PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO CONDUCTING GESTURE
IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

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Conducting is non-verbal communication of musical ideas through the use of gestures made by the hands, arms, and body, as well as expressions made by the face. It is at once physical, psychological, mental, and potentially even spiritual, requiring presence, an ability to listen, respond, guide, catalyze, shape, lead, sometimes follow, and most of all, invite and inspire musicians. This document addresses gesture as a manifestation of musical sound and how conductors approach these physical, non-verbal motions to affect musical sound and how they might be interpreted by performers. Using anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell’s *Kinesics in Context*, and studies by psychologist Paul Ekman and his colleagues, I relate kinesics and categories of non-verbal communication to conducting and the teaching of gesture, and how this non-verbal language communicates musical intention. Through information gleaned from interviews with preeminent American conducting pedagogues as well as my own experience as a student and teacher of conducting, I present several approaches to teaching conducting aimed at helping developing conductors improve and cultivate their craft. I also offer a compilation and expansion of exercises that encourage conductors to maximize their expressive potential and most effectively communicate with their ensemble. Finally, this document addresses how the standard idea of gesture applies to Gerard Grisey’s *Partiels* from his *Espaces Acoustiques* and Witold Lutosławski’s *Chain 1*, taking into account new notational elements. The purpose of this document is to elucidate the gestural language of conducting and the visual aspect of effectively communicated sound, and provide a fresh pedagogical approach to conducting.
This document is dedicated to my husband Octavio and my daughter Luana.
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INTRODUCTION

Conductors rely on a vocabulary of gestures to communicate musical ideas to their ensembles. These gestures have a direct impact on the sound the ensemble produces. Numerous conductors, such as Hector Berlioz, Richard Wagner, Max Rudolf, Brock McElheran, Frederik Prausnitz, and Erich Leinsdorf, among many others, have written about conducting, addressing topics such as pattern, score-study, fermatas, the left hand, tempo changes, clefs and transpositions, marking the score, score mapping, rehearsal technique, memorizing music, and the business of conducting. However, very few books about conducting address, in a direct fashion, the communication of sound through gesture.

Among these, only a few address the topic of using gesture to shape sound with any specificity. Harold Farberman speaks to many of the above-mentioned elements of conducting technique, however, his solutions are prescriptive with PatternCubes\footnote{PatternCubes are a two-part multi-dimensional system for charting baton movement; i.e. where the baton should be, what strokes to use, and how the strokes are delivered. He creates symbols to represent direction, length, etc. For the left hand he has five indications, and four indications for the arm positions.} showing exactly how one should conduct the music.\footnote{Harold Farberman, \textit{The Art of Conducting: A New Perspective} (Miami: Warner Brothers, 1997), 87-92.} Arthur Weisberg’s \textit{Performing Twentieth-Century Music: A Handbook for Conductors and Instrumentalists} is the only book that addresses conducting contemporary music per se, however, its audience is not trained conductors but rather, instrumentalists and composers who haven’t been trained as conductors but may end up conducting an ensemble.\footnote{Arthur Weisberg, \textit{Performing Twentieth-Century Music} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).} Weisberg’s focus is largely on patterns, subdivisions, score preparation, metric modulations, etc. Diane Wittry has, in her recently published book \textit{Baton Basics: Communicating Music through Gestures}, addressed weight, resistance, and energy and includes companion videos on her website that offer relaxation exercises and demonstrations of
all possible types of conducting gestures. She uses many extra-musical motions such as bouncing a ball or sweeping off a small table to illustrate musical ones and also addresses the types of gestures that work best with specific instrument types. She even delves into mindfulness, centeredness and gives some exercises on how to achieve them.

Authors of conducting books generally agree that clarity of gesture combined with an unequivocal conveyance of musical expression and shaping of musical time are indispensable requisites for being an effective conductor, but they rarely suggest how this might be achieved. Even great conducting pedagogues struggle to find exercises that help their students internalize music in the score in order to then outwardly express their musical ideas. This document addresses conducting gesture in three ways: as musical sign language, pedagogical approaches, and finally through the discussion of two contemporary case studies.

Larry Rachleff, conductor of the Rhode Island Philharmonic and Walter Kris Hubert Professor of Music and Music Director of the Shepherd School Symphony and Chamber Orchestras says, “First, you have to give musicians the space to form their own feelings. That’s why nonverbal communication is the deepest because, hopefully, they’re connecting to your body language and you’re listening to what they’re saying with their instruments.” Using the study of kinesics, I address posture, gesture, stance, and movement, specifically focusing on categories of non-verbal communication that connect most effectively with conducting language and the communication of musical ideas. Leonard Bernstein likened a conductor to one who projects musical feelings so that they reach even the person seated furthest away in the orchestra. In this way he says, “When this happens – when one hundred men [sic] share his feelings, exactly, simultaneously, responding as one to each rise and fall of music…then there is human

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5 Frederick Harris Jr., *Conducting with Feeling*, (Galesville: Meredith Music Publications, 2001.), 38.
identity of feeling that has no equal elsewhere."\textsuperscript{6} Anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell, the founder of the study of kinesics, emphasizes that communication is reciprocal stating, “Essentially, we discuss communication as a complex and sustaining system through which various members of the society interrelate with more or less efficiency and facility.”\textsuperscript{7}

Because conducting is one of the more obstinately indefinable of the musical arts, it is problematic to determine an exact system for teaching conducting. Violinist and conductor Yehudi Menuhin, speaking of educating young musicians, said, “In all teaching there must be a fusion of authority as an adult providing a stable framework for the [people] in one’s care, and humility as another human being ready to educate an equal who may turn out to be a superior.”\textsuperscript{8}

This applies directly to conducting teaching. Through information gleaned from interviews with preeminent American conducting pedagogues and my own experience, I present a survey of approaches to teaching gesture and various philosophies about how to encourage developing conductors to connect with musical sound and express their internal aural image of the pieces they are conducting. I also offer a compilation and expansion of exercises that encourage conductors to maximize their expressive potential and most effectively communicate with their ensemble.

In an interview at Slush 2014\textsuperscript{9}, Esa-Pekka Salonen referred to being a conductor as a \textit{primus inter pares}.\textsuperscript{10} Being a catalyst, nurturing talent, and engaging with musicians to create a space where everyone is invited to bring forth the totality of their musical skill and passion is the

\textsuperscript{9} “Lessons from Leading the Most Talented Musicians in the World,” YouTube video, from an interview of Esa-Pekka Salonen with host Marko Ahtisaari at Slush 2014, posted by SLUSH November 18, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oREELwum5IU
\textsuperscript{10} Perhaps he was recalling Max Rudolf’s reference to conductors being a first among equals from Max Rudolph, \textit{The Grammar of Conducting}, (New York: Schirmer, 1949), 336.
conductor’s job no matter the repertoire. By looking at two contemporary works, Lutosławski’s *Chain 1*, and Gérard Grisey’s *Partiels* from *Les Espaces Acoustiques*, I explore how a traditional approach to conducting gestures does or does not apply and investigate new conducting techniques the works require. These two works are particularly interesting examples due to untraditional notational elements and additional theatrical elements not present in common practice repertories. An evaluation of these representative pieces will offer a fresh perspective on conducting contemporary repertoires.
CHAPTER I.

CONDUCTING GESTURE AS MUSICAL SIGN LANGUAGE

The Study of Kinesics and How It Relates To Conducting Gesture

Conducting is non-verbal communication of musical ideas through the use of gestures made by the hands, arms, and body, as well as expressions made by the face. Conducting is at once physical, psychological, mental, and potentially even spiritual. It requires complete presence, an ability to listen, respond, guide, catalyze, shape, lead, sometimes follow, and most of all, invite and inspire musicians. A conductor’s gestures should be infused with technical competence and emotional connection. The question is: how does one show ideas of interpretation gained from careful score-study, historical and theoretical context, and analysis in one’s gestures? Line, direction, sensitivity to harmonic changes, register, type of attack, and many other elements can and should be shown for gestures to connect to the musical flow and ultimately, the way the work is performed.

Conducting gestures *per se* are elusive conductor-specific means by which musical ideas are communicated. Many books have described conducting gestures in both general (i.e. patterns) and specific (in the context of a particular musical example) terms. Yes, there is an agreed upon (or sometimes not)¹¹ beat pattern and there is a commonly accepted stance on the podium, however, each conductor has a unique style, performance rhetoric, manner, and physiology (physiognomy) that shape, at least to a certain extent, her gestures.

¹¹ A search for 6/8 time signatures and how to conduct them either in conducting Literature or on YouTube will yield an astounding variety of approaches from a simple 2-beat pattern to a subdivided 3 pattern (which is not 6/8 but rather 3/2), to an Italian 6/8 and a German 6/8.
What is missing in conducting literature is a discussion of how physical, non-verbal musical gestures affect the sound, how they are interpreted by musicians and thus translate into sound. Using Ray Birdwhistell’s *Kinesics in Context* and studies by Paul Ekman and his colleagues, I will relate kinesics\(^{12}\) to conducting and the teaching of gesture. I will attempt to explain how body movements and gestures communicate musical intention. I will specifically address how physical, non-verbal musical gestures convey all the possible nuances that each moment in music possesses, i.e. volume, register, attack, color, texture, length, breadth, etc., and how these are interpreted by musicians and thus translated into sound.

Historically, a few successful music education methodologies have been developed to act as aids to musicians, to express meaning non-verbally, and to establish a physical connection with sound using elements of space, velocity, muscle engagement, effort, shape, etc. Although not aimed specifically at the craft of conducting, they can have application for conductors. Emile-Jacques Dalcroze,\(^{13}\) Carl Orff, Zoltán Kodály, and Edwin Gordon are among the creators of these methods. More recently the work of Rudolf von Laban has been introduced to students of conducting as a framework within which conductors can develop an expressive vocabulary on the podium.\(^{14}\) A number of studies have used Laban Movement Theory to create a framework to aid conductors in creating an expressive vocabulary on the podium. Lisa Billingham’s *The Complete Conductor’s Guide to Laban Movement Theory* aims to do just that. Charles Gambetta

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\(^{12}\) Kinesics is the study of those body movements and gestures by which, as well as by speech, communication is made; body movements and gestures that convey meaning non-vocally.


\(^{14}\) Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) was a dancer, choreographer and dance and movement theoretician. One of the founders of European Modern Dance, Laban raised the status of dance as an art form, and his explorations into the theory and practice of dance and movement transformed the nature of dance scholarship. He established choreology, the discipline of dance analysis, and invented a system of dance notation, now known as Labanotation or Kinetography Laban.
and James Jordan have also contributed to this unique approach. The study of kinesics provides another way to look at the question of gesture translating into sound and because it is not specific to musicians, seems to engender a more universal application.

Kinesics, though not developed specifically for conductors, begs connection with the art since in musical terms conducting is the quintessence of nonverbal communication in the musical world. Conductors could learn a great deal from the development of useful exercises related to mind-body connection, and interpersonal and group communication. Anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell begins the introduction to his book *Kinesics and Context*, with this statement: “These essays are based on the conviction that body motion is a learned form of communication, which is patterned within a culture and which can be broken down into an ordered system of isolable elements.”

Musical ensembles are complex, dynamic, living organisms that react to and connect with both physical and metaphysical energy present in their space. Thus, conductors must always remain open to creative impulses coming back from the ensemble in order to cultivate and maintain a vibrant, synergistic environment and be able to respond in the moment to whatever needs their attention. Birdwhistell illustrates this same idea in the following way:

When we talk about communication we are not talking about a situation in which John acts and Mary reacts to John’s action and in turn John reacts to Mary’s action in some simple, ongoing, one-after-another sequence. Essentially, we discuss communication as a complex and sustaining system through which various members of the society interrelate with more or less efficiency and facility. According to communication theory, John does not communicate to Mary; and Mary does not communicate to John; Mary and John engage in communication.16

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16 Ibid., 12.
Birdwhistell further maintains that communication is internalized rather than invented. Likewise, our training as musicians includes endless hours of practice learning notes, rhythms, tuning, articulations, phrasing, etc., and the physical non-verbal gestures that directly correlate with these aspects of music are also something we internalize in the process of becoming musicians. If one were to ask a well trained musician to explain the phrasing of a certain musical passage, what results is a verbal explication most likely accompanied by some kind of physical gesture that demonstrates direction, speed, intensity, volume, attack, and maybe even pitch or register. That ability to show the aural image of sound with movement is what conductors learn to cultivate and refine. Thus, understanding a conductor’s gestures is also, to a certain extent, something musicians internalize in the process of becoming a musician.

Of course, everyone has had unique experiences that make their performance and perception differ from that of others. Birdwhistell recalls Ted Schwartz’s useful distinction:

The special idiolect or the idiomovement system of any individual is a product of the special experiences of his idioverse. However, the specialist cannot determine how distinctively individual any particular performance is before he knows the structure of significant ranges of behavior for a particular behavioral area…. Because such behaviors are communicational, as members of society, we use the pattern of another’s behavior to anticipate and to react to him.”

Thus, the more musicians watch conductors the more they are able to react to a larger vocabulary of conducting gestures. Perhaps this is why it is so important for conductors of youth ensembles and even college and university ensembles to be thoroughly in command of an effective and sophisticated conducting vocabulary so they can train young ensemble musicians how to watch and interpret a conductor’s gestures.

When Birdwhistell collected data about gesture to determine meaning, he looked at a given region of the body and a certain type or class of movement. Briefly, he considered three

17 Ibid., 15.
18 Ibid., 81-2.
motion qualifiers that, when varied, modify the kinesic structures and have an analytic identity separate from those structures. The three categories of motion qualifiers are:

1) *Intensity*, which describes the degree of muscular tension involved in the production of a kine or kinemorph\(^\text{*19}\)

2) *Range*, the width or extent of movement involved in performance of a given kine or kinemorph (range he subdivides into narrow, limited, N (neutral), widened, and broad, and

3) *Velocity*, or the temporal length involved in the production of a kine or kinemorph. He measures velocity by a three-degree scale and incidentally uses musical terminology: staccato, N, and allegro.\(^\text{*20}\)

Even just considering range and velocity, much of music can be communicated simply using these measurements since width and temporal length take care of one of the most basic and important jobs of a conductor, that of measuring time and setting a tempo. One might also argue that the size of the gesture, or range relates to the volume, but that will be discussed in the pedagogy chapter.

Birdwhistell recognized the value in correlating linguistic and kinesic material. He suggests that words in and of themselves are not absolute carriers of meaning. They can be comprehended only by reference to their context.\(^\text{*21}\) This relates to conducting gestures in that, isolated they mean very little, but within a musical context they should relate to what is transpiring at that moment. Harmonically, melodically, and rhythmically they relate to their environment and connect one musical event with another.

\[^{19}\text{Birdwhistell describes the kine as the smallest behavioral unit distinctly perceived by the viewer such as a head nod. Kines are combined to make kinemorphs, the smallest meaningful gestural unit such as a head nod including eyebrows, etc. Ibid., 165.}\]

\[^{20}\text{Ibid., 165.}\]

\[^{21}\text{Ibid., 16.}\]
Communication is not only reliant on the person sharing the communication but also on the perceptive capacity of the one receiving the information. If someone speaks Greek to you, and you do not understand Greek, most everything is lost, except perhaps character or emotion if the speaker is particularly expressive. Classically trained musicians generally share a common language of harmony, rhythm, articulation, pitch, register, color, etc. Individually we all have our own experience, our own personal training, and our own instruments, but the syntax, grammar, and vocabulary of musical ideas are often similar. Even modestly skilled musicians easily execute concepts of louder, softer, higher, lower, shorter, longer, etc. Gestures communicating these, if executed effectively, should be understandable and easily recognizable.

Birdwhistell states, “The student of body motion behavior, as he becomes a more practiced observer, becomes increasingly aware of the apparently endless movement the shifting, wriggling, squirming, adjusting, and resituating\(^{22}\) which characterize the living human body in space. If the entire human body becomes the organ for communicative movement as an analog to the vocal apparatus as the organ of speech, how can he hope to deal with the flood of information, which he observes? His would seem to be an impossible task.”\(^{23}\)

For the student of conducting this statement is of utmost importance, because the realization that any and every movement we make may be interpreted or misinterpreted as having intentional meaning becomes a tool for the elimination of any gesture that does not have a precise musical purpose. Thus, sweeping one’s hair from one’s face, scratching body parts, idiosyncratic tics, or any other arbitrary gestures can obscure clear communication of one’s musical ideas. Even the initial twitches, clothing adjustments, subconscious but visible tapping of tempi, nervous pacing, and such when an inexperienced conductor takes the podium already

\(^{22}\) Birdwhistell’s term for moving things around such as a blouse, one’s hair, etc.

\(^{23}\) Birdwhistell, 76.
communicate to the musicians that he is unaware of his own body space and gestures, and that in all likelihood, what is to come will be a combination of practiced gestures and unintentional ones.

Birdwhistell also emphasizes the importance of isolating the “strictly communicational behavior from the idiosyncratic.”24 Likewise, the experienced musician must somehow sift out what is an intentional meaningful musical gesture and what is idiosyncratic or coincidental, and it is the conductor’s job to eliminate or minimize the latter and carefully craft and refine the former. If there is too much idiosyncratic behavior, the result is that musicians stop watching the conductor because it takes too much energy to distinguish meaningful musical gestures from habits or arbitrary movements.

A single event that Birdwhistell observed during World War II sparked one of the primary “breakthroughs” in the development of kinesics. He writes,

I became at first bemused, and later intrigued, by the repertoire of meanings, which could be drawn upon by an experienced United States Army private and transmitted in accompaniment to a hand salute. The salute, a conventionalized movement of the right hand to the vicinity of the anterior portion of the cap or hat, could, without occasioning a court martial, be performed in a manner which could satisfy, please, or enrage the most demanding officer. By shifts in stance, facial expression, the velocity or duration of the movement of salutation, and even in the selection of inappropriate contexts for the act, the soldier could dignify, ridicule, demean, seduce, insult, or promote the recipient of the salute.25

This demonstrated quite clearly the order of variability on a central theme, which relates perfectly to the primary lesson in most beginning conducting classes: conducting beat patterns, since a simple four-beat pattern can be conducted in many different ways to achieve completely different sounds. Just like the salute, the duration and velocity, and of course, shifts in facial expression, will illicit significantly different responses from a well-trained ensemble.

24 Ibid., 95.
25 Ibid., 79-80.
Albert Mehrabian, a pioneer in nonverbal communication in the 1950s, found that the total impact of a message when dealing with feelings and attitudes\(^{26}\) was about 7 percent verbal (words only), 38 percent vocal (including tone of voice, inflection and other sounds) and 55 percent nonverbal. \(^{27}\) Likewise, Birdwhistell found that the verbal component of a face-to-face conversation is less than 35 percent and that over 65 percent of communication is nonverbal.\(^ {28}\)

Nonverbal communication can include posture, facial expression, and body signals. For a conductor, posture can communicate a lot, and with dozens of facial muscles and an infinite number of permutations of how they work together, the face can equally impart a great deal. In addition to the communicative features of the face, the hands, fingers, arms, shoulders, torso, legs, and feet are also components of conducting gesture. One might not think of the feet or legs as part of the conducting apparatus, however, many conductors walk around the podium, stomp their feet at climactic moments, or bend their knees to shrink into quieter passages, so these are all part of nonverbal communication and gesture.

While it is true that many professional musicians only have a peripheral eye on the conductor, especially given today’s decreased rehearsal time, a conductor with an expressive face can convey much to the ensemble in terms of the emotional content of his or her musical ideas. Dr. Paul Ekman,\(^ {29}\) a preeminent psychologist and co-discoverer of *micro-expressions* with Wallace V. Friesen, Ernest A. Haggard, and Kenneth S. Isaacs\(^ {30}\) studied and made significant advances in the field of facial expressions. In 1969, building on Birdwhistell’s kinesics, Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen differentiated five categories of body movements and facial

\(^{28}\) Ibid., 10.
\(^{29}\) In 2009, Time Magazine named Dr. Paul Ekman one of the Most 100 Most Influential People in The World.
expressions: Emblems, Illustrators, Affective Displays, Regulators, and Adaptors. Thirty years later, Ekman expands on these five categories and describes their application. Below are the categories and how they might relate to approaching the communication of musical sound through conducting gesture.

**Emblems**

Emblems are the only true ‘body language’, in that these movements have a set of precise meanings, which are understood by all members of a culture or subcultures…. Emblems are socially learned and thus, like language, culturally variable. A message may have an emblem in one culture, and no emblem in another cultural setting, or the same movement pattern may have quite different meanings in different cultural settings.

Examples include shrug to denote helplessness, or raised eyebrows to denote surprise. Ekman continues, “Emblems may be iconic, in which the movements look in some way like the message they are signifying, or arbitrarily coded. Emblems most often involve the hands, but some are performed using the shoulders, changes in head positioning, or facial movements.”

Elizabeth Kuhnke, author of *Body Language for Dummies*, mentions the sign of the cuckold as an example of an emblem. With the index and little fingers extended pointing forward with your palm facing down, making ‘horns’, you might be telling an Italian that his partner’s been unfaithful, or in Texas, expressing your support for the University of Texas Longhorns football team. Because of different interpretations of the same gesture between

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33 Ibid., 40.
34 Ibid., 40.
35 https://elizabethkuhnke.wordpress.com/2011/05/10/kinesics-the-categories-of-gesture/#comments
cultures, the correct reading is dependent on the context in which the signal occurs.36 As Birdwhistell noted, “no position, expression or movement ever carries meaning in and of itself.”37

The musical equivalent to an emblem might be a cutoff indicating *stop playing*, or the index finger pointing up or down with the back of the hand facing the musician to suggest an adjustment of pitch in either direction, *higher* or *lower*. The index finger pointing up with the palm facing the musician might mean *watch out!* or *pay attention!* In short these are signs used to refer to certain words or messages. A sharp, strong, quick gesture with a rapid ictus and fast rebound will indicate *sforzando*. Higher, slower, relaxed gestures with no arm or hand tension that move gently through the conducting plane will show a floating, light sound. Musicians who are trained and perform in the Western tradition should recognize these types of gestures easily. While conductors do show cutoffs in different ways depending on the musical context, the thing they all have in common is the stopping of the gesture, which directly correlates to the stopping of the sound, regardless of the direction or speed of the cutoff.

Illustrators

These are movements illustrating speech, intimately related to what a speaker is saying, often augmenting what is said, but sometimes contradicting it.38 There are seven different types of illustrators as listed below39:

1. Batons40 time out, accent or emphasize a particular word or phrase, ‘beat out the tempo of a mental locomotion’.

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36 Although gestures can be culturally specific (for instance, the American OK sign has different meanings in various countries), none of the pedagogues consulted for this study could recall problems with confusing gestures among their international students; and my video studies of conductors from numerous countries did not reveal any gestures that could be misinterpreted in the United States. An internet search of “culturally specific gestures” provides a quick overview of this topic in general.

37 Birdwhistell, 45.

38 Ekman, 41.

39 Ekman preserves the terminology described by Efron for the types of Illustrators, but adds the sixth and seventh ones.
2. Ideographs sketch a path or directing of thought, ‘tracing the itinerary of a logical journey’.  
3. Deictic movements point to a present object.  
4. Kinetographs depict a bodily action.  
5. Spatial movements depict a spatial relationship.  
6. Pictographs draw a picture of their referent.  
7. Rhythmic movements depict the rhythm or pacing of an event.  

Although illustrators are typically performed with the hands, they can also be in the head or the feet. Almost all facial batons involve eyebrow raising and lowering. Ekman notes that with words such as easy, light, good, etc. a brow-raise is used, while brow lowered is used to emphasize words such as difficult, dark, bad, etc. He offers an interesting explanation for the association of these brow movements with negative and positive words relating to how these two actions in conversational signals carry an implication of something negative, or in contrast, something surprising or interesting.

Kuhnke gives holding your hands apart to indicate size as an example of an emblem. She also mentions, “In general, Latinos use illustrators more than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts, who make more use of illustrators than many Asian cultures. In some Asian cultures, extensive use of illustrators is often interpreted as a lack of intelligence. In Latin cultures, the absence of illustrators indicates a lack of interest.” This raises the issue; does the cultural background of a conductor affect his or her expressiveness? Perhaps, however something like this is immeasurable and difficult to pin down since there are always exceptions to the rule.

What is most noticeable about illustrators is the fact that they accompany language and thus are nonverbal metacommunicators. For conductors, the equivalent of an illustrator might not necessarily accompany language, although it could. For instance, a musical non-verbal illustrator

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40 N.B. this does not refer to a conductor’s baton, but rather to a movement that emphasizes something.  
41 Ekman, 42.  
might indicate a section in which balance needs attention. Verbal illustrators might be used often in rehearsal when a type of sound is verbally requested and simultaneously accompanied by a hand signal to indicate staccato, tenuto, legato, etc. Furrowed brows might indicate a deeper, darker, heavier, angrier, rougher, sound, while eyebrows raised might indicate a lighter, higher, brighter, or higher sound. Musicians will almost always know to which of these things the nonverbal gesture is asking for, however if it is not clear, the conductor may have to resort to verbal instruction. A combination of nonverbal gestures can also aid the musician in knowing how to adjust and it is entirely possible that a gesture with the hands, body and or arms accompanied by a facial expression can clarify the conductor’s intent.

Manipulators

This category (previously, and still sometimes called adaptors) consists of movements in which one part of the body or face manipulates another part of the body or face, i.e. touching one’s hair, scratching one’s body, licking or biting one’s lip, etc. An object may also be the thing being “manipulated”, or alternately used to perform the manipulation. Ekman notes, “The frequency with which these movements occur is amazing, once one begins to notice them.”\[^{43}\]

While some manipulators appear to serve a useful function such as grooming or cleaning, many of them seem to have no specific purpose. Ekman notes,

> Perhaps reassurance or comforting is a possibility, but many manipulators seem simply to reflect a nervousness, or habitual activity. Manipulators appear to be performed on the edge of awareness, in that a person if asked what he or she just did can usually describe the activity, but was not focusing on it as it occurred. Or observations suggest that most people disattend when another person engages in a particularly noticeable, presumably taboo, manipulator…. The disattending, I believe, also occurs with little awareness.\[^{44}\]

He maintains that generally, manipulators increase as a person becomes uncomfortable. On the other hand, manipulators may also increase when people feel comfortable, are with friends, and

\[^{43}\] Ekman, 43.
\[^{44}\] Ibid, 43.
are unconcerned about appearances. He writes, “Our research found that others distrust people who show many manipulators; they are commonly interpreted as signs someone is lying. But in fact, they are not a reliable sign of lying for most people.” For conductors this would not be a good thing since gaining the ensemble’s trust is extremely important. Ekman’s distinctions underline Birdwhistell’s emphasis on the importance of isolating the “strictly communicational behavior from the idiosyncratic.”

For conductors, the importance of understanding adaptors or manipulators is that the use of these types of nonverbal gestures can cause the observer to stop observing if it becomes uncomfortable for them or off-putting. Many of these are habitual behaviors associated with nerves and have little or nothing to do with the message being communicated. Again, conductors who engage in these kinds of movements do not realize that musicians are learning to not look at them since these movements and motions do not communicate anything to do with musical sound. The podium is no place for grooming or cleaning.

Regulators

These refer to “actions which maintain and regulate the back-and-forth nature of speaking and listening between two or more interactants. They tell the speaker to continue, repeat, elaborate, hurry up, become more interesting, less salacious, give the other a chance to talk, etc. They tell the listener to pay special attention, to wait just a minute more, to talk, etc.” Examples of these are head nods, agreement-smiles, forward leans, brows raised in exclamation. Ekman also mentions ‘floor holders’ which, like a traffic policeman, prevent the listener from entering the conversation and ‘turn seekers’ where the listener attempts to gain the floor. The latter may involve leaning forward, rising from a chair, opening one’s mouth to show intent to speak, etc.

