
The Army Ceremonial Conductor

SEPTEMBER 2022

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Preface

TC 1-19.51 describes actions and prescribes training for Soldiers serving as ceremonial conductors in Army Bands. It provides information to standardize ceremonial conductor practices and train Soldiers to function as conductors.

The principal audience for TC 1-19.51 is all Soldiers that are led by, train as, or perform as ceremonial conductors. Band commanders should also consult local policies and regulations concerning ceremonial performance.

Commanders, staffs, and subordinates ensure that their decisions and actions comply with applicable United States, international, and in some cases host-nation laws and regulations. Commanders at all levels ensure that their Soldiers operate in accordance with the law of war and the rules of engagement (see FM 6-27).

This publication is not the proponent publication for any Army terms.

TC 3-21.5 prescribes marching standards for Soldiers with or without weapons. TC 1-19.10 adapts selected movements and training techniques from TC 3-21.5 to accommodate Army Musicians in ceremonial formations. TC 1-19.51 also provides specific guidance to conductors when TC 3-21.5 and TC 1-19.10 are not sufficiently descriptive. The techniques and procedures within this publication conform to the best or most common ceremonial practices found in the Army Bands and in the Army ceremonial units that support the Military District of Washington. Marching techniques described in this publication are to be used only by Army conductors, including Soldiers engaged in on-the-job training, when conducting a ceremonial music performance or training for such a performance. Army conductors will conform to the standards described in TC 3-21.5 in all other formations.

Information specific to ceremonial music performance and drum major functions can be found in TC 1-19.10 and TC 1-19.50, respectively. Training videos for ceremonial conductors are located in the “Resources” section of the Army Bands Intranet under the “USASOM” and “Ceremonial Conducting (Videos)” tabs (see URL listed in “References”).

As this publication is a guide, and as all possible situations and eventualities cannot be foreseen or covered by the manual, great reliance must be placed upon the application of sound judgment and common sense by all members of an Army Band. In situations not covered by this manual and where doubt arises as to the proper action to be taken, the individual must consider their mission and apply sound judgment in making the required decision(s). This publication contains copyrighted material.

TC 1-19.51 applies to the Active Army, the Army National Guard, the Army National Guard of the United States, and the United States Army Reserve unless otherwise stated.

The proponent of TC 1-19.51 is the United States Army School of Music. The preparing agency is the Directorate of Training and Doctrine, the United States Army School of Music. Send comments and recommendations on DA Form 2028 (*Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms*) to Commandant, U.S. Army School of Music, ATTN: ATSG-SMZ, 1420 Gator Boulevard, Virginia Beach, VA 23459-2617.

Acknowledgements

The Source Notes lists other sources of quotations and photographs.

Conducting: A Hands-On Approach, Anthony Maiello, Belwin Mills Publishing Corp., 1996.

Baton Basics: Communicating Music Through Gestures, Diane Wittry, Oxford University Press, 2014.

Introduction

TC 1-19.51 is designed to be a practical guide for Army Musicians who have little, to no, conducting experience. It provides those Soldiers with materials to help them develop the fundamental skills required to succeed as a conductor in a ceremonial setting. It should be used in conjunction with TC 1- 19.10 as a reference for Soldiers seeking knowledge of ceremonial conductor responsibilities, stationary movements, and actions. This document is not intended for use in teaching advanced techniques for concert band, orchestral, or choral conducting or for developing score study techniques.

TC 1-19.51 is the primary ceremonial conductor training publication of Army Bands and incorporates various United States Army School of Music course materials. This publication also references material from *Conducting: A Hands-On Approach*, by Anthony Maiello and *Baton Basics: Communicating Music Through Gestures* by Diane Wittry.

Text conventions: This publication uses unique text conventions to facilitate understanding: preparatory commands are ***Italicized in Bold***, commands of execution and directives are **CAPITALIZED IN BOLD**, references to positions and movements are italicized, and names of music or bugle calls are placed in “*Italicized Quotations.*”

TC 1-19.51 contains five chapters:

Chapter 1 discusses the role of the Army ceremonial conductor and the history, responsibilities, and selection criteria thereof.

Chapter 2 describes the baton and its usage as well as describing the conductor’s stationary ceremonial movements.

Chapter 3 describes conductor actions not covered in TC 1-19.10.

Chapter 4 describes fundamental techniques for the ceremonial conductor.

Chapter 5 provides a series of exercises to aid in the development of conducting fundamentals.

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Chapter 1

The Ceremonial Conductor

This chapter describes the history, responsibilities, and selection criteria for ceremonial conductors in Army Bands. Conducting a ceremonial ensemble is a great responsibility as the conductor represents the band and, by extension, the dignity and reputation of the Army itself. Therefore, leaders should select high-caliber Soldiers with demonstrated conducting abilities to be ceremonial conductors.

HISTORY

1-1. Soldiers have led bands since the earliest days of the Army, when enlisted drum and fife majors marched Washington's Continental Army to victory during the American Revolution. From General Pershing's warrant officer bandmasters of the 1920s to the current cohorts of noncommissioned officers (NCOs), warrant officers, and commissioned officers leading Soldiers in joint operations all across the globe, the Army's musicians have always produced highly trained and qualified conductors.

1-2. Today, the skills needed by Army ceremonial conductors are trained at the U.S. Army School of Music's NCO Academy and officer training courses as well as in the field through the mentorship of new conductors by experienced leaders. By combining the knowledge of expert civilian conductors and educators with the lessons learned by generations of Army bandmasters, the ceremonial conductors of today's Army are provided with the training and education needed to successfully accomplish their ceremonial mission and honorably represent the Nation through music.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1-3. As AR 220-90 states: "Army Bands are highly visible, effective at building esprit de corps and cohesion, and serve to enhance the Army's public image. Members of Army Bands must demonstrate the highest levels of professional musical performance, conduct, and appearance standards to best represent the Army and the Nation." Accordingly, the responsibilities of an Army ceremonial conductor are to do the following:

- Ensure that the musical element is fully prepared to accomplish its mission to the highest standard possible.
- Rehearse the Music Performance Team (MPT).
- Know the sequence of events for the ceremony.
- Communicate with the operations NCO and point of contact for the ceremony in order to stay abreast of any changes to the sequence of events.
- Demonstrate clear conducting technique and knowledge of the music.
- Represent the band, the Army, and the Nation.

SELECTION CRITERIA

1-4. Enlisted ceremonial conductors in any unit should be chosen from among those leaders who have a firm grasp of conducting fundamentals, a strong impulse of will, and experience as an Army ceremonial musician. Situational awareness is a requirement for any ceremonial conductor, and they should have a working knowledge of Army ceremonial procedures before conducting their first ceremony. The primary function of ceremonial music is to trigger the next event in the sequence of a ceremony or operation. So, while the ceremonial conductor needs to ensure that the MPT is performing to a high musical standard, they also need to be aware of their place in the sequence of events and what action will be coming next.

1-5. Commissioned officers and warrant officers are the primary ceremonial conductors for their bands and are selected for their positions based on a combination of leadership and musical competencies. Soldiers interested in pursuing these positions should reference AR 220-90 and the application documents on the Army Bands Intranet listed under the "Resources" and "420C/42C" tabs (see URL in "Resources").

Chapter 2

Manual of the Baton

This chapter describes the baton, its parts, and its usage. Additionally, it demonstrates the various stationary movements required by the conductor during a field or indoor ceremony. The term "conductor" refers to any Soldier filling that role when leading a marching band, ceremonial band, or small ceremonial MPT.

SECTION I – THE BATON

2-1. The following is the base manual of the baton. Certain units and officers incorporate or utilize other traditional movements as per their local policy.

PARTS OF THE BATON

2-2. The conductor uses the baton to communicate fundamental musical ideas to the ensemble. The main parts of the baton are:

- The handle or heel, typically made of plastic, cork, or wood.
- The shaft, usually made of a lightweight wood, fiberglass, or carbon fiber.
- The tip, which is the pointed end of the baton opposite the handle.

2-3. Batons are fashioned with a tapered shape, starting with a larger circumference near the handle and progressing to the smaller tip. Although baton lengths vary widely, most batons used for military ceremonies are 12 to 16 inches long. Batons of this length are preferred for ceremonial conducting as they are easier to see outdoors and when the conductor doesn't have the option of standing on a podium. Seasoned conductors prefer balanced batons, meaning that the balance point is located close to the hand, usually near where the handle meets the shaft. Balanced batons allow for the greatest control and nuance, while tip-heavy batons are more forgiving in the hands of a novice conductor.

HOLDING THE BATON

2-4. Refer to figure 2-1 for a suggested basic baton grip. This is the recommended way of holding the baton. Other methods are available. In the right hand, hold the baton lightly between the thumb and index finger with the thumb crooked out. The heel of the baton should rest in the hollow near the base of the thumb, and the tip of the ring finger should rest lightly on the handle. This three-point grip (tip of thumb, side of index finger, ball of ring finger) provides security and flexibility. Ensure the grip on the baton is just firm enough to avoid dropping it but not so tight as to create unnecessary tension.

2-5. Avoid placing the index finger on top of the baton, letting the heel of the baton slide around the palm, letting the handle protrude from the bottom of the hand, or letting the baton point to the left (it should be a relatively straight extension of the arm).

