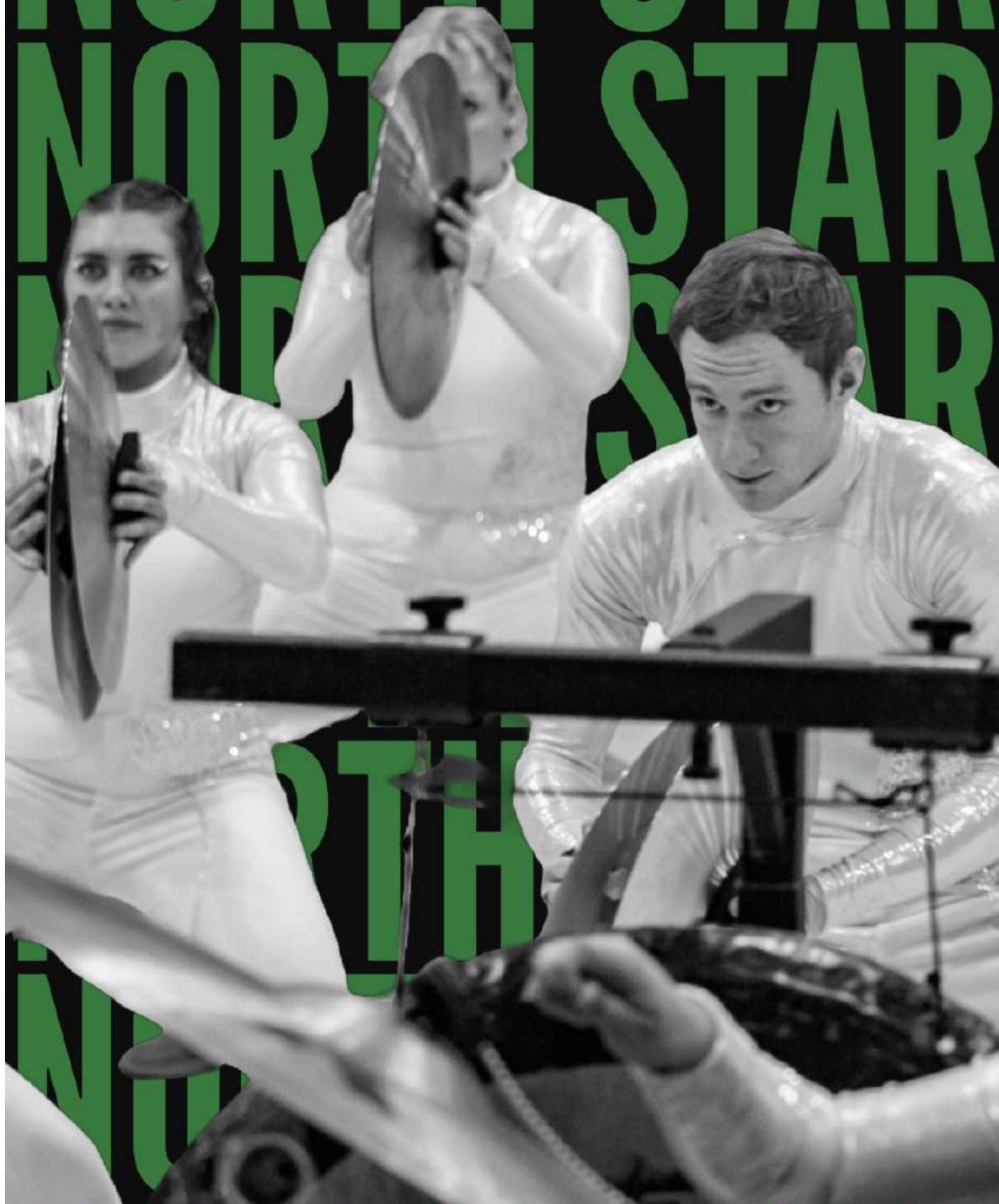


2025 CYMBALS AUDITION PACKET



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North Star Independent Cymbal Ensemble

Welcome! It takes a special kind of person to want to join the cymbal line. If you're reading this, it likely means you're someone who loves the "Work Hard, Play Hard" mentality. Playing cymbals in a marching ensemble is a rare skill set and art form. To earn the title "cymbalist," you must not only show skill in musicality —you must also demonstrate dedicated physical prowess and control. Your awareness of your body in space, as well as your physical strength and endurance, are very important. The cymbal line has a hybrid role. It's the best of both worlds between being in a visual ensemble and playing a musical instrument. That being said, sometimes the role of a cymbal player is to move props, perform supporting choreography, or direct the audience's attention to a specific focal point in the drill. We often have featured moments just like every other section, and enhance the overall story-telling of the show. If you are an enthusiastic, expressive performer, this is the place for you!

Please come to auditions with a great attitude, and some comfort performing the materials below. We will teach you!

