Music for Beginning Conductors

Free Online Supplement

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Introduction

This anthology, with music and teaching guides, is designed so that beginning conductors, both choral and instrumental, will be able to develop fundamental skills of communication through gestures—these skills being in the categories of expression, function, and technique.

Expression is first, and of primary consideration, in that conductors should have artistic ideas about the music they wish to relate to ensembles; conductors should have concepts of expression.

Function, which consists of transmitting matters such as rhythmic activity and phrasing, is the next category—the functions transmitted by the conductor being of considerable aid to ensembles in their accomplishment of rhythmic cohesion.

Technique consists of grammatical elements of conducting such as tempo, articulation, and volume—these gestures aiding the conductor in the communication of expression and function, just as grammar in speech aids one in verbal communication. As such, the beat patterns of conducting should always convey qualities of expression and function, and therefore, beat patterns should be taught *after*, not *before*, the conductor has, and desires to communicate, specific ideas of musical expression.

To aid in the development of expression, function, and technique, the music in the anthology consists mostly of folk songs and other familiar melodies that beginning conductors can identify with and that have perceptible qualities of expression. Basic suggestions—that include tempo, phrasing, volume (dynamic levels), and rhythmic articulation—are presented following each piece, although these are only suggestions. Student conductors should feel free to convey each piece of music as it seems natural to them and as best suits the needs and circumstances of the responding ensemble.

Also to aid in gestural communication, all the pieces are accessible in terms of melody, rhythm, and harmony, thus allowing the music to be read with relative ease and, therefore, allowing students to focus on conducting rather than on learning pitches and rhythms. In addition, the music is accessible in terms of scoring and flexible in terms of performance: the pieces at the beginning of the anthology have been arranged so that they can be performed as unaccompanied melodies, as melodies with keyboard accompaniment, or as a combination of melodies and accompaniment. Furthermore, all the pieces in the anthology can be performed with minimal resources, whether vocal, instrumental, or both. And with numerous pieces of music, the students can work independently of each other, which is recommended so that students do not mimic or conform to each other. Developing confidence that an ensemble's response is the direct result of a conductor's gestures is critical for the beginning conductor.

For an effective development of skills, the music is organized in technical or generic categories that address issues from simple to more complex, starting with pieces in standard meters that begin on the downbeat, and progressing to pieces in standard meters that begin on beats other than the downbeat, pieces in standard meters that begin between beats, pieces in meters requiring extended beat patterns, pieces in mixed meters, canons, pieces for two independent voice parts, chorales with fermatas, and pieces for four independent voice parts.

Because the intent of the anthology is to facilitate conducting skills, most of the music is in English. However, there are several pieces in Latin and German as well, and although literal translations are provided, it is strongly recommended that these pieces be sung in their original language, this since much of the music the choral conductor will encounter—the great repertoire of Western culture—is in a language other than English. Moreover, there is a considerable wealth of repertoire, generally referred to as World Music, in languages from around the globe.

Finally, in order to broaden the experiences of students, the music consists of a wide range of repertoire set in a diversity of meters and keys. That is, meters such as 3/8, 9/8, 3/2, and 6/4 are included with standard 4/4 and 3/4 in early pieces, and meters such as 5/4 and 7/8 are included in later pieces. Also, key signatures include the less common D-flat, E-flat, and A-flat Major along with the standard C, D, E, F, and G.

In order for the beginning conductor to develop gestures that communicate desired elements of music—that use gestures as the primary source of communication, with verbalization only as a reinforcement—it is imperative that the conductor believes in the communicative ability of gestures, and that the gestures, in the form of beat patterns, contain elements of expression and function.

To accomplish this, it is recommended that the students first participate in group exercises that connect hand gestures with expressive qualities—exercises that are eurythmic in nature (actual eurythmics would be ideal) and that convey specific qualities of smoothness, sharpness, lightness, and heaviness. Following this, individual students can attempt to convey qualities that the other students can endeavor to detect and describe. After this, these exercises, both group and individual, can progress to include qualities of mood (i.e., happiness and sadness), tempo, and articulation.

Once established as a means of communication, the responding students (both choral and instrumental) can be assigned spoken syllables (consonants and vowels) that mimic the gestural qualities, and the gestures can be organized into simple patterns of down-up (2/4), down-out-up (3/4), and down-in-out-up (4/4)—the patterns always communicating qualities of expression.

Function is next as the students indicate a connection of some syllables to others or rests that separate syllables. And to indicate success in the communication of functions, the students can attempt to convey rhythmic passages through gestural rhythmic dictation. The functions, along with expression, can then be applied to actual musical examples. And following this, the students are ready to apply expression, function, and technique in pieces from the anthology assigned to or chosen by them—chosen being preferred since it furthers the student conductor's commitment to gestural communication.

