

## I. Complete Conductor

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- A. Conductor is a metaphor for:
  - 1. Music
  - 2. Tone
  - 3. Technique
  - 4. Breath
  - 5. Posture
- B. Pedagogue, historian, leader, supporter
  - 1. Love, spirit, inspiration, leadership
  - 2. Mind→body→spirit Δ
    - i. Research and understand music and technique
    - ii. Explore and implement technique for success
    - iii. Commit to music, ensemble, and leadership to be true
- C. Balance between what the singer needs, what the ensemble needs, and what is the overall vision of the music

## II. Spirare

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- A. Circle process
  - 1. Inspire, expire, spirit, respiration
    - i. Invitation to sing
      - a. Spirit
      - b. Imagination
      - c. Breath
      - d. Space
    - ii. Gesture and face should support all of these elements
      - a. Gesture is tied to experience. Experiences are tied to emotion
      - b. Hands should: create onset, shape breath, and invite tone
      - c. Let your gesture be subservient to the inner sensation of breath
  - 2. Inhalation-Suspension-Onset-Exhalation, then inhalation as prep and repeat of process
    - i. Conductor's work is to create something that is not there
      - a. Create energy, invite tone, and inspire spirit
    - ii. Everything is either an onset or a breath

## III. Breath: Inhalation, Suspension

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- A. Gesture can reflect any point of the process
  - 1. Gesture is metaphor
    - a. What the singer needs to do to be successful
    - b. What the body is doing to produce a successful tone
    - c. What the special elements of the music are at that moment
    - d. What the effect and spirit of the music are at that moment
  - 2. Inhalation
    - a. Gesture reflects appoggio
      - i. Exploration of the individual sensation of appoggio for each singer
        1. Feeling of out, down, expanded, tucked, lifted in
          - a. How can gesture reflect the variety of sensations?
            - i. What is your personal sensation?
            - ii. Is there a general sensation based on voice part? Can you help a specific section due to the tessitura?
  - b. Panting exercises

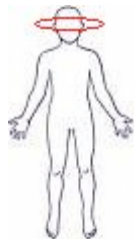
- i. Sensation of large amounts of breath
      - 1. Keeps back of throat open and relaxed
      - 2. Awareness of abdominal muscles
      - 3. Basic level of awareness to build foundational concepts and technique
- 3. Suspension
  - a. Gesture reflects the preparation of breath
    - i. Singers tend to hold (tension) or release too much air at this point
      - 1. Less airflow, more air pressure
      - 2. Gesture should counter-balance the ensemble's particular issue
        - a. Let gesture show the equal and opposite sensation of what the body is doing
          - i. Gesture reflects breath/onset
          - ii. Preparatory gesture should develop as equal and opposite motion to prepare
            - 1. Higher→lower
            - 2. Set→expanded
            - 3. Tucked in→pushing out
        - b. Ensemble may hold at one point of the piece and over-release at the other
          - 1. Exercises and variety of gesture that will support the correction of those issues
- 4. Shaping the breath
  - a. Anticipate the phrase shapes within the music
  - b. Dynamics
  - c. Pitch level and tessitura
  - d. Resonating vowel
    - i. What breath is needed to be successful?
      - 1. Placement of breath within the mouth
      - 2. Forward momentum of breath
        - a. "Show me your molars"
          - i. Use of common and daily process to help with placement
            - 1. Sniffing a flower
            - 2. Yawning inside
            - 3. Swallowing a whole egg

#### IV. Three area of focus with gesture

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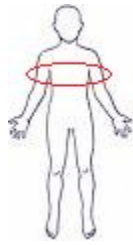
##### A. Kinosphere

- 1. Head ring
  - i. Use to draw attention to sound and placement
  - ii. Example 1



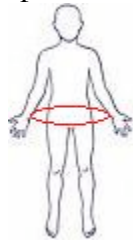
## 2. Heart ring

- i. Use to draw attention to motion and emotion
- ii. Example 2



## 3. Breath ring

- i. Breath focus
- ii. Example 3



## B. Curvilinear gesture

1. Guiding of energy of ensemble and music
  - i. Example: a crescendo is just the release of the inner energy
  - ii. Ebb and flow of notes and phrases needs to occur within the gesture
2. Shape and sculpt, don't lead, to create true shape
  - i. Don't stress actual event
  - ii. The music is in between the beats
3. Show energy, but don't push the ensemble.
  - i. Energy → suspense → guidance
    - a. Pushing air can add tension that affects pitch
  - ii.  $MC \pm MM = MG$ 
    - a. Momentum of choir  $\pm$  Momentum of music = Momentum of gesture
  - iii. "If you say what you mean and mean what you say with your gesture, you do not need to overconduct"
    - a. One-to-one correlation between gesture and sound
      1. Make gesture meaningful and informative
        - i. Don't throw away beats
          - a. Each beat has importance, whether it's to sustain or to prepare for the next event. "Once you play that card, you can't use it again"
            1. Choose the path of gestures that you want to use throughout the piece
        - b. If they don't do it, then they aren't understanding the gesture
          1. Emphasize focus on gesture again, but then may need to step out and do a "teaching moment" to connect gesture to pedagogy

