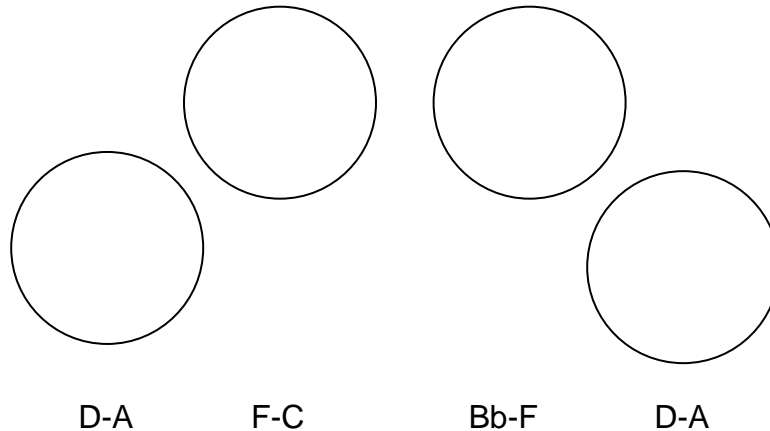


Timpani Tips

Tuning

- Hear the note. Use the ensemble's tuning pitch, tuning fork, piano, or mallet instrument.
- Start with pedal at bottom of timpani range. Strike lightly with mallet and move pedal up until you hear the pitch. Use your knowledge of the timpani ranges to find the pitch.
- Check pitch by playing the drum softly with mallet. Singing into drum will also work when drum is well tuned (a drum in tune will ring to your singing).

Ranges



Playing Area

Timpani have a “sweet spot” where the best sound is produced. Experiment to find the best sound from the drum. Near the edge the sound is thin and towards the center the sound becomes dead. The ideal spot is just a few inches in from the edge.

Technique

Your stroke will determine the quality of the sound. Use a relaxed, full motion to produce a long sound and a clear pitch. Because timpani are larger than a snare drum a bigger stroke is required to activate the full sound of the drum.

Rolls

The single stroke roll is used on timpani. Open or closed rolls are only used for special effects. The ideal roll speed varies depending on the pitch and range of the drum. Lower pitches require a slower roll speed than higher pitches. Experiment with roll speeds to find the ideal speed for each pitch. A roll that is too slow will sound like a rhythm and too fast will sound distorted. The ideal speed produces a smooth sustained sound.