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Toward a Vision of Mutual Responsiveness: Remythologizing the Symphony Orchestra

by

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Toward a Vision of Mutual Responsiveness: Remythologizing the Symphony Orchestra

In the essay that follows, two philosophy professors from the University of Dayton take us on a fascinating journey through the myths which surround conductors. However, our authors are more than professors. Marilyn Fischer is also a violinist with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra. Isaiah Jackson serves as Music Director of the Youngstown Symphony Orchestra and as Principal Guest Conductor of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra. These authors know whereof they speak.

Autocrat or Charismatic Leader?

Casting their discussion in the language of myth—which they suggest expresses “profound realities that shape our perceptions of lived experience”—Fischer and Jackson first explore the role of the conductor as an autocrat. They explain how the conductor’s role has evolved over time and suggest that the modern conductor is, in fact, a product of the industrial revolution.

They conclude that the myth of the autocratic conductor is incomplete and proceed to explore the myth of the charismatic conductor, positing that “glorious music” cannot result from the exercise of autocratic power alone.

Mutual Responsiveness

Our philosopher-authors then turn their attention to the future. They advise that viewing musicians as professionals rather than “labor” is the beginning of creating a new vision; a vision of mutual responsiveness. They outline many specific ideas for restructuring the orchestral workplace to support this new vision and conclude that an understanding of the myths and metaphors used to describe symphony orchestra organizations is a necessary beginning for positive change.

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The sense of dislocation in orchestras is deep, multi-faceted, and well known. Our audiences, to use Norman Lebrecht's term, are shriveling. How can we attract younger audiences to a form they perceive as rigid and outdated? How can we package and market concerts to appeal to younger sensibilities? Can we adapt valuable insights of business efficiency and organizational management without losing artistic purpose? The Symphony Orchestra Institute has already contributed admirably to these discussions.

Discontent issues from the stage. Conductors, even benign ones, are perceived as tyrannical; musicians, even well-meaning ones, appear passive at best, passive-aggressive and hostile at worst. Although many still view the orchestra as a group of musicians under the autocratic control of the conductor, this vision is increasingly at variance with a prevailing and appropriate sense of democracy. In the thrall of this view, our music making is often tedious rather than joyous.

Let us, then, examine the notion of the orchestra under the control of its autocrat. Perhaps we might thereby derive a concept of large-scale collective music making that serves both the democratic spirit and also our deepest artistic purposes.

It is appropriate to cast this inquiry in the language of myth. In doing so, we speak not of the Tooth Fairy and other imaginary entities; nor do we speak of patent falsehoods. We invoke, rather, the realm of primordial images that shape our conscious thought. Whether myths are literally true is beside the point. These images express the profound realities that shape our perceptions of lived experience; we enact these perceptions in ritual and embed them in institutional structures. A crucial step in organizational change, then, is to discover the myths embedded in our organizations and to discard the ones that are no longer serviceable.

"A crucial step in organizational change . . . is to discover the myths embedded in our organizations and to discard the ones that are no longer serviceable."

The Myth of the Autocratic Conductor

In their article for *Harmony*, “Why They’re Not Smiling: Stress and Discontent in the Orchestral Workplace,” Seymour and Robert Levine state succinctly one of the most potent myths in Western music: the conductor as omniscient and omnipotent patriarch. He exercises complete control over the workplace; the musicians are his powerless children (18-20).¹

Their formulation of the myth squares with historical tradition. The symphony orchestra as we know it is a 19th century European institution that developed during a time when most cultural institutions were hierarchical by definition: the military, the church, governments, families, workplaces. Pierre Vozlinsky’s description is colorful: “The orchestra used to be a cross between a group of domestic servants and a military platoon” (Wheatland Foundation 19).

Another way of expressing this hierarchical control is through the double metaphor of the conductor as performer; the orchestra as instrument. One writer described Wagner this way, “He treats the orchestra like the instrument on which he pours forth his soul-inspiring strains” (Galkin, 568). Bruno Walter also employed the metaphor, writing, “It is in actual fact that single person who is making music, playing on the orchestra as on a living instrument, and transforming its multiformity into unity” (Bamberger 156).

In the myth of the autocratic conductor, the true performer is the conductor; the musicians are the instrument. As soloists realize their artistic vision through controlling their instruments, so conductors realize their artistic vision through autocratic control of the musicians. The conductor’s task is to give directions; the musicians’, to obey. Admittedly, the goal is the glorious one of creating wonderfully meaningful sounds and musicians must be highly skilled in order to follow complex instructions. Nonetheless, the relation between conductor and musicians is hierarchical, a matter of authority and control.

