

The Company of Fifers and Drummers Junior Fife and Drum Camp

Notes for Fifers

Welcome!

We'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Company of Fifers and Drummers Junior Fife & Drum Camp!

Since many drum corps instructors explain and teach things about the fife, fingerings and music a little differently, we thought it would be a good idea to give you some information before camp begins. It's important that we all speak a common language, so please read this over before you arrive.

Though this might seem like a lot of information to absorb, you don't need to memorize everything. These are just some of the things that we would like you to know so you can get the most out of camp. Don't worry if you don't understand all of it right away – your camp instructors will continually reinforce this information throughout the week.

Scales and Fingerings:

OK, this is the one area we actually *DO* want you to memorize. You should know the following scales and fingerings before you get to camp, and most of you probably know at least 3 out of the 4 scales already.

Please note: *The fingerings highlighted below are intended to provide the fife line with a uniform set of fingerings for camp purposes only. If your corps uses fingerings that are different from these, then you must use your corps' fingerings outside of camp when practicing or performing with your corps. All fingerings noted below are for 6-hole fifes only. For 10 or 11-hole fifes, please consult the fingering chart that came with your fife.*

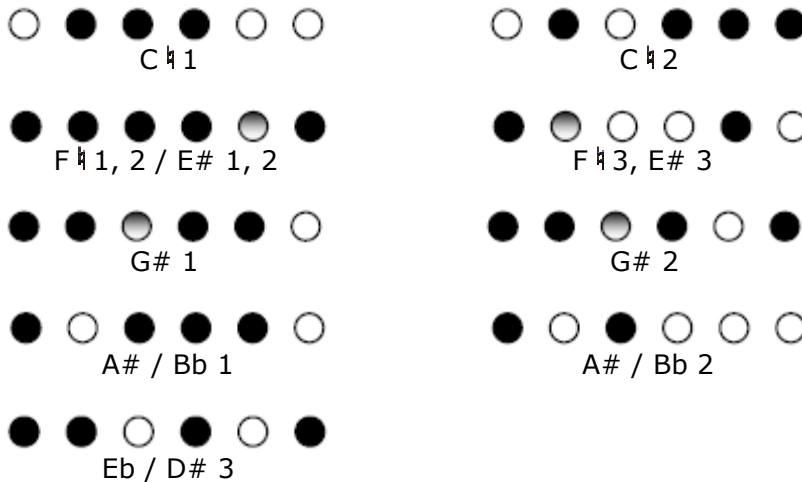
- **D Major** – The notes in this scale are: **D E F# G A B C# D**. This is the first scale everyone learns on the fife, and can be played in 2 full octaves (plus). The first octave is D1 – D2. D1 is the lowest note one can play on the fife, where all the finger holes are covered. Fifers have inconsistently referred to either D1 or D2 as *Low D*, so we won't use that terminology. The second octave is D2 – D3. You are probably used to reading D2 as the note directly below the staff. The D Scale contains F#'s (F *Sharps*) and C#'s, but there are no special fingerings to be concerned about.
- **G Major** – The notes in this scale are: **G A B C D E F# G**. The G Major Scale can also be played in 2 full octaves. The first octave is G1 – G2 and the second octave is G2 – G3. For this scale there are some fingerings we would like you to be aware of, since it contains C ♮'s (C *Naturals*) vs. the C #'s in the D Major Scale above. C ♮1 is to be fingered by covering holes 2, 3, 4, while C ♮2 is to be fingered by covering holes 2, 4, 5, 6. (See below.)
- **A Major** – The notes in this scale are: **A B C# D E F# G# A**. The A Major Scale can also be played in 2 full octaves. The first octave is A1 – A2 and the second octave is A2 – A3. The A Major Scale introduces the note G#, which can be a bit tricky. G#1 is to be fingered by covering holes 1, 2, [half-hole] 3, 4, 5. G#2 is to be fingered by covering holes 1, 2, [half-hole] 3, 4, 6. (See below.) G#3 uses the standard fingering – covering only the 3rd hole.
- **C Major** – There are no sharps or flats in this scale, every note is *natural*. The notes in this scale are: **C D E F G A B C**. In this scale we introduce the F ♮. Although the C Major Scale can technically be played in 2 full octaves, for camp purposes we will only focus on the octave C1 – C2. (In addition to the F2 in this octave, for our camp music you should also know the fingerings for F3.) F1 and F2 are both fingered the same, by

