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Conducting Under Constraints
Gestural economy, time limitation and interpretation priority



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Anotācija

Šajā praksē balstītajā teorētiskajā pētījumā *Diriģēšana ierobežotos apstākļos: žestu ekonomija, laika limiti un interpretācijas prioritātes* orķestra diriģēšana aplūkota kā ķermeniska un adaptīva prakse, ko veido spriedze starp analītisko sagatavošanos un mēģinājumu un atskaņojumu praktisko realitāti. Pētīts, kā žestu ekonomija un lēmumu pieņemšana reāllaikā pārveido diriģenta sagatavošanās laikā izstrādātās analītiskās un interpretatīvās ieceres, ja sasniedzamo ierobežo laiks, nevienmērīga sagatavotība, nestabila koordinācija, akustiskie vai materiālie apstākļi un institucionālās prasības. Interpretācija netiek uzlūkota kā tiešs partitūras izpētē izveidotās ieceres pārnesums uz atskaņojumu; analizēts, kā muzikālās ieceres tiek pārbaudītas un pārveidotas ar žestu, selektīvi sniegtu vārdisku norādījumu, mēģinājumu uzdevumu prioritizēšanas, ansamblareācijas un māksliniecisko vērtējumu palīdzību.

Pētījums aptver trīs īstenotus koncertprojektus atšķirīgos kontekstos: daudzvalodīgu kora uzstāšanos Aviči arēnā (*Avicii Arena*), kur bija jānodrošina saskaņa ar fiksētu fonogrammu un plaša mēroga koordinācija; eksāmena koncertu Stokholmas Karaliskajā Mūzikas koledžā (*Royal College of Music in Stockholm*) ar īpaši izveidotu dažāda sagatavotības līmeņa mūziķu orķestri; un profesionālu projektu ar Kijivas simfonisko orķestri Bervalda koncertzālē (*Berwaldhallen*). Šis projekts ietver divus atšķirīgus mākslinieciskos uzdevumus: Borisa Ļatošinska Trešās simfonijas interpretāciju un mana skaņdarba *Kajumarsa leģenda* (*Legend of Kayumars*) orķestrim, korim, solistiem un teicējam pirmatskaņojumu. Analīzē izmantota partitūru izpēte, mēģinājumu un atskaņojumu novērojumi, atlasīti videomateriāli, partitūras ar atzīmēm, darba pieraksti un refleksijā balstīts salīdzinājums. Pierādījumu apjoms un raksturs projektos atšķiras, tādēļ apgalvojumi, ciktāl to pieļauj dokumentācija, ir saistīti ar konkrētiem muzikālajiem fragmentiem, intervencēm un novērojamām muzikālām reakcijām. Pētījumā secināts, ka žestu ekonomija balstās savstarpējās attiecībās un nav pielīdzināma nelielai žestu amplitūdai: ekonomisks žests sniedz konkrētam mūziķim vai grupai attiecīgajā brīdī nepieciešamā apjoma un veida informāciju. Interpretācijas prioritātes izrādījās savstarpēji atkarīgas: ritmiskā un koordinācijas stabilitāte bieži bija priekšnoteikums iecerētās dikcijas, frāzējuma, skaņkrāsas vai dramaturģiskās nepārtrauktības īstenošanai. Salīdzinot gadījumus, nošķirtas mākslinieciskās funkcijas, kurām bija jā saglabājas stabilām, no interpretācijas parametriem, kurus varēja pielāgot; interpretācijas kompensācija identificēta kā līdzeklis muzikālā rakstura saglabāšanai, mainoties tempam vai citam parametram; savukārt mēģinājumu darba vienību mērogs aplūkots kā mainīgais, ko nosaka materiāla pazīstamība, sarežģītība un koordinācijas traucējumu risks. Atšķirība starp tūlītēju korekciju un tās rezultāta saglabāšanos atskaņojumā rosina provizoriski izvirzīt stabilizācijas sliekšņa jēdzienu. Darba oriģinālais ieguldījums ir konkrētu muzikālo fragmentu līmenī veikta procesa rekonstrukcija un salīdzināšana trīs atšķirīgos projektos. Tā aptver sagatavošanās posmā izstrādāto ieceri, praksē sastapto ierobežojumu, intervenci, muzikālo reakciju un, ciktāl tas dokumentēts, reintegrāciju un sasniegtā rezultāta saglabāšanos. Analīze atklāj diriģenta prioritātes un pielāgošanās pamatojumu, kā arī pēta viņa centienus saglabāt interpretācijas identitāti, mainot muzikālos un praktiskos līdzekļus.

Atslēgvārdi: Orķestra diriģēšana; Žestu ekonomija; Interpretācijas prioritātes; Mēģinājumu stratēģijas.

Abstract

This practice-based artistic research investigates orchestral conducting as an embodied and adaptive practice shaped by the tension between analytical preparation and the practical realities of rehearsal and performance. It asks how a conductor's prepared analytical and interpretive intentions are transformed through gestural economy and real-time decision-making when limited time, uneven preparation, unstable coordination, acoustic or material conditions, and institutional demands restrict what can be achieved. Rather than treating interpretation as something transferred directly from score study to performance, the dissertation examines how musical intentions are tested and reshaped through gesture, selective verbal intervention, rehearsal triage, ensemble response, and artistic judgement.

The research comprises three completed concert projects in contrasting contexts: a multilingual choral performance at Avicii Arena involving fixed playback and large-scale coordination; an examination concert at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm with an ad hoc mixed-level orchestra; and a professional project with the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra at Berwaldhallen. The Kyiv project contains two distinct artistic tasks: the interpretation of Borys Lyatoshynsky's *Symphony No. 3* and the first performance of my own *Legend of Kayumars* for orchestra, choir, soloists, and narrator. The cases are examined through score study, rehearsal and performance observation, selected video material, annotated scores, working notes, and reflective comparison. The evidence is not uniform across the projects; claims are therefore tied, as far as the documentation permits, to specific passages, interventions, and observable musical responses.

The study finds that gestural economy is relational rather than synonymous with small gesture: an economical gesture supplies the amount and kind of physical information required by a particular musical recipient at a particular moment. Interpretive priorities also proved interdependent. Rhythmic and coordinative stability often had to be established before diction, phrasing, colour, or dramatic continuity could be realised. Across the cases, the research further distinguishes between artistic functions that had to remain stable and interpretive parameters that could be adjusted; identifies interpretive compensation as a means of preserving character when tempo or another parameter changed; and treats rehearsal granularity as a variable determined by familiarity, complexity, and coordinative risk. Finally, the difference between immediate correction and retention in performance suggests a provisional stabilisation threshold. The dissertation's original contribution lies in its passage-level reconstruction and comparison of prepared intention, encountered constraint, intervention, musical response, and, where documented, reintegration and retention across three contrasting projects. This analysis makes the conductor's priorities and reasons for adaptation explicit and examines how interpretive identity was pursued through changes in musical and practical means.

Keywords: Orchestral conducting; Gestural economy; Interpretive priorities; Rehearsal strategies

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Introduction

Orchestral conducting occupies a distinctive position within artistic practice at the intersection of analytical preparation, embodied knowledge, interpersonal communication, physical technique, and real-time musical decision-making. It demands more than musical expertise or the ability to maintain tempo. The conductor acts simultaneously as interpreter, leader, mediator, and performer, drawing on score reading, composition, instrumental knowledge, style, and interpretation, as well as the interpersonal sensitivity needed to guide musicians effectively. Gestures of the arms, hands, eyes, and body establish tempo, coordinate entries, and shape phrasing, articulation, dynamics, balance, and expression. A successful act of conducting arises when musical insight, psychological awareness, physical technique, and situational judgement work together to produce a coherent and expressive response from the ensemble.

Conducting is also inseparable from the character and organisation of the ensemble. Its technical level, working habits, rehearsal culture, and institutional context influence how interpretive ideas can be realised. John Spitzer and Neal Zaslaw show in *The Birth of the Orchestra: History of an Institution, 1650–1815* that the institutional foundations of the orchestra were historically context-bound: “most orchestras were subsumed within larger organizations, such as courts, theaters, or churches”, while musicians could belong to a “monopolistic professional group” or to networks “on the payroll of the municipality, churches, theaters, and aristocratic households” (Spitzer & Zaslaw, 2004, pp. 19–30). Neal Zaslaw likewise describes the orchestra as an institutional creation dependent on some form of central musical leadership even before the modern baton conductor emerged (Zaslaw, 1988). These historical accounts are relevant here because they demonstrate that orchestral performance has never been independent of its organisational conditions.

The contemporary ecology of full-time professional orchestras, conservatoire ensembles, youth and community orchestras, freelance projects, and mixed professional–amateur collaborations creates different expectations and constraints. Dense institutional schedules and high technical standards may require immediate results from a professional orchestra; unfamiliar repertoire may demand concentrated work on coordination, texture, and notation; and a

conservatoire or mixed ensemble may require technical, pedagogical, and motivational work alongside interpretation. These categories are not treated in this dissertation as fixed predictors of quality. They identify working contexts whose actual capacities must be established in rehearsal rather than assumed in advance.

Research problem, aim, and question

The central practical problem is that analytical and interpretive preparation cannot simply be transferred into rehearsal or performance. It must be translated into gesture, communication, rehearsal strategy, and decisions made in front of an actual ensemble. A tempo that appears convincing in score study may obscure another layer in performance; a restrained gesture may be sufficient for a familiar passage but inadequate when coordination is unstable; and an intended rehearsal sequence may cease to be useful when time, materials, or ensemble preparation differ from expectation. The discrepancy between prepared intention and rehearsal reality is therefore not incidental. This study treats that discrepancy not only as evidence that conductors must adapt - a premise established in the conducting and rehearsal literature discussed in Chapter 2 - but as the point at which a hierarchy of artistic obligation becomes observable. When all intended aims cannot be pursued equally, decisions about what must be protected, what may be altered or deferred, whose instability requires attention, and which intervention is proportionate cease to remain tacit. Interpretive responsibility is located in this pattern of selection and justification, rather than in the conductor's authority alone. The study understands interpretation not as the direct transmission of a pre-formed conception, but as a process shaped through interaction among conductor, ensemble, score, rehearsal conditions, and real-time artistic judgement. Its objectives are:

1. to examine how analytical and interpretive intentions developed during score preparation are transformed in rehearsal and performance;
2. to investigate how gestural economy changes according to ensemble need, rehearsal pressure, acoustic and visual conditions, and the stability of coordination;
3. to identify how interpretive priorities are ordered when not all musical aims can be pursued equally;
4. to analyse decisions among gesture, verbal intervention, rehearsal triage, technical correction, material revision, and interpretive compromise; and

5. to evaluate the observable musical consequences of selected interventions, including changes in rhythmic precision, synchronisation, tempo stability, clarity of character, balance, phrasing, and continuity.

The study is guided by the following research question:

In what ways are a conductor's prepared analytical and interpretive intentions transformed through gestural economy and real-time decision-making under rehearsal and performance constraints such as limited time, uneven ensemble preparation, unstable coordination, and institutional demands?

The question deliberately foregrounds gesture and real-time judgement while allowing the analysis to show that adaptation can also occur through rehearsal order, changes in the scale of the rehearsal unit, and revisions to notated or practical material.

Methodology and case design

This research is situated within practice-based artistic inquiry. Artistic inquiry can be systematic and critically examinable while recognising that the practitioner's embodied and situated knowledge is itself part of the evidence. Mick Wilson and Schelte van Ruiten describe artistic research as containing productive tensions and remaining open to experiential, sensorial, and emergent forms of knowledge (Wilson & van Ruiten, 2013). Mika Hannula, Juha Suoranta, and Tere Vadén similarly present practice as a primary site of inquiry in which action and reflection disclose aspects of artistic work that cannot be separated neatly into theory and application (Hannula et al., 2005). In the present study, this relationship is organised as an iterative cycle: preparation generates an intention; rehearsal tests that intention; the ensemble's response prompts an intervention or revision; and subsequent reflection evaluates both the result and the limits of what can be claimed.

The three completed concert projects examined in Chapters 3–5 and summarised in Table 1 together constitute the Artistic Demonstration of this doctoral research. I served as conductor in all three projects, with additional compositional and arranging responsibilities identified in the relevant chapters. Their preparation, rehearsal processes, and public performances form the artistic material on which the research is based. The Thesis examines this material through score

analysis, available documentation, observation, and critical reflection, tracing the relationship between prepared intentions, encountered constraints, conducting interventions, and musical outcomes. The Artistic Demonstration and the Thesis therefore function as complementary components of the research: the former comprises the artistic practice and its public realisation, while the latter articulates and critically evaluates the knowledge generated through that practice.

The three cases were selected purposively because they expose different configurations of the same research problem. They are not intended to represent all conducting situations. The Avicii case isolates the interaction of language, fixed playback, monitoring, and visual attention; the KMH case examines an ad hoc mixed-level orchestra, imperfect materials, and a highly compressed schedule; and the Kyiv case tests the approach in a professional orchestral context while also contrasting familiar repertoire with a revised finale and a newly composed multi-layered work. Treating the two Kyiv tasks separately within one project makes it possible to compare how familiarity, authorship, and rehearsal structure altered the required conducting response. Although the projects are presented within one three-case design, they are not equivalent in scale, documentary density, or analytical function. The resulting case structure is asymmetrical rather than balanced. The Avicii and KMH projects function as focused cases: each concentrates on a relatively circumscribed configuration of constraints and generates a smaller number of closely defined rehearsal episodes. The Kyiv project functions as the extensive case. It contains two analytically distinct musical tasks within one concert project, the interpretation of Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3 and the first performance of my own *Legend of Kayumars*, and involves a wider range of forces, materials, preparatory processes, rehearsal decisions, and performance consequences. It is also supported by more extensive score-based and rehearsal documentation. These differences account for the greater analytical space devoted to Kyiv.

Project	Performing forces	Artistic task and principal constraints	Evidence used in the study	Function with research
Avicii Arena, Stockholm, 14 March 2023	Multilingual mixed choir (SATB) with fixed backing track.	Two Persian-language songs with a multilingual mixed choir, fixed backing track, uneven monitoring, and compressed preparation	Rehearsal and performance observation, project materials, reflective reconstruction, and passage-specific analysis	Focused case examining Persian diction and ensemble timing, conductor-mediated coordination with fixed playback, and gestural adaptation to monitoring and spatial constraints (Chapter 3).
Royal College of Music (KMH), Stockholm, 10 May 2023	Ad hoc orchestra comprising KMH students and invited professional musicians, with vocal and instrumental soloists	Examination concert with an ad hoc ensemble of students and invited professionals; two rehearsals and a short general rehearsal; material, communication, and stage-layout constraints	Scores and altered materials, rehearsal observation, working notes where preserved, and comparison of intended and realised procedures	Focused case examining rehearsal prioritisation, material revision, temporary gestural support, and adaptation to uneven ensemble preparation and altered sightlines under a compressed schedule (Chapter 4).
Kyiv Symphony Orchestra, Gera and Stockholm, concert on 11 May 2024	Kyiv Symphony Orchestra, joined by choir, solo singers, and narrator for <i>Legend of Kayumars</i>	Lyatoshynsky's <i>Symphony No. 3</i> and <i>Legend of Kayumars</i> ; schedule reduced from four planned days to three shortened working days; unfamiliar or revised material; integration of orchestra, choir, soloists, and narrator	Score analysis, annotated materials, rehearsal plans and notes, one recorded orchestral rehearsal, preparatory work with pianists and conducting professors, and performance reflection	Extensive case comprising two artistic tasks: symphonic interpretation and the first realisation of a new work as composer-conductor. Examines tempo negotiation, interpretive compensation, rehearsal granularity, coordination across performing forces, and retention of rehearsal interventions (Chapter 5).

The study also draws on supplementary material: one recorded rehearsal with conducting professors and pianists preparing Lyatoshynsky's *Symphony No. 3*; and observations from two rehearsals in Stockholm and four in Riga involving other repertoires and ensemble conditions. These materials informed my comparative awareness of gesture and rehearsal strategy, but they are not additional case studies and do not enlarge the three-project corpus. They support a claim only where they are explicitly identified in the text.

Materials and analytical procedure

The research materials comprise score-based preparation, annotated scores, preserved rehearsal plans, notebooks and working notes made during or shortly after rehearsals, selected video material, rehearsal and performance observation, and reflective commentary. The documentation is uneven: not every rehearsal was recorded, not every intervention was revisited under identical conditions, and some accounts depend partly on contemporaneous notes or later practitioner reflection. The dissertation therefore does not present the material as a complete audiovisual dataset. Instead, it uses documented rehearsal episodes to examine how a specific musical intention met a specific constraint and what changed as a result. From the available materials, episodes were selected purposively for detailed analysis when they: (1) exposed a constraint directly relevant to the research question; (2) added a distinct analytical function rather than merely duplicating another example; and (3) allowed the condition before intervention, the decision taken, and the subsequent response to be reconstructed with sufficient specificity. A recording strengthened the traceability of this sequence but was not required; where an account depended on scores, notes, observation, or reflective reconstruction, its claims were limited accordingly. Success was not required for inclusion: the selected episodes include immediate, partial, and non-retained outcomes. The concepts developed later emerged through comparison of these episodes rather than serving as predetermined criteria for selecting only confirming examples.

The principal unit of analysis is the passage-level rehearsal episode. For each selected episode, the analysis asks: (1) what musical function or interpretation had been prepared; (2) what constraint became audible or visible; (3) what occurred in the last documented attempt before intervention; (4) what gestural, verbal, strategic, interpretive, or material variable I deliberately changed; (5) why I expected that change to affect the diagnosed problem; (6) what musical response followed; (7) whether the response was repeated, reintegrated into a larger span, or retained after an interval or in performance; and (8) which alternative explanations remained plausible, including repetition, increasing familiarity, changes in concentration, or other simultaneous rehearsal decisions. Video material was reviewed comparatively with attention to tempo, beat structure, subdivision, cueing, rehearsal stopping points, verbal

explanation, ensemble response, and changes from the initial plan. Annotated scores and notes were used to distinguish intentions recorded before or during the process from interpretations formulated retrospectively.

Because these rehearsals were artistic events rather than controlled experiments, the study does not infer causation from post-intervention improvement alone. Following Mayne (2012), it adapts the central logic of contribution analysis: the relevant question is whether an intervention made a credible contribution to an observed result within a system in which other causes were also active, rather than whether it functioned as the sole cause (Mayne, 2012). Repetition and increasing familiarity are therefore treated as possible contributors to improvement, not as neutral background conditions. Where several variables changed together, the analysis attributes the result only to the combined rehearsal strategy and does not isolate the effect of an individual gesture or instruction. A contribution claim is strongest where a specific problem is documented immediately before the intervention; the intervention targets an identifiable musical or coordinative mechanism; the predicted dimension changes in the following attempt; and the change remains audible when the passage is repeated, reintegrated, or performed with reduced support. The match between the diagnosed problem, the conductor's decision, and the resulting musical change can make undirected repetition a less complete explanation, but it does not eliminate it. Accordingly, the dissertation distinguishes among improvement occurring during rehearsal, an immediate intervention-linked response, a plausible contribution to repeated change, and a retained result. Where the evidence does not permit these distinctions, the text reports that the passage improved during rehearsal without attributing that improvement specifically to my intervention.

Researcher position, ethics, and scope of claims

I am both a conductor and a composer. I served as researcher-conductor in all three projects, but also held an authorial role in two: I composed the thirteen-bar introduction and prepared the choral version of *Soroode Zan* for the Avicii project, and composed and conducted the first performance of *Legend of Kayumars* in the project with Kyiv Symphony Orchestra. This position gave me direct access to prepared intentions, bodily decision-making, annotated materials, and

the reasons for revising a plan. It also creates the risk of selective attention, retrospective rationalisation, and evaluating an artistic result according to my own preferences. The analytical procedure addresses this limitation by separating, wherever possible, what the score or recording shows, what the notes record, what musicians communicated informally, and what I inferred artistically after the event. The rehearsals and performances were artistic projects rather than experiments imposed on musicians as research participants. No formal interviews were conducted, and no individual musician is named. Informal responses are used only as contextual evidence and are not treated as independent validation of the findings. Because the dissertation identifies several institutions, descriptions of rehearsal difficulty are limited to observable musical events and project conditions; they are not intended as general assessments of an ensemble or an individual musician. The extraordinary circumstances of an orchestra working in exile may be acknowledged as context, but they are not used to explain a particular musical result without corroborating evidence. The dissertation does not reproduce rehearsal footage. Any future public use of the underlying recordings would require separate confirmation of the relevant permissions and institutional requirements. This is a single-conductor, small-case study. It cannot establish statistical generalisations or isolate the effect of one intervention from every simultaneous influence, including performer preparation, acoustics, fatigue, notation, rehearsal sequence, or the accumulating effect of repeated work. Its findings are therefore offered as analytically transferable distinctions and practice-generated heuristics whose usefulness must be tested by other conductors, ensembles, repertoires, and rehearsal structures.

1. Terms and Definitions

This chapter defines the small number of terms that organise the study. *Constraint*, *gestural economy*, *interpretive priority*, *rehearsal reality*, and *adaptation* are used operationally throughout the analysis. The study does not assume that every recurring rehearsal pattern requires a separate conceptual label; where a distinction can be expressed precisely in ordinary language, it is described rather than named. The later distinctions among artistic invariants, adjustable interpretive parameters, interpretive compensation, rehearsal granularity, and stabilisation emerged retrospectively from comparison of the cases rather than being imposed as assumptions before the research. Section 1.6 explains not only what these expressions designate, but also the limited analytical reason for retaining them; they are not proposed as universally applicable terminology.

1.1 Constraint

In this study, a constraint is any condition that limits, redirects, or reshapes the conductor's planned interpretive and practical choices in rehearsal or performance. It is not simply an obstacle; it is a concrete factor that conditions what is artistically possible, what is communicatively necessary, and what must be prioritised. Temporal constraints include limited rehearsal time, shortened schedules, and the need to prepare a complex result under compressed working conditions. Material and technological constraints concern the score, parts, instrumentation, stage setup, monitoring, or the use of fixed playback instead of flexible live accompaniment. Ensemble constraints concern the capacities and current preparation of the musicians, including mixed experience, linguistic diversity, or unfamiliarity with repertoire or working methods. Acoustic and spatial constraints include room resonance, balance, monitor distribution, physical placement, and sightlines. Institutional constraints arise from production structures, administrative decisions, rehearsal allocations, programming frameworks, or external expectations that the conductor does not fully control. A constraint is therefore not external to artistry; it is one of the conditions through which artistry is realised.

1.2 Gestural economy

Gestural economy refers to the deliberate calibration of physical information to the musical and coordinative need of a particular recipient at a particular moment. It concerns not the smallest possible gesture but the sufficient gesture: one whose scale, timing, content, duration, and direction are proportionate to the risk it is intended to address. Economy may therefore require reduction when the ensemble has internalised the pulse or character, but expansion when unstable coordination, poor sightlines, or an exposed entry or release makes additional information necessary. In this study, clarity, effectiveness, and economy answer different questions. Gestural clarity concerns legibility: whether the intended beat, preparation, entry, release, character, or phrase can be perceived and interpreted without avoidable ambiguity by the musicians for whom it is intended. Gestural effectiveness concerns consequence: whether the gesture is followed by the intended musical or coordinative response, immediately and, where this can be tested, after reintegration or in performance. Gestural economy concerns proportional allocation: whether the conductor supplied the appropriate kind and amount of information to the relevant recipient at the necessary time, and whether that additional support was reduced or withdrawn once it ceased to be needed. The three concepts overlap but are not necessarily interchangeable. A gesture may be clear yet ineffective if it communicates information that is irrelevant to the actual problem, arrives too late, or conflicts with the musical function of the passage. It may be effective yet uneconomical if continuous subdivision or repeated cueing secures the intended result but continues after the ensemble has internalised it, duplicates information already available, restricts ensemble agency, or obscures the phrase. Conversely, a visually small gesture that fails and requires stopping or verbal repair is not economical merely because it uses little movement. Within this operational definition, economy presupposes sufficient clarity and effectiveness but adds selectivity, proportionality, recipient-specificity, and temporal withdrawal. It is therefore assessed across the course of an intervention, rather than from the appearance of an isolated gesture.

