

# **SCV Battery Auditions**

## **TENOR**

Techniques, Exercises, and Tips on Auditioning for the  
Santa Clara Vanguard Drum & Bugle Corps

by  
Murray Gusseck



**[www.scvanguard.org](http://www.scvanguard.org)**



# Welcome to the Santa Clara Vanguard Audition Packet!

Thank you for your interest in the Santa Clara Vanguard. This packet was designed by Murray Gusseck, the battery caption manager for SCV. It is designed to supplement the accompanying video lesson. Additional audition information may be found on SCV's website:

[www.scvanguard.org](http://www.scvanguard.org)



Please read all the information both in this packet and on the website very carefully. It is also helpful to visit the website often for news and updated information. We look forward to seeing you in November!

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## Audition Camps

### What to Bring

Bring your own sticks and mallets. We will not be using implements from the corps' supply until the line has been set. You may use whichever models you feel comfortable with. Vic Firth SRH (Hardimons) models are a good choice for sticks, as are the Murray Gusseck signature sticks ("M-Dawgs"), which should be available by November 2008. For mallets, we use the Vic Firth MT4A model.

You are encouraged to bring your own drums and a stand if it's feasible for you. There's no guarantee that we'll have you on your particular drums during ensemble settings, but it would be nice to have the option if needed. This is certainly not mandatory, but if you do end up bringing your own equipment, LABEL IT!

Bring a practice pad. You likely will not be on drums the whole time. If you're not on a drum, it's necessary that you still have something to play on. A tenor practice pad is encouraged, but a single pad would be just fine.

Bring warm clothes. The Bay Area is infamous for its cold nights and winds at that time of year. This means sweats, jeans, a light sweatshirt, and a heavy coat. Bring gloves, a cap, and a scarf just in case. Bring shorts in case the weather is warm during the day. Bring sneakers or tennis shoes. You will be doing some marching as well each audition weekend, and you can't do that in Birkenstocks or moon boots.

Bring a pencil for when we make on-the-fly edits to exercises or split parts. Don't be *that guy* asking to borrow a pencil all the time. Bring a binder to keep your music in so the wind doesn't blow it all over the parking lot.

Keep your cell phone in your bag during rehearsals. Switch it to 'silent' mode. Leave your Bluetooth headgear in your bag.

### So, to recap...

- sticks and mallets
- set of drums (if you can)
- practice pad
- warm clothes
- active wear
- pencil
- your brain



## What to Expect

We will spend the majority of the time at camps in individual subsections, allowing the staff members to challenge your hands and mental capabilities in various ways. We will mostly use the exercises contained herein as the audition material, although there may be a few things that get thrown at you on the fly to allow us to see how you adapt to new material. Sometimes you may even get a snippet of music.

We need to be able to hear and see how you act and react in the kinds of situations you'll be in on a day-to-day basis as a member of the Vanguard. We will be using our own discretion to determine who plays when and next to whom. If you are auditioning with a friend, you may not necessarily be able to stand next to them the whole time.

At any point during auditions you may be asked to demonstrate something. Try to keep in mind that this is not to humiliate you, but to allow us to see how you do what you do. You never know — you may be asked to play because we want a public demonstration of how to do it correctly!

Depending on the course of the camp weekends, we may elect to hold individual auditions in addition to the regular group auditions. You should be prepared for this in case it is necessary.

We will go through two to three rounds of cuts to get the drumline set correctly for the season. If at any time you don't get asked back for the next round of auditions, you would typically be encouraged to check out the Vanguard Cadets. There is a high degree of consistency of approach between the Cadet Corps and the A Corps, so this should be of serious consideration for those who really want to join the A Corps but who may not be quite ready.

## The Internet

For those who participate in drum corps chat rooms or forums, assume that your posts will be read by the folks you write about. Insulting remarks about individuals within the organization or the SCV organization itself will not be tolerated. As a general rule of thumb: If you wouldn't say something about someone to their face, don't write it in a forum that other people can read.

