

The Conductor's Roles

The Many Roles of the Music Director

- A. Administrator
- B. Community Resource Person
- C. Fund Raiser
- D. Teacher
- E. Public Relations Manager
- F. Colleague
- G. Personnel Manager/Recruiter
- H. Counselor
- I. Conductor

Conducting is the art of communication, both gesturally and verbally. In addition, conducting involves not only musical leadership, but also interpersonal skills. Thus the following statements pertain both to musical and “non-musical” aspects of conducting.

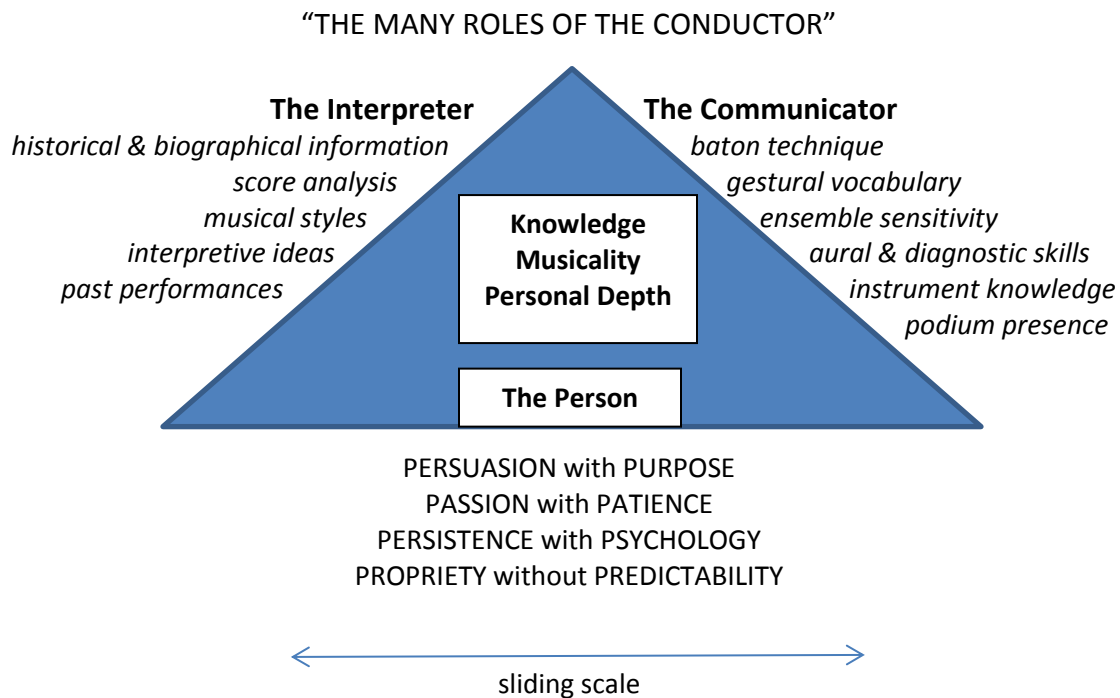
- A. A conductor is a **musician** who can demonstrate the ability to
 - Conduct music of various styles with clarity and expressivity
 - Know the score thoroughly (be able to sing/play all parts; be able to assist a choral ensemble from the keyboard as needed; listen perceptively while conducting.)
- B. A conductor is a **scholar** who can demonstrate the ability to
 - Prepare a written score analysis
 - Articulate clearly principles of choral/instrumental technique
 - Discuss related readings
 - Describe theoretical and historical aspects of selected compositions
- C. A conductor is a **teacher** who can demonstrate the ability to
 - Prepare a written rehearsal plan with specific strategies for teaching the music
 - Apply principles of choral/instrumental technique
 - Evaluate the outcomes of teaching
- D. A conductor is a **leader** who can demonstrate the ability to
 - Discuss various leadership styles of conductors
 - Apply these styles as appropriate
 - Relate to the musicians in the ensemble in a professional and personal manner

The Many Roles of the Conductor

- A. The Interpreter (the composer's advocate)
- B. The Communicator (it's a two-way street!)
- C. The Person (the human equation)

Exploring and Enhancing Your Personal Skills

- A. Being at Peace with Yourself
 - Your inner self and podium presence (intensity vs. tension)
 - Practice vs. play (work?)
 - There will never be "enough" time
 - "respect comes from knowledge"
- B. The Sliding Scale
 - The "bigger than life" You
 - "becoming" the music
 - Being "in" or "out" of the music
 - Reaching out and touching someone
- C. PERSUASION is a powerful tool for the conductor; however, we must always remember to strive for the composer's PURPOSE!
- D. PASSION for the music is paramount, but we are not just conducting music, we are conducting musicians...PATIENCE!
- E. PERSISTENCE is essential, as long as we are always aware of the ensemble's collective spirit...use group PSYCHOLOGY!
- F. PROPRIETY gives us credibility, but not at the price of musical spontaneity or discover...the enemy is PREDICTABILITY!



