

THE MUSICAL LIFE AND CONDUCTING PEDAGOGY OF PETER ERŐS

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ABSTRACT

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Maestro Peter Erős led a 54-year career of international distinction as a conductor of symphony orchestras, opera, and ballet. He conducted over one hundred different ensembles in twenty-four countries, spanning six continents, held five professional music directorships, and taught at three conservatories of music. A protégé of legendary conductors George Szell, Ferenc Fricsay, and Otto Klemperer, Peter Erős represents an important link to the Central European tradition of classical music performance. Having joined the faculty of the Amsterdam Conservatory at the age of twenty-seven, and served as Director of Orchestral Activities at the Peabody Conservatory in the early 1980s, Erős dedicated the latter years of his career to teaching conducting and directing the orchestral and operatic activities at the University of Washington School of Music, where he taught dozens of student conductors, orchestral musicians, and opera singers. This dissertation examines Peter Erős' musical life, training, and conducting pedagogy, making available his teachings and approach to musical performance to future generations of musicians.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Hwal-ung Hwang and Hae-choon Choi

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Peter Sandor Erős (b. 1932) is a musician and conductor of international distinction, with a career spanning half a century. He led performances of orchestras, opera, and ballet, on six continents, with over one hundred different ensembles. His artistic collaborators included many of the most significant and renowned instrumentalists and singers of the second half of the twentieth century. Erős held several music directorships, most notably the San Diego Symphony, an orchestra he built up from a part-time, semi-professional group to a fully professional ensemble with a ten-month season. A protégé of legendary conductors George Szell, Ferenc Fricsay, and Otto Klemperer, Peter Erős represents an important link to the Central European tradition of classical music performance.

Teaching is second nature to Peter Erős and an integral part of his professional life. Having joined the faculty of the Amsterdam Conservatory at the age of twenty-seven, and having served as Director of Orchestral Activities at the Peabody Conservatory in the early 1980s, Erős dedicated the latter years of his career to teaching conducting and directing the orchestral and operatic activities at the University of Washington School of Music. During his twenty-one year tenure at the University of Washington, Erős trained dozens of conductors, orchestral musicians, and opera singers. His compelling pedagogical style and ideas were very influential amongst his students and they deserve to be gathered and disseminated for the benefit of future generations of musicians. This is the rationale of this dissertation, in addition to discussing Peter Erős' artistic heritage, formative training, and highlights of his professional life.

In the preparation of this paper, the author was granted full access to Maestro Erős' books, scores, letters, detailed concert diaries for Erős' concerts from 1955-2010, concert programs, press clippings, video and audio recordings, and other papers, all held privately by either Erős or by his former pupil and successor at the University of Washington, Dr. Jonathan Pasternack.¹ Peter Erős did not write any articles or books about his craft, and the interviews with him that exist are limited to biographical points and anecdotes. For the sections dealing with conducting and conducting pedagogy, the author relied upon class notes from the University of Washington conducting seminar, orchestra, and opera rehearsals; her own personal recollections of lessons; discussions and informal talks with Erős over the nine year period, from 2004-2013; and notes from several formal interviews with him.

The purpose of the non-biographical chapters is to present the most important artistic ideas and teachings of Peter Erős in an organized format. It is not an attempt to present a unified and complete conducting method or pedagogical method. The concepts related are those that were taught by Erős, based upon the author's own notes, recollections, and understanding. Every attempt is made to describe them simply and clearly, being as faithful as possible to the original ideas and lessons given by Erős. It is hoped that his unique and unforgettable personality is also reflected, at least to some extent, in the pages that follow.

¹ See Appendix A for a list of the archival material consulted for this paper.

CHAPTER 2: THE EARLY YEARS, 1932-1956

Peter Sandor Erős was born in Budapest on September 22, 1932. His mother, Agnes Rozgonyi, was a violin prodigy, a professor at the Franz Liszt Academy, and “one of the most beloved and sought after violin educators in Hungary.”² Her teachers included Leopold Auer, Otokar Sevcik, and Carl Flesch. Peter Erős’ father, Egon, was an architect, which was also the profession of Egon’s father and grandfather. Egon played viola and jazz saxophone; he was also an amateur linguist. Although Egon was against his wife keeping steady employment, she used to teach in secret a group of violin students, using her friend’s apartment as her teaching studio.³

Young Peter Erős began piano lessons when he was four and gave his first recital when he was ten. At the age of six, his parents took him to his first symphony concert—an all-Beethoven program—which made a lasting impression on the child. Every Sunday, the Erős family had chamber music gatherings in the parlor of their apartment.⁴ With Agnes at the violin, Egon often playing viola, and Peter turning pages and following the score, many distinguished musicians came to visit and make music, including pianist and composer Ernő Dohnányi, pianist and conductor Fritz Reiner, and violinist Erika Morini.⁵ This was the rare atmosphere that Peter enjoyed during his early childhood.

During the Nazi occupation of Hungary, toward the end of the Second World War, Peter’s family was forced into hiding with other Jewish families, even though his

² Tore Leifer, *Life at Stake: Memoirs of Conductor Tamas Vető* (Lindhardt og Ringhof, Copenhagen, 2005), p. 66.

³ San Diego Jewish Community Center, *The Eros Story*. February 7, 1981, p. 1. This unpublished document was compiled from interviews with Erős, his wife, other family members, and friends, as a script for the JCC Music Committee Banquet honoring Erős’ tenure as Music Director of the San Diego Symphony.

⁴ Maureen Bang, “Once more—Con amore.” *Australian Women’s Weekly* (April 6, 1969).

⁵ JCC, *The Eros Story*, p. 1.

father was a convert to Calvinist Protestantism. Erős spent many months living in very confined quarters in cellars, until the day when Soviet soldiers liberated Budapest. One day, Erős' father defied the dangers and stepped outside into the cold winter air for a cigarette; he never returned. Later, it was found out that he was taken and murdered by Hungarian Nazis.⁶

THE LISZT ACADEMY

Peter Erős entered the Franz Liszt Academy in the fall of 1945, when he was 12 years old. His studies included composition with Zoltán Kodály and Kodály's disciple, Janos Viski, chamber music with Leo Weiner, conducting with László Somogyi, and piano with Lajos Hernádi. At various times, in his late teens and early twenties, he worked at the Academy as a piano accompanist, opera repetiteur, and teaching assistant.⁷ His classmates included conductors István Kertész, Janos Furst, Tamás Vető, and János Kómíves; pianists Peter Frankl, Balint Vazsonyi, and Tamás Vásáry; and composer György Kurtág.⁸ The importance of his studies at the Liszt Academy is highly significant, as each teacher made enormous contributions to the formation of Erős' artistry.

At the Academy, Erős was a composition student of the famous Hungarian composer, educator and pioneering ethnomusicologist, Zoltán Kodály, for four years, from 1949 to 1953.⁹ At that time, according to Erős, "Kodály was a national hero, almost like a god." He had a quiet authority about him, spoke very softly, and taught

⁶ Interview with Peter Erős, May 20, 2012.

⁷ István Kerekes and Egyszer Volt, *A Hungarian Conductor: László Somogyi* (Xynminos, Budapest, 2005), p. 252.

⁸ Interview with Peter Erős, May 20, 2012.

⁹ Letter from Peter Erős to Maurice Abravanel, San Diego, April 4, 1978.

composition “like it was a religion.”¹⁰ As a teacher, Erős recalled, Kodály could be praiseworthy and damning at the same time. For one of his examinations, Erős was required to write a movement for a string quartet and submit it to Kodály. “He told me it wasn’t a bad piece,” Erős recalled, “but I should take out about 40 bars... When I asked him which bars, he replied, ‘It doesn’t matter!’”¹¹

Kodály was approachable, even if it was in a very eccentric way. He used to frequent a local pool, where he would swim in the nude at 6 a.m. in the morning; these would constitute his ‘office hours.’ In a newspaper interview, Erős recounted that, “I myself never did [go], because I didn’t like to get up that early.”¹²

The Hungarian composer and Liszt Academy professor Leo Weiner had a great influence on Peter as a performing musician. In a tribute volume about Weiner, Erős contributed the following recollection:

Leo Weiner was one of the very great composers and teachers in Hungary. He was a contemporary of Kodály and Bartók and wrote in the post-Romantic style. By the way, he didn’t much care for the unresolved dissonances in Bartók’s music. He knew music like few people knew it. I had a wonderful contact with him, privately too. He was an incredible chamber music player. He was not a great performer...but he was a musical genius. He taught us how to play. He showed me how to accompany, how to be part of an ensemble. When I was 10, we first played Diabelli 4-hands together. I was in my teens when he came and visited us at home. He came once a week to my apartment. He was always “Uncle Leo” to me. He loved the goose liver my mother prepared. Very attentive, he would correct everything we did. He taught me everything!¹³

About Lajos Hernádi, who was Peter Erős’ piano teacher at the Academy, Erős recalls:

¹⁰ Interview with Peter Erős, May 20, 2012.

¹¹ Tom Griffin, “Maestro from the Majors,” *UW Columns*, September 1990, p. 11.

¹² Bang, *op. cit.*

¹³ Melinda Berlász, *Memories of Leo Weiner* (Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1985), p. 71.

In 1946, not long after the liberation, my mother, Agnes Rozgonyi, violinist, got acquainted with Lajos Hernádi, because she thought I had enough talent to get into the preparatory class at the Academy of Music. I remember - but I'm not sure - that after the entrance examination only two of us got in: Balint Vázsonyi, who went to the teacher Böszörményi, and myself, who got into Hernádi's class... After the four preparatory classes given by him, he said I was one of the most talented students but he was angry because I did not practice properly. The teaching was kind, polite, but very strict. Do not forget that I was between 13 and 17 years old, and as a teenager did a lot of pretty much useless and bad things, so maybe the discipline was justified... One day, I played Mozart's B minor *Adagio* in class, and Hernádi said that no one since Dohnányi had played so beautifully. Immediately after that, he put me down for not practicing, and said I was never going to be a real pianist. He was right! ...I loved his concerts. He knew incredibly well the piano as a musical instrument and its possibilities. If I wanted to describe what was so beautiful about his playing, I would say his great strength was a kind of "masculine poetry." He was never sentimental, but always had a very beautiful manner of playing, whether it was Chopin or Beethoven or Mozart and Bartók. He had a great aesthetic sense and incredibly huge literary and artistic knowledge. He supported my going over to the conducting class, after four years in his studio.¹⁴

Finally, László Somogyi, Erős' conducting teacher at the Liszt Academy was a person who made a profound impact on Erős and perhaps contributed the most to the kind of conductor Erős became. A very sensitive musician and generous teacher and friend, Somogyi's intensely critical and often sardonic pedagogical manner was never far from the surface when Erős was his student. In a tribute volume about Somogyi, Erős wrote the following recollection and appreciation:

My great experience of the times when I was a student at the Liszt Academy was when my teacher, László Somogyi, conducted in concert pieces like the Verdi Requiem, the Schumann symphonies, concertos with Annie Fischer... I must have been for two years at the Academy, when I had the feeling that I had to be a conductor. So, in the spring of 1952, I got into the class of Somogyi. The audition took two days. At the end of the two days, he said that I was a 'little bit talented' but also a little too secure of myself... For four years, we learned from him what music was... In the lessons, we learnt how you can make a piece of music... express exactly what it ought to, how to make the orchestra sound in a special way. In our lessons, Maestro Somogyi taught us how to create something

¹⁴ András Hernádi, *Hernádi Lajos: Memories* (Rózsavölgyi, Budapest, 2005), pp. 232-233.

deeply profound [in our conducting]; to cheat was not possible for him. If he felt we were trying to cut corners, he got very angry.¹⁵

Somogyi's conducting class met both in a seminar setting with an ensemble of several pianos played by the conducting students themselves (Erős was to fashion his own seminar on this same model) as well as with orchestra. Somogyi, in Erős' words, was "a musical superstar in Hungary," and was able to secure important opportunities for his students both during and following their training. Erős describes his student experiences:

Three times a week in the entire afternoons, we were all together to study conducting... In the lessons, the atmosphere was quite good and we helped each other as we could. We were often invited to our professor's home for lunch or dinner and there we were able to talk freely with him. We played with his beloved electronic tape machine. The fifth year I just started, in September 1956...on October 23, 1956, I conducted Brahms *Symphony No. 1* while, outside in the street, there were young revolutionaries... Somogyi was a great faithful friend. He was an incredible conductor and great musician.¹⁶

Erős recalled an incident at the Liszt Academy that showed Somogyi's temperament in class:

I was in my fourth class when a very funny thing happened. He was yelling at me so much that I lost my head. It was in *The Magic Flute* and I was conducting the famous *Sprecher-Recitative*. He was screaming at me so, the windows were shaking! I had never been spoken to in that way. I threw the *Magic Flute* score at the piano facing me. The whole class became totally dead quiet. I thought there would be a big problem. Maestro Somogyi laughed instead and started to speak to me in a whisper, since I had told him that he was shouting and I wasn't used to that.¹⁷

Somogyi expressed his regard for Erős in an open recommendation letter he wrote in late 1956: "I want to emphasize that Peter Erős was one of my brightest students. Since he distinguished himself in the opera class as a coach, with a lot of talent and skill,

¹⁵ Kerekes and Volt, *László Somogyi*, p. 252.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Interview with Peter Erős, May 20, 2012.

he was nominated by the Directorate of the School...at the Hungarian State Opera as a rehearsal pianist.”¹⁸

After both conductors had escaped from Hungary during the 1956 Revolution, Erős and Somogyi continued to enjoy a warm and supportive personal and professional friendship that lasted until the latter died in 1988. Somogyi held the position of Music Director of the Rochester Philharmonic from 1964-1968, where he invited Erős to guest conduct.

Peter Erős conducted his first public orchestra concert at the Liszt Academy on June 17, 1955, in a program including Mozart’s *Symphony No. 33* and Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 1*. Opera was a great love of Erős from an early age. With his piano training, he became not only a very capable chamber music partner but also a fine opera *repetiteur* and vocal coach. His first opera conducting experiences at the Academy were with Rossini’s *Cenerentola* and Verdi’s *Falstaff*.

On November 27, 1956, in the aftermath the Hungarian Revolution, Erős escaped on foot from Soviet-occupied Budapest and arrived in Vienna. From there, he made his way to the Netherlands, where he began to pursue his conducting career and life in the free world.

¹⁸ Open recommendation letter from László Somogyi (original in German), Vienna, November 28, 1956.

CHAPTER 3: YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY, 1956-2010

THE AMSTERDAM YEARS

After his arrival in Amsterdam, in late 1956, unknown and poor, the 24-year-old Hungarian refugee did as much musical freelance work as he could to earn a living. He played piano, accompanied singers and instrumentalists, and wrote orchestrations. For a time, he also conducted an amateur choir.¹⁹

Erős pursued work with the Dutch Radio, which was headquartered in Hilversum. He was granted an audition with the Radio Kamerorkest, in which he conducted Beethoven's *Symphony No. 1*, on February 26, 1957. Following this successful audition, Erős was engaged to conduct concerts with the Promenade Orkest and other ensembles of the Dutch Radio. In July of that same year, he was accepted as a participant in the Hilversum Conducting Course, where Albert Wolf was his master class teacher. In 1958, he made debuts with the Groningen Orkest and other orchestras in the Netherlands. That year, he also accompanied his mother in a violin recital recorded for the Dutch Catholic Radio, as well as competed in the Besançon Conducting Competition in France, where he was a finalist.²⁰

In 1959, Erős applied for and won the position of musical assistant at the Holland Festival. There he assisted guest conductor Otto Klemperer in rehearsals and performances of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. His duties included playing piano for coachings and staging rehearsals and also conducting the off-stage musicians.²¹ His first piano rehearsal for *Tristan* was on May 28, with Klemperer and Ramon Vinay and

¹⁹ Interview with Peter Erős, May 20, 2012.

²⁰ Peter Erős concert diaries, privately held. See Appendix A.

²¹ Letter from Holland Festival to Peter Erős, Hilversum, May 9, 1959.

Martha Mödl.²² Klemperer became ill and was unable to conduct the first performance. Although Erős was fluent in the score and knew intimately Klemperer's interpretation of the opera, instead, Ferdinand Leitner, who was then the chief conductor of the Residentie Orkest in the Hague where the Festival took place, was engaged to replace Klemperer, who returned to Switzerland to convalesce.²³ Klemperer was a regular guest conductor with the Hungarian Radio Symphony, Hungarian Opera and Budapest Philharmonic, from 1947. Erős, who heard Klemperer's performances in Budapest with the Hungarian State Opera and Radio Symphony,²⁴ had already made a good contact with the elder German conductor, as evidenced by very cordial letters that exist from this time.²⁵

In the following fall, Erős worked for two months in Berlin, from September to October 1959, as an employee of the Deutsche Gramophon Gesellschaft, as assistant to the Hungarian conductor, Ferenc Fricsay. Fricsay was music director of the Berlin RIAS (Berlin Radio) Orchestra during this time, which was made up largely of members of the Berlin Philharmonic. Because Fricsay was so ill at the time, it fell to Erős to rehearse and even to record some of the music, including the complete Bartók piano concertos with soloist Geza Anda, Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique Symphony*, the *C Minor Mass* by Mozart, Liszt's *Les Preludes*, and Dvorak's *New World Symphony*.²⁶ Erős later assisted Fricsay in Vienna with recordings of the Wiener Symphoniker in Mozart symphonies (E-flat major and G minor), as well as for the 1961 Salzburg Festival production and recording

²² Letter from Holland Festival to Peter Erős, Hilversum, May 26, 1959.

²³ Interview with Peter Erős, March 27, 2012.

