

'You're a woman and our orchestra just won't have you': the politics of otherness in the conducting profession

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Introduction

In the musical profession of conducting, men have had the power to construct and cultivate customs and traditions and, as a result, the role of the conductor has been imbued with so-called 'masculine traits.' While the role has historically been subjected to continuous changes--linked to the rise and fall of musical institutions, the sociology of music, and the expansion of musical composition--its modern-day incarnation has remained deeply entrenched in nineteenth-century ideology and concepts of patriarchy. (1) Its current position at the height of the orchestral hierarchy has kept it largely 'untouchable', and protected from any drastic changes. While contemporary conductors have been allowed a degree of individual expression on the podium, they have also been expected to comply with the role's sacrosanct rituals and traditions in order to succeed.

Women conductors' inescapable difference from the male norm defines them as Other; disruptive figures that challenges dominant social and professional norms with their presence on the podium. Hence, women have faced the problematic task of adapting their dress, gestures, behaviour, leadership, and familial commitments to conform to this male-oriented paradigm. No matter how successful women might be in assuming this male-defined role, their difference always remains markedly visible. Judgments of a woman conductor's musicianship and abilities are often made in relation to her gender.

In spite of the burgeoning of feminist scholarship in musicology, little attention has been given to this field, and women conductors' stories have scarcely permeated the seminal discourses of both the conducting and musicological professions. A brief look at current statistics worldwide certainly shows the extent of their minority status today. According to the American Symphony Orchestra League, five out of their 122 member orchestras (that is, 4.10%) with artistic budgets of over one million dollars (US) have a female as Music Director or Principal Conductor (see Table 1 in Appendix). Twenty-nine out of their 389 member orchestras (that is, 7.46%) with artistic budgets between \$1300,000 and \$880,000 (US) have a female as Music Director or Principal Conductor (see Table 2 in Appendix). Despite women's long ancestry in conducting--which can be traced back to the Renaissance figure of Tarquinia Molza (2)--they have continued to remain a small and silent minority group. Even the growing success of contemporary women conductors has been accompanied by a curious silence about the pain and pleasures they have experienced on the podium. (3)

Intrigued by the absence of women conductors' voices and untold stories, I undertook an ethnographic study with seventeen professional women conductors across the US, UK and Australia, from 2000-2004. (4) This research was simultaneously political and personal; as a young woman conductor I wanted to produce a counter-hegemonic discourse in my profession, which openly acknowledged women's experiences on the podium. My research revealed a number of issues, which related to the profession's nineteenth-century ideology and women conductors' bodies, gestures, power, leadership, relationships, motherhood, education, and opportunities. During my research into each of these, the repercussions of women conductors' Otherness surfaced repeatedly. The women's individual stories of difficulties and discrimination, coupled with the alarmingly low number of female conductors, all pointed towards the notion that women are still marginalised and positioned as the Other in this profession, defined as they are by their difference.

Outlining the Ethnographic Approach

This article reflects the cooperative and contextualised ethnographic methodology that was utilised in my research. Because an ethnographic approach focuses on openness and reciprocal exchange, with its point of departure being the lived experiences of the researched, it was necessary for me to come face-to-face with the women conductors themselves. (5) I primarily conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews with the women conductors over a period of approximately two hours, and where possible attended their rehearsals and performances. The rationale for choosing the interviewees, locations, and sites of interviews was practically and culturally based. (6) While the women conductors whom I interviewed do spend a large proportion of their time abroad, in most cases the interviews took place in their home cities. Due to the trans-national nature of the conducting profession and the mobility of these women, the 'field of study' could not be neatly defined and contained in each of these countries or a specific site, for example a concert hall or recording studio. My field of study, thus, became wherever I happened to be, and wherever the women happened to be. Hence, the field was defined not in terms of a locality but, rather, as a field of shifting and fluid relations significant to the people involved in this study. (7) In this world in motion, the interview setting provided a place where the women and I could reside and make sense of our stories. (8)

As the focal point of each interview was the individual woman's narrative, the interview questions varied slightly from woman to woman. The questions were drawn from my own experiences as a conductor as well as the broader theoretical ideas explored in my research. While the questions were designed to cover key themes, they allowed for flexibility and spontaneous exchanges. Consequently, each interview was a new, unique experience. As the emphasis was on understanding, rather than explaining, processes of analysis were subordinated to the process of listening. (9) As a result, it was the quality of human relationships that were developed rather than methodology that determined the quantity and quality of the information gathered. In this exchange the women and I relied on a trust and mutual understanding with one another. Inside this shared space we felt safe to let down our defences and explore sensitive issues particular to our experiences. (10) My own status as a female conductor played an important part in this process; it provided a point of introduction and a point of common ground with the women and myself. It defined me as more 'native' than others might be, more an insider than outsider. My subject position also

clearly affected the words and stories they chose to impart to me. The close communication we shared resulted in a reflexive process, as I considered their responses and related them to my own experiences as a woman conductor.

