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The Politics of Conducting

The conductor's role in new music ensembles based on a study of performance practice in Simon Steen-Andersen's AMID

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Abstract

In this article, we will observe at a micro level how specific values and value hierarchies influence performance practices and the social relationship between the conductor and musicians in new music ensembles. Our study is based on a context-based score analysis of *AMID* (2004) by Simon Steen-Andersen (1976–), an in-depth interview with the composer, and a performance practice pragmatically developed in rehearsal and performances of *AMID* with an advanced student ensemble of the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp. We will contribute to this relatively new direction using experimental artistic and sociological research.

Keywords

Conductor, Value Regimes, New Music, Integrated Concerts, Gesture-Based Notation

Music and Value Regimes

Our interest in conducting this case study arose from a conflict we first observed in artistic practice between the expectations of the conductor and the practical possibilities found in performing the work *AMID* by Simon Steen-Andersen. Moore first conducted the piece in 2012 with Nadar Ensemble, a Belgian new music ensemble specializing in integrated concerts:

video, light and sound design (including live electronics), costuming and decor, and even the choice to utilize a conductor are all integral parts of the ensemble's concert curation. The training and experience Moore had garnered prior to working on *AMID* had mostly been in classical and commercial genres, making Steen-Andersen's gesture-based notation – a 'choreography of the sound production' as a compositional 'point of departure'¹² – seem all the more confining. This notational method, in which gestures instead of results are written in the score, prescribes every movement.³ In *AMID*, the conductor's role has been manipulated. This is also the case in Alexander Schubert's *Point Ones* (2012), where the conductor triggers live electronics. These two works served as catalysts to an ongoing study in which we are examining the artistic and socio-economic instrumentalization of the conductor's role in new music ensembles. This study of *AMID*, specifically, began with a contextualized score analysis to determine detectable and written utilizations of the conductor by either composer and/or programming artistic director. We then conducted an in-depth interview with the composer to further inform our score analysis and empirical observations. And finally, to formulate and test a pragmatic conductor and ensemble performance practice, we prepared, rehearsed, and performed *AMID* with an advanced student ensemble.

In order to gain perspective from these personal experiences and to order our initial analytical, interview-based, and practical observations more systematically, we decided in dialogue to re-articulate the material through the lens of the value-sociology developed by sociologist Luc Boltanski and economist Laurent Thévenot.⁴ Based on an analysis of political philosophical texts, management manuals, and other practical professional literature, Boltanski and Thévenot argue that six 'worlds' or value regimes are fundamental to western society. They designate these the world of inspiration, the domestic world, the world of fame, the civil world, the market and the industrial world. Later Boltanski and Eve Chiapello added a seventh value regime to this, the project city.⁵ All these worlds have their own hierarchy in which certain qualities and objects are valued above others and each regime has central subjects and protagonists. Moreover, the investments one must make, the tests one must pass, and the evidence one must provide to achieve dignity or 'grandeur' are particular to each world.

To get a better grip on this sociology of values, we will briefly and archetypically outline

1 Iga Batog, 'Black Box Music by Simon Steen-Andersen: The Visual Layer as a Sound-Determining Factor. An Exploration of Prospects for Development', *Kwartalnik Młodych Muzykologów UJ, English Issues* 46/3 (2020): 109–27, <https://doi.org/10.4467/23537094KMMUJ.20.040.13913>.

3 Tanja Orning, 'The Polyphonic Performer: A Study of Performance Practice in Music for Solo Cello by Morton Feldman, Helmut Lachenmann, Klaus K. Hübler and Simon Steen-Andersen' (Oslo, Norwegian Academy of Music, 2019).

4 Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, *On Justification: Economies of Worth*, Princeton Studies in Cultural Sociology (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

5 Luc Boltanski, Eve Chiapello, and Gregory Elliott, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, New updated edition (London: Verso, 2018).

the seven regimes and how they may directly relate to compositions, the (role of the) conductor(s), and musicians. We will then show how and whether these regimes play a role in the performance of *AMID* in order to finally indicate what requirements this game between value regimes places on the role and politics of the conductor. Our research has previously shown that in everyday practice, value regimes simply emerge side by side simultaneously.⁶ However, in order to provide a clear understanding of this contest of tensions and compromises we will describe the logic of each regime in its pure form.

Unsurprisingly, the world of inspiration has ‘inspiration’ as its highest worth. This means that a composition, conductor or musician rises high on the value ladder when they inspire and thus stimulate creativity. An inspirational composition challenges, for example, one’s idiosyncratic interpretations or appreciation of the work. An inspirational conductor interprets the composition and in turn challenges the musicians and the audience to create their own interpretation. In this value regime, the unusual and the unexpected predominate, and autonomy, authenticity, and uniqueness are cherished. Both conductor and musicians are expected to have passion and audacity. The score is therefore certainly not understood in this regime as prescriptive, but rather as a stimulus to develop one’s own variations.

That is completely different in the domestic world. Here, the highest worth is reproduction. The protagonists in this world have respect for tradition, fixed values, and rituals. From a domestic point of view, the composition is the highest authority. It contains all the authority and, according to Goehr, players should attempt to remain as faithful as possible to the original work.⁷ In this regime, conductors acquire grandeur when they perform the composition to the letter and guide ‘their’ musicians in approved directions and with the necessary authority. For musicians, those who are most appreciated play according to the composer’s and/or conductor’s clear directions. Colleague-musicians also gain esteem for their personality and track record because within the domestic regime, actors rely solely upon experience, traditions, and fixed or stable roles. Value will increase for a composition, conductor or musician who inspires confidence, especially while maintaining a familiar role (of violinist, conductor, etc.).

In the world of fame, acclaim and reputation are paramount. Here, value is determined by public opinion. The more recognition one receives, the higher one will appear on the value ladder. The fame regime fosters a star cult. A sensational ‘famous’ composition is therefore one that responds to trends or belongs to a world-renowned musical canon. A conductor’s and/or musician’s technical capacities are not central. Their personality is important, and even more so is their ability to present it to their audience and the wider media. In other words, in the regime of fame everything revolves around the public image. This differs greatly from the civil regime in which the community and general interest are predominant. A valuable

6 Camiel H. van Winkel, *De hybride kunstenaar: Organisatie van de artistieke praktijk in het postindustriële tijdperk*. (Breda: Academie St. Joost, 2012).