²⁴ Raymond Holden, *The Virtuoso Conductors* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2005), pp. 195-196.

²⁵ For example, letter from Lotte Klemperer to Peter Erős, Zurich, June 19, 1959.

²⁶ "Herr Peter Erős has been a long time serving as my assistant, and prepared my rehearsals, and my work...in recordings." Open recommendation letter from Ferenc Fricsay, Arosa, January 18, 1961.

of Mozart's *Idomeneo* with the Vienna Philharmonic, for which Erős also played the cembalo part.

Fricsay was very impressed with his young new protégé. In a letter of recommendation for Erős, in 1961, Fricsay wrote, "I can say only the very best opinions about him, about his outstanding musicianship and great experience, despite his youth, in orchestral conducting, in music, and technique, and also about his psychological understanding as a conductor."²⁷ In October 1962, Fricsay wrote to Erős to inform him that he had just recommended Erős to work with him as assistant conductor of the Berlin Radio Symphony.²⁸ Fricsay wrote, "I have recommended [you to the orchestra board] based on my experiences with you and my appreciation of your musical and high technical skill in conducting, about which I need not emphasize to you."²⁹ Unfortunately, the friendship and collaboration between the two Hungarian conductors came to an end in February 1963, when the 49-year-old Fricsay died of stomach cancer.³⁰

After returning from work with Fricsay and Deutsche Gramophon in Berlin, in October 1959, Erős tried out with the Promenade Orkest for the Dutch Young Conductors Program, which gave him a series of debut concerts and touring opportunities with provincial Dutch orchestras. A month later, Erős auditioned for and won the position of Assistant Conductor of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra on November 12, 1959; the repertoire was Schumann's *Manfred Overture*. He relates the story of this audition in an anecdote:

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Letter from Ferenc Fricsay to Peter Erős, Arosa, October 28, 1962.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Interview with Peter Erős, May 27, 2012.

I had one suit, the same one I had worn when we escaped from Hungary. We went with Gyorgy [Erős' first wife] to a concert in the Concertgebouw. There was a conductor leading a rather boring *Romeo and Juliet* of Tchaikovsky. I turned to my wife and told her, "that is the job I will have, and that is the piece I will play in my first concert."³¹

Indeed, Erős' debut concert with the Concertgebouw Orchestra on December 26, 1960, included the Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture*, as well as works by Corelli, Brahms, and Bartók. In Amsterdam, Erős had the opportunity to work with what was arguably the world's greatest orchestra at the time, and he interacted with the greatest conductors of the day, including Klemperer, Monteux, Walter, Van Beinum, Szell, Kubelik, Münch, and Krips.³²

As part of his Concertgebouw appointment, Erős also held a position at the Amsterdam Conservatory, where he taught conducting and orchestration. Three of his students went on to achieve prominence in the field: Edo de Waart, former oboist with the Concertgebouw Orchestra who currently enjoys an international conducting career; Jan Stulen, who is professor of conducting at the Royal Conservatory in the Hague; and Hans Vonk, who was music director of the St. Louis Symphony, Hague Residentie Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Symphony, and Cologne Opera and Orchestra. Erős was especially fond of Vonk and Stulen. He said Vonk had "a certain greatness" and playfully also said that Vonk conducted like "a rusty bear."³³ About Erős, Hans Vonk had nothing but praise. He wrote: "I remember him very well sitting at the piano. He then gave an upbeat without his hands moving. That was really impressive... He was

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

mysterious. He had a sense of the ineffable.”³⁴ Jan Stulen recalled about Erős: “His trademark was an absolutely reliable and functional conducting technique, which he was able to bring across to his students excellently... Erős advised me soundly.”³⁵

Armed with recommendations from Fricsay and Klemperer, Erős applied to attend the Bayreuth Festival Master Classes in 1960. Friedelind Wagner, the composer’s granddaughter, who was Executive Director of the Master Classes, invited Erős to the Festival that year as a Festival Assistant where, among other things, he played as rehearsal pianist and coach for Knappertsbusch’s production of *Parsifal*.³⁶ Erős and Friedelind Wagner became good friends following the 1960 Bayreuth Festival, and were later to collaborate on a major recording project in the 1980s.

The years 1960 and 1961 found Erős making debuts with the Brabants, Overysseles and Gelders (Arnhem) Orchestras in the Netherlands, as well as the Siegen Orchestra in Germany and the Stockholm Radio Orchestra in Sweden. He also made tours with all three of the Dutch orchestras.

In 1962, fellow Hungarian Antal Dorati invited Erős to conduct Dorati’s Philharmonia Hungarica on a five-city tour of Germany. In a letter written in 1978, Dorati testified to his younger colleague’s valuable connection to the past: “He is a very serious, dedicated artist of the highest quality... He has that very rare faculty of combining the thoroughness and uncompromising strength of the “old school” with the

³⁴ Luuk Reurich, *Hans Vonk: A Conductor’s Life* (Thoth, Bussum, 2006), p. 64.

³⁵ Eurovision Artists. “Jan Stulen.” <http://www.andtheconductoris.eu/index.htm>. Accessed February 25, 2013.

³⁶ Letter from Friedelind Wagner to Peter Erős, Bayreuth, March 13, 1960.

atmosphere of the world of our days.”³⁷ As part of the Christmas Day concert with the Concertgebouw Orchestra, that same year, Erős led a performance of Kodály’s *Te Deum*.

Another great influence on Erős was the long-time music director of the Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell. Szell was always interested in helping young talent. In 1946, with a grant from Cleveland’s Kulas Foundation, Szell began a program to bring young conductors to Cleveland to work with Szell and his orchestra.³⁸ Michael Charry, who was a staff conductor with the Cleveland Orchestra from 1961-1970, described the program in detail in his biography of Szell:

Szell would choose two “master students” to observe the daily functioning of a great orchestra and conductor for one year. They would take part in the activities of the orchestra, playing keyboard and/or another instrument, and assist Szell, working with the orchestra under his guidance, and in the orchestra library. The initial program ran for three years. Szell revived and expanded it from 1959 to 1968. Over the years there were seven Kulas Apprentice Conductors and eleven Kulas fellow Conductors, who shared a concert with the orchestra under Szell’s supervision each year. The program was unique. Serge Koussevitzky’s class for conductors at Tanglewood had begun in 1940 and Pierre Monteux’s Domaine School for Conductors, transferred from Paris to his residence in Hancock, Maine, in 1943, were admirable. Koussevitzky’s and Monteux’s programs operated during the summer, but Szell’s ran for a full season.³⁹

Charry described what it was like for Szell’s assistants and apprentices:

Szell did not give lessons except by daily example, but each time that we apprentices or assistants were assigned to conduct pieces on concerts, we had a coaching session with Szell in which one of us played piano for the other, who conducted his piece. In our rehearsals with the orchestra, Szell took an active part. Facing that orchestra was scary, but with Szell behind us in the auditorium, the pressure increased geometrically. Survival between a rock and a hard place served as a lesson itself.⁴⁰

³⁷ Open recommendation letter from Antal Dorati, Detroit, November 29, 1987.

³⁸ Michael Charry, *George Szell: A Life of Music* (University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 2011), p. 91.

³⁹ Charry, p. 92.

⁴⁰ Charry, p. IX.

George Szell met Peter Erős in Amsterdam in 1960 and was impressed with Erős' work with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, as he related in a recommendation letter Szell wrote for Erős in February 1961: "As guest conductor of the Concertgebouw Orchestra, I had ample opportunity to observe Mr. Peter Erős, at present Assistant Conductor of that Orchestra, and it gives me great pleasure to say that I consider him a highly gifted, excellently trained musician and a "born" conductor, with impeccable rhythm, ear, and a highly developed baton technique."⁴¹ Szell invited Erős to work with the Cleveland Orchestra as a Kulas Fellow. Erős took a leave of absence from the Concertgebouw and made his United States debut in a concert with the Cleveland Orchestra in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 1*, on January 6, 1963.

George Szell demonstrated his continuing support of Peter Erős' career in a letter written to Erős' first important manager, Lotte S. Medák, in which Szell wrote: "I shall watch things carefully for Erős and continue to be actively interested."⁴² Erős was later to return to Cleveland for his own subscription concert series in March 1968, again as a result of Szell's personal invitation.⁴³ That Szell allowed Erős to choose completely his own repertoire for this program—which included Berlioz' *Benvenuto Cellini Overture*, Bartók's *Two Pictures*, and Mahler's *Symphony No. 1*—reflected the respect and admiration Szell had for his young protégé.

Erős frequently sought the great maestro's advice. "For 10 years he was kind of a father figure to me," recalled Erős. "I never made a career decision without talking to

⁴¹ Open recommendation letter from George Szell, Cleveland, February 20, 1961.

⁴² Letter from George Szell to Lotte S. Medák, Cleveland, July 13, 1967.

⁴³ Letter from George Szell to Lotte S. Medák, March 9, 1967: "I personally would like to give Erős a chance here [in Cleveland]."

him first. I still would now if he had not died.”⁴⁴ As a conductor and musician, Szell had a profound influence on Erős. In fact, Erős was even described in the press as a “Junior Szell.”⁴⁵ Szell’s words about one of his models, Arturo Toscanini, can provide an insight into the kind of conductor that Erős was striving to become. Regarding the most important facets of a young conductor, Szell said: “Self discipline, highest degree of competence, relentless dissatisfaction with everything including oneself . . . based . . . on a sufficient amount of talent.”⁴⁶

In 1963, Erős gave his first subscription concert series with the Concertgebouw Orkest, in a program that featured Shostakovich’s *Symphony No. 10*. He led tours with the Gelders Orkest and the Brabants Orkest, and conducted a debut concert with the Stuttgart Philharmonic. He also led performances of *Die Zauberflöte* at Oberhausen State Opera and *La Bohème* at Köln Opera. Erős’ classmate from Budapest, Istvan Kertész, was at this time Generalmusikdirektor at the Köln Oper and had arranged for his younger colleague’s debut. Erős made his first tour of South Africa in 1964, leading the Capetown Symphony Orchestra in 30 different programs between August-October, and also led regional tours in Holland with the Netherlands Kamerorkest and Geldersorkest (Arnhem Philharmonic). That same year, he made debuts with the Utrecht Symphony, Hamburg Radio Orchestra, and Hamburg State Opera, where he conducted Verdi’s *Aida*. He led a subscription program in November 1964 with the Concertgebouw that reflected his own Hungarian heritage: Haydn’s *Oxford Symphony* and Bartók’s *Duke Bluebeard’s Castle*.

⁴⁴ Griffin, p. 13.

⁴⁵ Arthur Bloomfield, “Young Maestro’s Debut—He’s a Junior Szell” (*San Francisco Examiner*, June 7, 1967).

⁴⁶ Radio Interview with Harvey Sachs, WCLV, Cleveland, January 1965. Quoted in Charry, p. 4.

FROM MALMÖ TO AUSTRALIA

Peter Erős won his first music directorship in 1966, at the age of thirty-three, as chief conductor of the Malmö Symphony Orchestra, a position he kept until 1969.

During the years 1965-67, he led the Overysseles Philharmonic on tour as well as four tours with the Nederlands Dans Theater. Erős also made debuts with the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra; Nordilijk Philharmonic in Groningen; Barcelona's Orquesta Municipal; Hamburg, Göteborg, Helsingborg and Norrköping Symphonies; Stockholm Philharmonic; and, in 1966, he made his United Kingdom debut with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic.

The year 1968 saw increased activity in North America, including debuts with the Vancouver Symphony and Rochester Philharmonic, the latter having still been under the music directorship of Erős' teacher, Somogyi. In June, Erős had his first opportunities with the San Francisco Symphony, which was then led by one of Erős' mentors from his Amsterdam days, Josef Krips. There, Erős' concerts were part of the 'Musica Viva' series of American contemporary music, featuring works by Crumb, Martino, Wolpe, Ives, and Miller. That same year, Peter Erős made debuts with the Israel Philharmonic, in Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, the RTE Symphony in Dublin, and the Oslo Philharmonic in Norway.

Erős made his first tour as a guest conductor with the Australian Broadcasting Commission in 1969, leading concerts and tours with the Melbourne, Sydney, Queensland, South Australian, and West Australian Symphony Orchestras. In Sydney, Erős was reunited with his sister, Judith; they had not seen each other for twenty years,

ever since she fled Hungary to Australia in 1949.⁴⁷ In 1969, he made debuts with the St. Louis and Denver Symphonies, the Royal Philharmonic in London, and the Helsinki Philharmonic. He also returned to San Francisco, where he conducted the Symphony's first performances of Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 10*. In December, Erős started a long-lasting relationship with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra; his last concert with them would be in 1995, which would also mark Erős' final appearance as a guest conductor.

He returned to Australia in 1970, where he also made his debut with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. That same year, he made his first appearances with the Rotterdam Philharmonic, in a program that featured his teacher Kodály's *Psalmus Hungaricus*.

In 1971, Erős made his debut with the Niederösterreichs Tonkünstlerorkest in Vienna and Spain's Orquesta Nacional de Madrid. He returned to North America, where he was invited by his close friend and colleague, Eduardo Mata, to conduct in Mexico City with Mata's National University Symphony Orchestra. Around this time, he had his first interview with board members of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, in connection with their search for a successor to departing music director, Zoltán Rozsnyai. Erős was engaged to conduct a set of concerts with the San Diego Symphony in November of the same year and was also appointed the orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor and Music Advisor.⁴⁸

Peter Erős made his second conducting tour of South Africa in 1972, conducting multiple programs in Capetown, Durban, and Johannesburg. He made his Brazilian

⁴⁷ Author unknown. "Dutch Conductor Arrives." *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 30, 1969.

⁴⁸ Melvin G. Goldzband, *San Diego Symphony* (San Diego Symphony Orchestra Association, San Diego, 2007), p. 131.

debut in Rio de Janeiro with the Orquestra Sinfonica Brasileira and returned to Vienna with the Niederösterreiches Tonkünstlerorkest. His New York City debut also occurred this year, leading the New York Chamber Orchestra at the Mostly Mozart Festival in Avery Fisher Hall. Since childhood, the music of Mozart was very close to Erős: he played often his solo piano music as well as chamber music with his mother and other friends, and he had conducted Mozart's *Symphony No. 33* in his first public concert at the Liszt Academy. His conducting mentors, especially Krips, Szell, Fricsay, and Klemperer, were renowned Mozart interpreters. Erős continually renewed his affinity with Mozart during his career, and conducted Mozart Festivals in Baltimore, San Diego, and Seattle.

THE SAN DIEGO YEARS

The year 1972 had an even greater significance for Peter Erős: that year, he accepted the position of Music Director of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra. He had been well-liked by the orchestra and the board found him to be the most impressive candidate.⁴⁹ He and his family moved from Amsterdam to California that summer and he led his first concert as chief conductor in November 1972. Hailed by the San Diego Press Club as "Headliner of the Year 1973," Erős was lauded only a year into his music directorship for elevating the status of the orchestra and dramatically increasing subscription sales.⁵⁰ According to Erős, "In the 8 years of my Music Directorship there (1972-80), we elevated a small Community Orchestra (6 single concerts per season, \$500,000 Annual Budget) into a Major Symphony Orchestra (4 million dollar Budget, 16

⁴⁹ JCC, *The Eros Story*, p. 9.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

double or triple concerts plus a summer season, and regular youth concerts for schools.”⁵¹ Indeed, Erős’ leadership completed the ensemble’s transformation into a fully professional orchestra, moving rehearsals from evenings to daytime, making key personnel changes, increasing the size of the orchestra to 96 full-time members,⁵² and increasing the annual number of performances from thirty-six to eighty-two.⁵³ Another of his accomplishments was creating the San Diego Symphony Chamber Orchestra, which featured mostly non-principal players from the main orchestra.⁵⁴

Erős invited many of the greatest and most famous soloists to appear with him and his orchestra in San Diego, including pianists Arthur Rubinstein, Van Cliburn, and Gina Bachauer; cellists Mstislav Rostropovich and Nathaniel Rosen; and violinists Henryk Szeryng, Isaac Stern, and Yehudi Menuhin. He was particularly appreciated by his soloists for the sensitivity he displayed in their concerto collaborations. Bachauer wrote to him in gratitude after their concerts together in 1974: “I want to thank you again, with all my heart, for your superb collaboration in the Brahms *Second Concerto*. The three concerts we played together in San Diego and San Marcos recently, were sheer joy for me; I felt absolutely at ease, knowing that we were in complete accord musically – and the beautiful sound you produced from the orchestra was inspiratory! I was very happy to make music with you...”⁵⁵ And, again, in 1976: “It was such a joy for me to play the Rachmaninoff *Second* with you—each performance was more wonderful than

⁵¹ Letter from Peter Erős to Ernest L. Lewis, Seattle, February 4, 1991.

⁵² Goldzband, p. 136.

⁵³ Goldzband, p. 145.

⁵⁴ JCC, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Letter from Gina Bachauer to Peter Erős, New York City, March 13, 1974.

the previous one. Not only was your collaboration superb but your sensitivity brought out the finer details of the music and built up the work to a thrilling climax...”⁵⁶

Other programming highlights of the “Erős Era” of the San Diego Symphony included performances of Bruckner’s *Fifth and Seventh Symphonies*, Mahler’s *Symphonies 1-5*, Dvorak’s *Stabat Mater*, and a concert version of Verdi’s *Otello*, featuring James McCracken as Otello and Cornell MacNeil as Jago. Early in his tenure with the San Diego Symphony, in 1975, Peter Erős accepted an additional local role, as Artistic Director of the La Jolla Chamber Music Festival and La Jolla Chamber Orchestra; he held this position until 1982.

