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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GESTURAL VOCABULARY FOR CHORAL
CONDUCTORS BASED ON THE MOVEMENT THEORY OF RUDOLF LABAN**

by

Lisa Adalade Billingham

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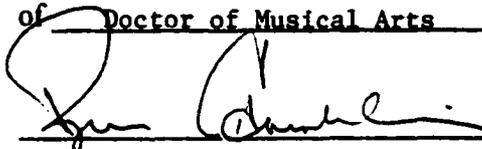
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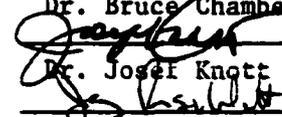
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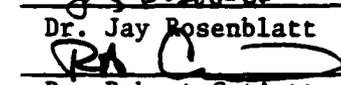
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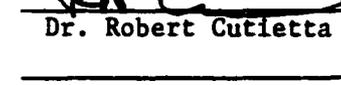
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to create a conductor's gestural vocabulary that can be used to demonstrate stylistic elements in choral music. Specifically, the study assigned Laban Movement Theory elements of Effort and Body to specific choral music examples that demonstrate differences in articulation, rhythm and phrase shape. This study explored Laban Movement Theory and Bartenieff Fundamentals as they relate to body movement and application to the conducting gesture.

Gestures were designed following musical analysis and subsequent study with Janice Meaden, an internationally recognized movement instructor and certified LMA/Bartenieff Movement Analyst. These gestures were based on Rudolf Laban's Eight Effort Elements in Combination (float, wring, glide, press, flick, dab, slash and punch). Modifications to the gestures were based from ongoing feedback from a college level choir.

At the conclusion of the study, all gestures were evaluated in terms of their ability to communicate the desired response. Six of the eight designed gestures were deemed to be successful, with two needing further modification. Implications for teaching choral conducting as well as conducting choirs are drawn. Conclusions drawn from the study support the application of Laban Movement Theory to the conducting gesture as an useful tool for creating expressive conducting gestures.

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study was to develop a gestural conducting vocabulary that can be applied to literature of several style periods, which may in turn be added to a curriculum for young conductors. These gestures, designed from Laban Movement Theory principles, exemplify the specific musical elements of the representative works from the Classical, Romantic and Twentieth-century style periods.

Rudolf Laban's early work in developing his Movement Theory revolved around the premise that all movements have a purpose and can be broken down into pockets of physical and emotional memory. This premise is applicable to conductors, who draw from movement and its implied meaning to express music. Developing a gestural system that describes not only the movement but the inner intent of selected pieces of music for conductors is the backbone of this study.

Several dissertations on Laban Movement Theory have focused on conducting by implementing it to test the rhythmic accuracy in high school ensembles (Jordan, 1986). Another study of Laban and Non-Laban based instruction has been compared pedagogically in the high school choral rehearsal (Holt, 1991). Conductors (college students and professionals) have also been videotaped and analyzed by Laban-Certified Movement Analysts to isolate the Laban principles incorporated in specific conductors' gestures (Hibbard, 1994, Bengel, 1996), but no study has been done in which a gestural vocabulary has been constructed for stylistic use.

This study began with a stylistic and theoretical analysis of the three literature selections in order to gain an understanding of form and style. These analyses aided in

the development of the expressive gestures needed to convey the style of the literature. The gestures created were demonstrated and used in rehearsal with the Recital Choir at the University of Arizona. The choir was given a written survey at regular intervals throughout the study. This allowed for modifications to be made during the rehearsal process in several intervals.

CHAPTER ONE:
TEXTBOOKS ON CONDUCTING AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Textbooks on Conducting

The preponderance of conducting textbooks used by major universities for undergraduate conducting classes do not provide a pedagogical approach for the development of an artistic expressive gestural vocabulary through any basic body movement system. These conducting textbooks contain pragmatic and fundamental concepts of practicing basic conducting patterns and the means by which they may be technically executed. Other topics included in these textbooks are: conducting releases, score study, conductor posture, and rehearsal techniques.

Elizabeth Green, in *The Modern Conductor*, devotes a single chapter on active and passive gestures. The active gestures are defined as legato, staccato, tenuto and the gesture of syncopation, while the passive gestures are considered dead gestures and preparatory beats.¹

Basic Techniques of Conducting by Kenneth H. Phillips is a descriptive conducting textbook that approaches conducting pedagogy with few descriptive models for expressive conducting gestures. The only mention of practicing anything stylistic in Phillips' book is to practice mime, and "eyebrow sit-ups" for facial expression.² The

¹ Elizabeth A. H. Green, *The Modern Conductor*, 8th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996), 62.

² Kenneth H. Phillips, *Basic Techniques of Conducting*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 168.

extent of practice applied here is very fundamental as it pertains to gesture. The text has a concrete design, but lacks the application of expressive gestures as fundamental to beginning conducting practice.

Another text frequently used in the choral classroom is *Conducting Choral Music* by Robert Garretson. This is an all-encompassing text for the choral music education and conducting student that explores conducting, diction, vocal health, the singing voice and musical style. The section devoted to developing conducting skills gives brief, but specific, exercises for the beginning conductor. Meter, subdivision, dynamics, cueing, changing planes and style of beat (legato, staccato, portato and marcato) are the mainstay of the patterns suggested for practice. One of Garretson's few exercises that apply to expressive conducting is creating a legato gesture by imagining resistance. "Pretending to move your hand through a pool of water will often produce the desired feeling."³ Another applicable strength of this text is the inclusion of a time period description that identifies the conducting style of the compositional masters of each period (for example, discussing tactus in the Renaissance period). Although this does not describe how to extract style from an ensemble through the use of gesture, it does give students generalized information for the style that is useful for historically accurate performance practice.

Movement training for conductors is an integral part of the rehearsal process. In his text *Choral Directing*, Wilhelm Ehmann states that choral singing is a way of

³ Robert L. Garretson, *Conducting Choral Music*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998), 38.

dancing in place, and that "this concept of 'inner dancing' should continually be kept alive by the director as he directs his choir."⁴ Ehmann's philosophy of rehearsing choral music is based on movement activities for the conductor and the singer. Participating in outdoor activities such as hiking and sports can assist in the rhythmic acuity of the ensemble and the conductor. "If such activities are not feasible, then one must limit oneself to activities which can be incorporated into every choral rehearsal."⁵ Although Ehmann does not relate these motions to a specific movement theory, activities are outlined in great detail as to which hand motions are encouraged to teach stylistic phrasing in the choral rehearsal. "In accordance with the ideal traditional leader, the choir director should regard himself as a precentor or leading dancer who, as the best performer in his group, emerges from the group to give direction and leadership."⁶

The aforementioned texts do not address a specified movement training process or theory as a way to develop a gesture system for conductors. James Jordan, a student of Ehmann, has continued to explore the development of the conductor through the importance of movement training. He suggests Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) as a way to explore the movements for conductor training in his textbook *Evoking Sound*. Jordan's is the only current conducting text that institutes Laban principles. He

⁴ Wilhelm Ehmann, *Choral Directing* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publications, 1968), 78.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 112.

incorporates Laban as a tool for the beginning conductor, both as a philosophical premise and a process to involve the whole body in the development of gesture.

Jordan devotes an entire chapter to *Movement Potential and Conducting*, in which he defines LMA and applies Laban's theory. He also gives examples of Effort Elements in Combination (Laban's combination of inner intent and outward physical movement) that people experience in everyday life, and allows spaces for the individual reader to add to the list. These experiences assist conductors in finding a way to relate to Laban's principles of movement: "Whether one is beginning one's study of conducting or has considerable experience conducting, the movement categorizations of Laban can be of great assistance in solving several issues."⁷

Review of Literature

Several dissertations on Laban Movement Theory have focused on conducting. An initial dissertation to apply Laban Movement Theory to conducting was implemented to test the rhythmic accuracy in high school ensembles by James Jordan in 1986.⁸ Jordan explored the concept of rhythm in relation to Laban's theories of Effort Elements. Laban's concepts of Effort, Weight, Time and Flow can be combined to form expressions of movement. The study examined the interactions of Effort Elements in Weight and Flow, Time and Space (known as dyads), and all Effort

⁷ James M. Jordan, *Evoking Sound Fundamentals of Choral Conducting and Rehearsing* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 1996), 42.

⁸ James M. Jordan, "The Effects of Informal Movement Instruction derived from the Theories of Rudolf Van Laban upon the Rhythm Performance and Discrimination of High School Students" (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1986).

Elements in Combination to promote rhythmic accuracy of high school students with varying levels of aptitude. Jordan proposed:

Rhythm then becomes the experiences of body tension that provide points of reference that we commonly refer to as meter. Rhythm, experienced and discussed in those terms, could possibly assist and improve discrimination among and between various rhythms and rhythm modes in audiation and performance.⁹

Jordan found that informal instruction in rhythm performance using Laban's Effort Elements in Combination, not in dyad structure, was successful in raising the rhythmic ability level of students.

Another study of Laban and Non-Laban based instruction has been compared through varying pedagogical approaches in the high school choral rehearsal.¹⁰ Michelle Holt compared the effect of Laban instruction and non-verbal instruction on the ability of high school choral ensembles with low and high musical aptitude to perform selections from Béla Bartók's *Four Slovak Songs*. Students were given portions of the MAP (Musical Aptitude Profile) to determine ability levels and then were randomly split (high and low ability) to participate in one of the two ensembles. Group I received verbal instruction on basic technique and vowel production while Group II participated in movement activities based on Laban Effort Elements and received additional information on the basics of Laban Movement Theory.¹¹ Each

⁹ Ibid., 62.

¹⁰ Michele Menard Holt, "The Application to Conducting and Choral Rehearsal Pedagogy of Laban Effort/Shape and its Comparative Effect upon Style in Choral Performance (Conducting Pedagogy)" (DMA diss., University of Hartford, 1992).

¹¹ Ibid., 52.

ensemble was videotaped to be played back and judged by three conductors for five performance criteria (Tone Quality, Intonation, Rhythmic Accuracy, Balance and Blend, and Expression). Her conclusions, based upon adjudicator comments, revealed that, "Group II scores were higher to a greater extent on the rating scale suggesting that the use of Laban instruction improved the performance capabilities of Group II."¹²

Conductors (college students and professors) have also been videotaped and analyzed by Laban-Certified Movement Analysts to isolate the Laban principles incorporated in specific conductor's gestures. Conducting students were evaluated on their ability to communicate dynamics, articulation and tempo in Stephen Miller's 1988 study.¹³

The premise for Miller's research is the generalized understanding that the performance result of school ensembles is often hindered due to the lack of a mastery of gestures that convey expression. Miller states: "The traditional approach to teaching conducting tends to further develop those who already possess an innate or pre-learned repertoire of gestural communication skills and who are fairly uninhibited in their use of body movement as a means of expression."¹⁴ The concept of training conducting students in Laban Movement Theory was observed at two conducting classes at two separate universities; one was treated as a control group, the other was given

¹² Ibid., 64.

¹³ Stephen W. A. Miller, "The Effect of Laban Movement on the Ability of Student Conductors to Communicate through Gesture" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1988).

¹⁴ Ibid., 9.

instruction in Laban Movement Theory. Conclusions by Miller were inconclusive due to the low number of subjects involved in the project.

Therees Hibbard extensively reviewed literature on LMA, and then observed a master teacher who often incorporates movement in the choral rehearsal. "[The conductor's] use of movement enables him to bring the singers quickly into an active, energized mode of music-making by involving their physical, visual, aural, and often tactile senses in the learning process. It gives rehearsals an efficient pacing by allowing correction and reinforcement of certain aspects of vocal production or musical expression without stopping the flow of the rehearsal."¹⁵ Movements made by the conductor in rehearsal were labeled for style and the performance response produced by the ensemble.

Ramona Wis proposes a similar need for further research following her dissertation on the relationship of gesture and movement as physical metaphor.¹⁶ Her hypothesis was that, in order to facilitate learning, gestures and movement could enhance the musical experience. Two conductors were observed, Timothy Haskett of Lake Forest High School in Illinois, and Rodney Eichenberger of Florida State University. Haskett and Eichenberger were nominated as possible conductors for Wis'

¹⁵ Therees Tkach Hibbard, "The Use of Movement as an Instructional Technique in Choral Rehearsals" (DMA diss., University of Oregon, 1994), 260.

