

May 2015

From Paper to Podium: Exploring the Gap between University Training and Professional Experience in Orchestral Conductors

Rachel L. Waddell
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.34917/7646086>

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FROM PAPER TO PODIUM: EXPLORING THE GAP BETWEEN UNIVERSITY
TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ORCHESTRAL
CONDUCTORS

By

Rachel L. Waddell

Bachelor of Music in Composition

The Hartt School of Music

2009

Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting

Northern Arizona University

2011

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Musical Arts

Department of Music

The College of Fine Arts

The Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

May 2015

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We recommend the dissertation prepared under our supervision by

Rachel L. Waddell

entitled

From Paper to Podium: Exploring the Gap between University Training and Professional Experience in Orchestral Conductors

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

Department of Music

Taras Krysa, M.M., Committee Chair

Anthony Barone, Ph.D., Committee Member

Diego Vega, D.M.A., Committee Member

Justin Emerich, M.M., Committee Member

Simon Gottschalk, Ph.D., Graduate College Representative

Kathryn Hausbeck Korgan, Ph.D., Interim Dean of the Graduate College

May 2015

Abstract

In African polyrhythmic drum circles there is a proverb that exemplifies the necessity of common vision and community in group musical performance: "I am because we are." This simple ideal is ostensibly mirrored in the western institution of the symphonic orchestra, an ensemble of many that nevertheless must arrive at one, shared interpretation of a piece of music. The structure of the orchestra is a complicated hierarchy with section players at its base, followed by principals, the concertmaster, and finally the conductor. Although conductors are the public face of leadership in orchestras, if they alienate the musicians they will have limited or even negative effects on the final musical product. With the exception of perhaps difficult rhythmic passages and youth ensembles, musicians do not typically need help keeping time. Despite this fact, university and conservatory programs center on developing physical conducting technique, often neglecting the social skills necessary to thrive as a professional conductor. By focusing so heavily on baton technique graduates of conducting programs face a gap between practice and performance, as there are many additional skills, such as social skills and leadership, which are necessary to be a successful conductor. This leaves newly appointed conductors in a period of flux, with little guidance on how to take their musical leadership to a level where both their physical technique and personality inspire musicians and audiences.

My dissertation will explore this gap by investigating what orchestral musicians need from a conductor. I will address the following research questions: What do musicians want from their conductor in order to reach their collective objective of a unified, polished, and inspiring musical performance? How do musicians' needs differ in

academic and professional settings? Based on these answers, what do conductors need both from musicians and their training to prepare them for their first professional post?

Traditional pedagogical texts often overlook that conductors and instrumentalists are human beings, ignoring the psychological implications inherent in musical performance. There are a few texts and studies that explore these issues from conductors' perspectives and many studies that investigate the complex social interworking of the symphony orchestra. A literature review of traditional conducting literature and qualitative studies on conductors and performers reveals that these findings are not incorporated into existent conducting literature.

In this dissertation I address this gap by including a comparative study of university students in the Western American University Symphony Orchestra and professional musicians in the Middletown Symphony Orchestra. I worked with both ensembles in the capacity of Assistant Conductor and conducted qualitative studies, including observations, participant interviews, and critical self-reflection, with members of each orchestra.

Based on these methods, I determined that there are three main skills that student conductors and instrumentalists do not acquire from university training and current pedagogical texts:

1. Collaboration
2. Rehearsal Techniques
3. Concert Programs and Audience Reception

To provide an example of how these findings and current pedagogy can be integrated, I close this dissertation by offering a model book chapter that elaborates on these three

skills with additional suggested resources and activities. This material could be incorporated into conducting texts to provide some insight into the depth of study and complications that arise in working with human beings so intimately.

In doing this research my hope is to contribute to an ongoing academic conversation on conducting pedagogy. In providing graduating conductors with further insight into professional expectations, they will be better prepared to direct orchestras and be inspiring, engaging, and effective leaders earlier in their careers. Similarly student musicians might uncover gaps in their own educations that will help them as they enter the professional realm. Both instrumental and conducting professors may use this research to address gaps in their own pedagogical tools.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my D.M.A. committee for their support and guidance throughout my doctoral degree. Thank you to Anthony Barone, Justin Emerich, Simon Gottschalk, Diego Vega, and my committee chair and advisor, Taras Krysa. It was Taras who pushed me to take auditions and pursue a professional career alongside academia and, for that, I will always be grateful. I would also like to thank Simon Gottschalk for taking me in as a social scientist and guiding me in the qualitative methodology portion of this dissertation. Thank you also to Andrew Shahriari for his positivity, mentorship, and friendship.

I would also like to acknowledge Dave, "Maestro," for staying with me from the beginning of my conducting career. You saw potential in me when no one else did. You have listened to my countless complaints and worries with patience and understanding. I could not have made it here without you.

Graham, thank you for your patience and for your support in finishing this document, my education, and in pursuing my dreams. You have not allowed me to give up on this degree or me.

Finally, thank you to the WAU and Middletown Symphony Orchestras that allowed me to observe, interview, and work with them. Your willingness to open up about your experiences has served as a reminder that trust and vulnerability do not make you a weak leader. You have inspired me to strive to be the best that I can be as a person and a conductor.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to young conductors.

May you always remember your greatest teacher: the orchestra.

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Chapter 1: Literature Review

Introduction

Before beginning a career as an orchestral conductor, young conductors must first consider the gravity of the task ahead of them. The role of the conductor is three-fold: to be of service to the composer, the orchestra, and, finally, the community. First, conductors must understand the composer's intentions through studying the score. This ability requires extensive training in orchestration, aural skills, music theory, and musicology, and will continue to strengthen and evolve over the conductor's lifetime. The conductor then must be able to convince the orchestra of his or her interpretation of the score through baton technique and gestures. It is easy for young conductors to imagine that the music somehow emanates from them alone. This delusion can sometimes cause conductors to enter the field for the wrong reasons, associating the profession with power and control. In fact, it is healthier for young conductors to perceive conducting as a service position. The opportunity to conduct an orchestra and become part of a community is a tremendous responsibility. The second of these points, being of service to the orchestra, is particularly overlooked in traditional orchestral conducting programs and pedagogy. Therefore, when young conductors win their first professional post they often find they need many additional skills outside of their educational training. This was certainly my experience.

During the first year of my doctoral program, I worried obsessively over whether I would ever get a job as a conductor. A year later when I was appointed the Assistant Conductor of the Middletown Symphony Orchestra, I longed for the days of focused

instruction in a safe learning environment. This is the conductor's paradox; a situation undoubtedly familiar to many young conductors as they transition from the classroom to the concert hall. Some trepidation is natural from any college graduate, but the gap that I faced between my university training and professional demands seemed to me, at first, an insurmountable abyss. My coursework had focused almost exclusively on physical conducting technique and so I found myself fixated on this as a professional, wrongfully assuming this would be my weakness. Compound meters and difficult temporal transitions became obsessions. It soon became clear to me that it was all in my head; the passages I spent hours on were completely inconsequential to the orchestra, who played them quite well with or without me. This is perhaps because the orchestra had learned something which I had not. Musical performance is collaborative; the art of watching, observing, and breathing together. Although these concepts do occasionally appear in conducting textbooks, they often read as poetic ideals, an innate skill set that cannot be learned or practiced. Perhaps this is what Leopold Stokowski meant when he said, "Conductors are born, not made."¹

Indeed much of the gap I found between my educational background and professional position centered on finding a way to enter and participate in the intimate social circle that the orchestral musicians had already created. I quickly realized that, with the exception of perhaps difficult rhythmic passages or youth ensembles, musicians do not need the conductor's technique as it is traditionally taught (keeping time, beat patterns, even starting and ending together). Despite this fact, university and conservatory

¹ Frank Battisti, *On Becoming a Conductor: Lessons and Meditations on the Art of Conducting* (Galesville, MD: Meredith Music Publications, 2007), 6. Quoting conductor Leopold Stokowski.

programs center on developing physical conducting technique, often neglecting the social skills necessary to thrive as a professional conductor. By focusing so heavily on gesture, graduates of conducting programs face a gap between practice (learning) and performance (conducting). This leaves newly appointed conductors in a period of flux, with little guidance on how to take their musical leadership to a level where both their physical technique and personality inspire musicians and audiences.

Current pedagogy seems to agree with Stokowski that these social skills are inherent and cannot be taught. Orchestral conducting texts focus almost exclusively on the remaining physical and intellectual tasks, such as baton grip, beat patterns, orchestration, and score study. Many traditional pedagogical texts ignore or limit their discussion of the human element of conducting, such as leadership, the psychology and sociology behind conducting and ensemble performance, and rehearsal technique. As social sciences have developed as disciplines, it has become clearer than ever that these human interactions can be studied and even taught. Modern conductors need a comprehensive text that exercises them both physically, sociologically, and psychologically; they demand training that includes the voice of their greatest teacher: the orchestra.

This dissertation explores the gap between traditional orchestral conducting pedagogy and professional demands by investigating what orchestral musicians need from a conductor. I will address the following research questions: What do musicians want from a conductor in order to reach their collective objective of a unified, polished, and inspiring musical performance? How do musicians' needs differ in academic and

professional settings? Based on these answers, what do conductors need both from musicians and their training to prepare them for their first professional post?

To help address these questions, I conducted two ethnographies in the course of which I observed, interviewed, and conducted orchestral musicians at both the university and professional levels.² I then compared the findings to determine what university and professional musicians in these two situations expected from their conductors and from each other. In conducting this comparative study, I do not mean to suggest that all university and professional orchestras can be so easily compared. I was able to study these two ensembles in an intimate way because I served as the assistant conductor of both. Instead, I hope this comparative study encourages young conductors to be more cognizant of their own training and potential areas for improvement, as well as further arenas for study. For example, a similar study could be conducted of a full-time professional orchestra, such as the New York Philharmonic, as well as chamber orchestras, summer festival orchestras, opera orchestras, and many others. What these

² An ethnography is a written story of a person or group of people and is commonly used in the social sciences such as sociology, anthropology, education, and ethnomusicology. It may involve a researcher or group of researchers making observations, conducting interviews, and even interacting with the group(s) being studied. Since human subject research is not typically included as part of conducting programs, I took a doctoral-level course in qualitative methodology through the UNLV Sociology Department and an ethnomusicology class at Kent State University. In addition, I became CITI-Certified to conduct social and behavioral research through UNLV's Institutional Review Board. These three experiences provided me with the analytical tools necessary to successfully complete the research component of this dissertation. CITI stands for Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative and is an intensive online training program for conducting human research. Successful completion of this program is required for research in the life and social sciences and expires every five years.

studies do derive, however, are some overarching empirical truths for all young conductors, such as the importance of critical self-reflection and observation.

My study of the WAU Symphony began in the spring of 2012 with weeks of observing the interactions between members of the orchestra and between the musicians and the conductor. Informed by the patterns I found in these observations, I conducted in-depth interviews where I asked musicians about their experiences in symphony orchestras in general, and their perceptions of each other and their conductors. The members I interviewed were those I observed as being the most active in the ensemble (communicating, writing notes in their parts, etc.). These respondents came from a variety of sections within the ensemble, but their answers conveyed consistent patterns. Musicians remarked on negative experiences before discussing positive ones. In each case these negative experiences led them to feel isolated from the rest of the ensemble and experience disunity. Musicians agreed they wanted conductors to convey a strong artistic vision, to be prepared with the technical and aural means to convey that vision (rehearsal technique), and be able to admit fault when necessary.

In light of their answers, I implemented changes to my own physical and rehearsal techniques, and encouraged the interviewees to comment on the final ethnography. Their responses, in turn, prompted me to ask some additional questions of the Middletown Symphony Orchestra members, primarily self-reflexive in nature (such as, what do you wish your college education would have provided additionally to your training?).

The WAU and Middletown Symphony Orchestras are interesting examples of major university and professional regional orchestras throughout the country. These two ensembles are used here as case studies; through my findings I will be able to make

comparisons and observations of other orchestras in future work. To strengthen the reliability of my findings, I also cross-referenced my findings with additional interviews of professional orchestral musicians and conductors who do not participate in these two ensembles. My conclusions enabled me to complement the existing literature with suggestions for new techniques.

I will structure this dissertation by progressively moving, as conductors do, from practice to performance. I will begin where most conducting students begin, studying orchestral conducting literature. I will then examine this body of literature and the findings of my two ethnographies. By comparing the results of these ethnographies to the existent literature, I can assess what instrumentalists need from conductors and vice versa and how university programs can better prepare conductors for their first professional post. My dissertation will conclude with a model chapter focused on these often overlooked social skills using the findings of these two studies. My hope would be that this chapter could be further fleshed out into a monograph or, at the least, give conducting teachers pause as they prepare new texts and students for the future orchestral careers.

Part I: Conducting Technique

As an orchestral conducting student, I often noticed that what I was learning in texts did not match what I saw in professional situations. Conductors with textbook-perfect technique were heavily resented by the orchestra. Flailing conductors had the complete respect of the ensemble and the enchanted audiences. Some instrumentalists told me that they appreciated clear technique; others told me they would rather have a conductor with some fire and energy. I did not understand why these two traits had to be

mutually exclusive; in fact, I believe the two can and should co-exist. While physical technique did not seem to be much indication of success on the podium, conducting lessons remained focused on technique, namely whether or not the gestures I was demonstrating for my teachers were clear to an office wall. So I was primed with cookie-cutter beat patterns as is common in conducting training, a practice conductor Harold Farberman detests.³ I was ready to place my mold over an ensemble regardless of what that ensemble might be. In effect I later realized what in retrospect was a rather obvious: each person is different and therefore every ensemble, made of many different people, is different and needs different things from me. Conductors therefore, more than anything, have to be observant, malleable, flexible, and human.

Yet the problem is that conducting texts often overlook or limit their discussion of the human element of orchestral performance, equating instrumentalists to instruments and conductor to baton. To understand how to approach music making as an inherently social and human aspect, I reviewed traditional orchestral conducting pedagogy for discussions of psychology, sociology, and rehearsal technique.

Traditional conducting texts for this study were selected from my personal experience in three different conducting programs and by polling conducting students and faculty in a variety of programs across the country including, but not limited to, the Eastman School of Music, New England Conservatory, the Hartt School of Music, Peabody Conservatory, Bard College, University of Maryland, Northwestern University, Indiana University, Illinois State University, University of California Los Angeles,

³ Harold Farberman, *Conducting Technique: A New Perspective* (New York: Alfred Publishing, 1997), 39.

University of Nevada Las Vegas, Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, and the University of Akron. Despite the large diversity of public and private schools, and universities and conservatories, almost all of the programs used the same conducting texts: Max Rudolf's *The Grammar of Conducting*, Elizabeth Green and Nicolai Malko's *The Modern Conductor*, Erich Leinsdorf's *The Composer's Advocate*, Gustav Meier's *The Score, the Orchestra, and the Conductor*, and Gunther Schuller's *The Compleat Conductor*. From these texts additional conducting staples were cited, such as Adrian Boult's *A Handbook on the Technique of Conducting*, Adam Carse's *Orchestral Conducting: A Textbook for Students and Amateurs*, and Hermann Scherchen's *Handbook of Conducting*.

Boult's *Handbook* (1919) is often considered the first modern conducting textbook. Boult wrote this concise, twenty-seven page manual for his conducting students at the Royal College of Music because one did not exist.⁴ Given the text's brevity Boult does not spend a lot of time discussing subjects in depth, but does give a nod to the orchestra's well-being. "The two most important things," he writes, "are to see that everybody is happy and comfortable and to waste no time."⁵ Carse's work (1929) borrows heavily from Boult but takes a strikingly different approach.⁶ Rather than treating orchestral musicians as human beings for whose happiness the conductor is responsible, Carse refers to the orchestra as a group of "players under their [the

⁴ Adrian Boult, *A Handbook on the Technique of Conducting* (London: Hall the Printer, 1945), 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶ What happened between the publication of Boult's text and those of later pedagogues to so shift conductors' perspective could be a subject of a research paper itself. One possibility, however, is that Boult's text focuses on teaching novice conducting students, with no premonitions of them pursuing professional careers. These later texts, however, are clearly aimed at the professional conductor.

conductor's] control and defines conducting as "playing on an orchestra as on an instrument."⁷ Scherchen's *Handbook* (1933) is equally alarming in his dehumanization of instrumentalists and superior placement of conductors. First, Scherchen treats conductors as god-like figures stating, "Let it be repeated that the conductor's activities are exclusively spiritual; that the spirit is the mightiest human power; and that we had to define the conductor as the most spiritual form of the manifestation of the reproduction of the art."⁸ According to Scherchen the conductor is necessary to provide an omnipotent overview of the music because, "Performers acquire a knowledge of the instruments they play, but never of the works they wish to perform." He [the musician] knows even less of the creative forces."⁹ Given this was written during an age of tyrannical conductors like Arturo Toscanini, Carse and Scherchen's philosophies are not surprising. Unfortunately it was from these earlier conducting models that the not too-much-later published texts emerged; the ones that are still commonly used in conducting programs today.

This next generation of conducting texts focuses almost exclusively on physical conducting technique. Rudolf's popular *The Grammar of Conducting* contains a chapter on rehearsal technique, which includes a brief sub-section on "The Psychology of the Conductor-Orchestra Relationship." In this section Rudolf admits the difficulty of discussing the human element of conducting, stating "the reason that one conductor wins the cooperation of an orchestra while another fails is difficult to give." Basically it is not a question of liking or disliking their leader but of feeling respect. Unless musicians

⁷ Adam Carse, *Orchestral Conducting: A Textbook for Students and Amateurs*, (1929; repr., Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1971), 1.