1.3 Interpretive priority

An interpretive priority is the musical parameter, idea, or structural function that the conductor judges to be most important at a particular moment and therefore foregrounds over competing

possibilities. Not all musical aims can be pursued equally under real working conditions. Score study may disclose simultaneous goals involving tempo character, polyphonic clarity, motivic projection, balance, harmonic tension, articulation, or continuity of phrase. In rehearsal and performance, however, constraints require selection. Interpretive priority is therefore a hierarchy of values in action. The issue may not be the ideal tempo in the abstract, but which musical function must take precedence when one tempo favours brass rhetoric while another secures woodwind clarity. Similarly, rhythmic integrity and ensemble security may temporarily take priority over colouristic nuance because the former enables the latter to become meaningful. The case studies further show that priorities often form a dependency structure: coordination may enable diction, stability may enable phrasing, and rhythmic definition may enable dramatic character.

1.4 Rehearsal reality

Rehearsal reality refers to the musical, human, technical, acoustic, spatial, and temporal conditions encountered when the score is tested with an actual ensemble. It stands not in opposition to theory, but to the conductor's prior projection of how the work is expected to function on the basis of score study, pianistic rehearsal, recordings, or consultation. Rehearsal reality is what emerges when analytical preparation meets collective sound, embodied response, institutional limitation, and real-time interaction. It includes such factors as unstable coordination, linguistic misunderstanding, uneven section response, altered acoustics, score problems, unfamiliar materials, and sightline difficulties. It is the concrete field in which musical intention is tested, resisted, transformed, and negotiated.

1.5 Adaptation

Adaptation is the conductor's process of modifying means, priorities, or procedures in response to rehearsal reality while seeking to preserve musical coherence and artistic integrity. Interpretive adaptation revises a previously imagined musical solution, for example by changing a tempo to balance thematic projection and technical clarity. Gestural adaptation changes the scale, character, timing, recipient, or explicitness of gesture in response to ensemble need. Rehearsal-strategic adaptation alters the order, pacing, focus, or scale of rehearsal because time is reduced

or preparation is uneven. Textual or material adaptation changes notation, accompaniment, articulation, spacing, or structural presentation where the conductor or authorised artistic decision-maker has responsibility for the material. Communicative adaptation changes language choice, verbal explanation, cueing, or interaction in response to a mixed linguistic or social environment. Adaptation is therefore not necessarily the abandonment of artistic intention; it can be the transformation of method through which the most important musical function is preserved.

1.6 Concepts generated through the cases

The following distinctions emerged retrospectively from comparison of the cases and are used as analytical tools within the passage-level procedure described in the methodology. They identify the artistic functions protected, the parameters adjusted, the scale of rehearsal, and the durability of observed changes. Their purpose is to make these relationships explicit and comparable across the projects. Their contribution lies in their application to the documented decisions and musical consequences, rather than in the discovery of previously unknown conducting practices. Across the cases, some musical, structural, or dramatic functions had to remain recognisable if the interpretation was to retain its identity, even when tempo, articulation, balance, gestural scale, subdivision, or rehearsal order changed. I use the term “artistic invariants” for these case-specific functions and adjustable interpretive parameters for the means through which they could be realised. Invariant does not mean universal, permanently fixed, or independent of interpretation; it identifies what I judged non-negotiable within the particular artistic conception documented in a case. The distinction is analytically useful because it allows an adaptation to be evaluated in relation to what it preserves, rather than described only as change or compromise. When one prepared parameter could not operate as intended, another was sometimes altered deliberately to preserve the larger artistic function—for example, moderating tempo while strengthening articulation, accentuation, dynamic contrast, or orchestral weight. I use “interpretive compensation” to identify this specific relationship between a constrained parameter and the adjustment made elsewhere. The term is narrower than adaptation: not every change compensates for another parameter, and compensation is claimed only where the altered means can be connected to a specified musical or expressive function that remained at stake.

The cases also differed in the size and sequencing of the units selected for rehearsal. “Rehearsal granularity” is used as shorthand for this variable, ranging from an isolated rhythmic cell or sectional fragment to a continuous movement, together with the process by which isolated work is reconnected to a larger musical span. The term is useful here because the analysis concerns not merely whether passages were segmented, but how the scale of rehearsal changed according to familiarity, complexity, and coordinative risk, and whether the selected unit was subsequently reintegrated. Moreover, in this dissertation, the identity of an interpretation does not mean the identity of the musical work itself. It denotes the case-specific configuration and hierarchy of formal, dramatic, rhetorical, expressive, textual, and perceptual functions that I intended the performance to make audible. It is grounded in score analysis and, where applicable, compositional intention, but remains an interpretive proposition: individual parameters may change without altering this identity, whereas changing its governing functions or their hierarchy would produce a qualitatively different interpretation.

Finally, the cases distinguish between an immediate response to an intervention and a change that remained stable after an interval, reintegration, or performance pressure. “Stabilisation threshold” is used only provisionally for the point at which a correction no longer appears to depend on concentrated short-term support. The present evidence does not establish a measurable or universal threshold; the expression identifies a question for further testing rather than a confirmed general principle. Together, these distinctions clarify what is meant in this study by “interpretive responsibility”. The phrase is used as an organising relationship among the concepts rather than as an additional technical category. Under constraint, the conductor must decide which artistic function should be protected, which means may change or be deferred, how narrowly the problem should be rehearsed, where compensatory adjustment is justified, when additional support should be withdrawn, and whether the resulting change has endured. Interpretive responsibility therefore does not imply that the conductor is the sole cause of the musical result. It concerns the accountability of the conductor’s selections: what was protected, what was altered, why that decision was made, and what musical consequence followed.

2. Theoretical and Research Context

The literature relevant to this study can be organised around three connected questions: how conductors prepare and allocate rehearsal time; how gesture and verbal instruction influence ensemble response; and how artistic intentions change when they are tested in collective practice. Conducting manuals, empirical studies, and practitioner accounts do not offer the same kind of evidence. Manuals formulate professional principles, empirical studies examine selected observable relationships, and practitioner accounts disclose situated judgement. This chapter therefore uses them comparatively rather than treating all sources as equivalent proof.

2.1 Rehearsal as adaptive problem-solving

Michele Biasutti's study "Orchestra rehearsal strategies: Conductor and performer views" provides the closest empirical point of departure. Based on qualitative material from professional conductors and orchestral musicians, it presents rehearsal as a dynamic problem-solving environment rather than a linear execution of an interpretation fixed in advance. Conductors enter with structural understanding and interpretive aims, but those intentions must be translated into gesture, concise verbal instruction, and decisions about pace under limited time. Ensemble proficiency, repertoire difficulty, social atmosphere, and the musicians' response alter what the conductor can pursue. Biasutti's account therefore supports the premise that interpretation is partly co-constructed in rehearsal and that successful rehearsal strategy depends on monitoring results and recalibrating priorities rather than merely applying prior knowledge (Biasutti, 2013).

The practitioner literature makes a related argument in prescriptive form. Brock McElheran recommends clear priorities, limited verbal explanation, selective stopping, and attention to ensemble, rhythm, balance, and coordination before finer interpretive detail (McElheran, 1966). Christopher Seaman similarly argues that a conductor must decide continually what requires immediate correction, what can be postponed, and what should remain untouched in order to preserve flow and confidence. His warning against rehearsing details so extensively that continuity is lost is especially relevant to the present cases, where every stop had an opportunity cost (Seaman, 2013). Max Rudolf also emphasises that rehearsal procedures cannot be fixed independently of the orchestra, repertoire, and available time, particularly when

professional musicians work alongside students or amateurs (Rudolf, 1995). These authors establish flexibility and economy as professional principles, but their format does not normally reconstruct the passage-level sequence through which a conductor recognises that an initial method has failed, selects an alternative, and evaluates whether the change endures.

Thomas W. Goolsby's comparison of expert and novice instrumental music teachers adds a more specific account of time use. Across rehearsals of the same composition, expert teachers devoted a larger proportion of time to performance, used shorter teaching episodes, and addressed musical parameters more selectively than novices (Goolsby, 1999). Although school or band teaching is not identical with professional orchestral conducting, the study helps distinguish limited clock time from the organisation of that time. The practical question is not only how many minutes are available, but how finely the conductor segments the work, when a stop produces useful information, and how quickly a corrected detail is returned to musical continuity. Together, these sources support three propositions used in this dissertation: rehearsal plans must be specific but revisable; intervention carries a cost in time and continuity; and success depends on selecting the musical function whose correction enables other aims. The present study extends this discussion by tracing how those principles operated in three contrasting artistic projects and by distinguishing immediate improvement from retention after reintegration or in performance.

2.2 Gesture, instruction, and ensemble response

The conductor's problem is intensified by the asymmetry between preparation and execution. Gustav Meier observes that singers and instrumentalists can test a score through their own sound and physical feedback, whereas conductors prepare largely without access to their instrument—the orchestra (Meier, 2009). Many gestural and interpretive decisions are therefore provisional until they encounter actual musicians. Score study can identify structural functions and likely risks, but it cannot determine fully how a particular orchestra will balance a texture, respond to a cue, or coordinate a transition in a particular room. Research on gesture confirms that visual information is not a neutral accompaniment to sound. Luck and Toiviainen's analysis of ensemble synchronisation associates musicians' timing with specific movement features in the conductor's gesture, including deceleration and vertical velocity (Luck & Toiviainen, 2006).

Montemayor and Silvey likewise found that conductor expressivity affected evaluations of rehearsal instruction, indicating that the perceived quality of an intervention depends partly on how musical intention is embodied rather than on verbal content alone (Montemayor & Silvey, 2019). These studies do not prescribe one ideal gesture for every ensemble. They support the narrower conclusion that timing, preparation, release, and expressive shape in the conductor's movement can affect the ensemble's capacity to interpret an instruction.

José Maurício Valle Brandão's study of conducting pedagogy is relevant to the relationship between musical and non-musical skill. It argues that conducting education cannot be reduced to conventional beat technique and must include the broader communicative abilities through which a conductor makes musical knowledge effective in rehearsal (Brandão, 2011). Rudolf's technical framework and Meier's account of score preparation remain essential, but the present research treats technique as situationally activated. The same four-beat pattern may need different scale, focus, subdivision, facial communication, or preparatory timing depending on the players' sightlines, familiarity, and current stability. Moreover, Jansson, Haugland Balsnes, and Durrant further demonstrate that the reception and importance of conducting gestures vary according to factors including musical complexity, singer receptiveness, the irreplaceability of visual information, and the conductor's proficiency. Their account connects clarity with the economising of gestural means while also recognising the need to balance precision with ensemble self-determination (Jansson et al., 2022). The mentioned studies support the relational position adopted here, but they do not make clarity, effectiveness, and economy synonymous. In the terminology of the present study, clarity is perceptual, effectiveness is outcome-based, and economy evaluates the proportional and changing allocation of gestural information. This position gives gestural economy a relational meaning. Economy is not identical with smallness. A minimal gesture that fails to reach the relevant players and requires repeated verbal repair is not economical in practice; a larger and more explicit gesture may be economical if it prevents confusion. Conversely, continuing to subdivide or cue information already internalised can restrict ensemble agency and obscure musical line. The cases therefore examine not only what gesture was used, but when it was introduced, who needed it, how long it remained necessary, and when it could be withdrawn.

2.3 Multiple temporal sources and expressive timing

The Avicii project required the choir to coordinate with both a conductor and a fixed backing track. Delius and Müller describe choral singing as a form of interpersonal synchrony involving the coordination of multiple musical and physiological processes (Delius & Müller, 2023). A fixed track changes that relationship because it cannot respond to breath, diction, or temporary instability. The conductor's function becomes partly one of organising attention between live visual information, the other singers, and an external temporal source. This provides a distinct form of the general research problem: a prepared musical shape has to operate within a temporal structure that cannot negotiate. At the opposite end of the spectrum, orchestral interpretation sometimes requires intentional local flexibility. Timmers, Ashley, Desain, and Heijink show that tempo rubato is context-dependent and may involve changes at both broader and beat-level scales (Timmers, Ashley, Desain, & Heijink, 2000). Their study concerns pianists rather than orchestras, but it supports an important distinction for conducting: an intentionally broadened beat must be differentiated from an uncontrolled delay. In a multi-layered orchestral or choral-orchestral texture, expressive timing is successful only when its function is shared and when dependent entries remain coordinated. This distinction becomes central in the Kyiv discussion of percussion release and of tempo adjustment as interpretive compensation.

2.4 Position of the present study

The sources reviewed here establish that rehearsal is adaptive, that gesture influences response, that time must be allocated selectively, and that interpretation is shaped through interaction. The specific gap addressed by this dissertation is narrower than a claim that rehearsal adaptation has not been studied. Within the literature used here, relatively little attention is given to a transparent passage-level chain connecting prepared intention, encountered constraint, intervention, observable response, reintegration, and retention across markedly different artistic contexts. Nor do the practical manuals normally distinguish what must remain artistically stable from which parameters may be adjusted to preserve it. The contribution of the following cases is therefore not a universal rehearsal method. It is an artist-researcher account of how such decisions were made and evaluated in three projects, including situations in which an intervention worked only temporarily or required a change in the conductor's own interpretation.

This position keeps the claims proportionate to the evidence while allowing practice to generate concepts that can be examined by other conductors and musicians.

3. Performance with Mixed Choir at Avicii Arena in Stockholm

3.1 Project context

The project at Avicii Arena in Stockholm on 14 March 2023 involved a short musical contribution within a large production, yet proved artistically revealing within the broader context of the research portfolio. I was invited to lead a group of songs within a larger concert programme, and although the musical material was not extensive in scale, the working conditions made the project unusually demanding. The programme, entitled *A Call for Freedom*, featured live performances by Iranian artists based in Europe and the United States. At the opening, I was responsible for conducting two songs with a mixed choir: *Soroode Zan* (*Women's Anthem*), composed by the Iranian composer Mehdi Yarrahi, and *Sogand*, an older, well-known Persian song whose composer is unknown. I wrote the choral arrangements of both songs for this performance. The ensemble consisted of a mixed choir, not only in the musical sense of combining different singers, but also in the linguistic and experiential sense that became central to the work. The repertoire was in Persian, whereas the choir itself was not made up exclusively of Persian speakers; some singers had no prior familiarity with the language at all. From the outset, therefore, the project involved more than ordinary choral preparation, since linguistic accessibility, textual coordination, and musical confidence were closely interconnected. The contribution placed the Persian-language songs within a public concert programme shaped by themes of freedom and protest. To give a concrete account of the musical material, the detailed score-based discussion in this chapter focuses on *Soroode Zan*, an anthemic protest song associated with the Woman, Life, Freedom movement and released by Iranian musician Mehdi Yarrahi in 2022 (Yarrahi, 2022). For the Avicii performance, I created a sixty-bar choral version of the work that combined an original introduction of my own with an arrangement of Yarrahi's song. Bars 1–13 are not present in the original song: I composed them as a new *Adagio* introduction for the mixed choir, after which the pre-existing song material begins at bar 14 (see Examples 1&2). My artistic involvement therefore extended beyond the redistribution of existing material among the voices; it included the composition of a new opening that altered the work's formal proportions and the manner in which the original song was introduced to the audience. The score condenses the SATB writing into two staves labelled S&A and T&B, ranging from

unisons and octaves to four-part passages, with Romanised Persian text beneath the notes. It records the choir's pitches, rhythms, dynamics, and tempo, thereby providing a practical performing document for the singers.

Example. 1. Score of *Soroode Zan*, music by M.Yarrahi, arrangement by Afshin Khaef, mm. 1–14

Soroode Zan
[Women's Anthem]
A song dedicated to the Woman, Life, Freedom movement

Music: Mehdi Yarrahi
Arrangement: Afshin Khaef

Adagio ♩ = 68

S&A *mf* Be na me to ke es me ram ze mast sha ba hen gam

T&B *mf* Sha be Mah sa to loo e sad Ne dast be

8

S&A *f* mi a ne koo che hast be khan ke shahr so

T&B *f* dar koo bad ke no ba te sho mast be khan ke shahr so

♩ = 114
Allegretto

12

S&A roo de zan sha vad ke in va tan va tan sha vad

T&B roo de zan sha vad ke in va tan va tan sha vad Be

Example. 2. Score of Soroode Zan, music by M.Yarrahi, arrangement by Afshin Khaef, mm 45–53

3

45

S&A
man be de__ be boo sa mash be khoon ke ja__ ve da ne mi shavad

T&B
man be de__ be boo sa mash be khoon ke ja__ ve da ne mi shavad

49

S&A
bas te ba la ye sar gi soo an che hei ba tistkosh te and har ke ra ra vi e je na ya tist sa

T&B
bas te ba la ye sar gi soo an che hei ba tistkosh te and har ke ra ra vi e je na ya tist sa

53

S&A
far__ che ra__ be ma no pas be gir ze jo__ re shan na fas be gir be

T&B
far__ che ra__ be ma no pas be gir ze jo__ re shan na fas be gir be

In terms of accompaniment, the project also underwent an important structural change. The initial plan had been to perform with a pianist, which would have allowed a more flexible musical relationship between choir, accompanist, and conductor. However, this was later altered by the organiser, and the available options became either a live band or a backing track. The

reasons given were a preference for a more instrumental sound and the lack of a suitable piano on stage. Under the actual production conditions, the most workable solution was to perform with a backing track. This changed the nature of the project substantially, because the accompanimental layer was no longer a responsive musical partner, but a fixed temporal reference around which the entire coordination of the performance had to be reorganised. In this respect, the project differed fundamentally from conventional choral-orchestral rehearsal conditions and instead required a more mediated and technically controlled form of leadership from the conductor. As Julia A. M. Delius and Viktor Müller, in *Interpersonal synchrony when singing in a choir*, argue, choir performance depends on highly refined interpersonal synchronisation across the ensemble and in relation to the conductor. In this case, that synchronisation had to be negotiated not only among singers and conductor, but also in relation to a non-responsive external source (Delius & Müller, 2023). The project was also shaped by limited rehearsal time and changing performance conditions. Accordingly, the work had to be prepared under compressed circumstances, which meant that the rehearsal process could not develop gradually or expansively. Instead, the main tasks had to be identified and addressed with high efficiency from the beginning. On the concert day, the situation became even more specific: the choir had to stand broadly across the stage, and the monitor placement did not allow the backing track to be heard equally clearly by all singers. This meant that the project combined several different elements that were especially relevant to the broader aims of the thesis: a mixed ensemble, a multilingual repertoire context, a fixed accompaniment source, and a spatially unstable performance environment. For that reason, although the project was smaller in scale than the orchestral cases, it offered a particularly concentrated example of how language, technology, rehearsal time, and conducting strategy intersect under practical constraint.

3.2 Initial preparation and expected challenges

Before the rehearsals began, I understood that the principal difficulty of the project would arise less from the repertoire's scale or formal complexity than from the interaction among the score's specific musical demands, the Persian text, the fixed accompaniment, and the performance conditions. Although the repertoire was not extensive, its use of Persian made preparation more demanding than in an ordinary choral setting, particularly because the choir was linguistically

mixed. Based on my previous experience—especially a large concert programme for mixed choir and orchestra in 2017—I anticipated that syllabic segmentation, vowel duration, final consonants, and accentuation would affect not only pronunciation but also rhythmic precision, intonation, and ensemble coordination. The text therefore could not be treated as a separate verbal layer added to the music; it had to be understood as an integral part of the musical structure. This became especially apparent in my score study of *Soroode Zan*, which revealed a clear formal and textural trajectory. The opening Adagio, marked $\text{♩} = 68$, combines sustained chordal writing with alternating and partially overlapping entries between the upper and lower voice pairs, while a bar of 5/4 interrupts the prevailing four-beat organisation before the return to 4/4. The subsequent Allegretto, marked $\text{♩} = 114$, introduces a recurring long–short triplet subdivision. Between bars 17 and 28, moving syllabic material is set against sustained vocal parts, with prominence shifting between the upper and lower voices; from bar 29, and particularly throughout bars 37–60, the writing becomes predominantly homorhythmic and chordal. At bar 49, the key signature changes directly from three sharps to two flats. I therefore expected the preparatory work to involve establishing a shared and performable relationship to a language that was not equally accessible to all the singers, while simultaneously addressing changes of tempo and metre, sustained intonation, triplet-based text delivery, coordinated chord changes, and the establishment of a new tonal orientation. An important distinction within this formal design concerns authorship. Bars 1–13 were newly composed by me for this performance and do not form part of Yarrahi’s original song. In the realised arrangement, these bars function as a separate slow introduction, using sustained choral sonorities, alternating and overlapping entries between the upper and lower voice pairs, and a temporary 5/4 bar before the transition into the pre-existing material at bar 14. The introduction therefore does more than delay the beginning of the original song. It establishes a differentiated choral texture and a slower temporal environment, making the entry of the original material an audible change of tempo, rhythmic activity, and collective energy. This addition also generated musical responsibilities that would not have existed in the same form had the song begun directly with its original material. The transition at bar 14 had to connect this newly composed material to the fixed backing track

without allowing the change of tempo and texture to sound disconnected. I therefore identified the end of the introduction and the entry into the original song as a principal structural coordination point: the choir, my gesture, and the playback source had to arrive at the same temporal frame despite having operated differently during the preceding thirteen bars.

A second anticipated challenge concerned the nature of the accompaniment. The original plan had involved a pianist, and this would have allowed a more flexible interaction between choir, accompanist, and conductor. Once that plan was changed by the organiser, however, and the use of a backing track became the most realistic solution, I expected that the project would require a different kind of preparation altogether. Unlike a live accompanist, a backing track cannot adjust to breath, diction, rubato, or momentary ensemble instability. This meant that temporal flexibility would be reduced and that coordination would need to be much more exact from the beginning. In this respect, the challenge was not simply technical but structural: I expected that the choir would need to orient itself not only towards my conducting and towards one another, but also towards a fixed external pulse that could not respond to the live situation. This expectation corresponds closely with the broader argument made by Julia A. M. Delius and Viktor Müller, where choral performance is described as a process of tight interpersonal action coordination involving rhythm, timing, and the interaction of multiple musical and physiological subsystems. In my case, I anticipated that the presence of a non-responsive playback source would complicate that coordination considerably (Delius & Müller, 2023).

Finally, I expected that the limited preparation time would require a highly selective approach. Rather than building the performance gradually through repeated musical deepening, I knew that the most essential conditions for security would have to be established very quickly. This meant that my preparatory thinking was directed less towards elaborate interpretive refinement and more towards identifying where instability was most likely to emerge: in the relation between Persian text and choral diction, in the choir's adjustment to a fixed accompaniment source, and in the possibility that concert-day technical conditions might differ from those of rehearsal. For that reason, before rehearsals began I was already preparing not only musical cues, but also alternative ways of leading attention, simplifying coordination, and

mediating between singers and accompaniment if the live situation demanded it. The project therefore began with the expectation that the main task would be to construct a workable performance framework under unstable conditions, and only within that framework to pursue the strongest possible artistic result.

