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# **WOMEN CONDUCTORS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF GENDER, FAMILY, ‘THE BODY’ AND DISCRIMINATION**

By

Loucia Lazarou, MA

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD

Department of Music

Department of Geography

University of Durham

**2016**

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to develop a broader appreciation of women's experiences of conducting, focusing on issues concerning embodiment, body language, clothing and so forth in order to place emphasis on their life experiences. The research is based upon thematic analysis (TA) of qualitative interviews conducted with women conductors living in the UK ( $N=8$ ) alongside detailed Media Content Analysis (MCA) of data derived from online magazines, online newspapers, online blogs and Internet articles. The results reveal prevalent gender discrimination, bias, sexism and misogyny against women in the conducting profession. Specifically, six broad themes emerged through the data analysis. These are: 1) gender discrimination (TA and MCA suggest that gender bias, discrimination, sexist and misogynist comments and attitudes still occur within the conducting profession); 2) factors that influence women conductors' career development (TA suggests that families as well as a musical background of women conductors have motivated them to pursue and develop a musical career); 3) achieving balance (TA and MCA support that a balance between professional and personal life can be difficult to achieve); 4) clothing (TA and MCA suggest that clothing choices are very important for women conductors, affecting them personally in terms of how they are perceived by other musicians and/or audiences); 5) the conducting body (TA and MCA conclude that gender is not a factor affecting women's bodily communication; however, their gestures may be perceived differently by people); and 6) conducting and leadership (TA and MCA suggest that the concept of the male 'tradition' is the main factor that has prevented women conductors from being seen as great leaders, therefore, women lack the experience and practice to develop their leadership abilities). Taken together, these factors highlight the continuing struggle that women experience in conducting today and provide an insight of how they cope with their profession.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and foremost, I want to thank my advisors. I deeply appreciate Prof. Bennett Zon who has continuously contributed his time, ideas, and support to make my Ph.D. experience productive and stimulating. I feel that it has been an honour to be a Ph.D. student for my second supervisor, Dr. Rachel Colls and I am thankful for the excellent example she has provided as a successful woman in feminist fields. The joy and enthusiasm she has for this research was contagious and motivational for me. Prof. Zon and Dr. Colls have equally helped me to complete this degree, not only professionally but also humanly, even during very tough times in the Ph.D. pursuit.

In addition, I would like to thank Durham University, and specifically Durham Music Department that have greatly contributed to my personal and professional time in the UK. I gratefully acknowledge the help College of Hild and Bede provided to fund a year's accommodation, and awarded additional funding for this study through the Caedmon Ceolfrid Trust in Durham. In addition, I would like to show my appreciation to the Student Union's Hardship Fund in Durham, which assisted for this study's expenses for a year. I am also immensely thankful to Leventis Foundation that has funded this research for two years and fundamentally assisted to the completion of this study.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family for all their love and encouragement, particularly my parents, who raised me with a love of music and for allowing me to realize my own potential. For the loyal presence of my brother Pavlos in my life and his never-failing sympathy for what I do. I am also grateful for my loving, cheering, and patient friends whose faithful support during all the stages of this Ph.D. is so appreciated. Thank you.

Loucia Lazarou

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It is the study of music and gender that has put music's worldly meaning back on the musicological map.<sup>1</sup>

### *1.1 Rationale*

The conductor has always been the ultimate and most prestigious commander of the concert stage. According to Bartleet, it is this sense of power which, in the nineteenth century, was a reflection of masculine characteristics and patriarchal values that has led the conducting profession to be non-inclusive towards women.<sup>2</sup> Gender discrimination, misogyny and sexism are the main prejudices that women conductors have had to deal with. However, women wishing to become conductors and to be acknowledged have made great efforts and their continuous struggles have brought about change within the profession.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, women conductors were mostly showing their musical talents in private settings such as performing in front of friends and/or family members and very rarely in front of concert halls.<sup>3</sup> In the early 1830s, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805–47), for example, conducted a mixed ensemble of men and women and her own large choral-orchestral works at only private salons.<sup>4</sup> Although the late 19<sup>th</sup> century included many women conductors, such as Emma Roberto Steiner (?1852–1929) and Caroline B. Nichols (1864–1939), who were the first women conductors in the US to establish and maintain full careers, conducting opportunities increased with the all-women orchestras of the 1920s and 1930s, which also brought a shift from lighter

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<sup>1</sup> N. Cook, *Music : A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> B. L. Bartleet, 'Women Conductors on the Orchestral Podium: Pedagogical and Professional Implications', *College Music Symposium*, vol. 48, 2008, pp. 31-51.

<sup>3</sup> M. Edwards, 'Women on the Podium', in J. A. Bowen (ed.), in *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 220-227.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

music to symphonic repertoire.<sup>5</sup> Ethel Leginska, a concert pianist with a reputable international career, began conducting studies to improve her understandings of orchestration for her compositions, but was rapidly drawn to orchestral conducting. Unable to secure a position as permanent conductor, Leginska founded the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra (1926-27) of ninety men, and held a conducting post with Boston Women's Symphony Orchestra (1926-30).<sup>6</sup>

Another exceptional figure of women conductors is Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979), who had no connection with all-women orchestras. In spite of having less training than other women conductors, she became the most successful woman conductor to appear during the 1930s.<sup>7</sup> Within a few years she had become acknowledged as an important conductor, making appearances with Parisian orchestras, becoming the first woman to direct the Royal Philharmonic and the orchestras of Boston and Philadelphia, and one of the very few women to direct the New York Philharmonic and the National Symphony. Boulanger had also conducted for radio in England, France, Belgium and the United States.<sup>8</sup>

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more women entered the profession such as Grace Burrows, a violinist, music educator and orchestra conductor, who conducted the British Women's Symphony orchestra in Queen's Hall in London in 1934. The orchestra consisted of 80 players including few male instrumentalists.<sup>9</sup> In 1911, the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> M. Edwards, 'Women on the Podium', in J. A. Bowen (ed.), in *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 220-227.

<sup>9</sup> British Pathé, 'The British Women's Symphony Orchestra 1934', <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/the-british-womens-symphony-orchestra/query/Grace>, 1934, (accessed October 2016)

conservatoire-trained musician Ethel Smyth composed 'The March of the Women'.<sup>10</sup> A prolific composer, Ethel Smyth composed a wide variety of music including chamber music, chorals, instrumental music, and operas, as well as orchestral, piano, and vocal pieces. She conducted much of her music and broadcasted some of it. Ethel Smyth also wrote many books, plays, librettos (some in German), articles, and essays. Smyth conducted 'The March of the Women' through the bars of her cell in Holloway prison using a toothbrush being a militant suffragette.<sup>11</sup> This study's rationale relates to Smyth's toothbrush story and the struggles of early and current women conductors observing their experiences and their fight against discrimination.

From a personal perspective, the baton has always fascinated me. When that medium sized 'stick' is waved, the most prominent instrument of all is being played: the conductor is 'playing' the whole orchestra. The myth of the authoritarian, austere and strong-minded maestro controlling everyone under his baton has shadowed my own musical steps, through my short career as an orchestral player and, later on, as a conductor. Until very recently, every person I ever saw on the podium was a man wearing a black tailcoat, with an austere and proud look on his face, totally confident in his ability and skills to lead a group of musicians to success. It was not until I decided to research and learn more about the profession that I came to realise that the *maestro* myth is flawed in many ways. Why should a conductor's charisma, leadership, gestures, musicianship and role be considered as exclusively masculine traits?

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<sup>10</sup> C. St John, V. Sackville-West, and Kathleen Dale, *Ethel Smyth: A Biography*, London: Longmans, Green and co, 1959, p. 316.

<sup>11</sup> F. Maddocks, *Women composers: Notes from the musical margins*, [website], 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2011/mar/13/london-oriana-choir-women-composers>, (accessed April 2012).

Elias Canetti states that the expressive performance of a conductor is the ultimate display of power and it contradicts the history of the role of women in society.<sup>12</sup> According to Edwards, not only does the conceptualisation of the traits of power and authority fit sociologically with a man but also these traits have often been considered undermining if applied by a woman.<sup>13</sup> In addition, Edwards argues that women conductors in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were considered unable to maintain discipline and, consequently, no-one wanted to ‘risk’ proposing women conductors for orchestral music, an attitude that resulted in women being outnumbered by men. Although, this sounds like a weak excuse for gender discrimination in the field of conducting, the role of agencies, fundraisers, board members, music critics and music educators has clearly had an impact on the selection of women conductors for high status positions.<sup>14</sup>

Books such as *The Maestro Myth* by Lebrecht<sup>15</sup> provide little information on women conductors, whereas *The Cambridge Companion to conducting* by Bowen<sup>16</sup> contains a chapter (by M. Edwards) dedicated to women conductors. However, a single chapter is not representative of their achievements and struggles throughout the centuries. In addition, *Women and Music: A History* by Pendle<sup>17</sup> and *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship* by Solie<sup>18</sup> focus on diversity and aim at giving equal treatment to women (and minorities) in music. The historical overview given in these books regarding women composers, instrumentalists and opera singers suggests that women have been somewhat invisible in musical life, traditionally oppressed under Westernised patriarchal relations. However, there is limited

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<sup>12</sup> E. Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, New York: Seabury Press, 1962, p. 394.

<sup>13</sup> Edwards in J. A. Bowen, pp. 220-236.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> N. Lebrecht, *The Maestro Myth: Great conductors in pursuit of power*, Citadel Press, 2001.

<sup>16</sup> J. A. Bowen, (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to conducting*, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

<sup>17</sup> K. Pendle, *Women and Music: A History*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992

<sup>18</sup> R. A. Solie, (ed.), *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, University of California Press, 1995.

information on women conductors. Ironically, the earliest proof of a woman conductor can be found as early as 1594, when a woman conducted an all-female ensemble in San Vito in Ferrara.<sup>19</sup>

According to Lawson, the success of several women conductors in the 1970s suggested wider acceptance, although the limited opportunities they were given and continuing male domination in the field were two of the main factors that prevented them from becoming prominent figures in the conducting profession.<sup>20</sup>

This study aims to explore the path that women conductors have had to pursue over the centuries, briefly discussing the traditional status of women, their role and experiences in society in the Westernised world up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Young women have traditionally been expected to become home-keepers, bear children and carry out domestic chores and, in many instances in the past, they were also involved in agriculture. Denied their right to vote and be politically active for centuries, they were forced to obey the existing social and behavioural patterns.<sup>21</sup>

The art of conducting was one of the last doors of opportunity for a professional career for a woman but the growing presence of contemporary women orchestral and choral conductors is now vital and obvious. Jagow argues that women were not encouraged to play professionally since this was considered 'unsuitable' by society. It was believed that women were not adequately skilled to play instruments other than the

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<sup>19</sup> M. Edwards in J. A. Bowen, p. 220.

<sup>20</sup> Kay D. Lawson, 'A woman's place is at the podium' *Music Educators Journal*, vol. 70, no. 9, 1984, pp. 46-49.

<sup>21</sup> M. Gangl and A. Ziefl, 'Motherhood, Labour Force Behaviour, and Women's Careers: An Empirical Assessment of the Wage Penalty for Motherhood in Britain, Germany, and the United States', *Demography*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2009, pp. 341-369.

piano.<sup>22</sup> Their experiences have been met with a notable and peculiar silence, not only on the part of academics but of music historians as well.<sup>23</sup>

Regarding the conducting profession, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in particular, conductors were idolised by the concert-going bourgeoisie and grew in popularity and reputation, resulting in the profession being recognised as a specialised field, in contrast to women's roles of home keeping, bearing children, and performing domestic duties. Indeed, women were encouraged to cultivate only domestic music making.<sup>24</sup>

Bartleet points out that the appearance of a woman conductor on the stage, in front of a paying public at the time, would undoubtedly have undermined the social status of her family.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, even the most gifted women were expected to confine their musical activities to the home, particularly if they were married and/or mothers. Such private roles were unmistakably different from the public roles required of male orchestral conductors.

In education, it is noteworthy that male and female students studied separately. The Paris Conservatoire, founded as a result of the French Revolution, may have adopted promising ideas influenced by the Age of Enlightenment but, in 1879, boys and girls were obliged to use different staircases and entrances to the faculties, they were housed in separate quarters and taught on different days.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, while women musicians were permitted to take the course in written harmony, few schools allowed them to

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<sup>22</sup> S. M. Jagow, 'Women Orchestral Conductors in America: The Struggle for Acceptance. A Historical View from the Nineteenth Century to the Present', *College Music Symposium*, vol. 38, no. 3, 1998, pp. 126-145.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> B. L. Bartleet, 'Behind the baton: Exploring autoethnographic writing in a musical context', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, vol. 38, no. 6, 2009, pp. 713-733.

<sup>25</sup> B. L. Bartleet, 'Reflections on Females Conducting,' in E. Mackinlay, D. Collins & S. Owens (eds.), *Aesthetics and Experience in Music Performance*, Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005, pp. 235-242.

<sup>26</sup> N. B. Reich, 'Women as Musicians: A Question of Class' in R. A. Solie, (ed.), *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, Berkeley, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, pp. 125-148.

take courses in composition because, until 1822, not many women had showed talent in composition, or at least no historical evidence for this existed at the time. Those who graduated from the conservatoires could only teach girls, whereas male professors were allowed to teach students of both sexes.<sup>27</sup> Thus, education for women was not easily accessible nor was it accepted in the same way as it was for men.

For example, *The Magazine of Music* presented the following sexist comment in 1892, arguing that women wind players were unsuitable for a professional career:

Lovely woman inevitably ceases to be lovely when she tackles a wind instrument. One has indeed heard a female cornet player, but only the possession of a singularly equable mind could enable one to sit out the performance.<sup>28</sup>

Reported examples such as the above and the following by Sir Thomas Beecham in 1942 reveal how women musicians were perceived whereas some of the restrictions they faced included the following attitude:

I do not like, and never will, the association of men and women in orchestras and other instrumental combinations... As a member of the orchestra once said to me, 'If she is attractive I can't play with her, and if she is not then I won't.'<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, biased media coverage has been a problem not only for female instrumentalists but women conductors too. They would often be pressurised by others (peers, teachers, colleagues) to become choral rather than orchestral conductors, making it more difficult for future generations to have female role models to look up to. The American Margaret Hillis is known for her choral work, even though she

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 125

<sup>28</sup> P. Gillett., *Musical Women in England, 1870-1914: Encroaching on All Man's Privileges*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

<sup>29</sup> WNYC, 'The Position of Women in Music', [web blog], *NYPR Archives & Preservation*, 18 November 2013, <http://www.wnyc.org/story/women-in-music/>, (accessed May 2013).



conducted orchestral works with great success. When she wanted to pursue a career as an orchestral conductor, her composition teacher suggested:

You are a conductor, but there is no place for a woman in orchestral conducting...There [choral conducting] a woman is acceptable. Otherwise you're going to go down the drain.<sup>30</sup>

Although limited research has been conducted regarding women conductors, researchers have tended to draw attention to particular issues concerned with the experiences of female conductors (usually professionals) coming from America, England, Europe, Australia and Asia, such as motherhood, clothing and gender discrimination, related to pedagogical and professional aspects of conducting.<sup>31</sup>

Bartleet examined the difficulty of balancing motherhood and conducting, especially for professional conductors who travel a great deal.<sup>32</sup> Later, she investigated the pedagogical and professional implications of conducting, suggesting that current conducting pedagogy and curricula need to be re-examined, together with the norms and the customs of the profession, and to take a more inclusive and in-depth look into women's lives and experiences.<sup>33</sup>

Janet Sue Brenneman explored how gender issues continue to influence the experiences of professional female choral conductors.<sup>34</sup> Christina Williamson Elkins examined the emergence of women in music and the challenges they face upon entering the conducting profession, such as a limited access to education and a lack of

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<sup>30</sup> Lawson, pp. 46-49.

<sup>31</sup> Bartleet, (2009), pp. 713-733.

<sup>32</sup> Bartleet, B. L. 'Conducting Motherhood: The Personal and Professional Experiences of Women Orchestral Conductors', *Outskirts: Feminisms along the edge*, vol. 15, 2006, available at <http://www.outskirts.arts.uwa.edu.au/volumes/volume-15/bartleet>, p. 1-23.

<sup>33</sup> Bartleet, (2008), pp. 31-51.

<sup>34</sup> J. S. Brenneman, 'Footsteps of My Own: Gender Issues that Influence the Formative Experiences of Exemplary Women Choral Conductors', 'PhD Thesis', Michigan State University, 2007.

role models, availability of positions, music reviews, separation of personal and professional life, and authority.<sup>35</sup> This study builds upon the aforementioned research and aims to undertake further matters regarding women conductors and analyse them into more depth within six broad themes using a combination of qualitative analyses (discussed in Chapter 3). Having presented these studies, it is imperative to mention feminism and how it has been facilitated within discourses to address problematic issues within the discipline of musicology and promote equality.

### ***1.2 Feminism and feminist musicology***

One's social sexual identity, or gender, is a very central concept in music, linked with interactions between the sexes.<sup>36</sup>

This section aims to briefly discuss how the work of feminists (male and female), which marked the beginning of liberation for many people, including female conductors, helped them find the courage to stand up to oppression, patriarchy, sexism, misogyny and racial and/or gender discrimination.<sup>37</sup> This section will lay the foundations of literature in feminism and feminist musicology before stating the problem in the following section.

An important asset of feminist discourse is the distinction of the words 'sex' and 'gender'. In her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler, the philosopher and pioneer in feminist theory, defines sex as 'a biological configuration of bodies', and gender as 'the rationalisation of power portrayed and

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<sup>35</sup> C. W. Elkins, 'Conducting Her Destiny: The Making of a Maestra', D.M.A. Thesis, University of North Carolina, 2008.

<sup>36</sup> E. Koskoff, *Women and Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective: (Contributions in Women's Studies)*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1987, pp. 262.

<sup>37</sup> B. Hooks, *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate Politics*, Cambridge: MA, South End Press, 2000, pp. 1-6.

expected of those bodies'. Butler argues that the categorisation of these words may give us the result from the repetition of the acts, which constitute identities.<sup>38</sup>

Butler's clear definitions of sex and gender were vital for musicologists to grasp the difference between the two terms and how they affect musicology and its sub-disciplines. Similarly, in this study, the terms sex and gender are of great interest, particularly gender, which inevitably emerges in each of the chapters of analysis (4-9), exploring its relationship with conducting. In addition, this study supports Butler's argument that gender is a social construct and that discrimination against women was due to patriarchal and oppressive societies affecting women musicians and, in this project's specific case, conductors, amongst other minorities.

Concerning women in the field of music, Suzanne G. Cusick argues in *Feminist Theory: Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem* that the matter of self-identification is raised, if and when becoming a feminist. She is referring to women born under a variety of circumstances, which affect different aspects of their development such as class, race, ethnicity, sexuality or religious beliefs. In bringing up the question of 'How we think about music', she emphasizes the fact that, if we wish to study and combine the interactions of music theory and feminist theory, we need to change our viewpoint.<sup>39</sup> Cusick's point of view on 'how we think about music' can be linked to this study and can suggest that discourse on feminism, music and conducting needs to be discussed in more depth and observed thoroughly so that we can examine the profession in non-stereotypical or biased ways.

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<sup>38</sup> J. Butler, *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*, New York: Routledge, 1999, pp. 2-7.

<sup>39</sup> S. G. Cusick, 'Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem', *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 32, no. 1, 1994, p. 9.

According to Gould, the 1970s feminist movement exposed the inequalities experienced by women with respect to their gender, and stereotypical sex roles prevented both women and men from completing their full development as female and male members of society.<sup>40</sup>

According to Brenneman, feminism as a critique disordered the ‘conventional ways of thinking about and doing music performance, musicology, critical theory and music education’.<sup>41</sup> In musical culture, the social construction of gender has been influential and it has been a challenge of gender studies in music. Feminist researchers in music and music education strongly believe that women have been marginalised and, in many instances, are absent from music history.<sup>42</sup> Citron suggests that the relationship between women and music is due to the lack of access in a patriarchal world,<sup>43</sup> Bowers and Tick place emphasis on the exclusion of women by historians<sup>44</sup> while Hinely believes that the problem of this absence of women is, rather, historical and cultural.<sup>45</sup>

Correspondingly, this study, having a feminist character, will claim that such stereotypical beliefs continue to exist in the conducting profession. If, as Cusick suggests, we change the way we think about music, then the inclusion of women in all fields of music will not be viewed in comparison with male composers and considered

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<sup>40</sup> E. S. Gould, ‘Feminist theory in music education research: grrl-illa games as nomadic practice (or how music education fell from grace)’, *Music Education Research*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2004, pp. 67-80.

<sup>41</sup> Brenneman, pp. 16-17

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 18-23

<sup>43</sup> M. J. Citron, ‘Feminist approaches to musicology’, in S. C. Cook & J. S. Tsou (ed.), *Cecilia reclaimed: Feminine perspectives on gender and music*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994, pp. 15-34.

<sup>44</sup> J. Bowers, and J. Tick, *Women making music: The western art tradition, 1150-1950*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1985, pp. 3-4.

<sup>45</sup> M. B. Hinely, ‘The uphill climb of women in American music: Conductors and composers’, *Music Educators Journal*, vol. 70, no. 9, (1984b), pp. 42-45.

substandard to the male canon<sup>46</sup> but will rather un-mute women's work in every music field.

### ***1.3. Statement of the Problem***

Studies examining the experiences of women conducting bands and orchestras suggest that female musicians have had 'slow progress toward recognition but conducting was an even less obtainable goal'.<sup>47</sup> Hinely's (1984a & 1984b) research has shown that women feel the need to prove themselves praiseworthy in this traditionally male role in music performance as well as in music education, and have experienced more problems in the areas of personnel management, assertiveness, commanding personality and exceptionally high levels of musicianship, and trying to achieve the respect of their ensemble, choir and orchestral members.<sup>48</sup> However, according to Bartleet, if women conductors adopt too much 'masculine authority' they are characterized as 'butch' while if, on the other hand, they reveal too much of their femaleness they are seen as being weak or too sensitive.<sup>49</sup>

The stereotypical physical and mental qualities that men and women perceive as requirements for an orchestral conductor are another reason why women do not gain high status positions in world-renowned orchestras, as suggested by Jagow.<sup>50</sup> In fact, the imbalance in the numbers of men and women in band conducting is evident in Jackson's study.<sup>51</sup> Feather's research on women band directors shows that they

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<sup>46</sup> Brenneman, p. 40.

<sup>47</sup> Hinely, (1984b), p. 42

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Bartleet, (2008), pp. 713-733.

<sup>50</sup> Jagow, pp. 126-145.

<sup>51</sup> C. A. Jackson, 'The relationship between the imbalance of numbers of women and men college band conductors and the various issues that influence the career aspirations of women instrumental musicians', Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, East Lansing, 1998.

conducted smaller bands than those directed by men and were paid less by both private and public institutions.<sup>52</sup>

In the educational setting, Bartleet argues that most conductors are taught by men, and as noted previously, women conductors and their contribution to the field are almost non-existent in the relevant literature. According to Hetzel and Norton<sup>53</sup> and VanWeeldon<sup>54</sup>, there is a need to note that there also seems to be a gender imbalance in faculties as well as in the academic world. If women were taught and mentored by men, wouldn't that bring implications, both pedagogical and professional, to women on podiums? Men have had the authority to create conducting books and cultivate traditions from the beginning of a trainee conductor's career to the height of his profession, based on a 19<sup>th</sup> century ideology filled with notions of patriarchy.<sup>55</sup>

Concerning the absence of women conductors on the musicological map, conducting books (see Lebrecht and Bowen) make limited reference to women, their experiences and contributions to the field. In those cases where women conductors are mentioned, Lawson suggests that it is in reference to their gender and not necessarily to their music making.<sup>56</sup> According to Bartleet, the lack of attention and questions from theorists and musicologists regarding the musical, performative, embodied, creative and relational experiences of women conductors should be more visible in academic circles.<sup>57</sup>

With regard to research studies, Bartleet states that any large-scale research into women conductors' experiences in the orchestral profession has been minimal and a

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<sup>52</sup> C. A. Feather, 'Women band directors in higher education', *MW*, vol. 2, 1980, pp. 388-410.

<sup>53</sup> L. R. Hetzel, and K. Norton, 'Women choral conductors at the collegiate level: Status and perspectives', *College Music Symposium*, vol. 33, 1993, pp. 23-40.

<sup>54</sup> K. Van Weeldon, 'Demographic study of choral programs and conductors in four-year institutions in the United States', *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 2003, pp. 20-30.

<sup>55</sup> Bartleet, (2008), pp. 713-733.

<sup>56</sup> Lawson, pp. 46-49.

<sup>57</sup> B. L. Bartleet, (2008), pp. 31-51.

very limited number of scholarly publications and stories in the press have emerged.<sup>58</sup> However, discussions have focused on more public and professional issues, such as women's historical achievements, career paths, mentorships, and institutional barriers. Private issues, such as motherhood, body language, femininity, and clothing have rarely been documented; there has been little in-depth discussion in conducting or musicological discourse on matters such as gesture technique, authority, leadership and pedagogy.<sup>59</sup>

A small number of dissertations have been published concerning the experiences of women conductors, in addition to the limited literature on women conductors, such as Brenneman's *Footsteps of my own: Gender issues that influence the formative experiences of exemplary women choral conductors*, Elkin's *Conducting Her Destiny: The Making of a Maestra* as well as Sampson's thesis on *The influence of gender in choral conducting on expressive gesture and its interpretation*.

Moreover, the lack of research into the woman conductor's body on the concert stage would seem to be a vital missing element within the discourse of musicology. Bartleet, for example, argues that reviewers and critics consider women's bodies and their physical appearance as part of their femininity. Hence, a considerable number of compositions ask for a dominant conductor, a 'dictator', embracing a (surrogate) masculinity which enforces upon women conductors a Cartesian split of mind and body,<sup>60</sup> an issue under investigation in this research.

Feminist musicologists, open-minded scholars and academics admit that there are anomalies in the music world and that gender anxiety prevents women from

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<sup>58</sup> B. L. Bartleet, (2005), pp. 235-242.

<sup>59</sup> B. L. Bartleet, (2009), pp. 713-733.

<sup>60</sup> Bartleet, (2008), pp.31-51.

participating fully. The existing gender discrimination over who shall and can hold the baton remains a historical, societal, musical and existential puzzle, due to the lack of research and information in music history books.

To this end, few research studies are carried out on women conductors. It is therefore suggested that it is important to undertake a research study, which should aim to develop a broader appreciation of women's experiences in conducting regarding gender discrimination, women conductors' career development, balance, clothing, the conducting body and leadership.

#### ***1.4. Research questions and objectives***

The research questions of the project are as follows:

1. What is the nature of gender discrimination that women conductors experience?
2. What are the factors that may influence a woman's decision to pursue and develop a career in conducting?
3. To what extent are women conductors able to balance their professional and personal lives? How do they deal with becoming and being a mother when having a choir or an orchestra to direct?
4. How does clothing affect a woman's gestures or body language when conducting?
5. What are the perceived differences/similarities between female and male conductors' approaches to conducting according to women conductors (gesture, technique and body language)?
6. What are the assumptions, which inform what constitutes a 'good' female and a 'good' male conductor?



### *1.5. Content overview*

Chapter 2 presents the literature review regarding discourses in feminist musicology and relevant information on areas of study such as gender and the body. The issues arising in the literature review discuss in depth how issues of gender, body and sex concerning female conductors are linked to the art of conducting. The chapter also deals with the work of prominent feminist musicologists that have influenced the discipline of music and made more academics, music lovers, scholars and conductors change the way they think about the sex and gender of the conductor.

Chapter 3 provides details of the research methodology employed in this study. The methodology section details the development of the qualitative research. The advantages and the disadvantages of the research tools selected for this study are discussed. Data was gathered in the UK, including semi-structured interviews conducted with eight female conductors, and media and Internet reports regarding women conductors. Data was analysed by means of Thematic Analysis (TA) and on the principles of Media Content Analysis.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 consist of the analyses of interviews dealing with the experiences of eight female conductors in England. Six broad themes emerged and were presented in separate chapters: Gender Discrimination (Chapter 4), Factors influencing women conductors' career development (Chapter 5), Achieving Balance (Chapter 6), Clothing (Chapter 7), The Conducting Body (Chapter 8) and Conducting and Leadership (Chapter 9).

Chapter 4 deals with the matter of discrimination, a crucial issue for women in the profession, since it is argued that discrimination, sexism and misogyny still exist in

conducting. Interview and media content analyses will provide information that discusses the matters of discrimination in depth.

Chapter 5 examines the family motivation and encouragement women conductors receive to follow their chosen field, as well as dealing with matters of pedagogy and discrimination. The issue of professionalism and amateurism is also presented to understand how people – including conductors themselves – perceive this matter and how they feel about it, resulting in their advice to young female musicians wishing to pursue a conducting career.

Chapter 6 consists of the experiences of women conductors in their attempts to achieve balance within their partnerships and their marriages. Motherhood is one of the key issues of the chapter in which the participants share their experiences as mothers or non-mothers, combining conducting with motherhood or without it.

Chapter 7 includes the matter of clothing. It discusses how clothing can affect a conductor's gestures or technique, her essence on stage and her body language within the choices of how to dress during rehearsals and on stage.

Chapter 8 deals with the issues of body language on the podium, women on stage, their inner feelings about their bodily communication, the gestural aspect of conducting and their way of working, without feeling inadequate due to their appearance. The participants in this Chapter explain how they embrace conducting as an art form.

Chapter 9 involves the issues of leadership and additional attributes which make great conductors stand out. It emphasizes leadership, although matters of power and

authority are also discussed. It also introduces what the eight participants believe to be an additional quality for the ideal conductor.

In Chapter 10, a general discussion is presented of the main findings, which are referenced back to the literature review presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 10 further responds to the main research questions presented in Chapter 1. A number of conclusions from the studies are also discussed and further research recommendations are made concerning gender and conducting.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Introduction***

#### ***2.1.1 Foreword***

This thesis is based on interviews and media content analyses and more relevant literature is given in each individual chapter (4-9) to support the specific findings. Thus, the following literature review is kept relatively short, identifying key concepts and themes relevant to the thesis regarding conducting, such as feminist musicology, gender, body and performance. The structure of the empirical work is derived directly from the data and each chapter's data is organized thematically and contextualized within the relevant literature to the broad themes, exploring the key concepts and ideas in more depth.

#### ***2.1.2 Opening remarks***

In Chapter 1, the absence of women conductors within the musicological discourse was discussed in order to set the context of the research. Recent efforts by a number of academics, presented in order to point out discrimination against women conductors, were also highlighted. However, in order to move things on, a closer examination of gender with regard to women conductors is also required.

In this chapter, the terms 'sex' and 'gender' will be introduced, reviewed and discussed. The importance of understanding body language and embodiment as a prerequisite to understanding female conducting will be examined. In addition, feminism's contribution, through empirical research and studies, to acknowledge women's representation in music and conducting will be presented. Finally, the underrepresentation of women conductors in current musicological research is discussed.

## 2.2 Sex vs. gender

This section will provide a brief introduction on the definitions of the terms ‘sex’ and ‘gender’. The purpose of this section is to distinguish these two terms in an attempt comprehend that the sex and gender of conductors should not be viewed in the same light but rather discussed separately. This study gives emphasis to, and focuses on, the gender of women conductors and not on their assigned biological sex.

### 2.2.1 Sex

The American Psychological Association defines ‘sex’ by referring to a person’s biological status, usually categorized as male, female or intersex (i.e., atypical arrangements of features that usually distinguish male from female). In addition, a number of indicators of biological sex exist, including sex chromosomes, gonads, internal reproductive organs and external genitalia.<sup>61</sup> Eckert and McConnell-Ginet propose that the

sharp demarcation fails because there is no single objective biological criterion for male or female sex. Sex is based on a combination of anatomical, endocrinal and chromosomal features, and the selection among these criteria for sex assignment is based very much on cultural beliefs about what actually makes someone male or female. Thus the very definition of the biological categories male and female, and people’s understanding of themselves and others as male or female, is ultimately social.<sup>62</sup>

Over the decades, the emphasis by psychologists on biological differences, which sees male-female differences of cognition and behaviour as primarily a function of

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<sup>61</sup> APA Council of Representatives, *Definition of Terms: Sex, Gender, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation*, The Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients, , [website], 18-20 February, 2011, <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/guidelines.aspx>, (accessed January 2016).

<sup>62</sup> P. Eckert, and S. McConnell-Ginet, ‘*Language and Gender*’, (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 1-2.

hereditary physiological differences, has shifted to nurture, which perceives environment, especially socialisation, as a primary factor of our being and behaviour. Although this, too, is changing, since the 1960s the nurture view has tended to predominate in psychology, sociology and cultural anthropology.<sup>63</sup>

A handful of scientists, economists, politicians, journalists and educated people in a variety of fields and disciplines are interested in the differences between the sexes and they have been active in researching the biological differences to find out the truth and myths that lie in our DNA. The big question has always been the struggle between Nature and Nurture, together with evolutionary Darwinian theories and psychology. Biological and social determinism provide a more mutual way of looking into the depth of sexual differences between men and women.<sup>64</sup>

Ember suggests that biological differences are not simply 'genetic', 'hormonal' or a 'difference in chromosomes'. Instead, sex differences arise from past evolutionary and ecological pressures. Specific environmental and familial pressures favour particular complexes of physical, behavioural and physiological traits; these evolved phenomena are the proximate triggers of differences.<sup>65</sup>

Evolutionists support their arguments about sex differences, explaining that those alterations come from different selection pressures that were first established in primeval environments.<sup>66</sup> The evolutionary approach suggests that men and women,

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<sup>63</sup> S. Golberg 'Why Patriarchy?' *Gender Issues in group therapy, Eastern Group Psychotherapy Society*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2008, pp. 13-21.

<sup>64</sup> A. F. Sterling, *Myths of Gender: Biological Differences between Women and Men*, Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, 1992, pp. 3-60.

<sup>65</sup> Carol R. Ember and M. Ember, *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender: Men and Women in the World's Cultures*, New York: Kluwer Academic/ Plenum Publishers, 2003, pp. 3-33.

<sup>66</sup> L. A. Rudman and Peter Glick, *The Social Psychology of Gender, How Power and Intimacy Shape Gender Relations*, New York: The Guildford Press, 2008, pp. 11-15.

like all things, are fundamentally different psychologically and physically as part of evolutionary biology.

Many ideologies have changed since Eagly's social role theory in 1987, explaining how gender stereotypes are formed. Women were considered as child bearers; more nourishing, tender and kind than men, who do not always encompass a domestic role. Males were considered to be more aggressive and competitive; a factor related to physical bravery and leadership skills. Throughout history, while these social roles were reformed and women entered the workforce, stereotypes often remained, whereby women continued to keep the household along with their paid work. This is also what happened in women's musical life throughout the history of the mostly Westernised world; women musicians were confined to a private sphere, whereas men would have the freedom to compose, conduct and perform publicly.

Evidence gathered by Antoinette Brown Blackwell, who argued that men and women are equal,<sup>67</sup> and Eliza Gamble's about the superiority of the female sex,<sup>68</sup> supports different views contrasting other scientists' arguments that women are inferior and weak in comparison to men. Indeed, women and men are different and statements by socio-biologists, combining the approaches of both biology and sociology, state that it actually makes sense to think that the two sexes are different species.<sup>69</sup>

However, Sterling suggests that biological facts can actually predetermine our behaviour but our behaviour can alter our physiology.<sup>70</sup> The issue of patriarchy is still

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<sup>67</sup> A. B. Blackwell, *The Sexes Throughout Nature*, New York: Hyperion Press, 1976, pp. 100-144.

<sup>68</sup> E. Gamble, *Evolution of Woman: An Inquiry into the Dogma of Her Inferiority to Man*, New York: Putnam, 1893; Westport, Conn.: Hyperion, 1976.

<sup>69</sup> C. Smith-Rosenberg, 'The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles and Role Conflict in 19th Century America', *Social Research*, 1986, 39119721:652-78.

<sup>70</sup> Fausto-Sterling, pp. 3-60.

a vital aspect of our society, as male and female activists try to stop its effect on every form of discrimination. As Golberg argues,

all of the 1,500-5,000 societies (past or present, primitive, preindustrial, or modern) on which we have any evidence have associated hierarchical dominance with men and have been ruled by hierarchies overwhelmingly controlled by men.<sup>71</sup>

So, is male dominance and, hence, patriarchy, which has as its core prerequisite the biological sex of men, one of the main reasons why women conductors have been excluded from the profession? Should women be considered as equally competent to deliver prominent podium work as men? In other words, should biology matter?

### **2.2.2 Gender**

In order to distinguish biological differences from social/psychological ones and to talk about the latter, feminists appropriated the term 'gender'. Psychologists writing on transsexuality were the first to employ gender terminology in this sense. Until the 1960s, 'gender' was used solely to refer to masculine and feminine words like 'he/she'; however, in order to explain why some people felt that they were 'trapped in the wrong bodies', the psychologist Robert Stoller<sup>72</sup> began using the terms 'sex' to pick out biological traits and 'gender' to pick out the amount of femininity and masculinity a person exhibited. Feminists found it useful to distinguish sex and gender as this enabled them to argue that many differences between women and men were socially produced and, therefore, changeable. Hence, gender is a social construct and can be very different from our biological sex.

Gayle Rubin uses the phrase 'sex/gender system' in order to designate

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<sup>71</sup> Golberg, pp. 13-21.

<sup>72</sup> R. Stoller, *'Sex and Gender: On the Development of Masculinity and Femininity'*, New York: Science House, 1968, pp. 3-23.



a set of arrangements by which the biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention.<sup>73</sup>

Rubin employed the 'sex/gender' system to articulate that the locus of the oppression of women is part of social life<sup>74</sup> describing gender as the socially enforced separation of the sexes<sup>75</sup>. Rubin's reasoning was that, while biological differences are fixed, gender differences are the oppressive results of social interventions that dictate how women and men should behave. However, since gender is social, it is thought to be fluctuating and changeable by political and social modification that could ultimately bring an end to women's subordination. Moreover, Rubin suggests that feminism should aim to create a

genderless (though not sexless) society, in which one's sexual anatomy is irrelevant to who one is, what one does, and with whom one makes love.<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, Kate Millett suggests that gender differences essentially encompass cultural, rather than biological bases.<sup>77</sup> Millett suggests that feminine and masculine gender-norms are problematic and that gendered behaviour reinforces women's subordination, learning to be passive, oblivious, compliant and to offer emotional support to men.<sup>78</sup> For Millett, these social roles are merely learned and, therefore, once 'unlearned', equal societies could be created.

The French philosopher Simone De Beauvoir states that one is not born but rather becomes a woman; this may be interpreted as a claim about gender socialisation where

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<sup>73</sup> G. Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex', in L. J. Nicholson (ed.), *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975, p. 165.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. p. 159.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. p. 179.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. p. 204

<sup>77</sup> K. Millett, 'Sexual Politics', London: Granada Publishing Ltd, 1971, pp. 27-30.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. pp. 25-26

females become women through a process whereby they acquire feminine mannerisms and learn feminine behaviour. Simone de Beauvoir notes that, in all societies, men are defined as actors or subjects while women are defined in relation to men. De Beauvoir claims that

He is the Subject (hunter, farmer, and soldier); she is the Other  
(mother, mate, wife).<sup>79</sup>

Thus, the distinctive characteristic of femininity is characterised as alterity or otherness. This has been largely true in Western history, whereas it is not always found in all societies. Other authors have taken De Beauvoir's notion of *Subject* and *Other* and tried to explain certain traits of masculinity, femininity and extended or paralleled De Beauvoir's analysis.<sup>80</sup> Masculinity and femininity are thought to be products of nurture. Haslanger suggests that they are causally constructed and the mechanism of construction is social learning.<sup>81</sup>

Equally, according to Oakley, gender variety in society shows that gender is culturally determined; different and separated from our biological sex and that gender roles are learned rather than innate.<sup>82</sup> Judith Butler claims that gender is something we *do*, not something we *are* or *have*<sup>83</sup> and that sex and gender are both socially constructed. For Butler, sex assignment is always in some sense oppressive. For example, when the doctor calls a newly born infant a girl or a boy, s/he is not making a descriptive claim, but a normative one. People, then, engage in activities that make it seem as if the sexes naturally come as one or the other, and that being female or male is an objective feature

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<sup>79</sup> S. De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, New York: Vintage Books, 1989., p. xvi.

<sup>80</sup> E. A. Michaelson and L. M. Aaland, 'Masculinity, Femininity and Androgyny', *Ethos*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1976, pp. 251-270.

<sup>81</sup> S. Haslanger, 'Ontology and Social Construction', *Philosophical Topics*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1995, pp. 95-125.

<sup>82</sup> A. Oakley, *Sex, 'Gender and Society'*, London: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd., 1972, pp. 115-136.

<sup>83</sup> Butler, (1999), pp. 190-193.

of the world. This is what Butler means in saying that physical bodies never exist outside cultural and social meanings, and that sex is as socially constructed as gender. This appears to be due to Butler's general suspicion of classification: classifying sex can never be merely descriptive but always has a normative element reflecting the evaluative claims of those who are powerful. She suggests that conducting a feminist genealogy of the body is vital and that feminists should examine and uncover ways in which social construction and certain acts that constitute sex can shape our understanding of sexed bodies, what kinds of meanings bodies acquire and which practices and illocutionary speech acts 'make' our bodies into sexes.<sup>84</sup> In doing so, it will enable feminists to identify how sexed bodies are socially constructed in order to resist such construction, because, according to Butler, 'the way in which we understand gender actually changes the way we live gender. As we interpret ourselves differently, we also live ourselves differently'.<sup>85</sup>

Similarly to Butler, this study argues that humanity's way of normative thinking about the profession (eg. the sex of the conductor always being male), has determined people's views about women conductors. It additionally suggests that understanding gender is imperative to our understanding of women's bodies, leaving aside other normative cultural, social and physical meanings.

Contradicting Butler's view on sex and gender both being socially constructed, Stone argues that the social construction of both sex and gender does not make sex identical to gender. According to Stone, it would be more precise to say that claims about sex *imply* gender norms. That is, many claims about sex traits (such as 'females are physically weaker than males') actually convey implications about how women and

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<sup>84</sup> J. Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, London: Routledge, 1993, pp. 27-29.

<sup>85</sup> J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, 1999.

men are expected to act and behave. Therefore, claims about sex are not identical to claims about gender; rather, they imply claims about gender norms, although they may also imply that females are not expected to engage in very demanding physical activity and that they would probably not be good at it.<sup>86</sup>

As shown, gender and sex are claimed to be different by researchers and scholars explaining that the former is socially determined and the latter is biologically based. However, the distinction in this very complex scientific issue can be difficult to define. Women conductors born within these traditional gender roles have been underprivileged in comparison to men, through society's reinforcement of gender norms, depriving them of rights, power and resources. Traditional gender norms are a driving force behind their lower economic status, low literacy and education, poorer health outcomes and greater exposure to gender-based violence.<sup>87</sup> For this reason, this thesis aims to suggest that gender equality in conducting will empower women and girls to escape from society's assumptions about the way a man or woman should look and behave<sup>88</sup> and encompass the activities, responsibilities, and decision making that society has historically allocated to men and women within public and private spaces. The specifics may differ across societies, but no society assigns equal power or status to men and women.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> A. Stone, 2007, *An Introduction to Feminist Philosophy*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007, pp. 69-70.

<sup>87</sup> Margaret E. Greene and Andrew Levack for the Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG), *Synchronizing Gender Strategies: A Cooperative Model for Improving Reproductive Health and Transforming Gender Relations* (Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau, 2010).

<sup>88</sup> GLAAD, Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation (GLAAD), *Media Reference Guide, 8th edition*, [www.glaad.org/files/MediaReferenceGuide2010.pdf](http://www.glaad.org/files/MediaReferenceGuide2010.pdf), 2010, (accessed July 2015).

<sup>89</sup> Greene and Levack, (2010)

### 2.3 *The gendered body*

We could all be just people with various bodies.<sup>90</sup>

Taking into account the definitions of sex and gender, in this section, the emphasis will remain on gender, adding the concept of embodiment within the gendered body. Feminists often refer to the biological facts and experiences of women's bodies to develop theories of female embodiment. This section aims to introduce literature for the better understanding of the woman conductor's body within this profession.

Butler locates *gender* in the context of embodied performance,<sup>91</sup> developing a performative gendered and sexed identity and drawing a line between performance and performativity.<sup>92</sup> However, to avoid confusion, Butler's notion of performance has little to do with musical performance. For her, gender is constructed through one's own repetitive performance of gender, and the structure or discourse of gender is bodily and nonverbal. Butler's theory of the gendered body does not accept a stable gender identity, claiming instead that the idea of identity is free-floating and not connected to an 'essence' but to a performance. Regarding the body and gender, Butler suggests that gender is

a stylized repetition of acts which are internally discontinuous [so that] the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> A. Ferguson, *Androgyny as an ideal for human development*, [website], <http://www.angelfire.com/or3/tss/andro.html>, (accessed June 2015).

<sup>91</sup> S. Salih, *Judith Butler*, London, 2002, p. x..

<sup>92</sup> J. Butler and S. Salih, *The Judith Butler Reader*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2003, p. viii.

<sup>93</sup> Butler, (1999), pp. 191-192.

To say that gender is performative is to argue that gender is real only to the extent that it is performed.<sup>94</sup> Butler's theory of performativity applies easily to female conductors because the essence of gender and its anticipation in social and cultural contexts and life produces, and poses as, an outside self: the outside self of a genderless conductor, not a man's and not a woman's self. This contribution of gender performances, repetition and rituals, can result in a naturalisation of bodies, a constitution of meaning.<sup>95</sup>

Butler argues that gender has neither origin nor end; that it is "un-natural". Gender is an effect of repeated acting, one that produces the effect of a static or normal gender while obscuring the contradiction and instability of any single person's gender act. Hence, there is no necessity for a relationship between one's gender and body. She hypothesises that the socially constructed aspect of gender performativity is possibly most obvious in a drag performance. Drag performances offer a rudimentary understanding of gender binaries in their emphasis on gender performance. Butler realises, however, that drag cannot be regarded as an example of subjective or singular identity, suggesting that

there is a 'one' who is prior to gender, a one who goes to the wardrobe of gender and decides with deliberation which gender it will be today.<sup>96</sup>

For Butler, gender is a pre-existing subject and performativity contests the very notion of that subject.<sup>97</sup> She argues that the act that one does and that one performs is, in a

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Butler and Salih, pp. 132-133.

<sup>96</sup> J. Butler, 'Critically Queer', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1993, pp. 17-32.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

sense, an act that's been going on before one arrived on the scene.<sup>98</sup> Hence, the gendered body can be

an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again.<sup>99</sup>

In addition to the above, Young cites Toril Moi who suggests that gender needs a renewed assessment. She claims that the lived body taken from existential phenomenology can lead towards the theory of sexual subjectivity without the danger of biological reductionism or gender essentialism.<sup>100</sup>

According to Butler and Moi, women learn communication through specific bodily movements. Young similarly suggests that women were not using their body as whole but only certain parts of their body that made them feel more comfortable, hence, they were taught by their families to prefer confined spaces, maybe in an effort to protect themselves, saving their bodies from harm.<sup>101</sup> Women conductors could be seen as an example of this specific restriction of using their bodies on pedestals and podiums, having societal restrictions as to how they should use their bodies to communicate through movement. As Young suggests,

feminist reflection begins from the socio-historical fact that women's bodily differences from men have grounded or served as excuses for structural inequalities.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Butler, (1999), p. 151.

