



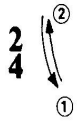
BASIC CONDUCTING¹

To respond effectively in a large performing ensemble (group), musicians must learn how to “read” the conductor’s baton. In order to do so, the musician must have an understanding of beat patterns and styles and the conducting gestures for preparatory beats (beats that tell the musician it is time to play), cut offs and dynamics. This unit, therefore, is designed to introduce you to the craft of conducting and to help you develop basic conducting skill.

BEAT PATTERNS AND STYLES

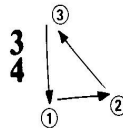
Dead Gesture (non-stylistic): The dead gesture is characterized by a neutral and continuous, straight-line motion with no tension in the forearm, hand or fingers. The size of the pattern is usually small. The dead gesture is used to show the passing of rests.

TWO (beats per measure)



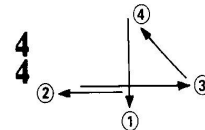
Same for $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{2}{8}$ and $\frac{2}{2}$.

THREE (beats per measure)



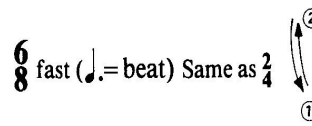
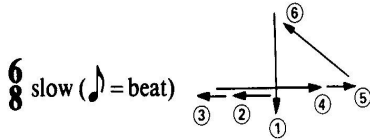
Same for $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{2}$.

FOUR (beats per measure)

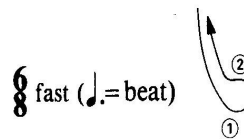
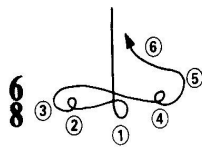
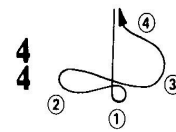
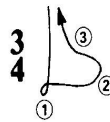
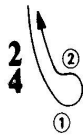


Same for C , $\frac{4}{8}$ and $\frac{4}{2}$.

SIX (beats per measure)



Legato Style: The legato beat style is characterized by a smooth, continuous curved-line motion. The size of the pattern may vary depending on the emotional intensity of the music. This style is used to conduct expressive music such as a chorale.



¹ Garofalo, Robert. Rehearsal Handbook for Band and Orchestra Students. Meredith Music Publications, 1983.



BASIC CONDUCTING² CONTINUED

Staccato style: This beat style is characterized by a “flicking” action of the ictus (point) of each beat. The “flick” is produced by the wrist which must be kept loose and relaxed. The size of the beat is small when the music is light and fast.

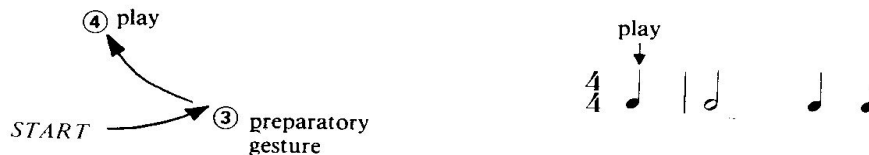
Marcato style: The marcato (marked style) beat is characterized by a forceful forearm motion with a stop on each count. The size of the beat is determined by the dynamics of the music. The marcato style is frequently used to conduct marches.

CONDUCTING GESTURES

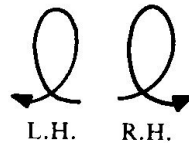
Preparatory Beats: The preparatory gesture shows three things: tempo; dynamics; and style of the music. When the music begins on beat one of a measure, give beat four as the preparation to play. In order to give beat four, you must position the hands on beat three, then give the preparatory gesture and the downbeat.



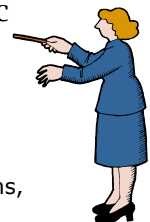
When the music begins with a pick up note, position your right hand at the center of your body and give beat three as the preparation, followed by the beat four motion for the pick up.



Cut Offs: Cut offs are usually executed in the same tempo, dynamics and style as the music. To achieve a cut off, move the hands in a circular motion as diagrammed below.



Dynamics: To achieve a crescendo while conducting, move your hands away from your body, make a larger beat pattern and/or use your left hand with the palm up. For a decrescendo, reverse these motions. In general, loud dynamic levels are conducted with larger beat patterns, and soft dynamic levels with small beat patterns.



² Garofalo, Robert. Rehearsal Handbook for Band and Orchestra Students. Meredith Music Publications, 1983.