The goal is that the beginning conductor will have the ability to transmit expressive ideas and functional matters through gestures, thus causing a responding ensemble to have reason to watch the conductor and discern the meaning of the gestures. Communication will be primarily through gestures, *not* through verbalization.

Guidelines for Teachers and Students

Philosophies

Conducting is a language of communication, and as such, information is transmitted from one entity (a conductor) to another (an ensemble) through a system of signals (hand gestures). These gestures are comparable to elements of grammar in spoken languages. However, the gestures of conducting are different from speech in that conducting is not generally taught to communicate desires and ideas, as is the case with verbal communication. Conducting, instead, is generally taught to observe rules of gestural grammar (i.e., beat patterns), and therefore, the communication of desires and ideas is often overlooked and absent from gestures.

It is critical, however, that conducting *does* communicate desires or ideas for a number of very important reasons. First, comprehending and appreciating the communicative power of conducting is a strong motivation for the development and mastery of the gestural language. If a conductor believes that conducting gestures can truly relay information, the conductor has the desire to perfect the language and use it efficiently, while on the other hand, if there is disbelief or even doubt about the ability of gestures to communicate, there is a corresponding lack of desire to utilize or develop the language. Instead of using gestures to communicate—instead of working to develop their efficiency—a conductor will resort to other means of communication, usually verbal.

Second, conducting should be motivated by the desire to communicate. That is, conductors should have information they wish to relay through gestures. Desire to communicate is why anyone learns a language. Consequently, conducting is much more than making patterns in the air. Conducting is also much more than indicating elements of music-making such as tempo, articulation, volume, and phrasing. Conducting is a vital means of communicating the essence of music, which is the reason behind elements such as tempo, phrasing, etc. Therefore, with this in mind, conducting communicates not so much the factual particulars of music, but the expressive causes for the particulars—the moods or sentiments that give the particulars their reason for being. Conducting indicates *how* a tempo, volume, or articulation should be produced, not merely *that* it should be produced. Consequently, when a conductor gives a gestural cue to a chorister or instrumentalist, the gesture should not indicate merely the *now* of an attack (as in “sing or play now”). The gesture, instead, should indicate the *how* of the attack (as in “this is how you should sing or play now”).

Third, as a specialized language, one governing sound that moves through time, conducting communicates many elements of music better than speaking about them. For instance, gestures can guide the numerous minor fluctuations of tempo and volume which occur in a piece of music better than words can explain them. Gestures are also more effective than words at indicating the qualities and varieties of articulation that are often so integral to the expression of a composition. Talking about the expression is too nebulous; one person's idea of an adjective (e.g., "gentle" or "majestic") is different from another person's idea. And one person's reaction to a request for

"gentle" or "majestic" is also different from another person's reaction. But an entire ensemble, being given no words from the conductor, can see and sense specific expressions and can react to nuances of them. With conducting gestures as focal points, there is much greater opportunity for unity of tempo, volume, articulation, and expression than there is with explanations through words. Thus, conductors should comprehend that they can best communicate through gestures—that gestures can communicate better than words.

Fourth, the language of gestural conducting is based upon rules that aid in communication. Conducting has grammar, and just as verbal communication is not merely a jumble of sounds or a random mixture of adverbs, nouns, and conjunctions, gestural communication is not a jumble of motions or a random mixture of beat patterns. Beat patterns and other aspects of motion are used in systematic ways to facilitate communication, and the better one has command of the grammar, generally speaking, the better one is able to communicate. Consequently, all the grammatical aspects of conducting ought to be used consistently, even though these grammatical aspects are not the purpose of conducting. Conductors do not communicate beat patterns any more than speakers communicate nouns and verbs. Verbal grammar is used to facilitate the communication of ideas, and similarly, beat patterns are used to aid in the communication of qualities of tempo, volume, articulation, and expression, with the rules of grammar never separated from their purposes. Indeed, the purposes should be first and the grammar second both in consideration and in teaching. A beginning conductor should learn beat patterns only as a means of expression. Beat patterns should not be taught or used as separate entities.

Fifth, conducting is based on natural physiological phenomena. This is to say that the motions or gestures of conducting are derived from situations common in nature. A gesture to indicate soft looks soft as compared to a gesture to indicate loud. A gesture to indicate the lengthening of a consonant such as "m" or consonant cluster such as "sh" naturally takes more time than a gesture to indicate a consonant such as "t" or "p." Even the design of beat patterns reflects the general metric stress of music—an important aspect of much repertoire a conductor will encounter. Because of the natural physiology of conducting gestures, then, the language of conducting is not difficult for people to comprehend. Indeed, it doesn't matter whether members of an ensemble have had musical training or not. The language of gestures is intuitive enough to be understood by all, singers and instrumentalists, amateurs and professionals. Choral and instrumental conducting are, therefore, both the same in terms of their basic grammar of communication. Only nuances of facilitation are different (i.e., aiding a horn entrance as opposed to aiding a soprano entrance).

