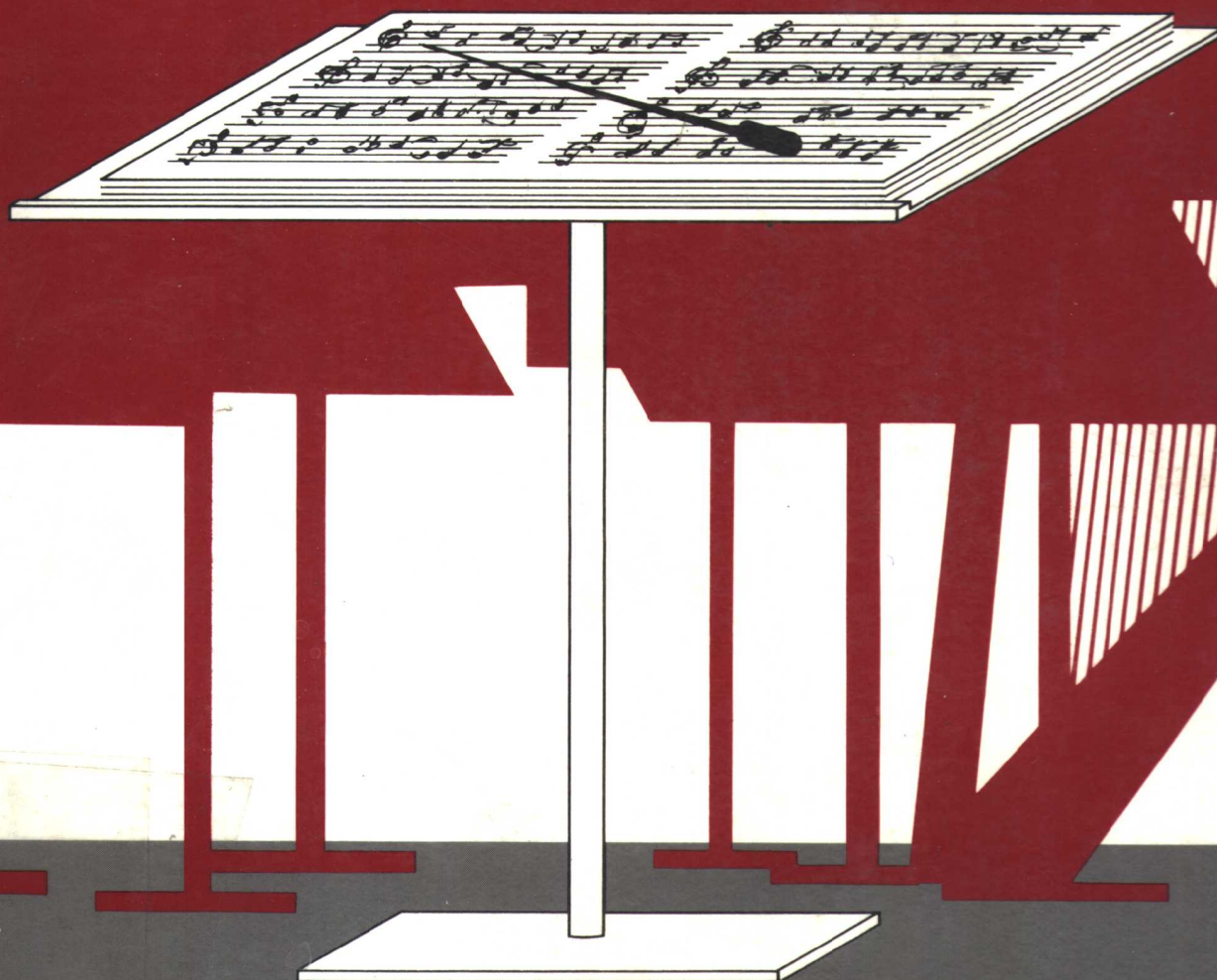


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THE ART OF CONDUCTING

SECOND
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DONALD HUNSBERGER
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THE ART OF CONDUCTING

SECOND EDITION

DONALD HUNSBERGER
ROY E. ERNST

The Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester

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THE ART OF CONDUCTING

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His research into American theater orchestra repertoire and performance practices led to an association with the Film Archives at the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York. He has presented concerts featuring live orchestral accompaniment to classic silent films with major symphony orchestras such as The National, Milwaukee, and Vancouver, among others, as well as with his own Eastman-Dryden Orchestra.

Dr. Hunsberger is active in wind band and theater orchestra recording; his CD of turn-of-the-century cornet solos featuring Wynton Marsalis and the Eastman Wind Ensemble was nominated for a Grammy Award for "Best Solo with Orchestral Accompaniment." Music from his series of theater orchestra music on Arabesque Records with the Eastman-Dryden Orchestra was included in the sound track of the film *Room with a View*. He has recorded on Sony, CBS Masterworks, DGG, Philips, Mercury, Toshiba EMI, Tioch, and others.



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PREFACE

TO THE INSTRUCTOR

The improvement of college conducting classes is a matter of widespread concern, particularly since a large percentage of graduates will use their conducting skills extensively during their careers and many—perhaps most—will receive no additional formal instruction. The number of students who need to receive individual instruction and experience in a limited amount of class time seems inevitably to make accomplishments too limited.

What can be done to increase the effectiveness of conducting classes, given the amount of class time and the number of students? More specifically: How can classes be organized so that each student will receive as much time as possible to actually conduct? What are the best methods and sequences for presenting instruction? How can instrumentalists and vocalists be accommodated in the same conducting class? What musical repertoire can be conducted and performed in class? How can score reading and analysis be integrated with the development of technique? How can the wide array of background knowledge and administrative skills required to become a successful conductor today be included? These were among the questions that we addressed during 10 years of concentrated evaluation and revision of the basic conducting curriculum at the Eastman School of Music. The organization and instructional materials which were developed are presented in this comprehensive text for introductory through advanced conducting classes consisting of vocalists, instrumentalists, or both.

The techniques and information included in most undergraduate conducting courses are thoroughly covered in the first ten chapters of the book (Section One) and classes that progress only to this point will give students an excellent grasp of the fundamentals of conducting technique. Many instructors will find, as we have, however, that the more efficient procedures and instructional sequence reflected in the text will make it possible to include the additional material in Chapters 11 to 14 (Section Two). If this is not the case, owing to the size of the class or the number of hours available per week, these chapters can be included in subsequent courses rather than the introductory course. These chapters, which take up special topics and techniques, will also serve as an important reference resource for students who are not able to study them in other courses.

The main focus of the text is on conducting technique, score reading, score analysis, and general rehearsal procedures. More detailed information on rehearsal procedures and repertoire for each type of ensemble is expected to be covered in subsequent courses. If the class consists of all vocalists or all instrumentalists, however, this specialized information can be easily integrated.

We have found that concise instructions, directly to the point, are most helpful to students, but this should not be mistaken for a dogmatic approach. Alternative procedures are discussed, and teachers and students are encouraged to consider and analyze still additional alternatives.

Every musical concept or physical skill presented in the text is accompanied by musical excerpts (Section Three) for illustration and conducting practice. The excerpts are long enough to establish a musical context for conducting—not just three or four measures to illustrate a point. We have found—not surprisingly—that students prefer to conduct standard repertoire (“real music,” as they say) rather than études. This is also an opportunity to learn additional repertoire. Single-pitch exercises are provided where they will be useful for unison conducting in class.

The musical excerpts have been selected from the standard choral, orchestral, and wind repertoire, so that it is possible for classes with vocalists and instrumentalists to function both as an instrumental ensemble and as a choral ensemble. Classes consisting of vocalists only or instrumentalists only will find sufficient repertoire for each type of ensemble. Classes that are not able to perform some of the more difficult excerpts can use those for analysis and the less difficult excerpts for class performance. We recommend that students perform in class on either their major instrument or a secondary instrument on which they are fairly advanced.

Musical excerpts for the earlier chapters are to be sung (with piano accompaniment) and conducted by the class in unison with the instructor. This enables the class to learn and practice each technique before individual students conduct—an efficient procedure that makes it possible for the class to learn the fundamentals of technique very quickly. Instruments can be added to the vocal line when individuals conduct the class.

For the later chapters, instrumental excerpts are included that are arranged for performance by small groups of random instrumentation. Students are expected to transpose, if necessary, when playing easy excerpts. Transposed performance parts are included for more difficult excerpts.

Developing fluency and confidence in score-reading techniques—clefs, transpositions, and orchestration schemes—requires continual practice over a long period of time. Some of the exercises for reading clefs and transpositions, however, can be omitted if this has been adequately covered in other courses and time does not permit additional practice. These can also be grouped and reviewed as a single unit. Score-reading assignments include reading clefs and transpositions working toward a comprehensive analysis of compositions.

The Appendixes (Section Four) include a course description, daily exercises, seating charts, forms for planning and organization, a glossary, and a selection of recommended readings.

ABOUT THE SECOND EDITION

Several changes have been made in the second edition. The content has been reorganized on the basis of evaluations of conducting classes at Eastman and the suggestions of conducting teachers from other universities who have used the first edition. This process has affirmed that there is more than one good way to organize the material; and although we feel that the present organization works very well, we encourage you to make changes in the sequence of topics to suit your own preferences and needs.

New repertoire has been added to this edition. We have selected a broad variety of good repertoire that students will enjoy. It is possible to achieve musical results with almost any combination of singers and instrumentalists by creatively adapting the excerpts for the class. Students should be encouraged to make their own decisions about how to use the performing resources of the class. The excerpts are now presented as an Anthology (Section Three) rather than at the end of each chapter. This should make it more convenient for students to use excerpts from any of the chapters to supplement those for the chapter currently under study.

Aural analysis sections and other exercises have been added to give students more practice in analyzing performance and making musical decisions. We recommend taping the class so that students will be analyzing real performances rather than performances with contrived mistakes. A "designated listener" procedure also gives students more practice in analyzing real performance. New assignments and tests make students more accountable for the aspects of technique that they should be able to accomplish through individual practice. This makes it possible to devote more class time to rehearsal techniques and other aspects of musical leadership.

