

Table of Contents

About This Book	8
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PART I MOVEMENTS, POSTURE, AND BEAT PATTERNS

1 Basic Movements	13
The Bounce	
The Pendulum	
The Lemniscate (Figure Eight)	
Uneven and Even Beats	
The Circle	
The Conducting Line and the Beating Points	
2 Indicating Cues, Endings, and Tempo	21
Indicating Entrances	
Ending a Sound	
Starting and Stopping Using the Pendulum or Lemniscate	
Predictable Movements	
Indicating a Tempo	
Indicating Slowing Down	
The Choir's Reaction Time	
3 Posture	30
The Basic Posture for the Hand	
Demanding a Loud Sound	
Indicating a Soft Sound	
Flexibility of the Hand	
The Posture of the Arms	
Openness	
Mouth Postures	
Relaxation and Strength	

4	Beat Patterns	39
	The Four-Beat Pattern	
	The Three-Beat Pattern	
	The Two-Beat Pattern	
	The One-Beat Pattern	
	Six-Beat Patterns	
	Other Beat Patterns	
5	The Anchor Pattern	50
	Beat Patterns According to the Anchor	
	Relationship to the Conventional Patterns	
	Pros and Cons of the Anchor Method	
6	The Size of the Conducting Movements	61
	Placement of the Conducting Line	
	Space for the Conducting Movements	
	Loudness and the Size of the Conducting Movements	
	Tempo and the Size of the Conducting Movements	
	Simplified Movements in Faster Tempi	
7	Common Mistakes in Beat Patterns	60
	Moving Too Vertically	
	Making the First Beat Too Low	
	Making the Last Beat Too High	
	Giving Insufficient Space at the Right Side	
	Strange Last Beat	
	Corners in Between the Beats	
8	Changes in Time	67
	Switching Between Time Signatures	
	Time Change Plus a Change of Tempo	
9	Choosing Alternative Beat Patterns	71
	Combining Beats in a Movement	
	Combining Three Beats	
	Conducting a Smaller Beat	
	Combining Measures	

.....

PART II CONDUCTING WITH TWO HANDS

10 The Left Hand	77
The Functions of the Left Hand	
Left-Handed Directors	
Independence of the Hands	
Showing Connections	
Articulations	
Other Functions of the Left Hand	
The Basic Position of the Left Hand	
11 Conducting Volume	97
Indicating Dynamics	
Positive Gestures	
Openness in Indicating Softness	
12 Cueing Entrances	91
The Preparatory Movement	
Entrances in the Middle of Sentences	
Entrances on the First Beat	
Upbeats of One Beat	
Entrances on Other Beats of the Measure	
The Loudness of Entrances	
Entrances in Between Beats	
Other Moments Between Two Beats	
Mirroring Movements of the Right Hand	
13 Cut-Offs	103
Indicating the End of a Sound	
Movements for Cut-Offs	
Endings Consonants	
An Entrance Directly After a Cut-Off	
Cut-Off in Between Beats	
Cut-Off and Entrance in a Single Movement	
14 Eye Contact and Focus	111
Watching	
Looking at Sections of the Choir	
Cueing with Two Hands	
Cueing with the Right Hand	

.....

PART III ADVANCED TECHNIQUES

15	Complex Time	119
	Five Beats in a Measure	
	Seven Beats in a Measure	
	Combining Beats in Complex Time	
16	Passive Conducting	125
	Indicating the Tempo with Passive Conducting	
	Entrances on the First Beat	
	Entrances on an Upbeat	
	Entrances on Other Beats	
	Passive Conducting in Fast Tempi	
	Passive Conducting and Flow	
17	Subdivision	134
	Indicating a Moment in Between Beats	
	Moments in Between Beats in the Patterns	
	Subdividing While Slowing Down	
	Subdividing to Prevent Rushing	
	Three- and Two-Beat Patterns with Subdivisions	
	Subdividing in Odd Time Signatures in High Tempi	
	Subdividing in a Triple Division	
	Indicating Subdivisions on the Conducting Line	
18	Fermatas	143
	A Fermata	
	Different Kinds of Fermatas	
	In Between the Beats	
	Directions in Fermatas	
19	Varied and Effective Conducting	149
	Listening to the Choir	
	Varying Gestures	
	Making Movements Smaller Prior to a Loud Sound	
	Not Showing the Tempo	
	Cueing or Not Cueing	

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APPENDICES

Folk Songs	156
Amazing Grace	
Aura Lee	
Barbara Allen	
Black Is the Color	
Black Velvet Band	
Danny Boy	
Early One Morning	
The Foggy Dew	
Golden Slumbers	
Greensleeves	
Lavender's Blue	
Molly Malone	
Red Is the Rose	
The Salley Gardens	
Scarborough Fair	
She's Like the Swallow	
Waltzing Matilda	
Glossary	164
Anatomy of the Four-Beat Pattern	167

Part I

Movements, Posture, and Beat Patterns



Chapter 1

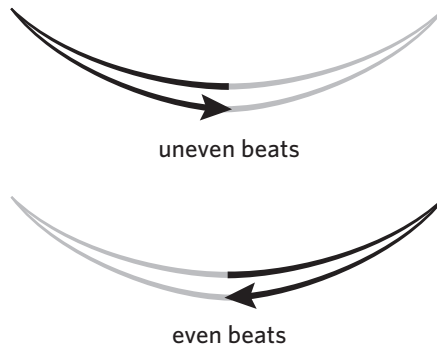
Basic Movements

In this chapter, we will look at the elementary movements of the conducting technique. We start with a simple vertical movement called the bounce. Next, we will consider more complex forms, including the pendulum, the lemniscate, and the circle movement. The bounce is used in particular to indicate entrances. The pendulum and the lemniscate are used as building blocks for beat patterns, which are employed to beat full bars, while the circle movement is used primarily for indicating the end of sounds.