<sup>99</sup> J. Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins UP, vol. 40, no. 4, 1990, pp. 519-531.

<sup>100</sup> I. M. Young, *On Female Body Experience, Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 12.

<sup>101</sup> Young, p. 34.

<sup>102</sup> Young, p. 4.

For Young, women were often told to be cautious of getting hurt or dirty and to be aware of everything that is dangerous for them. Spatiality and gender are closely associated when we speak about closed spaces. Women are usually intertwined with their wombs and vaginas, whereas men are more used to being in outdoor scenes connected with their phallus.<sup>103</sup> All the above suggest that sexist oppression in contemporary society has, in a way, physically oppressed woman, entrapping her in patriarchal societies. Could this be the result of mistrusting their bodies, having lacked practice at using them differently, whilst performing tasks such as conducting?

In terms of conducting and the gendered body, Michel Foucault's 'regulatory ideal' (cited in Butler) and Judith Butler's 'normative heterosexuality,' applied within this profession, could suggest that sex is an ideal construct, which is forcibly materialized through time. In *Bodies That Matter*, Butler suggests that,

'sex' not only functions as a norm but is a part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs.<sup>104</sup>

Butler's argument might give us a clearer understanding of how women are somehow governed and controlled by their assigned biological sex, giving women a suppressive internal implication of how they perceive the world, underestimating their spectrum of abilities, as it is the case in many female musicians' lives and experiences. Butler's argument applies to female conductors and the pressure and expectations society has put on their sex; her argument that gender is something we *do* and not something we *are* could be a starting debating point for any discipline involving sexist or discriminatory behaviours and for our understanding of our embodied experiences.

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<sup>103</sup> Young, p. 45.

<sup>104</sup> Butler, (1993), p. 1.



Hence, women conductors should not be judged or criticised according to *who* they are (such as their biological sex) but rather seen about *what* they *do*.

In terms of gender and conducting, Butler emphasises the gender's constructed nature in order to fight for the rights of oppressed identities. In this case, women conductors' identities may not conform to the strictly enforced rules that govern normative heterosexuality and societal standards. If those rules are not natural or essential, she argues, those rules are historical and may rely on their continual reference or enactment by individuals; thus, they can be challenged and changed through alternative performative acts.<sup>105</sup>

### ***2.3.1 The gendered performer***

Gender is an impersonation; becoming gendered involves impersonating an ideal that nobody actually inhabits.<sup>106</sup>

Besides distinguishing gender and sex, embodiment is one of the core issues in this study, due to its significance to the female performer's embodiment in conducting.

Merleau-Ponty suggests that embodiment can be interpreted in the following way:

In so far as I have hands, feet, a body, I sustain around me intentions which are not dependent upon my decisions and which affect my surroundings in a way which I do not choose. These intentions are general... they originate from other than myself, and I am not surprised to find them in all psycho-physical subjects organized as I am.<sup>107</sup>

Merleau-Ponty points out that the body is our general medium for having a world. He proposes that the lived foundation of this human-world entanglement is perception,

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<sup>105</sup> Butler, (1990), pp. 519-531.

<sup>106</sup> L. Kotz, 'The Body You Want: Liz Kotz interviews Judith Butler', *Artforum*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1992, pp. 82-89.

<sup>107</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, C. Smith (translator), Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962, p. 440.

which, in turn, he relates to the lived body. He suggests that a body simultaneously experiences, acts in, and is aware of a world that normally responds with immediate pattern, meaning, and contextual presence. Therefore, embodiment defines our body as a natural and physical entity through societal, private and cultural practices such as female or male clothing,<sup>108</sup> and conducting is one of the practices that could relate to the embodiment of those natural and physical terms.

Linda Nicholson interprets the female performing body through socio-historical differentiation, rather than maintaining a distinction between biological sex, embodiment and gender.<sup>109</sup> The conducting profession, as the main issue in question in this research, could be the lived body in focus. Reflecting the above, Young suggests that:

If we conceptualize individual identities as constituted by the diverse group identities – gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and so on – there seems to be a mystery about both how persons are individualized, and how these different group identities combine in the person. With the idea of the lived body there is no such puzzle. Each person is a distinctive body, with specific features, capacities, and desires that are similar to and different from those of others in determinate respects. She is born in a particular place and time, is raised in a particular family setting, and all these have specific sociocultural histories that stand in relation to the history of others in particular ways.<sup>110</sup>

In addition, Young proposes that queer theory could bend gender meanings, aiming to loosen them from the normative polarities of hegemonic masculinity and femininity.

Queer theory forms its philosophy upon feminist challenges to the idea that gender is

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<sup>108</sup> J. Pilcher and I. Whelehan, *50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies*, (1<sup>st</sup> edition), SAGE Publications, 2004, p. 9.

<sup>109</sup> Young, p. 17.

<sup>110</sup> Young, p. 18.

part of the essential self and upon gay/lesbian studies' close examination of the socially constructed nature of sexual acts and identities, expanding its focus to encompass any kind of sexual activity or identity that falls into normative and diverse categories.<sup>111</sup> Young's argument about 'uninhibited intentionality' explains how the female body

projects the aim to be accomplished and connects the body's motion toward that end in an unbroken directedness that organizes and unifies the body's activity.<sup>112</sup>

For female conductors, this feminine bodily motion applies when it often separates this mutually conditioning relation between aim (our goal) and enactment (our performing actions). In those motions, which, when properly performed, require the coordination and directedness of the whole body towards some definite end, women frequently move in a contradictory way. In performing a physical task such as conducting, the woman's body carries her toward the envisioned aim, often not straightforwardly, but rather 'circuitously,'<sup>113</sup> which is a frequent consequence of feminine hesitancy due to patriarchal constraints, societal norms, and oppressive and/or sexist behaviour.

Women conductors and their lived bodies, as a unified idea of a physical body acting and experiencing in a specific socio-cultural context, could relate to refusing to distinguish nature and a culture that, as suggested by Young, grounds a distinction between sex and gender. Taking into consideration Young's and Moi's ideas, the idea of the female and male body could be applied and lived, at least involving music, through the following argument:

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<sup>111</sup> J. Kemp, 'Queer Past, Queer Present, Queer Future', *Graduate Journal of Social Science*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2009, pp. 3-23.

<sup>112</sup> Young, p. 37.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. pp. 36-37.

The body as lived is always enculturated: by the phonemes a body learns to pronounce at a very early age, by the clothes the person wears that mark her nation, her age, her occupational status, and in what is culturally expected or required of women. The body is enculturated by habits of comportment distinctive to interactional settings of business or pleasure; often they are specific to locale or group. Contexts of discourse and interaction position persons in systems of evaluation and expectations which often implicate their embodied being; the person experiences herself as looked at in certain ways, described in her physical being in certain ways, she experiences the bodily reactions of others to her, and she reacts to them. The diverse phenomena that have come under the rubric of “gender” in feminist theory can be re-described in the idea of lived body as some among many forms of bodily habitus and interactions with others that we enact and experience.<sup>114</sup>

Nonetheless, feminism has long been fighting against stereotyping and discrimination and has made tremendous steps to achieve equality for all, whereas feminist musicology sheds light on many forms of bias, misogyny and sexism within the discourse of music.

#### ***2.4 Feminist Musicology***

The absence of a feminist critique in music is not necessarily owing, however, to an anti- woman bias. Until there exists some way of dealing with music in general as a social discourse, gender will remain a non-issue.<sup>115</sup>

As seen in Chapter 1, the work of feminists and feminist musicologists has helped move towards more equal treatment between men and women. It has assisted in

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid. p. 17.

<sup>115</sup> S. McClary, ‘The Blasphemy of Talking Politics During Bach Year’, *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception*, Cambridge, 1987, pp. 13.62.

standing up against forms of oppression and being more inclusive with people of different races, ethnicities, sexualities or religious beliefs as well as in distinguishing between the terms 'sex' and 'gender'. This section will build upon arguments made in the Introduction, referring back to the work of Butler, Solie, Conlon, Citron and others, and introduce more feminist musicologists and their views in greater detail.

In *Feminist Scholarship: Kindling in the Groves of Academe*,<sup>116</sup> five authors research scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s in the fields of education, anthropology, literature, history, and philosophy in order to assess the extent of feminist scholarship. In the course of that research, Bowers suggests that the challenge of feminist scholarship involves the revision and adjustment of paradigms in fields and disciplines as well as of the basic methods and assumptions that have obstructed the inclusion of women in various subjects of research.<sup>117</sup> Similarly, this study presents in following chapters how and why women conductors have been excluded in the field of conducting and were under-represented in music history, while having to deal with sexism and misogyny due to the male domination of the profession, and it introduces ways that women conductors have found to establish themselves in this field.

One of the first musicological references to reflect feminism is found in the work of Theodor Adorno (i.e. *Philosophy of New Music* in 1949). The German philosopher, sociologist and musicologist Theodor Adorno's work on critical theory stresses the reflective assessment and critique of society and culture by applying knowledge from the social sciences and the humanities. Critical social theory is (1) directed at the totality of society in its historical specificity (i.e. how it came to be constructed at a

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<sup>116</sup> E. C. DuBois, *Feminist Scholarship: Kindling in the Groves of Academe*, University of Illinois Press, 1987.

<sup>117</sup> J. M. Bowers, 'Feminist Scholarship and the Field of Musicology: I', *College Music Symposium*, vol. 29, pp. 81-92.

specific point in time), and (2) improves society's understanding by integrating all the major social sciences, including geography, economics, sociology, history, political science, anthropology, and psychology.<sup>118</sup> Critical theory (having its origins on Marxism) came to stir the waters in the discipline of musicology; it exposed an ideology in everyday life, criticized and examined societies and cultures. Adorno was one of the founders of critical theory and has contributed a lot to Joseph Kerman's objections about the 'critical' point of view that music needed.<sup>119</sup> Critical theory, from a musicological approach, studies the political, historical and sociological status of understanding music in depth, along with critique in many subjects, such as the absence of women in music.<sup>120</sup>

In addition to the above, Nicholas Cook suggests that women do not lack musical skills and that their under-involvement in musical activities is due to music history's wrong way of teaching.<sup>121</sup> Although these mentioned musicologists are not explicitly feminist, they do orientate their work in a similar ideological fashion. Nicholas Cook also reflects a general tendency towards feminist musicological readings, for example, in his book *Music: A very short Introduction*, where he describes women playing music domestically not professionally – not for money, but for friends and family – implying that women were deprived of their rights to evolve as talented musicians. Cook cites the relatively modern sexism of Vienna Philharmonic conductor Herbert Von Karajan:

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<sup>118</sup> M. Horkheimer, 'Critical Theory Selected Essays', New York: Continuum Pub, 1982, pp. 283-284

<sup>119</sup> J. Kerman, *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology*, Harvard University Press, 2009, pp. 17-149.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Cook, p. 102.

A woman's place is in the kitchen and not in the symphony orchestra.<sup>122</sup>

Examples such as the above will be presented throughout this thesis (specifically in Chapter 4) drawn from literature, interview extracts and media content, exhibiting a similar attitude towards women musicians and conductors.

The performing female body enters musicological discourse principally through feminist musicology, beginning with Jane Bowers<sup>123</sup> and Nancy Reich, both part of an expanding profile of academic and doctoral studies on women and music in a number of doctoral dissertations and Masters Theses in 1980s.<sup>124</sup> These include a large number of works on women and music, such as biographies, historical studies, articles and books on female musicians, interviews with living musicians, recordings of women composers, as well as anthologies involving issues of women and music. With regard to performance and the female body, Green suggests that there is a vast majority of listeners who assume what they hear. For example, for female vocalists, the audience will immediately make the connection between a woman's voice and her biological sex or gender.<sup>125</sup> Similarly, this study will discuss in the following chapters how audiences and/or listeners view men and women conductors in terms of embodiment, clothing and gender, as well as observing whether stereotypical beliefs are still present in conducting and how these impact women conductors' lives.

Regarding historical settings, Bowers argues that women were always active in music history, composing, performing, teaching, publishing, as well as supporting, funding and establishing musical organisations. Similarly, the argument of women being

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid. p. 107.

<sup>123</sup> Bowers, pp. 81-99.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> L. Green, *Music, Gender, Education*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 39.

under-represented and discriminated against is the basis of this study. Like Bowers, this study argues that biological sex and gender binaries were among the determining elements to an individual's access to musical education, musical instruments, employment opportunities and musical institutions, making the history of music different when it comes to men and women. Hence, this study argues that the spheres of gender-assigned musical activities differed for men and women, limiting females to mostly private spheres, sometimes barring them from pursuing any musical career, let alone that of a conductor.

In addition, Bowers proposes a direction for research in feminist musicology deriving from other disciplines, such as anthropology, towards a better understanding of gender being socially constructed. In addition, ethnomusicology will broaden our knowledge of musical cultures, and enables us to relate more to political and social tendencies, intellectual and philosophical climates as well as to the technological and industrial effects that affect music making in various cultures.<sup>126</sup> Bowers suggests that sociology can help us determine how power differs in the hands of women and men when it comes to the labour market and institutions (discussed in Chapter 9). Women's history, for Bowers, is the field in which feminist musicology owes its biggest debt,<sup>127</sup> because

women historians showed that women were present and active at every moment and in every aspect of the past, and that the inclusion of women's lives has the power to alter the largest historical picture in significant ways.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> J. M. Bowers, 'Feminist Scholarship and the Field of Musicology: II', *College Music Symposium*, vol. 30, No 1, 1990, pp. 1-13.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*



Correspondingly, Treitler (1993) also questions the concepts of masculinity (something that is considered rational) and femininity (a sensual concept).<sup>129</sup> He explains the three senses of gender characterization from a feminist standpoint. The first sense is the celebration of the 'masculine' as the main line of European music history written by music historians since the eighteenth century; conducting was not an exception to that 'norm'. Secondly, he brings up the issue of women being 'mis- or un-represented' as a human group unable to judge and/or speak for themselves about the 'feminine' in music. The third and last sense of the gender characterisation in music to which Treitler refers is the mystical and mysterious categories of gender encountered at the outset and which were replaced with claims of categorisation of gender difference, directly connected with immediate feelings and experiences of sexuality.<sup>130</sup> He notes that these claims of gender characterisations

open again a Pandora's box of questions about musical aesthetics that used to be fiercely debated without resolution and about which there has been, in the mainstream of musicological activity, tacit agreement to let them lie.<sup>131</sup>

Similarly to Treitler and Bowers, Susan McClary, argues that musicology has largely ignored feminist scholarship.<sup>132</sup> According to McClary, feminist musicologists began to appear in music in the 1970s and their numbers have increased steadily ever since. This field of research, primarily circulated within a separate sphere, tolerated but largely ignored by the discipline's mainstream, and little is known of it outside musicology. As mentioned previously, since the 1980s, feminist musicology has

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<sup>129</sup> L. Treitler, 'Gender and Other Dualities of Music History', in Solie, R. (ed.), *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 38-45.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>132</sup> McClary, (2002)

widened its scope to include re-examinations of the canon and, as predicted, the introduction of such discourse into a discipline that has long resisted critical agendas of any sort has provoked widespread, often bitter debates.<sup>133</sup> McClary's feminist arguments in her early book<sup>134</sup> in a broader socio-political context, suggest that the traditional musicological assumption of the existence of 'purely musical' elements (divorced from culture and meaning, the social and the body), is an imperative factor used to overshadow the social and political necessities of the worldview that produces the classical canon, which is mostly appreciated by supposedly objective musicologists. Concerning McClary's point of view of not looking into strictly musical elements but rather including history and culture in musicological discourse, this study explores women's lived experiences, aiming to point out that women were – and still are – a dynamic part of musicology's world.

Furthermore, a significant step forward for feminist musicology came in 1982 with Carol Neuls-Bates's *Women in Music: An Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle-Ages to the Present*.<sup>135</sup> The voices of women such as Abbess Hildegard of Bingen, Clara Schumann and others resonate as they emerge from the wide range of materials in the book, containing letters, poems, diaries, novels and reviews that reveal women's accomplishments, not only as educators and patrons but also as composers and performers. Neuls-Bates shows how gender stereotyping brought an imbalance of women in comparison to men's musical careers, while reviews in the book reveal women's achievements not only as patrons and educators but also as composers and performers. For instance, Neuls-Bates reveals the letters to Fanny Mendelssohn from

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> S. McClary, *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

<sup>135</sup> C. Neuls-Bates, (ed.), *Women in Music: An Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages to the Present*, New York: Harper& Row, 1982.

her father and brother, indicating how powerful societal expectations were in keeping women from contributing as much as they might have done.<sup>136</sup> Similarly, in this study's following chapter (5), the role of motivation and environmental encouragement will be discussed in order to observe the impact they have on women's decision to follow a conducting career and detect if there is a change in the way people support (or not) their choices.

In 1986, the landmark of a chronologically arranged series of essays edited by Jane Bowers and Judith Tick, *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition* contributed to feminist musicology, presenting biographies of women composers such as Barbara Strozzi, Ethel Smyth and other outstanding performers and composers, as well as analyses of women musicians as a class. The book provides examples of music from all periods, including medieval chant, Renaissance song, Baroque opera, German lieder, and twentieth-century composition. Unlike most standard historical surveys, the book not only sheds light upon the musical achievements of women but illuminates the historical contexts that shaped and defined those achievements. The essays in the book prepared the ground for a more enlightened understanding of the distinctive contribution made by women to music's long history and slowly changing progress. Filling the gap in historical knowledge, Bowers and Tick examine women's minority status within music, evaluating how that status has affected their compositional output. The book challenges assumptions about music history, providing new information to make the reader realise how programmed s/he has been to accept a historical approach, which has neglected women's contribution. The authors argue that the boundaries of

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

music history must continually be re-examined and reviewed to gain new emphases and the research they provoke if the quest for historical truth is to be a successful one.

Furthermore, Karin Pendle's book *Women and Music: A History* also consists of a collection of essays contributing to feminist musicology. The book is designed to address and conclusively correct the white, high-art prejudice that characterised much previous scholarship, for it includes chapters dealing with women involved in traditional musics around the globe, as well as Western women of colour, or of the working class engaged in popular music. Pendle's book takes a critical step towards integrating gender as well as race, bringing the unseen women and men of the past into full view. Although the book refers to women conductors, I would suggest the information that is provided is not sufficient to properly identify all the reasons that women conductors are not properly placed on the musicological map.

The first piece of feminist criticism in a major musicology journal came from Marcia Citron in 1993 and her book on the musical canon, where women musicians explore the issues in gender and music in greater depth.<sup>137</sup> Citron argues that those who teach courses in women's music in Western society invariably encounter the question of whether a specifically woman's style in music exists. She states that there is general agreement that women have emphasised certain genres more than others and this could be the question of whether specific features of musical language – melody, rhythm, texture – bear the identifying stamp of a female musician. Similar to Citron's argument about a specific musical style by women, in a following chapter (8), women's embodiment in conducting will be discussed in order to observe how their body language, gesture and technique differ (or not) from those of their male counterparts

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<sup>137</sup> S. McClary, 'Reshaping a Discipline: Musicology and Feminism in the 1990s', *Feminist Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1993, pp. 399-423.

and, if the “stamp” of a female conductor is visible, how it is perceived by interviewees, audiences and the media.

In addition, Solie and several the scholars who contributed to the book *Musicology and Difference*, dispel the common misconception that gender studies concern only the recovery of women’s history in music. The fifteen essays that comprise the volume offer a mixture of ideas about the relationships among music, gender, and sexuality. Many of the essays draw heavily from a diverse body of writings, including feminist theory, literary criticism, cultural studies, gay and lesbian studies, anthropology and philosophy, opening the way towards a better understanding of issues such as embodiment and queer studies. This collection of essays opens the door for scholars to rethink music history and its sub-disciplines in ways more inclusive towards women, although one may find absent the issue of class and race. However, Solie et al.<sup>138</sup> challenge the discipline of musicology as being the last of the signifying practices to be revealed and explored as cultural discourse.

The presented work of feminist musicology inevitably proposes that feminist musicology makes it possible for people interested in music as well as its sub-disciplines is to comprehend the construction of links between gender and meaning and thus introduce innovative ways of conceptualising women’s relation to music.<sup>139</sup>

Similarly, Lucy Green suggests that

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<sup>138</sup> Solie, 1995

<sup>139</sup> M. J. Citron, ‘Feminist Approaches to Musicology’ in ‘Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music’ by Susan C. Cook; Judy S. Tsou; Susan McClary, *American Music*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1995, pp. 375-378.

the delineations of femininity and their capacity to affirm, interrupt or threaten patriarchal definitions, can vary in degree like all musical meanings, according to the music's style, its historical context, and the subject-position of the listener.<sup>140</sup>

She claims that although music can sometimes have its own autonomy, the discourse surroundings avoid the possibility of a defined meaning and femininity is unavoidably outlined to some extent. If that could be avoided, she states that

there would be no heat in the issue of women's musical roles, and the whole history of music would be different.<sup>141</sup>

Like Green, this study argues that women conductors may have threatened those patriarchal definitions and male dominating traditions of conducting; hence they were many times restrained from pursuing a professional conducting career, although this is not always the norm but rather the basis of discrimination against them.

Moreover, a central matter in the feminist musicological spectrum is homosexuality. Although this topic is not discussed in this study, homosexuality, in terms of subject matter involving minorities of marginalized people, could be linked with women being a minority within music and conducting as well. The frequently harsh criticism is, of course, a major concern in social, historical, musical, philosophical and psychological studies and backgrounds. Brett, Wood, and Gary Thomas introduced a collection of essays on lesbian and gay musicology; *Queering the Pitch*<sup>142</sup> and it includes works on artists such as Handel, Katherine Phillips, k.d. lang and Schubert and on lesbian and gay reception. Despite the brilliant work of these scholars and their contribution to feminist and gay musicology and discipline, references to women conductors remain

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<sup>140</sup> L. Green, 'Gender, Musical Meaning, and Education', *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, vol. 2, no. 2 1994, pp. 99-105.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> P. Brett, E. Wood, and G. Thomas, *Queering the pitch: The new gay and lesbian musicology*, Taylor & Francis, 2006.

minimal, although their work opened the way to a broader musicological world, comprehending matters of minorities and diversities concerning the variety of people in music.

Although musicologists, writers and sociologists have published conference papers and articles with titles such as: *On a lesbian relationship with music: A serious effort not to think straight*,<sup>143</sup> or *Queer episodes in music and modern identity*,<sup>144</sup> making the discipline wide-ranging, more debate is necessary. Similarly, Phillip Brett suggests an ‘inclusive sense’ of musicology.<sup>145</sup> Thus, the conducting profession could be closely related to these new queer musicological debates, when issues of sexuality, gender, femininity, embodiment and motherhood are so often (and recently so openly) discussed. In terms of this study, an inclusive sense of musicology as Brett proposes would set forth the argument that women have always been capable of composing, performing and conducting music and that it is the deprivation of their rights that made them almost invisible on the musicological map.

#### ***2.4.1 Research on conducting and women conductors***

Music comes from the brain, not from sex.<sup>146</sup>

As briefly presented in the previous chapter, (section 1.1), research regarding women conductors appears to be limited. However, Bartleet, Jagow, Brenneman, Elkins, Hinely and others have included women in their work and have introduced occurring

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 368.

<sup>144</sup> S. Fuller, and L. Whitesell, *Queer episodes in music and modern identity*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2002.

<sup>145</sup> P. Brett ‘Are You Musical? Is It Queer to Be Queer? Philip Brett Charts the Rise of Gay Musicology’, *The Musical Times*, vol. 135, 150th Anniversary Issue, 1994, pp. 370-374+376.

<sup>146</sup> Hinely, (1984b), pp. 42-45.

issues concerning women and conducting. This section will present more research on conducting in general and further discuss women in the conducting profession.

In general terms, studies of conducting performers include readings of the expressiveness of the conductor, their technique and gestures, the relationship of the orchestra with the conductor and the pedagogy of conducting by scholars, scientists, musicologists, music pedagogues and researchers. However, gender has not been given enough attention and this is one of the core issues in question in this thesis, suggesting that patriarchal constructs and discrimination against women have prevented them from entering the field.

More recently, studies on clothing, attractiveness, stage behaviour and instrumentalists (Wapnick, Mazza and Darrow)<sup>147</sup> as well as studies on the physical appearance of female concert performers (Griffiths)<sup>148</sup> have shed light on issues relating to conducting. Wapnick, Mazza and Darrow reveal that violinists of both sexes who were rated highly on dress were rated higher under audiovisual conditions than under audio conditions, suggesting that clothing has an impact on listeners' perceptions. One of the findings of Griffiths's study revealed that concert dress and, in particular, body-focused attire has a real effect on audience perceptions of performers' abilities, sometimes leaving the performers' musical abilities overlooked if an appropriate (or inappropriate) style of dress choice has been made. Similarly, clothing is one of the broad themes of this study and issues on gender and clothing regarding conducting

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<sup>147</sup> J. Wapnick, J. K. Mazza and A. Ann Darrow, 'Effects of Performer Attractiveness, Stage Behavior, and Dress on Evaluation of Children's Piano Performances', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 48, no. 4, 2000, pp. 323-335.

<sup>148</sup> N. K. Griffiths, 'The Effects of Concert Dress and Physical Appearance on Perceptions of Female Solo Performers', *Musicae Scientiae*, 12: 273, 2008, Sage.



(rehearsal and concert attire, clothing and body of women conductors) will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Furthermore, Biasutti's study on the views of conductor and performer about rehearsal strategies<sup>149</sup> shows how conductors and performers view the rehearsal time as well as what approaches are used by the conductor and the instrumentalists for rehearsing a performance. The findings, regarding the relationship between conductor and orchestral players, highlight the importance of a friendly working environment as being a vital factor for success. The project, however, does not relate this issue to the gender of the conductors (it does not give any information about the gender of the participants), which would be a good asset in the gap of knowledge about this profession but rather suggests that

conducting involves a good memory, listening skills, clear gestures, a suitable choice of repertoire, proposing interpretation, respecting compositional ideas and understanding the musical character of the piece and the music style.<sup>150</sup>

The study additionally shows that a conductor takes a wider approach, considering both technical, expressive and interpretation issues. Although the aims of the study were to question the orchestra practising strategies employed by conductors and performers during rehearsal, it fails to identify if the gender of the conductor has an impact on those strategies.

In terms of the body, which is one of the themes of this study, also discussed in Chapters 7 and 8, Wöllner and Behne look more closely into evaluating performances

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<sup>149</sup> M. Biasutti, 'Orchestra rehearsal strategies: Conductor and performer views', *Musicae Scientiae*, 2012, 1029864912467634.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

and body movement through participants' audio-visual perceptions.<sup>151</sup> Their findings suggest that audience members may experience heightened sensitivity to, and an all-inclusive appreciation of, the music when they both see and hear the actions of music performers. The findings reveal male interpretations are perceived to be more precise whereas female interpretations are more dramatic, suggesting gender effects. This research has a special interest in the bodily communication of women conductors (discussed in Chapter 8) and aims to observe how women conductors perceive their body through conducting as well as how they perceive their gestural technique when conducting diverse-gendered ensembles.

On another note, Hunt, Stelluto and Hooijberg's<sup>152</sup> work on the relationship between orchestra-conductor leadership and musician creativity is a stepping stone towards our understanding of the conducting profession in its own right, showing that conductors work differently now than in the past, using their leadership skills and different methods of working with their orchestral members. The current research similarly investigates how conductors view leadership as a quality of their professionalism and how the relationship between conductor and musicians (instrumentalists/choristers) affects the quality of an orchestral performance and the public image of the orchestra and/or choir. Judy suggests that leadership is a critical ingredient of orchestral effectiveness.<sup>153</sup> However, in terms of gender, leadership and conducting, the amount of information, literature and empirical evidence is minimal, insinuating that, in most cases, leadership and conducting are male norms. This study explores the theme of

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<sup>151</sup> K. E. Behne and C. Wöllner, 'Seeing or hearing the pianists? A synopsis of an early audio-visual perception experiment and a replication', *Musicae Scientiae*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2011, pp. 324-342.

<sup>152</sup> J. G. (Jerry) Hunt, G. E. Stelluto and R. Hooijberg, 'Toward new-wave organization creativity: Beyond romance and analogy in the relationship between orchestra-conductor leadership and musician creativity', *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2004, pp. 145-162.

<sup>153</sup> P. R. Judy, 'Life and work in symphony orchestras: An interview with J. Richard Hackman' *Harmony*, no. 2, 1996, pp. 1-13.

leadership in terms of gender, suggesting that the individuality of the conductor and traits of personality have a greater impact on the performance's outcome, without excluding the gender factor when questioning leadership (discussed in Chapter 9).

In terms of performance and women, a study by Chumaceiro on the career paths of women conductors<sup>154</sup> suggests that there is a silence in the literature on the impact of positive chance events in the careers of successful women in the traditionally male-dominated art of conducting. Allmendinger and Hackman's<sup>155</sup> four-nation study of the inclusion of women in symphony orchestras has shown that there was a gender imbalance regarding women in orchestras. The numbers of female members of a symphony orchestra vary according to countries and the size of the orchestra. Allmendinger and Hackman's study can also be applied to this project with regard to leadership and gender, since the exclusion of women in orchestras several decades ago, restrained their development as leaders throughout the years.

As mentioned, research into female conductors is relatively new in musicological discourse. Mary Brown Hinely's *The Uphill Climb of Women in American Music: Conductors and Composers* was one of the first studies on the matter. Hinely argues that American women seeking a professional standing in musical career areas have always battled resistance and prejudice, and she presents a historical study following women composers' and conductors' struggles during their careers. She emphasizes that historical-cultural forces, seen by many as unsuited to a professional musician,

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<sup>154</sup> C. L. Diaz de Chumaceiro, 'Serendipity and Pseudoserendipity in Career Paths of Successful Women: Orchestra Conductors', *Creativity Research Journal*, vol. 16, no. 2-3, 2004, pp. 345-356.

<sup>155</sup> J. Allmendinger and J. Richard Hackman 'The More, the Better? A Four-Nation Study of the Inclusion of Women in Symphony Orchestras', *Social Forces*, vol. 74, no. 2, 1995, Oxford University Press, pp. 423-460.

have shaped their identity as women. Even when they were given positions, they suffered in status and salary.

In addition, the work of Marietta Nien-hwa Cheng *Women Conductors: Has the Train Left the Station?* follows a stage-setting statistical review of women as orchestra members and conductors. Cheng offers a brief history of women conductors and an insightful review of the obstacles that women conductors face; from issues of authority to bias against the 'home-grown.' A thoughtful discussion of the advantages of women conductors follows and, later on, she shares her own experiences and looks at ways in which she has had to change to succeed in her chosen career. Cheng believes that orchestras will survive, but they will need to change. She suggests that women are conditioned to be more likeable, to maintain ties, to be flexible; they want to preserve community, harmony, friendship, and goodwill; they want to come to agreement. She claims that

Women avoid confrontation, and accord full marks to sensitivity. These are assets which they bring with open arms to most situations. Increasingly in the world of business, companies are taking a new, appraising look at the values by which women tend to live. For example, women tend to incorporate greater collegiality into their management styles. Often they seem to make others feel valued, and are good at encouraging workers on a one-to-one basis. Such approaches to management are different and, some companies are recognizing, perhaps better.<sup>156</sup>

Being optimistic, Cheng points out that in an ideal world, men and women would change and learn from one another, thereby integrating the other's tactics and taking a step forward to earn legitimacy. Although Cheng touches on a lot of issues

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<sup>156</sup> M. Nien-hwa Cheng, 'Women Conductors: Has the Train Left the Station?', *Forum of the Symphony Orchestra Institute*, no. 6, 1998, pp. 81-90.

concerning women in the field, several others are ignored, such as body language, gestures and clothing, whereas she mentions authority and leadership, suggesting strategies of rehearsals from her own experience. In the following chapters, these issues of body language (Chapter 8), clothing (Chapter 7) and leadership (Chapter 9), will be thoroughly discussed and analysed throughout participant interview responses and media content analysis.

Shelly Jagow's *Women Orchestral Conductors in America: The Struggle for Acceptance. A Historical View from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (1998)<sup>157</sup> was one of the first studies on the subject on women conductors. Similarly, this project deals with the struggles of female conductors and their road towards acceptance, having a historical focus. Jagow explains how sexism and gender discrimination disables women from following conducting as a career, but she offers information showing that, even if those women faced discrimination, they were active in the field, sometimes forming all-female orchestras as well as holding high-status positions in some cases. In Jagow's study, the reasons for women being a minority in conducting are explained in a table. Besides discrimination, it is also suggested that employers are reluctant to hire women due to their distrust of the female's discipline within an ensemble, while maternity leave is an additional factor, as well as women's perceived inconsistency in ensemble leadership. Similarly, this study deals with the broad theme of discrimination as well as leadership and motherhood, contributing to the knowledge of conductors' perceptions of these matters. Additionally, Jagow brings forth other factors explaining women's exclusion, such as salary, the difficulty in managing a career and family since conducting involves committed hours during weekdays,

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<sup>157</sup> S. M. Jagow, 'Women Orchestral Conductors in America: The Struggle for Acceptance. A Historical View from the Nineteenth Century to the Present', *College Music Symposium*, vol. 38, no. 3, 1998, pp. 126-145.

evenings, weekends, and holiday events, and the difficulty in adapting/ignoring existing stereotyped views. The study's findings have also shown that women conductors may remain a minority because of the widely held view that women are too feminine and weak to appropriately demand discipline of an ensemble, too emotional to endure gruelling rehearsals and tours, and too sensitive to ignore inappropriate comments.<sup>158</sup> The themes of this study also include some of the aforementioned issues, such as managing career and family, calling the conducting profession into question, suggesting that male-domination and the burden of tradition are imperatives that society needs to recognise and evaluate, while other issues will be discussed concerning how women conductors experience conducting through their clothing choice, gestures and bodily communication.

Furthermore, Joan Conlon's *Wisdom, Witt and Will: Women Choral Conductors On their Art* in 2009 is a great contribution to the study of conducting, which takes into account women conductors' experiences as biographical facts and not as analysis, although the focus is only on choral conductors and does not involve orchestral conductors. However, the book systematically refers to the lack of women in the field and focuses on the personal, pedagogical, and professional implications that women face in the profession, which is also one of the focuses in the present study.

Sadly, the acclaimed book by Bowen *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting*, has only very limited references to women conductors, presenting a fairly short chapter on *Women on the Podium* (written by Michele Edwards).<sup>159</sup> The book introduces an extensive inside view of the history and practice of conducting while the analysis and

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> M. Edwards, (2003), pp. 220-236.

advice comes directly from working conductors. In this honest book, Bowen presents a secretive industry of managers, artistic directors, soloists, players and conductors openly discussing their different perspectives for the first time. However, women conductors are almost invisible in the book. Michele Edwards argues that gender/sex discrimination is obvious in the conducting field and offers historical/biographical facts about early and later women conductors, although gender and issues such as embodiment are not thoroughly discussed.

A great contribution regarding women conductors lies in the work of Brydie-Leigh Bartleet. The present study has similarities with Bartleet's work regarding women conductors and their experiences, as well as observing the topics of gender, motherhood, and discrimination. Relatively recently (2004), Bartleet's PhD Thesis *Gendering the Podium: The Journeys of Professional Women Conductors* brought together the stories of seventeen professional women conductors from across the globe to begin discussing what it means to be a woman in the conducting profession, looking at women as marginalised, undermined and alienated. Bartleet's research interests are similar to this project's, although a variety of differences exist such as the attention given to the totalitarian approach of not only the woman but of the conducting profession. Issues such as environmental backgrounds, gesture, embodiment, leadership and clothing are given an in-depth focus, taken from not only professional but from mainly amateur participants.

Bartleet re-examined conducting as a profession and, in her thesis, she looked how women have successfully negotiated their way through these challenges to re-embody the role of conductors.<sup>160</sup> Bartleet has published several articles about women

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<sup>160</sup> B. L. Bartleet, 'Gendering the Podium: The Journeys of Professional Women Conductors', PhD Thesis, University of Queensland, 2004.

conductors focusing on motherhood, authorship and pedagogical and professional implications through ethnographic research. As seen in the introductory chapter, Bartleet's work on women conductors touches most of the issues occurring in the profession, suggesting that male musical tradition has made women's career path in conducting more difficult. According to her, public issues are more often discussed than private issues regarding women in conducting and the limited attention needs to become vast.

In addition, Janet-Sue Brenneman deals with issues of gender in all aspects of music, music education and music making. In her thesis *Footsteps of My Own: Gender Issues that Influence the Formative Experiences of Exemplary Women Choral Conductors* the experiences of female choral conductors are introduced in relation to gender aspects. Her research documents the personal experiences of women choral conductors, with a particular focus on emergent gender issues and gives insights as well as to the issues that influenced their experiences. Like this research, Brenneman's work also presents familial influences, educational practice, and career experiences, whereas this project will deal with these issues but also with many others, such as the body and clothing in the conducting profession, arguing that the art of conducting should become a non-discriminatory profession, because of women's high abilities that have long been – and sometimes still remain – unvalued.

## **2.5 Summary**

This chapter has investigated a variety of societal structures that have, in many ways, constrained the lives of women. These differences have created serious suffering while limiting peoples' freedom, including in the discipline of music. Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 have distinguished sex from gender and discussed how stereotyping has historically allocated men a public role and restricted women to private spaces. Norms



of sex and/or gender have considerably restrained the lives of women, especially when variable sexual and other preferences exist, motivating some towards an adjustment to live according to the existing social relations.

The sections on gendered body (2.3) and gendered performer (2.3.1), have pointed out that male dominance and hence, patriarchy is one of the main factors women conductors have faced, leading them to be excluded from the profession. In addition, the sections on feminist musicology (2.4) and female conducting (section 2.4.1) have presented how the work of feminists and feminist discourse in musicology offer a more inclusive and a clearer understanding of the lack of women in the field of music and how gender binaries have limited women's access to the art of music. The work of Butler, Young, De Beauvoir, Moi, Pendle, Solie and others offer an insight into sexist oppression that has handicapped women in using their bodies and prevented them from freeing themselves from gender repressed rules.

In addition, the work of Brenneman, Bartleet, Jagow, Conlon, Wöllner, Griffiths and other scholars and researchers contributes to the field of music performance and conducting. In their work, personal and professional implications are discussed, showing the difficulties women face in conducting, as well as introducing matters of clothing, gender, sex and body bias, physical attractiveness and more. Besides the work by the aforementioned researchers, the gap in knowledge regarding women in the field of conducting remains vast, whereas gender and conducting needs more attention.

In the following Chapters, the six broad themes (divided into supplementary themes) emerging from the interviews and media content analysis, will be introduced and discussed analytically, in order for the issues of gender, the body, clothing, gesture

and leadership regarding women conductors to enrich the discipline of feminist musicology, making their own contribution to conducting issues and, hopefully, moving closer towards equality and valuing the work of women in music and conducting.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### *3.1 Introduction*

This study utilises qualitative methods, and employs Thematic Analysis (TA) using the data from semi-structured interviews with eight women conductors, and Media Content Analysis using data from the Internet. Information about the participants' recruitment to the study will be presented and data collection will be explained. The research design and procedure will be introduced as well as the limitations of the data collection, which were part of the study's process.

### *3.2 Theoretical Considerations of Qualitative Research*

According to Bryman, qualitative research focuses on words rather than numbers, concerning both the collection and analysis of the data. It entails an inductive approach to theory and research where research formulates the theory.<sup>1</sup> As found in Denzin, qualitative research tries to describe people's lived experiences, events, or situations in depth and great attention is given to rich detail, meaningful social and historical circumstances and experiences as well as personal backgrounds. The significance of emotional content is an effort to understand whoever or whatever is being studied.<sup>2</sup>

Davis observes that 'good qualitative research has equalled, if not exceeded, quantitative research in status, relevance, and methodological rigor'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p.22.

<sup>2</sup> N. K. Denzin, *Interpretive interactionism*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1989, p. xi.

<sup>3</sup> S. H. Davis, 'Bridging the gap between research and practice: What's good, what's bad, and how can one be sure?', *Phi Delta Kappan*, vol. 88, no. 8, 2007, pp. 569–578.

Snider's observation on qualitative research is that numbers impress, but simultaneously and unfortunately conceal far more than they reveal;<sup>4</sup> a result this project wanted to avoid,

Patton suggests that the most common sources of qualitative data consist of interviews, observations, and documents; however, none of these can be easily processed by statistical software.<sup>5</sup> Many factors influence how individuals carry out their research projects, such as their own perspective of the social world, the acquired nature of knowledge and the goals or the characteristics of the research.<sup>6</sup> Since this research seeks to examine women conductors' lived experiences, qualitative research is the most appropriate method to follow.

### ***3.3 Data collection in Qualitative Research***

#### ***3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews***

Interviews can be segregated into three categories: structured, unstructured, or semi-structured.<sup>7</sup> One of the most common approaches to interviews as a qualitative method is the semi-structured interview, as suggested by Kitchen and Tate.<sup>8</sup> Semi-structured interviews are developed when researchers map out relevant questions with possible probing sub-questions in advance of the interview taking place. This approach to interviews in qualitative analysis has a degree of pre-set order but it gives

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<sup>4</sup> J. Snider, 'Commentary: The cult of statistical pyrotechnics', *Education Week*, vol. 29, no.21, 2010, pp. 20–21.

<sup>5</sup> M. Q. Patton, *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002, pp. 9-12.

<sup>6</sup> D. Snape, and L. Spencer, 'The foundations of qualitative research', in J. J. Richie and J. Lewis (eds.), *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*, London, Sage, 2003, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> A. Strauss, and J. Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, London, Sage, 1998, pp. 4-5.

<sup>8</sup> R. Kitchin, and N. Tate, *Conducting research in Human Geography*, New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 211-225.

the participant a sense of freedom to guide the interaction and lead the way in which issues are addressed.<sup>9</sup> Gillham argues that semi-structured interviews could be the most important way of conducting interviews because of its balanced structure and flexibility. It will give the data higher and better quality.<sup>10</sup> Most qualitative researchers use interviews as a means to understand human experience and the diverse traits it encompasses.<sup>11</sup>

In this project, semi-structured interviews were employed and occurred in the form of face-to-face and Skype interviews. In cases where face-to-face or Skype interviews were not possible, interviews were conducted via e-mail.

Gibson and Riley argue that data such as questions sent or interviews made via the Internet are 'viable objects for qualitative analysis' and have been proven to be particularly useful in the past. (see James and Buscher, 2006;<sup>12</sup> Mattheus and Cramer, 2008).<sup>13</sup> For the purposes of this research, data gathering via the Internet has proven to be necessary and advantageous for two reasons. First, most participants were located hours away and had limited time to spend on the particular process and to consult them would have been too costly. Second, the issues discussed and questions asked may seem to be personal and the participant might have felt uncomfortable or discouraged to discuss them face-to-face.

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<sup>9</sup> C. Dunn, 'Interviewing' in Hay, I., (ed.), *Qualitative research methods in Human Geography*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 79-105.

<sup>10</sup> B. Gillham, *Research Interviewing: The range of techniques*, New York: Open University Press, 2005, pp. 70-79.

<sup>11</sup> S. Hugh-Jones, 'The Interview in Qualitative Research' in M. A. Forrester (ed.), *Doing Qualitative Research in Psychology: A Practical Guide*, London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2010, pp. 78-79.

<sup>12</sup> N. James, and H. Busher, 'Credibility, authenticity and voice: dilemmas in web-based interviewing', *Qualitative Research*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2006, pp. 403-420.

<sup>13</sup> J. Mattheus and E. Cramer, 'Using Technology to Enhance Qualitative Research with Hidden Populations', *The Qualitative Report*, vol.13, no. 2, 2008, pp. 301-315.

The interview schedule used in this thesis consisted of key questions in combination with some optional prompts, in order to gain a more detailed and complete answer when necessary.<sup>14</sup> The types of questions used in the interview schedule were: introducing questions, follow-up questions, probing questions and specifying questions (see Appendix I).<sup>15</sup> The interview schedule enclosed in this thesis consisted of thirteen open-ended questions. The interview schedule examines how and if gender becomes an issue in conducting, the matter of discrimination and sexism in music. It also explores the following issues: the impact of environmental status (family and society) on women's decision on becoming conductors, women conductors' combination of their professional and personal lives, motherhood, clothing, gestures, body language and the qualities of a good conductor (see Appendix I).

### **3.3.2 Internet and media data**

Internet and media analysis draws the interest of conversation analysts as well as discourse analysts, due to its naturalistic form; naturalistic refers to the individuality of the formats in which the information is publicized, as professional researchers do not necessarily present it.<sup>16</sup> These types of media are communicated and found on the Internet as it has developed into its unique communicational design.<sup>17</sup> The main sources of gathering information for the current study were: online magazines, online newspapers, online blogs, Internet articles on women conductors and online journals (further explained in section 3.6.2).

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<sup>14</sup> C. Dyer, *Research in Psychology: A Practical Guide to Methods and Statistics*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, pp. 29-47.

<sup>15</sup> Bryman, pp. 21-23.

<sup>16</sup> S. Gibson and S. Riley, 'Conducting Qualitative research' in M. A. Forrester (ed.), *Doing Qualitative Research in Psychology: A Practical Guide*, 2010, London: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 66-67.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

### ***3.4 Recruitment and Procedure***

The participants in the study were eight female conductors from the UK. Their ages ranged from the youngest (22) to the oldest (68). All the conductors were English and are currently living in the United Kingdom. The length of the participants' involvement in conducting has a mean of 21 years (from one year to 46 years). All the participants were assigned pseudonyms in order to protect their identities (Willow, Sandy, Genie, Cathleen, Diana, Bria, Pauline, and Lia). In the following table (see Table 3.1) their involvement in conducting and the ensembles they currently work with is presented:

**Table 3.1: Participants**

<b><i>Participant (pseudonyms)</i></b>	<b><i>Years of involvement in conducting</i></b>	<b><i>Ensemble</i></b>	<b><i>Childcare responsibilities</i></b>
Willow	1 year	Mixed Brass Jazz Band	No
Sandy	7 years	Mixed SATB, Women's Only Choir	No
Bria	18 years	Ladies' Choir, Girls' Choir, Girls' Chamber Choir, Children's Choir	Yes
Genie	24 years	Male Barbershop Choir, Women's Choir	No
Pauline	30 years	Mixed SATB, Male Choir	Yes
Lia	14 years	Children's Choir, Mixed SATB	Yes
Cathleen	48 years	Women's Choir, Children's Choir, SATB Choir, Girls Choir	Yes
Diana	25 years	Cathedral Choir, Mixed SATB Chamber Choir	No



The conductors were mostly found:

- through website home pages of women conductors such as <http://www.simoneyoung.com/titel/>, <http://www.marinalsop.com>
- personal and public blogs of women and male musicians and conductors, <http://maestrakimd.blogspot.com>, <https://harryfiddler.wordpress.com/tag/women-conductors/>, <http://www.classical-music.com/blog/why-arent-there-more-women-conductors-jude-kelly-leads-discussion-southbank-centre>
- music and conducting related websites, for example, <http://www.nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk/> , <http://www.choirs.org.uk/home.htm>, <https://www.abcd.org.uk/> and <http://www.abo.org.uk/>. <http://www.wqxr.org/>

They were all contacted via e-mail, which informed them of the study and requested their participation. Two participants were interviewed via Skype, two were interviewed face-to-face and four participants answered the interview questions online. If the replies were incomplete or required further comments, the participants were asked to give more explanation on their responses via e-mail. Interviews lasted between one hour and one hour and twenty minutes.

