

as well to Jeff Hodges of the College of Music for ideas leading to my Peter Gabriel/Primus chapter in *Listening Subjects*.

My gratitude also to my son Jakob for his patience and support during the writing of this book. Thanks as well to Amy for her love and support.

CHAPTER ONE

The Rise of the Conductor and the Missing One

In the eighteenth century, orchestras in Germany, England, France, and Italy performed symphonies with at least two “conductors.”¹ The composer (or his surrogate)² sat at a keyboard or harpsichord filling in harmony, and the concertmaster sat or stood at the head of the first violin section beating time.³ This is the well-known “double direction” of eighteenth-century, European orchestral performance.⁴ Throughout the late eighteenth century, the roles of these conductors underwent a series of gradual transformations, leading to the emergence in the early nineteenth century of the single conductor of the modern era.⁵ I would like to understand this conversion of double direction into single direction in both musical-historical and psychoanalytic terms.⁶ I will focus on developments in German-speaking countries.⁷

A Historical View

Social spaces in Germany and the structure of the orchestra itself changed from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. Where, earlier, orchestral music functioned in courts and the church, now orchestral music began to be played to the new and rising middle class. Isolated, single concerts transformed into the modern subscription series, and concerts moved from the church, theater, opera house, and tavern to the new, modern concert hall.⁸

The symphony orchestra became standardized into choirs of clearly defined sections (strings, winds, brass), with a relatively fixed number of players in each section. These sections were laid out on stage in a

wide variety of configurations that became standard in the early nineteenth century.⁹ The individual music stand became the standard platform from which performers projected music to the audience in the new space of the concert hall.¹⁰

The idea and ideology of the genius developed during this period.¹¹ Works of great composers contained difficult musical effects that required coordinated execution in performance. Standardized procedures of orchestral rehearsal became the norm.¹² Single movements and opera excerpts were played less and less frequently in favor of performances of entire instrumental works. The concertmaster gradually ceased playing his violin while conducting orchestral performances and instead beat time (with audible time-beating declining in favor of silent time beating) with his bow, a baton, a roll of paper, or a handkerchief.

By the early nineteenth century, the Kapellmeister and the concertmaster merged into the single modern conductor, who made music with his back turned to his audience. This turn might seem to be a turn *away* from the audience, but I would like to understand it as a turn *toward* a new kind of textuality in music in the early years of historical modernism.

A Psychoanalytic View

This 180-degree conversion of the conductor away from his audience toward his players connects the history of the conductor to the mirror phase of Lacanian psychoanalysis.¹³ The imaginary plane that both separates and connects audience and performer in the modern concert hall is like a mirror.¹⁴ Lacan has shown how the mirror phase connects the developing subject to an ideal self reflected in the (m)other's face in a complex and kinetic series of identifications and (mis)identifications. The mutually exclusive binary categories of mirror identification and (mis)identification underwrite elemental components of subjectivity reflected by a wide variety of structures in social space.¹⁵

The mirror phase is embedded in the practice of a conductor walking out onto a stage and facing an audience, and, crucially, making eye contact with it. He has taken his place in the imaginary plane that both connects and severs him from his audience. This is the dimension of specular identification between conductor and audience.¹⁶ Having made eye contact, the conductor turns his back on the audience. The audience directly sees the musicians looking at the conductor and indirectly sees the conductor looking at the musicians. This moment is the ap-

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pearance of the gaze. Eyes look; when eyes look at eyes looking, the gaze opens—a structure of displaced, transposed looks in the visual field of the Other.¹⁷

Space opens in the modern musical text at precisely the moment the modern musical text itself comes into being. In one prolonged and complex historical “moment,” music becomes too complex for a coherent performance under the conditions of double direction. At such a moment, the emerging complexity of music has already produced a new kind of meaning that demands a new kind of musician. The modern, single conductor creates the illusion of coherence over and over again, from one performance of a great masterpiece to another, pulling the elements of music together around a vortex of silence through gaze and gesture.¹⁸

Eighteenth-Century Double Direction and the Orchestra

Eighteenth-century orchestras played in theaters, churches, and concert halls, with opera orchestras tending to be larger than court orchestras (Galkin 35).¹⁹ Schünemann suggests that on average the eighteenth-century orchestra had from four to twenty violins with “corresponding winds”; apparently the other instruments were not even counted on a systematic basis (Schünemann 183). Schünemann points out that there were occasionally very large orchestras, many formed to perform and celebrate one of Western history's first great composers—Handel.²⁰ The 1786 Handel celebration in Berlin had an orchestra of thirty-eight first violins, thirty-nine second violins, eighteen violas, twenty-three celli, fifteen basses, plus winds; other massive performances honored Handel in London (1784) and Stettin (1785) (Schünemann 183). The number of players in an eighteenth-century orchestra thus varied widely from place to place and from occasion to occasion. And, from one eighteenth-century orchestra to another, the placements of instruments on stage also varied widely. The fluidity of the number of musicians in an orchestra and placement of instruments on stage has much to do with the double direction of the eighteenth-century orchestra and the gradually evolving roles of these two conductors. I shall examine the nature of eighteenth-century double direction with special attention to the placement of instruments on stage, the nature of the stages themselves, and the relationships among musicians on stage and the audience.²¹

Heinrich Christian Koch defined the Kapellmeister in his *Musik-Lexicon* of 1802 as associated with the composer or as the composer's

surrogate. He has the score with him during rehearsal and performance and fills in harmonies as required, cues entries, and holds together all aspects of a work's performance and rehearsal, including determining the number and placement of performers (Galkin 157–58).²² As early as 1703 Sébastien de Brossard included in his *Dictionnaire de musique* an entry under “Capo,” suggesting that the French equivalent of the German Kapellmeister was, in his view, a teacher of the members of the orchestra (quoted in Galkin 145). Schünemann reports that Rousseau, Junker, Petri, and Hock agree that the basses should be placed next to the keyboard or harpsichord. As a result, the basses could take the beat from the Kapellmeister and transfer it to the rest of the orchestra. The proximity of basses to the keyboard is reflected in a number of sketches that have survived depicting the layout of eighteenth-century orchestras. Figure 1 is adapted from a sketch from Max Seiffert that shows a Kapellmeister at the middle of an orchestra, with no audience shown. The celli and basses are very close to the Kapellmeister (“a” and “b” in the sketch).²³

An arrangement that more closely resembles the modern binary of audience/performer can be seen in the sketch of the Gewandhaus orchestra (Figure 2). Notice that a horizontal line separates the performers from the audience in the sketch; there are celli in front of the Kapellmeister. Their backs were probably turned to the audience since their function was to communicate the beat provided by the Kapellmeister to the rest of the orchestra.

