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## ***Abstract***

*Communication in choral or instrumental music can be either responsive or expressive, occurring between a sender and a beneficiary as the sender (director) expresses musical information in the music sheet in the verbal, visual, or aural signs, and a recipient (choir) deciphers the information. Thus, interpretive communication is a two-advance procedure, depending on data being conveyed plainly and deciphered effectively. This investigation draws on momentum look into and applicable writing to talk about ways choral conductors can improve effective communication with particular reference to the ensemble's discernments. The study, which adopts Marrine's theory of gesture and musical communication, notes that gesture functions as non-verbal communication in music describes how conducting gestures are constructed from motion, and shows how gesture could be detected and reconstructed through sensing technology and software models. Primary data for this study was obtained through participant observation and interviews with ten (10) church-based conductors in Ogbomoso. An examination of practices used by selected conductors reveals that the conductors utilise a series of verbal and non-verbal nuances in conducting; this is herein referred to as "communicative conducting". Findings reveal that meaningful interpretation of African music depends on the director's ability to capture the mood of the music, shape of dynamics, colour of tone, drive the rhythm, express the form and most importantly, develop an inner sense to read into the mind of the composers. The interviewee's feedback uncovers that the conductor's signal, outward appearance and non-verbal communication are critical previously and amid an act. The conductor indicates melodic aims in nonverbal language through motion and these components. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the school of music should develop a curriculum that emphasises meaningful interpretations of African music in a performance. Scholars and researchers in the field of art of conducting should still explore studies in the proper application of score studies towards realising a meaningful insight into the composer's mind in a performance.*

## Introduction

The professional activities of the choral conductor are communicative art, which requires a deep understanding of musical elements such as dynamics, expressions, tempo, and articulation. The conductor also acts as an organiser and a guide of the artistic idea of choral work from the first choir rehearsal to the final performance stage. Therefore, Conducting and choral art are unique. Unlike an instrumentalist musician, the choir serves as an "instrument" for the conductor. A communicative process between the conductor and the choir depends on the level of communication. The conductor's ability to communicate effectively through the choral group or the ensemble for a meaningful musical interpretation goes beyond the precision of notes and rhythms. It involves a process of verbal and nonverbal conducting gestures.

Regarding the nonverbal communication of the choral conductor, Adetutu (2016:1) noted that conducting is also about how the choral conductor communicates interpretative proposals to the choir to increase the quality of the choir. Therefore, conducting involves a communicative system of verbal and vocal art, the charisma of conductors, artistic and non-verbal communication and its refraction in the performance.

Conducting/directing requires a thorough study of the music scores and a reasonable interpretation of the composer's intention for effective musical communication and response. Odusanya (2015:1), quoting from the standpoint of Ogunlade, opined that the era in which conductors see the arts of conducting as a mere waving of hands to indicate a beat pattern, cue and cut-off gestures has gone. With this, our churches need no music directors who do not understand what the art entails. Gestures and dynamics are symbols of mutual understanding between the music director and the choir. However, the reverse is the case because some music directors do not understand the music symbols or how to interpret them.

Good conducting requires a thorough study of the musical scores and interpretation of such materials. To this effect, the writer sets out to elucidate the place of musical expressions and communication in choral conducting performance, thereby filling the gap between the prowess of the professional African conductor and the amateur. The general purpose of this study is to investigate factors affecting effective communication in choral conducting; examine the differences in the gestures, facial expressions, and body language of the conductor influence the choir; find out the singers' attitudes to different kinds of verbal and nonverbal communication and find out techniques of eliciting musical response in choral music performance; There will be an in-depth analysis concerning the studies on the influence of active communication in choral conducting and consideration on how singers react to the expressiveness of the choral conductor. The writer, therefore, intends to investigate and utilise a series of verbal and non-verbal nuances in conducting, referred to as "communicative conducting". Also, he will examine the roles and techniques of communication in conducting and their effectiveness, as utilised by selected church-based conductors in Ogbomoso, and make recommendations based on findings.

## Concept of Conducting

According to "The Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments", Sadie (1984:58) defines conducting as directing a musical performance using visible gestures designed to secure unanimity from ensembles, both of execution and interpretation'. Similarly, Kennedy and Joyce (2007:23) define conducting as 'the art of directing a musical performance through visible gestures.' The use of visible gesture" implies the availability of non-visible gesture. However, the earlier is strange in literature since gestures in conducting are usually used to communicate; their visibility is readily implied, and hence, gestures should suffice not to imply their non-existent antonym. Limiting the conducting technique to

gestures, as Sadie (1984) and Kennedy and Joyce (2007) espouse, suggests that conducting is exclusively gestural; apart from the gesture, other forms of body language are utilised in conducting. In a study on the development of preliminary construct validity of a screening measure of non-verbal communication, Skadsem (1995:76), while reporting on conducting as non-verbal, posits that 'among verbalisation, dynamic markings, gesture, and choir dynamic level on singer's dynamic responses, conductor's verbalisation prompts the most significant dynamic response among singers'.

Wagner's (1868) concept of conducting emphasises the expressive nature of music, transcending and setting the appropriate tempo for interpretation and expression. In agreement with this, Davey (2009:2) states that 'conducting is an expression of music that uses the whole body conducting transcends keeping the beat'. However, Davey's idea of conducting as an art that involves using the entire body fails to specify how the body is deployed in conducting. Therefore, there is a need to clarify how the entire body is used in conducting.