¹⁶ Ramona M. Wis, "Gesture and Body Movement as Physical Metaphor to Facilitate Learning and the Enhance Musical Experience in the Choral Rehearsal" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1993).

study by fellow Illinois music teachers for observation, as they routinely incorporate movement in rehearsal.

Wis interviewed and observed both conductors and noted specific hand gestures and motions that not only the conductors used in rehearsal, but what ensemble singers were encouraged to do for representative movements. Wis provides an extensive review of literature on movement and music education, and she has the significant finding that movement in the classroom has been traditionally limited to the elementary classroom. Wis concludes:

The research from this study has important implications for conducting. Students of conducting, especially those in teacher training programs, should be acquainted with the effectiveness of a movement-based teaching pedagogy and should be encouraged to experiment with their own conducting gestures so that they can develop from a pattern- and beat-only focus to a wider vocabulary that will be a more effective physical metaphor for what is inherent in the music. Broadening the concept of conducting gesture and gesture as a singer's tool will inevitably go hand-in-hand, and can do much to develop the expressive capabilities of both conductor and singer. Studies are needed which explore the relationship between conducting gesture and musical gesture—between the quality of the conductor's gesture and the qualities embodied in the music.¹⁷

LMA was applied to the observation of two collegiate-level conductors (one instrumental and one choral) in rehearsal by Timothy Bengel's study in 1996. These rehearsals were then reviewed by two panels of three collegiate-level performers, who identified movements of peak expression by the conductors. LMA Analysts then

¹⁷ Ibid., 252.

identified a movement profile for each conductor, and they labeled isolated conducting gestures in the LMA system.¹⁸ Bengé found that effective conducting had a correlation to their movement abilities. He suggested that, "Eventually, a complete conducting language could be defined based on a correlation between performers' perception of the musical message and the expressive movement components utilized by the conductor."¹⁹ This gives the impetus for the study of Laban and the creation of a vocabulary based on his Movement Theory.

Studies by Wis and Bengé indicate a need for, and support the concept of, a study focusing on the development of a conducting vocabulary that is constructed on Laban Movement Theory. Bengé's study in particular indicates that a higher level of expression can be achieved by conductors who apply Laban Movement Theory to their training. This gives the author justification for proceeding with a project to incorporate Laban Movement Theory training as a vehicle for designing a vocabulary that may be used for expression in gesture.

¹⁸ Timothy John Bengé, "Movements Utilized by Conductors in the Stimulation of Expression and Musicianship" (DMA diss., University of Southern California, 1996).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

CHAPTER TWO: LABAN BIOGRAPHY

Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) spent the majority of his life observing styles of human movement (everyday actions such as walking, eating). Laban, the son of an Austro-Hungarian military officer, traveled extensively as a child and "Laban became interested in the movement profile of various cultures including the American Indians, the natives of Africa, peoples of the Near East, and the Chinese."²⁰ It was not only dance that inspired Laban to observe human movement; his fascination grew from exposure to numerous rituals in his travels throughout Europe. Laban observed military displays of ceremony through movement in musters, parades and funerals; the observation of dervish dancing²¹ (or dagger dancing) intrigued Laban. As the precursor to battle, dervish dancing was a physical outlet to practice for incumbent combat. These men's bodies would often get into a state where they could drive needles and nails through their cheeks, chest and arms, and have no blood-loss or pain. These states were created not through physical movement alone, but by the addition of a focused mental state.

²⁰ Michele Menard Holt, "The Application to Conducting and Choral Rehearsal Pedagogy of Laban Effort/Shape and its Comparative Effect upon Style in Choral Performance (Conducting Pedagogy)" (DMA diss., University of Hartford, 1992), 29.

²¹ Dervish dancing is a prayer performed by Moslem lay-brothers who offer their prayers in a continuous spinning of the body.

The extended movements were out of control and intense concurrently. "It is impossible of course, to describe the essence of the movements. But sometimes one can experience the same sort of tremendous impulse to move, for example, in a fight, in danger, in ecstasy and in passion; in short, in times of excessive emotion."²² These early experiences convinced Laban, in lieu of engaging in battle or self-mutilation, that experimentation with these combined movements could create inspiring and life-long challenges through the marriage of the mystical and the physical. "The thought of the magic in dance held fast in my mind and my decision to give my life to the arts became irrevocable."²³

As a student, Laban went to Paris in 1900 to study art and architecture, but he was soon uninspired by studying these arts in isolation. Laban's father expected him to follow in his footsteps as a military officer, consequently, this forced Laban to assume a posture of independence from his family. To financially support himself, Laban took odd jobs as a sketch artist, actor and coordinator for small revue shows. As a result of these jobs, the genesis for a dance theater began in Paris. His earlier studies in architecture inspired Laban to design sketches for his ultimate performance space, a theater in the round for dancers.

Laban settled in Munich from 1908 to 1914, where he designed movement activities and festivals. During this time (1910) he also developed his concept of the

²² Rudolf Laban, *A Life for Dance*, translated and annotated by Lisa Ullman (London: MacDonald and Evans Limited, 1975), 51.

²³ Rudolf Laban, *A Life for Dance*, 56.

movement choir throughout Germany. These choirs were a large body of people with various levels of training that ranged from amateur to professional dancers. Laban would choreograph dance movements for the professional dancers and invite the amateur to draw from the repetitive movements they performed at work (industrial or otherwise) to create a *movement choir*. The focus on these blocks of individuals was to "play" and create an experience in the joy of movement.

Laban established his first school 1910, where dancers would be liberated from the limited pairing of music and dance. Students were encouraged to explore movement in a less-confining environment. Classes were held outdoors, where students were free from the walls of a studio or hall. Between 1911-1914, workshops, schools, and performances were held in Munich in the winter and Ascona, Switzerland in the summer. The festivals he coordinated in Ascona continued his work with movement choirs, and observers of these festival performances were often invited to join in as participants. Improvisation by his students led to his groundbreaking concepts of spatial harmonies of dance. Laban believed that expression in dance was formed by the "rhythm of bodily movement and its spatial and dynamic components."²⁴ Studying these aspects of movement within a framework isolated from the confines of musical structure allowed for a freedom of expressivity. Mary Wigman, a student of Jacques-Dalcroze, who later became one of Laban's most famous students, integrated his early explorations with his concepts of drumming accompaniment, musical

²⁴ Vera Maletic, *Body Space Expression* (New York: Mouten de Groyter, 1987), 6.

harmony, set design, costumes and the spoken word. Laban remained in Zürich during World War I and began his manuscript for *Die Welt des Tänzers (The Dancer's World)* which was published in 1920. Here Laban describes his position that there was uniformity to human movement patterns, particularly those of dancers. This text was developmental; Laban realized less than ten years later that some of his ideas in *Die Welt des Tänzers* were incomplete. Laban's level of creative drive and development at this time made *Die Welt des Tänzers* a starting point, but not the definitive book on Laban Movement Theory.

Laban's work was soon recognized throughout Europe, and he received invitations to choreograph productions. "Laban was called to the National Theatre in Mannheim to re-establish ballet and movement by the presentation of his own productions."²⁵ Dance schools in Europe were being run by Laban's students and his reputation flourished. Laban's Choreographic Institute was moved to Berlin, from Würzburg in 1926; in 1929, he directed a movement choir of five hundred participants for a Mannheim Festival. Concurrently, Laban relocated his school from Berlin to the Volkswageschule in Essen. This was a center for the study of all art forms; Kurt Jooss and Sigrid Leeder were involved in the dance department at the Volkswageschule. It was at the school in Essen that certification and testing for all Laban students began, and he would execute the rigorous examinations himself. Laban returned to Berlin in

²⁵ Mark Thornton, "Laban International Courses Website" [taken from *A Movement Perspective of Rudolf Laban*, no longer in print] < <http://freespace.virgin.net/mark.thornton/abt1bn.htm> > last updated March 2, 2001.

1930 to assume the directorship of the Allied State Theatres. He published *Ein Leben für den Tanz (A Life for Dance)* in 1935.

Laban had been offered (and renewed) several six-month contracts as the Director of the Deutsche Tanzbühne beginning in 1934. His main responsibilities were to choreograph and organize performances of German dance. He would report to Goebbels (one of Hitler's top aides) and was required to promote dancers in roles according to Hitler's labels. The Nazi position on men and women's roles in dancing (Hitler saw men as folk dancers) were damaging to Laban's integration of men and women as equals in the movement choir, making this creation of Laban's obsolete in Germany.

Laban had several major responsibilities during the 1936 Olympics; choreographing and coordinating the opening performance of the Olympics, and the sponsorship of an International Dance Competition. Laban was obliged to do as Hitler commanded, as it was common knowledge at the time that to ignore directives would result in serious consequences. The dress rehearsal of *Tauwind*, the prologue to the opening ceremony, brought disaster. *Tauwind* was based on the premise of "harmony between man and nature."²⁶ Music from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was chosen to accompany the choreography; however, it had to be replaced with a work by Hans Claus Langer, as the Beethoven was being used in the opening ceremony. The audience in the open-air theater was amazed by the dress rehearsal performance. Hitler and

²⁶ Valerie Preston-Dunlop, *Rudolf Laban: An Extraordinary Life* (London: Dance Books Ltd., 1998).

Goebbels attended, yet did not share the audience's enthusiasm. An entry in

Goebbels diary the following day:

Rehearsal of dance work; freely based on Nietzsche, a bad, contrived and affected piece. I forbid a great deal. It is so intellectual. I do not like it. That is because it is dressed up in our clothes and has nothing whatever to do with us.²⁷

Goebbels cancelled the performance of *Tauwind* at the Opening Ceremony, and executed a mechanism by which all publicity regarding the performance was halted.

The International Dance Competition, held during the Olympics, was disappointing, as some choreographers from England, France, America, Sweden and Russia did not send participants due to the political climate.²⁸

As chairman of the organisation [*sic*], Laban was given his instructions: a German group must win. He was appalled. He could have gone along with it, but decided to act independently. The documentation records how he sent Snell off frantically in a taxi to buy prizes for every competitor. His decision was that all should win equally. Wigman [a prior student of Laban] was dismayed, for her performance had received an enthusiastic ovation. Possibly unaware of Laban's dilemma, she blamed him again. Her diary records her anger that after all her efforts: "The competition was a farce."²⁹

Following the dismissal of Laban from the 1936 Olympics, the authorities searched for ways to banish him. His ties to freemasonry were used to justify his dismissal, and Laban received notification that all Freemasons were considered

²⁷ Ibid., 196.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 197.

outcasts. "Laban and all those associated with him were now in mortal danger."³⁰

As Laban saw this as a threat to his existence, his challenge was to find a way out of the country. An invitation was extended to Laban, asking him to lecture at the International Congress on Aesthetics in Paris; he seized this opportunity to flee the country.

Three of Laban's students, Kurt Jooss, Sigrid Leeder and Lisa Ullman had established a school in Dartington Hall, England; he was invited to join them in 1938. As Laban had obtained German citizenship in 1935, he was allowed in England as a guest lecturer, but was unable to work as a teacher in an official position.³¹ He gave unofficial lectures that Lisa Ullman arranged for him and lived in constant fear of deportation. Word of his work spread, and to relieve any tensions with the government, he would sometimes allow Ullman to give lectures on his behalf. Later in life he was regarded as a scholar and was allowed to give lectures openly. He was dependent on others for mobility and relied on "word of mouth" to promote his work. A series of movement courses for teachers was offered by Laban from 1940-1946, and in 1946 Laban made the final move of his life to Manchester. Ullman had opened the Art of Movement Studio, which later became the center for educational dance in England. Laban's book *Modern Educational Dance* was created in 1948 through his work in Ullman's studio.

³⁰ Ibid., 199.

³¹ Ibid.