Another common feature of the eighteenth-century orchestra was to have, in addition to the basses, the concertmaster close to the Kapellmeister. According to Koch, the concertmaster was responsible for placing, tuning, and organizing the practical needs of a performance.²⁴ Koch says it is far more important for him to be a well-rounded and experienced musician than an accomplished soloist. The concertmaster is usually the first chair, first violin (Galkin 176–77).²⁵ Figure 3 shows the Bachmann Liebhaberkonzert of Berlin (with the concertmaster marked with a “b+”).

In Figure 3, an ascending stage is indicated, and you can see basses (“e”) both near the Kapellmeister (“a”) and against the far wall to the left. In addition you can see the concertmaster separated from the other first violins. What strikes the eye about the Seiffert, Gewandhaus, and Bachmann Liebhaberkonzert orchestras is that the double direction is from the middle of the musicians. It is important to imagine how self-evident the presence of the double directors in the midst of the music

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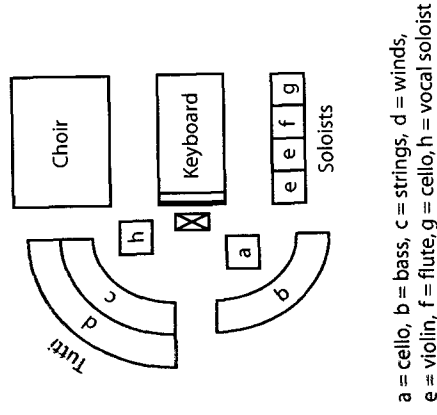


Figure 1

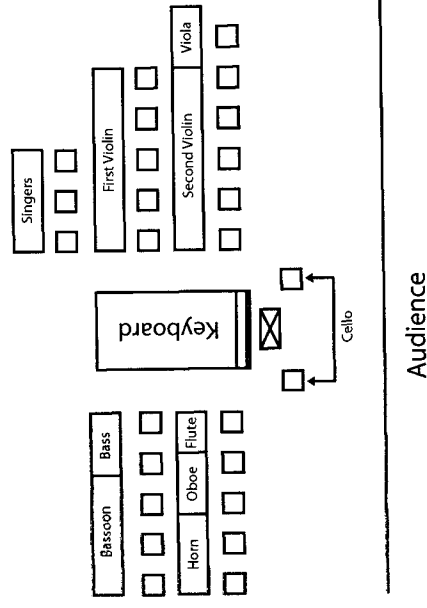
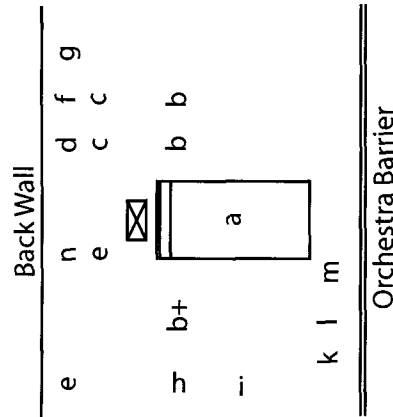


Figure 2

must have seemed to an eighteenth-century concertgoer. It is difficult, however, to get a clear sense of who sees whom from these sketches. A contemporary writer criticized the Bachmann Liebhaberkonzert arrangement, saying the concertmaster had his back to the Kapellmeister (Schünemann 189). Rellstab's Berlin Orchestra sought to correct this problem (Figure 4).

In Rellstab's arrangement, the concertmaster (“b+”) can see the Kapellmeister (“a”), and there is a stand of basses (“e”) near the Kapellmeister as well. Still, it would seem, given the placement of letters on the sketch, that the musicians were not all looking in the same direction.



The stage is elevated from the main floor and ascends toward the back wall.

a = keyboard; b = first violin; b+ = concertmaster;
c = second violin; d = viola; e = basses; f = oboe;
g = horns; h = bassoons; i = flute; k, l, m = soloist
and singers; n = choir

Figure 3

Quantz made a suggestion according to which no musician would have his back to the audience (Figure 5).

Quantz's arrangement had the basses and concertmaster near to and looking at the Kapellmeister without any musician's back turned to the audience. Junker found Quantz's plan too spread out and wanted to have the musicians surround the keyboard, according to the plan shown in Figure 6.

Figure 7 shows Petri's plan for triple direction: the Kapellmeister at the keyboard (called "director" in the sketch), the concertmaster to his right (called "leader: first violin"), and the first-chair cello (called "leader: cello") as a second concertmaster for the lower strings.

The orchestra that performed Handel's *Messiah* in Berlin in 1786 brings together these multiple directing agencies (Figure 8). There is a director ("a") in front of the entire ensemble, a Kapellmeister ("b") with cello and basses at each side ("e"), and a concertmaster ("c") just to the left of the front of the Kapellmeister. Five musicians led the performance from the middle of an enormous ensemble of singers and musicians. This is very similar to the immense orchestra of the 1784 *Messiah* performance in London.

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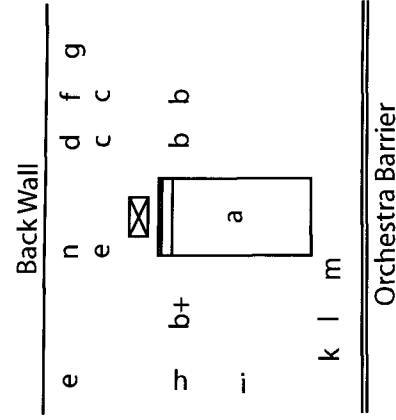
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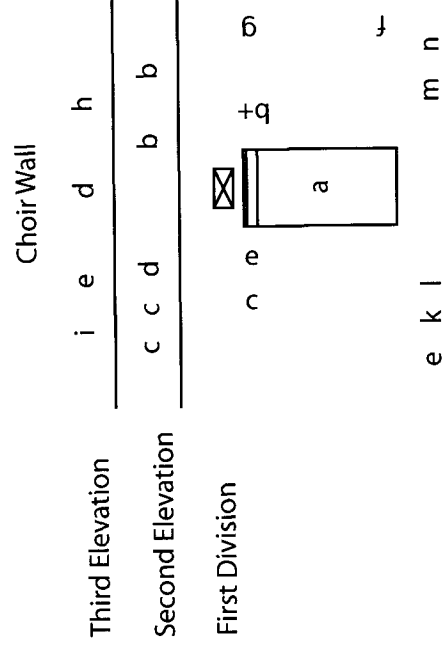
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Figure 4