BEYOND SAN DIEGO

In the 1970s, Erős made his third South African tour (1974) as well as five more visits to Australia, where he had been appointed Conductor of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, holding that position from 1974 until 1979. He made numerous recordings with the WASO both for radio and commercial release in Australia and New Zealand. Erős made his Chicago Symphony debut in 1973 with an all-Viennese program. Significant debuts of this decade also included appearances with the Dallas, Mexico City, Sydney, Grant Park, Indianapolis, Calgary, and National Symphonies; the Hamburg Radio Symphony at the Montreux Festival; and the Ankara Philharmonic in Turkey. He made several return trips to Vienna with the Niederösterreichs Tonkünstlerorkest and the Rochester Philharmonic. Erős also enjoyed a six-year relationship (1973-79) with the

⁵⁶ Letter from Gina Bachauer to Peter Erős, New York City, March 9, 1976.

Bach Aria Group in New York City, which performed every December in Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall.

Perhaps the most personal concert engagement in this time was his first performance in Budapest in twenty-three years, where he led the *Symphony No. 4* by Gustav Mahler with the Hungarian State Orchestra. Erős recalled, "If I remember correctly, Hernádi came as a surprise to my return concert in Budapest in 1979, with the Hungarian State Orchestra, and he told me that he was very happy with his former lazy student."⁵⁷

In 1980, the year he concluded his San Diego appointment, Peter Erős made debuts in Hong Kong, Edmonton, and Portland, Oregon. He also conducted a concert at Indiana University, with György Sebök as piano soloist, as part of a festival observing the 20th anniversary of the death of their beloved teacher from the Liszt Academy, Leo Weiner. Upon the recommendation of his former Amsterdam conducting student, Jan Stulen, Erős was invited to return for concerts over two seasons with the Promenade Orkest in the Netherlands.⁵⁸ He made another tour of South Africa in the fall of 1980. In 1981 and 1982, Erős made debuts with the Providence Opera; American Chamber Orchestra in Chicago and Residentie Orkest in the Hague; the Seattle, Des Moines, and Puerto Rico Symphonies and, upon the personal invitation of his countryman, Antal Dorati, with the Detroit Symphony. He also returned to Vienna, Dallas, and South Africa.

The year 1982 marked the beginning of two important artistic relationships for Erős: his debuts with the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and the Aalborg Symphony

⁵⁷ Hernádi, p. 232.

⁵⁸ Letter from Jan Stulen to Peter Erős, Hilversum, May 15, 1979.

in Denmark. He became Music Director of the Peabody Orchestra and Opera that fall,⁵⁹ starting with a program of American contemporary music and, in 1983, began as Music Director of the Aalborg Symphony. His tenures with those institutions lasted, respectively, until 1985 and 1989.

Highlights of Erős' time in Aalborg were the critically acclaimed recordings he made in 1985 of the orchestral works by Richard Wagner's son, Siegfried,⁶⁰ and music of contemporary Danish composers, Steen Pade, Tage Nielsen, and Erik Norby, in 1988.⁶¹ Erős recalled the beginning of the recording collaboration with Siegfried Wagner's daughter, Friedelind, who sponsored the recordings, and with whom Erős had been close friends since his time at the Bayreuth Master Classes and Festival in 1961:

During all those years, she talked about her father Siegfried's compositions, and how she would like to make them better known. For a long time I contemplated the possibility of recording some of his orchestral works, but never thought I could pull it off. Finally, when I had been conducting the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra for many summers, the time seemed ripe and I offered to do this for her. We did two CDs of Siegfried Wagner: *Symphony in C* and tone poems *Glück, Segnsucht, Unt wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär*. They were produced by Isabella Wallich on her Delysé record label and she was so pleased with the results.⁶²

A letter from Friedelind Wagner attests to the composer's daughter's approval of the final product:

I still think that it was a small miracle (or big?!) that we concluded our recording sessions in a blaze of glory. Most of the credit naturally goes to you and your splendid conducting—plus knowing how to treat this uncouth, nice bunch of musician-farmers-mavericks and how, on this rare occasion, to get the best out of them.⁶³

⁵⁹ See Appendix C for a list of Erős' programs at Peabody Conservatory.

⁶⁰ The Siegfried Wagner works were issued on Delysé SLL 2 (1986) and Delysé SLL 3 (1986).

⁶¹ Point Records 5083 (1995).

⁶² Peter Erős, "Memories of Friedelind Wagner," *Liszt Saeculum*, Vol. I/II, Number 47/48, 1991/92, p. 4.

⁶³ Letter from Friedelind Wagner to Peter Erős, Grevinge, December, 25, 1985.

The Wagner CDs in particular received excellent reviews in the most prominent music journals.⁶⁴

Erős' guest conducting engagements from 1983-89 included returns to Philharmonia Hungarica; Gelders, Omroep, and Promenade Orkests; Royal Scottish National Orchestra; RTE Dublin, Helsingborg, Norkopping, and Malmö Symphonies; and Netherlands Radio, Budapest, and Stockholm Philharmonics. Erős led tours in South Africa, in Sweden with the Göteborg Symphony, and in Germany with the Bodensee Symphony and Wurtembergische Philharmonic (making his debuts with both orchestras). He made debuts during this period with the Alabama, Bournemouth, Charlotte, Odense, Oulu, Regina, Sonderyulands, Stavanger, Trondheim, Umea, and Uppsala Symphonies; Helsinki, Nordwestdeutsche, and Turku Philharmonics; Leipzig Radio Orchestra; Rheinland-Pfalz Staatsorchester; and the Stockholm Opera Orchestra.

Erős' program highlights for the 80s included Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin Suite*, Brahms' *Requiem*, Prokofiev's *Fifth Symphony*, and Mahler's *Symphonies Nos. 5 and 6* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra; Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* with the Stockholm Philharmonic; and Mahler's *Sixth Symphony* with the Helsinki Philharmonic. In 1984, he returned to the Concertgebouw to lead a program with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic. In July 1986, Erős conducted a program in Vienna featuring Brahms' *Symphony No. 1*, with the Hungarian National Philharmonic, as part of the Wien Musik-Sommer. Shortly afterwards, while vacationing in Budapest, Peter Erős

⁶⁴ See, for example, reviews by Annette Brunsing, in *Das Orchester*, September 1986, and "M.K." in *Gramophone Magazine*, July 1986.

suffered a heart attack, an event that was to inform his professional decisions and cause him to seek a more stable position.⁶⁵

THE SEATTLE YEARS

In 1989, after 33 years as professional conductor, Peter Erős decided to devote himself to teaching, and joined the faculty of the University of Washington School of Music in Seattle. Erős, who was trained by some of the greatest musicians of the twentieth century, was ready to devote himself to the education of the next generation of musicians. As his teacher Kodály said, “Only someone who has been taught well can teach well.”⁶⁶ Erős moved back to the United States in August 1989, from his home in Stuttgart, Germany, and began a tenure in Seattle that would last 21 years and round out his professional career as a conductor. He began as a Senior Artist in Residence and, within two years of his appointment, Erős became a Professor of Music with full tenure. He was later honored with the title of Professor Emeritus of Music, following his retirement in 2010.

In the first decade of his time at the University of Washington, Peter Erős built a successful orchestra program in close collaboration with the University’s violin professor, the virtuoso Steven Saryk. The two had worked together before: Saryk was the concertmaster of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, when Erős was beginning his appointment there as assistant conductor.⁶⁷ One of Erős’ first accomplishments at the school was to institute an annual student concerto competition, in

⁶⁵ Interview with Peter Erős, May 27, 2012.

⁶⁶ László Eöszé, *Zoltán Kodály: His Life in Pictures and Documents* (Corvina Kiado, Budapest, 1982), p. 197.

⁶⁷ Thane Lewis and Steven Saryk, *Fiddling with Life: the Unusual Journey of Steven Saryk* (Mosaic Press, Oakville, ON, 2000), p. 124.

1991. He conducted two to three fully staged opera productions per year, programmed a broad variety of repertoire,⁶⁸ and collaborated with numerous distinguished singers and soloists, including his old friend and colleague, Janos Starker. He taught orchestral conducting to dozens of students, some of whom have gone on to professional careers.

Erős led his final tour in South Africa in the summer of 1992. In 1994, he was a featured conductor for the Seattle Symphony's Beethoven Festival, in which Erős conducted that orchestra in *Symphonies Nos. 5, 6 & 8*, in one program. He returned to Europe in 1995, for final appearances with the Aalborg Symphony and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

At the time of his retirement, in June 2010, Peter Erős had been a professional conductor for 54 years, having led orchestral, operatic, ballet, and contemporary music performances, on six continents. He had conducted in twenty-four different countries, held five professional music directorships, and taught at three conservatories of music. In his own words, spoken at the reception following his final concert, he said:

...I truly love my students and they know it. I had a wonderful time. I did the music I love, I did what I always wanted to do for fifty-six years, and nobody is happier to have been here that long as I am. And I thank each of you for your love, your support, your kindness... Goodbye.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ See Appendix D for a complete list of Erős' programs at the University of Washington.

⁶⁹ Transcribed by the author from an amateur video recording, made on June 4, 2010, privately held.

CHAPTER 4: FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF CONDUCTING

This chapter will serve as an introduction to the ideas and conducting pedagogy of Peter Erős. First, some general points about conducting should be explained. What exactly is the conductor's function? Simply put, a conductor is a musician who prepares and leads other musicians in the performance of a musical composition. The conductor must grasp a work's musical structure, emotional content and dramatic shape, understand the technical practicalities involved in performing the composition, and be able to direct an ensemble of musicians according to his conception in performance. The art of conducting lies in the communication of the musical will of the conductor, based upon the instructions contained in a musical score, to influence and lead the performance of a group, from the smallest combination of musicians to the largest.

The conductor's role is two-fold: 1) to determine how a composition ought to sound, and 2) to guide and inspire others in performing the music according to this authoritative understanding of the score. As Leopold Stokowski commented, "there is one factor of vital importance in conducting—to achieve the most complete and eloquent expression of the inner spirit of the music and all the potentialities lying dormant on the printed page of the score."⁷⁰ That said, it is still somewhat mysterious how a conductor really gets what he wants from an orchestra. But the explanation is not found in the visual, insisted Peter Erős. Indeed, Erős often said that there was no single conducting "technique," per se, outside of the basics required by the practical needs of performing a certain composition. Part of what he meant was that, beyond a few fundamental concepts of physical technique, which will be discussed in the following pages, every action in

⁷⁰ Quoted in Carl Bamberger, *The Conductor's Art* (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1965), p. 198.

conducting arises according to the actual content of the music and the immediate needs of the musicians, nothing more. The requirements one needed to conduct, he said, was sound musicianship, a strong musical will, and the temperament to lead others. Or, as Fritz Busch put it, “the conductor’s most precious possession: personality.”⁷¹ Erős’ point about technique was that conducting is more about leadership through psychology than about physical gestures. All too often the physical gesture is taken as the most important aspect of conducting, when it is only one of the many tools of the accomplished conductor.

The common error among most attempts at teaching conducting, said Erős, is the over-emphasis on the physical aspect. He recognized the widely held belief these days that conducting is primarily a physical act in which every physical gesture is somehow magically turned into sound from an orchestra or choir or whatever ensemble the conductor is leading. The faulty conclusion from this approach is that the conductor is defined by the gestures he makes, and how he uses a special ‘gestural language’ to ‘show the music in his hands’ and ‘show his feelings’ about the music. The physical show is thus expected to demonstrate the ‘meaning’ of the music, so much so that the conductor has become the visual focal point of whatever concert he leads. As Stokowski wrote, “Conducting is little understood and greatly misunderstood. Often the superficial and exterior aspects of conducting are exaggerated, and the inner realities of the art of conducting completely unperceived.”⁷²

⁷¹ Bamberger, p. 313.

⁷² Bamberger, p. 198.

THE CONDUCTOR'S WILL

Building upon his studies with Somogyi in Budapest, Peter Erős learned by example from the other great conductors he worked with at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, including Otto Klemperer, Pierre Monteux, George Szell, Josef Krips, and Rafael Kubelik. Among the great artists that Erős came into contact with during his time in Amsterdam, was the Dutch conductor Edvard van Beinum. Van Beinum, who was the Music Director of the Concertgebouw Orchestra from 1938 to 1959, told Erős something that would follow him throughout his years as a professional conductor and teacher of conductors. As Erős relates it, he became profoundly impressed by Van Beinum's ability to achieve the most impressive results from the orchestra with only the minimum of physical exertion. When Erős asked Van Beinum how he was able to get such amazing things from the orchestra without great displays of physicality, Van Beinum replied: "I get it because I want it so much." So, Erős concluded, the most important thing for a conductor is to be completely convinced about how to perform the composition at hand. It is through this conviction that he will have the authority to lead the orchestra: if a conductor gets the performance that he must have—must because he "wants it so much"—then his work will be effective.⁷³

Hans Vonk, who was Erős' conducting student in Amsterdam in the early 60s, told a similar anecdote about his teacher, as related in his biography: "After his [Vonc's] first concert as chief conductor of the Residentie Orchestra, his former teacher, Peter Erős, made a characteristic remark. It appears that there is more of a connection with

⁷³ Interview with Peter Erős, March 5, 2013.

Vonk happening than appearance alone can explain—“It is not because you can but because you want.”⁷⁴

MAXIMAL EFFECT FROM MINIMAL MEANS

It was one of the main tenets of Erős’ conducting teaching that the conductor should use minimal physical means for a maximal effect. Felix Weingartner wrote about this in his treatise about conducting, stating that it was important for the conductor “not to make any more movements than are necessary. The expression of each passage will then generate an appropriately great or small motion of the baton.”⁷⁵ Aside from the compelling power of Van Beinum’s and Weingartner’s advice, there are other reasons for a conductor to minimize his physical technique. The most obvious one is to avoid distracting both the musicians and the listeners from the most important element of a concert: the music itself. Erős taught that it is an unforgivable error for the performer, in this case the conductor, to mimic the most obvious gestures in the music for the public’s consumption and appreciation. However, some may advocate that demonstrative musical performers who frequently utilize obvious and exaggerated physical gestures to underline certain aspects of the music—entrances of different instruments, changes in mood, the shift of the melody from one instrument to another—are rendering for their listeners an important positive service, that they are, in fact, “teaching” their audiences about the music while it is being performed. For Erős, this kind of performing did a disservice both to the audiences by pandering to them as well as to the musical performance by turning it into a circus.

⁷⁴ Reurich, p. 181.

⁷⁵ Holden, p. 116.

That musical performers have found it necessary to overdo their visual presentations to audiences purely for reasons of vanity and showmanship also went against Erős' teachings. This might be done consciously or unconsciously but the motivation is the same: the conductor wanting to take the credit for every note and phrase-shape and dramatic gesture made by an orchestra. For Erős, the conductor, like every other musician, was there to serve the music itself, as honestly and in as straightforward a manner as possible. Of course, the performer's personality and ego becomes a part of the performance by necessity, and this gives each performance its uniqueness. Erős' point is that the performance should not become about the performer and the performers' feelings in place of the content and sentiment that have already been created by the composer.

Most important, perhaps, was Erős' practical reason for favoring the most minimal means in physical conducting technique. This reason had to do with the psychology of the performing musician. He taught that the more the conductor showed in bigger and obtrusive gestures, the less the player relied on her own internal rhythmic and musical sense; the less the conductor showed, the more the player had to engage her own musical integrity and responsibility. In this way, conducting is, in large part, leadership through subtle yet powerful guidance using psychological suggestion, rather than forceful dictation through physical means. In Otto Klemperer's words, "The art of conducting lies, in my opinion, in the power of suggestion that the conductor exerts."⁷⁶ Erős taught that, when the musicians felt comfortable and free to play, they would

⁷⁶ Peter Heyworth, *Conversations with Klemperer* (Gollancz, London, 1973), p. 110.

respond more positively and intently to this kind of leadership and the performance would be more optimal.

THE BASIS OF CONDUCTING TECHNIQUE: THE UPBEAT

The first principle of conducting is that the conductor indicates a manner of playing a certain passage of music before it is played. That is, the sounding musical gesture is anticipated by a preparatory physical gesture made by the conductor.

Erős taught that there are three principal elements to this preparatory gesture, or “Upbeat”: tempo, dynamic and character. The Upbeat can be compared to the preparatory breath in singing or playing a wind instrument, or the lift of the bow arm in string playing. Metaphorically, the Upbeat is a gesture of inspiration, meaning ‘inward breath’. The Upbeat is the key element of physical conducting technique and is a very powerful tool with a variety of applications, as will be described below.

It is important before beginning the discussion of Upbeats to make two important points for the sake of clarification. The commonly accepted meaning among performing musicians of the term “up-beat” is, the last beat of any given measure of music (or, more specifically, the beat which precedes the following downbeat of a bar of music). For the present discussion, every musical beat that precedes another beat can be, in essence, a preparation for that next beat; so, every beat can be an “Upbeat.”

The Upbeat, relaying the crucial information of tempo (pulse), dynamic and character to the players, is followed by the production of sound. It is this resultant sound that will determine the conductor’s next action, in reaction to the response of the ensemble to his previous Upbeat. Peter Erős taught about a ‘cycle’ of conducting that is

repeated over and over again during a musical performance. The components of this cycle are:

- The conductor imagines how the music should sound.
- The conductor gives an indication, in an Upbeat, showing tempo, dynamic and character, or outlining a phrase shape; in this way, the conductor inspires the players in some way, which in turn depends upon the quality and success of the previous indication.
- The conductor listens to the resulting sound and becomes inspired by that sound.
- The conductor reacts to the resulting sound, continuing the cycle with the next Upbeat indication.