## Final Thoughts

Common sense and courtesy will go a long way during the audition process. Your ability to go with the flow and stay happy and relaxed will be a necessary factor for inclusion in the program. We will be evaluating these qualities throughout the audition weekends as well as your playing abilities. That being said, we sincerely hope you have a good time during auditions, learn a lot, and make some new friends. If you have problems or concerns of any kind during the weekend, feel free to let a staff person know. It's cliché, but know that we're here for you!



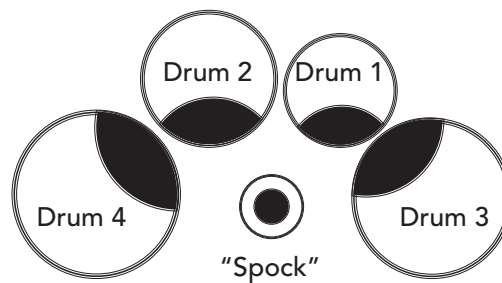
## Technique Fundamentals

### Grip and Form

The following concepts are intended to be guidelines to follow. More specific information can be obtained by studying the video material that accompanies this packet and by coming to the camps.

The thumb will be across from either the index finger or the middle finger, depending on the application. Where fulcrum pressure is needed, the index finger will be used. Where relaxation is needed, the middle finger will be used. The difference between the two will be less of a visual change and more of an internal refocusing of energy to different parts of the hand. The primary mover of the stick will be the wrist for most applications.

The resting position of the stick beads will be at about one inch off the drum head. There will also be a slight downward angle of the sticks from the hand to the beads. In general, the playing zones of each drum in the set will conform to the body's natural hand positioning as you move your hands around the drums. The black areas inside the following illustration will give you an idea of where to hit on the tenor drums:



It's important that the drums be at the right height for you. We will not sacrifice individual comfort and accessibility for perfect drum heights across the line. A guideline for height is this: From your elbows down to your hands, there should be a slight downward angle.

Lastly, posture is important. Your shoulders should be relaxed as much as possible. Try to get in the habit of analyzing yourself internally for signs of unnecessary tension. Some of what you will be doing requires some tension in the hands. Recognize that this does not mean that tension also needs to live in other parts of the body as well. Remember to breathe, drop your shoulders, keep your head (and your eyes) up, and focus the energy where it needs to be.



## Approach

The important thing to remember about our tenor approach is that it should be identical to the way you would approach playing on one drum, only deviating when there is no other alternative. This approach can be viewed hopefully as one of common sense. We're looking for the best sound achieved with the greatest ease — efficiency, to put it another way.

During the auditions we will spend time focusing on very specific muscle movements in the wrists, arms, and fingers. It is the intuitively coordinated use of these different muscle groups that give great players that awe-inspiring sound, feel, and look of fluid and relaxed speed and power.

Ultimately we are going for a musically mature sound. This comes from each player in the drumline having a sense of musical integrity and connection to what they are playing.



## Sound Fundamentals

### Timing, Feel, Sound, and Touch

These four concepts will rule our percussive world in everything that we do. They are interchangeable, overlapping, and synonymous with each other much of the time. As in spoken language, what we drum is the same as what we are saying. If the message is to be clear, it has to be able to conform to the well-groomed subdivisions of a common pulse. When you play something, play as if your audience is a computer that will transcribe your every note. Only the most exact performance of the rhythms will be transcribed correctly by this computer, so be *excellent* with your timing.

Feel comes from a player's ability to relax when he or she plays. You can get a robot or computer to play something with perfect accuracy (see above), but it might not have much human quality to it. If you can achieve excellent timing while relaxing and breathing, not to mention having some fun, the patterns and music will start to take on a life of their own, and you will then be generating a great 'feel.' This is a high-performance activity, and so let's see some HUMANS performing!

The issue of sound has to do with your listening skills and awareness. You have to be able to use your ears the way a microbiologist uses a microscope. Not only do you have to be able to hear and evaluate your own sound actively and constantly, but you need to be able to blend that sound into the ensemble of which you're a part. This takes a set of ears that can hear everything in the environment you're in and a brain that is capable of making subtle choices on the fly that enable you to fit into, and contribute to, the ensemble sound. This is *not* easy and takes time and practice to develop. We will help you with this. The first steps are to be taken by you, however, by way of making sure that you are playing on the head in the appropriate spot and that you are capable of producing the same sound with either hand.