45 Ibid., 43.
46 Birdwhistell, 95.
47 Ekman, 44.
An example of a musical regulator would be speeding up the beat to bring about an *accelerando* or slowing the beat to bring about a *ritardando*. Even an open hand indicating space for a soloist to play with freedom of expression might be a regulator since it implies an invitation to enter into the sound space as one would open a hand to allow another to speak.

**Emotional Expressions**

This category (previously called Affect or Affective displays) consists of involuntary signals that provide important information to others. These expressions, according to Ekman, have been:

selected and refined over the course of evolution for their role in social communication. As involuntary signals they may occur in response to anything that calls forth an emotion, which may include non-personal events such as a beautiful sunset or thunder, and may be manifest when the individual is alone. The presence of others enhances expressions, as emotions themselves evolved primarily to deal with fundamental life tasks involving child care, mating, dealing with predators and rivals, etc. 48

Ekman argues that a hallmark of an emotion is that it has a signal, in face and/or voice and/or bodily movement. He also has a theory that any state sharing the characteristics he describes for an emotion will have a signal or expression. He maintains that the face and voice are primary sites of emotional expressions and that posture or positioning of the head and body is also recruited into the signal of some emotions. 49 Ekman also suggested that there is a group of emotions relating to unhappiness that share a particular facial expression as well as a group relating to happiness, which does so as well. His claim is that their appearance on the face is not much different, with only minor variations for each of these related states. 50

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48 Ibid., 44-5.
49 Ibid., 46.
50 Ibid., 46.
The discovery of mirror neurons\textsuperscript{51} may have implications that connect with the importance of emotional expressions since humans have a tendency to imitate or mimic each other’s expressions. Marco Iacoboni in his book \textit{Mirroring People}, elaborates on this phenomenon quoting a passage in \textit{Emotional Contagion} by Elaine Hatfield, John Cacioppo and Richard L. Rapson, “people imitate others’ expression of pain laughter, smiling, affection, embarrassment, discomfort, disgust, stuttering, reaching with effort, and the like in a broad range of situations. Such mimicry…is a communicative act, conveying a rapid and precise nonverbal message to another person.”\textsuperscript{52} The significance of this for conductors is that whatever we show on our face will to some degree be absorbed by at least part if not all of the members of the ensemble. This mimicry suggests not only a communicative role, but also a perceptual one, and can have a profound effect on the emotional communication between a conductor and the ensemble.

Even more subtly, ‘referential expressions,’ a subset of Ekman’s emotional expressions, are facial movements that refer to an emotion that is not felt by the person showing it. The person is referring to the emotion, much as the person could with a word, showing the emotion, but in a way that makes it clear that the person is not feeling it now.\textsuperscript{53} It must look like the emotional expression but differ from it for two reasons: first, if it resembles the actual emotional expression the observer might fail to recognize that it is not being felt now and perceive it as an actual emotional expression; and, second, to reduce the likelihood that the person making the referential expression will actually begin to experience an emotion. Ekman’s research with

\textsuperscript{51} In the 1980s Giacomo Rizzolatti and his colleagues identified certain motor neurons in the Macaque monkey’s premotor cortex that fired in reaction to watching someone perform an action. In 1992, they published a study “\textit{Brain}” (Vol. 119, No. 2, pages 593-609 in the American Psychological Journal and called these “mirror neurons.” \url{http://www.apa.org/monitor/oct05/mirror.aspx}, accessed May 27, 2016.


\textsuperscript{53} Ekman, 45.
Robert Levenson (Ekman et al. 1983\textsuperscript{54}; Levenson et al. 1990\textsuperscript{55}) found that deliberately making the facial movement associated with a universal expression generates the changes in the autonomic nervous system that occur when emotion is generated in more typical ways\textsuperscript{56}. The implications here are manifold since musicians, conductors included, are often communicating emotions that they do not necessarily veritably feel. If they are playing a piece that is sad or somber, they are creating a mood that will be felt by the audience, if there is joyful music, that too, hopefully will be communicated. Thus, facial expressions and the possible ripple effect they can have in a musical context, is tremendously important for a conductor to understand.

The challenge with affective display or emotional expression in music is that every individual has her own degree of expressing emotion. Some people are more shy and less likely to allow their faces to indicate any emotional response to a situation, others are more outwardly expressive and are much more likely to demonstrate their emotions. As for conductors, it is generally agreed upon that there should be some degree of facial expression that indicates an emotional connection with the music. Some conductors refer to this as acting, others as a natural response to the musical content. Whatever it is, it must be authentic and genuine, or at least come across that way. Ekman would most likely say that he could easily determine the authenticity of the emotion expressed, but without learning the finer nuances of his way of detecting truth in emotions, musicians probably trust that whatever emotional expression they are seeing is authentic, unless, of course, it is not convincing.

Birdwhistell posits that “body motion and facial expression (are) strongly conditioned, if not largely determined by the socialization process in particular cultural milieus” and that “out of


\textsuperscript{56} Ekman, 47.
the vast range of possible combinations of muscular adjustments, perhaps a quarter of a million in the facial area alone, each society ‘selects’ certain ones for recognition and utilization in the interaction process.” 57

Members of choral ensembles might be more likely to respond to a greater extent to facial expression of emotions since part of their instrument or vocal apparatus involves the lips, mouth, and facial muscles. A sensitive singer will closely monitor the face of a conductor who is particularly expressive and will mirror emotions on her face.

Any form of contradictory metacommunication from a conductor, such as large, intense gestures accompanied by supplications to “play softer” immediately causes a lack of trust in the authenticity of gestural language and thus creates a perceptual impasse between conductor and ensemble. When a conductor uses effective gestures orchestra members feel not only inspired to bring all of their musicianship to the performance, but also like they trust the conductor to lead them on an extraordinary journey. And ultimately when orchestras can interpret a conductor’s gestures effectively they will play and sometimes even physically move together so that the message of the music is then communicated to the audience.

57 Birdwhistell, 182.
CHAPTER II.
CONDUCTING PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE
Approaches to Teaching Gesture

In this chapter I examine how conducting pedagogues approach teaching conducting and what methodologies and philosophies they use to help developing conductors improve and cultivate their craft. Through interviews with preeminent American conducting pedagogues with international careers, I will suggest some exercises and approaches to help conductors maximize their expressive potential and most effectively communicate with their ensemble and audiences. Charlene Archibeque, Director of Choral Activities Emerita of San Jose State University, Kenneth Kiesler, Director of Orchestras and Orchestral Conducting at the University of Michigan, Brad Lubman, Associate Professor of Conducting and Ensembles at the Eastman School of Music, Michael Haithcock, Director of Bands and Professor of Conducting at the University of Michigan, H. Robert Reynolds, principal conductor of the Wind Ensemble at the USC Thornton School of Music, Frank Battisti, conductor of the Wind Ensemble and Director of Wind Ensemble Activities at the New England Conservatory, and Robert Porco, Director of Choruses of The Cleveland Orchestra, and professor emeritus of Choral Conducting and Opera Conducting at Indiana University, and Vance George, former Director of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, all generously allowed me to interview them for this study.58 Based on the information they provided, as well as my own experience as a student and teacher of conducting, the end of this chapter includes pedagogical exercises that help students maximize their expressive potential and most effectively communicate with their ensemble and audiences.

58 See Appendix C for conductor bios.
While the variance of playing style among instrumental musicians is, of course, unique to the individual, there is a certain conformity of technique required to make instruments sound properly. A conductor, however, can jump about, wave his arms frantically, or hardly beat at all, and the ensemble, in many cases, can still stay together if they are experienced, well-prepared and/or sensitive. That being said, a conductor’s gestures, personality, and facial expressions shape sound in a very direct way as can be witnessed, for example, by seeing two different conductors conduct the same piece with the same orchestra.

A perfect illustration of this can be seen by observing the conductors in the International Malko Conducting Competition. The Malko Competition, established in 1965 in honor of Nicolai Malko, conductor of the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, is a weeklong competition for young conductors that takes place in Copenhagen’s Koncerthuset. During this competition, The Danish National Symphony plays for 40 different conductors, between 20 and 30 pieces, and finally a winner is selected by a jury of well-respected conductor-musicians. To win the Malko competition not only brings a generous prize of 20,000 euros but also ensures twenty-four engagements with leading Nordic and European orchestras. There are six prizes, plus an additional Audience Prize, all of which come with a monetary prize.

One of the beauties of the Malko Competition is that one need not fly to Scandinavia to have the opportunity to watch the candidates. Each day during the six-day competition the rounds are streamed live via the Malko site and inquiring minds can watch the young conductors rehearse with the orchestra. Each of the five rounds has specific repertoire that the candidates must conduct so the orchestra has a limited, albeit significant, repertoire to play. This specificity also allows the jury to compare the conducting style and effectiveness of each candidate in the

59 https://www.malkocompetition.com/about/history N.B. The competition can only be viewed during the competition and shortly afterward.
same pieces. One can witness first hand and in close proximity the skill and talent of these young conductors and the direct affect their technique and musical intention have on the ensemble. The orchestra sounds appreciably different under each conductor, which says a lot about their gestural language and how the orchestra responds to it.

Since a conductor shapes musical time, balances textures, and, in effect, defines a unified and unique sound, her gestural vocabulary should thus encompass and elicit a vast range of expressive capacity. In a pedagogical setting, conducting students should be encouraged to explore their own unique connection with sound and thereby develop a rich vocabulary. Elements that are potentially present in a conductor’s nonverbal communication include timing, dynamics, vibrato, timbre, articulation, length, sustaining quality, intensity of sound, speed, texture, color, etc.

Musicians have to produce with precision and independence the movements that their instruments require and coordinate these movements with many others. Conductors have much more flexibility in terms of their physical motions to communicate their ideas and affect the sound of the ensemble, however gestures that demonstrate false information about the sound will cause the ensemble stop watching in very short order. Gestures should also be appropriate to body type and the personality of the conductor.

Teaching students the importance of gaining musicians’ trust by using gestures that clearly demonstrate musical ideas in real time is very important. It is also important to avoid prescriptions about how to stand, hold the baton, position one’s torso, since the more constricted and restricted a conducting student will feel the more difficult it will be for them to be free to express their musical thoughts. However, giving students a basic framework and the tools
necessary to express the musical ideas inherent in the score and develop their own interpretive
decisions is the primary job of a conducting teacher.

Technique And Inspiration: Planning And Practicing Gestures

A successful conductor will possess not only a solid technique comprised of effective
gestures able to clearly suggest nuanced musical ideas, but also a spirit of spontaneity and
passion. Technique does not however mean choreographed conducting or planned out gestures,
but rather a natural part of the conductor’s physical non-verbal language, which comes from
practice and experience. The best conductors, and the only truly effective conductors, are those
who are simultaneously proactive (to get the sound they want) and also listening (and responding
to what they hear) in order to adjust the minutest of details, even in a concert. However for
students of conducting, sometimes practicing in front of a mirror, especially tricky or challenging
spots, is an effective step toward building muscle memory and also helpful in determining
whether or not they are communicating their ideas successfully. Even better than practicing in
the mirror, given today’s technology and its accessibility, is recording one’s conducting on a
smartphone or video recorder since one learns a tremendous amount watching oneself conduct.

As Elizabeth Green so correctly points out,

When the impulse of will is anemic, everything is lost. There is no conducting. When the
impulse of will is strong and the technique is weak, the conductor is eternally confronted
with feelings of frustration. Muscles tend to tense up, and he or she tries to substitute
mental and emotional drive for physical technique. When the impulse of will is strong
and the technique is secure, the ensemble truly has a leader who can unify the
musicianship of all into one secure interpretation. Such a conductor has the finely
developed technical skill and the confident drive to convey by gestures exactly what he or
she wants.60

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First are the ears; music is, after all, sound. Conductors may hone their gestures in front of a mirror until they put Marcel Marceau to shame, but if they're not listening to what comes back at them from the orchestra and don't know how to respond to that, all of their predetermined ideas may well go for naught. How many times do conductors stop the orchestra and say, "Please take MY tempo!"? Whose tempo do they think the orchestra is taking? There’s only one person on the podium!

So the question remains, should we teach our students to plan out gestures in advance? Kenneth Kiesler, Director of Orchestras at the University of Michigan, says, “I suggest that they learn a technique that suits every possible circumstance that could arise, which is then called forth by their musical ideas in the moment.”61 Both he and Robert Porco agree that spontaneity is key but nearly every conducting pedagogue interviewed agrees that there are certain exceptions such as complicated fermatas or tempo changes that can benefit from demonstration and/or practice. Charlene Archibeque thinks it is a mistake for students not to practice a particular gesture if it does not come naturally for them. She says, “If they don’t do it over and over it won’t come naturally in the middle of rehearsal.”62 Brad Lubman agrees that practicing in front of a mirror can be an effective tool for students so that they can see if their gestures are readable, helpful, useful, and musical.63

Perhaps Erich Leinsdorf articulates it best when he states: “Gesture is of crucial importance in conducting as long as it carries a message. But that message cannot be determined in advance. It is born out of a need that arises only during music making. It is pointless to prepare an eloquent quieting motion for the left hand if one fails to know when or whether it is

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61 Kenneth Kiesler, interview with the conductor, January 31, 2016. See Appendix B, 93.
63 Brad Lubman, email interview with the conductor, response received May 10, 2016. See Appendix B, 120.
required."\textsuperscript{64} In other words, practicing gestures so they become second nature is essential, but more important is knowing how and when to apply them.

**Balance Between Facial Expression and Hands**

The inexpressive conductor has no chance of inspiring the ensemble to become involved in the music. This is not to say that all conductors should have the kind and magnitude of facial expressions as Leonard Bernstein did, but some indication of connection with the music is important because it indisputably demonstrates the emotional and even spiritual involvement the conductor has with the music. Weston Noble, the internationally acclaimed conductor and educator said, “You cannot conduct with a passive face. Your eyes tell them more than your beat ever can tell them. Your face has to show the music totally.”\textsuperscript{65}

Xian Zhang expressed her thoughts about the eyes: “The eyes should be the most telling in musical intent. The eyes are the window of the heart. They show how you feel about the music.”\textsuperscript{66} Yannick Nézet-Séguin, recently appointed successor to James Levine at the Metropolitan Opera, says, “I feel as if my face is singing with the music.”\textsuperscript{67} And from the perspective of a conductor who also happened to play under many of the world’s greatest conductors, Gunther Schuller shares,

I played with so many great conductors – anybody you can name, from Toscanini on up and down, and many of them really conducted with their eyes. Maybe that’s overstating it, but we looked in their eyes…. It isn’t just the eyes; it’s the cheeks, it’s everything. In the mouth there’s a certain relaxation or a certain nervousness.\textsuperscript{68}


\textsuperscript{65} Frederick Harris Jr., *Conducting with Feeling* (Galesville: Meredith Music Publications, 2001), 39.


\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{68} Harris, 39.
Some conductors, such as Carlos Kleiber and Leonard Bernstein, had extremely expressive faces when they conducted, others, like Fritz Reiner, not so much. Bernstein, “conducting” the Vienna Philharmonic, could even get away with losing the hands and only conducting with his eyes, as revealed in a recording of Haydn’s Symphony No. 88.69 This video reinforces that facial behavior expresses emotions we feel internally and is particularly effective in communicating.

As educators of conductors, to what extent should we encourage our students to use their faces, and how do we help them find and achieve the balance between facial expression and arm/hand gestures. Certainly musicians will be quick to pick up on artificial facial expressions and if someone is “putting on” a false face, it will not serve the music. Ultimately the most effective facial expression is achieved when the conductor is genuinely and authentically expressing what he or she feels inside.

Kiesler encourages his students to allow their faces to reflect what they feel and think. However, he adds: “I discourage them from putting the face first and acting in place of or in higher priority to what comes out authentically from the inside. The first thing is to hear internally, the second is to respond to what one hears and to share that experience with the people who are watching us. Not to focus on projecting something physically, but to share something that we are holding in our imaginations, in our spirits.”70 Michael Haithcock, has a similar philosophy saying, “I encourage conviction of the musical expectation, and availability

69 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oU0Ubs2KYUI This video of Bernstein conducting the Vienna Philharmonic in the 4th movement of Haydn’s Symphony No. 88 is famous because in it he only uses his face. However, the question may be asked, is he conducting or is he allowing the musicians to just play and in a way collaborating with them. Yes, his face is proactive, in other words, he is not responding to them, but rather knows exactly where major musical events happen, but would not the Vienna Philharmonic play just as beautifully if their concert master started them out and Bernstein were not even in the room? Or if he started them out and then left the stage? Well-prepared, yes, but also one of the greatest orchestras in the world.

70 Kenneth Kiesler, interview with the conductor, January 31, 2016. See Appendix B, 94.
of the body, and an openness to dialogue with the musicians with the face and eyes. …But, encouraging pre-planned face/eyes are the enemy of dialogue and true exchange with the musicians.”71 This ties together the idea of being in the moment, responding to the music and the immediate needs of the musicians, and being available expressively.

The challenge when addressing facial expression with students is that every individual is different and has his own degree of outward expression. Some conductors are naturally very expressive with their faces, even when they are not conducting. Others are quite poker-faced, some saving that “little something special” for performances. Charlene Archibeque mentions Helmut Rilling as the perfect example of the latter:

Helmut Rilling…in rehearsals does not show any facial expressions at all, but the one thing that everyone has commented on about him his whole life is that when he’s conducting in concert, he becomes the music. To them that is so radical. To go from almost no expression, to all of a sudden becoming the music, and of course, they just do the same thing; they’re so well trained. It’s a mind-blowing experience both for the audience and the musicians.

I recall some classes during a masters-level conducting class at the University of Michigan with Kiesler where he held a music stand in front of conductors’ faces if he thought they were showing “too much” in their faces and not enough in their hands. This required the conductors to put all of the expression and nuance in their gestures. This is a great lesson in trying to fine-tune the expressive capacity of the hands, especially since one hand holds a baton. Conversely, for other students who were flailing about or who refused to breathe with the ensemble, he would have them put their hands in their pockets and conduct only with their torso/face/breath. This stretched all of the conductors to strengthen the areas of physical communication that were weak and deemphasize the areas that came naturally. This helps students understand the breadth and depth of non-verbal communication emanating from them as

71 Michael Haithcock, interview with conductor, April 25, 2016. See Appendix B, 105.
conductor-musicians. What was especially powerful was hearing the change in the sound of the ensemble when these exercises were performed.

Perhaps the most important thing to remind students is that first and foremost comes the ability to conduct in a clear and musical way with the hands and arms. Then, if the conducting is authentic, the face and rest of the body can be free to be expressive.

Demonstrating For Students

By and large, every conducting teacher demonstrates for their students, some to a great extent and others not as much. Archibeque had students video tape each of their sessions and she always stood up and conducted at the end because it kept her accountable; she says, “You always have to be cleaning up your own conducting.”72 Robert Porco says that although he frequently demonstrated, it was never how to be expressive, but rather more often for tricky passages such as recitatives. When he demonstrates, he also emphasizes, “Here’s what I would do, but don’t imitate me.”73 Haithcock, who demonstrates regularly for a few seconds at least once or twice in each 20-minute seminar segment, says that more frequently he will “take their hand and ‘drive’ which gives them a more direct physical sensation of the change (aurally and physically) we seek.”74 Kiesler is also a known proponent of “driving” his students. He explains,

I take their right hand in my own and support their left arm or elbow with my left hand, so they’re not totally free, or so they don’t get injured, and I conduct with their right hand so that they can feel the flow of things. I’m not trying to show here’s a particular gesture that works, or that there are geographic points in the air where you have to go. I’m just trying to communicate the feeling of the flow of the music and not just beats and cues.75

74 Michael Haithcock, email interview with the conductor, April 25, 2016. See Appendix B, 105.
75 Kenneth Kiesler, interview with the conductor, January 31, 2016. See Appendix B, 95.
Other students, he says, learn visually, so he occasionally resorts to demonstrating by saying, “this could be done like this.” H. Robert Reynolds is sensitive to context and states, “When I was teaching graduate students I really wouldn’t do that when they were conducting an ensemble because I felt that it interfered with their authority as a conductor and their connection with the student ensemble.”

Most students like to see how their teachers would conduct something they have been working on. One thing, however, is certain: until the students have had an opportunity to try conducting a passage by themselves, it is extremely important not to show them how it is done, or could be done. Conducting teachers are already fighting having students imitate conductors given easy accessibility to YouTube, and certainly, demonstrating before they have conducted limits their imagination, their expressivity, and their opportunity to be original.

If students observe their teachers conducting a passage first, they will automatically start integrating some of their teacher’s gestural vocabulary or idiosyncrasies into their own conducting style simply because they are, in essence, learning a new language. It is like assimilating an accent from a foreign language teacher. Often this is why conductors from certain studios become clones of their teachers. I try very hard to avoid this and instead have each student be true to her own body, score study, imagination and spirit. Haithcock espouses the same belief, “There are basically three ways to teach conducting: 1) observe me, 2) mimic me, 3) [sic] principles that apply: you figure out how to use them. I tend to lean on #3 most, #2 next, #1 hardly at all. I really have a hard time with the mimic approach and do not want a studio of clones.”

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77 Michael Haithcock, email interview with the conductor April 25, 2016. See Appendix B, 105.
Regarding the teaching of gesture as it relates to sound, conducting teachers responded differently. Some even asserted that gesture does not always relate exclusively to sound at all.\textsuperscript{78} Haithcock’s approach relates to cause and effect. He says, “If you got what you wanted, fine. If it was too fast, adjust. If it was too loud, adjust. If it was too long, adjust. There are very few things that are absolute. Most have nuance, so I try to make the instruction as specific as possible to the moment.”\textsuperscript{79} Haithcock’s words reveal the essence of teaching gesture: every element of musical sound should have a correlating physical gesture that communicates what you are trying to achieve sonically.

Kiesler talks with his students using metaphors such as touching, pushing, feeling, and being in contact with the sound. When I first studied with him he spoke about resistance and weight, and even asked us to bring our batons down to the water at his summer conducting retreat in Maine and drag the tip through the water to feel its resistance. This is one exercise I have my students do using their imagination and have expanded upon it.\textsuperscript{80} Kiesler says, “Gestures have a specific intention rather than only the beat, which should be in the background sort of like the canvas of the painting, or the scaffold, or the 2X4s of the building.”\textsuperscript{81}

A good approach to teaching sound through gesture is to ask the students if they really feel like they are connecting with what and how the musicians are playing. Like Haithcock, I ask my students if the sound they are hearing from the ensemble matches the aural vision of the piece they have in their mind, and if not, how they can change their gestures to get what they

\textsuperscript{78} Brad Lubman stated the latter explaining, “One must know when the gesture needed is one for matters of tempo or ensemble or sound or manner or style, etc.” See Appendix B, 120.
\textsuperscript{79} Michael Haithcock, email interview with the conductor, April 25, 2016. See Appendix B, 106.
\textsuperscript{80} See exercises at the end of this chapter.
\textsuperscript{81} Kenneth Kiesler, interview with the conductor, January 31, 2016. See Appendix B, 95.
want. If they begin to say something, I quickly say, “Don’t ask them for it, show it and they will play it.” Then they are forced to figure out how to show what they want with their hands, arms, torso, face, etc. This is very challenging for some students and easier for others. If they have trouble figuring it out I ask them to sing what they want. Usually this is accompanied by some sort of intuitive gesture in their hands and thus, they have just showed what they wanted. If they do not demonstrate with their hands I work little by little with them to discover what sound they want and how to demonstrate that physically. An example might be, a heavy, broad stroke moving at a walking tempo in the lower register, such as the beginning of Prokofiev’s Montagues and Capulets from Romeo and Juliet. This will not be shown with high gestures above the chest that float through the air effortlessly. The conductor needs to connect the gesture with the sound. If the ensemble is not playing pesante enough, perhaps the gesture does not demonstrate this.

This might seem elementary, but even the most well-trained professional musicians in the world’s greatest orchestras respond differently to different conductors and this approach to the visceral, physical, and emotional connection to sound has real and measurable effects.

Different Styles of Conducting for Different Styles Of Music

The conductors I interviewed generally agreed that there are two broad categories of composers: those whose works require precise and clear beat patterns and those whose music allows for more flexibility. Largely, conductors agree that when there is mixed meter clarity and the beat are indispensable; if a piece is in a set tempo and always has the same meter, there might be more room for leaving beats out or disregarding the pattern completely. Igor Stravinsky, John Adams, Aaron Copland were mentioned in the former category and Brahms and a few others
were mentioned for the latter.82 Lubman, however, maintains beat patterns in the standard repertory as well, though less methodically,

Whether I conduct Beethoven or Debussy or Boulez or Lachenmann, to name a few, I am always looking to find what it is that the composer is trying to express or get across to the listener and the gestures needed follow what the music calls for.83 If I conduct a Brahms symphony, I’m not going to purposefully use strange and amorphous gestures (the “smoke and mirrors” effect), rather I will still more or less conduct a pattern and will still infuse it with information that reflects the music (and/or offers the musicians what they might need to see). The patterns contain hierarchy of phrasing. One does not need to conduct them pedantically in standard repertoire, but at the same time, I feel that they are useful for musical reasons.”84

Archibeque prefers to emphasize with her students the use of score study, placing the pieces in a historical context and bringing that to their conducting style. She finds that knowing a composer’s biography will affect her students’ approach to the music.

[I] think of [Haydn] in his wig…it was a different manner, a different style of living and thinking and I try to get my students to put themselves in that milieu. I think you’re going to hold yourself and think in a certain way when you are conducting Haydn and Mozart. And then you have Brahms and Schumann and Mendelssohn…whom did they associate with, what were they like, and how did they approach their music and how did they approach society?85

Kiesler recalled that Yehudi Menuhin said, “Every sound has a unique visual coefficient,”86 and continued,

So, if you have an ascending scale in Mozart and it’s orchestrated with violins and a cello accompaniment and you have an ascending scale in Mahler orchestrated with brass and horns with bells in the air, and basses on the c-string, then of course it’s going to look different. It could be the same pitches, but the sound is different. I just did a program that had Wagner Prelude and Liebestod going straight into Ravel Daphnis and Chloe Second Suite and you feel yourself change from the tone color of the Wagner to the tone color of the Ravel. You feel yourself being more impressionistic and moving in a more airy or pastel-like way versus the oil painting on the canvas you’re doing with the Wagner, where you’re deep in the sound.87

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82 I find it rather odd for Brahms to be mentioned in this latter category since in his orchestral works the downbeat is often obscured.
83 Brad Lubman, email correspondence with the conductor, March 4, 2016. See Appendix B, 120.
84 Ibid.
85 Charlene Archibeque, interview with the conductor, December 19, 2015. See Appendix B, 91.
86 Kenneth Kiesler, quoting Yehudi Menuhin, interview with the conductor, January 31, 2016. See Appendix B, 96.
87 Ibid.
I mentioned that the same thing could be said of the huge character change between the different movements of Elgar’s *Enigma Variations*, for example the harmonic shift of the major third from the Winifred Norbury variation VIII into Nimrod, to which he responded, “Ideally, if one is open to the music, the music plays us and the orchestra sees that happening, and they don’t just see us moving like dancers, we’re causing things with gestures, but it’s rooted in resonating with the music. We are a conduit and it’s going to change with every harmony, every pitch, with every color.”