The interviews for this study were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. After every interview, the data was transcribed in detail by the researcher and an English teacher reviewed the recordings and made suggestions for editing. The teacher also signed a confidentiality form, signed it and handed it back to the researcher. The data collected in this study will remain confidential and will be destroyed after the publication of the thesis.

The transcription of the interviews was done by the researcher.

The participants who were sent the **interview questions via e-mail** had a more flexible timeframe in which to complete the interview questions. Open-ended questions were used in semi-structured interviews in order to achieve an in-depth response by the participants. After their initial positive response to be involved in the research, they were sent the questions and notified that they should respond within two to three months.

### ***3.5 Ethical Considerations***

Research that contains human participation needs to be ethically considered. In order to proceed to conduct this research, ethical approval was attained from the Ethics Committee of Durham University. Interview procedures can be a sensitive matter for participants; thus, significant ethical issues were taken into account to avoid any maltreatment of the participants.

All participants were firstly given a **consent form** (Appendix II). It was signed when the two face-to-face interviews occurred. The remaining six consent forms were sent via e-mail and returned to the researcher, scanned, signed and completed after the Skype interview took place. The participants agreed to their anonymity being maintained in the study.

The consent form was signed by all of the conductors and it was made clear that they could withdraw from the project at any time they felt discomfort or wanted to stop for personal reasons. All the data and results were safely stored on a password-protected external hard drive. Finally, no financial reward was given to any of the participants.

### ***3.6. Data Analysis of the thesis***

#### ***3.6.1 Thematic Analysis***

TA is a wide-used qualitative analytic method used in psychology yet it is rarely acknowledged and is poorly defined.<sup>18</sup> This approach was chosen for this study because it has a way of simply organising and describing the data in rich detail. It frequently goes further than this, and interprets numerous aspects of the research topic. In addition, Braun and Clarke argue that the thematic analysis approach can offer an accessible and flexible method of analysing qualitative data that can be used in other disciplines beyond psychology and should be considered as the foundation of any qualitative research method.

In addition, according to Guest, MacQueen & Namey and Joffe, TA is a phenomenological approach that examines and comprehends lived experiences, whereas Braun and Clarke suggest that thematic analysis has a theoretical flexibility, identified as an analytical method instead of ‘methodology’.<sup>19</sup> Hence, in TA, theory is the outcome of the research, rather than a basis on which to formulate research. TA can be studied and learned without some of the potentially perplexing theory, a necessary aspect of some other qualitative approaches.

Furthermore, TA is suitable in researching factors or variables that influence any issue that might emerge from the participants.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, their interpretations are substantial in terms of giving the most appropriate explanations for their actions, thoughts and/or behaviours.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> V. Braun, and V. Clarke, ‘Using thematic analysis in psychology’, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2006, pp. 77-101.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> J. W. Creswell, *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*, Sage, 2003.

<sup>21</sup> J. A. Hatch, *Doing qualitative research in education settings*, SUNY Press, 2002.

Boyatzis writes in *Transforming Qualitative Information* that thematic analysis is a process of ‘encoding qualitative information.’<sup>22</sup> Braun and Clarke suggest that the process should not be viewed as a fixed model whereby researchers cannot proceed to the next phase without completing the preceding phase and, instead, they remark that TA is a back-and-forth process.<sup>23</sup> TA is a six-phase process.<sup>24</sup> The six phases of TA are the following:

1. *Familiarisation with the data.* As in all approaches to qualitative analysis, the researcher must become intimately familiar with the data information they receive. They must read and re-read the data and note primary observations that may occur.
2. *Coding.* A common approach to qualitative analyses in which the researcher finds crucial features of the data that are relevant to wider research or literature. Coding is an analytic process capturing semantic and conceptual reading of the data. This phase ends with the researcher collecting all the codes and other extracts that are important.
3. *Searching for themes* is similar to coding, but instead, you code your codes in order to find similarity in your data. A theme is a meaningful pattern in the data and relevant to the research question(s), which is constructed by the researcher and is not hidden or waiting to be interpreted.
4. *Reviewing themes* is the process that involves checking if the themes work in relation to all the data, as well as to the coded extracts. Then, the themes should be reviewed by the researcher who will decide if they are convincing or

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<sup>22</sup> R. E. Boyatzis, *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*, Thousand Oaks, London, & New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1998, p.7

<sup>23</sup> Clarke and Braun, pp. 120-123.

<sup>24</sup> Braun and Clarke, pp. 77-101.

compelling enough to tell a story and to define the relationship between two or more themes. Sometimes, a theme can be split into two, or all the themes may be discarded and the process is restarted from the beginning.

5. *Defining and naming themes* involves the construction and analysis of each theme by the researcher and giving an appropriate and short name to individual themes.
6. *Writing Up* consists of bringing the extracts of the data and the themes together in a coherent story about the data in comparison with the conceptualisation of the existing research and literature.

### **3.6.2 Media Content Analysis**

Macnamara defines media content analysis as a specialized sub-set of content analysis, a well-established research methodology.<sup>25</sup> It is conducted through the researcher's 'readings' and interpretation of media texts. One weakness, though, is that it can be difficult and even impossible to have scientific reliability. However, qualitative analysis of texts is a medium for understanding the audience's deeper meanings and likely interpretations.<sup>26</sup>

Internet and media data, taken from early twentieth century sources until 2016, were chosen for analysis, in order to obtain public opinion in addition to the academic research and the conductors' voices. Regarding the process of gathering Internet data from online sources, this study analysed online newspapers (such as: *The New York Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Independent*, *Daily News*, *The Guardian*, *Seattle Times*, *LA Times*) online archives (*The Times Digital Archive*, *British Archives Online*, *The*

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<sup>25</sup> J. Macnamara, 'Media content analysis: Its uses; benefits and best practice methodology', *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*, vol. 6, no.1, 2003, pp. 1-34.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

*Women's Liberation Music Archive, Susanfleet, VAM*) and other online sources such as blogs (*Feminist Truths, Psychology Today, NPR*) taken from a variety of online journals and magazines (*Limelight Magazine, Jazz: the Magazine, Arts Journal, Newstatesman, Music Web International, Gramophone, PSMAG*) by reviewers, audiences, critics, journalists as well as conductors introducing and discussing their own personal issues revolving around conducting.

The search terms used to find relative information about women conductors were numerous. Some of the keywords utilized in the search were the following: *women conductors, female conductors, gender and conducting, sexism in music, barriers for women conductors, female musicians, body and conducting, body shaming in music, clothing and female musicians, feminism and music, feminism and conducting, male dominance in music, leadership and music, women as leaders, misogyny and music*. The reason why the above-mentioned search terms were used was to make the research more practical in terms of finding effective and efficient information from the Internet, which has allowed access to a variety of data that would have otherwise been unattainable or not recorded for the general public's use.

### ***3.7 Reflections on the Research***

The goal of this study was to interview as many female conductors as possible and to obtain quantitative and qualitative data. The lack of prior research studies on the subject forced the project to focus on qualitative and not quantitative data. The lack of available and reliable data required a limit to the size of the samples. In addition, TA did not require more than four or six participants and it was decided (by the researcher and the supervisors) to proceed using the specific analysis.

Two hundred female conductors were contacted via e-mail and one hundred replied. Fifty participants decided not to participate in the project and fifty were positive about discussing their involvement. During the conversations the researcher had with the potential conductors, thirty of them changed their mind, did not show interest, or thought that their participation would not be a valuable input for the project. The remaining twenty showed an interest in being involved in the project.

The second year of the research was dedicated to conducting the interviews; however, ten of the twenty participants did not reply or could not set up a meeting with the researcher. The remaining interviews took place during the 2012-2013 academic year, with two further participants dropping out for personal reasons.

Another difficulty I faced occurred when trying to contact professional women holding high status conducting posts. As they could not be contacted personally most of the time, I tried to speak with people working closely with them. I spoke to administrative staff, managers, secretaries and personal assistants but, in some cases, interviews could not be conducted for a variety of reasons, such as “She is very busy at the moment”, “She does not think she will be of any help”, “She does not think there is any discrimination in conducting” and “We will contact you soon”. The difficulties I faced made me reflect on a number of issues related to the experiences and status of female conductors. For example, why is it so hard to find professional conductors? Why do they think there is no bias against them? Is it because they are already established conductors? Similarly, the above limitations can be found in the ethnographic study by Bartleet interviewing professional women conductors. She explains that the ‘field of study’ became ‘wherever she happened to be and wherever

women happened to be,<sup>27</sup> expanding her project to a four-year culturally based study. Bartleet followed the female professionals to their home cities and took interviews from all over the world because of the conductors' busy schedule and duties.

### ***3.8 Summary***

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the research methodology of this study, to explain the sample selection and describe the data collection, as well as to provide an explanation of the procedures used to analyse the data. In this chapter, the theoretical underpinnings of TA were reviewed.

In the next chapters, the broad themes of the thesis will be introduced, investigating and analysing various media coverage stories taken from online newspapers, articles, periodicals and magazines from a mainly 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century timeframe, as well as individual interviews from online resources and web-blogs referring to women conductors' life experiences, personal stories and individual struggles in their profession. Moreover, data drawn from participants' interviews is also used and analysed to explore women's narratives and their experience of being a woman conductor.

The following chapters introduce the participants' point of view on conducting, in order to comprehend gender discourse in the profession supported by media content analysis and empirical and further literature evidence.

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<sup>27</sup> Bartleet, (2009), pp. 713-733.



## CHAPTER 4: GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Nature never intended the fair sex to become cornetists, trombonists, and players of wind instruments. In the first place they are not strong enough to play them as well as; they lack the lip and lung power to hold notes which deficiency makes them always play out of tune...Another point against them is that women cannot possibly play brass instruments and look pretty, and why should they spoil their good looks?<sup>1</sup>

### ***4.1 Introduction***

Using interview data and media findings, this chapter explores the types and level of discrimination female conductors experience and the effect that discrimination has within their profession. Focusing on interview analysis and media content analysis, this chapter aims to identify how discrimination occurs and whether it has changed for women conductors from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It also investigates whether gender bias, sexism and misogyny still exist in conducting, as well as how women conductors (participants and conductors found in media content) deal with these discriminatory issues.

As we have seen previously, gender discrimination is theoretically different from sexism. While sexism is prejudice based on biological sex, gender discrimination explicitly addresses discrimination towards identity-based orientations, including third gender, gender queer, and other non-binary identified people.<sup>2</sup> Gender discrimination is discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived gender identity (appearance, or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of an individual,

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<sup>1</sup> G. Kerker, 'Opinions of Some New York Leaders on Women as Orchestral Players', *Musical Standard*, vol. 21, 1904, pp. 217-218.

<sup>2</sup> T. Macklem, *Beyond Comparison: Sex and Discrimination*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 61.

with or without regard to the individual's assigned birth sex).<sup>3</sup> It is suggested that gender discrimination can deny human rights, prospects or resources and it is defined as the systematic, unfavourable treatment of individuals on the basis of their gender. Kabeer, for example, claims that women across the world are treated unequally and less value is placed on their lives because of their gender.<sup>4</sup> Women's differential access to power and control of resources is central to this discrimination in all-institutional spheres, i.e. the household, community, market and state.<sup>5</sup>

As this chapter's epigraph reveals, women have been considered incapable of being as good as men at playing wind or brass instruments, and their involvement in music was undervalued and biased. However, the science of performance studies suggests that many aspects of conducting – solo performances, motor skills, our perception in music and so on – are not naturally male preserves. Scholars, researchers, academics and scientists, such as Sloboda, Luck, Zwan, Machatch, Wöllner, Deconinck and others, indicate that gender discrimination is not something to ignore but a fundamental factor in classical music cognition and behaviour.

#### ***4.2 Broad Theme 1: Gender Discrimination***

Within the broad theme of gender discrimination I will discuss two key elements: (a) gender bias<sup>6</sup> (prejudice based on gender as defined by Burton's Legal Thesaurus against women conductors); and (b) sexism<sup>7</sup> – seen previously – prejudice or

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<sup>3</sup> J. Feder, and C. Brougher, 'Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination in Employment: A Legal Analysis of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)', 2013.

<sup>4</sup> N. Kabeer, 'Agency, well-being and inequality: reflections on the gender dimensions of poverty', *IDS Bulletin*, vol. 27, no.1, 1996, pp. 11-21.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> 'Gender bias', The Free Dictionary, Burton's Legal Thesaurus 2016, <http://legaldictionary.thefreedictionary.com/gender+bias>, (accessed October 2015).

<sup>7</sup> 'Sexism', Encyclopedia Britannica 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/sexism>, (accessed January 2016), Notes that "sexism in a society is most commonly applied against women and girls. It functions to maintain patriarchy, or male domination, through ideological and material practices of individuals, collectives, and institutions that oppress women and girls on the basis of sex or gender.

discrimination based on sex or gender, especially against women and girls, and misogyny<sup>8</sup> – the hatred or dislike of women or girls, as defined by the Encyclopaedia of Feminist Theories – in conducting (Table 4.1).

The reason for embedding the two themes of this chapter and discussing them as a unit in the broad theme is that there are constant links found in the participants' responses and the media findings linking gender bias along with misogyny and sexism. Therefore, there is no separation between the themes; they are going to be referred to as a *Broad Theme*.

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<sup>8</sup> L. Code, *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories* (1st ed.), London: Routledge, 2000, p. 346. ISBN 0-415-13274-6.

**Table 4.1 Summary of Broad Theme 1: Gender Discrimination**

<b><i>Participants' Experiences</i></b>	<b><i>Themes</i></b>	<b><i>Media Analysis</i></b>
<p><i>Discrimination is not always visible, but most of them had experiences of it.</i></p> <p><i>They sometimes feel patronised by members of their choir or orchestra, board members, other colleagues and people who are involved in their work, especially at the beginning of their career.</i></p> <p><i>No direct discrimination makes them feel it does not exist or they are uncertain about what is done on the boards and committees of their choirs or orchestras.</i></p>	<p><b><i>Gender Bias</i></b></p>	<p><i>Discrimination is intense.</i></p> <p><i>Women conductors feel that changes are made slowly.</i></p> <p><i>Rejection from being appointed as conductors can be gender based, but it is suggested by women conductors that conducting is demanding for every gender.</i></p> <p><i>Experienced gender bias and lost work opportunities because of it.</i></p>
<p><i>People would rather not be members of their ensembles because they had women conductors.</i></p> <p><i>People were critical and abusive towards them, avoiding further explanation.</i></p> <p><i>They felt they had to be careful how they spoke towards the men of their ensembles.</i></p>	<p><b><i>Sexism, Misogyny</i></b></p>	<p><i>Sexism is still an issue, especially in orchestral conducting.</i></p> <p><i>Men are the ones who usually have misogynistic behaviour.</i></p> <p><i>The sexual energy of women, the way they play and move on the podium is harshly criticised.</i></p> <p><i>Attractive women conductors can make people be less focused on their task.</i></p>

#### ***4.2.1 Broad Theme 1: Gender bias; women conductors portrayed by the media, then and now***

I do not call myself a woman conductor; I call myself a conductor who happens to be a woman.<sup>9</sup>

This section provides brief historical sources and a variety of examples taken from media content findings (20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century), arguing that there is still discrimination concerning women in music and, more specifically, in the conducting profession. Using media content findings, this section aims to show how discrimination continues.

The story of discrimination is written in the annals of conducting history, with one of the most important female conductors of the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Antonia Brico. Brico disputes the very concept of gender in her profession and believes that being a good musician has nothing to do with one's sex or gender feminine or masculine traits, stating that the orchestra is to the musician what the palette is to a painter.<sup>10</sup>

You're either born a musician or you're not a musician. It has nothing to do with gender.<sup>11</sup>

She made her conducting debut in 1930 with the Berlin Philharmonic, the first woman ever to lead that grand orchestra. The *Allgemeine Zeitung* critic, commenting on her performance, stated that she displayed unmistakable and outstanding skills as a conductor. The critic suggested that she possessed more ability, cleverness and musicianship than certain of her male colleagues who 'bore' people in Berlin,<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A. Kozin, *Antonia Brico, 87, a Conductor; Fought Barriers to Women in 30's*, [website], 1989, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/08/05/obituaries/antonia-brico-87-a-conductor-fought-barriers-to-women-in-30-s.html>, (accessed May 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> S. Fleet, *Two conductors: Antonia Brico and Marin Alsop*, [website], 2008, [http://archives.susanfleet.com/documents/antonia\\_brico-and\\_marin\\_alsop.html](http://archives.susanfleet.com/documents/antonia_brico-and_marin_alsop.html), (accessed May 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

implying that female conductors were mostly compared to men and had to prove themselves as equally skilful as their male colleagues. Brico, as a woman conductor, was compared to her male colleagues in the 1930s; however, a *Pictorial Review* critic commented that her conducting debut was brilliant, and that she made the NYC Musicians' Symphony Orchestra play as they had never played before at the Metropolitan Opera House. Sadly, Brico was hired to conduct a second concert, but was denied a third when the tenor soloist, John Charles Thomas, refused to perform under the direction of a woman conductor, fearing that this would take attention away from him.<sup>13</sup>

Despite all the positive reviews Brico received, she could not obtain a conducting post with a professional, established orchestra. Commenting on Brico, Mrs. Charles Guggenheimer, doyenne of Lewisohn Stadium, stated the following, after the conductor's NY Philharmonic debut:

It's a disgrace that a woman is conducting this venerable orchestra.<sup>14</sup>

Another remark on Brico's gender came from Arthur Judson, the former manager of the NY Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra, saying that:

All those females in the audience want to see a male conducting.  
Brico, you were born 50 years too soon.<sup>15</sup>

In Brico's defence, I will argue that she was born neither early neither late; she was a conductor, marking her own path in the profession, at a time when reforms were taking place, making her presence on the podium valuable for generations to come, like that of other females in the field. Brico sadly cut short her conducting career for 20 years,

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<sup>13</sup> Kozin, *Antonia Brico, 87, a Conductor; Fought Barriers to Women in 30's*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

due to a lack of opportunities. She had a chance to begin conducting a community orchestra in Denver, only when a biographic film, made by Jill Godmilow and the folk singer Judy Collins in 1974 called *'Antonia: A portrait of a Woman'* revitalised her career. The film brought her achievements and struggles to light, finally praising her abilities and valuing her contribution to the field as a conductor and a teacher.

Staying within 20<sup>th</sup> century's media content, JoAnn Faletta, one of America's best-established music directors, realises that gender discrimination and bias has always taken place in women's lives and it is not something that has changed in the 20<sup>th</sup> or the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The conductor is well aware of the roots of gender discrimination; she suggests that they lie in how women were raised within societies. She recalls:

The more I got into conducting, the more I had to come to terms with how I was raised as a young Catholic girl. We were taught to be supportive, nurturing, gentle, kind.<sup>16</sup>

Women, however, have broken the glass ceiling of the conducting world, even under these circumstances. A 'glass ceiling' is the political term used to describe the unseen yet unbreakable barrier that retains minorities from rising to the upper ranks of businesses or any other corporations or disciplines and jobs, regardless of their credentials or accomplishments.<sup>17</sup> Hence, in order for women to break the glass ceiling of podiums in the conducting profession, not only in Western culture but in most of world's countries, they had to prove themselves equally qualified in comparison to their male colleagues although, as mentioned, it was not an easy task. Falettas's remark (above) inevitably suggests that gender, as well as the embodiment of a girl in music, is difficult when taking into consideration that women in most societies are told and

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<sup>16</sup> Pendle, p. 366

<sup>17</sup> Federal Glass Ceiling Commission. *Solid Investments: Making Full Use of the Nation's Human Capital*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labour, November 1995, p. 4.

taught to act within specific societal norms and forced to pursue careers that are conventional and/or traditional.

The so-called firsts for women happened decades ago with Sian Edwards conducting the Scottish Opera in 1988, the first woman to do so. She was also the first woman to conduct at the Royal Opera House in 1988 at Covent Garden, after 256 years of only male conductors' appearances.<sup>18</sup> Edwards did not feel she had been discriminated against because of her gender. She was also a music director of English National Opera from 1993 to 1995<sup>19</sup> and is still conducting, remaining one of the most prominent conductors in the UK. Her response in an interview on being a woman within the field of conducting is noteworthy:

You're working with such highly trained and disciplined musicians and they just want to do their job as well as they can.<sup>20</sup>

Edwards additionally states that she is aware of the fact that her profession is not so common amongst women, whereas conductors were usually idealised because of their male sex and dominance they carried through the centuries. However, Edwards' point of view needs to be taken into consideration because it implies that working with disciplined and high skilled musicians would be an easier task, whatever one's gender might be. Similarly to Edwards, Marin Alsop, answering Charlie Rose's interview question about not being hired because of her gender, responds:

I just always said I must not be good enough yet... one learns from rejection than success. I'm sure some rejection was gender-based,

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<sup>18</sup> J. Duchon and R. Wigmore, *Edwards, Sian*, Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/44876>, (accessed November 2016).

<sup>19</sup> J. A. Duchon, *A glass ceiling for women in the orchestra pit*, [website], 2010, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/classical/features/a-glass-ceiling-for-women-in-the-orchestra-pit-1875075.html>, (accessed February 2012).

<sup>20</sup> A. Wigglesworth, *In charge of the baton*, 1988, Available from: *The Times Digital Archive*, (accessed June 2013).



but I never really felt like that. Conducting is a challenging field for every gender.<sup>21</sup>

Alsop's response implies that women might have often felt that their abilities and skills as conductors were not quite enough to reach high status careers. The fact that Alsop could, to a certain extent, be sure that sometimes the reason she was not hired was gender bias, proposes an introvert objection to it, even if later on she 'blames' it on the many challenges of conducting.

Furthermore, within the younger generation of women conductors, things are rather controversial. The young Greek orchestral and choir conductor Phaedra Giannellou when asked about how she handles her career as a woman conductor, she replies:

Conductors find themselves in a position of power and, whether they like it or not, this fact opens up a number of fronts. As I enter into this field I'm starting to discern that you need a strong stomach and the ability to turn a blind eye. Otherwise, you can't make it. Maybe I tend to come across more barriers because I'm a woman, but I don't want this fact to create problems either. Let's just say that, in male-dominated jobs, we women need to try more in order to prove our worth over a man.<sup>22</sup>

Similarly to Brico's example previously, Gianellou states that women still feel the need to prove themselves equal to men. In addition, the 'ability to turn a blind eye' may be a step backwards for women conductors, reinforcing male domination and discrimination in the field of conducting. Gianellou's comment implies that there is gender bias in her profession; however, she is trying to handle it by putting more effort into her work and thinking that she can overcome obstacles. Does the conductor

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<sup>21</sup> O' Neil, M., 'Passion and Authenticity: A Conversation with Marin Alsop', in J. Conlon (ed.) *Wisdom, Wit, and Will: Women Choral Conductors on Their Art*, (2009), p. 142.

<sup>22</sup> Phaedra Gianellou: *Greece's youngest conductor*, [website], 2013, <http://www.hellenicyouthofmelbourne.com/5/post/2013/02/qa-phaedra-giannellou-greeces-youngest-female-conductor.html>, (accessed June 2013).

actually solve the problems she is facing because of her gender, or is she covering the issues up by always trying to prove her worth and show that she is capable in comparison to others?

Equally, conductor Jane Glover remarked that women conductors need to be 150% as good as their male counterparts to be noticed. Although she states that she loves her job, she does not want to believe there is discrimination and says that there are many more women in assisting jobs than there used to be.<sup>23</sup> This particular statement could definitely be a problematic realisation of the issues occurring in conducting; women conductors accepting the lack of other females entering the profession and being satisfied with assisting rather than directing, and in most cases not reflecting their spectrum of talent.

Conversely, the Estonian conductor Anu Tali, asked about conducting and gender discrimination, responds by including the concept of sexuality within her response:

Instead of drawing these frames around either female, male, gay, non-gay, hetero ... it's all depending on personality. It depends on you, this person, maybe not today the same as tomorrow. If we find this connection on stage or with our audience, we can do wonderful things.<sup>24</sup>

She additionally remarks that she would never ever limit herself to thinking of somebody based on sexual priority, or being a man or woman, or young or old. For her, it is not important. Music, she claims, is, as close as people get to God in this living world, noting that it is an international language that everyone, somehow,

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<sup>23</sup> R. Johnston, *Baton of the sexes*, [website], 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2007/apr/13/classicalmusicandopera.gender>, (accessed June 2013).

<sup>24</sup> L. Christians, *Breaking barriers: More female conductors make their way to front of orchestra*, [website], 2010, [http://host.madison.com/entertainment/arts\\_and\\_theatre/breaking-barriers-more-female-conductors-make-their-way-to-front/article\\_eff176f8-1d65-11df-9210-001cc4c03286.html](http://host.madison.com/entertainment/arts_and_theatre/breaking-barriers-more-female-conductors-make-their-way-to-front/article_eff176f8-1d65-11df-9210-001cc4c03286.html), (accessed June 2013).

understands.<sup>25</sup> Tali's ultimate goal is to serve music; she believes in this sacred bond she has with a higher power, whether called God or anything else, and she wants to do it with no form of sexism or discrimination.

However, gender discrimination is very much alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2006, not a single female composer or conductor took part in BBC's 'The Proms'. A *Times* article in July 2006, written by Richard Morrison, entitled '*A monstrously ignored regiment*', noted that even if women soon dominate professional orchestras and play a huge part in music-making, they are still undervalued in the composing and conducting world.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, a very recent example showing that gender discrimination and bias exist in the conducting profession is the BBC Proms; it took one hundred and eighteen years for a woman to stand on the podium at the Last Night of the Proms (LNOP) in 2013. Marin Alsop was the first woman to conduct at the last night and the second to do so in 2015. Alsop, who broke the 118-year history of male conductors' appearances on the podium at the BBC Proms, made a huge step for women, not only conductors, but for all musicians who feel that they belong to a minority and are underrepresented in music. Alsop comments:

I'm extraordinarily proud to be the first woman, but I'm also sad that it's 2013 and there still can be firsts for women.<sup>27</sup>

In her 2015 speech at the Last Night, Alsop shared how proud she was to have been the first woman to conduct the LNOP in 2013. However, she went on to say that, although she was the first and second to do so, the music world has a long way to go:

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> R. Morrison, 'A monstrously ignored regiment', Available from: *The Times Digital Archive*, (accessed June 2013).

<sup>27</sup> BBC News, *BBC Proms appoints first female director for Last Night*, [website], 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-22188201>, (accessed June 2013).

I have to share, though, that I am even more proud to be the first second woman – or maybe it’s the second first woman. What excites me is that now we’re going to see the third, the fifth, the tenth, the one hundredth woman to follow me because we have to work towards a more just and equal playing field for women. I think it’s clear that inequality is one of the greatest challenges facing us today – whether it’s gender, racial, economic or ethnic inequality.<sup>28</sup>

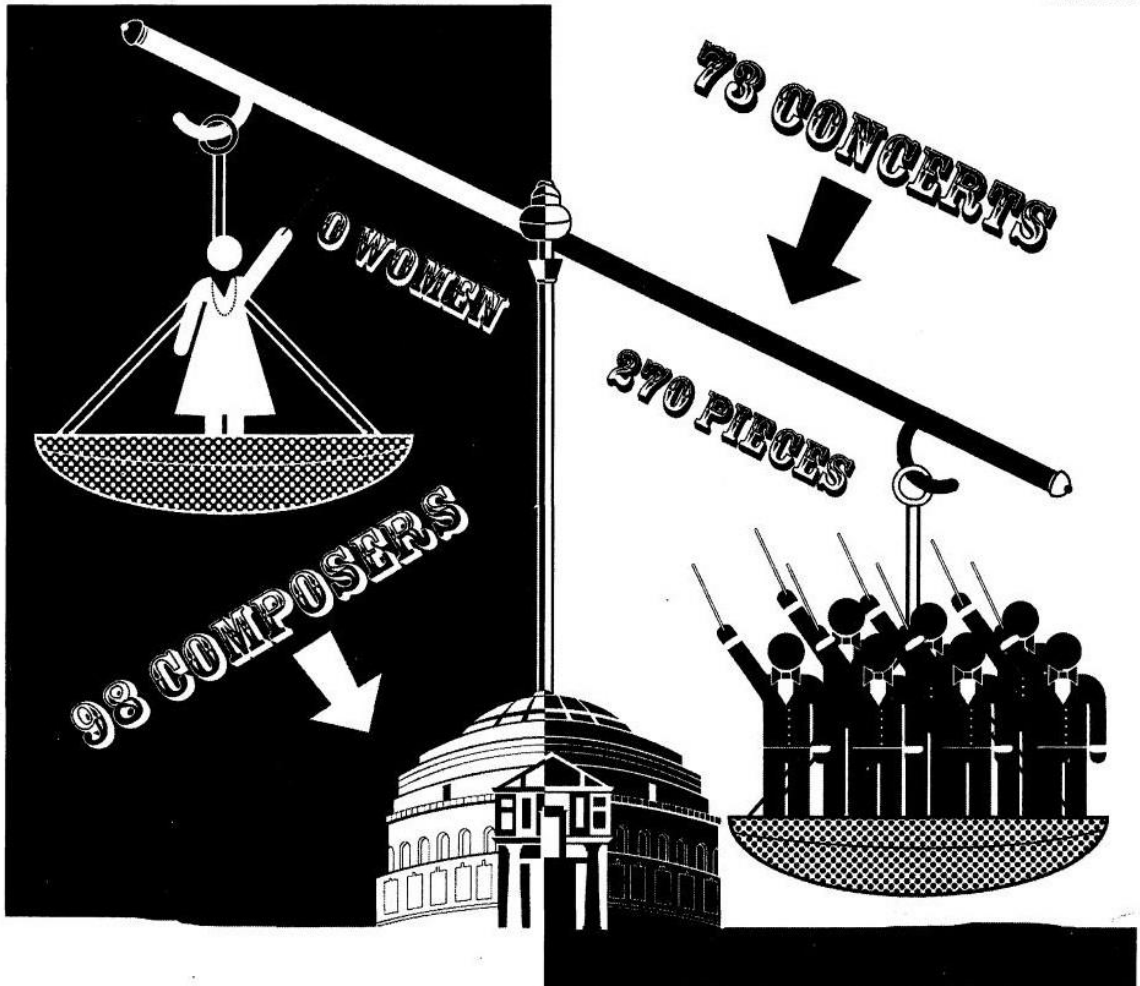
The above statements indicate that different kinds of biases may exist in conducting and they involve ethnic backgrounds, race, and/or financial disparity. This call for equality may sound louder when it comes from women that are already established and prominent in the field of conducting. These women can act as role models for future generations of conductors, since they are more aware of the difficulties and struggles a woman conductor may face to gain a high-status position. The long male dominance in this profession has led people to compare women to men conductors and their dominance is one of the main factors leading to this gender bias. Women conductors of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, state that they always have to prove themselves equal to their male colleagues. Second, the conventional ways of growing up as a girl in – mostly – Western societies have been forcing women to conform to patriarchal rules and fixed structures and to face difficulties in embodying the profession of conducting. Third, rejection may have brought up internalised doubts in women conductors about not being good enough to conduct, when the concept of having power over a choir or an orchestra is a trait usually associated with male conductors. Fourth, the minimal presence of women from major events (such as the

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<sup>28</sup> *Marin Alsop’s Last Night of the Proms speech*, [website], 2015, <http://www.marinalsop.com/news/marin-alsops-last-night-of-the-proms-speech/>, (accessed February 2016).

BBC Proms) has revealed that, although women are active in music and almost ‘conquering’ professional orchestras as musicians, they do not seem to be valued and properly represented as composers and conductors in the music world.

NATHALIE LEES



29

#### ***4.2.2 Sexism, misogyny and women conductors portrayed by the media***

This section of the chapter specifically focuses on media data analysis findings on sexism and misogyny, adding to the broad context of gender discrimination. Although discriminating against women was very common in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; JoAnn Faletta

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<sup>29</sup> Morrison, *A monstrously ignored regiment*

shares her experience, pointing out how vital the female presence was considered on the podium, sometimes leading to misogyny:

When I was conducting a major symphony on the East Coast, one of the older members of the orchestra said he hoped he would die before seeing a woman on the podium.<sup>30</sup>

As in the case of Brico and the tenor previously mentioned, both males refused to be directed by a woman conductor. I would suggest that they acted that way mostly due to fear of change. Both cases occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; one at the beginning and one towards the end, proving that gender bias and sexism continues to exist and affects women musicians negatively.

Faletta and Brico are certainly not the only ones to have faced sexism and misogynistic behaviour in their profession and the stories told by female conductors are vast. Joanna Pitman's report on Odaline de la Martinez is disturbing. De la Martinez, the first Cuban-born female conductor, who directed at the Albert Hall in London in 1984, recalls an extreme form of sexism and misogyny against the young guest conductor, Indira Ghandi. De la Martinez observes:

She was doing perfectly well in rehearsal until she cued the brass section. The five male musicians stood up and dropped their trousers. Can you believe it? But that was not the worst of it. The musical director decided not to reprimand the brass players, but instead to cancel her contract and put an end to women conducting his orchestras.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, although sexism existed within this profession, more 'firsts' occurred for women conductors in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Jane Glover was the first woman to change

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<sup>30</sup> C. Veltman, *Female conductors crack the glass podium*, [website], 2009, <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/may/10/entertainment/ca-women10/2>, (accessed June 2013).

<sup>31</sup> J. Pitman, 'Take the cue from her', Available from: *The Times Digital Archive*, (accessed 7 June 2013).

152 years of choral conducting history in Huddersfield when, in 1988, she was appointed as principal conductor of Huddersfield Choral Society.<sup>32</sup>

Although changes towards a more equal treatment regarding women conductors have occurred, sexist remarks are still observed in the media. It is more shocking to encounter these comments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially coming from established conductors such as the 83-year-old Finnish ‘conducting guru’ (as WQXR blog describes him) Jorma Panula. When asked if he supports the fact that more women are entering the profession, he responds:

I do not! What the hell, it is such a limited profession. There are more than enough men. They can try, but it is completely different. Some of them are making faces, sweating and fussing, but it is not getting any better – only worse!<sup>33</sup>

Panula additionally remarked that women could try to be conductors provided that the music they conduct is ‘feminine’. He added that composers such as Stravinsky and Bruckner are not suitable for women and that Debussy and Ravel are. ‘This is purely an issue of biology’,<sup>34</sup> he stated, provoking public outrage. Panula’s misogynist comments point toward a continuing sexism against female conductors, suggesting that the music they “should” conduct is feminine and indeed easier, weaker, softer and more fragile. Panula not only suggests that women are less ‘powerful’ than their male colleagues but also criticises the music of Debussy and Ravel as being biologically more suitable in the hands of women conductors.

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<sup>32</sup> *Jane Glover takes over Huddersfield*, 1988, Available from: *The Times Digital Archive*, (accessed 7 June 2013).

<sup>33</sup> B. Wise, ‘Conducting Guru Claims Women Shouldn’t Be Conductors’, [web blog], *WQXR*, 3 April 2014, <http://www.wqxr.org#!/story/conducting-guru-claims-women-shouldnt-be-conductors/>, (accessed May 2014).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

In relation to the above, the response by Simone Young (Artistic Director of the Hamburg State Opera and Music Director of the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra) in an interview may be seen as a retort to Panula's remarks, having a similar basis to Tali's previous interview response. Young, commenting on sexism, gender and women on the podium, refers to the concept of the musical repertoire as well:

Is our musical interpretation supposed to be so different? And where does that leave all the male gay conductors? It is plain bonkers to suggest that women can't interpret the sexual context of certain repertoire. I was Barenboim's assistant, and the huge canon of German rep is my heritage. For me it's about musical genealogy, not gender.<sup>35</sup>

Young's comment goes beyond the notions of sex and gender discrimination and embraces the concept of musical genealogy as the main emphasis in her work and mindset. She suggests that the individuality of conductors regarding musical interpretations may not be so diverse and that women are more than capable of supporting their choice of repertoire and interpreting composers' works in their own stylistic versions.

On a similar note on sexism, the Russian conductor Vasily Petrenko stated that a female conductor's sexuality could be detrimental to the performance of a professional orchestra, sexually objectifying his fellow female peers and colleagues.

Men often have less sexual energy and can focus more on the music. A sweet girl on the podium can make your thoughts drift towards something else.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Johnston, *Baton of the sexes*

<sup>36</sup> S. Gillies, *Jorma Panula claims women should not be conductors*, [website], 2014, <http://www.limelightmagazine.com.au/Article/381595,jorma-panula-claims-women-should-not-be-conductors.aspx>, (accessed May 2014).



Although he later rushed to explain that he had been misquoted in the interview, a prompt defence of all women conductors came from Nicolette Fraillon, Chief Conductor of the Australian Ballet, who responded that, in terms of opportunities for conductors, she did not think there was as much of a problem in her country as elsewhere in the world. Having said that, Fraillon argued that gender equality in any field is not an issue to be reluctant about, but it truly needs to be discussed openly and tackled from within.<sup>37</sup>

Another example of sexist and misogynistic behaviour comes through the eyes of the British conductor, Sian Pearce, who was the first female conductor in 70 years of the Morryston Orpheus Male Voice Choir, Pearce felt she was ‘hounded-out’ of her position and resigned after the refusal of several members of the choir to sing Queen’s ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’ and Westlife’s ‘You Raise Me Up’.<sup>38</sup> Commenting on her decision, she explained:

Some people have been reluctant for the choir to change, to move forward and some people did not like the fact that a woman was leading the choir – that was a real problem for a minority of members. I have loved the Morryston Orpheus since I was a small child and to conduct them has been absolutely fantastic. The overwhelming majority of members have been wonderful, very supportive.<sup>39</sup>

Although the majority of the choir members were supportive, others’ resistance forced Pearce to leave her post and resign; suggesting that even a small percentage of oppressive behaviour can lead to a temporary job loss, demotivation and negative

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Wales Online, *Conductor ‘hounded out’*, [website], 2013, <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/conductor-hounded-out-2244886>, (accessed July 2013).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

feelings. Similarly, regarding people's resistance to women conducting, is the approach to the profession by Alondra de la Parra, who spent some unglamorous years (as she states) studying, absorbing, analysing scores, practising her gesture technique, practising ear training and struggling to get in front of an orchestra even for a small amount of time. In a recent interview, she points out that the challenges of conducting are hard enough, even without the thought of gender. By adding the worry of being a woman, you are adding the worrying about succeeding, she says. She then adds that being a woman does not make someone handicapped but rather gives her an advantage. She explains that being a girl can offer more freedom to express feelings, do ballet, gymnastics and embody activities artistically; it gives women an upper hand as conductors.

People's resistance has made me stronger, we must be cautious of our dreams because this profession we followed is not for ordinary people. It is a profession not for the weak of heart regardless of their condition, gender or nationality. Musicianship is the ultimate levelling field. Everyone who has dared to travel this path has experienced the fears and challenges of the conductor's life. However, of the many privileges that life has given me – being a woman amongst them – I have been blessed to know that the music, the audience and my ability to dream are far more important than my fears.<sup>40</sup>

For the younger generation, then, considerable changes continue to develop a better, safer environment in the conducting world, although issues such as decisions taken behind the scenes of the concert stage still occur. For example, Sarah Ioannides,

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<sup>40</sup> A. De LaParra, 'The challenges of being a female conductor', [web blog], *Gramophone*, 26 April 2011, <http://www.gramophone.co.uk/blog/gramophone-guest-blog/the-challenges-of-being-a-female-conductor>, (accessed February 2012).

British conductor and music director of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra and the Spartanburg Symphony Orchestra comments:

Conducting is an incredibly rewarding career, but discrimination still exists. Not long ago I auditioned for a position as music director. I was one of two finalists. They offered it to the other finalist but he wasn't available. I heard nothing for a month and presumed the board was taking its time but when I eventually called them, they'd appointed someone else. I was told that the executive director felt it was "too important" a year to work with a woman, as the orchestra was celebrating its 75th anniversary.<sup>41</sup>

Although Ioannides feels that conducting is rewarding as a career, she felt that she was being discriminated against. The fact that people would not trust her abilities and that the year was too crucial for a woman conductor to lead, clearly shows how sexism and bias undervalue women's skills and capabilities. The conductor did not stay silent about what happened, however, and brought the issue to light. Similarly, the Finnish conductor Kim Diehnelt, in her online essay blog '*What is it like to be a woman conductor*' proposes to her female colleagues not to be silenced:

I'd like to challenge my fellow female conductors to join me in widening these defining lines. When women conductors are asked this question about being female in today's world, the default and 'proper' answer is a glossy, up-beat, and politically bland, 'There may be some discrimination, but I haven't experienced any.' Yes, I understand the political forces that require an American woman to deny the existence of any scenario that could paint her as 'a victim.' Any hint of victim-hood makes you weak and culpable; a taboo and stigma in this society. However, such white-washing of the world smacks of self-centred complacency: 'Well, I found my niche, so

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<sup>41</sup> Johnston, *Baton of the sexes*

things must be good enough.’ Just because you or I have eluded the barriers certainly doesn’t mean the situation is ‘good enough’.<sup>42</sup>

Diehnelt believes that women musicians should be able to speak out about their achievements and capabilities that have yet to be discovered but their male colleagues should be willing to fight for them, with them and accept them as equals. People who are not prejudiced or faced by any form of discrimination should not be bystanders who turn a blind eye or state that there is no direct discrimination in this profession. Diehnelt suggests that men and women conductors should try to comprehend that anyone can become a victim of sexual objectification and harsh critique and be stigmatised in a society that tends to have taboos based on gender binaries, sexual orientation and other constructs. The conductor suggests that, although females have been victims of gender bias, sometimes they will refer to it as no ‘big deal’. The comment implies that women conductors should not individualise their experiences but rather look into the matter of sexism, misogyny and discrimination as a community and tackle it, even if they are professionals and have a high status career; as Leopold Stokowski once brilliantly stated, not to sacrifice achievements to conventional beliefs.

When I think of women as I see them in the musical world, what they are capable of doing, their fine spirit, excellent technique, I realize what a splendid power we are letting go to waste in this country, and in other countries, too. What poor economy it is to take it for granted that women are not ready to enter the world of art, are not capable of becoming fluent channels for the expression of genius... We are sacrificing accomplishment to tradition.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> K. Diehnelt, ‘What is like to be a female conductor’, [web blog], *Maestra Kim Diehnelt*, 1 June 2011, <http://maestrakimd.blogspot.co.uk/2011/06/what-is-it-like-to-be-female-conductor.html>, (accessed June 2013).

<sup>43</sup> L. Stokowski, ‘Women in the Orchestra’, *The Literary Digest*, vol. 52, 1916, p. 504.

The prevailing templates for women's self-portraits and narratives are stuck in their emotional, motivational and cognitive infrastructure. As presented in the first two chapters of this thesis, through the work of feminists such as DeBeauvoir, Butler, Young and feminist musicologists such as Bartleet, Solie, Pendle, Conlon, Hinely and others, women were once mostly members with no specific power in patriarchal societies where they were forced to comply with subordination that might sometimes develop into an internalized oppression. As Diehnelt argues, something that is repeatedly suggested in this study, if women conductors refuse to turn a blind eye to discrimination and become aware of it, conducting will begin to gain equal status for men and women, having its focus on women's rights and equal treatment. If feminism continues to dynamically apply to the conducting profession, then the sexist oppression will come to an end. To this end, bell hooks<sup>44</sup> remarks that feminism will not give women privileges over men but, she says, it has the power to transform our lives in a meaningful way.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to the above, Stacey suggests that even if not explicitly defining themselves as feminists, other women are said to have the 'potential for feminist critique'.<sup>46</sup> Young women have interpreted the principles of feminism in their lives without necessarily having cognisance of it; therefore the various gains they receive will be unconditionally anticipated. This subconscious embrace of feminism reflects the existence of feminist values, without having to adjust to the movement practically.<sup>47</sup>

If women (as well as men) conductors reflect the principles of feminism, conducting

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<sup>44</sup> bell hooks is the pen name of the feminist Gloria Jean Watkins which, as she requests, is always cited in lowercase letters.

<sup>45</sup> b. hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000, p. 28.

<sup>46</sup> J. Stacey, 'Sexism by a subtler name? Post-industrial conditions and postfeminist consciousness in the Silicon Valley', *Socialist Review*, vol. 17, no.6, 198, pp. 7-28.

<sup>47</sup> P. Aronson, 'Feminists or "Postfeminists"? Young Women's Attitudes toward Feminism and Gender Relations', *Gender and Society*, vol. 17, no. 6, 2003, pp. 903-922.

will limit its discriminatory and sexist nature to a minimum level, aiming towards equality.

#### ***4.3 Broad Theme 1: Gender discrimination, bias, sexism and misogyny against women conductors: participants' responses.***

As seen in the introduction and literature review chapters, scholars, researchers, academics and feminist musicologists such as Bartleet, Jagow, Hinely, Pendle, Solie, McClary, and Conlon have included women musicians and conductors within the discipline of musicology and argued that they have been restrained, oppressed and discriminated against in almost every field of music. Yet, in the performing arts, conducting is one of the last fortresses of gender discrimination and one that is taking a long time to fall.

This was also evident within the interviews of this study about gender stereotypes, bias and discrimination (as well as in the media findings above). During the interviews, I was specifically cautious when asking about the participants' experiences of gender discrimination on the podium due to the sensitivity of the matter. Some participants hesitated when responding to this particular question, although some of them did not feel restrained to answer. Participant Diane, confirmed that she had been discriminated against when people watched her conduct, especially in the beginning of her career. She comments:

*“My particular career is almost entirely male-dominated; when I began there was a variety of responses, ranging from curiosity to acceptance, to discrimination and even abuse.”*

Diane did not give an analytical report of the word 'abuse', although her response implies that women conductors may find it difficult to deal with a male-dominated profession, especially at the beginning of their careers.

Participant Lia seems to have experienced gender discrimination in the past but finds the issue of discrimination wearing and does not place much emphasis on it. She notes:

*“Just lots of comments as to how unusual it was, which gets a bit tedious after a while!”* implying that she was exhausted from hearing the same comments over a long period of time.