Inside all this glorious music making, the source of orchestral musicians’ frustration is clear. They are highly trained professionals, living at a time when our culture calls for flatter hierarchies in business and grassroots participation in politics. No wonder the musicians resent functioning as someone else’s instrument! Signs of the felt insult are manifold. Adult musicians respond to direction with petty childishness. The youthful vitality of new members dulls into routine: we come, we play the notes, we leave. Audiences sense the bizarre irony of stony faces mechanically sawing and blowing and banging out the musical treasures of western civilization.

There is rot in the rank and file; there is rot at the top as well. Historical

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thinkers make this point in a variety of contexts. In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft implored the architects of the French Revolution to extend to women the political rights sought for men, noting that, “[Women] may be convenient slaves, but slavery will have its constant effect, degrading the master and the abject dependent” (88). Frederick Douglass shares this conviction, stating: “No man can put a chain about the ankle of his fellow man without at last finding the other end fastened about his own neck” (397). That the fault lies in the hierarchical structure of power is clear in Jane Addams’s critique of well-intentioned philanthropy, where she describes the attitude of benefactor as one of “kindly contempt” toward beneficiaries (153).

Today’s music director functions from a legacy of tyranny. Decades of perceived powerlessness on the part of the musicians lend the orchestral workplace the feel of shark-infested waters. Continuing in the tradition that predates Toscanini, the music director’s

skin thickens against the musicians’ passive aggression. Music gets played; warmth and sensitivity diminish; resentment builds on both sides. Mutual contempt is made tolerable by the fact that the music director is rarely around.

Alternatively, the music director can choose to inhabit the role of friendly guest conductor. The orchestra becomes a self-policing entity: the best that the conductor can do is appeal to an orchestra’s own norms of good ensemble, intonation, and behavior—and let the troops out early! Amidst the smiles, there are mutterings about the lack of musical leadership. The music director must try to reconcile explicit instructions with a gracious *laissez-faire*.

What music directors can actually accomplish depends largely on where they are in their tenure. At the beginning, during the coveted honeymoon, they can do no wrong. At the end, and the end is always protracted, their influence declines from the moment departure is announced.

What can be accomplished in the middle of a tenure depends, under the existing system, on who can maintain power for how long. Ultimate authority over music directors, the power to hire or fire, is vested in the board of directors. As long as the music director holds the confidence of the board, the contract is secure; worker dissatisfaction is a given.

Thus, the chain of cause and effect between orchestral musicians and conductors creates a vicious circle, a chronic condition. How many orchestras have come to resemble war zones with their friendly camps, enemy camps, temporary truces? Rarely is there a frank and openly collegial atmosphere; more often, one encounters the web of anxiety born of years spent living together in hostility.

If the problem is that power hierarchies corrupt, then it is sensible to look for ways of diminishing autocracy. At the end of their article, the Levines ask, "Is it possible to actually do away with the myth and with musicians' lack of control over their workplaces, while maintaining the ability of professional orchestras to produce musical services efficiently?" (23). Perhaps to go forward, we should first look back. Understanding how the myth arose out of a particular culture at a particular time is a first step toward detaching ourselves from it.

Leadership in the 18th century was shared by three musicians: the concertmaster, the principal cellist, and the keyboard player. The role of the continuo declined toward the end of the century, and the concertmaster became more prominent. The *Stehgeiger* was a transitional figure, the concertmaster who led the ensemble from the first desk, brandishing his bow when necessary.

The large, heavy batons of the early 19th century are remnants of this dual function and the *Stehgeiger* still conducts Vienna's waltz orchestras.

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In one sense, the modern conductor can be seen as a product of the industrial revolution. With larger halls came larger orchestras; with larger forces came the need for a supervisor, a person whose sole function was to administer the passage of time. Though theater and concert hall alike employed specialist conductors in the 19th century, it was the composer-conductor

who embodied most successfully the myth that has come down to our own time. Beethoven, Berlioz, Wagner: when these men mounted the podium, a mighty creativity was unleashed. They spoke through music and gesture alike. Small wonder that their contemporaries marvelled at their power; small wonder that so few moderns can match that power.

The Myth of the Charismatic Conductor

But here we notice a peculiar thing: the myth of the autocratic conductor is incomplete. How does such glorious music result from an autocratic exercise of power? To late 19th-century European musicians and audiences, it was apparent that the myth of the autocratic conductor had a counterpart: the myth of the charismatic conductor. The conductor's charisma justified his autocracy, as the following quotations powerfully illustrate.

