A case study of the life and work of an Australian Orchestral Portfolio Conductor

Warwick Dean Potter
ARCM (T.D., Perf., P.G.), DipRCM, ALCM (T.D.)

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Abstract

Given the rich history of classical music as a Western art form, relatively little has been written about the art of conducting. There are increasing numbers of pedagogical texts, as international conductors record their thoughts regarding the art. Some of these texts are autobiographical, some are how-to-guides, and some are a mixture of both. The vast majority of texts concern the art of conducting a professional orchestra. Very little is written about those conductors who do not reach those “heights.” Such practitioners conduct a myriad of ensembles, varying in description, standard, and *raison d’être*. Such conductors are theorised as Orchestral Portfolio Conductors. The aim of this PhD in music performance is to investigate this phenomenon.

The Orchestral Portfolio Conductor (OPC) can be theorised via the extant literature as a protean career musician who conducts a variety of ensemble genres across a broad spectrum demographic. Such ensembles can range from community music groups to a full-time salaried professional symphony orchestra. There has been considerable research in recent years regarding the plight of the Australian protean career musician. There is very little written about a sub-section protean career musician – the OPC. The importance of this study is to shed light on the OPC’s life and work. The following research questions will be addressed:

1. What is an Orchestral Portfolio Conductor?
2. What are the life experiences and work practices of an Orchestral Portfolio Conductor in 21st century Australia?
3. What are the skills, both musical and extra-musical, required for success in this music performance sector?

Data were produced using an autoethnographic and case study approach. I used a collective case study of interviews with five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia, which provided industry insight into the phenomenon. A triptych of conducting engagements was investigated as performance-based autoethnographic case studies in order to examine the life choices and work practices of an OPC. The ensemble genres chosen were a sessional freelance string ensemble, a full-time professional symphony orchestra, and a community orchestra. Observations, field diary entries, video analysis, and interviews were amongst the techniques used.
Findings have informed a re-focused definition of the OPC, and the identification of the musical and extra-musical skill sets required of an OPC in the 21st century. Underpinning the work of a successful conductor, the identified skills include those that are omnipresent and historically acknowledged in relation to the preparation, rehearsal and performance stages of an engagement. Additionally, the increasingly important role of business skills, entrepreneurial ability, and industry understanding to the OPC is researched and discussed, given the current-day OPC’s need for such extra-musical capabilities.

Recommendations include suggestions for future study of the OPC phenomenon within Australia, as the professional orchestral sector changes, and how this phenomenon occurs internationally. Recommendations also include matters for consideration for the OPCs of the future.
Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my research higher degree candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly stated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

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Publications during candidature
No publications.

Publications included in this thesis
No publications included.

Contributions by others to the thesis
This thesis has undergone revisions suggested by my supervisory panel (Professor Margaret Barrett, Professor Patricia Pollett, and Associate Professor Julie Ballantyne) and Dr Simon Perry at the School of Music, University of Queensland. I have also received professional editing advice from Dr Tammy Jones in the production of this thesis.

Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree
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Conductor, portfolio career, protean career, orchestral, preparation, rehearsal, performance, semi-professional, professional, community

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# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... ii

Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................ vi

List of Figures & Tables ........................................................................................................ xii

List of Abbreviations use in the thesis ................................................................................ xiii

Chapter 1: Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1

Chapter 2: Literature Review ............................................................................................... 9
  2.1 Defining the Orchestral Portfolio Conductor ................................................................. 10
    2.1.1 The protean career ................................................................................................. 10
    2.1.2 The portfolio musician ....................................................................................... 11
    2.1.3 Describing the orchestral portfolio conductor within the extant literature.......... 13
  2.2 The Current Australian Professional Orchestral Context ............................................ 13
  2.3 The Preparation Stage .................................................................................................... 18
    2.3.1 Musical preparation .............................................................................................. 18
    2.3.2 Extra-musical preparation ................................................................................... 22
  2.4 The Rehearsal Stage ....................................................................................................... 23
    2.4.1 Communication skills .......................................................................................... 23
    2.4.2 Leadership skills ................................................................................................... 24
    2.4.3 Conducting the rehearsal ................................................................................... 26
  2.5 The Performance Stage .................................................................................................. 27
    2.5.1 The walk to the podium ....................................................................................... 27
    2.5.2 Conducting the orchestra ................................................................................... 27
    2.5.3 Presentation skills in the performance stage ..................................................... 28
  2.6 Personal Traits and Characteristics ................................................................................ 28
  2.7 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 28
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Theoretical Framework

3.2.1 Defining “autoethnography”

3.2.2 Defining “case study”

3.3 Data Collection Methods and Techniques

3.3.1 Collective case study of interviews

3.3.2 Conducting case studies

3.3.3 Case study background information

3.3.4 Field diary and video observation

3.4 Ethical Consent

3.5 Credibility and Trustworthiness

3.6 Research Questions

3.7 Analysis

3.8 Summary and Conclusion

Chapter 4: Case Studies

Case Study 1: A collective case study of interviews with five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia

4.1 Extra-musical skills required

4.1.1 Business skills

4.1.2 Market awareness

4.1.3 Securing a debut engagement

4.1.4 Return engagements

4.1.5 Professional development: Agents, travel, and skill development

4.1.6 Presentation skills

4.1.7 Specialisation

4.1.8 Career development within Australia: Corporate and freelance opportunities

4.1.9 Advice
Case Study 2: Camerata of St. John’s – April 25 and 26, 2011

4.2 Introduction ................................................................................................................ 58

4.3 Purpose and Overview .................................................................................................. 58

4.4 Engagement and Preparation Stage ............................................................................ 58

4.4.1 The use of audio recordings within the preparation stage ....................................... 59

4.4.2 Score preparation ................................................................................................... 59

4.4.3 Conducting preparation ......................................................................................... 62

4.4.4 Extra-musical communications ............................................................................ 64

4.5 Rehearsal Stage .......................................................................................................... 64

4.5.1 Rehearsal 1 — April 25, 2011: 75 minutes ............................................................. 65

4.5.2 Rehearsal 2 — April 26, 2011: 15 minutes ............................................................. 65

4.6 Performance Stage — April 26, 2011 ................................................................ 66

4.7 Summary ...................................................................................................................... 67

Case Study 3: West Australian Symphony Orchestra – February 27 and 28, 2012

4.7 Introduction ................................................................................................................ 69

4.8 Purpose and Overview ............................................................................................... 69

4.9 Engagement and Preparation Stage ......................................................................... 69

4.9.1 Score preparation .................................................................................................. 70

4.9.2 Rehearsal preparation ......................................................................................... 72

4.10 Rehearsal Stage ....................................................................................................... 72

4.10.1 Rehearsal 1 — February 27, 2012: 215 minutes ................................................... 73

4.10.2 Rehearsal 2 — February 28, 2012: 20 minutes ..................................................... 76

4.11 Performance Stage .................................................................................................... 76

4.11.1 Conductor stand, memory, and presentation ....................................................... 76

4.11.2 Beethoven, Webern, and Stravinsky performances ............................................ 76

4.12 Summary .................................................................................................................... 79
Case Study 4: Willoughby Symphony Orchestra – June 19 to July 1, 2012

4.13 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 81

4.14 Purpose and Overview ................................................................................................. 81

4.15 Engagement and Preparation Stage .............................................................................. 81
  4.15.1 Extra-musical preparation ..................................................................................... 82
  4.15.2 Beethoven score preparation ................................................................................. 82
  4.15.3 Reasons for conducting Beethoven from memory ................................................ 83
  4.15.4 Howes score preparation ....................................................................................... 83
  4.15.5 Rodrigo score preparation ..................................................................................... 83
  4.15.6 Arriaga score preparation ...................................................................................... 84
  4.15.7 Conducting preparation ......................................................................................... 84

4.16 Rehearsal Stage ............................................................................................................ 84
  4.16.1 Rehearsal 1 — June 19, 2012: 150 minutes ....................................................... 85
  4.16.2 Rehearsal 2 — June 21, 2012: 150 minutes ....................................................... 85
  4.16.3 Rehearsal 3 — June 26, 2012: 150 minutes ....................................................... 86
  4.16.4 Rehearsal 4 — June 28, 2012: 180 minutes ....................................................... 87

4.17 Performance Stage ........................................................................................................ 91

4.18 Summary ...................................................................................................................... 91

Chapter 5: Findings, Recommendations, and Postscript ................................................... 94

5.1 Findings .......................................................................................................................... 94
  5.1.1 What is the Orchestral Portfolio Conductor? ......................................................... 95
  5.1.2 What are the life experiences and work practices of the orchestral portfolio
      conductor in the 21st century? .................................................................................... 97
  5.1.3 What are the skills, both musical and extra-musical, required for success in this
      performance sector? ................................................................................................. 98

5.2 Recommendations ........................................................................................................ 102
  5.2.1 Recommendations to present and future OPCs ................................................. 102
  5.2.2 Recommendations for further study of the OPC phenomenon ......................... 103
5.3 Postscript ...................................................................................................................... 103

References .......................................................................................................................... 104
Appendices .......................................................................................................................... 112
List of Figures & Tables

Figure 1  Inscription inside the front cover of *Rhymes and Rhythms* gifted by Barbara Kirkby-Mason. 1

Figure 2  Bars 10 to 12 from Penderecki’s *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* showing score preparation including the use of the “zigzag way” technique, colour coding and the instrumental numbering order of the passage. 61

Figure 3  The accelerando poco a poco between Figures 27 and 29 in *Danse infernale du roi Kastchei*. 71

Figure 4  This figure shows bar 1 to Figure 2 in *Ronde des Princesses* where specific instrumentalists become de facto conductors. 78

Figure 5  This figure shows bars 202 to 220 from *The Happy Slaves* overture by Arriaga. 89

Figure 6  This figure shows bars 221 to 238 from *The Happy Slaves* overture by Arriaga. 90

Table 1  An analysis of Australian conductors conducting Australian professional symphony orchestras within the highest portfolio of engagement in 2015. 16

Table 2  Points of contact and data generated for Case Studies 1 to 4 37–38
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACO</td>
<td>Australian Chamber Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOBO</td>
<td>Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMC</td>
<td>Cultural Ministers Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRSO</td>
<td>City of Rochester Symphony Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Canberra Symphony Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESYO</td>
<td>East Sussex Youth Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSO</td>
<td>Melbourne Symphony Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPC</td>
<td>Orchestral Portfolio Conductor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCM</td>
<td>Royal College of Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI</td>
<td>Symphony Services International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO</td>
<td>Sydney Symphony Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYCO</td>
<td>Sussex Youth Chamber Orchestra</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASO</td>
<td>West Australian Symphony Orchestra</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAYO</td>
<td>Western Australian Youth Orchestras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSO</td>
<td>Willoughby Symphony Orchestra</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

I was born in the United Kingdom into a working class family during 1968. The journey that has taken me from my humble beginnings to becoming a nationally recognised orchestral conductor in Australia is, quite simply, extraordinary when I contemplate it. I believe that this personal journey, including its inherent career decisions, forms essential data for the reader to comprehend the basis of this PhD in music performance.

My parents actively encouraged the pursuit of the arts in my family. Like so many other decisions made for a young child, as a 7-year old, I was told that I would be starting to learn the piano. I entered music festivals (eisteddfodau) in Sussex during my formative years and had some success as a pianist. At one music festival, a well-known educational piano composer of the time gave me a memorable and treasured memento (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Inscription inside the front cover of Rhymes and Rhythms gifted by Barbara Kirkby- Mason.
Blacklands County Primary School offered further musical activities, and I would often play the piano as assemblies gathered and exited. As an 11-year-old first study pianist, once it became apparent that I would not be playing centre forward for Leeds United Football Club, I decided that a career in music was what I desired.

Music came easier to me than many other subject areas. As a disengaged British teenage boy in the Thatcherite era, the prospect of studying to become a professional musician greatly appealed. At the expense of other academic pursuits, I would, for example, regularly skive from school lessons which held little or no interest for me: chemistry, biology, and (above all) physics regularly attracted low marks on my school reports. Such irregular lesson attendance, however, was not without gain, as I would attend brass instrumental lessons, soaking up knowledge for future use. My brass studies even went as far as casually playing the trombone, knowledge that I draw on today when I suggest alternative slide positions to student players in youth ensembles.

The inevitable move to secondary school brought other challenges: music at an all boys’ state secondary school during the 1980s did not always place me in a safe environment, given that the first XI football team were treated like gods. The music department, however, had been told in advance of my arrival, and it was suggested that I learn a second instrument. The flute was selected, but this was rejected by the history teacher, as the weekly lesson clashed with his class. A year later, the department again “invited” me to start another instrument and, this time, the bassoon was chosen for me. Still very much a first study pianist, I learnt the bassoon without wanting to play it until 1982, when I was invited to join the area youth wind orchestra. This decision would change my life.

Prior to one 1983 rehearsal for the area youth wind orchestra, it was announced that the normal conductor was running late. A call was made for a volunteer to start and conduct the rehearsal, and I, without really knowing anything about conducting, was first to put up a hand. The experience that followed for the next 20 minutes changed my life. Over 30 years on, I can say that the experience was an epiphany. The event gave me 20 minutes of rehearsal time which I used on a selection from the musical *Oklahoma*!

The same area youth wind orchestra conductor to inadvertently facilitate my first conducting experience subsequently offered me as much podium time as possible with the same youth ensemble until I started my tertiary studies in 1987. Podium rehearsal time became weekly, and was often more than half of the allotted time for the ensemble. I was invited to conduct works in concerts and, subsequently, entire concerts. These experiences were priceless. To me back then, as it remains today, conducting was a pleasure, and very
exciting too. Those early experiences began the process of developing the communication
and leadership skills required to become a professional conductor. Clearly there was much to
learn, but (like Ham\(^1\) and Slatkin\(^2\)) having been “bitten” by the “conductor bug,” I went to
every rehearsal thereafter, not only with the aim of furthering the craft of being a bassoonist,
but also, as other players talked, to study each conductor under whom I played. I obtained as
much information as possible, analysing rehearsal techniques, leadership matters,
communication skills, baton use, rehearsal efficiency, and other factors pertaining to the work
of a conductor.

In 1987, having been advised that performance career success was statistically more
likely as a bassoonist than as a pianist, I commenced my studies at the Royal College of
Music (RCM) in London. As my skills increased as a bassoonist, I was exposed to a higher
standard of ensemble, with a higher standard of conductor to observe. I scrutinised RCM staff
conductors such as Norman del Mar, Christopher Adey, John Forster, and Edwin Roxburgh,
and became aware of some of the extra-musical skills and abilities required to successfully
conduct. Skills analysed included different techniques to conduct youth orchestras of varied
standards and purposes, a range of communication skills, a wide variety of leadership ideas,
instrumental techniques used by a conductor in a youth orchestra setting, enhanced musical
ideas, and different ways and techniques to efficiently run rehearsals. Other conductors such
as Harry Legge, Roger Durston, Arthur Davison, David Willcocks, James Blair, and the
global pedagogue Colin Metters were similarly musically observed and technically dissected,
with a plethora of rehearsal, leadership, communication, and conducting techniques being
drawn from each in turn. With only a postgraduate level course offered for conductors at the
RCM, most of my learning was from ensemble experience, and so I joined ensembles such as
the Rehearsal Orchestra and the Young Musicians’ Symphony Orchestra external to the
RCM. I enjoyed occasional tutorials and private lessons with Forster and Metters. The latter
would become my mentor as my conducting skills and career developed.

It was a happy coincidence that Metters conducted the East Sussex Youth Orchestra
(ESYO) and I had over 3 weeks annual exposure to him with this ensemble from 1985 to
1992. Although I have much experience today, I still ask myself the question “What would
Colin have done?” if answers to a rehearsal problem are not forthcoming. With most of my
conducting engagements, today, in the youth orchestra sub-sector, the study of recognised
youth ensemble conductors (and Metters in particular) has proven an enormous aid to my

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1 Denise Ham, interview with Brydie-Leigh Bartleet (2002, p.82).
2 2012, pp. 7-9.
career engagements conducting youth orchestras of various standards, sizes, and purposes. It was important for me to comprehend not only what worked and why, but, even more crucially, what did not work for the conductor and why.

Upon leaving the RCM in 1992, I was immediately engaged by a summer school in High Wycombe to tutor the woodwind players. As well as taking orchestral sectional (tutorial) rehearsals, I conducted the course’s symphony orchestra through the first movement of Brahms’ *Second Symphony* during the course’s orchestral concert. This was the first time that I had conducted a symphony orchestra, let alone an excerpt from a Brahms symphony. At that time, I had recently played the same piece under Metters, and my score knowledge was appropriately higher as a result. Conducting from memory, the rehearsals and performance were described as “electric” by other course music staff. The experience only further cemented my long–held ambition to conduct.

Between 1993 and 2000, I ventured into the realms of community music making. I scoured *Classical Music* on a monthly basis for conducting positions in any genre or geographical location, in my belief that only podium time really increased experience or expertise. I was appointed to Bexhill Choral Society (1993–1996) and City of Rochester Symphony Orchestra (CRSO) (1996–2000) with repertoire conducted including *Carmina Burana* and *Elijah*, as well as major orchestral works by Beethoven, Brahms, Bruch, Dvorak, Elgar, Kodaly, Mozart, Rachmaninov, Stravinsky, and Tchaikovsky to name a few. Further experience was gained, including conducting a professional brass section in CRSO concerts. I took every available opportunity, and subsequently tutored wind sections for Maidstone Symphony Orchestra and ESYO (for Metters). I was invited to conduct the Sussex Concert Orchestra on more than one occasion. Other opportunities needed to be created.

From 1992 to 1994, I co-conducted a youth orchestra for East Sussex Music Service, but a change of staffing led to my role being superfluous. The experience introduced a still naive conductor to the profession’s politics, in which decisions made by others negatively affected my career aspirations as a conductor. In 1994, and as a result of this early career experience, I founded and conducted the Sussex Youth Chamber Orchestra (with the unwittingly appropriate acronym of SYCO!) in a bid to keep developing my conducting passion. I quickly adapted to the business skills required, including those involved in gaining sponsorship, and learnt a completely new set of skills — Windows 3.1 and other computer software, at a time when desktops were replacing typewriters and the handwritten word. This was a major challenge for someone who had not seen a computer in the classroom while a state secondary school student less than 7 years earlier.
My playing career as a bassoonist developed through the 1990s, and I freelanced throughout the United Kingdom. I was successfully placed on extra lists\(^3\) including those of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Halle Orchestra. I played for the London Concert Orchestra, and I was a regular player on the amateur London choral society scene where networking was an ever-present professional tool. It was via networking that I was approached to play in the Thursford Christmas Spectacular in 1998. Always prepared to take every opportunity, I accepted the 7-week contract playing bassoon and tenor saxophone, never having played the latter before! The season was a success and I retained the seat for the 1999 and 2000 seasons.

It was at Thursford that I met Gerry Cornelius who was the Musical Director to the Thursford Christmas Spectacular, and to whom I had been recommended by one of my professional network associates. Cornelius also happened to be a former student of Metters, and a professional conducting relationship commenced. With the position of Assistant Musical Director for the Thursford production becoming available for the 2001 season, I quickly and promptly sowed the seed with Cornelius for me to fill that role in the 2001 season. This eventuated, and brought about my debut conducting engagement in front of a fully professional ensemble. It would require 5 years and a change in country, continent, and hemisphere until I conducted a professional ensemble again.

Personal circumstances initiated a move to Sydney, Australia in 2002 and I began to build professional relationships. I was appointed to conduct a string ensemble for Killara State High School. I undertook casual auditions for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (SSO), the Australian Ballet and Opera Orchestra (AOBO), and the Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO), with mixed results. I was unsuccessful in my SSO audition, but I was added to the AOBO’s casual bassoon list. It was, however, with the ACO that I enjoyed most success. I was part of multiple national tours as a bassoonist, which again afforded me the chance to study a world-renowned musical leader, Richard Tognetti. This opportunity also brought me into contact with the current Musical Director (Peter Moore) for the Western Australian Youth Orchestras (WAYO) at a time when I had made the decision to move to Perth, and WAYO, coincidentally, required a conductor for its Philharmonic orchestra.

My portfolio career in Perth flourished, securing further conducting appointments in the youth ensemble sector at Trinity College. I was appointed as Musical Director to Perth Oratorio Choir and Perth Concert Band, both in the community sector and in very different

\(^3\)The term “extra list” in the professional orchestral sector refers to an instrumentalist hired as a casual employee.
genres. It was in 2005, however, that I started to think again about conducting a professional ensemble, and I was advised to audition for Symphony Australia’s (as it was known then) conducting modules, which allowed successful applicants the experience of conducting large-scale orchestral repertoire with some of Australia’s professional state orchestras. Following the audition, I was awarded a place to conduct the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in 2006. This was the forum at which I came to the attention of the country’s artistic advisors and directors for Australia’s professional symphony orchestras.

In 2007, and having “graduated” from the Symphony Australia modules, I was engaged by the West Australian Symphony Orchestra (WASO). This marked my debut engagement with a professional symphony orchestra, the repertoire being Britten’s *Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*. I had previously studied and conducted this piece during one of the Symphony Australia modules. The engagement was successful, and I regularly conducted WASO across its portfolios: primary and secondary education concerts, kinder cushion concerts, outdoor symphonic spectacles, informal patron events, and family performances were all undertaken, with many performances requiring me to present the respective concert as well. A pop collaboration with The Panics was even conducted. In addition to WASO, I was also engaged to conduct the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (debut 2010), Camerata of St John’s (2011), Canberra Symphony Orchestra (2011), Darwin Symphony Orchestra (2007), Queensland Symphony Orchestra (2010), and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (2011).

Personal circumstances brought a move to Brisbane in 2010, with each of the many trips to Brisbane from Perth during 2009 involving one type of networking event or another. By the end of 2009, I had obtained regular conducting employment with the University of Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Brisbane Philharmonic Orchestra (community), the Queensland Young Conservatorium Symphony Orchestra, and the Queensland Youth Orchestra Wind Symphony in Brisbane. Since 2010, I have been invited to conduct Queensland Youth Symphony, youth ensembles for Education Queensland, and other educational ensembles, as well as additional community ensembles across Queensland and New South Wales.

I have conducted many different ensembles throughout my career: primary school orchestras, secondary school big bands, auditioned wind orchestras, tertiary education symphony orchestras, brass ensembles, community orchestras and choirs, semi-professional
ensembles, freelance professional ensembles, and full-time salaried professional symphony orchestras.

Each different ensemble required a different skill set to enable optimum results from each engagement. My career has gradually shaped me into a portfolio musician, taking in performance and teaching projects as both conductor and bassoonist, but now that my playing days are (probably) behind me, I have become a more specific portfolio musician – the orchestral portfolio conductor (OPC).

There is a growing body of literature regarding conducting. Slatkin (2012) provides an autobiographic account of his musical career, interweaving conducting hints and tips throughout. He provides a series of brief case studies regarding aspects of the art of conducting, illustrated through analysis of passages from the core standard repertoire. Seaman (2013) draws on his professional experiences to document the musical and extra-musical skills required of a professional conductor. Roxburgh (2014) focuses on fundamental conducting techniques and other matters pertaining to a conductor’s skills, before using a series of case studies to illustrate the conductor’s thought processes via reference to works by Birtwistle, Boulez, Messiaen, and Stockhausen. Roxburgh, a noted high-profile protean careerist in the United Kingdom, is usually associated with being a composer and leading teaching academic in the field of music education. Both Seaman and Slatkin have long-standing international careers. None of these conductors can be regarded as an OPC. Little is known about the life practices, work experiences or the skills required to be an OPC.

In 2011, and after invitation, I commenced the journey towards a PhD in music performance at the School of Music at the University of Queensland, in order to investigate the phenomenon that is the orchestral portfolio conductor, and I have chosen to do this via an autoethnographic study. The varied performances forming part of this PhD in music performance highlight the distinctive nature of this relatively new degree, which allows the individual to bring his/her career experiences to the reader. One of the purposes of this PhD in music performance is to educate future conductors regarding the skills required as an OPC.

