Eighteenth-Century Conducting Practices

In the eighteenth century, as in earlier times, conducting was performed with a baton, a roll of sheet music or other paper, or just the hand. A baton was especially popular in France in opera conducting, while concert and choir performances were often conducted with a roll. German musicians knew the baton but preferred the roll; in contemporary reports the roll was often mentioned, and also has been found on paintings of musical scenes and portraits. In some places the roll was considered the symbol of the Kapellmeister, and its popularity continued into the nineteenth century.¹

The French musicians used the baton in most concert situations, while the Italians and Germans retained the seventeenth-century practice of conducting operas and instrumental pieces from the klavier. Only in choir performances, in church, or in “sundry other music performances,” was a conductor at work.² Charles de Brosses, in letters from his travels of 1739 and 1740, wrote that in Rome only church music was conducted, “never operas, no matter how big the ensemble was.”³ The same was reported by Corrette.⁴ Goudar claimed that the Italians considered the French opera as a gathering of blind people who needed a stick to lead them, while the Italians, he said, did not conduct opera at all, only church music.⁵ The same was true in Germany. Junker said that in church music the Kapellmeister was “not player, but time-beater.”⁶ Löhlein said, “In a church music, where the musici stand dispersed, it is nearly impossible for all playing members to stay so precisely together—without being given the beat—as in a concert or chamber music, where the musici stand close to each other.”⁷ Matthe-

¹ Georg Schünemann, Geschichte des Dirigierens (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1913), p. 158. All translations are by the present author unless indicated otherwise.
⁴ Michel Corrette, Méthode, théorique et pratique pour apprendre en peu de temps le Violoncelle (Paris, 1741), p. 46.
⁵ Ange Goudar, Le Brigandage de la musique italienne (Amsterdam, 1780), p. 120.
son, Scheibe, and others also spoke of the conducting in church music. As late as 1802 Heinrich Christoph Koch wrote, "In church music, the Kapellmeister gives the beat throughout the musical piece; in opera, however, he does customarily play the thorough-bass on the keyboard at the same time." He also said, "Nowadays, one is accustomed to beat the time only in vocal pieces and especially in church music and in big cantatas, where the figures and fugue-like passages, and the accompaniment of the recitativi render time-beating unnecessary." During the eighteenth century, musicians in Italy and Germany made a distinct separation of church music from opera and instrumental music in regard to conducting. This distinction can be traced all through music literature.

During the Renaissance the practice of dividing choirs into several equal groups had become firmly established. Each choir sang to the accompaniment of keyboard instruments, to which an orchestra was occasionally added. The practice did not change much during the eighteenth century, although the efficiency of choruses had declined practically everywhere, thus creating problems for choirmasters. In spite of restrictions in the number of chorus members and instruments, and the use of more precisely detailed instructions for the execution of a work, there were many bad performances, caused largely by unreliable performers and inefficient cantors. Musicians fought against these conditions and performances, but without real success. They protested against incapable conductors and Kapellmeister who wanted to keep their musicians together by noisy time-beating habits. They repeated over and over that a good performance could be achieved without that rumbling noise. Such critiques can be found in music books, travel reports, and instrument textbooks. Fuhrmann, for example, said:

A vitium mensurae is created when certain musicians have gotten into the habit of rapping the beat violently with their feet which defiles the entire performance. Some conductors themselves are prone to act thus disreputably in that they stamp the beat incessantly with their feet; Or with a paper held in the hand, they whip at the pulpit or board in front of them at every downstroke so madly that it resounds with a smack and so that the congregation gathered in the church can hear every beat that is struck; but which is an ugly soloecismus directorius for one should never at any time hear the rhythm of the music being beaten except, nota bene, the first beat and all others (if it can be helped) should merely be seen being beaten.

