

2025 Study Materials

Drum Major



CAROLINA GOLD

Drum and Bugle Corps

Thank you for choosing Carolina Gold! Our goal is to give you a learning experience that you can carry with you for the rest of your musical journeys.

The mission of Carolina Gold Performing Arts is to advance music education by providing transformative learning opportunities that cultivate artistic excellence, personal discipline, and a lifelong commitment to the performing arts.

To achieve this mission, Carolina Gold is dedicated to fostering an educational environment that emphasizes rigor, creativity, and collaboration. We are committed to ensuring that every individual is treated with dignity and respect while being challenged to grow as musicians, performers, and community leaders. Through structured instruction, performance, and community engagement, Carolina Gold seeks to enrich both the individual and the broader cultural landscape.

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You may use as little or as much of the material in this packet as you would like, as long as you follow the directions for the technique, prepared excerpt, and interview audition components.

The first round will have no formal audition. Instead, you will be evaluated on your attitude, willingness to learn, preparation, and willingness to adapt. Prepare as much as you can, and we will work on the material together.

How to Audition

Step 1) *Sign Up for the Audition*

November 29 – First Round

December 6 – Second Round (Callback)

Step 2) *Learn the Material*

The material within this packet is what you will be using for your audition. The packet also contains information about the material that you can use to improve your skills. At the end of the packet, there will be a QR code to a Google Folder that has instructional videos for your convenience.

Step 3) *Evaluate Yourself*

It is important to evaluate yourself so that you know your strengths and areas of improvement. Ask for help from family, friends, band directors, and even private instructors who can provide feedback.

Step 4) *Come to the Audition*

This is your opportunity to show us who you are! Bring your best preparedness, attitude, and personality.

Audition Components

Technique – See page 10

Time Signatures: 4/4, 3/4, 5/4

Patterns: Focal Point, Classical, and Stop Time

Prepared Excerpt – See page 19

You will have several choices to choose from for your prepared excerpt. You can mix and match songs to give yourself an opportunity to showcase a lyrical, expressive style, and a technical style.

Interview – See page 21

During the second round of auditions, we will be hosting interviews. During the interview, you will showcase the technique sequence and your prepared excerpts. We will also ask questions regarding your marching and leadership experience, your interest in Carolina Gold, and several leadership and conflict management scenarios. During both camps, we will be looking to see how all the auditionees interact with each other.

Conducting Vocabulary

Ictus: The specific point in a conducting pattern where the beat occurs.

Rebound: The bounce away from each ictus. The rebound should have gravitational weight, like bouncing a basketball.

Travel: The movement from ictus to ictus.

Horizontal Plane: This is where you naturally bring your hands up and where your ictus will be. The movements required for travel and ritardando moves along the Horizontal Plane, the left-to-right motions.

Vertical Plane: The Vertical Plane is where up and down motions occur. Rebound, accelerando, upbeats, downbeats, and dynamics all utilize the Vertical Plane.

What makes a good pattern?

Each of your beats should move through time evenly, and each beat should be predictable to help the ensemble stay in time and know what is coming next.

Intro to Technique

Focal Point

- Accented by nature
- Variations for legato, staccato, and marcato
- Used for technical passages
- Uses heavy rebound between the beats
- Can easily be seen from far away on the field
- Best used with tempi under 160 bpm

Classical

- Legato by nature
- Variations for accented, staccato, and marcato
- Used for lyrical passages
- Uses mostly travel between the beats
- Most often seen in concert band settings
- Best used for expressive conducting with slower music

Stop Time

- Staccato by nature
- Variations for marcato and accent
- Not suitable for legato
- Used for technical passages
- Uses no rebound or travel
- Can easily be seen from far away on the field
- Best used with tempi over 160 bpm

Intro to Technique

Focal Point

Focal Point is sometimes known as the “arrow pattern” because of its shape in 4/4 time. It can also be referred to as “down, in, out, up” for the same reason. Focal Point gets its name because every ictus occurs at the same place, and the focus is placed on the recurring location of the ictus.

