The Conductor's parodies.

A multimodal strategy for error management

in music rehearsals[*]

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Abstract

A parody is a distorted imitation of a trait or behavior, aimed at highlighting its flaws and possibly making fun of them, generally with a satirical aim, but sometimes with pedagogical ends. The paper presents a study of the parodies performed by choir and orchestra conductors viewed as a peculiar strategy for error management during rehearsals. To investigate how parodies are exploited to correct the singers' or players errors, rehearsals of orchestra and choir conductors were collected and the types of errors they stigmatize, as well as their parodies of them, were analysed by means of an annotation scheme that describes their parodies and classifies the pointed errors in terms of the musical parameters with respect to which they are errors. The paper points out that the use of parody as an error management device is widespread across conductors, but especially when the relationship between conductor and musicians is characterized by an informal and friendly climate.

1   Introduction

Life and work in a music ensemble is a tangled web of physical, cognitive, social, and affective processes, and much of its emotional climate and musical performance is often determined by the conductor and by his or her aesthetic, interactional and didactic style. The conductor's job is multifaceted and multitasked. S/he is a performer but also a teacher, a leader as well as a trainer, and must take care both of the technical and of the aesthetic aspects of music performance. This implies a complex plan of action (Poggi, 2011) aimed at having musicians play or sing well. In order to this the conductor must provide, at any moment during performance, information about the sound to produce: who is going to sing, when, what is the content expressed by the words to sing, what sound to produce, and how. The specific sound to produce implies various goals, corresponding to the parameters of music: the conductor asks for a particular melody, rhythm, tempo, timbre, intensity, expression, or reminds aspects of the musical structure of the piece, e.g., coming back to the tonic or changing from minor to major.

All the information borne by his or her body behaviour during performance must be provided during rehearsal as well. In this case, the whole plan of "playing or singing well" must be fulfilled, but not yet as a simple reminder, rather as a set of techniques that are being indicated for the very first time.

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[*] This work is dedicated to M° Maria Teresa Carloni, the conductor of "Corale Benedetto Marcello" of Rome, who died on 24 August, 2016, under the rubble of her house during the earthquake of Amatrice (Rieti, Italy). Below I do not analyze any of the numerous parodies of the choir's errors made by M° Carloni, since I simply collected in my memory, and I will only recall them "by heart" (in the literal sense). She used to make a lot of them, and she was among the conductors who inspired my analysis. Her error parodies were only one of the reasons for my admiration, along with her sunny disposition and her fresh enthusiasm.

A rehearsal is then a communicative interaction in which the conductor has to "show" how to do (Veronesi, 2014), and since at the beginning of learning a technique people may not immediately perform it correctly, the conductor may have to point at technical errors and show how to correct them: how to do in fact (Weeks, 1985; 2002). Yet, an error may be managed in different ways: you may ignore it, trusting it will be fixed in next rehearsals, or point at it as a serious flaw, or play it down.

This work illustrates a peculiar way to manage errors in music performance: making a parody of them. Fixing errors by making fun of them is a very intriguing didactic strategy, firstly because it exploits the whole range of body communication chances of a teacher, but also because it is a cue to a particular style of teaching interaction: a friendly, sometimes joking pedagogical stance (D'Errico et al., 2012) in which strict and severe reproach does not dwell, and which can further motivate players/singers/pupils to learn doing better. The general aim of this work is to evidence how the whole body of the conductor may be in the service of music, not only during performance, but also when teaching, correcting, and inducing the skill and the pleasure of making music.

Section 2. overviews previous works on multimodality and conducting, and 3. some approaches to error management stemming from different learning theories. Section 4. summarizes the notions of humor, ridicule and parody, their cognitive and communicative devices, and their social functions. Sections 5 and 6 go in more detail in how errors are managed in music performance, outlining what musical contents may be in principle conveyed by a conductor in explicating and correcting music errors, while sections 7 and 8 present a study on the conductors' parodies of musicians' errors during rehearsals.

2 Multimodal communication between conductor and ensemble

The communicative interaction of a conductor with an ensemble can be seen, from some points of view, as a conversation (Ashley, 2000), which can be analysed in terms of Grice's Cooperation Principle; in other respects, unlike verbal dialogue, participants must not wait to take the turn, but can act simultaneously – the conductor makes gestures, and at the same time musicians play or sing in synchrony with them. The conductor's gestures have been analysed by conductors and theorists of conducting (Rudolf, 1995; Green, 1997; Saito, 1988), mainly focusing on the rhythmic functions of gesture, but in general acknowledging the possibility of mapping specific gestures to specific musical information; in the multimodality field, Boyes Bräm and Bräm (2004) used the categories of Sign Language Studies to analyse the Conductor's expressive gestures and their iconic and metaphorical features; Poggi (2002) outlined a "lexicon" of the conductors' face – the cognitive, affective, expressive and musical meanings conveyed by their gaze, facial expression, and head movements; in the domain of vocal learning, Rahaim (2012) showed the strict intertwining, in Hindustani music, of gesture and voice as two parallel articulations of melody, and a similar intertwining of relationships between teacher and student through the medium of voice and gesture. Finally, Johannsen and Nakra (2010) overview automatic systems in which the previous analyses are applied to construct conducting interfaces for tracking and accompanying conductors' gestures.

