

Junior Snare: Audition Solo, Allegro

- Observe the accents carefully in this solo. Try to make a noticeable difference between accented notes and unaccented notes, especially in the first measure.
- The rests in this solo are very important. Measure two should get two full counts of rest. Many percussionists tend to abbreviate rests and to avoid this, try subdividing during the rests.
- For soft passages such as measure 4, it is a good idea to move to the edge of the drum. This will give you a soft, crisp, and articulate sound. However, moving to the edge of the drum is not enough. Stick heights must still be kept to a minimum for these soft passages.
- In this solo, all flams and rolls can be played on the same hand - RH for those of us right-handed players (LH if you prefer left-handed rudiments).
- The crescendo in measure 8 can go to a comfortable *mf*, but doesn't need to be over-stated.
- For this solo, a sixteenth-note roll structure (skeleton) works well.
- In the Region Ending, carefully pace your dynamic changes to avoid getting too soft too soon. Remember that from *mp* to *pp* there is a dynamic level in between so you need to leave enough room to play very softly for the measure marked *pp*.
- *In the All-State ending, avoid "digging into" the drum too much for the *sfz* rolls. Measure 21b is difficult to execute because of the *subito pp* marked at the beginning of the measure. Quickly go from off-center (*ff*) to the edge (*pp*) without interrupting the tempo.

*Applies to All-State Ending only

Clinic Snare: Audition Solo, Allegro

- For those who have limited experience with 12/8 meter, it is advisable to work on the individual rhythms with a metronome before practicing this solo. The most problematic rhythms are the first two beats in measure 2, the first two beats in measure 8, and the dotted eighths in measures 9 and 10. The dotted eighths make a 2-against-3 rhythm with the underlying eighths, so work on these diligently with a metronome.
- The accents in this solo are very important, so do your best to contrast accented vs. unaccented notes. This is especially true in measures 1 and 2.

- A sixteenth-note roll structure (skeleton) will work well for this solo.
- In measures 7 and 8, I like the sticking RRLl for the first two beats, but other options are certainly acceptable. Also try RLRL for each of those beats. Whichever sticking you use, try to avoid accenting the third note of each beat too strongly.
- In the Region Ending, pace your crescendo carefully. Measure 14a is difficult to play too loudly, so save some of the crescendo for the end of that measure. I prefer an alternating sticking in this bar rather than playing Swiss-Army triplets and diddles.
- *In the All-State Ending, the transition into the 4/4 is tricky. Since you see the notation Dotted Quarter=Quarter, that means the big beat (pulse) stays the same. The sixteenth note triplets at the end of measure 14b will be exactly the same speed as the sixteenth notes in measure 15b. In measure 15b, I would recommend playing all the “off-beat” sixteenths with the left hand (RH for those who favor left-hand lead stickings).

*Applies to All-State Ending only

Senior Snare: Audition Solo, Presto

- Due to the fast tempo of this solo, finding a roll structure (skeleton) for the rolls is difficult. For a while I played around with triplets and other rhythmic structures for the rolls, but over time, I made my way back to sixteenth note roll structures. To make sixteenths work, the multiple bounces cannot be too “crushed,” or the roll will sound choked. There are some options here so I would encourage you to experiment with what works best for your sound and drum.
- The eighth note pulse should stay constant throughout this solo and to practice this, I set my metronome to constant eighth notes. Even though the meters jump from 4/4 to 7/8 to 3/8 these transitions should be seamless.
- Pace the crescendo beginning in measure 12 very carefully. If the crescendo happens too quickly, it will be difficult to contrast the *mf* in measure 15 with the *ff* in measure 16 (a and b).
- In the Region Band Ending, the quarter note rolls go by very quickly. Avoid elongating these rolls so that the downbeat of the next bar starts exactly in time.
- *In the All-State Ending work on playing the quintuplet-eighth note figure perfectly in time with a metronome. It should not have a 3+2 or 2+3 feel to it, rather 5 notes stretched evenly over two beats.

- *For the dotted half note roll and the half note roll, I adjust my roll speed slightly slower than for the first part of this solo to accommodate the subito dynamic changes. For the dotted half note roll, I use 8 strokes in the roll, and for the half note roll, I use 5 strokes ending on my left hand. Again, there may be other solutions, but this works well for me.
- *In measure 21b, try using a RRL sticking on the sixteenth note triplets. This will help you move through them faster and allows them to both be played on the same hand.