Erős explained that there are two kinds of beats that are indicated through the conductor's gesture: passive beats and active beats. The active beat is basically an Upbeat, containing new information about tempo, dynamic and character, or affirming a previous indication about the same. The passive beat is not an Upbeat, per se; it can encourage the flow of music but does not convey any new information. So, the conductor conveys the tempo, character and dynamic of the music in an Upbeat, listens to the resultant sound and reacts to the sound when necessary, communicating any adjustments to be made through subsequent Upbeats. Conducting can thus be seen as a succession of Upbeats, or active beats, interspersed by passive beats.

The most conventional manner of showing an Upbeat physically begins with the right arm bent at the elbow, hand half-outstretched (as in giving your friend a pencil, Erős said), perpendicular to the torso. At the beginning of a piece, before any other motion, this is the 'starting point.' A small click of the wrist initiates motion of the hand from the starting point to a consequent 'mid-point.' The direction of the hand indicates the location of the given beat in the metric framework of the musical bar, based on the

conventional patterns of conducting (for example, in common time, beat one is down, beat two is to the left, etc.). Another click of the wrist indicates the sounding point (or “ictus”)—when occurring at the start of a musical bar, this is the ‘downbeat’— and completes the Upbeat gesture. The complete gesture is clearest when these clicks are carried out on a consistent plane of motion, although the necessary condition is that the Upbeat describes an upward motion followed by a downward motion.

The tempo is defined through an Upbeat by the velocity of motion between the starting point and the mid-point. It can be confirmed by motion, at precisely half the duration of the Upbeat, between the starting point and the sounding point. In order to show a certain tempo, it is necessary that the velocity between the first starting point and sounding point equals that between the following starting and sounding points. Otherwise, a tempo has not been established because two different speeds have been indicated.

It is more difficult to give explicit instructions about how to communicate the two other components of the Upbeat: dynamic and character. Whereas the tempo is a measurable quantity, dynamic and character are qualities of sound and it is impossible to establish universal rules for signaling them through physical gesture. This is where the conductor’s will must be completely focused on the sound to be produced. Peter Erős taught that dynamic and character need not be demonstrated by the conductor in any kind of exaggerated way in order to communicate effective information to the musicians. Instead, it is through a process of suggestion and inference through subtle physical gestures and facial expressions, coming from a fully determined musical will, that can communicate these more qualitative aspects to the musicians.

Still, it can be generally stated that larger gestures from the conductor's arm(s) will imply stronger dynamics and smaller gestures, softer ones. Even though it might be counterintuitive to expect an orchestra to respond with a relatively soft dynamic if the Upbeat is relatively large and vice versa, it is possible to achieve a very strong dynamic of concentrated power with an Upbeat that, although not large in spatial size—and combined with suggestive facial expressions and other physical signals—it communicates the appropriate intensity and character. Likewise, it may be possible and even necessary in a soft passage to use a relatively larger Upbeat to convey a more singing or projecting sound, given a corresponding facial or other gesture. The conductor should reinforce his indication of dynamic or character, even in a relatively exaggerated manner, only if the desired result has not been achieved through a previously given Upbeat. Again, according to Erős, the means the conductor uses must be for the sole purpose of creating the desired result; that is, the physical means must come solely from the necessity of the musical ends and the will to achieve those ends, and never for purely theatrical effect.

Great music by and large contains a significant variety of emotion, conveyed by rhythmic, gestural and dynamic nuances, and requires performances that embrace this variety. Such a variety of expression can be conveyed by the conductor by utilizing different kinds of Upbeats to inspire changes in the way the musicians perform the music.

Different instrumental colors can also be reflected in where the conductor places his hands to lead a particular passage, thus inspiring the players to perform with a certain quality of sound. Erős often spoke about “where the music sounds.” For him, it was useful to vary the height of his hand(s) to suggest the ‘weight’ of the music, depending

upon the tessitura of the principal voice in a given phrase. Simply put, higher hand positions could be felt as more inviting by players of higher sounding instruments (flute, violin in the higher register, etc.), whereas lower hand positions could convey more weight and depth in the sound characteristic of lower sounding instruments (low cello, bass, tuba, low bassoon, etc.).

PHRASING WITH UPBEATS

Conducting is not defined in patterns but in phrases; time-beating patterns are only theoretical. Aside from the preparatory beats, the actual time-beating patterns as such are not important aspects of the conductor's art. The overall shape of the conducting, within the general framework of the basic time-beating patterns, is determined by the structure of the individual phrase. If conducting is a series of Upbeats, the conductor does not need constantly to resort to the patterns of metric subdivision.

There are two crucial practical considerations for the conductor to use the universally accepted beat patterns, at least as an outline for his gestures: For musicians who are counting bars of rests and who might not know the complete score, or for those who need more concrete spatial grounding in rhythmically complex and perhaps unintuitive music, reference to a clear conducting beat-pattern can assist in marking each measure of music and in showing which beat of the measure is coming next.

In terms of manual technique, the shape of a phrase can be physically shown by varying the relative sizes of Upbeats in succession to lead the dynamic contour, varying the relative sizes of the beats to convey phrase direction, and varying the speed of the Upbeats to convey nuances in the pulse.

UPBEATS AND CHANGES OF TEMPO

It is necessary for the conductor to be able to control a ritardando or an accelerando so that they are proportionately executed. The method for gradually changing a tempo through accelerating or decelerating is accomplished through Upbeats. For example, if a ritardando is to occur over four beats, each beat needs to be an Upbeat to the next, each showing a slower speed from point to point until the desired slower tempo is reached (see the discussion of independent Upbeats in the next chapter).

ARTICULATION AND PHYSICAL GESTURE

The question of articulation must now be addressed. As mentioned above, in the teaching of Peter Erős, the conductor's role is to lead the performance, not to mime gestures that are already written in the musical score. This brings up the confusion of cause (gesture) with effect (the resulting sound produced by the performers). For example, it can be supposed by the listener/viewer that the music is made to sound legato because the conductor is making smooth, flowing motions with his arms. Or it is presumed that certain rhythms are executed as staccato because the conductor makes crisp, short, 'dry' motions. Erős' approach runs contrary to methods that encourage the idea that, for every single detail in a musical score, there is (and ought to be) a corresponding physical signal that can (and should) be used by the conductor to show that detail. For Erős, there is no specific form of "staccato conducting" or "legato conducting." The physical form his conducting took, and what he taught his students, was that of a flowing motion from beat to beat, relating more to the shape of the musical phrase than to any localized event in the music, such as accents or special articulations.

He would frequently point out when a student's conducting became "event-oriented," that is, when it became pedantically concerned with every change in articulation and accent, as to lose sight of the overall musical line.

PREPARATION

Preparation for conducting is a mental process. It is impossible to prepare oneself physically for conducting a composition, beyond the most rudimentary technical requirements (i.e. how to handle fermatas, relaxation, basic beating patterns, etc.). Why is this so? It is so for the reason that conducting is an activity that can only be practiced with the participation of others, as it involves the leadership of an ensemble of musicians in real time. It is not unreasonable for a conductor to think through how he shall lead, for instance, a somewhat difficult orchestral recitative in opera. But let us allow for no misunderstanding: in such a case, the conductor is preparing to make his direction of the performance of the recitative as visually unambiguous as possible. What he is not doing is planning how he can look the most 'expressive' and somehow physically 'embody' the musical sound. This has nothing to do with the art of conducting as taught by Erős, in which a physical gesture, if it is at all necessary, is given before the musical event in question. Thus once the conductor has prepared the execution of something or other in performance, he has already started thinking about the subsequent phrase, or toward preparing the next gesture.

According to Erős' teaching, it is not relevant for an aspiring conductor to prepare his physical motions before confronting the orchestra, for example, when and how best to point at the triangle player in the third movement of Brahms' *Fourth Symphony*, or what

facial expression will best elicit the correct singing tone from the strings or the most ferocious statements from the brass. In a spirit that closely resembles Erős' thoughts on this subject, William Steinberg presented the argument in this way:

What is called nowadays "baton technique" is a myth the very existence of which I have rejected my entire life. Let me illustrate this controversial point. I do not deny that there are certain basic rules which have to be studied and perfected. Every kind of technique—if this is the label given manual dexterity—has its origins in the brain. Vocal or instrumental technique can be achieved in solitary training—not so conducting. One cannot conduct for oneself alone, and the whole enterprise of conducting is rather a means to an end. I don't favor conducting, to the accompaniment of gramophone records, in front of empty chairs or even (as is supposedly done quite frequently) a mirror—because one does not lead, but follows. One learns conducting only from conducting. In order to train and foster manual dexterity one needs the live instrument, the orchestra... I know that by scepticism concerning technique I strongly contradict some of my colleagues who have written fine books about the subject and who sweat by the so-called diagram without which—so they say—no orchestra would be able to react properly. Both from my own experience and from the observations of others I learned that an orchestra simply does not care what kind of a diagram is beaten before their noses. Since all orchestras in the whole world want to play well (I never encountered an orchestra which wanted to play badly) the player simply expects a method which enables him to play well.⁷⁷

Bruno Walter's comments about the relationship between 'technique' and the conductor's actual role as music-maker are also instructive:

As to the handling of the baton, I think it is neither possible nor necessary to impart practical advice. He who has manual talent for conducting will soon wield his baton in a way that can be followed by the orchestra. ...[W]hile conducting, never think of the movement of hand and baton, only of the playing of the orchestra. In the former case, one's attention would be directed at the mechanism of conducting—but this can never be an aim in itself; it is one's musical intentions rather, that should, by the skill of one's hand, be translated into movements whose mechanical meaning is wholly immersed in their musical significance as the transmitter of the impulses for expression, tempo, and precision. It is to these impulses, which are in the service of one's general conception, that one's attention must be directed in conducting, even if the hand should prove clumsy and refuse to do what the head wishes.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Bamberger, pp. 304-305.

⁷⁸ Bamberger, pp. 165-66.

In conclusion, as Erős often reminded his class, the mere gestures a conductor exhibits do not contain any quality in and of themselves without having a direct contextual relevance and necessity to the specific composition being performed. “If you give them a good Upbeat,” Erős often suggested in humor, “you’ve done your job, and you can go home.”

CHAPTER 5: CONDUCTING PEDAGOGY OF PETER ERŐS - LESSONS IN SEMINAR CLASS

In the Erős conducting studio at the University of Washington, the bi-weekly Advanced Conducting seminar classes were centered around hands-on experiences for the conducting students. Based on the model of László Somogyi's classes at the Liszt Academy, Erős utilized three pianos to comprise the ensemble for his students to conduct. Each piano would ideally have two players, making for three four-hand piano duo teams. In this way, most of the significant elements of a composition were covered by at least one of the pianists and a multi-person 'ensemble' was available for the conducting student's lesson. Although the ability to play from a full orchestra score was expected from his students, with at least some degree of competence, often piano arrangements would be used by the players of at least one, if not two, of the three pianos. This was done so that the difficulties of score-playing in real time would not get in the way of the flow of the class. Erős would frequently sit at one of the pianos, playing and always observing.

Rather than following a specific and rigid syllabus, the repertoire and focus of each class would vary depending upon the strengths and interests of each particular student. According to what aspects of conducting Erős felt a particular student needed to work on, he would sometimes guide that student towards certain scores. The repertoire brought in by each student varied from year to year but usually came from the standard Central European repertoire. Often students would wish to study in seminar classes those works which Erős himself was leading concurrently in rehearsal with the student orchestra. Before he would allow students in front of the orchestra, Erős would expect them to go through the pieces with piano in the seminar class. This also was the case

with first-time opera conductors. Erős generally advised his students to study those works they felt strongly attracted to. They were also welcome to bring to class repertoire for competitions, auditions, and other extra-curricular opportunities.

The conducting class was always open to auditors and, at times, more than twenty students would be in attendance in the small seminar room (Erős' own studio would normally not exceed six students in any given year). Choral conductors, wind ensemble conductors, music educators, and composers were welcome to visit the seminar. Not infrequently, Erős would invite an auditor to conduct for him and the class.

From time to time, Erős would ask for comments from other students in the room—not only from the conductors—about the student conductor who was having his lesson. Comments were supposed to be as specific and helpful as possible. In this way, the student was able to receive feedback not only from the instructor but also from other conductors, pianists, orchestral instrumentalists, choral conductors, etc. General musical questions were also entertained by Erős and sometimes opened up for discussion.

In addition to the conducting seminar, Erős' students were expected to attend his rehearsals with the university orchestra. He often would say that it was in rehearsals where a student could learn the most about the practicalities involved in leading an orchestra. On occasion, he would teach conductors in the context of their own rehearsals with the school orchestra, as will be seen in the next chapter. Erős didn't give private lessons in conducting *per se* but was always available to meet and speak with students about musical subjects, go through scores, play piano four-hands, and coach singers and instrumentalists.

Lessons in the conducting seminar were always about the student's pedagogical needs. There was little urgency to 'get through' a complete work during a class. As soon as Erős felt it was time to stop the music and teach, he would do so immediately. This meant, on occasion, that entire lessons might focus on musical and technical problems relating to just the first few bars of a piece. Sometimes, this was because the first bars contained significant difficulties for the conductor, as in the opening fermatas of Mozart's *Overture to Die Zauberflöte* or Beethoven's *Second* or *Fifth Symphonies*. At other times, this was due to the student having difficulties indicating the proper Upbeat for the very first bar of a composition. According to Erős, this exacting approach to teaching proper Upbeats was something he learned from his own teacher, László Somogyi.⁷⁹ Erős, like Somogyi, would often stop a student in the middle of her first Upbeat, if he already felt it could be better. In fact, some students' lessons were devoted just to the first few Upbeats of a score.

As part of the training, students would be encouraged to experiment using a variety of different Upbeats, some of which might not have been entirely appropriate for the music at hand. Pianists were instructed to follow exactly what preparatory information the student conductor was conveying. In teaching Upbeats, Erős would constantly reinforce these three fundamental 'rules' for the conductor:

1. Know exactly what you want.
2. Give a clear indication to the players to get what you want, via Upbeats that show tempo, dynamic, and character.

⁷⁹ Interview with Peter Erős, May 20, 2012.

3. Expect that what you want to happen will happen, and allow it to happen, by giving the players the freedom to play (and by refraining from pedantic over-conducting).

Otto Klemperer's recollection of the conducting of his early mentor, Richard Strauss, exemplifies this last point, noting that Strauss would "let the orchestra breathe...*He* didn't throw himself around like a madman, but [let] the orchestra [play] as though *it* was possessed."⁸⁰

For sudden changes in tempo, Erős taught his students to utilize what he called the "independent up-beat," a very powerful tool in the conductor's technique. Right before a tempo change was to occur, in place of a beat falling where it was expected to fall in the old tempo, Erős would delay indicating the beat and then give a new Upbeat, independent of the old tempo, in the speed of the new tempo. It was crucial for the conductor to time exactly when to give this independent Upbeat, so that it would be in logical proportion to the desired new tempo.

In his own conducting practice, Erős sometimes utilized a more mysterious but still powerful way of creating a slowing down of the music which did not exactly have to do with Upbeats. He would make his beat very small and then stop showing beats altogether, right before the ritardando was to begin. During the ritardando itself, he would slowly turn his right hand inward and move the tip of his baton gradually towards the floor; his elbow would extend upward at the same time. This was an exercise in psychological suggestion to his musicians, who would actually have to take the responsibility for creating the precise ritardando themselves. For an accelerando, the

⁸⁰ Holden, p. 173.

same principle applies, except each subsequent Upbeat increases in speed until the desired faster tempo is achieved.

Given Erős' general philosophy of 'less is more,' the importance of developing the student conductor's clarity of gesture was frequently stressed in class. Although he didn't believe much in students practicing physical conducting exercises on their own without having an actual ensemble that would react and respond to them, Erős taught a simple way of improving wrist flexibility and the strength of 'wrist clicks' that could be worked on from the comfort of an armchair. The exercise was as follows: the student sits in a chair and either places his right elbow on a table or holds that elbow with his left hand. The right arm is angled about halfway up and facing to the left. With the arm thus stabilized, holding a baton or a pencil, or just with thumb and forefinger held together, the student would focus his attention on making tiny downward 'clicks' from the wrist.

Another exercise that helped the student conductor develop both clarity and control was what he called the "click-pull." The student would use a simple beat-pattern and, remaining strictly in tempo, make a small 'click' on each beat, moving to the next beat in a small arc, as if pulling against the tension of an imaginary elastic band. Erős indicated that this technique was also very useful for conducting adagio tempos in classical repertoire (for example, the introduction of Mozart's *Symphony No. 39* and the beginning of the third movement of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*).

The more complicated the rhythmic pattern, the less complicated the conductor's gesture, becoming more focused on clicks, using active Upbeats sparingly, allowing the players to organize the rhythm themselves. Especially in contemporary music, in passages featuring meter changes every bar or so, Erős emphasized the importance of

clearly showing the direction of the beats to signify the meter. In passages where the meters changed between duple and triple (e.g. from 2/4 to 3/4, or from 6/8 to 9/8), for example, Erős taught students to slightly exaggerate the placement, to the left, of the second beat in the triple meter, and thus to better distinguish the triple from the duple.

In addition to clarity in the Upbeat, Erős demanded the absence of any pretense in the conductor's physical bearing. He would often say, "I may not know you well personally, but when you get up to conduct, you are completely open to me and I can see everything." At first, this approach has the effect of slowly stripping away layers of cliché from the conducting student's demeanor. The intention of this method was to allow the student to re-learn the basic ideas of conducting, based on Erős' approach, without the baggage of preconceived stereotypes of how a conductor should look or behave. It had the additional effect of instilling in the students both a profound modesty and a sense of responsibility in relation to his role as an interpreter of the great works of music.

