

April 11, 2011

Prospective Members,

Thank you for your interest in the 2011 Green Hope Marching Band Percussion Section. Fresh from a successful season with the indoor percussion group, Green Hope's percussion program is gearing up for another season with the fall marching band. Last season, in addition to local competition and football game performances, the marching band traveled to Western Carolina University, and The United States Naval Academy to compete. We are looking forward to another great season.

For those of you who are new to marching music, the percussion section is usually split into two groups. There is the battery, or "drum line", which consists of marching snare drums, tenors and basses. This group plays their parts while marching around the field in formations. The other half of the section is called the Front Ensemble, or "pit". This is where you will find the instruments you are more familiar with, such as timpani, concert bass drums, xylophones, marimbas and so on. This group stays stationary at the front of the field, as it would obviously be difficult to march with such large equipment. Each student will be placed in one group or the other (and in some cases on a particular instrument) at the end of an audition process. This should not discourage you from auditioning, however, as in the fall ensemble, all students who audition will be a part of the ensemble. It is, however, impossible for every student to be placed on the instrument they wish to play. With the number of students auditioning, and some instruments being more popular than others, it is the unfortunate reality that some members will be disappointed. Please understand that all decisions will be made for the good of the ensemble. We unfortunately can not put the interests of one student above the interests of the group. With all of those unpleasant realities addressed, if every student approaches the ensemble with a good attitude, and the desire to work towards something bigger than themselves, then the limits of our accomplishments are endless.

Auditioning members will be evaluated on several criteria. First, and possibly most important, is attitude. An open mind, and an eagerness to learn might be the easiest things you can do to speed up your development as a musician. Keep in mind, we are looking not only for your abilities at the time of the audition, but also at how easy it will be to teach you. A student that is eager and does everything they can with the information given to them will learn very quickly. Second, and almost equally important, is preparation. We try to be as clear as possible as to the expectations for auditions. Students should feel free to contact the staff if there are any questions regarding those expectations. There is not much we can teach a student, however, if the material isn't fully prepared. The better you know the audition material, the more information we can give you on how to perform it better. In short, the more prepared you are, the faster you can learn. The third area in which a student will be evaluated is musical ability. We will look at technique, tempo control, rhythmic accuracy, quality of sound and confidence. All of these things are incredibly important to playing well, so in your preparation, you should take all of them into account. Lastly, we will look at improvement. Throughout the entire audition process, there will be opportunities for feedback. Each student will, of course, have things that we would like for them to work on. We will keep notes on each student, and assess their progress throughout the process. If, at any point during the process, a student would like more feedback from the staff, he or she should feel free to contact us via email.

The audition material will consist largely of exercises which will be used throughout the entire season. There are exercises which are specific to the battery, as well as ones who are specific to the front ensemble. With a large number of auditioning members this year, auditions will likely be very

competitive. It is a good idea to have a secondary instrument prepared. For instance, if a student auditions for tenors, and, after the individual audition, it is clear that that student will not make the tenor line, if he or she has already learned a bass drum part, the chances of that student earning a spot on the bass line increase because they do not have to learn an entirely new part. If a student does not prepare a secondary instrument, and we can not place them on their primary instrument, then that student has to learn an entirely different part and catch up with others who have spent the entire audition process on those instruments. All rising 8th graders are required to learn the front ensemble audition material.

We are very excited about the potential for this fall's percussion section. We look forward to getting started with the audition process, so that we can get started with learning the show. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to email me. Thank you, and good luck.

Regards,

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