Chapter 5, on score reading and rehearsal techniques, is entirely new. It provides a systematic approach to score study and a basic repertoire of rehearsal techniques. Both of these are presented so that they will be treated as the beginning of a learning process that can be continued throughout an entire career.

An Instructor's Guide consisting of teaching suggestions for use with this new edition is available from the publisher. It discusses priorities for the use of time, procedures for emphasizing musical leadership, and other objective and subjective factors for consideration in evaluating and improving the teaching of conducting.

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We are deeply indebted to Susan Gamer, our editing supervisor at McGraw-Hill, for her editorial revisions of this second edition; to our sponsoring editor, Cynthia Ward; to our consulting editor in music, Allan Schindler; and to our designer, Rafael Hernandez.

Finally, we are particularly indebted to the many students with whom we have worked, both at Eastman and throughout the United States, whose enthusiasm and musicianship are a constant source of inspiration to us. We hope that this book will help many of them to have rewarding musical careers.

Donald Hunsberger
Roy E. Ernst

INTRODUCTION

TO THE STUDENT

Conducting is a great privilege—an opportunity to use the vast resources of musical composition and performance for artistic creativity. It also carries with it many responsibilities, particularly to the composer, the members of the ensemble, the audience, and the conductor's own standards of musical and personal integrity.

To become a conductor, scholarship is essential, for in addition to possessing the skills to analyze a score thoroughly before rehearsal, a conductor must be able to draw upon extensive knowledge and long experience to develop the inherent, distinctive characteristics of each composition. Interpretation of any composition requires a knowledge of the composer's other works and of how this composer's style is similar to or different from that of his or her contemporaries, predecessors, and followers. The ability to clearly differentiate compositional and performance styles will result in performances that are distinctive and interesting, while failure to do so usually results in bland and monotonous renditions. Even the experience of many years of conducting will not lead to convincing, stylistically valid interpretations if the conductor's research and analysis habits are superficial rather than thorough.

In addition to possessing a broad knowledge of traditional repertoire, conductors should study the works of contemporary composers—the music of their own time—and develop the special knowledge and skills necessary for analyzing, interpreting, and conducting contemporary compositions. Jazz performance and musical theater are important areas of contemporary composition that should not be ignored.

The conductor must be worthy of leading other musicians, allowing his or her conducting abilities and other accomplishments as a musician to speak for themselves without indulging in pompous self-flattery. Conductors must be able to inspire and challenge musicians to perform at their highest possible level through instructive assistance that is supportive and positive rather than intimidating and destructive. Fortunately, the era has passed when it was common for egotistical or personally insecure conductors to psychologically abuse performers through verbal intimidation. Such actions are usually an

attempt to draw attention away from the conductor's own deficiencies. A conductor should never hesitate to display sincere caring for the performers and the music being performed.

In addition to scholarship, a clear, fluent conducting technique is essential. A secure technique enables a conductor to concentrate entirely on the needs of the performers and the music. It also serves to reduce the use of verbal instruction during the rehearsal, since performers will recognize good technique and react positively to it. A polished technique by itself is not sufficient, however, it is only the means through which the conductor expresses knowledge and musicianship. Flamboyant and dramatic gestures made primarily to impress an audience should not be mistaken for good conducting technique.

Conductors frequently must be responsible for administrative details that are essentially nonmusical but can become critical obstructions if neglected. An enormous amount of behind-the-scenes detail work is necessary for the successful operation of a musical ensemble. The conductor's objective is to develop organizational procedures to handle each problem as efficiently as possible.

The subject of right-handed and left-handed conductors is frequently discussed. According to the traditional concept, the right hand is primarily assigned to beating time patterns while the left hand is relegated to indicating sostenuto support, dynamic levels, cuing, and so forth. Today, however, conductors face musical tasks so complex that they must be able to use either hand independently. To perform Renaissance antiphonal choir music, contemporary aleatoric and proportional-notation compositions, or accompaniments of all periods requires a free and independent use of *both* hands for rhythmic pulse, cuing, or dynamics. Thus an *ambidextrous approach* is essential for the beginning conductor.

There are many different styles of conducting. In presenting, for example, a particular style of beat pattern, we do not intend to imply that we consider it superior to other styles, or that you must use one particular style to be a good conductor. We are well aware that many conducting teachers will prefer different styles, and we encourage their inclusion from the beginning. We feel that students will be well served if they learn both the basic style suggested in the text and alternatives that their instructors recommend. Both can then be used as points of reference to evaluate the infinity of alternatives that will be encountered or discovered in the future.

Once the fundamental knowledge and techniques are acquired, each conductor must strive to develop an individual style and personality—avoiding the common tendency to mimic other conductors. Do not hesitate to learn from others, but be selective in what you choose to adapt to your own style. You must be able to analyze the logic and validity of the many dogmatic concepts and myths about conducting. For each new technique you try, ask yourself such questions as these: What are the advantages for my own development? What are the disadvantages? In what type of situation would this work best? Where would an alternative technique work better? Using this analytical approach—rather than attempting to reduce conducting to a set of simple rules—will lead you, as a musically sincere conductor, to continuous intellectual growth and superior conducting capabilities.

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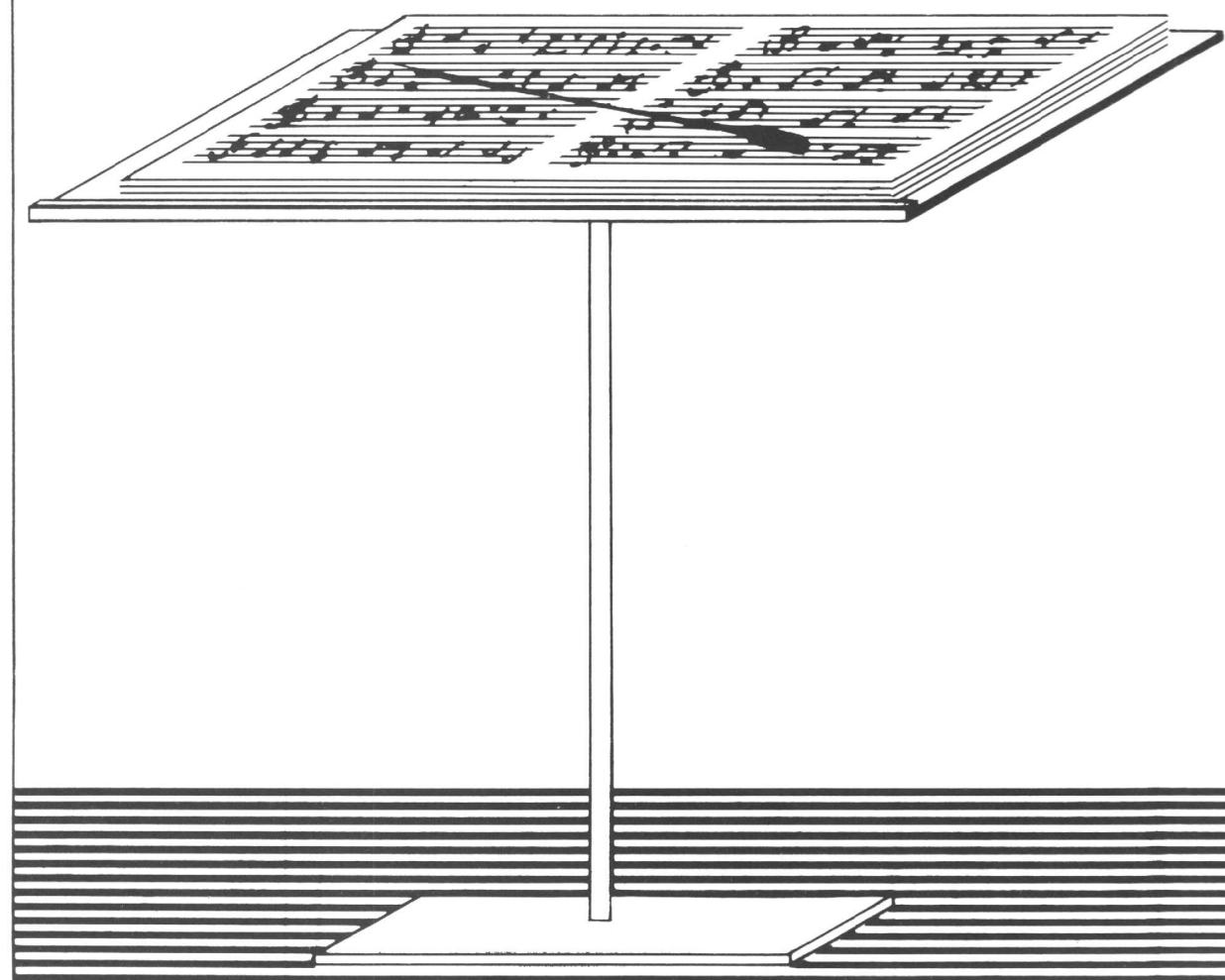
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SECTION ONE

BASIC PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES





CHAPTER 1

POSTURE

PREPARATORY GESTURES AND DOWNBEATS

RELEASES FOUR- AND THREE-BEAT PATTERNS

STYLE OF ARTICULATION

POSTURE

The foundation of good conducting technique begins with correct posture. A knowledge of how each aspect of posture affects conducting will lead to maximum physical flexibility and will give a general impression of confident leadership and artistic elegance.

Stance

The following stance is recommended for beginning conductors. Slight variations will develop naturally as each person's individual conducting style begins to take form.

- Stand erect with your feet 5 or 6 inches apart, toes pointed slightly outward. This position will provide good balance and allow you to turn comfortably to each side. (Some conductors develop the habit of placing one foot forward, creating a tendency to face one side of the ensemble more than the other. This presents a somewhat lopsided appearance to the audience.)
- Keep your knees straight but not locked. Distribute your weight evenly on both feet.
- Keep your shoulders back, though not uncomfortably stiff or rigid.
- Hold your head high with your neck relaxed. Avoid holding or twisting your head to one side or the other, as this may produce tension in the neck and shoulders and possibly cause you to turn the entire body in that direction.
- When you turn your upper body to face sections of the ensemble, do not give the impression that your feet are immobile or fastened to the floor. Change your foot position for a more decisive turn or move.

