

tRio

A beginner drumline piece inspired by the energy and sound of Rio

tRio is written for beginner drumlines taking their first steps into ensemble playing. It is also a personal tribute to Rio de Janeiro - one of my favourite cities - and to the energy, colour and rhythmic excitement of Brazilian carnival.

About the piece

The piece introduces young players to the feeling of a drumline groove while keeping the material approachable and fun. It features a very common Brazilian-style call and response - the kind of rhythmic exchange you might hear during carnival - alongside some funky grooves that give the ensemble plenty of character.

How it develops

tRio begins almost like a warm-up, using an **8-on-a-hand** idea to settle the players, establish their sound and get everyone moving together. It then quickly develops into the main groove, giving beginners the chance to take familiar technical material and turn it into music.

Solo section - Letter C

The solo section at **Letter C** can be repeated as many times as needed so that every player who wants to can take a solo. During each solo, the rest of the drumline continues to play the written ensemble hits and stick clicks. This keeps the pulse and structure clear while giving each soloist a supportive framework in which to experiment.

For very new players, solos can be as simple as a favourite sticking pattern or rhythm. More confident players can improvise freely. The goal is participation, listening and confidence rather than complexity.

Sticking

All stickings are single-stroke rolls unless otherwise indicated in the score. Directors can encourage relaxed hands, consistent sound quality and an even flow between the hands.

Teaching focus	What players can explore
Technique	8-on-a-hand, single strokes, control and consistency
Ensemble skills	Listening, pulse, call and response, matching sound
Musicianship	Groove, dynamics, phrasing and rhythmic feel
Creativity	Improvisation and taking a short solo

Performance note

Above all, tRio should feel energetic and communal. Encourage the players to listen across the line, respond confidently to the calls, and let the groove breathe. It is designed to be an accessible first step into drumline performance - with a little taste of Rio along the way.