Even though the women's stories were constructed, creatively authored, rhetorical and deeply personal, they still revealed broader gender equities and inequalities and practices of power. Having said this, I did not aim to frame this study in a quantifiable and empirical manner, as much research in gender segregation in the classical music workplace has done to date. I was more concerned with the subtleties of each woman's story in its own right, not within a numerical argument. As a result, analysing their accounts required careful consideration of a number of elements. Narrative, contextual, temporal and analytical dimensions all played a part in the process of transforming the experience into words. During this process some analytical concepts arose spontaneously from the women themselves. Other analytical concepts arose whilst I was 'inside' the bodily experience of fieldwork, and further ideas were also generated 'outside' the bodily experience, from theory and the words of other scholars. Thus, the process of analysing and writing about this ethnographic research called for a balance between the individual women's stories and a broader social critique; between the ontological understandings that came from being in the field and the epistemological explanations that came from relevant discourses. (11)

In this article I open up the politics of this Otherness, and look at some of the ways in which women conductors have been positioned. By interweaving the women's words with feminist and poststructuralist theoretical frameworks, I outline some of the issues that women face as a result of their difference. I also briefly consider how women conductors can possibly overcome being subsumed within masculine norms. In the paper I divide these issues into three sections for the sake of clarity: Positioning women's Otherness on the podium; Facing women's Otherness on the podium; and Overcoming women's Otherness on the podium. However, I should say that in lived experience they are all deeply connected and intertwined. Overall, it becomes clear that the manner in which a woman conductor tames or transgresses her difference is strongly linked to the ways in which she experiences her position as Other.

Positioning Women's Otherness on the Podium

In feminist discussions on difference, concern has centred upon the ideological instigation of old and lingering dualisms, such as man/woman, culture/nature, mind/body, normal/abnormal, and so on. (12) Because such dualisms are deeply ingrained with power relations, they predictably translate into dominant and subordinate terms. The lesser term is always defined by its difference to the superior term, and is constantly judged by its shortcomings and deficiency. In this respect, difference is a relational concept, and is always experienced relationally in terms of political discrimination, inequalities of power and forms of domination. (13) When applied to the podium, if the devalued term--woman conductor--is measured in relation to the primary term--(male) conductor--she will always be labelled as the Other and continually found wanting. As Victoria Bond (New York conductor and composer) explained, 'There is that conservative mindset that says this is what a conductor is and this is what a conductor isn't, and most women just don't fit into the category of what people picture [as] the maestro'. (14) This is further exemplified in the story of Apo Hsu (Orchestra Director at the National Taiwan Normal University):

I conducted in a workshop when I was studying. A fine conductor and mentor ... who I respect greatly commented to me after one of my sessions, 'Apo you have conducted so beautifully today, I am so happy and proud of you. You didn't conduct like a woman.' It was a compliment ... I didn't conduct like a woman, which means weak or indecisive ... I was conducting with authority, confidence and all of that. (15)

This 'compliment' reiterates the powerful relationship that such dualisms evoke: conducting like a woman is defective and deficient, in comparison to conducting like a man, which is accurate and acceptable. While such reasoning is built on the premise that there are masculine and feminine styles of conducting, and it overlooks the fact that men and women may display mixtures of characteristics considered masculine and feminine, it does illustrate how the profession urges women to emulate various supposedly masculine traits. In this way, Hsu's mentor encouraged her to transgress against her gender and avoid modelling herself on allegedly womanly ways of conducting, for such behaviours are not valued on the podium.

Irigaray echoes Hsu's experience when she describes the 'wearisome labour of doubling and miming' the valued masculine norm. (16) According to Irigaray great caution is needed to succeed in this process:

If you move, you disturb their order. You cause everything to fall apart. You break the circle of their habits, the circularity of their exchanges, their knowledge, their desire: their world. Indifferent one, you must not move or be moved unless they call you. If they say 'come,' then you may go forward, ever so slightly. Measure your steps according to their need--or lack of need--for their own image. One or two steps, no more, without exuberance or turbulence. Otherwise, you will smash everything, their mirror, their earth, their mother. (17)

Whilst this act of miming might appear to allow women to engage more effectively with the role of conductor, as Irigaray's comment suggests, it can also be seen to perpetuate the old system and reinforce the dominant masculine paradigm.