Classical

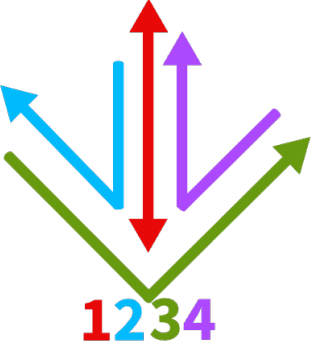
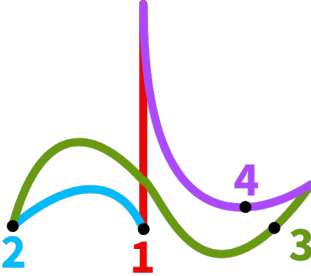
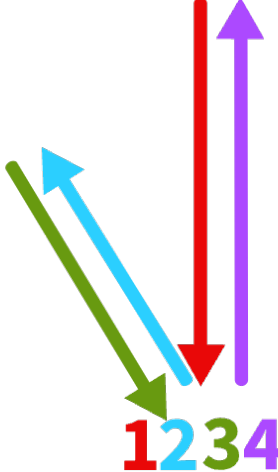
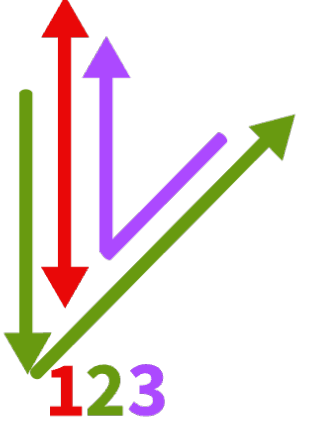
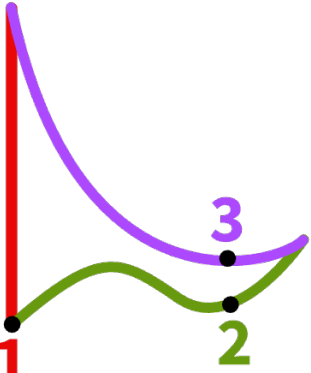
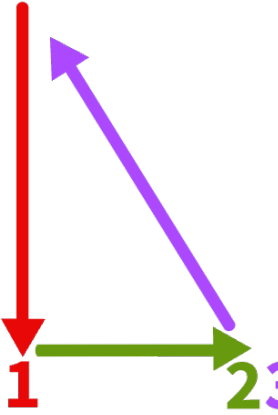
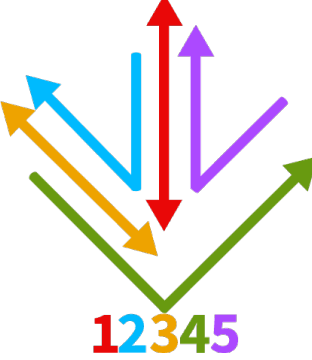
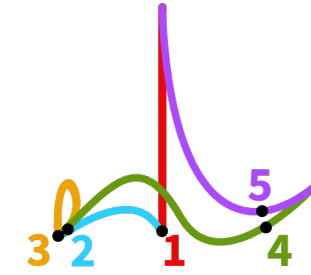
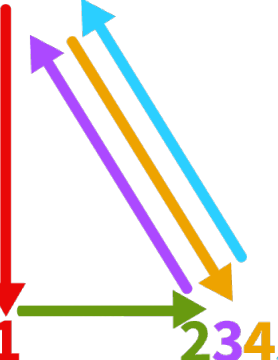
Classical is the most expressive conducting pattern. It places all the beats along the horizontal plane.

Stop Time

Stop Time is a newer conducting style compared to Focal Point and Classical. It gets the name Stop Time because time is literally stopped between the beats. In 4/4, this occurs between beats 1-2 and 3-4.

*The next page gives a reference for the shape of the conducting patterns. The ictus occurs where the numbers are placed, the arrows do not indicate the placement of the ictus, but the direction that your hand travels in. **Please see the videos from the QR code for the best visual representation.***

Pattern Shapes

	Focal Point	Classical	Stop Time
4 -- 4			
3 -- 4			
5 -- 4			

Technique Audition Info

During the technique portion of your audition, you will showcase your 4/4, 3/4, and 5/4 patterns in all three styles, Focal Point, Classical, and Stop Time. That means there will be nine parts to the technique portion.

The sequence is as follows:

Focal Point	100 bpm	(8 beat Count in)	4/4 (x4)
Classical	100 bpm		
Stop Time	160 bpm		
Focal Point	100 bpm	(8 beat Count in)	3/4 (x4)
Classical	100 bpm		
Stop Time	160 bpm		
Focal Point	100 bpm	(8 beat Count in)	5/4 (x4)
Classical	100 bpm		
Stop Time	160 bpm		

There will be an **eight-beat** count in before each part, and you will conduct each part for **four measures**. This will repeat for the 3/4 and 5/4 sections. During the audition, there will be a metronome playing while you conduct. The metronome track can be found through the QR code.

