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2013 Midwest Clinic

Utilize Your Technical String Knowledge to Improve Your Conducting

Selim Giray, *clinician*

Friday, 20 December 2013, 12:30–1:30 p.m.

Meeting Room W186

- Conducting Technique: a General Overview

The most primitive way of ‘conducting’ consists in merely beating time... There are three distinct purposes in conducting: 1) to present the metric course of the music; 2) to indicate its expressive, structural features; 3) actually to guide the orchestra—preventing faulty playing and correcting fluctuations or inequalities.¹

- A Few Basics That a Conductor Needs to Master:

A) Ability to beat constant tempo.

B) Ability to show accurate dynamics with the baton.

C) Ability to show section or tempo changes.

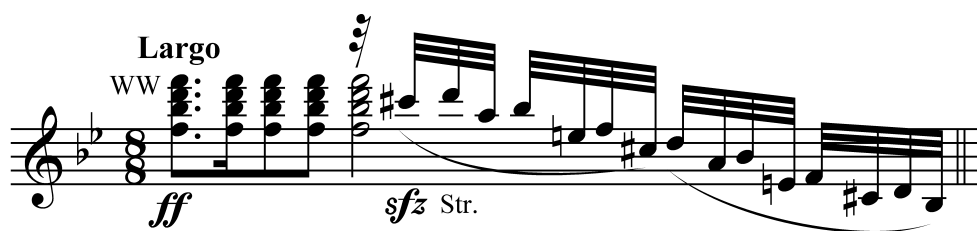


Figure 1. m 1, Schubert: Symphony No. 2, D. 125, metric versus melody-forming gestures.

¹ Hermann Scherchen, *Handbook of Conducting* (London: Oxford University, 1933), 151–152.

Original Rhythmic 1 Rhythmic 2

Rhythmic 3 Melodic 1 Melodic 2

Melodic 3 Result

Figure 2. String Practice: Simplified Layering Exercise.

Original
(♩ = 108) (♩ = 78)

Simplified 1
(♩ = 108) (♩ = 78)

Simplified 2
(♩ = 108) (♩ = 78)

Simplified 3
(♩ = 108) (♩ = 78)

Result
(♩ = 108) (♩ = 78)

accel - e - ran - do

Figure 3. Conducting Practice: Simplified Layering Exercise.

- Parallels Between Bow and Baton Techniques

According to Leonard Atherton, [in conducting] each beat consists of three parts:

- a. a preparation
- b. an ictus—the point at which the precise beginning of a beat is marked
- c. a rebound²

- Scale Exercises in Creating Trust and Enhancing Our Ability to Communicate with Our Ensemble.
- Translating String-specific Terminology and the Daily Instrumental Practice Regimen into the Craft of Conducting
 - Techniques That Apply to Bowing
 - General Techniques
- Technical Exercises in Improving Our Skills as a Conductor
- Use of the Left Hand in Demonstrating Expression
- General Strategies in Improving Our Skills as a Conductor
- Main Differences Between an Instrumentalist and a Conductor

SAMPLE PRACTICE REGIMEN

- Breathing exercises: <http://cas.umkc.edu/casww/brethexr.htm> (12/08/2013).
- Stretching exercises: http://www.womensheart.org/content/exercise/stretching_exercise.asp (12/08/2013).
- Posture
- Right Arm exercises
- Left Hand exercises: Bach Chorales: <http://www.jsbchorales.net/bwv.shtml>
- Study and perform your repertoire
- Closing Remarks and Questions

² Leonard Atherton, *Vertical Plane Focal Point Conducting* (Muncie: Ball State University, 1989), 3.

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