Lastly, the concept of touch can be addressed simply by saying that the term refers to the amount of pressure you apply to the implement in your hand. If the music or exercise calls for a light touch, this simply means *touch the stick lightly*, as in legato passages. A heavier touch would be your cue for more pressure on the stick, as in staccato passages. Again, we will help you develop an intuition about this.



## Definitions

The drumming regimen you will find on these pages and at auditions has been carefully designed to target specific muscle groups or skill sets that are important to our technique program and musical development. Much thought has been given to the details of the exercises in terms of the tempos, dynamic markings, and so on. Many of the exercises are very simple on paper but properly performing them with the required techniques at the required tempi may be deceptively difficult. Please take the time to analyze each exercise and understand what it intends to teach you about your technique. In conjunction with this, please pay close attention to the details of each exercise, no matter how seemingly insignificant.

### Stickings

Stickings are notated in a case-sensitive fashion. Upper case R's and L's indicate accents in 2-height passages or one height if the exercise is monodynamic. Lower case r's and l's generally indicate taps or low notes. If you find discrepancies between this method and what you see on the page (as in the case with typos), go with the accent pattern you see and use common sense.

### Drum Patterns

Some of these exercises are notated with patterns around the drums, and some aren't. If the exercise does not show an "around" pattern, you can assume we will practice it on different drums, one at a time, in order to develop intuition about how the muscles respond to the vastly different tensions typical of a modernly tuned set of tenors. We may also elect to invent patterns on the fly to see who is capable of learning quickly. We may also elect to play on one drum some of the exercises that have patterns notated around the drums in order to study more closely the technique being used.

### Dynamics

Generally our system of dynamics translates into the following heights. Be weary of focusing too much on height definitions when trying to execute a musical phrase. Use your musician's ear and your drummer's intuition for these moments.

*pp* = 1.5 inches

*p* = 3 inches (tap height)

*mp* = 6 inches

*mf* = 9 inches

*f* = 12 inches

*ff* = approx. vertical



# EXERCISES

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# Free Stroke Exercise

by Murray Gusseck



Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.

Tempo Range

♩ = 84 - 112

Practice on different drums.





**8-8-16**

by Murray Gusseck

#### 4 Variations:

- (1) All up (forte)
- (2) All down (tap height)
- (3) Crescendo
- (4) Decrescendo

### Tempo Range

**♩ = 90 - 164**

### Variation 3

R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R  
*p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L  
*p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

R L R L ... *p* *f*

## Variation 4





# Basic Stickings Exercise

by Murray Gusseck

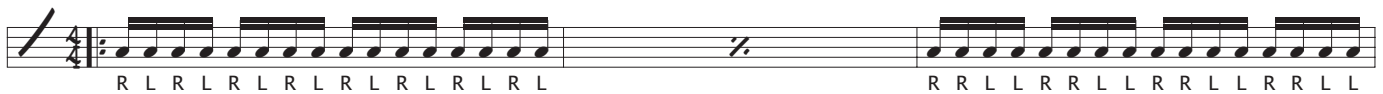
Practice at a variety of dynamic levels. Remember to focus on a 2-handed upstroke before the attack! Practice on different drums.



Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.

Tempo Range

♩ = 84 - 160







# Stick Control

by Gusseck/Crosby

Practice at a variety of dynamic levels. Remember to focus on a 2-handed upstroke before the attack!



Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.

Tempo Range

$\text{♩} = 84 - 132$





# Stick Control Variations

by Murray Gusseck

## Variation #1



*Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.*

## Tempo Range

**♩ = 84 - 112**

Practice on different drums.



This variation focuses on the overall hand-to-hand motions that make up the full exercise. Work to exactly place the strokes that make up the 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th measures, as well as the ending.

## Variation #2

## Tempo Range

♩ = 84 - 132







# "Basicker" Strokes

by Murray Gusseck



Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.

