

Music

Visible



Alan Cutts

Parts Two & Three excerpted

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Stage 9: Accents

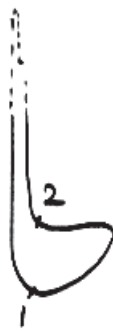
accents
tension
characteristic examples

Accents

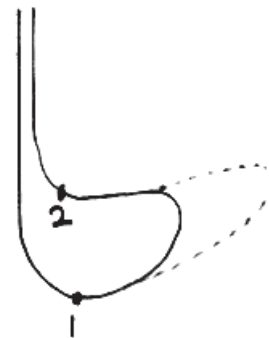
What is an accent? It is a shorter or longer stress at the beginning of a note in order to give it one of a range and variety of characters - sharp, heavy, cheeky, soulful, etc. Assuming for the time being that the note is on a beat, not in between two beats, the increased volume takes place on the click of the beat. But in following the general rule that the louder the dynamic, the larger the beat, one must be clear that a click is a point, and can by definition be neither larger nor smaller. Trying to make the click itself stronger will only result in a sharper, more staccato character, which may or may not be a part of the desired character and will always be in danger of harshening the tone-quality.

So, obviously, it is the space, the movement between the beats that must be larger. Equally obviously, that larger movement must anticipate the accent itself, prepare the players for it, rather than take place after the note has been played. So we arrive at the same advice given before for starting a piece or for indicating a breath - come out of the previous beat larger. And indeed, if the beat following the accent returns to a softer volume, you must actually come out of the accented beat itself small again. Here it is, the dotted line representing the enlarged preparatory beat in each case:

2-time:



accent on 1

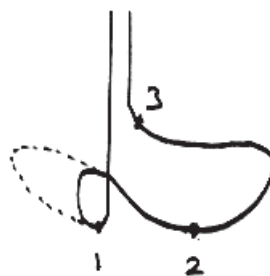


accent on 2

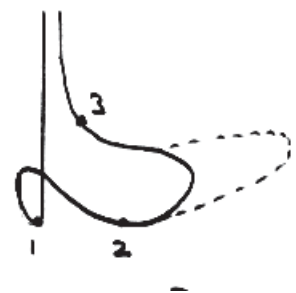
3-time:



accent on 1

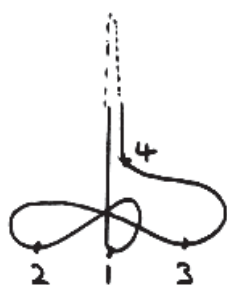


accent on 2



accent on 3

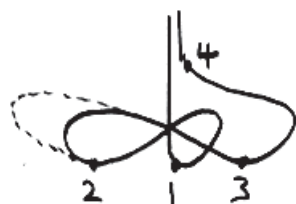
4-time:



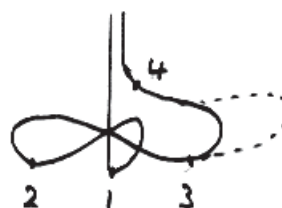
accent on 1



accent on 2



accent on 3



accent on 4

To get the initial idea of this, it may help to take a sharp intake of breath as you make the preparation for the accent; this may help the arm to find the required movement. However, then practise making accents without any such intake of breath! Make the movement convincing; learn to create a sense of expectancy. However, in making the larger preparations, use the horizontal dimension rather than the vertical one, otherwise you will end up with what looks like a succession of downbeats - something players hate!

After you have practised giving an accent on any beat of the bar, a useful exercise is to ask a friend to clap on each beat of the bar while you conduct, and to clap an accent whenever you show one. Keep the tempo reasonably slow and exaggerate the differences in size somewhat. If you gain even a modicum of confidence at this, you should be able to show the preparation of an accent so convincingly that the friend gives a strong clap even if you yourself freeze (at the far point of the 'OUT' of the previous beat) and never give the accented beat at all!

You could also try beating while your friend claps the off-beats (♩ ♪ ♩ ♪ ♩ ♪ ♩). Notice the crisp beat needed for this, both generally and especially in showing an accent, the accent arriving only half a beat after it has been shown. The following beat must then somehow be entered lightly after all.

Tension

The fundamental problem that arises with accents is the degree of tension that should be allowed to inhabit the baton-hold and maybe the arm - even, perhaps, the shoulders and back. As a rule, beginners tend to use far too much, especially when actually in front of players or singers. A wide range of possibilities does lie open to the individual here, ranging from the relaxed detachment used by, for instance, Adrian Boult, to the great physical tension preferred by Colin Davis, to name but two. But really, the first step in deciding where your own taste in this lies has to be in discovering the possibility of securing accents without the use of any tension, even in the baton-hold, let alone the back and shoulders. Instrumentalists and singers spend many hours over many years learning to produce the tone, articulated in many ways including accented ones, without involving tension in the body, especially not in the shoulders. If it takes a conductor a few hours to do the same, need he be surprised or impatient? He has a responsibility to the players not to counteract their fundamental technique but to

create music within it, as they must. He has to be aware not just of character and emotion but also of tone quality. This subject was discussed at more length in Part 1, Stage 4 (Awareness & Whole-Body Flow), but becomes vitally important at this point. Remember your T'ai-Chi - body not locked but its weight naturally into the floor, breathing relaxed, the whole a unified action.

Characteristic Examples

Now turn to the musical examples on the following pages, remembering that there are many ways of indicating a stress: $-$ $>$ \wedge *fz* *fp* or just a forte marking in an otherwise soft passage. Begin by deciding (either in silence or by singing and playing, but absolutely without any conducting) what is the character of the accent: strong or weak, sharp or lengthy, spirited or sorrowful, etc. Only after you have settled the musical character should you try conducting the example. Comments on the particular types of accents involved, as well as more general remarks about the piece itself, are given at the head of each example. Other considerations that arise in the conducting of each item are made separately below.

Tchaikovsky: March from 'The Nutcracker'

Given a lively tempo, a choice has to be made whether to conduct in four or in two (alla breve). Of course, you should in your mind try both, as well as a few different tempi. If you then remain in any doubt, let the composer's time-signature have the casting vote. While you make these investigations, you will probably notice that unnecessary tension for the accents has an even more detrimental effect when using the slower alla breve beat than the lively one in 4/4. Learn to show the musical spirit whilst leaving the players free of an interfering physical tension.

The temptation when in four-time, however, could be towards too enclosed a posture. This invites a brief digression on the way an increased musical intensity felt by the conductor during any piece of music can all too easily lead to a certain 'turning in' of that intensity within himself, whilst simultaneously trying to dig that same passion from the players. This is not true conducting and does not produce happy results. Instead of the boundaries between the conductor and the players lessening or even vanishing, they become more marked and the conductor feels a certain awkwardness, even guilt (however he may disguise it to himself) over the whole affair. Ultimately, both he and the players need to become a channel for something greater than themselves, the key requirement for which is openness. This openness will show itself in every aspect of the conductor's demeanour.

The crescendo in bars 7 & 8 may best not be shown by increasing the size of the beat, both because this destroys the ability to show the accent, and because if one is in 4, the beat is too fast for a large beat. One must instead use more subtle body language, maybe gripping the baton a little tighter.

There might be a temptation then to show the sudden change from forte back to piano at bar 9 by a sharp, suppressing gesture. This would be a mistake, because the musical expression is not a suppressed one. It is simply the exact same character as in the opening bar. If you remember that the base line of the beat is generally rather higher for soft music than for loud, then simply making the downbeat at a slightly higher level than in the preceding bar will create the abrupt change without interfering with the character, nor with the wind-players' tone.

March (opening), from 'The Nutcracker' (1892)

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(Russian, 1840-1893)

A straightforward case of lively accents on the third and fourth beats. It is striking how subjects supposedly for children often draw outstanding results from composers. This superlative music makes intelligible Stravinsky's remarks about Tchaikovsky. He disdained music that was no more than emotional or pictorial, but of Tchaikovsky he wrote: "What could be more satisfying to our taste than the cut of his phrases and their beautiful arrangement?" His view is worth consideration: "What is important for the lucid ordering of the work - for its crystallization - is that all the Dionysian elements which set the imagination of the artist in motion and make the life-sap rise must be properly subjugated before they intoxicate us, and must finally be made to submit to the law: Apollo demands it."

Tempo di marcia viva

clar, hn, & tpt. vln. 1 & 2

5

clar, hn, & tpt. vln. 1 & 2

bsn. wind, cymbal
(with timp. stick)

cello, bass (pizz.)

9

clar, hn, & tpt. vln. 1 & 2

13

clar. wind, cymbal
(with timp. stick)

cello, bass (pizz.)

cre - - scen - - do

Mozart: Symphony No 41, slow movement

Again, a decision must be made whether to conduct in 3 or in 6 - though it is probably only if one is conducting modern, not period, instruments, the choice may fall with the latter. But remember that Mozart wrote the music in 3; don't let the quaver beat, if you use it, dominate the pulse and drag the tempo and character downwards. 'Andante' is from the Italian verb 'andare' meaning 'to go', and that was what it still meant for Mozart, whatever about later composers.

Bars 2 & 4 - The downbeats are light, being the last note of a phrase; lift the baseline of these beats, i.e. tap them high and light - even 'tap' is too strong a word. The music is 'still' on the 3rd beat; don't feel you have to mark such beats with the baton, provided the pulse is still alive in your mind. If you are in six, you will give the fourth quaver beat.

Bar 5 - A different expression to bar 1; a freer, fuller beat.

Bar 6 - The chromatic legato line will probably require a strengthening of the grip on the baton for expressiveness, with maybe some use of the downward space in front of the body.

Bar 8 to bar 9 - This transition may need a little practice. The sudden piano is again achieved by lifting the baseline of the beat - float! (Rounding out the edge of this change may be helped by taking the third beat of bar 8 not with two inward strokes but with an inward followed by an outward stroke, provided this is done tastefully.)

Bar 9 - Be clear with the 2nd & 3rd quaver beats (or with the 2nd crotchet beat, if you are beating crotchets only), in order to help the violins rhythmically in advance.

Bar 11 - Don't wait until this bar arrives to turn to the lower strings; go to them during the last beat of the previous bar.

Bars 12 & 14 - On the second beat of these bars, the upper and lower strings have such contrasting characters that it is really not possible to show both. The violins take precedence, with their clear, light demisemiquavers that must be helped to have perfect ensemble. All the same, it may be possible to let the lower strings know, as you leave them, that you anticipate their forte stroke.

Bar 14 to bar 15 - At the end of bar 14, open the beat just a little to allow the violins to make a transition towards the lyrical tone needed in bar 15.

Brahms: Symphony No 2, 3rd movement

Bars 14 & 26 - Don't forget to prepare the flute and clarinet entry.

Bar 21 - Give a clear beat so the horn syncopations against the cello pizzicati are well coordinated.

Bar 32 - On the last two beats, begin already to give the precise rhythmic beat necessary for bar 33 so that the transition is secure; but do it without destroying the mood that remains in bar 32 from the previous music.

Bars 33 to 38 - Memorise: three bars with accent, two without, one with. Perfect this.

Bars 41 to 50 - Again, memorise: four bars (answering between wind and strings in harmony); four bars (rising answering phrases in unison); two bars (answering phrases halved in length). Memorise also that the crescendo begins halfway through the second set of four bars.

Bar 51 and following - Use two hands and with a strong grip on the baton, strength also in the left hand; but don't use a large beat.

Symphony No 41 in C, 'Jupiter' (1788), 2nd mvt. (opening)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(Austrian, 1756-1791)

It's easy to give an accent on the second beat of the bar. But what kind of accent?? Surely not a crisp one. But not a sentimental one, either. If one can catch that particular quality of soulfulness that is nevertheless simple, natural, unaffected and completely without self-indulgence that is the essence of Mozart, miracles can happen. But you may only hear it two or three times in a lifetime. That shouldn't stop us trying to achieve it ourselves, though. What would be the point if we didn't try?

Andante cantabile

strings (con. sord.) *p* tutti *f* strings *p* tutti *f* strings *p*

7 vln 1, ob *f* vln, fl, bsn *p*
vln 2, vla *f* bsn & hn sustain *p* senza bsn, hn *p*
cilo, bass

11 vlns *f* bsn & hn *p* vla, cilo, bass *f* *p* *f*

15 strings *p* (+ hn)

Symphony No 2 in D (1877), 3rd movement (opening)

Johannes Brahms
(German, 1833-1897)

A gently pastoral mood imparts a particular character to the third beat accents in the opening six bars, as also those on the second beat - slightly more expressive? - at the end of the 3/4 section. The Presto is one in a bar, which might make one think it impossible to show or acknowledge the accents on the fourth quaver. However, if you conduct the passage imagining there were no accents and then again with them, you will see that a tiny extra spring in the beat does reflect their presence. In particular, notice how the beat for bar 38 differs from the preceding three bars. A glint in the eye along with all this will help! At the forte, the accents simply show a 'ben marcato' style; in practice, the players are more likely to need to stress the unmarked semiquaver than the other two notes of the bar, in order to articulate the music strongly.

Allegretto grazioso (Quasi Andantino)

ob. cl. bsn.

p

cllo pizz.

6

11 (+hn.) fl. cl. *dolce*

16 ob. hn.

21 ob. cl. ob. cl. bsn. fl. cl. *p dolce*

(cello pizz.)

27

ob. \leq \gt

fl. cl. \leq \gt

33

Presto ma non assai ($\text{♩} = \text{♩}$)

str. (arco) *p* leggiero

39

WW.

45

cresc. molto

51

tutti

f ben marc.

56

Stabat Mater (1897) (opening), from 'Four sacred Pieces'

Giuseppe Verdi
(Italian, 1813-1901)

Many accents here and many types of accent, but all of them heavy with suffering. Keep a strong grip on the baton through the first four bars, as the nails go through the Son's hands and the Mother's heart. Sing the choral entry for yourself - without conducting - to find the exact dramatic expression required; then attempt to show it with a 2nd beat conductor's movement - not easy! The 2nd and 3rd beats of bar 7 should be very, very light, while those of bar 12 should not be shown at all. (Momentarily stop in the centre of the 3rd beat in bar 7 to create the breath.) Use the 4th beat of that bar to show the final 's', release the choir and lead in the violins. In bars 13 & 14, the 2nd beat is minimal while the 3rd is either not shown at all, or stops on its centre, very, very small.

smorzando = smothering the tone; *stentare* = stretch, spread.

Sostenuto (♩=88) > *p smorzando*

Chorus

Sta - bat ma - ter do - lo - ro - sa jux - ta

Orch.

bsn. hn. str.

mf *f* *p* *dim. sempre morendo*

8 *poco stentando*

cru - cem la - cry - mo - sa, dum pen - de - bat fi - li - us,

dim. *morendo*

13 alti *pp*

cu - jus a - ni - mam ge - men - tem tenori

p dolce *p* con - tri -

vln. *pp dolce*

bsn. cclo.

pp dolce

Fantasy Overture, 'Romeo & Juliet' (1869), bars 143-154

Peter Ilych Tchaikovsky
(Russian, 1840-1893)

If Stravinsky paid tribute to Tchaikovsky concerning the 'Nutcracker' music, one could almost imagine Tchaikovsky paying tribute to Stravinsky ahead of time in this famous passage, presumably suggested to him by the cut and thrust of a sword-fight. The work was written thirteen years before Stravinsky was born and forty-three before he composed 'The Rite of Spring'.

There is no need for the wind chords to be shown large, but they must all be accurately and fiercely acknowledged with the beat; the players must know that you are right there with them, all the way. Unlike the earlier Tchaikovsky example, it seems inconceivable not to use a fair degree of physical tension here.

(Allegro giusto)

ww. brass. perc.

strings

ww. brass. perc.

145

148

151

cymbals

tutti orch.

Ballet Music No 2, from 'Rosamunde' (1823)

Franz Schubert
(Austrian, 1797-1828)

Schubert marks a lot of accents! You will need to get a clear idea of what you think they mean before you try and conduct them. Obviously those in the opening two bars indicate no more than a crisp, rhythmic style, whereas the *fp* is a true accent. Many of the others are no more than rhythmic pointers; they need showing or acknowledging, but not to the point of interference with the light, gentle mood. Notice that bars 27 & 28 are without accents or staccatos, quite in contrast to the rest.