Johann Adolph Scheibe wrote that he did not demand the Kapellmeister to perform an "awkward and noisy time-beating with his feet"; it was enough that he indicate the beat at the beginning of the pieces once or twice decisively, and then maintain a moderate movement of

8 Heinrich Christoph Koch, "Taktgeben," Musikalisches Lexicon (Frankfurt, 1802).
9 Koch, "Kapellmeister," Musikalisches Lexicon (Frankfurt, 1802).
10 Martin Heinrich Fuhrmann, Musikalischer Trichter (Leipzig, 1706).
the hand until the piece was finished. The best, however, would be if
he could train his chorus so that the noisy indication of the initial beats
could be dispensed with altogether.\textsuperscript{11} Mizler said that many cantors
may well understand “to beat the time with a long roll of paper and
with the head, the hands, the body and the feet at the same time,” but
the music would be overpowered by the “violent stamping of the feet”;
and “with various unbecoming gestures of the head waving to and fro
with the beat,” they would only arouse laughter in the audience.\textsuperscript{12} In
a similar fashion, Adlung criticized incapable conductors:\textsuperscript{13}

It is ridiculous to beat the time with the tapping of the feet or nodding of
the head. . . . If . . . in the same ensemble there are \textit{virtuosi}, or at least such
musicians as know how to follow the prevailing melody, then nothing else is
necessary than that the beat be given at the beginning. After that, one should
be able to let well enough alone, or perhaps could move the hand just a
little. . . . Now and then, the feet will tap a bit, which movement will serve
well against the hypochondriac evil. . . . It is still more foolish when beside
the conductor, other musicians, too, wave heads, hand and feet, which they
sometimes do so loudly that one confuses the other, and the music gets all
bungled up.

In other words Adlung, too, advocated the marking of the beat at
the beginning of a piece. Scheibe and Fuhrmann were even for a loud
marking of these measures in order to make quite sure that the musi-
cians got the correct tempo right away. Scheibe recommended an
audible conducting when fluctuations in the beat occurred. He said
that a well placed decisive downstroke with the foot could prevent
many a mistake.\textsuperscript{14}

This beating the foot is sometimes a necessary evil, but only to be applied with
large chorus groups; but it must not become a habit, or else one disturbs the
listeners and their attention, and one makes a fool out of oneself and out of
the music. Also to be avoided are violent and adventurous gestures, such as shoot-
ing the hand high up into the air, or knocking it down practically under the
floor, or—as does happen—into the wig so that it swirls around the head; and
such as dancing up and down with one’s body and hovering, as it were, up in
the air, all the while contorting one’s face into ugly grimaces and beginning
to scream out loud.

Mattheson, too, often protested against the conducting noise:\textsuperscript{15}

The opinion some people have of the time-beating with the foot lets one
wonder; especially since they seem to think their foot is more intelligent than
their head and that the head should obey the floor. They may not express this

\textsuperscript{12} Mizler.
\textsuperscript{13} Jakob Adlung, \textit{Anleitung zu der musikalischen Gelahrheit} (1758); facsimile
\textsuperscript{14} Scheibe, \textit{Über die musikalische Composition} (Leipzig, 1773), pp. 298-99.
\textsuperscript{15} Johann Mattheson, \textit{Exemplarische Organisten-Probe} (Hamburg, 1719), pp. 84-85.
as an absolute fact, but it certainly follows per indirectum from their sentiments. But such behavior is against all order and reason. Because, for one thing when one plays in a concert he cannot just simply play his own beat but the beat has to be led by the one who has the authority and will be followed or else everyone would play his own beat and that would mean: quot capita tot Tactus [so many heads, so many beats], which, deplorably, is actually the case and it's nothing new that this one makes an upstroke and that one a downstroke simultaneously. . . . This I have noticed: the less one understands about music, the more often will he beat time.

