

A GRADUATE CURRICULUM FOR ORCHESTRAL CONDUCTORS

BY

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To the memory of Sarah Knapp Kidd, a unique and inspiring musician, silenced far too soon.

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Chapter 1: Essential Skills for Conductors

An investigation of the skills necessary to a conductor must begin with an attempt to understand the art of conducting itself. Further, we must come to understand the institutional responsibilities given to the conductor in a variety of potential settings. Thankfully, there is literature that can help us come to grips with these two aligned roles.

The Conductor as Musician: Study, Rehearsal, and Performance

Most commentators on the conductor's role as a musician focus on three separate aspects: preparation and study of the score, rehearsal of the ensemble, and performance. Typically, the vast majority of discussion is focused on preparation, particularly the formation of an artistic vision for a work and planning of conducting gestures. Some mention is made of rehearsal technique and dynamics, and performance is left as something of an afterthought, or a natural result of the earlier processes. This is an outgrowth of a reality of conductors' lives: time spent alone with a score dwarfs time spent rehearsing, which in turn constitutes considerably more time than performance. It is also a product of a basic assumption that the primary factor determining good rehearsal and performance is solid preparation.

Study: Building Knowledge and Vision

The premium placed on score preparation highlights a central difference between conducting and other kinds of music making, which has been famously articulated by Bruno Walter—the assistant conductor to Gustav Mahler who went on to have a major career in Germany and America in the middle of the twentieth century. “What distinguishes the activity of the conductor from that of all other musicians? ... To [the conductor] alone ... is denied the inestimable advantage of being able to try out matters

in the quiet of his study.”¹ Walter is acknowledging that there can be no process of trial, error, and experimentation—no practicing—for a conductor once in front of the orchestra.

Instead, the conductor must arrive ready to perform as flawlessly as is possible, placing focus entirely on the preparation of the ensemble, without the benefit of having the ensemble itself as a tool in his or her own preparation. This is, of course, a simplification. Most importantly, it makes no mention of the role that experience—gained in rehearsal, performance, or through previous study—plays in a conductor’s development and preparation over a longer period of time. As Charles Munch, the famed Music Director of the Boston Symphony wrote. “We never stop learning!”²

What is it to have properly studied a score in preparation for rehearsal and performance? Gunther Schuller—former principal horn of the Metropolitan Opera, composer and conductor—presents one definition. “[W]e must know everything it is possible to know.”³ This simplified statement is worth quoting here because it is so ubiquitous in the education of conductors. Routinely, students asking about score study are left with few guidelines as to what it is they are actually meant to be achieving with study, or how they should go about achieving it, only the missive that they should know everything about a work.

1. Paul Hamburger, trans. *Bruno Walter: Of Music and Music-Making* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1961), 83.

2. Leonard Burkat, trans. *Charles Munch: I Am a Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 36.

3. Gunther Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 10.

There are some good reasons for this. Each conductor has different strengths, weaknesses, interests, and instincts. Study is a very private and individual affair. There may be some concern that imposing one method of study, or one set of priorities in study, will limit a student in a very elemental way. Also, in an ideal world of limitless time and ability, a conductor would indeed know everything about every score before their first rehearsal.

These concerns, however, must be weighed against the greater concern that faced with a score and little guidance, a student will quickly become overwhelmed or spend time laboring unproductively. Also, without being taught some sort of solid study technique as part of their education, students will almost inevitably waste a great deal of time finding such a technique on their own. With guidance, educators can put students in a position to start seriously assimilating repertoire and refining their study process to be best-suited to their individual musicianship.

There is some divergence among conductors as to the goals of study, but there is also frequently overlap and repetition from source to source. Authors tend to fall into one of two general categories. The first focuses on conducting gestures, ensemble techniques, and knowledge useful to rehearsal and performance: building knowledge about a piece and problems of its execution. The second focuses on formation of an artistic concept and interpretation for the work at hand: forming a vision of what the work can and should be. The two positions are, of course, complementary.

Building Knowledge

Nicolai Malko, the great Russian conductor and pedagogue, sums-up the more technical approach to study rather neatly.

"[K]nowing the notes and the instrumentation is not enough. The conductor must understand the content of the music. This includes ... the structural peculiarities (of form, phrasing, harmony, and of the technique of the individual instruments) plus the recognition of the problems that must be dealt with in the rehearsal. These problems may be technical in relation to the instruments; they may be concerned with difficult rhythms, with passages that may be out of balance when performed by the prospective orchestra; they may be concerned with the actual baton work, namely, how best to show the music through gesture."⁴

Although Malko suggests that knowledge of notes and instrumentation is “not enough” this knowledge remains essential. Here, again, authors diverge as to what knowledge is required and how it is best obtained. In general there is agreement that it is vital for the conductor to work through each and every instrument’s part, throughout the score. Although some advocate doing this with the aid of a piano, most suggest internal singing and imagining of each part. The aim of doing so is to construct a mental sonic image of each chord and passage as fully as possible.

This step alone poses a serious challenge to many students. It requires a thorough background in solfege or similar aural skills, skill at the piano sufficient to cope with the rigors of transposition and reading multiple staves, an intimate acquaintance with each instrument and instrument family’s potential sounds, and a high degree of discipline, patience, and imagination. Our first goal, then, must be to ensure that students are either given these skills and knowledge in the course of their study, or that they are set on a clear path towards obtaining them independently.

Some comfort can be found in the ubiquitous presence of ear training and piano proficiency classes at accredited schools of music, but standards vary wildly between

4. Elizabeth Green and Nicolai Malko, *The Conductor and His Score* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1975), 13.

programs. As such, basic ability in sight singing, aural comprehension, and reading clefs and transpositions must be evaluated, and weaknesses immediately addressed. Indeed, some effort must be made to turn what is often a basic weakness for many students, where they have received little excellent training in the past, into a strength. Teaching discipline and imagination is a bit more difficult, but teachers can foster discipline by providing structure, and imagination by encouraging creativity and exposing students to a wide range of musical possibilities.

Malko's desire for study to identify "structural peculiarities" and "problems which must be addressed in rehearsal" brings to light other essential problems a conducting student's education must solve. First, study of form and analysis is typically not covered in sufficient depth in undergraduate curricula. As a result, entering students, even if they are required to immediately enroll in graduate courses on formal analysis, will need some assistance both in building these skills and in understanding how they can be applied to score study.

Understanding the "technique of the individual instruments" is similarly problematic. It is, effectively, impossible for any conductor to be a proficient player of every orchestral instrument. Still, it is neither unreasonable nor undesirable to require that conductors be proficient on at least one instrument, and that they be as experienced and proficient a performer of chamber and ensemble music as is possible. Such experience provides the student with first-hand knowledge of the ways musicians individually and collectively achieve musical values of performance (good blend, unified attack, pacing of dynamics and tempi, etc.).

This requirement is also not assured by a typical undergraduate education at even a well-regarded school of music. Here again, entering candidates' levels of experience and understanding will vary widely depending on everything from their choice of instrument to the quality of the chamber music coaches and ensemble directors with whom they have worked. Proficiency must be assessed early.

Even if we could assume a very high level of proficiency on an individual instrument, a deep understanding of chamber music, and a significant body of large ensemble experience of every entering candidate, this would not be enough to provide the technical understanding at both the level of the individual player and at successively larger levels of ensemble that is necessary for a conductor. While it is not important for the conductor to have first-hand knowledge of each and every instrument of the orchestra, it is very important for him or her to have studied the specific challenges that face each and every player. (This is an important distinction, because it brings to light not only the different challenges faced by violinists as opposed to oboists, but the different challenges faced by musicians in different parts of the same section.) This knowledge of ensemble technique is not covered in classes in orchestration, since those are focused fundamentally on the possibilities of various instruments individually and in combination in composition, not on performance. Although a conductor's understanding of ensemble technique will grow through a lifetime of experience, it is possible to give students a solid foundation in the classroom so that they may begin to assess the various difficulties of a work from the orchestra members' perspectives in their study. Teachers can also help students to understand the deeper musical and psychological forces motivating the function of a large ensemble.

Last, but in no way least, we come to Malko's requirement that study provide some insight as to "how best show the musical gesture" with one's physical conducting. This has been the primary goal of much conducting instruction in the past, and there are many excellent general practices that can be borrowed from current curricula. Thankfully, a student's manual gestures reflect, often very clearly, their level of musical knowledge and understanding, and can be an excellent tool for evaluation. Gesture can be readily demonstrated in a lesson or conducting seminar, and easily compared from student to student. It is also, importantly, often the primary point of evaluation for entry-level conducting positions in the job market. "Can this conductor beat clearly?" will always be asked before, "Is this conductor a brilliant interpreter?" by selection committees of every stripe—if they ever even ask the second question.

Achieving the large goal of helping students build knowledge and technique requires a blended approach of old and new. There is no reason to abandon the traditional conducting seminar for teaching of gestural language and evaluating study, but these activities must be supplemented by the building of foundational skills and knowledge in sight-singing, analysis, and ensemble techniques.

Building an Artistic Vision

"[T]he ideal musical interpreter will be one who is wholly taken up with the work, wholly in line with it, but who, at the same time, conjures up the full force of his personality—and this includes, of necessity, his delight in his own talent for interpretation.... I cannot, however, give any practical advice as to how one is to achieve this incorporation of foreign matter, this identification of a union between interpreter and work. It is an act of grace that occurs when a true musician humbly and intensively studies a work with which his being is in accord."⁵

5. Paul Hamburger, trans. *Bruno Walter: Of Music and Music-Making* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1961), 23-28.

That such a towering figure as Bruno Walter would have difficulty defining what it is to “interpret” music in concrete terms, and have even greater difficulty prescribing a path towards such an interpretation, is very telling. Granted, Walter has chosen the rhetorically facile tact of talking in the most sweeping generalities, from a decidedly romanticized and metaphysical view of interpretation. As such, he seems to address the issue, and spills much ink in doing so, without revealing much that might be useful to a student striving to better themselves. It is almost certainly true that the goal of interpretation is a “union” of musician and music, but such a relationship is both so abstract and so intimate that it is more aptly described as a matter of spirituality, or instinct, rather than a concrete goal for conductors to realize.

Sadly, these are the same types of abstractions often used as justification for glossing over interpretation in the education of conductors. Too often, interpretation is presented as too complex and mature a topic for still-developing conductors, or as a sort of mystic ability gifted upon the talented. Failing to seriously address issues of interpretation with students leaves them at the mercy of their own experience and with no framework for understanding what interpretation is, how best to do it, and where to look for guidance and inspiration. Nor is it sufficient to simply provide students with our own interpretive ideas, absent deeper explanation of our decision-making process, which might inform their future choices.

Erich Leinsdorf—assistant to both Bruno Walter and Arturo Toscanini and Music Director of the Cleveland and Boston Symphony Orchestras, among others, during a long career from 1934 to 1980—provides a very practical approach to the interpretive

challenge in *The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians*.⁶ Notation and scores, Leinsdorf reminds us, are imperfect tools for transmitting musical information through the ages. Further, inherited traditions of the modern era cannot be trusted to be reflect the composer's wishes, since they may not be the same as the traditions of the composer's own age. To help fill in these gaps, he argues for a body of knowledge about the composer's contemporary world at-large, his or her compositional practices as revealed by revisions and a large-scale knowledge of the composer's works, and musical traditions and practices contemporary to the composition.

His chapters on tempo put this knowledge into practice, providing several detailed explanations of Leinsdorf's decision-making process in coming to an ideal tempo for a given movement or passage. Central to the Leinsdorf's vision of the conductor's role is seeking out and identifying the composer's wishes and presenting the composer's music in a way that is fresh and vital in the modern world. Unfortunately, Leinsdorf doesn't explore his methods for negotiating this particular balancing act between past and present.

Leinsdorf's assertions concerning the limitations of notation are not universally accepted. A contrasting viewpoint is available in Gunther Schuller's *The Compleat Conductor*.⁷ Schuller examines a host of recordings, and uses them to systematically evaluate the interpretations of various conductors across eight major works, mostly decrying performances he finds to be out-of-line with the composer's wishes as expressed

6. Erich Leinsdorf, *The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1981).

7. Gunther Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

in the score. Some of his insights are interesting, even revelatory, but most interesting from the perspective of an educator is that Schuller represents the opposite extreme from Walter's metaphysical approach to interpretation. For Schuller, interpretation is concerned overwhelmingly with finding ways of following the notated wishes of the composer as precisely and with as little additional alterations as possible. Failing to do so is evidence that "nobody gives a damn about the composer."⁸ Performance traditions, even contemporary to the composer, do not enter the discussion. Practicality of performance, or the conductor's own instincts or feelings about a passage aren't particularly material. All that is truly relevant is on the page. What is unfortunate, perhaps, is that Schuller's process of surveying recordings could yield a multitude of possibilities for students rather than simply providing cannon fodder for his condemnation. With instruction, however, such an approach might be placed in a productive context.

It is not necessary to a student's education that they are presented with one of the above viewpoints, or any viewpoint of interpretation as definitive and absolute. What is absolutely necessary is that students be given a glimpse into the ways different musicians approach the task of interpretation so that they can begin to craft their own views and techniques.

Rehearsal: Understanding into Action

As has already been mentioned, much less attention has been lavished upon the conductor's role in rehearsal and performance than in study. This is, in part, because rehearsal and performance tend to be thought of as less of a subject for intellectual

8. Ibid., viii.

analysis than study or a conductor's gestures. An individual conductor's personality and unique musicianship also loom much larger in these performing contexts.

There are general suggestions, scattered throughout the literature, on rehearsal especially. On the whole, conductors agree that rehearsals must: be efficient, be cordial and collegial, be focused as much as possible on higher issues of music making, secure technical details of the score, and provide the ensemble with a clear interpretive vision. These larger goals are supported by more material advice. Keep comments short, focused, and select wording carefully for maximum clarity. Allow the ensemble to continue playing through individual errors and issues rather than stop for each mistake so that the rehearsal's music-making isn't constantly halted. Appear professionally dressed and groomed. Use the plural "we" in place of the singular "I," and foster collective involvement wherever possible. Make use of approaches that enable the ensemble to sort out technical issues themselves, such as playing a passage under tempo with certain clear goals (e.g., focus on correcting woodwind intonation, or clarifying a particular rhythm or articulation). All of this advice is well and good, but the most helpful bit of advice to a young conductor, and perhaps the most frequently repeated, is to observe as many conductors as possible in rehearsal.

There may be an inclination, born of a desire to protect students from negative influences, to limit this observation to only the best, most-qualified conductors available. Certainly, the best musicians should be observed closely and command the majority of students' focus. Also important, however, is the observation of less-than-excellent conductors. They are more likely to make mistakes that inexperienced conductors might,

and seeing the negative impact those mistakes have on a rehearsal or performance can be very effective in preventing their occurrence in a student's conducting.

It is also very important for conductors to observe rehearsal of different types of ensembles: professionals in various contexts (including rehearsals for run-outs and pops performances), conservatory students, youth orchestras of varying ages, and amateur ensembles. All require a different approach to the relationship between conductor and ensemble, have a unique set of priorities of rehearsal at each step in the process, present a different set of conditions with regard to technical ability and musical knowledge, and have essentially different underlying goals of the musical endeavor. All, however, are settings conductors emerging from graduate programs can expect to encounter at the start of their careers. Even those few students lucky enough to become assistant conductors to major orchestras will be likely asked to work with children, students, and amateurs from time to time as part of their outreach activities, or serve as artistic director of a youth orchestra program with several orchestras of differing ages and abilities. The vast majority of students, meanwhile, will find themselves working with these types of groups on a regular basis at the start of their careers.

Wherever possible, guest speakers who have specific knowledge of various rehearsal processes and ensembles should be invited to present their unique perspective and answer students' questions. This will both contextualize what the students have observed and expose them to the specific concerns and aims of different conductors in different settings. If students can be given some first-hand experience working under these various conditions, all the better.

One area relevant to rehearsal that is given a good deal of attention in the literature is making use of markings in the score to ensure that it can be more easily read for essential information in front of the ensemble. The most detailed methods are provided by Nicolai Malko and Gustav Meier. Malko's system primarily highlights phrase lengths and dynamics.⁹ Meier's includes graphical representations of the movement of a conductor's attention among the various sections and instruments of the orchestra throughout the score, which he calls the "zig-zag way," and a notation system for indicating specifics of conducting gestures.¹⁰ Both also make suggestions as to how to simplify reading complex meters. All these systems could prove useful to students, both in study and as practical tools limiting dependence on peering down at the score during rehearsal and performance.

Performance: Knowledge and Action Focused

Relatively little has been written about performance itself, at least if one is looking for concrete goals, methodologies, and practices. The fleeting, spontaneous nature of excellent performance fosters a perception that knowledge about it cannot be structured or easily transmitted, only experienced first-hand. This may very well be true, but that doesn't free educators of the obligation to help their students discover what good performance is.

One issue that is discussed at some length is whether or not to conduct scores from memory in performance. This issue probably attracts a lot of interest because of

9. Elizabeth Green and Nicolai Malko, *The Conductor and His Score* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), 30-76.

10. Gustav Meier, *The Score, the Orchestra, and the Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 156-221.

what it implies. Conducting without a score suggests an impressive level of knowledge, especially considering that each member of the orchestra is performing with the aid of their part. The scoreless conductor, it seems, has apparently managed the incredible feat of memorizing everyone's part in order to perform free of all earthly burdens.

There is some truth to this perception. It does require a certain level of knowledge to conduct without a score, even if all one accomplishes in doing so is making the right gesture in the right direction at the right time. There is also something to be gained in performing without a score. Even if no other benefit is derived, it does free up the conductor's eyes to remain fixed on the orchestra, and frees the left hand from the necessity of turning pages. But there are also limitations to the promise and the practice of conducting without a score, varying from conductor to conductor and from situation to situation.

Most obviously, to fulfill the conductor's role in performance it is not enough to be prepared to lead everything as it unfolds correctly. It is also necessary to be able to deal with and correct errors that creep into the performance. This raises the bar for knowledge and the stakes for failing to possess such knowledge considerably. It is easy to imagine many situations where conducting without a score would be fraught with difficulty for this reason alone.

Opera, in particular, is one area where performing without a score can be very dangerous. Singers, unless very experienced, skilled, and well-rehearsed, often make mistakes even when given clear direction—as a result of the complexities of functioning as both a musician and an actor at once. Adjusting to these errors without the aid of a score, while possible, requires a deep body of knowledge about the music, the experience

to anticipate where and what errors are most likely to occur, and the ability to either prevent or correct them.

In the context of a conductor's education, conducting without a score is an excellent tool to evaluate a student's level of preparation. Being forced to assimilate a score to the point where a student can at least conduct through the work or section of the work, answer questions, and identify errors, is a test of the boundaries of his or her ability to learn through study. Whether or not students choose to perform with a score is an issue they can sort out for themselves at a later date.

Aside from the question of whether or not to use a score in performance, there remains the question of what constitutes excellence in performance. Perhaps the best answer, written by Eugene Ormandy—the long-time Music Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, can be found in Elizabeth Green and Mark Gibson's *The Modern Conductor*.

“It is in performance that the conductor operates upon the highest and most demanding level.... He must, while identifying himself with the music, keep a constant watch upon the progress of the work, allowing a portion of his analytical mind to constantly evaluate the sound and pace of the performance. He must be prepared to instantaneously make any adjustments, large or small, in the actual performance required for the fullest realization of this inner concept.... At such a moment the experience of a conductor tells, for the young conductor, new to such emergencies, tends to do one thing at a time. Music does not permit this, for it flows in time, and all adjustments must be super-imposed upon the uninterrupted continuum.”¹¹

The essential dynamic of a conductor performing excellently, then, is a careful balance between union with the performance as it unfolds and modulating that unfolding

11. Elizabeth Green and Mark Gibson, *The Modern Conductor, Seventh Edition* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2004), xii.

to be in concert with an ideal vision of the work. Happily, Ormandy has also helped us along the way to finding a means of teaching this: experience.

For myriad practical and political reasons it can be very difficult to give a graduate student conductor enough podium time, especially in performance, especially with ensembles of a high enough caliber that excellent performing is possible. Despite these challenges, it is absolutely essential that students be given opportunities to perform with the best ensembles available, as frequently as possible. It is simply impossible to learn to be a performer without performing. Performing only with sub-standard ensembles, like playing on a sub-standard instrument, doesn't help students realize their potential and discover their true strengths and weaknesses.

The Conductor as Administrator

There is some misperception that the expanded and expanding roles of conductors off the podium, now typical in many institutions, are something new. If anything, the music-centered life which was available to some conductors working at the highest levels of the profession during the second half of the twentieth century was an aberration from what has typically been the case throughout history. Toscanini—the great Italian maestro who, among other major achievements premiered Puccini's *La bohème*—is popularly quoted as having said that an opera house's Music Director should be “first to unlock the theater doors in the morning and last to lock them at night.” Indeed, throughout history conductors have been responsible for myriad administrative and institutional tasks both near and far from the podium. Although the administrative responsibilities of a conductor will vary widely from one context to the next, it is possible to organize an approach to teaching skills necessary to the most important and frequently encountered tasks.