Ultimately style boundaries are often blurred and unclear. Essentially, the way we conduct anything needs to connect with the sound of what we are conducting. We will conduct very differently for the first chord of Mozart’s Overture to *Die Zauberflöte*, the first chord of the last movement of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, the first chord of the “Infernal Dance” from Stravinsky’s *Firebird*, and the first chord of any contemporary work that is fortissimo, but our reason for conducting these differently should have more to do with the sonority we want, the orchestration, the context, the message of the music, the color, the register, etc. than the fact that they were written in different years.

Left Hand And Right Hand

Some textbooks suggest that the right hand is for keeping time and the left hand is primarily used for expressive gestures. Hermann Scherchen writes, “All he (the conducting student) does must be natural, simple, unconstrained: and the act of conducting must be accomplished by the right arm only.” Richard Strauss said, “[The left hand] has nothing to do

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88 Kenneth Kiesler, interview with the conductor, January 31, 2016. See Appendix B, 96.
with conducting…its proper place is in the waistcoat pocket from which it should only emerge to restrain or to make some minor gesture for which in any case a scarcely perceptible glance would suffice.”

Brock McElheran says: “If this is followed it means that all the performers on the right side of the conductor see an expressionless metronome.” And I would add the left side of the orchestra only gets imprecise shapings with no rhythmic indication. However, he continues, “The right hand, when properly trained, gives both the tempo and the character of the music, so why add something superfluous? Moreover, it often prevents those on the conductor’s left from seeing the more important hand.”

Gunther Schuller states,

The right hand expresses and embodies all that is essential to the music’s correct characterization, leaving the left hand free to confirm, to highlight, to make more specific, to isolate some musical-compositional detail, to ‘decorate’ and refine, as it were, the basic conductorial gestures of the right hand. This can range all the way from both hands locked in identical, symmetrical (confirming) gestures through separate and diverse (highlighting, decorating) gestures to total inactivity of the left hand.

It is my firm belief that we have two sides of our body, and although the baton hand does primarily keep the beat, as it were, both sides are completely able to, and should communicate anything and everything about the sound that is appropriate in any given moment.

A perfect example of this is the beginning of the first movement, *Dawn* from Britten’s *Four Sea Interludes* from *Peter Grimes*. You have two flute players who are, presumably straight in front of you and slightly to the left, and depending on how you seat your strings, potentially all the violins on the left side of the ensemble. It is entirely possible to conduct this soft, delicate, floating, unison passage with the left hand alone. The right can remain inactive until the 8th bar

92 Ibid.
where other instruments enter. Many conductors will disagree with this, but this is one of many examples where the left hand should be just as capable of communicating musical time, character, and sound quality, as the right.

Haithcock mentions that the idea of the right hand keeping time and left providing expressive nuances and cues is primarily taught as a way of preventing mirroring.\(^9^\) Porco states,

> I believe sometimes you can conduct just with the left hand. Whether it's just the tempo or being expressive…. Sometimes the left can keep the tempo and the right can be expressive. If you’ve got a pretty well trained ensemble, beating time is your least important responsibility, particularly for choral people who just tend to beat too much. Also, some also say that all the cuing is done with the left hand, but the truth is, much of the cuing is done with the eyes. If you look at the flute player or the trombonist it’s a confirmation, the idea that you point at them is ridiculous.\(^9^5\)

Kiesler also has a particularly strong stance on this topic:

> I think [the idea of the left keeping time and the right being expressive] is totally wrong and bankrupt and old fashioned and useless. You’ve got two hands; why not use them both to be musical? This idea is the enemy of expressive conducting, and therefore good conducting. The idea of conducting is to express and communicate so it’s impossible to be expressive and musical that way, it’s machine-like. It keeps the conductor actually fairly uninvolved or minimally involved in the music because it engages the part of the brain that’s the counting part. And therefore it mitigates against creativity and resonance with the music so we need to get out of the counting part of the brain and get into the part that’s about the soaring line or the introspective phrasing.\(^9^6\)

And H. Robert Reynolds says, “Sometimes neither hand is giving the pulse, maybe it’s your shoulder. You’re not even thinking about it, but the pulse is within you, therefore it’s being expressed. Sometimes the pulse is so strong within the ensemble you don’t even need to give it.”\(^9^7\)

Both hands should remain flexible and responsive to the needs of the ensemble. Either hand or both should connect to the rhythmic, registral, phrasing, and characteristic flow of what

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\(^9^4\) Michael Haithcock, email interview with the conductor, April 25, 2016. See Appendix B, 106.

\(^9^5\) Robert Porco, interview with the conductor, April 13, 2016. See Appendix B, 102.

\(^9^6\) Kenneth Kiesler, interview with the conductor, January 31, 2016. See Appendix B, 97.

\(^9^7\) H. Robert Reynolds, interview with the conductor, May 30, 2016. See Appendix B, 117.
is taking place and not be tied to anything rigid unless the music calls for it. Even conducting mixed-meter contemporary music requires both hands to be available for whatever the music calls for. This will be discussed further in the case study chapter.

The challenge of teaching independence of hands to students is that, with very few exceptions, nearly everyone has a dominant hand, thus time must be spent practicing getting the non-dominant hand more fluid, fluent, and flexible. Right-handed conducting students may find it restricting to have their “more expressive hand” holding a baton and left-handed students will find being expressive with the left easier, but may not feel as capable of showing direction and line or anything other than the beat with the right. Occasionally, and only occasionally is it okay to have a student put one hand or the other in his pocket and conduct with the other. This works only to strengthen one hand and invest all of the musical energy in that hand, but what is counterproductive is that it weakens whichever hand is inactive. Some conducting teachers employ this “trick” entirely too much.98

“Over-Conducting” Vs. “Under-Conducting”

This is an often disputed subject since every conductor’s personality comes through in her conducting. The gestures of one person conducting a piece might be over-conducting while exactly the same gestures by a different conductor might be under-conducting. Primarily, the music should determine what kinds of gestures to use, but a conductor needs to be authentic to his own personality in the way he shapes the sound. Haithcock thinks if a conductor uses more space and more energy than the music requires or the players are exerting it seems to be “over-

98 See exercises at the end of this chapter for some suggestions on how to help students develop independent hands.
conducting,” and if the opposite is true, then that would qualify as “under-conducting.” Most conducting pedagogues today agree with this concept, although this is not always the case. Frank Battisti states, “Players appreciate conductors who have illuminating and interesting ideas about the music and clear and controlled conducting technique. The same cannot always be said for conductors with extravagant and self-indulgent technique.” So where does one draw the line? Many might see Gustavo Dudamel’s conducting as too extravagant, and many might think it is perfect. The question arises: what do we teach our students?

Kiesler has a very definite opinion on the subject in terms of what he feels is an appropriate amount of conducting, and the ensemble plays a role in determining this:

> What could be perfect conducting for one group might be over-conducting in the same music or under-conducting for another. And the conductor has to be so aware and self-aware, not self-conscious, but aware of what’s going on with the group to know what amount, quality, quantity and intensity is appropriate at any moment. I might have to beat every beat in a Mozart symphony with one group and with another there might be very few beats.

In other words, it is entirely context-bound. Perhaps one group needs more specific gestures, with a greater concentration on beat-patterns and cues, and another might allow for more freedom and space since they are rhythmically and musically more independent and self-sufficient.

This does not mean, however, that for youth orchestras one beats patterns and for professional orchestra one does not. I have seen youth orchestra conductors who have brought their ensembles to an extremely high level of musical competence and artistry by expecting only the best from them. They will rise to the occasion and perform at a much higher level if our conducting expresses musically the sounds they should be playing. Likewise, I have seen many

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99 Michael Haithcock, email interview with the conductor, April 25, 2016. See Appendix B, 107.
101 Kenneth Kiesler, interview with the conductor, January 31, 2016. See Appendix B, 97.
conductors simply beat patterns with some of the world’s greatest professional orchestras and the orchestras either sound marvelous (i.e. completely ignoring the conductor and making extraordinary music nonetheless) or dead (i.e. the conductor’s lack of connection with the music and the players resulted in a lackluster performance).

I recently saw a performance of the Cleveland Orchestra under the baton of Andrés Orozco-Estrada. The program included Kodály’s *Dances of Galanta*, Rachmaninoff’s First Piano Concerto, and Stravinsky’s *Firebird*. I noticed that Orozco-Estrada danced very much with the music and showed every nuance, event, dynamic, cutoff, accent, etc. He was the music in every sense of the word, but I found it a bit too much, and likewise distracting. This said, the orchestra sounded amazing, as usual. A conducting student happened to be in the audience and said, “He does everything you tell us not to do.” I laughed and replied, “Except be the music!?” It was true, he bounced up and down on the podium, crossed his right arm over to conduct the violins while turning his back on the violas, used his head for cues, his feet moved all around the podium, he showed every tiny detail but he was a breathing, moving, living representation of the music. What occurred to me is something similar to the theory student pointing out that J.S. Bach sometimes breaks the rules of counterpoint in his music: to which I say, once you have achieved a level of professional proficiency and artistry as a composer or in this case, conductor, you are allowed to break the rules for musical reasons. And if the result is brilliant, you are doing something right.

H. Robert Reynolds related a story about a friend of his who played principal oboe with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. At this friend’s invitation, he attended a rehearsal and watched a conductor about whom he commented, “Boy, he knows the music cold, inside out, no question

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102 The performance was May 6, 2016 at Severance Hall.
103 Frank Battisti recalls Frederik Prausnitz’s take on this: “the podium is a place on which to stand, not to walk or dance. Fancy footwork belongs in the boxing ring.” Cited in Battisti, 71.
about it!” to which his friend responded, “Yes, and that’s his problem, he shows every nuance. It’s hard for the players to contribute musically.”\textsuperscript{104} It goes without saying that being sensitive to the outcome of the performance, in other words, listening to the sound is of utmost importance, however, having enough sensitivity to the subtle but palpable response of the musicians is also key.

What I believe to be most important is for students of conducting to create a basic framework, a clear and communicative gestural vocabulary that demonstrates the composer’s intentions, is helpful and useful to the musicians, and corresponds to the musical sound they envision: all the while allowing their own expression and connection to the sound to inform and shape their gestures.

Size And Sound Correlation

Perhaps one of the most interesting points of disagreement among conducting teachers was the correlation of the size of a gesture to its sound. Many conductors relate size to volume: i.e. large = loud, small = soft. Diane Wittry says, “I perfected the timing of giving cues, beating larger for ‘\textit{forte}’ and smaller for ‘\textit{piano}.’”\textsuperscript{105} Porco says, “Small equals soft and big equals loud. It’s dynamic related, absolutely. People conduct large all the time and say sing soft. Soft things should be small.”\textsuperscript{106} Haithcock has a similar opinion, “Players adjust to the contour/contrast a conductor works from. Size is relative as is volume. Contour from the conductor should signal to the players a clear landscape of dynamic range.”\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{104} H. Robert Reynolds, interview with the conductor, May 30, 2016. See Appendix B, 118.
\textsuperscript{106} Robert Porco, interview with conductor, April 13, 2016. See Appendix B, 104.
\textsuperscript{107} Michael Haithcock, email interview with the conductor, April 25, 2016. See Appendix B, 107.
Kiesler, however, thinks the size of the gesture primarily relates to tempo, large being slow and fast being small. He says,

The size, the amount of resistance, the way its prepared, how dense it is, how viscous it is or isn’t… There are times when we conduct larger for loud and smaller for softer. But if we have a choice, let’s say we have a crescendo and an accelerando at the same time, we have no choice but to get smaller for the accelerando, to make the beat smaller, and conduct with more intensity to make the crescendo. I think that’s probably the most significant misconception on the part of most conductors and it gets them in the most trouble.108

Archibeque also believes there is a direct correlation of the size of a gesture to its corresponding sound, which she says is manifested not only in the dynamic scheme but in the intensity of sound, the beauty of sound, the shaping of the phrases and the word stress.109 H. Robert Reynolds says, “I think there’s some correlation [of size to sound] but not much. Because I think you can give a really strong energetic gesture with maximum volume without much size.”110

If our gestures do not communicate the sound we are seeking then verbal instruction is the only way to get what we want, and unfortunately many conductors ask for something they are not showing or they simply talk way too much. Porco mentions an example of the conductor who asks that the musicians play staccato but whose gestures are showing nothing short. Haithcock warns that “Do as I say, not as I do” is never a good rubric for success.111 Many conductors agree that one should attempt to communicate or demonstrate musical ideas non-verbally before defaulting to verbal instructions. Larry Rachleff states, “I try not to talk to [the musicians] in a way that lessens the power of the music.”112 And Claudio Abbado says,

109 Charlene Archibeque, interview with the conductor, December 19, 2015. See Appendix B, 93.
111 Michael Haithcock, email interview with the conductor, April 25, 2016. See Appendix B, 107.
112 Harris, 40.
Musicians love to play music. I know that they don’t want to listen to conductors talk, talk, talk—so I don’t speak much during rehearsals...Because I don’t rely on words so much, musicians become accustomed to watching carefully from the very first rehearsal. I think there is better communication between conductor and musician if there is more eye contact.113

Abbado touches on two very important points here, the first is: keep your talking to a minimum and let your gestures communicate your ideas, and second, get your head out of the score so you can be in contact with the musicians. The more you look at them the more likely they are to watch you!

Final Thoughts

The amount of rebound is another extremely important topic, which Charlene Archibeque brought up saying, “I believe that most conductors use way too much rebound—especially choral conductors where 90% of the music is legato/sostenuto. I basically believe that once your hands (baton) leave the plane of conducting you lose control over the sound. The horizontal figure eight (or similar) should be the goal for one phrase, one breath—long connected phrasing.”114

This is a very important concept to teach conducting students. If one is conducting something with a sustaining quality and the gesture leaves the plane, the ensemble will stop the sound (i.e. play a rest) or play with undesired decay of the sound. This was very evident when I had my conducting students conduct the first movement of Beethoven’s First Symphony. In measures 8 and 10 there are tenuto chords alternating between the strings and winds. If these are not shown with horizontal gestures, or gestures somehow in contact with the conducting plane, the result is space between the chords. This is, of course, an interpretive decision, as some conductors like more space and others less. However, when asked to sing what they wanted

113 As cited in Battisti, 71.
114 Charlene Archibeque, interview with the conductor, December 19, 2015. See Appendix B, 93.
nearly all of them sang without much space, yet their rebound was too short and quick. Once they changed their gestures to a more horizontal, tenuto, sustained direction they got what they wanted.

Practicing gestures either in front of the mirror, for a musician colleague, or recorded on a video is a tremendously useful tool for all conductors regardless of their level of expertise as mentioned above. It is of utmost importance that what we are asking for and what our gestures are showing agree. Allowing our faces to express our musical connection with the piece of music allows for an even greater degree of expressivity to our conducting. And very importantly, making sure that our conducting gestures intimate as much of the sonic landscape as necessary in any given musical moment is the key to success. Showing too much may be off-putting since it then becomes more about us as the conductor than about the music, and not showing enough can imply a disconnect with the music and the musicians. It is a subtle but achievable art and I believe students of conducting can learn how to effectively and expressively communicate with their ensembles.

Exercises And Recommendations

What follow are some exercises that teachers of conducting may use to help students communicate sound through gesture. I do not claim to have invented any of them, but I have not found a list of published attributions. Many of these I have learned from my musical mentors, in which case credit is given. I believe these exercises will help even more experienced conductors become communicatively competent.

1. Reacting in a childlike way to sounds. To allow the body to instinctively and intuitively respond to aural stimuli, have one person play an instrument and the other close their
eyes and allow their body to respond to the sound. For example, on the piano play clusters, high and low, spread out and in close proximity. Play glissandi and single notes in different registers. One important aspect of this exercise is to allow the responder time to let the sound settle. Moving too quickly from one type of sound to another or from one pitch to another creates a defensive reaction. Emphasize the importance of no anticipation or looking back. This is an exercise based solely on immediate reaction. Non-complex rhythmic ostinato can be effective if maintained long enough for the responder to get in a groove and respond to any minimal pitch changes associated with the ostinato. In many ways, these are Dalcroze-inspired. I learned these from my conducting teacher, Ken Kiesler, and have expanded upon them since. The following is a list of qualities of sound the executant might consider:

- **Dynamics**: soft to loud
- **Attack**: unnoticeable, delicate, sharp, heavy
- **Length**: short to long
- **Weight**: light to heavy
- **Velocity**: slow to fast
- **Texture**: sparse to dense
- **Character**: sad, tender, passionate, joyful, angry, abrupt, etc.

Similarly, H. Robert Reynolds refers to “exporting” internalized sound and moving to music that is not conducting-technique oriented. He asks his students to show him five different ways to show the same sound so they can explore different options and use their imagination. He emphasizes the importance of encouraging them to “free their inner safety net.” Frank Battisti likens the conducting students body to a tree, starting with the trunk, then the branches, and the leaves, and he says everything starts with the trunk, and asks his students to

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115 Dalcroze-inspired because they aim to develop the inner ear, the sense of rhythm, the inner muscular sense, and creative expression, which, according to Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, are the core of musicianship. Marja-Leena Juntunen, University of Oulu, Finland. “Practical Applications of Dalcroze Eurhythmics”, *Nordic Research in Music Education Yearbook* Vol. 6:75-92, 77.
117 Ibid.
“use [their] bodies and do anything [they] want to do to try to show me what [they] feel and what [they] know.” So rather than trying to restrict them he allows them to use their body so then he can influence them in a way that gets to something that is more focused in the upper part of their body.

2. Improvise a performance. Have the conducting student improvise a performance with any size ensemble. The larger the ensemble the greater the responsibility since texture, density, and sound color are all elements to be considered. The art of being persuasive about one’s gestures relies on being a credible communicator.

3. Multiple versions of the same chord. Have the ensemble play a specific chord, always playing exactly the same notes; the conductor has as many opportunities to conduct that chord as he or she wants. The idea is to transform the sound of the chord by giving different gestures. The players will play the same pitches but articulate them as the conductor demonstrates. An example might be a strong attack like a sfp followed by a crescendo and an abrupt cutoff. Another might be an almost imperceptible entrance and the softest most ethereal sound one can create. See how many different versions of that chord are possible.

4. Resistance exercise. Conduct a non-descript four beat pattern at quarter note equals 60 beats per minute. Now imagine you are in a room full of fluffy snow and you are moving the baton through the snow. Now the room is full of water, now warm caramel, now wet cement. This helps conductors feel different types of resistance in their gestures. Similarly, one can do these gestures and imagine the kind of sound that would go along with these types of gestures.

N.B. this is an exercise without sound.

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119 Ken Kiesler first introduced this exercise concept to me with the tip of the baton through the water as mentioned above.
5. Weight exercise. Conduct a non-descript four beat pattern at quarter note equals 60 beats per minute. Now imagine that there is a golf ball tied on the end of a string to the baton tip, now a big bunch of grapes, now something heavier, and heavier yet. Here the idea is similar to the above, but relates to weight, which is also resistance, but has more to do with the tip versus the entire arm.

6. Right hand/left hand independence. To improve right hand/left hand independence, write out an exercise that includes cuing different members or sections of an ensemble. Use the left hand for musicians on your left and the right hand for musicians on the right. This can start out very simply with simple 4/4 meter with cues on every first and third beat and progress to a more complicated exercise with mixed meter and cues on any beat. Then add dynamics, different articulations, etc.

7. Mime exercises. Michael Haithcock suggests that conductors can practice, away from the podium, various mime exercises that put them in touch with how the “mask” of their face and eyes works and what their capacity of expression might be.\(^\text{120}\) Below is his explanation:

In the early 80s I worked with a couple of mime artists. One, Miriam Tait, wrote an article published in the *College Band Directors Journal* [sic] (don’t remember the exact date but early 80s) entitled, “Striving to Become A Creative Artist.”\(^\text{121}\) The take away from the mime study and the practical components from the article are listed below:

- The mime does not have positions or patterns, but must sell their “intention” through gestural adaptability to communicate the smallest of specific details to create a “readable” image.

- The same basic musculature is used for actions like a wave, but the body language, the face, and the eyes communicate the specificity of intention, which varies to a much greater degree than the muscle use.

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\(^{120}\) Michael Haithcock, email interview with conductor, April 25, 2016. See Appendix B, 107.

- Example: think about a wave as a signal. Do it generically without intention and think about the muscles used. Then do a wave with the following variables meant to express different things:
  happy greeting
  warning of danger
  aristocratic stoicism
  calling out to someone in the distance (I’m here)

Your imagination is the limiting factor, not the body. Your “mask” will take on different support of your intention as the mind fuels the body to be specific (a.k.a mime). A mime artist mirrors, not creates the human experience. The article referenced takes one [among] many common actions like a wave to provide a means of exploring the connection between the imagination-expectation-use of the tools.

Similarly, a good conductor (in my view) communicates through the mask as well as the muscle system the specifics of what is needed in the moment. Being open and available to the moment in a conversational sort of way is much different than the often pre-set use of these tools.¹²²

8. Green’s relaxation vs. tension. Elizabeth Green has a number of excellent exercises in her book The Modern Conductor that relate to relaxation vs. tension.¹²³ They involve letting the arms hang loosely and swinging them from side to side, and inversely, gluing the arms tightly to one’s sides as rigidly as possible, and then flapping the hands forward and backward as violently as possible. These to extremes she states set up some neural connections between relaxation and tension. I prefer to use the term intensity rather than tension since tension implies something negative for string players, wind players and singers. Tension can also cause injury for a conductor. But her point is valid: it is absolutely essential for conductors to be able to recognize these two polarities when conducting any music. All music has a relative degree of resistance or fluidity and our gestures need to demonstrate that. Her exercises are very useful in creating the neural connections between relaxation and tension.

9. Conceptual analogies. Take a section of a piece you are conducting and allow your imagination to paint a scene. What does that section remind you of, what type of visual image do

¹²² Email correspondence with Michael Haithcock, May 15, 2016, See Appendix B, 107.
you feel this music could accompany. Then envision that image as you use gestures to paint the music. Use word-painting and adjectives.

10. Write a story. To go along with the music, write play-by-play narrative. Having written 12 stories for Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, Roger Norrington says, “The dramatic subtext of the music is very important to me. It is what a director has to decide about in an opera. In a symphony there is usually no ‘action’ but the feeling should be there that this music could suddenly burst into a painting or a novel or a play. There is always that dramatic poetic potential.”

11. Bring in a dance instructor. A dance instructor can work with the conductors to help them create musical line and get more in touch with their bodies. I invited Sarah Whale, instructor of dance at Baldwin Wallace University to work with my conducting students. She used musical red-light/green light, cluster exercises where the group followed whomever was out front and the focus shifted from person to person, another where one person lead another around who had their eyes closed and their only contact was the flat palm of the closed-eye person on the top of the flat hand of the leader, and a number of other wonderful exercises to emphasize the physical kinesthetic connection. Trusting another, being authentic to your own body, and communicating music and ideas through movement were all important lessons emphasized in this class.

12. Observe other conductors. Just as an artist learns much about art by looking at others’ paintings, sculptures, and drawings, so must a conductor watch other conductors to see what works, and what does not, what inspires and what does not, and what affects the sound and what does not. I recommend that my students see as many performances as they can, not only of

124 Harris, 43.
orchestras, choirs, and bands, but theater performances, modern art interactive exhibits, etc. The more broadly we open our minds to the different possibilities of cross-disciplinary enhancement the better musicians we are.

Healthy Conducting: Dos And Don’ts

What follows are a few suggestions that will help young conductors develop more expressive and effective gestures and consequently communicate better with the ensemble. Don’t do anything that hurts. If the way one holds a baton feels uncomfortable then probably the musicians playing for that conductor will feel uncomfortable as well. Any tension in a conductor’s body directly affects the playing or singing of musicians in the ensemble. It is important to help students develop as wide a range of expressive gestures as possible to avoid repetitive stress injury and maximize connection with the ensemble. Imagine the complexity of color potentially present on a painter’s palate. Even when conducting the same music it is important to be listening and responding in the moment.

Each person’s body is unique and therefore his or her gestures should be appropriate to his or her body type. Someone who is five foot two and weighs one hundred pounds will not conduct the same way someone who is six foot two and weighs 230 pounds. A hummingbird does not fly the same way an eagle does and for good reason. Encourage students to explore their own unique connection to sound without being self-conscious. Have them find a space where they can play music that you’ve never heard before with nobody watching you. Encourage them to close their eyes (to block out any visual stimulus and enhance the aural stimulus), and experience how their body moves with the sound.
Finally, Alexander technique, Feldenkrais, Yoga, Pilates, and Tai Chi all emphasize healthy movement of the body that maximizes the natural biology and physiology of the bones, muscles, and connective tissue. Many conductors and other performing artists take classes in these disciplines to develop healthy habits when on the podium. My personal favorite is yoga because it is very much about breath flow, which is tremendously appropriate for conductors.
CHAPTER III.

CASE STUDIES: TWO CONTEMPORARY COMPOSITIONS

In this section I address how standard ideas of gesture, as gleaned from a review of the literature and pedagogical approaches discussed in Chapter II, apply or do not apply to Witold Lutosławski’s Chain 1 and Gerard Grisey’s Partiels from Les Espaces Acoustiques and what, if any, new gestures or approaches are required to conduct these works. The following focuses on the application of gestural vocabulary and approaches to conducting that take into account new notational elements.\footnote{For a formal analysis of Partiels, see Chris Arrell, “The Music of Sound: An Analysis of Partiels by Gérard Grisey” Spectral World Musics, proceedings of the Istanbul Spectral Musics Conference, ed. Robert Reigle and Paul Whitehead: 318-333, accessed May 18 2016, https://issuu.com/chrisarrell/docs/arrellpartielsanalysis/5}

Witold Lutosławski’s Chain 1

Written for flute, oboe, clarinet in B-flat, bassoon, trumpet in C, horn in F, trombone, percussion (marimba, xylophone, 2 cymbals, gong, and tam-tam), harpsichord, and strings (1.1.1.1.1), Witold Lutosławski’s Chain 1 lasts around 9 minutes. Chain 1 is in chain form, a form that Lutosławski created in earlier works. Lutosławski describes chain form thusly: “In a work composed in ‘chain’ form the music is divided into two strands. Particular sections do not begin at the same moment in each strand, nor do they end together. In other words, in the middle of a section in one strand a new section begins in the other.”\footnote{Witold Lutosławski, “Program note Chain 1 [Lancuch 1] (1983)” accessed May 18, 2016, http://www.musicsalesclassical.com/composer/work/7728} Classical Music editor for The New York Times, Russell Platt, describes chain form more simply, “Lutosławski’s ‘chain form’ denotes a technique in which small musical ideas of contrasting character are overlapped upon
one another like links in a chain, creating a dynamic yet fluid sense of forward movement."\textsuperscript{127}

This dynamic and fluid sense of movement is to a greater extent, controlled in part by the performers and in part by the conductor. This will be discussed further below.

1. Notation and errata. In \textit{Chain 1}, Lutosławski, as a forward-thinking innovator, created his own unique score with new symbols and layout. The way the piece is designed, with a certain degree of aleatory to the three sections, means that each performance is unique. The conductor’s job is not only to conduct as he would any other piece of music in terms of gestures that are sensitive to rhythm, attack, register, texture, etc., but also to make temporal decisions as to when certain parts will enter. Likewise, she must also decide how to seat the chamber ensemble which has a direct affect on conducting gestures, as will be discussed below.

\textit{Chain 1} contains metered sections with a defined tempo (i.e. quarter note = ca. 82) and unmetered \textit{ad libitum} sections, which are “not to be conducted.”\textsuperscript{128} The beginning of each of the unmetered sections is marked with a downward arrow (see Example 1), which corresponds to a downbeat from the conductor.