7 Lydia Goehr, ‘Being True to the Work’, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 47/1 (1989), 55.

composition is one that is supported by a subculture, a community, a people, or an entire nation. A people may even partly derive their identity from a piece of music with a high civil value. Solidarity, collectivity, and teamwork determine the relationship between conductor and musicians. Conductors are also especially appreciated when they represent their ensemble or orchestra to the outside world. The conductor speaks for their supporters or musicians and their work is at the service of the ensemble. In short, this professional is applauded for their cultural leadership. Musicians, in turn, see themselves as representatives of the music world or at least their genre, and they propagate this enthusiastically in their communities. In the civil world, idiosyncratic artistic works may find their way into a broader cultural field, gaining acclaim from a community far beyond the boundaries of music connoisseurs, professionals, and peers.

Our next world is the market, whose values are probably the most widely known: competition, rivalry, and profit. A valuable composition is one for which a substantial amount of money must be paid to perform it. Works by well-known composers who sell out halls or increase audience sizes are also highly valued. The demand for conductors and musicians determines their value with their wages directly serving as the barometer. Being able to secure subsidies, grants and prizes also increases prestige. And finally, creative entrepreneurship is highly praised in the market.⁸

Entrepreneurship is also valued in the world of industry, but not for a profit motive, but rather for the efficiency, performance, and impact it may generate. A valuable composition here is primarily a technically complex or virtuoso masterpiece. Also, a special emphasis is placed on *métier* and the control that musicians and the conductor have over both the work and their instrument. A good conductor (or artistic director) is one who makes their orchestra or ensemble run like a well-oiled machine; and the best musicians are those who connect to each other like gears in that machine. Craftsmanship and perfectionism are paramount in the industrial regime.

This is also the case for the last value regime, the project city. However, perfectionism may be compensated by actors of whom this ‘city’ requires versatility. The project-musician prefers to freelance, easily jumping from project to project or combining multiple ‘gigs’. The same applies to the conductor, who is a born networker, seeing opportunities in compositions as well as musicians and venues. The conductor is therefore first and foremost a ‘networker’ and, in relation to the (often ad-hoc) ensemble, acts as a coach who does not dictate the musicians but proverbially massages them into a piece of music or programme. Both musicians and conductor respond tactically⁹ to the assignment that is presented to them, be that an opportune festival,

8 Pascal Gielen, *The Murmuring of the Artistic Multitude: Global Art, Memory and Post-Fordism* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2010).

9 We use the term ‘tactically’ (and its various forms) in this paper to refer to the residual tools and/or choices left after having decided upon a strategy; or simply put, we will use strategy to mean what and tactics to mean how and who. See Ramon Casadesus-Masanell and Joan Enric Ricart, ‘From Strategy to Business Models and onto Tactics’, *Long Range Planning* 43/2–3 (2010), 195–215, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2010.01.004>.

programme, or piece. This perhaps rests on the fact that a valuable composition in this network regime is an intertextual piece that does not so much register itself in the historical canon, as respond to and at the same time distinguish itself from recently performed compositions. The quality of a ‘project’ piece is not so much supported by a vertical relationship with the deep wells of music history or linked to some glorious future. Instead, quality is measured horizontally by what is understood in the here and now as an ‘interesting’ or ‘innovative’ composition.¹⁰

To round off this value-sociology, let us emphasize that, due to the limited scope of this article, we have provided a very schematic and optimal representation of the seven regimes. This conveniently makes the individual worlds of value more easily recognizable. However, the real world is always more complex and nuanced. Moreover, the above typology does not exclude the possibility that, for example, a composition is simultaneously technically complex, has a high market value, and is awe-inspiring – however that is more the exception than the rule, to which every music professional can attain. Be that as it may, the above optimal representations of value regimes do provide a useful analytical framework with which we can observe the position of the contemporary conductor more sharply, and perhaps also have a better understanding of the tensions faced by this profession and of the compromises that must be made. For example, it helps us to understand why, as initially observed, a traditionally trained conductor might be unsuited to a work like *AMID* (because the value regime in which this conductor is trained may be quite different from the demands of a contemporary composition). In what follows we specify which values a piece like *AMID* assumes and how a conductor may deal with them. For the record, we are very much aware that other values can be detected in the music world, or that values can be more specified for art, such as aesthetic and musical values. We consciously chose for the broad value-sociological approach of Boltanski et.al. because it forces us to search for values to which we are not accustomed in the art world. Some of those values are even suppressed by professional artists, as shown in the art sociological work of Pierre Bourdieu.¹¹ But this suppression does not counter their impact. On the contrary, implicit values can be determinant in the behavior and organization of social configurations such as those in the contemporary music world. Since, in this article, we examine the role of the conductor from a social standpoint, it seemed plausible to adopt this sociological interpretation above an aesthetic or musicological approach.

Gestures

Simon Steen-Andersen composed *AMID* for seven musicians: flute, clarinet, guitar, piano, percussion, violin and cello. The piece is scored using gesture-based notation instead of the

¹⁰ Pascal Gielen, *Creativity and Other Fundamentalisms* (Amsterdam: Mondriaan Fund, 2013).

¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

more common result-based notation; it is ‘notation showing what to do rather than what should sound’. The composer wrote ‘a kind of choreography for instrument and musician – with sound as its consequence’,¹² with the musicians only discovering those resulting sounds while practising and rehearsing the piece, whereas result-based notation leaves the way a specific note may be played to the discretion of the performer. In that sense we can certainly frame the composition in the industrial value regime as described above. Though the musicians may use the rehearsals to determine specific sonic aspects (i.e. timbres and dynamics) and, in the case of the piano and guitar, instrumental preparations, the collective visual presentation has been pre-determined by Steen-Andersen. The composer’s possible motivations for this notational choice will be discussed later in the article. First, we would like to explore the possible definitions of gesture and determine their specific use for this article.

The image shows a musical score for the first four bars of Steen-Andersen's *AMID*. The score is written for a full ensemble including Flute (Fl.), Clarinet in E-flat (Cl. prep.), Piano (Pno.), Guitar (Guit.), Right Hand Dampener (rh.damp), Percussion (Perc.), Violin (Vl. (h-sord)), and Viola (Vlc. (h-sord)). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 60. The score is characterized by gesture-based notation, with various performance instructions and dynamic markings (mostly *ppp* and *mf*). A blue circle highlights the first bar, indicating a collective release of tension (exhalation for winds, downbow for strings, and glissandos in guitar, percussion, and piano). A red circle highlights the second bar, indicating a collective build-up of tension. The score includes detailed performance instructions for each instrument, such as 'blow - 5 cm. from mouthpiece, lowering across, 1 semibreve, 100%' for the flute, 'rasgueado hold slide between thumb and 4th finger' for the guitar, and 'gravity-guiro' for the percussion. The score is marked with 'sempre' and '100%' throughout, indicating sustained performance.

