

## **Beethoven Symphony No. 5**

### Conductor Observations

#### **Christian Thielemann** Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

- short preparatory gesture, the conductor put the baton on his shoulder for a half second
- splashing down the baton to start the first note
- he bowed down and the facial expression is not visible for the first five bars
- extending baton straight out holds the notes for fermata
- a quick ictus on fourth beat functions as the prep for next bar after fermata
- most of the times stand still and have no extra fancy movements
- most of the times only waving baton up and down clarifying beats
- so it is very effective when he bows down and moves dramatically to create a huge dynamics and expression contrast
- put extra or less weight on the baton and changing the pattern size for dynamic changes
- rarely cue any instruments
- but he will turn around on a specific instrument group's side to indicate fortissimo
- has limited facial expression communications
- but he will look up or down to indicate different intensity variations
- his two arms will mostly be centered above the podium, but sometimes will open the arms to indicate a sense of invitation at the beginning of a new phrase
- he will conduct very low in the position to build in weights to the notes
- very conserved and old-fashioned

#### **Daniel Barenboim** West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, 2012

- for the preparatory gesture, he stepped forward, and used a punch to be the third beat
- then continues a series of punches to indicate the note length; orchestra reacts accurately
- the fermata is held using only one hand with the baton extending straight out
- he raised the other hand to indicate the ending of the fermata
- each note, as well as the preparatory for next phrase, get an ictus point through the baton
- so that the prep beat and characters for next phrase is really clear
- he made lots of emphasis on various solo sections by using the baton pointing at them
- his various facial expressions clearly expressed different characters of the phrase
- his baton sometimes may point downwards to show a sense of diminuendo
- and sometimes his baton points vertically down to show intensity and concentration
- there are a few places with crescendo; his beat pattern suddenly becomes expressive and exaggerated while the orchestra seems to not reacting immediately and the sound seems to be not matching the contrast in his conducting posture well.
- his articulation to some phrases seems to be more marcato and the dynamic contrast is much more palpable compared with other conductors' interpretations

**Leonard Bernstein** Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, 1976

- he gives both second and third beat in his prep gesture
- there are lots of vertical movements with limited horizontal expansions for first few bars
- held the fermata by moving baton vertically bottom up to indicate note intensity
- a clear splash of prep gesture is given to suggest the proceeding dynamics and characters
- there are lots of wrist movements when waving the baton
- the lots of body and facial expressions
- his eyes are closed for a long time and suddenly open
- stares at the sectionals to indicate the music character
- the whole body is moving expressively with small jumps for forte phrases
- and sometimes he will stand still and not conducting the beat patterns to create the contrast or maintain the current sound effect
- lots of times he would directly show the notes' length rather than beats in each bar
- the orchestra responses and reacts to his conducting indications very well
- all the ictus are clear and the orchestra accurately catches changes in gestures and gives out immediate and proper responses
- showing a clear ictus and well-defined beats
- the baton movements convey musical ideas really effectively

**Chung Myung-Whun** Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, 2013

- used a strong stab to show the prep third beat
- has a strong facial expression in the prep that brought out the music character
- in the fermata, his left hand and baton are shaking to indicate the intensity
- then gives out the prep beat for the next phrase which is clear and in character
- he used expands left and right arm a lot with an imposing manner
- used his left hand to show the phrasing and articulation
- and using the arms to indicate the dynamics and intensity level
- his body would face to a particular direction to cue dynamics changes for the section
- changed the body directions to show melodic connections between the sections
- directly use ictus points to show the notes' rhythms and phrasing rather than beat patterns
- limited facial expressions besides the first phrase
- he expanded both arms and create an openness of the sounds
- the baton extends out and waves back to cue sections rather than using other cuing gestures
- he sometimes used both arms drawing big circles or lines to show different articulations

**Gerard Schwarz** All-Star Orchestra, 2012

- a precise prep upbeat to indicate the tempo as well as the dynamics for the notes
- a slashing gesture to hold the intensity of the half note with much weights on the hands
- a clear facial expression that corresponding to the music character
- hold the fermata by waving baton horizontally outwards
- bouncing in the baton to start a new phrase seamlessly
- clearly cued sections with a dab
- the beginning tempo is much slower than other conductors' interpretation
- appropriate size and weights of the beat pattern
- entire body moves up and down with a big slashing gesture to emphasis on the fortissimo
- the baton extends straight out and properly positioned
- the ictus points and beat patterns are much more clear and readable than any other conductors mentioned above
- changes different carriage to show musical characters
- the intention is clearly shown through various gestures on the podium
- and the orchestra responses to the changes in gestures accurately and instantly