



The Conductor

The CONDUCTOR is the most visible member of the Orchestra. The Orchestra is like a team and the conductor acts like the leader or “team captian”. He or She keeps the group of players together by waving a stick held in the right hand, called a baton, and moving the baton in a pattern or beat. The conductor uses the left hand, face, and body, to signal to the players the tempo (how fast or slow) , when to start and stop, and when to get louder or softer. The Conductor chooses the music and decides how it should be played. Very much like the coach of a basketball team. The conductor reads a score which shows every instrument’s part. Being a conductor is a very complicated job. It takes a lot of practice to learn how to conduct. *Maestro* is a fancier way of saying *Conductor*.

Maestro Michael Morgan

Maestro Michael Morgan, the Conductor of Oakland Symphony, was born in Washington, DC and attended public school, where he began conducting at the age of 12.



While Maestro Morgan was a student at Oberlin College of Music, he studied for a summer at the Berkshire Music Center at the Tanglewood Festival with world famous conductors Gunther Schuller, Seiji Ozawa, and Leonard Bernstein.

In 1986, Sir Georg Solti chose him to become the Assistant Conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, a position he held for five years under both Solti and Daniel Barenboim.

Maestro Morgan became music director of the Oakland East Bay Symphony in 1990. He founded the MUSic for Excellence (MUSE) program early on and has been a huge advocate for youth music education.

As a guest conductor, Maestro Morgan has traveled far and wide to appear with most of America's major orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, National Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, Alabama Symphony, Houston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, Winnipeg Symphony, Edmonton Symphony and Omaha Symphony. He has conducted orchestras in Europe, South America, the Middle East (Israel and Egypt) and even the Kimbanguiste Symphony Orchestra in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

In addition to his duties with the Oakland Symphony, Maestro Morgan serves as Artistic Director of the Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra, Music Director at Bear Valley Music Festival, and Music Director of the Gateways Music Festival. He is Music Director Emeritus of the Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera, and is on the boards of Oaktown Jazz Workshops, the Purple Silk Music Education Foundation, and the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute. He makes many appearances in the nation's schools each year.



Maestro Michael Morgan conducts Oakland Symphony and violinist Robert Chien, Young Artist Concerto Winner.

ACTIVITY: Discuss the Conductor

- Why does the orchestra need a conductor?
- How does the conductor communicate with the orchestra without talking?

Listen to recorded music and explore following the beat and tempo:

Clap along to the beat of recorded music

Wave one arm to the beat of recorded music

Explore how to conduct:

Learn the 4/4 beat pattern (1-down, 2-left side, 3-right side, 4-up)

Have students use their pointer finger on right hand as a baton and explore the 4/4 the beat pattern. Practice going fast and slow.

Have students sing while some students explore the 4/4 beat pattern and then trade places. ex: Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Have students conduct to a recorded piece of music.

Conducting beat pattern diagram:

