Journal of the Conductors Guild

Volume 31, Number 2
2014

Conductors Guild
. . . Advancing the Art and Profession

719 Twinridge Lane
Richmond, VA 23235-5270
T: (804) 553-1378; F: (804) 553-1876
E-mail: guild@conductorsguild.org
publications@conductorsguild.org
Website: www.conductorsguild.org

Table of Contents

The publication date of the present issue of the *Journal of the Conductors Guild* is February, 2014. Due to a change in editors, publication has been delayed. The Conductors Guild reserves the right to approve and edit all material submitted for publication. Publication of advertising is not necessarily an endorsement and the Conductors Guild reserves the right to refuse to print any advertisement. Library of Congress No. 82-644733. ISSN: 0734-1032.

A Conductors' Philosopher: Susanne Langer on Music

By
Michael Luxner

Musicians, perhaps especially conductors, like to dig deep into the music we perform. Notes on a page are only the beginning. We also concern ourselves with questions of style and historical context, and musical structure from its broadest outlines to its tiniest details. We like to "get our minds around" the music we learn, leaving no stone unturned in the search for information and understanding that may give our performances greater meaning.

But what is that "meaning," what exactly is the nature and *import* of a satisfying musical experience? This, of course, is a philosophical question, one which an entire branch of philosophy—aesthetics—has been speculating about for centuries. As musicians, we wrestle with it every day, and as part of that struggle, may have consulted some of the classic literature in the field, by Bergson, Croce, and others. But it is often hard to relate abstract theory to the nuts and bolts of actual musical activity, and the search for truly galvanizing ideas in such areas as musical feeling, expression, and meaning, remains elusive.

There is at least one philosopher, however, who writes about aesthetic questions in a way that speaks directly to what it feels like to make and experience music. This is Susanne Langer (1895-1985), author of *Philosophy in a New Key* (1942) and *Feeling and Form* (1953). I discovered these books in late career, and find them to give shape and clear, resonant voice to a lifetime of thought on issues of musical meaning as they directly relate to my work as a conductor. Langer speaks our language and sees things from our side. She was a musician (cellist) herself, uses musical imagery and metaphor, and cites the writings of composers, music theorists, and music critics as often as those of psychologists and philosophers. Her theory of art explicitly begins "in the studio," and reaches impeccable intellectual conclusions via the experience of art as it's made and perceived "on the ground," not in the ivory tower.

This essay seeks to offer musical colleagues a brief glimpse of a few of Langer's ideas, hoping that those who are unfamiliar with her writings will be stimulated to explore them via her books themselves, for she is as difficult to summarize as she is a pleasure to read, and the spirit of her voice is key to the pleasure, an artistic experience in itself. Langer's work embodies the part of us that is always striving to balance "heart and mind" in our performances, sensual effect with overall cohesion; indeed, "feeling and form," the very title of one of her books. Langer understands this yin-and-yang, and the lively interplay between them animates every page of her work.

*

The cornerstone of Langer's approach is the idea of *symbolization*, by which the human mind makes sense of its world, and turns "life" into the conscious experience of life. This process, in fact, is the very thing that makes us human:

> The power of understanding symbols, i.e. of regarding everything about a sense-datum as irrelevant except a certain *form* that it embodies, is the most characteristic mental trait of mankind. It issues in an unconscious, spontaneous process of *abstraction,* which goes on all the time in the human mind: a process of recognizing the concept in any configuration given to experience, and forming a conception accordingly. That is the real sense of Aristotle's definition of man as "the rational animal." *Abstractive seeing* is the foundation of our rationality, and is its definite guarantee long before the dawn of any conscious generalization or syllogism. It is the function which no other animal shares. . . . Dogs scorn our

> paintings because they see colored canvases, not pictures. A representation of a cat does not make them conceive one.[1]

Langer is quick to point out that she was not the first to theorize about symbolization, but that her contribution is to demonstrate that it is a "new key" into which the "main themes of our thought tend to be transposed."[2] She broke further ground by distinguishing between two types of symbols, "discursive" and "presentational." In discursive symbolism, epitomized by systems such as language and mathematics, meaning is conveyed by a sequence of terms with agreed connotations, and is sufficient to express most ideas. But complex and intangible aspects of the human condition are difficult to convey in this manner, and may be better served by a presentational symbol, such as a picture, which is not made up of individually definable parts and must be gleaned as a whole. Both types of symbolization are crucial to the life of the mind, but one can instinctively sense how Langer's separation of the presentational from the discursive opens the door to an especially rich understanding and appreciation of aesthetic expression. And that is exactly where the study of symbols takes her: to the realm of art, and especially to music.

*

Langer's first broad study of symbolism is *Philosophy in a New Key,* in which she focuses on four fundamental areas of human activity: language, ritual, myth, and ultimately art, with music as the representative art form. A "topic sentence" for her discussion of music in this context might go something like this: music conveys, through presentational symbolism, insight to the life of human feeling; in Langer's words, "a formulation and representation of emotions, moods, mental tensions and resolutions—a 'logical picture' of sentient, responsive life."[3] She is not, of course, speaking here of literal representation in any way akin to "programmatic" content; the content has been symbolized for us. And the ultimately ambiguous nature of musical symbolism is a vital part of its mystery and appeal:

> The real power of music lies in the fact that it can be 'true' to the life of feeling in a way that language cannot; for its significant forms have that *ambivalence* of content which words cannot have. . .Music is revealing, where words are obscuring, because it can have not only a content, but a transient play of contents. It can articulate feelings without being wedded to them. . . The assignment of meanings is a shifting, kaleidoscopic play, probably below the threshold of consciousness, certainly outside the pale of discursive thinking. The imagination that responds to music is. . .concerned with a wealth of formulations for its wealth of wordless knowledge. . .Because no assignment of meaning is conventional, none is permanent beyond the sound that passes; yet the brief association was a flash of understanding. . .The lasting effect is, like the first effect of speech on the development of the mind, to *make things conceivable* rather than to store up propositions. Not communication but insight is the gift of music.[4]

As one who has always sensed that "music begins where words leave off" but without being able to say exactly how, this rings true to me, and helps explain why the quixotic exercises we call "score study" and "interpretation" can sometimes be so elusive. Am I too quick, for instance, to move a rehearsal along by assigning discursive meanings where none is intended? Let's say a closing passage in a slow movement of a non-programmatic symphony, with simple undulating melodic figures over a tonic pedal, is not achieving a certain restful quality that I feel it needs. Should I think of, or ask the orchestra to think of, an image such as a rocking cradle, a symbol with powerful associations for a "life of human feeling?" Did I think of that image as an *insight* in response to the presentational symbol of the music that I'm reading in the score, an association made in a "flash of understanding?" Or would I be "obscuring," with words, a feeling that is best left ambivalent? Well, one might fairly say, if it works, it works. We conduct music, not philosophy, and when a rehearsal or performance is succeeding, we've probably chosen correctly, either with or without the image. But Langer's take on the artistic process can be a critical tool that may help me understand *why* it worked, or didn't. And it may bring me a little closer to what the passage has to say, just by having asked the question.

These are fascinating ideas, and I am far from the first to be stimulated by them. *Philosophy in a New Key,* first published in 1942, became a best-seller and influenced a generation of thinkers in disparate fields. In an appreciation written in 1982, no less formidable a figure than Howard Gardner, one of today's most distinguished psychologists and popular authors, characterized his discovery of Langer as one of the "crystalizing" experiences of his undergraduate education some twenty years earlier, eventually helping to determine his "major scholarly interest—the study of human symbolic activity." In the same piece, Gardner specifically references Langer's "account of the significance of music" as its most intuitive and influential contribution.[5]

*

But it was only the beginning. Eleven years later, Langer published a sequel, *Feeling and Form,* subtitled "A Theory of Art developed from *Philosophy in a New Key.*" She discusses in turn most of the forms of aesthetic experience we would think of: the decorative arts, painting, spatial arts (sculpture and architecture), the "musical matrix," dance, poetry (lyric and narrative), literary prose, and drama (both tragic and comic); there is also an appendix with "a note on film." A practitioner of any of these will have much to gain by reading about all of them, not only because of the intellectual coherence of Langer's theory, but because the arts overlap in ways that we deal with every day. A chapter called "The Principle of Assimilation," for example, whereby "one art 'swallows' the product of another"[6] (this includes opera, and contains a prescient commentary on Wagner's idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*), shed some light on my experience with a commissioning project some years ago. The composer in question was reluctant to set a pre-existing literary text, as proposed by the sponsors of the commission, preferring to write his own. The way he expressed his reluctance, citing unspecified "problems" and "dead ends," seemed vague, perhaps even a bit facile. But Langer shows quite convincingly that a literary work in its own right, "in which everything is said and nothing merely adumbrated, a work completely developed and closed, does not readily lend itself to composition. It will not give up its literary form."[7] In this context Langer quotes a revealing review by Robert Schumann of another composer's Goethe settings, to the effect that the composer "has too much respect for his poem, as though he were afraid to hurt it by seizing too ardently; so at every turn we find rests, hesitations, embarrassments."[8] Dead ends indeed! (The composer of the commission, by the way, wrote his own text and produced a generous, very successful, and justly acclaimed large-scale work.)

Similarly, I wish I had read Langer before beginning to conduct for ballet. Already a reasonably seasoned orchestral conductor but with little experience in the theater, I was frustrated by my inability to "feel" the actions of the dancers as naturally as I "breathed" with a violin soloist, vocal choir, or pianist. Somehow, I think, Langer's take on the dance, as in the following observation, might have helped:

> In a *pas de deux* the two dancers appear to magnetize each other; the relation between them is more than a spatial one, it is a relation of forces; but the forces they exercise, that seem to be as physical as those which orient the compass needle toward its pole, really do not exist physically at all. They are dance forces, virtual powers.[9]

Why "virtual?" Because the magnetic attraction of the dancers is not "real"; it is the Symbol. But the power of the art of dance is real, as the result of the illusion of the symbol. Would this idea have spared me some anxiety, or shortened my learning curve as I started to gain pit experience 25 years ago? I don't know for sure, but I do know that I'll never again accompany a *pas de deux,* or even observe one, without that intense imagery in body and mind.

"Virtual Powers," incidentally, is one of Langer's chapter titles, and what we might call her "controlling metaphor" for the dance. Every art form has such a metaphor, all insightful. Cinema, for example, as distinct from live theater, is a "dream mode," an "eternal and ubiquitous virtual present. The action of drama goes inexorably forward

because it creates a future, a Destiny; the dream mode is an endless Now."[10]

*

This brings us back to comprehensive art theory, and a few other reasons why *Feeling and Form* is such a good read, especially for musicians. Langer literally picks up where she left off at the end of *Philosophy in a New Key,* where music serves as the subject for a culminating study of symbolism in art. The earlier book had accomplished the exposition of the theory itself, with all of the attendant scholarly accounting of previous work in the myriad fields (philosophy, psychology, anthropology, art history and criticism, acoustics, and many others) that fed into it.

With that work behind her, and perhaps encouraged by its enthusiastic reception, Langer is free in the later book to proceed in a more streamlined manner. She gets on an intellectual roll. Her erudition takes the form of an insightful, unfettered eloquence in an almost breezily confident prose style, a celebration of the topic with less of the machinery of proof. As much fun as it was watching her cook it all up, we're now out of the kitchen and ready to enjoy the meal.

Further, music stays in the lead. Langer calls her earlier study of music a "special theory," generalized in *Feeling and Form* to a far-reaching critique of art as whole; not, perhaps, unlike Einstein's progression from "special" to "general" relativity. So the key concepts have been formulated with music in mind, and resonate especially well with musical thought and experience. (As a random example, Langer's definition of "motifs" in the decorative arts—"organizing devices that give the artist's imagination a start, and so 'motivate' the work. . .drive it forward, and guide its progress"[11]—applies beautifully to motives of Beethoven's type as well.) *Feeling and Form* is, in this sense, a grand fleshing-out of Walter Pater's famous formulation, "All art aspires to the condition of music."[12] Let's close then, with a taste of Langer's thoughts on music, within her comprehensive theory of art.

*

The link between symbolization and art is what Langer calls "Significant Form":

> The basic concept is the articulate but non-discursive form having import without conventional reference, and therefore presenting itself not as a symbol in the ordinary sense, but as a "significant form," in which the factor of significance is not logically discriminated, but is felt as a quality rather than recognized as a function.[13]

What is "signified" is the "verbally ineffable and therefore unknown forms of sentience."[14]

Therefore, "Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling."[15] And crucially, "An artistic symbol is a much more intricate thing than what we usually think of as a form," (such as the arrangement of images in a painting, or the design and tonal scheme of a piece of music) "because it involves *all* the relationships of its elements to one another."[16]

How does music create significant form? First, through the making of "virtual time." Virtual time is duration, but not clock time. It is "lived" or "experienced" time, "the passage of life that we feel as expectations become 'now,' and 'now' turns into unalterable fact."[17] It is a semblance of time, analogous to the illusion of magnetism among dancers, in fact an "image of time," Langer's controlling metaphor for music. "The primary illusion of music," she writes, "is the sonorous image of passage, abstracted from actuality to become free and plastic and entirely perceptible."[18] This elegant idea, by which music is both temporal and a single, unified symbol, seems to me to capture perfectly a basic element of our job as conductors, to control time in the service of an organic whole. The "shaping of a phrase," for example, is inconceivable without a simultaneous understanding of both its fluidity and totality.

But what is this totality? What is this musical "thing" that is significant in its form? Is it the conception? The score? The performance? The reception? For Langer, it is all of these, together. As an "occurrent" art, music "grows from the first

imagination of its general movement to its complete, physical presentation, its *occurrence.*"[19]

When a composer has a conception that reaches a certain stage of "gestalt," he "recognizes it as the fundamental form of the piece, and henceforth his mind is no longer free to wander irresponsibly . . .This form is the 'composition' which he feels called upon to develop."[20] Though far from finished, it has reached a point where its central significance is known, and the symbol of that significance is what Langer calls the work's "commanding form," to which subsequent stages of the compositional process must successfully respond.

