

**The Incomplete Conductor:
theorizing the conductor's role in orchestral
interpretation in the light of shared leadership
practices**

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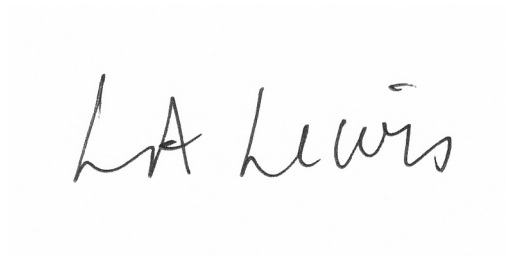
PhD in Music

DECLARATION

**The Incomplete Conductor:
theorizing the conductor's role in orchestral interpretation
in the light of shared leadership practices**

I hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are entirely my own.

Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "LA Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The "LA" is written as a single unit, followed by "Lewis". The signature is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Leslie Anne Lewis

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore and chart the territory of the performative aspects of orchestral leadership in both theory and practice, and by so doing to expand existing notions of the modern conductor's role while at the same time problematizing our current conceptualization of interpretation. Throughout the study I argue for the codeterminacy of leadership and interpretation, and I explore the implications of this in the light of the shared thinking and memory processes that underlie the development of both conducted and unconducted orchestral performance.

The thesis begins by challenging the notion of 'the compleat conductor', as exemplified by Gunther Schuller in his eponymous text. After reviewing the multiple relationships that exist between score, orchestra, and conductor, I propose that a socially-distributed, rather than projective, conception of both leadership and interpretation more accurately portrays the realities of orchestral performance. I explore these realities by drawing upon an extensive fieldwork project with Britten Sinfonia, a Cambridge-based chamber orchestra with a diverse repertoire and a dynamic approach to leadership, i.e. sometimes being led from the violin, other times being led by soloists and conductors.

The final part of the study focuses again on the modern conductor by theorizing the conductor's possible functions within the 'orchestral network'. This is accomplished through mapping Ekman and Friesen's seminal categorization of non-verbal communication onto the neo-Vygotskian frameworks of 'scaffolding' and 'assisted performance'. I finish by exploring how, even when leadership functions are highly distributed across an orchestra, an incomplete conductor may still have a role to play in performance through the cognitive structuring of musical material and even of creativity itself.

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Preface

Many of the arguments made in this study rely upon evidence obtained in interviews with freelance professional orchestral players working in London and Cambridge. This interview material is quoted at length throughout the text, and a second volume containing full interview transcripts was included with the version of the thesis submitted for examination. Although all interview participants formally agreed to have their contributions in their entirety included in what follows, with the Examination Committee's permission, the full transcripts of the interviews have been removed from this final version of the work. A detailed listing of fieldwork interviews is now located in an appendix to the thesis.

Acknowledgements

As is only appropriate for a study exploring the finer points of socially-distributed cognition, I wish to begin by acknowledging the many people who have helped me along the way. Firstly, I am grateful to the Britten Sinfonia players, guest artists and management team for their help, generosity and encouragement over the course of my time with them. I also offer my thanks to the players from The Academy of Ancient Music and The Cambridge University Collegium Musicum who kindly agreed to participate in the study. It was a privilege to spend as much time as I did learning about the inner workings of these orchestras, and I wish each and every individual associated with these groups success in his or her future endeavours. Additional thanks go to Ulrich Alexander Krepplein, Faber Music Ltd., and Oxford University Press for allowing me to reprint the excerpts from the orchestral parts found in Chapter 4.

Secondly, I would like to offer my appreciation to Dimitrios Rallis, Peter Stark, Claire Taylor-Jay, Maggie Faultless, Peter Ribeaux, Neil Thompson, June Boyce-Tillman, Judy Kuhn, Valery Roach, and Tom Regelski, all of whom, in their own way, offered indispensable inspiration and support along the way. Nicola and Ellie Parkins fall into this category as well, but deserve particular mention as they were faithful companions right until the very end. Special acknowledgment also goes to John Rink, who helped me to discover what I needed to do and then, with the lightest of touches, helped me to move the inner and outer mountains that stood in my way. This is a gift I fear that I might only be able to repay by becoming a much better human being than I currently am. Fortunately, I am working on that.

One final word of thanks goes to the three institutions that have generously contributed to the funding of my postgraduate studies in the UK: Royal Holloway, University of London; The Overseas Research Award Scheme; and The Rotary Foundation.

Dedication

For

Lynne Lewis

(1946-2001)

and

Helena Brown

(1948-2012)

Introduction

If one thing is clear about the modern conductor's role in interpretation, it is that it is ambiguous. By looking at the conductor's role within the greater network of shared leadership practices at work within orchestras, this thesis aims to make the role less so. The springboard for this study was a question that arose in my own work as a conductor and teacher of conducting. It goes without saying that different ensembles demand different approaches from a conductor. However, I had also noticed that orchestras change their way of working in relation to what conductors offer, having seen countless examples of this. In working with inexperienced (and sometimes even experienced) conductors, for example, an ensemble will often 'rescue' some portion of a performance by taking over leadership responsibility at a critical point where the conductor fails to provide what the orchestra needs. In some cases they may even plan to do so. Although both players and conductors tend to view this type of situation simply as a sign of a conductor's incompetence — and it may to some extent be that — I wondered why conductors did not pay more attention to this kind of 'subversive' leadership which lies unnoticed in the background ready to emerge when necessary. Perhaps if it could be understood, I thought, it might be harnessed in a way that could enhance orchestral performances. I also suspected that the ability to capitalize on this type of 'leadership from within' could be one of the ways in which conductors might contribute in a unique way to performance. This served as the starting point for what follows.

Unfortunately, there is very little in the literature by and for conductors about the shared leadership practices at work (or ready to work) in orchestras. It is also a difficult topic to broach with conductors in person due to the strong association between conductor incompetence and a certain type of player contribution. In addition, this lack of attention seems to be related to the way that orchestral culture conceptualizes interpretation, i.e. as a process that involves the unilateral projection of interpretations (or in some cases, even the works themselves) from conductor to orchestra. Shared leadership practices are, at least notionally, antithetical to this. String quartets are often credited with shared ownership of an interpretation, but they seem to be an exception to the norm. Reading reviews of orchestral concerts, for example, demonstrates that things are different in larger ensembles. In this world, conductors, and to a lesser extent soloists, are the owners of interpretations, even if this belies the complexity of what happens in actual practice. This, of course, mirrors larger and frequently explored musicological problems having to do with the pre-eminent work concept and related

notions of authoritative text. Simply put, the idea of shared leadership challenges the identity of an authoritative text. With many people in a position to make choices about how a work is performed, who will be ‘the composer’s advocate’?¹ While the four people in a string quartet might be able to keep the identity of the work (whatever that is) intact, how might an orchestra do this?

Sadly, this sort of thinking has led to the proverbial ‘throwing the baby out with the bathwater’. As conductors have assumed their relatively recent role as the owners and projectors of musical interpretation, the contributions to the process made by players have been largely eclipsed or even erased. Taken to an extreme, this leads to the notion that the conductor plays the orchestra like a piano. In fact, an extensive amount of research in the areas of social, organisational, and developmental psychology, leadership theory, socially-distributed cognition, and transactive memory contradicts the accuracy of this view and demands a rethinking of both the modern conductor’s role and orchestral interpretation in the light of the shared leadership, memory, and cognition that invariably underlie all orchestral performance, even if these variables often go unacknowledged.

The starting point for this project is a reframing of the field of inquiry. Instead of looking at orchestral leadership in terms of unilateral causation, i.e. how a conductor influences an orchestra, a systems-based approach is adopted. Leadership, from this perspective, cannot be understood through the study of individual influence alone. As organisational psychologist Walter Bennis explains, even in its simplest form, leadership is ‘a tripod — a leader or leaders, followers, and the common goal they want to achieve.’² In essence, to apply this sort of approach to the study of musical leadership requires looking at the conductor’s role within a wider ‘orchestral network’ that includes conductors, players, and the repertoire- and ensemble-specific performance task. This, in turn, leads to the necessity of a methodology that can capture the subtleties of orchestral interaction and by so doing map the territory that stands between the world of chamber music, where shared ownership exists, and orchestral music, where it is said not to, yet must: after all, as the American conductor Robert Shaw once quipped, ‘The hands don’t sing.’ Only by adopting such an approach, i.e. one where the conductor is seen as a single part of a larger system, I argue, can one begin to understand how and under what circumstances conductors contribute to performance.

¹ *The Composer’s Advocate* is the title of Leinsdorf’s (1981) conducting treatise.

² Bennis, 2007: 3-4.

Over the course of this study I had many opportunities to speak to players about conductors, and I found that even the players who seemed to have the least positive things to say about the maestros would often have a story about working with someone they considered to be very good. Usually this person was described as someone who ‘knew the score’, but also ‘let them play’. The problem, it seems, is not that the majority of players want to do away with conductors (although some clearly do) but that players want more out of the conductors that they work with. In the end, although it is beyond the scope of this study to confirm this, I suspect that many conductors whom players single out as being ‘good’ draw out contributions from within the group, and at the same time integrate these contributions into a larger Gestalt. If this is correct — and in the light of the research I will present in this thesis I believe it is — then it is a conductor’s ‘incompleteness’ rather than ‘completeness’ that acts as the impetus for effectiveness in working with an orchestra.

With this in mind, the research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

- (1) How is the modern conductor’s role currently conceptualized? What are the limitations of this conceptualization?
- (2) What part do attitudes relating to interpretation play in the above conceptualization?
- (3) How does the perceptual orientation facilitated by full scores and parts influence orchestral leadership?
- (4) How does musical leadership emerge in orchestral settings? What is the role of designated leadership vs. more informal distributions of leadership? What role does repertoire play in this process?
- (5) What strategies might conductors adopt to capitalize upon the potentialities of shared leadership practices?

The overall aim of this thesis is both theoretically and practically to map the continuum that I perceive between chamber music and orchestral music — one in which the necessity for musical leadership, and by extension the conductor’s role, can be seen as more or less emergent depending upon contextual factors — and by so doing, to create a framework for understanding and acting upon the modern conductor’s role in orchestral interpretation in a way that acknowledges the reality and potentialities of shared leadership practices. The objectives of this study are therefore the definition of the ‘orchestral network’ and the conductor’s role within it; both theoretical and practical exploration of how leadership functions are distributed across this network, and the role of contextual factors within this distribution process; and finally, the proposal of

rehearsal and performance strategies for conductors that capitalize upon the boon of socially-distributed cognition and shared leadership practices that, to some extent, underlie all orchestral performance.

The research process began by focusing on each element of the ‘orchestral network’ before moving on to explore how these elements interact in practice. In considering ‘leaders and followers’, I started by reviewing the literature by and for conductors in addition to leadership theory more generally. Defining ‘the common goal’ required an extended exploration of orchestral interpretation; this relied upon a literature review which considered the concept from both the conductor’s and the player’s perspective. The conclusions I was able to draw from examining the conductor’s role from within the ‘orchestral network’ can be found in Chapters 1 and 2.

In the next phase of my work, I aimed to discover how leadership might be distributed across the ‘orchestral network’. This work involved both a review of the perceptual orientation provided by full scores in contrast to orchestral parts (as described in Chapter 3) and a fieldwork study investigating orchestral interaction. The latter was conducted over a one-year period with the Cambridge-based chamber orchestra Britten Sinfonia. This orchestra was chosen because of their dynamic and flexible leadership structure which vacillates between conducted and un-conducted performance. The orchestra’s chamber music ‘set point’³ provided an excellent vehicle for exploring how conductors might affect leadership distribution within a system where shared leadership practices are actively operating. An in-depth discussion of the methodological approach, which involved rehearsal observation, interviews, and the examination of performance materials, appears in Chapter 4.

The final stage of the research addressed how conductors might capitalize upon shared leadership practices in performance. In dealing with this question I found it necessary to turn my research towards both the process of learning, via a framework imported from developmental psychology, as well Ekman and Friesen’s seminal work on body language. By mapping categories of body language upon Tharp and Gallimore’s theory of ‘assisted performance’, I was able create a theoretical framework that explains how a conductor might facilitate shared leadership practices in performance. The model is presented in the final chapter of the thesis.

³ In evaluating leadership distribution it is helpful to see unconducted chamber music and conducted orchestral music as two points on a continuum. I use the term ‘set point’ to refer to the place on the continuum where an ensemble’s leadership distribution seems to stabilize. Britten Sinfonia’s approach is highly unique in that they maintain a chamber music set point even when working with a conductor.

In addition to the fieldwork project with Britten Sinfonia, I have drawn, albeit to a lesser extent, upon interviews that I conducted with players from the Academy of Ancient Music, with whom I had the opportunity to speak with while reviewing a joint project that they undertook with the Cambridge University Collegium Musicum in January 2011. I have also occasionally referred to other less formal interactions that I have had with other players and conductors.

In summary, I have chosen to adopt a methodological approach that is centred on the relationships that exist between the producers of orchestral music; in most cases this means players and conductors, although in the fieldwork study with Britten Sinfonia I was able to expand my definition of ‘producer’ to include the artistic management team. I have also explored the way that musical parts and scores mediate these relationships. In order to look at a system it is helpful to define the boundaries of that system, and I have done that here. Nevertheless, it is also necessary to acknowledge that the modern conductor’s role is part of other systems that include audiences and the larger cultural work that orchestral music-making performs. Although these systems are outside the range of this study, I find it important to emphasise that this thesis explores only one piece of a greater puzzle.

The thesis itself is divided into five chapters, each mapping onto one of the five research questions outlined above. Chapters 1 and 2 situate the modern conductor’s role within the context of the ‘orchestral network’, based upon Bennis’s ‘tripod’ of ‘leaders, followers, and the common goal’. Chapter 1 breaks down the distinction between leader and followers and, borrowing from Hackman, instead reframes the discussion around the ‘leadership functions’ that might be shared across either a conducted or an un-conducted orchestra. The second section of this chapter uses Gunther Schuller’s *The Compleat Conductor* as a case study which explores the consequences of too narrowly defining the modern conductor’s role. Chapter 2 addresses the thorny problem of defining ‘the common goal’ of orchestral performance. Five models of influence are presented, each bearing a different version of orchestral interpretation. These models convey two basic attitudes towards the process: interpretation as projection, and interpretation as emergence. Seen from the perspective of socially-distributed cognition, however, emergence more accurately reflects the realities of orchestral performance. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the effects of failing to acknowledge this.

By positioning the conductor’s role within the ‘orchestral network’, Chapters 1 and 2 pave the way for an exploration of the interactions that define and shape this network. Chapter 3 argues that full scores and parts offer two competing perspectives

on the scripted ‘musical landscape’. These perspectives colour the interaction between players and conductors in fundamental ways that often go unacknowledged. Chapter 4 looks at ensemble interaction in actual context by drawing upon an extensive fieldwork project with Britten Sinfonia. Here the orchestra’s attention to ‘ensemble-repertoire fit’ is contextualized within the larger organisation, and five musical case studies are presented that exemplify the ensemble’s approach to matching both designated and informal leadership structures to repertoire-based demands. The ensemble’s orientation is based upon the primacy of horizontal relationships, with vertical relationships (which involve distributing responsibility for a musical parameter to one person) emerging only when necessary. This way of working has significant advantages for the orchestra, and these advantages are explored here. This leads directly on to Chapter 5, which examines the modern conductor’s role in the light of the above findings, and presents a means whereby conductors might take these insights from theory into practice.

Although the thesis is clearly divided into five chapters, its structure can also be conceptualized in two parts. The first part performs the necessary task of defining what I refer to in Chapter 3 as the ‘musical landscape’. This is a space where social and musical relationships are co-determinate, and the field in which the interactions that are explored later take place. In order to clarify this ‘musical landscape’, distinctions between ‘complete’ and ‘incomplete’ conductors, projective and emergent conceptions of musical interpretation, and competing perceptual orientations facilitated by the use of parts and full scores need to be addressed, and this occurs in Chapters 1-3. The second part of the thesis, i.e. Chapters 4 and 5, is dedicated to exploring the interactions that occur within this field. This study of interaction leads to an understanding not only of the modern conductor’s role, but also of the conditions in which conductors might add value to orchestral performance.

Given enough time and player skill, most leadership functions necessary for expert performance can be distributed among the orchestral players alone. However, depending upon repertoire, not all can be. Orchestral music-making can be seen as fundamentally structured in a way that facilitates maximum contributions from both players and conductors in the service of interpretations that, under the right circumstances, are highly saturated with human cognition. How this cognition is distributed and the role that the conductor plays in this process problematize not only how we see the orchestra and its leadership, but also how we see interpretation itself. In conclusion, if the conductor is incomplete, so is the ‘guiding intelligence’ conception of orchestral interpretation. The exploration of this insight alone demonstrates this study’s

significance to both performance studies and methods of conducting pedagogy. In it lies a challenge to reposition our understanding of interpretation to reflect its association with creativity, improvisation, and aurality. Although this study begins this process, the field of performance studies has much further to go before the full extent of the advantages of socially-distributed cognition can be understood and practically applied across ensemble music-making contexts.

Reconceptualizing the modern conductor's role

In the light of its institutionalization in the culture of ensemble music-making today, it is easy to forget that the conductor's role is a comparatively modern one. Leadership within groups, however, is far from new, and emerges due to necessity and in relation to the work at hand: the more complex a situation and/or task, the more need there is for explicit leadership. In the context of a symphony orchestra, for example, the conductor, as a non-sounding member of the ensemble, is in a position to help coordinate many of the seemingly infinite number of variables that arises when a large group of orchestral musicians in a specific environment meet each other and an audience with the score (and musical work) as a mutual point of contact. In this situation, the conductor, using some version of gestures and rehearsal technique refined by the profession over the last century and a half, performs a role that holds the potential to contribute value to the performance in a unique way, albeit in an indirect (non-sounding) one. How conductors in any ensemble specifically 'add value', however, is mysterious. The uncritical acceptance of this role's necessity and its associated techniques is often questioned, at least by players, if not by scholars and audiences, and with good reason. In many ways, the modern conductor's role has become to some extent disconnected from the (largely mid-nineteenth century) cultural and musical necessities that contributed to its emergence, as the regular conducting of compositions from the 'pre-conducting' era illustrates. Perhaps even more importantly, the role has become detached from its roots in the variety of musical leadership practices that existed before the advent of conducting as an independent profession, practices that are associated with the performance of chamber music and are based on more cooperative structures where leadership is explicitly shared across ensemble members. Part of this disconnection is unavoidable: both composition and conducting technique have continued to evolve through ongoing dialogue with one another and the culture at large to the extent that there are situations where the conductor's role is undeniably essential. In any case, it seems that the 'technology' of conducting has developed to such a degree that it is too efficient not to use even in many contexts where it might take value away from performance, or at the very least, may prevent the addition of value through the group dynamic from the inside out, rather than from the outside in.

As the ‘technology’ of conducting has improved, orchestras have also grown more dependent on it. The conductor’s role has become detached from past practices because of new expectations that conductors have, in turn, helped ensembles to meet. For example, our expectations for orchestral performance in the ‘age of recordings’ have never been higher, yet they must be achieved with very little rehearsal time. Having one person in charge of rehearsals, and aesthetic outcomes, clearly saves time and money. In addition, the range of repertoire performed by the average ensemble, even amateur and student groups, exceeds anything that has existed up to this point. We no longer have a common musical style or grammar, and having a conductor to make stylistic choices simplifies the rehearsal process and, once again, saves time. Thirdly, the physical technique of conducting can be very compelling, so much so that it may be impossible for an orchestra to act completely against it. Orchestras also expect conductors to demonstrate what they want with clear gestures. Some orchestras have become so adept at following a conductor that the ability to share responsibility for musical outcomes beyond a certain level of interpretation is no longer part of the average professional orchestral player’s skill set; in fact, they may resent having to contribute in this way. The elevation of conductors to the status of celebrities because of their ability to sell recordings and concert tickets has also been a factor in the evolution of the role. Each of these variables contributes to a self-perpetuating cycle: as conductors take on more responsibility, the players are left with less. This balance of power might not be appropriate or necessary for all repertoire, ensembles, and audiences, and it deserves further exploration. More often than not, the conductor’s role as described above is applied across a variety of situations, without thought being given to the context. However, this thesis argues that our dependency on this limited understanding of the role is holding us back from developing or reinvigorating other, more collaborative ways of organizing the performance of ensemble music. It may also keep us from recognizing when it is already happening, as the organizational and social psychologist Richard Hackman has noted in his explanation of the ‘leader attribution error’, which identifies our human tendency to give credit to leaders for an outcome that is clearly a result of teamwork.⁴ Exploring this line of thought has the potential to change not only the way in which we see the conductor’s role, but also how we see

⁴ See Hackman, 2005.

musical interpretation more generally, i.e. as a shared phenomenon that relies on socially-distributed cognition.⁵

This chapter begins by viewing through the lens of leadership theory the symbiotic relationship that exists between orchestra and conductor. Leadership theorists, including social and organizational psychologists, have had a great deal of interest in conductors over the years, and a survey of their insights and conclusions paves the way for the theoretical framework that underlies this study as a whole. Hackman's argument that 'leadership functions' can be shared across individuals in a musical ensemble is then developed and exemplified through a recounting of his research with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. This discussion concludes with the assertion that through committing the 'leader attribution error', we have ascribed more authority to the role of conductor than is appropriate, and there is a need to reconsider the role from the perspective of the 'orchestral network' (my term) which, borrowing from Bennis, I define as the relationship between 'leaders, followers, and the common goal'.⁶ In doing so, new questions emerge that, when answered, will lead to a better understanding of the reality of both orchestra performance and interpretation.

The second section of the chapter begins by drawing attention to one of the main reasons why we have not yet begun this redefinition project in any substantial way, i.e. it discusses how conductors are able to project their power onto musical scores. It also addresses the extent to which modern conducting, through its very definition, has become isolated from other types of musical leadership. I begin by exploring attitudes towards conducting embedded in and revealed through language, and Gunther Schuller's use of the term 'conductor' is explored as a case study, albeit a rather provocative one. Using Jakobson's concept of 'markedness', Schuller's idea of 'the compleat conductor' is allowed to emerge fully in order to make visible its shadow, 'the in compleat conductor'. Through the process of exploring both the 'compleat' and the 'in compleat' sides of the role the full range of possibilities for action within the conductor's environment appears, as do the implications of choosing not to acknowledge the whole that they together comprise. The chapter concludes with the insight that only by breaking free from the conceptualization of the conductor's role as one independent of environmental factors (i.e. musical work, players, audience, and beyond) can we begin to understand the possibility for breadth and depth that exists in the modern conductor's role.

⁵ The idea of socially-distributed cognition was first explored by Hutchins, 1995. I will address this concept more extensively in the chapters that follow.

⁶ See Bennis, 2007.

Leaders and Followers

Today, you conduct some of the most prestigious orchestras, those from Chicago, Cleveland, Berlin, and Vienna. How would you define the special qualities of these orchestras?

Firstly, each player has a complete mastery of his or her instrument. They are orchestral virtuosi. The second quality comes from the fact that these musicians are intelligent players who understand quickly what the conductor wants. They can carry out his wishes almost immediately. The third and final quality is their sense of ensemble. This is crucial, to give each section both a homogeneous style and colour.

--Pierre Boulez in conversation with Cécile Gilly⁷

The role of the professional orchestral player

Both formal and anecdotal evidence suggests that the experience of playing in a professional symphony orchestra is disempowering to its players in a variety of ways. As Boulez suggests in his comment above, the ‘virtuosi’ of the world’s best orchestras are exceptionally skilled at carrying out the demands of conductors, and at conforming to our modern cultural expectations for uniformity in sound and stylistic execution.⁸ It is common knowledge that the training involved in achieving this level of technical proficiency and sensitivity to style is extensive and involves a great deal of solo and chamber music performance. In these genres the choices of individual players are highly valued; indeed, they serve as the criteria for expert performance. The fact that the practice of orchestral playing in the world’s finest orchestras, which in turn serves as a model for orchestral playing generally, stands in opposition to this training (or perhaps it is fair to say ‘conditioning’) is problematic.⁹ Players’ contributions to orchestral music-making, beyond choices at a relatively foreground level of musical interpretation, are often discouraged, and this seems to be one of the reasons for the lack of job satisfaction that many players experience.¹⁰

In an empirical study carried out in the early 1990s which examined the ‘life and work’ of orchestral players in 78 professional orchestras in the US, UK, West Germany

⁷ Boulez, 2003: 141.

⁸ This demand for uniformity and style is a product of a number of factors, not least of which is the rise of mechanical representation. For more information on this issue see Phillips, 2004.

⁹ See Waldron, 2008: 97-108.

¹⁰ The distinction between musical and non-musical leadership is very helpful in understanding the functioning of orchestras such as ‘The London Cooperatives’ (as Allmendinger et al., 1996, refer to them). These ensembles do exhibit a great deal of apparent control over their work environment. Nevertheless, it is arguable that they are just as confined as other orchestras by the dogmatic interpretations of conductors.

and East Germany, Allmendinger, Hackman and Lehman found that orchestral players across all four countries were relatively dissatisfied with many aspects of their work.¹¹ The study explored only professional symphony orchestras who performed selections from the standard symphonic repertoire, and whose members were paid ‘non-trivially’ for their work.¹² The researchers looked specifically at the orchestral players’ ‘motivation and satisfaction’ and compared the results of survey data with those from twelve other groups and organizations including airline cockpit crews, flight attendants, an amateur theatre company, beer sales and delivery teams, economic analysts in the (US) federal government, (US) federal prison guards, industrial production teams, mental health treatment teams, operating room nurses, a professional hockey team, professional string quartets, and semiconductor fabrication teams.¹³ Three questions were addressed. The first involved the level of ‘internal work motivation’. Orchestral players were the most self-motivated of those groups which took part in the survey. As the authors of the study noted, ‘orchestral players are, indeed, fuelled by their own pride and professionalism.’¹⁴

Unfortunately, the rest of the results were less encouraging. The second question addressed ‘general satisfaction’, and here the orchestral players ranked seventh out of the thirteen groups, falling in between federal prison guards at sixth and industrial production teams at eighth.¹⁵ The last question explored the players’ ‘satisfaction with growth possibilities’, and here the orchestral musicians were ranked ninth, followed only by operating room nurses, semiconductor fabrication teams, the professional hockey team, and the amateur theatre company.¹⁶

These results are even more striking in the light of the ranking of professional string quartets in the study. In sharp contrast to the orchestral player results, quartet members scored highest of all of the groups in the last two questions, suggesting that players who are more involved with making ‘higher-level’ musical choices are more satisfied with their work.¹⁷ Referring to the results of the same research in another publication, Hackman attributes the low satisfaction of professional orchestral players to the overall leadership structure of the organization, commenting that:

¹¹ Allmendinger et al., 1996.

¹² Ibid., 195.

¹³ Ibid., 200-2.

¹⁴ Ibid., 201.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 202.

¹⁷ ‘Higher-level’ in this case refers to background musical choices including tempo, general dynamics, and hierarchical relationships between phrases. This stands opposed to ‘lower-level’ choices that tend to include the more subtle shapings and colourations that happen within the phrases. See also the discussion in Chapter 3 on differing cognitive perspectives.

Clearly, much talent and many musical ideas and possibilities are left on the rehearsal stage in the persons of the orchestra members. Their work life is not fulfilling, nor are their contributions harvested, at anywhere near the level they could be. The same is true, I venture, in many other leader-centric groups and organizations. The leader-centric model may be a fundamentally flawed way of thinking about the leadership of teams.¹⁸

The historian and conductor Leon Botstein claims that contributing to the well-known problem of player morale is the widening gap between the ability of conductors and the ever-higher level of technical proficiency of orchestral performance demanded by the current orchestral culture. He notes that ‘the conductor of the present and future will face technical prowess and a level of general musical skill in an orchestra far higher than ever previously existed.’¹⁹ This increase in player expertise primes orchestras to take direction from a conductor more efficiently, a situation that, ironically, contributes to the overall problem of wasted human potential.²⁰ For these and other reasons, both Hackman and Botstein argue that the modern conductor’s role needs to be reconsidered in a way that embraces new approaches to leadership — approaches acknowledging that without followers, leaders do not exist.²¹

Chamber music vs. orchestral music

It is fair to say that most players on the professional level see chamber music performance and orchestral playing as two extremes: the performance of chamber music involves shared decision-making and personal contribution, whereas orchestral playing involves submission.²² Part of the problem is that conducting technique has developed into a very efficient technology, improved in large measure by the modern international conducting scene where maestros work with many different orchestras and under the constraint of less and less rehearsal time. Often conductors on the international circuit find themselves in situations where they cannot fluently speak the language of orchestral members. Out of necessity the physical gestures of conducting technique have become more refined, more standardized, and, above all, more efficient in terms of

¹⁸ Hackman, 2005: 121. Hackman, as Edgar Pierce Professor of Social and Organizational Psychology at Harvard, has intensively studied the work of symphony orchestras for over a decade.

¹⁹ Botstein, 2003: 291-2.

²⁰ That the LSO is commonly referred to as ‘the machine’ by other London musicians is a case in point.

²¹ This is not to say that there will no longer be a place for conductors working in the tradition of the authoritarians of the past. Most people acknowledge that some of the leader-centric conductors working today are individuals of great talent and that our musical culture benefits in certain ways from their contribution. However, this study aims to explore the cost of accepting this model of leadership uncritically.

²² For a nuanced exploration of this within the professional musical community in London see Cottrell, 2004: 77-121.

getting the orchestra to do what the conductor wants.²³ Having one person in charge is also efficient from another perspective: it is easier to get things done.²⁴ Shared decision-making takes time.

However, ensembles such as the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra (OCO), a 26-member conductor-less orchestra, demonstrate that it is possible to perform orchestral repertoire in a way that allows leadership to be shared across several players, blurring the line between chamber music and group performance.²⁵ The OCO cannot run itself like a string quartet; managing 26 contributing parties requires a good deal more structure and rehearsal time. According to Lehman and Hackman, who prepared a leadership case study on the OCO for the Kennedy School of Government, the ensemble takes three times more time than an average symphony orchestra to rehearse the same work.²⁶ The researchers also discovered that, in an attempt to bridge the gap between the freedom of chamber music and the requirements of larger group performance, the orchestra has developed a variety of strategies, all of which help to map one possible middle ground between a conductor-centred approach and a more democratic one. They do this by distributing the leadership functions, usually taken by the conductor, across the orchestra. The orchestra begins by choosing concertmasters to manage the ‘nuts and bolts’ of rehearsals. These leaders are chosen for their ability to organise the practical aspects of the rehearsal (e.g. error detection, interpersonal relations, and time management) and also their particular talents in relation to specific repertoire.²⁷ I argue that in this case the concertmaster is taking on the non-conducting portion of the ‘conductor’s’ role. Indeed, the fact that this person does not assume ultimate responsibility for musical choices is noteworthy. This is done by a core group of players who work out an interpretive strategy in advance of the first rehearsal — a sketch of what they will later actualize in situ. This sketch is not the property of any single person, and it becomes even less personalized as it is filled in by the ensemble over the rehearsal period.

The OCO turns the traditional way of looking at orchestral leadership upside down. They leave the higher-level musical choices to the performers; and the concertmaster, the person most like a ‘conductor’ in the traditional sense, merely

²³ I argue later that apparently unclear gestures can actually benefit ensemble music making; see Chapter 5.

²⁴ This point is also made in Hackman, 2005: 119.

²⁵ Detailed information on the historical advent of the group, its leadership structure, and working methods is available in Lehman and Hackman, 2002.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Leon Botstein argues strongly for the need for conductors to ‘add value’ to rehearsals and performances. See Botstein, 2003. Clearly, concertmasters of the OCO are chosen with this in mind.

facilitates the progression of rehearsals and offers stylistic coaching as appropriate. In performance, the boundaries between leadership and ‘followership’²⁸ blur beyond distinction. Interestingly enough, Hackman’s evaluation is that this group has ‘more leadership’ than symphony orchestras conducted by well-know maestros.²⁹ This idea goes against our standard view of leadership, which Hackman describes as being ‘cause and effect’, i.e. the individual conductor does something that causes the orchestra to respond.³⁰ Modern leadership theory questions this premise³¹ and considers how ‘followers’ and situations change the ways in which leaders lead. Even more importantly, it reframes the question entirely. As Hackman and Wageman asserted, asking whether or how leaders make a difference is nowhere near as useful or interesting as asking ‘under what conditions does leadership matter?’³² Immediately this brings into view another issue, namely whether the modern conductor’s art — one that certainly exceeds the specific context of the professional symphony orchestra — is best defined by those maestros of the world’s great orchestral ensembles. Both educational and leadership theory are now challenging this premise.³³ In fact, Hackman has gone so far as to entitle his contribution to a 2005 collection of writings offering new perspectives on the psychology of leadership ‘Rethinking Team Leadership *or* Team Leaders Are Not Music Directors’. Very few conductors conduct professional orchestras and the symphonic repertoire exclusively, even though our model for the role has evolved from this specific musical context. Clearly a new and more broadly defined conceptualization of the role is called for.

The ‘new organization’

Part of the problem with redefining the modern conductor’s role is the tendency, on the part of both musicians and non-musicians, to idealize the leadership qualities of symphonic conductors. Perhaps the best way to demystify these qualities is to look at the relationship between the symphony orchestra conductor and leadership theorists. This relationship can be said to have begun in 1988 with an article by the management

²⁸ This term was first used and developed in relation to conductors by Atik, 1994.

²⁹ Hackman, 2005: 134-5.

³⁰ Ibid., 121-2. See Chapter 2.

³¹ See Atik, 1994; Avilio, 2007; Hunt, 2004; Hackman and Wageman, 2007; Sternberg, 2007; and Vroom, 2007.

³² Hackman and Wageman, 2007: 43.

³³ I discuss the work of leadership theorists further in this chapter, and consider the work of developmental psychologists in relation to this problem in Chapter 5.

guru Peter Druker entitled ‘The Coming of the New Organization’,³⁴ in which the symphony orchestra, along with hospital care teams and the British administration of India during the Raj, is presented as a model for the organizational structure required for the coming new information-based age.³⁵ Druker argued that the businesses of the future (‘twenty years hence’) will need to be ‘flatter’, i.e. with fewer levels of management, due to changes in demographics, economics, and information technology. These new organizations ‘will be knowledge-based [and] composed largely of specialists who direct and discipline their own performance through organized feedback from colleagues, customers, and headquarters.’³⁶ Druker suggested that the symphony orchestra exemplified this type of organization, as many ‘high-grade specialists’ play directly for the ‘conductor-CEO’ without the interference of middle management.³⁷

Conductors, by extension, serve as models for the leaders of these new organizations. They are professional, i.e. leadership specialists, and trained as such. This solves one of the major problems that Druker anticipates with the elimination of middle management: the lack of a suitable training ground for top management.³⁸ No longer will people work their way up from within the group; leaders will now come from the outside. In Druker’s words: ‘This is the way that major orchestras get their conductors — a young conductor earns his or her spurs in a small orchestra or opera house, only to be hired away by a larger one.’³⁹

One could argue that ‘the coming of the new organization’ happened earlier in music than it did in business, which is what put the symphony orchestra in a position to become the model for the innovations that Druker predicted. There has always been musical leadership, even though for most of music’s history there has been little differentiation between the roles of composer, conductor, and player. Druker’s ‘new organization’ is designed to manage the need for an extreme amount of specialized knowledge. The modern conductor’s role has developed for much the same reason. It is no accident that the role arose in tandem with that of the independent interpreter, that is, with specialization.⁴⁰ This progression happened gradually and as the result of more and

³⁴ Druker, 1988. Druker’s argument still motivates a great deal of academic discourse: Hunt et al. (2004) refine Druker’s argument, while Hackman (2005) discredits it (see below). In addition, the conductor/management-consultant business that was born through Druker’s promotion of the orchestra/new organization metaphor continues to thrive, in spite of research claiming that leader-centred approaches to teamwork are ultimately ineffective.

³⁵ Druker, 1988: 45.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 48. I explore Botstein’s argument, which stands in stark contrast to Druker’s, later in this thesis.

³⁸ Ibid., 52.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ See Bowen, 2003.

more complicated scores written for larger and/or more specialized performing forces. The rise of the virtuoso in the nineteenth century also played a role by increasing the prestige of and expectations for technical accomplishment. In any case, the roles of conductor, composer, and performer eventually began to split and develop along independent lines.

In performing choral music, the division between leader and follower developed more fluently, however, as one could be both a singer and a conductor simultaneously. Using the hands to communicate a *tactus* came along with the developments of rhythmically complicated sixteenth-century polyphony.⁴¹ Presumably this did not prevent the ‘conductor’ from being a full performing member in the group, as the hands are not needed to sing along. However, the hands were generally not used to lead orchestral performance until much later, perhaps simply because they were busy holding instruments. Leading from the violin and/or keyboard was common practice from the onset of the Baroque period. It was not until significant challenges were presented by a new style of composition, perhaps best exemplified by Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, that the baton conductor became a regular feature of performance.

Louis Spohr claimed to have invented baton conducting in 1820.⁴² Whether or not this is true, his timing was right. Although Bowen’s research places the first baton-conducted performance in 1594, he notes that baton conducting was forgotten and rediscovered repeatedly over the next 200 years until it finally gained acceptance between 1820 and 1840.⁴³ Spohr’s use of the baton is directly tied to his inability to play the piano well, a requirement for most Kapellmeisters. In fact, it seems that his piano playing actually disrupted some of his performances,⁴⁴ which clearly motivated him on some level to embrace and develop the new art — and to begin the division between sounding and non-sounding ensemble members which characterized the development of the modern conductor’s role. Spohr’s well-received performance of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with performing forces of between 500-700 musicians⁴⁵ demonstrated the advantages of specialization and the effectiveness of a leadership structure centred on a conductor-CEO, with very little middle management.

⁴¹ Ibid., 95.

⁴² Ibid., 99.

⁴³ Ibid., 101.

⁴⁴ ‘Spohr told Moritz Hauptmann “that he would give a hundred *Louis d’or* to be able to play the piano,” and Hauptmann agreed: “Spohr’s inability to play the piano is one of the main reasons why our new operas come to grief in nine cases out of ten.”’ Quoted in *ibid.*, 101.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

The search for a definition

Conducting as a professional specialism continued to develop throughout the nineteenth century. This was fuelled, to a large extent, by the need to manage more and more compositional and performative complexity. By the end of the century the separation of conductor from performer was more or less complete, as it eventually became a rarity for a conductor to maintain a performing career after making the transition to professional conducting.⁴⁶ The split of conductor from composer happened more slowly. In the late nineteenth century the conductor/composer was common, yet in the twentieth century this became the exception rather than the rule. Musicians such as Stravinsky and Bernstein kept the tradition alive to some extent; nevertheless, in spite of a few notable exceptions, there are arguably fewer than ever conductor/composers working at the highest levels of orchestral performance today.

As the conductor's role became more differentiated from the other related roles of performer and composer, the search for a definition began. Many people, including some musicians, have a difficult time knowing what it is that conductors do and what makes them effective.⁴⁷ Hans Keller, for example, whose career paralleled the rise of the modern musical specialist, called conductors 'phoneys';⁴⁸ the similar views of Schmidt, Schoenberg and Stravinsky are well known.⁴⁹ Defining what it is that makes a conductor good seems to be as difficult as clarifying what makes any kind of leader effective, albeit with the added complication that the conductor's role is non-sounding in performance, which is a problem if one dismisses the view that the conductor plays the orchestra like a piano. Leadership theorists agree that no clear definition of leadership exists, and that what separates effective and non-effective leaders is particularly difficult to quantify.⁵⁰ Modern scholars have generally discredited attempts to define leadership through common traits and behaviours, and defining leadership exclusively through situational factors also fails due to individual differences that exist between effective leaders in similar positions.⁵¹ *Grove Music Online* defines the modern conductor as a time beater, an interpreter, and an administrator,⁵² and in so doing also falls victim to this same criticism, as it offers nothing toward defining what makes one

⁴⁶ There are exceptions to this, of course, such as Daniel Barenboim and James Levine.

⁴⁷ The BBC's reality television series *Maestro*, aired in the summer of 2008, capitalized on this 'mystique' and captured the attention of viewers by offering clues into the inner workings of (and difficulties in defining) the conductor's art by subjecting eight celebrities to the rigours of conducting the BBC Concert Orchestra.

⁴⁸ Keller, 1987: 21-7. Also see Botstein's commentary on Keller's comments in Botstein, 2003.

⁴⁹ See Botstein, 2003: 287 for a summary.

⁵⁰ See Vroom and Jago, 2007: 17.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 17-24.

⁵² See 'Conducting' in *Grove Music Online*, accessed 18 October 2008.

conductor more effective than another,⁵³ nor does it acknowledge how conducting changes across situations, including those involving repertoire that might as easily be led from the keyboard or violin.⁵⁴ New theories in leadership, including contingency,⁵⁵ integrative,⁵⁶ and systems models,⁵⁷ acknowledge that leadership is a complex phenomenon involving a combination of factors including traits, behaviour, and context, among other things, and may be of great help in clarifying the modern conductor's role.

Although the trait-based concept of leadership has been widely accepted in regard to musical leadership, some, such as the conducting pedagogue Harold Farberman, question the concept of the 'born conductor'. Farberman claims that the concept has been one of the main obstacles to innovation in conducting technique and providing appropriate training for young conductors.⁵⁸ Farberman states:

My conviction that 'born conductors' do not exist may be hard to comprehend when we have an aggressive recording industry and an active music press that tell us differently. Young naturals, audacious talents who seemingly get it right without instruction, are constantly touted, but history reveals that the prodigies who continue to grow and fulfil musical expectations are likely to be instrumentalists or composers such as Mozart and Mendelssohn, but not conductors. There are virtually no prodigal conductors, and for good reason [...] The path to the podium is not a direct one. Gifted adult musicians change career direction because their visions propel them beyond a single instrument to the challenge of music's most complex instrument, the symphony orchestra. While it is extremely helpful to have been a virtuoso musician, its effect while facing an orchestra is limited. Good conductors quickly discover the complex nature of the job and learn they will require significant social skills for dealing with a living instrument.⁵⁹

The idea that certain inborn characteristics define conductors is the musical version of the trait models of leadership that theorists have discredited. As an alternative to the 'born conductor' model, Farberman views conducting as a collection of necessary skills, as many, including the authors of seminal conducting texts such as Scherchen and Rudolf,⁶⁰ have done before him. Farberman's exploration of conducting training offers a

⁵³ *Grove Online* is perhaps not the best place to address questions of value; however, as I will argue below, the use of this brief list of characteristics to define the role is far from unproblematic in the light of the limitations of trait-based definitions of leadership.

⁵⁴ Although conducting is described later in the article as coming from these historical routes.

⁵⁵ These approaches include Fiedler's Contingency Model, and Path-Goal Theory. See Vroom (2007) for an overview.

⁵⁶ One of the best known integrative theories is Zaccaro's Leader Attribute Model. See Figure 1.2 below.

⁵⁷ See Sternberg, 2007: 34-42.

⁵⁸ See Farberman, 2003: 249-261. The debuts of Rattle and Harding at age 21, in addition to the 2009 Proms performance by 24 year-old conductor Gustavo Dudamel, are likely to be the exceptions that prove the rule.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 255.

⁶⁰ Scherchen, 1929, trans. by M.D. Calvocoressi, 1989; Rudolph, 1949/1994.

typical, albeit somewhat updated, view of the ideal conductor's skill set.⁶¹ Using as a springboard the description of conductors of *New York Times* music critic Harold Schonberg, Farberman critiques and qualifies Schonberg's list of necessary skills while at the same time making one of his own. Their proposed lists of essential skills are as follows:

Schonberg	Farberman
(1) Must play several instruments	Must play one instrument well and have a performing knowledge of one stringed instrument
(2) Should have a knowledge of every instrument	Knows how to play an instrument, so complete knowledge is not necessary. It is however necessary to know ranges and sonorities of individual and groups of instruments
(3) Must be able to read a full score easily	Knows clefs, keys, transpositions, tempo markings, time signatures, and meanings of musical terms
(4) Understands the 'structure and meaning of a score'	Ability to carry out harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, and phrase analysis, 'but the "meaning" of music is inherently ambiguous and should not be fixed'
(5) Works to achieve the composer's vision	Performance choices change over time; whatever 'vision' is achievable is limited due to 'a series of compromises because of the inadequate manner in which baton technique is understood and taught'
(6) Should have the technique and memory to absorb new works	Different works require different technical solutions
(7) Has perfect pitch and the ability to hear wrong notes	Players can correct wrong notes and intonation themselves. The ability to hear rhythmic articulation is more important than absolute pitch when shaping phrases and bringing out structure
(8) Composing and orchestration skills	Needs to know the basic mechanics of composition and orchestration ⁶²

Figure 1.1. *Schonberg's and Farberman's lists of the 'essential skills' of a conductor*

⁶¹ See Farberman, 2005: 253-4. Farberman's technical approach is focused on developing the illustrative component of gesture. The advantages and disadvantages of the method are described in detail in Chapter 5.

⁶² Ibid. Schonberg's list is attributed to an unidentified *New York Times* clipping.

The skill-based approach is limited for various reasons, one of which is explicit in the fact that Farberman offers his own skill set while at the same time updating another. Essential skills change over time and vary from situation to situation and this set, at least, fails to acknowledge the key interpersonal aspects of the role. As Rudolf notes, ‘A wide scope of musical and psychological aspects exists in evaluating the work accomplished by a conductor and his team of players.’⁶³

Traits, skills or context, considered in isolation, are all inadequate in describing leadership and, by extension, conducting — particularly when trying to determine effectiveness or predict who might hold leadership potential. The ‘leader attributes model’⁶⁴ of organizational psychologist Stephen Zaccaro offers an integrated approach to understanding these problems by expanding the field of exploration to include attributes in two constellations (see Figure 1.2 below). ‘Distal attributes’ include personality, cognitive abilities, and motives and values; ‘proximal attributes’ are problem-solving skills, social appraisal skills, and expertise and tacit knowledge. On the ‘nature-nurture’ continuum, distal attributes are closer to the former (e.g. the ‘born conductor’ proposition) while proximal attributes are more influenced by the latter (e.g. a skill-set understanding). Both sets of attributes interact with each other in ‘leader processes’ that are themselves affected by environmental factors; the outcome of these processes results in different criteria for leadership evaluation including predictions of leader emergence, effectiveness, and advancement and promotion.⁶⁵

Zaccaro’s model (Figure 1.2 overleaf) is one of several new approaches borrowed from leadership theory that might be utilized in seeking a more complete understanding of the modern conductor’s role. In any case, it demonstrates the necessity of considering the problem more broadly and systematically than has been done up to this point.

The leader attribution error

That scholars have not considered the conductor’s role from a more holistic perspective is due largely to the ‘leader attribution error’. Hackman coined this term as a way to describe the tendency people have to credit the leader with the success or failure of a team effort. He explains that this happens because we generally prefer to attribute

⁶³ Rudolf, 1995: 382.

⁶⁴ Zaccaro, 2004.

⁶⁵ For a full description of this model, see Zaccaro, 2007: 11-13.

responsibility to things we can see, while failing to notice the dynamics operating in the background.⁶⁶

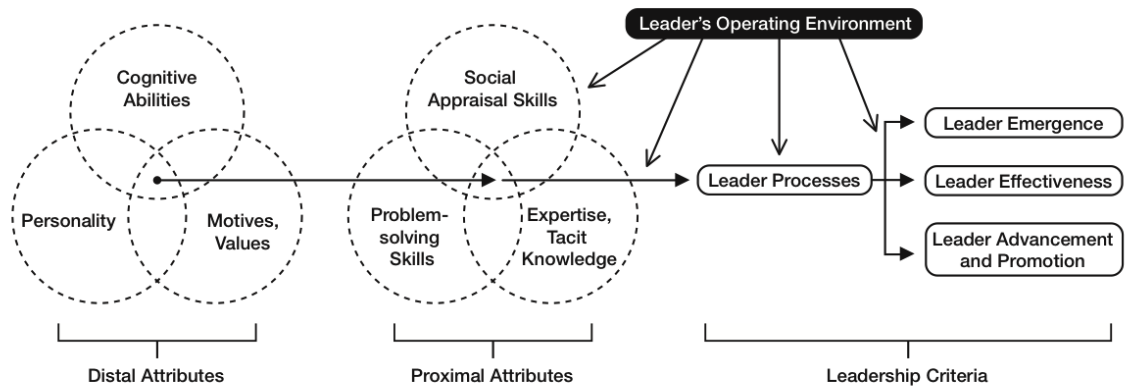


Figure 1.2. Adapted from Zaccaro's model of leader attributes and leader performance.⁶⁷

Interestingly enough, Hackman, who has studied countless organizations over the course of his career, has concluded that in no other situation are people likely to give more undue credit to the efforts of a leader for the work of a team than in the case of a professional symphony orchestra.⁶⁸

Hackman had an interest in unpicking the leadership style of authoritarian conductors in order to evaluate the popular, yet inappropriate, use of the conductor/orchestra metaphor as a model for leadership in training and scholarly discussions.⁶⁹ The 'common sense' view of leadership tends to assume that influence flows in a straight line from leader to group. Occasionally the process also works in reverse when an organization is going through a transitional period and a leader needs to adjust to the situation.⁷⁰ However, Hackman's research suggests that leadership is more effective when it focuses on improving a group's contextual conditions than when it

⁶⁶ Hackman, 2005: 116.

⁶⁷ From Zaccaro, 2007. Adapted from Zaccaro, et al., 2004.

⁶⁸ Hackman, 2005: 117.

⁶⁹ Hackman (2005) quotes uses of the metaphor by Stephen Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, among others. I am most familiar with the practical aspects of this work through the work of Benjamin Zander, motivational speaker and conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra. He claims through his seminars that: 'In this new model of leadership [modelled by the conductor/orchestra], the conductor sees his job as awakening possibility in others. The orchestra is a group of highly trained individuals poised to coalesce into an effective whole. Passion, creativity and the desire to contribute are basic human instincts to be released.' from <http://www.benjaminzander.com/speaker/> accessed 24 December 2008.

⁷⁰ Hackman, 2005: 122.

aims to redirect the causes of behaviour in real time.⁷¹ Making a change in only a few conditions can have a large impact on the success of a group. Leaders who wish to improve team work can do so by creating ‘real teams’ (i.e. stable groups that exist for a task-defined amount of time), providing these groups with ‘compelling direction’ for their activities, ensuring that the team has an ‘enabling design’ that supports effective and efficient work, and finally making available ‘expert coaching’ which can help groups get the greatest amount of benefit out of their positive environmental situation.⁷²

This alternative approach to leadership is exemplified through case-study material collected from Hackman’s work with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, as described above. His provocative claim that this group has ‘more leadership’ than conductor-led ensembles is compelling.⁷³ In this leadership model the lines of influence extend in all directions and the emphasis is on filling leadership functions, and not necessarily on who fills them or how they go about it.⁷⁴ This type of leadership does not manifest itself in the form of a direct democracy: roles are distributed to members on the basis of the needs of the situation. This contingency-based approach to defining leadership is consistent with the outlook of this thesis as a whole.

Hackman’s argument for a more indirect approach to leadership does not guarantee success, but he has demonstrated that it can increase the probability that great moments of performance will occur. In describing a model for this sort of approach, Hackman remarks on the performance of a Mahler symphony by the Russian conductor Yuri Temirkanov:

He cued the musicians to begin, and then his hands went to his sides. The orchestra played, and he *listened*. When some adjustment or assistance was needed, he provided it — signalling players with his eyes or body, or guiding a transition with his arms and hands. But that was about the extent of it. He had prepared the orchestra well during rehearsals, and all the right conditions were in place. Now, at the performance, when it counted the most, he was ‘managing from the margin.’⁷⁵

Hackman argues that there are two ways to undermine the possibility of this sort of performative ‘magic’. The first is to act like a team leader in the ‘maestro tradition’, i.e. those who simply do the work all by themselves, and resist any efforts to facilitate and

⁷¹ Ibid., 122-23.

⁷² Ibid., 124.

⁷³ Ibid., 134-5.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 134.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 139. I would argue that Barenboim’s work with the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra is another good example of this approach to leadership.

coordinate contributions from other members of the team. The second is to disengage from the process and assume that it will happen automatically.⁷⁶

In summary, it seems that the dynamic associated with a certain type of unilateral leadership is the critical difference between chamber music and orchestral performance. However, as Hackman's research reveals, there is a middle ground where 'leadership functions' rather than just leadership roles can be acknowledged and acted upon. In fact, when asking the accomplished orchestral leader and chamber musician Gordan Nikolitch about how orchestral and chamber music performance differ, I was told that I was asking the wrong question. Nikolitch sees the same problems of lack of personal and interpersonal sensitivity at work in both contexts.⁷⁷ Listening and responding in relation to both sounding and non-sounding ensemble members, clearly something at the core of any sort of musical 'sensitivity', is a dynamic and multifaceted process; this is true from the perspective of both leader and follower. Nikolitch's skill at leading performances from the violin allows for an understanding of leadership that is much more fluid and complex than the one embodied by the standard model of the conductor on the podium.⁷⁸ For Nikolitch, making room for 'more leadership', something he has learned to do, also means making room for more musical sensitivity and greater personal investment from players.⁷⁹ To most people — both musicians and non-musicians — conductors give the illusion of being completely in control of their subordinates, and this might be true to some extent; however, few have reviewed the costs in terms of aesthetic outcome and player morale or have considered alternatives to the standard approach in any sort of systematic way. Part of the reason for this is that in order to move in the direction of 'more leadership' there is the need to embrace aspects of musical leadership that have been overlooked and diminished as the conductor's role has become more professionalized. The second part of the chapter describes how this situation might be reconceptualized in a way that makes 'more leadership' possible.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 138. The approach to conducting advocated by Gunther Schuller in *The Compleat Conductor*, which I will describe in depth below, encourages both conditions.

⁷⁷ Private conversation at Royal College of Music, London, January 2008.

⁷⁸ The approach of another violinist leader, Jacqueline Shave, will be explored extensively in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

⁷⁹ When discussing this point Nikolitch commented that he 'had to learn that telling people what to do never works'.

Compleat and Incompleat Conductors

Until both scholars and practitioners accept the risks of breaking out of our traditional ways of construing and leading social systems, we will remain vulnerable to the leader attribution error — and we will continue to mistakenly assume that the best leaders are those who stand on whatever podium they can command and, through their personal efforts in real time, extract greatness from their teams.

--J. Richard Hackman⁸⁰

Gunther Schuller's 1997 book *The Compleat Conductor*⁸¹ is arguably the most widely discussed book on conducting written in the last few decades. At the heart of Schuller's thesis is a 'philosophy' that centres the conductor's role in the 'realization'⁸² of the specific notation as it appears in the score. Schuller uses fidelity to the musical score as the criterion for the painstaking assessment of over 300 recordings before dismissing most of the performances as inadequate and lacking in integrity. I argue that although it appears that Schuller is simply presenting another unhelpful claim for the notion that the musical work is located in the notation, what is in fact happening is far more complex, and can be read as an outcome of his idealization of the notion of being 'compleat'. Schuller is facing the consequences of Hackman's 'leader attribution error' described above. When compounded by his insistence that the core attribute of a good conductor is humility, this reinforces his projection of authority on to the musical score (a term which he uses interchangeably with 'the composer'). Schuller ends up creating a standard which only a performance that conforms to the letter of the score can satisfy. This strategy, albeit unconscious, uses a rigid adherence to the musical notation as a means to ward off any sense of 'incompleat-ness', but the consequences of this choice are profound, as much of the sense for the performative aspects of music-making appears to be lost, and with it any chance of exploring the full potential of actualizing 'more leadership' within the modern conductor's role. What follows is an exploration of how conductors got into the 'leader attribution error' and how they might begin to get out, using Schuller's *Compleat Conductor* as a case study.⁸³

⁸⁰ Hackman, 2005: 141.

⁸¹ Schuller, 1997.

⁸² A term borrowed from Ravel (see below).

⁸³ I am suggesting a parallel here with Joseph Kerman's challenge to musical analysis. See Joseph Kerman, 'How we got into analysis, and how to get out' *Critical Inquiry* 7/2 (1980): 311-331.

The compleat conductor

If it were possible for anyone to become a truly ‘compleat’ conductor, Gunther Schuller would be in the running. He was a horn prodigy and served as principal horn for several first-rate ensembles including the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra; he also won a Pulitzer Prize for composition, and has decades of conducting experience. In addition to this he is the author of two well-respected studies of the history of jazz, and has been the recipient of a MacArthur Foundation ‘genius’ grant.

The persona of the ‘compleat’ conductor emerges from Schuller’s book as an almost mythological construction: this conductor is an independent, hardworking and moral character who exhibits an unquestioning attitude towards the musical score. From Schuller’s perspective, conducting is a collaboration between conductor and composer, even if the composer is no longer living.⁸⁴ His view of interpretation is that it is unfortunate, yet inevitable, i.e. ‘there is no practical way of stopping performers from interpreting or misinterpreting a composers’ work.’⁸⁵ Schuller argues that the notion of interpretation encourages performers to lose their humility in the face of the musical score, and he therefore prefers to use the term ‘realization’, borrowed from Ravel whom he quotes as saying, ‘One should not interpret my music; one should realize it.’⁸⁶

The Compleat Conductor’s 571 pages are divided into three sections. The first is a ‘philosophy’ of conducting; the second, a history; and the third, an extended analytical section of over 400 pages which offers detailed insights and critiques of conductors based on an extensive number of recordings of eight masterworks including: Beethoven Symphonies 5 and 7, Brahms Symphonies 1 and 4, Strauss’s *Till Eulenspiegel*, Ravel’s *Daphnis et Chloé* Second Suite, Schumann Symphony 2, and Tchaikovsky Symphony 6.

The analytical section is quite astounding in its level of detail, insight and critical fluency. Often Schuller moves through sections bar by bar and in the process reveals mediocre *mezzo-fortes* in places where *piano* or *forte* is required, *crescendos* that begin or end prematurely, rhythmic features in need of differentiation, undisciplined approaches to bowing, and blurred and unvoiced harmonies — all of which could be, and presumably are, avoided when he conducts.⁸⁷ His reflections on phrase structure and hypermetric organization of the works are also instructive. What is demonstrated in this section is that the ‘compleat’ conductor’s job is to ‘realize’ every

⁸⁴ Schuller, 1997: 10.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 40.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁸⁷ An optional companion CD to the book with Schuller conducting is available.

possible notational detail. Schuller's profound disappointment with those conductors (including those whom he admits to be his former heroes, i.e. Furtwängler, Toscanini, Klemperer, and Walter) who have fallen from grace either through contradicting or overlooking some aspect of the score, is palpable, and his determination to 'name and shame' those conductors who violate the letter of the score (in the name of 'fairness' all identities are given)⁸⁸ demonstrates just how stark, lonely, and limiting his quest for 'compleatness' is.

For Schuller, the conductor alone is responsible for every aspect of the performance, and he criticizes his colleagues with this in mind. It is as if the orchestra does not exist. His attitude could not better exemplify the leader attribution error. In order for the conductor to be 'compleat' the ensemble needs to be disciplined out of any tendency towards asserting interpretive insight, which is a tall order, as one has to acknowledge at the level of actuality that, as Robert Shaw quipped, 'the hands don't sing.' It seems that Schuller is able to accomplish this feat of making the ensemble disappear by engaging in a special type of relationship with the score: a relationship between conductor and composer ('even if the composer is dead'). He does not conceptualize the orchestral personnel as active participants in the music-making: they merely 'realize' the score under the disciplining eye of the conductor, who reveals what the composer means. Both the players and the conductor approach the score as a fixed point of contact, and in so doing the score becomes immovable and hardens into an artefact. From this fixed point the conductor and instrumentalists play a 'matching game'. This game is much like the one that Schuller demonstrates in his critique of the over 300 recorded performances discussed in the book, the criterion for assessment being whether the performances correspond to the text. True communication between conductor and orchestra — a state where one could genuinely move the other — is blocked, and the aim of the performance is to play the score correctly. As Leon Botstein puts it: 'The point of Schuller's engaging, impressive, instructive, and brilliant book is, put bluntly, to assert that if you know what you are doing and do your homework carefully you *may* avoid making a mistake.'⁸⁹

Strengthening the authority of the text to an even greater degree is Schuller's assertion that humility is the most important character trait a conductor can possess. He explains that

⁸⁸ Schuller, 1997: xi.

⁸⁹ Botstein, 1997: 3.

the ‘compleat’ conductor must possess a whole range of diverse talents [...] But all these talents must be encompassed in one all-embracing basic attitude: a deep humility before the art of music that contains in it a profound love for and unswerving commitment to serving that art; a humility that considers it a privilege, an honour, to bring to life the masterworks of our musical heritage, and to communicate through them to our fellow human beings. With such an unostentatious approach, the many other talents a conductor needs to possess will evolve in proper perspective [...]⁹⁰

Although Schuller may have the best intentions here, I would argue that this call for humility is what finalizes the conductor’s separation from the ensemble. Schuller does not express humility before his colleagues; in fact it is more likely that he simply wants to feel humble (albeit unconsciously) while having all the advantages that come from speaking with the composer’s voice. In a way this can be seen as a version of the leader attribution error raised to another level. Not only does he ascribe to the conductor what is the product of teamwork between the orchestra and conductor, but he then goes on in the name of humility to ascribe to the composer the product of the same relationships.

