

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: DEVELOPING A PERSONAL PEDAGOGY OF
 CONDUCTING

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Dissertation directed by Professor Edward Maclary
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When conductors in academic institutions are required to teach a course or private lessons in conducting, they most often resort to their own training and recycle the ideas and methods of their own teachers. Over time it is typical for them to try new approaches and techniques, to discover and implement new resources and literature, and to develop their own personal conducting pedagogy.

Through an examination of conducting texts as well as current conducting course syllabi from various American universities and colleges, some conclusions about current conducting pedagogical practices can be drawn. After consideration of the material and a summary of current practice, this paper presents several sample syllabi and a description of the process for teaching a basic conducting class. These materials serve as a model for the approach that could be taken by the readers in the development of their own personal conducting pedagogy.

DEVELOPING A PERSONAL PEDAGOGY OF CONDUCTING

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 LITERATURE ON CONDUCTING	11
Clarifying the Philosophical Approaches	13
What makes a conductor?	13
Where to start?	18
Where to stop?	19
What comes in between?	22
Exercises versus patterns	22
Repertoire versus examples	27
Musicianship training and Rehearsal Techniques.....	29
Specific Topics.....	30
Posture.....	31
The Conducting Plane.....	34
Baton and Baton Grip	35
Beat Patterns	41
Preparatory gestures.....	49
Cues and Releases.....	53
Fermatas.....	58
Left Hand	63
Implications.....	68
CHAPTER 2 CURRENT CONDUCTING METHODOLOGY	70
Textbooks as syllabi.....	72
National standards in conducting instruction.....	75
Designing Conducting Instruction	79
Beginning Conducting Instruction.....	80
Conducting Syllabi.....	83
Course structure	83
Teaching philosophies	84
Sequencing (beginnings, ends, and middles).....	91
Course materials (texts, readings, and repertoire)	93
Other topics.....	95

CHAPTER 3 A PERSONAL PEDAGOGY	98
Course and instructor information	99
Course description	99
Materials	100
Instructional methodology	105
Objectives, outcomes, and goals	105
Assessment, assignments, expectations	107
Course calendar	109
A Personal Pedagogy	110
Determining the pedagogical approach	111
The syllabus	115
CONCLUSION	121
APPENDIX 1 REPRESENTATIVE REPERTOIRE FOR CONDUCTING INSTRUCTION	123
APPENDIX 2 SAMPLE BASIC CONDUCTING COURSE SCHEDULES	126
APPENDIX 3 EXEMPLAR SYLLABUS – BASIC CONDUCTING	132
BIBLIOGRAPHY	136

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Chronological list of baton recommendations	38-39
Table 2. The three common types of releases that follow fermatas	60
Table 3. Competencies for the Beginning Conducting Class	73-74
Table 4. Universe of topics derived from goals and objectives statements	85
Table 5. Types of written assignments in conducting courses	93-94
Table 6. Basic conducting topics and recommended readings	102
Table 7. USC Choral Conducting I Repertoire List	103
Table 8. UMD Basic Conducting Repertoire List	104
Table 9. Grading schema from selected beginning conducting courses	107-108
Table 10. A graded rubric for undergraduate conducting	109
Table 11. Sequence of Basic Conducting Class	113-114

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Max Rudolf's five swinging movements.	26
Figure 2. Comparison of the basic 4-beat pattern of Rudolf and McElheran	42
Figure 3. Green's four-beat pattern	43
Figure 4. Green's diagram of focal point conducting	45
Figure 5. Rebound subdivision style.	46
Figure 6. Continuation style (left) and Continuation-Rebound style (right)	47
Figure 7. Transition from three to one.	49
Figure 8. Transition from four to two.	49
Figure 9. Long cut fermata.	61
Figure 10. Short cut fermata.	61
Figure 11. No cut fermata	62

INTRODUCTION

Though the development of a “modern conductor” who provides the artistic leadership and direction for music making is a relatively new phenomenon in the course of musical performance, the discussion of musical leadership is not. There is an extensive body of literature both historical and contemporary on conducting and on conducting technique. Treatises from as early as the 1568 *Fromino Dialogo in Vinegia apperso Girolamo Scotto* by Vincentio Galilei discuss musical leadership. At the same time, new dissertations are completed each year giving a current appraisal of the field and adding new studies in methodology and new perspectives on interpretation and gesture to the field. Between these two bookends is a vast collection of a variety of types of sources, including articles published in scholarly and trade journals, published books on conducting and its related areas, and the course documents used for conducting instruction in colleges and universities.

While Galilei’s text may be an early example, the most significant early treatise on conducting is the oft-quoted Mattheson *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739). Mattheson is broad and inclusive, with topics ranging from general music principles and the fundamental nature of sound, to style, melody, vocal health, modes, writing music, rhetoric, harmony, instrumental performance, and a number of topics that specifically relate to the conductor. Even now, Mattheson is able to speak wisdom to the modern conductor. For instance, in regards to rehearsals, Mattheson says:

Rehearsals are so essential that it is quite amazing when one still meets people who contradict this and yet pretend to have intelligence. In the foreward of *der brauchbare Virtuose* brief comment has been made on

this. Here I only want to say that not only the performers but also their directors would often need the rehearsals themselves.¹

Mattheson gives additional advice on proper gesticulation, rehearsal technique, proper correction of errors in the music, and a host of other topics that serve as the basis for the body of literature on conducting that follows. In the late 1700s, many theorists expanded on the work of Mattheson, but it was not until the 1800s, after the advent of modern conducting, that we see many essays on the art in a form that resembles present practice. Among these, those by Berlioz and Wagner were the most significant.

Wagner's 1869 treatise, *Über das Dirigieren*, is a critique on the interpretations of modern conductors (or perhaps more appropriately, the lack thereof) and the current state of the art of German music. The treatise deals primarily with the matter of tempo, especially in the works of Beethoven, and is particularly firm in asserting the need for tempo modification to suit the composition. Wagner mostly shares his thoughts on conducting in terms of examples of incorrect readings of significant pieces by famous conductors in comparison to a time when he conducted the same piece to the great appreciation of the musicians and audience. While the treatise offers much in the way of anecdotes and a window into Wagner's manner of thought, it does little in terms of proscribing any conducting technique other than the careful consideration of artistic interpretation in a score.

On the other hand, Berlioz provides the basis of the modern conducting textbook in his 1855 treatise *Le Chef D'Orchestre, Theorie De Son Art*. Like the more modern texts considered in this project, Berlioz begins with a general description of the conductor

¹ Mattheson, Johann. *Der vollkommene Capellmeister: A Revised Translation with Critical Commentary by Ernest C. Harriss* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1981), 869.

and then moves through a discussion of gestural technique including basic patterns, subdivision, and conducting recitative. He concludes with general considerations for the conductor in performance, such as secondary conductors in logistically difficult configurations and the particular nuances of working with various types of instruments.

One of the primary bodies of literature under consideration in this project is the conducting textbook. The textbook category is broadly defined for the purpose of this project and includes books specifically designed to be used as textbooks in a classroom setting like Elizabeth Green's *The Modern Conductor* and Kenneth Phillips' *Basic Techniques of Conducting*; conducting handbooks that cover a broader number of issues like Robert Garretson's *Conducting Choral Music* and *The Complete Conductor* by Robert Demaree and Don Moses; and technique manuals that offer a more focused approach to conducting technique like the Brock McElheran *Conducting Technique* or *Upbeat Downbeat: Basic Conducting Patterns and Techniques* by Sandra Willetts. Additionally, some books are more philosophical in their approach and deal with larger issues than just manual technique, such as Gunther Schuller's *The Compleat Conductor*.

While not specifically relevant to this project, many other types of works are related to the field of conducting and are often relevant to the larger discussion of conducting pedagogy. Some books use movement theory, like the techniques created by Frederick Matthias Alexander, to inform their discussion of gesture and posture. Alexander technique certainly plays a large role in James Jordan's discussion of conducting technique, as does the movement theory of Rudolf Laban. Guidebooks like Lisa Billingham's *The Complete Conductor's Guide to Laban Movement Theory* and the descriptions of techniques offered in Jordan's *Evoking Sound: Fundamentals of Choral*

Conducting and Rehearsing begin to shape a pedagogical conversation on the physical nature of conducting. *The Saitō conducting method*, edited by Wayne Toews, takes a more physical approach to gesture and links the movement and postural techniques of Alexander, Feldenkrais, and Laban to traditional manual conducting technique.

There are many texts that offer the wisdom of famous conductors on a variety of topics. Some are specific to a single conductor, like Leonard Bernstein's *The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard*, which is a collection of his Charles Eliot Norton Lectures from 1973. *The Robert Shaw Reader*, edited by Robert Blocker, collects the letters of one of the most significant choral conductors of the modern era on topics of performing, rehearsing, analyzing, and preparing major works. Other books are in the vein of Bernard Jacobson's collection of essays by a series of great conductors in *Conductors on Conducting*. Jacobson's book takes the form of famous conductor on famous composer, such as James Levine on Verdi and Mozart, or Sir Adrian Boult on Elgar. Other books in this genre include Carole Glenn's collection, *In Quest of Answers: Interviews with American Choral Conductors* and *Choral Conducting Symposium*, edited by Harold Decker and Julius Herford.

There are books on the preparation of a score, like the Frank Battisti *Guide to Score Study for the Wind Band Conductor*, and then another set of literature on preparing the skills for working with scores. The Morris and Ferguson *Preparatory Exercises in Score Reading*, or Hindemith's *Elementary Training for Musicians* are standards in score preparation skills for the professional conductor. Books on the various sections of the repertoire such as Dennis Shrock's *Choral Repertoire* or David Daniels' *Orchestral Music: A Handbook* are standards for conductors planning concert programs and

attempting to discover music. Finally, there are also texts on the history of the conducting field such as the impressive volume by Elliott Galkin, *A History of Orchestral Conducting in Theory and Practice*. All of these types of texts are essential for the conductor to know, but because they tend to address areas that are supplemental to conducting instruction, they are not specifically germane to this discussion on conducting pedagogy.

Recent research continues in the field of conducting as seen in several relevant dissertations and theses. Merry Spencer's "Conducting pedagogy: Teaching through musicianship" takes a similar approach to this project by documenting the approach to musicianship in the conducting literature and then making recommendations for its incorporation into the conducting classroom. Sean Powell's "The Effect of Elizabeth A. H. Green's Conception of Psychological Conducting on the Ability of Beginning Instrumental Conducting Students to Communicate Through Gesture" discusses Green's method of psychological conducting and concludes there is no particular benefit for including it in basic undergraduate conducting instruction. Ki Sun Lee's "Towards an Improved Baton Technique: The Application and Modification of Conducting Gestures Drawn from the Methods of Rudolf, Green and Saitō for Enhanced Performance of Orchestral Interpretations" provides a summary of the gestural language of these three pedagogues and recommends the combination of their gestural vocabulary for expressive conducting. Brian Runnels' "Practices in the Teaching of Instrumental Conducting at the Undergraduate Level among Colleges and Universities in the Upper Midwest" used a survey methodology to compare conducting curriculums, and served as a forerunner to some of the more recent research in conducting.

Theses like Alan Baker's "Creating conductors: An analysis of conducting pedagogy in American higher education" and Muriel Gibala-Mahardige's "The Evolution of the Choral Conducting Profession in the Twentieth century: Conducting Methods as Written Testimonies" provide useful background knowledge about the philosophy of conducting and rehearsing ensembles, but do not directly address conducting pedagogy. On the other hand, Michael Lyle's "Four Twentieth-Century American Choral Conducting Methodologies" and Matthew Schlomer's "Inspiring Sound: Synthesizing Dance and Conducting Pedagogy for Heightened Creativity on the Podium" make the connection between conducting pedagogy and the related fields of dance, psychology, sociology, and education.

Just as the wealth of literature, particularly in conducting textbooks, continues to grow, an increasing number of students are enrolling in undergraduate conducting classes in colleges and universities. Some of this may be due to widespread adoption of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) accreditation requirements that encourage the study of conducting for music majors and require it for those in some particular degree pathways.² To account for these present practices in schools and universities, in addition to a review of the literature on conducting technique, I have obtained syllabi and related course materials from significant teachers in the United States and Canada that represent some current pedagogical approaches in the field. Therefore, the structure of this project is in three parts: 1) a review of the relevant literature on conducting, 2) a discussion of current pedagogical practices as displayed

² NASM, NASM Handbook 2011-2012 [Reston, VA: NASM, 2012], 87.

through the course materials of significant teachers of conducting, and 3) an analysis of the intersection of these two bodies of literature and recommendations on best practices.

In the first part, the review of the literature is grouped topically. Common subjects appear throughout the literature and include basic beat patterns, various types of fermatas, cues, starts and stops, and the left hand. These topics and others will be treated in turn with an attempt to show consensus where it exists among many various sources and to also highlight areas of disagreement. For example, the discussion of the basic four-beat pattern and the diagrams presented in most of the books are fairly well aligned. Most authors agree that the ictus (point of the beat) of each beat falls on the same horizontal plane; that beats one and four are down, two is to the left and three is to the right; and that the rebound is in the opposite direction of the next beat. But there are differences. Green elevates the four off of the horizontal plane and Rudolf does not have a rounded rebound on beat three, which is represented as a conducting flaw by McElheran.

While these differences are at times small, they point to the highly personalized nature of conducting and the strong advocacy that each author argues for their particular approach. These discrepancies also clarify the problem that conducting teachers face, particularly when educating the young and inexperienced conducting student in basic conducting technique—the art of conducting is complicated, variable, often improvisatory, and highly personal. How does one communicate this in its most basic elements to a novice in ways that they can digest and then use as the building blocks to create their own personal conducting style?

In addition to these specific elements and topics covered in conducting texts, a discussion of general sequencing and the particular topics selected for inclusion in the

books serves to elucidate the individual pedagogical approaches and values of each of the authors. For example, Nicolai Malko (the conductor whose technique and pedagogy serves as the basis of the popular Elizabeth Green text) begins with physical exercises, not conducting technique. While Malko indicates that these exercises should be taken up simultaneously with conducting technique, which indeed is the way that Green presents these ideas, the primacy of place that Malko gives to his physical exercises shows how important he believes the physical conditioning of a conductor to be. Moses and Demaree begin with leadership and posture while Bailey begins with the ictus and preparatory Beat. Garretson starts the basic patterns and then moves directly to irregular meter while Rudolf waits until chapter twenty-seven to introduce the five-beat pattern. These differences all have relevance when planning a conducting course and teaching individual conducting lessons. What to cover, when to cover it, and in how much depth are the foundational questions upon which we build a conducting pedagogy.

In the second part, where I examine conducting materials from current teachers of conducting, the approach is similar, especially in overview. The sequencing of skills and the specific skills included reveal much about the pedagogical approach of each of these instructors. Additionally, the choice of text and repertoire included in each of these syllabi is just as important. The Phillips and Green books are the most popular, but not all teachers use a textbook or use textbooks in the same way. Some teachers move directly through a text in order, others use several books as references for the instruction, and some teachers use no textbook at all, supplying the fundamental materials themselves. In spite of these differences, some commonalities appear such as the frequent reliance on Bach chorales and the Mozart *Ave Verum Corpus*. Some of these choices bear the marks

of practicality based on the logistics of running a college conducting class. One needs materials that can be performed by a varied group of singers, instrumentalists, or a mix of the two. Both the Mozart and the Bach Chorales succeed in meeting these requirements while standard orchestral and choral repertoire is often harder to reproduce in the classroom setting. These practical considerations, while sometimes addressed in the written literature, become much more pronounced in the materials supplied by current teachers in the field and are ultimately some of the primary considerations for new teachers of conducting when designing their courses.

It is in the combination of these two areas therefore that the most can be gained for the field. A review of the conducting literature can supply a recommended sequence of skills, a list of commonly accepted axioms or norms in conducting, and even an overview of the most hotly contested topics and differing approaches. A survey of the current practice shows the experience of actual classroom teaching and the knowledge of how to put these concepts into practice. Additionally, these syllabi supply us with a series of working blueprints have had success in developing conducting skills and teaching basic concepts.

The result of this project is a set of best practices, including sample course structures, recommended sequences and approaches to literature and technique, and a discussion of areas that are regularly disputed. My goal is not to create a singular methodology for the teaching of conducting, as that would be a disservice to an endeavor that is personal and variable. Just as one persons' physicality is different from another and two oboists will never have identical tone or phrasing, so too, conductors should not feel confined to one *correct* approach to teaching their craft. While I do offer an example

of a complete course design that I have created, it is only to serve as an example for how one can synthesize the information presented in this project and use it to create a personal pedagogy of conducting.

Here we can again rely on our anecdotal observations at the start: that the natural process of learning to teach conducting begins with a repetition of our learning experiences, a synthesis of new materials and techniques, and the eventual realization of a pedagogy that is individual and unique. This project will serve to speed conductors along their way to this goal by providing them with a resource that summarizes a variety of perspectives current in the field and presents suggestions for how these approaches might successfully be incorporated into the education of a conductor.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE ON CONDUCTING

In the twentieth century, books following in the tradition of Berlioz, intended specifically to teach conducting skills, became more common. Grosbayne, in his 1941 attempt to catalog the literature on conducting, cites several turn of the century examples of conducting texts: Mikorey's *Grundzüge einer Dirigierlehre* (1917); Adam Carse's two texts from the late '20s, *The School Orchestra: Organisation, Training and Repertoire* and *Orchestral Conducting*; Boult's *A Handbook on the Technique of Conducting* (1920) and Herman Scherchen's *Handbook of Conducting* (1933). But it was not until the middle of the century that conducting texts were published with any real frequency.

While some earlier sources like Gehrken's 1919 text and Bakaleinikoff's of 1938 remain significant, more relevant to this discussion are texts such as the Max Rudolf *The Grammar of Conducting* (1950), Nicolai Malko *The Conductor and his Baton* (1950), Benjamin Grosbayne *Techniques of Modern Orchestral Conducting* (1956), Elizabeth Green *The Modern Conductor* (1961), and Brock McElheran *Conducting Technique: for beginners and professionals* (1964). These texts form the first collection of complete systematic approaches to the learning of conducting. It is from this body of literature from the 1950s and forward upon which I will draw my primary sources of a pedagogical approach to conducting. While they do not address specifically the issues of conducting pedagogy, their sequencing and depth of topical coverage speak volumes about those things that the authors value, what they believe are the essential skills a conductor must learn, and the requisite knowledge and talent a conductor must possess.

More recently, particularly since 1995, a number of books have been published that rely heavily on material represented in these mid-century approaches, but also begin to create clear schools of thought in conducting pedagogy. Some, like Gunther Schuller's *The Compleat Conductor* (1997) are not meant as textbooks and are more like a modern Wagner *On Conducting*, offering a list of what is wrong with conductors but not the solutions to these problems. On the other hand, texts like the Kenneth Phillips *Basic Techniques of Conducting* (1997), Robert Demaree and Don Moses *The Complete Conductor* (1995), Joseph Labuta *Basic Conducting Techniques* (2004) and Wayne Bailey *Conducting: The Art of Communication* (2009) are clearly geared towards the needs of the collegiate conducting classroom and often even include suggestions for pacing a course over an academic semester or two.

So what can be learned from an examination of conducting textbooks? First, the overall scope and context of the philosophical approach can generally be revealed through an investigation of the introduction and contents of a book. By examining these across the literature, we can demonstrate an alignment on breadth of topical coverage, the significance of traits like leadership, and the most common trajectories of instruction. Second, several specific topic areas emerge as important to some authors, though not all. These include physical training, conducting repertoire and musicianship training. By examining these differences, some of the distinctive pedagogical traits of some authors become clear. Finally, on the basic fundamentals of manual technique, the authors offer a variety of perspectives. Through an investigation of the most common instructional areas under manual technique, the specific details of each author's approach are revealed. A

thorough understanding of the available options in texts and approaches is a key resource for developing a personal pedagogy of conducting.

Clarifying the Philosophical Approaches

The preface, introduction, or first chapter of a conducting text almost always addresses the profession of conducting generally. Before the specifics of gesture and patterns are discussed, these opening words contain some of the fundamental principles covered in the text and are thus paramount in understanding the authors' pedagogical approach. Nicolai Malko even goes so far as to open his section entitled "To the Reader" with a parenthetical note: "(Contrary to custom, this *must* be read)."³ These passages state what the authors' believe makes a successful conductor and what knowledge and talent is necessary to be effective. The starting and end points for the book are also illuminating. The initial concepts treated by an author are the fundamental elements for the technique and skills that follow. The end point demonstrates the breadth and scope of the material and more importantly, the final result that the author hopes to achieve through their writing.

What makes a conductor?

Gehrken begins—

Many musicians feel that conductors, like poets and teachers, are 'born and not made.'... But his experience in training supervisors of music has lead him to feel that, although only the elementary phases of conducting can be taught, such instruction is nevertheless quite worth-while, and is often surprisingly effective in its results.⁴

³ Malko, Nicolai. *The Conductor and His Baton* (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, 1950), 11.

⁴ Gehrken, Karl W. *Essentials in Conducting* (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, Inc., 1919), i.

Malko adds—

Not only is the amateur conductor misled, but also the professional, when he subscribes to the theory that it is sufficient to have talent and a fine general musical education, and that the technic of the baton will gradually be acquired during the process of working with the orchestra.⁵

Because of the lack of targeted literature and an established course of study for young conductors, there were many who felt that conductors rose out of the orchestra because of their superior musicianship, ear, talent or personality. Those writing conducting texts had clear motivation to dispute this. By codifying a technique of conducting, they were making the implicit assertion that the skills of conducting were learnable and not imbued directly upon musicians of the greatest worth. As texts and methodologies for conductors became more common, the need to justify the training of conductors began to drop away. The focus turned to the essential qualities found in any conductor that make them a worthy student of the craft. In the literature, from the earliest books to those published most recently, these qualities are generally presented in two categories. The first category is the musical, physical, and intellectual, which includes a mastery of the gesture, a knowledge of the score, and a clear interpretative perspective. The second is the psychological or personal: what kind of person fits the type to become a conductor?

Returning to Gehrken's, he treats both categories in his second chapter by summarizing the necessary traits:

1. Innate musical ability.
2. A long period of broad and intelligent music study.
3. An attractive and forceful personality.
4. A sense of humor.
5. A creative imagination.
6. Magnetic leadership and organizing ability.⁶

⁵ Malko, 12.

⁶ Gehrken's, 18.

As is understandable from an early book like Gehrken's, the focus here is mostly on the innate ability and characteristics, not the training. Only "a long period of broad and intelligent music study" references a course of study, or skills that could conceivably be taught. The last four points are all based on the personality, and the first presupposes an innate level of talent to be necessary. Green adds "The best conductors are innately endowed with musicality—a term that need not be defined because those who have it know what it means and those who do not will never understand it through definition."⁷ If these born characteristics are so important, how do the variety of authors feel these are made manifest?

"Much of a conductor's effectiveness depends on his personal characteristics and on his capacity to persuade others to his will."⁸ Communicating "his will", as Bowles described, is a point that Malko also takes up. "If will power is important for any performer, instrumentalist or vocalist, this will power plays a special role with the conductor because he uses this will power, not only in organizing his personal activity, but also in being able to impart it to the other performers, the orchestra or chorus."⁹ McElheran recasts will as "inspiration", beginning his first chapter, "The most important requirement in a conductor is the ability to inspire the performers."¹⁰ Rudolf adds that

⁷ Green, Elizabeth. *The Modern Conductor*, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), 9.

⁸ Bowles, Michael. *The Conductor: His Artistry and Craftsmanship* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1959), 1.

⁹ Malko, 24.

¹⁰ McElheran, Brock. *Conducting Technique: For Beginners and Professionals*, Revised Edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 3.

“all his musicianship and thorough study of scores will help him little unless he knows how to talk to people, work with them, and get results in a quick and direct manner.”¹¹

The musical, physical, and intellectual elements of conducting tend to receive more attention, most likely due to their direct relevance to a manual of technique. It is therefore not surprising that the skills a conductor must acquire flow primarily from these three elements. Knowledge of the score and mastery of the physical baton technique are almost universally agreed upon, but the weight that these topics receive varies greatly. In his “General Rules of Conducting”, Bakaleinikoff address both issues. “[H]e must attain the technique of conducting from the very first fundamentals,” including the basic patterns and facility with the baton.¹² Additionally, “the student must prepare his score at home and must know even the smallest details.”¹³ On the other hand, Malko gives primacy to the physical conducting technique and attempts “to show that *technic has the same importance for the conductor as it has for any other musician-performer.*”¹⁴ Green follows Malko in this way.