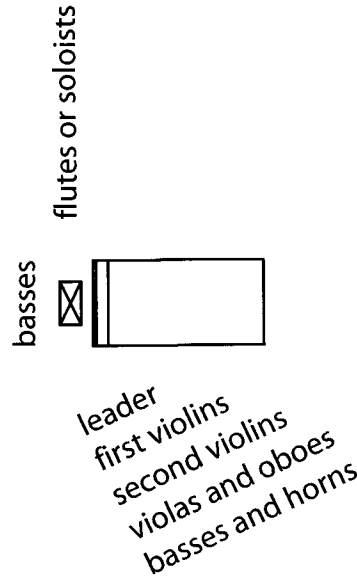


Figure 5

You can catch a glimpse of the modern orchestral arrangement in Junker's diagram (Figure 9) of the orchestra at Mannheim—the famous for their uniform bowings and crescendo-decrescendo techniques (Galkin 72–73).²⁶ At Mannheim the Kapellmeister is the central focus of the orchestra at the center of an imaginary circle enclosing both the performers and, implicitly, the audience. The basses are close to the Kapellmeister as in so many eighteenth-century, double-direction orchestras. Junker's Mannheim diagram clearly shows that neither the winds nor strings are yet conceived as orchestral colors of their own.²⁷

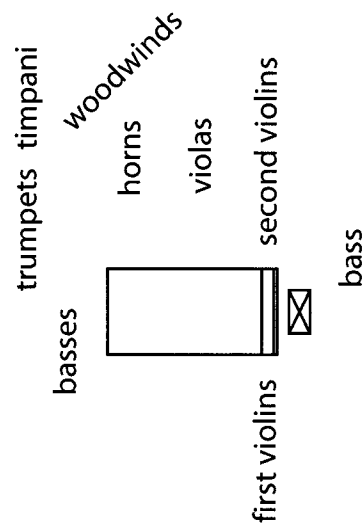


Figure 6

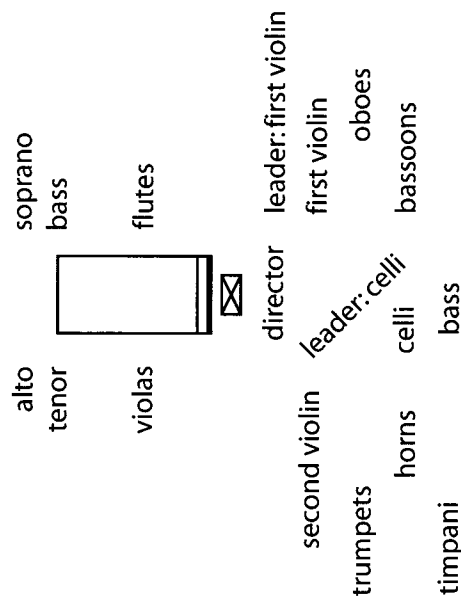


Figure 7

Reichardt's orchestra got rid of the keyboard—a bold step at the time (Figure 10). According to contemporary accounts, there were basses (omitted in the diagram) close to the Kapellmeister;²⁸ he conducted with a violin bow or baton with the concertmaster close by. The core of sound is clearly the strings with winds and brass at the edges. The conductor faces out toward the audience from the back of the theater wall. The omission of the keyboard is a profound gesture, taking leave of a powerful instrument of double direction.²⁹ Reichardt also added a special podium from which to conduct (Schünemann 257).³⁰

The layout of the Hofkapelle in Vienna (Figure 11) shows the emergence of the winds as a clearly autonomous section of the orchestra. In

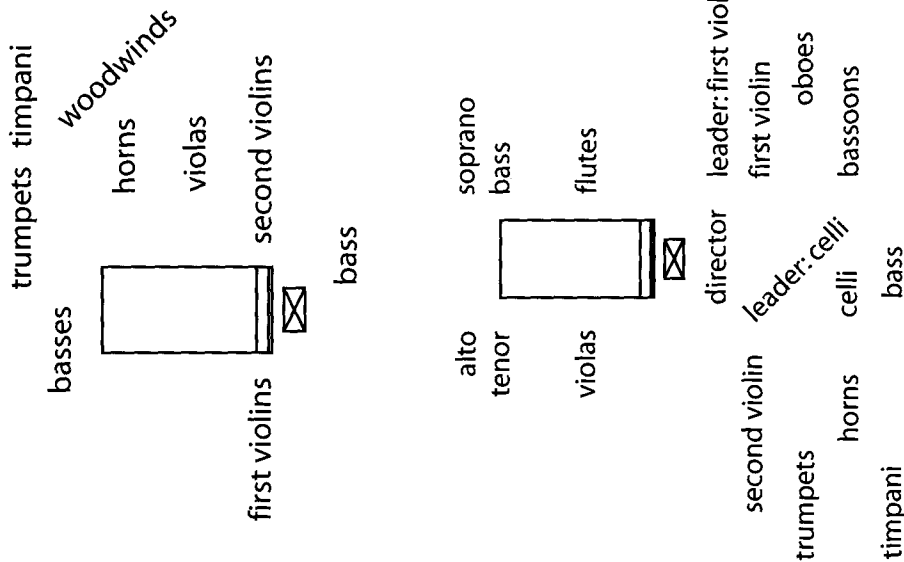
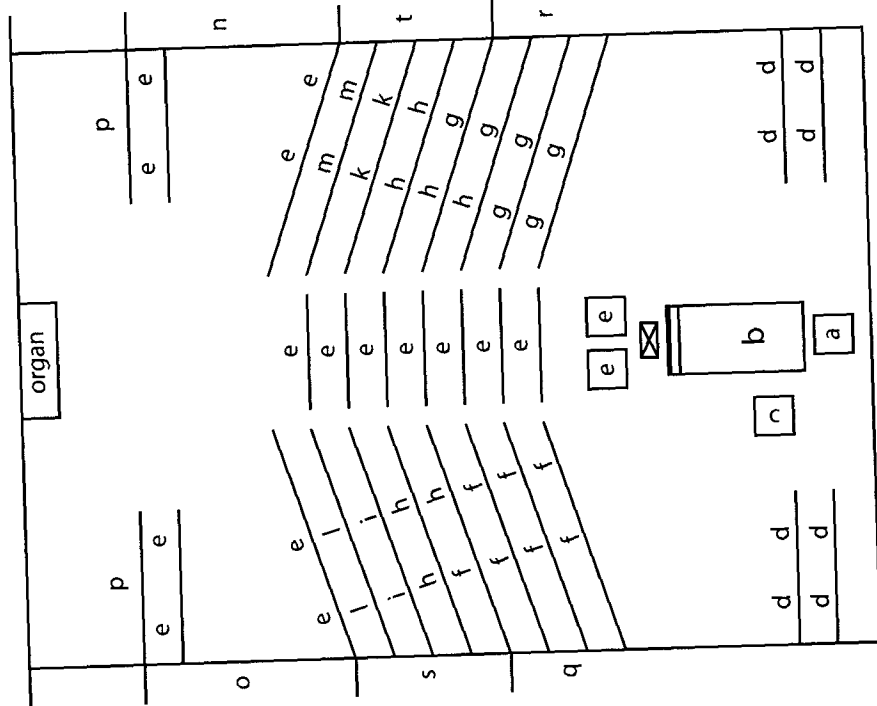