The idea of "commanding form" has all the power that the term suggests. It may, for instance, help us keep large-scale structural priorities in mind when the details of more local events in a finished score begin to monopolize rehearsal time. It may even help us discern compositional weaknesses, places where local events do not spring successfully from the central idea. If we play a passage the way a composer tells us to and it does not seem to work, can we reverse-engineer to the essential conception and perhaps figure out why? Is there anything we can do fix it, to guide the composition to its inner truth? Surely this is the most fertile aspect of the idea of "commanding form": far from telling us what to do, it explicitly reminds us that a musical work is not "completed" until it is heard:

> Real performance is as creative an act as composition, just as the composer's own working out of the idea, after he has conceived the greatest movement and therewith the whole commanding form, is still creative work. The performer simply carries it on. [21]

I don't know about you, but I needed to hear that. As Langer points out, "the final decision of *what every tone sounds like"* rests with the performer, with us.[22] And if our understanding of the work is in sync with its commanding form, our decisions about what every tone sounds like will not result from the anxiety of "interpretation" (or worse, "self-expression"), but will be made with precision and conviction, bringing the creation of music to its successful, occurrent completion,*"with ardor for the import conveyed."*[23]

Heart and mind are one. Feeling *is* form.

*

To "essay" is to *attempt*, and so I have, but I feel compelled to leave off at this point with the express hope that I haven't done too much damage. For as I said at the outset, Langer is extremely difficult to summarize, or even excerpt. Her prose moves compellingly from sentence to sentence, bursting with provocative ideas large and small. Taking one or another out of context, while possibly succeeding in conveying the flavor of the whole, cannot do justice to the fecundity of her thought. You simply have to read Langer for yourself, and if I've encouraged that by sharing the enthusiastic response of one working professional musician, fair enough.

Not that she needs any advocacy from me. Though not as much of a household name as, say, Bertrand Russell, Langer remains one of the most widely read philosophers of the 20th century, is still highly respected and studied in academic circles, and frequently cited in a broad range of humanistic scholarship and arts criticism. Thanks in part to her work, symbolization is a bedrock concept not only in philosophy, but in educational theory, anthropology, and many other fields. And there are indications that Langer's thought has been tacitly assimilated into the mainstream of aesthetic discourse. Consider Stravinsky's famous contention, in his 1936 autobiography, that music "is incapable of *expressing* anything at all,"[24] an idea that has been both provocative and problematic (to say the least) for many musicians for a very long time, and self-evidently against the grain of Langer's fundamental premises. A quarter of a century later, after publication of the Langer books discussed in the present essay, Stravinsky claimed that his comment about expression had been "overpublicized," and went on, in what Richard Taruskin, the pre-eminent Stravinsky scholar of our day, calls a "mythographic or mythopoetic" attempt to "improve" on his original statement for posterity,[25] to say that "music is supra-personal and

super-real and as such beyond verbal meanings and verbal descriptions."[26] That is an entirely different story, and a very Langer-like formulation. Did she provide the language for the emblematic composer of the 20th century to rewrite the credo of modernism? Stravinsky completed his 1962 thoughts by saying that "form is everything," but not before acknowledging that at a certain point of composition, "meanings" may grow into a work, though the composer is unaware of them.[27] Again, feeling is form!

Tantalizing (and completely speculative) examples of influence aside, I think Langer's work will resonate for a very long time to come, first of all because of the breadth of her sources. Langer's ideas do not rest on the shoulders of any one previous school of thought, let alone transient fashion. Though writing at the height of Freud's influence, for example, she is no more or less likely to reference him than she is, say, Adorno, or T.S. Eliot, or Heinrich Schenker, whose work was barely known in the English-speaking world at the time. Part of Langer's genius is for synthesis, and from across an astonishing intellectual spectrum, from Schumann to Sessions, Plato to Pound. And in addition to range, her ideas have flexibility. They are not wedded to specific artistic styles, such as representative painting or common-practice music. Simple thought-exercise, to the delight of the exerciser, reveals them to be equally satisfying when applied to art she does not directly address, or did not live to see.

Further, the more aesthetics itself evolves, the more foundational her work seems to have become. Leonard Meyer's *Emotion and Meaning in Music* was the latest word when I was in school, and since that time I've enjoyed the writings of philosopher Peter Kivy[28] and psychiatrist Anthony Storr[29] on music, and kept up with some of the recent wave of science-based studies of musical perception and cognition by Robert Jourdain, Fred Lehrdahl, Oliver Sacks, and Daniel Levitin. Revisiting these after reading Langer is enlightening. Compared to her, some are more anecdotal, some more sociological, some more into what the latest MRI studies can tell us about brain function, and some more concerned with a broader sampling of musical styles. But none contradicts what one takes from Langer, or makes it appear old-fashioned. Quite to the contrary, they come to seem almost like branches of the Langerian tree. One of the newest books in this area, Philip Ball's *The Music Instinct,*[30] a wide-ranging and well-researched study of "how music works and why we can't live without it" (his subtitle), can be read as a grand manifesto celebrating the fact that almost everyone is "musical" in the sense that perception is a complex, creative act, or what Langer would call the culminating aspect of the commanding form. All of these writers love and feel music and help us think about it in fresh new ways; but none, I would suggest, does so with Langer's uncanny appeal to the intuitive artistic experience itself.

And that, in the end, is the main reason I think that Langer's work will retain its interest: quite simply, the spot-on ring of truth it has for an active artistic mind. These ideas feel right to me, and in the same way if she is writing about my own field of music, or about drama, which I know a little about, or lyric poetry, about which I know almost nothing. Just as music "filters and objectifies" inner life without sacrificing feeling (a Langer formulation), so her writing filters and objectifies the mysteries of art without sacrificing its magic, and helps one discover it every day. Here's an exquisite metaphor I casually encountered in the writing of Stanley Crouch while writing this essay: "The double consciousness so fundamental to jazz: the burdens of the soul met by the optimism of the groove—the orchestrated heartbeat."[31]

Symbols. You start to see them everywhere.

*****

Michael Luxner is the Music Director and Conductor of the Millikin-Decatur Symphony Orchestra and a Professor of Music at Millikin University. He holds a doctorate in Music Theory from the Eastman School, and studied conducting principally with Charles Bruck at the Pierre Monteux School in Maine and in Paris. His previous positions have been with the Owensboro Symphony, the Savannah

Symphony, and the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music. He has been a Fellow of the Franco-American Atlantique Foundation, a presenter at regional and national meetings of the League of American Orchestras, the National Association of Schools of Music, and the College Orchestra Directors Association, and has served on the Boards of the Conductors Guild, the Illinois Council of Orchestras, and the Monteux School. His published writings include analytical studies, pedagogical and popular articles, essays, book and CD reviews, and program annotations.

ENDNOTES

[1] Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in A New Key,* Second Edition [hereinafter PNK] (New York: Mentor Books, 1951), p. 70. Italics in all quotations from Langer are hers.
[2] PNK, p. vii.
[3] PNK, p. 188.
[4] PNK, pp. 206-7.
[5] Howard Gardner, "*Philosophy in a New Key* Revisited: An Appreciation of Susanne Langer," in *Art, Mind, and Brain: A Cognitive Approach to Creativity* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), pp. 48-54.
[6] Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form* [hereinafter FF] (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 157.
[7] FF, p. 154.
[8] Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker,* vol. I (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1914), quoted in FF, p. 272 (translation Langer's).
[9] FF, pp. 175-176.
[10] FF, p. 415.
[11] FF, p. 69.
[12] Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1908; orig. 1873), quoted in PNK, p. 217.
[13] FF, p. 32.
[14] FF, p. 39.
[15] FF, p. 32.
[16] FF, p. 51.
[17] FF, p. 109.
[18] FF, p. 113.
[19] FF, p. 121.
[20] FF, p. 121.
[21] FF, p. 139.
[22] FF, p. 139.
[23] FF, p. 141.
[24] Igor Stravisnsky, *An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936), p. 83.
[25] Richard Taruskin, "Stravinsky and Us," in *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), p. 422.
[26] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1962), pp. 114-15; quoted in Richard Taruskin, *Ibid.,* p. 422.
[27] Stravinsky and Craft, *Ibid.,* p. 115.
[28] See especially Peter Kivy, *Music Alone* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).
[29] See especially Anthony Storr, *Music and the Mind* (New York: Random House, 1993).
[30] (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[31] Stanley Crouch, liner notes to CD, *Marcus Roberts: The Joy of Joplin,* ©1988 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Conducting Agon- the Balanchine/Stravinsky Contribution to the Development of a Specialism

By
Dr. Eugenie Burkett

Despite the growing academic trend of addressing ballets as interdisciplinary collaborations, this coverage frequently bypasses the conductor's role, despite the acknowledgement by some that it is a complex specialty. Conducting literature holds even fewer references to choreographic considerations.[1] For example, *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting* (Bowen 2003) never once refers to ballet conducting or the awareness of choreography, even though its close relative, opera, has its own chapter.

> In fact, conducting for ballet is a highly specialised skill, and any good dancer will tell you how much difference a sympathetic conductor who watches the stage can make to the realisation of their interpretation. It is no good grimly grinding on at the tempo the conductor feels the composer wanted; the choreography and the needs of the individual dancer must play their part (Drummond 1997:57).

Within the ballet genre, *Agon* (meaning competition or contest) was unprecedented; it was the first serial composition.[2] However, this factor in isolation does not make *Agon* a test: Stravinsky is now combining all of the innovative factors of his repertoire: the irregular rhythms, the aesthetic misalliances, and the demanding choreography are all together in one melting pot. In terms of difficulty for the ballet conductor, *Agon* is less rivalled in its era than *The Rite of Spring*. Dance academic Stephanie Jordan describes it as "the most brilliant score of the period" (2007:56), and because of its difficulty, conductors, musicians and dancers still shy away from it. "Stravinsky's *Agon* was considered hard to play, hard to choreograph, and hard to dance. These are all reasons why *Agon* productions have been few." (244). Each dance requires a different approach in consideration of these competing factors. This article will endeavour to locate them and demonstrate how the conductor might approach these challenges to ensure a successful performance.

AGON'S AESTHETICS – THE MISMATCHED COMPONENTS

Before the score is considered on any practical or more detailed level, the ballet poses many aesthetic misalliances, which each conductor acknowledges in varying degrees. Unlike many of the Stravinsky/Balanchine ballets, which were set to existing concert works (e.g. *Balustrade* and *Persephone*), *Agon* was intended as a ballet from the outset, and was written in collaboration with Balanchine.[3] Therefore there are aesthetic juxtapositions evident in both the music *and* the choreography that shape the conductor's overall perception of the work. It is an abstract, contemporary ballet but adopts sixteenth and seventeenth-century dance forms. Three dances are named after the Galliarde, Bransle, and the Saraband, all popular in Europe in the Renaissance era. Stravinsky creates flavors of these styles in some of his

[1] The only example I have found in conducting literature is in Prausnitz Score and Podium p490-1

[2] The principal serial composers (Schoenberg, Berg, Webern) did not write ballets. However, choreography has since been set to serial concert works, for example, Schoenberg's Verklärte Nacht choreographed by Jiri Kylian.

[3] See Chapter 10 "The Evolution of Agon's Musical Structure" in Joseph, Stravinsky and Balanchine: A Journey of Invention, pp. 228-254. Joseph documents the collaboration between choreographer and composer and the nature of their working relationship.

instrumental choices: for example, the use of the mandolin, harp and strings with minimal flutes in the Galliarde sets the scene for a dance in a seventeenth-century French court. Yet much of the score has a very clinical, contemporary nature— a stark contradiction. Balanchine's choreography follows a similar philosophy: it is contemporary but with references to these Renaissance dances.

The Saraband-Step for example, is named after the Latin-American dance that originated in the late sixteenth century. At this point it was fast and lively in mood, alternating between the meters of 3/4 and 6/8. It then spread to Italy in the seventeenth century, and France, where it became far more slow and stately. It is the latter that is reflected in *Agon*, and the soloist's bow at the end is also evocative of this style. In many respects the main characteristics are retained: the dance is written in binary form, its triple time inherent throughout, often with an emphasis on the second beat of the bar. The opening solo violin chord [Bb-F-A] accent on the second beat in 3/4 time embodies this characteristic Saraband rhythm. Yet Stravinsky is obviously not attempting to emulate the style in most other respects. The instrumentation (solo violin, xylophone, trombones and cello) is not evocative of any early music and the musical language is unmistakably contemporary.

Stravinsky did not halt at these simple contradictions, himself suggesting that "traces of blues and boogie-woogie can be found in my most 'serious' pieces, as, for example in the Bransle de Poitou and the Bransle Simple from *Agon*" (Stravinsky and Craft 1968:54). This displays further employment of mismatched components; that of perceived "high" and "low," or "classical" and "folk" music. This principle can also be applied to the Saraband-Step, as the music provides highly discordant and uncomfortable listening, yet the heavy use of trombones gives the dance a circus-like, humorous feel. The xylophone tremolos and trills in the violin part add an eccentric element that suggests that although the music is highly intellectual and demanding on the musicians, it is not taking itself too seriously. Again, this approach is complemented by Balanchine's contribution. As Denby explained,

> it recalls court dance as much as a cubist still life recalls a pipe or guitar. The boy's timing looks like that of a New York Latin in a leather jacket. And the cool lift of his wrong-way-round steps and rhythms gives the nonsense so apt a turn people begin to giggle. (1986:266).

The Pas-de-Deux demonstrates a contrasting set of stylistic paradoxes: a dance that usually portrays romance and intimacy is coupled with music at its most serial and clinical. The dance follows the typical format: the duo dance an entrée (or the Interlude, as it is called in the score), an adagio, solos for both the male and female dancers (with an additional refrain for the male), and a Coda at the end which reunites them. The choice of instruments is also typical of the genre, as the strings are used exclusively until the start of the male dancer's solo. However, this is combined with almost Webernesque music,[4] giving the impression of strands or threads of sound accompanying the dancing. These strands, although notated with the utmost accuracy, sound improvisatory and unnerving, not at all synonymous with a Pas-de-Deux. Instead, the dance communicates a number of moods: an eerie and uneasy opening develops into a more assertive, brassy male variation that is quickly succeeded by a more gentle, mystical variation led by the woodwinds. The Coda is the most aggressive section, but again is short-lived—followed by a more mellow Doppio Lento section featuring the mandolin.