All conductors will, many times in their careers, be part of an audition process for orchestra musicians. In the world of large, unionized, professional orchestras the Music Director's role is often primarily advisory, as part of a larger committee. At successively smaller institutions, however, more and more responsibility for auditions and searches will fall to the conductor. Knowledge of best practices in organizing and executing auditions is, therefore, essential. Experience listening to auditions and observing audition committees at work is very helpful, as is talking to conductors and orchestra managers about the search and audition practices utilized by various organizations. Conductors will frequently be tasked with assigning seating based on audition results, so knowledge of the requirements of each position in the orchestra is, here again, essential.

Conductors will also be required to program concerts, either alone or in collaboration with others. Familiarity with various guidelines of programming for different ensembles and in different settings must be taught. Thankfully, inventing sample programs and debating their relative merits are favorite activities of most conductors. One dimension that isn't a particular favorite in such discussions, but is absolutely vital today, is an understanding of the financial implications, both of costs and likely revenues, of each and every program. It is also very important for emerging conductors to be able to both program the music for educational and pops concerts and to develop scripts for the commentary during them.

Conductors need to have at least a basic understanding of marketing. This is true both for their personal careers and in their work with various organizations. It becomes helpful in programming processes that include marketing considerations (as nearly all do outside of academia, since those considerations inform expected revenue from sales),

helping boards decide on effective ways of promoting ensembles when there isn't a marketing professional available, and in self-promotion—where enlisting professional assistance is costly and finding effective assistance often proves difficult.

Conductors, by virtue of the highly visible nature of their leadership position, are frequently required to serve as spokespersons for their ensembles. This extends from making announcements and providing commentary before or during performances, to speaking to civic organizations like Rotary Clubs, to meeting one-on-one or in small groups with donors and board members, to dealing with the press. This requires a deep knowledge and ability in verbal and interpersonal communication. Some assistance from experts in public speaking would prove useful to students, as would opportunities to speak in public about music and the orchestra, and to observe and reflect upon others doing the same.

The conductor's role in fundraising and financial matters is primarily focused on an understanding of artistic costs and in communication, skills which are explored above. Working with major donors, in particular, is an important part of every Music Director's job, and well-maintained and positive relationships with such donors are absolutely vital. Especially at smaller organizations, however, it is very useful for conductors to have a more sophisticated knowledge of the best practices employed by fundraising professionals, so they can bring that knowledge to the aid of their fledgling organizations.

It should be further noted that orchestras are increasingly focusing efforts at the intersection of fundraising, marketing, and public relations. This work is primarily referred to as audience development and patron engagement. The general goal of patron engagement is to develop ways of deepening the financial commitment of the audience,

both through promoting increased sales to a given patron or demographic and in fostering new charitable giving. Efforts to expand the demography of the audience and donor base fall in the category of audience development. Conductors are expected to be part of both processes, and to help provide and implement artistic efforts that aid them. Also, conductors are increasingly being asked to provide some vision for audience development as part of their hiring process, especially when applying for Music Director positions.

Regardless of what administrative task a conductor finds themselves doing, it is essential that they keep the artistic output of the organization, or part of their organization that is their purview, at the forefront of their mind. No other individual in the organization is equally responsible for the maintenance of high artistic standards. No one else is able to both judge what exactly those standards should be for the organization and effect the changes necessary to attain them.

Toward a Curriculum for Graduate Students in Conducting

A conducting curriculum must teach a wide variety of aligned and interdependent skills. Students must learn to work from sound aural, analytical, and technical skills; have a body of knowledge about orchestral performance and literature that will inform their study, rehearsal, and performance; receive opportunities to work with ensembles first-hand; and come in contact with ensembles and conductors working in all manner of conditions. They must graduate with the tools they need to lead and contribute effectively in organizations of every size. They must find their voices and learn how to be heard.

Doing all of this in the short span of four academic semesters will be no easy task. In some areas students will have to be set on a path towards success rather than prepared

fully while in school. But they must be thoughtfully and rigorously prepared if they are to face this highly-demanding profession with some hope of success.

Chapter 2: Curriculum Values, Strategies, Benchmarks, and Resources

In order to come to a firm understanding of exactly what and how we will be teaching as part of this curriculum it is important to articulate values, strategies, and benchmarks for the degree as a whole, each year, and each semester. It is also important to understand the time and resources we will require and the limitations that we will likely encounter.

The skills the curriculum is built to address are articulated in Chapter 1, but they are worth summarizing here.

Table 2.1. Essential Skills

- 1) The gestural language of conducting must be learned so that it is musically clear and confident.
- 2) Approaches to score study must be taught and skills necessary to it evaluated and reinforced: sight singing, knowledge of historic practice, analysis, systems of marking, and techniques of memorization.
- 3) Students must graduate understanding the internal workings of the orchestra and the ways in which conductors help orchestras progress in individual rehearsals and over longer periods of time.
- 4) Students must graduate with knowledge and experience necessary to fulfill their roles as organizational leaders, communicating effectively and managing professionally.

The strategies for addressing these goals have their roots in a small number of educational and musical values. These values inform the choices that will be made in selecting strategies and benchmarks to meet the curriculum's goals.

Essential Musical and Educational Values

A conductor is only as good as his or her understanding of the music and commitment to a vision for its performance. Education should focus on helping students

build their conducting on understanding of the score and ensure that their ability to internalize and interpret scores is continually developing.

Conducting is an act of leadership. To lead effectively requires a deep knowledge of both the demands being placed on the members of the orchestra in any given musical situation and of the orchestra's natural practices of coping with those demands. It requires excellent interpersonal and communication skills. Leadership off of the podium has similar requirements: knowledge of the organization's internal and external operations and the ability to work with others and communicate effectively to improve and promote the organization's endeavors.

Teaching is more effective when it engages students in multiple ways. Pedagogy that includes demonstrating conducting gestures, evaluating video, discussing programming, lecturing, performing analysis, reading, and completing projects requiring leadership and public speaking engages students in different and important ways. Combining these learning modalities can help build efficiency and enhance the efficacy of teaching.

As mortal humans, teachers are inevitably limited in their own experience and knowledge. Also, the period of study in graduate school is quite small compared to the lifetime of work on which a student conductor will hopefully embark. Every effort must be made to offer students more than we can give them as individuals and to prepare them to be independent, lifelong learners about their art form.

Key Strategies

The primary strategy of the curriculum will be to coordinate efforts to teach students on the podium and off, creating a dialogue and synergy between our seminar on

orchestral literature and our seminar on orchestral conducting. This will enable us to help students delve as deeply as possible into each score they prepare. It will make it easier for students to transfer the analytical techniques and practical knowledge gained in the classroom to their work on the podium. Coordinating studies also allow students to focus very clearly, and under a teacher's guidance, on a small number of pieces at a time and on a process for learning them, rather than on two sets of works in two different classes.

This focus on a small number of pieces at any given time is a second essential strategy of the curriculum. Given the large body of repertoire and composers conductors must be familiar with, limiting the number of scores students explore in a given week may seem counterintuitive. Here we must remember the underlying value of students continually deepening their knowledge and ability with each new work. This is much harder to achieve if the student's attention is divided among too many pieces, or if the pace of study is beyond a student's ability to keep up. Students should still be presented with as large a swath of repertoire as practicable, and the selection of works should be made with care, but we must remain sensitive to the quality of students' work at all times and balance the primary goal of pushing them to achieve more with each score against the secondary goal covering more repertoire.

Involving students in as many different roles as is possible in the running, rehearsal, and performance of both the orchestra and opera productions their teacher is overseeing and any other orchestras and opera companies in the community, is an important strategy towards helping them build a body of experience and contacts that will help them establish their careers once graduated. This will be much easier at large universities and in large urban centers than in rural areas or at small colleges, but it is

absolutely essential. This requires that instructors actively maintain good professional relationships both inside and outside the university, so that their students will be welcome throughout the musical community.

Finally, although students will be given opportunities to conduct, rehearse, and perform throughout the curriculum, the general strategy is to make the second year more performance-intensive, and the degree will culminate in a final project where students conduct either a major work or half of a full program with a major ensemble.

Benchmarks

Moving from broad goals and strategies to individual lessons requires mapping out intermediate benchmarks for students' learning and performance and a basic framework of progressive study to meet each educational goal. The major skill areas are presented as italicized headings, with benchmarks for each enumerated in tables and explanatory narrative as required below. Second year benchmarks are grouped together because their pacing should be tailored to the student and will be less-easily dictated at that point in the course, or because they apply to the year as a whole.

The gestural language of conducting must be learned so that it is musically clear, and confident.

Table 2.2. Benchmarks for Conducting Technique

First Semester

- 1) Students should be able to beat clearly in slow and moderate tempos with clear legato and wide dynamic range.
- 2) Students should be able to cleanly beat mixed meters in moderate and fast tempos.
- 3) Students should master fundamentals of posture and gestures of prepping tempo in various situations.

Second Semester

- 4) Students should develop patterns of cuing, learn to deal with various stop and start situations, and be able to control tempo changes through a wide body of repertoire.

Table 2.2 (Continued). Benchmarks for Conducting Technique

5) Students should gain some basic experience conducting as accompanist.

Second Year

6) Students should be competent conductors of recitative in the first semester.

7) Students should be able accompanists to both instrumentalists and singers in the first semester.

8) Students should conduct increasingly complex music with increasing command and musical clarity.

Establishing the fundamental techniques of beating and podium gestures must be accomplished within the first year so that students have time to make their technique as musical as possible by graduation, through the experiences provided throughout the course. One effective approach is to sort the presentation of technique into categories which very clearly feel and look different. On one extreme are techniques of beating clear rhythm at fast tempos, in a compact pattern. At the other are techniques of beating clear dynamics and line in slow tempos, using more broad gestures. Isolating and focusing on each extreme will help students find the basic building blocks of a much more subtle and malleable technique.

Conducting music in mixed meters is very effective in helping to develop proper techniques for faster tempos. Clearly conducting mixed meter forces students to focus their gestures on rhythm and to beat cleanly, succinctly, and energetically without tension—exactly the qualities of gesture that are required in conducting any music in a fast tempo. Such passages also frequently force students to swap quickly between basic beat patterns, and occasionally require beating patterns of more than six beats, solidifying these basic facets of technique.

Styles of beating in slow tempos, meanwhile, are all based on variations of legato beating with clear direction. To develop these gestures music should be chosen with clear, long, melody lines that demand smooth conducting at various tempos, dynamics and changes of dynamics.

Problems with posture and the left hand must also be corrected early, as they can quickly become bad habits. The progressive approach to conducting transitions and rubato of various types is borne of the reality that, although the techniques for conducting these transitions are relatively straight-forward, those techniques must be mastered in simple situations before they can be applied to more complex ones. Conducting as an accompanist is given special attention because it is fundamentally different than conducting in situations where the conductor is the sole director of musical choices.

Approaches to score study must be taught and skills necessary to it evaluated and reinforced: sight-singing, knowledge of historical practice, analysis, systems of marking, and techniques of memorization.

Table 2.3. Benchmarks for Score Study

First Semester

- 1) Students should be able to sing melodies bordering on the atonal, and harmonies through the late Classical and Beethoven accurately and fluently, whenever there is an opportunity to review materials in advance.
- 2) Students should be able to present an analysis of harmony and phrase structures of Classical movements that can help guide interpretive decisions.
- 3) Students should be able to utilize Malko and Meier's systems of marking mixed meters, dynamics, and conductor attention.
- 4) Historic practices of accentuation, articulation, and phrasing should be demonstrated in analyses, rehearsals and performance.
- 5) Memorization of complete dance movements and the expositions of sonata forms should be routine.

2.3 (Continued). Benchmarks for Score Study

Second Semester

6) Students should be able to sing all inner voices and arpeggiate all vertical harmonies in even highly-chromatic music.

7) Less-harmonically-rigid structures should be explored, techniques of analysis that focus on motivic elements should be presented, and systematic charting and memorization of larger forms should be performed.

8) Historic concepts of tempo and tempo modification should be covered and brought into discussion and analysis.

9) Memorization of a complete Classical sonata form should be demonstrated

Second Year

8) Historic concepts of ornamentation, embellishment, and bowing should be covered in the first semester.

9) Students should be introduced to specific techniques for internalizing operatic material.

10) Successively larger passages should be conducted from memory. At least one less-rigidly-structured movement or work of larger scale should be conducted from memory.

It is important that approaches to score study be largely covered in the first year so that students may profit as much as possible from performance experiences. Sight singing must become second nature for students to begin assimilating scores with accuracy and fluency, so it is sensible to require that students sing more and more of the scores they are studying in class, beginning with melodies. Systems of marking phrases and mixed meters, Malko's system for marking dynamics, the basics of Meier's concept of the "zig-zag way" and its notation are also covered early so students may quickly begin utilizing and adapting them in their own study. Analytical tasks begin with movement types that students likely have some experience with and move on to assignments of size and scope that most will not have encountered before. Various analytical methods—harmonic, motivic, etc.—can be employed as studies progress.

Study of historic performing practices are spread throughout the semester, and the second year, because they are important to cover in some depth, are not applicable to all pieces performed, and represent a large body of knowledge. It is further important to note that memorization will not necessarily be required in performance. Instead, it is to be used as a tool for evaluating a conductor's knowledge and understanding of a score.

Students must graduate understanding the internal workings of the orchestra and the ways conductors help orchestras progress in individual rehearsals and over longer periods of time.

Table 2.4. Benchmarks for Rehearsal and Performance

First Semester

- 1) Students should be able to identify obvious errors of pitch, ensemble, or rhythm while conducting, and to identify more subtle errors when observing rehearsal.
- 2) Students should have a sound understanding of fundamental principles of sound production and playing for all orchestral instruments.

Second Semester

- 3) Students should demonstrate knowledge of ensemble performance techniques for all orchestral instruments, individually and in choruses.
- 3) Students should readily identify any mistakes in the performance and rehearsal of ensembles they are conducting or observing.
- 4) Students should demonstrate their ability to clearly conduct complex rhythms in performance.
- 5) Students should be able to be relied upon to efficiently rehearse an individual movement or small work to a high degree of proficiency, regarding fundamentals in particular, without requiring much guidance.
- 6) Students should be assigned a piece for performance with the school's main ensemble that presents more challenges than the work performed in their first semester.

Second Year

- 7) Students should perform a concerto or large concert work in the first semester and music equivalent to half of a performance in the second semester, as a final project, with the school's best-available orchestra.
- 8) Students should be entrusted with sectional and full rehearsals of both orchestra and opera programs without active guidance.

Table 2.4 (Continued). Benchmarks for Rehearsal and Performance

9) Students should build a sophisticated understanding of how to refine the sound of individual players and choruses of instruments.

10) Students' rehearsal and performance should evidence efficient, effective, musically-focused conducting that rises to the level of a young professional.

11) Students should be required to observe orchestra and opera rehearsals outside of the university, especially by professional ensembles.

12) Any small opportunities to work with ensembles outside of the university should be encouraged.

Here we separate our approaches between time inside and outside of the classroom. Some of the material covered in this goal, especially factual knowledge regarding the peculiarities of each instrument family and orchestral position, can be addressed in the classroom, primarily in the seminar on orchestral literature through discussion of readings and relating their content to pieces being studied. The bulk of the material to be learned, however, must be covered in less-traditional settings. Among these is the first-hand knowledge of ensemble techniques provided by rehearsing and performing chamber music. The great benefits of chamber music performance make it advisable to require chamber music study throughout the two years of coursework. Students should also be required to attend masterclasses on the performance of orchestral instruments and voice on a regular basis, especially when those classes are focused on orchestral or operatic performance itself.

The primary consideration for benchmarks in this area, however, is to present progressive challenges in rehearsal and performance, giving students successively more difficult and larger tasks. For the final project, if the student presented a concerto in performance during the first semester of their second year, they should instead present a symphony or symphony-sized work in their second semester. If they did not present a

concerto, it is best that they now present one alongside a large overture or concert piece, so they are assured experience working as an accompanist.

Students must graduate with knowledge and experience necessary to fulfill their roles as organizational leaders, communicating effectively and managing professionally.

Table 2.5. Benchmarks for Administration

First Semester

1) Students should be able to write clear and concise program notes.

Second Semester

2) Students should demonstrate practical knowledge required to effectively run a collegiate ensemble.

3) Students should demonstrate proficiency in programming for various situations.

4) Students should introduce pieces they are about to conduct from the podium, in concert.

Second Year

5) In the first semester, readings on finding and attaining an entry-level position should be assigned and discussed.

6) In the second semester, specific concerns of organizational leadership, marketing, and fundraising should be addressed.

7) Students should be responsible for presenting pre-performance talks.

Benchmarks in this area of study are primarily focused, as in performance, around completing successively more difficult and involved tasks. Also, study will take place primarily outside of the classroom and seminar environment, where it is harder to evaluate students' progress and account for an instructor's involvement.

Involving students in the day-to-day operations of their school's primary orchestra is an especially helpful way of introducing them to the challenges of orchestra management. In the second year, time can be spent learning about ensembles and organizations beyond the university environment. If an excellent survey course on leadership in general, or on non-profit leadership in particular, is available at the

university, it should be required during the second year. If possible, it is also advisable that students work together with their instructor and the school's main ensemble to present both an orchestral pops and an educational concert during their instruction. The practices of programming, scripting, and rehearsing these concerts are all very different from those for traditional programs, but often central to the lives of young professional conductors especially.

Resources for Study and Instruction

Possibly the most limited resource in teaching students is time. The course of study will take place over four academic semesters in two years, towards a master of music degree in orchestral conducting. Admittedly, a longer period of study would be desirable but there are practical reasons for this limitation. First, it is generally the period of study accepted for master's degrees in music. Second, adding additional semesters will increase the cost of educating each student significantly and lower the number of graduates from the program over a given period of years, neither of which are likely to be seen as advantageous. Finally, working during the summer semester is problematic. Student ensembles are rarely available on campus during the summer and students are well-advised to spend summers participating in festivals and conducting workshops away from their school to gain additional perspective and make new professional contacts.

Given the typical academic calendar of sixteen weeks per semester, that leaves sixty-four weeks to educate students. There are, however, other demands upon a student's time in most master's programs. Students are required to take classes outside their major for a significant portion of their degree: ensemble requirements, core curriculum requirements, electives, etc. There are also other requirements on a conducting teacher's

time, typically including overseeing at least one orchestral or operatic production at any given time and planning and preparing for at least one more. This generally leaves time for a twice-weekly seminar on conducting, where a live ensemble of some sort is available for students to refine their conducting technique, and a two-or-three-times weekly seminar in orchestral literature where issues of study, analysis, style, orchestra administration, and other matters which do not require the presence of an ensemble can be covered.

A student's typical week of coursework in the major will consist of two to four hours of conducting seminar and two to four hours of seminar on orchestral literature. The larger layout of coursework in the major will be four semesters of seminars on conducting and orchestral literature, and one semester of final project—which will be conducted as an independent study.

The question of whether or not to add private lessons to this general schedule should be determined carefully. More one-on-one attention is generally helpful to students. If a program has four or fewer students, however, each student is likely to receive a great deal of attention without another regular burden upon an instructor's time. It is very possible that lessons will be required at some times during the semester, for example when the student is preparing a work for performance or is having a particular difficulty, but not others. Given this variation of need, it is best to confine private lessons to office hours, with an understanding that lessons will be expected and granted on an as-needed basis, rather than a regular commitment of a teacher's time.

Aside from time, the next most serious limitation on a conductor's education is the availability of ensembles, with which to practice in conducting seminar and to

rehearse and perform. In short, the better and richer these resources the better-off student conductors will be. This is for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is simply no substitution for learning in front of a live orchestra. Individual musicians respond very differently than choruses of musicians. Making eye contact with a single pianist for all woodwind and brass cues is nothing like finding your way among a sea of faces for cues with a full choir of instruments. Relationships between the size of gesture and the response of the ensemble are much easier to manage with a small group than a large one. Most importantly and obviously, however, even the best-played pianos are incapable of a sustained or growing tone, so it is harder to teach conducting winds and brass with good line and clear breaths with only pianos as substitute.

At absolute minimum students must have a small ensemble of strings—at least a quintet—and piano available during their conducting seminar. If possible, it is greatly preferable that an actual orchestra be regularly available. It is important that these players be compensated for their time as part of a graduate assistantship or work-study position, so that well-qualified students will have an incentive to participate and they can be held accountable for practice, attendance, etc. This, unfortunately, makes it all the harder to provide a large ensemble.

Since finding pianists with excellent score reading skills is frequently very difficult, it is also best to choose music available in piano reduction so that, with some simple editing letting the player know what material is not exclusively scored for the strings, wind and brass parts can be read with ease. Since many of these reductions are scored for either two pianos, or four hands, two pianists and or two pianos will often be required.