*Applies to All-State Ending only

Junior Mallet: Audition Solo, Allegretto

- A medium or medium-hard mallet will work well for this solo. I prefer the Malletech SH-14's for this and all of the Region/All-State solos.
- Be sure to give the full value to the rolls in the solo, especially the dotted quarter note rolls. Most folks will want to shorten those slightly, so practice those figures carefully with a metronome.
- The accidentals in line 2 are very important. Remember to carry the accidentals through the entire bar!
- Observe the diminuendo in measure 11 and 12 carefully, arriving all the way to *p* at the downbeat of measure 13.
- Practice the transition from eighth notes to triplets in measure 13 with a metronome.
- The *ritardando* in the penultimate measure is important in the musical flow. Without enough *ritardando*, the rolls are difficult to make sound smooth.
- *Practice the transition from sixteenth notes to eighth note triplets in measures 17b-18b very carefully with the metronome. Avoid slowing down in the triplets.
- *The double stops in measure 19b provide a substantial challenge at the marked tempo. Play the double stops precisely together and make a nice *ritardando* all the way to the last note. I also like to put a diminuendo over the last few measures.

*Applies to All-State Ending only

Clinic Mallet: Audition Solo, Allegro

- A medium or medium-hard mallet will work well for this solo. I prefer the Malletech SH-14's for this and all of the Region/All-State solos.
- In the opening of this solo, observe the key signature of F-minor carefully. In measure 1 and other figures like this, a slight emphasis on the first note and the "&" of beat 2 help make the melody flow.
- In measure 10 be sure to play the double stops precisely together.
- Measures 13a and begins to make the transition from F-minor to F-major, so be sure to observe the accidentals carefully.
- Phrase measures 14a and 15a like the musical material from measures 1 and 2.
- In measure 17a, the double stops also need to be played precisely together.
- Make a full, yet warm sound on the last four accented notes. Be careful not to sacrifice quantity of sound of quality of sound.
- *Measures 13b-15b may be an unfamiliar scale, the whole-tone scale. Each subsequent note is a whole step away from its neighboring notes. The F-major key is re-established in measure 16b.
- *I like to make a slight crescendo in measure 13b, peaking on measuring 14b. In measures 14b and 15b a slight diminuendo followed by a crescendo leads nicely into the sixteenth notes.
- *Play double stops precisely together in the last two measures.

*Applies to All-State Ending only

Senior Mallet: Audition Solo, Espressivo / Allegro / Presto

- Play the opening rolls as slowly as possible while still making the instrument "sing." Rolls that are too fast actually sound less sustained and more like a rhythm. It is also helpful to play on the top of the mallets to reduce the articulation. I like playing the first four bars as two separate two-bar phrases with a slight break between measures 2 and 3.
- In measures 6-9, bring out the notes marked with *tenutos*. These notes make the melody, and the other notes just provide an accompaniment.
- In measures 13a and 15a, drop the dynamic level slightly to provide room for the crescendo in these measures.

- The double stops in the Region Ending should be played precisely together. Avoid getting a “flam” sound produced by one mallet striking ahead of the other.
- Though not notated, a slight crescendo in measure 18a leads nicely into the final few bars of the piece.
- *The double stops in the All-State ending are tricky at this fast tempo.
- *Be sure to make a distinct difference in the quarter note triple in measure 13b and the dotted eighth note rhythms in measures 15b, 17b and 19b.
- *I’ve found that in measure 21b, beats 4 and 5 the sticking RLLR LLR works best, even though the doubles are fast at this tempo.
- *For an unexpected musical twist, try playing the final note softer than the crescendo that precedes it.

*Applies to All-State Ending only

Junior Timpani Solo: Allegro

- The given pitches of F and C can be played using multiple drum combinations. The most useful suggestion is to put the F on the 26” drum and the C on the 29” drum.
- In both the opening and the ending of this solo, take great care not to overplay the *ff* dynamic. Good sound should always be your top priority!
- Mallet Choice – the player should choose a mallet that maximizes articulation while also being soft enough to perform the few rolls within the solo. A general mallet with a felt core surrounded by a tight wrap of softer cotton/felt should work well.
- It is very easy to rush this solo! Spend the majority of your time practicing with a metronome so as not to push the tempo. Pay special attention to measures that have rests – be sure to hold those rests to full value!
- To determine an appropriate length for the fermata in m. 4 and m. 38b, begin by extending the note to at least twice its written value, as dictated by the given tempo. Always be careful not to play too long or overstate the written dynamic.
- The accents in m. 5 and m. 7 are written at a *mp* dynamic, so be careful not to play them too loudly. As with all accents, think first about **emphasizing** the accented note, not just playing it louder.
- Articulation markings are important. Whenever possible, muffle the drums immediately after playing notes marked with a staccato articulation (see m. 11, 21, 23, 25, and both endings). Notes marked tenuto can be emphasized by a slight increase in both length and duration (or “weight” of the note), but not as much as an accent (see m. 32a). And, as always, be careful not to overplay notes that are accented.