Figure 1. The first four bars of Steen-Andersen *AMID*, demonstrating his gesture-based notation: Circled in blue we see the notation for the collective release of tension (exhalation for the winds, downbow for the strings and glissandos in the guitar, percussion and piano). Circled in red is the collective build-up of tension.

In order to play any instrument, one must make a series of preparatory movements or gestures. This is, of course, also true for any other sort of intended physical action, such as opening a door or taking a step. When playing the cello, the musician will make a series of movements before placing the bow on the string. A flutist will first inhale before exhaling across the mouthpiece to produce a tone. Percussionists and pianists will respectively lift sticks and hands before striking drums and keys. There are also a series of gestures associated with actual sound production. For example, the cellist draws the bow across the strings. A clarinettist presses and releases keys while exhaling. The pianist presses keys and pedals causing hammers to strike the strings and lifting the dampers. Also, by releasing the keys and pedals, sound is ended, thus creating rests or bringing a piece to its end. Both the physical gestures that prepare and produce sound can be termed the musicians' movement repertoire. In most cases, this repertoire enters into what is more commonly referred to as muscle memory. This is similar to the manner in which most people have collected a series of complex minute movements into a single simple common gesture called a 'step' or a 'wave'. In the musicians' case, playing, for example the note 'G', involves a bundled series of complex, often minute, gestures, too.

In *AMID*, Steen-Andersen has zoomed in on, applied, and employed musicians' movement repertoire, turning what is normally associated with preparatory and production gestures into the musical material itself. The pianist, instead of moving across the keys to find one to strike, only moves across them, audibly clicking the tops, but not activating the hammers. For the string players, their bow movements across their strings have been precisely mapped and the winds breathing is exactly measured and notated.¹³ During an in-depth interview in 2019 Steen-Andersen described his fascination in 2004 with the winds' breathing movements that generated 'a clear build up and release of tension'. With *AMID*, he wanted to 'translate this gesture to the other available instruments'.¹⁴ Steen-Andersen would later begin to call this compositional and methodological approach 'hyper-concrete' in reference to Helmut Lachenmann's *musique concrète instrumentale*.¹⁵

The very first bar of *AMID* meets Robert S. Hatten's definition of musical gesture, 'a temporal unfolding of a succession of sounds that may be interpreted as significant'.¹⁶ *AMID* contains a series of sounds (notes) that in some fashion can be experienced as separate from the other sounds in the piece. Artist-researchers Jehan-Julien Filatriau and Daniel Arfib, detailing their experience creating software and hardware that better maps musical gesture, write, 'a gesture by itself is the result of an intention. A sound is a result of an expression. So,

13 Simon Steen-Andersen, 'AMID' (Musical Score, S-Editions, 2004).

14 Simon Steen-Andersen, interview by Thomas R. Moore, 10 November 2019.

15 Steen-Andersen, 'Behind next to Besides'.

16 Robert S Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2017).

we could say that music, and especially music performance is the [realization] of an expression coming from an intention.¹⁷ This statement is also applicable to *AMID*. As described above, to (intend to) perform a gesture on their instruments, musicians must commence a series of movements to prepare and then produce the performance.

Musicians' gestures have been in general a fruitful field of artistic stimuli for Steen-Andersen. During multiple conversations, the composer expressed that he would like performances of his pieces to be 'as interesting for deaf people as they would be for blind people'.¹⁸ This quote suggests that the composer is also operating in the regime of inspiration and with his pieces, wants to inspire his public by introducing a new, maybe transgressive way of determining the musicians' gestures. But making the physical gesture an essential part of and integral to performances of his 'hyper-concrete' works results in well-determined and prescribed parts and roles. Here we can pinpoint the complex play and compromises present between value regimes. While *AMID* is absolutely innovative by trying to expand what we, the audience, experience with a musical piece, it also leads the musicians and conductor into a quite rigid industrial regime. At a minimum, the musicians have little room for their own interpretations or, in the words of Goehr, 'impromptu improvisations'. The gestures are so rigidly composed, that 'on the spot' spontaneous artistry is simply discouraged.¹⁹

Furthermore, there are arguably no secondary physical gestures in *AMID*, because all movements associated with sound preparation and production made by the musicians (and conductor) during a performance of the piece are essential and exactly notated. Each musical gesture is linked with a specific physical gesture. For example, the piece begins with a two-part modular cell. First, an expulsion of sound: exhalation in the winds, a full down bow in the strings, a full low to high glissando in the piano and guitar, and a complete release of the weight in the gravity guiro (percussionist). All this occurs over the course of four quavers. All are combined visible/physical and audible/musical gestures. On the final beat of the first bar, the musicians recharge: inhale, glissando back down, lift the weight, and perform a full up-bow. Again, all are both physical and musical gestures. Together, the physical and musical comprise one combined gesture across five beats. Applying this as the basis, our analysis shows that the musical and physical gestures throughout the piece are inseparable. Steen-Andersen even goes so far as to ensure that there are no non-necessary gestures made during a performance of his piece, which further underscores our interpretation of the piece as particularly 'industrial'. He writes in the legend: 'It is important that as little movement is done in between the written

17 Jean-Julien Filatriau and Daniel Arfib, 'Instrumental Gestures and Sonic Textures', Proceedings of Sound and Music Computing Conference, 2005 (accessed 3 December 2020), www.researchgate.net/publication/228631759_Instrumental_gestures_and_sonic_textures.

18 Conversations with Simon Steen-Andersen, 2016.

19 Lydia Goehr, 'Improvising Impromptu, Or, What to Do with a Broken String', in *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies*, ed. George Lewis and Benjamin Piekut (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 460.

movements as possible – there are therefore no real breaks for relaxing in the piece’.²⁰

Conductor’s Conundrum

Conductors have movement repertoire as well, employing patterns that are commonly used to indicate the metre in which a piece is written. For example, there are specific patterns for bars divided into 4 beats, 3 beats, etc. Gestures for dynamics and other expressive indications are also more or less a part of the ‘trained’ conductor’s toolbox. Entrance cues for musicians and singers are recognizable gestures, as are cut-offs. It is also generally understood that the conductor’s gestures indicate a common tempo.²¹ And lastly, the conductor’s movement repertoire may also be classified as a macro-gesture.²² Their movements are intended for a larger group of musicians and have ramifications across a number of variables. For example, the downbeat indicates a collective starting point for the playing musicians, as well as tempo, dynamics, and articulation. The upbeat indicates ‘get-ready’, the ending of the previous bar, and possibly the start of a new section. Like the downbeat, it can also indicate tempo, dynamics, and articulation.