In orchestral settings, relationships between players and conductors are mediated by scores in different ways.⁹¹ The pattern of interaction described above is predicated on a fixed text, and this arrangement is due to at least two factors: (1) Schuller’s argument that the ideal conductor is ‘compleat’ within himself, which forces him to commit the leader attribution error and by extension to cut off the possibility of an ensemble working as a team; and (2) Schuller’s assertion that the ‘compleat’ conductor exhibits humility to the musical score (or as he says elsewhere ‘the composer’) before all else. This encourages Schuller to focus his attention on what he perceives to be the composer’s intentions and to avoid looking at his own private motivations, at least when in the role of conductor. In this way, Schuller falls into one of the traps that Hackman claims prevent inspired performance: he refuses to acknowledge, let alone enable, the contribution of his team members. As described above, Hackman argues that although a leader cannot make a team great, he or she can increase the probability that this will happen in various ways. The leader can also reliably prevent good performances:

One way to go wrong [...] is to act like a maestro on the podium, body and limbs in constant motion in an effort to pull greatness from an orchestra. Team leaders in maestro tradition would prefer to do the work all by themselves, without having to engender and coordinate the efforts of others. But since that is not possible, they do the next best thing and personally manage every aspect of the work process, keeping a close eye on all that is transpiring and issuing to team

⁹⁰ Schuller, 1997: 6.

⁹¹ This issue is explored in depth in Chapter 2.

members an unending stream of instructions and corrections. Magic is not commonly observed in teams whose leaders act like maestros.⁹²

Hackman argues that the second major way in which the leader can prevent inspired performance is not to engage with the team at all; this is often justified by wanting to ‘stay out of the way’.⁹³ The metaphorical ‘grabbing’ or ‘dropping’ of the team, in Hackman’s view, does more harm than can be undone by good leadership strategies. Schuller’s rigid adherence to a ‘fixed’ musical text creates a barrier that prevents a balanced interchange between conductor and orchestra, and if Hackman is correct, this means that Schuller cannot possibly lead an inspired performance. In other words, perhaps the main problem with Schuller’s argument is, as Leon Botstein notes, ‘in [its] relentless appeal to authority in cases where authority cannot exist.’⁹⁴ As blind to the matter as Schuller seems to be, it does not change the fact that we ourselves give meaning to scores and musical works; and try as we might, conducting technique on its own does not result in sound. Sound in an orchestra requires other people.

The incomplete conductor

As Schuller defines the ‘complete’ conductor he also defines its shadow, which I will refer to as the ‘incomplete’ conductor. This shadow or background figure when combined with the foreground ‘complete conductor’ make one whole which represents the working environment and potentiality of the modern conductor. Reconstructing this field is an essential prerequisite to the relational and ecologically-based approach that is used throughout this study.

The method demonstrated below is based upon the concept of ‘markedness’, as developed by the Russian linguist and semiotician Roman Jakobson. Markedness helps to clarify how the binary between ‘complete’ and ‘incomplete’ occurs. The premise of this theory is that ‘[e]very single constituent of any linguistic system is built on an opposition of two logical contradictories: the presence of an attribute (‘markedness’) in contraposition to its absence (‘unmarkedness’).⁹⁵ Binaries rarely have equal weight, and paired signs consist of both ‘unmarked’ and ‘marked’ forms. This applies at two levels, i.e. those of signifier and signified.⁹⁶ A special linguistic feature distinguishes the ‘marked’ signifier from the ‘unmarked’ form. The ‘marked’ form is recognized by its

⁹² Hackman, 2005: 138-9.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Botstein, 1997: 8.

⁹⁵ Lecht, 1994: 62, quoted in Chandler, 2002: 110.

⁹⁶ Chandler, Ibid. In this case, the word or concept is the signifier, and the real-life conductor is the signified.

complexity, and in the case of ‘formal marking’, this is done by adding to the ‘unmarked’ version.⁹⁷ The terms ‘man’ (unmarked) and ‘woman’ (marked) are a common example, the prefix ‘wo-’ being added to create the marked form. The ‘compleat conductor’ (unmarked form) and ‘incompleat conductor’ (marked form) is the binary I will be exploring below.

Chandler explains that ‘[w]here terms are paired, the pairing is rarely symmetrical but rather *hierarchical* [...] The unmarked term is primary, being given precedence and priority, while the marked term is treated as secondary or even suppressed as an ‘absent signifier’.’⁹⁸ The ‘absent signifier’ of ‘incomplete conductor’ is revealed by looking at what Schuller has failed to include in his description of the ‘compleat conductor’. Because the ‘marked’ term (often called ‘Term B’) is relationally dependent upon the ‘unmarked’ version (‘Term A’), the former is defined by what the latter is not; that is, in this case, the ‘incompleat conductor’ is the negation of the ‘compleat’ version. However, as Derrida demonstrated, Term A is defined by what it suppresses.⁹⁹ It therefore follows that:

The unmarked form is typically dominant (e.g. within a text or corpus) and therefore seems to be ‘neutral’, ‘normal’, and ‘natural’. It is thus ‘transparent’ — drawing no attention to its invisibly privileged status, while the deviance of the marked form is salient. Where it is not simply subsumed, the marked form is foregrounded — presented as ‘different’; it is ‘out of the ordinary’ — an extraordinary deviational ‘special case’ which is something other than the standard or default form of the unmarked term. *Unmarked—marked* may thus be read as *norm-deviation*.¹⁰⁰

Figure 1.3 contains a summary of many of the traits ascribed both explicitly and implicitly by Schuller to the unmarked Term A (the ‘compleat conductor’). I have also included the default traits assigned to marked Term B (the ‘incompleat conductor’). In the text that follows, each pair of concepts will be briefly explored. The rationale for this approach is to demonstrate that working conductors, more often than not, inhabit the range of possibilities that exist in the fields of Term A *and* Term B. In fact, once the ‘absent signifier/signified’ is revealed, the need to see the distinction as a binary becomes less important. The study as a whole draws upon this insight.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 111.

⁹⁹ Derrida, 1976, quoted in Chandler, 2002: 112.

¹⁰⁰ Chandler, 2002: 112.

Figure 1.3. *The traits of Schuller's 'compleat' and 'incompleat' conductors.*

	The compleat conductor	The incompleat conductor
	(Unmarked term) A	(Marked term) B
(1)	'normal' (norm)	'different' (norm-deviation)
(2)	The (symphony orchestra) conductor	The choral conductor The opera conductor The orchestral coach The church choirmaster The bandmaster The conductor of new music
(3)	Repertoire ranging from Beethoven to Ravel	Repertoire ranging from early to new music, for a variety of instrumentations, also popular and folk styles
(4)	Integrity comes from internal relationships	Integrity comes from both internal and external relationships
(5)	The finest players available	All levels of players
(6)	Communication via predetermined channel: score—conductor—orchestra	Communication within Network; no pre-set channel
(7)	'realization'	'argument'
(8)	Conductor works in collaboration with composer (but only with the intent to 'serve the music')	Conductor works in collaboration with score, the greater musical work, players/singers, audience, other collaborators
(9)	Low morale among personnel	Higher morale coming from shared sense of leadership
(10)	Music = score/CD (product)	Music = performance (process)
(11)	Needs of the score determine the conductor's actions	Needs of the situation determine the conductor's actions
(12)	Conductor as arbitrator	Conductor as facilitator
(13)	Professional conductor	Musician/scholar who conducts
(14)	Historically a nineteenth-century invention strengthened by modernist values	Role is of ongoing historical significance
(15)	Gesture reflects 'pulse'	Gesture reflects 'music' or invites interaction
(16)	Conductor-led performance	Performance as the result of socially-distributed cognition

(1) Normal *and* Different

The concept of ‘normal’ in relation to conducting is straightforward: the idea of the single person on the podium using gesture to communicate is normal, whereas the idea of ‘leadership functions’ that may or may not be embodied in a single person is not. The latter concept is a ‘marked’ one; however, failing to acknowledge the connection between leadership functions and the conductor’s role certainly limits our ability to understand what conductors do and what makes the non-sounding ensemble member’s role unique and necessary (when it is).

(2) The (symphony orchestra) conductor *and* the choral conductor, the opera conductor, the orchestral coach, the church choirmaster, the bandmaster, the conductor of new music

In the *Cambridge Companion to Conducting* there are chapters assigned to the ‘special’ work of conducting choirs, opera, and early music; all other chapters are about the work of ‘conductors’, meaning symphony orchestra conductors.¹⁰¹ This demonstrates clearly the power of the ‘unmarked’ term: indeed, it is ubiquitous. To think of conductors means primarily to think of the conductors of symphony orchestras. However, the consequence of not acknowledging the unique situations that guide ‘marked’ conducting roles (e.g. the choral and opera conductor) means that they are often left without appropriate models.¹⁰²

(3) Repertoire ranging from Beethoven to Ravel *and* Repertoire ranging from early to new music, for a variety of instrumentations, also popular and folk styles

It is interesting to note that even though Schuller is best known for his work with new music and jazz, he has chosen in *The Compleat Conductor* to explore a limited repertoire of orchestral ‘masterworks’. Along with the notion that ‘the compleat conductor’ is the symphony orchestra conductor comes the idea that the core of the

¹⁰¹ Bowen (ed.), 2003.

¹⁰² For an in-depth discussion of this issue see Waldron’s (2008) critique of Schuller. In this article the author argues that the perspective advocated by Schuller does harm when applied to her specific conducting situation of leading student wind bands.

‘unmarked’ conductor’s job revolves around realizing this repertoire from the symphonic canon. It is obvious how this creates a limited framework within which to approach ensemble music-making, especially in view of the diversity of ensembles that are led using what we think of as standard conducting technique.

(4) Integrity comes from internal relationships *and* Integrity comes from both internal and external relationships

What is meant by ‘integrity’ in this context is musical integrity, i.e. what unifies the musical performance. For Schuller musical unity comes from a process that involves what he might describe as ‘discovering the composer’s intentions’. This is achieved through standard analytical procedures which both start and end at the level of the score. A more ‘marked’ conception of musical integrity is obvious in concerto performance, where a main factor in achieving a unified performance is the orchestra’s relationship to the soloist. This conception may begin with the score but often departs from it, and in fact can come into being only in the performance situation itself.

(5) The finest players available *and* All levels of players

As noted earlier, student conductors often refer to the London Symphony Orchestra as ‘the machine’. The LSO are highly skilled at reading conductors, and have a superb sense of ensemble regardless of who leads them. This is clearly the type of orchestra that would best realize the aims of Schuller’s ‘complete conductor’. An orchestra that included different levels of instrumental proficiency or experience in orchestral playing would not be appropriate and represents, in this context, the ‘marked’ exceptions to the ‘unmarked’ rule. The conductor Peter Broadbent once said, ‘a professional conductor does not necessarily conduct professionals’.¹⁰³ This sort of attitude reflects what could be integrated into the conductor’s role if the ‘marked’ aspects of the role were more visible.

¹⁰³ Private conversation, Spring 2006.

(6) Communication via predetermined channel: score—conductor—orchestra *and* Communication within Network (no pre-set channel)

For Schuller's 'compleat conductor', the flow of influence moves from the score through the conductor to the orchestra. For the 'incompleat' conductor of the concerto described above, for example, the flow of influence moves in at least two directions. However, the possibilities for mutual influence are in fact almost infinite, coming from the score, performers, conductor, audience, acoustic, culture, and beyond.

(7) 'Realization' *and* 'Argument'

As described above, Schuller sees the 'compleat' conductor's work as 'realizing' the score. This can be set against Taruskin's claim that a score is an argument which can be tested in performance. He claims that Norrington does this when he offers a literal interpretation of Beethoven's metronome markings in his Symphony Cycle CD. In order for Norrington to keep to the printed tempo markings, he must shift the importance away from other score indications.¹⁰⁴ Taruskin's 'marked' idea of 'score as argument' reveals the implicit choices that are made by conductors even in the most score-centred performance.

(8) Conductor works in collaboration with composer (but only with the intent to 'serve the music') *and* Conductor works in collaboration with score, the greater musical work, players/singers, audience, other collaborators

Schuller's 'compleat' conductor claims to be in dialogue with the non-living composer. Whether the composer is living or dead is of little consequence, as Schuller's intention is not to discover anything new, only to realize what he believes is already contained in the score. The 'incompleat' conductor's collaboration with various colleagues and communities as well as with the greater musical work¹⁰⁵ holds the opportunity to discover what is new in each performance of a work, and also for the score and the work itself to change if the conductor is collaborating with a living composer.

¹⁰⁴ See Taruskin, 1995: 230-4.

¹⁰⁵ The musical work is fed by other performances, both live and on recording. See Bowen, 1999.

(9) Low morale among personnel *and* Higher morale coming from shared sense of leadership

Orchestral morale is not a topic that comes up explicitly in Schuller's narrative. However, according to the research of Allmendinger et al. discussed at length above, professional orchestral players have very low job satisfaction.¹⁰⁶ Considering that the 'compleat conductor' does not acknowledge the creative contribution to the performance made by the orchestra, this is hardly surprising.

(10) Music = score/recording (product) *and* Music = performance (process)

Schuller sees the 'music' in the score and in the recordings that he evaluates. Living time and spontaneity are not variables in his assessment of value. The 'incompleat' conductor is able to see the importance of real-time performance, and acknowledges that each occurrence of a musical work is unrepeatable.

(11) Needs of the score determine the conductor's actions *and* Needs of the performance situation determine the conductor's actions

One of the main problems with the 'compleat conductor' is that he is not prepared to deal with the unexpected. Perhaps this is why so much of Schuller's discussion revolves around scores and recordings, i.e. artefacts that can be constructed out of real time. The 'incompleat' conductor knows that managing problems and surprises that arise in performance is part of the job.

(12) Conductor as arbitrator *and* Conductor as facilitator

It is clear from Schuller's narrative that the 'compleat conductor' must defend what is taken to be the composer's view in any dispute over interpretation (or 'realization'). The 'incompleat' conductor sees the task differently, and may choose, for example, to

¹⁰⁶ See Allmendinger, et al., 1996.

facilitate a performance of Mozart's *Requiem* even if that means doing it without basset horns.

(13) Professional Conductor *and* Musician/scholar who conducts

Botstein has argued that the professionalization of the modern conductor's role has had an enormous influence on the deterioration of the culture of orchestral performance today. Conductors need to 'add value' to performance, he says, and can do it only by having a life outside of conducting that brings something new and fresh to the rehearsal situation.¹⁰⁷ The 'compleat conductor' is a professional, although ironically Schuller himself fits into a number of roles that Botstein argues have the potential to 'add value'. Perhaps Schuller's quest to remain 'humble' prevents their expression to some extent (at least in this text). The 'incompleat' conductor may wear many hats, as Botstein himself does in his roles as conductor, historian, educator, violin virtuoso, and college president.

(14) Historically a nineteenth-century invention strengthened by Modernist values *and* Role is of ongoing historical significance

Botstein has situated Schuller's 'philosophy' in the mid-twentieth-century modernism of Stravinsky and Schoenberg.¹⁰⁸ Schuller's comments about how composers have developed precise notation in order to 'defend themselves against the vagaries of performers',¹⁰⁹ together with his rejection of many nineteenth-century performance practices including large-scale tempo profiles,¹¹⁰ seem to confirm this argument. Both Botstein and Sherman have argued that the application of his 'philosophy' to nineteenth-century music is problematic.¹¹¹ In any case, because the 'incompleat'

¹⁰⁷ The thesis of Botstein (2003) is that conducting ought not to be an isolated profession, but one intimately connected to a performing, composing, or scholarly life.

¹⁰⁸ Botstein, 1997: 2.

¹⁰⁹ Schuller, 1997: 43.

¹¹⁰ I define tempo profiling here in a similar way to Cook (1995), i.e. as a means of shaping aspects of musical form in performance through the use of tempo arches.

¹¹¹ For example, in response to Schuller's protest against the practice of speeding up for crescendos, Sherman (1998: 23) reminds the reader of the evidence we have in regard to Brahms performance practice:

conductor is not attached to any one historical context or repertoire, there is the opportunity to identify with the longer-view concerns of music leadership more generally.

(15) Gesture reflects ‘pulse’ *and* Gesture reflects ‘music’

The conductor Harold Farberman has argued that the accepted form of conducting technique, with its focus on beat patterns and ictus, has separated pulse from music. He has proposed a new technique that remedies the situation through more attention to line, at times recommending that the conductor even trace the shape of melody in an attempt to connect with this parameter as the orchestra plays.¹¹² In Schuller’s brief discussion of conducting technique,¹¹³ he asserts the importance of lateral movement when beating conducting patterns and also lists some of the advantages of using the right and left hands together yet independently. Schuller’s approach suggests that a conductor does more than ‘beat time’, but at the same time he follows the model of many writers of conducting texts who include diagrams of the ‘correct’ ways to perform beat patterns. The ‘incomplete’ conductor, as exemplified by Farberman in this case, is consciously attempting to move beyond a technique that conveys pulse at the expense of other musical parameters, including line.

Joseph Joachim reported that when Brahms accompanied his D-minor Violin Sonata, he increased the tempo markedly at the point where the music suddenly becomes loud for the first time — yet no change of tempo is noted in the score. If you doubt eyewitness reports, listen to the surviving recordings not only of musicians in Brahms’s circle, but of the composer himself; all these artists tend to accelerate during crescendos.

Botstein (1997: 5-6) also adds that:

Notation in the nineteenth century took into account assumptions about common practices by performers that either required no explicit references or demanded particular emphasis and commentary. The existence of a crescendo marking in Brahms means a clear indication at a particular moment. But its absence elsewhere does not mean that the performer should *not* apply variation in dynamics. Brahms’s own markings in the score of the Fourth Symphony he used in performance suggest considerable flexibility in the way he heard his own music.

¹¹² See Farberman, 1997 and 2003. I explore the limitations of Farberman’s approach in Chapter 5.

¹¹³ Schuller, 1997: 59-62.

(16) Conductor-led performance *and* Performance the result of socially-distributed cognition

This final point summarizes what has been said above, and also exposes the limitations of the method I have employed to define the field for the working conductor's endeavours. Although it is true that one performance can be more 'conductor-led' than another, a performance that is completely conductor-led is in fact impossible. Schuller's vision of the 'complete conductor' is an ideal that can never be realized. Conductors owe the players, and the environments they inhabit, their livelihood.

Conclusion

This opening chapter, through its survey of innovations in leadership theory, has demonstrated that the self-contained 'complete conductor' does not and cannot exist. That the notion of the 'complete conductor' persists is due, at least partially, to two faulty perceptual processes, i.e. the leader attribution error and 'absent signifiers/signifieds'. These processes keep us from noticing that what conductors do arises from how they are embedded in their contexts and environments, and that leadership functions are often shared across individuals. The idea of the 'complete conductor' also persists because of historical attitudes toward musical scores that have, in many cases, outlived their usefulness. The areas of interest that have been revealed through making the invisible ('incomplete' conductor) visible are instructive, and demonstrate the need for an approach to exploring the modern conductor's role which both challenges our assumptions about how conductors as non-sounding ensemble members contribute to performances, and at the same time begins to unpick the unique aspects of the conductor's role which cannot be replicated by sharing leadership functions across the sounding members of the group. The juxtaposition between 'complete' and 'incomplete' is presented in order to develop a more comprehensive description of the modern conductor's field of concerns. Neither side of the binary fully captures the role in its completeness. In fact, I argue that any attempt to do this must begin by addressing how the role works in relation to the 'orchestral network' as a whole. This insight serves as a springboard for what follows.

The (un)common goal

Chapter 1 explored the interdependence between the first two parts of Bennis's 'tripod', i.e. leaders and followers, and also outlined the blocks that interfere with these interrelationships which include the 'leader attribution error' and 'absent signifiers/signifieds'. This chapter completes the picture of the 'orchestral network' through a discussion of the final part of the tripod that Bennis referred to as the 'common goal'. Within the context of my study of the conductor's role, this goal is associated with orchestral interpretation, loosely defined as the process of moving from score to sound.¹ In this case, however, it is clearly more accurate to speak about contrasting views of interpretation, as it seems that there are profound disagreements about what is happening in this process. How conductors position the influence of the 'composer's intention', the work (in the broadest sense), or the score in relation to their own role as well as the ensemble's is key in determining the problems involved in agreeing on a common goal for orchestral performance. I address this issue by modelling patterns of influence that conceptualize the conductor's role as either projecting a more or less fully pre-formed image of the work, or facilitating the emergence of one in real time. I argue that the nature of a conductor's preconceived, and probably unconscious, idea about this pattern of influence both defines and is defined by how the conductor sees the musical score, i.e. in terms of an authoritative text or as a 'script'² and social contract. In the end I conclude that the lack of a 'common goal' or shared conception of what it means to interpret a musical work might be at the heart of difficulties that underlie the relationships between players and conductors. In this way, I set the stage for a possible resolution.

Cause and effect

In most circumstances conductors and players would agree that a conductor ought to be able to communicate a musical vision to an orchestra via gestures, and, in spite of research that confirms otherwise,³ that gesture should exhibit a direct causal connection to performance outcomes. This chapter argues that this version of the unilateral

¹ I have borrowed the phrase 'from score to sound' from Peter Hill, 2002: 129-143.

² Nick Cook's (2003) description of 'script' points towards a more fluctuating conceptualization of musical notation. I will discuss this in detail in Chapter 3.

³ Clayton's (1985: 107) study of coordination of orchestral music demonstrated that fine coordination depends more upon the hearing that takes place between players than upon guidance from the conductor. Conductors give general rather than specific guidance. See also Cook, 1990: 30.

causality is problematic, although ubiquitous. In fact, the conductor's ability *not* to illustrate some elements of his or her musical vision may be as important as (and in some cases more important than) the ability to do so. Perhaps this is best explained through an example, i.e. the need for the orchestra to slow down at the end of a section. If a deceleration is not together after a number of rehearsal attempts, the discussion between players and conductor will most likely involve some sort of talk about whether the conductor should subdivide. Typically the conductor will want to subdivide in order better to illustrate his or her musical intention, and the orchestra will, more often than not, ask the conductor not to.⁴ In this theoretical example, the conductor is acting out a version of causality that on the surface seems reasonable: that is, the conductor believes that he or she is not providing the correct information needed to project his or her interpretation, and the solution, therefore, is to provide more detailed information to the ensemble in the form of a subdivision. However, this linear version of cause and effect fails to acknowledge the true complexity of the patterns of influence that run across musical ensembles.⁵ In this case, a vertical conception of influence has eclipsed the reality and primacy of the horizontal interactions that take place between players. Unfortunately, coordination does not ultimately come from the podium, although it might be helped from there. The existence of basic dynamics of peripheral hearing⁶ and orchestral momentum serves as two pieces of evidence that this is the case.

It is not uncommon for a conductor to say 'watch me', especially to student groups, when there is a problem with orchestral ensemble.⁷ The assumption is that if each player were to watch the conductor properly they would all play together. However, this way of approaching the development of ensemble skills or solving rehearsal problems overlooks the fact that hearing in musical situations is both *peripheral*, in the sense that the direction of the hearing moves horizontally outward in the same way that peripheral sight does, and *primary*, in the sense that hearing takes

⁴ From my experience as a conductor and frequent observer of ensembles under other conductors, the better the orchestra, the more likely this is to be the case. Professional orchestras, in particular, are very aware of what is not working even if they do not know why, and as Allmendinger et al. (1996) have noted, they also take a great deal of pride in maintaining high professional standards. This, in addition to an orchestra's exposure to uneven standards of conducting skill, often leads orchestras to ask conductors (albeit politely) to, metaphorically speaking, move out of the way so they can get on with it.

⁵ Hackman (2005) makes a similar claim in relation to leadership more generally.

⁶ I am grateful to Peter Stark, Professor of Conducting at the Royal College of Music, for introducing me to this concept.

⁷ However, this also happens at the professional level. For example, John Farrar, an experienced conductor of professional orchestras and teacher on the London Conducting Course (July 2009), announced to a student, 'you can either spend four hours rehearsing ritardandi and accelerandi, or the orchestra can watch you'. I argue that although there is some truth to this, this oversimplifies the dynamic relational processes involved in negotiating tempo changes.

precedence over (even if it might be enriched by) sight in musical performance.⁸

Ideally, players listen to each other and then respond *as a group* in relation to conductors; not to do so would be a recipe for poor ensemble.⁹ The dynamic of peripheral hearing also partially explains why some of the best orchestras play behind the beat.¹⁰ Players need time to manage their group response to the conductor; the triangle player and tuba player need to produce their sounds at different times in order to have them sound together, and the conductor's beat cannot help them unless they respond to it as a unit that is connected through listening peripherally. This insight does not so much override the idea that linear causality runs in a straight line from conductor to ensemble as much as it demonstrates that the real-life situation of ensemble music-making is far more complex than this.¹¹

The fact that the dynamic of peripheral hearing, and the horizontal relationships that underlie it, are not widely acknowledged or understood can lead conductors to make gestural choices that are not effective. This most often takes place when the conductor provides either too much or the wrong kind of information in the gesture.¹² The subdivision referred to above is a good example of this in a way that is best illustrated through peripheral hearing's relationship to orchestral momentum, a second dynamic that problematizes the linear version of causality between conductor and ensemble.

As orchestras and other ensembles are coordinated primarily through a unifying peripheral hearing, they are subject to laws of momentum;¹³ this momentum is something that a conductor is always engaging with, either consciously or

⁸ When I say that 'hearing' is primary it is important to take into account hearing that is embodied by the other senses, sometimes to an extreme degree. For example, Davidson (1997) has shown that performers rely on visual cues to help achieve ensemble coordination, and the use of an even more embodied version of hearing is demonstrated convincingly by the deaf percussionist Evelyn Glennie. Sight is used to confirm sound and vice versa.

⁹ In most music-making, hearing is primary and sight is secondary. There are some occasions where players are asked to perform as if they are wearing aural 'blinkers', but this is rare.

¹⁰ For an extended discussion of this phenomenon see Cottrell, 2007.

¹¹ In his study of conducting technique (1997: 99), Farberman presents a diagram that literally connects the conductor to each section individually and stresses the importance of noting 'spatial registration', i.e. moving the arms towards each section as relevant, in preparing a score for performance. This claim is part of a greater one that presses the conductor to be an embodied illustration of the musical score, something I will argue against in detail below. Farberman describes the connection between spatial registration and his overall argument as follows: 'Just as the composer carefully constructs an ongoing form, the conductor's Registration should conscientiously map a technical web of pattern designs to capture the composer's form' (p. 100). In this case a related assumption to the 'watch me' situation described above is revealed, i.e. that looking like the music somehow causes an orchestra to sound like the music. This might be true but is not necessarily so.

¹² I discuss this further in Chapter 5.

¹³ Momentum as I describe it here is grounded to some degree in the phenomenon of entrainment. See Clayton, 2005.

unconsciously.¹⁴ Research confirms that tempo changes are related to motional rules subject to the laws of momentum, and that performances without motional characteristics come across as inhuman or robotic. Friberg and Sundberg, for example, discovered that how a runner stops and how Baroque music slows down at a final *ritardando* follow the same curve. Their model is also able to account for this in relation to both individual runners and individual performances. Listeners also preferred *ritardandos* that corresponded to the runners' deceleration.¹⁵ It is easy to see the relevance of this point in relation to the gestural language of conductors when one considers how best to catch a cricket ball, change down a gear when driving, or slow down a running child. In all three cases, there is a need to make contact with the moving object while matching its speed; only then is it appropriate to remove some aspect of the object's force. Changing the speed of an object in motion is best done with as little interference as possible if one wishes to maintain the player-to-player connections made possible through peripheral hearing. Pulling one player too far ahead of others can break the invisible horizontal string that holds together musical ensemble.

One solution to this problem is contained in the nature of the conducting gesture itself, in that it uses contoured beat patterns to make contact rhythmically with the momentum of the group at predetermined points (usually beats) before contributing or withdrawing force. After these points of contact come 'follow-throughs', places where the conductor has the opportunity to listen and determine how best to meet the orchestra next.¹⁶ This dynamic confirms Shusterman's insight that 'the relational self acquires and deploys its powers only through its enabling relations'.¹⁷

The dynamic of orchestral momentum problematizes the linear conception of causality described above by displaying once again that at the most basic level conductors are both leaders and followers, and that orchestra and conductor are largely, if not completely, interdependent.¹⁸ If a conductor could get an ensemble in the example above to decelerate at exactly the rate he or she envisages, it would have to occur

¹⁴ Perhaps a good metaphor for this is that of a group of soldiers marching forward in a horizontal line. Even though the leader can give a visual or verbal indication for the group to move and even 'mark time' verbally, the length of the stride will be dictated to some extent by group momentum if the group's primary direction is to keep the line perfectly straight.

¹⁵ See Friberg & Sundberg, 1987 and 1999.

¹⁶ Even though I have referred only to tempo issues in describing orchestral momentum, I would argue that this concept is applicable to other musical parameters as well. For example, an orchestra's movement through a phrase, perhaps at several levels, leads to something akin to the momentum dynamic described above. I explore this in greater detail in Chapter 5.

¹⁷ Shusterman, 2008: 215.

¹⁸ Even if the orchestra decides not to follow the conductor at all, the orchestra's resistance will no doubt colour the performance. The conductor's presence on the podium will also, of course, affect the performance in the audience's eyes to some degree. In other cases, contrast between the quantity and quality of expressive gestures may create a similar result.

through using gestures that relate intimately to the momentum of the group. This clearly illustrates why an orchestra might think that subdivision is not necessarily the answer to the problem of getting the group to slow down together. More gestural information about the conductor's vision of the musical extract will not help with coordination if the conductor is disconnected from the momentum of the group.

The realization that the conductor's role involves both leadership and 'followership'¹⁹ not only exposes an error in causal reasoning, but also identifies an important element that is missing from conducting's technical skill set. Thinking and acting are closely interrelated in this regard. Conductors are generally not trained to lead from a position of neutrality, i.e. from a position where both interference and non-interference are available when required.²⁰ This has major disadvantages.²¹ The emphasis placed upon conductors to conduct 'expressively'²² and to project an interpretation to the orchestra has created a musical culture that dismisses the potential profits of shared leadership and followership. In fact, many conductors view any sign of leadership emerging from the ensemble as a sign that the conductor is incompetent,²³ and although this may in certain circumstances be true, it is certainly not a given.²⁴ Simply put, interfering in places where shared leadership might emerge has become modern conducting's 'default' position.

Although one is currently more privileged than the others, there are three general positions that a conductor can take in relation to an ensemble.²⁵ The first is an 'active' stance in which the conductor leads the ensemble towards realizing his or her predetermined vision directly. Here is the idea of the interpretation as projection. This is the position that is associated with the notion of the 'complete conductor' described in Chapter 1. This view has the obvious disadvantage of expressing a linear approach to

¹⁹ For a discussion of 'followership' see Atik, 1994.

²⁰ In fact, lack of training in how *not* to interfere may lead to this being a blind spot for conductors.

²¹ Perhaps the most obvious disadvantage is that if the conductor cannot help but interfere, an ensemble that can play perfectly well un-conducted may not play nearly as well conducted.

²² Many conductors give instruction as to how to conduct more 'expressively', though none that I know of discusses how *not* to interfere with, or just 'be a part of', expressive music-making that might be happening already. I suggest that expressivity is best dealt with in the same way I describe relating to orchestral momentum above, i.e. by matching the level of expression present in the playing before offering any additional direction, that is if any additional direction is, in fact, needed. I discuss Matthers (2009) in relation to this issue in Chapter 5 below.

²³ For example, Farberman (1997: xiii) states that 'if a conductor's technique, supposedly the outward manifestation of his/her inner musical impulses is deficient, the outcome should be a poor performance. In many instances the opposite will occur. Thanks to the musicians, the orchestra willingly supplies the missing ingredients for the conductor and shapes a performance well beyond the conductor's capabilities.'

²⁴ In fact, it is quite reasonable to consider a player's instrumental expertise itself as a form of potential orchestral leadership.

²⁵ A similar yet less well-developed version of this argument is presented in Hackman, 2005: 138-141.

causality which fails to acknowledge the full complexity of the ensemble/conductor relationship. It is also important to note at this point that the limitation in this perspective is not so much in the intention to ‘interpret’ a work in a specific manner as in the way the conductor goes about achieving this vision, i.e. through creating gestures and rehearsal instructions that dictate to the orchestra in as much detail as possible how the music ought to be played.²⁶

The second position is a ‘passive’ stance that relies on the orchestra to ‘rescue’ a conducted performance; in fact, orchestras are often put in the situation where they have to do this if they wish to maintain their professional reputations.²⁷ This position represents a disconnection between orchestra and conductor, and within this situation a skilled orchestra is likely to take charge, although perhaps with resentment.

The final ‘neutral’ position is the least explored, although arguably the most useful stance for the conductor overall in that it is the result of the process of actively engaging with the orchestra both as individuals and collectively.²⁸ The interpretive result of this engagement can emerge as either spontaneous or more predetermined, i.e. it can result in something in the shape of a conductor’s vision²⁹ or not.³⁰ For a conductor working from the ‘neutral’ position, gesture is not the beginning of a process of linear causation; instead, it is a means to engage with orchestral sound in a way that allows the shape of the performance to emerge from the conductor/ensemble relationship. The conductor working from the ‘neutral’ position does not seek simply to illustrate some sort of internalized image of the music or the score: he or she works to facilitate music-making in relation to this.³¹

²⁶ In a situation with limited rehearsal time or that contains players of a mixed ability this might be welcomed by the orchestra, but as a default position this perspective remains limiting.

²⁷ I have been told that a stipulation of the BBC Concert Orchestra participating in the BBC1 television programme *Maestro* (summer 2008), a reality show that featured celebrities who were taught to conduct, was that they did not have to follow the conductors if they went wrong.

²⁸ Perhaps the reason why this position is not recognized is because it has been conflated with the passive approach and has, as such, been dismissed as undesirable. Although the neutral position is not direct, it is certainly not passive.

²⁹ Conductors conducting different orchestras will have different results even if the different versions share the same overall ‘shape’. Rink (1990) argues for the usefulness of the concept of shape in regard to types of analytical thinking that are more appropriate for performers. Determining what makes performances similar and different across orchestras is certainly helped by embracing this concept.

³⁰ Gould and Keaton’s (2000) distinction between spontaneity and improvisation is particularly helpful here. They argue that all score-based music-making is, in fact, improvisatory in that it is necessary to add nuances that are not able to be captured in notation; this varies only by degree. Spontaneity, however, is making these additions in real-time, whereas improvisation, as they define it, can be either spontaneous or pre-planned. In relation to what is being discussed above, the ‘neutral’ stance can result in either a conductor-led shaping, or one that more spontaneously emerges from the performance situation.

³¹ Nicholas Cook (1990) has commented extensively about the difference between thinking about music and experiencing music, and this difference is relevant here.

A high degree of physical and musical/mental differentiation is required in order to work from this position. Firstly, the conductor must be able to recognize and meet the ensemble's sound through gesture, and then he or she needs to have the ability to respond appropriately.³² What is appropriate is highly subjective, of course, and the character and intensity of 'force' required will obviously vary greatly from situation to situation and from moment to moment. For instance, the amount required to start an ensemble sounding from silence might be more than what is required once everyone is playing.³³ Experienced conductors make many of these sorts of adjustments unconsciously.³⁴ However, one of the aims of this study is to explore how a conductor might begin to engage more consciously with this process. Therefore, the section below begins the process of revealing the complexities and interrelationships that are left unexplored and undefined when viewing conducting from the perspective of a simple linear causality which assumes that the conductor 'plays' the orchestra.³⁵

Patterns of influence: exploring the relationship between work/score, conductor, and ensemble

Interpretation is conceptually bound to leadership (either through a conductor or distributed across the orchestral 'team') in the same way that choice is bound to the person (or people) who choose. This means that one way to explore contrasting views of orchestral interpretation is through the study of the interaction between conductor, work/score,³⁶ and ensemble. The five models that follow are designed to map this interaction in the form of 'patterns of influence'. Leadership attributes are notoriously difficult to define,³⁷ yet as Vroom and Jago note, 'virtually all definitions of leadership

³² Due to the need to differentiate and integrate many layers and levels of material, I argue later in this thesis that the conductor's role can be viewed as a type of in-time musical analysis. See Chapter 5.

³³ It is important to note here that 'force' in this context does not equate to physical force in the conductor's body. Instead, it refers more generally to the means through which the conductor actively steers and shapes orchestral sound.

³⁴ This process is most likely guided by 'informed intuition' among other things. See Rink, 1990.

³⁵ This metaphor of the conductor 'playing the orchestra' is an interesting one and may actually be correct on some level, but only if one acknowledges that any instrumentalist is in an interactive relationship with the instrument he or she plays. I would argue, however, that more commonly this metaphor is used to express a version of linear causality. One example of this more typical approach can be found in Scherchen, 1929/1989 (quoted below).

³⁶ I use the term 'score/work' throughout this section to refer to places where the musical work is mediated through the technology of a notated score via full scores and instrumental parts. When referring to the 'work' alone, I am describing a work that may or may not have a score. This choice is intended to acknowledge that conditions outside of what is notated in the score (including other performances) are active in our conceptualization of music when playing from scores. See Goehr (1992) and Bowen (1999).

³⁷ See Chapter 1. More recent attempts include Zaccaro (2007) and Sternberg (2007). However, Hackman and Wageman (2007: 44) claim that this is the wrong question in any case, and that leadership theory should address 'not what are the traits of leaders, but *how do leaders' personal attributes interact with situational properties to shape outcomes?*'

share the view that leadership involves the process of influence.’³⁸ I argue that mapping ‘patterns of influence’ allows for a more robust understanding both of what underlies the lack of ‘common goal’ in orchestral performance and of the conductor’s role in creating and maintaining this situation.

Model 1

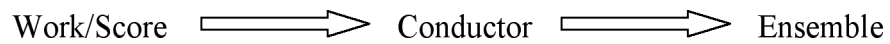


Figure 2.1.

Work/score directly influences conductor; conductor directly influences ensemble

Scherchen’s seminal work *Handbook of Conducting* (1929) contains a vivid account of the linear conception of influence outlined in Model 1 (Figure 2.1):

The conductor, when representing a work to himself, must hear it as perfectly as the creator of this work heard it. A creative artist relies upon the acuteness of his own artistic perception; he hears new tone-colours, he views his materials in a new light, he stamps his own personality upon the music.

Of all the human means of musical expression, singing is the most living or vital. Singing comes from within ourselves. The conductor’s conception of a work should be a perfect inward singing. And if the work lives within him as an ideal, undimmed by obstacles of mechanism, then he is worthy to bear the conductor’s responsibility. To conduct means to make manifest — without flaws — that which one has perfectly heard within oneself. The sounds must be commanded, and to conduct is to give them shape. The instrument which the conductor uses for this purpose is most sensitive, most richly and diversely equipped and articulated, inexhaustible and most inspiring: it is an organ of which each pipe is a human being. To be able to play this organ is to be a magician; to command it requires almost superhuman powers. But these powers live only in the innermost focus of the ego, and the very source of feeling and inspiration. The ego must radiate all that it has felt in terms of music; and its radiations must be translated into tones of this magic organ. Only a man who can achieve this mediation in all its purity, in whom are combined the greatest powers of receiving and of giving out again, whose conception of the work does not dwarf it and who is capable of lifting up his medium to the level of that work, is worthy of the name of conductor.³⁹

³⁸ Vroom and Jago, 1997: 17.

³⁹ ‘Der Dirigent muß in seiner Vorstellung das Kunstwerk ebenso vollkommen hören, wie es seinem Schöpfer erklang. Der Schaffende gestaltet aus unermäßigem Reichtum des Geistes, hört neue Farbigkeiten des Tons, schaut die Materie neu; die Töne empfangen das Gepräge der Persönlichkeit. Das lebendigste Band der Töne aber ist Singen — Singen ist nur im Menschen; vollkommenes inneres Singen sollte das Vorstellen des Dirigenten sein. Lebt so in ihm das Werk, in originalem Leuchten, ohne Trübung durch die darstellende Materie, dann ist er würdig der Magie des Dirigierens. Dirigieren heißt: das innen vollkommen Gehörte gleichvollendet in der Materie hörbar zu machen. Die Töne sind zu bezwingen, Dirigieren ist ihre Gestaltung; das empfindendste, verschiedengliedrigste,

Scherchen is clearly an idealist who identifies with linear causality. From this perspective, the conductor's power lies in 'receiving and giving out again' ['aufnehmendes Gefäß ist und verströmender Inhalt']. In light of the earlier discussion that explored the interrelatedness of conductor and ensemble, it is not surprising that Scherchen finds the need to define the conductor's area of activity as follows:

To acknowledge that the conductor's domain is largely spiritual is to realize the exceptional character of his art; one can then appreciate the great artistic and human attributes which must be possessed by the true conductor.⁴⁰

Characterizing the conductor as 'a magician' ['Magie üben'] and conducting as 'largely spiritual' allows the author to avoid having to find more specific and accurate descriptions for what is unknown; and what is unknown and unacknowledged in this case is that causality in music-making is multifaceted.

Interestingly enough, this linear conception of causality does not seem to have gone out of fashion; in fact, it may have become even more extreme in recent years if one takes the work of Harold Farberman into consideration. In his 1997 book, *The Art of Conducting Technique: a New Perspective*, Farberman applies Model 1 causality to conducting technique and ends up claiming that

Simply put: MUSIC CREATES TECHNIQUE.⁴¹ A conductor committed to a clear presentation of a score must utilize a technique that can serve as the varying visual representation of the printed page, the frozen textual kaleidoscope of the composer's voice.⁴²

Farberman's technical approach advocates abolishing standard beat patterns in the service of making the conductor's gestures more 'painterly'⁴³ and illustrative of the score. This approach will be examined in more detail in Chapter 5.

unerschöpflichste Instrument, die berauschende Menschenorgel, ist das Handwerksmittel des Dirigenten. Sie spielen können, heißt Magie üben; sie beherrschen, erfordert bannende Kräfte. Die aber leben nur im Brennpunkte des Ich, im Quell der Vorstellungen und Empfindungen. Das Ich muß ausstrahlen, was es als Musik empfangt, strahlend muß es zum Klang der Menschenorgel werden; nur wer in Reinheit solche Mittlerschaft vollzieht, aufnehmendes Gefäß ist und verströmender Inhalt, das Werk in sich nicht verringert und die darstellende Materie zur Höhe des Werkes zwingt, ist würdig des Namens eines Dirigenten.' Scherchen, 1929, trans. by M.D. Calvocoressi, 1989: 2-3.

⁴⁰ 'Diese Erkenntnis der Beschränkung des Dirigenten auf die stärkste menschliche Kraft, die des Geistes, weist tief auf die Sonderheit seiner Kunstausübung; sie gibt zugleich Aufschluß über die Höhe der menschlich-künstlerischen Qualität, die als Forderung dem wahren Dirigententum zugrunde liegen soll.' Ibid., 1.

⁴¹ Farberman's emphasis.

⁴² Farberman, 1997: xi.

⁴³ Botstein describing Farberman's approach by quoting Schenker (1894) in Farberman: vii.

Schuller's claim that conducting is a collaboration between conductor and composer, even if the composer is no longer living,⁴⁴ is a good example of Model 2 below (Figure 2.2).

Model 2

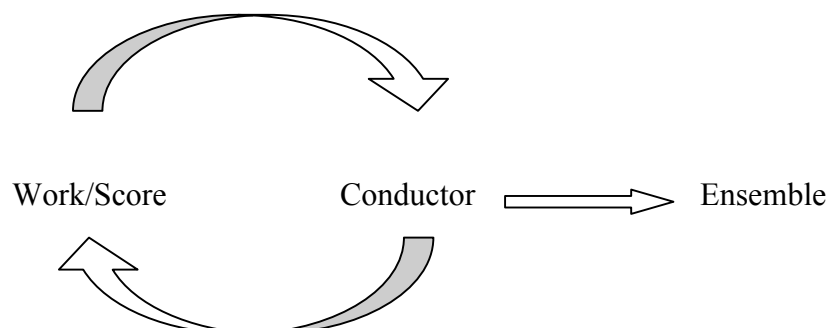


Figure 2.2.

Interaction between work/score and conductor; conductor directly influences ensemble

Unlike the Model 1 conductors who subscribe to a linear and almost magical conception of causality between work/score and conductor, it is clear that Schuller sees the conductor's task as the laborious 'translation' of score into sound through detailed and ongoing analytical examination of the musical text.⁴⁵ In his own words:

[There] ought to be a sense of moral obligation, a sense of unalterable respect for the great literature comprising our Western Musical heritage; a sense that the art of conducting must be seen as a sacred trust to translate into a meaningful acoustical reality, with as much insight and fidelity as is humanly possible, those musical documents — the scores, the texts — left to us by the great composers.⁴⁶

Throughout *The Compleat Conductor*, Schuller presents what amounts to an ethical objection to conductors who have a more tenuous relationship to the score. In a way, Model 2 could be viewed as a response or even an unconscious reaction to the archetypical 'egoistic' conductor, who uses his or her weak or underdeveloped relationship to the masterworks of the orchestral repertoire to further his or her own career. Model 2, in this way, may be a reaction to the perceived 'abuse' of Model 1. In any case, Schuller's argument that 'humility' before great artworks must be a

⁴⁴ Schuller, 1997: 10.

⁴⁵ Schuller's attitudes towards scores and performers are explored in depth in Chapter 1 of this study.

⁴⁶ Schuller, 4.

conductor's 'basic attitude'⁴⁷ leads him to engage in a rigorous feedback loop with the score, if not with the performers themselves.⁴⁸

Models 1 and 2 represent the conductor in the 'active' position. He or she takes full responsibility for projecting an interpretation to an ensemble, and as a result falls victim to the leader attribution error. Another 'side effect' of this approach is that an anatomical view of the orchestra eclipses a physiological one. Players tend to be seen as their instruments and positions in the orchestra rather than as individual musicians functioning within a living system.⁴⁹ In the language of Chapter 1, the embodiment of the ensemble becomes the absent signifier.

Judging from the title of Erich Leinsdorf's book *The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians*,⁵⁰ one might think that its perspective would easily fall within the scope of Model 2; upon close reading, however, the outline of the more complex Model 3 (Figure 2.3) is visible.

Model 3

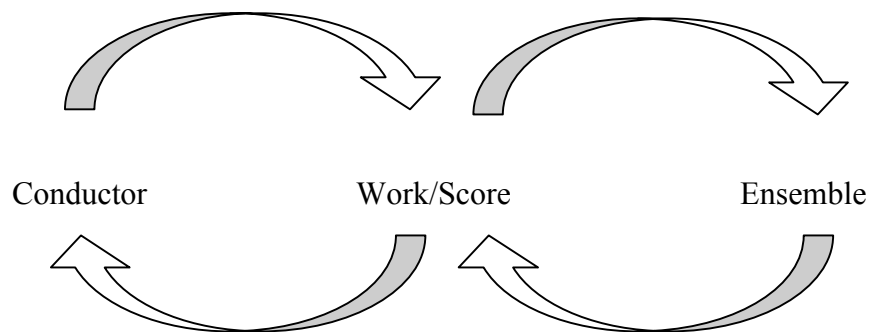


Figure 2.3. Conductor interacts with work/score; ensemble interacts with work/score

⁴⁷ '[...] the 'complete' conductor must possess a whole range of diverse talents [...] But all these talents must be encompassed in one all-embracing basic attitude: a deep humility before the art of music that contains in it a profound love for and unswerving commitment to serving that art; a humility that considers it a privilege, an honour, to bring to life the masterworks of our musical heritage, and to communicate through them to our fellow human beings. With such an unostentatious approach, the many other talents a conductor needs to possess will evolve in proper perspective [...]' Schuller, 1997: 6.

⁴⁸ I propose in Chapter 1 that Schuller may simply be projecting his own authority onto that of the composer, which would amount to the 'leader attribution error' taken to the next level. In any case, it is likely that very few readers of Schuller's book would see it as a 'humble' undertaking.

⁴⁹ For one of many examples of the anatomy of the orchestra eclipsing the physiology of the orchestra see Del Mar, *Anatomy of the Orchestra*.

⁵⁰ Leinsdorf, 1981.

The book is filled with apparent contradictions. Take Leinsdorf's opening premises, for example:

1. Great composers knew what they wanted.
2. The interpreter must have the means at his disposal to grasp the composers' intentions.
3. Music must be read with knowledge and imagination — without necessarily believing every note and word that is printed.⁵¹

This set of points expresses the tell-tale signs of a feedback loop between conductor and work/score, albeit one that takes a critical stance towards editions; the contents of chapters entitled 'Knowing the Score', 'Knowing the Composer', 'Knowing What Composers Wanted', 'Knowing Musical Tradition', and 'Knowing the Right Tempo' back this up. However, as the narrative unfolds it slowly becomes clear that this is really a book not just for conductors but also for professional musicians generally, and this recognition substantially changes the impact of the book. Nowhere in the book is Leinsdorf's 'radical orthodoxy' spelled out specifically, although near the end of the text the author reveals that:

My overall purpose [in this book] has been to wean professional musicians from learning their music through the ear and guide them toward an independent and more reliable method of learning through the eye and the mind. In the artistic infancy musicians are nourished through the ear. Every musical child who is lucky enough is treated to a diet of recordings and model performances by accomplished musicians. This is a necessary stage of learning music, as nursing is to an infant's growth. The problem is that too many professionals today don't get weaned and stay well into their dotage being 'breast-fed' through the ample teats of tapes and discs. They remain unready to undertake a personal search for the deeper truths of great music.⁵²

Regardless of how things might seem on the surface, the author clearly wishes to reposition the work/score in a place between conductor and ensemble and encourage all musician participants to engage with it critically, rather than to remain in the position of being 'breast-fed' (or perhaps just 'spoon-fed') by conductors. In his own words:

All too many members of our profession should know more about music. They have been trained to learn only those parts of a work written for their instruments. It is as though they were espionage agents allowed to know only a tiny part of a grand strategic design. If it were in my power to arrange, every

⁵¹ Ibid., viii.

⁵² Ibid., 209.

musician would possess and know the full score of every piece played and thereby come to appreciate wholly the beauty that he helps to create.⁵³

Leinsdorf is ‘the composer’s advocate’, but unlike Model 1 and Model 2 conductors, he wants his players actively to join him in the same pursuit. He seems to take a more pragmatic stance, however, when he argues that players and conductor enter the score/work from opposite directions:

Understanding players demands an acquaintance not only with psychology but also with the materials with which the players have to work. The conductor, who has the full score in front of him, should keep in mind that the players can be expected to grasp only a limited sense of the whole work from their individual parts, which are just that — parts. To do more than produce a meaningless succession of notes a player must be helped to see their interconnections with those that other players are producing. It is up to the conductor to enlarge the players’ awareness of the work as a whole. This can range from pointing out that a certain player must be in unison with another whom he can scarcely hear to demonstrating the complexities of ‘broken line’ work.⁵⁴

This statement reveals one of the more problematic aspects of Leinsdorf’s perspective, i.e. a privileging of the knowledge of a ‘bird’s eye view’ of the score over the ensemble’s greater ‘on the ground’ awareness and expertise.⁵⁵ Certainly players of the standard that Leinsdorf conducted would do quite a bit more than ‘produce a meaningless succession of notes’ if left to their own devices. It is quite possible that even the most experienced conductor will have several professional players before him who have played the work far more often than he has conducted it.⁵⁶

Leinsdorf is not alone: an examination of Models 1 and 2 as presented above also demonstrates that, when performing the standard orchestral repertoire, players’ contributions to performances often go unseen. The subtle turn of a phrase or solo line, or the warm sound of a string section, can make an enormous contribution to the impact of a performance. Nevertheless, the idea that ensemble members would contribute to

⁵³ Ibid., vii.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 178.

⁵⁵ In Chapter 3 I argue that these two ‘entry points’ to the experience of music-making, i.e. through the part and through the full score, are the basis of two conflicting conceptual models and the source of many misunderstandings between conductors and ensemble members, in much the same way that different perspectives are at the root of misunderstandings that occur between performers and analysts. I addressed some of the latter misunderstandings in my MMus thesis (Lewis, 2006).

⁵⁶ As Levine and Levine (1996) remark in the forum of the Symphony Orchestra Institute: ‘Musicians in a professional orchestra of any significance know quite a bit about the music and about what they’re doing. So do many conductors, of course; but generally, individual conductors do not know more than the orchestra in front of them knows collectively.’ This is not to say that a conductor is not helpful when players cannot hear each other, as Leinsdorf suggests in the previous quote. However, if the player knows who he or she is listening for, this may make the conductor’s efforts redundant.

performances in a way that would ‘lead’, outside of a concerto context, is highly unpalatable to most conductors.⁵⁷ However, this may be more a problem of inappropriate differentiation and valuations of certain musical parameters. Those parameters that are associated with the ‘bird’s eye view’ (and as such more related to the indications in score) seem to be more valued than ones that are ‘closer to the ground’ (i.e. the more qualitative aspects of performance, particularly timbre).⁵⁸ Much of the criticism about being ‘led from within’ seems primarily concerned with the parameter of tempo, for example, and opera is usually an easy target for this. Leinsdorf gives a common account:

An easygoing opera conductor used to accommodating diverse temperaments and unifying the disparate elements will come to grief if he presents himself alone before a symphony orchestra. The reason is quite elementary: while even a capricious opera singer brings some kind of interpretation to a performance, an orchestra is a blank as far as reading beyond the notes is concerned. In the opera house the typical maestro must conduct only a short prelude, without too many interpretive problems, before the curtain rises. (Even the giant Verdi wrote very few orchestral sections requiring any particular depth of musical insight. The ‘typical’ operatic conductor rarely gets to Wagner, Mozart, or Strauss, whose demands are more taxing.) When such a musician steps in front of a symphony ensemble, he is like a fish on dry land. The stage, with its varied populace, is missing. Nobody sets the pace for him by either rushing or dragging, as singers are wont to do. On the symphony podium, the conductor is quite alone, with no help to be expected from the orchestra. And that holds true regardless of an orchestra’s skill. When a hundred or more musicians play together, they lose their individual characteristics and become a collective.⁵⁹

Once again, Leinsdorf makes the claim that without leadership from the conductor the symphony orchestra has little to offer beyond ‘reading the notes’; however, this perspective trivializes the intricacy of the interaction between conductor and ensemble and ignores player contributions that are generated with expertise that arises ‘closer to the ground’.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Schuller, Leinsdorf, Farberman, and Scherchen all agree on this point.

⁵⁸ Recent research by Rolf-Inge Godøy and his Musical Gestures Project team at the University of Oslo has drawn attention to listeners’ perceptual limitations; that is, most people retain only a few seconds of music in their active memory. This research clearly challenges the importance placed on musical structures that can only be seen (and facilitated) from the ‘bird’s eye’ perspective of the conductor (or analyst), and offers an opportunity to re-value the ‘closer to the ground’ musical parameters that are more performer-driven and -led, i.e. timbre and smaller-scale phrase structure. See Chapter 3 of this study for more information about this point.

⁵⁹ Leinsdorf, 1981: 174-5.

⁶⁰ Cottrell confirms the importance of the role of the individual creativity within the collective. See Cottrell, 2004: 103-121, also Jane Davidson et al., 1997: 218.

Model 4

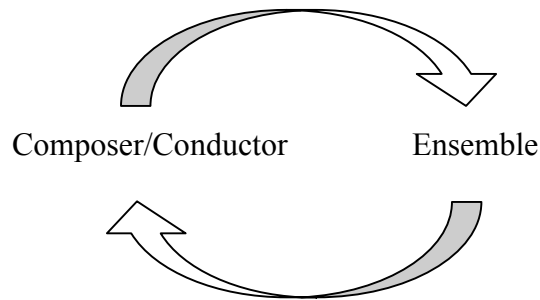


Figure 2.4. *No score; interaction between the composer/conductor and ensemble*

Model 4 (Figure 2.4) focuses specifically on this issue of player contribution in relation to creating a work's sound-world through exploring the pattern of influence at work in 'Soundpainting'.⁶¹ Described by its founder as 'the art of live composition', Soundpainting is a conductor/composer-led musical sign-language in which all of the sounds created are the result of some degree of player improvisation.⁶² 'Sound' or timbre is an important issue in musical interpretation even if it is the hardest musical parameter to capture in notation. Perhaps this difficulty explains why 'sound' is more likely to be associated with an orchestra itself than with a specific orchestral interpretation of a work. In any case, Soundpainting presents an opportunity to explore this un-notated parameter (as well as others) and makes a significant contribution to this study as a result.

The system was developed by New York City-based composer and saxophonist Walter Thompson, and had its first public performance in the early 1980s, although Thompson claims that the language's genesis occurred long before this.⁶³ The vocabulary of the system now contains close to 1,000 gestures, all of which have been codified in an online 'soundpainter's dictionary' available to practitioners. Thompson

⁶¹ Cottrell (2004: 44-55) has highlighted the importance of sound to individual players in detail.

⁶² I once again think it is important to note Gould and Keaton's (2000) distinction between improvisation and spontaneity here. If all notation-based performance involves some degree of improvisation then Model 4 may be more relevant to traditional score-based situations than one might first think.

⁶³ Another New York City-based jazz musician and band leader, Lawrence D. 'Butch' Morris, invented a similar sign language-based composition (and arrangement) system called 'Conduction' that also had its first performance in the early 1980s. Although the number of gestures differs (Morris's system having far fewer than Thompson's), and although each has developed in a different direction (Morris's focusing on cross-cultural work, and Thompson's on interdisciplinary work and education), in many ways the systems are strikingly similar. Either of the systems would fit easily into Model 4 as defined above. For more information on 'Conduction' see Mandel, 1999: 6-66.

organizes annual international ‘think tanks’ to help further develop the language with the help of other Soundpainters.⁶⁴

One of the things that makes Soundpainting unique is its ability to allow performers at various levels of technical proficiency and also from different performing traditions (not to mention disciplines)⁶⁵ to play together.⁶⁶ In order to deal with this situation, ‘scaffolding’ is built into the language. By scaffolding, I mean the process by which an expert provides someone inexperienced with the necessary structure to work beyond their level of competence.⁶⁷ Within educational applications, this structure is then gradually removed, leaving the ‘learner’ with more and more independence and developing expertise. In this situation, facilitating independence and creativity in the players is also the aim, although the application differs slightly. Players are not working at their peak of creativity all the time; however, in Soundpainting it is an advantage to have an ensemble able to be as independent and creative as possible. The performers in Thompson’s groups all come with different levels of experience on both their instruments and with the language itself, and the gestures that he has created, out of necessity, contain different ‘entry points’; that is, some gestures call for quite specific outcomes and less creative input from performers, whereas others leave the choice of outcome up to the players. At one extreme is the gesture ‘Long Tone’, which directs a player to play any pitch and hold it; at the other is the gesture ‘Improvise’, which allows the player to play a solo in whatever style he or she wishes. Both of these gestures can be qualified through the use of others that will make the direction more or less specific, although this addition is optional.⁶⁸

Soundpainting is improvisation-based and un-scored;⁶⁹ this means that a Soundpainter is dependent upon the process of ‘searching for material’. Players are systematically invited to contribute what they can, and this is what makes the composition possible. The more creativity and interest in the material generated, the

⁶⁴ It is worth noting that Thompson keeps firm control over the development and use of the language. The Soundpainting organization itself is a very ‘closed group’ for this reason, and the syntax and vocabulary of the language have been refined to the extent where its basic skills have been captured in a series of workbooks with accompanying CDs that can be easily distributed. See Thompson, 2006.

⁶⁵ Although I am limiting my discussion to the musical side of Soundpainting, the system has also evolved to include actors, dancers, and visual artists.

⁶⁶ I have been able to observe this personally in Thompson’s work at ‘think tanks’ in Woodstock and Tours, and at a two-week artist residency held at Roehampton University in October 2008.

⁶⁷ The concept of scaffolding has its basis in Vygotsky’s (1978) Zone of Proximal Development. Price and Bio (2002) were the first to apply the concept to the work of conductors. Scaffolding and its implications will be explored in depth in Chapter 5 below.

⁶⁸ Basic Soundpainting syntax consists of ‘Who, What, How, When’. The ‘How’ is always optional. A more complete view of the structuring of the Soundpainting vocabulary is offered in Chapter 5 below.