3 Errors in learning theories

Learning theories evidence wide differences from each other as to the best way to manage errors during learning (Corder, 1967). For example in a behaviourist view, where the repetition of some performance is a way to consolidate memory of it, the error must be avoided as much as possible, because even the very perceiving it may eventually lead to learn it. In foreign language teaching, the behaviourist teacher never repeats the pupil's error, to prevent him from learning it; rather, he may repeat the meaning intended by the pupil, but rephrasing it the right way, without remarking the error at all, even, ignoring it.

A cognitivist view, on the contrary, attributes a positive value to errors, viewed as a cue to the learner's underlying learning processes; in such a perspective, analysing it and comparing it with the right phrasing is fruitful for learning and memorization.

Of course, the management of errors by a teacher also depends on his or her teaching style and social-educational relationship with pupils: in a word, on the teacher's "pedogical stance" (D'Errico et al., 2012), his/her kind of positioning towards both pupils and errors. This includes the "didactic stance" – the specific ways in which s/he intends to guide pupils's learning and problem solving, and to develop their skills – and the "affective-relational stance" – the relationship s/he wants to entertain with pupils, the importance s/he credits to affective aspects of learning, the type of affective climate s/he wants to impress to teacher-pupils interaction. From the point of view of the didactic stance, a "maieutic" teacher will accept errors as a step towards learning, whereas an "efficient" one will try to avoid and prevent them (Leone, 2012). From the point of view of the affective-relational stance, only a teacher with a "friendly" stance is not judging nor controlling, s/he does not comment when the pupil makes a mistake, being often playful or ironic, and approving self-corrections; whereas a "dominating" teacher is very directive, controlling and judging, s/he does not tolerate errors and only praises pupils if they do exactly what s/he wants.
If all this regards errors in language learning and school teaching in general, what happens in the domain of music performance? What is the attitude of music teachers and conductors towards errors in singing or playing? (Veronesi, 2012; 2014).

This work investigates the management of errors in some orchestra and choir conductors by focusing on a peculiar strategy to stigmatize and correct errors during rehearsals: making a parody of them. Parody is a strategy to remark people's errors by making fun of them, and conductors often spontaneously use this strategy to explain how singers or players should not sing or play, and to contrast the right way with the wrong way of producing sound.

4 Humor, ridicule and parody

When a conductor makes a parody of players' or singers' errors, s/he is pursuing a pedagogical aim by making use of humor. Le us see what is humor, what does it mean to make fun of something or someone, and finally what is a parody.
Among the dozens of recent and past theories (Martin, 2007; Ruch, 2008), three classes of them are particularly fit to understand humor and laughter:
1. Theories of incongruity, that view humor as stemming from the sudden violation of an expectation which, though, does not bear negative consequences, and view laughter as triggered by its resolution.
2. Theories of relief, mainly represented by Freud's (1905; 1928) works on comic and humor, according to which we laugh when energy, stemming for example from sexual or aggressive impulses, is suddenly released, thus resulting in a positive emotional state. Humor would thus be a route to express our impulses disproved by Super-Ego in an acceptable way, while also taking advantage of the tension relief we gain in expressing them.
3. Theories of superiority (firstly represented by Hobbes, 1650, and Bergson, 1900, but somehow dating back to Aristotle) which stress laughing *at* someone, more than laughing *with* someone. According to Hobbes (1650), laughter is a *sudden glory* following the perception of superiority of oneself with respect to others' flaws. Laughing at another finally results in a "social punishment" of others, to highlight and correct behaviours not conforming to required standards (Bergson, 1900).

These three classes of theories can well be integrated with each other to provide a more complete account of laughter, humor, and the social behaviour of making fun of another: actually, the first (incongruity) concerns the cognitive device of humour, the second (relief) its emotional effect, and the third (superiority) concerns its social function. Putting them together tells us the whole story: laughter stems when some expectation is disconfirmed and raises surprise, and the unexpected

event is discovered as not dangerous, in such a way as to cause relief (in fact, the strong expirations contained in laughter might assimilate it to an exaggerated sigh of relief). When the unexpected event consists in finding some flaw, some lack of power, especially in someone who displays some pretence of high power and superiority, laughter about his flaw becomes laughing at him, making fun of him, mockery, ridiculization.