Sixth, conducting, like other languages, takes application and time to develop. When one begins to learn to speak, for instance, one has limited ability to communicate, and that initial ability is rudimentary and awkward; competence of speaking comes through regular usage over a period of time. Likewise, when one begins to learn to conduct, one is limited; nuances and complexities of communication occur only after continued use. Conducting, likewise, must be practiced and treated as a physical activity comparable to that engaged in by other musicians. That is, the physical act of conducting should be as practiced as the physical acts of a pianist or clarinetist (much like those of ballet dancers, golfers, and swimmers)—all their body motions developing and achieving

excellence by practicing. One immediately reasons, however, that the analogy is weak since conductors don't have ensembles readily at hand as the pianist has a piano, the clarinetist a clarinet, etc. True, but gestures can and should be a part of score study, which is to say that the mental activity of study should be combined directly to the physical activity of conducting, thus making the mental physical. Practice is imperative since conducting will not develop sufficiently—the conductor will not gain sufficient skills and will not have the desire to use the language of conducting—without practice.

Conductors rely too much on verbalization, and thus in contrast, too little on conducting. Conducting skills are therefore often underdeveloped and limited in their effectiveness. While unfortunate, the situation is understandable in that conductors learn and become proficient in the art of verbal communication long before that of conducting. Moreover, conductors do not have the opportunity to practice conducting as they do speaking, and in addition, conductors generally feel the need to speak to their ensembles—to explain why a certain tempo or volume level is desirable or to give analogies that will, somehow, be convincing or meaningful to singers or players. Mostly, however, conductors do not value the communicative power of conducting and do not, therefore, take the time or make the effort to develop gestural skills to a level of comfort and efficiency. But this can change if conductors comprehend and appreciate the language of conducting and, because of this mindset, develop the gestural skills necessary to communicate effectively and reap the many rewards that the gestural language of conducting provides.

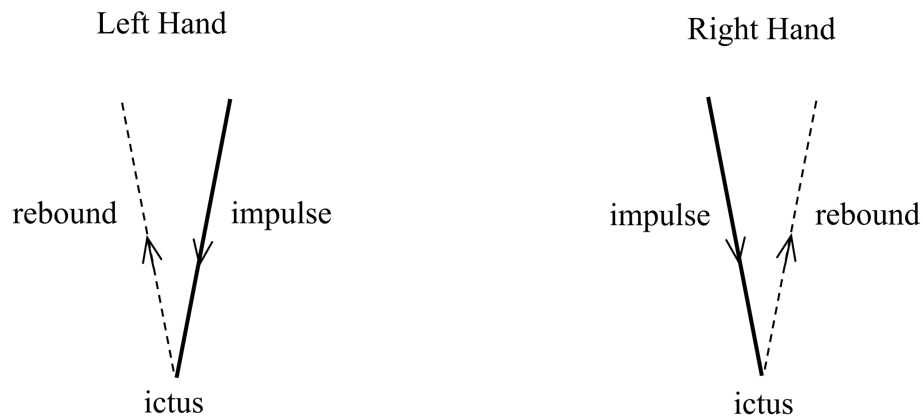
In summary, the conductor should combine expression, function, and technique into one unified language of communication, not forsaking one for the other and working to ensure that gestures are an effective language of communication.

Procedures for the Development of Expression

To establish a foundation of gestural communication, it is helpful if the beginning conductor participates in group exercises that connect body motions with expressive qualities—exercises that are eurythmic in nature (actual eurythmics would be ideal) and that convey specific qualities of smoothness, sharpness, lightness, and heaviness as well as motivating moods such as cheerful, despondent, excited, pensive, and majestic. To accomplish this, the students can form a circle and move around in steps, using their bodies to emulate and convey specific qualities, and/or they can stand in a circle, facing inward, and pretend to bounce various sizes and textures of a ball in the manner of the specific qualities. Following this, to better assess communication, individual students can attempt to convey qualities that the other students can endeavor to detect and describe.

To relate the bouncing motion to conducting, the teacher should describe the components of the motions, explaining that each beat is comprised of an *impulse*, *ictus*, and *rebound*—the *impulse* being the motion that leads to and creates the *ictus*, the *ictus* being the point in the air that indicates exactly the inception of each beat and sound, and the *rebound* being the motion that releases the sound on that beat or that moves the sound from one beat to the next.

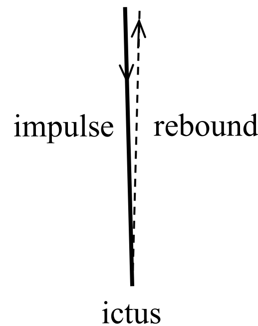
In the illustration below, the *impulse* is shown as a solid line and the *rebound* is shown as a dotted line—the direction of down and up depending upon the hand giving the beat.