F. C. Lawrence, an industrialist, invited Laban to apply his movement notation and theory to industry, analyzing worker motion efficiency in factory situations in London. He was asked to document worker motions, so that industrial work could be adapted to work that was more productive.³² His experiences with Lawrence led to *Effort* (1947), on which Lawrence and Laban collaborated as a source for successful industrial movement. The success of the Lawrence/Laban collaboration resulted in Laban's Theories being expanded into various fields. Another colleague and student, Warren Lamb, was instrumental in exploring the application of movement analysis to the field of psychiatry. Later in life, Laban Movement Analysis (known as LMA) was applied to work in various fields in England and abroad.

Laban's desire to define personal identity and expression through movement is still active today. Laban's work was known in Europe, but through the efforts of two of Laban's students (Irmgard Bartenieff and Anne Hutchinson), his work was continued in *Effort/Shape* and *Labanotation* in the United States. To this day, The Dance Notation Bureau at The Ohio State University and the Laban Institute of Movement Studies in New York are two of the more well-known institutes for Laban Training in the United States. The Laban Centre for Movement and Dance (formerly The Laban Art Center) in England, was established as an educational trust for the public to access Laban's collection of charts, manuscripts and models is a source for Laban's writings and sketches.

³² Worker motions were also adapted for efficiency by creating movement patterns that were also possible by women who were a core of the industrial work force at the time.

CHAPTER THREE:
LABANOTATION, LABAN MOVEMENT THEORY AND BARTENIEFF
FUNDAMENTALS

Labanotation³³

Notation was vital for Laban to establish an accurate descriptor of his movement system. Movement, to Laban, was a series of motions that a body passed through – there were no set positions, but a progression of movement *through* movement. Laban was focused on devising a notational system that would depict the notation of *motions*, not positions (as could be done with traditional dance).

Laban spent the first half of his career developing his notational system. Design of the notational system flourished with the assistance of several of his students, Sigrid Leeder, Kurt Jooss, Dussia Bereska and Albrecht Knust in 1926,³⁴ and they assisted Laban in concerns from their individual perspectives as graphic artist, musician, dancer and notator, respectively. The problem for the final notation system was the proportion of timing. Laban devised signs that would encompass movement in three-dimensional terminology.

Each sign was like a letter, which clustered together to make "words"; but the flow of movement was not amenable to this mode of analysis. It was Jooss, apparently, who suggested that

³³ As this study is based in the United States, the term Labanotation is used to refer to Laban's notational system.

³⁴ Valerie Preston-Dunlop, *Rudolf Laban: An Extraordinary Life* (London: Dance Books Ltd., 1998).

they should try opening out the matrix from a cross with four spaces for signs, to lines with four columns for signs.³⁵

These columns were easy to pair with a musical score, enabling the brevity or elongation of a movement in proportionate time with the printed music.

Laban was encouraged to publish his system as other choreographers at the time were doing so as well. Subsequently, it was difficult for Laban to choose an appropriate label for his system: "It was a *Bewegungsschrift*, a script of movement, but the name *Kinetographie* was decided upon to distinguish it from Feuillet's eighteenth-century *chorégraphie*. The profession of dance notator was the new concept and written dance the new domain."³⁶ It was apparent that Laban had studied (or at the very least been exposed to) Feuillet's *chorégraphie* in Paris. The unique factors Laban included (describing movement through to the next movement), isolated his system from prior methods of choreographic notation.

American specialists in *Kinetographie Laban* were later trained by Anne Hutchinson. Hutchinson, a student of Laban during his United Kingdom days, brought his ideas to the United States in the 1930s.³⁷ She eventually coined the phrase *Labanotation* to describe his notation system. Laban was often in disagreement with the changes Hutchinson had made³⁸ to Laban Movement Theory notation (or *Kinetographie Laban*). Hutchinson eventually created a textbook on *Labanotation* that

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 131-2.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 133.

³⁷ Hutchinson was anxious to adapt Laban's notational system and add some of her own insights into her teaching.

³⁸ Laban was often in letter correspondence with Hutchinson.

is frequently used by the Laban Institute in New York and by other Laban teachers as a resource for understanding Laban's system.

Choreutics

Laban states in *Choreutics* "Choreosophia...is the nearest term I have discovered with which to express the essential ideas of this book."³⁹ It is general knowledge, in certain circles, that the most often practiced concepts by Pythagoras were from a mathematical standpoint. Laban was motivated to use his theorem related to the "mathematical underlying musical scales."⁴⁰ Given Laban's definition, choreosophia has three divisions of knowledge: 1) choreography (writing circles), 2) choreology (logic, science of circles), and 3) choreutics (practical study of various forms of more or less harmonized movement). According to Laban:

Choreutics comprehends all kinds of bodily, emotional and mental movements and their notation. The choreutic synthesis embraces the various applications of movement to work, education and art, as well as to regenerative processes in the widest sense.⁴¹

³⁹ Rudolf Laban, *The Language of Movement: A Guidebook to Choreutics*, rev. Lisa Ullman. (Boston: Plays, Inc., 1974), vii.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

Effort Elements

Effort is the section of LMA that addresses the range of expression in movement. Laban's overall theory (see Figure 1) is comprised of four areas: Effort, Space, Shape and Body. The focus of this study is to develop gestures from the components of Effort and Body.

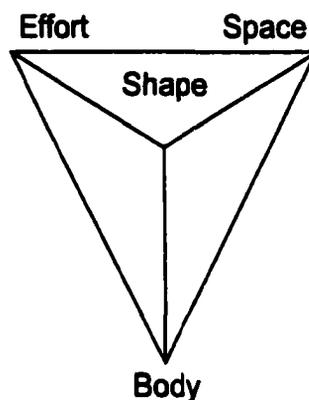


Figure 1. Laban Movement Theory

These four elements display the "manifestation of the mover's inner attitude toward the physical properties of weight, space, time and flow."⁴² Laban designed an Effort Grid to depict the four motion factors (see Figure 2), as "transitions from one exertion to another and the finesse of exertion quality through effort examples."⁴³

⁴² Ed Groff, "Laban Movement Analysis: An Historical, Philosophical and Theoretical Perspective" (MFA thesis, Connecticut College, 1990), 87.

⁴³ Ibid.

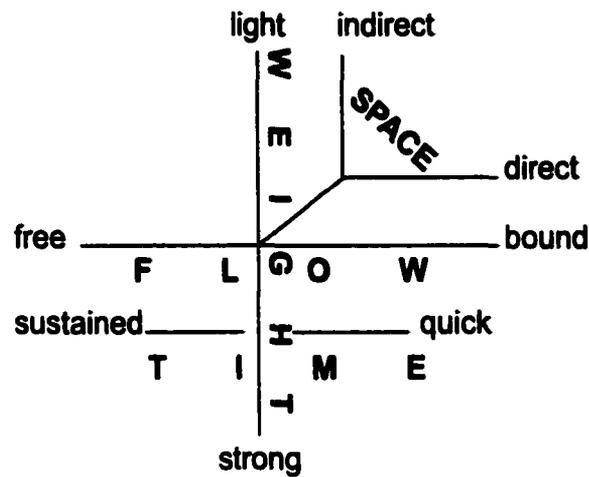


Figure 2. Effort Grid

Laban grouped the respective Effort Elements by classification of Indulging or Fighting/Condensing. Indulging (free flow, light weight, indirect space and sustained time) was defined by Laban as "going with" a motion factor, while a Fighting/Condensing motion (bound flow, strong weight, direct space and quick time) was "fighting against" a motion factor.⁴⁴

Of note is the concept that these four elements fall on a continuum of opposites. Each effort has a polar end to its inner quality. Flow effort is the "baseline variations in the quality of bodily tension"⁴⁵; it is the underlying element beneath all the others. Free flow allows the body to be care free, difficult to stop instantly. Bound flow is a sense of restrained energy that can be stopped at any time.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Worksheet Janice Meaden uses with her Integrated Movement Studies classes for Laban Study, printed in 1995.

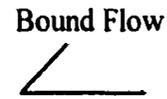


Figure 3. Free and Bound Flow

Weight is "the sensation of force or pressure exerted in a movement." Light weight has a delicate touch, while strong weight is forceful and actively uses body weight to make a motion/impact.

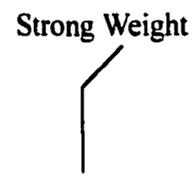
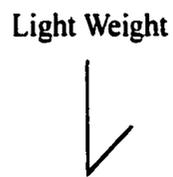
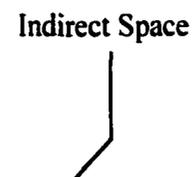


Figure 4. Light and Strong Weight

Space is differentiated in the quality of attention toward the environment as direct (to-the-point specific) or indirect (all-encompassing, taking everything into account).⁴⁶



⁴⁶ Janice Meaden, *Study Videotape Day Four* (Tucson, Arizona, January 18, 2001), videotape from private study.

Figure 5. Direct and Indirect Space

Time is "the attitude toward the duration of time in an action,"⁴⁷ either prolonging it through sustained time or indicating a sense of urgency, or quickness.

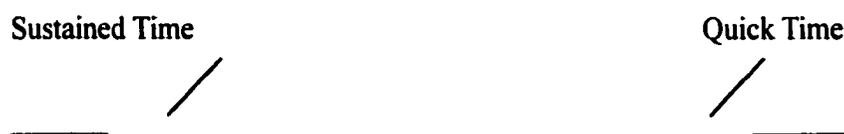


Figure 6. Sustained and Quick Time

"Laban recognized that movement as an ongoing process (flow) always involved a change of assertion of the weight of the bodies [*sic*] mass (weight) in relation to a spatial environment (space) occurring in a particular duration of time (time)."⁴⁸

Effort Elements in Combination

Effort Elements in Combination are often referred to as basic effort actions, as they form the foundation from which all inner intent qualities are based.⁴⁹ These eight effort elements in combination have been labeled float, wring, glide, press, flick, dab, slash and punch. Each of these elements contain a polarity combination of weight,

⁴⁷ Worksheet Janice Meaden uses with her Integrated Movement Studies classes for Laban Study, printed in 1995.

⁴⁸ Groff, 87.

⁴⁹ Valerie Preston-Dunlop, *Handbook for Dance in Education*, 2nd ed. (London: MacDonald and Evans, 1980), 61.

time and space. See Figure 7, Effort Elements in Combination, for the descriptive character of each element.

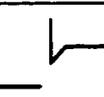
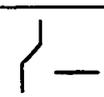
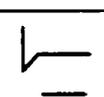
Basic Effort Actions	Qualities (Elements)	Labanotation
Float	Indirect (S) Light (W) Sustained (T)	
Punch	Direct (S) Strong (W) Quick (T)	
Glide	Direct (S) Light (W) Sustained (T)	
Slash	Indirect (S) Strong (W) Quick (T)	
Dab	Direct (S) Light (W) Quick (T)	
Wring	Indirect (S) Strong (W) Sustained (T)	
Flick	Indirect (S) Light (W) Quick (T)	
Press	Direct (S) Strong (W) Sustained (T)	

Figure 7. Effort Elements in Combination Chart

Study with Janice Meaden, LMA Analyst

In my study with Janice Meaden, she emphasized in her instruction that to incorporate these concepts into the body, one must be willing to let the imagination create an action that has inner intent. "You have to be willing to let go – to let all that happen,"⁵⁰ were her comments to help me move and think freely while trying to assist my development of the Effort Elements in Combination. The core of LMA is the awareness that you bring to the motion while it is being enacted. Through textbooks, articles and study the author has gleaned that effort elements are engendered through experience; all eight elements in combination have individual characteristics that can be applied to an inner intent. Through practice with imagery, individualized foci for practicing were developed.

Bartenieff Fundamentals

Irmgard Bartenieff

Irmgard Bartenieff (1900-1981) was trained in Germany during the 1920s in art, music and dance. Her dance studies eventually led her to work with Laban in 1925, and she was greatly influenced by her work with him in developing what would later be labeled *Bartenieff Fundamentals*. Bartenieff immigrated to the United States in the late 1930s and received training as a licensed physical therapist to support her family. She eventually took a position at a psychiatry day hospital affiliated with the Albert

⁵⁰ Janice Meaden, *Study Videotape Day Four* (Tucson, Arizona, January 18, 2001), videotape from private study.

