

# ***ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF A DRUM MAJOR***

Conducting AND Leadership skills are both necessary to be a successful Drum Major. Strengths in all of the following areas will help you to make a bigger impact on the improvement of yourself and your band.

## **CONDUCTING ABILITY**

The Basics

Clarity and Effectiveness

Interpretation Skills

Metronome Markings and Rhythmic Stability

Inspiration and Presentation

## **LEADERSHIP ABILITY**

General Leadership Traits/Potential

Enthusiasm

Being a Role Model

Gaining and Giving Respect

Rehearsal Management Skills

Your Role as a Disciplinarian

And.....much, much more!

# CONDUCTING ABILITY

## 1. The Basics

- Stance, posture
- Plane
- Arm & Hand Position
- Patterns: 2, 3, 4, 5
- Cues
- Cut-offs
- Dynamics
- Preparatory Beat
- Division of the Beat
- Tempo Changes
- Meter Changes
- Complex Meter

## 2. Effectiveness

- Clarity (rebound/ictus ratio)
- Eye Contact
- Presence
- Use of Left Hand
- Use of Body & Stance
- Effectiveness Obstacles

## 3. Interpretation

- Styles: Legato, Staccato, Marcato, Light/Bounce
- Facial and Non-verbal expression
- Score Study
- Director Advisement
- Contrast
- Proven Practices: cresc., decresc., step out, triplets, chop-chop, swan, accented half notes, side cut-offs, snatch, circle cut-offs, whip, marching & conducting, "around the world," "the Henderson," falls, "the Moatès."

## 4. Metronome Markings and Rhythmic Stability

- 60, 72, 80, 96, 104, 120, 132, 144, 152, 160, 172
- Use familiar "tune" to associate with tempo and use that "tune" to derive a tempo marking
- Practice with a metronome and work to develop STONG internal beat

## 5. Inspiration and Presentation

- As a conductor you are the visual **INSPIRATION** of the music to be played by the performers, and the visual **REPRESENTATION** of the music being heard by the listener
- Audience acknowledgement
- Salutes: H-O-L-D-I-T down
- Presenting the band after performance
- Business **BEFORE** pleasure as a conductor

# BASIC CONDUCTING TECHNIQUES

## DYNAMICS

1. Pattern Size/Placement
  - Loud = Larger/Higher\*
  - Quiet = Smaller/Lower\*

\*higher/lower placement of plane is not an absolute in dynamic relationship
2. Crescendo/Decrescendo
  - Left Hand Steady
  - Even Movements Up/Down
  - Hand Open, Palm Up

## CUES

1. LOOK - make eye contact with recipient of cue several counts prior to execution
2. PREPARE - lift and prepare for execution of cue
3. DELIVER - deliver cue in downward motion onto the plane extended from standard conducting space

## CUT-OFFS

- All cut-offs have a circle motion and a close. The second to the last beat is always the circle, and the last beat is the close. All other beats are conducted in a beat pattern.

## SUBDIVIDED CONDUCTING

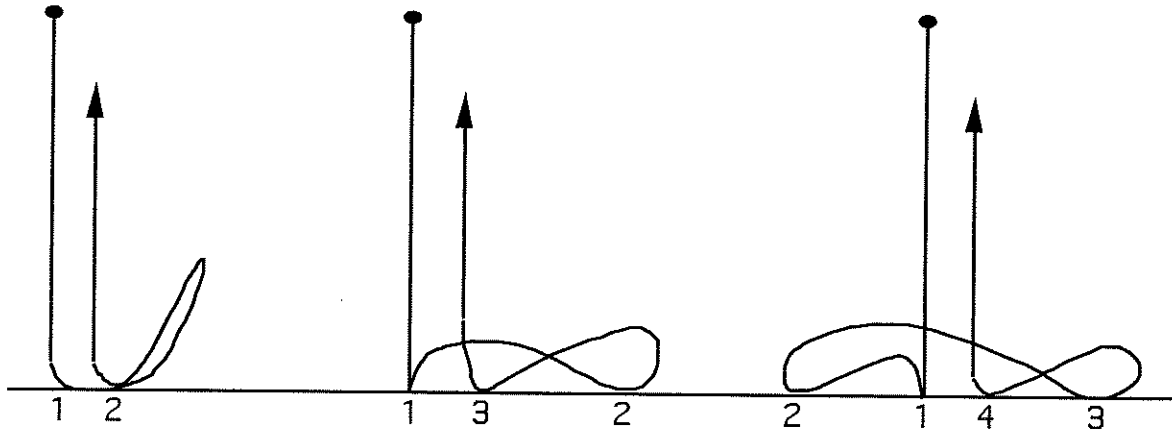
- **Use with extreme moderation.** Pay attention to the style and keep in mind WHY we subdivide! It is not an expressive technique, it is a technical skill to dictate the division of the beat. Especially useful in a heavily articulated ritardando/allargando with eighth notes present throughout.