\textsuperscript{128} Lutosławski, \textit{Chain 1}, notes on Instrumentation page of score. Chester Music Limited has authorized the inclusion of all excerpts from Lutosławski’s \textit{Chain 1}. All reproductions of the score are from this source. \textit{Chain 1} Music by Witold Lutosławski © Copyright 1983 Chester Music Limited. All Rights Reserved. International Copyright Secured. Figures 1, 2, 3, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 32, 34, 37, 38, 46
In the introduction, the composer states clearly that the rhythmic values in the *ad libitum* sections are approximate, thus the placing of the notes one above the other in the score has no correspondence to the order in which they are to be played.\textsuperscript{130} In other words, the spatial relationship one takes for granted in a typical score from the 18\textsuperscript{th} or 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries is null and void, i.e., the notes may not sound with chronological relation to their vertical positioning (see Example 2). However, the metered sections, which are to be conducted, contain precise rhythmic values and thus that spatial relationship is to be respected.

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{130} Lutosławski, *Chain 1*, notes on Instrumentation page of score.
The arrows indicating “downbeats” that are to be conducted are not specific in terms of what “kind” of downbeat they are. Some show endings and some show entrances, and sometimes neither or both. Sometimes the conductor is listening to one musician playing a part and places the downbeat with the termination of a certain musical passage, and all of these must take into account the number of players the downbeat involves and all of the elements of sound created by that gesture (i.e. dynamic, rhythms, etc.). Could one simply give a “downbeat” and the musicians would play? Perhaps, but for a convincing and powerful performance and for the gestures to truly connect with the music, the sound, and the musicians, these gestures need to be infused with all of the elements of musicality one would use while conducting a Beethoven Symphony or a Strauss tone poem. Thus, in addition to the structure, these indications should

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131 Ibid., 2.
indicate the musical sound.

Sometimes these downbeat arrows are empty and other times they are filled in (see Example 3); sometimes they are empty half-arrows and sometimes they are filled in half-arrows (see Example 4), however there is no key on the instrumentation page as to how to decipher them.\textsuperscript{132} The filled in arrows generally denote a shorter period of time while those that are empty denote a longer period of time, but these are all relative to what is going on in the music.

Examples 3 and 4 Lutosławski’s \textit{Chain 1}, page 25 and 23.\textsuperscript{133}

\begin{figure}[!h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example.png}
\end{figure}

Despite Lutosławski’s instructions regarding passages of music where the vertical placement of the notes eschew any direct temporal relationship and the fact that he occasionally writes \textit{senza rigore} in the score and parts, there are moments where musical events need to happen before others to maintain the integrity of the musical structure. One such event occurs between rehearsals 12 and 13 (see Example 5) with the coordination of the trumpet and trombone solos.

\footnote{132} Perhaps the difficulty in deciphering these downbeats is in part due to the experimental nature of Lutosławski’s innovative notation.
\footnote{133} Ibid., 25 and 23.
There is no existing errata list for *Chain 1*; however, there are several mistakes in the parts (compared to the score) that need to be corrected. Unfortunately in this important moment, the trumpet and trombone parts are incorrectly written. Figure 12 for the trumpet should be on the downbeat of the next measure,\(^{135}\) i.e. on the tied e-flat, (see Example 6) and the trombone’s figure 12 should be on the downbeat of the next measure. There is also a missing quarter-note rest at the beginning of the measure (see Example 7).

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\(^{134}\) Ibid., 9.

\(^{135}\) N.B. figure 11 is also in the wrong place.
Examples 6 and 7 Lutosławski’s *Chain 1*, trumpet and trombone parts, page 1.\textsuperscript{136}

Since these two instruments are involved in an intricate duet, it is important that they both have the correct indication of where the downbeat falls. Figure 12 is marked *senza rigore* for both instruments, however, the way the score is written and the way the rhythms are indicated suggests an antiphonal interaction between the two instruments that seems quite important. The conductor must follow the trombone beginning at figure 12 until the 2/4 bar. Since neither the trumpet nor trombone has the other players’ music cued into their parts, it is important to clarify this, because if the trombonist begins too early it is entirely possible that he/she might finish the gesture before the trumpet has finished. This would then interrupt the bar before figure 13 and could potentially disrupt the texture change that occurs at figure 13 (see Example 8).

\textsuperscript{136} Lutosławski, trumpet and trombone parts, page 1 of each.
We are fortunate to have a video of Lutosławski conducting the premiere performance of *Chain 1* with members of the London Sinfonietta for whom the piece was written. This historical document affords us insights into some of the finer nuances that are not so obvious in the notation, and of his ideal setup of the ensemble. Of course, there is nothing that says that were he to conduct it again he would not change the performance, but it provides at least one perspective of how the composer envisioned the work.

In Lutosławski’s performance of *Chain 1* it is remarkable how the temporal exchange of the trumpet and trombone lines resemble the visual relationship represented on the page. It is difficult to determine if this was simply coincidence or if Lutosławski asked them to play as

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137 Ibid., 10.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4D7eczEms_U
139 Ibid.
such, since the lines do resemble a dialogue. Regardless, if someone plays his part marked *senza rigore* too slowly or too quickly, the melodic and or harmonic material of one subsection of the music might interrupt the next, as mentioned above. It is up to the conductor to rehearse these spots, fix errors in the parts, and avoid unnecessary and undesired overlapping or gaps, which ultimately could disrupt the chain form. In this sense, the gestures and responsibility of the conductor are a bit more complex than those necessary for most common practice repertory.

Another challenge arises with Lutosławski’s placement of vertical dotted lines that connect the timing of specific musical events. He asks the conductor to follow certain musicians’ parts during these aleatoric passages in order to give another gesture bringing in other musicians at specific spots (see Example 9).

Example 9 Lutosławski’s *Chain 1*, page 15.

Why Lutosławski chose to indicate figures 19 and 20 differently, i.e. the first with half arrows and the second with full arrows, is a mystery, since both entrances indicate essentially the

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140 Lutosławski, *Chain 1*, 15.
same idea, with the conductor following the viola and bringing in other instruments. Here the speed and type of gesture is very similar, only that gesture occurring at figure 20 needs to take into account the entry of the cello.

2. Setup of the ensemble. Since there is no specific setup suggested for the ensemble, the conductor (as is the case with any piece) has to determine the best location for the musicians in terms of the material they play, the tuning, balance, etc. However, another aspect of this is related to how one will conduct the work. There are moments when the left hand might be holding a trill in one voice while the right hand brings in another voice with a different gesture. To a certain extent this may determine one’s placing of the instrumentalists. One spot, which might affect the placement of the ensemble, is between figures 13 and 14 with the entrances of the horn, harpsichord and xylophone (see Example 10).

Example 10 Lutosławski’s *Chain 1*, page 10-11.\(^{141}\)

The placement of these musicians could potentially determine which hand would be used for each of these entrances, thus clarifying the musical structure. What is particularly confusing is that Lutosławski gives a cue for the horn and the harpsichord, but not for the xylophone, and

\(^{141}\) Ibid., 15.
thus the xylophone player must enter freely, sometime after the start of the harpsichord trill. In the harpsichord part, there is a cue for the horn but not for the xylophone, which would actually be the more important cue since the end of his or her trill coincides with the arrival of the trill on A-sharp in the xylophone part. This, at least, is cued by the conductor.

In general, these kinds of conducting gestures can be likened to directing traffic. In essence, telling the performers to go or stop, enter or cease playing, however, as is clear in the score there are different dynamics and energy levels in every one of these gestures, and it is my belief that even when giving a simple “half-arrow” cue, it should somehow connect with the musical material of the soloist.

One place that invites accidental early entrances in the score coincides with the flute entrance before figure 38 (see Example 11).

Example 11 Lutosławski’s *Chain 1*, page 27-28.\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 27-8.
After a relatively lengthy moment of aleatory beginning at figure 33 the solo cello is accompanied by strings and winds playing repeated patterns all marked *piano*. At figure 38 the trumpet, horn, trombone, marimba, harpsichord and strings all enter either *sfp* or *forte*. The flute entrance right before 38 heralds the next section and is *forte*. If shown with too much force or with the right hand, it is entirely possible that the musicians who enter at 38 will come in with that gesture. The violins and viola, in particular, who are continuing their repeated patterns, are watching for a gesture indicating their *forte pizzicato* at figure 38. This is a perfect place for a “wait for it” gesture in the right hand, while the left hand not only indicates the flute, but also connects with the musical material (i.e. *forte* and rather frenetic). Of course, were there a cue in the parts showing the flute’s music, this might not be such a precarious spot, but only some of the parts have the actual flute cue, while others have a cue that the flute is playing (although not the specific music), and others have a cue that someone is playing, without naming the instrument.

This again emphasizes my findings about conducting contemporary music. Can the conducting style be dry, clear, and almost uninvolved? Of course, just like any conducting, but the musicians playing will almost certainly be more inspired and involved if the conductor shows connection with the character of the music. To be clear, this *does not mean* getting in their way. As mentioned in Chapter 2, an over-involved conductor is just as bad, if not worse, than an under-involved conductor. The flute passage in the above example could easily be indicated with a passive gesture, but I found in rehearsing this piece that the flutist will play the dynamics more in line with the composer’s markings if the gesture is clear.

Although in the *ad libitum* sections there is room for variance and although Lutosławski
specifically states that certain notes do not need to coordinate as they seem to in the score. He was meticulous about the “expressive and auditive impact of his chosen sound structures, keeping the balance between the abstract ideas and their physical realizations.” He thus laid out the score, for the most part, in a way that avoids any confusion, but as already demonstrated, this is not always true of the individual parts.

One passage that is clarified in Lutosławski’s performance with the London Sinfonietta is before figure 3, where there is an implied, but not written, fermata in order to make time for the crescendo (see Example 12), the arrival of the forté in all voices, and the marimba and harpsichord chords at figure 3, and the departure from the 12-note chord on the sfp.

Example 12 Lutosławski’s Chain 1, page 1-2.

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143 Lutosławski, Chain 1, notes on Instrumentation page of score.
146 This crescendo may be occur at different times in different voices depending on the speed at which the musicians articulate their particular melodic lines.
147 Lutosławski, 1-2.
It is important to note that Lutosławski, although an effective conductor, was self-trained, studied several textbooks on conducting, and generally only conducted his own works.\textsuperscript{148} He stated:

My latest works contain several new proposed solutions in the realm of orchestral performance. This has to do with the function of the conductor both during rehearsals and concerts, as well as the work of the members of the ensemble. There are comparatively few conductors perfectly at ease with what my scores contain in this respect. More numerous are those who look askance at the conductor’s role required by my scores, a role more like that of a stage-manager or call-boy than a true performer. For this reason I often prepare new works and conduct them myself. In order to prove to myself, to the musicians, and possibly to other conductors who might be interested that the manner of playing and conducting proposed in my music is possible, serves a definite purpose, and moreover is the only way of achieving that purpose. Apart from this, conducting my own works affords a really inestimable advantage as regards enriching my skills as a composer.\textsuperscript{149}

Thus it is useful to watch Lutosławski conduct his own works in the sense that through his preparation of the ensemble and what he brings out in the performances, we get a relatively clear picture of his musical intention. However, conductors who have studied and dedicated themselves to the craft of conducting as their primary focus can use his example and approach as a guide, but not necessarily as the only way to conduct his works. Today there are more conductors who are not only well-versed in conducting contemporary music with new types of notation and styles of compositional writing, but also conductors who specialize in this. The pedanticism of the ‘stage-manager’ will yield a less effective result than an invested performance by a conductor who connects with the music.

3. Gestures. Regarding the types of gestures required to conduct Chain 1, there are the metered sections, which necessitate precise rhythmic gestures and any number of elements that communicate sound (such as articulation, dynamic, etc.) as well as the non-metered and limited

\textsuperscript{149} Tadeusz Kaczynski, \textit{Rozmowy z Witoldem Lutosławskim} (Cracow Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1973), 127-8, Stucky’s translation, as cited in Stucky, 95.
aleatory sections, for which there are, of course, creative options. In these, one could dryly indicate the entrance of certain musicians with a downward gesture and let them play, but the character, texture, and energy of the music in one such section varies greatly with that of another section and it is preferable for the conductor to stay in contact with the musical sound.

For example, at rehearsal 13 the strings are all playing repeated overlapping cells *pianissimo, non-vibrato*, and in a relatively high register with violas and cellos playing harmonics. The horn, harpsichord, and xylophone each have solo gestures throughout which are indicated once again by arrows for cues. One could have ones hands at one’s sides and just indicate the changes, and probably many conductors of new music will do just that, but conducting musically and expressively during the metered sections and then disconnecting from the musical material during these aleatoric sections seems to not only disturb the musical/visual/conceptual flow, but also change the degree of involvement between sections.

Between rehearsals 40 and 47 there is a gradual building of instrumentation, volume, texture, and intensity as the piece approaches its close. These gestures, too, can be given with simple downward gestures that have nothing to do with the energy of the music, however, it is my firm belief that if the conductor connects with the same degree of amount of effort and energy that the musicians are putting forth and shows this in each subsequent gesture, the result will be a much more musical and integrated performance.

The challenge, however is that that some musicians, in certain aleatoric sections, may be performing a crescendo from a *pp* to *ff* at different times and there might be a change of material where the musicians are asked to finish what they are doing before moving on to the next segment; in these sections the rhythmic and dynamic intensity is determined by the musicians themselves. This makes the direct connection with what they are doing entirely reliant
on the conductor listening to and watching the musicians. Since musical time is flexible in these instances the conductor may not necessarily be showing the rhythmic subdivisions or dynamic intensity that they would in common practice repertories, since changes occur at an undetermined pace (see Example 13).

Example 13 Lutosławski’s Chain I, page 40-41.\textsuperscript{150}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example13.png}
\end{center}


\textit{Partiels} (1975) is the third of six movements in Grisey’s \textit{Les Espaces Acoustiques} (1974-85). \textit{Partiels} is written for 16 or 18 musicians including 2 flutes (1\textsuperscript{st} also piccolo and alto flute, 2\textsuperscript{nd} also piccolo), 1 oboe (also English horn), 2 Clarinets in B-flat (1\textsuperscript{st} also E-flat clarinet, 2\textsuperscript{nd} also clarinet in A), 1 bass clarinet in B-flat (also double bass clarinet in B-flat), 2 horns, 1 trombone (with several different mutes), 1 accordion with chromatic basses or electric organ, 2

\textsuperscript{150} Lutosławski, 40-41.
percussionists, 2 violins, 2 violas, 1 cello, and 1 contrabass, and of course, one conductor.\textsuperscript{151} The score and parts include not only technical demands, but also innovative theatrical requirements that would challenge the most well trained professional new music ensembles, even those specializing in French 20\textsuperscript{th}-century music.

What accompanies the rental score of Grisey’s \textit{Partiels} is an 11-page document\textsuperscript{152} with very specific instructions on how the piece should be played, including translations of unique notational devices in the score. The document refers to page numbers in the conductor’s score, not to measure numbers or rehearsal numbers, and thus the notes are not easily shared with members of the ensemble without an additional list of rehearsal numbers. Many of the instructions relate to extended techniques with detailed instructions on how to achieve the desired sound.

Musicians in \textit{Partiels} are asked to not only perform extended techniques on their instruments, but also do such things as freezing suddenly, whispering unintelligibly, rustling or crumpling transparent paper, squeaking Styrofoam, crushing aluminum foil, putting their instruments away and shutting the case loudly, rubbing their bow with rosin ostentatiously, playing a partridge whistle with very specific techniques, turning the last page in their part very loudly, clearing condensation out of their instrument, standing up suddenly and solemnly, and looking with specific expressions at other musicians. The conductor is even asked to pull a red handkerchief from her pocket, wipe her brow dramatically and close the score as if all the hard work is done. Then, the culminating \textit{piece-de-résistance}, is when the percussionist is directed to take the crash cymbals, open the arms slowly, mysteriously, and solemnly with muscular and

\textsuperscript{151} Grisey’s notes say, “Although the present instrumentation is preferable the score can be performed with a single horn and a single percussion player.” Hal Leonard BMG Srl. has authorized the inclusion of all excerpts from Grisey’s \textit{Partiels}.

\textsuperscript{152} See Appendix D for notes from publisher.
psychological tension as if to play a *fortississimo* crash and then remain in that position until the spotlight focused on the percussionist suddenly turns off (see Example 14). Thus musicians are required to prepare differently for this piece than for most other 21st-century works since they have to perform all of these additional theatrics.

Example 14 Grisey’s *Partiels*, page 63.\(^{153}\)

Grisey created not only a masterpiece of spectral music\(^{154}\) whose opening builds on the electronic sonogram analysis of the attack of a low E2 on a bass trombone, and whose exploration of expectation and surprise, predictability and unpredictability, provides an aural game for the listener, but also a visually interesting and theatrically entertaining piece of music as well. In an interview two years before his untimely death, Grisey mentioned that, “The second statement of the spectral movement—especially at the beginning—was to try to find a better equation between concept and percept—between the concept of the score and the perception the

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\(^{154}\) Spectral music is a compositional technique developed in the 1970s using computer analysis of the quality of timbre in acoustic music or artificial timbres derived from synthesis.
audience might have of it. That was extremely important...”155 Thus, one would imagine that the conductor’s participation in the performance should convey the desired sonic effect as well as be a part of the overall entertainment. In this sense, the conductor, unlike in Lutosławski’s *Chain* 1, is very much a part of the action, and not just a stage-manager, as Lutosławski has suggested.156

*Partiels*, according to Gérard Grisey:

…refers to both a part of a larger work and to partial tones of a sound as in acoustics. Two traits characterize the development of sounds: periodicity157 and the overtone spectrum. These elements, which are very easy to identify, give the piece continuity and a dynamic that corresponds rather closely to the cyclical form of human respiration (inhalation, exhalation and rest or tension/collapse—relaxation—collection of energy). Many sections of *Partiels* anticipate the technique of instrumental synthesis. Just as auditory synthesis, which is used in digital electronic music programs, this technique relies on the instrument (micro-synthesis) to express the various components of sound in order to achieve a new global synthesis (macro-synthesis). As a result of this process, the various original instrumental sounds vanish from our perceptions, giving way to a newly invented, synthetic tone color. This gradual blending process makes it possible to formulate a whole series of color tones and establish relationships among them, from the overtone spectrum to various spectra with inharmonic partials and even white noise.158

This “whole series of color tones” invites the expressive conductor to connect with as much of the ‘soundspace’ as possible and necessary without getting in the way of the musicians. Technically speaking what is missing from the parts in some places is a clear indication of what and where the conductor is beating. There are metered sections with bar lines (more or less) but it is, in some cases, necessary to clarify what is being conducted even just in terms of beats per measure. It may thus be necessary to assemble a second document (to accompany the 11-page document that already comes with the parts and score) to clarify what was in the conductor’s

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156 Stucky, 95.
157 Grisey is referring to regularity, repetition, and or recurrence in his music, in other words, predictability giving rise to expectation. This is achieved in *Partiels* with a cycle of three inhalation/exhalation/rest in the work, which in turn demonstrate periodicity/expectation and aperiodicity/lack of expectation. (see Arrell, 320-21).
notes as well as to describe the types and number of gestures the conductor will give in order to
avoid precious waste of rehearsal time.\textsuperscript{159}

1. Specific challenges. There are certainly several elements of Grisey’s score that require
the same sort of consideration and attention that other works of music do, such as specific tempo
markings, meters, and dynamics, and certainly deciding which musical elements to focus on.
However, there are a significant number of places where the conductor must make decisions
without clear guidance from the score.\textsuperscript{160}

In the very first bar, the bass player has three measures to the single bar that the rest of
the ensemble has (see Example 15).

\textsuperscript{159} In Appendix E: Notes for Musicians for Grisey’s \textit{Partiels}, I include the document that I compiled for a
performance of the work by student musicians at Bowling Green State University on March 19, 2011.
\textsuperscript{160} The same, I suppose, could potentially be said of any score, but Grisey’s \textit{Partiels}, has a particularly significant
collection of new notation to deal with.
Thus, the question arises, should the conductor indicate all three (or four) attacks in the bass or leave it up to the bass player to articulate them at his or her discretion? The conductor can decide either way (and I have seen it conducted both ways), however, it is important to consider that in the section immediately following this, the bass continues to play a repeated E natural while other metered musical events happen simultaneously. Creating a rhythmic connection with the bass player from the start establishes predictability for the next section.

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161 Grisey, 1.
Since the rhythm written for the bass varies from three straight quarter notes to more complicated rhythms (such as a quarter followed by a dotted eighth followed by a quarter tied to a sixteenth followed by a sixteenth followed by a longer held note) (see Example 16), the conductor’s gestures indicating these rhythms should relate to what the bass player is playing.

Example 16 Grisey’s Partiels, page 6.\textsuperscript{162}

There are sections of the piece, such as between figure 23 and 28, where the printed noteheads within the measure are placed spatially using non-traditional notation (see Example 17). Grisey gives only an arrow indicating where the downbeat is and a notehead with an arrow

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 6.
indicating slightly higher/lower (1/6 of a tone). Although the composer requests that the durations remain precise, in terms of traditional rhythmic notation the noteheads are placed in very imprecise locations. He also requests that the tuning of the intervals be exact, even going so far as to say that they should be rehearsed slowly. This provides the musicians and conductor with a unique challenge since precision both in terms of tuning and timing are requested in a context that is conceptually precise, but difficult to achieve in practice. As this section continues, the number of noteheads per measure increases and the challenge of alignment increases as well.

Example 17 Grisey’s Partiels, page 26.164

At figure 31 there is a section of limited aleatory165 with the woodwinds repeating figures

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163 In the translated notes accompanying the score, it simply says, slightly higher/lower, however the French version in the first few pages of the score specifies $1/6^{th}$ of a tone in either direction, thus a bit more detective work for the non-Francophone conductor.

164 Grisey, 26.
and slowing down individually and the strings repeating and accelerating the pattern (see Example 18). The conductor should give larger gestures for each of these “bars” in which there are several secondary gestures to be made. One bar, for example, is nine seconds long and has seven sub-sections. It is wise to keep the larger gestures that indicate major demarcations in one hand, and the smaller gestures indicating entrances for the various instruments in the other hand so as to avoid confusion.

EXAMPLE 18 Grisey’s *Partiels*, page 40. 166

Many passages in the score have musicians playing varied dynamic levels and different rhythms, some playing *crescendo* others playing *diminuendo*, and in these cases the job of the

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165 Limited aleatory is where when extensive passages of pitches and rhythms are fully specified, but the rhythmic coordination of parts within the ensemble is subject to an element of chance.

166 Grisey, 40.
conductor is much more like that of a “traffic cop,” keeping the bar lines and beat pattern steady so the musicians can play their individual parts. Too much involvement in one player’s part can be confusing and also upset the overall gestalt (see Example 19), especially considering the overall shifting of color, texture, and harmony that is a signature element in Grisey’s music. This kind of general pattern-conducting also exists in other repertoire where multiple rhythmic and dynamic layers exist simultaneously.

Example 19 Grisey’s Partiels, page 47

At figure 41 the conductor will do well to pay very close attention to the dynamic and

\[\text{Ibid., 47.}\]
rhythm (see Example 20). Each scale is meant to diminuendo and all instruments here articulate their first note precisely together. This is definitely a spot that should be rehearsed slowly to insure the exact timing of these descending scales and the accents within them.

Example 20 Grisey’s *Partiels*, page 51.¹⁶⁸

In the section beginning at figure 42 which heralds the third exhalation, there is a gradual dissipation of periodicity, which aligns with decreasing fulfillment of expectation. Accents begin precisely together and throughout the next section slowly begin to liquidate as the dynamic and pace decrease. Since the tempo changes not gradually but in stages, it is extremely important that the conductor’s gestures indicate these changes with precise correlation to size, intensity, and speed.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 51.
At figure 51, the first flute assumes the role of the conductor/leader since when she slams her case shut everyone stops what they were doing abruptly. Should the conductor cue this, the effect would be ruined.

Example 21 Grisey’s *Partiels*, page 60.

After this moment, apart from the musicians who enter, everyone else is to remain completely still until the measure before figure 52 (see Example 22). In this bar among all the quiet clatter the clarinetist closes his or her case after which the conductor cues the downbeat of figure 52, a *ppp* entrance of organ and bass clarinet. But just before this downbeat, the flutist and

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169 Ibid., 60.
2nd percussionist perform their *mf* gestures (see Example 22).

Since the entrance of the organ and bass clarinet at figure 52 is extremely quiet, giving a strong upbeat gesture for the flute and percussion entrance—at a louder dynamic level— is problematic. However, the coordination of the percussionist and flutist is something to be considered. Whether this means giving an upbeat or not must be decided by the conductor. I have seen this performed several different ways and regardless of how it is done, Grisey notates that the flute and percussion must play together. The best solution will likely depend on how individual ensembles respond.

Example 22 Grisey’s *Partiels*, page 61.\(^{170}\)

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\(^{170}\) Ibid., 61.
Conclusion: The Ultimate Goal of Conducting Gestures

The ultimate goal of great conducting technique is to connect so inextricably and authentically with what is taking place musically in the moment that it is neither distracting nor disruptive, but integrated into the larger musical gestalt. As Elizabeth Green points out in her “Credo”: “We build the technique only to ensure that our music can achieve its unforgettable moments, evanescent as they are, before once more returning to its prison of impatient silence. The most profoundly inspiring performances of a lifetime were those where the performer’s technique was so superb that we forgot it existed. Music spoke its own language in its own way, uninfluenced by human frailty.”

This, I believe translates not only to performances, but rehearsals as well. When the greatest conductors are in the thick of a rehearsal, no one is paying attention to their conducting technique, rather, since music is happening in real time, the cohesiveness of tight music-making happens without any consideration for the conductor’s skill.

Conducting contemporary repertoire is fundamentally no different than conducting any other repertoire. What is required is connecting with the composer’s expressive intentions and efficiently and effectively giving the musicians what they need in terms of gestures. New notation always necessitates some deciphering, as musicians, including conductors, may not immediately know what the symbols indicate. But once the intention is clear, finding the gestures required to communicate or connect with the sound should be no different from any other repertoire.

One additional element that conductors have to manage is the degree to which they are detached from the emotional content of the music they are conducting. This balance between

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171 Elizabeth Green, *The Modern Conductor*, xvii.
distance and personal emotional investment is extremely important. Esa-Pekka Salonen warns, “We need to be wary of the centrifugal powers of music.” Of course, this is much more challenging when conducting a piece of music that has sentimental value to us as musicians, but regardless of the context, much like an actor, the conductor needs to exercise a balance of self-control and vulnerability to be "in the zone," while being careful to not lose control of one’s emotions. It would be just as easy to fall into the trap of getting too emotionally involved in Penderecki’s Threnody for the Victim’s of Hiroshima or Gorecki’s Symphony No. 3, as it would Barber’s Adagio for Strings.

Along with the concept of being “in the zone,” there is the idea that one has to be spontaneous and that gestures are always responding to the moment in real time, thus no single “performance” of the piece will ever sound exactly alike, nor will the gestures used by a conductor be exactly alike. There may be many similarities in multiple performances of a piece by a single ensemble and conductor, however, the paradox remains that although gestures should represent a cohesive aural image of the piece, they are always in response to what is happening in the present time so they will never be identical.