⁸ Hermann Scherchen, *Handbook of Conducting*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 19.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 223.

respect the conductor, they will not play for him, as the saying goes.¹⁰ Rudolf admits that rehearsal technique is not commonly discussed in conducting programs and leaves most of what conductors need to know to personal experience, perpetuating the idea that social and psychological skills are difficult to teach.¹¹ Green and Malko also devote a small portion of their text to conducting psychology and rehearsal technique. They write, "Conducting as an art has been steadily developing during the last hundred years. The original pedagogic and administrative aspects have continued, but other facets of conducting, such as the educational and creative, are increasing rapidly. The conductor of today cannot only be a musician."¹² Like Rudolf, Green and Malko do not broach the topic in depth, stating that, "The psychological implications of this arrangement [of the orchestra] are infinite."¹³ They offer advice similar to Rudolf's, such as being prepared and using rehearsal time efficiently, stopping as little as possible, and being respectful of the musicians. In fact, Green later authored *The Dynamic Orchestra: Principles of Orchestral Performance for Instrumentalists, Conductors, and Audiences* with the express aim to explore topics of conducting from a psychological perspective.¹⁴ Both Meier and Schuller's texts focus almost exclusively on physical technique and score study, respectively. Adopting a radically different approach than Carse, Meier writes, "Orchestra musicians have valuable insights and can offer excellent suggestions."¹⁵ He

¹⁰ Max Rudolf, *The Grammar of Conducting: A Comprehensive Guide to Baton Technique and Interpretation* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1995), 337.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 330 ó 331.

¹² Elizabeth Green and Nicolai Malko. *The Conductor and His Score* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 7.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁴ This will be discussed more thoroughly later.

¹⁵ Gustav Meier, *The Score, the Orchestra, and the Conductor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 344.

continues, "As a general rule, musicians deserve credit for having some acquaintance with the work and being able to resolve most problems on their own."¹⁶ Schuller writes, "Conducting comprise(s) a whole network of specific abilities and attributes...even psychological and philosophical.... [conductors] must develop the gestural skills to transmit that information clearly to an orchestra and the psychological dexterity to relate effectively (especially in rehearsals) to an orchestra-itself a complex collection of talented individuals, personalities, and artistic egos."¹⁷ He does not elaborate on how to develop "psychological dexterity". Furthermore, none of these texts cite sources in their psychological discussions or directly quote orchestral instrumentalists, in effect perpetuating the idea of the conductor's voice over that of the ensemble. As a whole, while this set of commonly-used orchestral conducting texts shows a need for the incorporation of humanism into conducting pedagogy, they are unable to articulate how.

Beyond these texts, however, are many resources that can help conductors develop social skills and the self-awareness to become amazing, well-rounded leaders. There are a number of music resources available that discuss the importance of developing social skills as a conductor. Richard Parncutt and Gary E. McPherson's *The Science & Psychology of Music Performance* (2002) explores the psychological demands of music performance through an empirical lens. Chapters exploring different intersections of music and science are co-authored by a performing musician and scientist. Though published much earlier in 1969, Peter Paul Fuchs makes a similar call for studying psychology as a conductor in *The Psychology of Conducting*. Drawing from

¹⁶ Ibid., 350.

¹⁷ Gunther Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3.

existent psychology models, Fuchs explains the importance of conductors recognizing ensembles are comprised of human beings; he also discusses how to draw the line between the personal and professional. Perhaps the most notable of these lesser-known texts is Charles Blackman's *Beyond the Baton*. This resource was published in 1964 making it contemporary with Fuchs's publication. Blackman approaches conducting in a revolutionary way, by interviewing the orchestral musicians themselves. He argues that conductors are trained to interpret scores, gestures, and sound but *not* the musicians in front of them.

Standard conducting texts in wind ensemble and choral conducting prove that the concepts of Parncutt, McPherson, Fuchs, and Blackman can successfully be incorporated into conducting textbooks alongside physical technique. In contrast to traditional orchestral pedagogy texts, all of these texts have been published within the last ten years illustrating two main points:

1. Other specializations of conducting take the incorporation of the psychology of conductor and ensemble very seriously.
2. Perhaps because of this, or at the least reflecting a more open philosophy, these disciplines both produce and seek out more modern and relevant conducting texts.

Wind ensemble conductor Frank Battisti's *On Becoming a Conductor: Lessons and Meditations on the Art of Conducting*, focuses almost exclusively on social skills, quoting conductors from many disciplines on the importance of treating ensembles with respect. Battisti sees the conductor first and foremost as a teacher, so it is his or her job to inspire and educate, regardless of the ensemble's ability.¹⁸ Similarly James Jordan has become a

¹⁸ Battisti, vii.

notable choral conducting pedagogue, publishing many texts that adopt a radically different approach to ensembles than orchestral texts. In *Evoking Sound: Fundamentals of Choral Conducting* (2009), Jordan focuses on developing conductors from the inside out. Rather than orchestral texts, which begin with physical technique and try to add the music and the orchestra in as an afterthought, Jordan starts with the conductor him or herself. As he writes, "As conductors we need to work hard every day of our lives to understand what it is to be an affirming/compassionate, caring, and loving musician simply by standing in front of an ensemble and beingí .first and foremost, we must take time in our lives to affirm ourselves as people first, and as musicians second."ö¹⁹ In his various texts, Jordan approaches the subject of psychology from many different angles. One of his works, *The Conductor's Gesture: A Practical Application of Rudolf von Laban's Movement Language* focuses entirely on the perception and reception of conductorsøgestures at it relates to the movement theories and studies of modern dance and movement pioneer Rudolf von Laban. What these examples of wind and choral ensemble conducting texts illustrate is the depth of possible integration of psychology in orchestral conducting. In fact, with orchestras containing nearly all instruments in the wind ensemble, and frequently performing choral works ó should not this need be even more evident and necessary?

A few orchestral conducting texts, not yet commonly used in conducting programs, offer good models for how to incorporate the diverse skills necessary to be a successful orchestral conductor in one comprehensive resource. In *The Dynamic Orchestra* (1987), a sequel to Greenø's work with Malko, Green interviews many

¹⁹ James Jordan, *Evoking Sound: Fundamentals of Choral Conducting* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2009), 14.

musicians about their experiences playing in symphony orchestras, finally offering an outlet for musicians to discuss their needs from conductors. *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting* (2003), edited by José Antonio Bowen adopts an interesting approach to conducting pedagogy. Each chapter is authored by a different conductor and includes such subjects as the historical development of conducting in each country, gender and race studies in conducting, and new pedagogical tools. By acknowledging opportunities for studying conducting in conjunction with gender and race, Bowen not only highlights the human aspect of conducting, but opens new avenues for scholarship in previously neglected arenas. Finally, conductor Diane Wittry's *Beyond the Baton* (2007) also approaches the art of conducting from many different angles, discussing not only physical technique but how to form positive relationships with orchestra administration, board, donors, audience, and, of course, the orchestra itself.

While these texts fill a gap in orchestral conducting pedagogy left behind by the four standard conducting texts, they are not without their limitations. Green's text is still almost thirty years old. Furthermore she only asked the musicians two questions, "What annoyed you the most about your instrument during your years in the orchestra?" and "What advice do you have for today's young musicians?"²⁰ These questions provide valuable insights but, simultaneously, limit the discussion. A more open-ended approach where musicians were able to talk freely might be more revealing. Bowen's compilation reads more as a sourcebook, perhaps something valuable to accompany another conducting text. A novice student approaching conducting for the first time might feel

²⁰ Elizabeth Green, *The Dynamic Orchestra: Principles of Orchestral Performance for Instrumentalists, Conductors, and Audiences* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1987), ix.

overwhelmed by the vast amount of information and specialized jargon discussing each topic. Lastly, with the exception of three interviews with established conductors Leonard Slatkin, Robert Spano, and JoAnn Falletta, Wittry's text is entirely based on her own experiences. She provides additional readings and resources in a number of appendices, but does not cite them throughout her text. One professor, at a major public university, includes a class on "Principles of Orchestral Leadership" in his curriculum. This class focuses exclusively on non-musical books on leadership and creativity.

Consequently, I find that the world of orchestral conducting pedagogy is in pressing need of additional staple resources that focus on the human element of music making. Conducting has been long dominated by white, patriarchal figures, and it is perhaps no surprise that the three orchestral conductors to most thoughtfully reexamine orchestral conducting technique, Green, Bowen, and Wittry, are all minorities. Even their texts have difficulty articulating what musicians need and how to achieve it as a conductor. Discussions are usually left to broad, "common sense" summations about social skills, instead of integrating extensive interviews or scientific data. Some sources use ethnographic studies and interviews, but the methodology is ignored or faulty; others incorporate extensive scientific data apart from physical conducting technique. By combining discussions of scientific and ethnographic study alongside physical technique, it is possible to create a text that better prepares young conductors for working with live musicians in today's society.

Part II: Ethnography

As I have demonstrated, current orchestral conducting pedagogy texts fail to address the mammoth topic of working with live musicians. There is a scientific (or

social scientific) explanation for why human interactions are so difficult to articulate. Any piece of music goes through multiple levels of interpretation, action, and reaction. According to Symbolic Interaction Theory, relationships can be thought of as a complex, constantly shifting web defined by external and internal factors and influences.²¹ As sociologist Paul Rock writes, "We do not react to facts as they really are . . . but to our consciousness of those facts, and that consciousness is naturally interpretive and experiential."²² In other words, we construct our own realities. This means that our world is open to individual interpretation and, in fact, Symbolic Interaction Theory is the cornerstone of the Interpretive paradigm. Examples of Symbolic Interaction Theory include symbols, such as physical signs or hand gestures. For example, we learn that a thumbs-up sign means "good job" or "I agree" and is generally a positive gesture in American culture. In Thailand, however, this physical movement implies the opposite as children sometimes do this to indicate that they do not like someone. Another example would be receiving an e-mail from your boss instructing you to meet at his office the next morning, without explanation. The boss may perceive your meeting as nonchalant or even positive; perhaps he wants to ask you to do a simple task, discuss your contract, or even offer you a donut. You, however, may immediately construct in your own mind that

²¹ "SSSI Home," Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction Blog, <https://sites.google.com/site/sssiinteraction/> [accessed March 24, 2015]. According to the blog of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction (SSSI), the term "Symbolic Interaction Theory" was first used by sociologist Herbert Blumer, who continued to develop the work of George Herbert Mead, "who argued that people's selves are social products, but that these selves are also purposive and creative." Meanings of words, events, symbols, and nouns change for people based on individual experience. Furthermore meanings continue to develop through personal experience and social conditioning.

²² Paul Rock, "Symbolic Interactionism and Ethnography," *Handbook of Ethnography* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 27.

something is terribly wrong. You may convince yourself that you are being criticized or fired. Then you may carefully consider everything you have said or done in the past few days. You might even start to view past events differently, imagining different vocal intonations or intentions than you originally conceived. As a final example, imagine you are a woman picking out an outfit and settle on a shorter, tighter dress that makes you feel confident. When you think of how your boyfriend will perceive you, you imagine that he will be pleased and excited. Now, imagine you were wearing the same outfit for a job interview. As you envision how your potential employer might see you, you start to feel uncomfortable in the outfit, sensing that it may not be appropriate. Similarly, your views on your outfit might shift as you imagine how others would perceive you in it. Its appropriateness would also change depending on the event, for example, is the outfit appropriate for a hike, a funeral, or a bachelorette party?

Music is rich with visual representations and interpretations. Music, itself, cannot physically be seen. Sheet music offers us a visual simplification of music, one which allows performers to recreate a piece in a similar way. But even then, the written notation only provides the performers with a skeleton. Using Gunther Schuller's example of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, we see that conductors and orchestras can perform the same work in different ways. This means that the sheet music is being interpreted by those reading it. Some composers attempt to notate every detail of the score so there is less room for interpretation. Béla Bartók, for example, includes specific durations to the second that his works should last. Other composers only set down a loose set of parameters for a performance to occur. In *She was a Visitor*, for example, Robert Ashley determines there should be choruses, leaders, and a speaker. The speaker repeats, "She

was a visitor^o verbatim while the leaders slowly speak different syllables from the sentence, ^oshe was a visitor,^o such as ^osh^o, ^owa^o, ^otor^o, and ^ovi.^o The choirs then echo those sounds. Each time the piece is performed it will be vastly different; the notation simply serves as a guideline. The performance of music, itself, is symbolic. The concertmaster of an orchestra moves in such a way as to communicate breath, phrasing, and bow changes to the rest of the string section. He or she might bob their head on a down bow to emphasize the downbeat. Although we can observe the physical processes of making music, we can only hear the product or music itself. In the case of instrumentalists, singers, and narrators, their movements directly lead to the production of sound. Conductors are the only musicians involved in a performance whose movements (i.e. baton technique and physical gestures) are quiet. A conductor's movements are interpreted by performers to shape or influence music, certainly, but remain silent in themselves. From the notation of the score and parts to the gestures of a conductor's hands, everything in music is symbolic. Here is an example of looking at the process of music performance through a Symbolic Interactionist lens:

1. A composer writes a piece of music. He or she has a conception which may or may not be based on extra-musical concepts, such as a poem, novel, or play; abstract concepts like heroism and democracy; strictly musical themes, as in serial composition; or all or none of the above. He or she begins the process of composing, which can vary widely from traditional sketches of form and thematic development to juxtaposition of electronically recorded or produced samples. *The music may begin as a mental conception that goes through multiple physical processes such as singing lines or playing through music on the piano; consulting non-musical sources;*

drawing inspiration from outside places, people, and events; and any other processes involved in the imagination and creation of a musical composition.

2. The composer then commits his or her ideas to paper by specific boundaries of some kind or another (music notation). If required, parts will also be made for any instrumentalists, vocalists, or soloists. *Again, the processes involved vary greatly. The act of writing down a musical composition is physical, but when compositions are alleatoric or require improvisation, such as in jazz, there is also an extensive mental process. In some cases, as in the computer generated music of composer Xenakis, the process is electronic.*

Here it is worth pausing to reflect on the already complicated process of music making. In the discipline of musicology, scholars spend years studying the life and work of specific composers and in some cases, one work. This is because each composer's life and music has many different psychological, sociological, historical, economic, and countless other factors that influence it. Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 in Eb, for example, can be studied as: 1) a personal statement of Beethoven's will to continue composing despite his worsening deafness, 2) a global statement on democracy and freedom in a post-Napoleonic era, 3) a theoretical relationship of musical themes and structures, 4) in relationship to Beethoven's other compositional output, 5) in relationship to different versions of the score and Beethoven's sketches, and through countless other lenses. While letters and personal diaries of Beethoven might give us some valuable insight into what the composer was thinking, feeling, and experiencing when he wrote certain pieces, it is impossible for us to know anything for certain. Just as we are unable to determine what Beethoven's

relationship was to the music he wrote, we cannot predict or control what an individual musician or audience member's relationship to a piece of music will be.

We will continue with a piece composed for orchestra as an example:

3. The orchestra receives the score and parts and begins to learn the music. In an orchestra of sixty-five musicians, this means that sixty-five individuals are learning the parts, usually in isolation, in addition to a conductor who is studying the entire score. Each musician forms his or her own interpretations of the symbols on the page. These interpretations stem largely from the player's own personal experiences: who have they studied with? Have they played this piece before? What does it mean to them? Or not mean to them? *This is a mental and interpretive process. Just as with the word 'son', each musician is going to approach a piece of music differently. For example, when I was an undergraduate our orchestra director dedicated Elgar's Enigma Variations to his mother who had recently died. Although we only learned about his emotional connection to the work through his announcement at the concert, he admitted how deeply his mother's death had affected him in his preparation of the score.*

4. Both the instrumentalists and conductor have formed an *interpretation* of the work, as well as an emotional and mental connection, and are now transmitting their ideas into physical technique in a combination of gestures, facial expressions, and the moving of the body, etc. *The movements, themselves, are a physical process that is largely influenced by the musicians' mental and emotional connection to the work as well as the quality of sound they wish to produce. Conductors, for example, typically use light, short gestures to indicate staccato passages. Even though much of*

conducting technique focuses on physical gesture, conductors do not usually rehearse every gesture ahead of time. Doing so can create a mannered and predictable set of movements with little connection to the ensemble and present creation of music.

Instead, conductors often have a general sense of what kind of gesture they will use and respond in the moment to inspire the musicians.

