

Tuning Concepts For The Percussion Section

Concert Percussion: Snare Drum and Bass Drum by Steve Hearn

Remember the BIG THREE!

1. Sound-What is a good sound?
 - Think moderation. Not too tight. Not too loose.
2. Mechanics-What do I need to know to achieve a good sound?
 - See below – tuning is simple but necessary.
3. Maintenance-How do I keep this good sound once I get it?
 - Check tuning each month or at least at the beginning of each semester.

General Lug Tuning Order for all Drums – Always work across the head in opposites. This tightens the head as evenly as possible.



Concert Snare Drum

1. Begin with all tension rods loose.
2. Tighten all rods finger tight following lug tuning order.
3. With a drum key, tighten all rods 1/2 turn.
4. Repeat 4 times
5. Use a ruler and match distance from the top of the lug to the bottom of the counter hoop.
6. Seat (stretch) head by applying open palm hand pressure to head center and pressing with firm, short bursts.
7. Continue raising pitch in 1/2 turn increments until desired pitch is achieved.

Recommended Batter (Playing) Head Pitch:

- 13X4 = B - D#
- 14X4 = A - C
- 14X5 = G# - B
- 14X6.5 = G - A#
- 14X8 = F# - B
- 14X12 = E - G
- 16X16 = A# - C#

Recommended Snare Side (Bottom) Head Pitch:

- Perfect 4th or 5th higher than top head

8. Fine tune the pitch by lightly tapping the head near each lug.
9. Turn on snare strainer and slowly tighten snares while striking drum until a crisp snare response is achieved.



Concert Bass Drum

1. Begin with all tension rods loose.
2. Tighten all rods finger tight following lug tuning order.
3. With a drum key, tighten all rods 1/2 turn.
4. Repeat 4 times
5. Use a ruler and match distance from the top of the lug to the bottom of the counter hoop.
6. Seat (stretch) head by applying open palm hand pressure to head center and pressing with firm, short bursts.
7. Continue raising pitch in 1/2 turn increments until desired pitch is achieved.

Recommended Batter (Playing) Head Pitch: C - E

Recommended Resonant Side Head Pitch: (Several Options)

- 1/2 step higher than Batter Head
- Same pitch as Batter Head
- 1/2 step lower than Batter Head