Chapter 1 has included an autoethnographic account of my interest in conducting from an early age, and traces key moments and decisions made in my conducting career. In Chapter 2 I investigate existing knowledge via a literature review in which I consider the musical and extra-musical skills required in the conducting profession, as per the extant literature, with a specific lens on the conductor’s life and skills as a music performer. In Chapter 3 I provide a description of, and justification for, the purpose and existence of the study: the methodological framework employed for the parameters of the study, emphasising
the relationships between the performances and the exegesis. In order to gain further insight into the musical and extra-musical skills required by an OPC in the 21st century, Chapter 4 provides a quartet of case studies. Case Study 1 is a collective case study comprising interviews with five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia, who offer their views on the conducting profession and possible pitfalls for conductors. This collective case study provides an analysis of data generated through a semi-structured interview process. Case Studies 2, 3, and 4 are autoethnographic accounts of performance-based conducting engagements with three different ensemble genres: a sessional freelance string ensemble, a full-time salaried professional symphony orchestra, and a community orchestra, respectively. Chapter 5 sets out the study’s findings and makes recommendations for both future OPCs and for future study of this phenomenon, both within Australia and abroad.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I aim to identify and critically analyse what is known about the Orchestral Portfolio Conductor (OPC) in order to locate gaps in the knowledge pertaining to the OPC’s skill base as well as the OPC’s life and work practices. I will use extant literature to examine the phenomenon under investigation. Non-traditional literature resources such as websites, journalistic interviews, and audio interviews are included in this music performance-based study, in order to reflect the thoughts of leading practitioners and commentators within the 21st century’s global conducting profession. These act as a supplement to the scholarly literature, due to the relative lack of literature concerning the phenomenon. I consider a definition of the OPC within the extant literature, as well as discussing the work practices and life experiences of this career type in 21st century Australia. The research questions that follow may guide the reader through the subsequent sections of this chapter:

1. What is an Orchestral Portfolio Conductor?
2. What are the life experiences and work practices of an Orchestral Portfolio Conductor in 21st century Australia?
3. What are the skills, both musical and extra-musical, required for success in this music performance sector?

The conductor works in an environment where he/she is assessed via four key points of activity:

1. the pre-engagement period, which is assessed by orchestral management, in terms of communication success with the OPC;
2. the “real time” rehearsal stage, which is assessed by both orchestral management and the player cohort;
3. the performance stage, which is assessed by orchestral management, players, and, increasingly, the audience; and
4. the post-engagement period, which is assessed by the corporate orchestra.

The term “extra-musical” in this study pertains to non-musical conducting matters. This term does not have a musicological meaning in the context of this study.
The majority of this chapter, therefore, is focussed upon the three stages of any conductor’s (including the OPC) work practice: the preparation, rehearsal, and performance stages of every conducting engagement.

### 2.1 Defining the Orchestral Portfolio Conductor

Bennett (2008, p. 2) refers to the form of professional existence, whereby the individual’s work is distributed across a range of organisations and related tasks, as a “protean” career. Alternative labels for such a career include “composite”, “multiple,” and “portfolio” (Bennett, 2008, pp. 8-9).

#### 2.1.1 The protean career

Within Australia, Bennett (2008, p. 2) writes that the vast majority of musicians are self-employed and/or working in a casual employment environment. Bennett (2009a, p. 318) suggests that the individual musician needs to attain and use a suite of administration skills, regardless of the geographical site or employment conditions encountered. Employment tangents, such as music performance, arranging, management, audio engineering, and teaching are regularly encountered (Bennett, 2008, p. 2).

Bennett (2009a, p. 310) argues that social and monetary circumstances often define career choices made by Australian musicians. These circumstances reflect the individual’s professional and extra-professional requirements for success, which, in turn, are defined by the individual (Bennett, 2008, p. 2; Bennett, 2009a, p. 311). Hall (1996, p. 8) additionally emphasises that the individual’s definition of success will change with the passage of time. Citing Mills and Smith, Bennett (2012, p. 14) writes that musicians who merge intuitive and equitable career alliances will ascertain success. Wittry (2007, p. 15) maintains that obtaining success is always a career goal in that “you are always preparing for it.”

Promotion within a corporate entity is usually viewed as a tool for obtaining career advancement. Protean careerists, however, realise that equivalent (and intrinsic) career movement can be gained via infinite pathways (Hall, 1996, p. 8), and is, to an extent, self-determined. Bennett (2009a, p. 312) agrees, but adds that the sector’s highest echelons define success in association with performance accomplishments and levels. An individual’s professional attributes and accomplishments can counter any singular definition of success (Bennett, 2012, p. 8).
2.1.2 The portfolio musician.

The classical music profession is in a continuous process of change (Roxburgh, 2014, p. 1). In response to this constant change, the 21st century portfolio musician tends to be multi-skilled (Bennett, 2012, p. 81). In a survey of nearly 500 musicians, almost 48% stated that they had a portfolio career (Holzenspies, 2009, p. 3), and, as such, seek many employment avenues and roles (Bennett, 2007b, pp. 179-189; Cutler, 2011). Indeed, Bennett (2012, p. 102) has identified over fifty such roles.

In general, portfolio musicians enjoy assorted careers, without the availability of formal corporate advancement frameworks. OPCs, like musicians in general, need to recognise and create potential niche markets, attain and develop entrepreneurial skills, as well as obtain and update necessary pedagogical expertise. Many business aspects are not taught in global tertiary music programs (Bennett, 2007b, pp. 179-189). Wittry (2007, p. 21) confirms that conductors may need to attend board meetings, artistic committee meetings, and education department meetings, as part of a portfolio career. Wittry (2007, p. 141) also writes of the necessity to be available to players.

In 2005, James Strong chaired a review into the financial stability of Australia’s state orchestras, the final report being called “A New Era: Orchestras review report.” Since Strong’s (2005) review, conducting has changed as the number of orchestral portfolio projects have developed within Australia. The skills base required for the survival of the OPC in the 21st century is constantly changing and expanding (Bennett, 2008, p. 108).

According to Bennett (2008, pp. 108-109), 64% of musicians now believe that business administration is a necessary skill, with human resource management (49%), marketing (45%), and technology (43%) skills also featuring as important. These data were largely generated from surveys of salaried, full-time orchestral players, so it is logical to assume that these figures may be considerably higher for freelance artists, such as OPCs, where business skills are a greater requirement. More recently, and of specific note to the OPC, Bennett (2012, p. 63) writes that three in ten musicians conduct.

Faced with such competition, Bennett (2007b, p. 181; 2008, p. 44) states that musicians (including OPCs) are recommended to become de facto entrepreneurial agents in a digitalised, ever-changing, and worldwide market place. Roxburgh (2014, p. 1) agrees that the speed of change has confronted conductors in recent decades, particularly since 1950. The requirement for business skills is a global issue, and many tertiary institutions now offer courses or modules targeting this area for music students (Bennett, 2007b, p. 185). Over the past quarter of a century, music schools and conservatoires have offered courses and tuition
in entrepreneurial career development, including instruction in publicity skill and writing funding applications (Beeching, 2010, p. 11).

Technology continues to advance and the portfolio musician uses online resources (Bennett, 2012, p. 59), including ePortfolios. This usage is increasingly common, and this subject area is now taught within tertiary level education (Melbourne Graduate School of Education, 2014). Dunbar-Hall, Rowley, Bennett, Blom and Hitchcock (2013, pp. 82-87) comment that portfolio musicians can access websites, such as Flickr, Google, SoundCloud, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Facebook in order to develop and maintain their own online presence. Bartleet, Bennett, Bridgstock, Draper, Harrison and Schippers (2012, p. 34) state that portfolio musicians live and work in the global digitalisation era in their individual attempts to engage with society using contemporary approaches (Bennett, 2012, p. 94).

Mirroring the increasing casualisation of the music performance sector, portfolio musicians may have to migrate in order to find the volume and genre of employment required. Such travel and/or relocation are an accepted part of a musician’s portfolio career. Bennett (2009b, pp. 117-128) comments that reasons for relocation are varied, although the major reason remains the need to secure suitable employment levels. The portfolio musician’s geographical manoeuvrability is at its historical zenith (Bennett, 2012, p. 4). Portfolio musicians may also have to engage with employment in non-musical sectors (Department of Education and Training, 2015). Three in four performance musicians are employed in other professions, especially in service roles (Bennett, 2004, p. 54). Further training, however, can reflect the profession’s continued drive for increased artistic excellence (Bennett, 2012, p. 101).

The development of new relationships and networks, as well as the maintenance and upgrading of existing contacts is important (Bennett, 2012, p. 58; Wittry, 2007, p. 191). Networking is an omnipresent activity and can be a great asset to the portfolio musician. As Hannan informs Bennett (2012, p. 140):

*In my own protean career, everything seems connected: the opportunities for getting new work are the result of expanding professional networks and the broadening of skills through formal and informal learning along the way. Each new opportunity seems to have been made possible by those that preceded it.*

Specific to conducting, Bartleet (2009, p. 14) writes: “my deepest thinking about conducting does not revolve around scores and supposed musical issues. It’s much more about the relationships that I have built with people through music making over the years.”
While Bennett’s years of research cover the working lives and varied employment roles of Australia’s musicians, it does not cover the specific role of the OPC within the Australian classical music sector in the 21st century.

2.1.3 Describing the orchestral portfolio conductor within the extant literature.

The conductor has long been a portfolio musician. The views and work of Bennett (2008), Cutler (2011), Hall (1996), and Holzenspies (2009) can be translated to the orchestral sector. The OPC can be seen, within the extant literature, as a protean careerist and portfolio musician who works:

1. in a variety of different ensembles;
2. across a wide demographic;
3. in a diverse conglomerate of styles, standards and project outcomes; and
4. in the education, community, youth, semi-professional, and professional music ensemble sectors.

2.2 The Current Australian Professional Orchestral Context

The work practices and skills required of the Australian OPC have changed alongside changing market conditions, as the result of a number of reports into the Australian orchestral sector. In order to appreciate the skills required by the OPC, it is logical to examine the history of the orchestral sector that has led to the current context within which an Australian OPC works.

The Australian orchestral profession has been under pressure to change and update its working practices and audience development techniques for over 30 years. In 1981, Alexander Dix (1981, p. 35) recommended “the establishment of a new concert and orchestra administration within the Australian Broadcasting Corporation” (ABC) in what became Music Australia. Dix (1981, p. 35) stated that “control of the individual orchestras will become a State responsibility.” Dix (1981, p. 35) recognised the changing roles of the Australian state orchestras in a sector in which “the community’s demand for other uses for the orchestras has increased.”

Ken Tribe (1985, p. 5) recommended that the ABC orchestras “should be divested to independent local ownership … [and that such divestment is] conditional upon divestment also of the material resources necessary to their support.” Tribe (1985, p. 7) recommended that additional orchestral playing positions be developed if finances became available, and
criticised the ABC orchestras for not updating their respective operating parameters to reflect public opinion (1985, p. 14). Nathan Waks (1992) “recommended that the [ABC] orchestras be allowed to make their own programming decisions and that there should be enhanced transparency of procedures between the orchestras” (Strong, 2005, p. 13).

The Australian government’s *Creative Nation* policy statement of 1994 aimed to “transfer the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (SSO) from the ABC to local control” in order to create a flagship ensemble that “will tour throughout Australia, become a major cultural export and strengthen its program of international recording” (Commonwealth Government of Australia, 1994, pp. 26-27). The passage of time, however, would not see this aim fulfilled to universal acceptance. Lebrecht (2001, p. 333), for example, questioned the effectiveness of Edo de Waart’s period as Chief Conductor to the SSO, so much so that he comments that the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra was a superior ensemble during that period.

In 1996, the Cultural Ministers Council (CMC) (1996, p. 2) “agreed in principle to establish the orchestras as ABC subsidiary companies.” The CMC (1996, p. 2) thought that “the potential for greater local ownership, autonomy and flexibility” would eventuate, although the Council (1996, p. 2) “agreed to monitor the corporatisation process to ensure that no orchestra was financially disadvantaged.”

The Mansfield report (1997, p. 6) endorsed similar divestment along local lines, as Dix and Tribe had previously suggested. The Mansfield report (1997, p. 10) stated that “management of orchestras should not be an ABC priority”, and that “revised funding and structural arrangements for ABC orchestras be developed” (1997, p. 10) with haste. Furthermore, “the medium-term goal of any structural solution should be complete divestment of the orchestras from the ABC” (Mansfield, 1997, p. 45).

All previously-mentioned reports were pre-cursors to the Nugent report (1999), which only served to reinforce the historical mistrust within the profession regarding audience numbers and income, as Ross (2007, pp. 29, 106, 152) and Bennett (2008, p. 29) have shown. In a wide-ranging report recommending structural and financial changes to the sector, Nugent (1999, p. xiii) recommended that Australian state orchestras might “improve artistic standards and revenue and ensure greater operating efficiencies.” Nugent also recommended that orchestral administrations might consider “working proactively with musicians and the relevant union to increase the flexibility of work practices” (Nugent, 1999, p. xiv). In 1999, Australian conductors were reported to be low in quality and not able to

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access the necessary podium time with the country’s professional orchestras to make a noticeable improvement (Nugent, 1999, p. 53).

Strong’ (2005) review confirmed that Australian state–funded orchestras needed to address falling audience numbers and injudicious repertoire choice as part of a solution to significantly enhance income. In response to Strong (2005), and at a time when audience numbers were generally declining, Australian orchestras have attempted to address this issue by attracting new audiences through the programming of more popular repertoire across multiple portfolios. Strong (2005) recommended responsible governance, realistic financing, viable employment arrangements, and sustainable structures. Strong (2005) also recommended the Australian orchestras’ full divestment from the ABC, which subsequently took place in 2006, a quarter of a century after Dix made similar recommendations.

Evidence of the new concert formats adopted by Australian orchestras are seen in these programs for 2015: *The Godfather Live* (Sydney Symphony Orchestra, 2015), *Star Trek: Live in Concert* (Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, 2015), *Doctor Who Symphonic Spectacular* (Adelaïde Symphony Orchestra, 2015a), *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (West Australian Symphony Orchestra, 2015), *Maximus Musicus visits the Orchestra* (Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, 2015), and *Lights, Camera, Action!* (Queensland Symphony Orchestra, 2015). Such changes to a professional orchestra’s portfolio base have brought (and will continue to bring) implications for the skill-base and flexibility required of the Australian OPC.

Although some Australian orchestras have not fully downsized their playing strengths, as outlined by Strong (2005), my career evidence (as both player and conductor) shows the increasing casualisation of the workplace for orchestral musicians, with former full-time salaried positions being covered by casual contracts, when such full-time positions are resigned, at a lesser overall cost to the orchestra concerned.

The OPC will usually be conducting diverse ensembles; from youth choirs to concert bands, community orchestra to professional choirs, and invitational youth orchestras to professional orchestras. The repertoire will be equally diverse for the OPC. It is, however, unlikely that the OPC will be conducting a Mahler symphony, for example, with one of Australia’s six state symphony orchestras. The OPC’s engagements with this level of ensemble are more likely to be drawn from education, family, and outdoor portfolios. The highest level of symphonic conducting is still largely the reserve of the international Guest Conductor or the Chief Conductor/Artistic Director of the respective Australian state orchestra. This is the market reality for the OPC in Australia. In an encouraging sign of
change, Nicholas Carter’s appointment as Principal Conductor to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra from 2016 is evidence that an Australian OPC can be promoted within the Australian classical music sector (Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, 2015b).

In 2015, the six Australian state symphony orchestras will present a total of 82 programs at each orchestra’s respective highest profile concert series. Australian conductors will conduct only 10 of these: Simone Young (three), Nicholas Carter (two), Richard Mills (two), Brett Dean, Paul Dyer, and Benjamin Northey (one each). While this is undoubtedly a positive move, it does serve as proof that the OPC keep flexibility and remain pragmatically realistic about the level of concerts being conducted with professional orchestras. A further analysis of the figures quoted above is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

An analysis of Australian conductors conducting Australian professional symphony orchestras within the highest portfolio of engagement in 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Orchestra</th>
<th>Name of 2015 Series</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
<th>Number of Australian conductors employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Symphony Orchestra</td>
<td>Master/Great Classics</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1 (Young)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Symphony Orchestra</td>
<td>Individually named Hamer Hall programs</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1 (Northey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Symphony Orchestra</td>
<td>Maestro</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 (Young)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Australian Symphony Orchestra</td>
<td>Master/Classics</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3 (Young, Dyer, Carter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide Symphony Orchestra</td>
<td>Master/Great Classics</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2 (Carter, Dean)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra</td>
<td>Master/Special</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2 (Mills x 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data in Table 1 are taken from the orchestras’ websites and based on their 2015 seasons. The figures show that only 8.2% of Australia’s leading orchestral programs will be conducted by Australian conductors. If this level of conducting is unavailable to the OPC with Australia’s professional orchestras, then other avenues might be explored for this to occur.

Other portfolios with professional orchestras exist: family, education, pops, and contemporary music are just four. Each of these portfolios has more Australian conductors plying their trade than in the symphonic subscription series shown in Table 1. An increasing trend with Australia’s state symphony orchestras is film track performances. As noted earlier in section 2.2, titles such as The Godfather and The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King are being performed in 2015, but these shows, like so many in other portfolios, are known as “buy-ins,” because, as my career experience confirms, the entire show is contracted, including overseas conductors.

In summation, the OPC resides in the highly competitive entertainment sector (McGuire, 2010, p. 3). With so many diverse entertainment possibilities, including sport, cinema, dining, and the arts, all vying for the country’s disposable finance, the Australian public has become allegedly more unpredictable as to how their entertainment dollars are spent (Strong, 2005, p. 11). Concert series now cover many more styles and genres than a decade ago. In such a large country with such a sparse population base, the sector has a small slice of the entertainment pie and continues to change (Bennett, 2012, p. 64).

Despite the changing nature of the Australian professional orchestral sector, there are some constants in the 21st century for the OPC. Although the type and number of orchestral portfolios (e.g., family concerts, education concerts, popular music collaborations, cinema scores) to be conducted has changed, the OPC still needs to participate in the preparation, rehearsal, and performance stages of musical projects. As befits a PhD in music performance, these stages will be analysed and reviewed as part of this thesis. The argument and relevance of this analysis and review is that regardless of the type of orchestra, portfolio, or repertoire conducted, there are certain aspects of the OPC’s role that are constant, and can help ensure success over a career. The recordings submitted for this PhD in music performance are a direct consequence of these three musical project stages.
2.3 The Preparation Stage

The preparation stage of any conducting project will usually fall into two categories: musical preparation and extra-musical preparation. The former has been artistically important for centuries, the latter an increasingly important part of a career in the 21st century.

The importance of the preparation stage for the OPC is paramount. It is crucial for the OPC to realise that he/she is not just preparing for a specific project, but also the possibility of return engagements. Orchestral players and management have long and often selective memories, and a conducting career is built upon return engagements. Competition levels are higher than ever now, and will only increase in time. As Wittry (2007, p. 210) states:

*You will be judged on everything you do. The saying often used in the field is “You are only as good as your last concert.” If you do not think you have the time to adequately prepare without sacrificing other important things in your life, then learn to say a tactful “no”.*

2.3.1 Musical preparation.

The success of the rehearsal and performance stages for a professional conductor mirrors the level of preparation undertaken. Green (2004, p. 215) confirms that performance levels reflect preparation levels, and that stage histrionics cannot change this fact. Schuller (1997, p. 12) agrees, adding that outstanding musical direction is obtained through study alone. In 2007, while participating in one of Symphony Services International's (SSI) conducting modules, I was asked by one of the maestro tutors “What gives you the right to conduct this piece?” It was a question that I had not previously considered and I could not supply a suitable response. The maestro saved my discomfort by adding that, “a conductor must know the score better than any member of the orchestra.”

Orchestras traditionally evaluate conductors very quickly. In my bassoon career, I have experienced many occasions when conductors’ scores have not had the correct information regarding rehearsal letters/figures and the use of bar numbers. Time is lost and players can become tetchy. Rehearsal aids are inserted into scores prior to the opening rehearsal (Gehrken, 1919, p. 158). As discussed earlier, Wittry (2007) suggests that conductors should treat every professional engagement as if it is their last and the preparation stage as if the engagement is their first.

Ormandy believed that a conductor’s score preparation includes technical and artistic aspects (Green, 2004, p. xi). On the technical side, an academic understanding of the score is paramount, including instrumentation details, melodic shape, harmonic content, and structure.
Meier (2009, p. 223) and Roxburgh (2014, p. 72) both agree. This process leads to the conductor devising a beating plan in order to physically conduct the work in question. Such a beating plan may involve unorthodox styles of non-verbal communication, especially if non-traditional music notation is being conducted (Green, 2004, p.169; Roxburgh, 2014, p.75). At the conclusion of this technical process, the conductor can able to deconstruct the compositional process (Meier, 2009, p. 223), and the conductor able to give a memorised verbal account of the piece. The conductor uses significant aural skills when bringing a score to life, especially when conducting a world premiere (Roxburgh, 2014, pp. 4, 122). As with all repertoire, the conductor is only ready to rehearse the ensemble when such levels of preparatory competence have been achieved (Green, 2004, p. 2).

Score preparation techniques such as the “zigzag way,” devised by the conductor Eleazar de Carvalho, are often useful. Meier (2009, pp. 243, 257) advises that the “zigzag way” identifies players and/or sections that require most assistance from the conductor on an individual bar basis, thus creating an outline for the conductor to use in preparation, rehearsal, and performance stages, as if it were a child’s dot-to-dot drawing exercise.

Having mastered the theoretical preparation of a score, the conductor examines the musical and expressive aspects, establishing melodic and/or harmonic interest that he/she wishes to bring out, and finding suitable ways of achieving this with the orchestra. This will often involve a deep technical knowledge of each instrumental group (Schuller, 1997, pp. 6-7; Watkins, 2007, p. 3). The artistic result may also be enhanced by acquiring additional information pertaining to the composer, as well as to the historical and stylistic context of the work (Meier, 2009, p. 131; Ross, 2007, p. 500). Bartleet (2013, p. 1) believes that the 21st century conductor takes “the role of subservient interpreter of composers’ works” via the “pre-modern concepts of divinity and sanctity” (Bartleet, 2013, p. 1). This philosophy towards the sanctity of composers’ wishes continues the late 20th century line of thinking, as described by Schuller (1997, p. 4). Although much of the literature recommends the importance of adhering to the composer’s wishes, there is still significant room for personal musical interpretation, thus adding the conductor’s individual interpretative and creative forces to a score.

Memorisation can be a crucial tool for a conductor to enable visual (non-verbal) communication with the musicians. Players (generally) appreciate conductors who can fully engage with them (Gehrken, 1919, pp. 154-155). One of the major benefits of memorisation is that the conductor is communicating with the players as well as indicating the musical intent, which is a major psychological advantage for the conductor to obtain.
Conducting from memory, or “by heart” (Pritchard, 2011) as Mark Wigglesworth suggests in an interview, is a controversial topic, and it can be seen as a 21st century professional necessity, which can be more deferential to the composer in the artistic results that follow (Hostetter, 2009). Conducting from memory can be seen as not only a significant conducting aid, but also as commercially important. Following the Strong (2005) report, and in the increasing box-office nature of the Australian profession, conducting from memory can be a performance stage skill expected by audience members (Hostetter, 2009). This effect on audiences, however, is not a new phenomenon for conductors (Lebrecht, 2001, p. 32).

The gestural path chosen when conducting from memory has potential to please audiences yet ire reviewers (Buzacott, 2014). As Lebrecht (2001, p. 9) writes, “every critic has his favourite performer, who, likely as not, is the next-door critic’s bete noire”. Some people in the profession believe that conducting from memory “should be a matter of secondary importance” (Schuller, 1997, p. 56) and that “unfortunately it has been made into a major issue by some critics, writers, conductors and their publicists” (Schuller, 1997, p. 56). The legendary conductor Lorin Maazel became a great proponent of conducting from memory (Wroe, 2011). Schuller and Szell believe that conducting from memory is an individual’s choice (Charry, 1987; Schuller, 1997, p. 56). Ultimately, as Meier (2009, p. 342) asks, “Will memorization result in a better performance?”