According to Castelfranchi (1988), ridiculization is a communicative act conveying a negative evaluation of someone, aimed at a sort of "moralistic aggression" toward him (Bishof, 1980), to be used as a sanction against a-social behaviour, possibly with a pedagogical function. More specifically, since people may be evaluated negatively either for inadequacy (they have a goal but are not able to fulfil it) or for noxiousness (they have a negative power that may harm others) (Miceli and Castelfranchi, 1998), ridiculization conveys a negative evaluation of inadequacy. In making fun of a person, we warn him he displays some inadequacy against some standard, but one that does not harm anybody, and is not threatening nor even worrying for us. This may have the effect of making him feel inferior and in lack of something, while putting ourselves on a level of superiority with respect to him (Poggi, 2012).

Ridiculization may have aggressive aims, for instance in bullying; but more in general it is used to force divergent members to conform to the group's norms; in this sense, it is a form of "moralistic aggression", like is the case, for example, in literary and political satire.

Parody is a tool for ridiculization: a bullying teen may tease his schoolmate by making a parody of his speech or his walk; pupils make parodies of their teachers' behaviour to defend their own identity against the model he projects; a comedian makes a parody of a politician to stigmatize his political flaws.

A parody is a text or a verbal or multimodal communicative behaviour (a discourse, a song, a movie, a fiction, a pantomime) that imitates another text or multimodal behaviour in a distorted way, so as to highlight its flaws or errors, with the aim of amusing and eliciting laughter about either the behaviour or the one who performs it (D'Errico and Poggi, 2016).

Yet, two levels of distortion can be adopted, leading to a "surface" or a "deep" parody, respectively. In the latter the parody does not only (re)produce actually visible or audible features of the parodied behavior, but re-categorizes the Victim that performs it, and imitates the traits or behaviors that would plausibly stem of that new category. For instance, in a surface imitation of a very short politician, the parodist will simply impersonate him while standing on his knees; but if the object of the parody is the politician's being always very aggressive, the parodist will impersonate him with a helmet and a gun, while groveling on the ground, thus re-categorizing him like a guerrillero. In this case parody is not bare (distorted) imitation, but makes a further step of cognitive complexity: what is represented is not what can be patently heard or seen.

In principle ridiculization, and parody within it, may be also exploited with a pedagogical function: some decades ago parents would occasionally ridicule a baby who was late in toilet training. But in times of political correct, is ridicule still accepted as a pedagogical tool?

My hypothesis is that, at least in choir and orchestra conduction, stigmatizing mistakes in performance by making a parody of them is still a didactic tool for error management.

In the following, I analyse the parodies of musical errors in orchestra and choir conductors.

5 Musical error management

What is an error, and what is correction, in music? An error is the result of some action that failed its goal. In music, suppose I want to sing tune "A" but I produce a sound with a slightly lower frequency; this is an error to the extent to which the tune I wanted to produce was an "A" proper. The actual frequency of the tune sung does not match with the frequency I had in mind – my musical goal. This mismatch is what we call an error.

Of course, being "out-of-tune" is the most trivial kind of error: depending on the level of musicians and on the phase of training, more sophisticated aspects of music performance can be the target of a conductor. Musicians must be accurate not only in the very tunes produced (melody) and their timing (rhythm); along with dynamics (the intensity of sound), agogics (accents and length),

what gives color to music performance – hence determining the signature of an orchestra or a choir – is timbre, that is also responsible for the expressive nuances of the music sung or played. And errors may occur in any of these parameters. How can they be managed in teaching?

A first possibility – like in the behaviorist view above – is to ignore them. If the pupil made a mistake, just let him repeat the passage, or at most you repeat it the right way, while passing over the wrong one.

An alternative strategy is to highlight the error and to contrast it with the right way to sing or play. The music teacher, once heard the difference between wanted and actual sound, may sing the tune again, once the right way and once the wrong way, to let you compare them and understand the difference. In Veronesi's (2014) terms, the teacher may display a "contrast pair", contrasting the "correctable" and the "correction" (Weeks, 1985; 2002). An idea implicit in this view is that if your previous performance has been mistaken, you should understand what is the wrong action you did, that produced that bad result. The pupil, in fact, may be aware of the error, but sometimes a particular sensitivity is needed to catch subtle nuances of the performance, that only the teacher may detect. In these cases the teacher might produce both the wrong and the right sound in somewhat exaggerated way, to stress their differences.

