Part 3
Gestures indicating time patterns

Introduction

In Part 1 a distinction was made between a gesture and a pattern: a gesture is the physical execution of a specific pattern, whether it is a simple time pattern, a compound time pattern, or an irregular time pattern.

Steven Hart (1996) has indicated in his thesis, *Evolution of Thought and Recurrent Ideas in Choral Conducting Books and Secondary Music Education Texts Published in English from 1939 – 1995* Colorado: University of Colorado; that a tremendous increase in detail with regard to the conducting of “time patterns” has occurred only during the last 55 years in conducting literature. (Hart 1996:19).

When studying literature on the recommended manner in which gestures should indicate time patterns, one is confronted with a myriad of diverse ideas. It is vital that a conductor must have knowledge of the theoretical motivation for the practical indication of gestures, as this theoretical motivation will provide a set of principles which the conductor will be able to apply in different conducting situations.

Gestures should be a series of movements which will give information to the ensemble with regard to the musical interpretation of the text. This information must to be given in such a manner that it will prepare the ensemble for the first beat. Ideally, the preparatory beat should contain information to indicate the tempo unambiguously to the ensemble. The successful indication of the tempo of a simple time four-beat, subdivided four-beat gesture, compound gesture or irregular time gesture must convey information with regard to the preparation of
the beat, the placement of the ictus of the beat as well as the rebound from the beat.

Part 3 is concerned with the practical indication of the preparatory gestures, simple time gestures, the division of the simple time gestures, the indication of compound time gestures and fast irregular gestures.

Chapter 9 specifically deals with the practical indications of preparatory beats.

In Chapter 10, of all the simple time gestures, only the simple time four-beat gesture will be probed. This gesture provides for opportunities to discuss aspects such as the beating planes to the left and right of the vertical axis, which do not apply to the simple time one-beat gesture, simple time two-beat gesture and simple time three-beat gesture.

In Chapter 11, several issues about the subdivision of simple time gestures will be examined in different authors’ work, and the same principle applied to the choice of discussing only the subdivision of simple time four-beat gesture.

In Chapter 12, the indication of slow compound duple, slow compound triple and slow compound quadruple gestures will be scrutinized from the writing of particular authors, as all these gestures will demand different solutions to given problems. In closing this chapter, a discussion surrounding irregular gestures (gestures where an unequal number of beats are indicated on the left and right of the vertical axis) will be confined only to fast irregular gestures, as these gestures occur more frequently in choral music and present specific practical problems for the conductor.

In Part 1 the functional requirements of gestures have been identified. The functional requirements have to be satisfied in order for the gesture to be successfully indicated. The requirements of gestures are that they are visible, show clarity of intent, be informative with regard to all musical aspects, are predictable, have constant movement, are accompanied by breath by the
conductor and are understood by all in the ensemble. In all descriptions, these functional requirements will be used as a basis to discuss the authors’ opinions in each chapter.

All the writers who were selected to this study contributed to at least some aspects surrounding the indication of the simple time four-beat gesture.

Chapter 9 looks at what the authors said about the indication of preparatory beats; Chapter 10 deals specifically with the indication of the simple time four-beat gesture; Chapter 11 probes aspects surrounding the indication of the subdivision of simple time gestures; Chapter 12 addresses the indication of slow compound time gestures and lastly, Chapter 13 deals with the indication of fast irregular gestures. Chapter 14 will be a conclusion to Part 3.
Chapter 9
Preparatory beats

9.1 Introduction
In this chapter the research question to be answered is: “What are the recommended indications of preparatory beats, and how do these fulfil the functional requirements of gestures?” (Research question 2.1) It is vital that the indications for the preparatory beats are critically studied, as this aspect of conducting sets the stage for everything else that follows. There should also be awareness by authors that not only is the first beat of a work the preparatory beat, but that every beat within a work needs to be prepared in terms of tempo and other aspects. Every beat’s rebound therefore has the potential to become the information beat to the very next beat. If this is not kept in mind, the conductor will simply remain a “time beater”, and will not become an interpreter of the composer’s intentions.

9.2 The definition of the preparatory beat.

The authors’ definitions are mostly very similar, implying that the preparatory gesture precedes the actual gesture as a warning beat, and that the primary purpose is to communicate to the ensemble how the music on the next pulse will be performed in terms not only of the tempo, but also the articulation and dynamics. This beat serves, therefore, to indicate the full mental and musical preparation from the conductor for what has to follow in the process of music-making.
Several aspects surrounding the indication of preparatory gestures will be discussed. The authors will be questioned in terms of their definitions of the preparatory beat, the use of breath and other aspects by the conductor, in conjunction with the preparatory gesture, the link between the preparatory beat and the establishment of the ictus, the indication of dynamics, articulation and style, the height from where the preparatory beat is indicated, the rebound height, the relationship between the preparatory beat, as well as the actual gesture and the indication of fractional and passive beats.

### 9.3 Preparatory beat and breathing

Some authors are of the opinion that the conductor should breathe with the preparatory beat, some even specifying how loud this breath should be, and suggesting other issues associated with the preparatory beat.

In scrutinizing the works of all the authors mentioned above, it seems that there are many different schools of thought in terms of the ensemble synchronising with the conductor’s breath, or the conductor synchronizing with the ensemble’s breath. All the above authors are unanimous in their opinion that the conductor must breathe simultaneously with the gesture of the preparatory beat. They all either implicitly or explicitly believe that the conductor determines when the breath is taken.

Kaplan and Willits both emphasise that adequate breath should be taken in by the singers in order to produce a good tone. The lack of adequate breath will result in poor sound quality and a sore throat. (Kaplan 1985: 17) “The more breath motivating one’s upbeat, the better the quality of that sound – regardless of the ability of one’s group,” Willits says. (1993: 19).

Green (2004: 55) speaks of the “breathing gesture” as though breath is equated with the preparatory beat. Decker and Kirk (1988) ask the conductor to practise taking breaths in various tempos. Ehrmann points out that the cantors of the 16th to 18th centuries did not occupy a special visual place as the choir leader - they
were all part of the performance of the choir, and most probably stood with the choir in the centre. “The cantor, who usually sang with the choir and was a vital part of the breathing and singing organism, became, so to speak, the heartbeat (vital force) of the choir.” (Ehmann 1968: 111)

Ericson (1976:15) mentions that the conductor, when indicating the intake of a breath at the same time with the ensemble, achieves a necessary 'vocal contact' with the singers. Holden (2002: 12) quotes Bernstein, who suggested that a conductor should treat the preparatory beat "exactly like breathing: the preparation is like an inhalation, and the music sounds as an exhalation." This quotation links the concept of breath and the preparatory beat from the other spectrum – linking breath with the preparatory beat, and not the preparatory beat with breath.

The only author who does not link the physical breathing of the conductor with the breathing of the chorus is Davison (1954: 12, 13).

Jordan (1996: 93) is the only author who echoes that the conductor should breathe with the indication of the preparatory gesture, but then adds that the conductor should be able to listen to the breath of the choir. The conductor would be able to “instinctively synchronize and co-ordinate their own breath with that of the ensemble’s. When heard, the sound of the inhalation signals to the conductor when the choir is ready to release “sounds from their throats”. Jordan is the only conductor who advocates that the breath of the conductor should be synchronized with the ensemble, and that the cue should be taken from the ensemble.

In a real conducting situation, this suggestion would seem to be totally impractical, as the conductor should be making the leading decision, and the ensemble should be following him. The clarity of intent of the conductor will be compromised if he has to synchronise his breathing with that of the ensemble,
instead of leading by using his own breath in combination with the preparatory beat.

Five authors mention the loudness level of the breath intake: Busch (1984:89) is of the opinion that the breath intake should be very clearly and audibly noticeable. “Do not be sneaky about your breathing in preparation for the entrance.” On the other end of the spectrum is Green (2004: 55), who suggests that “a quiet breath be taken by the conductor during the movement of the hands towards his middle.” Holden (2002: 5) echoes this idea by saying “Although this might sound peculiar, a short, silent, rhythmic intake of breath often helps to communicate the conductor’s intentions to the players”. Willits (1993:19) asks for a noiseless breath. Busch (1984) says that, apart from taking a breath, it is critical that the conductor makes eye contact with the ensemble. McElherhan (1989: 37) echoes this position.

Davison (1954: 12 f ), who did not suggest that the conductor should breathe with the preparatory beat, makes the suggestion that the conductor could make very sure that the singers will come in by “reinforcing the ‘singing’ beat by a slight elevation of the shoulders and a little forward inclination of the head”. (Davison 1954: 13). This gesture seems to be a substitution for an indication of a breath by the conductor. The problem with this suggestion is that the ensemble could emulate this movement, with the resulting elevation of the shoulders causing shallow breathing in the ensemble. The conductor’s “forward inclination of the head” will negatively effect the balance of his posture.

Some authors, like Gordon (1977: 67), is of the opinion that, in order to encourage adequate breathing, the conductor should open his mouth and inhale while conducting the preparatory beat. Phillips (1997) agrees, but adds that the conductor should not breathe through his nose. He does not give a reason for this, but one can assume that he requires a quiet breath, or that the open mouth will signify an intake of breath to the ensemble.
Others, like Labuta, (2000) associates inhalation, facial expression and chin motion, and even a subtle head nod at the beginning of the upbeat, all of which should "radiate tempo and expression".

A very unusual opinion is presented by Jordan (1996:74): He states that the conductor should have the “ability to hear the colour of the choir”. This aspect of synestesia, which links sensory perceptions across different sensory experiences, is listed as one of over 40 music aptitudes that the conductor needs to be able to learn. He explains this aptitude in more detail as follows: “For conductors, this valuable and necessary tool can be unlocked and developed through two initial processes. In the first process, you should simply assign to a phrase or a section or an entire piece a physical colour, such as light blue. Once you arrive at a colour decision you should feel the colour as you inhale. Colour changes within the piece and can be influenced by selecting another colour, and breathing that colour. You should be able to hear the colour change in the sound. By imagining a section of the piece in a particular colour, you are awakening your musical fantasy life by going beyond the simple rhythm. Secondly, by fantasizing about a colour or colours, and breathing that colour, you may directly influence the quality of your breath.” Jordan (1996: 152)

Of course, the possibility of proving that the association of breathing with a colour will positively influence the quality of breath is impossible to prove.

In summary, several aspects surrounding the indication of preparatory gestures have been analysed. Most authors are in agreement that the preparatory beat should indicate the tempo, articulation and dynamics of the music which is about to follow. All authors, except Davison, mention that the conductor should breathe while indicating the preparatory beat. While Busch and others are adamant that the breath should be very audible, Willits asks for a noiseless breath. Other combinations with the breath include the opening of the mouth, and the use of facial expression, as well as the nodding of the head.
Jordan has a theory about the direct relationship between the ability to breathe and the ability to hear, which raises many rhetorical questions. He is also the only author who suggests that the sound of the conductor’s breathing should be synchronised with the choir, and not the other way around. He also associates colour with the inhalation of breath.

9.4 The relationship between the preparatory beat and the ictus

The link between the preparatory beat and the establishment of the ictus is vital. If the preparatory beat does not establish the ictus, the predictability of the beat will become questionable, as the ensemble will not be aware of where the next beat will be placed. In looking at the possibility of linking the preparatory gesture with the establishment of the ictus, five authors suggest that the preparatory beat establishes the ictus of the next beat:

Jordan (1996:85) asks the conductor to start from the anticipatory position, and then to let the hand drop downward, keeping the forearms parallel to the floor. He explains this line as the ictus line, from where the arm will “naturally bounce upward”. He continues: “This impulse gesture elicits a spontaneous breath from the choir at the same moment that the conductor breathes and opens his body. This immediate communication of breath between conductor and choir establishes what can be called connection” He calls this first ictus later on the “breath impulse gesture”. (Jordan 1996:93)

Jordan therefore links the establishment of the preparatory beat with the ictus line. His explanation for the rebound of the hand, (assuming that the forearm is parallel to the floor), is that the hand will naturally rebound, as a ball will rebound from the floor. In his opinion this rebound is slower than the downwards movement, because it moves now against gravity. He says that the conductor in fact has to “wait and allow the rebound to occur naturally”. (Jordan, 1996:87)
The major problem with this statement is that such a “rebound” does not occur “naturally”. Both the descending and rebounding movements are due to the triceps controlling the descending upper arm, and the biceps controlling the ascending movement. The only difference is that with the descending movement, of course, there is greater use of gravity. The point Jordan misses is that both these movements are happening because of musculely controlled movements. If anything, the conductor has to learn through continuous practice to establish an awareness of the proprioceptive sensation in order to realise how these two movements can be made smoothly, with both taking the same time to complete.