---

[4] Claudio Spies, however, notes Tchaikovsky's influence in the female variation– "the patterned rhythmicization of the unchanging string simultaneities simply spells 'ballet accompaniment' while acting as a backdrop for a set unfolding in the flutes." (1987:109-112).

These aesthetic juxtapositions complicate any possible interpretation, and the conductors interviewed and studied showed a varying interest in exposing these stylistic contradictions within the music. Philip Ellis, Conductor at the Birmingham Royal Ballet, UK,[5] believes that the more "metronomic" the approach (i.e. without imposing extra phrasing or interpretation) the more successful the performance—"the music will look after itself." For him, there was little need in considering the aesthetic or dramatic issues and considered the piece more as a "moving framework" whose only leniency was to adapt to the action on stage. Yet Paul Murphy, Principal Conductor of the same ballet company [6] (who believes *Agon* is the hardest of the Stravinsky ballets to conduct) argues that it is important for the conductor to expose these more theatrical aspects of the music. He suggests that the theatrical phrasing and shape is necessary to highlight so that the dancers can relate to and make sense of the work. In concert performance, David Robertson, conducting *Agon* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms in 2009, has a clear sense of drama throughout the piece, appearing to communicate, for example, the male/female dynamic. Jason Lai, the "Maestro-Cam" commentator for the performance, noted that during the Pas-de-Deux's solo section for the man and woman, Robertson makes a clear distinction in his baton technique. For the male solo and refrain his body language is more assertive than the gentle beats he uses during the female solo. However this theatricality is also coupled with a clear, accurate technique and thorough knowledge of the score.

INSTRUMENTATION – ENSEMBLES WITHIN AN ORCHESTRA

Although Stravinsky is writing for a conventional orchestra, he is constantly altering the combinations of instruments that he uses. Furthermore, these combinations are often highly unorthodox, and the conductor must be more acutely aware of the orchestral balance. For example, the Saraband-Step is composed for a solo violin, xylophone, and two trombones (joined sporadically by the cellos). This presents issues in balance of sound, as although there are only four musicians playing, they are from very disparate parts of the orchestra, producing very different sonorities and at varying distances from the conductor.

Even Stravinsky noted this problem. "I am annoyed by the violin solo in my *Agon* recording. It seems to emanate from the bedroom, while the trombone accompaniment sounds as though it is in my lap" (Stravinsky & Craft 1968:122). A similar principle is applied to other dances in *Agon*. For example, the Bransle de Poitou is written for two trombones and the first and second violins; the Bransle Gay employs the first and second flutes, bassoons, harp and castanets; and the Coda uses two trombones, harp and solo cello. These tiny ensembles within the orchestra expose the instrumentalists, and synchronisation is therefore more crucial for the conductor to oversee. Stravinsky takes the sparse, exposed music of *Les Noces* and *Apollo* and adds the extra difficulty of widely spaced musicians.[7] Philip Ellis argues that to a certain extent Stravinsky has already considered these spatial considerations in terms of balance of sound, and scored the Saraband accordingly. This is evidenced in the varying use of dynamics between parts. The violin part is marked *forte* throughout, and the xylophone *mezzoforte.* The trombones, however, are scored more sensitively, with greater variation so as not to overpower the quieter instruments. Nonetheless, the musicians are playing with comparatively little

---

[5] Interviewed 9 March 2011.

[6] Interviewed 2 October 2009.

[7] Les Noces was written for four pianos, percussion, four solo singers and chorus. This created a highly percussive, mechanised sound in which rhythmic synchronisation is crucial. Apollo is written for a more conventional string orchestra, but the sparse, neo-classical sound is also very exposing of any discrepancies in rhythm.

support from surrounding instrumentalists,[8] and this gives the conductor an additional concern at many points in the ballet.

MUSICAL LANGUAGE

In the study of *Agon*, the musicologist's most common starting point is the ballet's harmony. As the ballet was written over a number of years (between 1953 and '57),[9] and in a transitional era in Stravinsky's career, there is an inconsistency in the musical language used. The term *serialist* in reality is too simplistic,[10] and Straus suggests that *Agon* uses four different compositional techniques: 1) Diatonicism—conventional tonality; 2) Diatonic Serialism—music that is tonally based although employing serial principles; 3) Non-Diatonic Serialism—motifs that are atonal and 4) Twelve-note Serialism (2003:156). White writes that "in *Agon* the serial adventure is expressed in instrumental and choreographic terms" (White 1984:138), suggesting that the use of twelve dancers was a response to Stravinsky's score. However, Alm argues that much of the musical material in *Agon* was dictated by the choreographic ideas, rather than the gradual move from diatonicism to serialism, or any other specifically musical statement (1989:261-2).

Although of academic interest, a thorough knowledge of Stravinsky's harmonic language(s) is not, in practice, the primary concern for the conductor. Although an understanding of his varying uses of serialism can denote phrasing as well as creating landmarks within the music, it takes a lower priority to rhythm. Even Schoenberg himself advised,

> I can't utter too many warnings against overrating these analyses, since after all they only lead to what I have always been dead set against: seeing how it is *done*; whereas I have always helped people to see: what it *is*! (Schoenberg, cited in Taruskin 2003:274).

Stravinsky applies a similar patchwork approach to *Agon*'s rhythmic language, with complexity being approached from many angles. It is this aspect of the ballet that presents the greatest challenge to the conductor. Consistently altering time signatures are regularly used, otherwise known as Rhythmic-Metric Type 1 construction (Van den Toorn 1983:138) and the minute subdivisions of *The Rite of Spring*'s "Sacrificial Dance" are revisited in the Pas-de-Deux and Bransle Gay (6/16, 5/16, 7/16 etc.) This immediately adds to the conductor's solitary study as he/she must be familiar with these rhythmic patterns before considering any musical content. The superimposition of two meters, or Rhythmic-Metric Type 2 (1983:139) is seen most explicitly in the Bransle Gay, with the castanets playing 3/8 over the variable time signatures in the flutes, bassoons and harp.[11] Even the more conventionally notated dances (e.g. the Triple Pas-de-Quatre) contain many offbeat accents and entries that cloud the sense of rhythmic pulse.

> I know that portions of *Agon* contain three times as much music for the same clock length as some other pieces of mine. Naturally, a new demand for greater in-depth listening changes time perspective (Stravinsky and Craft 1959:25).

---

[9] Interrupted by Stravinsky's commitments to composing In Memoriam Dylan Thomas and Canticum Sacrum.

[10] Threni was Stravinsky's first completely dodecaphonic work (composed 1957-58).

[11] In fact, it is in the Bransle Gay that one notices the greatest difference between concert and theatre performances in terms of tempo. In the score, the metronome mark is eighth-note = 92, but it is taken more slowly in ballet performance (the Balanchine Celebration takes it at 76-78). This is because it is accompanying the female soloist (there are also two male dancers on stage but they are merely clapping to the castanet rhythm). Although playful, her choreography demands precision which could not be achieved at a faster pace. David Robertson takes it at a much faster pace (eighth-note = 103-5) which is closer to Stravinsky's specifications (Stravinsky in contrast is far slower at 80-83!), but completely impractical for the ballet.

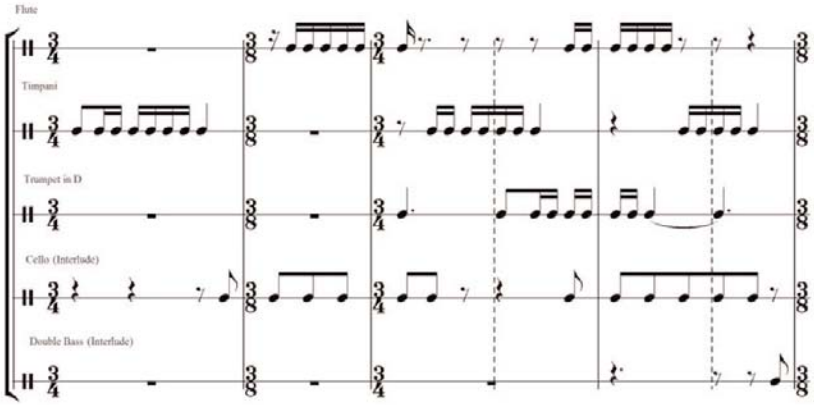
PRELUDE/INTERLUDES

The Prelude/Interludes appear three times in *Agon*, introducing each Pas-de-Trois as well as the Pas-de-Deux. The Interludes are both repeats of the Prelude but with added instrumental lines and altering choreography. In the first Interlude the instruments that appeared in the Prelude play the same (diatonically based) music, but are joined by the viola, additional solo cellos and double basses. The second uses added trumpets and the tom-tom. However, they are all identical in terms of length, tempo, and the changes in time signature (the dance combines 3/4 and 3/8) and the final *meno mosso* section also changes to the same tempo each time. For the conductor this aspect can be memorized and repeated each time (although Paul Murphy said the changes into 3/8 never felt comfortable), but the rhythmic structure *within* this comparatively straight-forward structure is where the Prelude presents the most complexities. The tonal feeling and comparatively conventional sound of the music is misleading: although C is the tonal center, each part has its own independent rhythmic framework, expressed by the short repeated motifs that become continually shorter at varying rates as the piece progresses.

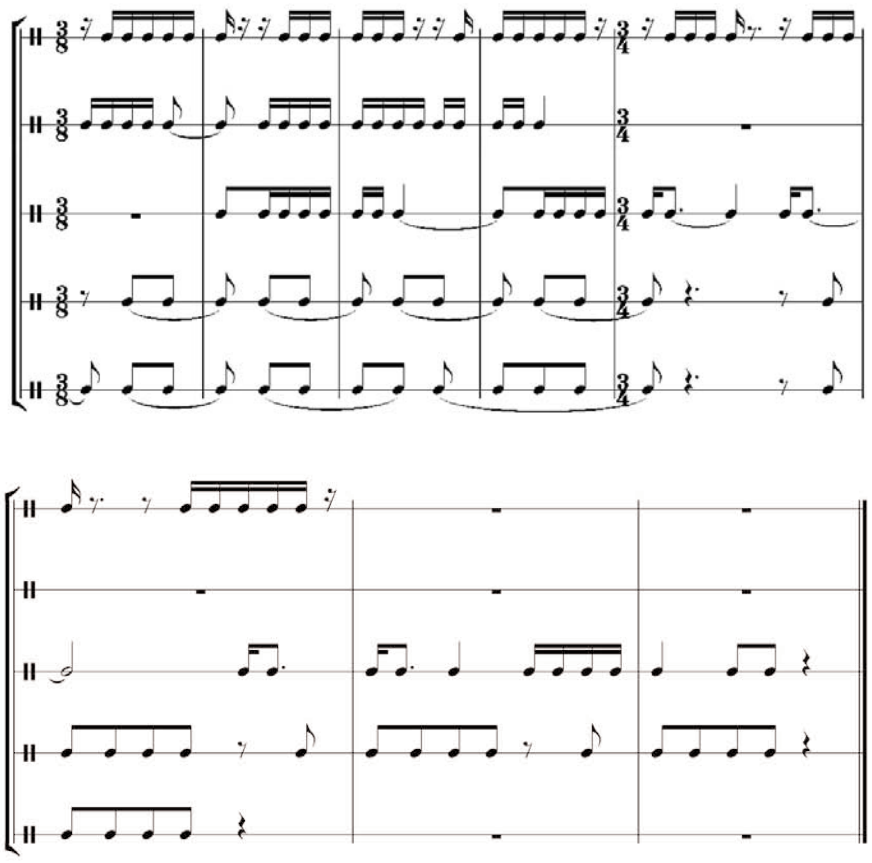
This can be seen in the figure below. In the Prelude, the flute melody is prominent, playing a recognizable ascending motif based on the C-major scale. After two repetitions, the rest between the repeats is shorter, with the motif itself shrinking to four sixteenth-notes. The timpani follows a similar principle, with a reduction in the number of sixteenth-notes in its motif as well as a shortening gap between repetitions. However, this process occurs at a different rate to the flute part, and this principle is applied across all of the instrumental lines. It creates a complex and disorientating musical texture for the conductor to oversee. In the first Interlude, the addition of the cellos and double basses complicates matters further. The double bass follows the opposite rule: although it plays continuous eighth-notes they are grouped by Stravinsky to show an expansion of its motif rather than a reduction. In the second Interlude the music follows the same principle but is increasingly dense. For example, the additional flutes and strings play the same motifs as their predecessors but echo the already established parts. The conductor must therefore learn three pieces that in many respects are identical, but with crucial differences that must be communicated in performance.

> Whoever plays Stravinsky can hardly do so without the score. In general, sightreading a piece is easier when one has already heard it a few times. One then only partly reads the music: the memory fills in the rest. Doing this with Stravinsky will generally lead to disaster. (Andriessen and Schonberger 1989:40)

Fig. 1 Rhythmic analysis of bars 1-12 of Prelude/Interludes.[12]



[12] I have inserted slurs in the cello and double bass parts where Stravinsky grouped eighth-notes over the bar lines.



To complicate matters further, Balanchine adds a choreographic counterpoint. Just as Nijinska imposed her own choreographic meter over Stravinsky's score in *Les Noces*,[13] Balanchine alters the perception of the rhythmic meter, but also uses *Agon*'s moments of apparent "pulselessness" as opportunities to create his own.

> When the rhythmic pattern is ambiguous or unstressed, steps and gestures articulate pulse and meter, sometimes coinciding with the musical structure, sometimes not. In the prelude and two interludes, there is an initial rush of musical activity, the overlapping of parts removing any strong sense of meter. Using short repeating dance units, Balanchine creates his own clear pulse and independent meter. (Jordan 1993:5)

Observation of the dance performance of the Prelude shows that while the score opens with a 3/4 bar, followed by a 3/8 bar before returning to 3/4 for two bars etc. (see fig. 1 above), the choreography completely overrides this, actually giving the impression of a clearer sense of pulse to the audience than the music. For example, both dancers and musicians start simultaneously. However, the choreographic units in the first section are primarily in groups of four, occasionally with short gaps in between to realign with the music. Other examples of independent choreographic meter are seen throughout the ballet. For example, in the

---

[13] See for example, Jaubert, J. "Some Ideas about Meter in the Fourth Tableau of Stravinsky's Les Noces,' or Stravinsky, Nijinska, and Particle Physics" in The Musical Quarterly, Vol.83, No. 2 (Summer, 1999): 205-226.

