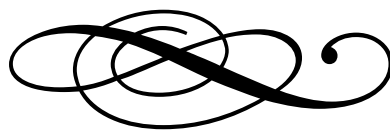


Conducting Insights

Moving from Technique to Artistry



Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic
62nd Annual Conference
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Presented by

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Little Things Mean a Lot

TOPIC #1 LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT

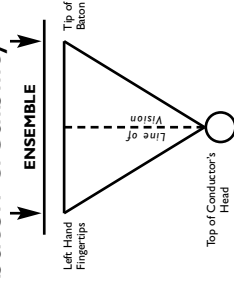
- THE STUDY
Participants were asked to identify and categorize personality differences between two identical twins.
- OBSERVATION/CONCLUSION
The results of the study and the impact it has on how conductors are perceived on the podium

1

The Line of Vision

TOPIC #2 LINE OF VISION

- Tip to tip vs. hand to hand
- Give the baton credibility



- Conducting without a baton
- Conducting with a baton

2

Adjusting Planes and Stance

TOPIC #3 USING THE THREE PLANES AND STANCE EFFECTIVELY

- Horizontal – adjust height perception
- Vertical – adjust width perception
- Sagittal – adjust depth perception
- Stance – face the music properly

3

The Left Hand Rest Position

TOPIC #4 LEFT HAND REST POSITION

- Consider the “posture of the left hand”
- Rest near mid-section
- Off the body
- Neutral character/posture/shape
- No tension or relaxation

4

Left Hand Technique

TOPIC #5

ENHANCING/IMPROVING LEFT HAND INDEPENDENCE

- Geometric shapes – square, rectangle, triangle, single and double circles
- Group participation with above shapes
- Vary starting points
- Experiment with combinations of the planes and shapes to align with the musical demands of the score
- MUSICAL EXAMPLE #1 – see *this handout, page 4*
- Conduct 2 against 3, 3 against 4, etc.
- Example of 2 against 3: *Variations on a Korean Folk Song* – John Barnes Chance, 215 to end
- Example of phrasal conducting: *My Country 'Tis of Thee*
- MUSICAL EXAMPLE #2 – see *this handout, page 5*
- *Variations on America* – Charles Ives for Symphony Orchestra/Band, slow section

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The Long “Float”

TOPIC #6

THE LONG FLOAT

- The loss of time
 - Demonstrate the hitch, click, flick motion
 - Applications in asymmetrical meters, slower compound meters, and fractional pickups
- MUSICAL EXAMPLE #3 – see *this handout, page 5*
- *Greensleeves* (sing and conduct with me)
 - *Lincolnshire Posy* (3rd and 6th movements) – Percy Grainger

6

Transitions

TOPIC #7

TRANSITIONS

- Square off the beat pattern
- Angular approach – more wrist and fingers, less arm
- PLAN AHEAD – Stop where you want to start, especially with fermati
- The “away stroke” / “upward stroke”
- The moveable 2nd beat (12 to 3, 3 to 12)
- MUSICAL EXAMPLE #4 – see *this handout, page 6*
- MUSICAL EXAMPLE #5 – see *this handout, page 7*
- Example for conducting a transition from 1 to 3: *Lincolnshire Posy* (6th movement, last section) – Percy Grainger
- Supermetric – combining downbeats for greater clarity
- Example of supermetric conducting: *Lincolnshire Posy* (6th movement) – Percy Grainger | *Symphony #5* (1st movement) – Beethoven

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Conducting the Musical Phrase

TOPIC #8

TO BEAT OR NOT TO BEAT

- Example for conducting the musical phrase: *Overture to Candide* (83–123) – Leonard Bernstein
- Sing and conduct
- ONE IS NOT ALWAYS DOWN

8

MUSICAL EXAMPLE #1

Andante

C *mf* *f*

B \flat *mf* *f*

E \flat *mp* *mf*

A.C. *mp* *mf*

F *mp* *mf*

B.C. *mp* *mf*

8

C *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

B \flat *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

E \flat *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

A.C. *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

F *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

B.C. *mf* *f* *mf* *f* *mf*

MUSICAL EXAMPLE #2

3 vs. 2 - Switcheroo

Moderato

C
B \flat
E \flat
A.C.
F
B.C.

mf
mf
mf
mf
mf

MUSICAL EXAMPLE #3

Adagio

C
B \flat
E \flat
A.C.
F
B.C.