Labuta also makes the connection between the preparatory gesture and the establishment of the ictus level: “The consummation of the preparatory gesture as it arrives through the downstroke is the count of one. This point is defined precisely by a small snap of the wrist. This subtle but vital wrist action is variously called the rebound, flick, click, bounce, recoil, tap, or ictus. The beat, as a point in time, must be exactly identified by the tip of the baton through flexible and suitable wrist action. If you do not use a baton, place the point of beat in the index finger.” Labuta (2000: 10) He adds: “This figure makes the preparatory beat very clear: The beat starts on the same level as the ictus, swings up to the top of the first beating gesture before coming down to the same starting level as the opening horizontal plane.”

In his explanation it is clear that the preparatory beat establishes the ictus point before the breathing beat is given.
McElherhan (1966:65) expresses the principle of giving the information beat to the ensemble which will enable the performers to give information about the exact moment at which the piece is to commence, and the tempo, as well as the mood. Should the work not start on the first beat of a bar, the upbeat is modified to start moving from the ictus in order to establish the base of the conducting gesture. When a piece starts with an upbeat of a quaver note, the conductor cannot only give the upbeat itself, because this does not provide enough information to the performers.
It is clear from these drawings that the preparatory gesture passes through the horizontal line to the right of the downbeat ictus. He suggests that the movement therefore starts from the ictus level.

Phillips (1997) suggests that the preparatory ictus is always the beat that precedes the downbeat. In common time, the preparatory ictus is beat four, for a composition beginning on beat one. In triple time, beat three is the preparatory ictus, and in duple time the preparatory ictus is beat two. One must show this preparatory ictus accurately and in time as it occurs prior to the downbeat ictus. Therefore, the preparatory gesture moves downward to the horizontal plane, rebounds when marking the preparatory ictus, and ends when it moves down the vertical plane to mark the downbeat ictus on which the music begins. The time between the preparatory ictus and the downbeat ictus determines the tempo of the composition.

(Figure 2.12, Phillips (1997: 17)

Therefore, in this chapter, it can be clearly shown that the preparatory gesture establishes the ictus, which Phillips specifically calls the preparatory ictus, in order to differentiate it from the downbeat ictus. This establishment of the ictus will determine how functional and effective the gesture is in terms of the precision
of the entry of the ensemble. If this ictus is clearly indicated as part of the preparatory gesture, the predictability of the gesture will be increased.

Most authors suggest that there is a link between the preparatory gesture and the establishment of the ictus. Jordan talks about the “natural rebound”, which will be questioned from an anatomical point of view in Part 5, Chapter 24.

The effectiveness of the preparatory beat on any plane other than the horizontal plane will be argued in Part 5, Chapter 22.

9.5 Relating the preparatory gesture to the indication of dynamics, articulation and style


Kohut and Grant (1990) state the obvious, that if all the information is not portrayed in the preparatory beat, it will inevitably be too late to indicate it at the arrival of the first beat without some preparation.

In addition to reflecting that the preparatory beat should convey information with regard to tempo, dynamics, articulation and style, Ericson (1978: 15) adds an interesting opinion: “This beat is also of the utmost psychological importance, for the conductor now shows with the motion of his hand his attitude towards the piece in terms of emotions and interpretation of the text. In other words, he now shows the full sounding ‘body’ what he has in mind”. The emotional aspects of the work should therefore also be shown in this preparatory beat.

When it comes to the manner in which the preparatory beat should appear in order to convey the articulation, two distinct schools of thought become apparent:
The first school of thought is represented by Labuta (2000), McElherhan (1989), and Neuen (2002), who all seem to agree that a round preparatory beat will have the effect of a legato line, and a more angular will have a greater staccato effect. Labuta (2000:17) Stylistically, a crisp, chopped preparatory motion indicates staccato; a smooth, flowing one, legato; and a heavy forceful one, marcato. (Figure 2-5) Remember that the level of the plane of beating and preparation may be moved up or down to match the dynamic and style of the music.

![Figure 2-5: Preparation Styles](image)

Labuta (2000, 17 Figure 2.5)

McElherhan (1989) echoes this concept when he states that “the articulation of the intended performance is showed by the roundness or angularity of the preparatory gesture. The greater legato the line is, the more roundness there will be.”

This opinion is shared by Neuen (2002: 223), that the articulation of the intended performance is shown by the roundness or angularity of the preparatory gesture. The greater legato the line has, the more roundness there will be.

A second school of thought is represented by Rudolf (1993:34), who describes the indication of a staccato preparatory beat not as angular, but as executed with a “stop” indication. The problem with this idea is that if the hand indicating tempo usually stops, then the singing will also stop. It is vital that the hand motion
continues at all times. A stop will have the effect of a cessation of breathing of the choir at worst, or even a disruptive flow of breath at best. (see Figure 4.1)

Rudolf (1993: 29  Figure 4.1)
For *staccato* entrances, Rudolf suggests that a stop is to be made on beat 3. He says that if this is not done, the feeling of a *staccato* indication will not happen: (Figure 4.2). The problem is that these drawings are not angular at all, and it could simply be interpreted as a *legato* indication with the cessation of airflow in between.

Rudolf (1993, 30 Figure 4.2)
Rudolf describes the upbeat to the 4th beat differently for a *legato* and *staccato* gesture. The upbeat towards the 3rd beat is much higher for the *staccato* gesture
than the *legato* gesture. Similarly, the upbeat towards the 2nd beat is also much higher for the *staccato* gesture: (figure 4.5 and 4.6) (Rudolf, 1993:34)

![Fig. 4.5. 4-beat; start on the second count (legato)](image)

![Fig. 4.6. 4-beat; start on the second count (staccato)](image)

Rudolf (1993: 34 Figures 4.5 and 4.6)

The upbeat to the 2nd beat in a *legato* three-beat gesture is described by Rudolf as Figure 5.7:

![Fig. 5.7. 3-beat; start on the second count (legato)](image)

Rudolf (1993: 43 Figure 5.7)
Rudolf (1993: 93) The staccato upbeat to the 2nd beat in a three-beat gesture looks different: The rebound of the 1st beat is much higher compared with the legato gesture. (Figure 5.8)

![Image of a music gesture](image.png)

**Fig. 5.8.** 3-beat; start on the second count (staccato)

Rudolf (1993: 93, Figure 5.8)

In terms of indicating articulation, different schools of thought exist about the nature of the preparatory beat. If the hand is used in a "stopping" gesture to indicate staccato, the flow of the breathing will be negatively affected, as well as the control over the tempo indication of the gesture. In this regard the effectiveness of the gesture can become questionable, as well as the influence it will have on the music performance. This aspect will be debated in Part 5, Chapter 23, especially the suggestion that the stopping of the hand will be used to indicate staccato or marcato beats.

### 9.6 The height of indication of the preparatory gesture

It has been stated before that the vertical and horizontal aspects of the beating plane determine the beating area where the gestures are indicated. When the views of the authors pertaining to the preparatory gesture and the height from where the preparatory beat should be indicated in relation to the horizontal level are scrutinised, the height is indicated in terms of the horizontal plane. It becomes obvious that there are different opinions about this matter. Some writers indicate the preparatory beat from the rebound level, others from the ictus
level, and some even from shoulder height, while others start even lower than the ictus level.

Busch states: “In order to prepare the ensemble for the downbeat, begin by placing the hand about shoulder-high and approximately eight inches to the right of the position for the basic pulse gesture. For most practical purposes this eight-inch distance will be adequate for the preparation. Come to a complete stop. Then make a slight fishhook toward the left hand, raising the hand and forearm into position to give the basic pulse.” The problem with this gesture, apart from creating tension, is that this beating gesture will directly result in a *forte* or *fortissimo* sound, as the big downbeat will have the effect of a loud dynamic, as the extended vertical plane is used in conjunction with the preparatory beat. The use of a high preparatory beat will also result in shallow breathing from the ensemble.

Busch also gives a variation away from the shoulder height, and acknowledges that “Some conductors place the hand directly on the basic pulse line before the preparatory gesture is given. The preparatory gesture is then straight up, followed by the basic pulse, which is straight down along the same line.” (Busch 1984: 16)

Garretson (1993: 15,16) suggests that the preparatory beat should be given at the same rate of speed needed in subsequent measures. In his example, however, the preparatory beat starts higher than the ictus of the first beat, and therefore might result in an unclear first beat, with the same problems that arise from Busch’s suggestion.

Green advocates that the preparatory beat should start from the rebound line. She makes a clear distinction between the ictus line (which she calls the baseline) and the rebound line. The rebound line is the line from where the upbeat would start, as well as the line which marks the upper part of the rebound. Green (2004:27) She recommends against the practice of a drop in the
preparatory beat, which she claims causes faulty attacks. In terms of motion of the preparatory beats, the second and third beats make use of a pendulum shape.

She is the only author who specifically suggests that the ictus line and rebound line are two differentiated lines.

The preparatory beat from this height does not aid in the establishment of the ictus level, and one can argue that this lack of establishment will rather result in faulty attacks, and not a drop in the preparatory beat, as she suggests.

Figure 3.19 Hylton (1995:107)

Hylton indicates in Figure 3.19 (above) that the position of the starting point of the preparatory beat is higher than the ictus, but he is not consistent, and indicates that the preparatory beat to the 4th beat starts lower than the actual beat. This inconsistency of the preparatory beat will compromise the predictability of the beat. Hylton (1995:107)

An author who starts the gesture from a much lower ictus level is McElherhan (1989). This most certainly will add to the predictability of the beat.

Phillips (1997) indicates that the height of the preparatory beat will give an indication of the dynamic level: a forte sound should be placed above the shoulder height; anything below the shoulder height is performed on the piano
If this is followed, it means that the indications of Busch, Phillips and Green will have the effect of an indication of the dynamic level.

“Raise the arm/hand to a position to the right of the vertical plane, and to the predetermined height to indicate the dynamic level at which the music begins; the higher the louder.”

Roe (1983) indicates that the preparatory beat for the first downbeat will be smaller than the beat that usually precedes the first beat in a 3 or 4 beat bar. This will also have an effect on the dynamic level.

The problem with writers who indicate that all preparatory beats should start from the rebound level and advocate that the height of the vertical beating plane should be used to indicate the dynamic level, is that these two gestures could become contradictory. It leads to questions about the functionality of the vertical plane for the indication of changes of dynamics. The clarity of intent therefore becomes questionable. This debate will be taken up again in Chapter 4.2, as well as in Part 5, Chapter 21.

To summarise, therefore, the height from where the preparatory beat is given differs between authors, and the only way to ascertain which of the suggested different levels will be the most successful is to make a reference to anatomical issues. If a preparatory gesture is started from a height other than the ictus point, effectively the preparatory aspects of this gesture are of very little value, as the ensemble has no way of knowing where the beat will actually be established.

The ensemble’s first clue, in fact, is the height from where the preparatory beat has been given. This information indicates to the ensemble the possibility of where the ictus will be. Should this ictus level be moved for no specific reason, the predictability of the beat will be negatively affected. This also links up with the manner in which changes in dynamics are indicated, which will be discussed in 4.2. Ultimately, these issues will be enlarged upon in Part 5, Chapter 24.
9.7 Direction of approach of the preparatory beat

When one investigates the manner in which authors perceive the direction from where the preparatory beat should be approached in relation to the gesture, five authors mention that the preparatory beat should start within the context of the gesture.

Decker and Kirk (1988:16) say: “The preparation is invariably in the direction of the beat preceding the one on which sound is to begin. If sound begins on a beat, the preparation is the preceding beat.” Ehmann (1968: 114) echoes this statement, saying, “To practise this upward preparatory motion, the conductor student should adhere closely to the conducting gestures, i.e. practising the preliminary beats exactly in accordance with the directional lines in the gesture.”

Three authors specify that the preparatory beat’s direction will come from the opposite direction from the present playing beat (Green, Labuta and Roe).

