

## Preface

This textbook is designed to provide undergraduate students with an engaging immersion in the art of conducting that lays the foundation for compelling musical leadership. The methodology is not confined to considerations of ensemble genre, performance level, or the needs of any specific repertoire. Rather, it underscores the essential requirement for a conductor to lead by simultaneously engaging four key principles: the prepared mind, the trained body, the ability to create a non-verbal dialogue with the ensemble, and the ability to self-analyze while also analyzing the ensemble. The value of these principles has been proven throughout the history of the field as well as the personal experience of the authors of this text.

The conductor's primary responsibility is to create a rehearsal process and performance product that takes the interpretation of the composer's expectation beyond the limits of notation. When the prepared mind merges with the trained body, each gesture can communicate the expectation for a specific sound with equally vivid intent. This level of communication makes a collaborative cycle of stimulus and response between the conductor and the ensemble possible.

This text is divided into five units:

Unit 1: Expressive Movement: Developing Understanding and Awareness

Unit 2: Shaping Sound: Communicating with Specific Gestural Intent

Unit 3: Basic Beat Patterns and Beyond: Expectations for Expressive Results

Unit 4: Creating Emphasis in Advanced Meters: Shifting Space Within an Even Flow of Motion

Unit 5: Maintaining Specificity of Intent

In the twenty-two chapters that follow, concepts are scaffolded so that students can experience success in realizing how the four principles of compelling musical leadership expand their capacity to communicate expressively while still ensuring objective clarity.

Since the body is the conductor's primary means of expression, the initial chapters examine useful anatomical information and principles of motion that influence one's ability to move without unnecessary tension. Gradually, communicating with increased specificity of expectation and intent is explored through the body's available response to the imagination (visual and aural) using strategies that merge the prepared mind and trained body. As more conducting-specific techniques are introduced, emphasis on maintaining the principles of motion as fueled by aural expectation is heightened rather than diminished. The primary consideration is for students to develop the ability to respond accurately and efficiently by adjusting their gestures based on the ear's analysis.

The Exercises and Explorations are designed not only to help the student learn to initiate sound but also to reinforce how conductors analyze and respond to what they actually hear. Thirty-four instructional videos are interspersed throughout the text and offer detailed information on how to

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absorb and practice the material. Instructions for accessing the videos are outlined at the conclusion of this preface.

One of the unique features of this method is that it asks students to develop a deeper connection to the aural image of a score by taking on the role of composer–arranger. Experience has shown that students gain a greater understanding of how to interpret and develop an ear-based conception of the music when they engage with the limitations of notation through these exercises. Simple songs, most frequently “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” are used not for their simplicity but for their universal familiarity. Other simple songs can be found in Appendix 1. The process of using these songs allows students to develop their conducting technique with a link to a prepared aural image, leading to a clearer understanding of how the composer’s expectations are transferred to the intent of the conductor’s gestures. This becomes increasingly important as the decision-making demands of the scores grow.

A substantial number of four-part scores are included in Appendix 2. Transposed versions of these materials can be downloaded from the publisher’s website for in-class use. The content of these scores is directly linked to the instructional concepts in the specific chapters. Appendix 3 offers guidance on instrument transposition which is useful in processing the four-part scores and in more advanced score study. The Glossary collates the terminology used throughout the text. As they appear, all terms are initially emphasized by **bold** font, and terms borrowed from other methods are highlighted in ***bold italics***.

The range of materials is designed to allow the text to be used in a comprehensive single term or across multiple terms of instruction. No matter the format of the course, we are confident the information and approaches to learning will significantly advance each student’s ability to move expressively in service of their ensemble and the composer’s imagination.

### **To access instructional videos and transposed scores:**

Go to [www.conway-publications.com](http://www.conway-publications.com) and click on **Resources**.

On the Resources page, you may click on **Video Links** or **PDF Links**.