Practice this stance and experiment with variations that feel natural to you.

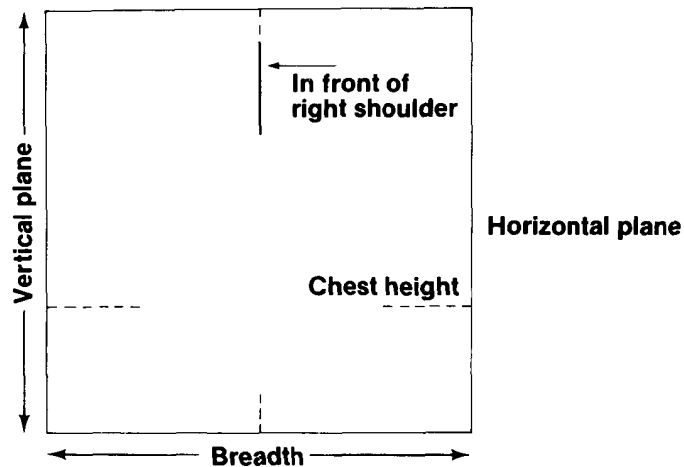


FIGURE 1-1
Conducting area.

Conducting Area

Ordinarily, the conducting area extends from the top of the head to the waist (approximately the height to which a conductor's stand is generally raised) for vertical strokes, and the full reach of the arms to either side for horizontal strokes. The horizontal center of the beat patterns should be approximately at chest height. The vertical beat patterns should be in front of the body slightly to the right of center for the right hand (approximately in front of the right shoulder) and slightly to the left of center for the left hand (again in front of the shoulder area). (See Figure 1-1.)

Arm Position

To develop a basic arm position, do the following (see Figures 1-2 and 1-3):

First, fully extend both arms in front of your body. Retract your hands toward your chest until the bending of the elbows creates an angle of slightly more than 90 degrees between the upper arm and the forearm. Your elbows should be in front of your body, not by your sides. Figure 1-2 illustrates this position.

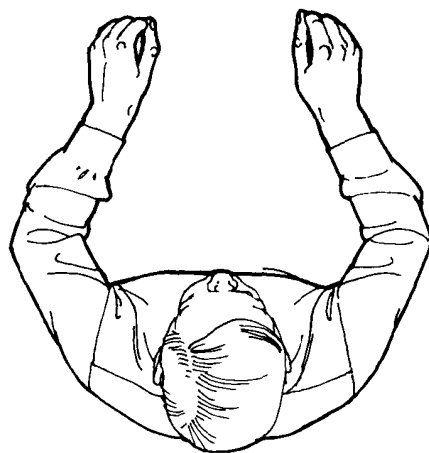


FIGURE 1-2
Conducting arm position viewed from above.

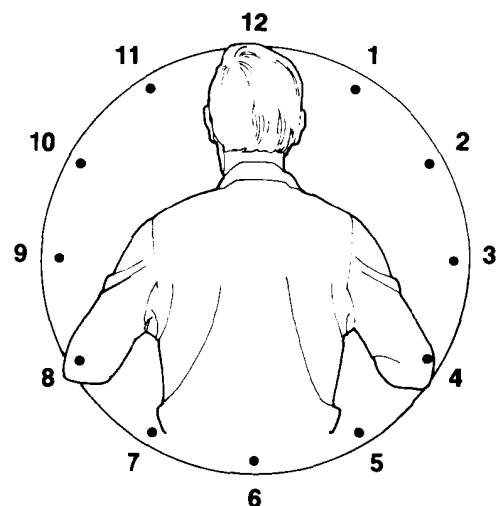


FIGURE 1-3
Conducting arm position viewed from the back.

Second, visualizing the numbers on the face of a clock, position your right elbow at approximately four o'clock and your left elbow at approximately eight o'clock. This is the basic arm position. It creates a natural appearance and allows maximum freedom of movement (Figure 1-3).

Third, practice adjusting this position by raising the right elbow to the three-o'clock position and the left elbow to a nine-o'clock position. Rotate both elbows and lower them to approximately six o'clock, or close to the body. Be aware of the feeling of each of these extreme positions. Now return to the basic position.

Hand Position

It is best to begin learning the basic beat patterns without a baton, because this approach encourages a more relaxed and natural grip when you add the baton later. Also, developing the ability to "feel the pulse" in your hand will assist you when the baton is used. If your instructor prefers to begin the entire process with a baton, however, read "Using the Baton" in Chapter 3 (pages 30–35) before proceeding.

To develop a basic hand position, do the following.

First, turn the palm of the right hand downward with a slight inward roll and lightly touch the thumb against the first finger at the first joint. Curve the remaining fingers inward naturally toward the palm. This will be approximately the same shape as the hand assumes when it is hanging, relaxed, by your side. It is also the same basic shape you will use later with the baton. Positioning the thumb against the first finger will help to control the shape and prepare for the use of a baton. (See Figures 1-4 and 1-5.) This is not, however, a hand position that would be used by most choral conductors.

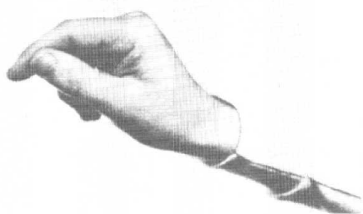


FIGURE 1-4
Hand position without baton.

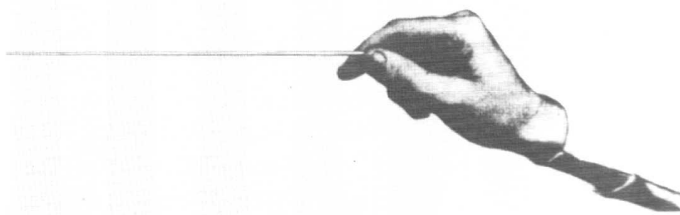


FIGURE 1-5
Hand position with baton.

If you prefer to begin with a *choral-type* hand position, open your fingers more and do not touch the thumb against the first finger. You may also want to touch the *middle finger* lightly with the thumb. In any case, the back of the hand should be held a little higher than the wrist.

Second, give small downbeats and upbeats, in order to feel a rhythmic pulse with your hand, focused in your fingertips. The hand should flex downward slightly at the wrist as downbeats are given, as though you were flicking water from your fingers. Observe the wrist action carefully; too much motion will produce a floppy effect, and too little motion will appear stiff and rigid.

PREPARATORY GESTURES AND DOWNBEATS

It takes a great deal of practice and analysis to produce consistently clear and rhythmical preparatory gestures and downbeats. These introductory motions must convey:

- Exact beginning of the first tone
- Dynamic level
- Articulation style of the opening statement
- Tempo

Practice giving preparatory gestures and downbeats as follows:

- 1 Assume the basic conducting positions described above. Check the position of your feet, shoulders, and head. Extend your right hand and arm to the position shown in Figures 1-2 and 1-3. Let your left arm hang in a comfortable position by your side.
- 2 Give a preparatory gesture and downbeat, inhaling slightly as you raise your hand through the preparatory gesture. Breathe quietly—do not make a loud gasp. Breathing along with the preparatory gesture places the conductor in a sympathetic position with regard to the performers, who will usually breathe on the preparatory beat. It will also help to avoid rushing on the preparatory gesture.
- 3 Bring your hand downward to the same horizontal plane where the preparatory gesture began (see Figure 1-6, opposite page) and sing a syllable such as *tu* or *du*. The tone should begin at the point when the downward motion stops. The hand can either remain in this position or make a slight upward rebound. The precise moment when the metric pulse is felt and the tone begins is called the *ictus*.

When making preparatory gestures and downbeats, always establish eye contact with your performers and pause for a moment until you sense their concentration and readiness. Practice until the breathing motion, the preparatory gesture, and the downbeat are coordinated within an overall feeling of rhythmic flow. Practice the patterns in Figure 1-6.

The various parts of the preparatory gesture and downbeat should be carefully analyzed to see how they indicate specific musical qualities, such as dynamic level, style of articulation, and tempo. For example, the size and intensity of the preparatory gesture and the downbeat gesture can indicate an expected *dynamic level*. You may want to concentrate on the size of the gesture at this point. Intensity is more difficult to convey; it comes from the total effect of posture, facial expression, and muscle tension.

The contour and speed of the preparatory gesture will indicate *articulation style*. An abrupt, angular motion would indicate an accented or *staccato* style; a smooth, curved gesture indicates a more flowing, *legato* style. (These styles are discussed later in the chapter.)

It is particularly important to analyze how the *tempo* is set. In a scientific sense, setting the tempo means defining a unit of time duration that will be repeated exactly to create a steady metric pulse. Just as two specific points in space are needed to define a unit of distance, two specific points in time are needed to define a unit of duration.