Several authors imply that every rebound of a beat will be the next beat’s preparatory beat. Lamb (1983:45) explicitly states that “…if the last beat of the measure is the first beat on which sound begins, the previous beat of the gesture will be used as a preparation. For example, if the first sound occurs on the 4th beat of a 4/4 measure, the third beat of the gesture would be the preparatory beat.”

Kaplan (1985) makes an important observation in that each beat becomes a preparatory beat for the next. Thus the conductor is able to communicate his intentions one beat ahead of the ensemble. The preparatory beat should communicate the tempo as well as the type of sound you expect from the ensemble. Similarly, Labuta (2000:11) advocates that the rebound of the preparatory beat is also extremely important, and makes the observation that some writers on the subject do not make mention of a rebound at all.
The above ideas are echoed by Rudolf (1993: 317), who says that it is wrong to think that preparatory gestures are used only to start a piece. “On the contrary, they are used continually and constitute one of the most effective tools by means of which the conductor brings life and variety into the performance. In a sense, all conducting is preparation - indicating in advance what is to happen. With preparatory gestures, the conductor not only brings in the instruments with a particular shading and expression, but also emphasizes the salient points of the melody and underlines the phrase groups.”

Many authors, then, make the observation that the rebound of a beat is in fact the preparatory beat of the next beat. In this sense, the predictability of the preparatory beat is important, and the effectiveness of the gesture can be sensed. Unfortunately none of them make the observation that the rebound should be arranged in such a manner that the preparatory beat should be put in position for the preparation of the next beat. This aspect will be elaborated on in Part 5, Chapter 23, - specifically the way in which the end of a fermata should be indicated in such a manner that the hand is immediately in position for the preparation of what is to follow.

9.8 The indication of fractional beats and preparatory beats

All authors agree that for a cue on a beat the preparatory gesture should fall on the previous full beat. In this first opening beat of the next work, the preparatory beat is essential as it needs to contain information with regard to the dimension, which is crucial at the start of the work.
Music Example 9.1 Knut Nystedt, *If you receive my words*, opening bar 1 to the work (Norsk Musikforlag)

Generally, authors are happy to indicate only one preparatory beat if the upbeat is one half of the value or less. When the value of the note becomes longer than one half, some authors suggest that an extra beat is in order: Garretson (1993: 17), and Rudolf (1993: 93), for instance. Decker and Kirk suggest that when a composition begins on the second half of the beat, one should give the first part of the beat as the preparation. Also, when a composition begins *after* the second half of the beat and is closer to the following than the preceding beat, use a full or complete beat as the preparatory movement.

Kaplan (1985: 78, 80) is more cautious and states the following rule: "If the music starts on a note whose duration is less than half of one beat’s value (in 4/4 or 3/4, less than an eighth note, or less than a quarter in 4/2 or 3/2), ignore the fraction and conduct a preparatory beat which will serve the first full beat of the
music.” However, should the music start on a fraction that is *half or more than half of the beat’s value*, it is necessary to conduct an additional preparatory beat on the previous count. Ericson (1976: 17) adds that in fast tempi, one may give the preceding beat as well in order to secure the entrance.

A author who agrees with the above statement is Labuta (2000), but adds that the conductor should not attempt to beat the fraction or otherwise divide the meter. He adds that a head nod will elicit a precise attack. But surely this would distract from the efficiency of the gesture if the head should get involved in securing it?

An observation is made by Roe (1983: 197), that breath on the beat of a subdivided beat can be used to indicate the subdivision. In addition, he suggests that the conductor should insist that the ensemble should be able to watch the conductor forming the shape of the first vowel to be sung with his mouth.

Rudolf (1993: 319) says that in a slow tempo, a full beat preparation may be too long, and it might be necessary to subdivide the count preceding the entry. This will result in a clearer gesture and establish closer contact with the musicians.

McElherhan (1989: 66) takes the more precautionary route, by saying broadly that for entrances “between beats, give two beats before the first note.”

Most authors seem to agree on the principles of indicating fractional beats.

### 9.9 The use of the passive beat

Some authors point out that the danger of giving more than one preparatory beat to the ensemble is that the ensemble may start after the first preparatory beat has been given. In order to avoid this false start, some authors suggest the use of passive beats. Few authors advocate the use of passive beats as part of the indication of a preparatory gesture. Ericson (1976:18) suggests a method whereby the conductor makes use of his right and left hand. He suggests that the
The right hand will passively conduct the beat, while the left hand starts moving only actively on the preparatory beat of the beat which needs to become active. This method is very effective, especially when fractional beats must be conducted, or when the tempo needs to be firmly established before a new section.

Hansen (1997: 51) distinguishes between an active and a passive beat as an indication of a preparatory beat: The two beats may be given in different ways: the first method is used where the right and left hands are mirrored - the first beat is passive, small, with not much energy in the beat. The second preparatory beat is active and more strongly accented, with greater energy in command, determination and intent.

The second method is similar to Ericson’s suggestion. Here Hansen suggests the employment of an independent technique for the right and left hands. The first beat (if falling on the 3rd beat of a quadruple gesture) is passively conducted by the right hand alone, while the left hand is in the “stop” position. The second preparatory beat (which falls on the upbeat of a quadruple beat gesture) is actively and energetically conducted by both hands.

In either case, it is important to maintain the same tempo for the passive beat as well as the final preparatory impulse.

Kaplan (1985), Willits (1993: 24) and Lamb (1983) say that there are times when a conductor will use two beats in preparation to clearly establish the tempo for the choir, and “to avoid any misunderstanding of the beat on which the choir will begin to sing”. They do not make use of both hands, but use the idea of a less active gesture, devoid of “even the smallest bounce at its commencement”. This neutral beat serves to indicate to the ensemble the expected length of each beat. In other words, it sets the tempo.

All three authors suggest the two-beat gesture, one passive and the other active. This gesture is not very secure, as the danger still exists that the ensemble might
start, even on the slightest movement, if the static left hand is not employed to reinforce the non-action.

A similar method to Kaplan is taught by Labuta (2000: 72) and Rudolf (1993: 99), offering a hybrid approach, similar to Ericson’s method, but with the functions of the hands swapped. In their approach the left hand is used to do the movement, and the right hand remains motionless until the upbeat is given for the subdivided beat. In this method the ensemble now has to watch another hand than the one they are used to watching to indicate the beat. Ericson’s method seems far more secure to use. The use of the passive beat in order to indicate fractional beats will be described in more detail in Part 5, Chapter 23.

In summary, then, disappointingly few authors suggest the use of the passive beat. This technique is extremely useful in the preparation of the ensemble when fractional beats or slow beats are given. It certainly heightens the effectiveness of the precision of the ensemble, and will enhance the musical entrance of the ensemble. This will be discussed in more detail in Part 5, Chapter 24.

Whenever authors have given reasons for their advice, relating it to anatomical, functional or musical issues, these have been mentioned in the text. Wherever the motivation is questionable, this has been pointed out in the body of the text.
Chapter 10

Simple time four-beat gesture

10.1 Introduction

In Part 1 the idea of a universally held concept of “fundamental gestures” or “traditional conducting gestures” was questioned. In this chapter, the aim will be to look specifically at the simple time four-beat gesture, and to ascertain from the authors who have already written on this subject, what the principles are of those gestures which make them effective, clear and predictable for the ensemble.

The research question to be answered in this chapter is: “What is the recommended indication of the simple time four-beat gesture in relation to the preparatory beat, the style of beat, the positioning of the ictus and the motivation for the placement of different aspects of the beat; and how do these contribute to the function and execution of gestures?” (Research question 2.2)

This chapter will firstly deal with several aspects surrounding the simple time four-beat gesture: firstly, the gesture in relation to the vertical and horizontal axis will be looked at in different authors’ work. Reference will be made to the preparatory beat, but not with the concept of “breath and the preparatory beat”, as this has been already dealt with in a previous chapter.

Answers will be sought from different authors with regard to the shape of the simple time four-beat gesture in terms of the pendulum or inverted pendulum movement.

It was mentioned in Part 1 that the representation of the two-dimensional pattern and the actual three-dimensional gesture might be very different in practice, but less problematic when the simple time four-beat gesture is compared to the slow
compound time quadruple-beat gesture, for example. This issue will also be referred to in Part 5, Chapter 23.

The placement of the different icti in relation to the horizontal and vertical planes will be discussed.

Some authors suggest gestures with a specific set of principles in mind, while others make no reference to any principle at all. Reference will be made to those authors who offer a set of principles.

Some authors make no reference to other “schools or styles” of gestures, while others are very critical of certain “schools or styles”. Reference will be made to those authors who are critical of other styles.

10.2 The placement of the preparatory beat of the simple time four-beat gesture

This chapter will set out to answer the research question about the recommended indication of the simple time four-beat gesture in relation to the preparatory beat. Firstly, an enquiry about the level from where the preparatory beat plane is indicated will be made. A diverse body of information has been gathered from the authors, and where it is not possible to categorise this diversity, the individual authors’ opinions will be briefly discussed in terms of the reasons for their advice, relating it either to anatomical, functional or musical issues.

The first school of thought does not indicate any preparatory beat, as none of the beats have a rebound or preparation beat. Davison (1954:15) indicates no preparatory beat for any of the beats, as the ictus is undefined because the direction of the preparation is in exactly the same direction as the beat itself. The problem with Davison’s drawings is that they are mostly indicated without any rebound level, and therefore the ictus and rebound points are indiscernible. He
admits that the straight-line drawings do not adequately “allow us to see the real motion” (Davison 1954: 23) and offers a more flowing gesture.

A further two schools of thought emerged: some authors place all the preparatory beats in relation to the horizontal plane, and therefore the preparatory beat establishes, through the placement of the ictus, the horizontal plane for the ensemble.

Authors who subscribe to this idea are Decker and Kirk (1988: 15), who did not explicitly state that the preparatory beat should start on the horizontal plane, but according to Figure 1-11, make it implicit that the 4th beat is on the horizontal plane.

![Figure 1-11: Duple pattern for 4 counts.](image)

Decker and Kirk (1988: 15, Figure 1-11)

A similar idea is offered by Gordon (1989:67), despite the fact that no rebound for any beat is indicated. Labuta (2000: 15), however, explicitly states that all beats should “hit an imaginary horizontal line”. This includes the preparatory beat too.

McElherhan (1989: 240) does not indicate any preparatory beats, but the fact that beat 4 lies on the horizontal plane, will effectively mean that the preparatory beat will start from that level. Phillips (1997: 17) indicates the preparatory beat as establishing the horizontal plane.
Phillips (1997: 17 Figure 2.12)
In this figure the preparatory beat starts clearly from above the horizontal plane, but establishes the ictus of beat 1 very clearly.

Roe (1983: 201) indicates the four-beat gesture from the same horizontal plane, and therefore it can be assumed that the upbeat to this gesture will also derive from this plane, although he does not state this explicitly. Garretson (1993: 6) indicates the 4th beat on a horizontal plane. The rebound is indicated from the horizontal level.

The second school of thought places the preparatory beat at a much higher plane than the horizontal plane, and does not establish the horizontal plane at all through the preparatory beat, but only with the rebound from the first downbeat:

Busch describes the preparatory beat for beat 1 as from the level of the ictus of the 4th beat, which is on a much higher plane than any of the other beats. (Busch (1984: pp19). The preparatory beats of beat 2 and 3 are also on their own level, differing from any horizontal plane. (ibid). In fact, Busch indicates the ictus range as lying between the sternum and the beltline. (Busch (1984: 12)

Holden (2003: 6) indicates the preparatory beat for the first downbeat as a vertical upbeat. The other preparatory beats follow the gestures that preceded them and Ehmann (1968:122,) indicates the 4th beat, and therefore the
preparatory beat, higher than any of the other beats. There is no explicit indication of the idea of a preparatory beat.

Ericson (1978: 178) indicates the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} beats on the same horizontal plane, but beat 1 is much lower than this plane, and so is the 4\textsuperscript{th} beat.

Ericson (1976: 177, “beat patterns”)

Green (2004: 13) indicates the preparatory beat of beat 1 from the rebound level, beat 2 from the horizontal level, beat 3 and 4 above the horizontal level. Hylton (1995: 97) indicates the 4\textsuperscript{th} beat as higher than the 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd}, and therefore one can assume that this will be the preparatory beat.