mp
mp
mp
mp
mp

MUSICAL EXAMPLE #4

One to Three

Allegro con brio (in One) *rit.* *Medium waltz (in 3)*

The musical score consists of two systems of six staves each. The first system is divided into three measures. The first measure is marked *Allegro con brio (in One)* and *ff*. The second measure is marked *rit.*. The third measure is marked *Medium waltz (in 3)* and *f*. The second system begins at measure 8, marked *mf*. The instruments are C (Trumpet), Bb (Trumpet), Eb (Trumpet), A.C. (Alto Saxophone), F (Saxophone), and B.C. (Baritone Saxophone). The key signature has one flat (Bb) for the first system and one sharp (F#) for the second system. The time signature is 3/4 for the first system and 3/4 for the second system.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE #5

Three to One

Allegro assai (in Three) *Accelerando poco a poco*

The score is divided into two main sections. The first section, *Allegro assai (in Three)*, consists of six staves (C, Bb, Eb, A.C., F, B.C.) in 3/4 time. The dynamics are marked *mf* and *f*. The second section, *Presto (in 1)*, begins at measure 7 and continues to the end of the page. The dynamics are marked *f* and *ff*. The tempo and meter change to 1/4 time. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

The Power of G.O.S.!

TOPIC #9 GESTURE OF SYNCOPATION

- The closer the entrance to the ictus, the harder the stroke
- The further away the entrance to the ictus, the softer the stroke
- Variations on this concept in compound and common time
- Example: *Symphony #5* – Beethoven

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Fractional Entrances

TOPIC #10 FRACTIONAL ENTRANCES

- Use only 1 preparatory beat whenever possible
- Dictate entrances: *La Forza Del Destino* – 3/8 dotted eighth rest followed by 3 sixteenth notes conducting in “1”
- MUSICAL EXAMPLE #6 – see *this handout*, page 9
- *Overture to Barber of Seville* – 32nd note entrance followed by bar line then dotted quarter note and 4 32nd notes conducting a subdivided 4 pattern
- MUSICAL EXAMPLE #7 – see *this handout*, page 9
- 2-beat preparatory gesture (fractional anacrusis at a fast tempo)
- MUSICAL EXAMPLE #8 – see *this handout*, page 10

10

Fractional Cut-Offs

TOPIC #11 A “DICTATORSHIP” WORKS BEST

- Float the cut-off, catch the last note (i.e., 2 & or 4-e-&-a)
- MUSICAL EXAMPLE #9 – see *this handout*, page 11
- MUSICAL EXAMPLE #10 – see *this handout*, page 12
- Alternative technique, employ the “opposite direction wrist flick” no arm or cut-off gesture
- MUSICAL EXAMPLE #11 – see *this handout*, page 13
- *Nutcracker* (3rd bar from the end, fermata on 2nd beat) – dictate the fractional pickup with double downbeat

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Subdivide only when necessary!

TOPIC #12 SUBDIVISION

- Extra motion may generate excitement, but it is difficult to read
- 3 techniques
- full to _ (double strokes)
- _ to full (double strokes)
- Wrist/finger hitch motion within the rebound of the beat (single stroke)
- MUSICAL EXAMPLE #12 – see *this handout*, page 14
- Practice employing this motion every other beat; vary this technique to fit the music

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MUSICAL EXAMPLE #6

Subdivide

Molto adagio

C
Bb
Eb
A.C.
F
B.C.

ff *p* *ff* *p* *ff* *ff*

MUSICAL EXAMPLE #7

Example 3.10

Allegro

C
Bb
Eb
A.C.
F
B.C.

f *f*

MUSICAL EXAMPLE #8

Vivace

C
f

Bb
f

Eb
f

A.C.
f

F
f

B.C.
f

C
ff

Bb
ff

Eb
ff

A.C.
ff

F
ff

B.C.
ff

MUSICAL EXAMPLE #9

Presto alla polacca

The musical score is written for six staves, labeled C, B \flat , E \flat , A.C., F, and B.C. The time signature is 2/4, and the key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo and style are indicated as "Presto alla polacca". The dynamic marking is *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 8. The music features rhythmic patterns with accents and slurs, characteristic of a polka.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE #10

Sicilienne $\text{♩} = 112$

The musical score is arranged in two systems of six staves each. The instruments are C (Cello), B \flat (Bassoon), E \flat (E-flat Clarinet), A.C. (Alto Clarinet), F (Flute), and B.C. (Bass Clarinet). The piece is in 6/8 time with a tempo of 112 beats per minute. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first system starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system concludes with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE #11

Allegro vivo

a2

Measures 1-9 of the musical score. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The instruments are C (Trumpet), Bb (Trumpet), Eb (Trumpet), A.C. (Alto Saxophone), F (Saxophone), and B.C. (Bassoon). The tempo is Allegro vivo. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The C and Bb parts have a *f* dynamic. The Eb, A.C., and F parts have a *mf* dynamic. The B.C. part has a *mf* dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