Einstein Medical School,⁵¹ but later returned to study with Laban and his colleague Warren Lamb, where she refined her development in the areas of physical therapy, dance therapy and movement research. The development of her work stemmed from the application of LMA, specifically that concepts were best experienced in relation to one another; it "was never just the body, it was never just space or just rhythm."⁵² The genius in LMA was the ability to synthesize and then apply what was needed on an individual basis. Training in massage therapy⁵³ gave Bartenieff an added advantage over practicing therapists, in that she considered the whole body in the rehabilitation process, not just the limb or area of trauma affected. As Meaden points out:

She felt the physical therapists in her time were mechanically oriented toward two-phasic repetitive movement for isolated muscle strengthening and were not adequately using the connective possibilities of three-dimensional movement (particularly the rotary component) or the inner expressive life of the patient in the rehabilitation process.⁵⁴

Siegel, in "Profile: Irmgard Bartenieff" continues this thought: "She developed a method of movement training, called Bartenieff Fundamentals, which is her unique integration of principles of Laban movement analysis."⁵⁵ Bartenieff founded the first training program in effort-shape analysis in the United States in 1965. In her training with Laban, Bartenieff came to this conclusion: "Laban actually gave to people only

⁵¹ Marcia B. Siegel, "Profile: Irmgard Bartenieff," *The Kinesis Report News and Views of Nonverbal Communication* 2, no. 4 (Summer 1980): 2.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵³ Her understanding of body musculature and its potential for three-dimensional abilities.

⁵⁴ Peggy Hackney, Handout, *Making Connections Through Bartenieff Fundamentals*, 1995, 1.

⁵⁵ Siegel, "Profile: Irmgard Bartenieff," 2.

what they needed, and he did not form them as artists or dancers or teachers."⁵⁶

Laban's students over time adapted his main analysis theories to suit their own needs.

In an interview prior to her 80th birthday, Bartenieff relates to the contents of *Choreutics*, noting that there are "pearls" of wisdom included, but no thorough explanation. She further states:

You want pure Laban. That's nonsense. Laban threw out fantastic ideas; he had fantastic insights, but, if we just stay at that and do not understand further [that the application is an integral part of the process of Laban's work]...the only one that understands is Valerie Preston-Dunlop, who developed the "motif writing."⁵⁷

As a result, Bartenieff co-authored *Body Movement: Coping with the Environment*, with dancer Dori Lewis, wherein she describes Laban Movement Analysis.⁵⁸ She also promotes her Fundamentals in a brief appendix at the end of the text. This appendix expounds on LMA in the areas of effort and space flow. Bartenieff gives twelve simple exercises that indicate the beginnings of her own philosophy. Peggy Hackney, a Bartenieff student, has recently completed a text entitled *Total Body Integration Through Bartenieff Fundamentals*, that defines in great detail Bartenieff's concepts and work.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Ibid. Bartenieff felt that you had to be open to what he saw in you, and to absorb the information as he shared it with you.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 15.

⁵⁸ Irmgard Bartenieff with Dori Lewis. *Body Movement: Coping with the Environment*. (New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1980).

⁵⁹ Peggy Hackney, *Making Connections: Total Body Integration Through Bartenieff Fundamentals* (Australia: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1998).

Bartenieff Fundamentals

The life work of Irmgard Bartenieff culminated in the development of advanced LMA techniques in the area of Body Effort. "The Goal of Bartenieff Fundamentals is to facilitate a lively interplay of Inner Connectivity with Outer Expressivity to enrich life."⁶⁰



Figure 8. Bartenieff Fundamentals⁶¹

This goal differs from other philosophies of movement and movement therapy in that the final goal is not either end of the spectrum. It is the "interplay" between the actions of the body and the intent of the action that creates expressivity. Building a connection between the intent, action and outcome can be a difficult task if there are hindering qualities in body connectivity. LMA/Bartenieff Analysts are trained to isolate the patterning issues and difficulties with the body, and they train individuals to find the pathways to promote inner connectivity. These pathways are built in early child development, and in some cases are either mis-formed or never advanced. The

⁶⁰ Ibid., 34.

⁶¹ Ibid.

challenge for LMA/Bartenieff Analysts is to find exercises that will strengthen and, in some instances, aid in the construction of basic body patterns that were never actualized during the maturation process.

Bartenieff Fundamentals is an approach to basic body training that deals with patterning connections in the body according to principles of efficient movement functioning within a context which encourages personal expression and full psychophysical involvement.⁶²

The Fundamental Patterns of Total Body Connectivity

Hackney notes: "These Fundamental Patterns of Total Body Connectivity form the basis for our patterns of relationships and connection as we live our embodied lives."⁶³ Each element of connectivity is a basic level of movement that can be practiced in isolation, but is also related to the other patterns.



Figure 9. Breath Patterning

3. ⁶² Peggy Hackney, Handout, "Making Connections Through Bartenieff Fundamentals", 1995,

13. ⁶³ Hackney, *Making Connections: Total Body Integration Through Bartenieff Fundamentals*,

Breath Patterning relates to respiration, and is the basis of Laban's Flow Effort. "Flow is the river upon which the content of communication flows."⁶⁴ Bartenieff believed that, whether in teaching or therapy, breathing must be dealt with first, as healthy breathing patterns will support other work with the body.

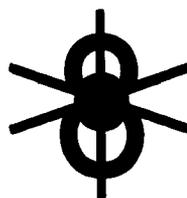


Figure 10. Core-Distal Connectivity

Core-Distal Connectivity is the awareness of one's edges of the body and the environment beyond with internal core support: the relationship between a limb to limb, limb to core, or ones' self to an outside environment.⁶⁵ In infant development, this occurs when the child begins to explore the distal edges of the body.

⁶⁴ Janice Meaden, *Study Videotape Day One* (Tucson, Arizona, January 15, 2001), videotape from private study.

⁶⁵ Janice Meaden and Peggy Hackney, *Bartenieff Fundamentals Laban Certification Program Handout*, "Patterns of Total Body Connectivity: Core to Distal Patterning," received January 15, 2001 during individual study with Janice Meaden...



Figure 11. Head-Tail Connectivity

Head-Tail Connectivity is associated with the spine and its support of the body. To establish this connectivity, experimentation with exercises in push and reach and pull are necessary to develop a sense of core support.

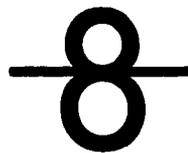


Figure 12. Upper-Lower Connectivity

Upper-Lower Connectivity constructs movement that will eventually promote organization of the whole body to perform skills with either the upper or lower portion of the body. This builds "grounding, strength; and intention through pushing into the earth."⁶⁶ A connection is made to the earth that also allows the upper body to reach or pull with the upper body.

⁶⁶ Peggy Hackney, Handout, *Making Connections Through Bartenieff Fundamentals*, 1995, 2.



Figure 13. Body-Half Connectivity

Body-Half Connectivity allows an action on one side of the body that is supported by the other half of the body. The passive side of the body remains stable and connected to the core. This allows for movement from hand to mouth, and supports the balance of development on both sides of the body.⁶⁷

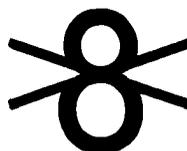


Figure 14. Cross-Lateral Connectivity

Cross-Lateral Connectivity organizes whole body movement by connection across the body (upper to lower, side to side) along inner diagonals. This develops the ability to perform three-dimensional movements such as spiraling and other complicated movements. The practical application of the Bartenieff Fundamentals lies

⁶⁷ Janice Meaden and Peggy Hackney, Bartenieff Fundamentals Laban Certification Program Handout, "Patterns of Total Body Connectivity: Body-Half Patterning," received January 15, 2001 during individual study with Janice Meaden. This will also develop the patterns for dominant/non-dominant sidedness in the brain.

in the relationship of patterning from basic levels of breathing combined with the intent and actions for other body movements. The functional ability of individuals is layered in the capacity to breathe and have core support grounded to perform a movement with intent.

There are three major Labananalysis concepts that are the core of Bartenieff Fundamentals exercises. First, the emphasis is always on mobility process rather than just muscle strength. Second, in all movement—from the small isolated gesture to a major total action—more than one factor is operating. Third, spatial intent, preparation and initiation in a movement sequence determine the whole course of a sequence and the quality of its function and/or expressiveness.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Irmgard Bartenieff with Dori Lewis. *Body Movement: Coping with the Environment*, 21.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE GESTURAL VOCABULARY

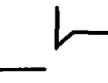
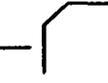
Developing the Gesture

Following training with Janice Meaden, an LMA Bartenieff Movement Analyst, Laban and Bartenieff Fundamentals were practiced by the author through a series of exercises learned during our sessions. These exercises were a compilation of Bartenieff Fundamentals (Body); connection to the breath (Breath Patterning), and grounding (Core-Distal Connectivity) in preparation for practicing the effort actions. The effort actions were practiced with imagery of the inner intent, and practiced in a progression, by experiencing each effort element in order. To achieve fluidity and an ease of transition between each gesture, an imaginary box was placed on the floor, so that each movement could be practiced with a different portion of the body either to the front or back of the imaginary box, in opposite corners.

The focus of each action was begun through several considerations: connection to the breath, inner intent and developing a sense of grounding followed by a reach and pull (also a Bartenieff concept) that led through the series of effort actions in combination. Inner intent is best practiced with imagery that is refined through individual experience with the manifestation of the outer expression. This outer manifestation was then incorporated into a movement that could be used as a conducting gesture.

The gestural vocabulary was based on all eight Effort Elements in Combination (float, punch, glide, slash, dab, wring, flick, press); a discussion of these eight gestures follows in this chapter. Figure 15 contains the Effort Elements in Combination Chart, along with descriptions for each movement example, the specified musical example for each gesture and a description of the proposed gestural vocabulary.

Figure 15. Effort Elements in Application Chart

Basic Effort Actions	Qualities (Elements)	Labanotation	Movement Examples	Musical Example	Proposed Gesture
Float	Indirect (S) Light (W) Sustained (T)		Pulling away from a hug	Mozart mm. 26-30 "Alleluia"	Open space, use of light horizontal plane; buoyancy
Punch	Direct (S) Strong (W) Quick (T)		Boxing	Mozart mm. 1-6 "Regina Coeli"	Confined to pattern, weighted pattern with sharp edges
Glide	Direct (S) Light (W) Sustained (T)		Hand sliding over a glass table top	Brahms mm 1-8 "O schöne Nacht"	Wide horizontal sweeping motion; open, rounded arm space
Slash	Indirect (S) Strong (W) Quick (T)		Clearing a table of dishes with a towel	Maslanka mm.71-7 "And then the boundaries"	Weighted gesture within pattern; diagonal-cross-body motion
Dab	Direct (S) Light (W) Quick (T)		Touching a spider web	Maslanka mm. 83-87 "I am"	Short, quick movements with the hand isolated in free space (no pattern)
Wring	Indirect (S) Strong (W) Sustained (T)		Opening a jar	Brahms mm. 53-58 "der Knabe spricht"	Rotation of the lower arm in opposition, rounded motions
Flick	Indirect (S) Light (W) Quick (T)		Removing glitter from hair	Maslanka mm. 4-6 fugue theme	Short, quick movements with the wrist in a small pattern area (wrist flat)
Press	Direct (S) Strong (W) Sustained (T)		Human garlic press	Brahms mm. 61-63	Palms rounded in a heavy weighted, smooth motion

Float

Effort qualities of float include indirect space, light weight and sustained time. The movement practice with imagery was the sensation of pulling away from a hug. This gives the arms a basic application for a vast means of light weight and open space. The sense in the body is buoyancy; and the arms are free to use an expansive range within the horizontal plane. The light articulation of the Mozart *Regina Coeli*, K. 276, could then be demonstrated with this free use of the horizontal plane.