In *Choir Training and Choral Conducting for Africans*, Ekwueme (1993:32) states that "conducting is... standing in front of the group and beating time at a performance". Although conducting involves time beating, the essence of time beating is not acknowledged in the definition. It is expected that a definition of conducting should also include the goal of time heating and how the body language is used in conducting. In a study on improving conductors' vocabulary, Berz (2013:3) states that conducting is entirely non-verbal; hence, conductors communicate their musical intentions through physical expression. He notes that through a tradition of clearly defined motions, conductors direct ensembles on the meter, tempo, dynamics phrasing, style, and other musical conventions. This implies that conducting is fixated and abhors change;

however, conducting from the Middle Ages to the 18th Century is replete with periods of defining changes (Ossaiga, 2014). Thus, defining conducting in terms of tradition is not borne out of historical experiences. According to Fuelberth, while sharing his view on conducting, he noted that:

Conducting is a nonverbal art that includes facial expression, eye contact, body position, posture, and gesture. Non-verbal communication includes body movements, the use of interpersonal space, touch, posture, paralanguage, and gaze; in addition to physical appearance and personal habits, several aspects of non-verbal communication are intricately related to the nature of conducting gestures... one hundred per cent of a conductor's communication is non-verbal in performance (Fuelberth, 2003:13)

Her view on conducting as a non-verbal communication is instructive on the trans-gestural nature of conducting. However, the exact deployment of gestures and other non-verbal nuances in conducting is not evident in the concept. In a study on motions utilised by conductors in stimulating expression and musicianship, Bengé (1996:13) opines that conducting is a type of non-verbal communication with right and left-hand gestures and movements, which are generally interpreted in the same way...; conducting skills communicate vast array of information. However, it is essential to clarify that similarity in ensembles' interpretation of gestures presents some exceptions as all ensembles do not interpret gestures in conducting similarly. This necessitates the practice of mutual familiarisation between conductors and ensembles through rehearsals. A concise but controversial definition of conducting is posited by Julian (1989:49), who states that conducting is "an elaborate code written nowhere, known by none, and understood by all, a conductor communicates through body language that includes eye contact, body orientation and posture, facial expression, and movement of feet, torso, and head, in addition to the expected hand gestures". Identifying

'expected hand gestures' as conducting techniques suggests that other gestures may have been considered "unexpected. Furthermore, his inclusion of "feet movement" as a conducting technique is thought-provoking; however, foot movement is rarely seen in literature as a technique in conducting.

Schullar (1997:23), in his book, *The Complete Conductor*, states that the art of conducting involves eliciting accurate acoustic results from ensemble(s) with the most appropriate minimum gestures': Schullar's concept of conducting is suggestive of precision and economy as seen in the accurate acoustic result and 'minimum gestures, respectively. As instructive as this concept is, minimal gestures may not always elicit the desired responses, so conductors may need to use maximum gestures to elicit desired responses. *Gorce (2007:1) also corroborates Schulla when he states that conducting is a means of communicating artistic directions to performers during performances through non-verbal means.* His view of conducting suggests the utilisation of all forms of non-verbal communication. Since some aspects of non-verbal forms of communication may be considered inept in conducting, Gorce would have specified the aspects of non-verbal communication utilised in conducting. Similarly, Kolsenik (2004:1) views conducting as directing high-level aspects of the performance of multiple instruments with one's physical gestures but without direct contact with the instruments themselves.

Using high-level aspects of performance in his definition of conducting, Kolsenik (2004) classified the performances where conducting is utilised and not utilised. Again, 'gestures' would have sufficed instead of physical gestures since no other form exists here in conducting. In "The New Harvard Dictionary of Music", Randel (1989:47) regards conducting as:

Leading and coordinating a group of singers and instrumentalists in a musical performance or rehearsal conducting includes indicating the metre, tempo and dynamics; cueing

entrance; adjusting timbre balance; identifying the sources of performance errors and helping to resolve them; demanding clear articulation and enunciation..., a conductor is generally responsible for coherent interpretation of musical works.

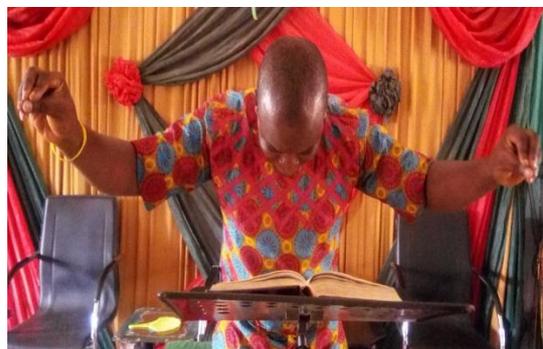
Randel's concept of conducting is comprehensive as it captures the diverse roles of the conductor. From another perspective, Bengtson (1996:23) opined that conducting is a universal type of nonverbal communication, with specific gestures and movements that are generally interpreted in the same way conducting skills of expressive conductors communicate a vast array of information. Bengtson's concept of conducting suggests that its nuances are readily understood universally. However, there are conducting techniques that are generally different from the techniques documented in the conducting literature. Although conducting is a universal art, its techniques are not always interpreted the same way because conductors have different sets of gestural techniques, and most ensembles need mutual familiarisation with a conductor's gestures to understand and interpret them. This study shall demonstrate how the conducting gestures of one conductor may not be the same as the gestures utilised by another. Concerning those mentioned above, this research regards conducting as a non-verbal act utilised in directing performances, unifying the performers, and evoking musical responses from ensembles.