We build the technique *only* to ensure that *our music* can achieve its unforgettable moments, evanescent as they are, before once more returning to its prison of impatient silence. The most profoundly inspiring performances of a lifetime were those where the performer’s technique was so superb that we forgot it existed.¹⁵

For Moses and Demaree, the technical skills are paramount as well in gaining mastery over the instrument of the orchestra (or choir or band). “[Y]ou yourself must build a technical discipline as a conductor equal to or better than their instrumental expertise, for

¹¹ Rudolf, Max. *The Grammar of Conducting*, 2nd Edition (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), xv.

¹² Bakaleinikoff, Vladimir. *Elementary Rules of Conducting* (New York: Belwin, Inc., 1938), 8.

¹³ *Ibid*, 9.

¹⁴ Malko, 13.

¹⁵ Green, xvii.

no one can conduct simply by wanting to; it is through careful, thoughtful mastering of performance skills that the musician becomes a conductor.”¹⁶

Beyond the basics of conducting technique and score knowledge, the sources provide a litany of other skills and abilities. This list usually begins with mastery on an individual instrument or the voice. Wayne Bailey rationalizes this mastery, stating, “[t]he depth of musicianship acquired by the conductor on his instrument relates directly to the depth of musical understanding he possesses as a conductor.”¹⁷ Gustav Meier, in *The Score, the Orchestra, and the Conductor*, lists studying an instrument from an early age at the top of his list of characteristics of a fine conductor but goes on to list other important skills and ambitions as well.

[S]tudy an instrument and listen to music as early in life as possible, learn all you can about music and composers, study with a fine teacher, become educated in languages and the humanities, observe other conductors, harness energy for hard work, cultivate patience to work long hours alone without an instrument, and garner strength to deal with the inevitable rejections.¹⁸

McElheran offers another list along the lines of Meier’s suggestions of the steps to undertake to become a successful conductor beginning with a study of leadership, a study of music and related subjects, and the score. This list is followed by behavioral suggestions to “choose music you love;... choose your proper work level”, whether that

¹⁶ Demaree, Robert W. and Don V. Moses. *The Complete Conductor: A Comprehensive Resource for the Professional Conductor of the Twenty-First Century* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), 1.

¹⁷ Bailey, Wayne. *Conducting: The Art of Communication* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 4.

¹⁸ Meier, Gustav. *The Score, the Orchestra, and the Conductor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 4.

be older, younger, experienced, inexperienced, “take a personal interest in your players,” and “develop a clear conducting technique.”¹⁹

Throughout the literature, the themes of musical knowledge, communication skills, and an interest and expertise in other fields (musical and otherwise) abound. This type of discussion is generally the introduction by the author to the text and while acknowledged as critical to the development of a conductor, is quickly left in favor of a detailed approach to baton technique and considerations specific to conducting. Books like the *The Compleat Conductor* by Gunther Schuller, which admittedly does not attempt to present a method of conducting but is instead a consideration of the philosophy of conducting, are able to deal more thoroughly with these broader issues. The same is true of books like Wagner’s *On Conducting*, which may serve to supplement conducting instruction but are not a substitute for a manual of technique.

Where to start?

After the discussion on what conducting is and what makes a conductor, the next question is how does one begin a course on conducting. Of the sources consulted, posture is the most common starting point for a discussion on conducting technique. James Jordan’s *Evoking Sound* is centrally concerned with proper posture and physicality, not just as an introduction to conducting, but also as the content for the first four chapters. The Phillips, Demaree and Moses, McElheran, Hunsberger and Ernst, Decker and Kirk, and Bailey texts all begin (essentially) with a more general discussion on proper posture for conducting. Willetts’ approach is similar, with a discussion of basic concepts such as hand position, the ictus and the conducting plane.

¹⁹ McElheran, 4-5.

Malko and Green begin with physical training exercises, which while related to posture, are not posture specific. Rudolf also begins with exercises intended to help train the conductor's hand to navigate the conducting plane with comfort and ease.²⁰ He also addresses elementary issues related to the baton in his introduction, and so could technically be categorized with Meier and Gehrken, who begin their texts with discussions of baton grip. Of these authors, only Bakaleinikoff begins with the conductor's relationship to the score, and Bowles, whose text is not truly a conducting textbook, starts from a historical perspective by discussing the development of the orchestra and then the conductor. The discussion of conducting technique is presented much later, even after the concept of interpretation.

The near agreement among the sources on posture and physicality as an appropriate starting place for conducting instruction is as significant as the alignment found in the introductions on the characteristics of a successful conductor. Conducting is a psychomotor skill, one that the literature recognizes requires a significant amount of physical training.²¹

Where to stop?

While there is general agreement as to what essential elements are important to foundational conducting technique, there is a greater variety in the breadth of topical coverage in the various texts. How these books conclude is just as significant as how they begin. Just as most of the sources cited here begin with a discussion of posture, many authors move towards a discussion of repertoire as an end point. One form of the

²⁰ Rudolf, 1-2.

²¹ Phillips, Kenneth H. *Basic Techniques of Conducting* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), xi.

repertoire end point is the etude, as with Bakaleinikoff who presents a series of exercises or Phillips who offers two “Conducting Synthesis” assignments that are intended to provide an opportunity to use all of the skills of conducting that have been built within the class. On the other hand, Rudolf and Demaree/Moses conclude with discussion of actual repertoire and the conducting challenges involved in preparing specific works. In the case of Demaree and Moses, this includes a focus on style and performance practice that is integral to their holistic approach to conducting pedagogy. Gunther Schuller’s text goes further, taking a selection of classical and romantic masterworks and presenting detailed comparisons of the score to extant recordings of the pieces with the goal of evaluating and criticizing interpretation.

Both Willetts and Malko end their texts with the left hand. Willetts’ book is so intentionally brief that even her discussion of the left hand is limited to one exercise. Malko goes into slightly more depth, but it is noteworthy that both of these authors, focus throughout their books almost exclusively on the physicality of the gesture and choose to end there as well, remaining consistent throughout their approach. McElheran, whose book is similarly concise to the Willetts, gives a brief nod to the non-musical tasks that a conductor faces. He suffices to offer two wry mottos in reference to these matters: “Worry early”, and “one percent of conducting is conducting.”²² Garretson’s exploration of the non-musical tasks is more expected given that the text’s scope is that of a complete manual for the choral conductor, not just as a book on conducting technique. As such, Garretson’s final chapter includes notes on budget management, rehearsal, seating, and touring, to name a few. The Hunsberger and Ernst *The Art of Conducting* (1992) and the

²² McElheran, 127.

Decker and Kirk *Choral Conducting: Focus on Communication* (1988) function similarly to the Garretson, as handbooks for not just conducting, but for running an organization as a conductor. Hunsberger covers programming and administrative responsibilities, while Decker goes deeper into the specific challenges of working with choruses in the rehearsal. Meier also explores some of these non-musical ideas, such as orchestra members on probation, cosmetics, and general attitude. On the other hand, like Gehrken and Bowles, Meier also discusses the topics of rehearsing and ear training. Bailey considers the skills of musicianship, ear training, and error detection of paramount importance in the training of conductors.

From this overview of the introductions and the general trajectory of these texts, an overall approach that is relatively unified can be distilled. Authors feel that the qualities of a successful conductor include strength in leadership and inspiration as well as musical acumen and a mastery of physical technique. These traits should be accompanied by a thorough knowledge of the score and an awareness of related subjects: musical and otherwise. Conducting is essentially a physical performance; so most authors begin with the basic physicality either through training exercises, basic grip of a baton, or the proper posture for a conductor. The trajectory of the texts and of the study of conducting is toward a mastery of technique that can then be successfully applied to repertoire. The authors also generally acknowledge there are other duties that are beyond the baton technique that can range from managing a budget to advanced ear training and error detection.

What comes in between?

The essential pedagogy of the various approaches is contained in the material between the texts' beginnings and endings. Before investigating specific topics such as patterns and preparations, several schisms in the authors' approaches should be addressed. As mentioned in the discussion of starting points, many writers focus on physical training through exercises, while others begin directly with beat patterns. Another important difference is the type of musical examples used. Should the novice begin with the masterworks or instead work through specifically designed etudes that develop the base skills necessary for success? Finally, some authors find musicianship training and rehearsal technique essential to cover alongside the conducting techniques. Others leave this for other texts and focus only on the primary issue of the physical act of conducting. Any teacher must consider these distinctions when choosing what, if any, text might be appropriate for a class and in consideration of an overall pedagogical approach.

Exercises versus patterns

Bakaleinikoff's "General Rules of Conducting" immediately address the crux of this debate.

Just as the pianist, violinist, trumpet player or other instrumentalist must learn the technique of his instrument from the very beginning, so must the student of conducting start with the a-b-c's to get the technique of the baton. He should know precisely how to conduct in 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.; in other words he must attain the technique of conducting from the very first fundamentals.²³

Are the fundamentals of conducting technique the knowledge of the basic patterns or is there a deeper level of training the body and mind necessary to have physical control over

²³ Bakaleinikoff, 8.

the hands and arms? Nicolai Malko and Elizabeth Green are the biggest proponents of a systematic approach to physical training. Green's methods are rooted in Malko's, and his motivation for the development of this method is "to train the body, especially the arms and hands, so that each necessary physical act may be accomplished easily, freely, without any fatigue, and absolutely in synchronization with the impulse of will."²⁴ Malko stresses the importance of focused study and concentration throughout the exercises and of the simultaneity that he recommends along with the learning of basic conducting technique.

First of all, rhythmic and general musical feeling must be maintained during the coordination of the will-impulse and the movement it provokes from the conductor. This is the basic reason why a course of general physical training apart from the course of conducting technic would be beside the point. One should begin with special physical exercises and then simultaneously go through the elements of conducting technic. When meeting with technical difficulties the physical exercises will prove helpful and will play, so to speak, an "hygienic" role in the process of mastering the technic, and, later on, through all the activity of the conductor.²⁵

While Malko separated out his exercises into one chapter and the baton technique into another, he clearly advocates they be learned side by side. When Green adapted these exercises, her aim was to distill the approach into a form that could be easily incorporated into the collegiate conducting curriculum.²⁶ She is more direct in her approach to placing physical training side by side with conducting gesture as she provides a sequence for Malko's physical training and even makes specific recommendations about when in a semester of conducting the exercises should be taught.

²⁴ Malko, 35.

²⁵ Malko, 31.

²⁶ Green's book is now in its seventh edition and is frequently cited in the submitted syllabi for this project. It seems she was successful in this endeavor.

The purpose of the eleven Malko exercises as stated by Green is “the development of independence in the left hand and the ability, manually, to speak a language clearly understood by the players.”²⁷ This second point is a reference to a fundamental difficulty in the way that the arms move. “[A]ll motions of the arms are naturally circular in character, regardless of which joint bends.... Obviously the curved pattern must be replaced by straight-line motion.”²⁸ For this reason, Green begins with two exercises—the Horizontal Straight Line and the Vertical Line—even before any instruction on conducting technique. The third exercise is the first step in the development of left and right hand independence, with the right hand moving up while the left hand moves down, and vice versa. The fourth adds the *staccato* articulation to the first two exercises and the fifth combines the perpendicular and horizontal in the two hands, connecting the concept of the straight line with the independence of the hands. Beginning with the sixth exercise, more standard beat pattern and conducting gestures are introduced. Exercise six focuses on preparing for cues, seven is a practice of cueing combined with time beating and eight is time beating plus left-hand gestures for crescendo and diminuendo. Exercises nine and ten isolate the forearm and the wrist respectively in combination with the movements from the earlier exercises. Finally, the eleventh exercise (which Green highlights as a still fundamentally ignored area of conducting pedagogy) focuses on the control of *speed of motion*.²⁹ The exercise requires

²⁷ Green, xv.

²⁸ Ibid, 5.

²⁹ The speed of motion in conducting, while not addressed in most conducting methodologies is one of the principle components of the Saitō conducting method. In his theory, “the tempo, the beat, and the strength of the accents can be shown clearly ... by using acceleration and deceleration to and from the beat-point.” See Saitō, Hideo. *The*

that the conductor gradually enlarge the beat pattern without changing the tempo and then return to the original small size of beat.

11. Controlling the *speed of motion* during the line of connection between beat points. Right hand only: Baton in hand, time-beating in FOUR. Start with a quarter-inch square—all four beats to be within that tiny square. Gradually enlarge to a half-inch square, to a 1-inch square, a 2-inch square, etc., to a 10-inch square. Then a 12-inch square and upward by three-inch additions: 15 inches, 18 inches, 21 inches, 24 inches. Return downward, unit by unit, to the quarter-inch square.³⁰

As a related aside, Demaree and Moses are also concerned about the size of beat but more as it relates to dynamics and do not make the distinction that Green is most concerned about: the variable speed of motion. They suggest cutting a series of nesting conducting frames from cardboard of rectangles of 4x4 inches, 8x8 inches, 12x16 inches, 16x20 inches, 20x24 inches, and 24x28 inches, which correspond to pianissimo through fortissimo dynamics respectively.³¹

Rudolf begins his text with a short series of recommended exercises before introducing the basic four-beat pattern.

1. Practice the up-down and left-right motions with the wrist alone, first slowly, then rapidly. To be sure that the forearm does not move, hold it firmly with the left hand. Avoid tension in the wrist and make as large a gesture as possible.
 - a. There are two positions of the wrist: palm downward and palm sideways. Practice with both positions [in conducting].
2. Use the left hand to hold the arm above the elbow while practicing with the forearm. In slow tempo precaution should be taken in order to achieve smooth coordination of all parts: the hand motion should always be a little behind that of the forearm.
3. [T]he whole arm. Work for a smooth motion in which all parts of the arm blend in their movements, so that no one part sticks out awkwardly. Think of the baton as an extension of the arm; its motion should be smooth and steady.

Saitō *Conducting Method* (Tokyo:Min-On Concert Association and Ongaku No Tomo Sha Corp., 1988), 6.

³⁰ Green, 277.

³¹ Demaree and Moses, 24.

4. This diagram (see fig. 1) shows five swinging movements. Practice each with wrist alone, then with wrist and forearm. Vary the size and the speed of your beat, from a snap of the wrist to a slow turn.³²

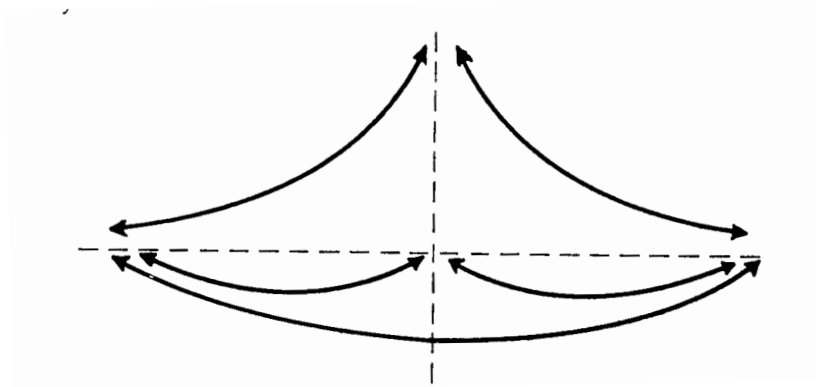


Figure 1. Max Rudolf's five swinging movements.³³

Rudolf recommends that these exercises be practiced prior to beginning the work of learning the basic beat patterns. He additionally recommends “a few warming-up exercises familiar to violinists and pianists: shaking the hands freely, lifting the arms and letting them drop suddenly, and so on.”³⁴

The preparatory approach that Rudolf takes toward physical exercises is the most common among authors who do discuss physicality besides the actual baton technique. Demaree and Moses offer three exercises before turning to the preparatory gesture and downbeat. The first is a whole body relaxation exercise, the second moves the right hand to the basic conducting position, and the third practices the baton grip in connection with a relaxed posture and proper arm position.³⁵ Even these three exercises are much more directly related to the standard conducting gesture than the Malko exercises. Phillips takes a similar approach in his discussion of posture—providing a series of guided

³² Rudolf, 1-2.

³³ Ibid, 2.

³⁴ Ibid, 2.

³⁵ Demaree and Moses, 14-20.

practices that help the student find an appropriate standing posture, arm position, and hand position.³⁶

In general, the question is not one of being ‘for or against’ physical exercises, it is instead whether to prioritize physical exercises or to leave them out of the discussion. There are not authors who advocate against these practices. Those who advocate for a specific physical training are usually more concerned with a holistic approach to the conducting gesture, while those that do not are often more concerned with the nuts and bolts details of what must be accomplished on and off the podium.

Repertoire versus examples

A question almost as important as ‘through what methodology is conducting taught?’ is the question of ‘what should the students be conducting?’ Mostly there is a balanced approach to be found in these texts. Exercises and examples written specifically for the mastery of a technique are useful when first encountering a conducting challenge, but application in the musical repertoire is the eventual goal. This approach can be seen in books like the McElheran when introducing changing beat units. First he presents a series of etudes, but along side these, he also suggests poetically based choral works, such as *Lark* by Aaron Copland and *Rejoice in the Lamb* by Benjamin Britten, as repertoire for practicing these concepts.³⁷ Green similarly offers a series of etudes on the subject and then prints an excerpt from *L’Histoire du Soldat* by Igor Stravinsky for further study.³⁸ Books like the Green and Demaree/Moses attempt to be self-sufficient, including excerpts of scores that can be used to conduct in class. Bailey goes a step

³⁶ Phillips, 7-16.

³⁷ McElheran, 118-119.

³⁸ Green, 128-136.

further. His approach is to take “great works of the standard literature of the band, choir and orchestra from the Baroque era to modern times” and arrange and truncate these to allow students to get right to the conducting issue at hand.³⁹ He additionally provides a CD-ROM with files of these excerpts that make it easy for the instructor to adapt them to the specific instrumentation found in the class that they are teaching.⁴⁰ Bailey’s approach is a balanced one, providing examples from repertoire but in a manner that can be easily executed in a collegiate conducting class.

There are other approaches though that are much more dependent upon examples not drawn from the literature. Daniel Moe’s *Problems in Conducting* is a series of examples that he has composed specifically for the conducting class and for the conductors who find themselves confronted with modern music. These examples have the benefit of being concise, singable, and easily performed by a standard conducting class. On the other hand, they may lack some of the importance and artistry present in excerpts from the masters. Bakaleinikoff took a similar approach with self-composed etudes ending his study in conducting. Meier on the other hand goes to great lengths to find excerpts from the orchestral repertoire that illustrate every specific conducting challenge under discussion. In a smaller number of matters he creates examples, but primarily he uses pre-existing material. Willetts is the most exercise-based of all including, in her short and concise tome, no references to pre-existing music and in her exercises, only rhythms with various dynamics, meter, articulations, and tempos.

It seems unlikely that any author, no matter what approach taken in their text, would be against the application of conducting technique to actual literature, as this

³⁹ Bailey, ix.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

would be the goal of anyone writing a method of conducting. The choice is when to introduce that repertoire. Is the best teaching example the great orchestral repertoire that is fraught with challenges yet full of artistry or, instead, the simple etude that gets right to the heart of the specific pedagogical issue that the author is addressing?

Musicianship training and Rehearsal Techniques

As already noted, some texts stop at the end of the development of a manual technique, while other authors continue to address other topics, including the rehearsal and other musical training that a conductor should undergo. Here, the divide is in the scope that the author has chosen to address. The Willetts *Upbeat Downbeat*, that has been observed to be curt, has a follow-up volume, *Beyond The Downbeat*, that addresses choral rehearsal skills and techniques. So, while it would be fair to say that her first book does not cover the topic of rehearsal technique, it would not be fair to assume that she does not value it. For Willetts and others, musicianship training and rehearsal technique are simply beyond the scope of the primary conducting text they have written. In contrast, Meier spends just as much time discussing the additional musical skills and score study techniques the conductor should implement as he does on beat pattern and gesture. Some books, like the Garretson and the Decker and Kirk, are intended to be more summative and thus include information not only about musicianship training and rehearsal technique, but extra-musical details such as budget management, auditions, and maintaining a well-organized music library. When a book attempts to cover so much, some of the breadth and depth on conducting technique found in a book like the Green or Rudolf is lost.

The larger question then arises: what should be mastered as a conductor and what does each author believe is the scope of their instruction? Relevant for the teacher of conducting is: in what way are they preparing their students? A course that is to cover rehearsal and/or classroom methodology as well as beat patterns necessitates a greater breadth of instruction than one geared to manual technique alone. If rehearsal technique and methodology is taught in a different course, there is more time to spend on the development of the musicianship skills related to conducting. The variety found in conducting texts is paralleled by conducting courses taught throughout American colleges and universities and is a result of the individual situations of each of these courses and their instructors. It is not necessarily a reflection on the philosophical approach to conducting that a teacher or author may possess.

Specific Topics

Besides the broader issues discussed above, there are the specific topics that constitute a technique of conducting. There is often agreement among many authors on the topics below, but there are also specific differences of opinion that are important to illuminate. For example, while the authors may all agree that beat three of a four-pattern should be conducted to the right, there are many thoughts about where exactly that beat should be placed, how it should be approached, and what the rebound from the beat should look like. These distinctions are the essence of the individual approach that each author takes, and are central to understanding the underlying philosophy of conducting that guides their writings. The methodology an author uses can also be of primary importance when selecting a textbook for a conducting class, or assigning a reading. A

thorough examination of the details of conducting technique as presented by these authors is therefore essential to the development of a personal pedagogy.

Posture

The principle author on conducting posture is James Jordan. In *Evoking Sound*, Jordan sets out “to provide valuable insights for both novice and experienced conductors concerning the relationship between choral sound and physical gesture.”⁴¹ Jordan’s perspective throughout the book is fundamentally grounded in an understanding of proper posture and alignment and the centrality of breath to every gesture in conducting. To begin his discussion, Jordan relies on the work of two titans in the field of movement theory, Frederick Matthias Alexander and Rudolf von Laban. Alexander was an actor who was motivated by personal difficulties with projection and hoarseness to launch a sixty-year career of observational study and teaching on posture and alignment.⁴² Laban spent his career in dance, primarily as a choreographer and dance educator, and believed that “the act of moving was a link between the physical and mental experiences of life.”⁴³ For Jordan, he uses Alexander technique to deal primarily with issues of alignment and tension, while Laban’s *effort elements* of flow, weight, time and space apply more directly to the physicality of the conducting gesture itself.⁴⁴ After the discussion on Alexander and Laban, Jordan continues to apply his views of the centrality of breath and posture to all of his subsequent discussions of gesture.

⁴¹ Jordan, James. *Evoking Sound: Fundamentals of Choral Conducting and Rehearsing*. (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 1996): xiii.

⁴² Ibid, 11-12.

⁴³ Jordan, 31.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 12-21, 32-45.

The broad and comprehensive understanding of conducting from a breath and postural point of view is not the typical approach in texts on conducting. Most authors treat posture more briefly and more specifically by describing some general principles for good conducting posture. Bakaleinikoff's general rules of conducting include a few mentions of posture that can serve as a starting point for the larger conversation of proper conducting posture as found in these other texts. He begins with a reminder to conductors that the audience can see them, so "choose his movements carefully. They must be simple, clear, and above all graceful."⁴⁵ Movement on the podium should be kept to a minimum according to Bakaleinikoff. "It is not necessary to jump from one side of the conductor's platform to another. When the melody changes from one group of instruments to another, it is better for the conductor to move just slightly towards the direction where the principal theme is being played."⁴⁶ Finally, he distinguishes between the proper arm and hand positions for people of various physical builds. "A position which will be proper for a tall person will look awkward for a short person and a position which will be proper for a stout person will be very improper for a slender one."⁴⁷

In discussing the placement of the feet, the general consensus is that feet should be comfortably apart. But, McElheran suggests that all conducting should happen above the waist and that the feet should remain together and still.⁴⁸ On the other hand, according to Malko, "if, while conducting, the feet were placed close together, the body would not have sufficient stability and poise and one's balance might be upset by a sharp and

⁴⁵ Bakaleinikoff, 13.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 13.