AMID is typically conducted and Steen-Andersen has indicated in interview that this has become the common and accepted performance practice for this piece, though not because of any active choice made by the composer.²³ Therefore, the presence of the conductor in a performance of this piece represents an affirmative and active choice made by the programming artistic director. Steen-Andersen suggested an economic motivation for this choice offering that most ensembles ‘would not have the time to have it not conducted’.²⁴ Or, in other words, a conductor facilitates the rehearsal process allowing the piece to be prepared in a financially viable timeframe.

An analysis of the score suggests an artistic motivation as well. Steen-Andersen has barred his piece pragmatically. Nearly all of the modular cells, the gesturally notated building blocks upon which *AMID* is built, begin on a downbeat and their intended length seems also to determine the length of the bar. For example, in bar 54, the clarinet makes a key-pop on the first beat and then sustains the tension for the remainder of the bar. The sustained tension is four seconds long and the next modular cell begins on the fifth second and lasts in total for two

20 Steen-Andersen, ‘AMID’.

21 Gunther Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

22 Mykyta Kovalenko, Svetlana Antoshchuk, and Juergen Sieck, ‘Real-Time Hand Tracking and Gesture Recognition Using Semantic-Probabilistic Network’, in 2014 UKSim-AMSS 16th International Conference on Computer Modelling and Simulation, 2014, 269–74, <https://doi.org/10.1109/UKSim.2014.49>.

23 Steen-Andersen, interview.

24 Ibid.

seconds before continuing in a half second long retrograde version of the modular cell found in bar 1. The indicated tempo is crotchet = 60 bpm and Steen-Andersen writes this across two bars. They are thus pragmatically barred in Figure 2.

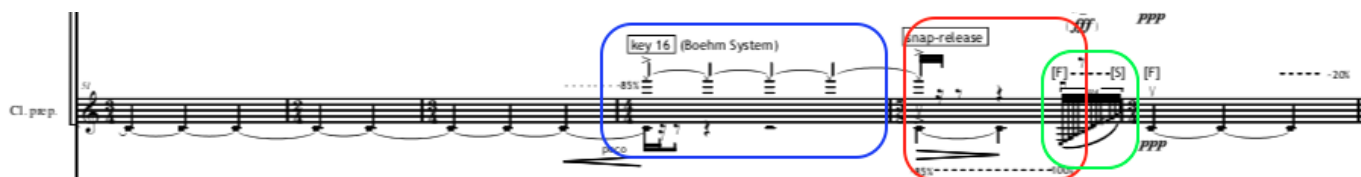


Figure 2. *AMID*, bars 51–56: Bar 54 in blue, sustaining cell (bar 55) in red, and the retrograde cell in green.

The first 54 bars (and modular cells) of the piece follow a repeated pattern: release of tension on the downbeat and build-up on the upbeat. By combining these reiterations with conductor’s movement repertoire, a visible relationship between the downbeat and upbeat macro-gestures with release and build-up, respectively, can be appreciated. In this fashion a visually attentive audience conceivably may be encouraged to comprehend, when in bar 55 (see Figure 2), the clarinettist inhales on the downbeat (instead of exhaling), that this gesture is also musical material instead of being excluded as preparatory. By employing a conductor in this manner and especially instrumentalizing their recognizable movement repertoire, a programming artistic director can assist the audience in Steen-Andersen’s stated objective, ‘[making] a piece where that which is clearly background and that which is clearly foreground switch places’.²⁵

Our contextual score and interview-based analyses of *AMID* does however reveal a curious limitation to the conductor’s conventional role should one be employed. During the course of interviews we undertook into the artistic and socio-economic motivations for utilizing a conductor, many interviewees expressed the expectation that a conductor would physically lead, facilitate and assist the musicians during rehearsals and concerts by using generally recognizable gestures.²⁶ However, in *AMID*, where every movement is suddenly thrust into the musical foreground, any impromptu or preparatory gesture from the conductor would just as suddenly be out of place. Pieter Matthyssens, artistic co-director of Nadar Ensemble, further underlining his motivation for employing a conductor in this piece, stated that ‘the conductor is an extension of the musicians in *AMID*’, becoming an equal part of the music machine in the industrial regime.²⁷ That leads us to conclude at this intermediate point that even though Steen-

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Thomas R. Moore, interviews with, among others, Alexander Schubert, Bas Wiegers, Betinna Junge, Carl Rosman Christof Loeser, Dries Tack, Elisa Medinilla, Enno Poppe, Filip Rathé, Geoffery Patterson, Georges-Ellie Octors, Jessie Marino, Michael Beil, Pieter Matthyssens, Simon Steen-Andersen, Stefan Prins, Tom De Cock, and Wim Henderickx.

²⁷ Pieter Matthyssens, interview by Thomas R. Moore, 21 January 2020.

Andersen has not specifically written a gesture-based part for the conductor, that is the result of his composition. This also means that should the active decision be made to utilize a conductor, a performance practice must be created specifically for this piece, the burden of which appears to lie squarely on the shoulders of the performing conductor.

Since the end of the second world war, a growing body of western art music has begun to appear that in some way has problematized, manipulated, augmented and eventually instrumentalized the role of the conductor. Conductor-researcher Hernando Varela traces a progression from conductors' 'technique [that] must have a close link with the music it serves' to a contemporary situation in which conductors' 'gesturality' can be utilized to 'exceed the operative framework – that is, of communication with the instrumentalists – and becomes a structuring factor of the piece'.²⁸ This arc, from impromptu to instrumentalized conductor is not linear and certainly not consistent. Not all composers, when deciding to write a conducted piece, decide to actively deploy the conductor. They are happy to have the conductor's presence continue to be a secondary phenomenon of the music be that for (economically) traditional, artistic, or pragmatic reasons. As Belgian composer Wim Hendrickx remarked, 'when I write for a symphony orchestra, I know it is going to be conducted'.²⁹ However, as Gunther Schuller attests, there has been a noticeable trend in an increasingly intricate art music tradition, be that rhythmically, dynamically, visually or via a multi-medial or integrated approach.³⁰

For example, we can begin with Charles Ives's fourth symphony (1910–16) in which it at least two silent conductors are typically employed in the second movement. Though this has become accepted performance practice, it was not at Ives's behest. During preparations for the posthumous premiere in 1965, it was Theodore Seder 'who finally convinced'³¹ conductor Leopold Stokowski to hire two assistant conductors to aid the performance. Here technique – the use of multiple conductors – rose to meet the music it serves. In Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Gruppen* (1955–57) the usage of three conductors was preconceived by the composer, however it was a result of the orchestra's division into three parts.³² The conductor(s)'s role was manipulated and augmented, but still used as a tool and not further developed as an instrument. Mark Applebaum introduced his work *Tlön* (1995) for three conductors and no players with the comment:

28 Hernando Varela, 'Adecuación, Expansión y Ruptura. La Técnica Gestual de La Dirección Musical En Composiciones de Los Siglos XX y XXI', *Revista 4'33"* 9/19 (2020), 33–53.