REQUIRED PREREQUISITE:

Seavine Cymbal Education - <https://seavine.co/pages/education>

- **Please come to auditions with proficient skill in Chapters 1 and 2**
- **Novice understanding of the following lessons from Chapter 3: 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 14, 15**
- **Preferred knowledge: Chapter 4, lessons 1-5; Chapter 5, lessons 1-5**

The videos listed above are short, instructional demonstrations of foundational skills that the NSI Cymbal line most frequently uses. Following this progression will take you from total beginner level to a skilled A-Class cymbalist in a matter of weeks if you're willing to put the work and muscle into it! Coming prepared for the auditions with this background and common terminology sets the line up for rapid progress and success together. The faster everyone on the line has the basics solid, the sooner we can move on to complex visuals and fun choreography. We are only as strong as our weakest link!

Marching Cymbal Technique

Daniel Balls, Michaela Denning

Grabbing the Cymbals

When holding your cymbals, your index and middle fingers should be pushed together, which we will refer to as a finger gun. Your other two fingers and thumb should be spread apart as wide as they can comfortably be. This grip creates a reference line from your elbow to the tips of the finger gun.

Set

Both arms are extended at your side, with your elbows slightly bent. The knots of the cymbals should be positioned along the seam of your pants. Your presence is tall and elongated with balance and grace. Raise your chin up and pull your shoulders back for a broad chest.



Gumption

Both arms are extended in front of your chest, with your elbows slightly bent, think of the shape of a house rather than a triangle. The cymbals are at an angle similar to a seat belt, with the tops of your cymbals aligning with your left shoulder and the bottoms with your right hip. The cymbals are separated about 1- inch.



Vertical

Both arms are extended in front of your face, with your elbows slightly bent. The knots of the cymbal are about eye level and your biceps should be parallel to the ground. The cymbals should be perfectly vertical and straight with your body, you should be able to see a sliver of the back edge of the cymbals through the 1-inch separation.



Playing the Cymbals

Crash

Your right hand makes contact two inches from the edge of the left cymbal and will flam slightly while following through the crash.

At Horizontal, the crash has a quarter note prep. The prep brings the right hand into position by pulling back slightly towards the right shoulder, repositioning the cymbal to make contact two inches from the top of the left cymbal. The left arm will not move; however, the wrist will break, pushing the bottom of the left cymbal into the forearm. Contact will be made with the tips of your fingers, while the follow through will come from the palm of your hand.

At Vertical, the crash has a quarter note prep. The prep brings the cymbals to a “V” position, with the bottoms of the cymbals two inches apart. Contact is made with the bottom of the right cymbal, two inches from the bottom of the left cymbal with the palm of your hand. The follow through comes from the tips of the fingers, pushing the cymbals back into an “A” position.

Crash Choke

This sound is played exactly like a crash, except immediately after the crash is played, you mute the cymbals completely. The object of a crash choke is to be short. Maximize contact on the cymbals to stop them from vibrating.

At Horizontal, the cymbals are dampened on your torso, with the knots near the bottom of your rib cage, covering as much of the cymbal with your body and arms. The cymbals are about two inches apart from each other, making an arrowhead shape on your torso.

At Vertical, the cymbals are dampened on your biceps and chest between your pectoral muscles and biceps. The cymbals will make an “A” with the tops two inches apart from each other. The bottoms will be slightly wider than shoulder width apart following the natural angle to your arms set.

Open Tap

Depending on where contact is made and how much force is applied, you can create different timbres and volumes. A tap is typically played at vertical from the A-prep position. Your right wrist pulls back, bringing the right cymbal away from the left. The right cymbal then strikes the left cymbal, making contact two inches inside the right cymbal.

Punch

Start in tap position. This is the same as the choke position for the horizontal crash choke. To prep, allow the left hand to come off the body and rotate the right hand to be parallel with it. Strike the edge of the left cymbal with the right cymbal, making contact about two inches inside the edge. Immediately return to tap position to mute the cymbals.

Suc

This sound is created when the right cymbal pulls into the left cymbal, creating an air pocket and locking both cymbals together. This causes a low, bass-like “thump” sound.

Sizz

This sound is created when both cymbals vibrate on each other. When equal pressure is applied by both cymbals, the cymbals will create a hissing sound. Make sure not to press them together with excess force. There is no prep for this implement.

Sizz-Suc

This sound combines the last two implements together. From a size (in either position), you will move towards the suc prep position while maintaining the sizz sound.

At Horizontal, the prep for this implement is directly forward with the right hand. You will pull straight back, applying pressure with the palm of your right hand in order to trap air in between both cymbals.

At Vertical, the prep will follow a 45-degree angle away from your face instead of straight forward.

Crunch

Simply press both cymbals together, squeezing your pectoral muscles to create a very short sound. There is no prep for this implement.

Zing

This sound is caused by pulling the edge of one cymbal across the grooves of the other cymbal. Typically played at the horizontal position, the right cymbal opens up like a book to a 90-degree angle. Contact is made near the bell of the left cymbal with the bottom of the right cymbal. The right cymbal then pulls to the edge of the left cymbal towards your right hip and then resets back to horizontal.