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Figure 8

this diagram you can start to see the contemporary orchestral layout emerging. There are clear choirs of strings, winds, and brass (although the brass are split, with trumpets on one side of the organist and trombones and horns on the other). The conductor is at the center of the orchestra on an elevated podium. The elevation helped the conductor literally rise above the orchestra, to better be seen, of course, but the



Figure 9

theater wall

e	a	c	a	a	a	e	e
e	a	c	c	a	a	p	e
i	h	g	e	e	f	f	k

a = Kapellmeister, b+ = concertmaster, b = first violins, c = second violins, d = violas, e = basses, f = horns, g = flutes, h = oboes, i = bassoons, k = clarinets, l = trombones, m = trumpets, n = tympani, o = harp

Figure 10

elevation also suggests a metaphorical rise in musical and aesthetic mastery and status. The concertmaster and the basses are still near one another.

A similar independence of the wind section can be seen from the diagram of an orchestra in Dresden (Figure 12). As with the Hofkapelle in Vienna, the strings, winds, and brass sections are clear. In addition, the conductor has moved to the very front of the orchestra and each level moving back from him to the wall of the hall is increasingly elevated.³¹ Music is thus projected out toward the audience.³² In the early nineteenth century, the orchestra gradually assumed its contemporary form. The orchestras of Mannheim, Leipzig, and Paris contained a roughly uniform one-to-eight ratio of winds to strings by the second

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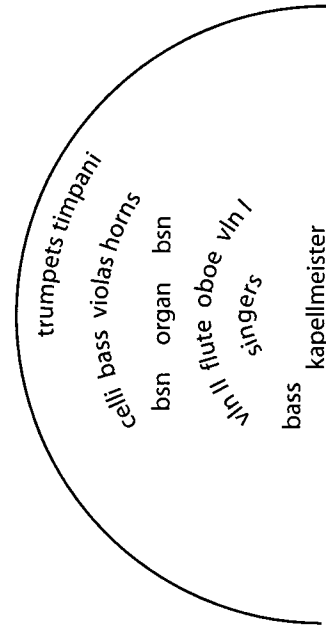


Figure 9

theater wall															
e	a	c	a	a	a	p	e	e							
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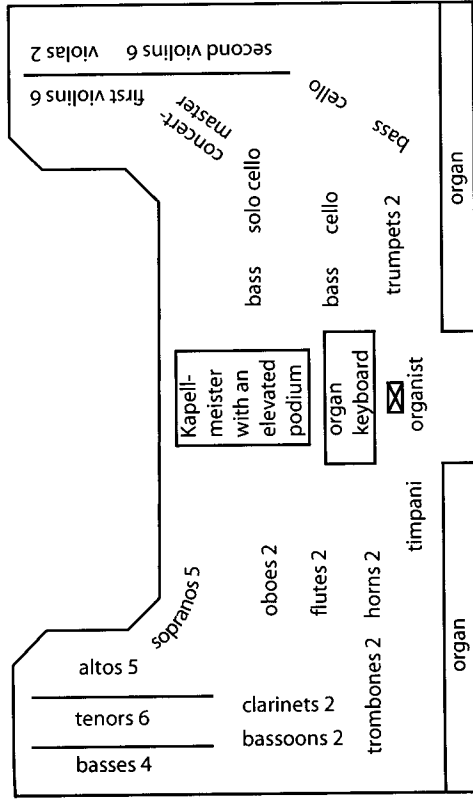


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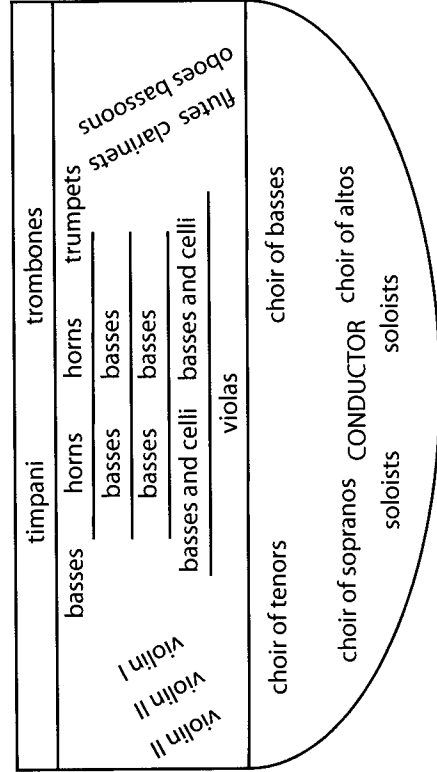


Figure 12

decade of the nineteenth century (Galkin 171-72). The contemporary orchestra attained a relatively stable strength and distribution of players in the early twentieth century.³³

Complex Musical Works

On the one hand, the modern, singular conductor enabled the composition of a new kind of music for a new kind of performance; on the other hand, a new kind of musical performance of a new kind of music

demanded his appearance. He is at once a *cause of* and an *effect of the cause of* the modern musical masterpiece. Musical works are whole and must be well executed in performance.³⁴

Musical performances at the turn of the nineteenth century were often transparently bad, however. Here is an excerpt from a review of a performance of Mozart's Mass in C minor in Fulda published in *Die Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* (AMZ):

Although at such concerts it is customary to have the king's concert-master conduct, this concert was directed by a Benedictine monk from the Domkirche; he had neither a clean and solid bowing arm nor sufficient knowledge of the art of directing. He stood by the first violins and scratched away without having chosen a tempo. He kept playing on his untuned violin in complete ignorance of the orchestra, one piece after another, with no regard as to whether anyone in his section was playing C-natural or C-sharp. No instrument played with any other, and the whole production deteriorated into an everlasting mess of dissonances. Together with constantly reserved trumpets and false chords on the organ, one could barely recognize Mozart's work.³⁵

Mozart's works generated in late eighteenth-century writers what we might now refer to as "anxiety."³⁶ In general, across the pages of the AMZ, Haydn is praised as the great master of clarity.³⁷ In the following passage, Mozart's "genius" is opposed to (an implicitly Haydnesque) "taste": "Our orchestra does not like to perform symphonies by Mozart. One can still not really get used to their spirit. The overtures did not have the expected effect and reinforced the opinion that Mozart, even though he is Haydn's rival, but a much less prudent rival as a composer of instrumental music, has proven to have more genius than he has taste."³⁸