If 'Andante' means 'going' then 'Andantino' must mean 'going a little', i.e. not as fast as Andante. But the term really only came into use at a time when 'Andante' had already become firmly associated with a fairly slow tempo; thus 'Andantino', for all but the most pedantic composers, means 'just a little slowly', i.e. slightly faster than Andante. Certainly, Schubert was anything but pedantic, as a glance at his manuscripts will show: for a century and a half some of his large, scrawled accents were mistaken for diminuendo marks.

Andantino

p strings only

5

9

WW. hn. only

13

mf

cresc.

17

strings only

p

21

fp

25

WW only

pp

29

str. & fl.

(pp)

33

str. ob. clar.

pp

Symphony No 3 in E flat, Eroica (1803), 1st mvt. bars 109-155

Ludwig van Beethoven
(German, 1770-1827)

Beethoven's brother, Karl, wrote: "My brother thought at first that the symphony would prove too long if the first part of the first movement were repeated, but on repeated performance it was found that the omission of the repeat was harmful to the work". In this regard it should be noted that failure to observe exposition repeats can in some cases actually result in the omission of new thematic material, for instance, in Mendelssohn's 'Italian' Symphony.

If you are able to listen to Wilhelm Furtwängler's extraordinary 1944 recording of this work, you will hear the tempo being changed with every new mood in the music. Even if you do not wish to treat the music quite like that, it is important to suggest the different qualities of movement: bars 117-122 thrusting forwards, 123-131 held steady, and the same contrast between bars 140-143 & 144-148.

(Allegro con brio)

Violin (vln.) and Wind (wind) parts for bars 109-116. The Violin part features a melodic line with accents and dynamic markings of *f* and *sf*. The Wind part provides harmonic support with chords and a steady bass line.

Brass (brass) and String (str.) parts for bars 113-116. The Brass part has a melodic line with accents and dynamic markings of *sf*. The String part has a rhythmic accompaniment with dynamic markings of *ff*.

Violin (vln.) and String (str. only) parts for bars 117-120. The Violin part has a melodic line with accents and dynamic markings of *sf*. The String part has a rhythmic accompaniment with dynamic markings of *sf*.

Tutti section for bars 121-124. The score shows a dense texture with multiple voices in both the Violin and String parts, marked with *sf*.

126

sf sf sf sf sf sf p

vla. cello

133 vln. WW

sfp sfp

139

cresc.

143 tutti

ff f f sf f sf fp

(vln 2. vla.)

str. hn.

149

p decresc. pp sfp

1. +WW.

Overture, 'Don Giovanni' (1787) (bars 23-39)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(Austrian, 1756-1791)

The opposite of an accent is a sudden piano. Change the rule now to: 'come out of the centre of the previous beat small'. However, this particular passage is at a slow tempo and you may feel you want to come out of the second crotchet beats of the first four bars still increasing the size of the beat to extend the crescendo. Assuming you are respecting the time signature by using a divided two, not a four pattern, come out of the second beat upwards as much as sideways. This will keep the second half of the bar central and high, the base-line lifted for the piano. Don't make a fuss about the change of tempo, still less start trying to calculate mathematical relationships that don't exist. Just be clear: bring the baton centre to focus, then give a neat, clean beat.

vln 1 + fl 8va
(Andante) *cresc.* *p* *cresc.* *p*

p vln 2, vla
+ ww & brass sustain
cllo. bass

25 *cresc.* *p* *cresc.* *p*

27 brass: *f* *p*

31 Molto Allegro
strings *p*

37 *f* ww. brass, timp.

Stage 10: More about Pauses

pausing in the middle of a piece
to pause or not to pause?
'Lanes in summer' (Harry Brook)

Passion Chorale (opening)

Here are the opening two phrases of this famous chorale, as normally printed:

melody Hans Leo Hassler (German, 1564 - 1612)
harmonised Johann Sebastian Bach (German, 1685 - 1750)

The image shows a musical score for the opening of the Passion Chorale. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the melody and a bass clef staff for the harmonization. The time signature is 4/2. The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and D5. The harmonization consists of chords in the bass clef, primarily triads and dyads, supporting the melody.

In the following, if you wish to control a slight rallentando into the pause, fill out the space between the last beats.

1 - all-purpose quick-fix:

The image shows a single staff of music in 4/2 time. It illustrates the 'all-purpose quick-fix' technique. The melody is G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. A fermata is placed over the D5 note. A vertical line with a 'V' above it indicates the point of release from the pause.

For the nervous and unsure! Hold the pause at the centre of the beat, then release it by simply dropping the hand and continue with the next beat. This will produce a break for a breath, but this can be larger or smaller depending on the size of drop you make. This simplification of the subject may help you in an emergency, but the various approaches that follow are neither complicated nor difficult. Nos. 2 & 3 repeat the click of the paused beat, while the others just flow out from the paused beat.

2 - pause, paused silence, breathe & continue:

The image shows a single staff of music in 4/2 time. It illustrates the 'pause, paused silence, breathe & continue' technique. The melody is G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. A fermata is placed over the D5 note. A double slash (//) indicates a full measure of silence. A vertical line with a 'V' above it indicates the point of release from the pause. The melody continues with E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6.

What is this ho - ly won - der? Ah, Je - sus dies — for me!

pause on the centre of the beat;
circle slowly & gently to cut off and pause again at the same place;
continue with the 'out' of that beat.
(the 'out' of 3 is always the choir's breath in this phrase.)

3 - pause, distinct cut-off with breath & continue:

The image shows a single staff of music in 4/2 time. It illustrates the 'pause, distinct cut-off with breath & continue' technique. The melody is G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. A fermata is placed over the D5 note. A vertical line with a 'V' above it indicates the point of release from the pause. The melody continues with E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6.

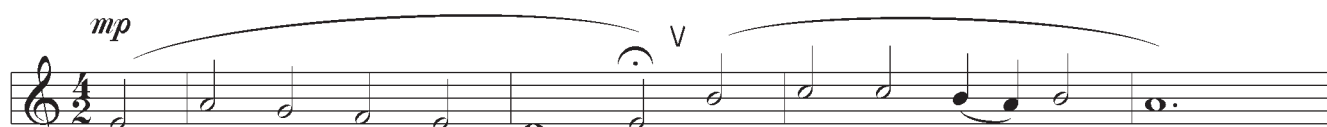
How cruel - ly is He treat - ed, The thorns pressed round — His head.

pause on the centre of the beat;
retrace slowly and repeat the beat to cut off (lightly or strongly, according to the character of the music) and flowing straight on out for the breath.
(The cut-off and the new breath are made with the same single gesture)

This retrace and cut-off allows for precision in a final consonant, whether delivered crisply or gently. But beware of any hint of a 'click' or pulse as you begin the retrace; otherwise it just becomes an additional, unnecessary beat in the wrong direction.

4 - pause, breathe & continue, but without any emphasised break:

mp



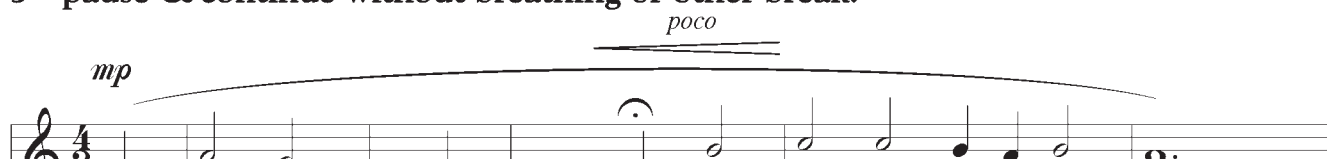
Now Je - sus is for - sa - ken; He must face death— a - lone.

pause on the centre of the beat;
flow on out of the beat without any retrace, but marking the pulse slightly.

It would actually be possible still to use a gentle circle or a small gentle retrace for the cut-off-like something between version 3 and version 4. Be aware of how much breath is needed following the pause and, if a lot, use enough space to show it

5 - pause & continue without breathing or other break:

mp



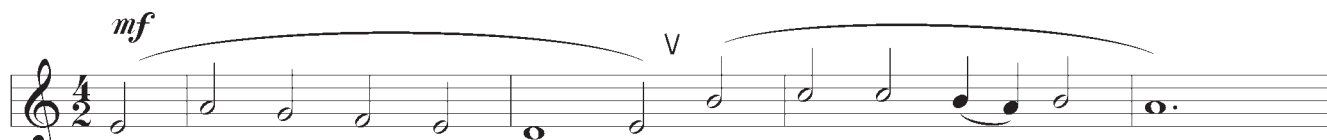
Now Je - sus is for - sa - ken And left to die— a - lone.

pause on the centre of the beat;
flow on out and into the next beat without any hint of a drop.

To make a crescendo through the pause, come gradually out of the 3rd beat while they sing. Increase the grip on the baton as you do this to create a feeling of 'stretching', like pulling chewing gum.

6 - no pause but with a phrase-break:

mf




Oh sa - cred head, sore wound - ed, re - viled and put— to scorn!

stop on the centre of the beat for no more than a split second;
flow on out and into the next beat without break or drop.

This situation occurs countless times in choral music, where time must be allowed to breathe between phrases or to articulate the text; become fluent at it. The stop must be too short really to register with the choir, who must not 'stop' mentally. It simply separates singing (the 'IN' to the beat) and breathing (the 'OUT').

7 - no pause, no phrase-break:

mf



O sa - cred head, sur - round - ed By crown of pierc - ing thorn!

The printing of pauses at the end of every phrase of a chorale was designed only to help the eyes of the choir skip between the music and the words, printed separately on the page because of the many verses. They were not intended as a musical instruction at all. Do not feel obliged to follow them when performing Bach cantatas or passions, but rather feel free to be guided by the musical situation. (Whether or not to break the obvious musical phrase by articulating the comma of the text is a matter of personal taste, as discussed in Book 1 in relation to Mozart's 'Ave Verum Corpus'.)

Deep River (ending)

In the Negro Spiritual 'Deep River', the music moves on from the pause not on the following beat but on the half-beat after that:

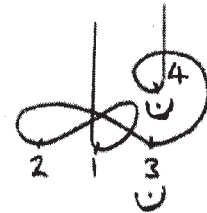
Be warned that the 'quick-fix' method on the previous page will not work here! Give up quick-fixes now.

Because the new phrase begins on the final quaver of the bar, and since the singer(s) maybe do not need one and a half slow beats to breathe, only a half beat, the 4th beat now, not a repeated 3rd beat, will indicate the cut-off of the pause and the breath for the new phrase.

However, just as in the Passion Chorale, the earlier examples here involving more of a break in the phrase may invite the use of a circle to cut off the pause, rather than a directional click. This modifies the approach slightly, as shown in the diagrams. (In the diagrams, the 4th beat is shown higher than the 3rd purely for legibility. In practice it will probably be the same height.)

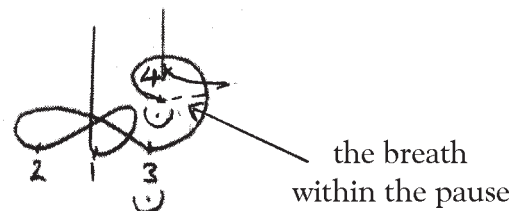
1 - pause, paused silence, breathe & continue:

pause on the centre of the third beat;
cut off the pause with a gentle circle and hold the silence;
move upwards 'out of 4' for the breath and following phrase.



Moving up in tempo may make the breath rather snatched and out-of-character with the music. One solution is to come up gently in the character of a slower breath, letting the sung quaver slip in naturally in time before the downbeat. This can produce a very natural result. Alternatively, the breath can be shown as below, followed by an 'in tempo' 4th beat click to which the choir responds without further breathing.

pause on the centre of the third beat;
cut off the pause with a gentle circle and hold the silence;
move 'out of 3' gently to show the breath,
and give a fourth beat to move on in tempo.



Numbers 2, 3 & 4 below are to a degree identical: pause on the third beat and cut-off or continue with the fourth beat, flowing on in tempo to what follows. But the subtle differences between them show the degree of musical control a conductor can and should have over the manner of delivery of a piece of music, no matter that the result should seem natural and instinctive, only the musical expression itself occupying the minds of conductor and performers alike.

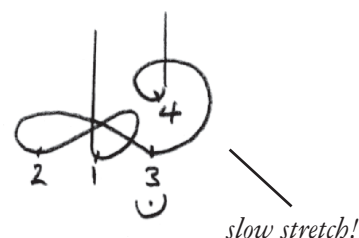
2 - pause, distinct cut-off with breath & continue:

with growing passion

Deep ri - ver, Lord, I want to cross o - ver in - to camp ground.

pause on the centre of the third beat;
continue to 'stretch' the sound out with the 'out of 3'
cut off the pause with a well-clicked fourth beat and continue.

If cutting off with a circle, the cut-off becomes the fourth beat:



3 - pause, breathe & continue, but without any emphasised break:

gradually calming

Deep ri - ver, Lord, I want to cross o - ver in - to camp ground.

As 3, but loosely out of 3, without the sense of 'stretching', and giving the fourth beat simply. Alternatively, simply come 'up out of 4' to release the pause and show the breath - but know when you expect to hear the 'd' of 'Lord'.

4 - pause & continue without breathing or other break:

with yearning

Deep ri - ver, Lord, I want to cross o - ver in - to camp ground.

This time you may be advised not to remain at the centre of the third beat for very long, if at all, letting the hand move slowly through and out of that beat and gently round into a very smooth fourth beat that yet carries us forwards into the music that follows. Or, perhaps better, simply come up out of 4, but slowly and feeling the crescendo.

To pause or not to pause?

High notes in late-Romantic Italian opera pose certain problems for conductors, not so much of a technical nature as concerning musical integrity. Soloists - in particular, tenors - can be very fond of extending the length of their high notes in order to milk their effect on the audience. Furthermore, some audiences may be inclined to judge their whole performance by whether and to what degree they do this, considering them feeble and inadequate unless they make a 'good' job of this.

But did the composers really want this? Look at bar 3 of the Puccini excerpt opposite. All he marked was an *allargando*, not a pause at all. In other words, though the pulse must stretch, it must not stop. Is it conceivable to perform this passage in that way? The conductor is not a singer; if he were, is he sure he would not pause himself? What may he do to the tenor's career if he insists on only an *allargando*? Is he in any position to insist? If the tenor pauses, the conductor may not plough on regardless in public; that would be unthinkable.

Music staff not involved in the actual responsibility of conducting may be in a freer position to air their views. There is the case of Jani Strasser, principal coach at Glyndebourne Opera for many years, who, when Franco Corelli held a high C for an inordinate length of time, stood up from the piano and blew his nose very loudly before sitting down at the piano again and continuing. Even so, this was an especially reckless act on his part because Corelli's wife was present...

And to repeat, since virtually all tenors hold such high notes regardless of composers' markings, can we be sure it is not right to do so? Maybe both voice and music really do demand it? And even an actual pause may have a quality that suggests it is always about to move on...

Then again, perhaps Puccini knew well that a pause would be needed if a high C was taken, but leaving that option as an 'ossia' (an ossia in fact invariably used in performance), he marked only as necessary for the lower version, deciding that no tenor needed actually encouraging to hold his top C's by printing a pause in the score!

Technically, the way to stretch such a beat without actually pausing is to come out of its centre slowly. Beware - as soon as you turn to go towards the next beat, the *allargando* is over and you can no longer accommodate the tenor if he chooses to stay longer! The continued, if stretched, movement of the baton is what defines the feeling as that of an *allargando* rather than a pause. A tiny stop in the centre of the beat need not harm the *allargando* feel, but the longer one stays, the closer to an actual pause is the feeling. The present example (bar 3, opposite) probably requires the subdivision of the fourth beat, the last subdivision then holding, either momentarily or, if the tenor is set on a long note, holding still until it is clear that it is time to move towards the next note.

Ironically, Puccini's actual pause in bar 8 is likely to be a much more modest affair. The whole excerpt is full of *rubato*, requiring a constant slipping in and out of subdivisions and being technically quite demanding. Use the space between the beats for voluptuousness of expression at a slow tempo. Remember your T'ai-Chi and whole-body movement, keeping firmly rooted! Use such space even more for the *rubato* stretches, only breaking into twelve when either the stress requires it (the *stentando* accents in bar 7, perhaps) or the slowing is too great to keep control any other way.

'Con anima' means with life, with spirit. above all with heart, something that applies, really, to every note in Italian opera.