Mattheson was of the opinion that "a tiny wink, not even with the hand, but with eyes and small gestures can be of much better service than the usual 'feather-fencing' is, if only the musicians will be sure to keep their eyes on the director." Mattheson did not turn only against the foot stamping of the choir members or the instrumentalists; the Kapellmeister who conducts in this way was also criticized. "I remember," Mattheson said, "a certain time beater in the opera who had an empty box placed beneath his feet so that the stamping might resound all the louder. These are nothing but disgusting and foolish things." In the same passage Mattheson was annoyed because of a supposed violinist who considered it appropriate "to use his fiddle as a baton and to indicate his displeasure with his foot." As late as 1750 loud complaints were raised against this bad habit. The Bavarian musicologist Josef Riepel ascribed this mannerism to the Italians. "A man who from the day of his birth has no proper beat in his head will always bang away in music and beat with his feet. Many Italians some years ago also beat with their feet in the theater against the orchestra; but it only occurred in order to conceal their ignorance and mistakes." Although Riepel spoke only of the Italians, this mannerism was widespread everywhere.

A zealous campaign against audible time beating with the baton or foot had been carried on since the end of the seventeenth century. The campaign was continued to the end of the eighteenth century, but in vain. It is interesting to note that the contemporary music theoreticians ascribed bad mannerisms, hence also noisy beating of time, to the "ancients." One of these "moderns" was Carl Friedrich Cramer, who wrote:

It is probably time at last to get rid of this woodcutter [the Kapellmeister], who ruins our operas from one end to the other. These frightful blows of the man with the club who stands before the orchestra deafen the listener without making him feel the beat. Such a manner of indicating the time comes from barbaric ages; for the Ancients, to whom we owe perhaps more bad customs than good, also designated it in this way. At the beginning they beat time with

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16 Mattheson, p. 180.
18 Josef Riepel, Grundregeln zur Tactordnung (Leipzig, 1755), p. 22.
the foot, because it ensures more noise than the hand, and in order that one should hear it at a good distance they tipped their shoes with iron nails, stamped on the floor until it resounded as if from hammer blows of the Cyclops, and the conductor, a musical blacksmith's apprentice, took up his position on an elevated place where he could be seen by all who attended the concert.

In the last third of the eighteenth century, conducting by foot seems to have decreased somewhat, perhaps under the influence of the critical and satirical expressions of Mattheson and his companions. In 1782 Junker reported that "stamping the foot seems to be practiced now only with small works of music."20

The noisy conducting practice mentioned so often in the textbooks was closely related to the decline of choir singing noted above. Many cantors were employed who could not live up to their tasks, while the thriftiness of cities and churches contributed to the decreasing efficiency of the choruses. In many places voluntary church choirs ceased to exist because subsidies to church choirs and other singing groups gradually stopped. These voluntary church choirs were partly surpassed by the secular singing groups active at \textit{convivium} and other festive gatherings. The decrease in singing church members sentenced many \textit{Kantoreien} to a dummy-life. People's interests turned more and more toward instrumental music so that churches often had to do without lay singers. Singing lessons in schools were reduced, and the trend was toward abolishing choir schools altogether; thus, schools were no hope for the churches. It is known that Johann Sebastian Bach had to fight with the educators, and that he had to take private pupils and university students into the choir to achieve good performances.

It is easy to understand the laments of the musicians who complained so much about the noise in conducting. Some performances of the time must have been quite awful. The good advice of beating only the beginning measures, or using only moderate hand movements, must have been easier given than followed. Each cantor just had to do as best he could. Mattheson, for example, said that he had always fared better by playing and singing along with the ensemble than by "merely standing there to beat the time."21 The choir, he said, would be encouraged by such singing and playing along with them; it would be refreshed and perform much better. J. S. Bach worked in a similar fashion. Salomon Gesner said of him:22

\ldots if you could but see this man, while he not only accomplishes what several of your Kithara-players and a thousand flautists combined could not accomplish \ldots but in addition even watches every single person and keeps thirty to forty musicians in harmony: one through a wink, another through beating time with his foot, a third with a threatening finger, while giving the tones to his singers—

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to that one in high voice, this one in low voice and to a third in middle voice. . . . And when he alone amidst the resounding music of players and singers, when he alone—although he has surely the hardest task of them all—immediately notices when and where something went amiss; when he keeps them all together and anticipates mishaps and re-establishes order as soon as something seems to falter. . . . How rhythm dwells in his bones, how he senses all harmonies with the sharpest of ears and, with the limited range of his own voice, produces all voices—truly, I have always been an admirer of antiquity; but I believe that my friend Bach, and whosoever should be like him, comprises within himself Orpheus and twenty Arions.