⁶⁹ Soundpainters do, however, use musical ‘palettes’ (which are sometimes pre-set and sometimes notated) as points of departure for improvisation when the performance is in progress.

more possibility for the work. The Soundpainter invites sound and then decides whether he or she will shape what comes, and if so, how. This seems analogous to the creative process more generally. For example, the ‘editor’ and the ‘writer’ are both functions of the act of producing a piece of writing; however, these two functions work most effectively when employed in rhythmic succession.⁷⁰

In the language of Soundpainting the interactive relationship between conductor/composer and player is explicit and obvious, as the contributions the players make are more forthright than what is required in performing standard orchestral repertoire. However, I argue that the same processes are at work in more traditional orchestral settings: through specific gestures and rehearsal procedures conductors invite contributions from players and then in some way shape them, even if by choosing not to. In Soundpainting, of course, there is a way to use gesture to draw out contributions from players in a manner that is idiosyncratic to what they are able to contribute. Nevertheless, I argue that the Soundpainting idea of ‘searching for material’ and the orchestral conductor’s quest to make space for contributions from performers amounts to the same thing; it is a question of degree. The same ‘scaffolding’ approach to gesture that is practised in Soundpainting can be applied to score-based conducting, albeit in a less emblematic way. These various points will be developed more fully in Chapter 5 below. In the meantime, it is important to note that parameters such as timbre are able to influence and be influenced by the conductor/ensemble relationship.

Model 5

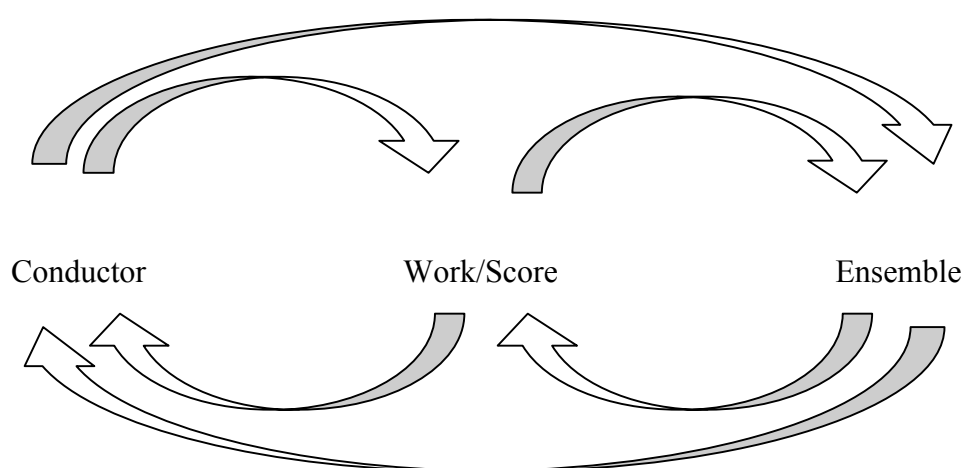


Figure 2.5. *Interaction between conductor and ensemble, work/score is mediator*

⁷⁰ I argued for something akin to this in relation to the role of analyst and performer in my MMus thesis (Lewis, 2006).

Model 5 (Figure 2.5) represents the bringing together of Model 3, which places the work/score as the ‘point of contact’ between conductor and ensemble, with Model 4, which acknowledges the necessity of a player’s contribution to music-making and the benefits that come from direct connection between conductor and the ensemble’s sound-world. Combining these two models reconciles the apparent paradox between the creative and re-creative aspects of ensemble music-making, and also makes visible the full influence of the players on orchestral interpretation. In essence, the work/score defines the task while at the same time being changed and redefined by its enabling relations.⁷¹ The contribution the conductor makes in this process is in real time through a gestural approach that includes elements of the ‘neutral position’ described above. It is the embodiment of this position that allows for the possibility of shared leadership between the ensemble and conductor during the performance event; this shared leadership is a key feature of Model 5.

Christopher Adey seems to be the conductor most aligned with this perspective, at least in print.⁷² In his book *Orchestral Performance: A Guide for Conductors and Players*, a comprehensive overview of both the anatomy and the physiology of the orchestra is presented, and his suggestions for conductors spring directly from the view that the orchestra works as a living system. The book also aims to explore themes that are relevant to both amateur and professional orchestras. In describing the work of conductors Adey emphasizes that

by far the most important concept to grasp is the *basic* difference between working with professional instrumentalists and with those less experienced. With inexperienced players the processes of refinement — clarification or re-articulation of the phrase, alteration in balance, variation of dynamic, subjugation or supremacy of line — will be attempted on almost every occasion without the professional player’s automatic adjustment of technical production that makes it possible. For this reason, the conductor of youth, student or amateur orchestras needs to be able to draw upon a far deeper understanding of the technical solutions to musical problems than would be the case were he or she working solely with professional players (where such explanations would be strongly resented). The fundamental truth of this statement *must* be fully understood, for it is the essential difference between two otherwise identical media and the reason, so rarely comprehended, why some conductors do not easily transfer from one to the other.⁷³

⁷¹ A similar process takes place when recorded performances meet works; see Bowen, 1999.

⁷² There is no doubt that many other conductors also embody this way of working. In this case there seems to be a gap between practice and conceptualization of practice which is perhaps brought about by the ubiquity of the dominant narrative (see Models 1 and 2 above).

⁷³ Adey, 1998: xv-xvi.

However, it seems that this ‘deeper understanding’ gained from working with inexperienced groups exceeds mere technical solutions and also, at least in Adey’s case, results in an a more refined view of the orchestra as a relational system where individual contributions are not only valued but understood as essential. In working with amateur and youth orchestras the skill of playing together cannot be taken as a given. It may be that the professional orchestra’s ability to ‘automatically adjust’ and fix problems of ensemble almost before they occur is one of the roots of the devaluation of player contributions in Models 1-3 presented above. After all, it is easiest to dismiss what seems to happen naturally. Using the insight that the conductor’s work happens primarily within a relational landscape, Adey offers a nuanced view of interpretation, and clearly the origin of orchestral sound (as seen in model 4 above) is taken to be a variable in defining this process:

An orchestral musician’s personal contribution to the overall interpretation will vary between one repertoire and another, and for different conductors. An empathy can exist between the musician and a particular work, or between two musicians, that produces subtle alterations in sound production. When this occurs among string players a tenuous change in the section’s sound begins to emerge. Clearly, were it to be confined to one or two players in random positions, all that would result would be a rather unfortunate imbalance within the section. Fortunately, this does not happen because individual players influence those around them, and a prevailing attitude of identification with the musical personality of the direction ensues. Thus we begin to progress from any change in sound based on individual contribution, to the more satisfactory situation of combined alteration.⁷⁴

Adey argues that constellations of interrelated individual players working in relation to conductors form orchestral sound. He contends that one of the ways in which conductors can contribute to this process is through directing their attention towards different parts of the string sections, i.e. front, middle, or back. Many conductors habitually, and usually unconsciously, direct their attention towards one of these three areas. Adey reflects upon ‘the rather startling result’ of this habitual positioning of attention and claims that ‘in many cases, [this attention towards either the front, middle, or back of sections] even conforms to the string sounds appropriate to an individual conductor’s most successful repertoire.’⁷⁵

Adey suggests that there are advantages to a conductor turning his or her focus away from just the principal players and redirecting it towards the middle and back of the ensemble. This has a number of benefits:

⁷⁴ Ibid., 482-483.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 483.

Gradually [student orchestras] come to understand that string playing is not a matter of a large number of people doubling the same notes, but thirty, forty or fifty separate and distinct responsibilities. Once this monstrously ignored fact is truly comprehended by players and conductor alike, one of the main difficulties of orchestral string playing is more easily overcome. Listening to each other becomes a natural part of playing because the area of responsibility is not continually thrown to the front. In consequence a section will tend to synchronize their sound and movement, stay together and be able to accompany other sections and solos almost instinctively. Orchestral balance between wind and strings emerges and the all-important sensitivity towards transmitted sound begins to appear. This is the basis of orchestral technique, the production of the style of sound from which the content of the work will emerge. Notes without communication are nothing and will deceive only those who cannot aspire beyond the visual image of the printed page.⁷⁶

What Adey is describing here is the process of creating in the young orchestra the ability for ‘automatic adjustment’ that characterizes professional orchestras. This process is what facilitates the emergence of interpretation. It is important to note that once this skill has been achieved and thus slips from the foreground of an orchestra and a conductor’s attention, it does not cease to be a working dynamic that can be capitalized upon in the service of improving performance and enriching orchestral interpretations.

Interpretation as an emergent phenomenon

Part of the conflict that underlies player/conductor relationships may result from the fact that our conceptualization of interpretation manages the idea or mythology of projection better than the reality of emergence of interpretations via a process of socially-distributed cognition, and that this mythologized ‘interpretation as projection’ suits conductors (and audiences)⁷⁷ more than it does players. Although in its simplest form interpretation can be viewed as bringing score to sound quite literally, i.e. through realizing the symbols of musical notation, the more general (and problematic) understanding of the concept is a recent development and is dependent upon comparisons between performers and multiple performances of canonical repertoire. The concept as we think of it today was not relevant before 1800 for this reason.⁷⁸ Interpretation, in this sense, arose in the nineteenth century along with the myth of the genius composer and his ever-more-complex masterworks. As Davies and Sadie put it, ‘It is not a coincidence that the rise of the conductor, as the person who would

⁷⁶ Ibid., 484.

⁷⁷ See Lebrecht (1991) and Small (1997).

⁷⁸ From Davies and Sadie, ‘Interpretation’, Grove Music Online, accessed 6 April 2011.

‘interpret’ the piece of music, by conveying his understanding of it at each performance, took place at exactly this time.’⁷⁹

There are two correlative notions that are also relevant to this discussion. Firstly, interpretations are almost always viewed as personal, i.e. contained within the mind of a single individual. This is especially true in orchestral music.⁸⁰ Although we do credit chamber musicians collectively with group interpretations, this is very much an exception to the rule in orchestral performance, barring concertos. Secondly, interpretations, by definition, are repeatable and, therefore, recognizable. This second notion privileges the more quantifiable musical parameters, e.g. tempo, over the more qualitative ones, e.g. timbre. In order to identify two different performances as instances of the same interpretation, one has to pay less attention to what changes between them than to what remains the same, and often what changes between similar interpretations is the orchestra that actually produces the sound.⁸¹ Together the idea that interpretation is personal and repeatable helps to justify the role of jet-setting conductors who go from orchestra to orchestra sharing their personal interpretations of works from the standard repertoire, particularly those who command large fees along the way. The fact that most of the iconic interpretations we recognize from recordings are the product of conductors who have developed a long-standing relationship with the performing orchestra seems to be all too easy to forget. In any case, both ideas rely on the notion of projection of the work/score for their livelihood. Unfortunately, the standard projective conceptualization of interpretation places more value on what is re-creative than what is creative, when the reality of orchestral performance is that it is both.⁸² At best, this ‘projective’ conceptualization is an example of Model 3, at worst it is Model 1 or 2.

This last comment is not based on a mere preference of Model 5 over Model 1 or 2, but rather on the fact that interpretation as an emergent and socially-distributed phenomenon is a more accurate view of what is really happening. Recent research into the nature of how groups function has challenged the view that the self-contained individual (be he or she an orchestral leader or follower) is the most relevant unit for

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Richard Wagner’s views on Beethoven were instrumental here. Ibid.

⁸¹ Of course the blindness of projection can work the other way around. In an interview with one of the principal players in the Britten Sinfonia, I was told of the experience of working with another well-known London chamber orchestra where the conductor said to the orchestra at the end of a week of rehearsals and concerts, ‘It’s been a pleasure following you’. This player expressed regret about this situation.

⁸² Edward Cone (1989) describes this identifying condition of the performance of Western Art Music as the ‘double trajectory’ of diachronic and synchronic.

study.⁸³ To explore certain issues — and I argue that orchestral interpretation falls into this category — it is necessary, as Hutchins claims, to ‘move the boundaries of the unit of cognitive analysis out beyond the skin of the individual.’⁸⁴ When one is able to do this, orchestral interpretation based upon projection of the conductor’s vision alone becomes simply incomprehensible.

This conclusion arises from the realization that both conducted and un-conducted orchestras easily fall within the realm of socially-distributed systems. Cognitive scientists Gureckis and Goldstone described these distributed systems as follows:

1. They are composed of identifiable units that can be used for different purposes and whose operation can be described independent of any particular context [...] In human distributed systems, each person has their own set of perceptions, goals, and desires which can operate independently of the group.
2. The units are loosely coupled and can thus influence one another.
3. The pattern of connectivity between units is dynamic.⁸⁵

Even in an orchestra under the most authoritarian of conductors a socially-distributed system is still at work, although perhaps not as efficiently as in an orchestra that is better at sharing ideas in the service of solving technical and interpretive problems. This helps to clarify why in their study of symphony orchestras (referred to in Chapter 1) Allmendinger, et. al. conclude that although conductors make little difference in determining an orchestra’s overall standing (this apparently comes down to financial strength), they do make a significant contribution in terms of whether an orchestra under- or over-performs according to expectations of ‘talent’ ascribed to the individual players.⁸⁶ According to research into socially-distributed cognition, the most efficient and ‘useful’ groups ‘promote robust information transmission across people yet avoid having everybody know the same things.’ Groups that manage to achieve this are able to ‘maximize their computational capability.’⁸⁷ This means that conductors who manage to facilitate these sorts of conditions of ‘robust information transmission’ will be better at solving problems and more likely to over-perform. It also follows that conductors (and orchestras) that block these emerging factors will be more likely to under-

⁸³ This work has its foundation in Hutchins, 1995; see also Gureckis and Goldstone, 2006; Harnad, 2005, and Tribble, 2005.

⁸⁴ Hutchins, 287.

⁸⁵ Gureckis and Goldstone, 2006: 295-6. They later add (298) that not all systems that are distributed develop ‘new higher-level, emergent properties’. However, I will demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter and the following one that orchestras do function in this way.

⁸⁶ See Allmendinger, et al., 1996: 214-15.

⁸⁷ Computational capacity is linked to problem-solving in this context. Gureckis and Goldstone, 297.

perform.⁸⁸ In conclusion, projection vs. emergence is a less interesting question than ‘How does a conductor best capitalize on the inevitability of emergence?’

Clearly conductors and orchestral players see their musical ‘work’, in both senses of the word, differently, or at the very least from different perspectives. Unfortunately, when this results in the blocking of the emergent aspects of interpretation, in the ways described in Models 1-3 above, this often leads to adversarial relations between players and conductors. For example, in the rather bleak account of orchestral life portrayed in their article for *Harmony: Forum of the Symphony Orchestra Institute* entitled ‘Why They’re Not Smiling: Stress and Discontent in the Orchestral Workplace’, Seymour and Robert Levine propose that the player discontent first explored in the Allmendinger, et al. study, is due in large part to stress caused by how little control individual players have over their working environment.⁸⁹ As a father-and-son neuroscientist and principal-violist team, they are in a unique position to reflect both theoretically and practically upon the situation, and unsurprisingly they propose that a good deal of this stress comes down to an orchestra’s working relationship with conductors, which they attribute with nothing less than setting the stage for ‘learned helplessness’ — an insidious condition arising from lack of control.

‘Helplessness’ is defined by Levine and Levine⁹⁰ as a psychological situation ‘in which the individual cannot determine any relationship between available responses and probable outcomes.’⁹¹ The authors, referring again to Allmendinger, et al., then ask why string quartets, which are subject to many of the same stressors as orchestral players, e.g. performance anxiety, the challenges of the technical demands of their instruments, fear of disability, and internal demands for perfection, do not fall into this same sort of negative emotional state. Their answer lies in the notion that different ‘normative myths’ underlie the two types of performance. In chamber music the normative myth is ‘democracy’,⁹² whereas in orchestral playing it is ‘patriarchy’.⁹³ Levine and Levine argue that ‘the disparity between myth and reality in professional orchestras is extreme

⁸⁸ The problem, of course, is mediated by the needs of the situation. Once again, it is helpful to remember that when time is running short, for example, what might be in everyone’s best interest is for a conductor to take on more responsibility.

⁸⁹ Levine and Levine, 1996.

⁹⁰ S. Levine and H. Ursin, 1991. ‘What is stress?’ in *Stress. Neurobiology and neuroendocrinology*, edited by M. R. Brown, G. F. Koon, and C. Rivier. New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc.

⁹¹ Levine and Levine, 16.

⁹² For an extended discussion on the notion of ‘democracy’ in relation to chamber music, see Mohr 1994.

⁹³ Levine and Levine, 17-18.

and serves as the most powerful source of musician stress and counterproductive institutional dynamics.’⁹⁴

What follows then is a sad practical portrayal of the orchestral workplace where the conductor is seen as ‘omniscient father (‘maestro,’ ‘maître’) and the musicians as children (‘players’) who know nothing and require uninterrupted teaching and supervision.’⁹⁵ Perhaps their most direct example of how this mythology is enacted is in terms of the necessity players feel to communicate with conductors through questions rather than statements: ‘Virtually every communication from a musician to a conductor in a rehearsal is phrased as a question, even when it is really a statement of fact or belief.’⁹⁶ Levine and Levine go on to clarify that

Questions from musicians to conductors must be respectfully phrased and, ideally, prefaced with the honorific ‘Maestro’. (This title may be dropped if the conductor is sufficiently young or doesn’t speak with an accent.) Such questions must not explicitly challenge the conductor’s interpretation of the music or conducting and rehearsal technique in any way [...] This arrangement makes matters awkward for the orchestral musician who desires to improve the quality of the orchestral product. The musician must not challenge the conductor’s tempi or interpretation; he or she cannot even suggest that there might be a pitch or ensemble problem, much less how the conductor might fix it. Questions are therefore limited to issues of whether the parts agree with the score or how the conductor would like a certain passage bowed. Even the latter has risks, however, as it implies that the conductor didn’t see how it was bowed the first time [...]⁹⁷

The authors conclude that although the myth of the conductor as ‘omniscient being’ does ‘work’ to a certain extent, the price that players pay when they accept it is high, and includes ‘chronic stress, job dissatisfaction, and infantilization.’⁹⁸

Unfortunately, Levine and Levine offer no solution to this problem. They do examine the strengths of existing strategies, however. For example, they look at the tendency for orchestral players to take on hobbies that provide a high degree of control as a counter-balance to their out-of-control work environment, e.g. gardening, writing, home improvement, and even flying airplanes (in some American orchestras it seems that the percentage of players with pilot licences is as high as ten percent). They also review the advantages of limiting contact with the conductor by enforcing strict policies in terms of rehearsal times and breaks. However, they admit that neither of these

⁹⁴ Ibid, 18.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 18-19.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 19-22.

strategies addresses the cause of the stress itself.⁹⁹ In the end, like others before them, they evoke the working methods of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra as a possible new model, and suggest that ‘it seems at least plausible that the notions of small teams, and of workers being able to stop production to fix a quality problem, could be imported into orchestras’.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, they propose no solutions as to how one might begin to deal with the difficulties involved in doing this.

What is clear from both the content and the tone of Levine and Levine’s article is the extent of the fissure that exists between conductors and orchestras when the myth of projection eclipses the reality of emergence.¹⁰¹ However, once the false binary of projection/emergence is exposed, one is left alone with ‘emergence’ — a wild, undifferentiated landscape where things that once were seen as differences of type, e.g. chamber music vs. orchestral music, become experienced as differences only of degree. Very few writers on orchestral music, let alone conducting, have managed to acknowledge the existence of this landscape, let alone map it; however, Adey, quoted above, is one, and Leon Botstein is another. Clearly what is needed is a way to explain the dynamics of how interpretations emerge. Just because conductors are not completely responsible for all elements of interpretation does not mean that they are not responsible for some or even many of them. How and under what circumstances leadership is shared in orchestral music-making is an extremely under-explored area; however, Botstein and Adey offer some clues as to how one might begin to map this territory.

Botstein’s unique contribution to the dialogue on conducting and orchestral performance springs from his unusual background.¹⁰² Along with being an accomplished conductor and well-known champion of contemporary music, he is also a recognized cultural historian and an advocate for progressive education.¹⁰³ This broad perspective may help explain the basis of his argument that a large part of the problem with modern orchestral culture today springs from the professionalization of the modern conductor’s role. As I briefly referred to in Chapter 1, Botstein argues that conductors need to add value, i.e. unique value, to the work of orchestras through moving beyond

⁹⁹ Ibid., 23.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ I acknowledge that Levine and Levine are addressing a situation that they have observed in an American orchestral context, albeit drawing upon Allmendinger, et al. that looked at the issue of life and work in symphony orchestras across several countries. However, I argue that their conclusions apply to some extent even to the London orchestras, which are seen as ‘collectives’ with the power to choose their conductors in a way that American orchestras do not. I base this upon my own experiences talking to players, as well as Cottrell’s (2004) work in this area.

¹⁰² Botstein’s (1997) critique of Gunther Schuller presented in Chapter 1 of this study is a good example of this contribution.

¹⁰³ He is probably best known for advocating the abolition of US high schools in favour of an earlier start to university education.

the role of professional conductor. In his own words, ‘The artistic relationship between a conductor and a professional orchestra can survive only if the conductor is perceived by the musicians in the orchestra as contributing to music beyond the podium.’¹⁰⁴ Conductors can best do this, he claims, through engaging in musical work such as composing, instrumental performance, and scholarship in the area of history or performance practice.¹⁰⁵ He notes that ‘[t]he musical work that is not conducting should preferably be an activity orchestral musicians neither wish to nor can emulate, but consider useful.’¹⁰⁶

Botstein’s argument sounds, in one way, very much like an extension of that made by theorists of socially-distributed cognition, i.e. that the most effective groups are good at sharing information and avoid too much knowledge overlap. However, his claim that the only way to get back to adding value is to do something else in addition to conducting is problematic. I argue that Botstein moves in the right direction through acknowledging that conductors can, and ought to, contribute to orchestral interpretation in unique ways, i.e. ways in which players are not in a position to add value, yet he does not go far enough into the specifics of how this sort of unique contribution is actualized in the act of performance. In other words, Botstein points to the need for a map of this new ‘all-emergent’ territory, but does not offer many practical suggestions. If his argument did go further in this direction, the need for conductors to work in other areas in order truly to succeed with orchestras would be seen as perhaps useful, but beside the point.

Botstein does, nevertheless, provide clues as to where a more practical solution may lie. In his commentary on the ‘professional behaviour’ of marking parts in advance of rehearsal he notes that

A key practical consequence of the self-image of conducting as an autonomous self-sufficient profession is misleading advice derivative of particular images of ‘professional’ behaviour. Does one arrive as a guest conductor with one’s own parts for works of the standard repertory except in exceptional circumstances? The answer is no. In each city, orchestra, and venue the acoustic conditions and playing habits are different. Listen first, and do not presume to anticipate the outcome. The orchestra one encounters has its own experience making all the variety of sounds and articulations and balances any conductor might seek; the players may know how to adjust, particularly to an acoustic with which they are far more familiar. What the conductor needs to know, after listening, is how to

¹⁰⁴ Botstein, 2003: 288.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

ask for and make changes as a result of what he or she hears. Articulation and balances can be achieved using several different means.¹⁰⁷

This is far from a universally accepted position, as Botstein acknowledges; in the American context in which he works this is actually a very provocative argument, as conductors arriving at a first rehearsal with marked parts is the norm.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, Botstein convincingly argues that it is worth questioning this practice in the light of both its musical results and its practicality in building working relationships with players. Botstein, echoing Adey, points here to the unique leadership role that performers manifest in the process of developing an interpretation. He still views the process as primarily one of the orchestra doing what the conductor wants; nevertheless, it is undeniable that he sees leadership emerging at ‘points of contact’ between conductor and players, and between the players themselves, and that he regards ‘listening’ and the readiness to move as required by the situation as the key skills involved. He also implies that a conductor can potentially interrupt the emergent aspects of interpretation through prescriptively annotating parts.

Although Botstein does not go any further than this, he might do so if given the opportunity, and his comments inspire continuing on in any case. In attempting to make sense of this ‘all-emergent’ landscape, one can see the orchestral parts as a gateway through which the players stretch towards in-time ‘points of contact’ with one another. One way to begin mapping the territory of emergent interpretation, therefore, might be to look specifically at both the parts and the full scores that serve as the gateway to the musical ‘work’. (Once again, I refer to ‘work’ in both senses of the word.) Cook refers to notation in this performative or ‘irreducibly-social’ sense as a ‘script’,¹⁰⁹ even if in this case a ‘part book’ might be more accurate. Discussions of how notation under-determines performance outcomes are familiar; certain parameters lend themselves more easily to being captured in notational language than do others. However, what is happening in ensemble music-making is a step beyond this basic realization, as no one performer, including the conductor, can contain the ‘work’. Players enter the in-time musical ‘work’ through their own parts, while conductors enter through full scores, but neither can ‘know’ the whole of this ‘work’ in the way that a solo pianist can know the whole.

In ensemble performance, notation also serves as a social contract that defines (or rather, elegantly under-defines) the work for players and conductors. Even if players

¹⁰⁷ Botstein, 2003: 289.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Cook, 2003: 206.

agree with conductors on little else, they agree to play from their part. As I will explore more in the chapter that follows, conductors ‘play from their part’ in a very different way than players do, yet for both players and conductors the ‘common goal’ for their work is to put together the puzzle of individual parts (including the conductor’s individual part). Seen from this perspective, the desire for *Urtext* editions and unmarked parts might be interpreted as a clarification of what is ‘contractual’ and what is not. Determining the absolute contents of the ‘contract’ in this sense is, of course, impossible. Nevertheless, unless one moves in this direction it is very difficult to know where one’s individual contribution to interpretation can begin. This lack of knowing what is choice, be it conductor’s or player’s, and what is ‘contract’ can, I argue, lead towards ‘learned helplessness’ as fast as any of the other ‘workplace stressors’ described by Levine and Levine.

In any case, looking at parts and full scores, as well as how they are annotated and by whom, holds promise as a way to map the landscape of emergent interpretation, and by extension, musical leadership. Not only do parts contain evidence of the overall social structure of orchestras, as described above, but marked parts also contain traces of ‘transactive memory’, which describes how individuals can serve as external memory devices for one another.¹¹⁰ In the end, however, interpretive choices emerge at ‘points of contact’ between players and conductors and among/between the players themselves. Parts and full scores can only be maps, scripts, and memory devices that point towards what is ultimately emergent and performative; who connects to whom under what circumstances is the real question. Studying marked parts may begin to provide part of the answer; however, one can really learn about what happens at the ‘points of contact’ only by exploring the ‘orchestral network’ in real time, something which I undertake in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Although orchestral interpretation is often seen as the result of a conductor projecting his or her musical intention towards an ensemble, I argue in this chapter that the reality of the process is socially-distributed and emerges at the ‘points of contact’ between the individuals involved in producing the performance. I began by presenting five models of the conductor’s role in orchestral interpretation drawn from the literature by and for conductors. The models start from a position of unilateral causality (i.e. moving from composer to conductor to ensemble) before gradually evolving into systems diagrams

¹¹⁰ This theory is attributed to Wegner, 1986.

that more accurately reflect the complex realities and interrelationships involved in bringing orchestral scores to sound. On the surface, Model 3 represents a compelling view of the orchestral network as it is able to demonstrate how the score/work is changed through the act of performance. However, Model 4 problematizes this as the final word on the subject. This model, in its consideration of Walter Thompson's 'Soundpainting', aims to capture what is lost when notated parameters alone are used as the basis for exploring the relationship between conductor and orchestra. Here the improvisational and more spontaneous elements presented in all live performance are exemplified, before these qualities are combined with Model 3 to make Model 5, which I see as the most comprehensive model of the orchestral network in interpretation. The chapter concludes with the proposal that, under the emergent conception of interpretation, musical text might be seen as a type of social contract, and discusses the implications of emergent vs. projective views of interpretation for the working life of orchestral musicians.

The view from parts vs. the view from full scores: the impact of competing conceptual perspectives on the orchestral network

In Chapters 1 and 2 of this study I outlined the three aspects of the ‘orchestral network’, and in the process considered how conductors are incomplete in the sense that leadership functions are always to some extent shared across an ensemble; this led to the insight that interpretations are necessarily the result of some version of socially-distributed cognition. However, in moving past the ‘leader attribution error’ and the myth of interpretive projection, we are left with a complex pattern of influence between players and conductor within a ‘wild’ and undifferentiated landscape of ‘emergence’. To make things even more complicated, this landscape is dominated by competing perspectives that set conductors against players, and players against conductors.

This chapter addresses one basis for these competing perspectives through exploring how conductors and players enter the ‘scripted’ performative landscape in fundamentally different ways, i.e. conductors from the perspective of the full score and players from individual parts. In the end, stretching towards the whole via ‘points of contact’ is the aim; the question is, of course, how leadership and interpretive insight are distributed in this process. Gureckis and Goldstone’s proposal that groups can be seen from either the level of the operation of the collective (as the conductor might see it) or that of the individual (as the player reading from a part must) is helpful here. They suggest when confronting a situation such as this one that ‘[t]hese two levels need not be in conflict although they are often not obviously related’.¹ Much insight can be gleaned, they conclude, through examining one level from the perspective of the other.² I argue that exploring these entrance points into the musical landscape, i.e. full scores and parts, with this in mind helps not only to pave the way towards a resolution between the competing conceptual models that are born from them, e.g. the polarization of chamber music and orchestral music, but also helps to differentiate this ‘wild’ emergence of interpretation in a way that clarifies how the individual producers of orchestral music might best contribute leadership and interpretive insight to

¹ T.M. Gureckis and R. L. Goldstone, ‘Thinking in Groups’ in *Pragmatics & Cognition* 14/2 (2006), 293-311. The authors also note that one of the significant contributions from the study of complex adaptive systems is that the ‘rules that govern behavior at one level of analysis can cause qualitatively different behaviour at higher levels. Thus, individual and group-level descriptions need not be in conflict.’ p. 294.

² Ibid.

performance. This later project serves as the aim for the chapters of this thesis that follow.

The musical landscape³

The first few times I heard Jacqueline Shave, leader and director of Britten Sinfonia, ask one of her orchestral colleagues ‘What do you have there?’, I was alarmed. My training as a conductor came to the fore with the knee-jerk reaction of ‘Doesn’t she know?’ or ‘Why doesn’t she look in the score to find out?’ However, I quickly learned that what was in the score was not the information Shave was looking for. She knew *what* they were supposed to play; what she needed to know was *how* they were going to play it, as it was her or someone else’s job to respond. This experience was one of several during fieldwork with Britten Sinfonia that made me aware of the fact that entering the musical experience through a part is quite a different experience, both perceptually and psychologically, from entering via a full score. And the difference is not just technical: these two entry points shape distinct ways of approaching orchestral music-making.

The ‘musical landscape’ metaphor as used by practitioners of conceptual metaphor theory⁴ is a useful tool to reflect upon these contrasting perspectives, as it is able to capture the variety of (more often than not conflicting) outlooks that are possible as one plays or conducts from a part or full score. Entering the experience of music-making through musical notation is a diachronic ‘path’-oriented activity and leads to a unique way of conceptualizing music, i.e. as a landscape through which the performer moves.⁵ The basis for this metaphor is the physical motion necessary to move our embodied selves through a spatial landscape.⁶ However, ‘elevation’ within either a spatial or metaphorical musical landscape is an important variable, as it is the misunderstanding of how changes in elevation within this ‘landscape’ affect changes in performance roles that is at the root of many of the problems that plague the working relationships between players and conductors, and also, I argue, cause orchestras to ‘underperform’.

³ I use the ‘musical landscape’ metaphor throughout this chapter in order to evoke a cross-domain mapping between musical or musical-analytical space and social or performative space. This approach is motivated by Monson’s (1996) insight that the social and musical are codeterminant. This approach also motivates my case study with Britten Sinfonia in the chapter that follows this one.

⁴ The core texts in conceptual metaphor theory are Johnson and Lakoff’s *Metaphors We Live By* (1985) and *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999). I draw upon the application of this work to musical motion by Johnson and Larson (2003) in what follows.

⁵ Adlington (2003) notes that multiple metaphors are at work in settings such as this, and I agree. However, I limit my discussion to the ‘musical landscape’ metaphor because it is the most relevant to the task at hand, i.e. exploring how scores and parts shape the perception of their users.

⁶ Johnson and Larson, 2003: 71.

Engaging with music by viewing it from different elevations within a metaphorical musical landscape is not a new idea, of course. Categorizing the interaction between levels and layers of musical material has long occupied analysts in ways that have deepened musical understanding, sometimes in a way that performers find helpful, sometimes not.⁷ With this in mind, Johnson and Larson identify the musical landscape metaphor as having two perspectives: the ‘participant’ and the ‘observer’. From the participant perspective:

You, the listener, are moving over the musical landscape [...] As you move thorough musical space, you stand in various spatial relations to different musical events (as locations) and you can notice various things along your journey [...] Within this landscape framework, repetition is tracing out the same trajectory of motion again. In music one can repeat the same path of motion, but always at a different time from the original musical event. However, the experience of tracing the same musical path over again is so powerful that it can actually make you feel as though you are experiencing the same time over again.⁸

Johnson and Larson refer here to the listener’s journey through the musical landscape. For the performer, however, the journey is scripted. The player is travelling over more or less worn paths with the help of a map. Also, players, unlike the listeners that Johnson and Larson describe, not only ‘stand’ in relation to different musical events, they embody some and relate to others.

The observer perspective differs from the participant one, however. Johnson and Larson explain that

It is conceived as a distant standpoint from which you can observe the path through a musical landscape that defines a particular work. This is the perspective utilized most often by musicians who are analyzing a score. The score is one metaphorical representation of the imaginary path through an abstract musical space. Every expression that can be used when speaking from the participant perspective can also be used from the observer perspective, just as observers are travelling the musical journey in their imagination (in an imaginary space). The advantage that the allegedly ‘objective’ observer perspective supplies is that one can see the entire musical piece at once, because it is an abstract object that can be viewed from afar. By contrast, from the participant perspective you ordinarily cannot see everything that is up ahead, because, according to the logic of the ‘musical landscape’ metaphor, from a particular standpoint within the music, you may not be able to see the entire path ahead.⁹

⁷ See Rink, 2002 for a discussion of what types of analysis are likely to be most helpful to performers.

⁸ Johnson and Larson, 2003: 71.

⁹ Ibid., 73.

Here we have the analyst's position — a position that is potentially less useful to performers, as it is apparently disconnected in some way from what is happening 'on the ground'. From a distance a view of the whole is possible; and from this perspective emerges the idea of the piece of music as an 'imaginary object' that can be glimpsed in a flash.¹⁰ The lack of resolution between the in-time 'on the ground' perspective and the out-of-time 'bird's-eye view' is the source of a great deal of confusion for both performers and musicologists. As Nicholas Cook has noted:

here is the basic paradox of music. We experience it in time, but in order to manipulate it, even to understand it, we pull it out of time and in that sense falsify it. But it isn't a falsification we can do without; it is a basic part of what music *is* [...] The important thing is to recognize the falsification for what it is, and not to confuse the imaginary objects of music with the temporal experience for which they stand.'¹¹

The fact that the 'bird's-eye' perspective is viewed by an 'observer' rather than by another type of 'participant' adds fuel to the idea that with distance or increasing elevation in the musical landscape there comes disconnection. As Cook reminds us, to take music out of time involves some sort of necessary 'falsification'; yet when discussing conductors, undoubtedly the performing musicians most closely aligned to the perspective of the 'observer',¹² we are not talking about taking music out of time as much as experiencing the musical landscape differently, i.e. both as 'observer' and as 'participant', and to some extent both in time and out of time. I argue that this lack of understanding of the 'participant-observer' role in performance contributes to the problems in identifying the conductor's unique role in orchestral performance and also problems of musical leadership more generally.

Fortunately, Edward Cone's reflections on the Vermeer painting 'View from Delft'¹³ help to clarify how the 'participant' and 'observer' perspectives of the musical landscape relate to one another. For Cone, Vermeer's painting reflects a distanced perspective from which one is able to grasp how abstract and representational form (in addition to numerous other binary poles) 'fuse by mutual analogy'.¹⁴ In a later article, Cone went on to revise this statement to say that these binaries also could also be locked

¹⁰ This experience of music as an imaginary object is also consistent with how some composers first claim to experience the work. See Cook, 1998: 63-4.

¹¹ Cook, 1998: 70-1. See also Lydia Goehr (1992) for an exploration of the historical basis for this.

¹² For a full description of the conductor as analyst see Lewis, 2006.

¹³ Cone, 1961: 439-53.

¹⁴ Ibid.

in a sort of dynamic tension.¹⁵ And although, even with this later addition, I question some of Cone's applications of this insight, the basic premise that musical detail (which is generated 'on the ground' — in accordance with the musical landscape metaphor) and the musical whole (which is represented by the distanced 'View from Delft') are inextricably bound together is compelling. How this happens in the act of performance, however, is more difficult to describe.

Cone's discussion of how analysis and performance are involved in a cyclic process that leads towards ongoing dialectical synthesis is illuminating in this regard. In his 'Three Ways of Reading a Detective Story — Or a Brahms Intermezzo', Cone uses the metaphor of multiple readings of a detective novel as a springboard from which to propose a series of readings that outline how this synthesis takes place.¹⁶

Cone's model begins with a 'First Reading' in which one reads the work with the desire to find out what happens. This reading happens in diachronic time: 'the trajectory is one-dimensional, moving along the path laid out by the author.'¹⁷ This is followed by the 'Second Reading' which leads to a 'synoptic overview':

The Second Reading aims at an analysis — not necessarily a conscious analysis, formally constructed, but at least one implied by a synoptic overview. This synoptic analysis treats the story, not as a work of art that owes its affect to the progress through time, but as an object abstracted or inferred from the work of art, a static art-object that can be contemplated timelessly. Paradoxically, the Second Reading achieves its goal when it ceases to be a reading at all — when it becomes the pure contemplation of structure.¹⁸

In the 'Third Reading', the synoptic 'Second Reading' is seen diachronically and a 'double trajectory' is created. 'The primary, open level is once more that of experience', Cone adds.¹⁹ The final reading is the 'ideal First Reading' in that 'it is the only one that fully accepts the story as a work of temporal art and tries to appreciate it as such.'²⁰ This 'double trajectory', which might better be described as diachronic-primary and synchronic-secondary, 'cannot avoid attending to the overall pattern investigated by synoptic analysis; it will allow itself to recognize that pattern, however, only as a gradually emerging one, and it will concentrate on the strategies of concealment and disclosure by which the author controls the process.'²¹ This final reading potentially

¹⁵ Cone, 'Aunt Claribel's "Blue Nude" wasn't easy to like' in *Art News* 70/7 (1980), 162-63. See also Introduction to *The View From Delft: Selected Essays* (1977/ R1989), 5-6.

¹⁶ See Cone, 1977.

¹⁷ Ibid., 80.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 81.

²¹ Ibid., 81. For a similar argument about the function of concealment in performance see Rothstein, 1995.

gives birth to a new ‘Second Reading’ analysis, and thus the cycle of ‘Second’ and ‘Third’ Readings that characterizes rehearsal and performance begins. This is also one way to understand the ongoing reflective process that shapes how musical interpretations develop and evolve.

Moreover, Cone offers an intriguing proposal in describing the move from the ‘Second Reading’ into the ‘double trajectory’ of the ‘Third’. This happens via the purely psychological process of ‘intentional forgetting’:

To be sure, we cannot really ration what we know. Our subconscious minds contain no selective filter to strain our memories — no sieve that allows only those memories useful for a given purpose to penetrate our overt consciousness, while retaining the rest. But we often find it necessary or convenient to pretend that this is the case and to act as if it were so. When we go to the theatre, we pretend that the actors are not actors and that the stage set is not a set. Children, of course, often create imaginary lives for themselves that are almost as vivid to them as their real lives; many adults retain something of this power in their capacity for daydreaming. It is the same faculty, or a closely related one, that enables us to respond emotionally to what we know is only fiction, and especially to experience during the Third Reading something of the excitement characteristic of the First.²²

Here we have a description of how to recover from what Cook describes as the ‘falsification’ that happens when we take music out of time in order to understand it. Cone’s solution is to forget about anything that will keep the ‘excitement’ of diachronic time from being primary. Any experienced performer knows exactly what is meant by this; the first concern in performance is ‘keeping up with time’, as mind-wandering can be disastrous. Performers also know, however, that they can trust something of what has been discovered in the process of preparation to remain. How this happens for a solo player might be described as a redistribution of information from the conscious to unconscious mind, and thus Cone’s call to ‘intentionally forget’ makes sense. For orchestral players and conductor, however, this process is probably best explained through the theory of transactive memory, i.e. a process through which memory, distributed across the group, becomes available as individuals learn to remember who holds the relevant information at each particular moment.²³ Seen from this point of view, Cone’s ‘double trajectory’, for either a soloist or an ensemble, has as its result an ‘increased bandwidth’ for the performance to draw from, even if this is achieved in different ways by an ensemble than by a soloist. For an orchestra, I argue, this

²² Cone, 1977: 81.

²³ For an introduction to the theory of transactive memory see Wegner, 1986; Wegner, Raymond, and Eber, 1991; and Wegner, 1995.

possibility for more bandwidth is actually structural, in that players and conductor enter the musical landscape through highly-differentiated pieces of a greater puzzle. However, just because the possibility for increased bandwidth exists, this does not mean that it is actualized. Failing to plug into this boon often comes down simply to misunderstanding how the characteristics and contributions of musical life ‘on the ground’ differ from the life at elevation.

The view from the part

As I discussed in Chapter 1, chamber music and orchestral music are often viewed as experiences that are different in type; however, I argue there is much to be gained by looking at both as generalized points on a continuum. Chamber music, in the most idealistic sense, falls towards one end of the continuum. Here there is a primacy of face-to-face, ‘democratic’²⁴ relationships with leadership emerging as necessary. Artistic leadership and rehearsal management can potentially emerge from any member of the ensemble, although for various reasons one individual may take on more responsibility than the others.²⁵ The archetype of orchestral music falls towards the other end of the continuum, of course. In this situation there are still horizontal relationships between players at work, and the better the orchestra the more this is the case, but these relationships are to some extent mediated by individuals in designated leadership positions, and in particular by the conductor’s role.²⁶ To put things simply, in chamber music, leadership roles are likely to be distributed more horizontally (and democratically), while in the orchestral context, leadership will tend to be distributed more vertically (and hierarchically). The reality of the situation, however, is not so tidy: for although the scale might be tipped one way or the other, the horizontal and vertical are likely to be in constant flux in response to the musical and practical demands of performance.

One other problem complicates the expression of horizontal and vertical relationships in performances. As I have explored in depth in Chapters 1 and 2, the leadership of conductors, like designated leadership generally, has the power to eclipse the horizontal relationships that exist between the players.²⁷ One example of this is the

²⁴ Cottrell (2004: 87) refers to this as ‘directed democracy’.

²⁵ For a further discussion of this perception of chamber music as ‘democracy’ see Murnighan and Conlon, 1991; Mohr, 1994; and Levine and Levine, 1996.

²⁶ See Clayton (1995: 107) for a discussion on how coordination in conducted groups is more dependent upon players being able to hear one another than on seeing a conductor. Conductors provide more generalized information.

²⁷ This happens in quartets as well. See Murnighan and Conlon (1991) for a discussion of how quartets with dictatorial first violinists were less successful, however.

use of beating time to facilitate ensemble coordination. A prescribed pulse, especially one provided by a conductor, can very easily get in the way of the face-to-face coordination that characterizes chamber music performance.²⁸ Just as a pianist might simplify the sight-reading of a two-part fugue by focusing on how each voice rhythmically fits within the other, a centrally-given pulse simplifies the act of ensemble coordination. In both cases, the horizontal aspects of the material give way to a vertical organizing principle. In chamber music, using an audible or visual pulse as a rehearsal strategy would usually become modified at some point as players re-orient themselves towards a value system that prioritizes horizontal leadership and coordination; however, in orchestral playing this is less likely to be the case. The impact of this lack of conscious re-orienting or re-balancing of horizontal to vertical as time goes by can lead to under-utilized cognitive bandwidth of the group as a whole. In an extreme case players may actually learn to listen less. I argue that one of the ways that orchestral players can move towards remedying this situation is to recognize and actualize the cognitive advantages inherent in working from a part.

In many ways, the argument that the part and the full score represent unique perceptual perspectives comes out of Marshall McLuhan's observation that 'the medium is the message', an insight that seems no less valuable today than when it was first made over forty years ago.²⁹ As David Chandler elaborates:

When we use a medium for any purpose, its use becomes part of that purpose. Travelling is an unavoidable part of getting somewhere; it may even become a primary goal. Travelling by one particular method of transport rather than another is part of the experience. So too with writing rather than speaking, or using a word processor rather than a pen. In using any medium, to some extent we serve its 'purposes' as well as it serving ours. When we engage with media we both act and are acted upon, use and are used. Where a medium has a variety of functions it may be impossible to choose to use it for only one of these functions in isolation. The making of meanings with such media must involve some degree of compromise.³⁰

Although not generally acknowledged, full scores and parts are different media, and require different 'compromises' as a result.

Both chamber and orchestral musicians play from parts, of course. And even though many players might say that the commonalities between the two experiences end there, this is by no means the case. Playing from a part, in either context, constrains the

²⁸ One way that orchestras might deal with this by playing behind the beat; see Cottrell, 2007.

²⁹ Marshall McLuhan, 1964/ R1987.

³⁰ Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics*, 2002: 4.

player to a view from ‘on the ground’. From this position in the musical landscape a player cannot avoid playing a more or less defined musical-social role in what can be seen as the performative drama. On the surface this mapping of social role onto notational part is straightforward and follows logically from the view of the musical text as a ‘script’. If the player is working from the ‘Oboe 1’ part, for example, ‘Oboe 1’ is the role he or she plays. The functions that one fulfils in enacting this role are various, of course, as ‘Oboe 1’ might need to move moment by moment between leading, following, accompanying, doubling, etc.

Things are more complex, however, for a section player playing from a ‘Violin 1’ part. Here the role of ‘Violin 1’ is distributed across many players, and each distribution holds its own challenges. For example, the last outside player in the first violin section is sitting in the precarious position that many players call ‘suicide corner’.³¹ Although this player is in one of the spots least conducive to hearing the orchestra as a whole, he or she knows that it is necessary to ‘lead’ in the sense that anticipating the playing of the rest of the section is needed in order for the group to sound together. The functions that this player performs in enacting his or her role will also vary in accordance with the situation, and will also involve leading, following, accompanying, and doubling, albeit more within the context of the section itself. This example demonstrates clearly how roles are related to, yet exceed, the parts that sit on players’ stands; this happens in much the same way that musical notation under-defines performance generally.

Nevertheless, whether the role ‘scripted’ by the part is distributed or not, and for that matter, whether the ensemble in question is an orchestra or chamber group, there are certain perceptual similarities for all players working from parts. Firstly, the role one plays in performing from a part is consistent and continuous, i.e. a player can experience the musical landscape only in relation to his or her own individual role, which to some degree is defined by the path ‘scripted’ within the part. Even if the player has bars of rests, for example, he or she has the role of not playing for a certain period of time and knowing when to enter again. This continuity of perceptual identity experienced when working from a part is seen in the logic of the musical landscape metaphor in the sense that someone on the ground can be in only one location at a time, and as a result can see only so far ahead. To put it another way, to play from the part is

³¹ Interview with Britten Sinfonia first violins section, West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge, 7 February 2011.

to experience everything personally, i.e. in relation to your ‘scripted’ role, and this is true for both principal and sectional players.

Secondly, in navigating the musical landscape a player working from a part must rely primarily on auditory and visual cues that are not captured in the notation. In other words, when working from the part, one is forced to rely more on what is ‘unwritten’ than on what is ‘written’.³² In this case, it is necessary to recognize what Cottrell refers to as the largely unacknowledged oral/aural tradition within Western art music. He explains:

Although such music arises from a highly rationalized system predicated on elaborate scientific principles governing temperament, functional harmony and so on, and underpinned by a sophisticated notation system, there is also a significant aural component in the way in which it is produced and reproduced. Traditional musicology’s reliance on the overriding primacy of the musical text has perhaps obscured this point, but the discourse between teacher and pupil, and between musicians themselves, must inevitably affect the interpretation of individual works.³³

The concept of ‘musical text’ here is associated with full scores and the ‘imaginary objects’ they point to, and Cottrell’s idea echoes the overall argument in this thesis in that the primacy of this concept often overshadows the various ‘unwritten’ and ‘relational’ discourses that affect interpretation. The lack of information on parts reveals this situation, as this lack creates an unavoidable vacuum that pulls players towards discourse both in rehearsal and in performance itself.

Acknowledging the importance of the ‘unwritten’ in playing from parts also has an impact on the ontological status of the work at hand. Treitler’s discussion of the ‘unwritten’ and ‘written transmission’ within medieval chant practices clarifies this point. Here he claims that a trope or organum melody that was ‘reconstructed or extemporized’ in performance has been ‘*realized in*’ rather than ‘*transmitted through*’ performance.³⁴ Playing from parts can also be seen in this light, and this may explain Schutz’s comment, which might on the surface seem quite radical, that ‘there is no difference in principle between the performance of a string quartet and the improvisation at a jam session of accomplished jazz players.’³⁵ Cook affirms this idea of the ‘reconstructive and extemporized’ nature of quartet playing in his argument that an experienced quartet playing familiar repertoire ‘plays together with a kind of

³² Granted, one can see all notation this way; what I mean here is ‘in comparison to a full score’.

³³ Cottrell, 2004: 41.

³⁴ Treitler, 1992: 135.

³⁵ Schutz, 1964: 177. Also quoted in Cook, 1990: 131.

suppleness and mutuality of timing.’ He goes on to describe this timing as the antithesis of internal or external ‘counting’, and claims instead that the players stay together ‘because they are, in a quite literal sense, playing by ear.’³⁶

Cook compares his understanding of this improvisatory ‘playing by ear’ to conversation,³⁷ and in this way his evaluation of ensemble coordination can be seen as relating to the ‘discourse’ that Cottrell associates with the aural/oral tradition in Western art music. Cook explains that

It is perhaps [...] illuminating to draw a parallel with the rapport and give-and-take of people engaged in conversing together; each speaker listens to the others, accommodating himself to what they are saying and timing his interjections in accordance with the flow of the conversation, so that the conversation as a whole has a kind of rhythmic pacing which is shared by all the participants. And if good conversation can easily be disrupted by the bore who will not listen, will not see anybody else’s point of view, but insists on ‘saying his piece’ as if he were delivering a lecture, then precisely the same applies to chamber music performance: there are musicians, especially those accustomed to solo performance or to playing in orchestras, who play without regard to what everybody else is doing, or who insist upon a rigidly enforced beat — so that the mutuality of performance, which is the distinguishing feature of chamber music, disappears. Perhaps the most damaging criticism that can be made of a chamber player is that he doesn’t listen: for this strikes at the heart of an art in which openness to the other is of the very essence.³⁸

Cook’s conversational analogy seems appropriate, and is consistent with the thoughts of scholars of creativity more generally,³⁹ yet I argue that when playing from a part, be it in a chamber music group or an orchestra, the ‘medium’ of the part itself dictates a message of collaboration, or ‘mutuality’ as Cook has it. This, therefore, leaves Cook’s characterization of the player who ‘will not listen’, plays ‘without regard to what everybody else is doing’, and ‘insists on a rigidly enforced beat’ as not just a poor chamber musician, but a poor orchestral musician as well. Because of what is not in the player’s notation, playing from a part is completely contingent upon players ‘listening’ and responding to the work of others, and in fact the ‘medium’ of the part is structured to help this happen.

Evelyn Tribble’s study ‘Distributed Cognition in the Globe’ examines the highly-distributed system of the Elizabethan repertory theatre and in so doing allows for the teasing out of some parallels that enhance the picture of musical part-based systems.

³⁶ Cook, 1990: 130.

³⁷ The analogy linking conversation to a certain type of refined coordination is explored further in Chapters 4 and 5.

³⁸ Cook, 1990: 130-1.

³⁹ For example see Keith Sawyer, 2007: 127-149.

Drawing again upon the work of Hutchins,⁴⁰ she argues that the system of the early modern theatre 'is precisely calculated to maximize individual contributions',⁴¹ and examines 'tools, artifacts, and practices' of the early theatre with the aim of demonstrating 'how they form elements of a cognitive structure that, in constraining and limiting, also enables an extraordinary level of achievement.'⁴² Although Tribble thoughtfully reconsiders in the light of socially-distributed cognition the physical environment of the theatre itself, particularly the systematic ways in which actors enter and exit through stage doors, as well as 'plots', which were the single folio-page overviews used by the company backstage (I will discuss these more below), our concern to start with is her recognition of the substantial advantages attached to the Elizabethan practice of working from part books or 'sides'.

Tribble claims that, like today, actors in Shakespeare's time relied upon socially-distributed mechanisms in order to produce performances; however, the distribution of these mechanisms differs radically across these two contexts. Modern actors have access to the full playbook as well as to additional information about the play. They also have a director's guidance and the advantages that come from group rehearsal and discussion. In contrast, Shakespeare's actors never saw a playbook, and instead worked from parts ('sides') that contained only their own character's dialogue and minimal cues. In addition, they were given only two weeks to learn these parts and had very limited rehearsal time, as they were often performing five or six plays at the same time.⁴³

Tribble describes how there is also some debate among scholars about what constitutes 'being perfect in one's part': while the modern theatre favours verbatim realization, the early theatre most likely valued fluency over word-perfect renditions.⁴⁴ Therefore, while in the modern theatre a 'prompter' is the primary scaffolding to memorization, Tribble argues that in the Elizabethan theatre the prompting was built into the distributed system in the form of 'verse'.⁴⁵

In the light of this and other aspects of early theatre, Tribble states that

parts perform the useful function of stripping all superfluous information. Modern actors' painstaking research into their roles would be counterproductive

⁴⁰ Tribble (2005) provides a comprehensive literature review of Socially-Distributed Cognition, but in the end draws mainly on Hutchins (1995) for her argument.

⁴¹ Ibid., 135.

⁴² Ibid., 142.

⁴³ Tribble, 2005: 148.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 148-9.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 49.

in situations where it is necessary to master or re-master a role as quickly as possible. We live in an information-dense society and tend to think that more information is better. We can off-load such information onto computer hard disks, file folders, electronic organizers, calendars, and so on. However, managing the mass of data that we have involves serious challenges that are met with filtering and organizing devices such as RSS feeds. Our cognitive needs involve managing and filtering rather than committing to memory, and the mechanism used by modern actors [...] involve such extended cognitive devices.⁴⁶

Tribble then joins other writers on socially-distributed cognition in confirming the advantages of ‘under-loading’ the cognitive system:

Although the cues seem sparse, and although, as Carol Rutter puts it, it is difficult to imagine ‘oneself playing Polonius without knowing any of Hamlet’s lines or any of the stage action while Polonius is off,’⁴⁷ there are clear advantages to such ignorance. While the practice of selective knowledge may have originated in exigency — the prohibitive cost of copying full playbooks for the entire company — it nevertheless may have had many useful side effects. In the first place, as anyone who has tried to get amateur actors to stop reading other people’s parts will know, text is an attractive nuisance. Anything we have, we read. When instead the actor must hear the cue, the emphasis must be on listening.⁴⁸

Finally, Tribble, citing Stein,⁴⁹ claims that within the parts is ‘most of the information that an actor needs.’ In other words, playwrights embedded the ‘direction’ within the play itself — producing texts that, once divided into parts, would lead to all that was necessary in performance, i.e. without the actor needing to know very much about the play itself.⁵⁰ Therefore, she concludes that ‘[t]he most effective of all cognitive scaffolds is good writing’.⁵¹

In many ways, Tribble’s description of the early modern theatre mirrors the situation of modern orchestral players, who are also arguably part of a system that is calculated to ‘maximise individual contribution’. In applying her insights to an orchestral context, one can see that modern players also work from parts alone and most have very little rehearsal time while performing an extensive repertoire; as in the Elizabethan theatre, the cognitive ‘under-loading’ of the parts makes this level of performance possible. As Tribble explains, ‘the more thinking that can be off-loaded

⁴⁶ Ibid., 151.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 151. Quoting Carol Chillington Rutter, *Documents of the Rose Playhouse* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1984), 51.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 151-2.

⁴⁹ Tiffany Stein, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 88-9.

⁵⁰ Tribble, 2005: 152.

⁵¹ Ibid., 152.

onto the environment, the more mental energy remains available for those tasks that are primarily internal.⁵² Presumably, the technical aspects of playing an instrument would also qualify as ‘internal’ in this context. There may also be a comparison to make in the value of fluency over ‘literal’ and ‘word-perfect renditions’, that is, if one sees ‘fluency’ in the sense Cook describes it when he discusses the quartet ‘that plays together with a kind of suppleness and mutuality of timing.’ Here Cook is clear that in chamber music, at least, this fluid approach to coordination is valued more highly than navigation through beating time (either internally or externally). Therefore, perhaps instead of relying on ‘verse’ as the prompter, a ‘part-based’ orchestra or quartet might rely on a common knowledge of ‘style’ as a guiding principle.

There are also differences between the two contexts, of course. As Tribble reminds us, we in the modern world have access to more information than ever before, including full scores and recordings, and the thought of metaphorically ‘playing Polonius without knowing any of Hamlet’s lines’ would today be as unthinkable musically as it is dramatically.⁵³ However, in seeing the ‘musical landscape’ from the perspective of the part, much of the ‘managing and filtering’ of any information overload has already been done for the player in advance. Modern musicians, unlike modern actors, do not generally learn their parts from a ‘playbook’, even if they may know the piece through a recording or consult a full score when problems arise.⁵⁴ As I noted above, limited rehearsal time is an issue here, as is the modern proficiency in sight-reading which, more often than not, makes looking at a full score unnecessary. And in new repertoire, scores are often not available to individual players in any case.

Finally, Tribble’s provocative claim that ‘the most effective of all cognitive scaffolds is good writing’ needs to be further qualified in order to understand how it relates to an orchestral context. One can readily acknowledge that in a one-to-a-part chamber music context this notational-based scaffolding might be adequate; here what Cook described as a ‘conversational’ approach to coordination could map onto the situation quite directly. However, the variety and distribution of roles in the modern orchestra, as described above, creates added complexity that at times demands a hierarchical (and therefore, vertically-distributed) approach. Apparently this need for a hierarchical perspective also emerged in the Elizabethan theatre in response to two issues, both of which are also relevant also to orchestras. Firstly, the theatre needed a

⁵² Ibid., 144.

⁵³ This is not at all unusual, however, when an orchestra performs a new work.

⁵⁴ It was interesting in my Britten Sinfonia interviews that one first violin player said that playing second violin made it seem like a different piece!

way for the actors to know enough about the play as a whole to practically execute their parts; and secondly, there was the need to introduce new and less-experienced players to the system.⁵⁵ Although I will address only the first of these points below, in both cases, the part-based system expanded vertically to accommodate these needs in a way that did not interrupt the primacy of horizontal relationships that are characteristic of the cognitive scaffolding made possible by ‘good writing’.

It seems that in the Elizabethan theatre there were some problems that couldn’t be solved by the actors in ‘diachronic’ space; scholars know about this because of the artefacts known as ‘plots’, which Tribble describes as ‘folio-sized sheets of paper contain[ing] scene-by-scene accounts of entrances and, sometimes, exits; necessary properties; casting; and sound and music cues.’ Some scholars argue, based upon holes found at the top of the documents, that plots were hung on a wall behind stage and were intended for common use.⁵⁶ Tribble explains that

A plot functioned as a two-dimensional map of the play designed to be grafted onto the three-dimensional space of the stage and to be used in conjunction with the parts. Since players did not have the full text, this document allowed them to see and to chart the play, particularly to understand the rhythm of the scenes. Even if there are many odd gaps in the information that the plots record, we must not neglect the significance of their most salient features: their size and their physical layout. Here, and here only, the play is given a shape easily graspable by all members of the company.⁵⁷

Drawing upon Hutchin’s insight on the use of maps (‘charts’) as a ‘computational device’ in naval navigation, Tribble continues:

if we imagine the ‘book’ of the play as a street guide, containing all the information necessary to mount the play but dispersed across many pages and inaccessible to the individual players, the plot becomes the map, in which the architecture of the information is displayed, reduced to its most important component parts.

[...]

Moreover, the plot, like the nautical chart Hutchins describes, is not merely a two-dimensional representation; it is a ‘computational device’.⁵⁸ Plots provide a spatial analogue — the play at a glance, so to speak — as well as a way to chart

⁵⁵ Tribble (2005: 153-4) borrows from Hutchins (1995) in discussing how apprentices in the theatre who had social skills but lacked practical skills could actually function well before they knew what they were doing.

⁵⁶ Tribble, 2005: 144.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 146-7.

