

Conducting and Phrasing the Musical Line

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I. *Listen to Silence!*

A. Listening, Imagination and Expression

1. Connect with your inner child
What is the “drama” of the work?
Where is its Heart?
Sing! Dance! Play!”
2. Channel your inner Spielberg
Create musical Characters
Conversation and dialogues
Exaggerate the imagery - like reading to a child
Find the story – use imaginative imagery
Think like an artist
Use emotional descriptors for sounds
3. Summon your musicianship
Harmonic Rhythm
Tempo relationships and architecture
Textures
Rhythmic Phrasing
Note Groupings
Anticrasis/crasis – To, From and At

Q: Conducting is the art of translating physical gesture into sound. Is there something in female gesture as opposed to male gesture, because of the difference in the physicality, that translates into different responses from an orchestra?

A: Everything we do is about gesture and the way humanity interprets gestures. The same gesture from a woman and a man is completely different. I talk to conductors a lot about trying to neutralize or de-genderize their gestures so that there are no stereotypical associations. As a woman conductor if you extend your little finger on your baton hand it looks like you're having tea – unconsciously people will find it lightweight. If a man does it it's usually interpreted as a gesture of sensitivity. You really have to really go through your physical vocabulary and analyze it from many different levels. – Marin Alsop

II. *Movement and Artistry*

A. Whole body conducting – combine mental sound concept with physical expression

B. How does sound look? How does it feel? How is it interpreted? What does that do to body?

1. **GO LONG! - ELIMINATE BEATS**

Think weights of sound

Planes - where does sound live?

Lessen angles

Think sound shapes

EXERCISE: Expand and contract

EXERCISE: Meld on different beats/note shapes

2. **LESS IS MORE**

Conduct smaller : use fingertips

EXERCISE – “Technique” box

EXERCISE – Box with weights/styles/tempi

EXERCISE – Finger pressure

3. **RELAX**

EXERCISE: Zero gravity – no angles

EXERCISE: Put the pattern in your big toe – put all expression there – focus it. How to do thru gesture?

EXERCISE: Yoga breath

OTHER RESOURCES

<i>Sound in Motion</i>	David McGill
<i>Note Grouping</i>	James Thurmond
<i>The Conductor as Leader</i>	Ramona Wis
<i>The Musicians Soul</i>	James Jordan
<i>The Score, the Orchestra, and the Conductor</i>	Gustav Meier
<i>The Compleat Conductor</i>	Gunther Schuller
<i>The Modern Conductor (7th ed)</i>	Elizabeth Green
<i>My Lessons with Kumi</i>	Michael Colgrass
<i>A Soprano on Her Head</i>	Eloise Rilstad
<i>Conducting with Feeling</i>	Frederick Harris Jr.
<i>The Art of Possibility</i>	Benjamin Zander

VIDEOS

TedTalk	Carl St. Clair “Innovation Whispers”
TedTalk	Benjamin Zander
YouTube	Traces to Nowhere – Carlos Kleiber
YouTube	Conductors in Rehearsal



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CLINICIAN:

Dr. Sarah McKoin

Texas Bandmasters Association 2014 Convention/Clinic



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