TERMINOLOGY FOR THE CONDUCTOR

A. FIXED TEMPO

Very slowest tempo

Larghissimo

Adagissimo

Lentissimo

(M.M. 40-50)

-superlative of Largo

-superlative of Adagio

-superlative of Lento

Very slow tempo

Largo

Adagio

Lento

(M.M. 50-63)

-broad, large

-at ease

-slow

Slow Tempo

Larghetto

Adagietto

(M.M. 63-72)

-diminutive of Largo

-diminutive of Adagio

Moderately Slow Tempo

Andante

Andantino

(M.M. 72-80)

-going or walking

-diminutive of Andante, therefore meaning literally
“going less”

Moderate tempo

Moderato

(M.M. 80-92)

-moderate

Moderately rapid tempo

Allegro

Allegretto

(M.M. 92-132)

-cheerful, quick, lively

-diminutive of Allegro; a little slower

Very rapid tempo

Con moto

Vivo

Presto

Vivace

Presto assai

(M.M. 132-152)

-with motion

-lively

-quick

-vivacious

-very quick

Most rapid tempo possible

Prestissimo

Vivacissimo

Allegrissimo

Prestissimo possibile

(M.M. 152-192)

-superlative of Presto

-superlative of Vivace

-superlative of Allegro

-extreme superlative of Presto

B. VARIABLE TEMPO

Gradual increase of tempo

Accelerando (accel.)

Stringendo (string.)

-hastening the movement

-quickening

Gradual decrease of tempo

Rallentando (rall.)

Ritardando or

Ritenuto (rit.)

-gradually slower

-holding back

- C. VARIABLE TEMPO AND LOUDNESS
- Slower and softer (gradually dying away)**
Calando
Morendo
Perdendosi
Smorzando
- Slower and louder**
Allargando
- Louder and faster**
Crescendo ed animando
- D. TEMPO QUALIFYING TERMS
- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| <i>assai</i> | -very |
| <i>ma non troppo</i> | -but not too much |
| <i>ma non tanto</i> | -but not too much |
| <i>meno mosso</i> | -less quickly |
| <i>molto</i> | -very |
| <i>piu mosso</i> | -more quickly |
| <i>poco</i> | -little |
| <i>poco a poco</i> | -little by little |
- E. STABLE DYNAMICS
- Softly as possible**
pianississimo (ppp)
pianissimo possibile
- Very softly**
pianissimo (pp)
il piu piano
piano assai
- Softly**
piano (p)
piu piano
- Moderately softly**
mezzo piano (mp)
- Moderately loudly**
mezzo forte (mf)
- Loudly**
forte (f)
piu forte
- Very loudly**
fortissimo (ff)
il piu forte
- Loudly as possible**
fortississimo (fff)
il piu forte possibile

F. VARIABLE DYNAMICS

Accent of single note or chord

Forzando or Forzato (fz)

Sforzando or Sforzato (sf or sfz)

Sudden change

forte-piano (fp)

crescendo subito

-loudly followed immediately by softly

-becoming louder immediately

More gradual change

crescendo (cresc.)

crescendo poco a poco

crescendo molto

crescendo piu diminuendo

crescendo e diminuendo

decrescendo (decresc.)

diminuendo (dim.)