Berlioz is eloquent in describing the passionate transmission of his charisma: "Performers should feel that [the conductor] feels, comprehends, and is moved: then his emotion communicates itself to those whom he directs, his inward fire warms them, his electric glow animates them, his force of impulse excites them, he throws around him the vital irradiations of musical art" (Galkin 285).

Wagner's charismatic power must have been prodigious. Anton Seidl wrote of his conducting teacher, "His eyes glittered, glowed, pierced; his fingers worked nervously, and electric currents seemed to pass through the air to each individual

musician; an invisible force entered the hearts of all; every man thrilled with him, for he could not escape the glance of the great man. Wagner held everybody bound to him as by a magical chain; the musicians had to perform wonders, for they could not do otherwise” (Galkin 575).

In the 19th century, conductors sent out vital irradiations, electric fire and currents, creating magical chains uniting conductors and performers. From this mystical, electric unity, the power of music was conveyed to the audience. Now we understand why conductors needed autocratic authority: it enabled them to send unobstructed currents; the more obedient the musicians, the clearer the transmission. Besides, the currents were so powerful, the musicians could hardly resist.

In contemporary discussions, the myth of the charismatic conductor is muted; the language of electric fire and vital irradiations hopelessly out of date. Traces remain, however. In his book on the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Carl Vigeland

writes, “For a string player to be excited by a tutti assignment, the conductor must be utterly convincing in his interpretation of the music. He must make his orders to the players inspirational” (72). And traces stubbornly remain in musicians’ complaints: “That conductor doesn’t inspire me, I don’t play as well when I don’t connect emotionally with the conductor.” For every transcendent experience, conductors and orchestral musicians give 20 forgettable performances.

Now we certainly want conductors to inspire. Today’s conductors, however, function within a web of contractual restraints that would have been unimaginable to the maestros of the Golden Age. And it would be inhumane to make being bound by magical chains part of an orchestral musician’s job description.

In short, the myth of the charismatic conductor, though deeply embedded in the subconscious, has become too embarrassing to state, while the myth of the autocratic conductor has ossified into concert rituals and organizational structures. We should tread softly, though. Before demythologizing the autocratic conductor, let us consider mythic charisma. We do

not expect myths to be literally true, but we do need for them to be vital and potent, to fuel our imaginations, our caring.

We would do better, not to *de*-mythologize the orchestra, but to *re*-mythologize the orchestra. Rather than destroying myths, let us articulate new governing myths: myths that capture the magic of what we do; myths that generate empathy and understanding; myths that suggest new rituals and organizational structures through which to work.

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Toward a Vision of Mutual Responsiveness

Bruno Walter writes, “The principle of individualization melts in the fire of such mystico-musical union, and nothing can be more real or experienced more securely than this mysterious act of unification between us, the work, and its creator” (Galkin 774). Something like this truly does happen on stage when fine orchestral playing is achieved. However, precisely what is happening can be described in a number of ways. Rather than thinking of this mystico-musical union as a state created by the conductor’s vital irradiations, can we think of it as one created through an exquisite mutual responsiveness, a state shared and reciprocated by all the musicians on stage?

Responsiveness for orchestral musicians entails exercising complex skills while maintaining peak concentration. They must instantaneously and continuously respond to visual cues from the conductor, integrating these with instructions previously given. Just as importantly, if not more so, they must respond to visual and auditory cues from one another. The flute hears the oboe’s phrase and responds in kind or in contrast, as the phrase suggests. Members of the viola section listen critically to each other, blending their sounds. The tuba player has eyes glued on the principal bass to execute a simultaneous attack. All of this information must be instantaneously and continuously expressed in intricate, accurate finger manipulations and breath control so as to convey the emotional content of the piece.²

While the conductor provides a unified artistic conception of the work being played, the conductor’s actual gestures vary according to the response of the musicians. Determining the specific gestures that will elicit this artistic conception is to some extent improvisational, a matter of ongoing negotiation with the specific musicians of a particular orchestra. The conductor hears the musicians’ response to a particular set of gestures and then refines the next set of gestures in response to the musicians.

A rehearsal or concert can thus be understood as a complex series of adjustments based on mutual responsiveness among those on stage. Jochum was talking about receptivity between musician and conductor, but we can generalize his statement to refer to receptivity among all on stage: “And the player must respond with alertness to the most subtle differentiations and have a highly developed receptiveness. The qualities of our foremost orchestras are primarily due to this receptiveness, and not only to beautiful sound or technical accomplishments” (Bamberger 263).