Technique Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the following categories:

Keeping Time

Can you stay in time with the metronome and place your beats with the click?

During the tempo changes, can you quickly adapt to the different tempo?

Even Beats

Can you move evenly between the beats or are you rushing or dragging between them? Is each beat predictable?

Staying in Style

Can you stay in the style of Focal Point, Classical, and Stop Time? Every person will naturally have their own individual style, but how well can you adapt the characteristics of the three given styles to your own?

Recovery

While it is important to be as accurate as possible, if you do happen to mess up, how quickly can you get back on track?

Intro to Expression

There are several factors that go into expressive gestures. These include dynamics, phrasing, articulation, duration, style, as well as cues that benefit and help the ensemble with entrances and counting.

Expressive conducting is important because it allows the conductor to share their interpretation of the music to inspire musicality from the players. Expressive gestures also help remind the players to follow the dynamic and articulative instructions notated in the music.

During your audition, you will be standing still and conducting with a track, so you will have the opportunity to be as expressive as possible, but without the ensemble following you. The goal is to conduct in such a way that if there was an ensemble in front of you, your musical interpretation and expressions would be clear to them and easy to follow.

On the field, expressive gestures must be well thought out. The point of expressive gestures is to benefit the ensemble, but if they are playing a technical passage and moving quickly, it might be best to put more of an emphasis on providing time for the ensemble and using simple gestures. In this kind of scenario, less is more.

In slower and more musical passages, where the ensemble is not moving as much or as fast, there is more freedom for expression. Expressive gestures on the field should be easily seen from further away due to the size of the “stage” or field.

In drum corps, there are opportunities to play corps songs or encore tunes where the ensemble is most commonly standing still in an arc. Because the ensemble is standing still without feet responsibilities, there is much more room to add expressive gestures.

A cue/gesture can be created by adding or taking away motion. If you are conducting time with one hand, you might use the left hand to create a gesture, or even with the right hand as you give the pattern. This can also be done when conducting the pattern with both hands. Cues can be given by taking away motion when conducting with two hands by pausing one hand and bringing it back in, this could signal, “something is about to happen!” You can also stop one hand and then use the same hand to create new motion.

An effective cue/gesture is created with a preparatory beat, the cue itself, and the follow-through. The preparatory beat is like the way you breathe in before you play, and the motion from beat 4 to 1 when conducting. The preparatory beat tells the ensemble that something is about to happen. Before the preparatory beat

even happens, it is important that the conductor turns towards the intended players and makes eye contact with them.

The cue/gesture itself is created with a motion that is different than just showing time, and it should also be within the style of the music. This could be as simple as a nod of the head to help someone with an entrance, or as advanced as showing a 3 over 2 rhythm in the left hand in a super slow passage.

The follow-through of a cue/gesture is most important when cuing entrances, and when the cue is outside of the beat pattern. This can also be thought of as remaining in the cue and is important as it creates better clarity and communication with the players. If the cue happens too fast, they might miss it.

Eye contact and body language should take place before, during, and after the cue to strengthen connection and communication.

Intro to Score Study

When looking at the music to prepare for your conducting, it is important to think about these factors:

Step 1:

- Time signatures
- Tempo
- Styles & expressive markings
- Roadmap items (fermatas, pauses, repeats, etc.)
- Key signature and key changes (and clefs)

Step 2:

- Who has the melody?
- Who has the counter melody?
- Where are the important moments in the music?
- How can you show these important moments with your gestures?

Step 3:

- When and where are the important harmonic moments?
- Can you anticipate any problem areas for the entire ensemble, like rhythms/timing or instrument-specific tendencies?
- How can you prepare your conducting and communication to assist in these potential problem areas?

**These are not all the layers of score study,
but these are the most basic items that will help
you survive your first experience.**

Other important items that were not previously listed include why the piece was written, when the piece was written, and where the piece is from. The historical context of the piece can give insight into other stylistic and expressive choices.

Who is the composer, and what specific qualities does their music have?

*How does the form and structure of the piece evolve?
How do the rhythms and harmony evolve throughout the piece?*

How do you want the audience to respond to the piece, and how can you best elicit this response?

Intro to Score Study

While some of these more advanced factors are more important than others for your audition and being a drum major, it is still important that you keep them in mind. It is important that as a conductor, you know your piece well, and as a drum major, you should know your show well so that you can be the embodiment of its story and character through your conducting. Learning about the historical context of the show music can help you better understand how it relates to the show theme or story.