Yet, for both the desired and the wrong tune, the teacher must focus, on the one side on the perceived sound (the wrong or correct result), on the other on the sound production – the motor behavior that outputs it; and of course he must both let the pupil distinguish the wrong from the correct one and show the motor behavior that would produce the correct sound. This obviously implies that the teacher has a clear hypothesis about the body movements that generate both the wrong sound perceived and the correct one to produce.

This is not the only technique that conductors or music teachers may use, but it seems to be quite an instinctive way to correct errors. Yet, this strategy may be exploited in either a serious or an ironic way, depending on the type of social-affective relationship between teacher and pupils. A very patient teacher might simply ask me to repeat the tune until I make it the right way. A quite severe teacher will be strict, he might possibly get angry, show disgusted, or even scold me or hit me for that bad performance. But a teacher who wants to have a friendly relationship with pupils might ironically tease me for my out-of-tune sound, while implicitly meta-communicating that he is not being strict but simply joking. This is a case in which a music teacher may happen to use parodies to highlight music errors.

Of course, I do not imply this is the "pedagogically right" way to manage errors, only that this is the way some conductors manage musical errors. In the following, I present an observational qualitative analysis of two conductors' rehearsals, showing that both often use parodies to stigmatize singing or playing errors.

6 Imitation and Parody of Right and Wrong Sounds

The aim of this work is to analyse some fragments of music rehearsals to test the hypothesis that conductors actually use parodies with the didactic function of stigmatizing and correcting errors in singing and playing.

In analysing error management during rehearsal, I focus on the case in which the Conductor does not pass over the error but wants singers or players to recognize it and amend it. Based on the above pedagogical ideology, to make the error and the correction clear, the conductor may refer in his teaching to both the correct sound and the wrong sound, and he may mention, reproduce, or imitate them (Weeks, 2002; Veronesi, 2014) by his own voice or by his body, head, hand gestures.

How can you refer to a sound by head or body movements, or by a gesture? Through a transposition of some features across modalities; for instance making a very abrupt hand movement may refer to a sound with very abrupt onset. In other cases, though, the conductor does not directly refer to the sound, but reproduces the movements that presumably are made to produce the correct and the wrong sound, respectively. In a choir rehearsal, for instance, the simplest way to do so is to display the vocal movements that typically result in that sound; but since vocal organs are not so visible, to make the general bodily movement more clear and conspicuous, one can either

exaggerate it (e.g., make mouth movements wider than the normal ones), or perform those body movements that typically accompany the mouth movement at issue.

In music performance, body movements, besides expressing affective and cognitive states, also "help" the technical movements required by the performance. As argued by Poggi (2006), within a pianist's multimodal behavior, it is possible to distinguish, within a class of movements called "Helping Motor Action", three subclasses named "Help Melody", "Help rhythm", "Help Harmony": ones that facilitate, respectively, the movements necessary to play the sequence of keys (melody), their rhythm, and harmony. Another class of movements are ones called "Help Manner of Movement", those that help one not so much to produce that particular tune, but to produce it a particular way: "Help tempo", "Help timbre", and "Help intensity". Moreover, among the movements linked to the affective states felt – or enacted – by the performers, some are helpful in the production of particular sounds or aspects of a sound: e.g., a strong frowning, being a typical expression of anger, may evoke anger and along with it the high energy mobilized by it, thus "helping" intensity.

My hypothesis is that this is the case both in playing an instrument and in singing: since some facial expressions or body postures favor the production of a certain sound or its production in a particular manner, the conductor may imitate that particular expression or posture to make players or singers understand the technique to be preferred or avoided – hence marking the correct versus the wrong sound.

The conductor's verbal and body communication during rehearsal may then in principle convey six types of contents, exemplified as follows:

- **RS** (Right Sound): for example, *moving right hand open, with palm down, rightward* with a *continuous movement* may convey that the produced sound must be continuous;
- **WR** (Wrong Sound): e.g., *facing hands dropping down* as chopping movements evoke a too (metaphorically) "chopped", too "staccato" a sound;
- **MRS** (Movement producing the Right Sound): the conductor, while explaining how to produce the right sound, says *dobbiamo abbracciarlo* (we must embrace it), and *moves his hands toward himself with fingers open curve*, as if embracing someone: by his hand movement he refers to the curve round movement of the mouth in producing the sound;
- **MWS** (Movement producing the Wrong Sound): he verbally explains how NOT to sing, by saying: *non allarghiamo troppo* (don't let us widen [the mouth] too much), and at the same time *opens his mouth and arms exaggeratedly wide*;
- **ShRS** (Shape of the mouth producing the Right Sound): he *depicts a sphere* with *curve hands* to show the required round mouth shape;
- **ShWS** (Shape of mouth producing the Wrong Sound): he makes an *exaggeratedly wide mouth shape*.

