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Appreciating the transcultural in music gesture diversities and stage directing in Kenyan choral music

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Abstract

Choral conducting/directorship is an artistic praxis that continues to generate varied opinions and positions. Whereas in the Western world the praxis is clearly defined, it is not the case in Kenya. It is common that whenever a choir appears on stage, questions of whether the conductor directed the choir appropriately, was overt, or lacked certain and/or requisite gesticulations arise. Consequently, some musicians show that the art ought to follow the Western ideals of conducting. Others raise the need for it to be more liberated, so that other directorship ideals are employed besides the Western ones. A third school of thought, however, think(s) that every artiste ought to generate their own unique directing/conducting mannerisms based on the music being performed, devoid of any restrictions. Based on the three positions, it is not clear what determines/influences conducting/directorship ideals in the Kenyan choral-art (music combining both African and Western elements) music scene. Whether it is the music being performed, the performer, or the culture that informs the praxis. This paper responds to the preceding concerns by analyzing the nature of choral-art music that is performed in Kenya based on a field study that made use of ethnographic approaches in the Kenya Music Festival 2017 edition. Among other issues, the paper demonstrates how gesture and other music traditions could be possible influences for conducting manifestations. Moreover, the paper provides insight into how conducting as visual culture and/or gesture enhances music meaning and, therefore, the need to appreciate its diversified approach as well as practice, in the transculturally negotiated choral space.

Introduction

Choral music exists in many cultures, who define and regard it differently. In the traditional African settings, it may be considered as group singing, which makes use of a lead musician/s (vocalist/s or instrumentalist/s) who invite others into the music making process. Besides, the leader/s control and direct the group through the non/musical needs of the performance. It is not necessarily dependent on individuality or independence of voices, but the need to create a corporate spirit into collective singing. As portrayed by Nketia (1984), the group singing is in essence not based on a music need, but

the social circumstances that call for the music to be made. From a European perspective, the Encyclopedia Britannica defines choral music as music sung by a choir with two or more voices assigned to each part. The word choir in this definition shows that the group is organized on the basis of a musical need. In terms of voicing, the independence of each voice that also harmonizes with others is the essence of such context. Choral music then refers to performance with varied voice parts (SATB, SSA, TTBB) singing simultaneously, under the directorship of a conductor.

While choral music exists in many forms, this article recognizes its two broad divisions in the Kenyan situation. First, the Western classical art music which includes festival and concert standard music such as madrigals, motets, Masses, oratorios, anthems, as well as church hymns. During performance, this music makes use of a person who directs the choir; the conductor. As part of choral music making, conducting largely borrows from the Western classical tradition. The second category is what Wafula (2020) coined as Kenyan choral-art music, which is a hybrid of African music traditions and that of Western Art music. It includes adaptation and arrangement of African folk melodies and pop music, and original compositions that bear African musical idioms. This category draws melodic, rhythmic, ornamental, harmonic (to a lesser extent) and textual raw materials from local (Kenyan and by extension African) music traditions.

It is, however, notable that its structural, melodic and rhythmic modifications, the larger harmonic, and the overall musical development immensely borrow from Western Art music. Its dual nature points to why Wafula (2020) refers to it as Kenyan choral-art music, to show that it bears a Kenyan musical foundation yet largely developed via a Western classical music approach. Importantly, this second category makes use of a choral conductor for rehearsal and stage performance, too. This article focuses on interrogating and elaborating how choral conducting is manifested in this second category, which may be regarded as a hybrid of musical cultures.

Conducting as a feature of choral art-music performance in Kenya may be attributed to the colonial and missionary influences. This assumption is made based on the understanding that the type of conducting being experienced currently in churches, institutions of learning and political scenes is not similar to that of the African traditions. It makes use of mainly gestures that are geared towards visual directing of choral performance. The director may not entirely be involved in the singing, dancing, and playing of instruments as it is in African traditions.

As a Western classical music praxis, Killburn (2016) shows how among other things, world artistes and researchers have written about conducting, addressing topics such as pattern, score-study, fermatas, the left hand, tempo changes, clefs and transpositions, marking the score, score mapping, rehearsal technique, memorizing music, and the business of conducting.

