

“Create Your Own” Conducting Exercise Template

- Meter
(divisions)
- Arms in Use (L/R/B)
- Shape (ar/gl)
- Basic Size (wr/fore/whl)
- Dynamic Changes

EXAMPLES

4	4	3	2	5(2+3)
R		L		B
ar	gl	ar		
fore		whl		wr

6	7(2+2+3)	2	5	6
B		R		
ar		gl		ar
fore		wr	whl	

Cueing and “Gesture of Syncopation” Exercises
(In these sorts of exercises, it’s best to keep time beating parameters stable)

Meter=4/Shape=gl/Size=fore

Beats	0	0	0	0	/	0	0	0	0
Gos			+				+		

OR

Beats	0	0	0	/	0	0	0	/	0	0	0
Cues			+			+			+		

Body Position

- Relaxed!
- Balanced on feet (either slightly apart or together)
- Shoulders relaxed and down
- Head up
- Lower back straight
- Move only what you intend to move
- Body/head not moving in sympathetic motion with arms as you conduct
- Awareness focused on your **center** (right below sternum)
- Face muscles 'gentle'; no clenching of hands, shrugging of shoulders, tightening of muscles
- Create only the **illusion** of weight; there is no resistance to your movements other than your own mass

Arms

- Natural shape; gentle inward curve; 'a hug'
- Hands approximately 45 degrees from horizontal-with-ground (depends upon individual biomechanics)
- Keep your joints bent (not straight); don't let your shoulders rise as you raise your arms
- Generally, don't conduct higher than shoulder level; almost never let your elbow rise above shoulder level
- Think of moving only one joint at time
- No isometric tension!

Conducting Form

- Center
- Arms are your instruments; move only what you intend (no sympathetic movement)
- Calm and relaxed
- All conducting occurs in your center, within the natural range of motion (see above) of your arms

Shapes

- Nearly all conducting gestures form either arcs or angles
- Other possible shapes=circles, lines
- Shape is delineated by change of direction (either gradual or sudden)



Arc (rc)



Angle(ng)



Circle



Line

Basic and Gradated Sizes

- Conducting gestures may be formed with either the wrist alone, the forearm alone, or the whole arm moving from the shoulder—the basic sizes
- Generally, avoid moving more than one joint at a time
- The size of the basic gestures may, of course, be gradated (“large” wrist gestures, “small” whole arm gestures)

Patterns

- Conducting patterns (“beat” patterns) exist to provide a visual depiction of meter; they have no other intrinsic value
- “Divided pattern”=a beat pattern wherein the beat is divided into its duple or triple components; “subdivided”=dividing a beat into any desired smaller measure to show rubato (most often note-by-note)
- Patterns may be modified to fit the music; there is no ‘single right way’
- Common patterns=1,2,3,4,5,6,7, 8 (divided 4), 9, 12



1 pattern



2 pattern/rc



2 pattern/ng

2 pattern/rc

2 pattern/ng



3 pattern/rc



3 pattern/ng



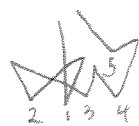
4 pattern/rc



4 pattern/ng



5 pattern/rc

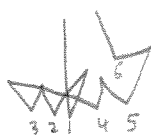


5 pattern/ng

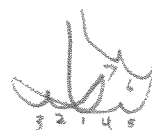
5 pattern/alternate



6 pattern/rc



6 pattern/ng



7 pattern/rc

Showing Dynamics

- Dynamics are most overtly shown by varying the size of the beat (larger=louder) but can also be shown by adjusting the *intensity* of gesture
- Crescendi/descrescendi can be shown by gradually increasing or decreasing size and/or intensity of gesture
- Dynamic contrasts can be emphasized by ‘minimizing’ or ‘maximizing’ the gesture(s) preceding

Cues

- Cues provide players information about changes of musical texture: most overtly to help with an entrance, more subtly to delineate and express the music
- Cues may be provide with the conducting instrument, with the alternate hand, or with a visual (eye contact) confirmation; in rare circumstances, the body or head can perform a cue
- Cues must be ‘prepped’ on the beat prior to the occurrence

Gesture of Syncopation

- Gesture of Syncopation (“GoS”) is a term borrowed from conducting pedagogue Elizabeth Green
- The GoS signals an offbeat syncopation and elicits addition rhythmic energy and accent
- A GoS is performed by either a) providing greater acceleration into the GoS beat or b) stopping on the beat before then ‘bursting’ to the GoS beat

Cutoffs/Releases

- Cutoffs/releases show both the timing, dynamic, and nuance of the end of sound
- Cutoffs/releases must be in the same style as the preceding sound
- Cutoffs/releases are *sometimes* needed for clarity but should *always* be musical

The Fermata

- To perform a fermata, simply ‘hold’ the gesture on the desired beat
- Slow movement within a fermata can demonstrate a building or lessening of and/or intensity

Showing Phrase Shape

- Phrase shape can be shown by crafting the dynamic/intensity contour and/or beat pattern and/or gesture shape to coincide with the composer’s *musical/expressive/structural* contour