Conductors need to create a space where musicians feel empowered, encouraged to bring to the fore all of their musical training, gift, skill, and passion into their music-making along with every other musician on the stage. There are many elements that can contribute to this kind of atmosphere, but a conductor’s gestures are of utmost importance since they are what make or break the relationship. Conducting is a two-way conversation, a giving and taking, and perhaps Scherchen articulates the job of the conductor best when he says, “The conductor’s conception of a work should be a perfect inward singing. And if the work lives within him as an idea,

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undimmed by obstacles of mechanism, then he is worthy to bear the conductor’s responsibility. The sounds must be commanded, and to conduct is to give them shape….” ¹⁷³

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APPENDIX A. QUESTIONS FOR CONDUCTING TEACHERS

1) For less experienced conductors do you suggest that they plan out gestures in advance?

2) Do you encourage your students to use their eyes and faces to help communicate ideas in the music? Where is the balance between hand and arm gesture and facial expression?

3) Do you use any particular exercises with your students to help them internalize and thus communicate sound and if yes, how do you encourage them to use gesture to communicate what they hear or want to hear?

4) How often do you demonstrate for your students?

5) For your more advanced students who already understand the basic fundamental technique of conducting, how do you approach the teaching of gesture as it relates to sound?

6) Do you think there is such thing as a feminine or masculine gesture? Explain.

7) Do you approach teaching female conductors any differently from male conductors? Why or why not?

8) Do you feel there is a stylistic gestural difference between conducting classical, romantic, and contemporary repertoire? Is there anything specific you tell your students about how these conducting styles should be approached?

9) Some conducting textbooks suggest that the right hand is for keeping time and the left hand is primarily used for expressive gestures. Do you agree? Why or why not?

10) Do you believe there is such a thing as “over-conducting” or “under-conducting”?

11) Do you have any favorite conducting books that you recommend to your students that specifically address conducting gesture?

12) Have you found any gestures used by conducting students from other cultures that were inappropriate or that might mean different things in a musical context in this country? Or vice versa?

13) Do you feel that your gestures in a performance are any different from your gestures in rehearsals in terms of how much or little freedom or control you choose to exercise?

14) Do you feel there is a direct correlation of the size of a gesture to its corresponding sound?
1) For less experienced conductors do you suggest that they plan out gestures in advance?

CA: I think it’s a mistake for students not to practice a particular gesture if it’s not part of them. If they don’t do it over and over it won’t come naturally in the middle of rehearsal. Yes, I insist that my students practice the different kinds of cutoffs, or a breath pause, or a different kind of preparation.

2) Do you encourage your students to use their eyes and faces to help communicate ideas in the music? Where is the balance between hand and arm gesture and facial expression?

CA: I think it’s one of the most important things that we have as a conductor because a lot of people don’t really watch our hands they watch our faces. And if our faces are not engaged in the emotions and the meaning of the music then what good are the hands. The whole thing of synchronicity and the mirror image, all of that is going on in the brain and it happens primarily face-to-face. We know that the brain fires when it sees things happen and it tends to do what we do as a conductor, so if we’re not doing something we want in the music, then the musicians will not do it either. I just think we all have to be in synch with each other in the musical process. The best conductors I have ever seen always have the most expressive faces. I’m thinking of the woman who was here (SJSU) after I retired, I felt that probably about 80% of her effectiveness came because in rehearsal you always knew in her breath prep what she wanted. You knew the mood, the energy, the lifted eyebrows, the shape of the vowel on her breath, it was all in her face and so immediately everybody was into the music on the very first note. It didn’t take two or three measures to get with it, it was all on her face and I watched it. Now the opposite is true of Helmut Rilling who in rehearsals does not show any facial expressions at all but the one thing that everyone has commented on about him his whole life is that when he’s conducting in concert, he becomes the music. To them that is so radical. To go from almost no expression, to all of a sudden he becomes the music, and of course, they just do the same thing, they’re so well trained. It’s a mind-blowing experience both for the audience and the musicians.

Part ii:
I am convinced that where the arms are affects the sound so greatly that the hand is an extension of the shoulder and the arm. Even the hands and fingers, and the way you hold them and the way you shape them affects the sound also. It’s all one. It’s all part of you, the body. The ribcage, the shoulders, the back, the neck. I’ve seen conductors bent over at the neck and just having them stand up changes the tone radically. I don’t separate hands from arms, from anything; it’s all one big unit.
3) Do you use any particular exercises with your students to help them internalize and thus communicate sound and if yes, how do you encourage them to use gesture to communicate what they hear or want to hear?

CA: If you don’t have an image in your own mind of what kind of sound you want then you’ll accept whatever comes out. So the job of the conductor is to envision not only how the piece is going to go, but also what kind of sound is going to bring that music to life. It might be a strong brittle sound you want, or if you’re doing early American music you might want the kind of untrained singer sound and you have to know what that sounds like. Do you want it to sound like country western or do you want it to sound like religious people who are just singing naturally? So as far as hearing choirs, since that’s my bag, if the choir’s sound is not passionate and warm and rich, I don’t want to listen to it. This I think is the hardest thing to teach our students, is what sound is a choir capable of and what sound do you want as a general sound, and what kind of sound do you want specifically with each piece, and each composer, and each period, and each style, and each note. I don’t think a lot of choral conductors hear harmonic motion, and I’m constantly asking people which chord are you leading to, and when you get there, shouldn’t that chord sound different? I use a palate of colors and maybe you’ve been blue and all of a sudden you want a purple of sound on this chord, but it has to sound and feel different when you arrive at a particular point. Or getting to that point what should the sound be. And I don’t think they ever think that or at least they don’t seem to until I mention to them….

Exercises? I wish I knew some. When you figure out those exercises, let me know!!

KK: Let’s say they have a really great vision of exactly how they want the piece to sound and they’re not quite sure how to communicate it gesturally, are there exercises you to help them physicalize what they hear in their ears? For example playing some chords on the piano and having them respond to those, like they are a child responding to sounds, so they are exploring how their body relates to what they hear so that they can then flip that around and make certain gestures to create certain sounds on the other side…

CA: That’s a whole new field that people have not explored is how to teach that!! I tell them to listen of course to a lot of choirs and get different choirs in their head and Howard Swan. He used to say, for each piece you must have a model alto sound in your ear. For example when I do a spiritual I think of Marion Anderson I’m always thinking of her dark, rich, round, full voice. When you’re doing English music I think of Dawn Upshaw. I have all those in my head, but our students don’t. They haven’t heard enough. It’s different for every piece. Sometimes I want a contralto sound in my sopranos, sometimes I want a very straight, pure, innocent sound, and sometimes I want a real operatic sound. To have all those sounds in your ear you have to have heard them. (Me: Like seeing painting styles). You have to have that with each voice. When I first started teaching I used to teach all the voices as if they were one, and I realized I had to different exercises for my tenors as I did for my sopranos. You can’t treat all the voices alike. They don’t know that. It took me a long time to realize it. Nobody taught me that.
Me: Knowing which sound is appropriate in each context takes experience.

4) How often do you demonstrate for your students?

CA: Absolutely. I do. One thing I picked up when I was teaching at the University level is that at the end of each conducting assignment, because I videotape each one, now they tape their own and they take them home and study them. I would always stand up and conduct it too at the end. Of course it made me be accountable. You always have to be cleaning up your own conducting.

5) For your more advanced students who already understand the basic fundamental technique of conducting, how do you approach the teaching of gesture as it relates to sound?

CA: Repertoire. More complicated problems to solve, and if they haven’t thought of it, you suggest ways they might deal with those more advanced problems and a more advanced sound.

6) Do you think there is such thing as a feminine or masculine gesture? Explain.

CA: Yes. I do. I think that women should not use effeminate gestures, as a rule.

KK: What if the music requires it, what do you do?

CA: As a rule. Somebody shouldn’t look at someone and say, “Oh she’s a woman conductor by the way she moves her hands. The same thing for a man conductor. I don’t think a man wants to look effeminate. I still think there are some gender issues in conducting that we have to deal with. We shouldn’t call attention to our gender by the way we conduct. And you don’t want people to say, he looks effeminate when he conducts. We want to use fine gestures that are expressive.

KK: Having it be connected to the music, rather than to who we are. It’s a tricky line.

CA: Sometimes I’ll say to women, that gesture isn’t strong enough or that people are going to criticize you if you use that gesture.

7) Do you approach teaching female conductors any differently from male conductors? Why or why not?

CA: No. I teach them all the same except that women need a little more help. Their voice doesn’t carry with the same power that a man’s voice carries, so everything they do has to be powerful. That’s what I call my workshops, the powerful conductor because I try to get women to feel their power. The way they dress: it’s important for women not to wear beige and pink, and things that look effeminate. So I stress strong bold colors, a lot of black, obviously, dark bright. Another problem that we have especially with women is
playing with their hair. Or tucking in their blouse. A lot of men do the same thing with their shirts or their pockets. When you come up, stand there, and when you’re ready, you lift your arms and don’t touch your body> it’s the same thing with choirs. It’s so distracting.

8) Do you feel there is a stylistic gestural difference between conducting classical, romantic, and contemporary repertoire? Is there anything specific you tell your students about how these conducting styles should be approached?

CA: I do think there is a difference. I don’t know that I do a good job of teaching the difference. I do a lot of imagery you know when you’re conducting Haydn, you think of him in his wig; he was only seen in public once without his wig. It was a different manner, a different style of living and thinking and I try to get the students to put themselves in that milieu. I think that you’re going to hold yourself and think in a certain way when you are conducting Haydn and Mozart. And then you have Brahms and Schumann and Mendelssohn, read what they were thinking about. The fact that Mendelssohn was good friends with Goethe for example. The fact that he was friends with Prince Albert. Who did they associate with, what were they like, and how did they approach their music and how did they approach society? I don’t mean that romantic music has more bodily movement, but a freer sense of who you are and what the music says.

Contemporary music: neo-baroque, or neo-romantic, or Stockhausen. It depends on the music, but yes.

KK: If you look at Gesualdo, has a lot of juicy stuff, in some ways romantic, because of all the clashes, so much expression, yet it’s really early, and then a contemporary piece that is new-baroque and essentially straightforward, so in that sense style boundaries are blurred and unclear. Is there a way to approach teaching a specific genre of music, or is it piece specific?

CA: Yes.

9) Some conducting textbooks suggest that the right hand is for keeping time and the left hand is primarily used for expressive gestures. Do you agree? Why or why not?

CA: I do. I think that traditionally it’s better to have one hand that keeps the time so that everybody knows where and what it is. And I don’t care whether it’s the right or the left, as long as it keeps time. The other hand is free for cuing, all the rest of the stuff it does. I do teach students the orchestral cutoff, you know you hold the baton and cut with the left hand. Both hands, of course, are used to a greater degree together once the beat is established. With professional musicians you don’t have to show every beat. But if you are showing it, the musicians should know which one it is.

KK: So you’re okay with left-handed conductors conducting with a baton in their left hand. Do you teach with a baton?
CA: Yes, absolutely. They have to conduct with both. It depends on the music. They have to be proficient with both.

I rehearse with a baton because it forces you to be clearer and cleaner. If you don’t use a baton, you use too many muscles, you over conduct, your arm gets tired, your shoulder gets tired, and with a baton you can be so relaxed. It’s a wrist instrument. Because I’m so expressive people used to say Charlene doesn’t conduct, she dances. And when I heard that criticism, I was obviously all over the place. Some of it is fine, but I really worked to bring everything down and condense what I was doing. And I found that a baton really helps me do that.

10) Do you believe there is such a thing as “over-conducting” or “under-conducting?”

CA: Absolutely. I have seen people who under-conduct and in general the music is not very expressive and I’ve seen people who over-conduct and they call attention to themselves. I don’t think that your conducting should have to do with you. It should be focused on the music making. I think there are dangers with either. In most cases less is more.

11) Do you have any favorite conducting books that you recommend to your students that specifically address conducting gesture?

CA: Howard Swan. I studied with Elizabeth Green and as far as I’m concerned her book is the bible. The problem is that all of her examples are from the orchestral repertoire and for singers who have not studied Beethoven they don’t, it takes time to play some of the examples to see what it all means. I wish someone would write a Green book for choral conductors, using the same language. I love her chapter on impulse of will. I find that every time I read it I pick up something new. It means that if you want something bad enough you’ll find a way to get it as a conductor. A lot of people don’t have a very strong impulse. I love her gesture of syncopation. A lot of people don’t know how to show this. Offbeat entrances. She makes it clear. It comes from a stopped hand, it’s very quick and it has no preparation. You read that and you know exactly.

She also has these exercises called psychological conducting, if you do those exercises your conducting becomes so clear but it takes a lot of time and effort. What she does is she has the people in the class without any music. You have to be so clear that you have to be able to show a half note as opposed to two quarters, a dotted quarter and an eighth, an eighth note with an eighth rest, or quarter notes legato. Once a student learns that these gestures get results, then they start to connect with the sound and their conducting becomes so much better. They don’t like to practice them, they’re not sure what gesture does what. Partnering is one of the best ways to teach. Teaching beginning conducting is hard, I hated it. I had way too many students….

12) Have you found any gestures used by conducting students from other cultures that were inappropriate or that might mean different things in a musical context in this country? Or vice versa?
CA: I haven’t seen it.

13) Do you feel that your gestures in a performance are any different from your gestures in rehearsals in terms of how much or little freedom or control you choose to exercise?

CA: Yes, I believe there is a difference in gestures I use in rehearsal and performance. In rehearsals “anything goes”. All kinds of free demonstrative gestures that will hopefully elicit a robust and free response from the singers can be used and discarded, as we get closer to performance. By the time the music is audience ready, it should be set enough, that all the conductor needs to do is remind the musicians of what they have created together. In performance, I like to conduct less, listen more, respond to the moment, become totally involved with the message, and hopefully relight the fires the composer intended. I do not want to distract the audience with my conducting and often keep it very small and unobtrusive. Sometimes I hardly conduct at all and on some pieces walk away and let the singers sing unconduted. Many times I have seen conductors who get in the way of the music by over-conducting, over controlling and in general not allowing the singers enough freedom to express what they feel.

14) Do you feel there is a direct correlation of the size of a gesture to its corresponding sound?

CA: Absolutely there is a direct correlation of the size of a gesture to its corresponding sound, and it is manifested not only in the dynamic scheme, but also in the intensity of sound, the beauty of sound, the shaping of the phrases and the word stress.

Not asked: The amount of rebound…. This has become a big thing with me. I believe that most conductors use way too much rebound—especially choral conductors where 90% of the music is legato/sostenuto. I basically believe that once your hands (baton) leave the plane of conducting you lose control over the sound. The horizontal figure eight (or similar) should be the goal for one phrase, one breath—long connected phrasing.

Interview with Kenneth Kiesler (January 31, 2016)
*N.B. I use Ken and Kiki since both of us have initials of KMK.

1) For less experienced conductors do you suggest that they plan out gestures in advance?

Ken: No, I suggest that they learn a technique that suits every possible circumstance that could arise, which is then called forth by their musical ideas in the moment. With certain infrequent exceptions such as complicated fermatas where you have to think a little bit about how you might get in or out of them.

2) Do you encourage your students to use their eyes and faces to help communicate ideas in the music? Where is the balance between hand and arm gesture and facial expression?
Ken: I encourage my students to allow their faces to reflect what they feel and think. I discourage them from putting the face first and acting in place of or in higher priority to what comes out authentically from the inside. The first thing is to hear internally, the second is to respond to what one hears and to share that experience with the people who are watching us. Not to focus on projecting something physically, but to share something that we are holding in our imaginations, in our spirits.

3) Do you use any particular exercises with your students to help them internalize and thus communicate sound and if yes, how do you encourage them to use gesture to communicate what they hear or want to hear?

Ken: There are people who can internalize the music, but may not be able communicate it, and there are others who have no intention but have some means of communication. The idea is to become vulnerable enough to allow the music to touch them, reach them, resonate within them, and, once that vulnerability is there how do they share that, how do they project that feeling.
- The axiom is: Without intention there’s no communication, and without communication there’s no relationship. You’re looking at which aspect or practice needs to be developed: The musical intention, or the communication.
- Almost everybody can figure out what they need to know about the music: the key, who’s playing, the harmony, how many bars in a phrase, what’s the strong bar, what’s the weak bar, but that’s not enough unless you’re a theorist or a critic or a musicologist, for example, rather than a conductor. As Boulez said to me when I was working with him, “It’s not worth knowing if it can’t be made audible.” I’d like to expand that to say, “it’s not worth knowing if it can’t be made palpable.”

There are exercises I use to get the music to seep from the brain, the cognitive into the spirit or the feeling, and thus into the body. I’m talking about something we can actually see in somebody’s body, and how the body moves, how they breathe and how they ARE… Usually the exercises have to do with closing the eyes, responding like a child to various pitches, chords that I play, tone clusters. And usually there is too much inhibition to allow people to show that and share it, so I do it in a room one-on-one, sometimes. I don’t watch them at all, to make sure they feel comfortable, and that they find their childlike responses. To clear away all the stuff that’s been built up by trying to be right and trying not be wrong, trying to look good and avoid looking bad. So they can resonate with the music and move with it.

We’re not just delivery mechanisms but receiving mechanisms. It’s a two way street.

Kiki: Concerning exercises: responding to sound and then turning that into something they’re showing: Conducting is taking what you hear in your head and communicating that externally rather than responding to that immediately…

Ken: Taking what you know and communicating it is a problem, because if you’re thinking about your communication then you’re not really in touch with the music, you’re at least one degree away from the music. So the idea is to find a way that you just hear
and immediately feel the music, immediately hear it, not think about hearing it, and not think about what to do, but immediately respond. If you were to scream, or drop something loud in front of a 2 year old they would scream, run away, cry, laugh, there’d be some response. If you do it in front of an adult they often don’t respond.

You know, Leonard Bernstein said that the difference between a layperson and an artist is that the artist retains their childlike response to life as they age. That’s the key. Whether you call it child-like or vulnerable.

4) How often do you demonstrate for your students?

Ken: There are some students who learn visually, so I occasionally resort to saying, “this could be done like this.” And there are some people who just respond immediately and they can get it in their hands and can go with it. But my way of demonstrating, which I’ve been doing for years and which I find to be extremely effective, is to stand to the side and slightly behind the student. I take their right hand in my own and support their left arm or elbow with my left hand, so they’re not totally free, or so they don’t get injured, and I conduct with their right hand so that they can feel the flow of things. Now I’m not trying to show there’s a particular gesture that works, or that there are geographic points in the air where you have to go. I’m just trying to communicate the feeling of the flow of the line of the music, not just beats and cues.

5) For your more advanced students who already understand the basic fundamental technique of conducting, how do you approach the teaching of gesture as it relates to sound?

Ken: I use metaphors such as touching, pushing the sound, being in contact with it, feeling it. Lately I also have been using something like a score with a rough cover or a table top and I have the students use the baton make the rhythms on the table top, sustaining notes so they can actually hear that the rhythm they are conducting is or is not actually what they are supposed to be communicating. Then I have these exercises that I have from Jean Morel with my own additions and revisions over the years, where the idea is to communicate the rhythm to someone who doesn't have the music. The exercises are graduated so they get very, very complicated after a while. Conductors are encouraged to communicate and be in contact with the player who is playing that rhythm so that they’re playing that rhythm together rather than the conductor doing a vague meaningless four patter no matter what the music is doing. So gestures have a specific intention rather than only the beat, which should be in the background sort of like the canvas of the painting, or the scaffold, or the 2X4s of the building.

6) Do you think there is such thing as a feminine or masculine gesture? Explain.

Ken: Yes, and I think men use feminine gestures and women use masculine gestures and it has nothing to do with the gender of the person who’s using them. I think there’s feminine phrasing, emphasizing the second and fourth bar of the phrase. Phrasing on the first and third bars, that’s known as masculine phrasing; for whatever reason I don’t
know, but people use the terms. If the feminine attributes mean we’re sensitive to the music and we’re vulnerable, then I suppose all of us ought to be that way.

7) Do you approach teaching female conductors any differently from male conductors? Why or why not?

Ken: The answer is probably 95% no, they’re the same work, same exercises, same everything. Sometimes I’m conscious of the fact that a male, for example I was just teaching a person for 6 hours of private lessons and he’s a guy who has really bulked up on the upper part of his body and it really affects him negatively in that he’s stuck and can’t move fluidly. Sometimes I have a female student who needs some muscle tone and whose gestures are a bit floppy or not supported; I don’t know if that has anything to do with gender but maybe more with lifestyle. These sorts of issues are rarely a concern.

8) Do you feel there is a stylistic gestural difference between conducting classical, romantic, and contemporary repertoire? Is there anything specific you tell your students about how these conducting styles should be approached?

Ken: Our conducting ought to be showing the sound because sound is what music is made out of. So if the sound is different for romantic music than it is from classical music, then of course, the gestures would be different, right? We’re not going to have the same gesture for different sounds. You know, Yehudi Menuhin said, “Every sound has a unique visual coefficient.” So, if you have an ascending scale in Mozart and it’s orchestrated with violins and a cello accompaniment and you have an ascending scale in Mahler orchestrated with brass and horns with bells in the air, and basses on the c-string, then of course it’s going to look different. It could be the same pitches, but the sound is different. I just did a program that had Wagner Prelude and Liebestod going straight into Ravel Daphnis and Chloe second suite and you feel yourself change from the tone color of the Wagner to the tone color of the Ravel. You feel yourself being more impressionistic and moving in a more airy or pastel-like way versus the oil painting on the canvas you’re doing with the Wagner, where you’re deep in the sound.

Kiki: The same thing can be said of the huge character change between the different movements of the Enigma Variations, like the harmony shift / drop of the major third from the movement before Nimrod going into that movement.

Ken: Ideally, if one is open to the music, the music plays us and the orchestra sees that happening. They don’t just see us moving as if we were dancers. We are causing or eliciting or confirming with gestures, but it’s rooted in resonance with the music and in musical intention. We are a conduit which changes with every harmony, every pitch, with every color, tempo, articulation, etc.

9) Some conducting textbooks suggest that the right hand is for keeping time and the left hand is primarily used for expressive gestures. Do you agree? Why or why not?
Ken: I think it’s totally wrong and bankrupt and old fashioned and useless. You’ve got two hands, why not use them both to be musical? This idea is the enemy of expressive conducting, and therefore good conducting. The idea of conducting is to express and communicate so it’s impossible to be expressive and musical that way, it’s machine-like. It keeps the conductor actually fairly uninvolved or minimally involved in the music because it engages the part of the brain that’s the counting part, and therefore it mitigates against creativity and resonance with the music. Of course there are often times when beating the time is helpful and one of the highest priorities. There is a proportion, which is shifting with the music.

10) Do you believe there is such a thing as “over-conducting” or “under-conducting”?

Ken: Sure, I guess over conducting means being more physically active than is necessary and that can change from one moment to the next or one ensemble to the next. What could be perfect conducting for one group might be over-conducting in the same music or under-conducting for another. And the conductor has to be so aware and self-aware, not self-conscious, but aware of what’s going on with the group to know what amount, quality, quantity and intensity is appropriate at any moment. I might have to beat every beat in a Mozart symphony with one group and with another there might be very few beats.

11) Do you have any favorite conducting books or (books not about conducting) that you recommend to your students that specifically address conducting gesture?

Ken: I find all the old things in conducting textbooks, like even the patterns in Max Rudolf’s book I don’t teach anymore. I find that they’re not flexible or fluid enough to go with the music. I feel that the music too often is asked to fit some physical pattern. I really admired Fredrik Prausnitz’ book called Score and Podium, which is not available anymore, because it dealt with score study as well as rehearsing, and it was surprisingly elegant in the way it was communicated, and it was insightful. When new books come out, publishers sometimes send copies to me. I’m astonished at how bad some of the new conducting books are. I recently flipped through one of them to discover there’s a chapter called The Face, and there’s a chart which says “mouth and eyes: for Anger, open mouth wide in O position.” Squint the eyes…I can’t even believe how antithetical to my convictions….

12) Have you found any gestures used by conducting students from other cultures that were inappropriate or that might mean different things in a musical context in this country? Or vice versa?

Ken: No. From some cultures, they don’t even try to be artistic or musical, they are up there to be the boss, to be the tyrant. And they’re putting on some kind of act that makes them be the leader and that manifests itself physically in their posture and in the way they dictate with their hands and their eyes. That needs to be worked through. This is a complete misconception about why we’re on the podium, and what our role is, and how to communicate with people….
13) Do you feel that your gestures in a performance are any different from your gestures in rehearsals in terms of how much or little freedom or control you want to exercise?

Ken: Yes, of course, because by the time we get to the performance our function is different. The orchestra’s playing differently and therefore we conduct differently. I think it’s a real problem when a conductor conducts a performance like it’s a rehearsal. First of all, in a rehearsal we are trying to accomplish as much as we possibly can in usually in a short period of time. I think the idea of the concert to transcend, to make transcendent music. This goes back to awareness, in this particular moment.

One of the advantages of being a professional conductor is how often you get to repeat the same repertoire sometimes even with the same orchestra. And every concert is different.

Kiki: In the concert you want to give everyone the benefit of the doubt that they’ve fixed their problems, so you create a space where everyone brings their full musicality and skill to the fore.

Ken: Gestures should not be pejorative. In other words, instead of piano, conducting not too loud, etc. We are collaborators, so we create the atmosphere where everyone can co-arise simultaneously.

Kiki: In an academic setting, when you allow the space, if that person doesn’t rise to the occasion and doesn’t fulfill their musical responsibility, then they learn from it, probably feel bad about it and won’t do it again. So this is pedagogical and at the same time musical, even if you’re not thinking about it.

14) Do you feel there is a direct correlation of the size of a gesture to its corresponding sound?

Ken: Yes and no. The size and many other things affect the sound. The size, the amount of resistance, the way its prepared, how dense it is, how viscous it is or isn’t. The size of the gesture primarily relates to tempo. Large is slow, and fast is small.

There are times when we conduct larger for loud and smaller for softer. But if we have a choice, let’s say we have a crescendo and an accelerando at the same time, the gestures need to get smaller for the accelerando. We make the beat smaller, and conduct with more intensity to make the crescendo. I think that’s probably the most significant misconception on the part of most conductors and it gets them in the most trouble.

If you’re doing the finale of Daphnis and you’re conducting at 168 or at 170-2 and you’re trying to do everything large because it’s fortissimo, good luck with that. That means you’re conducting from the shoulder, full arm. It’s absolutely impossible. If one imagines the bouncing ball and it gets smaller as it gets faster…
I think that it’s really important to practice certain techniques without any musical intention, but very quickly afterwards you have to be conducting with musical intention.

Here’s the biggest thing that has changed about my teaching in the last few years, because of book that I read and somebody else who kind of influenced me about these things.

I’ve been working much, much more on how the brain works and what we think while we’re conducting. What it is that causes us to do certain things. How can we train the brain to really focus? The brain is hard-wired to avoid hard work. But conducting is mentally “hard work.” So that you’re focused on the music so intentionally and on your gestures so intentionally that it’s not an accident, and that you can be more effective. That what we do is not accidental but intentional.

Kiki: …and all of that of course, is tied into listening, because without listening none of that can happen.

Ken: Well, when we’re listening it causes other things to happen. Our brain can only be occupied with so many things at once. What Boulez said to me years ago, when I asked him, “how do you hear so many things at once? You’re known for that.” He said, “I actually don’t hear anything at once, I hear one thing at a time, I just scan really fast.” So I’ve been working a lot with people on thinking. Exercises that I used to do with Master’s degree students at the end of the second year I’m now doing in the first few hours of my work with someone. This comes from a book.

1. Say your phone number as fast as you can. Okay, good, now that’s part of your brain’s system that’s automatic.

2. Now, say your phone number but add three to every digit. Okay, so as I listen to you go through that your brain is working in a different way, it kind of heats up and I see your eyes go up in your head while you think, I see the judgment going on…. “Can I do this?” I hear the little laughter going on saying, “This is stupid why am I doing this?”… All of this is normal. All the studies show that everybody experiences hard mental work the same way. In all cultures. This is a University of Michigan study.