No matter how industrious women conductors may be in contravening aspects of their gender, the politics of these powerful dualisms mean that those who differ from the norm are still systematically and symbolically 'lumped' into the category of Other, and looked upon as the devalued group. Irigaray cautions that such a system, which reduces all Others to the 'economy of the same,' underpins the construction of masculine and feminine subjects. (18) This notion has not gone unnoticed by the women conductors whom I interviewed; in fact many of them spoke about the ways in which they have been reduced to their gender and thrown into a group based on this categorisation, as opposed to their conducting abilities. Kate Tamarkin (Music Director of the Charlottesville and University Symphony in Charlottesville) recollected the moment when this realisation dawned upon her: 'The first time I ever conducted, this man came up and said, "You're pretty good for a girl"; that was his compliment'. (19) The reference to Tamarkin's gender in this 'compliment' reiterates that on the podium she was being judged according to her gender, in a separate, and inferior, category to her male colleagues. Marin Alsop (Principal Conductor of the

Bournemouth Symphony) also spoke about this: 'I mean the thing that distresses me the most is when people say "Oh, ... I have heard you are the best woman conductor." So you get lumped in a group because of your gender, which is absolutely, I think, unconscionable ... how can you emerge from a group? It also does the group a disservice.' (20) As Alsop states, if women are kept contained within this devalued group they cannot break through the dominant discourses of the field. So long as they are restricted to the category of Other, their disruption of the male norm can be controlled.

To date, the press has also played a large part in keeping women restricted to this category. When speaking about the New York press Jeremy Geffen from the New York Philharmonic observed, 'If you ask me about the New York Times ... [a woman conductor] is on their list of favourites; her name does come up in other people's reviews, although always in the context of female conductors.' (21) Geffen's comment that a particular woman's name is only ever mentioned in the context of female conductors, once again reiterates this notion of reducing all women conductors to an economy of the same. Women conductors are rarely thought of simply in terms of their conducting, and their gender seems to pervade any discussion about them. A number of the women conductors whom I interviewed made mention of being asked ridiculous questions by people (often journalists) who were keen to group them into the 'woman' category and portray them as somehow separate. Simone Young (Music Director of the Hamburg State Opera and Hamburg Philharmonic) said, 'That's the one thing people often ask me, if I think it's different being a woman conductor to being a man, and I say, "I don't know because I was never a man".' (22) Similarly, Lucinda Carver (Music Director and Conductor of the Los Angeles Mozart Orchestra) stated, 'Everyone's always saying, "How does it feel to be in this male-dominated world?" and I joke and say, "I don't know. I've never been a male".' (23) Alsop also commented, 'I am very, very tired of the question, "What does it feel like to be a woman conductor?" You know, you think, that's such a silly journalistic question ... I can't answer that.' (24) In the journalists' effort to understand the women conductors' relationship with their dominant counterparts, they have perpetuated the masculine focus of the profession. Instead of trying to comprehend the women conductors' feelings on their own terms, these journalists have sought to examine these women's experiences through a language of Otherness and patriarchy.

This dualistic and imbalanced way of viewing women conductors has been most pronounced when it comes to their bodies and their obvious physical difference from the privileged male norm. Given the visual nature of conducting and the importance of the body in communication, a woman's bodily difference--in terms of her sexuality, stature, dress, and gestures--serves to reinforce her Otherness. Mallory Thompson (Director of Bands and Professor of Music at Northwestern University) recounted the following story: 'I was doing a conducting workshop with someone and I realised that everything he had to say to me was based on my being a female. He didn't see anything else. He talked about my hair and my eyes, my make-up. It made me sad that he didn't see me; that all he saw was the woman, that he didn't see the musician or the conductor.' (25) Sharon Choa (Artistic Director of the Chamber Orchestra Anglia) also recounted, 'There have been reviews ... that have concentrated on how I look rather than what the music sounds like.' (26) Similarly Rachael Worby (Music Director of the Pasadena Pops Orchestra and the American Music Festival in Cluj, Romania) explained,

Nobody writes about what a man wore when he conducted but it's almost [inevitable] that with a woman conductor they'll say, 'she wore a long flowing skirt', or 'her hair [was] tightly wound'. I think that is an aspect of the Otherness but it's not the private Otherness, the Otherness that you can ponder and wonder about in the privacy of your room, it's the Otherness that gets written about in a newspaper everybody buys and reads. (27)

I have also encountered similar experiences on the podium. After my first public performance a lady approached me and said, 'You might like to wear a longer jacket next time you perform. Your hips move when you conduct in a most unlady-like fashion.' After relaying this story to Paula Holcomb (Director of Bands at the State University of New York, Fredonia College), she further commented, 'You're going to get it 'cause you're pretty and you're blond and you're small. You're going to get a lot of [it].' (28) Such situations evoke a form of Cartesian dualism whereby women are reduced to their bodies, and objectified on the public podium. (29) In this dualistic way of thinking, a woman's body is always seen in a negative light; in my case, 'unladylike' meant that my hips were a distraction from the music and possibly a source of corruption or even seduction, and thus needed covering up. (30)