Saraband-Step, Jordan notes that the male soloist's choreography in the second half forms groups of four over the music in triple time. She also suggests that the female soloist in the Bransle Gay "establishes her own five-beat meter" over the shifting meter in the flutes, bassoons and harps, and the consistent 3/8 rhythm in the castanets (1993:8). Although, as in *Les Noces*, these independent meters cannot be incorporated into the conductor's own beating patterns, or indeed any interpretation of the work (the musical score presents enough complexity), they nonetheless underline the need for metronomic delivery, and the adoption of an appropriate meter.

Observation of David Robertson conducting the Prelude and Interludes at the BBC Proms 2009 shows minimal but significant changes in the way he guides the orchestra. The right-hand beating patterns remain identical for each prelude and two interludes (with the exception of the final bar of the first interlude, where he continues beating in three to accurately introduce the next dance). It is the change in cues that is the most noticeable alteration, particularly in the second interlude. The decipherable cues in the footage of both the prelude and first interlude are for the timpani in bar 1, cellos in bar 2 and the trumpet in bar 3. However, in the second prelude, the second trumpet is also introduced in the second half of bar 1 as well as the second cellos in bar 6.

PAS-DE-DEUX

The Pas-de-deux presents rhythmic and tempo challenges on multiple levels. Structurally, Stravinsky had a very concise vision for the tempos and durations of the individual sections in *Agon*'s Pas-de-Deux, which is evidenced by the index card that Stravinsky attached to a summary sheet of the previous dance's durations. (Joseph 2002:245-6) Stravinsky's "measurement" of each section in minutes and seconds was a novel way of breaking down and perceiving the music for the ballet conductor. This differs greatly from, for example, the way Tchaikovsky worked with Petipa. Petipa would prescribe the number of measures needed to complement the dance on stage, and Tchaikovsky would work within this template (Garafola 2007:157).
In order to assess the realism of Stravinsky's expectations, the table below shows a selection of recordings/ performances of the Pas de Deux, indicating how closely they follow Stravinsky's specifications. The recordings and performances displaying the most variation are those in the studio or concert hall. Stravinsky, considering his own exacting demands, strays at many points, especially between bars 452-462 (an example of the inconsistencies between his aesthetics and performance practice),[14] although the biggest time difference is David Robertson's performance of bars 414-451. Obviously, in these examples the conductors had more freedom without the need to consider choreography. The Balanchine Celebration of 2001 orchestra accompanying Darcey Bussell and Lindsay Fischer adheres more rigidly to the original times set by Stravinsky for the *Agon* premiere. This proves that although allocating time lengths to sections of the music is perhaps not the most practical way to articulate one's wishes, it was nonetheless realistic in relation to the choreography it was accompanying.

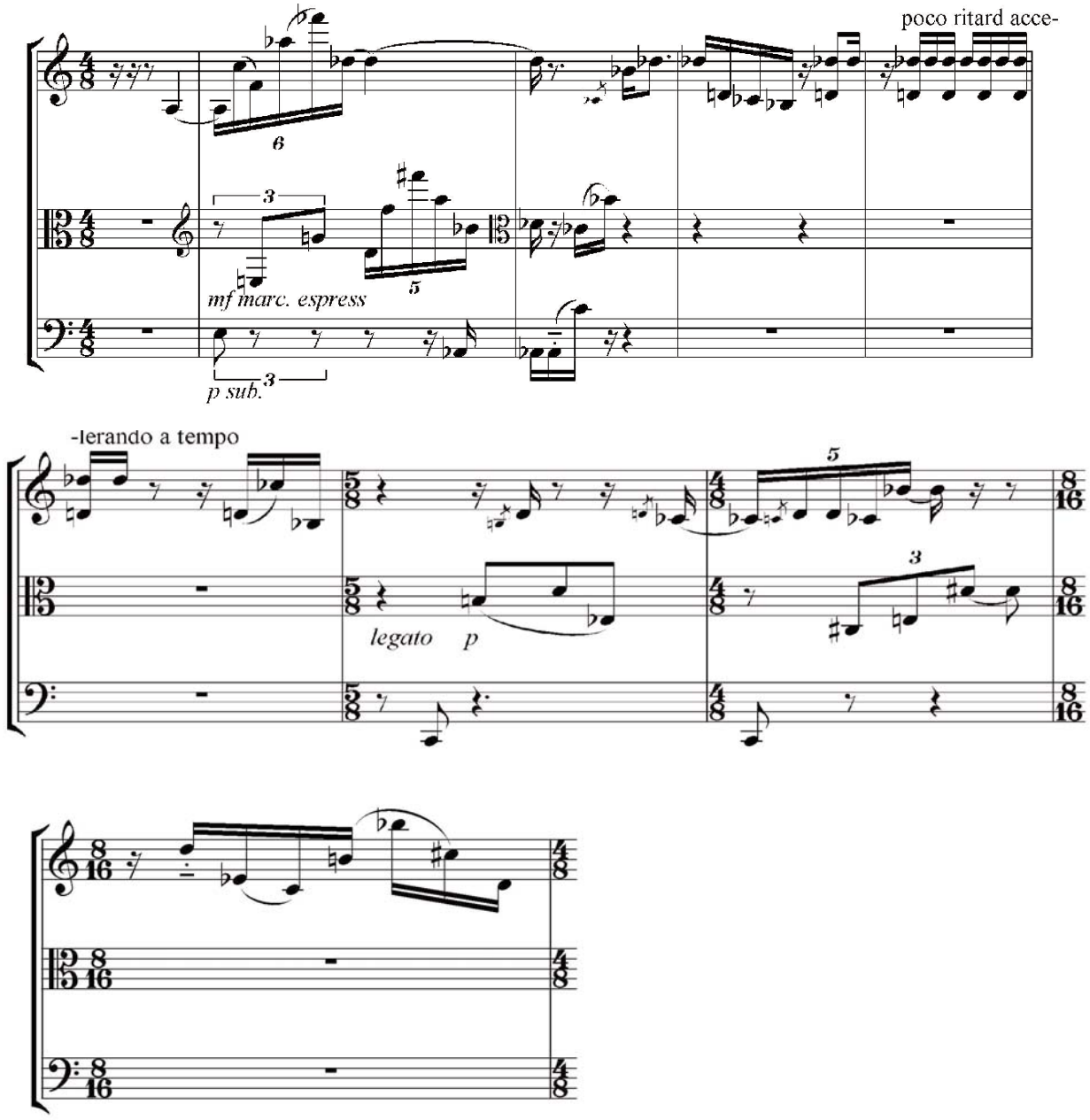
[14] See N. Cook, "Stravinsky conducts Stravinsky" in J. Cross (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky, pp. 176-191. In this chapter Cook assesses the correlation between Stravinsky's aesthetics and his own conducting practice.

Bars	411-413	414-451	452-462	463-494 (solos)	495-503 (Coda)	504-510
Stravinsky's note of timing	13s	2m40s	20s	40s	18s	28s
Stravinsky 1957	13s	2m42s	33s	47s	21s	33s
Balanchine Celebration 2001	14s	2m45s	23s	42s	21s	29s
David Robertson Proms 2009	16s	2m59s	27s	44s	21s	25s

Table 1 – Timed sections of Pas-de-deux

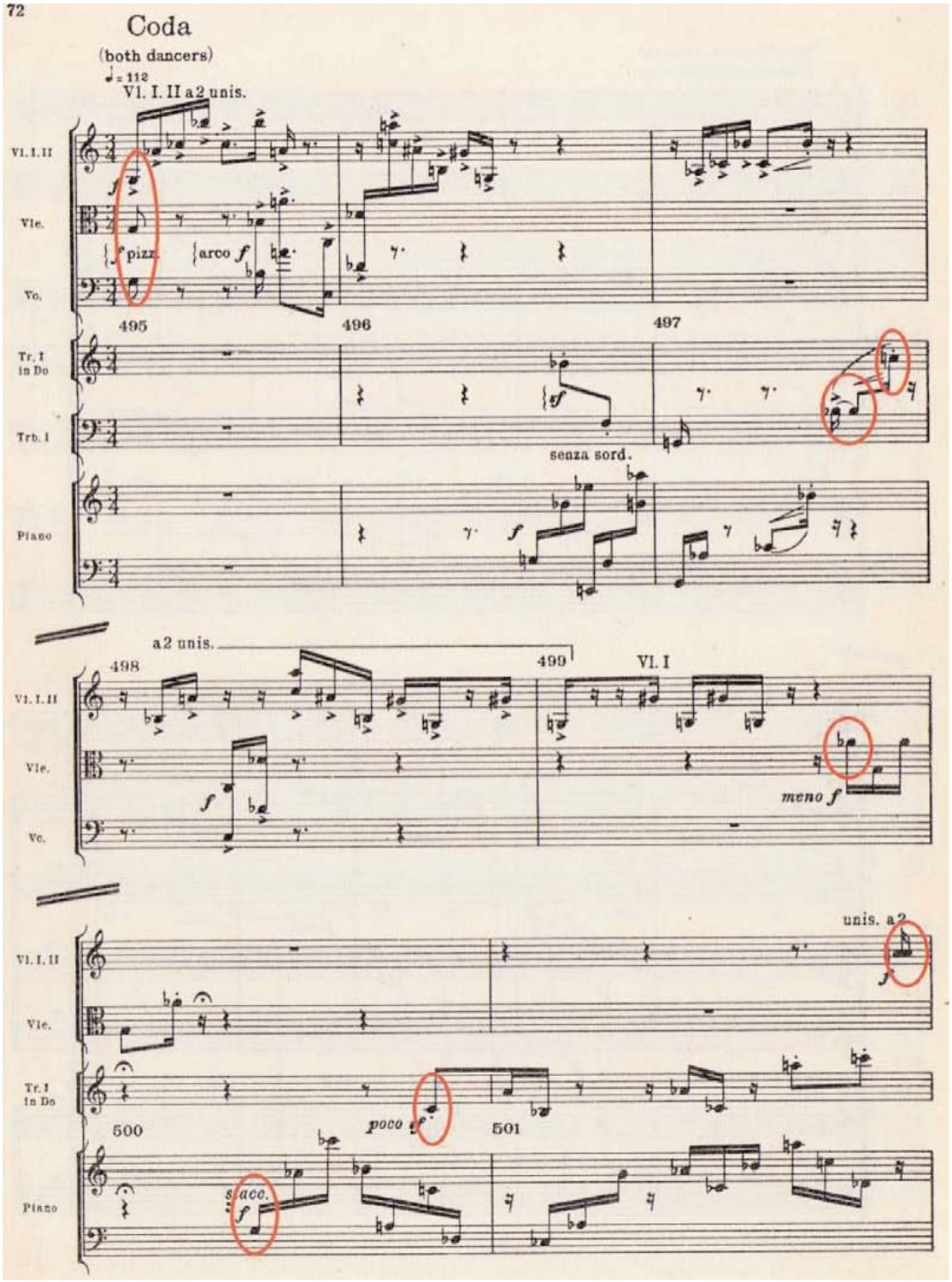
The instrumentalists need a very clear concise beat from the conductor in order to accurately follow the score. Jason Lai also suggests that it is the first thing the orchestra would require, or look for in a conductor of this passage (2009). The apparent disappearance of the musical pulse is carefully constructed by the regular omission of any accentuated downbeats. An example is at bars 416-23. In every one these eight bars the first semiquaver beat is a rest, or a note is tied from the previous bar. This ensures that even though the first five bars continue in 4/8 (as do the previous two bars to this section), it is impossible for the listener to sense the bar divisions. The sixth bar of the section deviates to 5/8, compounding this confusion further. These techniques, although synonymous with much of Stravinsky's earlier music (in particular *The Rite of Spring* and *Les Noces*) now accompany choreography that needs more consideration from the conductor.

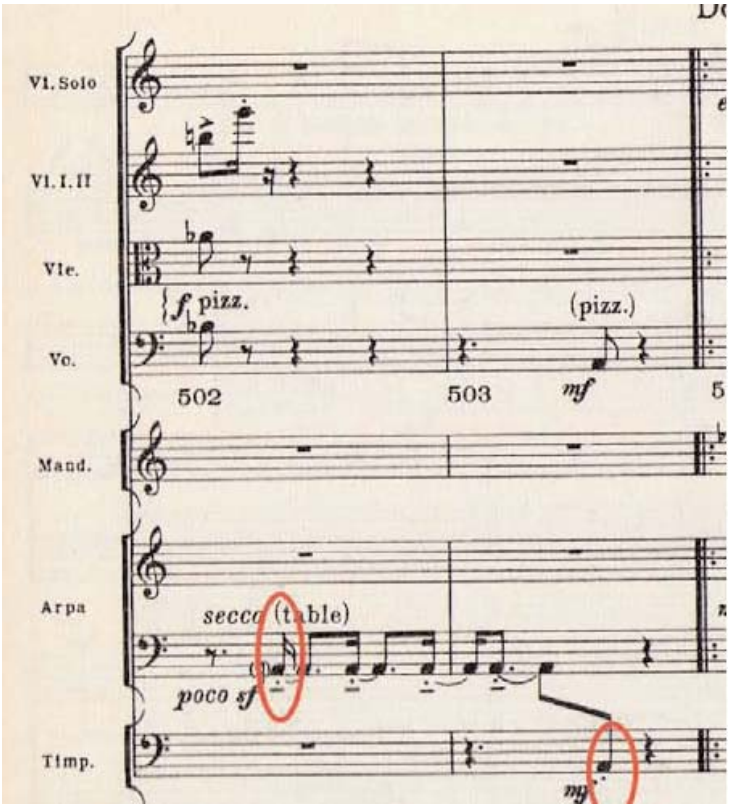
Ex 1 Bars 416-423 of *Agon*'s Pas de Deux (solo violin, viola, cellos).