*Thinking Fast and Slow* is the name of the book.

When the music is really difficult, If I have someone do these exercises first they are much more successful. If they don’t warm up the brain beforehand, they can’t do. When a pianist or violinist warms it’s partially physical and partially psychological or mental. And conductors don’t really have a way of doing that.

Warming up physically is also very important before you go on to conduct either a rehearsal or concert is really important. Your muscles and tendons need it. We should warm up. And cool down.
Interview with Dr. Robert Porco (April 13, 2016)

1) For less experienced conductors do you suggest that they plan out gestures in advance?

RP: I don’t. The exceptions are when there are tricky places to get in and out of like a fermata or a change of tempo. That, I ask them to practice. Otherwise I think conducting needs to be more spontaneous and in the moment than planned out.

2) Do you encourage your students to use their eyes and faces to help communicate ideas in the music? Where is the balance between hand and arm gesture and facial expression?

RP: Absolutely. There are so many boring faces, but don’t quote me on that. Most of the communication in conducting folks is in the eyes and face particularly the face as a mirror, although this is not as easy as it might sound because some people can’t let themselves go on this. This part is not really teachable, you can’t say, do this with your face. You have to encourage them to allow themselves to be themselves. If they’re enjoying the music, there’s nothing wrong with displaying that. I find that the most communicative thing that a person can do and be interesting. In some ways it’s more important than the gesture.

I remember one time at IU, I asked the orchestra if anyone wanted to conduct and some guy did and he had no physical training so it was all over the place, but the orchestra sounded terrific because he was so interesting. It just validated that. I do believe the physical gesture of where one and two is an all that is the simplest thing to teach, it should be not the first things you learn, but one of the last things you learn. Like learning the score and being able to hear things is so much more important than that. In the big picture, you can have a pretty good technique and clarity and not be terribly interesting. Jan Harrington had it right because he often just started with chant, which has no beats, and then if it’s true, the actual gesture of a beautiful beat and a good ictus so people can know what you’re doing, if that’s not the most difficult then that can come later. A lot of people can conduct the right patterns and be really quite uninteresting, and even more serious than that is not listening. If someone has a fantastic technique but isn’t hearing what’s going on, then the whole process is upset, that person shouldn’t be conducting.

3) Do you use any particular exercises with your students to help them internalize and thus communicate sound and if yes, how do you encourage them to use gesture to communicate what they hear or want to hear?

RP: I encourage them to let go. Sometimes I have them conduct without their arms. They always get stuck here, they’re very self-conscious about it, and they either conduct with their body movements or their face, or their eyes. How do you feel about the music? I ask them a lot of questions starting with, “Do you like music?” What does this music mean to you emotionally. Give me some adjectives for this music and then extra-musical descriptors. Can you do that with your body, can you do that with your arms, can you do it with the stick down, or with your left hand. I encourage them at a certain level to be as extravagant as you can. Some people I would say, be as outside yourself as you can. But I
had a student this last time at IU who was all over the place, so the approach there was a little different. He was lunging forward and over-conduct. So I asked him to concentrate all of that into a more economical thing. So there’s no one single way. Sometimes I encourage people to take dance or acting classes. Anything that will allow them. You can be a very boring person, a soft-spoken shy person. There’s no place for that in music. Music isn’t a shy thing. It’s an extroverted activity. So, someone who brings that shyness, I ask them to even pretend a bit. I don’t have an approach that is universal for everyone; you just see what they bring. What young people don’t realize probably is how groups, particularly choruses, read you. Everything about us as leaders can be read and be expressive of what you feel. It’s a very tricky business. Orchestra players, one of the first things they look at is: is she clear? I’ve prepared choruses for so many people. Very few people of the professional conductors I’ve prepared choruses for have an outstanding technique; they have a lot of other things.

4) How often do you demonstrate for your students?

RP: I would say, relatively frequently. I don’t demonstrate how to be expressive. I often demonstrate if there’s a tricky passage if it comes to active beats and passive beats such as in a recitative. When it becomes a purely technical thing, sometimes demonstrations can be helpful. I preface all my teaching by saying just because I’m teaching this doesn’t mean I can do it any better than you. I mean that. I have the advantage of being the observer. Occasionally I will say, “here’s what I would do, but don’t imitate me.” Because it’s fun for one thing.

5) For your more advanced students who already understand the basic fundamental technique of conducting, how do you approach the teaching of gesture as it relates to sound?

6) Do you think there is such thing as a feminine or masculine gesture? Explain.

RP: I don’t. I think that’s very obviously dated.

7) Do you approach teaching female conductors any differently from male conductors? Why or why not?

RP: My approach is entirely the same.

8) Do you feel there is a stylistic gestural difference between conducting classical, romantic, and contemporary repertoire? Is there anything specific you tell your students about how these conducting styles should be approached?

RP: The big answer is no. But the more particular answer is if you’re doing Brahms Requiem and you stray from a four pattern and just conduct the music that’s great, but if you’re doing John Adams Harmonium you can’t do that because there are so many meter changes. The beat and the clarity have to be very important. It’s cleaner and often smaller because smaller is more clear than large. So in that aspect, anything that has mixed
meters, like Stravinsky, etc., I do think the technique has to be more refined. I was reminded of this when I was doing Appalachian Spring with the Cleveland Orchestra at Blossom, and one of the percussionists, a very nice guy, came up to me during the break and in a very nice way said, you know there’s one part I’m walking from stage right to stage left to go over to the chimes and sometimes when I look up to check where you are, I can’t tell. If he’s looking up and there’s a 4.4 measure and he can’t tell if I’m on beat three. It’s a great question but it’s so situational. It’s the same thing in Elijah where there are so many recitatives, and you’re going in and out, and people are counting. You take the moments when you can just do sweeping gesture when the music goes on for a long time in 3. Often, with contemporary music, I do think there’s a difference.

9) Some conducting textbooks suggest that the right hand is for keeping time and the left hand is primarily used for expressive gestures. Do you agree? Why or why not?

RP: I don’t. I don’t use any textbook, never have. Look, in a very, very general sense, yes. The right hand has the stick. But I would never ask a student to do only that. I believe sometimes you can conduct just with the left hand. Whether it’s just the tempo or being expressive… Sometimes the left can keep the tempo and the right can be expressive. If you’ve got a pretty well trained ensemble, beating time is your least important responsibility, particularly for choral people who just tend to beat too much. Also, some also say that all the cuing is done with the left hand, but the truth is, much of the cuing is done with the eyes. If you look at the flute player or the trombonist it’s a confirmation, the idea that you point at them is ridiculous.

10) Do you believe there is such a thing as “over-conducting” or “under-conducting?”

RP: Choral conductors in particular micromanage and give every cut off. Under conducting you’d have to go a long way to be under conducting. I have seen Franz and other people absolutely stop conducting. That’s the Cleveland Orchestra, however. The Cleveland Orchestra will play no matter who is up there. In terms of physical gestures, certainly there are a lot of people who over conduct. If we include the whole idea of emotional content under conducting would be not being involved at all. And I don’t think that’s a good idea either. The bigger danger is people over conducting. Most of my choirs, I give no cutoffs unless they’re at the end of a phrase. You’d never give a flutist a cutoff. As a conductor I don’t perform a note, they are the performers, it’s their responsibility to put an s or t where it goes. It is so disturbing musically when you have something going along, when a conductor is giving these interior cutoffs, it’s not musical. Many orchestra guys don’t know what to do with a chorus, in the sense that they might have great musical ideas, but they have no idea about vocal production, some don’t know languages, some don’t even know the meaning of what they are conducting. There are exceptions to that, of course.

11) Do you have any favorite conducting books that you recommend to your students that specifically address conducting gesture?
RP: Anything physical. Tennis or acting, modern dance. Alexander Technique. You’re getting the idea. I think that teaching people where beat 2 is, is very basic and most people can do that, it’s all the other stuff that’s hard to do, hard to do and hard to teach.

12) Have you found any gestures used by conducting students from other cultures that were inappropriate or that might mean different things in a musical context in this country? Or vice versa?

RP: No. I find British conductors a little quirky sometimes, there’s a typical way that’s not traditional in our way of thinking. It’s not bad; it’s just different.

KK: It’s kind of like language if you think about it. I feel like our conducting styles can sympathize with language, like a British accent versus an American accent, or German or French or Italian.

RP: Muti is very different from Franz. Franz is kind of Austrian in every way. There is that, I’m not sure you can make it universal, but yes, there is a bit of that. At one point there were a lot of Asian students at the IU, and I thought their technique was fabulous, and I had this theory, this was when Ozawa was in his prime, he influenced so many people because he was such a beautiful, balletic conductor. There was that influence consciously or subconsciously.

13) Do you feel that your gestures in a performance are any different from your gestures in rehearsals in terms of how much or little freedom or control you choose to exercise?

RP: Yes. I get very carried away in rehearsals, but there’s a whole different affect in the performance. You can’t go back. You’re in the moment. I don’t plan it, but I know that I’m probably more demonstrative, hopefully expressive and emotional in performance. Part of that is planned, you want to save something. I never know what I’m going to do. I tell my choruses we’re rehearsing this one way, but it might be slightly different. I don’t take huge risks.

I remember one time Bernstein was at IU, and he muttered, “this guy doesn’t take any chances”, which for him was pejorative.

I think there has to be an organized spontaneity in the performance.

Me: what do you mean by demonstrative?
Porco: I’m talking about if it’s a really grand music, my gesture might be considerably larger than it has been. Or, in a piano thing, I might conduct smaller than they’ve ever seen.

14) Do you feel there is a direct correlation of the size of a gesture to its corresponding sound?

RP: Oh, absolutely. I seem to come down on choral conductors, and I don’t mean to do that. We as conductors, teach our people so much without saying a word. For example, if there’s a choral conductor who mouths the words all the time, over the course of about two rehearsals, you’ve taught your chorus don’t sing unless I mouth the words. Small
equals soft and big equals loud. It’s dynamic related, absolutely. People conduct large all the time and say sing soft. Soft things should be small. Things that are forte should be forte.

Small with some intensity, the way you can do that is what happens with your arms. If you’re conducting with your elbows in that’s very unmusical because everybody has to breathe. But if you bring your elbows out, you’ll get a richer deeper sound.

Everything about us reflects something. It’s a great idea to demonstrate in your gesture what you just asked them to do, if you ask them to sing staccato and there’s nothing in your gesture that shows that it seems to me mixed messages.

The gesture has to correspond to the sound.

KK: In your experience as an opera conductor, is there anything unique about conducting opera, other than the fact there are recitatives, in some ways that can correlate to conducting concerti, in terms of following a conductor.

RP: The most obvious is that you usually have a couple of levels, one for the orchestra and one for the singers that are higher. So many great conductors come out of the pit because they were répétiteurs. I think it’s the most challenging of all the things, since you mentioned recitative. You can’t be vague and keep things together. Everybody is so spread out. Off-stage choruses. We did Carmina Burana one time as a ballet, with all the percussion and the two pianos; most of the orchestra was up here and under there was the chorus. I was on a monitor. 1948 black and white TVs.

Opera does present extra challenges, the very obvious being that people are spread out. I love conducting opera when singers lead, they’re confident and they lead the orchestra. I encourage that.

Email Interview with Dr. Michael Haithcock (response received April 25, 2016)

1) For less experienced conductors do you suggest that they plan out gestures in advance?

MH: I encourage a progression on this. With raw beginners, I encourage them to practice putting musical ideas between the beat by using a single beat point. This helps them focus on “how” rather than simply “now.” Once they have made physical their musical expectations in this format, I encourage them to move to patterns, LH, and other forms of physical communication.

This method has proved useful over many years in making sure music is at the forefront of their thinking, not geometry.

2) Do you encourage your students to use their eyes and faces to help communicate ideas in the music? Where is the balance between hand and arm gesture and facial expression?
MH: This is a slippery slope, particularly in the age of You Tube. I encourage conviction of the musical expectation, and availability of the body, and an openness to dialogue with the musicians with the face/eyes. Pre-planned face/eyes are the enemy of dialogue true exchange with the musicians.

Conductors can practice away from the podium various mime exercises which put them in touch with how the “mask” of their face and eyes works and what their capacity for expression might be. BUT, encouraging pre-planned choreography usually lacks appeal to the players who see it as false.

3) Do you use any particular exercises with your students to help them internalize and thus communicate sound and if yes, how do you encourage them to use gesture to communicate what they hear or want to hear?

MH: My answer to this is muddled. It depends on the student. At the undergrad class level, I am constantly asking them to evaluate what they hear and helping them learn how to adjust physically to be more specific in getting what they want (assuming they know what they want).

At the graduate level, or summer workshop level, I use a variation of the above with more pointed questions about the nuance of being musical. I have found no exercises beyond the basics of ear training that aid this.

If you have some, let me know!

4) How often do you demonstrate for your students?

MH: Regularly, once or twice in each 20-minute seminar segment, but in very short burst. A few seconds, nothing lengthy. Same with summer workshops. More frequently, I take their hand and “drive” which gives them a more direct physical sensation of the change (aurally and physically) we seek.

5) For your more advanced students who already understand the basic fundamental technique of conducting, how do you approach the teaching of gesture as it relates to sound?

MH: I try not to be prescriptive but try to guide them to get what they want in their own body. There are basically three ways to teach conducting: 1) observe me, 2) mimic me, 3) principles that apply you figure out how to use them. I tend to lean on #3 most, #2 next, #1 hardly at all. I really have a hard time with the mimic approach and do not want a studio of clones (which makes me very different than KK).

Thus, I approach this as cause and effect. If you got what you wanted, fine. If it was too fast, adjust. If it was too loud, adjust. If it was too long, adjust. There are very few things that are absolute. Most have nuance, so I try to make the instruction as specific as possible to the moment.
I never tell a student to conduct a specific measure like me…

6) Do you think there is such thing as a feminine or masculine gesture? Explain.

MH: No! This is arcane language for strong/weak, which is necessary to provide contour and contrast, but never in gender terms. The language also used to be applied to cadences in theory, but no more.

7) Do you approach teaching female conductors any differently from male conductors? Why or why not?

MH: No! I don’t see a difference in responsibility. At the DMA level, I have had some very talented female students who all have big jobs in academic circles now. They are very successful. I have a single standard for what my students should accomplish and hold all to it. Each student is different and I work hard to find the best way to “reach” them while not equivocating the standard.

At summer workshops, there is not really time to get to know someone. I try to ascertain the persons level, regardless of gender, and try to help them take one step at a time.

8) Do you feel there is a stylistic gestural difference between conducting classical, romantic, and contemporary repertoire? Is there anything specific you tell your students about how these conducting styles should be approached?

MH: Beyond one’s technic is the need to be sensitive to the style of the music as well as the needs of the players. Players don’t need as much constant energy in Mozart as the do in Beethoven. Late Beethoven needs different things than Symphony No. 1. Stravinsky needs “dry-ice” clarity in most cases.

These responses flow out of what I have stated above.

9) Some conducting textbooks suggest that the right hand is for keeping time and the left hand is primarily used for expressive gestures. Do you agree? Why or why not?

MH: I think this is a baseline not an always/all the time idea. This is primarily taught as a way of preventing mirroring.

10) Do you believe there is such a thing as “over-conducting” or “under-conducting?”

MH: Yes. If the conductor is using more space, more energy than the music requires or the players are exerting it seems falsely “over.” If the opposite is true, then that would quality as “under.”

11) Do you have any favorite conducting books that you recommend to your students that specifically address conducting gesture?
MH: Not really. I do have a favorite article by a mime artist Miriam Tait called “Striving to become a creative artist.” This was published in a CBDNA Journal 20 year ago. She makes the point that muscles are often the same for physical expression that have very different meaning. Imagination is more important than muscle is her point. The article takes a wide variety of basic gestures (a wave: how do you make it welcoming or warning for example).

12) Have you found any gestures used by conducting students from other cultures that were inappropriate or that might mean different things in a musical context in this country? Or vice versa?

MH: No.

13) Do you feel that your gestures in a performance are any different from your gestures in rehearsals in terms of how much or little freedom or control you choose to exercise?

MH: The early stages of rehearsal I would say are more confined to clarity when the difficulty of the piece demands it. As the players become more comfortable with the piece, then I tend to go more “free” and toward performance. I try not to do the same thing every rehearsal or in every spot unless the navigation is so tricky it requires a certain level of repetition to promote confidence.

14) Do you feel there is a direct correlation of the size of a gesture to its corresponding sound?

MH: I don’t think this is black/white. Players adjust to the contour/contrast a conductor works from. Size is relative as is volume. Contour from the conductor should signal to the players a clear landscape of dynamic range. If not, then talking is the only way around it and that serves no one. Do as I say, not as I do, is never a good rubric for success.

Additional email correspondence with Dr. Michael Haithcock (May 15, 2016)

Good Morning Kiki,

In the early 80’s I worked with a couple of mime artist. One, Miriam Tate, wrote an article published in the College Band Directors Journal (don’t remember the exact date but early 80’s) entitled, "Striving to be a Creative Artist.” The take away from the mime study and the practical components from the article are listed below:

- the mime does not have positions or patterns, but must sell their “intention” through gestural adaptability to communicate the smallest of specific details to create a “readable” image.
- the same basic musculature is used for actions like a wave, but the body language, the face, and the eyes communicate the specificity of intention, which vary to a much greater degree than the muscle use.

- Example: think about a wave as a signal. Do it generically without intention and think about the muscles used. Then do a wave with the following variables meant to express different things:

  - happy greeting
  - warning of danger
  - aristocratic stoicism
  - calling out to someone in the distance (I’m here)

Your imagination is the limiting factor, not the body. Your “mask” will take on different support of your intention as the mind fuels the body to be specific (a.k.a. mime). A mime artist mirrors, not creates the human experience. The article referenced takes one though many common actions like a wave to provide a means of exploring the connection between the imagination-expectation-use of the tools.

Similarly, a good conductor (in my view) communicates through the mask as well as the muscle system the specifics of what is needed in the moment. Being open and available to the moment in a conversational sort of way is much different than the often pre-set use of these tools (here’s my major chord face, here’s my big brass entrance face, here’s my “this moves me” face, this looked good in the mirror) I often see in some quarters at UM:).

Happy to respond further as needed.
MH

Interview with Frank Battisti (May 17, 2016)

FB: Let me just say a few things before we get to the questions. I think that it’s absolutely necessary, if I’m working with even a student beginning to study an instrument, I would never ask them to play a B-flat without telling them what kind of B-flat I want them to play. In other words there has to be a motivation to express something before you make a motion. So, you see, that’s the problem in the teaching of conducting, we don’t say to them from the word go, “Don’t make the motion until you’ve got something clear internally that you want to express. So they think it’s something that you do to direct players as opposed to something that you manifest because it’s inside of you and you manifest it in the external motion.

If it is not done that way then you’re teaching an activity. Every single motion, just like every single sound, should be motivated by the desire to express something. Kids think that playing the right notes is the objective. They never truly have the experience that allows them to understand that the instrument can be another vehicle like their arm or their eyes or their mouth to express what they want to express to somebody. So
everything has to be predicated on that. From the first motion the person makes in a conducting class has to be motivated by the desire to express something.

1) For less experienced conductors do you suggest that they plan out gestures in advance?

2) Do you encourage your students to use their eyes and faces to help communicate ideas in the music? Where is the balance between hand and arm gesture and facial expression?

3) Do you use any particular exercises with your students to help them internalize and thus communicate sound and if yes, how do you encourage them to use gesture to communicate what they hear or want to hear?

FB: I think you have to start with them expressing it with their body. I think that technique should grow like a tree does. It’s natural. You start with a trunk, the branches grow, and they thin out and you can control it by pruning it. But everyone is unique and different. It starts with the trunk of the tree. The conductor starts with the trunk of the body. It does not start with the arms. I would start with something that the kid knew. Let’s say he knows America. He knows the words, he can intellectually understand what the words indicate. Now, use your body and do anything you want to do to try to show me what you feel and what you know. No restrictions. They can move anything. I want them to understand that the issue is the internal feeling. They need to feel with they think and think when they feel. So rather than trying to restrict them I’m going to allow them to use their body so then I can influence them in a way that gets to something that’s more focused in the upper part of their body.

They’re not used to it. One has got to be patient with that. One cannot force that. One can encourage it. One can suggest something. The person might be self-conscious. I think having them close their eyes would be a big help. You’re trying to get them not to be conscious in the sense that they’re putting on an act. You want them to basically be normal and natural in how they would express ideas. The environment is the thing that freezes them. They have to give them the opportunity to be in that environment.

I don’t know how anyone teaches conducting without an ensemble in front of the students. I made it really clear at the conservatory that I wouldn’t teach conducting without an ensemble present with the instrumentation of the piece I was teaching. We’re trying to teach them to listen, to be able to sort out what they hear, and deal with all the issues, and we don’t give them a chance to do that.

One of my goals is to convince the people at MIT to construct a visual orchestra, so the people studying conducting could put on a helmet, and what happens in the orchestra will be affected by what the conductor did. That to me is the answer.

4) How often do you demonstrate for your students?
5) For your more advanced students who already understand the basic fundamental technique of conducting, how do you approach the teaching of gesture as it relates to sound?

6) Do you think there is such thing as a feminine or masculine gesture? Explain.

7) Do you approach teaching female conductors any differently from male conductors? Why or why not?

8) Do you feel there is a stylistic gestural difference between conducting classical, romantic, and contemporary repertoire? Is there anything specific you tell your students about how these conducting styles should be approached?

9) Some conducting textbooks suggest that the right hand is for keeping time and the left hand is primarily used for expressive gestures. Do you agree? Why or why not?

   FB: Every gesture I should be able to execute with both hands so if I broke my arm, I could still conduct. Do you know of a right- or left-handed pianist? Or harpist? I believe very strongly, and I teach all my students that they should be able to do everything with both hands.

10) Do you believe there is such a thing as “over-conducting” or “under-conducting?”

11) Do you have any favorite conducting books that you recommend to your students that specifically address conducting gesture?

12) Have you found any gestures used by conducting students from other cultures that were inappropriate or that might mean different things in a musical context in this country? Or vice versa?

13) Do you feel that your gestures in a performance are any different from your gestures in rehearsals in terms of how much or little freedom or control you choose to exercise?

   FB: I think the sound is more the result of the persons’ temperament and personality than it is the motion. If you take the same orchestra playing the same piece, and you put another conductor in front of them, and he didn’t move anything, they’d sound completely different.

   Small is beautiful. They are intimate; they are the most powerful. If I go out on a sunny day and want to capture the sun at the maximum it has the smallest volume on my hand, not the largest. It has intensity.

   Additional questions for Frank:

   KK: You bring up Leinsdorf’s quote about not planning things out. Do you suggest your students practice gestures?
FB: They should practice all problematic things. But you see, conducting is like playing a tennis match. You cannot plan a tennis match. What you can do is develop all the technique to play the game of tennis but you won’t know what you have to do until the ball comes over the net. As a conductor, you don’t know what you’re going to do until the sound comes over the net.

The thing to remember is that. Just like in playing an instrument, it’s a gradual process. When you only have a certain number of weeks to work with someone, you have to be aware, that the objective won’t be possible in that short period. All you can do is lay the foundation that will, if the student decides to continue, go somewhere. You have to be sure they understand what conducting is, what the role of the conductor is. They should understand that they, unlike when they play their instrument, they never can become that involved in the music making. They have to oversee the music making, they have to be bonded to it, but they can’t participate in it.

It’s kind of like the French say “chef d’orchestre”. That’s the perfect description of it. The good chef gets out the bowl, gets out the vegetables, chops them up, puts them in the bowl, puts on the salad dressing, mixes it up, but never jumps in the bowl with the vegetables.

KK: You mention extravagant and self-indulgent technique as being not appreciated by musicians. Can you think of any famous conductors whom you might deem to be extravagant these days? Where do you draw the line if their gestures and their personality (to which they must stay true in order to be authentic) are the “essence of the music” as Victor Markevitch said?

FB: The person who changed conducting was LB. He was the first television conductor. We live in an image world. We want to see something. We don’t want to feel the crucifixion; we want the conductor to show us the crucifixion. It’s a completely different culture. It’s a very much image/visual culture. Now, the only criteria is if the players, if what the conductor is doing, is relevant to the player making the music, then no matter what he’s doing, it’s good. But when they overdo they get in the way of the music and the players know that they’re doing that and it makes it hard to play. That’s the only criteria. It isn’t what they look like.

KK: I kind of feel that’s a very individual thing. You might find one orchestra conducted by Dudamel and they absolutely love him, and feel encouraged, and invited, and enabled, and inspired by him and another orchestra might think, “Who is this young kid? He’s getting in our way.”

FB: Exactly. That’s exactly right. The chemistry is the important ingredient. If the players are getting what they need, and if the conductor is not grandstanding, then it’s good, no matter what he’s doing. He might be laying on his belly conducting! When those things do not exist, then it’s bad conducting. I don’t care if it’s small, or big.
KK: There’s a third element to all of this. There’s the conductor, the orchestra, and also the audience. When we think about the role of the music director as also having to attract an audience and have them come back. A lot of times if you ask an audience who are you coming to hear/see tonight, they often mention the conductor’s name rather than the orchestra. They really are coming to see the conductor conduct and that’s were their focus is. In some ways I suppose it’s a very unfortunate thing because really they are watching us. I always joke that I became a conductor so I could have my back toward the audience, because I have a fear of facing the audience, then I could “make music” but not have to face the audience.

FB: It’s the players and me with the audience looking on. Part of what orchestras are faced with now is that they’re playing music that is so much more sophisticated than the culture that we have in our society now. They’re trying to sell something. In other words, I can remember when I first came to Boston; the BSO never advertised in the Boston Globe, there was no store in the lobby selling t-shirts and mugs. They weren’t selling music. So if you’re going to try and survive in a climate in which 1% of the population is interested in what you are doing, then you’re going to have to wear red sneakers when you conduct and all kinds of other things. It’s no longer art. It’s a business.

KK: How do you maintain your art within the business? I’d like to think that very few people become conductor to sell something. It’s because we are passionate about our music, and it lights the fire within us.

FB: You see, there’s a reason that all the orchestras are hiring young conductors, it’s not because they’re the great conductors, it’s because they’re young. And they look good on covers of magazines, and on albums. I saw Bernstein not only conduct when he was on television, but I also saw him conduct at Tanglewood when there was no camera on him. He conducted differently. When somebody says I’m going to take your picture, what do you do? You want to look good. You do all kinds of things. We live in a world, where the art that we love is not appreciated. The art institutions have to beg for everything to survive and so they’re finding all ways to try and attract this visual audience. This changes programming, all kinds of things. They’re trying to relate to the customs that now are part of our culture. There’s a dilemma. A huge issue here of whether classical music will always survive, but it becomes less and less an important factor. When E. F. Hutton everybody listens. When the orchestra conductor speaks, nobody listens. We’ve got to separate the art of making music from the business of music in our society.

KK: You mentioned Boulez’ statement” You [the conductor] receive what they play; you listen and then give them what they need” and you say gestures are a conductor’s spontaneous immediate physical reaction to what he or she hears, however, in an audition setting, in a concert, or even true in a rehearsal, our gestures also create the sound. It’s sort of a chicken/egg situation. We need to be able to respond in the moment to what is going on, but we also are a catalyst for the sound, and create the musical space with our gestures….

FB: I think you do that with your whole body and your whole personality.
KK: You mentioned that “we hear what we listen for”. Could you elaborate on this? Doesn’t this sort of imply that if a conductor plans out a rehearsal and expects to hear problem spots in one place they’ll only be listening for that and not open to hearing any other issues that may arise?