The problem with these dualisms on the podium, or indeed elsewhere, is that they take into consideration only single aspects of people, in isolation from other characteristics that make up the specificity of their lives. The experience of being a woman can never be a singular one and will always be dependent on a multiplicity of locations and positions that are socially constructed. (31) In reality, the dualistic positioning of women conductors does not offer an accurate picture of how these women live their own bodies and transgress this opposition. While the women conductors whom I interviewed might have their gender and certain experiences in common, there are equally important differences among them, and these always need to be acknowledged. (32)

Indeed, it should also be acknowledged that an over-emphasis on difference can lead one to overlook the disadvantages women conductors share with many men, who are also defined by their difference. (33) While this is not the focus of the article, it is important to recognise that the process of Othering on the podium also intersects with other axes of difference, such as race and ethnicity, amongst many others. Indeed, hegemonic masculinity and racism are both deeply connected to the rise of western economic and political power, and both are a strong part of western discourse on Otherness. (34) This is reiterated in Tamarkin's story:

I think it's a little bit like racism. I can say to you, 'Is there any racism now?' and you could say, 'Well it's certainly not as overt as it was, but is it there? Sure it's there.' ... I recall hearing that in the ... mid-West, a search committee was looking at applications and mine came across the table. A member said, 'Our orchestra won't play for a woman,' and discarded the application. I once studied with a black conductor who said to me at the first lesson, 'You know, we have the same problem. If you go in expecting prejudice you'll find it. You can't go in expecting that. You just have to go in and do the job.' (35)

As Tamarin's story suggests, conductors who have differed from the Western norm in terms of race and ethnicity have also traditionally been marked as Other and encountered similar issues. Indeed, women marked by differences in their gender, race and ethnicity have faced an even more amplified process of Othering. (36)

Facing Women's Otherness on the Podium

As I have suggested, a woman's position as Other pervades every facet of her experiences on the podium--from initial negotiations with hiring boards and working with ensembles to dealing with the public and press. As she moves from ensemble to ensemble, a woman conductor has to continually confront her Otherness and negotiate and re-negotiate her position of difference. A piece of advice relayed to Young by an American conductor supports this notion: 'He said, "Look this is the deal, as a young conductor under thirty standing in front of an orchestra for the first time;" he said, "you have got about ten minutes to prove yourself;" he said, "if you are a woman you have got about two".' (37) Due to a woman's Otherness, she seems to face a different set of expectations and criteria for judgment. As Geffen described in relation to the New York Philharmonic, 'I think probably because the orchestra has seen fewer female conductors some percentage of them will probably think, let's really give her a shot and they'll loosen their stance, their criteria aren't the same, another percentage probably think, a female conductor, show me your stuff; you better be damn good.' (38) These extra criteria seem to exist in addition to the 'usual' challenges that a male conductor might face. I have discussed this issue in relation to the next generation of women conductors, and the fact that many seem to be choosing not to pursue this profession, in light of lingering patriarchal pedagogies and the issues they will face when entering the profession after their training. (39)

Whether in a critic's review, an audience member's comment, or a selection committee's decision, women seem to face a different set of parameters, which are governed by the notion that their worth needs to be greater than their male colleagues in order to justify their success. As Geffen described, 'If I wanted to be the first male soprano and I happened to sing a pretty mean Tosca it would have to be a hell of a lot better than anybody else's Tosca for me to be engaged, or pretty damn good. That's a weird analogy, but I think part of that does apply.' (40) This analogy of a man having to change his voice to fit a traditional woman's role, exemplifies how strong the perception is that women have to mitigate their gender to fit into the traditionally masculine role of conductor. As Geffen notes, in order for women to prove that they can adapt, they have to be leagues ahead of their male colleague in terms of skill and abilities. Women have to be twice as good as their male colleagues, and continually confront pressures beyond those commonly faced by men on the podium. This is reiterated in Young's comment, 'Every time I went to a city where it was the first time they were having a woman conduct the orchestra ... that was a big deal. I mean there would be a lot of stuff in the press about it and ... I would always have the extra pressure on my back knowing that if I did a bad job it was going to be that much harder for the next woman who came through.' (41)

Not only are these women conductors perceived differently in how they look and act; their Otherness appears to have been used by the profession as a means to justify discrimination against them. This is an issue that women conductors have raised with Jesse Rosen at the American Symphony Orchestra League:

There have been two women in the last month who have both reported instances to me where they felt they were interviewed and asked extremely inappropriate questions as to their family and what their intentions were with respect to having children and how they would maintain a household with their husband and travelling and all kinds of stuff, which basically you're not supposed to ask in interviews and probably don't get asked of men. I think whether it's issues like that or issues of what do you wear, ways of communicating with musicians and how people's attitudes about gender affect the extent to which people will work with you or be responsive to you [are] things which come into play for women in ways that are much more pronounced than for men. (42)