However the parts are covered, it is essential that the seminar ensemble's membership be accomplished enough that they can put their focus squarely on the conductor. The better the ensemble is able to pay attention and respond, the easier it will be for students to hear and feel the different reactions of the ensemble to their developing technique. Also, the better the ensemble, the wider the swath of repertoire that can be covered in the conducting seminar.

The level of participation students have with a school's regularly performing ensembles is also very important to their education but difficult to dictate. Tradition and politics may make it difficult or impossible for students to conduct the school's primary ensemble, but failing to provide such opportunities is inadvisable. Even the best ensemble at the best of schools will not be as responsive to a conductor as an experienced professional ensemble. A school's second ensemble is often comprised of non-majors or less-capable students, and will be significantly less responsive still.

Gaining actual rehearsal and performance experience, with the best ensemble available, is absolutely vital. Failing to give students rehearsal and performance opportunities is to try and train them to be a musician without any opportunity to make music. Giving them only experience with sub-par ensembles is the rough equivalent of having piano students practice and perform on out-of-tune pianos with uneven actions and broken strings: students might learn something from the experience, but it won't be the right thing.

Further, a degree and even a glowing recommendation from a teacher are rarely enough to convince employers to hire students or offer them an audition. If students are to be competitive, they will need opportunities to collect video footage. Especially while

technique is still developing, very little of a given performance experience will be representative of a student's best conducting, and even less will be usable if the ensemble is deficient or if the conductor is being forced to conduct beneath his or her ability to accommodate its weaknesses—cuing entrances constantly at the expense of line, over-conducting dynamics, etc. Further, viewers of conducting videos frequently put the blame for any problems with the performance on the conductor, as they have no way of knowing how the performance they are viewing relates to the general performing abilities of the ensemble being conducted.

All of this said, however, it is essential that students receive guidance and feedback when working with their peers. At first, it is important that students be directly observed, ensuring that they establish a good relationship with the ensemble and have fundamentals of rehearsal under control. Over time, students can be left increasingly on their own, but their time in front of the ensemble will always be better spent if a teacher can be present to point out areas in need of improvement and make suggestions either during or following the rehearsal. It would also prove useful to create, or help students create, a written rubric for self-evaluating each conducting experience both in rehearsal and in seminar: taking time to articulate clearly what succeeded, what areas required improvement, and possible strategies for continued improvement. In addition to establishing healthy habits of self-reflection, this will provide documentation for students to track their progress throughout their course of study.

Another important resource to students and instructors, which helps significantly with the basic problems of conductors not being able to see themselves while they conduct and of students rehearsing without a teacher present, is video recording and

playback equipment. Often, problems that might be difficult to feel or hear on the podium become obvious upon reviewing footage. This is especially true because the basics of conducting require much more effort and attention at the beginning of training than they do as experience is gained, and being able to attend to anything but one's own actions can be very difficult. Reviewing conducting footage from seminar also helps students repeat each experience and the lessons learned during it.

Having experience operating video equipment and using editing software is a helpful practical skill as students prepare applications for workshops, festivals, additional academic degrees, and jobs, without the aid of a professional video production team. Thankfully, the costs of high-quality video and audio recording equipment has diminished significantly as high-definition recording has become the norm in consumer electronics. Editing software is also much easier to use, more powerful, and less expensive than ever before. This said, if it is possible to provide students with professionally-filmed footage of their performances especially—through an art center or school recording department—it could save them a great deal of time and energy that could be better-spent focusing on matters of making music.

As a practical matter, a collection of batons of various types and from various makers for students to experiment with could be of considerable assistance. Little attention is generally given to this issue in the confines of instruction, but finding a baton that he or she is comfortable with is an important basic step in a student's development. Having a number of possibilities available saves students some of the hassle and expense of the years of trial and error most conductors go through before finding a suitable baton, even if their tastes change as their technique matures. Indeed, one way to build this

library of batons relatively quickly would be to solicit students to donate or sell the batons they've bought but no longer use to the program. Giving each baton a unique identifying mark and keeping a record of the model and make of each, as far as is possible, will also prove helpful as most makers do not print this information on the batons themselves.

It would also prove useful to have access to one or more libraries of video recordings of conductors, especially those who lead the field, available for viewing. Possibly the best resource for exploring the contemporary world of conducting at its highest level is the Berlin Philharmonic's online Digital Concert Hall. Available for a fee, the service not only allows students to view more than forty live internet broadcasts of Berlin Philharmonic performances each season, but allows them to stream more than 200 performances from years past. These archives contain, essentially, a very large catalogue of performances by the top conductors in the world today, with one of the world's top orchestras, in performances which cover the full orchestral repertoire from the Baroque to contemporary works.¹

A final word must be said about the number of students in the graduate conducting studio at any one time. Given the significant resources required of both an instructor and a school to train a single conductor, it is important that the number of students be constrained as much as possible. This, of course, may conflict with a university's administrative policies requiring a teacher to maintain a studio of a given size. Every effort must be made to inform administrators of the realities of conductor

1. Berlin Philharmonic, "Digital Concert Hall," Accessed December 27, 2014, <https://www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/home>.

education and make them aware of the very real danger that a larger studio presents, especially at schools with only one capable orchestra and one conducting teacher. While potentially attractive in the short term, increasing the size of the school's conducting studio beyond the available resources and opportunities for performance may produce conductors of inferior training and ability, who will not compete well once graduated, leaving the school's reputation harmed in the long term.

Chapter 3: Course Materials Evaluation

Along with the many scores that must be evaluated and selected as part of the curriculum, there are a number of potential sources for information on orchestration and ensemble techniques, conducting study and score preparation, etc., that can be of use in constructing lessons and courses for graduate conductors. Narrowing the field to those written explicitly for the orchestral conductor or conducting student limits the number of choices significantly, as does focusing on those titles available in English and still in publication.

Importantly, texts addressing physical technique are not included. Primarily, this is because physical technique is much easier to demonstrate than it is to write about. As such, these texts have at best a marginal value to students already enrolled in a seminar on conducting with a competent teacher and the opportunity to conduct live musicians regularly. A number of the leading texts currently available are listed in Appendix A.

Score Study and Preparation

Some works bridge the gap between practical knowledge relevant to the ensemble, and interpretation and score study. Most prominent of these is Clive Brown's *Classical and Romantic Performance Practice 1750-1900*.¹ In it, Brown assembles and summarizes more than thirty years of research, from a very wide body of sources, into the evolution of performance practice. In the past, students hoping to fill in the many gaps in Classical scores especially were left either relying on the received knowledge of one or two teachers and what they could infer from recordings and performances they admired,

1. Clive Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

or with the extremely daunting task of trying to sort through the many primary sources of performance practice information: pedagogical treatises, composer correspondence, contemporary accounts, contemporary theoretical treatises, etc. Now, Brown makes it easy to benefit from the last few decades of research on the historical development of conventions of accentuation, bowing, vibrato, phrasing, tempo, notation, and ornamentation in performance.

Far from being a prescriptive manual of interpretation, Brown's book presents a very full picture of the many subtleties, contradictions, and range of interpretations that are associated with one or another dimension of performance in a given time period. As such, rather than limiting a conductor's options in performance it provides a rich and assured context for making interpretive decisions. It also provides many glimpses into the ways musicians contemporary to a given composer thought and wrote about music, which sometimes contrast surprisingly with modern conventional wisdom and dialogue.

For an activity so central to a conductor's task, there is relatively little written on specific approaches to score study that could be easily brought into the classroom. Books by Leinsdorf, Weingartner, and Schuller fall frequently into long passages either ranting against practices they find objectionable in other conductors, or arguing forcefully for a specific interpretive decision they have made, rather than providing guidance to students in finding interpretive solutions of their own.² All, however, especially Leinsdorf, detail examples of musical logic that can be of aid to developing conductors. Books by Malko,

2. Erich Leinsdorf, *The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1981); Felix Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies and Other Essays* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969); Gunther Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Meier, and Green focus on practical aspects of study: marking scores, charting scores, and selecting and notating appropriate conducting gestures, and attempt to provide a framework for working from ignorance of a score to being prepared for rehearsal and performance.

Malko and Green's primary work covering score study, *The Conductor and His Score*, offers what may be the most helpful guide to score study readily available.³

"Chapter 3: Studying the Score" lays out Malko's approach to score study: examining instrumentation, "rationalization" of the score (Malko's term for examining large-scale structure, marking periods and phrases with attention to how similar units contrast, and considering phrase direction and continuity of line through tempo changes), style (here defined as examining the gap between the composer's notation and his or her likely performance intentions), understanding the work's strengths and weaknesses, and separating inherited traditions from wise musical choices. What's most striking about Malko's description is that he does a very good job of articulating the musical decisions each step is meant to help a conductor recognize and make, while also articulating their importance in front of the orchestra.⁴

In subsequent chapters Malko offers a very practical approach to marking scores to aid in reading them when on the podium in particular.⁵ Green also offers a reductive charting technique for aiding in memorization in "Chapter 5: Imagination, Interpretation, and Memorization." Conductors will, of course, make different choices than Green as to

3. Elizabeth Green and Nicolai Malko, *The Conductor and His Score* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975).

4. *Ibid.*, 12-29.

5. *Ibid.*, 30-76.

what musical dimension they choose to use as their memory cue for a given phrase, but the general charting scheme and process of producing successively more abbreviated charts as memorization takes place is very helpful.⁶

Gustav Meier's book *The Score, the Orchestra, and the Conductor* is far less succinct and focused as Malko and Green's.⁷ (In fairness, however, Malko and Green leave many issues tying study to conducting for their later books, whereas Meier merges the discussions of study and conducting throughout.) It contains, however, a wealth of practical, actionable approaches to score study and marking.

Two systems of notation Meier describes are potentially very helpful. First, is Meier's system for notating the various types of gestures employed for a given passage, transition, etc., which he describes in the first chapter.⁸ This could be utilized to help students both articulate and remember beating decisions they have made in the course of score study, so that they can learn a consistent approach to the technical challenges of a given passage.

More helpful to students in the long-term, as gestural decisions become more second-nature, is a graphic notation for recording sequences of cuing and pivots of attention from one section of the orchestra to another, which Meier calls "the zig-zag way," described in his fourth chapter.⁹ This allows a conductor to summarize a sequence of actions that take place on the podium over a phrase or period with a single chart that can be further simplified as study progresses. Meier compares the necessity of

6. Ibid., 77-90.

7. Gustav Meier, *The Score, the Orchestra, and the Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

8. Ibid., 7-9.

9. Ibid., 156-222.

internalizing these sequences, especially where they prove complicated, to the necessity for a soloist to practice difficult passagework until it can be performed with ease.¹⁰ Meier then provides some guidance in deciding upon the zig-zag way for a given piece or passage in the following chapter, providing details of his own zig-zag way for passages from a number of standard works.¹¹

After his chapters on score study and conducting, Meier offers a great deal of practical advice on rehearsing, programming, auditions, maintaining a good relationship with the orchestra, appendices of voice types used in opera, notation of instruments and transpositions, etc. None of these topics receive exhaustive treatment, but all are comprehensive enough to be of significant use, especially his various tables of notation, harmonics, and voice types.¹²

Rehearsal and Performing Techniques

Possibly the most widely-used text for teaching orchestration is Samuel Adler's *The Study of Orchestration*.¹³ Its wide use is well-earned. Its author is a well-respected composer and teacher, currently on the faculty of Julliard. Its successive editions have eliminated many errors that were inevitably present upon the first writing of such a comprehensive work. A set of compact discs can be purchased, which provide a sonic representation of the many written musical examples throughout the text. It addresses the issues of range, register, sound production, extended techniques, fingerings, bowings, etc. for myriad individual instruments. It has several "orchestration in practice" sections,

10. Ibid., 221.

11. Ibid., 243-298.

12. Ibid., 299-476.

13. Samuel Adler, *The Study of Orchestra, Third Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2002).

which analyze the various choices composers have made, illustrate general principals of the arrangement of voices across a chorus of the orchestra, etc. It is an impressively comprehensive guide for the composer or arranger. What it does not do, however, is help the budding composer understand the limits and difficulties inherent in performing a given composition once it has been created, especially if that work is being performed by a less-than-world-class ensemble.

Filling in some of the gaps is Kent Kennan and Donald Grantham's *The Technique of Orchestration*.¹⁴ Although organized in a very similar fashion to Adler's work, *The Technique of Orchestration* puts a premium on writing for instruments in groups and on understanding what the general limits and problems of range in particular are for soloists, orchestral musicians, and students. The Adler is more comprehensive but Kennan and Grantham do a better job of highlighting the idiomatic limitations of each instrument group, individual instrument, and general choice of orchestration.

Moving from the perspective of a composer to that of a conductor or orchestral player, however, neither book offers much help beyond a thorough understanding of what composers in the modern age might expect to be possible. For an essential understanding of how to best identify music that is difficult to execute, and how to cope with it, we must turn to two works by British authors: Norman Del Mar's *Anatomy of the Orchestra* and Christopher Adey's *Orchestral Performance*.¹⁵

14. Kent Kennan and Donald Grantham, *The Technique of Orchestration* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2002).

15. Norman Del Mar, *Anatomy of the Orchestra* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1987); Christopher Adey, *Orchestral Performance: A Guide for Conductors and Players* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1998).

Anatomy of the Orchestra is organized much like the orchestration texts mentioned above but takes the perspective of player and conductor. As a result, much more information of practical use to performers is given. Del Mar's work functions primarily as an introduction to the problems faced by performers in a wide variety of settings and repertoire. It does little to explain how to deal with such problems, however, beyond bringing awareness of their existence, and it does not detail problems faced by various players in the same instrument group (e.g., details of the difference, from a player's perspective, of sitting in the first versus the last desk of a string section, or the requirements for excellence in a first versus fourth horn player). For this level of detail and for a systematic, comprehensive, attempt at understanding orchestral technique for ensembles ranging from young student ensembles to professionals, we must turn to Christopher Adey's book.

The book's main three sections, each internally organized much like the Del Mar, move progressively from "fundamentals" of ensemble performance relevant to each instrument and instrument group to refinement of sound, technique and musicality in "the infusion of quality." Thereafter, all manner of practical and musical issues that apply more to the conductor than the players are presented in two concluding sections, including information useful to the conductor outside of rehearsal or performance such as programming music and auditioning new members.

The only concern in using Adey's *Orchestral Performance: a Guide for Conductors and Players* is simply that it has not found a strong foothold in the community of educators, conductors, and players in the United States. As such, it has a history of being rather difficult and expensive to obtain and is not a widely-known work.

It is, however, still in print in the United Kingdom and is currently available very inexpensively as an electronic book.¹⁶ One additional concern is the book's substantial size, 847 pages.

The writing style is rather pedantic and one can sense Adey struggling to infuse the text with as much information and wisdom from his long career as possible at every turn. He repeats himself a great deal on fundamentals of performance, such as the need to encourage players to listen to each other as much as possible, and the overall organization of the text only encourages this practice.

Reading the book cover-to-cover is a daunting task, and could easily prove unfruitful and simply frustrating to a student without experience as a guide. But, especially with *Anatomy of the Orchestra* as a primer, the Adey could rather easily be used as the foundational text for a course of study on orchestral techniques. Its contents will prove helpful in coming to understand important practical factors like orchestra seating, layout, and internal leadership. Since we can hardly expect incoming students to be proficient on all instruments of the orchestra, or indeed more than one, it will also help students come to a better understanding of the challenges faced by players of instruments different than their own.

A special problem of orchestral technique, inadequately explored in the Adey, is that of bowings. This is because, while a conductor will never be expected to assume responsibility for anything but issues of ensemble technique for other groups of the

16. Amazon.com, "Orchestral Performance: A Guide for Conductors and Players [Kindle Edition]," accessed December 27, 2014, http://www.amazon.com/Orchestral-Performance-Guide-Conductors-Players-ebook/dp/B008214VOK/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1419717678&sr=8-1&keywords=adey+orchestra.

orchestra, he or she is frequently put in situations that require a firm understanding of orchestral bowing. Especially when dealing with non-professional orchestras, bowings are typically left to the conductor to create or obtain and support from string principals may be severely lacking. Failure to identify or correct issues of bowing can be detrimental to a rehearsal or performance, frustrating players, wasting valuable time, and creating situations where the conductor's musical requests simply cannot be met. Further, the need for a text and instruction on this issue is not isolated to conductors without experience performing on string instruments, as the specific needs of orchestral string players, and the needs of students still developing their techniques only become apparent after years of performing with professional ensembles and teaching students of many ages.

Thankfully, Elizabeth Green's *Orchestral Bowings and Routines* offers a systematic approach to understanding techniques of orchestral bowing as they apply to various repertoires and players of various levels of proficiency.¹⁷ Like the Adey, it begins with fundamental principles that will apply to all levels of players and moves progressively towards techniques employed by more advanced and professional musicians. The primary hesitation to giving the book to students as an infallible guide is that, although Green does her best to explain the various nuances that go into a choice of bowing, it is essentially impossible to do so in a text. Nor does her work reflect historically-informed traditions of bowing, which can make an interesting and important addition to the process.

17. Elizabeth Green, *Orchestral Bowings and Routines* (American String Teachers Association, 1990).

Administrative Responsibilities and Building a Conducting Career

There are a number of biographies and autobiographies of conductors (several of which are listed in Appendix A) but these are frequently unhelpful to conducting students, as they focus primarily on a conductor's individual history rather than their music-making process. Books that tread the line between being targeted for general audiences and conductors seeking guidance from an experienced master do exist, however, and can help students consider what their larger lives as working conductors and music directors will require and how they can meet those requirements. Diane Wittry's *Beyond the Baton: What Every Conductor Needs to Know* attempts to systematically examine all the myriad, mostly non-musical, issues a conductor must deal with away from the podium and outside of their study.¹⁸

Perhaps the best-known of the books by a recognized master of conducting is Bruno Walter's *On Music and Music-Making*. His opening chapter is decidedly esoteric. It begins. "Two and a half millennia ago, Pythagoras proclaimed his teaching on the harmony of the spheres."¹⁹ From the second chapter onward, however, the prose becomes successively more concrete in its descriptions of Walter's approach to conducting, even offering a summary of considerations he found important in performing Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion* in the fifth chapter. The language throughout is florid, especially in English translation, and Walter's aesthetics are very clearly grounded in a musical-spiritual Romantic ideal that was already beginning to fade from the mainstream at the

18. Diane Wittry, *Beyond the Baton: What Every Conductor Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

19. Paul Hamburger, trans. *Bruno Walter: Of Music and Music-Making* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1961), 11.

time the book was written. But Walter's thoughts are lucid, and presented with the passion and sound arguments of a seasoned and experienced artist.

Much more intimate in its feel, and must less concerned with the internal life of a conductor and more with his relationship with the orchestra and the world at large, is Charles Munch's *I Am a Conductor*.²⁰ Like *On Music and Music-Making*, Munch's book is not particularly concerned with autobiography. (Munch's general biography is primarily confined to the book's introduction, written by Leonard Burkat, the book's translator, and to "Chapter 2: Years of Apprenticeship.") The text is peppered with anecdotes, to a greater extent than Walter's, but all are clearly meant to serve as witness to one or another argument Munch is making.

Like Walter, Munch comes from an essentially nineteenth-century musical aesthetic. "Let no one be astonished then that I consider my work a priesthood, not a profession."²¹ But his general philosophy regarding his relationship with his fellow musicians and his work is extraordinarily humble, compassionate, and personally-demanding. In less than ninety pages of text, Munch provides a great deal of guidance and perspective: on the early years of a conductor's training, score study, rehearsal, planning and executing performances, the contrasting demands placed upon orchestra musicians and conductors, and his own approach to continually improving his work while maintaining a personal equilibrium that enables him to continue working.

Where Walter and Munch books are passionate and very personal, Diane Wittry's book is decidedly practical. She begins from the very start of a conductor's career,

20. Leonard Burkat, trans., *Charles Munch: I am a Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).

21. *Ibid.* 9.

offering advice on selecting a graduate program in conducting and general training, various paths to employment, and navigating the often rough waters of a conductor's first job in the first three chapters. Thereafter she addresses issues of artistic leadership, including a process for defining and articulating artistic vision, programming, organizational leadership, fundraising, and achieving career longevity. Where Walter and Munch make for very interesting, helpful, and inspiring reading, Wittry's book rises to the level of being a viable option for the basis of coursework addressing off-podium concerns. There are some minor holes in her prose: specifics of what selection committees are generally looking for in conducting videos, a relative lack of emphasis on the importance of face-to-face networking, little information on marketing or using sales data in programming, no mention of the current necessity of educational programming helping educators meet state and national educational standards, and a general emphasis on theoretical paths to a "national" career with little or no discussion of building a career or livelihood in a single region or market. These could easily be addressed, however, through guided class discussions.