29 Wim Henderickx, interview by Thomas R. Moore, 22 January 2020.

30 Gunther Schuller, *Musings: The Musical Worlds of Gunther Schuller* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

31 John Kirkpatrick, 'Preface to Symphony No. 4 from Charles Ives', in *Charles Ives Symphony No. 4* (New York: Associated Music, 1965).

32 Michael Kurtz, *Stockhausen: A Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992).

Tlön was composed on the basis of the observation that the act of conducting, in itself, is not only *musical*, but *music*. Furthermore, elements traditionally associated only with sound, such as loudness or dissonance (particularly temporal dissonance), may be equally cultivated in the corporeal, gestural sphere.³³

The three conductors in *Tlön* all face the audience, mark bars, and give cues in three different, yet synchronized tempos. Applebaum deployed physical gestures, conductors' movement repertoire, as the musical material. Instead of technique and practice adapting or rising to meet the music it serves, technique and practice, as Varela said, becomes the musical material itself. The composer develops tools, instrumentalizing conductor and movement repertoire to meet a specific artistic need.

Metronome

In order to test our score analysis of *AMID* and apply it and the knowledge gained from the in-depth interview with Steen-Andersen in 2019 to artistic practice we worked closely on the piece with an ad-hoc ensemble of advanced students at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp, Belgium during the 2019–2020 academic year. The ensemble held two reading sessions, rehearsed in two one-week blocks, and gave one concert. The ensemble was also coached by external experts in this musical genre and was assisted by one student-conductor.³⁴ Our practical work with the ensemble provided us with the opportunity to create a working performance practice specifically for this piece. In regard to ensemble playing, for example, we found that specific timings were more accurately placed and given by specific musicians and the opening bar was best provided by the conductor. However, the subsequent 50 bars were more precisely timed by following the movement of the violinist's bow. Another example can be found in the specific length and pitch of the guitarist's glissando in bar 135 (see Figure 3.) The results were temporally more consistent when matched with the pianist's actions. In furtherance to the examples provided on ensemble timing, the practical work also demonstrated that an *AMID*-conductor is really only required to provide the down and upbeats and for intermittent tempo gestures. However, those specific 'in-between' gestures held no required specificity. Only the recognizable gestures for the downbeat (the 'go' sign) and the upbeat ('get-ready') held significance for the functioning of the machine. When confronted with this reflection, the flute player in the project ensemble offered, 'this is chamber music. We are all concentrated on our difficult parts, listening to and watching what the other players are doing, and counting, counting, counting! We only need the conductor for the downbeats, so we are not looking at him, her, or them for the rest.' In other words, the musicians count for themselves and rely on the conductor only in terms of reference. In this case, only the downbeat gesture was useful for the musicians, further suggesting that the conductor's physical performance is thus not solely for the benefit of the musicians.

33 Mark Applebaum, 'Tlön' (Musical Score, 1995).

34 The external experts were members of Nadar Ensemble.

In hindsight, and with a little distance from the internal negotiations required in bringing *AMID* to performance, we can now define our behaviour in this phase as part of the inspirational value regime as well. The ensemble as a whole had some small freedom to be creative and to come-up with solutions themselves for the industrial, prescribed composition. Their creativity was limited, however: reduced to the level of finding pragmatic and practical solutions. What differs here is that interpretations of the composition and decisions about its performance were made in collective negotiation and not unilaterally decided by the conductor. Arguably the authority of the conductor has shifted to the authority of the composition.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Piano (Pno.), Guitar (Guit.), and Cymbal (ch.damp). The score is for bar 135. The piano part is in the top staff, the guitar part is in the middle staff, and the cymbal part is in the bottom staff. A red circle highlights the glissandi in the piano and guitar parts in bar 135. The piano part has a *ppp* dynamic marking. The guitar part has *pp* and *ppp* dynamic markings. The cymbal part has a *ch.damp* marking.

Figure 3. Circle in red, the glissandi in the piano and guitar parts in bar 135.

AMID is filled with new and unique playing techniques, complex rhythms, and sudden metre changes. As mentioned above, it is entirely possible to perform this piece without a conductor. However, building further on Steen-Andersen's economic suggestion,

the conductor [is] somebody who can save rehearsal time. First of all, by keeping time [the pulse], so you [the musicians] don't have to go into all the cueing. But also, secondly, of course, having a global overview so not everybody has to learn [the score], see it from the outside, and learn the total of it. [The conductor] facilitates the rehearsal process of the piece.³⁵

By inserting a conductor into the machine, a programmer or artistic director can thus help an ensemble to simplify the musicians' role during the rehearsal process and a concert situation. In its most basic form, the conductor may act as a visual, unifying and living metronome, assisting (though admittedly to a lesser degree in *AMID* than in a conventional manner) the musicians musically and metrically in their performance.

In *The Complete Conductor*, Gunther Schuller lists the qualities typically associated with a professional conductor:

³⁵ Steen-Andersen, interview.

Ranging from the somewhat philosophical to the specifically technical, the requisite talents and skills need to be a fine, perhaps even great, conductor are: an unquenchable curiosity about the miracle of the creative process ...; a profound reverence and respect for the printed score; the intellectual capacity to analyze a score ...; a lively musical aural imagination ...; and on a more practical level, a keen, discerning ear and mind; a versatile, disciplined, expressive baton technique; an efficient rehearsal technique; a precise and thorough knowledge of the specific technical limitations and capacities of orchestral instruments ...; and finally but not least, a basic respect for the role the musicians play in the creation of the sounds that are ultimately transmitted to the audience.³⁶

When we compare our conductor's economic and metronomic role to Schuller's encompassing definition, we find that Steen-Andersen has narrowed the scope of the conductor's role to that of a tactical facilitator. The structure of *AMID*, utilizing modular cells, contained in single bars, whose beginnings and endings thus align perfectly with the conductor's upbeat and downbeat macro-gestures, suggests that, when conducted, the conductor's gestures should be in unison with the musicians', as opposed to the conventional situation in which a conductor appears to lead the ensemble.³⁷ A conductor in *AMID* would then not be present to interpret the score or inspire the musicians with 'expressive baton technique', but instead to industrially expedite the musicians' performance gestures. From a value-sociological point of view the role of the conductor has also been 'reduced' to finding pragmatic and practical solutions to improve the efficient performance of the piece, demonstrating exact industrial values. As mentioned before, even on this 'pragmatic level' that does not however exclude scope for interpretation, creativity, and inspiration.