While such displays of discriminatory behaviour are not as overt today, every woman conductor whom I interviewed seemed to recollect an incident that had a profound impact on her and made her realise her difference and Otherness. As Nicolette Fraillon (Music Director and Chief Conductor of The Australian Ballet) commented, 'I've had outrageous things said to me. I mean orchestra managers who would come and say to me, "I really love your work," after concerts, "but I can't possibly employ you, you're a woman and our orchestra just won't have you".' (43) Odaline de la Martinez (Artistic Director and Conductor of Lontano) also recollected similar experiences in her early days of conducting when few other women conductors were working. She recalls that the late 1970s and 80s were particularly difficult for women conductors in the UK: 'I remember some of the early days when I started conducting orchestras, boy, I would hear that the boys were in the green room talking about, "Oh my god, a woman conductor, do I dare even look?".' (44) Worby also recounted two incidents from early in her career:

Many, many years ago when I was first starting out, when I went to the first rehearsal of an orchestra I was guest conducting, the trumpet section stood up and walked out in protest to my being there and never returned for the remainder of the rehearsals, they hired substitute players.... I conducted another orchestra where I was in fact correcting the violas about something and the principal viola looked at me and said, 'Don't tell me what to do, you're not my mother.' So it's not like these things haven't happened, but that was all a very long time ago. (45)

Given the litigious nature of contemporary society, and some emphasis upon 'political correctness' in the 1990s, many of the women noted that the overt discrimination that they faced prior to the late 1980s has been replaced with a more surreptitious form of prejudice, often in the form of tokenism.

A number of the women had noticed that, with increased pressure on organisations to hire members of minority groups, they are often called up for an interview to satisfy certain equal opportunity criteria, but are never taken seriously for the job. As Nan Washburn (Music Director of the Plymouth Symphony) commented, 'I have been through so many searches and very often they'll put five candidates and they'll have four white guys and Other ... it's very rare if you are picked if there's another woman for one thing, because they basically pick one woman.' (46) When speaking about conducting jobs in academia, Holcomb expressed similar frustrations to Washburn:

'They would ask me to apply for the job and I would send out my tape because that put me into the pool, so they could satisfy the affirmative action qualification, which was a big deal in the US at that time. And so they would use me to do that and then I wouldn't get called in for the interview.' (47) Likewise, when speaking about the issue of tokenism, Carver recounted the following story:

I remember when I was first looking for management I had a woman agent say to me, 'You know I would love to bring you on, you're so musical, but I already have another woman on my roster, she'd be very upset if I added a second woman.' And I was shocked, you know,
I said, 'It sounds as though you already have a rare monkey exhibit at the zoo,' and she agreed with me. (48)

Interestingly, Tamarkin used a similar analogy: 'There were times where I felt like some zoo exhibition. Like they'd say, 'Oh look honey, there's a spotted speckled something or other!' ... I feel like I'm behind bars at the zoo.' (49) Both Carver and Tamarkin's analogies reiterate my earlier discussion about the consequences of 'lumping' women conductors into one group, regardless of their musical abilities and qualifications. The analogy of the zoo exhibit also raises another consequence of women's Otherness on the podium that relates to their novelty status.

Just as zoo exhibits have been pored over by the public for their amusement, so too women conductors have been objectified and treated as objects of desire and curiosity on the podium. Indeed, in feminist and race-cognizant literature, issues of Otherness and desire are seen as inextricably linked. This literature has revealed how the secret and (not so secret) yearning to have a 'taste' and 'touch' of the Other is gaining momentum in contemporary Western culture. According to bell hooks: 'The commodification of Otherness has been so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling.' (50) The 'deliciousness' of women on the podium comes from their radical disjuncture from the traditional image of a father figure on the podium. One cannot ignore that this sense of curiosity has intensely sexual overtones, particularly when women's bodies are treated as objects of sexual desire on the podium. As my earlier discussion on the positioning of women's bodies suggested, no matter how musically gifted a woman conductor might be, on the podium her body is still viewed as a novelty item, ripe for objectification. This is exemplified in the following comment made by Eve Queler (Music Director of the Opera Orchestra of New York): 'One of our leading artist managers stated at a meeting that women with good figures have a problem on the podium because they are sex symbols.' (51) In a similar vein, a musician working with the conductor Sarah Caldwell at the Boston Opera made the following remark: 'If she had been a babe we'd have walked right over her.' (52) In fact, Sarah Caldwell's rather large size has been consistently documented in the media. Whether a woman is large or petite, her bodily appearance never seems to go unnoticed and is a constant source of curiosity.