-gradually becoming louder

-becoming louder little by little

-becoming much louder

-gradually louder then gradually softer

-gradually louder then gradually softer

-gradually becoming softer

-gradually becoming softer

G. SPIRIT AND MOOD

Agitato

Animato

con amore

con bravura

con energia

con espressione; espressivo

con brio

con fuoco

con passione

con grazia

con tenerezza

Dolce

Giocoso

Gioioso

Leggero; Leggiero

Maestoso; con maesta

Pastorale

Pesante

Pomposo

Scherzando; Scherzoso

Sostenuto

Sotto voce

-excited, agitated

-with animation, lively

-with tenderness

-with boldness

-with energy

-with expression; expressive

-with brilliance

-with fire

-with passion

-with grace

-with tenderness

-gently, sweetly

-humorously

-joyfully

-light, rapid

-majestically, dignified

-in pastoral style; simple, unaffected

-heavy, weighty

-pompously

-jokingly

-sustained

-with subdued voice

Basic Calisthenics for Conductors

Richard L. Blatti

[*adapted from Elizabeth Green's Modern Conductor*]

Calisthenic No. 1: "Dust Off Your Ictus Table"

Begin with hands directly in front of you, palms down and fingers extended inwardly, left middle finger touching right middle finger. The elbows should be at the same level as hands, approximately as high as the breastbone (bottom front of the rib cage,) and slightly in front of body. Avoid tension in shoulders, neck, or upper arms. Slowly move hands away from each other along the same plane at a constant speed, fingers pointed in as long as possible. (Elbows should not move up or down, forward or backward!) Once arms are almost fully extended, flip fingers out and bring hands back to center at the same even rate. It is best to think of a certain tempo in triple meter (pick a favorite piece) and make the movements last approximately 3 seconds. [e.g. piece in $\frac{3}{4}$ at MM=60, one measure out, one measure in] *Be sure your fingertips stay exactly the same distance from the wall (and from the floor) throughout this exercise!*

VARIATION: HANDS IN PARALLEL MOTION!

Calisthenic No. 2: "Paint Brush Practice"

Begin with hands in front of you (approximately 12"), arms and fingers extended down to the floor, palms facing your body, with hands approximately shoulder distance apart. Gradually raise your hands, again at constant speed, keeping hands equidistant from the wall and from each other. Again take about 3 seconds to move up, until arms are almost fully extended, fingers pointing down as long as possible. Flip hands (fingers pointing to the ceiling) and return hands to original position. Throughout this exercise, the movement must originate from the wrists – NOT the upper arms or shoulders. *Remember to keep the vertical plane perfectly flat and to stay at a constant tempo!*

VARIATION: HANDS IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS!

Calisthenic No. 3a & 3b: "Coordination/Subordination"

Now try Cal. No. 1 with the left hand (LH) alone. Try to put the LH on "automatic pilot" – try not to think about it, always being sure to keep the tempo and hand speed absolutely constant. While LH is still in motion, focus on the right hand (RH), gradually bring it forward to Cal. No. 2 starting position, and begin Cal. No. 2 with RH. It is imperative that the RH begins (on count 1) when the LH is also at the starting point of Cal. No. 1! You will notice that the RH must travel a little farther than the LH in the same amount of time - gauge your movements accordingly! Keep practicing this calisthenic until you feel fairly comfortable with it and both hands convincingly describe perpendicular planes-this is Cal. No. 3a. When you are ready (and only then) try reversing hands-begin with RH on Cal. No. 1 and bring LH into Cal. No. 2 - this is Cal. No. 3b. *You may even try starting No. 3a with the RH (Cal. No. 2) or No. 3b with LH (Cal. No. 2) as variations on these!*

NOW TRY THESE FIRST THREE CALISTHENICS WITH BATON IN RH: You will have to stand a little farther away from the wall, but try to keep hands in the same vertical plane – the baton tip will extend into a different but parallel vertical plane one baton length away. Be sure to extend all your RH "energy" to the baton tip – NO CURVED MOVEMENTS!

Calisthenic No. 4: "Right Hand Independence"

Choose either Cal. No. 1 or No. 2 for the LH, still thinking in triple meter, approx. MM=60.

STEP 1: Begin LH motion, as in No. 3a or 3b, leaving RH with baton in "deactivated mode."

STEP 2: When it is comfortable to do so, gradually bring baton/RH to "activated" status and begin tapping beats in the very center of your conducting field, on the ictus table. These "taps" should be barely noticeable and should not interfere with the LH movements at all; if they do, deactivate RH and, after reestablishing LH, gradually try again.

STEP 3: Gradually convert taps to a very small three pattern; again, there should be no change in the LH movements. (If there are, return to Step 2.) Gradually, enlarge the three pattern until it is at the maximum size it can be at this tempo and stay under control. Now slowly return to the small pattern, to the taps, and deactivate RH entirely. Using the steps above, experiment with linear or diagonal LH movements using the space in front of your vertical plane (the "performers" space.)