Seemingly, choral conducting is a complex and multi-faceted leader role, in which choral conductors shape their practice in highly individual fashions as amalgamations of background, formal education, career development and working situation (Jansson & Balsness, 2020). Besides, conducting is a particular kind of leadership through the prominence of gestural communication, and it is a ubiquitous phenomenon across a variety of social settings, musical genres, and ensemble

types (Jannson, Elstad, & Dòving 2019). In terms of role, the conductor draws on a number of skills and competencies that are partly acquired through education but, equally importantly, through experience. Apfelstadt (1997) identified three elements that entail the leadership role in conducting. That is, musical, artistic intuition; extra-musical confidence, articulateness, and enthusiasm; and combining musical and extra-musical elements artfully.

Further, literature emphasizes the impact of conducting gestures on the resultant sound of the choir. Durrant and Varvarigou (2015, p. 3) for instance, show how non-verbal communication through thoughtful conducting gestures is a convincing way to elicit healthy and efficient vocal behavior and expressive choral singing. The preceding shows that conducting mainly focuses on vocal production, an assertion which confirms that such literature on conducting has not appreciated the multifactorial nature of, in this instance, Kenyan choral-art music. The composite nature of Kenyan music necessitates a conductor to not only be able to take care of sonic features, but also, dance, instrumentation, dramatization among other performative qualities inherent in the music. Conducting Kenyan choral-art music, therefore, is not only multifaceted, but also artistically, culturally, and performatively demanding. In the Kenyan situation then, it is not clear how one chooses the gesture/s necessary for the sonic, rhythmic, expressive and all performative (which are all culturally relative) aspects that characterize such performances, all at the same time. Given their focal position, one wonders what entails gesticulation in such choral conducting.

The term gesture may simply mean the symbolic use of any or more than one part of the body, to express a desired meaning. With regard to music, gesture consists of a translation of the intended movement and rhythm of music into a form of visible signs that are intended to shape the musical behavior of the conducted in a common way (Busch, 1984; Decker and Kirk, 1988; Ehmann, 1968; Fuchs, 1969; Kaplan, 1985; Roe, 1983; Rudolf, 1995; Stanton, 1971; McElheran, 1989; Thomas, 1979). Besides movement and rhythm, gesture is also viewed literally as 'pictures of sound' (Decker and Kirk, 1988; Wis, 1999). Of an almost similar idea, Argyle (1975) defines gesture in conducting as an 'emblem', which ideally replaces a verbal instruction.

As pertains to orchestral conducting gestures, Bräm and Bräm (1998) cite Lakoff and Johnson (1980), who indicate that most communication with regards to abstract concepts is made possible through the use of either metonymic or metaphoric structures. A metaphoric structure is a gesture based on similarity, whereas a metonymic system is based on contiguity. Additionally, Bräm and Bräm affirm that most conducting gestures are based on metaphoric/metonymic connections between aspects of the music and the physical experiences, which human beings have with objects in their everyday lives, that is, gestures which present imagery. It is through such experiences that aspects of the music can be re-conceptualized into concrete objects and contours to represent and transmit musical ideas.

To reinforce the assertion by Wis (1999), and Bräm and Bräm (1998) that conducting is metaphoric, Gonzo (1977:10) shows that a conductor uses a metaphor as a vehicle to transfer perceptual, cognitive emotional and experiential information from a thing that is understood (his metaphorical choice) to that which is less understood (the meaning in the music). As an intellectual shortcut to a meaning, (Gonzo:12) emphasizes that to make metaphoric contact, a variety of conditions must exist. The

conductor, the metaphor maker, the music about which the music is made, and the singers to whom the metaphor is directed all must participate in the intended meaning if the metaphor is to reach fruition. Arguably, metaphors are unique to respective communities, cultures, age sets and contexts, in as much as there can exist generic metaphors. The choice of conducting gestures (which are metaphoric) then, are affirmatively influenced by the foregoing factors. The Kenyan choral scene presents an array of conducting metaphors given its cultural multiplicity and geographic diversity, factors that are responsible for, and largely demonstrated in her choral music.