David Robertson, conducting *Agon* at the Proms 2009, gives the orchestra more guidance during the Coda than in the rest of the Pas-de-Deux. It is at this point that the score presents the highest density of cues. Although not always using his hand or baton to make connection with the instrumentalists (instead using glances or turns toward the musicians about to play), Robertson's cues are nonetheless more densely packed in these nine bars. Ex. 2 shows the full score and highlights the points at which he cues the musicians.

Ex.2 David Robertson's cues in the Coda of *Agon*'s Pas-de-Deux.





The more one immerses oneself in the Pas-de-Deux and its associated literature, the more the evident rhythmic complexities increase. A musicological approach unearths a highly organized and detailed score that must be performed with great accuracy to ensure cohesion, particularly in ballet performance. Yet a greater sense of freedom is felt by dance academic Jordan, who writes:

> The performance timing also seems more personal in the Adagio, as if the dancers provide their own continuity being in touch with the music but no longer disciplined by its pulse… lack of counts means that, though the dance still co-ordinates carefully with the music, there are new leeways for rhythmic detail and interpretation. (2000:163)

The freedom that Jordan is sensing emanates less from the musical score than from the extent to which the conductor connects with the action on stage. Any Pas-de-Deux requires a certain level of adaptation on the conductor's part. Space must be created for the demanding choreography and lifts required, and these adjustments will vary from dancer to dancer. But this is particularly so in *Agon*, and it is in the Pas-de-Deux where the pinnacle of choreo-musical interdependency is reached. For example, at bar 451, the cellos play a glissando sliding down from the A harmonic above middle C, punctuated by the double basses playing the pizzicato G# in the following crotchet beat. This musical gesture is led by the female soloist. After she steps over her partner, lying on the floor, he stands up. She then steps to the left and lets her left arm rise into second position. At the start of the arm movement, the glissando in the cello begins and the conductor takes the cue from the dancer.[15] Jordan also notes several moments of connection between choreography and music—the most relevant to the conductor being at bar 424, where the "isolated gestures of the woman in *penché* with her leg around the man's shoulder" correspond with the pizzicato strings. (1993:10)

---

[15] Paul Murphy, 2 October 2009.

Agon contains many interesting cueing examples. Simple cues at the start of a dance include the beginning of the Double Pas-de-Quatre, when Paul Murphy uses one or two beats to introduce the eight dancers, or the one or two beats used to introduce the Pas-de-Deux etc. At the start of the Prelude, the dancers (facing the conductor) are cued as well as the musicians. There are, however, more complicated examples. At the start of the ballet (Pas-de-Quatre), there is a "soundless whirl"—"a downbeat that starts the action." (Denby 1959:460) The effect is that the dancers cue the orchestra, when in reality the dancers themselves are also cued. Paul Murphy stated that the dancers, facing backstage, turn around, and from that cue he beats 1, 2, 3 and the music starts. At the end of the Bransle Simple, the cue for the final chord is taken from the dancers as they arrive at their final pose.

However, there are additional points where the conductor must cue the dancer and the instrumentalists in quick succession. The Saraband-Step opening is an example. At the opening the male soloist jumps straight up into the air initially with his legs together and then kicking out his right leg in front of him. Here the conductor has to work closely with the soloist. The dancer's jump is cued (although this is optional)[16] and mid-jump the musicians are given an upbeat so that the dancer's landing and the music are synchronised for the first beat of bar one. Although it is impossible to argue that this is entirely unprecedented, these awkward cues are not usually accompanied by such a challenging score. Other examples of taking cues from dancers mid-air (for example at the start of *Spectre de la Rose* when the male lead jumps from offstage or at the start of the Bluebird's dance in Act Three of *Sleeping Beauty*) are followed by the leading of far more conventional music in terms of instrumentation and rhythm.

AGON'S COMPETITION

Although *The Rite of Spring* is widely viewed as Stravinsky's most influential work, one might assume that it would also be the work with the least competition in its era. However, it appears that *Agon* had fewer rivals in ballet than the earlier "revolutionary" Russian work. The challenges that *Agon* presents to the conductor are numerous and it is difficult to find a ballet score of the period that rivals the Stravinsky-Balanchine collaboration (the conductors of the Birmingham Royal Ballet also struggled to find examples of a comparable ballet). This is not, however, solely due to Stravinsky or Balanchine's superior musical or choreographic ability, or indeed their originality. It is also due to the lack of investment in unknown composers and choreographers at the time, an issue of less prominence in Stravinsky's early career. (Diaghilev, of course, had a particularly creative and experimental attitude in comparison to many of his successors.) Stravinsky and Balanchine's established fame therefore gave them the freedom to experiment, a luxury the younger generation had less opportunity to enjoy. Denby commented on the large ballet companies' increasing disinterest in commissioning new ballets.

> Such a lack of interest by the big companies in living musicians of some originality is very sad. They seem to have no curiosity about the intellectual life surrounding them. It is perfectly proper for a ballet company to choose old music of contemporary interest for some new ballets. But there is something quite fossilized about a company that cannot go out and buy itself a brand-new score or two every spring. (1943:128)

---

[16] Paul Murphy explained that not all dancers of the Saraband-Step are comfortable with taking this kind of cue from the conductor.

CONCLUSION

The study of *Agon* encapsulates the development of the ballet conductor's role in the twentieth century. Individual factors when assessed in isolation do not necessarily present unprecedented challenges. Score analysis and historical comparison show that Stravinsky himself had used many of the complex rhythmic devices decades earlier (the same applies to the harmonic language—explored by the original serialist composers). The aesthetic ambiguities are in many respects an extension of those seen in his earlier neo-classical ballets (e.g. *Balustrade* – also choreographed by Balanchine). Performance analysis shows that the choreographic challenges such as cueing mid-jump, although numerous and in greater density than the previous ballets by Stravinsky, can mostly be traced to previous Balanchine works or those of Tchaikovsky or Weber. However, the *combination* of these numerous competing factors makes *Agon* the most challenging of the Stravinsky ballets in terms of multi-tasking. The rhythm, choreography, aesthetic paradoxes, cues for dances and musicians and unusual instrumentation combine in most of the dances, giving a great deal for the conductor to consider. It is taken to such a level that it is often impossible to be much more than a mere time-beater, or "executor" of his music. One can apply Balanchine's thoughts to the role the conductor must adopt, when he described *Agon* as being "more tight and precise than usual, as if it were controlled by an electronic brain." (cited in White 1979:496)

*****

Eugenie Burkett (PhD) is the Coordinator of Music Education programs at University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She has contributed to the Journal for Historical Research in Music Education, the National Association of College, Wind and Percussion Instructors, and Percussive Notes. As a timpanist and percussion, Burkett is a co-founder of Trinkle Brass Works, a chamber ensemble performing under the WESTAF and Arts Midwest Touring programs. She is the author of OnMusic Education for Elementary Music Majors, OnMusic Education for Elementary Music for Non-Majors, and OnMusic for Special Learners published by Connect4Education of Reston, VA.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alm, I. "Stravinsky, Balanchine and Agon: An Analysis Based on the Collaborative Process" in *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 7, No. 2 (Spring 1989), 254-269.

Andriessen, L. and Schonberger, E. *The Appolonian Clockwork on Stravinsky.* Oxford University Press, 1989.

Bowen, J.A. (ed.) *Cambridge Companion to Conducting.* Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Cook, N. "Stravinsky conducts Stravinsky" in Cross, J. (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky,* 176-191. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Denby, E. "On Commissioning New Ballet Scores" (July 4th 1943) in *Dance Writings,* 127-29. Dance Books Ltd., 1986.

Denby, E. "Three Sides of *Agon*" (*Evergreen Review*, Winter 1959) in *Dance Writings,* 459-65. Dance Books Ltd.,1986.

Drummond, J. *Speaking of Diaghilev.* Faber and Faber, 1997.

Garafola, L. "Russian ballet in the age of Petipa" in Kant, M. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet.* Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Jordan, S. "Agon: A Musical/Choreographic Analysis" in *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Autumn 1993), 1-12.

Jordan, S. *Moving Music: Dialogues with Music in Twentieth Century Ballet.* Dance Books Ltd., 2000.

Jordan, S. *Stravinsky Dances: Re-Visions across a Century.* Dance Books Ltd., 2007.

Joseph, C. *Stravinsky and Balanchine: A Journey of Invention.* Yale University Press, 2002.

Prausnitz, F. *Score and Podium: A Complete Guide to Conducting.* Norton, 1983.

Spies, C. "Conundrums, Conjectures, Construals; or, 5 vs. 3: The Influence of Russian Composers on Stravinsky" in Haimo, E. and Johnson, P. (eds.), *Stravinsky Retrospectives.* University of Nebraska Press, 1987.

Straus, J. "Stravinsky the Serialist" in Cross, J. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky,* 149-174. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Stravinsky, I. and Craft, R. *Dialogues and a Diary*. Faber and Faber, 1968.

Taruskin, R. "Stravinsky and Us" in Cross, J. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky,* 260-284. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Van den Toorn, P. *The Music of Igor Stravinsky.* Yale University Press, 1983.
White, E. W. *Stravinsky, the Composer and his Works.* 2d ed. University of California Press, 1979.

AUDIO-VISUAL SOURCES

Balanchine Celebration – American Inspiration, 2001. VHS tape – provided by NRDC, Guildford, Surrey (Core Video Collection, ref. XZJ/1642/1).
David Robertson conducting Stravinsky's *Agon* at the BBC Proms with the BBC Symphony Orchestra on "Maestro-Cam" 28th August 2009 on BBC Four (commentary Jason Lai).
Stravinsky 1957 [2007] CD Los Angeles Festival Symphony Orchestra LC06868.

ENDNOTES

1 The only example I have found in conducting literature is in Prausnitz *Score and Podium* p490-1
2 The principal serial composers (Schoenberg, Berg, Webern) did not write ballets**.** However, choreography has since been set to serial concert works, for example, Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* choreographed by Jiri Kylian.
3 See Chapter 10 "The Evolution of *Agon*'s Musical Structure" in Joseph, *Stravinsky and Balanchine: A Journey of Invention,* pp. 228-254. Joseph documents the collaboration between choreographer and composer and the nature of their working relationship.
4 Claudio Spies, however, notes Tchaikovsky's influence in the female variation– "the patterned rhythmicization of the unchanging string simultaneities simply spells 'ballet accompaniment' while acting as a backdrop for a set unfolding in the flutes." (1987:109-112).
5 Interviewed 9 March 2011.
6 Interviewed 2 October 2009.
7 *Les Noces* was written for four pianos, percussion, four solo singers and chorus. This created a highly percussive, mechanised sound in which rhythmic synchronisation is crucial. *Apollo* is written for a more conventional string orchestra, but the sparse, neo-classical sound is also very exposing of any discrepancies in rhythm.
8 This idea is exploited by later composers, for example Boulez in *Rituel in Memoriam Bruno Maderna*. In this piece Boulez not only completely reorganizes the seating arrangements of the players, he also creates eight different groups of instrumen talists, who are not sitting adjacent to each other.
9 Interrupted by Stravinsky's commitments to composing *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas* and *Canticum Sacrum*.
10 *Threni* was Stravinsky's first completely dodecaphonic work (composed 1957-58).
11 In fact, it is in the Bransle Gay that one notices the greatest difference between concert and theatre performances in terms of tempo. In the score, the metronome mark is eighth-note = 92, but it is taken more slowly in ballet performance (the Balanchine Celebration takes it at 76-78). This is because it is accompanying the female soloist (there are also two male dancers on stage but they are merely clapping to the castanet rhythm). Although playful, her choreography demands pre cision which could not be achieved at a faster pace. David Robertson takes it at a much faster pace (eighth-note = 103-5) which is closer to Stravinsky's specifications (Stravinsky in contrast is far slower at 80-83!), but completely impractical for the ballet.
12 I have inserted slurs in the cello and double bass parts where Stravinsky grouped eighth-notes over the bar lines.
13 See for example, Jaubert, J. "Some Ideas about Meter in the Fourth Tableau of Stravinsky's Les Noces,' or Stravinsky, Nijinska, and Particle Physics" in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol.83, No. 2 (Summer, 1999): 205-226.
14 See N. Cook, "Stravinsky conducts Stravinsky" in J. Cross (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky,* pp. 176-191. In this chapter Cook assesses the correlation between Stravinsky's aesthetics and his own conducting practice.
15 Paul Murphy, 2 October 2009.
16 Paul Murphy explained that not all dancers of the Saraband-Step are comfortable with taking this kind of cue from the conductor.

Bruno Walter, Leonard Bernstein, and Tempo Interpretation in Mahler Scores

By
Nathaniel F. Parker

A conductor's initial encounter with an orchestral score by Gustav Mahler can be daunting. The sheer duration of his compositions, the mass of orchestral and vocal forces required, the meticulous detail of his instructions in the score, and the deep emotional connection many experience with his music can all contribute to a strong sensation of being overwhelmed, a sensation only magnified further by his reputation as an esteemed, and demanding, conductor. When entering the world of Mahler interpretation, one might logically seek guidance from legendary conductors, reputed for their interpretations of Mahler's music; two conductors who immediately come to mind are Bruno Walter and Leonard Bernstein.

Indeed, Walter and Bernstein have been identified by Norman Lebrecht as primary examples of two distinctly different approaches in the interpretation of Mahler's scores. Lebrecht characterizes Walter's post-War performances as focusing on "textural refinement and de-exaggeration" while Bernstein's "striv[e] for ever-wilder extremes of expression" (302). (He also designates conductors Raphael Kubelik and Vaclav Neumann as representatives of a third approach, which emphasizes the folk elements in Mahler's compositions.) Lebrecht does not elaborate further on the two "mutually irreconcilable" schools of interpretation represented by Walter and Bernstein, only stating that these "trends," as well as others, are "equally valid" because of "the variability of Mahler's own performances" (302).

Still, as both Walter and Bernstein are conductors revered for their interpretations of Mahler, a comparison of their respective approaches can be enlightening for an individual trying to find his or her own interpretive path in the scores of Mahler's musical worlds. In comparing these two schools, it is important to understand how both Walter and Bernstein related to Mahler, and what each identified as the most important elements in Mahler's music. Exploring these views provides a basis for understanding some of the differences in their interpretations of Mahler. These differences are then highlighted by a comparison of tempi used by each of these conductors in recorded performances of the first movement from Mahler's Symphony No. 2 in C-sharp Minor.