Further explanation can help the beginning conductor formulate an effective hand posture, one that has the heel of the hand, with or without a baton in it, thrusting rapidly downward to the *ictus* and then rebounding just as rapidly. The formation of the hand, while not rigid, does not change during this process. The *ictus* is indicated by the heel of the hand, not the fingers. If the hand is empty, it remains in a cupped position. If the conductor is holding a baton, the baton remains at a level plane; the baton does not dip to indicate the *ictus*. The baton is an extension of the hand and arm and should not move independent of them. The wrist should be flexible and should move freely, especially from side to side.

Choral conductors usually conduct with an empty hand while orchestral conductors usually conduct with a baton. The general reason for this is that the open hand is considered to be more conducive to what most vocalists would refer to as an open and free vocal production. Also, the open hand is a direct human form of communication, just as vocal production is a direct human form of music making; there are no barriers or obstacles. The baton is, by its look, sharper and thus more conducive to an incisive beat generally preferred by instrumentalists. In addition, the baton is an implement to the conductor as an instrument is to an instrumentalist, and the baton can be seen more easily than an open hand by the musicians of an orchestra, who are often at a considerable distance from the conductor. Regardless of these conditions, there are choral conductors who regularly use a baton and there are orchestral conductors who conduct with an open hand. The choice is up to the conductor. However, traditions carry with them expectations, and one is often best served by working within those traditions. Vocalists generally expect to sing for and thus will likely relate better to a conductor who conducts with an open hand, while instrumentalists generally expect to play for and will likely relate better to a conductor who uses a baton. The process of communication is, therefore, more efficient if choral conductors conduct with an open hand and orchestral conductors conduct with a baton.

With or without a baton, the student can progress from bouncing an imaginary ball in a simple up-and-down motion (with a specific speed and character) to motions that are in the standard conducting patterns. It should be clarified, however, that the one-pattern is slightly different than the beat illustrated above in that the beat of the one-pattern starts and stops at the same location.



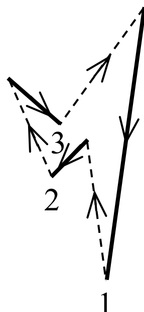
The two-pattern combines the one-pattern shown above with a subsidiary beat, and since the two-pattern shows a downbeat and an upbeat, it is important that the *ictus* of the upbeat is at a higher plane in the air than the downbeat—the differentiation of planes helping to keep both conductor and performers organized, and, of course, the differentiation showing the general qualities of a two-beat measure (2/4, 2/2, or 6/8).

Left Hand

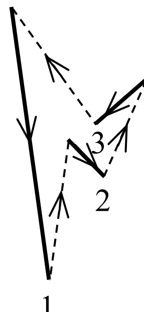
Right Hand

The three-pattern has downward, outward, and upward beats. The first, or downbeat, is identical to that of the two-pattern, the second beat moves out or away from the body, and the third beat moves upwards, with an *ictus* at a higher plane than the others.

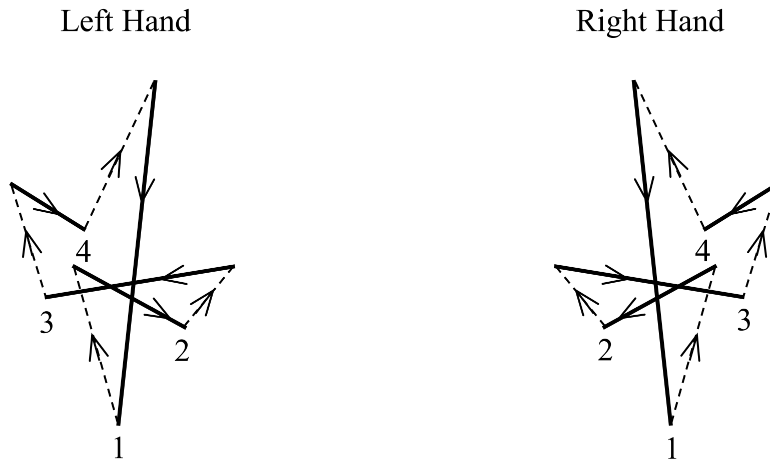
Left Hand



Right Hand



The four-pattern has downward, inward, outward, and upward beats. The first or downbeat is always the same, the second beat moves inward toward the center of the body, the third moves outward, and the fourth upward. The inward motion on beat two followed by an outward motion on beat three is important in that it shows the general emphasis of beat three as compared to that of beat two.



Since beat patterns were devised at a time when people were often right-handed (naturally or by force), the patterns have traditionally been given with the conductor's right hand, and because of this tradition, performers expect it. This is not critical when conducting a choir with an open hand. However, when conducting an instrumental ensemble with a baton, the direction of the beats from left to right, or right to left, *is* critical since the directions of beats can be distracting to players glancing up from their music.