Calisthenic No. 5: "Control Those Rebounds"

Using a four pattern approx.. MM=72, begin with RH baton only so that each leg of the pattern measures just ½ inch; this should only require fingers. Gradually increase size to 1" which will, perhaps, only involve a slight involvement of the wrist. Increase to 2", 4", 8" – each adjustment coming only after careful and successful display at the size previous and only with minimal movement of arm, if at all. As you move to 16 and 32", the lower arm and, eventually, even the upper arm will have to be more and more involved but only after you "run out of wrist." Now begin reducing to 16, 8, 4, 2, 1, and ½ inches, as quickly as possible deactivating upper, then lower, arm and elbow. Did you change tempo? Style? Symmetry? Try to keep these constant – the more you do, the more control you will have. *Try to avoid tension in wrist throughout.*

Calisthenic No. 6: "Left Hand Independence"

Begin a four pattern (MM=84) with RH/baton while LH hangs loosely at side. Bring LH up (in fist) into conducting field on the third beat of a given measure and immediately deactivate LH to return to relaxed position at side. Conduct another measure without the LH motion, and then another with the LH, again on count three. Alternate for a while, always with the LH first on "three." Now try a different tempo and a different beat, e.g. beat 2 at MM=120. Now try a sequence of beats, with a different LH beat gesture in each measure; e.g. beat 1 in measure 1, beat 2 in m. 2, 3 in m.3 and 4 in m. 4. This will require a little practice since the RH and LH will be travelling different directions at different times.

VARIATION: Practice the "four steps to any cue" using this method!

Calisthenic No. 7: "Now Do It with Style"

Execute Cal. No. 1, No. 2, No. 3 & No. 4 with hands in different styles, e.g. LH staccato, RH legato or LH tenuto, RH marcato. Be sure to "eliminate" the new variable each time until the "automatic pilot" hand is unaffected by the other. Try Cal. 6 Variation (cueing) using this method as well. *This can be a very practical skill in interpretive conducting!*

Calisthenic No. 8: "Some LaMaze Tricks"

TO RELIEVE EXCESS TENSION: 1.) Extend arm forward or to side; transfer tension from shoulder all the way out to fingers, then eliminate tension fingers to shoulder (or vice versa.) 2.) "Visual Imagery" of swimming pool set-up and elbow/arm support.

Conductors' Checklist

By John P. Paynter

[ed. By Richard Blatti] & [further ed. By Margaret Underwood]

Before Starting

1. Feet firmly planted in a comfortable but secure position; slightly spread; [about shoulder distance.]
2. Back straight and backs of the legs firm, [*torso elevated.*]
3. Both arms up in a natural, straight-away lift from at-the-sides-position, [with elbows at 4:00 and 8:00 and hands in center of conducting field.]
4. Baton hand holding the baton with the thumb and knuck of the index finger, [allowing baton to be an extension of the arm.]
5. Left hand [naturally curved, with fingers together], [*palm down.*]
6. Point of the baton between the eyes of the conductor and the ensemble.
7. Head up and out of the score – full eye contact with the performers.
8. Tempo, beat pattern, style, dynamics, [mood], color, rhythm all in mind.
9. Check preparatory gesture mentally.
10. Begin [conduct the breath needed to start the music], [*frame the music with silence.*]

After Starting

1. Reduce or eliminate body sway and hip movement.
2. Use your head, but not to give conducting gestures.
3. Conduct as much as you have to, and as little as you can, [depending on what is necessary, appropriate, and/or effective as a communicator.]
4. Continue eye contact; keep your head up and out of the score.
5. Be sure your conducting reflects the desired musical style, [dynamics, pacing, phrasings, architecture, colors, and cues], [*reflect the emotional environment of the music.*]
6. Regularly check your baton, eye and hand positions.
7. Compliment the group, with your eyes, face and lips [*immediate feedback.*]
8. Make music! [and remember, you are not just conducting music, you are conducting musicians!]

Transposition Worksheet

Name _____

You are rehearsing a composition in the key of D Major. What key will the following instruments be playing in?