Hiring boards--including those committed to reforming and enlivening the orchestral tradition, and those looking for something to 'spice up' their declining orchestras--have certainly capitalised on this fascination with the Other, and have frequently programmed women as guest conductors or musical directors of more middle-tier

orchestras. On the one hand this can be viewed in a positive light, as more women are offered opportunities to advance their careers and gain recognition. As Sarah Ioannides (Music Director of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, Texas, and the Spartanburg Philharmonic Orchestra, South Carolina) noted, 'I think anybody who's in the minority could be perceived to have an advantage because they will be remembered.' (53) As a young woman I, too, have marketed my unique status as a young woman conductor in the promotion of my ensembles and myself. Marin Alsop also alluded to this when she said, 'I think when you get down to the race for a big chief conductor position, it's good for the orchestra to understand and they probably do, that having a woman is going to be much more interesting to the press. You know whoever breaks through that top major orchestra ceiling is going to get tremendous publicity. Tremendous!' (54) Having said this, in my own experience, I have had to be extremely cautious in promoting this. For on the other hand, this capitalising on women's differences can fuel prevailing patriarchal norms on the podium. As a result, despite women conductors' unique status, they often cannot venture too far away from the profession's rules and regulations.

Overcoming Women's Otherness on the Podium

When it comes to dealing with this Otherness on the podium, every woman whom I interviewed spoke about the necessity of losing herself in the moment and being totally engrossed in the activity of music making. These women said that, as a matter of survival, when they are standing on the podium they have to block out thoughts about their Otherness and make a concerted effort simply to focus on the music. As Andrea Quinn (Music Director of the New York City Ballet) explained, 'I think my feeling is--it's very important not to think too much about this difficulty of going out as female conductors, we're just there to do our job and we must almost become genderless in order to do it satisfactorily.' (55) This notion of a 'genderless' style of conducting and leadership has significant implications. Certainly, men do not speak of ridding themselves of their gender when they are on the podium, because they do not need to. The following comment by Tamarkin expresses similar sentiments: 'conductors need to completely disregard preconceived gestures; just think about the music and move.' (56) It appears that women conductors rely on what Titon calls a mode of 'musicalbeing.' (57) This mode of being is different from the women's normal everyday modes of experiencing. When they are caught up in the moment of performance they seem to be in a space that transcends their everyday gendered experiences of being-in-the-world. This internal mode of 'being' is key to understanding how women conductors cope with the high degree of scrutiny that is placed on them. However, this special ontology seems to be short-lived and, I suspect from my own experience, disappears when women return from this temporary state of immersion in the music-making process. As a woman puts down her baton and steps away from the podium she is often left wondering how people have perceived her work, conducting, clothes, leadership, and so on.

Overcoming, or at least partly challenging, this Otherness on the podium appears to be a complex and unwieldy task, to say the least. As Judith Patrick (Executive Director of the Women's Philharmonic, 1995-1999) explains, 'It is an elite art and I think that it's harder to make change in an elite organisation because there is just such a set of norms around what's appropriate for everybody. (58) While feminist theorists including Irigaray call upon women to radically claim their difference and avoid being

consumed by patriarchal enclosures, patterns, distinctions and oppositions of Otherness, such personal and political action would undoubtedly be met with great resistance on the podium. Many of the women whom I interviewed intimated that such action could result in a very heavy price, such as exclusion by hiring boards, further objectification by the press, or intolerance from conservative ensembles. They suggested that the key is finding a careful balance between conforming to the traditions of the profession, and creating a 'new language' of conducting that is relevant to their experiences as women. While many of the women whom I interviewed openly and inadvertently spoke about their search for this 'new language' on an individual level--particularly in their dress, gestures and leadership methods--I am left to question whether this will lead to a broader celebration of women's difference on the podium.

Having said this, to imply that the situation is completely fixed and unchangeable would be to ignore the radical possibilities of how this role could be transformed by women over time. Indeed, as Betsy Wearing maintains, we must not become too bogged down in talking about women's Otherness in terms of discrimination, inequality, subordination and victimisation, and should also keep in mind the pleasures and possibilities of their difference. (59) Hsu encapsulates the promise in this positive approach to Otherness through the following story:

A woman brought up her two daughters, five and seven, to meet me, and she came up and said, 'This is their first concert [a Women's Philharmonic concert in Minneapolis], they were so excited the entire time, they were mimicking your conducting during the concert,' and she said, 'The five-year-old asked me during the concert, "Mommy, can a man be a conductor?"' And the mother thought about it for a second and answered, 'Yeah, if they're good enough.'