This responsiveness is really going on; it must, for great symphonic music cannot be generated by mere temporal simultaneity, as if each individual were plugged in only to the conductor. Of course musicians are responsive to the

“A rehearsal or concert can thus be understood as a complex series of adjustments based on mutual responsiveness...”

conductor. But they also make a multitude of autonomous decisions. A conductor would need years of rehearsal time to dictate every nuance; at best, he or she can unify an interpretation, pace it, shape it, balance it.

Here we see clearly the dangers of focusing exclusively on the myth of the autocratic conductor. To frame the matter as an issue of control, leads to the conclusion that the answer will also be a question of control, with the conductor's authority distributed among the musicians.³ Doing this, however, elevates autonomy beyond reason; it maintains our separateness, and ultimately, it still ignores the source of our unity. Anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson writes with perspicacity, "Western culture associates independence and autonomy with strength, but there is a sense in which an awareness of being part of a larger whole, of being defined by context, a self in adaptation, can offer a different strength, leading to flexibility and constant learning" (1994, 62).

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The intense satisfaction of string quartet playing may derive in part from the absence of an autocratic conductor.⁴ An equally potent and more positive source of satisfaction is the members' immediate experience of interdependency, a state in which the intimacy of mutual responsiveness bridges individual separation. When it is going right there is a dynamic merging of selves, in which questions of equal control become irrelevant. Admittedly, merging 85 selves to perform Beethoven's Seventh Symphony presents logistical problems never faced by a string quartet. What remains the same, however, is the strength and oneness available through mutual dedication to the muse, to the power and urgency of musical expression.

Professionalism for Orchestral Musicians

Under the autocratic, charismatic conductor myth, orchestral musicians are conceptualized as labor. Their task is to follow orders, and not contribute their intelligence or creativity beyond what those orders entail. But when all on stage are mutually responsible for sustaining "mystico-musical union," conceptualizing musicians as labor is utterly inadequate. What does it mean to be a professional under the myth of mutual responsiveness?

Here the history of the professions is helpful. In medieval times, there were three recognized professions: medicine, law, and the clergy, which included university teaching. In embarking upon a profession, one "professed" by entering a literal or metaphoric monastic calling, a way of life far beyond the scope of a mere job or career. Professionals were distinguished from merchants in their dedication to the two ideals of service and excellence. Their calling was to serve the common good as defined within the medieval world view: to heal bodies in this life and to prepare souls for the next.

As lights dim in the concert hall, it is easy for musicians to forget our reason for being: to serve the audience by exploring with them the meaning of our humanity. Music, through ordered tones and rhythms, presents images of triumph, despair, joy, sadness, frivolity, transcendence, and fate. As thinking and feeling beings we need to confront the meaning of our existence; one way of doing that is through creating and experiencing artistic images. The orchestra serves its audience by sharing with them a musical vision of the full range of all that it means to be human.

Moreover, in an age when great performances are available on recordings, it is not sufficient just to recreate the masterworks; we must also share with our audiences the profound joy that music gives us. Our love for the music must shine through the sounds, inviting the audience to participate in a lived sharing of the experience.

A musician's commitment to excellence is of a piece with the commitment to service. If an artist's calling is to present in artistic form the full range of human meanings and emotions, then a commitment to excellence is integral to fulfilling this task. A fine musician can articulate musically the difference between melancholy sadness, angry sadness, tragic sadness, and melodramatic sadness; a poor musician cannot. A commitment to continuous musical growth, by musicians as individuals, and by the orchestra as an aggregate, is entailed in the meaning of "professional."

Recognizing the mutual responsiveness myth is an important beginning, but it is only a beginning. It would be impotent simply to request orchestral musicians to think of themselves as professionals rather than labor or to encourage them to engage the audience on occasion. To be potent, to sustain commitment, myths must be enacted, ritualized, and embodied in ceremonies and in organizational structures. The mutual responsiveness myth gives us a fertile central conception. Through it we can imagine a more nurturing musical environment, one in which musicians strive for excellence and thereby serve the aesthetic needs of the audience. The orchestral workplace needs to be restructured in light of the myth's ideal: continually to increase conductors' and musicians' abilities to respond musically to one other, enabling them thereby to serve the audience most fully.