Additional Reference Works

Two additional books seem indispensable to the working conductor. The first is Russ Girsberger's *A Practical Guide to Percussion Terminology*.²² This is a glossary translating the many terms for percussion instruments used throughout the repertoire into modern English. As many words have multiple meanings, depending on composer,

22. Russ Girsberger, *A Practical Guide to Percussion Terminology* (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida: Meredith Music Publications, 1998).

nationality, or time period, it also deals with these variables in a compact, easily navigated, format.

Another essentially indispensable book is the *Polyglot Dictionary of Musical Terms*, frequently indexed under its Latin title *Terminorum Musicae Index Septem Linguis Redactus*.²³ This is, without question, the most comprehensive dictionary of musical terms used in Western art music available in print. It gives translations or equivalents for musical terms from seven languages—English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Hungarian, and Russian—and attempts to include terms from the whole of music history, although it is more focused on words no longer in frequent use in modern language.

More specific glossaries are also available, for example translating the many, often lengthy, performance indications in the works of Mahler into English. These can be obtained through the Conductor's Guild and have been created by David Daniels.²⁴ Also very helpful are phonetic and word-for-word English translations by Nico Castel that he has assembled for many of the most frequently-performed operas, in a series of volumes published by Leyerle Publications.²⁵ Finally, as a general tool for programming, David Daniel's *Orchestral Music: A Handbook* provides an excellent general listing of works in the repertoire, including overall and movement timings, instrumentation, publishers, etc.

23. Horst Leuchtman, Ed. in Chief, *Terminorum Musicae Index Septem Linguis Redactus*, Second Edition, (London: Bärenreiter, 1980).

24. Conductor's Guild Store, "Daniels: Mahler Glossaries," accessed December 27, 2014, <http://www.conductorsguild.org/product/daniels-mahler-glossaries/>.

25. Leyerle Publications, "Opera Libretti," accessed December 27, 2014, http://www.leyerlepublications.com/?v=op_lib.

It also includes a number of helpful lists and indexes, organizing the repertoire in various ways: date of composition, composer nationality, instrumentation, etc.²⁶

Required Materials and Readings

Of these books only three should be required purchases for students' coursework: *Classical & Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900*, *Beyond the Baton: What every conductor needs to know*, and *Orchestral performance: A Guide for Conductors and Players*. The remaining works can be made available using a library reserve desk and or electronic scans of required readings, with particular emphasis on works by Green, Malko, Meier, and Munch.

26. David Daniels, *Orchestral Music: A Handbook, Fourth Edition* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2005).

Chapter 4: Auditions, First Semester Course Outline, and Sample Lesson

Application and Audition

One of the challenges facing conducting programs is finding students qualified to engage in serious study of conducting at the graduate level. Even conservatory undergraduate programs often graduate students without all the training in aural skills and music theory necessary for in-depth score study and good on-podium responsiveness. An understanding of basic ensemble dynamics, preferably gained through performing chamber music at a relatively high level is also quite important but may be lacking, as not all undergraduate curriculums put a premium on small ensemble performance. Further, music history programs tend not to focus too keenly on orchestral music, as they must address the general progression of styles across multiple genres and often find more fruitful examples in other genres. Students typically have taken at least one conducting course, but those courses frequently focus almost exclusively on baton technique at its most basic level.

Application materials should aid in identifying those candidates most likely to be well-qualified for graduate study. They should not be relied upon exclusively, however, except as a means of limiting the number of candidates auditioned. Undergraduate transcripts should be examined for evidence of successful completion of coursework sufficient to provide solid foundational knowledge of music theory, orchestration, and general music history. A personal resume focusing on performance experience should be examined for substantial ensemble experience, both as conductor and player, and significant training on at least one instrument. The candidate's current conducting repertoire should be provided. A recording of a performance on the candidate's primary

instrument can be used to try and assess general musical potential. A videotape of the candidate conducting a live ensemble should be evaluated to determine the candidate's overall current level of proficiency in front of an ensemble. A short video-taped essay may also be requested, to obtain a general idea of each candidate's verbal communication skills.

In general, admitted candidates should demonstrate a solid grasp of undergraduate-level aural and written theory, sight singing, and orchestration. Questions and tasks designed to demonstrate this knowledge should focus on the scores assigned as audition excerpts. This is also a particularly good way to assess the student's investigation of relevant history, attention to detail, and currently level of musical retention.

Audition formats will vary depending on resources available and the number of candidates being auditioned. If at all possible, auditions should be conducted in front of a live and complete ensemble, which has been rehearsed on the music in use. With large numbers of candidates multiple rounds might be employed to spend as little time as possible on the weakest candidates, while giving stronger candidates a chance to differentiate themselves through additional podium time, which can be used to conduct more difficult repertoire, etc. If it is necessary, pianos or a reduced ensemble can be used for preliminary auditions especially.

The interview should be geared towards forming an impression of the student's personality, aspirations, motivations, and general ability to communicate. Although a certain degree of self-delusion is necessary for the novice conductor to even stand in front

of an ensemble, candidates clearly out of reason's grasp should be avoided, as should those without a healthy regard for the collegial nature of a conductor's work.

Especially in the early years of a program's existence, and in years with anything but robust general economic growth, it is likely that qualified students may be difficult to attract. Even after a program is established it is also conceivable that meeting enrollment goals may prove difficult if a teacher accepts only well-qualified applicants. Where, then, to set the floor for admission? A teacher must never accept a student that he or she doesn't feel can become of good use to an ensemble as a conductor and leader, and must always seek out those students who will be of the most use to the most ensembles. At minimum, a teacher must be confident that in the short time available the student can be trained to be a competent musician and leader, if not a leader in the field.

Benchmarks for Audition and Admission

Certain minimum standards should be required for audition and admission. A student's application video should indicate some fundamental grasp of beat patterns, reasonably stable posture, knowledge of general beating technique (relating the size of the beat to dynamic and articulation to shape of beat, etc.), focused attention, and responsiveness to the ensemble. Every effort should be made to find candidates who communicate musical ideas, not merely relevant performance information. Candidates' undergraduate transcripts and letters of recommendation should clearly indicate they will be able to face the rigors of graduate study, including in classes outside of their major. Sound or video recording of a candidate's performance on their primary instrument should evidence excellent musicianship.

In the audition examinations, students should be able to demonstrate an ability to read transpositions, at least of the most-frequently-encountered kinds (horns in F, trumpets in B-flat, clarinets in A, English horn, etc.), and to provide definitions for or translate basic string and orchestral performance indications (*arco*, *pizz.*, *con sordino*, *solo*, *a2*, *ponticello*, *sul tasto*, etc.). They should be asked to take a rhythmically simple, tonal, two-part melodic dictation at minimum, and demonstrate strong ability in this exercise. They should provide a coherent harmonic analysis for a Bach chorale, notated in soprano and bass clefs, with a change of key. They should be able to readily sing any portion of the melody of their assigned audition pieces if asked to, demonstrating at least completely accurate rhythm and preferably completely accurate pitch. (Two contrasting passages: one with simple melodic and rhythmic contours where precise pitch can be expected, and one with more complex rhythm where focus can be placed on examining rhythmic stability may be wise.) These represent minimum standards, but some more advanced testing along these lines of inquiry should also be conducted to help separate the stronger from the weaker candidates.

On the podium, students should be asked to prepare and conduct at least three contrasting excerpts: one fast, one slow but in a different meter and historical style period, and one with a mixed meter. Selections which include at least some basic use of fermata or indicated tempo changes are also advisable. Here again, all the technical and musical parameters used to evaluate the admission videos should be used and the strongest candidates admitted.

The First Semester

What follows is a table of assignments and activities selected to help students achieve each benchmark identified for the first semester. These are not meant to be exclusive, but represent one set of options among many. These choices should be tailored so that the activities chosen mesh well with students' abilities and should be scheduled in such a way as to maintain some variety in students' weekly experience. It is not at all unreasonable, for example, to study works that contrast greatly in a single week, so long as that contrast is considered when judging a suitable workload for the allotted preparation time.

Each of these repertoire assignments is meant to occupy one session in front of the seminar ensemble and in the seminar on orchestral literature, necessitating two assignments per week, or thirty-two assignments for the sixteen-week-long semester. Only twenty-eight assignments from the literature have been provided, however, leaving room for students to spend time with the seminar ensemble preparing their work to be performed with the school's orchestra, and the inevitable loss of class time to school breaks.

Table 4.1. First Semester Assignments by Benchmark

Conducting Technique

1) Students should be able to beat clearly in slow and moderate tempos with clear legato and wide dynamic range.

- Haydn, Symphony No. 104
 - i. Adagio—Allegro (Exposition, mm. 1-123; Complete in following session)
 - iii. Menuetto e Trio (complete)
- Beethoven, Symphony No. 7
 - ii. Allegretto
- Beethoven, Symphony No. 1
 - ii. Andante cantabile con moto

Table 4.1 (Continued). First Semester Assignments by Benchmark

- Tchaikovsky, Symphony No. 4
 - ii. Andantino in modo di canzona (mm. 1-199; Complete in following session)
- Brahms, Symphony No. 4
 - ii. Andante moderato
- Mozart, Symphony No. 38
 - i. Adagio-Allegro (Exposition; Complete in following session)
- Brahms, Symphony No. 2
 - ii. Adagio non troppo
 - iii. Allegretto grazioso (Quasi Andantino)
- Tchaikovsky, Symphony No. 5
 - iii. Valse: Allegro moderato (mm. 1-153; Complete in following session)
- Barber, Adagio for Strings
- Puccini, *I Crisantemi*

2) Students should be able to cleanly beat mixed meters in moderate and fast tempos.

- Stravinsky, The Soldier's Tale
 - The Soldier's March
 - Pastorale (mm. 1-14)
 - The Devil's Dance
 - Airs by a Stream
 - The Royal March
 - The Little Concert
- Copland, Appalachian Spring
 - Rehearsal 11-3rd measure of Rehearsal 18
 - Rehearsal 23-51
 - Rehearsal 67-End
- Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring
 - The Naming and Honoring of the Chosen One (Rehearsal 104-121)
 - Sacrificial Dance (The Chosen One) (Rehearsal 142-End)

3) Students should master fundamentals of posture and the gestures of prepping tempo in various situations.

- See above assignments for Benchmarks 1 and 2. In cases where students demonstrate a persistent problem, dramatic activities may be required. (e.g., Students who continually pace around the podium should tie their shoelaces together so they can feel the moment they start to do so. Students who continually slouch should conduct with their backs against a wall.)

Score Study

4) Students should be able to sing melodies bordering on the atonal, and harmonies through the late Classical and Beethoven accurately and fluently whenever there is an opportunity to review materials in advance.

- Assign first-semester students to sing melody lines as part of discussions of analysis and interpretation in the seminar on orchestral literature.

Table 4.1 (Continued). First Semester Assignments by Benchmark

-Require students to periodically demonstrate their musical choices, of accentuation and phrasing especially, in the seminar on conducting by singing.

5) Students should be able to present an analysis of harmony and phrase structure of Classical movements that can help guide interpretive decisions.

-Full harmonic and phrase analyses of movements by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven above should be discussed in the seminar on orchestral literature.

6) Students should be able to utilize systems of marking mixed meters, dynamics, and conductor attention.

-Read Elizabeth Green and Nicolai Malko, *The Conductor and His Score* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), 30-43.

-Provide in-class discussion of method's efficacy and practice in the first three weeks.

-Read Gustav Meier, *The Score the Orchestra and the Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 149-221.

-Provide in-class discussion of the method's efficacy and alternatives in the first three weeks.

7) Historic practices of accentuation, articulation, and phrasing should be demonstrated in analyses, rehearsals, and performance.

-Read Clive Brown, *Historical Performance Practice 1750-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) 7-258.

-Spread out reading assignments, and discussion of their relevance to and implication for the interpretation of assigned works, throughout the semester.

8) Memorization of complete dance movements and the expositions of sonata forms should be routine.

Rehearsal and Performance

9) Students should be able to identify obvious errors of pitch, ensemble, or rhythm while conducting, and to identify more subtle errors when observing rehearsal.

-Require students to observe and take notes of areas for improvement during rehearsals the instructor is conducting. Review these notes with students.

-Require students to articulate errors present in the seminar ensemble's performance periodically. Assign errors to players if necessary, making them progressively more difficult to detect.

10) Students should have a sound understanding of fundamental principles of sound production and playing for all orchestral instruments.

-Read Christopher Adey, *Orchestral Performance: A guide for conductors and players* (Boston: Faber and Faber Limited, 1998) 3-177.

-Spread out reading assignments and discussion of their relevance to and implication for assigned works.

Table 4.1 (Continued) First Semester Assignments by Benchmark

Administration

11) Students should be able to write clear and concise program notes.

-Read D. Kern Holloman, *Writing about music: A Style Sheet*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 81-83.

-Write at least one program note for each concert by the school's primary ensemble. The instructor should review a preliminary draft and provide feedback before publication.

Sample Lesson

What follows is a sample lesson plan and lecture for a class on the analysis of classical forms and historically-informed accentuation in a late-Classical dance movement. This lesson would be expected to be scheduled in the first two weeks of class.

Haydn, Symphony No. 104 in D major: Menuetto e Trio

In preparation for this lesson, students will be asked to complete pre-class assignments. Students will also be required to complete a follow-up assignment, utilizing the material learned in the lesson.

Table 4.2. Lesson Goals, Materials and Pre-Class Assignments

Lesson Benchmark Goals: Students should be able to sing melodies and harmonies through the late Classical accurately and fluently. Students should be able to present an analysis of harmony and phrase structure of Classical movements that can help guide interpretive decisions. Historic practices of accentuation should be demonstrated in analysis.

Classroom Materials: Annotated overhead transparency of Haydn, Symphony No. 104, Mov. III with harmonic analysis (See Appendix B); Fine-point overhead transparency marker; DVD or internet link of video showing minuet dance

Pre-Class Assignments:

-Learn at least the melody and bass lines for the entirety of the movement, so that you are able to readily sing the material with only the aid of the score.

-Prepare a harmonic analysis of the Menuetto and Trio of Haydn Symphony No. 104. Identify at least one chord per bar and pay close attention to cadence points.

-Read the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* article on the Minuet.

-Read Clive Brown, *Historical Performance Practice 1750-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1-58 and 75-87, paying close attention to passages that relate to Haydn's music and minuets in particular.

Lecture Text

An essential task in conducting is learning scores and forming opinions about their interpretation in performance. In music of the Common Practice Period, structural and phrase analyses grounded in an examination of harmony can be a very helpful part of this process. It is especially easy to understand why this is so when studying music of the late Classical period, where structures are clearly defined by hierarchical harmony, and where an understanding of melodic dissonance in the context of the prevailing harmony is integral to interpretation. Although the efficacy of thorough harmonic analysis becomes less tangible as music become increasingly chromatic in the Romantic era and beyond, the general process of using harmony as a tool to identify various levels of musical structure remains helpful in taking increasingly large and complicated forms and breaking them down into more-easily understood and assimilated sections for examination.

This Menuetto and Trio, from the last of Haydn’s “London” symphonies is a ternary form, built from two binary forms linked by a transition and da capo. [Have students sing through each section as they’re defined.]

Table 4.3. Large-Scale Formal Outline

Menuetto	A (mm. 1-16)	B (mm. 17-34)	A ¹ (mm. 35-52)
Trio	A (mm. 53-64)	B (mm. 65-78)	A ¹ (mm. 79-94)
Transition (da capo)	mm. 95-104		

These sections are internally punctuated by cadences and harmonies which, in the Menuetto, are quite stable and forceful.

Table 4.4. Menuetto Formal and Harmonic Outline**Menuetto: (D major)**

(PAC: Perfect Authentic Cadence, IAC: Imperfect Authentic Cadence)

A	m. 1: I	m. 8: PAC	m. 9: I	m. 16: PAC
B	m. 17: I	m. 26: PAC/V	m. 30-34: V ⁷	
A¹	m. 35: PAC	m. 42: IAC	m. 47: V ⁷	m. 49-52: PACs

The A and A¹ sections of the Menuetto both conclude with perfect-authentic cadences, the A¹ section ending with several repetitions of that cadence. The Menuetto's B-section harmonies tonicize the dominant and transform it into a dominant-seventh chord, emphatically preparing the return to tonic with the arrival of the A¹ section. The trio is far less harmonically stable.

Table 4.5. Trio Formal and Harmonic Outline**Trio: (B-flat major)**

(PAC: Perfect Authentic Cadence, IAC: Imperfect Authentic Cadence, HC: Half Cadence)

A	m. 55-I	m. 58-IAC	m. 64-PAC/V	
B	m. 67-IAC/ii	m. 70-72-IAC/vi	m. 78-HC	
A¹	m. 79-I	m. 84-IAC	m. 87-IAC/IV	m. 89-IAC/vi
	m. 94-PAC			

First, the opening melodic motive (the ascending minor third from D to F) is strongly reminiscent of the opening gesture of the Menuetto (the ascending major third D to F-sharp), suggesting the possibility of an abrupt turn to the parallel minor. This is readily reinterpreted as the upper third of a B-flat-major triad with the entry of the bass in m. 55. This provides a sense of a tonal center, but an unstable one, due to its mediant relationship to the Menuetto's G major tonic, and the aforementioned leanings towards D/G-minor.

Throughout the Trio, B-flat remains a relatively weak tonal center, as a forceful move to its dominant (PAC/V in m. 64) and subsequent temporary tonicizations delay any strong tonic cadence until the very end (PAC in m. 94). Even after a strong

preparation of the dominant in mm. 75-78 the arrival of B-flat major in m. 79, with the reprise of the opening motive and the arrival of the A¹ section, is weakened by the absence of the tonic on each downbeat. Unlike the Menuetto's A¹ section, which emphatically tonicizes D-major, the Trio's A¹ section is notable for its overall avoidance of the tonic B-flat.

The transition is relatively straight-forward. Beginning in a clear B-flat major, it pivots (on G-minor) towards a prolonged preparation of D-major's dominant.

Table 4.6. Transition Harmonic Outline

Transition: (B-flat to D major)

<i>B-Flat Major</i>		<i>D Major</i>
m. 95: I	(m.98: pivot on g-minor ⁶)	m. 104: V ⁷

This analysis is the first step in both internalizing the musical content of the movement and in coming to an interpretive vision for it. Even this rudimentary harmonic analysis, especially if conducted with either the aid of a keyboard or while making a concerted effort to sing through each harmony as it's identified, helps establish an aural relationship to the general harmonic scheme while drawing attention to dissonant notes in the melody that will require particular inflection, and to those more unstable or harmonically complex areas that will require additional effort to internalize.

Identifying these harmonies is also important in identifying the various period and phrase lengths within the movement. (Period lengths are listed first, in Table 4.7, with phrase lengths in parenthesis and general harmonic motion for each beneath. Arrows indicate harmonic motion towards a cadence or harmony during the phrase.)

Table 4.7. Menuetto and Trio Phrase Outline**MENUETTO**

A	8 (4 + 4)	+ 8 (4 + 4)
D:	I → PAC	I → PAC

B	10(4 + 6)	+ 8
	→vi →PAC/V	V ⁷

A¹	8(4 + 4)	+ 10(6 + 4)
	I → IAC	→V PAC

TRIO

A	12(6 + 6)
B \flat :	I → PAC/V

B	14(8 + 6)
	→V ⁷ /ii →V ⁷

A¹	16(6 + 4)	+ 6
	I →IV	PAC

TRANSITION

	10(6 + 4)	
B \flat :	I → V/iii	D: V

It is worth noting at this point that there is a reason all of these phrase lengths consist of even numbers of bars. Minuets are danced in counts of six (two bars of three), not counts of three (one bar), so odd-numbered phrase lengths would leave our imagined dancers stumbling about. Also important is the fact that the downbeat of the first bar of each pair was generally the stronger of the two. Aside from this fundamental precept, the lengths are of relatively little import. Defining and marking the periods and phrases, however, provides progressively-smaller segments defined by musical logic to focus on as examination moves from large structure to small detail and back again during the study process. They will also aid in building a sense of hierarchy into the interpretation of the various cadence points that will reflect the larger structure of the music.

One aspect of larger structure this phrase analysis helps clarify are the differences between closely-related sections. In this case, the most important sections to compare are the A and A¹ sections of the Menuetto and Trio, respectively. Clarifying these differences achieves two primary goals. Most practically, identifying the points at which a varied repetition of a passage (an A¹ section in a binary form, a recapitulation in a sonata form, the return of the refrain in a rondo, etc.) departs from the first version alerts the conductor to points of transition from familiar to unfamiliar material, so he or she can help the orchestra move smoothly into and through them. The other aim in comparing related sections is to come to an understanding of how the composer has crafted them to achieve their contrasting functions using closely-related melodic and harmonic materials: setting-up the movement in the opening section (A), and bringing the section, and ultimately the movement as a whole, to a satisfactory conclusion in the closing section (A¹).

