

UP BEAT

In October, 2008, I directed a weekend course on conducting for *The Schools Music Association*. Those on the course were conductors of school, youth, adult and church choirs. Some had no conducting experience at all. The content of the course included:-

- Conducting gestures
- Appropriate beats for different time signatures
- Communicating with gestures and not with words
- Using warm ups and cool downs
- Rehearsal techniques
- Vocal techniques for the choir
- Vowels, consonants and diphthongs
- Diction
- Correcting choir faults
- Aiming for a better sound
- Baton technique
- How to prepare the music
- Tips on motivating your choir
- Working with your accompanist

At the end, many course members said that they would like to know more, not only about conducting, but about singing and choir work in general. After discussion, I decided to form a club which I have called **UP BEAT**. This will take the form mainly of electronic newsletters – about four a year. **Now this service is absolutely free.**

If you are interested in this please send to me your e-mail address and I will send you immediately Newsletters Nos 3 - 7. Nos 1 & 2 were mainly about setting up the club and what it would cover so you would not have missed anything. Topics covered in Nos 3 – 7 include:-

- Physical warm ups – aims and reasons
- Vocal warm ups – aims and reasons
- Breathing
- Posture
- Cool Downs
- A short guide to vowel sounds
- Diphthongs and Triphthongs
- Consonants
- Some pitfalls and exercises to do with vowels
- Studying the music you are to conduct

- Reviews of CDs and Books

Up Beat is for those who direct choirs/orchestra/ensembles. So if you would like to join just contact me at dcoombes@clara.net and I will send you newsletters 3 - 7 and a document which suggests 57 rehearsal strategies.

Douglas Coombes