Kaplan (1985:5) indicates the four-beat gesture with the preparatory beat for beat 1 in the diagram of Exercise 4 below:
Kaplan (1985:5) Exercise 4

The preparatory beat starts much higher than the ictus for 1, or any of the other beats, for that matter. The ictus level is only established with the rebound of the first downbeat.

Lamb (1983 124) indicates the preparatory beat for beat 1 as starting much higher than any other level, and yet, he explains that the other gestures should start on the previous level. Rudolf (1993: 9) and Willits (1993: 18) indicate the preparatory beat higher than the ictus of beat 1.

In terms of the preparatory beat of the simple time four-beat gesture, then, only the preparation beat which starts from the ictus and rebounds up to the same position of the horizontal plane will give a clear indication of where the ictus will take place on the horizontal plane.

The preparatory beat which starts higher than the horizontal plane is not very clearly delineated by any of these authors. This preparatory beat will only establish the horizontal plane with the rebound of the first downbeat, with the
effect that no-one in the ensemble will have any adequate preparation from the conductor as to where beat 1 will actually end and rebound. In terms of the effectiveness of the gesture, the first preparatory beat will clearly indicate the preparation of the ictus level, whereas the second will not succeed in this aspect. This means that the ensemble will suffer in terms of preciseness of entry.

10.3 The movement of the preparatory beat compared to the rest of the gesture

When one looks at the literature to ascertain if the preparatory beat is given in the same pendulum-style as the other beats, an interesting answer emerges: The research question in this chapter will deal with the recommended indication of the simple time four-beat gesture in relation to the style of the preparatory beat, in terms of the musical aims and functional requirements of gestures.

Busch uses the preparatory beat of the first downbeat as part of the pendulum-shape, though the figure does not go through an ictus, but starts from it. All the other preparatory beats are indicated as part of a pendulum-type movement. (Busch 1984: 19)

Decker and Kirk (1988: 15); Garretson (1993: 6); Kaplan (1985:5); Labuta (2000: 16); Lamb (1983 124); McElherhan (1989: 24) and Phillips (1997:25) all use a pendulum-type movement for the preparatory beat and also consistently continue to use the same pendulum-type movement for all the beats.

Willits (1993: 18) uses the inverted pendulum-type movement for the upbeat to beat 1 and then also continues with the same style of inverted pendulum-type movement for the beats to follow. Green is the only one who offers the pendulum-type movement for the preparatory beat, but then uses the inverted pendulum-type movement for the rest of the gesture as an alternative.

In summary, all the authors continue in the same style as the preparatory beat, except Green, who offers an alternative pendulum-type movement for the
preparatory beat, and an inverted pendulum-type movement for the rest of the gesture.

10.4 The direction of the downbeat of the preparatory beat

When the downbeat is described by authors, it is always assumed that one means “straight down” as in a movement of 90° towards the floor: Busch (1984: 11) says that the downbeat is “straight down”, implying 90° to the floor. All gestures have a distinct 90° downward movement. Ericson (1976) Garretson (1993: 6), Green, Hylton, Jordan, Labuta, McElerhan, Neuen, Phillips, Roe and Lamb (1983: 130) all indicate the downbeat as a 90° movement, without a slant at the bottom.

Ehmann (1968:123) talks about the downbeat as being executed as “a clear, downward movement”, but in the drawing of the four-beat gesture, this seems to be contradicted, as there is a slant to the right:

![Diagram of a four-beat gesture](http://example.com/diagram.png)

Ehmann (1968:122, Figure 27 d)

He admits that certain modifications arise in actual practice. It is notable that none of these gestures appear to provide adequate rebound from the previous beat which can be used as preparation beats for the next beat. Very importantly, he suggests that the figures that follow illustrate the counterbalance or interception of the vertical movement of the beat (following the manner of orchestral conducting) with a horizontal movement (following typical choral conducting practices). The downward beat must rebound, but in the sudden change of direction, sharp corners must be avoided. The second heaviest beat in three-four time should be beaten toward the outside and not toward the inside, as is frequently practised.
Gordon (1989: 71) indicates the downbeat as slanting clearly to the right. The predictability of this gesture, however, is doubtful. If there is no rebound, there will have to be a momentarily silence between the beats, in order to change the direction of the beat. This aspect will add to the unpredictability of the beat.

![Diagram of the Four Pattern](image)

Gordon (1989: 71, figure 4-5)

Kaplan (1985:5) uses the downbeat for most of the time as 90°, but there is evidence of a slight slant to the right at the point where he indicates beat 1, while Willits (1993: 36) indicates the downbeat and upbeat at angles which are slightly different from 90°:

![Diagram of the Four Pattern](image)

To sum up, then, Ehmann and Gordon use the downbeat with a distinct slant to the right. This beat will be very difficult to follow. Kaplan and Willits have a slight
slant. All other authors are emphatic that the downbeat should be down, meaning at an angle of 90°. All other authors use the 90° indication for the downbeat.

10.5 The placement of the ictus relating to the horizontal plane

When the ictus is considered, the positioning of the horizontal plane in relation to the placement of the different icti is considered by different authors, as well as the linking of the concept of predictability of beats with the placement of the ictus. Only six authors, namely Decker and Kirk (1988: 15), Labuta (2000:16), McElherhan (1989: 37), Phillips (1997 17, Roe (1983: 201) and Willits (1993: 36) linked the horizontal plane directly to the placement of all the icti on the horizontal level.

Davison (1954: 16) indicates beats 1, 2 and 3 all on the same horizontal level. However, these beats will be indiscernible, as there is no preparation for the ictus indicated, because the preparation for the ictus and the beat itself all lie on the same level.

Davison (1954: 15, Example 2)

Davison (1954: 24 Example 10)
This figure is given as an alternative to the stick-like figure. Davison indicates beat 1 and 2 at the bottom of the pendulum-type movement, which will be discerned as the beat, but then indicates beat 3 and 4 on top of the pendulum-type movement, where it will not be seen as the beats. Beat 3 and 4 will both be interpreted as at the bottom of the pendulum-type movement. Interestingly, beat 3 is lower than beat 1.

Green suggests that beats 1, 2 and 3 should be on the horizontal plane:

![Diagram of time-beating in four.]

Green (2004:11, Figure 2)

Busch (1984: 20) places the ictus of the 4th beat much higher than any of the other beats. All the icti are on different levels. He indicates the “ictus range” as the area between the sternum and the beltline. (Busch 1984: 12)

Holden (2003: 6) places the icti of beats 3 and 4 on different planes, thereby using only the first two beats to establish the horizontal plane.

Ehmann (1968:122) uses different planes. He does not place the numbering of the icti at the place where the downbeat will end, while Ericson (1978: 128) indicates the 2nd and 3rd beats all on the same horizontal plane, but offers a lower position for beat 1 and a higher one for beat 4. Garretson (1993: 6) places beats 2, 3 and 4 on the same horizontal plane.
In the section, to do with “impelling the sound forward”, Jordan (1996: 128) suggests that the velocity of a gesture can be temporarily increased in order to maintain a conducting gesture “that is slightly ahead of the singers”. “By temporarily increasing the velocity of the gesture without adding weight, an internal momentum is generated within the musical line that is spontaneously sensed by the singers. The gesture with the quickened velocity makes the spinning of the air of the singers increase, thereby adding forward momentum to the musical line.” Jordan (1996: 130).

Increased velocity will result in a quicker tempo, as the preparation beat for each new beat becomes faster, resulting, surely, in more different interpretations of the tempo. It is most unlikely that the ensemble will sense this increased velocity not as an increased tempo! The idea of increased velocity will also compromise the clarity of intent as well as the predictability of the beat. The idea that the air can be “spun”, and that this will add to a forward momentum, is highly questionable. It is clear that Jordan borrows terms such as velocity and momentum from science, and uses these terms out of a scientific context. If he does this to add weight to his arguments, he fails to convince, as these terms cannot be used in the context of a moving hand, which is part of a stationary body.

Jordan (1996: 130) suggests a second approach to “impel the sound forward”, by indicating an ictus with the fingertips. He suggests that “at the moment when the rhythm pulse needs to be communicated, the fingers lightly and quickly flick apart, or can lightly dab. Many times it is helpful to bring clarity to the ictus by lightly holding the thumb and index finger together.”

This movement will be an additional movement to the gesture itself, which can result in severe inaccuracies, as the gesture indicates the beat, as well as the fingers indicating the ictus. Surely, if the gesture was to be sufficiently informative in the first place, the choir can do without another gesture which has the potential to become contradictory? This gesture will compromise not only the informative aspect of the gesture, but also the clarity of intent and the
predictability of the beat.

If the conducting gesture has been given with the ictus clearly on the same horizontal level, it will be totally unnecessary to employ increased velocity and flicking fingers on icti.

Kaplan (1985:5) makes no use of the concept of a horizontal plane, as for him all the different beats are on four different icti.

Kaplan reasons that “the position of the ictus of the first beat is not reinforced by the placing of the other beats on the same level, and therefore the preciseness of the beat could be compromised.” He therefore prefers to indicate the 1st beat much lower than the other beats. Gordon (1989: 67) teaches that the horizontal plane should be placed a quarter-way up from the bottom end of the vertical plane. This effectively means that beat 1 will always be lower than the rest of the beats.

Another author who suggests the placing of the 3rd and 4th beats with no indication of the preparatory beat either is Hylton (1995: 97). The rebound of the second beat changes direction abruptly, with the rebound of beats 2 and 3 changing direction to the next beat and Lamb (1983: 130) places each beat's ictus on a different level, and does not seem to work with a horizontal plane in mind at all.
In Figure 61, Lamb (1983: 130) it is clear that all four icti are placed at different levels, with beats 2, 3 and 4 incorrectly placed – these positions are placed either at the end of the beat (3 and 4) or to the left of the beat (beat 2).

Hylton (1995: 97 Figure 3.2)

In this four-beat gesture the ictus appears on four different levels, the 4th not clearly marked at all. It is not very clear where the rebound after the third beat is, or where the 4th beat and its rebound are.

Jordan (1996: 117) places the ictus of the 4th beat much lower than any of the other beats. Beats 1, 2 and 3 also all differ. Neuen (2002: 219) does not always provide all the beats on the horizontal level.
Neuen (2002: 220 figure 11.18)

In this figure the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} beats are seen on the horizontal plane, but beats 1 and 4 are on a different plane.

Rudolf (1993: 5) indicates beats 2 and 3 on the horizontal plane, but with the icti indicated as “clicks” The indication of all the beat clicks will be nearly impossible, if a neutral, legato line should be indicated, as he claims.

Rudolf (1993: 9, Figure 1.5)
Busch (1984:15) indicates that the ictus of the 4\textsuperscript{th} beat is shoulder height.
A complicated four-beat gesture is suggested by Holden (2003: 6): He places beat 4 much higher, but in addition to this, changes the direction of the 4th beat, which has the effect that the 4th beat becomes at best subdivided, or at worst, construed as a separate 5th beat. He does the same with the last beat of all other gestures. This gesture will result in much confusion.

Ehmann (1968:122) places the 4th beat higher than any of the other planes, as do Ericson (1978: 127), Gordon (1989: 71), Green (2004:11) and Hylton (1995: 97) but it is unclear where the 4th beat will actually take place, as it is indicated on top of the beat. Lamb (1983: 130) places the 4th beat much higher than any of the other beats and so do Neuen (2002: 219) and Rudolf (1993: 9).

An odd gesture is suggested by Jordan (1996:117), who indicates the 4th beat lower than any other beats. No gesture for the preparatory beat is drawn, but he indicates on page 96 that the anticipatory position is from the sternum height, and that the ictus is indicated just above belt height. This 4th beat will result in an accent on beat 1, which might become very unnatural. The fact that all four beats are on different levels will also result in a questionable coherency within the ensemble.
Kaplan (1985:5) indicates the ictus of beat 4 right on the vertical height of the gesture, where it will most likely not be perceived as the ictus.

As far as the link between the preparatory beat and the predictability of the beat is concerned, Kaplan (1985:4) makes the remark that “a good preparatory beat is a predictable beat”. Labuta (2000:20,21) is very clear that the preparatory beat must contain all the elements of what is to follow, and therefore by implication, it should be predictable. McElherhan (1989: 19) puts it simply – “all beats should bounce at the same level”. If this happens, the beat will become predictable.