- In general, try to avoid stickings that repeat the same hand too often. It's ok to play two right hands or two left hands in a row, but any more than two may cause your consistency of sound to suffer. Use your judgement (and your ears) and choose the sticking that is the most comfortable for you.
- The timpani rolls in this solo are single-stroke rolls, played rapidly and with as much sustain as possible. This applies to both loud and soft rolls. Don't forget: your **sound** is the most important feature of the roll. Imagine a tuba player playing a half note, and emulate that concept of sustained sound!
- **For the Region ending:**
 - The muffling in m. 31a can be a little tricky. Use the left hand to play the note while the right hand muffles the drum to facilitate the written rhythm.
 - The two rolls in m. 33a should be the same length – don't let the tied rhythm fool you!
 - To play the *fp* roll in m. 35a, first strike the roll at *f* and then begin the roll shortly after at *p*. Be sure to put a little space in between the single strike and the roll to maximize the effect of the *fp*.
- **For the All-State ending:**
 - For the muffling in m. 29b-31b there are a couple of options available. In m. 29b, try muffling each drum with the same hand that plays the note on that drum (for example, the right hand would muffle the F, while the left hand muffles the C). In m. 31b, try the following sticking (stickings within parenthesis meaning muffle the drum with that hand):
 - l-r-(l)-r-l-(r)
 - This will keep your hands in a constant eighth note subdivision.
 - Pay close attention to the dynamics in this ending. Avoid overplaying the *mf* in m. 32b, and take your time as you crescendo from m. 33b-36b – don't get there too soon!
 - In the case of the rolls in m. 35b-36b and m. 38b, play the 8th note and the start of the roll with the same hand. This will help increase your rhythmic clarity and consistency.

Clinic Timpani Solo: Quarter = 112

- In both the opening and the ending of the solo, take great care not to overplay the *ff* dynamic. Good sound should always be your top priority!
- Mallet Choice – while the majority of the solo is very articulate, the soft roll section in the middle of the solo presents a challenge when determining the correct mallet choice. Therefore, begin with the rolls in mind, and choose a softer general mallet that can play the rolls smoothly while also offering good articulation.
- There are many dynamic changes in this solo, including multiple sudden changes. Be sure similar dynamics are consistent, regardless of where they appear in the solo.

- The stickings in m. 1 and 2 should be very similar, especially on beat 1 and 2. Be sure to be consistent with what sticking you choose. Then, as the rhythms begin moving down the drums, you should lead with the LH. In many cases, it's as simple as this: when the rhythm moves from low to high, begin with the right hand, and when the rhythm moves from high to low, begin with the left.
- The accents in m. 9 and the 8th notes in m. 10 should connect smoothly to each other. Practice playing the 16th notes in m. 9 evenly without over-exaggerating the accents.
- The *sfz* roll in m. 14 should be struck strongly first (at or near a *f* dynamic), and then rolled through the crescendo into m. 15, similarly to a *fp*-style roll.
- In general, the timpani rolls in this solo are single-stroke rolls, played rapidly and with as much sustain as possible. This applies to both loud and soft rolls. Don't forget: your **sound** is the most important feature of the roll. Imagine a tuba player playing a half note, and emulate that concept of sustained sound!
- In the case of the rolls in m. 19 and m. 21, play the 8th note and the start of the roll with the same hand. This will help increase your rhythmic clarity and consistency.
- The rolls in m. 23-26 should be separated slightly. This allows the player to move from drum to drum more easily. In addition, be sure to balance the volume of the roll between both hands, especially when two drums are played at the same time.
- **For the Region ending:**
 - m. 28a-29a should have a similar sticking to m.1-2. Using a similar sticking will help preserve the style of the rhythm across the piece.
 - Practice m. 32a-33a with your metronome to avoid rushing. Focus on playing the 8th notes in time in both measures.
 - To play the *fp* roll in m. 18a, first strike the roll at *f* and then begin the roll shortly after at *p*. Be sure to put a little space in between the single strike and the roll to maximize the effect of the *fp*.
- **For the All-State ending:**
 - The 16th notes on beat 3 in m. 28b should be played r-l-r-l. Be sure to square your shoulders to the drum you are playing, and rotate your torso smoothly as you move across the drums.
 - Be sure to muffle the drums immediately after playing them in m. 30b, as dictated by the staccato articulation markings.
 - For the rolls in m. 32b-33b: do not try to connect these rolls. Use short bursts of rhythm (a sextuplet or a quintuplet, for example) to perform the rolls and facilitate the written drum shifts.
 - Regarding the sticking in m. 34b-35b: the first measure can be alternated entirely starting with the right hand. This will force you to begin m. 35b with the left hand. To facilitate the drum shift from beat 1 to beat 2 in m. 35b, play beat 1 as a LH paradiddle (l-r-l-l). Then finish the measure by alternating your sticking.
 - The rhythm of m. 36b is very tricky. Try starting the measure with two right hands (on the 1st 8th note, and then on the very next triplet 16th note), and you should be able to alternate the rest of the way. Also, be sure to square up your shoulders to the drum you are playing as you move around