10

Measures 10-18 of the musical score. The score continues in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The instruments are C (Trumpet), Bb (Trumpet), Eb (Trumpet), A.C. (Alto Saxophone), F (Saxophone), and B.C. (Bassoon). The tempo is Allegro vivo. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The C and Bb parts have a *f* dynamic. The Eb, A.C., and F parts have a *mf* dynamic. The B.C. part has a *mf* dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE #12

Subdivide

♩ = m.m. 180

Musical score for measures 1-3. The score is written for six staves: C (C4), Bb (Bb4), Eb (Eb4), A.C. (A.C.4), F (F4), and B.C. (B.C.4). The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked as ♩ = m.m. 180. The dynamics are marked as *ff* (fortissimo) and *p* (piano). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed eighth notes and sixteenth notes, often with slurs. The first staff (C) starts with a rest, followed by a series of notes with slurs. The other staves follow a similar pattern, with some staves (Bb, Eb, A.C., F) starting with a rest and then entering with notes. The dynamics *ff* are placed below the first staff, and *p* is placed below the last staff.

Musical score for measures 4-6. The score is written for six staves: C (C4), Bb (Bb4), Eb (Eb4), A.C. (A.C.4), F (F4), and B.C. (B.C.4). The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 3/4. The dynamics are marked as *ff* (fortissimo). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed eighth notes and sixteenth notes, often with slurs. The first staff (C) starts with a rest, followed by a series of notes with slurs. The other staves follow a similar pattern, with some staves (Bb, Eb, A.C., F) starting with a rest and then entering with notes. The dynamics *ff* are placed below the first staff, and *ff* is placed below the last staff.

The Value of Wrist/Finger Technique

TOPIC #13

FINGER-WRIST/ARM TECHNIQUE

- Review hinge points
- Right hand thumb and finger technique holding the baton at the fulcrum point
- Thumb and right hand index finger move as one independently from the rest of the right hand – practice on flat surface
- Rotate the wrist (thumb nail facing upwards) vs. palm down facing the floor

13

Changing the Focal Point

TOPIC #14

CHANGING THE FOCUS

- Cue from the tip of the baton to the elbow depending on the musical demands in the score
- Tip to elbow – bar of 4/4 time followed by cue on 1st beat
- Employ the line of sight

14

Topics for Review

- Brief Points for Consideration
- Reminders / Helpful Suggestions
- Questions and Answers

15

Transposition Timesavers

CONSIDER MOVEABLE "C" CLEFS

- Common band transpositions
- Use tenor clef for B-flat transpositions, read in concert key
- Use mezzo soprano clef for F transpositions, read in concert key
- Use bass clef for treble clef E-flat transpositions, remember + 3 flats / cancel out sharps
- Double transpositions "bring the instrument to the music" – E-flat saxophone reading F horn part – E-flat to F (up one whole step)

16

The Preparatory Beat

CONSIDER THE POWER OF THE PREPARATORY BEAT

- Achieves 5 things simultaneously: tempo, dynamics, style, who/what plays, on what beat (try a 1-hand approach)
- Always incorporate the breath
- The "AWAY" stroke – start at point "A" and return to point "A" (adjust the horizontal plane to fit the music)

17

Bring the Ensemble to YOU!

- Consider reducing the size of the beat pattern when rhythmic phrasing occurs
- Rather than conducting larger, conduct smaller, consolidate, and focus movements and motions
- Expect the ensemble to come to YOU, instead of YOU going to THEM
- Achieve this by consolidating and focusing movements and motions

18

Ultimate Legibility

- Crossing of hands when conducting the 2nd beat in a 4 pattern tends to convolute clarity and precision (3 points of focus)
- Consider adjusting the size, height, velocity, and character of the rebound for the sake of ultimate legibility

19

Make every movement count

- Minimizing the use of the entire arm motion on lighter stylistic/articulations/passages
- Consider using the finger/wrist technique gestures for more delicate, subtle nuances

20

The "In Limbo" Left Hand

- Control the left hand from hanging / dangling at the left side near the thigh
- Consider placing it near the mid-section, slightly away from the body with a "neutral" character / posture (neither passive or aggressive) ready for immediate use

21

Give Yourself to the Ensemble

- Eliminate the crouching down / hunching inward motion for soft *piano* dynamic markings (backside view is unflattering) – This takes the conductor away from the ensemble.
- Consider bringing the ensemble closer "into you" by employing a more focused, smaller beat pattern and gestures that are closer to the facial area.
- Employ the use of the left-hand index finger close to the face and mouth – This gesture connects the hands and face.

22

Utilize the Beat Pattern

- Use more than one style when beating basic beat patterns. One size does not fit all!
- Consider varying the beat pattern to reflect legato and non-legato styles / articulations.
- Accomplish this by controlling the rebound.

23

Rhythmic Independence

- The TEE – KO exercise
- Keep the float "tight"

24