Hostetter (2009) believes that to conduct successfully from memory requires three things: time, trust, and a decent memory for sound. Whilst these elements are important, a further element, eye contact, might be viewed as equally important, for it can help the players know when and how to produce sound. In the rehearsal stage, for example, eye contact must be established quickly in order to keep players interested in the conductor’s aims (Seaman, 2013, p. 43). With eyes free to engage players, conductors can use the principal method of soundless contact between people (Scherchen, 1933, p. 15). Such non-verbal communication can then be omnipresent between the conductor and the orchestra (Colson, 2012, p. 93). Meier (2009, p. 342) states that enhanced eye contact adds to the music’s impassioned delivery. Rattle believes that eye contact is “where the real stuff is” (Rees, 2013). Rattle continues: “It’s kind of lonely up there and it’s kind of really nice if you have a bit of contact because you’re not making a sound and it’s very nice if you can enjoy a phrase together”

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6 Lorin Maazel’s career saw appointments as Music Director to numerous orchestras including the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. [http://www.maestromaazel.com/#/bio/c22j5](http://www.maestromaazel.com/#/bio/c22j5).
(Rees, 2013). Gergiev\(^8\) states: “everything I do, I try to do relying on expression and visual contact” (Wakin, 2012). Clearly, eye contact with musicians is a vital skill and can equate to higher levels of artistic outcomes for the conductor (Seaman, 2013, p. 11). Although important, however, eye contact will vary with each work conducted (Roxburgh, 2014, pp. 13, 15, 16, 116). Eye contact is important for the conductor to establish with the players, and memorisation has the obvious potential to help this goal materialise. Some scores will be too difficult to memorise, however, and, in such circumstances, eye contact will still be possible between the conductor and the players, although lessened in nature.

Accepting engagements at short notice may lead to enhanced future career development, as the conductor will not know what transpires from an engagement unless the engagement is undertaken. The potential of such opportunities is considerable, regardless of the work or ensemble being conducted (Green, 2004, p. 8). My career experience has seen many conductors succeed in short notice engagements and be invited back to conduct other concerts in the future. The pressing nature of short notice engagements and the lack of preparation time may require the use of technology (e.g., iTunes, YouTube, SoundCloud, etc.) as a preparation tool (Attard, 2008; Green, 2004, p.139). A recording, for example, may be beneficial (Green, 2004, p. 168), although there are clear authenticity concerns for any conductor undertaking such use.

Players are made aware of the extent and detail of the conductor’s preparation during the rehearsal stage. Players expect consistency of the conductor throughout the rehearsal stage (Meier, 2009, p. 3). Although the entire score needs to be learned, the conductor needs to be aware of the more difficult passages (Wood, 1945, p. 84), and it is recommended that conductors prepare these sections until fluency has been obtained (Meier, 2009, p. 221).

Concerti can be categorised into two sections: works that require rehearsal before a soloist arrives, and those that do not (Green, 2004, p. 198). My experiences show that there is a current trend towards professional orchestras not rehearsing a concerto without the soloist(s), especially if the concerto is well-known (e.g., Mendelssohn’s *Violin Concerto in E minor*, Mozart’s *Clarinet Concerto in A major*, and Tchaikovsky’s *Piano Concerto No. 1 in Bb minor*). Regardless of this, it is a soloist’s professional expectation that an orchestra is prepared upon his/her arrival (Wittry, 2007, p. 157). The conductor is required to triangulate communication with both soloist(s) and orchestra, and experience levels can play a pivotal

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\(^8\) Valery Gergiev is (at the time of writing) Principal Conductor to the London Symphony Orchestra and Artistic and General Director to the Mariinsky Theatre. [http://mariinsky.us/valery-gergiev/](http://mariinsky.us/valery-gergiev/).
role in the performance outcome of a concerto (Green, 2004, p. 198), when occasionally the unforseen occurs.

In non-standard repertoire and/or world premieres, the conductor needs to communicate conviction in the genre and an understanding of the work’s direction in order to help the ensemble efficiently assimilate the repertoire (Slatkin, 2012, p. 71). If the composer attends during the rehearsal period, greater insight into his/her thoughts may be obtained, which may help realise his/her score’s intentions (Green, 2004, p. 168). Slatkin (2012, p. 65) comments that such collaborations may not always be successful, and that tact may be required. Extant repertoire can survive a bad performance, but a contemporary composer’s career can receive significant harm from a poor world premiere (Roxburgh, 2014, p. 3).

2.3.2 Extra–musical preparation

My experiences as both a bassoonist and a conductor, which Schuller (1997, p. 7) corroborates, confirm that rehearsal efficiency is a key aim for a professional conductor. Conducting efficiency is a result of preparation levels, both musically and technically, in any given repertoire. In practice, efficient rehearsals are often assessed by players as the speed at which a conductor completes each rehearsal.

A conductor’s rehearsal planning begins long before the podium is seen and is part of the preparation stage. Wittry (2007, p. 155) recommends that the rehearsal schedule (including movement details and timings) is agreed to with orchestral administrations no later than 28 days (the industry standard in the United States of America) before the engagement commences. Wittry’s recommendation may change with each individual orchestra’s work practice and employment conditions, which the conductor is required to abide by (Wittry, 2007, p. 176). Green (2004, pp. 210, 189) comments that a conductor plans the rehearsal so that overtime is not accrued, and that he/she use the published rehearsal schedule. Rehearsing every note at every rehearsal will not usually be an option on time grounds (Wittry, 2007, p. 156).

The “big-to-small” rehearsal approach has long been a staple of the orchestral profession (Boult, 1963, p. 18). This occurs when conductors rehearse the repertoire in an order dictated by the decreasing number of orchestral personnel required (Wittry, 2007, pp. 187-188; Wood, 1945, p. 82). Psychologically, this approach can have a positive effect on how the orchestral players view the conductor, both in terms of the rehearsal period and the post-engagement period, when the conductor is discussed via surveys, orchestral players and artistic committees (Seaman, 2013, p. 111). Occasionally, the largest work in terms of
personnel coincides with the most difficult score, and, in such cases, Wittry (2007, p. 187) advises beginning a rehearsal with the most taxing work.

2.4 The Rehearsal Stage

Although the preparation stage is the most important stage for the conductor, it is during the rehearsal stage that an orchestra appraises the conductor’s effectiveness. The rehearsal stage requires communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal), leadership skills, musical skills, and conducting the rehearsal.

2.4.1 Communication skills.

Musicians usually have significant expertise in communicating with other people (Bennett, 2012, p. 56). The conductor’s communication skills can be categorised as verbal and non-verbal and he/she uses these varied skills in as collegial manner as possible in order to meet the aims of each engagement. Communication requires patience and is fundamental to a professional conductor’s longevity (Wittry, 2007, p. 141). Patience usually involves time, but time is not always on the conductor’s side. In interview, Robertson⁹ states that successful communication between a conductor and an orchestra can be almost instantaneous (Fallon, 2014). He recalls that a timeframe of 5 to 10 minutes is not uncommon for a conductor to prove his/her worth (Fallon, 2014).

The literature suggests that a conductor respect the players (Fallon, 2014) and never be imperious (Mitropoulos, 2014). The literature recommends that care is taken by conductors when addressing players (Green, 2004, p. 120; Wittry, 2007, p. 185) and the ensuing impact of verbal communications may also need to be considered in advance (Wittry, 2007, p. 57). Part of communication skills can be listening to others, and Robertson recommends that conductors heed advice offered by a specialist instrumentalist if specialist information is forthcoming (Fallon, 2014). Despite the adverse warnings above, the rehearsal stage is also an opportunity for respect to be earned and cooperation gained (Watkins, 2007, p. 9).

With community and youth ensembles, the OPC may consider assisting orchestral players more with technical aspects than he/she would professional players. A full knowledge of orchestral instruments is an important factor in creating high levels of art with a community orchestra (Seaman, 2013, p. 22). In certain repertoire, verbalisation is needed

⁹ David Robertson is (at the time of writing) Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. http://www.opus3artists.com/artists/david-robertson.
(Meier, 2009, p. 350), but the literature recommends that verbal communications are generally restricted (Meier, 2009, p. 350; Wittry, 2007, p. 190). A conductor’s aim, with a professional orchestra, is to arguably communicate more to an ensemble through physical gesture than verbal interaction. The amount of verbalisation, specifically for the OPC, will vary with the differentiation of the ensemble genre and standard conducted.

Conducting gestures range from the physically large (e.g., Barenboim, Boulez, Challender, and Young) to the more economical (e.g., Fritzsch, Gergiev, Rattle, and Verbitsky). There is no correct manner in which to conduct, rather, it is a matter of providing the means to assist the individual to attain the best results in order to create musical art. Regardless of the scale of physicality, technical clarity remains fundamentally important to a conductor’s success. The artistic impacts of gesture use and choice are enormous. Whilst in Melbourne in 2006, a SSI maestro stated that “a conductor should look like the music going to be conducted.”

In conclusion, the importance of the OPC’s verbal communication skills cannot be underestimated. The tone, direction, and frequency of verbal communication from a conductor to an orchestra can have a dramatic effect on the success of the rehearsal, and the relationship with the player cohort. Conductors might consider showing their artistic intent through non-verbal communication in preference to talking about the music. A conductor’s overall gestural technique should consequently be rich and diverse enough to obtain this communication goal (Green, 2004, p. 41).

2.4.2 Leadership skills.

In 1978, Burns introduced the ideas and theories of “transactional” and “transformational” leadership. Burns states that transactional leadership “occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of the exchange of valued things” (Schultz, 2003). He subsequently defines transformational leadership as occurring “when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Schultz, 2003).

Leadership skills can define a conductor and that a conductor can show leadership through his/her post and conviction (Wittry, 2007, pp. 3, 77). As such, “knowledge of what followers want or need, and a spirit of excitement and commitment that energizes people” (Wittry, 2007, p. 79) will be required.

Transactional leadership is used in a more dictatorial environment, but is, however, sometimes necessary with extremely limited rehearsal time, and/or with certain repertoire
styles. This type of leadership is used by conductors who wield considerable powers in terms of both artistic creation, and, crucially, employment terms and conditions (Wittry, 2007, p. 41). Postema (2008, p. 32) agrees that, historically, leadership was concentrated on the conductor and not the players. In the 21st century, dictatorial displays can be frowned upon by some ensembles (Roxburgh, 2014, p. 16).

As discussed earlier (see section 2.2), the OPC’s role mirrors how orchestral workplace conditions have changed over the last 25 years with 21st century collegial orchestras expecting more transformational rather than transactional guidance (Wittry, 2007, pp. 41, 77). Schuller (1997, p. 50) confirms this change within the profession and Lebrecht (2001, p. 330) concurs. In the 21st century, very few conductors have the executive control of the past, yet all conductors still shoulder the overall responsibility for a project’s success (Wittry, 2007, p. 41). Behaviour akin to the dictatorial maestri of the past has largely been banished in the 21st century (Roxburgh, 2014, p. 118).

My career experience reports that today’s salaried full-time orchestral musicians rarely have to approach their work with such psychological symptoms as fear and loathing, or in trepidation under the baton of transactional conductors. Professional orchestral players have never, arguably, enjoyed such “freedom” as they do in 2015. Players can interact with orchestral executive teams: player board members are de rigueur, players form artistic committees (some of which can be very powerful placing artistic planners and managers in localised corporate power struggles). Players have access to post-concert conductor surveys and can self-govern orchestras (Lebrecht, 2001, p. 149). The London Symphony Orchestra (London Symphony Orchestra, 2012) is one such ensemble, and other London orchestras have followed this lead (Bennett, 2007a, p. 58). All of these aspects place emphasis on the conductor’s leadership skills, for it is return engagements that make a career.

In summary, transactional and transformational leadership theories have informed understanding of the 21st century OPC’s role, with the latter preferred by the profession at large. Transactional leadership techniques are today reserved for certain types of repertoire where considerable verbal input is needed from the OPC. Leadership of each orchestra requires the OPC to have knowledge of the varied employment rules and regulations, as well as different artistic and managerial expectations for each orchestra, before deciding which style(s) of leadership are used for any given project or engagement. This skills and knowledge set can perhaps be described as contextual knowledge of workplace practices. Within Australia, each professional ex-ABC state orchestra will be different in this regard and it has effectively been thus since the devolvement of state orchestras into public
companies limited by guarantee following recommendations made within the Strong (2005) report.

2.4.3 Conducting the rehearsal.

The art of rehearsing an orchestra has many challenges. In the increasingly commercialised orchestral world, rehearsal time is often short and the need for efficiency is great. Time allocated varies from orchestra to orchestra within the myriad of different orchestral portfolios. Ormandy describes the rehearsal stage as the second stage of the conductor’s work, when the conductor aims to have an orchestra playing the repertoire in the same way that he/she has prepared it aurally, but within a collegial setting of mutual respect (Green, 2004, p. xii).

Irrespective of the engagement portfolio, two of the most important aspects for a conductor to consider are first impressions and efficiency (Lebrecht, 2001, p.8; Wittry, 2007, pp. 57, 190). The latter can be especially true of conducting concerti (Green, 2004, p. 197), when contrasting artistic views can be observed (Meier, 2009, p. 299). A preliminary meeting between conductor and soloist is therefore advised to collaboratively shape the musical interpretation (Green, 2004, p. 198).

The conductor’s rehearsal efficiency rate is shaped by the conductor’s and players’ preparation stages, as well as the difficulty of the repertoire involved. The literature recommends that the conductor would be unwise to attempt to pre-empt likely rehearsal issues in order to save time (Wittry, 2007, p. 185), for players can see this as being non-collegial. A major factor in obtaining efficiency is not to ask players to replay a passage without having a good reason, certainly not because the passage had been conducted poorly (Wittry, 2007, p. 188). Wittry (2007, p. 189) suggests that a conductor can show faith in players, for it is usually the playing cohort that finds the answers required to address problems in the repertoire (Meier, 2009, p. 350). Young (2012) agrees and specifically states about core symphonic repertoire:

> It’s just expected that the orchestra keeps that repertoire kind of in their bodies and in their brains and in their heads … if you want to call it sort of “seriously advanced and extended corporate memory,” that’s kind of what it is.

Regardless of the type of rehearsal engagement being conducted (e.g., subscription, education, family, etc.), the OPC’s aim is to be efficient, as players both like and expect this.
In interview, Northey (2013) suggests that many professional orchestral players rate conductor efficiency by how quickly the rehearsal call ends.

2.5 The Performance Stage

The performance is the public face of the conductor’s work and is the culmination of the conductor’s engagement process. It is when the conductor brings the art to life (Green, 2004, pp. xii, 211). Boult (1963, p. 45) likens the conductor’s performance stage to that of an “engine driver; we supply the motive power, keeping our eye on the track with an occasional thought for danger signals, yet mainly possessed with the relentless flow of the sound to its climax and thence to its inevitable close.” Non-verbal audience communication, including the choice of performance attire, can positively affect communication with both audience and concert reviewers (Cohn, 2011; Slatkin, 2012, p. 276).

2.5.1 The walk to the podium.

The walk to the podium involves both physical and psychological processes and can set the tone for both audience and orchestra. Walking successfully (and safely) through an orchestra to the podium is not the conductor’s only concern. The conductor thinks about how the piece begins: tempo, dynamics, mood, rhythm, and instrumentation are all considered. This is obvious and most important. What is difficult is subsequently marrying communication, concert etiquette, and the physicality and psychology involved to the forthcoming musical experience (Watkins, 2007, p. 10).

2.5.2 Conducting the orchestra.

The pre-performance rituals having concluded, the conductor faces the orchestra. Looking around the orchestra can portray a confident air to the players. Glancing over the concert platform also gives the conductor the opportunity to ensure that the full orchestral forces required are on stage.

Mood setting is pivotal and the conductor can arguably take his/her time before commencing. Some repertoire is best started almost as quickly as the conductor has arrived at the podium, whilst there are others that require an alternative use of atmosphere. Expectancy and excitement can engage non-verbal communication with both orchestra and audience. As Green (2004, p. 211) muses, the performance will not start without the conductor. Conductors direct performances, but it is the players that produce sound and errors can be made in both directions. The literature recommends that conductors should abstain from showing any
disappointment in such circumstances (Green, 2004, p. 211). Any unfortunate body language can take away from the mood and ambience that the music has created.

### 2.5.3 Presentation skills in the performance stage

Presentation skills have formed an increasing part of a conductor’s role during the performance stage of some portfolio engagements, particularly in education concerts. Leonard Bernstein, for example, regularly presented concerts with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the “Young People’s Concerts” being particularly noteworthy from their debut in 1958 (The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc., 2015).

Slatkin (2012, p. 82) believes that presentation skills are a mandatory requirement for conductors and that the ability to speak coherently is crucial, especially when addressing concert goers (Wittry, 2007, p. 30). Wittry (2007, p. 203) writes of the requirement for conductors to have public speaking skills that can easily translate to concert presentation. Bennett (2012, pp. 34, 35, 137) writes of the skill of audience communication despite her opinion that this is a skill that many conductors may not instinctively possess. Spano adds that this includes differentiating platform deportment when talking (Wittry, 2007, p. 36). Tertiary music establishments have started to recognise the need for conductors to have presentation skills (Norwegian Academy of Music, 2014).

### 2.6 Personal Traits and Characteristics

As in many employment sectors, conductors are required to possess certain character attributes, and these need to be developed in order for conductors to progress. Wittry (2007, pp. 13-17) writes of the need for conductors to have a positive outlook, integrity, humility, discipline, persistence, assertiveness, assurance, and to project the physical appearance that the individual wishes to publicly project. Green (2004, pp. 213-214) suggests that being truthful, showing sincerity, being patient, exhibiting courage, and showing persistence are all pre-requisites to a successful conducting career. My career as an OPC confirms that all of the above personal traits and characteristics are required within the profession.

### 2.7 Conclusion

The literature demonstrates some aspects of the contemporary conductor’s work, specifically within the stages of preparation, rehearsal, and performance, as well as some extra-musical aspects of the profession. Much of the reviewed literature has been derived from pedagogical texts (i.e., Gehrkens, 1919; Green, 2004; Meier, 2009; Schuller, 1997;
Wittry, 2007) and from accounts in online sources, as well as from the popular press, which refer to working with professional orchestras. Although important to the study, the pedagogical texts and related materials act as “advice” to conductors in general, often making the assumption that the orchestras conducted are professional ones. This identifies a key knowledge gap, as the OPC’s work with professional orchestras will only be part of his/her employment portfolio.

Bennett’s years of research have given considerable insight into what it is to be a portfolio musician in the 21st century. What is not known or written about are the day-to-day work experiences and life choices of the OPC, and specifically those within the Australian classical music profession. This PhD in music performance aims to identify what these experiences and life choices are, and, subsequently, make recommendations for future study of the phenomenon both in Australia and internationally.

The following research question, as previously examined within the extant literature, will be further analysed via examination of my own performances (Case Studies 2, 3, and 4):

1. What is an Orchestral Portfolio Conductor?

Via examination of my own performances, the following research questions will therefore be addressed:

2. What are the life experiences and work practices of an Orchestral Portfolio Conductor in 21st century Australia?

3. What are the skills, both musical and extra-musical, required for success in this music performance sector?
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this PhD in music performance was to examine the life experiences and work practices of the Orchestral Portfolio Conductor (OPC). The study was undertaken as an autoethnographic case study in which my experiences as the OPC provided a lens through which this phenomenon could be investigated. The aims of the study included identifying the nature of the work of a 21st century OPC, and how this is realised in the case studies under investigation. This PhD in music performance addresses the following research questions:

1. What is an Orchestral Portfolio Conductor?
2. What are the life experiences and work practices of an Orchestral Portfolio Conductor in 21st century Australia?
3. What are the skills, both musical and extra-musical, required for success in this music performance sector?

To investigate the phenomenon, this autoethnographic study took a two-pronged approach. Firstly, a collective case study through semi-structured interview of the work experiences and contemporary work practices of five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia was undertaken (see section 3.3.1/Table 2). Secondly, I analysed my personal experience of preparation, rehearsal, and performance stages of three performance-based conducting case studies representing a cross-section of ensemble genre. For the purposes of this study, engagements with a sessional freelance string ensemble, a full-time salaried professional symphony orchestra, and a community orchestra were the focus of this PhD in music performance (see sections 3.3.1 and 3.7).

3.2 Theoretical Framework

This qualitative investigation drew from the methods and techniques of autoethnographic inquiry and case study. In the following sub-section, I outline the key aspects of autoethnography, with specific emphasis on those most relevant to the present study.
3.2.1 Defining “autoethnography.”

Autoethnography is a branch of ethnography. Ethnography has been described as an analysis of people’s experiences and viewpoints within the setting of their normal existence (Gay, 2009, p. 13), with people viewed as members of the investigation (Freebody, 2003, p. 76). Ethnography has also been described as the scientific craft of depicting people within a given setting (Ezzy, 2005, p. 161).


Specific to music, Bartleet and Ellis (2009, p. 7) write that autoethnography is a self-led investigation joining an individual’s experiences and practices surrounding a phenomenon. The same authors (2009, p. 9) comment that autoethnographic accounts emphasise an approach that focuses on encouraging musicians to describe their professional practices in a more expressive and personal fashion. Furthermore, these authors (2009, pp. 9, 10) also state that one purpose of a musical autoethnography is to affect other musicians to critically analyse their own performance and career experiences. This further emphasises the appropriateness of autoethnography for studying practices related to music performance.

Essentially, autoethnography allows researchers to draw on their own experiences as a means to understanding a particular phenomenon, thereby increasing comprehension and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Methodologically, autoethnography blends life and career occurrences with ethnographic mechanisms and approaches (SAGE, 2012).

In considering the limitations of autoethnography as a research methodology, Holt (2003, p. 3) argues that “autoethnography is at the boundaries of academic research because such accounts do not sit comfortably with traditional criteria used to judge qualitative inquiries.” Lindlof and Taylor (2011, pp. 310-311) write that despite autoethnography becoming more popular during the 1990s, this research methodology was not universally accepted. Nevertheless, the use of autoethnography provides unique insights into aspects of human experience, particularly from the perspective of those who live the phenomenon. As this study sought to investigate the skills held and the life choices made by the OPC, autoethnography was the most suitable method to capture both this experience and phenomenon of the OPC.
In this PhD in music performance, I draw upon my own experiences as an OPC in order to develop insights into the life and work experiences of an OPC. I seek to comprehend and understand the complexities of the phenomenon through the documentation of my experience via video observation, field and diary notes, and score annotations. I have provided a brief life and career history account (see Chapter 1) in order to illustrate and demonstrate my interest and experience with the phenomenon, thus establishing the context for the investigation. The phenomenon will be further explored through the documentation and critical examination of my work during three professional engagements with (a) a sessional freelance string ensemble (including invited advanced students), (b) a full-time salaried professional symphony orchestra, and (c) a community orchestra.

3.2.2 Defining “case study.”

Case studies have been a qualitative descriptive research tool since the early 1920s (SAGE, 2012) and have been defined in various forms since. Gerring (2004, p. 341) describes case study as a detailed examination of a phenomenon in order to derive knowledge over a bigger cross-section of phenomena. Lichtman (2006, p. 74) writes that case study is an objective research tool used to help identify knowledge pertaining to a phenomenon. Stake (1995, p. xi) states that case study helps the researcher to better understand the order of events, the focus of the phenomenon, and the singularity and difficulties of that individual phenomenon.

Furthermore, Stake (1995, pp. 3-4) writes of the concepts pertaining to three types of case study: the intrinsic, the instrumental, and the collective. The intrinsic case study occurs when the main aim is to understand the issues pertaining to an individual and often unique case. The instrumental case study serves to scrutinise a phenomenon of interest through the lens of one or more cases. The collective (or “multiple”) case study involves the analysis of several cases or interviews to create a collective understanding regarding the research questions and phenomenon.