### **Overview of Communication in Choral Conducting**

The word "communication" according to Adetutu (2016:25), the word "communication" can be verbal or non-verbal. He further buttresses verbal communication when messages or information are exchanged or communicated through words. He further presents Bovee's positing view on verbal communication: "Verbal communication is the expression of information through language which is composed of words and grammar." He further presents the view of Penrose that "Verbal communication

consists of sharing thoughts through the meaning of words (26)." So, from the researcher's view, verbal communication is the process of exchanging information or messages between two or more persons through written or oral words.

*Meaning of non-verbal communication:* Nonverbal communication is when messages or information are exchanged or communicated without using any spoken or written word. It could also be expressed consciously in the presence of others and perceived either consciously or unconsciously. Much non-verbal communication is unintended, and people are unaware they are sending messages. Non-verbal communication occurs through gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, physical proximity, and touching, to mention but a few. Some important definitions of non-verbal communication are as follows: Adetutu (2016:26), in line with the view of Bovee, opined that "non-verbal communication is communication that takes place through non-verbal cues: such as gesture, eye contact, facial expression, clothing and space and through the non-verbal vocal communication known as Para-language." Therefore, non-verbal communication occurs without words (body movements, space, time, touch, voice patterns, color, layout, design of surroundings). In [non-verbal communication](#) it is the exchange of information or messages between two or more persons through gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, proximity, touching, etc. and without using any spoken or written word. Non-verbal nuances that are utilized by the conductors includes the body language, kinetics and "palming-soling." Body language refers to the use of body art, namely, bowing, and "extended-gestures." Bowing: This is the lowering of the head towards the choirs. In "Communicative conducting," bowing is used to indicate "fine." In respect of the study, Plate 1 is a photograph of a conductor, bowing.



*Bowing in "Expressive Conducting":* During bowing, the head is lowered gradually towards the choir thus signaling to the choirs that the performance is coming to an end. At the end of the bowing, the choir stops vocal production, thus bringing the performance to a close (Source: Field survey, 2019).

The "Gestures" among the conductors observed, conducting features the extension of gestures beyond the grasp of standard conducting texts, these gestures are referred to as "extended-gestures"; they are "clorothands", "thumbing", "tipping-pulling", and "waiting-hands".

*"Clorothands":* This is a gesture involving alternated rolling of folded right and left hands over each other. It is used by the conductors to indicate a repeat of particular section or measure. In regards to the study, Plate 2 is a photograph of "clorothands",



*Plate 2 "Clorothands" in "Communicative Conducting" (Source: Field survey 2019).*

The "communicative conducting" technique is not without observable effects in their performances. The technique prompted repetition and modulation among the choirs. The responses of the choirs and

instrumentalists to the gesture allude to the effectiveness of the gesture as "thumbing" was followed by the choirs' returning accurately to the hitherto performed passage of their song, thus underscoring their understanding of the gesture. When directed towards the instrumentalists, the "keyed" instrumentalists modulate to the next key as rehearsed.

*"Tipping-Pulling"*: This gesture refers to pulling the right and left hands apart, with touching thumb and index finger. From the meeting point of the conductor's left and right hands, each index finger, touching "tip-to-tip" with the thumb are pulled apart, gradually. Plate 3 is the photograph of a conductor pulling his hands apart, with touching index finger and thumb to indicate stop.



Plate 3 *"Tipping-Pulling"*: (Source: Field survey, 2019)

*"Waiting-Hands"*: This gesture refers to the raising of hands, with the tips of the fingers pointing upward and with the palms opened towards the choirs. The gesture is used to indicate vocal rest, during instrumental introduction, interlude or silence. The gesture is sustained for the duration of the rest. In respect of the study, plate 4.5 shows the picture of "waiting-hands" in their conducting.



Plate 4 *"Waiting-hands"* (Source: Field survey, 2019)

Gesture is used in performance by the conductor to indicate loudness" to the choir or the instrumentalists, The gesture features the two arms widely open and the two palm facing the conductor. This action indicates that the choir should sing loud.

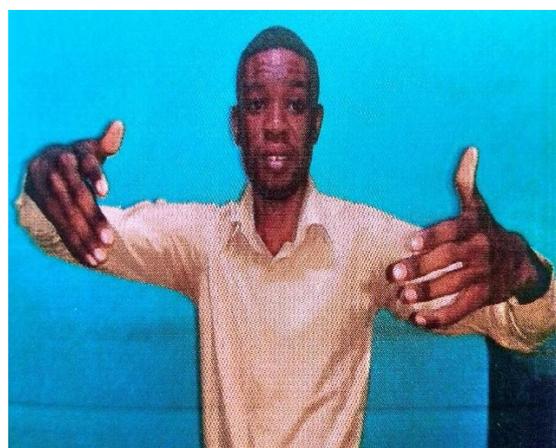


Plate 5. *Forte (Loudness)*

Gesture is used in performance by the conductor to indicate piano" to the choir or the instrumentalists. The gesture features the two palm facing down towards the choir or the instrumental group. This goes along with the body language as shown in the diagram below. This action indicates that the choir should sing soft during the performance.



