Conducting as Communication

Andrew Boysen

The Basic Rules

Selective - De-emphasize unimportant information. Try choosing just one thing. No “white noise.” Don’t work too hard.

Score Study – Know the piece and know your ensemble.

What to Communicate – Who, What, When, and How.

Everything is a Prep.

Gavorkna Fanfare (Jack Stamp)

This short fanfare is constructed from two basic ideas, presented at measure 5 and measure 26. There are a myriad of wonderful teaching opportunities in the piece, including the use of sets (the [013] set dominates the A section while the use of perfect fifths dominates the B section), imitative counterpoint/fugue, and polychords.

Introduction	A	Transition	B	A	Coda
m. 1-4	m. 5-14	m. 15-18	m. 19-41	m. 42-47	m. 48-54
Pyramids	Main Theme, [013] material	Polychords that introduce B material	Imitative counterpoint, emphasizing perfect fifths	Main Theme return	Hint of polychord/perfect fifths and final timpani solo
Eb pedal	C minor	Arrive on Eb major	C minor	C minor	E major

Interactive Experience

http://etc.ch/RtAb

Laban

Rudolf von Laban (1879-1958)
Austro-Hungarian pioneer of modern dance theory and Labanotation
Space, Weight, and Time

Loosening a screw	Treading water	Throwing a paper airplane
Tapping on a window	Spreading butter on toast	Hammering a nail

Rotations

Procedure:
Begin with a measure of four and then in following measures, cue/release on beat one, then beat two, then beat three, then beat four.

Cues:

- Eye contact
- Breath
- Left hand gesture
- De-emphasize right hand prior to cue
- Vary dynamic and articulation

Releases:

- Maintain right hand pattern
- Vary style of release gesture in left hand
- Use both circular and vertical left hand release gestures

Three by Five

Procedure:
Choose a combination from the following categories and conduct 1-2 measures. Have a partner guess what you were trying to communicate. The goal is immediate and unquestioned clarity. Be obvious!

pp	Staccato
mf	Legato
ff	Accent
	Staccato and Accent
	Tenuto and Accent

Elizabeth Green, *The Modern Conductor*

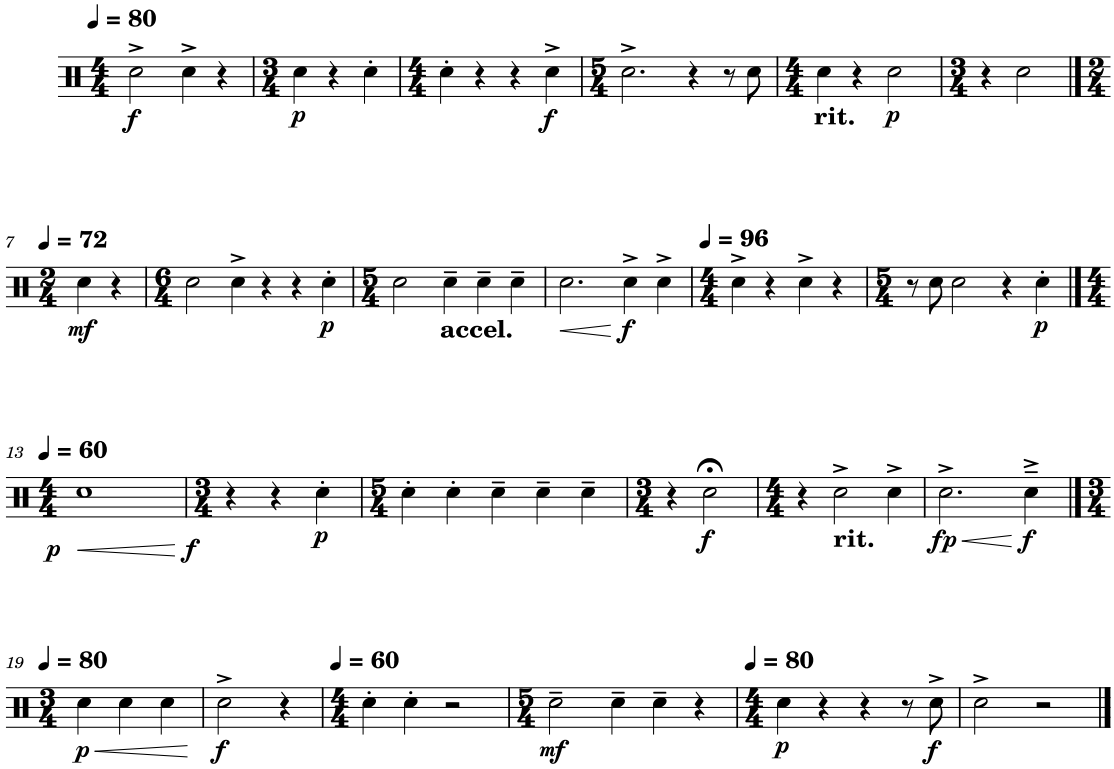
Benefits:

- Refines our technique
- Demonstrates what we are actually communicating with our gestures
- Teaches our students how to watch and respond

Rules:

- Must maintain a pattern
- Use normal ictus in right hand for single pulse
- Use left hand and de-emphasize right hand for sustain
- Show all preps and releases
- Show all articulations, dynamics, and tempo changes
- Use gesture of syncopation for between-beat entrances

Examples:



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