But, the issue of left or right-handed conducting is not as simple as using one hand or the other. Both hands are normally engaged in the activity of conducting. Sometimes both hands mirror each other, which is logical since using both hands looks and feels balanced if an ensemble is spread out in front of the conductor or if the entire ensemble is equally active. Also, sometimes it is comfortable to use the left hand instead of the right—for instance if the sound source is on the extreme left side of the conductor. And sometimes, if the musical activity in the ensemble goes from one side to the other, it is logical to go from one hand to the other. Developing an ambidextrous ability is quite helpful. So, while the conducting should be predominately generated from the right hand, the left hand should be utilized when needed or desired—all factors of function and expression communicated through the beat pattern, whether shown by the right hand, left hand, or both hands. One hand should never conduct a disengaged beat pattern while the other conducts an expression.

Procedures for the Development of Function

Rhythmic function refers to the relative motion or stasis, activity or inactivity of the beats in music—each beat (always still conveying qualities of expression) demonstrating one of the following functions: 1) preparation for the inception of sound—the preparation usually a breath, whether vocal or instrumental, and the inception of sound usually called an attack; 2) an actual attack; 3) a carry-over or connection of sound from one beat to another; 4) activity between beats, called an offbeat; 5) preparation for the release of sound—preparation for a cutoff; 6) release of sound—a cutoff; and 7) no rhythmic activity on or off the beat—called a marked or dead beat.

The *preparation* gesture, which negates the need for verbal instruction, is generally given on the beat before sound occurs, either at the beginning of a piece or at the beginning of a phrase. The preparation beat must be in the tempo of the ensuing music and also must exhibit qualities of the ensuing volume and articulation. In addition, it should aid performers in the production of their sound. In the case of singers, this gesture should reflect the quality of breath intake. In the case of instrumentalists, it should reflect the mechanics of the instrument being played (e.g., a bow on a string or a beat of a drum).

The rhythmic activity or *attack* gesture replicates the preparatory gesture, reinforcing the indication of tempo, volume, and articulation. The *ictus* of this gesture should directly reflect the quality of rhythm of the music on this beat. The only difference between the attack and preparatory gesture is in function—the preparatory gesture often indicates a breath, while the rhythmic activity gesture reflects the inception of sound—and also in the *rebound* of the beat, which in the attack gesture reflects the quality of the ensuing beat.

The *carry-over* gesture guides the rhythm from one beat to the next, and since there is no rhythmic activity on this beat, there is no emphasized *ictus*. Instead, the conductor glides through the *ictus*. The *rebound*, then, moves the sound to the next beat's function.

The *offbeat* gesture reflects no rhythmic activity on the ensuing beat, but after it. To show this, the *rebound* of the previous beat moves easily to the *ictus* of this beat (thereby showing that there is no activity on the beat), the *ictus* of the beat shows the volume and articulation of the ensuing offbeat, and the *rebound* of the beat is fast (basically as fast as the offbeat rhythm is short).

The *preparation for release* gesture shows that the sound is coming to an end. To indicate this and to control the precision of the release of sound (which frequently is a consonant such as “t” or “s” that must occur at precisely the same time by all performers), the conductor stretches the *rebound*. This stretch is akin to that of elastic, which by nature of the stretching builds a degree of tension that prepares or signals the performers that a release is imminent.

The *cutoff* gesture releases sound. The *ictus* reflects the sharp or smooth quality of the vowel, consonant, or consonant cluster, and the *rebound* reflects the cessation of sound by showing a release of arm tension and by moving away from the ensemble.

The *marked* gesture is totally inactive and, since it is utilized for beats that are completely filled with silence, it shows that there is no activity either on or off the beat. This marked gesture must exist; it cannot be deleted. However, it is small and without energy.

The seven rhythmic functions are shown in the music example below.

Mournful ♩= 60

prep 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 cut off

prep is the breath, which is on the beat (beat four) that theoretically precedes the beginning of the music. This breath should emulate an actual breath—the elbows expand from the body and the hand indicates an *ictus*, sufficiently incisive, to bring an ensemble of singers or instrumentalists in together with a quality indicated at the beginning of the music (in this case mournful). The size and weight of this preparation gesture should also reflect the intended volume of the attack.

1 is the inception of the sound that shows rhythmic activity. The *ictus* indicates the desired quality of articulation and volume.

2 is a carry-over since there is no rhythmic activity on the beat; it is merely a continuation of the downbeat or a connection between beats one and three. Consequently, the conductor's motion should show smoothness between beat one and the upcoming beat three, moving through beat two without interrupting the continuing sound.

3 through 7 show rhythmic activity and should have gestures that indicate the quality of this activity.

8 is an offbeat function and indicates that there is no activity on the beat, but after it. To show this, the conductor moves easily into the beat (beat four of the second measure), then gives a fast *ictus* and *rebound*, suspending the motion at the end of the rebound until it is time to move to the next beat.