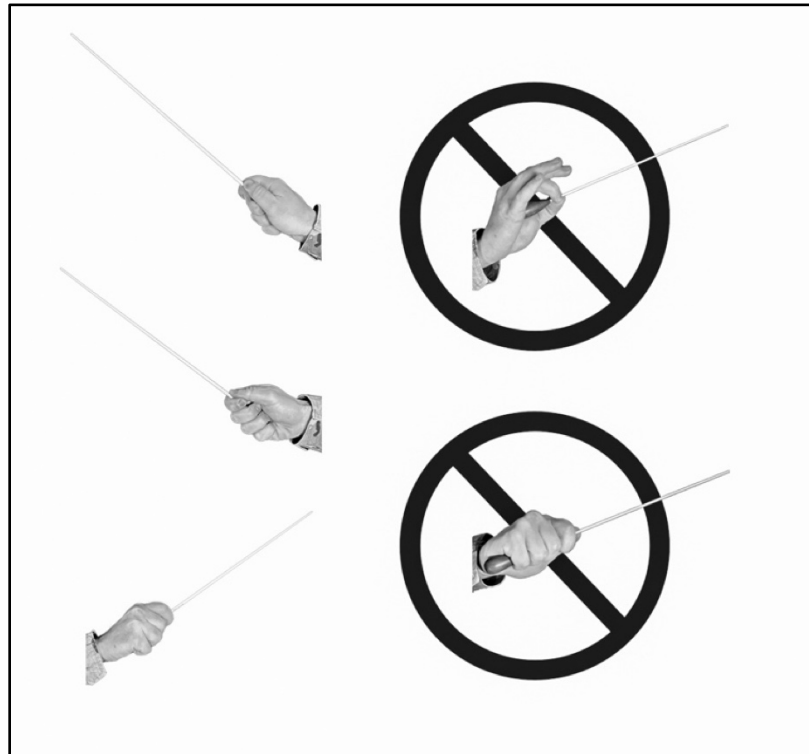


Figure 2-1. Holding the Baton

CONDUCTING REGION

2-6. The conducting region varies depending upon the situation. For outdoor ceremonies with a marching band arranged in a block formation, the conducting region is above the shoulders and ensures that Soldiers in the rear of the formation can see the conductor's movements. For seated ceremonies indoors or outdoors, the conducting region may be lowered to the chest level or a position deemed comfortable and appropriate by the conductor (see figure 2-2).

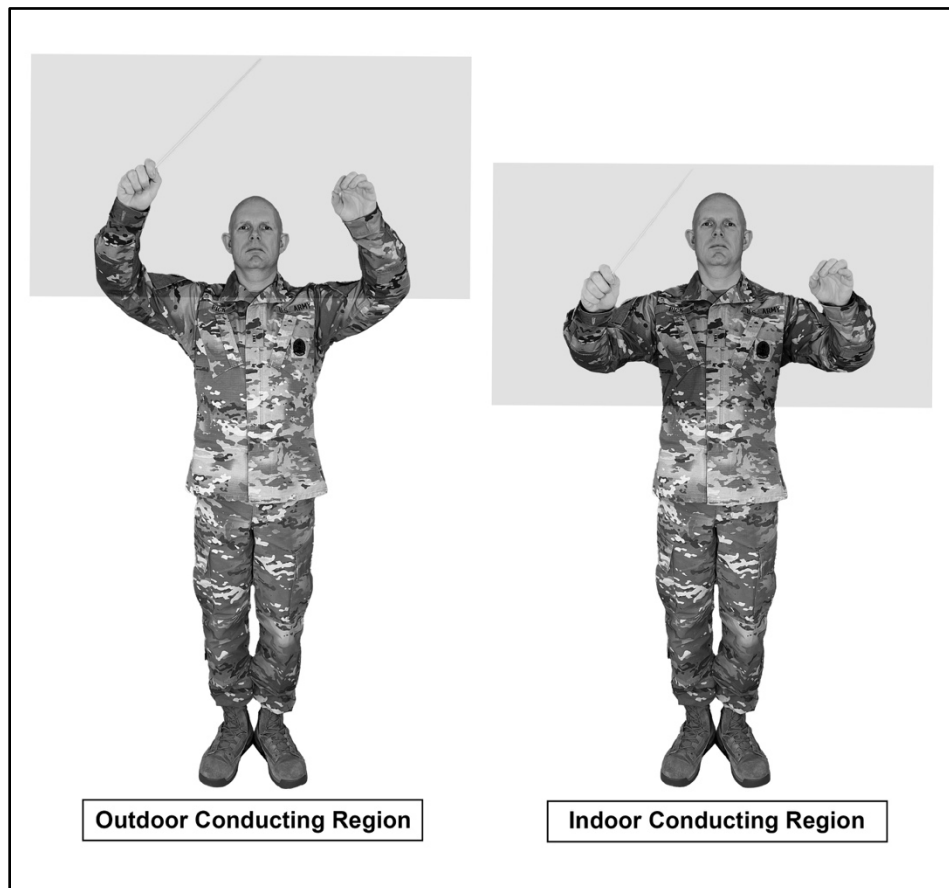


Figure 2-2. Conducting Region

SECTION II – CONDUCTOR STATIONARY MOVEMENTS

2-7. Signals are performed at a tempo between 114 and 120 beats per minute, with 116 the preferred tempo for most occasions. Conductors perform the stationary movements as described in TC 3-21.5 with necessary modifications. When carrying a baton, conductors execute attention and parade rest as illustrated in figures 2-3 and 2-5.

Note. The movements illustrated in this section are intended for use in outdoor ceremonies or large-scale ceremonies conducted indoors. These movements should be learned first and serve as the baseline for all ceremonial conducting movements. At the conductor's discretion, these movements may be scaled down to an appropriate size if the context of the ceremony or size of the band calls for it. For instance, the stationary movements executed on the parade field for a battalion change of command with a full ceremonial band may be too large and disruptive for a small cut down band performing a seated ceremony in the base chapel. The bottom line for conductors is this: be clear and look professional.

ATTENTION

2-8. For the *Position of Attention*:

- Stand at the *Position of Attention* as described in TC 3-21.5.
- Hold the right arm along the side of the body.

- In the left hand, hold the baton between thumb and forefinger where the handle meets the shaft. The baton tip should be pointed upward and parallel to the inside of the forearm. Curl the remaining three fingers (see figure 2-3).
- March with the baton in the left hand.



Figure 2-3. Attention

HAND SALUTE

2-9. The hand salute is executed from the *Position of Attention* or while marching at the quick time (see figure 2-4). Execute the hand salute in the same manner as prescribed in TC 3-21.5. The baton should remain in the left hand as prescribed above in paragraph 2-8.



Figure 2-4. Hand Salute

PARADE REST

2-10. For the position of *Parade Rest*:

- Cross the hands in front of the body with the right hand over the left.
- Hold the baton with the left hand (see figure 2-5).
- From this position, conductors may assume the positions of *Stand at Ease*, *At Ease*, and *Rest*, though the hands should remain clasped in front of the body while in formation with the band.

Note. Ideally, conductors should time their hand placement during parade rest with the trombone's manual of instruments.



Figure 2-5. Parade Rest

Note. This position mirrors the appearance of the drum major and musicians. If the conductor is in a formation but not performing as a conductor, they will assume the position of parade rest as described in TC 3-21.5.

INSTRUMENTS UP

2-11. *Instruments Up* is a three-count movement used to bring the instruments to the *Prepare to Play* position. It is always executed from the *Position of Attention* (see figure 2-6).

- Initiate the movement by giving the preparatory command of ***Instruments***. This prepares the band to move to *Ready Instruments*.
- **Count 1** — Raise both hands to chin level, closing the right hand into a fist around the handle of the baton. The palms should be facing down with index fingers touching, elbows raised to shoulder height. The baton is parallel to the ground. Band members will come to ready instruments.
- **Count 2** — Silent count.
- **Count 3** — Extend the arms out from the body into a field conducting position (arms extended, elbows slightly bent, hands at eye level or slightly above, baton in the right hand). Band members will come to *Prepare to Play*. The arms should be in the proper conducting region ready to give a preparatory beat.

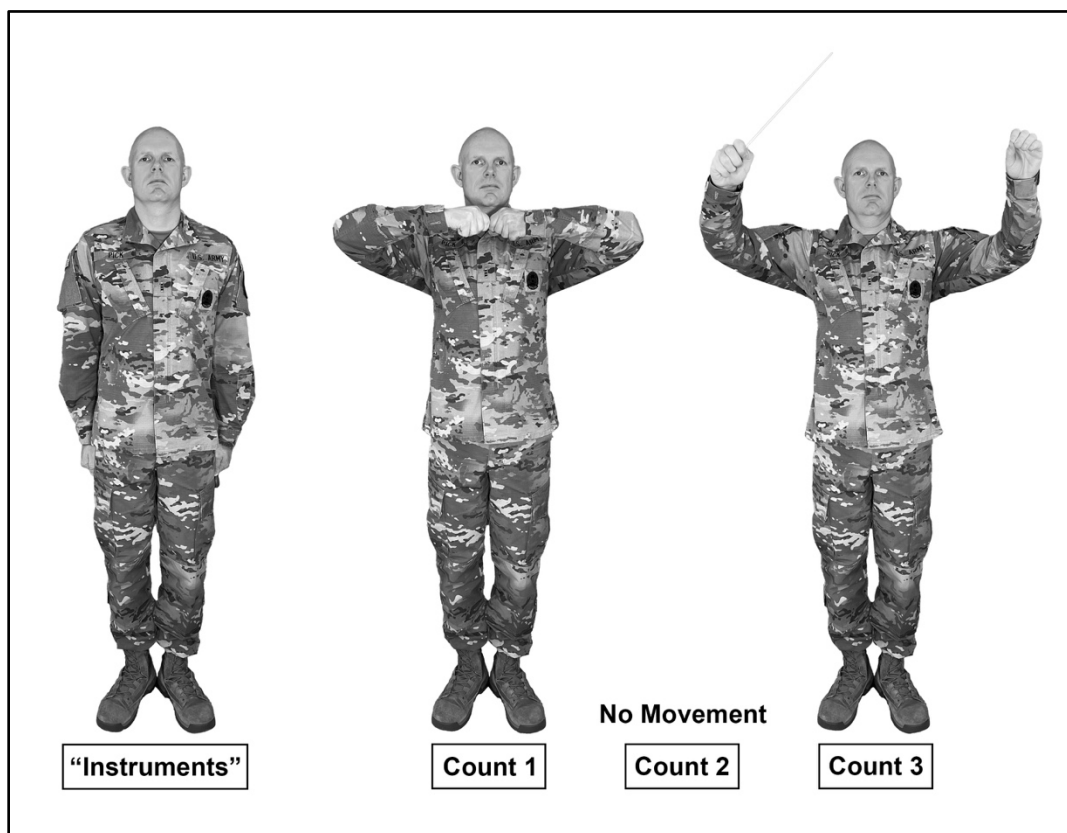


Figure 2-6. Instruments Up

FERMATA CUTOFF

2-12. Use a fermata cutoff (see figure 4-4) when the last note of the music is a fermata, tenuto, or does not provide a rhythmic three-count ending. Make a counterclockwise and upward loop with the right hand. The left hand will simultaneously make a clockwise loop. At the cutoff point, close the left hand into a fist. The hands should stop in a position that is identical to the third count of *Instruments, UP*. This will place the arms in a position ready to execute count 1 of *Instruments, DOWN* (see figure 2-10).

