

Quick Start – Practice Tips on Becoming a Conductor

TECH TIP #2: Online Resources to Learn the Basics of Directing an Orchestra – by Paul K. Fox

Fox's Fireside Chat

One of my favorite times with the South Hills Junior Orchestra, leading up to preparations for the Charity Concert, is when members take the baton and conduct most of the carols.



According to “The Method Behind the Music” website at <https://method-behind-the-music.com/conducting/intro/>, “Conducting is more than waving your arms in front of the band/orchestra. The conductor has two primary responsibilities:

1. To start the ensemble, to establish a clear, uniform tempo, and keep it throughout the performance.
2. To help the musical quality of the piece (expression, dynamics, cues).”

I also like the comments from *School Band & Orchestra* (SB&O) digital newsletter:

“As a conductor, you have one of the most creative jobs in the world – you sculpt sound with your hands! You evoke, shape, and inspire sound with your conducting. Have you ever asked a snare drummer to keep time for your ensemble? Many conductors are the visual equivalent of our snare drummer. If you were given the task of inventing conducting, would you pound the air on every beat regardless of the musical impetus? Or, rather, would you craft a set of gestures that indicates all aspects of the music, not just the meter. If you choose the latter, imagine your conducting as the artistic catalyst to inspired music making.”

In other words, be an artist, and “shape the music!” Check out their “15 Conducting Tips for Inspired Musicianship” at (<http://sbomagazine.com/1269-archives/2320-59creative-conducting-15-conducting-tips-for-inspired-musicianship.html>).

The purpose of this short SHJO “Series to Share” is to get you started with some basic “how-to steps” to learn how to conduct. The only thing you need to do is “give it a try” and practice those beat patterns with your favorite musical selections. During the Saturday SHJO rehearsals in December, we will give you the opportunity to direct the entire group and provide you a few hints!

Enjoy! PKF



1. Conducting in 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4 (mirror image – follow her)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79Pk-33R2HM>

2. Conducting in 6/8

<https://ourpastimes.com/conducting-orchestra-in-68-time-13580341.html>

3. Tips for Conducting an Orchestra (series):

Common Time Signatures for Symphony Orchestras

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kq63LE57rcI>

Hand Movements to Conduct an Orchestra

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usgaDgiby1A>

Mistakes of Beginning Conductors

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gigW20fIPec>

4. The Conducting Beat Patterns

<http://cnx.org/content/m20804/latest/>

5. Use of Left Hand in Conducting

<http://cnx.org/content/m20895/latest/>

6. Advanced Concepts about Conducting

<https://www.ted.com/topics/conducting>



The mission of **South Hills Junior Orchestra**, which rehearses and performs in the Upper St. Clair High School in Pittsburgh, PA, is to support and nurture local school band and orchestra programs, to develop knowledge, understanding, performance skills, and an appreciation of music, to increase an individual member's self-esteem and self-motivation, and to continue to advance a life-long study of music. Members of the Orchestra *learn, grow, and achieve* positions of leadership to serve their fellow members. (For more information about SHJO, please visit www.shjo.org.)

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