**Tempo Range****♩ = 60 - 100**





# Control Strokes Exercise

by Murray Gusseck

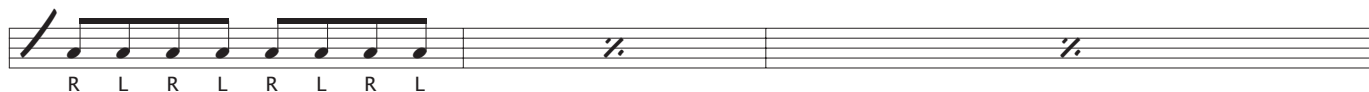
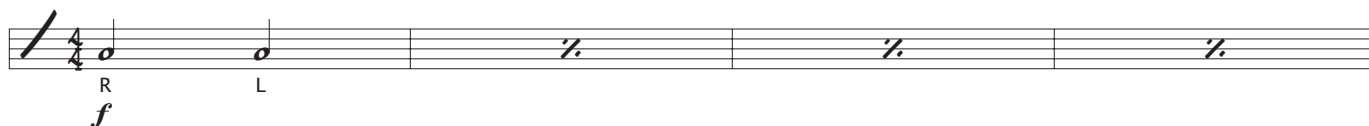
This exercise is to focus on controlling the rebound of each stroke. However, once you get to the 16th note values, transition into legato stroke technique. Practice on different drums.



Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.

**Tempo Range**

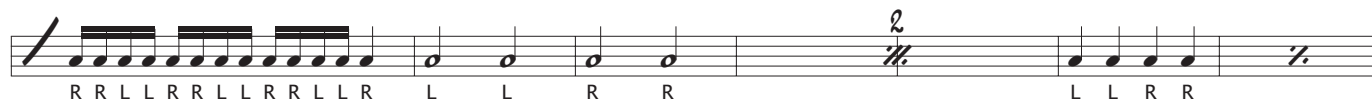
**♩ = 90 - 110**







## Control Strokes Exercise (cont.)





# Single-Hand 2-Height Exercises

by Murray Gusseck

## Exercise #1



Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.

Tempo Range

♩ = 90 - 132

Practice on different drums.



## Exercise #2



Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.

Tempo Range

♩ = 90 - 132

Practice on different drums.





# Basic Strokes

by Murray Gusseck

Basic Strokes is a combination of 7 sections covering essentially two very rudimentary ways of playing accents in a relaxed fashion. They are as follows:

## Section A:

This first section deals with one accent followed by a string of taps on one hand. The patterns encourage a smooth, relaxed upstroke prior to the first accent. The taps should be played smoothly and relaxed with the wrist, not the fingers. Think of bouncing a tiny basketball three inches above the floor.

## Section B:

This section is a 16th-note pyramid pattern building all the way up to four measures of 16ths on each hand. The notes should be played smoothly and relaxed with the wrist.

## Section C (*Hunter's Groove*):

This was developed by Hunter McRae in 2004. Hunter did a masterful job of creating simple parts that work very well with each other. This section just serves to break up the monotony a little, and it makes the kids in the back dance.

## Section D:

Here we have the same *sounding* patterns as played in Section A, only with inverted stickings. This section represents the second of the two basic kinds of strokes being studied here — a string of taps leading up to an accent. Quick and subtle finger and fulcrum pressures can be used in order to avoid over-spacing the second-to-last tap to the subsequent accent.

## Section E:

Similar to Section B, we now have the addition of little 32nd-note diddles, either single- or double-stroked, at the end of every bar. Just because.

## Section F:

Section F is back to square one with a countdown to the last section which consists of variations on the famous Curt Moore exercise from SCV lore called "Thirteen" (the version here is adapted) and long strings of 32nd notes designed to test our grasp of the basic concepts therein. Don't forget to breathe.

## Section G:

Section G is like Section F with a cherry on top. This time we're using the inverted stickings. It is usually faster in your mind than it is in reality. Remain calm and collected and focus on each passage as it comes.