9 shows rhythmic activity and is, therefore, like the other active beats.

10 and 11 are carry-overs.

12 is a preparation for release, which prepares for the *cutoff*. In so doing, the conductor emulates a motion that looks like stretching the *rebound*, somewhat like elastic, following that with an *ictus* that releases the tone in the same soft mournful character that began the melody.

cutoff is theoretically on beat one of what would be the next measure.

In developing the ability to conduct the rhythmic functions in music, students should isolate the various functions and develop skill at communicating them, beginning with exercises that contain only a few simple functions and progressing to exercises that contain all the functions. The following exercises are illustrative. In each of the exercises, all students should sing or play and conduct simultaneously, positioned in a circle for eye contact with each other. Individuals should then conduct, one at a time, while the remainder of the students sing or play. In order to continue developing skill at attaching mood or character to each gesture, the choral conductors should decide on a consonant and vowel for each exercise while the instrumental conductors should decide on a quality of articulation. All conductors should vary the tempos and dynamic levels so as to make their communication somewhat individual. In communicating mood, the conductors should adjust their gestural expressions as needed, *without verbalization*, in order to align their intentions with those of the sounds they hear.

Rhythmic Function Exercises

Phrasing (i.e., pauses that separate sections of music) is also an important function that the conductor should demonstrate in gestures—important because pauses or stoppages occur frequently in virtually all music and because their coordination or execution is considered to be one of the main ingredients of performance. To accomplish this most effectively, the conductor should realize that gestures derive from natural phenomena. First, since a phrase indicates a pause in music, the phrase is shown with a pause in the gesture; a stop of sound is reflected by a stop in motion. Second, since stops need preparation (what one might refer to as braking, as in the slowing of motion by an automobile or bicycle before coming to a stop), the phrasing gesture is prepared by a lessening of motion, thus indicating that a stop is imminent. Third, since phrasing pauses are measured in rhythmic values (an entire beat, a half of a beat, or a distinct shorter portion of a beat), the gestures reflect this durational value exactly. Fourth, since phrasing pauses are of different types (periods, commas, colons, exclamation points, etc.), the gestures reflect the various qualities with degrees of emphasis and finality. Fifth, since pauses result in breaths by singers or slur endings by instrumentalists, the gesture displays this function.

Phrasing pauses are often not indicated in the rhythmic notation of a composition. Musicians surmise phrases by the melodic, harmonic, and textual content of music. In the example below, for instance, anyone singing or playing this song will breathe in several locations not marked in the music. Performers will simply interpolate rests where none are actually marked; the whole notes in the fourth, eighth, and twelfth measures of the example will become dotted half notes.

Down in the mea - dow dai - sies shine so bright;

5
down in the mea - dow birds take their flight.

9
Nat - ure's sweet boun - ty fills us with glad - ness,

13
flows through our spi - rits and our souls with de - light!

To indicate these phrasing pauses, the conductor minimizes the size of the conducting gesture as the music approaches the pause, thus showing that a pause is imminent (i.e., there should be minimal motion on beat two of measures four, eight, and twelve). On the beat directly before the pause (beat three), the conductor indicates a *preparation for release* function. This is followed by a *preparation* (breath) function on the beat of the pause (beat four). Note that there would be no actual *cutoff* function. The *preparation for release* function is followed immediately by the *preparation* function, which effectively creates the cutoff.

Procedures for the Development of Technique

Technique here refers to the conductor's ability to use gestures consistently and efficiently so that an ensemble can recognize and respond quickly to gestural communication. This response is due, in large part, to the universal or standardized properties of technique. Gestural technique is both choral and instrumental, and its universality is such that it is recognized by everyone, no matter their manner of making music. Conducting is conducting, whether it communicates with amateurs or professionals, youth or adults.

To establish the technique, the conductor must first practice and think of the practice as do all other performers and athletes (e.g., singers, clarinetists, ballet dancers, swimmers, and golfers).

But the process for conductors is different in that the practice should begin with and be an integral part of score study. And to facilitate the conductor's mindset and process, the conductor should not think of the score as existing on a printed page but instead as a three-dimensional arrangement of performers in a rehearsal room or performance stage. That is, the standard choral score for sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses, with the parts as they appear on the page from top to bottom (as seen on the left below) should be visualized as existing in the seating or standing arrangement of the singers (a representation of which is seen on the right below, with the basses behind the sopranos and the tenors behind the altos).