⁴⁸ McElheran, 15.

sudden movement.”⁴⁹ Bailey’s basic conducting stance seems to have some affinity with the McElheran approach, advocating for a modified ballet position with “the right heel in the in step of the left foot,” but he encourages stepping out from this initial starting position once conducting begins. At the same time, Bailey warns against “dancing on the podium.”⁵⁰

Demaree and Moses list three steps in developing a conducting posture.

1. Start with your feet. Their placement should be comfortable, with your hips squared toward the ensemble. You may place one foot slightly in front of the other if that gives you a better sense of balance.
2. Your torso, shoulders, and head should be erect. (Some people like to imagine “a string, attached to the top of the head, pulling straight up”, or “turning over the second button on one’s shirt.”)
3. Ankles, knees, hips, shoulders, neck, elbows, and wrists should feel loose and relaxed. Tension restricts your freedom of motion and, in times of stress, can make you light-headed.⁵¹

Phillips offers his own six-item list of basic elements of posture.

1. Feet must be flat on the floor (and kept on the floor), approximately six inches apart, with the weight distributed toward the ball of each foot.
2. One foot should be slightly ahead of the other to help prevent the body from swaying side to side.
3. The knees are relaxed and the hips tucked under (buttocks in).
4. The spine is stretched and the sternum (breastbone) elevated.
5. The shoulders are back, down, and relaxed.
6. Finally, the head should be held high with the chin neither lifted nor tucked back.⁵²

From the various approaches given above, their fundamental convergence is on a relaxed and centered body, with feet slightly apart and one foot slightly in front of the other.

⁴⁹ Malko, 39.

⁵⁰ Bailey, 10.

⁵¹ Demaree and Moses, 14.

⁵² Phillips, 6.

The Conducting Plane

It is imperative for the beat to be visible to the ensemble, as “a beat that cannot be easily seen will not be readily followed.”⁵³ Most conducting texts advocate for a horizontal beat plane that is found through raising the forearm to make a right angle with the body and then extending the hand out in front of the body from that position. Establishing the horizontal plane on which the beats rest is the first step in developing proper hand and arm position. According to Willetts, “the distance from the ground is approximately at the curve of the elbow.”⁵⁴ She advocates this height to keep the beat plane near the body’s center of gravity and to encourage good breathing, particularly from singing groups.⁵⁵ Meier and Phillips both base their arm height on the sternum, though Meier opts for a more centered pattern while Phillips draws the centerline to be even with the right shoulder.⁵⁶

Bailey on the other hand, advocates a much higher basic arm position. His physical pedagogy is generally built on the free use of the hinges of the body (joints such as the elbow and the shoulder) and believes that a lower arm position “causes conductors to use their elbows as their primary hinge,” and does not feel that this contributes to expressive conducting.⁵⁷ Instead, his method for finding the basic position involves extending the arms straight out so they are “perpendicular to the ground with palms down and a shoulder width apart. Next, allow your elbows to bend slightly, with your hands

⁵³ Gehrken, 22.

⁵⁴ Willetts, 11.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 11.

⁵⁶ Meier, 6; Phillips, 10-14.

⁵⁷ Bailey, 12.

drawing towards your body.”⁵⁸ Without lowering the arms when bending the elbows, the tip of the baton should be high and be generally located between the conductor’s eyes and the eyes of the players.⁵⁹

The difference between these two approaches is significant. Advocates of the lower arm position often point to connection with the breath and the power that can be derived with gestures that are rooted to the center of the body. On the other hand, Bailey’s argument about increased flexibility with the use of the various joints of the arm and shoulder is compelling and the ability to continually have the ictus placed where the eyes of the conductor meet the player is a valuable benefit. The prevailing attitude in the literature, however, seems to be for a lower position for the baton and hand.

Baton and Baton Grip

The three essential questions concerning the baton are whether to use one, what it should look like, and how to hold it. Some authors, like Scherchen, Willetts and Schuller do not mention the baton, the baton grip, or the baton debate at all. Willetts, who is a choral conductor, assumes no baton as she proceeds through her text. Scherchen, an orchestral conductor, makes no mention of the fact that he himself stopped using the baton, and not one mention for or against the baton appears in his text.⁶⁰ But Scherchen is not the norm, and generally the line between instrumental and choral conducting is usually one of with and without baton, respectively. This was especially true in the mid to

⁵⁸ Ibid, 10-11.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ehmman, Wilhelm. *Choral Directing*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968): 117.

late twentieth century, though some contemporary conductors of orchestras are following Scherchen's example and abandoning the baton when before orchestral forces.⁶¹

McElheran directly confronts these basic assumptions about baton use at the start of his fourth chapter by listing four baton "myths."

1. A baton should be used for an instrumental group and not for a chorus.
2. The baton gives a point to a beat.
3. A baton can be seen better than the hand.
4. A baton increases precision.⁶²

After a swift debunking of the above "myths", McElheran offers four of his own points on baton use.

1. A baton adds a length of rigidity to a beat which detracts from the following quality needed in a cantabile passage. Is it just coincidence that one of the greatest cantabile conductors, Stokowski, never uses a baton?
2. A baton magnifies any hand quiver to a conspicuous degree. Most people's hands treble slightly in a moment of tension, or even after strenuous movement. A baton announces this to all and sundry, making the conductor seem very nervous.
3. A baton robs the hand of an important function: indicating the mood by different positions. For example a clenched fist for *maestoso*, a relaxed, flowing movement for *cantabile*, one finger outstretched for precision, the little finger raised for delicacy, etc. But this requires much skill and practice, and beginners should not be concerned with it. Therefore, all beginners should use a baton.
4. The baton, by enabling its user to shorten the distance his arm travels, reduces fatigue in a long or strenuous work.⁶³

Along the lines of McElheran's myths, Garretson illuminates the benefits of both approaches. The baton clarifies the *ictus* and extends the arm and hand, which can be helpful when working with large groups, while the hand alone can create a more "fluid

⁶¹ Pierre Boulez (b. 1925) and Leopold Stokowski (1882-1977) are two other notable examples of conductors who primarily favored the hand over the baton.

⁶² McElheran, 13.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 13-14.

and flexible beat.”⁶⁴ For Demaree and Moses, the baton is an essential tool with which the beginning conductor must become comfortable. In support of this position, they offer six points (summarized below):

1. Instrumentalists expect a baton and will respond more comfortably if one is used.
2. When performers are further from the conductor as in choral-orchestral works, the baton clarifies visibility.
3. With a pit orchestra, the distances and sight lines make a baton more useful.
4. Well-delivered baton conducting is clearer and more precise than with the hand alone.
5. The baton highlights conducting flaws, and many conductors are more careful and more aware of these faults as a result when they conduct with a baton.
6. Preparing oneself for all possible conducting opportunities requires a familiarity and competency with the baton.⁶⁵

Nicolai Malko gives the most straightforward assessment in the baton debate.

“The baton is useful in the hand of one who knows how to use it well, but may even do more harm than good when abused.”⁶⁶ This seems to be the fundamental point in the debate. One must learn how to use a baton, but, for most students of conducting, the baton does not come naturally at first. Therefore, the most common recommendation is to start with the baton so that this technique can be established from the beginning and can continue to serve the conductor whether they go on to use a baton frequently or rarely.

If one has decided to use a baton, then the question becomes what kind of baton to use. The consensus preference is for wood batons (or newer materials like graphite and carbon fiber) that are tapered and relatively light. Historically, the recommendation on baton size seems to have trended from larger to smaller. A 12” baton seems to be the general recommendation for most authors since the late 1990s. This is in contrast to sizes

⁶⁴ Garretson, 26.

⁶⁵ Demaree and Moses, 17.

⁶⁶ Malko, 116.

around 20” in the 1950s and before. Bailey specifically ties the length of the baton to the length of the conductor’s arm and the size of the ensemble. The longer the arm and the larger the ensemble, the longer the baton may be.⁶⁷ The consensus on handle shape seems to be toward tapered shapes such as a knob, ball or pear, but many authors make no comment or specifically leave this decision to the conductor in terms of what feels best. Universally, the authors prefer light-colored and white baton colors from a standpoint of best visibility. Table 1 summarizes recommendations on selecting a baton from a number of sources, listed chronologically.

Table 1. Chronological list of baton recommendations.

Author	Length	Handle	Color
Gehrkens ⁶⁸ (1919)	16”-20”		“light in color”
Malko ⁶⁹ (1950)	matter of preference	matter of preference	matter of preference
Rudolf ⁷⁰ (1950)	20”	“with or without”	
Bowles ⁷¹ (1959)	long enough, but not too long		“light in colour”
Hunsberger ⁷² (1992)	10”-14”	cork or wood	
Green ⁷³ (1997)	12”	pear-shaped	white

⁶⁷ Bailey, 13.

⁶⁸ Gehrkens, 20.

⁶⁹ Malko, 118-20.

⁷⁰ Rudolf, xvii.

⁷¹ Bowles, 71.

⁷² Hunsberger, Donald and Roy Ernst. *The Art of Conducting*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1992): 30.

⁷³ Green, 26.

Author	Length	Handle	Color
Phillips ⁷⁴ (1997)	10"-14" most use 12"	rubber or wood, 2" in length, tapers to shaft, small in diameter	
Labuta ⁷⁵ (2004)	12"-14"	ball-end	
Bailey ⁷⁶ (2009)	"distance from center of palm to the crook of the elbow"	"a matter of preference"	

The way a conductor holds the baton is just as personal as the type of baton they prefer, and is subject to a considerable amount of variation depending on the character of the music. However, three main variations emerge from the literature. First are those who advocate a full hand approach to holding the baton. Both McElheran and Bailey describe the basic method of setting a baton grip as akin to shaking hands and then wrapping the fingers around the baton. This grip is one, as McElheran points out, that was advocated by the famous conductor Pierre Monteux.⁷⁷ Bailey stresses that while all the fingers wrap around the baton, the work is done by the thumb and forefinger.⁷⁸ For both McElheran and Bailey, the palm faces down, and the result is a baton that is slightly angled to the left.

Along these lines, Bowles, Phillips, and Labuta all advocate a grip that is essentially identical, and in many ways, the standard baton grip. The baton is gripped between the pad of the thumb and the first joint of the forefinger with the heel of the baton resting gently against the palm of the hand (or in the case of Phillips, pointing

⁷⁴ Phillips, 63-64.

⁷⁵ Labuta, 8.

⁷⁶ Bailey, 12-14.

⁷⁷ McElheran, 14.

⁷⁸ Bailey, 14.

towards it). In this grip, as was the case with McElheran and Bailey, the baton angles slightly to the left with Phillips being the clearest about this angle, indicating that the tip of the baton will be at the body's center point.⁷⁹ Phillips is the link between McElheran and Bailey, advocating for the option to wrap the rest of the fingers around the baton for *marcato* passages.⁸⁰

In contrast to both of these grips, Green and Demaree/Moses both advocate a position that keeps the baton extended directly out from the arm rather than at an angle to the left. Green's description is the clearest in how this is accomplished. The thumb and forefinger hold the baton with the thumb remaining curved. The heel of the baton presses against the "fleshy hollow near the base of the thumb" and the ring finger rests on the heel.⁸¹ While the focus on the fulcrum of the thumb and forefinger are the same, the requirement that the baton faces straight out from the hand stands in strong contrast to the other approaches, shifting the beat pattern off of the centerline as one would if conducting with hands alone.

Hunsberger and Ernst, who present detailed pictures of the basic grips described above as well as common errors in conducting grips, stress the importance of self-evaluation the baton grip. They offer three points to check with any conducting grip.

1. Feel where the contact points with the baton are located. For any style in which flexibility is required, there should be only two main contact points with the baton. Three or more contact points (such as two fingers and the thumb; or one finger, the thumb, and the palm) create a rigid grip, and the baton will not pivot. Test flexibility in the grip by holding the baton very lightly and making small down-up motions, allowing the baton to pivot slightly in the grip

⁷⁹ Bowles, 71; Phillips, 67-68; Labuta, 8.

⁸⁰ Phillips, 68.

⁸¹ Green, 22-25.

2. Notice the general shape of your hand and the curvature of all your fingers
3. The ictus of the beat should always be focused in the tip of the baton. For example, when a beat is given to the right, the tip of the baton should make a larger motion in that direction than the hand or elbow. Some conductors prefer to lead with the wrist.⁸²

With all of these grips, batons of different lengths and handle styles will effect how successful the grip feels. In many ways, just as the choice to use a baton and the style of that baton are a matter of personal preference, so too is baton grip. Bakaleinikoff writes that “intuition and good judgment will tell [the conductor] which position is correct for him.”⁸³

Beat Patterns

In the earlier discussion of the conducting plane, the topic was confined to the general position of the beat pattern and where the basic motion of the arms originates. The conducting plane has additional significance when examining the variety of beat patterns that are advocated throughout the literature. The major difference that emerges here is where the ictus, the point of the beat, is placed throughout the pattern. One school of thought proposes that each ictus falls upon the same horizontal plane. The alternative option is that the beats are oriented not just across a horizontal plane, but also on a vertical plane.

⁸² Hunberger and Ernst, 35.

⁸³ Bakaleinikoff, 8.

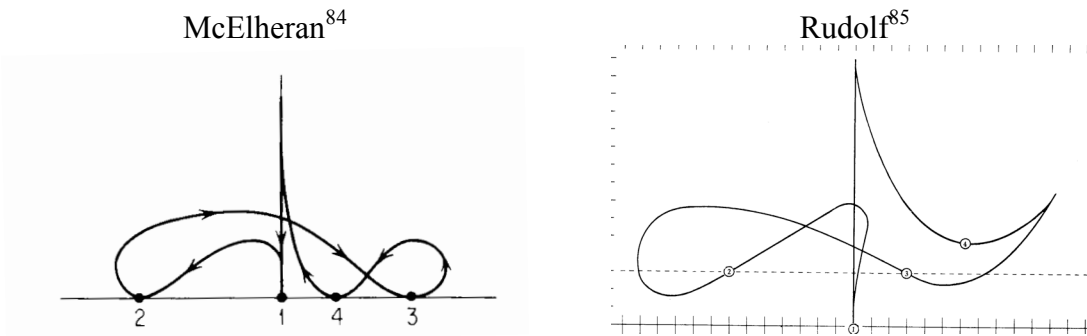


Figure 2. Comparison of the basic 4-beat pattern of Rudolf and McElheran.

In figure 2, the basic Rudolf and McElheran four-beat patterns represent these two approaches to the orientation of the ictus versus the horizontal plane. In McElheran's pattern, all four beats fall on the same horizontal line. In contrast, Rudolf's pattern shows beat one as the lowest, beat two and three are on the same horizontal line and then beat four is slightly above. Another slight variation of the McElheran approach is found in Green's text. Green keeps all beats except the final upbeat on the same horizontal plane. This variation is done to eliminate the quicker rebound style that she experiences in the McElheran approach.⁸⁶ (See figure 3).

⁸⁴ McElheran, 24.

⁸⁵ Rudolf, 21.

⁸⁶ Green, 37.

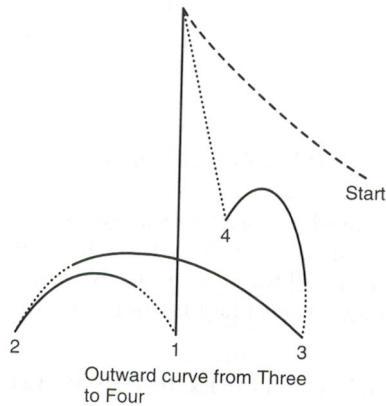


Figure 3. Green's four-beat pattern.⁸⁷

In spite of the general brevity in McElheran's text he is perhaps the most specific about why he adopts certain patterns. Chapter six is dedicated to the theory of beat patterns that rest on some fundamental premises.

1. The first beat of the bar must always be clearly distinguishable from the others.
2. The theoretical secondary accents in a compound time signature are shown by motions larger than unaccented beats, usually made across the body.
3. Give the beats, not the rhythms⁸⁸

These three points are the basis for the basic patterns, i.e. one is always down and three in a four pattern is across the body. The literature is almost universally in agreement over these first points. McElheran goes on to add three more points for consideration. First, that each beat is a "*moment of time ... NOT a duration.*"⁸⁹ This focus on a specific point to each beat is further clarified with a belief that each beat "bounces" from the same level and that motions toward a player must be avoided.⁹⁰

Therefore, *time should never be indicated by motion toward a player.* Do not use the type of beat patterns (so often shown in conducting textbooks) that make horizontal motions to the sides. While these are clear to people

⁸⁷ Ibid, 11.

⁸⁸ McElheran, 17-18.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 18.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 19-20.

in front of the conductor, they aim directly at those on either side, such as violins or cellos in a symphony orchestra, clarinets in a band, choristers on curved risers, or practically everybody in an opera orchestra.⁹¹

For McElheran, the solution is geometrical. An arc defines a point by intersecting a line. This line is the “bounce level” or the horizontal plane.⁹² This argument is primarily defined through its treatment of beats outside of the upbeat and downbeat. In a four-beat pattern for example, beats two and three are to the left and right respectively. Those in the school of Rudolf would have those points intersect with a horizontal plane, but above the one defined by the downbeat. McElheran submits that keeping all these beats along the same horizontal plane lends more clarity to the overall pattern.

A variation on McElheran’s single plane approach is Atherton’s “Vertical Plane Focal Point Conducting,” derived from the techniques of George Hurst. Here, the ictus is maintained in one point no matter the beat and the preparation and rebound define the metrical information.⁹³ An example of this type of pattern is given by Green in figure 4. Along with this diagram, Green also shows examples of the McElheran “bounce level” approach and the Rudolf pattern where beats two and three are elevated. Green acknowledges these other ideas as possible and even possibly preferred by some conductors so long as three things are kept in mind: “a good sense of rhythm, a lack of tension in the arm muscles, and a readable beat (especially for the first beat of the measure).”⁹⁴ McElheran is less forgiving of alternative approaches, saying at the end of

⁹¹ Ibid, 20.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Atherton, vii.

⁹⁴ Green, 37.

his chapter, “If you disagree with some points, reread them, and then make a study of them when next you are performing under someone else. You may change your mind.”⁹⁵

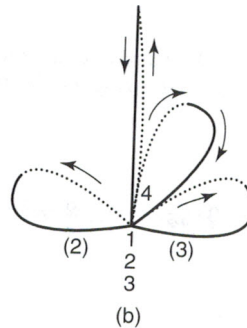


Figure 4. Green’s diagram of focal point conducting.⁹⁶

Along with Rudolf, Green and McElheran, a number of other authors subscribe to similar approaches. Garretson, Scherchen, Bakaleinikoff, Grosbayne and Ehmann all align mostly with Rudolf, while Demaree/Moses, Phillips, Meier, Bowles, Labuta and Willetts are all in agreement with McElheran. Green’s elevated fourth beat is similar to Malko’s approach and is also shared by Gehrkens, Hunsberger and Ernst, and, to some degree, Bailey. Even with these disagreements, the basics of patterns are all shared in the literature. There is no disagreement about the general directionality of the subsidiary beats in standard patterns or on the necessity for clarity on the first beat in a measure.

When a tempo is sufficiently slow, a beat pattern may need to be subdivided to communicate clearly with the ensemble. McElheran presents three principles of subdivision to guide the conductor in this practice.

- a. Preserve the original basic pattern
- b. Give additional bounces on the appropriate beats.
- c. Modify the size of the extra beats in accordance with their musical importance.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ McElheran, 22.

⁹⁶ Green, 37.

These principles, as well as the various styles of subdivision seem to have continuity across the literature. Hunsberger and Ernst present the clearest explanations of the various ways to subdivide by describing three styles of subdivision (see figures 5 and 6). The “rebound style” is by far the most common across the literature. To execute this style of subdivision, “let the hand rebound slightly from the ictus of the beat and place an additional, smaller beat in approximately the same location.”⁹⁸ This is also the method described by McElheran and Willetts, though Willetts makes clear that “[original emphasis] ONLY THE PULSE THAT PROPELS YOU TO THE NEXT BASIC BEAT HAS AN ACTIVE REBOUND.” Otherwise, beats are minimized and placed in the same physical space.⁹⁹

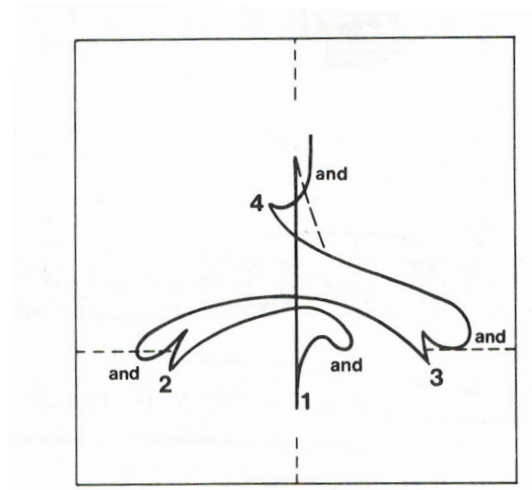


Figure 5. Rebound subdivision style.¹⁰⁰

In addition to the rebound style, Hunsberger and Ernst describe the “continuation style” and the “continuation-rebound style.” For the continuation style, the conductor should “make a slight pause on the beat... and continue in the same direction, as in a

⁹⁷ McElheran, 28.

⁹⁸ Hunsberger and Ernst, 82.

⁹⁹ Willetts, 41.

¹⁰⁰ Hunsberger and Ernst, 82.

debate. For Willetts, “[o]ne should beat 2/2 with a subdivided TWO pattern and not a FOUR pattern. This renders all of the beats to be basically in the same place only to be delineated by clear rebounds. The ‘and’ of 2 will have the highest rebound.”¹⁰³

McElheran is quite earnest about his opposite opinion.

Some theorists maintain that there is a difference between a slow 2/4, beating eighth notes, and a slow 4/4 beating quarters.... In practice, no justification for this can be found, it being a theorists' quibble. The Great Masters were quite happy writing adagio 2/4's or 4/4's indiscriminately. The author has never seen a celebrated conductor use a divided 2 for more than a few seconds at a time. It is an awkward beat and should receive a speedy burial, being exhumed only for brief intervals.¹⁰⁴

The authors have less to say about the practice of merging than they do about subdivision. Merging is the gradual transition from a more divided beat pattern into a less divided pattern. For instance, as a tempo accelerates a conductor might shift from beating in three to beating in one, or from four to two. While subdivision is routinely discussed, only some authors give mention of merging, and even when they do, it is often brief and not particularly explanatory. Willetts, for instance, introduces the concept and provides some exercises for practice but does not discuss the physicality of successful merging. McElheran offers some anecdotes and definitions, along with a few exercises for practice, but little else in terms of description.

Merging is less common. Sometimes in an acceleration the beats would be too fast to be clear; the conductor then merges two or three beats together and continues thus in the faster tempo.... In the writer's youth he had great trouble making his orchestra accelerate sufficiently in a Strauss waltz when he stayed in a fast 3; then he tried merging into 1, part way through the acceleration, and the trouble was instantly cured—a fine illustration of bad conducting rather than bad performers.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Willetts, 48.

¹⁰⁴ McElheran, 28-29.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 78.

Labuta provides two diagrams to clarify the merging gestures (figure 7 and 8), additionally noting that as the tempo increases, the size of the pattern must decrease.

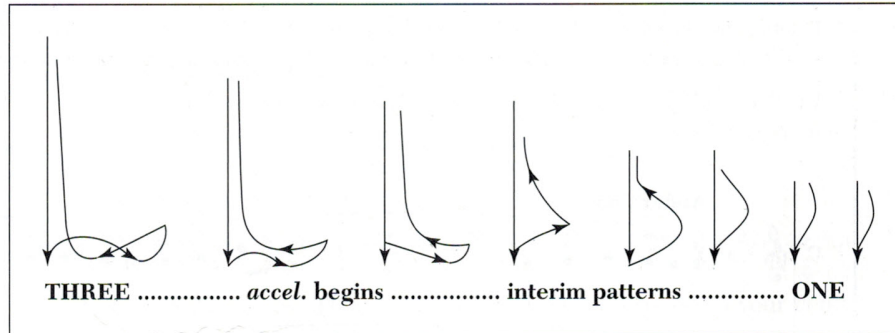


Figure 7. Transition from three to one.¹⁰⁶

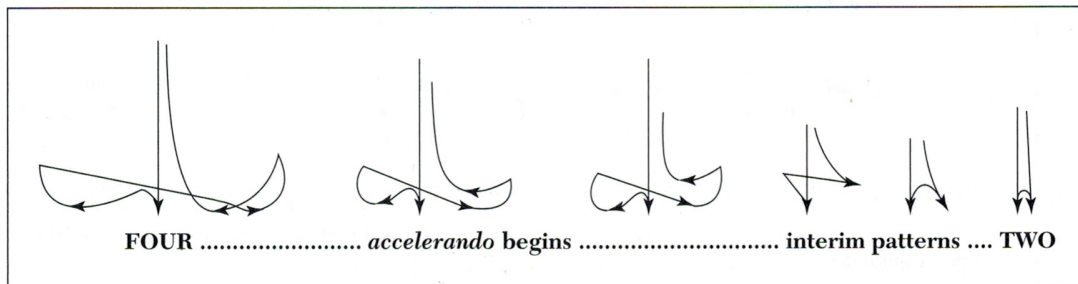


Figure 8. Transition from four to two.¹⁰⁷

Preparatory gestures

While the literature is aligned on its treatment of the preparatory gesture, how the task is defined varies specifically by author. All the sources agree that when music starts on the beat, the beat prior to the beat of entry must be given. Green adds that an essential ingredient in a successful preparatory gesture is the “impulse of will”, the determination for sound to be made by the ensemble.¹⁰⁸ Green is also less specific with the directionality of a full beat preparatory gesture. She stresses instead that the “slant of the

¹⁰⁶ Labuta, 63.