In this PhD in music performance, I use instrumental case study as a means to investigate the phenomenon of the life and work practices of the OPC. Additionally, I use collective case study in a series of semi-structured interviews with five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia.
3.3 Data Collection Methods and Techniques

The data were collected in various forms using ethnographical methods and techniques, including interviews, audio-visual recordings, observations, field notes, and reflexive diary entries. Semi-structured interviews with five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia were recorded on a camcorder, and transcripts were produced. Audio-visual recordings of rehearsal and performance stages were taken with a camcorder and analysed in order to isolate the musical skills required by an OPC in the 21st century. A range of rehearsals was recorded throughout the study’s duration in order to enable thorough examination of the OPC’s work, although rehearsal recording of Case Studies 2, 3, and 4 was not possible due to artist/ensemble requests. Observations were noted in field notes and a reflexive diary throughout the period of the study.

The professional experiences and perceptions of five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia pertaining to the conducting profession were elicited through structured recorded interview. Transcripts were produced and member checked by the interviewees prior to use in this exegesis. Member checking is an important aspect to the study as it develops trustworthiness of the study to the reader (Stake, 2010, pp. 126-127).

3.3.1 Collective case study of interviews.

The art of interviewing has been accepted as a leading research technique (King, 2010, p. 6). Holstein (1999, p. 105) states that interviews can help to create data regarding a phenomenon. Seale (2007, p. 25) comments that the process of interview has the potential to extract data from hitherto private individuals. Kvale (2007, p. 1) suggests that data are produced from the intercommunication between the inquirer and a knowledgeable respondent.

Kvale (2007, p. 55) writes of the importance of interviews occurring at a venue that allows the respondent to feel at ease, thus maximising the opportunity to gather data relevant to the phenomenon. The interviews pertaining to this PhD in music performance were conducted in an office environment, with the exception of one, which took place in a restaurant. As Kvale (2007, p. 55) suggests, a semi-structured script was used with set questions allowing for subsequent impromptu questioning as each interview progressed.

This semi-structured interview method was employed with five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia (see Appendix A for the questions posed in the semi-structured interview). The purpose of the interviews was to gain current industry insight pertaining to the skills, life choices, and work patterns of the OPC. The interviewees were
selected because of their professional standing, their specific field knowledge of and insight into the professional conductor’s world, and that of the entire orchestral profession. These administrators have specific knowledge as to the skills and requirements of an OPC in order that he/she may succeed in this 21st century Australian profession.

The interviewees are identified as:

1. Interview Participant 1 (IP1);
2. Interview Participant 2 (IP2);
3. Interview Participant 3 (IP3);
4. Interview Participant 4 (IP4); and
5. Interview Participant 5 (IP5).

As Kvale (2007, p. 55) suggests, I outlined the aims and purposes of the study with each interviewee prior to the commencement of each interview. All interviews were conducted by me. The audio was recorded on a camcorder with one exception, when notes were hand written notes due to the interview participant’s choice of a restaurant venue for the interview. All transcripts were prepared by me before these documents were circulated to each respective interviewee who then had the opportunity to revise the transcript as part of member checking.

The interviews collected data that reveal insight into the work practices, both musical and extra-musical, of a professional conductor in the 21st century. The interviews focused on the work practices of the OPC in terms of skills, the knowledge required by conductors in the 21st century, the musical outcomes and extra-musical awareness to the role, as well as the life practices required of conductors in the 21st century, based on the understanding and experience of orchestral administrations.

3.3.2 Conducting case studies.

Three performance-based case studies (in each of which I conducted in music performance) were undertaken, each reflecting a specific community of engagement in the Australian orchestral sector, thus appropriately reflecting the broad spectrum of the OPC’s career.

The first conducting case study (Case Study 2) was with the Camerata of St. John’s, a sessional freelance string ensemble (Camerata of St. John’s, 2014). In addition to the
Camerata’s core players for this event, there were full-time salaried and professional freelance players, as well as invited students in the ensemble. The students had been tutored by Camerata members prior to the rehearsal stage commencing. The repertoire chosen by the Camerata was *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* by Penderecki. The engagement period was April 25 to 26, 2011, as part of the Camerata’s Easter concert, *The Glad Tomorrow*. The venue for both rehearsal and performance stages was St. John’s Cathedral, Brisbane.

The second conducting case study (Case Study 3) was with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra (WASO) – a full-time salaried professional symphony orchestra. This was an education concert for Year 12 students, at which the students would hear excerpts from set works on which they would be examined later in the same year. The repertoire selected by WASO for this performance was *Suite: L’oiseau de Feu* (1919) by Stravinsky, the first movement from *Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op 67* by Beethoven, and the second movement from *Symphony, Op 21* by Webern. The engagement period was February 27 to 28, 2012. The venue for both rehearsal and performance stages was Hale School, Perth.

The third conducting case study (Case Study 4) was with the Sydney-based Willoughby Symphony Orchestra (WSO) – a community orchestra. The Australian community music performance sector is well established (Schippers, 2013, p. 454) and WSO is a leading example. At the apex of the genre’s quality pyramid (Willoughby City Council, 2013), WSO operates in a completely different way to any other community ensemble for which I have conducted; it pays its players a nominal fee. It attracts current and former professional players, music students, and gifted amateurs. The WSO represents the archetypal conglomerate cross-section in music society (Cahill, 2010, pp. 1-2). The WSO auditions all players and playing standard is the only criterion for membership.

Due to the WSO’s player fee structure, it does not fully reflect the usual parameters of conducting a community orchestra. In my experience, conducting community orchestras closely mirrors conducting youth ensembles. As Seaman (2013) suggests, my career with community orchestras recognises that players often need more technical assistance than professional players. A full knowledge by the OPC of orchestral instruments is an important factor in creating high levels of art with a community orchestra. Due to my Guest Conductor status with WSO, I was not required to participate in committee life as is required in many other community ensembles (Wittry, 2007).

My engagement was part of the WSO’s subscription series. The repertoire selected by WSO was *Overture: Los Esclavos Felices (The Happy Slaves)* by Arriaga, *Concierto de Aranjuez* by Rodrigo, *Madrigal 4* by Howes, and *Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op 21* by
Beethoven. The engagement period was June 19 to July 1, 2012. The rehearsal venues were the Joe Ciantar Music Rehearsal Studio and The Concourse Concert Hall, both located in Chatswood, New South Wales. The performance stage also took place at the latter venue.
3.3.3 Case study background information.

Table 2: * indicates performances/repertoire used for this study.

*Points of contact and data generated for Case Studies 1 to 4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ensemble</th>
<th>Rehearsal date(s)/Interview date</th>
<th>Number and length of rehearsals</th>
<th>Performance date/Camera position</th>
<th>Repertoire</th>
<th>Rehearsal and performance venue(s)</th>
<th>Data generated and research questions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CASE STUDY 1</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Collective case study of interviews with five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia</td>
<td>Wednesday 28 September, Wednesday 26 October, Thursday 27 October, Friday 4 November (all dates above are 2011)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Facing the author with the lens closed.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Interview transcripts giving professional insight into the skills and life practices of the OPC. Research questions 2 and 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CASE STUDY 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Camerata of St. John's</td>
<td>Monday 25 April 2011 and Tuesday 26 April 2011</td>
<td>1 x 1.25 hour (25/04/2011) and 1 x 0.75 hour (26/04/2011)</td>
<td>Tuesday 26 April 2011 Camera position: showing conductor from within ensemble.</td>
<td><em>Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima: Penderecki</em></td>
<td>St. John's Cathedral, Ann Street, Brisbane, Queensland</td>
<td>Video recording of performance stage (N.B.: permission was not given to record both rehearsals and performance). Extensive reflective field notes of the rehearsal process were taken. Research questions 1, 2 and 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CASE STUDY 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>West Australian Symphony Orchestra</strong></td>
<td>Monday 27 February 2012</td>
<td>2 x 2.5 hours scheduled</td>
<td>Tuesday 28 February 2012</td>
<td>1 x 20 minute</td>
<td>Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Opus 67 (1st mvt.); Beethoven* Symphony, Opus 21 (2nd mvt.); Webern L’oiseau de Feu (1919); Stravinsky*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CASE STUDY 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Willoughby Symphony Orchestra</strong></td>
<td>Tuesday 19 June 2012, Thursday 21 June 2012, Tuesday 26 June 2012 and Thursday 28 June 2012</td>
<td>3 x 2.5 hours (19/06/2012, 21/06/2012, 26/06/2012) and 1 x 3.0 hour (28/06/2012)</td>
<td>Friday 29 June and Sunday 1 July 2012 Camera position: from within orchestra showing conductor.</td>
<td>Overture – Los Esclavos Felices: Arriaga* Concierto de Aranjuez: Rodrigo* Madrigal 4: Howes* Symphony No. 1 in C major, Opus 21: Beethoven*</td>
<td>Joe Ciantar Music Rehearsal Studio, Chatswood, New South Wales The Concourse Concert Hall, Chatswood, New South Wales</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.4  **Field diary and video-observation.**

A full and reflective field diary account reporting my life experience and work practices from late February 2011 to the close of the study was kept. This reflective document details the planning, implementation, and revision undertaken in each case and documents the successes, failures, problems, and frustrations that occur in the working life of an OPC.

A daily assessment reflecting the life practices, problems, and workings pertaining to the OPC is included in the field diary, and spans the academic years 2011 to 2013, as well as the majority of 2014. Some of the diary entries are short, others significantly longer, especially at times when I was conducting professional orchestras interstate.

Observational notes were made of audio and audio-visual (video) recordings, and extensive personal field reflections were written following both rehearsal and performance stages.

3.4  **Ethical Consent**

Ethical consent for research was sought and obtained from the Ethics Committee at the School of Music at the University of Queensland. This project complied with the provisions contained in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (see Appendix B for certification).

Five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia were subsequently contacted by direct email in the first instance. I outlined the nature of the study and the interview before issuing an invitation for each individual to be interviewed. Everyone who was asked to participate in an interview accepted the invitation, indicating interest in the phenomenon.

Each ensemble conducted in Case Studies 2, 3, and 4 was approached by me and permission to record rehearsals and/or performances was sought from each ensemble’s management. Verbal agreement to these requests was unanimously given before any recording pertaining to this PhD in music performance commenced.

3.5  **Credibility and Trustworthiness**

The “methods of qualitative case study are largely the methods of disciplining personal and particularized experience” (Stake, 1994, p. 245). As such, it is important to create and maintain credibility through a thorough consideration of source use. Credibility has been achieved in this study by using primary and secondary sources, with multiple methods of data collection. My current professional standing and career history allow me to
claim the required “expert” status in the field. The professional standing of the five interviewed senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia also confirms credibility and trustworthiness. Member checking took place after the interviews, with each interviewee agreeing to the content of transcripts produced.

Primary sources included interviews (see section 3.3.1/Table 2) for further information). Other primary sources included field recordings and performances, field diary entries, and autoethnographic data. Secondary sources included textbooks and relevant scholarly monographs in the discipline area, government reports, journals, newspaper interviews, and orchestral sector reviews.

Polkinghorne (2007, p. 474) states that “judgments about the validity of knowledge claims to have scientific merit [are] required that they are based on the weight of the evidence and argument offered in support of a statement or knowledge claim.” In the following chapters, evidence from the five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia is presented, together with the storied accounts of the three performance-based case studies, which are provided as a means to support the knowledge claimed.

### 3.6 Research Questions

The qualitative approach to data collection allowed the use of multiple methods (interview, observation, video recording, reflective diary, field notes) to address the major research questions:

1. What is an Orchestral Portfolio Conductor?
2. What are the life experiences and work practices of an Orchestral Portfolio Conductor in 21st century Australia?
3. What are the skills, both musical and extra-musical, required for success in this music performance sector?

### 3.7 Analysis

Analyses of qualitative data (e.g., interviews, observations, field notes, diary entries) were undertaken in two ways: analysis of narrative and narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995). Furthermore, Polkinghorne (1995, pp. 5-6, 15) describes “narrative analysis” (as distinct from “analysis of narratives”) as documentary evidence arrived at through the analysis of qualitative research mechanisms such as case studies, interviews, and autoethnographic evidence, where the resulting data represent a “story.”
Analysis of narratives may be employed to analyse transcriptable data in order to identify emerging themes. This PhD in music performance has used both approaches. The investigative task was to analyse and reconstruct the data obtained in such a way that they help to identify the phenomenon (1995, p. 15). In this case, the phenomena under study are the life choices, work practices, and skills required to be an OPC.

An emergent analysis design process was employed throughout the course of the study. The analysis framework involved post-event referrals to extant literature, as necessary, and the study’s research questions from the data gathered to identify some of the skills and life practices required of the OPC.

In analyses of the interview data, themes emerged pertaining to the skills required and the life practices of an OPC in 21st century Australia. Themes related to the research questions, and were cross-referenced with the literature as required. Analysis of the member checked interview transcripts sought to gain insights into the difficulties and challenges faced by the OPC in the 21st century. Insights resulting from this process would enable future conductors, especially those in Australia, to better understand the processes of the OPC and the conducting profession at large.

Field notes, diary entries, and video evidence were analysed in a “bounded system for study” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 15) in order to identify the different strategies and techniques (both musical and extra-musical) used in a rehearsal setting, and identify the nature and extent of musical direction undertaken.

3.8 Summary and Conclusion

Chapter 3 has outlined the methodological decisions, methods, and techniques used in this study of the life and work of an OPC. Issues pertaining to ethical consent, credibility, trustworthiness, and analysis during the course of this study have been documented.

Chapter 4 will present a series of four case studies: one collective case study regarding data obtained from interview, as well as three performance-based case studies with a variety of ensemble, as befits the professional work of an OPC.
Chapter 4 – Case Studies

This chapter presents four case studies, as listed in section 3.3.3 (see Table 2): one collective case study via interview, and three performance-based case studies befitting this PhD in music performance.

Case Study 1: A collective case study of interviews with five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia

A series of semi-structured interviews with five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia took place in 2011. Musical and extra-musical requirements were discussed in relation to conductors working within the sub-sector of professional orchestras. These interviews sought to identify the skills, knowledge and work practices of conductors, including those events that facilitated career development. A list of questions asked during the interviews is provided in Appendix A.

4.1 Extra-musical skills required

For the OPC, the journey to working with professional orchestras is usually long and arduous. It can often be the case that the extra-musical skills required to succeed attract higher levels of importance than the musical ones. What are the extra-musical skills required for an OPC in the 21st century?

4.1.1 Business skills.

Bennett (2008) writes of the business skills required of a musician in the 21st century. This was specifically supported by IP2 who stated that it is:

\[\text{increasingly important though for an [OPC] to acquire a deep understanding of the whole orchestral business. A balanced knowledge of all departments of an orchestra’s business is recommended. (IP2, 2011)}\]

4.1.2 Market awareness.

The use of DVD recordings and internet uploads (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, personal websites, etc.) is increasingly important for conductors to be viewed by potential employers. IP3 commented that some orchestras are:

\[\text{pretty strict in that [orchestras] won’t book an artist that [they have] not seen conduct. (IP3, 2011)}\]
With the Australian state orchestras now operating as public companies limited by
guarantee, each orchestra has an organic business plan, reflecting its own catchment area’s
market forces, with the result that each former ABC orchestra is slightly different. As IP1
stated, it is becoming increasingly:

important to study from orchestra to orchestra to find ... that every organisation
has a slightly different mix, a slightly different balance in terms of the amount of
commercial activity they do. (IP1, 2011)

Following the recommendations of the Strong (2005) report, orchestral
administrations are becoming more attuned to developing distinctive profiles, with playing
and audience cohorts alike. These profiles produce a plethora of projects requiring OPCs to
diversify their skill base. The use of “click-track” technology, for example, is one skill base
that is a necessity for the OPC in the 21st century. As IP3 stated:

The lessons that you learn conducting a show such as Tim Minchin\(^{10}\) – so there
are various things that you might not think as important to your art, but you are
still directing an orchestra. You are still learning to work with a “click-track.”
You are still learning all of these things which then might work for you to work
in studio sessions, which then might lead to doing a big film project live.
(IP3, 2011)

4.1.3 Securing a debut engagement.

Unless the OPC has a close working relationship with orchestral administrations, it is
very difficult for the OPC to secure a debut engagement with a professional Australian
orchestra. In Australia, the standard path is to audition for the conducting modules run by
Symphony Services International (SSI) (Symphony Services International, 2015). Managerial
representatives from Australia’s state orchestras often play a role within these modules
(Symphony Services International, 2015). As IP3 stated:

I think Symphony Services International do a pretty unique job in developing
young talent. That is certainly one way that talent can come to our attention.
(IP3, 2011)

\(^{10}\) Tim Minchin is Australian songwriter/vocalist/pianist in the popular music genre who has collaborated with
numerous Australian professional orchestras.
The data, however, suggest that personal recommendation and “word-of-mouth” is more pivotal to a debut engagement being offered by an Australian orchestra to an OPC as the following data confirm:

1. *I get a sense that personal recommendation is all important.* (IP1, 2011)
2. *The opinions of my colleagues are very important: we talk once every three or four months.* (IP3, 2011)
3. *The best way is if another colleague has suggested you look at someone. The colleague can be a musician in an orchestra, it can be an artistic administrator, it can be another conductor, it can be an agent: agents are very important in this, depending on who the agent is.* (IP4, 2011)
4. *Having someone whose musicianship and knowledge you respect who points you towards a new talent saying “This is someone to keep an eye on. This is someone to help develop.” That always carries a lot of weight.* (IP5, 2011)

With “word-of-mouth” being such a crucial factor, the OPC has to consider that:

… everything you do is top-notch – you can’t afford to fail unfortunately. (IP4, 2011)

As Seaman (2013, p. 215) comments, there will always be more conductors than opportunities to conduct professional orchestras. While Symphony Services International’s conducting modules have clearly been an historical asset for Australian OPCs (Symphony Services International, 2015), conducting a state symphony orchestra in such a setting is:

*like learning to drive a Ferrari rather than doing it on a normal first car.* (IP3, 2011)

Although SSI has produced successes via its conducting training program (Symphony Services International, 2015), the data show that the profession is divided on the overall success of the SSI conducting modules. IP2 stated, for example:

*The success rate is obviously low.* (IP2, 2011)
Furthermore (and in Chief Conductor terms), IP2 continued:

_In the cold light of day ... no Australian conductor has probably been good enough in recent times._\textsuperscript{11} (IP2, 2011)

These quotations mirror the data in Table 1 (see section 2.2) that show the limited opportunities afforded to Australian conductors (whether based in Australia or otherwise) in subscription level concerts. Conducting careers, though, are long-term affairs. One interviewee compared the relative lack of conductor success to Australian medal success in the 1972 Olympic Games:

_The results [of investment] were not necessarily shown in 1980 or 1984, but you look at 2000, 2004, and 2008._ (IP3, 2011)

### 4.1.4 Return engagements.

The collegial way in which orchestras and conductors now work is reflected in the way in which orchestral administrations work closely with their players. The following interview data confirm this:

1. _I know what my orchestra looks for ... what my orchestra wants._ (IP2, 2011)
2. _There is no point in going against the opinions of the player cohort._ (IP4, 2011)
3. _There’s no point in trying to re-engage someone that the orchestra violently disliked._ (IP5, 2011)
4. _It’s a democratic process and I endeavour to take note of players’ thoughts and wishes._ (IP2, 2011)

The process of post-engagement conductor surveys varies with each Australian orchestra, with most (but not all) using elected artistic committees formed from both an orchestra’s playing and administrational cohorts. Most Australian orchestras (but not all) have formal conductor surveys that players are invited to complete within a given timeframe following the performance(s). As IP5 stated:

_Player surveys are important to try to get a general idea of someone’s immediate response to a conductor._ (IP5, 2011)

\textsuperscript{11} Interview was conducted prior to the Chief Conductor appointments to Christchurch Symphony Orchestra (Benjamin Northey) and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (Nicholas Carter).
Player cohorts, however, sometimes see matters differently to orchestral administrations as the following data confirm:

1. *When you are involved in the show you are perhaps not always the best person to judge whether it was as fantastic as or as poor as they think it is or isn’t.* (IP1, 2011)

2. *[The] circumstances [of the project] were so extraordinary that it was never going to work.* (IP4, 2011)

3. *[An administration] believe[s] in that conductor and feel[s] that they deserve a second chance.* (IP4, 2011)

There can be internal orchestral agendas beyond the OPC’s control. Such agendas can account for some of the inevitable career knockbacks and disappointments experienced during an OPC’s career. Artistic committees can have political agendas that require orchestral administrations to:

*... navigate through.* (IP5, 2011)

Additionally, it is possible that the:

*... composition of the artistic and management teams [is not] really representative of the orchestra.* (IP5, 2011)

To the playing cohort, the rehearsal stage is the key element when assessing conductors. As IP2 stated:

*The rehearsal period is the main focus. It’s important for a conductor to respect the players and to treat them well.* (IP2, 2011)

During the rehearsal stage, the players are looking for:

*... the level of rehearsal technique shown and the amount of respect shown to the players themselves.* (IP2, 2011)

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12 By extension, rehearsal technique includes how to behave in front of an orchestra, how far to push an orchestra in the rehearsal situation, and recognition of the importance of the rehearsal stage to the players.
Rapport and professional chemistry between the OPC and the orchestra is important. As IP3 comments:

_A happy rehearsal room and a positive rehearsal room produce the best results._
(IP3, 2011)

Given the pre-requisite for all conductors to be technically and musically proficient on the podium, the ability to obtain return engagements (and thus create an ongoing career) will largely revolve around the interplay between social and psychological factors. My career can testify to these elements: for example, my years as a professional bassoonist exposed me to a myriad of orchestral players’ psychological and social mindsets.

As IP2 commented, orchestral managements view the conductor’s process with more complexity:

_The process is a three-dimensional one [within which] the concerts, the repertoire, and the level of audience success [are all considered]._ (IP2, 2011)

Increasingly, audience surveys are used by orchestral administrations and this has the potential to affect the OPC’s career. It is also impossible to counter. Perhaps the easiest solution is to remain honest to oneself, which was advice given by the majority of the interviewees:

1. _Be honest with yourself, knowing when you’ve done a good job or not such a good job. Be very honest with the players, honest with the music and the art._ (IP1, 2011)

2. _Be honest with oneself at all times – nothing is more important than this. Ask questions and stay honest to oneself._ (IP2, 2011)

3. _Be yourself – I think that’s the key. That’s what people respond to from any performer. Not everyone will like you, but at least you will come out of it the other end knowing who you are and I want to know who you are too._ (IP4, 2011)

4. _Self-honesty is a big part, but also the will to succeed in what is a very competitive market. Any career to get to the top of that career path is hard work. There’s a lot of people who want that position. Look at people who have gone before you, look at what they done to achieve the success that they have._ (IP5, 2011)
4.1.5 Professional development: Agents, travel, and skill development.

When a diary becomes too difficult to manage or a career boost is required, it is usual for an OPC to consider employing an agent. Although IP1 recognised that:

… a conductor can self-represent … (IP1, 2011)

… the interviewed cohort, however, unanimously held a deep preference for conductors to use agents. As IP4 stated:

*That's only because [orchestras] have long-standing relationships with them. [Without] that type of substantial relationship, having an agent is very important.* (IP4, 2011)

IP5 suggested that a recommendation is a type of professional reference, if it comes from the “correct” agent:

*It’s a sign that someone … has decided that this person has something above other candidates and that they’re willing to invest their time and their money and their expertise in developing that person’s career.* (IP5, 2011)

There are a range of reasons to employ an agent from the OPC's professional development to discussing fees, but the choice of agent can prove very important to the OPC as the following data show:

1. *There are two kinds of agents – there are good agents and there are bad agents.* (IP3, 2011)

2. *A good agent can open doors and provide opportunities. An “old-school” agent can advise on all matters including repertoire, especially in vocal selections. The end product of such an “old-school” agent is usually a well-rounded conductor.* (IP2, 2011)

3. *A good agent can be] really careful in what engagements they select for the artist, what time, how fast they let them progress, what sort of repertoire they select, what sort of orchestra they work with.* (IP5, 2011)

4. *A good agent can] save the artist from a potentially damaging engagement, [whereby] it saves the orchestra from being put into a position where the conductor is not ready and not suitable.* (IP5, 2011)

Such “old-school” agents, however, are becoming increasingly rare. As IP3 stated, with the advent of technology:
There’s barely a conductor that [orchestras] don’t have a programming conversation with directly. (IP3, 2011)

As IP3 confirmed, agents can also act in cancellation scenarios:

[I can] ring up an agent and say “Who have you got?” ... in which [way] an artist can pick up work as well. A good agent can make a world of difference. (IP3, 2011)

IP2 stated that:

[The] ability of [orchestras] to trust agents is vital. (IP2, 2011)

Clearly, the OPC selects an agent with care and market research awareness. As IP4 stated:

Agencies build up reputations and give credibility to any artist, soloist, or conductor (IP4, 2011).