Score		
Soprano		
Alto	Basses	Tenors
Tenor	Sopranos	Altos
Bass		

Similarly, the orchestral conductor should visually transfer the parts as arranged on a score to the parts as they would be arranged while rehearsing or performing, for example,

Percussion
Horns   Trumpets   Trombones & Tuba
Clarinets   Bassoons
Flutes   Oboes
Second Violins   Cellos & Basses
First Violins   Violas
Conductor

While looking at the parts on the score, the conductor should have a mental image of where those parts are located when they are being sung or played. If the choir or orchestra is familiar, the conductor can actually visualize the faces of the singers and instrumentalists (e.g., the face of the principal flutist or of the concertmaster). The visualization then helps to establish a physical connection between conductor and singer/player and greatly aids in the communication process that will take place during rehearsals and performances; the conductor is, at the outset of score study, beginning to build a communication rapport with the singers/players and eventual eye contact that is so important while actually rehearsing and performing. Furthermore, visualization of performers while studying produces a minute form of physical activity in that the eyes of the conductor, as well as incipient gestures, while still fixed on the score, make subtle motions in the assumed direction of the singers or players. These motions should then reveal technical elements of the music being studied—most especially tempo, volume, and articulation.

Tempo is shown by the speed of the preparatory beat: the hand, from a stationary position, moves through both the *impulse* and *rebound* portions of the beat at precisely the tempo desired by the conductor. Control is shown similarly by the speed of each successive beat, no matter its function—which seems simple, and it is. However, it is also challenging in that one preparatory beat is not much time to indicate precise tempo, and the movement of the hands through each beat can control tempo only if the conductor feels the weight of the sounds being produced by the singers or instrumentalists.

Most choral conductors count several beats verbally before giving the preparatory beat (i.e., they say, “one, two, three” before a breath that is on beat four). This is a crutch, rarely used by orchestral conductors who, instead, generally rely solely on preparatory gestures. The counting by choral conductors, while ensuring a precise tempo, gives no motivation to the singers to watch the conductor, this when watching is particularly important just before and at the beginning of singing. If the singers are not engaged by the conductor at this point, it is difficult to engage them later. The conductor, therefore, should develop the ability to indicate tempo without any verbal assistance. Helpful in this process—as well as throughout all conducting—is to engage the eyes of the singers and then wait several seconds before giving the preparatory gesture.

Tempo is related gesturally not only by speed but also by the size of the gesture. Faster tempos are communicated with smaller motions and slower tempos with larger motions. The reason for this is that faster tempos and smaller motions take less time while slower tempos and larger motions take more time. To indicate a tempo, then, the conductor should give preparatory beats that are matched in size to the speed of the desired tempo. To control tempo, the conductor can give either a larger and heavier or smaller and lighter beat, depending upon the speed of the music. If the performers are going too fast—if they are rushing—the conductor makes a larger and heavier beat. On the other hand, if the performers are going too slowly—if the tempo is dragging—the conductor makes a smaller and lighter beat. The same relationship holds true for making tempos gradually faster or slower. To control an *accelerando*, the conductor makes the beat gradually smaller, lighter, and faster. To control a *ritardando*, the beat is made gradually larger, heavier, and slower.

Articulation, which specifically refers to the duration and emphasis of individual notes (short or long, strong or weak), is also characterized by the quality of a note, rhythmic pattern, or phrase (a quality such as agitated, lyrical, majestic, etc.). Articulation, then, is a characteristic that pervades all music—some articulations marked in the score and obvious (e.g., *staccatos* and *sforzandos*) while others not marked in the score but necessary in the expression of the music. All music—every note—has a quality of articulation that is governed by the nature of the music and that a conductor should exhibit in conducting gestures.

As examples, a dot *staccato* (·) is small in size, light in weight, and has a very quick *impulse* and *rebound*—the speed of the *rebound* being in direct proportion to the shortness of the desired *staccato*, and the entire beat suspended in motion until it becomes time for the next beat.

A wedge *staccato* (') is somewhat larger in size, heavier in weight, and not quite as quick as the shorter and lighter dot *staccato*.

A *legato* is characterized by a drawn motion through both the *impulse* and *rebound*.

A *tenuto* is shown by a leaning quality of the *impulse* and a slight delay of the *rebound* (i.e., the motion of the *rebound* moves slowly at first).

A *sforzando* has a strong and forced motion of the *impulse*, almost as if the conductor were hitting something.

A *forte piano* is shown by striking the *ictus* with force and then immediately backing away or letting go.

However, articulations such as *staccato* and *legato* are only general. Each articulation has more specific qualities. One *staccato* or *tenuto* may not be exactly like another, one *sforzando* may be more or less forced than another, and there are many degrees of *legato*. The feeling of the music determines the nature of each articulation and therefore each gesture from the conductor.

Degrees of loud and soft (referred to as dynamics) are also one of the chief technical aspects of music that the conductor communicates. And as with articulation, each note, rhythmic group, and phrase has a distinct level of volume, whether the volume is extreme, subtle, or at some level in between. With this in mind, the conductor should embody the volume and demonstrate it as an integral component of the conducting gesture (beat pattern).