In the case of the Menuetto, the comparison is rather straightforward. The opening A section avoids any harmonic instability whatsoever. It is simply two eight-bar periods consisting of an opening four bars on the tonic, then four-bars of very straight-forward motion to a perfect-authentic cadence (PAC). These periods are, in fact, nearly exact repetitions of each other with simple dynamic variation (forte in the first period, pianissimo in the second) and a general smoothing out of the rhythmic texture—with the switch to half-notes in the woodwinds and horns, rather than quarter-notes—in the second phrase.

The first period of the A¹ section holds quite closely to the first period of the opening A section. The melody is a clear variation on the opening melody, with the substitution of eighth-note for quarter-note motion. The harmonic outline and rhythm is

identical to the opening period with one, very important departure. Instead of concluding with a PAC in the final bar, it concludes with an imperfect-authentic cadence (IAC). The second period, rather than being a close repetition of the first as it is in the A section, is a dramatic departure. The first phrase begins with a deceptive cadence to the subdominant. Then come two bars of grand pause. Then come two bars of a sustained, piano, dominant-seventh harmony before the concluding four-bar phrase emphatically repeats the PAC in forte.

As we'd expect from Haydn, the structure of these related but contrasting sections perfectly mirrors their respective functions. The A section clearly establishes the tonic key and melodic outline of the Menuetto's theme. This is thanks to both the restricted harmonic content and the near-literal repetition of the first period in the second. The variations in the second period are emblematic of Haydn's desire to balance his movement at each level. The pianissimo dynamic makes the second period much gentler than the first, and the rhythmically-simplified version of the theme both smooths the rhythmic activity and provides a clear outline of the main melody. Overall, then, the section manages to firmly affix the tonic key and main melodic material to the listener's memory without becoming pedantic.

The Menuetto's A¹ section, in contrast, provides a clear sense of reprise and arrival with the near-direct quotation of the movement's first period, but then moves the movement to an emphatic close. The employment of an imperfect-authentic cadence, rather than a perfect-authentic cadence, at the end of the first period is a tactic for delaying the more powerful cadence until the end of the second period. The deceptive cadence and grand pause which follow provide the most striking point of contrast in the

entire movement, literally halting the music for two bars after an unstable harmonic move. This only intensifies the sense of arrival as the dominant is reintroduced in mm. 47-48, and the series of PACs in mm. 49-52 provide a powerful sense of arrival and finality.

Connecting the Menuetto's A and A¹ sections, the B section's opening period is essentially a prolonged half cadence, ending on a PAC on the dominant. The second period is a prolonged dominant-seventh chord in crescendo. On the whole, then, the B section functions entirely as a preparation and prolongation of the dominant. The tonal center of D major is never called into question throughout, and we are left with a mounting anticipation of the tonic's return with the arrival of the A¹ section.

Similar relationships can be found comparing the A and A¹ sections of the Trio. The Trio's B section, however, serves a very-nearly opposite structural function to the B section of the Menuetto.

In the Trio's A section the opening phrase moves, in rather straight-forward fashion, to an IAC. The second phrase, however, moves quickly away from tonic to a PAC on the dominant. In the Trio's A¹ section, as in the Menuetto, the first phrase closely mirrors the first phrase of the A section. The second phrase of the Trio's A¹ section, again as in the Menuetto, moves to a deceptive cadence on the subdominant and a grand pause. Unlike in the Menuetto, however, the PAC that concludes the Trio is not particularly emphatic, since it arrives after a very short-lived and weakly-prepared dominant, nor is it repeated.

A practical question should be asked at this point of our analysis. Given the parallels in construction between the A¹ section of the Menuetto and the A¹ section of the

Trio we have just discussed, are the period and phrase groupings here presented the best available choices? Might it be better to define the second period in the trio as beginning in m. 85? [Steer discussion towards accepting the change for, among others, the following reasons. It would then have an analogous musical layout to the final period of the Menuetto. This could aid memorization later in our study and makes the connection between the two sections more obvious in our interpretation.]

The B section of the Trio is much more tonally ambivalent than that of the Minuet. The opening phrase, lacking a functional bass line, weakly implies temporary tonicization of the supertonic (m. 67) and sub-median (m. 70). Thereafter, the prolonged G pedal (mm. 72-74) beneath the G⁷ chord implies a preparation of cadence to the supertonic. This move, if the supertonic was subsequently transformed into its dominant-seventh form, could have served as a strong preparation of the dominant and thus the arrival of the tonic with the A¹ section. Instead, Haydn provides only a weak arrival on the supertonic before weakly preparing the dominant in m. 78. The preparation is weak for a few reasons: there is a metrically weak cadence to tonic in m. 76, and the arrival of the dominant is also metrically weak and prepared by its chromatic leading tone, not by its own dominant.

Although B-flat is clearly the tonal center in both the A and A¹ sections of the Trio it is never given the kind of emphatic arrival that D major is given in the Menuetto. The Trio's B section only reinforces this ambiguity, containing the least harmonically clear phrase of the entire movement (mm. 65-71) and never strongly preparing the arrival of either the dominant or the tonic.

This ambiguity contrasts, neatly, with the clear harmonic direction of the Transition. The first phrase begins in a clear B-flat major, pivots towards D, and uses a full assemblage of harmonic devices to reinforce the arrival on A-major as the dominant of D: a German-augmented-sixth chord prepares the first appearance of A major (signaling its dominant, rather than tonic function), an A pedal is held for the final five bars of the Transition, and leading-tone inflections towards A can be found in m. 101 and m. 103. From the viewpoint of the larger structure, however, this forceful harmonic move, so important to preparing the da capo repeat of the Menuetto, is relatively understated compared to the forceful concluding bars of the Menuetto. In a quiet dynamic to start, the Transition diminuendos to its conclusion, and the melodic material is more slowly paced here than anywhere else in the movement, allowing the listener's attention to be drawn to the harmonic progression.

Returning to the Menuetto with the da capo raises an essential question of Minuet and Trio performance: should the Menuetto's individual sections be repeated in the da capo? The answer, as a matter of convention, is that they should be. Here, however, Haydn has given us explicit evidence that a repeat of both sections is intended. Ironically, it is the lack of a repeat sign at the end of the Menuetto's A section that is the indication. The A section's two periods are so similar, contrasting primarily in dynamic and the figuration of woodwind accompaniment, that they essentially function as a written-out repeat. Here Haydn intends for the eight-bar period to be repeated, but he also wants to be assured that the opening section will not become pedantic and to properly balance the Menuetto's opening, so he grants himself some dynamic and textural variation. This

notion of balance, alongside hierarchies of dissonance, cadence, and structure, will be integral to the choices of accentuation we make in continuing to study this movement.

So far, we have been examining Haydn's choices and trying to come to an understanding of why they were made and how they're meant to work together. Now we have to make choices for ourselves about how the score is going to be performed. Aside from pitch, and then only in a relative sense depending on the tuning used, in practice no dimension of musical notation can be considered absolute. Certainly, all that is on the page has a meaning. But that meaning cannot be easily quantified and frequently exists primarily in relation to its surroundings.

Take the very simple example of the dynamic indications of forte, pianissimo, and piano found in this movement. We know that the forte should be loud, the piano soft, and the pianissimo softer still. But how loud? How soft? How much softer? Handed a decibel meter we would be hard pressed to provide an answer, and trying to do so would be basically ridiculous because in the next movement, the next piece, even in the next phrase if the orchestration differs, the quantitative "loudness" of the dynamic would almost certainly be different.

What's more, anyone who has ever heard a computer play through a score, even when programmed with reasonable facsimiles of orchestral sounds and to make relative adjustments for written dynamics and accents, knows that following notation precisely, without any additional inflection or consideration, is the very definition of "unmusical" performance. So, how do we contextualize the indications we have and make additional choices that will make our performance "musical?" What is the range of choices that Haydn would have considered in "good taste?"

Answering these questions requires understanding both the musical values of the composer and the conventions of the time. Unfortunately, we can't necessarily rely only on our inherited knowledge of style and convention. In large part, this is because our knowledge about musicality is almost entirely passed generation-to-generation through aural traditions which, while capable of very much, are heavily influenced by outside trends, including the evolution of instruments and techniques of playing, and individual tastes. So, like in a game of "telephone," the tradition long ago established at the beginning of the line of succession, and expected by the composer, often ends up either very much changed or discarded entirely by the time it reaches us in modern times, many years and generations of teachers later. (Indeed, research into changes in performance practice shows that these changes can occur over very short periods of time as prevailing tastes change.)¹

Thankfully, there has been a growing body of research over the past half-century into the history of performance practice, attempting to rediscover how music and musical notation were interpreted by composers' contemporaries in a pre-recording world. Among the leaders in this field is Clive Brown, who for several decades aided Sir Roger Norrington in preparing historically-informed performances. Thankfully, Brown has created a compendium of this knowledge in *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900*. Within it, he organizes and summarizes information gained from pedagogical and theoretical treatises, composer and performer correspondence, critical reviews, and audience accounts in an effort to answer the central question of exactly how a given form,

1. Clive Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 375-376.

type of musical passage or gesture, or notated indication was interpreted by performers during the time period examined. A quick glance at the book's bibliography will be all students need to be grateful they are dealing only with Brown's summary, rather than the many primary sources he has researched for decades.

Some may still cling to the belief that entering the realm of historically-informed performance is to hand over the reins of interpretation to choices spelled-out in the dusty annals of archaic method books by minor composer-theorists and pedagogue-performers but this is hardly the case. As Brown points out in the introduction to his book and shows evidence for throughout, there has always been a range of meaning attached to various notations and a range of conventions attached to various genres and styles of performance.² His book can aid us in coming to grips with this range of musical possibilities as composers may have understood them and, in doing so, help us create performances that are both more personal and more assured than we could hope to achieve using only the received wisdom of a few teachers and mentors. The idea is to look to the past for guidance and inspiration, not direction. As Brown makes plain, those hoping for definite answers from either the available primary source materials or his book will be left wanting.

For now we'll focus on accentuation, notated and unnotated, in the opening A section of the Menuetto. Most obvious are the sforzandi in mm. 1-3 and m. 6, but we know that other accents are likely to have been assumed by Haydn.

First, there is an implied pattern of accentuation given by both the meter (3/4) and the dance genre (minuet). The meter is defined, primarily, by an accentuation of the first

2. Ibid., 1-6.

beat and a weaker accentuation on the third beat of each bar. Brown refers to this in a number of places in the reading, but it can be most readily felt if one considers what it would feel like to conduct the bars with an uneven tactus (half-note then quarter), which Brown describes as conventional until the late-eighteenth century.³

Watching a historically-informed performance of a minuet we can readily observe the larger hyper-meter of each two-bar group. [Play video clip of Minuet being danced.] We can see, very clearly, that the dance is performed in sets of six steps, with a significantly larger step or hop beginning each set, and a clear change of gesture after three. What we are seeing, essentially, is how the metric hierarchy within each bar and across each two-bar unit was derived from the gesture of the dance.

In addition to the aforementioned sforzandi, there are other accent indications which contradict this regular metrical hierarchy. Most prominent of these are the slurred couplets present throughout the passage, beginning with the very first two notes of the movement.

These slurred couplets, as Brown explains, would likely be played with some sort of accentuation on the first of the two notes, produced either by leaning into the first of the pair as an accent or, more likely, by releasing the second note, leaving it a bit shorter and quieter than the first.⁴ This is the case for the upbeat couplets to m. 1 and m. 5. The sforzandi that occur on the first note of slurred couplets now take on an enhanced meaning. It is not that these notes are accented and others are not, but that these are accented more forcefully, perhaps with a dynamic, rather than purely agogic, accent. It is

3. Ibid., 12-13.

4. Ibid., 30-36.

worth noting, also, the three places where there are not sforzandi in the first period: the upbeat to mm. 1, 5, and 6. Why are these places left unmolested by notated accent?

In the case of the upbeat to m. 1, as the opening gesture of the movement it was understood to require a certain added degree of emphasis already. Adding an additional sforzando would have had the effect of dictating a very heavy accent indeed and begin the dance with what could sound like two downbeats, causing our imagined dancers to stumble. This is also likely the case in the pickup to m. 5, which begins the second phrase and thus a large hyper-metric group of four bars. The absence of a sforzando on pickup to m. 6 is less readily explained, however, at least in terms of hypermeter. Here we must turn, instead, to the type of dissonance the F-sharp in question represents.

All of the notes which receive sforzandi are part of neighboring dissonant harmonies against the tonic pedal in the bass and prevailing D major: upper-neighbor dissonances in m. 1 and 3, and lower-neighbor dissonance in m. 2. The dissonance in m. 5, however, is a passing dissonance. Why might Haydn avoid accenting this dissonance? First, he might be trying to draw attention in the second phrase to the leaping accent of the pickup to m. 7, and clearing the phrase of other sforzandi will help that. (This leap will be an important feature of the A¹ section, mm. 42-44, helping to set up the dramatic grand pause.) Second, he may be trying to draw attention in the first period to neighboring dissonances rather than passing dissonances.

It is highly unlikely that Haydn was thinking in these sorts of theoretical terms, but the musical logic for this assertion can be found in the Menuetto's B section. (Also, although untrained listeners won't know the jargon for these different types of dissonance, even they will likely be able to readily aurally recognize the difference

between them.) Here, the sforzandi in mm. 17-18 highlight passing dissonances while the one neighbor dissonance (on the third beat of m. 19) is left without sforzando. In fact, aside from this one instance, all the dissonances of the B section's first period are of the passing type. The reappearance of neighbor dissonance, accentuated first by slurred couplets in mm. 27-29, then by sforzandi in mm. 30-34 work in concert with the dominant preparation to build a sense of anticipation for the return of the opening theme.

There seems to be a clear musical logic at work behind the pattern of notated accent, so adhering closely to the notation is best and adding accents should be avoided. Importantly, it's entirely likely that the orchestra will instinctually accent the pick-ups to m. 5 and 6 with the same weight as mm. 2-4, despite the absence of sforzandi, essentially following the basic pattern established in preceding bars. Therefore, we must be prepared for this to happen and try to contradict the ensemble's instinct to do so through our gesture if possible and in our rehearsal if not.

Given the apparent importance of a hierarchy of accentuation regarding neighboring versus passing dissonance, why did Haydn use no sforzandi or other accent marks in the second period of the Menuetto? Should we, therefore, avoid continuing the pattern of accent in the quiet dynamic?

Brown, again, provides important guidance. Throughout his chapters on accentuation, one maxim seems to prevail among all others. Harmonic implications of a note or gesture are of primary importance in determining the degree of accentuation required. It would stand to reason, then, that since Haydn establishes a hierarchy of dissonance in the first period it makes sense to repeat that hierarchy in the second period, albeit within a pianissimo dynamic. His choice to avoid using sforzandi may simply have

been a decision grounded in avoiding tastelessly-strong accents within the prevailing pianissimo, as sforzandi were not necessarily understood to imply purely relative accent but might have caused performers to play notes marked with sforzandi not just with stronger accentuation than those surrounding them but in an actual subito-forte dynamic.⁵

Harmony is also important in understanding the hierarchy of metrical accent. Looking at the second phrase of the Menuetto we find it ends with a cadence. But which of the two bars falls on the metrically strong beat and which on the weak? Following the dance, we find that m. 7 is, indeed the metrically stronger beat in the hypermeter. It is also, importantly, the dominant, the most harmonically powerful pole to the tonic in the movement. As such, although it has no sforzando, it is understood to be the most-weighty of all the downbeats in the first period. Haydn heightens the drama of this downbeat's arrival further by preparing it by leap.

Taking this sort of logic up successive levels of structure provides us a framework on which to build our musical interpretation. We can decide to accentuate one dissonance or another, where Haydn hasn't made an indication plain for us, based on larger patterns of dissonance and cadence. We can decide upon phrase directions and choices of balance that accentuate structural elements. In short, we can provide ourselves with a context for the many ambiguous notations on the page that is grounded in the musical logic and expectations of the composer himself.

Table 4.8. Follow-up Assignment to Haydn Lesson

-Compare two recordings of this movement, by different conductors, and be prepared to talk about how they do or do not reflect your understanding of the movement's structure and musical logic.

5. Ibid., 75-87.

Table 4.8 (Continued). Follow-up Assignment to Haydn Lesson

-Be prepared to conduct the entire movement from memory, making your choices of phrasing and phrase direction clear.

Chapter 5: Second Semester Course Outline and Sample Lesson

Assignments and Activities toward Each Benchmark

What follows is a table of assignments and activities selected to help students achieve each benchmark identified for the second semester. These choices should be tailored so that the activities chosen mesh well with students' abilities and should be scheduled in such a way as to maintain some variety in students' weekly experience.

Each of these repertoire assignments is meant to occupy one session in front of the conducting seminar ensemble and to be discussed in the seminar on literature, necessitating two assignments per week, or thirty-two assignments for the sixteen-week-long semester. Twenty-eight assignments from the literature have been provided, leaving time for students to prepare to perform with the school's orchestra, and the inevitable loss of class time to school breaks.

Table 5.1. Second Semester Assignments by Benchmark *Conducting Technique*

- 1) Students should develop patterns of cuing, learn to deal with various stop and start situations, and be able to control tempo changes through a wide body of repertoire.
 - Beethoven, Symphony No. 1
 - i. Adagio molto—Allegro con brio mm. 1-178
 - iv. Adagio—Allegro molto e vivace (complete)
 - Beethoven, Symphony No. 7
 - i. Poco sostenuto—Vivace (mm. 1-178, complete in following lesson)
 - iii. Presto (mm. 1-237, complete in following lesson)
 - Tchaikovsky, Symphony No. 5
 - i. Andante—Allegro con anima (mm. 1-114, complete in following lesson)
 - ii. Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza (mm. 1-91, complete in following lesson)
 - Beethoven, Symphony No. 5
 - i. Allegro con brio (mm. 1-124, complete in following lesson)
 - iii. Allegro (mm. 1-140, complete in following lesson)
 - Mussorgsky-Ravel, Pictures at an Exhibition
 - i. Gnomus
 - Verdi, Overture to *La forza del destino*

Table 5.1 (Continued). Second Semester Assignments by Benchmark

- Beethoven, Symphony No. 9
 - iv. Finale (mm. 1-215)
- Bernstein, Overture to *Candide* (mm.1-133, complete in following lesson)
- Mahler, Symphony No. 1
 - i. Langsam. Schleppend.—Immer sehr gemächlich (mm. 1-162, complete in following lesson)
- Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique
 - i. Réveries. Passions. (mm. 1-232, complete in following lesson)

2) Students should gain some basic experience conducting as accompanist.

- Mozart, Violin Concerto No. 3
 - ii. Adagio
 - iii. Rondo
- Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 3
 - ii. Largo
 - iii. Rondo
- Mozart, Recitative and Aria “Dove sono” from *Le nozze di Figaro*

Score Study

3) Students should be able to sing all inner voices and arpeggiate all vertical harmonies in even highly-chromatic music.

- Have second-semester students sing important inner voices and arpeggiate vertical harmonies and progressions at every opportunity throughout the semester, particularly in the seminar in orchestral literature.

4) Less-harmonically-rigid structures should be explored, techniques of analysis that focus on motivic elements should be presented, and systematic charting and memorization of larger forms should be performed.

- Focus in-class structural analysis on works which retain features of Classical structure but expand their scope or take them in new directions: Tchaikovsky, Berlioz, and Mahler.
- Have students read Elizabeth Green and Nicolai Malko, *The Conductor and His Score* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), 82-89, in the first week. Discuss the efficacy of Green’s approach and alternatives.
- Provide examples of various charting approaches throughout the semester and have students provide charts reflecting their personal approaches.

5) Historic concepts of tempo and tempo modification should be incorporated into discussion and analysis.

- Incorporate readings from Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 282-414, into examination of repertoire.

6) Memorization of a complete Classical sonata form should be demonstrated.

Table 5.1 (Continued). Second Semester Assignments by Benchmark

-Beethoven, Symphony No. 5, first movement, should be conducted from memory.

Rehearsal and Performance

7) Students should demonstrate knowledge of ensemble performance techniques for all orchestral instruments individually and in choruses.

-Have students read Christopher Adey, *Orchestral Performance: A Guide for Conductors and Players* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1998), 181-478, throughout the semester and discuss assigned readings.

8) Students should readily identify any mistakes in the performance and rehearsal of ensembles they are conducting or observing.

-Continue to require students to observe and take notes for areas of improvement during rehearsals the instructor is conducting. Review these notes with students.

-Require students to articulate errors present in the seminar ensemble's playing while they are conducting, working towards increasingly subtle errors.

9) Students should demonstrate their ability to clearly conduct complex rhythms in performance.

-Have students find or create an opportunity to conduct a small ensemble in a piece with complicated rhythm. (Such opportunities are usually relatively easy to find in collaboration with composers and percussionists on campus especially.)

-Evaluate the student's rehearsals and performance using video footage and live observation.

10) Students should be relied upon to efficiently rehearse an individual movement or small work to a high degree of proficiency regarding fundamentals without requiring much guidance.