An agent’s standard fee will be between 15 and 20 per cent of the conductor’s fee. Money is a very strong reason for employing an agent. IP3 stated that orchestras:

… do prefer to talk about fees with agents. (IP3, 2011)

IP3 continued, suggesting that orchestras:

… feel more comfortable haggling, and you no longer get to personal statements. (IP3, 2011)

IP1 commented that with an agent involved in negotiations, there is the professional:

… distance between an orchestra and a conductor (IP1, 2011) …

which orchestral administrations prefer when negotiating rates of remuneration. The interview data show that orchestral administrations clearly place artist loyalty and trust, over time, at a high premium. IP1 had substantial knowledge of:

instances where it has gone wrong about a fee. (IP1, 2011)
IP1 continued, saying that a:

*professional relationship can be ruined with an artist, a relationship you’ve had for five or ten years suddenly is over.* (IP1, 2011)

IP4 stated that employing an agent can prevent an OPC from:

*getting up on the podium having had all of these negotiations. Conductors should not know about any of that. They should turn up, conduct, go home.* (IP4, 2011)

In sum, it is clear from the interview data that professional orchestras expect conductors to be represented by an agent. The profession recognises that there are good and bad agents in the sector. The choice of agent, therefore, is of paramount concern to the OPC in terms of overall career development. Different artists (conductors and soloists) will have individual and varied definitions of what makes an agent “good” or “bad”. It could simply be the ability for an agent to supply the necessary volume of engagements to the individual artist concerned. As with “success”, the definition of what makes a good or bad agent may remain with the artist and could vary throughout a career.

My career experience shows that SSI holds a ledger on which all conductor fees paid by the Australian state symphony orchestras can be recorded. It is optional for the Australian state orchestras to report its conductor fee figures, and not every orchestra does so, but access to the ledger can be requested by any of Australia’s state orchestras, thus enabling orchestral administrations to discover the fee paid to any conductor within any given orchestral portfolio. The result is that the OPC needs to be very careful when negotiating fees. Why, for example, should a family concert performance cost the Sydney Symphony Orchestra more than the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, for example? My career experience is that it is usual for an OPC’s fees to rise by approximately $100.00 per engagement per portfolio per annum throughout a career, within the Australian structure. This, however, may change in the future as each orchestra continues its individual path in the post-Strong (2005) era.

The interviewees were unanimous in their estimation of the importance of overseas study for Australian conductors. IP2 stated that this:

*immediately adds weight to a CV. It is possible to stay in Australia and make it work, but it is very risky.* (IP2, 2011)
With relatively few professional orchestras in Australia compared to other regions of the world, the ability to:

\[\text{stand out ... sometimes involves relocation.} \quad \text{(IP5, 2011)}\]

A conducting career demands sacrifice, and relocation can be such a sacrifice. Bartleet (2004, pp. 211-238) writes of other, more personal sacrifices that may be required of OPCs, including those career choices and subsequent life choices that can affect potential personal relationships and family life.

### 4.1.6 Presentation skills.

As discussed in section 2.3.2, Bennett (2012) and Wittry (2007) both write of the importance of conductors developing presentation skills. IP3 commented that presentation skills are:

\[\text{really important because it’s something that they can do and can do well} \quad \text{(IP3, 2011)}\]

IP3 continued, saying that for education concerts:

\[\text{It’s almost a responsibility now [for an OPC to present education concerts].} \quad \text{(IP3, 2011)}\]

Opinion, however, is divided on the importance of verbal presentation skills for the OPC. IP4 noted that some orchestral administrations are not:

\[\text{big on conductor/presenter concerts, especially for new conductors [as the conductor] can often think about what you will be saying and it becomes too much. [An] orchestra’s not going to [not] re-invite you because you told the wrong story ... but they certainly won’t re-invite you if you conducted the music badly.} \quad \text{(IP4, 2011)}\]

The interviewees emphasised the role of education concerts. IP2 stated that every OPC:

\[\text{should be involved in a range of education concerts and education matters. It cannot harm and certainly knowledge of this portfolio is important.} \quad \text{(IP2, 2011)}\]

IP3 likened education concerts to a school teacher’s role:
It’s like classroom teaching in a sense, but you’re conducting as well. (IP3, 2011)

IP3 continued, and stated that:

For a conductor in the 21st century, I think [presentation is] going to be part of their skill set. (IP3, 2011)

In sum, the literature and the majority of the interview data point to presentation being a key skill for the OPC in the 21st century.

4.1.7 Specialisation.

For the OPC, specialisation is:

a post-modern thing … (IP1, 2011)

where the market reflects:

the way that our audiences have absorbed music perhaps in the last twenty years in terms of genres, in the way that record companies sell records and the way that broadcasters produce. (IP1, 2011)

Specialisation is specific to the Guest Conductor rather than:

a Chief Conductor where you want them to be able to do lots of things. (IP4, 2011)

Orchestral administrations:

do tend to look for people to specialise in certain repertoire. (IP4, 2011)

but this process of finding an OPC’s niche market depends on:

what you think you’re good at, what orchestras think you’re good at and where there’s a niche in the market. (IP4, 2011)

The OPC may recall though that:

where [specialisation] falls in a career is for others to decide. (IP4, 2011)
The interviewees, however, were divided regarding the necessity for the OPC to specialise in a particular repertoire or field. In one respect:

*Quality is apparent and always shows through.* (IP2, 2011)

However:

*in some ways it may restrict the type of engagements you can get.* (IP5, 2011)

It is my belief, as an OPC, that specialisation will become an increasingly important aspect of the profession globally, for:

*in the rest of the world, you will see certain conductors being in association with certain repertoire and styles.* (IP1, 2011)

Conductors such as Charles Dutoit, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, John Eliot Gardiner, Christopher Hogwood, Trevor Pinnock, Roger Norrington, and Roy Goodman are all noted, and professionally acknowledged examples of conductors becoming synonymous with particular repertoire and genre specialisations.

Specialisation is a skill that the OPC might be aware of if a break from this career path is wanted, but, principally, market forces define the success of such a change. Reputations are forged by engagements, and thus reputations are enhanced in particular portfolios of a professional orchestra’s program. This type of de facto specialisation can lead to “pigeon-holing.” OPCs tend to:

*get pigeon-holed very easily and in some ways it’s certain.* (IP1, 2011)

As IP5 commented:

*Even great conductors get pigeon-holed a bit.* (IP5, 2011)

It can be:

*very hard for a conductor to be taken seriously to conduct the standard repertoire* (IP1, 2011)

if “pigeon-holing” takes place. The interviews show that:
every conductor, irrespective of level, tends to get type cast or pigeon-holed. (IP2, 2011)

For the OPC, the data show that:

If you want to be doing Beethoven symphonies when you’re stuck doing education concerts that it could be frustrating. (IP4, 2011)

This would suggest that “pigeon-holing” is therefore a potential problem for an OPC’s career, especially in Australia where opportunities are rare. The data, however, also suggest that:

if you're pigeon-holed it’s usually because you’ve done something well (IP3, 2011)

to the point where the OPC:

use[s] that skill, that strength to your own advantage. (IP3, 2011)

As employers, orchestral administrations:

want to use someone who ... is good at what they do. (IP4, 2011)

To conclude, specialisation and “pigeon-holing” are active in the relatively small Australian market. Reputations are made and enhanced quickly (or not at all) in such a small orchestral catchment area, and, following the Strong (2005) report, orchestras, as limited companies, are increasingly unwilling to take industrial and fiscal risks. Whilst this can lead to possible individual financial success and to an OPC becoming a cornerstone of a particular niche market, it may lead to a lack of artistic and musical fulfilment, or “success” for the individual. Indeed, specialisation may technically go against the definition of the OPC, as the broad spectrum of engagement associated with the OPC narrows.

4.1.8 Career development within Australia: Corporate and freelance opportunities.

Bennett (2008) and Bartleet et al (2012) write of the need for the protean musician to develop and maintain a suite of entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurial skills, as well as artistic vision and capability, are required and be combined:
with aptitude and trying to break the glass ceiling. (IP2, 2011)

Sometimes:

an artist's manager can help steer that (IP1, 2011),

but with specialisation and “pigeon-holing” both arguably active in the Australian market, this will only go so far without career development guided at a corporate level.

One such corporate success within the Australian orchestral sector is Benjamin Northey, now Associate Conductor, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO), and Chief Conductor, Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. Northey has conducted a range of styles and genres, and, at the time of writing is arguably the pre-eminent Australian-based conductor. Northey, having won the 2001 Australian Young Conductor of the Year, clearly had a promising career prior to his involvement with the MSO. Since the MSO’s corporate backing was offered, however, his career has flourished at higher levels. The data show that such corporate backing is:

player led (IP2, 2011),

and that:

the talent must be part of an organisation and invested in personally. (IP2, 2011)

Furthermore, an orchestra needs to:

invest time, finance and efforts into a conductor which it sees as having talent worth fostering and nurturing. (IP2, 2011)

Some Australian orchestras, in conjunction with SSI, have appointed Assistant Conductors for a 12-month period, during which study of varied conductors’ preparation, rehearsal, and performance skills is married to the attainment of:

how an orchestra works as a company. (IP1, 2011)

By invitation only, SSI also occasionally:
holds workshops for different conductors ... with all of the Artistic Administrators present. (IP3, 2011)

Corporate assistance, therefore, clearly is the most obvious way to career development for OPCs in the Australian market place. Other opportunities can be created and OPCs may:

need to strike out on their own, they need to be organising things on their own, they need to have that internal drive which is inherent in the job (IP3, 2011).

4.1.9 Advice.

The interviewees were asked for closing advice for Australian conductors. The following characteristics were given as advice, which reflect the Australian orchestral profession. The characteristics have been amalgamated into four categories – skills, sector knowledge, interpersonal skills, and self-knowledge.

The skills set advised by the interviewees comprised the following ideas (in no particular order of importance):

1. Faultless technique;
2. The ability not to fail;
3. Communication skills;
4. Interpersonal skills;
5. Leadership skills;
6. Musical authenticity;
7. Technical control;
8. Total preparation;
9. Understanding of the corporate orchestra in general;
10. The ability to become independent and set up ensemble(s) by oneself if required; and

Knowledge of an orchestra as a company, travel for study and development, taking all opportunities as these arise, and knowledge of varied orchestral portfolios were given as advice from interviewees pertaining to conductor’s sector knowledge. The interviewees advised that knowing that not everyone will like you is important. Similarly, an
understanding of player psychology is crucial, as is wanting to make a difference in the music for the orchestra and the audience. Diplomacy was also noted as being advisable for a when conducting ensembles.

Personal integrity, self-honesty regarding talent, ability and capability, being oneself, perseverance, an understanding that lifestyle and artistic sacrifices may be required, and an acceptance that there will be inevitable setbacks, were all advised as key areas of self-knowledge and self-understanding.

4.1.10 Summary.

The bulk of the data given by the interviewees centred on the extra-musical skills required of an OPC in the 21st century. This is reflective of the market reality that any professional conductor can conduct and that there are too many conductors chasing too few engagements. All interviewees assumed a high level of conducting, musical skill, and expertise as a pre-requisite for any individual to achieve success.

The interviewees recognised the complexities and challenges of the role and identified the following as features of the life and work of an OPC:

1. Awareness of the business;
2. Awareness of the market;
3. The importance of “word-of-mouth” and personal recommendation;
4. Networking;
5. How to behave in front of an orchestra;
6. Recognising how far to push an orchestra in a rehearsal situation;
7. Recognising the importance of the rehearsal period to the players;
8. There is no place for failure;
9. The careful choice of an agent;
10. Overseas travel and study can help a career;
11. Presentation skills are a likely pre-requisite for the OPC in the 21st century;
12. If the OPC becomes a specialist in an area, then that can be a good thing; and
13. The importance of honesty to the every conductor.
Case Study 2: Camerata of St. John’s – April 25 and 26, 2011

4.2 Introduction

The OPC is likely to be engaged to conduct a wide range of ensembles and sub-genres therein. I conducted the Camerata of St. John’s as part of this case study. The Camerata is a leading sessional freelance string ensemble based in Brisbane, Queensland. In addition to its core players, additional players were drawn from professional, semi-professional, and student ranks to bring the total number of players to 52, as required by Penderecki for a performance of his work, Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima.

4.3 Purpose and Overview

At short notice (13 days), I was asked to conduct the Camerata in Penderecki’s 52-piece string orchestra work, Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima. I accepted with enthusiasm, as this was an opportunity to meet both a new set of players, and to conduct a new ensemble within Brisbane. The life choices involved in my decision included not joining my then-fiancée in Perth, having sacrificed the Easter long weekend and ANZAC day holiday to undertake this engagement. My then fiancée, who was based in Brisbane, reluctantly agreed that such an opportunity was too important to turn down. The fee, no matter its size, was also agreed to be of use with wedding costs in mind. Given the considerable expenses to follow in the personal life choices made, there was disappointment, coupled with the realisation that part of a major holiday period needed to be sacrificed. A second life choice was to then work through this holiday period on the preparation, rehearsal, and performance stages of this engagement. As a freelance, career protean musician, the OPC needs to work whenever opportunities for engagement come to hand, and are accepted.

I had not conducted the piece before, and I had not encountered the work for over 20 years, since it appeared in a history lecture I attended as an undergraduate student at the Royal College of Music, London. There were two rehearsals of 75 minutes (April 25, 2011) and 15 minutes (April 26, 2011), respectively, leading into one performance on April 26, 2011, part of the Easter celebration production The Glad Tomorrow.

4.4 Engagement and Preparation Stage

The preparation stage for this engagement was unusually intense, due to the very short time-frame, my lack of recent experience of the repertoire, and the requirement to maximise rehearsal efficiency. A fee was offered by the Camerata Concertmaster and accepted. I understood the size of the fee was due to the financial constraints of the Camerata’s budget.
for this project, and that exposure to Camerata (and other Brisbane) players would offset the fee level in terms of networking and professional development, within a city that was still relatively new to me. The losses (family time) were outweighed by the potential longer-term professional benefits. The following sections describe elements of the preparation stage.

4.4.1 The use of audio recordings within the preparation stage.

Given the short preparation timeframe, I followed Green (2004) and Northey’s (2013) advice regarding preparation tools for quick study. A recording (Penderecki, 1992) was sourced and used to assimilate the structure, basic principles, string techniques, and overall nature of this work.

4.4.2 Score preparation.

With the exception of performances at short notice, professional conductors in Australia can expect hired scores no more than 6 weeks before a concert, but often this time period is smaller. Just as orchestral players may have three or four different programs being practised at any given time, it is entirely likely that the successful (i.e., busy) conductor will be simultaneously preparing a range of different programs. I have gained most success in score study by purchasing a copy of the work in question (as in this case), ideally the same edition as that being used by the orchestra concerned. I prefer to use coloured markings, as I have found the use of colour to help significantly in the quality, speed, and efficiency of my score learning. The ownership of a score is most useful: it can be prepared as the conductor wishes and reviewed easily as required for any future performances of that work that follow.

Players in this work are required to use a amalgamation of traditional and non-traditional notation, often within aleatoric processes, where the individual player defines pitch. As Roxburgh (2014, p. 72) advises, knowledge of the advanced string techniques was researched from information extracted from the score and subsequent Internet searches. I printed the score before listening to the recording with the string technical descriptions in mind.

Recalling Meier’s (2009) advice, I used the “zigzag way” of score preparation due, to the compressed timeframe and the complexity of the work. Often employing a literal annotated colour-coded fashion, as shown below, I studied the use of instrumentation groups throughout the work until my score had become a topographical depiction from which it was

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suitable to conduct. Figure 2 shows an example page, bars ten to twelve over a duration of 60 seconds. It highlights not only the complex nature of the score, but also of the score’s preparation. The following information can be gleaned from the score regarding the preparation:

1. The brackets serve as a visual reminder of instrument groupings (i.e. violins 13 to 24).
2. The blue circled numbers represent the order of events in any given bar. Each event would be conducted via a left-hand number signal with each new bar being indicated by a baton upbeat/downbeat signifying the bar line.
3. The red time references indicate my time allowances for each event in every bar. For example, at six seconds into bar 10, all violins, violas and double basses finish playing at the same time.
4. The descending vertical lines strengthen the bar line between bar ten and bar eleven.
5. The red circles at the bottom of the page highlight the total time given to each individual bar by Penderecki.
6. The non-vertical arrows show my annotated interpretation of the “zigzag way.”
7. The small bracketed arrow to “vcl” towards the bottom right-hand corner is a visual reminder to me as to what happens at the commencement of bar 13.
8. My marking of “vlns, vlas, db – stop!” at the top left-hand side of the figure is a visual reminder to me that violins, violas and double basses all cease playing together (after six seconds) in bar 10.

Integration of string techniques, dynamics, and graphic score details concluded the initial score preparation. Despite the nature of the string techniques involved, the score clearly still required me to retain rhythmic intensity.
Figure 2. Bars 10 to 12 from Penderecki’s *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* showing score preparation including the use of the “zigzag way” technique, colour coding and instrumental numbering order of the passage.
4.4.3 Conducting preparation.

Following Green’s (2004) recommendation, a physical conducting plan was devised. With such a plan formulated, score preparation accelerated and it became clear that Penderecki had been explicit to the desired length of the work, setting this at 8 min 37 s\(^{14}\). Penderecki’s instructions indicated that strict control of an internal second pulse (crotchet = 60) be maintained. As an example, the following information documents the physical conducting plan\(^{15}\) conceived for this work through bars 1 to 5:

Analysis of directing style

1. Each baton downbeat signifies each change in bar. Events that start on the bar line start with the baton.
2. There are a series of varied left hand (LH) numbered cues in each bar to show the different numbered events. Players need to be aware of which number event applies to their line of the music and then count accordingly.
3. The score is not entirely clear at times and, as such, I made a few executive decisions, especially in the area of timed events.
4. All entries are senza vibrato unless marked.
5. The baton downbeat will show dynamic contrast when possible.

Bar 1 — all entries are “ff”

1. Baton downbeat — violas 1-5 start playing.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violins 1-6 start playing.
3. Cue 2 = basses 1-4 start playing.
4. Cue 3 = violins 7-12 start playing.
5. Cue 4 = ’celli 6-10 start playing.
6. Cue 5 = violins 7-12 start playing.
7. Cue 6 = violas 6-10 start playing.
8. Cue 7 = basses 5-8 start playing. Please note that cues 1 to 7 happen within a short space of time. Then a small gap to ……

\(^{14}\) Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima was originally called 8:37”.

\(^{15}\) A copy of the score used can be seen in Appendix C. The entire data regarding the physical beating plan for this work are shown in Appendix D.
10. Cue 9 = ’celli 6-10 start playing.

This information is then collated with the timed gap intervals shown in the score.

Bar 2 – tutti subito “f”

1. Baton downbeat — violins 1-6 and violas 1-5 have an event on the downbeat.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violins 13-18 molto vibrato.
3. Cue 2 = violins 7-12 and violas 6-10 have an event.
4. Cue 3 = violins 19-24 have an event.

Bar 3

1. Baton downbeat — celli 1-5 have an event on the downbeat.
2. LH Cue 1 = violins 19-24 change to molto vibrato.
3. A short bar with only one LH cue.

Bar 4

1. Baton downbeat — events for violins 1-6, all violas, ’celli 6-10, and basses 1-4.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violins 13-18 change to molto vibrato.
3. Cue 2 = violins 7-12, ’celli 1-5, and basses 5-8 all change together to molto vibrato.
4. There are only two LH cues in this bar.

Bar 5

1. Baton downbeat — dynamic changes for all except violas. Additionally, technical changes for all players, except violas 6-10 and basses 5-8.
2. LH Cue 1 = violas 6-10, ’celli 1-5, and basses 5-8 all change techniques together.
3. There is only one LH cue in this bar.

As conductor, there were three main difficulties that needed to be addressed in order to lead the Camerata to a successful outcome. Firstly, the 1992 recording used for preparation demonstrated that the composer’s time wishes are not always adhered to (the recording concerned runs for 8 min 56 s, 19 seconds over the composer’s intentions). Secondly, St. John’s Cathedral, Brisbane, the venue for both rehearsals and performance, would likely
require more time to be taken due to its reverberant acoustic qualities. Finally, much would
depend upon my ability to keep the crotchet = 60 pulse correct at all times as required by
Penderecki. The compulsory use of a metronome during the preparation stage was a
requirement in keeping the pulse steady. I took any opportunity to enhance this skill,
including those offered in transit using muted settings; my ferry journeys to the University of
Queensland being one example.

With score preparation complete, I began to rehearse the work alone, coordinating
both baton and left hand gestures as Green (2004) advised. This strengthened the muscle
memory aspects required to the point that the physical coordination became automatic. For a
conductor, such physical foundations are as important as the knowledge gleaned from the
score, and are only to be established in a solitary environment by the conductor prior to the
rehearsal. Recalling Green (2004), I felt ready to enter the rehearsal stage of this engagement.

4.4.4 Extra-musical communications.

I communicated and liaised with the Camerata’s orchestral management regarding
rehearsal and performance timings, venues, ensemble layout, performance dress, specific
performance deportment requirements (including no applause following the Penderecki), and
a list of players. I also submitted a biography for the concert program.

4.5 Rehearsal Stage

Notwithstanding Meier (2009) and Wittry’s (2007) warnings, the Threnody required
significant verbal direction, often on a bar-by-bar basis, due to the conducting complexities of
the work. Unless I had planned and executed the necessary verbal directions properly,
rehearsal efficiency would have been compromised. Additionally, the rehearsal included
other works not directed by myself, but prior to rehearsing the Threnody which obligated me
to ignore Wittry (2007) regarding rehearsing the most difficult work first.

Success in countering the required levels of verbal communication involved my
ability to maintain the flow of the rehearsal. To obtain this, I employed a style of rehearsal
that I often use with youth and community ensembles. I name this style the “patchwork quilt”
method of rehearsing. This method rehearses small sections of a work before rehearsing a
bigger section: bars 1 to 5,\(^\text{16}\) for example, were individually rehearsed before collectively
playing through bars 1 to 5. The use of the patchwork quilt method allowed the players to

\(^\text{16}\) 00:10" to 01:05" in the Penderecki recording.
comprehend the ensemble requirements before amalgamating their knowledge within a “performance” basis.

Due to the strict and small rehearsal timeframe, I used communication skills appropriate to a professional orchestra engagement, irrespective of the Camerata’s player cohort for this engagement.

4.5.1 Rehearsal 1 — April 25, 2011: 75 minutes.

Bars 1 to 25\textsuperscript{17} and 56 to 70\textsuperscript{18} were rehearsed using the patchwork quilt method. Bars 26 to 55\textsuperscript{19} are the easiest for the conductor, but possibly the hardest for the players, due to the specific string techniques involved, the level of ensemble difficulty for the individual player, and the rhythmic precision required. These bars required me to beat a 2/4 pattern. After verbally explaining the concept of this section, including the tempi changes and de facto time signatures, as extrapolated from Penderecki’s instructions, I afforded the players three opportunities to correctly execute their respective parts for this section. With the work rehearsed in 75 minutes, my time had expired for this rehearsal with no time for a play through of the Threnody. In this rehearsal, I used transactional leadership skills throughout.

I suggest that there have been many instances when a conductor has left a difficult work for the day to find that the following day’s rehearsal has resulted in vastly improved results. Players may practise further and/or consciously think about the music in the time between rehearsals. In any event, and specific to this case study, this “marinating” process was most effective.

4.5.2 Rehearsal 2 — April 26, 2011: 15 minutes.

With only 15 minutes to rehearse a notionally 8.5-minute work, there was only time to play through the work from the outset, as well as undertake brief rehearsal remarks and answer questions from players. This was the only time that a play through of the work was possible during the rehearsal stage, and, as such, this rehearsal required transformational rehearsal techniques.