The conductor, therefore, should treat sound as having degrees of weight, with loudness and softness shown by the conductor through strength or intensity, not size, and with the mood or character of the music determined by the weight of a conductor's gesture. A majestic character is generally loud in volume and therefore shown by a weighty gesture, while a sweet character is generally soft in volume and therefore communicated by a gesture that is light in weight.

To indicate volume, conductors should match the feeling of weight in volume with that of the feeling of weight in their bodies (including arms). A very loud sound will need a preparation beat that is close to the body and that shows considerable lower body support and upper arm tension, reasoning that the physical requirements for lifting a heavy object are the same requirements for indicating a heavy or loud sound. A very soft sound, on the other hand, will need a preparation beat that demonstrates little upper arm tension. Crescendos add strength over a period of time; decrescendos decrease strength.

One further technique (beyond tempo, articulation, and volume) is needed to control fermatas, which are denoted by the sign 𝄐 and which mean that the note or notes under or above it are to be prolonged beyond their printed durational value. The duration is usually of an indeterminate length (unspecified by the notation), and thus the conductor's gesture is of critical importance.

For the gestural techniques: If a fermata is placed over a note that is of one beat in duration (e.g., a quarter note in 4/4 meter or a half note in 2/2), the conductor indicates a hold on that beat. If a fermata is placed over a note of multiple beats (e.g., a dotted half note in 4/4), the conductor conducts through the initial beats (beats one and two) and indicates the hold on the final beat (beat three) of the fermata. This is often mandatory because of varying rhythms in parts of the music that sound simultaneously. Contained in this anthology, for instance, the chorale *Christ lag in Todesbanden* shows the tenor part having rhythmic activity on beats one and two of the final measure. And in *Cast thy burden upon the Lord*, the accompaniment has rhythmic activity on beats one and two of measures 3, 7, 11, 13, and 15, necessitating that the conductor conduct through beats one and two and hold the fermata on beat three.

It is also important to know the meaning of the fermata sign during different historical eras. During the Baroque and Classical eras, for example, a fermata near the end of a solo vocal or instrumental movement indicated a cadenza, and in the Baroque era, a fermata in a chorale indicated the end of a phrase, not necessarily the prolonged duration of a note; textual and musical content determined prolongation. Consequently, the fermatas in most of the chorales included in

this anthology, being from the Baroque era, are not all held. When the text and harmonic motion indicate forward movement, the fermatas are not observed. However, when the text comes to a conclusion and the music has a cadence, fermatas are held. The ongoing or conclusionary qualities of the text and music frequently coincide with the structures of chorales, which are often organized into sections called *stollen* and *abgesang*. The *stollen* begins the chorale and is comprised of two or three phrases; fermatas are observed at the end of the *stollen*, not at ends of internal phrases. The *stollen* is then often repeated. The *abgesang* ends the chorale and is also comprised of two or three phrases, with fermatas treated in the same manner as in the *stollen*. *Ein' Feste Burg* illustrates this structure. The first two phrases comprise the *stollen*, which is then repeated; the remainder of the chorale is the *abgesang*.

Summary

With each category of conducting (expression, function, and technique), gestures of the conductor, conveyed through the grammar of beat patterns, should demonstrate a physical connection to music. The conductor should understand that the sounds of a composition are physical substances that must be moved from one place in time to another, and as such, the act of conducting should become every bit as physical as the act of playing an instrument or of singing. As the force and pressure of breath is needed to move sounds from one to another for an oboist or trumpet player, or the force of a bow across strings for a violinist or cellist, or the pressure of the diaphragm creating breath flow for the singer, the conductor's arms should feel and convey degrees of weight in moving the collective sounds of a choir or orchestra. Even the face of the conductor should reflect aspects of this physical activity. If the face is bland and unengaged and shows no signs of physical exertion, the choristers or instrumentalists will sense no connection between the conductor and the music being conducted. If the arms move too easily from beat to beat and show no weight of substance (even though the weight may be slight), the conductor will have no control over the cohesion of the ensemble and certainly no ability to shape expressive phrases and meaningful structures. The conductor without physical attachment to sound is the conductor who points and gives cues as to "play now" rather than the conductor who has an empathic connection to performers and communicates in a manner that says *how* to sing or play a passage of music.

Great conductors of the past have all communicated through their gestures the *how* of making music. These conductors have been able to manifest expression and function into their gestures and, as a result, they have had a technique that was able to form great ensembles—ensembles that created great and memorable performances.

Editor's Note: This anthology includes three songs with origins in minstrelsy: *Dixie* (p. 66), *Oh Susanna* (p. 179), and *L'il Liza Jane* (p. 182). Because of this history, teachers and students are encouraged to approach these selections with care. We recommend taking time to understand their historical context and the ways in which they have been used and interpreted over time before deciding whether they are appropriate to use in a given educational setting.