

Introduction to Conducting

“Ready, Begin”

Introduction: The well-rounded musician should be familiar with and be able to demonstrate the basics of traditional conducting technique. Directors should be able to clearly indicate tempo, volume levels, phrasing, accents, etc. by their gestures. Performers who understand conducting patterns will be able to better understand and follow the gestures of a competent music director.

Notes:

1. Purposes of conducting
 - a. Provide musical direction and leadership
 - b. Unify the musical presentation
 - c. Interpret inherent musical expression
 - d. Ensure musical variety and vitality
 - e. Encourage musical excellence
2. Posture and stance – stand like a singer; lead the group in standing well
3. Conduct the pulse or “**takt**” with the right hand, even if you are left-handed
 - a. Palm downward
 - b. Fingers curved and relaxed
 - c. Flexible wrist
 - d. Connect thumb and index finger to create a focal point
4. Basics of the conducting pattern
 - a. **Preparatory beat** – direct one beat before the performers begin; communicates the tempo, dynamic level and style of the music, and causes the performers to breathe together
 - b. **Downbeat** – the first beat of each measure, indicated by a vertical, downward motion directly in front of the director
 - c. **Ictus** – precise instant of the rhythmic pulse or beat-point; indicated by a bounce or flick of the wrist
 - d. **Rebound** – the upward bounce following the ictus; should never be more than half the height of a downbeat (unless directing in 1)
 - e. **Cut-off** – a looping or pinching motion made at the end of a section or piece to indicate the precise moment performers are to cut off the sound



Leadership

Beautiful, unified music only comes through excellent organization, management and leadership. Study the following Bible passages carefully to see the incredible organization of the temple music program.

(2 Chronicles 5:13) It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD.

(1 Chronicles 25:6) All these *were* under the hands of their father for song *in* the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman.

“Everything rises and falls on leadership.”

Dr. Lee Roberson