Mattheson's report of Bach's having played along without conducting by hand indicates a practice that had already persisted in the seventeenth century alongside the hand and baton conducting: conducting from the keyboard. This, during the eighteenth century, was the most common way of conducting opera and instrumental music. C. P. E. Bach wrote that:23

The klavier can completely take the place of the time-beating conductor who is common today only in extensive musical performances. The sound of the klavier—which is surrounded, quite wisely, by the musicians—can be clearly heard by everyone. I, myself, know that even in large and diffuse orchestral performances, where many voluntary and mediocre musici participated, all have been kept in order merely by the tone of the klavier. The klavier gives the music the harmonic backbone and the strict, rhythmic direction.

According to him it was best suited "to maintain the necessary evenness of the beat not alone in the other basses, but in the whole music."

In keyboard conducting the conductor made use of many practical aids. When the continuo had a rest he would play a harmony or two. He would divide long notes into rows of shorter ones, stress single passages that were rhythmically important, or play the melody when some musician went off until all had found their places again.

The beginning of a music piece presented great difficulty to the musicians, as has been mentioned. Telemann called the beginning measures "'dogs' measures,' since they were insufferable to human beings."24 Quantz reported that in large orchestras often one or several measures had to pass before all musicians agreed with one another. C. P. E. Bach therefore suggested playing the upper voice with the keyboard instrument, especially in quick passages, in order to set the musicians off into the correct beat right away. In slower moving pieces, he said, the Kapellmeister should indicate the individual quarter notes by repeating the chord, even when the piece begins with a long-held chord. By this repeated striking of the chord, the rhythmic movement was marked. The first violinist took up the tempo, probably accentuated the more important parts of the measure, and thus conveyed the tempo

23 C. P. E. Bach, p. 34.
24 Johann Samuel Petri, Anleitung zur praktischen Musik (Leipzig, 1782), p. 171.
to the instrumentalists. When the musicians had memorized the tempo from the beginning of a piece they merely had to listen to the klavierist and follow the concertmaster or, if they could not see him, their neighbor violinist or the voice leader.\(^{25}\)

The stressing of the accentuated beats was essential in klavier conducting practices; the bass notes with their harmonies were played stronger so that everyone could hear the rhythmical accents clearly. The conducting was more difficult when the continuo had a rest since this eliminated the bass voice and thereby the audible time beating. In such places the Kapellmeister indicated the harmony with his right hand, playing the particular harmony above the rests of the bass part in order to give a continuous rhythmical movement. Both Bach in his *Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu Spielen* and J. J. Quantz in his *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte Traversiere zu Spielen* gave extensive examples and instruction on the problems of keyboard conducting.

Keyboard conducting, however, was not feasible for all arrangements of symphony and opera pieces. Some, for instance, were set without a continuo. In such two- and three-voiced parts as appear in concertos of Quantz, Graun, or Mozart, or in the symphonies of the Vienna pre-Classicists, Haydn’s early symphonies, and many Italian operas, the leadership was assumed by the first violinist. Thus, besides the keyboard conducting, there existed a special conducting by the first violinist. He conducted either with the neck of the violin, or by interrupting his playing to conduct with the bow. The violinist thus conducted in the same way in which the instrumentalists of earlier centuries conducted—by the raising and lowering of their instruments. Samuel Petri said:\(^{26}\)

> He uses his violin with such good effect that all musicians always play together well and realize the tempo right away. The playing along of the initial notes of a musical piece has already been mentioned in keyboard conducting. . . . No one can go wrong, if the first violinist plays the notes of the part that has the smallest note values and intensifies the notes of the part that has the longest notes. For instance: when the first violin has sixteenth notes, but the bass quarter notes, the conducting violinist plays sixteenth notes and puts special emphasis on the individual quarter values.