⁵⁸ Tribble (2005) quoting Hutchins (1995: 61).

temporality and repetition, as actors, alone or in teams, enter and re-enter the stage.⁵⁹

Here we have a document that captures traces of an ‘elevation’ of what, in this case, is a dramatic rather than musical landscape.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, this ‘synoptic overview’⁶¹ is conceptually unique in the theatre (and potentially the orchestra) in that it emerges from the part-based performance situation rather than from ‘the book of the play’. This is a Second Reading, i.e. an analytical reading, that grows from the needs of a socially-distributed cognition system ‘on the ground’. Perhaps counter-intuitively, this overview also stays ‘on the ground’ in the sense that the responsibility for this ‘elevation’ is not given over to any single individual or authoritative text, as a plot is more a ‘computational device’ and a problem-solving tool than anything to be ‘transmitted through’ performance. The primacy of horizontal relationships is preserved, while the bandwidth for the performance stretches through distributing memory for the ‘elevation’ onto the plot. In other words, the plot helps to achieve Cone’s ‘double trajectory’, yet gets there from an ‘on the ground’ perspective. I argue in the chapter that follows that traces of a similar version of ‘double trajectory’ can be seen in some orchestral settings in the way that players interact in rehearsal and mark their parts. The fact that this increase of bandwidth emerges as the result of problem-solving ‘on the ground’ makes it consistent with how Rink characterizes performance-based analysis in music.⁶² These artefacts of the ‘Second Reading’, be they plots or, as I will explore later, marked parts, are also consistent with other types of analysis meant to achieve their benefits in the act of performance in that their ‘results’ are likely to be less helpful to scholars than to the performers themselves.⁶³ Tribble also comments that scholars of plots find them unhelpful in achieving a comprehensive picture of what happened in the early theatre performance, and states that this ‘is only to be expected when examining one element in a system of distributed cognition.’⁶⁴

The view from the full score

The bottom-up version of ‘double trajectory’ explored above is very different indeed from the more dominant conceptualization which involves seeing the musical landscape

⁵⁹ Tribble, 2005: 147.

⁶⁰ To some extent these plots are comparable with Wallace Berry’s (1996) ‘thematic essences’.

⁶¹ Albeit one with diachronic implications.

⁶² See Rink (2002) on problem-solving. In particular ‘entrances’ are noted more than exits, for example because one poses more problems than another. See Tribble, 145.

⁶³ See Cook, 1999.

⁶⁴ Tribble, 2005: 147.

from the top-down perspective of the full score. This perceptual orientation tends to be the preferred conceptual model of the musical landscape for three reasons. The first is entirely practical in that this view allows for a simplification of problems of ensemble coordination. Although research demonstrates that refined coordination in performance is more dependent upon individual players being able to hear and adjust to one another than upon their being able to see a conductor,⁶⁵ the efficiency of conducting technique, including the use of cues and beating, is undeniable, even if conductors might ultimately result in eclipsing horizontal relationships in a way that leads to a coarser version of interaction between players.

A second reason involves the fact that in orchestral culture the identity of musical works themselves is more entangled with their full score representations than with either their parts or their performances.⁶⁶ To some extent, the modern interest in, and expectations of, ‘informed’ performances is predicated upon the view from the full score rather than from the part.⁶⁷ For most musicians, to ‘know’ a work means to know it from the perspective of the full score. This is in spite of the fact that from a player’s perspective, ‘knowing’ the work might mean to know it in a way that is entirely different.⁶⁸ Moreover, even if a performance is built from the perspective of the parts, it will more often than not be judged by critics and critical listeners in relation to values derived from a full-score perspective.

The third reason is related to the second, in that the view from the full score is in some ways closest to the orientation of most listeners, i.e. looking at the musical landscape from a distance, since the way players experience the ‘musical landscape’ is very difficult, if not impossible, for listeners to achieve. Even if an orchestral player has a tacet movement and decides to ‘just listen’, he or she will most likely revert to a more distanced perspective. It is for this reason that the conductor’s perspective is the one with which listeners most often identify, as both listeners and conductors create their own paths through the musical landscape in a way players are not free to do.

Although for all the reasons named above the view of the musical landscape from the full score might be the most prevalent one, the question still remains of how this perspective is actually performed. In my earlier description of the musical

⁶⁵ Clayton, 1995.

⁶⁶ In spite of arguments to the contrary: for example, see John Butt’s argument (2002: 88) that ‘consideration of ‘lower’ levels [playing techniques] quite often reveals possible ‘higher’ intentions [those more associated with composers] that might not otherwise have been evident.’

⁶⁷ There are some exceptions, particularly in early music performance.

⁶⁸ I demonstrate in the chapter that follows how ‘knowing’ a work can mean something else entirely when speaking about orchestral performance. See case study 4.4 below for an excellent example of this.

landscape I spoke about the challenge of bringing the distanced ‘observer’, an individual who from an elevation can see the work as a single imaginary object, into diachronic time. Clearly conductors are in the best position to do this, as they are ‘participants’ yet not ‘grounded’ in the sense that players are. Unlike the musicians who enter the musical landscape via the scripted paths of their parts, conductors actually make their own scripts, zigzagging between layers and levels of musical material.⁶⁹ In the end, a conductor’s script is a highly bespoke action plan for performance. The key point here is that full scores are not scripts in the way that parts are. As a result, this script-making procedure shapes and defines the view from the full score in a unique way. When working from parts, synoptic overviews are similar to the plots in Elizabethan theatre companies, i.e. they emerge from the bottom up. However, when dealing with full scores, the process happens in reverse and under normal circumstances involves the creation of a narrative — something that theatrical ‘plots’ and their orchestral equivalents can, at best, only imply.⁷⁰

Conductors begin with the full score, and here we are in the territory of cognitive overload, the antithesis of the under-loading described in relation to the view from the part. This situation aligns conductors with what Cone describes as the analytical Second Reading:

In the Second Reading one knows much more than one is being told; the trajectory of thought is zigzag, or even discontinuous, constantly shifting back and forth between the planes of memory and experience, until at last one is able to achieve a comprehensive bird’s-eye view of the narrative path.⁷¹

As I argued in an earlier study, conducting is unavoidably associated with analysis, in that conductors are forced by necessity to develop strategies that make sense of the vast amount of information contained within full scores.⁷² When confronted with the diachronic reality of performance, conductors are faced with choices, and the basis for these choices springs from efforts made during their preparation, which can be seen, in

⁶⁹ I see ‘layers’ as unified by parameter. ‘Levels’ I use more traditionally, i.e. in terms of musical surface vs. background.

⁷⁰ Although, as I describe below, ‘narrative’ in music is typically associated with nineteenth-century interpretive practice, I use the term here to refer to a linear conceptualization of the work as a whole as it unfolds over time. Simply put, this conceptualization is what motivates the production of the script. Although playing from a part might reveal a narrative in performance, my argument is that conductors will often create some sort of linear concept in order to generate the script that helps them to navigate the work. This linear concept may or may not follow a typical plot archetype; nevertheless, the fact that conductors find what they are looking for does seem to have the power to change how we see the work (as both the piece and the labour of the orchestra). I discuss this in more detail below.

⁷¹ Cone, 1977: 80.

⁷² See Lewis, 2006. When I say ‘analysis’ I am referring to a performer’s analysis. See Rink, 2002.

one way, as their personal ‘rehearsal period’ for the performance that will follow.⁷³ One can equate this preparation process with Cone’s ‘zigzagging’ Second Reading. What a conductor cannot take in in diachronic time, he or she can slow down in the mind’s ear in order to absorb. Time can also halt entirely as comparisons are made; often this happens through flipping pages back and forth. In the end, at best, a ‘bird’s-eye view of the narrative path’ emerges.⁷⁴ A conductor then translates this ‘narrative path’ into a script that can be used when meeting the orchestra in diachronic time.

It is important to clarify that the most compelling differences between the view from the part and the view from the full score happen in this diachronic time, i.e. in performance, even if it is prepared for away from the performance itself. Here players and conductors both work from their respective scripts; however, the script that a conductor follows in performance is either composed or improvised by putting the full score through what might be seen as an analytical ‘filtering process’.⁷⁵ The players, in contrast, work from scripts that have already been, as Tribble puts it, ‘stripped of all superfluous information’. This situation results in two unique conceptions of what Gestalt theorists describe as the figure-ground relationship.⁷⁶ The ‘figure’ for a conductor is not consistent with any one part; it must be constructed by ‘zigzagging’ between levels and layers of musical material. The player’s ‘figure’, on the other hand, is conflated with the role scripted by his or her part. For the player, then, as I have already discussed, the attention can move towards the background, i.e. to how his or her part meets other parts, whereas for the conductor, the focus must begin with clarifying the ‘figure’ itself. How conductors might do this is explored below.

A key point in understanding the development of the conductor’s perspective is to look at the nature of the view that he or she has access to, yet is unavailable to the players in performance, i.e. the view that can take in the imaginary object. In *Score and Podium*, conductor Fredrick Prausnitz describes the process of constructing this synoptic overview, which he calls ‘a working image of the music’, and claims its

⁷³ Another situation unique to conductors is the inability to rehearse. Doing analysis might be seen as the closest they can get.

⁷⁴ Of course, as described above, these Second Readings can happen cyclically with Third Readings.

⁷⁵ Tribble, 2005: 151.

⁷⁶ ‘*Gestalt* is a German word taken from the psychology of perception. A Gestalt is a figure or pattern which can be distinguished against the background or field of perception [...] But the term has a wider meaning than the nearest English equivalents, “shape” or “form”, and carries stronger connotations of significance and meaning. Moreover, its use extends over a whole range of perception: shapes and tunes are *Gestalten*, and so are certain aesthetic and causal phenomena. The term applies whenever a significant pattern or construct (the “figure”) emerges against the background scene or noise (the “ground”).’ From Gregory, 1998: 291.

conceptualization ‘is basic to the preparation of a conducted performance’.⁷⁷ He introduces this process through offering a thought experiment based upon a line-drawing of several mountain peaks that appears in his text. The instructions begin:

The drawing below shows a mountain landscape. Study it until you have a sense of its perspective and of the observation point from which you are about to watch, in imagination, the action.⁷⁸

He continues:

A person is climbing the central peak from the lower left, then descending on the right. You must decide, first of all, whether you are observing the whole scene (including the central peak) from a distance, another peak perhaps, in which case the climbing figure would remain small and barely defined; or whether you are witnessing the scene from somewhere near the top of the central peak, a helicopter perhaps, in which case the ascending figure should grow larger and more distinct as it approaches, only to diminish as it passes from your view on the lower right. The figure neither stops nor changes pace along the way. You must imagine how it is dressed; how it is lit; what its speed of progress would be, and how that would affect its gait (running, climbing, walking at a leisurely pace); whether it is a man or a woman.⁷⁹

Prausnitz carries on by describing this scenario as the ‘visual equivalent’ of what one would find in ‘a very simple musical score’, and invites the reader to engage in transforming it into a ‘working image’. He explains that

the background (a held chord, or a repeating accompaniment) remains the same throughout; the action is vested in a single, moving event (a solo tune); the tempo remains constant. And yet the impact of this representation could vary enormously, because a vital aspect remained unspecified by the composer, and thus was left for you to decide. No, it is not whether the person is man or woman, running or ambling, dressed or naked. It is a question of where *you* are. The person might seem far off, a small, moving speck in an otherwise still and frozen landscape. Or, if you are close by, the person may approach you, recognize you and be recognized, react to that recognition — does he or she smile, speak, ignore or threaten you? And what is the manner of his or her departure? The only information available in this visual ‘score’ is that the speed remains constant.⁸⁰

Prausnitz suggests that the reader go to work ‘as if this were a score, and you the conductor planning its performance.’ This involves engaging with the scene until one is

⁷⁷ Prausnitz, 1983: 14.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 14-15.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 15.

able to visualize the constructed events.⁸¹ Once able to visualize this more diachronic representation of the narrative, Prausnitz instructs the reader to

Think of something else or, if you can, of nothing at all. Then, release the scene you have created in your conscious imagination *all at once*, as with a multiple camera exposure, all on one frame, but without the effect of overlapping figures. Try to get the feeling of a remembered event, something that really took place in time, but is now recalled in a single instance. If there is some sort of confrontation between the figure and yourself, this would be the most likely moment of first recall. Start with that and leave all else to be inferred, but clearly remembered in that instance, and vividly kept in mind until the figure disappears. Or you might be left with a calm, almost lyrical sensation of stillness and loneliness, emphasized by the far-off movement of a barely visible figure. Practice this ‘performance,’ including its minimal extension in time. Eventually you will be able to project a musical score into a comparable moment of total concentration before you begin its performance.⁸²

Prausnitz begins with the argument that a synoptic overview is ‘basic to the preparation of a conducted performance’, and over the course of his ‘experiment’ begins to explain why. In this account the key variable to be decided in preparation is where the conductor stands in relation to musical events. This makes sense; conductors do not produce musical sounds, yet, in the end, what they pay attention to has the power to affect the sounds the players produce. They add value to performance through the direction, amount, and quality of their received attention. Looking sympathetically at a soloist, ignoring a brass section with a tendency to ‘over-blow’, or pointing out one parameter of the musical fabric over another, are all examples of positions that a conductor might take in relation to musical events. For Prausnitz, the conductor can prepare for future performance through the exercise of placing himself within an imaginary musical landscape, and as this process goes on the imaginary musical landscape becomes a ‘working image’ for what becomes more and more like the real one. In other words, ‘space’ is transformed into a series of musical actions.

However, Prausnitz takes the role of the ‘working image’ a step further when he introduces the idea of practising an out-of-time ‘performance’ of the piece. Here we begin to touch upon an aspect of the conductor’s role that is more difficult to discuss, i.e. how it relates to synchronic time while in the act of performance.⁸³ When first discussing the concept of ‘double trajectory’, I proposed that when moving between Cone’s Second and Third Reading ensembles might distribute memory, thus creating

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Interestingly, both Schutz (1951) and Cottrell (2007) associate conductors association with ‘out of time’ worlds.

additional cognitive bandwidth for the group to draw upon. Prausnitz is showing one of the more specialized ways in which this might be done, i.e. through the conductor's role in bringing elements of the Second Reading consciously into the Third. When he speaks about being able 'to project a musical score into a comparable moment of total concentration', he is not saying something unfamiliar. Players themselves often comment similarly about this in relation to conductors. For example, when I asked Pavlo Beznosiuk, leader of the Academy of Ancient Music and former LSO player, about how he thinks conductors add value to performance, he commented that 'They form for the band, and particularly for audiences, a focal point [...] they are often very important for audiences, a conduit through which they can experience the piece, when they're good.'⁸⁴ The importance of this 'focal point' is perhaps nowhere more visible than in the moments immediately preceding the first sound an orchestra makes, which is why Prausnitz draws attention to it. Here we are often given a taste of synchronic time by a conductor, 'when they're good'.⁸⁵

In the end, it seems that Prausnitz's 'experiment' brings the reader into the imaginary landscape only so that he can take him out again. First, the conductor is asked to stand in specific relation to musical events in chronological order; this point of orientation in the landscape at any moment can be seen as a 'figure'. For example, in one section the conductor might choose to be 'close to' the motor of the accompaniment which is in the second violins and violas, and as a result comparatively 'far from' the players covering the tune. Elevation and position within the musical landscape may change with context, but the conductor's presence within that landscape is not in question at this point. However, in the second part of the experiment, the conductor is seemingly asked to step back from participating in the landscape at all. Here the 'figure' is his impression of the landscape itself, albeit one informed by his previous participation. How these two, apparently incompatible, 'figures' acquired during preparation translate into something useful in performance is the next area for discussion.

Gustav Meier, Prausnitz's successor as Professor of Conducting at the Peabody Conservatory, offers a suggestion of how this might be done in his description of the 'zigzag way'.⁸⁶ Much like Cone's Second Reading, which 'zigzags' in and out of time

⁸⁴ Interview with members of the Academy of Ancient Music, Wigmore Hall, London, 26 January 2011.

⁸⁵ Players leading from the instrument are often very skilled at projecting synchronic time at this moment, as well; maintaining this sort of projection throughout a performance, however, is very rarely compatible with the view from the part.

⁸⁶ Interestingly enough, although Meier claims that 'analysis is useful', he dedicates only a very limited amount of space to it in his text. In comparison his section on the 'zigzag way' is extensive. This points to

in the service of creating a synoptic overview, Meier uses the term to describe a conductor's path from the Second Reading into the Third, transforming a synoptic overview into a 'script'.⁸⁷ Describing the process, Meier explains that

As a conductor studies a work, decisions are made about the predominant need for direction at every point, from the beginning to the end, and a mental or written map is created. The name 'zigzag' is appropriate because the conductor singles out a specific group of musicians for any one of the many reasons [...] He or she may leave them to focus on another section of musicians in need of direction, return to the first group, turn to the third section, go back to one of the previous groups, or move on to a different section. As if following a road map, the conductor goes back and forth — zigzags — from point to point.⁸⁸

Meier suggests that the selection of the 'points of attention' to comprise this 'zigzag way' happens firstly through breaking the score into 'important areas of study', and then priority is assigned: 'When several seemingly equal priorities, such as rhythm, orchestration, and cuing, compete for attention, the conductor establishes a hierarchy among them.'⁸⁹ Mapping Meier's approach onto Prausnitz's, each of these 'points' is also a location in the musical landscape, i.e. what a conductor chooses to attend to becomes to some degree close, and what is not engaged with moves further away. Therefore, the 'zigzag way' is composed by connecting together a series of vertical relationship positions between the conductor and the members of the orchestra.

The result of Meier's approach is something resembling the plots of the early modern theatre in the sense that plots are also disjointed, and place a high degree of emphasis on entrances. Unlike plots, however, the 'zigzag way' is the result of a top-down perceptual orientation and is designed to be performed by a single person for whom it is implicitly meaningful (practically and/or musically). Consequently, Meier's 'zigzag way' can be seen as solving the problems of conductors more than those of the orchestra, which is certainly the case at this stage before the conductor meets the ensemble.⁹⁰ A conductor, instead of being confronted with cognitive overload, is able to create a narrative path through the musical landscape. And in the end, the conductor

the fact that, for performers, 'analysis' means formal analysis, and in spite of giving it a bit of lip service, he does not find its explanation worthy of space in the way his own analytical approach is.

⁸⁷ Rink's (1999) term 'kaleidoscopic' refers to a similar process.

⁸⁸ Meier, 243.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ In the end, the usefulness of a conductor's script can only be evaluated in performance, and in this situation, an improvised script may very well be more successful than a planned one.

working from this script can as a result experience something of the continuity and participation known by the player working from a part.⁹¹

Experience, of course, allows conductors to anticipate where attention might be needed in order to achieve an aim with some degree of success and build a script accordingly. Conductors can give only one or possibly two specific bits of information at a time, and this motivates them to learn what works through trial and error. Texts written by conductors are often based upon sharing this type of ‘tried and tested’ information, which amounts to individual ‘zigzag ways’ through various works. Norman Del Mar is perhaps the best-known writer in this genre, having written narrative commentaries on the symphonic repertoire of Beethoven, Berlioz, Brahms, Elgar, and others. His discussions draw upon both source study and his own experience, and ‘zigzag’ across a vast field of musical concerns. Each work is presented with an introduction followed by chronological conducting points for each movement. In the annotated ‘script’ of the first 50 bars of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 that follows, Del Mar demonstrates some virtuosic leaps between various locations within the musical landscape. The description begins with a moment of ‘total concentration’ akin to what Prausnitz characterized above:

More than usually does this greatest of all symphonies require the establishment of a rapt atmosphere before a note is heard, which should be communicated in the conductor’s demeanour from the moment he appears on the platform; and the performance itself should not start until there has been a marked period of absolute silence in the hall. The initiation of sound can then be motivated by the smallest possible up-beat, directed not to the strings but to the horns; the strings can to a large extent look after themselves. An excellent story is told of Furtwängler fulminating against what he regarded as a heinous misunderstanding of the opening bars when a young conductor, anxious to prove himself, wasted twenty valuable minutes of rehearsal time in order to achieve perfect ensemble in the 2nd violins’ and cellos’ sextuplets. ‘But,’ spluttered Furtwängler in a historic overstatement, ‘the whole *point* is that they must not be together!’

Beethoven’s ♩ = 88 is predictably a little too fast for both the inwardness and by contrast the towering declamation of this music. If the conductor has totally involved himself in its presentation, so that the preparation for the first mighty *ff* unison D minor statement has been properly spaced, it will turn out that the ♩ = 69 will be nearer to what the orchestra and the hall’s acoustics will enable him to attain. Quicker, the introductory 16-bar period will seem too terse; any slower and the carefully planned build-up will lack that all-important sense of direction.

⁹¹ This sort of aim motivated the analytical strategy I devised for conductors based upon the creation of parallel, parametrically-based ‘lines of continuity’ that are accessed as needed to solve the in-time problems of performance. See Lewis, 2006.

Nor should the unleashing of the fortissimo itself happen too abruptly, as it will if taken in resolutely strict tempo. The key to the passage lies in the demisemiquaver rest in the strings which must be given that extra fraction of a second before the full orchestra bursts in with the primary theme. For this purpose a divided beat in the second half of bar 16 is indispensable.

Such a subdivision of the beat serves both to mark the last string semiquaver before their rest and to hold the wind momentarily before indicating their own cut-off. For whilst the unison declamation presupposes a clean new entry from strings and wind alike, it would be wrong to ignore the wind overhang present in their tied double-dotted quaver. To achieve all Beethoven's requirements therefore, a slight broadening of bar 16 will be in no way inconsistent with the significance of so great a moment.

As for the conductor's evocation of that giant amongst themes, this can hardly be other than a sternly dictatorial delineation of its contours, devoid of actual time-beating and yet rigidly within its rhythmic framework. In bar 24 it is helpful to mark both the syncopated extra *ff* in the lower strings and the 2nd beat *ff* entry on flutes and horns, as these significant points of emphasis are easily submerged. The portato quavers of bar 26 will then need weighty indications, but the martial trumpets and drums of bar 27 and 29 need no encouragement from the stick as they can tend to be overplayed. It is the three sforzandos of bars 31-3 which are next designated with full power, after which the whole awesome pageantry collapses in the manner of the huge genie vanishing as smoke back into its tiny bottle, in the *Arabian Nights*. The flutes and trumpets, which mark the completion of this grotesque accompaniment with a unison low D, need for the purpose a clear indication from the stick.

Beethoven's dovetailing of the opening bars' restatement brings the 1st violins' sotto voce entry a bar earlier than might have been expected, a subtlety of which the conductor should be more than subconsciously aware, for his own comfort.⁹²

What underlies this commentary on the key aspects of Del Mar's own script, of course, is the desire to transmit what I am calling a musical 'narrative'. The privileging of the narrative potential within conducting was reinforced early on by no lesser commentators on the art than Liszt and Wagner,⁹³ and in many ways this has shaped the development of the role.⁹⁴ Today, most conductors, if not orchestras, would agree with Liszt's statement that 'We [conductors] are pilots, not oarsmen.'⁹⁵ And although Del Mar's script is no more than an elaborate series of action points for a conductor, through its enactment the implicit aim is to transmit a narrative of his own making, even if one can

⁹² Del Mar, 1993: 172-3.

⁹³ See Bowen, 2003: 108-13.

⁹⁴ Perhaps in part because of their extensive influence on the next generation of conductors: Liszt taught piano to Bülow, Damrosch, Mottl, Nikisch, and Weingartner, for example. Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 110: 'Nous sommes pilotes, et non manoeuvres.' Quoting from F. Liszt, 'Letters on Conducting', to Richard Pohl, November 5, 1853, cited from Ernst Burger, *Franz Liszt: A Chronicle of his Life in Pictures and Documents*, (tr.) Stewart Spencer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 341.

only imagine it in his description above by ‘reading (or hearing) between the lines’.

Rink explains that

it is the performer who ‘determines the music’s essential ‘narrative’ content by following indications in the score as to ‘plot’, and, as in the enactment of any ‘plot archetype’, by shaping the unfolding tale on the spur of the moment in an expressively appropriate manner.’⁹⁶ This kind of ‘narration’ — a particular legacy of the nineteenth-century performance practice — involves the creation of a unifying thread, a *grande ligne* linking the constituent parts of a performance into a rhythmically activated synthesis. Vital for intelligible, effective performance, it means giving the music a sense of shape in time by devising a hierarchy of temporally defined musical gestures from the small to the large scale. When playing, the performer engages in a continual dialogue between the comprehensive architecture and the ‘here-and-now’, between some sort of goal-directed impulse at the uppermost hierarchical level [...] and subsidiary motions extending down to the beat or sub-beat level, with different parts of the hierarchy activated at different points within the performance.⁹⁷

In order to make sense of the statement above in the context of orchestral music, however, one might need to replace ‘performer’ with ‘conductor’; only someone in this role is likely to be in the position to do, single-handedly, what Rink describes.

Performers working from parts are unlikely to be able both to play their role in the orchestral drama and to engage with greater narrative structure without a good deal more rehearsal time than most orchestras can afford. This is not to say that the performances of un-conducted orchestras or chamber musicians are necessarily without ‘narration’, only that in these cases the *grande ligne* (which might also be seen as a type of ‘zigzag’) would be contained differently; responsibility for its execution would need to be negotiated between members of the group, or principal players, and this takes time to accomplish. In this case, narration would not be distributed to a single individual, and this may go a long way towards explaining why many groups describe their interpretations as developing over the course of rehearsals and performances.⁹⁸

Conducted performances do not generally evolve to the same degree, at least not purposely, as it is an unspoken expectation that conductors will come to the first rehearsal with a ‘set’ interpretation in mind, regardless of whether they plan to work from a composed or improvised ‘script’.

The way that conductors prepare for performance may also play a part in coupling the conductor’s role with a narrative function. Narration is predicated upon the

⁹⁶ Quote from Rink, ‘Chopin’s Ballades and the Dialectic: Analysis in Historical Perspective’, *Musical Analysis*, 13/1 (1994), 112.

⁹⁷ Rink, 1995: 217-8.

⁹⁸ I explore this in the context of Britten *Sinfonia* in the chapter that follows.

sort of process that many conductors, such as Prausnitz, advocate applying to all repertoires.⁹⁹ Rink clarifies that

to construct a musical narrative initially requires close study of the score — ‘structural analysis’ — in order to reveal its particular message or meaning, as a preliminary to translating it into sound. This sort of ‘reading’, which will vary from performer to performer, itself derives from the interpretative ethos of the mid- to late nineteenth century, when, according to Dahlhaus, ‘structural hearing meant immersing oneself in the internal workings of a piece of the music’ to an almost metaphysical expressive end.¹⁰⁰

Indeed, even the idea of an ‘almost metaphysical expressive end’ maps nicely onto Prausnitz’s description of the ‘moment of total concentration’.

I would argue that it is difficult indeed to see one person, especially on the podium, conveying ‘how the piece should go’ without narrative implications. What might have started out as a concept associated with the nineteenth-century repertoire has now developed a life of its own. In the end, it is arguable that ‘narration’ is linked, for better or worse, to the performance of a modern conductor’s role, and that it is not the ‘conductor’, but the ‘conductor-narrator’ who is the ‘focal point’ for performance as Beznosiuk described above.¹⁰¹

When examined in the light of socially-distributed cognition, however, this situation has potential advantages. If an orchestra is a system designed to ‘maximize individual contributions’, then distributing the role of ‘narrator’ to a conductor makes sense practically, if not always historically or musically.¹⁰² The ‘medium’ through which an orchestra enters the musical landscape is neither the parts nor the score: it is both, of course. And to return to a thought from the last chapter, the most efficient groups ‘promote robust information transmission across people yet avoid having everybody know the same things.’¹⁰³ In other words, the top-down and bottom-up structure of the orchestra, when fully inhabited, creates a great deal of cognitive bandwidth, and with this comes the potential for a commensurate amount of ‘computational capability’, i.e. ability to solve problems and be creative. An ideal distribution of responsibilities from the perspective of socially-distributed cognition

⁹⁹ For a more comprehensive review of analytical strategies used by conductors see Lewis, 2006.

¹⁰⁰ Rink, 1995: 223. Once again in order to have this make sense in an orchestral context one must replace ‘performer’ with ‘conductor’ and ‘score’ with ‘full score’.

¹⁰¹ The symbolic role of the conductor (see Small, 1997) activates this dynamic on a different level and may help to explain how the conductor’s narrative function is still active outside of repertoire that holds obvious ‘plot archetypes’.

¹⁰² That being said, it might not make any less sense than conducting repertoire from eras that historically precede conductors.

¹⁰³ Gureckis and Goldstone, 2006: 297.

would draw upon the strengths of each perspective and, in turn, leave the musical landscape cognitively (and musically) saturated. If one were to distribute an orchestral role to a non-playing member, it makes sense for this role to capitalize on a perceptual viewpoint not available to players working from parts. Both ‘narration’ and Prausnitz’s ‘complete moment of concentration’ do this. Unfortunately, it is also true that this sort of ‘distribution’ often eclipses ‘robust information transfer’ across the rest of the orchestra and, as a result, often causes more problems than it solves.

Conclusion

Modern orchestral players have a great deal in common with the actors of Shakespeare’s theatre, in that both can draw upon the cognitive advantages of working from parts alone. However, even if orchestral musicians do not work directly with full scores, it is clear that the perspective afforded by scores has shaped their musical values. In this way Cone is right when he reminds us that ‘we cannot ration what we know’, as it has already changed us. Orchestral culture now values the ‘narrative path’, independent from the repertoire performed, and tends to conflate ‘narration’ with a single narrator, most often a conductor. Take, for example, the comments about the conductor’s role made by another player from the Academy of Ancient Music:

Essentially it means that you get one person’s vision of how the piece should go rather than... what tends to happen in smaller groups is you might have a discussion with somebody... the smaller the group gets, the more likely this is to happen. You’ll get to the end of the five minutes and they’ll have cancelled themselves out and then nobody says ‘Right, we’re going to do it like this.’ Nobody knows how the discussion happens, there is no conclusion reached and there is no dictator so nothing really changes, you just do it again, whereas, to me, how orchestras function best is with a benign dictator.¹⁰⁴

I suspect that many players share this sense that they need to choose between the ‘lesser of two evils’, i.e. between the conductor-narrator and lack of narration. Bernard Sherman expresses the same sort of sentiment in his comment that ‘Dispensing with a modern conductor may lead to more engagement among musicians, or to under-interpreted run-throughs.’¹⁰⁵ These statements seem even more provocative in the light of their early music contexts. In any case, I seriously question that choosing between these two extremes is the only option.

¹⁰⁴ Bojan Cicic, Interview with members of the Academy of Ancient Music, Wigmore Hall, London, 26 January 2011.

¹⁰⁵ Sherman, 2003: 246.

What I propose instead is a reframing of the problem using insights gleaned from socially-distributed cognition. From this perspective, the orchestra, like the early modern theatre, can be seen as a system ‘precisely calculated to maximize individual contributions’. I argue, however, that the orchestra’s two-media structure actually exceeds the early modern theatre in potential individual contributions: players have available all the perceptual benefits of working from parts, and conductors all the advantages of the full score. This leaves us simply with the question of how to move towards some sort of saturation of both perspectives. Answers for this are contingent upon a number of situational variables, many of which will be addressed in the chapters that follow. Nevertheless, it is clear that without ‘robust information transfer’ across the ensemble, failure is certain, if all too common. Take, for example, this discussion that took place between three principal players of Britten Sinfonia after a conducted rehearsal:

Player 1: [...] we started trying to say things, but then we very quickly realised there’s not much point. We gave up trying to take ownership because it wasn’t going to happen. Sometimes with a conductor, you can find a way of making suggestions and we can share more, but [sometimes] we’ve kind of given up, haven’t we?

Player 2: Some conductors, they’re too proud to take that on board, aren’t they? That’s what it comes down to—

Player 3: A lot of them come with a very set idea of what they want and how the interpretation is going to be and it doesn’t adjust to... they can’t hear something lovely and think ‘Yes, we’ll do it this way’ or ‘Yes, that’s lovely’ and trust that you’re going to do it—

Player 2: Sometimes they will—

[...]

Player 1: I had a nightmare the other day, had to go and do [a concert] on one rehearsal and turned up [...] love [the composer of this work] and there is a wonderful solo tune... and straight away, [the conductor] stood up and said ‘No vibrato anyone, I don’t want to hear any vibrato.’ I find that really hard sometimes, because the whole sound of the orchestra went very dead and it sounded awful. It was like having to lie and having to kill something. I had to work really hard not to get ill.

[...]

Player 2: I think also, a lot of conductors... just the nature of conductors [is] to go up there, stand up in front of thousands of people; sometimes, with big orchestras, they conduct in different orchestras each week. It does require quite a

big ego just to do that for a start and I think that's [...] what I've experienced. Particularly with the really big conductors, you can't say anything, you have to go... you just know they've got their way of doing and that's it. They don't want any input from you at all, just shut up and play. That's why we like it here. We don't have to put up with that.¹⁰⁶

These players state the problem quite explicitly: conductors can and often do block the transfer of knowledge across an orchestra. The first half of this thesis has focused on this theme: first, the 'compleat' was shown to eclipse the 'incompleat', then the prescriptive to cover the emergent, and finally the view from the full score to obscure the view from the part. In contrast, the second half of the study explores practical ways in which the condition of 'robust information transfer' might be regained.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Britten Sinfonia Principals, West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge, 29 November 2010.

Ensemble-repertoire fit: Britten Sinfonia as a case study

The rise of the chamber orchestra in the early twentieth century created a middle-ground between the symphony orchestra and the more intimate world of chamber music. This new area has continued to grow in depth and breadth in the last thirty years as the uncondacted chamber orchestra has come into its own. In 1972 the uncondacted Orpheus Chamber Orchestra's more democratic approach to leadership was unprecedented, whereas now the uncondacted or 'guest-directed' model has become a common format for smaller orchestras. This is particularly true in the UK, where the trend has been to move away from relationships with resident conductors in favour of more flexible leadership approaches.¹ These alternative modes of direction are popular with both players and audiences and serve both creative and practical (not to mention financial) aims. In any case, now that uncondacted groups have become widely accepted, it is much more difficult to claim that the leadership structures of chamber music and orchestral music are mutually exclusive.

Cambridge-based Britten Sinfonia, the subject of this chapter's case study, is a particularly good example of how boundaries between orchestral and chamber music can blur, as well as demonstrating the advantages of working from such a position. Perhaps the most obvious way this blurring happens is through the group performing under the same name in combinations ranging from three to sixty players. The dynamic and malleable formal leadership structure of the orchestra, sometimes led from the violin but at other times by soloists or conductors, is another example. The orchestra's diverse cross-genre programming is a third instance of this.² David Butcher, the Managing Director, even goes as far so to challenge the group's identity as an orchestra, preferring to think of the ensemble as more like 'a theatre company or dance company' than a 'chamber orchestra'.³ In the end, Britten Sinfonia, through its highly flexible orientation, offers an excellent opportunity to examine how an orchestra adapts to

¹ The rise of the historically-informed performance movement has also played a role in this. Although Butt (2002: 11) argues that 'ironically, the trend towards underplaying the role of conductor (or, at least, the director with a single-minded interpretative stance to the music) often ignores the hierarchical structure of the music establishment originally associated with the music performed.'

² The range of the group's programming is vast, extending from chamber music at the Wigmore Hall and full orchestral performances at the Proms to performances at the Latitude festival and on stage with various pop artists.

³ For an exploration of how this attitude has impacted on the orchestra's performance style generally see Higgins, 2010.

changing circumstances and the role conductors and players in leadership positions might play in this.

The idea that organizations might adjust their approach in the light of changing circumstances is not a new one. Lawrence and Lorsch's seminal study on complex organizations (1967) was the first to state explicitly the case for organization-environment fit, and it did so using three variables: differentiation, integration and the environment.⁴ The first two were used to characterize the organization, the last to define the external pressures that affect the functioning of the group. Analysis of these three variables can also be usefully applied (albeit with modifications that allow for a change of venue from a plastics factory to a concert hall) to understanding how Britten Sinfonia responds to change.

Lawrence and Lorsch describe 'differentiation' as the specialization of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in individuals and departments.⁵ They define 'integration', on the other hand, as the collaborative effort that is required to bring individuals and departments together in order to meet the demands of the environment.⁶ In an orchestral setting, differentiation might be seen in the specialized knowledge of individual players and sections, and integration in the way individuals and sections manage to coordinate sounding together in performance.

Defining 'environment' poses problems in the orchestral context, however. Lawrence and Lorsch attempted to quantify the environments of their three industrial case studies through an elaborate statistical tool that looked at a variety of technical and economic data. The analysis of this sort of data is obviously inappropriate for the present study of musical leadership and interpretation.⁷ An additional, and larger, problem was identified by Murnighan and Conlon in their extensive study of British string quartets. Here it was claimed that the 'internal orientation' of successful quartets keep them from adapting to their 'external market', thus placing them in 'direct opposition to common organizational wisdom that espouses organization-environment fit.'⁸ By 'internal orientation' the researchers were pointing to the fact that the quartets seem to pay more attention to their own playing than they do to what audiences think about it.⁹ Successful orchestras, due to a number of variables such as the amount of

⁴ See Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967.

⁵ Ibid., 2-3.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Empirically measuring environmental conditions is often controversial in any case. Lawrence and Lorsch's 'environmental uncertainty subscale', for example, was the subject of much debate in the literature. See Tosi et al., 1973: 27-36.

⁸ See Murnighan and Conlon, 1991: 183.

⁹ Ibid., 183. See also Butterworth, 1990: 207-224.

cognitive load carried in rehearsal and performance, are likely to find themselves in the same position. For the purpose of the present study, I intend to capitalize on what these organizational psychologists seem to have missed by arguing that this ‘internal orientation’, in fact, points to a different environment, and one that is helpful to consider in this context, i.e. the scripted musical landscape described in Chapter 3. I argue that reviewing the relationship between the orchestra and its repertoire (via the ‘scripts’ referred to above) is a good starting point for exploring what factors are involved in the distribution of leadership across ensembles.¹⁰

However, it is also necessary to consider the orientation of the organization itself; this can be seen in terms of the balance between differentiation and integration. Lawrence and Lorsch claim that, ‘other things being equal, differentiation and integration are essentially antagonistic, and that one can be obtained only at the expense of the other.’¹¹ In the orchestral context, for example, the situation of individual players knowingly sacrificing their own ideas in the service of playing together, especially under a conductor, is an all-too-common occurrence. This sort of sacrifice is at the heart of what sets chamber music and orchestral music apart in the minds of players. It seems that orchestras, particularly symphony orchestras, have the potential to be highly integrated but lowly differentiated. Yet, on the other hand, it is hard to imagine good chamber music not being both highly individual and highly coordinated. Interestingly enough, Lawrence and Lorsch identify this second state as the best model for confronting environmental change; however, they also claim that it is unavoidably conflict-laden.¹² The organizations identified by the researchers as the most successful in this regard were, therefore, the ones that managed to succeed in spite of having the most severe integration problems.¹³ As a result, they claim that styles of conflict resolution are also central to any relevant study of this sort of organization.

I argue in this chapter that Britten Sinfonia might also be seen as a highly-differentiated and highly-integrated organization, largely made possible by their chamber music ‘set point’. Although this orientation, and the informal quartet-based leadership structure that underlies it, serves as the basis for the group’s way of working, this is not a static situation. The breadth of repertoire the group performs necessitates a stretching of this basic orientation into domains usually ruled by conductors in order to achieve integration. What makes this group unique, however, is that it stretches well

¹⁰ I acknowledge that there are secondary variables that also play a role here. See ‘Focusing on Fit’ below.

¹¹ Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967: 47.

¹² Ibid., 24-8.

¹³ Ibid., 41-4.

into these domains while still consciously maintaining its chamber-music (highly-differentiated) orientation. Moreover, the group's high degree of differentiation facilitates the emergence of both formal and informal leadership as necessary, rather than having it imposed by above.¹⁴ When this extended leadership is no longer needed, the group retracts to its chamber music basis, which turns out also to be a very effective conflict resolution strategy. This highly-flexible leadership structure, at its best, allows for problems to be solved by the individual or section in the best position to have the knowledge and competence to do so, another characteristic that Lawrence and Lorsch associate with organizations primed for dealing with environmental change.¹⁵ This may even be true when the orchestra is working with a conductor, as sometimes the information required is most accessible from the 'view from the score'.¹⁶ All this leads to the situation where instead of formal leadership eclipsing 'the view from the part' (i.e. integration happening at the expense of differentiation), the advantages of both the bottom-up and the top-down perspectives, as discussed in the previous chapter, are allowed to occur simultaneously. As Jacqueline Shave, the leader of the orchestra, has said, 'In an ideal situation, you know the whole score and it's in the middle and you're just stirring it together.'¹⁷ A main purpose of this chapter is to discern how this 'stirring together' occurs and what it reveals.¹⁸

Finally, and, perhaps at first glance, counter-intuitively, I argue that studying a highly-differentiated and highly-integrated (and largely unconducted) orchestra such as Britten Sinfonia is an excellent way to explore how conductors function within, and add value to, performance. Because the group often performs difficult repertoire without a conductor, one can more easily pinpoint the circumstances in which conductors or conducting technique are useful and even necessary when they are put to use.¹⁹ In the case of Britten Sinfonia, this almost always comes down to a mismatch between repertoire complexity and rehearsal time, although the level of soloist spontaneity and sheer ensemble size also play a part.²⁰ The above circumstances point to the need for the

¹⁴ The management's dedication to supporting this is integral and is explored in depth below.

¹⁵ Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967: 30-41.

¹⁶ For an example see my discussion of the conductor as narrator in Chapter 3. A practical example can be found in Case Study 4.2 below.

¹⁷ Interview with Britten Sinfonia Principals, Theatre Royal, Norwich, 13 February 2011.

¹⁸ It is worth saying that the Britten Sinfonia has an advantage over the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in this regard, as the latter uses one approach for every problem, much like a conducted orchestra, whereas the Britten Sinfonia invents the tool in response to a specific problem.

¹⁹ This goes back to Hackman & Wageman's (2007) claim reviewed in Chapter 1 that the important question to ask about leadership is under what conditions is it necessary.

²⁰ Mark Padmore's performance of Finzi's *Dies Natalis* (6-13 February 2011) exemplified the latter situation. One player commented about the performance that 'it was completely exhausting because there was nothing rigid almost ever.' This performance was one of the few to receive a review saying that a

organization's 'integration' function to be bolstered in some way. If this need for additional integration is anticipated and extra rehearsal time or another appropriate form of support cannot be arranged to compensate, a conductor is invited to work with the orchestra; if the need is unanticipated, or deemed by principal players to be insufficient to employ a conductor, a playing member or, more commonly, a group of players will informally take on this responsibility.²¹ In either case, the conductor's 'functional role', if not a 'real-life' conductor, emerges as opposed to being imposed, thus making it an extension of the ensemble dynamic rather than a force antagonistic to it.²² Viewed from the perspective of socially-distributed cognition, when the conductor's role emerges in this way, it holds the potential to facilitate maximum contributions across the ensemble. This is in contrast to many orchestras where there is often a mismatch between what an ensemble needs to perform a specific work and what a conductor in fact provides. Due to the institutionalization of the role, conductors may be employed as a matter of course rather than to help meet any specific repertoire-based requirement, for example. Although in Britten Sinfonia this does occasionally happen, particularly when the orchestra collaborates with other ensembles that usually work with conductors, the orchestra's preference is to allow ensemble leadership and repertoire to be in constant dialogue with each another, searching for a perfect ensemble-repertoire fit. How this happens within the context of the organization as a whole, and the implications of this for orchestral leadership, will be contextualized in the case-study material presented below.

Developing a methodology

As the first part of this thesis has demonstrated, studying orchestral leadership moves unavoidably towards studying the orchestra as a system, yet how to do this methodologically is largely unprecedented. The orchestra whose collective leadership structure has been most extensively explored is the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra.²³ However, the applications of this work to the present study are limited, due partially to the group's way of working (i.e. ordinarily drawing upon a leadership formula that repeats itself systematically across repertoire), and partially due to the fact that the

conductor may have helped with ensemble coordination: 'I felt the absence of a firm baton more in Finzi's lovely song-cycle *Dies natalis*. Padmore's beguiling delivery of Thomas Traherne's ode to unsullied childhood innocence often seemed slightly ahead of the accompanying string chords.' Morrison, 2011.

²¹ This can also lead to subversive leadership in the instance of an underperforming conductor. I discuss this in Chapter 5.

²² For an example of a player embodying the conductor's 'functional role' see Case Study 4.1 below.

²³ See Hackman, 2002; Seifter and Economy, 2001; and Traub, 1996.

orchestra never works with a conductor. The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra is portrayed in the literature as exemplifying a formalized teamwork-based approach, with many marketing it as an alternative to the authoritarian-based conducted orchestra.²⁴ However, following Hackman, I have argued that to understand the potential of the modern conductor's role, it is necessary to see beyond designated leadership and into the world of the distribution of leadership functions. Although conducted and unconducted orchestras are often experienced as antithetical to one other, this does not mean that they either need to be or are helpfully conceptualized this way: a middle ground exists even if it is under-theorized.

In order to understand the distribution of leadership functions, it is ultimately necessary to engage in a close examination of ensemble interaction. Although few studies have undertaken the exploration of interaction within the orchestra, interaction between chamber musicians has been explored more extensively.²⁵ This work has added to the field of research through its attention to the understanding of group dynamics, communication, and coordination in smaller ensembles. The potential for distribution of leadership functions across groups is often acknowledged by these writers, although it is not described in these terms. For example, Goodman comments that 'The social interaction between players is like a "constant working out process", which can be realised more effectively during ensemble rehearsal when musicians openly negotiate ideas, handle conflicts, and try to reach compromises.'²⁶ Nevertheless, the majority of these studies remain unspecific about how this 'working out process' changes as repertoire changes, or how it shifts as players move from rehearsal into performance.²⁷ These studies are also limited, for obvious reasons, in their ability to understand the extremes of vertical distribution in leadership. For example, it is very rare indeed for a quartet to distribute responsibility for a single parameter, such as time-keeping, to one member of the group.²⁸ Perhaps most crucially, however, although the relationship between ensemble roles and the 'music' might be acknowledged, the implications for this are not followed through to their logical conclusion, which would involve studying

²⁴ See Chapter 1 and Hackman, 2005.

²⁵ For example, see Goodman (2002), Davidson and King (2004), Davidson and Correia (2004), Murnighan and Conlon (1991), and Blum (1986).

²⁶ Goodman, 2002: 164, quoting from Blum, 1986: 7.

²⁷ This issue has been addressed more recently by Mine Dogantan-Dack. See the 'Alchemy Project' <http://www.web.mdx.ac.uk/alchemy/index.html>.

²⁸ Although a member might set a tempo, this is not the same thing as 'time-keeping'. See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the more fluid 'conversational' approach to coordination adopted by good chamber musicians.

them as codeterminant.²⁹ It seems that in order to discover a model for this type of study it is necessary to look beyond classical music entirely.

Two works in particular serve as models in this regard for the case study that follows; both investigate jazz improvisation. Like the present thesis, Paul Berliner's *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* and Ingrid Monson's *Sayin' Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* both seek to redefine their topic conceptually through exploring the interactions that occur between the musical producers themselves.³⁰ Berliner argues that definitions of improvisation which emphasize spontaneity and intuition necessarily lead to a tendency to mythologize players and undervalue improvisation's knowledge base.³¹ This insight serves as a springboard for an exhaustive study of the topic which focuses on a revaluation of the content of players' individual and interactive skill sets — something that Berliner demonstrates is acquired with effort over a long period of time. Monson's study extends upon Berliner's thesis and draws attention to the inability of musical analysis to describe jazz. For her, musical and social structure are codeterminate, something that Berliner's work demonstrates but does not deal with so explicitly. In her own words: 'interacting musical roles are simultaneously interacting human personalities whose particular characters have considerable importance in determining the spontaneity and success of the musical event.'³² In order to explore this codeterminacy, Berliner and Monson, like Cook as shown in the previous chapter, draw upon the metaphor of 'conversation' to describe the interactive style of the players, and both researchers use the 'rhythm section' as a case study that emphasizes the tension between individual and collective concerns.³³

Both Berliner's and Monson's methodological approaches use extensive interviews with players and close readings of recordings. This reflects their desire to capture the interactive aspects of improvisation as well the codeterminance of the 'music' with its producers. Berliner augmented this basis with a participant-observational study that involved revisiting and reinvigorating his earlier jazz studies as a trumpeter. Arising out of these mixed-method approaches is a nuanced understanding of the 'musical landscape' of jazz — the inner-world or 'private life' of music-making

²⁹ In fact, it is often assumed that the person who has the tune is the leader. This grossly underestimates the complexity of what musical leadership really is. For example, rarely is the ability that an accompaniment has to lead a tune forward addressed. Murnighan and Conlon, 1991; Goodman, 2002; 164, and Loft, 1992: 18 all refer to the association of leadership with 'the tune'.

³⁰ Berliner, 1994 and Monson, 1996.

³¹ Berliner, 1994: 1.

³² Monson, 1996: 7.

³³ Berliner, 1994 and Monson, 1996.

in a jazz ensemble.³⁴ And although in both cases this landscape is contextualized culturally, the audience's perspective is not discussed. On the one hand this might be seen as a weakness; on the other, it is arguable that what improvisation is can best be seen from this level of analysis. I take a similar stance in discussing musical leadership, arguing that an understanding of the subtle and changing repertoire-specific distributions involved in performing orchestral music can best be gained through looking at music-making from the producer's perspective.³⁵

Nevertheless, investigating the distributions of musical leadership across an orchestra is a different (although in some ways related)³⁶ question from that of jazz improvisation, and it requires a bespoke methodological approach as a result. The interactions to be studied happen in a very different context from that of jazz performers, of course. To begin with, they are more formally 'scripted'. In addition, orchestral music-making happens on a different scale, with many more players and other collaborators involved; this necessitates extensive vertical distributions that one rarely finds even in chamber music. In designing the study, I needed to focus on methods that would allow me to understand ensemble-repertoire fit under these circumstances, as well as the role that leadership plays in this process. Like Berliner and Monson, I decided upon a mixed-method approach that focused attention on the musical producers. Unlike these improvisation researchers, however, I found it necessary to adopt a method based upon a broader fieldwork study balanced with the critical examination of annotated scores and parts.

I began my year-long fieldwork project with Britten Sinfonia in late February 2010 and finished in late February 2011. My first contact with the organization was through Sophie Dunn, Director of Creative Learning, and with her help I was able to organize a project that allowed for a comprehensive overview of the range of work that the orchestra undertook during the period. Early into the project I realized that getting an understanding of the orchestra's activities would not be straightforward, as the orchestra, although technically 'part-time', engages in a range of pursuits as broad as its repertoire, which as I have already mentioned is quite extensive. In the end I spent more time with the orchestra than I had originally planned, and by the time I had concluded the project I had observed 150 hours of rehearsal, two days of recording sessions, and a one-day educational project, and attended 20 concerts, many of them on tour. Britten Sinfonia is unique in that its variety of work — whether it involves playing for an

³⁴ See Deveau, 1998.

³⁵ I include the support of the orchestra's management in 'producers' in this case.

³⁶ I have discussed this in Chapter 3 in relation to the aural tradition that is enacted in playing from parts.

educational project, a chamber music lunchtime concert, the Proms, or at the Latitude Festival — is undertaken by the same core group of players. As Managing Director David Butcher has said, ‘The constant is the players, whatever we do’.³⁷ Observing the group in a number of different contexts, under different models of leadership, offered a rare glimpse into the nature of ensemble-repertoire fit and how the distribution of leadership functions contributes to it.

From the start, the aim of my observational work was somehow to document ensemble interaction and to try, through analysis of this data, to reveal the extent to which formal and informal leadership structures were at work and how this leadership changed as repertoire changed.³⁸ Audio or video recording seemed the obvious way to capture these interactions; unfortunately, the orchestra was not able to arrange for this to happen in any of the bigger projects, although I was able to video some of the chamber music work with permission from the individual players involved. I therefore had to rely heavily on field notes taken both during and after rehearsals.

In writing field notes during rehearsal I experimented with a variety of methods over the first few months of the project.³⁹ In the end, I decided that the best approach was to write down as much as I could of what people said and what I observed in real time. This had a number of unintended consequences. At first, and perhaps not unexpectedly, writing so much during rehearsal seemed to make some members of the orchestra self-conscious. Often in the early days of the project players would approach me and ask what I was writing about. In response I would explain that I was working on a project exploring conductors and leadership and then make clear that I was interested in the amount and type of interaction happening in the group.⁴⁰ The longer the project went on the less this was a problem, as people became more accustomed to seeing me with my pen moving.⁴¹

The second consequence of this approach to taking field notes was more unexpected and had deeper implications. At the beginning of the project I very much saw the orchestra from a conductor’s perspective that had been cultivated through years of both conducting and teaching conducting. By the end of the project my perspective

³⁷ Interview with David Butcher, Chief Executive, Britten Sinfonia, Sturton Street offices, Cambridge, 10 November 2010.

³⁸ I was also interested in how informal leadership was changed by different types of formal leadership, e.g. conductors vs. leadership from instruments.

³⁹ For example, for a while I used a stopwatch to determine the amount of time taken up in speaking versus playing in rehearsal.

⁴⁰ I sensed that the players feared that I was some sort of music critic, and were relieved when they discovered that I wasn’t, from their perspective, interested in the music at all!

⁴¹ At some point I was deemed harmless, and I attribute this state of affairs to one of the principal players who generously took me under her wing.

had been transformed. At one point, I even experienced something akin to revulsion when a conductor made a remark that I myself had made many times before from the podium.⁴² Interestingly enough, the in-time field notes seemed to be at the root of this change, as writing down everything I heard somehow transformed me from an observer into a different kind of participant. Often in rehearsing the unconducted works comments would bounce across the room as players attempted to understand each other and find common ground; it seemed at these times that everyone involved, including me, wanted to discover ‘how the piece would go’. During these moments I was writing furiously and quite literally on the edge of my seat trying to hear what each player was saying and listening with interest to how each suggestion affected the sound. In contrast, in rehearsal for one of the conducted concerts I noticed that it was difficult to motivate myself to move the pen at all. I realized afterwards that this was because this sense of discovery had been lost. Instead, the task had become to realize someone else’s pre-existing vision for the work, something it seemed that I was less interested in.⁴³ Having the experience of seeing things from ‘both sides’, as it were, played a part in helping me to interpret the interview material that I collected.⁴⁴

To supplement my observations of rehearsals and concerts, I conducted interviews. As my principal aim was to explore how leadership emerged in the interactions between players in musical settings, I often used this time to ask players to comment on or clarify specific issues that came up during rehearsals and concerts. This was in addition to asking more general questions about how the leadership structure of the group worked, and how they as individuals perceived their role within this structure.⁴⁵ Over the course of the project I was able to conduct formal interviews with every string player in the orchestra, and several from the wind section. I interviewed the string section leaders collectively on two occasions, and conducted extended interviews with three principal players: Jacqueline Shave, leader; Caroline Dearnley, principal

⁴² This conductor had asked the orchestra to do something that it was obvious the players did not agree with, and then said ‘good’ when they did it his way. I had never considered the inappropriateness of this kind of response before. Clearly, ‘thank you’ would have been more in order under the circumstances.

⁴³ Interestingly, this six-hour conducted rehearsal was followed by an unconducted three-hour rehearsal for a recording session — all of this after a long week of touring. Although this second session involved fewer players and two changes in personnel, the atmosphere for all lightened immediately and considerably.

⁴⁴ This seems to align with recent ethnographic thought: ‘Rather than seeing experience as two sided (either “my” story or “theirs”), it is more helpful to see the ethnography of experience as a conversation within which learning is located [...] If [...] we have come to partially “share the same narratives” — and songs — with those whose expressive lives we hope to understand, then an account of our experience is indeed exactly where we should focus.’ In Kisiuk, 2008: 33, quoted in Deveaux, 1998: 403.

⁴⁵ Often these interviews evolved into discussions where I was able to test out my developing theories about the conductor’s role. The players contributed to these discussions freely, and often told me that I was wrong!

cello; and Joy Farrall, principal clarinet. I also interviewed each string section as a group.⁴⁶

In addition, interviews with guest leaders Mark Padmore and James McMillian helped me to develop an understanding the orchestra in a wider context. This understanding was augmented by the interviews with Nico Muhly, Pekka Kuusisto, and Mark Padmore that Lizzie Ball, a Britten Sinfonia violinist, conducted on the 'Britten in America' tour.⁴⁷ I also spoke formally with members of Britten Sinfonia staff, including Sophie Dunn, Director of Creative Learning; Nikola White, Artistic Planning Director; Hannah Donet, Concerts Director; Hannah Tucker, Orchestra Manager; and David Butcher, Chief Executive and Managing Director, in order to reveal how the orchestra's greater organizational structure influences what goes on in the rehearsal room and on the concert platform. In talking to both the musical and the non-musical informants I became aware of the need to address the remarkable consistency between the musical and non-musical workings of the organization, which I do below.

Preceding each interview the subjects were given a letter inviting them to participate in the study; this letter also outlined the research project generally, and gave subjects an idea of what to expect from the experience. All formal interviews were recorded and transcribed. Everyone interviewed gave written permission for their contributions to be included in this study; most, but not all, players gave additional 'express permission' for their names to be included as well. In presenting this material I have used discretion in referring to individual players by name, however, and, with the exception of principal players, refer to members of the orchestra by their instrumental section which is what the players themselves preferred.⁴⁸

The third contribution to the case study is a close reading of the annotated full scores and parts that the participants worked from during the period.⁴⁹ Marking parts with dynamics, fingerings, ornaments, bowings, cues, and other coordination instructions is almost ubiquitous in today's orchestras, even if it became standard

⁴⁶ I also draw to some extent on the 2007 BBC player interviews with Lyndon Jones, if for no other reason than to show the group's consistency over time.

⁴⁷ Video interviews for 'Britten in America' tour blog, January/February 2010.
<http://www.Lizzieball.com/category/videos/>

⁴⁸ A complete list of interviews this study draws upon is found in an appendix to this thesis. When quoting from these interviews, names and sensitive information about other conductors, players and orchestras have been removed whenever possible. I have been influenced in my approach by Stephen Cottrell's (2004) study of professional music-making in London, although I do not go as far. Speaking of players working in very similar contexts to those that I interviewed, Cottrell comments on the delicate situation of referring to professional musicians by name and in his study chose to leave all interviewed players anonymous.

⁴⁹ I am grateful to James Calver at Britten Sinfonia for all his help in getting me access to these parts and the various publishers involved.

practice only in the twentieth century.⁵⁰ These markings work as external memory devices, enabling individuals to encode relevant personal information externally and thereby helping them to avoid the problem of overloading the working memory. However, markings can also serve as transactive memory devices,⁵¹ i.e. devices that help players to use other players as external memory devices. In practice, these two functions come together in a highly complex way. For example, when I asked Caroline Dearnley to discuss her markings in relation to a piece the ensemble was rehearsing, she explained that

It's a mixture of writing in key things: the cues, what you need to hear at that time and also, instructions to yourself about who you need to bring on board at that site, like I've got 'Lead the basses' there [...] It's a combination of other people's cues, instructions to yourself, what you've got to do and a general thing to help your section, so [here] you get them all to write in an arrow; they've really got to move through that bar in order to get to the next meeting point and not sound late.⁵²

In this case, the personal information encoded includes both instructions to herself (e.g. bowings and where to put on and take off mutes) and reminders for where she needs to take on specific leadership responsibilities, whereas cues refer to encoded transactive information, i.e. they inform players of who has the information they need. 'Arrows', like their 'wiggly line' counterparts, are interesting in that they fall somewhere in between. They indicate that something is going to happen, and in this sense are personal reminders to pay attention, but in their lack of specificity they draw the player towards an external orientation. Here the larger group holds the relevant information.

Annotated parts and scores are particularly applicable to the present study in that they potentially provide some sort of trace of what specific interactions are important to an individual player in a given musical context. As Jacqueline Shave explains about her markings:

it's knowing what not to listen to as well, because often it gets quite thick; it can be a bit overwhelming, you think 'Oh my god' so it's pinpointing what to listen to out of the mush, [this is where] a lot of the work goes on.⁵³

⁵⁰ See Sherman, 2003: 237. John Butt (2002: 96), for example, has commented on how 'shocked' early music 'purists' would be to discover how common marking parts is in orchestras specializing in Baroque and Classical repertoire, and perhaps even more shocked by how similar these marking are to those made by players working in 'mainstream' orchestras.

⁵¹ See Wegner, 1986 and 1995.

⁵² Interview with Britten Sinfonia Principals, Theatre Royal, Norwich, 13 February 2011.

⁵³ Ibid.

In a group that works without a conductor, players' markings take on a special role. In every orchestral setting some interactions are going to be more important than others; however, in an uncondacted situation, knowing what to listen to and what not to listen to is even more crucial. As Shave notes, 'You have [to have] lighthouses in a storm.'⁵⁴ Individual annotated parts remind players of where (or perhaps more accurately, who) those lighthouses are.

I concluded my fieldwork project with a thorough review of an array of other materials. I began by spending time looking at the ensemble's online presence and their extensive use of 'new media' marketing including web blogs, videos, and podcasts. I then looked at concert reviews, and completed the study with a day in the orchestra's archives looking at publicity releases, marketing material, and programmes going back to 1992 when the group was founded. From this material I was able to develop a more complete picture of how the orchestra had evolved over time. This was a crucial point as the orchestra has not always been the way it is today, ten years after deciding to part ways with its founding Artistic Director.