3.3 Actual constraints encountered

Once the practical work began, the central constraints of this project became more sharply defined than I had initially expected. Unlike the KMH examination concert, where the main instability arose from the mixed orchestral constitution and the uneven condition of the materials, here the most decisive difficulties emerged from the interaction between language, fixed accompaniment, time limitation, and concert-day technical layout. The project was smaller in scale, yet the constraints were highly concentrated and had direct consequences for how musical attention, coordination, and confidence could be established. Rather than dealing with a single dominant problem, I found myself working within a situation in which several different kinds of instability reinforced one another: the singers did not share equal access to the text, the accompaniment could not adapt to the live situation, rehearsal time was compressed, and the final stage conditions altered how the ensemble could hear and orient itself. The first actual constraint concerned the mixed linguistic character of the choir. The repertoire was in Persian, while the singers were not all Persian speakers, and some had no familiarity with the language at all. In practice, this meant that linguistic access was unevenly distributed across the ensemble. The challenge did not remain at the level of diction in a narrow sense, but extended directly into the musical fabric of the performance. Quite early, I observed that the length of vowels leading into final consonants was not always synchronised, creating a slight echo-like effect at the ends of phrases. This confirmed that the text itself was functioning as a source of rhythmic and ensemble instability. In a choir, such discrepancies are particularly consequential because the intelligibility of language, the precision of attacks and releases, and the cohesion of phrase endings are all interdependent.

The problem, therefore, was not only that some singers lacked full confidence in Persian pronunciation, but that this lack of confidence could also affect timing and collective musical

shape. In that respect, the project supports the broader view that language in multilingual choral work cannot be treated as external to musical preparation, but must be understood as one of the structuring conditions of ensemble coordination. A second and equally significant constraint was created by the change in accompaniment format. The performance had originally been conceived with a pianist, but this plan was altered by the organiser, who instead proposed either a band or a playback solution. Under the actual circumstances, the most feasible option was a backing track. This changed the working situation fundamentally. A pianist can listen, breathe, adjust, and respond to the conductor's shaping of time; a backing track cannot. As a result, the accompanimental layer no longer functioned as a collaborative partner but as a fixed temporal framework. This meant that the choir was required to orient itself not only to one another and to my conducting, but also to a non-responsive external source. The third constraint was time pressure. Although the chapter does not revolve around an orchestral-scale programme, the limited preparation time placed strong restrictions on how gradually the work could develop. I could not rely on extended repetition or long-term internalisation processes. Instead, the most urgent instabilities had to be identified and addressed almost immediately. This was particularly important because neither the linguistic issue nor the playback issue could be solved simply by adding more verbal explanation. Both required the rapid formation of a practical performance discipline: the singers needed to know where to place their attention, how to align themselves with my gestures, and how to maintain confidence despite the unfamiliarity of the text and the inflexibility of the accompaniment. In this sense, time pressure affected not only the quantity of rehearsal, but also the type of solution that became possible. It encouraged direct, concentrated interventions rather than broader developmental work.

A fourth constraint emerged in the form of concert-day stage layout and monitoring conditions. The performance situation changed such that the choir had to stand broadly across the stage, and the monitor was not positioned in a way that allowed the backing track to be heard equally clearly by the entire ensemble. This produced a highly specific kind of instability. The problem was not only that some singers heard the track better than others, but that the unequal access to the playback altered the internal distribution of temporal information across the choir. During soundcheck, an additional complication became apparent: the slight difference between

the hidden monitor signal and the reflected sound returning from the large hall created another layer of confusion, especially for those singers whose monitor access was already inconsistent. In effect, the choir was exposed to competing auditory cues: the direct playback, the hall return, and my live conducting. This created a situation in which the question of where attention should be placed became itself a central performance problem. The issue was therefore not reducible to technical inconvenience alone; it affected coordination, confidence, and the entire communicative hierarchy of the performance.

Accordingly, the constraints in the project arose less from repertoire difficulty in the traditional sense than from the convergence of several highly specific practical conditions: linguistic unevenness within the choir, the use of a fixed and non-responsive accompaniment source, limited rehearsal time, and unequal monitor distribution in a large hall. Each of these constraints influenced the others. The language problem increased the need for stable coordination; the backing track reduced the flexibility with which that coordination could be achieved; time pressure limited the range of possible rehearsal solutions; and the stage layout complicated the choir's access to the temporal source itself. The project therefore makes visible a form of conducting constraint that differs from the orchestral cases in character, but not in seriousness: here the conductor's role was defined not by the need to solve dense score problems or large-scale orchestral imbalance, but by the need to mediate between language, sound technology, attention, and live ensemble synchronisation under unstable practical conditions.

3.4 Conducting interventions

The interventions in this project were shaped less by the need for score correction, large-scale rewriting, or orchestral redistribution than by the challenge of establishing a reliable ensemble mechanism under unusual choral conditions. The principal difficulties arose from the interaction among sustained choral sonority, triplet subdivision, Persian diction, fixed playback, unequal monitoring conditions, and the resulting distribution of visual and auditory attention. Because the written score was insufficient on its own to coordinate a linguistically mixed choir with a backing track not represented in the notation, my interventions focused on how the singers processed and prioritised musical information in real time. Through oral demonstration,

diagnostic reduction, differentiated gesture, and a clearer hierarchy of temporal reference, I sought to establish a dependable chain of coordination among text, gesture, and playback. The purpose was not merely to prevent ensemble breakdown, but to enable the singers to perform securely while preserving textual intelligibility, collective vocal cohesion, and the contrast between the sustained opening and the more forward-moving, anthemic sections.

The first intervention addressed the relationship between Persian diction and ensemble timing. Early in the rehearsal process, I observed that phrase endings were not fully aligned, particularly in the sustained passages of the opening Adagio, where long vowels led into final consonants. The resulting echo-like effect arose not solely from the acoustic space but also from differing levels of familiarity with Persian and the consequent variation in the timing of consonantal closure. The score clarified the musical significance of this problem: when singers closed the final consonants at different moments, they shortened different portions of the sustained vowel, causing both the chord and the phrase to release in stages. To address this, I marked the relevant passages and tested them in three successive states: first with the complete text; then with the non-Iranian singers omitting the final consonant and sustaining the preceding vowel until my visible release; and finally with the consonant restored at the coordinated endpoint. This deliberately reductive procedure isolated the element of diction that was disrupting ensemble unity and allowed the choir to establish a common temporal core before reconstructing the complete text. The difference between successive repetitions was immediately audible: the vowel-only version established a shared duration, and the consonantal closures remained more closely aligned after being restored than they had been in the initial attempt. The intervention thus connected textual intelligibility, rhythmic alignment, and the vertical release of the choral sonority. By keeping the singers on the same vowel until the common cutoff, it also created clearer conditions for listening to intonation, although the rehearsal did not provide evidence of any quantifiable improvement in tuning.

A second intervention concerned the allocation of attention in relation to the backing track. Because the accompaniment was no longer live, the singers had to adapt to a musical situation in which the temporal reference could not respond to them. At first, this produced

uncertainty about where their concentration should be directed. Some singers attempted to follow both the playback and my conducting simultaneously, while others relied more on what they had grown used to in rehearsal. In order to reset this process quickly, I rehearsed the choir several times without the backing track and at different tempi, using these exercises to test and strengthen their responsiveness to my gestures. This temporarily created some confusion, but it served an important purpose: it showed the choir that under concert conditions a strong result would not be possible without a more disciplined visual focus. By removing the playback for a time, I could examine whether the choir was actually connected to my beat, phrasing, and preparatory cues, or whether they had become dependent on other forms of support. Only after this work had begun to produce greater attentiveness did I reintroduce the monitor playback. In score-based terms, this diagnostic work was directed particularly towards the recurring triplet subdivision of the *Allegretto*. Rehearsing without the backing track and at different tempi separated two questions that could otherwise be confused: whether the singers had understood and internalised the rhythmic relationship, and whether they were merely obtaining approximate temporal information from the recording. I used a clear quarter-note tactus, together with explicit preparations and releases, so that the long–short triplet relationship could remain stable without my attempting to conduct every syllable separately. In the sustained-against-moving textures of bars 17–28, my gesture had to serve two functions simultaneously: maintaining continuity for the sustained parts while giving temporal definition to the voices carrying the text. In the predominantly homorhythmic writing from bar 29, coordinated attacks and releases became the greater priority because a displaced syllable affected the vertical chord change of the entire ensemble. When the backing track was restored, expressive shaping had to occur within its fixed tactus through breath, articulation, dynamic direction, and release rather than through local tempo flexibility.

A third intervention followed naturally from this: I combined clearer beat patterns with more expressive gestural shaping of phrase, language, and timing. The singers needed not only metric guidance but also an embodied sense of how the Persian text should move through the phrase. My gestures therefore indicated pulse and entries while shaping prosody, collective breath, and release. In the subsequent repetitions, attacks and phrase endings followed the visible

preparation and release more consistently. I interpreted the increased continuity and reduced hesitation as greater confidence; because this judgement was not independently evaluated, the claim is limited to my observation of the rehearsal response. The required gestural information also changed with the texture. In bars 17–28, where sustained vocal parts coexist with moving syllabic material, I had to maintain continuity for the long-note layer while giving temporal definition to the text-bearing voices. In the predominantly homorhythmic writing from bar 29, coordinated attacks, consonants, and releases became the greater priority because a displaced singer altered the vertical chord change of the ensemble. Since the backing track fixed the tempo, expressive shaping had to be produced principally through preparation, articulation, breath, dynamic direction, and release rather than through local temporal flexibility.

The fourth and especially important intervention arose in response to the monitoring problem on the concert day. When the choir was positioned broadly across the stage and the playback could not be heard equally by all singers, the original balance between auditory and visual cues broke down. During soundcheck, the slight delay between the hidden monitor signal and the reflected sound from the large hall created further confusion, especially for those singers whose access to the direct monitor was inconsistent. Some members of the choir suggested solving the issue by adding more monitors. However, that would have complicated the existing technical and spatial setup and might have introduced even more competing signals. Instead of multiplying the sources, I moved in the opposite direction and intensified the choir's dependence on conductor-mediated coordination. I asked the singers to direct more of their attention to my gestures and, at one point, asked them to hum with closed mouths, retaining the rhythmic contour and approximate pitch while temporarily removing the articulation of words. This exercise redirected attention towards the physical timing relationship between ensemble and conductor before the text was restored. The humming exercise was therefore more than a means of restoring concentration. By temporarily removing consonants and linguistic meaning while retaining rhythmic contour and approximate pitch, it reduced the musical situation to pulse, vocal line, sonority, and visual response. This made it easier to distinguish instability created by the Persian text from instability created by divided attention between gesture, monitor signal, and reflected sound. It also made vertical alignment more audible before the words were restored. Its

principal documented effect, however, was the re-establishment of a direct temporal relationship between the choir and my gesture; the surviving evidence does not permit a separate quantitative claim about intonation.

The final intervention was therefore not a change to the music itself, but a change in the hierarchy of coordination. Under these conditions, I had to assume a more strongly mediating role than usual. My task became to hear the weak monitor signal clearly enough, to filter out the slight hall return, to synchronise myself accurately with the playback source, and then to transmit that synchronisation to the choir through conducting. In practical terms, this meant that I became the single temporal interface between the singers and the backing track. The singers no longer needed to divide their attention equally among several unstable inputs; instead, they could treat my conducting as the principal point of orientation. Although this solution did not remove all of the technical risk, it did establish a workable communicative order within which the ensemble could function more securely. What had initially appeared to be a monitoring problem was thus addressed not primarily by equipment, but by reorganising the flow of musical attention through the conductor. This reorganisation also redistributed responsibility. By asking the singers to treat my gesture as the principal reference, I assumed responsibility for filtering the fixed track and hall reflection into one usable temporal signal, while the choir's task was narrowed to following a single live reference rather than reconciling those sources independently. The contribution of the episode therefore goes beyond the familiar instruction to "watch the conductor": it identifies when centralising temporal responsibility is musically justified and which artistic functions - textual alignment, collective release, and formal continuity - that centralisation is intended to protect.

3.5 Artistic outcome

The influence of my interventions can be identified at both local and structural levels. Locally, the clearest comparison concerned the phrase endings rehearsed first with complete text, then with vowels alone, and finally with the final consonants restored. In the subsequent repetitions, the sustained vowels ended more nearly together, and the reintroduced consonants produced a more coordinated closure than in the initial attempt. In the faster material, attacks, continuations,

and releases became more consistently related to my visible preparation and beat while I remained synchronised with the backing track, thereby giving the choir one principal temporal reference when direct access to the track was uneven. The hierarchy of attention consequently became clearer: rather than dividing their attention among playback, gesture, and established rehearsal habits, the singers increasingly coordinated their entries and continuations through my beat. These repeatable changes provide stronger evidence than a general impression that the choir had become more confident. My compositional work also influenced the result at the level of form. Rather than beginning immediately with the faster original song, the performance opened with a thirteen-bar choral introduction whose sustained sonorities and differentiated upper- and lower-voice entries established a separate temporal and textural space. When the vowel endings and consonantal releases became more closely coordinated, this opening could function as a unified formal statement rather than as a collection of individually sustained lines. The subsequent entry of the original material at bar 14 then produced a perceptible change in rhythmic energy and collective articulation. In this sense, the artistic outcome was shaped not only by how I arranged, rehearsed and conducted the existing song, but also by the new formal introduction I had composed for it. Accordingly, I experienced the progression from the sustained introduction into the faster anthemic material as strengthening the work's dramatic direction. This remains my practitioner assessment rather than an independently evaluated audience response; the observable basis for the claim is the score's formal contrast and the more coordinated execution of the introduction and its transition.

Structurally, the clearer coordination helped to preserve the musical contrast on which the arrangement depended. The opening *Adagio* could retain its sustained and solemn character without phrase endings dissolving into successive consonants, while the *Allegretto* could project its forward-moving triplet rhythm without becoming detached from the fixed accompaniment. In the later homorhythmic passages, closer agreement of syllables, attacks, and releases allowed the chordal writing to function more convincingly as a collective declaration. I experienced this as a stronger realisation of the song's anthemic character; that assessment, like any claim concerning linguistic confidence or expressive conviction, remains a practitioner's artistic judgement, but it is grounded in the more directly observable changes in timing, release, and continuity. The result

should nevertheless be described proportionately. The monitor and hall-reflection problem was managed rather than eliminated, and unequal familiarity with Persian could not be removed within the available rehearsal time. The performance therefore continued to depend on active visual mediation. Nor can the score itself establish that the choir's overall intonation improved: that would require comparable before-and-after recordings, pitch analysis, or independent evaluation. What the evidence supports is a more specific conclusion. My interventions reorganised how the choir read, listened, and followed; this produced observable improvements in phrase closure, rhythmic alignment, and continuity, established a workable relationship among language, timing, and live musical leadership, and enabled the musical contrast and collective rhetorical character of the arrangement to become more clearly perceptible.

3.6 Research insight

In the Avicii project, gestural economy involved organising the choir's attention around a reliable visual reference. Clear beat patterns supported coordination, while expressive gestures shaped phrase and diction. When the backing track, monitor placement, and hall reflection created competing auditory inputs, I aligned my conducting with the playback so that the singers could use my gestures as their principal temporal reference. The project also clarifies interpretive priority in a highly practical way. Because linguistic insecurity and unstable synchronisation threatened the integrity of the performance, refinement of colour, phrasing, and expressive nuance depended first on establishing a stable relationship between text, pulse, and ensemble response. This did not mean abandoning interpretation, but rather recognising that under these conditions interpretive work had to begin with coordination itself. The case therefore reveals that interpretive priority is not merely a matter of choosing between musical ideas in the abstract; it is the process of determining which musical function must be protected first in order for the performance as a whole to become artistically viable. In this project, clarity of coordination was not separate from musical expression, but the condition that made expression possible.

The artistic-research significance of the project does not depend on claiming that the repertory possessed the compositional complexity of the later orchestral cases. It lies in making my artistic agency traceable within a different configuration of difficulty. The score, the Persian

text, the fixed playback, the choir's linguistic knowledge, and the hall acoustics each supplied only part of the information required for performance. My contribution was to identify where these sources conflicted, separate the unstable components in rehearsal, and reintegrate them through a hierarchy in which the backing track informed my conducting and my gesture became the choir's principal temporal reference. The resulting knowledge is both artistic and methodological: it shows how the conductor can preserve sonority, textual intelligibility, rhythmic character, and collective rhetorical force when the written score alone cannot coordinate all the conditions of performance. The project also demonstrates that the conductor's artistic agency may begin before the first rehearsal. By composing the thirteen-bar introduction, I did not merely prepare a means of presenting the original song; I altered its formal and temporal frame. That compositional decision then generated new conducting problems involving sustained intonation, balance between vocal groups, collective releases, and the transition into fixed playback. The case therefore reveals an iterative relationship among composition, arrangement, and conducting: a pre-rehearsal artistic decision created a new musical intention; rehearsal exposed the conditions required to realise it; and my gestural and procedural interventions were adjusted in response. This extends the project's research significance beyond the management of language and monitoring, and shows how material authorship, score preparation, and real-time conducting can operate as successive stages of one artistic process.

The evidential strength of this case lies in the sequence that could be observed: asynchronous phrase endings identified a linguistic-timing problem; vowel alignment isolated the common temporal core; final consonants were then restored; and visual attention was intensified when monitoring became unreliable. The result supports a transferable rehearsal procedure, but not a claim that the same solution will suit every language, choir, or playback arrangement. The monitor problem was managed rather than eliminated, and the case does not provide a later repeated performance through which long-term retention could be tested.

4. Examination Concert at Royal College of Music

4.1 Project context

The examination concert project took place on 10 May 2023 at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm (KMH) and was initiated by a student who wished to present her final examination concert in an expanded orchestral format. To realise this, an ad hoc blended ensemble was assembled, combining KMH students with invited professional musicians. As a result, the project did not involve a fully established orchestra with shared routines and working habits, but a mixed ensemble formed specifically for the occasion. This immediately shaped the working conditions of the project, since the musicians came from different levels of experience, differing rehearsal cultures, and unequal degrees of familiarity with one another. In this sense, the concert provided a particularly relevant case for examining conducting under conditions where ensemble cohesion could not be assumed in advance. The repertoire, comprising eleven pieces—*Brother*, *Winter of Sorrow*, *A Dream*, *A Scene*, *All I Am*, *Drops*, *Hope*, *Ny i världen*, *Queen of Autonomy*, *Vårfnatt*, and *Your Breathing*—was prepared within a highly compressed schedule. My task was to rehearse and conduct the programme in only two rehearsals, followed by a short general rehearsal immediately before the concert, which was itself combined with the sound check.

The programme included passages that demanded careful coordination between orchestra, solo lines, and transitions, including one section in which an improvised violin solo functioned as a lead-in to a collective re-entry. Under these circumstances, the project required not only musical preparation in the conventional sense, but also rapid assessment of the ensemble's actual capabilities, efficient prioritisation of rehearsal time, and flexible adaptation of conducting strategy in response to the specific practical conditions of the event. What made this project especially significant as a research case was the combination of factors present from the outset: a mixed-level ensemble, limited rehearsal time, unevenly prepared performance materials, and the need to establish an effective shared communicative framework very quickly. The project therefore offered a concrete opportunity to investigate how interpretive intentions, gestural choices, and rehearsal priorities are reshaped when the conductor must work within a

time-limited and structurally unstable performance context rather than within the more predictable conditions of an established orchestra.

4.2 Initial preparation and expected challenges

Before the first rehearsal, I approached the project with the expectation that the primary challenge would not lie in the repertoire alone, but in the conditions under which that repertoire had to be realised. Since the ensemble had been formed as a blended group of KMH students and invited professional musicians, I anticipated that differences in orchestral experience, rehearsal habits, and responsiveness to conducting would significantly affect ensemble cohesion from the outset. Based on my earlier experience with mixed ensembles, I expected that coordination could not be taken for granted and that the first rehearsal would need to function not only as a working session, but also as a diagnostic moment in which the ensemble's actual level of rhythmic unity, attentiveness, and responsiveness could be assessed. In this respect, Helen Renaud, in *Conductor and Youth Orchestra: Rehearsal Professionalism and Curriculum Development*, discusses how uneven abilities, differing technical levels, and changing player cohorts make work with a student orchestra particularly complex. She also highlights the challenge of balancing educational inclusion with ensemble quality and emphasises the importance of assessing the ensemble's strengths and weaknesses in order to respond effectively to the needs of developing players. Although the KMH ensemble was not a youth orchestra in the strict sense, Renaud's observations were highly relevant to my own expectations because they illuminate similar problems of heterogeneity, imbalance, and the need for early diagnostic assessment in rehearsal.

A second expected challenge concerned communication. Even though a substantial portion of communication in orchestral rehearsals occurs through verbal instruction, I approached the project with the understanding that, under severe time limitations, musical intentions would have to be conveyed primarily through gesture rather than explanation. In this respect, José Maurício Valle Brandão, in his doctoral dissertation *Learning and Teaching Conducting through Musical and Non-Musical Skills: An Evaluation of Orchestral Conducting Teaching Methods* (2011), argues that orchestral conducting is fundamentally a non-verbal communicative practice. Its effectiveness depends not primarily on musical authority alone, but on the conductor's ability to

convey intention through gesture, clarity of physical language, leadership, and adaptive rehearsal strategies. This perspective was directly relevant to the situation I expected to face, since only two rehearsals and one short general rehearsal were available. I therefore anticipated that any lack of gestural clarity on my part would immediately reduce rehearsal efficiency, and that my preparatory work would need to address not only interpretive decisions themselves, but also the most effective means of physically communicating them under pressure. I also expected from the beginning that rehearsal priorities would have to be organised with particular discipline.

In his article “Orchestra rehearsal strategies: Conductor and performer views,” Michele Biasutti emphasises that rehearsals must remain goal-oriented and continuously revised in relation to the most important artistic and technical objectives. This view corresponded closely with my own preparatory thinking. Given the limited time available, I did not expect to be able to address all interpretive and technical details equally. Rather, I anticipated that I would need to distinguish quickly between essential and non-essential issues, focusing first on those parameters without which the performance could not function securely, such as ensemble coordination, tempo management, structural clarity, and reliable entries. In other words, before the rehearsals began, I already understood that the project would require not a linear execution of pre-formed ideas, but a flexible rehearsal strategy in which interpretive intentions would need to be tested against the ensemble’s actual response and adjusted where necessary.

4.3 Actual constraints encountered

Once the rehearsal process began, the expected challenges quickly took a more concrete and differentiated form. What had initially appeared as a general concern regarding ensemble heterogeneity proved, in practice, to involve several interrelated constraints operating simultaneously. These included the mixed character of the ensemble itself, the uneven condition of the score materials, linguistic complications in rehearsal communication, severe time pressure, and, later, changes in stage layout that affected visual coordination in performance. Rather than functioning as isolated problems, these factors interacted continuously and shaped both the rehearsal process and the range of artistic decisions available to me. In this sense, the project

demonstrated with particular clarity that rehearsal reality is not defined by one single obstacle, but by the accumulation and intersection of multiple practical conditions.

The first and perhaps most fundamental constraint concerned the nature of the ensemble. Because the orchestra had been assembled as an ad hoc combination of KMH students and invited professional musicians, it did not operate with the shared habits, internal balance, or unified rehearsal culture that one might expect in an established orchestra. As Max Rudolf, in *The Grammar of Conducting*, notes when discussing situations in which professional orchestras are augmented by students or amateur players, the conductor must take into account not only different levels of technical proficiency but also differing attitudes towards rehearsal and performance. Rudolf emphasises that rehearsal methods can never be fixed in advance, since they must be adapted to the quality of the ensemble, the repertoire, and the amount of rehearsal time available. This observation was directly applicable to the present case. In practical terms, the mixed ensemble created uneven coordination, unequal responsiveness to gesture, and noticeable disparities in confidence and security across sections. The first rehearsal revealed not only a distance between my initial interpretive expectations and the orchestra's actual functioning, but also disparities among the musicians themselves. These internal differences affected how clearly certain passages could be realised and made early diagnostic assessment indispensable.