Rodolpho has just met Mimi on the landing between their garret flats as they fumble on the floor looking for her key in the semi-dark. He falls instantly in love with her, and tells her about himself in this aria. In the last bars, he invites her to tell him about herself likewise. Of course, to conduct Italian opera, one needs sufficient knowledge of the language to appreciate the meaning of every word.

from Rodolfo's aria, Act 1, 'La Boheme'

Giacomo Puccini
(Italian, 1858 - 1924)

(Andante lento)

poi - chè, poi - chè v'ha pre - so

stan - za la spe - ran - za!
stan - za la dol - ce spe - ran - za!

Or che mi co - no - sce - te par - la - te vo - i, deh! par - la - te. Chi sie - te?

Vi piac - cia dir!

pp *allarg.* *f* *con anima*

cresc. *f* *con anima stentando* *allarg.*

pppp *allarg. sempre* *pp* *f con anima* *allarg.*

pp *col canto* *pppp* *allarg. e dim. molto*

'Lanes in Summer' - Harry Brook

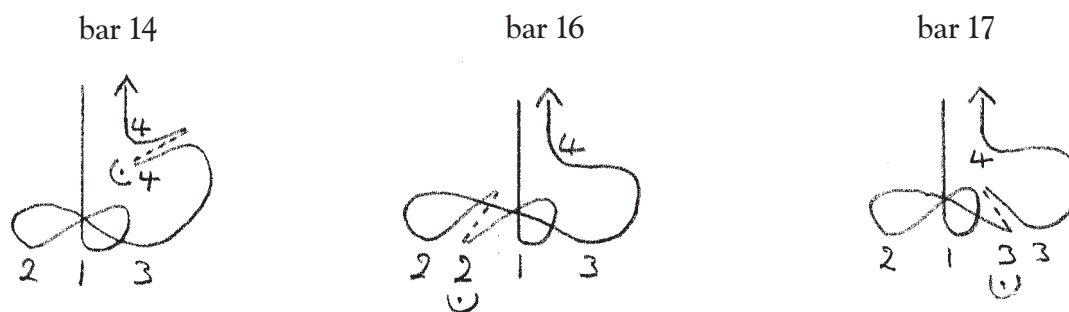
The Pauses

The problem for the conductor in this piece lies in the way the music picks up after the pauses not on the following beat but on the half-beat after (bar 8) or before (bars 14, 16 & 17). In bar 8 it is simple enough to release the 3rd beat pause with the 4th beat in order to continue the music. But in the other cases, the beat with the pause must be felt a second time so that the music on the second half of the beat can sound.

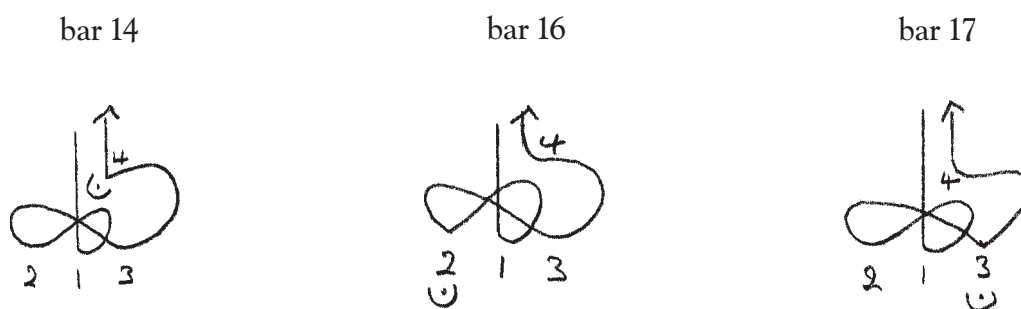
As always, the simplest way for a beginner to feel this is to release the pause with a drop, feeling the immediate continuation of the music. However, this is a poetic piece of music that nicely captures the stillness and drowsiness of a hot summer's day, and just making a 'drop' can produce a broken and perfunctory effect.

Essentially, making a drop is an easy way of repeating the pulse, the click of the beat, but at a lower level to the place where the pause was initially held. The central click of the beat is made twice. This can be done without dropping (and giving the effect of a hole in the music), in either of two ways. The first is gently to retrace the beat and give it again in the same place (as when subdividing the beat); the other is merely to flow on out of the beat but in a rhythmical manner.

Retrace Method



Flow-on-out Method

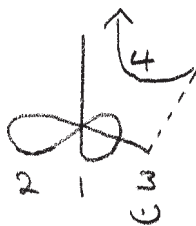


There is a danger with retracing and repeating the beat that one will move off into the retrace rhythmically, so initiating an entry from the singers but leaving the conductor stranded a beat behind the choir. 'Melt' into the retrace with the music of the pause still sounding (or without disturbing the silence in bar 17), only becoming rhythmic once again when you actually click on the repetition of the beat.

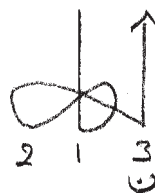
At bar 8, the spacing of the pause and the musical pick-up across separate beats means that using the first method, with its full preparation, will not involve a retrace, while the second 'flow-on' method will omit the 'out of 3' and the 'in to 4' entirely:

bar 8

full preparation method



flow-on-out method



Practise both methods at all four pause bars. It will become clear that the advantages of the retrace method are that it is clear (especially for larger choirs) and that it gives the singers plenty of time to breathe; the advantage of the second method, merely flowing on out of the pause, is that it leaves the music undisturbed. The advantage of the one method is the danger of the other. So - if you repeat the beat, do so very, very gently, with only a small retrace. If you simply move out of the pause, be very aware of the choir's need to breathe.

In fact, this need probably swings the balance in favour of the first method - as long as conductor and choir are comfortable with it and understand one another well. Of course, a choir can just breathe instinctively with the 'flow-out' method, but good singing really requires full and early breathing, even for delicate phrases such as these. For this, the choir members need to train themselves to separate the two actions of breathing and feeling the pulse, allowing for fuller, earlier breathing, such as a solo singer would use. The 'melt' into the retrace can be nicely suggestive of just such a gentle breath; having taken this breath, though, the choir must not be tempted to sing actually on the following click of the beat, but after it. This is simple, even with children, if the conductor is clear in his or her own mind what it is they are doing.

It should be borne in mind that the breathing remains a part of the musical expression and flow, and should not take place during the stillness of the pause itself. Orchestral wind players may well breathe at such 'frozen' moments, but will do so in a way that does not break its quality. It is the combination of speech and song, dramatic delivery and pure melody, that makes it important for singers to express the pause even in their breathing.

Other Considerations

Two other important considerations in this song are tempo and phrasing. The composer's metronome mark may surprise some people, but it is a clear warning against going too slowly. Also note how many one-bar phrases there are, followed by a semi-quaver rest. Taking the ends of these phrases lightly - touch the 4th beat very small and light and a little higher than normal - not only creates a lovely atmosphere to the song, it also allows each phrase to finish without hurry and for the next to emerge naturally and poetically. Then, when two bars are joined by the composer into a single phrase, carry the music through quite differently and with a little strength in the baton-hold to feel the centre of the crescendo, loosening the hold again as it passes. (Feel the music in the baton.) Getting the phrasing and the tempo right reduces the danger of the poem sounding like a shopping list and will help capture its suggestion of summer heat and drowsiness.

At the opening, be aware of when and how the choir should breathe. It should be no different from a solo singer, alone on the stage with a pianist. The breath is taken freely in good time and in the character of the coming musical phrase. There will even be time to shape the first vowel before singing it. The singer's mental sense of the pulse does not interfere with this physical, expressive action. When a choir looks at a conductor and a conductor marks the beats, this process can be destroyed and the breathing reduced to an inadequate affair, tied to feeling the beats prior to singing. Learn at once how to communicate something better than that to the choir. Remember the comments in Book 1 about how

Lanes in Summer

words by Malcolm Hemphrey

original key: G major

music by Harry Brook

Semplice ♩ = ca. 72-80 *mf*

I love the lit - tle wind-ing lanes In the

4

sweet — days when sum - mer reigns; The eg - lan - tine and hawk-weed's plume; the

6

dog - rose and the bram - ble bloom, Like stars from heav'n — gone a - stray;

8 *poco* *mp*

The fra - grant scent of new - mown hay; The

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10

pop - pies in the green - aisled wheat; The bees that find the clo - ver sweet; The

12

last song of the wren and thrush break - ing thro' the drow - sy hush.

rall.

14

a tempo

mp

If kind - ly peace be an - y - where

p *pp* *mp*

16

poco

dim e rit

'Tis sure - ly there, 'tis sure - ly there.

p *pp*

the beat is often an internal affair in classical music and how the choir must keep it that way, being able to do two things at once, so to speak: feeling the pulse and taking a relaxed, expressive breath.

So - start by practising showing the gentle intake of breath with your left hand across the 2nd & 3rd beats of the second bar. This will not be a gesture with a beat, but something suggestive of the opening of the ribcage. Then practise doing this whilst beating the 4 pattern.

Taking care of the choir's breathing between phrases is done in the usual way by stopping the baton momentarily - literally just a split second - at the centre click of the beat. When you are satisfied with how you are allowing these breaths, check that you have not lost the lightening of the phrase ending discussed above.

Stage 11: Left hand variety

revision
richness and lightness
rhythmic and loud v. soft and lyrical
positive softness
dramatic non-beating gestures

Variety in the use of the left hand is essential for musical conducting but often problematic for beginners. The material in this chapter may be somewhat superfluous for the talented novice, as well as seeming rather pedantic. But others may need help in freeing the left hand from the dull mould of either just mirroring the right or remaining withdrawn. Either way, in trying out any of my suggestions, do explore differently for yourself also.

Revision

Just in case things have slipped, begin by revising some of the loosening-up work done in Book One. Try conducting this passage from Schubert with the left hand alone. Try also conducting it with the right hand and baton, bringing the left hand forward to share the beating and then withdrawing it again at various moments during the music. (The forte obviously invites the use of both hands.) Alternatively, try with the left palm slightly up for the fortes and down for the pianos. Then try the other way round, with the palm down for the fortes. Try anything and everything that will loosen up the use of the left hand.

Deutsche Messe

1 - Introit

Franz Schubert
(Austria, 1796 - 1827)

p

Wo - hin soll ich mich wen - den, wenn Gram und Smerz mich - drük - ken? Wem

p

Wo - hin soll ich mich wen - den, wenn Gram und Smerz mich - drük - ken? Wem

p

Wo - hin soll ich mich wen - den, wenn Gram und Smerz mich - drük - ken? Wem

p

Wo - hin soll ich mich wen - den, wenn Gram und Smerz mich drük - ken? Wem

5

künd ich mein Ent - zük - ken, wenn freu - dig pocht mein - Herz? - - - - Zu

künd ich mein Ent - zük - ken, wenn freu - dig pocht mein - Herz? - - - - Zu

künd ich mein Ent - zük - ken, wenn freu - dig pocht mein - Herz? - - - - Zu

künd ich mein Ent - zük - ken, wenn freu - dig pocht mein Herz? - - - - Zu

9

Dir, zu Dir, o Va - ter, komm- ich in Freud- und- Lei - den; Du
 Dir, zu Dir, o Va - ter, komm ich in Freud und Lei - den; Du
 Dir, zu Dir, o Va - ter, komm ich in Freud und Lei - den; Du
 Dir, zu Dir, o Va - ter, komm ich in Freud und Lei - den; Du

13

send - est ja die Freu - den, Du— heil - est je - den Schmerz.
 send - est ja die Freu - den, Du heil - est je - den Schmerz.
 send - est ja die Freu - den, Du— heil - est je - den Schmerz.
 send - est ja die Freu - den, Du heil - est je - den Schmerz.

Lightness and Richness

Lightness would generally be shown by a slight rising in the position of the beat, and if the left hand is used, it will often rise as well. In that position, it can stay still (though not for long before withdrawing), it may hint at beating with the fingertips, or it may perhaps beat fully. Palm sideways or even slightly upwards give an immediate impression of lightness, but this can be conveyed perfectly well with palm down if one is creative about it.

Much the reverse applies for richness: the level of the beat is likely to fall a little and the left hand with it and the left hand likely to join in the beating fully. Palm down is immediately helpful.

Of course, you should experiment for yourself and do what feels right for you. Here is a part of 'Morning' from Grieg's 'Peer Gynt'. It opens with two contrasting strands of light music - flute solo accompanied by woodwind, and oboe solo accompanied by strings. Are these equally light? Do they require the same height baseline? Or does the entry of the strings bring a certain repose that lowers things slightly. Experiment with using the left hand for only one of these strands; then try using it only for the other.

Then there comes the blossoming into rich music on the full orchestra. Maybe the left hand must assume more muscular strength for this. There is a touch of richness also in the brief string crescendos under the oboe phrases of the opening passages. (Notice that the centre of these crescendos lies at a different place in the phrase to that for the flute phrases.)

Don't feel you have to use the left hand all the time. Letters A and B both seem obvious places where the left hand is called for. But it would be well to avoid monotony and not to use the left hand all the way from bars 21 to 30. For instance, withdrawing it at around bar 25 allows you to reintroduce it a couple of bars later for added effect. Using a horizontal beat with plenty of space will create the necessary fullness without the left hand. And the left hand can be actively involved without actually beating.

Remember also that responsibility for the ensemble of the orchestra rests with the baton alone. Be especially aware of this with the string semiequavers at letter B. Perhaps B isn't such an obvious place to use the left hand, after all; maybe a single focus through the baton would help the players better.

Morning

from 'Peer Gynt'

Edvard Grieg
(Norway, 1843 - 1907)

Allegretto pastorale

fl. *p*

cl. & bsn. *p*

vla.

5 ob. *p*

str. *p*

bsn.

9 fl. *p*

cl. & bsn.

vla.

13 ob. *p*

str.

bsn.

17

fl. ob. fl. ob.

cresc.

cresc.

timp.

21

A

WW. & hn.

f

vl. vla. cello.

f

bsn. & bass

25

più f

più f

29

B

ff

ff *dim.*

Muscular strength v. looseness

The next examples contrast rhythmic, loud music with soft lyrical passages. For this, a simple contrast of palm up or down will not suffice; there must also be a contrast between strength and tension in the hand on the one part, and softness and relaxation on the other. On page 37 is the Minuet from Mozart's 'Eine Kleine Nachtmusik'. Try it first with only the left hand, in order to feel the contrast in the muscular use of the hand. Really this is the same thing as the contrast in the right hand already practised between positions 1 and 3 in the baton hold; the left hand, however, remains in an open shape the whole time.

When using both hands to conduct the music, though the left hand must reflect the character of the music in its posture, it is not necessary for it always to beat time. The louder music may require no more than a hint of beating from the left hand, the soft music none at all. Even the right hand beat for the forte may not be very large because, although the music is loud, the pulse is fast. Beating that is both fast and large is generally only a nuisance to the players. The grip on the baton is what will convey the firmness of character.

Notice the hemiolas in bars 7 & 8 and in bars 16 & 17, marked in for you here, though of course not normally appearing in a score. Generally we would continue beating the same pulse at a hemiola; thus in the present example we would beat divisions through the 3/2 pattern. However, the tempo of this minuet is lively enough that it may be better to beat minim beats during the hemiola. And indeed, when beating crotchets through the rest of the piece, imply the forte through the character of the baton hold and the beat, rather than by using a large beat.

Notice in the next excerpt again (Mozart, Symphony No. 41, opening, page 38) how the left hand must probably refrain from beating in the soft passages in order to keep the lightness, and also how its muscles must soften. Should it also turn palm slightly up? Why might it be good for it to do so?

Eine Kleine Nachtmusik

3rd movement - Minuetto

W. A. Mozart
(Austrian, 1756 - 1791)

Violin 1
f

Violin 2
f

Viola
f

Cello
f

7

tr *tr* *p*

tr *tr* *p*

13

cresc. *f* *tr* *tr*

cresc. *f* *tr* *tr*

cresc. *f*

cresc. *f*

Symphony No 41 in C, 'Jupiter' (1788), 1st. mvt., opening

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(Austrian, 1756-1791)

Notice how Mozart's 1st movement Allegros often lie just between two and four in a bar; try not to tie the music down to one or the other with your beating, though of course you are going to have to choose at any particular moment. If you decide to use crotchet beats for any particular passage (e.g. the opening), keep them small and consider using the left hand only for character, not for also beating.

