

4.8 Figures



Figures 2a and 2b: Downbeat. This fundamental gesture in Morris' Conduction® vocabulary is used to commence and/or activate a directive.¹⁵

¹⁵ Conduction signs and gestures photos courtesy of Lawrence D. "Butch" Morris who retains all rights. The numbers associated with each image only have meaning in their original context – a workbook being developed by Morris for publication. Descriptions of these signs and gestures are adapted from this workbook and are used by permission of the author, Butch Morris.



Figure 3: Sustain. Play one continuous sound as long as hand remains palm up.



Figure 4: Repeat. If the musician *is not* playing when the *repeat sign* is given, the musician must construct information that is then repeated. The *repeat sign* is followed by a *downbeat*. If the musician *is* playing, and if the desire is to capture (previously played) information from that musician, the *repeat sign* is given followed by a *downbeat* at the end of the information to be repeated. If there is information to be captured (from any source or combination of sources), the *repeat sign* will be given to a musician or musicians with the left hand, then the information to be captured will be identified either by pointing with the right or left hand in the direction of the sound or by a gesticular emulation of that sound, followed by a *downbeat*.



Figures 5a and 5b: Dynamics. Top image indicates *fortississimo* (the very loudest), bottom image indicates *pianississimo* (the softest). In his workbooks, Morris uses the standard three f's and three p's as abbreviations for the Italian.



Figures 6a and 6b: Dynamics. This sign is an alternative to the gestures shown in figure for indicating dynamic level. Clenched fist held to the chest area indicates louder. The finger to the lips is used to indicate softer.

9. Change in tonality up



10. Change in tonality down



Figures 7a and 7b: Thumb up indicates a higher register or an increase in pitch. Thumb down calls for a lower register or a decrease in pitch.



Figure 8: Panorama



Figure 9: Pedestrian.



Figures 10a, 10b, and 10c: Expand or Develop.

18. Literal movement



Figure 11: Literal Motion. Baton is used to carve out a melodic contour in the space between the conductor and the performer. The range of the baton indicates the sonic register on the instrument: the lower the baton the lower the sound, the higher the baton the higher the sound.

Appendix II: A Conduction® Vocabulary²⁴

1. SUSTAIN (FERMATA OR HELD SOUND)

Description of Sign:

Left hand palm up, arm extended toward the musicians you wish to commence.

Meaning:

One continuous sound.

Explanation:

The sign for '*sustain*' is given, followed by a *downbeat* to commence 'one continuous sound'. This sound may be changed each time a downbeat is given.

The sign for sustain may be given to prolong individual sounds of notation.

2. DOWNBEAT

Description of Gesture:

Downward stroke of hand or baton.

Meaning:

Used to 'begin', commence and or activate a directive.

Explanation:

Given after a preparatory sign or gesture to commence and or execute. The downbeat is given *bigger* than all preparatory information.

3. REPEAT

Description of Sign:

Left hand forming the letter "U".

Meaning:

To 'capture' (emulate, imitate or follow) information, as close as possible, if not verbatim, by rhythmic graft, (it could mean to 'vamp or riff').

Explanation:

There are three circumstances in which this sign is used:

1. If the musician *is not* playing when the *repeat sign* is given, the musician must construct information (be it purely sonic, melodic, rhythmic or any combination, the utilization of 'rests' is encouraged) that is then repeated

²⁴ Provided and formatted by Lawrence D. "Butch" Morris.

(in essence) until the musician understands how his/her information fits into the immediate sonic structure, at this point the musician is at liberty to *develop* that information, never losing sight of his/her original idea. (In some cases this could be understood as a 'vamp or riff'). The *repeat sign* is followed by a *downbeat*.

2. If the musician *is* playing, and the desire is to capture (previously played) information from that musician, the *repeat sign* is given followed by a *downbeat* at the end of the information to be repeated.
3. If there is information to be captured (from any source or combination of sources), the *repeat sign* will be given to a musician or musicians with the left hand, then the information to be captured will be identified either by pointing with the right or left hand in the direction of the sound or by a gesticular emulation of that sound, followed by a *downbeat*.