The Authority of the Work

The reduction in a performance of *AMID* of the conductor's leadership role to that of a metronome or to another cog in the machine creates the necessity that leadership be sought elsewhere. For Steen-Anderson, that appears to be the composition itself. Although *AMID* is extremely innovative, the composer continues a trend in classical music that began in the early nineteenth century: scores are no longer descriptive, but prescriptive. In other words, the work or composition is granted an absolute authority, what Goehr, expanding on Hoffmann, calls 'Werktreue':

a musical work is held to be a composer's unique, objectified expression, a public and permanently existing artefact made out of musical elements A work is fixed with respect, at least, to the properties indicated in the score and it is repeatable in performances. Performances themselves are transitory sound events intended to present a work by complying as closely as possible with the given notational specifications. Beethoven's fifth symphony and Schubert's String Quintet in C, Op. 163 are examples of musical works.³⁸

³⁶ Schuller, *The Complete Conductor*, 6–7

³⁷ Cory D. Meals, 'The Question of Lag: An Exploration of the Relationship Between Conductor Gesture and Sonic Response in Instrumental Ensembles', *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020), 573030, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.573030>.

³⁸ Goehr, 'Being True to the Work', 55.

By also composing the gestures prescriptively, Steen-Anderson arguably radically extends this two-century-old tradition of *Werktreue*. In doing so, he aligns himself, *AMID* and its performers with a regime in which traditions, rituals and fixed values are held dear: the domestic world. Boltanski and Thévenot define this world as one in which people and objects are afforded worth ‘according to how much they contribute to establishing hierarchical relations among people and also, necessarily, according to the degree to which they facilitate the inscription of the worth and thus the identification of persons during encounters’.³⁹ At its extreme, in this value system musicians have worth only in so far as they assist themselves and their peers in maintaining their place in a prescribed hierarchy. A violinist is worthy because she can execute a particularly difficult passage precisely as the composer has written it. Traditions, too, hold worth. Maintaining the status quo and creating a collective understanding of how resources have interacted in the past are key tenements of this regime. Our violinist would be held high if she were to interpret a passage within the reasonably agreed appropriate style.

Though it varies along a spectrum, performing contemporary composed music is made up of several parts. Three of which would be key to artists in this realm: the composer’s written score, an understanding of the style appropriate to that composer’s chosen genre and knowing how their (the musicians’) role fits in amongst their peers. They would be motivated by a wish to perform the piece as written and intended. There would also be no desire to unnecessarily stick out above the other musicians, drawing undue attention. Solos would be possible, but only in so far as they go towards meeting the composer’s artistic wishes.

A conductor within this world would only be motivated by facilitating the musicians’ performance of their parts. They would be motivated not by a need to stamp their own interpretation on a piece, but rather by an aspiration to defend the written score. Such a conductor is an assistant with a global view. That does not make the conductor a servant to the musicians. In order to correctly and collectively perform their parts, all musicians will willingly submit to the conductor’s definition of time. He or she will not only show the intermediate time, but, as tradition dictates, will also begin and end the performance.⁴⁰

According to Boltanski and Thévenot, adherents to this domestic world require some sort of ‘divine law’ to unify them in their values and serve as the ‘foundation for bonds among beings. Individuals can only keep discord at bay by making mutual commitments’.⁴¹ In our example, the musicians have committed themselves to the written score and by extension the

39 Boltanski and Thévenot, *On Justification*, 164.

40 Diego Calderón Garrido and Salvador Oriola Requena, ‘Music and Leadership: The Role of the Conductor’, *International Journal of Music and Performing Arts* 3/1 (2015), 84–8, <https://doi.org/10.15640/ijmpa.v3n1a8>.

41 Boltanski and Thévenot, *On Justification*, 94.

composer's artistic intension and aura. Bar structure, tempo, and techniques are all agreed upon beforehand and adjustments to meet the composed instructions are made collectively during rehearsals. Little or no value would be afforded to impromptu artistry during a concert because this would break previously and collectively made commitments.

When the performance practice described above is viewed through this frame, many of the characteristics of the domestic world can be found in the motivations of *AMID*'s composer, potential artistic directors, and performing musicians and conductors. The work is written using gesture-based notation, meaning every move the musicians decide to make (or not make) and the timing thereof is motivated by the desire to perform the written score as exactly as possible. This is in contrast to most instances of composed music, in which we see result-based notation that affords a certain amount of freedom to decide how one will produce the written note. In our example, the written score details the very motion required, or as cellist-researcher Tanja Orning described it, the composer 'isolated movements and [gave] them value ... altering the hierarchical relationships between sound and gesture' where the 'thinking of sound over gesture has to yield'.⁴² Demonstrating an even greater adherence to hierarchy, the composer requests the musicians not to make any movements except those prescribed by the notation in the absence of any instruction.

During the rehearsals and concert with the project ensemble, we observed two tendencies that further support a domestic ensemble-conductor relationship. First, and as partially demonstrated above, it did not really seem to matter what pattern a conductor used to beat any specific time signature. Conductors could be inconsistent or even conduct a 3/4 bar in the 'opposite' direction: it made absolutely no difference in the quality of the resulting gestures made by the musicians. Only recognizable upbeats, downbeats, and consistent timing seemed to matter to the resulting performance. In other words, if a conductor was clear in the up and downbeats and showed the correct number of beats between the first and last in a bar, the musicians performed well. Of Schuller's listed baton techniques only 'disciplined' appears to be required here.

The practical study also demonstrated that it is better for the conductor in *AMID* to resist making any extraneous movements like cueing or cut-offs. Preparatory gestures proved to be both confusing for the musicians and irrelevant for the public. The practical study further revealed that the conductor should not risk distracting the musicians with any self-imposed interpretation (inspirational value regime) or showmanship (world of fame) but instead work meticulously to highlight a path offering the best prospect for a precise outcome. That 'precise outcome' is the exact interpretation and execution of the composition as intended by the composer. In that sense the artistic work or the score receives absolute authority, and everyone – musicians and conductor – is subordinated to its leadership. Here again, the traditional authority of the conductor is subjugated to the composition, thus placing him, her, or them on

42 Orning, 'The Polyphonic Performer'.

a more equal footing with the musicians.