Bruno Walter had a special connection to Mahler in that he knew Mahler personally and worked under him as a pianist and conductor. In 1894 Walter was hired as a vocal coach at the Hamburg Opera, where Mahler was then the principal conductor. The two men began a close personal and professional relationship, which continued throughout Mahler's remaining years. Beginning in 1901 Walter again worked directly under Mahler as assistant conductor at the Vienna Hofoper. After Mahler's death, Walter continued to promote, perform, and record Mahler's music throughout the remainder of his own life.

According to Alma Mahler, "the personal and artistic relations between [Mahler] and [Walter] were congenial from the first and grew into a friendship which was never clouded to the end" (113). Alma also stated that Mahler viewed Walter as a "very talented conductor," and she claimed that Walter knew "every subtlety [of Mahler's music] and gave his own original interpretation, and he took the spirit of Mahler's work as the keystone of his own work as an interpretative musician" (113). Describing Mahler's compositions following the early song cycles, Walter identifies a "conflict and mixture of romantic and classical elements" (88). (The idea of conflict, as we will see, is also

significant in Bernstein's description.) The "classical element" Walter describes is clear formal structure, or "solid forms," in Mahler's music. Walter expands on this idea by saying that, after Symphony No. 1, Mahler "pursued … the way of the symphonic artist who, from a thematic core, develops the construction of the movements with a close adherence to form and is enticed by no emotional excess [!], by no poetic idea, and even by no musical inspiration, to sacrifice the principle of organic compactness of a movement" (89).

In contrast to these "classical" structures, are the "romantic" elements, or less-conventional techniques, Mahler employed in his compositions. These elements include extreme contrasts of character and mood, autobiographical or programmatic references, allusions to sounds of nature, and quotation of or allusion to marches, folk dances, and other popular music genres. At the risk of oversimplifying, the "romantic element" Walter discusses may be best summarized as all the distinguishing attributes typically associated with Mahler's music. Although Walter acknowledged the autobiographical nature of Symphony No. 1, he consistently showed a strong aversion to any reference to Mahler's works, including the First Symphony, as programmatic: "He [Mahler] does not illustrate the sound that he experienced – that would be 'program music'" (105). Walter claims that, following Symphony No. 1, Mahler "turns away from personal experience" and his compositions become more "absolutely musical" (107-108). Despite his convictions about the "absolute" nature of Mahler's music, in his biography of Mahler, Walter quotes Mahler's descriptions of programmatic concepts in his symphonies and Walter himself engages in romanticized descriptions of the moods evoked in Mahler's compositions.

Leonard Bernstein, born in 1918, never met Mahler, yet there seems to be a powerful spiritual kinship between these two great musicians. In a 1967 interview Bernstein acknowledged that there are "analogue[s]" between himself and Mahler, although the only such analogue Bernstein identifies is that of "being torn between performing and creating" (Chesterman 70). Throughout their careers, both men were torn between conducting and composing; indeed, one of Bernstein's greatest sources of pain was that, despite his fame as a conductor, he was never fully accepted as a composer of "serious" music (Lacy).

Other analogues between the two are not hard to find. One example is the close ties both men had to their Jewish heritage, ties they also expressed through their music. Mahler converted to Christianity because of anti-Semitic sentiments in Vienna, and Bernstein struggled with these same prejudices when he reintroduced Mahler's music in Vienna following World War II. Bernstein also had other personal struggles that tormented him, including the troubled relationship he had with his father, and the conflict created by his heterosexual, traditional family and his homosexual desires.

It is clear that Bernstein esteemed Mahler greatly and identified strongly with his music. Bernstein once wrote:

> [Mahler's] music is so close to my heart. I feel attuned to it, a melancholy, a nostalgia for childhood, for innocence. The attempt to recover life as it used to be when everything was so protected, so untouched, so fresh – which it can never become again. I understand his complexity. I love even his weaknesses – and perhaps some of them are my own (Lacy).

He also says that Mahler, through his music, prophesized "his own, imminent death[,]…the death of tonality, which for him meant the death of music itself[, and]…the death of society, of our Faustian culture" ("Lecture 5"). For Bernstein, "the death of society" is the tragedy caused by the "dualistic" nature of humankind in the twentieth century – "[Mahler's music] is like a camera that has caught Western society in the moment of its incipient decay" (*Findings* 256). Further, Bernstein wrote that "all of Mahler's music is about Mahler – which means simply that is about conflict" and, beyond personal struggles, the ultimate conflict addressed is that between "Western man at the turn of the century and the life of the spirit" (*Findings* 256). To Bernstein, Mahler's music addressed humankind's loss of

humanity and spirituality caused by rapidly advancing technology, the importance placed on material possessions, superficial societal sophistication, corrupt politics, and the proliferation of warfare.

The above provides a qualitative foundation for the general approaches identified by Lebrecht and, given their respective viewpoints, one can likely anticipate differences between Walter's and Bernstein's performances of Mahler. For example, it makes sense that Walter's performances are relatively restrained when compared to Bernstein's, given the importance Walter placed on structure and organic flow in Mahler's music. From Walter's perspective, exaggerations would likely distort the formal structure and disrupt the flow of the composition; even sudden changes of mood or character are ultimately subservient to the overall structure. In contrast, because Bernstein viewed conflict as the most fundamental element in Mahler's music, he highlighted the antithetical. Logically, the most effective way to emphasize dualistic conflict is to exaggerate each of the opposing sides, both the "Yang and Yin" (*Findings* 256). It also seems that Bernstein could relate all too well to the internal struggles embodied in Mahler's works; this is another reason, perhaps, why Bernstein's performances exhibited such intense emotional depth and contrast – in Mahler's music, Bernstein found a vessel of expression and cathartic relief for many of his inner conflicts.

While the above establishes a foundation for Walter's and Bernstein's general approaches to Mahler's works, differences in score interpretation, specifically tempo, can also be observed quantitatively. Historical recordings facilitate comparison of respective tempi used by each conductor in performance of, for example, the first movement from Mahler's Symphony No. 2. In an imperfect attempt to limit variables, both of the recordings discussed below feature the New York Philharmonic – Walter's made in 1958 and Bernstein's just five years later. Table 1 compares Walter's and Bernstein's performance tempi at key thematic points in the exposition of the first movement of Symphony No. 2; it also includes metronome markings indicated by Mahler, when available.

Table 1. Performance Tempi in the Exposition of the First Movement from Mahler's Symphony No. 2[1]

	m. 2	m. 6	m. 43	m. 48	m. 67	m. 74	m. 80	m. 87	m. 97
Walter	128	74	72	80	84	92-104	88	92	94
Bernstein	156	64	60	59	96	112-126	126	76	67
Mahler (score marking)	144	84 a tempo [Allegro maestoso]	100/92	-- Im Tempo nachgeben	-- a tempo (poco piú mosso)	--	--	-- Pesante	-- Beruhigend

As shown in Table 1, Walter and Bernstein choose distinctly different tempi throughout the exposition. The movement's fundamental tempo, *Allegro maestoso*, is solidified in measure 6 (*a tempo*), and there is already a difference of 10 beats per minute between the two conductors' tempi. One overall pattern, perhaps an expected one, is that Bernstein's fast tempi are quicker than Walter's and his slow tempi are slower. For example, Bernstein's initial tempo of 156 is much faster than Walter's 128, but by measure 6, Bernstein has slowed to 64 and Walter establishes a tempo of 74. This is a trend that continues throughout the movement.

[1] The tempi of Walter and Bernstein's performances were determined using a Tempowatch. The tempi listed for Mahler are taken either from the autograph score or from one of the copyist's scores. Tempi from the autograph are listed in Kaplan, "How Mahler Performed His Second Symphony," 267. Tempi from the copyist's score are listed in Banks, "Mahler 2: Some Answers?" 205.

There are three other significant instances of extreme differences in tempo not included in Table 1. The first occurs at the beginning of the development, measure 112. The second theme (see m. 43) returns here, and Walter's tempo is 76 while Bernstein's is an extremely slow 40. Moving from extreme slowness to extreme quickness, in measure 191, where Mahler indicates that the tempo should move forward, Walter's tempo is a moderate 116 while Bernstein's reaches 150 beats per minute. This disparity is only surpassed by the sudden tempo change in measure 286, where Bernstein's 164 to the quarter note exceeds Walter's by almost forty beats per minute.

While differences between the two performances have been the main focus to this point, there are three ngly isolated instances where Walter's and Bernstein's tempi are virtually identical. In measures 34-35 both conductors slow the tempo; Walter arrives in measure 36 at a tempo of 65 and Bernstein's tempo the same measure is 62. Despite the drastic difference in tempo at the beginning of the development, thirteen measures later (m. 124), where a new theme is introduced, the difference in tempo between the two conductors is a barely noticeable two beats per minute. (Walter's 76 compared to Bernstein's 74) The third instance occurs in measure 265, where the *Dies irae* theme is first heard. Bernstein begins this portion of the development (m. 249 and following) ten beats per minute slower than Walter; however, when the *Dies irae* appears in measure 265, Bernstein's tempo has increased to 74 and Walter's tempo has also increased, although less drastically, to 72.

Perhaps the most significant difference between Walter's and Bernstein's interpretations, however, is not the actual performance tempi, but the progression of tempo throughout the movement. The concept of tempo progression is particularly important in light of Mahler's view that the correct tempo relationships within a movement are more important than the initial tempo (Kaplan 267). In the exposition, both Walter and Bernstein arrive at their fastest tempo in measures 74-79. Their overall tempo progressions, however, are strikingly different. Excluding the acceleration Walter makes in measures 74-79, his basic tempo progression is a paced, gradual acceleration from 74 (m. 6) to 94 (m. 97) throughout the exposition. Bernstein, on the other hand, maintains a relatively consistent, fundamental tempo throughout the first two themes of the exposition (mm. 6-60), slowing only slightly throughout from 64 to 59 beats per minute. The return of the introduction (m. 64) initiates a sudden spike in tempo and, after arriving at a peak tempo in measure 80, Bernstein slows to a tempo of 67 in measure 97.

Bernstein's tempo progression could be viewed in two ways. The first can be described as two parallel sections, measures 6-62 and measures 62-117 respectively, where a gradual slowing from an initial tempo occurs in each; alternatively, the progression can be described as an asymmetrical arch, where the initial tempo, 64, is essentially sustained, increases to a peak in measures 62-80, and then slows back to its starting point (mm. 97 and following). Despite Bernstein's significantly slower initial tempo, upon reviewing the tempi in Table 1 and Mahler's markings, one could argue that Bernstein's performance more accurately reflects the tempo progression indicated in the score than Walter's. It is important to note, however, that historical documents also seem to indicate that Mahler might not approve of the level of tempo exaggerations exhibited by Bernstein's performance (Kaplan and Franklin 561).

The above comparisons perhaps generate more questions than solutions. Does it not stand to reason that, if the fundamental, structural tempi taken by Walter and Bernstein are distinctly different, that all their tempi throughout the entire movement would also be so? Walter's initial tempo is closer to Mahler's metronome marking than Bernstein's, but Bernstein's tempo progression is more consistent with the score than Walter's. Is either correct? The confusion is further magnified by other issues, as well. Walter heard Mahler perform the Second Symphony in Hamburg (Chesterman 23), so how can his not be an "authentic" interpretation?

How can these two conductors take the same score and arrive at such different realizations when, according to Bernstein, "everything [is] so explicit and clear in [Mahler's] scores . . . I don't think there is any way of missing Mahler's intention if you have a basic sympathy with the music"? (Chesterman 70)

It seems likely that Mahler would find all of these questions about Walter's and Bernstein's, as well as other conductors', interpretations moot; "*Tradition ist Schlamperei* [tradition is slovenliness]," he famously said (A. Mahler 115). All the information necessary to bring a piece to life can be found in the score and, more importantly, the *music*. Mahler would never be considered a "purist" conductor in the modern sense because he frequently made significant alterations to other composers' scores. He and modern purists, however, would find common ground in that they all loath the "tradition" of performing a piece a certain way simply because "that's how it has been done before." When Mahler altered scores, he did so based not on what others had done, but on the premise that his alterations helped convey the composer's intentions – the "spirit" of the music (Walter, *Gustav Mahler* 80). It seems logical that he would expect conductors to approach his music in the same way.

Following some disappointing performances of his Symphony No. 5, Mahler wrote "anyone can read a book, but a musical score is a book with seven seals. Even the conductors who can decipher it, present it to the public soaked in their own interpretations" (A. Mahler, 93). This statement highlights one of the most essential issues in conducting: the role of the conductor in relation to the composer's score. For the visual artist, their work travels directly from the canvas to the viewer's eye; but in orchestral music the conductor is the lens through which an audience "sees" the art. The reality is that no matter how hard one tries to be true to the composer, subjectivity is inherent in the interpretation of a musical score. What each conductor must decide for him or herself is where to draw the sometimes very fine between realizing a composer's musical intentions and engaging in musical self-indulgence at the expense of a composer's work. This is one conflict that every conductor can share with Mahler.

*****

Nathaniel F. Parker is Director of Orchestral Activities and Assistant Professor of Music at Marywood University in Scranton, Pennsylvania. At Marywood, he serves as Music Director and Conductor of the Marywood University Orchestra and teaches courses in conducting, instrumental methods, musicology, and analytical techniques. He has led numerous performances with professional and student orchestras in the United States and has conducted professional orchestras in Peru, Russia, Poland, and the Czech Republic. Parker received a Doctor of Musical Arts in Orchestral Conducting from Michigan State University, where his primary instructors were Leon Gregorian and Raphael Jiménez. He received a Master of Music degree in Orchestral Conducting from Bowling Green State University, where he studied with Emily Freeman Brown; his other conducting mentors include Stephen Osmond, Gary W. Hill, and Timothy Russell. In addition to his training in academia, Dr. Parker participated in numerous conducting master classes and workshops in the United States and abroad, working under the tutelage of nationally and internationally renowned conductors and conducting pedagogues. Parker began his post-secondary education at Arizona State University, where he studied bassoon with Jeffrey G. Lyman and graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Music degree in Bassoon Performance.