## Basic Strokes (cont.)



*Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.*

## Tempo Range

**♩ = 84 - 112**

(A)

*f/p*

*p*

(B)

*f/p*

*p*



## Basic Strokes (cont.)

The first system of musical notation for 'The Little Boat' consists of a single staff. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature (C). The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, Bb3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The system ends with a double bar line.

© 'x' noteheads = 3rd rim

[illegible]

The musical score is written on a single staff with a treble clef. It begins with a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, some marked with accents. Below the staff, there are two lines of rhythmic notation: 'R l r L r l R l r L R r r' and 'l r'. A dynamic marking of  $f$  (forte) is placed below the staff. The score then transitions to a section marked '2x' (two times), which is enclosed in a circle with a 'D' (Dolce). This section features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, some marked with accents. Below the staff, there is a line of rhythmic notation: 'R l l l l l l l L r r r r r r r'. A dynamic marking of  $mf/p$  (mezzo-forte/piano) is placed below the staff.

The musical notation shows two patterns, 'R' and 'L', each repeated five times. Pattern 'R' consists of a single eighth note followed by a quarter rest. Pattern 'L' consists of a single eighth note followed by a dotted quarter note. The notation is written on a single staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The 'R' pattern is marked with a '1' above the note, and the 'L' pattern is marked with a '2' above the note. The notation is written in a way that suggests a continuous sequence of notes and rests.



## Basic Strokes (cont.)

[illegible]

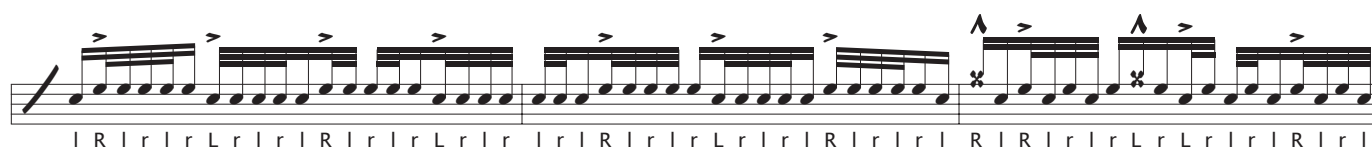


## Basic Strokes (cont.)

[illegible]

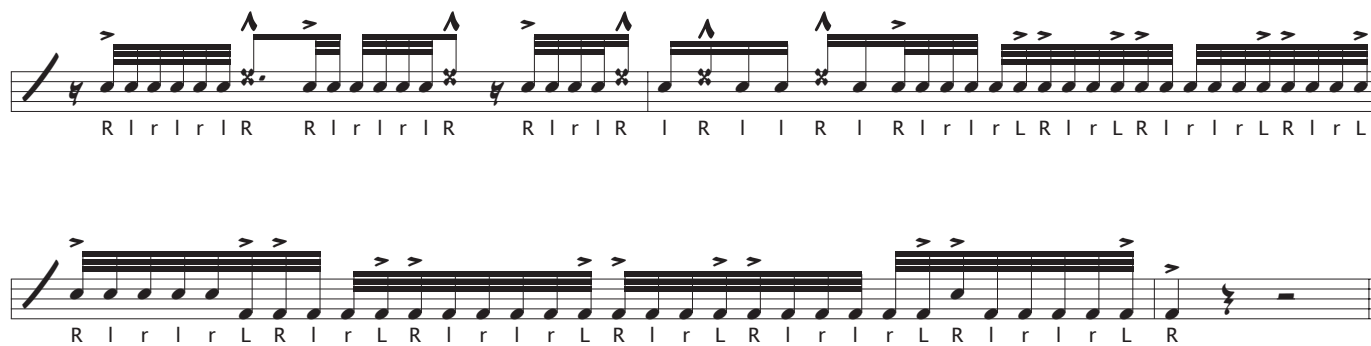


## Basic Strokes (cont.)





## Basic Strokes (cont.)



The image displays two staves of musical notation for tenor voice. The first staff contains a series of rhythmic exercises, including eighth and sixteenth note patterns, some with accents and slurs. The second staff continues with similar exercises, ending with a final note and a fermata. Below each staff, the corresponding fingerings are listed using letters R (Right) and L (Left) with numbers 1-5.