5. The conductor listens to what the orchestra is doing and compares that to his or her own interpretation. Physical techniques are changed to match interpretation. *This is a back and forth between mental process and physical process. For example, a conductor might hear quarter notes as long but an orchestra is playing them more marked. Conductors could stop the orchestra and verbalize that the quarter notes should be longer, but they will be more effective if they can show a smoother gesture with their baton or hands. Then, the orchestra and conductor can communicate and make a change without stopping.*

6. The performers also watch and feed off each other. String players might look at each other to start a piece together rather than simply watching the conductor. String players often do watch each other to ensure that they are using the same part of the bow at the same time. Wind and brass players also breathe together to come in together, and are constantly adjusting to match articulations in their section and across the orchestra. Much like the orchestra's interactions with the conductor, this creates a give and take between physical and mental reaction and interaction. *This is also a back and forth between mental process and physical process.*

7. The audience attends the performance and now creates yet another layer of interpretation in addition to the above. The audience's reaction (applauding or

booing, high or low energy, shuffling of programs and candy wrappers, and coughing or silence) all affect the conductor and players. This may, in turn, positively or negatively affect the performance. As an example, I recently saw an orchestra in a riveting performance of Brahms's Symphony No. 4. The orchestra was in the middle of performing the final movement's driving coda when a patron had a stroke. Members of the audience began to scream and call for help while the orchestra continued to perform the remaining minute of the work. The energy on stage and in the hall shifted immediately. The orchestra and conductor became increasingly curious and concerned, diverting focus from the symphony. *This is another back and forth between mental process and physical process.*

8. The reception of the audience may cause the conductor, or administrators, to suggest or enforce a change for subsequent programs, rehearsals, or concerts. Positive or negative reception from newspapers and online reviews may also have an impact as well as comments from board members, donors, and the general audience. When a concert does not sell well, for instance, the staff will try to figure out why. If the program is the potential culprit, the executive staff may insist that a specific work or kind of work (unfortunately, often new and experimental music) cannot be programmed again. *This is yet another back and forth between mental process and physical process.*

Even though this dissertation only focuses on steps three through six, it becomes immediately evident that the social possibilities are infinite. In fact, given the array of personalities and individual experiences, it is amazing that orchestras perform works similarly at all. Gunther Schuller's famous analysis of the first movement of Beethoven's

Symphony No. 5, for example, reveals that many orchestras take the exact same tempi, and treat the fermatas similarly. Schuller maintains that this nearly uniform interpretation contradicts Beethoven's intentions in his score, suggesting a larger cross-orchestral consciousness of performance and recording traditions.²³

Indeed as conducting pedagogues Rudolf, Malko, and Green have pointed out, explaining social phenomena is complicated. Researchers would be hard pressed, however, to find a young conductor who does not immediately feel the weight of that complexity when stepping on the podium for the first time. He or she becomes the fly in the web; the newest addition to an already established social framework. In view of this, orchestral pedagogues owe it to aspiring conductors to explore more thoughtfully these complex social interactions. Furthermore, if they could not be studied and learned, the entire branch of social sciences (including sociology, psychology, psychiatry, economics, and education) would render itself useless.

Unfortunately, to date, ethnographic study has not been widely incorporated in orchestral conducting texts. Some texts that do include qualitative analysis, such as Green's *The Dynamic Orchestra*, do not focus on the methodology used. Issues such as selection of participants, questions asked, and critical self-reflection are often not included. As already discussed, Green only asks her participants two questions and she does not consider how her role as an established conductor and educator might influence the musicians' answers. Apart from pedagogical texts, studies by social scientists, ethnomusicologists, and music educators, which are more methodology-centered, are limited, especially of American orchestras.

²³ Schuller, 109.

Summary of Qualitative Studies on American Conductors

In her text *Beyond the Baton* American conductor Diane Wittry includes interviews with prominent American conductors Leonard Slatkin, Robert Spano, and JoAnn Falletta. While the insight of such established conductors is unquestionably valuable, Wittry simply inserts the entire interviews into her text. Although interesting comparisons could have been drawn between the three, she does not analyze these interviews, or include her methodology in conducting them. American conductor and educator Virginia Ann Allen's extensive dissertation, *Developing Expertise in Professional American Orchestra Conductors* also incorporates interviews in her exploration of the effectiveness of university training. Her study focuses on how conductors learn once they begin professional work. According to Allen conductors have a difficult time, to quantify a definitive list of knowledge and skills they need, but it is possible for them to qualify the meaning of their knowledge and skills. This resonates with conducting texts, such as Malko and Rudolf's, which emphasize the difficulty of teaching certain conducting skills, such as interpersonal relationships. While Allen does spend an extensive amount of time discussing her methodology and her study's flaws, her work focuses exclusively on conducting from conductors' perspectives, failing to include the perspectives of orchestral musicians. Finally, Vlad Vizireanu uses interviews to assess what professional orchestras' administration (music directors and staff) look for in applications for Assistant Conductor positions.²⁴ In his study he finds that the two largest gaps between university training and professional experience are:

1. conductors understanding their official and unofficial responsibilities

²⁴ Vlad Vizireanu, "A Handbook for Assistant Orchestra Conductors in the United States." (DMA, diss., Arizona State University, 2014), i.

2. preparing job applications.

Vezioreanu also discusses how traditional pedagogical texts woefully under prepare students in these two arenas and, therefore, the professional world.²⁵

Summary of Qualitative Studies on Orchestral Players

There are ample studies available that focus on belonging to a symphony orchestra, which adds to the frustration that few of these studies are incorporated in conducting texts. Bowen's *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting* includes chapters that explore conducting and orchestral performance and its intersections with race, gender, history, and nationality. Although these are not qualitative studies in the traditional sense (using observations and interviews of select participants), these chapters do, at least, suggest possible arenas for further study. As the findings from my comparative study will show, musicians face a constant battle between isolation and inclusion. As with any human beings musicians are vividly aware of their differences, but long to forget them in lieu of a temporary commonality, in this case, music performance.

This does not mean, however, that those differences do not exist and that conductors and orchestral musicians alike cannot consciously or unconsciously be aware of and act on them. When Linda Ingrid Veleckis Nussbaum, Ph.D. in Organization Development at Benedictine University, published her doctoral dissertation on what makes for effective orchestral conducting leadership through the lens of the players, she stated,

²⁵ Ibid., 3 ó 4.

This is the first published study to explore the leadership of the symphony orchestra conductor through the lens of organization development. While numerous biographies and musical analyses exist, few explore the commonalities and differences of how effective conductors lead, inspire, and transform their orchestras. This dissertation employs a qualitative approach to help discover what constitutes effective leadership on the podium in its many manifestations in the orchestral organization. Through 28 interviews and 60 surveys with conductors and orchestral performers, the study identifies a group of skills that distinguish effective orchestral leaders.²⁶

Playing on the idea of the orchestra as a representation and microcosm of society, Tina K. Ramnarine explores the ability of orchestras to contribute to society through social programs, especially those that reach new communities.²⁷ In his article "Stereotypes Concerning Musicians within Symphony Orchestras," J.P. Lipton interviews 227 musicians from twenty-six major professional orchestras in the United States and Canada. He questions them about the stereotypes that arise from being an orchestral musician and from playing their specific instruments (e.g. stereotypes of being a tuba player). Lipton identifies "female" and "male" instruments, and discusses Freudian perceptions of playing them. He includes a comprehensive chart of stereotypes based on his findings.²⁸

²⁶ Linda Ingrid Veleckis Nussbaum, "The Podium and Beyond: The Leadership of Symphony Orchestra Conductors" (PhD, diss., Benedictine University, 2005), ii.

²⁷ Tina K. Ramnarine, "The Orchestration of Civil Society: Community and Conscience in Symphony Orchestras," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 20, no. 3 [December 2011], <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41417554> [accessed January 16].

²⁸ Jack P. Lipton, "Stereotypes Concerning Musicians within Symphony Orchestras," *The Journal of Psychology* 121, no. 1 [January 1987]

Scholars Richard Hackman and Jutta Allmendinger have devoted much of their lives to studying orchestral instrumentalists in the United States and Europe. Their study "Leadership and Mobility in Symphony Orchestras" addresses how leadership, personnel, and seating changes affect the psychology of conductors and performers.²⁹ Hackman and Allmendinger explore gender relationships in orchestras "Learning More by Crossing Levels: Evidence from Airplanes, Hospitals, and Orchestras," but their study focuses on European orchestras.³⁰ Finally their study "Life and Work in Symphony Orchestras" uses interviews and surveys to compare job satisfaction between American and European orchestral musicians.³¹ In a rare study, Sabine Boerner distributed surveys to musicians asking what makes for a good conductor and performance experience. She used statistical, quantitative analysis to review the data and posited the idea of "transformational leadership," which is elaborated on in articles by Barbara J. Daley and music educators Armstrong and Armstrong.³² While Boerner's study is interesting, it

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mah&AN=5374031&site=ehost-live2001> [accessed January 16, 2015].

²⁹ Richard Hackman and Jutta Allmendinger, "Leadership and Mobility in Symphony Orchestras," 1990.

³⁰ _____, "Learning More by Crossing Levels: Evidence from Airplanes, Hospitals, and Orchestras," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 24 [2003]: 905 ó 922.

³¹ _____, Jutta Allmendinger, and Erin Lehman. "Life and Work in Symphony Orchestras," *The Musical Quarterly* 80, no. 2 [Summer 1996]: 194 ó 219.

³² Susan and Scott Armstrong, "The Conductor as Transformational Leader," *Music Educators Journal* 82, no. 6 [1996],

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mah&AN=9604291635&site=ehost-live> [accessed January 16, 2015].

Sabine Boerner, "Transformational Leadership and Group Climate" Empirical Results from Symphony Orchestras," *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies* 12, no. 2 [Fall 2005].

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mah&AN=19051951&site=ehost-live> [accessed January 16, 2014].

focuses on European orchestras and does not compare university and professional expectations. Although not dealing with professional musicians, Jay Juchniewicz conducted a study of forty public school music educators in his study, "The Influence of Social Intelligence on Effective Music Teaching." These teachers were videotaped and evaluated by 42 music educators and 42 undergraduate music education majors to determine their effectiveness. In Juchniewicz's study, he found that evaluators believed 85% of effective teachers had strong social skills, while ineffective teachers lacked social skills, including time management.³³ This could easily be paralleled to effective and ineffective conductors with strong social skills or poor rehearsal technique, which will be discussed further in the findings and model book chapter portions of this dissertation.

Certainly not all of these issues may be directly relevant to orchestral conducting pedagogy. The fact that there are so many possibilities for study, however, begs for some integration into traditional pedagogical texts and tools.

What can be assessed from these two literature reviews on traditional literature and ethnographic study is that there are those who study conducting and those who study musicians but, unfortunately and perhaps ironically, these are not one in the same. By heavily borrowing from the methodology of qualitative inquiry, I hope to offer in the

Barbara J. Daley, "Novice to Expert: An Exploration of How Professionals Learn," *Adult Education Quarterly* 49, no. 4 [Summer 1999]: 133-61. In each of these articles the authors agree that transformational leadership includes 1) charisma and a positive relationship between the leader and the lead, and 2) a shared vision. Interestingly these points parallel Daniel Goleman's idea of sympathy (human reactions) and synchrony (human interaction and shared vision) in his book *Social Intelligence* (see bibliography).

³³ Jay Juchniewicz, "The Influence of Social Intelligence on Effective Music Teaching," *Journal Of Research In Music Education* 58, no. 3 [Oct 2010]. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mah&AN=61093811&site=ehost-live> [accessed January 7, 2015].

following sections a comprehensive study of the needs of student and professional musicians from their experiences. By comparing the ethnographies of the WAU Symphony Orchestra and Middletown Symphony Orchestra to each other and to the literature, I will be able to identify areas for growth in traditional orchestral pedagogy.

Conclusions

In conclusion limited literature, and almost no standard pedagogical literature, exists that addresses the additional skills young conductors need to serve the orchestra. The two most commonly used conducting texts, Green and Malko's *The Conductor and His Score* and Rudolf's *The Grammar of Conducting*, offer brief chapters on the psychology of conducting and rehearsal technique. Most of the skills involved in working with the orchestra are considered common sense, despite the fact that pedagogues in other conducting concentrations, such as wind ensemble and choral conducting, have included these discussions in their texts. In addition other conductors, such as Allen and Vizireanu acknowledge the gap between education and professional expectations in their dissertations, consulting with professional conductors and orchestra boards and staff to address young conductor's deficiencies. While a wealth of qualitative studies exists that study the orchestra both internally and externally, none of these connect back to orchestral conducting pedagogy or have currently been integrated into conducting texts. My comparative study of the WAU and Middletown Symphony Orchestras seeks to open a dialog between existent orchestral conducting pedagogy, conductors, and university and professional musicians, in order to help prepare young conductors for the formidable tasks ahead of them.

Chapter 2: Two Case Studies

As already discussed the possibilities for social arrangements--and therefore psychological study within the orchestra--are infinite. One therefore might question what good it does to study the interpersonal relationships of two orchestras and their conductors, and whether such findings can be used to make any useful observations of other orchestras. Here it should be reiterated that establishing validity is the constant struggle of social sciences, including ethnomusicology and sociology.

Given the capricious and unpredictable nature of the human mind, interpretive sociologists cannot collect data using the same formulaic and reconstructable methods employed by the natural sciences. The epistemological approach of the interpretive sociologist is not based on abstracting findings into concrete numeric analysis. Instead qualitative sociologists adopt a flexible approach that enables them to obtain observations through a cyclical process that "create[s] the space for critical, collaborative, and dialogical work" between researcher, participant, and, ultimately, the reader or audience reviewing the findings.³⁴ As Paul Rock states, "In acting, [people] will learn about the world and so reformulate their ideas: and that reformulation, in its turn, may induce them to return to the world with new questions which can lead to yet newer ideas: and on and on."³⁵

Since researchers are human they naturally seek and create relationships with other human beings, including those they study. A qualitative approach invites social

³⁴ Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, "Critical Methodologies and Indigenous Inquiry," *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2008), 3.

³⁵ Rock, 28.

scientists not to remove themselves from their research process. First of all respondents, themselves, will change over the course of the research. Those changes may be minimal, such as natural aging and daily life events, or the developments could be major, such as birth, marriage, and death. In addition, the researchers themselves will undergo both physical and emotional changes over the course of the research. Not only will the respondents and researchers change, but their relationship to one another will evolve. In other words, social research must take into account that researchers are not impartial infallible tools, but flexible barometers. In addition, these researchers will affect change in their respondents simply by being around them and studying them. Therefore researchers should consider their thoughts, observations, and emotions and how these affect the research process. As Norman Denzin argues, the researcher [should] actively engage in his or her observations through constant reflexive writing, [thereby] reinforcing qualitative research as a flexible process.³⁶

This "flexible process" resonates with Symbolic Interactionist theory, as pioneered by American sociologist George Herbert Mead in the early twentieth century. As previously discussed, Symbolic Interaction Theory holds that meanings between people and symbols constantly shift as individuals, relationships, and societies change. Self-reflexivity is paramount to this theory because of a separation made by Mead between "I" and "me." While this distinction seems abstract and difficult to articulate, Norbert Wily offers a clarification in *The Semiotic Self*. According to Wily, the "I" corresponds to our present self, one capable of thinking, and acting in the spur of the moment. The "me", on the other hand, is an impartial object, existing in the past and

³⁶ Norman Denzin, "The Art and Politics of Interpretation," *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Sage Publications, 1994), 505 - 507.

future of the individual's actions and emotions.³⁷ To maximize the ethnographic process, the researcher should record events, feelings, and interactions, transitioning them from mere impulse to synthesis.

According to Jonathan Turner, Mead's philosophy also centers on the significant versus generalized other, and role-making versus role-taking.³⁸ The generalized other can be defined as an abstraction of a large group of people, such as a community, religion, or nationality. Mead argues that people change their behavior based on the physical presence or mental cognizance of a generalized other. Using the symphony orchestra as a model, an orchestra may decide to market a program to a town's specific population or community, such as a German, African-American, or Holocaust remembrance concert. A significant other, in contrast, refers to an individual that modifies a person or group's behavior. Instrumentalists behave very differently for different conductors, and an individual instrumentalist or conductor might try extra hard if their family or friends are in the audience, or be slightly timid if they know a manager is scouting them. As Dirk vom Lehn and Will Gibson write, "Mead saw communication processes and the interchanges of significant symbols as central to his theory of mind and as constitutive of how people internalize social conventions and collaborate to construct meaning."³⁹ Based on people's reactions to a generalized or significant other, individuals assume the roles of role-maker or role-taker. In the latter example, the musician has decided the

³⁷ Norbert Wiley, *The Semiotic Self* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 42 & 48.

³⁸ Jonathan H. Turner, "Extending the Symbolic Interactionist Theory of Interaction Processes: A Conceptual Outline," *Symbolic Interaction* 34, no. 3 [Summer 2011]. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/si.2011.34.3.330> [accessed March 30, 2015].

³⁹ Dirk vom Lehn and Will Gibson, "Interaction and Symbolic Interactionism," *Symbolic Interaction* 34, no. 3 [Summer 2011]. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/si.2011.34.3.315> [accessed March 30, 2015].

manager plays an extremely important role, perhaps one of defining that musician's future. The manager may or may not accept that role or even have that power in the first place.

Turner extends Mead's philosophy into one that explains how symphony orchestras can strive for one, shared vision while allowing many distinct individuals to feel validated. Turner argues that individuals can feel positively self-verified in a larger community if there are clear boundaries and hierarchies between individuals.⁴⁰ In other words, if individuals understand their place in society, and how they fit in, they will be able to positively contribute. Orchestras, with their clear hierarchy of conductor, principal, assistant principal, sectional, and substitute musicians, offer a clear structure. In fact musicians' unions, regulated by musicians themselves, enforce this setup. A musician seated at the back of the section cannot simply substitute for the concertmaster, for instance. The musicians seated before him or her must be asked to take over first. This means that orchestras can be studied as microcosms of bureaucracy, raising the questions of how to enforce the hierarchy and simultaneously motivate individuals to contribute to it. The primary impetus for motivation should come from the conductor, as he or she is at the top of the pyramid. When conductors fail to do their job, however, musicians create a new hierarchy; one which places principal players in command. This does not always lead to harmony and clarity, however, and musicians may struggle to maintain or overthrow leadership. All of these issues emerged in interviews of orchestral musicians, especially at the professional level.

⁴⁰ Turner, 339.