Phillips (1997: 18, 19) is very articulate about the predictability of the beats with the placement of the ictus.

Only five authors, then, link all icti directly with the horizontal plane. No consistent schools of thought emerge here with regard to the placement of the different icti. Several authors prefer the 4th beat exclusively as the highest beat, some prefer beat 1 as the lowest beat, one sees beat 4 as the lowest beat, while others indicate beats 1, 2 and 3 on the same level, and beats 2 and 3 on the same level. Most authors do not give any motivation whatsoever for their placement of the various aspects of the gestures. From this section it is very clear that the idea of “standard gestures” does not exist, even with the placing of the different icti of the most common time signature.
Labuta, McElherhan and Phillips make mention of the predictability of the beat. It is also interesting to note that all three of these authors place all the beats on the same horizontal level.

10.6 The nature of the movement as pendulum-type or inverted pendulum-type

In this chapter the nature of the movement will be ascertained from the authors’ work as either a pendulum or as an inverted pendulum movement, or possibly a combination of both.

Busch (1984: 19, 20) suggests through drawings the pendulum-type movement.

Busch (1984: 26, Diagram 3-12)

Busch does not provide any reasoning for using the pendulum-type movement.

Decker and Kirk (1988:15) do not explicitly advocate the pendulum-type movement, although in the figure it is implied, and Ehmann (1968:122) indicates the first beat as a pendulum-type movement but the other beats slant upwards, while the pendulum-type movement is not evident there.

Ericson (1976:5) is of the opinion that a conductor must have the ability to use what he calls the “joy of movement which is inherent in all people.” In using
rhythmic motions, one must be freely aware of the beat, in addition to being aware of the direction or movement toward a point of gravity and the dynamics of the movement. A point of gravity in this exercise can be moved in space, sometimes low, sometimes high. The quantity and the character of the beats can be varied from small-soft to big-strong. Erickson urges the conductor to try to indicate movements of various sizes at the same tempo. The conductor should become aware of his whole body as an instrument. The conductor must be aware that for every aspect of a gesture, there is a preparatory beat.

Every gesture he uses has the distinct appearance of a pendulum movement, where there is a point of gravity for each beat in the downward cycle of the gesture.

Garretson (1993:6) and Jordan (1996: 117) use the pendulum-type movement. A very interesting suggestion is made by Kaplan (1985:5), who use beat 2 is an ascending line, with a curve to the right, but it does not resemble a pendulum-type movement as beat 1. The placement of beat 3 is also at the rebound level of the beat, and not at the bottom of the pendulum-type movement.


McElherhan insists that the conductor is aware of the pendulum effect of conducting through the ictus, as the basis for all the gestures. He argues that any motion towards a musician without a specific pendulum effect through the ictus will not be discernible.
Roe (1983: 210, unmarked figure) works with pendulum-type movements.

Two authors who use the inverted pendulum-type movement is Holden (2003: 6) and Green (2004: 11). Green also suggests an alternative 4th beat as a pendulum-type movement.

Phillips (1997: 27) warns against the use of the inverted pendulum-type movement, as he sees that the rebound is incorrect. Willits (1993), through all her gestures, suggests the use of the inverted pendulum-type movement.

While certain authors, (McElherhan (1989: 20) and Ericson (1978:5), for instance, insist on the use of the pendulum-type movement, most others do not have a very strong opinion about this matter. No-one provides an anatomical reason for their decision.

10.7 Indication of the rebound of the beats

When searching the work of different authors to ascertain whether the rebound for beats were indicated or not, the following emerged: Davison (1954: 15) shows no rebound whatsoever in the first four-beat gesture. In the second attempt, (Davison (1954: 24), there is a clear pendulum-type movement, but with beats 3 and 4 indicated not at the bottom of the pendulum-type movement but at the upswing of the gesture. In reality, this will not happen. Gordon (1989: 71) and Rudolf (1993:9) show no rebound for the four-beat gesture.

Several authors therefore work exclusively with the pendulum-type movement. McElherhan (1989: 37) specifically links this movement with accuracy. Only three
authors suggest the use of the inverted pendulum-type movement, with Phillips (1997: 27) warning against it.

10.8 Equidistance between the second and third beats

When the diagrams of the authors are scrutinized, it become interesting to note who indicates equidistance between the second and third beats in their diagrams or explanations:


(McElherhan (1989: 24, unnumbered figure)

Phillips (1997: 25) also indicates equidistance within the gesture.
So we can see that the majority of authors plead for equidistance between beats 2 and 3. Not all authors make the same effort when it comes to providing a detailed motivation for the gestures, though.

10.9 A motivation for the simple time four-beat gesture

Some authors provide a motivation for their indication of the simple time four-beat gesture, while others simply provided the gesture, with no apparent indication of the method:

Busch (1984: 19, 20, 21) describes in detail that each single gesture indicating a beat consists of three components: a preparation, ictus and rebound. He indicates each of these components with great care.

An author who provides a detailed motivation for the gesture is Jordan (1996: 93). He makes a distinction between horizontal and vertical beats. “Beat 1 must always be high; when conducting, it should always rise to the top of the breastbone and be close to being centred on the body.” He also says that the final beat of the gesture should be brought as close to beat 1 as is possible.

Neuen (2002 219) explains that teachers of conducting have come up with different gestures over the years. Some gestures have remained effective and
easily recognisable, and he suggests that these should be used. Labuta (2000: 15), McElherhan (1989: 16) and Phillips (1997) also provide a detailed motivation for their gestures.

10.10 Authors who are critical of other authors

Some authors refer only to their own ideas, while others indicate that they have made a study of what other authors believe, and in some cases, a degree of criticism is discernible. Green, Labuta, Neuen, Phillips, and McElherhan fall into this latter category:

Busch (1984:27) indicates critically that some authors prefer to indicate “all motion through a centre of the gesture”. Although he is positive about the fact that it focuses attention in the same small area, he guards against its constant use, and warns that there are moments when the gesture area "must leave the focal point", but does not give examples here.

In Diagram 3-14, Busch (1984: 27) indicates a four-beat gesture where the icti for all four beats are on a single ascending vertical line. He warns that all the beats will be indiscernible to anyone in an ensemble.

Green (2004: 11) is critical of a four-beat gesture which will appear only on the left, saying that it does not have equidistance. She also criticises a preparatory beat which has too much of a drop, saying that it will result in “faulty attacks”.

She also provides several different “styles” of time beating, saying that the conductor should be able to recognise these. She is not critical of these per se, but suggests that the style suggested in Figure 2 (Green (2004:11) is “recommended”.

Jordan (1996: 86) endorses the “geometry of all beat pattern”, but he warns that conducting pedagogy has become “a visual, rather than an aural art.” He urges that conducting students should become less preoccupied with the correct
gesture, than with listening to and responding to their own instincts. “Patterns are important, but they must reflect the sound of the music,” he says.

Labuta (2000:15) clearly indicates that many traditional diagrams are misleading, “either because they do not depict the rebound from the point of beat or they place the number representing the point of beat at the wrong location, usually at the end of the rebound”.

![Incorrect Conducting Diagrams](image)

**FIGURE 2-2**
Incorrect Conducting Diagrams

No rebound represented  Numbered at wrong locations

Labuta, (2000:15) Figure 2-2

This gesture can be directly referred to several authors’ gestures. The first, where no rebound is indicated, can refer to the work by Davison, and the second, where the numbers of the beats are indicated at the wrong locations, can be applied to several authors; including the work of Lamb, Kaplan, Ehmann, Gordon, Garretson, Davison, Hylton, Holden and Buch.

McElherhan (1989:34) is very critical of gestures which includes the following: 1) unwanted breaks in the gesture, 2) beat 1 indicated as lower than any of the other beats, with beats 2 and 3 indicated without a proper ictus level, and beat 4 higher than any of the other beats, 3) the rebound of the beats as high as the downbeats, 4) the 1st beat indicated with a slant, 5) the placement of beat 4 on the outside of the gesture, instead of closest to the vertical axis, which will result in a crescendo on beat 4 and a heavy accent on 1.
In this example, McElerhan (1966: 51) demonstrates the wrong use of an exaggerated beat, which will have a negative reaction on the group of singers. In this case, the result could be an accent on the 4th beat.

Neuen (2002: 220) Unnumbered figure

Neuen (2002: 220) is critical of gestures where beats become indiscernible because of overly rounded and big rebounds, and unclear upbeat gestures.

Phillips (1997: 25, 26, 27) is very critical of some gestures, and provides some gestures very much like McElherhan’s. He is critical of movements where the rebounds of the beats are too high, and can therefore be confused with the main beats.

(Phillips 1997: 25 Figure 3.2)

He warns against placing beat 3 not far enough to the right and therefore having to make beat 4 go upwards.
In summary, several authors offer specific criticism of other authors’ gestures, but not one mentions another author by name. In some cases the gestures criticized have literally been reproduced, but with no reference to the original authors. Those authors who do offer criticism all seem to use the same principles of teaching, and obviously feel strongly about the “wrong schools”.

Some authors give an anatomical reasoning for the placement of aspects of the gesture: Busch (1984: 18) refers to the body centreline, and the fact that the downward pulse line is to the right of this line. He teaches the student to start with the upbeat of beat 1, “placing the hand about shoulder-height and approximately eight inches to the right of the position for the basic pulse gesture.” (Busch 1984: 15)

He also warns that the elbow should not be pulled against the body for the downbeat, but that it should be kept “at an adequate distance from the body” (Busch 1984: 16). Of the elbow movement, he makes it clear that the elbow stays in front of the body. “It is not fixed to a point, but instead moves when necessary along an imaginary line approximately parallel to the diaphragm”. (Busch 1984:26)
Busch (1984: 26) also urges the conductor not to pull the hand towards the body on the second pulse of the Four Beat Gesture. He is of the opinion that the conductor should “reach to keep the hand and fingers along the vertical plane of conducting. As you perform this gesture, note the pull of the muscles in the arm and shoulder. This increased muscle activity conveys strength and sustaining power in the pulse 2 gesture. Pulling pulse 2 towards the body (the easy way to do it) weakens the gesture considerably”

This idea that the elbow should have its own pathway in parallel motion in front of the body can be very dangerous, as it will add to muscle tension, as indicated already in Part 2. Furthermore, it will add another horizontal path, and will jeopardise the clarity of the gesture. The further away from the body the conducting gestures occurs, the more stress will be placed on the elbow tendons. This in turn will cause the Golgi tendons to be activated, and the muscles will be forced to relax, which will result in inaccurate gestures. This aspect will be explained further in Part 5, Chapter 22.

Ericson (1976: 5) links the basic pendulum movement with the awareness of gravity which the body experiences in the downward cycle of the pendulum-type movement. Green (2004: 34) is of the opinion that beats should be given “without any tension in the arm”.

Jordan (1996: 84) explains in the indication of the location of the ictus that “for most conductors, the problem area is the neck. When the alignment is correct, the neck is released and the natural rhythm impulse of the conductor can speak. He also urges the conductor to understand that when “one’s arms drop, the forearms should always remain parallel to the floor”. If this does not happen in his opinion, it will be very difficult “for a rebound to occur”. He adds that the “hands should remain inside of the elbows”.

Neuen (2002: 218) indicates the rectangular space where most action takes place as just below the belt line at the lowest, and just above the naval line as the highest.
Phillips (1997: 25,26) provides a detailed anatomical reasoning for the placement of beats, without making any reference to muscles. His explanation is sound and anatomically correct: “When conducting the four pattern, the arm must be extended sufficiently in front of the body that the left and right motion will not be hindered. Beat two must be placed at an equal distance in front of the body as beat one; beat two should not be drawn back toward the left side of the body,” he says.

Executing beat three for beginning conductors is often a problem in that they fail to extend the beat far enough to the right by not extending the forearm (Figure 3.4, page 26). This results in a stiff elbow joint. The forearm must open and flow to the right for beat three by increasing the angle at the elbow between the forearm and the upper arm. Also, make certain that beat three lands on the horizontal plane.

Another common problem is that beats two and three are placed too close to the vertical plane, thus bunching up the beats (Figure 3.3, page 27). This confuses the placement of the individual beats and must be avoided. Give plenty of breadth to the placement of beats two and three.