So that is the reverse of it! (60)

Hsu found this reversal quite amusing and enjoyed reflecting on the impact that she had on her young audience members' ideas about conductors. Carver also enjoyed contemplating some of the positive feedback she has enjoyed: 'The feedback I have always gotten has been very positive. I have always been told how great it is to see a woman, that I'm graceful on the podium and what a wonderful presence.' (61) Similarly, Ioannides stated, 'People sometimes come up to me and say, "Oh, it's so wonderful. I've never ever been conducted by a woman conductor, it's just so fantastic." And that's delightful to hear. For me it's such a shame ... okay, it's tradition it just hasn't been women's role and it's very slow to change.' (62) Martinez also spoke joyously about her experience of being the first woman to conduct at the BBC Proms: 'Somehow there was a lot of hype because it was first woman this, first woman that. But, being in the Proms is a wonderful experience ... and your audience is so warm ... from the minute I walked out on that first Prom and you hear all that elation and you're going, "Yeah, man, we're going to do a great job here, we're all really going to make music".' (63) On the one hand, Martinez's story highlights the way that she was singled out as the first woman to conduct at the Proms, and this could be theorised in terms of her Otherness and gender. However, on the other hand, it is also important to resist the patriarchal trap of rendering this experience inferior and, rather, draw attention to the value of her achievement and celebrate her difference and distinctiveness.

By celebrating women's differences and accomplishments we can begin to reclaim their marginalised position and acknowledge all that they have to offer. Young's comment alludes to the possibilities of this: 'I feel people are somehow prouder of me now of what I have achieved because I am a woman than it would have been if I was a young man achieving the same thing. So inversely it's now, I think, working in my favour.' (64) As Solie contends, claiming one's own difference may be a form of resistance against being subsumed into an undifferentiated universal subject. (65) Great energy may be gleaned from the insistence upon difference and may prompt insights and readings unavailable to those whose lives take the 'normal' course. (66) The counter-hegemonic discourse created by the women conductors' words in this article offers a glimpse

of the possibilities in such readings.

Appendix

TABLE 1. Statistics for orchestras with artistic budgets of over one million dollars (US)

Artistic Expenses	Operating Expenses	Number of Female MD/PCs *	Number of Male MD/PCs
\$14,750,000	\$8,000,000	1	23
\$5,550,000	\$3,100,000	1	30
\$2,800,000	\$1,050,000	1	26
\$1,700,000	\$600,000	2	38
TOTAL		5	117

Source: The American Symphony Orchestra League, Information Resource Center, March 2006.

* MD/PC--Music Director or Principal Conductor

TABLE 2. Statistics for orchestras with artistic budgets between \$130,000 and \$880,000 (US)

Artistic Expenses	Operating Expenses	Number of Female MD/PCs *	Number of Male MD/PCs
\$880,000	\$420,000	5	48
\$455,000	\$211,000	9	102
\$130,000	0	15	210
TOTAL		29	360

Source: The American Symphony Orchestra League, Information Resource Center, March 2006.

* MD/PC--Music Director or Principal Conductor

Notes

(1) Denis Stevens. 'Why Conductors? Their Role and the Idea of Fidelity.' Joan Peyser, Ed. *The Orchestra: Origins and Transformations*. New York: Billboard, 2000;

Elliott Washington Galkin. *A History of Orchestral Conducting: In Theory and Practice*. New York: Pendragon Press, 1988.

(2) Shelly Jagow. 'Women Orchestral Conductors in America: The Struggle for Acceptance--An Historical View from the Nineteenth Century to the Present.' *College Music Symposium*, 38, pp. 126-45.

(3) Although there has been a limited number of books (which have combined discussions on women conductors, composers and performers), statistically-focused journal articles, theses (primarily in the area of college band and choral direction), and stories in the press, large-scale research into women conductors' experiences in the orchestral profession has been minimal.

(4) This study was part of my doctoral degree, in which I primarily examined the experiences of professional women conductors in the orchestral tradition.

(5) Full ethical clearance was given by the University of Queensland to undertake this research, and all the women conductors gave 'informed consent' for their identities and words to be used in resulting publications.

(6) First, these three countries were chosen because my initial enquiries showed that they contained the highest population of women conductors. Investigations were also made throughout Continental Europe but women conductors there were spread across different countries and proved much harder to locate. Second, these countries were selected as research sites because they are English-speaking countries. As this is the language in which I am fluent, communication barriers before or during the project were minimised. Of course, it should also be acknowledged that I shared a cultural commonality with the women from these countries, who were predominantly educated in Western society, which aided in the fluency of our communication.

(7) See Karin Norman, 'Phoning the Field: Meanings of Place and Involvement in Fieldwork 'At Home.'" Vered Amit, Ed. *Constructing the Field: Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World*. London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 121, 138.

(8) See Nigel Rapport, 'The Narrative as Fieldwork Technique: Processual Ethnography for a World in Motion.' Vered Amit, Ed. *Constructing the Field*: pp. 71-95.

(9) See Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack. 'Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses.' Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, Eds. *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. New York: Routledge, 1991, pp. 11-15.

(10) See Kristina Minister. 'A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview.' Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, Eds. *Women's Words*, pp. 34-39.