-Assign students to conduct early rehearsals of works with the school's major ensemble while under supervision.

Administration

11) Students should demonstrate practical knowledge required to effectively run a collegiate ensemble.

-Assign students various managerial tasks, assisting in the operations of the school's major ensemble. Provide feedback as necessary.

12) Students should demonstrate proficiency in programming for various situations.

-Have students read Diane Wittry, *Beyond the Baton: What Every Conductor Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 97-140, and discuss in class.

-Have students build proposed programs around various constraints (overall budget, size and ability of ensemble, concert type, intended audience, etc.) and discuss throughout the semester.

Table 5.1 (Continued). Second Semester Assignments by Benchmark

-Supplement discussion with available programming by various orchestras and opera companies and articles written on the subject.

13) Students should introduce pieces they are about to conduct from the podium, in concert.

Additional reading to supplement discussion of specific pieces:

-Beethoven, Symphonies Nos. 1, 5, 7: Relevant passages from

Del Mar, Norman. *Conducting Beethoven Volume 1: The Symphonies*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1992.

Forbes, Elliot, Ed. *Beethoven Symphony No. 5 in C minor: An Authoritative Score, The Sketches, Historical Background, Analysis, View, and Comments*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1971.

Schuller, Gunther. *The Compleat Conductor*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Weingartner, Felix. *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies and Other Essays*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1969.

-Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique

Cone, Edward, Ed. *Berlioz Fantastic Symphony: An Authoritative Score, Historical Background, Analysis, Views, and Comments*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1971.

Del Mar, Norman. *Conducting Berlioz*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Sample Lesson

What follows is a sample lesson plan and lecture for a class comparing the interpretive decisions and process of three master conductors in the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5.

Towards and Interpretive Vision: Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, First Movement

In preparation for this lesson, students will be asked to complete pre-class assignments.

Table 5.2. Sample Lesson Goals, Materials, and Pre-Class Assignments

Lesson Benchmark Goals: Less-harmonically-rigid structures should be explored and techniques of analysis that focus on motivic elements should be presented. Historic concepts of tempo and tempo modification should be incorporated into the analysis. Students should demonstrate that they can be relied upon to efficiently rehearse an

Table 5.2 (Continued). Sample Lesson Goals, Materials, and Pre-Class Assignments
individual movement or small work to a high degree of proficiency regarding fundamentals without requiring much guidance. Systematic charting and memorization of larger forms should be introduced, helping students build their ability to analyze simple formal units into an ability to understand larger, more complex forms.

Materials: Overhead transparency of preferred score;¹ Print outs of summaries of three authors' key interpretive points for distribution to students (Table 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5 below); Fine-tip transparency marker

Pre-class assignment:

-Read the following:

Schuller, Gunther. *The Compleat Conductor*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. pp. 109-158.

Weingartner, Felix. *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies and Other Essays*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1969: 119-131.

Del Mar, Norman. *Conducting Beethoven Volume 1: The Symphonies*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1992: 71-84.

Brown, Clive. "Historical Performance, Metronome Marks and Tempo in Beethoven's Symphonies," *Early Music*, 19 (1991): 247ff.

Brown, Clive. *Classical & Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900*, Oxford University Press: New York, 1999: 282-312, 375-414, 588-597.

-Annotate a copy of the score for the first movement of Beethoven's fifth symphony with indications of phrase lengths, and larger structural sections and bring it to class.

Lecture Text

Were we able to view the score to the first movement of Beethoven's fifth symphony without any prior knowledge of the work, we might be surprised that it has inspired so much heated debate among performers. We would, of course, note the relatively frequent use of fermatas, and its one bar marked "adagio," but there would seem to be little in the movement to spark controversy, especially given the clear

1. Ludwig van Beethoven and Jonathan Del Mar, Ed., *Symphony No. 5 in C minor, op. 67* (New York: Bärenreiter, 1999).

indications for dynamic gradation throughout—at least when compared with earlier works by Haydn and Mozart. Digging deeper we might note a few curiosities: the occasional departure from a regular four-bar phrase, the seemingly odd choice of bassoons to herald the return of the second theme in the recapitulation, and an uncommonly powerful and energetic movement overall. Once deep enough, presumably, we'd come to understand just how organic the development of this powerful movement is and marvel at the symphony's grand cyclical plan. This would at least account for the passion with which people write and speak about the work, if not the great diversity of opinions. Even if we were to peer at the critical commentary accompanying an urtext edition, we would find no significantly impactful editorial changes from long-accepted editions, but rather many relatively-minor adjustments to articulations—primarily concerned with the substitution of strokes for dots.

The controversy comes not primarily from what is on the page, but with what one should do with the score once it is in the hands of living, breathing musicians and a literal reading of the indications in the score is no longer sufficient. The debate is, entirely, a matter of interpretation.

As an exercise in coming to grips with some of the historical variance in the understanding of style by conductors, and in putting that historical debate into a context of the evidence available from Beethoven's own time, we will compare written accounts on the performance of the first movement of the Fifth Symphony by Felix Weingartner (born 1863, published in 1907), Norman Del Mar (born in 1919, published in 1992), and Gunther Schuller (born in 1925, published in 1997). The relationship between these

accounts will illuminate some of the ways in which thinking about style, structure, and interpretation changed—and didn't change—throughout the twentieth century.

Weingartner is an interesting place to start. In his lifetime he knew and admired firsthand the conducting of Liszt, Wagner, Mahler, and Bülow, possibly the most influential conductors of the second half of the nineteenth century and all known in part for the dramatic liberties they would take with scores. He was personally respected, however, for the economy of his gestural language and the depth and restraint of his performances, especially of Beethoven. His book on conducting Beethoven's symphonies was very influential in the twentieth century and is cited by both of the other authors we'll examine.

Table 5.3. A Summary of Weingartner's Key Interpretive Observations

- 1) Begin the allegro con brio tempo from the first bar.²
- 2) The movement is organized primarily in two-bar units, with the first bar of the movement as anacrusis.³
- 3) The tempo should be half-note equals 100bpm, not Beethoven's indicated half-note equals 108bpm.⁴
- 4) Weingartner's description of the treatment of the fermatas seems to indicate the following pattern: hold fermata, cutoff with gesture lasting one bar (inserting one bar of silence), continue in tempo.⁵
- 5) Think in terms of a legato melody line governing all the eighth-note motion, phrasing each toward its hyper-metric downbeat. (Locate the downbeat of each unit in the second

2. Felix Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven Symphonies and Other Essays* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969), 119.

3. *Ibid.*, 119.

4. *Ibid.*, 120.

5. There is some ambiguity in translation. "The *fermata* is removed and this gesture of removal occupies the value of one bar, whereupon the downbeat for the third bar follows immediately....'Inserted' bars have as little to do here as in other places where *fermatas* are removed, a procedure that always demands a pause." *Ibid.*, 120.

Table 5.3 (Continued). A Summary of Weingartner's Key Interpretive Observations group in the same way as in the first.) Maintain gradual dynamic tension or release in successive like units to convey a sense of direction.⁶

6) Observe Beethoven's pacing of crescendo and subsequent versions of forte dynamics precisely. Similarly, observe diminuendo for the entire duration of passages they effect, rather than making faster changes of dynamic.⁷

7) Hold the quarter-note on the downbeat of m. 240 to its full length.⁸

8) Treat the oboe as a lead solo voice beginning in m. 254, delaying the crescendo in the rest of the orchestra to m. 266. Do not allow the oboist to play the beginning of the solo too slowly. Encourage the oboist to save breath for the final note, and emphasize the final three notes as most slow. Begin the passage at m. 269 slightly under tempo and accelerate to tempo primo with crescendo to forte (m. 277).⁹

9) Substitute horns for bassoons in the announcement of C major at the start of the recapitulation's second group (mm. 303-305). (Have bassoons enter in m. 311.)¹⁰

10) Reduce the tempo slightly m. 477, hold the fermatas at the end of the passage longer than in earlier iterations, and reduce the tempo further with the re-entry of the piano passage which follows (m. 483). Return to tempo primo with the subsequent entry of fortissimo (m. 491).¹¹

11) Weingartner recommends the following woodwind doublings "if the string section is strong:" mm. 1-5, 22-24, 52-58, 94-128, 175-217, 228-232, 240-252, 296-302, 346-386, 390-482, and 491-502.¹²

Norman Del Mar was a very well-respected English conductor and teacher, most active after the Second World War. Written in the last decade of his life, Del Mar's volumes on conducting Beethoven, Brahms, and Berlioz provide wonderful insights into interpretive thinking in the second half of the twentieth century. Lest we think that Maestro Del Mar was ignorant of the trends toward historically informed performance

6. Ibid., 121-122.

7. Ibid., 124.

8. Ibid., 126.

9. Ibid., 126-127.

10. Ibid., 128.

11. Ibid., 131.

12. Ibid., 131.

which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, we should recognize that his son, Jonathan Del Mar, is the editor of the current Beethoven urtext edition and collaborated with many leading period instrument performers during his father's lifetime. (Touchingly, the elder Del Mar dedicates his volume on Beethoven. "For Jonathan with love in the confident expectation that he will disagree with most of it.")

Weingartner's influence is alive and well in Del Mar's essay, both in the thinking justifying his choices and in the passages which he chooses to highlight.

Table 5.4. A Summary of Del Mar's Key Interpretive Observations

- 1) Think of the movement primarily in four-measure units.¹³ (This builds upon Weingartner's hypermeter and maintains his patterns of anacrusis.)
- 2) It is permissible to play the opening five bars under tempo to give them more power, then set the main tempo at the piano in m. 6.¹⁴ (This contrasts with Weingartner.)
- 3) A cutoff with pause should be made after the second fermata, but not the first. (It serves to punctuate the end of a complete four-bar phrase and allows the subsequent piano passage to be heard.) Subsequent stand-alone fermatas should be followed by a cutoff with pause, because of their place in the movement's structure, but pairs of fermatas should be treated as in the opening bars (cutoff with pause only after the second fermata).¹⁵
- 4) The main tempo should be half-note equals 96bpm, not Beethoven's indicated half-note equals 108bpm.¹⁶ (This is even slower than Weingartner's recommended tempo.)
- 5) The first measure of the second theme should have an "upbeat character."¹⁷ (This is consistent with Weingartner).
- 6) The repeat must be observed, as it clarifies the "upbeat" nature of m. 1 in the movement's phrase structure.¹⁸

13. Norman Del Mar, *Conducting Beethoven: Volume 1, the Symphonies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 73-74.

14. *Ibid.*, 72.

15. *Ibid.*, 74-75.

16. *Ibid.*, 72.

17. *Ibid.*, 76.

18. *Ibid.*, 76.

Table 5.4 (Continued). A Summary of Del Mar's Key Interpretive Observations

7) Broaden the tempo in mm. 125-128. (This is analogous to Del Mar's treatment of the opening bars of movement.)¹⁹

8) Exaggerate the crescendo leading up to subito piano in m. 145 and 153.²⁰

9) Take a cue from the pianissimo in the trumpets and timpani to drop the entire orchestra's dynamic further at m. 158.²¹

10) Del Mar describes the passage beginning at m. 228 as two twelve-bar units, subdivided into units of five bars plus seven bars.²² (Del Mar's patterns of anacrusis and emphasis align with those described in Weingartner.)

11) Treat the oboe as a solo voice beginning in m. 254 (as in Weingartner), with the bassoon as secondary voice, and strings holding pianissimo (similar to Weingartner). A tense pause of "some seconds" should follow the dying away of the oboe and the subsequent entry should be played pianissimo rather than the indicated piano. (There should be no relaxation of tempo throughout this passage. Del Mar is expressly saving this device for the coda.)²³

12) Del Mar proposes the following as a possible "solution" to the bassoon versus horn problem at mm. 303-305. Have all three bassoonists (the contrabassoon player playing a regular instrument) play this passage while overblowing, imitating the period bassoon.²⁴

13) Approach m. 478 with some rallentando, to "summon up the tutta forza emphases." Give extra separation to the eighth-notes of m. 480. Proceed poco meno at m. 483. Return to tempo primo at m. 491, and maintain this tempo to the end.²⁵ (This is, essentially, the same approach as Weingartner's.)

Gunther Schuller's impressive career as a conductor is only one facet of this shockingly prolific performer, composer, educator, and arts advocate's working life. His book, while uncompromising in its critique of other conductors' interpretations, does a remarkable job of laying bare the variance in interpretation by a host of respected

19. Ibid., 79.

20. Ibid., 79.

21. Ibid., 79.

22. Ibid., 81.

23. Ibid., 81-82.

24. Ibid., 82-83.

25. Ibid., 83-84.

conductors available on recording, and comparing them to indications in the score.

Although his preface and some passages read like they were written by an avenging angel of artistic purity, his insights are many, and his fundamental dedication to the composer's expressed wishes is unquestionable. Although his interpretive analysis is significantly longer than the other authors' examined here—by more than four times—I have tried to distill his work to its most salient points, concentrating on those areas where comparisons are available in the other two sources.

Table 5.5. A Summary of Schuller's Key Interpretive Observations

1) At the opening of the movement, employ relatively short fermatas, in keeping with the con brio character of the tempo. The second fermata should be longer than the first. (Schuller explains that this desire for a longer second fermata explains Beethoven's "added" bar in m. 4, and criticizes those conductors who employ more complicated explanations, calling out both Weingartner and Del Mar by name, among others.) The fermatas should be "free in time, unpredictable in length."²⁶

2) Although Schuller does illustrate the range of tempi employed by various conductors, he stops short of recommending a tempo.²⁷

3) Conceive the movement primarily in four-bar units (like Del Mar), indicating the phrase groups in player's parts, and occasionally beating in four to aid players in creating a subtle hypermeter.²⁸

4) Schuller does acknowledge the convention that quarter-notes at the end of phrases should be played the same length as the leading voice, often an eighth note, even though this goes against his prevailing maxim of adhering to notation precisely.²⁹

5) Read Beethoven's dynamics very closely. Schuller points out that in key passages of repeated sforzandi (e.g. mm. 38-43) the tension is carried and built by successive dissonance, not just dynamics. (i.e., Successive sforzandi do not necessitate a crescendo.)³⁰

26. Gunther Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 111-121.

27. *Ibid.*, 121-123.

28. *Ibid.*, 123-128.

29. *Ibid.*, 127.

30. *Ibid.*, 129.

Table 5.5 (Continued). A Summary of Schuller's Key Interpretive Observations

6) Schuller argues for close attention to the difference between four-eighth-note groups Beethoven beamed as one note plus three notes versus those with four notes to a beam. (i.e., Three-note groups indicate figures functioning as a pick-up to the following bar and should be phrased as such.)³¹

7) "It goes without saying that the second subject will want to be performed in recognition of Beethoven's own 'flexible tempo' or 'tempo of feeling.' Surely a degree of relaxation in the tempo is wanted here, or is at least possible." (Why this particular instance of tempo modification is uniquely permissible while all other variances from strict tempo are forbidden by Schuller is never really explained.) Schuller goes on to suggest that if the main tempo is Beethoven's own half-note equals 108bpm, that the second subject can be played as slowly as half-note equals 96bpm (Del Mar's suggested tempo for the entire movement).³²

8) Schuller argues for repetition of the exposition.³³ (This is consistent with Del Mar and Weingartner).

9) Do not begin crescendo earlier than indicated. Follow gradations of dynamics carefully, especially in forte.³⁴ (Both Weingartner and Del Mar support this maxim.)

10) Schuller offers an explanation of the phrasing beginning at m. 196 that retains four-bar phrasing longer, and more consistently, than Del Mar or Weingartner. Schuller argues forcibly for maintaining full length half-notes throughout this passage.³⁵ (Schuller frequently argues for half-notes, and quarter-notes falling on the second beat of a bar, to be played full-length rather than being truncated in any way.)

11) Schuller is, generally, much more expressly concerned with orchestral balance than his colleagues. Most important to him are: hearing crucial details in the woodwinds that can be obscured by overly-loud string playing and limiting the dynamic of the trumpets and timpani so they do not obscure the rest of the orchestra.³⁶

12) Schuller advocates a gradual emergence of the oboe as a solo voice leading to m. 268.³⁷

31. Ibid., 131.

32. Ibid., 132-133.

33. Ibid., 139.

34. Ibid., 139-140.

35. Ibid., 147.

36. Ibid., 142.

37. Ibid., 149-150.

Table 5.5 (Continued). A Summary of Schuller’s Key Interpretive Observations

13) Schuller advocates solving the bassoon “problem” in the recapitulation of the second them by restraining the fortissimo of the horns in the exposition and encouraging the bassoons to play very loudly with emphasis on the half-notes in the recapitulation.³⁸

14) Schuller vigorously opposes any tempo modifications not outlined above throughout.

So then, what now? Should we accept one of the above interpretations as gospel and argue away its competitors? Should we reject each as products of the past and forage ahead on our own? Should we pick and choose among the options presented here? Perhaps unsurprisingly, I do not think any of these options is as good as using the various points the authors raise as jumping-off points for additional discussion and study. They are well-informed jumping-off points and wholly-valid jumping-off points, but also merely evidence of past practice, however perfect or imperfect it may be. We can, and will, hold these ideas up to the light of current evidence on style and our own natural preferences, but doing so is only useful if we allow it to help us find our own interpretive truth amongst the data.

This is, perhaps, an underappreciated aspect of conducting preparation. It’s not enough to know a great deal about a score, from its notes to its history to the conventions which surrounded it, and the mechanics of its sound production. These things are certainly important, but they don’t qualify one to stand in front of ensemble. What does serve as qualification is a deeply held conviction that we have dug deeply into the fertile ground a score provides and grown an interpretive vision with sturdy roots that we believe in wholly. It is not enough for us to know our choices are “correct.” We must find them deeply compelling and be able to make them compelling to others.

38. Ibid., 151-152.

Let us begin with a basic but always-difficult issue: tempo. Of our two authors who go so far as to recommend a tempo, both suggest tempi slower than those indicated by Beethoven's metronome marking. Clive Brown's article makes plain that there's little factual evidence to support the old theories that Beethoven's metronome markings were the result of a faulty metronome, so why the alteration?³⁹

Here we come up against a basic issue separating ideals of exactitude from performance-ready interpretation: practicality. What is the point of adhering to Beethoven's metronome marking precisely if doing so leads to sloppy performance by an ensemble that can't quite keep up with the notes, blurred melodies in a particularly acoustically live hall, or a sameness of affect? None of these are a given in doing so, but all are dangers. Further, is the point of a metronome indication to prescribe a precise tempo for any and all performances of a work?

Allowances must be made for realities of performance conditions and for our own limitations and preferences. There is nothing to be gained by blindly following a composer's tempo marking if in doing so we let other important dimensions of our performance suffer. (The fact that all three authors, including Schuller, prescribe one degree or another of deviation from Beethoven's marking is as good a proof of this as any.) The metronome marking is still very useful, it gives us a more precise understanding of what Beethoven means by "allegro con brio," one which we should do our best to incorporate into our thinking, but that is the end of it.

39. Clive Brown, "Historical Performance, Metronome Marks and Tempo in Beethoven's Symphonies," *Early Music*, 19 (1991): 247ff.

Whether or not to slow the tempo at the entrance of the second theme is another matter, with the same issues to consider. Especially if the main tempo is on the faster side, it may well make sense to slow down a bit for the more lyrical second theme. Doing so, however, does distort the tempo of the opening motive as it plays against the second theme in the bass instruments. This doesn't necessarily exclude making this choice, but it does suggest that there is a point at which slowing too much will obscure an important motivic link within the movement's larger structure.

Spend time imagining the work at Beethoven's metronome marking. If you can find it within your imagination and your body to perform at that tempo with all the nuance and precision you feel the movement deserves, try to. But do not let precision of tempo come at the detriment of the performance as a whole. It is better to find a suitably aggressive tempo that still allows you what freedom you need, and your ensemble what comfort it requires, to best perform.

From the beginning then, should the movement begin in the main tempo or a bit slower, as Del Mar suggests? Well, it can begin at a bit more stentorian tempo if you like, but why? Does this iconic motive—emphasized by repeated declamation, strong orchestration, fortissimo dynamic, and its embedded fermatas—really require an additional alteration of tempo to make itself present in the audience's mind and memory? Is there any real worry that this initial statement, or its later reiterations, would pass unnoticed without altering the tempo as well? I would argue, no.

Further, this approach is so stereotypical in the minds of most audience members that there is an opportunity to surprise them a bit by instead beginning briskly, which should be capitalized upon. In doing so the *con brio* character of the music is readily

apparent, which a slower start might obscure—especially since Del Mar’s suggestion is to begin the main tempo in a piano passage.