Phillips makes distinct reference to the movements made from the wrist, the elbow, forearm and the shoulder. Most conducting is done with the elbow and forearm, and where there is some lift of the elbow, this is a movement at the shoulder socket, and not the shoulder muscles. He warns the conductor against using any movement above the head, as the entire arm is lifted. He is of the opinion that this movement can distract the audience, and its use should be limited. (Phillips (1997: 27)

Of all the authors in this field, Phillips makes sound anatomical references to the gesture. Busch makes mention of guarding against the bringing of beat 2 closer to the body for all the wrong anatomical reasons. This issue will be discussed in
more detail in Part 5, Chapter 21. Ericson makes mention of the natural pendulum swing which is inherent in every gesture.

Whenever authors have given reasons for their advice, relating it either to anatomical, functional or musical issues, these have been mentioned in the text. In Part 5, Chapter 23, a motivation for the appearance of the simple time four beat gesture will be given which will aim to satisfy anatomical, functional and musical aspects.
Chapter 11
Subdivision of simple time gestures

11.1 Introduction

In this chapter the research question to be answered is: "What is the recommended indication of the subdivision of simple time gestures in relation to the placement of rebounds of the subdivided beat; the shape of the gesture, and the placement of the icti in terms of the functional requirements of gestures?" (Research question 2.3)

In this chapter the subdivision of the most commonly used simple time gesture, namely the four-beat gesture, will be addressed in the work of different authors. This gesture will make use of beats 2 and 3, which are traditionally placed on the left and right hand sides of the vertical plane, and research into the manner in which the subdivision of this specific gesture is usually achieved will hopefully also deal with the issues applicable to the two-beat, as well as three-beat, simple time gestures.

Several aspects surrounding the subdivision of simple time will be addressed, and aspects of the most effective subdivided beat should be highlighted in order to ascertain which aspects of the gesture will make it more predictable and easier to follow. The size of the rebounds of the subdivided beats will be looked at; and the positioning of the rebound from the main beat will also be interesting to investigate.

If the icti were indicated on different levels on the horizontal plane, then the subdivision could possible make it appear to be more complicated. This will also raise the question as to how discernable the beats will be. The basic movement as a pendulum or inverted pendulum movement will also be analysed. The use
of continuous movement or its absence, during the subdivision of beats, will also be an interesting aspect to research in the work of these authors.

11.2 The nature of the subdivisions

When looking at different authors’ interpretations of the subdivision of beats in the simple time four-beat gesture, it is very difficult to group these gestures in categories, as each author really introduces a different interpretation of the subdivision with its own set of peculiarities. In this chapter the way in which each author views subdivisions will be briefly looked at and discussed.

McElherhan (1966) reiterates the French conductor Monteux’s opinion that subdivision should not take place in strict time, and it is only advisable when the tempo is slowing down and needs better control. Another principle is to stick with the divided beat until the tempo picks up again. The basic beating gesture is preserved when subdivision takes place. Subdivision before the actually slowing down takes place is also advisable. This forewarns the performers of the intention to move towards a slower tempo.

Busch (1984: 118) indicates the rebounds of the subdivided beats as smaller than the main beats. In reality, according to the diagram, the rebound level of the main beats and subdivisions remain the same, and it is only the distance between the subdivided beat and the next main beat which is further from each other. The subdivided 3rd beat is much bigger than the subdivision of beats 1 and 2.
Busch (1984: 121 Diagram 9 – 7a)
Davison (1954) does not indicate how the subdivided four-beat gesture should be done, but the simple three-beat gesture included here suggests that there is no rebound at all. It could be speculated that the subdivided four-beat gesture will also have no rebound, making it very difficult to discern the main beats from the subdivided beats, as with the simple three-beat gesture.

(Davison (1954: 22 Example 8)
Decker and Kirk (1988: 20) indicate that the subdivided beat of the main beats should occur in the opposite direction of the next main beat. The subdivided beats are consistently smaller than the main beats.

Decker and Kirk (1988: 20 Figure 1 – 17)
Ericson (1978: 121) indicates the subdivisions in an opposite direction for the first beat. The subdivisions for the other main beats are about the same size as the main beats.

Garretson (1993:12) moves the subdivision of beat 1 in an opposite direction, but beats 2, 3, and 4 occur in the same direction as the main beat. Beats 2, 3, and 4 have their ictus points against an imaginary vertical line, and not against a horizontal line. This, in effect, will mean that the members of the ensemble will see a beat coming towards them, and it will be very difficult to see at which point this ictus point will change the direction of the movement. This gesture will be very difficult to follow.
Gordon (1977: 73 Figure 4 – 11)

No subdivided four-beat gesture for Gordon (1977: 73) could be found. If the three beat subdivided gesture is taken instead, one can postulate how the four-beat subdivided gesture might look: He might make use of an inverted pendulum-type movement, with the icti of all the main beats and subdivisions on different levels. The first beat comes down at a slant, and not 90°. The ictus level will be very difficult to see for anyone on the left-hand side of the conductor, as there will be a beat coming towards them.

Green (2004: 29) makes use of the subdivided gesture with the rebound moving away from the main beat in a smaller movement than the main beat. There will be a distinct indication between the main beat and the subdivided beats of the four-beat gesture. The rebound from the subdivided beat towards the next main beat is clearly a more defined beat.
Hylton (1995: 99 Figure 99) clearly indicates the subdivided 1st beat moving in the same direction as the 2nd beat, making the distinction between the main beat and its subdivision very difficult. The 4th beat remains on the horizontal plane, and is closest to the vertical plane.

Kaplan (1985:126, Exercise 71) indicates the subdivided four-beat gesture with the first beat’s subdivision close to beat 1, and after that the subdivisions of each beat move progressively further away from the main beat. Beat 1 and 2, with their subdivisions, take place to the left of the vertical axis, beat 3 and the subdivision takes place from the extreme left to the extreme right, with beat 4 and the subdivision ascending across to the left. The rebound therefore moves in the same direction as the main beat’s direction. The larger beat 3 and 4 might result in a continuous crescendo, as the subdivisions are about the same size as the main beats.
Labuta (2000: 27 Figure 5 - 1)

Labuta (2000: 27) shows the subdivided four-beat gesture with all the subdivisions smaller than the main beat. He favours the pendulum-type movement, calling it a U or V shape. The subdivisions are moved in the same direction of the main beat, but in the opposite direction of the next main beat.

In this section of Lamb (1983: 134), the main beats as well as subdivided beats are all inverted pendulum movements, but the interesting aspect is the 4th main beat “touching” the downbeat, and making that an ictus point. The problematic aspect here is that the mere fact that the subdivided beat will move to the right of the main first downbeat, and that the beating gesture as a whole will now start to migrate to the right, means that it works against the predictability and clarity of the gesture.

Lamb (1983: 134) says that conductors "should be certain to maintain a stronger gesture on the principal beats. One "must also be careful not to make the gestures of beats 2 and 3 so far to the left and right that the last half of those beats becomes difficult to indicate comfortably".

Lamb (1983: 134 Figure 67)
In this subdivided four-beat gesture, the first beat's subdivision is in the same direction as the second beat's main beat, making it difficult for the ensemble to discern between the second beat and the first beat's subdivision, as both are on the same side of the vertical downbeat.

Neuen (2002:221) suggests that the actual indication of the gesture should be kept low, that one should think *legato* and linear, avoid large movements, and that the circular 4th beat aids the *legato* flowing motion.

The problem with this gesture is that the subdivision of the second beat is bigger than the main second beat, especially as it moves also toward the right. The circle movement for the 4th beat is on a different ictus level as the rest of the beats. In this case the subdivided 4th beat is high, and the circular movement might give problems, as the main 4th beat and its subdivision look the same.
Phillips (1997: 156) warns that the conductor should not make too big a subdivision in order to maintain a distinct difference between the main beat and the subdivided beat. The subdivided movement is a small movement and should be made with the wrist. The subdivided beat is especially useful in the conducting of a hemiola. A wrist movement alone might be too small to be visible to the ensemble.

Phillips (1997: 156) Figure 20.1

The subdivided first beat is in the same direction as the next main beat, and confusion between this subdivided beat and the second main beat might result. The movement from the subdivided 2nd beat to beat 3 is very big, and this might result in a crescendo.

Rudolf (1993: 112, Figure 11.1) indicates the subdivisions on a much smaller scale than the main beats. He states that the weaker beats are done with a small
wrist movement. The problem with this gesture is that neither the 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 5\textsuperscript{th} nor 7\textsuperscript{th} beat will be discernable because there is no ictus established before these beats on these levels. The 3\textsuperscript{rd} beat's ictus point will not be introduced by any preceding beat, but will move from the 4\textsuperscript{th} beat to the 5\textsuperscript{th} beat without any ictus point. Therefore, inaccuracies will result, as the ictus point of the 7\textsuperscript{th} beat is a new introduction to the icti points, and will not be discernable at all.

Willits (1993:48) gives and indication of the divided beats as follows:

![Diagram of divided beats](image)


The rebounds from the main beats are small ascending and descending movements, going into inverted pendulum-type movements. Beats 1 and 4, as well as their rebounds, will not be easily discernable, as they are placed in the same area of beating.

So we can see that in this area, most authors are in agreement that the basic reason for subdivision of the simple time gesture would be when the basic beat slows down to below 50 beats per minute, as control over this gesture would then become problematic. They seem to agree that the rebounds of the subdivided beat should appear much smaller than the main beat.
11.3 The nature of the movement between the subdivided beats

As far as the nature of the movement during the indication of the subdivision is concerned, some authors suggest stops, either on the ictus or the subdivision, or both.

Busch (1984:118) indicates that this subdivided beat is a small wrist movement, which moves away from the main beat, and the subdivision as well as the main beat is indicated as a small stopped gesture. In other words, the subdivided gesture will stop on the ictus as well as the rebound. One could question whether this type of movement will invariably affect the flow of the music, especially in a slow tempo.

According to Davison’s drawing of the subdivided three-beat gesture, the subdivided gesture will stop on the ictus as well as on the rebound. Davison (1954: 22) Garretson, however (1993: 12), suggests a change of direction after beats 2, 3 and 4’s subdivision, which will necessitate a stop in the flow of the movement.

Phillips (1997: 157 Figure 20.3 and Figure 20.4) suggests a stop-start subdivision as an alternative, and this will result in a stop in flow of the musical line.

In summary, as far as the type of movement is concerned, some authors indicate a continuous flow, while others advocate that a “stop” gesture is used when it comes to indicating a subdivided beat. This stopping of movement might have an affect on the breathing of the choir, which will be discussed in Part 5, Chapter 23. If this principle is to be applied in subdivided triple gesture, the “stop” gesture will be impossible, as there will be a continuous halting of flow.

11.4 The type of movement of the subdivided beat

In this chapter, different authors’ indication of the subdivided pulse as a pendulum-type movement or an inverted pendulum-type movement is discussed. It will also be interesting to see which of the simple time (undivided) gestures have changed style from a pendulum-type movement to an inverted pendulum-type movement, or the other way round.

The two authors who made use of the pendulum-type movement in simple time, and who have now changed to inverted pendulum-type movement in the subdivision of the beats, are Busch (1984: 119), and McElherhan (1989: 77).

Two authors, Labuta (2000: 27) and Ericson (1978) consistently indicate the simple time four-beat gesture and subdivision of it as a pendulum-type movement.

Phillips (1997 156) describes two interesting gestures: the legato gesture makes use of a combination of a pendulum-type movement and an inverted pendulum-type movement. Beat 2 and beat 3 both have pendulum-type movements. In the stop- start gestures, the pendulum-type movement is used.

Garretson (1993:12) suggests a movement which is neither a pendulum-type movement nor an inverted pendulum-type movement, but a gesture that takes place mostly on the horizontal plane. It will be very difficult to discern this movement, however. Kaplan (1985: 126) shows no consistency in style in terms of a pendulum-type movement or an inverted pendulum-type movement: The subdivisions of beat 2 and 3 are pendulum-type movements, with a circle around beat 4 indicating the subdivision.

Neuen (2002:221) makes use of a combination of a pendulum-type movement and an inverted pendulum-type movement. Beat 2 and beat 3 both have pendulum-type gestures.

Rudolf (1993: 112) makes use of a v – shape for beat 1, and after that there is a combination of a pendulum-type movement and an inverted pendulum-type movement. Beats 3 and 4, as well as 5 and 6, will be very difficult to discern, as they all lie on the same horizontal level without any distinct icti points. Beat 7 is indicated in the wrong position, as the gesture is an upward slant and will not be very clear.