Studying human beings through a Symbolic Interactionist Theory lens requires a methodology that is markedly different than the natural sciences, such as biology or physics. On a basic level the Interpretive paradigm uses biography, including socio-political and historical contexts, interviewing, and textual analysis to collect findings. Rock describes research as a five-fold process: 1) identifying a problem, 2) field observations and interviews, 3) finding a mentor to guide these findings and facilitate trust and communication in the field, 4) writing as a reflexive process and 5) final editing and publication.⁴¹ All of these methods highlight the beauty of studying social science over natural science, that, "one is not studying an alien entity, but a process that may...be grasped from within."⁴²

It is precisely this desire to "grasp from within" that led me to choose the two orchestras that I know most intimately: the Western American University Symphony Orchestra and the Middletown Symphony Orchestra. I have served as the Assistant Conductor for both of these ensembles, which means that I was able to work closely with the orchestra. There are a number of potential arenas for study within the symphonic model, such as those suggested in Bowen's *Cambridge Companion to Conducting*, like gender and race studies. In the case of this dissertation, the problem centers on what orchestral musicians and conductors need in their training and from each other in order to create an inspiring shared, common vision. In conducting my ethnographies I relied extensively on three tools: observation, semi-structured interviews, and participation.

I began observations at the start of the spring 2012 semester (late January) for the WAU Symphony Orchestra and continued for approximately three months. In that time, I

⁴¹ Rock, 32 ó 34.

⁴² Ibid, 31.

made note of the students that were most active in rehearsals, for example, those that took notes in their parts, asked the conductor questions, or communicated to their section. I also noticed the conductor's behavior, such as what members of the ensemble he addressed the most and the least, and how the ensemble reacted to praise or negative comments. I began interviews in March, and asked some of the students about what I had observed, such as how they felt about certain statements the conductor had made, or how they felt about their section and other sections of the orchestra. For the most part, students expressed feelings that resonated with what I had observed, but in some cases the students stated that they were oblivious of their behavior and interactions. In actuality, I think the students were not "oblivious" of their behavior, but perhaps they were not actively conscious of it. As musicians we often get in a zone that is so intensely focused that we act immediately, without having to consciously consider our actions.

For the Middletown Symphony Orchestra, I began observations at the start of the 2013-14 concert season (late September). My ability to observe the orchestra was severely more limited in MSO rehearsals than WAU Symphony rehearsals. In these situations, where the orchestra has a limited rehearsal time and rehearses in the concert hall, the Music Director was dependent on me to assist with balance and actively pay attention to musical matters. When I could, however, I made observations of how the musicians interacted with one another both before and during rehearsal and their interactions with the conductor. In this case, the conductor almost never addressed instrumentalists by name, even when he was visibly upset at a particular individual. I began interviews in November, after about two months of observations, but continued making observations throughout that season.

I could not, however, solely structure my ethnography on observations. I wanted to give musicians a voice, and it therefore seemed most appropriate to rely heavily on semi-structured interviews. I hoped to create a space for dialog where my respondents felt comfortable openly discussing their experiences as orchestral musicians with me. In order to do this I tried to make it clear to my respondents that I wanted our interview to be as collaborative as possible. I encouraged them to challenge any of my questions and to ask me anything they wanted. Fortunately this approach seemed to successfully form trusting relationships between my interviewees and me, at times yielding emotionally explosive discussion, including some topics I did not anticipate like racial profiling.⁴³

In total I interviewed thirteen respondents: five from the WAU Symphony Orchestra, five from the Middletown Symphony Orchestra, and three from outside professional orchestras and universities. In addition, I had many informal discussions with additional professional and student musicians. While these individuals are not quoted directly in this document, our conversations supported the information relayed by the other thirteen individuals. In both cases, my observations of rehearsals enabled me to form some initial impressions about the group's dynamics that I used to guide my interview questions. The questions themselves centered on what I had observed in rehearsals, focusing on how the musicians felt about their orchestra's dynamics, as well as the dynamics of other ensembles they had participated in, what they felt made a conductor and a rehearsal effective, and what programs they liked to perform. As outlined in the section on "Findings", the main topics that emerged from these interviews were group vision, what instrumentalists need from conductors, what instrumentalists

⁴³ Christopher Dunbar et al., "Race, Subjectivity, and the Interview Process," *Handbook of Interview Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), 284.

need from each other, rehearsal techniques, and concert programs and audience reception. Interestingly, these topics do not center on physical skill and technique (the crux of conducting and instrumental training programs), but rather on inter-personal interactions and individual psychology. Remarkably, there was very little deviation within the answers of WAU musicians' interviews and within the answers within the MSO musicians' interviews. There were, however, discrepancies between the WAU and MSO Symphony Orchestras, especially in rehearsal technique, concert programming, and audience reception, which highlight the differences between the expectations of university and professional musicians. I will focus on these three variances extensively in the "Findings," and "Model Book Chapter" sections of this document.

I suppose by now it is "common sense" that respondents may find in-depth interviews therapeutic.⁴⁴ What I did not anticipate was the profound affect that my respondents would have on me: their frank discussion of conductors, and their habits and concerns taught me more about what musicians expect from their leaders than any conducting text I have ever read. In an effort to better understand transformational leadership, I became the one transformed: struck by the power of our reciprocal dialog off the podium and overwhelmed by its possibilities on it.

Needless to say my conversations with my respondents not only affected what I took from the field (additional observations) but what I gave back to it (my conducting). I scoured my observations for emerging patterns and my interviews for key, reoccurring ideas and concepts, while remaining self-reflexive about my own emerging insights and frustrations. This cyclical process, not unlike musical performance itself, created what

⁴⁴ Carolyn Ellis and Leigh Berger, "Their Story/My Story/Our Story," *Handbook of Interview Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), 851.

Kathy Charmaz refers to as an “enacted process,” where analysis informs the data collection and vice versa and actions (i.e. my participation in the field) either confirm or disavow these beliefs.⁴⁵

Since I am strongly concerned with giving my respondents a voice, I believe that one of the biggest ethical violations I could commit against them would be misrepresenting them or me. My respondents shared deeply personal stories with me in our in-depth interviews that I must now confine to a two-dimensional space through written documentation. In aligning myself with symbolic interactionism and the Interpretive paradigm, I am not concerned with validity, but evoking the story of these symphony orchestras of which I am unquestionably a part. To dismiss the multiple individualities and realities that form our ensembles in an effort to create one, neat, and unobtrusive story would be the real misrepresentation.

The idea of replicating the results with any other orchestra is, of course, absurd. The process behind these studies, however, is not. Nor are the findings, which will hopefully encourage young conductors to think beyond the score, baton, and instruments. In offering a comparative case study, young conductors may find similarities or dissimilarities to their own situations. By merely thinking about it and going through the process, they will not doubt be giving more consideration to the psychological implications of their work than they had previously considered.

Demographics of the WAU Symphony Orchestra

The WAU Symphony Orchestra is a large, full orchestra under the direction of Peter Boyko. One or two graduate students usually assist with the orchestra each year.

⁴⁵ Kathy Charmaz, “Grounded Theory in the 21st Century,” *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), 508.

The wind, brass, and percussion students are all graduate or undergraduate music majors, but a few of the string players are non-music majors or music minors. Entrance into the ensemble is by audition only. At the beginning of each year, students audition on orchestral excerpts for a panel of judges positioned behind a screen, so they cannot see the students. The students are not allowed to talk. This prevents any potential for sexual, racial, or personal bias towards the auditionees. Not all students will successfully audition into the orchestra. Some of the less-advanced musicians may be invited to participate in the smaller chamber orchestra or the lab orchestra, which masters and doctoral conducting students rehearse. The orchestra's website reads,

The WAU Symphony Orchestra's mission includes: training music majors to become professional performers and teachers, introducing non-music majors to a high level of music-making, [and] enriching the cultural life of WAU and the community. The orchestra presents as many as eight programs each season including a variety of standard symphonic orchestral repertoire, ranging from early Baroque through modern contemporary, and one complete staged opera.⁴⁶

Nearly all of the WAU Symphony Orchestra musicians take private lessons with WAU instrumental faculty, many of whom play professionally in the High Basin Symphony Orchestra. At the time of conducting my ethnography on the WAU Symphony Orchestra, I was also serving as the Apprentice Conductor for the High Basin Symphony Orchestra,

⁴⁶ "WAU Symphony Orchestra," WAU Department of Music, <http://www.WAU.edu/music/symphony-orchestra> [accessed December 29, 2014].

under Aaron Mehlberg, so I also included some interviews and observations of that ensemble in my study.

I chose the WAU Symphony Orchestra because I had an inside perspective as the Graduate Assistant and Assistant Conductor at the time. I began with extensive observations of the orchestra from rehearsals and concerts, as well as noting my personal experiences with the ensemble. I kept track of this in a diary-like format. It should be noted that I maintained my distance from the ensemble during these observations in order to influence the students' behavior as little as possible. I assume that I had limited effect on their actions as there were several students near me texting and playing games on their phone during rehearsal. From my observations, I was able to note which players were especially active in the ensemble and interacted the most with their colleagues, whether in their own or in neighboring sections. It was from these more active musicians that I selected my participants for interviews. I chose musicians that were in leadership positions, who were most active within the orchestra during my observation sessions, and who seemed the most attentive. These participants are both graduate and undergraduate students, woodwind and string players, male and female, and come from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds. They are kept anonymous and given aliases. I interviewed them regarding their experiences in orchestral ensembles and their perspective on some of the observations I had made about our ensemble. After reviewing my findings, follow-up interviews were made with some of the participants. Allowing the students to review the ethnography enabled them to question and challenge my findings. It prevented the one-sided dialog typical in conducting texts and allowed the musicians to have a voice in the literature.

Demographics of the Middletown Symphony Orchestra

The Middletown Symphony Orchestra is a seventy-five member professional regional orchestra in the Midwest under the direction of Gustav Hartman. There is also an Assistant Conductor and Chorus Director, in addition to a staff of eight and a Board of Trustees. As a part-time professional orchestra, the Middletown Symphony Orchestra differs from the WAU Symphony Orchestra in a number of major ways. First of all the seasons for the Middletown Symphony Orchestra are set at least one year in advance, if not two or three, especially in regards to booking guest artists. In comparison, the WAU Symphony Orchestra usually announces its season at the beginning of the year, or following the last concert. While the WAU Symphony Orchestra rehearses twice a week, presenting three to five concerts a year, the MSO only rehearses one to four times prior to each performance. The MSO performs seven to nine classical masterworks concerts each year, in addition to pops concerts and countless education and chamber programs. WAU's rehearsals typically last just over an hour while the MSO's rehearsals, per union regulations, last two and a half hours with a fifteen minute break. Both music directors may decide to let the ensemble go early but, in the case of the MSO, they absolutely cannot be let out late or each musician will be paid overtime. Like the WAU Symphony Orchestra, acceptance into the MSO is by audition only. Musicians retain their chair from year to year unless they voluntarily leave, are fired, or chose to re-audition for a higher chair. Auditions for section positions or the sub-list are not seen behind a screen, but those auditioning for principal positions do have screened auditions. Like WAU, MSO musicians audition with standard orchestral experts as well as solo works of their choice. Many of the MSO musicians are current or prior students at high level conservatories

around the world and study with musicians from some of the country's top professional orchestras. Many students leave after they graduate from their programs, but several others continue to play with the Middletown Symphony Orchestra and its neighboring ensemble, the Middlecity Symphony Orchestra. Other musicians have been with the orchestra for over thirty years.

According to the MSO's website, the orchestra has both a mission statement and an artistic mission statement. The former reads, "To perform and present at the highest possible artistic level live orchestral music to enrich, entertain, educate, and challenge diverse audiences in a variety of settings. In doing so, we will serve our community, manage our resources responsibly, and be accountable to our donors, audiences, employees and volunteers." The Artistic Mission states,

In carrying out the Association's mission to perform and present live orchestral music at the highest possible artistic level, the orchestra will perform both standard and contemporary repertoire, and will annually begin the classical series with a work by an American composer. It will commission new music, showcase established guest soloists and new young talent. It will provide service to American orchestras by offering its musicians experience in performing a wide range of repertoire, under the direction of conductors of high quality.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ "Mission and History of the MSO," Middletown Symphony Orchestra, <https://www.Middletownsymphony.org/mission-and-history> [accessed December 29, 2014].

After conducting my ethnography with the WAU Symphony Orchestra, I felt compelled to make some changes to my study of the MSO regarding the content of the interview questions themselves. I decided to ask MSO musicians about their collegiate training, if they felt that it prepared them for their first and current professional positions, and what advice they had for aspiring instrumentalists and conductors. Like the WAU ethnography, I began with extensive observations of the orchestra in rehearsal, although these were more limited than my observations with the WAU Symphony because the ensemble meets less frequently, and because I conducted more concerts and rehearsals than I did while at WAU. I tried to select those instrumentalists in the same roles as those I had picked from the WAU Symphony (i.e. concertmaster, principal viola, etc.). Unlike the WAU Symphony ethnography, however, the interviews for the Middletown Symphony ethnography were largely based on availability and willingness. In general, I had to ask a larger portion of members than the WAU Symphony to find participants that were available and willing to be interviewed. In a case where a musician was not available, I tried to select instrumentalists that seemed equally involved in the orchestra based on my observations. Participants are selected from string, woodwind, and brass sections. The participants are both male and female and encompass a wide range of ages and experiences; there is limited racial diversity within the Middletown Symphony Orchestra. Several follow-up interviews with participants were conducted. Once the ethnography was written, I e-mailed it to the participants to review. To date, one participant has chosen to make amendments and comments to the document.

Both ethnographies focused on the players' involvement with symphony orchestras. Questions were open-ended to encourage the musicians to freely discuss their

experiences, both in the WAU and Middletown Symphony Orchestras, and elsewhere. Discussions focused on the following topics: vision, conductor-player interactions (what musicians need from conductors), player-player interactions, rehearsal techniques, concert programs, and audience reception.

Conclusions

The WAU Symphony Orchestra and Middletown Symphony Orchestra respectively represent two examples of a large public university orchestra and large regional professional orchestra. The WAU Symphony Orchestra primarily consists of undergraduate string players with limited orchestral performance experience and almost no professional experience, and undergraduate and graduate student wind, brass, and percussion instrumentalists with significant orchestral experience and some professional experience. The students perform two to three concerts per semester in addition to a large opera production in the spring. In contrast the Middletown Symphony Orchestra is a fully professional ensemble, with level of professional experience ranging between two to more than thirty years. MSO musicians perform seven to nine masterworks concerts, in addition to three to four pops concerts, and many chamber and educational programs annually.

For the safety and protection of those interviewed, further identifiers of the respondents have been removed. I have taken care to keep descriptions of participants vague in conjunction with IRB protocol in order to ensure that they cannot be identified. Therefore more specific identifiers such as age, race, and geography have not been included. The WAU Symphony Orchestra will simply be identified as being located in the southwest and the MSO as being in the Midwest.

As previously mentioned, this comparative study opens many possible avenues for discussion and further research. I encourage others to consider studies, for example, that focus on the relationship of musicians' races or genders to their orchestral experiences. I hope these studies serve as a call to action to also consider how the answers of musicians in full-time professional orchestras, semi-professional orchestras, community orchestras, and many other types of ensembles vary. More than likely, many young conductors will not be fortunate enough to be selective about the location and level of their first position. I certainly never imagined that I would live in the southwest or the Midwest. An open discussion of the experiences of conductors and musicians across many levels and abilities will help young conductors understand how to best serve a variety of orchestras. This is only one study; this is only one story.

Chapter 3: Findings

Part I — Reaching a Shared Vision

“Describe your experiences playing in a symphony orchestra.” This was the intentionally vague question that began my interviews with both the WAU and Middletown Symphony Orchestra members. What I was hoping to find is the feeling or experience that defined orchestral performance for each individual. Once I knew their story, I could ask them about vision: their vision, the conductor’s vision, the orchestra’s vision — or were they all the same? What was the “so what” factor that drew them to orchestras in the first place?

WAU Symphony Orchestra musicians uniformly began with negative experiences; stories of being singled out from the rest of the orchestra because of their race, sexual preference, or playing ability. Fortunately for me as a graduate assistant at the time, these were from their prior experiences in high school, undergraduate, or festival orchestras, not WAU. Zoe, a violist, openly discussed her first and only year at a nearby university. “It was really hard being a person of color and a woman — because I was literally the only person of color in the entire orchestra,” she said. She told me the story of spending Halloween with her orchestra colleagues, who suggested she dress up as a black sheep. “So it was difficult to find the motivation to want to play, and want to go to class, and want to go to perform, so it kind of wore on me.” Zoe told me that she had come to terms with how she had been treated, “It’s the nature of life, I guess. This is the only life I’ve ever known.” But all that changed for Zoe when she came to the WAU. She commended the conductors for making the orchestra more inclusive and keeping it

about the music. Similarly Cynthia, a cellist, confessed that she almost quit music after having an extremely negative conductor at a prior university. "I actually decided not to go on and do my master's in music and part of that was influenced by an orchestral conductor at a previous university that I went to because he was so negative," she said, "He would stop the orchestra and say, 'Your sound is just not good.' But I never felt that we had a good sound." Also like Zoe, Cynthia felt the WAU Symphony Orchestra set a different atmosphere, "I feel like Peter creates an environment where it's positive for us to be there if we want to work hard. I don't feel like I'm playing with a whole bunch of mediocre musicians and a conductor who's given up on us."