A second major constraint concerned the quality and practical clarity of the performance materials. Several parts contained notational or coordinative ambiguities that slowed rehearsal and required either a targeted revision or an agreed temporary marking. One example involved a fermata on the third beat of a 3/4 bar which, according to the intended musical effect, occupied approximately two beats. In the original presentation, the relationship between metre, fermata, and duration was not sufficiently transparent for an ensemble already working under time pressure. Clarifying the duration and retaining a consistent metric reference reduced uncertainty without changing the expressive function of the pause. This example made the material problem analytically relevant: notation, ensemble confidence, and musical continuity could not be treated as separate matters.

A third constraint concerned shared rehearsal language. Brandão emphasises that conducting depends on musical and non-musical communication, including the conductor's capacity to make an intention physically and verbally accessible (Brandão, 2011). In this ensemble, access to Swedish varied, and one moment of misunderstanding showed that a long or linguistically exclusive explanation could affect both efficiency and atmosphere. I therefore relied more consistently on concise shared wording, gesture, demonstration, singing, and immediate musical repetition. The observation is reported as a constraint on the communication channel, not as a judgement about any musician's language ability.

Time pressure intensified all of these difficulties. I was required to prepare the orchestra in only two rehearsals and one short general rehearsal immediately before the concert, the latter combined with the sound check. Under these conditions, prioritisation was unavoidable. Brock McElheran, in *Conducting Technique: For Beginners and Professionals*, emphasises the importance of rehearsal efficiency, clear priorities, and the need to address fundamental issues of ensemble, rhythm, balance, and coordination before turning to finer interpretive details. Likewise, in *Inside Conducting*, Christopher Seaman stresses that rehearsal work is inherently contingent and that the conductor must continually decide what requires immediate correction, what can be postponed, and what should be left untouched in order to preserve continuity and momentum. These observations were highly relevant to the present case. The limited schedule meant that I could not attempt to solve every problem in equal depth. Instead, I had to distinguish constantly between what was essential for performative security and what could be simplified, delayed, or strategically left unresolved. Time pressure therefore did not merely reduce the quantity of rehearsal; it changed the hierarchy of what could be artistically pursued.

Finally, an additional constraint emerged on the day of the concert in the form of changed stage conditions. As the chapter already indicates, some of the decisions agreed upon in rehearsal were disrupted by the different orchestral layout in the concert hall. In particular, the woodwinds were positioned unusually far to the right side of the stage, which reduced their viewing angle towards the podium. This created insecurity in passages where some players had become accustomed to following relatively economical gestures in rehearsal. At this point, a new type of

constraint appeared: not one of preparation, notation, or time, but of spatial and visual access. The issue recalls Gustav Meier's discussion in *The Score, the Orchestra, and the Conductor* of how conductors must continually distribute attention selectively across the ensemble, adjusting their focus according to which sections require guidance at a given moment. In the present case, however, the changed layout made even previously successful gestural solutions less reliable.

I therefore had to enlarge my gestures and increase direct facial communication in the relevant passages, not because the musical intention had changed, but because the spatial conditions of performance had altered the means by which that intention could be communicated. This confirms that practical constraints in conducting are not confined to rehearsal alone; they may emerge again in performance, requiring immediate adaptation even after earlier decisions seemed secure. These constraints reveal that the difficulties of the KMH examination concert did not arise from repertoire alone, nor from the ensemble alone, but from the interaction of multiple layers of instability: mixed experience, problematic materials, linguistic divergence, compressed time, and altered concert conditions. The case therefore shows that conducting under constraint is not a matter of confronting one central problem, but of negotiating a shifting field in which musical, communicative, textual, temporal, and spatial factors continuously affect one another. In this project, the conductor's task was not simply to apply prior interpretation to the orchestra, but to identify which constraints were musically decisive, which could be reduced, and which required adaptation in order to preserve the strongest possible artistic result.

4.4 Conducting interventions

In response to the constraints described above, I adopted a series of interventions that were not conceived as fixed solutions in advance, but emerged through rehearsal as practical and interpretive responses to the ensemble's actual condition. These interventions addressed different levels of the work simultaneously: diagnostic assessment of the orchestra, revision of problematic notation, adjustment of gestural clarity in rhythmically unstable passages, restructuring of an unreliable transition involving an improvised violin solo, and later adaptation of gesture to altered concert-stage conditions. Taken together, they show that conducting in this project was not limited to the realisation of a prepared interpretation, but required continuous

modification of method in order to secure ensemble coordination and preserve the strongest possible artistic result.

The first intervention took place at the very beginning of the opening rehearsal and had a diagnostic function. Because I expected that the mixed nature of the ensemble might produce uneven coordination, I selected several short but representative excerpts from the score and asked the musicians to perform them without extensive preparation while I conducted. The purpose of this run-through was not merely to hear the repertoire, but to assess how the orchestra responded to basic beat patterns, how securely sections aligned rhythmically, and how consistently tempo changes and entrances could be negotiated. This initial strategy allowed me to identify where ensemble cohesion was already functional and where additional support or clearer guidance would be needed. In retrospect, this intervention shaped the entire rehearsal process, because it provided the basis for subsequent prioritisation. What emerged was not only a general picture of the orchestra's technical state, but also a more differentiated map of internal disparities between sections and players. In this respect, the intervention corresponded closely with the goal-oriented rehearsal thinking discussed earlier in relation to Michele Biasutti's article "Orchestra rehearsal strategies: Conductor and performer views", since it enabled rehearsal planning to be revised in direct relation to the ensemble's actual response rather than to my prior assumptions alone.

A second group of interventions concerned the score materials themselves. Because several parts contained the notational ambiguities described above, I intervened directly to reduce avoidable confusion. These were separate passage-level solutions. In some passages, I revised unnecessarily frequent time-signature changes and maintained a consistent 4/4 framework where the phrasing allowed (see Example 3a & 3b). In that passage, a fermata was placed on the third beat of a 3/4 bar but, in practice, lasted for the equivalent of two beats. I tested different realisations of this passage in rehearsal and found that doubling the fermata length and adding a quarter note was the most effective way of preserving continuity and allowing the music to breathe. This interpretation was implemented in consultation with the composer and also led to modifications in the accompaniment layers to support the resulting

flow. Here the intervention was both practical and artistic. It solved an immediate rehearsal problem, but it also led to a broader conclusion: notational accuracy and performative clarity are not always identical. In this case, simplification did not reduce the work; rather, it enabled the intended musical effect to become more performable under the actual conditions of the ensemble. This intervention also changed where responsibility was located. Once the metric presentation itself had been shown to generate avoidable uncertainty, asking the players simply to execute it more accurately would have transferred to them a problem created partly by the material. Revising the notation in consultation with the composer was therefore not merely a practical simplification; it preserved the phrase's function by changing the channel through which that function was communicated.

Example 3a: Score of A Dream, A. Winberg ,unchanged version, mm. 21-26

The musical score for Example 3a, measures 21-26 of 'A Dream' by A. Winberg, is presented for a full orchestra. The score is in 4/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. Dynamics range from *mp* (mezzo-piano) to *ff* (fortissimo). The score shows a transition from a 2/4 time signature to a 3/4 time signature at measure 24. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Fl. 1:** Measures 21-23 are rests. Measures 24-26 feature a melodic line starting with a *ff* dynamic, marked *sub.* and *mp*.
- Ob. 1:** Measures 21-23 are rests. Measures 24-26 feature a melodic line starting with a *ff* dynamic, marked *sub.* and *mp*.
- Cl. 1:** Measures 21-23 feature a complex rhythmic pattern marked *mp*. Measures 24-26 feature a melodic line starting with a *ff* dynamic, marked *sub.* and *mp*.
- Bsn. 1:** Measures 21-23 are rests. Measures 24-26 feature a melodic line starting with a *ff* dynamic, marked *sub.* and *mp*.
- Hn. 1:** Measures 21-23 are rests. Measures 24-26 feature a melodic line starting with a *ff* dynamic, marked *sub.* and *mp*.
- Hn. 2:** Measures 21-23 are rests. Measures 24-26 feature a melodic line starting with a *ff* dynamic, marked *sub.* and *mp*.
- Tpt. 1:** Measures 21-23 are rests. Measures 24-26 feature a melodic line starting with a *ff* dynamic, marked *sub.* and *mp*.
- Tpt. 2:** Measures 21-23 are rests. Measures 24-26 feature a melodic line starting with a *ff* dynamic, marked *sub.* and *mp*.
- Tbn. 1:** Measures 21-23 are rests. Measures 24-26 feature a melodic line starting with a *ff* dynamic, marked *sub.* and *mp*.
- Tbn. 2:** Measures 21-23 are rests. Measures 24-26 feature a melodic line starting with a *ff* dynamic, marked *sub.* and *mp*.
- B. Tbn.:** Measures 21-23 are rests. Measures 24-26 feature a melodic line starting with a *ff* dynamic, marked *sub.* and *mp*.

Example 3a: Score of A Dream, A. Winberg ,changed version, mm. 21-26

A third intervention involved my conducting technique in passages of rhythmic exposure, particularly in the brass section. In those moments I adjusted the balance among the harmonic parts and reduced excessive dynamic density, while also clarifying articulation to improve rhythmic precision. At the same time, I made a deliberate decision to keep my beat and articulation-signalling more explicit than I would ordinarily do when the passage was already secure in an established ensemble. In practice, this meant that I continued to “conduct the accompaniment,” especially the lower-brass marcato and staccato cells, for longer than would normally be necessary. I maintained a more clearly defined ictus and, where required, light subdivision until I could hear that the pulse had become sufficiently internalised across the section, throughout the relevant section. Only after that security had emerged did I gradually reduce the amount of beat information and redirect gestural attention towards other priorities. This intervention may be understood in relation to Gustav Meier’s discussion in *The Score, the*

Orchestra, and the Conductor of the conductor's selective distribution of attention across the orchestra. My decision to remain longer with the accompanimental layer was not a sign of overconducting in a negative sense, but a strategic investment in rhythmic stability, made precisely so that I could later conduct more economically once the foundation had become reliable. Responsibility in this episode also had a temporal boundary. I had to supply the rhythmic reference that was missing, but continuing to supply it after the section could maintain the pulse would have replaced rather than supported the musicians' agency. The withdrawal of scaffolding was therefore part of the artistic decision, not merely a preference for smaller gestures.

A fourth intervention addressed a structurally important transition involving an improvised violin solo. In the original conception, the solo functioned as an *ad libitum* transition into another chorus and the subsequent orchestral re-entry. In rehearsal, however, the soloist shaped the improvisation differently in each run-through, which made it difficult for the orchestra to establish a reliable sense of the collective entrance that followed. Under less restricted conditions, this might have been solved by devoting more rehearsal time to repeated coordination of the solo ending and the ensemble re-entry. Given the compressed schedule, that approach was not feasible. I therefore adopted a more structured solution: I removed the guitar line that was intended to accompany the solo violin freely, then I suggested that the violin solo phrase be integrated with the chordal piano accompaniment, transforming it into a freer solo line framed within a clearer rhythmic structure (see Example 4). Rather than repeatedly rehearsing the full passage with soloist and orchestra together, I worked directly with the violinist and pianist so that they could establish a shared sense of timing and phrasing. This created a more coherent musical shape when the passage was later reintegrated into the ensemble. It also gave me a clearer point of entry as conductor: I allowed the singer to begin at the end of the solo phrase, then entered after the singer's first two words and led the ensemble onto the first beat of the following bar. This intervention demonstrates how interpretive freedom sometimes has to be partially restructured in rehearsal, not in order to diminish its expressive character, but to make ensemble coordination possible within practical limits.

Example 4: Score of All I Am. A. Winberg, mm. 91-96

Fills ad. lib. sim. 4

mp F F/E Dm Dm/C Bb Bb/B Gm Bbmaj7 C C Am Bb

F F/E Dm Dm/C Bb sim. Bb/A Gm Bbmaj7 C C 4 Am Bb

mp F F/E Dm Dm/C Bb Bb/A Gm Bbmaj7 C C Am Bb

91 Fri improvisation! Solo violin.

mf

The final major intervention occurred on the day of the concert itself, when the changed stage layout altered the conditions of visual communication. In rehearsal, some woodwind players had become accustomed to following relatively economical gestures. In the concert hall, however, the woodwinds were positioned unusually far to the right side of the stage, which reduced their viewing angle towards the podium and created new insecurity in passages requiring precise coordination. To address this, I enlarged my gestures and increased the amount of direct

facial communication in particularly sensitive moments. This was not simply a matter of “making the beat bigger.” Rather, it involved making preparatory information more legible from a less favourable angle and reinforcing interaction where the altered spatial arrangement had weakened the effectiveness of earlier gestural solutions. In this sense, the intervention was not interpretive in content but communicative in form: the musical intention remained the same, but the physical means of transmitting it had to change because the spatial conditions of performance had changed. These interventions show that my role as conductor in this project was not limited to identifying problems, but extended to shaping different kinds of responses according to the type of constraint involved.

The diagnostic run-through addressed ensemble heterogeneity; notation simplification addressed material and cognitive obstacles; explicit brass guidance addressed internal rhythmic instability; restructuring the violin transition addressed temporal unreliability in ensemble entry; and gesture enlargement addressed performance-day spatial conditions. Each intervention was therefore local and situation-specific, yet all were connected by a common purpose: to preserve musical continuity, improve ensemble security, and create the conditions in which interpretation could remain communicatively and artistically effective despite significant practical limitations.

4.5 Artistic outcome

The artistic outcome of this project was not the complete realisation of an interpretive plan formed in advance. The clearest documented gains concerned structural continuity and ensemble stability in the passages that had received targeted intervention. The diagnostic run-through established where explicit support was needed, while the limited rehearsal time was then directed towards metric clarity, reliable entries, and transitions that affected the continuity of the whole programme. This evidence does not support a counterfactual claim about what another rehearsal order would have produced; it shows that the chosen order generated observable improvements in the passages retested after intervention. One of the most important artistic outcomes concerned continuity. Several of the interventions described above, particularly the simplification of problematic notation and the restructuring of the transition involving the improvised violin solo, were not undertaken merely to reduce technical difficulty, but to preserve the musical flow of the

performance. In the fermata passage, for example, the revised handling of duration and metric presentation did not weaken the expressive effect of the music; on the contrary, it clarified the temporal space of the phrase and allowed it to breathe more naturally. Similarly, the decision to integrate the improvised violin solo more clearly with the accompaniment made the subsequent entry more secure without stripping the passage of its expressive character. In both cases, the artistic result was not a reduction of complexity as such, but the transformation of unstable or unclear material into something performable, coherent, and musically convincing. This is significant because it shows that under constrained conditions, artistic success may depend less on preserving every element of an original plan than on identifying which modifications allow the work's expressive essence to remain audible.

A further artistic outcome concerned the changing amount of gestural support. In rhythmically exposed brass passages, I initially retained explicit beat and articulation information. When subsequent repetitions continued with less reinforcement, I could redirect attention towards phrase and balance. The observable change was local: the relevant passages required fewer corrective gestures once the pulse had stabilised. I interpreted the resulting continuity as a stronger sense of musical direction, while recognising that finer colour, phrase nuance, and interpretive differentiation remained only partly developed within the compressed schedule. The final result was therefore not an unproblematic fulfilment of prior intention, but a negotiated artistic outcome in which coherence, continuity, and communicative effectiveness were achieved, even though certain subtler ambitions had to remain secondary. The case therefore refined my understanding of what could be preserved under pressure. Its contribution was not proof that every initial intention had been realised, but a passage-based demonstration that structural and expressive functions could be protected while less decisive means were reduced, delayed, or reformulated. This distinction between function and means became the basis for the later concepts of artistic invariants and adjustable parameters.

4.6 Research insight

In the KMH project, explicit beat patterns, articulation-signalling, and occasional subdivision supported rhythmically exposed passages until the ensemble could sustain them with reduced

guidance. When the concert layout restricted the woodwinds' view, I enlarged my gestures and increased direct facial communication to make preparatory information more legible. In principle, economical gesture aims to communicate only as much physical information as is necessary. In practice, however, this project demonstrated that the most economical solution is not always the smallest one. In the early stages of rehearsal, and particularly in rhythmically exposed passages or in passages requiring additional support, a more explicit beat, clearer articulation-signalling, and occasional subdivision proved necessary in order to establish security. Only once that security had emerged could the gesture become more reduced. Likewise, on the day of the concert, the changed stage layout and poorer viewing angle of the woodwinds made it necessary to enlarge my gestures and increase direct facial communication. The case therefore shows that gestural economy is not a stable visual style, but a situationally calibrated practice: at times economy requires reduction, and at other times it requires expansion, provided that the gesture remains proportional to the actual communicative need. The project also clarifies the meaning of interpretive priority in practical conducting work. Under the conditions of this concert, it was not possible to pursue all musical aims equally. The limited rehearsal time, uneven ensemble preparation, score problems, and shifting performance conditions required constant selection between competing goals. The case therefore generated a specific methodological sequence: use an early diagnostic run-through to expose high-risk passages; apply explicit gestural scaffolding only where the ensemble lacks an internal reference; test the passage again; and withdraw the additional information once security becomes audible. Its evidence is strongest for the documented changes in continuity, cueing, and rhythmic stability. Broader claims about confidence or expressive success remain practitioner judgements, and the case cannot determine whether the same interventions would have been necessary with a differently constituted ensemble or fully revised materials.

As a result, interpretive priority did not remain an abstract analytical hierarchy formed in advance, but became a practical method of deciding what had to be protected first in order for the performance to function artistically at all. In this case, parameters such as rhythmic stability, reliable entries, structural continuity, and ensemble coordination often had to take precedence over more refined nuances of colour, phrasing, or detail. This did not mean that the latter lost

importance in an artistic sense, but rather that they depended on the prior establishment of more fundamental conditions. The case therefore demonstrates that interpretive priority is not simply a matter of personal taste or preference; it is a situational ranking of musical values shaped by rehearsal reality. A further research insight concerns the relationship between preparation and adaptation. The project confirms that preparation remains indispensable, but it also shows that preparation alone is insufficient when working with an ensemble whose actual capabilities and conditions differ from what was anticipated. Several of the most significant decisions in this case—including the simplification of notational problems, the restructuring of the improvised violin transition, and the modification of gestural scale on the concert day—could not have been fully determined before rehearsal. They emerged only through contact with the orchestra and through the discovery of how the music functioned under real conditions. In this sense, the case supports the broader argument of the thesis that rehearsal is not a linear realisation of pre-formed analysis, but a field in which interpretation is continuously negotiated between score, conductor, ensemble, and circumstance. The conductor's work, therefore, lies not only in transmitting a prepared concept, but in recognising which elements of that concept must be preserved, which must be modified, and which must temporarily yield to more urgent musical necessities. The project shows that conducting under constraint does not merely expose limitations; it also generates knowledge.

The interaction between mixed ensemble conditions, ambiguous materials, limited rehearsal time, and altered concert setup made visible the extent to which conducting depends on relational judgement rather than on the simple application of technical models. The case reveals that both gestural economy and interpretive priority are best understood not as abstract ideals, but as dynamic practices that emerge through rehearsal and are constantly reshaped by practical context. What this project contributed to the present research, therefore, was not a claim of complete success in a difficult concert situation, but a clearer understanding of how artistic decision-making in conducting becomes possible precisely through the negotiation of unstable, resistant, and changing conditions.

5. Concert with Kyiv Symphony Orchestra at Berwaldhallen

5.1 Project context

The concert project with the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra at Berwaldhallen in Stockholm on 11 May 2024 was a collaboration between Aftab Art Organization in Stockholm and the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra. The project, titled *Bells of Victory*, was conceived as a major public concert initiative that brought together artistic, organisational, and symbolic dimensions extending beyond those of a conventional orchestral engagement. The event took place at Berwaldhallen, one of Stockholm's principal concert venues, and involved not only the realisation of a demanding musical programme but also the coordination of multiple performers, production needs, and broader artistic expectations. Within the present study, the project occupies a central place because it offered a large-scale professional context in which analytical preparation, rehearsal strategy, and real-time conducting decisions could be observed under substantial practical pressure. The programme was conceived in two distinct parts, each with a different artistic function. The first half featured the revised version of Borys Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3, *Peace Shall Defeat War*, a work with strong historical, cultural, and expressive significance for the orchestra. The second half presented *Legend of Kayumars*, a newly composed work of my own written in an operatic and narrative format and based on the mythological figure Kayumars.

Whereas the first part centred on an established twentieth-century symphonic work with a demanding orchestral language, the second part involved a newly written composition requiring the integration of orchestra, choir, solo singers, and narrator-related dramatic flow. For this reason, the concert as a whole brought together two very different musical environments within a single event: one rooted in the interpretation of an existing symphonic repertoire work, and the other in the realisation of new music composed specifically for the occasion. The two parts also differed in their relation to preparation. Lyatoshynsky's symphony had already entered performance history and could therefore be approached through score study, comparison of recordings, and interpretive reflection within an existing tradition. *Legend of Kayumars*, by contrast, was composed after the final concert decisions had been made in January 2024, which

meant that its preparation unfolded under a much shorter creative and logistical timeframe. As both composer and conductor of the second half, I was required to develop the work while simultaneously considering its feasibility under limited rehearsal conditions. The project therefore combined two kinds of artistic responsibility: the interpretation of a historically and politically resonant orchestral work, and the creation and realisation of a new large-scale stage-oriented composition. This dual structure is one of the reasons why the concert functions as such an important case within the thesis. From the perspective of ensemble type, the project was centred on a professional symphony orchestra, but it cannot be understood as an orchestral case alone. In the first half, the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra functioned as a full modern orchestra in the performance of Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3, with all the demands that this repertoire places on balance, tempo leadership, texture, articulation, and large-scale form. An additional complexity was that the orchestra had performed the first three movements before, while the revised finale used in this project was new to it. This meant that the rehearsal process was shaped not only by the challenges of the work itself, but also by the need to confront existing habits, expectations, and internalised interpretive reflexes associated with a different version of the piece. In practice, working with habits formed through the orchestra's earlier experience of the symphony became an important artistic and rehearsal challenge in its own right. In the second half, the performing forces expanded beyond the orchestra itself to include choir and solo vocal performers, thereby introducing additional issues of coordination, communication, sound balance, and rehearsal planning across mixed performing groups.

The project was therefore not a single-ensemble situation in a narrow sense, but a multi-layered concert format in which different performance structures and leadership demands had to be handled within the same overall production. The project was also framed by a compressed rehearsal design. My initial rehearsal plan was structured across four days, beginning with an initial run-through of both works, followed by separate detailed work on each half of the programme, and concluding with a final complete run-through. This plan was intended to balance broad musical overview with focused sectional and tutti work, allowing both the symphony and the newly composed second half to be prepared in a coherent and proportionate way. Although later subsections will show how the actual rehearsal conditions diverged from this

plan, it is important at the level of project context to note that the concert was conceived from the beginning as a tightly scheduled undertaking in which musical preparation, production logistics, and artistic ambition had to be held together within a limited timeframe. It was especially significant that this project brought together several layers of conducting practice at once. It involved a historically charged symphonic repertoire work, a newly composed large-scale narrative composition, a professional orchestra, expanded vocal forces in the second half, and a major concert setting shaped by collaboration between artistic organisations. For that reason, the project offered an unusually rich environment in which to examine how conducting operates when interpretive planning, rehearsal strategy, ensemble management, compositional responsibility, and institutional conditions all intersect within a single public performance event.