The Company of Fifers and Drummers

Junior Fife and Drum Camp

covering holes 1, 2, 3, 4, [half-hole] 5, 6. F3 is fingered by covering holes 1, [half-hole] 2, 5. (See below.)

- Notes have more than one name, e.g. A# / Bb (B *Flat*. (A# and Bb are identical in pitch, but are written differently according to the key in which they occur – they're *enharmonic equivalents*.) The same is true with Eb / D# and E# / F♯.
- **Special Fingerings:**



Notation:

As you review the fife music posted for this year's camp you'll notice that there are a lot of lines and notes above the staff that most of you have never dealt with before. These lines are called *ledger lines*. They might look intimidating, but they don't have to be. Let us explain.

Prior to the mid 1900's, the vast majority of fife literature lay easily within the range of D2 – B3 (an octave and a sixth) and very little music was written with the notes D1 – C#1. Up until that point the "tradition" typically relied on simple harmony lines (when there *was* harmony) and there were few fifers, if any, capable of playing with a rich tone or in tune below D2. Rather than use ledger lines, it was easier for fifers to adopt the custom of writing the music an octave lower than it actually is. Well, instruments have changed, fifers have adapted, and now we're able to exploit the full range of the instrument in our arrangements. Rather than write "8_{vb}" for those passages we want to be played in the first octave, some of today's fife music arrangers have adopted standard flute and piccolo notation, where D1 is the note directly below the staff and D2 lies within the staff on the 4th line. On the positive side, the notation is standard and there is never any confusion about which octave to play. The downside to this is that it's something new, a paradigm shift, for the general fife community to learn.

This year your camp music will come in three flavors: 1) all traditional fife notation (e.g. *Redwing / Golden Slippers*), 2) all standard notation (e.g. *The Erie Canal*), and 3) a hybrid approach that incorporates elements of both (e.g. *Liza's Cajun Frog Legs*). We're sure this won't be the last time you'll be exposed to standard notation, and while you may not become fluent at reading it during camp, you should at least come away with a rudimentary understanding of how to apply it today and in the future

Here are some tips to ease your transition. First of all, for the majority of the music that we've provided in standard notation, the *Fife I* part is also provided in traditional fife

The Company of Fifers and Drummers

Junior Fife and Drum Camp

notation as well (the "hybrid" approach). Since the *Fife I* parts usually require the most ledger lines, this should provide a measure of relief. For *Fife II - IV* (depending on the number of voices in the arrangement), you should think of transposing the music down an octave from where you would normally read it in traditional notation. Also for *Fife II - IV*, there may still be notes that go above B2 (above the staff) in standard notation, but there are less of them and they typically don't go as high as the *Fife I* parts.

Here are the scales for camp written in both traditional and standard notation:

D Major
D E F# G A B C# D

Fife Trad. Notation

Fife

G Major
G A B C D E F# G

Fife Trad. Notation

Fife

A Major
A B C# D E F# G# A

Fife Trad. Notation

Fife

C Major
C D E F G A B C

Fife Trad. Notation

Fife

If there are some notes above B2 that you have some trouble with, it's OK to write the name of the note on your music. In fact, you can write in the names of *all* the notes on your music, if needed (but if you do, we *hope* you'll sign up for the "Sight Reading" class!).

The Company of Fifers and Drummers

Junior Fife and Drum Camp

Phrasing:

In ensemble playing, phrasing is one key ingredient in making a talented group of *individuals* sound like a cohesive unit. Everybody could play the exact same notes with perfect intonation, but if the phrasing isn't uniform we still won't sound as good as we have the potential to. As you listen to the different corps perform at the Deep River Muster on Saturday, try to focus some of your attention on their phrasing.