Float was applied to measures 26-30 in Mozart's *Regina Coeli* (Figure 16). This phrase is repeated several times throughout the piece with little alteration. The activation of the float gesture was also assisted by active and uncharacteristically strong emphasis on beats two and four within the phrase. This change in pulse accentuation (although minute) emphasized the horizontal motion and was therefore suitably applied to the gesture.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Mozart's *Regina Coeli*. The first system covers measures 26-30 and includes vocal staves for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B), along with a Piano Reduction. The lyrics are 'al-le-lu-ja, al-le-lu-ja, al-le-lu-ja'. The score is marked with dynamics *P* (piano) and *f* (forte). The second system continues the vocal parts and piano reduction for measures 30-32, with lyrics 'al-le-lu-ja, al-le-lu-ja, al-le-lu-ja'.

Figure 16. Mozart *Regina Coeli* measures 26-30 Float excerpt

Punch

Effort qualities of punch include direct space, strong weight and quick time. The movement practiced with inner intent for punch was boxing. This is an action that gives a conductor active weight in the gesture and body with a focused direction of the hands.

Through practice the author found that if connection to the breath was not solid, the gesture lacked the forcefulness to be labeled punch. The introductory measures 1-5 of Mozart's *Regina Coeli*, K. 276, were excellent for the application of the punch gesture, as the performance style for the beginning of the piece required weighted articulation. The block chords on the downbeat of measures 1-3 in the orchestra, along with the homophonic textual setting of the choral parts gave weight to the style. The focused articulation necessary for the style of Mozart's setting of the "Regina Coeli" text was well designed for a directed, weighted pattern. Concentrated weight in the vertical plane on beat one gave the punch gesture an edge with the added focus for a precise entrance in the orchestra from which the choir could activate their initial entrance (Figure 17).

The image displays a musical score for the beginning of Mozart's *Regina Coeli*, measures 1-5. The score is written for four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano reduction. The tempo is marked **Allegro** and the dynamic is **(f) Tutti**. The lyrics are: "Re-gi-na coe-li, re-gi-na coe-li, re-gi-na coe-li, lac-ta-re, lac-ta-re." The piano reduction features block chords on the downbeat of measures 1-3, providing a weighted articulation. The vocal parts enter on the downbeat of measure 1, with the Soprano part leading the text.

Figure 17. Mozart *Regina Coeli* measures 1-5 Punch excerpt

Glide

Effort qualities of glide include direct space, light weight and sustained time.

The inner intent for glide was imagining a hand sliding over a glass table top. This gives the sensation in the horizontal plane that there is a tactile lightness to the gesture and no sense of urgency in the traveling motion of the hand itself. There must be a focus to the space used in the glide gesture. Consider the motion in a rounded arm motion that confines itself to the width and breadth of full arms outstretched to capacity. The introductory theme in Brahms' *O schöne Nacht* delineates the practice of glide, as the theme requires smoothness for stylistically appropriate phrase shaping (Figure 18).

The image shows a musical score for Brahms' *O schöne Nacht*, measures 5-8. The score is arranged in a system with four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a Piano accompaniment. The lyrics are "O schöne Nacht!". The vocal parts are marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment features a prominent glide gesture in the right hand, characterized by a long, smooth melodic line that spans across the measures. The overall texture is light and sustained, reflecting the "glide" quality discussed in the text.

Figure 18. Brahms *O schöne Nacht* measures 5-8 Glide excerpt

Slash

Effort qualities of slash include indirect space, strong weight and quick time. Slash was created by the practice of rolling a towel and then snapping it across the front of the body as to unfold it. The inner intent for slash was the attitude of abandon by which the dishes were cleared. This cross-body motion created by the image of the towel can be applied to the conducting gesture, creating a movement that is quick and set outside the parameters of a traditional conducting pattern. The musical selection to represent slash, found in Maslanka's *Little Dance: for Barbara Mason*, in measures 71-77, is an agitated section in terms of harmonic setting by the tenor and bass dissonant entrance in open E-flat harmony against the e minor of the women (Figure 19). Another contributing factor in considering the gestural application is the rhythmical implications of the mixed meter of 3/4 and 4/4, along with the complex setting of the text that gives an angularity to the placement of rhythmic stress. (Figure 19)

71 *mf* *strongly accented* *cresc.*

S And then the bound - a - ries will cave in, and then the bound - a - ries will cave in, will cave in.

A And then the bound - a - ries will cave in, and then the bound - a - ries will cave in, will cave in.

T will cave in, will cave in, will cave in.

B will cave in, will cave in, will cave in.

71 *f* *strongly accented* *mf* *cresc.*

Cl.

Vib.

74 *uniso. div.* *mf* *cresc.*

S willcave in, and then my spi - rit will fly will fly.

A willcave in, and then my spi - rit will fly will fly.

T willcave in, and then my spi - rit will fly will fly.

B willcave in, and then my spi - rit will fly will fly.

74 *sp* *meno* *ff* *mf*

Cl.

Vib.

Figure 19. Maslanka *Little Dance: for Barbara Mason* measures 71-77 Slash excerpt

Dab

Effort qualities of dab include direct space, light weight and quick time. Lightly touching a spider web to remove dew from it was the image used to design the dab gesture. The light touch practiced for this gesture requires a change of hand position from the traditional practice of palm down. In order to touch the spider web, the imaginary web was placed in a plane parallel to the front silhouette of the conductor. The hand position was still in a healthy palm position (rounded to insure vocal health from the ensemble). The nimble touch of the fingertips (the idea of light weight) on the spider web applies to Maslanka's *Little Dance: for Barbara Mason*, in measures 83-86. This four measure passage in the Maslanka is the most rhythmically complex section in the work (Figure 20). The text setting of "I am" on four notes within each voice part is not the challenge; rather the problem is combination of rhythmic patterns appearing simultaneously.

The image displays a musical score for measures 83-86 of the piece 'Little Dance' by Maslanka, specifically a 'Dab' excerpt. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system covers measures 83 and 84, and the second system covers measures 85 and 86. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are written in a four-part setting, with lyrics 'I am' and 'am' repeated. The instrumental parts include Clarinet (Cl.) and Vibraphone (Vib.). The Clarinet part features complex rhythmic patterns and slurs. The Vibraphone part provides a steady accompaniment. Performance directions include 'fierce, aggressive' above the vocal parts in measure 83 and 'gliss.' at the end of the Vibraphone part in measure 86. Measure numbers 83, 85, and 86 are indicated at the beginning of their respective staves.

Figure 20. Maslanka *Little Dance: for Barbara Mason* measures 83-86 Dab excerpt

Wring

Effort qualities of wring include indirect space, strong weight and sustained time. Opening a jar was the physical motion practiced for wring. Practicing a three-dimensional rotation of the lower arm (as in Bartenieff's therapeutic treatments for polio patients) with expressive, open-rounded motions in the hands completed the wring gesture. The employment of wring in measures 53-58 of Brahms' *O schöne Nacht* aids the twisting nature of the voice parts in pairs and the arpeggiated style of the piano accompaniment (Figure 21).

53 *p mezzo voce*
 S der Kna - be - schleicht zu
 A der Kna - be schleicht zu
 T der Kna - be schleicht zu sei - ner
 B der Kna - be schleicht zu sei - ner
 Piano
 57
 S sei - ner Lieb - sten sacht.
 A sei - ner Lieb - sten sacht.
 T sei - ner Lieb - sten sacht.
 B sei - ner Lieb - sten sacht.
 Piano
 57

Figure 21. Brahms *O schöne Nacht* measures 53-58 Wring excerpt

Flick

Effort qualities of flick include indirect space, light weight and quick time. The motion for the creation of the flick gesture was to remove glitter from hair. This gesture differs from dab in the position of the hand, as the palm for flick should remain flat

within the horizontal conducting plane. Overall, flick also works if the gesture is within a small plane. Although the effort quality calls for indirect space, that does not dictate that a large space be used in order to execute the gesture effectively. The unifying thematic thread of Maslanka's *Little Dance: for Barbara Mason* in measures 4-6 was used for flick (Figure 22). A change in meter for this theme (one measure each of 4/4, 3/4, 5/8) was sufficient to test metrical changes for the study. This theme, placed at various points throughout the work is layered in imitation and set homophonically later in the piece.



Figure 22. Maslanka *Little Dance: for Barbara Mason* measures 4-6 Flick excerpt

Press

Effort qualities of press include direct space, strong weight and sustained time. To evoke press, the image practiced was a human garlic press. The palms were rounded, in a heavy smooth motion that expanded out from the center of the body in a wide perimeter of horizontal space. The directness of space was initially focused in a mirrored movement that simply pressed down and stretched out from the center of the body. Adaptations for press were made so that the gesture traveled in a downward manner, but pulled toward the body and then away from the body in a circular direction on one plane. This is required to achieve the desired results for a successful treatment

of the phrase structure. The requirement of sustained time contained the physical breadth of the gesture. Adaptation of press to a conducting gesture occurred in the final measures of the transition section (measures 61-63) of Brahms' *O schöne Nacht* (Figure 23).

The image displays a musical score for Brahms' *O schöne Nacht*, measures 61-63. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains the vocal parts for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). Each vocal line begins with the syllable "O" and is followed by a long horizontal line indicating a sustained note. The second system shows the vocal parts continuing with the syllable "schö" and a long horizontal line, followed by "ne." in the Bass part. The piano accompaniment is shown in the second system, starting at measure 61. It features a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) and a long horizontal line indicating a sustained note. The piano part concludes with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano).

Figure 23. Brahms *O schöne Nacht* measures 61-63 Press excerpt

Procedure and Results

Procedure

The gestures were tested with the Recital Choir at the University of Arizona. A total of fourteen 50-minute rehearsals were held to learn the three pieces. The individual content of the pieces was introduced (note values and pitch content) before testing the gestures.

A written survey was given to the entire ensemble during the fourteenth rehearsal. Prior to this final survey, two preliminary surveys were administered for the purpose of providing feedback for the development of the gestures. Members of the ensemble ranged in age and ability levels from undergraduate music majors to doctoral choral conducting majors. Five graduate choral conducting majors were randomly selected to offer verbal response on videotape after each survey, to establish validity. The survey (Appendix D) asked for feedback on a 5-point Semantic Differential Scale, and each member was asked to respond with an X on the Scale as to which side of the Scale the selected gesture matched.

Laban terminology was not used for the first survey, as the choir had not been instructed in LMT. The results of Surveys One and Two were used to develop the gestures, and to receive feedback as to what could be modified in order to refine the gesture. The purpose of this survey was to ascertain whether the gestures created initially held characteristics of LMT. Means and Standard Deviation were calculated and gestures that lacked consistency were modified.

Laban terminology was added for the second survey, as the choir had been given an introduction to LMT by this point in the survey. Based on the results of this survey, the gestures were further refined.

Final Survey Results

The answers from Survey Three, given on the last rehearsal (rehearsal fourteen) were analyzed to answer the research questions. A mean score (M) for each gesture was determined by averaging the scores from the survey ($N=28$). A standard deviation (SD) was also calculated to discern the range of answers and rate the appropriateness of each gesture in the vocabulary. Each gesture was evaluated by considering the mean score from the survey and the written and verbal comments from ensemble members.

Float Gesture

The first research question asked whether the float gesture was successfully observed by the choir. The results of the semantic differential showed a mean of 1.3 with a Standard Deviation of .3 (See Figure 24).

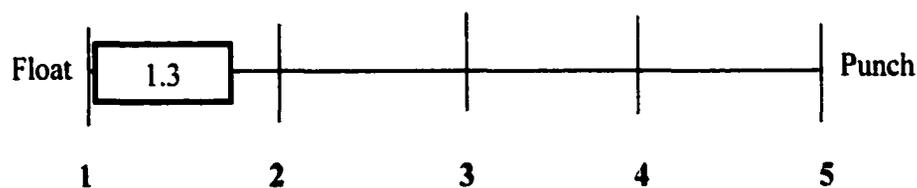


Figure 24. Results for Float

Based on these results the float gesture was successful. The small *SD* indicated the ensemble agreed the float gesture was indeed effective for the Mozart composition. A comment from the final survey for float: "The float works well here, as long as precision isn't lost; you're doing a good balance of float and precision." Overall, the float gesture was one of the easiest to execute, as it was characteristically light, something that the conductor represents with ease.