FB: Hearing is what all of us do. But when I listen it’s going to be directed towards some object. You’re listening to every single detail. The problem the amateur or band conductor is that they think that studying the score for three months is adequate. The Great conductors have studied a piece for 50 years. I know when I go back and restudy Lincolnshire Posy; I approach it in the sense that I’m open to discovery. But I don’t throw away all that I know.

In the band field, we’re a one-performance kind of people. We get a new piece and we study it for a short period, we perform it once and then we don’t come back to it for another 5-6 years. We don’t go back over the literature. There’s not a repertoire, there’s a literature, but a repertoire is something you go back to over, and over, and over. So orchestras play Beethoven’s 5th, Mahler’s 5th, Tchaikovsky’s 5th over and over and over. Conductors study it over and over and over and they really get to know it.

KK: I’m a big proponent of new music. I don’t want to do Beethoven’s 5th over and over and over again. I mean, I do want to do Beethoven’s 5th, but I also want to do Gorecki’s 3rd Symphony.

FB: That’s okay. But, if I’m going to be a participant in the art, I have to know a basic repertoire and know it really well. If I’m playing 5 pieces on a program three should be repertoire pieces, two can be new ones. How much more can you discover when you’re doing a piece for the 25th time, it becomes harder and harder, but it’s there and that’s the difference between a piece I’ve only studied for 25 minutes and then conducted it.

KK: I suppose in today’s world, unless you’re a conductor of a top orchestra, if you’re a conductor and trying to make a living of it, you’ve got a University gig, and a community orchestra, and as many side gigs as you can, and unfortunately that sort of equates to not having ample time to study as you’d like. Sometimes you only have 2-3 weeks to put it together.

FB: We all can do that. That’s not hard. I can do that. That’s easy, the question is in my 23rd year, how much more can you learn from a piece. I have to grow spiritually, and all kinds of ways in order to go deeper and deeper. That’s what we don’t do.

KK: It takes time. That was your whole point about these young conductors; we need to be patient, because they’ve only been on the planet for 18 years. They haven’t had their heart broken, or lost a parent; everyone has their own experiences.

FB: The important think is to keep in mind what the ultimate is. In the course of one’s life as a conductor, one has to do the things that are necessary to do depending on the
situation that you’re in. But you don’t want to compromise in your mind what the ultimate goal is. My ultimate goal is to know the music that I conduct intimately, comprehensively, understand it more and more, discover more and more. It’s like a good friendship. The longer it goes the deeper it grows, the more expansive it grows.

KK: You bring up Musin’s thought that a conductor “makes the music visible with their hands” What was his approach to facial expression? Did you work with him?

FB: The face isn’t a huge part of the apparatus. But the thing to keep in mind is that none of these things are absolutely necessary for every conductor, because if you look at all the great conductors they’re all unique. There are no rules. What I’m doing, I observe the student and I don’t try to make them do something the way I do it. I look at what he’s doing and I say, I think you’d be more effective with what you’re showing if you tried this. We’re trying to prune the tree to make it stronger, but we’re not trying to make an Elm tree into an Oak tree.

KK: What if you have a very expressive conductor facially who has trouble with their hands, and another who is not very expressive in their face so doesn’t seem connected. Do you try to strengthen the weaknesses of your students?

FB: When we look at a student. We’re prejudiced; we have our own way of thinking of what the person should be doing. The real question is the players who are playing it: how are they perceiving it? You follow me?

KK: Yes, I do try to think like a musician, like if I were playing this would I feel like they’re getting in my way, or really connected with me on this?

FB: You take a person like von Karajan who closed his eyes, and was in another world with his face. Berlin played pretty well for him. We’ve got to let people be who they are and so my feeling is, that what you should do. The conducting class should be this, you go to the room, you turn off the lights and you listen to the music that is being made. It’s not what you look like, but it’s the sounds that are being created.

As long as you’re prepared to do that job, then you’re worthy to be on the podium. I don’t care how old you are.

The ability to create “we” is the psychology is the necessary to do that. It’s different from every single conductor and orchestra. It’s the key to the whole thing. The conductor-orchestra relationship is the key to everything. When they’re making music, if that experience is fulfilling to the conductor and fulfilling to the players, then you’re in the right place. How could it not be fulfilling for the audience. It might be that the audience doesn’t understand the music, because they might not be equipped to deal with it. Like me in a physics laboratory at MIT, I’m going to say, “Get me out of here!”

Interview with H. Robert Reynolds (May 30, 2016)

1) For less experienced conductors do you suggest that they plan out gestures in advance?
HRR: Not when they’re conducting music, but I suggest that they learn conducting gestures and make them automatic, so if they’re conducting a four-four pattern they don’t have to think down left right up. In the same way you practice scales and arpeggios on an instrument, in order to make the technique on the instrument automatic you practice the basic gestures at home alone with no music so that they’ll be more automatic. I don’t have them plan. There are certain exceptions to that, when there are certain complicated things, when you have to hold this, and tie this and make a certain kind of cut off here, but that’s later.

2) Do you encourage your students to use their eyes and faces to help communicate ideas in the music? Where is the balance between hand and arm gesture and facial expression?

HRR: The planning out of things is not part of what I think is appropriate. Except you work on basic technique but then you don’t plan to use it when you’re actually conducting and rehearsing. It comes out automatically in the same way that you use hand gestures when you’re talking, you don’t think I’m going to gesture in this way to make this point. It just happens when you’re talking.

3) Do you use any particular exercises with your students to help them internalize and thus communicate sound and if yes, how do you encourage them to use gesture to communicate what they hear or want to hear?

HRR: I have them move to music that is not conducting technique oriented. If the music gets excited if the climatic point is on a downbeat, they might move up because it feels like the music goes up even though the conducting textbooks say that 1 goes down. I would ask them to show me 5 ways that they can create a loud bass drum boom. They would just have to use their imagination. How does a bass drum sound, how many hands, in what direction, so you use the elbows in that, too? Do you use the whole arm, or the whole body? So, anything goes in that sense because they’re trying to free their inner safety net.

4) How often do you demonstrate for your students?

HRR: Only when I think they need it. Occasionally. When I was teaching graduate students I really wouldn’t do that when they were conducting an ensemble because I felt that it interfered with their authority as a conductor and their connection with the student ensemble. But I do a lot of conducting workshops around the country and during those then I demonstrate more. So it’s kind of a two-edged sword.

5) For your more advanced students who already understand the basic fundamental technique of conducting, how do you approach the teaching of gesture as it relates to sound?

HRR: I don’t really approach it like this gesture makes this sound because everybody is a little different. I usually approach it with the idea if have they internalized that sound
inside them and how do they export that gesture. It’s essential because. Just because we all love music and are stimulated by music doesn’t mean we can do the other half, which is stimulate others. You have to export your own musical passion into other people. It sometimes doesn’t go hand in hand with loving music. The psychology of conducting is extraordinarily important when it comes to sound. We all have psychological baggage, some more than others. Some of us are more shy, some more extroverted. People who are trying to be safe and tying to be appropriate have a difficult time expressing the inner depth of music. Because when you’re expressing the inner depth of music psychologically you’re more vulnerable to those who are observing you and responding to you. So some people have a great desire to be safe, therefore they have predetermined predictable physical movements because they know they are appropriate and they can’t be criticized. But that’s way different from being able to express the depth of music that’s within you. It the same issue as expressing love to somebody.

6) Do you think there is such thing as a feminine or masculine gesture? Explain.

HRR: Well the one word answer is no, I don’t. I think there is lighter and more macho kind of music, but both men and women have to conduct that. Men and women have to have the ability to go from one extreme to the other into the most gentle, fragile music to the most ugly aggressive music. So both men and women have to do that.

7) Do you approach teaching female conductors any differently from male conductors? Why or why not?

HRR: I don’t. I haven’t even thought about that until I read your question.

8) Do you feel there is a stylistic gestural difference between conducting classical, romantic, and contemporary repertoire? Is there anything specific you tell your students about how these conducting styles should be approached?

HRR: I don’t. I approach piece as a separate piece. They have to pull that gesture from within the as to what they’re trying to express. And sometimes it’s just clarity. When you’re conducting Haydn and Stravinsky, now this is an overgeneralization, but I consider both of those composers to be sanitary composers. It’s very clear there’s nothing but the basic music. It’s expressive, but it’s very clean.

In my estimation one of the primary issues of Haydn is musical direction, so this phrase begins at this phrase and continues almost like a teeter-totter, so you get to a point and then it recedes to another point. Or it could go for the entire phrase to a miniature climatic point. The emotional direction of the phrase becomes paramount.

KK: Is Haydn unique? I he’s unique in this, but I kind of feel the same for Brahms, or Mendelssohn, or Schumann, or even Mozart and Bach.

HRR: I don’t put all of those in the same category. With Brahms and Mahler who both were people who dealt a lot with form and structure but they have a lot more going on in
the music than Haydn did. There are a lot more extra, added ingredients to the music. So you have to express all that. And sometimes there are multi-levels of that and you really can’t express all the levels at the same time. So you have to pick and choose what your focus is.

KK: You’re touching on the essence of conducting, really, because you can’t possibly show everything that’s going on. In every moment you need to be responding to what the ensemble needs, and what you’re hearing, and what’s not happening, etc. That’s the tricky thing.

HRR: Right, right, right. Conducting is a conversation. You say, “This is what I want you to do.” And the players respond back, “This is what I think you want” And then you respond, “Yes, that is what I want, or “It’s almost what I want, but not quite.” It has to be a conversation going back and forth visually and aurally.

9) Some conducting textbooks suggest that the right hand is for keeping time and the left hand is primarily used for expressive gestures. Do you agree? Why or why not?

HRR: That’s a dated thought. That’s not correct. Sometimes neither hand is giving the pulse; maybe it’s your shoulder. You’re not even thinking about it, but the pulse is within you, therefore it’s being expressed. Sometimes the pulse is so strong within the ensemble you don’t even need to give it. My answer is a definite no on that.

10) Do you believe there is such a thing as “over-conducting” or “under-conducting?”

HRR: It depends. I suppose there is, but I think you have to be able to go to the max because there are moments, not many, but there are moments in music when it needs that. The problem becomes if you use that maximum conducting too often, or too soon, and you don’t have it available to you when it’s necessary. It’s like when you have a conversation with someone and you’re shouting all the time, if at one point in the conversation you’d like to shout at him or her to make a point, you’ve used up all that audible space unnecessarily.

I have a friend who used to play principal oboe with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and he commented about one of the conductors. I went to see some rehearsals at his invitation, and I said, “Boy, he knows the music cold, inside out, no question about it.” And he said, “Yes, and that’s his problem, he shows every nuance.” It’s hard for the players to contribute musically.

It comes to a point when you gain enough experience, and experience is a big deal, to know when you’re needed and when you’re not. Because if you’re giving them information that they don’t need, then they’re having to pay attention to that and thus are not playing as much as a chamber ensemble, listening to each other. Experience will also tell you they need me here, or they need me for the general structure and atmosphere of the music.

When to conduct and when not to, or how much and how little is important.
I think there’s a point where you should over-conduct and under-conduct. And have the complete range at your disposal. Like having the complete range of emotion at your disposal.

11) Do you have any favorite conducting books that you recommend to your students that specifically address conducting gesture?

HRR: There are two books. I think The Elizabeth Green The Modern Conductor book is essential for basic conducting technique, learning the grammar of conducting. Unless you’ve got that… It’s sort of like learning German: if you want to talk to someone in German, you need to learn the language, if you want to conduct; you need to learn the technique. That’s my basic technique book.

The one I like is by Bruno Walter, Of Music and Music-making. The second half of the book is the part. Early on in my life as a conductor I was trying to learn as much as I could, so I started buying conducting books and I came across that one and it knocked me flat on my ear.

It’s the second half of the book that is the crucial aspect.

He talks about several important internal things, basically. One quote, “A person who is only a musician is half a musician.” So, a person who is in touch with society, and nature, and other things, other than just music.

And then there was a comment, I can’t give it to you verbatim, but it was sort of like, “The person who is mean to the people in the ensemble will either receive resentment from them, or intimidate them. But will not happen is that they will be free-willing music-makers.”

KK: I think there is not much room for those kinds of conductors these days. I think that’s a thing of the past.

HRR: Yes, again, a dated issue.

The other thing that has influenced me is conducting videos. So, there’s a whole set of Carlos Kleiber videos. He was, in my estimation, the greatest conductor who ever lived. My new hero is Andris Nelsons. He is a spectacular conductor, music-maker, musician, person. And I go to Tanglewood and conduct the Wind Ensemble every summer, so as a result of that I can go to any of the Boston Symphony rehearsals, so I have seen him rehearse and conduct many times.

He’s something special. He’s just been the music director of Boston for 2-3 years and already they have extended his contract until 2022, so he’s doing something right. The only negative from my point of view is he’s 36 years old, and it’s not fair, that somebody who is that young is that good. He grew up in a musical family and played trumpet in the
orchestra in Latvia. He conducts and rehearses in the most positive way, and yet with really high expectations. Those old souls in the Boston Symphony just love him.

12) Have you found any gestures used by conducting students from other cultures that were inappropriate or that might mean different things in a musical context in this country? Or vice versa?

HRR: No.

13) Do you feel that your gestures in a performance are any different from your gestures in rehearsals in terms of how much or little freedom or control you choose to exercise?

HRR: Yes. I think they are different. In so much that in rehearsals I’m, in addition to trying to express myself with the music, I’m trying to evaluate what just happen, so I can rehearse, so I’m listening hard to what they just did, so if there needs to be some alteration to what they’re doing, I can make that happen. In the concerts I don’t even think about that, it’s just all forward motion, and with a lot more energy. In fact my gestures are much different between the dress rehearsal and the concert, because I want to be sure that the energy is not left at the dress rehearsal. I try not to give the maximum energy that I want to give at the concert, at the dress rehearsal.

14) Do you feel there is a direct correlation of the size of a gesture to its corresponding sound?

HRR: Basically no, I think there’s some correlation but not much. Because I think you can give a really strong energetic gesture with maximum volume without much size. And something light and floaty that uses more space.

Email Correspondence with Brad Lubman (March 1-24, 2015)

Hi Katherine,

Thank you for contacting me. Based on your dissertation focus and my beliefs, I’m not sure I’m the right person to include!

You say that you’re going to focus on how conductors translate sound into gestures. My feeling is that conductors don’t translate sound into gestures. Composers envision sound and indicate it with notation. The conductor’s gestures are there to enable the musicians. I always maintain that a conductor must beat time clearly, accurately and musically.

The conductor is there to serve the composer and to conduct what the musicians need to see in order to enable to play to the best of their abilities. It is true that some gestures can influence to a degree how musicians might respond, that to some degree a conductor’s gestures might be able to influence the sound. However, I don’t feel that the role of the conductor is to magically make gestures that conjure up or cause the sound, rather the
gestures can merely influence the sound, and only in a relative degree. The sound is in the notes, in the orchestration.

Anyway, that’s my basic philosophy. I’d be happy to speak to you, but I’m in Europe for 3 weeks….so, Skype would be best. Perhaps we can coordinate schedules and see what might work?

All very best,
Brad

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Hi Kiki,

I’d be happy to continue our discussion. I wanted to respond to something you said, asking if I think there are different ways to approach the conducting of contemporary scores. I am often asked this question by journalists or interviewers. My answer is that there is no difference. No matter who the composer is or in what century the piece was written, I look to find what the composer’s intentions were and how to bring them about. Although if one conducts a standard repertoire work with an orchestra that knows it very well, one does not always need to conduct with the same utmost clarity of patterns, the approach is the same. If I conduct a Brahms symphony, I’m not going to purposefully use strange and amorphous gestures (the “smoke and mirrors” effect), rather I will still more or less conduct a pattern and will still infuse it with information that reflects the music (and/or offers the musicians what they might need to see). The patterns contain hierarchy of phrasing. One does not need to conduct them pedantically in standard repertoire, but at the same time, I feel that they are useful for musical reasons. Now, if the orchestra knows the piece extremely well, there certainly will be moments where I might almost stop conducting, whereas in a lesser-known work (or a more complex piece or difficult modern piece) I would never stop conducting to just let them play. I suppose a lot depends on the specific piece, but basically, my feeling is one should always beat time clearly and musically and at a level of artistry that reflects what the music needs or what the musicians need in a given moment.

All best,
Brad

P.S. I should preface my answers by saying that I have always viewed myself as a professional conductor who has worked with professional orchestras and student orchestras for 30 years, as opposed to a teacher of conducting. I do teach conducting at Eastman, but to me it is in the context of working in the professional world and what it takes to be a conductor in that capacity (as opposed to a more academic, classroom, teacher approach to conducting).

Email Interview with Vance George (May 24, 2016)

1) For less experienced conductors do you suggest that they plan out gestures in advance?
VG: Analyze the phrases of the piece, be it a chorale or something longer, from that analysis create your conducting gestures. As the phrases increase in tension the gesture becomes larger and perhaps even higher or more grand.

2) Do you encourage your students to use their eyes and faces to help communicate ideas in the music? Where is the balance between hand and arm gesture and facial expression?

VG: YES! Where is the balance between hand and arm gesture and facial expression? The balance comes by looking in the mirror or video taping to see what works. Experience is invaluable. Watching other conductors to learn or create conducting choreography.

3) Do you use any particular exercises with your students to help them internalize and thus communicate sound and if yes, how do you encourage them to use gesture to communicate what they hear or want to hear?

VG: Yes, particular exercises to learn to separate LH from RH. I will send you a sheet I use in workshops to teach conducting.

Shoulder- large ball and socket, RH only
Conduct a 4/4 pattern, right hand x 4, i.e. 16 pulses.
Elbow- large hinge, repeat 16 pulses
Wrist- small ball and socket
Fingers- small hinges
Baton- fingers

Left Hand only- large ball and socket
Left hand moves to the left 4 pulses, back to center 4 pulses, up 4 pulses, down 4 pulses.
Elbow- only, repeat 16 pulses
Wrist- 16 pulses
Fingers- 16 pulses
Now RH and LH together 4/4 right, out, back, up, down LH

4) How often do you demonstrate for your students?

VG: As much as necessary, sometimes I even have them put their hand over mine or the arm. Especially when I am demonstrating “less is more”, “no more energy than the desired result”, gestures are always relaxed to avoid undue tension. Tension is not good for the voice.

5) For your more advanced students who already understand the basic fundamental technique of conducting, how do you approach the teaching of gesture as it relates to sound?
VG: No difference, we are all beginners, come from nothing.

6) Do you think there is such thing as a feminine or masculine gesture? Explain.

VG: No, gesture is gesture, conducting is conducting choral or orchestral. I do not subscribe however to what I call swan lake over use of the wrist which looks like a ballet dancer doing overly graceful gestures as a norm. There is a time for everything, almost.

7) Do you approach teaching female conductors any differently from male conductors? Why or why not?

VG: Absolutely NOT!

8) Do you feel there is a stylistic gestural difference between conducting classical, romantic, and contemporary repertoire? Is there anything specific you tell your students about how these conducting styles should be approached?

VG: Look like the music said Danny Kaye, who never had a conducting lesson but looked like an accomplished conductor. Dry, stopped beats, liquid gestures, all are useful. Let the music tell you what works from your analysis of the phrases.

9) Some conducting textbooks suggest that the right hand is for keeping time and the left hand is primarily used for expressive gestures. Do you agree? Why or why not?

VG: Agree, it is a tradition, which works.

10) Do you believe there is such a thing as “over-conducting” or “under-conducting?”

VG: Yes, most conductors over conduct, gestures are too large for the number of phrases in the piece. If a group knows the music you can conduct less and less and less. Many conductors use larger gestures in the performance than they did in rehearsal. Challenge yourself to conduct less and less as you near performance.

11) Do you have any favorite conducting books that you recommend to your students that specifically address conducting gesture?

VG: No.

12) Have you found any gestures used by conducting students from other cultures that were inappropriate or that might mean different things in a musical context in this country? Or vice versa?

VG: No.

13) Do you feel that your gestures in a performance are any different from your gestures in rehearsals in terms of how much or little freedom or control you choose to exercise?
VG: Already answered.

14) Do you feel there is a direct correlation of the size of a gesture to its corresponding sound?

VG: Absolutely, however, once a big sonority has been achieved you can lessen the gesture and ride the wave of sound.
APPENDIX C. CONDUCTOR BIOGRAPHIES

Charlene Archibeque

Following 35 years as Director of Choral Activities at San Jose State University, Dr. Charlene Archibeque returned to the SJSU campus as Acting Director of Choral Activities for the academic year 2010-11. One of America’s foremost choral conductors and teachers, Dr. Archibeque helped put SJSU on the world map by winning seven international choral competitions with the famous SJSU Choraliers. Her choirs completed sixteen concert tours to Australia, Mexico and throughout Europe and she has conducted in many of the major music halls including Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Royal Albert Hall in London, and the Berlin Philharmonic among many others. Dr. Archibeque has presented choir clinics and conductors’ workshops throughout the US, as well as Australia, England, Canada, and most of Europe. Known as one of America’s top choral clinicians, she has conducted hundreds of honor choirs in 44 states and six provinces of Canada. Active in the American Choral Directors Association she has presented major interest sessions at national and divisional conventions, served on many panels, and her choirs have performed at 25 state, divisional and national conventions. She was the recipient of the Howard Swan Award presented by Calif. ACDA in 2008.

In the past several years Dr. Archibeque conducted the Connecticut and South Carolina All-State Choirs, judged the Golden State Choral Festival several times, and presented a major session at the Western Division Convention of the ACDA in Reno. She was Headliner for the National Association of Church Musicians Convention in Los Angeles, one of the Headliners for the ACDA Voices United conference at James Madison University in Virginia as well as for the Michigan ACDA Conference.

Known for her knowledge of the choral repertoire and performance practice of all styles, Dr. Archibeque has conducted and prepared over 150 major choral works with orchestras and chooses music from all historical periods. She regularly serves as Visiting Professor at various Universities and was on the campuses of both the University of Michigan and Michigan State in 2010 and at the University of Delaware and at the prestigious Westminster Choir College in spring 2012. Her most recent conducting assignments were Guest conductor for the California Bach Society in concerts of an all-Handel program with period instruments and Christmas Concerts at the Santa Clara Mission with the Santa Clara Chorale and the Jubilate Orchestra.

Her degrees were earned at the Univ. of Michigan, San Diego State and the DMA at the University of Colorado. She was named Outstanding Alumna at the latter and was given both San Jose State’s highest honors: Outstanding Professor and President’s Scholar. She currently serves on the Board of the American Beethoven Society, is President of the Silicon Valley League of the San Francisco Symphony and is Editor of the Charlene Archibeque Choral Series with Santa Barbara Music Publishers. A new DVD is in the works on Placement of Singers in Choirs.
Frank Battisti

President Gunther Schuller brought Frank L. Battisti to New England Conservatory in 1969 with the goal of creating a wind ensemble program on the model of the seminal work done by Frederick Fennell at Eastman. During his time at NEC, Battisti cemented his reputation as one of the most respected champions of music for winds in America, and the NEC Wind Ensemble amassed a sizable portfolio of premiere performances and recordings.

Battisti's inventory of recordings with NECWE has continued to appear on CD since his retirement in 2000. In 2001, NEC hosted an international symposium, "Wind Music across the Century," in Battisti's honor. Battisti is past president of the College Band Directors National Association, and his articles on the wind ensemble, music education, and wind literature have been published by many national and international journals. Battisti is author of The 20th Century American Wind Band/Ensemble and coauthor of the book Score Study.

He has conducted many professional, university, and school wind bands/ensembles throughout the world. During his time on the NEC faculty he also conducted all-state bands at major music conferences. Founder and conductor emeritus of NEC's Massachusetts Youth Wind Ensemble, Battisti also founded the World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles. Battisti has commissioned and conducted the premiere performances of works by Congress, Chavez, Persichetti, Bassett, Pinkham, Wilder, Benson, Tippett, Harbison, and Holloway. At Commencement 1997, Frank Battisti was the first recipient of NEC's Louis and Adrienne Krasner Teaching Excellence Award.


Vance George

Vance George is recognized internationally as one of America’s leading choral conductors. Under his direction he and the San Francisco Symphony Chorus have been hailed as one of the finest in the world and have received four Grammys and an Emmy.

His unique range of musical styles, knowledge of languages, mastery of vocal colors, and synthesis of the choral-orchestral tradition has been lauded by audiences, critics, and conductors. His work embodies the legacy of the great maestros and mentors he has known as protégé and colleague, especially Robert Shaw, Margaret Hillis, Robert Page, Otto Werner-Mueller, Mary Oyer and Kurt Masur, John Nelson, Helmut Rilling, Edo de Waart, Herbert Blomstedt and Michael Tilson Thomas.

For more than 23 years he prepared and conducted the SFS Chorus and SF Symphony in performances of large choral/orchestral repertoire as well as seasonal and pops concerts.
Prior to SFS Chorus he was Associate Conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus for seven years. As guest conductor he has led performances of Bach’s Mass in B minor, the Passions, Handel’s Messiah, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven Masses, the Requiem of Brahms and Verdi in Minneapolis, Spokane, Akron, Salzburg, Indianapolis and Sydney.

The San Francisco Symphony Chorus may be heard in Orff’s Carmina Burana, Grieg’s Peer Gynt, Mahler’s Symphony No. 2, a collection of short choral works by Brahms, the Requiem under the direction of Herbert Blomstedt and in Mahler’s Das klagende Lied, Stravinsky’s Perséphone, and Mahler’s Symphony No. 3, Michael Tilson Thomas conducting. The Emmy was for Sondheim’s Sweeney Todd in a semi-staged version featuring George Hearn, Patti Lupone and Neil Patrick Harris.

Under Vance George’s direction the chorus may be heard on the Delos label in Christmas by the Bay and Voices 1999/2000 and on film soundtracks for Amadeus, The Unbearable Lightness of Being, and Godfather III.

Vance George is highly regarded as a teacher of conducting and has written on the subject for Cambridge Press. A graduate of Goshen College and Indiana University, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Musical Arts by Kent State University and a lifetime achievement award by Chorus America. He has served on the Chorus America Board and the National Endowment of the Arts.

Michael Haithcock

Michael Haithcock assumed his duties as Director of Bands and Professor of Music (Conducting) at the University of Michigan in the fall of 2001 after twenty-three years on the faculty of Baylor University. Following in the footsteps of William D. Revelli and H. Robert Reynolds, Professor Haithcock conducts the internationally renowned University of Michigan Symphony Band, guides the acclaimed band and wind ensemble graduate conducting program, and provides administrative leadership for all aspects of the University of Michigan’s diverse and historic band program. In February of 2012, he was named an Arthur Thurnau Professor by the University of Michigan which is the University’s highest award for excellence in undergraduate teaching.

Ensembles under Haithcock’s guidance, have received a wide array of critical acclaim for their high artistic standards of performance and repertoire. These accolades have come through concerts at national and state conventions, performances in major concert venues, the UM Symphony Band’s May 2011 tour of China, and recordings on the Albany, Arsis, and Equilibrium labels. A review of recent recordings in Winds magazine proclaimed: “programming and execution of this caliber ought to be available worldwide...musically impressive, giving a sense of elation” while the American Record Guide praised the “professional manner with which the group delivers...they show great skill and artistry’ and proclaimed the “sound of the UM Symphony Band is something to savor”.

