

# CBDNA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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## Revealing Intentionality: A New Sequence for Conducting Instruction

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### Introduction

- Integrity in conducting – Defining our art

***Conducting** is musical leadership – aural expectation manifested physically. Conductors must predicate their physical actions upon the needs of the music.*

*In conducting, the aural image must be in place before the body moves.*

*Once the aural image is achieved, the body must be available for use. The conductor must understand how his/her body works and be aware of its motions at all times.*

***Pre-emptive conducting** relies upon your ability to resonate with the music. This is done most effectively with contour and contrast.*

*There must be enough cognitive space available to listen and process what you hear from the ensemble instantaneously.*

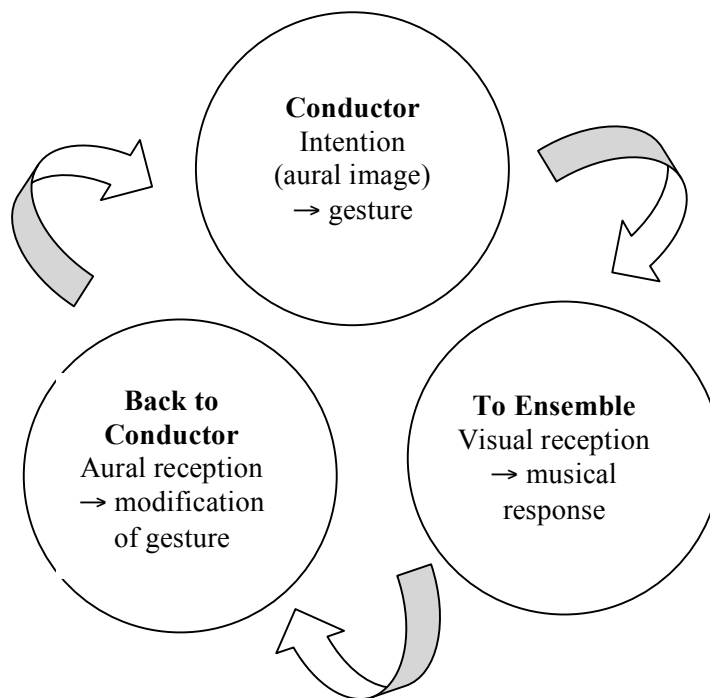
***Corrective conducting** relies upon the ability to physically manifest the change you desire from the ensemble to match your aural image. We show this needed change most effectively through contour and contrast.*

*Effective conducting is much like improvisation. Awareness and technique serve the exigencies of the moment – not some pre-conditioned plan.*

- Pedagogical and philosophical principles

### Sequence of Instruction

- **Unit I – Principles of Motion**
  - Awareness of imbalance and tension
  - Expanding the perceived range of motion
  - Finding the center of gravity
  - Unrestricted free movement
  - The concept of balancing (active) vs. position (static)
  - Attention to fluidity while in motion
  - Fundamental wrist exercise
    - Hinges and progressive engagement
  - Changes in expressive state
  - Defining the conducting space
    - Horizontal, vertical and sagittal space
  - Variables of speed and space
  - The concept of weight – “Now” Explosions
  - Listening as part of the feedback cycle



- **Unit II – Single Sounds**
  - Contour Neutral
    - Preparations & Releases
  - Specificity in beginning, middle and end of sound
  - *The Single Sound Song*
- **Unit III – From Single Sounds to Multiple Sounds**
  - Establishing specific connections between sounds
    - Space and duration
      - Introduction to melded gestures
    - Metered durations with contour
      - Steady pulse with variations in articulation
      - Steady pulse with variations in dynamic
    - Sounds and silences
      - Refinement of passive gestures
    - Altering tempo
- **Unit IV – Organizing Meter**
  - Duple and triple meter
    - Feeling “in tune” with meter
  - Reinforcing connections between aural image, gesture, and musical response
  - Pattern as the servant of the music
    - Standard, focal point and alternative patterns
  - Asymmetrical groupings
  - Melodic arrangements with organized meter
- **Unit V – Components of Navigation**
  - Cues
  - Preparations for entrances on beats other than “1”
  - Refinement of fermatas