THREE-COUNT CUTOFF

2-13. The *Three-Count Cutoff* (see figure 2-7) is used when the music ends rhythmically, but a full *Seven-Count Cutoff* is unnecessary or inappropriate. For example, when the band is performing pre-ceremonial music but no marching elements are on the field, a full *Seven-Count Cutoff* is not required to end the piece. The *Three-Count Cutoff* can be used to transition from cadence to a musical selection (e.g., during a long pass in review or the transition from a division song into the Army song). Likewise, if the band has stopped playing but the percussion section continues to play a cadence, use the *Three-Count Cutoff* to signal them to stop on the desired downbeat. In these situations, the non-baton hand is used to direct the percussion section to avoid confusing the rest of the band. To perform the *Three-Count Cutoff*:

- Ensure that the band or section is watching. **MAKE EYE CONTACT!**
- **Count 1** — Conduct an exaggerated downbeat using both hands with little to no rebound.
- **Count 2** — Circle the hands in time using the cutoff gesture (right hand counterclockwise, left hand clockwise).
- **Count 3** — End the motion in time with the arms fully extended. The left hand should close into a fist at the end of the motion.

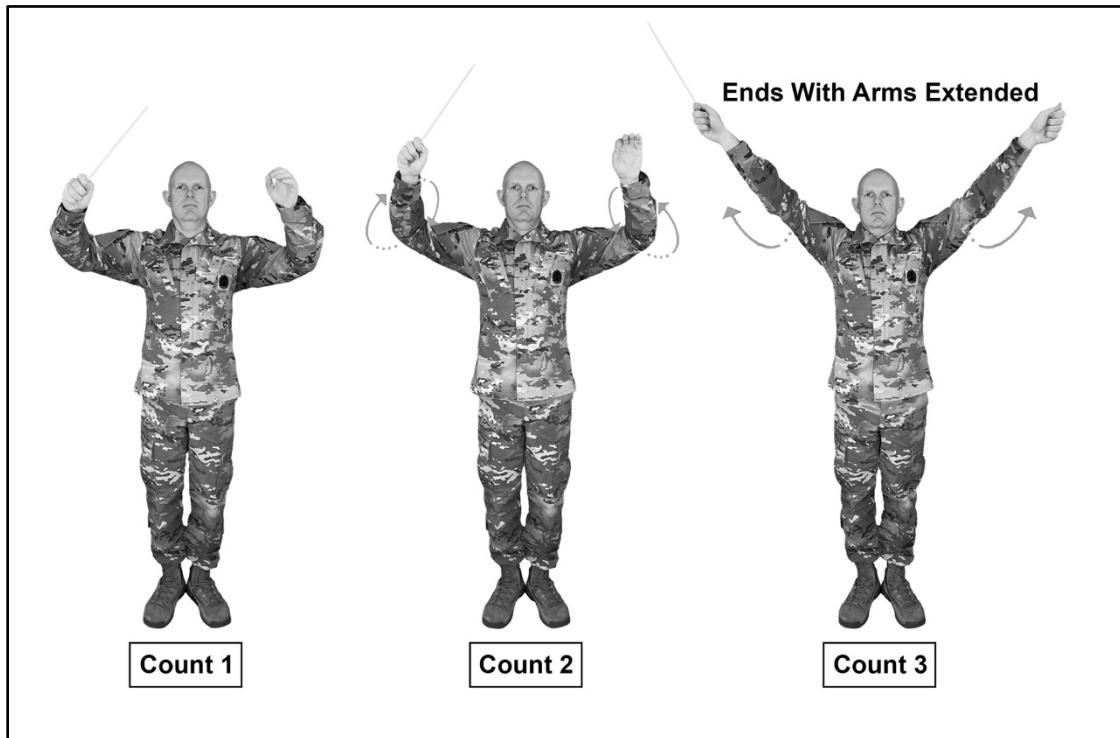


Figure 2-7. Three-Count Cutoff

Note. This movement may be altered by the conductor to suit the needs of the situation. Examples include performing the movement with only the baton, empty handed (for the drum major), or ending in an appropriate position other than *Instruments Up*. As always, be clear with your intent.

SEVEN-COUNT CUTOFF

2-14. Use the *Seven-Count Cutoff* to signal the band to stop playing (see figure 2-9). The cutoff can be used at any time during the march as long as it is signaled seven counts before the end of the march, strain, phrase, or measure.

2-15. **PREPARATION** — Approximately four (or more) bars before signaling the *Seven-Count Cutoff*, stop conducting and briefly lower your hands to your sides, and make eye contact with the percussion section. This serves as a warning to the band that the cutoff is coming.

2-16. From the *Position of Attention* (see figure 2-8), move both arms simultaneously (right arm in a clockwise motion and left arm in a counterclockwise motion). At the bottom of the circle, the left fist will be in front of the right. Begin raising your arms by crossing them in front of the body. At the top of the circle, the right fist will be in front of the left. Next, fully extend both of your arms into the *Ready Position*.

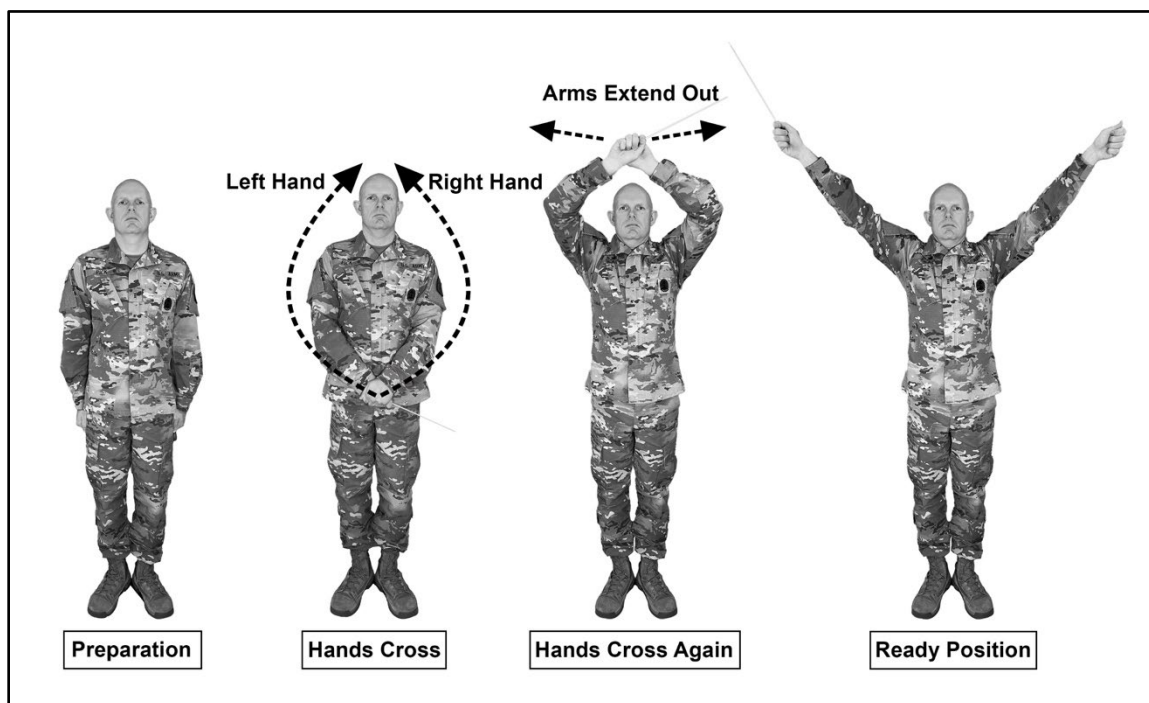


Figure 2-8. The Seven-Count Cutoff Preparation

2-17. **READY POSITION** — Both Arms extended upward roughly at a 45-degree angle, forming a “V” shape with the arms. The baton should be an extension of, and in line, with the right arm.

2-18. **PREPARATORY SIGNAL** — One beat before signaling the cutoff cadence, bend the left arm at the elbow, bringing the left fist closer to the head. The preparatory signal must be given in cadence with the signal of execution.

2-19. **SIGNAL OF EXECUTION:**

- **Count 1** — On the first beat of the cutoff cadence, return the left arm to the *Ready Position*. This signals the percussion section to begin playing the “*Seven-Count Cutoff*” (see TC 1-19.10 for percussion parts).
- **Count 2** — Bend the right arm at the elbow, bringing the right fist closer to the head.
- **Count 3** — Return the right arm to the *Ready Position*.
- **Count 4** — Bend both elbows slightly so that the forearms are oriented straight up and down, parallel to each other.
- **Count 5** — Straighten the elbows, returning to the *Ready Position*.
- **Count 6** — Move the arms to a position centered over the head with the hands crossed, right hand in front of the left hand. The hand with the baton will be the closest to the band.
- **Count 7** — Return to the *Ready Position*. After one silent beat, go to Count 1 of *Instruments, DOWN*.

