

A Gesture Refresher

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Who were/are our inspirations for gesture? Why?

- What are the artistic qualities that we wish to emulate?
- What are the idiosyncrasies that we may not want to emulate?
- How does body type affect our own *realization* of gesture?

"The performers should feel that he [the conductor] feels, comprehends and is moved: then his emotion communicates itself to those whom he directs, his inward fire warms them, his electric glow animates them, his force of impulse excites them: he throws around him the vital irradiations of musical art. If he be inert and frozen, on the contrary, he paralyses all about him..." - Hector Berlioz 1843

What are some of the foundational elements of our gesture that we are taught?

- preparatory gestures
- ictus/tactus
- patterns for basic meter, compound meter, asymmetrical meters, etc.
- cues & releases

Reframing thoughts about gesture (*Bodily Communication* by Argyle):

- initiation or impulse
- sustaining or time extending
- release or reinitiating

Functions of the conductor:

- mechanical
- interpretative/expressive
- motivational
- technical
- psychosocial/collaborative

Different theories about gesture:

- Textbook standards (Labuta, Rudolf, Green, etc.)
- Rudolf von Laban (1879-1958)
- Hideo Saito (1902-1974)
- Rodney Eichenberger (b. 1930)

Alexander Technique

- "...a process of *letting go* of habitual, end-gaining responses to stimuli, so allowing oneself to pay consistent attention to the means by which each goal is achieved."
- Four Concepts of Good Use
 - Allow your neck to release so that your head can balance forward and up
 - Allow your torso to release into length and width
 - Allow your legs to release away from your pelvis
 - Allow your shoulders to release out to the sides

Laban

- BESS: Body; Effort; Space; Shape
- Efforts classified in the spectra of *space, time, weight and flow*
 - *Space: direct or flexible*
 - *Time: quick or sustained*
 - *Weight: strong or light*
 - *Flow: free or bound*
- *Eight efforts in combination*
 - *Flick*
 - *Dab*
 - *Glide*
 - *Float*
 - *Slash*
 - *Punch*
 - *Press*
 - *Wring*

Saito

- Two primary beat functions based on *gravity, weight, speed and intensity*
 - *into-point*
 - **tataki** (to hit)
 - **shakui** (to scoop)
 - **heinkin** (even and constant speed)
 - *from-point*
 - *shukan undo* (instantaneous motion)
 - *sen-nyu* (for subdivision)
 - **haneage** (to spring forward; bounce away from)
 - *hikkake* (to hook; to catch with a hook)

Eichenberger

- Eichenberger Word Concepts: differences in sound through kinesthetic experiences
 - *in and out*
 - *up and down*
 - *here and there*
 - *small and large*
- Power Center
- Planes of motion
 - horizontal
 - vertical
 - sagittal
 - horizontal/vertical
 - sagittal/vertical

- Eichenberger *Four Functions of Rhythm*
 - Downbeat (A and B)
 - Offbeat
 - Away
 - Into

What are the challenges?

- Habits (ours and those of our students)
- Tensions (known and unknown)
- Fear
- Kinesthetic understanding: relative and habitual
- Time (pinpoint, record, consequate, evaluate)

How can we continue our self-growth and self-awareness?

- Watch great conductors as much as possible
- Videotape self-evaluation of rehearsal and performance
- Outside observer(s)
- The mirror and a dry erase marker
- Musician feedback

Rehearsal Conducting vs. Performance Conducting?

Resources:

Balk, H. Wesley. *Performing Power: A New Approach for the Singer-actor*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.

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McClung, Alan, and Rodney Eichenberger. "The Relationship between Nonverbal Communication and Conducting: An Interview with Rodney Eichenberger." *Choral Journal*, 1996, 17-24.

Toews, Wayne. "Exercises to Develop the Saito Technique." www.conductorschool.com. Accessed October 14, 2015. <http://conductorschool.com/info/ConductingExercises.pdf>.