Plate 6. *Diagram showing Piano (Soft)*

## **Energetic Expression:**

The body language below also indicate an energetic singing style in a particular section of the musical peace. In this particular style, the two hands are folded with the arms open wide and the shoulder slightly raised up to indicate “with energy”. *Plate 7. Diagram showing Energetic Expression.*



## **Elements of improving a conductor's practical communicative skills**

There are three elements to consider when improving a conductor's practical communicative skills. Those elements include gestures, facial expressions and body language. Gesture refers to the movement of elbows, arms, and hands as a unit and in coordination. The arms may or may not be independent. Conductors must be very careful with gestures because specific gestures (or lack of gestures) could cause vocal tension in the singers. It is also necessary to communicate intention through gestures. Gestures are not only beating tempo and showing dynamics; they must express something to get the singers' attention. As Durrant (2009:331) says, "The quality and nature of communication through gesture is fundamental in the choral conducting and musical learning context and contributes to the development of effective musical leadership".

Facial expression: Facial expression is complementary to gesture and a significant factor in the expressiveness of the conductor. Various choral music educators say conductors should attend to facial

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fit into six (6) categories, namely: beat, direction, emphasis, speed, size, and placement; noting that these six elements can be combined in different ways and form the core of conductor's gestural language. The theory applies to this study as it

expressions, which promotes expressive communication within the ensemble. The elements of facial expression include eyes, eyebrows, mouth, and facial muscles in general. Facial expression is essential to establish a connection and communication, visual and general, with the choir. If the singers feel supported by the conductor, they collaborate for a better interpretation. Before starting to gesture, getting the choir's attention through facial expressions and creating an atmosphere among the singers is essential. Facial expression gives information that is additional to the gesture.

Body language: This is complementary to gesture as well. A shrunken body does not help sing. An open-body position is better for conducting and expressing music. We can express many things nonverbally through body language, and the conductor can use it for several purposes. Breathing is essential in body language; the conductor must breathe with the choir, which is a way of communication. However, the conductor should be meticulous because excess body movement can cause problems. With too much movement, singers may think the conductor is overdoing it or is disturbing the music. It is essential to have enough control over the body.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on Marrine's (1992) "Theory of Gesture and Musical Communication" In an attempt to explain how gesture functions as non-verbal communication in music, Marrine (1992) describes how conducting gestures are constructed from motion and shows how gesture could be detected and reconstructed through the use of sensing technology and software models. According to Orru (2015:13), Marine regards conducting as a particular instance of gestural language which moves sequentially through a series of patterns, averring that the patterns have both discrete and continuous elements that

recognises conducting as a gestural language that utilises beat, direction, emphasis speed, size, and placement, which applies to this research. Notably, the progenies mentioned above of gesture are utilised in several ways to indicate

preparatory beat, cue cut and other conducting details. It follows that an analytical study of gestures used by church-based conductors in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, will investigate the various aspects of gestures.

### **Gesture in Communication**

Some scholarly works have been undertaken on gestures and communication; for example, Orru (2015:13), in a study on gestures in communication among aphasia patients, observes that speech therapists rarely analyse gestures when using a client with aphasia. This disregards the growing body of knowledge suggesting that language and gesture are part of the same or two highly integrated systems. They undertook the study to determine whether the gesture of participants with aphasia provided information about the participants' language system. They reported that iconic gestures produced by the participants reflect the breakdown of their language system and manifest similarity with the gestures utilised by non-aphasia patients while making a speech, adding that some gestures used by the patients were symbolic of the messages captured in a speech by non-aphasic patients.

This study confirms that gestures communicate, not only in conducting but also in language generally, that aphasia patients could communicate through gestures. According to Orru (2015:14), Psychologists and linguists have debated the relationship between languages and gestures over the years and proposed various models of the relationship. Although there is a debate regarding the exact details of the relationship, most researchers agree that gesture and language are related. Based on the literature mentioned above, it is a fact that gesture is related to language. That gesture could be utilised as a complement to speech by

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left hand gestures on perceptions of anticipated vocal tension in singers, Fuelberth (2004) utilised five (5) conducting conditions such as (a) left hand, fist gesture, (b) left hand, palm up; (c) left hand, palm down; (d) left-hand stabling

persons with or without speech impediment.

### **Gestures and Vocal Production**

Scholars have also studied the role of gestures in prompting specific vocal behaviour from singers. For example, Fuelberth (2003), in a study on the effects of gestures on singers' perception of inappropriate vocal tension, utilised varied gestures such as (a) hand-fisted gesture, (b) left hand, palm up. (c) left hand, palm down, (d) left-hand stabling, (e) left hand, sideways, phrase shaping gesture and reports that there were significant differences between the different gestures; that the sideways phrase-shaping conducting condition generated the lowest tension. Fuelberth's report confirms the ability of gestures to affect varied vocal behaviours and responses from singers. This implies that different kinds of gestures can evoke different responses from ensembles.