the timpani. This will improve your playing area accuracy and your overall tone on the instrument.

- To determine an appropriate length for the fermata in m.37b, begin by extending the note to at least twice its written value, as dictated by the given tempo. The *ritardando* allows you to play that fermata a little longer, though the speed at which you slow down is up to you. Still, always be careful not to play too long or overstate the written dynamic.

Senior Timpani Solo: Allegro con anima

- In both the opening and the ending of the solo, take great care not to overplay the *ff* dynamic. Good sound should always be your top priority!
- Mallet Choice – the overall style of this solo is pretty articulate, with only a few rolls throughout the piece. Choose a mallet that will give you an even sustain on the rolls while also allowing you to play articulate without having to work too hard. A slightly harder mallet than general should work well.
- The sticking in m. 1 is most easily performed by playing the first two notes with the left hand (L-lrlr, where the capitalized L is an 8th note and the lowercase l's are 16th's). This works in m. 2, as well as m. 17b.
- The stickings in m. 9, m. 17a, and m. 18b, however, should begin with a left hand, followed by right hand lead from there (L-rllr, in m. 17a). In many cases, it's as simple as this: when the rhythm moves from low to high, begin with the right hand, and when the rhythm moves from high to low, begin with the left.
- To determine an appropriate length for both the fermata in m.2 and in m.19b (all-state ending), begin by extending the note to at least twice its written value as dictated by the given tempo. In m. 2, the *ritardando* allows you to play that fermata a little longer than the one in m. 19b. Still, always be careful not to play too long or overstate the written dynamic.
- Be sure that the tempo in m. 1 and m. 3 are the same, and slow down smoothly in m. 2 to help show the difference!
- Throughout the solo you will find measures with lots of notes while some measures will only have a few. Rhythms such as dotted quarter notes are easy to rush because of the large amount of space between the notes. Be sure to practice with your metronome, and pay close attention to your tempo in m. 3-6 to get the solo started smoothly.
- In m. 9, work hard to show the difference between the dotted rhythms and the triplet 16th notes.
- In general, the timpani rolls in this solo are single-stroke rolls, played rapidly and with as much sustain as possible. This applies to both loud and soft rolls. Don't forget: your **sound** is the most important feature of the roll. Imagine a tuba player playing a half note, and emulate that concept of sustained sound!
- Articulation markings are important. Whenever possible, muffle the drums immediately after playing notes marked with a staccato articulation (see m. 6, 10-13, and both endings). Notes marked tenuto can be emphasized by a slight increase in both length and duration (or "weight" of the note), but not as much as

an accent (see m. 6, 16a, and 15b). And, as always, be careful not to overlay notes that are accented.

- ***For the Region ending:***
 - Pay special attention to the syncopated rhythm in m. 16a so as not to rush.
 - To play the *fp* roll in m. 18a, first strike the roll at *f* and then begin the roll shortly after at *p*. Be sure to put a little space in between the single strike and the roll to maximize the effect of the *fp*.

- ***For the All-State ending:***
 - Pay special attention to the syncopated rhythm in m. 15b so as not to rush.
 - The roll in m. 16b is very difficult – I suggest “metering” the roll, which helps you to move from drum to drum and still sounds like a roll. In this case, a quick burst of four 16th notes beginning on your left hand should do the trick. But be mindful of your tempo, the dynamics, and the tempo of the triplet 16th notes that follow the roll!
 - The rhythm of m. 19b is also very tricky. Try starting the measure with two right hands (on the 1st 8th note, and then on the very next triplet 16th note), and you should be able to alternate the rest of the way. Also, be sure to square up your shoulders to the drum you are playing as you move around the timpani. This will improve your playing area accuracy and your overall tone on the instrument.