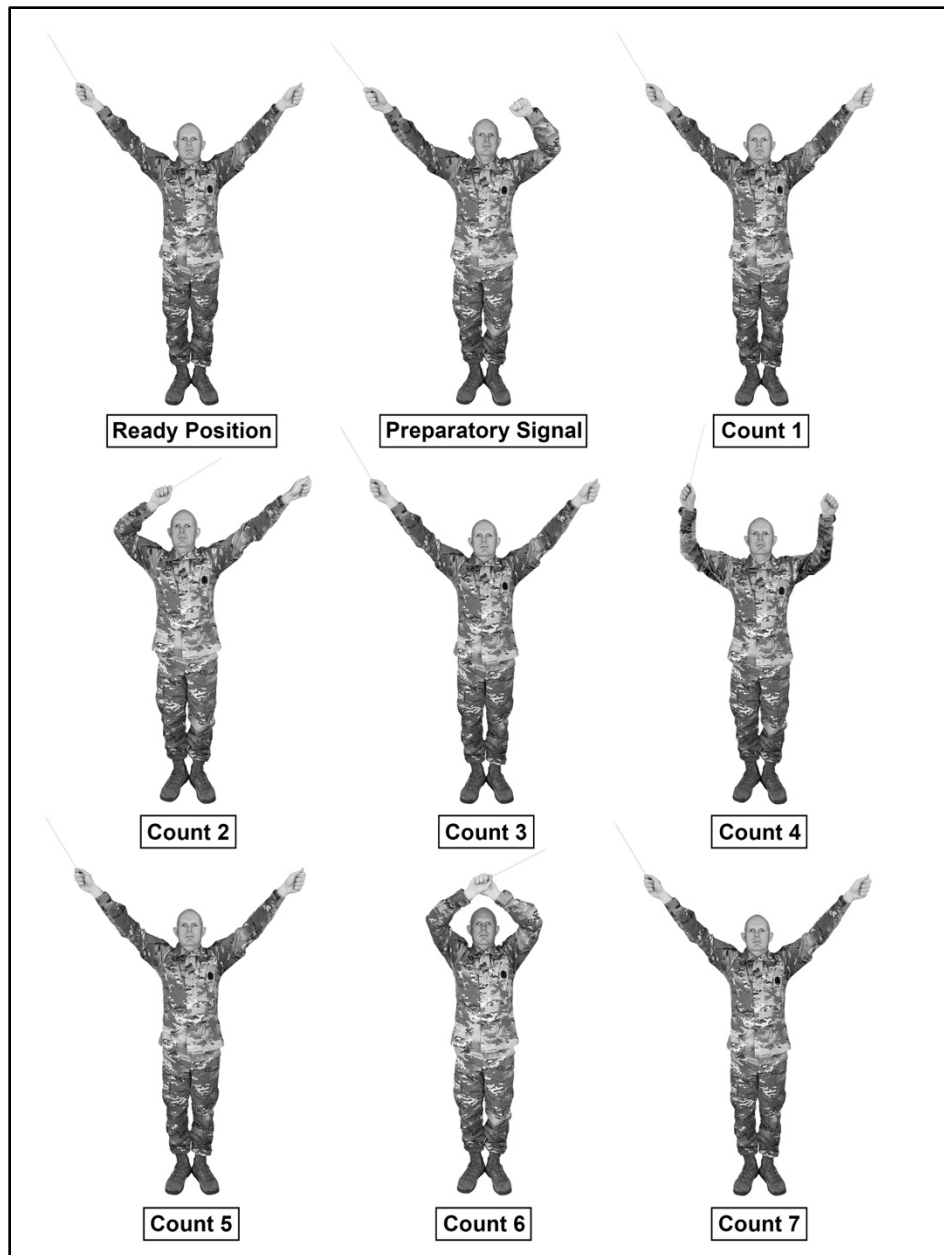


Figure 2-9. The Seven-Count Cutoff

INSTRUMENTS DOWN

2-20. *Instruments Down* is a three-count movement used to bring band members from the *Prepare to Play* position to the *Carry* (see figure 2-10).

- Start in the *Ready Position*.
- **Count 1** — Lower both hands to a point at chin level, closing the right hand into a fist around the baton's handle. The palms should be facing down with index fingers touching, elbows raised to shoulder height. The baton is parallel to the ground. Band members will come to the *Ready Position*.
- **Count 2** — Silent count.

- **Count 3** — Lower the arms back down (*Position of Attention*), switching baton back to left hand. Band members will come to the *Carry*.

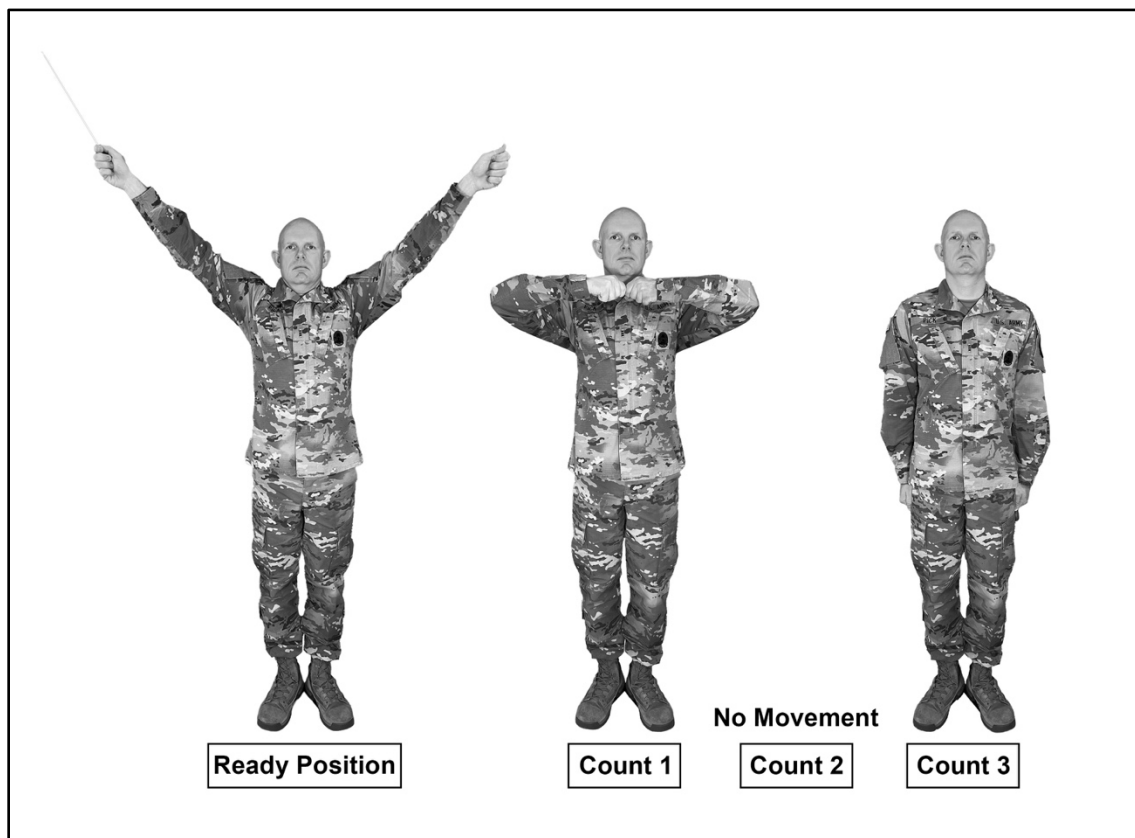


Figure 2-10. Instruments Down

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Chapter 3

Conductor Actions

Most of the actions required by the conductor during a ceremony are explained and illustrated in TC 1-19.10 and TC 3-21.5. The following chapter provides specific guidance for the conductor not covered in TC 1-19.10.

CHANGE POST

3-1. When the drum major and conductor must change posts, the drum major marches the outside “square” path and the conductor marches the inside “oblique” path shown in figure 3-1. The drum major and conductor execute appropriate marching movements to change posts in a military manner. The conductor either verbally commands ***Change Post, MARCH***, or uses a predetermined signal (head nod, for instance) to initiate the movement.

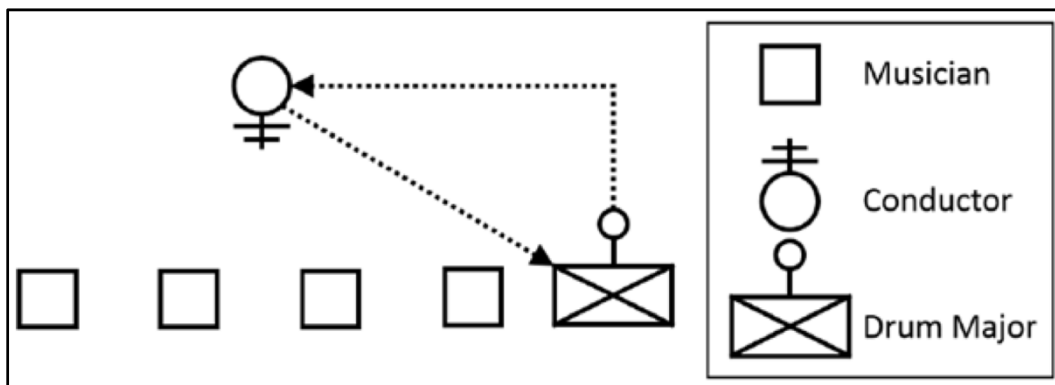


Figure 3-1. Change Posts

SIGNALING THE SALUTE

3-2. There are instances when the conductor and drum major are required to salute in unison, but no audible preparatory command may be given (such as during the inspection and march in review). In these instances, whichever Soldier is in front of the other should give a three-count visual signal before the execution of *Present Arms/Eyes Right* and *Order Arms/Ready Front*.

- *Eyes Right* (used during march in review).
 - **Count 1** — When the drum major's right foot strikes the ground, they slap their right thigh with the saluting hand. This is the preparatory command for the conductor.
 - **Count 2** — The left foot strikes the ground; no additional movement.
 - **Count 3** — On the right foot, the drum major and conductor salute simultaneously. The drum major will perform *Eyes Right* while the conductor continues marching with head and eyes forward.
- *Ready Front* (used during march in review).
 - **Count 1** — On the left foot, the drum major closes their saluting hand into a fist. This is the preparatory command for the conductor.
 - **Count 2** — The right foot strikes the ground; no additional movement.

- **Count 3** — On the left foot, the drum major and conductor simultaneously drop their salutes. The drum major returns their head and eyes forward.
- *Present Arms* (used during inspection).
 - **Count 1** — The conductor slaps their right thigh with the saluting hand. This is the preparatory command for the drum major.
 - **Count 2** — Silent count; no movement.
 - **Count 3** — The conductor and drum major simultaneously render the hand salute and execute eyes right. The conductor and drum major's heads and eyes follow the inspecting party until they are looking straight ahead.
- *Order Arms* (used during inspection).
 - **Count 1** — The conductor closes their saluting hand into a fist. This is the preparatory command for the drum major.
 - **Count 2** — Silent count; no movement.
 - **Count 3** — The conductor and drum major simultaneously drop their salutes.