When the movement or shape cannot be seen (e.g., movements of the vocal tract), one can resort to another movement from which this can be inferred, for example the movements that help produce the Right or Wrong Sound.

- **MHRS** (Movement Helping the Right Sound): for example, to show how fluid and harmonic the sound must be, the conductor *moves about like dancing*;
- **MHWS** (Movement Helping the Wrong Sound): to stigmatize a too abrupt onset he *shakes his hips*: a movement that generally helps stressing syllables or making abrupt starts.

As noted by Weeks (1985), the Wrong Sound is often imitated; but sometimes the conductor imitates it in an exaggerated way, thus making it the object of a parody. Yet, both as for the Wrong Sound and for the Right Sound, they are rarely simply displayed, i.e., produced by the Conductor with his own mouth; more frequently are they mentioned through peculiar iconicity devices, among which what we may call "transmodal analogy": a transposition from a modality to another. When the conductor *opens his arms wide* to exaggerate the openness of vowel *a*, he is *moving his hands*,

but this movement requires to be transferred (transposed) to another modality, not arms but mouth; and further, this might also require a transposition to an acoustic modality: an "open" sound.

7 Analysing the Conductor's Parodies

To test these hypotheses about the meaning of the conductor's verbal and body behavior, and to single out cases of parodistic imitation, I analysed rehearsals of choir and orchestra Conductors. After an overview of ones by Celibidache, Abbado, Pappano, Baremboim, I focused, first, on some rehearsals on Youtube by Riccardo Muti (approximately, 30 minutes in total). Specifically, one fragment from "Il Trovatore" was analysed[1], two fragments from "Nabucco"[2], one from "Don Pasquale"3, and finally one from a rehearsal by a very young Muti4.

Second, 24 minutes from Stravinski's "Rite of spring" by Leonard Bernstein5.

Third, a video was analysed (54 minutes) of a rehearsal of Gabriel Fauré's Requiem, performed by the amateur choir "Orazio Vecchi" conducted by conductor Alessandro Anniballi.

Finally, some notes were taken into account of other parodies performed by Anniballi and other choir conductors during personally witnessed non-videotaped rehearsals.

The fragments of rehearsals were analysed according to the annotation scheme presented in Table 1, built according to the principles of the "score" of multimodal communication presented in Poggi (2007), where each signal in each modality is described in terms of its production, attributed a meaning, and classified according to the categories relevant to the study at hand.

In the scheme, Column 1 contains the time in the video, col.2 the conductor's verbal behavior, col. 3 his body behavior (hands, head or body movements, facial expression or gaze) and col. 4 its meaning; col. 5 writes the type of communicative act performed (for example, if by that gesture and word the conductor is making a parody or explaining what is the wrong or the correct sound); col. 6 states what is the communicative device exploited (for example, transmodal analogy, or expressive motion attitude). Finally, col. 7 classifies the error at issue, and col.8 the musical parameter it refers to, whether vocal emission, rhythm, tempo, intensity, agogics or so.

Let us see some examples of analysis in the annotation scheme, taken from Muti's rehearsal. At minute 0.14 in the rehearsal of "Trovatore" he sings *"Chi del gitan"* (Who of the Gipsy) with a *plain flat voice* (Col.2), and at the same time he *moves his right hand*, with *open palm down*, *rightward* with a *continuous movement*, as if sliding on a flat surface (Col.3, see Fig.1 below), meaning (Col.4) that the sound must be continuous and fluid. His communicative act is to explain how to produce the RS (Right Sound, Col.5), and the communicative device exploited is transmodal analogy: the *continuous hand movement* is an analogue of the continuous sound (RS) to be produced (Col.6). Of course, even if the behavior analysed in columns 2-6 is one stressing the right way to sing, the goal of this whole behavior is to contrast it with the error to be avoided, that in this case is too abrupt an onset, and too strong a stress on the vowel *a* of the word *gitan* (Col.7); therefore, in this case the music parameter addressed by the conductor's correction is in the domain of agogics, the management of stress in the sung sound (Col.8). (See Fig. 1a).

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[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKQlg8rRsUs)

[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VWf5ZZ4vvs, and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8CO4cEddmk,

[3] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDvkZe2P7Bc&index=2&list=RDE8CO4cEddmk

[4] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jgftgFeomc.