For WAU Symphony Orchestra musicians, it seemed their orchestral experiences had initially been defined by a negative, even traumatic, experience. Their feelings toward orchestra had changed, however, when they found themselves once again in a positive musical environment. Scholars Boerner, Armstrong, and Armstrong, define this phenomenon as transformational leadership; a moment where negativity becomes supplanted by positive emotions. Transformational leadership stems from a healthy relationship between an ensemble and its conductor, where a shared vision (the music) can flourish. When Zoe and Cynthia felt alienated from the rest of the ensemble, and therefore the music, because of physical and personal characteristics, orchestra became not about working together but being apart. It may intuitively seem unlikely that young musicians feel strongly about maintaining a shared vision, but that is absolutely untrue. "Even if *one* person doesn't have their part down or *one* person isn't getting the message the conductor is trying to convey, it's very, very frustrating for me personally,"

complained Karl, "But I also feel very satisfied because we're all coming together to get this product and the result is that it's really very satisfying."

In contrast to WAU Symphony members, Middletown Symphony Orchestra musicians generally began by sharing a positive experience playing with an orchestra, such as enthusiastically listing all they had accomplished as professional and non-professional orchestral players. Perhaps professional musicians are able to put negative personal experiences behind them. Not only is this necessary for strength and success in a highly demanding field, but it also shows that musicians mature as they age and gain more experience. Another possibility is that these professional musicians experienced a turning point where positive emotions became more compelling in defining their experiences than the negative ones, bringing a sense of accomplishment to the foreground.

Like WAU Symphony musicians, MSO members wanted a compelling, shared vision between all members of the orchestra. Elizabeth, a first violinist with the Middletown Symphony, told me how her parents, neither of whom are musicians, can easily sense when the orchestra is on the same page, "They enjoy when someone is clearly active and listening to other people; that's what they respond to more. They might not know that's why, but they'll certainly respond to that and say, "wow, that was really something special."

As someone just beginning her professional career, I can easily relate to the dichotomy between the WAU and Middletown Symphony members' responses. If someone had interviewed me during or just after my master's degree, I would have immediately launched on a litany of negative experiences as defining my conducting

career. At the ripe age of 22 (mere infancy for conductors) I had decided that I would never be good enough. But that also began to change for me when I came to WAU and entered a more positive learning environment. Now if someone were to ask me about my orchestral experiences, I would probably join the MSO musicians in listing my professional accolades and positions, proud of what I had accomplished.

Table 1: Orchestral Experience and Vision

WAU Symphony Orchestra	Middletown Symphony Orchestra	Me
Orchestral experiences are defined by negativity and failure.	Orchestral experiences are defined by accomplishment.	Orchestral experiences gradually changed to positive experiences as I entered my professional career.
New, positive (transformational) moments changed their feelings toward orchestra.	Age, experience, maturity, and transformational experiences enhance their feelings toward orchestra.	Age, experience, maturity, and transformational experiences enhance my feelings toward orchestra.
Desire a strong, shared vision without isolation.	Desire a strong, shared vision without isolation.	Desire a strong, shared vision without isolation.

Table 1 shows a comparison of orchestral experiences in university and professional orchestral musicians and me. All three subjects desire a strong, shared vision without isolation.

Part II — What Instrumentalists Need from Conductors

As I previously discussed in the literature review, conducting texts can agree on how important shared vision and inspiration is, but differ on their opinions on how to get it and who it should come from. Some pedagogues, like Carse and Scherchen, see the conductor as a god that has to pull the music from the naïve masses. Other conductors, like Meier, acknowledge the orchestra has much to offer. Given such wealth of diversity and experience within the ensemble, one might wonder if it is possible to arrive at a mutual vision. The conductor is supposed to provide the answer; the person with definitive artistic authority and final interpretive say.

During the Baroque era conductors, if used for a performance at all, were solely responsible for beating time, often audibly. In many symphonic performances in Vienna the concertmaster led the ensemble by occasionally beating with his bow.⁴⁸ Performances were therefore a collaborative effort of an entire ensemble and not the artistic interpretations of one individual. As the symphonic cannon began to develop, composers died and others were needed to lead their works. The role of a conductor thus emerged, a role encouraged by both established composers' deaths and the increasing complexity of new musical compositions. With this idea of a necessary outside interpretive entity, the ego of the modern conductor was born.

To aid the conductor in (primarily) his journey, he studies technique, orchestration, and scores. This studying occurs alone creating a musician that, when hatched, will have spent very little time learning the one thing he will always conduct:

⁴⁸ José Antonio Bowen, "The Rise of Conducting," *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

people. Consequently, my next two questions focused on exactly that: what do musicians need from conductors and what do they need from each other? Similarities, or gaps, between university students' expectations and professionals' needs will help conductors to better prepare for their careers.

WAU Symphony Orchestra instrumentalists offered their perspective on shared vision and how a conductor can help, or hinder, the process. According to Karl, one way a conductor can help the orchestra is to, "highlight how each part fits within one another or who to listen to for specific tempos." Jennifer agrees stating, "I think the conductor's job is to hold the group together musically. I really like conductors that go in and they'll play through and they'll hit points and make it come together quickly." Clearly it is important even to student musicians that conductors come to rehearsal prepared and ready to lead, but they had one additional request for their maestro: energy. Zoe remarked on Peter's passion on the podium wanting to know how anyone could not try their best when he is "sweating on you." "He's got this air about him where you don't want to let him down," she remarked, "You know he's giving so much that you definitely want to match what he's giving to you."

Middletown Symphony Orchestra musicians agreed that a great partnership stems from a give and take between orchestra and conductor. Elizabeth said, "It's nice to have a conductor who's actually treating you like they're playing with you and not so much telling you how to play." According to flautist Deanna, "Part of what a good conductor does is they bring out the best in the player and they find that they somehow naturally have the ability to know what's hard for you and do some little motion to make it happen." Similarly Karen, a violist, stated that good conductors, "Hold individuals and

sections to high standards without being nasty or patronizingí .and show appreciation for a job well done.ö Listening, bringing together, energy, playing with you, knowing what is hard for you, showing appreciationô these are tasks that require a conductor to be human and to treat their ensemble as human; they do not come from being a god-like figure overseeing musical matters.

Musicians already know that conductors are not perfect, and they would rather see a humble demeanor from the podium than a humbling one. WAU and Middletown Symphony Orchestra musicians agreed that nothing is more frustrating than a conductor who blames his or her mistakes on the ensemble or refuses to look inward to discover why something is not working. Cynthia, a WAU cellist, said that it is unacceptable when conductors take out their stress on an ensemble for any reason, nor is it permissible to single out players for making a mistake. In Cynthia's experience, when this has happened the conductor has almost always blamed the wrong person. Cynthia was more forgiving of her conductor than professionals seem to be when a conductor tries similar antics with them. Alex, a bassist, complained about working under a young conductor who followed the orchestra instead of leading it. öI didn't know how to fit in with the group,ö he said, öI try to give every conductor the benefit of the doubt but once I put the blinders up, they're staying up.ö Elizabeth noted that some conductors, öSpend too much time saying, "oh, this isn't together and why isn't this working?"ö When you get to a certain level the groups will band together and they will play where they're supposed to play and they'll kind of ignore what's going on over there. But, it's harder for someone to get a message through, even musically.ö At that point the orchestra might be sharing a vision with each other, but the conductor has become excluded. He or she may never regain the respect of the

ensemble. Because conductors are not trained to read body language, they may or may not have any idea if they have upset or isolated the ensemble, or that their gestures have no connection to the music around them. Benjamin, a conducting professor at a prestigious private conservatory put it this way, "You can tell by how they [an orchestra] tunes how seriously they take things by how they're sitting, a lot of body language. The tone that's set at the beginning of the relationship is how it is."

As a student conductor, I usually knew when a rehearsal or performance had not gone well. The performance might literally derail and there would be an aural reaction to something that I had done or said. I also had the benefit of having mentors in both my degree programs and at conducting workshops. Consequently even if I was oblivious that I had done something wrong, I always had someone around to remind me otherwise. But when I accepted my first professional post, levels of judgment became simultaneously more lenient and so much more critical. The board and staff were positive and complimentary even when I thought concerts had gone poorly. As an example, I recently conducted a holiday pops concert and was completely exhausted and sick. I had caught the flu from my mother when she visited me to watch me conduct a masterworks concert a few weeks earlier. Due to the busy time of year, I had refused to let myself get too sick and felt barely alive. In addition, I had hired a Santa to provide some holiday magic. I did not realize Santa would be a complete ham and dance around stage, conducting with jingle bells dangling from his wrist, whilst blowing kisses at myself and the concertmaster. Between missed cues and false cues, messy runs, and showboat Santa I could not envision a more dreadful performance. So you can imagine my surprise when staff, board, and audience fawned over the concert the following week stating that it was

the best holiday pops concert they could remember. One woman even told me that she
 "Felt it really celebrated baby Jesus." I imagine the orchestra felt differently, especially
 since there was a point where our concertmaster kicked Santa in the shin. It can certainly
 be difficult for young conductors to separate audience, staff, orchestra, and personal
 perceptions of their performance.

Table 2: What Orchestras Need from Conductors

WAU Symphony Orchestra	Middletown Symphony Orchestra	My Needs
<p>Do: Show how the music comes together Help instrumentalists see where their parts fit into the whole Be passionate Have energy Admit fault</p>	<p>Do: Collaborate with the orchestra Play with the orchestra Know what it is hard for the orchestra Show appreciation for a job well done Admit fault</p>	<p>As a student: Received guidance and mentorship Aural consequences for a poor performance or rehearsal Audience reception less critical and pertinent Second chances</p>
<p>Do Not: Take out stress on the ensemble Blame the ensemble for your mistakes Single out individual players for any reason</p>	<p>Do Not: Follow the orchestra Look outward before looking inward Blame the ensemble for your mistakes</p>	<p>As a professional: Limited mentorship and guidance Orchestra ignores conductors they have lost respect for May not be aural consequences for mistakes Staff, board, and audience reception critical</p>

Table 2 shows a comparison of do's and do not's for conductors from student and professional musicians. Also included are the major differences I found between conducting student and professional ensembles.

Part III — What Instrumentalists Need from Each Other

In general both WAU and Middletown Symphony Orchestra musicians felt positively about their colleagues, but were also well aware of any disunity in their ensembles. WAU Symphony members seemed to feel that members of their ensemble did not communicate with each other, both across sections (i.e. woodwind, brass, percussion, strings), and within the string section itself. Jennifer, Karl, and Cynthia all remarked in their interviews that the woodwind, brass, and percussion sections were more mature than the string sections. They felt these players were more likely to come in with their parts prepared so they could focus on musical issues from the start. String players, on the other hand, often sight-read at rehearsal, using it as an opportunity to practice notes and rhythms instead of large scale musical ideas like interpretation and style. Jennifer became quite upset at the discrepancy between string, and woodwind attitudes, "It's like we're all just separate sections because one's so mad at another all the time, or in some parts of the piece where there's just no connection, and that's what makes it hard for me when I can see the anger, or annoyances, on either string players' faces or winds'." Christian, a bass player, stated, "I feel like the sections don't really communicate with each other. I feel like we do kind of do our own thing and it does translate in rehearsals too. The wind section really seems to work as a unit. There's probably not as much communication as there should be between all the various string players to try to get us to work as a team." He continues, "I've always felt like basses are the outcasts of the string section. Every single orchestra I've ever played in it's like basses are in their own little world."

Middletown Symphony Orchestra musicians agreed that cross-ensemble communication was the biggest aspect they were underprepared for in their professional

careers. String players, especially, commented that coming to the first rehearsal prepared was a major adjustment. Alex said, "I found this out early: be prepared. When you're in school you have a few weeks, sometimes even a month to work out a program. Then you go into a professional [orchestra] it's a few rehearsals, a few days. So it's learning how to be as prepared as possible." Karen, who is also an established educator and teacher, noted that string students truly are not prepared for professional life. "Woodwinds and brass players walk into rehearsal knowing their parts," she lamented, "String players are the ones who come to rehearsal without knowing their parts. It's like a social contract that hasn't been explained to them." Although Kevin is a trombone player he agreed adding, "The biggest adjustment was being able to play at a very high level for everything, every style of music that we play, and playing without fear of making a mistake." Being a professional orchestral musician is demanding, and requires a consistent dedication to self-improvement. "I'm surrounded by some of the best musicians I've heard," Elizabeth said, "yet that doesn't translate always into a good professional player. [there are players who don't] know how to play with other people, look up, or pay attention to what someone is trying really hard to do." In fact, at a recent MSO rehearsal, one of the first violinists ran up to me at break to lament about her stand partner. She was bright red, and furious that he was missing notes and not watching the conductor. In a university setting, a string player would never complain that their stand partner had not come to the first rehearsal prepared.

This being said, overall the Middletown Symphony Orchestra musicians, like most professional orchestral musicians, are exceptional at watching one another. As

Elizabeth said, musicians know how to band together when their conductor is not cutting it. She offered this poetic description of the orchestra as a bridge,

It's chamber music on the biggest level. [As concertmaster] I see it as if I'm supposed to be this bridge between the sections in the orchestra. All it really takes is one person, unfortunately. That's kind of the beauty of it, but it can also be the drawback because part of what's so amazing about orchestra is that you've got all these people on stage, all together, and they are all working together towards this one picture that they're trying to show. If there's one person that's just kind of off, we can all tell. Also, if someone's sitting within the string section, a violinist in the middle of the firsts, they're in the middle of that section but they're also right next to the seconds, so they're supposed to be translating what's ahead of them back, in front of them to the back, and [if] they're just not paying attention to what's happening up there, then the people behind them, if they're being really good listeners, then they're going to respond to that person. So then everything is disheveled and not together.

With Elizabeth's analogy, it becomes even clearer how closely the medium of the orchestra resonates with Symbolic Interaction Theory. Even in an ideal environment, where all players and the conductor mutually respect one another and feel unified in a common interpretation, there is still room for the slightest misplaced gesture, from any member, to create chaos.

When I was conducting at WAU, I never had to worry about the ensemble having a deeply rooted consciousness of its own; picking a completely different tempo, or watching one another for cues. In Middletown it was disconcerting to see so many eyes watching each other, especially when starting and stopping pieces. In some instances the orchestra is banding together, as Elizabeth and Alex say, ignoring the conductor because the message is not clear or convincing. I am sure that there have been many a time that the orchestra has kindly ignored my directive for the betterment of the ensemble. But just because members of an ensemble are making eye contact with one another does not mean that they are not watching their conductor. As Deanna said, "You do watch the conductor, you do follow the conductor, but it's kind of peripheral, you have to listen to the people around you." The musicians only wish to play together. They are looking for gestures from each other that a conductor cannot, and should not, micromanage.

Table 3: Inter-Orchestral Relationships

WAU Symphony Orchestra	Middletown Symphony Orchestra	My Observations
<p>The string section is least mature; woodwind, brass, and percussion players know their parts before the first rehearsal.</p> <p>String, wind, brass, and percussion sections do not communicate with each other.</p> <p>String sections do not communicate with each other.</p>	<p>In school, the string section is the least mature and well-prepared.</p> <p>All musicians must show up to rehearsals prepared.</p> <p>Extensive eye contact and breathing together allows the ensemble to play together with or without the conductor.</p>	<p>As a student: Players looking at music or at me Very little communication between players No breathing</p> <p>As a professional: Players come to rehearsal prepared Lots of non-verbal and verbal communication between players Plentiful, audible breathing to start and end phrases</p>

Table 3 shows a comparison how student and professional musicians relate to one another as well as my observations. Professional musicians unanimously stated that they felt underprepared for their first participation in a professional setting.

Part IV — Rehearsal Techniques

The other discussion that spawned the largest discrepancy between WAU and Middletown Symphony instrumentalists was rehearsal. WAU Symphony musicians did not seem to have much consensus on what makes an effective rehearsal. Some felt that a rehearsal should engage all sections of an orchestra equally. As Christian said, “There have been several rehearsals where I felt like we didn’t get anything productive [done] as a bass section.” Karl felt that conductors should, “have their ideas very much set it

stoneí .I find it annoying and frustrating to be under conductors who take suggestions. I just prefer to be in a setting where a conductor knows what he wants in regards to the music.ö Jennifer, on the other hand, disagreed, öConductors come in and they have an idea [and] it's important to portray that but at the same time pick out whatever sound comes to themí .like, -I never thought of the music that wayø or -I don't really like that but if that's what I'm getting right now than we'll go with that.ø So, I think they can set something but there should be some freedom. Very flexible, because they have no idea what they're dealing with.ö

Middletown Symphony musicians felt that conductors need to be prepared for rehearsal but, at the same time, be willing to adjust. öBe organized but full of spontaneity,ö Deanna said, öWilling to deviate from the plan andí .be able to adjust to whatever's going on in that situation.ö As Elizabeth so eloquently put it, musicians want conductors that treat them as equal musical partners, making music *with* them. MSO musicians clearly expected their conductors both to lead and listen in a way that is strikingly similar to Adrian Boult's rehearsal philosophy. As he wrote, "The main thing at a rehearsal is to watch results and to act on them. At a performance it is the other way around: the conductor must take the lead."⁴⁹ All MSO musicians also felt unprepared for the limited rehearsal time they would have in professional orchestras. As Alex said, in college students have weeks of time for preparation. Both Karen and Deanna felt that university programs need to be more conscious of programming more than three or four concerts per year. As Karen said, öWhile the orchestra director at [our] school was excellent, and demandingí .we followed the usual conservatory model of having weeks

⁴⁹ Boult, 24.

and weeks of rehearsal to prepare one program.ö Musicians felt summer festivals better prepared them for professional posts because of their intensive nature, frequently performing a concert or two once a week. öNothing can replace hands-on experience,ö Deanna said, öa music festival where you're playing a concert every. Single. Week. It's great training.ö

If student instrumentalists feel ill-prepared for the lack of rehearsal time stepping into their first professional positions, than it stands to reason that young conductors may feel similarly. Since I only covered two or three concerts per semester, I always felt that I had plenty of time to review and perfect scores. Consequently I would spend hours in formal, harmonic, and phrasal analyses. In addition I would obsess over possible rehearsal strategies, pouring over passages for sections that might be difficult and taking pride in brainstorming solutions. If I did not know a work exceptionally well, I felt I could learn it in rehearsal watching my professor. At most, I might be expected to prepare one new work each week, which was usually limited to a short overture or one or two movements of a symphony.