Scholars largely agree on the role of the left-hand gestures in effecting dynamics and supporting the right hand in conducting. For example, Kaplan (1985) and Green (1992) highlight the importance of hand gestures in conducting, stating that the left hand should not mirror the right hand but should be used for specific musical emphases such as cueing and the expression of crescendos and decrescendos through gestures that can prompt such vocal behaviours. This underscores that certain gestures, especially those emanating from the left hand, are usually utilised to prompt dynamic expression from singers. Apart from the stated role of the left hand in conducting, certain aspects of conducting may require the symbiotic use of the right-hand hand gestures in indicating beats and dynamics; however, how both hands are deployed may vary from one conductor to another. In a study of the effects of various

gesture; and (e) left hand, sideways, phrase-shaping gesture, with one hundred and ninety-two (192) participants to determine how a videotaped model of a conductor, utilising the five conducting conditions affect singer's perception of anticipated

inappropriate vocal tension. He reports that the findings in the study are similar to an earlier study in which student vocal responses to these gestures were videotaped and analysed (Fuelberth, 2003), adding that two exceptions to these similarities concern the palm up and palm down conducting gestures. It could be recalled that the analysis' in Fuelberth (2003) reveals higher tension levels for the palm-up gesture than the no-change condition, while the study under discussion contradicts that finding. In the analysis, the palm-down gesture generated the lowest tension rating of all conducting gestures. Further studies may be needed to decipher the relationship between higher pitches in singing and higher vocal tensions and to resolve the inconsistency observed in the studies.

Fuller (2000) studied the effect of various conducting gestures on choral singers' precision and expressiveness at phrase punctuation points. He sought to ascertain the effectiveness of preparatory gestures, subdivided patterns, and metric conducting patterns as gestural approaches to show spaces between phrases. He reports that various conducting gestures effectively punctuate phrases through an apparent cut preparatory gesture, sustained gesture and release. While his report aligns with the three stages in vocal production, namely, attack, sustain and release, it is crucial to ascertain the types of gestures used in prompting singing by different conductors. Generally, Green (1992), Kaplan (1922), Hylton (1995) and Garretson (1998) agree that the gestural role of the left hand is to convey expression and emphasis. It is noteworthy that strict adherence to the view could make conducting monotonous. While acknowledging the scholars' view, it is noteworthy that both the left and right hands play symbiotic roles, especially when

observing multiple performance requirements.

Garretson (1998), Hylton (1995), Roe (1983) and Kaplan (1985) state that the conductor should be knowledgeable in voicing that gesture may evoke desired vocal production. This implies that gestures in conducting should evoke, prompt and enlist good singing from choirs. Concerning good singing, Hykon (1995) and Smith et al. (2000) observe that the features of good singing involve good tone quality, accurate intonation, reasonable musical interpretation, flexibility, excellent breath support, and relaxed jaw, noting that poor intonation, breathiness, tension in the throat, and lack of phrasing constitute vocal problems that need the attention of conductors, concluding that gestures in conducting should aim at enhancing good singing and at correcting bad singing. From their perspective, a conductor's gestures can influence singing and control performance. Clarity and sense of purpose in singing manifest through non-verbal communication through gestures and effective verbal instruction (Fuelberth, 2004). Although the literature reviewed regarding gesture and vocal production highlights the role of gestures in prompting singing, the literature does not classify the forms of gestures used in conducting apart from the classification according to the hand that indicates the gesture.

### **Gesture in Conducting**

Gestures in choral conducting is an essential tool for conductors to express and communicate intentions to the choir in bringing out excellent results during a performance. The ability to effectively use and communicate to the choir through the conductor's non-verbal gestures depends on the conductor's understanding and skills in the musical techniques and compositional devices used in a particular musical score (Oladele, 2023). In an attempt to analyse and interpret the musical synthesis of

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expressive gestures using a device, Orru (2015: 17), elucidating the view of Nakra (1999), observes that using a device to collect data from six subjects consisting of three professional conductors and three student-conductors, during twelve hours of rehearsals and performances in an American University reveals that analysis

of thirty-five (35) significant gestures reflect intuitive and natural gestural tendencies. He then reports that the muscle tension characteristics of the conductors' gestures correlate with the conductors' respiration/personal manners and phrasing. It could be understood that the correlation between the conductors' respiration and

phrasing reflects the effect of performance on the conductors' manners.

In seeking to analyse both symbolic and expressive gestures, Kolesnik (2004) undertook a study on conducting gesture recognition, analysis, and performance systems and proposed a system. The system provides tools containing features for identification, classification, and performance by conducting gestures through continuous recognition of right-hand gestures. The gestures are incorporated into a real-time gesture analysis and performance system. Like Nakra (1999), Kolesnick assigned the task of analysing gestures to a technological device. Notably, arts are human acts; assigning such roles to devices reduces man's role in the musical space. Although this researcher is not averse to the use of technology, it is the view of this researcher that human-based analysis of gestures is in tandem with music as a human act.

