

“conduction”

(after Butch Morris and others)
Class exercise for a class or student improvisation ensemble.

Developed with members of
Music 32, Fall, 2012, Improvisation, Dartmouth College.

The gestures are freely taken from American Sign Language
(consult any ASL dictionary for them), but one could just as easily make up their own

lp
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On/off

POINT identifier (group or individual) (ASL: POINT/YOU)

ALL identifies group, all those playing (ASL: ALL)

START starts someone playing, who may be set beforehand (ASL: OCCUR/HAPPEN)

STOP stops someone playing (ASL: DIE)

e.g POINT to identify, set up FAST and HIGH, HAPPEN to start, STOP to stop.

Parameters

Parameters set or reset or modulated before or after POINT and START. Most are variable.

CANCEL cancels an indicated parameter, freeing it (e.g SLOW, IMITATE, etc.)

SLOW slow or slower (ASL: SLOW)

FAST fast or faster (ASL: FAST)

LOW ↔ **HIGH** low or lower or high or higher register register (ASL: LOW/HIGH)

LOUD ↔ **SOFT**

VARIED ↔ **NON-VARIED** change the degree of variation in playing (ASL: WAIT;
activity of fingers shows level of variation)

BACKGROUND ↔ **FOREGROUND** ↔ **MIDDLEGROUND** (ASL: IN-FRONT,
BEHIND, MIDDLE)

IMITATE (FOLLOW) one person or several imitate or follow one person (ASL:
SIMILAR)

PLAY SOMETHING DIFFERENT one person or several play something distinct from
one person (ASL: DIFFERENT)

USUAL play in some idiomatic style, or some known repertoire (ASL: NORMAL)

FREE opposite of usual, used for cancellation of USUAL (ASL: FREE)

HIT on signal, play an accent (ASL: CAN (fist))

SOLO one person, solo (others stop or become very quiet and/or inactive). May add other soloists as
well. May be used as a parameter to be activated by START (ASL: SHOOTING GUNS)

RHYTHM play a steady rhythm of your own invention (ASL: RHYTHM)

Entire group

CONVERGE: Play similarly (ASL: SAME)

DIVERGE: Play diversely (ASL: DIVERSITY)