Johann Georg Pisendel was called the “unsurpassed example” of this kind of violin conducting. Reichardt wrote of him:\(^{27}\)

> During the first few measures, Pisendel would, while playing the violin, indicate the beat by movements of the neck and head of the violin. If the beat were four, he would move the violin down once, up once, then to the side, and up


\(^{26}\) Petri, p. 172.

\(^{27}\) Johann Friedrich Reichardt, *Briefe eines aufmerksamen Reisenden* (Frankfurt, 1774), pp. 40f.
again. For a three beat, he would move it down once, to the side, and up again. When he wanted to slow down the orchestra in the middle of the piece, he would bow only the first note of each measure—in order to make these notes more conspicuous and emphatic—and within [the measure] he would slow down.

The careers of other eminent concertmasters can be traced in Andreas Moser’s *Die Geschichte des Violinspiels*.

One of the most significant appearances during the eighteenth century was that of dual conducting. Two persons were involved in the direction of a musical performance: the composer as the klavierist, and the leader of the first violins as the concertmaster. The development of dual conducting was the logical result of the overall musical development of the time. In instrumental music the violin had become the prime instrument and had taken over the leadership. Thus the first violinist had become the most important instrumentalist in the orchestra, next to the klavierist. The violin conductor, who at royal courts was called concertmaster, was the leader of all instrumental music. He was responsible for an exact unified playing by the orchestra, while the overall directorship lay in the hands of the Kapellmeister at the klavier. The latter conducted choir and opera performances, chose the pieces to be performed, and determined performance and rendition practices of the works. In Italy and Germany he was employed as a composer at the same time and had to compose the locally-required new pieces.

The simultaneous conducting of Kapellmeister and first violinist brought about many awkward situations and ill feelings. Often the concertmaster wanted to assume the overall supervision in choir and opera performances; just as often the klavierist wanted to do the same in symphony performances. Thus in many places quarrels arose about the positions and duties of Kapellmeister and concertmaster. Nicolaus Forkel pleaded for the conducting from the keyboard. He felt the violin could not possibly indicate the tempo precisely and convey it to all musicians, especially in the case of a great vocal work. He argued that it was necessary in such performances for the main beats of the measures to be indicated, and that these were in most cases contained within the bass part. If that should not be so, then the klavierist, “who is indispensable for accompaniment and for exact, unified playing of all instruments and parts,” 28 could still change the lesser parts of the measure into main beats without disadvantage to the entire effect, and could make the overall movement of the beat felt to the musicians. He felt, however, that this could and should never be done by the violin, for its part was the same as an ornamental carving on the building. Only the keyboard player would be able to bring back to order the players that strayed, since the supreme leader had to have the entire score in front of him. The violinist, on the other hand, would have to

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turn page after page, lay down his bow, and interrupt his playing. Therefore the klavier, being the best understood interpreter for the theory of music, was the most suited instrument for indicating the beat. Forkel continued:29

Every well-arranged orchestra can serve as a positive example for that. Here, the Kapellmeister is the conductor and uses the klavier to lead. The first violinist is, as it were, his first aide, since the violin's voice is the most penetrating and can be heard most clearly through all instrument groups of the orchestra. But the leading conductor he can never be, unless the Kapellmeister entrusts to him some lesser "expedition," such as the symphonies played here and other instrumental pieces.

Forkel was thinking here of the works of the 1770's—of symphonies with full accompaniment, the direction of which the concertmaster could assume alone. Such pieces were still rarities during the time of the Viennese pre-Classicists and the Mannheimers.