- The gesture of syncopation
  - Fractional preparations
- **Unit VI – Conducting From a Score**
  - Basic score study principles applied to multiple voices
    - Homophonic or simple contrapuntal excerpts of 1 or 2 phrases
    - Short movements or works (4-part arrangements)
  - Full score study curriculum
    - Short, grade I-III works
    - Advanced works, grade IV-V

### Pedagogical Advantages

This instructional sequence has numerous advantages. First, before requiring students to move in an expressive manner, it provides them with specific instruction on how the body’s architecture works, and how to achieve a maximized state of expressive availability. After exploring the physical and spatial variables in conducting, this sequence focuses upon manifesting varieties of single sounds – preparation, dynamic, articulation, contour and release – before moving on to multiple sounds. To maximize conductor-to-performer communication and feedback, the performers receive no music nor play instruments, necessitating the manifestation of gesture in line with the conductor’s intention. The conductor learns to arrange simple folk songs that they in turn conduct. Most importantly, as the conductors practice, they learn to listen and alter gesture to bring the ensemble in line with their original intention. As complexity is increased via multiple sounds and the addition of meter, so to is the conductor’s gestural integrity challenged further.

### Conclusions

While no scientific study has catalogued the efficacy of this curricular sequence, the supporting anecdotal evidence seems strong. Students having experienced this sequence seem to clearly grasp the relationship between specificity of gesture and the manifestation of the expected aural outcome. In general, their gesture appears more fluid and organic, and free of the constraints of omnipresent pattern-behavior. While conducting, students feel empowered to alter gesture to craft change in the ensemble. When queried, most seem aware of the sounds they are creating and of physical alternatives they might employ to bring about the desired change.

## **KEVIN M. GERALDI**

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Kevin Geraldi is Associate Director of Bands at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In this capacity, he conducts the UNCG Symphonic Band, teaches courses in graduate and undergraduate conducting, and directs the Wind Ensemble chamber music program. He received the DMA and MM degrees in instrumental conducting at the University of Michigan where he studied with Michael Haithcock and H. Robert Reynolds. For two years between graduate study, he served as Director of Bands at Lander University in Greenwood, S.C.

An Illinois native, Dr. Geraldi received his Bachelor of Music Education degree from Illinois Wesleyan University, where he studied conducting with Steven Eggleston and taught in the public schools of the Westchester, IL. As a member of the Franklin Park Brass Quintet, which was founded at Illinois Wesleyan University in 1992, he has toured the Midwest, New England, and South Carolina, performing recitals and conducting brass and chamber music masterclasses.

Dr. Geraldi studied conducting privately and in seminars with teachers including Gustav Meier, Pierre Boulez, Jerry Junkin, Craig Kirchoff, and Frederick Fennell. He is also a recipient of the Thelma A. Robinson Award, given by the Conductors Guild and the National Federation of Music Clubs.

## **BRIAN K. DOYLE**

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Brian Doyle, Director of Bands at the Crane School of Music, SUNY Potsdam, conducts the Crane Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band, and also teaches courses in conducting. A Michigan native, he received all of his degrees in his home state. At Michigan State University, he received a BME and two MM (saxophone and wind conducting) degrees. His principal teachers included John Whitwell, Joseph Lulloff and James Forger. At the University of Michigan, he received the DMA in Wind Conducting under the mentorship of Michael Haithcock.

Dr. Doyle's former teaching posts include faculty positions at Indiana University, the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, Duke University, and as a public school music educator in Imlay City, MI. While in North Carolina, Dr. Doyle served as the resident conductor of the Triangle British Brass Band from 1999 until 2002. Dr. Doyle has also served on the summer conducting faculty of the renowned Interlochen Arts Camp. During his ten-year residence he conducted the Intermediate Band, Festival Band, Festival Chamber Players, and the High School Concert Band. He also coached woodwind chamber ensembles and taught conducting.