In TWO:            1        +        2        +  
                         down   out   down   up

In THREE:            1        +        2        +        3        +  
                         down   up   down   out   down   up

In FOUR:            1        +        2        +        3        +        4        +  
                         down   up   down   in   down   out   down   up

# PATTERNS



## Vocabulary

1. Preparatory Beat - The beat preceding the written/sounding beginning of a piece of music; conducted with emphasis as a cue for the ensemble to begin; also indicates tempo, volume, and style.
2. Down Beat - The primary or first beat in any beat pattern; placed in (Thesis) the center bottom of the plane. The strongest part of a measure.
3. Ictus - The exact point at which the conducting motion stops or emphasizes, usually in contact with the bottom of the plane, and changes direction or course, indicating the pulse.
4. Arsis - The upbeat, or unaccented part of a measure.
5. Division - The separation of each beat into two; the first half conducted as an ictus, the second as an arsis.

## GENERAL LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

Maturity  
Dedication  
Ability to admit own mistakes  
Respect for others  
Humble/Does not get a "big head"  
Competence  
Ability to gain respect  
Fair and honest

Responsibility  
Positive role model  
Good attitude  
Persuasive  
Confident  
Positive reinforcement  
Decision maker  
Enthusiastic

## SHOWING ENTHUSIASM AND BEING A ROLE MODEL

1. Good marching
2. Good musician
3. Good time management
4. Follow directions quickly
5. Do individual warm-up
6. Strive for accuracy and encourage others to do the same
7. Have pride in your ensemble
8. Be attentive during rehearsal
9. Approach all rehearsals with energy towards getting something done
10. Be on time! (For you that means EARLY!)

## WAYS TO GAIN RESPECT

*Respect others*  
Be Competent/Do your job  
Lead by example  
Be excited about what you are doing

Be Responsible  
Be Consistent  
Be a follower sometimes  
Respect other leaders

Lead from within the band and not from above the band  
You are still a student that has to go to class with these individuals

\* Notice that many of these characteristics overlap. To gain respect you must first hold the traits of a good leader. At the same time, you must have respect from your peers to be an effective leader.



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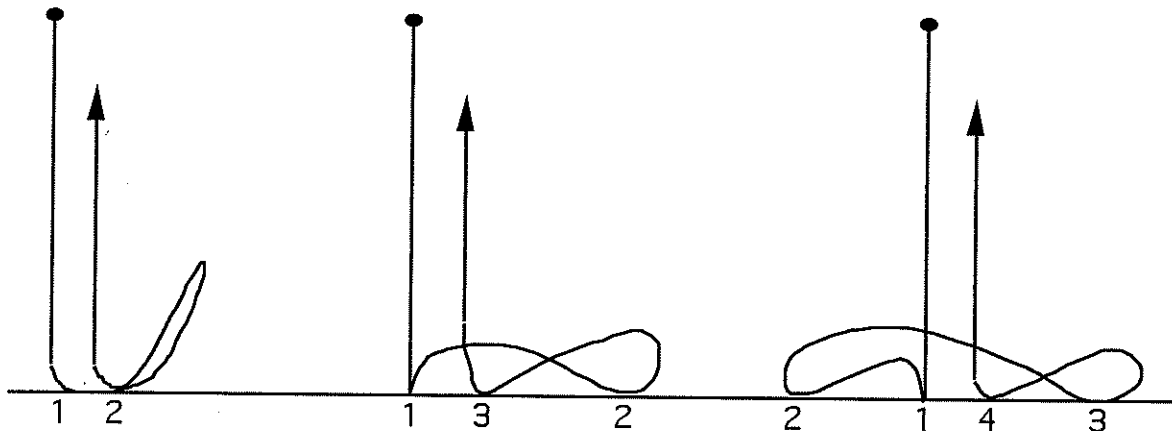
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