[5] https://www.google.it/#q=the+rite+of+spring+bernstein

Table 1. An annotation scheme of the conductors' parodies

1 Time	2 Verbal	3 Body	4 Meaning	5 Communic-ative act	6 Communicative device	7 Error	8 Musical parameter
			Muti **Verdi's "Trovatore"**				
1) 0.14	*Chi del gitan*	GESTURE *Right hand open palm down moves rightward with a continuous movement as if sliding on a flat surface*	The sound must be continuous and fluid	EXPLAINS how to sing	Transmodal analogy Continuous hand movement = continuous sound (RS)	Too abrupt onset	Agogics. Fluidity
0.17	*Non è* (it is not)		I will make it precise how it must not be done	CONTRASTS			
0.18	*chi del gi-*						
0.19	*tA'n*	VOICE *Strongly stresses "A'" of Gitàn*	I exaggerate vocal stress	PARODY	Exaggerated imitation of WS	Too strong stress	Agogics. Fluidity
		GESTURE *Shakes arms with bent elbows and closed fists* BODY *Shakes hips*	I exaggerate movements helping abrupt onset	PARODY	Imitation of movements helping intensity (MHWS)	Too abrupt onsets	Agogics. Fluidity
			Anniballi **Fauré's "Requiem"**				
15.18	*Un pochino più raccolto* ([a sound] slighty more gathered together)	HANDS *Mimicks a sphere with cupped hands, palms facing each other*	(I want) an intimate, rounded, not too open sound This is how it should be done	EXPLAINS how to do DESCRIBES RS	Round handshape = Round mouth shape (ShRS) + Transmodal analogy / metaphor: Round mouth shape = round sound shape	Too wide *aa*	Timbre
15.22	*non* (do not)	HANDS *Opens arms*	(I do not want) a widely open mouth	EXPLAINS how not to do by EXAGGERAT ED IMITATION of MWS	Transmodal analogy: Hands movement = Mouth movement Imitates MWS	Too wide *aa*	Timbre
15.23	*non allarghia-mo troppo* do not let us widen it too much			EXPLAINS how not to do		Too wide *aa*	Timbre
15.23	*aaaah*	MOUTH *Opens mouth exaggeratedly wide*	I imitate your too open mouth	PARODY of the error → Warns against MWS	Mouth movement and shape = MWS + ShWS + exaggeration	Too wide unrounded *a* → unpleasant sound	Timbre
40.16 Sanctus Saanctus	*ragazzi non filastrocch iamo questo*, (boys, don't let usdogg-erel this)	HEAD *Shakes head*	Do not do this → you are singing as a doggerel	EXPLAINS how not to do (WS)		Too free and easy sound	Expressive attitude
40.22		GESTURE *Left hand palm up moves rhythmically right-left* HEAD *Shakes head* VOICE *Teeree teeree tee ree teee*	I imitate someone following rhythm cheerfully	PARODY of WS	Imitates MHWS	not enough dramatic expression	Expressive attitude

<div align="center">(a)   (b)</div>

Figure 1 While singing *"Chi del gitan"* with a *plain flat voice*, Riccardo Muti (a) m*oves his right hand*, with *open palm down*, *rightward* with a *continuous movement*, as if sliding on a flat surface. Then (b), after saying: *"Non è"* (It is not) he *shakes arms with bent elbows and closed fists*, while by his body he *shakes hips.* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKQlg8rRsUs).

At 0.17 he says (Col.2) *non è* (it is not): his communicative act (Col.4) is to deliberately meta-communicate that he is to convey what is not to be done, thus contrasting (Col.5) the Right with the Wrong way. At 0.18 he starts again singing *"Chi del gi-"*, and at 0.19 he makes a multimodal parody of what sung by singers: by VOICE, he stresses the *a* of *"gi-tA'n"* strongly (Col.3), meaning he is exaggerating the singers' vocal stress on that vowel (Col.4): a communicative act of parody (Col.5) using the communicative device of exaggerated imitation of the Wrong Sound (Col.6), with the stigmatized error being the too strong stress on *à* (Col.7), a violation as to the parameter of agogics (Col.8). At the same time, he makes a parody also by gestures and body: by gestures, he *shakes arms with bent elbows and closed fists*, by body he *shakes hips* (Col.3, see Fig. 1b), both meaning that he is exaggerating the movements generally used to help the production of a strong stress (Col.4); the two parodies (Col.5) by voice, and by gesture and body, respectively, both consist in an exaggerated imitation of the Wrong Sound (Col.6) and, like the vocal stress, both are aimed at stigmatizing the error of the too strong stress on *à* (Col.7): an error as to the musical parameter of Agogics (Col.8).

Again in Table 1 we can see the analysis of a passage of Fauré's Requiem conducted by Alessandro Anniballi (see Fig.2).