In contrast, stepping in as an assistant conductor and therefore a cover conductor and rehearsal assistant required me to learn one to two hours of new music every two to three weeks. At times, I would be studying repertoire for pops, education, and classical concerts simultaneously. The ensemble breezed over the passages I thought were most challenging. Used to correcting pitches and rhythms, I was not prepared for the dulcet tones that would grace my ear from day one. The orchestra knew it was not performing perfectly and I had to quickly learn how to best help them. As a professional, I was able to explore nuance of tone and style that had never been broached in any student ensemble

where I had observed or participated. The instrumentalists would ask me questions, for example, the concertmaster asking me how off I would like a bow stroke to be. This extended beyond the usual orchestration textbook designations of *staccato*, *spiccato*, *sautillé*, and other terminology. The questions now were how *spiccato*? In fact, there are gradations of all of these terms, just as there are gray areas in whether a passage should be conducted in two, or six, for example. In actuality it can be both, even within measure. Conductors must analyze the music to determine if an individual measure is better conducted in two or six and, at the same time, be able to listen and respond to the orchestra to move between both with ease depending on if the ensemble is playing clearly, if it is dragging, if its phrasing is correct, and many other factors.

Honing younger ensembles into these details will take time and long term commitment on the part of the conductor; if he or she balances their job with directing multiple other ensembles or seeks a new position every two years it simply will not work. As a case in point, when I began at the MSO I also became Music Director of the Middletown Youth Symphony Orchestra. At first, they had no idea what it meant to play as an orchestra. Many would show up late to rehearsal and never practice and those who did come early to rehearsal would sit there with their instrument cases on their laps. As I learned what the MSO expected from me, I began to expose some of the MYSO students to these standards. After three years we have begun addressing questions like how *spiccato*. This is not to say that the youth ensemble is at the same level as the professional ensemble, they are not. They students do not show up to the first rehearsal knowing their parts and the majority of our rehearsals still focus on rhythm, pitch, and intonation. Their performances are not perfect and there are huge issues such as a balance and choosing

repertoire that works for both over very young and very experienced members. This does not mean that these students cannot be asked to think as professional musicians do and engage the music in the way that professionals do. You see the question of how *spiccato*, did not come from me, but from them. They may not be able to perfectly execute every technique, but they at least understand that their techniques inform the music they will produce, and in turn, how unified their sound will be as an ensemble. If they are serious musicians, their technical skill and comfort with pitches and rhythms will naturally grow over time. The question of how *spiccato*, however, is one they can carry with them and revisit throughout the rest of their musical careers.

Table 4: Rehearsal Techniques

WAU Symphony Orchestra	Middletown Symphony Orchestra	Me
<p>All instrumental sections should be addressed equally.</p> <p>Conductor comes to rehearsal with a plan and does not deviate from that plan.</p> <p>Conductor comes to rehearsal with a plan but is willing to be flexible.</p>	<p>Conductor comes to rehearsal with a plan but is willing to be flexible.</p> <p>Conductors must watch, react, and adjust based on the orchestra's performance.</p> <p>Traditional university models, with 2-3 concerts a semester (or year) do not prepare students for professional demands.</p>	<p>As a student:</p> <p>Responsible for covering 3-5 concerts per year and limited additional repertoire.</p> <p>Ample time to study the scores and perfect them.</p> <p>Many rehearsals per concert with no union regulations.</p> <p>Anticipating difficult passages for the orchestra and finding solutions before rehearsal.</p> <p>Focus on correcting pitches and rhythms.</p> <p>As a professional:</p> <p>Responsible for covering or conducting approximately 14 concerts a year.</p> <p>Concerts are often longer and more difficult repertoire.</p> <p>1-4 rehearsals per concert with union regulations.</p> <p>Focus on musical ideas, not pitches and rhythms.</p>

Table 4 compares student and professional musicians' perspectives on rehearsal. Both professional instrumentalists, and myself, felt ill-prepared for the changes in quantity and quality of rehearsal time in the professional field.

Part V — Concert Programs and Audience Engagement

Programming was barely mentioned in my discussion with WAU students. Even when I pressed them about what makes a good program in their opinion, they tended to focus on the music they instead enjoyed performing. As students it might be expected that they would be open to a larger variety of repertoire because it is all new to them, even pieces that have grown stale for professionals such as Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. Members also did not mention feeling a larger responsibility to the audience or their community. Of those interviewed, only Zoe mentioned the importance of audience reception, "When you play music you're not just playing notes, you're trying to get a message across," she said, "So if you don't feel it yourself, then the audience isn't going to feel it either." This sentiment resonates with Elizabeth's comments on her parents. Even non-musicians can sense a larger picture (or lack thereof).

MSO musicians, on the other hand, were vocal about what makes a good program. Many musicians wanted a concert with variety. "I think a combination of repertoire that is going to both engage and challenge the audience and the orchestra," Deanna said, "[like] finding living composers." Alex pointed out that programs with some kind of common theme give the orchestra and audience something to latch on to. Music is abstract and having the pieces connected in some way imbues the program with extra-musical significance. Karen also said that she likes programs with a variety of works from different eras and styles. "I'd like to see more under-represented instruments presented in concerti—surely the audience would, too! I [also] think programs that present the orchestra as the highlight, instead of the soloist, will do more in the long run to maintain the health of the relationship between the audience and institution than

anything else.ö Middletown Symphony Orchestra musicians thus seemed to be much more cognizant of how important programming is in reaching out and engaging the audience and connecting them to the ensemble. Karen, in particular, became passionate when I asked her about the importance of the audience:

What is an orchestra? The experience of the orchestra is this live music experience. If orchestras would think of themselves more as rock bands and get away from the idea of the patrons and think more about fans, I think they'd get it a little betterí A fan is someone who will save up for three years to get to see you twice on tour in one year. You *mean* something to your fans and your interactions with them is what is important to them and they have a very personal experienceí .they feel ownershipí . In general, in attempting to appease the social needs of donors overtime orchestras have created themselves as such an exclusive thing that now they're reaping the wind and they've become too exclusive. Nobody's coming, that's how exclusive they are.

I certainly never considered myself to have öfansö, in the traditional sense, during my time as a student conductor. I cannot remember doing any educational concerts, speaking at public functions, or really giving back to the community in any way. When I decided to accept the job in Middletown, I quickly realized that I would become just as much a part of the community as the orchestra itself. In fact I often feel that I spend more time at social functions than studying scores or conducting. In no way, however, do I feel that this aspect of my position is any less important than my artistic responsibilities.

Table 5: Concert Programs and Audience Engagement

WAU Symphony Orchestra	Middletown Symphony Orchestra	Me
<p>Most programs are interesting and engaging.</p> <p>Students enjoy programs with pieces they like playing.</p> <p>Audience and community are not a big focus in concerts but it is still important that the orchestra gets a message across to them.</p>	<p>Enjoy a variety of pieces in a program.</p> <p>Programs should feature orchestral musicians, living composers, and new music.</p> <p>Orchestras could benefit from thinking of audiences as fans, not patrons.</p> <p>The audience feels ownership and pride regarding the orchestra.</p>	<p>As a student: Programs are primarily determined by professors. Budget and difficulty of a repertoire is a constraint.</p> <p>Audience, education, and engagement are not chief focuses of programs.</p> <p>As a professional: Repertoire is determined years in advance. Repertoire is limited by an artistic budget, but that is generally larger than university budgets.</p> <p>Audience and community engagement play a real role in creating and presenting programs.</p> <p>Different programs (casual, pops, classical, and educational) meet needs of different audience members.</p>

Table 5 compares student and professional musicians' perspectives on programming, the audience, and community. In general, both programming and audience played less of a role for student musicians, both instrumentalists and conductors, than professionals.

Conclusions

University and professional musicians agree on many of the ideals of music making, like the importance of a shared vision, of not isolating or alienating individual musicians, and the necessity of all musicians (instrumentalists and conductor) of coming to rehearsal prepared. The three areas that created the largest discrepancy between student and professional musicians were:

1. Ensemble Communication and Collaboration
2. Preparedness and Rehearsal Techniques
3. Concert Programming and Audience Engagement

I posit that it is no mere coincidence that these three areas are also the ones that most intimately deal with interpersonal relationships between the conductor, ensemble, and community. These are also the three aspects I personally felt least prepared for when embarking on my professional career. They are the ones that are often overlooked in conducting texts or left to abstract, common-sense declarations. If all three of these components, so inherent in professional musicians, are nothing more than "common sense," why did so many professional musicians, including myself, struggle with them at first? Instead musicians learn these points from older, established musicians once they take their first job. What if these elements of music making became as integral to university instruction as correct intonation and rhythm? If they are to be taught, would not ensemble conductors play the largest role in doing so? Furthermore, if university conductors and the texts they use are *not* focusing on these aspects, how are student conductors learning them? And if student conductors are not learning what student

musicians need and what professional musicians expect, how can they possibly lead either?

Having student conductors practice on university freshmen as if they were the Berlin Philharmonic is a disservice to both parties. With student ensembles it is not all about gesture and music. Throwing student conductors in front of high-level professional ensembles as if they were eager students longing for inspiration and personal growth is also absurd. There is very little, because of both age and training, that the young conductor will be able to offer them at first. Here I must briefly pause to reiterate two important points:

1. If the above three gaps can be observed, they can be taught. Social science, as a discipline, depends on the idea that social interactions can be studied and that people are or can be conditioned to alter their relationships and perception of others. The professional musicians ultimately learned about collaboration, preparedness, programming, and community engagement, but lamented that their university programs did not do a better job of helping them develop in these areas. Yet conductors in both cases were expected to create shared vision, and come to rehearsal knowledgeable and prepared. Knowledgeable and prepared for what? Study of the score and gestural interpretation? Or the performance of that score for the ensemble and situation at hand? If the former, then conductors are no doubt prepared through the endless discussions on physical technique, score study, and orchestration available. If the latter, this study suggests the very opposite.
2. This is a comparison between one university and one professional regional orchestra. Based on my experiences working with some other regional and university orchestras, I

think these two ensembles are good representations of mid-level universities and regional orchestras. The results are not replicable because people, and the situations they find themselves, are not replicable. Any illusion of being able to duplicate a study involving people and their stories is illusory and echoes the similar misconception that orchestras can be studied and approached in the same way. For those interviewed in these studies, and myself, these stories and conceptions are real and valid. And, if they have truth for us, they will no doubt resonate, on some level, with orchestral musicians elsewhere.

So the focus now becomes, as it should, on how these three points can be taught and incorporated into conducting study to better prepare conductors, and instrumentalists, for the professional world. The following section of my dissertation supplies a model on how this information could be condensed and presented as a chapter in any existent pedagogical text.

As the research makes clear, any number of social inquiries could be made into the societies of symphony orchestras. Rather than seeing the immense scope of this project as weakness, I see it as strength: an opportunity to dive into a whole new world of orchestral studies with the orchestra, itself, at the base. I hope that other conductors, instrumentalists, and scholars will take up this challenge and aid me in making a more diverse, modern, and relevant contribution to orchestral conducting literature. What follows is one such sample of applying the findings of this comparative study to the existent pedagogical literature.

Chapter 4: Model Book Chapter – An Example of Applying the Findings to the Pedagogy

As conductors we spend a lot of time preparing. In the fervor of prepping program notes, scores, rehearsals, and concerts, it is important for us not to forget that conductors must also prepare to conduct people; conductors not only serve the composer but the orchestra and the community. Those of us who are also educators have the increased responsibility of preparing students for the next stage of their education and careers.

Fortunately there are many excellent conducting resources available that help us accomplish serving the composer; these focus on score preparation and honing our physical technique. Max Rudolf's *The Grammar of Conducting* builds a physical technique from the ground up. Rudolf's text innovatively discusses not only the physical beat pattern (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4), but the expression of that beat pattern based on different styles, such as legato or staccato. The text's second part "Applications" then applies these patterns to real musical examples and incorporates trickier technical situations, such as fermatas and syncopation. Nikolai Malko and Elizabeth Green's *The Conductor and His Score*, Erich Leinsdorf's *The Composer's Advocate*, and Gunther Schuller's *The Compleat Conductor* all offer valuable guidelines on score study. There are also many exceptional orchestration texts available, such as Norman Del Mar's *The Anatomy of the Orchestra*. A solid technique and knowledge of orchestration and score study build the foundation of our craft. As with any instrumentalist, they comprehensively provide an infinite arena for study and self-improvement. Although we will, over the course of our

lives, establish our own styles and ðbreakö or augment many of the technical discussions in these texts, we will never outgrow them.

The purpose of this book chapter, however, is not to focus on what is readily available on physical technique and score study. What these and other traditional conducting texts fail to focus on are the people that we will lead and ultimately learn the most from: the orchestra. I say ðtheö orchestra because it is important to understand that they are not *your* orchestra. They are not a foster child, passing from one guardian to the next. In most cases their histories and futures extend far beyond our time with them. Not all conductors feel or act this way. In fact it used to be quite common to feel the opposite. Pedagogues Adam Carse and Hermann Scherchen felt orchestras were theirs to control. Throughout his text Carse refers to ðplaying onö the orchestra.⁵⁰ Scherchen also equates the orchestra to an instrument and adds that conductors are gods, ðthe most spiritual form of the manifestation of the reproduction of art.ö⁵¹ Over time composers, like Beethoven, have become god-like figures and so it can be easy for us to imagine, in all our time intimately preparing and studying their works, that we are somehow closer to them. But, for all our preparation, orchestras will always be one step ahead of us. This is a mathematical fact: in an orchestra of 75 people, where each has been studying their instrument for an average of even twenty years, the commensurate experience of the ensemble will be 1,500 years. This is well over fifteen lifetimes.⁵² For this reason, alone, we cannot call them *ours*.

⁵⁰ Carse, 1.

⁵¹ Scherchen, 19.

⁵² Farberman,

But there is an even more obvious reason: they are human beings. Any idea of owning them resonates with slavery and suggests inequality. So amidst all of our texts, scores, colored pencils, training, and travels we must not forget that we, and those we lead, are first and foremost human beings. In *Evoking Sound: Fundamentals of Choral Conducting*, James Jordan discusses the most important lesson prolific conductor Weston Noble learned from his 57 year career: everyone needs to be affirmed.⁵³ Embracing Noble's sentiment, Jordan writes, "As conductors we need to work hard every day of our lives to understand what it is to be an affirming/compassionate, caring, and loving musician simply by standing in front of an ensemble and being."⁵⁴ Conducting texts do not typically focus on this aspect and so it is understandable if this task of "being" seems abstract and overwhelming. As Green and Malko write, "The psychological implications of this arrangement [of the orchestra] are infinite."⁵⁵ Social skills, often labeled as "common sense" or "inherent" have been thought so difficult to articulate and teach that the philosophy that conductors are, "born, not made" has emerged.⁵⁶ Fortunately these skills are quite attainable. With the same dedication and hard work that we apply to our score study and technical preparation, we can all master them.

This chapter is especially geared towards those young conductors that are recent or upcoming graduates of their degree programs and expect to start work in the field soon. You may find some major gaps in your training and may be surprised to realize that these are, most likely, not technical or academic in nature. More than likely if you are

⁵³ Jordan, 14.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Green and Malko, 9.

⁵⁶ Battisti, 6.

fortunate enough to win a job with a professional ensemble, your technical skill and score study are already quite strong. Instead we are going to talk about "the gap."

Even though this "gap" is not defined, most conductors know what it is or may currently find themselves in it. It is the gap that occurs between graduation and employment, the time spent second guessing yourself as you defer student loan payments and contemplate a second career in pre-med. The purpose of this chapter is not to provide career counseling but if you make a conscious effort to incorporate the material discussed into your preparation and attitude, you may very well find major positive changes in your life.

This chapter focuses on three skills: 1. Collaboration, 2. Rehearsal Techniques, and 3. Concert Programs and Audience Reception, which I have identified as a gap between educational training and professional experience. This does not mean that additional gaps do not exist or that certain conductors may feel well-versed in one, or all, of these skills. To better understand the difference between university and professional expectations, I conducted a comparative study of one university and professional orchestra where I served as the assistant conductor. These three skills emerged from the findings as being areas of weakness not only for young conductors, me included, but also of orchestral instrumentalists. Each chapter compares how the university and professional musicians I interviewed feel about each of these topics, offers pertinent materials and resources for further exploration, and ends with activities. In comparing the experiences of student and professional instrumentalists, we can see not only where our gaps as conductors are, but also where instrumentalists may feel less prepared for their

careers. If we are working with students or young professionals, it is especially important that we be cognizant of their needs and weaknesses.