I subsequently adjusted dynamics (bars 1 to 5) and opened the floor to questions and requests from the players. A technical question from the Principal Viola was raised regarding the numbered entry in bar 1 with the answer quickly given (after consultation with my highly annotated score) that violas 1 to 5 started the work and that no change in tone colour or string

\textsuperscript{17} 00:10” to 06:35” in the Penderecki recording.
\textsuperscript{18} 07:32” to 09:44” in the Penderecki recording.
\textsuperscript{19} 06:36” to 07:31” in the Penderecki recording.
technique was required until bar 2. With no further queries, I thanked the players for their patience and professionalism and closed the rehearsal period. The performance stage occurred later the same day.

4.6 Performance Stage — April 26, 2011

I was unusually nervous for this performance in a large building in front of an audience spread throughout St. John’s Cathedral. The audience included members from Camerata’s subscription base. It was a work that I had not previously conducted and in a genre of repertoire that I had never before attempted to direct. Every conductor has successes and failures. I successfully obtained much of Penderecki’s sound world in performance, but two aspects of my direction would require revisiting for any future performance of this work, at least in purely academic terms.

Firstly, the middle section (bars 26 to 55) was taken too fast in performance and secondly, my performance was over 10% too long. At 8 min 56 s in length, the 1992 recording used as a preparation tool was also over the composer’s time limitations by 19 seconds, so professional precedent is present. Other commercially available recordings have recording times of over 9 minutes and in one recording, with Penderecki conducting, at exactly 10 minutes (Amazon.com, 2015) in track length. Roxburgh (2014, p. 120) writes of such differences, noting the historical fact that many composers do not keep to the score’s instructions when conducting recordings of their own works. My Penderecki performance on my performance was 57 seconds over the composer’s prescribed timing. Although my reflections told me to be wary of Penderecki’s timings for the future, it is clear that length is not his focus given the length of his own recording of the Threnody. I believe that much of the extra time occurred due to the extreme acoustic properties of the venue.

What is not accounted for in the recording is the live nature and “in the moment” existence of music performance. The acoustic properties of the venue changed with the addition of the audience, albeit in a small way given the vastness of the venue. I do not believe that the extra length given to my performance of Threnody was influenced by the recording used during the preparation stage, but I do admit that it might have been sub-consciously possible given the stresses of conducting that work.
4.7 Summary

The analysis of Case Study 2 has identified a number of key issues in relation to the life experiences and work practices of the OPC. The summary of Case Study 2 can be expressed as follows:

1. There was a requirement to learn a work that was new to me, at speed, in order to acquit this conducting commission.
2. The musical skills required for Case Study 2 included strong rhythmic control, awareness of the instrumental layout of the ensemble’s 52–part scoring, knowledge of advanced string instrument techniques, and advanced aural skills.
3. Both transactional and transformational leadership techniques were used. Rehearsal 1 used transactional leadership techniques, as I explained each bar/series of bars or section. As time progressed, the style of leadership changed to transformational. This change occurred as players obtained higher degrees of confidence and accuracy with the work. Additionally, there was the omnipresent knowledge that the conductor transfers responsibility of the production to the players the closer it gets to the performance stage.
4. High levels of communication skills were identified in Case Study 2, from the initial telephone call from Camerata’s Concertmaster to the end of the performance. The rehearsal period required successful and efficient verbal instructions for this work. Both the rehearsal and performance stages of the work required the effective use of non-verbal communication skills, via body language, efficient baton technique, and use of left hand cues.
5. Diplomacy, tact, and self-control were required when discussing the fee for this engagement.
6. I liaised with the Concertmaster and orchestral management regarding the planning of the rehearsal stage. With the information provided, I was able to use the skill of score preparation for the Threnody.
7. Networking skills were present during all stages of this engagement. Firstly, my work within the Brisbane metropolitan area had brought me to the attention of the Camerata. Secondly, I spoke with many of the Camerata’s 52 players introducing myself to them, as I was still relatively new to Brisbane. In conversation with the Concertmaster, I obtained permission for the work to be
recorded for research purposes. Finally, I thanked the necessary parties following the conclusion of the engagement.

8. In order to execute this engagement, I was required to miss a family holiday gathering in Perth. This is evidence of the protean careerist’s life, having to weigh up potential employment and networking opportunities with personal life choices.

Case Study 3: West Australian Symphony Orchestra – February 27 and 28, 2012

4.7 Introduction

This case study analyses the skills required by the OPC when engaged for an education concert by a full-time salaried professional symphony orchestra, namely the West Australian Symphony Orchestra (WASO) based in Perth, Western Australia. WASO employed a number of casual players for this engagement.

4.8 Purpose and Overview

In August 2011, I was engaged by WASO to conduct a series of concerts in 2012. One of these commissions was to conduct WASO’s annual “Set Works” concert designed to help Year 12 students in their academic music studies of scores by Beethoven, Stravinsky, Vivaldi, and Webern. Usually, WASO’s education concerts would require the OPC to give a verbal presentation, but this was not required on this occasion. The first movement from Vivaldi’s *Spring* was also part of this concert, and, although directed by the Concertmaster, it would enter calculations in rehearsal planning, as enough time would be required to be set aside within the rehearsal period available.

The rehearsal period consisted of two 2.5-hour calls (10:00 – 12:30 and 13:30 – 16:00 AWST) on February 27, 2012, in order to prepare the following repertoire:

1. *Spring* (1st movement) from *The Four Seasons* — Vivaldi *
2. *Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Opus 67* (1st movement) — Beethoven
3. *Symphony, Opus 21* (2nd movement) — Webern
4. *L’oiseau de feu* (1919 suite) — Stravinsky

A further 30-minute rehearsal call, on February 28, 2012, was created closer to the engagement, but within the call structure existing when the engagement was offered by WASO. The rehearsal and performance stages took place at Hale School, Perth, Western Australia.

4.9 Engagement and Preparation Stage

The preparation stage for this event was significantly different from that pertaining to Case Study 2, with the benefit of nearly 9 months between notification of the engagement and

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20 From *Le quattro stagioni (The Four Seasons)* by Vivaldi.
the first rehearsal. My agent negotiated my remuneration, for a 15% agent’s fee. Out-of-pocket receipts were kept while I was away from home, which lessened the taxation implications of the engagement.

I suggested flights to and from Perth to WASO, which were subsequently booked by WASO. A number of Cabcharge vouchers were sent to me from WASO in the post. I stayed with family in Perth for the duration of the engagement. The life choices I made included being away from Brisbane less than two weeks before I was to be married, leaving wedding organisation during that time to others. As per Case Study 2, the OPC needs to work whenever engagements come to hand being a freelance, protean career musician.

Unlike the *Threnody*, I had previously conducted the entire repertoire, with the exception of *Introduction, L’oiseau de feu et sa danse* and *Variation de l’oiseau de feu* from *L’oiseau de Feu*, with WASO and other ensembles: Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (2010), Canberra Symphony Orchestra (2011), and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra (2011). I had, however, previously conducted and studied Stravinsky’s entire *L’oiseau de feu* (1919) in a Symphony Services International conducting module during August 2006.

4.9.1 **Score preparation.**

Given that I had previously conducted most of the repertoire, score preparation for this engagement required a more reflective and revisionary approach, rather than the learning of new material. Having considered artistic goals and career development, I formed the opinion that conducting the Beethoven and Stravinsky by memory would be commercially important. I regarded Webern’s *Symphony* movement too “dangerous” to conduct from memory. It is not standard repertoire, nor is it part of a professional orchestra’s corporate memory, as Young (2012) described. For the OPC, the education portfolio demands a similar depth of repertoire as a Chief Conductor: someone who is very good at many styles.
My Stravinsky technical preparations included a revision of the accelerando poco a poco between Figures 27 and 29 in *Danse infernale du roi Kastchei* (see Figure 3). This passage had been problematic in 2006, when I could not control the tempo change sufficiently well, either getting too fast or not fast enough, due to a failure in technique. I rectified this by using a smaller size of beat through the first seven bars of the accelerando before drifting into one-in-a-bar thereafter. Other preparation revisited the opening to Beethoven’s *Fifth Symphony* and the size of beats required for the subito dynamic changes throughout the first movement. Revision of Webern’s *Symphony*, however, dominated technical preparations, with its multiple tempi and meter changes. Taking Gehrken’s (1919) advice, I obtained a set of first violin parts for all works and made certain that bar numbers and rehearsal Figures/Letters matched those in my scores.

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4.9.2 Rehearsal preparation.

My rehearsal timings had to factor in the undirected Vivaldi. I submitted a rehearsal schedule to WASO’s orchestral management that reflected the industry standard, “big-to-small” parameters, as Wood (1945) and Wittry (2007) suggest. The rehearsal schedule was as follows:

February 27, 2012

10:00 – 12:30 Stravinsky/Beethoven
13:30 – 16:00 Beethoven/Webern/Vivaldi

Although not submitted, I was able to sub-plan the Stravinsky to reflect the “big-to-small” nature of the rehearsal:

- *Danse infernale du roi Kastchei.*
- *Final.*
- *Introduction.*
- *Variation de l'oiseau de feu.*
- *Ronde des Princesses.*
- *Berceuse.*
- *L'oiseau de feu et sa danse.*

As WASO had played most of this repertoire many times, including occasions conducted by myself, I entered the rehearsal stage with Young’s (2012) thoughts in mind and aimed to access WASO’s corporate musical memory. Another aim for the rehearsal period was to follow Northeys (2013) recommendation and end the rehearsal early, if possible.

4.10 Rehearsal Stage

The “Set Works” concert came at the beginning of the 2012 calendar year, following a series of outdoor “family-type” concerts. It was the first time in 2012 that WASO had rehearsed standard symphonic repertoire. The members of WASO were thus in a receptive mood, playing what they, presumably, considered to be more interesting music than children’s songs and pop charts.
4.10.1 Rehearsal 1 — February 27, 2012: 215 minutes.

The rehearsal commenced by checking that each desk had a breakdown of the excerpts sheet (see Appendix E). These excerpts would be played, for educational reasons, prior to performing the repertoire. Players were requested to only be on stage when playing, thus emphasising how many performers were involved in typical orchestras over the periods of music encountered.

When conducting a professional orchestra, I read through a piece, rehearse it, and then play it through again. Most professional orchestras have the skills and experience to resolve problems without the conductor’s interjections, thus giving an orchestra the opportunity to play often fixes many problems that arise. Given the desire not to get the players “offside” and considering that I had conducted nearly the entire repertoire with WASO previously, I decided not to have the final run-through of the Beethoven or Stravinsky before leaving the rehearsal stage, although individual movements from L’oiseau de feu (1919) were repeated. The Webern required a play-through to give the players more confidence in this less common repertoire.

With previous knowledge that WASO’s working conditions demanded a 15-minute break after not more than 90 minutes into a rehearsal, I successfully rehearsed the Stravinsky within this time frame. Danse infernale du roi Kastchei is the hardest movement technically to play, and therefore demanded my usual rehearsal technique of play-through — rehearsal — play-through. The ensemble items that required rehearsal revision were:

- To encourage the players to sustain through the syncopation theme.\(^{22}\)
- Figures 5 to 7 - general ensemble in the 2/4 bars.\(^{23}\)
- Trombone glissandi after Figure 12 were too low.\(^{24}\)
- Figure 14 - general ensemble in the 2/4 bars.\(^{25}\)
- Figure 15 - general dynamic “p”, but allowing clarinets to play louder.\(^{26}\)
- Figures 18 to 19 - general ensemble in the semiquaver passage work.\(^{27}\)
- Figure 19 - more brass dynamic contrast required.\(^{28}\)

\(^{22}\) 10:14” onwards in the Stravinsky recording.
\(^{23}\) 10:58” to 11:12” in the Stravinsky recording.
\(^{24}\) 11:41” onwards in the Stravinsky recording.
\(^{25}\) 11:59” to 12:06” in the Stravinsky recording.
\(^{26}\) 12:06” onwards in the Stravinsky recording.
\(^{27}\) 12:27” to 12:32” in the Stravinsky recording.
\(^{28}\) 12:32” onwards in the Stravinsky recording.
• Two bars before Figure 21 - my interpretational request for “piu ff”.  
• Figure 22 - horns to play more legato and with more awareness of dynamics.  
• Figures 27 to 29 for the accelerando poco a poco.  
• Figure 31 - rhythmic ensemble of duple time versus triple time devices.  
• Two bars before Figure 35 - a steeper decrescendo was required.  
• Figure 38 - greater string dynamic effect.  

All other movements, with the exception of Variation de l'oiseau de feu, required a play through-rehearsal strategy. Despite its brevity, Variation de l'oiseau de feu required the same treatment as Danse infernale du roi Kastchei in rehearsal terms, but with greater input from the playing cohort, particularly Principal Flute, Principal Clarinet, and Principal Piccolo. Stravinsky makes extremely high technical demands of these players. My collegial approach encouraged me to consult these players regarding tempo in this movement. A slightly faster tempo was requested, which I duly actioned. The movement was played through twice, which also gave the opportunity for the violinists, including many casual players, to master Stravinsky’s technical requirements. With all movements rehearsed, the break was called at 11:25 a.m., after which I reminded WASO’s Principal Bassoon about playing the opening solo from Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring.

Following the rehearsal break and having announced that the repeat was required, the Beethoven movement was played through before being rehearsed. My vision dictated a heavier and more energetic approach from the strings which, when requested, was immediately forthcoming. Balance issues were addressed: bars 110 and 114 required the strings to release the sound, which allowed the woodwinds and horns to have projection space. Dynamics were generally, but quietly, reminded to the players. A louder trumpet and timpani presence was requested in the “fortissimo” passages. The musical line was emphasised between First Violins, Principal Clarinet, and Principal Flute from bar 63. I requested bars 196 to 203 to have separated chords, including the use of retakes by the

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29 12:42” in the Stravinsky recording.  
30 12:53” in the Stravinsky recording.  
31 13:34” to 13:44” in the Stravinsky recording.  
32 13:56” onwards in the Stravinsky recording.  
33 14:11” onwards in the Stravinsky recording.  
34 14:27” onwards in the Stravinsky recording.  
35 03:57” to 05:14” in the Stravinsky recording.  
36 01:30” onwards in the Beethoven recording.  
37 00:57” onwards in the Beethoven recording.  
38 03:58” to 04:04” in the Beethoven recording.
strings with bar 204 onwards,\textsuperscript{39} before reverting to full-length chords without retakes. Once rehearsed, I granted a request from the bassoon section to play the opening few bars again.

With the Beethoven rehearsal complete, I drew the players’ attention to the excerpt list, isolating and conducting each excerpt in turn, before the lunch break was called. Although there was time to play through the Webern prior to lunch, the player body language, and psychology displayed, strongly showed that this would not be a good strategy. The noted effect on the players could have been due to hungry musicians, just as much as any desire not to play the Webern without subsequently and immediately working on it.

The afternoon rehearsal began at 1:30 p.m. with the second movement from Webern’s \textit{Symphony}. The orchestral set used was the same set that I had used to conduct WASO in 2011. The markings had been preserved and comments on my beating patterns were still in place. This increased my efficiency in rehearsal. I asked second horn, clarinet, and ’cello to play bars 1 to 12 (the tone row) from the first movement. My “patchwork quilt” method, as described in Case Study 2, was employed, individually rehearsing the theme and each variation before playing through the entire movement. There were areas of concern with individual player uncertainty, but player body language again dictated that it would have been unwise to continue. It was clear to me that many of the players clearly did not enjoy this repertoire. Allowing the Webern to “marinate”, I decided to end the rehearsal at 2:15 p.m., knowing that there would be up to 30 minutes on the Webern alone at 10:00 a.m. the following day. With the Webern rehearsal completed, only the undirected Vivaldi remained.

I have witnessed many occasions as a professional player when a work has been rehearsed on Day 1 only to be vastly improved overnight on Day 2. Notable examples whilst a bassoonist with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra have included Messaien’s \textit{L’Ascension} (Simone Young), Stravinsky’s \textit{Le Sacre du Printemps} (Yan Pascal Tortelier), and Richard Strauss’ \textit{Ein Heldenleiben} (Tadaaki Otaka). All showed staggering changes overnight whilst this ‘marinating’ process was underway. Knowing that this process is possible gave me the confidence (especially with this orchestra) to use this rehearsal strategy. This rehearsal stratagem could be used when conducting other ensemble genres (i.e. youth orchestra), but it would take a far greater leap of faith from conductor to player than it would with a professional orchestra. It is the only time that I have used the ‘marinating’ technique during my conducting career.

\textsuperscript{39} 04:04” onwards in the Beethoven recording.
4.10.2 Rehearsal 2 — February 28, 2012: 20 minutes.

The Webern was again rehearsed on February 28, 2012, for 20 (of the allocated 30) minutes prior to the performance and this was much improved following the overnight marinating and a brief rehearsal. I invited players to request rehearsal points before playing the movement through. No questions followed. The approach of inviting questions before the final play through of the Webern during the rehearsal stage was different to that used in Case Study 2. The reason for the change in approach was the lack of time allocated to the rehearsal stage of Case Study 2 in contrast to that allocated to Case Study 3. I believe that rehearsal efficiency is a key skill for the OPC. Having conducted this repertoire with WASO previously certainly advantaged me.

4.11 Performance Stage

The performance took place on February 28, 2012, at 11:00 a.m. at Hale School, Perth, Western Australia. The concert order was Vivaldi (directed by the Concertmaster), Beethoven, Webern, and Stravinsky. A near-full hall of students and staff totalling approximately 400 people attended. As the recording shows, and with Cohn (2011) and Slatkin (2012) in mind, the OPC’s dress code can commence communication with the audience.40

4.11.1 Conductor stand, memory, and presentation.

For education concerts, I have a run sheet on the conductor’s stand for reference, whether or not I am conducting from memory. There are often, as was the case here, too many extra-musical details to the performance for a conductor to recall, and a physical run sheet serves as a performance aid. Although the conductor’s stand was present, scores were only used for Webern and the Beethoven excerpts. The run-through performances of Beethoven and Stravinsky were conducted from memory. Education concerts are usually conducted and presented by the conductor, but not in this case, due to a late change by WASO’s administration.

4.11.2 Beethoven, Webern, and Stravinsky performances.

Both the Beethoven and Stravinsky recordings highlight how effective conducting from memory can be, how effective non-verbal communication can be between conductor

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40 My choice of shirt (black with large, solid red circles) and footwear (bright red shoes) for this engagement added some excitement to an audience’s experience.
and players, and the way in which the collegial manner of the profession divides leadership roles between conductor and players: *Ronde des Princesses*, for example, has many passages (e.g., bar 1 to Figure 2, the third bar of Figure 5 to Figure 7, and Figure 13 to the end) where individual players become de facto conductors and the actual conductor is the overall musical “caretaker.” As a former professional player, I have experienced this level of artistic freedom from a conductor myself. The players involved would (most likely) have enjoyed such levels of trust, collegiality, and musical individuality in this circumstance, if my own previous career history is an accurate guide. In effect, my actions turned the passages concerned into chamber music, also increasing the level of aural skill required by individual players. Figure 4 clearly shows the chamber music nature of the passage, as well as a visual reminder to me of what follows at Figure 2 in the score.

My own career has taught me that conducting from memory (Beethoven and Stravinsky, in this case) enhances my musical capabilities via heightened communication skills with the player cohort. It is as if a physical barrier (i.e., music stand and score) has been removed. Without distraction, the results are more effective for players and audience alike. The Webern shows the requirement for the OPC to perform a work in a convincing manner, and the need for technically assured and reliable technique.

It was difficult to gauge players’ attitudes to my approach at the time. Analysis of the recordings shows varied body language in the immediate post-performance seconds. Some players openly applauded (some woodwind, brass, and percussion), whilst others remained more stoic. I believe that the overall impression was favourable.

41 05:38” to 06:11” in the Stravinsky recording.
42 06:56” to 07:39” in the Stravinsky recording.
43 09:05” to 10:07” in the Stravinsky recording.
Figure 4. Bar 1 to Figure 2 in *Ronde des Princesses* where specific instrumentalists become de facto conductors.
4.12 Summary

The analysis of Case Study 3 has identified a number of key issues in relation to the life experiences and work practices of the OPC. The musical skills shown involved the constant skills base required of any professional conductor. The summary of Case Study 3 can be expressed as follows:

1. The ability to maintain a core repertoire in the memory from one engagement to another.
2. The life choices involved being away from home close (in time) to my wedding. This is further evidence of the OPC’s existence as a protean careerist balancing life choices with employment options.
3. A strong work ethic in the preparation, rehearsal, and performance stages of an engagement.
4. Having an agent avoids the conductor’s direct involvement in remuneration negotiations.
5. Memory as a conducting skill can be advantageous.
6. The ability to be honest with oneself as a conductor. In this case, I had to rework a section of the Stravinsky to make it technically clearer in order to obtain optimum ensemble results.
7. Networking skills were present in this engagement in all of its stages. I had previously conducted WASO on many occasions across numerous orchestral portfolios since my debut in 2007. The networking skills used were therefore used to maintain contacts.
8. High levels of communication skills were identified for Case Study 3, including matters pertaining to both musical and extra-musical skills. I liaised with the orchestral management regarding the planning of the rehearsal stage. I determined the content of the rehearsal stage within the structure given by WASO. This was communicated to WASO management in time for publication to the players. Other communications included verbal communications with WASO players and management, as well as significant non-verbal communications when conducting WASO during the rehearsal and performance stages. The latter included repertoire conducted by memory using significant eye contact and efficient baton technique. Communications included those with WASO management regarding recording the performance stage for the purposes
of this PhD in music performance. Communications and connections with the audience were enhanced by my choice of performance dress. It was also important to read player body language accurately in this case study.

9. With the exception of the Webern, the works conducted in Case Study 3 came from the standard core symphonic repertoire. The Webern itself was not as problematic as previously (2010), given that I had previously conducted WASO in this work and that the orchestral sets were identical to the ones used previously when I had conducted this work. As a result of these differences, I was able to use transformational and collegial leadership techniques in this engagement.

10. Keeping receipts gave access to taxation offsets under the Australian taxation system.
**Case Study 4: Willoughby Symphony Orchestra – June 19 to July 1, 2012**

4.13 **Introduction**

Case Study 4 analyses the skills required by the OPC when engaged for subscription concerts with a community orchestra. An OPC will conduct a variety of ensemble, so a community orchestra is therefore an appropriate choice for case study purposes as part of this PhD in music performance.

4.14 **Purpose and Overview**

In September 2011, I was invited to conduct Willoughby Symphony Orchestra (WSO), a Sydney community orchestra during June/July 2012. The engagement period included three 2.5-hour rehearsals, one 3-hour rehearsal, and two performances at the Concourse Concert Hall, Chatswood. The repertoire chosen by WSO was:

1. *Overture: The Happy Slaves* – Arriaga
2. *Concierto de Aranjuez* – Rodrigo
3. *Madrigal 4* – Howes (world premiere)

4.15 **Preparation and Engagement Stage**

The preparation stage of conducting a community orchestra involves many aspects similar to those used when conducting both a fully professional ensemble and a youth ensemble. Greater emphasis is accorded to the use of memory as a conducting skill, particularly with the rehearsal period in mind, as the OPC engages in eye contact with the players, some of whom will require technical correction and reminders. Eye contact can only be obtained by the depth of score assimilation attained during the preparation stage. If professional frustrations appear when conducting a community orchestra, the OPC might consider some degree of patience and possible musical acceptance during the preparation stage, so that a mood of calm and control can be maintained during the rehearsal stage.

The fee was offered by WSO to myself directly (at that time I was without an agent), and, although the size of the fee did not cover my interstate travel costs, I accepted the invitation as the professional development involved (including repertoire offered and potential new contacts) might lead to further engagements with WSO, Canberra Symphony Orchestra, or elsewhere. I was responsible for arranging flight and accommodation details. In addition, there were other costs pertaining to this engagement, including car parking at
Brisbane airport and return travel from Sydney airport to Chatswood. As a result of this expenditure, it was vital to keep track of the necessary receipts and invoices for taxation purposes. As with all trips away from home, there were taxation offsets available.