Allegro Vivace

WW.

f

brass, timp.

f

str.

f

p

5

WW, str.

f

brass, timp.

f

str.

p

cllo. bass

f

p

9

WW. hn.

f

vln 1

vln 2, vla

f

tpt. timp.

f

cllo. bass

f

Positive softness

The problem with a palm down position when used without beating time is that it tends to suppress, and more by indifference of character than through any positive intent. Soft music needs to be played with expression and some projection and turning the left hand palm up encourages this. In the second half of the Hostias from Mozart's Requiem (pages 39 to 40), there are dramatic contrasts of loud and soft. Earlier in the movement the text had been delivered simply and lyrically, but here it is repeated with more extremes of expression, perhaps pleading in the loud music, fearful in the soft. Try each of two different approaches for keeping the soft music alive. First, try leaning back for dramatic effect, using the left hand to suppress. Then try leaning forwards in a slight crouch, but turning the left hand up to encourage this sweeter softness to 'speak' to the back of the hall. The danger in this second approach is of implicitly stifling the choir's breathing with the crouched stance. At all costs, keep the same inward curve to the spine as when standing upright; this will keep a sense of 'deep breathing'.

Lastly, because of the layout of this book, the left hand must also discreetly turn the page. Try not to look down as you do this. (You are, of course, looking at the imaginary performers, not the score...)

Hostias, from 'Requiem'

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(Austria, 1756-1791)

(Andante)

21

–mus, ho - sti - as et pre -

+ hn. bsn. - hn. bsn.

(strings) *p* *f* *p*

26

ces ti - bi Do - mi - ne

f *p* *f* *p* *cresc.* *f* *p* *cresc.*

31

f lau - dis *p* of - fe - ri - mus: *f* tu su - sci - pe

f *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

f *p* *cresc.* *f* *p*

36

p pro a - ni - ma - bus il - lis, *f* qua - rum ho - di - e, me -

p *f*

41

ho - di - e me - mo - ri - am ——— fa - ci - mus:

mo - ri - am fa - ci - mus

Dramatic non-beating gestures

The suppressive left hand gesture suggested for the soft music of the Hostias involves keeping the hand in a very strongly characterised shape while holding it still. There are similar gestures in forte music. The opening of Beethoven's 'Coriolan' overture, for instance, has tremendous fixity in the string's held unison, yet the note must be exact in its length. Almost certainly, the left hand will hold still, with great strength, while the right hand measures the beat, not too large or the fixity will be lost. After the tutti chord, the silence must again be measured exactly, but this time without beating out the pulse. Indeed, the string note might be held with only an internal, mental beat, assuming that the players know the music.

Overture, 'Coriolan'

L. van Beethoven
(German, 1770 - 1827)

Allegro con brio

strings tutti

7

15 strings

19 + WW legato + brass, timp. strings

24 + WW legato + brass, timp.

The opening unison of this overture does not hold forte but makes a diminuendo; nor does it proceed in tempo but is held paused. Since there are no beats, they cannot get smaller, and one has therefore to simultaneously hold the note yet change its quality. Really the only possible movement of the hands is a small withdrawal; all the rest must be shown by a change in the muscular tension of the hands. (A turning of the left hand would be possible, if one wished.) Therefore begin with a very strong statue-like gesture that allows you plenty of room for change.

(John Cage famously said, "Are sounds sounds, or are they Beethoven?" This opening is a prime example of Beethoven's ability to instill 'meaning' into the simplest musical material, simply by the strength of his 'intention'. The conductor must have a similarly strong 'intention' to make such a passage work.)

Tension in the hands returns with the marcato motive, bars 2 to 4. Even the last two string chords, though piano, have some degree of tension. Only when the woodwind enter does the character melt, and the quality of the left hand with it.

Overture, 'Egmont'

Sostenuto ma non troppo

Ludwig van Beethoven
(Germany, 1770 - 1827)

Stage 12: In Front of an Orchestra

marking a score
giving cues
memorisation and practice
an important challenge
the real challenge

Marking a score

Many conductors have many ways of marking up their scores, but in principle there is only one real way of going about this - don't mark it, learn it. The dictum first coined by Hans von Bülow in the 19th century remains vital: the conductor should have the score in his head, not his head in the score. The only marks one might make are ones that help one, during an intermediate stage, to achieve this goal quickly and efficiently.

Giving cues

A conductor must, for instance, acknowledge the most important entries among the orchestra, incorporate them into his conducting of a piece. He may do this with his eyes, his gestures or both; it will vary all the time, and nothing could be worse than a fixed set of gestures repeated every time a passage is played. What will never vary is his awareness of these principle entries.

Of course, the conductor should be aware of everything that should be happening (as well as what is actually happening!) and it could be argued that it is an artificial division to note just the more important entries with pencil in the score. But if, for instance, a brass or other player enters after many bars' rest, it is a part of the conductor's job to be aware of this fact. The degree to which he physically acknowledges such entries will depend on various factors, from the confidence of the player and the stage of rehearsal to whether too much such 'acknowledgement' interferes with the musical paragraphing. There is, of course, a great range from subtlety to obviousness with which such acknowledgements can be made, but even the most externally clear acknowledgements should not be allowed to detract from the overall musical unity and flow.

Thus, marking the most important entries in the score, following them with your eyes only to look up and 'throw' the cues at the players - or still worse, to throw them without looking up - is the very antithesis of musical conducting. If you note the important entries in the score, it is simply to help yourself learn them more quickly.

(The only occasion on which one might use an exaggerated gesture such as pointing is when a player has entered wrongly and needs help refinding his place; hold him and point him in on his next entry if he needs it.)

Memorisation and practice

We have all heard solo musicians deliver a piece of music with absolute focus and commitment, carrying us from first note to last in an unbroken line of aesthetic and emotional expression so that, at the end, we feel something has truly been 'said', given us. We may even have achieved it ourselves at an instrument. The conductor's job is to achieve exactly this same thing in performance, though he has only visual means with which to do it. A solo player only really begins his serious practice after he has learnt a piece from memory. Unfortunately it is not always practical for a conductor to perform from memory, and as a matter of courtesy to the soloist, this is never done in concertos. But it always improves the chances of a fully focused and charged performance where it is done (whether or not the music is actually present on a stand). The fact that orchestral players cannot return his gaze the way a choir does (or should do) does not alter this fundamental fact.

Do not be shy, then, of practising your conducting of a piece, and without the score. Learn the score first, then begin to conduct in silence, being aware in your mind of what instruments should be playing what and when. Incorporate the important entries as they come, and when you are unsure of them, go back to the score, check it, put it down again and return to conducting in silence and from memory.

When you can go from end to end of the piece successfully in this way, you are like the instrumentalist who has learnt the notes of a piece. In other words, this is really only the beginning. Now it is time to 'realise' the music. ('Interpretation' is a bad word, placing the emphasis on the individual artist rather than the music.)

As you proceed in this manner, avoid the temptation to sing, whistle, blow, mouth, etc. These things will not be available to you when you are in front of the orchestra (we hope!) and if you use them in private practice, you are failing to develop the actual means through which the job is done.

An important challenge

As you feel things shaping up, it is of course possible to go to a mirror and check if it all looks convincing. But if you have achieved a strong mental conception of the music and endeavoured to feel it successfully in your gestures, this should not really be necessary. Much more useful, if facilities are available to you, would be to conduct your item through (in silence) in front of a video camera and then look at the result. As well as thus separating the two activities - conducting and observing - you can avail of the camera's ability to view first from the front and then from the side or from an intermediate angle. Naturally this can be a difficult experience at first, seeing oneself, one's posture, gestures and expressions, from the outside like this. But as well as being a remarkably effective way of discovering faults and motivating one to correct them, this also forms a powerful challenge to self-conscious inhibition and shyness, things that are a severe block to successful conducting - as well as to happy and successful living. Facing this challenge and overcoming it, coming to terms with one's appearance, improving it in any reasonable and necessary way and using it as well as possible represent important strides in life for anyone and are essential for conductors. There is an excellent saying: "God made the face; we make the expressions".

The real challenge

Again applicable to both conducting and daily living is another motto which perhaps forms the most fundamental advice contained in this book: the need to know what one wants and that it is right, and to become a living expression of it.

Fine advice! How many people in this world have known what they wanted and thought that it was right. Even Hitler did that... And then at the other end of the scale are those who never act at all because they know they have not achieved this goal of knowing what is right. Of course, the goal is finally unachievable, being rather like a horizon that recedes as fast as one approaches it. (About the only certainty we have in life is to say that when a person is certain they have found and understood 'the truth', they have not.) But it is only through action that one gains the experience necessary to discover even a little of what is right and what not, let alone to live it.

So although even only learning what is right and learning to want it is a lifetime's work and more, it is this seriousness of approach that is the core of the true musician's work. A conductor needs to live and work in depth with a piece of music before he really has any right to offer himself to stand in front of other musicians and direct them. It is not enough just to be 'musical'.

The other side of this same coin, though, is that the further a conductor progresses along this path, the greater becomes his natural 'authority' with others, emanating not so much from a forceful personality as from his own sense of conviction (devoid of arrogance) and from others' recognition that he is truly 'onto something'. Nothing more is needed; nothing less will do.

Stage Thirteen:

Irregularity of Metre

fast 5-time
medium 5-time
slow 5-time
7-time
the rumba
hemionas
remarks concerning Handel's 'Messiah'
one in a bar
time changes
'My spirit sang all day' (Gerald Finzi)

Fast 5-time

Irregular metres are really only a matter of practice. Begin with examples where one is beating only the main beats. Of course, you must decide which are the compound beats and which the simple ones. Although the movement of the hand must inevitably be slower for the compound beats than for the simple ones, keep an even sense of flow through the compound beats nevertheless, so that there is a sense of inevitability to the arrival of the next beat.

Mars, from 'The Planets' (1916)

Gustav Holst
(England, 1874 - 1934)

Allegro

Bsns, hns.

strings (col legno)
p timpani, harps. (Tam-tam sustained) *p* *mp*

7 + obs. *p* *cresc.*

13 + tpts. con sord. *mf dim.* *p* *tbns.*

19 + tpts. (senza sord.) *mp* *p* *cresc.*

25 + ww & brass & vln 1 *mf cresc.* *f* *hns., tubas*

31

f *f* *f* ten. tba. *cresc.*

36

+ tpt. & hns. *ff*

ww. hn & 3 tpts.

39

fff strings & heavy brass con 8 & 15

43

tbns. & ten. tba. *fff* strings, timp., 2 tpts.

hns. tpt. & tbns. con 8 basso

47

hns., tpts. & ten. tuba con 8 basso *fff* ww. & vln. *8vb* tbn., bsn., lower str.

3 basses, timp., 2 tpt.

51

+ picc. & tpt. *fff* ww., hn., str. (con 8 below) *8vb* ww., hns. strings

Symphony No 6, 'Pathétique' (1893), 2nd mvt.

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(Russia, 1840-1893)

Allegro con grazia ♩=144

Wind

cl. bsn.

hn.

mf

Cello

mf

f

Strings

pizz.

mf

5

f

mf

ff

f

mf

9

fl. ob. cl.

mf

più f

vln.

(pizz./arco)

mf

13

sempre mf

sempre mf

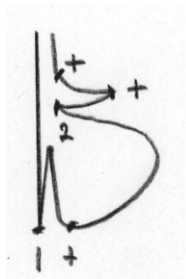
(pizz./arco)

sempre mf

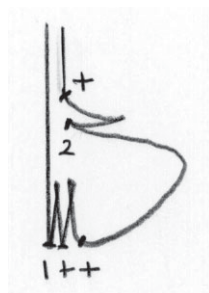
Medium 5-time

The examples given above are all at quite a flowing tempo. If, however, the tempo is even slightly less, the problem mentioned concerning keeping flow in the compound beat becomes more acute, and it may be necessary to hint at its subdivision, even though one would not want to do so with the simple beats. In a sense, we are living here again - as in the case of the Sicilienne variation from Brahms' 'Haydn Variations' - on the very borderline between a tempo that requires just giving the main beats and one that requires the subdivisions. Again as then, the use of the French pattern comes into its own, since it can just fractionally hint at the subdivisions, without disturbing the flow of the overall beat.

Here are the full French subdivisions, both for 2+3 and for 3+2:



French 2+3



French 3+2

The cello theme that opens the second movement of Tchaikovsky's 6th Symphony is at much the same speed as 'Mars' from The Planets, and so would be conducted using a plain duple pattern. However, bar 16 is usually given a small *ritenuto*, which would require subdivision across the second half of the bar to co-ordinate the cello section successfully. Just for practice, then, try the whole passage hinting at the subdivisions in the second half of all the bars. Then take it again showing only the two main beats (but keeping the flow of the baton through compound beat), just slipping into a subdivision at the *rubato* in bar 16.

The carol 'The Truth from Above', is at a genuinely moderate tempo, however, and needs all its compound beats subdividing, though only lightly. Because of the irregularity of the metre, you may like to mark every compound beat with a triangle above its first note.

The Truth from above

trad. English carol

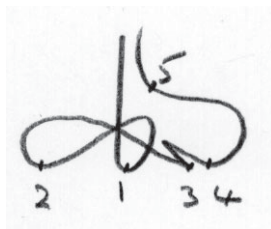
This is the truth sent from above, The truth of God, the God of love, Therefore don't turn me from your door, But harken all both rich and poor.

Collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Reproduced by permission of Stainer & Bell Ltd, London, England

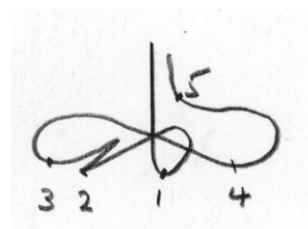
Slow 5-time

If, however, one were to be conducting an item slower than that carol - or if one were to conduct that carol at a slow tempo, all the subdivisions must be shown. Try it on 'The Truth from Above'.

Next comes a genuinely slow tempo, and now the subdivisions become so equally emphasised with the 'main' beats that the duple character of 5-time is gone and we really are in five-in-a-bar. At this point, the use of the French pattern comes gradually under question. The German pattern (based on 4, with an extra second or third beat) may now be a closer reflection of the character of the music.



German 2+3



German 3+2

The following is the opening of 'In freezing winter night', the seventh item of Britten's 'Ceremony of Carols'. Both the German and the French patterns seem equally suited to it, the French helping the music to flow a little, the German helping to hold it steady, especially in the second half of each bar. So, if you want a measured feeling, use the German pattern, if you want flow, use the French. Or, if your choir seems to be labouring the music, help them along by using the French pattern. If, on the other hand, they are failing to fill out the phrases sufficiently and seem to want to hurry, use the German pattern to try and broaden things.

'In Freezing Winter Night' from 'A Ceremony of Carols' (1942)

Benjamin Britten
(England, 1913 - 1976)

Andante con moto (♩=84)

Trebles 1

Trebles 2

Trebles 3

Harp
(or Piano)

pp

Be - hold, a sil - ly ten - der babe In

pp

Be - hold, a sil - ly

pp

Be - hold, a babe, in

5

cresc.

mf

free - zing win - ter night, In home - ly man - ger trem - bling lies... A - las, a

mf

ten - der babe In free - zing win - ter night, In home - ly man - ger trem - bling lies... A -

cresc.

mf

free - zing night, In man - ger trem - bling lies... A -

10

dim.

pi - teous sight!

dim.

-las, a pi - teous sight!

dim.

-las, a - las, a pi - teous sight!

pp

Finally, the last and slowest example comes from Mahler's 'Lieder Eines Fahrenden Gesellen' (opposite). The fact that it is principally in 4-time, and a kind of dead-march, makes it all the more appropriate to use the German pattern in the 5/4 bars.

Should it be 3+2 or 2+3? And why? First of all, consider the rhythmic pattern of the accompaniment. And then ask yourself about the extra beat in the 5/4 bars - why is it there? What does it express in the context of a weary tread?

7-time

If it is necessary to subdivide in 7-time, again there is the choice between the French approach, based on the three-time pattern (7-time is a triple metre) or the German approach, based again on the four-pattern. However, the choice does swing quite heavily in favour of the French patterns; there isn't any satisfactory way of doing 2+3+2 by the German method.