In addition to discussion of existent conducting texts, both traditionally used and not, this chapter also includes the voices of those that ultimately become our greatest teacher: the orchestra. I have included excerpts from interviews throughout the text from members of the Western American University Symphony Orchestra, when I was a Graduate Assistant and Assistant Conductor there, as well as from instrumentalists from the Middletown Symphony Orchestra, where I currently serve as the Assistant Conductor. Especially if you are still a student conductor or are about to begin your professional career, be very cognizant of the differences between what the student and professional instrumentalists say and need. If you primarily have only university training or work closely with student ensembles, you may find that you are caught in the gap between the two worlds. I welcome you to use this chapter as I did in researching, preparing, and writing it; as a bridge between paper and podium, and a guide from practice to performance.

Skill 1: Collaboration

“Chamber music” a conversation between friends.ö ó Catherine Drinker Brown

As Max Rudolf states in *The Grammar of Conducting*, “excellence in performance cannot be expected from musicians merely obeying orders but only if they are motivated by an impulse derived directly from the music to which they devote their skills, hearts, and mindsí .To accomplish this the conductor must be regarded by the

group as *primus inter pares*.⁵⁷ *First among equals*. In other words, the conductor is not God but a musician making music with other musicians; an entire orchestra of equals. Ironically, the physical arrangement of the orchestra immediately suggests the exact opposite. The entire ensemble is organized in a hierarchy of experience and playing ability. Each section is headed by principal players, then assistant principals, and section musicians. Some, but not all, chairs may be endowed by board members and patrons. So understand that we, as conductors, immediately enter a situation that is distinctly *unequal*. If we promote that inequality we encourage that hierarchy to take precedence. As an example Zoe, a viola performance student in the WAU Symphony Orchestra, told me how uncomfortable she felt when her orchestra colleagues focused on her race. “It was really hard being a person of color and a woman because I was literally the only person of color in the entire orchestra,” she said. She told me the story of spending Halloween with her orchestra colleagues, who suggested she dress up as a black sheep. In another instance, Cynthia, a cello student, told me how she almost quit music because of overbearingly negative university orchestra director. In fact all the student musicians I spoke with began by relaying negative orchestral experiences. When a musician is isolated from the group, even for musical reasons, it creates discord in the ensemble. As Robert Ripley writes, “What is a symphony orchestra? We are about one hundred in number. We are a microcosm of society, in politics, religion, interests, income everything. Yet we must be united in producing the one thing we have in common:

⁵⁷ Rudolf, 336.

music. Your task, as conductor, is to bring this unity to realization. You must inspire us to forget the differences among us.⁵⁸

University students are at a sensitive time in their lives and may not understand how to forget their differences and collaborate with their colleagues. WAU Symphony members reported feeling disunity between and within the instrumental sections of the orchestra. As Christian, a bass player, said, "I feel like the sections don't really communicate with each other. I feel like we do kind of do our own thing and it does translate in rehearsals too. The wind section really seems to work as a unit. There's probably not as much communication as there should be between all the various string players to try to get us to work as a team." What does it really mean to work as a team? An analogy I like to use is sports where the idea of team work and collaboration is not mere abstraction. In sports, from an early age, we are taught to learn from, and follow, the strongest players. We are also taught to pass the ball and moreover what makes a successful pass. We would not throw a ball to a teammate that was not looking nor would we purposefully throw the ball in such a way that it was difficult to catch. When I played soccer in elementary school, it only took once for a ball to smack me in the face to learn to pay attention and be alert constantly. An orchestra is no different than a sports team. Engaging performance requires the successful passing of musical "balls": gestures, melodies, and tempos. If we do not work together, it will not be long until someone on our team inevitably drops the ball.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Robert L. Ripley, "The Orchestra Speaks," *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁵⁹ In a yearly summer camp I direct, I was able to help young elementary students understand how musical performance works by playing a game of catch. In this non-traditional version, the students won by seeing how long they could keep the ball in

As student conductors we do not often give enough thought to whether instrumentalists are watching us and, also, each other. As Rudolf writes, "Conducting students, due to nervousness and involvement in their preconceived ideas, often do not hear what is actually going on in the orchestra and must first learn the art of unbiased listening."⁶⁰ It could also be said that conductors must learn the art of unbiased watching, something early conducting pedagogue Adrian Boult encouraged of his students at the Royal College Conservatory of Music. In his *Handbook on Conducting* (1919) he writes, "The main thing at a rehearsal is to watch results and to act on them."⁶¹ To watch what is going on around us, we need a thorough knowledge of the score, enough so that we can analyze what is happening around us without losing our place in the music or our patterns. Watching results also involves critical inward and outward reflection on the part of the conductor. We must decide if the orchestra is taking the tempi we show them; if we are breathing and if so if they are breathing with us and each other; if they are focused, or tired, or bored, or angry. As Charles F. Barber writes, "Be sensitive to your players. If you watch faces, you will know when your work has become tedious. If you've made your point, move on."⁶² With practice and conscious observation, we may find that we can naturally read body language and make according adjustments. If many students are yawning at rehearsal, slouching back in their chairs, fiddling impatiently, or looking at the clock, we may gather that the pace of our rehearsal needs to change. Perhaps it is time

motion. Students were "out" if they purposefully made a bad throw or failed to catch a good one. Because students could not talk to one another, they quickly learned to make eye contact, breathe, and dictate the speed of the throw in their preparation. Similar activities could be done with university orchestras or at youth orchestra retreats.

⁶⁰ Rudolf, 338.

⁶¹ Boult, 19.

⁶² "Charles F. Barber, "Conductors in Rehearsal," *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

for a break or maybe we have been talking too much or focusing on the first violins for too long. For those who find reading body language does not come naturally, books like Daniel Goleman's *Social Intelligence* and *Emotional Intelligence* can help.

In making group collaboration and reading body language an intricate part of our training, we can better prepare student instrumentalists and ourselves for professional positions, where such skills are already developed. We might be intimidated when we first step in front of a professional orchestra and realize that the musicians seem to be watching each other more than us. In some cases, this may be because we are being unclear or not disseminating any useful information. As Alex, a professional bassist in the MSO said, "I try to give every conductor the benefit of the doubt but once I put the blinders up, they're staying up." In these cases it becomes especially important for us to have honed our powers of observation. If we think the problem may be us, it is imperative that we address it on our own time and not blame the orchestra. Elizabeth, a professional violinist with extensive concertmaster experience, noted that some conductors, "Spend too much time saying, 'oh, this isn't together and why isn't this working?' When you get to a certain level the groups will band together and they will play where they're supposed to play and they'll kind of ignore what's going on over there. But it's harder for someone to get a message through, even musically." In a professional setting, however, musicians may not always be ignoring you. Flautist Deanna points out that instrumentalists watch the conductor peripherally.

For conductors collaboration boils down to knowing the score so we can read our ensemble, not simply reading the score. Elizabeth equated the orchestra to a bridge where all musicians, include the conductor, simultaneously transmit a musical message. "It's

chamber music on the biggest level," she said, "As concertmaster] I see it as I am supposed to be this bridge between the sections in the orchestra. That's kind of the beauty of it. What's so amazing about orchestra is that you've got all these people on stage, all together, and they are all working together towards this one picture that they're trying to show." Conductor Leonard Bernstein also equated orchestral performance to chamber music. He said, "It's] chamber music operation in which we are all playing together. I never think that they are there and I am here. Never. The whole joy of conducting for me is that we breathe together. It's like a love experience."⁶³ It is possible then, for everyone in the orchestra to truly be *primus inter pares*, as Rudolf writes, but not under a conductor's hand under music.

Suggested Resources

Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Dell, 2006.

_____. *Social Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Dell, 2006.

McElheran, Brock. *Conducting Technique: For Beginners and Professionals*. 1964. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Activities

1. Read Chapter 1: "Inspiration" in Brock McElheran's *Conducting Technique: For Beginners and Professionals*. Do the assignments on analyzing leadership models found on page six.

2. Compare the following videos of conductors in concert, available for free on Youtube:

Carlos Kleiber, Vienna Philharmonic, 1992 New Year's Eve Concert:

<https://youtu.be/Wsl3PI-mWZc>

⁶³ Battisti, 79.

Riccardo Muti, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Overture to *La Forza del Destino*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OLAGWa5rA>

At 5:20 in the Kleiber video, what does Kleiber do? What does he do with his hands when the strain is repeated? How does this compare to traditional conducting pedagogy?

What are his facial expressions?

For contrast watch from 1:20 in the Muti video. How are Muti's motions different?

What are his facial expressions?

3. Observe a university or other student ensemble. How are the musicians interacting with each other? With the conductor? What messages does their body language send?

4. Test your ability to read emotions. Read Goleman's chapter on emotions in *Emotional Intelligence* and take the test.

5. Watch the following rehearsal from the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, an ensemble that performs without a conductor:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90Gq9mYTV44>

How does the ensemble communicate? What methods do they use, both verbal and non-verbal, for communication? What difficulties do the players describe?

6. If you currently conduct an ensemble at any level, have them play through a piece without you. If it is a younger ensemble, help teach them some of the skills you have learned and observed such as breathing, making eye contact, and emoting. Change their seating or have them face in different directions. When you return to conduct them, only use gestures that make changes to what you heard them do. Do not beat time throughout the piece.

Skill 2: Rehearsal Techniques

Most conducting texts focus a very short chapter or section on the art of rehearsal. Unfortunately much of that text treats rehearsing as a mysterious skill. As Rudolf writes, "Orchestra players, when evaluating a conductor's ability, often put efficient rehearsing on top of a questionnaire. Thus, being important for a young conductor's success, it could be expected that rehearsal techniques are taught in music schools as part of their conductor training program. Yet, there are few schools where this training is offered."⁶⁴ Indeed both student and professional musicians rated effective rehearsal technique very highly in my interviews with them. Students, however, had a difficult time articulating what made a rehearsal effective to them, so it is understandable if orchestral conducting students may be equally confused. Christian, a student bass player, said that his favorite rehearsals addressed all instrumental sections equally, rather than focusing on one group, such as the first violins, extensively. His colleague Karl, a violist, preferred when conductors developed a rehearsal plan ahead of time and did not deviate from that. "I find it annoying and frustrating to be under conductors who take suggestions," he admitted, "I just prefer to be in a setting where a conductor knows what he wants in regards to the music." Jennifer, a violinist, disagreed and said she found flexibility to be a very important part of the rehearsal process.

Indeed most professional musicians I interviewed sided with Jennifer, stating that conductors should come to rehearsal with a plan, but be willing to deviate from that plan. "Be organized but full of spontaneity," flautist Deanna said, "[Be] willing to deviate from the plan and be able to adjust to whatever's going on in that situation." Adjusting to the

⁶⁴ Rudolf, 330.

orchestra can only come from being able to watch and read the orchestra in the first place. This is why the first skill, collaboration, is so essential to master as a conductor and encourage in student musicians. As conductors we must learn when to let the orchestra go; we must choose our battles carefully. Some tempos might not work for certain ensembles depending on their technical proficiency. A soloist may want a conductor to get out of the way during a solo passage. In learning to read the instrumentalists we not only make music together, participating in an interpretative give and take, but also learn when to speak and when to play, when to joke and when to be serious, when to hold an ensemble until the last minute and when to let them go early. As Rudolf writes, "To know how to word criticisms, to feel when to give encouragement, to sense when a tense moment is best relieved by a joking remark, all this affects the relationship between the leader and the group."⁶⁵

Professional musicians I interviewed offered a few additional suggestions on rehearsing. Just as conductors must be able to assess when they might be the problem, and learn to address it on their own time, conductors also must know when to let mistakes in the orchestra go. "Even if it's only rehearsal sometimes you just have to let the orchestra play," said Deanna, "Orchestra musicians get fed up really quickly with a conductor who you play two notes and you stop. A really experienced conductor knows when to say something and when not to. When you're working with *professional* musicians, to be told something you already know is really frustrating." This is a case-in-point example of how learning body language can be so important. Let us imagine that a conductor is reading through a work for the first time and the principal hornist majorly

⁶⁵ Rudolf, 337.

fracks a note. If the conductor is looking up, and not buried in their score, they may notice the player flinch or note something with their pencil. What purpose does it serve then to go back and comment on the missed note(s) except to humiliate the horn player? Now, if the conductor sees no response from the musician and the horn player continues to miss that note, perhaps a private conversation is necessary. In the case of both professional and amateur musicians, there is no reason for a conductor to publically humiliate a musician. Alienating an instrumentalist in that way will only cause them to feel a part from the shared vision of the ensemble. Collaboration then becomes impossible.

As conductors, we must not only be conscious of the quality of our rehearsals but also the quantity of our rehearsals in terms of how many we allot for each performance. University students, both instrumentalists and conductors, are used to a limited number of concerts per year and almost all of these concerts focus on traditional classical music and, occasionally, chamber or new works. This creates the illusion that orchestras also have a lot of rehearsals prior to each concert. In some orchestras, such as youth and community ensembles, this may be true, but professional orchestras often have one to five rehearsals per concert, depending on the difficulty of the repertoire and whether it is a pops, classical, or education concert. So why then, do university students have so many more rehearsals? Often, it is because of two main reasons:

1. The expectation is not set that all players will attend the first rehearsal with their parts learned.
2. Due to point one, the extra rehearsals allow the instrumentalists (and the conductors) to fall into learning their parts and scores as they go.

If as conductors we ever find ourselves worried that an ensemble will not have enough to work on if we encourage instrumentalists to come to rehearsal with their parts already learned, or with our heads bustling with musical ideas, we need to program more concerts, program harder repertoire, or raise our expectations. In professional ensembles, rehearsal is not really a time for learning notes and rhythms but exploring musical ideas. Many professional orchestras only meet a few times prior to each concert. Some concerts, like pops and education programs, may only have one, two and a half hour rehearsal. Due to union laws and regulations, musicians must be let out on time and given a break. This means that rehearsals must be planned efficiently ahead of time.

Professional musicians unanimously agreed that rehearsals were the biggest adjustment when they won their first professional position. Violist Karen reminisced how ill-prepared she felt for this aspect of her professional career stating, "While the orchestra director at [our] school was excellent, and demandingí .we followed the usual conservatory model of having weeks and weeks of rehearsal to prepare one program." Musicians felt summer festivals better prepared them for professional posts because of their intensive nature, frequently performing a concert or two once a week. "Nothing can replace hands-on experience," Deanna said, "a music festival where you're playing a concert every. Single. Week. It's great training."

Similarly, conductors should not hesitate to participate in or organize as many concerts as possible. Even the act of preparing scores for other rehearsals (i.e. observing professional rehearsals) can help prepare conductors for the demands a professional position. I felt incredibly overwhelmed when I accepted my first position with the Middletown Symphony Orchestra. Not only was I preparing to cover conduct one to two

hour programs each week, but I was sometimes preparing more than one new set of repertoire at once. There have been several occasions where I was preparing major symphonies and concertos alongside Christmas music, youth programs, and youth orchestra programs. As with instrumental summer festival programs, the quality of conducting workshops varies greatly but unquestionably affords us the opportunity to study more repertoire. The more often we study, rehearse, and perform repertoire quickly, the better prepared we will be when find ourselves with limited time later.

Suggested Resources

- Bailey, Wayne. *Conducting: The Art of Communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. Especially focus on Chapter 9, "Aural Skills and Error Detection."
- Labuta, Joseph. *Basic Conducting Techniques*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2010. Table 13-1 (pages 102-3) outlines potential ensemble errors and solutions for rehearsals.
- McElheran, Brock. *Conducting Technique: For Beginners and Professionals*. 1964. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Focus on Chapter XXI: "Some Rehearsal Suggestions."

Activities

1. Watch this video of Claudio Abbado rehearsing the Berlin Philharmonic in Beethoven's Symphony No. 6. An excerpt from this video is available on Youtube at <https://youtu.be/4YcmIohczpQ>, or you can watch the full video at <https://www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/film/74>. How does Abbado rehearse the orchestra and convince them of his interpretation? What do the instrumentalists say regarding Abbado's interpretation and their performance traditions?

2. Think about which rehearsals you have enjoyed watching and participating in. When did you feel your attention drift and why? When were you engaged and why? When were you bored and why?
3. If you are currently the conductor of an ensemble, experiment with different rehearsal techniques. Try a rehearsal where you do not say anything at all (unless it is absolutely necessary), or a rehearsal where you physically face different sections of the orchestra.
4. Ask a few members of the orchestra that you trust to occasionally give you feedback about your rehearsals. Listen to what makes them effective and what does not.

Skill 3: Concert Programs and Audience Engagement

As we have already discussed, part of what makes programming successful involves knowing the ensemble. Ultimately our desire to know and read our ensemble, as people, translates to our willingness to know our audience and community. In the case of those of us who will go on to be music directors of any level ensemble, the ability to communicate and understand the audience is essential. As student conductors we often find our programs are dictated to us by our professors or one of our friends asking us to conduct on their recitals. These opportunities are no less valuable to us but do prevent us from developing programming skills. Without knowing the ensemble's capabilities it is difficult to assess what works on concerts, especially if we want to move toward a model of more frequent and diverse concerts in university programs. We do not, of course, want to push the ensemble to the opposite extreme— one of failure— which can happen to any ensemble if they are presented with a poor program for them, regardless of their level.