Civil Chamber Music

From the perspective of a musician, the ‘civil world’, as described by Boltanski and Thévenot as one whose ‘distinctive feature’ is an attachment of ‘primordial importance’ to collectivity readily suggests the workings of a chamber music ensemble.⁴³ Their civil value system is largely built upon Rousseau’s *Social Contract*, which ‘sets forth a formula for subordination in which ... civil peace and the common good’ rest on the ‘authority ... of an impartial sovereign’.⁴⁴ In a civil world, a person’s worth and transcendence can be found by unifying their voice with their peers and working together towards a common goal. The sovereign in this situation is not embodied in a single entity, but instead in their shared, horizontal commonality. This seems deeply reminiscent of the way good chamber music ensembles approach their craft. To achieve a shared artistic goal, the chamber musicians conceivably relinquish their ‘selves’ and individual artistic identity for the sake of the common good. They are motivated to collaborate efficiently, maintain a ‘civil peace’, and respect their collectively produced ‘sovereign’ – the composed piece.

Conductors who wish to function in a ‘civil world’ must relinquish their artistic command to the will of the collective, reaching a ‘state in which they are concerned not with their own interest but with the interest of all’.⁴⁵ They are definitely not the sovereign in this world. However, it is conceivable to think of their gestures – when made in function of the general artistic will of the ensemble – as an impartial reference. A conductor in a new music ensemble does not necessarily represent the artistic or even temporal lead during a rehearsal or performance. In our experience, artistic decisions are often made collectively during the rehearsal process and, for example, command of timing may shift throughout the performance and rehearsal process of a piece or programme. (This is perhaps the best argument available for considering conducted contemporary ensemble music to be chamber music.)

Our researched and tested performance practice can also comfortably be framed in the civil value system. For example, rehearsal times and the locations thereof were respected not because of a fear of some punishment, but because of a common agreement to work together at pre-arranged and collectively agreed upon moments and specific locations. The musicians and conductors opened their agendas together, discussed the amount of time they required to rehearse the piece and then found the time to work together. Also, the musicians in our project ensemble played from the score instead of individual parts, enabling them to help each other

43 Boltanski and Thévenot, *On Justification*, 110.

44 Boltanski and Thévenot, *On Justification*, 107.

45 Boltanski and Thévenot, *On Justification*, 110.

during the rehearsals with difficult parts and complex rhythms. This demonstrates that the musicians appeared to hold the ‘interest of all’ foremost in their minds. (Based on our experience, this is common in many new music ensembles, in which a general attitude of helpfulness is present, recognizing that difficult individual parts can be a concern for all.)

As has been discussed above, the conductor in *AMID* can make little to no preparatory gestures. This functional performance practice found worth in the domestic world, but we detect civil world value as well. Of course, on a basic level, conductors can greatly and to positive effect influence the timing of performances.⁴⁶ In *AMID*, because preparatory gestures cause confusion, this influence has however been relinquished. The conductor’s gestures should move in exact temporal unison with the musicians’, thus collectively sharing the responsibility for the maintenance of timing and any possible correcting or impromptu artistic influence they might have. Given that, our study suggests that the conductor in *AMID* has little choice but to submit themselves to the collective will and general interest. Solutions for ensemble playing were bespoke as opposed to physically dictated; a significant breach from traditional and strategic conducting practice.⁴⁷ In *AMID*, we observed a definite ‘civil’ shift in the conductor’s role from that of top-down authority figure to one that represents a more neutral alternative, albeit with a defined central role.

Combining Worlds

Our interest in framing this case study by using the value-sociological approach arose out of a conflict that we observed between the general expectations of a conductor – based on both training and an extensive professional artistic practice in classical and commercial genres – and the reality found in conducting *AMID*. We wanted to know if this was the intention of the composer or a (happy) accident of the gesture-based notation. Perhaps it was even grounded in the culture and performance practice of new music ensembles? The conflict revealed itself during Thomas Moore’s first rehearsals with Nadar Ensemble in 2012 and manifested in the form of a severely limited ability to function gesturally as a traditional conductor, by, for example, giving cues where needed, expressing emotion, and/or leading an inspiring performance by affording room for impromptu artistry – all aspects of strategic leadership that we had anecdotally grown to be expected of a conductor.

Viewed through the lens provided by Boltanski and Thévenot’s theory, that conflict seems to resolve itself by combining worlds of value and compromise between the various regimes. Applying the customs found in the civil world, the conductor in *AMID* can find ways to assist the chamber ensemble through bespoke solutions instead of enforcing an interpretation through gestures. The former is decided together, democratically, while the latter is an example of

⁴⁶ Meals, ‘The Question of Lag’.

⁴⁷ Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor*, 6–7

authoritarian rule most certainly not welcome in a ‘civil’ world and detrimental to a performance of this particular work. By presenting clear and well-timed downbeats and upbeats the conductor meets their practical and pragmatic ‘industrial’ role of maintaining time, offering exact reference points, and visually extending the musicians’ gestures for the benefit of the audience. (This visual and gestural extension may have ‘inspirational’ value, as well, making the piece equally interesting for the eyes as it is for the ears.) Adhering to the domestic ideals, a conductor (just as the musicians) would attempt to perform the score, their ‘mutual commitment’, exactly as written. Again, imprinting a personal interpretation upon the score does not seem to be appropriate in the domestic value system. For the musicians and the conductor, the world of inspiration is limited here to finding pragmatic solutions. More interpretational or creative freedom does not appear to be constructive or ideal for a performance of *AMID*.

In our research we did not observe the two other value regimes described by Boltanski and Thévenot. The values of the world of fame seem not to be applicable to our conductor's performance practice. Our study demonstrates that inserting one's personality into the role of *AMID*'s conductor appears to be adverse to the artistic quality of the performance. The same is true of the values found in the market value system. While there is certainly a market for conductors with the requisite skills for *AMID*, it appears not to be a part of this piece's specific performance practice.

One regime still remains to be discussed in our narrative, namely Boltanski and Chiapello's project city. Another way to put the conductor's role in a piece like *AMID* into perspective, and to resolve the value conflict described above, is to realize that within the current way new music ensembles organize themselves, the role of conductor is an ad-hoc function. That means that ensembles will continue on their artistic paths and, when necessary, employ a conductor. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have described this style of coordination as ‘tactical leadership’ in which leaders may be seen as ‘a weapon to wield and dispose of as the situation dictates’.⁴⁸ We can also view this artistic and organizational development as an instrumentalization of the conductor.⁴⁹ Conductors are utilized as instruments of the ensemble and applied à la carte to the specific artistic situation. For example, though a conductor may have the artistic baggage to interpret a piece like *AMID*, the analyses of the score, in-depth interview, and practical work have demonstrated that the performance practice in this piece does not entail that particular artistic responsibility. Also, allowing room for impromptu artistry and employing conventional and facilitating baton technique have been stripped from the role. However, inspiration or creativity could be found in maintaining time, managing the rehearsals, and offering feedback on the balance – but not solely vested in one person. As shown above,

48 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Assembly* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 22.