With regard to the literature and, similar to Lia and Diane’s responses, Hinely’s research (see section 1.3) suggests that, because it was unusual to see women on the podium, women felt that they needed to prove themselves equal to men, since it is so male-dominated.<sup>48</sup> Regarding the oppressive attitude people may have towards women conductors, Bartleet remarks that if women conductors adopt too much ‘masculine’ power, they could be characterized as ‘butch’ and if they reveal too much femininity they could be seen as weak or hypersensitive.<sup>49</sup>

However, Genie’s story, with regard to discrimination, is both humorous and tragic. It involves the treatment she received regarding her gender and sexist behaviour by one of the members of her choir. Her story was noteworthy for me to hear; she was expressive, not only with her eyes but through her gestures. It goes as follows:

*“When I was at the Barbershop chorus, there was an old gentleman called Fred who used to refuse to watch me because he didn’t believe a woman had any business leading the chorus. As the chorus became better, the whole situation became more problematic. They got better and they became communicatively integrated but he insisted. You know, it became unbearable and some committee members shook him with “Either shape up or shape out!” He apologised and this was resolved, but that was catastrophic to me!”*

The word catastrophe she used is a powerful statement of her emotions at that time.

The undermining by a member of the choir was horrible for her to encounter and, as

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<sup>48</sup> Hinely, (1984b), pp. 41-42.

<sup>49</sup> Bartleet, (2008), pp. 31-51.

she said, everything was problematic. Being the newly appointed conductor of a choir, the participant left the issue with the committee members, wanting to stay out of quarrelling and fighting, especially at the beginning of her job. When the issue was resolved, the damage had already been done for her, even though she had managed to bring the choir closer together, making them more communicative, as she said, and having a better sound as a group. The participant continued talking about discrimination and stated that, over the years she has spent on her conducting career, she has come to believe that young women conductors in particular experience a frequent discrimination, such as Diane noted previously. Genie points out that:

*“The discouragement a female gets it is rarely explicit. It’s frequent. Women get patronised; when they are young it happens a lot!”*

This is also evident in Brenneman’s study, where she suggests that feminist researchers in music and music education strongly believe that women have been marginalised and often absent from music history.<sup>50</sup> According to Citron, this may occur due to women’s lack of access to a patriarchal world; a relationship between women and music could certainly be a problematic one.<sup>51</sup> In addition, Bowers and Tick emphasize the exclusion of women by historians,<sup>52</sup> whereas Hinely believes that the problem of this absence of women is rather historical and cultural.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, Genie was asked what steps she had followed to overcome this event, how she proceeded generally and what kind of state of mind she had afterwards. Her reply was full of confidence:

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<sup>50</sup> Brenneman, pp. 38-41.

<sup>51</sup> Citron, (1994), pp. 15-34.

<sup>52</sup> Bowers and Tick, (1985)

<sup>53</sup> Hinely, (1984b), pp. 42-45



*“I think these days you get your Doctorate and it gives you, partly you know, in a professional level, I have got this “badge” that says: “Look, I know something, shut up!”*

Regarding the above, the participant implies through her reference to her Doctorate as a “badge” that it stands as a personal and professional shield that can protect her from any sort of discrimination. She has the proof, the means and the power, the knowledge and the confidence that the particular paper may apply as a seriously dominant weapon against peoples’ discrimination and misogynistic behaviour.

Furthermore, when asked about discrimination, conductor Sandy replies:

*“Not yet... Of course I don’t see behind the scenes so I don’t know if there are things I’ve been turned down for that was related to my gender; I wouldn’t see that. So far, I haven’t experienced any direct rudeness to me that seems to be gender-based or any direct challenge.”*

Her response to the question is clear but she sets some boundaries within her answer. She implies that she is not aware if and whether people are discriminating against her gender, as she states that she has not been confronted in a sexist manner. Indeed, no-one knows what is happening ‘behind the scenes’, especially if the conductor is not a member of the choir or orchestra committee. Therefore, sometimes it could indeed be difficult to ascertain when or if discrimination is taking place when people stay silent about this issue.

Further on, the following two participants have not been discriminated against regarding their gender. For example, Pauline is really careful, avoiding conflict. She says:

*“I have to be careful what I say in front of the men in case it’s taken the wrong way.”*

In addition to the participant’s response and with regard to the literature, Jagow explains how sexism and gender discrimination disable women from following conducting as a career, and she remarks that sometimes they form all-female

orchestras, thereby avoiding confrontation with men.<sup>54</sup> Pauline's comment implies that she may be a victim of discrimination through avoidance and the manifestation of her own behaviour. The participant tries to steer clear of discrimination and acts in a manner that may regulate such problems before it can have an impact on her career. Self-discrimination by the participant could imply internal anxiety. When her previous statement is challenged, she states:

*"Never! No one has ever discriminated against me because I was a woman. I would say I've been respected."*

Moreover, the response from the following participant (Cathleen) appears as a sincere, self-aware answer to the question, with veiled points emerging. She remarks:

*"I have never encountered any discrimination because of my gender. However I have not really tried to push myself forward in this business."*

The participant denies that she has been discriminated against due to her gender; however, she immediately questions how things would have been if she would pursue this career in a more professional level.

With regard to the literature supporting the interview responses, Valerie Folkes and Shashi Matta conducted a quantitative study in 2013, which proved that gender stereotypes can shape our reaction to orchestral performances, a crucial issue within musicology.<sup>55</sup> The experiment is worthy of attention and discussion, due to this study's (especially this chapter's) overall focus on gender and discrimination against women conductors. In addition, the shaping of gender stereotypes and often false ideas on

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<sup>54</sup> Jagow, pp. 126-145

<sup>55</sup> V. Folkes, and S. Matta 'When a Product Takes on Characteristics of the Person Who Created It: Sometimes It Sounds Sweeter', *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2013, pp. 19-35.

male and female conductors will support this study's argument about the existence of sexism within conducting.

In the first experiment, 413 undergraduates with no strong interest in classical music read a short news story about the appointment of a new music director of the Baltimore Symphony. Half of them read an accurate account, referring to the female conductor Marin Alsop, and the others read a doctored report referring to the male conductor Maron Alsop. Half the reports were positive and the other half provided mixed reactions about the announcement. Later on, the participants listened to an extract of Alsop's recording of Brahms' First Symphony.<sup>56</sup>

The participants that read the mixed response, sometimes judging the conductor's competence, appeared to be more easily affected by gender stereotypes. Participants claimed that the performance was less powerful, more delicate, and had 'poorer quality' than those who believed they were listening to a man.<sup>57</sup> However, the participants who read the universally positive report reacted differently. They gave the performance equally high marks for masculine qualities such as 'stirring' and 'compelling,' regardless of the conductor's sex.<sup>58</sup>

Listeners who correctly believed that Alsop was a woman rated her performance higher in feminine qualities such as elegance and delicacy. Overall, they gave the performance higher grades than those who believed they were listening to a man. In the second experiment, students listened to an Alsop recording of a Brahms overture that featured more 'feminine'-sounding passages. This was repeated using a group of

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

112 classical music enthusiasts. The results were the following (in terms of the participants of the study):

They believed that a female conductor is more competent than a male conductor when both were highly praised, but once again, “her” performance of Brahms was judged more highly on feminine attributes such as delicacy and “his” received higher marks on such masculine elements as power.<sup>59</sup>

Although the above findings suggest a socially constructed attitude towards women conductors, Alsop argues:

There is no logical reason to stop women from conducting. The baton isn't heavy. It weighs about an ounce. No superhuman strength is required. Good musicianship is all that counts. As a society we have a lack of comfort in seeing women in these ultimate authority roles.<sup>60</sup>

The concept of leading an orchestra carrying the very complicated concept of gender could be a difficult task to accomplish. Nonetheless, comments such as Alsop's and other prominent conductors' motivating remarks can help females aspire to high status careers.

Concluding, the interviewees' responses show that most of them have been discriminated against in conducting. However, if they have not experienced discrimination, the participants' responses imply that are not always certain if discrimination occurs, since they are not aware of what is going on 'behind the scenes' of each choir/ orchestra/ band. Regarding discrimination, the literature argues that the

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<sup>59</sup> PSMAG, *The Perceived Delicacy of the Female Conductor*, [website], <http://www.psmag.com/culture/the-perceived-delicacy-of-the-female-conductor-39647/>, (accessed July 2013).

<sup>60</sup> M. Vincent, *CBC Classical music gender gap article poses new questions*, [website], 2014, <http://www.musicaltoronto.org/2014/04/05/editorial-cbc-classical-music-gender-gap-article-poses-new-questions/>, (accessed May 2014).

exclusion of women in musicology is a fact, according to Bartleet, Citron, Bowers and Tick, Brenneman, Hinely, Jagow and others, (as discussed in previous sections 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 2.4.1) due to historical and cultural implications such as the oppression of patriarchy, the absence of women musicians in music history books and a long ‘tradition’ of male-dominance in music.

#### ***4.4 Summary***

The first section of this chapter provided some historical sources and examples taken from media content, suggesting that there is still strong discrimination against women in music, specifically within the profession of conducting. The section introduced how discrimination took place across the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries and showed how sexism and misogyny come in different shapes and sizes, supporting the participants’ responses in the following section.

Data taken from the interviews suggest that these issues still remain in the profession and the different ways women conductors face discrimination are sometimes intense. Findings such as people refusing to be directed by a woman conductor, being curious about them as well as abusing them, are some of the participants’ experiences of the profession. The participants in the study have also noted that they have sometimes felt patronised, especially at the beginning of their career, because of people not taking them seriously or having doubts about their skills and abilities. The participants, additionally, felt that even if they did not face direct discrimination, if they were to push themselves more, they would probably be victims of it, whereas they are unaware of what is happening behind the scenes of committees and/or boards of choirs and orchestras.

Women conductors' responses found in the media analysis suggest that rejection can be gender-based, and they shared their experiences regarding gender-biased behaviour as well as losing work opportunities because of it, but conducting as a profession is significantly demanding of every gender. Media analysis also suggests that that sexism is still an issue, especially in orchestral conducting, with men often displaying misogynistic behaviour. An additional finding within media content suggests that reviewers and critics harshly criticise the way women play instruments, conduct and move on the podium, as well as their sexual energy on stage and they also suggest that attractive women conductors can make people be less focused on their task.

Women conductors' ways of handling these issues of sexism and misogyny vary. Some take a witty approach, some feel tired by the whole situation, others try to fight repression and the rest, even though they believe those issues exist, decide not to deal with them and continue doing what they do in the best way possible. This is evident within the interviews and the media content findings.

Although change has been occurring regarding the issue of discrimination in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the younger generation still faces gender bias, sexist remarks and misogynistic behaviour, although it is not as pronounced as in the 20<sup>th</sup> century media content findings. However, none of the participants who faced these issues (as well as women conductors within the media content) gave up trying to succeed in their chosen field, and their responses were optimistic about the future of all women entering this profession. Conducting, as Alondra de la Parra puts it, is a musical journey that, although it may sometimes include 'fear', can evolve into a promising, rewarding and creative career, breaking more and more glass ceilings in the musical world.

## **CHAPTER 5: FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN CONDUCTORS' CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

Musical training is a more potent instrument than any other for education.<sup>1</sup>

### ***5.1 Introduction***

This chapter draws upon interview data demonstrating the influence of family and other factors that may affect the pursuit and development of women's conducting careers. It also investigates whether intrinsic (coming from one's self) or extrinsic motivation (environmental/familial) and musical background had an impact on the participants' decision to follow music as well as to pursue and develop their conducting career. In this chapter, there was not enough evidence from the media to support the findings from TA, but rather, the researcher takes literature and further studies to support the interview data.

Media content was found to support evidence of a family's support, more in the sense of husband/spouse/marriage/partnerships (presented in chapter 6). In addition, this chapter aims to answer questions of familial motivation and familial musical background having (or not) an impact on women deciding to become conductors and on their musical skills. Furthermore, the chapter investigates how motivation works as an attribute on the participants' musical paths. It will, additionally, explore how the factor of encouragement may contribute to the participants' decision to follow a musical career and will analyse the participants' views on the terms 'amateur' and 'professional' and how they perceive conducting regarding those. Moreover, the final

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<sup>1</sup> M. Harris, *Music and the Young Mind Enhancing Brain Development and Engaging Learning*, Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2009, p. xii.

section of the chapter examines whether the participants of the study would urge women musicians to become conductors and pursue this particular career further.

### ***5.2 Broad Theme 2: Factors influencing women conductors' career development***

The second broad theme refers to the following three themes: (a) musical background and encouragement towards a musical career, (b) professionals vs. amateurs and (c) advice to prospective women musicians to pursue conducting as a career (Table 5.1).



**Table 5.1 Summary of Broad theme 2: Factors influencing women conductors' career development**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Participants' experiences</b>
<b>Musical background and encouragement towards a musical career</b>	<p>Families were motivating them, suggesting that the participants should begin music lessons.</p> <p>Supportive environment.</p> <p>Musical background (family members being musicians, professionals or amateurs) having an impact on their development and musical skills.</p> <p>Families and relatives were encouraging. Beginning at a young age helped them develop as musicians.</p>
<b>Professionals vs. Amateurs</b>	<p>Financial issues can be a struggle.</p> <p>Degree in conducting can be deceiving.</p> <p>Hours of practising and rehearsing.</p> <p>Ambiguity in the terms of professional and amateur when it comes to conducting.</p>
<b>Advice to prospective women musicians to pursue conducting as a career</b>	<p>A lot of work is going to be unseen but women are more than capable of enduring in this profession.</p> <p>No reason not to follow the career of conducting; it is a rewarding one.</p> <p>There is a need for more women conductors.</p> <p>Criticism may occur but women do not need to pay attention or be discouraged by it; they need to keep developing their careers.</p> <p>Follow their own vision and listen to no-one else.</p>

### ***5.3 Theme 1a: Musical Background and Encouragement towards a musical career***

#### ***5.3.1 The impact of family motivation to pursue music***

Functional sociologist Talcott Parsons likens the family to an ‘onion’. The layers act as the family members and the heart of that onion is made up of two family groups; the first being the individual, a mother, father and siblings and then the family of that individual; for example a husband, a spouse, children.<sup>2</sup> According to Cheal, family backgrounds affect peoples’ behaviour through the years of staying and spending time together.<sup>3</sup>

With regard to the interviews, all participants proudly refer to their families, even if their parents were not musical or were less supportive than others. They all place major importance on the motivation they received from their family members. It seems that parental influence has been identified as an imperative external factor affecting their motivation and determination to follow a musical career, as the comments of participants Willow, Sandy and Genie suggest:

*“I was not expected to be, but I was sort of creative and quite arty and I think my mom thought, “Oh well, maybe she would be all right on the cornet, so we could give her a go.” My auntie gave me a couple of lessons and that’s how I sort of started off.”* (Willow)

*“When I was about nine or so, my parents arranged for me to have piano lessons.”* (Sandy)

*“They (her parents) encouraged both my brother and me.”* (Genie)

Familial motivational support as an imperative factor affecting the participants’ choice in pursuing a musical career is also evident in the literature. Wigfield’s study suggests that children early in their lives (specifically around the first or second grade) begin to

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<sup>2</sup> D. Cheal, *Sociology of Family Life*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2002, p. 38

<sup>3</sup> Cheal, p.20

estimate their ability to perform various tasks.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Frome and Eccles suggest that children tend to base their evaluations on their own opinions and the feedback received from the significant adults in their lives. Their parents' assessment is more powerful than class grades in determining young children's self-perceptions of ability.<sup>5</sup>

Conductor Willow claims her involvement in music derived from her mother's initiative. According to Wigfield et al., mothers' feedback appears to have greater influence over students' self-concepts of ability than teachers' evaluations.<sup>6</sup> Hallam, however, argues that although a broad body of research suggests a particular importance of parental support in developing students' interest in music, such support may not always be essential.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Sichivitsa agrees that students could develop an independent interest in music, based on their own needs and aspirations, without any parental feedback. When parental support is present, however, it can have a significant positive affect on a child's motivation in music.<sup>8</sup>

For example, Willow's mother realised that her daughter was creative and could play an instrument and therefore follow her aunt's example by playing the cornet. The participant realises that her family influenced her and says that, if it were not for her mother's motivation and encouragement, she would probably not have begun music lessons.

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<sup>4</sup> A. Wigfield, J. S. Eccles, K. S. Yoon, R. D. Harold, A. J. A. Arbretton, C. Freedman-Doan, & P. C. Blumenfeld, 'Change in children's competence beliefs and subjective task values across the elementary school years: A 3 year study', *Journal of Educational Psychology*, vol. 89, no. 3, 1997, pp. 451-469.

<sup>5</sup> P. M. Frome, & J. S. Eccles, 'Parents' influence on children's achievement-related perceptions', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 74, no. 2, 1998, pp. 435-452.

<sup>6</sup> Wigfield et al., (1997), pp. 451-469.

<sup>7</sup> S. Hallam, 'Musical motivation: Toward a model synthesizing the research', *Music Education Research*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2002, pp. 225-244.

<sup>8</sup> V. Sichivitsa, V. 'Music motivation: A study of fourth, fifth, and sixth graders' intentions to persist in music', *Contributions to Music Education*, 31(2), 2004, pp. 27-41.

In addition, conductor Sandy notes that her parents were also very motivating; she remembers her father playing the guitar when she was very young. When she grew up, she became interested in playing the piano because her grandmother owned one.

*“She didn’t play it herself but I use to muck about on it. Redbridge has a music service that gives subsidised or paid music lessons so I had it through that service. I carried on playing piano up until University age; it kept me going all the way through school.”*

Having lessons through the music service helped the participant develop a musical background that her family was unable to afford. Even though the participant’s economic background was not helpful for her music lessons, the encouragement of her family was influential on her choice of career. The participant’s response illustrates Kelly’s hypothesis that people (i.e. the participant) observe the world, formulate and test hypotheses and review them when they are impractical.<sup>9</sup> In the case of the participant, music lessons through the service helped her first musical steps. Kelly suggests that people create meaning for themselves and, through perceiving what they acquire, they make sense of their world and are able to predict and understand things that happen to them. When people interpret these meanings, it can affect their future behaviour,<sup>10</sup> as occurred with Sandy’s decision to continue her piano lessons.

Contrastingly, although conductor Sandy had good motivation to pursue a musical career and received help from a music service, conductor Genie had noticeably more opportunities in music, appearing to come from a more stable economic background.

*“Well, I sort of have (brought up really) an orthodox classical background. I attended private schools. I did a bit of piano, clarinet and singing.”*

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<sup>9</sup> H. H. Kelly, ‘The processes of causal attribution’, *American Psychologist*, vol. 28, No. 2, 1973, pp. 107-128.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Studying in a private UK school could help an individual achieve greater things than students who attend a state school, through the support and the attention received from teachers and various surroundings. However, research has shown that differences in the private and public sector are far more limited than is popularly assumed. Witte argues that the range of fundamental problems needs dynamic, random assignment experiments over a number of years, with repeated measures of achievement taken into consideration and analysed.<sup>11</sup> The experiments, for Witte, would vary organizational approaches and practices following a random assignment of students; only through this approach, with its associated limitations in terms of generalizability, will we begin to realise which institutional strategies and practices lead to achievement gains for all students.<sup>12</sup>

Genie, however, acknowledges the fact that her parents were the main reason she pursued a musical career:

*“They (her parents) paid for our music lessons; my mother would drive me half an hour away to get singing lessons when no one else could. They were supportive that way.”*

The support and sacrifices made by both her parents (see above) motivated and inspired her. On the other hand, Ryan and Deci suggest that, as young musicians develop their skills, they pass through various stages of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The intrinsic motivation within students’ self-determination focuses on what learning circumstances are necessary to ‘elicit and sustain, versus subdue and diminish, this innate propensity’ to learn.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> J. F. Witte, ‘Private School Versus Public School Achievement: Are There Findings That Should Affect the Educational Choice Debate?’, *Economics of Education Review*, vol. 11, no. 4, 1992, pp. 371-394.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> R. M. Ryan, & E. L. Deci, ‘Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions’, *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2000, pp. 54–67.

As shown in the participants' responses, motivation was a tremendous aspect of their success in terms of music. With regard to the literature and the responses of the participants, Hallam suggests that there are three main groupings of those emphasising motivation: firstly originating intrinsically from the individual, secondly the individual's perception to be motivated by environmental factors and lastly, motivation can be seen as a complex interaction between the individual and the environment arbitrated by cognition.<sup>14</sup> However, could the participants' background and the motivation they received, in combination with the inheritance of musical talents, be a reason for their further development as musicians?

### ***5.3.2 Musical Background and Encouragement***

Woody and McPherson point out that music education gives the impression that the profession is so poorly equipped with knowledge, which explains more accurately how some students become intellectually interested and emotionally engaged in the repertoire they are studying, in contrast to others who display neither of these attributes during their practice.<sup>15</sup> This section aims to investigate if a musical background affected the pursuit and development of the participants' musical careers and how it encouraged them to persist within music. Regarding her musical background, conductor Pauline comments on her musical family:

*"This gentleman is my great grandfather on my mother's side. He was a choirmaster and a church organist. His son, my grandfather, played the organ; my mother sang and played the organ a little bit. So, yes," she said enthusiastically, "I have a musical background!"*

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<sup>14</sup> Hallam, pp. 225-244.

<sup>15</sup> R. H. Woody, & G. E. McPherson, 'Emotion and motivation in the lives of performers' in P. N. Juslin (ed.), *Handbook of music and emotion: Theory, research, applications*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 401-424.

Her excitement could be perceived not only as pride in the matter of having a musical connection with her family, but in the sense of the encouragement she was receiving to become one of the family's music group. Greenberg suggests that the perception people have about themselves is called their *self-concept*<sup>16</sup> and it could be stronger in music than in other domains.<sup>17</sup> This perception is strengthened by evaluations received from others, as well as by comparing oneself to others, as pointed out by Lamont.<sup>18</sup> Having a strong music self-concept is a crucial element in whether or not students will have the motivation to carry on in music.

Moreover, Greenberg notes that children's music self-concepts begin to shape as soon as they are able to determine how well they performed on a certain task.<sup>19</sup> Marsh, Craven, and Debus have confirmed that self-concept originates at an early age and becomes more personalized, as students grow older. Young students who engage in positive musical experiences are more likely to develop positive beliefs about themselves as musicians.<sup>20</sup> Pauline also points out:

*"My father could not even whistle in tune but I was deeply encouraged to be involved in music. When my mother moved to Billingham later in life, she sang with my choir."*

The participant emphasises that one of the closest family members was not musically talented himself, suggesting that not all members of the family had played a part in her musical career. She was deeply encouraged by her mother and her familial environment and pursued a musical profession which included her mother later on in

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<sup>16</sup> M. Greenberg, 'Musical achievement and the self-concept', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 18, no.1 1970, pp. 57-64.

<sup>17</sup> W. P. Vispoel, 'Measuring and understanding self-perceptions of musical ability', *International advances in self research*, 2003, pp. 151-179.

<sup>18</sup> A. Lamont, 'The beat goes on: Music education, identity and lifelong learning', *Music Education Research*, 2011, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 369-388.

<sup>19</sup> Greenberg, (1970), pp. 57-64.

<sup>20</sup> H. W Marsh, R. G. Craven, & R. Debus, 'Self-concepts of young children 5-8 years of age: Measurement and multidimensional structure', *Journal of Educational Psychology*, vol. 83, no. 3, 1991, p. 377.

her life, insinuating that her musical talent comes from her family background.

Similarly to Pauline, Genie remarks:

*“Both my parents were keen amateur musicians.”*

In relation to Pauline and Genie’s responses and with regard to the literature, Sosniak’s study of concert pianists shows that the parents of exceptionally gifted musicians were not necessarily musicians themselves or even had musical backgrounds.<sup>21</sup> The two prevailing perspectives about musical talent and musical training are contradictory and complex. Papousek suggests that our musical interactions are affected by our parents’ intuitiveness<sup>22</sup> whereas Walters, as a music educator, remains unconvinced of the mother’s or the father’s ability to transmit their musical culture to their child.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, findings by Howe and Sloboda’s research into children aged ten to eighteen who attended a specialist music school indicate that those who were rated as extraordinarily gifted by their music teachers had less musically active parents than the other participating children. In certain cases, the existence of successful musicians in former generations influenced how these parents nurtured their child after comprehending their potential in music,<sup>24</sup> as in the case of all the participants in this study. An example supporting the above is participant Diana’s statement about being encouraged and acknowledged for her musical talent. She comments:

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<sup>21</sup> L. A. Sosniak, ‘*Learning to be a concert pianist*’, in B. S. Bloom and L. A. Sosniak (eds.) *Developing talent in young people*, New York: Ballantine, 1985. pp. 19-67.

<sup>22</sup> M. Papousek, ‘Intuitive parenting: A hidden source of musical stimulation in infancy’, in I. Deliège & J. A. Sloboda (eds.), *Musical Beginnings: Origins and Development of Musical Competence*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 88-112.

<sup>23</sup> D. Walters, *Harmonic development: Music’s impact to age three*, Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Symphony, 2000.

<sup>24</sup> M. J. A. Howe, and J. A. Sloboda, ‘Young musicians’ accounts of significant influences in their early lives: 1. The family and the musical background’, *British Journal of Music Education*, vol. 8, 1991, pp. 39-52.



*“My whole family encouraged me – my grandfather insisted on buying me a piano as he felt I had musical gifts. My father had musical relatives and he himself had played the violin and sang when younger. My mother had played the piano and sung when younger, so although there was no degree of professional musicians in my most immediate family, music was strongly encouraged, not least for its cultural and educational value.”*

The above statement suggests that the participant’s inherent talent and her relatives’ belief in what she could achieve pushed her towards her current vocation. She had all the support needed in the shape of a family that believed music has tremendous value for her education and cultural upbringing. In addition, Cathleen knew in the early stages of her life that she wanted to become a musician. She points out:

*“From the age of 7 years, I played the piano and began to have singing lessons. At 8 years of age I knew I wanted to study at the Royal Academy in London where I obtained a place as a vocal student when I was 18 years old.”*

An extraordinary factor regarding the young age of the participant’s involvement in music could be the fact that she was put into this music world when she was often taken to events by her parents and relatives. The participant was also brought up listening to music throughout her childhood years:

*“My grandfather played the organ and my aunt played the piano, as did my mother. They took me to light operas in the late Forties and during the Fifties. They were amateur musicians who loved music and listened to records – mainly of lighter classical music.”*

In terms of the participant’s above reply and with regard to the literature, a study by Duke, Flowers and Wolfe argues that some children were rated as more skilful than other children when their mothers played the piano when they were young. Furthermore, parents who reported positive experiences with their own school music training, such as being a part of an orchestra, band or choir and had continued their music making as adults, encouraged their families and provided their children with

analogous music education opportunities.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Custodero and Johnson-Green claim that the inherently musical communication between a parent and a child outlines the nature of our earliest sound memories and experiences whereas, later, we may become members of various other musical activities.<sup>26</sup> Having all those musical experiences and influences as children and later on as teenagers, helps to determine musical preferences, linking the person to a lifelong association with music and music making, such as the participant's studies at the Royal Academy in London.

On the other hand, conductor Lia was a state schoolgirl, having superb musical support at the school. At the age of sixteen she moved to a boarding school with a good musical tradition, in order to study the organ. She got into music very early on and she was taking piano lessons and attending Saturday morning music school with the local authority. She also had violin lessons in groups at school, as well as recorder, clarinet and organ lessons. The participant states that she had a helpful, musical and encouraging family background:

*“My father is a good amateur pianist/organist and had sung at university. My grandma was a Methodist organist. I was massively encouraged by everybody but particularly my parents and then, when things started to shine through, I was very lucky with some very supportive teachers.”*

Supporting the above, findings by Scott and Moffett in a study of composers, suggest that musical talent is often revealed before the age of ten. Scott and Moffett report that musicians often have a family background of musical interest and knowledge and that

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<sup>25</sup> R. A. Duke, P. J. Flowers, and D. E. Wolfe, 'Children who study piano with excellent teachers in the United States' *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 1997, pp. 51-84.

<sup>26</sup> L. A. Custodero and E. A. Johnson-Green, 'Passing the Cultural Torch: Musical Experience and Musical Parenting of Infants', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 51, no. 2, 2003, Sage Publications, pp. 102-114.

the musical capacities of a child are often recognized early and stimulated.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Custodero and Johnson propose that parents' lullabies can help the transition of inherent musical qualities to their children and it can be as educational as an instrumental lesson. Various distinctive social musical units, also suggested by Blacking as 'sound groups', could act as vehicles through which musical culture is transmitted and shared.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, noteworthy approaches to children's development and involvement in music were studies by Hassler, Nieschlag and De La Motte; they investigated the relationships between musical talent and spatial faculties. They wanted to see if differences exist between musicians and non-musicians in hemispheric lateralisation or spatial and verbal processing.

Special talents and the biological basis factor have proposed new hypotheses over the years. Diamond et al. have put forward the notion that an enriched and stimulating environment during our development can have an impact on neocortical function, possibly providing the basis for exceptional talents.<sup>29</sup>

However, according to Seashore, the discipline of psychology divides capacity from ability, noting that capacity is our inborn power contrasting with our ability, which is 'an acquired skill in the use of our already given capacity.'<sup>30</sup> To analyse a musical talent from its psychological aspects, a variety of factors needs to be classified affecting the expression of that talent, bearing in mind the physical attributes of the

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<sup>27</sup> D. Scott and A. Moffett. 'The development of early musical talent in famous composers: a biographical review' in M. Critchley and R. A. Henson, (eds.) *Music and the brain: Studies in the neurology of music*, 1977, pp. 174–201.

<sup>28</sup> J. Blacking, *Music, culture, and experience: Selected papers of John Blacking*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 232.

<sup>29</sup> M. Hassler, E. Nieschlag and D. De La Motte, 'Creative Musical Talent, Cognitive Functioning, and Gender: Psychobiological Aspects', *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1990, University of California Press, p.35.

<sup>30</sup> C. E. Seashore, *Psychology of Music*, New York: Dover, 1967, p. 335.

waves of different sounds, and secondly the mental traits essential for the cognitive understanding and response through the mentioned attributes.

A common thread in the two themes of musical background and familial motivation is the fact that (1) all participants were encouraged by their family to pursue music; (2) parent and teacher motivation was crucial; and (3) the more parents are involved, the more successful and higher achieving their children will be. This is also supported by studies in educational psychology. Susan Hallam, like many others, suggests that motivation in active music making is determined by complex interactions between the individual and the environment in which they find themselves. She argues that these are issues that require further empirical investigation into individual ability and motivation:

Early musical experiences, learning outcomes, self-efficacy and subsequently self-esteem are internalised by the individual in such a way that they become part of that individual's characteristics, rendering it both impossible and pointless to disentangle them. Once internalised, they impact on motivation to continue to be involved in music. Motivation is inextricably linked to a self-perception of being musically efficacious.<sup>31</sup>

In addition, more questions about voice quality, along with musical emotion queries and so on, applied on the development of the musical mind from the early infancy and upwards, could unfold the mysteries of musical skills and talent. Standley claims that, when answering these questions scientifically in comparison to psychological aspects, music psychology could perhaps be better understood and applied in the future,<sup>32</sup> concerning gender and its key effect on musical abilities. As shown, researchers suggest that a supportive environment and intensive training are also of high

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<sup>31</sup> Hallam, pp. 225-244.

<sup>32</sup> J. M. Standley, *The Power of Contingent Music for Infant Learning*, University of Illinois Press, no. 49, 2001, pp. 65-71.

importance, as revealed in this study. Nonetheless, musical backgrounds, as shown through the interviews, helped the participants become involved in music and encouraged them to pursue and develop their career.

#### ***5.4 Theme 1b: Professionals vs. Amateurs***

This section of the chapter presents some of the participants' views on the issue of amateurism and professionalism in terms of conducting. Having gone through the participants' early life experiences in music (e.g. responses about how their families motivated them throughout their younger years to pursue a musical career, having discussed how encouragement and musical background affected the development of their careers), distinguishing professionalism and amateurism seems to follow the participants' path later in life, when conducting actually becomes their profession. The matter of earnings and the vagueness of defining professionalism and amateurism created a point of discussion during the interviews. Most of the participants in this study take on additional employment to make ends meet; conducting, it seems, cannot offer a proper salary to support them and/or their family, even if they consider themselves professional conductors.

Although seven out of the eight participants have a degree in music, only three have a degree in choir conducting and the rest became involved in the profession either by luck, self-motivation and/or familial encouragement. This section aims to examine the participants' responses and to discuss whether it matters to distinguish between professionals and amateurs, and how women conductors perceive these 'labels'.

Undeniably, there is a very large and praiseworthy body of individuals who make their livelihood exclusively in some branch of music. Some do this either by teaching or by giving public performances; these are called 'professionals.' Additionally, there is a

great number of people who can be characterised as the music-loving public, who take an interest in the art but do not make any use of it for the purpose of moneymaking. These, Pole remarks, are the true ‘Amateurs’.<sup>33</sup>

Beginning with participant Genie, she refers to the time spent on conducting and the diversity of approaches individual musicians have to music. She discusses the ambiguity of the terms ‘professional’ and ‘amateur’, as she is involved in the world of conducting, noting:

*“I think that, generally, the professional conductor has the advantage of putting more hours in. The basis of expertise is, the more time you spend doing it, the better you will get at it! The professional, in order to get there, would have to put in more hours, more constructive study. Having said that, there are often very good musicians who aren’t...You know... they are professional conductors because they did it obsessively and they are good at it but the financial aspect is also there. There are also the musicians who are quite good but they have a dysfunctional approach to music.”*

Similarly to this participant’s response, Gilbert suggests that professionalism is the intellectual side of any profession that requires a lot of time spent often at a university, in order to gain specialisation, training proficiency and knowledge on a specific subject, discipline or instrument. Manual skills are also a crucial additional factor, which is incorporated in the term, if an individual wants to be called a professional.<sup>34</sup>

Gaining professional experience without any formal education could be an enormously difficult and insufficient task. The true ‘spirit’ of the profession, as Gilbert points out, should not be measured by financial standards but also by the quality of the service provided. Gilbert also gives examples of some of the rewards of being a

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<sup>33</sup> W. Pole, ‘Professional Musicians and Musical Amateurs’, *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, vol. 24, no. 486, 1883, pp. 432-433.

<sup>34</sup> D. L. Gilbert, ‘Professionalism and the Professional’, *BioScience*, vol. 21, no. 15, 1971, pp. 803-805.

professional; a professor sees his students succeeding, physicians becoming wealthy by the motivating force of the good they can do for humanity, assuming they are not doing it for money and are driven by altruism rather than by wealth. However, the example of ‘professional athletes’ could be considered different because they are competing or playing for money; and, Gilbert adds, those individuals are not necessarily professionals in the true spirit of professional endeavour.<sup>35</sup> In the case of conductors, besides money, there is the creative side; they hear the sound they want the orchestra to produce.

Like Gilbert, Pauline mentions the significance of an individual’s financial status and earnings, when she notes:

*“For me, having a paying audience to come and see you and only do conducting does not make you a professional.”*

Truly, one might think that a paying audience could lead to people categorising others as professionals. However, the word ‘amateur’ and the English everyday usage of it, is defined by Webster's Dictionary in one sense as ‘one that engages in a particular pursuit, study, or science as a pastime rather than as a professional.’<sup>36</sup> From a sociological standpoint, the sense of the word amateur is not precisely explained. On the one hand, an amateur is said in the first sense of the word to be a devotee who loves a particular activity, while in another sense s/he is said to be a superficial participant—a *dilettante* or *dabbler*. Dilettante is explained as a lover of the arts, and in the second as a person who has judgmental perception or taste.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, an amateur conductor may spend less time within the profession, than a professional one

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> R. A. Stebbins, ‘The Amateur: Two Sociological Definitions’ *The Pacific Sociological Review*, vol. 20, no. 4 1977, University of California Press, pp. 582-606.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

but may love the art in the same way; however the ambiguity still remains. Regarding amateurism and professionalism, Sandy seems to agree that vagueness rests within defining those terms, suggesting:

*“I cannot say really what the difference is. One of the definitions may be if they are paid to do the conducting! That’s more the professional side of things isn’t it? I have two choirs but a degree in piano and not in conducting. It’s hard to categorise that.”*

In terms of the above, the issue of professionals and amateurs remains vague to distinguish and differentiate. For example, if we suppose that having a degree in conducting makes someone a professional, could it depend on the salary the person gets paid each time he or she conducts, on experience, or expertise? Stebbins gives an insight into how to differentiate an amateur from a professional by identifying two common usages of the word. First, for professionals, livelihood gains need to be at least 50%, while for amateurs, at the most, it only extends a principal source of income earned elsewhere. Second, the time spent on the occupation as a profession is considerably more than the time spent by an amateur. Having said that, it does not mean that an amateur loves his profession less or more than a professional and vice versa. Besides, as Stebbins proposes, many modern amateurs and professionals are highly devoted to their vocation and are very enthusiastic, regardless of their earnings.<sup>38</sup>

In addition, regarding conducting and financial status, participant Sandy suggests:

*“My personal definition of a professional is when someone makes money out of that activity. It may seem very factual but that’s how I define it.”*

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<sup>38</sup> Stebbins, (1977), pp. 582-606.



Her philosophy is simple, strict and straightforward. She remarks:

*“I think if someone is willing to pay you for the service that you require, that makes you a professional; you are allowed to be called a professional. That doesn’t necessarily speak of quality. I think just because someone gets money from what they do, doesn’t necessarily mean that they are amazing to what they do but it means that they are able to provide something to people.”*

The participant has an incredible awareness of this issue. As Pole suggests, the complex nature of our social system and all other attempts at statistical classification result in anomalous relations that abolish the clarity of any line of distinction that is attempted to draw.<sup>39</sup> As noted by Pole,

music offers great attractions to minds sensitive to it, and if it happens that persons so constituted are intelligent and persevering, they may, without any intention of making a living by the profession, carry their study and practice so far as to obtain a knowledge and proficiency fully equal to that of many professional men.<sup>40</sup>

Natural inborn talent, external factors and ongoing life experiences are some of the key issues to succeed in any field. Practice is also an additional factor, as Levitin and colleagues reported, when their study showed that accomplished musicians practise longer hours than musicians who are not at the top and, furthermore, the best conservatory students practise up to twice as much as those who are not referred to as accomplished.<sup>41</sup> Having said that, how can a woman conductor achieve experiences and expertise if she cannot practise her ‘instrument’?

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Pole, pp. 432-433.

<sup>41</sup> F. Travis, H. S. Harung, Y. Lagrosen, ‘Moral development, executive functioning, peak experiences and brain patterns in professional and amateur classical musicians: Interpreted in light of a Unified Theory of Performance’, *Consciousness and Cognition*, vol. 20, no. 4, 2011, pp. 1256–1264.

I would suggest that some participants of this study fall into the category or, better, the term ‘modern amateurism’, which appears as a new form of professionalization that is spreading from one occupation to another. The evolution of the term has been taking place alongside those occupations where some of the participants’ livelihood depends on the central activity, and hence, they are devoted to it as a vocation rather than as an avocation.<sup>42</sup>

To sum up, there are three main issues that emerge from the interview data. First, as implied by the participants, it does not mean that someone needs to have a degree in conducting to be called a professional conductor. Second, money becomes an issue if the salary of working exclusively as a conductor is insufficient to make ends meet. Third, in relation to the two issues of (a) having a degree in conducting and (b) earning a sufficient salary as a conductor may not be sufficient for someone to be called a professional. The participants argue that everything may also depend on the quality of the outcome that conductors’ provide in concerts; that is, music.

Nevertheless, I would argue that the distinction of the terms does not play an imperative role in how we perceive women conductors. However, that is not to say that so-called amateur women conductors are better than the professionals or vice-versa, but rather the importance of the terms lies in the life and/or institutional opportunities and support women receive in order to study and practise with their choirs and/or orchestras. Although the participants did not mention gender in the context of professionals and amateurs, I would suggest, also pointed out in Bartleet,<sup>43</sup> that women conductors may lack institutional support and opportunities, and may have

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<sup>42</sup> R. A. Stebbins, ‘Classical Music Amateurs: a definitional study’, *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1978, pp. 78-103.

<sup>43</sup> B. L. Bartleet, (2005), pp. 235-242.

therefore been depriving them from being called professionals. Gender discrimination is crucial in this context and, as seen in Chapter 4, the various ways in which discrimination restrained women musicians and conductors were discussed. Hence, if the anomalous relations that emerge between women and men conducting are terminated, women conductors will be able to carry their knowledge and proficiency, fully equivalent to that of professional men.

### ***5.5 Theme 1c: Advice to women musicians wishing to pursue conducting as a career***

In the previous sections, we followed the participants' path in music from their early musical stages to developing their career and discussed the terms 'professional' and 'amateur' concerning conducting. The final theme of this chapter examines if the participants (who have already been in the field for years) would advise young musicians to pursue a career in conducting, given the array of obstacles that may befall them during their career development, such as a non-stable economic background, a non-supportive environment or a lack of familial support. Most of the participants give an enthusiastic response regarding a potential conducting career for prospective female musicians and offering advice. However, some participants point out the difficulty women may face in this traditionally male profession and advise young women to be prepared for everything that may come their way.

To begin with, Willow remarks:

*"I think we do need more female conductors."* Willow, by this statement, suggests that there is gender isolation in the profession.

Furthermore, participant Bria comments:

*“If they find leading others rewarding then yes. I find that facilitating an ensemble performance is the most rewarding musical activity possible.”*

Bria suggests that there are traits associated with the enjoyment of conducting. She specifically points to the leadership quality; when one is comfortable and appreciates leading a group, women should pursue it as they will gain great pleasure through it.

Additionally, Lia, Cathleen, and Diane are all very keen to encourage the conducting profession in young females. They are all mothers, implying that the combination of conducting and motherhood can be achieved, as discussed in Chapter 6. The participants remark that females should think of nothing less than what they would like to do in their lives and follow their ambition, even if it is to become a woman conductor in a male-dominated profession. The participants point out:

*“Yes, like anything, if a girl thinks they fancy a go, why not have a go!” (Lia)*

*“Yes absolutely – if that is their dream they should pursue it.” (Diane)*

*“I certainly would if they were interested in it.” (Cathleen)*

Genie, who is very expressive in her reaction to the question, says that she would of course advise young women to pursue conducting, although anyone searching on Google for the word ‘conductor’ will observe the extent of male predominance in the field. She notes that, on the Internet, there seems to be information mostly about male conductors, arguing that male domination still exists in the profession. She states:

*“In choral conducting there are a lot more women”, indicating that in orchestral conducting, the number of women pursuing this career is even more minimal. “The whole thing is the maestro myth. If you listen to the radio, the basic concept of the great works and the great masters is pretty much undisturbed. And certainly people who are now in a position of authority were brought up with complete unquestioning of that.”*

The concept of the mighty maestro and authoritative figures is brought up by the participant in an effort to show how the masculine norm has conquered the podiums. She adds that, although books such as *'Gender and Genius,'* which was written at the end of the '80s, should have changed this 'masculine exterior type' of concept, it did not, adding "*certainly not in music*". Genie remarks on specific comments that a woman may hear throughout her career:

*"Some people say: "Oh, if you are a woman conductor you should leave your gender at the door" which I am OK with; but they would never say that to a man! Actually, if male conductors left their gender at the door it would be amazing. Nobody ever says to a man "leave your gender behind!" For Heaven's sake! You want to say to those people: 'Well, you are conducting like a bloke.' Can't you just be more like a human being? I am looking forward to saying that to someone sometime!"*

Leaving gender – or, better, gender norms – at the door would be the right ideology in an ideal world with no discrimination or sexist behaviour. It is perhaps most common, when comments are made to women conductors, to judge their conducting style by comparing it to someone else's, making remarks on technique and expressing – sometimes without realising – discriminatory and/or sexist comments.

Sandy's ideas on the subject come across as advice coming from someone who has put a lot of thought into her career and decided what she wants to pursue and accomplish:

*"Any particular study or area of study is hard but one of the things that make it difficult for women to get out there is whether you need to decide to what extent you're going to compete. If you want to be a career conductor, by which I mean you continually move on to bigger, possibly more professional ensembles until you're doing very big and very professional ensembles, very prestigious events; if you want to do that sort of thing, then it's not a very easy environment for women to do it. It's not a career that supports you very well; you're taking whole years out or you're not being free to travel. That doesn't sit well with family life."*

According to Sandy, if a woman wants to be a professional conductor, she should consider the consequences of her decision. She accentuates the fact that, especially for women who want to gain a higher status position in their field of expertise, a harder environment to deal with will be expecting them. She emphasizes that it is a career you pursue on your own and cannot afford a settled life in one area with other priorities. It requires hard work and a focus only on one direction to be able to compete in such a profession.

Furthermore, Pauline notes:

*“Be prepared! Yes, be prepared to put in a lot of unseen work.”*

The participant’s response gives a heads up to young girls wishing to pursue conducting, that sometimes the fruits of the conductors’ labour are not always visible. Concluding, in all cases, the participants give a positive nudge to prospective female conductors wanting to pursue a career in conducting. Most are enthusiastic about it and no participant remarks that conducting should not be pursued as a career, suggesting that the current conducting world needs more women in the field.

## ***5.6 Summary***

Regarding the research question of whether musical background, familial motivation and encouragement have a great impact on women deciding to becoming conductors, the participants responded that all of the above matter in every aspect. As shown by the participants’ responses along with the literature, having a motivating environment is tremendously helpful if one is pursuing and developing a conducting career, even if the participants grew up in a non-wealthy family. Being motivated at a very young age played an enormous role in their pursuit, as did the encouragement of family members and relatives. The participants’ relatives would play musical instruments themselves,

as well as other family members, and this would motivate them to play themselves or begin music lessons.

In terms of musical background being an additional factor contributing to their abilities as musicians, it has been shown that most of the participants may have inherited their relatives' musical skills, although studies show that this is not necessarily the norm. The importance of this theme is that the motivation and constant encouragement the participants received, in combination with their musical background, led them to pursue and develop within music.

In conclusion, the broad theme and the themes of this chapter have shown how background, family support and encouragement impact on the participants' lives and their pursuit of a musical career. All the participants responded positively when asked if their background in music and the support they received helped their subsequent steps in conducting. In addition, it is suggested that musical abilities and talent, as shown through TA as well as further research, can influence their lives as musicians in combination with an encouraging environment and family.

Furthermore, the terms 'professional' and 'amateur' brought ambiguity to the participants' responses about entering the field of conducting and developing their career. They commented that a professional conductor is someone who is being paid a salary to carry out a vocation and has a paying audience at performances, although this is not a factual condition and a conductor without a degree who devotes many hours to the profession can also be considered a professional, although an amateur can love his/her profession with the same passion. They perceive those terms as vague, suggesting that a professional conductor is the one whose livelihood depends on that vocation; rehearsing for hours and loving the profession can be additionally problematic if there is a need to define the terms.

However, although the participants' responses do not imply that professional male conductors may have more opportunities to practise with orchestras and choirs, I would suggest that women lack societal and institutional support to do so and to be called professionals. Therefore, these terms become more ambiguous regarding conducting, suggesting that gender bias and/or discrimination (discussed in the following chapter) may be one of the reasons why this occurs.