For the most part, the university musicians I interviewed just want to play. Most music is new and exciting for them because many of them have not had an opportunity to play most of it with an orchestra yet. A young student is more likely to get excited about performing Beethoven's fifth symphony than a seasoned orchestral player. When asked what they thought makes a good program, university students focused on composers and pieces they liked or would like to play, instead of thinking of a larger programmatic picture. Of those interviewed, only Zoe mentioned the importance of audience reception, "When you play music you're not just playing notes, you're trying to get a message across," she said, "So if you don't feel it yourself, then the audience isn't going to feel it either." This sentiment resonates with professional violinist Elizabeth's earlier sentiments on her parents; even non-musicians can sense a larger picture (or lack thereof).

Professional musicians, on the other hand, easily get tired of the traditional model of overture, concerto, and large symphonic work. They would prefer that the top members of their own orchestra be featured as soloists and enjoy performing new orchestral works. Musicians also admitted that they were not used to thinking of the audience and wished that their university training better prepared them for talking to children during a Kinderconcert or other educational programs.

As students, we are often not used to thinking that we have any responsibility beyond that to ourselves to grow as musicians, instrumentalists, and conductors. We know that there is an audience, and we understand they pay to see us perform, but they often do not subscribe and donate to our organization the way a professional ensemble's patrons do. In fact, many orchestras are funded by universities. But when we join a

professional ensemble this all changes and we become, as Karen says, a point of civic pride for the community, which comes to view itself as our fans.

Several of my colleagues still in their degree programs have longed for graduation and employment so they could get back to the music. In actuality, professional conductors frequently have even less time to focus on the music than university students. As Brock McEheleran writes, "Two mottos should be on every conductor's mind and wall: WORRY EARLY and ONE PERCENT OF CONDUCTING IS CONDUCTING."⁶⁶ When we join an ensemble we become part of that ensemble. In becoming part of something we perpetuate the ideas of collaboration and community so integral, and often overlooked, in the world of orchestras.

Suggested Resources

Battisti, Frank. *On Becoming a Conductor: Lessons and Meditations on the Art of Conducting*. Galesville, MD: Meredith Music Publications, 2007. Read Chapter 3, "Programming and Selecting Literature."

Meier, Gustav. *The Score, the Orchestra, and the Conductor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. Section G: Programming is particularly useful.

Activities

1. Research current and prior season programs for a variety of orchestras, including professional, semi-professional, community, university, youth orchestras, and high school orchestras. Listen to the programs and decide what works and what does not work. If

⁶⁶ Brock McElheran, *Conducting Technique: For Beginners and Professionals* (1964; 3rd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 127.

possible, find recordings of the performances and assess the ensembles' abilities. Do the programs work for the level of the ensemble?

2. Observe the body language of the conductor, orchestra, and audience during a concert. What is the repertoire? Does the conductor, orchestra, and audience seem to be enjoying the selections?

3. Analyze an orchestra season (or set of seasons). How many composers are men? Women? White? Other ethnicities? Alive? Dead? Are there any premiers? For more information and a visual representation of the statistics of programming in American orchestras, check out the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's "The 2014-15 Orchestra Season by Numbers" at <http://bsomusic.org/stories/the-2014-15-orchestra-season-by-the-numbers.aspx>.

4. If you are a conductor, make a conscious effort to program one piece with which you (and the orchestra) are unfamiliar. Ask a couple of orchestra members whom you trust how they feel about this piece.

Conclusions

When we win a position, whether with a university, professional, or any other ensemble, we say that we serve as the conductor of that ensemble. This idea of service, both to the composer, orchestra, and audience, is what unites all conductors regardless of our age, experience, and ability. With service comes humility. We must be willing to learn, evolve, and constantly improve our craft. This is not a profession marked by finality; our work will never be done.

Of composer, orchestra, and audience, our pedagogical training rarely informs us what it is the orchestra needs from us and vice versa. My comparative study of the WAU and Middletown Symphony Orchestras offers some insight into the differing expectations of student and professional ensembles, and makes suggestions for how these can be incorporated into existing conducting literature. This is by no means a definitive or exhaustive list. As Malko and Green point out, the possibilities are infinite.

Infinite possibilities, however, are the backbone of creativity and scholarship. They are the essence of interpretation, of intellectual curiosity, and a growing output of musical and scholastic repertoire. As I did here, I encourage other scholars and conductors to embrace a microcosm of that magnitude in their works. For example, how would a study of a full-time professional orchestra compare to a study of a part-time regional orchestra, like the MSO? What can conductors learn from non-conducted ensembles such as the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra or string quartets? How do attitudes of musicians in long-established ensembles, like The Cleveland Orchestra, differ from musicians in newer ensembles? Are major established conservatories, such as Juilliard or the Cleveland Institute of Music, doing a better job preparing their students for professional positions than non-conservatories? If so, what can public and private universities learn from these programs?

While it is true that we learn by doing, we can create more successful habits of doing now, as students. We do not have to wait until we are professionals to adapt a professional attitude and treat our ensembles, and ourselves, as professionals. The university and conservatory are the training ground for orchestral conductors and musicians of our future, yet there is a strange dichotomy (and dare I say animosity)

between the professional and academic worlds. We must be brave enough to ask why. Why must *maestri*, translating from the Italian as masters or teachers, choose between professional ensembles and education? Is not the implication of the term the exact opposite? Have not conductors always been the conduit between the composer and the ensemble? And as our definition of education develops beyond mere rote and testing, should not our understanding of *maestro* evolve as well? It is not necessarily true that those in academia can teach, any more than it is true that those in professional positions cannot.

Let this chapter serve as a call to action to begin a discussion that will breathe new life into our profession. The future of orchestras in our country deepens from honest, critical dialog; I encourage you to help your students, your orchestras, your audience, and yourselves embrace the infinite possibilities.

Appendices

WAU Symphony Orchestra Interview Questions

1. What have your experiences been playing in an orchestra?
2. What would you say is the role of the conductor?
3. What do you look for in a conductor?
4. How would you describe the dynamics of the ensemble where you currently play?
5. Please describe the interaction of the players in your ensemble both within your own instrumental section and in the orchestra as a whole.
6. In your experiences, which instrumental section in the orchestra do conductors pay the most attention to? Which instrumental section do conductors pay the least attention to?
7. What is your role in the orchestra?
8. What do you think makes a good concert program? What kind of program excites you?
What kind of program least excites you?

Middletown Symphony Orchestra Interview Questions

1. What have your experiences been playing in an orchestra?
2. What was your first professional position in an orchestra?
3. What was your biggest adjustment when you took that position?
4. Do you feel that your college training adequately prepared you for that first professional post? If so, why? If not, why not?
5. Were there outside experiences (festivals, life experiences, etc.) that you felt contributed more greatly to your success as a professional?
6. What do you wish your college training would have provided additionally to your training?
7. If you could go back and offer "younger you" advice about professional performance, what would it be?
8. What makes playing in an orchestra a positive experience for you?
9. What makes playing in an orchestra a negative experience for you?
10. Why do you play in an orchestra?
11. What do you look for in a conductor?
12. In your experiences, which instrumental section in the orchestra do conductors pay the most attention to? Which instrumental section do conductors pay the least attention to?
13. What do you think makes a good concert program? What kind of program excites you? What kind of program least excites you?



Social/Behavioral IRB –Review

Notice of Excluded Activity

DATE: February 5, 2015

TO: Dr. Simon Gottschalk, Sociology

FROM: Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects

RE: Notification of IRB Action
Protocol Title: **D.M.A. Dissertation**
Protocol# 1405-4829M

This memorandum is notification that the project referenced above has been reviewed as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45CFR46.

The protocol has been reviewed and deemed excluded from IRB review. It is not in need of further review or approval by the IRB.

Any changes to the excluded activity may cause this project to require a different level of IRB review. Should any changes need to be made, please submit a Modification Form.

If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects at IRB@unlv.edu or call 895-2794.

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Christian. Interviewed by author. Southwest United States. April 4, 2012.

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Deanna. Interviewed by author. Midwest United States. December 5, 2013.

Elizabeth. Interviewed by author. Midwest United States. February 28, 2014.

Karen. E-mail message to author. March 21, 2014.

Karen. Interviewed by author. Midwest United States. April 11, 2014.

Karl. Interviewed by author. Southwest United States. April 6, 2012.

Kevin. E-mail message to author. February 6, 2014.

Jennifer. Interviewed by author. Southwest United States. April 6, 2012.

Mya. Interviewed by author. Northeast United States. October 11, 2014.

Rei. Interviewed by author. Southwest United States. March 30, 2012.

Zoe. Interviewed by author. Southwest United States. February 28, 2012.

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ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Apprentice Conductor/Cover Conductor	Las Vegas Philharmonic	2011-2012
Associate Conductor	Las Vegas Civic Orchestra	2011-2012
Assistant Conductor	UNLV Symphony Orchestras and Opera, NV	2011-2012
Music Director	Las Vegas Korean Youth Orchestra	2011-2012
Assistant Conductor	NAU Symphony Orchestras and Opera, AZ	2009-2011
Assistant Conductor	NAU Academy Orchestra, AZ	2009-2010
Associate Conductor	Greater Hartford Women Composers Festival, CT	2008,2009
Principal Conductor		

GUEST CONDUCTING

Guest Adjudicator	University of Akron Concerto Competition, OH	2014
Guest Conductor	Las Vegas Philharmonic	2011, 2012
Guest Conductor	UNLV Symphony Orchestra, NV	2011, 2012
Guest Conductor	Las Vegas Academy of the Arts	2012
Guest Conductor	Rag Tag Entertainment, Las Vegas	2011
Guest Conductor	Flagstaff Light Opera Company, AZ	2010

EDUCATION

D.M.A.	Orchestral Conducting Taras Krysa, Conducting	University of Nevada, Las Vegas	May 2015 (Anticipated)
M.M.	Orchestral Conducting Nicholas Ross, Conducting	Northern Arizona University	Spring 2011
B.M.	Music Composition and Vocal Performance (Soprano) Stephen Gryc, David Macbride, and Kenneth Steen, Composition Christopher Zimmerman, Conducting Nancy Andersen, Voice	The Hartt School of Music, CT	Spring 2009

Conducting Workshops and Masterclasses

Oberlin Summer Conducting Institute, OH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Participant
UNLV Masterclass on <i>Appalachian Spring</i> , NV	
NAU Masterclass on Mahler, AZ	
The Conductor's Institute, Bard College Conservatory of Music, NY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleague and Fellow
Rose City International Conducting Workshop, Portland, OR	

Principal Instructors

John Nelson, Jason Harris, Jo-Michael Scheibe, Janet Galván	Summer 2014
David Loebel (New England Conservatory)	Spring 2012
Jeannine Wagar (Symphony of Northwest Arkansas)	Winter 2010
Harold Farberman, Lawrence Golan, Raymond Harvey, Apo Hsu, Eduardo Navega	Summer 2010
Christopher Zimmerman, David Hoose, Kenneth Woods	Summer 2008

HONORS AND AWARDS

Access Grant	University of Nevada, Las Vegas	2011-Present
Patricia J. Sastaunik Scholarship	University of Nevada Las Vegas	2013-14
Graduate College Summer Grant	University of Nevada, Las Vegas	Summer 2013
Bringing Theory to Practice Grant	Association of American Colleges and Universities, D.C.	2012-14
Full Graduate Assistantship	University of Nevada, Las Vegas	2011-12
Merit-based Scholarship	The Conductors Institute, Bard College Conservatory, NY	Summer 2010
Full Graduate Assistantship	Northern Arizona University	2009-11
Performing Arts Scholarship	The Hartt School of Music, CT	2006-09
Emeriti Association Scholarship	The University of Hartford, CT	2007, 2008
Scholarship	SBM Charitable Foundation, CT	2007, 2008
Presidential Scholarship	The University of Connecticut	2005-06

REPERTOIRE

(*REHEARSAL, **PERFORMANCE)

CONCERTOS

Barber Violin Concerto
Beethoven Piano Concerto 3 in C Minor*
Bruch *Scottish Fantasy*
Ewazen Concerto for Bass Trombone or Tuba**
Fleck *öThe Imposterö* Banjo Concerto
Franck *Symphonic Variations*
Glazunov Violin Concerto in A Minor
Grieg Piano Concerto in A Minor*
Haydn Cello Concerto 1 in C*, Piano Concerto 3**
Jiping Pipa Concerto
Liebermann Concerto for Flute and Orchestra**
Macdowell Piano Concerto No. 2 in D Minor
Menotti Violin Concerto
Mozart Piano Concerto 24 in C Minor
Nielson Flute Concerto*
Rachmaninov Piano Concerto 2 in C Minor
Saint-Saens Piano Concerto 2
Schumann Konzertstück for Four Horns**
Vivaldi Concerto for 2 Violins in A Minor
Walton Viola Concerto
Weber Clarinet Concerto 1 in F Minor
Wieniawski Violin Concerto 2 in D Minor**

OPERA AND CHORAL WORKS

Bach Christmas Oratorio, Part 1*
Bernstein “Make Our Garden Grow” from *Candide*,
 “Take Care of this House” from *White House*
Cantata
Bizet *Carmen***
Brahms *A German Requiem*
Britten *The Rape of Lucretia***
Copland “Simple Gifts” from *Old American Songs*,
 “The Promise of Living,” from *The Tenderland*
Donizetti *D’elisir d’Amore**
Gooding *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow***
Handel *Messiah***
Hanson *Song of Democracy*
Haydn *The Creation**

Mozart *Die Zauberflöte***
Sondheim *Sweeney Todd***
Verdi *Requiem**

PREMIERES

Baker *Canti Guerrieri ed Amorosì*
Benjamin, *Ancient Yuletide Carols: Adeste*
*Fidelis*** , *A Secret Gift*** , *Marches and Airs*
Franco *Tuba Sonata***
Smith, *Lacuna* **

SYMPHONIC

Bach Brandenburg Concertos No. 3 and 5,
 Orchestral Suite 2 in B Minor*
Bartók *Romanian Folk Dances***
Beethoven *Consecration of the House**, *Coriolan*
*Overture**, *Egmont Overture*, *Leonore Overture*
 3, *Symphonies* 1**, 2*, 3, 5**, 6**, and 7*
Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique***
Bernstein *Overture to Candide*, *Symphonic*
Dances from “West Side Story”, *öThree Dance*
Episodesö from *On the Town*
Bizet *L’arlesienne Suite* 1**, *Carmen Suites* 1
 and 2**
Borodin *In the Steppes of Central Asia**,
*Polovtsian Dances**
Brahms *Academic Festival Overture*** , *Tragic*
*Overture**, *Symphonies* 2* and 4*
Buck *Festival Overture*
Copland *Appalachian Spring*** , *Fanfare for the*
*Common Man*** , *Quiet City*** , *Symphony* No. 3,
 Mvt. I**
Corelli *Concerto Grosso* Op. 6, Nos. 6 and 7, and
Concerto Grosso Op. 6, No. 8, *öChristmasö***
Corgliano *Gazebo Dances*, *Promenade Overture*
Debussy *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*** ,
Printemps
Suppé *Poet and Peasant Overture***

SYMPHONIC CONTINUED

Dvorak Slavonic Dance 3*, Symphonies 8** and 9**
Elgar *Enigma Variations**, *Pomp and Circumstance**
Foote Suite for Strings in E Major, Op. 63**
Franck Symphony in D Minor
Gershwin Selections
Ginastera *Variaciones Concertantes*
Gliere *Russian Sailor's Dance*
Glinka *Ruslan and Ludmilla Overture**
Gluck Excerpts from *Orfeo ed Euridice***
Gould *American Salute**
Grieg *Holberg Suite***, *Peer Gynt Suite 1***
Handel *Water Music*
Hanson Symphony 2*
Haydn Symphonies 39*, 45*, 86*, 94, and 104**
Holst Jupiterö from *The Planets***, *The Planets*
Ives *Thanksgiving and Forefather's Day*
Kelly Elegy for Strings and Harp**
Mahler Adagiettoö from Symphony 5*, Adagio,ö from Symphony 10*, Symphony No. 2*, Beethoven, String Quartet No. 11 in F Minor, Op. 95**
Martinu *Lidice**
Mendelssohn *Overture to a Midsummer Night's Dream**, Sinfonia 10 in B Minor*, Symphony 3
Mozart Symphonies 25**, 32**, 36*, 38*, 40*, and 41, Sinfonia Concertante for Winds in Eb Major
Mussorgsky *Night on a Bald Mountain**
Part *Fratres***
Piston *The Incredible Flutist*
Prokofiev *Romeo and Juliet Suite 2**
Rachmaninov Symphony 1
Ravel *Ma Mère l'oye*
Respighi *Pines of Rome**
Rimsky-Korsakov *Christmas Eve Suite: Polonaise***, *Scheherazade***
Rossini *Overture to William Tell***, *Overture to La Gazza Ladra*
Salieri *La Tempesta di Mar***
Schubert Symphonies 5 and 8*
Schumann Overture, Scherzo, and Finale*, Symphonies 3* and 4**
Sibelius *Andante Festivo***, *Karelia Suite***, Symphony 1* and 2
Shostakovich Symphony 5, Symphony 9**
Smetana *The Moldau***
Smith *World Piece*
Stravinsky *L'histoire du Soldat**, Octet for Winds*, *Rite of Spring*, *The Firebird Suite* (1919)*

Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture***, *Serenade for Strings**, Symphonies 2* and 4*, *The Nutcracker: Trepak***
Vaughan Williams *Fantasia on Greensleeves***, *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*
Wagner Overture to *Die Meistersinger**, *Brünnhilde's Immolation Scene*, Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan und Isolde*, *Ride of the Walküre*
Webern Six Pieces for Orchestra (1928)