Writers for the AMZ felt particularly uncomfortable with the new compositional practice of giving independence to winds: "While the older composers use wind instruments only separately, sparingly, and almost always as reinforcements for the string instruments, the new masters use them in such different ways, almost too complex to enumerate. Soon they are filling up holes in sustained harmonies that cannot be covered by the melodic strings. Soon they form a second orchestra that works competitively with the main orchestra. Soon they are entrusted with the counterpoint to the melody led by the violins."³⁹ In the same article, the author argues that wind instruments are more powerful than string instruments in stimulating affective responses in listeners because

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"wind instruments are, from their nature, much more different from each other than string instruments. Their tone is more similar to the most Godly of all instruments, the human voice. They penetrate more quickly to the heart and stimulate according to their unique characteristics this or that emotion much more powerfully than string instruments, which have a more general and therefore less defined character."⁴⁰ The independent emergence of winds was a threat to be managed by the conductor, who could and would achieve balance and proportion of orchestral sonorities.⁴¹

What we call "program music" was a concern to writers for the AMZ as well: "We would like the opportunity at the end of this letter to express our opinion on painting symphonies. They seem odd, and we reject them since they cannot be reconciled with visual arts. Dittersdorf in Germany and Rosetti in Italy were the first to attempt such compositions, in which the composer has not a fixed and determined purpose but rather a painterly one."⁴²

The practice of including opera scenes and movements of symphonies undermined the sense of unity inherent in works of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A writer for the AMZ addresses this concern: "The custom to perform single opera scenes and opera arias in public concerts has only become common in the last twelve to fifteen years: previously one rather performed whole works—not always oratorios and other great works, but especially large or small cantatas and the like. There are many reasons for the present custom. The first is in both the music and the world of the theater in which there is the demand for new and nothing but new pieces."⁴³ Later in the same article the author writes that performing excerpts out of context produces affect without a motivated connection to a source: "The story, the situation of the characters, the action, the states of mind of the characters—everything is gone. It is precisely the most admirable in real opera, the individual [in the music] that corresponds to the individual in the libretto, that is completely missing."⁴⁴

A writer for the AMZ describes the negative effect of rubato on musical coherence:

They break violently through the limitations that art has received from nature, so that the best orchestra has a hard time following the labyrinth of motions, often guessing, to the most embarrassing effect in which the accompaniment of the voices does not tolerate any ease, and in which is

only possible by means of rests, which through ignorance is not seldom ascribed to bad intention. Some follow their petulance so far that they break out of their measures, adding one, two, three, even more quarter notes where none belong without regard to the barbaric effects of such liberties, whether they fit any longer in the harmony, whether one wrong note piles upon another; they feel justified doing whatever they wish, ignoring the principles of poet, composer, art, and artist in the pursuit of their individual impulses.⁴⁵

Difficult Works

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, writers for the *AMZ* began to openly discuss the difficulty of music. In the following article in the *AMZ*, published March 4, 1801, an author wrote,

Finally only the instrumental composer can be competent who knows how inner and outer tones work and how to bring them together according to valid, natural laws of tones, modes, keys, harmonies, rhythm, instrumentation, and so on, through study and genius. Such a composer will, during composition and performance, choose not simply the best-sounding music but will rather be true to a certain idea or emotion. To such a composer the question "Sonata, what do you want of me" can never be asked.⁴⁶

The following extended discussion of a late Haydn symphony suggests an anxiety about musical coherence as well:

One began with a symphony of Joseph Haydn, the third in D major of the six that were published in London. Whoever has listened to a great instrumental work will understand the correctness of expression, the precise coming together of the instruments that seem led by a single bow, especially, however, the pure tones of the violins, the clarity of the basses, and tenderness of the winds. What a beautiful impression this symphony also makes today! The not overly simple ideas of the first movement in 6/8 followed one upon the other naturally! They were performed as well by this orchestra as by a quartet of players who were used to performing with one another. The wondrous movements, and the rolling of the basses in the slow movement's minor section, the surprising instrumental play of instruments exchanging ideas in the minuet bear witness to the genius of limitless art who is equally great in smaller gestures. However, after the minor section in the finale allegro that is begun with such vigor, one voice after another moves in an imitative, fugue-like passage of contrasting ideas, and the listener, not always used

only possible by means of rests, which through ignorance is not seldom ascribed to bad intention. Some follow their petulance so far that they break out of their measures, adding one, two, three, even more quarter notes where none belong without regard to the barbaric effects of such liberties, whether they fit any longer in the harmony, whether one wrong note piles upon another; they feel justified doing whatever they wish, ignoring the principles of poet, composer, art, and artist in the pursuit of their individual impulses.⁴⁵

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to hearing such a thing, is torn out of himself. People looked at each other, and it seemed as if order no longer reigned. Then after fifty measures of this deceiving game, everyone ordered himself again into a large, cadential motion which eventually came to a satisfying close, and we were placed back into the repose of our previous pleasure.⁴⁷

The basic theme or idea for this movement is played by the first violin in measures 1–2, to the downbeat of measure 3. There is a metrical difference between the theme and the accompaniment. The accompaniment (second violins, viola, celli, and basses) play in four-square 2/4 meter, while the theme has a two-eighth-note *upbeat* plus one measure plus a beat into the next measure. The first violin's theme interlocks with the accompaniment throughout, and this interlocking must be absolutely precise (see Figure 13).

The music embodies a period of two antecedent-consequent phrases in D major. Haydn's wit can be heard in his definition of the V-I cadence through silence—the quarter-note rest on the downbeat of measure 7 in the bass presses the V of V E-natural right up against the A that concludes the section on the dominant.⁴⁸ There is an aspect of the orchestral writing in this movement that exhibits Haydn's wit (see Figure 14).

In measure 23 the music (in D major) reaches the dominant, and measures 24–28 prolong a-natural¹ with a chromatically ascending wedge from b-flat¹ in measure 25, through b-natural¹ in measure 26, through c-natural² in measure 26, through c-sharp² in measure 27, through d-natural² in measure 27. Melodically this d-natural² is the goal of the chromatic wedge, and it signals the return to tonic and a return of the bouncy theme—brought out by Haydn's staccato markings. Measure 28 gives us an entire extra measure of d-natural²/a-natural¹ eighth notes. The first pair concludes the ascending wedge gesture and the second pair is the pick-up to the next phrase played by the flute.