In early lessons with a student who was working on eliminating cliché from her conducting, Erős would have the student experiment with different methods of conducting that excluded standard forms. The student would be instructed to limit gestures to an absolute minimum to focus on giving characterful Upbeats. One variation was for the student to conduct without a baton; another was to conduct without using the hands at all. Students were encouraged to explore ways to give a clear Upbeat by, for example, just lifting the student's eyebrows, or making a slight tilt of the head, or raising one or both shoulders. Practicing this kind of variety in approach also helped the student to develop more tools for showing different musical characters.

Erős taught that it was of fundamental importance for the conductor to have a very strong concept of the sound in his mind before conducting. He stressed the necessity of having a vivid imagination about music. In class, he would often ask students to describe the emotional mood, the atmosphere or even the story behind a composition. A strong knowledge of various styles was crucial for the student, especially the different dance forms used by classical composers, for example, understanding the differences between French and Viennese waltzes, minuets, etc. Erős would sometimes demonstrate in class, with the assistance of a female student, the difference between, for example, the waltz and the minuet.

RHYTHMIC DISCIPLINE

One aspect of musicianship that Erős constantly stressed was rhythmic discipline. For this reason, he would have all of his students conduct works from the classical repertoire, since he believed would help to strengthen the student's understanding and ability to control rhythmic pulse. He would frequently point out to the student the underlying rhythmic framework of the music. Whereas many conductors lead from the melody line, Erős' method, more often than not, is to lead from the "rhythmic skeleton" that holds the music together.

SINGING AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL

Frequently, the student would be asked by Erős to stop conducting and, instead, sing parts of the music, both to test the student's understanding of the character of the phrase as well as her rhythmic concept and discipline. The student was not required to

use any particular kind of solfège. Instead, any kind of syllabization of the musical phrase was acceptable, as long as the student sang or ‘sang-spoke’ expressively and with conviction. Erős’ emphasis on his students singing in class echoed that of his teacher, Kodály, who wrote regarding piano playing, “...nobody can play it well if he does not feel and know where the essence of the melody is, and if he cannot bring it to life with his voice whatever his voice may be like.”⁸¹

Fundamental concepts that would arise during this process of singing through musical phrases in conducting lessons included *marcato*, *sostenuto*, *legato*, and *cantabile*. These are all basic principles of musical expression that are common points in almost any ensemble rehearsal. Not being able to demonstrate these vocally, when asked to do so during the lesson, could indicate that the student did not have a strong enough knowledge or conviction about the score in question; in some cases, testing in this way also revealed deficits in the student’s musicianship (for example, an inability to recall or match pitch, to sing in good rhythm, or even to read music fluently). Such deficits were readily pointed out by Erős in class, not to embarrass the student, but to suggest necessary areas of musical study that needed to be improved upon before the student could hope to progress as a conductor.

In music that has a *marcato* aspect, Erős taught, it is crucial to emphasize both the initial articulation of notes as well as the space between each note. This also helped to clarify and solidify the rhythm of the passage in question.

Among other things, the student conductor had to demonstrate a strong grasp of *sostenuto* in a musical phrase—literally, ‘sustaining’ the melodic line—and, depending

⁸¹ Eősze, p. 193.

upon how the student sang or spoke the phrase or even phrase rhythm, it would quickly become obvious if he did not have complete conviction about this aspect. Erős would sing or whistle back the line, indicating clearly how the phrase should be sustained without allowing any segment of the phrase to lose dynamic, energy or direction.

When singing back a legato phrase, the student had to be sure that all the notes were connected in a consistently smooth and logical manner. Again, it was necessary to show to Erős that the student had a firm conviction about the legato component of the phrase. If a student could not express an intense concept of the music she was conducting, how would she be able to lead a performance of the same music with the necessary authority?

The exercise of singing in class would sometimes be augmented, if not replaced, by having the student play a phrase on the piano, even if the student was not a fluent pianist. Erős showed, through his own example, how it is possible to execute a phrase on the piano with correct dynamic, character and expression, even on one of the beaten-up old upright instruments that were used in the conducting seminar room. As well as instructing and inspiring the student conductor to always imagine the music and be able to demonstrate it with complete conviction, Erős frequently would teach the pianists and conductors playing for the class how much more characterful, rhythmic and sensitive they could be in rendering the orchestral scores at the keyboard.

PACING

The most important and fundamental aspect of music-making itself, according to Peter Erős, was the pacing of a composition. How a work unfolded in time—from the

smallest rhythmic units to complete phrases, to entire sections, to the architecture of symphonic movements—was the ultimate responsibility of the conductor, who in large ensemble situations is the final say on all matters of interpretation. It is crucial for the conductor to have and display the utmost conviction about the flow of the composition, both within its constituent musical phrases as well as between phrases. Moments of repose and growing tension or agitation in a work had to be identified, anticipated, and prepared. The conductor needed to be aware of when minute shifts in the pulse, or agogics, were called for and possible, although Erős cautioned the conductor against making actual changes in tempo when these were not specifically called for in the score. This was especially true for classical symphonies, for example, in which Erős believed there should never be an audible slowing down of the second theme in a sonata form movement. Any agogic modifications were to be made within the overall context of a consistent tempo. In connection with pacing, he would often point out, “Don’t confuse tempo with character.”

The forward direction and flow of the music were very important to Erős. He taught that, as free as a conductor should be in terms of both imagining and leading the pacing and unfolding of a composition, she also had to strive to keep a balance in performance and not indulge too much in ‘stretching’ the music to conform to her whim. For example, in a piece with a relatively slow tempo, it was the conductor’s responsibility to allow the music to flow naturally and never get bogged down in overt sentimentality. “Slow is not ‘beautiful’, slow is slow,” was one of his mantras. “Do not show how beautiful the music is,” he would frequently say in response to an overly indulgent performance, “never lean on the music, let it flow.” Changes of tempo, when called for

by the composer, had to make sense in relation to the music leading up to the change. The flow of the piece, in its pacing, tempos, etc., should be like the inevitable fluid motion of a river. The conductor's goal is to understand and work with this flow, not interrupt or fight against it. In Erős' words, "You cannot push the Mississippi!"

LACK OF TENSION

To see if a conductor was unduly tense, Erős would unobtrusively approach the student during a lesson, from the right side, and gently give an upward nudge of his hand on the student's right elbow. If the student's right arm did not move much, or at all, in reaction, then the student's body had far too much tension in it. If, on the other hand, the student's arm flew up in immediate reaction to the surprise prod, then there was little or no resistance—and, therefore, not much tension—in the student's body.

The principle behind this exercise is that the conductor need not feel tension in order to convey musical tension to the orchestra. The conductor need only suggest a heavy or tense character and can himself remain physically relaxed and supple. "Don't hold energy in," he said. "Convey it to the orchestra." This suggestion is relayed to the orchestra by means of a clear Upbeat, showing the tempo, character and dynamic of the phrase; facial expressions, as long as they are not exaggerated or comical, can also be used. A subtle widening of the eyes, within the context of a concentrated look to the players, perhaps combined with a very slight raise of the shoulders, can be enough to convey the idea of increased weight or tension. Note that neither of these actions require the conductor to increase her own level of physical tension.

The conductor is supposed to be as free of extraneous bodily tension as possible. In fact, Erős would often say to a student during her lesson: “Don’t be tense yourself. Tense *them*.” That is, if the music calls for muscularity, or weight, or heightened tension or excitement of any kind, it was not necessary for the conductor herself to feel tense in order to inspire tension in the music. Erős said that such tension worked against the conductor’s own physical and, therefore, musical freedom.

CONDUCTING CONCERTOS

Erős was known in his professional career for being a sensitive accompanist and he taught his students about conducting concertos as an integral part of their education as conductors. Sometimes, a student would bring to class with them a student instrumentalist whom they knew to be working on a particular concerto. Other times, Erős might have selected one or more student conductors to share the duties of leading concerto accompaniments for the annual student concerto competition winners showcase. Such lessons were instructive both for the conductors as well as for the soloists themselves. Erős rarely limited his attention only to the conducting student—if music was being made, he always became completely involved and engaged. The result was that, often times, the student soloist would get a full coaching from Erős in the context of the conducting lesson.

Erős taught that the conductor and soloist must communicate and collaborate throughout the performance, with the goal of inspiring each other musically. It was important for each to know his or her role in the composition, including those passages where the soloist has the role of acting as a member of the orchestra, or in accompanying

one of the solo instruments of the orchestra. An intimate knowledge of the concerto soloist's part is crucial for the conductor, as the conductor is to anticipate mentally as much as possible what the soloist will do next. Routine time-beating has no place in the conducting of concertos, especially for the reasons previously discussed as well as the fact that the conductor must remain open and flexible to any changes the soloist might make mid-stream, minute or abrupt, that can have an immediate effect on the orchestral part. The conductor's beats should, as much as possible, fall exactly in time with the soloist's playing, what Erős refers to as “conducting on the soloist.” In this way, the ensemble between the soloist and orchestra is consistently aligned, in that the orchestral players are seeing from the conductor exactly ‘where’ the soloist is playing. Although it remains necessary always for musicians to listen to what goes on around them and try to fit their parts with the others in this way, the conductor can facilitate ensemble playing by leading the music as precisely with the soloist as possible.

CONDUCTING OPERA

Opera was an important part of Peter Erős' musical education and professional life. Considering his early debuts in opera conducting and his coaching experiences while still a student at the Liszt Academy, and his experience assisting Fricsay, Klemperer and Knappertsbusch in opera productions, Erős' training and career trajectory as a conductor certainly followed the classic path through the opera house to the concert podium.

Any students in the conducting seminar who wished to work on operatic material were welcome to do so. Students were also encouraged to observe as many opera staging

rehearsals as possible. But it fell to a small number of students to have the fortune of assisting Erős in the university's opera productions. These individuals were tasked with knowing the opera score and being able to conduct staging or orchestra rehearsals whenever needed. Erős would give students the opportunity to conduct in these situations as well as being able to conduct the occasional orchestra rehearsal, preview performance, or even one of the regular performances. Usually, the student conductors involved in the opera productions used their lesson times in the seminar to work through the opera score, with Erős instructing about tempi, pacing, character, and certain technical issues that the score posed.

During opera rehearsals, Erős would frequently stand near the student conductor and whisper instructions to her while she conducted. His brief phrases of wisdom would sometimes transform the student's whole approach. In opera, he taught, it is necessary first and foremost to conduct the orchestra, and use the orchestra as the means for directing the dramatic and musical action on the stage. He always encouraged the student conductor to take the lead of the performance but at the same time, to give the singer the feeling of freedom to perform comfortably and with confidence. As in concerto conducting, it was always give-and-take with the soloist, with the conductor having the ultimate responsibility of leading the overall pacing and architecture of the composition.

CHAPTER 6: CONDUCTING PEDAGOGY OF PETER ERŐS - LESSONS WITH ORCHESTRA

In this chapter, transcripts of Peter Erős' classes with orchestra will be examined and discussed. We are fortunate to have a video record of Erős' teaching graduate students with orchestra. Hands-on experience and instruction with an orchestra was always an important part of Erős' pedagogical approach, as he had had regular lessons with orchestra in László Somogyi's class at the Liszt Academy. Because resources were limited at the University of Washington School of Music, Erős was not able to offer students frequent interaction with an orchestra. Outside of the seminar situation, practical student conducting experience was limited mostly to infrequent opportunities to prepare and conduct repertoire in concert with the University Symphony and, in rarer cases, to lead opera rehearsals and performances as Maestro Erős' assistant.

LESSON #1: Brahms, *Symphony No. 2* - Movements I, II & IV⁸²

Peter Erős: *(At the beginning of the nearly two-hour class session, Erős allows the student to read through the entire first movement with the orchestra. When the student asks if he should move on to the second, Erős, who has been observing from behind the second violin section, approaches the podium)*

PE: *(To the orchestra)* He's excellent. *(To the student)* Relax, alright? Keep your left hand away because it's interfering. Do you have a stick or something? *(Student hands*

⁸² The class took place on April 7, 1997 and was originally filmed on VHS tape. The graduate student conductor was Jonathan Pasternack, who was preparing for a master class at the University of Washington on Brahms *Second Symphony* taught by Gerard Schwarz, then the Music Director of the Seattle Symphony. The original recording is in the possession of Dr. Pasternack. A DVD copy is held at the University of Washington School of Music Media Center.

his baton to Erös) The reason—what I want to tell you guys is, you probably don't know, because you are doomed to play with me all the time (*orchestra players laugh*).

Allegro non troppo

2 Flöten
2 Oboen
2 Klarinetten in A
2 Fagotte
4 Hörner
in D 1.
in E 3.
2 Trompeten in D
2 Posaunen
3. Posaune
u. Baßtuba
Pauken in D u. A
1. Violine
2. Violine
Bratsche
Violoncell
Kontrabaß

Allegro non troppo

Figure 1. Brahms, *Symphony No. 2*, first movement, mm. 1-13

PE: So, every conductor has a different sound. There are those who don't have any, and there are those who have some; and there are those who have an ugly sound, and there are

those who have a beautiful sound. So, you have to make your own sound. How do you do it? Okay, you do this by imagining the sound in your mind (*points to his head*) and then try to convey it (*makes a flowing gesture with his right hand*).

PE: You see? I didn't say a word. I just imagined the sound in my mind and that's what I get. (*He puts his arms up to conduct again, this time looking intently at the cellos and basses. He starts the movement again, and this time continues through to the horn entrance in the second bar*) You see that? If you give them—if you allow them to breathe—you get a decent sound. Let's do it again. Come. (*He starts again. At the woodwind answer to the horns, he quietly says to the student conductor to "Go!" That is, to keep the music gently flowing forward. He uses simple flowing gestures. Erős turns to the student and shows how, even with his left hand in his pocket, he gets what he wants. At the first violin entrance at m. 17, he uses his both hands together and wordlessly points out how he can use a very small yet precise beat to improve the violin ensemble. While still conducting, he says urges to the student, "Don't let them rush;" see Fig. 2*)

PE: (*He says three bars before the first trombone entrance*) Espressivo. (*He broadens his chest and steps forward a little to inspire the wind phrasing before letter A; see Fig. 3*)

PE: (*Encouraging the first violin right before the letter A*) Sing! (*He stops just after the violin entrance*) Okay? Good. You do it. With all these things in it. Because they do react. They do react. Feel free, no tension, and just make music. And breathe. Okay?

44 **A**

Fl. *mp*

Ob.

Klar. (A)

Fag. *p*

Hr. (D) *p*

Hr. (E) *p*

Pos. u. Btb. *pp*

1Viol. *p dolce*

2Viol. *p*

Br. *p*

Vcl. *p* *div*

K.-B. *p* *arco*

54 **A**

Fl. *p cresc.*

Ob. *p cresc.* *p cresc.*

Klar. (A) *p cresc.*

Fag. *p cresc.* *a 2*

Hr. (D) *p cresc.*

Hr. (E) *p cresc.*

Trpt. (D) *cresc.*

1Viol. *cresc.*

2Viol. *cresc.*

Br. *cresc.*

Vcl. *cresc.*

K.-B. *cresc.*

Figure 3. Brahms, *Symphony No. 2*, first movement, mm. 44-63

(The student conductor starts from the beginning with Erős observing behind and off to the conductor's left) That's it. (Erős says encouragingly, after eight bars or so, but without interrupting the music)

PE: *(Stopping the conductor at the end of the descending first violin passage before A)*
 Okay, sorry, guys. Do this passage again and just let it flow. It's a mystery. It should be a mystery. Okay? Make your goal a more mysterious sound. Okay? Can we start somewhere, guys? You have bar numbers or something? You do? *(The student conductor suggests measure 14 and Erős lets the student start from there)*

PE: *(Stopping the student again at measure 50 and taking the baton)* Okay, guys. Let's go back where you started before. I will tell you why *(to the conducting student)*: because you do all the right phrasings. But do not slow down. The tempo is the tempo. Not slow up. Not fasten up. Do all these agogics within the tempo. Okay? Same place, 14, on the first beat *(he begins to conduct)*. Listen *(he says to the conducting student, during the descending violin passage)*. Tempo *(at the start of the trombone chorale)*. Keep the tempo, okay? Don't slow down. *(He stops conducting)* Do the phrasing. Don't slow down. Same thing. Okay? Don't let them rush. You know? Broad—broaden up. If they rush, just punish them! *(The students laugh)* Here we go. *(The student conducts in a flowing way, keeping the tempo tight; Erős whistles along with the first violin melody)*

PE: *(Stopping again after the second bar of A)* One more thing. Two bars before A. Look: this is what you do. *(Erős conducts, showing little engagement, and then stops)* You have to anticipate already here. *(He starts again two before A, showing a look of anticipation and preparation over the two bars before the first violin entrance at A)*

Because, guys, a world opens up and the sun comes out. Okay? But you have to look up to the sky first in order to see it. Right? So—anticipate. Two last bars. (*The student starts to conduct*) I do this also for you guys because you can't think that conducting is so easy. Well, it is easy if you do it wrongly or badly. But it isn't if you really want to do it as a real artist. He is a real artist. (*Erős pats the student on the back. The student starts conducting, with Erős also conducting in the background to encourage the student*)

PE: (*Stopping the conductor at measure 58*) It's good. It's very good what you do but you are leaning on the orchestra and that's why we don't feel free. They always feel somebody is bothering them. Here we go. Two bars before A. (*Erős conducts bars 42 to 60 and then hands the baton back to the student*) Do these different things, you know? Many conductors don't dare to do these kinds of changes because they feel that the orchestra might get out of their hand. They never do if you really know what you want. Okay? Last time, ladies and gentlemen, last time, two bars before A.