At 15.22 and 15.23, to explain how not to do (Col.5), he says: "*non allarghiamo troppo*" (don't let us widen it too much), meaning he does not want an *"a"* produced with too widely open mouth. At the same time he opens his arms (Col.3), starting with arms on his breast, thus impressing an energetic stroke to arms opening (see Fig. 2 a); and after opening arms (Fig.2 b) he also opens his mouth (Fig.2 c) with a grimace of effort, finally ending with an exaggerated opening (Fig.2 d). Here he imitates, while exaggerating it, the singers' too open mouth (Col.4), thus performing a parody of the error, and warning against MWS, Movement producing the Wrong Sound (Col.5). What he imitates is the movement and shape of the mouth when producing the Wrong Sound (Col.6), and the pointed error is too a widened and unrounded mouth movement (Col.7), which is a mistake as to timber (Col8).

At 40.16, at the start of "Sanctus", Anniballi says *Ragazzi, non filastrocchiamo questo* (Boys, don't let us doggerel this: Col.2). *"Filastroccare"* is a neologism with a metaphorical import (Veronesi, 2009), then a creative word through which the Conductor wants to convey that the way the word "Sanctus" is produced somewhat reminds a free and easy person singing a doggerel (Col.4). This explains how the Sound must not be produced (WS, Wrong Sound) (Col.5); the stigmatized error is too free and easy a sound (Col.7), a flaw as to the general expressive attitude (Col.8), given the Sanctus in this piece is a part of a Requiem!

At 40.22, the Conductor makes a multimodal parody of someone singing a doggerel: he *moves his left hand rhythmically*, he *shakes head*, and by VOICE he sings *Teeree teeree tee ree teee* (Col.3), thus imitating someone who sings cheerfully (Col.4). This parody of the WS exploits an imitation of the Movements that Help produce the Wrong Sound (Col.6), thus conveying that the choir is not performing enough dramatically (Col.7): a flaw as to the parameter of expressive attitude (Col.8).

Figure 2 To mean he does not want an *"a"* produced with too widely open mouth Anniballi, starting with *arms on his breast*, and thus impressing an energetic stroke to arms opening (a), *opens his arms wide* (b, c); he also *opens his mouth* with a *grimace of effort* (c), finally ending with an *exaggerated mouth opening* (d). Here he parodies, by his exaggerated imitation, the singers' too open mouth.

8 Parodies as an error management device

The analysis of the aforementioned videos gave the following results.

First, both choir and orchestra conductors do make parodies of the musicians' errors: Muti makes 5 parodies, Anniballi 10, Bernstein 3. This kind of error management is then not an idiosyncratic strategy, but a quite natural and instinctive way to correct the singers' flaws while not humiliating them with too serious and severe a correction.

Second, all the cases hypothesized above are present in the fragments analysed: the conductor may provide either the Right Sound or the Wrong Sound only, without a parody of it, but also a plain or exaggerated imitation of the Wrong Sound, that is not necessarily parodistic; further he sometimes also imitates the movements, the shape, or the helping movements of the Wrong Sound.

Third, the stigmatized errors may concern various musical parameters: agogics, timbre, intensity, expressive attitude.

In all three conductors, generally not only the Wrong Sound is addressed but the Right Sound too: sometimes WS is focused earlier and RS later, in other cases the other way around. When RS comes first, often WS is preceded by a verbal explicit meta-communication like *non* (not), or *non è così* (it is not like this). In some cases, the conductor makes it explicit the stylistic rationale of his musical choice. For example Muti, to explain why he wants the *à* of *gitàn* not to be too vulgar a sound, says:

"Non è che io degli zingari voglio fare dei baroni, però non è neanche... Perché
in Verdi c'è sempre una certa aristocrazia della musica"
(It is not that I want to make barons out of the Gypsies, but neither that… Because
in Verdi there is always some aristocracy of music).

All of this, in all three conductors, occurs in a context of levity, amusement, irony and self-irony. For example, after the parody of the too stressed *à* of *Gitàn,* Muti makes a self-ironic digression with a self-parody in it. He is ironic about his own obsession of taking all grotesque timbres and movements away from the tenors' performance. He says:

E' una di quelle battaglie che io sto facendo…. da tanti anni. [per cui] i professori
mi odiano. togli gli acu… togli gli acuti, togli i do, togli le cose. Così si prende il
successo lui solo. Perché se il tenore fa un bel do naturale, allora il successo se lo
prende lui. raaa... raa… Non va bene. E allora invece…

(It is one of those battles I have been struggling since many years [due to which]
music professors hate me. Take out high… take out high notes, take out Cs, take
out things. So he only takes success. Because if the tenor makes a nice natural C,
then he takes success. *Raaa… raaa…* this is not good. So on the contrary…)

While saying: *togli gli acu… togli gli acuti, togli i do, togli le cose* (Take out high… take out high notes, take out Cs, take out things), he makes a parody of himself: with *bent elbows* and *fists with extended curve index fingers,* he *pushes hands forward-downward*, as if forbidding someone to do what he wants.