The writer from the *AMZ* cited above is struck with wonder at the passage marked "Maggiore," or major, from measure 103 to the end. In this passage the main theme articulated *forte* on two upbeat eighth notes enters in a richly imitative texture (see measures 110 [bassoon, cello, and basses], 112 [second oboe and second violins], and 114 [flute, first oboe, and first violins]). The conductor would rehearse and control precisely such passages, which must have been very hard to lead from the first violin's chair (see Figure 15).

Vivace

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello and Bass

Figure 13

Vivace

Flute
Bassoon
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello and Bass

Figure 14

Haydn expands the one measure that had connected the conclusion of one phrase to the upbeat of the next to four full measures (measures 110–14 in Figure 15). After the imitative passage of the Maggiore music, Haydn intensifies the witty glitch in measure 178 in Figure 16.

Although the first violin plays the same pitches in measures 27–28 as in measures 177–78, the staccato markings in the latter and the doubling in the bassoon makes it sound as if the bassoon had usurped the flute's solo, coming in too early.⁴⁹

Vivace

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello and Bass

Figure 13

Vivace

Flute
Bassoon
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
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Figure 14

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Vivace

Flute
Oboe 1
Oboe 2
Bassoon
Horn in D
Trumpet in D
Timpani
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello and Bass

Figure 15

Toward the First Appearances of the Modern, Singular Conductor

Two extended passages from the AMZ embody the urgency for a new musician just beyond the horizon. The first is an extended critique of the conducting of the Viennese concertmaster Schupanzig:

The great achievement of Mr. Schupanzig is certainly his distinguished playing, which contributes positively to his conducting. But with all due respect to his playing, we cannot agree with the widely held opinion that he is what one would call a great director. In order that this not seem like a gratuitous criticism, let us say to the educated man that Schupanzig is a skilled but limited practitioner, without knowledge of theory and composition. The most skilled and practiced director, lacking in such knowledge, can, in our opinion do little more than play his part well and, when

Vivace

171

Flute

177

solo

Bassoon

solo

p

Violin I

p

Violin II

p

Viola

p

Cello and Bass

p

Figure 16

instability in tempo or another error in the orchestra occurs, dig into his instrument and stamp his foot on the floor. A great director, however, must do much more—he must keep the orchestra together in a way the audience does not notice; he must also improve the orchestra and bring the ensemble together without notice from the audience, should errors occur.⁵⁰

This passage prefigures the essence of the singular, modern conductor, whose gaze is a central organizing source of musical meaning. The gaze is at once *seen* by the musicians, who get their cues from it, and, paradoxically, it is *unseen*, necessarily invisible at the heart of the music constantly being called into being.

The second passage is a wonderful description of orchestral performances in Amsterdam in which the author implicitly hears the realization of a masterpiece as the product of confronting and mastering complexity:

The music was performed, under the direction of Mr. Schmitt, with passion, power, precision, and delicacy, to the great pleasure of the educated listener. No symphony was performed until the completion of exacting rehearsals (which always occurred with full orchestral participation) until every attribute of the work was rehearsed to perfection. It is curious that the more difficult the work (as for example with the Mozart C major and G minor symphonies) the more passionate, powerful, and perfect was the performance.⁵¹

Vivace

Flute

Bassoon

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello and Bass

Figure 16

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The author implicitly understands that the modern musical masterpiece does not spring to life despite its inherent difficulties but because of them. The ground is being prepared for the single, modern conductor.

Two Concerts

Carl Maria von Weber reorganized the layout of the orchestra for the January 14, 1818, production of Spontini's *La Vestale* in Dresden. Weber was director of the opera in Prague from 1813 to 1816, where had begun such a reorganization of the orchestra. The usual arrangement had the Kapellmeister in the middle of the orchestra with cello and bass reading the continuo over his shoulder, and trumpets and percussion far to the right, out of sight of the conductor. Weber wished to establish a clear line of sight between him and all musicians.⁵² In response to a published letter critical of his innovations, Weber asserted that "the seating of the orchestra will depend entirely on the nature of the work performed, the main object being that no instrument should fail to be heard and that the conductor should have an equally good view of the stage and orchestra and be able, in his turn, to be clearly seen by everyone taking part" (Weber 249).⁵³ Later in the article, Weber explicitly relates his reorganization of the orchestra to the emergence of the conductor and the weakening position of both Kapellmeister and concertmaster: "The days are gone when the bass line in an Italian opera would contentedly bed down on the same note for eight or ten bars and after innumerable rehearsals was known by heart, so that it could safely be played from the score with the continuo player acting politely as page-turner or leaving even that to the leader" (250).⁵⁴

La Vestale was repeated on the 17th and 21st of January 1818. The reviewer in the *AMZ* was very flattering: "One could not wish for a more fully realized performance from the singers as well as the orchestra. This was achieved through the unanimously acclaimed, lively, and penetrating direction of von Weber and Pollendro."⁵⁵

Louis Spohr was a violinist, composer, and celebrated concertmaster in the early nineteenth century.⁵⁶ In 1820 Spohr conducted in London using a baton; the concert became well known as a milestone in the history of conducting. Here is an extended description of the event in Spohr's own words:

Meanwhile my turn had come to direct one of the Philharmonic concerts, and I had created no less sensation than with my solo play. It was at that time still the custom there that when symphonies and overtures were performed, the pianist had the score before him, not exactly to conduct from it, but only to read after and to play in with the orchestra at pleasure, which when it was heard, had a very bad effect. The real conductor was the first violin, who gave the tempi, and now and then when the orchestra began to falter gave the beat with the bow of his violin. So numerous an orchestra, standing so far apart from each other as that of the Philharmonic, could not possibly go exactly together, and in spite of the excellence of the individual members, the ensemble was much worse than we are accustomed to in Germany. I had therefore resolved when my turn came to direct, to make an attempt to remedy this defective system. Fortunately at the morning rehearsal on the day I was to conduct the concert, Mr. Ries took the place at the piano, and he readily assented to give up the score to me and to remain wholly excluded from all participation in the performance. I then took my stand with the score at a separate music desk in front of the orchestra, drew my directing baton from my coat pocket and gave the signal to begin. Quite alarmed at such a novel procedure, some of the directors would have protested against it; but when I besought them to grant me at least one trial, they became pacified. The symphonies and overtures that were to be rehearsed were all known to me, and in Germany I had already directed at their performance. I therefore could not only give the tempi in a very decisive manner, but indicated also to the wind instruments and horns all their entries, which ensured to them a confidence such as hitherto they had not known there. I also took the liberty, when the execution did not satisfy me, to stop, and in a very polite but earnest manner to remark upon the manner of execution, which remarks Mr. Ries at my request interpreted to the orchestra. Incited thereby to more than usual attention, and conducted with certainty the *visible* [Spohr's emphasis] manner of giving time, they played with a spirit and a correctness such as till then they had never been heard to play with. . . . The result in the evening was still more brilliant than I could have hoped for. It is true, the audience were at first startled by the novelty, and were seen whispering together; but when the music began and the orchestra executed the well-known symphony with unusual power and precision, the general approbation was shown immediately on the conclusion of the first part by a long-sustained clapping of hands. The triumph of the baton as a time-giver was decisive, and no one was seen any more seated at the piano during the performance of symphonies and overtures.⁵⁷