Punch Gesture

The second research question asked whether the punch gesture was successfully observed by the choir. The results of the semantic differential showed a mean of 3.8 with a Standard Deviation of 1.0 (See Figure 25).

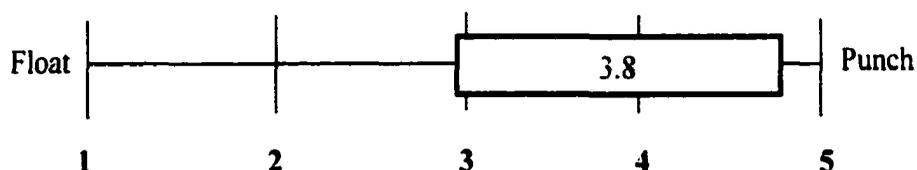


Figure 25. Results for Punch

Punch was a weighted gesture, falling on the right side of the Semantic Differential Scale. This gesture was deemed to be moderately successful. The wide *SD* indicated the ensemble did not agree this was always a heavy enough gesture. Comments from one respondent regarding the punch gesture include the insight that the "strong look in your eyes may have affected my opinion of the gesture." Adaptations to the punch gesture simply required more weight in preparation for the

vertical motions. The conductor also utilized longer, more separated breath patterns during this portion of the work, which also lends a sense of strength to the motion.

Glide Gesture

The third research question asked whether the glide gesture was successfully observed by the choir. The results of the semantic differential showed a mean of 1.3 with a Standard Deviation of .3 (See Figure 26).

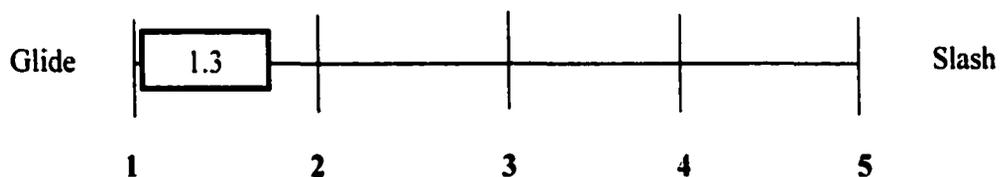


Figure 26. Results for Glide

The results for glide indicated success with the gesture. The *SD* indicates the ensemble members were able to identify the gesture and agree that what was being demonstrated assisted the phrasing of the example. There was agreement from several respondents that the gesture was "nice and smooth," and that it was "very nice shaping for the soprano and tenor lines." Again, the focus of this gesture as a light horizontal motion was more characteristic of the conductor, and this may have therefore factored in to the success of glide.

Slash Gesture

The fourth research question asked whether the slash gesture was successfully observed by the choir. The results of the semantic differential showed a mean of 2.9 with a Standard Deviation of 1.3 (See Figure 27).

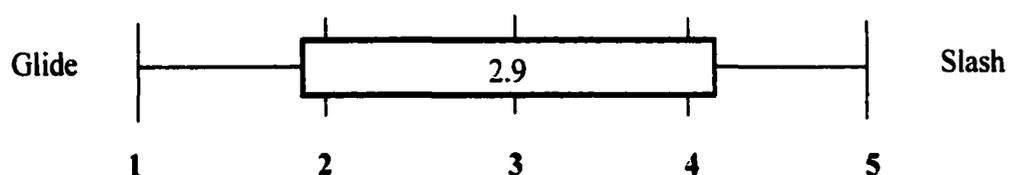


Figure 27. Results for Slash

Slash was an unsuccessful gesture according to results of the survey. The M rating of 2.9 placed this gesture halfway between the two polar adjectives of glide and slash. Furthermore, the SD indicates a lack of consistency in the responses. These results indicate that this gesture did not assist in creating the rhythm that was necessary for the phrase. It is interesting to note that in earlier surveys this gesture was rated more effective on the scale. This was a difficult musical passage for the ensemble, due to the entrance following a brief instrumental dance and the dissonance in the women's choral parts. The gesture itself, from the researcher's point of view, was difficult to execute within a pattern. Refining the gesture to work within a traditional conducting pattern to assist in the musical outcome may have contributed to the ultimate failure of

the gesture. The researcher's opinion is that slash works best out of pattern, simply demonstrating the ictus.

Dab Gesture

The fifth research question asked whether the dab gesture was successfully observed by the choir. The results of the semantic differential showed a mean of 1.8 with a Standard Deviation of .9 (See Figure 28).

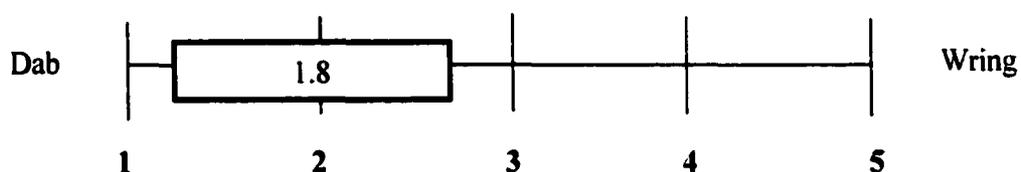


Figure 28. Results for Dab

Dab was another successful gesture. A *M* score of 1.8 supports this gesture for rhythmic effectiveness. The choir members found Dab one of the more unique gestures in the study (as shown by *SD*= .9), as the palm was used in a non-traditional fashion, actually facing the ensemble. The palm of the hand in traditional conducting pedagogy is positioned towards the floor. A written observation from a respondent: "I saw the dabs! I understand," was strong support for the actualization of this gesture in rehearsal. The conductor found the gesture very comfortable and acknowledged that, although it was a change from the norm in conducting ritual, it achieved the light style of the rhythm in the phrase to which it was applied.

Wring Gesture

The sixth research question asked whether the wring gesture was successfully observed by the choir. The results of the semantic differential showed a mean of 3.16 with a Standard Deviation of 1.1 (See Figure 29).

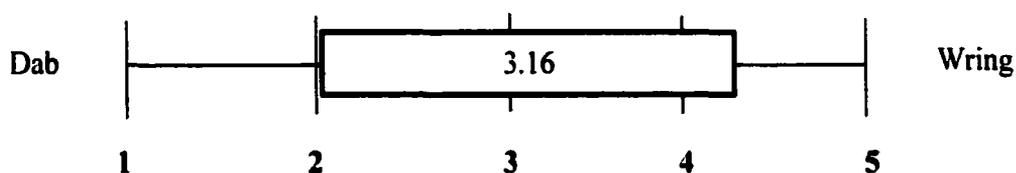


Figure 29. Results for Wring

The results for Wring are interesting in that all three *M* survey results were within one-hundredth of a point, deeming this gesture ineffective. To eliminate the possibility that this result was not due to bipolar extremes, all scores were plotted to look for potential trends. None were found; thus the inconsistency implied by these scores exists. Several respondents commented that the wring gesture did not match the text in the phrase ("The youth steals quietly away to his love"). This gesture was applied to test phrase shape effectiveness in this section of the work; it represented the twisted lines between the choral parts and the piano accompaniment. The gesture calls for a three-dimensional twisting of the forearm, giving perhaps too loose a gesture for the ensemble to follow. Further studies should reexamine and perhaps redesign this gesture.

Flick Gesture

The seventh research question asked whether the flick gesture was successfully observed by the choir. The results of the semantic differential showed a mean of 1.9 with a Standard Deviation of .8 (See Figure 30).

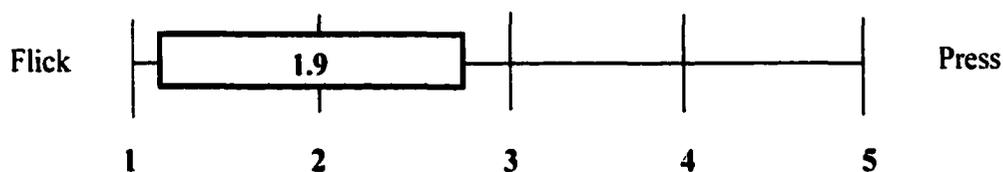


Figure 30. Results for Flick

Flick was a light gesture that was moderately successful. The lower *SD* indicated the agreement of the respondents to the *M* score of the gesture, and over the course of the study the *M* grew closer to the aspired 1.0. This gesture generated a vast amount of written comments. Several responses that support the effectiveness of this rhythmic gesture include: "the flick is very effective for placing these rhythms accurately," and "the flick gesture helps remind me to keep it light." These comments convinced the researcher that Flick was an effective gesture in the vocabulary.

Press Gesture

The eighth research question asked whether the press gesture was successfully observed by the choir. The results of the semantic differential showed a mean of 3.8 with a Standard Deviation of 1.1 (See Figure 31).

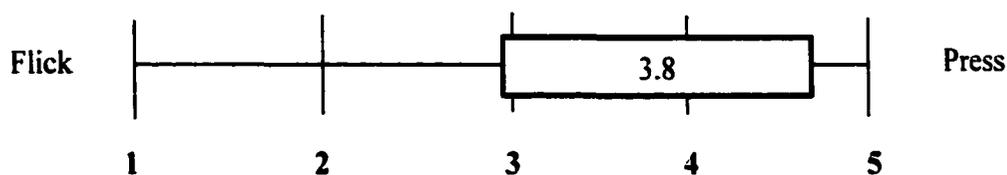


Figure 31. Results for Press

The M score improved over the course of the study, as modifications were made to the gesture. Although it did not reach the desired score of at least 4.0, it was evaluated as a moderately successful gesture. The SD was rather large, characterizing the wide range of scores from the respondents. The press gesture was a challenge due to the brevity of the example as it was applied to the two-measure final transition section in *O schöne Nacht*. This gesture also required the most refinement to develop for the vocabulary. Comments from the respondents in the beginning were characterized by a state of confusion as to whether the gesture was actually affecting the phrase shape at all. Through the developmental process of the conductor, it was required that the hand travel a great deal farther away from the body and change direction in a sweeping motion toward the choir to achieve the desired result. A response from a conducting colleague supports this: "[The] transition place is really wonderful, actually the speed of the gesture, you moved your hand so far out that you had to change the speed of the gesture which created more sweep." Press was the gesture that required the most refinement of all eight gestures built in the vocabulary.

In conclusion, six of the eight gestures designed for the gestural vocabulary were successful: float, punch, glide, dab, flick, and press. The two unsuccessful gestures, slash and wring, were categorized as unsuccessful due to the *M* scores in the middle of the Semantic Differential Scale.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

The gestural vocabulary designed for this study was developed through three surveys given to the ensemble and feedback from the author's conducting colleagues at the University of Arizona. Study with Janice Meaden was the initial stimulus that created the gestures applied for the study.

Changes were implemented in two stages following each survey.

The vocabulary designed for Survey One contained no set beat patterns. This was a challenge to effectively balance the testing of the gestures and the teaching of the music. Subsequently, for the Second Survey most gestures were adapted from some type of pattern; a traditional conducting pattern or in a rhythmic pattern within the style of the gesture (Dab and Flick were set independent of any traditional pattern throughout the study). Incorporating Laban gestures into the beat pattern, rather than a movement in isolation, created problems for the responses to the vocabulary, in that several respondents in the Second Survey commented that what they saw in the tested examples was beat pattern only and not an expressive gesture. These adaptations therefore needed further revisions since the focus of the study was to build expressiveness, outside the parameters of the traditional school of thought as far as patterns are concerned.

The gestures that required the most adaptation due to survey response included Slash, Wring and Press. The response to Slash may have been affected by several factors: the difficulty of the musical passage, the entrance itself, and the researcher's focus of gesture remaining on a horizontal plane. Wring was unsuccessful in that the gesture did not apply to the text of the musical passage; this was difficult for the ensemble to accept. This gesture also required a constant twisting of the forearms, which blurred the clarity of the ictus and therefore confused the ensemble. The Press gesture was adapted the most and, from the conductor's perspective, was successful in the end. The ability to make the gesture more three-dimensional and less pattern-like attributed to a change in speed of the gesture that evoked a drastic, musical result from the ensemble.