The preceding literature highlights what entails conducting with regard to performance directions. It emphasizes the challenges of conducting due to its multidimensional nature. It also shows that the formation of a conductor is based on varied factors, among them, their background and working situation. The Kenyan choral-art music is unique due to its multi-cultural manifestation, and so is its idiomatic diversification. Whereas the discussed features with regard to performance practice profit from Western music (that exhibits common performance practice), it is not clear whether it is applicable to the Kenyan situation, which is culturally diverse and/or exhibits cultural hybridity.

Given the cultural diversity, one then wonders whether it is then impossible to have similar or uniform conducting gestures in the Kenyan choral scene. It is on this basis that this article is in part concerned at the nature of conducting gestures that are evident in Kenyan choral-art music. Additionally, there is the need to discuss factors that are responsible for the choice and employment of the conducting gestures in Kenyan choral music. But, of importance to show the significance of conducting gestures as visual culture, and how they enhance music meaning in performance. Over and above, it is crucial to demonstrate how gestures influence, and/or determine Kenyan choral-art musical identities.

Survey

This article profited from the offshoots of my research that focused on aesthetics of music performance in diverse contexts. Particularly, the fieldwork I carried out during the 2017 edition of the Kenya Music Festival (National level), that was held at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology in Kakamega County. The Kenya music festival is an annual fete that brings together competitors from all levels of education in Kenya. That is, nursery, primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions of learning. The festival features a variety of music categories and elocution. This paper was particularly interested in the categories of choral art-music, with the view of interrogating how conducting was practiced. For the sake of this festival, the categories under investigation included the original own compositions, special compositions, adaptation, and arrangement of African folk melodies and pop music from Kenya and the rest of Africa.

The choral music categories under study are described as follows in the Kenya music festival syllabus, 2021 edition[1]; the original composition as an original piece of music, verse of poetry. The piece should not have been performed in this festival before. It may be presented in any language unless stated otherwise in specific classes. The adaptation and development of existing African folk and pop

[1] The Kenya Music Festival Syllabus, 2021 edition.

'*zilizopendwa*' (both sacred and secular) melodies. The arrangement of these songs should incorporate the treatment of musical elements consistent with, and appropriate to the idiom of choice through vocalization.

Whereas in the arrangement class the idiomatic characteristics may be preempted, in the composition class they are silent. It was, however, observed that the composition class draws raw materials from African idioms and developed largely via classical musical traditions. That is why this study found it crucial to be included in the survey, given that instances of compositions with African idioms attracted similar performance manifestations as did the arrangements. Essentially, the categories under study made use of conductors for stage performance, a feature that is central to this study.

The 24 were arrived at based on their willingness to share information concerning this study. Besides the interviews, I also keenly observed them perform in different categories of the festival, a process through which I gathered pertinent information on conducting of Kenyan choral-art music. In selected occurrences, I made videos that were used for analysis later. Coupled with published literature, I triangulated the data (from the three sources) that formed discussions and conclusions of this article. Below is an analysis of the music and performance that was reviewed in this survey.

The music

With regard to meter, the musics that were presented in the festival showed the following: those in compound time of 6/8, 9/8, 12/8, 9/16 and 12/16, mostly from the Western, and selected Rift valley and Coastal parts of Kenya. There was also evidence of simple times of 2/4, 4/4 and 2/2, mostly from the Nyanza, coastal and parts of eastern Kenya. Unique meters including 5/8, 7/8 and 8/8 were realized from central and selected parts of Western Kenya.

Performance-wise, the songs that were composed and/or arranged with immense influences from the Western Art music. This was observed in terms of musical development, harmony, rhythmic and melodic transformations. Texturally, the songs made use of both homophonic and polyphonic textures that were approached differently. For polyphonic textures, the most common being the use of canonic imitations and counter melodies.

