

BASIC CONDUCTING

MUS 290
Professor John V. Sinclair
Room 139, Keene Hall

Fall, 2010
T & TH 2:00—3:15
Room 119
Reinhold Room

Definition of Conducting

Conducting is communicating thought and emotion through gesture; in essence--silent interaction. The role and scope of the conductor is multi-faceted. A successful conductor must be a musician, scholar, performer, teacher, coach, artist, and advocate. In addition to musical attributes, being a conductor often seems like you are a psychologist, ambassador, role model, disciplinarian, manager, financial officer, public relations person, fund-raiser, writer, speaker, motivator, and visionary. A conductor should be charismatic, respected, creative, devoted, and a self-assured master learner.

Class Objectives: The purposes of this class are to:

- acquaint students with basic conducting terminology.
- equip students with fundamental conducting technique.
- provide students with a positive environment with practical opportunities
- practice his or her conducting skills.
- discuss performance practices and characteristic styles of musical eras.
- inform students of the multi-faceted roles and responsibilities of the conductor.
- improve student's rhythmic sense and ability to visualize metrical pattern.

Grading and Assessment

Final Exam	25%
Mid-term exam	25%
Classroom Conducting	20%
Literature list	10%
Personal textbook	10%
Listening Log	5%
Concert/rehearsal attendance	5%

Due dates and Deadlines

December 2 (2:00-3:15) &
December 7 (2:00-4:00) plus
class time last week of class
October 12 & 14 during class
Each class session
November 30
November 30
Last day of class (December 2)
During Bach's Beethoven 9th week
(detailed schedule to follow)

Description of Projects and Assessment Criteria

- The final exam will include conducting a prepared selection for the class. Classmates and other invited guests may have an opportunity to assess your skill in conducting. The final is graded like a jury. Options from which to select will be presented to you for two weeks prior to the exam.
- The mid-term exam will include conducting a prepared piece and a quiz testing knowledge of conducting and basic music terminology.
- A personal textbook is designed to encourage each student to collect articles, notes, and other pertinent materials to make this conducting class more personally meaningful and suitable to his or her own musical discipline. For example, a student interested in choral music may choose to include materials specifically meant to advance his or her knowledge of choral conducting and the specific techniques required. Each personal textbook should have at least seven chapter (topic) headings. The “textbook” should be submitted in either a notebook form or on a disk. Please remember that this project, if done correctly, will be very valuable to you as a reference guide in the future.
- A literature list of repertoire is comprised of music you know or literature you would like to put in your repertoire. While there is no required number of entries, it should be comprehensive and should be complete enough to serve as a reference in the future.
- Keep a listening log of works you have listened to throughout the semester. Should have a least several entries per week.
- Attend either a performance or a rehearsal of the Bach Festival’s fall concert. We will discuss what is important to observe during that time.

Additional course expectations: To be successful in this class each student should:

- practice daily.
- attend at least 5 concerts that use a conductor this semester.
- participate fully in all class sessions. (Upon the second absence and each subsequent absence, 3% of your final grade will be deducted)
- understand that not complying with any course expectation could result in a lower grade.
- read all assigned readings and be prepared to discuss the topic. (order to be announced)
- often an additional (optional) session with the instructor will be announced. This cannot substitute for a missed class period.

Class Topics and Assigned Readings

Listed below are topics to be covered during this semester. Each student will be responsible for having completed the assigned reading on the day the topic is to be discussed. The reading assignment will be given at least one class session in advance. The discussions may not necessarily be in the order of the listed topics.

- The role and scope of conducting
- Posture and hand autonomy
- The right hand's and the rebound
- Preparatory beat
- Conducting entrances and attacks
- The conductor's frame and readiness
- Basic fundamental conducting patterns
- Compound meters
- Cueing
- Sub-division and articulation
- Style, pulses, and accents
- Tempo changes
- Cut-offs, cadences, fermatas, and other nuances
- The left hand
- Choral vs. Instrumental conducting
- Baton vs. hand technique
- Choral conducting fundamentals
- Instrumental conducting fundamentals
- Concepts in leadership as related to conducting
- Performance practices of historic musical eras
- Rehearsal techniques
- Seating, sectionals, and auditions
- Working with professional musicians and contracts
- Programming and selecting repertoire
- Interpretation and expression
- Specialty conducting (opera, musicals, ballet, oratorios)
- Accompanying a soloist
- Performance anxiety
- Suggestions for continued study and growth

Academic Honor Code

Membership in the student body of Rollins College carries with it an obligation, and requires a commitment, to act with honor in all things. Because academic integrity is fundamental to the pursuit of

knowledge and truth and is the heart of the academic life of Rollins College, it is the responsibility of all members of the College community to practice it and to report apparent violations.

The following pledge is a binding commitment by the students of Rollins College:

The development of the virtues of Honor and Integrity are integral to a Rollins College education and to membership in the Rollins College community. Therefore, I, a student of Rollins College, pledge to show my commitment to these virtues by abstaining from any lying, cheating, or plagiarism in my academic endeavors and by behaving responsibly, respectfully and honorably in my social life and in my relationships with others.

This pledge is reinforced every time a student submits work for academic credit as his/her own. Students shall add to all papers, quizzes, tests, lab reports, etc., the following handwritten abbreviated pledge followed by their signature:

“On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work.”

Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge; submission implies signing the pledge.

Text: Basic Conducting Techniques, Sixth edition, Joseph Labuta, Prentice Hall, 2010.