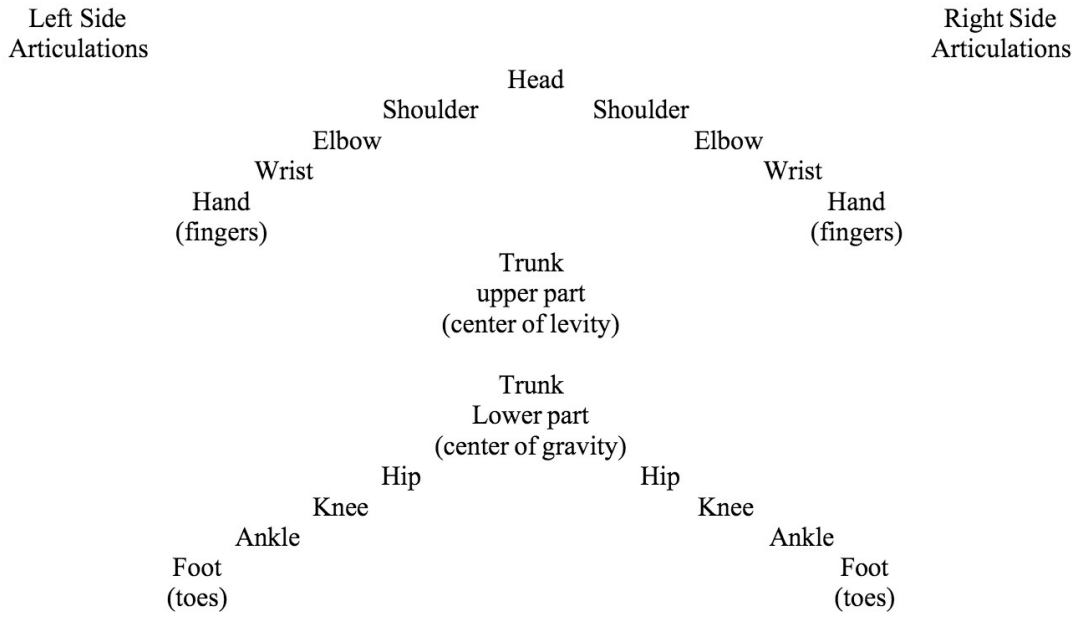
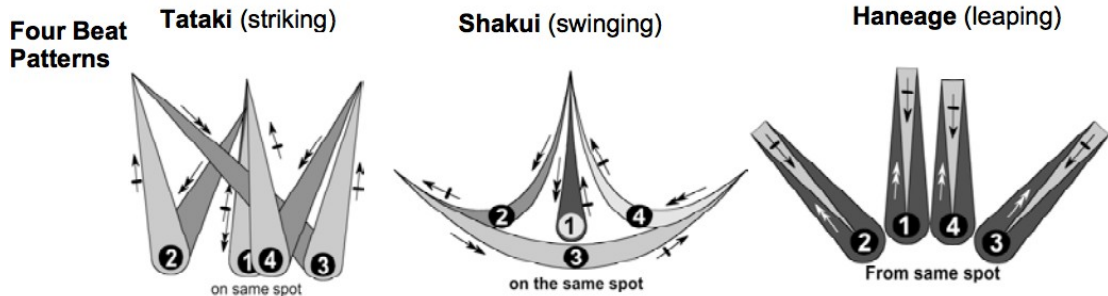


Figure 1. Basic Subdivisions of the Body.

From Gambetta, page 60

| BEA | Space Weight Time | compared with | BEA | Space Weight Time |
|-------|--------------------------------------|---------------|-------|--|
| Punch | Direct Strong Quick | its opposite | Float | Flexible Light Sustained |
| Press | Direct Strong <i>Sustained</i> | its opposite | Flick | Flexible Light <i>Quick</i> |
| Glide | Direct <i>Light</i> Sustained | its opposite | Slash | Flexible <i>Strong</i> Quick |
| Dab | Direct Light <i>Quick</i> | its opposite | Wring | Flexible Strong <i>Sustained</i> |

from Gambetta, page 84



from Toews, page 2