Examples of sustained 7/4 time include the 'Dies Irae' from Britten's 'War Requiem', which uses the most common 7/4 pattern: 2+2+3.

Lieder eines fahrenden gesellen (1884)
No 4: 'Die zwei blauen augen' (opening)

Gustav Mahler
(Bohemian, 1860 - 1911)

Durchaus mit geheimnissvoll schwermüthigem Ausdruck (nicht schleppen)

Alla Marcia (Throughout with a secretive, heavy-spirited expression - don't hurry.)

pp

Die zwei blau-en Au-gen von mei-nem Schatz, die ha-ben mich in die wei-te Welt ge - schickt. Da -

5

pp *espress.*

musst' ich Ab - schied neh - men vom al - ler - lieb - sten - Platz! O -

9

Au - gen blau, wa - rum habt ihr mich an - ge - blickt? Nun - hab ich e - w - ig Leid -

13

p *ppp*

- und - Grä - men!

The Rhumba

The rhumba consists of three unequal beats in a bar: $3/8+3/8+2/8$, properly marked with the time-signature $8/8$. It is, though, very frequently marked simply as $4/4$. Deciding whether and when to use the three-time pattern with unequal beats rather than simply beating $4/4$ is not always as obvious as one might think. Here are two examples from Sue Furlong's Nativity Musical, 'A New King for Israel'. Try them out and decide how you might conduct them before reading the next two paragraphs.

It should be mentioned that if you are ever conducting a dance band, they will expect you to beat four in all such cases, regardless of the feel of the bass-line. Try singing the bass line of 'Little Shepherd Boy' while conducting $3+3+2$ and you will see why they prefer conductors to play safe like this!

In 'Little Shepherd Boy', the time signature invites an uneven triple beat and the vocal part and right hand of the piano are clearly in rhumba rhythm. But much of the time, the composer has deliciously put this rhythm over a square $4/4$ framework in the bass - see bars 1-2, 5-6 and 9-10. Which does one conduct? Always the bass, the framework. Despite the time signature, I would beat the verse of this piece in $4/4$, moving to $8/8$ for the chorus, but back to $4/4$ in bar 20. The other number, 'A New King for Israel', likewise goes into a full $3+3+2$ swing in all parts at the refrain (bar 31), so I would find it impossible not to do likewise with the beat, returning to $4/4$ in bar 37.

A New King for Israel

© Sue Furlong

$\text{♩} = 144$

A promise made so long ago,
came on earth, this tiny babe,
chil-dren, all, and let us sing

5

made clear to our fathers of old. Good news for Is-ra-el,
to keep the pro-mise He made. No pil-low for His head—
praise to our lit-tle king, Bring peace and hap-pi-ness—

9

a child to be born. A new king for Is - ra-el, — a
when He was born. born.
to Him who was born. born.

13

new king for Is - ra-el, — a new king for Is - ra-el:
new king for Is - ra-el, — a new king for Is - ra-el:

1 & 2

17

Je-sus! Hmm Je-sus! Hmm Je-sus! 2. He
3. Come
Je-sus! Hmm, Hmm, 2. He
3. Come

1 & 2

Little Shepherd Boy

© Sue Furlong

♩=120

mf

5 Old Shepherd:

1. Lit - tle shep-herd boy, where do you go? — Why do you hur - ry this way to-night? The snow
 2. Lit - tle shep-herd boy, what did you see? — Is it a mi - ra - cle, tell me, tell me. Oh,

p

9

Chorus: (chorus continue)
 finger clicks: x x *mp*

co-vers the moun-tain tops, co-vers the road, — Shep-herd boy, don't you know. For my
 what could it be — that warms you so, — Shep-herd boy, I must know. For my

mp

13

heart is pat - ter-ing, I can't stand still, My teeth are chat - ter-ing but there's no chill, My
heart is pat - ter-ing, I can't stand still, My teeth are chat - ter-ing but there's no chill, If

17

eyes have seen a won - drous thing, Oh come with me and see. —
I could see this won - drous thing, I'd

poco cresc.

21

come with you, I'd come with you. — □

Hemiolas

The hemiola is a rhythmic cadential device from the Baroque Era. It appears only in triple time (or in compound time, treating the compound beat as a miniature triple metre in itself) and consists of a halving ('hemi-') of the speed of the pulse - i.e. a doubling of the note-value of the pulse, from quaver to crotchet, from crotchet to minim etc - for one full pattern of beats immediately before a cadence (perfect or interrupted) completes itself. Thus the two bars immediately before the cadence are conducted as a single bar, the beat twice as slow as usual. To say it another way, two bars of 3/4 become one bar of 3/2 immediately before the end of a passage. It is usually quite easy to recognise if a hemiola is present, both because of the infectious 'lift' in the result and because the bass line seems to support the new stress harmonically. If there are words, the hemiola should result in the word-stress being more natural than the stress made according to the bar-lines.

The examples on the following pages are from Handel's 'Messiah'. Mark the hemiolas with brackets pairing the small beats into larger beats. The middle of the three brackets will cross a barline. Then conduct the passages. In the faster examples it will be possible to conduct the hemiola with single, slow beats, but in the slower ones it becomes necessary to subdivide the beats during the hemiola, so that the beats continue at the same speed but the pattern suddenly spreads itself across two bars.

The 6/8 example is a bit of a teaser - it lies across the last half of one bar the first half of the other. This very rarely happens and you will have to invent your own way of conducting this! For instance, break out of two-in-a-bar to go one-in-a-bar, then the hemiola (a three-pattern), then one-in-a-bar again, thus completing the two bars containing the hemiola, and continuing as before, two-in-a-bar. Alternatively, a single three-pattern could be used for the whole two bars, subdividing the middle beat three times for the hemiola. This sort of thing wasn't a problem in an era before conductors, when ensembles were led either by the lead violinist or from the harpsichord. Still, I would prefer to beat the hemiola rather than ignore it; hemiolas are the conductor's responsibility.

Remarks concerning Handel's 'Messiah'

It is perhaps worth mentioning here - though surely nearly all readers will be aware of this - that Handel's tempo markings are according to 18th century usage, not 19th or 20th century. Thus 'Andante' retains its original Italian meaning of 'going', i.e. quite a fluent tempo. 'Allegro' then becomes quite a brisk speed, while 'Larghetto' is not at all as slow as the term later came to imply. Also, of course, all trills start on the upper note, except some occasions when approached from the upper note and the result might sound ungainly. (This rule applies not simply to the 17th and 18th centuries, but the early part of the 19th century, too.) Finally, 18th century practice also requires the use of an appoggiatura at appropriate cadence points in the vocal line, especially in recitatives, but also sometimes in an aria, such as the last bar of the third excerpt below, which thus becomes similar to the ending of the second excerpt.

No performance of 'The Messiah' these days should sound like performances did back in the 1950's. Fluent tempi, correct ornamentation, use of appoggiaturas and observation of hemiolas have transformed our feeling for the music, thank heavens. And one thing more, though this is more difficult: the use of dotted rhythms where they would have been understood. Unfortunately, Handel's notation is extremely unhelpful in this regard. Just where, in the third excerpt, should dotted rhythms be understood? Probably throughout (as also in the chorus, 'Behold the Lamb of God'), but it remains hard to understand why, in that case, the music should ever have been notated as it is.

The last cautionary note to add about 'The Messiah' for aspiring conductors is not to underestimate its difficulties. There is much of the oratorio that lies well within the technical grasp of moderate amateurs and well-trained school children. But there is also much that is not. 'The Messiah' should not be embarked upon just because 'everyone does it', though it is certainly a sure draw for an audience. Some sensible decision needs to be arrived at regarding its technical difficulties first.

Examples of the hemiola from Handel's 'Messiah'

George Frederick Handel
(German, 1785-1859)

Chorus: And the glory of the Lord (opening)

Musical score for the opening of the Chorus 'And the glory of the Lord'. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of five measures. The vocal line (treble clef) is silent, indicated by a whole rest in each measure. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) begins with a whole rest in the first measure, followed by a series of chords and moving lines in the right and left hands.

6

Musical score for measures 6-9 of the Chorus 'And the glory of the Lord'. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of four measures. The vocal line (treble clef) is silent, indicated by a whole rest in each measure. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) continues with chords and moving lines in the right and left hands.

10

CHORUS (altos):

Musical score for the vocal entry of the Chorus 'And the glory of the Lord'. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of five measures. The vocal line (treble clef) begins with a whole rest in the first measure, followed by the lyrics: "And the glo - ry, the glo - ry Of the Lord,". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in the right and left hands.

Air: O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion

Andante

5

8

12

SOLO (alto):

O thou that tel - lest good ti - dings to Zi - on,

Air: I know that my Redeemer liveth

Larghetto

7

12

17 SOLO (soprano):

I know that my Redeemer liveth,

Lastly, mark the hemiolas in these two passages from Corelli. Each instance has something just a little unusual about it.

Two excerpts from Concerto Grosso Op 6 No 2 in F

Archangelo Corelli
(Italy, 1653-1713)

The image displays two musical excerpts from Corelli's Concerto Grosso Op. 6 No. 2 in F major. The first excerpt is in 3/4 time and the second is in 4/4 time. Both excerpts feature hemiolas, which are unusual in this context. The score is written for a string ensemble, with parts for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabasso. The first excerpt shows a hemiola in the Violin I part, where the rhythm changes from 3/4 to 2/4 for two measures. The second excerpt shows a hemiola in the Violoncello part, where the rhythm changes from 4/4 to 3/4 for two measures. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

One-in-a-bar

One-in-a-bar is a perfectly regular metre but is dealt with here for want of anywhere better. All the other patterns take place within two dimensions - height and width. One-in-a-bar, however, has only one - height. This succession of down-beats, all in the same direction, can be frustrating in the limitations it places on the conductor's movements and above all must not result in a heavy-handed 'hitting' of the beat. Sometimes a conductor prefers to use a two, three or four pattern across a number of bars. For instance, 'In Dulci Jubilo' and 'Quem Pastores' (next page) might be beaten as if in 6/4 rather than 3/4, every two bars taken in a duple pattern. Occasionally a composer will mark his music like this. For instance, Beethoven, over a passage in the scherzo of his 9th Symphony, writes 'beaten in three', meaning use a three pattern across every three bars. Another instance occurs in the finale of Elgar's Enigma Variations. Otherwise, using two, three or four patterns to avoid a one pattern is a rare option and one not much favoured by players, who no longer see the barlines of the music marked by the conductor's baton. So try the two carols one-in-a-bar.

Don't push the tempo and don't get frustrated; just allow the music to happen. 'Quem Pastores' in particular is unhurried and you may need to hint at a three-pattern to ease the end of the last phrase into its cadence - make three pattern within a narrow horizontal but normal vertical frame. The end of 'In Dulci Jubilo' probably needs this, too. While you are about it, make a convincing cut-off to the last note of each item and begin a second verse - with a reasonable breath taken, but in tempo - all with the baton only, not using the left hand.

Show the breaths between phrases in 'In Dulci Jubilo' in the usual way, by stopping momentarily in the centre of the beat. (This would be every eight bars, not every four.) Be subtle about it and don't lose tempo, but do let the singers feel you acknowledge their need for an adequate breath - disguise what is happening in the way a good singer/piano duo would. Compare by singing yourself as you beat through with or without this momentary stop and you will understand what is involved for the singers. The matter is more difficult in 'Quem Pastores' because the phrases end with a crotchet on the last beat of the bar, making breathing impossible if one keeps a strict time. There are two solutions to this. If your tempo is relatively fast, you can simply stop momentarily on the downbeat, just as for 'In Dulci Jubilo', coming out of the beat soon enough to allow a breath, but one that does not break the musical flow too much. If your tempo is slower, you can lightly touch the last crotchet of the bar, to lift the singers over the breath. Again, sing yourself as you conduct to get a feel for this. (The loss of rhythm resulting from this need to breathe probably accounts for the old tradition of singing this carol antiphonally between three choirs, each taking a line in turn and joining together for the last line of each verse. Andrew Parrott uses another reading of the carol where the last bars of each phrase reverse the rhythm to crotchet-minim, thus removing the problem.)

The state of being between one-in-a-bar and three-in-a-bar is both difficult and very important to learn to capture, among other things because it is the essence of the waltz. Try 'The Blue Danube' Waltz to see how you must fluctuate between three, one and the half-way stage that is both and neither. To achieve the latter, try compressing the horizontal dimension of the three pattern, so that the second beat must travel as much up as out, thus lessening its stress.

The grand forte passage itself is, of course, in one, but notice how, if you beat as large as you would for a comparable forte passage in, say, four-time, there is a danger of monotony and insistence in the gesture. For this reason a somewhat smaller beat may be necessary, and yet one with all the life and verve still within it. The verve may be more implicit than explicit, but this is preferable to 'hitting' - or, heaven forbid, 'circling'!

Lastly, some mention should be made of the famous Viennese lilt! Explained in words, this is done by the waltz accompaniment hurrying slightly to the second beat, but placing the third in time. It tends to be most pronounced just as the first main theme gets under way - bar 24 in this example, after a delicious hesitation through bar 23. But whereas bar 23 will be beaten in three and the following bars 'one-with-a-hint-of-three', bars 27 and 31 are probably best as a simple one. As the piece gets under way, the 'one-with-a-hint-of-three' will gradually vanish, along with the lilt itself in the forte.

Carol: In dulci jubilo

trad. arr. A.C.

In dul - ci ju - bi - lo, Let us our hom - mage
O Je - su par - vu - le! I yearn for thee al -

7
show; Our heart's joy re - cli - neth
way! Hear me, I be - seech thee, O

13
In præ - se - pi - o And like a bright star
pu - er op - ti - me! My pray'r let it

19
shi - neth Ma - tris in gre - mi - o,
reach thee, O Prin - ceps glo - ri - æ!

25
Al - pha es et O! Al - pha es et O!
Tra - he me post te, Tra - he me post - te!

To make a small *rallentando* at the end of the last verse, show a breath after bar 28, and touch the last crotchet of the next two bars with a small sub-division as the hand rises from touching the main beat.

Carol: Quem Pastores

German 15th cent. arr. A.C.

Quem pas - to - res lau - da - ve - re,
Ad quem ma - gi am - bu - la - bant,
Chri - sto re - gi, De - o na - to,

5

Qui - bus an - ge - li di - xe - re,
Au - rum, thus, myrr - ham por - ta - bant,
Per Ma - ri - am no - bis da - to,

9

Ab - sit vo - bis iam ti - me - re,
Im - mo vo - la - bant hæc sin - ce - re,
Me - ri - to re - so - net ve - re

13

Na - tus est rex glo - ri - æ.
Na - to re - gi glo - ri - æ.
Laus, ho - nor et glo - ri - æ.

An der schönen blauen Donau

(By the beautiful blue Danube)

Johann Strauss jnr.

Tempo di valse

The first system of the musical score, measures 1-6. It features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The music is marked *p* (piano). The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and eighth notes.

The second system of the musical score, measures 7-14. It continues the melodic and harmonic development. The right hand has a more active melodic line with slurs. The left hand features a prominent bass line with chords and eighth notes, marked *fz* (forzando).

The third system of the musical score, measures 15-22. The right hand continues with a melodic line. The left hand has a steady accompaniment of chords. The system concludes with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking in the bass line.

The fourth system of the musical score, measures 23-28. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and eighth notes, marked *p* (piano).

The fifth system of the musical score, measures 29-34. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs. The left hand continues with a harmonic accompaniment of chords and eighth notes.

35

35

cresc.

This system contains measures 35 through 40. The music is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. The right hand features a melodic line with dotted rhythms and slurs, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. A *cresc.* marking is present in measure 38.

41

41

This system contains measures 41 through 47. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand maintains a steady accompaniment. The key signature and time signature remain consistent with the previous system.

48

48

f

This system contains measures 48 through 54. The right hand has a more active melodic line with slurs and accents. The left hand features a strong accompaniment, starting with a dynamic marking of *f* in measure 48. The system concludes with a double bar line and a key signature change to two sharps (F#, C#).

55

55

p

mf

This system contains measures 55 through 60. The right hand has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The left hand accompaniment starts with a dynamic marking of *p* in measure 55 and changes to *mf* in measure 59. The key signature remains two sharps.

61

61

p

This system contains measures 61 through 66. The right hand continues with eighth-note patterns. The left hand accompaniment starts with a dynamic marking of *p* in measure 61. The key signature remains two sharps.