5.2 Initial preparation and expected challenges

Following the project context outlined above, the preparatory work for this concert must be understood on two interconnected levels: first, as preparation for a single large-scale public event with a fixed date, institutional framework, and limited rehearsal period; and second, as preparation for two fundamentally different musical entities within the same programme. Although both halves of the concert were realised with the same orchestra and under the same broader production conditions, they demanded markedly different forms of analytical, artistic, and practical preparation. The first half required the interpretation of Borys Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3, a historically resonant and structurally complex twentieth-century symphonic work. The second half required the realisation of *Legend of Kayumars*, a large-scale narrative work that was new to all the musicians and had to be prepared under significant time pressure. For this reason, the preparation process cannot be treated only as uniform across the whole concert, but must instead be understood as a dual process in which two different artistic logics had to be developed in parallel. At the same time, these two lines of preparation were not entirely separate. They were shaped by the same rehearsal framework, the same institutional and logistical limitations, and the same need to transform detailed musical intention into a performable result within a restricted period of time. My work before rehearsal therefore involved not only piece-specific score study and interpretive planning, but also the broader task of anticipating how the demands of the two halves would affect one another in rehearsal, in

rehearsal priorities, and in the final balance of the concert as a whole. In order to clarify this more precisely, the preparation phase will be discussed below in two subsections: first in relation to Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3, and then in relation to Legend of Kayumars.

5.2.1 Preparation for Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3

I selected the symphony because it concentrates many of the conducting problems associated with large-scale twentieth-century orchestral repertoire: dense harmonic language, intensified polyphonic layering, frequent changes of metre, abrupt shifts of character, and a full modern orchestration including expanded winds, brass, timpani and percussion, two harps, and strings. The symphony therefore offered a particularly rich context for examining how analytical preparation must be transformed into practical rehearsal strategy. Before the first rehearsal, I expected that the main difficulties would not be isolated technical details, but the coordination of several parameters at once: tempo, rhythm, texture, balance, articulation, and large-scale form. In preparing the first movement, I divided the structure into smaller formal and thematic units in order to clarify where the main conducting challenges were likely to arise. This was particularly significant because it gave me a map of the most important musical materials Lyatoshynsky had used in the symphony, allowing me to recognise and address them when they reappeared in later movements. The movement is broadly related to sonata form, with an Introduction from bars 1–31, an Exposition from bars 32–120, a Development from bars 121–204, a transitional section from bars 205–222, and a Recapitulation from bar 223 onward. Within this structure, I further identified the internal subdivisions: the opening *Andante maestoso* material in bars 1–13, the *Poco meno mosso* material in bars 14–23, the *Tempo iniziale* variation in bars 24–31, the first subject group from bars 32–70, the transition from bars 71–82, and the second subject from bars 83–120. This mapping was important because it allowed me to understand and prepare the score as both a sequence of local events and a field of motivic returns, tempo relationships, and structural functions.

The opening of the symphony immediately suggested the need for detailed preparation of motivic identity, harmonic direction, and orchestral balance. The three off-beat quarter notes in the first bar, followed by triplets and a quarter note in the second bar, establish a motif that returns in varied forms throughout the movement. Within the first nine bars, the score already

presents important features of Lyatoshynsky's language: chromatic descending motions across woodwinds, brass, and strings; altered dominant sonorities; fortissimo harmonic weight; and rhythmic articulation that later becomes structurally significant. The quieter imitation of the motif in bassoon, contrabassoon, cello, and contrabass from bars 10–13 prepares the more extended *Poco meno mosso* material, while the later *Tempo iniziale* return redistributes the motif across instrumental groups. My preparation therefore had to address what the motifs were and how their changing orchestration altered their character and conducting demands. More specifically, in the Introduction, my preparation focused especially on establishing a strong and expressive opening, since the first gesture had to communicate the weight, tension, and character of the music immediately. At the same time, I paid particular attention to clarity in the softer responses and in the early time-signature changes, where the conductor's role is to preserve both atmosphere and rhythmic security. A further point of preparation concerned the release into the *espressivo* English horn line beginning at the *Poco meno mosso* in bar 14. Here I prepared not simply to continue marking the rhythmic pulse in the lower layers, but to release that rhythmic emphasis at the right moment and shift my conducting attention towards the lyrical woodwind line. This required a change in gestural priority: the lower rhythmic layer still needed to remain internally stable, but the main expressive responsibility of conducting moved towards shaping the long, vocal quality of the English horn theme.

The exposition required a different kind of preparatory attention. From bar 32, the *Allegro impetuoso* presents rhythmic figures in the lower strings, horns, and bassoons, where clarity of rhythmic movement is essential. The texture is initially more homophonic, but the harmonic language remains chromatically active. The syncopated emphasis around the fourth beat of the third bar of the thematic unit creates a particular challenge because its energy must connect into the following bar without becoming rhythmically heavy or unclear. From bar 50, the *Pochissimo meno mosso* theme in the first violin relates directly to the earlier *Poco meno mosso* material from the introduction, but now appears in a more urgent context with active woodwind figures and increasing polyphonic dialogue. I therefore expected that this part would require careful differentiation between thematic line, imitative figures, harmonic support, and active upper woodwind movement, especially from bar 62 onward where the texture becomes more

intertwined. My preparation for this passage was therefore focused on establishing a precise rhythmic character from the very beginning of the exposition.

Since the first bars of the *Allegro impetuoso* introduce the basic motoric identity of the section, I prepared a gesture that would be firm enough to secure the lower rhythmic figures, but not so heavy that the music would lose its forward drive. The syncopated accent in bar 34 required special attention. I did not want to treat it as an isolated stress, since that could interrupt the phrase and create unnecessary weight. Instead, I prepared it as a directional accent whose energy should continue into the following bar. This meant that the conducting gesture had to clarify both the placement of the syncopation and its continuation, so that the orchestra could feel the accent as part of the phrase's propulsion rather than as a momentary interruption. From bar 39 onward, where the polyphonic writing becomes more active, I expected that the main challenge would be maintaining rhythmic clarity without over-conducting every layer. My preparation therefore involved deciding which musical layer should receive the clearest gestural information at each moment. In the opening bars of the exposition, the lower strings, horns, and bassoons required strong rhythmic definition because they established the section's character and pulse. As the texture became more complex, however, the conducting task shifted towards preserving the general rhythmic framework while allowing the different contrapuntal layers to speak within it. In practical terms, I prepared to keep the beat sufficiently clear and give the entry cues as much as possible. The aim was to prevent the chromatic and polyphonic activity from becoming rhythmically congested while still preserving the urgency of the *Allegro impetuoso*. This was also connected to balance and articulation. Because the thematic material is carried in a relatively low orchestral register at the beginning of the exposition, I expected that the character could easily become too dense or too blunt if the lower instruments played with excessive weight. I therefore prepared to listen especially for the relationship between rhythmic articulation and harmonic thickness.

The second subject, beginning at bar 83, presented a contrasting preparatory problem. Compared with the first subject group, it is more homogeneous and lyrical, with a twelve-bar, folk-like modal theme whose melodic profile suggests an E-flat-minor or Aeolian colouring

rather than a straightforward tonal second subject. Its first appearance through harps, bassoons, and horns creates a more withdrawn or secluded sonority before the strings take over the same intervallic material in a denser and more dramatic texture. In preparation, I therefore had to think not only about tempo and balance, but also about how to sustain the longer line while maintaining the expressive contrast between the first subject material and this more lyrical second subject. At the beginning of this section, I prepared to establish the shift of mood and mode through a deliberately expansive and intensified gesture, rather than beginning with the more reduced, line-oriented gesture that might become sufficient later. The initial expansion was intended to make the expressive change unmistakable. Its effectiveness would be judged by whether the orchestra recognised and realised that change; its economy depended on whether the same degree of physical emphasis remained necessary. Once the character had been established, continuing the initial intensity might still have been clear and might still have elicited a response, but it would have supplied more information than the passage then required. Only after this new character had been established could the gesture become more restrained and line-oriented. The final fourteen bars of the section, in the lower strings, gradually reduce dynamic intensity, tempo, and mood towards the development, which meant that the transition into the next section had to be understood as both structural and psychological.

The development section was where I expected the greatest conducting pressure. The first five bars after bar 121 do not present the most immediate difficulty, but the transition into the first Allegro at bars 135–136 already requires exact control of beat value. The change from 4/4 to 3/2 is not difficult in a purely theoretical sense, but in practice it requires the conductor to maintain the same value of the quarter note while making the new beat structure clear. Instruments such as trumpets, which carry material across the transition, can more easily recognise the continuation of the pattern, but instruments such as oboe and English horn, entering after rests, require more precise preparatory information. For this reason, I expected the passage to require a conscious balance between continuity and clarity: the beat had to remain stable, but the changed metric structure had to be made visible enough for those entering after silence. An even more concentrated challenge appeared from bar 167 to bar 204, where the development reaches its highest level of rhythmic and textural instability. In this passage, the

score moves rapidly through *Meno mosso*, *Allegro*, *Andante*, and *Più mosso* indications, while also shifting among 4/4, 3/2, 5/4, and 3/4.

I mapped this passage carefully before rehearsal because I expected it to become one of the decisive tests of tempo leadership. The problem here was not simply changing tempo, but changing tempo while maintaining the coordination of multiple orchestral layers. My preparatory conclusion was that rhythm and tempo had to become the primary interpretive priorities in this segment. If those parameters were unstable, the harmonic and polyphonic richness of the passage would not be audible as musical intensity but would risk becoming textural confusion. This kind of preparation aligns closely with Mark Montemayor and Brian A. Silvey's article "Conductor Expressivity Affects Evaluation of Rehearsal Instruction." Their study is useful here because it presents preparation not merely as private score study, but as the formation of practical and communicative readiness for rehearsal. In their research design, conductors were given scores and a model recording to support both score study and rehearsal planning, and were then required to lead a short rehearsal after a limited preparation period. Importantly, the conductors were not asked simply to reproduce a fixed interpretation, but to focus on expressive conducting and address the musical issues they judged to require remediation in response to both score study and the ensemble's actual performance. The selected excerpts were chosen because they were unlikely to be performed flawlessly in a short rehearsal, meaning that conductors had to respond to typical rehearsal problems such as rhythmic precision, balance, blend, intonation, phrasing, contrasting tempi, phrase shaping, and dynamic contrast. This supports the view that preparation consists not only of knowing what the music should become, but also of anticipating how musical problems might appear and how they may be communicated, adjusted, and solved in rehearsal (Montemayor & Silvey, 2019, pp. 137–138).

This perspective was directly relevant to my preparation of Lyatoshynsky. I did not enter rehearsal with analysis alone, but with a set of listening priorities, gestural intentions, and possible rehearsal strategies. The score study therefore had to be translated into expected areas of intervention: where subdivision might be needed, where a standard beat would be clearer, where brass or percussion might affect the perceived tempo, where woodwind lines might need

protection within a dense texture, and where a tempo decision might have to be reconsidered in relation to the orchestra's actual response. In other words, I prepared not only the symphony as a musical text, but also the possible rehearsal situations that might arise from it. This became particularly important because the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra had previously performed the first three movements, while the revised finale used in this project was new to it. Therefore, I expected that some of the musicians might bring an internalised understanding of the work based on another version or on established performance habits. Accordingly, part of my preparation was directed towards finding ways to introduce my own reading of the symphony, both verbally and through musical gesture, while still acknowledging the orchestra's prior relationship with the piece. Comparative listening formed another important part of my preparation. Because Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3 has a more limited recorded tradition than works by composers such as Mahler, Stravinsky, or Sibelius, I used the available recordings as a contextual tool rather than as interpretive models to be followed. I considered recordings by the National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukrainian SSR conducted by Stefan Turchak, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine conducted by Volodymyr Sirenko, the Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestra conducted by Theodore Kuchar, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra conducted by Kirill Karabits, and the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra conducted by Luigi Gaggero. These recordings revealed certain shared tendencies, especially in relation to opening tempos. In the first movement, the *Andante maestoso* is often taken closer to an *Adagio* or *Adagietto* character than the tempo indication might suggest. Since no recording from the 1951 Kyiv premiere with the composer present is available, I regarded the recorded tradition as valuable but not definitive. This allowed me to treat the initial tempo as an interpretive question still open to renewed judgement rather than as a fixed inherited solution.

My own tempo conception before rehearsal was to begin each movement slightly faster than is common in many existing recordings, while remaining within what I understood to be the character and framework of the score. In the first movement, I wanted the opening *Andante maestoso* to have greater forward motion in the three-point motif while allowing the triplet response to carry the weight and dignity of the *maestoso* marking. I intended to apply a similar logic to the *Tempo iniziale* return at bar 24. In the second movement, where most recordings

adopt a relatively slow tempo, I planned a somewhat faster pulse, relying on the breadth of the long phrase rather than on slowness itself to create the required character. In the third movement, I initially wanted a tempo faster than many recorded interpretations, but I already anticipated that this could become difficult if the brass and percussion did not remain rhythmically precise. In the fourth movement, my main expectation was not that the initial tempo would be problematic, but that the transitions and rhythmic patterns would require careful handling.

In forming the tempo decisions, I did not regard interpretation as a strict choice between arbitrary personal freedom and literal obedience to the score. Max Rudolf, in *The Grammar of Conducting*, describes attitudes towards interpretation as existing between two extremes: unrestricted liberties with the score and strict literal adherence (Rudolf, 1995, p. 357). My own preparatory position was closer to a middle path, in which the conductor works within the framework of the composition while allowing artistic judgement to shape tempo, character, and proportion. This also resonates with Eva Badura-Skoda and Paul Badura-Skoda's argument in *Interpreting Mozart: The Performance of His Piano Pieces and Other Compositions*, where historical understanding and fidelity to the composer's intentions are not treated as incompatible with personal artistic expression (Badura-Skoda & Badura-Skoda, 2008). Although their discussion concerns Mozart rather than Lyatoshynsky, the broader principle was relevant to my preparation: interpretive freedom must be grounded in knowledge of the score, style, and context, not imposed from outside them.

Thus, preparation for Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3 involved several interdependent layers: selective formal and motivic analysis, the identification of challenging tempo and metre transitions, the marking of technically demanding passages, analytical and comparative study of existing recordings, consideration of the orchestra's prior relationship with the work, and the development of appropriate gestural and rehearsal strategies to optimise the rehearsal process. As I anticipated that the rehearsal process would test not only the orchestra's technical readiness but also the practical viability of my interpretive decisions, the most important questions before the first rehearsal were whether I had a clear conception of the symphony and whether I could

communicate that conception effectively enough for it to be realised, adapted, and ultimately made musically convincing under the actual conditions of the project.

5.2.2 Preparation for *Legend of Kayumars*

Preparation for *Legend of Kayumars* differed fundamentally from the preparation for Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3 because the work did not exist as an established repertoire piece before the project. It was conceived after the final concert decisions had been made in January 2024, which meant that composition, practical planning, and conducting preparation developed almost simultaneously. I therefore had to think not only as a composer shaping a new work, but also as the conductor who would later be responsible for making that work performable under limited rehearsal conditions. This created a different kind of preparatory pressure from the Lyatoshynsky half of the programme. In the symphony, my task was to interpret, analyse, and rehearse an existing score; in *Legend of Kayumars*, I had to create the musical material while already anticipating its rehearsal consequences. A central issue in the preparation of the piece was the need to balance artistic intention with practical and institutional limitations. Since the concert project was developed in collaboration with other organisations and required a substantial production budget, the second half of the programme was affected by factors beyond purely musical decision-making. Target demographics, audience accessibility, marketing considerations, and the broader communicative function of the concert all influenced the framework within which the piece was written. This did not remove my artistic responsibility, but it changed the conditions under which that responsibility had to be exercised. Here responsibility was not identical with defending every compositional preference against production pressure, nor with accepting external demands without judgement. It consisted in deciding which features belonged to the work's artistic identity, which means could change without damaging that identity, and which technical or rehearsal burdens it was reasonable to place on performers. The composer-conductor position therefore made authorship answerable not only for intention, but also for the conditions of realisation. One concrete example was the rejection of modal microtonality during the planning process. Since microtonality was one of the compositional techniques I had originally wished to employ, its exclusion required me to rethink

the musical language of the work while preserving a connection to the expressive and mythological world I wanted to evoke.

The decision to base the work on the mythological figure Kayumars gave the second half a narrative and dramatic orientation from the beginning. Since Kayumars is a very old figure in Iranian mythology and appears in major literary and cultural sources such as the *Shahnameh* or *The Book of Kings*,¹ the preparation of the work involved more than the construction of musical sections. I had to consider how musical form could support mythic narration, how the emotional trajectory of the story could be made clear to an audience, and how the relationship between narrator, choir, solo singers, and orchestra could be organised in performance. The piece eventually took the form of twelve main musical numbers interspersed with three short interludes aligned with the narrator's readings. This structure gave the work a clear dramatic sequence, but it also created preparatory challenges because each musical number had to function both as an independent expressive unit and as part of a continuous narrative whole. Because the work was written under time pressure, feasibility became an internal compositional criterion rather than an external matter to be considered only after the score was finished. I had to ask, throughout the process, whether a musical idea could be rehearsed effectively within the available time, whether the orchestration would remain clear when combined with choir and solo voices, and whether transitions between sections would be secure enough for performance. This was especially important because the piece deliberately employed a broad diversity of styles, techniques, textures, and moods. That variety was intended in order to create dramatic contrast and emotional richness, but it also increased the demands placed on the performers. The orchestra, choir, and soloists would need to move quickly between contrasting characters, and I therefore had to prepare not only the music itself, but also the conducting strategy through which these contrasts could be communicated efficiently.

The mixed performing forces of *Legend of Kayumars* made preparation especially complex. Unlike the first half of the concert, where the primary relationship was between

¹ The *Shahnameh* (*Book of Kings*) is the national epic of Greater Iran. Ferdowsi began the poem in 977 and completed it over approximately thirty-three years. It contains about 50,000 rhyming couplets and combines mythic, heroic, and historical narratives (Library of Congress, n.d.).

conductor and orchestra, the second half required the coordination of orchestra, choir, solo singers, and narration. This meant that my preparatory work had to include several different layers of attention: orchestral balance, choral clarity, solo-vocal projection, cueing, textural transparency, and the timing of transitions between spoken and musical sections. In some passages, the orchestra would need to carry the dramatic energy; in others, it would need to support the choir or soloists without covering them. I therefore had to prepare a flexible hierarchy of attention, deciding in advance where the conducting gesture should prioritise beat clarity, where it should support vocal phrasing, and where it should coordinate larger formal transitions. Kerry Barnett's article "A Choral Conductor's Preparation for Choral/Orchestral Concerts" is useful in this context because it emphasises that preparation for choral-orchestral performance cannot be limited to choral concerns alone. Barnett argues that the conductor must understand the orchestral score, study the instrumental parts carefully, prepare performance materials, and adjust conducting technique to meet orchestral expectations. He also stresses that, when rehearsal time is limited, the conductor must be especially exact, plan realistically, identify the difficulty level of passages in advance, and expect transitional passages, especially those involving changes of metre, tempo, or instrumentation, to require particular attention (Barnett, 1991). Although Barnett writes from the perspective of choral-orchestral performance more generally, his observations were directly relevant to my preparation of *Legend of Kayumars*. The piece required me to prepare simultaneously for orchestral, choral, solo-vocal, and dramatic coordination, while also anticipating that the most fragile moments would often occur not inside stable sections, but at points of transition. My rehearsal plan for my composition reflected this expectation. In the original four-day schedule, the first day was intended to include an initial run-through of both Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3 and *Legend of Kayumars*, giving me an overview of the whole concert and allowing the orchestra to encounter the second half as a complete dramatic sequence. The third day was then planned as the principal working day for *Legend of Kayumars*, beginning with a tutti pass and followed by more focused work on specific sections such as woodwinds, brass, and percussion. The fourth day was intended to consolidate both works through a complete final run-through.

This plan was designed to give the new work both a large-scale dramatic shape and enough detailed attention to address the passages where orchestral precision, vocal coordination, or balance were likely to become problematic. One particular area of expected difficulty concerned rhythmic coordination in the instrumental layers when combined with choir and soloists. In an orchestral-only context, a slight delay in brass or percussion may affect pulse and character, but in a work involving voices it can also disturb entries, phrasing, and the security of the singers. I therefore expected that the brass and percussion would require close attention in rhythmically exposed places, especially where their material functioned as a structural support for vocal or choral entrances. This was not only a technical matter; it was part of the larger question of how to protect the dramatic continuity of the piece. If the instrumental foundation became unstable, the vocal and narrative layers would also lose security.

Another preparatory concern was the relationship between notational detail and performability. Since I was both composer and conductor, I had the possibility, and responsibility, to consider whether the notation communicated the musical intention efficiently enough for the rehearsal situation. This did not mean simplifying the music in advance in a superficial way, but it did mean that I had to remain alert to passages where excessive notational complexity might consume rehearsal time without producing a corresponding artistic benefit. In this sense, the preparation of *Legend of Kayumars* already involved the central research problem of the thesis: how artistic intention can be preserved when the conditions of realisation require practical adaptation. The score had to be artistically convincing, but it also had to function as a usable rehearsal document under pressure. The most important question before rehearsal was therefore not only whether *Legend of Kayumars* was compositionally complete, but whether its dramatic, vocal, and orchestral elements could be made coherent within the available preparation time. My initial preparation aimed to create a work that could sustain mythological narrative, stylistic contrast, and emotional intensity, while remaining clear enough to rehearse efficiently. This placed the second half of the concert in a distinctive position within the research: it was not simply a case of conducting new music, but a case of composing, preparing, and conducting new music while already negotiating the constraints that would shape its first performance.

5.3 Actual constraints encountered

The rehearsal process for the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra project revealed a more complex field of constraints than had been anticipated during score preparation. Because the concert consisted of two highly different but equally demanding parts, the practical difficulties did not arise from a single source. Instead, they emerged from the interaction between repertoire complexity, reduced rehearsal time, uneven preparation, institutional circumstances, ensemble response, and the specific demands of combining orchestra, choir, soloists. The first and most decisive constraint was temporal. My original rehearsal plan was based on a four-day structure: an initial tutti run-through of both Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3 and *Legend of Kayumars*, followed by detailed rehearsal of the symphony, detailed rehearsal of the second part, and a final complete run-through of both works. This plan would have allowed a gradual movement from general orientation to detailed correction and finally to musical integration. In practice, however, one rehearsal day was cancelled and the remaining rehearsal time was shortened. The schedule was therefore compressed from four days to three reduced working days. This changed the function of the rehearsals fundamentally. The process could no longer follow the planned progression from run-through to refinement; instead, each rehearsal had to function simultaneously as diagnostic assessment, technical correction, interpretive negotiation, and performance preparation. This reduction of time affected both parts of the programme differently. In Lyatoshynsky's symphony, the main difficulty was not simply learning the notes, but achieving clarity in a highly complex twentieth-century orchestral texture. The work contains dense polyphony, frequent tempo changes, irregular metric shifts, and rapid changes of character and orchestration. These features require a shared understanding of tempo, pulse, hierarchy of material, and sectional balance. Under normal circumstances, the conductor can afford to rehearse such parameters progressively, allowing the orchestra to internalise transitions and refine the relationship between structural clarity and expressive character. Under the compressed schedule of this project, however, many passages had to be addressed in a more selective and pragmatic manner. The rehearsal priority shifted from the full realisation of all interpretive details to the establishment of those conditions without which the performance could not remain

coherent: tempo stability, rhythmic precision, transition security, textural balance, and reliable ensemble coordination.