The life choices included being away from home overnight, significant travel time, including four return journeys to Sydney in 13 days, and a financial loss on the engagement, which impacted on the household budget. This professional development opportunity, however, was too important to ignore, and the engagement was expeditiously accepted.

4.15.1 Extra-musical preparation.

The extra-musical aspects in the preparation stage involved travel arrangements, biography writing, photographs for programs, and communications with WSO’s management. These communications included the preparation and finalisation of a rehearsal schedule to gain best artistic results within the rehearsal timeframe. Such calculations can only be made through thorough score assimilation. As Wittry (2007) advises, rehearsing every note at every rehearsal would not be an option.

Given the rehearsal time constraints and the expectations of the WSO alluded to by its management, I took the view that the rehearsals would be a mixture of youth orchestra techniques amalgamated with those used at professional level. My aim was to be as efficient as possible, whilst maximising the rehearsal time available.

4.15.2 Beethoven score preparation.

Beethoven’s *First Symphony* has become a traditional repertoire choice for others, be they orchestral administration, players, or other conductors, to judge conductors. My career experience shows that it is a fair test of a conductor with tempo control, a range of mood styles, dynamic contrasts, demanding communication skills, leadership skills, and musicianship all being required. Technical baton control is also required. For the OPC, this work falls into the same category as a Mozart concerto for an instrumentalist’s audition. Everything can be seen and any hole in a conductor’s skill set can be quickly isolated. The fact that it is the composer’s *First Symphony* “in no way implies any degree of inferiority or lack of mastery” (Del Mar, 1992, p. 1). It was the most important work in the repertoire list that the WSO had commissioned me to conduct, and, as such, I aimed to conduct the Beethoven from memory in these concerts, to help convey the work’s musical and physical demands to both players and audience alike.
4.15.3 Reasons for conducting Beethoven from memory.

It is usually a necessity for players to watch a conductor, but as the literature advises 21st century conductors to treat players in a more collegial manner than in times past, it is logical to assume that the conductor watches an orchestra’s players as well. Conducting without the physical score present would enhance collegiality and, hopefully, the overall performances.

Having memorised Beethoven’s score details, I considered the string technical details required in order to fulfil my vision of this Beethoven symphony, marrying sublime moments with power. My career experiences have taught me about the necessity of keeping Beethoven string bow use in the lower half, when possible, for sound and technical reasons. This would gain the necessary drive, power, and articulation required for my powerful and intense vision for the work’s performances, especially from a community ensemble. This would be reflected in communications when it came to the rehearsal period. If Beethoven’s score was to shine, WSO was required to experience “physical exhaustion so intense that it becomes an integral part of the music” (Chorzelski, 2013).

4.15.4 Howes score preparation.

The final score for Madrigal 4 had been supplied 6 weeks prior to the first rehearsal, and having listened to the MP3 midi recording, the need for constant mental sub-division whilst conducting became clear. This ensemble would likely only play the complex rhythmic patterns successfully with such rhythmic authority from the conductor. With tempi and instrumentation noted, the major aim in bringing this world premiere to life would be through its sound world. Understanding the style of this work would be important as a Guest Conductor (Slatkin, 2012, p. 71), as would having an accurate aural perception of this new work (Roxburgh, 2014, p. 4). As this was to be a world premiere, collaboration with the composer was considered important, if the work was to be heard in its best light. As such, collaborative steps with the composer were taken during the rehearsal stage. Tempi changes were suggested by myself to Howes, as well as gaining insight from the composer as to the exact nature of the mood aiming to be created.

4.15.5 Rodrigo score preparation.

I had previously conducted Rodrigo’s Concierto de Aranjuez in 2006 with Faith Court Orchestra (West Australian Academy of Performing Arts’ student orchestra, Edith Cowan University, Perth). With the schedule only allowing one rehearsal with the soloist, balance
awareness would be a key factor in this work’s performance success. Score preparation involved a general revision of the work, with additional focus on the beating patterns of the third movement. This movement had previously given me concern during the 2006 performance stage. WSO players would need to be fully versed in the work prior to the soloist’s arrival. The rehearsal schedule would need to cater for this.

4.15.6 Arriaga score preparation.
This 7.5-minute work did not require much in terms of preparation: instrumentation requirements were absorbed and the technical need for the strings to keep to the lower half of the bow was noted. On paper, this work did not look as if it would create many problems, but this was not the case during the rehearsal period. There were notable difficulties in the First Violins due to the high nature of the E-string writing, and a generalised lack of individual preparation, with rhythmic problems disrupting the overall sense of ensemble cohesion. The latter was partly due to the choice of bow articulation made by individual players in a section of eight players.

4.15.7 Conducting preparation.
With score preparation complete, the task of planning how to physically conduct the repertoire was undertaken. Only the Howes required changes of view in this regard, from the standard approaches, with its slow overall tempi setting and multiple time signature changes.

4.16 Rehearsal Stage
The rehearsal schedule was set in advance in consultation with WSO’s management and Chief Conductor. The first three rehearsals were at Joe Ciantar Music Rehearsal Studios in Chatswood. Only the final rehearsal took place at The Concourse, Chatswood.

As Wittry (2007) suggests, I was aware of the need to be accessible to the players when possible for musical and networking purposes. I would engage with them as much as I was able before and after the rehearsal, as well as during the rehearsal breaks.
4.16.1 Rehearsal 1 — June 19, 2012: 150 minutes.

The major aims of the rehearsal were as follows:

1. Play through and rehearse Beethoven’s outer movements.
2. Play through and begin the rehearsal of Arriaga’s overture.

These two aims were chosen because of the technical, ensemble, and balance issues pertaining to the Beethoven, and as a warning to WSO that the overture should not be treated lightly.

From the outset, I demanded from the string section the physicality required in the Beethoven in order to make this piece work, largely from the lower half of the bow articulations. Such visual checking was only possible due to the memory preparation outlined earlier. My professional career has instilled in me the necessity for a conductor to constantly monitor players, especially in the community and education sectors. Both Beethoven outer movements were played through following its respective rehearsing in order to allow the movements to settle.

The Arriaga’s rehearsal showed a lack of player preparation, particularly in the First Violins. Reminiscent of many of Mozart’s great symphonies in which the First Violin parts are exposed, Arriaga’s overture clearly needed extra rehearsal time in the calls that followed. This put a strain on the other repertoire, and this short work required an abnormally long period of time to bring it to performance level.


The major aims of the rehearsal were as follows:

1. Play through and rehearse Beethoven’s inner movements.
2. Play through the Howes.
3. Continue the Arriaga rehearsal stage.

The aims of the rehearsal were to finish the main part of the Beethoven rehearsal period; allow WSO to become familiar with the Howes, thus giving players time enough to practice as required; and to give further opportunities for WSO to increase its control of the Arriaga.
Having established the repeat patterns in both Beethoven movements, I aimed to increase aural awareness levels in WSO’s players by occasionally not conducting, thus making the players more responsible for the results, a technique witnessed on many occasions during my professional orchestral career. With the need for constant internal sub-division explained to the players, the Howes was read through for the first time in preparation for rehearsing it fully during a later rehearsal. Following Green (2004) and Slatkin’s (2012) lead, I convinced WSO of the work’s musical purpose and advised that Howes would be attending a later rehearsal (June 26) and both performances.

The Arriaga still created problems for the First Violins:

1. Figures 2, 10, and 11 required greater individual player articulation at tempo (minim = 132) within the dynamic (“piano”).
2. Intonation was problematic in the melody after Figure 5 despite a series of slower sectional-style attempts due to the height of writing on the E-string.
3. Figure 15 onwards was simply an issue of notes at the “piu mosso” tempo (minim = 144).

These issues reminded me that it is not the conductor’s responsibility to physically produce the instrumental sounds of the ensemble being conducted. Regardless, it still remains the conductor’s responsibility to find a solution to the problem.

4.16.3 Rehearsal 3 — June 26, 2012: 150 minutes.

The major aims of the rehearsal were as follows:

1. Rehearse the Howes (with the composer present).
2. Rehearse the Rodrigo (without soloist).
3. Play through the Beethoven symphony.
4. Continue the Arriaga rehearsal stage.

Rehearsing the Howes used a technique of allowing the players the opportunity to play passages many times intermixed with stopping for further explanations, as required. This

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44 02:01" onwards in the Arriaga/Rodrigo recording.
45 04:59" onwards in the Arriaga/Rodrigo recording.
46 05:25" onwards in the Arriaga/Rodrigo recording.
47 03:10" onwards in the Arriaga/Rodrigo recording.
48 06:45" onwards in the Arriaga/Rodrigo recording.
enabled players to enhance their own understanding of this new work. Having spoken to Howes during the rehearsal, the composer’s insights were relayed to the players and I sensed their positive collaboration. The composer’s insights included balance matters (although this would need to be checked at the concert venue) and a sense from Howes that the overall tempo could flow more than the score’s markings.

As suggested by Green (2004) and Wittry (2007), I conducted through the entire Rodrigo, stopping when required to explain beating patterns and empty bars, especially in the work’s final two movements. Beethoven’s symphony was rehearsed in 45 minutes, increasingly in bigger pieces of the work so that the players could fully grasp the scale, scope, stamina, and sheer physicality required to bring the work to life in performance. With the Arriaga now obtaining better results from the First Violin section, I was able to follow Northey’s (2013) advice and conclude the rehearsal early.

4.16.4 Rehearsal 4 — June 28, 2012: 180 minutes.

The final rehearsal was also the only rehearsal in the concert venue. The major aims of the rehearsal were as follows:

1. Rehearse Rodrigo with soloist.
2. Rehearse Beethoven.
3. Rehearse Howes.
4. Rehearse Arriaga.
5. Check balance issues for each work.
6. Allow the WSO players to feel aurally comfortable with the works in the vastly different acoustic from the Joe Ciantar Music Rehearsal Studio.

As noted by Green (2004), the concerto genre places greater requirements on a conductor’s technique than other genres of repertoire. The conductor’s knowledge of a concerto’s solo part obtained during the preparation stage is examined and assessed. Adhering to Green (2004) and Meier’s (2009) views, I met with the soloist for 30 minutes prior to this rehearsal. My primary goal was rhythm and, specific to this genre of work, the way in which it binds soloist with orchestra. This concerto was not a difficult one to synchronise soloist with orchestra, and, although WSO winds required greater anticipatory skills on occasion, the work was rehearsed in 90 minutes.
The major Beethoven aim in the time available was to fix balance issues in the new venue. The level of trust was raised between conductor and orchestra, as I directed the rehearsal from the body of the hall relaying balance requirements to the players. I first witnessed this technique in the 1980s, as used by Metters. The entire Beethoven symphony was played, although I restricted the size of the repeated sections played for time efficiency purposes. The woodwinds gained more confidence as they adapted to the “new” acoustics of the concert venue.

Following the composer’s suggestions at the previous rehearsal, Madrigal 4 was played through at a slightly faster tempo than the original marking. The Arriaga unfortunately still had some individual violinists in difficulty. Much of the passage work lies awkwardly as seen in Figures 5 and 6.

These passages (and others) were hazardous from a technical viewpoint for the players concerned: slow practice was encouraged, as well as being implemented in a “tutorial” setting within the “tutti” rehearsal structure. This work created many problems for such a short piece and the ratio of performance length to rehearsal time was unforeseen and significant.
Figure 5. Figure 5 shows bars 202 to 220 from The Happy Slaves overture by Arriaga. The First Violins had intonational difficulty from nine bars before Figure 10. All violins had ensemble difficulty from four bars before Figure 10.
Figure 6. Figure 6 shows bars 221 to 238 from *The Happy Slaves* overture by Arriaga. The First Violins had technical difficulty throughout this page. Matters pertaining to off-the-string playing, overall ensemble and intonation required further individual preparation.
4.17 Performance Stage

The two performances took place on June 29, 2012, and July 01, 2012, at The Concourse, Chatswood, New South Wales, and the recordings submitted are drawn from both performances. The sound quality reflects the necessary placement of the video camera. Of particular note are the Rodrigo and Beethoven. The concerto performance agrees with Green’s (2004) thoughts: the Rodrigo recording highlights the successful way in which liaising with the soloist helped me conduct the WSO. The Beethoven recording shows the way in which conducting from memory can transform non-verbal communication with an orchestra, especially during the performance stage.

4.18 Summary

I have conducted many community ensembles in my career: the Bexhill Choral Society, City of Rochester Symphony Orchestra, and Sussex Concert Orchestra in the United Kingdom, as well as the Brisbane City Pops Orchestra, Brisbane Philharmonic Orchestra, Fremantle Chamber Orchestra, Northern Rivers Symphony Orchestra, Perth Oratorio Choir, Perth Concert Band, and St Lucia Orchestra in Australia. The WSO was unlike any other community orchestra I had either encountered or conducted in my career due to the remuneration given to the players by Willoughby City Council. This clearly helped to attract a high standard of player. Additionally, the WSO’s management was run in the style of a fully professional orchestra, akin to WASO (Case Study 3). The result was a high quality ensemble matched by high quality administration.

Analysis of Case Study 4 identified a number of key issues in relation to the life experiences and work practices of the OPC. The summary of Case Study 4 can be expressed as follows:

1. The importance of preparation, rehearsal, and performance stages of this (or any) engagement.
2. The life choices included sacrificing much time travelling to Sydney from Brisbane at my own cost. I made four return journeys during this engagement. The fee did not match the expense level, so accepting this engagement was a labour of love combined with a strong element of professional development.
3. Knowledge of the Australian taxation system helped to offset some of the loss on the engagement.
4. Conducting from memory can be seen as an asset for the OPC. In this case, conducting the Beethoven from memory increased eye contact with the playing cohort, which, in turn, significantly increased the levels of artistic ensemble obtained.

5. The ability to accompany (a concerto in this engagement) is a key skill for an OPC. As Seaman put it in conversation with me during a Symphony Services International conducting module in Adelaide during 2006, “I am always wary of conductors who cannot accompany.”

6. The ability to maintain information from previously learnt scores (Beethoven and Rodrigo) was a key skill area identified.

7. The skill of learning a world premiere composition (Howes) was also identified, as was learning “new-to-me” repertoire (Arriaga).

8. This engagement used a combination of transactional and transformational leadership techniques. The earlier rehearsals used the former, but this engagement saw the transfer of responsibility to the players over time, and thus involved transformational leadership techniques the closer the WSO came to the performance stage.

9. Networking skills were present in this engagement as I was working with many musicians whom I had not previously met, let alone conducted. Not being aloof with the players aided my cause and resulted in the players enjoying my rehearsals. This is evidenced by my return to WSO in 2015.

10. High levels of communication skills were identified for this case study, including matters pertaining to both musical and extra-musical skills. The musical communication skills included: significant eye contact when conducting from memory, liaising with a soloist, and giving precise technical help to instrumentalists as required. I determined the content of the rehearsal stage after consultation with the WSO administration. Communications included those with WSO management regarding recording the performance stage for the purposes of this PhD in music performance.
Partly as a result this engagement’s success, I was subsequently invited to conduct the Canberra Symphony Orchestra in the following high profile events:

1. Assistant Conductor for the world premiere of Andrew Schultz’s *Third Symphony* in March 2013.

In addition to the above engagements, I was subsequently invited to a return engagement with the WSO during June 2015[^49].

Chapter 5: Findings, Recommendations, and Postscript

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings and make recommendations for future OPCs to consider, as well as making recommendations for future study of the phenomenon. A brief postscript is also offered. This PhD in music performance, investigating the phenomenon that is the orchestral portfolio conductor (OPC), has sought to establish, through a series of autoethnographic case studies, the answers to the following research questions:

1. What is an Orchestral Portfolio Conductor?
2. What are the life experiences and work practices of an Orchestral Portfolio Conductor in 21st century Australia?
3. What are the skills, both musical and extra-musical, required for success in this music performance sector?

5.1 Findings

As demonstrated in the literature review (see Chapter 2), case studies (see Chapter 4), and in conjunction with examination of the recorded performances (and specific instances within these performances, as seen in the footnotes), this exegesis has identified that the OPC is a protean musician, who has the capacity to successfully conduct a wide range of ensemble genres and repertoire styles. Like all conductors, the OPC requires flawless technical skills and high levels of musicality. The OPC also needs to obtain a wide extra-musical skills set in order to survive in the 21st century. These skills include networking, publicity, and both business and entrepreneurial skills. This exegesis has concluded that the extra-musical skills are vital to the OPC, given the profession’s expectations that any conductor is technically proficient and musically capable.
5.1.1 What is an orchestral portfolio conductor?

In section 2.1.3, I theorised the OPC within the extant literature to be a protean careerist and portfolio musician who works:

1. in a variety of different ensembles;
2. across a wide demographic;
3. in a diverse conglomerate of styles, standards, and project outcomes; and
4. in the education, community, youth, semi-professional, and professional music ensemble sectors.

Bennett (2008), Holzenspies (2009), and Cutler (2011) refer to musicians who have a working life that includes multiple employers as having a “protean,” “portfolio,” “composite,” or “multiple” career (see section 2.1). Bennett (2008) refers specifically to Australia’s music sector (see section 2.1.1). Bennett (2007b, 2008, 2012) and Cutler (2011) state that many employment roles may be required (see sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2). My career pattern has fitted these descriptions since graduating from the Royal College of Music as a postgraduate student in 1992. The ensembles conducted in the case studies as part of this PhD in music performance provide evidence of my many and varied employment roles: a sessional freelance string ensemble (see Case Study 2), a full-time salaried professional symphony orchestra (see Case Study 3), and a community orchestra (see Case Study 4).

In addition to the employment roles referred to in Case Studies 2, 3, and 4, my career has also seen conducting engagements with primary school ensembles, secondary school ensembles, invitational youth orchestras, auditioned youth orchestras, auditioned wind orchestras, community choirs, community concert bands, youth choirs, brass ensembles and tertiary level ensembles. Such additional information is important when attempting to define the OPC from an autoethnographic study. As the OPC clearly requires a multiple employer base from which to gain engagements, the OPC resides within the casual employment market, like the majority of other musicians (see section 2.1.1).

As Bennett (2008, 2009a, 2012) and Hall (1996) write, “success” is in the purview of the individual (see section 2.1.1). Hall (1996) continues that this definition is organic in nature; this definition may change over time, and “success” can be obtained from any field (see section 2.1.1). Wittry (2007) writes that “success” is the result of lifelong preparation. A conducting career, however, is built upon return engagements. It is highly unlikely that an OPC has his/her own (and owned) orchestra from which to draw an income (see Chapter 1: 95
SYCO). It is far more likely that the OPC is invited to conduct ensembles organised by others, in a casual employment arrangement or “guest” capacity.

The OPC, therefore, additionally relies upon possible employers and a network contacts in order to gain “success.” If this view is accurate, then “success” is not just a level for the individual OPC or protean careerist to measure, but subsequently for potential employers to gauge as well, regardless of the standard of the ensemble conducted. The interview data from Case Study 1 confirm this view, and employers may take into account player, managerial, and audience feedback when considering return engagements within the professional orchestral sector (see section 4.1.4). My career experience also suggests that matters pertaining to artistic issues, music education, politics, and the OPC’s ability to work professionally with minors can affect return engagements within the youth ensemble sector. As Bennett (2009a) suggests, financial pressures can dictate work patterns (see section 2.1.1). Such a view only furthers the need for a strong, omnipresent, and organic network of professional contacts for the OPC. This may be considered an extension of the extant literature and thus, arguably, new knowledge.

The requirements for “success” are many and varied. These requirements are drawn from musical and extra-musical topics by the individual and employers alike. As confirmed by my own career and this study, the OPC requires a broad range of musical and extra-musical skills in the 21st century. These skills will be written of further in section 5.1.3, but the presence of this skills base forms part of the OPC’s definition and, therefore, require mentioning here. As a result of this PhD in music performance, I define the Orchestral Portfolio Conductor (currently) in the 21st century as being:

*a multi-skilled freelance protean/portfolio/composite/multiple careerist conductor, who works in the casual employment market. He/she may choose to accept engagements and subsequently professionally conduct a variety of ensemble portfolios, with a potentially wide range of ability standard, demographic, and purpose. Success is measured by both the individual and the potential employer.*

I have chosen to use the word “currently” in the lead in to this definition as it will undoubtedly change in time, as the profession continues to evolve and diversify.
5.1.2 What are the life experiences and work practices of an orchestral portfolio conductor 21st century Australia?

As defined in section 5.1.1, the OPC is a freelance, protean careerist who is reliant upon institutions and governing bodies for conducting engagements (i.e., employment). This is confirmed by my career experience as evidenced in Chapter 1. It is also evidenced by the freelance employment basis of the conducting engagements described in Case Studies 2, 3, and 4 (see Chapter 4). The freelance existence of the OPC is described by Bennett (2008, 2009a, 2012) and the importance of networking is reflected in the literature by Wittry (2007) and Bartleet (2009).

With the exception of diary clashes, I have undertaken every conducting engagement offered, except for one, since 1992. Hindsight has since “told me” that I should have accepted that singular engagement, regardless of my professional reservations at the time. The OPC should undertake all engagements offered, as was suggested by IP3 (see section 4.1.2). The OPC does not know the future networking contacts or subsequent professional development that may result from any given project, as Bennett (2012) confirms (see section 2.1.2). Case Studies 2, 3, and 4 all describe elements of networking. Furthermore, Case Study 4 clearly shows the importance of developing and maintaining contacts regarding future freelance conducting engagements (see section 4.18).

Undertaking every freelance employment avenue, however, results in life choices having to be made. Case Studies 2, 3 and 4 document the personal sacrifices involved in accepting engagements. Bartleet (2004) believes that this sacrifice is necessary in order for some conductors to gain “success.” Case Study 1 (see section 4.1.9) highlights that sacrifice may be a pre-requisite for an OPC. In Case Study 2, I sacrificed a long weekend holiday in Perth with my family to undertake the engagement in Brisbane. During Case Study 3, I had to be away from home to conduct WASO, and at a time when wedding planning was at its peak. In Case Study 4, my choice to accept the engagement resulted in the need to travel extensively, stay overnight in Sydney, and, ultimately, accept a financial loss on the project.
5.1.3 What are the skills, both musical and extra-musical, required for success in this music performance sector?

Based on my study of the pedagogical texts, the musical skills that the OPC needs for “success” have not dramatically changed. Conductors still require exceptional aural, technical, and musical skills, regardless of the repertoire being conducted. This is shown throughout the extant literature and confirmed in all four case studies. The aspects pertaining to preparation (including assimilation of new works and retention of information from works previously conducted), rehearsal, and performance stages of conducting engagements are still valid today, despite the increased number of orchestral performance portfolios in the 21st century (see sections 2.3 to 2.5 and Chapter 4’s performance-based case studies). Failure is not tolerated by the profession (see section 4.1.4) and “word of mouth” still has the greatest influence on the OPC’s ability to attract future conducting projects (see section 4.1.3). The challenge for the OPC is to “create” debut engagements with potential employers via extra-musical skills before the musical skills can manufacture subsequent return engagements.

While traditional conducting skills remain in the 21st century, the area of music technology is constantly developing. In section 2.1.2, Bartleet et al (2012), Bennett (2008, 2012), Dunbar-Hall et al (2013), Roxburgh (2014), and Green (2004), (see section 2.3.1) agree that technology is changing the conducting profession. IP3 uses technology to discuss possible programming (see section 4.1.5). The use of “click track” technology, as confirmed by IP3’s data (see section 4.1.2), in the post-Strong (2005) review era is an aspect that is common place within the Australian orchestral profession at the time of writing. The current popularity of programming film scores in concert halls (see section 2.2) confirms that the advent of technology use in performance continues. An OPC’s online presence (see section 2.1.2) positions the OPC in a global economy, and, as such, the OPC is required to obtain a suite of business administration skills, as most portfolio musicians have (see section 2.1.2). As Bennett (2012) has shown, many portfolio musicians conduct (see section 2.1.2). The OPC is therefore required to constantly upgrade his/her skills base, accordingly, in order to remain competitive. Part of such an upgrade can be developing knowledge of taxation affairs for the OPC, as identified in sections 4.5 and 4.15.