PE: (*Joking with the trombone and oboe professors who are sitting in with the orchestra*) You don't need to audition now. We already heard you. (*The student then conducts in a more engaged manner, focusing on showing the flow of the melody and phrasing*)

PE: (*He approaches the podium, stops the music at six bars after letter E, and takes the baton from the student*) Very good. Very good. Now, let's see. You have 'quasi ritenuto'? E? (*To the conductor*) If you bounce... (*shows an exaggerated, big bouncing beat*) You can do it but it's so much better if you don't. Four before E. (*Erős conducts until the fifth bar of E with a more focused beat and then stops; see Fig. 4*) If you bounce, they don't sustain. Sorry, I have to try this once more. Please have patience. Same place. (*He demonstrates again with exaggerated, big bouncing beats, and then*

stops) There is no sound because they don't sustain. And that's—you have to sustain. If you do, they do. Last time, please. (*He is not satisfied and stops*) Very last time. Thank you. (*The student conductor begins conducting the same place, this time with less bouncing and more sustained beats*)

PE: (*Stops around measure 171*) Again, guys, we are talking about freedom. At one point, you start to beat cliché. You know cliché? Forte cliché...piano cliché...it sounds like cliché, it sounds pedestrian. You have to do the... (*He conducts the descending fortissimo eighth notes, 4 bars before F, without the orchestra*) And don't slow down. (*He sings the first violin phrase*) Marcato phrasing. Give me something, okay? What is this? 148. Got it? (*He conducts up to 2 bars before F and then stops; see Fig. 5*) Don't slow down, okay? Play marcato but don't slow down. Don't change the tempo. Same place, ladies and gentlemen. (*He has the student conduct the same place and, after a while, Erős stops the music*)

PE: (*Following a five minute break, the student begins the second movement, up to letter C, and stops. Erős approaches the podium*) Many people I talked to in my life, they say, ah, well, Brahms, you know—he is boring. And sometimes it is. Especially when you don't go with it (*makes flowing motions with both arms*). Bruckner, the same. Bruckner symphonies, you buy these CDs and they are longer and longer and longer. When they were written, they were about an hour. Now, a hundred years later, it's two hours. I mean, I don't know why they do this. Let's go with it (*he demonstrates by moving the baton in a moderate tempo*). You did very well, here we go. Don't be afraid of it.

Adagio non troppo

2 Flöten *a 2*

2 Oboen *pp*

Klarinetten in A

2 Fagotte *a 2* *poco f* *pp*

2 Hörner in H *poco f* *p*

Trompeten in H *pp* *pp*

3 Posaunen
u. Baßtuba *p*

Tuba *p*

auken in H u. G

1. Violine

2. Violine

Bratsche *div.* *poco f*

Violoncell *poco f* *espressivo* *p*

Kontrabaß *div.* *poco f* *p*

Adagio non troppo

7

Fl. *a 2* *mf* *p* *poco f*

Obo. *mf* *p*

Klar. A) *p*

Fag. *mf* *p* *poco f*

Hörn. H) *p* *mf* *p*

Tromp. H) *p dolce*

Posa. u. Bttb. *p dolce* *p dolce*

Viol. *poco f*

Viol. *poco f*

Br. *div.* *unis.* *poco f*

Viol. *poco f* *dim.*

Kontrab. *mf* *p* *poco f* *dim.*

Figure 6. Brahms, *Symphony No. 2*, second movement, mm. 1-14

15 **A**

Fl.

Ob.

Klar. (A)

Fag.

Hr. (H)

Trpt. (H)

Pos. & Btb.

1. Viol.

2. Viol.

Br.

Vcl.

K.-B.

24 **A**

Fl.

Ob.

Klar. (A)

Fag.

Hr. (H)

Trpt. (H)

Pos. & Btb.

Pk.

1. Viol.

2. Viol.

Br.

Vcl.

K.-B.

Figure 6 (continued). Brahms, *Symphony No. 2*, second movement, mm. 15-30

B *Listesso tempo, ma grazioso*

31

Fl. *dim.* *p* *p dolce*

Ob. *dim.* *p* *p dolce*

Klar. (A) *dim.* *p* *dim.* *pp* *p dolce*

Fag. *dim.* *p* *pp* *pp*

Hr. (H) *dim.* *p* *pp*

Trpt. (H)

1.Viol. *dim.* *p* *dim.*

2.Viol. *dim.*

Br. *dim.*

Vcl. *dim.* *p* *pizz.* *p*

K.-B. *dim.* *p*

B *Listesso tempo, ma grazioso*

35

Fl. *pp* *dolce* *p cresc.*

Ob. *pp* *p dolce* *dim.* *p cresc.*

Klar. (A) *pp* *dim.* *dolce*

Fag. *pp* *dim.* *dolce*

Hr. (H) *dolce*

Trpt. (H)

1.Viol. *p dolce* *p* *pp*

2.Viol. *pp* *pp* *dim.* *pp*

Br. *pp* *pp* *dim.* *pp*

Vcl. *pp* *arco* *pp* *dim.* *pp* *cresc.* *pizz.*

K.-B. *pp* *pp* *dim.* *pp* *cresc.*

Figure 6 (continued). Brahms, *Symphony No. 2*, second movement, mm. 31-40

41

Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
Hr. (H)
Trpt. (H)

1. Viol.
2. Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.

47

Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
Hr. (H)
Trpt. (H)
Pos. u. Btb.
Pk.

1. Viol.
2. Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.

Figure 6 (continued) shows the musical score for Brahms' *Symphony No. 2*, second movement, measures 41-56. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 41-46) includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in A (Klar. (A)), Bassoon (Fag.), Horn (Hr. (H)), Trumpet (Trpt. (H)), Violin I (1. Viol.), Violin II (2. Viol.), Brass (Br.), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Double Bass (K.-B.). The second system (measures 47-56) includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in A (Klar. (A)), Bassoon (Fag.), Horn (Hr. (H)), Trumpet (Trpt. (H)), Pos. u. Btb., and Pk. The score features various dynamics such as *p*, *pp*, *p cresc.*, *dim.*, and *p espress.*, along with performance instructions like *pizz.*, *arco*, and *poco f*. A section marker 'C' is present at the beginning of measure 47.

Figure 6 (continued). Brahms, *Symphony No. 2*, second movement, mm. 41-56

PE: (*Erős conducts from the beginning of the second movement, sometimes softly whistling along with the melodic line; see Fig. 6. He starts in a sub-divided four/four and then moves over to a straight four at the upbeat to measure 3. He gives a slight click on the second part of the first beat of measure 14 to help facilitate the rhythm in cellos and violas. He then sub-divides from measure 15 and on, until the horn solo*)

PE: (*At the horn solo*) Take it over here; don't be afraid. (*Erős conducts in a flowing four, with more swinging and forward motion. With the upbeat to measure 28, he moves back into slightly sub-divided beats but still with a lyrical flow. He moves back into four at measure 31, singing along with the melody in the clarinet and strings. Starting at two beats before letter C, he goes into twelve, back into four at measure 53, always giving space for the compound meter. Sub-dividing again at the marcato descending line, in the second half of bar 54, he goes back into four at two bars before D*) Now you do it. (*Erős hands over the baton. The student conducts from the beginning and through the entire second movement. He then begins the Finale*)

PE: (*Erős claps and stops the orchestra around the second bar of letter C; see Fig. 7*) Remember, guys? Slow is not beautiful. Slow is? (*The orchestra players reply, in unison, "Slow!"*) That's it! Slow is slow. Don't slow down the second theme. I mean, every bloody dilettante does that. You are too good for that, okay? I mean, broaden a little bit—if you can do it broader, fine. But don't play another piece, okay? Here we go. Fight dilettantism, guys! (*Right before the students begins*) Fight! Fight it to your last breath. (*Student is about to begin at eight before C but Erős stops him*) Do the beginning. Do the beginning, again. With a special request to the trumpets to play piano! Thank you.

Figure 7. Brahms, *Symphony No. 2*, fourth movement, mm. 71-79

(The student starts from beginning but Erős stops again after six bars) Sorry, guys. I'm getting into this now. (Erős comes up to the podium) What do we want? We want tempo. We want pianissimo and that's what we want. We also want flautato and mysterious. Here we go. (He conducts for 3 bars and stops) That's it. Why? Why do I get this? Because I want it so much. I really want it so much that my life depends on it. Yours does (he says to the conducting student. Everybody laughs. The student conducts for five bars before Erős interrupts again)

PE: I want to make a point here. After they started, and they had the right dynamic, they have the tempo, you can go home. In no way—in what we call in conductor language, don't massage it (shows spreading, obtrusive gestures). Just let them play. Look how

happy they are! (*Erős starts with minimal conducting for the first eight bars and stops*) They feel very free to play it. (*He asks the orchestra*) Didn't you? If I massage it, then they don't feel free. Here is the massage. (*He starts using floppy, over-expressive gestures and then stops*) Don't you see this many times? (*He acts out a pantomime of overdone, "expressive" conducting*) What do you get? Nothing. I mean, the sound goes, all you see is a conductor who is trying to earn his living. You know? Here we go. (*Erős passes the baton to the student, steps back and lets him conduct*)

PE: (*He comes back to the podium and stops at letter C*) The first clarinet and the first oboe played their soul out for you (*singing a little of the passage*) and you don't pay attention. You just go like this (*waving the stick mechanically*) because of the beat. Listen to them, her and her. And have them to play beautiful, as they do. What I want to show you—all of you—is, it's a matter of pacing. It's not a matter of beating, it's matter of pacing. Here we go. (*Erős starts at letter B and stops four bars before letter C*) You hear it? I listen to them, and when I inspire the player, the player inspires me. I have to inspire them first before they play, and when they play, then they inspire me. Then I'm so happy, I listen. Okay? Once more at B! One!—Two! (*Erős starts again at B, handing over the baton to the student around letter E*)

PE: (*The student goes back and starts at letter B. Erős comes up and stops the student around measure 244 and tells him to go back to G. As soon as the student starts conducting, Erős comes up next to him, and takes the student's right hand in his right hand*) Okay. Upbeats. I give you a little advice. You do like this (*he moves the student's hand up slightly, without any substance*)—there is no tempo in it. Nobody knows what's going on. Okay? It doesn't matter if afterwards you go because it's so much easier to do

downbeat than Upbeat. You have to give the tempo in an Upbeat. Let's show this to the orchestra. We know it. (*Erős starts to conduct at Letter G, still holding the student's hand, and experiments with different Upbeats, showing how different Upbeats result in different tempo, character and dynamic. The student tries this without Erős' help; see Fig. 8*)

PE: (*stopping the student after a few bars*) But that's not the sound what you want. It's a rather pedestrian sound. You want... (*He demonstrates. Starting from a very quiet and still position, he gives an Upbeat and stops the orchestra after one bar*) Here is the prescription: First, you make a 'dirty' face (*he contorts his face, in jest*), then imagine very well what you want. You can do it in the other order, too. First, imagine... (*The student again starts at G, with Erős standing to the side. Erős comes up and stops the student around letter H*)

PE: Sorry guys. This is important. The music goes to the background, right? It goes more and more diminuendo, is that right? Don't stay beating the same thing. You know? (*pauses*) Did I tell them about the eye and ear doctor? You see, there is this joke about this thing: A guy goes to hospital, says, "I want to see the eye and ear doctor." They say, "Eye and ear doctor? We don't have those. We have throat—ear and throat, but not eye and ear." And he says, "I want to see an eye and ear doctor because yesterday I went to a concert, a conductor conducted, and I saw one thing but heard another." So, if you stay like this (*again demonstrates large, clichéd time-beating*), they will play beautifully, because they want to play beautifully. Don't imagine you did it. I mean this. "George"! (*Erős conducts in a very calm and restrained yet lyrical manner from Letter G until bar 184, then passes the baton to the student. He stops and instructs the student to begin:*

“George, okay?” While the student conducts, Erős approaches him on the conductor’s left side, not interfering, quietly suggesting more subtle varieties of characterful conducting, whispering so softly that only the student can hear his points. The student continues conducting to the end of the movement, trying to implement his teacher’s advice. Erős steps to the left side, behind the podium; listening and observing, he occasionally softly whistles along with the music. When the symphony concludes, Erős leads applause for the student conductor, and thanks the orchestra. The class ends)

LESSON #2: Sibelius, *Symphony No. 2* - Movement I⁸³

PE: Very Nice. Allegretto...okay. So... Calm down! Think of flow and color and (making a gesture and glance to signify engaged excitement)—breathe. (The student conducts from the beginning in a more relaxed and engaged manner; see Fig. 9)

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Sibelius's Symphony No. 2, measures 1-6. The score is for Violino I, Violino II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabasso. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The dynamics are marked 'mf', 'mp', and 'p'.

Figure 9. Sibelius, *Symphony No. 2*, first movement, mm. 1-6

⁸³ The class took place on November 2, 2009. The graduate student conductor was the author, who owns the digital video recording.

PE: Right! First of all, you are a fabulous musician and you know that because I've told you many times. Allow me to give you an advice. If you talk and say "...and," that means you have to say something [more], so don't say, "...and..." Say, "The weather is nice." Period! Because you have to say something. That's one of my lessons today. You can do everything with your hand and you don't need the yuk-yuk. (*Takes the baton*) Now, the beginning. Relax. (*Erős conducts using very minimal stick motion but with inviting glances to the musicians before their entrances, as Upbeat gestures, making eye-contact and "allowing" the flow of the music*)

PE: Excitement is nice when the music is exciting but when it is not, relaxation is just as important. What you do is fabulous. What you do as a musician is fabulous but you talk and talk—don't do it. You can do it with your hands. That doesn't mean you shouldn't talk at all. When you start to explain that, hey, here is the second bassoon, etc... (*Erős continues for several seconds, demonstrating with uninteresting technical and overly detailed discussion of dynamic markings in the bassoon*)

Student: What do you do if I try several times and it doesn't work?

PE: What do you do? You try something else. Let's do the beginning again. (*Erős starts conducting the beginning three different times, using completely different Upbeats, showing three different dynamics and characters, and getting three different results*)

What you do is that you use your what-we-call 'technique' and convey what you want. Once more. You don't say that, "Now it will be piano, now it will be forte, now it's mezzo-forte." Don't say anything. Breathe. Shape. Phrase...and enjoy. One of the main issues for orchestra is that we let them enjoy themselves. These are all excellent

musicians—except him (*joking with the principal cello*). Okay? Breathing, shaping, phrasing, using your great musical talent. Don't be pedantic. We are artists.

LESSON #3: Tchaikovsky, *Violin Concerto*, Movement I⁸⁴

PE: I want to tell you one thing... You wait for her all the time...which is good because if you get ahead then you are in trouble! However, you don't anticipate what should happen. You are a perfect accompanist... AN-TI-CI-PATE! Don't always wait for what's happening because you lose the flow of the piece. Everything is fine, except...in the house where every single block is okay, but it's not a house, it's just a collection of very good blocks. Okay? So you start this. Alright? (*Erós demonstrates the opening of the movement, showing the flow of the piece, using very simple gestures; see Fig. 10*)

PE: There has to be a broadness in this melody. Not slow but paced. (*He sings the phrase*) Okay? No urgency. Do you understand?

1. Violine
2. Violine
Bratsche
Violoncell
Kontrabaß

* 2. Fl.
* 2. Ob.

p *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p*

Allegro moderato ♩ = 126 *p* *p*

Figure 10. Tchaikovsky, *Violin Concerto*, first movement, mm. 1-8

⁸⁴ The class took place on January 22, 2010, and was a rehearsal for the concerto competition winners' concert on January 28, 2010. The graduate student conductor was the author, who owns the digital video recording. The violin soloist was Xiaojing Pu.

LESSON #4: Ginastera, *Harp Concerto* - Movements II & III⁸⁵

PE: I'm sorry. I shouldn't bother you—but I do... *(To the student conductor)* Lead! Don't indulge! *(To the orchestra)* Give me 'Tempo Primo'. Got it? This is not that beautiful that you have to play it forever. That's the flow... Okay, beginning! *(He starts with the Second movement with the cellos and basses and corrects the basses)* E flat!

PE: You have to lead this, not 'enjoy'. Go. Otherwise, it's sleepy. *(He pantomimes a little for effect, making a facial expression to showing how much he is 'enjoying.' Then he changes to almost look like he's fainting from boredom)*

PE: *(He stops. To the orchestra)* Let's go, okay, guys? You know I love you—wake up, wake up! *(To the student conductor)* She plays slow, that's fine, but when you come in, take over, otherwise we never end things—and the kitchen closes at 10 o'clock. *(Here Erős makes one of his favorite gestures, outlining with his hand an imaginary old man's beard, very long, extending from his chin to chest)*

PE: Sweetheart, just come in, don't be afraid. If you are too early, you hear the next thing she plays...courage! *(He demonstrates the passage, very simply and effortlessly)* If you do it well... *(Erős takes a cough drop out of his pocket, as a 'prize' for the student conductor)*

PE: There is slow, and fast. There's also a difference between fast and fluent. It has to be fluent but quiet.

PE: As more you seem to work, as less anyone else will work. As less you seem to work, as more anybody will rely on his or her own rhythmic sense. So, don't have the feeling, "Oh! I have to keep this together!" Then it will not be together. Do technique!

⁸⁵ The class took place on January 26, 2009. The author was the graduate student conductor, who was preparing the Ginastera for a performance on January 29, 2009. The soloist was Ruth Mar. The digital video recording is in the possession of the author.