WORKS CITED

Banks, Paul. "Mahler 2: Some Answers?" *The Musical Times* 128/1730 (April 1987): 203–206.

Bernstein, Leonard. "Lecture 5 – The Twentieth Century Crisis." *The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard*. The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures, 1973. 6-DVD Set. Dir. Clark Santee. West Long Branch, NJ: Kultur, 1992.

_____. *Findings*. London: Macdonald, 1982.

Chesterman, Robert, ed. *Conversations with Conductors*. London: Robson, 1976.

Kaplan, Gilbert E. "How Mahler Performed His Second Symphony." *The Musical Times* 127/1718 (May 1986): 266–271.

Kaplan, Gilbert E. and Peter Franklin. "Mahler and Tradition. Is There or Isn't There?" *The Musical Times* 133/1797 (November 1992): 559–563.

Lacy, Susan, dir. *Leonard Bernstein: Reaching for the Note*. DVD. New York: WinStar Home Entertainment, 1998.

Lebrecht, Norman. "The Variability of Mahler's Performances." *The Musical Times* 131/1768 (June 1990): 302–304.

Mahler, Alma. *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters*. 3d ed. Ed. Donald Mitchell. Trans. Basil Creighton. London: Cox & Wyman, 1973.

Mahler, Gustav. Symphony No. 2, "Resurrection." New York Philharmonic, cond. Leonard Bernstein. Sony Classical, 1997 (rec. 1963). CD.

_____. Symphony No. 2, "Resurrection." New York Philharmonic, cond. Bruno Walter. Sony Classical, 1994 (rec. 1958). CD.

Walter, Bruno. *Gustav Mahler*. Trans. James Galston. New York: Greystone, 1941.

Scores & Parts

Tchaikovsky Romeo & Juliet Fantasy—Overture
A guide to preparing a correct score and parts

By
David Bernard

INTRODUCTION

Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet Fantasy—Overture is a staple of the orchestra repertoire. With its abundant collective experience from countless performances, it is shocking that the materials available for performance contain significant errors and omissions. Norman Del Mar's "Orchestral Variations" is helpful, but only scratches the surface.

The objective of this guide is to help conductors and their librarians prepare a fully correct score and set of parts for Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture using the commonly available sources.

SOURCES AND MATERIALS

This article covers Tchaikovsky's third version of the Romeo and Juliet Fantasy—Overture, completed in 1880, which has become the commonly accepted version for concert performance. The currently available materials are:

Publisher	Item	Description
Bote & Bock	Full Score	The first edition of the full score that was published in 1881. This version is also the source for Dover's publication. Dover's reproduction of the Bote & Bock score is the source for the scanned PDF version available on IMSLP.
Bote & Bock	Parts	The first edition of the orchestral parts that was published in 1881. Note that there are errors that exist in these parts that are not in the score and vice-versa. This version is also the source for parts currently available from Kalmus, which was also used as the source for the scanned PDF parts available on IMSLP. The version of these parts on IMSLP have a few corrections marked by hand.
Eulenburg	Full Score	This edition of the Score appeared after Bote & Bock's first edition and contains a different set of errors and changes. As of this writing, the full score published by Kalmus is an enlarged version of the Eulenburg score. The Kalmus catalog therefore couples an enlarged reproduction of the Eulenburg score with a reproduction of the Bote & Bock parts, mixing editions.
Belaieff	Full Score	Published in 2006, this edition has corrected most, though not all, errors. Unfortunately, the orchestral parts that correspond to this Full Score are rental.

Note: This article does not provide notes on the Belaieff Orchestral Parts, which are available only as a rental.

CHOOSING AN EDITION

Parts

Orchestral parts are available in two editions: Bote & Bock and Belaieff.

Belaieff. The Belaieff parts have most, though not all, errors corrected. However, this edition is only available as a rental.

Bote & Bock. The Bote & Bock parts contain a fair amount of errors, many of which appear only in the parts and not in the score. This edition is available for purchase from Kalmus and Lucks Music Library and is also available for download from IMSLP.

Score

The large score is available in three editions: Kalmus (a reprint of the Eulenburg mini-score), Bote & Bock (also available as a Dover Reprint), and Belaieff.

Kalmus (Eulenburg Reprint). While both Kalmus/Eulenburg and Bote & Bock contain a fair amount of errors, Kalmus/Eulenburg has additional challenges. First, there is a measure numbering error. Eulenburg places measure 100 a measure late, and as a result, all numbering past this point is off by 1. In addition, Eulenburg made the decision to change the rendering of the high cello parts from tenor clef to treble clef using the old notation where notes are written an octave higher than they sound. On the plus side, the Kalmus/Eulenburg is much easier to read than Bote & Bock, but this is a small benefit when considering its flaws. Addressing the issues listed in this article will certainly assist in making a Kalmus/Eulenburg score usable for those who already own this edition, but the Eulenburg/Kalmus score is not recommended as a starting point.

Bote & Bock (Dover Reprint). While the Bote & Bock edition contains many errors, measure numbers and most rehearsal letters are correct. Readability of the notation is difficult. The availability of this edition as a low cost Dover reprint makes this a viable practical option once the errors are corrected.

Belaieff. Published in 2006, M.P. Belaieff's edition is the most current, and has corrected most errors. However, some errors do appear, including new errors introduced by Belaieff's editors. Also in preparing their edition, Belaieff's editors decided to dispense with the rehearsal letter scheme used by both Bote & Bock and Kalmus/Eulenburg, necessitating a comprehensive reapplication of rehearsal letters in this score when it is used alongside the Bote & Bock parts. Even so, the Belaieff edition is the best option for conductors as it corrects most errors and is the most readable.

REHEARSAL LETTERS/MEASURE NUMBERS

Ensuring conformity between score and parts with regards to measure numbers and rehearsal letters is essential. Please note:

- There is an error in the version of the Eulenburg score that was used as the basis for the Kalmus reprint, placing measure 100 one measure late, causing all measure numbers past that point to be off by 1.

- The editors of the Belaieff edition adopted a new rehearsal letter scheme that differs from all other sources. As a result, using the Belaieff score with the Bote & Bock parts requires changing all the rehearsal letters in the score.

- While all sources except the new Belaieff edition are in agreement on the placement of Rehearsal Letters, a few letters are missing in these scores and parts. These rehearsal letter anomalies have been noted in the "Structural Changes" section below.

The following measure number/rehearsal letter cross reference will be useful in adjusting the rehearsal letters in the Belaieff score to ensure consistency with the rehearsal letters in the Bote & Bock parts:

Measure Numbering Guide:

A=38
B=61
C=86
D=122
E=143
F=161
G=184
H=205
J=243
K=273
L=300
M=320
N=331
O=345
P=364
Q=387
R=419
S=446
T=462
U=485

STRUCTURAL CHANGES

This section contains a detailed listing of all structural changes across all of the covered sources. A structural change is one that, left uncorrected, would result in wasted rehearsal time.

Measure	Bote & Bock Full Score	Bote & Bock Parts	Eulenburg / Kalmus Full Score	Belaieff Full Score
12	**Viola.** Accent is missing on the third beat	**Viola.** Accent is missing on the third beat	**Viola.** Accent is missing on the third beat	Correct
14	**Violin 1.** Accent is missing on the third beat	**Violin 1**. Accent is missing on the third beat	**Violin 1.** Accent is missing on the third beat	Correct
28-29	Correct	Correct	**Viola.** Missing a diminuendo over two measures (corresponding to basses, winds and brass)	Correct
30	**Winds/Horns.** Add "P" as the dynamic here	**Winds/Horns.** Add "P" as the dynamic here	**Winds/Horns.** Add "P" as the dynamic here	**Winds/Horns.** Add "P" as the dynamic here
32	**Harp.** Add "P" as the dynamic here	**Harp.** Add "P" as the dynamic here	**Harp.** Add "P" as the dynamic here	**Harp.** Add "P" as the dynamic here
36	**Harp.** Add "PPP" as the dynamic here	**Harp.** Add "PPP" as the dynamic here	**Harp.** Add "PPP" as the dynamic here	**Harp.** Add "PPP" as the dynamic here
51	**Violin 1 & 2.** Add "P" as the dynamic here	**Violin 1 & 2.** Add "P" as the dynamic here	**Violin 1 & 2.** Add "P" as the dynamic here	Correct
61	Correct	**Viola.** Second quarter should be a D-natural.	**Viola.** Second quarter should be a D-natural.	Correct
72-73	Correct	**Viola.** A tie is missing between these measures (over G).	Correct	Correct
73	Correct	**Clarinet 1.** The natural sign next to the B in this measure is an error. It should be B-flat (tied to the previous note).	**Clarinet 1.** The natural sign next to the B in this measure is an error. It should be B-flat (tied to the previous note).	Correct
86	Correct	**Oboe 1.** The first note of this measure should be G-sharp.	Correct	Correct
88	**Horn 3.** Add "F" as the dynamic here	**Horn 3.** Add "F" as the dynamic here	**Horn 3.** Change the "P" dynamic to "F" here	Correct
102	**Bass.** The dynamic should be "PP" not "P"	**Bass.** The dynamic should be "PP" not "P"	Correct	Correct
115	Correct	**Violin 2.** The C on the third beat should be C-natural.	Correct	Correct

Measure	Bote & Bock Full Score	Bote & Bock Parts	Eulenburg / Kalmus Full Score	Belaieff Full Score
135	Correct	**Horn 4.** The tie is in the wrong place. It should be moved to join the last eighth of this measure to the downbeat of the next measure. **Viola.** The rhythm is incorrect and a tie is missing. The rhythm should be eighth rest-quarter-eighth tied to eighth. **Bass.** A tie is missing between the two eighth notes (2+ to 3).	Correct	Correct
139	Correct	**Viola.** The last note of this measure should be changed from a quarter note to an eighth note.	Correct	Correct
140	Correct	**Viola.** The second note of this measure should be changed from a quarter note to an eighth note.	Correct	Correct
151	**Trumpet 1.** Last note (eighth note) should be changed from a "G" to an "A"	**Trumpet 1.** Last note (eighth note) should be changed from a "G" to an "A"	**Trumpet 1.** Last note (eighth note) should be changed from a "G" to an "A"	Correct.
157	Correct	**Clarinet 1.** Beat 2+ should be changed from an "A" to the "C" above it. **Viola.** The slur should end with the fourth 16th note of this measure, re-articulating the fifth 16th note starting the second beat.	Correct	Correct
159	**Violin 1.** The high "A" figure on the second beat of this measure should be changed to a high "F-sharp" a third below (similar to the second beat of 160).	Correct	Correct	Correct
164	**Bass.** The "C-sharp" dotted half should be changed to an "A" dotted half a third lower	Correct	Correct	Correct
168	Correct	Correct	**Cello/Bass.** The "Bassi" indication is unnecessary and should be removed	Correct

Measure	Bote & Bock Full Score	Bote & Bock Parts	Eulenburg / Kalmus Full Score	Belaieff Full Score
174	**Clarinets and Bassoons.** Technically not an error, but for consistency and readability the rhythm should be changed to match 175	**Clarinets and Bassoons.** Technically not an error, but for consistency and readability the rhythm should be changed to match 175	Correct	Correct
184	**Horn 1.** The flat sign on the second quarter should be moved to the first quarter, resulting in "E-Flat" throughout the measure.	Correct	**All.** Add rehearsal letter "G"	See note on Belaieff rehearsal letters
211	**Cello (lower divisi).** First quarter should be a G-Natural. The natural sign is missing.	Correct	Correct	Correct
212	Correct	**Oboe 2.** Add a slur over the 16th note run on the 2nd to 4th beats.	Correct	Correct
254	**Bassoon 2.** "P" is missing from the downbeat here.	**Bassoon 2.** "P" is missing from the downbeat here. Also the diminuendo should end with the "P" on the downbeat.	**Bassoon 2.** "P" is missing from the downbeat here.	Correct
257-258	**Bassoon 2.** Add a Sf, dim leading to "P" on the following downbeat, similar to the Cello.	**Bassoon 2.** After the Sf, add a dim leading to "P" on the following downbeat, similar to the Cello.	**Bassoon 2.** After the Sf, add a dim leading to "P" on the following downbeat, similar to the Cello.	Correct
260	**Strings (but not Bass).** As a practical matter, move the "Senza Sordino" from 273 to 260	**Strings (but not Bass).** As a practical matter, move the "Senza Sordino" from 273 to 260	**Strings (but not Bass).** As a practical matter, move the "Senza Sordino" from 273 to 260	**Strings (but not Bass).** As a practical matter, move the "Senza Sordino" from 273 to 260
273	Correct	**Bassoon 1.** A whole rest is missing from this measure. **Cello & Bass.** "Arco" should be added here.	**Cello & Bass.** "Arco" should be added here.	Correct
275	Correct	**Bassoon 1.** A tie is missing over the two eighth notes (beats 2+ to 3)	Correct	Correct
279	**Strings.** Add a diminuendo over the full measure here (as in 301)	**Strings.** Add a diminuendo over the full measure here (as in 301)	**Strings.** Add a diminuendo over the full measure here (as in 301)	**Strings.** Add a diminuendo over the full measure here (as in 301)
289	Correct	**Trumpet 1 (Transposed Notation Part Only).** F-double sharp.	Correct	Correct
293	Correct	**Violin 1.** Third note should be changed from a quarter note to an eighth note.	Correct	Correct

Measure	Bote & Bock Full Score	Bote & Bock Parts	Eulenburg / Kalmus Full Score	Belaieff Full Score
295	Correct	**Horn 1.** The written E is missing a flat sign—the note should be E-Flat.	Correct	Correct
301	Correct	**Flute 1.** The first note should be changed from a quarter note to an eighth note.	Correct	Correct
319	**Flute 1.** First note (half note) should be C-flat, not C-natural.	**Flute 1.** First note (half note) should be C-flat, not C-natural.	**Flute 1 and 2.** First note (half note) should be Flute 1: C-flat, Flute 2: A-flat (A-flat carries over through the measure)	Correct
320	Correct	**Flute 2.** First note (quarter note) should be a D-flat, not D-natural.	Correct	Correct
333	**Bassoon 1 and 2.** The last eighth of this measure should be an "A-natural" not an "A-sharp"	**Bassoon 1 and 2.** The last eighth of this measure should be an "A-natural" not an "A-sharp"	**Bassoon 1 and 2.** The last eighth of this measure should be an "A-natural" not an "A-sharp"	Correct
334	**Bassoon 1 and 2.** The first eighth of this measure should be an "A-natural" not an "A-sharp" (tied from the previous measure)	**Bassoon 1 and 2.** The first eighth of this measure should be an "A-natural" not an "A-sharp" (tied from the previous measure) **Bassoon 2.** The C-natural after the second beat should be changed to a C-sharp.	**Bassoon 1 and 2.** The first eighth of this measure should be an "A-natural" not an "A-sharp" (tied from the previous measure). **Bassoon 2.** The C-natural after the second beat should be changed to a C-sharp.	Correct
337	Correct	**Oboe 2.** The quarter rest on the third beat of this measure should be changed to an eighth rest.	Correct	Correct
338	Correct	**Clarinet 2.** Remove the eighth rest at the end of this measure	Correct	Correct
342	**Violin 1.** Last eighth. Top note should be "B" as in the previous chord and should not go down to "A"	Correct	Correct	Correct
345-349	**Bass Drum.** After the initial strike, the bass drum is missing until the final chord in this passage. Recommend adding Bass Drum alongside each Cymbal hit in this passage.	**Bass Drum.** After the initial strike, the bass drum is missing until the final chord in this passage. Recommend adding Bass Drum alongside each Cymbal hit in this passage.	**Bass Drum.** After the initial strike, the bass drum is missing until the final chord in this passage. Recommend adding Bass Drum alongside each Cymbal hit in this passage.	**Bass Drum.** After the initial strike, the bass drum is left out of three cymbal hits in 345-346. Recommend adding Bass Drum alongside each Cymbal hit in this passage.