¹⁰⁷ Labuta, 63.

¹⁰⁸ Green, 12.

preparatory beat should be upward. A downward curve in the preparatory beat can be mistaken by some of the players for a command to play—with unhappy results.”¹⁰⁹ McElheran is in agreement that the preparatory gesture, while rooted in the standard beat pattern, is always up.¹¹⁰

With music beginning on a fraction of a beat, the appropriate method for conducting the start is less clear. Both Meier and Labuta suggest two methods as possibilities. Labuta’s one-count preparatory prepares “the first full beat that follows the fraction and subsume[s] the fraction within the preparation.”¹¹¹ The two-count preparatory, as the name implies requires that two beats before the first full beat are given. Labuta cautions, “you must take great care not to bring the musicians in prematurely.” This is accomplished through a neutral, passive, or “dead” beat for the first of the two preparatory beats and a “live” preparation on the second.¹¹² Labuta suggests using the one-count method “in fairly slow tempos where the beat is easily established or where the fraction occupies less than one-half count.” The two-count is best used at quick tempos or when the “fraction occupies more than one-half count.”¹¹³

Meier offers a similar distinction. “If the upbeat’s duration is half of the basic pulse or less, the normal preparatory beat for bringing in the orchestra on the main count is sufficient.”¹¹⁴ On the other hand, if “the upbeat’s duration is longer than half of the basic pulse, an additional preparatory beat is required.”¹¹⁵ For Meier, the openings of

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 13.

¹¹⁰ McElheran, 65.

¹¹¹ Labuta, 28.

¹¹² Ibid, 28-29.

¹¹³ Ibid, 29.

¹¹⁴ Meier, 21-22.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 24.

Beethoven Symphony no. 2, fourth movement; Schumann Symphony no. 3, fifth movement; and The Soldier's March in the Stravinsky *L'histoire du soldat* are all best conducted with one-count preparations.¹¹⁶ On the other hand, the openings of the Rimsky-Korsakov *Sherazade*, third movement; Beethoven Symphony no. 5, first movement; and Strauss *Don Juan* require a two-count prep.¹¹⁷ In two-count preparations, Meier's first beat must communicate the correct tempo but not have an ictus. This is the same principle as Labuta's live and neutral beats. Demaree and Moses argue against two preparatory beats except in "rare circumstances in which (because of a difficult rhythm or tempo shift) it is permissible."¹¹⁸ Rudolf is of the same opinion, advising against subdividing the entrance or adding additional beats unless "you cannot get a satisfactory result without it."¹¹⁹ McElheran comes down on the other side, always advocating for two preparatory gestures in the live/dead manner described by Labuta and Meier. McElheran believes the Demaree and Moses approach "violates logic" since "[t]he conductor is actually asking the players to come in halfway through a unit of time *before the unit has been defined.*" But, McElheran also acknowledges the inherent danger of this method. "Therefore, the first beat must be given very casually, small, with left hand held out motionless."¹²⁰ Phillips, Bailey, and Willetts all side with McElheran in this debate.

Green's approach is a modification of Malko's *gesture of syncopation* (GoS). In the gesture of syncopation, the preparatory motion is replaced by a dead stop one beat before the "GoS beat." The "GoS beat" itself is a sudden "instantaneous sharp twist

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 22-23.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 24-25.

¹¹⁸ Demaree and Moses, 51.

¹¹⁹ Rudolf, 98.

¹²⁰ McElheran, 68-69.

toward the right, similar to turning a key to *unlock* a door.”¹²¹ When using this gesture for a start on a fraction of the beat, Green describes the following solution.

When the first note of a composition is an afterbeat, the GoS is in its element. A small downward flick of the fingers of the left hand states one beat before the first written beat. The right hand follows rhythmically with the sudden GoS on the initial beat of the composition. The time between the left hand and the right hand is exactly one beat. There is no preparatory motion in either hand.¹²²

The gesture of syncopation has applications within the beat pattern as well. Green’s rule for this is that “[w]hen the musicians must react after the beat (instead of on the beat), the beat itself must have its own distinctive character that cannot be mistaken for any other type of gesture.”¹²³ In these cases, the left hand does not necessarily need to be involved. Instead, the stop occurs on the beat preceding the syncopation and the flick on the GoS beat creates the impulse for the players to properly place their attack after the beat.

Labuta is less specific on this issue, but agrees with Green. “Hesitate on the beat before; then move straight into the beat with a wrist snap.”¹²⁴ Alternatively, Meier places the stopped beat on the beat of syncopation, rather than the beat before.¹²⁵ McElheran removes the stop entirely, but leaves intact the idea of a flicking gesture on the beat where the offbeat or syncopation occurs.¹²⁶ In spite of these disagreements, all four of these authors are aligned that the conductor should conduct the beat and not the syncopation or offbeat. “It is universally agreed in a syncopated passage the conductor

¹²¹ Green, 52.

¹²² Ibid, 56.

¹²³ Ibid, 52.

¹²⁴ Labuta, 49.

¹²⁵ Meier, 82.

¹²⁶ McElheran, 51.

should [original emphasis] PRESERVE THE BEAT AND LET THE PERFORMERS SYNCOPATE AROUND IT.”¹²⁷

Cues and Releases

Closely tied to the discussion of preparatory gestures are the subjects of cues, releases and fermatas (or holds). Like preparatory gestures, cues and releases must be prepared.¹²⁸ McElheran elaborates on this connection. “Basically a cue is like a start or an accent. One beat before, make an anticipatory gesture, and at the moment of entrance a decisive motion in a generally downwards direction, like ‘ready-go!’ or ‘up-down!’”¹²⁹ Green’s cueing gesture is “a small, definite motion toward the recipient(s); palm toward the floor, middle fingers together.” To make the cue an invitation, turning the palm “slightly upward” is another alternative. Green also encourages eye contact if possible.¹³⁰ While both of the above descriptions are of hand gestures, there are multiple methods of cueing supported by the large body of authors.

In general, cues can be given with either hand (baton included) or the head and eyes. The head and eyes are the most appropriate tool for delivering a subtle cue. This kind of cueing is recommended especially for soloist or small group entrances.¹³¹ The head and the eyes are also highly effective when both hands are otherwise occupied.¹³² Phillips is more comfortable reserving head nods for chamber ensembles and relies more on the hands and particularly the baton for cueing. For cueing gestures with the hands or baton, the basic recommendation is that the direction of the cue determines the hand used.

¹²⁷ McElheran, 51-52.

¹²⁸ Labuta, 45; Bailey, 59; Demaree and Moses, 87.

¹²⁹ McElheran, 48.

¹³⁰ Green, 92.

¹³¹ Labuta, 46.

¹³² Green, 93.

Therefore, cues to the first violins would be delivered with the left hand while, depending on the seating plan, the cellos would likely receive a baton cue. Labuta recommends the baton be used as much as possible for cues, except in those cases when the performers are seated at the extreme left.¹³³ Meier and Phillips advocate an additional method of turning the body or pivoting toward the group receiving the cue. This is especially effective “when a cue is given in the opposite direction of the beat within the pattern.”¹³⁴

But when should a cue be given and for what purpose? McElheran is perhaps the clearest on this subject and delivers an unequivocal rule. “[original emphasis] CUES SHOULD NEVER BE USED TO SHOW A PERFORMER WHEN TO COME IN.”¹³⁵ This may seem counter-intuitive at first, but the literature is mostly in agreement. “Musicians usually know when they are to enter the ensemble fabric. Fine professionals always do. It is not just to save them from counting measures and rhythms that you signal their entrances and releases.”¹³⁶ For Rudolf, the purposes of cueing are to serve as a reminder of an entrance, to “insure precision of attack” and to interpretively shape the sound at the point of entry.¹³⁷ McElheran adds to this list to “[r]aise the performer’s morale and thereby improve many other musical qualities (tone, balance, etc.).”¹³⁸ Meier agrees with these sentiments, and Green adds a very specific list of moments to cue.

1. When an instrument or a group of instruments enters the music for the first time after the piece has already begun
2. When an instrument or a group of instruments enters after a long rest
3. When a single instrument begins an important solo or melodic line
4. When an entire section takes over the main theme

¹³³ Labuta, 46.

¹³⁴ Phillips, 203.

¹³⁵ McElheran, 46-47.

¹³⁶ Demaree and Moses, 87.

¹³⁷ Rudolf, 241-43

¹³⁸ McElheran, 46-47.

5. When melodic interest or rhythmic figures (motifs) are tossed from one instrument to another
6. Whenever entrances are tricky and difficult
7. When the conductor wishes to control exactly the moment of the sound
8. When instruments enter on *double forte* attacks
9. When there is a cymbal crash or an entrance of the cymbals for a prolonged passage
10. When there are isolated pizzicato notes or chords¹³⁹

The list that Green offers, while much more specific than those of Rudolf, McElheran, or Demaree and Moses, is essentially compatible with the basic premises that these authors offer. However, Bailey warns against cueing too often. “The beginning conductor is cautioned to not overcue the ensemble or he will begin to look like a traffic cop and other musically important issues suffer.”¹⁴⁰ Of course, each piece and ensemble will have its own requirements in terms of the amount of cueing necessary. “Generally, less experienced groups need more cues, and vice versa. However, even the most experienced ensemble players who have not been playing for numerous measures are reassured when the conductor cues their entrance.”¹⁴¹

To some authors, the cut-off or release is very similar to the preparatory gesture or the cue, simply another beat, while others feel that the release should have a specific gesture assigned to it. Rudolf explains some possibilities.

You may cut off with the right hand alone, either by clicking or by making a definite stop on the rest. The left hand may also be used [...] Some conductors move the arm in toward the body, palm inward, closing the hand simultaneously. Another effective motion is a quick downward turn of the left hand.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Green, 92.

¹⁴⁰ Bailey, 60.

¹⁴¹ Phillips, 204.

¹⁴² Rudolf, 129.

The main differences seem to come down to whether or not a circular motion is necessary. Those, like Willetts, who do not believe so tend to be firmer about their convictions. “The CUT-OFF gesture seems to be one that develops the most personal idiosyncrasies—mostly in the form of excessive and flowery motions. Endless curlicues and pinching one’s fingers together.”¹⁴³ McElheran is of the same mind on this issue. “Many complex and ineffective ways to do this are being taught. Some people use a written ‘e’ for no apparent reason; others make wild swoops in several directions, and nobody knows exactly when to stop.”¹⁴⁴

For Willetts, the difference between a regular beat and a cut-off gesture is that the cut-off is generally higher than the normal beating plane and the rebound smaller. Otherwise, she instructs one to “raise the beating hand from the last beat and tap another beat followed by a small rebound with the appropriate articulation.”¹⁴⁵ “The simplest way is best.” to McElheran, “returning to exactly where it started from... up, down, like ‘ready, go!’”¹⁴⁶ Garretson, Gehrkens, and Meier are all in agreement with the approach advocated by McElheran and Willetts. Meier’s only advice is that like preparatory gestures and cues, cut-offs “require a full preparatory motion.”¹⁴⁷

On the other side of the debate where specific cut-off gestures are suggested, the authors do not make precisely clear why a normal preparatory gesture is not sufficient. Differentiated cut-offs are instead introduced as a matter of fact without a justification. Demaree and Moses begin their description with “[t]he basic gesture is a small loop

¹⁴³ Willetts, 29.

¹⁴⁴ McElheran, 73.

¹⁴⁵ Willetts, 29.

¹⁴⁶ McElheran, 73.

¹⁴⁷ Meier, 71. See also Garretson, 16-20; and Gehrkens.

around the impact point of the beat on which you want the release.”¹⁴⁸ This is essentially the same as Labuta’s description of “a small circular motion with a flick at the bottom of the arc to define the exact point of release.”¹⁴⁹ For Bailey, the exact point of release is instead defined by “an ictus made with a downward motion.”¹⁵⁰ Hunsberger and Ernst, Green, and Phillips all subscribe to the basic circle gesture.¹⁵¹ For Green, there is no explanation, instead only diagrams to demonstrate the proper pattern for a release.¹⁵²

As illustrated above by Rudolf, there are other types of release gestures beyond the circle. “The type of release used is dictated by the style of the music. The shape or type of gesture is usually determined by the length of decay of sound required in the music.”¹⁵³ Bailey goes on to clarify these other types of gestures. For Bailey, the circle is the most basic and most often used release. It is appropriate for a variety of styles and is especially useful for releases from fermatas. For a “stinger note”, Bailey suggests beating “the ictus of the final beat with a full stop. The length of the rebound, if any, will indicate to the performers if the sound should be stopped abruptly or have an element of decay.”¹⁵⁴

While this may cover a number of the right hand gestures, “most cut-offs include the movement of the left hand.”¹⁵⁵ Bailey offers three specific kinds of left hand gestures for releases.

¹⁴⁸ Demaree and Moses, 71.

¹⁴⁹ Labuta, 26.

¹⁵⁰ Bailey, 40.

¹⁵¹ Hunsberger and Ernst, 39; Phillips, 29-30

¹⁵² Green, 14.

¹⁵³ Bailey, 39.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 40.

¹⁵⁵ Phillips, 29.

1. Clockwise gesture with the elbow and wrist while closing the fingers of the left hand to the thumb (not into a fist)
2. a gesture of rolling the fingers closed while appearing to grasp an imaginary object in mid air. This gives the impression of gathering the sound out of the air to cause the release.
3. Extending the left hand as if to shake hands, moving upward and at the same time in a circular motion while closing the fingers onto the thumb.¹⁵⁶

Fermatas

For a number of authors, the proper control of fermatas requires substantial instruction and attention. For Rudolf, the “[c]ontrol of holds and interruptions is one of the hardest problems confronting the student conductor.”¹⁵⁷ In spite of this observation, Willetts does not treat fermatas in her text and neither Gehrken nor Atherton discusses the subject in detail. Even Demaree and Moses only offer brief remarks about the common situations where fermatas are found without much treatment of how to solve the problems of these fermatas.¹⁵⁸

Labuta identifies three parts of the fermata: the attack, duration and termination.¹⁵⁹ In discussing the differences in approaches to the fermata, most agree on the attack. One simply continues to beat expressively into the beat where the fermata occurs. It is on the next two points, duration and termination that the debate begins. With respect to the duration, the major dividing line is around what kind of motion occurs while holding the fermata. Grosbayne and McElheran advocate for no motion from the baton at all, a complete stop.¹⁶⁰ This is in contrast to Green, Bailey, Hunsberger and Ernst, and Labuta who believe that some kind of motion of intensity is necessary. Green

¹⁵⁶ Bailey, 40.

¹⁵⁷ Rudolf, 160.

¹⁵⁸ Demaree and Moses, 72.

¹⁵⁹ Labuta, 37.

¹⁶⁰ Grosbayne, 81.

and McElheran are precisely on opposite sides of the debate. For McElheran, “some conductors use a slow upward motion for a fermata, on the grounds that this prevents the sound from dying away. With a well-trained group this produces an unwanted crescendo.”¹⁶¹ Green argues that “[w]hen the baton stands still, there is always the danger that a diminuendo will occur.”¹⁶² Bailey worries instead that if the conductor remains “motionless with a passive expression... the performers will stop playing.”¹⁶³ Meier’s general comment is perhaps the most even-handed. “The conductor actively participates in the holding of the fermata and reflects the flow of time by remaining focused.”¹⁶⁴ This view does not advocate specifically a gesture or motion, but instead states that the conductor must be an active participant in the fermata, not remaining passive as Bailey warns against.

The termination of a fermata, the final part of Labuta’s three, is the real difficulty in conducting. McElheran is correct that the “problem is never the fermata itself”, instead it is like “falling out of the Empire State Building, the trouble comes when you stop.”¹⁶⁵ Some authors, like Rudolf and Green, take a very specific approach to solving the termination issue by presenting a collection of musical excerpts and by “solving” these problems as examples. But Rudolf and Green state some generalities around fermatas as well. Rudolf defines his categories as holds that end a piece versus holds that occur during a piece. Of the holds during a piece, these can be subdivided into two subcategories: holds followed or not followed by rests and holds followed or not

¹⁶¹ McElheran, 88.

¹⁶² Green, 97.

¹⁶³ Bailey, 62.

¹⁶⁴ Meier, 74.

¹⁶⁵ McElheran, 85.

followed by breaks.¹⁶⁶ Like most of the other authors, Green groups her fermata classifications only by what follows them. Fermatas may cut off completely, continue without a cut-off or interrupt a continuous melody line with no cut-off. In each of these situations, the music can continue on a beat or on an “afterbeat”.¹⁶⁷

The most common approach in the literature is a tripartite structure of fermata types. Fermatas are frequently defined as type one, two and three in the literature, though McElheran flips the order and labels with letters instead (table 2).

Table 2. The three common types of releases that follow fermatas.

Release type	Long Cut/Caesura	Short Cut/Breath	No Cut/Break
Number ¹⁶⁸	1	2	3
McElheran Letter	C	B	A

The long cut or caesura fermata (see figure 9) is generally treated as a hold at the end of a piece followed by a preparatory gesture that would start a piece. The preparatory beat can begin a section in a new tempo and can prepare an entrance on or after a beat. The authors are consistent in their treatment of this type of fermata: recommending a cut-off in their prescribed style, stillness for the desired length of time, and then either one or two preparatory gestures as called for according to their technique.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Rudolf, 160.

¹⁶⁷ Green, 109.

¹⁶⁸ The labeling system used by Labuta, Phillips and Scherchen assigns numbers to these three types of fermatas and is consistent throughout their discussions.

¹⁶⁹ See Rudolf, 172; Bailey, 63; and McElheran, 87.

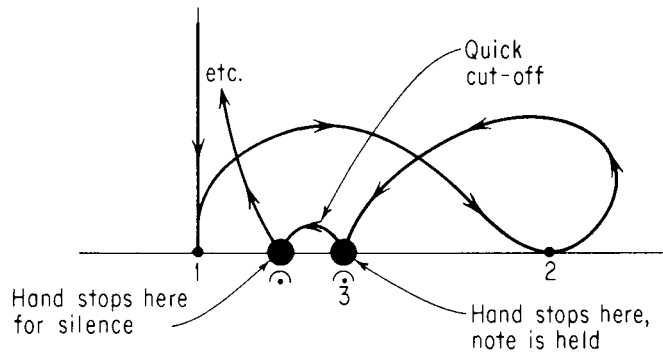


Figure 9. Long cut fermata.¹⁷⁰

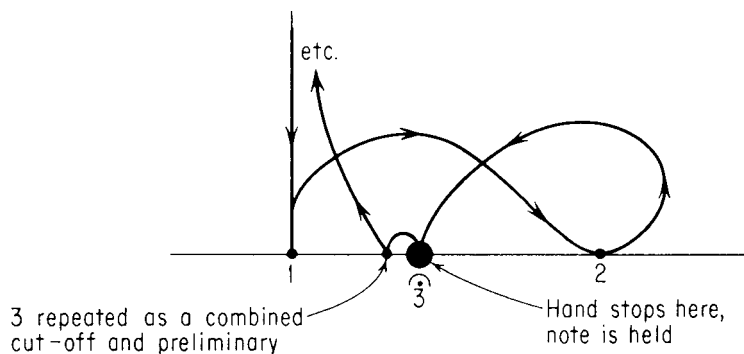


Figure 10. Short cut fermata¹⁷¹

For a short cut or breath fermata (see figure 10), the release is also usually the preparatory gesture. Bailey and Meier both advocate the use of two hands for these gestures. The release is indicated with the left and the new preparatory gesture is given with the right.¹⁷² McElheran suggests that the release is a downward motion that repeats the beat and “acts as a cut-off and also is a preliminary for the next note.”¹⁷³ McElheran also finds that the “left hand can help. Hold it out motionless during the fermata, and

¹⁷⁰ McElheran, 87.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 87.

¹⁷² Bailey, 63.

¹⁷³ McElheran, 86.

mirror the right hand when it starts moving again.”¹⁷⁴ Green is also an advocate of the left hand generally.

In many cases the left hand can be most serviceable in showing the termination of the fermata. This hand is also valuable in helping to control the general fermata dynamic, in reinforcing the sustained tone, and in adding a hypnotic quality to a very long diminuendo-fermata.¹⁷⁵

When there is to be no break between the fermata and the next musical sound (see figure 11), the authors agree that the primary concern is that the gesture should not look like a cut-off. Here, perhaps, is the best case for using a specific gesture for a cut-off. A preparatory gesture must be given to restart the music, but to keep the players from cutting off, the gesture of preparation should be “smooth rather than sharp, so that the players cannot mistake it for a cut-off.”¹⁷⁶ Bailey agrees “this prep beat should look like a small and smooth rebeating of the beat of the fermata.”¹⁷⁷

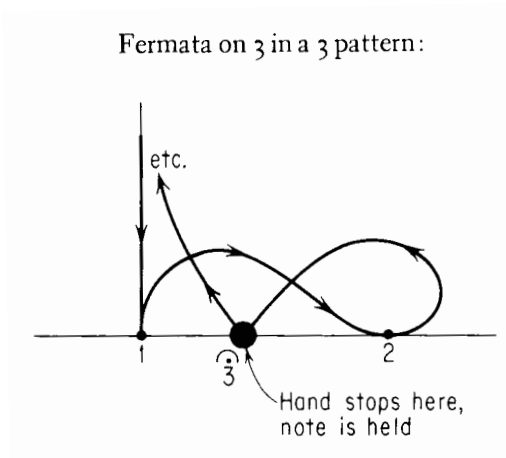


Figure 11. No cut fermata.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Green, 97.

¹⁷⁶ Rudolf, 176.

¹⁷⁷ Bailey, 63.

¹⁷⁸ McElheran, 86.

Rudolf elaborates on some other situations that arise with fermatas. For the final hold of a piece the dynamics must be controlled. In louder dynamics, a gesture of intensity from the left or right hand is necessary to sustain the dynamic through the hold. At a piano dynamic, stopping the baton is acceptable, in a pianissimo, “the left hand keeps the orchestra subdued.”¹⁷⁹ Holds followed by rests are treated as a short cut (type 2 or B) where the release is the preparatory gesture. Different note values under a fermata require that all relevant beats are shown. Interruptions are treated as either a caesura or breath (type 3/A or 2/B) depending on the length of the pause.¹⁸⁰

From a pedagogical perspective, both Green and Grosbayne offer some additional points of consideration for the conductor’s solving of fermatas in a score. For Green, there are three points of consideration: 1) How long? 2) Does the sound stop? and 3) If there is a cut-off, in what direction?¹⁸¹ For Grosbayne, “[i]t is helpful, when confronted by a passage with holds which seems troublesome, to beat through the text without the holds to get the main line of the musical thought, and then to add the holds.”¹⁸²

Left Hand

When discussing the left hand, there are two issues to consider. One is the issue of “left-handed conducting” and specifically whether it is advocated or even allowed. The other is what expressivity and clarity the non-time-beating hand can add. The debate around those who are left-handed using that hand as the primary time-beating device hand is hardly even a debate in the literature. Most authors do not even mention the possibility of switching which hand is primary based on handedness. The assumption that

¹⁷⁹ Rudolf, 160.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 184-192.

¹⁸¹ Green, 96-97.