Before we discuss phrasing, though, let us emphasize once more that we don't want you to worry about getting all of this down right away! You may not hit everything perfectly this year, but one of your goals should be to consciously think about your phrasing and how it matches up with the rest of the line.

Here are some important phrasing marks you'll notice in our music:

- To breathe or not to breathe, *that* is the question! Those "commas" (or "apostrophes") you see after certain notes in the music are actually breath marks, indicating that it's not only OK to breathe here – it's *expected* that you'll breathe here. You may have to cut the note *before* the breath mark shorter in order to get the breath in, which is fine. Usually, the breath mark denotes the optimal place to breathe. Other times it may just be the best place to breathe in order to make it through the next long passage where we may not want you to take a breath.



- In addition to breathing where the breath marks are noted, you should also feel free to take a breath whenever you have a rest, or if you have the opportunity to "sneak" a quick one in after a staccato note.

- OK then, what is "staccato"?* Staccato is a term used in music to designate that a note is to be cut short or played in a detached manner from the surrounding notes. We have a couple ways to mark this in the music. The first is the normal staccato mark, which is a dot above or beneath the note head. The second one is an upside down "V", which not only means play the note short, but *accent* it at the same time.



- The opposite of staccato is legato, which means to play the music in a smooth, even style without any noticeable break between the notes. In the camp music, always assume legato unless otherwise noted. This means that you should play each note for its full value. In this example, the half note G2 would release only *at* the downbeat of the following measure (where there also happens to be a rest where you can breathe, if needed...)



- If the upside down "V" indicates a short, accented note, what is that sideways "V" I just saw in the prior example?* That symbol indicates that you should accent the note, attacking it louder and stronger than the other notes. Since it's a sideways "V" vs. an upside down "V", the note should be played for its full duration.

- Dynamic Markings.** In some of the music you'll notice some fancy "*f*"s and "*p*"s, which are sometimes combined with other "*f*"s and "*p*"s – and maybe even a few "*m*"s thrown in for good measure. These markings are telling you how loud or soft to play. They're not absolutely critical, but see if you can try to play the music as the arranger heard it and would like you to interpret it.

Common Dynamic Markings	
ff.	fortissimo : very loud
f.	forte : loud
mf.	mezzo forte : moderately loud
mp.	mezzo piano : moderately soft
p.	piano : soft
pp.	pianissimo : very soft

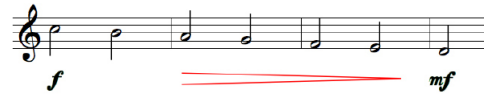
The Company of Fifers and Drummers

Junior Fife and Drum Camp

- Crescendo is a way of telling you to *gradually* increase the volume (get louder) of a particular phrase or passage. This can be designated with the word *crescendo* or with the crescendo symbol, consisting of two lines that start together at a point at the left and spread apart to the right. There is typically a dynamic marking at either end of the symbol indicating the desired volume before or after the crescendo.



- Decrescendo has the opposite dynamic effect of crescendo – it is a way of telling you to *gradually* decrease the volume of the specific passage. This can be designated with the word *decrescendo* or with the decrescendo symbol consisting of two lines that start apart at the left and come together to a point at the right.



Finally, in the finest ensembles in the world, every musician provides accompaniment at some point. This is true for string quartets to full orchestras. We will need strong fifers to cover all the voices, so please consider it a compliment if you're assigned to play harmony.

Will the world come to an end if I don't incorporate any of this stuff into my playing? No, we're pretty sure the world will still be here long after the 2008 Junior Fife and Drum Camp is over. These are a few of the things we will be working on during the camp. You may not be able to include all of these into your playing right away, but it would be great if you could begin to include whatever you can. If you come away knowing more than when you started the week, then we *all* will have been successful.

Like we said earlier, don't worry about learning or memorizing everything we've included in this letter. We want you to enjoy your time at camp while at the same time trying to improve your fife skills. Both are definitely achievable!

In The Ancient Spirit,

Your Fife Instructors