67

67

mf cresc.

f

This system contains measures 67 through 72. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs. The left hand accompaniment starts with a dynamic marking of *mf cresc.* in measure 67 and changes to *f* in measure 70. The key signature remains two sharps.

Time changes

A common feature of 20th-century music, frequent changes of metre require you to be confident in the basic patterns, but you should be that by now. If by any chance there is any residual unsureness, tackling 'My spirit sang all day' by Gerald Finzi should bring the problem to a head and force you to sort it out.

'My spirit sang all day' (Gerald Finzi)

This is a piece with a real sense of forward motion, both in the louder, more rhythmic passages and the softer, more flowing ones, and dealing with the patterns must not detract from this. The composer simply wrote the phrases he wanted to achieve his musical effect, using whatever metre was needed at each moment. Likewise when you conduct this piece, though the patterns should be absolutely clear, they should not become any sort of focus of attention; they merely melt into the musical flow and characterisation, the things that are the true focus of attention. You will do well, therefore, to memorise the time changes so that they do not take up more than a small part of your own attention. Memorise where the 2/4 bars come (by memorising on which words of the text they fall) and you will be there, since the 5/4 bars always come with the same text in each verse. If you clarify the verse structure for yourself you will make the task very much easier.

The decision on whether to use a French or German pattern is fairly clear here. Despite the fact that the tempo is fast (which often means using the French pattern), the piece is basically in 4/4 and using this pattern as the basis of the 5 pattern maintains the same feeling throughout.

The decision on how many preparatory beats to give at the opening will be determined by the character of the breath you want the choir to take, determined in turn by the character of the delivery of the first line. Imagine taking a breath before words such as "O why...?" - it will be slow and thoughtful. Then before an angry 'Begone!' - it will require a quick, sharp intake of breath (though without any catching on the throat that would destroy the tone quality). As a third alternative, try "Sweet May..." - a medium, light intake seems likely for that. Now try declaiming the opening line of "My spirit sang all day", find the character of the delivery, and hence of the breath. It will now be easy to determine how many preparatory beats you should give the choir.

Characterisation of this kind becomes your principal concern when all the metrical problems are dealt with and this piece is a good deal more varied, both in range of style and speed of change, than any of the previous examples in this book. (Try choosing at random any few bars to conduct in silence and see if your colleagues can easily identify the passage.) You also need to incorporate the leading among the different vocal parts, much as you practised for orchestra in the previous book of this series. Indeed, if you can rise to all the challenges in this piece, you have reached a fair degree of advancement in the art of conducting.

There are a few decisions to be taken in this piece regarding where to breathe and where not to breathe, according to the demands of the text and the music. (And should one introduce staggered breathing in bars 37-39.) Amateur singers need more breathing places than professionals, and clear guidance in the matter.

It is necessary for a conductor to develop his playing of scores at the piano at least to the point where he can cope with an SATB open score such as this. But this can take time and for some will never be entirely fluent. So as an aid to learning this piece and gaining a feel for it, a piano reduction is included.

My spirit sang all day

from 'Seven Poems of Robert Bridges'

Gerald Finzi
(England, 1901 - 1956)

Vivace $\text{♩} = c. 144$

My spi-rit sang all day O my joy. No-thing my tongue—— could say,

My spi-rit sang all day O my joy. No-thing my tongue—— could say,

My spi-rit sang all day O my joy. No - thing my tongue could say,

My spi-rit sang all day O my joy. No - thing my tongue could say,

5

mf ——— *f* ——— *pp* *p* ——— *mf*

On - ly my joy!—— O my joy—— And spake,

mf ——— *f* ——— *mp* *p* ——— *mf*

On - ly my joy!—— My heart an e-cho caught - O my joy—— And spake,

mf ——— *f* ——— *pp* *p* ——— *mf*

On - ly my joy!—— O my joy—— And spake,

mf ——— *f* ——— *pp* *p* ——— *mf*

On - ly my joy!—— O my joy—— And spake,

10

pp

Tell me thy thought,—— Hide not thy joy.——

pp

Tell—— me thy thought, Hide not thy joy.——

mp

Tell—— me thy thought, Hide not thy joy.—— My eyes gan peer a -

pp

Tell me thy thought, Hide not thy joy.——

15

O my joy - What beau-ty hast thou found? Shew us thy
 round, O my joy - What beau-ty hast thou found? Shew us thy
 O my joy - What beau-ty hast thou found? Shew us thy

20

My jealous ears grew whist; - O my joy - Mu-sic from hea-ven
 joy. My jealous ears grew whist; - O my joy - Mu-sic from hea-ven
 joy. My jealous ears grew whist; - O my joy - Mu-sic from
 joy. My jealous ears grew whist; - O my joy - Mu-sic from

25

is't, Sent for our joy? She al-so came and heard;
 is't, Sent for our joy? She al-so came and heard;
 hea-ven is't, Sent for our joy? She al-so came and heard;
 hea-ven is't, Sent for our joy? She al-so came and heard;

30

rit.

O my joy, What, said she, is this word? What is thy joy? —————

O my joy, What, said she, is this word? What ————— is thy

O my joy, What, said she, is this word? What ————— is thy

O my joy, What, said she, is this word? What is thy joy? —————

35

a tempo

□ And I replied, O see, O my joy, ————— 'Tis thee, I

joy? ————— And I replied, O see, O my joy, ————— 'Tis thee, I

joy? ————— And I replied, O see, O my joy, ————— 'Tis thee, I

□ And I replied, O see, O my joy, ————— 'Tis thee, I

40

Allargando

cried, 'tis thee: ————— Thou ————— art my joy. —————

cried, 'tis thee: ————— Thou ————— art my joy. —————

cried, 'tis thee: ————— Thou ————— art my joy. —————

cried, 'tis thee: ————— Thou ————— art my joy. —————

My spirit sang all day

from 'Seven Poems of Robert Bridges'

piano reduction

Gerald Finzi
(England, 1901 - 1956)

Vivace ♩=c.144

My spi-rit sang all day O my joy. No-thing my tongue could say,

5 On - ly my joy! My heart an e-cho caught - O my joy And spake,

10 Tell me thy thought, Hide not thy joy. My eyes gan peer a-

15 round, - O my joy - What beau - ty hast thou found? Shew us thy

20 joy. My jealous ears grew whist; - O my joy - Mu-sic from hea-ven

Musical score for measures 20-24. The score is in G major and features a piano accompaniment with dynamic markings *pp* and *mf*. The tempo is marked with a hairpin crescendo and decrescendo.

25 is't, Sent for our joy? She al - so came and heard;

Musical score for measures 25-29. The score is in G major and features a piano accompaniment with dynamic markings *mp* and *p*. The tempo is marked with a hairpin crescendo and decrescendo.

30 O my joy, What, said she, is this word? What is thy joy?

Musical score for measures 30-34. The score is in G major and features a piano accompaniment with a dynamic marking *rit.* The tempo is marked with a hairpin decrescendo.

35 And I replied, O see, O my joy, 'Tis thee, I

Musical score for measures 35-39. The score is in G major and features a piano accompaniment with dynamic markings *f* and a tempo marking *a tempo*. The tempo is marked with a hairpin crescendo and decrescendo.

40 cried, 'tis thee: Thou art my joy.

Musical score for measures 40-44. The score is in G major and features a piano accompaniment with dynamic markings *ff* and a tempo marking *Allargando*. The tempo is marked with a hairpin decrescendo.

Stage Fifteen:

Not using the left hand

rhythmic focus
an intense legato line
unchanging loud passages
tight and loose

A conductor needs to know when it is better not to use the left hand. Without over-generalising, one might say that three broad categories present themselves:

- when it is necessary to create a rhythmical focus
- when an unremitting, intense legato line is desired
- when a loud passage continues without change for many bars

Rhythmic focus

There are countless instances when it is better to focus players' attention on a clean, clear beat from the baton and not distract by using the left hand. (That doesn't mean it will hang uselessly at ones side; only that it mustn't distract.) Mostly they are moments involving quavers or semiquavers, often staccato. A conductor needs to remember that an orchestra is a large ensemble and it may not be possible for all the players to hear each other properly even in a good acoustic, while in a difficult one, such as a large church, hearing can become impossible; there is only the conductor's baton to provide coordination. Here are a few examples of moments where such a visual focus is required.

In the slow introduction to Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony. (No 38), one might be tempted to show the contrasting character of the forte and the piano bars by using the left hand in two different ways. And with an experienced and well-rehearsed orchestra, this might present no problem. But a conductor needs to understand that his first job is to help the players relax over ensemble, thus enabling them to focus more freely on expression. They may play together without such help from the conductor, but the unity between players and conductor may be lessened as a result, as they focus on gaining unity within themselves. And the loss of their natural musicality may be far more significant than anything gained from what a conductor can do with his left hand. Is there, in any case, anything he can do with his left hand that he cannot incorporate into his baton technique? I don't wish to be dogmatic about how this passage should be conducted; I just use it as a borderline example in the issue about when one hand can achieve more than two.

The slow introduction to Beethoven's 7th Symphony breaks into pianissimo semiquavers on the fourth beat of bar 8. But when a transition is made from a fairly loose pulse to a strict, tight one like this, the players need the beat to clarify a beat or two in advance. (This long excerpt will be returned to later in the chapter.) 'Clarify' will mean bringing the baton central, as well as giving more 'click' to the beat.

In the storm movement of Beethoven's 6th Symphony, though one is likely (but not certain) to involve the left hand in the forte chords, the strings must be given what they require in order to keep the ensemble clean in the semiquavers, whether this is the rumblings in cello and bass, or the tense semiquavers that run throughout the entire passage in 2nd violins and violas. The sudden drop of dynamic at bar 41 is easiest to achieve by some gesture of withdrawal - as described in Stage Eleven in Book Two. But what the players need at the piano is a well-presented, forward and central baton. The drop of dynamic has to be conveyed, therefore, by body language that does not interfere with this.

In that last Beethoven passage, all the orchestra is playing music of a tightly rhythmic nature. In the excerpt from Aaron Copland's 'Appalachian Spring' however, the strings and piano play staccato quavers while the brass play a broad, lyrical melody from the ballet's opening. It is extremely hard not only for the brass players to avoid stretching the time a little, but even for the conductor not to do so mentally. It is a part of lyricism not to have the sound speak absolutely instantly on the beat. Yet any leeway in a passage like this is fatal. Using the left hand as one would normally do for a melody on the brass like this will make coordination with the strings and piano virtually impossible. A single clear beat with the right hand is what the brass players need; it is certainly all they will watch, whatever you do with your left hand. (This passage would normally be conducted in two, despite the time-signature.)

But whereas there is some chance the brass players in the Copland example may be able to hear the violins, countless occasions arise in concertos where the soloist is playing fast passage work and really it is only the conductor (and the front desks of strings) who can effectively hear him or her. With this passage from the finale of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, (also conducted in two) we are now at the other end of the spectrum from the first example (Mozart, Symphony No. 38) where it was perfectly possible to use the left hand, provided one was aware of the need to achieve safe ensemble; here it would be quite irresponsible of a conductor to use his left hand.

Symphony No. 38, 'Prague', K.504, 1st mvt. (1786)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(Austria, 1756 - 1791)

(Adagio)

14

WW. *p* *f* + tpt. *f* + vla.

h. *f*

vln. 1 & 2 *p*

cllo, bass, vla. *f*

timp. *p* *f* (timp.)

17

f

p *f* *p*

bsn. *p* *f* *p*

20

f *p* *f*

f *p* *f*

23

f *p* *f* *p*

p *f* *p*

Symphony No 7 in A (1812), 1st mvt. (slow introduction)

Ludwig van Beethoven
(Germany, 1770-1827)

Poco Sostenuto (♩=69)

ob. *fp* *fp* *fp* *fp*

fl. *p* WW. hn. *fp*

clar. *f* *f* *fp* *f*

hn. *f* *f* *f* *f*

vln 2. vln. *f* *p* *f* *p*

str. *f* *p* *f* *p*

9 clar. bsn. *dim.* *pp* *dolce*

dim. *pp* *pp*

(str.) *pp*

13 WW. hn. *cresc.* *ff* *ff* *ff*

vln 1 *sf* *sf* *sf*

vln 2 *sf* *sf* *sf*

vln. *ff* *ff* *ff*

cresc. *ff* *ff* *ff*

cresc. *ff* *ff* *ff*

17 *ff* *sf* *sf* *sf* *ff* *sf*

ff *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

ff *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

20

ff sf dim.

+ fl. 8va

dim.

dim.

23

ob. ob. clar. p dolce

vln 1 & 2 p tr tr

bsn. p dolce

28

ob. bsn. pp

vln 1 pp

vln 2, vla. pp

cllo. bass pp

32

+ fl. cresc. ff sf sf sf

cresc. sf

ff str.

cresc. ff

57

ww.

62

vln. 1

vln 2, vla.

pp

pp

ob.

cl.

cello, bass

67

pp

+ fl. (8va)

72

cresc.

ww.

cresc.

cresc.

Appalachian Spring (1944)

Aaron Copland
(U.S.A., 1900 - 1990)

8

(Allegro)WW. *non legato*

f
hn. + vln. 1

f marc.
tbn. + vln 2 tpt. + vla. hn. + cilo.

f marc.

9

vln. 1

f marc.

f marc.

8va.....

vln. 1 & 2, vla. & pno.

fl., hn. & tpt.

ff

bsn., tbn., cilo. & bass

tbn. + bass

8va.....

ff

bsn., tbn., cilo. & bass

(8^{va}).....

Musical score for the first system, measures 1-4. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 5/4. The top staff features a melodic line with accents and slurs. The middle and bottom staves provide harmonic support with chords and single notes.

-pno., + ob. & cl.
8^{va}.....

Musical score for the second system, measures 5-8. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The top staff features a melodic line with slurs. The middle and bottom staves provide harmonic support with chords and single notes.

10 8^{va}..... 8^{va}.....

-fl.

- cilo. & bass

Musical score for the third system, measures 9-12. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The top staff features a melodic line with slurs and rests. The middle and bottom staves provide harmonic support with chords and single notes.

Concerto for violin and orchestra in E minor, 3rd mvt. (1844)

Felix Mendelssohn
(Germany, 1809 - 1847)

(Allegro molto vivace)

131

solo violin

(pp)

WW.

p

strings, pizzicato

pp

hn., vln 1, vla., cello

vln 2 & bass, pizzicato

(pp)

135

139

143

molto cresc.

cresc.

cresc. *sf*

It is the easiest thing in the world in a passage like this last for the orchestral ensemble to become ragged, or even in danger of falling apart. A very common mistake among inexperienced conductors in responding to such a situation is to beat larger and stronger, in an attempt to force the ensemble back together. This, unfortunately, is exactly the wrong thing to do, as it 'interferes' with the players and makes it harder for them to listen and focus. The conductor must realise that he cannot 'fix' the playing himself, only the players can fix it. And so by giving, paradoxically, a smaller beat, he creates a livelier sense of shared responsibility among the group and a sharper focus on the beat. Then the players can 'fix' things. The conductor may, of course, show a sense of alarm (though not panic!) on his face; the beat, however, must remain simply a beat. Use the tip of the baton, not the hand - offer a focus.

An intense legato line

There is no need to use only the right hand in this kind of music, but the special focus on the baton that comes from doing so can certainly increase the effect, though perhaps only if a baton-hold of the kind taught in this series is being used. A 'pointy' hold, where the baton is held between the thumb and first two fingers, is much less able to convey a legato line, so that conductors who use it may have to find other means of communicating such a quality.

Try comparing the effect of beating with two hands with that obtained from beating only with the right in this passage from Wagner's Prelude to 'Tristan und Isolde'. Remember that such an intense line will call for a very firm grasp of the baton - 'position 3' (see Book One, Step One) with the thumb pressed flat against the baton, resulting in the baton itself pointing slightly across the body. This would be necessary even for this work's soft opening phrase.

Many will prefer the greater voluptuousness that comes from using two hands in this music. However, the single-minded obsessiveness that has to last throughout the Prelude may be stronger the other way. Indeed, one outstanding performance of Shostakovich's 10th Symphony involved the conductor barely using his left hand throughout the whole twenty-minute span of the first movement.