(He goes to the beginning) You can conduct like, “What’s going to happen?!” (Mimics worry and overdoes his gestures) Or you can do, “Hey, guys I know you can do it. Come.” (Gives a small focused Upbeat and the orchestra plays with significantly more precision) Use your brain. (Erős takes the conductor’s right hand in his and goes through the same section, demonstrating a relaxed, simple yet focused technique)

PE: *(Stops conducting and points to his head) From here, not from here (points to his behind)! As less, as little you beat, the more they concentrate. So, relax!*

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

As both a performing artist and a teacher of musicians, the conductor Peter Erős represents an important link between the past masters and the present day. Having trained with some of the most significant composers, instrumentalists, and conductors of the early twentieth century, Erős brought his own unique artistic personality and musicianship to the performance and teaching of orchestral and operatic compositions. His approach to conducting flowed naturally from his musical instincts and philosophies, which also formed the core of his teaching.

Erős taught his conducting students to avoid routine and cliché in music-making, and to lead other musicians by combining solid preparation, a compellingly strong musical imagination, clarity and simplicity of gesture, and a positive spirit of collaboration. Always a practical musician, Erős taught that conducting was something that could only be properly learned by doing and not as an intellectual exercise.

It is the author's hope that this paper will serve, not only as a contribution to the literature about artist-teachers in the field of conducting, but also as a tribute to a great and influential conductor and teacher.

AFTERWORD: RECOLLECTIONS BY STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES

Maestro Peter Erős touched the lives of countless musicians, students, and music lovers around the world. The following are recollections of his teaching, music-making, and personality, by former students and colleagues, demonstrating Erős' profound influence on their professional and personal lives:⁸⁶

Timothy Schwarz (Studienleiter, Heidelberg Opera)

I found the Maestro to be both an inspiring and provocative mentor and a welcome antidote to a relatively insular academic world caught up in issues of political correctness and which did not always provide its students with a realistic view of the professional world outside its borders. The Maestro told it like it was, because he knew. It was inspiring to hear his stories of his great teachers and mentors including Leo Weiner, Klemperer and Szell and he was clear and uncompromising in imparting to us what it takes to enter that world, not only musically, but personally. His willingness to confront our limitations in personality and hone in on areas where our musical development was lacking was at times extremely challenging, but as I look back on it, I am exceedingly grateful. He was anti-dilettantism, anti-show for its own sake and pro-authenticity and pro-*Handwerk*. If it were not for the risks he took in his mentorship, I would not be working in a German opera house today and where I've been for over 15 years. I say risks, because it is clear that the personal relationships the Maestro has with his students are very dear to him and perhaps not everyone was able to handle such a direct approach. For me, I feel fortunate to have been exposed and to have incorporated at least some of his strength of character, his directness and authenticity, his clarity of rhythm, phrasing and technique. One favorite of the many wonderful stories the Maestro told us...was of a rehearsal he had with the pianist John Lill who apparently believed himself to have had the ability to communicate with deceased composers. While rehearsing a slow movement from one of the Beethoven piano concertos and questioning the plodding tempo the Maestro said, "I can conduct this in eighths, I can conduct this in sixteenths. I can even conduct this in 32nds, but I can't conduct this in 64ths!" To which John Lill replied, "Yes, Maestro, but it is Beethoven's tempo. I know this because he told me himself." To which the Maestro replied, knowing that the pianist did not speak German, "And in which language did you speak with him?"

Jeremy Briggs Roberts (Music Director, Washington Idaho Symphony)

Maestro Erős turned me into what he called an "honest musician." He taught me to approach everything in music, as in life, with the utmost integrity and purpose. His incredible rhythmic sense and the naturalness of his musical phrasing were revelatory. Whatever I possess in terms of a workable conducting technique, I

⁸⁶ These comments were gathered via electronic mail by the author, during May and June 2013.

learned from him. How he approached his orchestra and opera rehearsals was nothing short of inspirational. His ability to influence and shape the basic sound of an orchestra was amazing, as was his virtuosic command of the orchestra itself as his instrument.

Jonathan Pasternack (Director of Orchestral Activities, University of Washington)

Peter Erős was a musician's musician who had a wonderful intuition about music and performing. He taught me that conducting is a sophisticated art, not just a mundane craft, one that relies much more upon the psychology and musical imagination than upon visual, physical routines. What he had to teach his conducting students, orchestra players, singers, really anybody with whom he came into contact in a musical setting, was how to think about music, at once in a practical as well as an inspiring way. His conducting technique, as such, may have looked simple and minimalistic, but it had enormous power and concentration. His artistry and teaching came from a formidable legacy bequeathed to Erős by his mentors Szell, Fricsay, and Klemperer, and to them by Mahler, Strauss, Bülow, and Wagner.

Teresa Metzger Howe (Music Director, Bellevue Youth Symphony)

The first time I conducted in Peter's conducted class, he said to me, "You should wear pants!" So I always have worn pants while conducting since then. A quote of his that I use at least once a season, "Slow is not beautiful. Slow is slow." And I learned a certain cut-off move from him (a circular motion in which the cut-off is also the prep for the next beat) that is so distinctive that whenever I want to use it, I write in my score, "PE cut-off."

Robert Huw Morgan (University Organist, Stanford University)

"Slow is not beautiful. Slow is slow"—a phrase that I use over and over again. That and "beat the beat and get out of the way." What a superb musician. His teaching and conducting have always been with me when I conduct, when I teach conducting and when I play the organ. Always the first question is, "What would Peter do/say?"

Natalya Ageyeva (Artistic Director, Russian Chamber Music Foundation of Seattle)

Peter once told me before I went out on stage to perform: "Remember to play with cool head and warm heart." While I was a student, he was the most supportive professor. When I got sick a day before the performance with Peter and the orchestra and could not be at the rehearsal, he called me and said that he would add an extra rehearsal just for me to make me feel better. He kept his word and when we were done rehearsing, he said "you have done it and no one can take it away from you." Always funny remarks in the green room: "Sweetheart, I don't sweat, I make others sweat."

Nino Merabishvili (Piano Instructor, Music Works Northwest)

Amazing teacher and friend, Peter Erős is a master-musician for whom the music is his voice, his passion. I always felt privileged to know him. He taught me so much about music and life!!

Gloria Wilson Swisher (Professor Emerita of Composition, Shoreline College)

Peter Erős was able to conduct rehearsals without embarrassing his players. He included the music of composers in this part of the world and enjoyed featuring School of Music performers and music by woman composers. For the first time in many years he started the programs on time so the students would learn self-discipline and be able to leave Meany Theater in time to attend to their other academic duties. I can honestly say that the change of morale of the members was very striking. The students walked onto the stage happy and prepared to do their best for the first time in ages. He also respected the different requirements of the opera productions on stage and in the pit.

Robin McCabe (Professor of Piano, University of Washington)

A superb musician who always put the MUSIC itself at the forefront—I will always remember his many, many performances which allowed students in the orchestra to achieve inspired results. And my own collaborations with him in many concerti will remain among the most rewarding musical experiences of my career.

Memmi Ochi (Percussionist)

Maestro Erős had the ability to draw music out of players' hearts. There were so many times under his baton when I heard great sounds coming out of my instruments, sounds I could never make on my own in the practice room. He trusted us to make music, and he made room for us to sing freely from our souls. There are not very many conductors who can make the "magic" happen the way Maestro Erős could. He was always one with music.

Colin Todd (Violinist, Tacoma Symphony Orchestra)

Peter Erős is still the best conductor I've ever worked with. My very first day of orchestra rehearsals at the UW I was lost trying to get to the rehearsal room and I ran into him in the basement. He introduced himself with "Hi, I'm Peter," and shook my hand... I was in awe of him all of that first quarter. My next quarter I was made principal viola and got my first taste of his temper when I got yelled at during a dress rehearsal for tuning too loudly. Then there was the time he made me sing rhythms in Brahms 2 in front of the whole orchestra... I think for a lot of "outsiders" Peter could seem abusive, but I love him like a grandfather (even when his temper blows up). I owe almost everything I know about conducting to him, and a big chunk of my general musicality as well. I can still hear him yelling "Don't massage it!" at the violas while we were playing some accompaniment. I keep that, and many other things, in mind always.

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APPENDIX A: CATALOG OF PETER ERŐS ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

The following items make up the Peter Erős archives, currently in the possession of Dr. Jonathan Pasternack.

Concert Diaries (3), handwritten, with details for all programs conducted by Erős
 Volume I: June 1954 - July 1972
 Volume II: August 1972 - February 1988
 Volume III: February 1988 - June 2010 (final two entries made by J. Pasternack)

Concert programs, various, from 1959-2010

Correspondence, large loose-leaf binders (3), in alphabetical order by correspondent

Correspondence with managers, including contracts, invoices, publicity materials

Large concert posters, various

Large albums (5), collected press clippings, Australian Broadcasting Commission

Large albums (4), miscellaneous press clippings, Europe, Asia and United States

Notebook of press clippings, from 1964 South Africa tour

One spiral notebook, press clippings, San Diego

Papers concerning the Aalborg Symphony Music Directorship

Papers concerning the La Jolla Chamber Music Society Music Directorship

Files of miscellaneous professional correspondence and contracts

Files of University of Washington, printed correspondence, concert programs

Reel-to-reel audio tapes, LP and Compact Discs of Peter Erős' recordings

San Diego Papers, memos, letters, contracts, concerning Erős' Music Directorship

Carousel of photographic slides, compiled by San Diego Jewish Community Center

Framed photographs of conductors and soloists, many autographed for Peter Erős

Large and miniature scores, many with performance markings by Peter Erős

APPENDIX B: ENSEMBLES CONDUCTED BY PETER ERŐS

The following is a list of ensembles conducted by Peter Erős during the years he was active as a professional conductor, 1956-2010⁸⁷:

Alabama Symphony Orchestra
 Alborg Symphony Orchestra
 American Chamber Orchestra
 Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra
 Ankara Symphony Orchestra
 Berlin RIAS Orchestra
 Bodensee Symphony Orchestra
 Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
 Brabants Orchestra
 Brazilian National Orchestra
 Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra
 Calgary Philharmonic
 Cape Town Symphony Orchestra
 Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
 Chicago Symphony Orchestra
 Cleveland Orchestra
 Dallas Symphony Orchestra
 Denver Symphony Orchestra
 Des Moines Symphony Orchestra
 Detroit Symphony Orchestra
 Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
 Frysk Orchestra
 Galve Symphony Orchestra
 Göteborg Symphony Orchestra
 Hamburg Staatsoper
 Hamburger Symfoniker
 Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra
 Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra
 Het Gelders Orkest/Arnhem Symphony Orchestra
 Hong Kong Philharmonic
 Hungarian State Orchestra
 Indiana University Orchestra
 Israel Philharmonic Orchestra
 Köln Staatsoper
 La Jolla Chamber Orchestra
 Leipzig Radio Orchestra
 Malmö Symphony Orchestra
 Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

⁸⁷ This list was compiled from Maestro Erős' concert diary entries and cross-referenced with actual concert program booklets and reviews.

Mexican National Orchestra
Municipal Orchestra of Barcelona
National Symphony Orchestra
National Symphony Orchestra of Madrid
National University of Mexico Philharmonic Orchestra
Netherlands Chamber Orchestra
Netherlands Dance Theater
Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra
Netherlands Radio Omroep Orchestra
Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra
Netherlands Radio Promenade Orchestra
New York Bach Aria Group
New York Chamber Symphony (Mostly Mozart)
Niederösterreichisches Tönkünstler Orchestra
Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie
Norrköping Symphony Orchestra
Northern Philharmonic
Odense Symphony Orchestra
Oslo Philharmonic
Oulu Symphony Orchestra
Overijssels Symphony Orchestra
Peabody Symphony Orchestra
Phoenix Symphony Orchestra
Philharmonica Hungarica
Portland (Oregon) Symphony Orchestra
Pretoria Symphony Orchestra
Providence Opera
Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra
Queensland Symphony Orchestra
Regina Symphony Orchestra
Residentie Orchestra
Rheinland Staatsorchester
Rochester Philharmonic
Rotterdam Philharmonic
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Royal Scottish National Orchestra
RTE Symphony Orchestra
San Diego Chamber Orchestra
San Diego Symphony Orchestra
San Francisco Chamber Orchestra
San Francisco Symphony Orchestra
Seattle Symphony Orchestra
Sonderjyllands Symphony Orchestra
South Australian Symphony Orchestra
St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

Staatlicher Oper Oberhausen
Stavanger Symphony Orchestra
Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra
Stockholm Radio Orchestra
Stockholm Royal Opera
Stuttgart Philharmonic
Sydney Symphony Orchestra
Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra
Trondheim Symphony Orchestra
Turku Symphony Orchestra
Umea Symfoniette
University of Washington Symphony Orchestra
Uppsala Chamber Orchestra
Utah Symphony Orchestra
Utrecht Symphony Orchestra
Vancouver Symphony Orchestra
West Australian Symphony Orchestra
Wiener Philharmoniker
Wiener Symphoniker
Wurttemberg Philharmonic

APPENDIX C: PEABODY CONSERVATORY PROGRAMS

The following are programs made and conducted by Peter Erős as Music Director of the Peabody Conservatory Orchestra and Opera, 1982-1985:

Season 1981-1982

Creston: *Two Choric Dances*

Haydn: *Symphonia Concertante*

Beethoven: *Symphony No. 3*

Season 1982-1983

Poné: *Avanti*

Del Tredici: *Happy Voices*

Ginastera: *Harp Concerto*

Argento: *Vaichion*

Mozart: *Symphony No. 29*

MacDowell: *Piano Concerto No. 2*

Brahms: *Symphony No. 2*

Britten: *The Turn of the Screw* (fully staged opera)

Lewis: *Moto*

Ponce: *Guitar Concerto*

Dvorak: *Symphony No. 8*

Bradshaw: *Four Mountain Scenes*

Beethoven: *Violin Concerto*

Nielsen: *Symphony No. 2*

Enriquez: *Symphony No. 2*

Gould: *Latin-American Symphony No. 4*

Dvorak: *Cello Concerto*

Latin-American Festival

Poné: *Avanti*

Prando: *Aurora* (Piano Concerto)

Enriquez: *Symphony No. 2*

Gould: *Latin-American Symphony No. 4*

Season 1983-1984

Weisgall: *Prospekt 1983*

Weber: "Durch die Wälder" from *Der Freischütz*

Verdi: "Ah, fors e lui" from *La Traviata*

Bizet: "Parle-moi de ma mère" from *Carmen*

Beethoven: *Triple Concerto*
 Wagner: *Symphony*
 Wagner: *Wesendonck Lieder*
 Liszt: *Piano Concerto No. 1*
 Liszt: *Les Préludes*

Argento: *Postcard from Morocco* (fully staged opera)

Hoffman: *Aeolus*
 Chopin: *Piano Concerto No. 1*
 Beethoven: *Symphony No. 4*

Schubert: *Rosamunde Overture*
 Weber: *Bassoon Concerto*
 Rimsky-Korsakov: *Scheherezade*

Season 1984-1985

Mozart: *Symphony No. 35*
 R. Strauss: *Horn Concerto No. 2*
 Poulenc: *Concerto for Two Pianos*

Verdi: *Falstaff* (fully staged opera)

Bach: *Air*
 Strauss: *Burlesque*
 Brahms: *Symphony No. 4*

Mozart: *Die Zauberflöte* (fully staged opera)

Tchaikovsky: *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture*
 Rachmaninoff: *Piano Concerto No. 2*
 Stravinsky: *Firebird Suite*

Season 1985-1986

Beethoven: *Egmont Overture*
 Duparc: *Five Songs*
 Poulenc: *Chansons Villagroises*
 Poulenc: *Les Chemins de l'Amour*
 Copland: *Billy the Kid*

APPENDIX D: UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PROGRAMS

The following are programs made and conducted by Peter Erős as Music Director of the University of Washington Symphony Orchestra and Opera, 1989-2010:

Season 1989-1990

Mozart: *Così fan Tutte* (fully staged opera)

Copland: *Billy the Kid*

Mozart: *Symphonie Concertante for violin and viola*

Tchaikovsky: *Symphony No. 5*

Piston: *The Incredible Flutist*

Mozart: *Sinfonia concertante for oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn*

Beethoven: *Symphony No. 4*

Bradshaw: *Four Mountain Sketches*

Wagner: *Siegfried Idyll*

Dvorak: *Symphony No. 8*

Barber: *Vanessa* (fully staged opera)

Season 1990-1991

Liadov: *Eight Russian Folksongs*

Mozart: *Piano Concerto No. 16*

Brahms: *Symphony No. 2*

Joint Concert with Garfield High School Orchestra

Weber: *Overture to Oberon* (UW)

Bach-Albert: *Prelude, Chorale, and Fugue**

Haydn: *Symphony No. 101**

Shostakovitch: *Symphony No. 9* (UW)

Argento: *Postcard from Morocco* (fully staged opera)

Bach: *Suite No. 2*

Thome: *The Ruins of the Heart*

Beethoven: *Symphony No. 7*

Mozart: *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (fully staged opera)

Season 1991-1992

Cimarosa: *Il Matrimonio Segreto* (fully staged opera)

Copland: *Rodeo*
 Poulenc: *Concerto for Two Pianos*
 Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet Suite No. 2*

Dvorak: *Slavonic Dances*, selections
 Tchaikovsky: *Violin Concerto* (first movement)
 Liszt: *Totentanz*
 Griffes: *Poem*
 Sibelius: *Violin Concerto* (first movement)
 Berlioz: Three Pieces from *The Damnation of Faust*

Verdi: *Overture to La Forza del Destino*
 Beethoven: *Concerto for Violin, Cello and Piano*
 Bizet: *L'Arlésienne*, selections