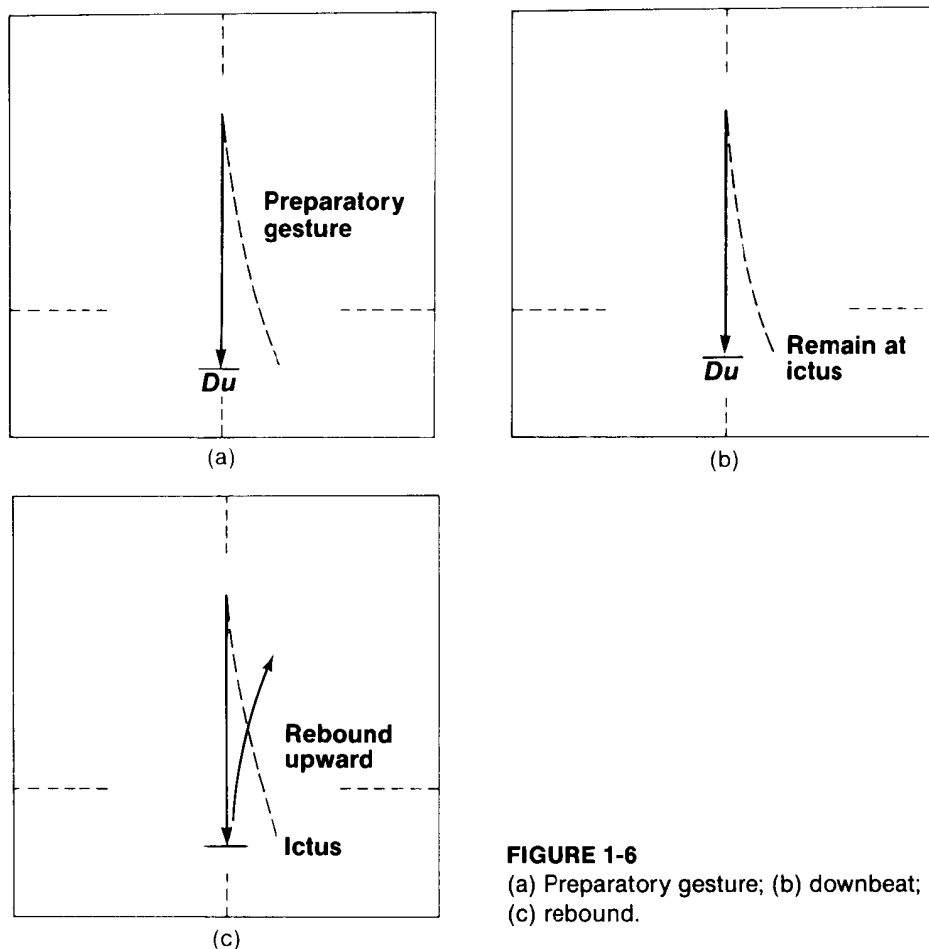


FIGURE 1-6

(a) Preparatory gesture; (b) downbeat;
(c) rebound.

The beginning of the preparatory gesture cannot be consistently identified by observers as a specific point in time because it is impossible to recognize the exact moment when motion begins; thus the upward motion from the beginning to the end of the preparatory gesture gives only an approximation of the tempo. The end of the preparatory gesture, which we will now call the *preparatory ictus*, can be observed as a specific point in time. Therefore, the duration of time between the preparatory ictus and the downbeat ictus precisely defines the length of metric unit or pulse. (See Figure 1-7.)

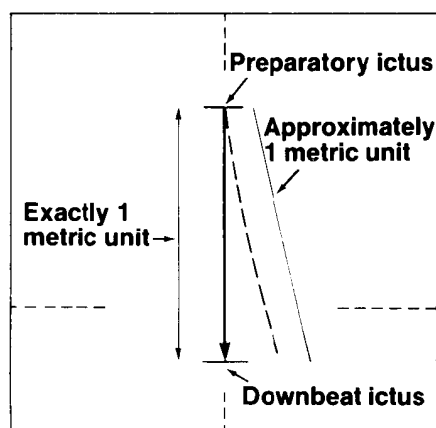


FIGURE 1-7

Defining the tempo.

PRACTICING PREPARATORY GESTURES

Now practice giving preparatory gestures as shown in Figure 1-8. Do not continue conducting after the downbeat, but continue singing *du* on the pulse established by the preparatory ictus and the downbeat ictus. Repeat this at different tempos. Your conducting should enable the class to sing the right dynamic level, articulation style, and tempo consistently and confidently from the information communicated by only the preparatory gesture and downbeat.

FIGURE 1-8

Exercise for preparatory gesture and downbeat. The conductor should try different dynamic levels, articulation styles, and tempos.



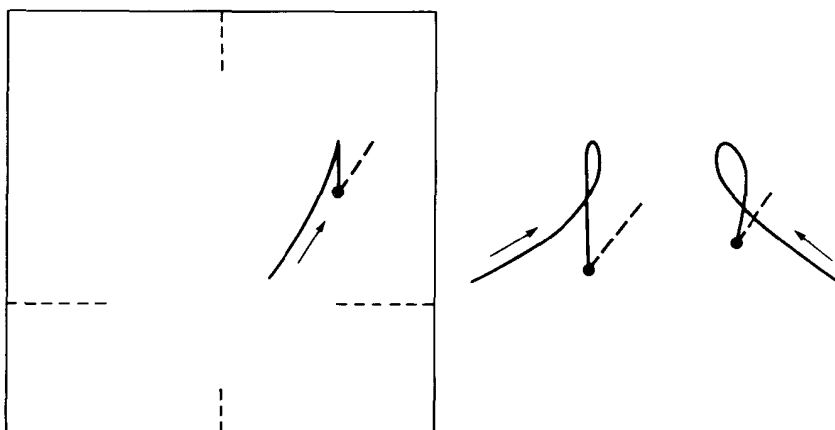
With practice, all the aspects of the preparatory gesture and downbeat described above can interact with each other to produce an infinite range of subtle variations. A clear, secure technique must be developed, as the slightest indecision can produce disastrous and demoralizing results. Performers quickly lose confidence in conductors who do not give consistently clear and confident preparatory gestures and downbeats.

RELEASES

There are an infinite number of ways to release the sound, but only one basic pattern is required at this time. Prepare the release with an upward motion and make an ictus with a downward motion as shown in Figure 1-9. The stopping of the downward motion, with or without rebound, will create an ictus that indicates the precise point at which the sound should end or, in singing, the point at which the final consonant should be articulated. In some situations, you may want to make the up-and-down motion in the shape of a loop. Practice this motion with various speeds and sizes. Stretch out the upward motion if you want to sustain the last note.

FIGURE 1-9

Release, up-down.



The size of the release motion should be consistent with the dynamic level and style of the music. Avoid the tendency to use a large circular motion constantly, for all styles of music. Practice each type of release along with the preparatory gesture and downbeat exercises described above. Think of how you want the release to sound, and make a visual representation with your gesture.

FOUR- AND THREE-BEAT PATTERNS

Several different styles and shapes of beat patterns can be used. The type of beat pattern recommended at this point, called the *modified classical style*, places the ictus of the downbeat on a slightly lower plane than the ictus of beats to the left or right, making the downbeat ictus more prominent. The ictus for the two sideward beats should occur at the extremities of the pattern: for example, the ictus for beat 2 in a four-beat pattern will be at the extreme left and the ictus for beat 3 at the extreme right. This style of beat pattern is probably the easiest for performers to follow, since the distinctive character of each ictus can be easily seen from any direction.

Later chapters will show patterns in which the location of ictuses can be changed for expressive purposes, generally moving more toward the center of the pattern for legato styles.

Some conductors may want to use other styles of patterns and will choose to modify the patterns shown in the diagrams which follow. Other styles are described in Chapter 2.

Four-Beat Patterns

Figure 1-10 illustrates useful reference points in the conducting area, with the horizontal broken line indicating approximate chest height. The center of the pattern, indicated by the vertical broken line, should be approximately in front of the shoulder. The articulation style shown here for the four-beat pattern is somewhat staccato, with the ictuses at the extremities of each direction in the pattern. Figure 1-11 shows a more rounded pattern for a legato-style four-beat pattern.

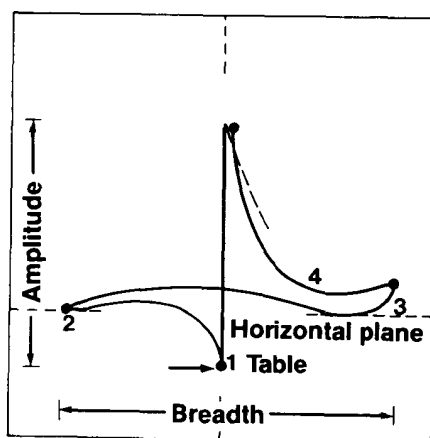


FIGURE 1-10
Definition of terms: four-beat pattern,
staccato style.

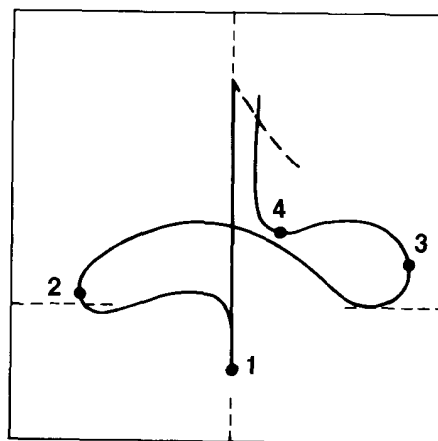


FIGURE 1-11
Four-beat pattern, rounded for legato
style.

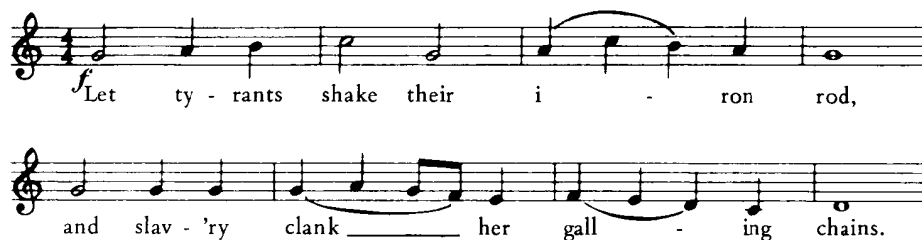
With a martial air ($\text{♩} = 120$)

FIGURE 1-12
William Billings, "Chester."

Practice the four-beat pattern in unison with your instructor, varying the size and speed of the movements. At first, stop at the ictus of each beat while your instructor checks your body position, arm position, and hand position. Next, practice singing and conducting the melodic excerpt in Figure 1-12. (Practice singing and conducting all the excerpts in the text as you come to them.)

Three-Beat Patterns

Practice conducting the angular and rounded three-beat patterns shown in Figures 1-13 and 1-14. At first, stop at the ictus of each beat to check hand and arm position; then conduct the pattern without stopping. Sing and practice conducting the melodic excerpt in Figure 1-15.