Measure	Bote & Bock Full Score	Bote & Bock Parts	Eulenburg / Kalmus Full Score	Belaieff Full Score
352	Correct	**Clarinet 1.** The C-natural on the second beat (eighth note) should be a C-sharp.	**Clarinet 1.** The C-natural on the second beat (eighth note) should be a C-sharp.	Correct
356	**Cymbal.** Rhythm is incorrect. Should be eighth rest, eighth note (instead of quarter rest, quarter note).	**Cymbal.** Rhythm is incorrect. Should be eighth rest, eighth note (instead of quarter rest, quarter note).	**Cymbal.** Rhythm is incorrect. Should be eighth rest, eighth note (instead of quarter rest, quarter note).	**Cymbal.** Rhythm is incorrect. Should be eighth rest, eighth note (instead of quarter rest, quarter note).
365	Correct	Correct	**Timpani.** "Muta in Fis-A" should be changed to "Muta Fis in A"	Correct
373, 375	Correct	**Oboe 1.** Add a tie between the "A" quarter notes on beats 2 and 3.	**Oboe 1.** Add a tie between the "A" quarter notes on beats 2 and 3.	Correct
387	Correct	**Flute 1.** Second Quarter should be an "F-Natural", not an "F-Sharp"	Correct	Correct
411	Correct	Correct	**Timpani.** "Muta in A-Fis" should be changed to "Muta A in Fis"	Correct
412	**Viola.** 2^{nd}-3^{rd} and 4^{th} quarters should be "C#-D-E" not "E-F#-G" (a third lower).	**Viola.** 2^{nd}-3^{rd} and 4^{th} quarters should be "C#-D-E" not "E-F#-G" (a third lower).	**Viola.** 2^{nd}-3^{rd} and 4^{th} quarters should be "C#-D-E" not "E-F#-G" (a third lower).	Correct
427	**Flute 1 and Oboe 1.** Rhythm is incorrect in the first two quarters--should be dotted quarter then eighth.	Correct	Correct	Correct
435	**Trombone 1.** Second Quarter should be a D# not a D-natural (same as previous measure—sharp is missing)	Correct	Correct	Correct
443	**Violin 2.** The triplet on the third beat should be "F#-G" not "E-F#"	**Violin 2.** The triplet on the third beat should be "F#-G" not "E-F#"	**Violin 2.** The triplet on the third beat should be "F#-G" not "E-F#"	Correct
453	**English Horn.** First note should be an eighth to match the rest of the winds. For consistency, the brass, bassoons, cello and bass should also be changed to an eighth.	Correct	Correct	Correct

Measure	Bote & Bock Full Score	Bote & Bock Parts	Eulenburg / Kalmus Full Score	Belaieff Full Score
454	**Bass Drum.** The whole measure rest should be replaced with two quarter note strokes on the first and second beat, as in 455.	**Bass Drum.** The whole measure rest should be replaced with two quarter note strokes on the first and second beat, as in 455.	**Bass Drum.** The whole measure rest should be replaced with two quarter note strokes on the first and second beat, as in 455.	**Bass Drum.** The whole measure rest should be replaced with two quarter note strokes on the first and second beat, as in 455.
455	Correct	**Trumpet 2.** The first note is missing a dot. Should be a dotted eighth-sixteenth.	Correct	Correct
459	**Viola.** Third 16th note should be an "E" not an "F-Sharp". The four sixteenth notes in the first beat should be identical to the four sixteenth notes in the second beat.	**Viola.** Third 16th note should be an "E" not an "F-Sharp". The four sixteenth notes in the first beat should be identical to the four sixteenth notes in the second beat.	**Viola.** Third 16th note should be an "E" not an "F-Sharp". The four sixteenth notes in the first beat should be identical to the four sixteenth notes in the second beat.	Correct
462	**All.** Rehearsal Letter "T" is missing.	**All.** Rehearsal Letter "T" is missing.	**All.** Rehearsal Letter "T" is missing.	See note on Belaieff rehearsal letters
463	Correct	Correct	Correct	**Oboe 1 & 2, English Horn.** The rhythm on the second beat is incorrect. It should be eighth-sixteenth-sixteenth, not sixteenth-sixteenth-eighth
465	Correct	**Flute 2.** "G" on second quarter should be a "G-Flat" not a "G-Natural". The natural sign is in error and should be replaced with a flat.	Correct	Correct
468	**Bass.** In beat 1, the off-beat should be an "E" not an "F-sharp".	Correct	**Bass.** In beat 1, the off-beat should be an "E" not an "F-sharp".	Correct
469	Correct	**Bass.** In beat 1, the off-beat should be an "F-sharp" not an "E"	**Bass.** In beat 1, the off-beat should be an "F-sharp" not an "E"	Correct
470	**English Horn.** On the fourth beat, the "G" eighth note should be a "G-natural"	**English Horn.** On the fourth beat, the "G" eighth note should be a "G-natural"	**English Horn.** On the fourth beat, the "G" eighth note should be a "G-natural"	Correct
473	Correct	**Trumpet 1.** The first note of this measure has a flat which is in error. This note should be a "D-Natural" in original notation or "G-Natural" in the transposed part.	Correct	Correct

Measure	Bote & Bock Full Score	Bote & Bock Parts	Eulenburg / Kalmus Full Score	Belaieff Full Score
478	Correct	**Violin 1 (Lower).** The first quarter note is missing a ledger line in between the top and bottom note. After adding a ledger line, the bottom note should read "A" not "C"	Correct	Correct
507	**Oboe 2.** There is a natural sign missing from the entrance on the second half of this measure. The note should be "A-natural" not "A-sharp"	**Oboe 2.** There is a natural sign missing from the entrance on the second half of this measure. The note should be "A-natural" not "A-sharp"	**Oboe 2.** There is a natural sign missing from the entrance on the second half of this measure. The note should be "A-natural" not "A-sharp"	Correct
510	Correct	**Flutes.** Though technically not an error, reminder sharp signs should be placed on the "D-sharps" at the beginning of this measure.	Correct	Correct

INTERPRETIVE CHANGES

In addition to the structural changes above, the following Interpretive Changes—changes that are not due to error, but still require consideration—are included to complete this article.

Measure Number	Description
315	Violin 1 and 2 have a full quarter as the third note in this measure, differing from the corresponding passage at measure 297 that contains an eighth note and an eighth rest. All sources are in agreement with the altered repetition, but the alternate solution, adjusting measure 315 to conform with measure 297, has its merits and is viable.
446, 454	All sources are in agreement with avoiding the Cymbal hits in measures 446-448 and 454-456 that would conform to other tuttis. However, many conductors have added them back in.
509	The Harp's G-flat major chords in the lower line have been reinterpreted in the Belaieff edition. Bote & Bock and Eulenburg/Kalmus have 2nd Inversion (D-flat in the bass), 1st inversion (B-flat in the bass), 2nd inversion (D-flat in the bass), Root (G-flat in the bass) leading to the C-flat root chord on the downbeat of 510. The Belaieff edition provides an alternate approach with 2nd inversion (D-flat in the bass), Root (G-flat in the bass), 1st inversion (B-flat in the bass), 2nd inversion (D-flat in the bass) leading to the C-flat root chord on the downbeat of 510. Belaieff's reading has some merit musically by providing a more natural ascent and avoiding the awkward gaps of the traditional approach. However, the justification provided by Belaieff's editors is somewhat misleading. Belaieff's editorial notes cite "There are incorrect chords in the second, third and fourth crotchets in all editions. We follow A." "A" is defined as "Autograph score (first version and some fragments of the second version)."

	Reviewing the earlier versions of Romeo and Juliet, the ascending harp chords in measure 439ff of the first version and measure 529ff of the second version do indeed appear in consecutive inversions, but the chords start in a different position (Root) and leave a gap, forcing a shift just before the final chord, similar to the Bote & Bock and Eulenburg/Kalmus rendering of the third version. It is therefore difficult to conclude that the passages in the older versions dictate the solution Belaieff has provided. Belaieff's labelling of the traditional rendering of this passage as reflected in Bote & Bock/Eulenburg/Kalmus as "incorrect" is perhaps too strong a description of the variance. The decision to adopt the Belaieff rendering is a musical choice and does not likely have a scholarly mandate.

CONCLUSION

Tchaikovsky's Romeo & Juliet Fantasy—Overture is an important work in the symphonic repertoire. It is the hope of this author that this guide will help conductors and their librarians ensure the best possible performances through use of fully corrected and clean parts and scores.

*****

David Bernard is Music Director of New York City's Park Avenue Chamber Symphony and is an active guest conductor, recently appearing with the China Conservatory Orchestra, the Long Island String Festival, the Massapequa Philharmonic, the New York Symphonic Arts Ensemble, the Putnam Symphony and the South Shore Symphony Orchestra. A two-time First Prize Winner of the Orchestral Conducting competition of The American Prize, David Bernard's discography includes 17 albums spanning music from Vivaldi to Copland, and released on Amazon.com, iTunes, Napster and Rhapsody.

Guidelines for Contributors

The manuscript should be for readers who have expertise in diverse areas of music and conducting, and are interested in broadening their knowledge of current research and writing in the field.

The manuscript must be double-spaced with 1.25" margins on top, bottom and sides, including endnotes/footnotes and references, and should follow the style recommendations as set forth in the Chicago Manual of Style or the Modern Language Association (MLA) style manual.

The type size of the manuscript should be no smaller than 12 point.

The entire manuscript including abstract and any pictures, graphs, or musical examples should not exceed 20 pages.

Graphs, musical examples and pictures should be high resolution and accompanied by texts and captions as they are to appear in the articles. These items must be submitted as separate files (a photo embedded in a Word document is not acceptable). Files in the .jpg format are preferred.

To preserve anonymity in the review process, the authors name must not appear anywhere on either the abstract or the article.

Manuscripts submitted simultaneously to other journals will not be considered.

The Publication Process

1. Submit an electronic version (MS Word file) of the manuscript and a 100-word abstract to the Publications Coordinator (PC) by email. Electronic copies of the manuscript on a CD may also be submitted by mail.

2. The PC sends copies of the manuscript and abstract to the Editor.

3. The peer review committee determines whether the manuscript: a) is not accepted for publication; b) is accepted for publication with suggested revisions; or c) is accepted for publication as is.

4. Peer Reviewers send article back to the editor and publications coordinator with comments (from 3.)

5. If revisions are needed, the manuscript(s) will be returned to the author for corrections. The author then resubmits the manuscript to the PC with the appropriate revisions.

6. The PC will format the corrections complete with pictures, graphs, musical examples, etc., and send to the Editor for final approval.

7. The formatted proofs are sent back to the author for final approval.

8. The manuscript is then published in the Journal of the Conductors Guild.

CONDUCTORS GUILD

...Advancing the Art and Profession

Mission of the Conductors Guild

The Conductors Guild is dedicated to encouraging and promoting

the highest standards in the art and profession of conducting.

The Conductors Guild is the only music service organization devoted exclusively to the advancement of the art of conducting and to serving the artistic and professional needs of conductors. The Guild is international in scope, with a membership of over 1,600 individual and institutional members representing all fifty states and more than thirty countries, including conductors of major stature and international renown. Membership is open to all conductors and institutions involved with instrumental and/or vocal music, including symphony and chamber orchestra, opera, ballet/dance, chorus, music theatre, wind ensemble and band.

History of the Conductors Guild

The Conductors Guild was founded in 1975 at the San Diego Conference of the American Symphony Orchestra League, and it continued for a decade as a subsidiary of that organization. In 1985 the Guild became independent. Since then, it has expanded its services and solidified its role as a collective voice for conductors' interest everywhere. It is supported by membership dues, grants, donations and program fees and is registered with the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit corporation.

Purposes of the Conductors Guild

1. To share and exchange relevant musical and professional information about the art of conducting orchestras, bands, choruses, opera, ballet, musical theater and other instrumental and vocal ensembles;

2. To support the development and training of conductors through workshops seminars, and symposia on the art of conducting, including, but not limited to, its history, development and current practice;

3. To publish periodicals, newsletters and other writings on the art, history and practice of the profession of conducting;

4. To enhance the professionalism of conductors by serving as a clearing house for knowledge and information regarding the art and practice of conducting;

5. To serve as an advocate for conductors throughout the world;

6. To support the artistic growth of orchestras, bands, choruses and other conducted ensembles; and to communicate to the music community the views and opinions of the Guild.

Conductors Guild

...Advancing the Art and Profession

719 Twinridge Ln.
Richmond, VA 23235