Moreover, the participants in the study point out that there is a need for more women to enter the field of conducting. Their responses suggest that a lot of work done by prospective conductors is going to be unseen and they need to be prepared for that. However, the participants argue that women are more than capable of enduring within this profession and that there is no good reason not to follow conducting as a career, claiming that it is a fulfilling one. Harsh criticism, the participants acknowledge, will always be one of the barriers against women in the field but young musicians wishing to pursue a conducting career should not be discouraged and should keep developing their careers and evolve as conductors. Additionally, women musicians wanting to become conductors should also follow their own vision and voice if they want to survive in the profession, although having familial duties may stop or slow down the development of their careers. However, the participants in the study who are mothers strongly believe that if a young woman wants to be a conductor, no one can stop her trying to succeed.



## CHAPTER 6: ACHIEVING BALANCE

I conducted all the way through eight months of pregnancy, up to eight-months. It's always then because you're a woman, if you're tired ... with a male they'd say, "Oh, that's okay, he's tired, he has just flown in from wherever and has had a very busy rehearsal schedule." And with me it was always, "Oh well there you go, the woman," kind of thing.<sup>44</sup>

### ***6.1 Introduction***

This chapter aims to investigate, through interview and media data analysis, the extent to which female conductors are able to balance their personal and professional lives. As a result of the TA and the media content analysis, two themes emerged: (i) partnerships and marriages and (ii) motherhood. Similar to this chapter's sections on motherhood, Bartleet also examined how motherhood and conducting can be a difficult to balance, especially for professional conductors who travel often,<sup>45</sup> suggesting that there are too many norms and customs to this profession and that it needs to be more inclusive and look in-depth into women's lives and experiences,<sup>46</sup> something that this chapter aims to do. The themes of partnerships and marriages as well as motherhood will explore the ways in which participants cope with being in committed relationships, wives, mothers and conductors and, in some instances, as women conductors who are childless.

### ***6.2 Broad Theme 3: Achieving balance***

The third broad theme – Achieving balance – refers to the two themes indicated in the table below: (a) partnerships and marriages, (b) motherhood (Table 6.1).

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<sup>44</sup> Bartleet, B.L., 'Conducting Motherhood: The Personal and Professional Experiences of Women Orchestral Conductors' *Outskirts: Feminisms along the edge*, 15, 2006, available at: <http://www.outskirts.arts.uwa.edu.au/volumes/volume-15/bartleet>, pp. 1-23.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Bartleet, (2008), pp. 31-51.

**Table 6.1 Summary of Broad Theme 3: Achieving Balance**

<b>Participants' experiences</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Media Analysis Theme a and b</b>
<p><i>Balance is difficult to achieve.</i></p> <p><i>Would not be able to manage without support.</i></p> <p><i>Hours put into conducting are demanding, therefore balance is hard to accomplish and it is difficult to separate life from work.</i></p>	<p><b>Partnerships and marriages</b></p>	<p><i>Difficulties in combining personal and professional life.</i></p> <p><i>Support is extremely important.</i></p> <p><i>A lot of travelling is required if you become a professional conductor, hence, combining marriage with work is sometimes impossible.</i></p>
<p><i>Participants are hesitant about having children because it requires them to stay at home for a long time.</i></p> <p><i>If they decided to get pregnant they would stop their work and they did not feel ready to do that.</i></p>	<p><b>Motherhood</b></p>	<p><i>Feel guilty if they are absent from home and are away from their children.</i></p> <p><i>Pregnancy might be equal to failing to attain a job as a conductor.</i></p> <p><i>Conducting should not require this much sacrifice; being pregnant is not something to make you stop your professional career.</i></p> <p><i>People should be more empathetic towards pregnant women conductors.</i></p>

### ***6.3 Theme 1a: Partnerships and marriages***

#### ***6.3.1 Financial, political, social issues***

This section provides a brief discussion and presents four key issues of women's changing role in a Western context and relates those issues to women conductors and balancing their personal with professional lives. Although changes have occurred, given that barriers to women's full participation in society have been lowered, women remain greatly underrepresented at the higher levels of nearly every occupation,<sup>47</sup> including conducting.

According to Kaplan, women have firstly struggled to combine work, an active sex life and motherhood in their lives throughout the centuries. For Kaplan, women in normative heterosexual marriages have difficulty combining these three aspects (assuming that these three are indeed the main ones). Women who face greater challenges than the latter are poor or belong to minority groups, single or recently divorced mothers, or are gay parents.<sup>48</sup> The lack of institutional support for combining an active sex life, work and motherhood is a major factor affecting the lives of women.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, for women conductors, the combination of work, motherhood, and personal life can be a complicated situation to handle.

Second, the tremendous post-World War II economic and technological changes include an increased number of women in the workforce, the advent of the '60s/'70s/'80s feminist women's movements and new reproductive technologies substantially affected women's lives.<sup>50</sup> In addition, feminist and gay rights movements

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<sup>47</sup> S. L. Sutherland, 'The Unambitious Female: Women's Low Professional Aspirations', *Signs*, vol. 3, no. 4 1978, University of Chicago Press, pp. 774-794.

<sup>48</sup> E. Ann Kaplan, 'Sex, Work and Motherhood: The Impossible Triangle', *Journal of Sex Research*, vol. 27, no. 3, *Feminist Perspectives on Sexuality, Part 2*, 1990, pp. 409-425.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

have provided a normative framework according to various inequalities of power that are recognized as the central fact of current gender relations.<sup>51</sup> In terms of conducting, the male dominance of the profession, the male tradition in music and the lack of music history's input in valuing women's work in music, reinforced those unequal gender relations and caused women to face more obstacles when pursuing a career as conductors.

Third, patterns of women's behaviour have changed as they have become more socially, sexually and financially secure. Segal suggests that the women of the 20<sup>th</sup> century look and feel more ambitious, at least in most Western countries. The variety of the forms of oppression involves patriarchal controls over women's bodies, reproductive rights, ideologies of domesticity, femininity and compulsory heterosexuality, as well as social definitions of the nature of skill, the value of work and the differential compensation of 'productive' and 'reproductive' labour.<sup>52</sup> Hence, for women, the ability to combine their marriage, relationship or domestic partnership may be one of the most difficult situations they face but they seem more determined to do so. Reflecting Segal about women becoming more determined and ambitious, the interview data and media content findings will be presented and analysed in the following sections in order to discuss how women perceive these situations, as well as to observe the ways they find to combine a personal life with a profession and, later on, with motherhood.

Lastly, a political agenda is also defined, aiming at a transforming balance of power between men and women (also discussed in Chapter 9). The limited number of

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<sup>51</sup> R.W. Connell, *Gender and power: society, the person and sexual politics*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987, pp. 259-277.

<sup>52</sup> L. Segal, *Slow motion: changing masculinities, changing men*, London: Virago Press, 1990, pp. 1-9.

college-educated women, mainly gaining lower pay for many years and restricted to female-dominated professions such as teaching and nursing, was one of the issues of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, over the past several decades, there has been an outstanding increase in the percentage of college-educated women in higher-paying professional occupations.<sup>53</sup> For example, in the U.S. in 1967, less than 20% of women were working in these occupations and by 1997, this number had increased to almost 40%.<sup>54</sup> Conversely, although entering the field of teaching conducting as well as gaining degrees in choir and orchestral conducting,<sup>55</sup> women conductors remain almost invisible in high status positions.<sup>56</sup>

To sum up, labour economists Richard Layard and Jacob Mincer observe that the remarkable increase in the number of women entering and remaining in the labour force over the last years, is ‘one of the most profound social changes of our time’,<sup>57</sup> suggesting that women are more eager to combine their personal and professional duties. However, how easy does that apply to women in the field of conducting?

### ***6.3.2 Participants’ experiences of achieving balance between their partnerships and marriages and their professional life***

The theme of this section focuses on participants’ partnerships and marriages, exploring how they balance their personal and professional duties. Five of the eight participants are married, two are living together with a partner and one is single.

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<sup>53</sup> S. E. Black and C. Juhn, ‘The Rise of Female Professionals: Are Women Responding to Skill Demand?’ *The American Economic Review*, vol. 90, no. 2, Papers and Proceedings of the One Hundred Twelfth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association, 2000, pp. 450-455.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Bartleet, (2009), pp. 713-733.

<sup>56</sup> Bartleet, (2008), pp. 31-51.

<sup>57</sup> R. Layard and J. Mincer, ‘Trends in Women’s Work, Education, and Family Building’, *Journal of Labour Economics*, vol. 3, no.1, 1985, pp. 429-455.

Bria, who is married, notes that she finds no difficulty in balancing conducting and her life. She claims:

*“What specifically enables or prevents this from happening? Music is my work and my hobby and has been a huge part of my children’s lives, so the boundaries are often blurred.”*

Her answer suggests that she may not have been aware that her profession could actually be a barrier to balancing her private and professional life. She realises that her work is her hobby and she understands that, in order for it to work, she must balance work (as an employee or employer) and hobby (as a fun experience). This promotes balance in her life and family without having too many complications. Her children’s involvement in her work is tremendously important in terms of their upbringing (this will be further discussed in section 6.4.1).

Conductor Pauline, who is also married, gives tremendous importance to her husband’s support. For her, being a conductor and having a family could be a complex blend; however:

*“I couldn’t do it without my husband. I couldn’t do it without his support.”*

When her face lights up after the question, it seems clear that her relationship with her husband is based on mutual understanding, and that her husband is empathetic and supportive. She additionally explains more on her environment, emphasizing other people’s support and care for her activities as a conductor:

*“It’s important having support; I could not manage to do everything without people who love me by my side.”*

The participant not only appreciates her husband’s astonishing support but her environment’s (maybe her friends’ or other acquaintances’) help as well. She gives great importance to love and having people being by her side whilst admitting that she

would not be able to cope without them. Similarly, the same view comes from Cathleen, who finds balance through the support of both her husband and environment:

*“I am able to balance my life to some extent, although it probably would weigh heavier on the choir rather than family. I am fortunate that my husband and two close friends have been involved with the choir from day one.”*

Cathleen’s husband’s and friends’ involvement in the choir is also crucial. Being a professional vocal coach, she feels that if she were to weigh both aspects, the choir would probably be the one she most focuses on. She recognises the emphasis she puts on her work and she is not reluctant to admit that, sometimes, it can take up a lot more of her time than her family or her private needs do.

Equally, but not quite like the previous conductor, participant Lia, commenting on balancing with her private and professional life, states:

*“A complete nightmare. My type of conducting is very much a vocation and it is very hard to separate the life/work. My friends are my colleagues, and this can be hard when you are not perhaps happy with the musical output.”*

Lia is frustrated giving much attention to the musical result her concerts and events will have but also to conducting. For Lia, having friends involved in her everyday work environment can be simultaneously helpful but, in some cases, catastrophic. She suggests that someone may end up depending on those people for an outcome, having a great amount of authority over them (authority will be discussed in the last chapter of the research).

Diana refers to this equilibrium struggle, as if her work has spilled into her personal life. However, as she states, she can mostly achieve a balance. When she goes on to

explain what she feels about combining her personal with her professional life, she gives an alternative response, conveying her feelings. She states:

*“I have tried to learn and devise techniques to walk away from my work and regard it as just that; work, but music is such an all-encompassing art that in its creativity it cannot help but affect your personal life – particularly with reference to your mood and the endorphins that a performance might release.”*

The conductor explains what music is for her and how the performance experiences she is having can easily affect her mood, her brain chemistry and overall, her life. She refers to endorphins (neurotransmitters produced by the pituitary gland and the hypothalamus), which produce a feeling of well-being during exercise, excitement, pain, love and orgasm.<sup>58</sup> If her work makes her feel happy and healthy, then she perceives that this feeling can have an effect on her personally, resulting in satisfaction in her private life too. According to the participant’s point on embedding music into her professional as well as her personal life, there is a large body of literature examining the outcomes of work-family clash based on the definition given by Greenhaus and Beutell:

a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect.<sup>59</sup>

The above definition points to a bidirectional relationship. Family and friends can interfere with work and work can interfere with one’s private life. However, Greenhaus and Powell’s study on work-family enrichment and work-life facilitation

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<sup>58</sup> W. Bloom, *The Endorphin Effect: A Breakthrough Strategy for Holistic Health and Spiritual Wellbeing*, Hachette, UK: Piatkus Books, 2011, p. 320

<sup>59</sup> J. Greenhaus, & N. Beutell, ‘Sources of conflict between work and family roles.’ *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1985, pp. 76–88.



concepts has stressed positive interdependencies, noting that work can also subsidise private life and vice versa.<sup>60</sup>

Moreover, Genie points out the importance of flexibility in her working hours:

*“My partner is an IT contractor, so his working hours are a bit strange but our timetable is flexible.”*

Although her partner’s times are not stable, as she says, his schedule enables her to work as she sets her own timetable. She adds that, being someone’s partner and in a committed relationship means that they have to find time and be there for each other. If her timetable is peculiar but manageable and his working hours are strange but flexible, then common ground can be found for that particular partnership to work, especially when it has strong foundations. With regard to the literature, Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, point to the negative consequences of trying to combine work and family in terms of stress, health, and negative outcomes for family members.<sup>61</sup> Working long hours, time spent travelling, working at night and on weekends, and extensive travel creates stress and overload. The effects of conflict and job stress on depression, job satisfaction, exhaustion and organizational obligation are well documented according to Allen et al.,<sup>62</sup> Dorio, Bryant, & Allen,<sup>63</sup> Frone, Russell, & Cooper.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> J. H. Greenhaus, & G. N. Powell, ‘When work and family are allies: a theory of work-family enrichment’, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2006, pp. 72-92.

<sup>61</sup> T. D. Allen, D. E. L. Herst, C. S. Bruck, & M. Sutton, ‘Consequences associated with work-to-family conflict: A review and agenda for future research’, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5, 2000, pp. 278-308.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> J. M. Dorio, R. H. Bryant, & T. D. Allen, ‘Work-related outcomes of the work-family interface: Why organizations should care’, *Handbook of work-family integration*, 2008, London, England: Academic Press, pp. 157-176.

<sup>64</sup> M. R. Frone, M. Russell, & C. L. Cooper, ‘Antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict: Testing a model of the work-family interface.’ *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 77, 1992, pp. 65-78.

In addition, a fairly feminist approach reflecting the difficulties of women's multifaceted role within society and family trying to find balance, comes from participant Sandy:

*“My suspicion is whether you decide to go up to a professional level, then that's it; my impression is that is harder for women. It is also the practicalities of balancing that with family life, if you are going to have one of course.”*

The word *if* is accentuated in her sentence, suggesting that she has indeed thought of the practicalities, as she says, of a healthy pairing; life and work. Not only has she thought of them but she realises that it is harder for women, especially if they want to become professional conductors, knowing in advance that the term ‘professional’, whether you are a conductor or anything else, can take up a lot of your time.

In relation to the participant's comment, Warhurst et al., suggest that the concept of balance should be altered, with preference given to the concept of work and personal life integration or interaction.<sup>65</sup> They argue that the term ‘work-life balance’ indicates that work and life are separate spheres and that time should be split equally between work and private life. In addition, Clark notes that not everyone wants to integrate the domains of work and family/personal life.<sup>66</sup> However, Rapoport et al., point out that people may have differing priorities in that regard, and that the aim is not always an even balance between the two.<sup>67</sup> On the contrary, some people balance their work and personal life by keeping the two strictly separated.

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<sup>65</sup> C. Warhurst, D. R. Eikhof and A. Haunschild A., *Work Less, Live More? Critical Analysis of the Work-Life Boundary*, Houndsmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p.137.

<sup>66</sup> C. S. Campbell, ‘Work/family border theory: a new theory of work/family balance.’ *Human Relations*, vol. 53, no. 6, 2000, pp. 747–770.

<sup>67</sup> R. Rapoport, L. Bailyn, J.K. Fletcher, et al., *Beyond Work-Family Balance: Advancing Gender Equity and Workplace Performance*, vol. 23, no. 5, 2002, pp. 25-70.

To conclude, all the study's participants are either married or have a partner except Willow, who was single when she was interviewed and directing an amateur brass jazz band. The participants have difficulties in combining their private and professional lives when in relationships and marriages, and Willow is not the exception to the rule. She claims that music keeps her sane and that it is a form of therapy, implying that in order to be well-balanced she blends her conducting post into her everyday life even if it takes up a lot of her time, having to deal with her Master's degree (at the time). When asked how she manages her schedule she replies:

*“Have you ever played Jenga? It is becoming a bit like that for now.”*

The participants' responses give a clearer view of the difficulties of combining their professional and private lives and show that a balance can be found through the supportive environment of family and friends, who understand their duties as conductors and their needs as individuals.

#### **6.4 Theme 1b: Motherhood**

This section presents literature regarding motherhood and how scholars perceive this concept, and it provides an insight into what has changed over the centuries for women. The term 'motherhood' was rarely used before the twentieth century;<sup>68</sup> thus, when it emerged, it was usually in discussions of women's role in an ideal society. The commonly argued debate by philosophers included the control, legitimacy and education of children.<sup>69</sup> Motherhood was perceived as an obstacle to women's participation in public life. Today, the necessity for financial stability, along with career commitment, pushes women to continue being employed not only after marriage but also after becoming mothers; since 1980s, a mother's income has been

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<sup>68</sup> Harris, pp. 11-28.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

an essential part of the family's income.<sup>70</sup> The gender wage gap levelled off during the 1980s and 1990s and research across the social sciences has increasingly sought to identify those processes that might explain the persistence of a noteworthy gender wage gap around the world, despite sharp increases in women's educational accomplishments and career aspirations.<sup>71</sup> Given the equally persistent correlation of marital status and motherhood throughout the Western world, it would seem that motherhood might indeed be a critical event behind much of the gender wage gap.<sup>72</sup> Most female conductors, as shown in the previous section, struggle to combine the personal and professional aspects of their lives.

For Simone De Beauvoir, the enigmatic nature of motherhood could curtail a woman's freedom and independence.<sup>73</sup> Many women conductors, wanting to become prominent and established figures, choose not to have any children due to the need to be travelling several times a year and thus staying away from their families.

Conversely, Bridges suggests that the wife/mother and career triangle is the most attractive role option, as assessed by female college students.<sup>74</sup> As mentioned earlier, women's commitment to their career has led to a postponement of marriage and childbearing, as well as to a decrease in the number of children born to educated women.<sup>75</sup> The more highly educated women are, the more likely they are to obtain

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<sup>70</sup> L. White and S. J. Rogers, 'Economic circumstances and family outcomes: A review of the 1990s' *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol. 62, no. 4, 2000, pp. 1035–1051.

<sup>71</sup> T. A. DiPrete and C. Buchmann, 'Gender-Specific Trends in the Value of Education and the Emerging Gender Gap in College Completion', *Demography*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2006, pp. 1-24.

<sup>72</sup> M. Gangl and A. Ziefel, 'Motherhood, Labour Force Behaviour, and Women's Careers: An Empirical Assessment of the Wage Penalty for Motherhood in Britain, Germany, and the United States' *Demography*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2009, pp. 341-369.

<sup>73</sup> DeBeauvoir, pp. 524-570.

<sup>74</sup> J. S. Bridges, 'College females' perceptions of adult roles and occupational fields for women', *Sex Roles*, vol. 16, no. 11, 1987, pp. 591–604.

<sup>75</sup> N. Betz, 'Women's career development' in L. Denmark & M. A. Paludi (eds.), *Psychology of women: Handbook of issues and theories*, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1993, pp. 717-752.

employment.<sup>76</sup> However, this does not change the fact that, even if women are willing to delay starting a family nowadays, they may remain dedicated to having one.

According to Angrist, women in society are socialized to prepare for and adjust to contingencies, the parenting role and marriage being the most important of these. She suggests that women's belief systems and their life choices can possibly be reflected in their personality development through these contingencies' orientation.<sup>77</sup> Young women in Westernised societies have been expected and encouraged to accept traditionally feminine roles to expand their chances of finding a spouse, but to also ensure their availability for maternal responsibilities.<sup>78</sup> However, Virginia Haussegger's view on women and motherhood is that things continue to develop and change and this is clearly showing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, after all the other struggles women have fought and, in most cases, won:

As women, we carry the lion's share of responsibility for our relationships, the birth of our progeny, the care and raising of our children, the feeding and nurturing of our families, the well-being of our spouses, the connection with our friends and the care of our communities. So while prohibitive barriers have been torn down, and once closed doors thrown open, and we're urged to feed from an expansive menu of choice and opportunity, we have nevertheless still got a whole stack of stuff piling up on the 'to do list'. Eventually, the cracks begin to show, and the 'have it all-do it all' plan begins to crumble. Sometimes the pieces crash in spectacular fashion; sometimes it's just a quiet, private, but nevertheless painful, concession to failure.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> M. Hoffnung, 'Wanting It All: Career, Marriage, and Motherhood During College-Educated Women's 20s', *Sex Roles*, vol. 50, no. 9/10, 2004, pp. 711-723.

<sup>77</sup> S. S. Angrist, and E. M. Almqvist, *Careers and Contingencies*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp. 27-44.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Hoffnung, pp. 711-723.

Linking women to motherhood seems to be a universal norm, whereas womanhood and motherhood are treated as equivalent identities of each other; a part of their life experience.<sup>80</sup> However, many women decide not to, or cannot, have children. Should they feel guilty or unworthy of society's expectations? The next section closely examines women conductors' responses and perceptions about motherhood, balance and conducting.

#### ***6.4.1 'Understandings of motherhood'***

This section observes how women conductors perceive motherhood in combination with conducting and how balance is (or is not) achieved. In this study, four out of the eight participants are mothers. The participants who do not have children believe that it would be difficult and that certain sacrifices would have to be made in order to combine their work and their role as mothers. Conductor Lia, for example, points out that it was hard when she was not a mother, but becoming one reformed her way of thinking:

*"Having a small child has made it even harder. The hours are weird. Every day essentially involves a public performance, so you can never really switch off."*

Lia's response suggests that being a mother and having to perform every day turns her work into a constant struggle, a 24/7 occupation. She mentions that her current living situation compares to an electric device that cannot be switched off. For her, getting rest would probably mean putting aside one of the two, either her family or her work, which, noticeably she considers to be equally important.

This is also evident in the literature. Wen-Jui Han points out that mothers' non-standard work schedules may affect children's well-being. This is due to the

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<sup>80</sup> S. Ruddick, 'Maternal thinking', *Feminist studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1980, pp. 342-367.

framework of daily life being dissimilar for children whose mothers work non-standard hours, compared with their counterparts whose typical workday is from 7.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.<sup>81</sup>

Moreover, returning to Bria's reply on balancing her life and her work, it can be observed that she might be slightly nervous about balancing motherhood and her profession when she perceives music as her work and her hobby and it has been a huge part of her children's lives. For Bria, as she said previously, the boundaries between her children and her work are often blurred.

Her conscious decision to include her children in her profession might lead to the observation that her children may be musically talented and her time schedule would be more convenient in the sense of taking care of her children. The participant refers to blurred boundaries, thinking that her children's lives should involve music, wanting them to be a part of what she does, without excluding her professional activities. Could we say that her identity as a conductor is 'blurred' as well?

Genie, on the other hand, realises that the fact of not being a mother could be seen as a weight off her shoulders:

*"I don't have children, so the whole getting away or travelling around the country after midnight is not an issue. I don't know how I would manage with children. It would be tough with them partly because there are things you need to be at home for. Also, I have more freedom, financially."*

Stating that her needs are more important (at least for the time being) than the aspect of bearing children, she realises that she will not be able to gain what she personally acquires, (such as financial stability) if she decides to have a family. Her individual

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<sup>81</sup> W. J. Han, 'Maternal Nonstandard Work Schedules and Child Cognitive Outcomes', *Child Development*, vol. 76, no. 1, 2005, pp. 137-154.

needs include travelling, getting away and living an enjoyable life, especially when admitting that she is economically self-sufficient and eager to explore her options, personally and professionally. She also declares that she is not really sure if having children would make her capable of handling her current living and working situation. The main observation from her reply is her need for freedom in many aspects of her life, which do not include, at least for now, having children. Vandell and Wolfe's findings support Genie's response, contrasting with Han's findings that children whose mothers work non-standard hours receive a different quality of care and could gain a better cognitive development.<sup>82</sup>

If, for example Genie, decided to have children, probably her ideal support would be like that of the participant Pauline, who already has children and now lives with her husband. She states that, when she is away, her husband is in the house taking care of everything, including the cooking:

*"I have a lot of support, a lot of backup and he is very patient. I have to be away often, I have to leave the house and ask him to do this and that; he does the meals in this house!"*

Patience, support, help; conductor Pauline is getting what she needs so she has the freedom to proceed with her conducting duties, having two choirs to manage. Similarly Sandy, when asked about motherhood, replies:

*"I wouldn't be able to do that kind of shenanigans unless my husband was going to be the main carer."*

The financial situation is important for Sandy as well as for Genie. The participant continues:

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<sup>82</sup> D. L. Vandell, and B. Wolfe, 'Child care quality: Does it matter and does it need to be improved?', *Institute for Research on Poverty, Special Report 78*, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2000.



*“If we had a family, I would probably be the one who would stop most of my work, because my work is not keeping the household going.”*

Admitting that her conducting profession does not pay as much as her husband’s job, she accepts the fact of having to stop most of her vocational duties and stay at home. She is sceptical but firm, declaring that she is going to be the full-time career of the child for the time needed to be at home. According to her, however, her statement about not completely stopping her work as a conductor but rather excluding some of her other obligations, suggests that she would try and probably be able to combine motherhood and professional duties. With regard to the literature, Stone and Lovejoy suggest that professional women trying to balance their careers and personal lives are attacked with conflicting messages by their family and/or by society. Some women may have the choice of staying at home and caring for their families that most professional men, lower income women, or single women, rarely have for reasons of economics or societal expectations.<sup>83</sup> Although this group of women may be a minority, according to Stone and Lovejoy, their choices and approaches are important to understand, as they are often a crucial source of organizational human capital.<sup>84</sup>

Having a daughter, conductor and vocal coach Cathleen seems able to balance her maternal duties with her profession. She points out that her daughter seems perfectly happy with the situation, as they always know what will happen in advance to some extent, saying that,

*“What is coming up, we can plan our domestic situation around this.”*

Planning and balancing in this participant’s situation is important. She will plan her life accordingly, since her daughter is happy with her mother’s professional

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<sup>83</sup> P. Stone, & M. Lovejoy, ‘Fast-track women and the ‘choice’ to stay home’ In *Workplace/women’s place: An anthology*, 2006, Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company, pp. 142-156.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

occupation; every domestic commitment, even if her work timetable is full, will be accomplished.

According to the participants' comments, especially those that have given birth, motherhood has to be treated as a "career" that is as physically and emotionally demanding as conducting. Their bodies, hearts and minds have to be 100% devoted to everything they do and that is not an easy thing to achieve. As Bartleet puts it, managing their lives can be as complicated and tough as 'juggling' is.<sup>85</sup> Bartleet suggests that only a few casual references are made by reviewers and journalists regarding women conductors either having children or being pregnant. Despite motherhood often being represented as a woman's most important and all-consuming role, Bartleet argues that,

in Western society there has been little in-depth discussion in conducting or musicological discourses on how this role connects (or disconnects) with women's experiences on the orchestral podium.<sup>86</sup>

In addition, she emphasizes that questions have rarely been asked about how women conductors combine and balance their international careers with childbearing, how women's roles as mothers enrich their work on the orchestral podium and how their experiences on the podium enhance their roles as mothers,.

One could argue that such issues may not have entered conducting and musicological discourse because there are very few mothers working in the orchestral conducting profession, whereas those women conductors who are mothers may not consider such private concerns relevant or consequential to their professional work as conductors. In

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<sup>85</sup> Bartleet, (2006), pp. 1-23.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

addition, Bartleet argues that, because of their minority status in this field, and obvious differences from the male norm, any debate about women conductors' experiences with motherhood could also serve to marginalise them even further.<sup>87</sup>

Although that might be the case for many women wanting to pursue a professional career as conductors, Bartleet notes:

The conducting profession does not want to acknowledge the tired, swelling, and vomiting pregnant body of a woman conductor. The women are left to make the personal sacrifices needed to pursue this profession, even if this means silently and stoically running their pregnant body into the ground.<sup>88</sup>

Furthermore, whilst more and more women continue to ascend the world's podiums, the implications for the next generation of women conductors are worrying, especially considering how little attention is given to issues relating motherhood to the conducting profession. Many women will choose to remain childless (as in the case of Sandy and Genie) and have music as their child and their projects and performances to nurture, develop and watch as they grow. However, many will probably feel guilty. Accordingly, LeBlanc suggests that a specific sense of guilt is connected to the idea of 'good mothers' and 'bad mothers'.<sup>89</sup> This implies that women conductors may sometimes feel guilty because the life they would be offering to their children would never be quite good enough.<sup>90</sup>

With regard to the above, Bartleet cites conductor Sarah Ioannides in her article:

It's very important for me to nurture a home and a family and to be there. ... For me life is not only conducting. It's not only about

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> W. LeBlanc. *Naked Motherhood: Shattering Illusions and Sharing Truths*, Random House Australia, 1999, p. 146.

<sup>90</sup> Bartleet, (2006), pp. 1-23.

music. That's part of life. But there are other things that I care deeply about, care very much about. People and family; you know, life. And I think life should enrich me as a musician in order to fulfil my role as conductor, and I think if I'm not able to have those fulfilling relationships or cultivate trusting relationships, I wonder what kind of a conductor I would be.<sup>91</sup>

For Ioannides, being a good mother is linked to being a good conductor and that is an intriguing response. Negotiating this mutual exchange of family and conducting can often be tricky because of the expectations that society and the conducting profession place on women. Limited access for women to higher status positions, the unequal salary they earn, as well as the rough working conditions under certain employers, all suggest that work, marriage and motherhood may not be a good combination for a woman.

Equally, Sarah LaChance notes on *mothering*:

it is the practice of mothering that makes one a mother, not a biological or social imperative. Therefore, the title of 'mother' is not strictly limited to biological mothers, or even women.<sup>92</sup>

The participants' responses suggest that if some of them feel guilty for not being mothers, it is not from a parental point of view but rather from the perspective of their child's development, noting that the right balance is undeniably a difficult task to accomplish. All the participants' comments on motherhood confirm that it is, indeed, a complex matter to manage duties as a musician/conductor and a mother. Although not all of them are mothers, and some choose not to become ones, all the participants

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ruddick, pp. 342-367.

agreed that it is an extraordinary barrier if there is a need for the accomplishment of higher goals in terms of their profession.

#### ***6.4.2 Theme 1b: Media representations of conductors as partners, wives, and specifically ‘as mothers’***

This section will draw upon findings from media content on the theme of motherhood to support the interview data findings.

With regard to the importance of the support women conductors receive from their partners or husbands, when asked about support from her husband and how she manages with her busy schedule Simone Young replies:

It’s simple. I married a saint.<sup>93</sup>

This comment affirms that being a conductor requires tremendous support and enormous sympathy from loved ones and other people (in Young’s case, her husband), especially when travelling is involved. However, although the support from partners and husbands was a strong argument from the interview data, there is not enough evidence to be presented from media content apart from Young’s statement.

Regarding the difficulties of having children and being a professional woman conductor, Marin Alsop, who has a son, states that it is always hard having a family and that the hardest thing she has to do is leave her son behind every time she travels:

Leaving is just killing me. I hear it gets easier as your child gets older, and I certainly hope so!<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> S. Arthorp, *Conductor Simone Young's house work is never done*, [website], 2012, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/review/simone-youngs-house-work-is-never-done/story-fn9n8gph-1226446093341>, (accessed July 2013).

<sup>94</sup> M. Bargreen, *Conductor foresees more women taking podium*, [website], 2005, <http://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/conductor-foresees-more-women-taking-podium/>, (accessed June 2013).

Alsop's comment could be perceived as a call for help. Being one of the most famous conductors in the world, she has to travel very often. Her hope that, when her child grows up, things could get better and easier, is a sad reminder that women conductors who may not be supported by their familial environment could not embrace a life with children. However, if they do have a supporting environment (as Alsop does), it is still so difficult and tiring that it adds stress and feelings of anxiety to everyday life, making the absence and the concept of 'leaving' equal to death.

On the other hand, Bruno Mantovani, Director of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris, suggests that women conductors will miss out of their role as mothers if they decide to give birth:

There is also the problem of maternity that raises its head; a woman... erm... who wants to have children... erm... will have a hard time having a career as a conductor, which can change tack abruptly overnight for several months...and then after having dealt with... I was going to say tastelessly the after-sales service of maternity, that is to say, raising a child at a distance, it isn't simple, so you tell me that men are in the same situation, but despite everything, the relationship of a child to its mother is not that of a child to its father.<sup>95</sup>

After the public anger and controversy over Mantovani's comments, he rushed to explain why he thought maternity affected women conductors:

I mentioned maternity, a question that often poses itself at the same time as a conductor's career is beginning (between 27 and 35 years old). With the 'service après vente' [after-sales service, or customer service] of maternity (an unfortunate turn of phrase, I admit, but it is also admissible to have a sense of humour when discussing

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<sup>95</sup> C. Swithinbank, 'Bruno Mantovani on female conductors', [web blog], 6 October 2013, <http://www.chrisswithinbank.net/2013/10/bruno-mantovani-female-conductors/>, (accessed May 2014).

serious subjects), I said that only with difficulty could a mother combine an international career as a conductor (very different from the level of involvement of an instrumentalist, because playing a concerto or a recital does not involve a week of rehearsals) with a recent birth. The relationship of a child to its mother is not the same as that to its father and denying this from behind an angelic egalitarianism is rather distant from reality.<sup>96</sup>

The American journalist Anastasia Tsioulcas responded to Mantovani's claims and in defence of female conductors, claiming that she finds it astonishing that so many assumptions are made about women's lives. She adds that the feminist revolution was about advocating self-agency and it is despicable that, in the year 2013, Mantovani and others assume that a woman's first priority is having a family.<sup>97</sup>

This is indeed true on many occasions. More and more assumptions are made about women, although they are struggling for their individuality and their rights. Who is to argue that a woman's place and role in society is to become a mother or a wife? And who is to say that, if either of these happens, she cannot combine it with her professional duties? Why should such a generalisation exist, hypothesising that females are supposed to struggle and suffer more in comparison to men when balancing parenthood and their professional careers? Are male conductors questioned about their role as fathers and as conductors or does the weight solely fall on women conductors as mothers?

Supporting Tsioulcas's view in a humorous way, the Mexican conductor Alondra de la Parra responded to Mantovani's arguments, leaving no room for further discussion,

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> E. Davis, *Director of Paris Conservatory declares conducting too demanding for women*, [website], 2013, <http://www.classical-music.com/news/director-paris-conservatory-declares-conducting-too-demanding-women>, (accessed May 2014).

implying that, although pregnancy can be hard, it can be greatly rewarding, suggesting that as an experience it can give a conductor extraordinary levels of dynamism:

All I can say is that last night I conducted a concert of Mexican contemporary music in the first half and then Sheherazade in the second half; I am four months pregnant and I have never felt this amount of energy before.<sup>98</sup>

In addition, when Young was appointed to conduct Richard Strauss's *Electra* she was eight months pregnant. She argues that, even though there is bias against female conductors who want to be mothers, their predicament needs to end soon and not be blamed for their success or held accountable for becoming mothers whilst being conductors:

I hope this puts an end to those who say, 'We can't hire a woman because she might get pregnant.' And I'd like to say that my stomach is still smaller than that of some of my male colleagues.<sup>99</sup>

Regarding the above and with regard to the literature on motherhood, opinions vary. For example, Bennetts<sup>100</sup> and Hirshman<sup>101</sup> suggest that professional women with children who successfully balance their work and their personal lives obtain many rewards, including greater financial stability and success, happier marriages, and greater life pleasure, such as in the case of De La Parra. For Bennetts and Hirshman, the answer is simple: women should work, be as successful as they can, and not feel

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> L. Bennetts, *The feminine mistake: Are we giving up too much?*, New York, Hyperion, 2007, pp. 295-297.

<sup>101</sup> L. R. Hirshman, *Get to work: And get a life before it's too late*, New York, Penguin Books, 2006, p. 23.



guilt-ridden. Moreover, Barnett finds that participation in multiple roles is related to lower levels of stress and higher levels of mental well-being.<sup>102</sup>

Of course, the simplicity of the above is not something to take for granted as an easy task to accomplish. Who would not want this combination of personal-professional-motherhood to be successful and applied to the cases of women conductors, make them happier, more financially sufficient and successful? However, the problematic notion of being a woman that has everything (family/professional career/children) is in direct conflict with the demands and strains placed on women conductors, leaving them to grapple with these issues silently on their own. The participants' responses reflect the difficulties they face when trying to balance motherhood and conducting, whereas others choose to not have children due to the profession's challenging and demanding nature.

Hopefully, the women conductors of future generations will not see motherhood as a sacrifice of their own individual needs and goals, and they will truly gain a satisfying balance in their lives, have more institutional support and not be over-pressured to bear all the burden of mothering alone. This can be partly achieved with more research, discussion and debate in a variety of disciplines and fields of study, exploring their feelings and perceptions in depth and observing their experiences in the profession. If the experiences of women are analysed in depth, investigating the notion of motherhood and conducting more broadly, it can shed light on the ones who try to find balance by deciding to become mothers or choose to remain without children.

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<sup>102</sup> R. C. Barnett, 'On multiple roles: Past, present, and future', in K. Korabik, D. S. Lero, & D. L. Whitehead (eds.), *Handbook of work-family integration*, London: Academic Press, 2008, pp. 75-94.

## ***6.5 Summary***

This chapter has demonstrated that women conductors experience particular challenges when managing their personal and professional needs in combination with their partnerships and marriages as well as with being mothers and wives. In relation to partnerships and marriages, the participants in the study claim that it is indeed difficult to achieve a balanced lifestyle if there is no support from a partner, a husband, wife (in the case of Alsop), or a loving environment in general. In addition, the participants remark that it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between work and their personal lives. Some of the participants choose to include their personal life (husbands and children, friends) in the professional, finding a more helpful way to achieve balance. Conversely, others find it helpful when their partners have flexible employment, or consider conducting to be a form of therapy, whereas others choose not to have children due to the demands of the profession.

Some participants seem hesitant to have children because it requires that they stay at home for a long period of time and there is possibility to stop their work. Some of the study's participants do not feel ready to become mothers, at least for the time being, as they know that it may take a lot of their time and a tremendous effort on their part, suggesting that they would need to stay at home, conduct less and pay attention to raising their children rather than combining their vocation with mothering. The participants who are mothers claim that it is indeed one of the most difficult tasks they have to accomplish.

Media content findings support the participants' responses and further suggest that the conducting world needs to embrace the tired, swelling, and vomiting pregnant body

of a woman conductor<sup>103</sup> (although this is not always something that every pregnant woman's body experiences), and terminate claims of pregnancies obstructing women from achieving that balance. Support is extremely important from friends, family, husband and colleagues; moreover, professional women conductors remark that, because they travel extensively, it is difficult to combine marriage and work. Some of the responses imply a sense of guilt if they are absent from home and away from their children. Some of the findings additionally suggest that the occurrence of pregnancy might be the equivalent of failing to attain a job as conductors, due to the choir's or orchestra's demanding timetable and travelling. Thus, women conductors who become pregnant may lose their job or not be appointed. However, responses by conductors within the media indicate strongly that conducting should not require this much sacrifice, that being pregnant is not something that should obstruct women in their professional career, and that people should become more sympathetic to this situation.

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<sup>103</sup> Bartleet, (2006), pp. 1-23.

## **CHAPTER 7: CLOTHING**

### ***7.1 Introduction***

This chapter explores women conductors' feelings, experiences and decisions about matters related to their clothing choices with regard to their profession. It draws on data taken from interviews and media content concerned with how rehearsal and concert clothing may affect women conductors. A tailcoat is considered to be the choice for most of the male conductors, whereas for women, a dress, trousers, or suit combinations for concerts and rehearsals seem to complicate their decisions. Therefore, the chapter discusses what the participants perceive as appropriate and suitable attire for concerts and rehearsals. It will also introduce matters of the body in terms of clothing and how it affects the participants' lives but also the musical outcome of the performance. The lack of extensive academic literature on the topic of clothing in the context of women conductors is crucial, making the issue of clothing choices on the podium a noteworthy key issue in this study.

### ***7.2 Broad Theme 4: Clothing***

The fourth broad theme, Clothing, refers to two themes: (a) Chest, back and bottom; participants' responses concerning their clothing choices and their bodies (b) Clothing for rehearsals and when on stage (Table 7. 1).

**Table 7.1 Summary of Broad Theme 4: Clothing**

<b><i>Participants' experiences</i></b>	<b><i>Themes</i></b>	<b><i>Media Analysis Theme a and b</i></b>
<p><i>Insecure about their body parts in terms of what they wear.</i></p> <p><i>Chest can “get in the way”.</i></p> <p><i>Conscious about their bottoms and backs, want to look nice.</i></p>	<p><b><i>Chest, back and bottom; participants' responses concerning their clothing choices and their bodies</i></b></p>	<p><i>Judgement on what women conductors wear; women instrumentalists face the same sexism by the media.</i></p>
<p><i>Low confidence when not dressed “appropriately”.</i></p> <p><i>Aware of having to dress more smartly in rehearsals.</i></p> <p><i>Feeling that people will criticise if they are not dressed properly.</i></p>	<p><b><i>Clothing for rehearsals and when on stage</i></b></p>	<p><i>Critics comment on hairstyle instead of abilities of conductors.</i></p> <p><i>Reviews mostly on how women conductors are dressed overshadow their skills.</i></p> <p><i>Professional women conductors claim that their dress code is not flexible in comparison to their male counterparts.</i></p>
<p><i>They feel the need to dress professionally.</i></p> <p><i>Clothing needs to be non-revealing of their body.</i></p>		<p><i>Men conductors mostly wear a tailcoat, which leaves women with questions of attire that will not make them look less feminine or be compared with a male conductor's choice of styling on the podium.</i></p>

### ***7.3 Theme 1a and 1b: Clothing; women conductors represented in the media.***

This section will follow up women conductors' experiences concerning their podium clothing choices, deriving examples from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries through media content findings. It will illustrate how their dressing choices are perceived by critics and reviewers, audiences and authors, and it will present how these choices have brought up sexist remarks and harsh criticism, as well as observe and focus on how women conductors have dealt with this issue.

In the past two decades, male conductors gradually began to follow a trend set by soloists (particularly violinists) to change the outdated garment of a tailcoat for something more comfortable.<sup>104</sup> For example, comfort is the key for the violinist Joshua Bell, whether he is performing as a soloist or as a music director of London's Academy of St Martin in the Fields.<sup>105</sup>

The criteria I'm looking for when wearing something is, number one, comfort. The most comfortable thing probably would be tattered jeans and a t-shirt, but of course I don't want to go out in that!<sup>106</sup>

Although the choice of clothing is important for men and women in conducting, men conductors seem to dress more freely with regard to their attire on the podium, whereas women seem to experience certain dilemmas and difficulties in choosing their outfit. Regarding women on the matter of stage appearance, Cook, commenting on the Western art music context, suggests that because of its conservative structure and

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<sup>104</sup> S. Rubin, *Dressing for musical success / Tails? Usually. A tie? Sometimes. Not all conductors agree on style*, [website], 2001, <http://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/article/Dressing-for-musical-success-Tails-Usually-A-2853759.php>, (accessed September 2016).

<sup>105</sup> J. Melick. *What are today's conductors and solo artists wearing onstage? A survey of the scene, and what it all means. Everything from tuxes to mini-skirts*, [website], 2015, <http://sarahioannides.net/wordpress/wpcontent/uploads/2015/01/Fashion-Statements.pdf>, (accessed July 2015).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

serious background, a woman looking sexy was not a primary, but a secondary, if not the last objective. Cook notes that a woman could not look too appealing because she would not be considered as a serious musician. In western classical music, the focus was always on the performing skills a person encompassed.<sup>107</sup>

In February 1957, Ruth Baker conducted Beethoven's Choral Symphony and her own choral cantata '*The Cat*' at the Royal Festival Hall in London. Ruth Baker was actually Dr. Ruth Gipps, a child prodigy pianist, a composer and a conductor. In the 1940s as well as in 1960s, she was judged and criticised as a "housewife musician",<sup>108</sup> while in the 1950s, domesticity was largely promoted for all women, and, inevitably, women musicians were not excluded from the society's norms.

Baker applied for a job as an assistant conductor and an accompanist at BBC Midland in 1950. She was unsuccessful and was told that she lacked the physical capacity to conduct and lead a male-dominated orchestra and was barred from taking the conducting audition, having already passed the accompanying part before the audition. Besides the existence of those barriers, Baker and her previous female colleagues, musicians and conductors like Ethel Smyth, Avril Coleridge Taylor, Imogen Holst and Kathleen Riddick, took the opportunity in inter-war Britain (due to a lack of male musicians and conductors) to bring female bodies and performance closer to public acceptance and change its narrow-mindedness about a conductor's 'maleness' or 'femaleness'.

The following poster advertises Ruth Gipps (or Ruth Baker) and her performance at the Royal Festival Hall. Her image on the poster was undeniably the largest part of it,

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<sup>107</sup> Cook, pp. 102-124.

<sup>108</sup> J. Halstead, *Ruth Gipps: Anti-Modernism, Nationalism and Difference in English Music*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, pp. 180-192.

suggesting that she was the person in charge of everything. Her name was written in big letters and she was depicted as both ‘feminine’ and controlling, holding the baton.<sup>109</sup> The poster was harshly criticised, with many people astounded by her decision to put a photograph of herself on the concert poster but Ruth went on to have a remarkable career as a conductor, becoming the first woman to conduct a broadcast of her own symphony on the BBC in 1969.

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**ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL**  
 (General Manager: T. E. BEAN)  
**1957**  
 FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1st at 8 p.m.

ROSINA RAISBECK  
 (soprano)

WALTER MIDGLEY  
 (tenor)

**RUTH GIPPS**  
 CONDUCTING THE  
**PRO ARTE**  
 ORCHESTRA  
 (Leader: Antony English)  
 AND THE  
**GOLDSMITHS'**  
 CHORAL UNION  
 (Conductor: Frederick Haggis)

MARJORIE THOMAS  
 (contralto)

JESS WALTERS  
 (baritone)

<sup>109</sup> J. Halstead, ‘The Night Mrs Baker Made History’: Conducting, Display and the Interruption of Masculinity. This article is based on a paper originally delivered at the International Conference on Gesture and Music, University of East Anglia, 2003. It also incorporates ideas from the author's forthcoming book (Halstead), *Women: A Cultural Review*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2005, pp. 222-235.

<sup>110</sup> Halstead, 2005



Nevertheless, even with her great professionalism in that performance of 1957, the general attitude of that era is reflected in the following sexist remark:

Women conductors are very rare in music, but recently one of them appeared at London's superb Festival Hall. Nothing like it had ever been known before. Mrs Ruth Baker appeared conducting a professional orchestra and a crack London choir in Beethoven's Choral Symphony. This work is one of the Everests of music. It makes exceptional demands on the conductor's nerve, stamina, intellect, imagination, emotions. A woman is no more expected to conduct it than build a Great Boulder Dam, pilot a space rocket, buy ten million surplus Army razor blades, put up a new deep-sea diving record or win a cheese-eating contest.<sup>111</sup>

The commentator not only suggests that Beethoven's Symphony is only to be conducted by men, but it is impossible for him/her to think that a woman is actually capable to do so, and suggests that she (as a conductor) is physically and mentally incompetent to take on this kind of difficult task. It is unthinkable; an abomination, to conduct Beethoven's Choral Symphony, let alone putting a woman wearing a dress, holding the baton, controlling sound and time on the poster.