¹⁸² Grosbayne, 81.

the right hand is the primary conducting hand and the left hand subordinate is clear evidence to the dominance of this view in the field. When authors do address the issue, they overwhelmingly support the traditional view that left-handed conductors should learn to beat time with their right hand.

Some authors are more open than others in their general disagreement. Bailey and Green are both unequivocal on the topic. Bailey affords one sentence only, “The baton should always be held in the right hand.”¹⁸³ Green only addresses the subject as a parenthetical. “(No! Sorry! The left hand won’t do. The baton is held in the right hand.)”¹⁸⁴ When given slightly more consideration, authors often raise the theory that left-handed conductors will eventually be better off for their adept use of the left hand in expressive conducting. “[T]he student who is left-handed will be found to have a real advantage: That left hand will be more naturally agile in making the special, impromptu gestures for cueing, shading, and emphasis that those who are right-handed find clumsy.”¹⁸⁵

Grosbayne recommends right-handed conducting, but can at least imagine a world where left-handed conducting would be possible. “For the record, though, let us mention the fact that a well-known string quartet recently included a left-handed first violinist, who rearranged his strings and gave excellent interpretations of chamber music; and it is quite possible that a left-handed conductor may some day follow suit and rearrange the seating of the orchestra.”¹⁸⁶ Aside from a 1976 dissertation by Walter Ray, Jr. that found

¹⁸³ Bailey, 14.

¹⁸⁴ Green, 3.

¹⁸⁵ Demaree and Moses, 16.

¹⁸⁶ Grosbayne, 75. The violinist that the author is referring to is likely Rudolf Kolisch who served as first violinist for the Kolisch Quartet and the Pro Arte Quartet.

students were comfortable following a left-handed conductor, only Willetts and Atherton openly advocate that a left-hander use their dominant hand as the time-beating hand in conducting. Willetts offers a “word to ‘lefties’:”

If you are ambidextrous, use your right hand for the beat patterns. If not, go ahead and use your left hand and reverse all the directional instructions. (You should be used to that by now.) It has been my experience that the left hand dominates anyway, so you might as well use it correctly.¹⁸⁷

The traditional responsibilities of the left hand are the interpretive and expressive tasks. This can be summarized as “the right hand gives the tempo and the left the expression,”¹⁸⁸ or “to show shadings of dynamics, articulation, and style” and “is often used for cueing.”¹⁸⁹ The task of the left hand certainly seems to have moved past simply mirroring the patterns of the right, or not being used at all, but how various authors choose to bring up the left hand in their texts is varied and complex. Many authors address the topic, as has already been seen above, in relation to other issues such as cueing, releases, and fermatas. But, some also choose to address the left hand specifically, not just in terms of its common tasks like dynamics, phrasing, cueing and expression, but also in terms of a fundamental technique.

The chief author on the technique of the left hand is Green. She and Malko, because of their attention to the physical training of the conductor, are particularly well positioned to speak to the fundamental technique and training of the left hand. The first step for Green in building left hand technique is “to be able to activate and deactivate the left hand without upsetting the time-beating in the right hand.” Malko’s fifth training exercise as presented by Green targets this specific skill. The sixth training exercise

¹⁸⁷ Willetts, 31.

¹⁸⁸ McElheran, 37.

¹⁸⁹ Bailey, 84.

applies to the second task Green sets for the left hand: “to be able to perform long, smooth, slow motions with the left hand without showing either pulses or momentary stops in its motion while the right hand continues its time-beating.”¹⁹⁰ Other authors have similar exercises and suggestions for developing this necessary independence. Phillips, for instance, advocates “The Circle Drill” for the left hand while the right hand beats a four pattern.

Raise the left arm/hand, as in a ‘stop’ gesture, with the left hand pointing up to 12 on an imaginary clock. Move the left hand in clockwise fashion, pulsing at each hour (1, 2, 3, etc.) on the clock for each beat. Continue around the clock back to 12, and reverse the motion counterclockwise (11, 10, 9, etc.).

In addition to this type of exercise, many authors suggest a variety of exercises based on the common cueing and expressive tasks of the left hand. McElheran recommends practicing the mundane to develop the true independence of the left hand and the automation of the time-beating of the right.

Set a metronome or play a record, beat time, and see how much you can do with your left hand without having the right vary the tempo or lose the pattern. Do things necessary to conducting, like turning pages and reinforcing downbeats, and also attempt numerous unmusical tasks like blowing your nose, arranging matches in a row, piling books on end, etc., simply to develop an automatic beat and an independent left hand.¹⁹¹

Similarly to McElheran, Demaree and Moses offer as the “Ultimate Test of Left Hand Autonomy” this exercise:

Once you have achieved good independence between your left and right hands, see if you can keep a 6/4 pattern going in your right hand while carrying on a game of tic-tac-toe with your left hand on a blackboard. Make sure you win!¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Green, 91.

¹⁹¹ McElheran, 38.

¹⁹² Demaree and Moses, 89.

Willetts actually suggests that to strengthen the independence of the left hand, her entire book should be reread and all the exercises performed with the left hand, and then again with both hands completing all the tasks.¹⁹³

While Willetts advocates practicing the beat patterns with the left hand and then both hands together, she is not suggesting that mirror conducting is a generally acceptable practice. In fact, the majority of authors specifically caution against this practice in conducting. “Too often, unfortunately, one can see how the left hand of a conductor repeats the movements of the right hand.”¹⁹⁴ Phillips seems the most comfortable with mirroring, but even he warns against its overuse. “Mirroring should be reserved for times when special attention needs to be called to what is happening musically—a *ritardando*, for example, on an *accelerando*, or expressive phrasing.”¹⁹⁵ Bailey also addresses mirroring as an acceptable technique but, again, within the realms of good taste. “[T]he overuse of mirror conducting trains the ensemble not to look at the left hand if it always says the same thing as the right.”¹⁹⁶

So, if a conductor is more or less counseled against mirroring, then what are the tasks of the left hand? Malko presents five areas where the “role of the left hand is revealed:”

1. In the dynamics.
2. In the sphere of expressiveness in the broad sense of the word.
3. In the indication of cues to different instruments, and groups of instruments.
4. In the indication of syncopation when the right hand is busy with other duties and cannot do it.

¹⁹³ Willetts, 76.

¹⁹⁴ Malko, 251.

¹⁹⁵ Phillips, 121.

¹⁹⁶ Bailey, 84.

5. In the correction of various mistakes which might arise.¹⁹⁷

The list that Demaree and Moses similarly provide is slightly more inclusive:

1. Cues
2. Releases
3. Dynamics
4. Crescendos and diminuendos
5. Accents
6. Sudden changes of all kinds
7. Word stresses and unstresses in texts
8. Phrase shapes¹⁹⁸

While Demaree and Moses continue on to suggest a variety of exercises to practice these tasks, most of the literature leaves the use of the left hand to the imagination of the conductor. Both Labuta and Phillips do some work to suggest specific hand gestures that the left hand can use to address the issues cited above. The open palm up and the open palm down can be used to affect a crescendo or diminuendo, and a quickly retreating left hand can show a *subito piano*. Similarly, long connected gestures or quick flicks of the hand can differentiate between *legato* and *staccato*.¹⁹⁹

Implications

Writing a conducting text is much like creating a conducting course. Each author examines the field as they see it, confronts the technical challenges facing the conducting student, and then attempts to create an approach to solve these challenges. The authors of these texts make philosophical statements about what it means to be a conductor, how one is an effective leader, and what qualifications are required for this leadership. Beyond that, they discuss thoroughly the manual technique of conducting and reveal their understanding of the fundamentals of conducting technique. Not all of the authors agree,

¹⁹⁷ Malko, 252-53.

¹⁹⁸ Demaree and Moses, 83-84.

¹⁹⁹ Labuta, 48-49.

but for the most part, their perspectives are compatible. Even when specific disagreements occur, there is great value in understanding both sides of the issue. The debate that these authors inspire leads the reader to question their own technique and methodology and to make decisions about this very personal art.

CHAPTER 2

CURRENT CONDUCTING METHODOLOGY

While textbooks have attempted to define the problems of conducting and propose solutions for the aspiring conductor, in classrooms, teachers of conducting are constantly testing and revising the pedagogy of conducting. The study of textbooks and the pedagogical approach of their authors cannot present a complete picture of conducting pedagogy. The day-to-day instruction presented in these educational laboratories is a necessary component for this study and adds a fluid and adaptive context to the heavily edited and codified approaches of the textbook literature. Unlike published textbooks, the conducting class and its associated course materials are constantly in a state of refinement and adaptation. Each semester the instructor fine-tunes the presentation of concepts, the sequence and structure of the class, and the objectives and outcomes for the course.

To analyze this fluid body of literature, I solicited syllabi and course materials from leading teachers of conducting at colleges and universities throughout North America. Twenty-two educators agreed to share their syllabi and/or course materials to assist in this research, and their documents are a sampling of the evolving body of literature described above. In crafting their syllabi, these conductors considered the body of literature, the difficulties confronting the aspiring conductor, and their own training and experience. The objectives, goals, and outcomes of the various classes detailed gives insight into the general teaching philosophy and pedagogical practices at work in conducting courses. The class calendars included in these documents serve a similar

function to the table of contents in a text book, defining the arc and scope of the course and demonstrating the proposed trajectory and pacing, as well as summarizing the topics to be covered. A list of required repertoire and texts reveals some of the materials these pedagogues use and by extension, value. When the materials, structures, and goals of courses align across institution and instructor, this reveals some of the current trends and convergences in the field of conducting pedagogy.

Unlike textbooks, syllabi are an outline not an explanation. The textbooks considered in the first part of this project present a more complete perspective on a given pedagogical approach than any syllabus. Over the course of a semester, topics may have to be rearranged, omitted, or added to meet the needs of the students or to satisfy scheduling challenges that arise. A topic that appears on the syllabus may not be covered in class while a topic that was not referenced might be a major point of discussion. Therefore, the omission of a topic from a syllabus is not sufficient evidence to infer that it is unimportant to the instructor or that it will not be covered in a class. Instead, in examining these documents, topics that are included and the way that these topics are discussed is the best evidence for our pedagogical conclusions.

Because of the nature of syllabi, in this project most of these documents are described in generalizations and summary rather than in reference to the specific pedagogue who supplied the material. In some situations, a particularly enlightening quote is extracted when it is illustrative of a specific point or approach. The syllabi collected also represent a wide variety of courses aimed at students with different levels of experience in conducting. The majority of the syllabi address beginning and intermediate undergraduate conducting classes, primarily in the choral area, that are

aimed at the music student pursuing a performance or education degree. Some graduate-level courses are also included, as well as specifically instrumental courses and those that blend choral and instrumental conducting students together.

Textbooks as syllabi

While the differences between syllabi and textbooks are pronounced, the influence of textbooks on course design is strong. This is especially true in beginning conducting courses, which tend to rely more heavily on textbooks than intermediate and advanced courses. The influence is felt not just in the syllabus design represented by the sampling of courses collected, but also in materials in the textbooks themselves. For many of these authors, the decision to write a textbook is born out of the experience of teaching conducting. Kenneth Phillips, whose textbook *Basic Techniques of Conducting* is a common choice for the beginning class, began his work on his book through the urging of his editor at Oxford University Press, stemming from her “frustrations in a beginning conducting course.”²⁰⁰ For Phillips, his “text represents ten years of teaching and refining.”²⁰¹ Phillips has designed his textbook to be all-inclusive for the needs of teaching basic conducting technique.

[T]he sequence of materials has been carefully studied and matched to the developing needs of the students. Directives are very specific, and some instructors may find them too restrictive. I have found, however, that once a base line is established, students learn to modify and personalize their technique. While no book can teach students to conduct (the instructor being the most important part of the process), it is hoped that the method outlined here will help instructors more readily teach a subject that is often without a clear instructional strategy, and that it will develop a clear and convincing conducting technique upon which students can build their own personal style.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Phillips, xv.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid, xiii.

In his introduction, he lays out several philosophies about instruction in a beginning conducting course. For instance, the structure and calendar of the course is designed “for two hours per week for one semester. There are a total of thirty lessons, one per class session.”²⁰³ For Phillips, the basic conducting course focuses on “the psychomotor skills necessary for clear and expressive conducting.”²⁰⁴ He therefore does not present complex musical examples and primarily discourages written evaluation. He does treat topics of score terminology and transposition through the suggestion of ten quizzes throughout the course, but acknowledges that these quizzes may be omitted. Similarly, he does not include information on clefs and transpositions.²⁰⁵

Phillips and Labuta both adopt a model of instruction in their texts that is competency based. “[S]pecific techniques are introduced, practiced, and evaluated before moving on to the next level of difficulty.” Table 3 is a reproduction of appendix B from *Basic Conducting Techniques* and lists the competencies for a basic conducting class. Labuta arrived at these competencies “by an analysis of the essential skills a beginning conductor should develop to lead and rehearse a performing organization.”²⁰⁶

Table 3. Competencies for the Beginning Conducting Class²⁰⁷

Conducting Techniques

The beginning conducting student will:

- 1 Demonstrate appropriate baton grip.
 - 2.1 Demonstrate the preparatory position for starting on the count of one in all meters.
 - 2.2 Demonstrate the preparatory position for starting on counts other than one.
- 3.1 Demonstrate the preparatory beat for the count of one, (i.e., for the downbeat in

²⁰³ Ibid, xii.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, xii-xiii.

²⁰⁶ Labuta, 374.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 374.

- all meters)
- 3.2 Demonstrate the preparatory beat for the count of one that indicates appropriate tempo, dynamic level, and style of music being performed
 - 3.3 Demonstrate the preparatory beat for counts other than one.
 - 3.4 Demonstrate the preparatory beat that indicates appropriate tempo, dynamic, and style for fractional pickup notes and between-beat starts.
 - 4 Demonstrate proper wrist action to define the exact point of the beat.
 - 5.1 Demonstrate the basic release gesture.
 - 5.2 Demonstrate the release on all counts of all meters.
 - 6 Demonstrate the standard beat patterns, maintaining a steady tempo.
 - 7 Demonstrate beat divisions in simple and compound meters.
 - 8 Demonstrate styles of beating, including the *legato*, *staccato*, *marcato*, *tenuto*, and neutral (nonexpressive) beat styles.
 - 9.1 Demonstrate the *fermata*, with a release and caesura of appropriate length, and a subsequent preparatory beat.
 - 9.2 Demonstrate the *fermata*, with the release gesture used as a preparatory beat.
 - 9.3 Demonstrate the *fermata*, without release but with a preparatory gesture to signal resumption.
 - 10 Demonstrate cuing gestures with the left hand, baton, and nod of head, with eye contact and preparation for each.
 - 11 Demonstrate independent and effective use of the left hand to signal dynamics, *subito* changes, accents, phrasing, and balance.
 - 12 Demonstrate changing meters and asymmetrical patterns in slow and fast tempos.
 - 13 Demonstrate gradual and *subito* changes in tempo and the ability to accompany.

Score Preparation and Rehearsal Techniques

- 14 Demonstrate ability to analyze the score for conception, interpretation, rehearsal, and performance.
- 15 Demonstrate the ability to rehearse an instrumental group.
- 16 Demonstrate the ability to rehearse a choral group.

Bailey's approach to the conducting course is intentionally different from Labuta and Phillips. Bailey sees the need for a more holistic approach to conducting than is presented in the most popular conducting texts. His years "as an administrator and reviewer of music schools" have led him to write a book that he believes addresses "the technical, analytical, and expressive aspects of conducting."²⁰⁸ The text is designed, unlike the Phillips and Labuta, to serve as a two-semester course. This design is apparent

²⁰⁸ Bailey, vii.

in his two syllabi contributed for this project. The first semester focuses on manual technique and the second on analysis, musicianship, and interpretation.

Even outside of the texts that are as explicit in their course design as the Bailey, Labuta, and Phillips, most other books are similarly aligned in structure and scope. The design of a course begins with posture and proceeds through a synthesis of skills with the ultimate goal of conducting repertoire. This arc is almost universal in beginning conducting courses and in textbooks. Alternatively, courses and textbooks move toward issues of rehearsal technique, score analysis, or musicianship. But in all these cases, there is a general model of beginning with the basic posture and manual technique and moving toward more advanced skills that are then assessed in a final conducting project intended to be a synthesis of the skills acquired.

National standards in conducting instruction

In designing the courses represented by these collected syllabi, teachers of conducting have invariably taken into account the standards and guidelines presented by NASM, the National Association of Schools of Music.

The National Association of Schools of Music [NASM] was founded in 1924 for the purpose of securing a better understanding among institutions of higher education engaged in work in music; of establishing a more uniform method of granting credit; and of setting minimum standards for the granting of degrees and other credentials.²⁰⁹

To accomplish these purposes, NASM sets forth standards and guidelines. “These Standards and Guidelines are presented as a synthesis of current thought about education and professional training in music.”²¹⁰ NASM accreditation is important to schools of music and has strongly influenced the design of new courses and the updating of old

²⁰⁹ NASM, Handbook, 1.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 53.

course structures. In fact, Phillips acknowledges at the very start of his preface to *Basic Technique of Conducting* that the basic introductory conducting course he lays out “is designed to meet the National Association of Schools of Music requirement that all undergraduate music majors have at least one course in conducting.”²¹¹ The standards that NASM has developed have “been approved by over 585 institutional members of NASM following broad consultation in the field, and therefore represents a national consensus.”²¹²

Conducting holds a prominent place in the training of professional musicians. Students seeking “all professional baccalaureate degrees in music and all undergraduate degrees leading to teacher certification” must acquire “[k]nowledge and skills sufficient to work as a leader and in collaboration on matters of musical interpretation. Rehearsal and conducting skills are required as appropriate to the particular music concentration.”²¹³ Those seeking a Bachelor of Music (BM) in Composition must have “conducting and rehearsal skills” and candidates for a BM in Music Therapy should attain “[c]onducting skills adequate to the therapist’s needs in providing repertory and leadership to small and large vocal/instrumental ensembles.”²¹⁴

Reasonably, the NASM standards are more specific for those pursuing a degree in Music Education. For these students “[i]nstitutions should provide opportunities for advanced undergraduate study in such areas as conducting, composition, and analysis.”²¹⁵

²¹¹ Phillips, xi.

²¹² NASM, *Characteristics of NASM Standards* [Reston, VA: NASM, 2004], 1.

²¹³ NASM Handbook, 100-1.

²¹⁴ Ibid, 104 and 110.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 115-16.

NASM makes clear some of the specific objectives of a conducting class for this type of student.

The prospective music teacher must be a competent conductor, able to create accurate and musically expressive performances with various types of performing groups and in general classroom situations. Instruction in conducting includes score reading and the integration of analysis, style, performance practices, instrumentation, and conducting techniques. Laboratory experiences that give the student opportunities to apply rehearsal techniques and procedures are essential.²¹⁶

In the training of conductors in graduate programs, NASM is even more specific. In their handbook, Appendix I.C. is dedicated to the “standards and guidelines for the education and training of conductors: choral, orchestral, wind.”²¹⁷ Much like a preface or introduction to a textbook, this appendix lays out some philosophical positions on what a conductor is, or specifically what is necessary in the training of a conductor for professional success. According to the handbook, a professional conductor demonstrates “an assimilation and integration” of musical skills, conducting skills, and background knowledge.

For musical skills, NASM lists five subcategories: musicianship, instrumental competence, vocal competence, analysis, and repertory. Professional conductors need “advanced aural skills” and “advanced skills in sight-reading”. For all conductors, a mastery of an instrument, basic knowledge of the other instruments they will encounter, and functional keyboard skills are essential. Conductors also need “[a]dvanced skills in musical analysis” and the “ability to integrate analytical knowledge and skills in the development of artistic interpretations and the preparation of scores for performance.” Finally in reference to repertory, conductors should hold a “[c]omprehensive knowledge

²¹⁶ Ibid, 113.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 162.

of the choral, orchestral, and/or wind repertory, including concert music, operas, and oratorios, and a detailed knowledge of scores forming the basic literature of each historical performance period or ensemble type.”²¹⁸

The handbook divides conducting skills into baton technique and rehearsal technique. Baton technique is defined as the “ability to maintain continuity of rhythm, line, structure, and interpretive integrity in the overall performance of a work while, at the same time, being able to evoke and control response by gesture at all levels of musical detail.” Rehearsal technique is the “ability to fuse analytic knowledge of the structure of a work and an artistic conception developed from that knowledge to sonic realization in minimal rehearsal time. This skill should be evident with all sizes of ensembles, from the coaching of soloists in chamber music to rehearsals with full orchestral, wind, and/or choral forces.”²¹⁹

The background knowledge required to be a professional conductor is both the broad understanding of related topics outside of music and the very specific and practical skills a conductor will need to succeed professionally. For instance, the first point under background knowledge is “[c]omprehensive knowledge of the history of music and of its relationship to the broader context of the history of civilization.” On the other hand, the guidelines are also so specific as to list “[a]udition and interview techniques” and “functional knowledge of the business of ensemble life and sufficient interpersonal skills to deal effectively with musicians and such other elements as managements, unions,

²¹⁸ Ibid, 162-63.

²¹⁹ Ibid, 163.

contracts, professional ethics, audiences, repertory, teaching institutions, and public relations.”²²⁰

Designing Conducting Instruction

In designing a course of conducting instruction there are several questions to consider. First, who is the audience of the instruction and what is the purpose of the course? These basic understandings influence all the subsequent decisions and have a substantial effect on the eventual design and content of the instruction. In his introduction, Bailey acknowledges the various situations where conducting instruction occurs.

Most music schools require different numbers of conducting classes based upon the objectives of the degree programs. Students in some degree programs, such as guitar performance or music therapy, for example, need acquire only the rudimentary techniques and understanding of conducting. Other programs, such as music education, require more advanced skills in expressive conducting, score analysis, and error detection.²²¹

This description parallels the NASM standards and connects with Bailey’s model of a first semester course that is devoted to technique and a second semester that works more substantially with elements of interpretation, analysis and aural skills. Advanced and specialized conducting classes are aimed at preparing the professional conductor. At the graduate level, conducting instruction is more appropriately discussed as a course of study rather than a specific conducting class. Literature and pedagogy courses, seminars on a variety of topics, and lab conducting experiences provide these advanced students with a portfolio of experiences to prepare them for the challenges of the field of conducting.

²²⁰ Ibid, 163.

²²¹ Ibid, vii.

It would not be appropriate to treat the same scope of topics covered in a graduate conducting program in a first semester introductory conducting class. This awareness of audience is central to building successful instructional experiences. At the same time, it is necessary to make the beginning student aware of the larger universe of topics and issues related to conducting. Early exposure to these concepts allows those with interest in further study to be more prepared for their future experiences.

Beginning Conducting Instruction

A beginning course in conducting is likely the only formal instruction in conducting that many musicians will receive if they do not continue on to pursue that field as a career. The question becomes what lessons should be taught to this type of student while at the same time providing quality instruction to the student who has further interests and aspirations in the conducting field? From both the texts and syllabi, two fundamental topics are clearly required: manual technique and score study. Willetts covers the basics of manual technique in her text: posture/position, preps/releases, patterns, tempo modifications, and expressive conducting (including the left hand).²²² These are the essential elements of the conducting technique and can almost universally be found in all texts on conducting and in all introductory level conducting syllabi. Labuta's competencies listed in table 3 are another example of these basic concepts of manual technique, as are the conducting topics derived from the collected syllabi and summarized in table 4.

Beyond the manual technique is a basic understanding and approach to score preparation. Bakaleinikoff was clear about the necessity for intimate knowledge of the

²²² Willetts, 5-6.

score. “[T]he student must prepare his score at home and must know even the smallest details.”²²³ This level of knowledge comports with Apfelstadt and Itkin’s systematic approach to score study in their syllabi. Labuta first justifies the primacy of score study and then offers a three step analytical framework.

Score study in advance of rehearsal is essential for valid interpretation, efficient rehearsing, and—especially for inexperienced conductors—developing manual technique. Never attempt to learn music with the performers during practice; always acquire a conception of the score through study before the rehearsal. How should the music sound? What is the historical period? How can you achieve a valid and expressive performance? What does the composer want? How should the music move? Where is it going? How should it get there? What exactly should be accomplished in rehearsal?²²⁴

If the course begins with simple exercises on the basics of technique, perhaps the concepts of score study and preparation can be postponed to later in the class. But, when longer selections of repertoire are being prepared, the student needs a framework to learn that music independently and a basic instruction in score study is essential.

