Notes on Deanna Joseph’s Conducting Workshop

**Use the fulcrum that looks like the music**

In other words, when conducting, you have four main choices:

* Fingers, bending at the knuckle
* Hands, bending at the wrists
* Forearms, bending at the elbow
* Arms, bending at the shoulder

Based on my observation of Ms. Joseph’s conducting style, and of the problems I’ve had communicating through my conducting, I think that perhaps one would be more effective by **not combining the use of fulcrums** except for special effects.

In other words, make the arm/hand/fingers as much like a stick as possible. This makes it easier for the chorus to follow and see the ictus. When one conducts with the arm, *only* the shoulder should be flexible. The elbow, wrist and fingers would remain stable. When conducting with the wrist, *only* the wrist should be flexible. The hand, elbow and shoulder would remain still.

**Too much preparation leads to uncertainty of timing with the breath.**

The chorus needs to know when to breathe. They can’t simply watch the conductor for a cue, or they’ll breathe late. They need to have an intrinsic sense of when they will breathe, with the conductor’s breath merely acting as a confirmation of that idea.

The breath must be fluid and easy, neither too quick or too slow. A well-timed breath will eliminate either the gasping (too quick) or the uncertain (too slow) breath that comes from not knowing exactly when to breathe.

**Preparation**

Ms. Joseph’s preparation tended to begin with the arms crossed and frozen until the moment one conducted the **single** preparatory beat. At that moment, the arm/wrist/hand moved towards the ictus point of the prep beat (If conducting a four pattern, the hand moves to the third beat).

**Offbeats**

Ms. Joseph used a shoulder pulsation to help define conducting of the offbeats.

**Diminuendo**

Ms. Joseph recommended bringing the arm closer to the body for diminuendo rather than lower to the ground. Bringing the arm closer in suggests more intimacy, as you have to get closer to someone speaking quietly.

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