Haydn: *Symphony No. 12**
 Haydn: *Symphony No. 92**
 Haydn: *Symphony No. 95**
 Haydn: *Sinfonia Concertante*

Britten: *The Turn of the Screw* (fully staged opera)

Season 1992-1993

Handel: *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (fully staged opera)

Bizet: *Carmen Suites 1 and 2*, selections
 Bruch: *Double Concerto*
 Beethoven: *Symphony No. 5*

Spohr: *Concerto No. 2 for Clarinet*
 Prokofiev: *Concerto No. 2 for Violin*
 Mozart: *Concerto No. 4 for Violin*
 Vieuxtemps: *Concerto No. 5 for Violin*
 Tchaikovsky: *Concerto No. 1 for Piano*

Mussorgsky: *Night on the Bald Mountain*
 Saint-Saëns: *Concerto for Piano No. 2*
 Stravinsky: Suite from *The Firebird*

Brahms: *Tragic Overture**
 Wagner: *Wesendonck Songs*
 Prokofiev: *Symphony No. 7*

Sullivan: *H. M. S. Pinafore* (fully staged opera)

Season 1993-1994

Grieg: *Norwegian Folk Music**

Grieg: *Piano Sonata**

Grieg: *Piano Concerto*

Weill: *Mahagonny** & Puccini: *Gianni Schicchi* (fully staged operas)

Beale: *Variations for Orchestra*

Mozart: *Scena con rondo*, "Chio mi scordi di te"

Franck: *Symphonic Variations*

Nicolai: *Overture and Aria* "Nun eilt herbei" from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Falla: *Three Dances from The Three Cornered Hat*

Torelli: *Trumpet Sonate*

Bartók: *Concerto for Viola*

Beethoven: *Concerto for Piano No. 3*, 1st movement

Glière: *Concerto for Horn*, 1st movement

Schumann: *Piano Concerto*, 1st movement

Bartók: *Concerto for Violin No. 2*, 1st movement

Mozart: *Overture to The Marriage of Figaro*

Schumann: *Concert Piece for Four Horns*

Mahler: *Symphony No. 1*

Mozart: *Marriage of Figaro* (fully staged opera)

Season 1994-1995

Smetana: *Blanik* from *Ma Vlast*

R. Strauss: *Four Last Songs*

Mussorgsky/Ravel: *Pictures at an Exhibition*

Rachmaninov: *Piano Concerto No. 2*, first movement

Saint-Saëns: *Piano Concerto No. 2*, first movement

Debussy: *First Rhapsody for Clarinet*

Mozart: *Violin Concerto No. 4*, first movement

Hummel: *Bassoon Concerto*, first movement

Ravel: *Tzigane*

Rachmaninov: *Piano Concerto No. 3*, first movement

Mozart: *Concerto for Two Pianos*

Shostakovich: *Symphony No. 10*

Glinka: *Ruslan and Ludmilla Overture*

Mussorgsky: *Songs and Dances of Death*

Liszt: *Piano Concerto No. 2*

Bernstein: *West Side Story* (fully staged opera)

Season 1995-1996

Mozart: *La finta giardiniera* (fully staged opera)

Prokofiev: *Piano Concerto No. 2*

Beethoven: *Symphony No. 3*

Brahms: *Academic Festival Overture**

Beethoven: *Concerto No. 3*, 1st movement

Shostakovich: *Violin Concerto No. 1*, 1st and 2nd movements

Prokofiev: *Piano Concerto No. 1*

Adams: *Tromba Lontana**

Adams: *Short Ride in a Fast Machine**

Wagner: *Prelude to Die Meistersinger*

Badings: *Concerto for Two Violins*

Brahms: *Symphony No. 4*

Mozart: *Symphony No. 29*

Bartók: *Piano Concerto No. 3*

R. Strauss: *Death and Transfiguration*

Sullivan: *Patience* (fully staged opera)

Season 1996-1997

Mozart: *The Magic Flute* (fully staged opera)

Mussorgsky: *Persian Dances* (from *Khovanshchina*)

Khachaturian: *Violin Concerto*

Tchaikovsky: *Symphony No. 2*

Weber: *Overture to Oberon*

Mozart: *Piano Concerto No. 23*

Elgar: *Variations on an Original Theme, "Enigma"*

Bizet: *Carmen Suite No. 1 & 2*, excerpts

Nielsen: *Concerto for Flute*

Ravel: *Piano Concerto*, 1st movement

Walton: *Concerto for Violin*, 2nd movement

Rachmaninoff: *Piano Concerto No. 2*, 2nd and 3rd movements

Rodgers: *Oklahoma!* (fully staged opera)

Season 1997-1998

Strauss: *Die Fledermaus* (fully staged opera)

Mozart: *Sinfonia Concertante for Winds*
 Bruckner: *Symphony No. 7*

Rossini: *Overture to the Italian Girl in Algiers*
 Rachmaninoff: *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*
 Tchaikovsky: *Symphony No. 5*

Haydn: *Symphony No. 88**
 Copland: *Concerto for Clarinet**
 Moszkowski: *Spanish Dances (excerpts)**
 Liszt: *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E flat**

Verdi: *Falstaff* (fully staged opera)

Season 1998-1999

Humperdinck: *Hansel and Gretel* (fully staged opera)

Beethoven: *Overture to Egmont*
 Hindemith: *Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes by Carl Maria von Weber*
 Brahms: *Piano Concerto No. 2*

Grieg: *Peer Gynt Suite, No. 1, Op. 46**
 Beethoven: *Piano Concerto No. 4, 1st movement*
 Dohnányi: *Variations on a Nursery Rhyme, Op. 25*
 Ibert: *Concerto for Flute and Orchestra*
 Tchaikovsky: *Piano Concerto No. 1, 1st movement*

Rimsky-Korsakov: *Capriccio Espagnole*
 Weiner: *Concertino for Piano*
 Mendelssohn: *Symphony No. 3, "Scottish"*

Joint concert with Pacific Lutheran University Orchestra (Tacoma)

Mozart: *Così fan Tutte Overture**
 Britten: *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings**
 Debussy: *Première Rhapsodie for Clarinet and Orchestra**
 Rimsky-Korsakov: *Capriccio Espagnol (UW)*
 Mendelssohn: *Symphony No. 3 (UW)*

Weill: *Street Scene* (fully staged opera)

Season 1999-2000

Massenet: *Cendrillon* (fully staged opera)

Liadov: *The Enchanted Lake*
 Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet Suite No. 2*
 Dvorak: *Cello Concerto*

Vivaldi: *Concerto for Oboe*
 Glazunov: *Concerto for Saxophone**
 Tchaikovsky: *Variations on a Rococo Theme*
 Brahms: *Piano Concerto No. 1*, 1st movement

Wagner: *Siegfried Idyll*
 Bartók: *Concerto for Viola*
 Franck: *Symphony in D minor*

Season 2000-2001

Poulenc: *Dialogues des Carmélites* (fully staged opera)

Wagner: *Overture to Rienzi*
 Mozart: *Piano Concerto No. 19*
 Brahms: *Symphony No. 2*

Liebermann: *Flute Concerto*, 1st movement*
 Dvorak: *Cello Concerto*, 1st movement *
 Mozart: *Piano Concerto No. 25*, 1st movement
 Debussy: *Premiere Rhapsody for Clarinet*
 Saint-Saëns: *Cello Concerto No. 1*

Dvorak: *Carnival Overture*
 Prokofiev: *Violin Concerto No. 1*
 Nielsen: *Symphony No. 2*, "The Four Temperaments"

Britten: *Turn of the Screw* (fully staged opera)

Bach: *Orchestral Suite No. 1**
 Mozart: *Symphony No. 29**
 Debussy: *Petite Suite**
 Gershwin: *Rhapsody in Blue**

Season 2001-2002

Mozart: *Così fan Tutte* (fully staged opera)

Smith: *The Star Spangled Banner*
 Verdi: *Overture to I Vespri Siciliani*
 Mozart: *Bassoon Concerto*
 Dvorak: *Symphony No. 9*

Hindemith: *Der Schwanendreher**
 Rosauero: *Marimba Concerto**
 Rachmaninoff: *Piano Concerto No. 2*, 1st movement
 Bartók: *Violin Concerto No. 2*, 1st movement
 Liszt: *Piano Concerto No. 1*

Brahms: *Hungarian Dances Nos. 1, 5 and 6*
 Rachmaninoff: *Piano Concerto No. 2*
 Beethoven: *Symphony No. 7*

Wagner: *Vorspiel and Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde*
 Mahler: *Kindertotenlieder*
 Tchaikovsky: *Final Scene* from *Eugene Onegin*
 Tchaikovsky: *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture*

Haydn: *Symphony No. 48**
 Ravel: *Pavane pour une Infante Defunte**
 Tchaikovsky: *1812 Overture**
 Smetana: *The Moldau**
 Wagner: *Wotan's Farewell and Magic Fire Music* from *Die Walküre**

Season 2002-2003

Cimarosa: *Il Matrimonio Segreto* (fully staged opera)

Handel: *Zadok the Priest**
 Duruflè: *Messe cum Jubilo**
 Honegger: *King David*

Creston: *Concerto for Alto Saxophone**
 Brahms: *Piano Concerto No. 2*, first movement
 Ravel: *Piano Concerto in G major**
 Rachmaninoff: *Piano Concerto No. 4*, first movement

Bizet: *Carmen Suites 1 & 2*, Selections
 Glazunov: *Violin Concerto*
 Schumann: *Symphony No. 4*

Smetana: *The Bartered Bride* (fully staged opera)

Season 2003-2004

Rossini: *Overture to L'Italiana in Algeri*
 Dragonetti: *Double Bass Concerto*
 Paganini: *Moses Phantasy for Double Bass*
 Beethoven: *Symphony No. 2*

Debussy: *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*
 Ravel: *Ma Mère l'Oye suite*
 Debussy: *Deux Danses*
 Mozart: *Oboe Concerto*

Beethoven: *Piano Concerto No. 5*, first movement*
 Spohr: *Clarinet Concerto No. 2*, first movement*
 DuBois: *Concerto for Saxophone**
 Saint-Saëns: *Cello Concerto No. 1*
 Liszt : *Totentanz*

Schubert: *Rosamunde Overture*
 Poulenc: *Concerto for Two Pianos*
 Tchaikovsky: *Symphony No. 4*

Mozart: *The Magic Flute* (fully staged opera)

Season 2004-2005

Dvorak: *Slavonic Dances Nos. 1, 2 and 8*
 Duparc: *Three Songs*
 Sibelius: *Symphony No. 2*

Copland: *Quiet City*
 Swisher: *Concerto for Flute*
 Creston: *Symphony No. 3*

Hübler: *Concerto in F for Four Horns**
 Larrson: *Concerto for Trombone**
 Spohr: *Clarinet Concerto No. 1*, first movement
 Mozart: *Piano Concerto No. 17*, first movement
 Chopin: *Piano Concerto No. 2*, first movement

Mendelssohn: *The Hebrides Overture*
 Brahms: *Concerto for Violin and Violoncello*
 Shostakovich: *Symphony No. 5*

Mozart: Overture to *Le Nozze di Figaro*
 Mozart: *Symphony No. 38, "Prague"*
 Mozart: "Non so piu cosa son" from *Le Nozze di Figaro*
 Mozart: *Symphony No. 40*

Wagner: *Siegfried Idyll**
 Schubert: *Symphony No. 5**
 Mozart: *Symphony No. 36**
 Haydn: *Symphony No. 104**
 Ravel: *Pavane pour une Infante Défunte**
 Beethoven: *Egmont Overture**

Season 2005-2006Mozart: *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*Mozart: *Piano Concerto No. 9*Mozart: *Symphony No. 35*Berlioz: *Rákoczy marsch* from *The Damnation of Faust*Fallá: *Noches en los Jardines de España*Tchaikovsky: *Symphony No. 6, "Pathétique"*Mozart: *The Marriage of Figaro Overture*Mozart: *Oboe Concerto*, first movement*Ravel: *Tzigane*Ravel: *Piano Concerto*, first movement*R. Strauss: *Burleske*Hindemith: *Nobilissima Visione Suite*Prokofiev: *Piano Concerto No. 1*Stravinsky: *The Firebird Suite*Mozart: *The Marriage of Figaro* (fully staged opera)Rossini: *The Barber of Seville Overture**Ravel: *Mother Goose Suite**Barber: Knoxville: *Summer of 1915**Tchaikovsky: *Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy**Season 2006-2007Puccini: *Suor Angelica* (fully staged opera)Purcell: Suite from *Fairy Queen*Mozart: *Sinfonia Concertante*Beethoven: *Symphony No. 3, "Eroica"*Wagner: Overture to *Die Meistersinger*Beethoven: *Piano Concerto No. 3*, first movementBrahms: *Violin Concerto*Shostakovich: *Symphony No. 10*Debussy: *Petite Suite*Franck: *Symphonic Variations*Kodály: *Variations on a Hungarian Folk Song (Peacock Variations)*

Season 2007-2008

Durand: *Four Musical Tales*

Haydn: *Sinfonia Concertante*

Brahms: *Symphony No. 1*

Respighi: *Fontana di Roma*

Borodin: *Polovetsian Dances*

Tchaikovsky: *Violin Concerto*

Side-by-side with Seattle Symphony Orchestra

Mozart: *Piano Concerto No. 21*

Mahler: *Symphony No. 1*

Vaughan Williams: *Symphony No. 1, "A Sea Symphony"*

Season 2008-2009

Beethoven: *Leonore Overture No. 3*

Bruch: *Concerto for Clarinet and Viola*

Schumann: *Symphony No. 3, "Rhenish"*

Brahms: *Academic Festival Overture**

Griffes: *Poem for Flute**

Shostakovich: *Cello Concerto No. 1**

Ginastera: *Harp Concerto**

Tchaikovsky: *Piano Concerto No. 1, first movement*

Mussorgsky: *Persian Dances from Khovanshchina*

Grieg: *Piano Concerto*

Debussy: *La mer*

Tchaikovsky: *Eugene Onegin* (fully staged opera)

Schubert: *Rosamunde Overture**

Schubert: *Der hirt auf dem felsen**

Schubert: *Symphony No. 8, "Unfinished"**

Schubert/Liszt: *Wanderer Fantasy**

Season 2009-2010

Mozart: *Piano Concerto No. 24*

Tchaikovsky: *Manfred Symphony*

Basta: *Concerto for Marimba**

Tchaikovsky: *Violin Concerto, first movement**

Jolivet: *Concerto for Flute**

Prokofiev: *Piano Concerto No. 1*

Side-by-side with Seattle Symphony Orchestra

Mozart: *Concerto No. 22**

Strauss: *Ein Heldenleben**

Verdi: Overture to *La Forza del Destino**

Offenbach: "Les oiseaux dans la charmille" from *Les contes d'hoffmann**

Verdi: "De' miei bollenti spiriti/Un di felice/Ah fors' è lui... from *La Traviata**

Mozart: "Ach, ich fühl's" from *Die Zauberflöte**

Mascagni: "Voi lo sapete" from *Cavalleria Rusticana**

Donizetti: "Chi raffrena il mio furore" from *Lucia di Lammermoor**

Wagner: "Leb' wohl" from *Die Walküre*

Smetana: Vashek's song/Surely you must be the bridegroom from *The Bartered Bride*

Mozart: "Ein mädchen oder weibchen"/"Papagena, Papageno" from *Die Zauberflöte*

Verdi: "Ciel! Mio padre" from *Aida*

Strauss: "Hab' mir's gelobt/Ist ein traum" from *Der Rosenkavalier*

Bach: *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5*

Mozart: *Scena con rondo*, "Ch'io mi scordi di te"

Beethoven: *Symphony No. 7*

*Denotes works not conducted by Peter Erös

BIOGRAPHY

Meena Hwang began music studies at age 4, concentrating in piano, cello, violin, and composition. She graduated from the Seoul Arts High School with a composition emphasis, and then entered the prestigious Korean National University of Arts (KNUA) where she received the B. Mus. Degree in orchestral conducting under the tutelage of Maestro Chi-yong Chung. During her time at the KNUA, Ms. Hwang served as an assistant conductor for the KNUA's orchestra and opera productions and directed numerous ensembles for concerts of contemporary music and competitions for young composers.

Ms. Hwang has conducted such ensembles as the Sofia Festival Orchestra, Rouse Philharmonic, Rose City Chamber Orchestra, and Willamette University Chamber Orchestra. Her stage credits include productions of Bizet's *Carmen*, Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* and *La Finta Giardiniera*, Puccini's *Suor Angelica*, Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, and Haydn's *Il Mondo della Luna*.

She studied instrumental conducting under Maestro Peter Erös at the University of Washington School of Music, where she was awarded the master of music degree in instrumental conducting in 2007 and became a candidate for the doctor of musical arts degree in 2011. She also has studied conducting with Jorma Panula, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Christopher Zimmerman, Kenneth Woods, and Jonathan Pasternack.

Meena Hwang currently serves as Music Director of the Federal Way Youth Symphony and Assistant Conductor of the University of Washington Symphony Orchestra and Opera. During the 2011-12 academic year, Ms. Hwang served as Visiting Director of Orchestral Activities at Willamette College in Salem, Oregon. She was

Principal Conductor of the Washington State Korean Music Association Festivals from 2009-2011, Assistant Conductor of Bellevue Opera from 2009-2011, and Assistant Conductor of Skagit Opera from 2011-2012.

While a graduate student at the University of Washington School of Music, she was the recipient of the Morrison Fellowship for Orchestral Conducting, Alcor Endowed Scholarship for Symphonic Music Studies, and graduate assistantships in opera accompanying and orchestral conducting.