Then, while uttering *"raaa… raaa…"*, he makes a parody of the tenor: this is a parody, first, in the vocal signal itself, that imitates a grunting sound, but it is also accompanied by multimodal exaggeration of Movements Helping the Wrong Sound: in gesture, *curve arms* with *closed fists move downward twice rhythmically*; in body, he pushes his *abdomen forward*; in mouth, his *lower lip* is *protruded*, almost grinning. By all these signals he shows as someone pushing, striving, thus making a parody of a tenor's striving to make stressed and violent sounds.

Finally, an unexpected and intriguing result of the study is that even in conductors we can find, besides the cases of "surface" parody seen above, cases of "deep" parody too. A funny example is in Bernstein's rehearsal of the "Rite of Spring", one of the most difficult symphonic pieces, that he prepared with a Youth orchestra in a former barn before the Music Festival of Schleswig Holstein.

At the very beginning of the piece, the young man at the bassoon plays his solo and Bernstein, to stigmatize his too long pauses, makes a parody of him (Fig. 3): he starts *singing the first notes* (to imitate his playing), but then he *raises his head* (Fig. 3 a) and makes a *noisy yawn* (b), possibly alluding to someone sleepy or bored; then he *raises his left hand* (c) and *looks at his wrist* as if looking at his watch (d), first simply watching it, then *watching from closer while frowning*, as if being worried that time is passing. All the young musicians in the rehearsal laugh.

| (a) | (b) | (c) | (d) | (e) |

Figure 3 Bernstein's "deep" parody of the bassoon solo. He *sings* the first part of the piece (a), then he *raises his head* while *yawning* (b), he *raises his left hand* (c), *looks at his watch* on his wrist (d) with a *frown* showing he is more and more worried (e), as if only now had he understood it's late.

This is a "deep" parody, since Bernstein is not imitating anything that the young musician actually has done: he is reinterpreting his pauses as excessive slowness by re-categorizing him as a lazy sleepy man who does not want to rush. His pantomime means something like: "you are waiting so long that you get bored (you yawn), and (looking at the watch) you finally realize it's time to go". This way, he is exaggerating and dramatizing the bassoon's behavior, to let everybody understand the mistake.

In all the cases analysed, the conductor's body is a powerful tool for making musicians understand and correct errors, while keeping a pleasant mood in social interaction and music making.

9 Conclusion

This work has analysed some parodies made by conductors in orchestra and choir rehearsals to have musicians visualize their errors and see their difference from the correct way of singing or playing. Results show that this strategy of error management is common to various conductors, and that the errors so stigmatized make reference to all the basic parameters of music (e.g., dynamics, agogics, timbre, expressive attitude), and resort to the same communicative devices (mainly exaggeration and transmodal analogy).

So far I have only provided a first overview of this didactic technique, simply giving evidence of its use among conductors, of the types of parodies performed, and of the targeted musical parameters.

In future, such study might be extended to encompass a wider corpus of conductors, possibly assessing the relative frequency of the different types of parody in different conductors and on different musical parameters, in the hypothesis, for instance, that with more advanced ensembles conductors target their parodies on more sophisticated levels of musical parameters (say, expressive more than rhythmic aspects). Moreover, the effectiveness of this technique might be assessed in terms of better learning of the addressed passages, longer-term memorization, more generalized prevention of that type of error, or finally, thanks to its use of humor, simply induction of a more friendly relationship with the conductor.

Finally, the didactic use of errors parody might be investigated in domains other than music learning, for example in second language learning, or in the training of motor skills.

Still in the music domain, this work might possibly evolve, in future, into technological applications. Suppose the closeness of singers' and players' performance to a specific wanted acoustic output, or the difference thereof can be accurately measured by automatic sensors, and the conductor's strategies of imitation and exaggeration can be implemented in an automatic system (an Artificial Parodist, Poggi & D'Errico, 2013), this might potentially lead to the construction of an Artificial Conductor and Music Teacher which captures a player's or singer's errors and makes a parody of them: a Parodistic Artificial Conductor.

This might be of use for musicians' training; though of course it would take away a big part of the joyful experience of music rehearsals with human ensembles and human conductors…

Acknowledgments

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