Sadly, remarks about women's incapability and lack of skills continue to this day, and remarks about clothing continue to be present in music reviews, online blogs and online music magazines. More recently, in the *Los Angeles Times* 1990s archives, in an article named 'A Concerted Effort: For Women Conductors, the Dress Code Combines Freedom of Movement with an Emphasis on Glamour', many views from women conductors regarding their dress choices are presented. For example, JoAnn Faletta states that:

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<sup>111</sup> Halstead, (2005), pp. 180-192.

Tails would be misunderstood by the audience as my trying to appear masculine, I don't want to convey that image, but I also don't want to wear frills and sequins because they are distracting to the audience.<sup>112</sup>

In another interview, commenting on clothing, Faletta additionally remarks that critics used to comment on her hairstyle and what she wore. She adds that they would never refer to her by her last name only, as they would Rattle or Boulez. However, resistance by men and women is still noticeable, but progress is being made:

Things have definitely improved, but boards of directors are often drawn from the most conservative sections of communities and corporate sponsors can see a woman music director as a risk. Can a woman have the same authority? Women can still face resistance by women at management level. The change has been slower than we all thought, but the fact it is slow means it will stick.<sup>113</sup>

Moreover, famous musicians over the years such as William Steinberg, Pinchas Zukerman, Itzhak Perlman, Luciano Pavarotti and conductor Leonard Bernstein to name a few, had the tailor Otto Perl designing tailcoats and tails and capes for them. It was only in 1989, when the conductor Gisele Ben-Dor who arrived at Perl's Manhattan shop, asked to be fitted for the pops, Christmas and occasional subscription concerts she led as resident conductor of the Houston Symphony. The tailor stated that women conductors must look more glamorous than men but still should be able to move.<sup>114</sup> Gisele Ben-Dor additionally points out that skirts get in the way if the podium is too high and comments that if she wears a short jacket while everyone else is in tails, she looks too casual. If in tails, she says she looks like a 'little man.' Ben-Dor

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<sup>112</sup> G. Beigel, *A Concerted Effort: For Women Conductors, the Dress Code Combines Freedom of Movement With an Emphasis on Glamour*, [website], 1990, [http://articles.latimes.com/1990-04-13/news/vw-1361\\_1\\_women-conductors](http://articles.latimes.com/1990-04-13/news/vw-1361_1_women-conductors), (accessed July 2015).

<sup>113</sup> Johnston, *Baton of the sexes*

<sup>114</sup> Beigel, *A Concerted Effort: For Women Conductors, the Dress Code Combines Freedom of Movement with an Emphasis on Glamour*

wears white cotton blouses with a pleat, but no lace. And rather than a bow tie, she opts for a pin with pearls.<sup>115</sup>

Similarly to the above, the conductor Kate Tamarkin states that

Concertgoers accept any kind of behaviour from a man. They can jump or stride or do anything on stage, it doesn't matter. A woman is expected to be graceful and elegant. Clothing makes all the difference.

In addition, Marin Alsop notes she always wears trousers. And she offsets the severity of her tailcoat with a silk camisole in a royal blue or other bright colour, also having a velvet suit with a knee-length jacket lined in crimson satin. It is evident that women conductors put a lot of effort in what to wear, as well as taking into consideration how comfortable they would feel on the podium. Colours, length of the dress, shoes, materials: all these things matter to them because it seems (throughout interview responses and media findings) that it also matters on the perception of audiences and of the media regarding women conductors disproportionately. How will they look on the podium? Should they wear what they really want? What is the most appropriate attire for a conductor? In the online daily newspaper Boston Herald, the conductor Cynthia Woods shares her thoughts:

While it looks like a rather benign topic on the surface, the clothing issue has become one of my greatest pet peeves on the Maestra front. From the very beginning, I was told by the most well-meaning mentors, yes, go for it, be a conductor, but you know, just don't look too feminine. Then there were the national conferences and workshops where all the women were huddled off from the men to small rooms to talk about the dangers of wearing a fitted shirt, an open-toed shoe, or God help you, a primary color. We all sat around

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

feeling awkward and baffled. What was so very wrong about dressing like a professional woman? And why, with a room full of eager young male conductors adorned with flip flops and scrappy T's, were we being singled out with the "how to dress" chat? Some of our most revered conductors have been known for their eccentric looks – the great Leopold Stokowski routinely wore a floor length black cape with red satin lining. Where was all this fashion terror coming from?<sup>116</sup>

Wood points out that she perceives her experience as meaning that it is fine to be a woman on the podium, as long as she does not look like a woman on the podium. She comments that putting her hair in a bun or cutting it short, investing in a wardrobe of ill-fitting navy and black, and losing the cute shoes may be considered an appropriate fashion for a woman conductor. For her, however, as she becomes older and wiser, she wears whatever she likes, as long as she thinks it shows the proper respect for the music and musicians. Although she has changed her mindset, she suggests that people have a great deal of work to do to change the conversation from what conductors are to who they are. Wood proposes that a conductor is not an old man with wild hair wearing a tailcoat on a podium, but rather a highly trained, dedicated musician, with a unique musical vision and passion he/she wishes to share with an orchestra. She additionally states:

If we are to entice our young women to become the next Maestro, engineer, scientist or CEO, the message has to be clear. Yes, dress professionally, but also be proud to be yourself, whomever and whatever that is, because that is where true leadership begins. And if pink happens to be one of your favourite colours, then so much the better.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> C. Woods, *Conductors Don't Wear Pink by Cambridge Symphony Orchestra*, [website], 2013, [http://www.bostonherald.com/entertainment/arts\\_culture/state\\_of\\_the\\_arts/2013/03/conductors\\_dont\\_wear\\_pink\\_by\\_cambridge\\_symphony](http://www.bostonherald.com/entertainment/arts_culture/state_of_the_arts/2013/03/conductors_dont_wear_pink_by_cambridge_symphony), (accessed July 2015).

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

Similarly, Barbara Hannigan suggests that the public discussion of gender issues is vast. As seen in Chapter 4, she notes that Vasily Petrenko, the conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and Bruno Mantovani, head of the Paris Conservatory, have set the bar high regarding comments on women conductors; even her own teacher, Jorma Panula, made withering comments on TV. Hannigan says that, although his comments were not personal, she felt terribly hurt when he was criticising musicianship and skill based on gender and claiming that women should only conduct ‘women’s music’, such as Debussy and Fauré. For her, there is not only gender discrimination but a clothing bias against women, which is also a vital matter.<sup>118</sup> For Hannigan, clothing remains an issue affecting women conductors that needs to be attacked and terminated. She shares her experience and comments:

When I’d made my debut at the Châtelet, I’d worn a suit: many women conductors wear either gender-neutral outfits or something resembling a man’s suit. I thought trousers and jacket were the “costume” I had to put on. However, to cover my arms in a jacket might serve convention, but not the music – and I never wear suits in real life! Ever since, I’ve worn a sleeveless dress to conduct. It’s something I can move in that doesn’t distract me or the orchestra – and it fits the music on the programme. I don’t tie my hair back, either, because I never do unless I’m having a bad hair day. I’ve had nothing but positive feedback about this from orchestras and audiences. None finds it a problem that I’m not soberly clad in a dark suit. Critics do invariably always remark on my attire, though, which isn’t something they regularly do with male conductors.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> B. Hannigan, *Barbara Hannigan: no jacket required...*, [website], 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/mar/11/barbara-hannigan-conducting-britten-sinfonia>, (accessed July 2015).

<sup>119</sup> N. Lebrecht, ‘I find conducting goes so much better without sleeves’, [web blog], *Slipped Disc*, 13 March 2015, <http://slippedisc.com/2015/03/i-find-conducting-goes-so-much-better-without-sleeves/>, (accessed July 2015).

The English conductor Julia Jones also states that critics objectify women conductors according to their clothing choices. Jones took to the podium at the Royal Opera House for the first time in 2010, in what was her first performance in her home country. She is the music director of Lisbon's Teatro Nacional de Sao Carlos and the National Symphony Orchestra of Portugal. Jones also refers to clothing as well as male dominance in conducting, showing an optimistic and positive spirit:

Some commentators still prefer to carp at Maestra's choice of clothing rather than listen to her work – perhaps that is why so many prefer to wear the same traditional garb as their male counterparts, usually tailcoats or a Nehru jacket... It might take just one breakthrough example to open the doors and chuck away the padlock. It can only be a matter of time before a Herbertina von Karajan or a Georgina Solti emerges to change the orchestral world forever. The day of the woman conductor is on its way, and not a moment too soon.<sup>120</sup>

The positivity of Jones contradicts reviewers, magazines and newspaper articles in online databases concerned with music, which still pay much attention to the way a female musician looks and acts on stage instead of commenting on her musical abilities and this is not a rare phenomenon. For example, Anne Midgette, a Washington Post music critic, addressed the controversy of the reviews asking if people should comment on how classical stars look. On the one hand, she argues, appearance has no bearing on how an artist sounds.<sup>121</sup> Midgette was referring to the pianist Yuja Wang performing at the Hollywood Bowl in 2011. Wang was judged, not about her virtuosity, but rather her short, tight dress.

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<sup>120</sup> L. Barnett, *Portrait of the artist: Julia Jones, conductor*, [website], 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2010/feb/01/julia-jones-conductor>, (accessed January 2013).

<sup>121</sup> T. Jacobs, 'Visual Cues Impact Judgment of Piano Performances', [web blog], *Pacific Standard*, 29 August 2011, <https://psmag.com/visual-cues-impact-judgment-of-piano-performances-14f8038697e9#.28119s17k>, (accessed July 2013).

Supporting the discrimination women musicians receive regarding their clothing, the pianist William J. Kelley's online blog on thoughts on dress-code for conductors lays down his opinions on clothing, suggesting that female conductors do not need to wear short, hot pink cocktails dresses but they do not need to attempt to look like a living effigy of old, dead conductors.<sup>122</sup> Kelley claims that there is no law that proclaims what men and women should wear and he believes that a female conductor should be able to feel comfortable wearing the same attire as any female soloist or performer, given that it does not obstruct her physical ability to lead an orchestra or risk to be indecent and exposed on the podium.<sup>123</sup>

Supporting Kelley's arguments and the freedom of women conductors' clothing choices is the conductor's Diane Wittry's comment:

Who says a conductor must always wear black? I began to mingle silver and gold with the standard black and white, adding a touch of pizzazz and excitement to our stage. We even toyed with the idea of a marketing campaign called 'Dress the Conductor,' in which local fashion stores would select attire for each concert. Throughout the years we have kept concertgoers guessing. 'What are you going to wear?' they all ask me. 'Come to the next concert and find out,' I reply. Ticket sales have increased dramatically!<sup>124</sup>

Reflecting Kelley's comments about being comfortable on stage, for Sarah Ioannides, music director of the Spartanburg Philharmonic in South Carolina and the Tacoma Symphony Orchestra in Washington, practical considerations of clothing are her primary concern. As a busy person, a mother of three children and a conductor of two

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<sup>122</sup> W.J. Kelley, 'Maestra, you wear that dress', [web blog], *Thoughts on music and other experiences...*, 6 July 2013, <https://wjkelly.wordpress.com/2013/07/06/maestra-you-wear-that-dress/>, (accessed July 2015).

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> M. D. Wittry, *Roll Over, Beethoven - Call me 'maestra'*, [website], available from [http://www.dianewittry.com/ma\\_newsweek.html](http://www.dianewittry.com/ma_newsweek.html), (accessed July 2013).

orchestras, she says that she has inadequate time to shop, to decide what to wear, to get her clothes pressed and picked up from venue to venue. Ioannides notes that she sometimes travels with a ton of scores and she prefers lightweight clothing that breathes; heavy suits are not something she prefers.<sup>125</sup> For her, a variety in what she wears is essential and it also goes along with the style of music she conducts. However, contrasting Wittry's comments, Ioannides has an attention-grabbing approach to clothing with regard to her conducting profession:

I tend to go for black, because the baton is more visible. I don't want what I'm wearing to be distracting, and I do want it to be stylish.<sup>126</sup>

Ioannides chooses clothing so that the baton's colour stands out in order that the orchestra will have a better understanding of her direction. She suggests that the orchestra's, the performers' and the conductor's attire is an interesting topic because of the orchestra's dress code of the late-18<sup>th</sup> or early-19<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, Ioannides notes that it means a male tailcoat. For her, comments such as 'You should wear this' or 'what she wore was feminine' or 'too feminine' are not difficult to discard. She argues:

Well, I'm sorry, I'm female. And I'm not going to wear a suit just because men wear suits. That's fine for some women, and occasionally I will wear a suit, and that's fine too.<sup>127</sup>

Ioannides refuses to feel constrained within the 'norms' of conducting attire and chooses to wear what makes her feel comfortable within her own gender, even when wearing a suit is thought to be 'a masculine thing to do'. Similarly, Anu Tali, the

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<sup>125</sup> Melick. (2015)

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.



Finnish-born music director of the Sarasota Orchestra, embraces her own style and trusts her own instincts in terms of her clothing choices. Tali proposes that

When the musical substance is there, one can wear most anything;  
anything that fits.<sup>128</sup>

For Tali, a formal outfit on stage is what she thinks is appropriate and she does not get mad or irritated with this topic. She claims that some people tolerate or enjoy attention more than others, but one thing they all have in common, she suggests, is that conductors are onstage first to be heard and second to be seen. Additionally, she advises artists looking to push the boundaries on concert attire to trust their inner feeling of taste and comfort, and get over the prejudice and the fact that people will always talk or criticise. Tali points out that everybody is different in shape and personality, hence, there is no definite answer/solution to this subject of discussion.<sup>129</sup>

The classical world has long presented female performers who take to the stage embellished in elegant gowns or suits and makeup, jewellery, and other accessories further ornament their appearance.<sup>130</sup> Beauty, it seems, is essential in almost all kinds of music performance, as Kopiez and Platz's research has shown. They conclude that the visual dimension is not a minor phenomenon but rather an important factor in the communication of meaning; it does not exist only in classical music, but in pop and rock as well.<sup>131</sup> The conductors' responses, garnered through media findings, suggest that there is a huge need to feel comfortable on stage, without exposing themselves

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> R. H. Woody, 'Do Better-Looking Musicians Make Better Sounding Music?', Psychology Today, [web blog], 14 January 2013, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/live-in-concert/201301/do-better-looking-musicians-make-better-sounding-music>, (accessed September 2014).

<sup>131</sup> R. Kopiez, & F. Platz, 'When the eye listens: A meta-analysis of how audio-visual presentation enhances the appreciation of music performance', *Music Perception*, vol. 30, No 1, 2012, pp. 71-83.

and being criticised, as well as a need to be stylish. Hence, whether on stage or in rehearsal, feeling comfortable is vital for women conductors.

#### ***7.4 Theme 1a: Chest, back and bottom; participants' responses concerning their clothing choices and their bodies***

Regarding clothing, Hansen explains the importance of fashion, clothing and culture, from an anthropological perspective. He describes how anthropologists are mainly concerned with the cross-cultural approach to clothing as well as its symbolizations and representations on a cultural basis. For some, dress can present the body as an indicator of professionalism and power in a competitive situation. For others, dress is explored through globalization and a more historical viewpoint.<sup>132</sup>

Hansen deliberately uses the word 'dress' in an inclusive manner to avoid any vagueness of the word's meaning and addresses Eicher and Roach Higgins' definition to explain it as 'an assemblage of body modifications and/or supplements'.<sup>133</sup> Anthropologists have been drawn to the matter of dress due to its power to create conflicting perspectives. It is perceived as both a representation of identities in which the person is enabled to explore through its use, as well as the intrinsic exploration of the individual. Dress is a subject creating conflict in areas such as class, between generations and genders, as well as economic changes and globalization. Another point of view derives from the findings of Zig, Sagi and Basserman, who suggest that beyond gender and physical appearance, certain other traits are considered essential

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<sup>132</sup> K. T. Hansen, 'The World in Dress: Anthropological Perspectives on Clothing, Fashion, and Culture', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 33, 2004, pp. 369-392.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

and indicative of a person's whole personality; dress, bodily posture, weight and perceived attractiveness have an effect on the impression individuals make.<sup>134</sup>

In addition, Grammer reflects on the findings of Goffman (1959) and Locher et al (1993) that people construct judgments of another's personality and proficiencies in a rapid glance of a hundred milliseconds.<sup>135</sup>

When interacting with a uniformed individual, we might speak about utilizing the role theory, as Joseph and Alex (1971) argue.<sup>136</sup> When we observe someone wearing a uniform, we automatically place that person into a role and we have some expectations of how the person will behave. In fact, especially in the conducting profession where the role of the conductor has to be distinguished from the role of the performers, the choice of the uniform becomes a more complicated matter. The uniform, and in the case of the male conductors, a tailcoat or a suit, should provide the wearer/conductor a legitimatizing social power to engage in behaviour not normally expected and influence him/her in certain ways. S/he is encouraged to act largely in the role that goes with the uniform.<sup>137</sup> The uniform enables the person to be able to play the role and help the individual enter that role in self-concept.<sup>138</sup>

Moreover, the research area of clothing involves and investigates the effects of a social structure variable, such as occupation, social status or sex roles implied by clothing, on a social behaviour such as interpersonal attraction, interpersonal distance, altruism

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<sup>134</sup> N. Ziv, G. Sagi and K. Basserman, 'The effect of looks and musical preference on trait inference', *Psychology of Music*, vol. 36, no. 4, pp. 463-476.

<sup>135</sup> K. Grammer, L. A. Renninger, B. Fischer, 'Disco Clothing, Female Sexual Motivation, and Relationship Status: Is She Dressed to Impress?', *The Journal of Sex Research*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2004, pp. 66-74.

<sup>136</sup> N. Joseph, and N. Alex, 'The uniform: A sociological perspective', *American Journal of Sociology*, 77, 1971, pp. 719-730.

<sup>137</sup> L. L. Davis, 'Clothing and Human Behavior: A Review' *Home Economics Research Journal*, vol. 12, no. 3, 1984, pp. 325-339.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

and compliance.<sup>139</sup> Using clothing manipulation as the independent variable and a subject's behavioural response as the dependent variable, experimental field studies make up the majority of the research paradigms.<sup>140</sup>

Similarly, in terms of their body image and body parts, the conductors who participated in this study argue that it is extremely important to be cautious of what or not to wear when they rehearse and when they are performing on stage and that their audience's perception of their clothing choices matters to them. Equally, Davis suggests that when individuals meet another person, even for a short period of time, the first things noticed about that person are sex, age, race and physical appearance, including clothing. These are the main characteristics that are also noticeable on a conductor. However, due to the lack of 'uniform' for women conductors, the dress code varies and a specific outfit that represents females on stage is absent.

To begin with, Conductor Willow claims that:

*"In the concert that I did the other day I got really into it and I did a little bit of dancing. Then, halfway through, I was really conscious that my bum was jiggling...and I remembered that my back is turned to the audience."*

For her, her body image and her dressing choice was influenced by a part of her body that is inevitably turned to the audience and the conductor can do nothing to alter that.

When commenting on other parts of her body she notes:

*"With your chest as well, when you are conducting that can get in the way a little bit."*

Similarly, the same approach on being aware of what her posterior looks like comes from conductor Sandy, when she comments:

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

*“I don’t want to think whether anything looks bad from the back.”*

She immediately puts herself in a position of denying feeling uncomfortable, placing an emphasis on wanting to look nice from the back, and not giving attention to, or being conscious of, her gestures when conducting. Regarding Sandy’s remarks, Susan Bordo claims that the body, (what we eat, how we dress, the daily rituals through which we attend to the body) is a medium of culture.<sup>141</sup> She argues that if we view gender oppression historically, the discipline and normalization of the female body (keeping in mind that it exists in different degrees and in different forms, across age, race, class, and sexual orientation) needs to be acknowledged as a remarkably resilient strategy of social control.<sup>142</sup> Bordo additionally suggests that neurasthenia, hysteria, agoraphobia, anorexia nervosa and bulimia since the Victorian era until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have made women suffer dramatically concerning their bodies.

She states:

A range of contemporary representations and images, as noted earlier, have coded the transcendence of female appetite and its public display in the slenderness ideal in terms of power, will, mastery, the possibilities of success in the professional arena. These associations are carried visually by the slender superwomen of prime-time television and popular movies and promoted explicitly in advertisements and articles appearing routinely in women's fashion magazines, diet books, and weight-training publications. Yet the thousands of slender girls and women who strive to embody these images and who in that service suffer from eating disorders, exercise compulsions, and continual self-scrutiny and self-castigation are anything but the “masters” of their lives.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> S. Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 165-170.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.* p.182

Regarding women conductors' bodies, I would agree with Bordo's comment on bodily image as an area of struggle where women need to work to keep their daily practices in the service of resisting gender domination, just like to women conductors' resistance to the male 'tradition' of conducting. Bordo suggests, additionally, that the effort that women need to put into their image requires determination as well as a sceptical attitude toward the routes of seeming liberation and pleasure offered by our culture. Reflecting Bordo's statement on the contradictory relations of image and practice between rhetoric and reality, women conductors may find themselves trapped within the image of the male conductor dominating the podium. Hence, female bodies, pursuing the clothing image of a tailcoat, may find themselves distracted, depressed and physically ill, according to Bordo, as females in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were when pursuing a feminine ideal of dependency, domesticity and delicacy; an ideal which has not vanished yet.

Similarly to Bordo's argument of pursuing the ideal of femininity and beauty, the ideal dressing choice for Pauline is the following:

*"I like to have something of interest on the back! ... Some of my conducting clothes have actually got a butterfly pin at the back. When I go and buy a dress for a concert I always get something with a nice back, people watch your back the whole time while you're conducting."*

With regard to the participant's response and literature, according to Snyder, the features of one's appearance, for example clothing and jewellery, are fragments of a 'front' or image that a person will use to convey to others.<sup>144</sup> Physical and mental effort is put into dressing appropriately, especially in terms of work, particularly for individuals who care a great deal about their workplace image.<sup>145</sup> A certain amount of

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<sup>144</sup> J. V. Peluchette, K. Karl and K. Rust, 'Dressing to Impress: Beliefs and Attitudes Regarding Workplace Attire', *Journal of Business and Psychology*, vol. 21, no. 1 2006, pp. 45-63.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

dissonance exists between what individuals believe that they are expected to wear and what they would prefer to wear, as suggested by Peluchette, Karl, Rust and others as an experience with emotional labour, proposing that this process is an ‘appearance labour’<sup>146</sup> which can be applied concerning the conductors’ statement. The participants strongly represent themselves as individuals who always have in mind that their front and back clothing will be judged and noticed by the audience. The last participant also expresses a need for others to have a good time watching her conduct, not by imposing her sexuality or trying to look attractive, but rather interesting the audience with her clothing (or in this case) jewellery choices.

In relation to the above participants’ responses, Bartky points out that women ‘discipline’ their bodies with sometimes obsessive dieting, exercising, non-elaborative smiling, controlled movements and posture, decorative makeup, skin-care routines, charming ornaments and clothing.<sup>147</sup> A woman taking care of her ‘regulated’ body image, in this case, a conductor’s role, is disciplined and has no ‘inferior’ status; she is not defective in her body, not fragile and not weak.<sup>148</sup> Does it really require such a large amount of self-awareness in order not to be that oppressed internally?

Bartky, commenting on dress codes for women, claims that they do not appear to have a strict code of dress to follow in comparison to men and there is, therefore, increased pressure on them to conform to gender stereotypes and physical appearance in all contexts, as in terms of dress and body norms.<sup>149</sup> As in the case of participant Pauline, Bartky suggests that decoration on a woman’s dress takes over and the practicality of it is usually lacking. If a woman conductor, instrumentalist or singer walks on stage

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> S. L. Bartky, *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the phenomenology of oppression*, London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 66-73.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

or towards a podium wearing a dress that is mostly decorative and not functional, it will probably not be helpful for the outcome of her musical intentions.

On the other hand, Griffiths argues that an individual's physical appearance also has a considerable impact on how one is judged.<sup>150</sup> In fact, findings by Platz and Kopiez contradict previous research and their results support findings from other studies that first impression types have an influence on music performance evaluation.<sup>151</sup> Hence, physical appearance leads to individuals making judgments about our personality traits, behaviour and/or character.

Equally, Sandy's response to a question concerned with clothing and the podium reflects Griffiths's findings:

*"I would never wear anything vaguely revealing I think, by which I mean low cut or indeed sexy, unless if it was an incredible special occasion; where the conductor was meant to be visible. I'd be worried that judgment was being made about me."*

Sandy, in this case, may be worried about judgment being made on her appearance as well as her ability as a conductor, but does not specify. It is difficult to distinguish between the two, since they may be correlated. Clearly, a conductor's posture and well-behaved personality and character, is an important factor for the participant, not only towards her music colleagues but to her audience and peers as well. The participant additionally accentuates the fact of her body weight and dress when she comments:

*"I never want to feel self-conscious, whether my bum looks big in this or whatever."*

It is important to note that she uses the word *never* having a clear idea of what makes her feel comfortable on stage. She might change the whole look of her

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<sup>150</sup> Griffiths, (2008), pp. 273-290.

<sup>151</sup> F. Platz and R. Kopiez, 'When the first impression counts: Music performers, audience and the evaluation of stage entrance behaviour', *Musicae Scientiae*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2013, pp. 167-197.



uniform/dress/conducting clothes if she feels remotely unsafe with her body image, suggesting that it might affect her conducting posture and movements. Regarding Sandy's belief about her body image, Bordo argues that our bodies are trained through the organization and regulation of the time, space, and movements of our daily lives. Our bodies are 'shaped, and impressed with the stamp of prevailing historical forms of selfhood, desire, masculinity, femininity'.<sup>152</sup>

For women, Bordo claims, the time spent on the management and discipline of their bodies is now great in comparison with other decades. Through the pursuit of an ever-changing, homogenizing, abstract and endless ideal of femininity, women constantly attend changes in fashion, and female bodies become docile bodies that are inclined to adapt to external regulation, subjection, transformation, 'improvement'.<sup>153</sup> For Bordo, women go through the exacting and normalizing disciplines of diet, makeup and dress, focusing on self-modification. In terms of conducting, clothing and the body, taking Bordo's arguments through these disciplines in which women are forced to comply, the women in the profession may continue to have the impression that their bodies are never good enough, as in the case of Sandy and other participants.

With regard to the occupational uniform (in the male conductor's case, we could say that a tailcoat is his uniform), it is very easy for the observer/audience to identify the uniformed person with an explicit role.<sup>154</sup> These role expectations of observers – in this case, the audience – are based on their social learning and on past experiences with others, wearing the same or similar uniforms such as a policeman, fireman... and conductor. According to Davis, role theory generally proposes an associated set of

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<sup>152</sup> Bordo, pp. 165-166

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. p. 166

<sup>154</sup> R. D. Coursey, 'Clothes doth make the man, in the eye of the beholder', *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, vol. 36, no. 3, 1973, pp. 1259-1264.

norms or expectations that specify the behaviour of the person playing the role, for example that of the conductor.<sup>155</sup> The uniform is perceived as a symbol, in that the person wearing it will obey, remain in and follow the expected role behaviour associated with the occupation or position that the uniform represents. I suggest that this can be applicable to women conductors, who would be more prepared to take on the role of conductor and feel better within their clothing attire and choices, if they were accepted and maybe identified as skilful conductors, regardless of the clothes they were wearing.

### ***7.5 Theme 1b: Clothing for rehearsals and when on stage***

Wapnick, Mazza and Darrow argue that clothes, hair style, jewelry and makeup can give others important information regarding people's career, origin, personality, beliefs, tastes and moods, from the choices they make of how to choose to present themselves.<sup>156</sup> This section focuses on the participants' responses and explanations about what (and why) they choose to wear when they rehearse and when they have a concert.

This particular section will explore female conductors' dress choices concerning their rehearsal time and at their concerts. Physical appearance can be one of the most salient traits of a person. It can affect an individual's interpersonal interactions, how others perceive and respond to an individual, and how their personality develops. Wapnick, Mazza and Darrow suggest that it is believed that being an attractive person has its

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<sup>155</sup> Davies, pp. 325-339.

<sup>156</sup> J. Wapnick, J. K. Mazza and A. Ann Darrow, 'Effects of Performer Attractiveness, Stage Behavior, and Dress on Violin Performance Evaluation', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 46, no. 4, 1998, pp. 510-521.

advantages in many situations and, in terms of rating music performances, could be influenced and affected by that physical attractiveness. However, they suggest that:

such a finding would be disturbing. It would imply that the talents of very accomplished but relatively unattractive people are being overlooked in favor of performers of perhaps lesser ability who are more attractive.<sup>157</sup>

Indeed, being a performer (instrumentalist, conductor, and singer) is a multifaceted activity and it is difficult to be assessed due a variety of factors, including musical training and abilities but also extra-musical elements related to the characteristics or performer's personality. Assessing a music performance, for example conducting, can be controversial due to the subjective nature of the evaluation.

As observed in the interview material, all the participants in this study have experienced dilemmas about their clothes choices in relation to their stage presence and how the audience perceives them.

Conductor Diane states the following about to her dress choices:

*“Yes, in the sense that if you are working in a professional capacity and you do not dress professionally as a conductor, your colleagues may not respond. Likewise, in a rehearsal situation not followed by a performance, if you are not attired casually when those rehearsing with you might be, you might be creating a psychological barrier.”*

Concerning the above and with regard to the literature, De Jaegher and Di Paolo hypothesize that ‘participatory sense making’ drives social interaction. Two or more individuals who co-construct can explain this as the moment-by-moment processes of engagement in communicative events in the world,<sup>158</sup> in this case the conductor's and

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> N. Moran, ‘Music, bodies and relationships: An ethnographic contribution to embodied cognition studies’ *Psychology of Music*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2013, pp. 5-17, originally published online 9 May 2011, Sage.

the choir's healthy cooperation and communicative spirit. The participant suggests that if clothing leads to creating a psychological barrier, the construction of that specific communication could be lost and the members of her choir could be indifferent under her direction.

On the contrary, Participant Lia doubts that her clothing decisions affect the response of her choir, because:

*"I have to wear a cassock; a uniform for much of the time. Perhaps with my kids choir being trendy (although I wouldn't say I was that trendy), that probably helps."*

The conductor is aware that having to wear a uniform would save her time on having to think of what would be appropriate to wear. In the case of participant Diane, she has compromised with her band for the distinction between her and the band in terms of different kind of clothing colours.

*"I wore a red dress; (the band's) colours are black and red, so we had the band wearing black and me wearing red sticking out!"*

Her red dress and the *sticking out* part of her answer are at first confusing regarding her podium appearance, but she explains:

*"Being aware that I am going to be in front of people and those people are going to be looking at me, I do think what I am going to wear; I would say that when I go and conduct I am thinking that I would better smart up my clothing a bit."*

Even if a female conductor wears a red dress so that she can stand out and is more visible on stage, she still has to be careful and conscious of people looking at her. It seems that a smart red dress would be her ideal uniform. Would the red dress make a difference to people's perception of her? Would she be more attractive in that, even if the colours of the band 'demand' that she wear a red dress?

These questions can be reflected with reference to the work of Wapnick et al., showing that perceived attractiveness does not depend only on a person's physical body attributes; a suitable dress for any concert occasion may also influence audience

evaluations.<sup>159</sup> Griffiths finds systematic differences in judgements of musical performance and physical attractiveness in relation to their style of dress.<sup>160</sup> Participants were shown video-recordings with the same soundtrack, but recorded by a different (male) violinist. The actor-violinists (four females) wore a traditional black concert dress or a nightclub outfit. The traditional concert dress was rated by the participants to be more appropriate than the nightclub outfit.<sup>161</sup>

Moreover, participant Bria comments:

*“I believe in dressing and behaving professionally. I am aware of being a role model.”*

Knowing that her place on the podium should be accompanied by professional behaviour and attire, she seems to choose to dress that way as well. Being a role model for her choir members, and probably other women wanting to pursue this particular career, is not a minor issue for the participant, and she apparently places emphasis on, and pays special attention to, her on-stage clothing decisions.

Participant Genie has another point of view, linking her clothing choices to the following aspects:

*“The decisions you make have to do with the genre of music you conduct. Different genres have different expectations. You will try and dress in such a way that people won’t think about your appearance very much.”*

The participant’s argument implies that certain types of music, in contrast with classical music, may allow a conductor to dress more freely on the podium. The genre of the music she conducts is the main theme of her consideration; she firstly respects

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<sup>159</sup> J. Wapnick, L. Cambell, L.J. Siddell-Strebel, A. A. Darrow, ‘Effects of non-musical attributes and excerpt duration on ratings of high-level piano performers’, *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2009, pp. 35-54.

<sup>160</sup> Behne and Wöllner, pp. 324-342.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

the music and the other matters come later on for her. The participant additionally notes:

*“I think my general preference as a conductor would be a trouser suit. A jacket and trousers. When I was lecturing, that was supposed to be my work uniform also. There’s a practical dimension to it.”*

For her, a trouser suit is practical, although some women may find practical totally different attire from others. Some women may find dresses more practical, consisting of just one piece of clothing. The participant also adds:

*“I think the only time I will find myself conducting in a dress is when I am conducting in an all-female group who are also in dresses.”*

The practical issue contradicts her response when she finds herself more comfortable wearing a dress amongst women. What is it that allows her to be more accepting of that particular piece of clothing? Is it to make the singers in her choir feel comfortable when she wears a dress too, or would she feel an outsider if she was in a trousers-suit? When asked to elaborate, she explains:

*“I generally feel that I must be matched in, rather than separated from, the ensemble. Some conductors go: “I’m the conductor and you are the troops.” I like to think that “Look, I am the one here holding it all together but I am part of it. I act with you rather than upon you.”*

In addition to the participant’s response, studies have shown that individuals’ roles help structure the work of organizations and guide individual behaviour.<sup>162</sup> Rafaeli and Dutton found that the process that individuals go through in taking on roles in their workplace influences one’s workplace attire.<sup>163</sup> Regarding music, taking on those roles and performing them successfully, individuals must inspect the cues of others,

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<sup>162</sup> D. Katz, D and R. Kahn. *The social psychology of organizations*, New York, USA: Wiley, 1978, pp.201-203.

<sup>163</sup> A. Rafaeli, and J. Dutton, ‘Navigating by attire: The use of dress by administrative employees’ *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 40, no. 1, 1997, pp. 19-45.

in the case of conducting, gestures, and react to the expectations that those cues signal. In the case of conductors, people develop cognitive frameworks, or schemata, about what behaviours are appropriate for their role and use symbols in executing their role schemata. As suggested by Fiske and Taylor, and Taylor and Crocker, individuals use dress as an informative role symbol for engaging in their work and how they relate to others in the execution of their role.<sup>164</sup> Therefore, women conductors may be expected to dress appropriately to execute their profession successfully. However, these role expectations by society for conductors are mostly under the impression of male-dominated attire.

The following participant (Genie) adds:

*“I think there are issues for women like shoes. Wear high heels with your dress and that completely changes your set-up!”*

Within the term *set-up*, the participant implies that posture is important, in terms of proper conducting attire. Furthermore, the participant, also being a voice clinician, knows that with the right posture, the sound could come out better and more easily, pointing out:

*“When I’m working with choirs, whether mixed choirs or single sex I am thinking that if we perform in heels I have to do the rehearsals with high heels too but it changes the sound of the voice; it will affect how you perform right? I’m not talking about everyone but I choose to wear a pair of high heels that will set up my performance. Some women wear high heels more comfortably than I do but I find it difficult to work with and difficult to stand.”*

The sound of the rehearsal is clearly something the participant finds crucial for the musical outcome she would like to have at a concert. For her, shoes, not so much as

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

clothing, can affect the performance and sound of her choir more than clothing, which she finds easily adaptable due to the genre of music she conducts.

Furthermore, Pauline always wears an evening dress when conducting.

*“I never wear low cut because I always have a fear of waving my arms and a strap or something falling; I would say ‘that’s pretty but I would never conduct the men in that!’”*

The participant constrains herself within specific items and dresses. She chooses not to wear something that scares her and makes her feel unsafe. Besides, she says:

*“They’ll laugh at me if I wear a dress and when I move my arms in all directions something falls or moves! If something falls off the shoulder, it’s no good!”*

Women are more likely to fear clothing falling off their bodies than men, given the different pieces of clothing they wear. Women conductors are alert, and it seems they do not want to lose their choir’s respect by not being careful about their podium clothing choice. Pauline also emphasizes:

*“The men, but also the ladies, are always appreciative of how I dress up for a formal occasion. I like to look good.”*

Respect and appreciation of her colleagues is significant for her and she cannot deny that if she looks good, she feels good too. What about the respect of the audience and the dress choice on the podium then?

Participant Sandy states, regarding clothing:

*“The choir knows you, the audience doesn’t. Unless the audience is completely transported by the music, in most of the concerts that I do, the conductor can’t be seen. If people are bored they’re going to look at what’s moving!”*

In this particular statement, similarly to participant Pauline’s statement previously on having something on the back of her dress, a fear of the audience’s judgement of her



is noticeable. The participant wonders if their eyes are going to be on her choir or on her body, when the music may not sound so interesting to them. Of course, she knows that this could easily happen and, even if she chooses to be somewhat of an invisible conductor, the audience will finally notice her due to subjective musical preferences. At the concerts she wears trousers and a neutral top, partly for ease of movement, as she notes.

Moreover, the participant believes that, in order to be respected and treated as a professional, everything – including clothing – matters, especially when the members of a choir or orchestra know the conductor and observe his/her every move. She points out:

*“More recently I’ve become more relaxed but that’s just because I became more relaxed in parts of the job; so I know it’s still possible to lead a rehearsal even if I am in a t-shirt, if I am in jeans. But I always tend to dress, if I can, one step above the choir and I think that’s a deliberate power play on my part. If I know the choir is going to be in jeans and t-shirts, then I’ll probably going to be one step better; I’ll be in jeans and a shirt, or smart trousers and a t-shirt, or smart trousers and a smart top. It’s something to do with sharing that you are at work and expect to be treated appropriately I suppose.”*

As a conductor, she respects her choir and comprehends that they need to respect her too; she deliberately dresses ‘smarter’ than her choir members, wanting to show that even though they have been together for a long time and they feel comfortable with each other, a certain hierarchy remains.

According to Behne and Wöllner, if women were to wear revealing clothes, they would be considered as passive objects and little attention would be given to their abilities in music. Hence, their creative skills, in comparison to men, seem to be

inferior when it comes to drawing attention to the female form focusing on clothing.<sup>165</sup>

Although some women are freer to express themselves, an association in terms of their musical abilities could still be an issue and maybe negatively judged. Participant

Cathleen comments:

*“Concert dress is much more relaxed today than when I began conducting in 1968...I do think that females certainly expect smart and glamorous dressing from their conductor. I and my staff often receive compliments on what we are wearing; dress or jewellery.”*

Relevant to most of the participants’ responses above, an empirical study by Griffiths investigated the importance in visual information in performance; she focused on the influence of dress on the musical evaluation of female classical soloists.<sup>166</sup> Empirically supporting the interview data, Bartky’s suggestion is that

women have a less rigid code of dress to follow than men and there is an increased pressure for them to conform to gender stereotypes in terms of dress, body norms and physical appearance in all contexts<sup>167</sup>

and, as Collins and Zebrowitz argue, the possibility for people to react positively to an attractive person is great.<sup>168</sup> What is it that makes us biased against this dress code? As Griffiths’s findings suggest, the spectacle of a musician in performance has a major impact on how the performers are received.<sup>169</sup> An appropriate dress for a specific genre of music affects the perceptions of performers’ musical abilities, and a body-focused style of dress may lead to the musician’s musical skills being overlooked or unrecognised. The research also revealed that a performer’s style of body movement

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<sup>165</sup> Behne and Wöllner, pp. 324-342.

<sup>166</sup> Griffiths, (2008), pp. 273-290.

<sup>167</sup> Bartky, pp. 66-73.

<sup>168</sup> R. A. Baron, D. Byrne, *Social Psychology*, London: Allyn & Bacon, 2003.

<sup>169</sup> N. K. Griffiths, ‘Posh music should equal posh dress’: an investigation into the concert dress and physical appearance of female soloists’, *Psychology of Music*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2010, pp. 159-177.

may affect their visual appeal.<sup>170</sup> Could that be the case with female conductors as well? As Griffiths in ‘Posh music’ (posh music reflects the classical concert music in this article) stresses, attractiveness is culturally defined and additionally brings to mind the polemics that can be stimulated when classical musicians abandon their ‘traditional’ concert dress. The interview responses suggest that the participants are, indeed, very cautious of their clothing choices and, additionally, careful regarding their body parts, choosing their attire sensibly. Nonetheless, the fear of judgment by audiences sometimes overcomes their need for comfort, whereas the two often seem to be linked.

### ***7.5 Summary***

This chapter has shown, through the participants’ experiences and media content analysis, that women conductors find the issue of clothing to be of great significance when working. Their detailed responses show that women conductors are indeed conscious of their body image on the podium (dress, chest, back, hair) and that they choose their rehearsal and concert attire very carefully. Through this discussion of their conducting dress code, the participants highlight how appropriate and suitable attire (according to the genre of music they conduct, the nature of the concert, non-revealing blouses, non-tight dresses) for concerts and rehearsals is vital for the musical outcome and criticism they will receive after a performance. Women conductors stress that the important issue for them is that the attire they choose to wear has to make them feel as comfortable and professional as possible, without losing their sense of femininity.

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

The participants' as well as women conductors' views taken from the media analysis, note that there is a certain bias against their choices and reviews of how and why they dress a certain way is usually perceived in the wrong way as sexy, provocative and inappropriate for classical music performance. The participants note that having their back turned to the audience is one of the issues they feel more uncomfortable with, in the sense of exposing themselves in front of audiences; therefore they are aware that they need to choose wisely their trousers, suit, tailcoat, dress and other clothes. Their chest is an additional 'burden' since some of them point out that they do not wish that particular body part to be 'sticking out', making them feel unable to conduct.

With regards to the media analysis findings, the fear of audiences or critics not approving their choices is a key issue, which informs why they choose to dress professionally, although some suggest this does not have anything to do with them, but rather with the genre of the music they conduct. Because the male tradition requires the maestro to be dressed in a black tailcoat, women conductors' responses suggest that they feel strange when compared to their male colleagues. Hence, most of them choose to dress according to how they feel comfortable within their own skin and body. Women conductors are often judged by their choices of clothing rather than their skills and musicality, as shown in a variety of audience, critics' and reviewers' bias. Within the media analysis, evidence shows that critics sometimes comment on hairstyle instead of conducting ability and reviews mostly refer to how women conductors are dressed, overshadowing their skills. In their responses, professional women conductors argue that their dress code is not flexible in comparison to that of their male counterparts, which leaves them with questions of attire that will not make them look less feminine or be compared with a male conductor's choice of styling on the podium.

It seems that women conductors are intrinsically aware that, even if they use the power they have gained through years of hard work and proving themselves competent in comparison to men, people will still not stop criticising them and commenting upon their choice of dress on the podium. However, this chapter's significance lies beyond the issues of dresses, gowns, jewellery, hair and shoes. It touches on the sensitive issue of women and their bodies, in an attempt to urge women conductors (who, in the case of the participants and women conductors portrayed in the media, have already come out of their comfort zone and dress non-conventionally) to gain a greater sense of freedom by not taking into consideration sexist or discriminatory comments from others. Thus, this chapter reflects on the work on women conductors by scholars and academics such as Bartleet, Elkins, Jagow, Brenneman, and others, and adds up the significance of dress choices in gender issues and matters of discrimination and sexism within conducting.

## **CHAPTER 8: THE CONDUCTING BODY**

### ***8.1 Introduction***

As discussed in Chapter 2, women learn to communicate through an array of specific bodily movements, according to Butler, Moi and others. Similarly, Young suggests that women were not using their body as an entity, but only certain parts of their body that made them feel more comfortable.<sup>1</sup> Hence, women were growing up within societal constructs that oppressive patriarchal societies were forcing them to follow and were many times governing their bodies. This chapter focuses on the role of the body in understanding women conductor's experiences of the profession, in an attempt to show the importance of this matter of the body not only to women conductors but to women in a broader sense.

The chapter will include women conductors' responses in interview and media analyses regarding their bodily communication, gestures and technique within the broad concept of embodying the profession of conducting. It additionally examines whether women conductors identify a difference between the gestures of a male and a female conductor, to explore whether gender discrimination regarding gesture exists in the profession.

### ***8.2 Broad Theme 5: The conducting body***

Broad Theme 5 demonstrates key findings related to one theme indicated in the following table showing the participants' responses and the supporting evidence from the media content analysis: (a) Body, gesture and technique (Table 8. 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Young, (2005), p.34

**Table 8.1 Summary of Broad Theme 5: The body and conducting**

<b><i>Participants' experiences</i></b>	<b><i>Theme</i></b>	<b><i>Media Analysis</i></b>
<p><i>Societal constructs push women to use their body with certain ways.</i></p> <p><i>They realise that women of the world were oppressed and it is difficult to change the way they express through their bodies.</i></p> <p><i>No matter one's gender, individuality in conducting gestures exists.</i></p> <p><i>Gestures may differ according to the physical attributes of men and women.</i></p>	<p><b><i>Body, gesture and technique</i></b></p>	<p><i>Maintaining their feminine side may take many years.</i></p> <p><i>Performances by women conductors are criticised as more feminine due to their body language.</i></p> <p><i>Years of experience enable women to act more freely in conducting but, due to a lack of opportunities, they did not have the chance to embrace their bodies in such a way.</i></p> <p><i>Body shaming is prevalent throughout the media.</i></p> <p><i>Audiences are not used to seeing women conductors.</i></p>

### ***8.3 Theme 1a: Body, gestures and technique***

This section of the chapter aims to explore how the participants in the study perceive body language within their gestural communication and technique and what they believe is different between them and their male colleagues.

According to Blacking, in all musical cultures, gestures and further bodily communication have an array of functions in performances. This may have developed because music has been closely associated with dance, rituals and ceremonies throughout history.<sup>2</sup> In dance, for example, movements that are interconnected with music can indicate a variety of expressive and emotional states and can function as facilitators towards social connections and shared experiences.<sup>3</sup>

In relation to the following section's responses by the participants, studies similar to the concept of embodiment and body language have been conducted to test hypotheses such as conductors' expressiveness, conductor-musician synchronization and conductors' gestures. To name a few, research by Ashley on gesture and the pragmatics of conducting and by Venn on the semiotics of conducting is based on a theoretical framework of philosophy and psychology (Ashley and Venn cited in Luck and Nte).<sup>4</sup> In addition, Skadsem's experimental data on conducting technique tries to analyze and improve dynamic markings and choir dynamic levels on singers' dynamic response.<sup>5</sup> Studies by Johnston, Crowe, Yarbrough, Kelly, Clayton and Fredrickson provide insight into various issues rising from the conducting profession related to error-detecting ability, peer-assessment, and video-self-observation amongst others,

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<sup>2</sup> J. Blacking, *How musical is man?*, Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1973, pp. 23-25.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> G. Luck, S. Nte, 'An investigation of conductors' temporal gestures and conductor-musician synchronization, and a first experiment', *Psychology of Music*, vol. 36, 2007, pp. 81-99.