Some other topics are sometimes included in basic conducting classes because it is likely to be the student’s only exposure to these concepts. According to Bailey, “[c]onductors spend a good deal of time recognizing and correcting errors.” Yet, “[u]niversity courses in ear training or sight singing seem to do a poor job of preparing students for this type of aural skill.”²²⁵ Bailey therefore includes these types of error identification problems in his text. Some other instructors address these issues through keyboard score reading and the singing of one part against another. Additionally, clefs, transposition, and musical terms may not be addressed in any systematic way in other music classes. Therefore, many instructors of basic conducting classes include these

²²³ Bakaleinikoff, 8-9.

²²⁴ Labuta, 67.

²²⁵ Bailey, viii.

concepts through basic quizzes or simple written assignments. Rehearsal technique is another area often addressed in these basic courses. Unless the student is studying music education, in which case they will likely receive further instruction in conducting, most music students have little focused instruction in group rehearsal technique. While this may be discussed in passing through chamber music coaching, private instruction, or through the experience of being in a large ensemble, the design of rehearsal plans and rehearsal observations is a primary component of most basic conducting classes.

Returning to an issue raised in the discussion of textbooks, Elizabeth Green advocates strongly for the physical training of a conductor through exercises, separate but complementary to the process of learning manual technique. The related questions in this case are whether this type of physical training is necessary or useful for a student who is unlikely to continue in the field, and whether its omission is detrimental to a student who wishes to do so? If the goal of including conducting instruction in the general education of music students is to provide them with the basic level of familiarity with conducting gesture required for their chosen field and to cultivate skills and knowledge to lead and collaborate in musical interpretation, it seems that the aim of a physical training to provide the basis of manual technique would not be a requisite skill.²²⁶ However, many errors of execution in a basic conducting class stem from a lack of physical competency, so it may be possible, particularly if using the Green text as the basis of instruction, to use the physical training exercises correctively rather than prescriptively.

²²⁶ NASM Handbook, 100.

Conducting Syllabi

While there is substantial variation in the methodology the instructors adopt and the specific sequence of topics change from course to course, many of the basic objectives are similar. Most of them are aligned with NASM's understanding of the value of conducting to undergraduate music education and to the training of conductors for their professional future. In examining this body of literature, there are several lessons that can be learned. Like the NASM standards, many of the syllabi in their description of the course objectives and outcomes reveal a variety of fundamental philosophical points about what makes a conductor. Clarifying these basic philosophies are the course structure, the sequencing of topics, and the materials used (including textbooks and repertoire). Some of the syllabi also provide additional guidance on specific points important to the pedagogues.

Course structure

Structurally, there is considerable alignment in courses from school to school. Beginning courses tend to meet more often, varying from twice a week to up to four times a week. As is the case in many college settings, either a fifty-minute class every Monday, Wednesday and Friday or an eighty-minute class every Tuesday and Thursday are the most common situations. Advanced courses for graduate students are often held once a week for a longer period of time. The lab ensemble that each student conductor directs is most commonly composed of the other members of the class. This ensemble could be completely choral, completely instrumental, or a mix of the two depending on the expertise of the students enrolled and the specific focus of the conducting class. Some beginning courses allow the conducting students to conduct an established university

ensemble as a culminating experience. Similarly, some intermediate and graduate level courses rely on a discrete lab ensemble formed specifically for the purpose of providing conducting experience for the conducting students. In these situations, the lab ensemble is usually only present one day a week of the normal class schedule.

Conducting in front of an ensemble is an essential experience in all of the sampled courses, and generally the instructor seeks to create an opportunity for this as frequently as possible. The number of times that a student can get up and conduct in front of an ensemble is dependent on several factors. First, class size can create a challenge as the more members there are in a class, the less time each student will have in front of the ensemble. The trade-off is that a larger number of students often means a better and more realistic ensemble to conduct. In most conducting courses, the student conducts an ensemble with a specific conducting assignment between four and six times.

Teaching philosophies

One of the primary functions of a syllabus is to outline the topics that will be covered in a class and the goals, objectives, and expected outcomes that students will meet at the conclusion of instruction. While the syllabi collected for this project represent a wide variety of class types and structures, taken in total, the statements of objectives and outcomes from these syllabi come together to represent the universe of possible topics for inclusion in conducting pedagogy. In synthesizing these statements, eight fairly distinct categories emerge as significant areas of instruction. Table 4 lists the goals, objectives and outcomes under the categories of manual technique, interpretation, preparation, rehearsing, assessment, musicianship, leadership, and background knowledge.

Table 4. Universe of topics derived from goals and objectives statements.

Table 4. Universe of topics derived from goals and objectives statements			
Manual Technique	Interpretation	Preparation	Rehearsing
Patterns Subdivision Various meters Tempo changes Baton (and without) Posture and Stance Baton Grip Left Hand Independence Cues Dynamics Articulations Preparatory gestures Breathing Cut-offs Fermatas Accompanying Recitative	Basic interpretive gestures Color Balance Tone Intonation	Score preparation Score study Score analysis Analytic skills Score graphing Score marking strategies Repertoire selection	Rehearsal technique Choral pedagogy Rehearsal planning Rehearsal procedure Using gesture not speech Rehearsal pacing Classroom management and discipline Error detection and correction
Background Knowledge	Musicianship	Leadership	Assessment
Musical terms Stylistic elements Stylistic awareness Diction Performance practice Repertoire Current trends in the conducting profession Understanding the voice Understanding instruments Professional resources	Listening skills Error detection Score reading Keyboard reductions Transposition Score hearing Analytic listening	Dynamic group leadership Communication skills Program notes Confidence Managerial responsibilities Connecting emotionally and musically with an ensemble	Self analysis Peer assessment Student assessment

As in most texts on conducting, manual technique is the principle category of skills for most courses on conducting. The expectation in most conducting courses, particularly those that are for beginners with little or no previous conducting experience, is that students will demonstrate a familiarity with conducting patterns, preparatory gestures, cueing, and basic use of the left hand. This basic manual technique is the foundation of conducting instruction. Some courses, particularly those that are more advanced, focus on incorporating elements of interpretation into gesture, such as articulation and dynamics, and address the particular challenges of accompanying a soloist or conducting recitative.

Background knowledge can be seen as both a pre-requisite for a conducting class and as an area for further study. Some conducting classes integrate the study of background knowledge through quizzes on musical terms, or by requiring membership in professional organizations such as the American Choral Directors Association or the Conductor's Guild. But the conducting class is in most cases, a place to augment already held knowledge of music history, foreign languages, and vocal and instrumental pedagogy. Students must draw on their experiences in these areas to make decisions about gesture and interpretation of pieces. While not all classes will deal with these issues to the same extent, most courses spend at least some time addressing them.

While manual technique serves as the basis of the majority of instruction in a conducting class, the other categories listed in table 4 are key components to the development of a successful conductor. Dr. Paul Rardin, chair of choral activities at the Boyer College of Music and Dance at Temple University, and formerly a professor at the University of Michigan sets the "[u]nderstanding of the relationship between gesture and

sound” as a goal in his conducting classes.²²⁷ This connection between conducting and the art of making music is the bridge to the other categories of topics addressed in the conducting classroom. Basic patterns and gesture are insignificant if there is not musical meaning behind them, and it is through the connection of gesture to the basic knowledge required to be a conductor that this musical meaning is informed and developed. The area of interpretation is one where this connection becomes particularly relevant. Dr. Hillary Apfelstadt, director of choral activities at the University of Toronto, seeks to “strengthen interpretative and artistic skill through gesture and body language” in her choral conducting and literature class.²²⁸ Likewise, Dr. Kimberly Dunn Adams, director of choral activities at Western Michigan University, lists “Coordinating/controlling physical movement in response to the rhythmic and expressive character of the music.”²²⁹

In another parallel to texts on conducting, some conducting courses spend instructional time on the elements of leadership. In some cases these are the mundane day-to-day logistical details of program administration and skills specific to the management of an ensemble like writing program notes or working with musicians’ unions. In other cases, these can be the more general characteristics that make an effective leader from the podium. Dr. Paula Zerkle, director of choral music at Moravian College in Pennsylvania, lists connecting with the ensemble emotionally and musically as a primary objective for her intermediate conducting course. Other elements of leadership

²²⁷ Rardin, Paul. “Conduct 316.003 Elementary Conducting II: Choral.” University of Michigan, Winter 2011.

²²⁸ Apfelstadt, Hillary. “EMU430H1 Choral Conducting and Literature I, MUS2222H.” University of Toronto, Fall 2012.

²²⁹ Adams, Kimberly Dunn. “MUS 5970 Choral Conducting.” Western Michigan University, Spring 2012.

include communication skills and the confidence to lead a group of peers successfully (particularly in the context of conducting an ensemble of classmates).

Some courses have a broader scope than just manual technique and its immediately related areas. These topics include rehearsal technique, score preparation, and musicianship; areas that are strongly linked to successful conducting, but that are not always included in basic conducting instruction. Musicianship skills can relate directly to rehearsal technique, especially in the form of error detection and listening critically to the ensemble. For the most part, the specific training of musicianship skills is the task of other classes, or is reserved for graduate study in conducting. But, some undergraduate conducting courses incorporate techniques such as “Sing-Play-Conducts” and open score reading at the keyboard into the course syllabus.²³⁰ Internal hearing of the score, or as the conductor of the Hong Kong Bach Choir, Jerome Hoberman, calls it, the “ability to reduce a musical work mentally, away from any instrument,” is also practiced specifically in some beginning and intermediate conducting courses.²³¹

Rehearsal technique is a much more important topic for classes geared toward music education students, but some conducting courses address it through a rehearsal observation requirement or by requiring written rehearsal plans that are then carried out in conducting lab situations. The shape of these experiences and instruction has much to do with the ensemble that the student conductors work with, and this specific topic will be addressed later in a discussion of course structure. The approaches in the syllabi are

²³⁰ Sing/Play/Conducts are a type of assignment employed by Dr. Edward Maclary at the University of Maryland. He assigns Bach chorales to the students and asks them to perform one line with one hand at the piano, sing another line, and conduct with the free hand.

²³¹ Hoberman, Jerome. “MUS 3431 Choral and Instrumental Conducting.” Hong Kong Bach Choir.

mixed on their treatment of score analysis skills. Some instructors are very specific about the process of score analysis, the tasks involved, and when the topic is introduced in the course calendar. Others do not mention score study at all in the syllabus, but it seems unlikely that in any of these classes no guidance is given on how to prepare a score for conducting.

Apfelstadt provides a detailed paragraph on what is required to be prepared to conduct a piece in class in her syllabus for “Choral Conducting and Literature I”.

For each piece studied in class, you will need to mark your score (as modeled in class); demonstrate knowledge of the musical context and content (use analysis form provided); be able to sing all parts in your own voice range; play individual parts on the piano and at least two parts together; know how to conduct the music accurately and expressively; and develop teaching ideas including focused warm-ups.²³²

Dr. David Itkin, director of orchestral studies at the University of North Texas also lists in his syllabus for his “Graduate Conducting Seminar” a step by step process for score study.

1. Composer’s dates, period/style, pertinent historical background of the piece and/or composer
2. Movements and their basic tempi, musical ideas, form, repeats, etc.
3. Orchestration/transpositions: if the edition does not do it for you, write the transposition of every transposing instrument at the brace on *every page of the score*. Be sure to observe carefully when transpositions change from movement to movement or within a movement.
4. Translate all foreign text completely. This includes all tempo and expressive markings, all markings in individual instrumental parts (special performance notations, etc.), and any opening or end-notes.
5. Phrases analysis. Making decisions about large, medium, and small scale phrase structure, and marking all such information in the score.
6. Harmony. Analysis of every harmony (chord) on every beat of every bar of the work, and write the harmonies below the staff.
7. Orchestration. Bar by bar examination and marking of orchestration details, cues, etc.
8. Thorough examination of the score for rehearsal process issues, looking for issues such as the following: what passages are likely to

²³² Apfelstadt, Fall 2012.

need extra rehearsal, what is likely to go wrong on the first playing and need explanation or rehearsal, etc.

9. Personal decision-making. All decisions regarding tempi (written in score with metronome marking), handling of tempo changes, handling of fermata, etc., should be completed.
10. Articulation. Decisions about articulation should be well thought-through in advance, precisely as though preparing for rehearsal. This includes all decisions of “short, long”, etc., not specifically proscribed by the composer, as well as preliminary decisions regarding what is to be played on or off the string.²³³

These two methodologies described by Apfelstadt and Itkin are very detail-oriented and demonstrate the level of understanding and familiarity with the score that is expected of a well-prepared conductor standing in front of an ensemble. While this may not be the standard expected of the beginning conducting student, this level of detail in score analysis and preparation presents an aspirational aim for each conducting student. Itkin says of score preparation that “[a]ll scores (and exercises) assigned for class are to be studied thoroughly before attempting to conducting them in class.”²³⁴ While the above list is “by no means exhaustive,” it “serves as a starting point for basic study.”²³⁵

The final topic in table 4 is that of assessment. In most courses, the students enrolled in the course constitute the performing ensemble that each student conducts. For this reason, many teachers build the opportunity to give peer feedback into their course structure. Peer feedback builds the evaluative skills of the conductor so that they can self-evaluate through video recordings—a standard method employed in most conducting courses. A few classes, particularly those with a heavy emphasis on teacher preparation, also focus on student assessment tools. Student assessment can mean many things, from grading to error detection in rehearsal. Dr. David Schildkret of Arizona State University

²³³ Itkin, David. “MUAG 5850-001 Graduate Conducting Seminar [Draft].” University of North Texas, Fall 2012.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

strongly emphasizes the development of evaluation rubrics and of regular self- and peer-evaluation throughout his course calendar.²³⁶

Sequencing (beginnings, ends, and middles)

The introduction to the art of conducting and specifically what topics are addressed in the first few class meetings can provide significant details about the pedagogy at work in the sampled classes. One of the major differences that emerges between instructors is how early they treat the topic of score study and analysis. Generally, courses that are intended as a student's first introduction to the technique of conducting focus more on pattern and basic technique. Almost universally, the follow-up course to the introductory level begins with a review of that technique and then immediately addresses score analysis and issues of style and performance practice. Graduate conducting courses make these musical details the primary focus of instruction and the technique of gesture is revisited in service of these musical details. Wayne Bailey, author of *Conducting, The Art of Communication*, follows this paradigm in his two courses at Arizona State University. His "Introduction to Conducting" class begins predictably in a similar vein to his book, with baton grip, posture, hinges, preps, releases, and patterns. However, his second level course begins immediately with style and then moves quickly into score study.

All of this is not to say that most introductory courses do not address issues of score study and analysis. Some courses introduce score study at the start through a general procedure of score marking like those referenced by Apfelstadt or Itkin. Others address the topic shortly after basic technique has been introduced, but still within the

²³⁶ Schildkret, David. "MUP 339: Choral Conducting." Arizona State University, Fall 2012.

first few weeks of the start of the course. Still, for some other courses, most of the basic issues of conducting technique are taught before dissecting a score and richer interpretive details are discussed.

Introductory courses have as their primary purpose to familiarize the student with the manual technique of conducting, and most of the courses represent this similarly in their syllabi. When taking just those courses from the sample that are introductions to conducting, the starting point for conducting instruction is almost universal. Conducting courses begin with a discussion of posture and body position and then introduce the basic patterns in the right arm. Some courses also begin with the baton in hand as well as the basic preparatory gesture and releases.

Like many of the conducting textbooks that these introductory courses follow, other issues besides manual technique are addressed later on in the syllabi. Many choral-specific courses address warm-ups and the conducting of unmetered vocal music like chant. Likewise, blended and instrumental-only courses tend to address some of the individual issues and specific conducting challenges of the various instrument families. Challenging pieces in mixed meter or extended passages from a large work that include recitative are often final projects for the beginning student. Advanced courses focus more on masterworks of the repertoire and the stylistic challenges of conducting this repertoire. In addition however, many instructors introduce other issues including administration, concepts of leadership, repertoire selection and concert programming, recitative, advanced aural skills, and score analysis.

Course materials (texts, readings, and repertoire)

While the topics within most conducting courses may be relatively standard, a variety of materials are used to provide instruction. The basic materials fall in three main areas: textbooks, repertoire, and supplemental readings. In the selected syllabi, Elizabeth Green's *The Modern Conductor* was the most popular textbook, followed closely by the Kenneth Phillips *Basic Techniques of Conducting*. The Donald Hunsberger text, *The Art of Conducting*, as well as the Max Rudolf *Grammar of Conducting* are also used frequently (but often as supplementary reading to a primary textbook). In courses that are primarily choral, James Jordan's *Evoking Sound* is also a popular choice, particularly as introductory reading to the concept of connecting gesture and sound. Other books included in the various sampled courses include Daniel Moe's *Problems in Conducting*, Labuta's *Basic Conducting Techniques*, McElheran's *Conducting Technique*, and Willetts' *Upbeat Downbeat*.

Supplemental reading comes in a variety of forms. In many of the courses, one of the books listed above acts as the primary textbook and manual for the course, but some topics are taught by use of one of the other listed texts. For instance, Wayne Bailey, who is himself an author of a textbook of conducting and uses it in his basic conducting class, also relies heavily on Elizabeth Green's book. In intermediate-level conducting classes, some teachers incorporate more theoretical and historical texts like Wagner's *On Conducting*. But in advanced and graduate courses the supplemental reading is often more related to the specific repertoire than to conducting challenges. Michael Musgrave's *Brahms: A German Requiem*, published as part of the Cambridge Music Handbooks

series or Charles Rosen's *The Classical Style* would be two examples of this type of literature.

Of course conducting instruction requires not just background knowledge and conducting technique, but also repertoire for performance and rehearsal. Some conducting textbooks like the Phillips, Labuta, and Bailey provide repertoire for the conducting class and instructors that use these books draw primarily on the repertoire included in these texts for that purpose. Other instructors make their own collections of repertoire for study and some use a combination of both approaches. Basic conducting classes tend to use shorter pieces such as choral octavos or sections of larger instrumental works. This is in contrast to advanced and graduate conducting courses that rely mainly on large-scale masterworks.

Across all levels of classes though, there are some composers whose music is used most frequently. Bach is the most common composer among the syllabi collected, partly because his work is included in many of the conducting textbooks. Many instructors find the chorales a perfect laboratory for basic gesture and particularly useful for the practice of various fermata types. They are also easily sung and played, and make excellent study pieces for score reading and harmonic analysis at or away from the keyboard. Instructors often rely on the music of Brahms, particularly his *Requiem*, as being rich in pedagogical possibilities, and sections of *Messiah* by Handel are common to both final projects in beginning and intermediate conducting classes, as well as advanced and graduate level courses. Appendix 1 is a list of repertoire from the various syllabi collected for this project. It is not a complete representation of the repertoire studied in

these courses, but offers a perspective on some of the available options when selecting repertoire for conducting instruction.

Other topics

While much of our discussion has focused on the specific content and topics in the various conducting courses represented in the collected syllabi, there are a number of other areas for consideration. For instance, how are students evaluated in a conducting course and what categories of assignments must they complete? Most instructors incorporate written assignments as part of their methodology. These written assignments can take a variety of forms, and a summary of the various types is included in table 5. The assignments are organized using the same eight-category structure from the previous discussion of the universe of topics available in conducting instruction. When applicable, an assignment is listed under all of the categories where it obviously falls. In the case of the category of interpretation, an argument could be made that most of the assignments involve interpretation, but only the recording review assignment appears to deal primarily with this topic.

Table 5. Types of written assignments in conducting courses.

Table 5. Types of written assignments in conducting courses			
Manual Technique	Interpretation	Preparation	Rehearsing
Concert Observation Self-Critique	Recording review	Score analysis Score graph	Rehearsal observation Rehearsal plan Warm-up project
Background Knowledge	Musicianship	Leadership	Assessment
Annotated bibliography IPA Project Phenomenology project Programming assignment Program notes Transposition project Quiz Clefs Orchestration Terms Transposition	Error detection Score reading (at keyboard)	Conductor interview Concert observation Rehearsal observation Term paper Attributes of a fine conductor Comparison of two major conductors	Concert observation Literature review Rehearsal observation Recording review Self-Critique

Through written assignments, topics outside of manual technique can be treated. This instruction can also often occur outside of normal class meetings. Rehearsal observations and plans, critiques, papers, and analysis projects cover areas of preparation and rehearsing. A considerable number of background knowledge areas can be addressed through written assignments, including programming, diction, issues of score reading (including clefs, transpositions and foreign language terminology), editions, and relevant background literature. Observations of other conductors can speak to the broader issues of leadership, and musicianship tests at and away from the keyboard can evaluate error detection and score reading.

CHAPTER 3

A PERSONAL PEDAGOGY

In the first two sections of this project, I examined two different bodies of literature on conducting. The first part explored the tradition of textbooks and treatises on the art of conducting, written by leading conductors and pedagogues intended primarily as guidebooks for the amateur conductor and textbooks for conducting classes in a university setting. The second part digested a collection of syllabi from teachers of conducting in universities and colleges throughout the United States and Canada. The examination of these two bodies revealed both the unanimity of thought on some issues and also the wide variety of approaches available to the conducting teacher.

Just as most conducting courses end with a final project that is a synthesis of conducting technique, the final goal of this project is to discuss some specific considerations and approaches from the literature and their application for developing a personal pedagogy of conducting. By framing this discussion in the structure of a course syllabus, one can trace how other pedagogues have developed their conducting courses, and also present examples of how one might follow their example. From examining the collection of submitted syllabi, there are seven general components of a syllabus common across the represented courses:

1. Course and instructor information
2. Course description
3. Materials
4. Instructional methodology
5. Objectives, outcomes and goals
6. Assessment, assignments and expectations
7. Course calendar

These elements do not necessarily appear as discrete sections in all syllabi, and are often combined and presented in differing orders. However, by working through this structure, and by citing from the collected syllabi and texts, a selection of possible approaches in the design of a beginning course in conducting can be presented.

Course and instructor information

A syllabus typically begins with a list of information regarding the instructor, course title and number, location and times of meeting, the semester, and the year. An example of a typical header is shown below:

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

MUSC 490-0101 (2 credits)
Basic Conducting: Spring 2013
MWF 11:00am-11:50am – CSPAC 2201

Prerequisite: MUSC251

Scot Hanna-Weir, instructor
email@umd.edu; 301-405-5555x555
Office Hours by appointment

Other information that is sometimes included here includes irregularities in the schedule. For instance, if one of the class meetings is a lab, but it does not always meet, that could be listed. Graduate assistants for the class may also be listed in this opening section, as well as any pre-requisites and the number of credits or units for the course.

Course description

Another basic element of the syllabus is the course description. The course description is usually a one or two sentence summary of the course, often taken from the undergraduate bulletin or other course schedule. For instance, at the University of Maryland, the course description is simply “Vocal and instrumental baton techniques.”

David Schildkret's course description for his Choral Conducting syllabus is similarly short: "Elements of choral conducting technique and interpretation."²³⁷ Occasionally, some insights into the scope and methodology are provided. Peggy Dettwiler provides the following description of her Choral Conducting class.

Course Description: Prepares the future music educator to organize, rehearse, and conduct choral ensembles of varying levels of achievement, particularly junior and senior high school age groups. Experience in conducting the class as a chorus is integral to the course.²³⁸

Some syllabi omit the course description entirely, or combine it with a statement of objectives, outcomes and goals.

Materials

The first area that provides significant subject for debate and a considerable variety of approaches is that of the materials required for the course. Materials can include an assigned textbook, scores, supplemental reading, and other implements of conducting like a baton and metronome. One model of course design would be to follow the prescribed approach of a conducting textbook like the Phillips. The Phillips is designed to provide all of the necessary musical examples and the course structure and is intended to be sufficient as the only required material for a basic conducting course. Paula Zerkle's "Introduction to Conducting" course mostly follows this model and relies heavily on the Phillips text. Her required materials include the text and a baton.

Required Materials: Phillips, Kenneth H. *Basic Techniques of Conducting*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; Baton (will have selection in class to purchase)²³⁹

²³⁷ Schildkret, Fall 2012.

²³⁸ Dettwiler, Peggy. "MU 3350 Choral Conducting." Mansfield College, Fall 2012.

²³⁹ Zerkle, Paula. "MUS 334.2 Introduction to Conducting." Moravian College, Spring 2012.