Conducting gestures

A focus on the gestures employed showed, first, an inclination towards sustaining the tempo of the songs. To keep the tempo, some of the conductors snapped their fingers to the main beat of the songs. Related to snapping of fingers, other conductors also tapped (with a hand) on their lap to ensure the tempo was strictly followed. In other instances, the conductors stamped one or both feet to mark the main beat of the song/s. Others maintained a steady vertical (up and down) torso movement. The most common gesture was waving one or both hands vertically to mark the main beat of the songs. Occasionally, conductors also clapped to ensure the tempo was strictly adhered to. Further on tempo marking, the conductors also depended on instruments to help them achieve steadiness. With the help of a drum (mostly) a common beat was tapped upon which the conductors based their vertical waving of hands, tapping the lap, snapping of the fingers or their vertical torso movement.

Tempo was also maintained via use of speech surrogates that were whispered to the choir/s. in few instances, some conductors were seen mimicking the words *ka ka ka ka ka* or *cha cha cha cha* or *kiki kiki kiki kiki* or *ngaka ngaka ngaka ngaka.* The speech surrogates were done to the rhythm of crotchets, others

did it to the rhythm of quavers or triplets depending on the rhythmic and metric demands of the music.

Singing along the choir/s was a common occurrence during the performances. This gesture played multiple roles in enhancing performance. It was observed to be a means to remind the singers of their lines. This was evident in the way the conductors sung not complete passages but the opening sections of varied episodes of the music. In contrapuntal situations, they mimed the lines of the respective voices as they occurred in turns. Whenever the choirs seemed to find their bearing, the conductors would cease the sing-along or miming in favor of an alternate gesture for the continuity of the songs. Singing along may have acted in favor of the choirs in many instances, but in few, was not a welcome gesture. For instance, where male conductors directed female choirs and sung along, their voices were distinct from the rest of the choir/s, hence a form of distortion. From a different view point, such participation was a means of giving the choirs confidence, given the fact that they did not struggle to remember their parts, but basically picked up from what the conductors lent them.

Given the participatory nature of African music, it can also be argued that singing along was a means of incorporating the conductors into the performance. The songs seemed to invite the conductors immensely that their singing along, in some instances, was a form of participation rather than directing the choir/s. As participants in singing, the conductors boosted the voice parts that did not seem firm on their lines. Some conductors achieved this by being part of the selected voice-parts without domineering. Other conductors stood out among the rest of the singers within the selected voice that they purported to support, which left the balance of the voice/s in doubt. Their leadership in this sense, was not only in terms of offering direction but, moral support and being part of the performance, where song was involved.

Given that performance of the choral-art music employed dance, it is also clear that it was a common gesture for the conductors. The dance incorporated in the performances was in few instances supportive of the songs, whereas in most, it was as important as the songs. Lack of dance in the performances would have rendered the songs desolate. The conductors, therefore, had the duty of not only controlling and directing the sonic aspects of the performance, but the movements too. To achieve this, it was observed that the conductors used hand cues to beckon the singers to either start, change or stop dancing. Use of hand gestures, however, appeared to be a challenge since the same hands were being used to control the sonic, tempo (and their variance), dynamics and all other aspects of performance. To manage the challenge, hand gestures were employed to usher the beginning, change, or end of dance movements. This was achieved by showing direction where the singers (and dancers) had to go.

Besides the hand signs, signaling dance was also done verbally, by miming certain words to act as cues. I tried, on a number of occasions, to read the lips of the conductors and gathered some of the words and phrases that were used to usher dance movements and patterns. I, for instance, came across some conductors who mimed *twende* (let us go) and the singers made the desired movement. Others moved their lips to the word *hapo* (there) and the singers stopped. At climax points, some conductors were seen whispering *chini* (down) and the singers went lower as they engaged in more intricate dancing. Seemingly, Kiswahili words appeared to favor the lip gestures of most of the conductors. This may be attributable to the words used borrowed from dancehall situations.

It was also common for the conductors to dance along with the choir during performance. This ranged from simple vertical lifts to swaying of the body to complex dance movements as the music demanded. In selected scenarios, some conductors seemed to dance more than any other performer in the choir/s. Just like singing along, dance in this instance came as a form of involvement in the performance, which is typical of composite African music performances. Most of the songs seemed to draw a sense of enjoyment that hardly spared the conductors from engaging in the dance. This in essence acted as solidarity with the performers, such that they drew inspiration from their conductors. While it was not intended as a means to offer performance direction, the participation through dance helped motivate the performers more, since they had their conductor to read from.