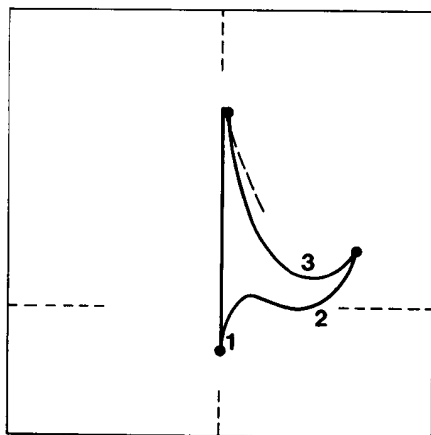


FIGURE 1-13
Three-beat pattern, angular.

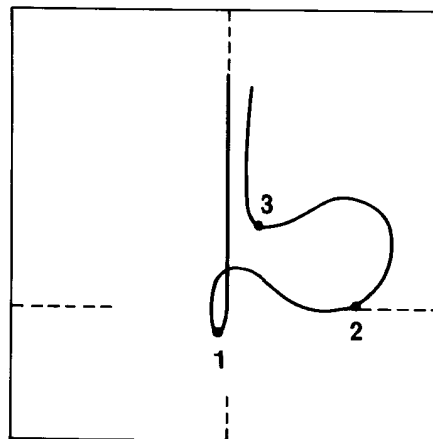
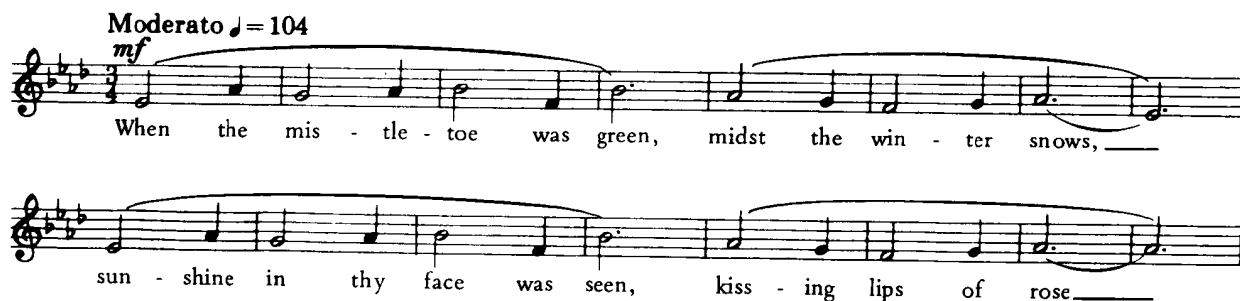


FIGURE 1-14
Three-beat pattern, rounded.

FIGURE 1-15
Traditional, "Aura Lee."
Verse 3.



Pattern Clarity

Two common problems can detract from the clarity of beat patterns—*lack of rebound control* and *insufficient horizontal motion*.

The distance of the *rebound* should be less than half the length of the beat itself. (The one-beat pattern, described in Chapter 3, is an exception.) An overly large rebound tends to make the following beat look like another downbeat, as shown in Figure 1-16. This is probably the most frequent cause of beat patterns that are unclear to performers. Compare this with Figure 1-17, which shows a beat pattern with better control of the rebound. Practice conducting three-beat and four-beat patterns with a small rebound and then an overly large rebound, and study the effect of the size of the rebound on the clarity of the patterns.

Failure to use sufficient *horizontal motion* for beats to the left or right also detracts from the clarity of patterns. Figure 1-18 shows a four-beat pattern that is somewhat unclear because the rightward horizontal motion is not sufficient, placing beat 3 too close to the location of beats 1 and 4. Compare this with Figure 1-19, which is clearer because of the increased horizontal motion.

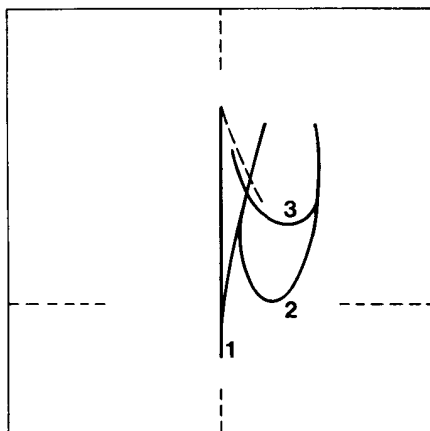


FIGURE 1-16
Three-beat pattern; rebound too large.

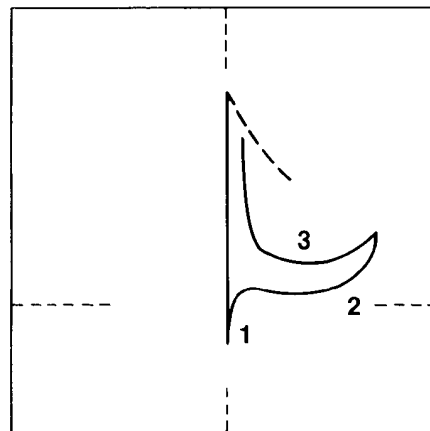


FIGURE 1-17
Three-beat pattern; rebound controlled for greater clarity.

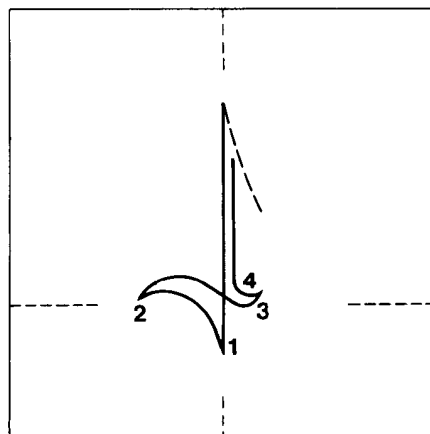


FIGURE 1-18
Four-beat pattern; insufficient horizontal motion.

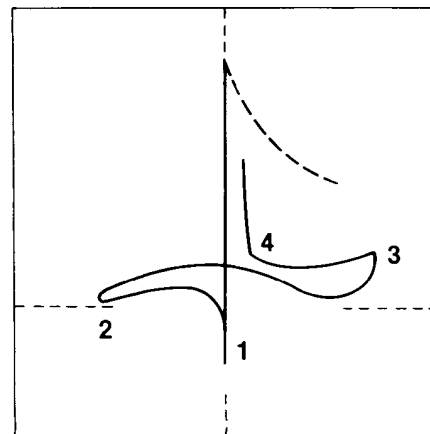


FIGURE 1-19
Four-beat pattern; more horizontal motion for greater clarity.

STYLE OF ARTICULATION

Style of articulation is indicated by the shape of the beat pattern and the speed of the movement from one ictus to the next. The movement from ictus to ictus is called *travel*.

Staccato Style

In a staccato style, the beat pattern is usually angular, as shown in Figure 1-20, and the travel is quick.

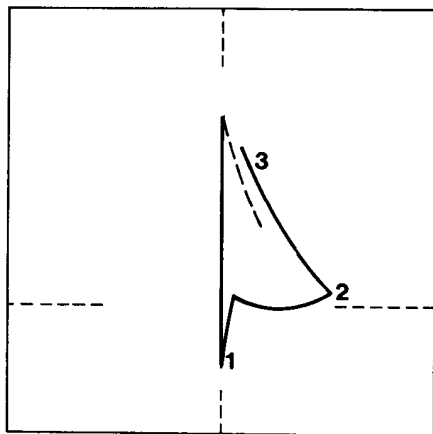


FIGURE 1-20
Three-beat pattern, staccato style.

The travel should make a definite stop either at the ictus or after the rebound from the ictus. Stopping after the rebound is often done with a quick flicking motion of the wrist leading to and rebounding from the ictus. This is commonly called a *click beat* because of the quickness of the wrist motion. The click motion is nearly always used in indicating staccato, but staccato can also be indicated with a motion primarily of the arm for a heavier staccato style. Practice four-beat and three-beat patterns in staccato-style, using a slow tempo at first and carefully analyzing the movements. Then practice conducting and singing the excerpt in Figure 1-21.

FIGURE 1-21
Gioacchino Rossini, *L'Italiana in Algeri* ("The Italian Girl in Algiers").



Legato Style

Legato style is indicated by rounded beat patterns, as shown in Figure 1-22, and by the smooth, even travel from one ictus to the next. Notice also that the ictuses are not at the extreme direction but rather are somewhat closer to the pattern's center, to show a stretching out of the travel after each ictus. In legato-style conducting, the *motion between ictuses* must receive careful attention. This motion should convey the desired breadth of sound and flowing quality.

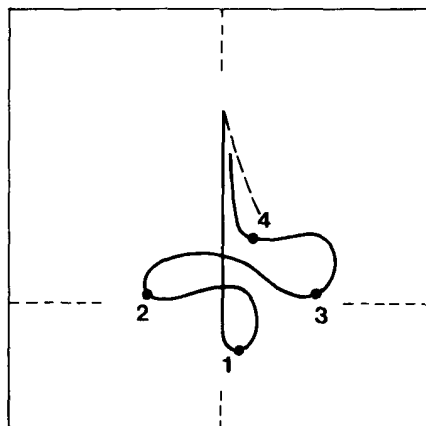


FIGURE 1-22
Four-beat pattern, legato style.

Moving the hands slowly and smoothly in a way that will emphasize the sustained quality of the sound usually requires considerable practice. It may help at first to pretend that you are moving your hand against a resisting force, like what you would feel when stretching a strong elastic cord or when moving your hand through a thick liquid. It may also be helpful to think of slowly painting the pattern with a brush. Practice conducting and singing the excerpt in Figure 1-23. (Four- and three-beat patterns and the excerpt in Figure 1-21 can also be practiced in legato style.)

FIGURE 1-23
Maurice Ravel, *Pavane pour une enfant défunte* ("Pavane for a Dead Princess").



CONDUCTING THE CLASS

When preparing to conduct the class, it is important to set the correct tempo for a composition with the preparatory gesture and the downbeat. Do not make a rough estimation of the tempo in your mind and then change it slightly in the first measure or two. Think through one or more sections of the composition before raising your hand to give the preparatory gesture, keeping in mind that the opening measures may not always provide the most reliable feeling for the correct tempo; often a section in faster note values or a strongly rhythmic section will be a better guide.