While Zerkle uses the Phillips text, and does rely on it almost exclusively for her conducting repertoire for this course, she does not follow exactly the schedule provided by Phillips in his introduction, nor does she only teach topics that are covered in the text.

The other end of the spectrum in course materials is no required textbook. In courses that use this approach, there is often still a primary resource, but readings on topics of conducting are distributed in class, or through library and electronic course reserves. The benefit of this structure is that the instructor is free to choose what they feel are the most appropriate readings for a particular topic and to select the repertoire for conducting that they feel will best address the topics. Table 6 provides a list of basic topics of conducting and recommended readings, evaluated primarily for clarity of instruction. In instances where more than one fundamental approach is taken (as in the instance of location of the beat plane or the release gesture), a principal author for each approach is indicated.

Table 6. Basic conducting topics and recommended readings.

Topic	Author	Notes
Posture	Jordan	Exploration of related fields like Alexander technique and Laban movement theory
Plane height	Phillips	Advocates for a low baseline
	Bailey	Advocates for a higher baseline
Baton grip	Bailey	Helpful illustrations
Pattern	McElheran	Best for beat pattern theory
	Green	Also shows alternative patterns
	Rudolf	For very detailed patterns in lots of circumstances
Preps	Labuta	Presents multiple methods of dealing with entrances on fractional beats
Gesture of Syncopation	Green	While originally Malko's concept, Green's explanation is thorough.
Cuing	McElheran	Especially useful discussion of when to cue
Releases	Bailey	For circular releases
	McElheran	For non-circular releases
Fermata	Labuta	Clear descriptions and consistent lettering with several other texts
Left Hand	Green	Exercises and detailed list of activities to be assigned to the left hand
Score study	Labuta	Meier and Bailey are also good choices, but Labuta offers a clear method with examples.
Musicianship	Bailey	Bailey's inclusion of error detection exercises is central to his approach.

While the above chart covers recommended readings on the various topics of conducting, it does not aid in the selection of repertoire. In selecting repertoire for a beginning conducting class, an excellent starting place is the repertoire included in various texts. Authors like Green, Bailey, Phillips, Labuta, Decker, and Demaree and Moses all take great care in selecting the repertoire that they include in their texts with specific considerations for the inherent conducting challenges. Troy Quinn's "Choral Conducting I" at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music (USC) includes a blended conducting repertoire list drawn from the Phillips text and supplemental handouts. This repertoire list is presented as an example in table 7.

Table 7. USC Choral Conducting I Repertoire List.²⁴⁰

Project 1: Chorales and Hymns

W. Billings	Chester	Phillips, p. 32
J. S. Bach	Selected Chorales	Phillips, p. 144
J. Sibelius	Finlandia	Handout

Project 2: Polyphonic Works

G. Palestrina	Sicut Cervus	Handout
T. Tallis	If Ye Love Me	Handout

Project 3: Choral Masterworks

J. Brahms	Erlaube mir	Phillips, p. 97
G. F. Handel	Surely He Hath Born our Griefs (Messiah)	Phillips, p. 158
G. Fauré	Sanctus (Requiem)	Handout

Project 4: Advanced Gestural Techniques

R. Thompson	Glory to God in the Highest	Handout
M. Seiber	The Handsome Butcher	Phillips, p. 206

Final Project

L. Bernstein	Chichester Psalms (Mvt I)	Handout
B. Britten	Rejoice in the Lamb (Nimrod section)	Handout

As the USC course is specifically a choral conducting class, the repertoire is drawn almost exclusively from the choral repertoire. At the University of Maryland (UMD), the basic introduction to conducting is a combined instrumental and choral class. Table 8 is a listing of repertoire from this course that represents both the instrumental and choral repertoires.

²⁴⁰ Quinn, Troy. "MUCD 340 Choral Conducting I." University of Southern California, Fall 2012.

Table 8. UMD Basic Conducting Repertoire List²⁴¹

Composer	Title	Instrumentation
J. S. Bach	Selected Chorales	Keyboard/SATB
Mozart	Ave Verum Corpus	SATB, Strings, Continuo
Beethoven	March in B-flat Major	2 Cl, 2 Hn, 2 Bn.
Mendelssohn	Nocturne (Mid-Summer Night's Dream)	2 Cl, 2 Bn, 2 Hn, Strings
Handel	Messiah (Angel sequence)	Sop, SATB, Baroque Orch.

When no textbook is used, the repertoire can become the textbook. The UMD repertoire list provides opportunities to work on the challenges of basic conducting technique, through complete pieces rather than examples or shortened versions of full pieces. In both the UMD course and the USC course, the final conducting assignment is an extended piece that requires the conductor to synthesize the conducting skills acquired throughout the course. These principles all follow the general methodology of most major textbooks but do so in a more personalized approach.

One added benefit of a course where repertoire is either completely or partially selected from sources other than textbooks is that the repertoire can then mirror larger projects or pieces that school ensembles may be preparing. For instance, if the large choir and orchestra will be performing Haydn's *Creation*, choruses and recitatives from that work could be substituted for the Handel *Messiah* selections in the UMD model. On the other hand, such an approach requires much more preparation and does not always result in a sequential acquisition of skills through practice in repertoire.

In addition to textbooks and repertoire, there are other types of course materials. This includes batons (which almost universally seem to be recommended for beginning conducting instruction in textbooks and syllabi), the students' major instrument (so they

²⁴¹ Maclary, Edward. "MUSC 490 Basic Conducting." University of Maryland, Spring 2011.

may participate in the class ensemble), and some form of recording medium for video recording conducting sessions.

Instructional methodology

Primarily, students in basic conducting classes acquire skills through the act of conducting their peers as a lab ensemble. In addition to this principle mode of instruction, students may also observe and evaluate other conductors, both in their own class and in established ensembles. Other tasks could include evaluation of musicianship skills through a variety of tools such as score reading at the keyboard or through error detection quizzes. Below is an exemplar description of instructional methodology.

Course methodology: Students are expected to **attend every class session** and to be **prepared to conduct**. The only guaranteed method for acquiring skill in conducting is to practice in front of a live ensemble. All students serve as ensemble members for each other with their primary instruments (bring it to class), voice and piano. All students are expected to provide to and receive from one another constructive criticism during the class. There will be a number of one-on-one meetings with the instructor for aural and keyboard skills testing and review of classroom conducting skills. Students will also be asked to attend and write observations of several other ensemble rehearsals during the semester.²⁴²

Objectives, outcomes, and goals

Table 4 provided a complete list of topics derived from the objectives, outcomes and goals listed in the collected syllabi. Likewise, table 3 lists the core competencies for the beginning conducting class that outline the topics covered in Labuta's textbook. No conducting class could hope to include all of these topics, but they all draw extensively from these two lists. Bailey's list from his introductory course is succinct.

²⁴² Adapted from the UMD syllabus for Basic Conducting.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of the course the student will be familiar with and able to gracefully execute basic conducting patterns, stance, grip, moves required in elementary conducting.²⁴³

While Bailey's description primarily focuses on objectives from the manual technique category, Dr. Terry Barham, formerly director of choral activities at Emporia State University lists four objectives that each represent a different category of topics: leadership, technique, preparation and musicianship, respectively.

1. To introduce you to the elements of dynamic group leadership.
2. To prepare you in the standard conducting patterns and techniques
3. To aid you in your score study through analyses of representative vocal and instrumental scores.
4. To refine your ability to detect errors in music as you conduct (melodic, harmonic, rhythmic)²⁴⁴

Dr. Paula Zerkle's course objectives are perhaps the most complete for a basic conducting course included in this sample of syllabi.

To be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- conduct 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 patterns and their subdivisions
- have a command of the conducting basics, which involve executing and controlling: preparations and cut-offs, cueing, fermatas, dynamics, articulations, tempo changes, complex and irregular meters, phrasing, and expressive gestures
- have a functional use of the left hand for dynamic control, cueing, and phrasing
- develop score study skills, involving ear training, analysis, research, style interpretation, score reading, and score study
- develop skills necessary to make a strong connection with the ensemble and hear all parts individually and as a whole
- begin to develop skills necessary to make musical connections within the ensemble
- to begin to evaluate, refine, and develop score-learning, conducting, rehearsal and performing skills through study, practice, and videotaping²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Bailey, Wayne. "MUP 210 Introduction to Conducting." Arizona State University, Fall 2012.

²⁴⁴ Barham, Terry. "MUSIC 477 Basic Conducting." Emporia State University, Spring 2010.

Assessment, assignments, expectations

Since most courses in conducting require the students in the class to become the ensemble for conducting performance, class attendance and preparation are of primary importance. Most of the syllabi submitted assign the most significant portion of the grade to regular attendance and participation. This participation or conducting grade can account for between 30% and 50% of the grade in the course. Other projects like analysis, observations, quizzes, presentations, and musicianship skills tests account for the remainder of the grade. In table 9, several grading schema are listed in order of increasing complexity. For purpose of comparison, all systems in the table are represented in terms of percentage rather than points.

Table 9. Grading schema from selected beginning conducting courses.

Conducting	
Conducting Labs	50%
Exams	25%
Written Assignments (quizzes, literature info, analysis paper)	25%
Introduction to Conducting	
Attendance	35%
Exams	15%
Daily conducting assignments	50%
Choral Conducting	
Class attendance & participation	40%
Video exams	30%
Mid-term (written)	10%
Final conducting & teaching performance with written project	20%

²⁴⁵ Zerkle, Paula. "MUS 334 Introduction to Conducting." Moravian College, Spring 2012.

Conducting I	
Participation (attendance, preparedness, discussion, contributions)	20%
Labs (warm-ups, sectionals, classroom podium time)	15%
Written Work	25%
Quizzes	20%
Finals	20%

Choral conducting and literature I	
Conducting	50%
Warm-up Presentation	5%
Musical analyses	15%
Score markings	10%
Rehearsal journal	20%

Basic Conducting	
Attendance, preparedness & participation	30%
3 Rehearsal Plans	10%
3 Rehearsal Observations	10%
4 Sing/Play/Conducts	10%
3 Quizzes (Clefs & Transpositions; Musical Terms; Orchestration)	10%
Instrument Presentations	10%
Final Examination	20%

Labuta and Phillips both present their conducting courses as competency-based in design. Just as an assessment rubric for these competencies is included in the appendix of Labuta's text, some syllabi discuss the specific criteria of assessment that will be used to measure success in the course. Paul Rardin presents a graded rubric in his undergraduate conducting courses from his time at the University of Michigan. His rubric is reproduced in table 10.

Table 10. A graded rubric for undergraduate conducting²⁴⁶

A range:	Conducts clearly and expressively. Demonstrates excellent preparation. Improves and attends class regularly (no more than one unexcused absence). Writes clearly and thoughtfully.
B range:	Conducts effectively; modest errors in clarity and/or lack of expression. Demonstrates good preparation. Improves and attends class regularly. Writes effectively.
C range:	Conducts passably; noticeable errors in clarity and/or lack of expression. Demonstrates fair preparation. Improves sometimes. Writes adequately.
D range:	Conducts poorly; significant errors in clarity and/or lack of expression. Demonstrates poor score study. Improves rarely. Writes inadequately.
E range:	Poor performance in all aspects of the course.

Course calendar

Once the course objectives, expectations, and policies have been set, the final and often most time consuming part of developing a syllabus is creating the course calendar. This process, much like rehearsal planning, is challenging because it requires the instructor to predict how the students will progress through the material. In laying out the course material over the class meetings, the instructor has to attempt to balance sufficient time to cover to topics and also ample time for practical application of these topics. In appendix 2, I have included an example of what a course schedule for Phillips' *Basic Technique of Conducting* would look like if following his described methodology as laid out in his introduction. This particular schedule includes the optional quizzes but also dedicates only one class meeting to videotaping for each assignment.

In many courses, the number of students enrolled may make this videotaping schedule impractical. Zerkle follows the Phillips book, but adds additional time for videotaping into her schedule and does not videotape as often as Phillips recommends. The same repertoire is covered in Zerkle's schedule as in Phillips' recommended

²⁴⁶ Rardin, Paul. "CONDUCT 316.003 Elementary Conducting II: Choral". University of Michigan, Winter 2011.

schedule, with the exception of the “Erlaube mir” and “Praise Ye the God of Hosts”. Zerkle cuts out these pieces and their respective videotaping sessions as well as the midterm videotaping. Zerkle’s course is also two class meetings short of Phillips’ recommended schedule, so lessons twenty-eight and twenty-nine are omitted. But, in spite of these scheduling challenges, Zerkle is also able to work in additional concepts like score reading on open score Bach Chorales, aural skills, and presentations on the final conducting assignment.

Zerkle’s syllabus (also included in appendix 2) is an excellent example of how the fundamental structure of a textbook can be followed, but with adjustments that make sense for the class size and schedule as it exists in practice. Wayne Bailey’s syllabus for “MUP 210 Introduction to Conducting” is another example of using a book as the basis of the calendar, but then expanding, modifying, and augmenting the course schedule to create a customized course. In his syllabus, he relies on his own text to provide basic information, but also includes readings from Stotter, Green, Hunsberger and Battisti.

A Personal Pedagogy

To develop a personal pedagogy of conducting, one must consider his/her own experiences in the field, the resources and methodologies available, the type of students that will be enrolled in the course, and also the various philosophical perspectives and approaches he/she wants to adopt for instruction. To model the development of a personal pedagogy, Appendix 3 offers an exemplar syllabus for a basic conducting course of my own design. The pedagogical approach taken in this course is a combination of my personal experience teaching conducting, as a student of conducting, and also a result of

the research for this project. The next two sections will describe the process that I used to create the course and then the course that is the result of this process.

Determining the pedagogical approach

One of my first decisions in creating a course design was whether I wanted to adopt a specific textbook's approach to teaching conducting. There are many benefits to using a pre-existing approach defined in a textbook. Generally, texts like the Labuta, Phillips, and Bailey all have excellent conducting examples, good sequencing and materials that would allow most students to successfully acquire the base skills of conducting. However, adopting one of these approaches, even in a modified form felt impersonal. I wanted to create a course that is more representative of my own conducting approach and that would present some of the best aspects of the pedagogy that I had become familiar with through the completion of this project. Therefore, I decided that I would not have a primary textbook, but instead incorporate readings from a variety of sources to support my instruction.

Since I decided not to rely on a specific textbook's approach, but instead to create my own synthesized system of instruction, the first step in developing this course was determining the scope of topics. The eight categories that resulted from the investigation of the submitted syllabi were my starting point, so I incorporated elements from each in building a student's fundamental conducting technique. Like most courses, I choose to focus primarily on the physical gesture, but elements of interpretation, preparation, musicianship and leadership are central to the developing conductor. When I considered rehearsal technique, I felt that this was too large a topic to adequately address along side developing manual technique. Rehearsal process is a topic that I feel is better treated in

depth through methods courses, and therefore cannot be a central focus of an introductory course. Peer feedback and self-evaluation are central to my teaching methodology, and so self-critiques of conducting video, as well as live feedback from peers are an important component of my course design. Finally, I feel it is important to incorporate some study of musical terminology, clefs and transpositions, as well as a familiarity with score order and issues of orchestration. Therefore, in designing the course, I looked for specific ways to incorporate these topics into instruction.

Once I decided the scope of the course would broadly include topics from all eight of the instructional categories, I began to draft an outline of the sequence of instruction. Like most courses, I knew I wanted to begin with a discussion of conducting generally, including the ideas of group leadership. I also wanted to address the needs of the students and to help them find the relevance of conducting to their own musical aspirations. Also, I wanted to end the class with a capstone conducting project. I wanted this project to be a larger section of musical material, and to address the challenges of conducting instruments alone, instruments with chorus, soloists, and a variety of tempos and styles, including recitative. My experience using the “angel section” of Handel’s *Messiah* in conducting instruction, as well as its frequent inclusion in courses of study from the submitted syllabi led me to choose this as the final conducting project.

Table 11 is the draft outline of the course that I developed at this stage in the process. This outline is not complete, nor does it completely reflect the actual shape of the course described in the syllabus in appendix 3. The sequencing of manual technique that I wanted to follow was relatively clear to me at this early stage of course

development. On the other hand, when I began to attempt to list what repertoire would be used, I found that I needed to make some other decisions first.

Table 11. Sequencing of Basic Conducting Class.

- I. Introduction to conducting
 - a. What and why is conducting?
 - b. What is its purpose for me?
 - c. Inspiration and Leadership
 - i. Traits of a leader/conductor
 - ii. Breathing
 - iii. Posture (tie in)
 - d. The relationship of gesture and sound
- II. Conducting Technique
 - a. Posture and Power
 - i. Finding the conducting plane
 - ii. Stance, hand position
 - b. Preparatory Gesture
 - i. Left and Right hand entrances
 - ii. Breathing
 - iii. Style, articulation, length, dynamic
 - c. Releases
 - i. Left and Right hand releases
 - ii. Breathing
 - iii. Style, articulation, length, dynamic, sustain
 - d. Basic patterns
 - i. 1, 2, 3, 4
 - ii. dynamics, articulations, accents
 - iii. starts and stops
 - e. Baton
 - i. Basic position
 - ii. When to use, when not to?
 - f. Fermatas
 - i. Type A, B, C
 - ii. Left hand sustaining gesture
 - g. Basic Left Hand Technique
 - i. Cues
 - ii. Dynamics
 - iii. Phrasing
 - iv. The at rest position
 - v. Assigning choreography to the left hand
 - h. More patterns and preps
 - i. Preparatory gestures for beats other than one
 - ii. Divided patterns
 - iii. Uneven meters

- iv. Mixed meters
 - i. Advanced conducting technique
 - i. Syncopation
 - ii. Tempo changes
 - 1. Merging
 - 2. Subdivision
 - iii. Recit
- III. Preparation
 - a. Score study basics
 - i. How to learn a score
 - ii. How to mark a score
 - iii. Score learning strategies
 - 1. Graphing
 - 2. Colors or not
 - 3. Memorization
 - b. Score layout and orchestration issues
 - c. Musical Terms
 - d. Transpositions and clefs
 - e. Musicianship training for score reading
 - i. Piano reductions
 - ii. Sing-play-conduct
- IV. Rehearsal technique
 - a. Rehearsal observations
 - b. The choral warm-up
 - c. Rehearsal planning
 - d. Rehearsal strategies
 - i. Pacing
 - ii. Sequencing
 - iii. Using gesture, not speech
 - e. Musicianship training for rehearsal
 - i. Cuing and prepping rehearsal entrances
 - ii. Where to start again
 - iii. Error detection and correction

My approach to the development of manual technique is derived from the basic up-down gesture. Therefore, I begin with stance, hand position and the conducting plane. From this point, the basic preparatory gesture can be taught and then patterns can be built around that technique. The benefit of this beginning is that from the very first gestures, issues of style, articulation, dynamics, and accent can be addressed and then continually incorporated throughout the course. Therefore, expressivity in conducting is always a

basic element. Additionally, beginning with the preparatory gesture as the fundamental technique allows for a simple connection between the conception of sound and gesture. The early classes will focus extensively on assisting the student in developing an imagination of sound and then exploring the ways to represent this conception.

Instruction in the basic patterns begins with the one pattern, traditionally one of the more difficult to master, but one that is strongly connected to the basic preparatory gesture. From the basic patterns, and stops and starts, the baton is then introduced along with fermatas, preparations to beats other than one and partial beats. The introduction of fermatas also provides a pathway into basic left hand technique, which, can then be continued throughout the rest of the course. The focus on manual technique then continues through more complicated patterns, and advanced techniques like tempo modification, subdivision, merging and recitative.

Developing the above outline clarified the next steps that I needed to take in creating the course. I had made decisions about the general topics under manual technique I was to include and the basic sequencing, but I was not yet sure what the overall structure of the class would be and how I would teach these concepts. To move forward, I began to create the course calendar. As I filled in the class meetings with the manual technique topics, I was able to begin to attach specific readings to these topics, as well as repertoire for study. It was not until after I created the basic course calendar that I felt I could expand out the rest of the areas of the syllabus.

The syllabus

Creating the course calendar required me to make several significant structural decisions. First, how often would the course meet? How many times would the students

conduct in front of the class? How much time would be spent on various topics and how would other assignments augment and support the in class instruction? I decided to create a class that met twice a week for 80-minute sessions. I felt that this structure was consistent with many of the syllabi that I received, and could be easily adapted to a three-times-a-week structure. Next was the task of determining how many conducting assignments could be completed in a semester course. Based on a range of four to six conducting assignments for most introductory courses, I decided that I would assign four major conducting assignments and an initial video taping session that focuses on the fundamental elements of manual technique.

While five video-taped assignments seems sufficient for the purposes of assessment, I wanted to find a way to structure the course so that the majority of classes would involve the students conducting each other. I also knew that I wanted to incorporate a strong emphasis on score study and preparation but was unsure how to do this and simultaneously introduce basic manual technique. I decided that the first piece of repertoire for video would be the piece that the students used to explore score study. In the third week of the course, I teach various methods of score study in class and then assign the preparation of this score. A week later, I collect their scores and give the students feedback on their preparation. A week later, they have an opportunity to ask questions about the Mozart *Ave Verum Corpus* before their video conducting sessions, but no in class instruction on the specific challenges of the work has occurred. By keeping the preparation on the *Ave Verum Corpus* outside of the group instruction, I allow the students to execute their own concept of the work to the best of their abilities. This method of individual study is only used for this first piece, but I feel it is important

to provide the students with an opportunity to test out their own analysis skills and to come up with independent ideas of interpretation. The next three-week period is dedicated to working through the Brahms part song as well as teaching various additional manual techniques. The seventh week of classes focuses on left hand technique, which can easily be employed through conducting the Brahms. Week eight begins instruction in mixed meter and asymmetrical patterns using the Orff *Tanz* for these concepts. After three in class sessions on the Brahms, the students have their third video session and we then revisit the piece in the next class to address any areas where the students in general may be weak. The strategy of some in class work on the video conducting assignment, mixed with instruction on the next piece for study and the related conducting challenges is followed for the rest of the course.

In choosing the repertoire for the class, I first decided on the *Messiah* excerpt, as already noted. I then consulted Appendix 1 to see what repertoire other courses employed and decided that I wanted a blend of instrumental and choral repertoire, from a variety of style periods. I knew that Bach chorales would be used for musicianship training and that the Handel would otherwise count for the Baroque period. I decided that the Orff *Tanz* would be a good challenge, an exciting piece, and a good representation of the modern period. Also, the piano/percussion version provides an easily rendered example for most conducting classes. Because I wanted to address the challenges of mixed meter, but also in a way that was expressive, the varying styles and tempos of this piece seemed to be a good fit. For a Romantic period piece, I wanted something by Brahms. I feel that the *Requiem* can be difficult to realize effectively, so I turned to his vocal quartets with piano accompaniment instead. After examining several of the quartets, I found that *Abendlied*

provided a variety of characters and articulations and was relatively easy to sing. This is especially true in contrast to some of the other quartets. It also has some independent cues and a lot of expressive possibilities for the left hand.

I elected to use the Mozart *Ave Verum Corpus* as the initial assignment, mostly because of my experience using it when I taught conducting previously. In its use of musical material, the piece is incredibly economical, yet also profound and well developed. It also allows the students the experience of conducting and interpreting a complete work. Finally, it is an excellent example of classical style, as well as sensitive and expressive text setting.

Once I had placed the major conducting topics and repertoire in the course calendar, I began to assign readings. I have a personal affection for the McElheran text. I think that his style is easily readable, and he generally presents things clearly and concisely. Too many details and options can be overwhelming for the beginning conductor, so I find his text to be a good fit for basic level instruction. In my opinion however, there are a number of topics where other authors do a better job. Bailey's two pages on baton grip are in my opinion, the best. Labuta is excellent as a source on preparations. Green does best with the more advanced topics and particularly with expressive conducting. For readings on score preparation, Labuta offers a good method, but I also found an interview with Margaret Hillis and a document from a colleague's former teacher to be excellent resources. The overall reading for the course is under 200 pages and is assigned mostly in the first half of the course, when students' other courses workloads are likely to be less burdensome.

After choosing the repertoire, clarifying the calendar, and assigning the class readings, I needed to make sure that I was addressing my central course objectives. The course currently would address the areas of score preparation and manual technique, but the other areas needed to be further expanded. Not all of this would be able to happen within the course of normal class times, so some outside assignments and other creative activities were necessary.