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Suggestions for Restructuring the Orchestral Workplace

Specific suggestions abound on how to organize the orchestral workplace around the mutual responsiveness myth; they merely need to be identified as such. Many of them can be found in previous issues of *Harmony*.⁵

The central conception is that excellence and service are the ideals toward which we strive. Continuous musical growth is a primary responsibility of the musicians and it is the institution's responsibility to ensure that structures for enabling this growth are available. For example, musicians could have opportunities for private lessons, coaching, and master classes. Musicians could be enabled to explore new areas of musical growth such as early music, jazz, world music, and composition through attending conferences, workshops, and other forums of continuing education.⁶ That chamber music is the best way to enhance listening and responsiveness skills is well-known; all members of the orchestra should be able to participate in chamber ensembles frequently as part of their job responsibilities.⁷

Current rigid rehearsal patterns need to be altered to enhance musical growth. Various sections of the orchestra need time to work on blending their sounds, achieving accurate intonation, and sharing approaches to technical problems. Sufficient rehearsal time for new works needs to be available; this may include discussions with composers.⁸

Current concert rituals enact the myth of the autocratic conductor. Could orchestra members with prominent solo roles for a particular concert enter the stage with the conductor? Alternatively, could all musicians, including the conductor, enter the stage together, to show mutual responsibility for the performance? Bows, too, imply an inequitable division of labor. How often have we witnessed an enthusiastic ovation, a responsive conductor, and a deadpan orchestra, with the musicians rearranging music and muttering asides? Rather than having the conductor stage-manage the bows, all the musicians could face forward, collectively receiving the audience's appreciation, much as actors and dancers do.⁹ A string section could together take a "solo bow" for achieving a particularly fine blended sound that evening.

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Current marketing methods also reflect the myth of the autocratic, charismatic conductor. Promotions for the new season often feature portraits of the maestro, portraits of the guest artists, and one long shot of the orchestra. To reflect the orchestra's mutuality, ads for upcoming concerts could feature musicians as prominently as the conductor. Wouldn't it be remarkable if the coming of a new second bassoon player was celebrated with press releases and advertising fanfare? The myth of mutual responsiveness can feed our imaginations in so many ways.

Just as we often find happiness not by looking for it, but by doing something else, so by focusing on mutual responsiveness, the orchestra is likely to achieve more of the diffusion of power and control sought by critics of the autocratic conductor myth. We should not fixate on equality defined as equal input or

“Instead of aiming at equal control, we should envision a workplace in which all can learn, all can contribute to others’ learning, and all can flourish.”

equal control. So little of life is lived like that. We constantly experience inequalities of strength, health, knowledge, energy, intellectual and physical capacity. As adults our relationships are fluid, alternating between authority and subordination. Instead of aiming at equal control, we should envision a workplace in which all can learn, all can contribute to others’ learning, and all can flourish. That vision by itself eliminates persisting one-way hierarchical relations.

We say nothing about how job descriptions for executive director, the board chair, or the music director should be rewritten. We say nothing about provisions in union contracts, except to note how much of the language therein developed in response to and as further calcification of the ossified autocratic conductor myth.¹⁰ Much needs to be undone; much needs to be done. First, however, we need a vision of what we want, an understanding of the myths and metaphors which can feed us.

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Notes

¹ The conductor paradigm is historically masculine. It would be misleading to use gender-inclusive language in referring to this history. In this paper we do employ gender-inclusive language when discussing conductors in contemporary contexts.

² “You have three conductors,” one old-timer told a new Boston Symphony second violinist, “your section leader, the concertmaster, and the conductor. You watch them all!”

³ We do not deny the wisdom of delegating the conductor’s authority. For example, if a certain musician plays consistently sharp (or flat or long), colleagues are reluctant to comment and often will be met with hostility when they do. The situation develops into a contest of wills and section leaders are sometimes powerless to oppose members of their own sections or other principal players. “If there is a problem, let the conductor fix it.”

Yet no conductor can correct every subtlety. An important component of mutual responsiveness is an openness to collegial interaction and suggestion. The section leaders, taken as a whole, represent natural candidates for an additional tier of responsibility and authority. Some principals run excellent sections; others, regrettably, play their solos and leave the rest to the conductor. This aspect of orchestral relations deserves further investigation.

⁴ Seymour and Robert Levine identify the four musicians’ equality as “the myth at the core of the string quartet” (17). In his study on satisfaction in various jobs and professions, J. Richard Hackman found string quartet members at the top of the rating scale for “general satisfaction” and “satisfaction with growth opportunities” (4-5).

In the functional reality of string quartets, however, the first violinist is often *primus inter pares*, first among equals.

