

Drumset Cymbal Notation

by Norm Weinberg

Ten Helpful Hints for Drumset Cymbal Notation

- 1 Always include a legend, which illustrates all of the notational symbols used in the piece.
- 2 Cymbals should be written with "x" noteheads. This will help distinguish cymbal notes from notes for other instruments in the drumset. For notational values of a half-note or longer, the notehead should be an open diamond.
- 3 When the ride cymbal is written on the top line of the staff and the hi-hat cymbal is written on the first space above the staff, a clear distinction between those two instruments is possible.
- 4 If more than three crash cymbals are required, their staff positions should be above the second ledger line.
- 5 When specifying an exact type (splash, sizzle, China, etc.) or size of cymbal, include this information in the legend of the composition instead of creating a new notehead or articulation marking.
- 6 All hi-hat notes are assumed to be closed, this way only open hi-hat notes need an articulation sign. Closed hi-hat articulations should be included only if their use will clarify a passage.
- 7 If an open hi-hat note is followed by a closed hi-hat played with the stick, it isn't necessary to indicate the hi-hat closing with the foot.
- 8 All cymbals should be allowed to ring for the entire length of their natural decay unless written with the "choke" articulation. The articulation for "let ring" should be used only when it will make a passage more clear.
- 9 When indicating strokes played on the bell of the cymbal, the clearest indication is to write the word "bell" above the passage. If bell notes and normal notes change so often that text becomes cumbersome, use a pictogram of a cymbal with a stick striking the bell.
- 10 When creating new sounds for cymbals, create new articulation markings rather than using normal musical symbols in a new or contradictory manner.

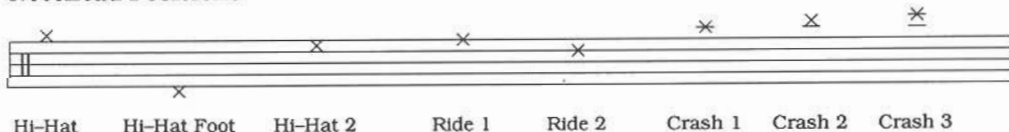


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Notehead Positions



Articulations



More information can be found in the *Guide to Standardized Drumset Notation*, published by the Percussive Arts Society, Inc., 701 N.W. Ferris Ave., Lawton, OK 73507