RECEIVING THE BAND

3-3. The conductor receives the band when they initially assume control over it from the drum major. This happens at the beginning of a field ceremony once the dressing and alignment of the band are complete and before conducting any pre-ceremonial music. If pre-ceremonial music is not taking place, the conductor receives the band at an appropriate time after the band is set but prior to the ceremony.

3-4. To receive the band, the conductor waits until the band is aligned and at the *Position of Attention* then approaches the drum major from any direction (usually from the front, but field conditions and unit placement may prevent this), stopping two paces in front of the drum major and assuming the *Position of Attention*. The drum major salutes and reports, "Sir/Ma'am/SGM/SGT, the band is formed." The conductor returns the salute, responds, "Take your post," and drops the salute. The drum major drops the salute then proceeds to their prescribed position aligned with the front rank of the band while the conductor steps forward into the position previously occupied by the drum major. This distance, measured in steps, should be equivalent to the number of files in the band minus one. For instance, in a band with five files, the position of the conductor/drum major should be centered four steps in front of the first rank.

FACE ABOUT AND SALUTE

3-5. The conductor employs *Face About and Salute* when they must quickly and smartly perform about face and render the hand salute. Executing this movement fluidly helps prevent "misfires" where the band should remain at *Instruments Up*, but some musicians misinterpret the conductor's move to salute as the command for *Instruments Down*. Instances include:

- At the conclusion of Honors or "*The General's March*."
- At the conclusion of the National Anthem.

3-6. *Face About and Salute* is a fluid motion executed with the arms starting in the conducting position. If conducting, stop. Begin about face by placing the right toe into the ground behind and across the left foot. As the body begins turning to the right, smoothly pass the baton from the right hand to the left, dropping the left hand as the right hand moves directly to render the hand salute. At the completion of *About Face*, the conductor should be rendering the hand salute with the baton in the left hand. Following the salute, execute about face with the hands moving in the opposite sequence as before. While turning, smoothly transfer the baton from the left hand back to the right, and end in the conducting position as about face is completed.

3-7. *Face About and Salute* may also be executed in a more defined sequence as described below.

- Stop conducting, keeping the hands in the conducting position.
- Transfer the baton between hands as prescribed in the movements for ***Instruments, DOWN***.
- Execute *About Face*.
- Render the hand salute.

- Drop the salute.
- Execute *About Face*.
- Transfer the baton between hands as prescribed in the movements for *Instruments, UP*.
- Resume conducting.

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Chapter 4

Conducting

This chapter covers many of the “nuts and bolts” aspects of ceremonial conducting. There are a number of fundamental principles that all conductors need to become proficient in before leading an ensemble. Understanding and implementing these principles will give the ceremonial conductor a strong foundation for technical proficiency, increase the confidence of both conductor and MPT, and result in a better musical product.

IMPULSE OF WILL

4-1. Impulse of will is the conductor's ability to confidently convey their musical direction to the ensemble using body language, baton and left-hand gestures, and facial expressions. Impulse of will is closely related to the Army leader attribute of presence (see ADP 6-22). Demonstrating presence is more than just showing up and being seen, although both are important (ADP 6-22). Conductors are the focal point to audiences of a formation or ceremony; movements and dress should reflect this by not being overly tense, remaining calm, and exaggerating movements enough to be interpreted well by the ensemble, but not so large to become comical. Conductors should keep the following in mind when developing their impulse of will and confidence in front of an ensemble:

“Confidence grows from professional competence and a realistic appraisal of one's abilities. A leader's confidence is contagious and permeates the entire organization. Confident leaders who help Soldiers control doubt reduce anxiety in a unit.”

ADP 6-22

4-2. Being technically and musically prepared to conduct will increase confidence, which will in turn help develop impulse of will.

ICTUS

4-3. **The ictus is a small flicking of the wrist at the precise point of each beat in a conducting pattern.** When conducting, it is vitally important that the ictus be clearly recognizable, as this translates the tempo to the players in the ensemble. The ictus should be small, precise, and result in a small rebound of the baton's tip off the beat-point. This rebound should lead naturally to the next beat point in the pattern.

BEAT PATTERNS

4-4. **A beat pattern is the path followed by the baton or hands, which indicates the specific counts in a time signature.** The basic beat patterns for meters in two, three, and four are shown in figures 4-1 and 4-2. These diagrams indicate the path of the right hand or baton from the conductor's perspective. In all patterns, ensure that beat points fall in distinct locations (see paragraph 4-3, ictus) and that the paths from beat to beat are clearly distinguishable to the musicians in your group. Refer to *Baton Basics: Communicating Music Through Gestures* by Diane Wittry for more beat pattern examples.

Note. Variations of these patterns are acceptable as long as it's clear to the musicians.

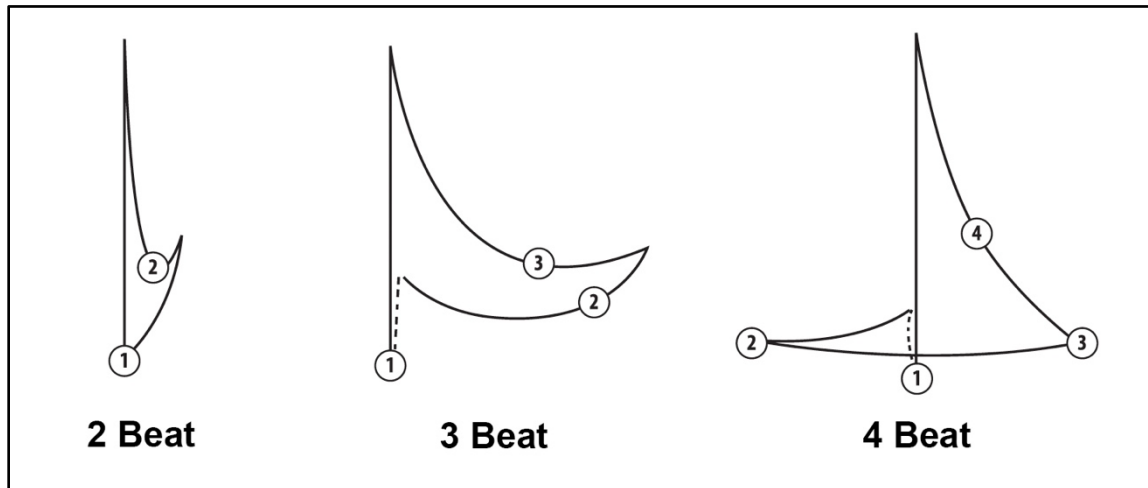


Figure 4-1. Beat Patterns

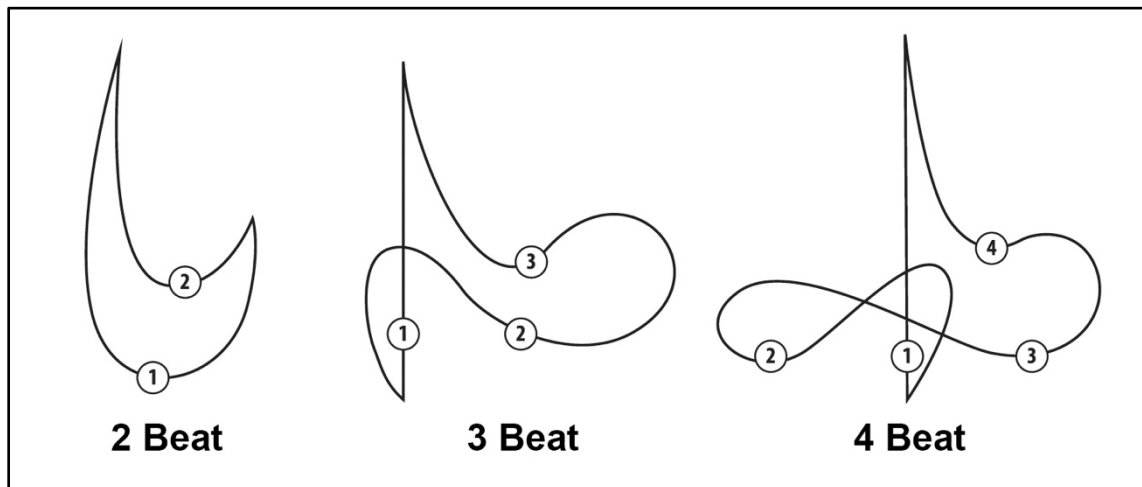


Figure 4-2. Alternate Beat Patterns

THE PREPARATORY BEAT

4-5. The preparatory beat precedes the first note in a piece of music and communicates the desired tempo, dynamics, and style to the ensemble. An example of a preparatory beat is shown in figure 4-3 and indicated by the word "Start." Clear and concise preparatory beats set the ensemble up for success and should incorporate the following:

- **Use the preparatory beat to establish the tempo.** Preparatory beats are always the same tempo of the music. Communicating and establishing a proper tempo is a must for any ensemble, and it begins with the preparatory beat.
- **Use the preparatory beat to establish dynamics.** The size of the preparatory beat communicates the desired dynamics to the ensemble (e.g., large preparatory beats result in louder dynamics, whereas small preparatory beats result in softer dynamics).
- **Use the preparatory beat to establish the initial style.** The expressive gestures (see paragraph 4-10) used in the preparatory beat communicate the desired style (e.g., legato, staccato, etc.) to the ensemble.