⁵ The following articles in *Harmony* are particularly germane: “The Uniqueness and Commonality of American Symphony Orchestra Organizations,” by Paul R. Judy (issue 1); Barbara Pollack’s “Interview with a Music Director: Marin Alsop” (issue 2); “Pure Gold: The Fleischmann-Lipman-Morris Debate of 1987-89” (issue 2); Robert Freeman’s “On the Future of America’s Orchestras” (issue 3); and Paul Judy’s interview with Pierre Boulez (issue 3).

The Evolution of the Symphony Orchestra, by the Wheatland Foundation, and the American Symphony Orchestra League’s *Americanizing The American Orchestra* are also rich sources of suggestions. Additionally, we should plumb the collective wisdom of orchestral musicians and conductors.

⁶ This is commonplace in other professions. Physicians, lawyers, and social workers must participate in continuing education to maintain their licenses.

- ⁷ The St. Louis Symphony has developed an imaginative response to such needs. Members of the orchestra earn points for solo performances, chamber music, and service in the city's public schools. These points are redeemable for additional paid vacation weeks.
- ⁸ The history of union-management relations as adversarial has had the effect of reinforcing the autocratic conductor myth. While this approach served well to overcome abusive treatment of musicians in the past, it is not conducive to fostering responsiveness. We should learn from models of participative management in other industries, where union-management relations have been transformed.
- ⁹ Orchestras as far apart as Detroit, Spokane, and Tasmania have adopted this practice.
- ¹⁰ The education of conductors and orchestral musicians merits further study. Musicians join professional orchestras with higher levels of musical knowledge and understanding than they did in the past. In light of this, we would expect musicians' authority and responsibilities in the orchestra to merit adjustment.

Such a study would investigate the implications of increasing professionalism as it affects many aspects of the orchestral workplace, including artistic decision making and the role of unionization.

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... intellectually, the conductor must have a clear conception of a work; of the music itself, its background, its harmonic resonances, which change from one period to another, its constant factors, and the reasons for its durability. [A] mere exterior dramatization, by means of a more or less appropriate miming will give no account of any style, any emotion, any form; instead of mediating between the work and the listener, such miming simply substitutes a vulgar byproduct [slurring] the work's intelligibility and comprehension.

... there is inevitably a 'magic' element in the relationship that must be established between a work and its performers through the agency of the conductor/medium. ...

Pierre Boulez
Orientalism, pp. 114-115

... the principle of unification ... has to be respected. It is not a question of authority ... but of unifying a certain number of personalities by means of a central personality. If that person doesn't do his job, the musicians will resent it. I'm not saying they always need to be led by the nose, like horses; indeed, they often play chamber music, where there isn't a conductor at all, and they themselves take the initiative. ... But in ensemble playing, you have to make sure the bowing coincides, and that the dynamics, balance, and intonation all agree. In short, there has to be someone who hears all that, and who gives clear directives to the ensemble.

Pierre Boulez
Conversations with Boulez, p.94

The best orchestras in the U.S. and abroad include the Berlin Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the San Francisco Symphony. The orchestra has a unique sound, largely due to the fact that it has only had seven conductors since its establishment. With a collection of nearly 1,000 recordings, it's easy to see why this orchestra takes its position at the top. Daniele Gatti assumed the role of chief conductor for the 2016-17 season. He succeeded Mariss Jansons, who was the chief conductor at the time of this ranking. A description of the symphony orchestra's activity, with emphasis upon German orchestras (Kulturorchester), as dominators on the classical symphony orchestras' market. Assuming that, the symphony orchestra is a cultural service providing organization, and a living organism, in constant interaction with the environment, being subject to internal and external pressures, which are the characteristics of their current management in order to maximize the satisfaction of all its stakeholders? These factors may include local traditions and attitudes toward the regional orchestras, the music selection and marketing of the performances, or the presence of a well-known guest conductor or guest musicians." (Toma and Meads, 2007). Theoretically, one could say that the symphony, as a form, reached its ultimate possibilities with Mahler – certainly Mahler thought so! – but in fact we know that major symphonic works of real significance continued to be written for another thirty-five years. There are those who consider these latter-day symphonies epigonic, and history may well prove them right; but one cannot simply dismiss such symphonic masterpieces as have come from Sibelius, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Hindemith, Schoenberg, Copland, Stravinsky, Schuman, Bartok. Toward a vision of mutual responsiveness: remythologizing the symphony orchestra. Article. Jan 1997. M. Fischer. I. Jackson. View. Labor relations in basketball: The lockout of 1998-99.