I have previously used a model of quizzes on background knowledge like terms, clefs and transpositions. The difficulty with these quizzes is that they take class time that could better spent on conducting. So, instead I assign a packet that covers these areas of background knowledge that is to be completed by the end of the course. Students should work on this packet throughout the semester so that they are exposed to these concepts, but additional class time is not needed. Since I was not going to treat rehearsal technique specifically within the course, I use assigned rehearsal observations to encourage my students to think about this topic. Score study assignments also have a component of rehearsal planning, as most methods require that the conductor identify areas that will be challenging or require additional rehearsal. The rehearsal observations will also further clarify some points on leadership and what makes a conductor a successful leader.

The incorporation of musicianship training elements was the biggest challenge. Most methodologies around this topic include substantial supervision by the professor, or individual meetings outside of class. Instead, I have taken a “warm-up” approach. Each class, I lead a short exercise in musicianship training. These could be exercises from Hindemith’s *Elementary Musicianship Training* or Bach chorales and dictation exercises that are played with errors that the students must identify. They may be interval or mode

recognition, sight-singing or rhythm exercises. A daily focus on musicianship building can serve to expose the student to various areas where they can grow and help them identify those areas that need the most improvement. It also reminds the student that these skills are inextricably related to the art of conducting and require constant practice and study.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, this project is an acknowledgement that conducting is a highly personal art, and, as a result, instruction in conducting tends to be highly personal as well. The conductors who have written texts and those who teach in conducting classrooms are committed to their approaches and believe in the value of the specific instruction that they deliver. Many of these choices and instructional methodology are highly compatible, but there are also many choices between equally valid, but significantly different, approaches. It is the aim of this project for the readers to come away with an enhanced knowledge of the available methods and their associated benefits so that they could then make informed choices about those specific topics and methodologies that resonate best with their personal conducting style.

In my own process of developing a personal pedagogy, and specifically a basic conducting class, I relied heavily on the materials presented in this document. Several of the tables and appendices were particularly useful. Having the opportunity to see examples of other's work and to decide what I appreciate and what I would change is highly useful when developing your own materials. Also, the greater familiarity I have with the body of conducting textbooks as a result of this project has enabled me to expand my preferences. This expansion of my repertoire of methodology has done me a great service in finding new ways to thinking about conducting instruction.

The personalization of our pedagogical approaches to conducting is something that happens over time for almost all teachers. We start teaching from a place of comfort and experience, and then gradually try new things and incorporate other methods until we

find a method that is uniquely our own. What benefits could our field reap if we accelerated this process through active scholarship and curriculum development? The active search for methods and materials for conducting instruction can bring new enthusiasm and life to stale courses. And the sharing of resources and an open communication about our teaching methodology benefits the entire field.

There is a willingness to have this dialogue, as evidenced by the generosity of those who submitted syllabi and other course materials for this project. Many skilled and talented conducting pedagogues are training young conductors successfully in colleges and universities, but how are we training ourselves to be up for this task? The active participation in this field of those who practice in it is necessary for the continued development of our fine conducting traditions. It is my hope that this project has had some small part in continuing these important discussions.

APPENDIX 1

REPRESENTATIVE REPERTOIRE FOR CONDUCTING INSTRUCTION

Anon	Chant
Anon	Dona nobis pacem
Anon	Haec Dies
Anon	Hodie Christus Natus Est
Anon	O Mitissima
Bach	Air (Orchestral Suite No. 3 - Phillips)
	Break forth, o beauteous heavenly light (Phillips)
	Brich an, O schönes Morgenlicht
	Chorales (various)
	Gloria (B minor mass)
	Jesu meine Freude
	Kyrie II (B minor mass)
	O grosse Lieb (St. John Passion)
	Preise, Jerusalem, den Herrn (BWV 119)
	St. Matthew Passion (Selections)
Barber	Let down the bars, O death
	Mary Hynes (Reincarnations)
Barnett	Veni sancte spiritus
Barnwell	We are...
Bartok	Concerto for Orchestra
Beethoven	March
	Mass in C
	Ode to Joy (Phillips)
Berlioz	L'adieu des bergers (L'enfance du Christ)
Bernstein	Chichester Psalms
Betinis	God of Owls
Billings	Chester (Phillips)
Boulanger	Hymne au soleil
Brahms	Dein Herzlein mild (Op. 62)
	Erlaube mir (Phillips)
	Lass dich nur nichts nicht trauen
	O Süßer Mai (Sechs Lieder)
	Requiem (selections)
	Rosmarin (Op. 62)
	Von alten Liebesliedern (Op. 62)
	Waldesnacht (Op. 62)
Britten	Rejoice in the lamb
Bruckner	Locus iste
Byrd	Ave verum corpus
	Mass for four voices
	Non nobis domine
Chatman	Remember

Desprez	Agnus Dei (Missa La sol fa re mi)
Dett	Ave Maria
Donizetti	Quel guardo il cavaliere... So anch'io la virtu (Don Pasquale)
Durufié	Ubi caritas
Farmer	Fair Phyllis
Fauré	Requiem
Gershwin	Rhapsody in Blue
Hall, arr.	I know where I'm goin'
Handel	Hallelujah, Amen
	Hornpipe (Water Music - Phillips)
	Messiah (selections)
Haydn	Austrian Hymn (Phillips)
	Chorale St. Antonii (Phillips)
	Creation
	Harmoniemesse (selections)
	Missa brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo (selections)
	Nelsonmesse (selections)
Hennagin	Walking on the green grass
Hill	An illuminated transience
Hindemith	En hiver (Six Chanson)
	La biche (Six Chanson)
	Printemps (Six Chanson)
	Puisque tout passe (Six Chanson)
	Un cygne (Six Chanson)
	Verger (Six Chanson)
King	There is no rose
Labuta	Examples
Larsen	A Creely Collection
Lassus	Bon jour mon coeur
Lotti	Sanctus (Missa brevis)
Mahler	Symphony No. 2
McKelvy, arr.	Deck the hall
Mendelssohn	Elijah (selections)
	Nocturne (Mid-Summer Night's)
Messiaen	O sacrum convivium!
Moe	Problems in Conducting
Morley	Sing we and chant it
Mozart	Ave verum corpus
	Luci care
	Requiem (selections)
Orban	Daemon irrepit callidus
Orff	Tanz (Carmina Burana)
Palestrina	Sicut cervus
	Sitivit anima mea
Parker	Invocation: peace
Pärt	Magnificat

Pilkington	Rest sweet nymphs
Poulenc	Salve Regina
Puccini	O Mio Babbino Caro (Gianni Schicchi)
Respighi	Lauda per la natività del Signore
	The Pines of Rome
Rimsky-Korsakov	Part III (Scheherazade)
Seiber	The Handsome Butcher (Phillips)
Sibelius	Finlandia
Sibelius	Violin Concerto
Smith	Star Spangled Banner
Stravinsky	L'Histoire du Soldat
	Symphony of Psalms
Tallis	If ye love me
Thompson	Glory to God in the highest
Tomkins	When David heard that Asalom was slain
Trad.	America the Beautiful
	My Country 'tis of thee (Phillips)
Verdi	Caro Nome (Rigoletto)
Victoria	Ave verum corpus
	Ne timeas Maria
	Officium defunctorum
Ward	America the Beautiful
Wilder	Lullabies and nightsongs

APPENDIX 2

SAMPLE BASIC CONDUCTING COURSE SCHEDULES

Schedule 1. The following course schedule is compiled directly from the Kenneth Phillips *Basic Techniques of Conducting*, following the guidelines explained in the introduction to the text. Dates are represented in the format “Week [dot] Class meeting”. Therefore, “3.2” would represent the third week of instruction and the second class meeting that week.

Date	Topic	Lesson	Assignment	Repertoire
1.1	The Study of Conducting Class Organization Course Requirements	1	Obtain materials Read L.2	
1.2	Posture and Position Preparatory Gesture Using the Metronome	2	Metronome Qz (2.1) Read L.3	
2.1	QUIZ – Metronome The Four Pattern Elements of the Pattern Internal and Final Releases	3	Practice “Chester” and/or “Austrian Hymn” Read L.4	“Chester” “Austrian Hymn”
2.2	The Four Pattern Varying the Articulation Tempo Terminology	4	Tempo Qz (3.1) Practice “Chester” and/or “Austrian Hymn” for videotaping (3.1) Read into to L.5 Review “Evaluation Form I”	“Chester” “Austrian Hymn”
3.1	QUIZ – Tempo Videotaping #1	5	View video Complete evaluation form Read L.6	“Chester” “Austrian Hymn”
3.2	The Three Pattern The Two Pattern The Daily Dozen Terminology for Dynamics	6	Dynamics Qz (4.1) Daily Dozen exercise Practice “My Country” and “Ode to Joy” Read L.7	“My Country” “Ode to Joy”
4.1	QUIZ – Dynamic Terms Selecting a Baton Dynamic Changes	7	Obtain baton Daily Dozens Practice “My Country” and “Ode to Joy” Read L.8	“My Country” “Ode to Joy”

4.2	Baton Grip Character Terminology	8	Character Terminology Qz (5.1) Daily Dozen with baton Practice “My Country” and “Ode to Joy” for videotaping (5.1)	“My Country” “Ode to Joy”
5.1	QUIZ – Character Terms Videotaping #2	9	View video Complete evaluation Daily Dozens Read L.10	“My Country” “Ode to Joy”
5.2	The One Pattern Midterm Preparation Release on One Accent, Articulation, and Connecting Terms	10	Study terms for quiz (6.1) Daily Dozen Practice “Sing We” and “Chorale” for midterm conducting exam Read L.11	“Sing We” “Chorale”
6.1	QUIZ – Accent, Articulation and Connecting Terms Release on Beat Two Entrance on a Pickup Note Midterm Preparation	11	Practice “Sing We” and “Chorale” for videotaping (6.2) Review and practice “Erlaube mir” and “Praise Ye”	“Sing We” “Chorale” “Erlaube mir” “Praise Ye”
6.2	Videotaping #3	12	View video and complete evaluation Practice “Erlaube mir” and “Praise Ye” for videotaping (7.1) Practice “Sing We” and “Chorale”	“Sing We” “Chorale” “Erlaube mir” “Praise Ye”
7.1	Videotaping #4	13	View video and complete evaluation Practice all four examples for midterm conducting exam (7.2 and 8.1)	“Sing We” “Chorale” “Erlaube mir” “Praise Ye”
7.2	MIDTERM – Part 1	14	Practice “Erlaube mir” and “Praise Ye” for midterm part 2 (8.1)	“Erlaube mir” “Praise Ye”

8.1	MIDTERM – Part 2	15	Write a two-paragraph summary of midterm video Read L.16	
8.2	Functions of the Left Hand The Circle Drill	16	Daily Dozen (L.H.) Circle Drill Write a two-paragraph summary of midterm video Read L.17	
9.1	L.H. Sustaining Gestures Coordinating the Two Hands	17	“Finlandia” “O Beautiful” and “Break Forth” for videotaping (10.1) Read L.18	“Finlandia” “O Beautiful” “Break Forth”
9.2	L.H. Sustaining Gestures Repeat Markings	18	Practice “Finlandia”, “O Beautiful” and “Break Forth” for videotaping (10.1) Review evaluation form in L.19 Repeat Markings Qz (10.1)	“Finlandia” “O Beautiful” “Break Forth”
10.1	QUIZ – Repeat Markings Videotaping #5	19	View video and complete evaluation Continue to practice “O Beautiful” and/or “Break Forth” for final exam Read L.20	“O Beautiful” “Break Forth”
10.2	Subdivision Cues Alto and Tenor Clefs	20	Practice “Surely” and “Air” Clefs Qz (11.1) Read L.21	“Surely” “Air”
11.1	QUIZ – Clefs Composer’s Intent Listener’s Response	21	Practice “Surely” and “Air” Read L.22	“Surely” “Air”
11.2	Entrances on Incomplete Beats Instrumental Transpositions: C and B-flat	22	Practice “Surely” and “Air” for videotaping (12.1) Transpositions Qz (12.1) Read L.23	“Surely” “Air”

12.1	QUIZ – Transpositions Videotaping #6	23	View video and complete evaluation Read L.24	“Surely” “Air”
12.2	Fermatas Compound Meters: Six, Nine, Twelve Instrumental Transpositions: F, E-flat, A	24	Practice “Silent Night” for videotaping (13.2) Transposition Qz (13.1)	“Silent Night”
13.1	QUIZ – Transpositions Asymmetric Meters: Conducting in Five and Seven Changing Meters	25	Practice “Silent Night” for videotaping (13.2) Read L.26	“Silent Night”
13.2	Videotaping #7	26	View video and complete evaluation Continue to practice “Silent Night” for final exam Read L.27	“Silent Night”
14.1	Accents Tempo Alterations Section Cues	27	Review previous quizzes for final quiz (14.2) Practice “Handsome Butcher” Read L.28	“Handsome Butcher”
14.2	QUIZ – FINAL Conducting Synthesis 1	28	Practice “Handsome Butcher” Review “O Beautiful” and/or “Break forth” and “Silent Night” for final exam	“Handsome Butcher” “O Beautiful” “Break forth” “Silent Night”
15.1	Conducting Synthesis 2	29	Practice “Handsome Butcher” for videotaping (15.2) Begin to study “Alleluia” for final and all other pieces Read L.30	“Handsome Butcher” “O Beautiful” “Break Forth” “Silent Night” “Alleluia”
15.2	Videotaping #8	30	View video and complete evaluation Practice four selections for final.	“Handsome Butcher” “O Beautiful” “Break Forth” “Silent Night” “Alleluia”

Schedule 2. The schedule below is a reproduction of Paula Zerkle's spring 2012 Introduction to Conducting course. She follows the Phillips text relatively closely but makes personal modifications and additions. Zerkle notes that the schedule is "subject to change; additional assignments may be made."

Date	Topic	Read/Prepare
Jan. 16	posture; basic beat, preps, downbeats	
Jan. 18	three and four patterns	L. 1 and 2 (p. 1-23); Now the Day (p. 31)
Jan. 23	one and two patterns; music preparation	L. 3 (p. 24-37); Chester (p. 32-34)
Jan. 25	tempo, dynamics, articulations, accents	L. 4 (p. 38-43); Austrian Hymn (p. 35-37)
Jan. 30	videotaping 1a	L. 5 (p. 45-48); 8 minutes – Chester
Feb. 1	videotaping 1b	L. 5 (p. 45-48); 8 minutes – Austrian Hymn
Feb. 6	phrasing	L. 6 (p. 49-61); Ex. 6.2 (p. 52) & Hornpipe (p. 53)
Feb. 8	LH techniques	My Country, 'Tis of Thee (p. 55) OR Ode to Joy (p. 58-9)
Feb. 13	batons	L. 7 and 8 (p. 63-72)
Feb. 15	aural exercises	L. 10 (p. 77-78); Sing We and Chant It (p. 81-82)
Feb. 20	videotaping 2a	L. 9 (p. 73-76); 9 minutes – Sing We and Chant It
Feb. 22	videotaping 2b	L. 9 (p. 73-76); 9 minutes – Sing We and Chant It
Feb. 27	left hand	L. 16 and 17 (p. 119-143); Finlandia (p. 139)
Mar. 1	more LH gestures; drills	L. 11 (p. 92-95), L. 18 (p. 147-150); O Beautiful (p. 140)
Mar. 5-9	<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>NO CLASS</i>
Mar. 12	subdivisions, cues	L. 20 (p. 155-162); Surely (p. 158-160)
Mar. 14	subdivisions	Surely (continued): Air (p. 163-164)
Mar. 19	more subdivision	L. 21 (p. 167-169); Air (continued)
Mar. 21	score reading session	open score Bach Chorale handout - individual appointments
Mar. 26	off-beats	L. 22 (p. 170-174)
Mar. 28	fermatas	L. 24 (p. 179-184); Star-Spangled (p. 182) [Break Forth p. 144]
Apr. 2	videotaping 3a	L. 23 (p. 175-176); 9 minutes – Handsome Butcher (p. 206-210)
Apr. 4	videotaping 3b	L. 23 (p. 175-176); 9 minutes – Handsome Butcher (p. 210-213)
Apr. 9	<i>Easter Break</i>	<i>NO CLASS</i>

Apr. 11	asymmetric meters	L. 25 (p. 193-196); handout; final pieces
Apr. 16	accents; tempo changes	L. 27 (p. 201-214)
Apr. 18	final pieces	short presentation on your final piece
Apr. 23	Final Videotaping	L. 30 (p. 227-230); 15 minutes
Apr. 25	Final Videotaping	L. 30 (p. 227-230); 15 minutes
May 1 8:30a	Final Videotaping	L. 30 (p. 227-230); 15 minutes

APPENDIX 3

EXEMPLAR SYLLABUS – BASIC CONDUCTING

The course represented in this syllabus is a result of the research for this project, as well as my personal opinions about the instruction of conducting. It is intended as an example of how one might use the information presented in this project to develop a personal pedagogy of conducting. The class is designed for twice a week meetings of 80 minutes each, but could easily be adapted to a three times a week, fifty minute class.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introductory course in conducting technique for vocal and instrumental ensembles

MATERIALS

Readings and scores will be provided through class handouts, library or electronic reserves. There is no required textbook. Students must purchase a baton by the beginning of the fourth week of class. Please bring your major instrument with you to every class session.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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REPERTOIRE FOR STUDY

Bach Chorales
Mozart *Ave Verum*
Brahms *Abendlied*
Orff *Tanz* (from *Carmina Burana*)
Handel *Messiah* (Angel section)
Other repertoire as assigned

COURSE METHODOLOGY

Just as one learns the art of playing an instrument through the practice of playing, so a conductor learns their art by conducting. The difficulty for a conductor, as they work to bridge the gap between gesture and sound, is that their instrument is the ensemble they conduct. It is therefore imperative to have frequent experiences of conducting a live ensemble in order to successfully develop conducting technique. In this course, the student will have frequent in-class conducting opportunities. The class will be the lab ensemble so full participation and exceptional attendance is a necessity for a successful class experience. The primary mode of learning will be the experience of conducting the class, and that of watching your peers conduct and giving feedback.

Various readings will be assigned throughout the semester. These readings further clarify conducting topics discussed and practiced in class, or prepare you for a topic that will be introduced. The completion of these assigned readings is essential.

In addition to manual technique, the course will also cover score study and preparation, leadership, essential background knowledge, and musicianship skills. These topics are primarily addressed through outside of class assignments. During our first class meeting, you will receive a “Background Knowledge Assignment Packet” that covers musical terms, clefs, transposition and score order. You should work through this packet throughout the class. Additionally, each class will begin with a brief musicianship training exercise. This exercise may be simple error detection, rhythm training, or score reading practice. Some of these assignments will be collected and graded.

The study of leadership will include two rehearsal observations that you will complete throughout the semester. These observations should be of an ensemble in which you do not participate and may be of any level or ensemble type. You should comment on the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of the rehearsal, more so than the ‘what’. Focus on qualities that make the conductor an effective leader (or that don’t). Each observation should be a minimum of one page, single-spaced.

A variety of score study techniques will be covered in the third week of class. You are expected to thoroughly prepare all scores that you are assigned to conduct. One cannot begin to lead an ensemble of musicians without a thorough conception of the score. This preparation **MUST** be done prior to conducting in class.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Attend every class

Bring instrument; be prepared to conduct; read all assigned reading

Actively participate in discussions, ensemble and conducting

Give feedback to fellow student conductors

Practice regularly outside of class

Maintain consistent progress on semester-long background knowledge assignments

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate a familiarity with the fundamentals of manual conducting technique.
- Demonstrate a variety of methods of score preparation.
- Develop musicianship skills related to the art of conducting.
- Conceptualize well-founded interpretations of musical scores and execute these through conducting gestures and rehearsal.
- Observe and evaluate rehearsal technique.
- Possess a fundamental knowledge of background information related to musical terms, clefs, transpositions and issues of orchestration.
- Describe and demonstrate qualities of musical leadership.
- Critically peer- and self-assess conducting.

COURSE CALENDAR

Monday/Tuesday 1 hour, 20 min		Wednesday/Thursday 1 hour, 20 min	
1-1	Introduction to Conducting What and why is conducting? What is its purpose for me? Inspiration and leadership Connecting gesture and sound READ: McElheran Chp 1-3	1-2	Posture/Power/Preps The conducting plane Stance, Hand position Preps (LH, RH), Breathing, Style, Articulation, Length, Dynamics READ: Willetts, Chp. 1; McElheran Chp. 6
2-1	Releases and Patterns Releases (LH, RH), Breathing, Style, Articulation, Length, Dynamics Patterns: 1-2-3-4, Dynamic, articulation, accent READ: McElheran, Chp. 9, 14	2-2	Patterns (continued) Starts and stops in patterns Video practice READ: Labuta, Chp. 1-2
3-1	VIDEO SESSION 1 (5 min ea.) Posture/Power/Preps/Patterns READ: Wagner, p.13-19; Hillis Interview (Choral Journal, Feb 1991)	3-2	Score Study basics Analysis, translation, sing/play, marking strategies, graphing Making musical and interpretive decisions ASSIGN: Mozart <i>Ave Verum</i> READ: Labuta, Chp. 12; Golan, Score Passes
4-1	Baton and Fermatas Baton: position, using it or not Fermatas: types A, B, C; LH use ASSIGN: Bach Chorales READ: Bailey, 14-15; McElheran, Chp. 4, 17 DUE: Self-Assessment 1 (3-1)	4-2	Preparing Preps Preparations for full beats, other than one REP: Bach Chorales READ: Labuta, Chp. 3, 4 DUE: Marked Scores (Mozart)

5-1	Preparing Preps Preparations for partial beats Syncopation REP: Bach Chorales READ: Green, Chp. 5; McElheran, Chp. 11	5-2	Issues of Interpretation Burning questions on Mozart? REP: Bach Chorales ASSIGN: Brahms <i>Abendlied</i> Op.92, No. 3 DUE: Rehearsal Observation 1
6-1	VIDEO SESSION 2 (10 min ea.) REP: Mozart <i>Ave Verum</i>	6-2	VIDEO SESSION 2 (10 min ea.) REP: Mozart <i>Ave Verum</i> READ: Green, Chp. 7; McElheran, Chp. 8
7-1	LH Technique LH: Cues, Dynamics, Phrasing The LH at rest REP: Brahms <i>Abendlied</i> DUE: Self-Assessment 2 (6-1)	7-2	LH Technique Creating a LH choreography REP: Brahms <i>Abendlied</i> READ: McElheran, Chp. 7 DUE: Self-Assessment 2 (6-2)
8-1	More Patterns Subdivision Asymmetrical meters Mixed meters ASSIGN: Orff <i>Tanz</i>	8-2	Advanced Techniques Tempo Changes REP: Brahms <i>Abendlied</i> READ: McElheran, Chp. 15, 20
9-1	VIDEO SESSION 3 (15 min ea.) REP: Brahms <i>Abendlied</i>	9-2	VIDEO SESSION 3 (15 min ea.) REP: Brahms <i>Abendlied</i>
10-1	Assessing ourselves Revisiting the challenges of Brahms and our developing manual technique REP: Brahms <i>Abendlied</i> DUE: Self-Assessment 3 (9-1)	10-2	More than just the meter In class practice on mixed meter and articulations REP: Orff <i>Tanz</i> DUE: Self-Assessment 3 (9-2)
11-1	Advanced Techniques Introduction to Recitative ASSIGN: Handel <i>Messiah</i>	11-2	More than just the meter In class practice on mixed meter and articulations REP: Orff <i>Tanz</i> DUE: Rehearsal Observation 2
12-1	VIDEO SESSION 4 (15 min ea.) REP: Orff <i>Tanz</i>	12-2	VIDEO SESSION 4 (15 min ea.) REP: Orff <i>Tanz</i>
13-1	Advanced Techniques Recitative and Accompanying REP: Handel <i>Messiah</i> DUE: Self-Assessment 4 (12-1)	13-2	Advanced Techniques Recitative and Accompanying REP: Handel <i>Messiah</i> DUE: Self-Assessment 4 (12-2)
14-1	Advanced Techniques Cueing and Phrasing REP: Handel <i>Messiah</i>	14-2	VIDEO SESSION 5 (25 min ea.) REP: Handel <i>Messiah</i> DUE: Background Knowledge Packet
15-1	VIDEO SESSION 5 (25 min ea.) REP: Handel <i>Messiah</i>	15-2	VIDEO SESSION 5 (25 min ea.) REP: Handel <i>Messiah</i>

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