## Conducting Music Your Students Will Follow

*Annie Nielson, Utah ASTA Fall Workshop 2016*

As conductors, our job is to organize the chaos that occurs in rehearsals into a cohesive sound at performances that represents the composer’s intent. This is a daunting task, especially if our musicians will not follow our direction. Laban Gestures are invaluable tools in the conductor’s toolbox to communicate the music beyond meters, tempos, and dynamics.

Laban Gestures are based on the work of Rudolf von Laban (1879-1958) - considered a pioneer and major figure in modern dance. He was born in what is now Bratislava, Slovakia. In 1928 he published *Kinetographie Laban*, which introduced a notation system to dance/movement. This system is commonly referred to now as "Labanotation.” His language about movement and gesture has been translated into many other fields, including conducting.

Three variables in movement: SPEED – SPACE – WEIGHT (sounds like)

1. **Flick**: *Fast – Indirect– Light* ( pft / FL )
   1. Ornaments and cues
2. **Dab***: Fast – Direct– Light* ( t/d for fast/slow tempos, D )
   1. Cues, light accents, and articulations
3. **Glide**: *Slow – Direct* *– Light* ( sss / G )
   1. legato, soft dynamics, slow tempos, and small dynamic changes
4. **Float**: *Slow – Indirect* *– Light* ( fff / F )
   1. legato, soft dynamics, slow tempos
5. **Press**: *Slow – Direct – Strong* ( V / P )
   1. Dynamic changes, fermatas
6. **Punc*h****: Fast – Direct – Strong* ( CH / PN *)*
   1. Strong accents and tutti entrances
7. **Wring**: *Slow – Indirect – Strong* ( Zh / W )
   1. Long, strong accents like loud tremolos
8. **Slash**: *Fast – Indirect– Strong* ( Z / S )
   1. Strong, short accents

Goal - too like the piece you are conducting.