4. ACCOMPANY

Description of sign:

While pointing with right hand (baton) and looking at the musician(s) you wish to take this directive, with left hand index finger pointing to left ear, then to the information/musician you wish to have accompanied/supported.

Meaning:

To support and assist particular activity.

Explanation:

This sign is used to distribute and develop supportive substructures. The musician accompanies existing information by supporting/reinforcing its sonic, rhythmic, harmonic and/or structural content. This sign is 'gravitational'; no downbeat is used

5. IMAGING/SHAPEING

Description of Sign:

Left hand pointing to chest, while indicating by pointing (with right hand) to, and/or looking at the musician(s) you wish to take this directive.

Meaning:

To elaborate, articulate, shape, develop and/or create variations in real time on existing information. Syntax.

Explanation:

1. The conductor must first establish/appropriate a visual representation of the ensemble information, be it by graphic contour and/or rhythmic, and then reshape (morph) that sonic idea through gestural suggestion. The musician should never lose sight of his/her idea, but alter it according to

visual representation, then returning to their idea with the sign (gesture) 'reconstruct', or the sign 'go back'.

6A-6B DYNAMICS (Loud – Soft/FFF – PPP)

There are two distinct ways to transmit dynamics:

Description of Gesture:

1. Palm(s) of left (and/or right) hand(s) facing the floor, raising them for louder, lowering them for softer. Executed without downbeat, response is immediate.

Description of Sign:

2. Left hand clenched-fist in chest area for loud, Left hand index finger to lips for soft. Downbeat follows directive.

7. MEMORY

Description of Sign:

Left hand to forehead, followed by a numerical designation. (memory 1 – one finger; memory 2 – two fingers, etc.)

Meaning:

Memory is a sign for the recall (and re-evaluation) of specific information.

Explanation:

Whatever the musician is playing when the memory designation is given is what the musician recalls and returns to when that designation is repeated with a downbeat.

8. PREPARE (Pay Attention)

Description of Sign:

Left hand palm facing musician(s) or ensemble.

Meaning:

Indicates that musician(s) are about to receive preparatory information.

Explanation:

1. If the musician 'is' playing when the *prepare* sign is given, s/he continues to explore their point of information but awaits and pays attention to preparatory information. Once the new information is given, and with a downbeat, s/he changes to new information.

2. If the musician 'is not' playing, s/he gives all attention to preparatory information.

This sign is generally given before graphic or rhythmic information and when multiple directives are being given.

9a-9b. CHANGE IN TONALITY

Description of Sign:

Left hand thumb 'up'.

Left hand thumb 'down'.

Meaning:

To transpose, transfer, shift or harmonize what ever a musician is playing up or down in respective order to a higher or lower sonic range.

Explanation:

Depending on which sign is given, the musician 'moves' what s/he is playing up to a higher, or down to a lower pitch or tonality on downbeat.

A gradual 'move' can be achieved by turning the thumb slowly without downbeat.

Either the left or right hand may give the downbeat.

10. TEMPO (PULSE OR METER)

Description of gesture:

Right hand or baton in chest area beating desired pulse. The left hand should beat "1" when making a distinction between 2, 3, 4, etc, beats to a measure.

Meaning:

When a pulse or meter is desired, or tempo modifications.

Followed by downbeat.

11. PROPORTIONAL SPEED

Description of Sign:

With the fingers of the left hand pointing to the floor, indicating;

1, index finger – SLOW (speed)

2, index and middle fingers – MEDIUM (speed)

3, index, middle and third fingers – FAST (speed)

Meaning:

To indicate immediately a 'relative' change of speed.

12. RHYTHM

Description of Gesture:

Right arm extended toward ensemble or musicians intended to receive rhythmic information.

Meaning:

To replicate or make clear an existing rhythm pattern, or to create rhythm.

Explanation:

The right hand (baton) taps the desired rhythmic idea while the left hand gives "1" or the beginning of the rhythm to be played.

(Although the rhythm may be given with both hands with a strong "1" given by either hand.)

13. DEVELOP < -- >

Description of Gesture:

Hands palm to palm facing left and right, chest level, separating left and right and returning.

Meaning:

Is used to variate, elaborate, embellish, transform, adorn, manipulate, augment, diminish, fragment, deconstruct or reconstruct a specific 'point of information'.

Explanation:

When the palms are together, this is the position of the specific information (idea or point of information) to be developed. As the hands separate the development of information takes place, as the hands return to the together position a reconstruction of the idea takes place, when the hands reach the together position this is the downbeat for the return to the initial information. The degree of development is determined in stages by the space between the hands.

13a. DEVELOP (Round -Canon)

Description of Gesture:

Hands palm-to-palm, facing up and down at chest level, spreading up and down.

Meaning:

Indicates that the musician maintain the rhythmic structure of an idea by syncopation, varying, elaborating, embellishing, transforming, adorning, manipulating, augmenting, diminishing, fragmenting, punctuating, deconstructing, and reconstructing while supporting the harmonic/melodic content of his/her 'point of information'.

Explanation:

When the palms are together, this is the position of the specific information (idea or point of information) to be developed. As the hands separate the development of information takes place, as the hands return to the together position a reconstruction of the idea takes place, when the hands reach the together position this is the downbeat for the return to the initial information. The degree of development is determined in stages by the space between the hands.

Each musician is responsible for developing their own information in their own time.

14. Entry (Pedestrian)

Description of Gesture:

A wave of the left hand, as if to beckon, *come in*.

Meaning:

To designate (a) pedestrian.

Explanation:

The *pedestrian* is free of all ensemble directives temporarily. Pedestrians may choose to contribute by playing or not, yet their major duty is to qualify ensemble information as a (major) contributor to the overall compositional construction. This response is gravitational, no downbeat is given. The pedestrian resumes his/her place in the ensemble when they are given an *overruling directive* specific to the pedestrian.

15. FEATURE (SOLO)

Description of Gesture:

Pointing to musician desired, left hand index finger as if to beckon.

Meaning:

To designate a featured musician (soloist).

Explanation:

The *soloist* is free of all ensemble directives temporarily and quantifies ensemble information. This response is gravitational, no downbeat is given. The soloist resumes his/her place in the ensemble when they are given an *overruling directive* specific to the soloist.

16. LITERAL MOVEMENT

Description of Sign:

Placement of baton parallel to the body, in front of the face.

Meaning:

Real-time, mid-air graphic information.

Explanation of Gesture:

The range of the baton indicates the sonic register on the instrument, the lower the baton the lower the sound, the higher the baton the higher the sound. Each musician who has been given this directive is obliged to 'read' and interpret the movement of the baton on their instrument as it transmits graphic information. The downbeat is the first gesture made after the *Literal Movement* sign is given.

17. PANORAMA

Description of Sign:

The baton upside-down, parallel to body.

Meaning:

To stop, then begin or begin then stop a contribution.

Explanation:

After the *Panorama* sign is given:

1. If the musician 'is not' contributing (at rest or is not playing); when the baton enters his/her physical (body) field they 'contribute only' in the moment that the baton is in their physical field.
2. If the musician 'is' contributing (playing); when the baton enters his/her physical (body) field they must 'stop only' in the moment that the baton is in their field, then resume their contribution.

The downbeat is the first movement of the baton following the description.

18. PEDAL

Description of Sign:

Left hand palm down in front of chest

Meaning:

Attack and decay/diminuendo.

19. ARTICULATION

Description of sign:

Right hand or baton parallel to body over right shoulder giving 'small preliminary instruction'.

Meaning:

Indicates how (the following) sounds are to be enunciated, short or long. Followed by 'larger' gestures of the preceding which satisfy a downbeat requirement.