The conductors also used short dance stints as means of showing the choir/s what movement to take on. The inception of (a) dance move(s) was always ushered in by conductors who enacted its prototype. A change of the dances was also demonstrated by the conductors and the singers followed. Whenever the end drew near, most of the conductors gradually, or abruptly stood still and so did the singers. Apart from being cues, this was a means of reminding them of the performance lines to ensure smooth transitions, continuity and synchrony of the performances. Observation showed that many conductors indeed achieved to use dance as a means of creating synchrony among the performers. In a few instances, though, the conductors danced to the amusement of the singers who did not seem in sync but enjoyed watching the spectacle.

A number of dance styles were observed during the performance of choral-art music. The stamping of the foot/feet rhythmically was the most common dance style during conducting. In other instances, one foot made an out curve as it was stamped in the Luo style called *nyono* as another common dance move during conducting. Shaking of shoulders, or the upper torso typical of the Luhya communities of Western Kenya was also a common occurrence.

Apart from dancing, facial expressions that are accompanied by miming of words and giving instructions were another gesture (compound) that dominated the choral-art music performances. Again, this gave me an opportunity to make a keen observation of the conductors while reading a combination of their lips, facial expressions and instructions to understand what they demanded of the singers. It was observed that conductors' smiles was a reinforcement for an achieved task from the choir. Moreover, the smile/s was a form of motivation and moral support for the singers. A frown on the other hand had a dual meaning. It was an indicator that the choir was straying, but in different instance, it called for sustaining of the seemingly strengthening performance. In addition to the smile and frown, the conductors were also heard whispering to the choirs "give me more", especially in instances where a hand gesture to ask for more volume was not achieving the desired result.

Facial expressions also revealed an interesting aspect of conducting choirs. Many of the choirs had internalized selected performance attitudes and effects. This was manifested especially in instances of dynamics, intensity, textural and other complementary performative demands. The conductor/s in such instances needed only to make certain facial expressions, accompanied by some instructions, and the choir/s would make a drastic change in the desired performance. Conducting in this sense revealed that it is a preparatory as well as on-stage performance. Such that the conductor is offloaded of some of the gestures they need to employ, but offer basic instructions coupled with a facial expression and the choir will achieve the desired effect. But the verbal instructions in this context then

contradict Argyle's (1975) definition of gesture in conducting as an 'emblem', which ideally replaces a verbal instruction.

In isolated instances, conductors stood still and only looked at the choir/s that achieved the desired effects. It also happened that the conductor/s would move close to one of the voice parts, who would make drastic changes to their performance. Movement in the direction of the performers in this instance reminded them of what they had rehearsed, that the conductor could not gesticulate, maybe due to the many demands of the performance that needed the conductor's attention.

From the foregoing discussion, it can be argued that the gestures employed in conducting of Kenyan choral-art music were either purely directional or directional with a performance orientation. The purely directional gestures include the vertical beating of hand/s to mark the tempo, the use of the hand to show a gradual increase in volume or tempo. The gestures with performance orientation involved singing or dancing along with the choir. As demonstrated initially, they were a means of participation that also directed the choir on the desired performance mannerisms. They in essence provide direction but come in a performative manner. Comparatively, the second option seemed most popular among the choral-art musicians.

Profiles of conductors

The preceding paragraphs have shown the different gestures that were evident in the performance of Kenyan choral-art music. This survey also revealed different ways in which the conductors expressed themselves, based on selection, nature and magnitude of the gestures employed as well as their modes of expression while directing performance. Observation showed that selected conductors had close similarities, which motivated me to pool them based on their performance likeness. This is what this article refers to as profiles of conductors. The subsequent section gives descriptions of the profiles of conductors that this survey experienced.

The Conservatives

The first category of conductor mainly made use of hand signs to direct performance. They maintained a common position on the stage, and any instances of movement did not displace them far from their initial positions. The conservatives hardly danced or made any body movements. Their facial expressions were limited and hardly sung along the choir. They were mainly interested in the finer aspects of the performance/s including tempo, dynamics, and intensity changes as well as toning the choir and achieving choral balance and blend. They are regarded conservatives due to their ability to moderate the number and magnitude of gestures employed in performance. They mainly acted as emblems who sign-posted preferred gestures for the development of the performances.