A conducting colleague spoke to the success of the procedure for the study: "What was effective today was that we sang through the pieces and then you went back and did those areas representative for your study. I can see how this also gives...those of us who are conductors, a chance to think about the gesture. Is it really relating to what we want musically, vocally, stylistically in the music?" This response is important as a reminder that respondents look for progressive order when responding to a survey. In considering a response, the ensemble members first needed to feel comfortable with the music being tested. According to members of the ensemble, that was not the case, until the Third Survey for all of the excerpts. Further studies might consider testing literature of a balanced ability level.

This particular study was designed for respondents to sing as members of the ensemble and then respond. That decision was based on the make-up of the ensemble, with its range from undergraduate through doctoral music students. It was also important to the researcher to gauge the immediate response to the gestures in as natural a rehearsal setting as possible.

Further comments and concerns from colleagues dealt with the possibility that the music was successful, not as a result of the gestures, but rather by the teaching method and rehearsal techniques. One colleague stated: "It is clear that you know which gesture you want to use for every example. I am curious to see if the gesture is affecting the sound or is it the rehearsal process?" From my perspective as conductor, there were several segments that required more rehearsal time, especially those in Maslanka's *Little Dance: for Barbara Mason*. Special care was taken to plan rehearsal techniques that would instruct the choir in ways to internalize the complex rhythmic structure, but it is not the conclusion of the conductor that these techniques aided the ability of the choir to sing the music for any particular gesture.

General comments that were unexpected related to the growth and change in the conductor. "I see more commitment to the gesture, you are more clear with each gesture Laban-wise," was a comment that surprised the conductor. Perhaps the strongest case for the implementation of Laban-based gestures was a persistent observation that the expressiveness and overall presence of the conductor vastly improved over the course of the study. A summative statement from a fellow doctoral colleague places these comments in perspective: "In general, in every rehearsal I've

become more convinced of the validity of this whole approach; I've seen a great deal of change and improvement in your conducting. A number of passages were really effective."

From the conductor's viewpoint, the ensemble appeared more open to experimentation once they had personally experienced the basic concepts of Laban and Bartenieff Theories. They were willing to experiment with body movement and were much more responsive musically following instruction or application of LMA to the rehearsal situation.

Conclusions

1. Six of the eight gestures designed for the vocabulary were deemed successful (float, punch, glide, dab, flick, and press).
2. Two of the gestures (slash and wring) require further modification.
3. The Gestural Vocabulary was more effective as the gestures were adapted into a beat pattern. The early vocabulary lacked clarity for the ensemble until the style of the Effort Elements was combined with a traditional beat pattern.
4. As the gestural vocabulary was tested, results indicated a relationship between text and music. The gestures applied to selected choral musical excerpts were selected by considering only the musical elements, with no application for text and its meaning.

Suggestions for Further Research

The Gestural Vocabulary could be tested with a group of conductors that receive training in LMA. No attempt was made with this study to involve teaching the gestural vocabulary to other conductors, who could then be observed and rated for effectiveness and expressivity. It would be interesting to see if the vocabulary would transfer to others, and evoke the same response from an ensemble.

Another possibility for study is the application of the gestures considering the relationship of music and text in combination. The present study applied the gestures to the musical style of each excerpt. No considerations were assigned to relate the gestures to the text of the pieces. The parameters of articulation, rhythm and phrase shape limited the scope of the study and omitted the consideration of text. Several ensemble members responded that the wring gesture was unsuccessful due to the twisting nature of the gesture and the gentle text of the excerpt, where the lovers quietly meet.

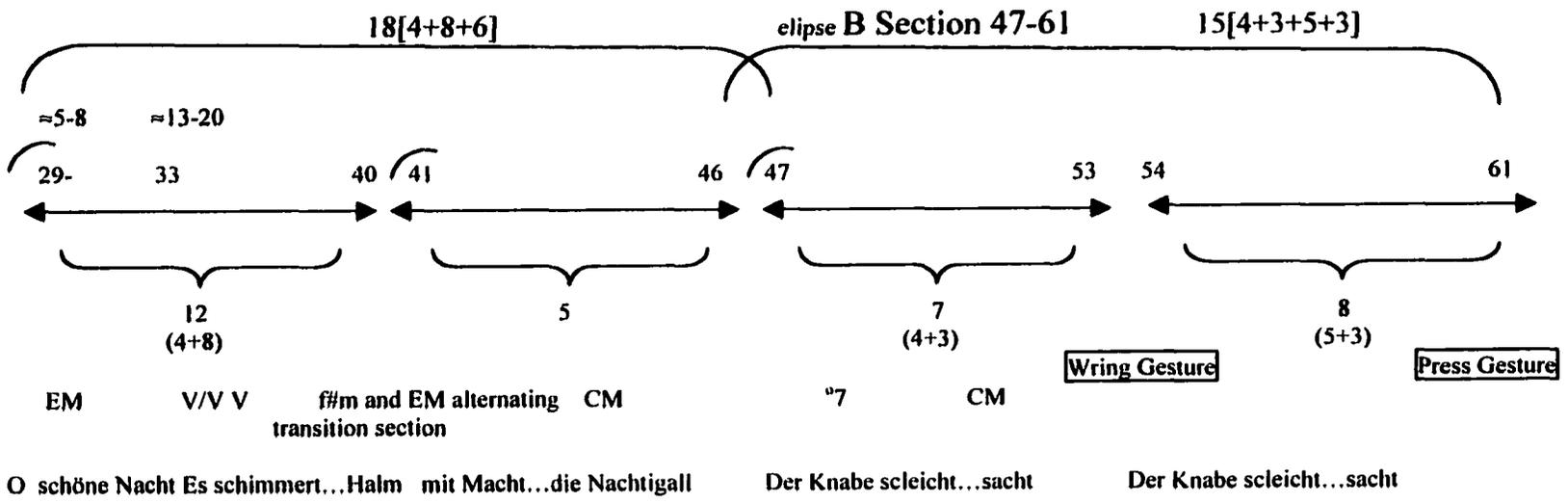
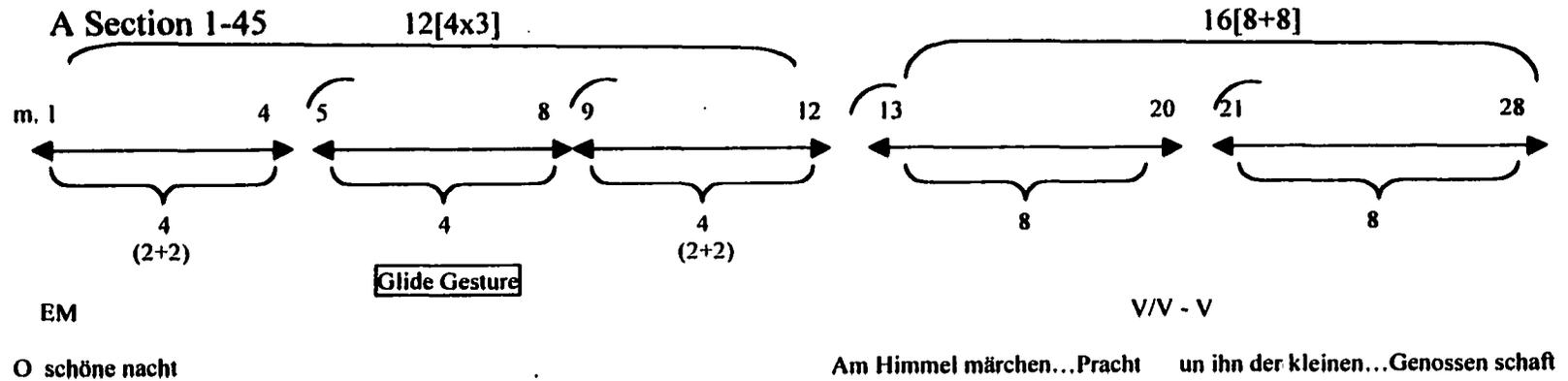
Two gestures were unsuccessful, slash and wring. A study would need to be designed by which these gestures could be tested with several musical examples. A possible contributing factor to the lack of success of the musical excerpt for slash (Maslanka) was its difficulty for the ensemble to execute. A future study could apply the slash gesture to a less difficult musical excerpt. Another way to balance the application of the gesture to the passage would be to teach the excerpts with dry beat patterns, and apply the gestures later in the study.

Another factor in the successful testing of the gestural vocabulary is the ability level of the ensemble used for the study. A study designed in which the age and ability level were controlled could provide further information regarding the level of ensemble that could respond to unique gestures. The researcher believes the results would differ if there were only undergraduate or only graduate singers used for the study.

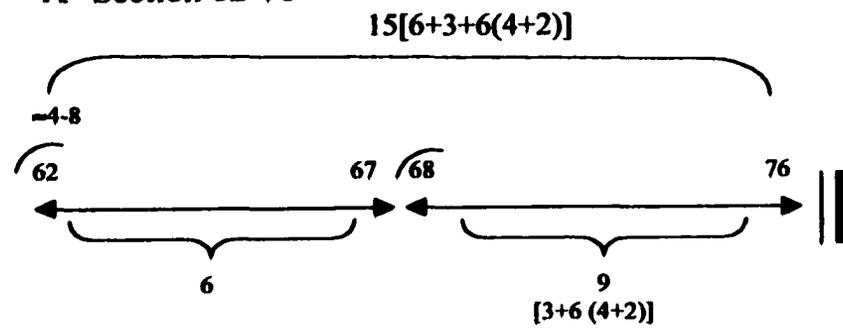
A most promising study following these results would be to test the response to gestures consistently adapted within a beat pattern. This would eliminate confusion resulting from adapted gestures which remained in a free form to better represent the inner intent of the Effort Element.

In conclusion, Laban Movement Theory is a tool that can create a successful gestural vocabulary for choral conductors. Further studies suggested here show promise for further adaptation and application of LMT principles to expressive choral conducting gestures and pedagogy.

APPENDIX A: ANALYSIS OF JOHANNES BRAHMS***O SCHÖNE NACHT, OP. 92***



A¹ Section 62-76



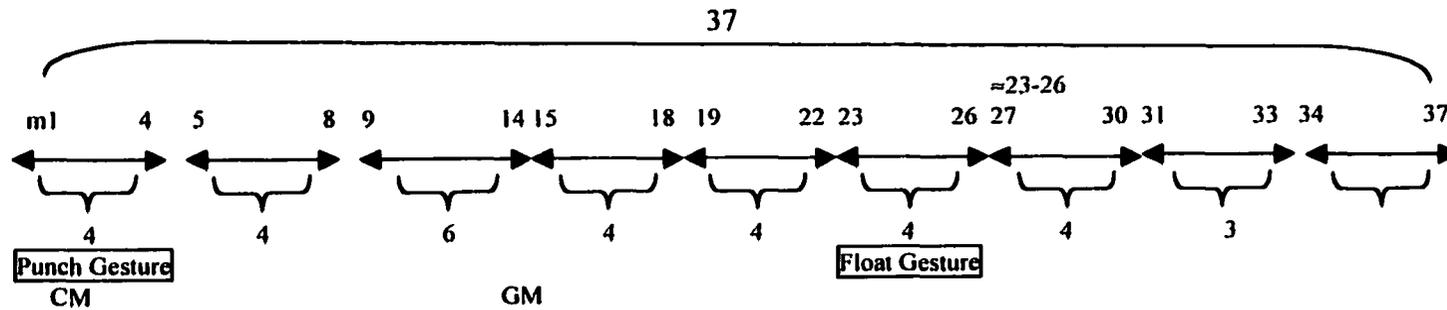
EM

O schöne Nacht

2 hemiola (71-74)