- **Preparatory beats must be clear to the ensemble to avoid false starts.** As a general rule during preparatory beats, move the baton in the opposite direction of the initial beat with an upward slant (see figure 4-3). A downward angle may be misinterpreted as a downbeat by the ensemble. Additionally, conductors should avoid giving more than one preparatory beat (e.g., prepping the prep) to avoid confusing the ensemble

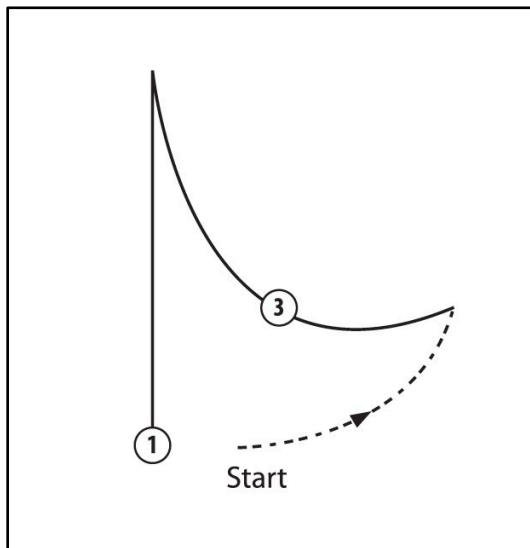


Figure 4-3. National Anthem Preparatory Beat

CUTOFFS IN CONDUCTING

4-6. The cutoff has the opposite responsibility of the preparatory beat—instead of beginning the sound, the cutoff is the signal to stop it. While the cutoff gesture is most often employed at the end of a piece, it can also be used effectively during the music. Since the cutoff gesture is used to stop sound, use it to:

- Ensure musicians end notes and phrases together.
- Mark the end of a phrase.
- Prepare the ensemble for a breath.
- Emphasize a prominent rest.
- End a fermata.

4-7. To perform the cutoff gesture, outline the shape of the letter “C” using the right hand. Start at the top of the letter, moving inward, down, and back outward to complete the motion. If the left hand is incorporated into the cutoff, it simply mirrors the right hand by outlining a reverse letter “C.” Depending on the point of origin, this motion may also outline the letter “O.” Stop the motion when you want the sound to cease (see figure 4-4).

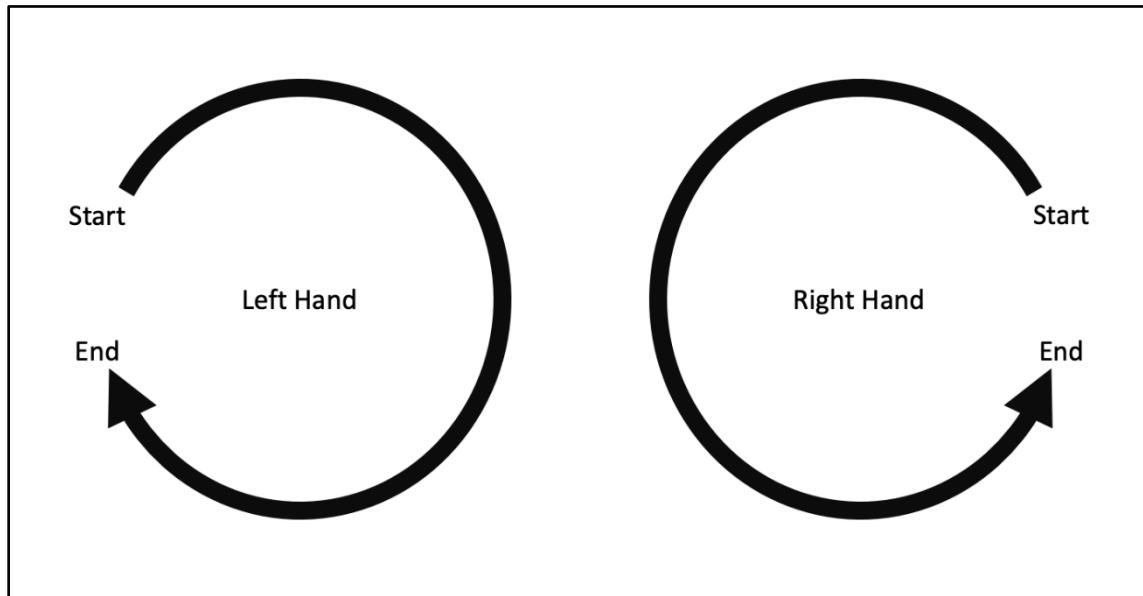


Figure 4-4. The Cutoff Gesture

- 4-8. Much like the characteristics of the preparatory beat, the cutoff gesture should reflect the following:
- Tempo.
 - Dynamics.
 - Style.
 - On which beat the music/sound ends.
 - Who/what should stop playing.
- 4-9. Always ensure that the cutoff gesture is clear and distinct from the conducting pattern.

EXPRESSIVE GESTURES (STYLES)

4-10. **Expressive gestures communicate the mood or style to the ensemble and are characterized by the line of connection from ictus to ictus (what your baton does in the space between the beats).** A smooth, flowing beat pattern with a gentle tap for the ictus demonstrates a legato feel to the ensemble. A heavy line in which the wrist leads and the hand pulls the tip of the baton from beat to beat shows a tenuto character. A light, percussive bounce in the ictus and beat pattern expresses a staccato style.

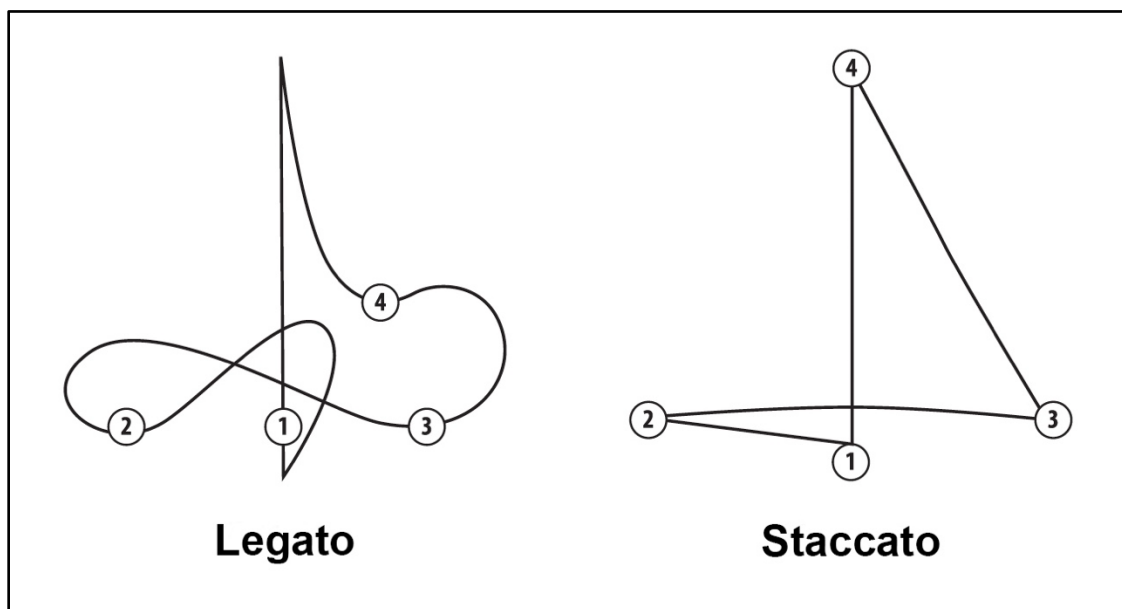


Figure 4-5. Expressive Gestures

4-11. Given the march-like nature of most ceremonial music, ceremonial conducting is most often executed using staccato gestures. Exceptions occur, however, such as during the second strain of the National Anthem (DOD version) or when conducting chorales at a funeral. The ability to easily move between staccato, legato, and tenuto styles should be the eventual goal.

4-12. Regardless of the musical styles and gestures employed, ensure that the ictus is always clearly defined and recognizable.

DYNAMICS

4-13. **Dynamics refers to the overall volume of the ensemble and to the volume of the various sections or individuals within it.** Generally speaking, there are two methods at the disposal of the ceremonial conductor for indicating dynamics to the group: pattern size and left-hand gestures. Using the left hand to control dynamics will be discussed in paragraph 4-21.

4-14. **Pattern Size:** A simple method for controlling the overall dynamic of the ensemble and for changing from one dynamic to another (crescendo, decrescendo) is through varying the size of the conducting pattern. Put very simply, the larger the pattern, the louder the music. The smaller the pattern, the softer the music. When conducting with both hands simultaneously (mirroring), the pattern size should be the same in each hand.

4-15. It should be noted that **dynamics, style, and tempo are independent musical elements**, so adjusting the size of the pattern (and thus the desired dynamic) should not create an accidental change in style. Just because the music requires a quick change from forte to piano does not necessarily mean that the conductor should also switch from a staccato style to a legato one or slow down tremendously if the music does not indicate that change.

4-16. **Left-Hand Gestures:** The left hand is an extremely effective tool for indicating dynamics. See paragraph 4-22 for more information.

CUES

4-17. **Cues are unique gestures that indicate special instructions to musicians and can be given with the baton, hands, eyes, a nod of the head, facial expressions, or similar body language.** In general, cues

should be given with consideration to the style, tempo, and dynamics of the music. Cues can provide a sense of security to musically exposed players. Some typical circumstances where a cue is beneficial for the ceremonial MPT are:

- Major entrances.
- Solo passages.
- When an entire section takes over the main theme.
- Difficult entrances.
- Major dynamic changes.
- Cymbal crashes.

4-18. When the musician or group being cued is on the conductor's right, the baton should be used for the cue. When the musician is on the left, the left hand should be used (see paragraph 4-22). The hands should not cross over each other when cuing. Incorporate eye contact with the hand gesture to reinforce intent.

4-19. Cues are most effective when preceded by a rhythmic preparatory movement one beat before the cue. This better prepares the recipient to respond to the cue on the desired beat.

THE LEFT HAND

4-20. Training the left hand to be independent of the right is an essential skill for all conductors. While mirroring the patterns of the right hand can be an effective practice, it is more important to train the left hand to indicate dynamics, phrasing, and cues. For the purposes of ceremonial conducting, keep the left hand generally relaxed with the fingers together when it is in use. Avoid tensing the hand and let the fingers curve naturally. When not in use for conducting or independent motion, let the left hand rest naturally near the stomach, where it is readily available for efficient employment as needed.

LEFT-HAND DYNAMICS

4-21. The left hand can be employed to show dynamics in multiple, simple ways. For instance, holding the left hand out with the palm facing the players indicates that they need to play more quietly. Conversely, facing the palm up or towards yourself is an indicator that the ensemble should play louder. Crescendos and decrescendos can be indicated by the smooth raising or lowering of the left hand in conjunction with the desired dynamic change. Combining this technique with an adjustment in the pattern size in the right hand gives the ensemble a very clear indication of the conductor's dynamic intent. See Chapter 5 for suggested methods for training this skill.