The treatment of the fermatas is similarly flexible. There is some expectation, as Clive Brown describes, that fermatas will be followed by a pause of some sort, although exactly how much of a pause (whether merely the indicated eighth-rest or something more) is not reliably dictated by conventions of the time.⁴⁰ With this in mind, all three conductors’ approaches to the fermatas and their cutoffs seem reasonable. Indeed, it wouldn’t be unreasonable to take even more drastic pauses following cutoffs than any of these authors advocate. Again, however, what is the purpose in doing so? If it is to highlight the opening statement, we have already discussed that this can hardly be avoided even without adding a pregnant fermata and pause.

Meanwhile, elongating the fermatas or the pauses does have the effect of separating the opening phrase from the remainder of the exposition, effectively creating five bars of introduction followed by the exposition proper. It is not invalid to claim that such separation is advantageous to the audience’s perception of the movement’s structure, serving as obvious “goalposts” along the way of the movement’s unfolding, but we would be hard-pressed to find another example in Beethoven’s symphonic output where this kind of treatment makes sense. Rather, looking at so famous an example as the opening chords of the “Eroica” Symphony we would find some evidence that a dramatic, fast opening is entirely characteristic of the fiery composer.

40. Clive Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 588-598.

Personally, my approach to these bars is most like Del Mar's. I like the sense of propulsion that comes with a quick attack off the first fermata, but I also like the sixth bar to begin from clear silence, which it cannot do if only an eighth-rest is observed. That said, I am in agreement with Schuller that the fermatas should not be particularly long, to maintain a sense of forward momentum, and that the second fermata should be obviously longer in length than the first—both because Beethoven seems to be indicating this and because it sets up the longer pause before measure six well.

All three authors argue for the observation of the exposition's repeat, pointing out that it puts the opening bars in clearer hyper-metric context. This is true and a perfectly valid reason to observe the repeat. Although such repetitions are no longer considered universally required, in this case the exposition is so quick and tightly constructed, and the movement is already so repetitive, that observing the repeat hardly represents a serious additional expenditure of effort on the parts of the musicians or audience. There is no reason to exclude it.

All three authors implore their readers to follow Beethoven's dynamic markings precisely. Given the care with which these indications are made, and their seamless coordination with the movement's harmonies, this seems to make good sense. But what of Schuller's many concerns regarding hearing all the voices?

In part, these concerns are borne of current practices of not doubling woodwinds or horns in Beethoven, as Weingartner suggests in forte and fortissimo passages in particular. It is also, however, due to a difference in timbre between instruments of Beethoven's time (which can be heard on any number of historically-informed performances documented by recording) and those of our own. Woodwinds of the era

were more distinct, particularly the double reeds. Strings were less opaque in their sound, trumpets and horns less brilliant, and timpani less sonorous but more percussive. As such, some of the balances Schuller frets over were more easily achieved in Beethoven's time.

Similarly, the striking difference we hear now between the introductory bars to the second theme on horns (in the exposition) and bassoons (in the recapitulation) would have been less striking, as Schuller points out. In this light, Beethoven's respective choices of orchestration at these moments seems less dictated by the limits of the instruments available and more a premeditated act, and Schuller's suggestion to maintain the choice of instrument but alter the player's interpretation of the dynamics makes good and effective sense. (Del Mar's suggestion of having the contra-bassoon player join in makes sense in and of itself, but it will require that the contrabassoonist attend rehearsal of the opening movement for only four bars of playing, and carry two instruments just for those four bars, which could easily annoy the player for little appreciable benefit.)

Indeed, one can question the very premise of the problem as it is often posed. Is it problematic, in the narrative of the movement, that the second theme be introduced more "weakly" (by the bassoons) in the recapitulation? I would argue it is not. On the whole, unlike in the exposition, the entry of the second theme in the recapitulation is not a moment of high drama. If anything, the energy and drive of the movement is more relaxed here than anywhere else, coming off the highs of the development and not yet gearing up for the coda. Harmonically, the turn to C-major is not particularly arresting. Why, then, suggest that the second theme's introduction should be as stentorian and grand in the recapitulation as the exposition? Why rob Beethoven one of the many, relatively subtle, points of variation he enjoys in this tightly-constructed sonata-allegro

structure, or so dramatically interrupt a brief period of respite in a very high-strung movement?

Schuller's other dynamic adjustments make generally good sense, especially when working with less-experienced orchestras. Student trumpets, in particular, tend to have very limited experience playing Classical music and often take forte and fortissimo dynamics much too enthusiastically. On the whole, however, it is better to enter rehearsals ready to make adjustments as needed rather than anticipate them by notating changes in the players' parts. Making the changes in rehearsal makes it easier to make balance a function of active listening (i.e., "balance to the woodwinds in this forte passage"), which will yield much better results.

The questions of phrasing and hypermeter each author raise are perfectly valid, and their various frameworks can be helpful for coming to an understanding the shapes of phrases throughout. (Schuller's suggestion of notating our choice of phrase groupings into the player's parts will likely prove both pedantic and unnecessary, as one's conducting can easily put the focus on phrase direction once the tempo is established, and such live manipulation of sound is always superior to notation, as it relies on active attention and listening as a group rather than individual's interpretations of vague markings.) Where the authors tend to disagree, further, is where hyper-meter is least important: in the opening bars and following measure 228.

In the opening, aside from giving the opening three eighth-notes a sense of anacrusis, the fermatas obscure whichever reading of hypermeter one chooses. After measure 228 Beethoven seems to be intentionally obscuring the previously-established hyper meter, so aside from the necessity of establishing a mental framework to avoid

getting lost in the repetitions, why impose one of the designs suggested here in any obvious way? Why not simply focus on creating a single line of *Klangfarbenmelodie*, defined entirely by orchestration, harmony, and gradual diminuendo? Doesn't allowing the meter to fall away make the subito fortissimo statements of the main motive all the more shattering?

All three authors are quite concerned that the oboe solo in m. 268 be well-prepared, but they have essentially contrasting approaches to doing so. Del Mar and Weingartner argue for making the oboe a clear solo voice from its entrance in m. 255. Schuller argues for its gradual emergence as a solo voice. I tend to agree with Schuller, but would like to clarify why.

I begin with two questions. What is the purpose of the oboe solo? Where are we in the structure of the movement at this point, both in terms of form and narrative? Structurally, we have just reached the recapitulation, with the nearly-literal restatement of the movement's opening bars in mm. 248-252. Continued comparison with the exposition will demonstrate that the strings are playing precisely the same material in the recapitulation at this point as they did earlier, with a regular simplification of orchestration restraining the eighth-note motion to the violin parts. Meanwhile, the formerly-absent woodwinds have new melodic material.

Or do they? The bassoon line is a bit more active than the oboe to start, the clarinets are rather clearly present to fill in harmony, and the oboe then becomes more active just as it becomes a true solo voice. Is either bassoon or oboe obviously dominant over the ongoing recapitulation of the opening motive and its larger melodic spinning-out in the strings? I would argue not. Therefore, we have an opportunity to capitalize on this

ambiguity, to play with the audience's expectation. Yes, they will hopefully note that there is new material in the woodwinds. (Repetition of the exposition has almost certainly seen to that.) Yes, we will have to work hard to achieve a balance between strings, oboe, and bassoon. But why push the oboe as dominant from the start? Why not let the ambiguity continue and let the relative significance of the oboe emerge on its own, as Beethoven rather neatly notates in the relative melodic motion of the parts, just before its famous cadenza?

Indeed, what is this cadenza filling in for? Why would Beethoven even make this seemingly odd and singular choice? It is, essentially, elongating the G major harmony of m. 21/268 and supplanting the fortissimo repetition of the four-note opening motive in mm. 22-23. I think Beethoven made this choice for a few reasons, explicitly or implicitly. First, I believe he is at this point in the movement's construction reserving the use of massive re-statement of the opening motive with fermata for structurally significant moments. He allowed a repetition to signal the arrival of the recapitulation, he will allow a similar repetition at the peak of drama in the coda in mm. 448-452. Adding an additional repetition of the motive-in-fermata gesture here might draw attention away from these more significant points of arrival. Secondly, this pattern of passing melody from bassoon to oboe will come back in mm. 483-491 as the clearly-dominant melody (here explicitly notated as piano against a pianissimo string accompaniment), and the introductory woodwind passage and oboe cadenza serves as a point of reference for this moment. Finally, preparing for the extreme energy of the coda, Beethoven is seeking ways of limiting the frantic energy of the recapitulation without robbing it of its dramatic power. Holding the audience captive with a single woodwind instrument, playing out of

tempo, in a first theme group that is almost entirely either propulsive or massive in its affect, is a brilliant means of achieving this.

We come now to Del Mar and Weingartner's most elaborate series of instructions on rubato, and Schuller's most fervent repudiation of their ideas, in the coda. As elsewhere in this discussion, there are essentially two questions to be asked. First, is the kind of rubato they propose something Beethoven might have reasonably expected performers to do? Secondly, if so, what is the range of acceptable departure from the main tempo? Both questions are rather difficult to answer with certainty.

Beethoven is often noted for having complained in his conversation books, among other places, about performers who adhered too strictly to a single tempo and ignored the expressive possibilities of rubato. This comes as no surprise, given the context Brown provides.⁴¹ Rubato was, at most every point in the period of music history he explores, part of the picture for all musicians who hoped to perform tastefully. The issue isn't so much whether or not rubato was acceptable, but when and how.

As Brown discusses, rubato was much more commonly employed in lyrical music in moderate and slow tempos than in fast music of any kind. That said, it was employed at faster tempi, especially in situations like the ones we encounter frequently in this first movement of Beethoven's: leading up to fermatas, pauses, and important points of arrival. But here we must pause and acknowledge that each author Brown cites also warns against tasteless overuse of rubato.

So, here we are, in a fast tempo but in a situation where some rubato might at least be permissible. What to do? The question, is again one of structure and larger form.

41. *Ibid.*, 375-415.

Del Mar, for example, felt that the structure was best served if each repetition of the opening bars was anticipated by a slowing, then acceleration of tempo. Weingartner, meanwhile, explicitly avoids such rubato until the coda, while Schuller avoids it all together. But what do you need to consider for yourself?

Consider, first, that the sonata-allegro form in general, and this one in particular, is about creating a balanced, compelling narrative structure from repetition. It is a means of taking relatively little musical material and arranging it such that it may be repeated and elaborated upon in an emotionally and musically satisfying way. Thus, the recapitulation is a varied repetition of the exposition, the development and especially the coda are explicitly built upon varied repetition of earlier materials. So there's nothing inherently wrong with Del Mar's approach of repeating a motto's rubato with each iteration. In theory it should be supported by the surrounding structure of repetition.

But what of the larger narrative at play, not just within the movement itself but across the whole of the symphony? This is a more complicated question. At its most basic level, the symphony is a large-scale transformation from the fiery, startling C minor of the first movement to the frenetic, expansive C major of the last. The famous transition between the third and fourth movements will make this harmonic shift readily-apparent, as well as remind the audience most explicitly of the motivic transformation from the opening chords of the symphony to the opening chords of its last movement. But what will these reminders of the first movement bring to mind? What do we want them to bring to mind?

Well, if we head in Del Mar's direction, we'll definitely make the first movement feel most stentorian. We might even manage to convey some sort of pathos along the

lines of “fate knocking at the door.” Then again, we might only manage to hammer an already overly-familiar moment of arrival home to an audience that’s slightly bored with what they’re hearing, in too similar a fashion, again and again. For this reason, and for the aforementioned reason that Del Mar’s approach will feel very familiar and old-fashioned to an audience—however justifiably or unjustifiably so, I tend to agree much more with Weingartner and Schuller.

I do not know that I agree with Weingartner’s premeditated and explicit approach to rubato in the coda. Certainly his choices are magnifying patterns of climax that are already present in the music, but they seem to exaggerate points which are already made plain by what’s on the page. Nor do I agree fully with Schuller, who would have us fight any instinct to indulge in those massive arcs with rubato.

I know, simply, that some slowing for the points of climax, especially in the coda, feels right to me, feels necessary as I conduct the final surge up the mountain. I do not really premeditate it. I don’t make adjustments to parts. If I needed to say something to get what I wanted in rehearsal the words “slowing down” would never cross my lips. I would talk, instead, in metaphors of feeling the music becoming weightier, more massive, inexorable, etc., because that’s the motivation which compels me to hold back the tempo, if only slightly, as we reach the inevitable peak. By the final repetitions of those hammering eighth-notes, I simply have no other means at my disposal besides slowing down to continue to increase their emphasis, and increasing their impact seems necessary to the form and the larger narrative.

This may sound like quasi-mystical, self-indulgent, overly-romanticized rationalization. And, I suppose it is. But what finally matters when we interpret, after we

find context, after we consider our alternatives, is what feels right to us. In the end, if we cannot wholly believe in the choice, it is merely a choice, and not an artistic act.

Chapter 6: Second Year Course Outlines, Final Project Description, and Sample Lesson

Course Outlines

The table of assignments and activities below is, of necessity, far less specific than for previous semesters. This is because, by the second year, there will be a wide spread of interest and ability between students. Also, the requirements placed upon the resources of the school and its student body (for soloists to accompany, orchestras to perform with, etc.) become much more pronounced at this point in the curriculum. As such, it is much more difficult to specify pieces for each assignment. Instead, general guidelines for selection of assignments and additional clarification and commentary on benchmarks are provided where appropriate.

Table 6.1. Second Year Assignments by Benchmark

Conducting Technique

- 1) Students should be competent conductors of recitative in the first semester.
 - It will be useful for students to have some progressive practice in recitative accompaniment. For students inexperienced with accompanying singers on any instrument, it will make sense to begin at the keyboard, with works in English, providing secco recitative to a singer. Selections from Handel's *Messiah* should prove ideal for this task, with specific selections chosen based on available singers. After that, multiple recitatives from Rossini and Mozart should be conducted, particularly from any of the Da Ponte operas, *The Magic Flute*, or *The Barber of Seville*, as these are the most-frequently performed. Emphasis should, at all times, be placed on clarity of manual technique and knowledge of the language and text.
- 2) Students should be able accompanists to both instrumentalists and singers in the first semester.
 - Although some accompanying will have been done in the second semester, the relative difficulty should be increased in the second year, to include works where the conductor and soloist are more equal partners. This will include concerti by Tchaikovsky, Sibelius, Elgar, Rachmaninov, and Dvorak, and operatic selections by Puccini especially, where shared rubato becomes increasingly important. Which selections to assign will be limited to those that students or faculty are willing and able to perform in seminar with the conducting students. If at all possible, ensemble passages from operas should also be assigned, as well as

Table 6.1 Continued. Second Year Assignments by Benchmark

through-composed scenes. (An excellent final assignment, for example, would be the first act of *Tosca*, at least through Angelotti and Cavaradossi's exit, preferably up to the Te Deum, but this would require significant vocal resources even with the seminar students filling in for the chorus.)

3) Students should conduct increasingly complex music with increasing command and musical clarity.

-Here, as elsewhere, the limitations of the seminar ensemble will become an issue. It is crucial that students be exposed to the music of the Late Romantic period and of the twentieth century, but the most significant of these works aren't easily playable by less-than-well-qualified ensemble musicians. If possible, however, works by Mahler, Sibelius, Bartok (specifically the *Concerto for Orchestra*), Brahms, Elgar (particularly the *Enigma Variations*), and Debussy should be incorporated, particularly those which place significant demands on the conductor's ability to shape the orchestra's pacing and sound.

Score Study

4) Study should begin to incorporate a wider variety of music at a faster pace than in the first year.

-This will vary from student to student, but all should be pushed as far as possible.

5) Historic concepts of ornamentation, embellishment, and bowing should be covered in the first semester.

-Readings should include Clive Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) 259-281 and 455-587. Readings should be assigned to coordinate with the student's study of scores, to which they can be applied.

6) Students should be introduced to specific techniques for internalizing operatic material.

-Special attention should be paid to using the text as an anchor for learning, the importance of language skills, and to examining the theatrical and dramatic construction of passages in addition to their musical logic.

7) As advanced training in bowing as is practical should be given during the second semester, incorporating feedback from the seminar ensemble musicians.

-Students should read and work through examples in Elizabeth Green, *Orchestral Bowings and Routines* (American String Teachers Association, 1990), throughout the first semester. The instructor, or a well-qualified string student from the seminar ensemble, should monitor the student's progress, and the student's bowings should be applied to seminar work on passages from various periods of music. These bowings should be critiqued by the instructor and ensemble.

Table 6.1 (Continued). Second Year Assignments by Benchmark

8) Successively larger passages of music should be conducted from memory throughout the year. At least one less-rigidly-structured movement or work of larger scale should be conducted from memory.

-Students should be encouraged to share innovations to the study techniques presented in the first year which they attempt or find success with.

Rehearsal and Performance

9) Students should perform a concerto or large concert work in the first semester and music equivalent to half of a performance in the second semester, as a final project with the school's best-available orchestra.

10) Students should be entrusted with sectional and full rehearsals of both orchestra and opera programs without active guidance.

-Wherever possible, especially at first, the teacher should be in attendance, even if they do not speak, until the student is clearly succeeding on their own. Thereafter, the experience should continue to be reflected upon and evaluated, if only through conversation and the observed progress of the ensemble.

11) Students should build a sophisticated understanding of how to refine the sound of individual players and choruses of instruments.

-Read and discuss Christopher Adey, *Orchestral Performance: A Guide for Conductors and Players* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1998), 481-792, throughout the first semester.

12) Students' rehearsal and performance should evidence efficient, effective, musically-focused conducting that rises to the level of a young professional.

13) Students should be required to observe orchestra and opera rehearsals outside of the university, especially by professional ensembles.

-Journal entries should be kept for each observation.

14) Any small opportunities to work with ensembles outside of the university should be encouraged.

-Any opportunities requiring a large time commitment should be turned into independent study coursework.

Administration

15) In the first semester, readings on finding and attaining an entry-level position should be assigned and discussed.

-Readings should focus, primarily, on Diane Wittry, *Beyond the Baton: What Every Conductor Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 7-76.

Table 6.1 (Continued). Second Year Assignments by Benchmark

16) In the second semester, specific concerns of organizational leadership, marketing, and fundraising should be addressed.

-Read and discuss the following during the second semester.

Diane Wittry, *Beyond the Baton: What Every Conductor Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 77-216.

Danny Newman, *Subscribe Now!: Building Arts Audiences Through Dynamic Subscription Promotion* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1983).

Indiana University Center On Philanthropy Fund Raising School, *Principals and Techniques of Fund Raising* (Indianapolis, IN: The Fund Raising School, 2006).

17) Students should be responsible for presenting pre-performance talks.

The Final Project

As described in Chapter 2, the final project should be equivalent in scope to an independent study course and should involve a substantial performance. Whether this performance is the half program presented in the second semester, or a separate degree recital organized with an ad-hoc ensemble by the student will depend on the available resources available and the choice of project.

The project, as a whole, should include the following elements.

Table 6.2. Elements of the Final Project

- 1) A public performance of a work or works, video recorded for review
- 2) At least three rehearsals, video recorded for review
- 3) A paper or presentation, geared towards the student's peers and mentors, presenting a thorough analytical and historical context for the work or works being performed
- 4) Program notes for the audience
- 5) A written assessment of the work's difficulties for ensembles of various levels
- 6) A written reflection and self-evaluation of the process as a whole, including areas for improvement, unexpected challenges, etc.

The selection of the work or works for examination and performance should take into consideration all that must be written about them. As a result, they should be works where a significant body of research is available, and for which the student is strongly enthusiastic. Evaluation of the project should take into consideration how well the student

incorporated relevant elements of their coursework, their general level of artistry, and the clarity of their presentation.

Sample Lesson

What follows is a sample lesson plan and lecture for a class introducing, in general terms, some of the considerations important to young conductors seeking a career outside of school. This lesson would be expected to come at some point during the first semester, before applications for summer festivals and graduate programs are due, and should be the first part of a much longer conversation about career development.

Building a Career in Conducting: Prepare, Publicize, Persevere

Table 6.3. Sample Lesson Goals, Materials, and Pre-Class Assignments

Lesson Benchmark Goals: In the first semester, students should be given an understanding of matters central to their attaining an entry-level job.

Classroom Materials: Lecture notes.

Pre-class Assignments:

-Read Diane Wittry, *Beyond the Baton: What Every Conductor Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2007), 1-76.

-Locate and read the biographies of one Music Director appointed within the last year for each of the orchestra types Wittry identifies, excluding opera and ballet. Be prepared to discuss them in class.

Lecture Text

Before we get too far into this lecture, I want to tell you that most everything that Wittry has written in her book is true. As Leonard Slatkin notes in his interview, you need to be very well-prepared for every opportunity that comes your way.¹ You need to pursue every opportunity. There are smart ways to dress, and act, and present your materials. All of it is true, all of it is relevant. We'll discuss all of it at one point or

1. Diane Wittry, *Beyond the Baton: What Every Conductor Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 32.

another throughout the year and as you start looking for work or apply for further study. Today I want to give you a bit of a look at the bigger picture contextualizing Wittry's comments and advice.