A charming survey of conducting, written in 1779, was against violin conducting for the following reasons:30

In opera nowadays, the first violinist is usually put on a chair somewhat above the rest of the orchestra members; and this way he is to conduct the work. Now, to be sure, this looks adventurous enough, especially when the eminent Mister Conductor flails about with convulsive jerks so that one fears any moment the doctor may have to be called, not to mention the awkward picture of one violinist sitting on a throne high above the other violin players. This elevated violin then shrieks out over all the orchestra as though the whole opera consisted only of one violin, or at least as though the whole opera depended on that one violin. Sometimes the high-seated lord has to turn around [to face the players], now suddenly the shrieking music stops and the remaining instruments now moan and groan like frogs out of the murky pit. Then the conductor needs a handkerchief; again, the music declines into a hollow muffled droning. All these things may well be an entertaining side show for the listener; but can an orchestra be conducted and directed in that way? I wonder. Much, anyway, speaks against it. First of all, it is a mistake to begin with, to arrange the seating of an orchestra so that not everybody can see each other and that one instrument has to be posted higher. Secondly, the first violin plays only the upper parts, or the melody, with or without ornamentation. But since a melody with all possible flourishes is merely the nicely decorated roof of the house, and only the combined playing of all members makes up the deeper significance and thought of the house as a whole, it becomes quite obvious that the violin cannot be the sole instrument to lead a whole orchestra—which has to convey so much substantial strength and feeling; the same way as one cannot move a house by grappling at its roof. Thus, this manner of conducting is a mere farce.

A conductor must be able to indicate the tempo at all times just as the composer has written it and wanted it. The conductor must be able to help any instrument that went astray to come back in, and be able to straighten out

29 Forkel, pp. 1055f.
30 Wahrheiten die Musik betreffend gerade herausgesagt von einem teutschen Biedermann (Truths Concerning Music, Spoken Out Freely by a True German Man of Integrity) (Frankfurt, 1779), pp. 42f.
notes in the score that are obviously wrong; in other words, he must have the whole score in front of him and must understand it intimately. But since no one can do this better than the composer himself, it becomes obvious that the composer himself has to be the conductor.

In well-organized instrumental groups or orchestras, the tempo and rhythm is maintained thus: the composer, who always is playing a klavier in the orchestra, and the bass players are situated—as they should be—in the middle of the orchestra. He indicates the tempo on his klavier with the same feeling and fire that he conceived it in when he composed the musical piece. The basses orient themselves from the composer's playing and the first violinist takes his cue from him and distributes it, as it were, among the other members just as he received it from the composer, and in that fashion every piece goes on in uninterrupted tempo. This manner of conducting is a sure orderly method.

In other words dual conducting was considered the most competent, with the klavierist (composer) assigned the overall direction. Friedrich Rochlitz also spoke for conducting from the klavier.\textsuperscript{31} Mozart spoke of a Viennese performance of \textit{Die Entführung aus dem Serail} in which he found it advisable to go back to the klavier, partly to wake up the orchestra that had begun to doze off, and partly to display himself to the attending noble audience as the father of his child (the opera). But from Paris, Mozart wrote that the rehearsal for his Paris Symphony went so badly that he would have liked nothing better than to conduct with the violin.\textsuperscript{32} His report referred to a later era in which the practice of including the continuo in the symphony had begun to fade. The reports, however, showed the differentiation between symphony conducting and opera conducting. In the former the concertmaster was the crucial conductor; in the latter it was the klavierist.

Among the musicians who wanted to assign conducting to the concertmaster was Quantz. He thought that "it does not matter what instrument the leader plays; but since the violin is indispensable in accompanying, and since it is more penetrating in tone than any other instrument, it would be best if the leader [conductor] played the violin."\textsuperscript{33} In an article from 1796 he gave the concertmaster the overall directorship:\textsuperscript{34}

He who . . . may, and must, make movements and gestures while playing, is the concertmaster or director. . . . Tempo, movement, fire, shadow and light he must indicate partly through the direction in which his bow points, partly with his head and partly with his entire body. . . . Also the \textit{Kapellmeister} [the klavierist] is subject to this law, only that his movements have to be even more intense; he may have to work with his head, hands and feet; he may even be forced to stop playing the klavier in order to cut like a sword through the air

\textsuperscript{31} Friedrich Rochlitz, "Bruchstücken aus Briefen an einen jungen Tonsetzer," \textit{Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung}, Vol. 2 (October 9, 1799), pp. 18f.