Some gesture analysis systems have been developed over the years; most projects primarily concentrate on tracking tempo and amplitude indicating gestures but disregard expressive gestures and individual mapping techniques for expressive gestures that vary from research to research. According to Kolesnik (2004), there is a clear need for a uniform process to analyse both indicative and expressive gestures. In meeting their objectives, the authors presented a conducting gesture recognition system based on the Hidden Markov Model (HMM) process. Training and recognition procedures are applied toward both right and beat amplitude indicative gestures; thus, continuous recognition of right-hand gestures is incorporated into a real-time gesture analysis and performance system. This technological study contributes towards

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Against the reported inhibitors, French (2013) lists ten correct conducting gestures as:

- (1) keeping the palm(s) down when conducting with some exceptions
- (2) listening to the ensemble rehearsal trial without singing or humming,
- (3) giving instructions

upgrading the devices utilised in gestural analysis, especially with its inclusion of the capability for identifying both indicative and expressive gestures. However, the study could not identify gestures beyond their indicative and expressive forms. Apart from analysing the indicative and expressive forms of gestures, this study shall identify and analyse the origin of the gestures used in conducting. Furthermore, the engagement of technological devices in analysing gestures and conducting beats further computerises the already technologically saturated music industry. A human analysis of gestures used in conducting could better identify, analyse and classify the gestures used in conducting.

While analysing the gestures utilised in conducting, French (2013) observes that not all gestures are required in conducting, stating that:

The top ten inhibitors of conducting gestures as (1) Conducting downbeats with the palm(s) up, (2) Singing melody and harmony lines while the ensemble is playing, (3) Yelling instructions while conducting the ensemble, (4) Using a strict beat pattern monotonously, using too many preparatory beats and (5) Counting off, stopping the ensemble too often (6) Talking too much, sing the left hand to mirror the right hand excessively, (7) Keeping one's eyes on the score, lack of eye contact with the ensemble, (8) Using gestures that are too large; over conducting and over cueing: (9) Bending over for piano dynamics or squatting for "subito" piano and beating time and (10) Neutral facial expression which does not express the music (French, 2013:6)

using posture-gesture mergers and facial expressions versus yelling, (4) studying the score and developing gestures to show the music instead of beating time, (5) using only one or two beat preparatory beats without counting off, (6) using gestures and facial

expressions to communicate information instead of stopping and talking, (7) developing gestures for the left hand through the use of conducting etudes, (8) increasing score study and conducting practice so that the score is internalised, (9) less is more when it comes to the size of conducting pattern and gestures, (10) focusing on showing the music through conducting gestures and facial expressions. (French, 2013:7),

Although French's report transcends gestures, the study provides an insight into what he considers wrong and right gestural practices in conducting. This view aligns with the canon of the instructional materials contained in standard conducting literature. However, the study does not report the different effects of the two identified sets of gestures on ensemble performance. Few studies have been concerned with the invention of technological devices that could analyse gestures regarding tempo, precision, expression and the hands where such emanate. None of these efforts is geared towards a comparative analysis of the gestures analysed in different Churches. Analysing the gestures used by different conductors is capable of unavailing the distinct gestures and the reasons behind their utilisation globally.

### **Influence of Active Communication on Creative Approach to Conducting**

Creativity in conducting is an essential manifestation of specific characteristics of creative individuals, and his/her driving force makes a difference in choral performance. Subsequently, an imaginative approach to doing things unexpectedly other than how they are utilized to be done is conjured (Aremu, 20221). To be creative, one needs to be able to view things in a new way or from a different perspective. One must come up with fresh options or possibilities, among other things. The conductor is expected to be bold in introducing the necessary flexibility to achieve a better performance in choral music for worship because only change is

constant. The conductors adopt a creative approach in choral conducting to interpret music pieces differently from strict adherence to the composer's current prescriptions. The conductor induces the singers to go beyond the usual way of interpreting a piece of music to bring in more dynamic expressions and meaning to raise the spirituality and ecstasy levels of the congregation or worshippers. Col. T C Eru was a notable proponent and practitioner of this approach to choral music performance in the contemporary Nigerian Church. According to him, creative conducting recreates a piece of music and makes it new for every new occasion. Idamoyibo articulates that Col Eru, in his early days;

He was known more as a pianist/organist, but his creative and excellent conducting prowess marked his later days. His favourite piece was the Hallelujah chorus, composed by George Frederick Handel, which he enjoyed conducting all seasons. Due to his belief in what he called Creative Conducting," 'Hallelujah chorus' was always a new piece each time he conducted it because he would change the dynamics many times in new directions (Idamoyibo, 2013:15)

Idamoyibo further states that Col. Eru's creative conducting style and top-notch musical interpretation standards earned him precious international gifts and commendations from Europe and America.

As a sequel to the position of Idamoyinbo (2013) and drawing inference from the opinion of the respondents (conductors) selected for this study, it is evident that the conductors find "restricted conducting" inadequate in directing their musical performances. Hence, they broadened their style to include an extension of verbal and non-verbal techniques. This researcher-conductor notes in this study that a creative approach to conducting depends on an individual's flair and training. Training in this context does not imply a degree in music but includes training under notable conductors. Not all the conductors of the

church choirs selected for this study possess any academic degrees in music but have been practising the art of conducting over the years. They all have their way of expressing creative interpretations of music pieces. They have not learnt conducting under a notable conductor, but they developed their skill under some knowledgeable choirmasters. They pay attention to beat patterns, cueing techniques, counting of notes values, teaching approach, and voice drills.