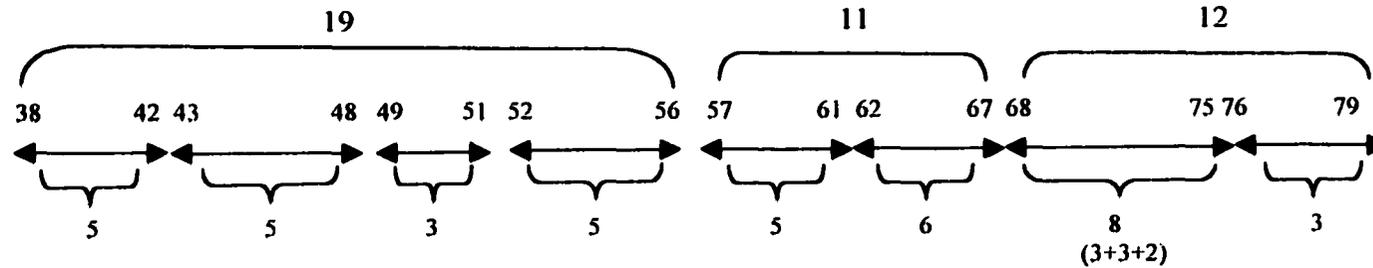
APPENDIX B: ANALYSIS OF WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

REGINA COELI, K. 276



Verse 1
Regina coeli laetare

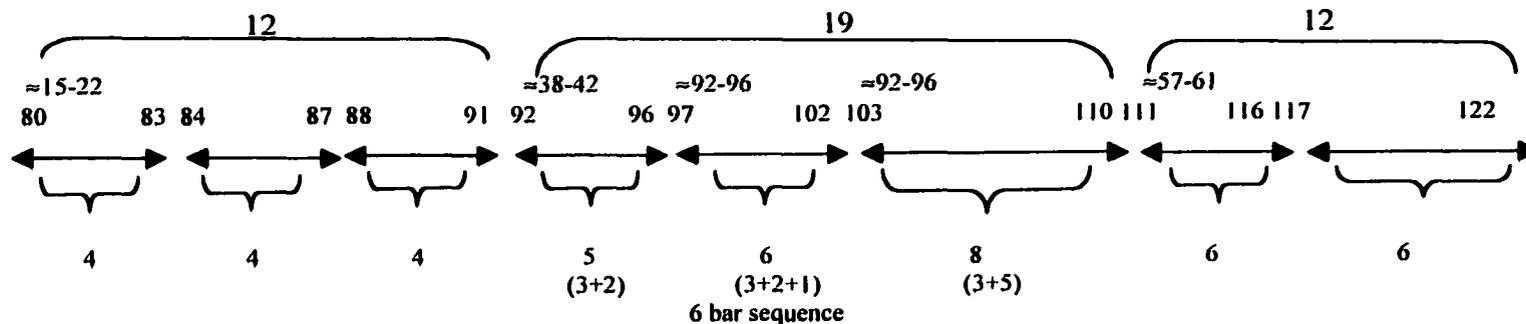
Alleluia
Alleluia



6 bar sequence

am EM
Verse 2 Alleluia (46)
Quia quem meruisti portare Alleluia

am FM
Verse 3 Alleluia Verse 4(69) Alleluia
Resurrexit sicut dixit Alleluia Ora pro nobis Deum Alleluia



CM

GM

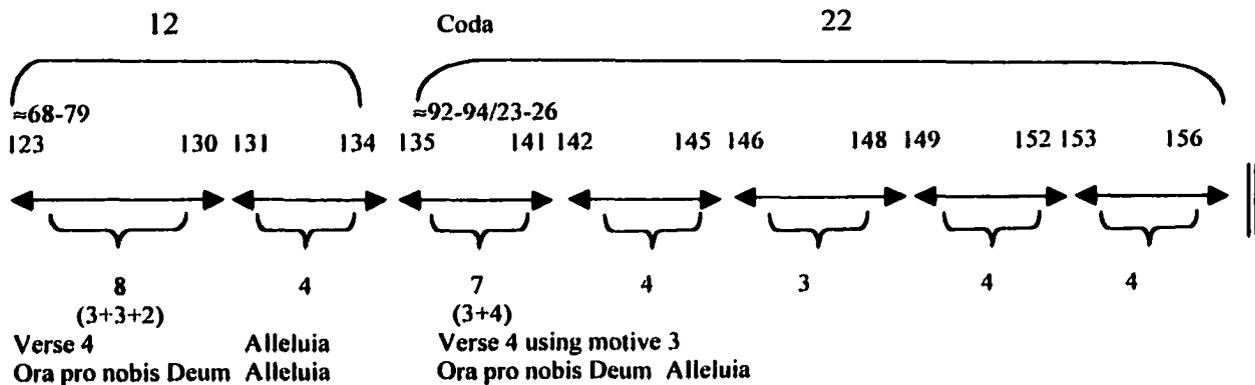
CM

Verse 1
Regina coeli lactare

Alleluia
Alleluia

Verse 2 Alleluia(95)
Quia quem meruisti portare Alleluia

Verse 3 Alleluia (119)
Resurrexit sicut dixit Alleluia



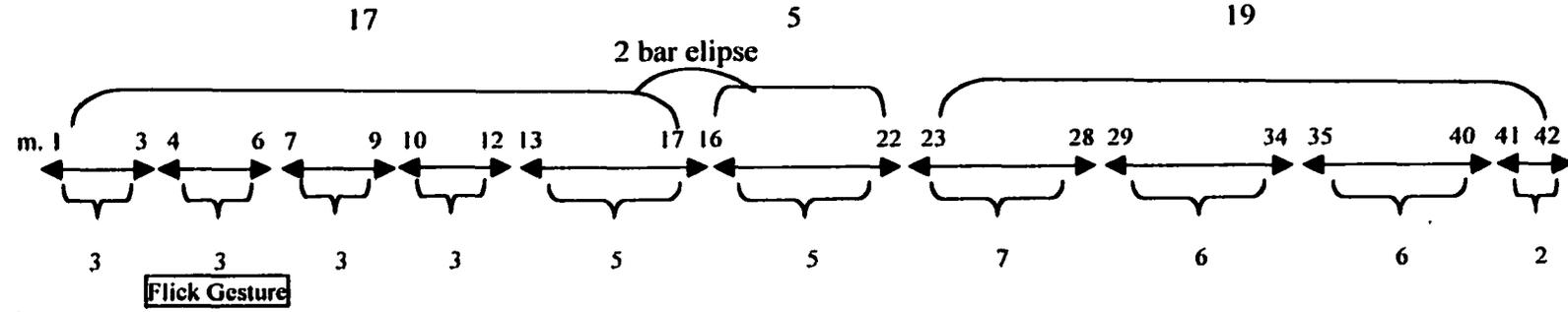
Verse 4 Alleluia
Ora pro nobis Deum Alleluia

Verse 4 using motive 3
Ora pro nobis Deum Alleluia

APPENDIX C: ANALYSIS OF DAVID MASLANKA

LITTLE DANCE: FOR BARBARA MASON

A Section 1-46



fm

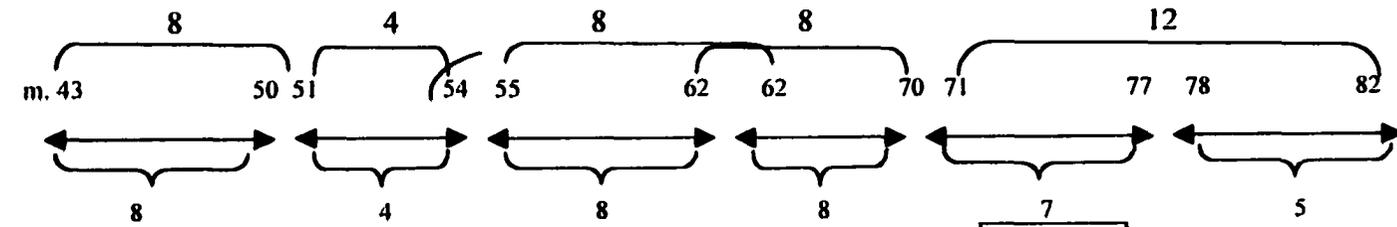
Instrumental Interlude Fugue on "Doo" 23-42

Pushing back the walls, stretching for freedom...of my limitation

Doo

B Section 47-63

C Section 71-89



CM ^bIII V gm FM

^bIII

I

v V/IV

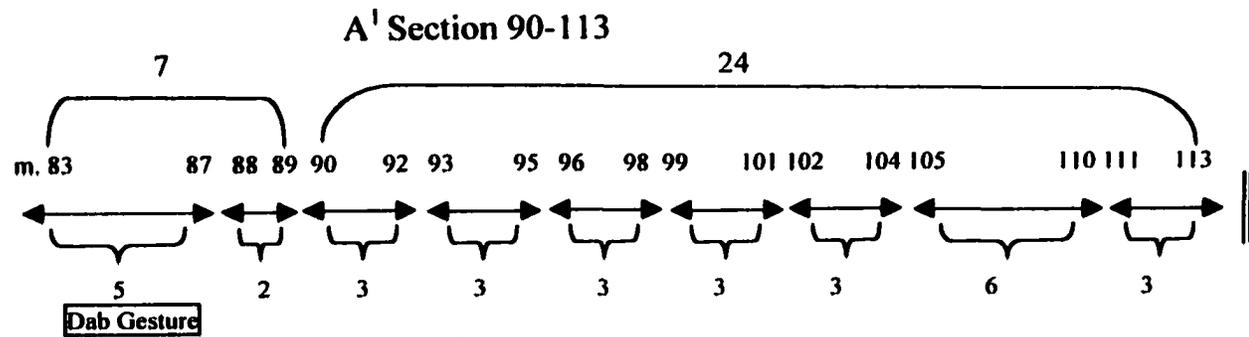
em

GM¹³ bm

Instrumental Little Dance

Instrumental Little Dance

Pushing back ...my limitation Perhaps this little dance...the dead Perhaps ...the dead And then the boundaries...In this moment



fm

silence restatement of A Theme Fugue on "Doo"

I am, in this moment...

Doo

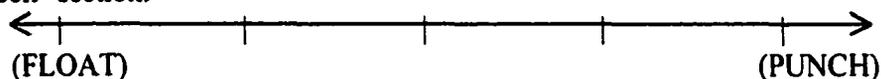
APPENDIX D: GESTURE SURVEY #3

GESTURE SURVEY #3

4/26/2001

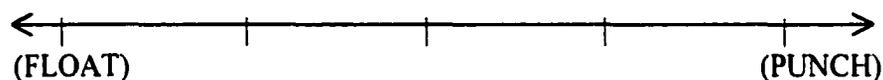
Please take a few moments to place an *X* on the line where the gestures used in today's rehearsal match the Laban descriptor on each line.

1. The gestures for the Mozart (mm 1-5) represent the *articulation* for the "Regina Coeli" section.



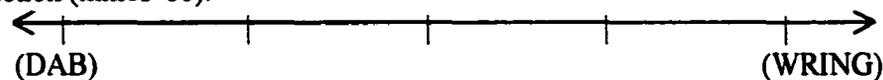
Comments:

2. The gestures for the Mozart represent the *articulation* for the "Alleluia" section (mm.26-30).



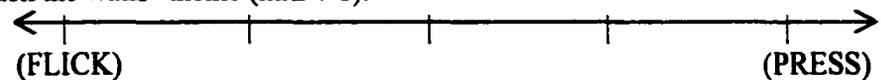
Comments:

3. The gestures for the Maslanka represent the *rhythm* being rehearsed in the "I am" section (mm83-86).



Comments:

4. The gestures for the Maslanka represent the *rhythm* being rehearsed in the "pushing back the walls" theme (mm 4-6).



Comments:

5. The gestures for the Maslanka represent the *rhythm* being rehearsed "and then the boundaries" (mm71-77).



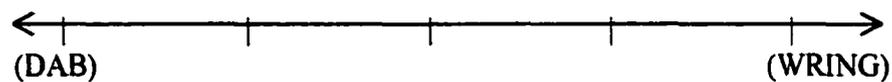
Comments:

6. The gestures for the Brahms represent the *phrase shape* being rehearsed in the introductory "O schöne Nacht" section (mm 5-8).



Comments:

7. The gestures for the Brahms represent the *phrase shape* being rehearsed in the "der Knabe schleicht" section (mm.53-58).



Comments:

8. The gestures for the Brahms represent the *phrase shape* being rehearsed in the transition section (mm. 61-63).



Comments:

Voice Part (circle) S A T B

Degree Program/Occupation _____

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