Practice conducting the class in two ways, using the musical excerpts in Section Three (pages 163–171). *First*, give only the preparatory gesture and the downbeat for the opening measure to practice setting the tempo and the articulation style. Have the class sing the first few measures on a neutral syllable. The purpose of this procedure is to focus on the preparatory gesture and downbeat and rely entirely on them to determine the character of the performance. Deliberately change one aspect, such as the tempo or the dynamic level, to see if the class can follow.

Next, conduct through the entire excerpt with the class singing the upper-staff melodic line accompanied by a pianist. Check the following points as you practice:

- 1 Is your posture commanding?
- 2 Are your hand position and your arm position correct?
- 3 Are you breathing rhythmically with the preparatory gesture?
- 4 Are the preparatory gesture and the downbeat a rhythmic motion with no pause or hesitation?
- 5 Can you feel the ictus with your hand?
- 6 Can you imagine the sound of the opening notes?
- 7 Are you communicating the proper articulation style and dynamic level?
- 8 Is the release gesture clear and of appropriate size?

AURAL ANALYSIS

Developing a good baton technique is the easiest part of conducting. You also need to develop musicianship and learn how to use it as a conductor. First, you must have a vivid image of what you want to hear. This is a result of all your experiences as a musician and your study of the score being conducted. You need to listen to what you are actually hearing from the performers and compare it with your image of what you should hear. This will be taken up in more detail in later chapters, but you should begin now to work on it constantly and systematically. Aural analysis exercises are included in many of the chapters.

Make a recording of the class performance of at least four of the excerpts for Chapter 1 in the Anthology. Use the best equipment available, but do it even if you can only use a portable cassette recorder. You will be surprised at how much you can hear, even on an inexpensive recorder. If the class is being videotaped, you can use the audio portion of the tape. (Try turning off the picture in order to concentrate on the sound. As an optional step, you can then look at the picture after evaluating the sound to discuss how the conducting influenced what was heard.)

AURAL ANALYSIS FORM FOR CHAPTER 1

Name: _____ Date: _____

Evaluate each of the recorded excerpts for the following: *precision of entrance; precision of release; expressive quality of release; tempo; style of rhythm and articulation; balance and blend; and quality of unison*. You can also list other factors that seem important to you. For each piece, list in priority order two things that are particularly good and the two things that most need improvement.

First excerpt: _____

Second excerpt: _____

Third excerpt: _____

Fourth excerpt: _____

After the class has discussed and compared observations, listen to the tape again to try to hear more and to confirm or revise your first observations. List some of the things that others heard and you missed, for your future attention.

You will be asked to listen for specific things in the aural analysis exercises, but we do *not* present them in the form of a checklist for each piece, because you will not use a checklist when you conduct. As you fill out the form, simply list one or two aspects of the performance that are particularly good and one or two aspects that need to be improved.

The aural analysis exercises can be done individually, with the class, or both. Doing the exercises in class is highly recommended because you can compare your own observations with those of your classmates. Don't be intimidated, however, when someone hears something that you did not hear; it is normal for each student to hear different things. You will learn from each other.

ASSIGNMENTS

- 1 Practice preparatory gestures and downbeats, checking yourself against the list on page 6.
- 2 Practice conducting the excerpts for this chapter in Section Three, using the following approach:
 - Sing the excerpt through to develop a sense of the melodic line, the rhythmic movement of the keyboard accompaniment, and the harmonic movement. *Form a clear mental image of what you want to hear.*
 - Make your preparatory gesture reflect the mood or style and tempo of the excerpt.
 - Conduct the excerpt in two ways: while singing the melodic line and while hearing it internally without singing.
- 3 Use a large mirror for practice. Observe your posture, hand movements, and arm movements.
- 4 Reread the chapter to be sure that you remember all the details that go into a good technical foundation.

ADDITIONAL EXERCISES

The Preparatory Gesture

You can benefit from carefully analyzing each detail of the preparatory gesture, asking yourself, "Does this work? If so, exactly how does it work?" Analyze other concepts of preparatory gestures in the same way, experimenting and using a scientific attitude.

- 1 Make only the upward gesture to the preparatory ictus and see if it can define a unit of time. Try setting different tempos, and ask other class members to sing a pulse on *du* at what they perceive the tempo to be. There may be some success because this does give an *approximation* of tempo; but the *beginning* of the preparatory gesture cannot be precisely observed.
- 2 Now have class members sing *du* on both the preparatory ictus and the downbeat ictus and then continue the pulse. Do it again, feeling the upbeat ictus but starting to sing the pulse on the downbeat ictus.
- 3 Try experimenting with a rounded up-down motion that does not define a preparatory ictus.

Knowing how the various aspects of the preparatory gesture function may seem at first like unnecessary attention to detail, but it will enable you to improve your technique by analyzing exactly what aspect of the gesture needs to be changed to achieve a particular effect.

Metronome Markings

Conductors must often be able to make very close approximations of metronome markings for setting tempos. This ability can be developed through systematic study and practice over a long period of time. Begin with the following steps:

- 1 Select three compositions from your personal repertoire—one fast, one moderate, and one slow—that you know well and usually perform consistently at the same tempo.

- 2 Check the tempo of each composition by using a metronome or a watch with a sweep second hand. To check tempo with a watch, sing or play a section to establish the tempo, then count beats for 15 seconds, starting the count with zero. Multiply the number of beats in 15 seconds by 4 to give the metronome marking. For example: 18 counts in 15 seconds equals $18 \times 4 = \text{♩} = 72\text{MM}$. This is a convenient and accurate procedure which should be practiced frequently.
- 3 Use these three compositions as points of reference for estimating other tempos. Add more compositions at other tempos to your repertoire over a period of time.

Muscle Conditioning

Many beginning conductors are surprised to discover that some muscles become tired and sore after even a relatively short period of conducting. This is usually a temporary problem, but poor posture and unnecessary tension, if uncorrected, can cause continual soreness and sometimes bursitis.

Good posture and a general knowledge of how the main areas of skeletal muscles function will help you develop a conducting technique free of unnecessary tension and unnecessarily restricted movement. The following exercises will help to acquaint you with muscle locations. Do them by tightening and releasing each muscle area in turn.

- 1 Stand with your feet at approximately a 45-degree angle. Slowly raise your heels and shift your weight toward the front of your feet. Feel the muscles contracting in your calves and thighs. Return to the starting position.
- 2 Slowly raise both arms, palms down, in front of your body to shoulder height and hold them parallel to the floor. Continue holding this position while again rising up on your toes. Slowly squeeze your hands into fists. Feel the tightening in your forearms, your biceps, your shoulders, and across your back. Return to the starting position and relax.
- 3 Again raise your arms to the position described in exercise 2. Squeeze your hands tightly into fists and then release the tension. Try to recall each area of tension and the way in which it was created and released.
- 4 Stretch your arms above your head and rise up on your toes, stretching upward as far as possible. Breathe in and out slowly and deeply. Begin contracting these muscle areas, trying a different sequence each time:
 - Try moving the contraction and resulting tension upward from your feet through your calves, your thighs, and your back, and into your shoulders; continue the contraction through your arms and into your hands as you form a tight fist.
 - Try to separate each main area of your body—arms, legs, head, upper torso, lower torso—and practice relaxation in one area while tightening the muscles in another.

These points of tension may occur later in actual conducting situations. Knowing how they originate and consciously relaxing the tension will help you to maintain a good physical and mental state.

Stretching is one of the best methods of alleviating tightness and stiffness, both while conducting and immediately following long conducting sessions. By learning the principles of tension and relaxation, a conductor may achieve a smoother, more flowing style and avoid excessive fatigue and soreness.

PERFORMANCE EXCERPTS FOR CHAPTER 1

- Section Three, pages 163–171*
- 1-1** Dello Joio, *Scenes from the Louvre*, second movement: “Children’s Gallery”
 - 1-2** Traditional, “Aura Lee”
 - 1-3** Hanson, *Chorale and Alleluia*
 - 1-4** Ravel, *Pavane pour une enfante défunte* (“Pavane for a Dead Princess”)
 - 1-5** Anonymous, *Dona nobis pacem* (“Give Us Peace”)
 - 1-6** Dvořák, Symphony No. 9, fourth movement
 - 1-7** Weber, *Der Freischütz* (“The Freeshooter”), Overture
 - 1-8** Sousa, *Semper Fidelis* March

CHAPTER 2

TWO-BEAT PATTERNS DYNAMICS

AMBIDEXTROUS CONDUCTING

COMMUNICATING THE ICTUS VISUALLY

ALTERNATIVE PATTERN STYLES

TWO-BEAT PATTERNS

Three variations of the two-beat pattern are shown in Figures 2-1, 2-2, and 2-3.

The pattern in Figure 2-1 is very simple and clear. It is excellent for fast tempos and is usually done with wrist motion only (there is little or no motion at the elbow or shoulder).

In the pattern shown in Figure 2-2, the rebound after the ictus of beat 1 prepares for a smaller motion on beat 2, visually emphasizing the different weight of the metric pulse on each beat. The angularity of the pattern is most appropriate for staccato or marcato styles. Remember to control the *size of the rebound*.

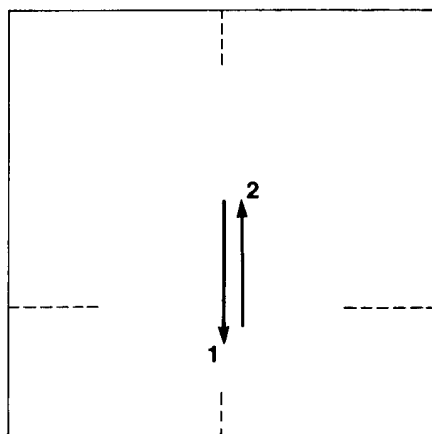


FIGURE 2-1
One version of the two-beat pattern.

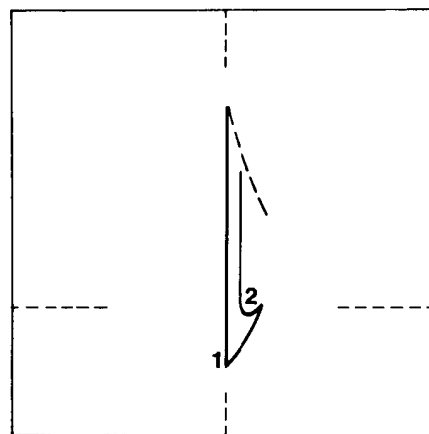


FIGURE 2-2
A second version of the two-beat pattern.

