

2006 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Conference
Thursday, March 30

“15 Tips for Playing the Drumset Musically”

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- 1) Use the Correct Equipment (drums, heads, cymbals, percussion, sticks, rods, brushes)
- 2) Use the Equipment Correctly (tuning, technique, set-up)
- 3) Know the Style, Play the Style (for example Samba vs. “latin”; shuffle vs. “jazz”)
- 4) Listen (to form, style, feel, timbre; to other players and parts in the band – esp. bass; to recordings)
- 5) Play melodically (phrasing; create and practice short melodies on the drums; rests are music, too)
- 6) Sing what you’re playing; play what you’re singing (internalize the music and the feel)
- 7) Look, listen, and communicate (play the music, not the drum part – and stop staring at it)
- 8) Play the drums (don’t play the trumpet or sax part, play one that makes their parts sound better)
- 9) Make the band play better (don’t compete, especially for space or volume; cued notes are not played notes)
- 10) Transcribe others; record yourself
- 11) Play with other musicians often (small group, duo; play with music - not books and metronomes)
- 12) Play with good feel (concentrate on it; dynamically balanced); play with good time (don’t fixate on it; dynamically consistent)
- 13) Fills and Solos (play those that are consistent with the feel and tempo; don’t play on top of others)
- 14) Take the concept of the soloist, arranger, and composer (not your own)
- 15) Play inside the volume of the band (not louder)

Marc Dicciani is Director of the School of Music at The University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and a Professor of Drumset and Music Business. He has performed with many artists and entertainers including Randy Brecker, Joey DeFrancesco, Jon Faddis, Robin Eubanks, Pat Martino, Christian McBride, Kurt Elling, Phil Woods, Clark Terry, Jimmy Bruno, John Fedchock, Gerald Veasley, Peter Nero, Sammy Davis Jr., Mel Torme, Natalie Cole, Frank Sinatra, and Ben Vereen, and worked on recording sessions in L.A. with Doc Severinsen, James Moody, Ernie Watts, Stevie Wonder, and Lee Ritenour. He has conducted countless clinics at colleges across the country and in Europe, Mexico, Canada, and South America, and at conferences for IAJE, PMEA, NJMEA, Philadelphia Grammy in the Schools, and teaches the nation’s only drumset course for music educators at Villanova University each summer. Marc is an artist/clinician for Yamaha Drums, Sabian Cymbals, Regal Tip Drum Sticks, Remo Drum Heads, and writes for Modern Drummer Magazine.