The reduced schedule was intensified by the state of collective preparation encountered in the first rehearsal. Management had indicated that the parts would be prepared in advance, yet several selected passages still required note-level clarification or first collective coordination rather than interpretive refinement. This description refers to the passages documented here and does not establish how every musician had prepared individually. It nevertheless changed the use of time: phrasing, articulation, dynamic proportion, and long-range direction sometimes had to yield to pulse, metric transition, and sectional alignment. Goolsby's comparison of expert and novice instrumental rehearsals is relevant because it shows that efficiency depends not only on the quantity of time but on the length and purpose of rehearsal episodes. In that study, expert teachers devoted a larger proportion of rehearsal time to performance, used shorter teaching segments, and addressed musical parameters more selectively (Goolsby, 1999). In the present project, repeated stopping or extended explanation therefore carried a direct artistic cost, and interventions had to be short, passage-specific, and immediately tested in sound. The orchestra's response was not uniform across repertoire or instrumental groups. Passages involving familiar material could often be rehearsed in longer spans, whereas selected metric transitions and rhythmically exposed brass or percussion writing required more explicit preparation, repetition, or visual anchoring. This passage-specific difference required me to revise my assumption of immediate collective responsiveness. It does not support a general assessment of the orchestra's professional level; it identifies the degree of security audible in the passages on which the analysis is based.

In Lyatoshynsky's symphony, these ensemble constraints became especially visible in passages involving tempo transition and dense rhythmic layering. One of the most important areas was the development section of the first movement, particularly around bars 136–137 and 166–180, where changing metres, shifting tempi, and complex orchestration required the orchestra to maintain both rhythmic accuracy and expressive momentum. In my preparation, I had identified these passages as structurally significant and had planned gestural solutions

involving subdivision, clear upbeat preparation, and selective prioritisation of principal lines. In rehearsal, however, the actual response of the orchestra required adjustment. The challenge was not only to show the new tempo or beat pattern, but to decide how much information the orchestra could process in real time without becoming overloaded. At certain points, especially around bar 169, I had to balance between continuing with divided beats in order to secure synchronisation and reducing the amount of visible information in order to prepare the transition into the following Allegro. The practical solution required a compromise between my prepared conducting plan and the orchestra's actual ability to follow and stabilise the transition. A related constraint emerged from the orchestra's established habits and previous relationship with Lyatoshynsky's symphony.

The orchestra had performed the work before, and therefore did not approach it as entirely unfamiliar repertoire. This had advantages, since the players already possessed some stylistic and expressive association with the music. However, it also created a constraint: in some places, the orchestra's habitual tempo and phrasing tendencies did not fully correspond to my interpretive conception. One clear example concerned the *Meno mosso* passage in the first movement where my initial tempo concept prioritised the rhetorical force of the fortissimo brass motifs supported by the lower strings. In rehearsal, this tempo caused a loss of clarity in the rapid woodwind figures. The issue was not that the orchestra lacked the technical capacity to play the passage, but that its previous experience of the symphony had oriented the players towards a slower tempo in that section. The final rehearsal solution therefore became a negotiated tempo: slower than my original conception, but faster than the orchestra's habitual version. This was a concrete example of interpretive intention being transformed through rehearsal reality. The prepared idea was not abandoned, but its realisation had to be modified in order to preserve both brass character and woodwind clarity.

The project also took place while the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra was working in exile. This institutional circumstance is relevant to the historical and organisational setting of the concert, but the present documentation does not establish a causal relationship between exile, personnel continuity, infrastructure, and any particular musical difficulty. The analysis therefore

remains with what could be observed in rehearsal: selected rhythmically exposed passages, especially in brass and percussion, required more time and more explicit coordination than I had anticipated.

The brass and percussion sections presented a set of limitations, especially in relation to beat placement and rhythmic coordination. In several medium-to-fast passages, lower brass and percussion entries tended to arrive behind the beat. This was particularly noticeable in the tuba, bass trombone, timpani, and snare drum. The result was not merely a local rhythmic inaccuracy; it affected the perceived tempo of entire passages and sometimes pulled the musical energy backwards. In a work such as Lyatoshynsky's Third Symphony, where rhythmic force, articulation, and momentum are essential to the character of many sections, such delay can weaken both precision and expression. The problem required more than simply asking the players to play "in time." It required a recalibration of attention: the players needed to connect visually to the conductor's beat rather than primarily listening sideways within their own section. In practice, this meant using more explicit gestures, singing or marking rhythmic patterns, isolating short passages, and allowing other instruments to articulate the beat with the brass and percussion so that the delayed entries could be heard in relation to a clearer reference point.

The timpani created a particularly important rhythmic issue when trills extended into the following accented beat. This problem became especially noticeable in my composition *Legend of Kayumars*, where the orchestra had to coordinate not only internally but also with choir and soloists. In such a texture, an extended timpani trill can disrupt the articulation of the next beat and blur the point at which a new phrase or entry must begin. Because the second part involved additional vocal layers, the consequences of such timing problems were greater than in a purely orchestral texture. A small percussion delay or overextension could affect the confidence of singers, the clarity of choral entries, and the overall coordination between orchestral and vocal forces. Timing in comparable snare-drum passages improved in most cases after rehearsal intervention, but the broader issue remained: coordination in these passages improved when local sectional listening was supplemented by more direct visual connection with my preparation and release gestures. This required certain cues to become more explicit than I had initially planned.

5.4 Conducting interventions

The conducting interventions in this project developed from the need to protect musical coherence under conditions that differed significantly from my original preparation. Since the concert consisted of two contrasting parts, the interventions could not follow one single model. In both parts of the project, my interventions were not only corrections of errors, but acts of prioritisation: I had to decide what required immediate physical clarification, what needed verbal explanation, what could be solved through repetition, and what had to be adapted interpretively. The first major intervention was a change in rehearsal strategy. My original plan assumed that the orchestra would arrive with a sufficiently prepared knowledge of the material and that rehearsal time could be used mainly for shaping interpretation, refining transitions, and integrating the two halves of the programme. Once the rehearsal situation revealed a lower level of collective security than expected, this plan had to be modified. Instead of treating the rehearsals as a progression from run-through to refinement, I had to use them diagnostically. Short passages were selected not only because they were difficult, but because they revealed larger problems of pulse, coordination, balance, and responsiveness. In this sense, the rehearsal process became less linear and more surgical.

The goal was not to cover the score equally, but to identify those passages whose instability threatened the coherence of the performance as a whole. In Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3, this meant that tempo and rhythm became the first interpretive priority. This was particularly important in the development section of the first movement, especially from bar 167 to bar 204, and in the fourth movement. In these passages the score moved through frequent changes of character and objective musical materials. In my preparation, I had already identified these passages as central conducting challenges; however, the rehearsal situation showed that the principal intervention was not merely to "conduct clearly" in a general sense, but to calibrate the amount of physical information given at each moment. Where the orchestra needed stabilisation, I used more explicit subdivisions and a firmer ictus even in places that were not marked for strict beating. Where too much subdivision risked making the transition heavy or visually overloaded, I reduced the gesture and prepared the next tempo through a clearer upbeat. The intervention

therefore consisted of moving between subdivision and broader gesture according to the orchestra's actual response. A specific example of this occurred around bars 168–170.

Rather than continuing the divided beat through every bar of the *Meno mosso* material, I used the subdivision where it was most necessary to secure the orchestra's internal pulse, then allowed the ensemble to continue the established tempo while I prepared the upbeat into the following *Allegro*. This was a practical compromise between two needs: the need to keep the layers synchronised and the need to avoid over-conducting the transition. In terms of gestural economy, the intervention was not a reduction of gesture for its own sake, but a redistribution of physical information. The gesture became larger or more divided only when it solved a concrete coordination problem; once that problem was sufficiently stabilised, the gesture had to become more directional and less corrective. Another important intervention concerned the relationship between my prepared tempo conception and the orchestra's established familiarity with Lyatoshynsky's symphony. This became apparent in several passages, including bars 235–242 and 281–292 in the first movement, as well as in the overall tempo character of the third movement. In passages where brass, woodwind, and lower-string figurations occurred simultaneously, often within dense polyphonic textures, my initial tempo choices tended to favour the weight, rhetoric, and dramatic character of the brass and lower instrumental layers. However, this occasionally reduced the clarity of other important layers, particularly the faster woodwind and upper-string figures (see Example 5). The solution was not simply to choose between my prepared interpretation and the orchestra's previous performing habit. Instead, I had to negotiate tempi that preserved the expressive and structural function of the brass, cello, and contrabass material while allowing the higher instrumental layers to remain sufficiently articulate and controlled. This was an interpretive intervention rather than merely a technical correction: the tempo was adjusted not because the original idea had been abandoned, but because the hierarchy of musical priorities changed when the passage was tested with the orchestra. A specific example occurred from bar 291 to the end of the first movement. In this passage, I accepted that the fast figurations in the violins and woodwinds would function more as textural filling than as the primary musical focus. I therefore prioritised the clearer projection of the rhythmically defined triplet-based theme in the brass. This decision represented a deliberate

interpretive compromise: rather than attempting to give equal prominence to all layers, I chose to foreground the material that carried the strongest structural and rhetorical function at that moment.

Example 5. Score of Symphony No. 3, B. Lyatoshynsky, Mov. I, mm 191-192. The *Meno mosso* passage discussed above, showing the simultaneous rhetorical brass material and rapid upper woodwind figures. Reproduced from the performing score used for the project.

The image displays a page from a musical score for Symphony No. 3 by B. Lyatoshynsky, Movement I, measures 191-192. The tempo is marked *Meno mosso*. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes staves for Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Cor Anglais, Clarinet, Clarinet in Bb, Bassoon, Bassoon in C, Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba, Timpani, Snare Drum, Cymbal, Triangle, and Arpa. The second system includes staves for Arpa and a section labeled *Meno mosso*. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including rapid upper woodwind figures and simultaneous rhetorical brass material. Dynamics such as *ff marcato* and *gliss.* are indicated. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

In the third movement of Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3, one of the most important preparatory and rehearsal challenges concerned the relationship between my intended urgent tempo and the conducting gestures required by the movement's changing metric organisation. The movement begins *Allegro feroce*, and its character depends on aggressive rhythmic energy, sharp articulation, and continuous forward pressure. However, this ferocity is not produced by speed alone. It also depends on the precision with which the orchestra can coordinate accents, triplet figures, displaced attacks, and rapid changes of orchestral layer. For this reason, my initial conducting decision was not to begin with an overly broad or generalised gesture, but to conduct the opening in a clear three-beat pattern from the beginning and continue this approach until bar 30. This allowed me to preserve the notated 3/4 organisation and support the orchestra's rhythmic security while still aiming for the urgent character I wanted. The first major complication appeared at bar 30, where Lyatoshynsky marks the metric relationship $2/4 = 3/4$. This is a particularly delicate transition because the lower string activity continues in a way that is closely connected to the preceding 3/4 motion, while other orchestral layers begin to articulate the new 2/4 framework.

Even though the cello and double bass lines are not explicitly notated as triplet divisions, their continuation of the previous rhythmic activity can easily be perceived in that way, especially when the conductor shifts into a two-beat gesture. The challenge was therefore that the change of gesture made the lower strings reinterpret their ongoing material too abruptly, while the upper and more rhythmically marked layers required the clarity of the new metre. At my intended tempo, this created a real risk of instability: if the transition was conducted too strictly in two, the lower strings could lose their relation to the previous pulse; if it was conducted too much as a continuation of three, the new 2/4 layer could lose its definition. For that reason, I rehearsed this passage specifically with the lower strings by moving between two- and three-beat gestural approaches. The purpose was to help them understand both dimensions of the passage: the continuity of their own line from the preceding 3/4 section and the necessity of fitting it into the new metric frame. This kind of rehearsal work was directly connected to the broader tempo question of the movement. I had originally wished to take the movement at a higher tempo, and in some rehearsal moments the orchestra was able to achieve this tempo with strong musical

effect. However, it gradually became clear that the ensemble could not sustain that level of precision securely enough for the performance. The decision to adjust the tempo slightly was therefore a practical artistic judgement.

A further complication emerged from bar 47, where bassoons and bass clarinet join the accompanimental activity already established in the lower strings (see Example 6).

Example 6: Score of Symphony No. 3, B.Lyatoshynsky, Mov. III, mm.43-48

The musical score for Example 6, measures 43-48, is presented in a standard orchestral format. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes parts for the following instruments: Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in G, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon, Contrabassoon, Cor Anglais, Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba, Timpani, Snare Drum, Arpa I, and Archi. The score shows a gradual build-up of texture from measure 43 to 48, with various dynamics and articulations. The woodwinds and strings enter in measure 43, and the brass instruments join in measure 47. The score includes various dynamics such as *p*, *f*, *sf*, and *cresc.*, as well as articulations like *div. in 3*, *div. in 2*, *unis.*, and *div. pizz.*.

The difficulty here was not primarily the continuation after the entry, but the first bar of their participation. When the woodwind players entered alone in rehearsal, the passage functioned relatively well; however, when combined with the strings, the first bar became blurred because the players were trying to adjust themselves to the ongoing lower-string motion rather than entering with a sufficiently absorbed rhythmic identity. The problem was therefore one of entry alignment and shared subdivision, not simply one of note accuracy. To solve this, I prepared a more targeted cueing strategy. Beginning four bars before the passage, I gave the bassoons and bass clarinet increased visual attention so that they could anticipate the entry as part of a prepared process rather than as a sudden local event. Two bars before their entrance, I quietly mimicked the rhythmic character of the passage within my gesture, preparing the physical sense of the rhythm before it sounded. At the entry itself, I gave a slight emphasis to the first eighth note, where the bassoon enters, and another clear impulse on the fifth eighth note, where the bass clarinet and contrabassoon enter. This helped the players develop a more secure habit for the passage and allowed the entrance at bar 47 to become clearer within the full texture.

The next relevant metric problem appeared from around bar 71, where the notation presents a $3/4$ framework with a $2/4$ indication in parentheses. This creates a similar but not identical issue to the earlier metric shift. Here, some layers continue to $2/4$ measures while others remain within a $3/4$ bar structure, yet the total length of the measure remains equivalent. Since the orchestration becomes thinner from this point and the texture no longer carries the same level of full orchestral density as the opening, I chose a different gestural solution. Instead of continuing to mark every internal division in two or three, I rehearsed the orchestra to follow a one-beat gesture. In this passage, the one-beat approach worked better because it clarified the larger span of the bar and avoided unnecessary physical information. It also allowed the remaining polyrhythmic activity to function within a broader pulse rather than becoming over-managed by my gestures. Max Rudolf argues that, in passages where different rhythmic layers proceed simultaneously, or where a change in the number of beats per bar is necessary, the conductor must avoid any gesture that interrupts the rhythmic continuity of any group. For Rudolf, the essential principle in such situations is clarity of beat and ictus rather than visual elegance. He emphasises that the conductor should not be overly concerned if the gesture

appears somewhat mechanical, provided that it communicates the rhythmic structure clearly. In this context, unnecessary curves or expressive shapes may obscure the beat pattern and make the gesture harder for the musicians to read. A more direct and clearly diagrammed gesture can therefore be the most effective solution, especially when performers need precise information about subdivision, metric change, and the exact placement of the ictus (Rudolf, 1995, pp. 135–142). For this reason, especially in passages where transitions between different rhythmic layers occurred, my first intervention was to adapt my gesture so that the musicians received the clearest possible beat pattern and gestural diagram to follow. This was particularly important around the most dangerous bars, where the preparation could not be limited to the exact moment of transition itself. Instead, I had to shape several bars before and after the transition so that the players could anticipate the change, understand the new metric relationship, and maintain rhythmic continuity through it.

The fourth movement of Lyatoshynsky's Symphony No. 3 occupies a particularly complex position within the history of the work. The first version, completed in 1951, was subjected to severe ideological criticism, after which Lyatoshynsky revised the symphony; the second version was completed in 1954 and premiered in 1955. Although discussion of the two versions often centres on the finale, Farenjuk's study of the third movement demonstrates that the revision history cannot be reduced to a simple opposition between an unchanged first three movements and a replaced finale (Farenjuk, 2023). In this project, however, the practical difference for the orchestra concerned the revised finale. Some musicians and commentators regard the unrevised version as the more "original" or authentic form because it preceded the imposed revision. My own view is more nuanced. Although the revised finale was produced under political pressure, I do not hear it merely as an ideologically obedient replacement. I find that its triumphant rhetoric, motivic recall, and large-scale drive can be understood as reinforcing a broader Western symphonic idea of conflict, transformation, and victorious culmination. This is an interpretive position rather than a historical claim about the composer's private intention. This became evident already at the opening of the movement. The *Allegro risoluto* begins with sharply articulated orchestral gestures, strong brass statements, accented responses, triplet figures, and sudden dynamic intensifications. In my initial preparation, I had imagined a tempo

and a relatively weighty gesture that would project the force of the main motives and establish the victorious character immediately. However, in the first rehearsal attempts, this did not communicate with the orchestra as effectively as I had expected. Because some musicians were still negotiating between the old version and the revised score, the heavy gesture risked reinforcing uncertainty rather than clarifying the musical direction. I therefore changed my approach. Instead of insisting on the full weight of my prepared gesture from the beginning, I established a clearly defined pulse with a firm but less heavy beat. I also gave more space to individual sections and rehearsed the opening in shorter segments, asking the players to treat the movement as a new score and to follow my gestures rather than relying on habits from the unrevised version. Once I had worked with the orchestra section by section and achieved a sufficient level of coordination, another issue became clear.

My original interpretation of the relationship between tempo and energy did not produce the musical effect I had expected. Even when the orchestra became synchronised, the movement did not project the same natural intensity and inner drive that I had experienced in the first movement. In this finale, I did not want to compromise the emotional and musical effect for the sake of maintaining my initial tempo plan. I therefore decided to alter my strategy and reduce the tempo slightly. This was not a simple slowing down, but a rebalancing of tempo, articulation, and energy. The slightly broader tempo allowed the accented notes to speak more clearly and gave the movement a stronger sense of weight and projection. It also made it possible to intensify certain dynamics and articulations without losing rhythmic control. I applied this revised strategy differently in different passages. In one increasing passage near the beginning, I reduced the written crescendo effect by asking the orchestra to approach the upward gesture around bar 6 more directly at forte, rather than allowing the crescendo to blur the attack and weaken the clarity of the line. By contrast, in another passage around bars 32–34, I asked the orchestra to begin the crescendo from a weaker dynamic level and finish it more strongly, in order to create a clearer contrast between layers and a more convincing sense of growth. Later, in the very active brass writing beginning around bar 165, the slightly reduced tempo proved especially effective. It allowed me to control articulation, rhythmic alignment, and synchronisation with the other sections much more securely. In this way, the final tempo choice became an example of

interpretive priority in practice: I preserved the movement's triumphant and forceful character not by insisting on the fastest possible tempo, but by finding the tempo at which the motives, accents, dynamic contrasts, and orchestral layers could communicate most powerfully.

Another particular conducting challenge in the fourth movement appeared at bars 239–250, where drastic changes of tempo and time signature occur together with very fast atmospheric passages in the upper woodwinds. During rehearsal, I had to test several conducting strategies before arriving at the solution that worked most effectively. The difficulty was that no single gestural approach seemed equally useful for all sections: different players responded better to different degrees of beat clarity, subdivision, or preparatory gesture. In this situation, it became necessary to give the woodwinds and brass a short additional sectional focus, allowing them to experience the passage several times with my support through both gesture and sung rhythmic guidance. Although I had not originally intended to spend extra rehearsal time on this passage in this way, the intervention became unavoidable once it was clear that the passage could not be stabilised through conducting gesture alone. Since the limited time frame did not allow me to work on every detail in each section equally, the issue became one of prioritisation: I had to decide which instrumental group carried the most important musical function and then adjust the others around it. My strategy was therefore to prioritise the brass section, which carried the main thematic material. I worked on the brass dynamics, articulation, and the intensity of the accents, which allowed me both to balance the passage's overall energy and to reduce the risk that some possible imprecision in the fast upper-woodwind lines would dominate the texture. In this case, the solution was not to correct every layer with equal attention, but to clarify the structural hierarchy of the passage so that the most important musical material remained audible and convincing. Because equal correction was impossible within the available time, prioritising the brass also meant accepting that some upper-layer imprecision might remain. This reveals a less visible dimension of interpretive responsibility: the conductor is accountable for interventions made, and also for omissions authorised in order to protect a more consequential musical function. The contribution is more specific than the general advice to prioritise, because both the deferred material and the musical reason for deferring it are made explicit.

The challenges in the brass and percussion sections required a different type of intervention, primarily connected to beat placement, rhythmic responsibility, and the players' relationship to the conductor's pulse. As mentioned earlier, in several medium-to-fast passages some brass and percussion entries tended to fall slightly behind the beat, affecting the perceived tempo and weakening the forward motion of the music. This became especially apparent in the second part of the project, during the rehearsal of my composition *Legend of Kayumars*. In the ninth piece, "Battle", an unforeseen rhythmic difficulty emerged in a syncopated passage that I had not expected to present a serious challenge for the brass and percussion players. In response, I combined gestural clarification with targeted rehearsal methods. I divided the passage into shorter fragments, made certain beats more physically definite, and asked the relevant players to connect more directly to the visible beat rather than relying primarily on sectional listening. I also sang the rhythmic patterns, both with and without conducting gestures, and used clapping to clarify the details of the syncopated rhythm, especially for the brass section.

In some cases, I isolated the rhythmic cell and repeated it with a clearer preparatory gesture; in others, I allowed another section to provide a stable reference point so that the delayed entries could be heard against a more secure pulse. Although this type of work could momentarily sound mechanical or overly technical, the aim was not to impose mechanical precision at the expense of musical character. Rather, the purpose was to restore the rhythmic foundation on which character, energy, and dramatic intensity could become convincing. In this case, rhythmic stabilisation became a necessary precondition for musical expression.

In orchestral repertoire, strict metric equality is not always identical with musical precision. A beat may be broadened deliberately when a crescendo, harmonic intensification, phrase boundary, or orchestral arrival requires additional weight. Timmers, Ashley, Desain, and Heijink show that expressive timing can involve both broader tempo modulation and local alteration of beat duration, although their study concerns pianists performing Brahms rather than an orchestra (Timmers, Ashley, Desain, & Heijink, 2000). The applicable principle is therefore limited but useful: a broadened beat must be intentional, proportionate, and shared. Without a common understanding, agogic emphasis becomes an uncontrolled delay. The conductor must

consequently make clear whether the pulse is being shaped expressively or must remain strictly contained, especially where choir, soloists, percussion, or exposed instrumental entries depend on the following point of arrival.

In the *Bells of Victory* project, percussion required particular attention where the rhythmic value of a sustained sound had to remain strictly contained. This became evident in bars 8 and 26 of “Victory”, the eleventh number of *Legend of Kayumars*, where the timpani part contains a dotted-quarter-note trill in 7/8 (see Example 7).

Example 7: Score of Legend of Kayumars, A.Khaef, Victory, mm. 1-9

XI
VICTORY
Legend of Kayumars

Afshin Khaef

$\text{♩} = 150$

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Flute I

Flute II

Oboe

Cor Anglais

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Clarinet in A

Bassoon

Contrabassoon

Horn in F 1&2

Horn in F 3&4

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Timpani

Cymbals

Tom-toms

Tambourine

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

In rehearsal, the trill extended into the following beat, blurring the next accent and the dependent orchestral and choral continuation. Because this was not an intended agogic expansion, I isolated the rhythmic mechanism and worked on the exact timing of the release, the preparation of the following accent, and their connection within one gesture. Direct eye contact, a sharper cut-off, a clearly prepared next beat, and sung rhythmic modelling produced a more contained repetition in rehearsal. The analytically relevant point is the passage-level relationship between sustained sound, release, and subsequent entry; no inference is made about the player's general ability or habitual behaviour.