The basic movements in this chapter are easy to learn, but it is important to practice them until you can use them fluently. This fluency of the basic movements will make learning more complex beat patterns much easier.

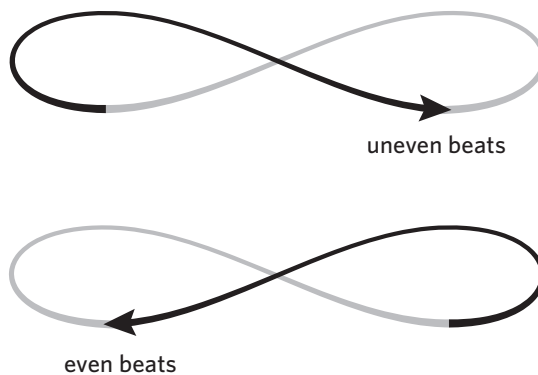
Uneven and Even Beats

When practicing the pendulum, try to move to the right on the uneven beats and to the left on the even beats whenever possible (for the moment we assume that you are using your right hand). This means that on the uneven beats the movement is to the outside and on the even beats it's to the inside:



In this way, the directions correspond to those of the beat patterns with two and four beats. (We will deal with beat patterns in Chapter 4).

The same applies to the lemniscate. In a measure with two or four beats, move to the right on the uneven beats and to the left on even beats:



Chapter 4

Beat Patterns

Beat patterns are schemes for conducting full measures. A beat pattern describes the directions the hand should move in on the different beats. The pattern that you apply depends upon the number of beats in the measure. For example, in a bar with two beats, the two-beat pattern is used, while for a measure with three beats the three-beat pattern is suited, and so forth.

The singers discern the beats you are conducting from the direction of your movements. For example, before the first beat, the hand moves in a vertical direction and before the other beats, you make more curved and horizontal movements. So, the movement before the first beat is similar to a bounce, and those before other beats are similar to the lemniscate. This helps the singers to make the distinction between the first beat and the rest.

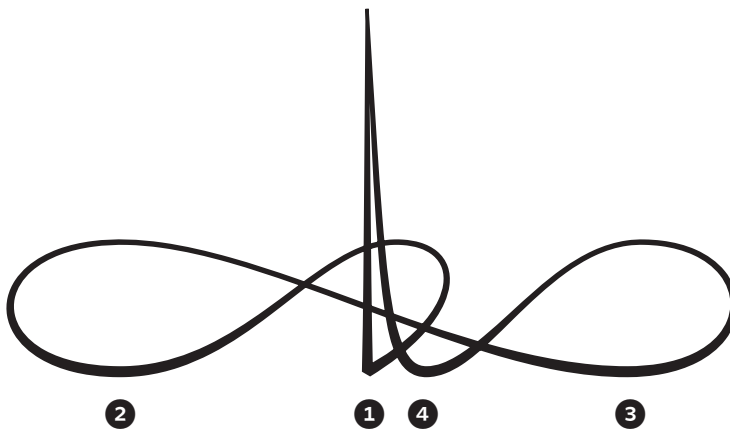
In this chapter, we will look first at the four-beat pattern, because it is the pattern most often used in conducting. Next, we will discuss the three-beat, then the two-beat, the one-beat, and the six-beat patterns. At the end of this chapter, we will discuss how to create patterns for all kinds of time signatures, with existing beat patterns as a starting point.

The Four-Beat Pattern

THE BASIC PATTERN

The beat pattern for a measure with four beats is called the four-beat pattern. This pattern can be applied for example in $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{3}{2}$, and $\frac{4}{8}$ time. It is also suitable for $\frac{12}{8}$ time, in which case each movement is corresponding to a group of three eighth notes.

The convention in the four-beat pattern is that the first beat lies in the middle, the second beat on the left side, the third beat on the right side, and the fourth beat back in the middle. The beat pattern looks like this:



The movement before ① is vertical. After the fourth beat you move more or less straight up and then down again. The vertical movement makes it easy for the singers to recognize the first beat. The movements before ②, ③, and ④ are much lower than that before ①. Notice that after the first beat the movement starts to the right, although the second beat is actually on the left side. The reason for this is that the movement between ① and ② would otherwise be too small in comparison to the other movements.

The length of the movement before ① is more or less the same as to the side before the other beats. This means that the width of the beat pattern is approximately twice its height. By having movements that are approximately the same size, you indicate a constant volume. (We'll have a close look at the volume of beat patterns in Chapter 6.)

In the image above, the first and fourth beats are shown next to each other. This way, the pattern can easily be understood. In reality, you can have ① and ④ exactly on the same spot. We have also drawn the movement after ① as quite small, but this choice is also made for the clarity of the diagram. In reality, you can move farther to the right after ① as well.