### **Verbalisation as conductor's choral tool in communication**

This involves the use of verbal minutiae in conducting. The conductors utilised various kinds of verbalisation observed. These are whispering, numerical counting, para-language, and spoken instruction. Whispering refers to muted verbal utterances the conductors use to conduct their choirs. During this, the instructions are softly communicated to the choirs in a manner that the choirs understand, without the communication being audible to the audience. Whispering is used by the conductors at any point in their performance to remind the choir of dynamics, correct errors and communicate inspiration. Numeric counting is the counting of numbers utilised by the conductors to initiate and regulate tempo and meter and unify vocal attack. It is often observed at the beginning of their performance and during tempo changes. Para-language means using exclamatory remarks such as 'ah' in conducting. It is used to remind choristers of the need to breathe before and to be ready for an attack. Spoken instruction refers to the un-mistakable clear instructions used by the conductors in conducting. While a few spoken instructions are engaged while working

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choristers may also affect effective communication during the performance. The interviewee's opinions agree with the writer's position when he also submits that it is not too good for the conductor to introduce a strange gesture to the singers, especially on the performance day, because it can mutilate the performance. He also underscores the conductor's attitude of being carried away by the choir's response

with the choirs, others are used to prompt the audience's participation in the performance.

To demonstrate effective communicative conducting during the performance, the conductor brings to bear an impressive interpretation of the selected pieces according to some musical signs and commands indicated by the composers and some new ideas introduced by the conductor after a careful study of the text, punctuation, melody and harmony of the pieces. The conductor demonstrates how a creative approach can be adopted to resolve the problem of imbalance of voice parts where the insufficient number of singers in certain parts creates such problems in choral performance. The approach is equally applied to interpret the selected choral pieces in a well-expressed and dynamic performance suitable for worship.

### **Findings**

Ogunlade (2024) noted in Factors Affecting Effective Communication in Choral Conducting that many conductors lack a mental image of the musical interpretation of the music performed. Before rehearsal, a comprehensive score study must be finished to enhance the interpretation level of any musical work. Aremu (2024) agrees with Odusanya that successful communication is enhanced when a conductor conveys a clear understanding of the message they hope to convey and embodies it before beginning a concert. Ojo-Yido (2024) supports the idea that one of the things influencing successful communication in choral conducting performance is the conductors' inability to focus on the performance because of chorister distraction. Okunola (2023) underscores that the lack of a good relationship between the conductor and

during the performance, which could distract the ensemble.

The conductor's gestures, facial expression, and body language were also observed by Ogunlade (2024); in response to the question of how these variations affect the choir, the conductor stated that the conductor's artistic ability to conduct is a significant determinant of the variations in the choir's response during a performance.

He observed that the vocalists are highly perceptive to various conducting techniques; they value a relationship with the movements, expressions on the conductor's face, and body language. They feel more assisted by the conductor when they see musical intentions conveyed through gestures, facial emotions, and body language than when these expressive cues are missing. Niyi-Ojo (2023) buttresses Ogunlade that the singer wants information from the conductor in several ways, including musical details and interpretative proposals. Ayantoyibo (2024) also elucidates that when the conducting lacks expression, the level of attention decreases, and they think that the conductor is unsure.

In furtherance to the discussion on differences in the gestures, facial expression, and body language of the conductor influence the choir, Ojo and Niyi-Ojo (2023) agree that once the choristers are used to the conductor's gestures, facial expression and body language of a particular conductor, it is capable of eliciting good response for the choir, but bringing in a new different gesture or an expression they are not used to during rehearsal may cause chaos during performance. Dada (2023) buttresses Ojo that how the conductor expresses musicianship ability through gestures, facial expression, and body language to interpret and establish the mood of the music is highly influential to the choir. According to Ige (2019), gesture and facial expression differences give the choir more confidence and cohesion to sing.

Ojo-Yido (2024) agreed that it inspired the chorister to sing with inspiration. However,

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the piece of music. Ojediran (2023) also understands that too much attention on the piece or music sheet side talk during rehearsal negatively affects the performance. He also agreed with Ojo-Yido and Dada (2023) that the conductor's lack of eye contact could affect effective communication in choral performance.

Dada and Okunola specifically suggest that the irregularity of the choristers in the rehearsal may negatively affect the ensemble. Ojo-Yido (2024) viewed it

the choir should be familiar with the conductor's gestures to elicit correct and intended musical responses from the choir during the performance. Aremu (2024) explains that facial expression, body language and appropriate musical gestures play vital roles in choral performance and are major determining factors of a successful musical performance. It also brings beauty to every choral or orchestral performance as it aids meaningful conducting performance. Ayantoyibo (2024) opined that when gestures are correct, facial expressions are good, and body language has a meaningful influence on the choir, the choir's sound is better. The researcher believes that good gestures and conducting techniques are essential, but facial expressions and body language must complement gestures. Facial expression is essential to encourage singers and achieve a reasonable interpretation of the piece; it is fundamental in nonverbal communication. Body language must also be involved, participating alongside gestures and facial expressions. The body language must suit the feeling of the piece to transmit the interpretative intentions. These elements influence the sound of the choir.

