

follow the markings unremittingly or do they interpret sensibly and freely?

Remember that you are responsible for the emotional content of the whole performance. It is a big responsibility and the reward for accepting it is the incredible thrill that one feels when it really works. The audience and players will all feel it, and become a part of the experience which is music. The absence of this magic renders the music lifeless, even if it is technically excellent.

Bands should expect their conductors to guide them to an

enlightened performance, and allow him to take their music making to ever higher levels. Only the ones who really can do it should be standing in front of them. Finally: why are conductor's hearts so valuable for transplants? They've had so little use.

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PENULTIMATE BEAT PLACING

Beating is an entirely personal matter; heaven forbid that we should all look like clones of each other, or even of the great conductors, but here are a few guiding principles to help us control and develop our expressive beating patterns.

Because of the limitations in flexibility in the beat to the right (for right handed conductors) to show the penultimate beat of the bar, make sure that the previous beat is more to the left, and if necessary, allow the shoulders and trunk of the body to follow through to give the space you need, rather like a golfer or squash-player.

CENTRE YOUR LAST BEAT

It is particularly important to centre the last beat in the bar. Do not think of it so much as an upbeat, because it is here that so often rubato occurs, it is here that you set a new slow or fast tempo. The speed of the preparation from the ictus of the last beat in the bar to the ictus of the next first beat, gives the new pulse and type of beat. If the ictus of the beat is in the air, you are then off-balance, and tend to fall into the next beat, often too early.

PASSIVE BEAT

Use this inactive beat when you need to do nothing more than indicate the beginning of a bar, or a beat with no musical result. Normally you should indicate every beat, especially for those who are not playing in the passage. The passive beat does not have a preparation nor rebound.

BEATING PATTERNS

- 1 Control the rebound. It should never be more than half the amplitude of the original beat except in 1 in a bar.
- 2 Use horizontal planes rather than vertical. It is difficult for players on your right and left to differentiate otherwise.
- 3 In general, in moderate dynamics, keep the ictus within the plane of your stomach - keep the ictus low. Draw the players to you, so that you can always extend when you need. Do not over-conduct.

6 POINTS TO REMEMBER

- 1 The players on either side of you have a very different view of the beat from those in front. Duple time can be particularly confusing.
- 2 We should always anticipate the next event in music.
- 3 We should guide and lead the players.
- 4 We should always try to indicate phrasing with the beat.
- 5 We should have a clear idea of where the music is travelling, melodically or harmonically, and what the structure is.
- 6 We should try to convey in the beat the sort of sound we expect.

SUBDIVIDING

In slow music, or with small note values, semiquavers or demisemiquavers (when will we call them 16th's and 32nd's?) we may need to show a subdivision of the beat. Just put a smaller beat after the rebound, perhaps using fingers and wrist, rather than wrist and arm. Normally I recommend going in the same direction to avoid confusion with other main beats.

TIPS FROM THE ROSTRUM

Timothy Reynish

10 WAYS TOWARDS SCORE PREPARATION

Purchase the Guide to Score Study for the Wind Band Conduc-

tor by Frank Battisti & Robert Garafalo, Meredith Music Publications, available from Just Music

- 1 Mark in changes of pulse & decide on beating patterns - (I use red pencil)
- 2 Analyse the phrase structure and put the length at the beginning of each phrase (in 4B). (I do not recommend marking heavy bars to split up the phrases)
- 3 Mark important lines, the Hauptstimme, and key leads (in red)
- 4 Mark important subsidiary lines & counter-melodies
- 5 Mark general dynamic levels and speed changes (in blue)
- 6 Analyse the key structure and pencil in main changes if necessary
- 7 Decide on a structure of dynamic levels; change dynamics according to the pitch or intensity of weaker instruments, of heavy accompaniment, to achieve better balance
- 8 Remind yourself of changes of tempo and rubato
- 9 Use a metronome to check on ideal speed, but then be flexible to needs of the ensemble, your solo musicians and the hall
- 10 Anticipate problems of ensemble, intonation, balance, and think of ways to avoid them

DYNAMIC LEVELS

In the wind orchestra we do not have to work hard at making a lot of noise; the noise level in most halls leads to a lack of clarity; and we must remember that the excitement of performance comes from clarity of textures, dynamic contrasts and a thoroughly prepared understanding of the architecture and of phrasing.

We must work hard at

- 1 Controlling lower levels
- 2 Anticipating dynamic events

In general:

forte is generally best thought of as a light dynamic

crescendo must start quietly

diminuendo must start loudly

subito piano is more effective if preceded by crescendo

subito forte is more effective if preceded by diminuendo

the first fortissimo is the smallest, the last is the biggest

Build an architecture of dynamic levels in your phrasing and in your whole concept of the piece.

Clarify textures by asking your musicians to play long notes less loud, to play repeated notes and ostinati less loud, to lighten all of the accompaniment, to concentrate on lightness rather than heaviness.

Accents - insist on your musicians releasing the note immediately, using the tongue and diaphragm to get a good attack, then sustaining in a meno dynamic. This will help to clarify the texture while giving the effect.

● *In the next edition we will look at score preparation in practical terms, using a Grade 3 piece by Guy Woolfenden.*