The Moderates

These conductors made use of most of the facets of the conservatives described above. They, however, had few other additional gestures that aided them in directing the choirs more effectively. It was observed that they mostly gave vocal cues to the choir as reminders for their lines. Besides, they also gave dance cues on a few occasions. The dance cues were, however, moderated such that they felt like basic indicators of what the choir/s needed to do. They also made moderated facial expressions to complement the other gestures, in order to achieve more in their choral directing act. Regarding them as moderates is based on how they regulated gestures that oscillate between performance and are purely direction oriented. They employed the two types of gestures in such a moderated manner that one could hardly understand their initial choral orientation.

The Extroverts

The conductors in this category made use of every available gesture to direct their performances. The most conspicuous being the use of dance and dance cues to usher in the performers. They also sung along the choir by articulating the respective entries of the voices. On achieving all the entries, they would sing along the choristers for rest of the performance. Such conductors also made use of dramatic effects such as lifting hands, or making use of big curves, leaning down then gradually up to signify crescendos and breaking into extreme dance in climax instances. Their endings of songs were characteristically loud such that they were beckoned energetically with hands raised very high. This category of conductors were the all-round performers who not only directed the choir/s but performed the music with them. They not only employed the gestures that were directional with performance orientation but also dramatized the gestures.

Reflections

Kenyan choral-art music presents a unique transcultural performance phenomenon. This is based on the fact that whereas the approaches to composing and arranging the songs in Western art music are a common denominator, the songs are drawn from diverse Kenyan music cultures that manifest different idioms, hence the need for divergent attitudes to their stage directing. The different cultures bring with them music that is rhythmically diversified. The music may also be drawn from environments that demand for certain performance mannerisms that, if not achieved, may lose the spirit of the songs. For example, for religious songs that draw the performers into trance, it can be difficult for a conductor not to be consumed into the music. The daily interactions with one's culture, nature and environment then play an essential part in shaping the kinds of gestures that they are bound to employ in their artistic exploits. This thought is consistent with Brӓm and Brӓm's (1998) affirmation that most conducting gestures are based on metaphoric/metonymic connections between aspects of the music and the physical experiences which human beings have with objects in their everyday lives, that is, gestures which present imagery. It is through such experiences that aspects of the music can be re-conceptualized into concrete objects and contours to represent and transmit musical ideas.

It has been agreed that African music is composite in nature. Stone (1998:7) acknowledges that "African performance is a tightly wrapped bundle of arts that are sometimes difficult to separate, even for analysis. Singing, playing instruments, dancing, masquerading and dramatizing are part of the conceptual package that many Africans think of as one and the same". It brings together more than the sonic elements of music, including dance instrumentation, drama, poetry and other performing and visual arts. A conductor of choral-art music is, therefore, presented with the dilemma of dealing with, controlling, regulating and directing all these features of musical arts. They may be too many for one person to handle in a single performance. Consequently, there is need to employ more than what is known in the conducting field in order for them to achieve a successful performance. As shown in the survey, the gestures that were manifest in choral-art music were diverse. This is an indicator of the demands of conducting as a result of the composite nature of African music, which provides the foundation for choral-art music.

The cultural diversity of the music notwithstanding, the conductors of the music are drawn for specific music cultures, situations that have equipped them in musical ways which are bound to leave certain sound/performance-scapes in their minds. Their bodies, thus act as carriers of the artistic knowledge that they have been socialized in. For them to perform any other music, they start from the known (their initial musical training) before they step into a new music world (unknown). It can be argued

that as conductors, these people can hardly evade manifesting their prior music practices in the musics they will direct on stage. This paper views manifestation of prior music practices in other performances as a process of knowledge transference that helps one discern their practical musicianship, and a means through which alternative musical identities are negotiated. Conducting choral art-music should, therefore, in many ways appreciate the expressive import of music which draws from cognitive, emotional and experiential past of the conductors.