<sup>5</sup> J. A. Skadsem, 'Effect of Conductor Verbalization, Dynamic Markings, Conductor Gesture, and Choir Dynamic Level on Singers' Dynamic Responses', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 45, no. 4, 1997, pp. 509-520.



relating conducting within the concept of embodiment.<sup>6</sup> Although these studies contribute to the discipline of music and add to the wider knowledge within the field of conducting, they cannot entirely apply to this chapter's content, due to this study's focus on, and approach to, the qualitative analysis of the experiences of women conductors.

In addition, the cognitive sciences have focused on the term 'embodiment' and related ones such as *embodied mind*, *embodied action*, *embodied cognition* are now frequently used, often associating concepts like *situated action*, *situated cognition*, *distributed cognition* or the *extended mind* hypothesis.<sup>7</sup> In terms of embodiment, Núñez suggests and distinguishes between three types; (1) *trivial*, which is the connection between cognition and the mind that is linked to the biological structures and processes sustaining them; (2) *material embodiments* consisting of the interaction of internal cognitive processes with the environment; and (3) *full embodiment*, which is his view of the body being involved in all forms of human cognition.<sup>8</sup>

Conversely, Clark claims that only two types of embodiment exist; (1) *radical*, related to Núñez's full embodiment; and (2) *weak embodiment* related to Núñez's material one.<sup>9</sup> Neuroscientists, linguists and artificial intelligence researchers are keenly interested in embodiment's multidisciplinary nature. Conducting can fit into the description of Núñez's third type of embodiment, as a fully embodied multidisciplinary art. However, because the definition of embodiment remains vague

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<sup>6</sup> Luck and Nte, pp. 81-99.

<sup>7</sup> P. N. Johnson-Laird, 'Mental Models in Cognitive Science', *Cognitive Science*, vol. 4, no. 1 1980, pp. 71-115.

<sup>8</sup> R. Núñez, 'Could the Future Taste Purple? Reclaiming Mind, Body and Cognition' *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, vol. 6, no. 11-12, 1999, pp. 41-60.

<sup>9</sup> R. Núñez, 'Mathematical Idea Analysis: What Embodied Cognitive Science can say about the Human Nature of Mathematics', Opening plenary address in *Proceedings of the 24th International Conference for the Psychology of Mathematics Education*, Vol 1, no. 1, 2000, pp. 3-22.

and the definition is ambiguous in terms of conducting, the focus of the chapter will mainly be on the body language of women conductors and how they embody this art. Regarding gestures, Goldin-Meadow et al. suggest that, when people talk and move their hands, these movements are typically called gestures. However, they are not just hand-waving; they are closely related to – and may even be beneficial for – cognitive processing.<sup>10</sup> Technique, on the other hand is defined by the Online Merriam-Webster Dictionary as way of doing something by using special knowledge or skill; the manner in which technical details are treated (as by a writer) or basic physical movements are used (as by a dancer); *also*: the ability to treat such details or use such movements, such as a ‘good piano *technique*’.<sup>11</sup>

The notions of gesture and technique in the following section will be combined and analysed together, and they represent a common theme within both interview responses and media content analyses. This is because the participants did not divide the terms or distinguish between them; therefore, it was implied that the technique used in their profession (seven of the participants are choir conductors and one is a brass band conductor) would mostly consist of the same gestural communication principles.

### **8.3.1 Theme 1a: Body, gestures and technique: participants’ responses**

This section explores how the participating conductors perceive body gestures and technique. The question under investigation is what women conductors perceive about their gestures, in combination with their body language and technique, and how these may differ from a male conductor’s gestures and bodily communication, since women

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<sup>10</sup> S. Goldin-Meadow, H. Nusbaum, S. D. Kelly, & S. Wagner., ‘Explaining math: Gesturing lightens the load’, *Psychological Science*, vol. 12, no. 6, 2001, pp. 516–522.

<sup>11</sup> Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/technique>, (accessed February 2016).

conductors are too often faced with criticism regarding their body language in conducting.

In terms of specific body language and gestures, participant Willow comments:

*“When it comes to body language, there were a couple of rehearsals when we would be in a tiny room and I would stand in the corner with the drums actually touching my legs and I could not move my arms and make very big gestures. It was really weird and I felt really small; I felt that my musicians were not listening to me as much as when we are in bigger rooms.”*

In this example, the limitations the participant felt during rehearsal were associated with the size of the room she was conducting in. She would not feel restrained and would be able to express and communicate more freely through her gestures.

Sandy remarks that the construction of the way of conducting and the space a woman needs on the podium falls under stereotypical beliefs. She says:

*“It is very hard to use your body differently because it becomes a habit. What I was interested in is that society encourages you from a very young age to use your body in a particular way because of your gender. You might need training to get over the fact that maybe quite a lot of women, when they stand on the podium, don’t expect to take much space!”*

This was also evident in the literature where the argument that women use their hands and face more expressively to communicate their ideas, is perceived as stereotypical beliefs by Kramer.<sup>12</sup>

Like Willow’s, Sandy’s response concerning the space women hold when they conduct is a noteworthy statement. She adds that, while some of the textbooks say specific things about conducting, those things can be developed in rapport with the group and that every conductor needs to use the body language that they are

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<sup>12</sup> C. Kramer, ‘Perceptions of male and female speech’, *Language and Speech*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1977, pp. 151-161.

comfortable with. Moreover, Hall suggests that women are better in decoding and using non-verbal communicating cues.<sup>13</sup> Echoing Kramer, Sandy additionally remarks:

*“There is evidence that society prompts people with different genders to move their body differently. There are enough studies exploring how women sit on the Tube, or how women use space; they quite often tend to use less space, not because they’re physically smaller... well quite often they are... but because of what society encourages in terms of how men and women use their bodies and use their space.”*

In terms of gesture, body and society, Young’s work in ‘*Lived Body Vs Gender*’ proposes that the aspects of gender and gesture are important, expressive and critical. The dual approach of gesture and gender in Young’s work explores the variety of aspects in female embodiment and implicated in different women’s everyday experiences and senses of self. Young’s essays on feminine bodily movement and spatiality can be linked to the project. Like Young’s work on women’s experiences, this study aims to show that similar oppressive patriarchal and societal norms<sup>14</sup> restrict and confine women conductors.

Concerning spatiality within the participants’ response, Young proposes that, in most Western societies, women were mostly constrained in smaller spaces than men and were taught to have an awareness of their gestural movements, body movements and facial expressions. Young suggests that women were using certain parts of their bodies that made them feel comfortable preferring constricted spaces; maybe in an effort to protect themselves, saving their bodies from harm.<sup>15</sup> Similarly to Young and the participant’s reply, this study argues that in societies that usually construct the norms

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<sup>13</sup> J. A. Hall, ‘Gender effects in decoding nonverbal cues’, *Psychology Bulletin*, vol. 85, No 4, 1978, pp. 845-857.

<sup>14</sup> Young, pp. 36-39.

<sup>15</sup> Young, pp. 34-35.

of spatial cognition, women conductors face oppression that is contradictory to their profession; a profession that requires freedom of an embodied bodily expression.

In addition to the above, Schubert suggests that gender is an important mediator for power and coercion processes, and claims that, on average, women are labelled as less dominant and assertive than men. Differences in gender coercion are large, suggesting a form of social influence with the aim of controlling others.<sup>16</sup> In Western societies' cultural norms, boys and men are encouraged to use their bodily force as a mean of social impact, whereas this does not occur with girls and women. Participant Sandy additionally states on gesture and gender:

*“Both men and women might do what they think is a big gesture but I don't think they will look equally big... there's not so much difference as thought, and maybe that has to do with training as much as anything else. I don't think even the expressive gestures in conducting were so much different as I hoped they might be. Perhaps they are not; maybe the body language context in which they take place, maybe that is different.”*

The claims of the participant about training, body language and gender are noteworthy. Although she finds those factors important, I would suggest that there is some ambiguity in her response when she comes to the conclusion that conductors' body language is a major factor consisting of their gestures and technique, as well as their gender. Additionally, she suggests:

*“In terms of gesture and body language I am not thinking I should do it this way, or no, I should move that way. There is a type of commonality of wanting to do it through one version. Bringing people together and singing. I guess the difference could be in terms of the characterisation of music. I guess it's the fact that the group has to adjust to different kinds of music and repertoire rather than my gestures and movements.”*

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<sup>16</sup> T. W. Schubert, 'The Power In Your Hand: Gender Differences In Bodily Feedback From Making a Fist', *Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Inc.*, vol. 30, no. 6, 2004, pp. 757-769.

Like the above, Genie's view on the matter of body language is associated with the kind of music she conducts, (a view seen in Sandy's response about repertoire rather than movements) and not according to different kinds of gestures. The participant emphasizes the importance of genre and not gender:

*"The big difference is not so much gender but genre. That's how I work with classical music. I've had people say to me when I was the Barbershop Director: "Oh, you direct like a bloke."*

In this particular case, gender discrimination is observed. Receiving discriminatory comments that may give rise to concerns about whether the conductor has the body language or is acting on stage as the opposite gender of the one she has been assigned could be taken as an insult to her gender as well as an indication of how women conductors are meant to direct an ensemble. She, then, humorously adds:

*"I think it was intended as a compliment. Ha! Some people had the sense of gender and gesture and I was thinking, "I just want to do this! I just want to direct Barbershop singing!"*

Giving minor attention to people's comments about her gestures or body language on stage, the conductor is dedicated to her job. Although she acknowledges that the comment was inappropriate, she is determined not to stop conducting, paying special attention to the genre and the repertoire of the music she chooses to direct, such as Barbershop singing.

Supporting evidence considering Sandy, Willow and Genie's responses can be found in Nussek and Wanderley. Their findings suggest that not all body movements are necessary for producing musical sounds and they largely seem to communicate expressive intentions called 'ancillary gestures'.<sup>17</sup> It is not known whether these

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<sup>17</sup> M. Nussek and M. M. Wanderley, 'Music and Motion – How Music-related Ancillary Body Movements Contribute to the Experience of Music', *Music Perception*, vol. 26, no. 4, 2009, pp. 335-353.

gestures merely accompany a musician's expressive intentions or whether they serve as conscious or unconscious structural markers for different parts of a performance. Hence, the genre and the repertoire of the music is an additional mean of expression in music performances, in comparison to gestures. Similarly, Pauline points out:

*"I think every conductor has a very individual way of conducting. We can all beat time, we can all tell them when to end words and show cut offs but I think that every one of us has different extra things that we do."*

Here, Pauline puts forward a clearer view of a conductor's individual style or technique, putting gender, genre, gesture and technique aside, focusing on each conductor's individuality. The 'extra things' she might have been referring to, may be too vague to comprehend, but in an attempt to do so, I would suggest she was referring to micro-gestures or individual hand, arm, or finger technique that a conductor develops and by which administrates his/her own uniqueness over a period of time with his/her own choir or orchestra, such as the 'ancillary gestures' mentioned in Nussek and Wanderley's research. Thus, for Pauline, embodying conducting is a peculiar and very personal matter.

Another approach to the matter comes from Cathleen, who suggests that the gestures of conductors may vary due to biological explanations:

*"There are probably some minor differences in gesture. Women having smaller hands generally than men and perhaps being generally smaller in stature."*

Cathleen claims that the differences between male and female conductors are biological and not concerned with musicality or talent in the conducting profession.

Similarly, Diana suggests that there is minimal difference in gestural communication and/or technique regarding women and men conductors. Her opinion on the matter is the following:

*“Only in the sense that the physiology of a female is different to that of a male, and gestures may not therefore appear as strong or large, otherwise, no. There is definitely a different psychological approach. Gestures and musicality are fundamentally the same.”*

Cathleen, additionally, comments on body language in a more general sense suggesting:

*“I think the body language has to be one of a relaxed appearance – upright, aware, smiling at the choir, confidence building before they begin to sing. I always take my time before beginning a concert – putting a handkerchief and spectacles down on the music stand, having a look at each choir member to see whether they are focussed and ready to perform. This also gives the audience a chance to settle and quieten down.”*

According to the participant’s response regarding a relaxed presence before the concert begins and focusing on her members’ calmness, empirical studies and scientific research applied to psychological aspects in the art of conducting, investigate emotionality and expressiveness. For example, findings by Wöllner highlight the importance of facial affective behaviour for expressive conducting, illuminating the conductor’s body parts and analysing the data. According to Wöllner, video materials can be used to present another view of the conductor’s high status profession. Conductors’ faces represent feelings and sometimes cues better than the arms-only or the peripheral conditions in terms of expressiveness ratings.<sup>18</sup> Hence, facial expressiveness, besides gender, or gestural technique, can be one factor that can shed light on conducting, as seen in Cathleen’s response.

Furthermore, Cathleen’s response about the audience’s presence at a concert is a noteworthy statement. The participant suggests that it is important for her that the audience is quiet and ready to appreciate the music. However, audiences are not

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<sup>18</sup> C. Wöllner, ‘Which part of the conductor’s body conveys most expressive information? A spatial occlusion approach’, *Musicae Scientiae*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2008, pp. 249-272.



always ready to do so and the perception of conducting seems to lead to certain gender biases within the musical world.

With regard to audiences and gender bias, a relatively new piece of published research by Behne and Wöllner suggests that watching musicians' visual cues in action can significantly influence the judgment of their playing.<sup>19</sup> Their findings provide evidence and clues that a pianist's body language impacts on the way listeners evaluate performance as well as proof that women artists are often judged differently than men.<sup>20</sup>

The study included forty-three music education students, thirty professional music teachers and twenty non-musicians who participated in a research (audio-visual perception experiment) that showed videos featuring four student musicians playing Chopin's *Waltz in A-Flat Major* and a Brahms's *capriccio*. However, none of the participants knew that the soundtracks for the videos were recorded by the same pianist and in fact he was only seen in one of the four videos; for the remaining three examples, the on-screen performer was a body double. Virtually none of the music teachers, music students, or non-musicians was aware of the audio-visual manipulations.<sup>21</sup>

The 'performers' for both Chopin and Brahms's compositions were male; the others female. After watching both interpretations, the participants rated what they heard using five-point scales to judge the players on such elements as precision, drama, virtuosity, expressivity and confidence. The researchers report:

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<sup>19</sup> Behne and Wöllner, pp. 324-342.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

Nearly all participants identified differences between the pairs of video recordings and, the “performances” by the male pianists were perceived as more detailed and accurate, whereas the female pianist’s Chopin’s “performance” was judged as more dramatic. Female performers were described as using their bodies more expressively than male performers.<sup>22</sup>

The bodily physical freedom and expressivity of the women performers was translated into ‘hearing’ a more dynamic performance but, in contrast, the bodily limitations of male players led listeners to believe the male performances were technically more exact. They also report that although more performer-actors would be needed to generalize, their result is in line with findings of previous research on gender stereotypes showing that maleness is associated with ‘instrumentalism’ and femaleness with ‘expressivity’<sup>23</sup> as in the case of participants’ (Diana, Cathleen, Sandy) responses about the biology and physiology of women and men conductors. The experiment’s findings suggest that social constructs of female and male bodily communication expects certain outcomes since societal norms have been stricter concerning women. In this case, could it be that the audience/members of choirs or orchestras are not used to seeing a woman on the podium and judge her body language, gestures according to her gender rather than her abilities as a conductor?

Furthermore, an aspect of gesture and technique was raised by Sandy within the theme is the pedagogy of conducting, which needs to be placed under investigation. The way women conductors are taught and by whom is an additional factor regarding the use of their bodies, their gestural technique; in a more general sense, how they embody their profession. According to Scott, the gestures of conductors must be clear and

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

effective.<sup>24</sup> Authors such as Byo, Green and McElheran suggest that the technique of the conductor has a great effect on the performance level of every ensemble.<sup>25</sup> Sandy remarks on body, gesture and technique regarding women conductors:

*“The women conductors that are very successful, if potentially they were taught by male conductors and they conduct like males, then when they teach, they are not teaching a female style of conducting. They are teaching the one they already learned.”*

In the above statement, the participant argues that it is normal to teach what you are taught; it comes as a chain reaction to what you do and how you do it. She goes on to explain that she does not know if a female way of conducting exists and if it can be taught by a female teacher due to the norm of the conductor being male for so long. However, she disputes that it all comes from a male origin or a male perspective. She explains:

*“I suppose what I’m saying is that it would be great if women were taught by female teachers who have themselves experienced enough variety of different teaching, to be able to have a unique way of going about things. In an ideal world, you would want each person to develop their own unique style of conducting as long as it’s understood to the group.”*

With regard to the literature and conducting pedagogy concerning body language and gesture, Bartleet argues that a great gap exists, not only in academia but also between academic knowledge and the lived experiences of students. Bartleet suggests that conducting teachers should change the ‘masculine-dominating landscape of the conducting profession’<sup>26</sup> and points out that the women she interviewed (conductors/conducting pedagogues and teachers), choose to take a lighter approach on this issue, addressing those problems with a positive energy and attendance, so they

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<sup>24</sup> D. E. Scott, ‘Visual Diagnostic Skills Development and College Students’ Acquisition of Basic Conducting Skills’, *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 44, no. 3, 1996, pp. 229-239.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

encourage more females to join the art of conducting and discussing such issues privately.<sup>27</sup> However, concerning body language and gestural technique, there is no literature in conducting textbooks that urges conductors (men or women) to alter their body language, gestures or technique for a better sound according to their gender, or if a conducting student is taught by male or female teacher.

This section of the chapter has shown that seven out of the eight participants agree that body language (involving gender, gesture and technique) is an issue that concerns women on stage. It is suggested by the participants' responses that they face a challenging environment and that gender stereotyping and/or discrimination still exist in their profession. The participants emphasise that individuality, physical attributes, genre/repertoire of music and expressiveness are also fundamental factors to take into consideration before criticising people's gender on the podium. What is great about this silent art is how one can express and embody one's deepest, inner, darkest or happiest sentiments through gestures and body language.

#### ***8.4 Theme 1a: Media content; the conducting body, gesture and technique***

This section of the chapter focuses on the findings of the media content analysis concerned with women conductors, body language, gesture and technique. It is used to support the responses from the research participants, as discussed in the section above.

Regarding gender and gesture, the world-famous conductor of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Marin Alsop, shares her thoughts:

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

It's about comfort levels; musicians as much as audiences need to get used to seeing women on the podium.<sup>28</sup>

Alsop raises the issue of the many challenges within conducting. One of those challenges is the audience's perception of what a conductor should look like, or how they should act on stage. When asked if it is an issue of female physicality (as seen within the responses of some of the participants previously) more than one of social prejudice, she argues:

You can't really practise your instrument until you are in front of a hundred people. The pressure is enormous and you need somewhere to make mistakes and experiment.<sup>29</sup>

Undeniably, experience is a core skill a conductor needs. However, how can a woman gain experience in conducting, if she is deprived of having it? And how can she feel comfortable with her body if her experiences do not allow her to expose herself through her expressive gestures and embody her profession?

With regard to differences in gesture between men and women conductors, Alsop states:

The same gestures from a female conductor and a male conductor are interpreted completely differently. As a woman conductor, if you extend your little finger on your baton hand it looks like you're drinking tea – people find it lightweight – while for a man the same gesture is usually interpreted as one of sensitivity.<sup>30</sup>

Similarly to Cathleen and Sandy's response about gender physiology, Alsop adds that women need to think twice about what they are doing on the podium, claiming that a

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<sup>28</sup> A. Coghlan, Marin Alsop: 'Musicians as much as audiences need to get used to seeing women on the podium', [website], 2013, <http://www.newstatesman.com/music-and-performance/2013/09/marin-alsop-audiences-need-get-used-seeing-women-podium%E2%80%9D>, (accessed March 2014).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

prejudiced and judgmental environment towards women brings them face to face with barriers they have to deal with, during and after rehearsals as well as concerts.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, she remarks:

There's one extra step you have to go through to convey only musical ideas, rather than having your gestures reinterpreted because people think as a woman you're conveying something else. Think about shaking hands when you meet someone. If you have a very firm handshake as a woman, it's a bit frightening. But a firm handshake is appealing in a man. In other words, as a female conductor, you have to figure out how to be strong without coming across as threatening. People should only respond to your musical gestures, rather than some preconception they have in their minds about strong women.<sup>32</sup>

Alsop's remarks are very similar to Young's interpretation of women being oppressed by societal norms and perceptions about how women are taught and expected to act and behave. Like this study's focus on women conductors, Young approaches gender and gesture (seen in the previous section) as restraining and confining for women. Alsop's remarks are supported by Behne and Wöllner's study, suggesting (seen previously) that gender stereotypes associate both genders with societal constructs and a certain mentality of how the body language of each should appear and/or act.

Conversely, Alondra de la Parra suggests that being a woman conductor is advantageous and that the body should not be an issue silencing women in music:

Frankly, the challenges of becoming a conductor are daunting enough without adding to them the worries of doing it as a woman, and considering what that might add to the difficulties of succeeding

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<sup>31</sup> C. Veltman, 'Marin Alsop on the Body Politics of Being a Female Conductor', [web blog], *Lies Like Truth*, 5 May 2009, [http://www.artsjournal.com/lies/2009/05/marin\\_alsop\\_on\\_the\\_body\\_politi/](http://www.artsjournal.com/lies/2009/05/marin_alsop_on_the_body_politi/), (accessed February 2014).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

in the career. If anything, I have decided that being a woman is not a handicap but perhaps in some ways even an advantage. A simple example: like many girls growing up, I was always allowed, encouraged even, to do ballet, gymnastics etc., using my body to express myself artistically, which then gave me an upper-hand as a conductor. Furthermore, since there are so many male conductors, being a woman has given me a creative space that brings a different experience to the audience.<sup>33</sup>

De la Parra's thoughts on the body on the podium bring up the matter of artistic freedom. On the one hand, sports and dance may have shown her an easier way to express herself as a woman growing up; therefore, she considers this as an advantage in her profession. On the other hand, it makes one wonder if there is a 'need' for other disciplines, arts, or sports to encourage women to feel freer to expressing themselves since society has been oppressing them for so long.

In addition to the above, conductor Paula Holcomb remarks that it is not an easy task to gain the freedom to express oneself in conducting stating:

It took me the first fifteen, maybe even twenty years of my career to figure out how to do that... how do I still maintain my femininity and what I'm all about, yet project what it is perceived as the male powerful macho, testosterone excuse me, sort of image that's there?<sup>34</sup>

Holcomb's comment relates to the biological implications like the aggressiveness of a male conductor on the podium, when matters of femininity and her body image took her so many years before she could actually feel comfortable on the podium. Should women forget about their femininity when conducting? Is conducting mostly about being aggressive and austere in front of the orchestra? The complexity of the issue of

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<sup>33</sup> DeLa Parra, *The challenges of being a female conductor*

<sup>34</sup> Bartleet, (2009), pp. 713-733.

the sex, sexuality, race and gender of conductors can be reduced when more humanistic ways are used to describe, observe or analyse people's body language on the podium. Greece's youngest conductor Phaedra Gianellou, commenting on body language and the stability of her technique on the podium when interacting with male musicians, fairly covers the context of power and the sex of the conductor as well:

No, because this has nothing to do with the sex of a conductor but the ideology he/she is up against. Many musicians will blindly obey the conductor and others, even though they disagree, will too see your point as long as you can persuade them. Many times, musicians might even come up with a more wonderful idea and persuade you! But there will always be one group of musicians that disagree strongly and for no real reason, because they don't want to be "pushed around" by anyone, especially a woman. Each type of musician is dealt with differently and one gains that experience not during concerts but during rehearsals – that's when a conductor builds on his/her work. This process though is a process based on human interaction so "issues" will always arise that one hasn't thought of before and must be dealt with.<sup>35</sup>

The orchestra's idiosyncrasy, according to Giannellou, plays a fundamental role in how everyone perceives the person standing in front of him/her. However, she feels that sometimes something will go wrong and that a conductor's job, regardless of their gender, is to be able to act as a perfect communicator, avoiding misunderstandings and working for a common goal. Equally, Sandy, Cathleen, Pauline and Genie suggested previously that conductors should be able to know their musicians individually and be gifted enough to try a different approach towards them, no matter what gender the conductor embodies.

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<sup>35</sup> *Phaedra Gianellou: Greece's youngest conductor*



This section of the chapter has shown how media content deals with women conductors, pushing them to rethink of how to maintain their feminine side when their performances are criticised as being more feminine due to their body language and gestural communication. Women conductors' responses drawn from media findings suggest that a woman conductor's gestures may be perceived differently by reviewers and critics in comparison to a male conductor's gesture and bodily communication. In addition, media data suggests that women conductors lack opportunities, whereas experience within conducting is difficult to accomplish. Body shaming for women musicians is still widespread, as suggested by the media content's findings, whereas audiences are not used to seeing women on the podium, frequently having a judgemental attitude towards them.

### ***8.5 Summary***

This chapter has focused on body language, gesture and technique in order to draw out the significance of the body in the participants' experiences in conducting. It has shown that women conductors perceive these matters with difficulty when asked about their body parts as well as their gestures and bodily communication.

In terms of the levels of congruence between female and male conductors' approaches (gesture, technique and body language), the participants claim that there is no difference between men and women conductors, although different physical attributes exist, proposing that each conductor has a sense of individuality in conducting gestures. In addition, the participants feel that societal constructs push women to use their bodies in certain ways, constraining them from acting freely and sometimes making them struggle to alter the way they express and communicate through their bodies.

Moreover, media content findings suggest that women conductors may feel that they need to maintain their femininity; an effort that may take many years to happen. Additionally, women conductors' comments from media content findings have shown that their performances are often criticised as being more feminine due to their body language. Furthermore, years of experience impact on their freedom on the podium, but their lack of opportunities in conducting does not give them the chance to embrace their bodies in front of audiences. Body shaming is rife throughout the media and this may occur because audiences are not used to seeing women conductors on stage, leading in many cases, to gender bias and discrimination against women conductors.

Moreover, the absence of research into how women are taught to conduct is a vital matter to take into consideration and one that must be further researched and discussed, as one of the participants suggests. The longstanding male appearance in conducting makes the profession a dominantly male one regarding the gesture/technique used, whereas the participants cannot see differences in their gestures/technique in comparison with their male colleagues. Media analysis has shown that male-female gestures can be interpreted and judged based on gender, whereas women conductors suggest that every individual embodies his/her profession differently from others, whatever technique/body language/gesture is used.

## **CHAPTER 9: CONDUCTING AND LEADERSHIP**

### ***9.1 Introduction***

This Chapter will have leadership as its main focus and discuss related issues, as well as dealing with authority and power, due to its relation to women's experiences in conducting, using interview analysis and media content findings. The analysis draws on a variety of mainly business-related sources, due to the lack of literature about conductors regarding leadership in particular. The aim of the chapter is to present how authority, leadership and power, analysed as a unit, may influence the conducting profession, in an effort to understand how women conductors perceive those traits embedded in their personalities. In addition, this chapter aims to answer research questions on the participants' views about the similarities, if any, between the qualities of a good female and a good male conductor, suggesting that gender discrimination regarding aspects of leadership may exist. Moreover, another theme emerges from the interviews when discussing leadership: communication, as suggested by the interviewees is an additional attribute that conductors need to encompass.

### ***9.2 Broad Theme 6: Conducting and Leadership***

The sixth broad theme Conducting and Leadership refers to two themes: (a) women conductors and leadership and (b) An additional attribute for a good conductor is communication (Table 9.1).

**Table 9.1 Summary of Broad theme 6: Conducting and leadership**

<b><i>Participants' point of view</i></b>	<b><i>Themes</i></b>	<b><i>Media Analysis</i></b>
<p><i>Concept of leadership has changed; maestros are not dictators any more.</i></p> <p><i>Some singers were used to be led under different conductors; it takes time to get used to a more collaborative model of leadership to build trust between the woman conductor and choir/orchestra members.</i></p> <p><i>Gender does not matter.</i></p>	<p><b><i>Women conductors and leadership</i></b></p>	<p><i>Strong element of power being a leader, women are not used to having this kind of power over people.</i></p> <p><i>Younger generation approaches the matter more lightly.</i></p> <p><i>Authority is a trait a conductor needs to have; people are not used to seeing women being authoritative</i></p>
<p><i>Musicality and preparation are important, but a good conductor needs to be able to communicate his/her goal.</i></p> <p><i>Able to communicate gestures through their bodily communication.</i></p> <p><i>Communication is important so the conductor can share his/her visions and goals with members of choir and/or orchestra.</i></p>	<p><b><i>An additional attribute for a good conductor is communication</i></b></p>	

### ***9.3 Theme 1a: Leadership***

The study of history has been the study of leaders – what they did and why they did it.<sup>1</sup>

Although the definition of leadership has been changing and has been discussed in literature since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, countless definitions and conceptual views still exist. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to obtain a single definition that embodies the true meaning of leadership as well as showing its astounding evolution, let alone one that fits music, as well as women and conducting. As mentioned, due to the lack of literature, particularly on women and leadership, this section provides definitions taken from business models, and concludes with Apfelstadt's categorisations of leadership, women and music.

According to Daniel Barenboim (cited in Lebrecht), the evolution of the 'great conductor' serving as a leader, or as a 'mythical hero', occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where the conductor had a non-artistic, sociological full-time occupation, also facilitating commercial needs of the orchestras.<sup>2</sup> In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this leadership model became the ideal, when famous, well-known 'super maestros' came to rule in a nearly oppressive, dictatorial power over the musicians and the repertoire. The second leadership model in the orchestra's organisation is adapted from a business model and involves collective or shared responsibility.<sup>3</sup>

According to DiMaggio, this second model of leadership and handling of an orchestra's organisation brings success due to the collective power and vision of three

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<sup>1</sup> B. M. Bass, *Handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications*, New York: The Free Press, 1990, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Lebrecht, (2001), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>L. I. V. Nussbaum, 'The Podium and Beyond: The Leadership of Symphony Orchestra Conductors', PhD Thesis, Benedictine University, 2005.

leaders and on their ability to implement teamwork.<sup>4</sup> The ‘three legged stool’, a term coined by Henry Fogel in 2000, features the Conductor as a guide of the artistic course, an Executive Director responsible for administrative work, The President/Chairman, are responsible for governing the orchestra, forms the board.<sup>5</sup> In addition, Child remarks that each institutional division of an orchestra has three dimensions. The first is the economic dimension, signified primarily by markets and the players in them; second, there is the cultural dimension, signified primarily by a set of shared prescriptions and a common identity. The third dimension of institutional division is the relational dimension, signified by networks of organizations within the sector, including government agencies.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of gender and leadership, Hopfl and Matilal suggest that women were once thought to be powerless and inferior to men.<sup>7</sup> However, since the 1990s, the new styles of leadership have changed from ‘post heroic’ to the renewed ‘21<sup>st</sup> century leadership’ in training programmes, books and courses, making this model a non-authoritarian, community-centred one. However, with regard to some effective leadership traits, Kouzes and Posner remark that extraordinary leaders must provide and promote psychological resilience in a climate of change.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, an effective leadership model cannot consist of only the individual’s ability, behaviours, style and charisma but it has to embrace a different element; collaborative efforts among group members.<sup>9</sup> Porterfield and Kleiner cite Kotter, a

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<sup>4</sup> P. DiMaggio, *Non-profit enterprise in the arts: Studies in mission and constraint*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 67-69.

<sup>5</sup> H. Fogel, ‘Are three legs appropriate, or even sufficient?’ *Harmony*, 10, 2000, pp. 11-33.

<sup>6</sup> A. Ropo and E. Sauer, ‘Management Partnerships of Orchestras: Towards Shared Leadership’, *International Journal of Arts Management*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2003, pp. 44-55.

<sup>7</sup> H. Hopfl, S. Matilal, ‘The lady vanishes’’: some thoughts on women and leadership, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, vol. 20 no. 2, 2007, pp. 198-208

<sup>8</sup> J. Porterfield, B. H. Kleiner, ‘A New Era: Women and Leadership’, *Equal Opportunities International*, vol. 24, no. 5/6, 2005, pp. 49-56.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

Professor of Leadership, where he defines a leader as someone who gives direction when times and circumstances are difficult and inspires others by building the sense of team work.<sup>10</sup> In the case of choirs and orchestras, this element of collaboration can clash and destroy the dictatorial and autocratic view of the ‘maestro’, where the group members could help and advice the maestro when asked as well as vice-versa for a better musical outcome.

Concerning gender, music and leadership, Bartleet indicates that despite the ongoing changes in musical traditions and music institutions since the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the view of a leader is clearly a structured norm that has been cultivated by the male dominant authoritative figure.<sup>11</sup> Until 2008 and according to the American Symphony Orchestra League, only five of their 122 member orchestras had a female Music Director or Principal Conductor.<sup>12</sup> According to Bartleet, the ration of male to female conductors is unbalanced suggesting that women conductors are treated as ‘a devalued and under-qualified category’ in this art, making it difficult to develop their abilities and evolve as professionals.<sup>13</sup>

Regarding women and musical leadership styles, maybe the most relevant to this study is Apfelstadt’s essay ‘*Women Conductors as Leaders and Mentors*’.<sup>14</sup> She proposes the following three categories of leadership features:

1. Musical: artistic intuition, aural sensitivity, musicality
2. Extramusical: confidence, effort, enthusiasm, initiative
3. Gestalt: the combination of musical and extra-musical components artfully

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Bartleet, (2008), pp. 31-51.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> H. Apfelstadt, ‘Women Conductors as Leaders and Mentors’ in J. Conlon (ed.) *Wisdom, Wit, and Will: Women Choral Conductors on their Art*, Chicago, GIA Publications, Inc., 2009, pp. 157-158.

The very informative input on leadership that Apfelstadt provides suggests that some conductors have the ‘charisma’ of leadership when others struggle to gain respect from people. She suggests that leadership is not about ‘having power over others’ but rather ‘getting a group of people to work together for the greater good.’<sup>15</sup> Drawing her ideas from Yu and others concerning leadership styles, Apfelstadt additionally suggests that leadership is integral to the formation of a suitable environment in which quality singing can occur.

In the following sections, the participants mention the aspects of authority and power. They do not distinguish between the terms but it is implied that they can exist individually as well as in isolation when combined with the concept of leadership. Additionally, each of the mentioned words can play a significant role to complete the other; thus, throughout the Chapter, leadership will be the main matter discussed, introducing relative literature on leadership and women conductors, and also presenting business leadership models due to the deficiency of literature on conducting and leadership.

### ***9.3.1 Theme 1a: Women conductors and leadership; how participants view leadership***

The participants’ views about the concepts of leadership, authority and power are thought-provoking. They do not define each word (leadership/authority/power) but rather they refer to all three of them as one and this is how their answers will be presented and analysed. In this chapter, the emphasis on leadership is the focus on these three concepts.

To begin with, participant Willow notes:

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



*“When you’ve got a conductor who doesn’t listen and he is a “dictator” it’s not fun. One thing I find hard in being a conductor is explaining what you want to hear.”*

Her individual interpretation of a conductor as a leader implies that dictatorship can be very often confused with good leadership. Very often, having power in their hands, conductors over the centuries could turn into austere authoritative figures. The participant understands that she is not fond of the idea of herself being a dictator, as she does not enjoy having that kind of power, hence, she would not act this way towards her band. She later explains:

*“I feel I am rather not at that point yet where I feel comfortable in commanding people around.”*

Using the word *yet* could imply the participant’s relatively young age and limited experience in conducting, leadership could be a trait the participant lacks.

Participant Bria explains what leadership means to her:

*“I think that the key attributes for effective leadership are energy, communication and a clear understanding of the goal and how to achieve it.”*

For the participant, the goal is what the leader requires to get him/her motivated to keep producing quality work. Understanding what the goal is, gives the conductor the energy to communicate it to their members and colleagues. The conductor will explain, motivate and make suggestions as to how it can be achieved by everyone.

A different approach on leadership comes from Pauline:

*“They’ve got to be able to handle a lot of people; they’ve got to have that kind of leadership. No matter how good they are musically, if they cannot handle a group of people it would not be good. They must also have the ability to form a relationship with the audience at a concert.”*

Her ideal conductor has to have a relationship with the audience as well as the ability to lead a choir or an orchestra. A conductor has to be able to lead and control the crowd

through his/her presence. She refers to an incredible skill, placing emphasis on the extra power one has to carry so as to be able to have one's back turned to a group of people but still be authoritative enough to gain their respect.

Similarly, participant Lia remarks that having to control a group or different groups of people can be frustrating and adds that a conductor must have the ability to maintain a stable environment during rehearsals and concerts.

*“Singing is such a personal thing that getting cross or angry or stating ones authority doesn't necessarily make for creating relaxed, unstressed singers. It needs a balance.”*

In addition, the participants discuss leadership within the context of gender. Conductor Sandy faced some problems with how people were viewing her ability as a leader of a choir. She says:

*“I've experienced a choir questioning my leadership ability and the people who were questioning it seem to have a particular model in mind of what leadership should look like that was more telling, I suppose. The conductor has the vision and the leadership and they tell the people, they transmit that information ... direct that way. I would suggest that there are other possible leadership models but I use one of them, which is more collaborative, which doesn't mean that you don't have a vision; it doesn't mean that your rehearsals are chaos, but it does mean that you're receptive to what comes back, in terms of what could be a really good idea! It took a while for one of those choirs to get the hang of what might be a different leadership model and, dare I say it, a not very masculine model.”*

According to Bass and with regard to the literature concerning the participant's response, scholars and researchers have debated and reflected upon the definition of leadership for many years, as seen previously. Interestingly, he argues that there are as many definitions of leadership as there are people attempting to define it. However, a trend emerges when one looks at the evolution of the leadership field. Some earlier descriptions of leadership identified it as a movement that consisted of individual traits

and physical characteristics.<sup>16</sup> Barnard Bass characterizes leadership as the participant notes, in other words:

...an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perception and expectations of the members. Leaders are agents of change – persons whose acts affect other people more than other people's acts affect them. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group...It should be clear that with this broad definition, any member of the group can exhibit some amount of leadership, and the members will vary in the extent to which they do so.<sup>17</sup>

In the case of participant Sandy, the collaborative/transformational model, best suits her conducting job. She has knowledge of other leadership models but collaboration with the members of her choir is a vital aspect in her job. Through the different models referred to by Bass, between autocratic, bureaucratic, transactional, task-oriented, servant, democratic/participative, laissez-faire, charismatic and transformational, as well as other models of leadership in different kind of disciplines, the participant chose the latter. Bass claims that the transformational model of leadership is the best one, because of its peculiarity of the leader in inspiring the intellectual stimulation of his/her followers and the emphasis of empathy on each person's individuality.

Furthermore, participant Genie notes:

*"A lot of them (singers) found that my directing was... Well, let's say that they found it easier to open up with a woman...The previous director he was really hard on them; I don't know, terms of leadership are a lot different than they used to be."*

Reflecting the above, Jones argues that

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<sup>16</sup> B. M. Bass, 'Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership', *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1999, pp. 9-32.

<sup>17</sup> Bass, (1990), pp. 19-20.

the field of leadership studies has not succeeded in articulating a coherent, paradigm-shifting model or approach that both scholars and practitioners can accept and work with.<sup>18</sup>

Regarding the participant's response and the literature above, I would suggest that maybe there is not a *single* 'model' per se within the leadership context. A variety of 'models' could exist within an array of disciplines. In the case of Genie, we notice a turn, in terms of the initial, austere approach by the first conductor, to the more nurturing style of the participant. In contrast to Sandy, who was faced with doubts by the members of the choir, the choir members embraced the last conductor's approach better. This suggests that even though the leader of a group may have good intentions, success can also depend on the followers' attitude and behaviour towards the leader as an individual. In almost all cases of teamwork, group dynamics vary. The leader therefore, has to recognize the dynamics of the group and be able to identify and solve whatever problems might arise with the help of his/her followers.

In contrast, participant Cathleen argues:

*"Whether male or female, the conductor must be strong about the decisions he or she makes and keep that slight separation from members."*

Concerning the participant's response on the strictness of a conductor and with regard to the literature, Avolio, Bass and Atwater suggest that a transformational model of leadership would be ideal for all conductors, due to the high development of morality that is required and can be directive, as much as it can be participative, hence a better

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<sup>18</sup> A. M. Jones, 'The Anthropology of Leadership: Culture and Corporate Leadership in the American South', *Leadership*, vol. 1, no. 3, 2005, pp. 259-278.

musical outcome will occur. In addition, Bass et al. argue that women transformational leaders seem to be better than their male colleagues.<sup>19</sup>

According to Hunt, Stelluto and Hooijber's arguments, the conductor/musician relationship can be seen more realistically and develop further into a notion of leadership of creative people in new organizations called new-wave; a movement, or trend (as in art, literature, or politics) that breaks with traditional concepts, values and techniques.<sup>20</sup> While the typical impression of a conductor is one of great talent, unconventional artistry and a despotic persona, it may not apply to the image of a conductor in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A proficient modern conductor is the one who possesses a set of complex leadership and behavioural skills. Their propositions suggest that the integration of the following will be an ideal model of studying the orchestra-conductor leadership and musicians' creativity.<sup>21</sup> They develop their theory combining CVF (Competing Values Framework) with selected works on leadership by creative people with examples of Quinn, R. E.'s work *Beyond rational management: Mastering the paradoxes and competing demands of high performance*. The authors remark that conductors are not only leaders, but could motivate their musicians intellectually and emotionally giving them the required stimulation. In terms of the responses from the participants, I would suggest that they cover the whole spectrum of an appropriate conducting leadership model (if there is indeed the need to define leadership within conducting).

To conclude, the conductor's vision and the musicians' implementation of that vision is based on a strong relationship, and as Hunt et al suggest, this model can be used as

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<sup>19</sup> B. M. Bass, B. J. Avolio, and L. Atwater, 'The transformational and transactional leadership of men and women', *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, vol. 45, no. 1, 1996, pp. 5-34.

<sup>20</sup> G. J. Hunt, G. E. Stelluto, R. Hooijbergc, pp. 145-162.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

a valuable insight by new-wave organizations.<sup>22</sup> In general terms, leadership in music could combine the following aspects a) Avolio, Bass and Atwater's transformational model of leadership that highly develops the morality that is required and can be directive as much as it can be participative,<sup>23</sup> where transformational leaders are agents of change, persons whose acts affect other people more than other people's acts affect them,<sup>24</sup> and b) the 'three legged stool' suggested by Fogel that features the Conductor as a guide of the artistic course, the Executive Director responsible for administrative work and the President/Chairman that forms the Board.<sup>25</sup> With regard to women and leadership, however, Apfelstadt's 'gestalt' way of leadership in music seems to be a gender-inclusive model of leadership, putting an end to the unequal treatment of women conductors referred to, as Bartleet states, as *Other*.<sup>26</sup> However, the definition of leadership continues to evolve, especially if the need to apply it to the complex context of choral and orchestral conducting remains.

### ***9.3.2 Theme 1a: Women conductors and leadership represented in the media***

It's a daunting career...but for many different reasons.<sup>27</sup>

The dominant idea of a conductor always portrayed as a male figure on the podium, wearing a tailcoat, being a strict professional leading orchestras and choirs, has started to take on a different form. According to Lebrecht, the concept of leadership in conducting has changed, evolved and reformed greatly through the centuries.<sup>28</sup> The hands, the bow of the first violin in a string ensemble, the paper and the stick are factors of the concept of power, showing that the person in front of all the others is the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Bass, Avolio, and Atwater, pp. 5-34.

<sup>24</sup> Bass, (1999), pp. 5-34.

<sup>25</sup> Fogel, pp. 11-33.

<sup>26</sup> Bartleet, (2008), pp. 31-51.

<sup>27</sup> De LaParra, *The challenges of being a female conductor*

<sup>28</sup> Lebrecht, (2001), p.98.

leader and is immediately given a power in music beyond the imagination. From Jean-Baptiste Lully, using a large stick banging on the floor in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to a rolled-up paper in the 18<sup>th</sup> century used to beat time for large choral groups and eventually the baton in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for choral festivals and orchestral music.<sup>29</sup>

In this section, media content findings suggest that along with societal changes and reforms, the concept of leadership has developed and transformed and has helped more women to find the courage to become more authoritative and act as leaders with their ensembles.

Conductor Kim Diehnelt points out that, ‘for some people, it might be a mind-block to envision a woman as a conductor.’<sup>30</sup> She states that ‘conducting is one of the rare positions where, because you stand on a podium with that title, you have the authority to tell a person – literally – when to breathe. That much power comes with the job.’<sup>31</sup>

For Diehnelt, a conductor has also the power to control time. She notes that conducting is immensely powerful and has historically had almost a sacred power.<sup>32</sup> Having this kind of power over people and being responsible for their breathing whilst in rehearsal and on concert stages, as well as having the control of time, gives conductors a sanctified aura of authority, an undeniable figure with the charisma of leadership. The terms ‘authority’ and ‘leadership’ will remain to be referred to as a unit, since in the previous section of this chapter, leadership, authority and the concept of power are terms that are combined and discussed altogether.

Marin Alsop comments on the situation of being the woman to conduct the last night of the BBC Proms. Consciously though, when commenting on leadership aspects of

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Diehnelt, *What is like to be a female conductor*

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

conducting, she argues that the nurturing part of this concept is more than relevant to women conducting:

I think it's a matter of society becoming comfortable with seeing women in these types of leadership roles.<sup>33</sup>

If women were considered and treated equally as their male counterparts they would not have to try harder to prove their worth over them. However, Western society is constructed in such a way that it does not allow women to be valued equally to men. Hence, how can women wanting to pursue a conducting career become leaders in this profession?

Relative to the above, Sian Edwards provides her own insight as to why female students have taken so long to follow conducting professionally. This may be because, in so many cases, females are not treated equally; they may have felt self-conscious and unworthy in pursuing a conducting career. Edwards states that it is easier to find women conducting as amateurs but in professional circles the idea of the authoritarian male has become something of a tradition, arguing that

It is a male-dominated profession; the image of a conductor is that of an elderly autocratic, white-haired man. But I do quite a lot of teaching at the Guildhall and people often do it as a second study where it's split 50/50 girls and boys. In the amateur world more women are doing it and on a professional level women are now coming through. Like in other jobs, it's taken women a while to really come through and I'm not quite sure why that is.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> H. Crane, *10 Minutes with: Marin Alsop*, [website], 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/women-in-leadership/2013/sep/27/marin-alsop-career-conductor-proms>, (accessed June 2014).

<sup>34</sup> K. Price, *Sian waves the baton for female conductors*, [website], 2008, <https://www.questia.com/article/1G1-185706853/sian-waves-the-baton-for-female-conductors-welsh>, (accessed June 2013).