Though this particular expressive quality is primarily associated with music since Beethoven, it can make its appearance earlier, particularly where qualities of pain or remorse enter the music. Both the St. John and the St. Matthew Passions of Bach end with full choruses in triple metre in the minor key, bidding farewell to Christ's body in the tomb. But to my ear, there is a subtle difference between them.

'Ruht wohl' from the John Passion has a hint of the rocking lullaby to it, with short phrases (1 bar, 1 bar and 2 bars) making up the opening statement. I would feel the need to use the left hand to lift and aspirate these phrases. 'Wir setzen uns' from the Matthew Passion on the other hand is closer to keening in the intensity of its grief and remorse, the chromaticism always leading the dotted minims on into the next bar without let-up, over the C pedal. For this, a single right-hand focus can be more to the point. The text of the two choruses illumines the difference also: "Rest ye well, ye holy limbs" (a lullaby) as against "With tears we sit and call to you in the tomb" (keening).

(I leave aside here the question of whether the use of a baton is suitable at all for music of this period. This will depend on how far towards stylistic authenticity you wish or are able to travel in any particular performance.)

Tristan und Isolde (1865) - Prelude

Richard Wagner
(Germany, 1813 - 1883)

This Prelude contains probably as much sustained emotional tension as is possible in music. Some conductors try to emphasise this by insisting on the opening slow tempo throughout, without any surrender to the forward movement. But tension can only exist when there are opposing forces, and unless the forward straining and desire is strongly present, merely holding the slow tempo achieves nothing. The two forces must fight.

Sometimes people light-heartedly refer to this music as masochistic. However, the subject demands more careful consideration than that. Wagner was greatly influenced by the German philosopher, Schopenhauer, who, along with the Buddha, considered a large part of our sufferings to be caused by desire. The solution those two men proposed was to let go of desire. Wagner, however, wrote four hours of music expressing the most intense desire imaginable. Then, when his hero was dead, he allowed the heroine to experience the satisfaction of her desire, 'in the realm of the spirit'. I don't think anyone can reasonably think that Wagner expressed what Schopenhauer had in mind. Does that matter? Was Schopenhauer right? If Wagner's music carries one away, does that do away with any need for further questions? Few musicians seem to seriously ask these and similar questions, at least, not with the sort of rigour taken for granted by people in other disciplines. I feel we should. If Wagner had it wrong, then this music is intensely dangerous - as would be much else in the classical repertoire.

Langsam und schmachtend

(Slow and languishing)

The image shows a musical score for the Prelude of Tristan und Isolde. It consists of three staves. The top staff is for the oboe, the middle for the cello, and the bottom for woodwinds (clarinet, cor anglais, bassoon). The music is in 3/8 time and D major. The oboe part starts with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on G4, moving up chromatically to B4, then down to A4, G4, and F4. The cello part starts with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on G2, moving up chromatically to B2, then down to A2, G2, and F2. The woodwind part starts with a rest, followed by a chordal accompaniment starting on G2, moving up chromatically to B2, then down to A2, G2, and F2. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, *cresc.*, and *dim.* and phrasing slurs.

7

flute

ob., clar., cor ang.

p *sf* *p* *p*

cresc. *sf* *p* *p*

p *sf* *p*

13

fl., ob., clar.

vln. 1 & 2

vln. 1 & 2

celli

wind (incl. horns) + some strings

cresc. *sf* *più f* *ff* *p*

pp

sf *più f* *ff* *p* (basses pizz.)

18

f *dim.* *p*

f *dim.* *p*

St. John Passion (1823), closing chorus (bars 1-20)

Johann Sebastian Bach
(German, 1785-1850)

Orch.

12 Ruht wohl, ruht wohl, ihr hei-li-ge-Ge-

S A

T B

17 bei-ne, die ich nun wei-ter nicht be-wei-ne, ruht wohl,

S A

T B

St. Matthew Passion (1825), closing chorus (bars 1-24)

Johann Sebastian Bach
(German, 1785-1850)

Orch. 1&2

tutti

orch. 1 *p* orch. 2 *più p* tutti *f*

choirs 1&2

13 Wir set- zen— uns mit— Trä- nen— nie- der und ru - fen— dir—

S A

T B

tutti

19 — im Gra- be— choir 1 zu: Ru- he choir 2 sanf- te, sanf- te ruh,— ru- he choirs 1&2 sanf- te, sanf- te ruh!

S A

T B

orch. 1 *p* orch. 2 *più p* tutti *f*

Unchanging loud passages

Returning to the slow introduction to Beethoven's 7th Symphony (pages 46 & 47), one needs to reinforce the down-beat of bar 15 with the left hand. However, if one continues mirroring the right hand with the left for the whole of the tutti passage, the effect is very tedious. One solution is to greatly reduce the size of the beat while still using both hands, implying the fortissimo with strong hands but without a large beat. The other is to keep some size to the beat but only to involve the left hand occasionally, perhaps hardly at all. To me there is, somehow, a quality of integrity when one continues to work fully through the baton in this way.

Tight and loose

A typical Rossini crescendo, such as that from the overture to 'The Barber of Seville' on page 54, involves two of the situations mentioned in this chapter, the rhythmical focus required at the pianissimo start, and the need to avoid monotony as the forte continues (though some use of the left hand may be desirable). In addition, because the forte music is rhythmic and staccato, there is the danger of 'hitting the beat' too much. This raises one last subject that, though it concerns the right hand, not the left, I will deal with in this chapter - the tight and the loose beat.

The tight beat goes in very close to the players, psychologically speaking, is often tense and is inclined to spring off beats very quickly, often coming virtually to a halt between beats - even if only momentarily - while waiting for the moment for the next click. In particularly loud and rhythmic passages, it runs a severe danger of 'hitting the beat' and interfering with the players. The musical result can be hectoring.

The loose beat steps back psychologically, relinquishing immediate and direct control. It keeps an even swing (perhaps a little like the pendulum of a clock), so that the flow from beat to beat is undisturbed and arrives with a certain inevitability. In loud and rhythmic music it can seem very detached, but it never runs any risk of harshening the tone. Old conducting books can be found to suggest that the conductor should not move more than his wrist, never the arm*; this is the ultimate in loose conducting. The musical result can be indifferent.

Most conductors, of course, live with a happy medium. However, inexperienced students need constantly to be reminded of the virtues of keeping a touch of looseness in their conducting, particularly when their youthful enthusiasm gets the better of them during excitable moments in the music. It is not just that the tone can suffer, as well as their own awareness of the playing. What they need to realise is the greater possibilities that arise when they leave the basic responsibility for playing with the players, something the looser style encourages. Firstly, you gain a truly 'active' ensemble, something of immense musical value. (Refer back, if you like, to the section 'An active choir' in the chapter 'In front of a choir' in Book One.) Secondly, the conductor has to rely much more on his 'presence', his 'aura' to influence the musical expression, a quality it is his duty to develop. And finally, there is more 'space', somehow, for the music to speak into and out of which to take flight.

And this is where I would like to pay tribute to George Hurst, a man who has influenced more than a generation of young British conductors, to say nothing of all those who came from abroad to attend his classes at the Canford Summer School in Dorset. His own conducting contained a perfectly judged touch of looseness - just enough to create a 'crack', so to speak, between his baton and the players. It was through this 'crack' that something 'extra-ordinary' could, and so often did, enter his performances.

* Sir Adrian Boult - who used a very large baton with a bulbous handle, worked almost entirely from the hand, with the thumb on top - would listen to performances on the radio and comment, "What a noisy elbow that conductor has!" Students in danger of too tight a technique might do well to buy a baton such as he used and practise the style a little to learn from it.

Overture, 'The Barber of Seville' (1816) excerpt

Gioacchino Rossini
(Italy, 1792-1868)

(Allegro)

pp

cresc.

rinf.

f

tutti
ff

ff

ff

Appendix Four:

Basic Vocal Technique - 2

Section One:

lifting the voice
when breathing
when singing

Section Two:

strengthening breath support
high notes
open vowels
forward & lifted vowels

If necessary, revise the technique taught in Book One thoroughly before continuing further. In doing so, cease thinking of the breath being motivated by the tummy moving out and in; instead think of the more anatomically correct fact of the diaphragm falling and rising. This will prove more powerful and effective.

Section One

Lifting the voice

Even when the individual members of a group seem to be singing in tune, when they all sing together the result can still sound flat, unless each member has learnt to let the voice rise in the face. It is no use trying to achieve this by 'smiling' or otherwise distorting the face, since it is the note that must rise inside the face and lifting the face only makes the job harder for it. Nor is it any good imaginarily pushing the note up. Rather, it is a matter of creating the 'space above' into which the note can rise naturally of its own accord.

The higher the note, the higher it must rise. Middle register notes lie around the cheekbones, but 'head-voice' notes rise above the eyes. Though low notes can resonate effectively downwards into the chest, they should never lose their link with middle register placing.

The rather silly diagram opposite is principally concerned with 'crossing the break' into head voice and with allowing enough space to the notes that lie immediately below the break at the top of the middle register. But it may also help convey the need to create space above the note when in ordinary middle register. This 'space' happens automatically for a girl's voice in head register; this may then give an idea of what to feel in middle register.

When breathing

As you breathe in, imagine the air is passing above the roof of the mouth. Keep the same sensation when breathing out, whether steadily or swiftly. (Keep the jaw and throat loose.) Just as, when you first softened the jaw, the sound of the breath changed (softer and darker), so now it should change again to something lighter in pitch, still barely audible.

As well as steady breaths out and swifter 'full exhalations', practise 'tennis strokes', except that these may now become 'badminton strokes'. (Badminton uses a light shuttlecock and a high net.) Or imagine a feather in the roof of the mouth, and with a quick, light puff of the airstream from the tummy, send it upwards, out of the front of the top of the head. A similar image to use on the long, steady exhalation would be a child's soap-bubble ring at the roof of the mouth. Use a perfectly judged steady airstream to send imaginary bubbles out through the top of the forehead.

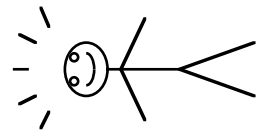
When singing

It is time now to change the vowel on which we sing from the ultra-loose and open 'ah' to the Italian 'a', pronounced like the 'u' in the English word 'fun' ('uh'). In English, this is always a short vowel, but learn to sustain it; it has the lifted quality we need now.

Long notes - It is important to remember that this 'above the roof of the mouth' sensation cannot simply be attempted as you start to sing. It must be prepared, as you breathe in. Then, when singing, continue the sense of lift and direction through the cheekbones and out into the hall throughout the note. (This exercise is notated, with piano accompaniment in Book 1.)

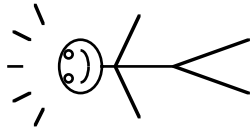
THE BREAK

'Open air' - head voice



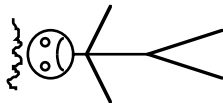
this very high note is in head voice - he cannot be sung without taking off the ceilings, so he's always happy.

'Ceiling' - the break

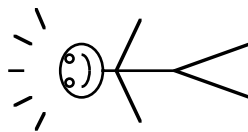


this quite high note is happy - the ceiling of the room has been removed for him and he has lots of space.

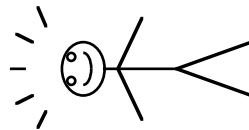
'Room' - main voice



this quite high note is unhappy - he belongs in the room, but there's no space above him.



this medium height note is happy - there's lots of space above him.



this low note is happy - there's lots of space above him.

Five notes down, plain - The reason for practising mostly descending scales at this stage is to keep the higher resonances on the lower notes - they will sound brighter and carry better. (Also, one needs to have developed some feeling for lift and placing before tackling rising figures.) As well as keeping the last note placed as if as high as the first, be sure to nourish it with a proper tone produced by a steady airstream and a round, well-formed vowel. Think of the 'ah' or 'uh' as like a ball, spinning away from you. (See Book 1 for this exercise also.)

Five notes down, wavy - This is actually the most useful of the sung exercises at this stage, since its wavy shape helps to renew the 'lift' of the voice.

Music score for the exercise "Five notes down, wavy". It consists of two staves: Voice and Piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The exercise is divided into two phrases, each starting with a rest followed by a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line consists of five notes descending in pitch, with a wavy contour. The piano accompaniment consists of a descending scale in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The first phrase is marked "Ah" and the second phrase is marked "Ah".

Five notes down, extra wavy - Take the first steps towards vocal agility with this exercise. Sing clearly, but do not add 'h's on each note, as this destroys the development of proper resonance.

Music score for the exercise "Five notes down, extra wavy". It consists of two staves: Voice and Piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The exercise is divided into two phrases, each starting with a rest followed by a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line consists of five notes descending in pitch, with an extra wavy contour. The piano accompaniment consists of a descending scale in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The first phrase is marked "Uh" and the second phrase is marked "Uh".

Section Two

Strengthening breath support

Singers often refer to 'support'. This is the use of the diaphragm to create a steady flow of air that carries ('supports') the sound. We can begin to enliven this ability, using the 'feather-in-the-roof-of-the-mouth' exercise from section one.

After a loose, lifted intake of breath, use the tummy to create the puff of air to send the imaginary feather flying upward, and at once (and without breathing in again) relax the tummy back out again. After a couple of seconds' pause, give another puff and again relax the tummy. After a further pause, exhale the remaining air in a long, steady stream after the manner of the 'soap bubbles' exercise.

It is as well to keep the little row of exhalations well separated when first practising this exercise, to be sure of perfect control and coordination between tummy and breath, as well as to be sure the jaw stays relaxed. But later it can be taken faster and one can move from 'two feathers and a bubbles' to three and then four 'feathers' before the 'bubbles'.

High notes

There is really only one rule for beginners in this area - to keep the jaw relaxed. If the throat remains passive, the airstream will be forced to be the active agent and do what is necessary to send the voice into the head, bypassing the throat as it were. (I am talking here principally of girls' voices. Men may need a quite different approach, but are not covered in this brief summary of vocal technique.)

Another way of achieving the same end is to focus not on the passivity of the jaw, but of the larynx. Place a finger lightly on the larynx and swallow; you will notice that it rises. It does this to block off the air pipe and ensure the saliva goes to the stomach, not the lungs. Thus it is clear that any rising of the larynx while singing would form an obstruction to the flow of air, and thus harm the tone.

Sing the exercise below (up through several keys) with a finger lightly on the jaw or larynx. The moment either the jaw tightens or the larynx rises, stop singing and do not attempt to go any higher. (If you cannot sing at all without the larynx rising, return to simple long notes in the lower middle register - or lower still, if necessary - until you can do so.)

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and the key of D major. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand. The exercise concludes with a high, sustained note on C5, with fingerings 5 and 7 indicated for the piano accompaniment.

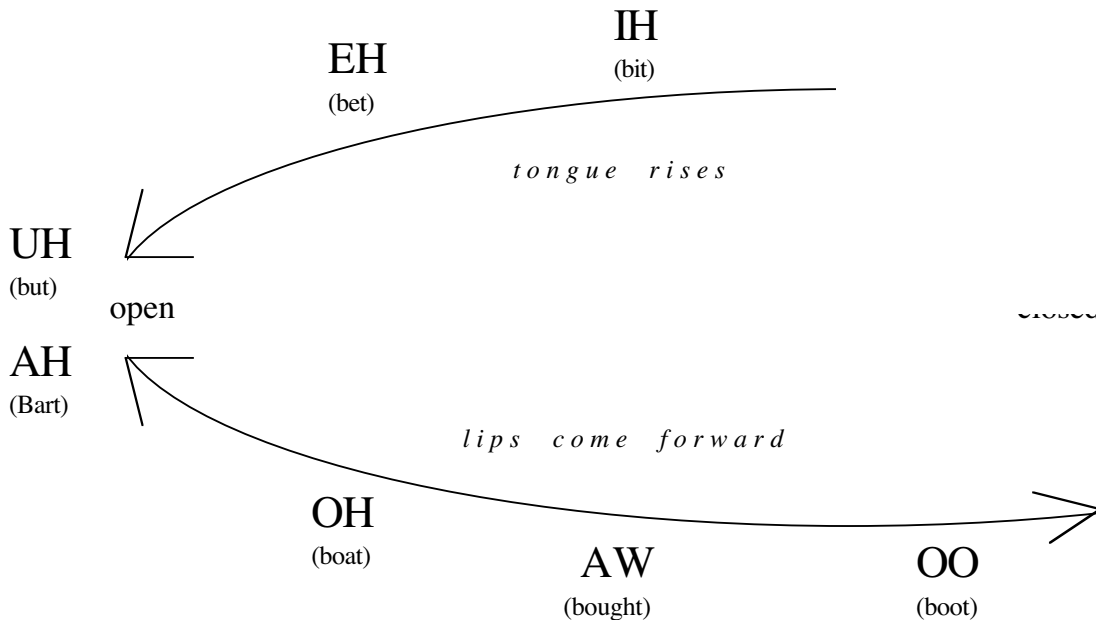
Keep a lively flow of the airstream on the high held note each time. Let the held note go soaring out. Because there is no tension, there is no need to be afraid of the high note; you can and should enjoy it.

