

The Conductor's Part Always Isn't in the Score

a Clinic Presented

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The score serves as the conductor's roadmap, yet it provides only a portion of the information a music director needs to successfully lead an ensemble. Explore a range of practical applications on leadership, stage etiquette and conducting technique that you can use to fulfill the multiple roles of a conductor.

1. THE CONDUCTOR AS A LEADER

- Inspire performers to do their best; inspire the following in each player
 - Desire to belong to the group; pride of membership
 - Willingness to practice the music on their own
 - Willingness to attend and work hard at all rehearsals
 - Desire to give the best at concerts

- How can I become a better leader as a conductor?
 - Study problems of leadership
 - Study as much as possible about music and non-musical subjects (languages, literature, art, architecture, acoustics, sports)
 - Choose music you love
 - Choose your proper work level
 - Take a personal interest in your players
 - Develop a clear conducting technique

2. PRACTICING CONDUCTING

- Use audio and visual aids – recordings, mirrors, videotapes, metronomes

- Visualize a group

- Sing

- Conduct in silence

- Develop your ears

- Develop independence in your left hand

3. STAGE ETIQUETTE

- Pre-concert check
 - Make sure ensemble is set up properly
 - Don't leave cases or extra equipment on stage
 - Make sure sound equipment, lights are working
 - Check podium and height of conductor's stand
 - Plan your path to the podium
 - Plan final bows
 - Leave scores on stage
- Conductor's stage entrance
 - Move to the podium with a continuous flow and sense of purpose
 - Carry your baton with you
 - Acknowledge the audience with a smile and bow
- In between musical selections
 - Don't change the music immediately
 - Recognize the ensemble, soloists, composer and/or arranger
- While you're conducting
 - Avoid bending or stooping
 - Keep shoulders down in relaxed, normal position
 - Avoid looking casual or indifferent, unless you want to relax the atmosphere in a tense moment
 - Avoid annoying habits (including those with keys, glasses, watches)
- Announcements
- Concert attire

4. CONDUCTING SOLOS

- Agree with the soloist on interpretation before the first rehearsal
- Rehearse the ensemble before adding the soloist
- Be prepared for surprises