It is statistically likely that, with so many conductors populating the profession, any conductor chosen is technically and musically proficient, with a strong work ethic in the preparation, rehearsal, and performance stages of a project. The numerical depth of musicians that wish, need, or are required to conduct is significant. Based on the literature, analysis of the interview data, and my own career experience, it is my conclusion that, despite the
importance of musical skills required, the OPC’s market place territory is such that extra-
musical skills are vital in the 21st century in order for the OPC to gain “success.”

My career experiences (see Chapter 1) show the importance of networking as a tool
for freelance musicians in general and the OPC in particular. Bartleet (2009), Bennett (2012),
and Wittry (2007) (see section 2.1.2), Case Study 2 (see section 4.4), Case Study 3 (see
section 4.12) and Case Study 4 (see section 4.15) all confirm this importance and further
emphasise the importance of professional recommendations within a relatively small
employment sector, where reputation is vital (see section 4.1.3). Networking is arguably the
most important extra-musical tool for the OPC, and re-confirms the importance of
interpersonal and general communication skills within the profession.

Advertising can assist in the creation of new networks, as well as in developing
relationships with pre-existing professional contacts. Roxburgh (2014) states that the classical
music profession continues to change in the 21st century (see section 2.1.2). The extant
literature has shown that in the 21st century, the OPC, like other musicians, be computer
literate and possess a range of business skills (see section 2.1.2). This is also confirmed in
Chapter 1 (see SYCO). As shown in Case Studies 2 and 4 (see section 4.15.1), as an OPC, I
am required to supply photographs, biographies, CVs, rehearsal schedules, and other
documentation in electronic form. Cyber space can also be used profitably by the OPC for
advertising purposes (see section 2.1.2). I have recently started to develop my own YouTube
page as a form of ePortfolio (see section 2.1.2) for advertising purposes. Advertising is a sub-
section of entrepreneurship. Bartleet (2009), Beeching (2010), and Bennett (2012) all refer to
entrepreneurship as a key skill (see section 2.1.2), which is confirmed by my own experience
with the Sussex Youth Chamber Orchestra (see Chapter 1) in addition to my overall freelance
career. Case Study 1 (see section 4.1.8) also provides further evidence of the importance of
business skills in general.

As shown in section 5.1.1, the OPC will work with a variety of ensembles to form a
work portfolio. A professional ensemble is only one of these potential ensembles, but
conducting such an ensemble can prove to be a very lucrative employment avenue to the
OPC. The interview data in section 4.1.5 shows that orchestral administrations within
Australia have a strong preference for employing conductors through agents, so as to help
protect the relationship between individual orchestras and conductors. Anyone can be an
agent, in terms of contracting and fee negotiation, but the interview data show that there is
variety in the quality of agents within the market place. As “success” can be defined by the
individual OPC, it can include artistic success as well. While my own experience in
conducting professional orchestras largely resides in the orchestral portfolio of education, the OPC may also wish to work in (allegedly) higher-status orchestral portfolios, which certainly can attract higher fees, again confirming Bennett’s view which correlates “success” with financial gain. In order to achieve this “success”, the “right” agent is crucial. One potential difficulty is becoming attractive enough an OPC for the “right” agent to be prepared to invest his/her time, expertise, and finance.

Overseas travel and study can be important to the skills base development of the OPC. All interviewees (see section 4.1.5) confirm this. Relocation may be required in such circumstances, as Bennett (2010, 2012) in section 2.1.2, and IP5 in section 4.1.5, both confirm.

In section 2.4.1, Bennett (2012), Fallon (2014), Green (2004), Meier (2009), Mitropoulos (2014), Seaman (2013), and Wittry (2007) all write of the importance of communication skills to conductors. This is confirmed in section 4.1.4 by IP2 and IP3 in the interview data. Communication skills are an ever-present requirement for any conductor. Non-verbal communication skills can also be seen within performance-based Case Studies 2, 3, and 4, via analysis of the video recordings of the performances. Communication skills, however, are far more complex for an OPC than for a non-OPC. The OPC has the potential to work with a wide ranging demographic in a wide variety of ensembles with multiple reasons for existence, including those within primary, secondary, and tertiary education sectors. The communication skills required, for example, to successfully acquit a primary school ensemble engagement will be significantly different to those required for a professional ensemble project.

Similarly to the broad range of communication skills required, the OPC’s suite of leadership skills will be far greater than those used by non-OPCs conducting the same type of ensemble all of the time. Case Studies 2, 3, and 4 clearly show that the higher the standard of ensemble directed, the more transformational the style of leadership is required, and vice versa. Non-case studied autoethnographic evidence within the youth ensemble sector, as described in Chapter 1, confirms that more transactional leadership techniques are required with less experienced, and/or ability challenged, ensembles than transformational leadership techniques. Postema (2008), Roxburgh (2014), and Wittry (2007) all agree as to the importance of leadership skills in conducting (see section 2.4.2).

Presentation skills are an important and growing part of the OPC’s skills set in the 21st century (Bennett, 2012; Slatkin 2012; Wittry 2007) and tertiary schools/conservatoires now require such skills to be taught (see section 2.5.3). This is further supported as the
majority view within the interview data (see section 4.1.6). Furthermore, my career experiences of having presented and conducted education portfolio engagements with professional and semi-professional level ensembles serve as evidence (see Chapter 1).

Specialisation can be a useful skill for the OPC to obtain. IP4 noted that the specialist is not usually a Chief Conductor (see section 4.1.7). Specialisation, however, is led by market forces, as IP4 states (see section 4.1.7), and, if it occurs, it can be a very difficult cycle to break, as IP1 commented (see section 4.1.7). IP4 acknowledged the potential artistic frustration for the conductor in such a circumstance (see section 4.1.7). IP3 noted that specialisation requires a strength within a skills set to occur (see section 4.1.7), but it can be quite restrictive as IP5 suggested (see section 4.1.7). The OPC needs to decide if specialisation brings “success.”

In section 2.3.1, I hypothesised that memorisation is a crucial tool for the OPC to create, maintain, and keep. Buzacott (2014), Hostetter (2009), Pritchard (2011) and Wroe (2011) all comment on the benefits of conducting from memory. Buzacott (2014), Lebrecht (2001) and Schuller (1997), however, give opposite views. Memorisation is an area of disagreement within the conducting profession. Section 2.3.1, also highlighted the need for eye contact, and, therefore, the ability to look away from the score (using memory skills) is required. The ability to conduct from memory possibly provides the OPC with a market edge. In order to prove this theory, the data from subsequent return engagements would need to be analysed. Case Studies 3 and 4 show this theory to be inconclusive. I have not conducted WASO since 2012 (due to WASO’s commitment to Perth-based conductors), yet I will return to WSO in June 2015. As always, the individual OPC’s career path is chosen for him/her as a result of decisions made by both the individual OPC and employers. Memorisation does not always guarantee “success,” but it can lead to “success” as well.

A suite of self-skills is required. The interviewees unanimously agreed that honesty (see section 4.1.4) was a pre-requisite, specifically within the realm of conducting professional orchestras. This can also be seen at section 2.6, as described by Green (2004) and Wittry (2007). Remaining honest to oneself, both professionally and artistically (authenticity), could easily be translated from the professional orchestral setting to the other employment avenues inhabited by the OPC. Other skills described in the interview data were determination, resilience, sacrifice (e.g., relocation), and the ability to foster a lifelong learning process. Many of these characteristics and skills were also commented on by Green (2004) and Wittry (2007).
In conclusion, as a result of my review of the literature and the data analysis, I find that the extra-musical aspects outweigh the musical aspects in terms of their importance to the individual “success” of the OPC. The musical aspects remain paramount when actually conducting, but such is the numerical strength of this sub-section of the profession (i.e., numerical competition levels) that the extra-musical elements now dominate the musical ones.

5.2 Recommendations

My recommendations fall into two categories: firstly, those skills to be considered by present and future OPCs, drawn from my life experience within the profession, the extant literature, and the data extrapolated from the four case studies within this PhD in music performance. Secondly, I make recommendations pertaining to the future exploration of the OPC phenomenon.

5.2.1 Recommendations to present and future OPCs.

The musical and extra-musical aspects required by an OPC in the 21st century can be summarised as follows:

1. Everything the OPC does (musical or extra-musical) in the preparation, rehearsal, and performance stages of any engagement must be as good as possible. The competition levels are too high (in standard and numerically), and the volume of work available too small, for failure to be entertained, if a career as an OPC is desired. Reputations are forged on and off the podium in the 21st century. Accept every engagement no matter how allegedly lowly it might seem. The OPC cannot foresee what future engagements or network contacts will follow from each engagement. If the OPC does not accept an engagement, another OPC will.

2. As the profession changes within the Australian orchestral sector, the skills required of the OPC will undoubtedly change in tandem. An adoption of a lifelong learning personal pedagogy is vital to the continuation of the individual OPC, particularly given the precarious nature of the profession, and the OPC’s place within it.

3. The OPC must understand that “Not everyone will like you.” The OPC will receive many more setbacks than steps forward during his/her career.
5.2.2 **Recommendations for further study of the OPC phenomenon.**

As a result of completing this PhD in music performance, I make the following recommendations for further study in relation of the OPC phenomenon:

1. As the classical music sector is positioned, it, undeniably, lies in a global marketplace. It is, therefore, almost certain that the OPC phenomenon exists internationally as well. If this is the case, further study of the OPC internationally is recommended in order to compare and contrast the skills set, life practices, and professional experiences of an Australian OPC to those in the rest of the world.

2. Further study of the OPC within the ever-changing Australian employment scene is also recommended, as the Australian marketplace in education, and the Australian orchestral sector, both develop in the post-Strong (2005) era. I recommend that such further research regarding the implications for the OPC take place as marketplace conditions change within Australia and internationally. Future research may include alternative methodologies, as well as other research tools such as questionnaires. Experts in body language interpretation could also be potentially employed in future video analysis.

5.3 **Postscript**

This PhD in music performance has brought me to understand myself, my art, and my profession much more than I did before its commencement in 2011. My professional life as an OPC has always been difficult, but I never had the time to reflect and contemplate my career’s direction, challenges, and difficulties therein until I undertook this PhD in music performance.

I would again like to thank all concerned with the production of this exegesis. The journey, hopefully, does not end here, and I look forward to the possibilities of future research of the OPC phenomenon. I hope that in time, those people reading this thesis will better understand the conducting profession in 21st century Australia (and internationally).
References


Young, S. (2012, August 22). 612 ABC interview (3'02" to 3'29" only). (T. Cox, Interviewer). Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.
Appendix A

Questions asked in Case Study 1 Interviews

The following 15 questions were asked of five senior orchestral artistic administrators within Australasia:

1. How do “new to you” professional conductors come to your attention? Is personal recommendation or “word of mouth” still the best recommendation in the business?
2. What are the most important things you look for from a professional conductor when weighing up a possible debut engagement with a professional orchestra?
3. What do you look for from professional conductors to consider re-engagement with a professional orchestra? On a scale of 0–10, how important to you are players’ conductor surveys and the thoughts of the players’ artistic committee?
4. Do you view professional conductors as having to specialise in a particular genre, portfolio, or style in order to succeed in the over-populated market place?
5. Do you view education concerts as a low risk environment to view “new” conductors?
6. How important do you therefore see budding conductors in order to get to a point where they might be used for education concerts to study education matters and develop a range of education concerts for the varied age groups of potential audiences?
7. On a scale of 0–10 if possible, how easy is it for a professional conductor to be pigeon-holed in a particular orchestral portfolio? What can be done by the professional conductor to overcome any such perceptions?
8. In Australia, rightly or wrongly, there appears to be a school of thought that the term “international” when applied to conductors translates as “good”. Is this a theory and trend that budding Australian conductors need to worry about?
9. With Australia having one of the better conductor training structures in the world, do you think that this structure should have produced more professional conductors by now?
10. Do you believe that a period of study abroad enhances future success in the marketplace for professional conductors in the eyes of music administrators?
11. The Australian orchestral profession currently works in difficult financial times. Audience numbers are generally decreasing, sponsorship and government funding is becoming harder to attract and sustain, and the competition for the disposable dollar from other sectors has never been fiercer. There is an apparent drift for orchestras to become more commercially successful. Given this, do you feel that conductors’ fees are too high and will there ever be a case when artistic intent is outweighed by the need for commercial success?

12. How important do you feel agents are to a professional conductor’s career development?

13. Do you view agents as being a necessary buffer–zone between an artist and orchestral management in dealing with fees and publicity matters, or can a conductor self–represent?

14. The line between publicity/promotion and harassment for work is potentially a very fine one for conductors. At what point do you believe that this line is crossed? Does too much publicity from a conductor become too much from a managerial point of view?

15. What tips and professional insights can you give future Australian conductors in order for them to succeed in this most combative of orchestral career paths?
Appendix B

Ethical consent for human interview participation granted by the Ethics Committee at the School of Music, University of Queensland

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Approval Form for Experiments on Humans Including Behavioural Research

Chief Investigator: Warwick Potter
Project Title: The Australian Portfolio Conductor – An Extra-Musical Musician
Supervisors: Professor Margaret Barrett, Associate Professor Patricia Pollett, Dr Julie Ballantyne
Discipline: Music
Project Number: SoM-2012-10/WP
Duration: 3 years

Comments:

Name of Responsible Panel:
School of Music Ethical Review Panel
This project complies with the provisions contained in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and complies with the regulations governing experimentation on humans.

Name of School of Music Ethics Review Coordinator and Director of Research: Dr Samantha Owens

Date: 6 September 2012 Signature: S. K. Owens
Appendix C

Score used for Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima in Case Study 2
Appendix D

Instruction sheet used as a rehearsal aid to communicate to the players of the Camerata of St John’s in preparation for a performance of Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima by Penderecki (Case Study 2)

1.1 Introduction

The following data represent a rehearsal stage aid which I constructed to enable me to disseminate information pertaining to the Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima in an efficient manner.

1.2 Baton and Left Hand (LH) Cues

Sections 1.2.1 to 1.2.36 identify information extrapolated from the score (see Appendix C). This data represents either single bars or a series of connecting bars depending on the content of the information that was required to be disseminated to the playing cohort.

1.2.1 Bar 1 – all entries are “fortissimo.”

1. Baton downbeat — violas 1–5 start playing.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violins 1–6 start playing.
3. Cue 2 = basses 1–4 start playing.
4. Cue 3 = violins 7–12 start playing.
5. Cue 4 = ’celli 6–10 start playing.
6. Cue 5 = violins 7–12 start playing.
7. Cue 6 = violas 6–10 start playing.
8. Cue 7 = basses 5–8 start playing. Please note that cues 1 to 7 happen within a short space of time. Then a small gap to …
9. Cue 8 = violins 19–24 start playing.
10. Cue 9 = ’celli 6–10 start playing.
1.2.2 Bar 2 – all players suddenly “forte.”

1. Baton downbeat — violins 1–6 and violas 1–5 have an event on the downbeat.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violins 13–18 molto vibrato.
3. Cue 2 = violins 7–12 and violas 6–10 have an event.
4. Cue 3 = violins 19–24 have an event.

1.2.3 Bar 3.

1. Baton downbeat — ’celli 1–5 have an event on the downbeat.
2. LH Cue 1 = violins 19–24 change to molto vibrato.
3. A short bar with only one LH cue.

1.2.4 Bar 4.

1. Baton downbeat—events for violins 1–6, all violas, ’celli 6–10 and basses 1–4.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violins 13–18 change to molto vibrato.
3. Cue 2 = violins 7–12, ’celli 1–5 and basses 5–8 all change together to molto vibrato.
4. There are only 2 LH cues in bar 4.

1.2.5 Bar 5.

1. Baton downbeat—dynamic changes for all except violas. Additionally, technical changes for all players except violas 6–10 and basses 5–8.
2. LH Cue 1 = violas 6–10, ’celli 1–5 and basses 5–8 all change techniques together.
3. There is only one LH cue in this bar.

1.2.6 Bar 6.

1. Baton downbeat—all violins and basses start crescendo from “ppp” to “mf.” Violas 1–5 and basses 1–4 change to senza vibrato. All ’celli stop playing and wait for LH cues.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = ’celli top line starts.
3. Cue 2 = ’celli 3rd line starts.
4. Cue 3 = 'celli 2nd line starts.
5. Cue 4 = 'celli 4th line starts.

1.2.7 Bar 7.

1. Baton downbeat—violins stay “mf” and change technique. All violas stop playing and await LH cues. 'Celli carry on from bar 6. Basses stay at “mf” and play rapid but unrhythmic tremolo.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violas top line starts.
3. Cue 2 = violas 3rd line starts.
4. Cue 3 = violas 2nd line starts.
5. Cue 4 = violas 4th line starts.

1.2.8 Bar 8.

1. Baton downbeat—all violins stop playing and await LH cues. All other players continue same techniques from bar 7 for the whole bar.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violins 1–6 start.
3. Cue 2 = violins 13–18 start.
4. Cue 3 = violins 7–12 start.
5. Cue 4 = violins 19–24 start.

1.2.9 Bar 9.

1. Baton downbeat—basses stop playing and await LH cues. All other players continue same techniques from bar 8 for the whole bar.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = bass top line starts.
3. Cue 2 = bass 3rd line starts.
4. Cue 3 = bass 2nd line starts.
5. Cue 4 = bass 4th line starts.

1.2.10 Bar 10.

1. Baton downbeat—violins, violas, and basses continue techniques until cued. 'Celli—change on down beat to new techniques as quickly as possible and wait for cues before changing ranges.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violins, violas, and basses stop playing. 'Celli start variances.
3. Cue 2 = 'celli stop variances and return to pitches chosen at start of the bar.
1.2.11 Bar 11.

2. LH cues: Cue 1 = ’celli stop playing.
3. Cue 2 = basses start playing and wait for cue to begin variances.
4. Cue 3 = violins 1–12 stop playing.
5. Cue 4 = basses start variances.
6. Cue 5 = basses at maximum variances to be played.
7. Cue 6 = basses begin return to original pitches.

1.2.12 Bar 12.

1. Baton downbeat—violas start, but hold pitch until cued.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = basses arrive at final pitch and hold.
3. Cue 2 = basses stop playing, violas start variances.
4. Cue 3 = violas start decrescendo, violins 13–24 start playing.
5. Cue 4 = violas stop playing.
6. Cue 5 = Violins 13–24 start variances continuing over the bar line.

1.2.13 Bar 13.

1. Baton downbeat—’celli start playing.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violins 13–24 stop playing.
3. Cue 2 = all violas start playing.
4. Cue 3 = ’celli stop playing.

1.2.14 Bar 14.

1. Baton downbeat—violins 1–12 start playing and await cues for changes.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violas start variances.
3. Cue 2 = violas return from variances.
4. Cue 3 = basses start playing.
5. Cue 4 = violas stop playing.
6. Cue 5 = violins 1–12 start variances.
7. Cue 6 = violins 1–12 return from variances.
8. Cue 7 = basses stop playing.
9. Cue 8 = violins 1–12 stop playing.
1.2.15 Bar 15.

2. No LH cues in this bar.

1.2.16 Bar 16.

1. Baton downbeat—all violins, ’celli and basses stop playing. Violas start at “ff.”
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violins 13–24 start playing.
3. Cue 2 = violins 1–12 and all basses start playing.
4. Cue 3 = violas stop playing.
5. Cue 4 = violas start next entry.
6. Cue 5 = ’celli start playing.
7. Cue 6 = violins 1–12 stop playing.
8. Cue 7 = violins 1–12 start next entry.
10. Cue 9 = violins 13–24 start next entry.

1.2.17 Bar 17.

2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violins 1–12 change technique and start glissando, ’celli finish glissando.
3. Cue 2 = violas and basses change technique and start glissando.
4. Cue 3 = violins 1–12 stop playing, violins 13–24 change technique and start glissando.
5. Cue 4 = violas and basses stop playing.
1.2.18 Bar 18

Simply start playing very shortly after the previous part number has played within your section.

1. Baton downbeat—’celli start.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violins 13–24 start.
3. Cue 2 = violas start.
4. Cue 3 = basses start.
5. Cue 4 = violins 1–12 start.
6. Cue 5 = ’celli and basses stop playing.

1.2.19 Bar 19

1. Baton downbeat—’Celli and basses start next entry.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = all violins and violas stop playing.
3. Cue 2 = ’celli and basses start glissandi.
4. Cue 3 = ’celli and basses stop glissandi.
5. Cue 4 = ’celli and basses start pitch variances.

1.2.20 Bar 20

1. Baton downbeat—’celli and basses start molto vibrato whilst subito “f” and decrescendo. ’Celli should be “mp” by the end of this bar.
2. There are no LH cues in this bar.

1.2.21 Bar 21

1. Baton downbeat—basses stop playing. ’Celli should be “p” by the end of this bar.
2. There are no LH cues for this bar.

1.2.22 Bar 22

1. Baton downbeat—’celli continue, but 1–5 change technique.
2. LH Cue 1 = ’celli 6–10 stop playing: decrescendo to “piu p” only, not “pp.”

1.2.23 Bar 23

1. Baton downbeat—solo bass sempre “pp.”
1.2.24 Bar 24
1. Baton downbeat—bass solo senza vibrato and molto decrescendo.

1.2.25 Bar 25
1. Baton downbeat—tutti general pause for 5 seconds. Please keep the sense of theatre here.

1.2.26 Bars 26–55
1. These bars I beat in 2/4, crotchet = 48. Play all entries in strict rhythm accordingly.

1.2.27 Bars 56–61
1. Similar to bars 26–55 except now subito piu mosso. Crotchet = 72. Strict rhythm is required.

1.2.28 Bars 62 and 63

1.2.29 Bar 64
1. Beaten 12/4 and in four groups of three. ’Celli and basses to take best guess: bass entries end by beat ten.

1.2.30 Bar 65
1. Beaten 6/4 and in two groups of three. Violins 1–12 subito “pp”—come off on beat four. ’Celli take best guess, but must be finished by beat six.

1.2.31 Bars 66–70 (in general)
1. Return to baton downbeat and style of LH cueing as before.
**1.2.32 Bar 66**

1. Baton downbeat—violins 1–12 start, violas change dynamic and technique.
2. LH Cue 1 = ’celli start playing.

**1.2.33 Bar 67**

1. Baton downbeat—varied changes in dynamics and techniques.
2. LH Cue 1 = basses stop playing.

**1.2.34 Bar 68**

1. Baton downbeat—basses start next entry.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = violins 1–12 stop playing.
3. Cue 2 = violins 1–12 start next entry.
4. Cue 3 = violas and ’celli stop playing.

**1.2.35 Bar 69**

1. Baton downbeat—various entries, changes of techniques and dynamics.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = all violins and basses start crescendo.
3. Cue 2 = all violas and ’celli start crescendo.
4. Cue 3 = tutti cut off.

**1.2.36 Bar 70**

1. Baton downbeat—tutti tutta forza. Time to change techniques and dynamics.
2. LH cues: Cue 1 = Reach *ord.* and “mf.”
3. Cue 2 = Reach “ppp” and a 5 second warning to the end.
4. Cue 3 = End cut off.
Appendix E

Excerpt instruction sheet employed during Case Study 3

1. **Vivaldi: Summer — First movement only**
   1. Tutti — bars 1 to 11.
   2. Tutti — bars 21 to 30.
   3. Tutti — bars 31 to 49 (first semi-quaver only).
   4. Tutti — bars 59 to 70.
   5. Solo only — bars 72 to 77.
   6. Tutti — bars 78 to 82 (first note only).
   7. Tutti — bars 90 to 94 (first note only).
   8. Tutti — bars 116 to 124 only.

2. **Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op 67 — First movement only**
   1. Tutti — bars 1 to 5.
   2. Tutti — bars 6 to 21.
   3. Tutti — bars 59 to 94.
   4. Tutti — bars 125 to 128.
   5. Tutti — bars 253 to 268.
   6. Tutti — bars 374 to 397.
   7. Tutti — whole movement with repeat.

3. **Webern — Symphony, Op 21**
   1. 1st movement — 2nd horn, clarinet and celli only: bars 1 to 12.
   2. Tutti: 2nd movement — complete.

4. **Stravinsky — L’oiseau de Feu (1919)**
   1. *The Rite of Spring* bassoon opening.
   2. *L’oiseau de Feu (1919)* — complete.