Singers' Attitudes to Different Kinds of Non-Verbal Communication According to Oladele (2023), non-verbal communication is the main feature the conductor uses, but singers respond differently in most cases. The degree of good response or attitudes to nonverbal communication is directly proportional to the kin relationship between the choristers and the conductor. For singers, the conductor's facial expression, gesture, and body language help them sing and establish a connection. Ige (2024) also contributes that non-verbal communication helps to create more techniques and variety. It allows the choir or choristers to interpret

differently based on his experience and noted that Choristers not paying may not be serious about their actions. Choristers may not be seeing the conductor due to sitting arrangements and the lack of provision of a conducting stand (podium) for the conductor so that the choir can see. It is, therefore, pertinent to note that visual communication is essential before and during the performance. Adequate nonverbal communication brings the

conductor closer to the choir, and the choir's reaction is positive in all aspects.

Techniques of Eliciting Musical Response in Choral Music Performance, as observed by Ojo (2023), note that great composers knew what they wanted; the interpreter must have the means at his disposal to grasp the composer's intentions; music must be read with knowledge and performed with imagination every note and word that is printed. The conductor must, therefore, develop the skill of capturing the mood of the music to be performed, shaping the dynamics, colour the tone, Mold the musical articulation, driving the rhythm, contouring the meter and also expressing the form of the music by bringing out the high points of pieces, subdue moments, saving the conductor's boldest gestures for climate peaks. Oladele (2024) also claims that the conductor should develop a good relationship with all his/her choir members. The conductor should prepare very well before the rehearsal and be able to train group leaders among his/her choir members. The writer believes that the conductor should develop the necessary conducting skills to aid good choral singing and good expression towards excellent performance, as well as a great-trained ear, good knowledge of harmony, and pleasant sight-reading knowledge.

## Conclusion

Effective communication in choral or instrumental music requires sending and receiving information between the conductor and the choral group. The conductor may deliver a message with interference when he/she fails to prepare before the rehearsal, leading to ambiguous

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## Recommendations

In order to realise the impact of this study, it is at this moment recommended that:

(a) There is a need to review basic conducting concepts en route for allowing practices in the field to adequately unveil and impact the basic concepts in conducting towards capturing certain conducting practices adaptable for practical communicative approaches to conducting both Western and African choral works in a

decisions in front of the ensemble. These anomalies hamper communication in conducting due to the reception of the unclear information that occurs in the delivery by the conductor.

Moreover, ensembles may encounter dilemmas translating a director's message because of perceptual impedance made by every part's experience, band position, and director recognition. Obstruction can likewise represent an intensive arrangement concerning a conductor that does not meet the perceptual needs of the choral group. Changing leading motions and developments, giving verbal input, and enabling time for individuals to adjust to an individual directing style will adequately encourage correspondence and a similar beneficial outcome on the choral experience of the conductor, artists, and gatherings of people. Given the effectiveness of conducting practices, further studies are required to ascertain the rate at which conductors utilise effective conducting performance methods. Also, the relationship between the gestural nuances and universals in sign language, conducting techniques, performance practices across genres, and the relationship between "extended conducting" and practices in directing African musical arts. It is significant to expand the frontiers of conducting to include the "extended conducting" techniques. The mode of conducting to be utilised in directing a given musical performance will then be a function of the concerned music's performance practices and the conductor's preference(s). All aforementioned attests to standardised and extended technical options before a conductor, especially while conducting in regions where music transcends sound.

concert, church worship, and social gathering.

(b) Standard texts in conducting are still pinned to the "Classical" ideas, thus excluding contemporary practices in

conducting. There is a need to update literature with contemporary practices to reduce the lacuna between literature and practices in conducting.

(c) Having observed that the scope of extended gestural and extra-gestural practices used in conducting church choirs provides the opportunity for the training of conducting students in order to keep them abreast with realities in the field. Therefore,

### **Oral Interview**

Mr Ojo Yido (Music Director, Okelerin Baptist Church, Ogbomoso), January 19, 2024.

Mr. Ayoola Ojediran (Music Director, Caretaker Baptist Church, Ogbomoso), February 19, 2024.

Mr. Toyin Ige Male (Music Director, Oja-Oba Baptist Church, Ogbomoso), January 19, 2024.

Revd. Akinola Ojo. (Music Minister, Greater Glory Baptist Church, Ogbomoso), November, 18, 2023.

Revd. Bisi Dada. (Music Minister, Odo-Oru Baptist Church, Ogbomoso), August 19, 2023.

Revd. Clara Okunola. (Music Minister, New Spring Baptist Church, Ogbomoso), November 25, 2023.

Revd. Dr. Aremu, Damaris. T (Lecturer, Faculty of Church Music, The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso), January 20, 2024.

Revd. Dr. Julius Dele Ogunlade (Adjunct Lecturer, Faculty of Church Music, The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso), January 20, 2024.

Revd. Dr. Mary Niyi-Ojo. (Lecturer, Faculty of Church Music, The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso), February 08, 2023.

Revd. Sola Ayantoyinbo. (Music Minister, Aromole Baptist Church, Ogbomoso), February 19, 2024.

Revd. Sunday Olawumi Oladele. (Music Minister, Owode Baptist Church, Ogbomoso), November, 18, 2023.

It is pertinent to note that conducting students should undergo compulsory supervised ministry experience (SME) or internship in church choirs to experience the dynamics and creativity in the sub-discipline.

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