'Focusing on fit'

Key to understanding Britten Sinfonia's musical approach is contextualizing how it fits into the overall organizational structure of the orchestra. Contributions are solicited by management, particularly in regard to choice of personnel and future programming, from a number of sources including the players, guest artists, commissioned composers and other advisers. The staff then performs the function of integrating these contributions into the programmes that follows. What happens in rehearsal and performance can be viewed as an extension of this greater structure. In both cases, differentiation is emphasised, yet at the same time there is an intense 'focus on fit' across the organization as a whole. This happens in three primary ways: first, through choosing players and guest artists who fit the ensemble's way of working; second, in finding repertoire and a performance schedule that fits both the ensemble and the overall programme; and finally, through designing an ensemble and leadership structure to fit this repertoire and the programme in its entirety. Although I began my study with this last category of 'fit' in mind, as my investigation progressed I realized that all three were interdependent, and I therefore address each in turn below.

Although a highly-differentiated and highly-integrated approach is remarkably consistent across the organization as a whole, the focus on individuality is more

⁵⁴ Ibid.

strongly ‘marketed’ than its counterpart, even though coordination plays as important a role. This is perhaps most obvious in relation to the management’s focus on its players. For example, the orchestra’s ‘public face’ stresses the differentiated aspects of the group through drawing attention to its players as individuals as well as to how they are empowered through choosing to work without a conductor.⁵⁵ Take, for example, this extract from the orchestra’s online biography:

Britten Sinfonia is praised for the quality of its performances and an intelligent approach to concert programming that is centred around the development of its players. Unusually it does not have a principal conductor or director but chooses to collaborate with a range of the finest international guest artists from across the musical spectrum as suited to each particular project.⁵⁶

This player-centred approach is mirrored in the orchestra’s marketing material. Emphasis is placed upon the musicians and their collaborators through including individual profiles with informal interviews in both concert programmes and on the web. In terms of the visual image of the orchestra, concert promoters are informed directly that ‘Britten Sinfonia does not have images of the whole orchestra, as we prefer to place an emphasis on individual musicians.’⁵⁷ Although the chamber music background of key players had been publicised from the group’s establishment in 1992,⁵⁸ in going through the orchestra’s archives it became clear that this more public focus on the individual began around the time of the amicable parting of ways with founding Artistic Director Nicholas Cleobury in 2004. Below, for example, is promotional material for the orchestra’s 2003-4 concerts in Norwich. Individual portraits of players with their names appear on the programme and nowhere is there a whole ensemble image. This approach, focusing on portraits of individuals and small groups of players, has guided the orchestra’s marketing strategy ever since (see Fig. 4.1).

This strategy has recently been extended into the world of ‘new media’ when, as mentioned above, Britten Sinfonia violinist Lizzie Ball was commissioned to create a video blog of ‘life on tour’ which included interviews with her fellow players and guest collaborators.⁵⁹ Through materials of this sort, outsiders are invited to catch a glimpse

⁵⁵ For example, see Kimberley’s (5 April, 2011) *Evening Standard* article ‘Britten Sinfonia take control’. <http://www.standard.co.uk/arts/music/britten-sinfonia-take-control-7424309.html>

⁵⁶ From ‘Biography’, Britten Sinfonia website. <http://www.brittensinfonia.com/about-us/index.html>

⁵⁷ From Britten Sinfonia website. <http://www.brittensinfonia.com/media-and-promoters/images.html>

⁵⁸ This in itself is a good indication of this dynamic.

⁵⁹ Other videos have also been produced, for example at the Latitude Festival. <http://www.brittensinfonia.com/media/videos/#Latitude>

of the inner life of the orchestra. This is consistent with Britten Sinfonia's overall approach which seems to involve promoting individual players and the orchestra's way of working.



Figure 4.1. Promotional brochure for Britten Sinfonia 2003-4 concert series in Norwich. Individual portraits of players are used with their names, but no image of the ensemble as a whole is included.

However, in the case of Britten Sinfonia, the focus on players is not just on the surface. When interviewing several key staff members, all of whom had previously worked with major London orchestras, I was told without exception that the extent to which this player-centred approach is employed is unique in their experience, and in some cases, something to which they took time to settle in. For example, Hannah Donat,

the orchestra's Concerts Director, who is involved in both programming and dealing with visiting artists, stated that

I think the difference which took me a while to get used to at Britten Sinfonia was that there was a number of people we would discuss things with and that included the Leader of the orchestra, perhaps some of the players whose opinions are openly asked for, even from a programming point of view, so it's a very different way [of working]. Previously, I'd been used to working somewhere where the conductor was king and that would be the person that we would discuss most things with and then it would be presented as a fait accompli to the orchestra.⁶⁰

Hannah Tucker, who as Orchestra Manager carries the burden of fixing the orchestra, spoke about how this affected her work. In addition to having a core membership, the orchestra often needs to bring in extra players. In response to how this is managed, Tucker replied:

I work from lists, which are decided by the players [...] If there's a particular seat that we need to fill, we might have our own opinions about who would be good in it but on the whole, for example, if I'm fixing a violin section, I will always talk to Jackie [the Leader] about who she wants in that section, so a lot of it comes from the players [...] I would very rarely book somebody, unless they're on a pre-existing list, without consulting with someone who's going to have to play with them.⁶¹

Perhaps most unusually, players are also openly consulted about perspective repertoire, an issue I will deal with more extensively below. Nikola White, Artistic Planning Director, is responsible for the orchestra's long-range programming; she explains:

There is the informality [to the dialogue] that does go on, there's email banter between key players and us. Our leader will send an email and mention a piece that is on her mind that she thinks would work very, very well and there's that spontaneous approach to it; and then we also hold regular meetings with our principals too, where there is a more formal forum [...] It's the focus on the advance planning that draws everybody into what's going on next. That is also a moment that can throw up ideas about what people want to do [...] Often it comes about, doesn't it, when you've just performed something, it's that moment, you've just come off the stage, 'Wouldn't it be great to do X?' and then, that gets put into our plans and then it looks like something that's been

⁶⁰ Interview with Britten Sinfonia Concerts Director and Orchestra Manager, Sturton Street offices, Cambridge, 10 November 2010.

⁶¹ Ibid. Later in the interview, when I asked about what kinds of contact players tend to make unsolicited, I was told that much of it has to do with suggestions for fixing. I discuss below how the orchestra prefers to keep leadership 'in the family'.

planned quite formally but actually, it's come about because of a conversation on the day.⁶²

This openness to player contribution occurs not only behind the scenes, but also in rehearsal: players know that they can say something from any seat,⁶³ although in this case, it seems that members are also aware of speaking only if it 'adds value'. As one of the orchestra's cellists explains:

You have to hold back all the time because the thing is, if there's too much noise going on then nobody can hear what, for example, [the leader] is saying [...] If nobody can hear it's chaos, so I find I'm holding back all the time, trying to listen to what's going on. Some sections are noisier than others and you just wait for them to settle down. If you've got something that you think is going to make a real difference then you say it.⁶⁴

A discussion between two violists also captures the delicate balance that is involved in making a contribution:

Player 1: What's nice about the Britten Sinfonia is that we all know each other terribly well, I guess, so there's a measure of trust and there's a measure of knowing how each other works and there's also a feeling that if you want to say something that's fine, but it's also quite important to say it to [the section leader] rather than to say it to whoever's leading the orchestra, because otherwise communication breaks down, maybe, depending where you are—

Player 2: As a number two, probably [I] do say things [...] but I know I'm allowed to, but I try not to too often otherwise—

Player 1: Sometimes you're more allowed to than other times.

Player 2: Exactly, yes.⁶⁵

Both of these interview extracts capture what I noticed in rehearsals with the orchestra. Although the players, empowered through both the musical and the non-musical leadership of the orchestra, know that they can speak and often do, sometimes even to the whole group from a back desk, they seem constantly aware of the fact that 'with freedom comes responsibility'. In this case, the 'responsibility' involves the awareness that in a highly-differentiated context, achieving ensemble coordination often requires 'holding back' and 'listening more'. They also seem to understand, however, that there is an important distinction between 'holding back' and being silenced.

⁶² Interview with Nikola White, Artistic Planning Director of Britten Sinfonia, Sturton Street offices, Cambridge, 10 November 2010.

⁶³ Note how this contrasts with the experiences referred to by Levine and Levine (see Chapter 2 above).

⁶⁴ Interview with Britten Sinfonia cello section, Air Studios, London, 16 February 2011.

⁶⁵ Interview with Britten Sinfonia viola section, West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge, 29 November 2010.

When things are going smoothly in a Britten Sinfonia rehearsal the orchestra seems like any other. They appear to be taking direction from whoever is leading and getting on with the music-making. However, it is when problem-solving is called for, as it was when the group was rehearsing Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* for a concert at Birmingham Town Hall,⁶⁶ that one sees the advantage of the group's highly-differentiated orientation. This concert happened at a rather busy time for the orchestra and was the penultimate concert of a six-date tour.⁶⁷ At the same time as the tour, the ensemble was rehearsing for another two concerts of Haydn's *Creation*⁶⁸ and three recording session dates that would follow on immediately.⁶⁹ The orchestra had been working very hard and everyone seemed quite tired. In any case, Birmingham had made a special request for the *Variations* to be added to the touring programme and, although the piece is in the orchestra's repertoire, it had been some time since it had been performed. The ensemble ran through the piece once in the rehearsal before the previous evening's concert in Southampton⁷⁰ but had to leave any additional rehearsal until immediately before the concert itself. At several points in the pre-concert rehearsal in Birmingham focused group problem-solving occurred. For example, near the end of a play-through of the 'March', the first violins had problems with both tuning and overall coordination in a very exposed passage. When the movement concluded, the section suddenly broke into a period of intense individual practice. After a minute or so, Jacqueline Shave offered a suggestion to the section about bow speed; this was tried in context, first slowly, then up to speed. The section hadn't improved. The following dialogue ensued:

Shave: Just pray, I think [long pause] Does anyone have any useful suggestions?

Player 2: [offers fingering suggestion and demonstrates, some players try it in individual practice]

Player 3: [suggests dividing it]

Shave: A couple of people just play the harmonic.

Player 3: Some people play the whole lot — some people just the harmonic.

Shave: Let's see what works. [They run the section three times.]

⁶⁶ 11 February 2011.

⁶⁷ 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 19 February 2011.

⁶⁸ 13 and 18 February 2011.

⁶⁹ 15-17 February 2011.

⁷⁰ 10 February 2011.

Shave: Let's all do it. [They run the section again, this time non-divisi.]

Shave: Sounds better. Let's go for it.⁷¹

Although this rehearsal strategy might have been delivered from the top-down, i.e. through Shave alone had she thought of it, the fact was that right from the moment the run-through of the movement stopped and the individual practice began, players were engaged in solving the problem themselves. When Shave asked for suggestions, they came quickly and freely because the players were already involved with the issue. In the end the problem was sorted out through a type of socially-distributed cognition. This type of problem-solving is a common occurrence in Britten Sinfonia, and it is possible because the players themselves have certain attitudes and skill sets.

Player-ensemble fit

Britten Sinfonia is able to work in this way because the players and guest artists involved are willing and able both to contribute *and* to collaborate. The latter characteristic is as important as the former. To some extent this dual set point can be attributed to the appointment of chamber musicians to principal positions, something that happened at the very beginning, albeit not for the reason of their strength in performing uncondacted. David Butcher, who has been instrumental in the orchestra's general management from its birth in 1992, explains:

Nick Cleobury, who was the then artistic director — we didn't call him principal conductor but he did conduct most of the concerts — rightly saw that we wanted world-class here and a number of people got involved... Nick Daniel, right from the start as well as his Haffner wind group, [and] its fabulous players; and then I can remember us hand-picking and inviting some of the string players to come along as well. There were formal auditions but it was really hand-picked chamber musicians, so right from the start — which exists today — there's a very, very strong chamber music, possibly even soloistic, element to the orchestra that was absolutely there [from the beginning].⁷²

Both players and staff confirm that since the time of Cleobury's leaving, a process that began around 2000 and culminated four years later, this chamber music ethos has become much more significant.

An important influence on this development is Jacqueline Shave, who was appointed leader of the orchestra in 2005. At the time of the appointment, Shave had spent the majority of her professional life as a chamber musician, having led the

⁷¹ Quoted from my field notes, pre-concert rehearsal, Birmingham Town Hall, 11 February 2011.

⁷² Interview with David Butcher, Britten Sinfonia Chief Executive, Sturton Street offices, Cambridge, 10 November 2010.

Brindisi Quartet for 15 years and the Schubert Ensemble from 1989 to 1994. Shave's extensive chamber music experience, perhaps working in combination with her lack of professional orchestral experience, set the stage for a unique approach to ensemble leadership which turned out to encourage both contribution and collaboration greatly.⁷³ In trying to pinpoint the characteristics that embody the orchestra's approach under her leadership, I asked Shave what sort of player is the best 'fit' for the ensemble. She explained that

It's quite hard to find, but I'm looking for a non-arrogant person who is really good as well [...] To get people who really listen and are prepared to change but have a facility to play basically in tune and not stick out. I think you're never going to find all people like that and they basically fall into two camps: you get people who are very neat and don't make much sound and people who will make more sound, take some risks, bring the welly into it but might make a few mistakes; I quite like that blend.⁷⁴

Shave's preference for the traits of adaptability, non-arrogance, and good facility (including some players in the group willing to 'take some risks') has helped to shape the ensemble in ways that enhance their collaborative way of working.

Other players, including a cellist quoted below, confirm that members of the orchestra possess a specific interactive skill set:

I think part of it is that we've had a lot of experience now of playing without a conductor, but I don't think that's all that it is because I think in some set-ups with different personalities, it would never work without a conductor, and it's having the right combination of people who can interact together and think on the same wavelength. Nobody's tugging and trying to be boss or anything, it's got to work together. I think if it doesn't from the word go, you're a bit stuck. You usually know very quickly.⁷⁵

This fear of being 'stuck' helps to explain why the orchestra, whenever possible, prefers to keep designated leadership 'in the family' when a principal seat needs to be covered. I observed two occasions during the year's field work where a player was promoted to a principal role from further down the ranking than one might find in other orchestras. The first case was when the principal second violin led the orchestra in a series of concerts, and the second was when a newly-appointed 'number three' in the second

⁷³ Although co-leader Thomas Gould led the orchestra on two occasions during my fieldwork, I have chosen to limit my discussion to the work of Shave, as I did not have the opportunity to observe Gould's work anywhere near as extensively.

⁷⁴ Interview with Jacqueline Shave, Leader of Britten Sinfonia, Air Studios, London, 16 February 2011.

⁷⁵ Interview with Britten Sinfonia cello section, Air Studios, London, 16 February 2011.

violins led the section for a single concert. In both cases, the orchestra warmly supported seeing familiar players in these roles.

The attention to finding the right ‘player-ensemble fit’ also extends to the guest artists the orchestra chooses to work with. In this case, the orchestra seeks not only to find compatible artists, but ones they can work to develop relationships with over the long term. Some artists such as Joanna MacGregor, James MacMillan, Pekka Kuusisto, Imogen Cooper, and Angela Hewitt have become something like part of the orchestra’s ‘extended family’, coming back year after year. Sometimes these guest artists are even paired in unlikely combinations in ways designed to enhance their creativity.⁷⁶ It is clear that the management of the orchestra supports and encourages these artists in exploring their own creative interests. For example, Nikola White discusses the orchestra’s involvement with MacGregor’s ‘Moondog’ programme:

you could look at it on the page and you’d think ‘What is this exactly? And how is this going to work? How is it going to sound?’ because we don’t know anything about this, all we know is he’s a street musician; he stood on the corner and did all this, but Joanna is absolutely brilliant at getting the right people involved in the right projects and she will draw other artists in from other areas, jazz, world music, whatever, and she will bring them in to work with Britten Sinfonia and to create a marvellous performing environment.⁷⁷

When asking White how the orchestra manages the risks of this sort of approach, she responded that

We must have been very lucky, I suppose, but I think because we choose our artists very carefully and they’ve got a proven track record, that I think there is a risk but you can manage the risk by the artist that you work with and the quality of the playing. I think if the quality is not there then there is more of a risk, I’m sure, but that’s something that’s our number one point: whatever this project is, that has to be number one.⁷⁸

In the end, many of the guest artists are ‘hand picked’ by both management and players — people who know the orchestra and their way of working intimately. Principal second violinist Miranda Dale, for example, describes phoning Butcher with a suggestion for a guest artist:

⁷⁶ Take for example, how Mark Padmore, Pekka Kuusisto, and Nico Muhly were brought together for the ‘Britten in America’ tour.

⁷⁷ Interview with Nikola White, Britten Sinfonia Artistic Planning Director, Sturton Street offices, Cambridge, 10 November 2010.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

I don't know if it was myself that was instrumental in it but I did suggest Pekka Kuusisto to [Butcher], that he was worth looking at because I was with the Philharmonia Orchestra for many years and of course, I got to know a lot of the people that worked with them and I thought Pekka, who was extraordinary [...] would be a great person to get in with us because he's slightly off the wall and we're not in a box, we always think outside the box and so does the management. It seems to work very well as an idea and as an entity in itself; the orchestra seems to have a life of its own, in a way.⁷⁹

Without a doubt this sort of personal selection increases the probability of an enhanced 'fit' between artist and the orchestra.

As with most things in Britten Sinfonia, however, this seems to work both ways. It is certainly the case that the guest artists are chosen for their 'fit' with the orchestra, yet as Donat explains, 'when we get soloists or directors in who are used to working with the orchestra, they also begin to adopt a bit more of the approach that we have.'⁸⁰ James MacMillan's comment about conducting the group is particularly enlightening in this regard. He acknowledges that he adopts an approach quite different from the one he uses with many of the orchestras he works with:

it's different with an orchestra like the Britten Sinfonia because [...] they're one of these bands that prefer not to [have a] conductor because they have a democratic ethos. You could even see [that in] the way that they interact with each other, they're used to exchanging ideas regardless of who's in front of them. That's very pleasant, I learn an awful lot from that and see how the internal psychology can work. There are some very strong personalities associated with every orchestra, you can probably see who they are, and there's some differences of opinion sometimes and all that, but that's their way of working so I never really want to get in the way of it. I've worked with them over a period of time now so that I know when to say something, when to impose, if you like, or suggest something and when to let them get on with sorting out the more nitty-gritty things.⁸¹

In a pre-concert rehearsal of Beethoven's Second Symphony,⁸² MacMillan began by asking the leader, in this case Thomas Gould, where the orchestra would like to begin and what they needed to work on. A short discussion ensued and a decision was taken. Throughout this and the other rehearsals I had the feeling that the orchestra was completely 'in charge'. Nevertheless, when I spoke to MacMillan afterwards about his

⁷⁹ Interview with Miranda Dale, Britten Sinfonia leader of second violins, West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge, 29 November 2010.

⁸⁰ Interview with Britten Sinfonia Concerts Director and Orchestra manager, Sturton Street offices, Cambridge, 10 November 2010.

⁸¹ Interview with James MacMillan, conductor, Britten Sinfonia guest artist, Liverpool Street Station, London, 20 October 2010.

⁸² 22 October 2010.

experience working on the piece with the orchestra I learned that, although he had conducted the work ‘a number of times on both sides of the Atlantic’ with orchestras as accomplished as the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, this had been the first time that an orchestra had been really willing fully to respond to his direction. In response to the question ‘Did you feel as though with this orchestra you could get what you envisioned?’, he responded, ‘Yes, completely, and that’s what makes it great coming back.’⁸³ It seems in this case that both the orchestra and the conductor got what they needed, which is an unusual situation indeed.

Programme-ensemble fit

Britten Sinfonia is highly acclaimed for its innovative approach to programming,⁸⁴ yet ironically, the programme is quite often the last thing on anyone’s mind. As Butcher explains:

it’s not so much about creating the programmes, it’s about the collaborations that we undertake. Thinking of myself as kind of a curator, if you like, a lot of that is spotting the right projects or what we think might be the interesting and correct projects to follow through, again, whether it may be something such as Imogen Cooper performing the Beethoven piano concerto cycle or whether it is something more adventurous, working with jazz musicians or world musicians, I think it’s the spirit of collaboration that is key in terms of our artistic policy.⁸⁵

As I described above, both players and guest artists are invited to make suggestions related to future programming to Butcher and his staff, and many do. At other times, members of staff will work with an artist to develop programmes. Integral to this way of working is the notion of a programme not as a set of discrete works, but rather as an event. Butcher clarifies, again drawing upon an analogy between concert and theatrical performance:

We try to think like a theatre company more than an orchestra; nothing wrong with it but a more traditional symphony orchestra doing a hundred different concerts a year will put those programmes together, and there’s rigid and excellent ways of doing that. We, in terms of our collaborations, think really hard about them and try to think of it like a production. It doesn’t always work but [we] try to think of it like a production, so we have our Barbara Hannigan project and we will then devise the programme with her, that’s absolutely crucial, so that she will have a complete stake. It’s a big thing for them as well, in terms of the production and then we’ll sell it and tour it. The best example

⁸³ Interview with James MacMillan, conductor, Britten Sinfonia guest artist, Liverpool Street Station, London, 20 October 2010.

⁸⁴ For example, see Morrison, 2011 and Hewett, 2010.

⁸⁵ BBC interview with David Butcher, Chief Executive, Britten Sinfonia, recorded in 2007.

more recently would be a project we did with Mark Padmore, who we've been working with, and we wanted to put him together with Pekka Kuusisto and Pekka and I talked and Pekka said 'I'm really interested in these people here' and I had to say 'Nico Muhly, I'm seeing him soon, perhaps we should do something with him.' That's how it evolved and then usually, it might be Pekka does a little bit of the programme, it might be that I or one of my team will suggest something but we will, in different ways, collaborate on putting a programme together but ultimately, it will come here and then we will finalise it, get agreement and then we go with it.⁸⁶

Butcher and his team work to devise a programme where the individual parts are linked through a greater conceptual or thematic framework. In working to achieve this, the guest artists and the composer of any new work on the programme might be consulted. In addition, the staff will sometimes seek advice from an outside advisor with specialist knowledge. In any case, the results are clear: the artists involved have some additional stake in the project, while at the same time, a group of independent pieces is transformed into a 'production'.⁸⁷

The conception of concert as 'production' helps to make sense of another feature of the orchestra's work, i.e. the ensemble's focus on touring and, by extension, repeat performances. Touring is anything but a 'necessary evil' in this case; in fact, it allows the orchestra to flourish in ways it might not otherwise, as interview material from the thirteen-date tour of 'Britten in America' featuring the guest artists of Pekka Kuusisto, Mark Padmore, and Nico Muhly demonstrates. In a conversation between Britten Sinfonia violinist Lizzie Ball and the composer Muhly, one gets both the guest artist's and the orchestral player's perspectives on some of the benefits involved:

Muhly: It's been great. The first two days were everyone getting to... it's a giraffe learning to walk and the thing is, in my life normally, that's all you get, you just get those first two days and then a concert and then you bow and that's the end. Bye. Whereas this has been great because we've learned so much, I think between concerts five and ten. I don't know what your experience is of playing it.

Ball: I think you're right and I think also, it's quite rare to have a new work that you perform more than once or twice. I think with new works, because it's new, it's nice for players to actually get to know it. So often you can have one or two concerts and you think 'We're just getting the hang of it' and then that's it and you don't see it again.

⁸⁶ Interview with David Butcher, Britten Sinfonia Chief Executive, Sturton Street offices, Cambridge, 10 November 2010.

⁸⁷ This idea of programme as 'event' aims to go beyond this 'curatorial' work, however, and in 2008 Butcher asked theatre director Katie Mitchell to work with the orchestra on the way it presents itself in concerts, bringing the issue into the orchestra's general consciousness.

Muhly: The great thing too is... today was a really perfect example during rehearsal. At the end, there's this thing [plays piano] these basses come in and they played it and I was like 'Did I ask them to play without vibrato?' I realised yeah, probably somewhere in Holland I said 'Can we be non-vibrato there?' and I completely reversed my decision. Because what do I know? The piece belongs to you guys more than it does to me, but it's nice to be able to whip in like a tornado and mess things up a little bit.⁸⁸

Emerging from this conversation is the idea that working with a new piece over an extended period of time somehow allows for a shift of ownership from the composer to the players — something that is probably only possible, especially in a complicated piece, once the adrenaline rush that comes with having to perform a new work with inevitably very little rehearsal wears off. However, even if multiple performances give players a chance to internalize more of the musical landscape of new works, as Kuusisto notes, it also tests them:

It's great because you never, almost never get to do a project this long or to play one concert programme thirteen times. It's luxurious and it's what I would prefer to do all the time [...] if I would work only with the regular symphony orchestra schedule, usually not even having enough rehearsal time to get through a piece, let alone work on it and make music, I would go crazy. Of course, it puts a lot of pressure on the piece; the piece has to be really good so that you can always find something new in it.⁸⁹

Here Kuusisto draws attention to the fact that repeated performance gives players the chance to explore a programmed work in a way that is not possible in a single performance. In the end, however, it takes the right kind of players to realize this kind of 'newness'. Ball and Padmore express the orchestra's preference for this kind of spontaneous approach:

Ball: I think it's been really wonderful for us, as well, to have the experience of doing this programme with you so many times, because a lot of the orchestra are commenting how you're singing... every night you do something different and it's a real joy to have that spontaneity within the same pieces every night.

Padmore: I think it's really hard to perform these pieces if you just do it with a symphony orchestra and you have one prior rehearsal and try to get it all together and then you only perform it once. Live performance is really important but it's so much better when it's actually repeated performance, you get the chance to try things out and re-imagine the piece each night. So often, it's done as a one-off and [...] you end up trying to imitate a recording because you want to get it right and you want to get it all together and everything and that's the

⁸⁸ Video interview with Nico Muhly for 'Britten in America' tour blog, February 2010.
<http://www.Lizzieball.com/category/videos/>

⁸⁹ Video interview with Pekka Kuusisto for 'Britten in America' tour blog, January/February 2010.
<http://www.Lizzieball.com/category/videos/>

limit of your ambitions. I think, for us, we've got to the stage where we want to perform it to the people who are there and get them to really appreciate it as much as we do. That's hugely exciting, it's great.⁹⁰

In the end, Britten Sinfonia's approach to programming and touring come together to create a situation where a group of related pieces have time to begin to dialogue with one other in performance. Echoing a comment frequently heard in pre-concert talks given by Britten Sinfonia guest artists, Kuusisto explains that

It's really interesting to feel how this kind of programming works, how the other pieces are supporting the première and how Nico's piece is giving something to the music.⁹¹

Helping to make sense of a programme such as 'Britten in America' — a programme that flies from Purcell, Tippett, and Britten to Reich, a Muhly premiere, and Adams — Butcher explains that

[In the past] orchestras may have thought 'There's a piece of new music here, we'll put it in but if we put it in next to the Brahms and between the Beethoven, then it's not going to scare people.' We try, at times, to turn that on its head, we start with the new music and then we build the programme.⁹²

Although using musical works to make sense of other musical works has clearly been appealing to audiences and critics,⁹³ this way of programming also seems to fit the overall ensemble dynamic exceptionally well, in that it allows performers to discover more and more connections between the works as a series of concerts progresses.

Ensemble-repertoire fit

Britten Sinfonia has a robust and adaptable approach to ensemble-repertoire fit due to a flexible leadership structure which, more often than not, allows informal leadership to play as important a role in ensemble coordination as designated leadership. To a certain extent, this flexible approach is predicated on the absence of a resident conductor or Artistic Director. This allows for both formal and informal leadership structures to be either designed or to emerge, as the case may be, in a highly bespoke manner.

Designated leadership is decided in advance. As I have described above, the preference

⁹⁰ Video interview with Mark Padmore for 'Britten in America' tour blog, February 2010.
<http://www.Lizzieball.com/category/videos/>

⁹¹ Video interview with Pekka Kuusisto for 'Britten in America' tour blog, January/February 2010.
<http://www.Lizzieball.com/category/videos/>

⁹² Interview with David Butcher, Britten Sinfonia Chief Executive, Sturton Street offices, Cambridge, 10 November 2010.

⁹³ In fact, Botstein (2003) calls for this explicitly when he envisions the orchestra of the future.

of the organization as a whole is for performances to be unconducted whenever possible; this usually means being led either from the violin or by a soloist or, in some cases, by the two in combination. Conductors are brought in only when the management, working under the advisement of musicians in key roles, deems it necessary. Often in a single programme several leadership approaches will appear together. For example, the orchestra's November 2010 *Mysteries of the Macabre* programme featuring guest artist Barbara Hannigan was organized as follows:

Rossini	Overture to <i>La scala de seta</i>	conducted: Wigglesworth
Mozart	<i>Vado, ma dove? Oh Dei!</i> K583	co-led: Shave and Hannigan
Mozart	<i>Un moto di gioia</i> K369	co-led: Shave and Hannigan
Ligeti	<i>Concert Românesc</i>	conducted: Wigglesworth
Rossini	Overture to <i>Il Signor Bruschino</i>	conducted: Wigglesworth
Weber	Concertino for Horn and Orchestra	conducted: Wigglesworth
Ligeti ⁹⁴	<i>Mysteries of the Macabre</i>	conducted: Hannigan

Interestingly, one of the most difficult works to coordinate, the Mozart recitative *Vado, ma dove?*, was performed unconducted.⁹⁵ Principal players commented in interviews that the orchestra has grown in confidence in recent years and now undertakes more challenging repertoire unconducted. In fact, after this concert, I was told by several players that if they were to do the same programme again they would have the courage to do it unconducted in spite of the complexities involved.⁹⁶ In any case, leadership decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, and in relation to time restrictions as well as in anticipation of any repertoire-based problems. White offers a typical example of how the process occurs:

at the moment, we're talking about doing a project in Easter 2013 and I'm asking [Jackie Shave] at the moment 'Do you feel comfortable with the thought of leading this project? Or is this something that would need to have a conductor?' Interestingly [...] she has her view about what she thinks will work but she's consulting with the other key players about it. Nothing really happens as an individual decision, all is talked about.⁹⁷

Shave's decision to consult other players, as I have already mentioned, is typical of her leadership approach both inside and outside of rehearsal. Her trust in the expertise of other players also serves as the foundation for the informal leadership structure that

⁹⁴ Arr. Elgar Howarth.

⁹⁵ I discuss this further below, see Case Study 4.4.

⁹⁶ Other than the *Mysteries*, as Hannigan's conducting which happened in full costume while performing the virtuosic soprano line was integral to the performance event.

⁹⁷ Interview with Nikola White, Britten Sinfonia Artistic Planning Director, Sturton Street offices, Cambridge, 10 November 2010.

characterizes Britten Sinfonia rehearsals, especially when rehearsing unconduted works. Dearnley explained to me her musical relationship with Shave, as well as the informal leadership role she assumes when leading the cellos, in the following interview excerpt:

Dearnley: I've known [Shave's] playing for a long time, but she's such an instinctive player that nothing really has to be... especially when you're playing chamber music or an unconduted programme, we're communicating all the time and [...] we're all listening to each other and we react off each other, so [...] I can tell immediately if she wants to push the tempo just ever so slightly and I absolutely go with her. And the same with me, if I want to hold on or drive a little bit more, then she responds to me—

Lewis: And this is not just stuff that's planned in advance?

Dearnley: No.

Lewis: This is in the moment [...]

Dearnley: Definitely. So a lot of things happen that naturally, obviously... it feels so right. It's not always the case that it happens naturally and, of course, as soon as... maybe you get somebody else, who's brought in... maybe a conductor who's got their own slant on things, then you have to try and make it work between you and fit in with what they want as well.

Lewis: 'Between you' meaning the outside parts [first violins and cellos]?

Dearnley: I think the fact that we sit absolutely directly opposite each other, I can pick up... I can see everything she does. Sometimes it's interesting [...] if the helm is being taken by someone else and I feel maybe that I have to compensate by having more input just to keep things either driving through or keeping things steady, so I just have to try and react to what's happening at the time. If I don't feel there's enough direction, then I will pour energy into it and try to compensate. I react to the situation I'm in and the people around me, and I think that's probably what people do, but at best it's a wonderful collaboration and an awful lot of things can go unsaid because they just happen on their own without being discussed.⁹⁸

Dearnley's comments about the conversational nature of her interaction with Shave, and the compensation strategy she implements when things aren't working, are characteristic of the orchestra's highly-differentiated and highly-integrated way of working. The relationships developed between the principal players over years of playing together define the orchestra's chamber music-based leadership structure. The relationships between the principal players of the orchestra are cultivated during rehearsal, but also during the orchestra's extensive chamber music series. The 'At

⁹⁸ Interview with Caroline Dearnley, Britten Sinfonia Principal Cello, St Johns Smith Square, London, 18 February 2011.

Lunch' concerts involve four programmes a year, each with a newly commissioned work, that are performed multiple times by the orchestra's principal players. In unconduted programmes the relationships developed here come to the fore.

A similar dynamic is at work in the wind section of the orchestra, which at its core is made up of members of the Haffner Wind Ensemble, led by Nicholas Daniel. Many of these players, like the principal strings, come to Britten Sinfonia not from other orchestras but from a background as chamber musicians and soloists. As Joy Farrall, principal clarinet, explains, within the group 'there's that risk-taking, that extra edge that we have from years of playing chamber music concerts together'.⁹⁹ Farrall continues:

I think one of the key things it affects hugely is musical shaping and phrasing because there's a lot of instinctive stuff that goes on. When you work in chamber music, a chamber musician... it's like ESP, you sense something happening and you go with... you make it happen and you do it, you don't need to talk about it, whereas you go into a normal orchestra and it has to be discussed, 'You're tonguing that' or 'You're slurring that'... 'Where are you phrasing to?' It doesn't happen just like that [clicks fingers].¹⁰⁰

When conductors come in the principal players, in both the winds and strings, often react to their chamber music 'set point' being inhibited. Principal players Shave, Dearnley, and Williams explain:

Shave: There's a lot more awareness of each other's parts when you're not—when you haven't got a conductor...

Dearnley: I think it's not being spoon-fed everything. I think if you've always sat in an orchestra and been used to being... doing exactly what you're told and not having to take initiative, in fact the opposite, if you sit in a section in an orchestra, it's not a good idea to take any initiative at all unless you're leading that section because you're not going to fit in. You really have to toe the line, which is something that you have to do here but you have to get it, hopefully, from the leader of your section, who's going to try [to] create a team [...] I think it's taking responsibility because [...] this is a much smaller group so everybody does have a voice to add to it but it's the way you listen and blend your sound and—

Shave: Trust is brilliant.

Dearnley: Trust, yes, but [...] when I'm leading a section, I try and make whatever I want to do as clear as possible so that they can pick it up and we can make a group effort.

⁹⁹ Interview with Joy Farrall, Britten Sinfonia Principal Clarinet, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, 30 November 2010.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

Shave: We have to be much more demonstrative without a conductor. I suppose that's obvious but we want to create an environment whereby we're all pulling together in a good way [...] it's much better. People just take responsibility [...] if you're at the back, it's such a difficult job. It's much harder being at the back than at the front [...]

Dearnley: And the bigger the section, the more difficult it is sitting at the back, just the distance.

Shave: So that's who we're trying to reach to all the time when we're playing without a conductor. It's including—

Lewis: Getting everybody—

Shave: Included. Being really inclusive and—

Williams: So many conductors, when they come in, they completely ignore... they just talk to the people in their immediate vicinity; and the people at the back, they lose concentration because they think they're not important.

Shave: So they're not going to give their best.

Williams: You're not going to get the most out of people.¹⁰¹

These players draw attention to a theme that arose frequently in interviews with Britten Sinfonia players: the players, particularly the principals, aspire both to trust their colleagues and to be trustworthy. One of the primary complaints raised about conductors is that that they don't trust the players.¹⁰² In another interview, Shave emphasizes this point:

Shave: The biggest thing I would say to a conductor is 'Listen to your orchestra' because I think there's a massive misunderstanding that they have to come in and make it happen; they don't, it's going to happen. What they need to do is enable the orchestra to play really well and so often that doesn't happen. So often it's almost like it stops it from happening.

Lewis: Why?

Shave: It's a trust thing, I don't think they trust us.¹⁰³

Being trustworthy, on the other hand, is expressed not only in the relationship between the principals themselves, but also in how they relate to their sections. Words such as 'gathering', 'inviting' and 'including' are frequently used to describe how the principal

¹⁰¹ Interview with Britten Sinfonia string principals, West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge, 29 November 2010.

¹⁰² I also explore this issue in Chapter 2.

¹⁰³ Interview with Jacqueline Shave, Leader of Britten Sinfonia, Air Studios, London, 16 February 2011.

players conceptualize their role in this regard. Some players sitting further back commented on the effectiveness of this approach. Take, for example, these comments from the second violins:

Player 1: I think particularly in this orchestra, it's got such a strong chamber music feel [...] it's like an octet at the front, a really fantastic Mendelssohn octet, and you want to get that feeling passed back to you of the chamber music so that you can play with the other... the back of the first violins—

Player 2: [someone seated further forward] Do you think you get that?

Player 1: 99.9% of the time, we get that with the odd ex—

Player 3: Yes, you could say that.¹⁰⁴

Shave instituted a rotation system for the violins as a way to help players who habitually sit further back to feel more connected with the front desks. The first three seats in each section are considered principal, meaning the rotation usually begins from seat four.¹⁰⁵ Although I was told that the system wasn't universally accepted at first, in the interviews with the sections this was not evident. Nevertheless, it seems that some positions are clearly more challenging than others, even if the burden of sitting in these seats has now been more fairly distributed. The place described as 'Suicide Corner' in the first violins, as I described in Chapter 3, is perhaps the best example of this. In fact, both players sitting at the desk furthest back on the outside find the position difficult.¹⁰⁶ As one player explains:

Obviously, if you're in the front, you're surrounded by sound, you've got sound coming from behind you, you hear the other parts beside you whereas, where we are, we've only got first violins in front of us and a desk, we've got nothing behind, so you've got nothing here and nothing there. You feel much more exposed there and then you can't hear the other parts nearly as well and you can't hear the discussion that goes on either, which is very frustrating.¹⁰⁷

The players sitting in this position have a very different experience of playing from that described by the second violinists above, and this presents a unique leadership challenge in both conducted and unconducted settings. First violinists in this position are in the only place in the orchestra where a principal player is predictably not visible. Shave is

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Britten Sinfonia second violins section, The Warehouse, London, 5 February 2011.

¹⁰⁵ As the viola and cello sections are only two stands deep, a rotational system is not deemed necessary.

¹⁰⁶ In Britten Sinfonia this tends to be desk three, as the final fourth desk is usually placed inside the section.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Britten Sinfonia first violins section, West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge, 7 February 2011.

conscious of this issue. In describing her work with the orchestra during an interview that took place after a recording session, she commented that:

When we're about to do a take, for instance, I always try to make an effort to turn round [and] just say 'Hi'. I'm aware that... especially my lot [first violins], [...] it's crazy really, we play together but I've got my back to them, so [I] have to make a special effort to gather my section. [...] In a quartet, you're on your own; [here] you're communicating but getting everybody on board is... I'm sure I could do it better sometimes.¹⁰⁸

Wind players can also struggle with issues involving hearing and sight-lines. Farrall explains:

We like to be able to see Jackie [Shave]; we have to be able to see her and/or Caroline [Dearnley]. Sometimes if I can't quite see Jackie... it depends, if we've got no conductor [...] especially on the back row, it's a bit difficult sometimes, we need to see both. Caroline... it's because often the bass is the cellos... cellos and basses are the driving rhythmic force and Caroline's got the most amazing sense of rhythm, it's unbelievable; so we really rely on Caroline to hold that together, just because you get problems of distance [...] it's not that we're playing out of time sometimes but the distance makes a difference to how you hear or judge things, that's fundamental.¹⁰⁹

Farrall draws attention to another key variable in Britten Sinfonia's leadership network: Dearnley's role. In my observations of the ensemble, I noticed that this was the role that shifted most when a conductor was involved. In unconducted rehearsals, players frequently consulted Dearnley, particularly on issues related to timing. When a conductor came in, the conspicuousness of Dearnley's role receded. Nevertheless, her influence along with Shave's is very active in the background, as once these sight-lines of communication are established they are difficult for players to turn off. The second violinists, for example, discuss this in relation to how things change when a conductor comes in:

Player 1: You do have to watch the conductor but you still try to play as a section, so you still follow what Miranda [Dale, the section leader] is doing and what Jackie [Shave] is doing sometimes.

Player 2: I think we're so used to doing it [unconducted] that when we do get a conductor in, it's harder at times.

Player 1: Yes, it can be [distracting] and getting in the way.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Jacqueline Shave, Leader of Britten Sinfonia, Air Studios, London, 16 February 2011.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Joy Farrall, Britten Sinfonia Principal Clarinet, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, 30 November 2010.

Player 2: And I find when I go to other places, I forget to look at the conductor because I'm so used to watching the leader. It is a bit awkward.¹¹⁰

In summary, Britten Sinfonia's leadership is robust and adaptable on a number of levels. Firstly, facilitated by the group's decision not to have a resident conductor or Artistic Director, designated leadership is bespoke and repertoire-based. Secondly, an informal and shared leadership structure exists in the form of the chamber music groups that serve as the foundation for both the string and the wind sections; this enables both a more 'conversational' approach to ensemble coordination and the ability to compensate for anything not being provided by the designated leadership. Thirdly, section leaders take a high degree of responsibility for players in their sections. Strong non-verbal communication plays a role here. And finally, robust interconnections exist between sections, and for the most part, within them. This situation sets the stage for the specific discussion of ensemble-repertoire fit which I will present in the form of five individual case studies.

Case Study 4.1: The emergence of vertical leadership

Windinnres for string trio, by Ulrich Alexander Krepplein

Britten Sinfonia's 'At Lunch' concerts were launched in 2005, the year Jacqueline Shave became leader. From the onset, this chamber music series has served as a vehicle for presenting contemporary music, particularly by young composers. In 2009 this work was acknowledged through a Royal Philharmonic Society Chamber Music Award. By 2 March 2010, when Krepplein's work *Windinnres* or 'the inside of the wind' was premiered, 'At Lunch' had expanded to four programmes a year, with each being performed in Cambridge, London, Norwich, Birmingham, and Kraków as well as broadcast on Radio 3. This concert featured music for string trio and oboe. Britten Sinfonia principals Shave, Dearnley, and Finnimore performed music by Schubert and Krepplein and were joined by Nicholas Daniel for Mozart and Schumann.¹¹¹

Although I had been told by Britten Sinfonia staff that I would be attending the first, and only, scheduled rehearsal day for this series of concerts, it was clear when I arrived at Hinde Street Church in central London that the trio had done some rehearsing previously.¹¹² The commission, written by a young German composer studying at Harvard University, had been deemed challenging and as a result the players had decided to meet the day before for an extra rehearsal. In spite of this, the majority of the

¹¹⁰ Interview with Britten Sinfonia second violins section, The Warehouse, London, 5 February 2011.

¹¹¹ 2, 3, 5, 9, and 14 March 2010.

¹¹² 1 March 2010.

trio's rehearsal schedule was dedicated to continuing their work on the piece. The complexities involved were obvious from the moment one opened the score. To begin with, three pages of instructions for extended techniques formed an introduction and served as the basis for a musical notation that was extremely difficult to decipher at sight. However, by the time the Hinde Street rehearsal had begun, even larger problems had started to emerge.

Krepplein's musical setting of 'the inside of the wind' begins *pppp* — in an almost inaudible 'misterioso'. After two extremely slow breath-like gestures from the trio, the viola emerges with *sforzando* glissandos played on harmonics; these are interspersed with irregularly-grouped rhythmic figures calling for various techniques including *flageolet* 'with random very high notes'. This is accompanied by a sustained pedal on a harmonic in the cello and *ponticello* trills in the first violin. Together these effects create a remarkable atmosphere, but also one where ensemble coordination is extremely difficult. The root of the problem is the lack of rhythmic scaffolding in the sound itself. Very few musical events happen on beats or in identifiable metrical patterns; those that do occur are very quiet. Later, when the dynamics increase slightly, what scaffolding is provided is still only partial, as I will describe below. This situation makes coordination more dependent on an internalized as opposed to externalized conception of pulse and metre. When the tempo is constant this is less of an issue: players can attune to one another's body language to calibrate their inner pulse. However, at several key points in the work accelerandos of different lengths occur. In fact, as the piece progresses, these moments of acceleration get longer and happen at faster tempos, making them more and more difficult to manage, especially in the light of the general technical difficulties involved in realizing the extended techniques called for in the notation.

One of these sections in particular became a focus not only of the rehearsal at Hinde Street Church, but also of the rehearsals that preceded the ensuing concerts.¹¹³ Bar 169 (see Example 4.1) begins the penultimate section of the work. *Sforzandos* in the violin and viola line mark the beginning of this *poco a poco accelerando* passage. The tempo carried over from the previous section is crotchet=96. From here a gradual increase in tempo begins, leading to a 'più mosso' at bar 181. After a six-bar steadying of the tempo another accelerando begins, this time marked 'più' and continuing into the climactic bars of the work which begin in the preparation to bar 196. Here, for the first

¹¹³ I was able to video record the pre-concert rehearsal of this work at the Wigmore Hall on 3 March 2010. The performance of the work in Cambridge was professionally filmed and is available online. See <http://www.brittensinfonia.com/media/videos/index.html#Krepplein>

time in the piece, a clear homophonic texture emerges. Shortly after the explosive start of bar 197 a turning point is reached and a rapid, frantic winding-down follows.

Arguably the most important element in clarifying the shape of this overall passage is the clarity of the homophonic texture at this point. Unfortunately, even for these highly experienced players, this was difficult to achieve.

Although the *sforzandos* that pepper the section from bar 169 are potential coordination landmarks, what happens between them creates difficulty. Most of this intermittent material is very quiet, technically challenging, hard to read off the page, and lacking in overt metrical pulse. When compounded with the task of managing the *accelerando* the players reached something very close to their cognitive capacity, hence their choice to rehearse the section repeatedly. In the end, what seemed to make the passage playable for the group was Dearnley's choice to conduct the passage (as well as much of the rest of the piece) with her head. In many ways, Dearnley was in the best position to do this, if for no other reason than she didn't have to hold an instrument under her chin. Nevertheless, in the light of the technical difficulty of her part and the other variables involved, i.e. conducting changing metre as well as taking responsibility for managing the acceleration, this was nothing less than a virtuosic feat, particularly given the amount of rehearsal time allocated.

On the afternoon of the Hinde Street rehearsal Kreppin came by to introduce himself to the players. In the discussion that followed the players asked questions relating to how much rehearsal time is allocated to players when performing his music and whether his works are usually performed under a conductor. It seemed that there had been a mismatch between the amount of rehearsal time provided and the level of complexity involved in the score, and the players were trying to draw this to the composer's attention. Interestingly, in an interview that happened close to a year after the event, when asked if 'the best case scenario' for the orchestra was to be unconduted, Dearnley's response referred this problem, or perhaps another like it:

Dearnley: Yes, I think it is. It slightly depends on the repertoire, because occasionally we're doing something that we don't have the rehearsal time to make it as secure as we need to, if it's incredibly complicated... usually, when we've had the new commissions in the lunchtime concert series, even if there are three or four of us, sometimes they are so complicated and rhythmically vague that unless you have someone putting a beat down, you spend the whole of the performance like a nodding dog, trying to beat with your head and play across the rhythms that you're putting down so it can get very complicated. But I don't think we've ever been completely stuck and felt that it was an insurmountable problem and that we couldn't possible do it without a conductor.

Lewis: You just needed enough time to do it.

Dearnley: Exactly. And it takes a while to get enough experience to be able to look at a new piece and to know what it needs, to know whether it will be possible to do it on our own or whether you think ‘I don’t think this is ever going to fly.’¹¹⁴

When asked if the orchestra preferred to work without a conductor, Dearnley referred to problems that had arisen in the chamber music series. In the end, it seems that Dearnley is particularly aware of the limits of horizontal coordination; perhaps this can be attributed to the role she plays in guiding the rhythmic drive of the orchestra,¹¹⁵ or maybe it just comes down to the ability to discern what is needed in the way she describes above. In any case, in performing the *Krepplein*, Dearnley took the decision to assume vertical leadership, i.e. she undertook responsibility for one parameter (pulse and metre) for the entire group. This was deemed necessary in this situation, and it probably would not have been possible to perform the work as successfully otherwise. However, it was also clear that she would have preferred not to have done this. This situation exemplifies the orchestra’s approach to leadership distribution: horizontal ‘face-to-face’ relationships take precedence, while vertical relationships emerge when necessary.

Case Study 4.2: Vertical leadership and the conductor

Concert Românesc for orchestra, IV: Molto vivace, by György Ligeti

This second example is the only one taken from the orchestra’s work with a conductor, in this case the composer/conductor Ryan Wigglesworth. Because the orchestra works from a chamber music ‘set point’, determining how conductors add value when working with Britten *Sinfonia* can be difficult. In fact, after this programme, I spoke to several players who felt that having a conductor on this concert was not necessary and expressed regret that they had not had the confidence to undertake the programme uncondacted. Nevertheless, I have chosen to write about Wigglesworth’s work in the final movement of Ligeti’s *Concert Românesc* because it seemed to me to be a clear demonstration of one way in which conductors actually can add value to orchestral performance.

Concert Românesc (1951) is an early work and draws upon a basis of Romanian dance and folksong material. In many ways, Ligeti’s style here has more in common

¹¹⁴ Interview with Caroline Dearnley, Britten Sinfonia Principal Cello, St Johns Smith Square, London, 18 February 2011.

¹¹⁵ Farrall’s comments about Dearnley’s role appear above.

with that of Bartók and Kodály than with *Mysteries of the Macabre*, the arrangement of three arias from his opera *Le grand macabre* that appears later the programme.¹¹⁶ The final movement of the *Concert* begins with a syncopated trumpet call before heading into a spinning Presto at minim=112. Here the pulse is one beat to a bar, and this leaves the conductor with a problem. Conducting in ‘1’ is difficult and potentially unhelpful. One of the strengths of conducting technique is its ability to convey both pulse and pulse hierarchy, but in ‘1’ this hierarchy becomes obscure. Conductors deal with this problem in a variety of ways, but the options tend to lie somewhere between the one extreme of conducting more or less equally accented pulses and the other of explicitly conducting the hypermetre. Context and individual preference guide decision-making.

In the *Concert* the option to conduct hypermetre is more straightforward than it might be in a Beethoven Scherzo movement. Although a good deal of this choice may come down to a conductor’s desire to ‘interpret’ the material in a particular way, as much might equally be attributed to practical concerns stemming from the sheer amount of repetition of material. Near the end of the work at figure ‘CC’, for example (see Example 4.2 for a reduction of this section), the strings repeat a one-bar figure consisting of rising and falling triplets 13 times, and at ‘DD’ another groups is repeated 20 times. With equal pulses this section puts the conductor and players nose-to-nose, too close for comfort. Conducting in hypermetric groups creates a bit of breathing room for those players caught in the repetitive figure, while at the same time giving the other, non-repeating, parts some scaffolding on which to hang their less predictable contributions.

Wigglesworth’s hypermetric choices are shown on the reduction presented as Example 4.2. Choosing hypermetric divisions is a highly personal affair. For example, many might decide to call the hyperbar that begins on bar 202 a bar of ‘4’ rather than ‘3’, as Wigglesworth has. Nevertheless, Wigglesworth’s choice to compact the hypermetre (i.e. move from larger hyperbars towards smaller ones) as things move towards the Prestissimo violin solo at ‘EE’ has a certain intuitive appeal. From here another round of compaction leads into ‘FF’ where a natural horn duet precedes one final *ffff* blow.

Wigglesworth approached the entire movement from a similar hypermetric perspective, and in the first rehearsal with the orchestra he began the session by listing his hypermetric choices. At first some of the players looked interested and made a few notes, but it quickly became apparent that this information had limited usefulness to the

¹¹⁶ The full concert programme is listed above. Performance dates were 28-30 November 2010.

players, at least in that context.¹¹⁷ In fact, one player later commented, ‘that was more for him than for us’. Whether Wigglesworth’s conducting of the hypermetre made a difference to the musical outcome is an entirely different question, however. My subjective perspective is that it did. I noticed a degree of shaping in this movement that I ascribe to Wigglesworth’s hypermetric choices. Objectively, however, I can only confirm the practice’s influence on players from rehearsal ‘EE’ through ‘FF’. In this final section, a quietly frantic violin solo is accompanied by solo second violin and solo viola on a pedal tremolo while the rest of the orchestra plays six octaves of the pitch *f* in unison *ffff* crotchets that over time get more and more frequent. In looking over the players’ parts for this section, I noticed that all string parts, barring principal cello and bass, had these hyperbars written in.¹¹⁸ These were also recorded in many of the wind parts. Clearly this was a place where players decided it was helpful to have this information to hand.

Why was this information less helpful in other places? The obvious answer is that ‘EE’ is a special case. The sudden tempo and textural change cause the players to look for the new tempo because the overwhelming majority of players will not be at a place where they can hear what is happening. Therefore, in looking up they see Wigglesworth conducting a bar of ‘4’, match that to their score and are able to coordinate the first unison crotchet properly. However, one can also see this from the perspective of socially-distributed cognition. At ‘CC’ for example, the strings are counting 13 bars. These bar counts are printed in the parts, one number over each bar. They are busy counting; yet at the same time they can also be influenced by what they see, which in this case is a hypermetric layer of the musical landscape that they are not consciously thinking about. Vertical distribution has occurred: Wigglesworth carries the hypermetric responsibility, and the cognitive capacity of the group increases as a result. The only difference between ‘CC’ and ‘EE’ is that in the latter case the players, for the special reasons described above, needed to be aware of what was happening. This puts the player’s comment about Wigglesworth’s listing the hypermetric divisions into context. The players do not need to know what is happening, except in exceptional cases; however, this does not mean that they derive nothing from seeing it. In summary,

¹¹⁷ One indication of this is that very little hypermetric information made it into the orchestral parts before EE. Another indication was the silence Wigglesworth received when he asked the question ‘Is this useful?’

¹¹⁸ I suggest that the reason why Dearnley and Williams did not have this in their parts was because they could see what was happening without needing to write it down. These two players are used to managing this responsibility for the group and as a result might be more primed to pick up this sort of organization in real time.

It might be possible to say that this was an instance where a conductor added unique value — that is, value that the orchestra themselves could not have added on their own, regardless of the amount of rehearsal time available. I explore how conductors can add value in this way in the following chapter.

Case Study 4.3: ‘Putting the puzzle together’

Another Staircase Overture for string orchestra by John Woolrich

As we have already acknowledged, performing orchestral repertoire without a conductor presents unique problems. Coordination, in particular, can be much more difficult. As Mark Padmore comments:

We start behind... it feels to me as if our starting point is less good than a conducted performance and it finishes up better than a conducted performance. That’s how I experience it. That it’s got more un-togetherness and more tentativeness often when you start the process, partly because people are listening and not playing quite with the dynamic rhythm you need, but once you get beyond a certain point, then I feel the result is much more exciting.¹¹⁹

The initial work of ‘putting the puzzle together’, as one Britten Sinfonia player described it, does indeed seem to take more time, even if in the end, as Padmore claims, the orchestra ends up further ahead. *Another Staircase Overture*, which the composer describes as ‘a series of snapshots and fragments of characteristic Purcellian moments’,¹²⁰ presents an opportunity to explore how Britten Sinfonia managed to put together one particularly difficult ‘puzzle’ and what benefits were gained in the process.¹²¹

Tribble’s argument, explored in the last chapter, that all the ‘direction’ required in a Shakespearian play is embedded in the action brought forth through performing the parts, could easily be applied to a Purcell overture.¹²² In fact, programmed in the same ‘English Song’ concert as the Woolrich was Purcell’s Overture and Rondeau from *Abdelazer*, and this was rehearsed and performed entirely without a full score. It seems that a score did not come with the parts, and Shave, who led the rehearsals and performance, did not request one. However, it is more difficult, if not impossible, to claim that the parts provided all the direction required for the performance of *Another Staircase Overture*. ‘Directing’ this piece requires a certain degree of specialist

¹¹⁹ Video interview with Mark Padmore for ‘Britten in America’ tour blog, February 2010. <http://www.Lizzieball.com/category/videos/>

¹²⁰ Quoted from Britten Sinfonia’s ‘English Song’ Concert Programme.

¹²¹ The rehearsal I refer to throughout this section occurred on 5 February 2011.

¹²² See Chapter 3.

knowledge, as a review of the rehearsal of the first two movements of the work illustrates. I have included the annotated principal string parts as Examples 4.3a to 4.3e below for reference. Why I have chosen to refer to parts instead of a full score becomes clear as the case study progresses.

Shave began the rehearsal by ‘talking through’ the first two sections of the piece (through bar 34). This is an unusual strategy for Shave, who, whenever possible, seems to prefer to begin a rehearsal with playing. Woolrich’s piece, borrowing from Purcell’s *A Staircase Overture*, begins with upward-moving scale passages, in this case, starting with the double basses and working upwards in pitch through the orchestra. Shave, therefore, started by letting the principal bass know that she would give four quavers before he began. She then let all players know the metrical groupings of the first three 7/16 bars (2+2+3, 2+2+3, 3+2+2). Pencils across the room moved as this information was recorded in the parts. The players were quiet and interested.

At bar 15, she explained, the cellos have quavers and the tempo gets pulled back. Bars 17 and 18, although not notated as such in the parts, are a Grand Pause. Going into the second section at ‘Letter A’, the second violins were told to begin at the same speed. In bar 22 Shave explained that she would conduct the bar twice and that at the end there is a double bass ‘spasm’. She then said that ‘the last quaver of bar 28 is a 3/16 bar’. Dearnley interrupted at this point to clarify this repositioning of bar lines with the comment: ‘bar 29 starts on the second semi.’

Shave continued with, ‘bar 36 violas pause; Violin 2 bring yourself in; bar 37 violas pause.’ Finnimore, as principal viola, asked for clarification that Shave provided. Shave then asked Dearnley to lead bar 38. Shave commented that bar 48 was faster than it looks and suddenly said: ‘Have a go’. Quickly Finnimore asked again for information about bar 22, and after a quick explanation, the orchestra played from the beginning through bar 38.

As soon as the music stopped it was clear that the atmosphere in the room had changed. Quiet murmuring was heard among players. Shave walked over and spoke to Dearnley, who then turned to talk to the basses. The one copy of the full score was being examined by Finnimore. (Shave, up to this point, had been reading to the orchestra from her annotated part.) The sub-principal cello got up and came to the back of the room and quietly asked me if he could borrow my score. I noticed that players in the back were standing up to see what was going on in the front. The room seemed to be expressing its concern for the situation. It appeared as if everyone had suddenly woken

up. Shave suggested that they try from the beginning again. For a second time they played to bar 38.

Dearnley and Shave spoke again. The score was being passed around, and one page of my photocopied score had now made it to the basses. Shave said, 'Let me conduct it once.' They began from bar 19 and stopped again at 38. I could no longer hear anyone individually. Shave quieted people and said that Dearnley would lead the chords at 'C'. When they began again it was at '2 before C'. They played through the end of the movement. Much discussion followed. Players from the back then actively consulted players at the front. Shave and her stand partner spoke. Dale, principal second, went to Shave; they discussed bar 42. Dale announced, 'Does anyone have a score?' Someone brought her one. Shave consulted a metronome. Things settled. They played from the beginning again before the rehearsal continued.

Both *Another Staircase Overture* and in *Windinnres* require a different approach to coordination from that employed when rehearsing and performing a Purcell overture. In *Windinnres* rhythmic scaffolding was required and this was distributed to Dearnley. With the Woolrich, however, rhythmic scaffolding was not the main concern: the tempos change very little and, once established, were not too problematic, and very little of the playing was technically taxing.¹²³ Instead, two other issues emerged. Firstly, the work was in a style between two musical languages, one very new and one very old. What this meant practically was that the players could not trust what they heard. Baroque rhetorical instincts could not be overridden, but nor could they be relied upon. The second thing the players could not trust was what was in their parts; important pieces of information necessary to play this music — even on a basic level — were simply not provided in the parts they were given. There are many examples of this in the section that ends at bar 38, but perhaps the clearest occurs in the notation of the fermatas in bars 36 -37. In the way that the parts are notated it is unclear that each bar has two pauses. This makes coordination without further clarification very difficult, if not impossible.

If a conductor had been involved in the project, this first rehearsal would have progressed much faster, as he or she could have provided this as well as other missing information. A conductor, seeing the musical landscape from the perspective of the full score, could easily act as a musical 'traffic warden', guiding players as required through both cueing and outlining the geography of the bars. The division of the metrical

¹²³ To a more limited extent than in the Krepplein, later passages of this work did require rhythmic reinforcement, and Shave conducted some of these passages in performance. Lack of rehearsal time was a contributing factor here.

groupings in the first few bars, for example, could be shown without a word. Unexpected entrances could be invited and validated. The Grand Pauses in bars 17-18 could be clarified. With the right conductor, the fermata in bar 22 and the double bass ‘spasm’ into bar 23 could have been performed perfectly on the first reading.