Although Edwards suggests that conducting has been male-dominated, she seems positive that women have entered the field and they are developing their skills in conducting. On the other hand, Jesse Rosen, president of the League of American Orchestras remarks:

The qualities of leadership have changed, enabling different types of people who possess strong partnering and nourishing skills, many of them women, to inhabit leadership roles.<sup>35</sup>

Similarly to Rosen, Beverly Taylor, head of the choral program at UW-Madison and conductor of the Madison Symphony Chorus claims that symphony music tends to be a bit conservative in its views, but

the face of leadership is changing. The thought of a woman running for president was unthinkable ... people would rather vote for a newcomer than a woman. There are a lot of old opinions held about what it means to be authoritative.<sup>36</sup>

Further on, the young age of the conductor, let alone a 'female newcomer' is another aspect of leadership that can be found in conducting. Ching Chun Lai (now an Assistant Professor and a conductor of Crane Symphony orchestra in New York) comments on gender and leadership and orchestral conducting when she was still a doctoral candidate, suggesting that times are changing:

It's seldom the issue of female or male has come up to me. It's really the issue of, are you a good musician, do you work well with the musicians. But I'm a younger generation. What matters is if you do the job well.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Veltman, 'Marin Alsop on the Body Politics of Being a Female Conductor'.

<sup>36</sup> Christians, *Breaking barriers: More female conductors make their way to front of orchestra*

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

The young conductor's optimistic ideology about leadership and gender is a motivating one, an ideal one I may add, where gender would have no implications in the conducting profession. However, Lai adds that she is younger than other conductors, implying that even though changes are now occurring, that was not the case previously and that gender was an issue regarding leadership and conducting.

Another approach to leadership and conducting comes from the British pianist and polymath Stephen Hough who suggests that the rise of female conductors mirrors the changing ideas of what a conductor, a leader, does:

A female conductor is an interesting thing, because it first of all challenges the idea of a conductor as a dictatorial, dominant force, and maybe it reinforces the idea of a conductor as someone who is sharing a musical idea with people.<sup>38</sup>

Hough first describes the male conductor's figure as traditionally linked with traits of dominance and dictatorship and second, appreciates that the entrance of female conductors in the field can provide a more balanced figure where the conductor simply shares musical ideas with other people.

The idea of a leader as a dictator is starting to fade away, according to Jesse Rosen, and more emphasis is put on music and the sound. Musicians' feelings about the composition, the personality of the maestro as a human being and not as the austere authoritative figure on a podium, begin to appear. Jesse Rosen additionally states about the normative model of the maestro:

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

The attractiveness of that model – the European, authoritarian conductor with a single-minded focus on music, rehearsals and concerts – is diminishing.<sup>39</sup>

The diminution of that model of the maestro as a dictator would be helpful to men as well as women to embrace conducting in a more humane way. Moreover, Marin Alsop, in a *Seattle Times* interview, remarks that leadership can be perceived as a metaphorical issue. She believes that the conductor represents the ultimate authority; therefore until we live in a society where women could have ultimate authority, the idea of a woman conductor will be resisted. Alsop remarks that as society changes, so will conducting,<sup>40</sup> implying that conducting is a complex profession closely intertwined with our societal upbringing and perceptions.

On a final note, the Estonian conductor Anu Tali states that being competent is enough to achieve success and she amusingly remarks that there will come a time when audiences get used to seeing someone without a beard on the podium.<sup>41</sup>

Concluding, media analysis has shown that the long male dominance in conducting has made society maintain a certain idea about what a good leader is. However, as society evolves, the profession will simultaneously develop within that particular society, hence, people will terminate their assumptions that a good leader is only a male leader and women conductors will be valued and seen, as they truly deserve to be; equal to their male colleagues.

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<sup>39</sup> *Taking the lead baton in hand*, [website], 2013, <http://www.newsday.com/entertainment/fanfare/classical-music-taking-the-lead-baton-in-hand-more-women-conductors-are-ascending-the-podium-with-harmonious-results-sidebar-of-a-new-age-see-end-of-text-1.755939>, (accessed June 2013).

<sup>40</sup> Bargreen, *Conductor foresees more women taking podium*

<sup>41</sup> A. Boutsko, *Women with batons*, [website], 2012, <http://www.dw.de/women-with-batons/a-15665792>, (accessed June 2013).

#### ***9.4 Theme 1b: Additional attributes for a good conductor: communication***

This section focuses on some other qualities of conductors, besides good leadership skills, gestures, technique, having (or not) a degree in conducting, according to the participants' personal interpretations. The participants were asked what the ideal attributes of a conductor should be in addition to leadership skills, and if they perceived those attribute differently in women and men conductors. The purpose of the question was to investigate whether a specific skill, besides good leadership abilities, is related to a conductor's gender when music is the protagonist during rehearsals and concerts.

Participant Genie makes a peculiar comment involving a conductor's character and attitude, bringing up her opinion on the matter:

*“The conductor is conceptually invisible. There are some conductors who want to be seen separately from their singers or their players but I want to be a part of them and not stand out; this does not mean that I want to be invisible, though. We are making music and this should be the important factor.”*

The impression of the conductor on the podium was traditionally reflected as a concept of great authority and leadership. Most conductors were conquering music stages all over the world and their bodily image of how a person looked upon the stage included this great austerity, dominating the orchestras with batons, which gave them a sense of absolute power.<sup>42</sup> Having this power literally in their hands could lead to the need to be noticed or 'showing off.' The participant's response implies that she needs to be visible in her own way, emphasizing that music is the central focus of the whole procedure. She also comments on musical abilities and an imaginative spirit noting:

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<sup>42</sup> Norman, pp. 97-98.

*“Good ear... The ear is everything. If you’ve got a good ear everything else will sort itself out. Also, imagination; so you enlighten them, so they make sense of things, they make sense of the music. You will get the choir or the orchestra to put music under their skin.”*

For Genie, creative spirit and imaginative essence in everything conductors do as well as musicianship in combination with talent, are the qualities of a good conductor. When asked if those qualities are the same in a man as they are in a woman, she agrees, adding:

*“The thing I don’t know is whether they imagine things or music the same way. There might be different visions looking in there!”*

suggesting that women and men view music subjectively, each having a different goal for the performance’s outcome.

Further on, Diane’s response points to the importance of verbal and musical communication. She states that, in terms of gender and the qualities of conducting:

*“There is no answer to that question as the response would be so varied from person to person. A good conductor effectively communicates with his/her performers and listeners both in terms of verbal instruction, accurate and careful listening, attention to detail, clarity of gesture, faithfulness and integrity to their musicality (which, as much as being drawn from within themselves, would also have some degree of intellect behind it) and inspiration in the moment.”*

According to her, all the qualities mentioned vary from one conductor to another. The emphasis is not only on the performers (instrumentalists or singers), but also on the audience. Within her answer, the trait of responsibility can be noticed, coming from the conductors towards their singers and/or players through her words of *faithfulness* and *integrity*.

In addition, Lia believes the qualities of an ideal conductor do not differ regarding gender. The participant points out the importance of hard work, preparation and being receptive of comments. She remarks:

*“Know the music, have done the homework. Give a clear beat. Enjoy the music making. Be prepared to work at things. Be prepared to take criticism from people if they think you are unclear. Understand the way instruments/voices work well so that you can respect where a player is coming from. I think they are essentially the same in both sexes.”*

The main factor regarding the above is the importance she gives to receiving comments and criticism from people, not specifying if they are musicians or not, and suggesting that peoples’ remarks and observations can create an improved, wiser conductor.

Participant Bria proposes that the following:

*“Communication, energy, bravery, humility and spontaneity”*

make an ideal conductor. She does not think that these qualities are unique to either sex. Furthermore, Pauline adds that, apart from musicianship being vital, a conductor should have an attractive personality as well as communication with his/her musicians and players, authority, and power. She also points out that:

*“You’ll have to decide what your singers will perform, organise purchasing of music and so much more. Be prepared, you have to think ahead! I am already thinking what I am going to conduct next Christmas! Take into consideration the ability of your choir and the time that they are able to put into learning the piece you want to perform.”*

Good preparation in the rehearsals is almost in all conducting handbooks but the participant additionally proposes that conductors should be aware and organised of what they will buy as concert music and be able to think in advance. Moreover, her comment on having knowledge of the level of your choir’s capabilities is a key issue

of good choir/orchestra management. Time management is also a factor that a conductor should not overlook and be capable of handling all through the year, going through every single rehearsal and, as the conductor comments, knowing what to sing next in concert.

In addition, Sandy adds that a fundamental ability of conductors is their musicianship. For her, musicianship as an aspect of understanding and being able to interpret a score, is one of the basic requirements of conducting and a skill that many conducting textbooks emphasize; a conductor should be able to ‘hear’ music when holding a composition in his/her hands.

Beyond that, the participant adds that *‘having people skills, making groups of people feel safe and confident’* should also be one of the conductor’s qualities, suggesting that conductors should encompass a communicative nature. Being able to make music and having teaching skills to address the gaps in their knowledge or their training, *‘particularly with amateur singers’* is the participant’s opinion on the matter. The emphasis she places on amateur singers suggests that, for choir conductors, it is an essential part of how they interact with people with limited knowledge, having a responsibility to know their needs and teach those singers properly, not damaging or restraining their voices.

Moreover, Cathleen argues that the necessary quality for any conductor is musicality, mentioning that there are no gender differences on the matter. Besides that, and similar to Sandy’s response on choir singers, Cathleen points out:

*“Having an excellent ear to listen to all the sections and to individual voices ensures balance of sound and vowel matching... Having a marvellous sense of phrasing and moving the music around is often an innate quality in an excellent musician.”*

The participant additionally comments:

*“A good sense of rhythm, an interest in poetry and languages and the humility to bring experts in these fields if they are missing in the conductor.”*

Cathleen suggests that conductors should look beyond their ego or self-efficacy and use all that is necessary for the substantial musical growth of their orchestra or choir. For example, a conductor who specialises in ensemble conducting and wants to conduct a bigger orchestra may need additional help from other conductors, courses and seminars to contribute and enrich his/her knowledge. The participant additionally remarks:

*“A love of humanity and care for each member of the choir and a fairness in deciding privileges, etc., amongst the members; a sense of teamwork with the members so they have an input to the final performance. Asking many questions of the choristers about the sense of unity within their particular section of the choir.”*

The conductor's response suggests that a key issue concerning the group dynamics of a choir is fair treatment and equality among choristers, who should not be favoured or discriminated against. Although a few may stand out and have the potential to receive privileges, such as being soloists or lead instrumentalists, a balance should be kept and all members should be treated with the same positive regard for their individuality and not their gender. This suggested manner may create a sense of appreciation by choir members. In addition, Cathleen argues that 'a sense of teamwork' may have good results on their final performances as they would be sharing experiences and achieving as a group as well as maintaining their individuality. She adds the significance of their individual opinions to the communication within the group. A group in which members feel they could contribute to the music produced would result in a more active, positive and motivated team. They would be able to learn from each other and



reach a unified musical perspective, putting gender, sex, and any other form of exclusion aside.

To conclude, the participants emphasise the importance of communication and, secondly, musicianship. Seven of the eight conductors remark that a trait a conductor should incorporate is to be communicative and five of them mention musicianship, amongst other traits. Good communication skills seem to be one of the core attributes a woman or a man conductor needs to have. All the participants note that there are not gender differences in that sense of communicative ability, but rather it is a matter of the personality of the individual. In addition, conductors need to have respect for their group of people, good behaviour, and respect for the music they conduct, having no difficulty to ask for help if it is needed.

### ***9.5 Summary***

This Chapter has discussed issues of leadership, and presented matters of authority and power within conducting, as well as the emerging theme of communication. However, the literature on women and conducting is minimal, so relevant information was taken from mainly business-related sources regarding leadership. Thus, this chapter's intention is to contribute to further broaden the knowledge about women conductors and leadership through media content and interview analyses.

In addition, this chapter has explored how the participants view leadership as a trait within conducting and what the similarities are, if any, between the qualities of a good female and a good male conductor. The participants' experiences suggest that the concept of leadership has changed over the centuries and maestros/as are not embracing a domineering nature as they used to. From the participants' responses, it is suggested that, when singers are used to being led by different conductors, it may

take time to get used to a more collaborative model of leadership to build trust between the new conductor and choir/orchestra members, especially if the conductor is a woman at the beginning of her career.

Participants in this research suggest that gender does not play a fundamental role in the leadership context in conducting and that experience and practice can help a woman become a better leader of a choir or an orchestra. However, media content analysis suggests that a strong element of being a leader is having power and authority, which women conductors are not used to wielding over people in this profession. Additionally, younger women conductors approach the matter of leadership more lightly, without denying that authority is a trait a conductor needs to encompass. Women conductors, similarly, suggest that people are not used to seeing women being authoritative, which could be a problematic issue when directing a prominent choir or an orchestra and maintaining the title of leader.

Throughout the interviews, besides musicality and preparation being important, communication emerges as one of the core skills conductors need to incorporate in order to accomplish their goals. From the responses of the participants, it is suggested that conductors need to be able to communicate gestures with their bodies, without lacking a good sense of rhythm, a good ear, respect for the score and ethos towards their members and colleagues. The concept of being communicative, as shown in the interviews, can help the musical outcome of performances and rehearsals, helping conductors transfer their future goals and vision through imagination, humility and musicianship.

## **CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION**

### ***10.1 Introduction***

This chapter begins with a summary of the results, which are then interpreted and related to the existing relevant literature. Next, it presents the thesis' contribution to knowledge, and goes on to discuss the general limitations of the research. Finally, suggestions for future research are proposed.

This study has explored aspects of gender and feminism as they relate to women conductors' experiences. It investigates ways in which women conductors have been discriminated against by focusing on the factors that have led to women to be underrepresented on stages and podiums, such as bias, sexism and misogyny. This research's aim was to place emphasis on the woman musician/conductor by analysing the existing literature, empirical data and media findings.

### ***10.2 Results and findings***

The results of the research reveal that gender discrimination against women still exists in the conducting profession. However, gender bias, as well as sexism and misogyny, are not the only issues that are evident in the data. The process of interview and media analysis suggests that the factors that may affect women and men conductors differently include clothing, bodily communication, their personal and professional lives and leadership attributes.

### *10.2.1 Interpretations of results*

The thesis has six overarching objectives. First: to examine factors that impact women's decision to become conductors. Second: to examine the ability of women conductors to combine their personal and professional lives. Third: to examine the effect of women's clothing in the conducting profession. Fourth: to observe what the perceived differences according to women conductors are, regarding gestures/ technique in conducting. Fifth: to observe the level and extent of discrimination experienced by women conductors. Sixth, to observe whether the assumed qualities of a 'good' conductor differ based on gender. A qualitative method research design was developed to make use of semi-structured interviews that aimed to explore the experiences of women conductors (Chapter 3).

This study has revealed that bias, sexism and discrimination against women conductors continues to occur. In addition, this study's findings have shown that women conductors' value, talent or existence continues to this day, to be partially miss- or un-represented. That said, the findings of the thesis need to be interpreted in the following paragraphs.

*Research Question 1:* What is the nature of gender discrimination that women conductors experience?

The nature of gender discrimination toward women conductors varies and can occur in the form of bias, to sexist and misogynist remarks.

The participants' responses reveal how some have been discriminated against in the profession. The interview findings show that some musicians/singers have refused to be directed by a woman conductor and that they can be curious as well as abusive

towards them. This type of discrimination is also observed in the media, where sexism still creates the most barriers for women conductors as in the case of Brico<sup>1</sup> and the tenor refusing to sing, Ghandi<sup>2</sup> and the male brass players dropping their trousers, and others. Furthermore, the media findings suggest that men are the ones who usually display misogynistic behaviour and that the sexual presence of women conductors in combination with their bodily communication can be also harshly criticised, as seen in Panula<sup>3</sup> and Petrenko's remarks on women conductors.<sup>4</sup>

The participants' responses additionally reveal that women conductors sometimes felt patronised, especially at the beginning of their career. Similarly, in the literature, this was also evident in Hinely's study where women conductors may face more problems if they want to prove that they are capable of handling a professional ensemble, making great efforts to convince others of their abilities.<sup>5</sup> The feeling of patronisation was also found within certain responses from women conductors in the media (i.e. Ioannides case<sup>6</sup>) suggesting that failure to appoint them as conductors may be gender based (as in the case of Brico,<sup>7</sup> Faletta,<sup>8</sup> Ghandi<sup>9</sup> and others). However, it is remarked by women conductors in the media that conducting is demanding for both men and women and although change is happening gradually, gender bias still occurs, therefore work opportunities are lost because of it.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kozin, *Antonia Brico, 87, a Conductor; Fought Barriers to Women in 30's*

<sup>2</sup> J. Pitman, 'Take the cue from her'

<sup>3</sup> Wise, 'Conducting Guru Claims Women Shouldn't Be Conductors'.

<sup>4</sup> Gillies, *Jorma Panula claims women should not be conductors*

<sup>5</sup> Hinely, (1984b), pp. 42-45.

<sup>6</sup> Johnston, *Baton of the sexes*

<sup>7</sup> Kozin, *Antonia Brico, 87, a Conductor; Fought Barriers to Women in 30's*

<sup>8</sup> Veltman, *Female conductors crack the glass podium*

<sup>9</sup> J. Pitman, 'Take the cue from her'

<sup>10</sup> Johnston, *Baton of the sexes*

Gender bias, sexist and misogynist remarks as well as discriminatory behaviour in conducting is also evident throughout the literature review, supporting the interview and media findings, in the work of feminist musicologists such as Conlon,<sup>11</sup> Brennemann,<sup>12</sup> Elkins,<sup>13</sup> and so many others suggesting that some of the factors arise from societal norms and expectations of women, not only in real life but also within musicology and the conducting field. Moreover, the need for women's value to be more recognised is stressed by scholars and academics such as Apfelstadt,<sup>14</sup> Solie,<sup>15</sup> and Pendle.<sup>16</sup>

To this end, this study reveals through interview and media content analysis as well as relevant literature on conducting that bias, discrimination and misogynist behaviour towards women conductors still occurs in academic musicological cycles as well as in real life and the media world of music.

*Research Question 2:* What are the factors that may influence a woman's decision to pursue and develop a career in conducting?

Results reveal that familial motivation/encouragement, environmental influences, as well as a musical background are major factors in their decision to pursue and develop their musical careers. The research question is answered in relation to relevant literature and does not include media content findings.

The participants state that being motivated at a very young age plays an enormous role in their pursuit of a musical career. Having encouraging family members and relatives,

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<sup>11</sup> Conlon, (2009)

<sup>12</sup> Brenneman, (2007)

<sup>13</sup> Elkins, (2008)

<sup>14</sup> Apfelstadt in Conlon, (2009)

<sup>15</sup> Solie, (1995)

<sup>16</sup> Pendle (1992)

in general, a supporting environment, would motivate them to begin music lessons. This was also evident in the literature, where sociological and psychological research dealing with motivation suggests that, as human beings, people are motivated by their desire for social approval. Hallam remarks that motivation comes intrinsically or extrinsically and this differs from one individual to another.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, the participants' emphasise that having a musical background can be a helpful factor in pursuing a developing a music career, although not all participants had musical parents. Equally, Sosniak's research into concert pianists suggests that the parents of exceptionally gifted musicians were not necessarily musicians themselves and they might not even have musical backgrounds.<sup>18</sup> However, musical talent and musical training, have two established perspectives, such as Papousek's claims that musical interactions are affected by the parents' intuitiveness<sup>19</sup> and Walters' scepticism of a mother's or father's ability to transmit their own musical culture to their child.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, the participants point out that having a musical background is a supplementary factor that may help or encourage a younger person to pursue a career in music. However, regarding musical background as an additional factor contributing to their abilities as musicians, it seems that most of the participants may have an innate talent for music, although studies show that this is not necessarily the norm.

*Research Question 3:* To what extent are women conductors able to balance their professional and personal lives? How do they deal with becoming and being a mother when having a choir or an orchestra to direct?

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<sup>17</sup> Hallam, pp. 225-244.

<sup>18</sup> Sosniak, pp. 19-67.

<sup>19</sup> Papousek, pp. 88-112.

<sup>20</sup> Walters, (2000)

Results revealed that balancing one's personal and private life is not easily achieved by a woman conductor.

With regard to the participants' responses concerning balancing their private and professional lives, they remark that the many hours they put into conducting are greatly demanding, especially if they need to travel. Balance, therefore, is hard to be accomplished. In spite the difficulties, the participants state that, with the support of their partners, husbands, friends and relatives, it is easier to achieve balance and combine the personal with the professional in their lives. This was also evident in the literature, where, regarding balance and balancing professional and personal duties, Greenhaus and Powell's study on work-family improvement and work-life facilitation, has noted positive interdependencies, stating that work can also subsidise private life and vice versa.<sup>21</sup> Equally, Warhurst et al., suggest that the concept of balance should be reformed and integrate/ interact with the concept of work and personal life.<sup>22</sup>

Regarding motherhood and balance, the participants' responses point out that becoming a mother can complicate situations further, bringing an unstable lifestyle to women on the podium. The difficulties of motherhood are significantly highlighted by the participants although the support of their partners, husbands, friends and relatives can help the situation. With regard to media findings, balancing professional and personal life and motherhood, it seems that most of the women conductors refuse to adjust to gender stereotypes and some, even when eight months pregnant, continue conducting, as Simone Young did.<sup>23</sup> Media content analysis, similarly to the interview analysis, has shown that familial support (e.g. husbands, partners) is crucial. However,

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<sup>21</sup> Greenhaus and Beutell, pp. 76-88.

<sup>22</sup> Warhurst, Eikhof and Haunschild, p. 137.

<sup>23</sup> Arthorp, *Conductor Simone Young's house work is never done*



bias against women conductors becoming mothers was evident with comments such as Mantovani's,<sup>24</sup> suggesting that maternity can be a problematic issue in women conductors' lives and professional career, whereas others remark the opposite, arguing that women should have equal opportunities even when they get pregnant.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, professional women conductors state that their profession can be greatly rewarding and being pregnant should not become a barrier; even though it is extremely hard, it can be an experience that gives a conductor extraordinary levels of dynamism.<sup>26</sup> This was also apparent in the literature, where Bennetts<sup>27</sup> and Hirshman<sup>28</sup> suggest that women should work and become as successful as they can, and not feel guilt-ridden as well as within Barnett's study pointing out that participation in multiple roles is related to lower levels of stress and higher levels of mental well-being.<sup>29</sup> On another note, Bartleet states that the experiences of women conductors and motherhood should be brought into light<sup>30</sup> and not be ignored by journalists and critics so they are acknowledged and valued.<sup>31</sup>

To this end, the combination of literature, media and interview analysis point out that there are indeed a variety of challenges a woman conductor has to overcome in order to combine the triangle of personal/professional/ motherhood. However, the responses by the participants and the women conductors within the media strongly indicate that boards, committees, audiences, reviewers and critics should become more sympathetic toward women conductors wanting to combine family and profession as well as motherhood. In addition, although two of the participants remark that they choose not

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<sup>24</sup> Swithinbank, 'Bruno Mantovani on female conductors'

<sup>25</sup> Davis, *Director of Paris Conservatory declares conducting too demanding for women*

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Bennetts, (2007)

<sup>28</sup> Hirshman, p. 23.

<sup>29</sup> Barnett, pp. 75-93.

<sup>30</sup> Bartleet, (2006), pp. 1-23.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

to have children because they would be required to stop work, and the freedom to travel as well as having financial stability and autonomy are (according to them) assets to pursue and further develop their career, the rest of the participants and the women conductors' responses by the media suggest that conducting should not require this much sacrifice and should not obstruct women in their professional career.

*Research Question 4: How does clothing affect a woman's gestures or body language when conducting?*

The fourth research question focused on women conductors' perceptions about what they consider to be a clothing choice on the podium, how they feel about it and how they are treated by the media world regarding this matter. The main finding was that harsh criticism occurs regarding clothing and women on the podium, although clothing attire is an important matter for both male and female musicians.

With regard to the participants' responses about their clothing choices, the importance of feeling comfortable on stage is stressed as extremely important. The participants note that they choose to dress non-provocatively, portraying themselves as professionals, wielding power and control over the situation without risking being judged by their fellow musicians, colleagues and/or audiences. In addition, the participants remark that having their back turned to the audience is something they feel more uncomfortable with, in the sense of exposing themselves. Equally in the media findings, women conductors such as Tamarkin,<sup>32</sup> Falletta,<sup>33</sup> Ioannides,<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Beigel, *A Concerted Effort: For Women Conductors, the Dress Code Combines Freedom of Movement with an Emphasis on Glamour*

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Melick. *What are today's conductors and solo artists wearing onstage? A survey of the scene, and what it all means. Everything from tuxes to mini-skirts*

Woods<sup>35</sup> and Tali<sup>36</sup> choose to be practical and comfortable, but simultaneously professional and adaptable to the genre of music they direct. The participants' responses agree with the media findings, where women conductors carefully present themselves being aware that embracing a more feminine look would not necessarily be a problem, hoping that the attention will be given to their abilities and not to their appearance.

The participants note that judgement is a common phenomenon, as are the blurred perceptions that audiences and critics may have on musicians' clothing and their abilities. Similar issues are found within the media sources. The fear of audiences or critics not approving their choices is tremendously significant, which informs women conductors' decision to dress professionally, although some suggest that this has nothing to do with the critics but, rather, with the genre of the music they conduct and/or how comfortable they feel with a particular type of dress. Sexist comments and misogyny regarding clothing and women conductors can be found in reviews on Ruth Gipps,<sup>37</sup> interview responses by JoAnn Faletta,<sup>38</sup> comments by Julia Jones,<sup>39</sup> remarks by Hannigan<sup>40</sup> and others.

The above issues are also evident in the literature, where similar matters about fear of judgement or criticism by others are stressed. As seen in Wapnick et al., physical attractiveness and clothing selections play a crucial role to an audience and to listeners' perception of the musical competence of an artist and that suitable dress for any

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<sup>35</sup> Woods, *Conductors Don't Wear Pink* by Cambridge Symphony Orchestra

<sup>36</sup> Melick. *What are today's conductors and solo artists wearing onstage? A survey of the scene, and what it all means. Everything from tuxes to mini-skirts*

<sup>37</sup> Halstead (2005), pp. 222-235

<sup>38</sup> Beigel, *A Concerted Effort: For Women Conductors, the Dress Code Combines Freedom of Movement with an Emphasis on Glamour*

<sup>39</sup> Barnett, pp. 75-94.

<sup>40</sup> Hannigan, *Barbara Hannigan: no jacket required...*

concert occasion may affect audience evaluations.<sup>41</sup> Similar issues are found in Behne and Wöllner's study,<sup>42</sup> as well as in Griffiths's study that reveals that concert dress, in particular body-focused attire, has a real effect on audience perceptions of a performer's musical ability.<sup>43</sup>

Both the interview and media responses provide information, observe and discuss how women conductors are, indeed, conscious of their body image on the podium (dress, chest, back, hair) and that they choose their rehearsal and concert attire very carefully. The interview and media analysis, as well as the literature on clothing and conducting, reveal that bias against women conductors is apparent, because of the emphasis placed on women conductors' choice of dress and their physical appearance that is sometimes greater than the appreciation of their abilities and skills as conductors.

*Research question 5: What are the perceived differences/similarities between female and male conductors' approaches to conducting according to women conductors (gesture, technique and body language)?*

The main finding of the fifth research question is that gestural communication in comparison to men and women conductors is perceived and criticised differently according to people, audiences and critics.

The participants mostly comment on the limitation of their bodily communication due to societal norms of their 'proper' use of space and remark that audiences perceive a gesture differently when it is made by a woman rather than by a man. This was also evident in many cases regarding women conductors' responses in the media findings,

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<sup>41</sup> Wapnick, Campbell, Siddell-Strebel, & Darrow, pp. 35-54.

<sup>42</sup> Behne and Wöllner, pp. 324-342.

<sup>43</sup> Griffiths, (2008), pp. 273-290.

who remark that their gestures can be criticised as being ‘too feminine’, or ‘lightweight’, whereas by men, the same gesture is interpreted as one of sensitivity.<sup>44</sup> In addition, media responses by several conductors point out that musicians, as much as audiences, are not used to seeing women on the podium and, thus, women cannot experiment with their bodies, gestures and technique, make mistakes and further test their skills and abilities.<sup>45</sup> The media data have shown that gestural communication has to do with the idiosyncrasy, and not the sex or gender of the conductor,<sup>46</sup> and it is suggested by women conductors that people should respond to musical gestures and not have in mind a fixed idea about strong women.<sup>47</sup> With regard to the literature on gestural communication between men and women, opinions vary, where Kramer suggests that women use their hands and face in a more expressive way when they want to communicate their ideas in comparison to men,<sup>48</sup> and according to Hall, women are better at using non-verbal communication cues<sup>49</sup> whereas, for Gaulin and FitzGerald, men tend to have better spatial abilities.<sup>50</sup>

However, seven out of the eight participants agree that body language is an issue that many women on stage are concerned with, and they face a challenging environment of gender stereotyping and/or discrimination in their profession. The participants emphasise that individuality, physical attributes, genre/repertoire of music and expressiveness are some of the basic factors to take into consideration before criticising people’s gender on the podium. Similar responses about gender stereotyping and bias regarding gestural communication are observed in the media

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Coghlan, *Marin Alsop: ‘Musicians as much as audiences need to get used to seeing women on the podium*

<sup>46</sup> *Phaedra Gianelou: Greece’s youngest conductor*

<sup>47</sup> Veltman, ‘Marin Alsop on the Body Politics of Being a Female Conductor’.

<sup>48</sup> Kramer, pp. 151-161.

<sup>49</sup> Hall, pp. 845-857.

<sup>50</sup> Steven, Gaulin and FitzGerald, pp. 74-88.

content data, also suggesting that the lack of opportunities results in gaining very minimal experience and hence, women are not able to practise in front of a professional orchestra or choir.<sup>51</sup> Thus, the lack of practice could result in bodily discomfort, a lack of self-confidence and some timidity. Regarding the bodily discomfort and consciousness on the podium, the literature agrees that, according to Young, oppressive patriarchal and societal norms, as well as gender stereotyping, have been bodily repressing for women,<sup>52</sup> and Bordo similarly remarks that those norms and presumptions about women have been restrictive and confining toward them and their bodies.<sup>53</sup>

Both the media and interview data responses, however, suggest that although bias and sexist remarks may occur when media comments on women conductors' gestural and/or bodily communication, the musical sound is fundamentally crucial for them and it is the most important principle to follow, whereas the outcome of their efforts may vary according to each conductor's individual bodily communication, singing repertoire, group experience and individual training of gestures and technique.

*Research Question 6:* What are the assumptions, which inform what constitutes a 'good' female and a 'good' male conductor?

The sixth research question explores what the perceived qualities of a good female and male conductor are according to women conductors, focusing on matters such as leadership, authority and power according to the participants' experiences. Bearing in

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Young, pp. 36-39.

<sup>53</sup> Bordo, pp. 165-170.

mind that references on women conductors exist since 1564,<sup>54</sup> conducting for women was considered a novelty profession since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The participants' responses stress the importance of leadership in conducting, noting that leadership styles have changed and been transformed. However, the participants did not emphasize on giving a definition concerning leadership and conducting and referred to authority and power as additional traits a conductor has to encompass. On this matter, the participants straightforwardly point out that in order to achieve balance, a relaxed atmosphere needs to be present during rehearsals. Concerning literature and musical leadership, Apfelstad's work on '*Women Conductors as Leaders and Mentors*'<sup>55</sup> agrees with the participants' comments, providing a more in-depth analysis of the 'gestalt' way of leadership and conducting, suggesting that leadership is not about controlling and having power over people but rather collaborating with groups of people for the greater good.<sup>56</sup>

Equally to the interview findings and the literature, the media content analysis suggests that a strong element of being a leader is having power and authority. Critics and reviewers, however, tend to compare men and women on matters of leadership, as seen through responses by women conductors such as Alsop's, suggesting that it is a matter of society becoming more comfortable with seeing women in leadership roles,<sup>57</sup> and Edwards's, remarking that due to the male domination within this profession, the figure of a leading conductor is that of an aged, despotic white-haired man.<sup>58</sup> Just as to the media findings, the participants point out that some singers and instrumentalists

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<sup>54</sup> M. Edwards in J. A. Bowen, p. 220.

<sup>55</sup> Apfelstadt, pp. 157-182.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Crane, *10 Minutes with: Marin Alsop*

<sup>58</sup> Price, *Sian waves the baton for female conductors*

are used to being led by different conductors and it takes time to get used to a more collaborative model of leadership and to build trust between the woman conductor and choir/orchestra members. However, as argued by the participants and the media responses by women conductors, gender does not play an imperative role in how individual conductors lead their ensembles and they place the emphasis on the uniqueness of individuality.<sup>59</sup>

Moreover, and similarly to the above, a finding from media analysis suggests that younger women conductors approach matters of leadership and authority more lightly, although they equally emphasize that the latter are traits any conductor, regardless of gender, needs to encompass.<sup>60</sup> Women conductors' responses in the media similarly remark that people are not used to seeing specifically women being authoritative and austere on the podium, and that could be challenging when directing a prominent choir or an orchestra, to maintain the role of leader. Taking examples from successful women conductors who have managed to gain high status positions with orchestras and choirs, as well as an encouraging reception from audiences and their male colleagues, the term conductor will eventually replace the term 'woman conductor'.<sup>61</sup> This was also evident in literature, where according to Elkins, if women want to overcome the 'authority' myth of a conductor, they should break the social expectations<sup>62</sup> of women viewed as incompetent until they can prove themselves.<sup>63</sup>

Both the media and the interview findings suggest women conductors do not embrace the dictatorial model of the conductor but they rather seem to prefer a more

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<sup>59</sup> Christians, *Breaking barriers: More female conductors make their way to front of orchestra*

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Apfelstadt, pp. 157-182.

<sup>62</sup> Elkins, p. 72.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.



collaborative model of leadership to build trust between them and the choir/orchestra members, especially if they are at the beginning of their careers. The long male dominance in conducting has made society maintain a certain idea about what a good leader is, however, as society evolves, conducting is developing to be a profession that can be lead by women and men equally.

Another important skill –and one of the findings of the thesis – consists of being communicative as a conductor, according to the participants. Throughout the interviews, musicality and preparation were seen to be important aspects of an ideal conductor, whereas communication seems to be vital, and one of the core skills conductors needs to incorporate if they are to accomplish their goals.

### ***10.3 Contribution to knowledge***

This study's innovativeness comes from being the first reference that makes use of a new model of analysis (Media Content Analysis) related to gender and conducting, providing a great insight into the way the media deals with women's status in this field. It is also the first study that combines qualitative analysis with the approaches of Thematic Analysis and Media Content Analysis regarding women conductors and gender. The use of data deriving from the interviews and media content, in combination with the relevant literature in each chapter, gives significant power to the findings, based on the analyses regarding women conductors' experiences. This study has further evaluated and applied qualitative enquiries regarding conducting and feminist musicology and contributed to the already existing research and literature.

Moreover, this study is the first to evaluate the experiences of women conductors and observe the current status of the profession in depth (using both media and interview analyses), regarding aspects such as factors influencing their career, gender discrimination, bias, misogyny and sexism, balance within their lives, body language

and leadership. Focusing on the interview responses and media findings, the analysis chapters have been outlined to contribute to the analysis of the participants' experiences, feelings and perceptions about their profession. In addition, a further contribution of this study is that it enables women conductors' voices to be heard, as identified in the literature review and through Chapters 4 to 9, and demonstrates current gender relations on music regarding conducting.

With regard to the findings from Chapters 4 to 9, they offer a more accurate answer in the discourse about the relationship between discrimination and women in conducting, establishing that equality has not occurred and that sexism and misogyny are still issues that need to be tackled in this profession with further in-depth research (suggested in section 10.5).

From a sociological perspective, this study addresses everyone, not only academics, scholars or people involved in musicology or performance studies, and expands the issue of discrimination in conducting (especially by bringing to light emerging issues such as clothing, motherhood and leadership) towards more disciplines and discourses, such as women's studies, gender and sex studies, philosophy, human geography, psychology and anthropology, and it calls for more investigation and empirical research into conducting. This research's contribution to knowledge will be a step towards equality, through peoples' change of attitude and behaviour, as proposed within the chapters of the thesis. Although women and men may note some podium differences (such as their use of space), this should not limit any person to portray their individuality on stage. By studying the history of conducting, some empirical evidence, the relevant literature and the data analysis of this project, one will come to comprehend that women have waved the baton since when the profession initially originated and have never stopped since then. Through this study, women conductors

will hopefully become more visible on the musicological map (e.g. music history books) and maybe then our perception of who is on stage will have only a minimal importance.

Furthermore, it will help younger people reform their distinct approaches regarding gender stereotypes and will hopefully give them a chance to rethink the issues (e.g. patriarchy) that are deeply linked with women's rights and presence in the music world. I strongly consider that all the information presented, read and grasped is important for the following reason: people who are music lovers, concert goers, students, teachers and everyone who is interested in similar concerns within this study, can assist towards a more equal treatment of individuals who have been under-evaluated, oppressed and discriminated against within the music professions and stop analogous actions happening in the future.

#### ***10.4 Research limitations***

This section describes the limitations of this research. Firstly and mainly, there was a limited number of conductors' responses to, and interest in, participating in the study. A large number of female conductors were contacted but fewer than 10% responded positively. Of those who responded, a few declined and the remainder confirmed their participation. This may limit the research's reliability where, in fact, it aimed to gather both quantitative and qualitative measures and data to be analysed. Therefore, due to the lack of prior research, the study undertook a thorough investigation of a qualitative analysis.

Secondly, another limitation that emerged concerned the participants' slow responses, as well as the need to receive reminders of the project's deadlines for e-mail interviews, consent forms and Skype meetings. The participants' busy schedules and

lack of travelling funds resulted in limiting the study to English women conductors and not broadening the scope of diversity. In addition, another limitation of travelling costs and busy schedules constricted the data collection, leading to conducting interviews through e-mails, Skype and only a few face-to-face interviews, fewer than initially intended.

The final limitation of this study concerns the limited amount of literature, let alone empirical studies, on female conductors, their appearance, clothing, body language, professional and personal lives, leadership abilities, motherhood, gestures and historical, familial and environmental backgrounds. Therefore, the data collection of this research had to focus to a major extent on non-academic articles and findings gathered from a variety of relevant Internet sources.

### ***10.5 Further research recommendations***

This section of the chapter provides an epilogue to what has been discussed and it proposes various ways in which research into the conducting profession could be taken forward in the near future.

In this study, few participants feel that their gender has affected their career, whereas all the participants interviewed make it clear that conducting remains a male-dominated profession. Despite their enlightening responses, a more effective way of finding out the truth about most of the conducting issues in the male-dominated conducting world needs to be researched and studied. Although some female conductors have managed to gain high status careers and maintain their involvement in conducting, not a great number manage to attain a professional career, even after years of education and practice. Hence, further studies on matters of bias and discrimination are truly essential towards an understanding of the reasons that lie

behind the slow progress of women conductors in order for this situation to be terminated.

Furthermore, research by Benzecry on the politics of musical conducting sheds some light on the exploration of the relationship between institutions and artistic talent, where the ‘authority of the cultural producer is diminished by the management of everyday interaction’.<sup>64</sup> Further studies on whether gender politics are present and taken into consideration by the management and organisation of an orchestra and/or choir, including decisions by the boards and committees of the orchestral pyramid, need to be further investigated and elaborated on for their importance and the role they play.

In addition, studies on orchestral players, as well as choir members, need to be carried out, for a better comprehension of their perception of conductors’ gestures and body language. Qualitative as well as quantitative data gathering would be a great combination of approaches towards the people who are conducted by a female or a male conductor in order to achieve (through the conductors’ help) a better musical sound.

Moreover, an issue not touched upon in this study concerns lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered/ transsexual (LGBT) conductors. The doctoral dissertation on *The Personal and Professional Life Experiences of Three Lesbian Middle and High School Instrumental Band Conductors* by Lisa J. Furman touches on matters of bullying and harassment in classrooms, as well as bringing to light reports by the participants who admit that their experiences have been impacted by their gender.<sup>65</sup> The queer

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<sup>64</sup> C. E. Benzecry, ‘Curtain Rising, Baton Falling: The Politics of Musical Conducting in Contemporary Argentina’ *Theory and Society*, vol. 35, no. 4, 2006, pp. 445-479.

<sup>65</sup> L. J. Furman, ‘The Personal and Professional Life Experiences of Three Lesbian Middle and High School Instrumental Band Conductors’, Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2013.

involvement and experiences in the conducting profession can be instructive and enlightening to consider, whereas it can open the road towards an explanation of issues such as masculine and feminine qualities in conducting, androgyny, body language, gestures and so forth. A more detailed analysis through qualitative approaches can be extremely useful to reveal issues that require further attention. In addition, the concept of androgyny in conducting could be a great asset to this profession's research and studies, as the progress, which will occur, could brilliantly shed light on questions arising about sex, gender, embodiment and performance on the podium without any form of underlying discrimination.

In addition, the issue of the race of the conductor seems to be almost indifferent to scholars and academics. That there is a limited number of black male conductors cannot be denied let alone the minimal existence of a black woman on the podium. This matter is certainly one of great importance for research.

Furthermore, studies involving the clothing choices of female and male conductors will offer a clearer view on how we, as audiences, perceive femininity and/or masculinity on the podium as well as helping conductors feel more comfortable embodying their profession. Clothing, however, could stand out as a more complex topic for discussion for future studies. As discussed in Chapter 7, regarding physical appearance and attractiveness, dress choices in combination with gestures are among the prominent visual facets of a conductor. On the other hand, being a conductor could provide an individual with a position of authority and power; he or she induces an almost 'godlike' aura. Bartleet poses the question 'Could it be that women conductors test a conformist masculine appearance, so they can more easily gain approval of their

colleagues and members?’<sup>66</sup> However, the decisions we make in tailoring our body in relation to how we feel psychologically can be tangled up, as suggested by the participants in this study. Thus, more research needs to be done for our further understanding.

With regard to leadership, many studies point out the significance of this particular trait of conductors. Research by Eagly (2005) and Johnson et al. (2006) suggest that ‘as more women enter leadership positions, we would expect to see a decrease in the salience of general gender stereotypes in the workplace over time.’<sup>67</sup> However, particular gendered assumptions still emerge, as in the case of women conductors attaining professional positions. The participants in this study confirm that leadership, authority and power are exceptionally important for a successful conducting career. Despite all the comments on the matter, more research needs to be carried out in order for these terms to be perfectly clear and applied to conductors of both genders. Realising how important these traits are and how the members of the ensembles individually perceive leadership, authority and power, a new leadership model can be developed. Thus, prospective conductors will have an awareness of the pros and cons of their individual, rehearsal and concert strategies.

### ***10.6 Finale***

The purpose of this study, besides establishing that discrimination still takes place in conducting, is to raise awareness in a profession in which women are outnumbered, to motivate and empower them to pursue this career without fear and to value their abilities and skills as highly capable conductors. Additionally, it aims to show the path

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<sup>66</sup> Bartleet, (2004)

<sup>67</sup> Johnson et al. ‘Legitimacy, Organizational Sex Composition, and Female Leadership’, *Psychology of the Workplace Advances in Group Processes*, vol. 23, 2006, pp. 117-147.

that women conductors' follow throughout their lives and observe matters of body language, leadership, balance and clothing thoroughly, in an attempt to better comprehend how such issues are perceived and handled by the participants and to add further responses found within the media content. In general, it aims to draw attention to a problem that has existed for a long time, in order to 'crack' the glass ceiling of women entering conducting once more.

Societal constructs, biologically inflected norms that govern gender, sex, embodiment, leadership, authority, motherhood and abilities, should put men and women under the microscope for a closer examination of what constitutes an astonishing conductor. Only then, through a change of people's behaviour, attitudes and approach towards women entering the conducting profession, can equal treatment regarding women conductors be achieved. In addition, this study advocates that the time of change has arrived and people need to trust women conductors and their tremendous abilities. Their extraordinary patience is something to aspire to but now it is their chance to shine, as they have proven their competence repeatedly throughout the history of humankind. Although this study has dealt with a variety of issues concerning women conductors, it calls for more in-depth research. Further matters of gender, women conductors' perceptions and feelings about how they experience this particular profession would shed light into the silent art of conducting.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Semi-structured interview



#### Research Project: the experiences of women conductors in England

1. Please give a short description about your background. Where did you grow up, where do you currently live, what were your interests in general and in regards to music?
2. Do you have a musical family that encouraged you to be involved in music? If yes, who encouraged you the most and how?

3. How and when did you decide to become a conductor? What were your motivations, your role models in this profession?
4. How long have you been involved in conducting and what kind of choir/orchestra do you work with?
5. Do you think there is a difference in the approach of gestures or conducting methods when you work with an all-girls ensemble? Do they respond differently to your gestures in comparison to boys?
6. Did you face any difficulties or barriers in this profession? Did anyone treat you differently or discriminated against you because of your gender?
7. It is stated in conducting textbooks that being responsible for groups of people and getting their respect as an individual involves matters of power and leadership combined with the aspect of authority over them. Do you agree? If yes, how do you deal with these matters at your work?
8. What do you think are the qualities of an ideal conductor? Are those qualities the same in a man as they are in a woman?
9. Do you think that the clothing you wear affects the response of a choir or an orchestra?
10. Do you think that gestures and technique of a female conductor differ to a male conductor's technique and body language?
11. Would you advise young girls to pursue a conducting career? If yes why so or why not?
12. Are you able to combine and/or balance out your professional duties and personal life? What specifically enables or prevents this from happening?
13. Please share some key moments, for example influencing comments from singers, players or mentors and concert memories or rehearsal experiences of your conducting career.

*Thank you for your valuable input.*

*I warmly welcome any additional thoughts or comments.*

CONTACT DETAILS:

[loucia.lazarou@durham.ac.uk](mailto:loucia.lazarou@durham.ac.uk)

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/research/directory/staff/?mode=staff&id=10051>

*phone number of the researcher*

## **Appendix II: Consent form**

### **RESEARCH PROJECT**

*THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN CONDUCTORS IN ENGLAND*

Researcher: *Loucia Lazarou, MA, PhD Candidate*

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC-DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

1. I agree to be interviewed for the purposes of the research named above.





2. The purpose and nature of the interview has been explained to me
3. I agree that the interview may be electronically recorded.
4. Any questions that I asked about the purpose and nature of the interview and assignment have been answered to my satisfaction.
5. Underline a) or b):
  - a) I agree that my name may be used for the purposes of the research and/or for publication.

OR

- b) I do not wish my name to be used or cited, or my identity otherwise disclosed, in the assignment.
6. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from participating in the research at any time

Name of interviewee:

Signature of interviewee:

Date:

I have explained the project and the implications of being interviewed to the interviewee and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Name of interviewer:

Signature of interviewer:

Date:

CONTACT DETAILS:

[loucia.lazarou@durham.ac.uk](mailto:loucia.lazarou@durham.ac.uk)

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/research/directory/staff/?mode=staff&id=10051>

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/music/>