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tory of conducting.⁵⁸ The Kapellmeister had been the composer or the surrogate of the composer, and the changing of hands described by Spohr stands for the emergence of a new musician.⁵⁹

Despite Spohr's 1820 milestone, it was Felix Mendelssohn who made the single conductor a permanent fixture of modern, orchestral musical performance. Mendelssohn was an important musician on many levels. He brought public awareness of the music of J. S. Bach to a new level with his 1829 Berlin performance of the *St. Matthew Passion* (Galkin 414). Mendelssohn was widely respected for his musical talents, his quiet, gentlemanly manners, and his rigorous rehearsal techniques. Mendelssohn routinely faced the orchestra, turning his back on the audience. We take this for granted today, but indications of performance practice throughout the early nineteenth century suggest that baton conducting first took place with the conductor *facing* his audience (Bowen 161). Although full of praise for Mendelssohn's musicality, Schumann was disturbed by the baton: "For my part, I was disturbed, both in the overture and in the symphony, by the conductor's baton, and I agreed with Florestan that in a symphony the orchestra must be like a republic, subordinate to no higher authority" (quoted in Bowen 161).

A much more negative reaction to the baton is described by Moritz Hauptmann in an 1836 letter to his friend Hauser:

The accursed white-wooden baton irritated me, and when I have to see that thing dominate, all music vanishes. It is as if the entire opera is only there so that a baton can beat time to it, to mark all of its most delicate nuances with this little stick. Perhaps it is necessary, but if I think of the maestro sitting so peacefully at the keyboard and accompanying the recitative precisely, as if everything was happening on its own, I am in another sphere entirely, heavens away from our crude and barbaric present, in which all dignity seems naked and exposed. (quoted in Schünemann 260)⁶⁰

The Singular Conductor and the Gaze

The transformation of double (and even triple) direction to the singular conductor has much to do with looking. Until the building of modern concert halls, music was performed in spaces (such as the church) that were not necessarily designed for musical performances, and musicians had to arrange themselves in and around a variety of obstacles. Musicians often could not see one another, the Kapellmeister, and/or the concertmaster. Carl Maria von Weber's innovations sought to correct

this lack of visual organization of the orchestra, connecting the conductor to each musician along a single, unobstructed line of sight. If the single conductor (Spohr, Weber, Mendelssohn, and all other subsequent single conductors of the modern era) were simply "looking" at their musicians in order to attain a more tightly organized musical performance, I don't think their innovations would have generated the reactions reported above. The audience at the 1820 Spohr performance would not have twittered uneasily; Schumann and Hauptmann would not have been so disturbed by the baton; the writer from the *AMZ* quoting Rousseau quoting Bernard would not have felt so threatened by the sonata form.

The masterpiece, as it emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in central Europe, required skilled, disciplined, and strenuous interpretation. Music was no longer happening as if on its own, to paraphrase Hauptmann's nostalgic wish for the simpler musical days of an earlier era. Since the musical masterpiece was no longer self-evident but required interpretation, since orchestras needed to be rehearsed and guided beat by beat and measure by measure through a score, since cues had to be given for entrances of solo instruments and orchestral sections, the essence of the masterpiece was outside the work itself. Music moved from score to conductor's eye and gesture to the musicians, to their instruments, to a concert hall, and to the body, ears, and eyes of each member of an audience. It is not only that the eyes and gestures of the conductor make the music of the masterwork sound; it is that the audience *sees* that the eyes and gesture of the conductor make the masterwork sound.

Music, Look, Gaze

In an attempt to understand how identities are constructed in social space, Jean-Paul Sartre discusses the look as follows:

Every look directed toward me is manifested in connection with the appearance of a sensible form in our perspective field, but contrary to what might be expected, it is not connected with any determined form. Of course what *most often* [Sartre's emphasis] manifests a look is the convergence of two ocular globes in my direction. But the look will be given just as well on occasion when there is a rustling of branches, or the sound of a footstep followed by silence, or the slight opening of a shutter, or a light movement of a curtain.⁶¹

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Sartre goes on immediately after this passage to discuss the significance of the look in an attack; thus the images that suggest a stealthy approach. Sartre is interested in exploring how seeing the look of the other fixes one in spatial and temporal relations in social space. For him, the look has two dimensions: a direct eye-to-eye contact and another level of social implication appended to that eye-to-eye contact. In "a rustling of branches, or the sound of a footstep followed by silence, or the slight opening of a shutter, or a light movement of a curtain" a wider field of visual apprehension is implied than simple eye-to-eye contact.

In his well-known reading of precisely this passage in Sartre, Lacan makes a crucial move. Sartre discusses a look, a returned look, and a set of object relations initiated in social space; Lacan asserts that "the gaze . . . is, not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the Other."⁶² For Lacan, the gaze is often drawn not by the eye but by an object. In a famous example, Lacan tells the following story:

One day, I was on a small boat, with a few people from a family of fishermen in a small port. At that time, Brittany was not industrialized as it is now. There were no trawlers. The fisherman went out in his frail craft at his own risk. It was this risk, this danger, that I loved to share. But it wasn't all danger and excitement—there were also fine days. One day, then, as we were waiting for the moment to pull in the nets, an individual known as Petit-Jean, that's what we called him—like his family, he died very young from tuberculosis, which at that time was a constant threat to the whole of that social class—this Petit-Jean pointed out to me something floating on the surface of the waves. It was a small can, a sardine can. It floated there in the sun, a witness to the canning industry, which we, in fact, were supposed to supply. It glittered in the sun. And Petit-Jean said to me—*You see that can? Do you see it? Well, it doesn't see you!*⁶³

For Lacan, the gaze is that look solicited by a glint of light coming from an object (the sardine can) that seems to see you more than you see it. The gaze is, for Lacan, crucially outside; it adheres to objects. I quoted the passage at length because I don't think the passage would work as a story without all the discursive details: the frail craft, the fishermen's vulnerability to disease, the industry the fisherman were supposed to be supplying. A simple can floating in the water would not have suggested the gaze to Lacan. There needs to be a widely distributed network of economic and social relations embedded in the story for the sardine can to embody the gaze. The entire host of social relations is condensed into the can's glint of light that flashes at Lacan as gaze.