\textsuperscript{32} Emily Anderson, \textit{The Letters of Mozart and His Family} (London, 1938).

\textsuperscript{33} Quantz, \textit{Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag} (Berlin, 1796), Chapter 17.

\textsuperscript{34} Quantz, pp. 173f.
with his arms. It would, of course, be more becoming if the Kapellmeister would leave the conducting entirely to the concertmaster, and would instead only take care of the overall unified playing and of the correct entrances of the vocalists. How easily may mishaps occur if two individuals take over—one at the klavier and the other at the violin. Some of the musicians will look at the Kapellmeister others at the concertmaster. One only has to imagine that both are leading different tempi (as is quite possible), and one can also imagine the result.

The question of whether the klavierist or the concertmaster could claim the overall direction of a musical piece became acute when the literature of fully orchestrated symphonies increased and the concertmasters in symphony orchestras became the first conductors. The sources leave no doubt that most often there were two leaders active together; when there was a keyboard instrument in the orchestra the Kapellmeister and the concertmaster worked together. It was in this fashion that symphonies with continuo, as well as operas and concerts, were performed. Only in grand chorus performances and church music that required a large number of performers was the time-beating done from a special stand.

Due to its very nature, the true dual conducting practice ceased with the end of the thorough-bass period. In the early nineteenth century the professional conductor emerged as a figure in his own right, divorced from the composer. The nineteenth-century composer, in a romantic conception of his “calling” and his “tone-poetic inspiration,” no longer wanted to act as an official composer-employee; only in exceptional cases did he appear as the interpreter of his own works before choir and orchestra.

Reichardt was a leader in the movement that aimed at eliminating the thorough-bass instrument and letting the conductor work from a stand with the help of a roll of paper. Cramer, Rellstab the Elder, Gottfried, and Anselm Weber agreed strongly. The most important early “stick” conductors were Spontini, Spohr, Weber, and Mendelssohn.

This “progress” was paid for by a simultaneous loss. In the orchestra, as well as on stage, all improvisational spirit was lost. Every detail was prescribed, and the new baton conductor, who perhaps could not even master an instrument any more, was reduced to a kind of police commissioner for order and precision. Moritz Hauptmann made a complaint in 1836 after the first Mendelssohn season at the Gewandhaus:35

I have always been angry at that confounded little white stick of wood, and when I have to watch this thing play the ruler, I just find myself losing all joy in the music. It seems as though the whole opera were performed merely so that one can beat time to it; and now, on top of it, that pedantic marking of every little nuance with that cursed little stick. Perhaps it has become neces-

sary—but when I think back on [Cimarosa's] *Matrimonio segreto*, where the maestro sat so quietly and unassumingly at the cembalo, accompanying the *recitativo secco*, where everything seemed to flow so beautifully by itself, then— I do declare—I am in an entirely different atmosphere, aeons removed from our modern one, which appears to me, barbaric and in the crudest fashion bereft of all grade and all dignity.

Yet the new idea of the stern leadership of one will did conquer, and not to a small degree because it coincided with the new way of instrumentation, of which Kretzschmar said that since the time of Beethoven the orchestra player had been degraded to mere "dyer services" (tinting the music rather than interpreting it). The player's only responsibility was to follow a part in which everything was minutely designated for the performance, with individual interpretation greatly reduced. The conductor, on the other hand, was no longer an active performer. At first there was an estrangement between the conductor and the orchestra of which he had been a member. However, the advantages of the new system became acknowledged as capable conductors began to officiate in the more important musical centers. Musicians and the public began to realize that by concentrating his attention on the players alone and not dividing it between them and the playing of an instrument, the conductor could achieve better coordination and unity. The orchestra itself, the whole body of players, became his instrument. By 1830 conducting with a baton had became known and accepted everywhere.

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