



## **Taking It Indoors**

### *How to being a Winter Drumline Without Hardly Trying*

Winter drumline, indoor drumline, winter percussion...whatever you choose to call it, can be a valuable addition and asset to your band program. It gives students a performance outlet that differs from anything else they do throughout the year, offering them a chance at a percussion oriented theatrical experience that they can own all to themselves. This has proven to work wonders in building morale and a positive work ethic, not to mention increasing the number of interested students in the percussion program in general.

Other benefits include introducing students to new instruments. Some groups use their winter program to build their percussion section for the next year and initiate younger students. Many times, wind players want to join in the fun and experience percussion first hand, which tends to increase their rhythmic accuracy on their primary instrument.

An often overlooked benefit is winter drumline's ability to generate a winter guard program with the use of guard and dance in the drumline production.

### **How to Begin**

The process is very similar to developing a marching band program, only on a much smaller scale. Consider the following topics and you'll be off to an almost effortless start.

### **Personnel/Staff**

Utilize your current percussion staff. Technique does not vary greatly from marching so you should be able to use your same personnel.

### **Instrumentation**

Decide if your winter drumline is going to act as a continuation of your fall program or be a building block for the future seasons.

### **Music selection**

Almost anything goes in this activity. Have fun and be as creative as you can. The writing of the show is crucial, in that it differs from outdoor writing. You must find someone who knows how to write for the activity or purchase a show that has already been written or performed. This latter option is much less expensive and you have the peace of mind that the show "works."

### **Drill and Staging**

Again, marching technique is fairly universal. The possibilities for body movement,



dance, characterizations and choreography are unlimited. Be creative and have fun!

### **Rehearsal Schedules**

You must consider that your students are coming off a very demanding marching band season and are back into a “normal” routine with school, jobs, and family commitments. Therefore, rehearsals should be kept to a minimum with a well written show and organized staff. I suggest two weekend “camps” and then one rehearsal a week throughout the season.

The indoor drumline activity is very rewarding and a great deal of fun! Why not consider adding this to your program? Your students will have a ball and, best of all, you don’t have to go out in inclement weather!

*Written by Alan Keown, clinician, percussion specialist, teacher and arranger in the Pacific Northwest. Article previously appeared in Fanfare, Winter 2005.*