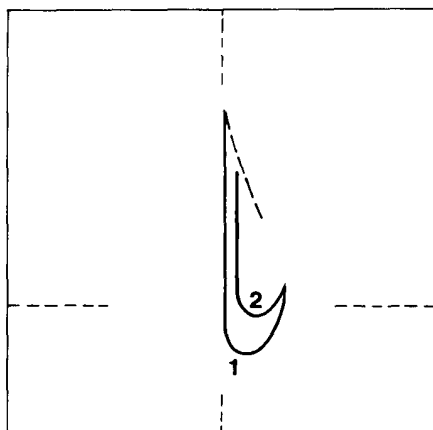


FIGURE 2-3
A third version of the two-beat pattern.

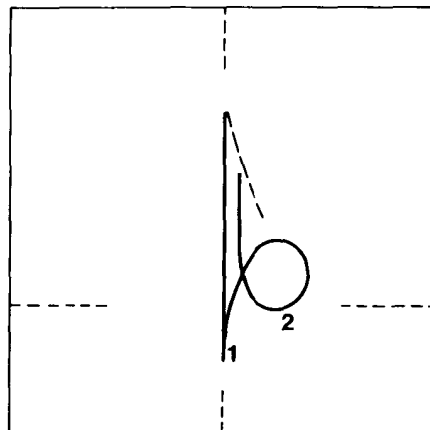


FIGURE 2-4
Two-beat pattern with loop.

The pattern shown in Figure 2-3 is usually used for slow, legato music. Notice that the motion for beat 2 is again smaller than the motion for beat 1.

A clockwise loop can be made for beat 2 to give increased weight or length to that beat, as shown in Figure 2-4. This pattern ordinarily would not be used for successive measures.

Often, two-beat patterns are not conducted clearly, usually as a result of an overly large rebound following beat 1. Notice, in Figure 2-5, that the two beats look nearly alike.

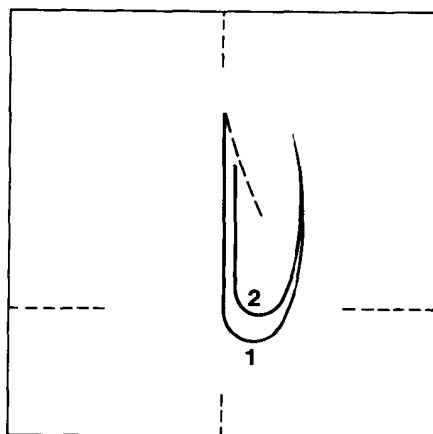


FIGURE 2-5
Two-beat pattern with rebound too large.

Sing and conduct the excerpts in Figures 2-6 and 2-7.

FIGURE 2-6
Béla Bartók, "Enchanting Song."



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FIGURE 2-7

Johannes Brahms, Variations on a Theme of Haydn, Op. 56a.



DYNAMICS

Dynamic levels are indicated by the size of the beat pattern, by the overall intensity of gestures, and by special motions with the left hand. Here, we consider the first of these methods. (The others are discussed in later chapters.)

Varying the Size of Patterns

At a very soft dynamic level, the movement should take place mostly in the wrist and hand, with little perceptible motion at either the elbow or the shoulder. As the size of the pattern is increased, the larger radius of movement should be created by gradually transferring the main source of motion from the hand and wrist, first to the elbow and then to the shoulder. All the joints of the arm and shoulder, however, should feel flexible, regardless of where the main source of motion occurs.

As the motion is increased at the elbow, it should be proportionately decreased at the wrist. If the wrist motion is not decreased, the beat will have a whiplike appearance. Similarly, as the motion at the shoulder is increased, motion at the elbow should be decreased.

Another common problem is to use excessive shoulder motions—caused by unintentional rigidity in the elbow or wrist—as the main source of motion for all gestures, large or small. This should be avoided because (1) a pianissimo beat is much easier to “read” if the motion emanates from the wrist rather than from the shoulder, (2) constantly conducting from the shoulder creates a stiff and unnatural appearance, (3) flexibility and expressiveness are more limited, and (4) it leads to tired and sore muscles.

REMEDIAL EXERCISES

If there is any difficulty in making either the wrist or the elbow a primary center of motion, practice the following:

- 1 Hold your right upper arm with your left hand and practice beat patterns with your right hand and forearm by making the elbow the main source of motion.
- 2 Place your left arm in front of you and rest your right forearm on top of it. Practice conducting with only the wrist and hand.
- 3 Rest your right forearm on a table and conduct patterns with only the wrist and hand.

Crescendos and Decrescendos

An increase in dynamics can be shown by increasing the size of the beat pattern, and a decrease in dynamics by reducing the size of the pattern. Practice making crescendos and decrescendos in the patterns shown in Figure 2-8, noticing the shift in the source of motion as the size of the pattern changes.

FIGURE 2-8

Exercises for dynamic changes.

♩ = 60; 94; 120; 144

The figure displays four musical exercises, each consisting of a rhythmic pattern on a staff and a corresponding dynamic marking with a crescendo or decrescendo line.

- Exercise 1:** 4/4 time, quarter notes. Dynamic: *p* (piano) to *f* (forte). The line starts narrow and widens to the right.
- Exercise 2:** 3/4 time, dotted quarter notes. Dynamic: *ff* (fortissimo) to *p* (piano). The line starts wide and narrows to the right.
- Exercise 3:** 2/4 time, eighth notes. Dynamic: *p* (piano) to *f* (forte) to *p* (piano). The line starts narrow, widens to the middle, and then narrows again.
- Exercise 4:** 4/4 time, quarter notes. Dynamic: *p* (piano) to *f* (forte) to *pp* (pianissimo) to *ff* (fortissimo). The line starts narrow, widens to the middle, narrows to the next middle, and then widens again.

Subito changes.

AMBIDEXTROUS CONDUCTING

The ability to conduct equally well with both hands should be acquired during the early stages. This will develop flexibility and coordination, which will reduce awkwardness later when both hands are needed for cues, dynamic indications, and separate patterns.

Practice the exercises in Figure 2-8 and the other exercises and excerpts in Chapters 1 and 2 with the left hand alone. Remember that the left hand will be performing patterns exactly opposite to those done by the right hand; that is, the left-hand patterns are a *mirror image* of the right-hand patterns, as shown in Figures 2-9 and 2-10. The hands should not cross on beat 2 of the four-beat pattern.

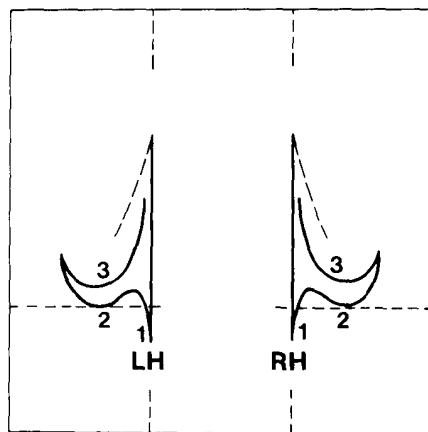


FIGURE 2-9
Three-beat pattern, both hands.

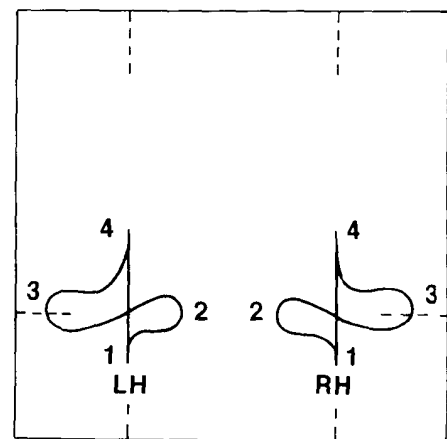


FIGURE 2-10
Four-beat pattern, both hands.

After practicing with the left hand alone, add the right hand and conduct with both hands simultaneously. *This style of conducting should not be overused:* far too many conductors use both hands in mirror image in much of their conducting, never realizing the potential of independent motions by each hand. However, the beginning conductor might spend some time practicing with both hands to develop a feeling for the correct size and placement of the left-hand patterns.

Practice the excerpt in Figure 2-11, alternating right-hand and left-hand patterns over one measure, two measures, and so on, to develop coordination and fluency in each hand. Both hands should be in the conducting position.

FIGURE 2-11
Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky, *The Nutcracker Suite*; exercise for alternating hands.



Examples:

- 1 RH _____ LH _____
- 2 RH _____ LH _____ RH _____ LH _____
- 3 RH _____ LH _____ RH _____ LH _____ RH _____ LH _____ RH _____ LH _____

COMMUNICATING THE ICTUS VISUALLY

Visually conveying the ictus—the exact moment when the rhythmic pulse occurs—is usually not a problem in conducting staccato or marcato styles: the ictus will be created by an abrupt stopping of the motion or an abrupt change of direction. Conducting legato style, however, requires a more thorough understanding of how an ictus can be indicated.

An ictus can be shown by (1) a definite change in direction, such as a reversal in rebounding or an angular shape; (2) stopping or starting the travel; or (3) a change in the speed of travel combined with a change in direction. The ictus created by reversal of direction or angular shape has been illustrated by the staccato patterns. The following examples illustrate the other possibilities.

First, conduct a rounded four-beat pattern, this time stopping the motion slightly, as shown in Figure 2-12, to indicate each ictus. If the stop is very brief, there will be a feeling of only one ictus on each beat. If, however, the motion does not resume until the second half of the beat, the start of the travel will also create an ictus on the second half of the beat. The stop-start rhythm will create a subtle feeling of subdivision. The important point to notice is that both stopping and starting the travel create a feeling and appearance of ictus.