As described, the presence of choir, soloists, and narrator in the second part of the project required a more flexible hierarchy of attention than had been necessary in the purely orchestral part of the concert. Since the largest portion of the second part had been rehearsed separately with the orchestra, choir, and soloists, the general rehearsal on the concert day became the first occasion on which all forces were brought together in the same performance situation. At that point, it became clear that I had to make continuous decisions about which element required immediate priority: orchestral coordination, choral and solo entries, textual clarity, dynamic balance, or the timing of the narrator's transitions into and out of the musical material. This created one of the most complex conducting situations in the project, because the work no longer functioned as separate musical layers prepared independently, but as a single dramatic and temporal structure in which every element affected the others. The difficulty increased when it became apparent that some orchestral passages in the second part had not remained as stable as they had seemed during the earlier orchestral rehearsals. Several segments returned, at least partially, to problems that had previously been addressed. This was especially noticeable in the eighth piece, "Fear", where the orchestra unexpectedly required more support in pulse, beat clarity, and coordination than I had anticipated after the previous rehearsals. This situation directly conflicted with the attention I had planned to give to the choir and soloists at that moment. The challenge was therefore not only technical, but also communicative and psychological. Because the combined rehearsal involved organisers, choir leaders, soloists, and the full ensemble, any instability in the orchestra created additional pressure and could easily be

interpreted as a weakness in the preparation process. I therefore had to manage the situation without allowing the rehearsal atmosphere to become tense or defensive.

The intervention required a combination of calm authority, selective rehearsal triage, gestural adjustment, and rapid reorganisation of priorities. Since some orchestral passages needed immediate reinforcement, I asked the choir and soloists to pause briefly and give space for focused work with the orchestra. This was not part of the original plan, and it reduced the already limited time available for the full ensemble. Nevertheless, it became necessary because the unresolved passages had the potential to affect the final performance significantly. I therefore worked at a high but controlled pace, selecting only the passages that posed the greatest risk to continuity, coordination, and dramatic clarity. In each of these passages, I first reduced the problem to its essential musical function. Where necessary, I demonstrated the phrase through clapping, singing, conducting, or full-body physical modelling in order to clarify rhythm, pulse, phrasing, and character. I then asked selected players who were more secure in the passage to perform the material once or twice while the others listened carefully and followed the score. This procedure allowed the less secure players to hear the passage within the ensemble's own sound rather than only through my verbal explanation. After this, I either asked the full orchestra to play the passage together or rehearsed it sectionally, depending on the nature of the problem. Throughout this process, I adopted a more direct attitude and a more focused rehearsal manner than before in order to restore concentration and ensure that the orchestra understood the practical urgency of the situation. Audio files of *Legend of Kayumars* exported from Sibelius had been supplied as preparatory material. Even with that support, the combined rehearsal showed that some orchestral passages in the new work still required active reinforcement before the vocal and dramatic layers could be reintegrated. This intervention also revealed that the two parts of the concert may not have carried equal practical weight for all the musicians. While Lyatoshynsky's symphony appeared to have received stronger attention and preparation, parts of *Legend of Kayumars* required more active reinforcement during the final rehearsal. This difference affected my conducting. I could no longer rely on the gestural solutions that had seemed sufficient in the separate orchestral rehearsals. Even in passages marked piano or requiring a restrained dynamic character, I sometimes had to use broader two-handed gestures in

order to make phrasing, pulse, dynamic direction, and expressive intention more visible. In these moments, gestural economy did not mean reducing physical information; rather, it meant increasing the clarity and visibility of the information that the ensemble needed in order to function securely. Once the most urgent orchestral issues had been stabilised, I gradually reintegrated the choir and soloists. This was not done in the same way in every passage. In some places, I first added only the vocal section or solo line that carried the principal melody, text, or dramatic effect, together with the relevant orchestral layer. This allowed me to test rhythmic alignment, balance, and textual clarity without the distraction of less essential material. Only after this partial integration had been secured did I move to a full tutti run-through. Although this process consumed part of the limited general rehearsal time, it was necessary in order to prevent significant errors from carrying into the performance. The intervention therefore illustrated how, under real performance conditions, the conductor may need to abandon the planned rehearsal order and temporarily return to basic coordination work in order to protect the larger artistic result.

5.5 Artistic outcome

My intended artistic conception of Lyatoshynsky's *Symphony No. 3* centred on the combination of dramatic weight, historical gravity, rhythmic propulsion, structural contrast, and a cumulative sense of symphonic direction. I approached the work as a twentieth-century symphony in which dense harmony, intensified orchestration, and forceful rhythmic energy are not merely technical features, but central expressive agents. Although lyrical and expressive melodic lines also play an important role, sometimes within thinner and more transparent textures, I understood the symphony's strongest dramatic identity as arising from the interaction between complex harmonic tension and expanded orchestral sonority. As Ton de Leeuw explains, in twentieth-century orchestral composition, timbre increasingly functions not merely as an external colour applied to pre-existing melodic or harmonic material, but as an active structural element. De Leeuw observes that composers around the beginning of the twentieth century sought to liberate timbre as a colouristic resource and relate it more directly to musical structure, resulting in greater differentiation among instrumental colours and textural layers (de Leeuw, 2005, pp. 97–116). Robert Hasegawa develops this understanding further by arguing that combinations of

pitch, dynamics, and instrumental colour may fuse into unified composite sonorities possessing an emergent timbral identity. From this perspective, a dense orchestral passage may be perceived not only as a collection of independent lines, but as an integrated sonic whole whose harmonic, textural, and timbral properties are inseparable (Hasegawa, 2019, pp. 525–551).

This approach corresponds closely to my understanding of Lyatoshynsky's symphonic writing—not as a purely timbre-centred modernist idiom, but as symphonic writing strongly shaped by timbral and textural thinking. In such passages, the dramatic effect depends not solely on the prominence of individual themes, but on the accumulated weight and interaction of the entire orchestral texture. During the rehearsals in Gera, it became clear that the musical difficulties described above, including rhythmic inaccuracies, coordination problems, unstable tempo transitions, uneven sectional responsiveness, and loss of clarity within dense orchestral textures, could not be treated as isolated technical issues. They directly affected whether my intended artistic conception of the music could be realised. I therefore had to address these challenges first as practical rehearsal problems and then reshape aspects of my interpretation in order to come as close as possible to the artistic result I had imagined. This required a hierarchy of priorities.

In some passages, not every layer could be given equal prominence; certain details had to be subordinated so that the larger dramatic character, harmonic density, and orchestral intensity of the music could emerge more convincingly. This understanding became stronger during the rehearsal process. Rather than treating clarity as the simple separation of all musical lines, I often chose to foreground the dramatic force created by dense harmony and orchestration. I regarded this density as one of the principal means through which the symphony produces its artistic and psychological weight. For example, in bars 15–22 of the fourth movement, where polyphonic motion and powerful orchestral writing are combined, I aimed to achieve a result that projected the dramatic weight of the texture as a whole, rather than reducing the passage to the clarity of individual lines alone. In this respect, my interpretation moved away from some of the existing recorded approaches I had studied and sought a broader, heavier, and more dramatically concentrated orchestral sonority. A similar priority shaped my approach to the final section of the

finale. After the breathing fermata at bar 254, the passage from bar 255, marked *Trionfante*, to the end could have been conducted primarily by foregrounding the strong thematic material, especially in the brass. However, I chose instead to intensify the entire orchestral texture. My aim was to create an expanded and forceful dramatic culmination in which the brass theme remained important, but functioned as part of a larger symphonic totality. The artistic outcome I sought was therefore not simply a triumphant thematic statement, but a broad, cumulative ending in which harmony, orchestration, rhythm, and thematic material together produced the final dramatic weight of the symphony.

A significant artistic insight that emerged during the rehearsal process was that an interpretive idea does not always survive by being applied exactly as originally imagined. Through several trial-and-error situations, I learned that when one prepared interpretive element could not function effectively under the actual rehearsal conditions, it was sometimes possible to modify other musical parameters in order to preserve the deeper artistic aim. In this sense, the artistic outcome was not produced by a simple compromise, but by a reorganisation of interpretive means. What mattered was not whether every initial decision remained unchanged, but whether the essential character, sonority, and dramatic direction of the music could still be achieved. One clear outcome of this process was the transformation of tempo from a private interpretive decision into a negotiated artistic condition in Lyatoshynsky's symphony. In several passages, my prepared tempo concept had to be adjusted when it became clear that a faster tempo, although closer to my original idea, reduced the audibility of important orchestral layers. Maintaining that tempo would therefore not have served the music more faithfully simply because it corresponded to my initial conception. Instead, I revised other musical details—articulation, accentuation, balance, dynamic profile, and orchestral weight—in order to obtain a sonority and expressive character that remained artistically convincing. The interpretation was therefore not weakened by the adjusted tempo; rather, it became more precise in its practical realisation.

The third movement provided a particularly clear example of this process. My initial wish for a more urgent tempo was musically justified, since the movement's character depends on

ferocity, pressure, and forward momentum. However, the rehearsal process showed that this ferocity could not be produced by tempo alone. It also depended on the accuracy of articulation, the clarity of irregular accents, the definition of triplet figures, and the dynamic relationship between changing orchestral layers. Although the orchestra was able to reach my intended tempo in many passages, some of the irregular accents in the lower strings and woodwinds became less sharply defined at that speed. At the negotiated tempo, these accents spoke with greater precision and weight, so that the movement's rhythmic violence was carried by articulation as well as speed. The final artistic result was therefore not a safer but less expressive version of the movement. On the contrary, the slightly adjusted tempo allowed the orchestra to project the music's character with greater security, intensity, and expressive force. This became one of the most important artistic lessons of the project: intensity does not necessarily increase when tempo increases. Under certain rehearsal conditions, intensity may depend more on the orchestra's ability to articulate musical material with conviction than on the conductor's insistence on the most ambitious tempo. In this case, the artistic achievement lay in discovering the tempo at which rhythm, articulation, orchestral colour, and dramatic energy could work together most powerfully.

A related artistic outcome emerged from the comparable rehearsal situation of Lyatoshynsky's fourth movement and *Legend of Kayumars*. In both cases, the orchestra's relationship with the material was closer to that of a first encounter than to the familiarity it had with the earlier movements of the symphony. As a result, some details, especially in highly active and densely coordinated passages, could not be refined to the same degree that might have been possible with a longer rehearsal period. They also could not be treated with the same level of detailed continuity that was possible, for example, in parts of the first movement of Lyatoshynsky's symphony. Nevertheless, the larger artistic function of these sections was preserved. The fourth movement could still serve as the public culmination of the symphony's dramatic trajectory, and *Legend of Kayumars* could still emerge as a coherent narrative and musical whole. This situation produced an important change in my rehearsal method. In the first three movements of Lyatoshynsky's symphony, I could assume that a longer run-through would give the orchestra enough continuity for me to diagnose problems and then return to specific

musical details. Even when inaccuracies occurred, the general structure of the movement remained sufficiently recognisable.

By contrast, in the fourth movement and, even more clearly, in *Legend of Kayumars*, I realised that this approach would not produce the best artistic result. Long uninterrupted passages risked exposing too many unresolved issues at once, without giving the ensemble enough time to absorb the musical character, rhythmic structure, or the relationship between my selective gestures and the musical material. The artistic result therefore had to be built through a more constructive and segment-based rehearsal process. Instead of beginning with large sections and then refining details afterwards, I selected shorter passages that carried essential musical or structural functions and worked on them until they reached a sufficient level of coordination, character, and expressive clarity. Only after these smaller units became stable enough did I connect them into larger sections. This method was not merely a technical solution to limited rehearsal time; it became a way of constructing the artistic whole from the most necessary musical components. In this sense, the final outcome was achieved through assembly rather than continuous refinement. The performance did not result from polishing every detail evenly across the score, but from identifying the passages that carried the greatest structural, dramatic, or coordinative importance and ensuring that they could function convincingly in performance. This approach allowed the larger form to survive even when some local details remained less refined than I had originally hoped.

The project also produced an important artistic insight into the composer-conductor position. As the composer of *Legend of Kayumars*, I had to confront the difference between a score as imagined during composition and a score as realised by performers under limited rehearsal conditions. Certain musical ideas that had seemed clear and functional during the compositional process at the desk required more practical support in rehearsal than I had anticipated. The event did not permit a single cause to be isolated: notation, orchestration, preparation materials, rehearsal design, performer familiarity, and my own conducting decisions interacted. It revealed that the first performance of a new large-scale work is also a process through which the work acquires its practical identity. In this case, the second half of the concert

was not only the public performance of *Legend of Kayumars*, but also the first test of how the piece behaved in real time, with real performers, in a major concert venue, and within a restricted preparation period. This was already part of the project's preparatory condition, since the work had to be composed, planned, and prepared while I was also anticipating its rehearsal consequences.

The composer–conductor dimension also has important historical resonance. In ‘The Creative Achievements of H. Berlioz as a Reformist Conductor’, Pluzhnikov identifies that one of the principal motivations behind Berlioz's conducting activity was his desire to direct performances of his own compositions. The same study also emphasises the importance of direct visual contact with orchestral musicians in achieving ensemble coherence and artistic refinement in large symphonic and choral-orchestral forces (Pluzhnikov, 2026). The comparison should not be overstated, but it is useful here because *Legend of Kayumars* placed me in a double artistic responsibility: I was not only interpreting a work, but guiding the first practical embodiment of my own composition. From this position, I experienced particularly clearly how visual communication can become a decisive condition for artistic coherence, especially when the score involves orchestra, choir, soloists, percussion, and narrative timing. This became especially apparent in the eleventh piece, “Victory”, where percussion, choir, and orchestra required a high degree of temporal security. Luck and Toiviainen's study of ensemble musicians' synchronisation with conductors' gestures is relevant here because it examines conductor–musician synchronisation in an ecologically valid setting involving instrumentalists and singers.

Their findings indicate that ensemble performance tends to synchronise with specific features of the conductor's movement, especially moments of maximal deceleration and high vertical velocity (Luck & Toiviainen, 2006). In practical terms, this supports what I experienced in rehearsal: when the ensemble needed stronger temporal certainty, my gesture had to provide clearer physical information about beat placement, release, preparation, and the exact end of a sustained sound. A specific example occurred at bar 26 of “Victory”, where the timpani part contains a dotted-quarter-note trill within a $\frac{7}{8}$ metre. In another interpretive context, a slight broadening of this trill might have been treated as an expressive expansion, particularly if the

passage were shaped by another conductor without direct access to my compositional intention. However, in my role as composer-conductor, I understood that this was not the desired effect. The trill had to remain rhythmically contained so that the following accent and the choral-orchestral continuation could remain secure. I therefore chose a definite, non-expanded rhythmic solution and communicated it through a more explicit visual relationship with the timpanist and the surrounding ensemble. The artistic result of this intervention was clearer in rehearsal than in performance.

During rehearsal, the visual clarification was followed by a more contained trill and a more rhythmically stable continuation. In the performance, however, the agreed rhythmic containment was not fully retained, and the trill again showed a slight tendency to expand. This difference between rehearsal success and performance result is important because it shows that a conducting solution may be musically effective in the moment, yet still requires more time to become absorbed as a reliable performance habit. The limitation was therefore not only one of communication, but also of retention under different levels of pressure. In practical artistic terms, this revealed a central condition of the project: even when the conductor's intention is made clear, and even when the passage responds to the intervention in rehearsal, limited time may prevent certain details from becoming fully internalised before performance. This became a clear example of the close relationship between artistic insight and practical conditions inherent in the dual role of composer and conductor. The role allowed me to decide that the passage should not be broadened, because I understood the dramatic and structural function of the rhythm from the composer's perspective. At the same time, the rehearsal and performance result showed that authorial knowledge alone is not enough and the artistic idea still had to pass through the practical realities of performer memory, visual attention, ensemble coordination, and the pressure of live performance.

5.6 Research insight

The concert project with the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra demonstrated that constraints in orchestral conducting do not operate independently. All the limitations discussed formed an interconnected system in which one difficulty amplified the effects of another. The cancellation

of a rehearsal day did not simply remove a fixed number of working hours; it altered the function of all the remaining procedures, since most aspects of the rehearsal process had to be addressed simultaneously rather than in separate stages. Comparison of the decisions made under these interacting constraints clarified which artistic functions I treated as essential and which interpretive parameters I adjusted to preserve them. In this project, certain artistic aims and musical features, including rhythmic stability, remained fundamental throughout the process. In Lyatoshynsky's symphony, these included dramatic weight, historical gravity, textural force, structural contrast, and cumulative direction. In *Legend of Kayumars*, they included narrative continuity, intelligibility of the vocal and dramatic layers, contrast between the individual numbers, and the coherence of the work as a complete trajectory. These aims functioned as artistic invariants because abandoning them would have changed the identity of the interpretation or the composition itself. By contrast, tempo, articulation, gestural scale, degree of subdivision, prominence of individual orchestral layers, distribution of rehearsal time, and order of rehearsal could be modified.

The practical task was therefore not to preserve every prepared decision, but to identify which decisions carried the artistic identity of the work and which served only as possible means of realising it. This distinction makes it possible to understand interpretive adaptation more precisely. In the third movement of Lyatoshynsky's symphony, the slightly moderated tempo was combined with adjustments to other interpretive parameters so that the movement's artistic force could be preserved, even though that force was generated through different means. This process may be described as interpretive compensation: when one musical parameter cannot function as originally intended, other parameters may be intensified, reduced, or reorganised in order to preserve the larger expressive purpose. Such compensation should not be arbitrary. Its artistic validity depends on a clear understanding of the relationships among musical parameters. Tempo, for example, affects more than speed; it can alter articulation, textural transparency, layer audibility, and the capacity for coordination. A tempo that appears convincing during analytical preparation may therefore produce less satisfactory results in other musical dimensions or change the relative audibility of instrumental layers when realised by a particular orchestra. A broader tempo does not necessarily create greater weight, just as a faster tempo does not necessarily

generate greater energy. What matters is the effect of the chosen tempo in relation to the other elements of the interpretation. The research insight here is that tempo should not be treated as an isolated interpretive decision. It operates within a network of musical consequences, and its artistic validity can be assessed only in relation to the orchestral response it makes possible. Viewed through responsibility, the distinction between invariants and adjustable parameters defines the conductor's burden of justification. An altered tempo, redistributed dynamic, or unequal layer prominence is defensible not because adaptation is inherently desirable, but because the changed means can be related to a musical function judged more structurally or expressively consequential. This moves the account beyond pragmatic compromise: it makes the reason for transformation part of the interpretation itself.

A significant research insight from this project concerns rehearsal granularity: the appropriate size of the rehearsal unit depends not only on the formal structure of the score, but also on the ensemble's familiarity with the material and its level of complexity. In the first three movements of Lyatoshynsky's symphony, the orchestra's previous experience made longer run-throughs productive. Even when local errors occurred, the larger structure remained sufficiently stable for me to diagnose problems within a continuous musical span. The revised fourth movement and *Legend of Kayumars* required a finer rehearsal scale. Because the musicians lacked the same collective familiarity with these works, longer run-throughs often accumulated unresolved difficulties without producing a reliable sense of form. Shorter passages therefore became the effective unit of work: each segment first had to achieve rhythmic stability, a clear hierarchy of material, and a recognisable character before it could be connected to the next. In these rehearsals, segmentation followed by reintegration helped me build continuity in the unfamiliar finale and in *Legend of Kayumars*. Segmentation alone may produce local accuracy but weaken formal continuity. The most effective sequence was therefore to isolate the unstable musical function, stabilise it, reconnect it to the surrounding passage, and then test it within the larger dramatic span. This offers a more precise model of rehearsal triage than selecting passages solely because they appear technically difficult.

The project clarified gestural economy as a question of when, where, and to whom physical information is directed, rather than how large or small the conductor's movements appear. In unstable passages, the decisive issue was the timing and specificity of the gesture. The bassoon and bass-clarinet entry in the third movement, for example, became more reliable when their rhythmic attention was prepared several bars in advance; enlarging the gesture only at the moment of entry was less effective. Similarly, in *Legend of Kayumars*, the timpani problem could not be solved by indicating the attack alone. The release of the trill and the preparation of the following accent had to be communicated as one continuous physical sequence. The gestural economy depends on the hierarchical distribution of attention according to coordinative risk. Eye contact, subdivision, preparatory motion, beat definition, release, and expressive shaping should be concentrated on the performer or layer whose instability is most likely to affect the rest of the ensemble. This became especially relevant in the orchestral-vocal sections, where choir, soloists, narrator, percussion, and orchestra could not all receive the same degree of visual support simultaneously. Effective gestural economy therefore required identifying the immediate coordinative centre of each passage, directing the necessary information towards it, and allowing the more secure layers to function with less active supervision. The project also revealed a necessary distinction between immediate correction and durable absorption. A passage may improve during a focused rehearsal intervention without becoming sufficiently internalised to remain stable in performance. The timpani trill in "Victory" demonstrated this difference clearly: the corrected rehearsal repetition followed the visual and rhythmic information, but the agreed timing was not fully retained in the concert. The intervention itself was therefore effective at the level of immediate response but incomplete at the level of performance memory. This has methodological consequences for evaluating the interventions. The first successful repetition after a correction should not automatically be treated as evidence that the problem has been solved. A more reliable evaluation requires the passage to be revisited after an interval, placed back into its surrounding texture, and, where possible, tested under conditions closer to performance. On the limited evidence of this example, the project provisionally suggests a stabilisation threshold: the point at which a corrected action no longer depends on concentrated short-term attention but has become sufficiently absorbed to withstand distraction, full

orchestration, and performance pressure. Limited rehearsal time reduced the possibility of testing whether all corrected passages had crossed this threshold.

This project showed why institutional designation cannot substitute for passage-level diagnosis. The Kyiv Symphony Orchestra's professional identity did not determine in advance how familiar a revised finale or a newly composed work would be, nor how much support a particular transition would require under the reduced schedule. The conclusion is limited to this project: effective preparation must respond to the collective knowledge and stability audible in the specific passage, rather than infer readiness from an ensemble category. The evidence cannot support broader claims about professional orchestras, Ukrainian orchestral practice, or ensembles working in exile.

6. Conclusion

This research began from a practical discrepancy at the centre of orchestral conducting: the interpretation prepared in score study is not identical with the interpretation that becomes possible in rehearsal and performance. The study asked in what ways a conductor's analytical and interpretive intentions are transformed through gestural economy and real-time decision-making when time, preparation, coordination, acoustics, materials, and institutional conditions restrict the available choices. Across the completed projects, the answer is not that prepared intentions are either realised or abandoned. They are subjected to a process of selection, redistribution, and compensation. Some artistic functions must remain stable, while the means used to realise them may need to change. Conducting under constraint is therefore best understood as the preservation of artistic identity through the controlled transformation of interpretive means.

6.1 Answer to the research question and original contribution

The findings through the process of this research support the premise of the research question, but they also extend it. Gestural economy and real-time judgement proved central to the transformation of prepared intentions; however, the cases show that this transformation is not confined to gesture at the podium. It may begin with the revision of notation, the restructuring of a transition, the reordering of rehearsal units, the redistribution of attention between conductor and ensemble, or, in a newly composed work, the adjustment of the musical material itself. Real-time conducting decisions operate within a wider adaptive system that includes preparation before rehearsal, decisions between rehearsals, and the capacity of musicians to retain an intervention under performance pressure. The final result therefore broadens the initial question: interpretive transformation occurs not only through what the conductor shows in the moment, but through the entire organisation of the conditions in which a gesture can become effective. The literature discussed in Chapter 2 already establishes that rehearsal requires flexibility, economical communication, and responsiveness to the orchestra (Biasutti, 2013; McElheran, 1966; Rudolf, 1995; Seaman, 2013). The principal original contribution of this research is the passage-level reconstruction and comparative analysis of how prepared artistic intentions were transformed in these three projects. The analysis connects intention, encountered constraint, intervention or

adaptation, and the ensuing musical response, then considers reintegration and retention wherever the documentation allows. It makes explicit both the conductor's reasons for acting and the musical consequences against which those reasons can be assessed. Through this sequence, the study identifies relationships among artistic priorities, gestural support, changes of interpretive means, rehearsal organisation, and the durability of corrections. The terms developed through the cases provide analytical tools for examining those relationships. The five findings summarised below articulate the knowledge produced by this comparison.