Yet, as Padmore notes, the unconducted Britten Sinfonia starts further behind. This is particularly true in working with this piece: firstly, because of the way Woolrich has designed it to play with the expectations of both the players and the listeners, and secondly, because the parts have been notated with a conductor in mind. In the end, the players dealt with the challenges involved by extending their field of concern beyond their own parts and into an elevation of the musical landscape typically distributed to conductors. The role of the full score in the rehearsal, as well as the annotations on the individual parts, provides evidence of this. In describing a similar process of ‘putting the puzzle together’, this time for a performance of Finzi’s *Dies Natalis* with Mark Padmore, Shave explains:

I think it’s very enriching, very rewarding [to work this way]. At the end of the day, even though it seems like a slog, I know that we get more out of it.¹²⁴

When working without a conductor, the players individually know more about the musical landscape as a whole and as a result are able to rely less on vertical coordination, i.e. times where one person takes control of a single parameter for the entire group. At its best, I argue that this approach results in a freedom of expression, which may be what is at the heart of Padmore’s association of the way of working with ‘excitement’. However, repertoire where rhetorical features play a greater part seems to enhance these benefits, as the final two case studies will endeavour to show.

Case Study 4.4: What it means ‘to know’

Misera, dove son? K369 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Misera, dove son? was the last of three Mozart concert arias performed by the Canadian soprano, Barbara Hannigan, on Britten Sinfonia’s *Mysteries of the Macabre* programme on 28-30 November 2010. As there was a conductor available for these concerts, I was surprised to discover that the plan was to perform the concert arias, including this last one which contained an extensive recitative, unconducted. However, I was even more intrigued by something I heard while this recitative was being rehearsed:

¹²⁴ Interview with Jacqueline Shave, Leader of Britten Sinfonia, Air Studios, London, 16 February 2011.

Dale: We find [bar] 12 a bit hard to work out.

Hannigan: Can I indicate?

Shave: [to Hannigan] No. We need to learn it.¹²⁵

This happened in a typical ‘putting the pieces together’ type rehearsal: work was slow, and rife with small but crucial moments of miscommunication that needed to be worked out. Hannigan, who had shown herself to be a very competent conductor in her *tour de force* sung and conducted performance of *Mysteries of the Macabre*, had basically offered to give a cue and Shave turned her down. Instead she insisted that the ensemble ‘learn it’. Clearly the expectation was for the players to be able to play together and with the singer without any overt vertical scaffolding. In any case, this left me questioning what exactly it means ‘to know’ a work if you are an orchestral player, and how this ‘knowing’ changes in conducted vs. unconducted settings.

In an interview the following day, Shave explained the problems involved as well as her aims:

I have to say that the recit is the hardest piece in the whole... we’re doing the hardest piece of music without a conductor. It’s rhythmically the most complicated, much more complicated than any of the Ligeti. It’s incredibly free, it’s almost like having to accompany someone who’s talking in a sentence [...] so it’s not necessarily just about the fact that we’re doing it without a conductor, just that particular piece of music is very [complex] But I have to say, if there was a conductor, even a good one, we probably wouldn’t be as much with the singer as if we’d all learned it and played like this [...] We’d be together but we’d probably not be quite on the bar line with her [...]¹²⁶

It seems that Shave values unconducted performance because she considers it ultimately to be more accurate or attuned.¹²⁷ In a later interview, this time referring to her work with Mark Padmore on Britten’s *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*, she clarified her position:

[In unconducted performance] You haven’t got the middle man, you’re cutting out the channel. You’re being very direct, particularly with the soloist, I think, because if there was a conductor in this Britten Serenade, just by definition, by

¹²⁵ Quoted from my field notes, Norwich rehearsal, 28 November 2010.

¹²⁶ Interview with Britten Sinfonia string principals, West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge, 29 November 2010.

¹²⁷ ‘Performers and listeners are “tuned-in” to one another, are living together through the same flux, are growing older together while the musical process lasts.’ Schutz ed. (1964: 174-5), quoted in Cook, 1990: 131.

us all looking at the conductor, we're not listening to Mark. It's not we're not listening to him, but our attention is taken with the conductor [...]¹²⁸

For Shave, first person interactions are crucial. As Dearnley explains, however, developing these relationships is a process that takes time and attention:

It's unbelievably complex [...] I think the principal players all have to have everything [marked] in, because... last night there was a bit that came slightly unstuck partly because the winds were so far away, they couldn't hear, that's the main problem [...] today, I talked to [the wind player who couldn't hear] and I said 'I've got that exactly at the same place as you have and I will show you where it comes,' so she knows now that we've got that together so she will look across at me and if she can't hear what's going on, it'll be fine [...] but I didn't realise that before so I didn't know to tell her. So it's all, it's going to be fine.¹²⁹

Marking parts, as Dearnley also mentions, plays a key role in 'learning' a new work. Britten Sinfonia players mark parts in a way that draws attention to key interactions. These annotations are externally-coded traces of a more global transactive memory system that is at work in the ensemble. Therefore, I decided to begin looking for what it might mean 'to know' this Mozart recitative there. My starting point was the parts of the string principals, as in this case the quartet formed the core leadership structure of the group.¹³⁰ Based upon what I knew from observing the group, what these four people knew also served as a basis for what others in their sections knew. However, it was also important to acknowledge that the principal players do not know the same things, even if there was a good deal of overlap in what they 'knew' about the piece. Therefore, in order for the traces of the transactive memory system captured in the parts to be more easily seen from each player's perspective, I have transferred the markings to four full scores (see Examples 4.4a to 4.4d), one for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Cello. For each, the instrumental line of the main part is highlighted in its entirety, cues are boxed, and other relevant marks (including arrows, wiggly lines, and comments) are included. I have not included bowings or articulation marks in order to avoid complicating what is fundamentally an analysis of interaction. What follows in Figure 4.2 is an analysis based upon these scores.

¹²⁸ Interview with Jacqueline Shave, Leader of Britten Sinfonia, Air Studios, London, 16 February 2011.

¹²⁹ Interview with Britten Sinfonia string principals, West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge, 29 November 2010.

¹³⁰ The parts of the string players sitting further back in the section were very similarly annotated in this case. I do not refer to the double bass or wind parts here due to the fact that they included full printed cues in the part. Although the players found this helpful, I found it quite unfortunate, as it prevented me from seeing more of how the wind players found their way through the work.

Figure 4.2. *Analysis of interaction based upon string principals parts for Mozart’s concert aria ‘Misera, dove son?’*

bar 1	Violin 1 and Violin 2 coordinate their part in relation to the moving bass line, while Cello attunes to the rhythmic motor of Violin 2 (and Viola).
bar 3	Cello listens for the descending motive in Violins 1 and 2.
bar 4	Violin 1 consciously makes contact with the winds for their first entrance, above the cue is written: ‘HORNS’.
bar 7	Violin 1 listens for the singer’s entrance before the bar 3 descending motive appears again in Violin 1 and 2. Cello and Viola notice that this time the motive happens on the fourth beat.
bar 9	Violin 1 has marked ‘(Lead)’ on the part and is still listening carefully to the singer here, noting not only the rhythmic and pitch structure of the singer’s part but also key words in the text. (In the performance she marked the beats of bar 9 which helped to coordinate the ensemble’s resolution at bar 10.) Cello begins following the singer’s line from bar 11. Here is one of the few places where text is included in the Cello cues.
bar 10	Violin 2 looks to Viola on beat one to coordinate the resolution.
bar 11	All parts cue the singer’s line. The third beat harmonic change is coordinated as follows: Violin 1 works with Cello, Violin 2 works with Viola and vice versa, Cello seems to be working predominantly with the singer. Violin 2 also draws an arrow across the bar line into bar 12. ¹³¹
bar 12	Cello joins Violin 2 in annotating the acceleration in the vocal part at the beginning of the bar. In the second half of the bar, all parts note a pulling back into bar 13. ¹³² Coordinating this pulled back figure happens as follows: Violin 2 works with Violin 1, Viola works with both Violin 2 and Cello, and Cello looks to both Violin parts.
bars 13-17	Violin 1, Viola, and Cello turn their attention to the vocal line. Unlike the other parts, Violin 2 cues in only the word ‘Cadmo’ in bar 17; in this section Violin 2 relies on Violin 1 to indicate the change into bar 15. Listening for ‘Cadmo’ helps her to time the release. In bar 14 Violin 1 notes the Viola movement on the third beat, probably offering encouragement here. The upbeat into bar 18 is annotated with arrows in all but Violin 1.
bar 18	Violin 1 places her arrow across the first half of this bar, indicating a longer view of the shape begun in the upbeat to this bar. Viola and Cello mark in cues for the Violin descending motive in the second beat. This knowledge helps them to time their release out of the first beat in a way that allows forward motion into the next bar.
bars 19-21	Violin 1 and Cello note the vocal line: Violin 1 with added text on the down beats of bars 20 and 21, as these correspond to harmonic movement. Cello places an arrow over the vocal cues in bar 19

¹³¹ This is the place referred to in the dialogue between Dale and Hannigan that is quoted at the beginning of this case study. One can assume that part of Dale’s resolution of her coordination problem involved preparing herself for the singer’s acceleration in bar 12.

¹³² In rehearsal, Hannigan spent a great deal of time explaining what textual themes motivate each orchestral introduction. These insights serve as the basis for the orchestra’s approach to moving forward and back at these places.

	indicating that the feeling of forward motion that began in the upbeat to bar 18 actually continues. In the upbeat to bar 22 the descending motive arrives again in the lower two parts. Violin 1 places an arrow here indicating the continuation of the pressing forward.
bar 22-23	Viola places an arrow into the second half of bar 22, as does Violin 2; however, the Violin 2 arrow extends into bar 23 helping to prepare the player for the movement that happens on the third beat, which is done in conjunction with Violin 1. All players that move at this place, i.e. Violin 1, 2, and Cello, note the vocal line here. Violin 1 and 2 add text to their cues.
bars 24-28	In bar 24 the lower two parts record the beginning of the descending motive on beat 4. Violin 2 puts an arrow across the bar line here. Beginning in the upbeat to bar 27, all players cue the vocal line; however, once again Violin 2 cues in less material than the other players — this time only the beginning and end of the phrase. This implies that she is getting information about where the harmonic movement changes from one of the other players, probably Violin 1.
bars 29-32	In the second half of bar 29 Violin 1 and Cello move their attention to the semiquavers in the middle parts. Violin 2 marks an arrow over this figure; Viola notes that it is shared with Violin 2 and also writes ‘Tempo’. For the first time since the singer’s entrance no vocal cues appear in the orchestral parts, indicating that here the orchestra is driving the tempo.
bars 33-36	Vocal cues appear in all parts again, yet to a lesser degree in Violin 2. In bar 34 Viola notes Cello. In the final bar the lower two parts include a wiggly line indicating their leading of the deceleration that ends the movement.

Although what is described above is necessarily coarse compared to its ‘real-life’ equivalent, two themes nevertheless appear. Firstly, coordination happens through a network of relationships where different players take responsibility for different things. For example, because Violin 1 and to a lesser extent Cello take responsibility for being with the singer at all times, the middle parts are able to concentrate on other things and work in a different way, as demonstrated by the lack of vocal cues in Violin 2. Bar 12 provides another example for this sort of distributed coordination. Here a web of interaction supports the orchestra’s integrative efforts. Secondly, the line between leadership and followership becomes blurred. Take, for example, the movement forward that begins in the upbeat to bar 18. The responsibility for maintaining this feeling of dramatic pressure across this section is shared across several parts making differentiation between leading and following difficult, and perhaps unhelpful, to discern. In summary, it seems that in this case, ‘knowing’ the work meant knowing how to achieve this kind of internal coherence. Vertical distribution of leadership, in the form of cuing, would have prevented an internal calibration process that is highly

accurate, if more difficult to achieve. The following chapter elaborates on strategies that conductors can use to bring about this process of internal calibration.

Case Study 4.5: Managing freedom

Sonata for Strings III: Lento, by Sir William Walton

The final case study in this chapter examines what the players take to be the main benefit of their approach to leadership: the freedom that it provides. At its best, Britten Sinfonia is like a clockwork mechanism with gears that are alive and ready to respond: an impulse from any one part can cause a subtle rebalancing of the whole, creating chamber music on a large scale. This does not mean that the group always gets there, however. As Shave explains:

I think that to be really honest, it takes lots and lots and lots of performances to be able to... if you played it without any of the markings, it is years... talk to quartets that have played Beethoven for years; you know what you're doing because you've become the piece. I think we've taken a step towards it but we [use] those markings—¹³³

Nevertheless, in the later concerts of a tour which included Walton's *Sonata for Strings*, the players agreed that they had managed to achieve this freedom to some degree.¹³⁴

The players had been telling me about this piece long before it appeared on a programme. In both informal conversations and interviews, players had said that the work, which is an arrangement of the String Quartet in A minor by the composer, was difficult and would be challenging to undertake uncondacted. The principals were keen but also concerned that not enough rehearsal time had been allocated. In the end, the work was programmed on the 'English Song' tour which had seven dates in February 2011, and a day's rehearsal was planned for the principals alone. When asked about this quartet rehearsal, Dearnley replied:

Yes, we got an awful lot sorted out, not just bowings, but working out which of us have to... where we're looking next, who's taking the lead, whose tune it is, where you're passing something to.¹³⁵

Dearnley also mentioned, however, that the third movement had been particularly challenging, and had required a lot of work on the parts. She then explained that

¹³³ Interview with Britten Sinfonia string principals, West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge, 29 November 2010.

¹³⁴ This piece was performed as part of the 'English Song' programme in February 2011.

¹³⁵ Interview with Britten Sinfonia string principals, Theatre Royal, Norwich, 13 February 2011.

Nearly always you'll find it's in the slow movements that you need to write a huge amount of stuff in and the fast ones very little, because there's a common pulse and you're just going to go with it and it carries you along.¹³⁶

By this point in the project I had already realized the significant role that marked parts played in the ensemble. However, I was also interested to learn more about what actually goes on in the players' heads when they look at these markings, and also to investigate further how these annotations contribute to the freedom that I had heard the players talk about. Between the rehearsal and concert of the sixth tour date, I had an opportunity to speak to the principals about these issues in relation to the third movement of the Walton. I began the interview by asking the players to talk through their parts. A full score and parts of the section discussed can be found as Examples 4.5a-4.5e and to make it easier to consult, I have referred to the players (Shave, Dale, Finnimore, and Dearnley) by the names of their instruments. Dearnley began:

Cello: The first bar on the second note, the cellos move in the half-bar so I lead my section to do that and then [Viola] takes over.

Viola: Yes, that's right, so you've got a comma after your second half note, haven't you? So we have to count the bar from the beginning of the second bar and come in on the last crotchet.

Cello: You're setting your own tempo.

Viola: We're kind of doing that, aren't we, yes. [...]

Violin 2: In the second bar, I'm following [Viola] at the last crotchet of the bar, where I join the tune with just an A.

[...]

Viola: When I come in, I'm conscious of the fact that we need to all feel really together and maybe something about the C sharp needs a bit of flavour, so I'll try and indicate that, but often it's best to do not much.

Violin 1: The beginning of this movement... a lot of the movement is a viola movement so I'm, whereas normally I might be quite active, I try to get my section to be incredibly passive and just be with [Cello] and [Viola]. I'm leading it but I'm completely not asserting my musical thing at all.

Violin 2: I think you indicate where you're playing and that's it for the section.

Lewis: But you're not giving them any extra information.

Violin 1: No.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Violin 2: Jumping on, there's a sforzando we have with [Violin 1] in that 4/4 bar.

Violin 1: But that's violas as well.

Violin 2: It's violas as well. It's got to be within the tune so we listen to what we're given and try to make it fizzy.

Viola: I was going to say about the tune, which lasts quite a few bars, with the violas, [...] it's quite little steps it achieves; this tune goes up a step and then down again, then up another step and down. It's a really long, long, long tune so I do need to indicate the beats a bit because... for everyone else to follow our tune, you do need to indicate because in the middle of a long note, [...] it's possible to lose your footing so you need to keep a sense of flow, although it's very, very slow, but that's quite difficult.

Violin 1: And then we get to 45 and [...] the melody is shared between the first violins and violas, we're playing it together.

Viola: We're now following the first violins.

Cello: Just into 45, I have to lead the basses in there because they're joining in, so I'm gathering my section and the basses by half-turning round and gathering them in to take them into 45 and then we sit back for a bit.

Violin 1: And then we get to 46, it's a unison rhythm there, pretty much, I think, isn't it? [sings] Does everyone have that?

All: Yes.

Violin 1: That again, is something else where [...] it's really about the leading, whether it's an intimate lead or actually gathering everybody and reminding 'Hey guys, this is completely unison. We're doing this together' and then the first fiddles drive it through, through 47.¹³⁷

The first thing I noticed about this interview was how it mirrored the actual performance of the piece. The players spoke in turn, they listened to each other, and the viola in this 'viola movement' took the opportunity to speak expressively about her expressive tune. Oddly, the 'leader' didn't enter the conversation until it was well under way, and then with language of 'non-assertion', also mirroring her musical role. This setting seemed to be an instance of musical and social structure acting as codeterminant.¹³⁸ Conversational relationships prevail in both contexts. Another thing that was remarkable was the variety of language used to describe the qualities of the interactions. Although players led and followed, they also joined, indicated, didn't assert, shared, gathered, and drove.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ I discuss Monson's (1996) use of this term earlier in this chapter.

Here leadership and followership blurred. Yet whether leading or following, the principals attempted to include the players behind them. This inclusion is something that the players undertake consciously:

Finnimore: I suppose the difficulty is when there's more people though... when there's fewer people, you can rely so much on hearing it, sensing it because you're so close. The same bits that worked with four people, with a lot of people you have to be much more physical, showing what you want to do, which can get in the way [...] it's a very difficult thing to do well, I think, to lead something successfully, clearly and not overly.

Lewis: Is this the 'gathering' thing you were talking about?

Finnimore: Yes, exactly. The tune's got to be so spontaneous, but sometimes you have to almost come back a few paces and think more simply so that it's just together and beautiful enough, not—

Shave: But then, I would say because [Finnimore]'s only got four people in her section, I think you haven't got the same problem that I've got because the people at the back really want me to waft a lot and maybe in quite a calm tune, which is quite rubato, I have to move around quite a lot, which I wouldn't choose to do in a quartet situation, for instance, and that's what you're saying. It can often look a bit overdone but people are going 'Oh please can you give that more, more, more...' ¹³⁹

In any case, I observed that the players were able to inhabit their musical roles deeply when they used their annotated part as an external memory device. This led me to ask the players if they still needed the markings after a certain stage in the work, and this was when the players connected the role of marking parts to that of managing freedom in performance:

Finnimore: I think it *does* get like we remember it by ear more and more when we play it, and you're not actually reading the cues that we've written in, but you need those as a guide [...] because what happens if somebody leaves it a little bit later, which sometimes happens. You have to be—

Dearnley: And also, the more you know a piece, sometimes that happens, that it gets freer, doesn't it?

Shave: Which *is* happening.

Dearnley: And people will take slight liberties with the tempo or they'll just play something a bit later and if you don't have that cue... unless you know it absolutely backwards... of course, we've done it a lot of times but still, [...] if you count the hours we've spent on it, I don't know how many it is—

¹³⁹ Interview with Britten Sinfonia string principals, Theatre Royal, Norwich, 13 February 2011.

Shave: Compared to a quartet.

Dearnley: It's still not [as many].

Shave: This is really unusual, we usually play... I would say it took until about the third or fourth performance before it really sounded like it was freeing comfortably for me and there weren't any moments of danger. But we usually only get three performances. This is unusual that we're doing six or seven. It's really unusual and really great; and what we *must* do and we don't always do, is make sure they photocopy all the parts and keep them because sometimes what happens [is] in two years, we'll have this come up, open the parts and there's nothing.

Dearnley: It'll be blank.

Shave: All that work we've done, the bowings, just not there.

Dale: Or maybe they've been lent out [...]

Shave: That happens a lot.

Finnimore: With a conductor and they'll write in 'in 6' or 'in 4'. We don't need that and sometimes you're not actually thinking of the numbers in a bar, you're thinking of who's important before you and who you're following [...] ¹⁴⁰

It seems that in this context, the annotated parts become a tool for facilitating what I described in Chapter 2 as the concept of interpretation as an emergent phenomenon. This is what the players ultimately associate with 'freedom'. In Finnimore's comment at the end of the above discussion is a clue as to how they manage to accomplish this. The way a conductor would begin the process of scaffolding a performance of this work would be through taking away the general distribution of the one parameter that these players seem never to focus on, i.e. the pulse — and, on a higher level, the metre.¹⁴¹ Yes, in this piece the players do indicate the pulse from time to time, but not to the extent of inhibiting the potential for spontaneity, at least not at this stage of the process; earlier stages might make different demands. Returning again to my clockworks metaphor, there is a sense here that, theoretically, any gear could move the whole. Yet there is also the sense that the potential for this movement is even more important than if it really happens. And the entire group dynamic of the ensemble backs this up. Players from the back seats know that they can speak, for example, even if they rarely do. In Britten *Sinfonia* the focus on the primacy of horizontal 'on the ground' relationships, and the use of marked parts as a tool to promote these relationships, is at

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ At a faster tempo other factors, including entrainment, are at work. See the Ligeti example above for how distributions at higher tempos might work.

the heart of what makes this sort of musical freedom possible. This is not to say that the vertical does not emerge: it does. The orchestra will do what is necessary in order to achieve ‘ensemble-repertoire fit’, as the case studies above demonstrate. I argue that what makes this ensemble unique, however, is that when the vertical has served its purpose, they are willing to let it go.

Conclusion

Between chamber music and orchestral music lies a vast interactional landscape that this chapter has attempted to map. In the process, I have explored how high differentiation and high integration in an orchestra need not be viewed as conflicting, and proposed that there are strong advantages to building ensembles where both can thrive.

Nevertheless, as Lawrence and Lorsch claim, with high differentiation comes the need for strong conflict resolution skills. A flexible approach to leadership based upon ensemble-repertoire fit is one of the key ways that Britten Sinfonia handles this problem. Five musical case studies have been presented in the second half of this chapter with the aim of demonstrating how the orchestra manages to match leadership approaches to repertoire challenges. In Chapter 5 I look towards how conductors might find a similar flexibility in their own approach to leadership and thus encourage some of the boons of socially-distributed cognition which Britten Sinfonia has so elegantly capitalized upon.

Example 4.1. *Windinnres* for string trio by Ulrich Krepplein, bb 169-199.

poco à poco acc.

169

Vln. *sfz* *pp* *sfz* *pp* *sfz* *ppp* *p* *pizz.* *arco* *sfz*

Vla. *pizz.* *arco* *sfz* *pp* *sfz* *pp* *sfz* *pp*

Vc. *leggero e giocoso* *p* *sfz* *pp* *poco* *pp*

(acc.)

23

173

Vln. *arco* *pp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *sfz* *pp*

Vla. *pp* *poco* *mp* *pp* *poco* *p*

Vc. *poco* *pp* *pizz.* *sfz* *arco* *p* *mp* *pp*

(acc.)

177

Vln. *sfz* *pp* *sfz* *p* *pizz.* *arco* *p* *poco* *pp*

Vla. *p* *sfz* *mp* *p* *sfz* *pp* *mp*

Vc. *poco* *sfz* *sfz* *p* *poco* *pp* *mp*

24 Più mosso $\text{♩} = 124$

181

Vln. *sfz* *p* *mp* *p* *sfz* *p* *poco*

Vla. *pp* *sfz* *p* *p* *sfz* *pp* *sfz* *pp* *sfz* *p*

Vc. *pizz.* *arco* *sfz* *mp* *p* *pizz.* *sfz* *sfz*

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Example 4.1. *continued*

185 **25** *più acc.*

Vln. *sfz* *sfz* *pizz.* *arco* *sfz* *3 p* *sfz* *sfz* *p* *sfz* *sfz*

Vla. *sfz* *sfz* *p* *sfz* *p* *sfz* *sfz* *p* *mp* *sfz*

Vc. *arco* *p* *pizz.* *f* *arco* *mf* *pizz.* *f* *3* *f* *sfz* *sfz*

(acc.)

189 **26**

Vln. *p* *sfz* *sfz* *mp* *sfz* *p* *sfz* *p* *mf*

Vla. *mp* *sfz* *sfz* *mp* *sfz* *p* *sfz* *mp*

Vc. *f* *arco* *mf* *pizz.* *sfz* *mp* *pizz.* *sfz* *arco* *f*

(acc.)

193 **27** *Vivace* ♩ = 146

Vln. *sfz* *mp* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *f* *f*

Vla. *mf* *sfz* *sfz* *pizz.* *arco* *f* *p* *sfz* *pizz.* *f*

Vc. *pizz.* *arco* *ff* *mf* *sfz* *mp* *sfz* *pizz.* *sfz* *arco* *f*

ritardando

197

Vln. *ff* *ppp*

Vla. *arco* *sfz* *ff* *ppp* *mf" (ppp)*

Vc. *sul g. flag. gliss.* *ff* *ppp* *sul c. flag. gliss.* *mf" (ppp)*

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Example 4.2 *Concert Românesc* for orchestra, IV: Molto vivace, by György Ligeti. bb 586-648.

[illegible]

Example 4.2. *continued*

EE
Prestissimo ♩ = 126
Violin Solo

secco

626

pp

f

a 2

2

pizz.

3

(S)

633

f

a 2

2

pizz.

2

(S)

640

f

a 2

2

pizz.

2

2

(S)

645

f

a 2

f

lunga colla parte

lunga

lunga

lunga

1 / 1 Δ | 1 / 1 Δ | 1 / 1 Δ |

Violin 1

Steve

1, 2, 3, 4

Another Staircase Overture

JOHN WOOLRICH

1. A staircase overtture
♩ = 152, ferocious

2. Another staircase overtture

3. Caroline

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164

B51
Violin 2

Another Staircase Overture

1. A staircase overtone

$\text{♩} = 152, \text{ferocious}$

JOHN WOODRICH

Handwritten notes: 1, 2, 3, 4 /

div.

ff

ff

3

unis.

unis.

Handwritten notes: Cali, 32, 2 | 3, 4 | 4

div.

ff

ff

f

p

f

G.P.

2

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Violin 2

19 **A** 2. Another staircase overture

unis.

pp

mf pp ppp

24

div.

p

mp

pppp

mf

ff

29

unis.

arco

f

p

34

f

ppp

43

p

pp

p

pp

48

G.P.

p

ppp

54

3. First Minuet

D ♩ = 104

sul pont.

pp

61

E ♩ = 120

pizz.

fff

66

F ♩ = 104

arco

ppp

2
Viola

Another Staircase Overture

1. A staircase overture
♩ = 152, ferocious
JOHN WOOLRICH

2. Another staircase overture

3. First Minuet
♩ = 104
FASTER
♩ = 104

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Example 4.3d. *Another Staircase Overture* for string orchestra by John Woolrich: Cello part.

2 *251*
Violoncello

Another Staircase Overture

JOHN WOOLRICH

1. A staircase overtone
♩ = 152, ferocious

1234

div.

7 unis. 1st half tutti

13

SLOWER
♩ = 132

ff

2. Another staircase overtone

pp

mf

pp

pizz.

arco

f

29

div.

p

< f p

pp

37 with clare unis. C

ff

pp

45

pizz.

arco

pp

pppp

with CLARE

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Example 4.3e. *Another Staircase Overture* for string orchestra by John Woolrich: Double Bass part.

BS 1.
Double Bass

Another Staircase Overture

JOHN WOOLRICH

Handwritten notes: 1234, 1 1 A staircase overture, = 152, ferocious, 1 1 4 1 1 A A 11

16 *fff*

6 *ff*

12 *ff*

132

Handwritten notes: 1 2

19 *mf* *pp* *pizz.* *p* *mf*

28 *mf* *p*

38 *ff* *pp* *p*

Handwritten notes: Vc lead, 1 2 3 4

47 *pizz.* *p* *arco* *pppp*

3. First Minuet

54 *pizz.* *p*

61 *fff*

67 *p*

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Example 4.4a. *Misera, dove son?* K369 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: 1st Violin part.

2 (198)

SCENE und ARIE
 „Misera, dove son!”
 (Text aus Metastasio's „Ezio”)
 für Sopran mit Begleitung des Orchesters.
 von
W. A. MOZART.
 Köch. Verz. N^o 369.
 Composit in München am 8. März 1781.

SCENA.
 Andante sostenuto.

Flauti.
 Corni in Es.
 Violino I.
 Violino II.
 Viola.
 Soprano.
 Violoncello e Contrabasso.

HORNS

(LEAD)

(Fulvia.)
 Misera, dove son!
 Laure del Tebro son queste chio re.

spiro?
 Per le strade maggi ro di Te, bea d'Argo?
 O dal le greche sponde, di tra.

W. A. M. 369.

Ausgegeben 1857

Example 4.4a. *continued*

14

(199) 3

ge - die fe - con - de, le do - mesi - che fu - rie - ven - ne - ro - a - que - sti li - di, del - la pro - le di Cadmo, e de - gli A - tri - di?

18

A

Là - dun - monarca in - giu - sto - lin - gra - ta - cru - del - ta - m'empie d'or - ro - re: dun

23

padre tra - di - to - re - qua - in - coi - pa - mag - ghiac - cia; e lo

W. A. M. 369.

Example 4.4a. *continued*

4 (200)

27 [B]

32

spo - so inno - cen - te ho sem - pre in faccia. Oh im - ma - gi - ni fu - ne - ste! Oh me -

mo - rie! Oh mar - ti - ro! Ed io parlo, in te - li - ce, ed io re - splro! Ah no!

Example 4.4b. *Misera, dove son?* K369 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: 2nd Violin part.

2 (198)

Mozart's Werke.

SCENE und ARIE

„Misera, dove son!“

(Text aus Metastasio's „Ezio“)

für Sopran mit Begleitung des Orchesters.

Serie 6. N^o 21.

von
W. A. MOZART.

Rösch. Verz. N^o 369.

Componirt in München am 8. März 1781.

1 SCENA. Andante sostenuto.

Flauti.

Corni in Es.

Violino I.

Violino II.

Viola.

Soprano.

Violoncello e Contrabasso.

(Fulvia.)
Mise-ra, do-ve son! Laure del Tebro son quest'occhio re-
spiro? Per le strade mag-gi-ro di Te-be ed' Argo? O dal-le greche sponde, di tra-

W. A. M. 369. Ausgegeben 1782.

Example 4.4b. *continued*

(199) 3

14

ge - die fe - con - de, le do - mesti - che fu - rie ven - ne - ro a questi li - di, del - la pro - le di Cadmo, e de - gli Atri - di?

18 A

Là d'un monarca ingiusto l'ingrata crudel - tà m'empie d'orrore: d'un

23

padre tra - di - to - re qua la col - pa magghiaeciù; e lo

W. A. M. 369.

Example 4.4b. *continued*

4 (200)

27 [B]

spo. so inno. cen. te ho sem. pre in faccia. Oh im. ma. gi. ni fu. ne. ste! Oh me.

32

mo. rie! Oh mar. ti. ro! Ed io parlo, in. fe. li. ce, ed io re. spi. ro? Ah no!

Example 4.4c. *Misera, dove son?* K369 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Viola part.

2 (198)

SCENE und ARIE
 „Misera, dove son!”
 (Text aus Metastasio's „Ezio”)
 für Sopran mit Begleitung des Orchesters.
 von
W. A. MOZART.
 Köch. Verz. N^o 369. Composit in München am 8. März 1781.

Mozart's Werke. Serie 4. N^o 21.

SCENA.
 Andante sostenuto.

Flauti.
 Corni in Es.
 Violino I.
 Violino II.
 Viola.
 Soprano.
 Violoncello e Contrabasso.

5 10 12

(Fulvia.)
 Mis-e-ru, do-ve son! L'aure del Tebro son quest'occhio re.
 spiro? Per le strade maggior di Te-be ed Argo? O dal le greche sponde, di tra-

W. A. M. 369. Ausgegeben 1782

Example 4.4c. *continued*

(199) 3

14

ge - die le con - de, le do - mesi che tu rie ven ne ro a quest il - di, dei in pro - le di Gudmo, e de gli Atri - di

18 A

Là d'un monarca ingiusto fingrata crudel - tà mien pie di orrore; d'un

23

padre tra di - to - re qua la col - pa mi agghiaccia;

W. A. M. 369.

Example 4.4c. *continued*

4 (200)

27 [B]

spo - so inno - cen - te no - sem - pre in facie. Oh im - ma - gi - ni fu - ne - ste! Oh me -

TEMPO

32

mo - rie! Oh mar - ti - ro: Ed io parlo, in te - li - ce, ed io re - spi - ro? Ah no!

Example 4.4d. *Misera, dove son?* K369 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Cello part.

2 (198)

SCENE und ARIE
 „Misera, dove son!“
 (Text aus Metastasio's „Ezio“)
 für Sopran mit Begleitung des Orchesters.
 von
W. A. MOZART.
 Köch. Verz. N^o 369. Componirt in München am 8. März 1781.

SCENA.
 Andante sostenuto.

Flauti.
 Corni in Es.
 Violino I.
 Violino II.
 Viola.
 Soprano.
 Violoncello e Contrabasso.

1

5

10

12

(Fulvia.)
 Misera, dove son!
 Laure del Tebro son queste chio re.
 spiro?
 Per le strade maggioro di Tebe ed Argo?
 O dal le greche sponde, di tra.

W. A. M. 369.

Ausgegeben 1802

Example 4.4d. *continued*

(199) 3

14

gu - die le con - de, le do - mesi che tu rie ven ne ro a questi li di, del la pro - le di Gudmo, e de gli Atri di.

Là dun monarca ingiusto l'ingrata crudel - tà mèm pie d'orrore: dun

padre tra di - to - re qua la coi - pa miagghiaccio; e lo

W. A. M. 369.

Example 4.4d. *continued*

4 (200)

27 B

spo, so inno - cen - te ho sem pre in faccia, Oh im ma - gi ni fu - ne - ste! Oh me -

32

mo - rie! Oh mar - ti - ro. Ed io parlo, in re - li - ge, ed io re spi ro? Ah no!

Example 4.5a. *Sonata for Strings III: Lento*, by Sir William Walton: full score.

III

Lento

div. sul tasto

(Tutti senza sord.)

VIOLINI I *pp*

VIOLINI II *pp* sul tasto

VIOLE *mf* prominente espr.

VIOLONCELLI *p* arm. II *pp*

CONTRABASSI

//

VI. I unis. *sfz*

VI. II div. *sfz*

Vle. *sfz*

Vlc.

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Example 4.5a. *continued*

60

VI. I

VI. II

Vi.

Vlc.

Cb.

nat. cant.

mp

nat.

cant.

mp

mf

unis.

div.

p sfz

p

45

46

Example 4.5b. *Sonata for Strings III: Lento*, by Sir William Walton: 1st violin part.

16 VIOLIN I

Cello

Viola

III

Lento
div. sul tasto
pp

Save

Caro

unis.

sfz

pp

45 nat. cant. mp

46 *mf* *mp* *p*

III

sfz *cresc. poco a poco* *sfz* *mp*

47 *f* *ff* *f*

48 *f* *ten.* *f* *ten.*

div. 1 1 1 1 2

Steve

Jodie Tom

Tom

Example 4.5c. *Sonata for Strings III: Lento*, by Sir William Walton: 2nd violin part.

16

VIOLIN II

Handwritten musical score for Violin II, measures 45-48, from *Sonata for Strings III: Lento* by Sir William Walton. The score includes various performance instructions and dynamic markings.

Measure 45: *celli* (handwritten), *Lento* (Tutti, senza sord.), *Violas* (handwritten), *sul tasto* (handwritten), *pp* (pianissimo).

Measure 46: *div. 7* (handwritten), *sfz* (sforzando), *celli* (handwritten), *div.* (handwritten), *psfz* (pianissimo sforzando).

Measure 47: *nat.* (natural), *unis.* (unison), *cresc. poco a poco* (crescendo poco a poco), *f* (forte), *mp* (mezzo-piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte).

Measure 48: *Tutti* (handwritten), *ff* (fortissimo), *With cello bass* (handwritten).

Example 4.5d. *Sonata for Strings III: Lento*, by Sir William Walton: viola part.

16 VIOLA

III

Lento. (tutte senza sord.)
prominente
espr.

VC

mf

sord

sfz

45

ant.

vin

mp

46

tender

tender!

mp

47

cresc.

ff

mf

48

Sola

mf

49

pizz

(senza sord.)

con sord. sul tasto

ppp

BASS

div.

Tutte

Tutte

p

p

* 1 player only on the last desk.

9-2-16 6-1-1

CELLO

more

mf

pizz.

arco

solo con sord.

tutti [senza sord.]

mf

p

p

pp

III

Lento

arm. II

p

pp

sfz

with basses

45

46

stay

cresc. poco a poco

Handwritten musical score for Cello, measures 47 to 53. The score includes various musical notations, dynamics, and performance instructions.

Measure 47: Treble clef, 1/4 note, *mp* to *ff*. Handwritten: *1*, *mp*, *ff*, *(Bass)*, *vla*.

Measure 48: Bass clef, 3/8 note, *pp* to *pp*. Handwritten: *pp*, *pp*, *vla*, *pp*.

Measure 49: Bass clef, 3/4 note, *p* *sanore*, *steady*, *pizz.*, *poco*. Handwritten: *1*, *in 4*, *pp*, *poco*.

Measure 50: Bass clef, 3/4 note, *p*, *arco*, *Solo*, *mp*, *pizz.*, *pp*. Handwritten: *3*, *3*, *pp*, *3*.

Measure 51: Bass clef, 3/4 note, *Tutti (pizz.)*, *mp*, *arco*, *mf*, *mf*. Handwritten: *3*, *3*, *3*, *3*, *3*.

Measure 52: Bass clef, 3/4 note, *espress.*, *mf*. Handwritten: *3*, *3*, *3*.

Measure 53: Bass clef, 3/4 note, *pochiss. rit.*, *Più mosso ma tranquillo*, *5*, *pp*, *(3/8)*. Handwritten: *3*, *pp*, *(3/8)*.

Conducting as ‘assisted performance’

Hackman’s provocative claim that un-conducted orchestras such as the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra might actually contain ‘more leadership’ than can be found in orchestras conducted by the world’s great maestros¹ predicted, at least to some extent, what I discovered in my fieldwork with Britten Sinfonia. However, I argue that Britten Sinfonia’s leadership potential actually exceeds what Hackman had in mind when he commented about the OCO’s ‘more leadership’ due to the fact that Britten Sinfonia’s approach, although organized around a chamber music ‘set point’, extends, as deemed necessary, into territory where conducting technique and/or conductors are employed. Indeed, as noted in the case-study material presented above, a variety of leadership practices easily and systematically emerged from the ensemble in relation to specific repertoire-based needs; this led to a dynamic manner of working that both facilitated and increased the orchestra’s problem-solving ability (or ‘computational capacity’, in the language of socially-distributed cognition). Conductors and conducting technique were employed in a way that was consistent with what I have referred to above as the ensemble’s ‘focus on fit’, i.e. conducting was used to solve only specific, repertoire- and rehearsal-based, problems, and never just as a matter of course. The critical acclaim the orchestra has received in recent years,² along with feedback provided by both orchestra members and guest artists, demonstrates that this leadership strategy has both practical and artistic advantages.

At its best, it seems that this approach allows Britten Sinfonia to make use of the advantages associated with the two perceptual orientations described in Chapter 3, i.e. both the ‘view from the part’ and the ‘view from the full score’. This is made possible, as I have described above, through keeping horizontal, player-to-player, relationships primary while at the same time allowing vertical relationships, i.e. where one individual takes responsibility for a single parameter for the entire group, to emerge when and for as long as they are necessary. Using this strategy, Britten Sinfonia manages to circumvent one of the main problems that ensembles working with conductors face, i.e. how to utilize a conductor’s (or conducting technique’s) unique contribution to musical performance while at the same time keeping more democratically-based leadership

¹ Hackman, 2005: 134-5

² Take, for example, Ivan Hewett’s comment: ‘There are few more thrilling and many-coloured things in British music than the Britten Sinfonia on top form.’ Ivan Hewett, *The Telegraph* online, 9 February 2010. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/classicalconcertreviews/7198594/Britten-Sinfonia-at-Queen-Elizabeth-Hall-review.html>

practices active.³ In one way, it is hardly surprising that the orchestra's strategy is successful. When seen through the lens of socially-distributed cognition, the differing perceptual orientations of players and conductors ought to offer the potential for more 'computational capacity', particularly in repertoires that demand coordination and shaping on a number of levels. Nevertheless, in most conducted groups it is generally acknowledged that this potential is rarely actualized, as numerous accounts from orchestral players confirm.

This situation might be explained by examining how the patterns of integration and differentiation differ across the two contexts. In Britten *Sinfonia*, the process of managing differentiation and integration begins with the former state and works towards the latter. Since vertical leadership emerges as needed and recedes when no longer necessary, the orchestra is able to achieve a highly-differentiated and highly-integrated status both musically and in terms of leadership. Orchestras with a conducted 'set point' start the process from the other end of the spectrum, and rarely get as far. Conductors facilitate, and work towards, integration. However, because for both technical and practical reasons they are not as able to recede at the point when the orchestra can manage without them, the development of the orchestra 'on the ground' can be stifled. In a conducted performance, therefore, a highly-integrated performance is more likely than one that is both highly-integrated and highly-differentiated.

In the end, it seems that how conductors conceptualize interpretation also has a role to play in this situation. As described in Chapter 2, the mythology of conductor-projected interpretation has profound consequences on how players' emerging contributions are valued. If a conductor's aim is to transmit his or her fully-formed conception of the work, then leadership coming from within the group is likely to be neither forthcoming nor welcomed. Thus 'on the ground' problem-solving either decreases or simply becomes subversive. Yet in spite of this, there is little doubt that some elements of vertical leadership are distributed across experienced orchestras under most circumstances, whether they are acknowledged or not. The obvious example of this is in the relationships between section leaders and players. String section leaders often make decisions about bowing, articulation, and even phrasing for the group.⁴ In wind sections, second players follow the lead of first players. Less often recognized, however, is when a player engages in vertical leadership with other players across the

³ This mirrors the problem of achieving both high integration and differentiation that was explored in the last chapter.

⁴ That is, if conductors do not arrive at first rehearsals with marked parts, etc. I discuss this issue in Chapter 2.

ensemble when a conductor is present. Nevertheless, I observed this as a regular occurrence in conducted Britten Sinfonia rehearsals and concerts.⁵ As Caroline Dearnley reflects:

If you don't get [what you need] from whoever's in charge, then you have to give it yourself. There are always moments when maybe you know there's a slightly wobbly moment coming up and you know that you're going to have to listen very carefully and be incredibly clear in your body language so that everybody knows; for example, there are cello places that I will try and be extra clear so that they can tell exactly where I'm putting the note or doing a pull up or trying to move the tempo ahead, so that at least we [play as] a unit—⁶

Conceptualized from the point of view exemplified by Gunther Schuller earlier in this thesis, one might see this situation as a form of subversive activity leading to either the conductor being judged as incompetent or the player being seen as obstinate. For Schuller, vertical leadership and the resulting interpretation can be ascribed only to the self-contained conductor — the 'complete' conductor. Alternatively, however, one might see this example of 'emerging leadership' as one of the fruits of socially-distributed cognition: with more players working to solve problems and take on responsibility, there is more likelihood that the group will excel.⁷ Throughout this thesis I have argued that this latter view is more representative of the realities of orchestral performance.⁸ Using this as a starting point, the conductor can then embrace the task of harnessing and mediating 'subversive' leadership rather than fighting against it. This is the first step in achieving the highly-differentiated and highly-integrated status that I have described in relation to Britten Sinfonia's work.

In summary, when Britten Sinfonia is unconducted there is 'more leadership' present than in a typical conducted group, as vertical leadership functions are allowed to emerge and are distributed across the orchestra as required. This highly-effective dynamic, however, stands in direct opposition to the more common perception of musical leadership, found even in some unconducted groups, where vertical leadership is imposed both practically and artistically from above. This idea conceptually limits the container for vertical leadership to one individual and disconnects it from a more direct

⁵ This is certainly not unique to Britten Sinfonia, yet their willingness to discuss this dynamic is very unusual.

⁶ Interview with Caroline Dearnley, Britten Sinfonia Principal Cello, St Johns Smith Square, 18 February 2011.

⁷ See Chapter 3.

⁸ I have noticed a similar dynamic in teaching conductors. When a conductor does not provide what the orchestra needs, even less experienced orchestras will adjust and take over the necessary leadership functions as required.

relationship to the contingencies of performance, including repertoire- and ensemble-specific needs. Moreover, Britten Sinfonia is unusual in that the conductor's role is able to emerge when necessary, arising in relation to various contingencies in the same way as other forms of vertical leadership. When a conductor has this level of connection to the specific contextual needs that gave birth to the role (and can draw upon the advantages that come from the conductor's unique gestural technique as well as his or her perceptual position, i.e. the 'view from the score'), without interrupting the player to player relationships that underlie Britten Sinfonia's overall approach, then even more 'more leadership' is possible. This was observable in the Ligeti example in Chapter 4 (Case Study 4.2). Here the emerging leadership, on the level both of the conductor and the players, is moving in the direction of what might be thought of as a socially-distributed version of cognitive saturation.⁹ What I have described above as 'focus on fit' plays a key role here, as more 'more leadership' will only be useful if it is necessary in fulfilling practical and artistic aims — aims that, within the framework presented below, are understood to be negotiated. Defining how a conductor might help an ensemble towards this state of 'saturation' is the main task of this final chapter.

The work of theorizing the modern conductor's role in these terms begins by fully embracing the conductor's incompleteness. The serious implications of defining the conductor as 'compleat' were presented at the outset of this study (see Chapter 1). I then extended this argument by addressing the limitations of the view of the conductor as a self-contained individual who relates to others hierarchically via patterns of unilateral causality, and proposed the idea that the orchestra as a whole works as an interactional and socially-distributed system. However, as Wertsch and Tulviste explain,

[i]n contemporary usage terms such as *cognition*, *memory*, and *attention* are automatically assumed to apply exclusively to the individual. In order to use these terms when speaking of processes carried out on the social plane, we must attach some modifier. This is the source of recent terms such as *socially shared cognition*, *socially distributed cognition*, and *collective memory*. The need to use modifiers such as 'socially shared' reflects the derivative, or nonbasic, status that mental functioning carried out on the social plane is assumed to have in contemporary paradigms.¹⁰

As attention turns back towards the modern conductor's role after the more holistic view of the orchestra in the previous two chapters, it is important to acknowledge the

⁹ I use this term here to describe an ensemble dynamic that can be described as an embodied version of 'double trajectory', i.e. highly-differentiated and highly-integrated both musically and in terms of leadership.

¹⁰ Wertsch and Tulviste, 1998: 14-15.

challenges involved in situating the conductor within this ‘non-basic’ or ‘marked’ context.¹¹ More than any other orchestral performance role, this non-sounding one is defined through its contingencies and interrelationships; this is especially true when one takes into consideration the extent to which leadership functions are distributed across experienced ensembles.¹² Unfortunately, both players and conductors have an almost ubiquitous psychological tendency to revert to thinking about the role as being enacted exclusively on the ‘individual plane’, even if the general lack of attention to the conductor from the perspective of the ‘social plane’ clearly demonstrates the need for the present study.

When considered from the ‘individual plane’, a place where the leader attribution error rules, there is no satisfactory way to acknowledge or work with either the multiple contingencies involved in the performance of orchestral music or the modern conductor’s role within it. These contingencies include how leadership functions are distributed, and how leadership strategies alter over time, change in relation to repertoire and adjust in response to player skill and motivation.¹³ Nevertheless, as described in Chapter 2, in developing orchestral interpretations the lines of influence moving across the ‘social plane’ are both unavoidable and numerous, regardless of how these influences might (or might not) be understood after reviewing the literature by and for conductors. Fortunately, through borrowing from the neo-Vygotskian literature of developmental psychology, there is a way to reframe the problem of the modern conductor’s role in interpretation in the light of these contingencies and multiple influences. This is made possible through viewing conducting as a means of ‘assisted performance’, a theoretical perspective that I will discuss in depth below. In the meantime, it is sufficient to say that assistance and influence are related, but not by any means equivalent. Any exploration of conducting involves, by necessity, an examination of the subset of influence which includes the deliberate use of vertical leadership, and the theory of ‘assisted performance’ provides a framework for doing this.

I begin with a discussion of how Vygotsky’s socio-cultural approach to developmental psychology is relevant to the problem at hand, before moving on to describe pertinent neo-Vygotskian perspectives including Wood, Bruner, and Ross’s (1976) conception of ‘scaffolding’ and Tharp and Gallimore’s (1998) theory of ‘assisted

¹¹ See Chapter 1.

¹² I have referred to some of the primary contingencies involved in my discussion of the ‘orchestral network’ in Chapters 1 and 2.

¹³ For a framework for understanding the role of motivational skill in this process see Blanchard, 2010: 75-90. I explore the consequences of doing otherwise in Chapters 1 and 2.

performance'. I continue by considering how the theory of 'assisted performance', originally intended to theorize teaching, might also apply to conductors working with orchestras, and then offer examples of how the framework might be used to conceptualize shared leadership within various domains of conducted performance, including coordination and shaping. As conductors rely primarily upon non-verbal communication when working within these domains, I conclude this chapter with an extensive discussion of how conductors might 'assist' performance through both their body language and their baton technique. Although much of what is known as 'rehearsal technique', i.e. the ability to structure the rehearsal process of an orchestra, can be easily distributed to a playing member of an ensemble, the level of cognitive structuring that conductors are able to provide in their non-verbal language is distinctive. It is my assertion that conductors very often have something to offer even in contexts where player-based leadership is highly-developed. In fact, in certain circumstances, achieving the type of 'saturation' I discussed above may depend upon it. Exploring the conductor's body in performance clarifies both where these potentials lie and how they might be actualized.

Conducting and development

Although it is rarely acknowledged, conducting and development are linked in a way that demands consideration.¹⁴ Psychologists refer to developmental process as happening on two primary levels, and conductors have the ability to participate on both of these.¹⁵ At the ontogenetic level, the conductor is often in a position to contribute to an individual's personal development over their lifespan; this is particularly true of conductors who work with less-experienced ensembles. Secondly, at the microgenetic level, the conductor facilitates the development of individuals and ensembles over the course of specific time-limited projects. This latter role is as relevant in work with experienced orchestras as with inexperienced ones.

How conductors contribute to the development of their players and ensembles is best understood by looking at the role vertical relationships play in learning more generally. The Russian developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), who viewed development as progressing from the 'social' to the 'individual' plane, is

¹⁴ I argue that this mirrors the link between creativity and development more generally. As Keith Sawyer notes in the preface to his text on the subject: 'Even though there has been no sustained attempt to bring together theories of creativity and development, there have nonetheless been many implicit and hidden connections between them.' Sawyer, 2003: 3.

¹⁵ For a general explanation of these ontogenetic and microgenetic levels of development see Wood, et al., 2006: 215.

credited with beginning the discussion of the importance of asymmetrical relationships in child development, an argument that later scholars have extended into learning and development beyond childhood.¹⁶ At the root of Vygotsky's approach is the recognition that the development of the individual happens in direct relation to social and cultural factors. As Wertsch and Tulviste clarify,

[Vygotsky's] orientation reflects an implicit rejection of the primacy given by the individual functioning and the seemingly neat distinction between social and individual processes that characterize many contemporary approaches to psychology. In contrast to such approaches, Vygotsky viewed mental functioning as a kind of action that may be carried out by individuals or by dyads or larger groups [...] Therefore, this view is one in which mind is understood as 'extending beyond the skin.' Mind, cognition, memory, and so forth are understood not as attributes or properties of the individual, but as functions that may be carried out intermentally or intramentally.¹⁷

Vygotsky's ideas map easily onto Hackman's notion of shared 'leadership functions', Hutchin's conception of socially-distributed cognition,¹⁸ and Wegner's explanation of transactive memory. However, by focusing on how individuals in vertical leadership roles contribute to developmental processes and how these contributions change over time and in relation to various contingencies, Vygotsky's theoretical approach offers a unique perspective on the role of the conductor within the orchestra. Through drawing attention to the constructive and creative aspects of mental development without dismissing the importance of 'social transmission' or 'instruction', Vygotsky is able to explore and map the territory that exists between dependence on vertical leadership and independence from it.¹⁹ Vygotsky's theory of the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD) explains this process in terms of moving from a version of social-regulation to self-regulation.²⁰

Price and Byo (2002) were the first to link the modern conductor's role explicitly to Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD, although they limit their application to the conductor's role in rehearsal,²¹ suggesting that

ZPD, in the context of the rehearsal, can be thought of as the difference between what an ensemble can achieve without and with the direction of a conductor. It

¹⁶ The extension into adult learning has been performed most notably by Tharp and Gallimore, 1998: 98.

¹⁷ Wertsch and Tulviste, 1998: 15.

¹⁸ Indeed, in the case of Hutchins, the same metaphor of 'extending beyond the skin' is applied.

¹⁹ Wood, Littleton, and Sheehy, 2006: 212.

²⁰ See Vygotsky, 1978. He defines ZPD as: 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by individual problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.' Vygotsky, 1978: 86.

²¹ I argue below that ZPD is equally useful in defining the conductor's role in performance.

is the distance between what problems individuals can fix independently and the possible solutions that can be achieved in collaboration with peers or under the guidance of an authority. As ensemble members become more sophisticated, they are increasingly independent of the conductor in their abilities to make appropriate decisions about the music and its performance. A group of students in a secondary school would require more basic direction about phrasing, articulation, and intonation tendencies than would a professional ensemble. It may be said that a conductor's task is to move the ZPD forward towards independence. Here the metaphor of scaffolding may be useful. It refers to establishing a situation in which musicians can achieve at a higher level when provided with external support. For example, a conductor might structure rehearsals and organize appropriate tasks so that an ensemble is better able to interpret and perform the music than if it were unaided [...] With increased sophistication (independence), ensembles approach what may be comparable to self-regulation in individuals; thus less scaffolding is necessary to achieve a performance goal.²²

Indeed, the metaphor of 'scaffolding',²³ which is regularly used to describe how learners progress through the ZPD with the guidance of vertical leadership, is in many ways a highly effective image through which to describe a conductor's role in orchestral performance. It also clarifies how conductors can help to facilitate a performance that would be quite impossible without them due to lack of rehearsal time, repertoire complexity, and/or insufficient player motivation or skill. Conductors can 'scaffold' a performance by taking over responsibilities for various parameters on behalf of the ensemble. This allows the players to focus on what is within their range of competence, thus making possible what might otherwise be impossible.²⁴

'Scaffolding' also helps to explain the findings of Allmendinger, et al. about the role conductors play in 'overperforming' orchestras:

Music director behaviour, which did not distinguish excellent from poor orchestras overall, is the main factor that differentiates overperforming from underperforming orchestras. Music directors of overperforming orchestras spend more time with them, provide clearer musical direction, and engage in more hands-on coaching of players than do music directors of underperforming orchestras. Overperforming orchestras also tend to be composed of younger players who are highly engaged with their musical work and tend to be less well off financially than are underperforming orchestras.²⁵

The 'behaviour' of a conductor of an 'overperforming' orchestra, although unable to change the overall status of an orchestra, might be seen here as a type of 'scaffolding' that allows an orchestral performance to become something 'greater than the sum of its

²² Price and Byo, 2002: 339-40.

²³ First described by Wood et al., 1976.

²⁴ Ibid., 90.

²⁵ Allmendinger et al., 214-15.

parts'. By insisting that 'ability' is better assessed through looking at what individuals can do with assistance rather than without,²⁶ Vygotsky also helps to clarify the role that players have in helping conductors. For example, Allmendinger et al. implies that the young, highly-motivated players referred to above were able to play a role in their orchestra's 'overperformance'. It is likely that they contributed to the 'overperformance', at least in part, through activities such as asking strategic questions of the conductor that clarified when additional vertical leadership was needed, or perhaps through being open and generous with their non-verbal communication with the conductor in performance. Both of these examples, as well as many other forms of problem-solving interaction that players might initiate with the conductors they work with, demonstrate how orchestral musicians are able to reinforce and refine the 'scaffolding' that a conductor seeks to provide.

In the end, a large part of the appeal of 'scaffolding' as a metaphor comes down to its acknowledgement of how leadership is connected to the contingencies of orchestral performance, i.e. the way that a conductor's vertical leadership strategy is designed to fit the needs and progress of the orchestra as a whole.²⁷ Nevertheless, the metaphor in its purest form fails conducted performance, as 'scaffolding' is only meant to provide a temporary support as a learner moves towards, and eventually achieves, independence. In the Mozart case study in the previous chapter (Case Study 4.4), 'scaffolding' is apparent in its intended form, albeit in an unconducted context. Here Shave, in her role as leader, rehearses the group through the Mozart recitative, all the time pushing the group to 'learn it' through becoming free from any sort of vertical leadership. Shave avoids one of the most common forms of vertical leadership in conducted performance, i.e. the cue that indicates where a player should place an entrance, even when the soloist offers to provide it. The aim and result of this strategy is orchestral self-support, i.e. no 'scaffolding'. However, useful conductor-led performance can never achieve this level of orchestral self-support, as useful conducting is by definition scaffolding that has become part of the structure itself, rather like a flying buttress. Fortunately, other neo-Vygotskian theorists have refined the theoretical perspectives presented above in a way that allows them to be more appropriately applied to conducted performance. It seems that, in the end, the ZPD itself is a concept that can be further differentiated.

²⁶ Wood, Littleton, and Sheehy, 2006: 212. This might be done via strategic questioning, in addition to other means.

²⁷ A similar contingency approach is apparent in Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967. See Chapter 4.

Viewing conducting as ‘assisted performance’

Tharp and Gallimore’s theory of ‘teaching as assisted performance’ combines and extends both Vygotsky’s conception of the ZPD and Wood, Bruner and Ross’s description of ‘scaffolding’.²⁸ The theorists’ choice to replace the term ‘scaffolding’ with ‘assistance’ reflects a renewal of Vygotsky’s claim that movement through the ZPD is directed towards self-regulation.²⁹ Whereas ‘scaffolding’ might be seen as a static and perhaps prescriptive process,³⁰ ‘assistance’ affirms that the relationship between the two asymmetrical roles works dynamically and cooperatively in the direction of independence from vertical leadership.³¹ Tharp and Gallimore’s theoretical framework offers two other significant innovations. Firstly, they suggest that the ZPD can be applied in multiple areas of competence. In fact, any area of developing skill can become a ZPD that can be moved through either on its own or concurrently with other related ZPDs.³² Secondly, they argue that moving through the ZPD (and beyond) amounts to a four-stage recursive process.³³ This elucidation of the progression through the ZPD, and the recognition of the need for the renewal of existing competences in the light of the contingencies that affect the real-life performance of these skills, become particularly relevant when applying the theoretical framework in an orchestral context.

Although Tharp and Gallimore refer to ‘assistance’ specifically in relation to teaching, I will demonstrate below that their theoretical framework also yields productive results when applied to conducting. Price and Byo suggest that ‘everything involved in rehearsing and conducting can be characterized via a teaching paradigm, even in a professional ensemble environment.’³⁴ I concede that teaching and conducting have much in common, particularly in the period leading up to performance. In spite of this, I will not go as far as Price and Byo in what follows, nor will I need to, as the model helps to make sense of the unique demands that conductors face as they play their role in developing orchestral interpretations. In essence, when the framework is applied to conducting it yields somewhat different results from when it is used to understand teaching, but these are no less significant. One might even argue that this application of the theory extends what is understood to belong within the ‘teaching

²⁸ See Tharp and Gallimore, 1998.

²⁹ I use quotes around ‘assistance’ throughout this chapter in order to indicate the term’s association with directionality towards the self-supporting state.

³⁰ A criticism of scaffolding is that it is seen as too prescriptive towards the learner. See Hoogsteder et al., 1998.

³¹ As I am applying this theory to conducting in this instance, I am referring here to the vertical leadership performed by the conductor alone.

³² Tharp and Gallimore, 1998: 96.

³³ Ibid., 98-104.

³⁴ Price and Byo, 2002: 336.

paradigm'. Although they do not make this point, perhaps this is what Price and Byo are implying in the comment I have quoted above.

Tharp and Gallimore's recognition of multiple ZPDs is the starting point for my consideration of conducting as 'assisted performance'. As Tharp and Gallimore explain:

There is no single [ZPD] for each individual.³⁵ For any domain of skill, a ZPD can be created. There are cultural zones as well as individual zones, because there are cultural variations in the competencies that a child must acquire through social interaction in a particular society³⁶ [...] Boys in Micronesia, where sailing a canoe is a fundamental skill, will have a ZPD for the skills of navigation, created in interaction with the sailing masters. A girl in the Navajo weaving community will have experiences in a zone not quite like any ever encountered by the daughters of Philadelphia. Whatever the activity, in the ZPD we find that assistance is provided by the teacher, the adult, the expert, the more capable peer.³⁷

This idea of multiple ZPDs points to the fact that although two orchestras may perform the same piece, the ZPDs associated with these performances might vary considerably. There is a seemingly infinite number of skills associated with orchestral performance, and the expectations for performance outcomes within individual groups will vary considerably and in relation to numerous contingencies. As a result, the development of orchestral competence with the help of 'assistance' is likely to be happening at all levels of the orchestra in ways that are unique to each individual ensemble. These developmental progressions are also likely to overlap. For example, over the course of a single rehearsal, the first violins may be learning how to manage a difficult technical passage with the help of the leader, a wind player might be learning how to coordinate her entrances with the strings with the help of the principal cellist, and the group as a whole may be trying to make metric sense of a difficult passage with the help of a conductor.³⁸ For each of these developing skills a ZPD can be identified, that is, as long as assistance in the form of vertical leadership is being utilized to help players move from this assistance-based support towards self-support. Depending upon what skills are being developed, a conductor will be more or less involved in assisting performance. In any case, the conductor's role has the ability to change over time and in relation to the

³⁵ In recognizing an orchestra as a socially-distributed system one can read 'ensemble' in place of individual here, much as Price and Byo did in their application to ZPD quoted in the section above.