Professor Haithcock is a leader in commissioning and premiering new works for band and has earned the praise of both composers and conductors for his innovative approaches to developing
the band repertoire. He is in constant demand as a guest conductor as well as a resource person for symposiums and workshops in a variety of instructional settings. In 2011, he was awarded the Distinguished Service to Music Medal by Kappa Kappa Psi National Honorary Band Fraternity.

A graduate of East Carolina University, where he received the 1996 Outstanding Alumni Award from the School of Music, and Baylor University, Haithcock has done additional study at a variety of conducting workshops including the Herbert Blomstedt Orchestral Conducting Institute. The Instrumentalist, the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association, the School Musician, the Southwest Music Educator, and WINDS magazine have published his articles on conducting and wind literature. Mr. Haithcock is an elected member of both the music honor society Pi Kappa Lambda and the American Bandmasters Association. In addition, he remains active in College Band Directors National Association following his term as president (2001-2003).

Kenneth Kiesler

Born of French and Austrian descent in New York City, GRAMMY® nominated conductor Kenneth Kiesler leads a highly successful international career. Recent concert engagements include televised concerts in Mexico and Mahler's Sixth Symphony in Brazil. Kiesler is also one of the world's most sought after and highly regarded teachers and mentors of conductors.

As the award winning Music Director of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra from 1980 to 2000, Kiesler conducted concerts in Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center and was founder of both the Illinois Chamber Orchestra and Illinois Symphony Chorus. The Illinois Symphony Orchestra named him Conductor Laureate for life, and from 2009 to 2011 he served as the orchestra's Music Advisor. He was also Music Director of the New Hampshire Symphony Orchestra and Principal Conductor of the Saint Cecilia Orchestra.

Kiesler has conducted orchestras on four continents, including the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center, the Chicago Symphony at Orchestra Hall, the Chamber Orchestra of Paris, and the orchestras of Utah, Detroit, New Jersey, Florida, Indianapolis, São Paulo, Jerusalem, Sofia, Haifa, Osaka, Puerto Rico, Daejeon and Pusan in Korea, Hang Zhou in China, Memphis, San Diego, Albany, Virginia, Omaha, Fresno, Long Beach, Long Island, Portland, and at the Aspen, Atlantic, Meadowbrook, Skaneateles, Sewanee and Breckenridge festivals.

A passionate advocate for new music and living composers, he has led premieres by Evan Chambers, Steven Stucky, Gunther Schuller, Leslie Bassett, Ben Johnston, Aharon Harlap, Gabriela Lena Frank, Kristin Kuster, Steven Rush, Sven Daigger, and Paul Brantley. He also has performed several long lost pieces including the first performance of Gershwin's original jazz-band score of Rhapsody in Blue since 1925. Other landmark performances include the U.S. Premiere of Mendelssohn's Third Piano Concerto, the world premiere of James P. Johnson's The Dreamy Kid, the first performance since 1940 of Johnson's blues opera, De Organizer, and the non-European premiere and premiere recording of Milhaud's Orestian Trilogy of Aeschylus.
Kiesler’s recordings with the BBC, Third Angle and University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra are heard on the Naxos, Dorian, Pierian, and Equilibrium labels. Recent work includes Ginastera's three piano concerti with acclaimed pianist, Barbara Nissman, and The Old Burying Ground, an orchestral song cycle by Evan Chambers. His latest recording, a 3 CD set of Milhaud's monumental work for expanded orchestra, chorus and soloists, L'Orestie, was released by Naxos in September of 2014.

Winner of the 2011 American prize in conducting, Mr. Kiesler was the Silver Medal winner at the 1986 Stokowski Competition, and the 1988 recipient of the Helen M. Thompson Award, presented by the American Symphony Orchestra League to the outstanding American music director under the age of 35. His teachers and mentors include Carlo Maria Giulini, Fiora Contino, Julius Herford, Erich Leinsdorf, John Nelson, and James Wimer.

His conducting students hold positions with major orchestras, opera companies and music schools worldwide, and have won major international conducting competitions including the Donatella Flick, Eduardo Mata, Nicolai Malko, and Lorin Maazel competitions.

Mr. Kiesler has led conducting master classes in New York, Houston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Paris, Moscow, Vilnius, Leipzig, Berlin, Mexico City, London and São Paulo, as well as at the Waterville Valley Music Center (New Hampshire) and the Conductors Retreat at Medomak (Maine), now in its 19th year.

Mr. Kiesler currently lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan where he is Director of Orchestras and leads the renowned orchestral conducting program at the University of Michigan.

Brad Lubman

Brad Lubman, conductor/composer, is founding co-Artistic Director and Music Director of Ensemble Signal, hailed by The New York Times as “one of the most vital groups of its kind.”. Since his conducting debut in 1984, he has gained widespread recognition for his versatility, commanding technique, and insightful interpretations.

His guest conducting engagements include major orchestras such as the DSO Berlin, Netherlands Radio Kamer Filharmonie, Residentie Orchestra Den Haag, WDR Symphony Cologne, NDR Symphony Hamburg, Bavarian Radio Orchestra, Stuttgart Radio Symphony, Dresden Philharmonic, Deutschland Radio Philharmonie, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Taiwan National Symphony, Cracow Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Finnish Radio Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, and the St Paul Chamber Orchestra, performing repertoire ranging from classical to contemporary orchestral works. He has worked with some of the most important ensembles for contemporary music, including London Sinfonietta, Ensemble Modern, Klangforum Wien, musikFabrik, Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, and Steve Reich and Musicians.

He has recorded for AEON, Albany, BMG/RCA, Bridge, Cantaloupe, CRI, Kairos, Koch, Mode, New World, NEOS, Nonesuch, Orange Mountain, and Tzadik. Lubman’s own compositions have been performed in the USA and Europe and can be heard on his CD, insomniac, on Tzadik.
Lubman is Associate Professor of Conducting and Ensembles at the Eastman School of Music since 1997, where he directs the Musica Nova ensemble, and is on the faculty of the Bang-on-a-Can Summer Institute. He is represented by Karsten Witt Musik Management.

Robert Porco

Robert Porco became director of choruses for The Cleveland Orchestra in 1998. In addition to overseeing choral activities and preparing the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus and the Blossom Festival Chorus for a variety of concert programs each season, Mr. Porco conducts the Orchestra’s annual series of Christmas concerts at Severance Hall and regularly conducts subscription concert programs both at Severance Hall and Blossom. In recent seasons, he has led performances of Handel’s Messiah, Vaughan Williams’s A Sea Symphony, Orff’s Carmina Burana, and evenings of Broadway and American favorites at Blossom.

Highlights of Mr. Porco’s Cleveland tenure have included preparing the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus for a wide variety of performances and repertoire, including performances of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 conducted by Franz Welser-Möst in January 2007, released as a Deutsche Grammophon recording. He has prepared the Chorus for touring appearances with the Orchestra, including the 2013 European Tour and performances at the Edinburgh International Festival, Lucerne Festival, London Proms, and Carnegie Hall, as well as for a series of operas at Severance Hall under Welser-Möst’s direction.

In 2011, Mr. Porco was honored by Chorus America with its annual Michael Korn Founders Award for a lifetime of significant contributions to the professional choral art. His activities and achievements across four decades of work have included preparing choruses for such prominent conductors as Pierre Boulez, James Conlon, Andrew Davis, Christoph von Dohnányi, Raymond Leppard, James Levine, Jesús López-Cobos, Zubin Mehta, André Previn, Kurt Sanderling, Robert Shaw, Leonard Slatkin, and Franz Welser-Möst, among others. As a guest conductor, Mr. Porco has led performances across North America, in Europe, and Asia, with appearances from Edinburgh to Lucerne, Reykjavik to Taipei, and from Chicago’s Grant Park Festival to the Cincinnati May Festival, where he has served as director of choruses since 1989.

Ohio native Robert Porco served as chairman of the choral department at Indiana University 1980-98, and in recent years taught doctoral-level conducting at the school. Highlights of his work at Indiana University have included a special performance by 250 students of Leonard Bernstein’s Mass as part of the Tanglewood Music Festival’s celebration of the composer’s 70th birthday. He was artistic director and conductor of the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir, 1989-98. As teacher and mentor, Mr. Porco has guided and influenced the development of hundreds of musicians, many of whom are now active as professional conductors, singers, or teachers. As a sought-after guest instructor and coach, his teaching work has included programs at Harvard University, Westminster Choir College, and the University of Miami Frost School of Music.

H. Robert Reynolds

H. Robert Reynolds is Principal Conductor of the Wind Ensemble at the Thornton School of Music at the University of South California, where he holds the H. Robert Reynolds Professorship in Wind Conducting. This appointment followed his retirement after 26 years from
the University of Michigan School of Music, where he served as the Henry F. Thurnau Professor of Music, Director of University of Bands, and Director of the Division of Instrumental Studies. In addition, he has also been conductor of the Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings for over 25 years.

Mr. Reynolds was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Music from Duquesne University in 2010, and he currently holds degrees in Music Education and Performance from the University of Michigan, where he studied conducting with Elizabeth Green. He is Past President of the College Band Directors National Association and the Big Ten Band Directors Association.

His frequent conducting appearances include Eastman School of Music, New England Conservatory, Oberlin Conservatory, Northwestern University, Manhattan School of Music, as well as Carnegie Hall and the Tanglewood Institute, among others. He has been a featured conductor/lecturer at international conferences in Austria, Norway, Belgium, England, Holland, Slovenia, Sweden, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland, Japan, and Sweden. He has won the praise of composers such as Leslie Bassett, William Bolcom, Aaron Copland, John Corigliano, Henryk Gorecki, Karel Husa, Gyorgy Ligeti, Darius Milhaud, Bernard Rands, Gunther Schuller, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and others for his interpretive conducting of their compositions.
Instrumentation

2 Flutes (1st also Piccolo and Flute in G, 2nd also Piccolo)

1 Oboe (also English Horn)

2 Clarinets in B (1st also Clarinet in Eb, 2nd also Clarinet in A)

1 Bass Clarinet in B (also double Bass Clarinet in B)

2 Horns

1 Trombone complete with Plunger, Bol, Robinson, Wawa and Velvet mute

1 Accordeon with chromatic basses or Electric Organ

2 Percussions

2 Violins

2 Violas

1 Cello

1 Contrabass
Instrumentation

Although the present instrumentation is preferable, the score can be performed with a single horn and a single percussion player. In this case, the hornplayer plays both horn parts and from rehearsal number 27 to number 28 the trombone replaces the second horn. The accordion can also be replaced by an electric organ.

For the percussionist: At number 8, the gong must be placed next to the vibraphone and played with vibraphone mallets. The tam-tam, the lion's roar and the bass drum must be located close by.

At number 28, do not play the last measure and take in advance the glockenspiel mallets. At number 42, play both parts (right hand and left hand) by grouping the instruments in the most convenient way.

All instruments are written in C and sound as written except the accordion.

The accidentals apply only to the notes they precede.

The precision of the intonation is essential to this piece.

Tune the instruments carefully before each performance, taking the A from accordion.
Percussions: 1 Vibraphone
1 Glockenspiel
1 Thai gong sounding exactly otherwise an ordinary gong or plate bell
1 Very low tam-tam
1 Very high suspended cymbal
1 Pair of ordinary cymbals
3 Snare drums (three different pitches)
2 Military drums with snares (two different pitches)
1 Medium tom-tom
1 Low tom-tom
1 Contrabass (or very low) tom-tom
1 Very low bass drum
1 Wood drum (if not available replace with two different tumbas)
1 Lion's roar

Accessories: 4 Mutes for tom-toms
1 Hard brush
1 Soft brush
5 Sheets of fine sand paper
2 Pieces of polystirene
Wrapping paper
Metallic foils
3 Bird-calls (partridges) giving a hushing sound (sssh!...) not a whistle. Two of these will be distributed to the 2nd clarinettist and bass clarinettist.

Hard sticks
Soft sticks
Medium sticks
Timpani sticks

* If the contrabass tom-tom sounds lower than the available bass drum, then play the bass drum part on the contrabass and vice-versa.
SYMBOLS

Excessively unstable sound. A kind of very irregular intensity vibrato. (Effects only loudness, not pitch.) With the breath for the winds and on the string for the string instruments.

: Sim., diminuendo

: Sim., crescendo

# higher by an exact quarter tone

+: higher by an exact quarter tone

^: slightly higher

^: slightly lower

: imperceptible attack

Rhythmic notation

Whenever the rhythmic notation is proportional, the arrow indicates the down beat.

on the beat immediately after the beat

: Sustain the sound

: At the conductor's cue

: Duration ad libitum

: Repeat the previous pattern

: Sustain the sound until out of breath (duration ad lib.)

: Accelerando
Wind instruments

Woodwinds

- ordinary fluttertongue
- fluttertongue with the throat
- sound of breath only (no tone)
- changing fingering on the same note
- multiphonic sound (see fingering)
- broken sound (press the lips, creaking sound)

Brass

- open with the plunger mute
- closed with the plunger mute

Have a reed available (for instance of a contrabassoon) suitable to the size of the mouthpiece of the instrument.

- Fluttertongue

Accordion

- sounds as written
- sounds an octave higher
- sounds an octave lower
- push the bellows
- pull the bellows
- bellows shakes
- normal bellows

Strings

1) positions
   - "alto sul tastò", as high as possible on the fingerboard, very near to the fingers of the left hand
   - on the fingerboard
   - normal
   - near the bridge
   - "alto sul ponticello" very high on the bridge:

   bow strokes
   - A) extremely rapid shifting upon attack
   - B) slow shifting

   2) bow pressure
      - normal
      - exaggerated
      - creaking noise, no precise pitch
      - tremolo as fast as possible
      - sustained sound with different bow pressures within the indicated limits

- breath sound only, the bow on the bridge

Duration: 22' to 24'
Repeat many times slightly varying the entire duration. Before continuing, the double-bass plays the three E tones without a break, as if emerging out of the trombone sound. Vary ad libitum on each repetition.

C.b. *Very high on the bridge. The E sounds almost an octave higher. The last time, go on to the next sound without stopping.

Horn: breathe ad libitum, but before the trombone stops playing.
Trbn: continue until out of breath.
Perc: vibraphone if the instrument has a sufficient range. * very rapid, blending with the winds.

Horn: with the breath without reattacking.
Vla2: * see symbols. Avoid being too much in relief.

Vla1: * see symbols. Avoid being too much in relief.

Trbn: Wawa mute with the stem.
Strings: ** Hushing sound only. The bow on the bridge.

Vla 2, Trbn: both instruments must avoid being too much in relief. The trombone must rattle. The wawa mute at the same time.

Horn: E fingering. The pitch must be higher when attacked.

Accordion: Bellows noise (sssh!...)

Strings: At the frog, cutting and tumultuous.
Cl 1, 2: * The broken sounds must blend slowly into that of the contrabassoon.

Nota: Till number 22, there are three levels of intensity. The generating sounds (performed by the winds) must remain in the foreground. The differential sounds (beats and tremolo of the strings) on the middle ground. Finally as an almost imperceptible halo, the ppp sounds without crescendo and poco vibrato. All attacks must be imperceptible.
p. 15 Strings*: Creaking noise higher than the sounds of the trbn and horn.

***: Creaking noise lower than the sound of the horn.

Horn Trbn**: Similar sound as the contrabass clarinet, low and stable.

Avoid any shrieking of pitch. If necessary don’t play the crescendo.

If the reed sound of the horn doesn’t sound, the trombone can replace the horn and perform another reed sound, higher than the previous one.

p. 16 Perc: Continue at the same speed.

Cb. Cl.: Brocken sound little by little.

p. 18 Cb. Cl.: Continue at the same speed.

p. 19 Vn 1: Tremolo as fast as possible.

p. 20 Cb.: Continue at the same speed.

p. 21 Vla: Tremolo as fast as possible.

p. 23 Vn 2: Tremolo as fast as possible.

p. 25 Repeat ad lib. The conductor’s signs almost regular.

Vla 2: Hold the sound after the first repetition.

Nota: Make sure the intonation of the octave is exact.

p. 26 Nota: Until number 28 the pairs Vn 2, Vla 2 / Fl 1 and 2 / Cl 1 and 2 / Horn 1 and 2 must emerge slightly from the ensemble and sound as a single instrument. The first and second violin parts are very difficult to play in tune: rehearse each interval slowly. The durations must remain precise, the instrument pairs alternating exactly as written.
Horns

If there is no second horn this passage is performed
by the trbn which should try to match the same tone
colour as the first horn (for instance by using a
velvet mute).

Very dense, all trills as fast as possible.
* Breathe ad lib. but imperceptibly, don't reattack fff.
Perc.: Glockenspiel and tam-tam beater: hit with the tam-tam
beater and let the glockenspiel mallet vibrate
irregularly behind the instrument.
Strings: "Jeté", as many as possible but very irregular.

Flexible and slightly irregular (perc and woodwinds)

From sign \(\text{\textbullet}\) on, all the woodwinds slow down individually.
Caution, the rallentando applies to the last note only. (arrival note)
All other notes remain as fast as possible.

On the signal from the conductor, each player completes
his patterns and passes on to the next.

Strings ** At the peak of the accelerando: minimal duration
1" = \(\frac{1}{8}\) approximately. Caution, the rallentando applies
to the last note only, the speed of the glissando remains
unchanged (1" approximately).

Continue without interruption.

Fl. 1, 2: Repeat by varying the order and alternating with
the second flute (end obligatory with the Fl. 1).
Quasi periodic durations (see notes) around 2".
* Nota for woodwinds: the grace notes extremely fast,
coming before the accent. First rehearse the real
accents, without grace notes, in order to set
the rhythms.

** The vibraphone must color the second clarinet.
p. 47 Perc.: * If the high notes are missing on the vibraphone, play them on the Glockenspiel.

p. 49 Horn: the last note of the glissando, almost inaudible.

           Accordion: with the woodwinds.

p. 50 Nota: until number 48, the accents at first exactly together, must break up progressively (position in the measure), then soften the attacks and "liquefy" (pitch inflexions).

* Strings: tremolo as fast as possible whatever the tempo may be.

** Perc.: place a sheet of fine sandpaper on the three tom-toms and on the bass drums. Rub with another sheet of sandpaper.

p. 51 Cl. 2 and B. Cl.: higher or lower sounds are obtained by closing or opening the hands around the bird call, producing a scale of seven sounds from completely open to completely closed.

\[
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\text{open} & & & & & & \text{completely closed}
\end{array}
\]

Position of the accents: on the conductor's signs, immediately before or immediately after and ff.
Subdivise \((\times 150)\) Position of the accents: exactly within the indicated limits.
* The accent immediately after the signs of the conductor.

p. 52 Caution: the inflexions are very close to the sustained note (\(\uparrow\) slightly higher, \(\downarrow\) slightly lower). The notation exaggerates them in order to make them visible.

p. 54 W. Winds: or others having as main pitch:

Perc. I: take the sandpaper off the bass drum and contrabass tom tom.

* W. Winds: the black notes of the multiphonic sounds indicate the pitch that must predominate.

p. 55 Flexible and floating.

Nota: repeat ad libitum. On each repeat, the musicians vary individually the position of the accents within the two first beats of the measure.
p. 55 (follows)

**Strings:** Flexible and floating bow freely between bridge and finger-board. Try to achieve a very unstable sound, very rich in overtones changing position of the hairs on the string.

p. 57 Far off, like a low echo of the previous music.

p. 58 Trbn.: This glissando is possible with the trigger and by pulling out the tuning slide as far as possible.

Nota: during the measured passages, the musicians must remain still without moving. Use the silent unmeasured moments to put on the sordine, turn the page etc...

p. 59 Fl. 1: Take the instrument down slowly with little noise (keys, tubes etc. ...)

Perc. 1, 2: Caution, no accent for the attack of tom-tom.

p. 60 Fl. 1: put the instrument in the case. Close the case loudly.

Fl. 2, Cl. 1: Take the instrument down slowly with little noises (keys, tubes, ...)

Vn. 1: Rub the bow with rosin ostentatiously.

p. 61 Fl. 1: turn the last page (transparent paper) abruptly and noisily. The case in hand, stand up suddenly, silent and solemnly.

Vno 1, Vno 2, V.1a 1, Fl. 2: rumple slightly the edge of the last page (transparent paper).

Ob.: Take the instrument down slowly with little noises (keys, tubes ...). Put the instrument in the case. Close the case loudly.

Cl. 1: Put the instrument in the case. Close the case loudly.

Cl. 2: Take the instrument down slowly with little noises (keys, tubes ...)

Horn 2: Sound of blowing the water out of the instrument.

Trbn.: Small short noises with the plunger or the slide.
Perc. 1: Wrapping paper.

Vn. 2, Vla 1: Dialog between Vn 2 and Vla 1 whispered and unintelligible.

Vc.: "Col legno battuto" behind the bridge. Slightly impatient look above to the left, above to the right...

Cb.: Slightly impatient, look to the first flutist.

Regie: general stage lights: slowly ... down ... off
Spotlight on Perc. 1: on - - - - - ... off
At first, all gestures very abrupt and jerky, then more and more flexible becoming excessively slow and unreal, until silence and immobility.

Fl. 1, 2 / Ob. / Cl. 1, 2 / Accordion / Strings: remain frozen in the last position.

Cb., Cl.: Take the instrument down with little noises (keys, tubes ...). At first, precised and quick gestures, then little by little until calme and absolutely immobile.

Horn, Trbn.: Blow the water from the instrument. Gestures getting slower and slower until calme and absolutely immobile.

Perc. 2: Unperceptible roll.

Perc. 1: Take the cymbals. Open the arms very slowly, mysterious and solemn. Muscular and psychological tension as for a fff blow. Remain in this position.
APPENDIX E. GRISEY *Partiels* PERFORMANCE NOTES (KMK)

Notes for Musicians for Grisey’s *Partiels* from *Les Espaces Acoustiques*

Since the performance notes you received refer to page numbers in the full score and not rehearsal numbers I’ve compiled this list so you can know exactly to what the comments refer. At the end I’ve also added a list of what I’m beating where.

Please note that if it looks like there is a 2/4 time signature at the end of a line (system) but there is no music in it, it’s probably just a warning that the next measure is in 2/4. This happens in a few parts. Also heavy ink barlines are actual barlines and the lighter ones are usually beats. Sometimes it’s hard to distinguish, but I think most of the time it’s clear. Sometimes like at rehearsal 44, there is only one large-scale bar of 11/8 followed by one large-scale 7/8 bar. In those cases I will beat the 16th notes.

Beginning on Page 6 of the notes from the publisher I will just list the page number in order as they appear on the sheet and the rehearsal numbers to which the notes refer.

p.1 measure 1
C.B. measure 1

p. 2 all comments refer to rehearsal 1

p. 5 all comments refer to rehearsal 4

p. 6 rehearsal 5

p. 7 rehearsal 6
Strings: going into rehearsal 6 (in other words play ordinario and then go to hushing sound)

p. 9 in reh. 7

p. 12 reh. 19

p. 13 bar before reh. 11

p. 14 Strings: measure before reh. 12
Cls. Rehearsal 12

p. 15 refers to the section from the middle of rehearsal 12-reh. 22

Strings bar before 13
Horn/Tbn: between 12 and 13 “son d’anche”

p. 16 perc reh. 14
cb cl. 4 before 14
p. 18 cb cl reh. 16
p. 19 reh 17
p. 20 reh 18
p. 21 4 before reh. 19
p. 23 2 before 21
p. 26 reh 22
p. 32 reh 27
p. 34 reh 28
p. 36 reh 29
p. 39 reh 31 second bar
p. 40 reh 31 third bar
p. 41 reh 32
p. 42 before reh. 33
p. 43 reh 33
p. 44 reh 35
p. 47 reh 39
p. 49 reh 41
p. 50 all comments refer to notes in reh 42
p. 51 reh 43
p. 52 reh 44
p. 54 between reh. 45-46
p. 55 reh 46
What I’m beating where:

In the very first bar (the fermata bar) I will beat either 3 or 4 times with the double bass), it will be very clear when I’ll be beating the ¾ bar because the first bar of the piece is attacked forte with very strong accents in the bass. The ¾ bar will be soft and coming out of nowhere. We’ll repeat these first four bars a few times and the last time the bass will play three low e’s at quarter note = 60 before we continue onto rehearsal 1. I will give a clear gesture demarcating our arrival at reh. 1 so as to avoid any confusion.

At reh. 1 take note there are 7 bars of 2/4 before the 11/16 bar.

See the measure before reh. 2- I will beat all of these measures as designated. For example this bar I will conduct a quarter note, a dotted eighth and a quarter note in a 3 pattern.

All 3/8 bars will be in 1

I would recommend that you lightly number the measures in your part between reh. numbers to facilitate rehearsals, and also so you can count them as they go by since a lot of this music is atmospheric and it’s easy to space out and lose count. I will also try to give gestures demarcating rehearsal numbers going by, but just in case it doesn’t fit the music, please do your best to count.

At reh. 22 I will not hold up fingers but simply beat a three pattern which repeats a few times. Each beat will be approximately 1.5 seconds in length. You will know it’s time to go on at reh. 23 because I will give a gesture, the tempo will be quarter = 60, and I’ll be in two.

If any of this is confusing, please send me an email and I’ll do my best to answer asap.
The spatial notation in this piece is such that you should attempt to play the notes where they appear in the measure with distance being a time continuum. In other words, a note that appears close to the first bar line should be played early in the bar, and one that appears near the end of the measure should be played later. The precision behind this determines the order in which the notes are played throughout.

At reh. 31 I will beat in 2 for the first bar and then hold up 1 finger for the 5” bar, then in the 7” bar I will hold up 2 fingers but give beats for each of the 5 entrances with my right hand. In the first 9” bar I’ll hold up 3 fingers with my left hand and give beats for each of the 7 entrances, in the second 9” bar I’ll hold up 4 fingers and beat 9 entrances and in the in the first 7” bar I’ll hold up 5 fingers with my left hand and beat five entrances. In the 7” bar before the 2/4 bar I’ll simply hold up 1 finger, then 2 fingers, then 3 fingers and then we’ll go on in the 2/4 bar. I know this sounds complicated, but I think you’ll see what I mean when we do it.

At rehearsal 33 for the flutes I will beat several 4/4 bars in which you will take turns articulating one or the other of the options, we’ll do this bar maybe 2 or 3 times, and then right before reh. 34 I’ll give a warning gesture that means we are continuing on at which point the first flute will play the first gesture into reh 34. And the first violin will pizz with her on the down beat of 34.

At reh 41 I will beat eighth notes. And it’s very fast.

At reh 42 I’ll beat in 3, the 12/8 bar will be four bars of 4/4.

At reh. 43 I’ll beat 4/4, 4/4, ¾, 2/4 and then in the 5/8 bar I’ll switch to beating 16th notes. So I’ll do a 10/16 patter if you will.

At reh. 44 in the 11/8 measure I’ll beat 8/16, 8/16, 6/16. (subdivided 4, 4, and 3 patterns). In the 7/8 bar I’ll still continue to beat 16th notes (subdivided 4 and 3).

At reh. 45 I’ll beat 16th notes but in 3 subdivided 3 patterns (to equal 9).

Finally at reh. 46 we’re back at quarter equals 60! The second measure I’ll repeat a few times but show a clear cue as to when we’ll go onto reh. 47.

I think the rest of the piece is relatively straight forward.

Let me know if you have any questions and THANKS AGAIN for playing this great masterpiece.

Nota bene, if you watch the videos, the gentleman conducting does not subdivide the 16ths like Grisey asks for (in order to make the placement of the accents more accurate) beginning at rehearsal 43 at the 5/8 bar, so don’t let this confuse you!
June 16, 2016

Katherine Kilburn
7607 Big Creek Pkwy
Middleburg Heights, OH 44130

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June 17, 2016

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