LEFT-HAND CUES

4-22. The left hand can function independently of the right for the purpose of cuing individuals and groups within the ensemble. To cue, make eye contact with the recipient, then make a definitive motion toward them with the left hand on the beat where the action is required. The cuing motion should be distinctly different from the time beating gesture and should often include a preparatory gesture on the beat prior. Examples of different cuing motions include:

- "The Invitation": invite the player to enter with the palm facing slightly upward on the entrance beat.
- "Throwing the Dart": pantomime throwing an imaginary dart at the player as they enter to indicate a pointed attack.
- Point at the recipient on the entrance beat (direct, forceful).
- Gesture to the recipient with a cupped hand (less direct, more inviting).
- Outline a backward letter "C," moving inward to outward (clockwise), which indicates a harder attack.
- Outline the letter "C," moving outward to inward, used for a softer, more inviting gesture (not to be confused with the cutoff gesture).

- "The Explosion": raise the closed left hand slightly above eye level and open the fingers on the beat of entry. This somewhat theatrical cue is well suited for isolated cymbal crashes (as long as the conductor and cymbal player have eye contact with each other).
- A straight downward motion on the beat.
- A straight upward "lifting" motion on the beat.

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

4-23. Using facial expressions can be an extremely effective means of communicating with the ensemble. Even simple gestures of the eyes and eyebrows can impart split-second instructions to the musicians, while using the whole face to demonstrate an emotion can completely change the ensemble's approach to the music. This may not feel natural for all conductors and requires dedicated practice. Try expressing various emotions while conducting in a mirror in order to become more comfortable doing this on cue. Anthony Maiello describes this practice:

If the music is happy, display "joy," if it is sad exhibit "sorrow" or emot "sadness," if it is slow appear to have "slower movements and less motion," and if it is fast look "brisk, bright, and quick." Above all be sincere, be yourself, and be the music!"

Conducting - A Hands on Approach

4-24. However, the Army ceremonial conductor also needs to consider the balance between emoting for the sake of the music and maintaining an appropriate degree of military bearing. Unlike conducting in a concert band or orchestral setting, expressing too much emotion with the body may detract from the overall ceremonial context or be misinterpreted as disrespectful by some military professionals. **Always uphold the professional standard of the environment in which you are working and save the interpretive body movements for the concert podium.**

Note. The ensemble cannot read the conductor's face if it is stuck in a score and avoids eye contact with the musicians. The conductor should keep their eyes up, paying attention to the music being performed and the ceremony's sequence of events.

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Chapter 5

Training Exercises

This chapter discusses training methods for developing conducting fundamentals. These exercises are designed to help lay the foundation of the new conductor's technique and to help the seasoned conductor refine theirs. They should be practiced as needed to develop proficiency and independence of the hands. Primary emphasis should be placed on those techniques most frequently used during the conduct of a ceremony.

SECTION I – RANGE OF MOTION AND CONTROL EXERCISES

5-1. Use these first two exercises to develop basic mobility, relaxed control of the arms and wrists, and develop an understanding of the plane across which the hands should travel when conducting. These exercises may also form the foundation of a practical conducting warm-up routine and should be practiced without a baton.

Note. Perform the first three exercises in a fluid, relaxed, and controlled manner. To achieve this, imagine that the arms are moving through water and that the hands and wrists are in a natural inclination as they follow the arms.

THE HORIZONTAL STRAIGHT LINE

5-2. This exercise will help develop the straight line horizontal (left/right) movement (see figure 5-1) and wrist flexibility. Ensure that the shoulders are relaxed, the arms hang freely throughout, and the elbows are not resting on the ribcage. The hands will move in a straight line across the front of the body.

5-3. Place crossed hands on the diaphragm, palms facing the body, right fingertips to left wrist, creating a straight horizontal line from elbow to elbow. The upper arms should be hanging freely. Move the hands horizontally outward in a straight line until they reach a point about two-thirds as far as the limit of reach (any further and the shoulders will begin to shrug). The fingertips should continue facing in towards each other throughout the motion and create a right angle with the arms as the wrists bend. At the end of the outward motion, stop.

5-4. Turn the hands so that the palms face front with the fingertips pointing away from each other. Keep the hands and wrists in this position as nearly as possible while returning them to the starting point. When the wrists touch again at the diaphragm, flip the hands so that they once again face inward in the starting position. Repeat the entire motion.

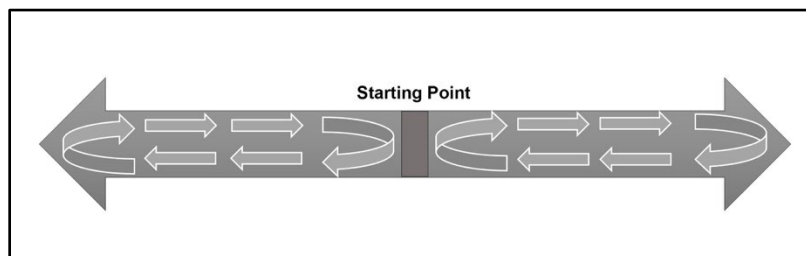


Figure 5-1. The Horizontal Straight Line

THE VERTICAL LINE

5-5. This exercise will help develop wrist flexibility and a sense of motion across the vertical plane (see figure 5-2). Again, ensure that the shoulders remain relaxed throughout and that the arms are hanging freely.

5-6. Let the arms hang full length by the sides with the palms facing backward. Gradually raise the arms to a point just above the top of the head. As the arms raise, keep the fingers pointing toward the ground.

5-7. At the top of the motion, flip the hands so that the palms are facing forward with the fingertips up. Gradually lower the arms, keeping the wrists and fingers in the same position as much as possible. At the bottom of the motion, reset the hands and repeat.

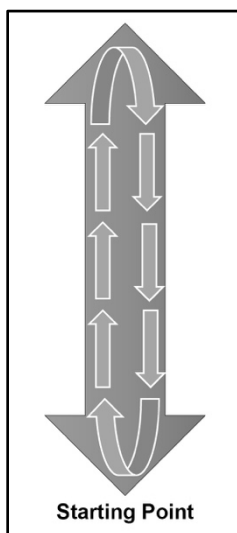


Figure 5-2. The Vertical Line

SECTION II – INDEPENDENCE EXERCISES

THE OPPOSITE VERTICAL LINE

5-8. This exercise uses the same motion as “The Vertical Line” already practiced but incorporates independent motion by having the two hands move in opposite directions simultaneously (see figure 5-3).

5-9. Start with the right arm hanging by the side, fingers are pointing down, and the left arm held up at eye level, palm out, and fingers are pointing straight up. Begin the motion by simultaneously raising the right arm and lowering the left. The wrists and fingers should maintain the same positions during these movements as in the previous exercise.

5-10. At the end of the motion, the right arm will be raised at eye level, and the left arm will be down by the side. Once this position is achieved, flip the hands (right now points up and left now points down). Repeat the motion with the left arm moving up and the right moving down until returning to the starting position.

Note. The hands should reach their stopping points simultaneously despite moving in different directions. Strive to synchronize this motion as it will further develop coordination between the hands.

COMBINED HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL MOTION

5-11. Perform the vertical gesture (see paragraph 5-5) with the right arm while performing the horizontal gesture (see paragraph 5-2) with the left arm.

5-12. Reverse the arms and let the left arm performs the vertical gesture while the right performs the horizontal.

Note. Maintain the straight lines during this exercise. The vertical hand tends to drift to the sides, while the horizontal hand will rise or fall slightly. While performing this exercise, reflect on how the vertical line can intensify the sustain of a tenuto beat and how the horizontal motion relates to moving from count two to count three in a tenuto four pattern.

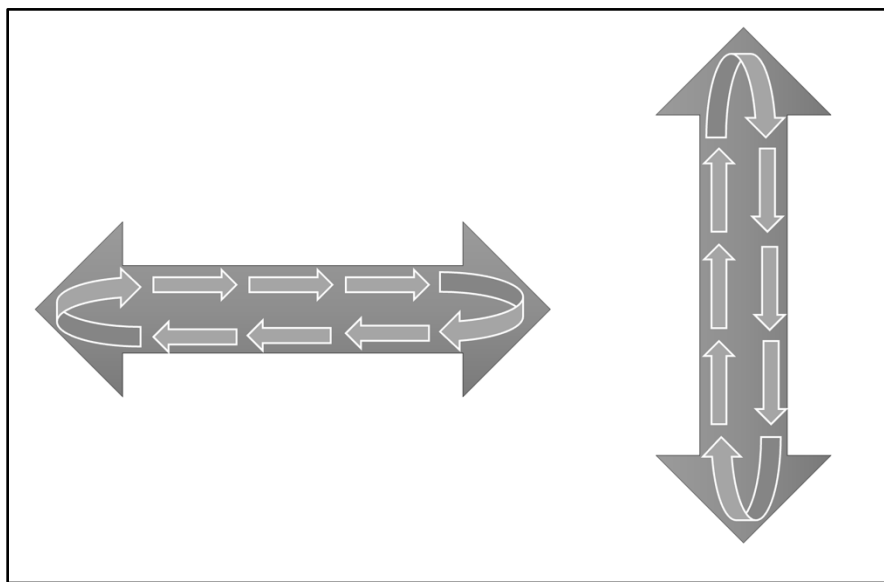


Figure 5-3. Combined Horizontal and Vertical Motion

CRESCENDO/DECRESCENDO

5-13. Conduct eight measures in two with the right hand. During the first four measures, indicate a crescendo by gradually raising the left arm from its position at the side of the body, palm facing up. At the top of the motion (forehead level), reverse the left-hand position so that the palm faces out. During the last four measures, indicate a decrescendo by gradually lowering the left arm, palm down, to its starting position. Strive for accurate timing of the left hand with four measures of crescendo and four measures of decrescendo.

5-14. Focus on maintaining smooth motion with the left hand and not letting the conducting in the right hand cause the left to bounce. Simultaneously, keep the conducting pattern of the right hand steady and recognizable.

5-15. Once this skill is mastered, adjust the size of the right-hand pattern to coincide with the dynamic indication of the left. As the dynamics increase, the size of the pattern should increase. The inverse is true when the dynamics get softer. Try this exercise using multiple time signatures and durations for the crescendo/decrescendo.