I will preface my comments by saying that they are based, primarily, on my observations as I built my own career, supplemented by what I can remember from reading about the music industry in print and online over the years, or conversations with friends, colleagues, mentors, and teachers. This is not an area where there is a body of more formal research to draw upon.

Career may be both the easiest and the hardest thing to talk about with students. It is easy, because getting ahead is not rocket science. It is not even particularly subjective like interpretation, or particularly difficult, like internalizing a score. There are some very straightforward, concrete, unambiguous things that will help you maximize your potential for building a career, which Wittry identifies. The problem comes not in explaining what should be done, but in answering the inevitable question of where will you end up?

The truth is that I have no idea where any of you will end up. I honestly cannot tell you whether you will wash out of the industry all together, or end up Music Director of a full-time orchestra. I have known good conductors who have done both. I have known not-so-good conductors who have done both. I cannot judge for you where, in between these two poles, you will end up. Anyone who tells you they can is either lying to themselves or to you, possibly in an effort to sell you their services.

This is important to face up front. Building a career as a conductor is a game you must play at very hard with no guarantee whatsoever that your efforts will be rewarded at all, let alone in a way that seems fair given the relative talent and work of others. In fact,

you need to put other conductors out of your mind entirely. This is a game you will play with yourself and a vast array of individuals and organizations known as “the business.”

The business you are in, in case you have forgotten, is show business. There may be no other business like it, but there are few that can be more frustrating. None of you are strangers to hard work, or you would not have been allowed in this course, but most of you are strangers to the biggest obstacle you will face in your career: failure. You will fail. You will fail more often than you succeed. You will fail more often and in more ways than you can currently imagine. You will fail despite your most fervent, passionate, well-planned, and well-executed efforts. Failure, in myriad ways, is inevitable. What matters is not whether or not you fail, because everyone does, even—if not especially—those who eventually succeed. What does matter, very much, is how you deal with those failures.

There is only one way to deal with failure. Quickly examine the failed effort to determine if there was any partial success to be built on or lesson to be learned, and move on. Sometimes there will be something you can try and do better or avoid next time. Sometimes there will be a partial result you can try and capitalize on. Usually there will not be. Either way, get on with your life and your work. Every moment you spend mulling over a failure, after you have taken whatever lesson you can from it, is a moment of your life completely wasted.

My first audition as a conductor was, without question, disastrous. I do not think the adjudicators watched me for more than three or four seconds before deciding I was not a good fit for the program, and spent the remainder of my audition looking at what I thought was my submitted essay and chatting about it to each other in what seemed like

mocking tones. Naturally, I did not advance past the first round, and was stuck overseas waiting for a return flight with nothing to do but sulk. I was devastated. It had taken some months of preparation and quite a lot of money to get to the audition, only to fail almost immediately.

I also extended my self-pity into feelings of having failed my teacher, a fine conductor who I had the utmost respect and admiration for. He surprised me. I arrived at my lesson a few days after the audition, no longer particularly anguished but definitely still bruised. We talked a short while about it before he pulled out a stack of letters, maybe an inch or two thick, folded in their opened envelopes. The stack, he explained, were rejection letters he had received over the years and decided to keep for whatever reason. They were, he assured me, an incomplete record of his attempts that had fallen short, sometimes with embarrassingly unimpressive organizations. “This is the business,” he said. “This is what you’re getting into. Just accept that this is how it’s going to be, and get on with it.”

I was very moved by the kindness of his gesture. He had, very concretely, shown me that he too had failed many times over. He did not need to. He could have left it as an anecdote, but he brought the stack. What I did not appreciate at the time was how right he was, and how important it was to do as he said: accept that the business is in part a numbers game, and get on playing it. Had I done so earlier in my career I might have been more successful. You should not dread building that stack of rejections, you should embrace it as part of the process.

Think for a moment, about the numbers you are walking into. You are sitting here, with a handful of your colleagues, at a music school. A few of you will graduate

this year. Multiply that by the number of music schools with master's degree programs in orchestral conducting across the country, then add in students from around the world, because everyone wants to work in the United States. You will end up with several dozen, if not more, students graduating each year, just from top music schools. There will be at least that many from smaller schools, or who obtain degrees in something other than conducting but enter the conducting profession in a serious way. This is the pool of people who enter the field to compete for opportunities each year.

And what are the opportunities? Well, there are many of them too, but if you were to add every entry-level position, competition slot, and workshop slot, you would maybe have one for about a quarter of all the new entrants to the labor pool. But, of course, the new graduates have to compete with last year's graduates who are still building their resumes, and the year's before, and so on. There are simply very many people trying to conduct and comparatively few opportunities for them.

So, the first rule of success is simply do not limit the already small number of opportunities available to you by not pursuing each and every one you possibly can or are remotely qualified for. Do not let focusing on one opportunity, especially a failed opportunity, prevent you from working towards the next opportunity. This is, in essence, the most important of all the rules of success early in a conducting career. You must doggedly persevere if you wish to succeed. This will not be a unique condition of your youth. Few, if any, positions in the professional world are permanent, so you will always need tenacity on your side to continue your career.

Let's read aloud a few of the conductor biographies for the large institutions that you have collected. [Read three to five biographies aloud, from various sized organizations.]

So, what do all these people have in common? What is, quite literally, the last thing any of them mention, which is left out of most of their bios? [The answer you are looking for is education at a conservatory.] There you have it. After going into debt, surviving an application pool that accepted fewer than 10% of applicants, studying for many hours, and generally achieving since you were in kindergarten, you will have finished a degree that might be worth mentioning at the tail end of your biography, but probably will not be.

So, if we look at all these things they list in their biographies, apart from their conservatory education, what sorts of things do we find? [Steer conversation towards a few major items: guest conducting spots, study or apprenticeship with known maestros, and competition wins.] Now, aside from these few conductors who started out with jobs as members of full-time orchestras straight out of conservatory, how much of these listed experiences are the kind of work that could sustain someone for more than a month or two? How many of them cost money? [Nearly all will either be jobs which pay very little or opportunities which actually cost money to pursue.]

You need resources to pursue your career. You need free time to study. You need free time to find and get to know people working in the industry who might be able to help you. You need money to buy scores, to travel, to pay for application fees, to pay for seminar tuitions, and all the rest. In an ideal world, all of you would have large trust funds, already own an apartment in a city with an international airport, and have a close

relative who is a successful and powerful publicist. Short of that, most all of you will have to make do with what you have.

Is this all really necessary? Is it not enough to be talented and hard-working, to do good work, and let that work speak for itself? Yes, it is absolutely necessary and, no, your work speaking for itself will not be sufficient. The reasons for that are two-fold. First, as we have already mentioned, there are many other recent entrants into the conductor job market who look, more or less, just like you do on paper. Secondly, you are entering a much wider networking pool than you have likely ever worked in before, and you do not know where the next opportunity will arise.

Now, not only is the business a much larger institution than you have likely ever dealt with before, its rules are also different. Like getting into a graduate program, or winning a chair in an orchestra, the business is in many ways a meritocracy—i.e. the best person gets the job. There is a significant difference, however, between conductor searches and other kinds of application processes that you have dealt with thus far. Odds are, for every opportunity you have applied to to-date, your actual conducting was evaluated, if only on video. In most conductor searches in the professional world, however, there is a significant cut between the open application process and the selection of people to submit videos. After that, there is another substantial cut to those who will be interviewed by phone, and then frequently another cut before any actual audition invitations are offered.

The reasons for this are relatively simple. Any position in conducting that pays and is advertised nationally can be expected to garner more than a hundred applicants. Make it a full-time, or an obvious resume-building job, and there will be substantially

more. Meanwhile, auditioning conductors, either by live audition or invitation to conduct a program, is very expensive and difficult to coordinate. This is not only because auditioning conductors requires the participation of the entire orchestra, which costs a great deal of money, but because it frequently also involves members of the orchestra's board of directors, staff, and Music Director. As a result, the large applicant pool must be winnowed down as much as possible.

So, how does one get through those successive rounds of cuts to the audition itself? Well, the first thing to consider is who will be evaluating your materials. Odds are, it will not be the orchestra's Music Director. It will likely be an arts administrator or general manager to start, searching through resumes using a rubric designed by a selection committee of staff, musicians, board members, and the orchestra's Music Director if it is an assistant or associate post. The committee will then look at selected resumes and decide who to solicit videos from, and set about reviewing them and deciding who to invite.

The problem, of course, is that this evaluation process is deeply subjective. There is essentially no way it cannot be. Aside from noting whether or not someone has earned a degree from an accredited music school and whether or not they can beat clearly and seem to be connecting with the music and musicians, it is very difficult to evaluate people with any depth based on resumes and short videos. More often than not, the reviewers find themselves examining the quality of the institutions the various candidates have attended or worked for, or looking for connections between the candidates and people they know whose opinions they trust. This is where getting a job becomes every bit as

much, if not more, about who you know and who knows you as whether or not you are an excellent conductor.

Your resume, to start, needs to have as many names and institutions as you can get on it, the larger and more illustrious the better. There are no shortage of seminars with established maestros instructing young up-and-comers. Sometimes you will get in and have the opportunity to for some podium time. Sometimes you will only be offered an auditor's spot to watch others. Both experiences are worth having and paying for, for two reasons. Firstly, you get the instructor's name on your resume in either case. Secondly, you are generally more likely to be accepted into a program, even a very prestigious one, if the people running it know who you are, and auditing a seminar is often a good way of not only meeting them but demonstrating that you take their instruction and your own education seriously.

Do not be picky about where you apply. Swallow the application fees and postage willingly, and be glad you live in an increasingly electronic age where you do not need to manually dub VHS, or frequently even pay postage. Be picky once you get in, but do not put podium time at the top of your priorities, put the head teacher's relative prestige. Your participation in their workshop gets you their name to affiliate yourself with. It is possible someone who knows them will call, and that will not help you unless the teacher liked and remembers you. More likely, and much more frequent, is someone who knows of them will note their name on your resume and add a chit to the "pro" column of your evaluation.

If you do get along well with a conductor and find their advice useful, by all means continue the relationship as best you can. Take private lessons if possible,

maintain a correspondence where you ask questions and keep them informed of what you're doing. What you do not want to do, in all likelihood if you have already been a full participant, is retake their seminar. You need to repeat the seminar process with other maestros, increasing the odds that the maestro you have worked with is someone your evaluators have heard of or know.

This whole process applies, similarly, to competitions. You do not need to win to get the competition's name on your resume. Also, even relatively-unknown competitions can help you learn to be a better competitor later on in your career. That said, know that the competition process is just as low a percentage game as the job market itself, with even fewer checks on subjectivity and caprice.

Many jobs are never posted nationally, if at all, with the position filled by applicants solicited through word of mouth, agents, etc. This is true at every size organization, so personal networking is crucial, especially in your own geographic backyard, where ready availability and nonexistent travel and lodging costs give you a natural advantage. As a result, choosing your place of residence is important.

Not all places are created equal as a fertile location from which to begin a career. If you chose to move home to save on expenses but home is nowhere near a sizable metropolitan center with significant cultural institutions, and smaller institutions of professional music as well, you will have a very hard time finding work in your field nearby. Conversely, if you move to New York City or Berlin, but have no connections with the arts institutions or musicians in the city, and have to work sixty or more hours a week at jobs outside of music to maintain your residence, you probably will not do very well either.

More importantly, no place is a good place unless you actively seek out connections within a larger musical community. Be industrious in seeking out organizations where there may be some potential opportunity but do not be too picky. Is there a small orchestra with no real budget for guest conductors or assistants, and only a handful of performances a year in your city? Approach them anyway. Introduce yourself to the Music Director. Make an effort to show interest by attending a few rehearsals and concerts. Meet at least one other person in the organization if possible. Often such orchestras will have a staff of less than five people, so it is not hard to figure out who to talk to. The same treatment should be applied to small opera companies, community orchestras, small and large university programs, churches with significant music ministries, and on up the ladder to the largest organizations with conductors in your comfortable travel radius. When one of these institutions has an urgent need to fill a position you need to be one of the people that comes to mind, and the best way to assure that is to be as visible as possible.

Do what you can, also, to capitalize on your greatest networking asset: other young musicians. Pay particular attention to people that are working in administration, rather than those who exclusively perform. They are more likely to have some knowledge of the dynamics of an institution behind the scenes and be willing to share, helping you to both know whether or not courting an organization is likely to pay off and how best to do it. Similarly, young performers, although often very pressed for time and still deserving of pay, are more likely to be willing to help you put together projects of your own before you have many resources at your disposal.

Wittry is, again, correct in suggesting that creating opportunities for yourself by forming an ensemble is very time consuming. It also, not incidentally, has the weakest impact on your resume compared with activities that enable you ride the coattails of better-established institutions and musicians. To maximize a project's impact, you need to do your best to have it seen, or at least heard about, by decision makers in your community: people who run, fund, and review larger institutions you want to work for. Send out invitations and press releases. Make a fuss on social media. Do not be shy about talking up the project within reason. Remember, people's expectations of quality and excitement affect their later perceptions of quality and excitement.

One of the few things of lasting help that these projects can garner is a decent quote or two from a reviewer. Unfortunately, fewer and fewer communities have dedicated art music critics and those that do often over-burden them. This said, however, a particularly novel project, especially one that could attract the attention of a critic who does not only evaluate classical music performances, could attract the desired attention. The potential downfall of this approach, of course, is that a non-classical music journalist may feel unqualified to comment on your conducting.

If this all sounds more like being an impresario, or a "showman," than a conductor, it is because that is what it is. Ultimately, however, you are not going to be judged only by those in the cloistered world of music-making, but by the public at large. As such, showmanship is necessary to success. Take comfort, if you need it, in knowing that this is nothing new. Successful musicians have always been canny salespeople, if only for themselves.

Eventually, someone you befriend or impress, or who is desperate enough, will give you a job. At that point, you have to lock in all the qualities of leadership that Wittry identifies: be positive, be prepared, and be professional. Do not, under any circumstances, be humble. It will not help you. Humility is an admirable quality in a person. It is a confusing quality in a conductor. Prostrate yourself before composers and their great works if you must, but remain confident, certain, and accept praise willingly with your musicians, board, and ensemble administrators. Your job, at all times, is to be a confident, competent, passionate, positive leader. Overt humility can obscure those qualities.

This notion that humility is a confusing quality comes out of what people presume of conductors, the “maestro mystique” that Leonard Slatkin mentions and which Norman Lebrecht has famously written about. What follows are some basic tactics of those who achieve this mystique effectively.

First, listen more than you speak in meetings and conversation. Part of the mystique is simply that you are illusive. Wait for the point in the conversation where you can deliver some well-chosen words to whatever effect you have decided will best serve you. Second, do not get too close to any of the musicians or staff publicly. You should make everyone of importance to you feel important in private. But in public only select people should receive your undivided or lasting attention, and they should be your superiors or equals in the organization or community. Beyond that there are not many guidelines, other than that wishing the “maestro mystique” away will not make it so, so try and make it your own.

You will also have to strike a balance between what you know to be right artistically, and what is politically, financially, and morally possible in your situation. Yes, you can fire or replace every subpar player in your ensemble the first year of your employment. Yes, a percentage of the orchestra, board, and audience will likely support and even applaud such a move. No, it is not without significant risk. No, it is not advisable. As much as you want to improve artistic conditions, you need to remember that the way your actions are perceived, in a larger sense, will always effect how the results of those actions are ultimately judged.

Finally, know that you will have to live with the choices you make as you make your way in the world. Decide to work in academia or with a civic ensemble, or in ballet or opera, and you will run into various biases within the industry. Work for too small an institution for too long in your career, even as Music Director, and the same thing will happen. Similarly, work too long professionally without teaching or publishing or earning a doctorate, and academia may not reward you. Earn more than a master's degree in anything before becoming certified to teach in public schools and you will have a very hard time getting hired ahead of much cheaper candidates with certification but only bachelor's degrees. Focus entirely on conducting orchestras and you may miss quality opportunities conducting opera, choirs, bands, and so on.

A few things will be helpful in learning to live with your choices, which will in turn, help you continue to press on in your career. First, know yourself. Everyone has needs. Some need adulation and notoriety, some are happy to labor out of the spotlight. Some need to be constantly challenged artistically, some prefer to succeed within a challenge they have become accustom to. Some need routine, some hate routine. Some

need a family, some do not. Some have a very high tolerance for travel and new situations, some have a very low tolerance. Odds are you will fall somewhere in between most of these extremes. But learn to recognize what is actually fulfilling to you, what is actually conducive to your best work, and try to seek it out.

Second, as you work through various jobs and positions, you will learn where your true talents lie. It may turn out that, although you trained primarily with orchestral conducting in mind, that you have a particular talent for working in opera, or vice versa. It may be that you have a particular gift for administrating, or for guest conducting, or for educating. All of this knowledge, as you experience different situations, will help you decide on and carry out a path. Be open to changes in your path that you did not see coming, but which turn out to work for you.

Once you leave school you will want to find, as quickly as possible, a career that capitalizes on your talents, challenges you artistically in a positive way, and provides for your emotional and material needs. This is much easier said than done, of course, and is much closer to the process for finding a spouse than a car. There will be far more luck and far less reason involved than you might desire, and the timetable will be impossible to predict. Try, as best you can, to remain attached to those things about music and making-music that most deeply compel you. They are the best inoculation against fear, frustration, burn-out, jealousy, and cynicism.

Remember always that making music professionally, at any level, is a privilege very few enjoy. So, remember to enjoy it. Each rehearsal or performance, like each day of your life, might be your last. Embrace every opportunity to make it a meaningful and satisfying experience for yourself and those around you.

Appendix A: Supplemental Texts on Conducting and Conductors

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Appendix B: Annotated Score: Haydn, Symphony No. 104, III¹

Menuetto
Allegro

D: I IV⁶ ii⁶₅ V⁷ PAC

pp I IV⁶ ii⁶₅ V⁷ PAC

1. Joseph Haydn, “Symphony No. 104 in D Major (“London”),” in *Joseph Haydn: London Symphonies Nos. 99-104 in Full Score* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications Inc., 1999), 341-346.

Fl. ¹⁸
 Ob.
 Cl.
 Fg. ¹⁸
 Cor.
 Tr.
 Timp.
 Vl. I.
 Vl. II.
 Vla.
 Vlc. e Cb. ²⁰

f sf sf
f
f sf sf
 I V/vi vi V/V

Fl. ²¹
 Ob.
 Cl.
 Fg.
 Cor.
 Tr.
 Timp.
 Vl. I.
 Vl. II.
 Vla.
 Vlc. e Cb. ²¹

p sf sf
p
pp
p
p
p
 PAC/V V V

Fl. *f* *sf* *a2* *f* *tr*
 Ob. *f* *sf* *a2* *f*
 Cl. *f*
 Fg. *f* *a2*
 Cor. *f* *a2*
 Tr. *f*
 Timp. *f*
 Vl. I *f* *tr*
 Vl. II *f*
 Vla. *f*
 Vlc. e Cb. *f* *a2* *33 f*
 6 ° I IV⁶ ii⁶ V⁷

Fl. *p* *f* *tr*
 Ob. *p* *f* *tr*
 Cl. *f*
 Fg. *a2* *p* *f*
 Cor. *f*
 Tr. *f*
 Timp. *f*
 Vl. I *f* *tr*
 Vl. II *p* *f*
 Vla. *p* *f*
 Vlc. e Cb. *p* *f* *50*
 IAC V₅⁶ / IV IV V⁷ PAC PAC PAC PAC

Trio

Fl. I
Ob.
Fg.
VI. I
VI. II
Vla.
Vlc.
eCb.

p
p
pizz.
pizz.
p
pizz.

B^b: I V⁷ 7 IAC IAC

Ob.
Fg.
VI. I
VI. II
Vla.
Vlc.
eCb.

p
p
arco
arco

IAC V⁷ I V⁷/vi vi V/V PAC/V

Fl. I
Ob.
Fg.
VI. I
VI. II
Vla.
Vlc.
eCb.

p
p
arco
arco

V⁷/ii ii V/vi vi V/vi

Fl. *1.*

Ob.

Fg.

VI. I

VI. II

Via.

Vlc. e Cb.

V^7/ii vii°/ii ii V^6 I ii^6 vii°/V

Fl.

Ob.

Fg.

VI. I

VI. II

Via.

Vlc. e Cb.

V^7 p $piaz.$ p $piaz.$ p $piaz.$ I V^3 7 IAC

Fl.

Ob.

VI. I

VI. II

Via.

Vlc. e Cb.

vii_6^5 $dim.$ V^7/IV IV $arco$ vii^7/ii ii^6 C^4 $V^7 PAC$

Fl. *p* *dim.*

Ob. *p* *dim.*

Fg. *p* *dim.*

Vi. I *p* *dim.*

Vi. II *p* *dim.*

Vla. *p* *dim.*

Vic. e Cb. *p* *dim.*

93 I *vi*⁶ *D:iv*⁶ 100 *Gr*⁶ V

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