## C. Active and passive beats

1. Active beat
  - i. Infused with energy

2. Passive beat
  - i. No energy
    - a. Stopping, slowing, and/or getting smaller with gesture
3. All three elements of beat can be active or passive
  - i. Prep, ictus, rebound
    - a. Focus on ictus being point of departure, not point of arrival
      1. Ictuses are just point of measurement
      2. Look at which beats are departure beats and which are arrivals
        - i. Emphasize the motion away from the ictus
      3. What part of the beat needs energy (motivation) and which just needs guidance?
        - i. “Lift, arrive, lift, lift, arrive...”
    - ii. Size and speed affect activeness or passiveness of beat
    - iii. Acceleration from passive to active will add energy
    - iv. Every beat has some relative amount of activity and passivity

## V. Circles

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- A. Most primitive form of conducting
  1. Allows gesture to grow from personal sensation and inner rhythmic feeling
  2. Natural sensations lead to genuine and supportive conducting gestures
    - i. Laban’s theory of natural planes of motion
- B. Size
  1. What affects size?
    - i. Dynamic motion
    - ii. Rhythmic momentum
      - a. Changing size automatically changes speed
- C. Speed
  1. Momentum
    - i. Encouragement of breath
- D. Direction
  1. Horizontal
  2. Sagittal
  3. In and out
    - i. Moving sound vs. moving breath
- E. Weight
  1. Emphasis
  2. Expression
  3. Resistance
    - i. Tension, resistance, heaviness, dynamic intensity
- F. Gesture should be a morphing of circular patterns and traditional patterns
- G. What are the factors that influence your decision?
  1. Momentum of line
  2. Dynamic
  3. Breath
  4. Rhythmic momentum
    - i. Focus of stress and release of underlying subdivision
    - ii. Give rhythm a physical sensation
      - a. Breath sensation internally with pulse
      - b. Tap tongue on the ridge behind your teeth (subdivision)
- H. Connection of gesture to emotional sensation and physical sensation
  1. Adjust elements of gesture based on what you hear

- i. Show what you want to hear from the ensemble plus what you've heard from the ensemble
      - a. Encouragement
      - b. Help with challenging areas if needed
- 2. Envision perfect performance and show it with gesture, face
  - i. Intent
    - a. Decide what you want and come to them with it
  - ii. Show ensemble what is going to happen next, not what is happening at that moment.
  - iii. If you are not feeling "it" or how you feel it should be feeling/sounding, your gesture is not "organic." Go back to circles and natural movement to the music and then build your gesture out of those movements
    - a. Inner feeling comes out, but doesn't need to be big. Draw the ensemble into you. A bigger gesture can be wasted or ignored by the ensemble, but a small, intimate gesture invites them to watch and share
  - iv. Set the breath, articulation, and intent in motion and then let the choir take control and just guide
    - a. Imposition of will

## **VI. Melody, Rhythm, or Text**

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- A. What should be the main focus?
  - 1. May change throughout the piece
    - i. What the ensemble needs
    - ii. What the music is saying
      - a. Analyze work to choose which is most important at each particular point of the piece

## **VII. Foundations of Gesture**

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- A. Right hand
  - 1. Musical information
    - i. Phrase
    - ii. Rhythm
    - iii. Dynamics
    - iv. Articulation
      - a. Motivated by rhythmic energy
- B. Left hand
  - 1. Pedagogy
    - i. Breath
    - ii. Placement
    - iii. Articulation
      - a. Motivated by breath energy
  - 2. Since it is a metaphor for air, don't allow it to have too much motion or flabbiness
    - i. Make sure it has purpose and then goes back to default
- C. Foundational gesture
  - 1. Everything within the context of an outline of what is needed musically and pedagogically
    - i. Good for ensemble to have grounded feeling at all times
    - ii. Bad for variety
- D. Contrasting gesture
  - 1. Movement of gesture to areas to help pedagogically
    - i. Foundation of breath may not always be present BUT variety may help numerous singers in different ways
- E. Demo gesture vs. conducting gesture

1. Demo gesture
  - i. What does the choir need to see as a metaphor?
2. Conducting gesture
  - i. Show what you need as a singer and develop gesture that supports those needs
- F. Motivate to what you want, then allow yourself to go back to “default”
  1. Empowers singers
  2. Allows ensemble to have higher level of default
    - i. Just need to respond to what you hear then
    - ii. “Ride the wave”
      - a. Encourage them (paddle) then ride along with them (surf) then paddle/surf throughout

## **VIII. Elements of Gesture**

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- A. Vocal performance
  1. Experience of breath energy
  2. Resonance of vocal tract
  3. Wisdom of style
  4. Musical elements of score
  5. Inspiration
- B. Illuminate the darkness
- C. Dissect the indivisible
- D. Describe the indefinable
- E. Visible to invisible
  1. Experience shown visibly with gesture
- F. Express the inexpressible
- G. Metaphor for greater things
- H. Symbol of what is, but not
- I. Create again, recreate, re-create
- J. Inspire
  1. Breathe in
  2. Take in spirit

## **IX. Anticipation of Problems**

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- A. Long phrases
  1. Motivation
  2. Motion of breath
  3. Maintaining appoggio
- B. Tempo changes
  1. Loss of momentum
- C. Vowel placement
- D. Relationship of voices to accompaniment
- E. Use this technique especially when sight-reading to help guide the ensemble
- F. Listen to the group...is it what you want?
  1. Tone quality
  2. Articulation
  3. Dynamics
  4. Energy and movement
  5. Stop and fix
    - i. DON'T change your vision – know what you want!

## **Works Consulted**

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Boers, Geoffrey. Taken from lectures from the University of Washington, September 2004-June 2007.  
Manuscript.