The single conductor, with or without a baton, has organized the space of performance so that each performer can meet his eye, so that each beat of the work can be communicated to each performer in each section of the orchestra, so that all important cues and entries can be mimed and perfectly executed. An audience member at a contemporary concert to whose back a conductor is crucially turned, imagines, or sees obliquely (depending upon where he/she is sitting), the conductor see his musicians.

Music, Gaze, Trap

Audience members, critics, and scholars have gotten used to the single conductor, who has by now become what Adorno might have called "second nature." But in addition to the conductor as gaze, I would like to explore the theatrical element of conducting, that is, the business of walking out on stage, facing and bowing to the audience, turning his back, and making eye contact with the musicians just before the music starts.

In an extended discussion of anamorphosis, Lacan reads Holbein's painting "The Ambassadors" from the point of view of a distorted image of a skull in the painting that can only be recognized as such when the viewer looks at the painting askew. There is a large body of anamorphic art in both Eastern and Western culture that depends upon distortion "righted" by perception through a lens, a filter, a skewed perspective. The skewed image that must be viewed awry becomes a crucial component of the Lacanian gaze. Lacan concludes his reading of "The Ambassadors" with an extraordinary general statement about painting, tantalizingly dropped at the very end of his lecture: "This picture is simply what any picture is, a trap for the gaze. In any picture, it is precisely in seeking the gaze in each of its points that you will see it disappear."⁶⁴

For Lacan the gaze disappears when we give ourselves over to a painting:

The painter gives something to the person who must stand in front of his painting which, in part, at least, of the painting, might be summed up thus — *You want to see? Well, take a look at this!* He gives something for the eye to feed on, but he invites the person to whom this picture is presented to lay down his gaze there as one lays down one's weapons.

This is the pacifying, Apollonian effect of painting. Something is given not so much to the gaze as to the eye, something that involves the abandonment, the *laying down* [Lacan's emphasis] of the gaze.⁶⁵

The single conductor, with or without a baton, has organized the space of performance so that each performer can meet his eye, so that each beat of the work can be communicated to each performer in each section of the orchestra, so that all important cues and entries can be mimed and perfectly executed. An audience member at a contemporary concert to whose back a conductor is crucially turned, imagines, or sees obliquely (depending upon where he/she is sitting), the conductor see his musicians.

Music, Gaze, Trap

Audience members, critics, and scholars have gotten used to the single conductor, who has by now become what Adorno might have called "second nature." But in addition to the conductor as gaze, I would like to explore the theatrical element of conducting, that is, the business of walking out on stage, facing and bowing to the audience, turning his back, and making eye contact with the musicians just before the music starts.

In an extended discussion of anamorphosis, Lacan reads Holbein's painting "The Ambassadors" from the point of view of a distorted image of a skull in the painting that can only be recognized as such when the viewer looks at the painting askew. There is a large body of anamorphic art in both Eastern and Western culture that depends upon distortion "righted" by perception through a lens, a filter, a skewed perspective. The skewed image that must be viewed awry becomes a crucial component of the Lacanian gaze. Lacan concludes his reading of "The Ambassadors" with an extraordinary general statement about painting, tantalizingly dropped at the very end of his lecture: "This picture is simply what any picture is, a trap for the gaze. In any picture, it is precisely in seeking the gaze in each of its points that you will see it disappear."⁶⁴

For Lacan the gaze disappears when we give ourselves over to a painting:

The painter gives something to the person who must stand in front of his painting which, in part, at least, of the painting, might be summed up thus—*You want to see? Well, take a look at this!* He gives something for the eye to feed on, but he invites the person to whom this picture is presented to lay down his gaze there as one lays down one's weapons. This is the pacifying, Apollonian effect of painting. Something is given not so much to the gaze as to the eye, something that involves the abandonment, the *laying down* [Lacan's emphasis] of the gaze.⁶⁵

For Lacan, in giving ourselves over to a painting, we lay down our gaze; to the imaginary invitation "You want to see? Well, take a look at this!" We say "yes!" Something similar happens in music once the conductor comes out on stage, faces us, makes eye contact with us, and then turns to the musicians, making eye contact with them. The audience lays down its gaze and looks in symmetrical rows of seats, in a visual field parallel to the visual field of musicians making eye contact with the conductor. Music has Apollonian and Dionysian components, more or less depending on the style of work being performed. The gaze organizes the eye contact of both the conductor and musicians, and of the conductor and the audience as we "first" see him see his musicians and "then" lay down our gaze in order to feast our eyes on the work.

Although in opera, music is a feast for both eyes and ears, it is on symphonic performances as a feast primarily for our ears that this chapter has focused. What disturbed both Schumann and Hauptmann has nothing to do with what is heard but with what is seen, as it is integrally connected to what is heard. One can close one's eyes at a performance and feast the ears, as if in answer to the imaginary question: "You want to hear something? Listen to this!" We answer "yes!" What happens when you open your eyes in an orchestral concert is not that you feast your eyes as if looking at a painting; you see instead the brute instrumentality at the heart of the modern musical masterwork. Music in Hauptmann's good old days had seemed to play on its own. With the late symphonies of Mozart, the symphonies of Beethoven, and the new generation of turn-of-the-nineteenth-century works, this instrumentality could not be overlooked, and a new professional musician had to stand in its place and transform the score of the masterwork into a coherent performance that sounded in social space. The "trap" is that which catches us at the threshold of the work whose internal consistency can no longer be taken for granted.

The gaze is connected to the missing One as follows. Music of the late eighteenth, early nineteenth century no longer unfolds as if on its own; the Kapellmeister no longer sits at his keyboard and accompanies a work, filling in harmonies and cues as needed, working together with a concertmaster who marks time with his bow. In the era of double and triple direction, the coherence of the work seemed singular, a principle to be grasped and executed. As long as pieces were organized around this singular coherence, the multiple direction could continue. But as

works became more complex in the late eighteenth century and the notion of a history of canonic music demanded repeatable, perfect performance, a space, a void, a missing One emerged at the heart of the modern masterpiece. The gaze is the structure that emerged as the single, modern conductor stepped into the place of the missing One. It is gaze in two ways: first, our seeing the conductor seeing his musicians, and second, the existence of a visual, theatrical component of music, externalized in public space.

This chapter examined in German musical history the rise of the single, instrumental conductor as a large moment that marked the emergence, as if from within musical texts and practices, of a new form of alterity. The remaining chapters will explore aftereffects of this moment, at times within masterpieces of the canon, at times at the margins of social space.