49 Thomas R. Moore, ‘The Instrumentalized Conductor’, *TEMPO* 75, no. 297 (June 2021), 48–67.

maintaining time was in particular a shared goal and responsibility of the entire ensemble. Managing rehearsals was also a collective burden, but in our case, the project ensemble verbally authorized the conductor to be the ‘point man’ for this specific project.⁵⁰

Conclusion: Tactical Conducting

To conclude, we will apply the insights from our study of *AMID* towards gaining a better perspective and broader understanding of the role and performance practice for conductors within new music ensembles that perform integrative concerts. Before going further, however, we should include one caveat: our conclusions are based on the in-depth case study and sociological reflection we conducted on one work within the described genre. Except for the percussionist, *AMID* was written for musicians playing traditional instruments, and, as described above, it is common performance practice that *AMID* be conducted. The conclusions we reach below may be applicable to non-conducted works, ensemble pieces utilizing object-instruments, or even pieces that borrow elements and hierarchies from movement-art and/or performance-art. However, it is our goal with this study to better describe and understand the conductor’s role and hence the findings will be extrapolated exclusively on this core and subset.

Our study has suggested, regarding rehearsal strategy, that a collective ‘civil’ approach is the best manner to prepare, rehearse and perform works in this genre. Strategic artistic choices were made cooperatively, including, but not limited to musical and visual issues and those of timing. This does not deny the need for artistic leadership, but it does mean that typical unilateral decision-making that conventionally would be embodied in a conductor is ill suited. Further, because instrumental and gestural techniques are often new, piece specific and/or composer-invented, there often is no standard physical solution. This requires that an ensemble and conductor take the time to discuss solutions verbally. In our study this encouraged and underscored collective understanding. To continue to achieve this in similar and new pieces, all those involved in the performance (players, technicians and conductor(s)) must have full access to the score and if electronics are involved, the patches (computer programs), and prepare their own parts from these sources.

In combination with the mentioned ad-hoc basis for contemporary conductors’ employment in the so-called ‘project city value regime’, the interplay of industrial, domestic and civil values leads to a new role of the conductor as a tactical leader that simultaneously assumes the emancipation of the role of the musician. This evolution is particularly evident within new music ensembles. According to Christof Löser, head of the new music studio at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, Stuttgart, this particular emancipatory movement began in the mid-twentieth century, as ‘new music ensembles began to democratically structure’

⁵⁰ Example of a bespoke solution put into practice: The ensemble members felt that the conductor in front of them had the most experience with the piece and were comfortable putting rehearsal management into his hands.

themselves, arguing that ‘if the dissonances were emancipated, so too should the musician be emancipated – or at least more so than in an orchestra. The ensembles were groups of musicians at the beginning with more or less democratic structures. Their concepts excluded the conductor or used one only if really necessary.’⁵¹

Today conductors are therefore more often applied where necessary and then ‘discarded’ when no longer required. Our observations confirm that artistic decisions are often made cooperatively or by a (temporarily) nominated artistic director or composer. Thus, when a conductor is present, there must also be specific artistic and socio-economic motivations for their presence. Specifically, we found in *AMID*, these included a composer-specified scope of responsibilities that is at the same time expanded upon conventional understanding of the role as well as narrowed to meet specific artistic needs. Our conductor serves as a visual extension of the musicians, moving in exact unison with their macro- and musical gestures. The role was also utilized to frame the silences in the piece. Steen-Andersen sees the conductor as a figure who can give ‘focus in a concert and even fullness to long silences, putting them into context’. By having the conductor continue to ‘beat in the silences’ the composer encourages the audience to comprehend that the piece is continuing, with the physical pattern itself ‘becoming a different part of the music, creating some kind of tension’.⁵² These two examples show that the conductor is expected to take up the mantle of a tactical leader during a performance of *AMID*. Examination of other conducted pieces in a similar genre has also demonstrated that conductors have been deployed tactically to frame not just silences, but pieces as well, such as in Michael Maierhof’s *Zonen 6* (2019). Conductors and musicians in general have also been instrumentalized to trigger electronics such as in Alexander Schubert’s *Point Ones* (2012), Thierry De Mey’s *Light Music* (2004, rev. 2021) and Pierre Jodkowski’s *Alan T.* (2021) and create intimacy as in *Third Space* (2018) by Stefan Prins.⁵³

Our value-sociological research teaches us that conducted new music such as a *AMID* (when conducted) is often still rooted in (and relies upon) a traditional division of roles based on what we have called domestic values. This means that every musician plays their classical role as a violinist, pianist or so forth. The conductor also retains their permanent place in the ensemble according to tradition. Moreover, the indicated *Werktreue* endorses this traditional domestic value conception. By taking this prescriptive principle of the composition to the extreme, the performers of *AMID* end up in a very rigid industrial value regime. However, this regime may also be called ‘traditional’ because it has shaped working conditions for orchestral musician for the last 200 years. For the latter, too, the work must in the first place be carried out as faithfully as possible. The only difference is that now the conductor, via the extremely

51 Christof Löser, interview by Thomas R. Moore, 15 January 2020.

52 Moore, Interview with Simon Steen-Andersen.

53 Moore, ‘The Instrumentalized Conductor’.

implemented *Werktreue* in *AMID*, is also more tightly bound in such an industrial regime. As a result, both their traditionally inspiring function and strategic leadership are strongly restricted. Idiosyncratic interpretations and impromptu gestures would simply be detrimental to the performance. Conductors therefore become, just like musicians, primarily performing artists who put themselves fully at the service of the faithful performance of the work. Indeed, according to the logic of the civil regime, they are even placed on an equal footing with the musicians. The absolute authority of the work generates, as it were, an equal subordination or service of the conductor and musicians. Knowing that according to the current logic of the project city regime, conductors are also just as replaceable as the musicians and that they must constantly adapt to the nature and context of the project and the piece, only one function remains: a tactical role. In other words, traditional conductors develop their artistic style much less strategically in the long run, while specializing in a particular musical oeuvre, enabling them to lead an orchestra or ensemble as an absolute authority. On the contrary, just like the curator and the artist in the contemporary visual art world, in the new music world more value is attached to a conductor who knows how to respond adaptively and flexibly to opportune projects and assignments.⁵⁴ In order to achieve a good execution of projects within the genre we studied, the conductor prefers not to adopt an authoritarian attitude towards the musicians, but instead negotiates tactically and on an equal footing with the musicians.

54 Gielen, *The Murmuring of the Artistic Multitude*.