Conduct the rounded four-beat pattern again, as shown in Figure 2-13, increasing the speed of travel in the section indicated by the thin line and decreasing it in the sections indicated by the heavy line. You might try to feel as though your hand is falling into the beat and then moving more slowly until it falls into the next beat. Notice that this creates a subtle feeling of pulse. Also notice that the ictus can occur at the *lowest* point of each gesture—it does *not* have to be at the extreme left for two, the extreme right for three, or the very top for four.

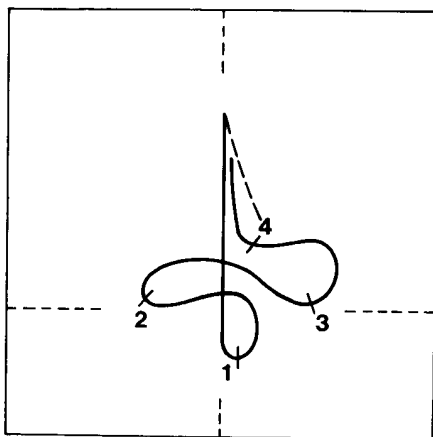


FIGURE 2-12
Stopping travel to indicate an ictus.
/ = slight pause.

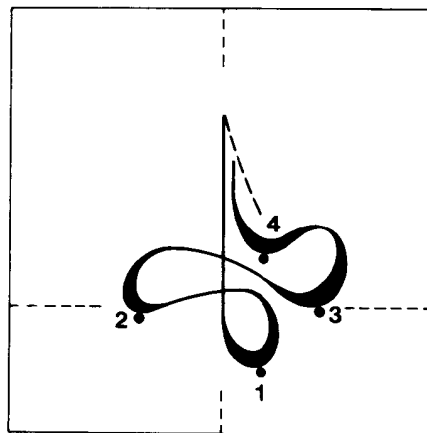


FIGURE 2-13
Changing travel and direction to indicate an ictus.

Next, try conducting a rounded pattern with absolutely no change in the speed of travel and see if it creates a feeling of pulse. What do you think creates a feeling of pulse with a rounded pattern like this: (1) placing the ictus at the bottom of each gesture, (2) changing the speed of travel, (3) combining both of these, or (4) using neither?

A light, smooth click beat may also indicate an ictus in legato patterns. As the hand arrives at the extremity of the pattern, add a small flicking motion of the wrist, as shown in Figure 2-14. This adds a slight point to an otherwise rounded pattern.

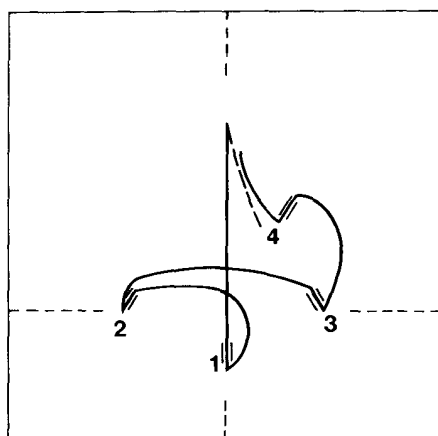


FIGURE 2-14
Legato pattern with click beat.

Practice slow, legato beat patterns, using each of the procedures described. Make small changes to vary the location, weight, and prominence of each ictus. Control the travel smoothly to indicate a sustaining and stretching out of the sound. Practice the excerpt in Figure 2-15.

FIGURE 2-15
Richard Wagner, *Lohengrin*, "Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral."

Slowly, solemn ($\text{♩} = 60$)

ALTERNATIVE PATTERN STYLES

Several distinctive approaches to beat patterns, with somewhat common terminologies, have evolved over the years. The differences in style depend primarily on the position of each ictus and the direction of travel following the ictus.

Below we describe the modified classical style, classical style, focal-plane style, and focal-point style.

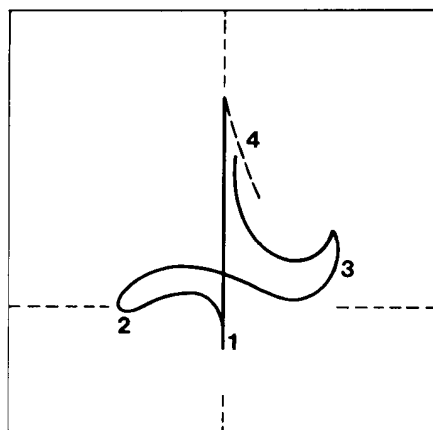


FIGURE 2-16
Modified classical style.

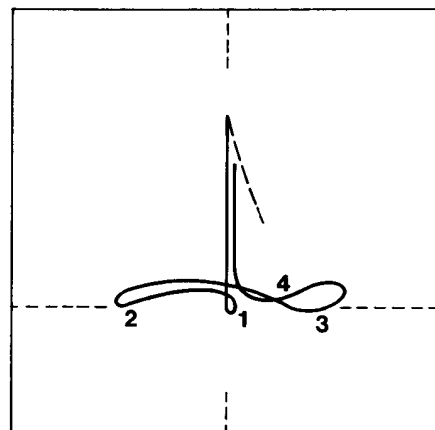


FIGURE 2-17
Classical style.

Modified Classical Style

The style illustrated in Figure 2-16 above, the modified classical style, places the ictus of each beat at the extremity of each direction in the pattern. The downbeat is on a lower horizontal plane than the sideward beats or the upbeat, and the ictus of beat 2, in a $\frac{4}{4}$ pattern for example, is at the leftmost position of the pattern.

Classical Style

The classical style, shown in Figure 2-17 above, places all the beats on the same horizontal plane. This style may tend to make the beats all look like downbeats unless the conductor takes special care to use sufficient horizontal motion for the sideward beats. Placing all the beats on the same horizontal plane also limits some instinctive, expressive motions.

Focal-Plane Style

In the focal-plane style, shown in Figure 2-18 (opposite page), each ictus is placed in the same vertical plane, the approximate center of the conducting area. The ictus is created by a change in the speed of travel, which is increased slightly as it approaches the ictus and then stopped briefly to create the ictus. Some conductors feel that this style enables them to use more travel for each beat, in order to stretch out beats where a flowing, sustained effect is required.

Focal-Point Style

The focal-point style, shown in Figure 2-19 (opposite), places each ictus on the juncture of the horizontal and vertical planes (or somewhat higher on the vertical plane). This approach focuses the performers' attention on one central area, indicated in Figure 2-19 by the circle. Distinguishing the beats from each other depends entirely on the direction of travel leading to each ictus. It is important to use a clear up-down motion after beat 4 to indicate the beginning of the new measure.

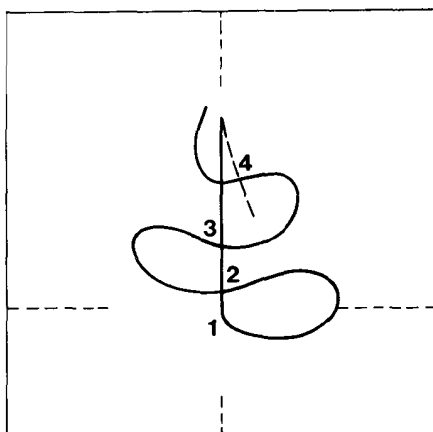


FIGURE 2-18
Focal-plane style.

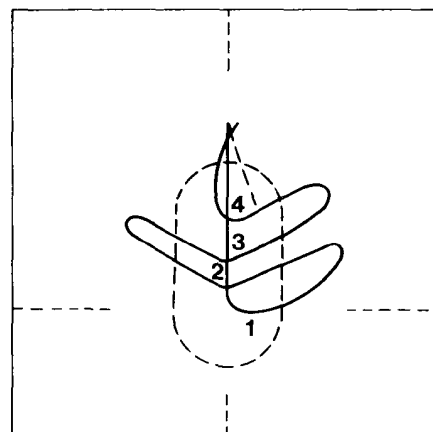


FIGURE 2-19
Focal-point style. *Note:* The vertical space shown in the illustration has been expanded for clarity. In this style the ictuses would occur at the same vertical and horizontal location.

ASSIGNMENT

Practice singing (using either neutral syllables or the text) and conducting the excerpts for Chapter 2 in the *Anthology* using the right hand only and the left hand only. Also practice alternating hands every few measures. When practicing alone, use a large mirror and check for the following:

- 1 Posture and stance
- 2 Arm and hand position
- 3 Plane of the beat pattern; ictus of each beat
- 4 Preparatory motion and downbeat
- 5 Size and style of the beat
- 6 Flexibility of the wrist, elbow, and shoulder
- 7 Location of the source of motion
- 8 Absence of tension

DAILY WARM-UP ROUTINE

Daily warm-up routines, similar in purpose to those used in singing or playing an instrument, should be used to refine and maintain your conducting technique. Do the following exercises in front of a mirror for 10 to 15 minutes every day.

- 1 Practice giving preparatory gestures and downbeats, varying tempo, dynamic level, and style. Practice releases in the same manner. Think of making a visual representation of the sound. Review Chapter 1.
- 2 Practice four-beat, three-beat, and two-beat patterns, gradually changing from a very staccato style to a legato style.
- 3 Practice very legato patterns, showing ictuses with varying degrees of emphasis or subtlety, (a) adding a click motion with wrist, (b) stopping the travel, and (c) changing both direction and speed of travel.

AURAL ANALYSIS FORM FOR CHAPTER 2

Name: _____ Date: _____

Tape-record at least four of the excerpts for Chapters 1 and 2 in the Anthology. As you listen to each one, imagine that it is a small segment for a professional recording and you can do one more "take." What needs to be done to make it more nearly perfect and more expressive? List the two or three top-priority items for each excerpt.

First excerpt: _____

Second excerpt: _____

Third excerpt: _____

Fourth excerpt: _____

Notes (list items that you should listen for more carefully):

AURAL ANALYSIS

Continue to practice the aural analysis exercises in Chapter 1. This can be done using the form provided above, or it can be done through class discussion. Listen more carefully in your ensemble rehearsals. Begin to think like a conductor, asking yourself, "What's good? What isn't good? What needs to be done?"

EVALUATION

The following optional form can be used for (1) self-evaluation of videotapes, as an assignment to be handed in; (2) evaluation during class by the instructor; or (3) evaluation of videotapes by the instructor.