**Staff 1 Fingerings:**  
 R 1 r 1 r 1 R    R 1 r 1 r 1 R    R 1 r 1 R    | R    | R    | R 1 r 1 r L R 1 r L R 1 r 1 R 1 r L

**Staff 2 Fingerings:**  
 R 1 r 1 r L R 1 r L R 1 r 1 r L R 1 r L R 1 r 1 r L R 1 r 1 r L R



# Push-Pull Exercise

by Murray Gusseck

Practice the entire exercise with both the right hand and the left hand. The faster the rhythms get, the more you will need to lighten up your touch on the stick and the lower you will want to play. Remember, the goal here is to develop and tone some very small muscles in the hand. Don't try to get BIG sounds, especially with the faster rhythms. Take it slow and find ways to warm your muscles up for the task. If necessary, just practice basic triplets and sixteenths until you get the hang of it. Traditional grip players, you will have to play much, much lighter and lower with your left hand most of the time.

The DOWN arrows (↓) indicate when you should *push* (let the stick drop), while the UP arrows (↑) indicate when you should *pull* (close the grip back around the stick).



Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.

**Tempo Range**

♩ = 100 - 124

Practice on different drums.

The musical notation for the Push-Pull Exercise consists of six staves, each beginning with a drumstick icon. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns with downbeats (↓) and upbeats (↑). The first staff has a 4/4 time signature and includes triplet markings. The second staff has a 4/4 time signature. The third staff has a 4/4 time signature and includes triplet markings. The fourth staff has a 4/4 time signature and includes triplet markings. The fifth staff has a 2/4 time signature and includes triplet markings. The sixth staff has a 4/4 time signature and includes triplet markings.





# Fingers McGee

by Murray Gusseck

A word about the sticking indications:

R1 = right hand first finger (index finger)

L1 = left hand first finger (thumb or index finger, depending on grip)

R2 = right hand second finger group (back three fingers)

L2 = left hand second finger group (index+middle or back three fingers, depending on grip)

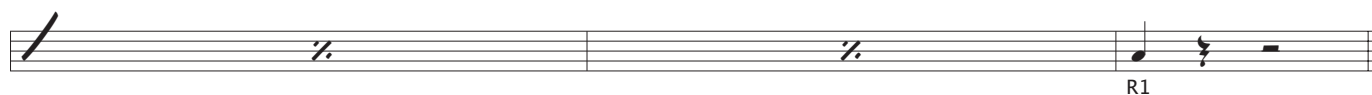
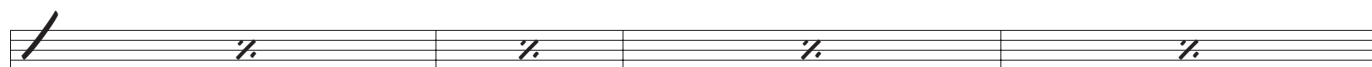


Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.

**Tempo Range**

**♩ = 72 - 112**

Practice on different drums.





# Diddle McNuggets

by Murray Gusseck

4 Variations (all to be played back to back):

- (1) right hand
- (2) left hand
- (3) double stops
- (4) alternating

Tempo Range

♩ = 100 - 144

Practice on different drums.

## Variation 1-3



*p - mp*

## Variation 4

Practice on different drums.



*p - mp*





# Triplet Diddle

by Murray Gusseck

We have four variations (outlined below). You'll find the 2nd and 4th variations notated. When playing the isolated diddle measures (3-4 and 7-8), practice keeping the non-diddle hand relaxed and with the same legato technique as all the check patterns. Practice on different drums.

## 4 Variations:

- |                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) All low (tap height) | (3) All up (forte) |
| (2) Crescendo            | (4) Decrescendo    |

## Tempo Range

$\text{♩} = 112 - 180$

## Variation 2



## Variation 4







# Schlitz & Giggles

by Murray Gusseck

This exercise will have three variations initially. The first one will be just taps and accents — no diddles, no rolls. The second variation will contain 'ruffs'. We'll define these as diddles before each accent. In other words, play one diddle on the hand prior to each accent. See the video for an example of this. The third variation will be as you see below.



Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.

**Tempo Range**

**♩ = 112 - 180**

The musical notation consists of seven staves, each containing a sequence of rhythmic patterns. The patterns are written in 4/8 time and use eighth and sixteenth notes. Hand indicators (R for right, L for left) are placed below the notes to indicate which hand plays each note. Dynamic markings (f/p) are also present. The patterns are as follows:

- Staff 1: *f/p* R R L L R R L L R R L L R R
- Staff 2: R R L L R R L R L L L L R R
- Staff 3: R R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
- Staff 4: R R L R L L R L L R R R L R R L L L
- Staff 5: R L R L R R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
- Staff 6: R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L
- Staff 7: R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L



# Cheezy Poofs

by Murray Gusseck

This one has been used quite a bit in the past and is good for all-around triplet flam patterns. It can be challenging at both very slow and very fast tempos for different reasons. The variations we will play include straight flams, cheeses, flam-drags, and flam-fives. The last one is what you will see notated below. The other variations are based on the same format.



Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.

## Tempo Range

$\text{♩} = 120 - 148$



The musical notation consists of six staves, each representing a different variation of the 'Cheezy Poofs' triplet flam pattern. The notation is written in 4/8 time and includes various rhythmic elements such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests. The patterns are labeled with 'R' for right foot and 'L' for left foot, with some variations including 'r' and 'l' for specific foot positions. The notation includes various rests and triplet markings (9/6) to indicate the timing of the flams. The patterns are as follows:

- Staff 1: R L L L L R L I R I r L r I R I R I R I r L r I R I r L r Lr L r I
- Staff 2: R I r LrrLrrLrrLrrL r I R I r L r I R I R I R I r
- Staff 3: L r I R I r L r Lr L r I R I r LrrLrrLrrLrrL r I
- Staff 4: R I R I R I r L r Lr L r I R I R I R I r L r Lr L r I R I r LrrLrrLrrLrrL r I
- Staff 5: R I I R I I R I I R I I r Lrr I I R I r L r I R I r L r I R I r L r I R I r L r I
- Staff 6: R L R I r L r Lr L r I R L R I r L r Lr L r I R L R I r L r Lr L r I



# Flammus

by Murray Gusseck

Here's another flam exercise in 4/4 time. Where triplet feels give us a rounder, slightly more breathable approach to rudiments, duple syncopations make you work harder to keep them in time. This one will drag like a fly in molasses if you let it. There are no variations for this one — just what you see below. For those who are familiar with this, there are a couple minor changes: a) The flam-taps are no longer double-accented; and B) The ending is a little different.



Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.

**Tempo Range**

**♩ = 100 - 124**

R L R L R r L I R L R L R r L I

R L R r L R L I R r L I R L R L

R L R L R r L I R L R L R r L I

R L R r L R L I R r L I R L R L

R l r L L r l R R l r L L r l R l r L L r l R r

L r l R R l r L L r l R R l r L r l R R l r L R



# *Flammus (cont.)*





# Independence Day - Duple

by Murray Gusseck

Independence exercises are the high-fiber diet necessary for good, consistent drumming health. There are countless methods and systems for practicing independence concepts. We will work on some very simple ones.

Start by playing the base pattern below with the right hand at a low height (3-4 inches) and on the 6" drum. Next, add in the following rhythms with the left hand as accents on drum 2. Stay on each pattern as long as it takes to become comfortable. Start slowly at first.

## Base Pattern



Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example. \*

## Tempo Range

♩ = 100 - 124



\* The video example varies slightly at this point.





# Independence Day - Triple

by Murray Gusseck

Same song, second verse. With both of these examples (duple and triple), also practice them with your hands in the opposite roles. In the accompanying video, this version is demonstrated with the left hand playing the base pattern while the right hand plays through the rhythms.

## Base Pattern



Refer to the accompanying video footage for instructions and a performance example.

## Tempo Range

$\text{♩} = 112 - 144$