CUES

5-16. Let the left arm hang completely relaxed by the side of the body. Begin conducting in four with the right hand. Bring the left hand up in a fist gesture on count three of the measure and then let it drop back to

the relaxed position by the side. Repeat this gesture every other measure. Ensure that the rhythm and pattern of the right hand are not interrupted by the motion of the left. Proceed to the next step once this skill is mastered.

- Now bring the left hand up on the first beat of the measure. This will be more difficult because the motions of the right and left hands will be contrary to each other.
- Continue this process by cuing on beats 4, 3, 2, and 1 in consecutive measures.
- Repeat the exercise with the left hand resting near the diaphragm between cues.
- Once this is comfortable, try using different cuing gestures and expressive gestures.

5-17. Lastly, come up with different permutations of the exercise by changing the time signature, cued beat, and style. For instance:

- Conducting in three using a legato style, cue on the downbeat of the first measure and count two of the second measure. Conduct one measure of time in-between and repeat.
- Conducting in two using a marcato style, cue on count two of the second measure and count one of the fourth measure.

SECTION III – CONDUCTING EXERCISES

SPEED OF MOTION

5-18. This exercise will help develop control over the speed of motion during the line of connection between beats. Using only the baton, conduct a four pattern with a metronome. Keep the beat pattern within a quarter-inch square. Keeping the tempo and style the same, gradually increase the size of the square to a half inch, one inch, two inches, all the way to a ten-inch square. After that, move to 12 inches and increase by 3-inch intervals all the way up to 24 inches. Return downward, interval by interval, to the quarter-inch square.

5-19. Try this exercise using both legato and marcato styles.

CUTOFFS

5-20. Cutoffs will often be used at the logical end of a musical phrase or at the end of a piece of music. Occasionally, they may be used to cut off an individual or section while the rest of the band continues playing. In order to do this, conductors must be able to show the cutoff gesture easily and then seamlessly continue conducting. This exercise will help develop the skill of indicating a cutoff on each beat of a four pattern without a cessation of time beating. These same techniques can be applied to other time signatures than four. It is also effective to mirror the cutoff motion with the left hand. Reference diagrams are included after each exercise. The point of cutoff (where the sound stops) is indicated with a solid line bisecting the baton's line of travel.

5-21. **To cut off on beat one**, conduct beats one and two as normal. On beat three, strike the ictus as normal, but rebound back to the left and perform the cutoff gesture (letter “C” or “O”) on count four, starting the motion at the ictus point of count three and ending the gesture at the ictus point of count one. Continue on to count two as normal (see figure 5-4).

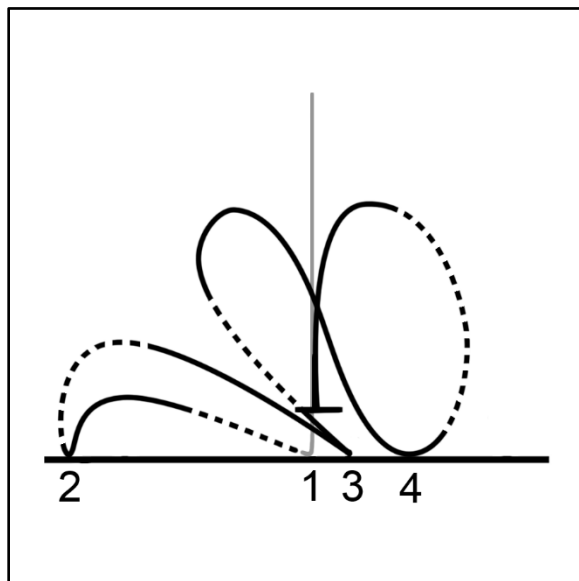


Figure 5-4. Cutoff On Beat One

5-22. **To cut off on beat two**, initiate the cutoff gesture on count one. Outlining a letter “O” and end on count two at the same ictus point as count one. At the end of the gesture (on count two), rebound to the left (or straight up) and then continue into counts three and four as normal (see figure 5-5).

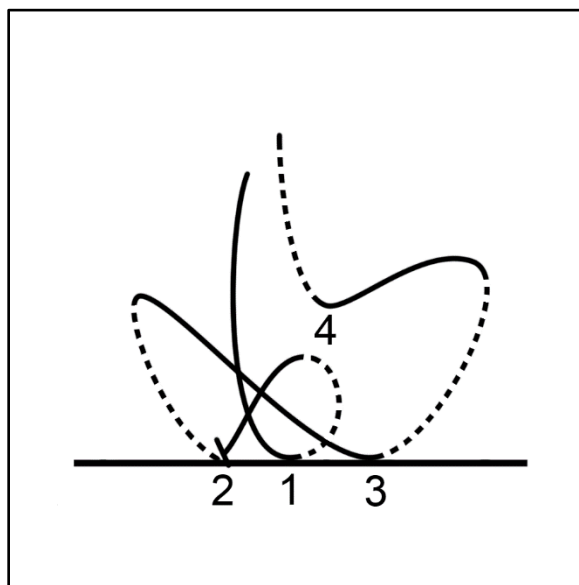


Figure 5-5. Cutoff On Beat Two

5-23. **To cut off on beat three**, begin by rebounding to the left after count one. Initiate the cutoff gesture on count two and stop at nearly the same ictus point as count one. The cutoff gesture will end on count three and end the desired sound. Follow through to the right after count three and continue to count four as normal (see figure 5-6).

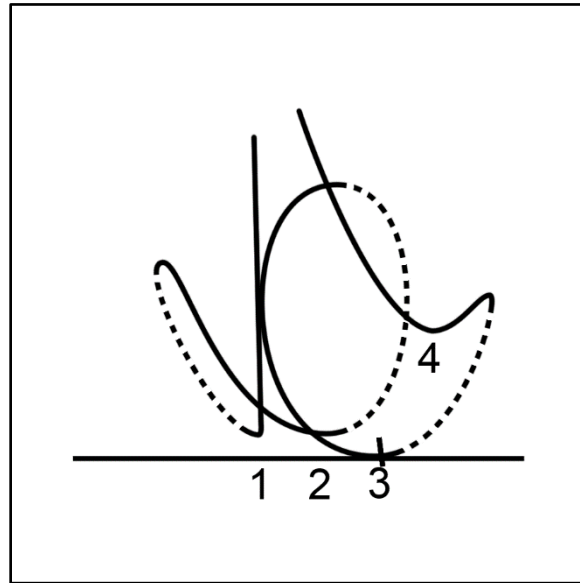


Figure 5-6. Cutoff On Beat Three

5-24. **To cut off on beat four**, conduct beats one and two as normal. On count three, initiate the cutoff gesture and continue through the motion to its natural end on the ictus of count four. Rebound off of count four as normal and continue to count one (see figure 5-7).

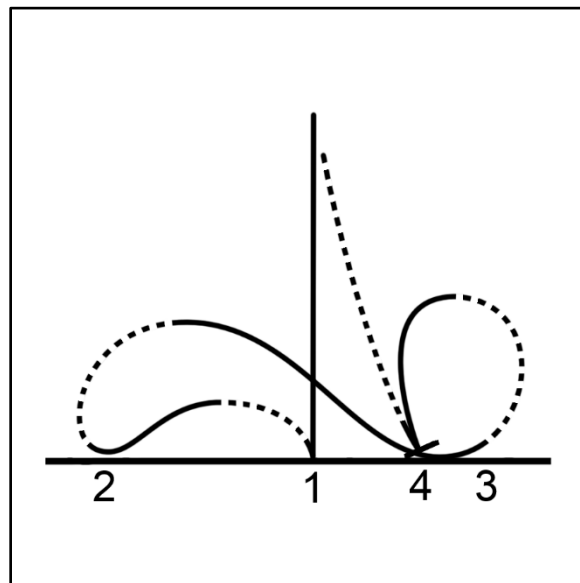


Figure 5-7. Cutoff On Beat Four

THE EXTENDED PLANE

5-25. While most ceremonial conducting happens in the vertical (up/down) and horizontal (left/right) planes, conductors can use the extended plane to create musical intensity. The extended plane (also known as the “sagittal plane”) refers to the space between the conductor and the ensemble. The conductor can extend into this space to increase the intensity and retract out of it to reduce intensity.

5-26. Practice moving in and out of the extended plane by conducting a four pattern at about 60 beats per minute. Start in the ready position with the right hand about eight inches from the body. Keep the pattern relatively small, with only about a six-inch distance between beats two and three. Conduct the first measure as normal. On the second measure, begin gradually extending the arm toward the ensemble, moving the right hand forward about four inches over the course of the measure. Do the same for measures three and four, extending forward four more inches during each measure, ending with the arm completely extended.

5-27. While moving forward, ensure that the pattern size remains the same. This highlights that an increase in intensity does not necessarily mean an increase in volume.

5-28. Once this motion is comfortable, practice the reverse process by starting in the forward position, gradually retracting the arm while maintaining arm position.

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Source Notes

This section lists sources by page number.

- 4-2 Figures 4-1 and 4-2 illustration by Richard Peckham. Wittry, Diane, *Baton Basics: Communicating Music Through Gestures*. Oxford University Press, 2014.
- 4-3 Figure 4-3 illustration by Richard Peckham. Wittry, Diane, *Baton Basics: Communicating Music Through Gestures*. Oxford University Press, 2014.
- 4-5 Figure 4-5 illustration by Richard Peckham. Wittry, Diane, *Baton Basics: Communicating Music Through Gestures*. Oxford University Press, 2014.
- 4-7 “If the music is happy...”: Maiello, Anthony, *Conducting: A Hands-On Approach* (2nd ed.). Belwin Mills Publishing Corp., 1996.

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Glossary

The glossary lists all acronyms and terms with Army or joint definitions.

SECTION I – ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Army doctrinal publication
AR	Army regulation
ATP	Army techniques publication
DOD	Department of Defense
FM	field manual
MPT	music performance team
TC	training circular
U.S.	United States

SECTION II – TERMS

music performance team

A team that offers the flexibility to support concurrent musical missions in multiple geographical areas. (ATP 1-19)

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TC 1-19.51
1 September 2022

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

JAMES C. MCCONVILLE
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Official:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark F. Averill', written in a cursive style.

MARK F. AVERILL
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