Davison (1954:22) indicates neither of the two, as there are no rebounds whatsoever.

In summary, Labuta, Ericson and Phillips consistently make use of the pendulum-type movement for the simple time four-beat gesture, as well as its
subdivided beats. Several authors suggest the inverted type movement, while
others use a gesture which does not appear as either a pendulum-type
movement or an inverted pendulum-type movement.

11.5 The placement of the icti of the main beats and subdivided
beats

(1989: 77), Phillips (1997:156,157) and Willits (1993:48) indicate all the main and
subdivided beats on the same horizontal level.

Green (2004: 29) indicates all beats but the last on the same horizontal plane.
Criticism of this gesture may be that the moving away from the horizontal plane
to a much higher plane can result in a accentuated 4th beat, or at least to a
crescendo towards the 4th beat. Control over the last two beats will be
compromised, as it goes higher than the rest of the beats. Neuen (2002:221)
indicates all the beats but beat 4 and the subdivision on the same horizontal
plane.

For Rudolf (1993: 112), beats 3, 4, 5 and 6 are all on the same horizontal plane,
but beats 3 and 4 will not very easily distinguished from the others, as no ictus
has previously established that plane, and beat 1 and the subdivision is much
lower than the rest. Beats 7 and 8 will be on a different plane.

Compared to his original four-beat gesture, Busch (1984: 121) indicates that the
subdivided beats have moved on a higher plane. The subdivision of the 3rd beat,
as well as the 4th beat and its subdivision, move up higher than the horizontal
plane. In may be speculated that Busch (1984) will indicate his subdivided four-
beat gesture on the same plane. The fact that there will be no rebounds will
make the subdivision indiscernible.

Ericson (1978) indicates the 2nd and 3rd main beats on the same horizontal level,
but the 3rd subdivision as well as the 4th and its subdivision move much higher
than the other beats. Garretson (1993: 12) indicates a gesture that has only beat 1 and its subdivision on the same horizontal level. All the other beats and subdivisions are on different levels, making it a very unpredictable gesture.

Gordon (1977: 73) makes use of three different planes for the subdivided three beat gesture. One can speculate that the four-beat gesture’s subdivision will be indicated on as many levels.

Kaplan (1985: 126) uses as many plains as main beats, plus subdivisions. This is a very ambiguous gesture for the ensemble to discern.

Lamb (1983: 134) indicates beats 2 and 3 with subdivisions on the same horizontal plane, but beats 1 and 4 on different planes. The movement of beat 4 away from the vertical plane will make it impractical to have the next downbeat to the right of the original vertical plane again.

To sum up the work on simple time four-beat subdivisions, as far as the indication of the icti is concerned, the same authors who indicated the simple time four-beat gesture on the same horizontal plane suggested the same for the subdivisions. Green, Neuen and Rudolf indicate all beats but the last on the same horizontal plane. Several authors indicate that the subdivision of beats takes place on a different level, usually much higher than the first beat.

It can be said that only three authors use the same style consistently for the ordinary gesture and the subdivision, whilst the rest seem to use some beats on the horizontal plane.
Chapter 12

Slow compound time gestures

12.1 Introduction

In this chapter the research question to be answered is: “What is the recommended indication of slow compound time gestures in relation to the placement of rebounds of the subdivision; the shape of the gesture and the placement of the icti in terms of the functional requirements of gestures?” (Research question 2.4)

Musical example 12.1 Edvard Grieg *Hvad est du dog skjøn* Bars 40 – 43 Norsk Musikforlag.

In the musical example above, it may be argued that the same issues surrounding the subdivision of the simple time gestures are also applicable in principle to the compound time gestures, namely the type of movement, the clarity of the subdivision, the height of the rebound, and the level of the placing of the ictus. There is, however, one important difference: the indication of the compound gestures are visually more “cluttered”, as there is not only the main
beat and one subdivision, but now two subdivisions per beat. This aspect of three subdivisions of each beat has a visual impact not only on the manner in which the gesture should be indicated, but also the manner in which a two-dimensional graphic representation of the gesture should be presented.

In this chapter the gestures suggested by the authors will be investigated in terms of the beating style for the pendulum-type gesture or inverted pendulum-type gesture, when the simple time beating gesture is compared with the compound beating gesture.

The majority of authors seem to change the style of beating from a pendulum-type gesture used in simple time gestures, to inverted pendulum-type gestures when indicating subdivision of simple time, as well as compound time. Very few authors stick consistently with a pendulum-type gesture: Ehmann and Ericson are the only two authors of some twenty authors who consistently make use of the pendulum-type gesture when dealing with simple time, subdivided simple time, and subdivided compound time. All other authors change the beating style to inverted pendulum-type gesture.

Some authors, when changing direction between the subdivided major groups, make use of the pendulum-type gesture at the change of direction. Those authors include Roe, Rudolf and McElherhan. No reasons whatsoever are given by any authors for the change of beating style. Even an author like McElherhan, who implicitly advocates the use of the pendulum movement, (McElherhan 1989: 20) changes the beating style to inverted pendulum-type gesture without any explanation.
McElerhan (1989: 30 unnumbered figure)
None of the authors offer an explicit set of principles offering an explanation of the compound beating gestures. Only Ehmann and Ericson consistently make use of the pendulum-type gesture in simple time, subdivisions of simple time, and compound time.

In 3, subdivided in 3 (beating 9)    In 4, subdivided in 3 (beating 12)

Ericson (1976: 177) (Appendix)
12.2 Compound duple gesture

Most of the authors place the first three subdivided beats of the compound duple beating gesture on the left, and the last group on the right. (The exception is Kaplan, who starts with beat 4 on the left, 5 on the right and ends with 6 on the left). However, there are many different variations for the last group: some authors place the 6th beat up and away from the horizontal ictus level (Busch, Davison, Ericson, Green, Hylton, Labuta, Neuen, Roe and Rudolf.)

12.3 Compound triple gesture

In the compound triple gesture, several authors place the last three beats in an ascending manner on the right hand side: they are Busch, Davison, Decker and Kirk, Ehmann, Ericson, Green, Kaplan, and Roe.

Hylton cuts across the vertical line from left to right with the last beat from the left.

The only two authors who consistently place all the different main beats, as well as the subdivisions, on the same ictus level, are Labuta and McElerhan, but even then there is a difference: Labuta places beats 1,2 and 3 on the left with 7,8 and 9 on the right, closest to the vertical line. McElherhan places all nine beats on the right, with the last group between the first and second group.

Willits is consistent in placing all main beats and their subdivisions on exactly the same plane, making it impossible to discern between main beats and subdivisions.

12.4 Compound quadruple gesture

In the compound quadruple gesture there is no consistency between authors in the placement of even the first three subdivided beats either left or right, which complicates the matter of description. The following authors place the first three beats (1, 2 and 3) on the left, followed by 4, 5 and 6 also on the left (therefore not
changing direction, and making the first six beats very difficult to discern). They are Busch, Davison, Kaplan, (although the second group is higher), McElerhan, Rudolf and Willits.

The following authors place the first three subdivided beats on the right, followed by the next three beats on the left: Decker and Kirk, Ericson, Garretson, Green, Hylton, Labuta, Neuen and Roe.

Decker and Kirk (1988:22 Figure 1-20)

In other variations, Ehmann places the 4th beat on the right, but then beats 5 and 6 on the left. All these authors place beats 7, 8 and 9 on the right, with the exception of Ehmann, who starts with 7 on the left and the 8 and 9 on the right, and Kaplan, who places 7 and 8 on the left and the 9 on the right.
As far as the compound quadruple gesture is concerned, many authors place the last three beats, 10, 11 and 12 on the right with an upward movement from right to left: Busch, Davison, Decker and Kirk, Ehmann, Ericson, Green, Neuen, Roe and Rudolf all fall into this category.

Kaplan (1985:128) (Unnumbered figure)
The exceptions are Garretson and Kaplan, who place the last three beats on the left. Hylton criss-crosses the vertical line between the last three beats, ending with the last beat from the left. The two authors who make use of the horizontal plane are once again Labuta and McElerhan: Labuta places beats 10, 11 and 12 between 123 and 789; whereas McElerhan places the last three beats closest to the vertical line.

### 12.5 German, French and Italian schools

Some of the authors refer to the traditional schools, such as the German, French and Italian schools, but there is also questionable consistency here.

Green, Lamb, Labuta, Roe and Rudolf all refer to “the German style”, but in their drawings this style does not seem to be universally the same. Roe’s perception of the German style is that all the beats are on the same horizontal plane, with beats 5 and 6 sharing the same ictus, the furthest away from the vertical plane. Labuta places all the beats on the same horizontal level, but with beat 6 the closest to the vertical plane. Green and Lamb describe one of the possible “German 6” with the 6th beat higher than the other beats. Rudolf describes the “German 6” differently, with different horizontal ictus planes.

As far as the “Italian 6” school is concerned, Green describes two different perceptions: the first has beats 1, 2 and 3 on the left, with 4 on the same ictus level and then ascending 5 to the left and 6 to the right; alternatively beats 1, 2 and 3 on the right, all on the same plane, with ascending 4 on the left, 5 on the right and on the left again. Rudolf seems to agree with Green’s second interpretation of the “Italian 6”. Labuta offers another variation, with beats 1, 2 and 3 on the same level, 4 and 5 ascending on the left, and 6 on the right.

For good measure, Lamb throws in the “French 6”, consisting of the first three beats on the right, 4 and 5 higher, but also on the right and 6 the highest to the right.
12.6 Summary

The majority of authors seem to change the style of beating from the pendulum-type gesture in simple time to an inverted pendulum-type gesture for the compound type gestures, the only two exceptions being Ericson and Ehmann. This is done without any explanation from any of the authors.

Most of the authors place the first three subdivided beats of the compound duple gesture on the left, and the last group on the right. In the compound triple gesture, several authors place the last three beats in an ascending manner on the right-hand side.

As far as the compound quadruple gesture is concerned, the idea of a “standard” gesture does not exist. Some authors place the first six beats on the left, while other place the first three on the right and the next group of three on the left. The majority of authors place beats 7, 8, and 9 on the right, and also the last three beats on the right. Differences between authors about the last three beats exist – some of them using the horizontal plane, others using an ascending line. Should the first six beats be placed on the same side of the vertical axis, it will become very difficult to discern the main beats from the subdivisions, as the first subdivision to the left might be construed as the next main beat.

None of the authors have given any reasons for their placement of the groupings of the different beats in the compound gestures. Two issues make the appearance of the compound gesture complicated: firstly, the fact that each beat is subdivided into three smaller beats makes the appearance of this gesture very cluttered. Secondly, the use of different levels of horizontal planes makes the gesture very difficult to recognise and in turn, to predict.

In Part 5, Chapter 23, an alternative way of thinking and indicating this gesture will be suggested as part of a theory towards conducting gestures.
Chapter 13

Fast irregular gestures

13.1 Introduction

In this chapter the research question to be answered is: “What is the recommended indication of fast irregular gestures in relation to the choice of shape of the gesture, the placement of the ictus, and the accommodation of the augmented beat in terms of the functional requirements of the gestures?” (Research question 2.5)

Many 20th century choral compositions have been written where irregular beating patterns are used. (For example, Britten’s *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Missa Brevis, Durufle’s *Missa cum Jubilo*, and Tront Kverno’s *Ave Maris Stella*). In this context, the importance of these gestures is that the word rhythms have been musically accommodated differently, compared with composers in previous centuries. In many of these works, the irregular gesture is not only used in a slow tempo where all the subdivided beats can individually be indicated, but in tempos where quaver beats exceed 100 beats per minute and much more. Effectively, this means that the various groups are bunched together in combinations of two or three notes, usually written in quavers. Some authors refer also to irregular gestures as “asymmetrical gestures” or “lopsided” gestures.