³⁶ See Rogoff, 1982.

³⁷ Tharp and Gallimore, 1998: 96.

³⁸ These examples are all drawn from my field work with Britten Sinfonia.

amount of responsibility for certain performance parameters that is ‘handed over’ to players.³⁹

Developing upon what I have briefly described above, Tharp and Gallimore explain movement through the ZPD ‘and beyond’ as a four-stage process. An illustration of how this process functions in conducted ensembles can be seen in Figure 5.1. below. Following the diagram is a description of how each stage might be applied to conducting.

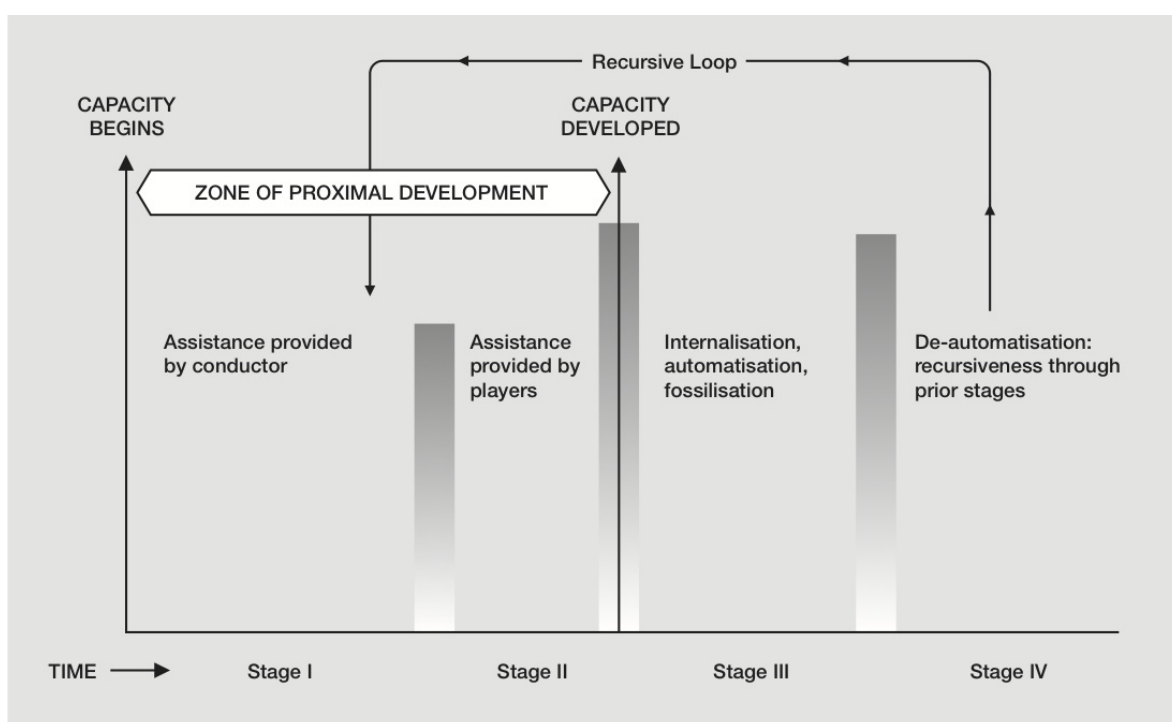


Figure 5.1. Adapted from Tharp and Gallimore’s ‘Genesis of performance capacity: progression through the ZPD and beyond’.⁴⁰

*Stage 1: Conductor-Assisted Performance*⁴¹

The amount of assistance a conductor provides at the beginning of the process depends upon issues such as: quality expectations, time constraints, the skill and motivation of the players, and the difficulty of the repertoire being performed. In the case of a professional orchestra undertaking an unfamiliar and challenging piece for a live radio

³⁹ Bruner (1983: 60) refers to this as the ‘handover principle’. This is not to say this always happens, of course. If the conductor has an attitude towards interpretation that is grounded in projecting a composer’s intention, some parameters might not be handed over.

⁴⁰ Tharp and Gallimore, 1998: 100.

⁴¹ Tharp and Gallimore describe to this stage as ‘where performance is assisted by more capable others’. Ibid, 98.

broadcast, the conductor is likely to offer a great deal of assistance in the form of vertical leadership in the first rehearsal. If the piece is familiar to the orchestra and the performance situation less pressurized, the conductor may offer less musical assistance, yet is still likely to be instrumental in efficiently guiding and pacing the overall rehearsal. The conductor, in either of the above cases, might be labelled a ‘more capable peer’ by Tharp and Gallimore, not because he or she is generally more skilled than the players, but because his or her externally-granted authority, musical perspective (informed by ‘the view from the score’), and the nature of their gestural technique, places them in the ideal position to assist players through this first stage of the process.

With the right kind of assistance from a conductor, the task of performing orchestral music need not be simplified in the way that might be necessary in an unconduted context. When a conductor takes responsibility for (‘scaffolds’)⁴² certain key parameters, it simplifies the players’ roles and allows them to work within their range of competence, whatever that may be.⁴³ This dynamic is what enables conducted ensembles to do more in less rehearsal time.⁴⁴ Tharp and Gallimore comment that

Only gradually does the [player]⁴⁵ come to understand the way in which the parts of the activity relate to one another or to understand the meaning of the performance. Ordinarily, this understanding develops through conversation during the task performance. When some conception of the overall performance has been acquired through language or other semiotic processes, the [player] can be assisted by other means — questions, feedback, and further cognitive structuring.⁴⁶

This gradual movement towards understanding may be evident even when highly-experienced orchestras are playing familiar repertoire, albeit to a much lesser degree than in amateur and student ensembles. With changes of conductor, venue, personnel, and even performing materials, one or more areas of competence may need to be renewed through the establishment of a new ZPD, as will become clear in my discussion of ‘Stage 4’ below.⁴⁷

Finally, it is worth acknowledging the reciprocal nature of the work that occurs between conductor and players even when moving across this first stage of the ZPD.

⁴² In this first stage ‘scaffolding’ remains a useful metaphor, albeit only when seen as one part of a larger process.

⁴³ This dynamic has been discussed above in relation to ‘scaffolding’. See also Greenfield, 1984.

⁴⁴ This does not mean that the end results are always preferred. Mark Padmore is quoted on this in Chapter 4.

⁴⁵ Tharp and Gallimore (1998: 99) refer to a learner who is a child in this passage. However, they make it clear later that this type of assistance is as relevant for adult learners as to children.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 99.

⁴⁷ This stage is reflected in the recursive loop of Figure 5.1.

Tharp and Gallimore note that ‘[a]s interaction proceeds, different goals and sub-goals emerge and change as the participants work together.’⁴⁸ Under normal circumstances, a conductor’s goals influence the goals of the players and vice versa. Quoting Saxe et al., Tharp and Gallimore conclude that ‘this goal structure is negotiated in the interaction itself’.⁴⁹ It follows that a ‘profound knowledge of the subject matter’ is required in order to assist competently in these circumstances.⁵⁰ Conductors need to be able to move quickly between layers and levels of musical and technical information in order to achieve the ‘intersubjectivity’ that underlies appropriate assistance;⁵¹ a comprehensive knowledge of the score is a prerequisite for this.⁵² This insight sheds light on why conductors of all persuasions seem to place such a strong emphasis on score preparation. Although conductors may offer conflicting rationales for the importance of this, it is undeniable that score preparation also increases a conductor’s ability to help players to eventually help themselves.

As visible on Figure 5.1, ‘Stage 1’ and ‘Stage 2’ together define the path through the ZPD, a path that can be seen as a continuum which exists between conductor-assistance and player-assistance. ‘Stage 2’ begins at the tipping point where the orchestra or an individual player’s competence reaches a level where they are able to take over responsibility for the skill or task that has been performed with assistance from the conductor up to this point.⁵³

*Stage 2: Player-assisted performance*⁵⁴

Player-assisted performance may happen either at the level of the individual or at the level of the ensemble. In both cases the players carry out the task without the assistance of the conductor. This is not the end of the process, however. Although responsibility for the task is transferred from the conductor to the players, the performance is not necessarily ‘fully developed’ or ‘automatized’ in the way it will become later on.⁵⁵

Tharp and Gallimore characterize ‘Stage 2’ as a period where deliberate self-regulation is established, and ‘self-speech’ plays a key role in achieving this. They describe this in relation to a developmental milestone:

⁴⁸ Ibid., 100.

⁴⁹ Saxe et al, 1984: 29, quoted in Tharp and Gallimore, 1998:100.

⁵⁰ Tharp and Gallimore, 1998: 100.

⁵¹ This idea that the goal of performance is negotiated mirrors the emergent conception of interpretation outlined in Chapter 2.

⁵² I have explored how one might do this in an earlier work. See Lewis, 2006.

⁵³ It is important to acknowledge that the skill associated with any ZPD may be the springboard to a larger one.

⁵⁴ Tharp and Gallimore (1998: 101) describe this stage as ‘where performance is assisted by the self’.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 102.

once children begin to direct or guide behaviour with their own speech, an important stage has been reached in the transition of a skill through the ZPD. It constitutes the next stage in the passing of control or assistance from the adult to the child, from the expert to the apprentice. What was guided by the other is now beginning to be guided and directed by the self.⁵⁶

However, Tharp and Gallimore argue that ‘self-speech’ also plays a role in development on the microgenetic level: ‘when we consider the acquisition of some particular performance capacity, adults during Stage 2 consistently talk to themselves, and indeed assist themselves in all ways possible.’⁵⁷ Since in an orchestral context player-assisted performance happens on both the individual and the group level, self-speech can manifest as either inter-player or intra-player dialogue.

A comprehensive picture of an orchestra moving through this second stage, albeit without a conductor, can be seen in the Woolrich example from the case studies presented in Chapter 4 (Case Study 4.3). Inter-player speech can be heard in the actual dialogue spoken in rehearsal; intra-player speech can be inferred from studying marked parts.⁵⁸ In fact, as this example demonstrates, one of the unique characteristics of Britten Sinfonia’s leadership approach is how effectively it facilitates the orchestra’s move into and through ‘Stage 2’, even when a conductor is present. This ability was exemplified above in Caroline Dearnley’s willingness to assume vertical leadership when it is not forthcoming from the conductor. Within the framework of ‘conducting as assisted performance’, vertical leadership coming from within the orchestra is within ‘Stage 2’, albeit closer to ‘Stage 1’ than to ‘Stage 3’ on the continuum.

The conductor’s role during ‘Stage 2’ remains to be defined, however. The simple answer is that he or she is probably ‘assisting’ in relation to another performance parameter. For example, once a player knows when to play, the conductor can establish a new ZPD by assisting in the ‘how’ or the ‘why’ of the same passage. In the end, the use of overlapping ZPDs can assist an orchestral performance in moving, with a conductor’s help, towards a state of cognitive saturation, i.e. a place where more ‘more leadership’ can guide performance.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 103.

⁵⁸ This connection between self-speech and writing is acknowledged by Tharp and Gallimore (1998: 103): ‘Self-speech is more than instrumental in skill acquisition; it is itself an aspect of cognitive development of the most profound sort [...] it forms the basis for writing and thus is transformed into the highest forms of communication available to the literate life.’

*Stage 3: Non-assisted performance*⁵⁹

At the onset of ‘Stage 3’, the ZPD for the skill or competency closes. Neither conductor-assistance nor player-regulation is any longer required; the performance has now moved into an ‘automatized phase’. Sharp and Gallimore explain that at this stage

[a]ssistance [...] is no longer needed. Indeed, ‘assistance’ would now be disruptive. It is in this condition that self-consciousness itself is detrimental to the smooth integration of all task components. This is a stage beyond self-control and beyond social control. Performance here is no longer developing; it is already developed. Vygotsky described it as the ‘fruits’ of development, but he also described it as ‘fossilized,’ emphasizing its fixity and distance from the social and mental forces of change.⁶⁰

In the Walton case-study presented in Chapter 4 (Case Study 4.5), Shave describes how it took several concerts before the piece sounded ‘like it was freeing comfortably’.⁶¹ Referring to the same movement, another player described how after a certain point her written-in cues were no longer required.⁶² Rehearsal observations and the players’ discussion of their work on this movement reveal a process that might be loosely described as: how a deliberate cue or lead became a nod, before becoming a wink, before becoming a simple understanding between the players involved.⁶³ The end of this process is a good example of ‘Stage 3’. However, these players also set the stage for ‘Stage 4’ in their comments about the usefulness of their cues even after this stage of performance is reached. As Dearnley commented, ‘what happens if somebody leaves [their entrance] a little bit later, which sometimes happens.’⁶⁴ This draws attention to the fact that players recognize that a problem can draw them out of their automatized state. In confronting a problem they are forced back into the ZPD where the process begins again, albeit at a different level of work. In other words, players know that just because the cues are not needed now, this does not mean that they might not become helpful again at some point in the future. If the performance in Case Study 4.5 had been a conducted one, the players would probably have relied upon a conductor to help them manage a problematic ‘corner’ where one player might spontaneously choose to take a bit of extra time — that is, if a player had been given the space by the conductor to take extra time in the first place, an issue that I will address in more detail below.

⁵⁹ Sharp and Gallimore (1998: 103) refer to this stage as ‘where de-automatization of performance leads to recursion back through the ZPD’.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Interview with Britten Sinfonia String Principals, Theatre Royal, Norwich, 13 February 2011.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ This sort of understanding was described by Joy Farrall in her 2007 BBC interview with Lyndon Jones as ‘ESP’.

⁶⁴ Interview with Britten Sinfonia String Principals, Theatre Royal, Norwich, 13 February 2011.

*Stage 4: Recursive return to the ZPD*⁶⁵

Tharp and Gallimore suggest that '[t]he lifelong learning by any individual is made up of these same regulated, ZPD sequences — from other-assistance to self-assistance — recurring over and over again for the development of new capacities.'⁶⁶ As I have described above, these cycles of ZPDs can happen concurrently; or put more accurately, in rehearsal or performance both multiple ZPDs and stages within these multiple ZPDs overlap. This is more easily observed when an orchestra performs a series of concerts. In early rehearsals capacities develop and are crystallized (or 'fossilized') to the point where a 'safe' performance is possible. In a rehearsal that follows a first performance, the ensemble either recursively returns to the same ZPD again, allowing for problems that emerged in the performance to be corrected, or uses this fully-functional competence as the starting point for establishing new ZPDs where further skills might be developed — skills that might improve the overall performance on the next concert. As I have described above, even within a performance a recursive return to a ZPD can occur, and in these places conductors, with their 'view from the score', can be particularly valuable members of the ensemble. In unconduted performance, cues marked in the parts can fulfil this capacity to some degree, which is why the players described above value them even when things seem to be going well.

Aiming high or aiming low

One trouble with applying Tharp and Gallimore's model to conducting is that many players in professionally-conducted orchestras would have difficulty identifying with it, at least in the context in which I have described it in the previous section. I argue that this is because in relation to certain performative competencies our orchestral culture aims high in establishing and helping players work through ZPDs, whereas in relation to others it aims low or not at all. In exemplifying the framework above, I have drawn upon Britten Sinfonia case-study material. This ensemble is somewhat unusual in that they excel within a ZPD where a high level of subtle coordination is the aim.⁶⁷ Few conducted orchestras would aim as high with this competency, in spite of its benefits. In contrast, if one were to review the framework in relation to other skills, such as accuracy in playing pitches or rhythms, orchestral intonation, and even achieving

⁶⁵ Tharp and Gallimore (1998, 103) describe this stage as 'where de-automatization of performance leads to recursion back through the ZPD'.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 103.

⁶⁷ I described this 'conversational' type of coordination in Chapter 3 in relation to chamber music and 'the view from the part'.

coordination through following a conductor, a great deal of common ground would be found between orchestras. With these parameters, our orchestral culture aims quite high; higher in fact, than ever before.⁶⁸

Why might self-support not be encouraged in certain areas? Tharp and Gallimore clarify that the ‘nature of the task’ plays a role here. Referring to the problem in a cross-cultural context which draws upon anthropological research, they report that

patient, contingent, responsive, and accurately tuned adult assistance does not always occur. A major variable here is the nature of the task or performance. If efficient production is needed, the adult will likely be more directive and less tolerant of such costly child errors as failing to correctly care for animals on which the family’s survival is partly dependent.⁶⁹

This insight is equally relevant to understanding why ‘patient, contingent, responsive, and accurately tuned’ assistance fails to be provided in many areas of orchestral skill. As I have noted above, conductors enable orchestras to get further faster, and are also able to lead performances that are likely to have more predictable outcomes. Take, for example, James MacMillan’s response to a question about why he chose to conduct several of the works on a Britten Sinfonia composers’ workshop day:

The players asked me to conduct in the end. I wasn’t going to do it because the quartets don’t usually want to be conducted, but it freed them up a little bit to think about things and it also meant that I could take the responsibility of interpreting it and giving [...] a more focused performance [for the] young composers and that’s fine, I like doing that kind of thing.⁷⁰

The ensemble performing the newly-composed works in this workshop consisted of both students and Britten Sinfonia players.⁷¹ Although MacMillan began the day without conducting, the professional players eventually asked him to do so. Limited time, variable player skill, and repertoire difficulty all contributed to their making this request.

Similar contingencies also limit the extent of ‘assistance’ in more professional contexts. For example, when a large symphony orchestra in a competitive market-place has only one rehearsal to prepare for a major concert, the idea of leaving anything more than necessary to ‘chance’ is unappealing, particularly if the concert is being recorded. Here the orchestra, much like the Britten Sinfonia players described above, might be

⁶⁸ See Philip, 2004: 98.

⁶⁹ Tharp and Gallimore, 106.

⁷⁰ Interview with James MacMillan, conductor, Britten Sinfonia guest artist, Liverpool Street Station, London, 20 October 2010.

⁷¹ Although MacMillan refers to ‘quartets’, in fact, the ensembles ranged in size from 4 to 8 players.

quite willing to be told what to do by a conductor. After all, this person would (ideally) have spent a great deal of time before the event making detailed decisions about key areas of the performance, whereas a player may be seeing his part (and nothing more than his part) for the first time on the day. Unfortunately, this very extreme definition of the ‘task’ can distort our understanding of both orchestral music-making and the modern conductor’s role.⁷² ‘Not enough time’ and the expectation of almost impossible degrees of accuracy at the highest levels of orchestral music-making elevate the careers of conductors who are best at dealing with these problems.

Atik’s exploration of the ‘leader-follower relationship’ in orchestras, a study based upon leadership theory as well as extensive interviews with conductors and players, identifies the conductors I have just described as ‘charismatic’ — a leadership type he later contrasts with ‘transformational’.⁷³ As Atik notes, ‘charismatic leadership does not take form unless the dispositional attitudes of followers towards their leader are considered.’⁷⁴ In a situation of charismatic leadership, the players agree to be led,⁷⁵ and at times, Atik argues, this can lead to very inspiring performances.⁷⁶

Unfortunately, charismatic leadership also has disadvantages:

Much of the appeal of charismatic leaders also rests on the fact that by assuming ultimate responsibility for success or failure, they remove any vestiges of uncertainty within their followers. As long as they succeed, they continue to win the admiration of their followers. When, as they must, they ultimately fail, the followers can then proceed to seek out another heroic figure.⁷⁷

Under the conditions of charismatic leadership, the conductor’s strengths and limitations become the ensemble’s strengths and limitations. Here there is very little attempt to move players towards ‘self-support’ in key areas.⁷⁸ Under these circumstances, one can understand why repertoire and performance-practice

⁷² The issues relating to the authoritative text and the projective conception of interpretation (as discussed in Chapter 2) also play a role here.

⁷³ See Atik, 1994. Atik claims, however, that not all conductors make it to a stage of performance that allows them to be categorized as either charismatic or transformational. Thus, the discussion that follows relates to conductors who are considered by players to be largely effective, albeit in different ways.

⁷⁴ Atik, 1994: 23.

⁷⁵ ‘Led’ and ‘assisted’ mean very different things in this context.

⁷⁶ Even Hackman (2005: 119), whose work in leadership theory points in every direction towards realizing what I have called the emergent conception of interpretation, notes that ‘symphony orchestras provide settings for the expression of the musical genius of those extraordinary individuals who lead the best of them. The world is much enriched by the musical insight and artistry of the finest symphony orchestra conductors, and to bar them from the concert hall podium would be akin to locking up Yo-Yo Ma’s cello.’

⁷⁷ Atik, 1994: 27.

⁷⁸ I will explore some of these areas, including coordination and shaping, in what follows.

specialization have been taken to such extremes by conductors. It seems that they are expected to rely almost entirely upon their own expertise and authority.

The transformational leader, on the other hand, embraces a teamwork-based approach that allows orchestras to develop in ways not possible under charismatic leadership. Atik did not expect that this type of leadership style would be validated by his interviewees. In spite of being part of a culture which seems to elevate the charismatic leader, he found that

Respondents talked about an alternative, equally effective leadership style which allows for greater flexibility in the relationship. The interviewees, both players and conductors, describe a team effort, with both parties forming different parts of a whole. It is as if the players reach a point beyond the traditional hierarchy, where controls and boundaries assume a diminished significance.⁷⁹

In other words, the transformational style results in more ensemble development both personally and collectively, yet it also results in a less traditional leadership structure. Players are encouraged to contribute towards the overall performance, making leadership more of a shared phenomenon. However, it is easy to see how this orientation might also be problematic, or at the very least, highly complex:

The superior and subordinate's relationship is dynamic and open to change. Hierarchical boundaries are less fixed. Control is no longer a simple and unidirectional matter. Issues such as participation, delegation and decision making, all of which contain the potential for greater uncertainty, become involved.⁸⁰

Britten Sinfonia's highly dynamic and flexible approach exemplifies this leadership model, yet their approach also demonstrates that capitalizing upon shared leadership practices takes time — a problem that the orchestra handles creatively, as the case-study material above illustrates.

Charismatic and transformational leadership can also be viewed in terms of ZPDs. As discussed above, ensembles working under both approaches are likely to have ZPDs that aim high in relation to accuracy in pitches, rhythms, and intonation. Even in the shortest rehearsal period, a conductor would assist players in developing these skills, while at the same time either expecting or encouraging self-support in due course. Even in these areas, however, the ways in which conductors 'assist' players may vary. As Price and Byo report,

⁷⁹ Atik, 1994: 26.

⁸⁰ Ibid: 27.

Conductors' efforts appear to be weighted toward providing guidance on how to make corrections or presenting exact solutions, by saying things such as 'you need more air' or 'the percussion needs to play softer'. This limits opportunities for self-correction on the part of the ensemble through slight hints or scaffolding [...] In these situations, ensemble members function much like simple machinery, rendering only specific responses to specific instructions about a specific point in a specific piece of music.⁸¹

Perhaps this dynamic explains why 'assistance' in areas such as intonation and pitch accuracy forms the ZPDs most often found in orchestral performance: these problems can often be 'assisted' on a case-by-case basis, even if a different approach might ultimately be more effective.⁸² ZPDs for other categories of competency such as coordination and shaping are more challenging to manage in rehearsal and performance, particularly when limited rehearsal time is a factor. Nevertheless, one of the main characteristics that differentiates charismatic from transformational leaders is the way these two categories, i.e. coordination and shaping, are managed. To put it more accurately, transformational leaders choose to 'aim high' in their 'assistance' within the ZPDs of shaping and coordination, whereas charismatic leaders usually choose to 'aim low' if they aim at all, albeit for reasons that may be understandable. In the end, however, a conductor's responsiveness to the orchestra may be the key variable, in that this is a necessary condition for the ZPD for any particular skill to emerge via negotiation with players and then to develop as much as possible within that specific context. The potential for a ZPD to develop is more important than the extent to which it does so. If a conductor is unresponsive to the players for any reason — an attitude towards interpretation that involves projecting a fully-formed aural image, for example — he or she prevents the ZPD from forming, and thus ultimately limits the ensemble's 'computational capacity'.

Responsive 'assistance' through cognitive structuring

The theory of 'assisted performance' provides clues as to how emergent interpretation, as discussed in Chapter 2, can be enacted on the podium. As described above, the performance goals for any ZPD are negotiated between players and conductors during 'Stage 1'. I argue that one can also see this process of negotiation as part of a larger one that results in the emergence of interpretation. Just as ZPDs are multiple and overlapping, so are the parameters involved in developing interpretations. As some

⁸¹ Price and Byo, 2002: 342.

⁸² Intonation problems in particular might benefit from a more collaborative problem-solving approach. As any player knows, being told that he or she is sharp or flat is not always helpful.

performance parameters are consciously ‘assisted’ and guided by conductors towards self-support, while others are left rigidly scaffolded or ignored, patterns emerge that guide an interpretation’s unfolding in real time. Ideally, ensemble- and repertoire-based necessity guides a process of ‘assisted performance’, yet within an orchestral culture that values charismatic conductors and their contributions, this process is often stunted. In practice, due to limited rehearsal time and other contingencies, conductors often confuse ‘aiming low’ with not aiming at all. Embodying the latter approach creates the fissure between conductor and orchestra that is behind the attitude I have defined in Chapter 2 as the projective view of interpretation.

I have argued above that in order for ‘assistance’ to take place, conductors must be attuned and responsive to their players. Tharp and Gallimore suggest that this sort of responsive assistance can take place through any of six methods: modelling, contingency management, feedback, instructing, questioning and cognitive structuring.⁸³ Although a player leading from an instrument is able to draw upon all of these, I argue that in real-time performance it is the gestural language of effective conductors that most efficiently ‘assists’ cognitive structuring.⁸⁴ In Chapter 2 I described how an emergent conception of performance balances two other models. In Model 3 (Figure 2.3), the conductor and ensemble are both influenced by the score, yet not by each other; whereas in Model 4 (Figure 2.4), exemplified by the work of Thompson, a feedback loop exists between the two. By combining the two models (Figure 2.5), I proposed that it is possible to balance the apparent paradox between the creative and re-creative aspects of ensemble music-making. I contend that the same paradox can be resolved on the podium by offering responsive ‘assistance’ through cognitive structuring both musical parameters, as I describe in this section, and creativity more generally, as I will describe below.

The argument that conducting and cognitive structuring are linked is compelling, particularly when one examines conducting technique itself — something I will do extensively later in this chapter. While players have access to the musical surface through producing actual sound, conductors can affect orchestral music in time only through anticipating, shaping and coordinating this sound, something they are in an ideal position to do due to their perceptual entry point to the musical landscape. Conductors also have the advantage of a technique that uses highly-refined gestures both to structure and to guide these processes in time. The ‘assistance’ this technique

⁸³ See Tharp and Gallimore, 1988: 44-70.

⁸⁴ Conductors may also have an advantage when it comes to giving certain types of feedback, e.g. feedback on balance, albeit to a lesser extent than they have with cognitive structuring.

provides is consistent with Tharp and Gallimore's explanation of 'cognitive structuring', a term that

refers to the provision of a structure for thinking and acting. It may be a structure for beliefs, for mental operations, or for understanding. It is an organizing structure that evaluates, groups, and sequences perception, memory, and action. In science, it is theory; in religion, it is theology; in games, it is rules. In everyday life, cognitive structures are like all of these, more or less formalized, more or less conscious.⁸⁵

Orchestral coordination and shaping are highly complex categories of skill. Particularly when these competencies blossom fully, as they do in professional ensembles, they manifest themselves in relation to repertoire-specific needs, and often involve managing different levels within the same interactive musical landscape. The distinction made in Chapter 3 between the perceptual vantage point of the score vs. that of the parts is relevant here, as playing together and meaningfully organizing musical material frequently involves activity generated from both 'on the ground' via the players and from an 'elevation' via a conductor. These two levels can eventually exist concurrently, yet the progression towards this 'double trajectory' relies upon a high level of interaction between conductors and players.

The idea that conductors provide cognitive structuring for the shaping of performances has historical precedent. In Robert Philip's description of 'outlining'—a practice associated with late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century orchestral performance—ZPDs for shaping are apparent. He begins by describing the practice in relation to Boult and Bülow:

Adrian Boult wrote about his experience of rehearsing Ethel Smyth's Mass in D in Birmingham in 1924: 'She was very keen about 'iron rhythm', no *rubato* (although her mind changed several times over what the pace should actually be in places). This is *most* inadvisable because it makes it impossible to underline certain things which a first-performance audience should have underlined [...].'⁸⁶ Boult was not noted for exaggerated 'underlining' at any stage of his career, so this testimony from him is particularly striking.⁸⁷

Hans von Bülow [...] was well known for a highly personal style of rubato and flexibility of tempo, which some writers loved and others loathed. But according to Max Kalbeck, Bülow particularly exaggerated these touches when a work was unfamiliar: 'Both as a pianist and as a conductor, Bülow used these brilliant and distinctive nuances in his interpretations only until he himself, the orchestra and the audience were assured. His exaggerations seemed to him a necessary

⁸⁵ Tharp and Gallimore, 1988: 63.

⁸⁶ Philip (2004), quoting from Michael Kennedy, *Adrian Boult* (London, 1987).

⁸⁷ Philip, 2004: 11.

persuasive measure. Once he felt that he was understood, and that the situation was fully under control, he restrained his personal interpretation, and ever thereafter let the work speak for itself.⁸⁸

In reality, Boult and Bülow eventually turned over responsibility for shaping the performance to the orchestra, albeit only after having helped them to make sense of the music in a specific way. It is questionable whether interpretative suggestions introduced in this way could ever be truly ‘restrained’, as Kalbeck claims. More probably, the shapings Boult and Bülow expressed through their tempo modifications were internalized by the players and manifested in more subtle ways in later performances. Philip explains that Brahms made a similar point in a letter to Joachim. It seems that

Joachim was to conduct an early performance of Brahms’s Fourth Symphony in Berlin in 1886, and he had written to the composer asking for more guidance about tempi. Brahms then sent Joachim a marked-up score of the symphony with a letter: ‘I have marked a few tempo modifications in the score with pencil. They may be useful, even necessary, for the first performance [...] Such exaggerations are only necessary where a composition is unfamiliar to an orchestra or a soloist. In such a case I often cannot do enough pushing and slowing down to produce even approximately the passionate or serene effect I want. Once a work has become part of flesh and blood, then in my opinion nothing of the sort is justifiable any more.’⁸⁹

Although Philip points out that this kind of ‘underlining’ of first performances ‘is an idea that would be unlikely to occur to a modern musician,’⁹⁰ it can be mapped onto the larger pattern that underlies ‘assisted performance’. The conductor starts by providing a great deal of cognitive structuring until the desired effect is achieved. Later, this structure is gradually removed until the orchestra achieves some level of self-support. Once this self-support has ‘become part of flesh and blood’, direction from the conductor in this area becomes to some degree superfluous, that is, until a problem in performance sets the process moving again. What these examples fail to acknowledge, probably due to the leader attribution error,⁹¹ is that once a competency is handed over to an orchestra the skill does not necessarily stop developing, although it may progress as part of a new ZPD situated on another level of the musical landscape.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 11, quoting from Max Kalbeck, ed. *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Heinrich und Elisabeth von Herzogenberg* (Berlin, 1907).

⁸⁹ Philip (12) quoting from Vienna, [20] Jan. 1886. *Johannes Brahms im Briefwechsel mit Joseph Joachim*, ed. Andreas Moser (Berlin, 1912), 220. Quoted in Hans Gal, *Johannes Brahms: His Work and Personality* (London, 1963), 66.

⁹⁰ Philip, 2004: 11-12.

⁹¹ For a discussion of the leader attribution error, see Chapter 1.

A conductor working through ZPDs on two levels can be seen in Cook's study 'The conductor and the theorist: Furtwängler, Schenker and the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony'.⁹² Here Cook establishes a correlation between Schenker's analytical insights and Furtwängler's approach to shaping orchestral music. After establishing a historical connection between Furtwängler and Schenker, and also performing a tapping analysis of two recordings of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (1951 and 1953) that resulted in very consistent arch-shaped tempo profiles that correspond to Schenker's monograph on the Ninth, Cook concludes that Furtwängler did, in fact, provide a performance 'correlate' to Schenker's multiple-level analytical spans.⁹³

Cook describes how Furtwängler is able to reconcile conflicting requests in Schenker's monograph, in particular, in the Development where Schenker specifies small nuances and yet also calls for attention to large-scale movement.⁹⁴ This conflict is resolved in Furtwängler's performance, Cook argues, because of the conductor's ability not only to provide a correlate to Schenker's spans, but also to find an 'equivalent' to Schenker's multi-level structure.⁹⁵

Again and again, Furtwängler creates a correlate in performance of the 'long-range hearing' he so admired in Schenker's approach. If Furtwängler's performance style could be summarised in just two words, they would be 'long-range conducting': he outlines the spans of Schenkerian theory, while giving expressive detail to the musical surface. Where other conductors have to choose between bringing out structure and doing justice to the details, Furtwängler consistently manages to do both.⁹⁶

In the end, Cook claims that 'Furtwängler's performance realizes a meaning that Schenker's words can only hint at.'⁹⁷

Although the 'leader attribution error' seems to be at work in Cook's assessment of Furtwängler's contribution to bringing out these two levels concurrently,⁹⁸ his description of Furtwängler's attitude towards the improvisational nature of performance points to the role of the relationship between conductor and orchestra in facilitating this process. Cook notes that Furtwängler, perhaps borrowing from Schenker's own attitude toward the subject, asserted that a performer should 're-experience and re-live the music

⁹² Cook, 1995.

⁹³ Cook, 1995 and 1999. The 'leader attribution error' is also present here.

⁹⁴ Cook, 1999: 45.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 46.

⁹⁶ Cook, 1995: 122-3.

⁹⁷ Cook, 1999: 46.

⁹⁸ In Chapter 3 I described this as 'double trajectory'.

each time anew'.⁹⁹ It seems that Furtwängler disdained conductors who prepared everything in advance, attributing such an approach to a conductor's 'fear of having to rely too much on the inspiration of the moment.'¹⁰⁰ I argue that one implication that can be read from Furtwängler's attitude towards improvisation is that he was willing to be responsive to the needs that emerged within performance itself, and adjusted his approach accordingly. It is unlikely that any conductor, even Furtwängler, could have shaped this section of the Ninth on multiple levels without handing over responsibility for at least some parameters to the players.¹⁰¹ What can be seen from this example is that Furtwängler was able to manage 'assistance' on two levels, and that his responsiveness to contextual factors during performance may very well have contributed to his being able to do so.

Although Furtwängler and the other conductors mentioned above relied upon what most would see as an outdated method of cognitive structuring, i.e. using extreme tempo modification, the same schematic pattern of 'assistance' may also be seen in examples taken from my fieldwork with Britten Sinfonia. James MacMillan's role in the composers' workshop discussed above, for example, offers a more contrasting illustration. Reflecting an approach consistent with the orchestra's overall leadership strategy, MacMillan only offered to conduct in the workshop when the need for a specific type of vertical leadership was deemed necessary. In an interview he explained that

The first brass piece was in 7/4. Considering that two or three of the players were very young and inexperienced [...] they would never have got that together without a conductor; and even if it was all professionals, they would still have wasted time over sorting out the arithmetic of the bar.¹⁰²

In this instance, MacMillan's conducting provided needed cognitive structuring for the players. The piece's 7/4 time signature often changed its structure, frequently moving between the three standard permutations of the metre (i.e. between 3+2+2, 2+3+2, and 2+2+3). These changes were difficult to discern from the players' parts; whereas from the conductor's score they were more obvious. Through the use of standard conducting technique patterns MacMillan was able to 'assist' the performance through creating a

⁹⁹ Cook (1995: 106) quoting Furtwängler (1926).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Although conducting can feel at times like spinning plates, it is unlikely that this metaphor is the best one for describing how Furtwängler achieved the shaping of his two performances. The two orchestras involved, the Festspiele Bayreuth and Wiener Philharmoniker, were populated with excellent musicians who would have been able to transfer suggestions from one context to another without continuous gestural indications.

¹⁰² Interview with James MacMillan, Britten Sinfonia guest artist, Liverpool Street Station, London, 20 October 2010.

cognitive structure that reflected these metrical changes to the ensemble in real time. If MacMillan had not stepped in when he had, the players would have had to rely upon discussion and marking parts to reach the same end. Although, in this case, the players still had quite a way to go before achieving complete ‘self-support’ in terms of coordination, being able to achieve this end through the help of a conductor moved them closer to this state.¹⁰³

A more complex instance of cognitive structuring can be seen in the Ligeti example described in Chapter 4 (Case Study 4.2). Here Wigglesworth contributed cognitive structuring to the performance through offering both metric and hypermetric support. By conducting hypermetric beat patterns spanning multiple bars, the conductor helped both to facilitate ensemble coordination and to shape how the passage was played. This example also demonstrates that ZPDs for coordination usually resolve into ‘self-support’ before ZPDs for shaping do. In this case, all but the concluding bars of the movement could have been performed without a conductor, and with more time this could have been managed. However, Wigglesworth’s shaping of the passage through his choice of hypermetric patterns would have taken significantly longer to ‘hand over’ — if, indeed, a full transfer from conductor and players was even possible in this case.¹⁰⁴ There are times when the complexity ‘on the ground’ keeps performers at even the highest levels of skill from being able to assume complete responsibility for the cognitive structuring of a piece. It is at these points that the importance of conductor’s role in orchestral performance becomes most apparent.

In the examples above, both MacMillan and Wigglesworth exercised a more vertical and conductor-driven approach to orchestral coordination than what might be suitable for other types of repertoire, and one could argue that this approach is appropriate in relation to the musical examples discussed. Nevertheless, it is also notable how this method of achieving coordination differs from the more refined and conversational style of coordination that I discussed in Chapter 3 in relation to ‘the view from the part’. A conductor’s firm delivery of the beat and metre may make coordination at a basic level possible, as it did in the composers’ workshop example above, yet at the same time it may prevent a more conversational style of coordination from developing. This insight lies behind both Padmore’s comment that un-conducted

¹⁰³ One can infer from Britten *Sinfonia*’s general ethos, in addition to the fact that an un-conducted first attempt of the piece was made by the ensemble, that an un-conducted performance would have been preferred if possible.

¹⁰⁴ I leave aside the question of whether this would have been desirable.

groups might start further behind but can end up further ahead,¹⁰⁵ and Shave's insistence that Hannigan not give a cue in the Mozart example from Chapter 4 (Case Study 4.4). In both cases, the focus is to get to 'Stage 2' by avoiding the pitfalls of 'Stage 1', the main one being the unwillingness or inability of conductors to 'hand over' responsibility for competencies when the orchestra is ready to accept them.

In certain types of repertoire, particularly pieces that are slower and more lyrical, the conversational approach to coordination may be preferable, as it moves the emphasis away from the division of the bar and towards more complex ways of responding — ways that encourage more subtle methods of listening and interacting.¹⁰⁶ One way that conductors can 'assist' an ensemble towards this type of coordination is though 'handing over' responsibility for beat and metre to the players, who in turn can work towards 'Stage 3' and automatization of this parameter. At this point, the conductor may turn his or her attention towards helping to cognitively structure the music's shape, something else that might be handed over in due course. I observed this approach in MacMillan's conducting of the second movement of Beethoven's Second Symphony.¹⁰⁷ Unlike in the other movements, MacMillan's expressive left hand dominated his performance of this lyrical one. When asked why he had chosen not to use his right (beating) hand, he replied:

You can do that with a group that thinks of themselves as a chamber group, that will play automatically as a unit regardless of me. You can't do that with everybody [...] You've just got to have confidence that they're used to sticking together very tight as a band anyway, whether there's a conductor there or not, so you can give them that little degree of freedom to be more expressive.¹⁰⁸

MacMillan's performance of the Symphony relied ultimately upon both types of coordination, thus confirming that the two approaches are not incompatible. Nevertheless, the conductor clearly plays a part in allowing the more refined version of coordination to emerge. In the first rehearsal of the work, MacMillan did use his right hand; only later did he turn over to the players full responsibility for what that hand was providing. This willingness to draw upon orchestral self-support allowed him to move

¹⁰⁵ 'I think with this programme, we start behind — it feels to me as if our starting point is less good than a conducted performance and it finishes up better than a conducted performance.' Interview with Mark Padmore, Britten Sinfonia guest artist, Birmingham, Town Hall, 11 February 2011.

¹⁰⁶ This was clearly behind Shave's approach to the Mozart. Farberman has also argued that the separation of beating from sound is the biggest problem conductors face.

¹⁰⁷ Cambridge, 22 October 2010.

¹⁰⁸ James MacMillan Interview, London, 20 October 2010.

his attention to new ZPDs, thus allowing the performance to move in the direction of cognitive saturation.

The common factor in the examples above is that they demonstrate some of the ways in which conductors develop highly bespoke strategies for helping to cognitively structure performances. At a basic level, beats and metric patterns might help; on a more sophisticated level, performances can be shaped on multiple levels using more expressive gestures and tempo modifications (albeit probably to a lesser extent than in the past). It is my contention that a conductor can improve orchestral performance through engaging with the orchestra and responding in a way that moves an orchestra towards ‘self-support’.¹⁰⁹ Conductors are uniquely placed to help in the cognitive structuring of musical material because of both their perceptual position and their specialized gestural technique. There are two prerequisites for delivering this sort of ‘assistance’, however. The first is a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter, which in this case is the score. Tharp and Gallimore insist that without this specialist knowledge, ‘assistance’ will fail to be accurately tuned to the needs of the situation.¹¹⁰ Secondly, the conductor needs a gestural technique that allows help to be given in real time. Unfortunately, this latter skill is all too rare. In the final part of this chapter, I will explore how the roots of ineffective technique lie in the types of misunderstandings that I have explored throughout this study.

The conductor in body

Over the course of this thesis I have made the argument that both leadership and interpretation are to some extent shared in orchestral performance. However, accepting this situation makes defining the modern conductor’s role difficult, particularly when one considers the successes of unconducted groups such as Britten Sinfonia. If responsibility for leadership functions can be socially-distributed then where does this leave the conductor? In the discussion up to this point I have avoided analysing the conductor’s role in rehearsal. My fieldwork experience with Britten Sinfonia demonstrated that players performed this role as well, if not better, than many conductors.¹¹¹ Although conductors can draw upon any of Tharp and Gallimore’s six categories of ‘assistance’ outlined above, I have proposed that conductors are in the position to make a unique contribution to in-time performance through the cognitive

¹⁰⁹ Tharp and Gallimore (1998, 106) define teaching in a way that reflects this point: ‘teaching can be said to occur when assistance is offered at points in the ZPD at which performance requires assistance.’

¹¹⁰ Tharp and Gallimore, 1998: 100.

¹¹¹ There is much more to be said about what conductors might learn from the way unconducted ensembles rehearse, but this is beyond the scope the current study.

structuring of musical material via their gestural technique. Seen from this perspective, the conductor's body, free and able to respond to the demands of performance as it is happening, is the conductor's greatest asset. As I described in Chapter 3, conductors make their own 'scripts' for performance, and in the light of what I have referred to above as 'conducting as assisted performance', one can see that this ability has its advantages. Scripts can change as performative needs change. The same holds true for the conductor's body: non-verbal communication can change as orchestral performance develops.

Unfortunately, most conducting training focuses on developing gesture and body language that is compatible with what I described in Chapter 2 as 'interpretation as projection', i.e. with a form of causality that views gesture as a means through which to obtain specific and predictable conductor-determined outcomes from an ensemble. Due to the emphasis conductors place on communicating their predetermined vision of the score/work, exploration of the conductor's body in performance tends to be limited to the use of preparatory gestures, right-hand beating patterns,¹¹² techniques for cueing and cut-offs, and the 'expressive' use of the left hand. The importance of eye contact and of eliminating body movements that distract from the gestures described above may also be addressed, although these issues tend to come up somewhat less frequently.¹¹³ In both theory and practice, conducting pedagogy places emphasis upon the creation of gestures that clearly communicate the conductor's musical intentions in the direction of the orchestra. Due to the limitations of the projective attitude towards conducting discussed in Chapter 2, however, it is arguable that there is a need for a more comprehensive approach to the exploration of conducting gesture, one that enables conductors to 'assist' performance through using their bodies both to demand and respond to the needs of the musical situation within its greater social and musical context. This calls for a more refined and differentiated understanding of the nature of body language, as well as a certain level of body self-awareness.

Ekman and Friesen's seminal (1969) work on non-verbal communication has been used by a handful of scholars and pedagogues as a point of departure for developing a more in-depth understanding of the conductor's body in performance.¹¹⁴

¹¹² The practice of left-handed conductors using their dominant hand to beat patterns is still viewed as problematic by some conducting pedagogues.

¹¹³ For thoughts about the role of eye contact in conducting see Rudolf (1995) and Wöllner (2008). For information on unnecessary body movement see Farberman (1997). Eye contact and the removal of habitual unnecessary movement are probably not discussed as much as other types of body language, because their contribution to the conductor's art is less quantifiable.

¹¹⁴ Good examples of this trend are Mathers (2009), McClung (2005), and Eichenberger (1994).

These applications of Ekman and Friesen's five-part categorization tool are, by and large, successful in broadening the approach to gesture advocated by many conducting teachers and pedagogical texts. However, I argue that the way the tool has been applied to the conductor's task up to this point fails to address the need for an approach that challenges the projective version of interpretation described above. In essence, the aim of these discussions is to help the conductor's gestures become more 'expressive', rather than to aid the conductor in utilizing non-verbal communication to assist in making the performance as a whole more expressive.¹¹⁵ I argue that this way of applying Ekman and Friesen's categorization misrepresents their holistic approach, which makes a point of situating the person's body language within its environmental context, and takes away from what their work could contribute to understanding the conductor's role if it were applied with this in mind. This is particularly true in regard to examining the use of body language as a means to facilitate 'assistance', something that will be described in depth below.

Whereas Ekman and Friesen's categorizations are helpful in differentiating various aspects of a conductor's body language, the insights of Richard Shusterman regarding body awareness or 'somatic self-consciousness' are useful in expressing how the conductor actually embodies the meeting of ensemble and conductor — a meeting that is an essential component of both the emergent model of interpretation and the negotiation by players and conductors of ZPDs. Shusterman claims that only when we have a good internal sense of our physical selves can we really consciously meet and influence (and be influenced by) our environment. Unfortunately, attention to this sort of 'embodiment' has been actively opposed by generations of enlightenment philosophers, as Shusterman explains:

A key argument in the condemnation of cultivating somatic self-consciousness is that any sustained focus on bodily feeling is both unnecessary and counterproductive for effective thought and action. Attentive self-consciousness of bodily feelings (or for that matter, of bodily form or movement) is thus rejected as a distracting corruptive obstacle to our essential cognitive, practical, and ethical concerns, a retreat into ineffectual self-absorption. Our attention, it is argued, must instead be directed exclusively outward for our engagement with the external world.¹¹⁶

Nevertheless, Shusterman adds that

¹¹⁵ The implications of this will be dealt with in more depth later in this chapter.

¹¹⁶ See Shusterman, 2008: 8.

such intensified body consciousness need not disrupt but rather can improve our perception of and engagement with the outside world by improving our use of the self that is the fundamental instrument of all perception and action. Indeed, I contend that *any acutely attentive somatic self-consciousness will always be conscious of more than the body itself*. To focus on feeling one's body is to foreground it against its environmental background, which must be somehow felt in order to constitute that experienced background. One cannot feel oneself sitting or standing without feeling that part of the environment upon which one sits or stands. Nor can one feel oneself breathing without feeling the surrounding air we inhale. Such lessons of somatic self-consciousness eventually point toward the vision of an essentially situated, relational, and symbiotic self rather than the traditional concept of an autonomous self grounded in an individual, monadic, indestructible, and unchanging soul.¹¹⁷

When a conductor begins to see the orchestra as an object to be acted upon, rather than as a collection of individuals involved in a common task, he or she loses the ability to respond as required to musical- and ensemble-based needs. Managing the complexities of orchestral performance demands flexibility in the perceptual framework through which the conductor meets the ensemble, and in order for this perceptual fluidity to be relevant to the conductor's task in performance, it must be enacted with the body.

Shusterman supports this by arguing that moving towards an embodied and differentiated understanding of ourselves is what makes it possible for us to make good contact with the environment. One must have a sense of the body before one can notice where and how it meets the chair, and the same goes for how a conductor meets an orchestra, even if the orchestra is a much more complex meeting point. Because this process occurs as one person meets many, as well as via a work/score¹¹⁸ that can be seen from different perceptual positions (see Chapter 3), the somatic self-consciousness of the conductor benefits from being highly sensitive and differentiated. Ekman and Friesen's work provides a framework that makes it possible for this sort of sensitivity and differentiation to be understood and developed. With this in mind, I offer below a description of their work and its implications, particularly in terms of clarifying the importance of developing gestures that can increase the potential for 'assistance' through cognitive structuring.

A differentiated approach to body language

Ekman and Friesen's (1969) work on body language, which includes discussions of categories, origins, usage, and coding, is a useful starting point from which to explore

¹¹⁷ Ibid. It is worth noting that Clarke (2005) has engaged with a similar line of thought in relation to musical listening through applying Gibson's 'ecological' approach to musical listening in his book *Ways of Listening*.

¹¹⁸ I use this term in the same way in Chapter 2.

how different attitudes towards interpretation manifest in the physical activity that occurs on the podium.¹¹⁹ They argue that in order ‘to understand fully any instance of a person’s non-verbal behaviour — that is, any movement or position of the face and/or the body — we must discover how that behaviour became part of the person’s repertoire, the circumstances of its use, and the rules which explain how the behaviour contains or conveys information.’¹²⁰ In other words, Ekman and Friesen’s categories are derived from observing the person within the environment rather than in isolation.¹²¹ The interrelationships that exist between these various aspects are complex, and Ekman and Friesen developed a system of categorization which facilitated their ongoing research goals. Their resulting five categories, i.e. emblems, illustrators, regulators, affect displays, and adaptors (described below), are defined through evaluating the following characteristics:

Usage	External conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the gesture used as a replacement for verbal communication? • Does it vary with enthusiasm and excitement or change with type of interaction or group personnel? • Is it the result of a method of training or the result of a culture? • Is it responding to a feeling or attitude?
	Relation to words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the gesture replace a word? • Is it tied to speech? • Does it illustrate a message or highlight a word? • Does it facilitate conversation? • Is it triggered by verbal behaviour which was present when the gesture was first learned?
	Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the gesture consciously made or is a result of unconscious processes?
	Intention to communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the gesture intend to communicate any specific meaning?
	Receiver feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the receiver respond to the gesture, if so, how?

¹¹⁹ Ekman and Friesen, 1969.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 49.

¹²¹ Ekman and Friesen’s focus on cross-cultural data emphasizes this point. Ibid.

	Type of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the information conveyed shared or idiosyncratic, and is the non-verbal behaviour communicative, informative, or interactive?¹²²
Coding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the coding arbitrary, iconic (either pictorial, kinetic, or spatial), or intrinsic?
Origins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the gesture culturally specific, socially learned, neurophysiologically programmed, or habitual?¹²³

Figure 5.2. Ekman and Friesen's categories of body language

Ekman and Friesen's Categories of Body Language

In the section that follows, I describe emblems, illustrators, regulators, affect displays, and adaptors in relation to the non-verbal language of conductors. Although Ekman and Friesen offer these five categories, they also clarify that many gestures fall into more than one category.¹²⁴ The implications for this overlap are extensive and will be discussed in more detail below.

(1) Emblems

Emblems are gestures that have verbal equivalents; good examples of this are nodding the head to say 'yes', and shaking the head to say 'no'. Emblems often happen in non-musical life when talking is not possible; the same situation exists in musical performance when it is not possible for a conductor to speak. For example, a conductor might inconspicuously hold up two fingers in performance to remind the ensemble to take the second time bar, or to let the ensemble know that there will be two preparation beats before an entrance. However, in most orchestral conducting situations few emblems are used.¹²⁵ The most recognizable emblem is the shape of a beat pattern that

¹²² I refer to these terms throughout this section in the sense in which Ekman and Friesen define them. These definitions are as follows: (1) *Idiosyncratic* meaning defines an act where there is 'some regularity in the information associated with its occurrence but the association is peculiar to a single individual' (p. 54). (2) *Shared* meaning is when 'the information associated with [the act] is common across some specifiable set of individuals' (p. 54). (3) *Informative* non-verbal behaviour 'encompasses those acts which have some shared decoded meaning, in that such acts elicit similar interpretations in some set of observers' (p. 55). (4) *Communicative* non-verbal behavior 'encompasses those acts which are clearly and consciously intended by the sender to transmit a specifiable message to the receiver' (pp. 55-6). (5) *Interactive* non-verbal behaviour includes 'acts by one person in an interaction which clearly modify or influence the interactive behavior of the other person(s)' (p. 56).

¹²³ Ibid. This is a summary of pp. 94-5.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ See Sousa, 1989.

defines metre. It is not accidental that these emblematic diagrams appear in conducting texts as often as they do; emblems, because they replace words, are the easiest element of conducting gesture to capture in print. Their ability to replace words, in this case the beat numbers of a metrical unit, also contributes to their effectiveness in facilitating coordination. Conducting patterns structure isolated beats into meaningful metric groups in a way that can be mapped onto notational metric groups.

Interestingly enough, Durrant has noted that choral conductors are more likely to use emblems than orchestral conductors;¹²⁶ one reason for this is because choirs tend to have longer rehearsal periods and have more time to build up the working relationship between conductor and ensemble, complete with its own idiosyncratic emblems which are learned. This may also have something to do with the nature of working with the voice; it is often more difficult to express technical directions to singers than to instrumentalists, as the mechanisms of the vocal instrument are largely contained inside the body. It is very common for vocal pedagogues to use a hand gesture to demonstrate some sort of technical or sound quality to a student, and sometimes these gestures actually stand in for anatomical parts, e.g. the diaphragm or the larynx. In any case, there is a high degree of agreement within individual ensembles about what emblems mean, even if some of these are idiosyncratic and not understood beyond the confines of the group (e.g. a choral conductor may use a raised wrist at head level to indicate the need for the sound to be produced with a higher soft palate, yet this does not guarantee that this gesture would work with another ensemble). Ekman and Friesen also note that emblems are usually delivered consciously, and they most often communicate a specific meaning.¹²⁷ Ensembles tend to watch, albeit peripherally at times, emblematic movement and often comment on it, e.g. it is quite common for orchestral players to remark on the lack of clarity in a conductor's beat pattern. In this way, these acts can inspire interaction.

Emblems, because of their direct connection to words, are the type of body language that is the easiest to recognize, teach, and write about. For this reason they have, to some extent, the power to overshadow the other types of body language

¹²⁶ See Durrant (1994 and 2003). Also Davidson (1997) has speculated that the best conductors minimize the use of emblems; this has implications in relation to the discussion of incomplete *and* complete conductors presented in Chapter 1 of this study. If it is true that emblems are more useful in choral contexts for various reasons, does this really make them less effective overall?

¹²⁷ See Ekman and Friesen, 1969: 55-6. Communicative gesture is delivered with the intention of portraying a specific message. This does not mean that this message is either understood or acted upon, however.

described below.¹²⁸ Receivers may unconsciously absorb other types of body language, but their conscious minds will recognize emblems with a similar ease to that with which they recognize the words of regular speech. It is not an accident that some inexperienced conductors think that conducting is mostly about performing beat patterns; what they see and read could easily lead one to make this conclusion.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, emblems are also the gestures most likely to occur in an uncondacted ensemble when serious problems are anticipated.¹³⁰ It seems that they perform cognitive structuring at a basic, but at times crucial level.

(2) Illustrators

These gestures are directly tied to musical or verbal speech¹³¹ and are used to illustrate content, rhythmically accentuate, or follow the shape and contour of either music or words. Orchestral conductors use illustrators extensively as they trace the shapes of musical lines and offer rhythmic accents at structural or dramatically important points. A conductor's tempo when given with a right hand through a 'click' or 'flick',¹³² is also an illustrative gesture. More frequently, however, the left hand is associated with the illustrative function in orchestral conducting; it is not unusual, however, for the whole body to participate in this illustrative activity.¹³³ Conductors are aware of the use of illustrators, especially when they take the form of left-hand movements, and strive to increase the variety of these types of gestures in their work. However, how conductors use left-hand and other illustrative gestures to convey specific musical information is highly idiosyncratic; for example, how one conductor conveys a change in dynamics

¹²⁸ Once again, this is directly related to what I discussed in Chapter 1 in relation to compleat *and* incomplete conductors.

¹²⁹ In my work in training conductors at university level I have found this to be the case more often than not.

¹³⁰ In observing Britten Sinfonia rehearsals I noticed that Shave only conducted beat patterns in performance when a passage consistently went wrong in rehearsal.

¹³¹ I argue that it is fair to equate musical speech to non-musical speech in this context, as both involve the same relational aspects in terms of line and accentuation. Later when discussing regulators, however, it will be necessary to distinguish between spontaneous and non-spontaneous speech.

¹³² Farberman (1997) advocates the use of sharp wrist movements to indicate pulse points. 'Clicks' happen on beats with vertical motions, 'flicks' on beats with horizontal motion (24-26). Peter Stark claims that both gestures interrupt an ensemble's peripheral hearing, and prefers to use a change in speed to indicate beat. This intentionally less clear gesture allows players to find the pulse themselves. Farberman's gestures are illustrative, Stark's more regulatory. Neil Thompson and John Farrer's idea of the 'Stop beat' also does this, but does not give nearly enough information for a player to read musical intention. Their version is somewhere between 'marking' a beat, as happens in recitative, and something fully conducted. In any case, all these approaches to generating beats contain what I call 'regulatory function'. More will be said about this below.

¹³³ Although the line between using the whole body to 'illustrate' in a way that does not involve distracting habitual behaviour (in the form of adaptors) is a point of contention among pedagogues. This may be a question of how well integrated the body is with an overall musical intention.

can differ dramatically from how another does, even if both versions are equally effective.

The illustrative function sometimes becomes more animated when there is an audience.¹³⁴ Illustrators are used by conductors in order to communicate, both with ensemble members and/or with the audience. The messages conveyed, however, are far less specific than those conveyed by emblematic gestures, that is, they refer to the shape or rhythm of musical or verbal speech and cannot be defined easily through verbal equivalents. Nevertheless, Ekman and Friesen note that the information is more shared than idiosyncratic, meaning that in many ways they may be easier than emblems to translate across performing contexts. They are also frequently (although not always) interactive, and therefore hold the potential to influence the receiver. However, these gestures are very much a result of the culture of orchestral conducting that gave rise to them, and are socially learned by imitation. For example, think of the conductor using the left hand to indicate the need for a richer sound through imitating a violinist's vibrato.

(3) Regulators

Ekman and Friesen note that all other categories of gesture can serve as regulators, and therefore choose to use this name only to refer to gestures that do not fall into other categories.¹³⁵ However, I argue that the 'regulatory function',¹³⁶ as it exists in concert with other categories (e.g. the interactive component of an emblem or illustrator), is important enough to view in its own right, given that regulators are gestures that serve interaction; and it is undeniable that interaction, or the ability to influence and be influenced, is a pressing concern for conductors who wish to 'assist' performance. Perhaps the best way to define this category (or gestural function) is to equate it to the verbal 'uh-huh's that keep a conversation moving back and forth through inviting more or less explanation from the other participant. It shows one person that another is listening and responsive to what they say or play. In the process, they encourage players to assume additional responsibility for skills and competencies. Unlike emblems and illustrators, these gestures are largely unconscious, yet Ekman and Friesen note that

¹³⁴ Players who worked under Bernstein, for example, often recount how much more of this sort of movement was present in his conducting when the camera was turned on.

¹³⁵ Ekman and Friesen, 1969: 82-4.

¹³⁶ My own term. I also argue that there is an 'illustrative function' that works in a similar way. This notion is consistent with Ekman and Friesen's claim that there are overlaps between their proposed categories.

withdrawal of these subtle non-verbal cues is enough to cause a receiver discomfort that might even cause the conversation to stop entirely.¹³⁷

Conductors are conductors primarily because of their use of regulatory gestures.¹³⁸ Their role is shaped by this ‘regulatory function’ of beginning, encouraging and ending musical conversation, all of which fall under the category of regulation to some degree, in the sense that regulators invite, sustain and stop interaction. It is for this reason that the importance of this category of gesture to conductors cannot be overemphasized. That these gestures are largely habitual and unconscious is even more of a reason to examine them carefully.¹³⁹ The information that is contained in the movements is shared and, by definition, interactive. Ekman and Friesen explain that these gestures are usually informative, yet not often communicative.¹⁴⁰ What is conveyed by regulatory gestures does not cognitively structure performance, but it does solidify the development of self-supportive competencies. These are gestures that can be categorized as being on the cusp of ‘Stage 2’. They are learned, but not usually through any specific form of training. The connection of this category to either musical or verbal speech is clear; the desire to interact or converse is what feeds these behaviours.