Gestures form a fundamental feature of symbolic culture. A symbol is an object, word, or action that stands for something else with no natural relationship, which represents abstract ideas or concepts. Everything one does throughout their life is based and organized through cultural symbolism. The conductors who were encountered in this survey were drawn from diverse cultures, which must have taught them varied ways of using symbols to communicate. This was manifested in the survey where frowning implied the choir was straying, while in other instances it was an affirmation that the choir was crystalizing the performance. Apart from symbols being culture-specific, they are also age-specific. Younger conductors make use of different gestures from those employed by the older ones. In some instances, they may also be gender specific, another reason why conducting choral-art music would be prone to diverse ways of using symbols as gestures to direct choral performance.

Conducting gestures can also be viewed as metaphors, which act as vehicles that transfer perpetual, cognitive, emotional and experiential information from one thing that is understood (metaphoric choice) to that which is less understood (the meaning in music). Again, metaphors differ from culture to another. Whereas there could exist generic ones, most are specific to their cultures. Individuals can also pose metaphors in different ways. Conductors from different cultures may similarly pose divergent metaphoric attitudes. The way two different choirs may respond to a common metaphor may also differ, depending on how they interpret it. Metaphoric contact in conducting may be achieved if the conductor (the metaphor maker), creates contact with the choir (to whom the metaphor is directed) and the music about which the music is made. The metaphoric nature of conducting gestures, therefore, is dependent on the individual/s, how their cultures have prepared their metaphoric attitudes, the process of metaphoric translation by the recipients (the choir/s) and how the resultant meaning is achieved.

Through this paper, I have referred to the person who directs choral performance as a conductor. The term 'conductor' having been coined in the Western traditions comes with a sense of hegemony that primes Western ideals in the praxis when applied to other music cultures such as Kenyan choral-art music. Its use then implies that the praxis assumes the definition and demands of Western art music, against Kenyan choral-art music that presents a transcultural context. As a form of decolonization, this article advocates for a thought into other terms that may carry the spirit of musical multiculturalism, especially within negotiated music spaces. Leadership could be one of the concepts worth considering. Care must, however, be taken that whereas leadership is a factor into this praxis, a collaborative direction should be given a chance as opposed to an autocratic one that is instruction-based, which would deny it the artistic charisma. Perhaps then an artistic choral director would also be an option that is closer to liberalizing the negotiated music spaces, accommodating artistic as well as educational concerns. The most difficult part is how to include the aspect of cultural pluralism in the terminology.

Based on the foregoing discussions, this article infers that cross-culturally conceived musics such as Kenyan choral-art music be considered from a negotiated artistic space. Ideally, no culture (in a cross-cultural situation) ought be dominant but should draw from a democratic artistic sharing that fosters new and alternative, musical identities. Diversity in the use of gestures is essential in so far as it carries the spirit of the music that would consequently enhance further music meaning. Of importance, the conductors/leaders/artistic directors would consider drawing from the African philosophy that:

> The African performance arts principle requires that the master musician or dancer is not an expert who dominates a presentation with overt, psychotic ego- displays. Rather, the lead artist endeavors to democratize ensemble action, and credits as well as involves empathic, emotional performers. The master performer mediates the performer-audience rapport. As such, evoking human sensing as well as sentiments in a creative contextual process is imperative, whether the performance need is music-specific or music-intrinsic. Most non-musical contexts inevitably demand musical-arts processing in the African rationalization of human interactions, in which music invariably mediates varied emotions, conducts attitudes, and structures actions (Nzewi, Anyahuru & Ohiaraumunna 2001:102-103).

Based on the preceding, the choice of conducting gestures should preferably be at the discretion of the artistic director of the choir, as long as their choice and implementation demonstrate a clear understanding between the artistic director and the choir, and that the gestures foster the total music factor and achievement of the entire group. This proposition for the democracy of the choice of conducting gestures draws from the inspiration that artistic directors come from different music and/or cultural backgrounds that have formed their musical orientations differently. Additionally, the use of gestures as symbolic culture and metaphors, is as divergent as are the peoples of the world. Whether a conservative, moderate or extrovert, care must be taken that the artistic director does not dominate the performance, but rather present themselves as positive factors of the ensemble who steward the performance, facilitate the creative development of the choir, and mediate a positive rapport between the choir and the audience.

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