13.2 Fast irregular gestures

In this chapter, the question asked of different authors will be how they recommend the use of fast irregular gestures in relation to the choice of shape of the gesture; the placement of the ictus; the accommodation of the augmented beat in terms of the musical aims; and the functional requirements of the gestures.
Of the 22 authors who contributed to all the other previous chapters, only seven wrote about the five and seven-beat gestures in fast tempos. Some authors dealt with the five-beat gesture only - Ehmann (1968) and Gordon (1977) - while most others added the seven-beat gesture. Busch explains the irregular eight gesture; whilst Busch (1984) and Garretson (1993) also explain the irregular nine-beat gesture; Roe (1983) explains the irregular ten-beat gesture; Neuen (2002) explains the irregular eleven-beat gesture and Busch (1984) the irregular twelve beat gesture.

Generally, the manner in which the authors employ the slow five and seven-beat gestures are consistent with the manner in which the regular simple time gestures, simple time gestures with subdivisions, and compound time gestures in terms of use of horizontal and vertical planes; placement of ictus; and pendulum-type movement or inverted pendulum-type movement are used.

Two different schools of thought clearly emerge when looking at seven authors' work: One school of thought, represented by Busch, Labuta, Rudolf, Willits and Neuen, accommodates the lengthening or shortening of the beats by varying the tempo within the gesture. In most of these cases the icti of the beats are more or less indicated at the same icti levels. The five-beat irregular gesture resembles a simple two-beat gesture, and the seven-beat irregular beat gesture resembles the simple three-beat gesture. Although the gestures vary slightly between authors, the principle used to create the gesture is the same.

Busch (1984: 187) indicates the shape of a beating gesture which resembles the simple time two-beat gesture. The gesture is not modified to accommodate the augmented aspects of the beat. Instead, Busch suggests that the beat which must indicate the augmented group has to prolong all three beats in one pulse. This means that when indicating the three beat pulse, the conductor will move the gesture straight to the ictus and wait on the execution of all three beats before moving on to the next beat. “The three grouping has the sensation of lift”. Busch (1984: 187)
Busch (1984: 187 Diagram 12-7a and 14-7b)

When looking at the gesture of Labuta (2000: 53), it is clear to see that he advocates the same principles.

Labuta (2000: 52 Figure 10.1)

With this gesture the continuous movement is compromised, as the rebound here is indicated as either slower or faster than the downbeat, in order to accommodate all the beats in the gesture. The problem here is that the hand may either have to stop on the three beat group, waiting for time to pass, or take longer to execute the gesture. This cessation of movement will mean that the ensemble will have to take responsibility for counting all the different beats individually, as the responsibility to execute this time now lies entirely with the ensemble. This gesture could also have the effect of stopping the flow of the air.
for the singers, and furthermore, will have a direct influence on how the preparation for this beat, as well as the rebound, will be executed.

Neuen (2002: 228,229) uses the term “float” to indicate the prolongation on specific beats. “Although it is important to feel a floating sensation in any compound-meter conducting, it is critical in complex meters. Ensembles tend to rush the compound beats and land early on the following beats. If our conducting demonstrates a clear float, and we insist that they feel that float as they rehearse and perform, we can eliminate this problem.”

Mixed Meter

Neuen (2002: 229 Figure 11.30)
Rudolf (1993: 153, Figure 13.1a – 13.1h)
The stick-like gestures of Rudolf (1993: 153 and 161) do not change the icti level, and demand from the conductor that he moves slower or faster between the beating gestures in order to accommodate the number of beats in the irregular gestures.

Willits (1993: 51) uses the expression "hang time" to indicate the prolongation period on specific beats to accommodate the longer beat.

Willits (1993: 42, Figure 25)

The other school of thought is represented by Ericson and Green. Here the icti points are changed in the beating gesture, rather than accommodating the change of the gesture between the different beats, by changing the tempo of the different indicated beats. This allows for greater movement in groups which have three subdivided beats, and the effect is that there is no stopping on any of the icti levels, and there is a natural flow in the gesture. Although the gestures vary slightly between authors, the principles used to create the gesture are the same.
Ericson (1976: 178) (Figure unnumbered) indicates the irregular five-beats per bar as above.

In this diagram, the basic gesture also resembles a simple time two-beat gesture. Ericson changes the ictus point of the second beat, dependent on the number of subdivided beats used. For beats which contain the augmented group he changes the gesture, taking the next ictus to a different level. This movement allows for continuous movement within the gesture. This in effect means that the hand will move continuously and that there will be no stopping or "changing tempo" on any of the icti. The gesture will also indicate a good preparation and rebound for either the two or three beat grouping, as well as be in a position to prepare for what happens after this group.

Fast five-beats are indicated by Green (2004: 98), as follows:

Green (2004: 98, Figures 40a + b)
In this gesture the high rebound for the first beat accounts for the added duration (the first three beats), leaving only a shorter line for the curtailed half of the measure (the last two beats). In 40b, (see previous page) the rebound of the first beat is kept low, leaving the upward line for the lengthier second beat (2+3). (Green (2004:97)

This gesture accommodates the different changes between two or three beats, and allows for the preparatory beat and the rebound to move naturally to the next beat. It does not demand mandatory stopping or slowing down on any of the icti. The result will be that the beating gesture will have a continuous flow.

13.3 Summary

Only seven authors wrote about fast irregular gestures. Two schools of thought are represented: one where the shape of the gesture remains the same, and the conductor’s hand is required to either “hang” while waiting for the passing of time during the augmented group, or where the tempo between the different beats is changed to accommodate the irregular beat. The other school of thought changes the beating plane, as well as the shape of the gesture, in order to accommodate the prolongation of the augmented beat, with the result that the hand is still constantly flowing.

The moment the hand of the conductor stops moving in this context, the vocalisation will be affected negatively and uncertainty about the gesture will become evident. In this “hanging” gesture, the clarity of intent of the conductor will be compromised, as the hand will literally wait for the ensemble to continue, rather than visibly leading the ensemble. The gesture will lose its informative nature, and therefore the predictability of the beat will also be compromised.

In Part 5, Chapter 23, reference will be made not only to the five and seven fast irregular gestures, but to other combinations where the shape of the simple time three as well as four beat gestures are altered in order to accommodate an augmented beat group within the gesture.
Chapter 14

Conclusion to Part 3

In Chapter 9 the research question posed was: “What are the recommended indications of preparatory beats, and how do these fulfil the functional requirements of gestures?” (Research question 2.1)

Several aspects surrounding the indication of preparatory gestures have been analysed. Most authors are in agreement that the preparatory beat should indicate the tempo, articulation and dynamics. Some mention that the conductor should breathe while indicating the preparatory beat.

The function of the preparatory gesture is seen to establish the ictus. This establishment of the ictus will determine how functional and effective the gesture is in terms of the precision of the entry of the ensemble. If this ictus is clearly indicated as part of the preparatory gesture, the predictability of the gesture will be increased. The effectiveness of the preparatory beat on any plane other than the horizontal plane will be argued in Part 5, Chapter 21.

In terms of indicating articulation, different schools of thought exist about the nature of the preparatory beat. If the hand is used in a “stopping” gesture to indicate staccato, the flow of breathing will be negatively affected, as well as control over the tempo indication of the gesture. In this regard the effectiveness of the gesture can become questionable, as well as the influence it will have on the music performance. This aspect will be debated in Part 5, Chapter 25, especially the suggestion that the stopping of the hand will be used to indicate staccato or marcato beats.

The height from where the preparatory beat is given differs between authors, and the only way to ascertain which of the suggested different levels will be the most successful is to make a reference to anatomical issues. If a preparatory gesture is started from a height other than the ictus point, effectively the preparatory
aspects of this gesture are of very little value, as the ensemble has no way of knowing where the beat will actually be established. The ensemble’s first cue, in fact, is the height from where the preparatory beat has been given. This information indicates to the ensemble the possibility of where the ictus will be. Should this ictus level be moved for no specific reason, the predictability of the beat will be negatively affected. These issues will be elaborated on in Part 5, Chapter 23.

Many authors made the observation that the rebound of a beat is in fact the preparatory beat of the next beat. In this sense, the predictability of the preparatory beat is important, and the effectiveness of the gesture can be sensed. Unfortunately, none of them make the observation that the rebound should be arranged in such a manner that the preparatory beat should be put in position for the preparation of the next beat. This aspect will be elaborated on in Part 5, Chapter 23, specifically the way in which the end of a fermata should be indicated in such a manner that the hand is immediately in position for the preparation of what is to follow. Most authors seem to agree on the principles of indicating fractional beats. Few authors suggest the use of the passive beat although this technique is extremely useful and will be discussed in more detail in Part 5, Chapter 24.

In Chapter 10 the aim was to look at the simple time four-beat gesture, and to answer the research question: “What is the recommended indication of the simple time four-beat gesture in relation to the preparatory beat, the style of beat, the positioning of the ictus and the motivation for the placement of different aspects of the beat; and how do these contribute to the function and execution of gestures?” (Research question 2.2)

The preparation beat which starts from the ictus and rebounds up to the same position of the horizontal plane will give a clear indication of where the ictus will take place on the horizontal plane.
The preparatory beat which starts higher than the horizontal plane is not very clearly delineated by any of the authors. This means that the ensemble will suffer in terms of preciseness of entry.

Most authors are emphatic that the downbeat should be down, meaning at an angle of 90°. All other authors use the 90° indication for the downbeat.

Very few authors link all icti directly with the horizontal plane. This issue will be taken further in Part 5, Chapter 21. Several authors prefer to work exclusively with the pendulum-type movement. The majority of authors plead for equidistance between beats 2 and 3. Not all authors make the same effort when it comes to providing a detailed motivation for the gestures. Some authors give an anatomical reasoning for the placement of aspects of the gesture. Anatomical reasons will be offered in Part 5, Chapter 22.

In Chapter 11 the research question answered was: “What is the recommended indication of the subdivision of simple time gestures in relation to the placement of rebounds of the subdivision; the shape of the gesture, and the placement of the icti in terms of the functional requirements of gestures?” (Research question 2.3)

Most of the authors are in agreement that the basic reason for subdivision of the simple time gesture would be when the basic beat slows down to below 50 beats per minute, and most authors seem to agree that the rebounds of the subdivided beat should appear much smaller than the main beat.

While some authors indicate a continuous flow of movement in the gesture, others advocate that a “stop” gesture is used when it comes to indicating a subdivided beat. This stopping of movement might have an affect on the breathing of the choir, which will be discussed in Part 5, Chapter 23. If this principle is to be applied in subdivided triple gesture, the “stop” gesture will be impossible, as there will be a continuous halting of flow.
Several authors suggest the inverted type movement, while others use a gesture which does not appear as either a pendulum-type movement or an inverted pendulum-type movement.

In Chapter 12 of Part 3, the research question asked was: “What is the recommended indication of slow compound time gestures in relation to the placement of rebounds of the subdivision; the shape of the gesture, the placement of the icti in terms of the functional requirements of gestures?”

The majority of authors seem to change the style of beating from the pendulum-type gesture in simple time to an inverted pendulum-type gesture for the compound type gestures. In Part 5, Chapter 21, an alternative to this suggestion will be proposed.

The placement of the groups in the compound quadruple gesture is not consistent. An attempt will be made in Part 5, Chapter 23, to give a motivation for the placement. None of the authors have given any reasons for their placement of the groupings of the different beats in the compound gestures. Two issues make the appearance of the compound gesture complicated: firstly, the fact that each beat is subdivided into three smaller beats makes the appearance of this gesture very cluttered. Secondly, the use of different levels of horizontal planes makes the gesture very difficult to recognise and in turn, to predict.

In Chapter 13 the research question was: “What is the recommended indication of fast irregular gestures in relation to the choice of shape of the gesture, the placement of the ictus, and the accommodation of the augmented beat in terms of the functional requirements of the gestures?” (Research question 2.5)

Few authors presented ideas about fast irregular gestures. Two schools of thought are represented: one where the shape of the gesture remains the same, but requires of the gesture to “hang”; or where the tempo between the different beats is changed to accommodate the irregular beat. The moment the hand of the conductor stops moving in this context, the vocalisation will be affected
negatively, and uncertainty about the gesture will become evident. In this “hanging” gesture, the clarity of intent of the conductor will be compromised, as the hand will literally wait for the ensemble to continue, rather than visibly leading the ensemble. The gesture will lose its informative nature, and therefore the predictability of the beat will also be compromised.

In Part 5, Chapter 23, reference will be made not only to the five and seven fast irregular gestures, but to other combinations where the shape of the simple time three as well as four beat gestures are altered in order to accommodate an augmented beat group within the gesture.