C Piccolo _____

English Horn _____

E-flat Soprano Clarinet _____

B-flat Clarinet _____

A Clarinet _____

Alto Clarinet _____

Bass Clarinet _____

Alto Saxophone _____

Tenor Saxophone _____

Baritone Saxophone _____

Horn in F _____

Horn in E-flat _____

Horn in D _____

C Trumpet _____

B-flat Cornet _____

E-flat Trumpet _____

Treble Clef Baritone _____

BBb Tuba _____

Tenor Trombone _____

Viola _____

Marimba _____

Basic Conducting- Self Evaluation Name _____

Practicum #1 - 3&4 Patterns: pp 163, 164, 167, 168

Fundamentals: stance, posture, excessive movement in head, body, arm/hand positions, baton grip, baton angle, conducting field, focus

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

Pattern Clarity: vertical/horizontal planes, ictus table, demonstration of 3 & 4 patterns: especially rebound control, symmetry, speed, direction, style, and size

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

Score Knowledge & Preparation: amount of preparation, confidence, eye contact, impulse of will, tempo stability, musicianship and interpretation

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

Overall Communication: ensemble performance, connection to ensemble, reactions to ensemble, directional conducting, facial information

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

ON BACK: List 3 things that pleased you on this practicum

Self Grade:

Basic Conducting- Self Evaluation Name _____

Practicum #2 – 1 & 2 Patterns: pp 23, 175, 182, 188

Fundamentals: stance, posture, excessive movement in head, body, arm/hand positions, baton grip, baton angle, conducting field, focus

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

Pattern Clarity: vertical/horizontal planes, ictus table, demonstration of 3 & 4 patterns: especially rebound control, symmetry, speed, direction, style, and size

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

Score Knowledge & Preparation: amount of preparation, confidence, eye contact, impulse of will, tempo stability, musicianship and interpretation

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

Overall Communication: ensemble performance, connection to ensemble, reactions to ensemble, directional conducting, facial information

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

ON BACK: List 3 things that pleased you on this practicum

Self Grade:

Basic Conducting- Self Evaluation Name _____

Practicum #3 – Left Hand Control: pp 310-311 (Au Clair de la Lune)

Fundamentals: stance, posture, excessive movement in head, body, arm/hand positions, baton grip, baton angle, conducting field, focus, pattern clarity

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

Pattern Clarity: vertical/horizontal planes, ictus table, RH control, symmetry, speed, direction, style, and size

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

Left Hand Communication: overall LH independence and control and reaction of ensemble, according to following criteria: activation/deactivation, gradual dynamic change, sudden dynamic change, originality in interpretation

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

Overall Communication: ensemble performance, connection to ensemble, reactions to ensemble, directional conducting, facial information

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

ON BACK: List 3 things that pleased you on this practicum

Self Grade:

Basic Conducting- Self Evaluation Name _____

Practicum #4 - Cues: Gordon Jacob (Early One Morning)

Fundamentals: stance, posture, excessive movement in head, body, arm/hand positions, baton grip, baton angle, conducting field, focus, pattern clarity

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

Cues: hand posture, facial information, RH/LH coordination skills: eye contact, deemphasis, preparation, cue gesture, follow-through (reaction)

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

Score Knowledge & Preparation: confidence, eye contact, impulse of will, tempo stability, special gestures, musicianship and interpretation

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

Overall Communication: ensemble performance, connection to ensemble, reactions to ensemble, directional conducting, facial information

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

ON BACK: List 3 things that pleased you on this practicum

Self Grade:

Basic Conducting - Paired Evaluation

Conductor's Name _____ Date _____

Mozart: Ave Verum Corpus

Set-Up and Posture: stance, posture, body, arm/hand positions, baton grip, baton angle

COMMENT	SOLUTION OR EXPLANATION

Right Hand and Pattern: conducting field and focus, rebound, ictus/legato, symmetry, centering, use of wrist, cuing

COMMENT	SOLUTION OR EXPLANATION

Use of Left Hand: neutral position, activation/deactivation, hand shape, cueing, musicality, effectiveness

COMMENT	SOLUTION OR EXPLANATION

Preps: style, articulation, tempo, follow-through, musicality, attention and contact

COMMENT	SOLUTION OR EXPLANATION

Paired Evaluation p. 2

Evidence of Preparation and Effectiveness: confidence, musicality, score familiarity, individual interpretation, connection to ensemble, eye contact, impulse of will, reactions to ensemble, directional conducting, facial information

COMMENT	SOLUTION OR EXPLANATION

Additional Comments:

Evaluated by _____