It is perhaps worth mentioning at this stage that the flow of the airstream changes between low and high notes, much after the manner of a river, which is slow and broad down near its estuary (= low notes) but fast and narrow near its source up in the hills (= high notes).

Open vowels

As has been said, the loosest, most open vowel is 'ah'. This simple, natural sound can be modified in two ways to produce the other vowels - by raising the tongue and by bringing the lips forward. (German and French do both at once for the German 'ü' and French 'u' sound.) Both actions are inclined to close off the sound, the raising of the tongue more drastically and unpleasantly than the bringing forward of the lips. The singer's first task with vowels is to see that this does not happen. Study the diagram of the vowel spectrum below, and then sing the exercise that follows.

the vowel spectrum: open & close



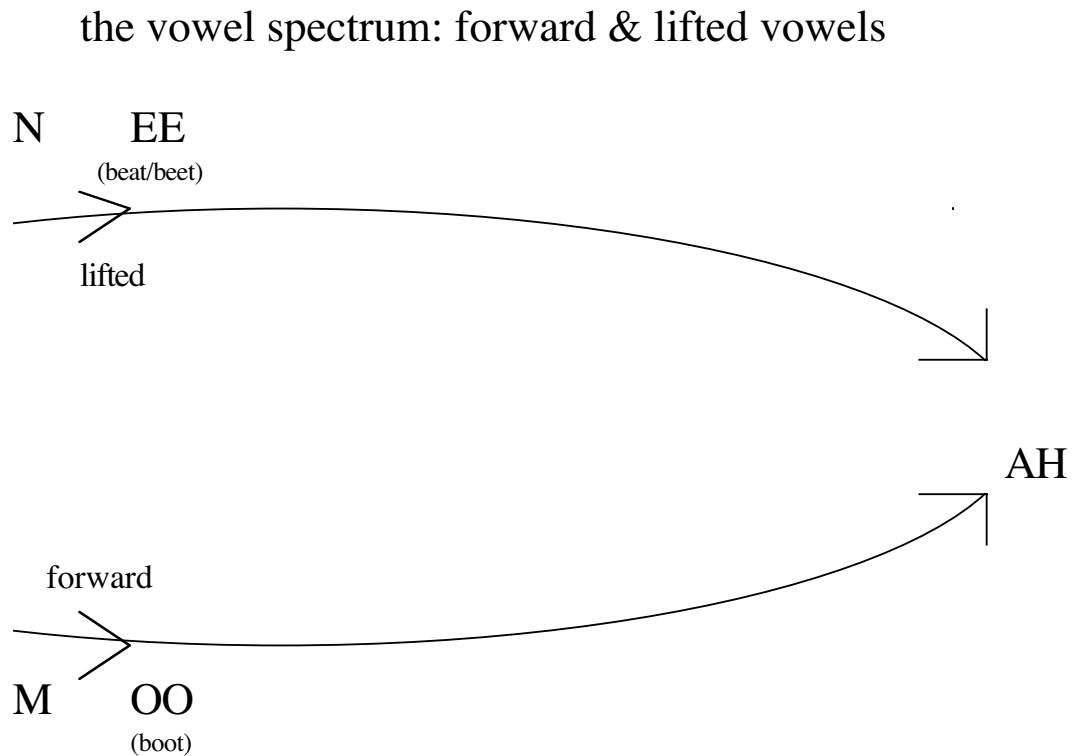
piano: voice:

ah oh ah oh ah oh,
 ah eh ah eh ah eh,
 ah ih ah ih ah ih,
 ah oh ah oh ah oh,
 ah eh ah eh ah eh,
 ah ih ah ih ah ih,

If you can keep a good open sound going from 'ah' to 'eh' and from 'ah' to 'oh', try going from 'ah' to 'ih' and from 'ah' to 'aw'. Finally, give regular practice to moving from 'ah' to 'ee' without the tongue blocking the sound (it may not feel like a real 'ee'), and from 'ah' to 'oo' bringing the lips well forward into a pout, and yet still allowing the sound to pass freely through.

Forward and lifted vowels

Take a look at this vowel-spectrum chart; it has been reversed from the one given in Book Two.



Having learnt to bring the openness of 'ah' across the whole vowel spectrum to the extremes of 'ee' and 'oo', we can now start to take the positive qualities of these last vowels ('ee' is lifted and 'oo' is forward) and bring them across the spectrum all the way to 'ah', which tends to be fallen and backward ('in the throat').

The consonants 'm' and 'n' have been added to the chart. When practising forwardness, a single 'm' placed at the start can help; when practising liftedness, an 'n' placed before each note can keep the lift renewed.

The first forward vowel exercise on the next page uses only one note, very cautiously going only one vowel away from 'oo' and immediately returning, so the singer can feel the forwardness and keep it. Then three notes downwards are used, using two vowels on each note, but still only going as far as 'aw'. Only after some time, when a real sense of forward placing has been developed is it useful to go further across the spectrum, to 'oh' and 'ah'.

The lifted vowel exercise begins by repeated flicking of the sound upwards, with the 'n' and the 'ee' vowel. Then it should be quite easy to keep this lifted feeling across 'eh' and 'ah', except that 'ah' is modified to the Italian 'a' ('uh'), with its particular lifted quality.

forward vowel exercises

1

moo aw oo, moo aw oo,
 moo oh oo, moo oh oo,
 (moo aw uh, moo aw uh,)

2

moo aw oo aw oo aw, moo aw oo aw oo aw,
 moo oh oo oh oo oh, moo oh oo oh oo oh,

lifted vowel exercise

nee nee nee, nee nee nee, nee nee nee. —
 nee neh nuh, nee neh nuh, nee neh nuh. —

nee nee nee, nee nee nee, nee nee nee. —
 nee neh nuh, nee neh nuh, nee neh nuh. —

Appendix Five:

Leadership and the
role of the conductor

The following extracts from student's essays are offered as food for thought:

Music can transform a quiet person into an impassioned leader.

[The leader] single-handedly pulls the whole project together in what always seems like a race against time, a lack of funds and a lack of resources.

[He is] someone who, though people may like or dislike them, is admired and respected by all; someone whose belief and drive inspires everybody to work as a team, to make sacrifices and to keep going when the going is difficult.

I had to do whatever was necessary in order to get the job done and I had to take the risk of appearing foolish in order to achieve this. The task to be done became the most important thing; in my head it was placed before the friendship. ...looking back now, I realise that most of these emotions and fears had been conjured up in my own head and that my friends had never had any real problem with my telling them what to do.

I found that my clarity of thought on what I wanted to achieve, rather than which bow-stroke to use to achieve this, was what became the driving force. I realised that I didn't need to tell them how to play, just to be clear in what I wanted it to sound like and to express this clearly to the players.

Obviously some people are natural born leaders; others need time and sheer hard work to attain all these qualities.

A leader must always take into consideration the social element created by a group. He should by all means support it and join in but should dutifully keep it in its place. This unique balance should mean that the leader is not only respected and looked up to but also recognised as a human being on a level similar to the group.

Leadership should not ideally be a position.

One of the prerequisites in the provision of effective leadership is the comprehension of the importance of sincere and quality followership. Good followers are reliable and dependable people and not merely blindly passive people. These are assertive, critical thinkers who will allow their talents to be utilised to their optimum but who will also refuse to be used and abused by leadership.

Every leader should have the ability to go beyond merely hearing to active listening, and beyond mere politics to straight talk.

Leadership empowers people to realise their own leadership potential. It is essential that a conductor realises this and allows the players to play as expressively as they also think necessary for the essence of the music to shine through. This combination of leadership from every musician concerned will lead to the full-blooded performances for which the music was conceived.

There are moments when anger is needed and is most effective. ...However, sometimes the conductor simply letting the players know that he is disappointed with them can be enough. The success of this depends very much on the level of respect held by the players for the conductor.

[The bad teachers] were unable to relate to their students.

[The good teachers] became passionate about their work.

[The good teachers] knew precisely when to express anger.

The ability to be uninhibited does not come naturally to everyone.

Great conductors have music in their souls, ...and are not self-conscious in its expression.

If there is one prerequisite of 'interpretation' it is surely that the music should flow and that its overall structure should remain intact.

Each situation and each person is unique and no text-book answer will be able to embrace that uniqueness - a leader has to judge each situation with a fresh eye. If there is a lack of flexibility, the whole excitement of your work and your team diminish as fresh ideas are lacking or lost.

The most important quality has to be absolute devotion to their art.

Persons responsible for directing the efforts of the other members of the group are generally designated to be leaders, although it is often true that their individual efforts are not any more important than any other individual within the group.

The basic qualities within a person that make them a potentially good leader can be enhanced by an awareness of the people who are being led.

The individuality of each player in an ensemble can become submerged in the combined expression of music. While this is generally attributed to the expression of the conductor, I feel that it is a greater expression by all the members of the ensemble which at face value is the interpretation of the conductor alone, but also contains all the musical and emotional input of every member of the ensemble.

Many leaders find it difficult to maintain boundaries while in a leadership role to the extent that, when a show of authority is needed, they are incapable of expressing themselves in a manner which will be taken seriously. There is no answer to this problem that can be taught to an individual and all leaders must eventually tackle the problem for themselves.

A leader needs to love to practise, enjoy learning new techniques and improving existing ones.

The conductor's primary musical instrument is his/her own mind.

If you are secure in what you are doing, you automatically stand in a leadership position.

With age comes the ability to become an authoritative figure.

A conductor or leader must be able to keep his personal life separate from his working life.

Being willing to risk a friendship to get a professional and excellent job done will also show you another lesson - who your real friends are.

The following are passages concerning famous conductors, composers and conducting in general:

"Liszt at the head of an orchestra is the continuation of Liszt at the piano" - Lina Ramann

"Music is a succession of tones which cleave to one another ...and they are not to be joined by thrashing out the beats" - Franz Liszt

"[Liszt] did not use his baton, but led simply with his hands, making gentle, wave-like motions with his right, while his left remained motionless at his side most of the time. Yet he was in sympathetic rapport with the ...chorus and orchestra; his kindly demeanour inspired them with confidence and understanding, while his personal magnetism seemed hypnotic in its influence, enabling him to guide them with his mind rather than his arms. At times, confident that his intentions were understood, the right hand, too, would cease moving for a time. Of disciplinary time-beating there was none. What a grand figure ...when, at a climax, he spread his arms like an eagle does its wings. Quietly it was done, but the musicians soared..." - Carl Lachmund

"Wagner with the baton in his hand only needs to say two words, "Now boys..." and every player pushes his chair nearer to the music stand and a volume of sound, as if from the one instrument, is produced."

Wagner commented that the first job of the conductor is to set the right tempo. Klemperer's outstanding memory of Mahler's conducting was how the tempo always seemed to carry a quality of inevitability and rightness about it.

"Richter's beat is unmistakable; but his power is not there, it is in his eyes..."

"It was [Elgar's] eyes perhaps that gave the clue to his real personality; they sparkled with humour or became grave or gay, bright or misty as each mood in the music revealed itself. His hands, too, gave another clue; they were never still but always eloquent, always saying something and giving an inkling of the extreme sensitiveness of his mind and character. He obtained all he wanted from his executants by his hands, his eyes, his whole facial expression which lit up in an amazing manner when he got the response he desired and when his music throbbed and seethed as he intended that it should. The orchestra, it is almost needless to say, adored him." - Billy Reed

"All conductors must have a big Ego. But sometimes some of them seem to love the music so much and become so completely absorbed in the work they are creating that they lose their Ego while conducting. And that's a bonus for us - that uplift we get when we feel that all of us are One with the music. This is what we are looking for." - Kenneth Goode (double bass player, London Philharmonic Orchestra)

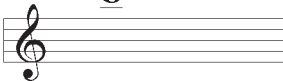
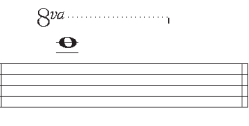
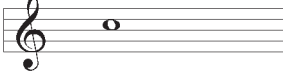
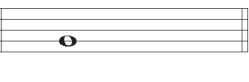

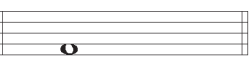

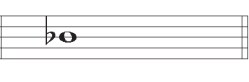

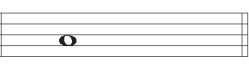

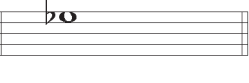
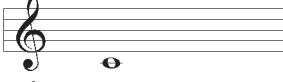
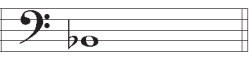
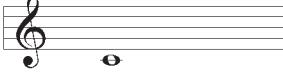
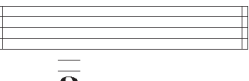

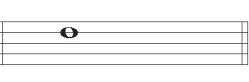
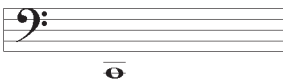
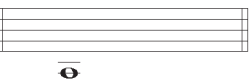
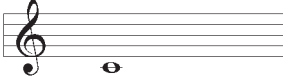
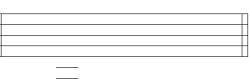

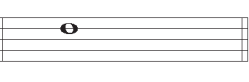
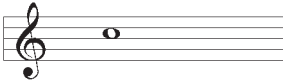
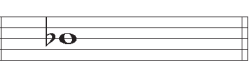
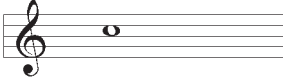
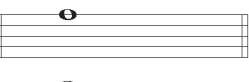
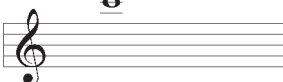
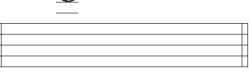

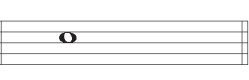
"Too much control and you lose intensity; too little control and you become rhapsodic and abandoned." - Sir George Solti

"In our profession, someone can be very brilliant and acquire total technical mastery. Yet in the last resort, the only thing that really counts is his quality as a human being. For music is created by man for man..." - Herbert von Karajan

Appendix Six:

Transposing Instruments

Transposing Instruments

| | written | sounding |
|---|--|---|
| Piccolo - sounds an octave higher: |  |  |
| Alto Flute - in G, sounds a 4th lower: |  |  |
| Cor Anglais - in F, sounds a 5th lower: |  |  |
| Clarinet in B flat - sounds a tone lower: |  |  |
| Clarinet in A - sounds a minor 3rd lower: |  |  |
| Clarinet in E flat - sounds a minor 3rd higher: |  |  |
| Bass Clarinet - in B flat, sounds a 9th lower: |  |  |
| Bassett Horn - in F, sounds a 5th lower in treble clef: |  |  |
| but a 4th higher in bass clef: |  |  |
| (Saxophone - always sounds lower than written.) | | |
| Contrabassoon - sound an octave lower: |  |  |
| (Exceptions: Iberia (Debussy) & Parsifal (Wagner), sound as written.) | | |
| Horn - sounds lower when written in treble clef, higher when in bass clef; * | | |
| e.g. horn in F: |  |  |
| *During the 20th century this practice changed, such that horn parts in the bass clef can sound a fifth lower. |  |  |
| (Note: Horn in C in classical music sounds an octave lower. Modern horn parts, if written in C, are actual sounds.) | | |
| Trumpet in B flat - sounds a tone lower: |  |  |
| Trumpet in F - sounds a 4th higher (even though a large instrument): |  |  |
| Trumpet in D - sounds a tone higher (a small instrument, used for high music): |  |  |
| Trumpet in C - sounds as written: |  |  |

Tuba - though the instruments are pitched in various keys (F, E flat etc.) the parts are always written at pitch.

Wagner Tuba - as the horn, sounding lower when written in the treble clef, higher when in the bass.