Orchestral conducting does not acknowledge either regulators or the regulatory function as part of its formal technique, and yet it may be one of the things that makes conductors unsuccessful.¹⁴¹ Another important point to note is that regulators and illustrators can be easily confused when applied to re-creative arts. Regulators refer to the management of real-time conversations between participants; illustrators, in contrast, elucidate or accentuate content and are not by definition interactive, that is, they do not necessarily help manage conversations. Therefore, in order for a cue or cut-off to be truly regulatory it must contain the element of ‘the willing suspension of disbelief’;¹⁴² in other words, the action needs to be the result of real-time musical

¹³⁷ Ekman and Friesen, 1969: 82.

¹³⁸ Ekman and Friesen note that regulators ‘vary with and partially define roles’ (Ibid., 94) This is certainly true in the case of conductors.

¹³⁹ Using video self-assessment to reveal unconscious behaviour while conducting has been advocated by McClung, 2005. However, I argue that McClung’s approach is limited due to his failure to recognize what I have described as the ‘regulatory function’ above.

¹⁴⁰ Ekman and Friesen, 1969: 94-5.

¹⁴¹ Mathers (2009) however, has argued that regulators, along with illustrators and affect displays, enhance ‘expressive’ conducting. My critique of the limitations of ‘expressive conducting’ is found below. In my own experience teaching conducting, I have noticed that many problems that conductors have are best described as ‘relationship difficulties’ between the ensemble and the conductor. The symptoms of these difficulties often first arise in the regulators. For example, if the conductor is not using regulators to encourage the ensemble to continue then it probably means the conductor is not listening — and who wants to talk to someone who is not listening?

¹⁴² What Cone might call ‘intentional forgetting’. See Chapter 3.

engagement.¹⁴³ The simple matching of what one sees on the page, or hears in one's head, to a gesture (as seen in interpretation as projection) would be defined as an illustrator. According to Ekman and Friesen's criteria, most cues and cut-offs are illustrative, as they do not acknowledge a gesture as regulatory unless it stands outside all other categories. However, this does not take into consideration the 'regulatory function', which is what separates the projective from the emergent view of interpretation. This conceptual confusion will be addressed in greater detail below.

(4) Affect Displays

These gestures are produced by the face and are used to reflect emotional states.¹⁴⁴ Cultural and social factors define the character and extent of affect displays. Sometimes the gestures work in relation to words or music (either by reinforcing or contradicting them) while sometimes they don't relate to outer connections at all. Users are either conscious or unconscious of affect displays, but usually one is only aware of the display after it has been made. These gestures are usually not intended to communicate any specific message to the receiver — more often they are made in order to reflect an internal state. Ekman and Friesen describe the type of information conveyed by these acts as shared and idiosyncratic, informative, and frequently interactive. The coding of these gestures can be intrinsic or iconic; some might be arbitrary. These expressions also vary across cultures. The origins of the gestures are the relationship of facial muscles to emotional affect. Some displays are the result of neurophysiological programming, whereas others are culturally learned.¹⁴⁵

There are at least two types of stimulus that produce affect display in conductors. The first is best seen as resulting from whatever emotional response the conductor might have to an internal or external musical event,¹⁴⁶ the second from the response to any other surrounding factors. Something that might be interpreted as anger or disappointment, for example, could be triggered by a musical event that the conductor is responding to, or also could be the result of a player having missed his entrance, a baby is crying in the concert hall, or because he or she has made a mistake. Affect displays that are motivated by the musical event usually have the same quality as

¹⁴³ This is comparable to Fürtwängler's comment about the improvisational component to conducting above.

¹⁴⁴ Ekman and Friesen, 1969: 72.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 70-82.

¹⁴⁶ This may be similar to the state discussed by Prausnitz that occurs in the preparation gesture (see Chapter 3). In this way, an affective display may actually be a type of cognitive structuring on a level of structure comparable to Schenker's background.

the music that accompanies them, and as a result they are rarely noticeable in their own right.¹⁴⁷

Wöllner, in a spatial-occlusion-based study that investigated conductors' body language, confirms the importance of affect display in the task of conducting by concluding that facial expressions are an essential element of effective conducting, before going on to propose that facial affective behaviour should be included within the curricula of conducting courses. Facial expressions were identified by both musically trained and untrained observers as being 'more essential than other bodily communication for perceptions of the conductors' intended expressiveness.'¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, in the light of the above discussion it is reasonable to propose that it may, in fact, be the regulatory function of these affective displays that influenced the study's outcome. If this is the case, any training that focused on choreographing facial displays in advance would not necessarily improve conductor effectiveness.¹⁴⁹

(5) Adaptors

Most conducting pedagogical texts agree that one of the most important tasks an inexperienced conductor must engage in is the decreasing or even eliminating the use of adaptors. Ekman and Friesen note that although during childhood and early life (or early training) these gestures are associated with necessary bodily actions; by adulthood they are often unconscious and habitual, and used as a way to manage built-up energy.¹⁵⁰ Common examples of habitual adaptors used by conductors include looking down (even if there is no score to look at), foot-tapping, and bouncing from the knees. Adaptors are

¹⁴⁷ Repertoire seems to have a great deal to do with the effectiveness/appropriateness of the use of affect displays when conducting. In a work like Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale*, for instance, powerful affective displays may have the potential to distract from the large amount of informational content that an ensemble needs in the form of emblems and illustrators (see Chapter 3). Yet, in a work such as Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*, failure to offer sympathetic affective displays may also limit the effectiveness of performance. In either case, determining a satisfactory balance for the various elements of non-verbal communication involves examining contextual factors. The 'regulatory function' connecting conductor with orchestra may be performed through a number of means, and affective displays may offer the means whereby this can be best achieved in certain situations.

¹⁴⁸ See Clemens Wöllner (2008), which is entitled: 'Which part of the conductor's body conveys most expressive information? A spatial occlusion approach'. I argue that although this study makes a valuable contribution to the literature, there are several ways in which it might have been improved. In reference to the present discussion, the use of an ensemble of instruments rather than expecting two pianos to represent the complexities of the orchestral situation would have resulted in more relevant data. Wöllner has acknowledged this point, and as a result his most recent study of conductors (using data collected in the Summer of 2009) utilized a string quintet. I also contend that Wöllner problematically conflates the notion of 'expressive' conducting with an expressive musical result, something I explore in more detail below.

¹⁴⁹ This is not to say that exercises that extend the possibilities for facial display, such as those performed by actors before performance, might not be relevant.

¹⁵⁰ Ekman and Friesen, 1969: 84.

not meant to communicate and are not usually interactive, which is why most conducting teachers advise their students to get rid of them.¹⁵¹

Interestingly enough, early research by Ekman and Friesen looked at the frequencies of adaptors as a way to determine whether people were telling the truth. They discovered that when words are combined with adaptors in a certain way there is 'leakage' that can be read as either deception or the weakening of the informational content of the speaker's words.¹⁵² Human beings have perceptual limits that come into play when confronted with several types of information, and this is especially the case when such information is conflicting. In general, adaptors in the form of habitual movement weaken the power of the information conveyed through other non-verbal means. Unnecessary movement, for example, makes it difficult to see what is happening in the arms, baton, or face, and this is likely to have an impact on a conductor's effectiveness in performance. Many conducting pedagogues would, to some extent, agree with Farberman's suggestion that

A firm, comfortable, tension-free podium stance allows the baton to form strokes with precision and clarity. Do not move the feet, bend the knees, or jump during a performance. The principle is simple: unexpected movement of the feet, added to precise movement (baton strokes), disrupts predictability (formation of patterns).¹⁵³

Nevertheless, perhaps it is more accurate to look at 'unexpected' or conflicting movement as the key idea here. Very few would argue against the observation that some fine and very effective conductors move their feet and knees during performance in a way that enhances what they do. However, there is a radical difference between movements which offer support to the necessary information conveyed by the 'precise movement' of the baton and the 'unexpected movement' which detracts and is the result of unconscious and habitual adaptors. I would argue that the real problem, in this case, is the one Ekman and Friesen refer to as 'leakage'. A conductor who engages in much unconscious extraneous movement is likely to be weakening the message he or she wishes to communicate. The issue is not what moves, but rather how integrated this movement is with the overall intention.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Davidson and King (2004) note this.

¹⁵² See Ekman and Friesen, 1969: 91. Also see Ekman, et al., 'Nonverbal Leakage and Clues to Deception', *Psychiatry* 32/1, 88-105.

¹⁵³ Farberman, 1997: 7.

¹⁵⁴ Improving body self-awareness and integrating movement patterns is the main focus of the Alexander Technique, a technique widely acknowledged as helpful in the training of musicians, including conductors. See Valentine (2004).

From theory into practice

The aim of the rest of this chapter is to demonstrate how conductors can strategically draw upon their bodies in order to ‘assist’ performance.¹⁵⁵ In the process, I also describe how a conductor might begin to harness the boons of socially-distributed cognition as exemplified above through the Britten Sinfonia’s work. Two insights, exemplified by Farberman and Thompson respectively, begin a process that eventually leads to mapping of Ekman and Friesen’s categories of non-verbal communication on ‘Stage 1’ of Tharp and Gallimore’s model of the ‘assisted performance’. As the ‘regulatory function’ plays a key role in this process of moving through ‘Stage 1’ of the ZPD, I have presented a case-study of Thompson’s Soundpainting as a way of elucidating the function’s unique contribution to ensemble performance. It also demonstrates that conductors not only provide cognitive structuring for parameters such as coordination and shaping, but can also, using the same ‘assisted performance’ framework, ‘scaffold’ the creative process itself.

The first insight that serves as the springboard for the mapping of body language onto ‘assisted performance’ comes from Harold Farberman, who argues that emblematic gestures can limit effectiveness. Although Farberman’s work clearly advocates implementation of the simplest version of linear causality in the sense that he sees the conductor’s task as delivering the score to the players via gesture (see Figure 2.1), the attention he draws to the limitation of emblems and the necessity of reconsidering the technique of conducting from a broader perspective makes a substantial contribution to the literature. In a way, Farberman echoes the notion expressed in the first chapter of this study by arguing that the idea of conducting as merely the executing of beat patterns is incomplete. In fact, he claims that the focus on beat patterns has caused conductors not to fully engage with ‘the music’. He attributes the modern emphasis on beat patterns to changes in leadership style that occurred in the nineteenth century, which led to ‘the separation of pulse from music’; this became solidified in the technique of conductors as audible time-keeping gave way to the silent beating of patterns. The problem, as he sees it, is that ‘while conducting technique has evolved to deal only with pulse, the training concentrates on the music, but without any technique for communicating the bulk of newly acquired musical knowledge.’¹⁵⁶ In summary, Farberman’s work recognizes that the focus on emblematic gestures,

¹⁵⁵ I argue that many conductors do this, to some degree, in any case, even if their own conceptualizations do not match their practice. The purpose of looking closely at the problem here might be to clarify how change might be undertaken deliberately, for example.

¹⁵⁶ See Farberman (2003: 250) for an abbreviated version of Farberman’s argument. The extended version can be found in his earlier work, Farberman, 1997.

specifically the beat pattern, limits conductors' ability to communicate, and Farberman reconceptualizes conducting technique in a way that shifts the focus from emblematic to illustrative gesture.¹⁵⁷

Expanding on what has been said above, Farberman's approach is grounded in creating a physical illustration of the musical score:

When conductors study a score, they hear and analyze it, but few see the notated graphics on the page as baton movement. No attempt has been made to make a visual correlation between the changing shapes on the page with the placement of the baton. If conductors paid closer attention to the visual structure of the composer's text, they would be forced to emulate those representations with comparable technical gestures. Every composer and composition would benefit from a fresh, perhaps original, set of baton movements that is the mirror image of the music. It would mark the beginning of the end of repetitive pattern beating.¹⁵⁸

Farberman's quest to illustrate the musical notation for the players resulted in the development of 'the pattern cube' and 'visual score study/baton placement descriptions'.¹⁵⁹ These extensive representations of the relation of score to movement (Figure 5.3) capture in an imaginative notation a variety of movement possibilities

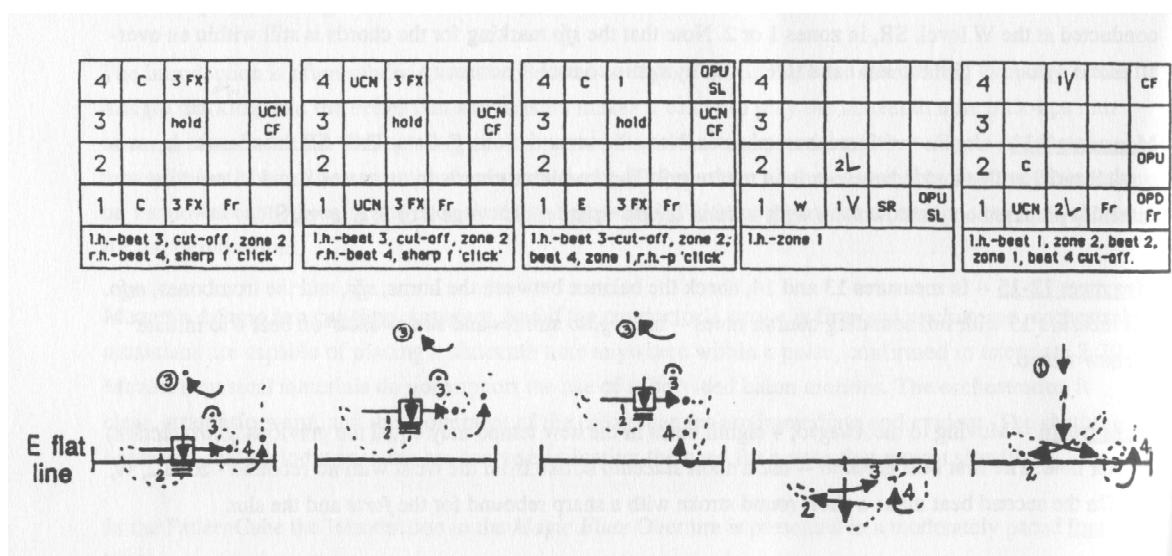


Figure 5.3. Pattern Cube and Visual Score Study/Baton Placement Descriptions: *Magic Flute Overture*, Mozart, bars 1-5.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Unfortunately, Farberman does not acknowledge the regulatory function or interactive aspects of body language in his technique, and this is clearly the limitation of the approach as a whole.

¹⁵⁸ Farberman, 1997: 73. Farberman clearly means the score when he refers to 'the music' in this case.

¹⁵⁹ See Farberman, 1997: 74-288.

¹⁶⁰ Farberman, 1997: 182.

including: character and speed of stroke, position of strokes and baton, types and positions of cues and cut-offs, and placement of arms and hands in relation to body.

Although Farberman insists that there are no ‘correct’ constructions for pattern cubes, and that individual body types and musical preferences will lead to different conductors making different choices, it is clear, from this perspective, that translating the score into movement is about moving more and more in the direction of enacting the projective conception of interpretation. Spontaneity and interaction have a place neither in Farberman’s aesthetic nor in his technical approach, at least as he describes it in writing. In the end, they are relegated to the place of the ‘absent signifier/signified’.¹⁶¹ The conductor’s task, as Farberman sees it, is to embody the musical score, and he takes as given the problematic notion that creating a ‘mirror image’ of the score leads, perhaps with a bit of tweaking, to expressive sounds from the ensemble.¹⁶² Nevertheless, in spite of this limitation, I argue that the pattern cube offers conductors a valuable analytical tool with which to discover a wider movement vocabulary, in addition to a more ‘embodied’ internalization of the score. In fact, the process of going beyond emblematic beat patterns by constructing pattern cubes could even be a very good preparation for spontaneity in performance, as it conditions the body to respond to music in new and less habitual ways.

The next insight that leads towards mapping the non-verbal communication of conductors onto ‘Stage 1’ of the ZPD is that regulators, affect displays, and adaptors, although used less consciously, are important for conductors to both recognize and develop. Emblems and illustrators have direct connections to speech, albeit in different ways. For this reason, they are much easier to consciously grasp, imitate or pass on than the more unconscious elements of body language including regulators, affect displays and adaptors. Emblems reflect a one-to-one correspondence to words, whereas illustrators, with their focus on drawing attention to the shape and highlighting of important points of speech, can refer to multiple parameters (e.g. rhythm or shaping) at multiple levels (e.g. at the levels of notes, phrases, or formal structures). Taking this into consideration, it is not difficult to see why Farberman and others such as

¹⁶¹ See Chapter 1.

¹⁶² I argue that this sort of assumption that interaction happens on its own leads not only to the leader attribution error, but also to the super-human and magical characteristics often ascribed to conductors. Another problem with this approach is that it in some ways denies the obvious needs of the situation, in the sense that in certain contexts seeing the information contained in the beat pattern without additional illustrative content can provide crucial cognitive scaffolding, e.g. when someone in the ensemble has to count hundreds of bars of rests in a piece that has been under-rehearsed and that has frequent changes in timing and expressive content.

Davidson¹⁶³ have proposed that effective conductors focus more on illustrators than emblems. Illustrators, because of their ability to move between levels and layers of musical material, have the ability to maintain a better point of contact with music needs as they manifest in time.

The remaining types of body language must be approached from a different perspective, however, because conductors are not as aware of them. For example, although to the person performing them, affect display and adaptors are generally unconscious, these types of gestures are easily seen by others, and this visibility from the outside has advantages. Conducting pedagogues can see unnecessary habitual movements (adaptors) in a conductor's technique and draw them to the student's attention. For professional conductors, friends and colleagues in the ensemble might be able to point them out, and video assessment is also possible. Reference is also frequently made to the expressive power of the eyes and facial expressions.¹⁶⁴ Although it is true, as Wöllner notes, that these affect displays are usually not taught systematically in conducting courses, they tend to be noticed in masterclasses and acknowledged by players, particularly if they are distracting. It is arguable, therefore, that improving one's body language in relation to the use of adaptors and affect displays simply requires some sort of ongoing reflection from others who are skilled in recognizing what does or does not work. In other words, conductors can become conscious of these gestures via the consciousness of others.

Regulators, however, tend not to be conscious to either the person performing them or to the receiver and for this reason they require additional examination. They are also difficult to recognize because of the frequent overlap with other categories. As described above, I refer to this overlap as the 'regulatory function'. These categories of gesture are of the utmost importance to conductors for the following reasons: (1) their purpose is to invite and facilitate interaction with and within an ensemble, a precondition for 'assisting performance' and a competency which few would deny is part of the essence of conducting in any case; and (2) they are frequently displayed via a conductor's gestural vocabulary, i.e. through something that a conductor actually does with the arms and the baton, and therefore, that is arguably integral to any discussion of conducting technique. Soundpainting (see Chapter 2 and Figure 2.4) as embodied by Walter Thompson, is a good vehicle through which to illustrate the use of regulators and the regulatory function, as Soundpainting relies entirely on interaction between a

¹⁶³ Davidson, 1997.

¹⁶⁴ For example, see Rudolph (1995: 314), also Darwin (2005), and Ekman (1982).

Soundpainter and players to generate the content of the work. The next section contains a detailed examination of Thompson's work, as Soundpainting provides a lens through which this important, yet largely invisible, category of non-verbal communication can become visible.

The use of regulatory function in Thompson's Soundpainting

Although Soundpainting draws heavily upon emblematic gesture, Soundpainters use regulators and the regulatory function more unambiguously (and consciously) than orchestral conductors.¹⁶⁵ This is due primarily to the improvisational nature of the work.¹⁶⁶ Here the interactive component of performance is explicit; Soundpainter and ensemble are interdependent in a way a conductor and orchestra rarely are, as Soundpaintings are created without the mediation of a score. In essence, Soundpainters create their performances completely through managing improvised musical conversation. These conversations occur between the Soundpainter and players and, through the mediation of the Soundpainter, between the players themselves. Soundpainters invite, sustain, and stop these conversations with the use of signs; as a result, all categories of signs they use — even those not understood by the players — have a regulatory function.¹⁶⁷ This regulatory function is expressed in Soundpainting in three ways: directly via technique,¹⁶⁸ via non-technical body language, and indirectly via technique. Each will be explored in turn below. The last category is perhaps the most significant, as it serves as the conceptual basis of the mapping of body language on ZPD that I will offer in the concluding section of this chapter.

¹⁶⁵ Although I described above in relation to Farberman's work that there are significant advantages in avoiding emblems in favour of illustrators, this does not apply to Soundpainting. Emblems strongly scaffold performances, and in a language that is based completely upon improvisation, an emblematic basis is useful. In orchestral music, which has built-in scaffolding provided by parts and scores, the emblematic vocabulary is very limited and has the power to mask other more subtle forms of non-verbal communication. This insight is what motivated Farberman's claim that emblems should be avoided when possible.

¹⁶⁶ In many ways what follows here is a continuation of what has been said about Soundpainting in Chapter 2.

¹⁶⁷ Thompson's training of Soundpainters also emphasizes minimizing or eliminating both adaptors and affect displays. I will discuss this more below.

¹⁶⁸ I define 'technique' here as being the emblematic and illustrative gesture conveyed by the arms, hands and baton. As these physical gestures are the ones closest to the surface of a conductor's consciousness, they tend to be the focus of conducting training and practice; therefore, they most easily resemble what other musicians recognize as technique. 'Non-technical' refers to all body language outside what I have defined above as 'technique', i.e. facial expression, and other less-conscious body movement.

(1) Directly expressed via technique

Soundpainting has regulators (or more accurately put, emblematic gestures with regulatory functions) within its systematic vocabulary. The signs ‘Continue’, ‘Play’, ‘Stop’, and ‘Repeat’, along with their multiple variations, are good examples. This formal gestural vocabulary of Soundpainting creates a spectrum of entry points for players to offer their contribution (this is discussed further below); however, what is equally interesting is their more informal use. This is reflected by the utilisation of (often redundant) gestures. The sign ‘Continue’, for example, is frequently used this way. This gesture will often be given to the same players repeatedly, even though this is not called for by the syntax of the language, in order to encourage the players to go on doing what they are doing in spite of what might be going on around them.¹⁶⁹

Interestingly enough, these types of gestures work in the other direction as well, i.e. from players towards the conductor. Two formal signs regularly used by ensemble members are: ‘I don’t understand what you’re asking me to do’ and ‘I can’t do it’. The first of these usually comes up when the Soundpainter uses a gesture that the player does not know or remember; the second is an indication that the player is not physically able to produce or continue to produce the sound being asked for. Both gestures are used to manage the conversation between player and conductor, and thus have a strong regulatory function.¹⁷⁰

(2) Expressed via non-technical body language

Soundpainters use both affect displays and other non-technical body language to convey the regulatory function. Although Soundpainting features a less consistent use of affect display in comparison to orchestral conducting, there is an idiosyncratic element of this in Thompson’s head-nodding (I translate this to mean ‘sounds good’) and to some extent in his facial expressions, both of which primarily communicate the regulatory function.

The lack of continuity of these affect displays is partially due to the fact that Soundpainters have no score to ‘interpret’. Without the technology of notation, gestures generally need to have more informational content, and the time lag between giving a

¹⁶⁹ Simply put, Soundpainting syntax consists of: Who, What, How, and When. The redundant use of ‘Continue’ is akin to saying ‘What’ over and over again. See Thompson, 2006.

¹⁷⁰ In Soundpainting situations where there are multiple conductors, the function of these gestures as regulators becomes more obvious, as a Soundpainter who calls on a member of the ensemble to conduct or share conducting within a performance (there is a sign to make this possible) may not know what players are capable of.

direction and the ensemble's response can vary considerably.¹⁷¹ Orchestral conductors working on the standard repertoire are closer to being 'in time' than Soundpainters; that is, although orchestral conductors are often gesturally ahead of the group (commonly by up to one beat), what will come next is usually known (via notation and memory) and is not that far away.¹⁷² A Soundpainter, on the other hand, is often at a distance from the event, sometimes by many seconds, and this makes the use of expressive facial gestures inappropriate and distracting.

This is not to say that affect displays are not used. When the performance is in motion and unfolding without direction, Thompson will often nod his head, and this has the same effect on the players as the redundant use of the 'Continue' gesture discussed above. Affect displays can also reinforce a sign; for example, a gesture such as 'With Murderous Intent' can be intensified by body language and facial expressions in obvious ways. Nevertheless, in most cases, the Soundpainter does not take responsibility for mirroring or guiding the emotional impact of the music in the way an orchestral conductor often does. This leaves the role of these gestures primarily in the realm of the regulatory function. In other words, these signs are used to demonstrate that the Soundpainter is listening and encouraging the players to continue, more than they are illustrating or calling for additional content.

(3) Indirectly expressed via technique

This final category represents the indirect manifestation of the regulatory function, through drawing attention to the fact that the quality (in the case of orchestral conducting) or type of sign (in Soundpainting) chosen has the ability to 'assist performance' by moving players towards a state of self-support. As Soundpainting is largely an emblematic language, the way that a conductor invites a player to contribute more or less musical content to the performance is through the choice of emblems — and these emblems exist on a continuum that mirrors 'Stage 1' of Tharp and Gallimore's framework. Both Soundpainters and orchestral conductors might experience how the quality of 'directive-ness' in a gesture can influence a player's contribution to performance for better or for worse; for example, at a certain moment a gesture that directs rather than 'invites' a soloist or a section leader to play can cause the

¹⁷¹ There is also more opportunity to weaken the informational content of the gesture through providing too much information.

¹⁷² This being in time with the players allows orchestral conductors to provide cognitive structuring in relation to parameters of shaping and coordination, as I have discussed above. I later argue that Soundpainters also provide cognitive structuring, albeit usually in relation to different parameters.

player to ‘turn off’ from the conductor, or even to play badly.¹⁷³ Trying, in an orchestral context, to evaluate why one sort of gesture differs from another in this sense is more challenging, as identifying why one gesture creates a certain kind of rapport between conductor and group requires a great deal of perceptual subtlety. Categorizing the qualitative content of conducting gestures can only take place within their interactive contexts; in a single cue, to take an example I have used before, there is the potential for innumerable variations of directive-ness.

Due to the emblematic foundation of Soundpainting, however, the differences that lie between gestures which are more and less directive (and thus at different positions in ‘Stage 1’ of the ZPD) are explicit and, as a result, more easily discussed. In orchestral conducting something called a ‘cue’ can be performed in a thousand different ways, whereas in Soundpainting there are a thousand different combinations of gestures. Many of these gestures can, to some degree, be categorized. By so doing, various aspects of the unseen regulatory function can be seen.

As ‘live composers’, Soundpainters are ‘directive’ in the sense that they express their musical intentions, even though they generally have no desire to control or predict specific outcomes.¹⁷⁴ Soundpainters, like aleatoric composers, sometimes tend to be assertive in their lack of assertion. Furthermore, the most experienced Soundpainting ensembles use a large variety of signs ranging from highly-directive gestures to ones that give the ensemble complete freedom. In the case of Soundpainting this range of sign choices has additional benefits. For example, most Soundpainters also regularly deal with players who perform at various skill levels, both in terms of understanding the sign language and also in their experience of improvisation, something that might be seen to limit the potential for musical outcomes. However, Soundpainting easily accommodates this wide range of participation by offering several entry points into the language. This is possible because some signs leave more to ‘chance’, or, put another way, to ‘player choice’ than others. Inexperienced players benefit from signs that limit the content of the improvisation, while experienced ones can be more self-supporting. Thompson himself regards these different entry points as an essential component of Soundpainting. This is demonstrated most clearly in the way that he often ‘breaks the fourth wall’¹⁷⁵ by inviting the audience to participate in performances.

¹⁷³ Compare to the description of Tharp and Gallimore’s ‘Stage 3’ above.

¹⁷⁴ This is a not unfamiliar phenomenon, as aleatoric and chance composers have been creating music in this way for some time.

¹⁷⁵ This is an expression used in the theatre to indicate that the players metaphorically leave the stage and engage with the audience directly.

Nevertheless, there are both explicit and implicit ZPDs at work in Soundpainting. Although the amount of skill required to participate in a performance is low (in fact members of the audience may know no signs at all when they are asked to participate), there is an expectation that skills will develop as the performance progresses. Thompson helps these competencies to develop by offering responsive and appropriately-tuned ‘assistance’. He repeats unfamiliar signs until familiar, and he combines them in new and interesting ways once they are known. He encourages more experienced players to learn from less experienced ones by calling for signs that ask them to relate to one another. In all sorts of ways he continuously increases the demands. Although Thompson is working here with an explicit ZPD of ‘learning the language’,¹⁷⁶ the implicit ZPD is for developing his ensemble’s creativity more generally. As the musical material of any Soundpainting is comprised of content provided by the ensemble, it is in Thompson’s best interest to have an ensemble that is as creative and responsive as possible. As a result, Thompson cognitively structures ensemble creativity through his choice of signs.

Signs can be seen as existing on a continuum that ranges from extremely Soundpainter-prescribed to more or less player-driven free improvisation. When one looks at the work of a modern conductor in all its complexity, including the leadership of opera and concerto accompaniments, early and contemporary music performances, as well as more ‘standard’ repertoire, a comparable breadth of regulatory variation is called for.¹⁷⁷ Below is a survey of some of these variations as revealed in the language of Soundpainting (Figure 5.4).

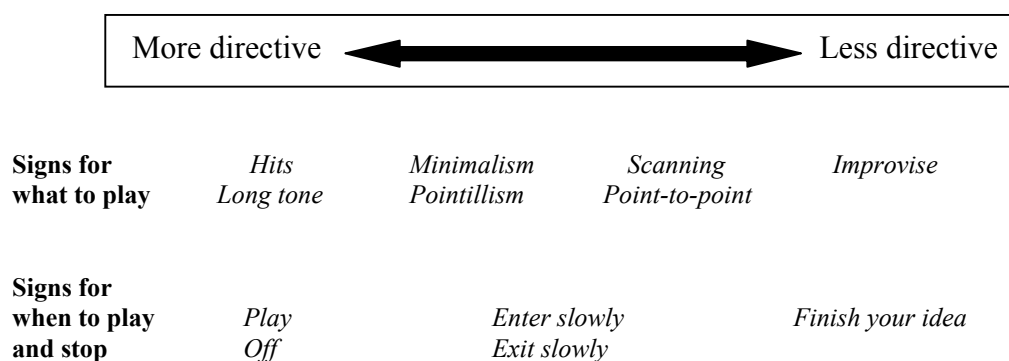


Figure 5.4. Soundpainting as ‘assisted performance’

¹⁷⁶ ‘Rehearsals’ in Soundpainting often focus on learning and reviewing signs.

¹⁷⁷ I am referring here to a ZPD on the same level as Thompson’s work demonstrates.

‘Signs for what to play’ and ‘Signs for when to play and stop’ can both be seen in terms of providing more or less cognitive structuring for an ensemble’s developing creative process. The specific signs recorded in the table are explained below, listed from most to least directive. They can also be seen as mirroring the process of moving through ‘Stage 1’ of the ZPD.

Signs for what to play

‘Hits’: This gesture is clearly related to the conception of Big Band ‘hits’. These conductor-led sound occurrences of short duration often correspond directly to the conductor-led preparation gestures. Dynamic and style of articulation of the onset are clear. There is a way to modify this gesture to make it less structured, however; the Soundpainter can call for a specific number of hits and then give the signal to begin. In this situation the group will choose when to make the sounds and the outcome is less predictable.

‘Long tone’: This sign is structured in the sense that a sustained note is asked for. It is improvisatory in the sense that, unless the gesture is qualified by another asking for pitch level or dynamic, the player can choose these elements.¹⁷⁸

Both ‘Hits’ and ‘Long tone’ are gestures that allow inexperienced improvisers to begin contributing to the composition in a way that is highly structured. Giving either gesture in its most basic form allows for a simple starting point from which a player with very little experience can contribute to the ‘live composition’ and help generate material that can be organized and developed over the course of the performance. By incorporating other qualifying gestures¹⁷⁹ that specify dynamic and pitch range, the gestures can become even more structured.

‘Minimalism’: Minimalism is a sign that calls for the performer to create a short pattern that is repeated until another gesture is used either to change it or to move on to

¹⁷⁸ It is rare for a specific pitch to be asked for by a Soundpainter, though it is a possibility in the language. The most specific this gesture ever gets is in asking for a high, medium, or low tone in relation to the player’s instrument. It is also worth noting that part of ‘default’ in this gesture is that once you enter you do not change either dynamic or pitch until another gesture is given. In this sense, the gesture asks for a contribution that does not involve interaction with others (see interactive gesture below). It is performed ‘wearing blinkers’.

¹⁷⁹ I refer to these below as ‘illustrators’.

something else. Although a preparation of four beats is given to begin the pattern, the contribution from the players can be in any metre.

'Pointillism': This gesture asks for an effect best described as analogous to the eponymous style in visual arts. The players create sound combinations that are characterized by their short duration, irregular rhythmic patterns and extremes of pitch.

Unlike 'Long tone' and 'Hits' where the performer's contributions are quite limited, 'Minimalism' and 'Pointillism' invite players to create pitch patterns, albeit in a less extensive way than with the signs that follow below.¹⁸⁰ The Soundpainter often uses these gestures with the whole group to create a dramatic shift in musical texture. Thompson has described his version of Soundpainting as being like 'switching between television channels', and the use of these signs, along with the contrast created by alternating these with the group 'Long tone', are one reason why most people would agree with this or another similar metaphor.¹⁸¹ Frequently, the Soundpainter will ask performers to memorize and repeat the patterns associated with 'Minimalism' and 'Pointillism' in the course of performance; this can be done through the use of the 'Memory' gesture. The more patterned aspect of both signs, particularly 'Minimalism', and the use of the 'Memory' gesture, allow inexperienced improvisers and audience members to begin to recognize in Soundpainting an organization they might associate with other styles of music.

'Scanning': This gesture is best described as resembling an audience 'wave' at a football game, i.e. when the fans all go from sitting to standing and then put their hands in the air in succession. The result when viewed from a distance is of a wave unfolding either horizontally or in the round. 'Scanning' is an attempt to capture a similar unfolding in sound. In order to create this gesture the Soundpainter moves a straight arm across the group. and when a player is motioned he or she creates a sound. Unlike at a football game, the 'wave' often becomes frozen in process, meaning that the player who is being pointed to must develop an improvisation. This gesture calls for an

¹⁸⁰ As a performer of Soundpainting, I often find it a challenge to find new patterns for 'Minimalism' when the gesture is repeated in quick succession.

¹⁸¹ After discussion with Thompson, I would argue that this 'channel flipping' character of Soundpainting is more a result of Thompson's personal aesthetic than of any intrinsic content of the Soundpainting language.

improvisation based on a limited amount of material, perhaps only a few notes within a short rhythmic motive. The player continues to develop the ‘solo’ at a slow pace for as long as the Soundpainter’s hand stays in contact. Often Soundpainting orchestras are organized in a semicircle or another formation of several rows; it is therefore common for two or more players to respond to the gesture at the same time.

‘Point to point’: Although this gesture has the same rules for improvisational development as ‘Scanning’, in that it is based upon a limited amount of material and develops slowly, it is produced in a different way. Each player is pointed to individually, although sometimes more than one responds — a situation usually embraced by the Soundpainter.

Both of these gestures are designed to help the Soundpainter search for material that can be organized over the course of the performance. The ‘Continue’ gesture is often associated with both ‘Scanning’ and ‘Point to point’, and with this direction the player is invited to continue to develop his or her improvisation following the same rules, i.e. limited material developed at a slow speed. Inexperienced players often find it difficult to begin to improvise, but these gestures are a good way to introduce improvisation to such players, due to their structure and limitation. Other qualifying gestures such as dynamic and tempo modifications are also used by the Soundpainter, but only after the player is directed to ‘Continue’.

‘Improvise’: This gesture in its unqualified form gives permission to the performer to improvise freely.

By giving this gesture, the Soundpainter withdraws control from the chosen player and then often directs his attention to creating an accompaniment. At some point during the improvisation the Soundpainter may give a qualifying gesture, e.g. dynamic or tempo modifications, but largely the player is left alone.

Signs for when to play and stop

'Play' and 'Off': The 'Play' gesture causes the initiation of a signed sound. The player enters at the end of the gesture without hesitation. The 'Off' calls for an immediate stop to the sound.

These gestures are very similar in construction to the preparatory beat and standard cut-off gesture found in orchestral conducting, although both involve more whole body movement as part of their delivery. The two signs are conductor-led and offer very little ambiguity in terms of where the event that the gesture calls for is supposed to occur.

'Enter Slowly' & 'Exit Slowly': These gestures give the player/s up to five seconds to enter or exit the composition.

Both of these gestures shift the responsibility for entrances and exits to the players, albeit with a strong timed limitation.

'Improvise' & 'Finish Your Idea': The latter sign gives a performer who is engaged with 'Improvise' up to one minute to bring his or her idea to a natural conclusion.

Because 'Improvise' gives the player full artistic responsibility for a portion of the composition, the Soundpainter gives the player a suitable amount of time to round off the contribution.

In summary, the work of Farberman, and to a greater extent, Thompson, has been explored in order to demonstrate how various categories of non-verbal communication might be employed in 'assisting' ensembles towards self-support. Farberman's claim that emblematic gestures are best transformed into illustrative ones is compelling, but because the interactive component that is a prerequisite for 'responsive assistance' is missing, I argue that it does not go as far as it might in the direction of 'Stage 2' of the ZPD, thus undermining what I have referred to through this study as 'the boons of

socially-distributed cognition'. In contrast, Thompson's Soundpainting has no shortage of interaction, and thus no shortage of the regulatory function. Of particular interest is how a Soundpainter's choice of gestures allows ensembles move an ensemble sequentially towards self-support, and thus help to cognitively structure the creative process itself.¹⁸² In what follows I will extend the proposal that gesture can be mapped onto conducting as 'assisted performance'.

Mapping non-verbal communication onto conducting as 'assisted performance'

Conducting as 'assisted performance' is dependent upon responsive interaction between conductor and ensemble and, by extension, upon the regulatory function. When speaking in bodily terms, the regulatory function is, in fact, the pivotal difference between the emergent and projective conceptions of interpretation that I defined in Chapter 2. However, regulators themselves remain elusive in the work of orchestral conductors. Although it is true that without these embodied manifestations of interaction ensembles 'turn off' and stop engaging with a conductor, the fact that they are embedded in other categories of body language and are both performed and received in a largely unconscious way makes them difficult to recognize. Mathers argues that regulators are best displayed via eye contact and body orientation,¹⁸³ however, what kinds of eye contact and body orientation serve as regulators as opposed to illustrators is difficult to determine. As demonstrated through the earlier case study of Thompson's approach to Soundpainting, the regulatory function in conducting can work both directly and indirectly, and via both technical and non-technical body language. In Soundpainting orchestras as well as more traditional ensembles, it is through a variety of means that these conducted gestures encourage interaction with and between players.

Unfortunately, due to this problem in recognizing, let alone utilizing, the regulatory function, most discussions of conductors' body language lead away from, rather than toward, the interactive dynamics that underlie both the emergent conceptualization of interpretation, as well as socially-distributed cognition. Conductors and scholars who emphasize the value of Ekman and Friesen's categorization¹⁸⁴ and systems such as Laban movement types,¹⁸⁵ often claim that they are doing this in order

¹⁸² I argue that the same capacity can be developed in orchestras playing the standard repertoire, using an approach I outline below — albeit at a much less significant level.

¹⁸³ Mathers, 2009.

¹⁸⁴ McClung, 1996; Davidson, 1997; Eichenberger, 1994; and Mathers, 2009. McClung uses an extension of Ekman and Friesen, but relies on the same categorization. Even Wöllner is looking for 'intended expressiveness'.

¹⁸⁵ James Jordan, 1996; and Miller, 1988.

to help conductors become more expressive, arguing that this can be done by improving and increasing their variety of gestures. Nevertheless, looking at body language has not generally been done with the intention of developing the ability to offer responsive assistance; rather, it has been done in order better to express the ideas associated with linear causality, i.e. communicating the ‘composer’s intention’ or a conductor’s inner sound image. Some, such as Farberman, even go so far as to effectively advocate choreographing their gestures in advance. Yet the idea that making one’s conducting more expressive will automatically improve an ensemble’s performance, and therefore should be the aim of instruction, is problematic; in fact, as any professional player would say, the wrong kind of expressiveness from a conductor can lead to diminished returns. Researchers have also been responsible for encouraging this view simply by accepting it as a given; an example of this is Wöllner’s study relating to ‘which part of the conductor’s body conveys most expressive information?’.¹⁸⁶

A large part of the confusion here arises from the fact that ‘expressive conducting’ does seem to have an effect on performance. This is confirmed by House’s (1998) study which demonstrated that videotaped conductors who utilized more ‘expressive’ beat patterns encouraged more expressive performances from the players than non-expressive conductors.¹⁸⁷ However, this study also leads one to question whether non-interactive expressiveness is the best-case scenario. It seems reasonable that a player will perform more ‘expressively’ to a video recording of someone who looks sympathetic and who, in fact, is attempting to project an internalised version of the same work via gesture (in this case, emblems, illustrators, and affect displays), than to a recording of someone who is not communicating his own musical image and in the most coarse sense is just ‘beating time’. The ‘expressive conductor’ as reflected in House’s study is perhaps best represented by looking back to Model 2.3. In this model the conductor is influenced via a feedback loop by the score/work, as are the members of the ensemble; unfortunately the two do not connect. What is missing is the larger loop in which they influence each other directly, something possible only when people interact in real time.¹⁸⁸ I argue that Model 2.3 can only accidentally lead to a performance where the whole (i.e. conductor + members of ensemble) becomes ‘greater than the sum of the parts’. Yet, as the House study confirms, this is not to say that Model 2.3 cannot lead to expressive music-making. The high level of musicianship that

¹⁸⁶ Wöllner, 2008. He uses ‘intended expressiveness’ as a criteria of evaluation.

¹⁸⁷ House, 1998. He also demonstrated that players had a better attitude towards these conductors.

¹⁸⁸ Another strong argument for the advantage of Model 2.5 over Model 2.3 is that it conceptually takes into consideration that ensembles and conductors need to negotiate many non-notated parameters with each other directly. See Chapter 3 for details.

professional orchestras demonstrate regardless of who conducts them also makes this point. Expression is not dependent on interaction; however, without some form of interaction this expression will not go beyond what an ensemble could do on their own.

I contend that one of the best ways for conductors to address the elusive interactive component of conducting is to ‘assist’ performance through their own in-time use of body language. Although most of the work exploring the body language of conductors seems to have ignored responsive ‘assistance’, perhaps relegating it to rehearsal technique rather than to performance, things need not be this way. The first stage in this process is responsiveness, and as Shusterman has argued, the body is an ideal site for ‘meeting the other’; in fact, it is the only vehicle we have through which to do so,¹⁸⁹ and it goes without saying that ‘meeting the other’ is a prerequisite for any type of responsive ‘assistance’. Shusterman suggests that

Reflective awareness of our bodies can never stop at the skin; we cannot feel the body alone, apart from its environmental conditions, relations, and ambient energies. In our bodily actions, we are not self-sufficient agents but stewards and impresarios of larger powers that we organize to perform our tasks. As Emerson wisely observed, ‘we do few things by muscular force, but we place ourselves in such attitudes as to bring the force of gravity, that is, the weight of the planet, to bear upon the spade or the axe we wield. In short [...] we seek not to use our own, but to bring a quite infinite force to bear.’¹⁹⁰

I propose that ‘assisted performance’ is nothing more than an ‘attitude’ that creates the possibility for conductors to facilitate an ensemble’s self-support, and as a result to facilitate ‘bring[ing] infinite force to bear.’ This way of thinking does not guarantee outstanding performance, of course, but without the interactive content that it facilitates, such performances would not be possible.

In essence, conducting as ‘assisted performance’ involves choosing gestures that encourage the players to move towards ‘Stage 2’. These choices, because they are made by the body in real time, are infinitely flexible and can respond to changes in the conductor/ensemble relationship both moment by moment and in the time scale that exists between first rehearsal and performance. They can also respond by degree in the cases where not much development is possible. ‘Stage 1’, of course, works on a continuum of ‘more directive’ to ‘less directive’ (see Figure 5.5). Where a conductor is positioned within this spectrum is determined by any number of contingencies. However, because this approach is based upon moving in a direction rather than on

¹⁸⁹ Shusterman, 2008: 8.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 215.

focusing on any specific position or orientation, it has the advantages of being able to run on several levels concurrently;¹⁹¹ for example, one musical parameter might be ‘assisted’ via an illustrator while at the same time others are ‘assisted’ via affect displays and regulators.

This situation might sound complex; in practice, however, all that is involved is asking the question, ‘Can I get either the same or a better result if I choose a less directive gesture?’ A conductor can ask this question and embody the answer from any point on the continuum, even as one is backing away from a less directive position. I argue that all that is necessary is for the conductor to direct their choices towards gestures that are on the right of Figure 5.5, even if it means jumping backwards while continuing to face in that direction. In other words, ‘assisting performance’ refers to an ongoing orientation towards shared leadership, which is the interactive ideal, even if the possibilities for it occurring within a specific context are limited. This ‘to the right’ orientation is the embodiment of the attitude of listening to the other and leads naturally towards a more creative and interactive position.

This model also helps to explain the physical manifestations of the ‘conducted’ vs. ‘unconducted’ set points I have referred to through this study. For example, in Britten Sinfonia, which I have referred to as having a chamber music (unconducted) set point, regulators, as well as illustrators and affect displays with a regulatory function, predominate. The advantage of this approach to non-verbal communication, perhaps best exemplified in Case Study 4.4 through Shave’s rejection of the offered cue, is that it leads to the musical landscape becoming ever more highly saturated with both leadership and creativity.

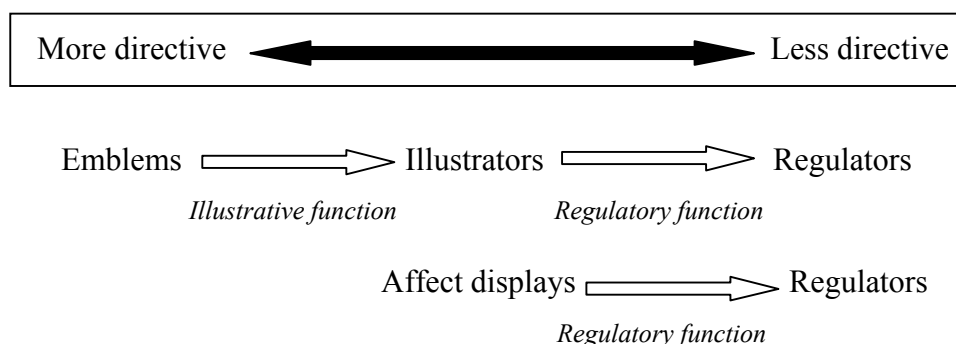


Figure 5.5. Non-verbal communication as ‘assisted performance’.

¹⁹¹ This applies to all ZPDs under Tharp and Gallimore’s framework.

Figure 5.5 provides a starting point for how a conductor might ‘assist’ performance in a similar direction. The categories on the chart move to the right, i.e. in the direction of regulators. This means that all gestures are heading in the direction of becoming movements that encourage the players to converse with each other and with any listeners who might be present. This movement towards regulators happens along paths that involve blending between one category of body language and another; for example, emblems take on an illustrative function before shedding their emblematic content by becoming illustrators. This process leads towards gestures that look less clear; however, sometimes it is necessary to show less to get more. To summarise, conductors can begin to ‘assist’ performance by allowing:

(1) Emblems move in the direction of illustrators

Emblematic movement is limited in terms of expressive possibilities for the reasons described above. Therefore making emblems, e.g. beat patterns, as illustrative as possible helps a conductor to connect better with an ensemble.

(2) Illustrators move in the direction of regulators

As illustrators become regulators they lose any sort of choreography and transform into something that is better at responding to in-time music making. For example, a cue moves from being an indication of where something is to happen, and becomes an invitation to join the in-time musical conversation.

(3) Affect displays move in the direction of regulators

Affect displays are often used to display the emotional content of music at the level of the general mood of a work. As these facial expressions move in the direction of regulators they are likely to take on the quality of response or reaction to the sounds that players produce.

(4) Adaptors are minimized or eliminated

Adaptors are not included on this model, as they create obstructions to decoding the meaning of non-verbal communication.

Towards Completion

Although the modern conductor's role is nothing if not ambiguous, this thesis has aimed to make it less so by exploring the common ground that exists between chamber music and orchestral music. In this shared space, the importance of leadership functions overtakes the more traditional focus on leadership roles. This starting point facilitated the study of the interactions and distributions of thinking and memory that take place within what I have called the 'orchestral network' (which consists of leaders, followers, and the common goal of bringing score to sound) and served as the basis for a research approach that strove to capture more accurately the often unacknowledged realities of orchestral practice and the modern conductor's role within it.

As I argued in Chapters 1 and 2, seeing the conductor's role from within this greater network of relationships not only contributes to redefining how orchestral leadership might be better understood, but also draws attention, upon acknowledging the codeterminacy of leadership and musical decision-making, to the limitations of our current conceptualization of interpretation. It seems that with the mythology of the 'complete conductor' comes the idea of the conductor projecting his or her fully-formed interpretation onto an orchestra, whereas when the conductor's role is seen from within the context of the 'orchestral network', one cannot help but see interpretation as an emergent phenomenon where conductors and players contribute to performance in bespoke ways. In fact, as I explored theoretically in Chapter 3 and practically in Chapter 4, the unique perceptual perspectives of conductors and players (via full scores and parts respectively) might be seen as a means whereby individual contributions to performances are maximized. The related insight that some orchestras contain more cognitive saturation than others is perhaps the most significant outcome of the study as a whole and one which I wish to develop here in these concluding remarks.

Cognition, in the context of musical performance, is a finite resource that might be managed in one of two ways. In an individual this may happen via a process of redistributing what is conscious to what is unconscious, something easily confirmed by the value placed by performers upon systematic rehearsal strategies that lead towards fluency and atomisation. As discussed in Chapter 3, the building of musical understanding involves engaging in a dynamic relationship between diachronic and synchronic time. Cone describes this engagement as culminating in a type of 'intentional forgetting'; however, he also acknowledges that what has been attended to

in synchronic time is never really forgotten when one re-enters diachronic time: what one part of the mind (or body) forgets, another often remembers. In ensemble performance a similar dynamic is at work, yet in this case, limitations in individual cognition can also be managed through distributing memory and thinking across the group. In essence, what is internalized in the solo performer can be externalized in the orchestra, and this phenomenon serves as a springboard for understanding the unique potentials for the conductor's role in orchestral performance.

As the Britten Sinfonia case study material presented in Chapter 4 demonstrated, prioritizing horizontal distributions of leadership functions is a highly effective means of achieving expert performance. When seen through the lens of socially-distributed cognition, these horizontal distributions also lead to more problem-solving ability (or 'computational capacity') from the group. This might also be seen as related to Hackman's claim that 'more leadership' is likely to be found in a group of this type than in a typical conducted orchestra — something that was confirmed both in my own observations of Britten Sinfonia at work and in interviews with the players themselves. Nevertheless, I went on in Chapter 5 to argue for the potential of even more 'more leadership' when a group with a chamber music 'set point', such as Britten Sinfonia, is conducted. In order to understand the basis of this assertion, it is necessary to return to Chapter 3's cross-domain mapping of musical-analytical space onto social-orchestral space via the musical landscape metaphor. Seen from this perspective, conducted orchestral performance might be conceptualized as an in-time performance of the process of analysis, with conductors playing an important role in the cognitive structuring of material.

When I say 'analysis' here, I am obviously not referring to musical analysis in the formal sense, but rather in the more general way described by Cone in relation to his synchronic 'Second Reading', i.e. examination of the parts of the musical work in relation to the whole with the aim of bringing into consciousness relevant musical relationships that, prior to analytical examination, went unacknowledged. When an individual player sees a work through this sort of analytical lens, more often than not cognitive limitations force the performer to leave music's essential diachronic nature behind temporarily. This sacrifice is made in order to develop a better understanding of the relationship between musical detail and the musical whole through comparison between layers and levels of musical material. Eventually this analytical 'reading' is 'intentionally forgotten' and the individual returns to an experience of music in time that (ideally) is informed by his or her analytical work.

It is not difficult to see the connection between this analytical way of exploring the musical landscape and what happens in the systematic practice and rehearsal of both soloists and ensembles. Musical time is also distorted here, e.g. slowed down, speeded up, and stopped, with the aim of clarifying the relationships between the part and the whole in a way that brings more of the musical landscape into consciousness both mentally and, if need be, physically and technically. In the end, appropriate rehearsal strategies move a player or ensemble towards ‘knowing the work’; I previously described this type of knowing as heading towards a type of ‘cognitive saturation’. The improved ability to conceptualize the musical landscape in multiple layers and at multiple levels and, perhaps even more importantly, develop the skill of moving between these layers and levels as necessary, are the fruits of both systematic practice and the analytical approach described by Cone.

Although I argue that all expert performance directs itself towards this state of cognitive saturation to some degree, soloists and ensembles go about this in the different ways described above, i.e. soloists by distributing elements of conscious material to the unconscious, while ensembles might also distribute thinking and memory across the group as a whole, thus increasing the overall cognitive resources of the orchestra. Throughout this thesis I have referred to socially-distributed cognition as a ‘boon’ in order to capture the unique potential inherent in this latter dynamic, and have argued that nowhere is this capacity more available than in the conducted orchestra. In chamber music performance, as in the early modern theatre, the parts themselves are distributed across the ensemble leading to the various advantages described in the first part of Chapter 3, including the benefit of the more refined approach to ensemble coordination actualized by Britten Sinfonia. However, when an ‘orchestral network’ already demonstrating a high degree of horizontal leadership can also draw upon the conductor’s gestural technique and perceptual perspective, it is possible to distribute cognition in ways beyond what is possible in an unconducted group. The examples of the cognitive structuring of shape and coordination provided in Chapter 5 give a good indication of how this might be achieved. By taking on responsibility for musical parameters that exist ‘at an elevation’ in the musical-analytical landscape, conductors seem to be able to facilitate expert performance in significantly less rehearsal time than what is achievable in unconducted groups, and this might be read as one example of how sharing cognitive responsibilities in this way can benefit performance. Distributing musical parameters vertically seems to require less distortion of musical time in order to achieve similar levels of cognitive saturation, at

least in the initial stages of rehearsal. Nevertheless, as Mark Padmore pointed out in an interview, the fact remains that although unconducted groups may start further behind, i.e. take more rehearsal time than a conducted orchestra to get to the same state of performance, they often end up further ahead in the long run.

In the final chapter of the study I addressed why this might be the case, and proposed how conductors might address this issue in practice. I began with an argument borrowed from Lawrence and Lorsch's contingency theory, namely that expert group performance is likely to exhibit both high differentiation and high integration. In my research I had noticed that Britten Sinfonia attained this state through a 'bottom-up' approach, i.e. through prioritizing horizontal relationships and only activating vertical strategies when absolutely necessary. When vertical leadership was no longer required it receded into the background. This way of working demanded a great deal from the individual players but enabled differentiation and integration to exist in a more or less balanced state: only rarely did one supersede the other for long.

In conducted ensembles, on the other hand, I argued that this balanced state rarely occurs. The high degree of integration present in conductor-led performance is achieved predominantly via a 'top-down' approach that, more often than not, happens at the expense of differentiation. Perhaps the best example of this is how easily the more subtle form of coordination that characterizes chamber music performance is eclipsed within conductor-led situations. The problem here has less to do with the fact that leadership comes, in the form of cognitive structuring, from the top down, than with the issue that the 'scaffolding' a conductor supplies can easily become a rigid part of the structure which, in turn, may lead to a certain level of dependency and decreasing level of engagement from the players. Said another way, whereas in Britten Sinfonia vertical leadership emerges out of a musical need and recedes when no longer necessary, in conducted performance vertical leadership — i.e. taking responsibility for a single parameter on behalf of the whole group — is less likely to recede when no longer required. As I discussed in Chapter 5, this situation is predicated upon the mythology of conductors as projectors of interpretation, as well as upon the nature of conducting technique itself. In both cases, conductors are often encouraged to be expressive and demonstrative rather than to work with an orchestra to help expression to emerge. In fact, our musical culture has very little language with which to address the alternatives to the dominant view, as the discussion in this thesis of shared interpretative practices and regulatory gestures has revealed. In summary, integration might be achieved by the conducted orchestra but differentiation is often stilted, and this limits the overall

cognitive resources of the group. In the end, what seems to be required is an approach to conducting that facilitates the same highly-differentiated and highly-integrated state exemplified by Britten *Sinfonia*, yet is able to get there from the top down rather than the bottom up. Applying Tharp and Gallimore's theory of 'assisted performance' to conducting and, later, mapping this approach onto Ekman and Friesen's categorisation of body language was undertaken with this in mind.

The main advantage of viewing conducting as 'assisted performance' is that it reconceptualises vertical leadership as no more than a means to an end of orchestral self-support. Needless to say, as an ensemble moves, with a conductor's help, towards self-support it also moves towards cognitive saturation and more 'more leadership'. In describing the 'assisted performance' model, the leadership functions of the conductor are explored in a way that draws attention to the unique ability conductors have to offer cognitive structuring to musical performance through both their perceptual perspective of the musical landscape and their gestural technique. Yet, and just as importantly, the framework also demonstrates how a conductor's contribution to performance is likely to change over time and in relation to the various contingencies of performance, including the amount of rehearsal time available, the demands of the repertoire, and the skill and motivation of the performers.

It is in the 'assisted performance' model that one can easily begin to see that leadership structures in chamber and orchestral music fall onto a continuum with vertical leadership functions playing a vital role in both cases, albeit in different ways. It also becomes clear that conductors are able to add unique value to orchestral performance by accepting responsibility for musical parameters that can only be seen from 'an elevation' in the musical landscape. In this way, conducted performance can be seen as a socially-distributed performance of the analytical task. Difficult though it is to conceptualize interpretation as socially-distributed, conceiving analysis in this way may be even harder. Nevertheless, when one looks at the fruits of musical analysis (as defined above) set side-by-side against the benefits of highly-differentiated and highly-integrated orchestral performance, the connection between the two is undeniable, as is the importance of the conductor's role in the process. Perhaps the best examples of this are reflected in what is achievable in very limited rehearsal time with the world's finest orchestras and conductors. In these contexts, cognitive saturation is so great that the relationships between the parts and whole of the work, embodied by the orchestra and the conductor in concert, are being developed and worked out with very little distortion of diachronic time. Here Cone's Second and Third Readings happen together or almost

together. I would argue that this shared, yet profoundly individual, discovery of ‘how the music works’ in real time is at the root of what orchestras and audiences find compelling in orchestral performance at its best. This thesis has proposed that conductors, in what they do and don’t do, play a crucial role here. There is little doubt that many conductors know and are acting upon this insight to some degree. Nevertheless, it is possible that few conductors or musicologists realize that one of the most useful springboards for understanding the modern conductor’s role can be found in acknowledging the role’s incomplete-ness. In this way, and also through the recognition of how conducting as ‘assisted performance’ helps move orchestral performance continually ‘towards completion’, the present study offers a novel contribution to the literature.

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Appendix

List of fieldwork interviews

Interviewer: Leslie Anne Lewis (unless otherwise indicated)

1. Interviews with Britten Sinfonia section leaders

Jacqeline Shave, 1 st violins	Air Studios, London	16 February 2011
Miranda Dale, 2 nd violins	West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge	9 November 2010
Caroline Dearnley, cellos	St Johns Smith Square, London	18 February 2011
Joy Farrall, principal clarinet	Queen Elizabeth Hall, London	30 November 2010
String principals	West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge	29 October 2011
String principals	Theatre Royal, Norwich	13 February 2011

2. Interviews with Britten Sinfonia string sections

First violins	West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge	7 February 2011
Second violins	The Warehouse, London	5 February 2011
Violas	West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge	29 October 2010
Cellos	Air Studios, London	16 February 2011

3. Interviews with Britten Sinfonia administrative staff

Britten Sinfonia offices, Sturton Street, Cambridge, 10 November 2010

David Butcher, Chief Executive
Sophie Dunn, Creative Learning Director
Nikola White, Artistic Planning Director
Hannah Donat, Concerts Director
Hannah Tucker, Orchestra Manager

4. Interviews with Britten Sinfonia guest artists

James MacMillan	Liverpool Street Station, London	20 October 2010
Mark Padmore	Birmingham Town Hall	11 February 2011

5. Interview with members of the Academy of Ancient Music

Wigmore Hall, London, 26 January 2011

6. Britten in America tour blog, January/February 2010

Interviewer: Lizzie Ball, Britten Sinfonia violinist

Pekka Kuusisto
Nico Muhly
Mark Padmore

7. BBC interviews with Britten Sinfonia members, recorded in 2007

Interviewer: Lyndon Jones

Miranda Dale
Martin Outram
Caroline Dearnley
Joy Farrall
David Butcher
Sophie Dunn