(11) See Timothy Rice. 'Toward a Mediation of Field Methods and Field Experience in Ethnomusicology.' Timothy J. Cooley and Gregory F. Barz, Eds. *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 106.

- (12) Ruth Solie. *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, PP. 6, 19.
- (13) Henrietta Moore. *A Passion for Difference*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, p. 26.
- (14) Victoria Bond, personal interview, 15 February 2002.
- (15) Apo Hsu, personal interview, 24 January 2002.
- (16) Luce Irigaray. 'When Our Lips Speak Together.' Translated by Carolyn Burke. *Signs: Women: Sex and Sexuality*, Part2, 6, 1, p. 71.
- (17) Irigaray, 'When Our Lips Speak Together,' p. 71.
- (18) See Moira Gatens. *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality*. London: Routledge, 1996, p. 43.
- (19) Kate Tamarkin, personal interview, 21 January 2002.
- (20) Marin Alsop, personal interview, 16 November 2000.
- (21) Jeremy Geffen, personal interview, 13 February 2002.
- (22) Simone Young, personal interview, 13 August 1999.
- (23) Lucinda Carver, personal interview, 16 January 2002.
- (24) Marin Alsop, personal interview, 16 November 2000.
- (25) Mallory Thompson, personal interview, 30 January 2002.
- (26) Sharon Choa, personal interview, 27 February 2002.
- (27) Rachael Worby, personal interview, 14 May 2002.
- (28) Paula Holcomb, personal interview, 27 September 2001.
- (29) I use the term Cartesian dualism to refer to the mind/body split--conceived by Plato and Aristotle and theorised by Rene Descartes--whereby the mental and the material comprise two different classes of substance that are independent of one another. This split has always been correlated with a number of other binary oppositions--such as man/woman, and culture/nature--enabling them to function interchangeably in certain contexts. Consequently, Cartesian dualism has equated the rational, cultured mind with men and the irrational, natural body with women.
- (30) See Susan Bordo. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, p. 5.
- (31) See Moore, *A Passion for Difference*, p. 3.

- (32) See Katherine Borland, "That's Not What I Said': Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research.' Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai. Eds. *Women's Words*, p. 72.
- (33) See Sherry B. Ortner. *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996, p. 137.
- (34) Moore, *A Passion for Difference*, p. 63.
- (35) Kate Tamarkin, personal interview, 21 January 2002.
- (36) See bell hooks. 'Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance.' Sharlene Hesse-Biber, Christina Gilmartin and Robin Lydenberg, Eds. *Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- (37) Simone Young, personal interview, 13 August 1999.
- (38) Jeremy Geffen, personal interview, 13 February 2002.
- (39) Brydie-Leigh Bartleet. 'Women Conductors on the Orchestral Podium: Pedagogical and Professional Implications.' *College Music Symposium*, 48, 2008 -- forthcoming.
- (40) Jeremy Geffen, personal interview, 13 February 2002.
- (41) Simone Young, personal interview, 13 August 1999.
- (42) Jesse Rosen, personal interview, 13 February 2002.
- (43) Nicolette Fraillon, personal interview, 31 August 2001.
- (44) Odaline de la Martinez, personal interview, 25 February 2002.
- (45) Rachael Worby, personal interview, 14 May 2002.
- (46) Nan Washburn, personal interview, 6 February 2002.
- (47) Paul Holcomb, personal interview, 27 September 2001.
- (48) Lucinda Carver, personal interview, 16 January 2002.
- (49) Kate Tamarkin, personal interview, 21 January 2002.
- (50) hooks, 'Eating the Other,' p. 179.
- (51) Jagow, 'Women Orchestral Conductors in America,' p. 132.
- (52) Jagow, 'Women Orchestral Conductors in America,' p. 132.
- (53) Sarah Ioannides, personal interview, 18 February 2002.

- (54) Marin Alsop, personal interview, 16 November 2000.
- (55) Andrea Quinn, personal interview, 14 February 2002.
- (56) Kate Tamarkin, personal interview, 21 January 2002.
- (57) Jeff Todd Titon. 'Knowing Fieldwork.' Timothy J. Cooley and Gregory F. Barz, Eds. *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, P. 94.
- (58) Judith Patrick, personal interview, 25 January 2002.
- (59) Betsy Wearing. *Gender: The Pain and Pleasure in Difference*. Melbourne: Longman, 1996, p. xi.
- (60) Apo Hsu, personal interview, 24 January 2002.
- (61) Lucinda Carver, personal interview, 16 January 2002.
- (62) Sarah Ioannides, personal interview, 18 February 2002.
- (63) Odaline de la Martinez, personal interview, 25 February 2002.
- (64) Simone Young, personal interview, 13 August 1999.
- (65) Solie, *Musicology and Difference*, p. 6.
- (66) Solie, *Musicology and Difference*, p. 7.