As a drum major, you can also relate historical context and meaning to your corps songs and encore tunes. **Corps songs and encore tunes** are very important to the history of each drum corps. There are alumni, fans, and staff members who hold these songs close to their hearts, and you must conduct these in such a way that honors the tradition of the piece and inspires the best playing from the ensemble. You are also responsible for learning the history of the piece so that you can share its meaning and story with the drum corps to help create and spread culture.

Memorizing Music

For your audition, you must memorize the music.

It is crucial that as a drum major, you memorize and internalize the entire score, sections, and tempos. You will be leading rehearsals and need to know exactly where you are off the top of your head.

Here are some tips for memorizing your music:

Learn the music one chunk at a time

Make a cheat sheet! A cheat sheet can help you organize the information in the music

Chunk	Measures	Time Signatures	Notes
Top-A (160)	1-8	8 (4/4)	Front ensemble only
A-B	9-25	16 (4/4) + 1(2/4)	Trumpet solo, low brass backgrounds in the 8 th measure, 2/4 bar of silent except for suspended cymbal roll
B-C	26-33	8 (4/4)	Big opening hit immediately, large cue for the entrance

Make flashcards for each chunk and play a memorization game! You can pick up the cards to quiz yourself on one chunk at a time, or pick up two and quiz yourself on the music between the two chunks.

Prepared Excerpts

You will have the option to pick at least one of these short excerpts to showcase all three styles in context:

- 1) Anthony Dvořák - **Symphony No. 9**, fourth movement
- 2) William Billings - **Chester** from the New England Psalm-Singer
(1770)
- 3) Richard Wagner - **Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral** from Lohengrin
- 4) Percy Grainger – **The Lost Lady Found** from Lincolnshire Posey
- 5) Percy Grainger – **Horkstow Grange** from Lincolnshire Posey
- 6) Gustav Holst – **Song of the Blacksmith** from Second Suite in F
- 7) Gustav Holst – **Mars** from The Planets
- 8) Leonard Bernstein - **Candide Overture**

*It is up to you to interpret what styles to use and the expressive gestures that you create. You can find the scores for each excerpt and a recording with a click track underneath it for your convenience. During the audition, we will play your tracks for you and **you will conduct the music memorized.***

Excerpts Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the following categories:

Keeping Time

Can you stay in time with the metronome and place your beats with the click? During the tempo changes, can you quickly adapt to the different tempo?

Even Beats

Can you move evenly between the beats or are you rushing or dragging between them? Is each beat predictable?

Staying in Style

Do you use all three styles in your prepared excerpts, and are they clearly understood and recognizable?

Expressive Gestures and Cues

Do you use any expressive gestures, or do you only conduct the time? When using expressive gestures, do they reflect what is going on in the music, and would they benefit an ensemble if used real context?

Recovery

While it is important to be as accurate as possible, if you do happen to mess up, how quickly can you get back on track?

Interview Info & Evaluation

During your interview, you will showcase your technique and prepared excerpts by yourself, and we will also use this time to ask you some questions to get to know you better. As previously mentioned in the packet, we will ask questions regarding:

- Marching and Leadership experience
- Your interest in Carolina Gold
- Leadership and conflict management scenarios

We are not looking for any specific answers or experience, but for people who can be team players and demonstrate a great understanding of the technique and selected excerpts. We want to take this time to get to know who you are as a person, and understand how you might work with the staff and other members of the drum corps. Our goal is to create an educational experience for the drum majors, while also setting a strong leadership foundation for the drum corps. We are invested in your growth as a human and musician.

Expectations & Responsibilities

As a drum major of Carolina Gold, we expect these things from you:

- Timely communication
- Growth mindset
- Know and memorize your scores and drill sets
- Lead rehearsals by conducting and running the metronome
- Work as a team with other drum majors, leadership, and staff members
- Be proactive with any issues that need to be resolved or tasks that need to be completed
- Come to rehearsal with all your materials, which include charging any batteries or equipment ahead of time to avoid a lack of equipment at rehearsal
- Be fair and kind to others
- Be professional, you are an ambassador of Carolina Gold, and even Sound Sport, so always be seen in a positive way that represents the corps

QR Code & Resources

The QR Code will take you to a Google folder that contains the following:

- Scores and sound files for prepared excerpts
- Metronome track for the technique auditions
- YouTube links to videos that thoroughly break down each conducting style
- YouTube links to videos breaking down the technique and a prepared excerpt audition



Have questions? Please email Lily Loughnane at

lilyloughnane@carolinagold.org

All questions asked will be answered through email and anonymously posted in the Google Folder with the answer