Analytical focus	Concise definition	Principal piece and passage	Example passages
1. Gestural economy distinguished from clarity and effectiveness	Clarity concerns whether a gesture is legible; effectiveness concerns whether the intended response follows; economy concerns whether the appropriate information is directed to the relevant musicians at the necessary time and reduced when no longer required.	Lyatoshynsky, <i>Symphony No. 3</i> , I, bars 168–170; III, bar 47, prepared from bar 43 (§5.4).	In bars 168–170, subdivision was reduced after the pulse had been established. At bar 47, preparing the lower woodwinds' attention before their entry was more useful than enlarging the cue only at the attack. Economy therefore concerns timing, recipient, and withdrawal of support, as well as gestural scale.
2. Interpretive priority as musical dependency	The conductor first identifies the musical function on which other artistic aims depend, rather than automatically addressing the most conspicuous error.	<i>Soroode Zan</i> , opening Adagio, bars 1–13: sustained vowels and final consonants (§3.4).	Coordinating vowel duration and consonantal release established the temporal stability required for textual intelligibility, vertical sonority, and coherent phrase endings. Coordination was therefore part of the interpretation, not merely a preliminary technical task.
3. Preserving an essential artistic function through compensatory adjustment (<i>artistic invariants and interpretive compensation</i>)	The conductor distinguishes the artistic function that must remain recognisable from parameters—such as tempo, articulation, balance, or gesture—that may be adjusted to preserve it.	Lyatoshynsky, <i>Symphony No. 3</i> , III, opening to bar 30 and the tempo comparison across the movement (§§5.4–5.5).	When the intended faster tempo weakened the definition of irregular accents, a slightly moderated tempo was combined with sharper articulation, stronger accents, and greater rhythmic weight. The <i>Allegro feroce</i> character was preserved through different means.

4. Matching rehearsal-unit size to the musical problem (<i>rehearsal granularity</i>)	The effective rehearsal unit may range from a short rhythmic cell to a complete movement, depending on familiarity, complexity, and coordinative risk. Isolated work must subsequently be reintegrated into the larger form.	Lyatoshynsky, <i>Symphony No. 3</i> , familiar movements I–III compared with the opening of the revised IV; <i>Legend of Kayumars</i> , No. 8, “Fear” (§§5.4–5.6).	The familiar movements supported longer continuous spans, whereas the unfamiliar finale and “Fear” required shorter functional units, partial or sectional work, and deliberate reintegration. Rehearsal scale was therefore an artistic decision rather than merely a matter of efficiency.
5. Distinguishing immediate correction from durable retention (<i>provisional stabilisation threshold</i>)	A correction becomes stable only when it survives reintegration, distraction, full texture, and performance pressure; one successful repetition demonstrates possibility, not durability.	<i>Legend of Kayumars</i> , No. 11, “Victory,” bars 8 and 26: dotted-quarter timpani trill in 7/8 (§§5.4–5.6).	A more contained release followed the targeted rehearsal intervention. At bar 26, however, the trill expanded again in performance. The intervention was associated with an immediate response, but the result had not become securely retained.

Note: The table identifies the clearest evidential anchor for each contribution rather than every instance in which the finding appears. The concentration of principal examples in the Kyiv project reflects the greater documentary depth of the extensive case, not greater artistic importance.

First, the study distinguishes gestural economy from gestural clarity and effectiveness. Clarity names the legibility of a gesture; effectiveness names its capacity to produce a specified musical or coordinative response; economy names the proportional allocation of physical information to a changing need. Economy therefore cannot be inferred from size, visual neatness, or immediate success alone. A gesture is economical when its scale, timing, recipient, content, and duration correspond to the actual coordinative risk, and when additional support can be withdrawn once the musicians have internalised the necessary behaviour. The cases make this distinction concrete. At KMH, enlarging gestures for woodwind players with restricted sightlines increased clarity; it became an economical intervention because the expansion was directed towards the affected players and passages rather than applied indiscriminately. Temporary subdivision in the exposed brass writing was effective in stabilising the pulse, but its economy lay in withdrawing that subdivision once the pulse had become internal. At Berwaldhallen, enlarging the bassoon and bass-clarinet cue only at the entry was less effective than preparing the

players' attention several bars earlier, demonstrating that economy concerns timing and recipient rather than magnitude alone. At Avicii Arena, the economical solution was not principally a smaller gesture but a reduction of competing temporal references: by aligning my conducting with the playback, I enabled the choir to treat my gesture as its primary visual interface. Across the cases, gestural economy is therefore measured by communicative necessity, musical consequence, and the conductor's capacity to return responsibility to the ensemble.

Second, interpretive priority emerged as a dependency structure among musical aims. Rhythm, synchronisation, textual clarity, balance, phrasing, colour, and dramatic continuity do not always compete on equal terms. In several cases, rhythmic or temporal stability had to be secured first because the more refined expressive aims depended on it. This does not place technique outside interpretation. When the choir at Avicii Arena could not coordinate Persian phrase endings, or when irregular accents in Lyatoshynsky's third movement became indistinct at the intended tempo, coordination itself became an interpretive priority because it determined whether the character of the music could be perceived. The conductor's task was therefore to identify which musical function enabled the others at each moment.

Third, the research distinguishes between *artistic invariants* and *adjustable interpretive parameters*. Artistic invariants are the functions whose loss would alter the identity of the interpretation: for example, dramatic weight and cumulative direction in Lyatoshynsky, or narrative continuity and vocal intelligibility in my composition *Legend of Kayumars*. Tempo, articulation, dynamic profile, degree of subdivision, prominence of a layer, gestural scale, and rehearsal order may be adjustable means. This distinction led to the concept of *interpretive compensation*: when one prepared parameter cannot function as intended, another can be reorganised to preserve the larger artistic purpose. The moderated tempo in Lyatoshynsky's third movement did not necessarily reduce ferocity; clearer accents, stronger articulation, and greater rhythmic conviction allowed ferocity to be produced by different means. The relevant criterion was not fidelity to an isolated decision, but fidelity to the musical function that decision was intended to serve.

Fourth, the projects identified *rehearsal granularity* as an artistic and methodological variable. The effective size of a rehearsal unit depends on the ensemble's familiarity with the material, the density of the coordination problem, and the amount of information that can be absorbed at once. Longer spans were productive in the first three movements of Lyatoshynsky because the orchestra possessed prior knowledge of much of the work. The revised finale and *Legend of Kayumars* required shorter units, followed by deliberate reintegration into the surrounding texture and the larger form. This produces a more precise form of rehearsal triage: a passage should not be isolated merely because it is technically difficult, but because a specific unstable function within it threatens continuity, coordination, or structural intelligibility.

Fifth, the research differentiates immediate correction from durable absorption. The timpani trill in "Victory" became secure during focused rehearsal but expanded again in performance. This contrast motivates the provisional term "stabilisation threshold", which frames a question for further investigation: when, and under what conditions, does a rehearsal correction become sufficiently secure to endure in performance. This distinction changes how rehearsal success should be evaluated. One correct repetition is evidence that an instruction can work; it is not evidence that the solution has become reliable. A correction must be revisited after an interval, restored to its full context, and tested under conditions increasingly close to performance.

Repetition, increasing familiarity, individual correction, sectional listening, and the musicians' mutual adjustment are active parts of the rehearsal process and may generate improvement without a targeted intervention. The present research therefore makes claims of contribution rather than exclusive attribution. A conducting decision is treated as a credible contributor where the documented sequence connects a specific diagnosis, a deliberately altered variable, and a corresponding musical response, while later repetitions test whether the response can survive reintegration or reduced support. Where interventions were bundled or no sufficiently clear pre-intervention comparison exists, the conclusion is restricted to progress occurring during the rehearsal process. This evidential distinction is itself part of the methodological contribution of the research: reflective conducting practice becomes more

accountable when the conductor distinguishes what followed an action from what can reasonably be claimed to have changed because of it. Collectively, the artistic contribution of these findings is an account of how interpretive identity can be preserved through compensation rather than through literal adherence to every prepared decision. Their methodological contribution is a traceable sequence for conducting under constraint: identify the artistic invariant; locate the immediate coordinative risk; determine the musical priority on which other aims depend; direct the necessary gestural, verbal, material, or strategic intervention towards that risk; assess the immediate musical response; and then test whether the response is retained. Their practical contribution is to make this sequence usable in preparation and rehearsal without reducing artistic judgement to a fixed formula.

6.2 Knowledge generated by the individual projects

The Avicii Arena project produced a case-derived insight of conducting as the organisation of attention between competing temporal sources. The choir faced unequal access to a fixed backing track, delayed hall reflection, multilingual diction, and limited rehearsal time. In these conditions, adding further auditory information would not necessarily have improved coordination. The effective intervention was to establish the conductor as a single temporal interface: I listened to and aligned with the fixed track, while the choir treated my gesture as its principal temporal reference. Gestural economy here consisted in reducing ambiguity in the hierarchy of attention. The work on Persian final consonants produced a related finding. Temporarily asking the non-Iranian singers to omit final consonants and synchronise the preceding vowels isolated the temporal core of the problem; reintegrating the consonants then restored textual completeness. The procedure shows that in multilingual choral work, diction can be rehearsed as an ensemble-timing problem rather than only as pronunciation.

The KMH examination concert clarified the function of temporary gestural scaffolding. In a mixed ad hoc ensemble, explicit beat, subdivision, and articulation-signalling were sometimes needed longer than they would be in an established professional orchestra. Once rhythmic behaviour became internally stable, this information could be withdrawn and attention redirected towards phrase and balance. Gestural expansion and later reduction were therefore

two phases of one economical process. The project also demonstrated that notation and stage layout are not peripheral logistics. Simplifying metric presentation, restructuring the improvised violin transition, and enlarging gestures when the woodwinds' sightlines changed were different forms of the same act: altering the channel of communication while protecting musical continuity. An early diagnostic run-through of selected passages proved more useful than assuming readiness from the institutional identity of the players.

The Lyatoshynsky rehearsals revealed that prior familiarity is simultaneously a resource and a constraint. The orchestra's knowledge of the symphony enabled longer musical spans, yet habits formed through the earlier version and established tempo expectations sometimes resisted the revised score and my interpretation. The resulting tempi were not simple compromises between conductor and orchestra. They were tests of which tempo permitted the intended rhetorical weight, textural hierarchy, articulation, and layer audibility to coexist. This led to a relational understanding of tempo: its artistic validity cannot be assessed independently of what it enables the particular orchestra to articulate and project. The rehearsals also showed that dense orchestral clarity does not always mean equal exposure of every line. At several points, foregrounding the structurally decisive brass material while allowing fast upper figures to function as texture produced a more intelligible and forceful result than attempting to give all layers equal prominence.

Legend of Kayumars extended the inquiry from interpretation into composition and first performance. As composer-conductor, I could define the intended dramatic function of a rhythm or sonority, but authorial knowledge did not guarantee its practical realisation. The work acquired its performable identity through the responses of orchestra, choir, soloists, narrator, and production conditions. Separate preparation proved insufficient, as full integration created new dependencies involving balance, cueing, and temporal coordination. The effective procedure was to identify the immediate coordinative centre, stabilise the indispensable layer, add the relevant partners, and only then restore the full texture. The first performance of a new large-scale work is therefore not merely execution of a completed score, but an investigative stage in which intention is tested against collective memory, embodiment, and limited time.

6.3 Practical application and fulfilment of the research aims

For conductors, the most direct practical application of these findings is a two-level model of preparation. Score study should identify, first, the artistic invariants of each passage—the functions that must be preserved—and, second, the adjustable means through which those functions might be realised. The rehearsal plan can then anticipate likely coordinative risks, alternative beat structures, and possible changes in rehearsal granularity. It should also include a concise working log that records the intended intervention, the ensemble’s immediate response, what improved, what remained unstable, and whether the result was retained when the passage was revisited in context. Such documentation turns rehearsal into a cumulative process of testing and revision: effective strategies can be retained, unsuccessful ones modified or abandoned, and immediate corrections distinguished from solutions that have become durable. This approach does not replace intuition; it makes intuitive judgement more disciplined, traceable, and responsive. It also reduces the risk of defending an initial tempo, gesture, or rehearsal order after that choice has ceased to serve the musical purpose for which it was selected. The findings also have implications for musicians and institutions.

Players benefit from an explicit understanding of the changing hierarchy of attention: when sectional listening is sufficient, when direct visual connection with the conductor becomes necessary, and why attacks, releases, and transitions may require different kinds of attention. Institutions influence the artistic result through the condition of parts, rehearsal allocation, continuity of personnel, monitor placement, sightlines, and the scheduling of combined rehearsals. These should not be treated as neutral administrative matters. They determine which artistic and interpretive possibilities remain available and how much rehearsal time must be spent constructing basic coordination rather than refining the result.

The research goals have been fulfilled to different degrees. The first objective—to document how prepared intentions changed—has been substantially fulfilled across all three projects. The second—to explain changes in gestural economy—has also been substantially fulfilled through the contrast among visual mediation at Avicii, temporary scaffolding at KMH, and recipient-specific cueing and release in Kyiv. The third—to identify the ordering of interpretive priorities—has been fulfilled through the dependency model in which coordination

enables diction, phrasing, colour, and dramatic continuity. The fourth—to analyse decisions among gesture, speech, rehearsal triage, material revision, and interpretive adjustment—has been fulfilled at passage level, although the documentation is more complete for some interventions than for others. The fifth—to evaluate observable musical consequences—has been partially fulfilled: the study documents changes in rhythmic precision, entry and release security, tempo stability, textual alignment, balance, and continuity, but cannot isolate causality systematically or establish long-term retention from one performance of each programme.

The final result therefore both answers and broadens the initial research question. The question anticipated transformation through gestural economy and real-time decision-making; the projects confirm this, but show that the decisive issue is not adaptation alone. It is the conductor's capacity to decide what may change without changing the artistic identity of the work, and to determine whether the ensemble has retained the resulting solution. The outcome is a working framework for conducting not as direct transmission or unrestricted compromise, but as accountable artistic reorganisation under specific conditions.

6.4 Limitations and directions for further research

The conclusions must remain bounded by the nature of the research. This is a practice-based study centred on one conductor's work across a small number of highly specific projects. The findings are not statistically generalisable; however, the recurrent mechanisms identified—such as gestural adaptation, interpretive prioritisation, rehearsal granularity, and the distinction between immediate correction and durable absorption—may be analytically transferable to comparable conducting situations. Their applicability must nevertheless be tested in relation to each ensemble, repertoire, and working context. A gesture that clarified one ensemble may produce a different response from another; an intervention that protected a particular work's dramatic identity may be inappropriate in another style. The study can propose concepts and procedures for conductors to test, but it cannot establish universal rules for rehearsal. The evidence is also uneven. Some rehearsals were video-recorded, while others were reconstructed from observation, annotated scores, notebooks, rehearsal plans, and immediate or retrospective reflection. Musicians' responses were mainly informal, and there was no consistent independent

panel evaluating the same passages before and after intervention. Because constraints frequently occurred together, it is not always possible to isolate the effect of one gesture or decision from changes in familiarity, concentration, balance, acoustics, or ensemble behaviour.

Claims of improvement are strongest where a specific musical change was observable and repeatable; they are necessarily more provisional where the outcome was evaluated through a general impression of character or dramatic force, since such judgements were mediated by my own interpretive and artistic understanding and were not independently corroborated.

The dual role of researcher and practitioner creates a further limitation. It gives direct access to intention and embodied decision-making, but also introduces the possibility of selective attention and retrospective rationalisation. This is especially significant in *Legend of Kayumars*, where compositional authorship gave me privileged knowledge of the intended function while also increasing my personal investment in the outcome. Likewise, observations concerning the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra's preparation and institutional circumstances apply only to this project as encountered; they cannot support general conclusions about professional orchestras, Ukrainian orchestral practice, or ensembles working in exile.

The present study comprises three completed concert projects, with the Kyiv project containing two distinct musical tasks. Its conclusions are therefore based exclusively on the documented material generated by these cases. Although the contrast between choral, mixed-ensemble, professional-orchestral, and composer-conductor contexts provides a substantial basis for comparison, the limited number of projects restricts the broader generalisability of the findings. Testing these concepts through additional concerts and rehearsal structures consequently belongs to future research and does not form part of the present study. On the basis of these findings, I propose two directions for further research. The first concerns retention: selected passages could be tested immediately after an intervention, after a rehearsal break, during a later rehearsal, in the general rehearsal, and in performance. This would allow the proposed stabilisation threshold to be defined more precisely. The second concerns rehearsal structure: longer continuous runs could be compared with segmentation and reintegration, separate sectional preparation with earlier full-ensemble integration, and the same programme under different allocations of rehearsal time.

Repeating the same work with different ensembles, or asking different conductors to address the same passage, would help distinguish transferable principles from solutions that depend on a particular conductor's physical language.

The documentation could also be strengthened without displacing the artistic character of the research. Video-coded gesture analysis, tempo maps, onset and release measurements, external listener evaluations, and structured musician interviews could be combined with annotated scores and reflective writing. Such material would not determine the artistic value of an interpretation, but it could test claims about coordination, timing, attention, and retention more rigorously. A future study could therefore use a prospective protocol: define artistic invariants before the first rehearsal; record the expected risks and alternative means; document each intervention and its immediate effect; and retest the same passage after an interval and in performance.

The principal conclusion of this dissertation is that constraint does not merely reduce what a conductor can realise. It reveals the structure of interpretive responsibility. When every intention cannot be pursued equally, the conductor must identify what gives the music its artistic identity, direct limited attention towards the functions on which that identity depends, and alter the means without losing the purpose. The quality of conducting under constraint is therefore not measured by the unchanged survival of the original plan, but by the precision, accountability, and musical insight with which that plan is transformed.

Acknowledgments

My doctoral studies in orchestral conducting at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music have been a formative academic experience, deepening both my musical practice and my understanding of artistic research. The programme has enabled me to examine the relationship between conducting, critical reflection and the creation of knowledge through artistic practice. It has also given me the opportunity to reconsider familiar musical questions and to develop a more reflective approach to my work as a conductor.

I am deeply grateful to Associate Professor Diāna Zandberga, Associate Professor Krists Auznieks, Associate Professor Jānis Puriņš and Professor Andris Vecumnieks. Their guidance, encouragement and generosity in sharing their knowledge have been invaluable throughout this journey. I sincerely appreciate their contribution to my artistic and academic development and to the learning that made this artistic research possible.

Links to the recordings of the projects:

Performance with Mixed Choir at Avicii Arena in Stockholm — A Call for Freedom

Place: Avicii Arena, Stockholm, Sweden

Date: 14 March 2023

Duration: 2 hours 50 minutes (full concert)

Programme:

Soroode Zan (Women's Anthem), Mehdi Yarrahi (2022); choral arrangement and composed introduction by Afshin Khaef (2023).

Sogand, composer unknown; choral arrangement by Afshin Khaef (2023).

Note: The program was a collaborative concert bringing together Iranian and international artists in support of freedom of expression and artistic freedom. The organisers did not publish the complete concert programme.

Artists:

Ebi
Yasmin Levy
Carola
Faramarz Aslani
Mojgan Shajarian
Shahin Najafi
Darya Dadvar
Arash Sobhani
Josette Bushell-Mingo
Ali Azimi
Babak Amini and Ardavan Hatami
Mojgan Azimi
Rostam Mirlashari
Maria Sur
Rastak
Afshin Khaef — conductor, with Aftab Choir and the choir All Inclusive
Navid Rezvani
Rewşan
Ghazal

Link to the released recording from the project at Avicii Arena in Stockholm: *Soroode Zan*, music by Mehdi Yarrahi (2022), arranged by Afshin Khaef(2023):

<https://youtu.be/5-aTMIfVYxA?is=LXvFppSwxYloqU8c>

Examination Concert at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm (KMH)

Place: Royal College of Music in Stockholm (KMH), Stockholm, Sweden

Date: 10 May 2023

Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes

Programme:

Timestamps refer to the linked recording (minutes).

A Dream, Annika Winberg (2023), 00:40–02:55

Drops, Annika Winberg (2023), 03:37–06:16

All I Am, Annika Winberg (2023), 06:53–13:06

Hope, Annika Winberg (2023), 14:08–17:50

Brother, Hamoon Tehrani (2023), 18:53–21:47

Winter of Sorrow, Hamoon Tehrani (2023), 22:30–25:21

Ny i världen (New to the World), Annika Winberg (2023), 27:02–29:52

Queen of Autonomy, Annika Winberg (2023), 30:45–35:32

A Scene with a Lot of Different Things, Hamoon Tehrani (2023), 36:23–39:46

Vårfnatt, Annika Winberg (2023), 41:11–44:04

Your Breathing, Annika Winberg (2023), 45:55–51:32

Artists:

Afshin Khaef — conductor,

Annika Winberg — vocal soloists

Kristine Botros — vocal soloists

An ad hoc orchestra assembled by Annika Winberg, at Royal College of Music in Stockholm (KMH)

Link to unlisted video recording of the examination concert at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, conducted by Afshin Khaef:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TG_2ZNX7JeY

Concert with the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra at Berwaldhallen — Bells of Victory

Place: Berwaldhallen, Stockholm, Sweden

Date: 11 May 2024

Duration: 1 hour 40 minutes

Programme:

Borys Lyatoshynsky: Symphony No. 3 in B minor, Op. 50 — revised version.

Timestamps refer to the linked recording (minutes).

Movement I: Andante maestoso – Allegro impetuoso, 00:00–14:45

Movement II: Andante con moto, 14:51–25:27

Movement III: Allegro feroce, 25:49–32:14

Movement IV: Allegro risoluto, 32:33–45:29

Afshin Khaef: *Legend of Kayumars*, for orchestra, choir, soloists and narrator - premiere.

Overture

Kingdom

There's a Land

If I ask you

Speranzoso

Blue Caspian (I)

Kayumars is my name

Fear

Battle

Adolorato

Victory

Blue Caspian (II)

Artists:

Afshin Khaef — conductor and composer of *Legend of Kayumars*

Kyiv Symphony Orchestra

Aftab Choir, Stockholm

Stockholm Latvian Choir

Kristine Botros — vocal soloist

Arash Azarbad — vocal soloist

Links to both unlisted and released video recordings from the concert with the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra at Berwaldhallen in Stockholm, conducted by Afshin Khaef:

Lyatoshynsky Symphony No. 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OKIMjW6NvE>

“If I Ask You” from *Legend of Kayumars*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSdckjePIMM&list=RDcSdckjePIMM&start_radio=1

“Kayumars Is My Name” from *Legend of Kayumars*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gYg-0wliqU&list=RD4gYg-0wliqU&start_radio=1

Rehearsal with Kyiv Symphony Orchestra in Gera, Germany, 8 May 2024: <https://youtu.be/TJMb4i8LAXw>

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Scores and Artistic Materials

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Documentary sheet

Diriģēšana ierobežotos apstākļos

Žestu ekonomija, laika limiti un interpretācijas prioritātes

[Conducting Under Constraints:
Gestural economy, time limitation and interpretation priority]

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