From movement to gesture. Thinking between music and dance

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Outside the field of dance, the field of research into human gesture is still under-explored. When gesture is studied, or holds a considerable place in theoretical development, it is most frequently about how gestures are represented (paintings, engravings, bas-relief, photographs) and very little has been written about *in vivo* gesture, that which Guillemette Bolens calls *the incarnational reality at the time of the gesture*[1], but this "little" is not completely barren, as we will see …

Movement, gesture, gestuality, gestique …

Common wisdom traditionally allows for a distinction: movement is global – *a movement of the whole body* – while gesture is segmental – *the gesture of the hand to say goodbye*. But, in fact, as we can see when consulting a current dictionary, a semantic uncertainty remains and the terms movement, gesture, sign, action are more or less synonymous. Thus, the Robert French dictionary defines a gesture as *a global movement of the body (mainly the arms, hands, head), voluntary or involuntary, which reveals a psychological state or is aimed at expressing or doing something*[2], *while the English Collins states: "a motion of the hands, head or body to emphasize an idea or emotion, esp. while speaking."*[3] And here the gestures are *an ensemble of coded gesticulations, as a means of expression*[4]. The example given in the Robert is that of a

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[1] In his article, "Comment lire la musicalité corporelle ?" (How to read corporal musicality), online: www.artweb.univ-paris8.fr/?-artweb-TV

[2] Dictionary *Le Nouveau Petit Robert*, Paris, June 2000.

[3] *The Collins English Dictionary*, Second Edition, 1986.

[4] Dictionary *Le Nouveau Petit Robert*, Paris, June 2000.

conductor's gestures, and the term is suggested as a synonym for gestural, that is to say: *an ensemble of expressive gestures considered as signs*[5]. It therefore seemed essential to come back to the etymology, which is exactly what Jean-Claude Schmitt was able to do in *La raison des gestes dans l'Occident médiéval*[6] (*The reason for gestures in medieval West*).

In this work, which, using images, examines the history of gestures from ancient times to the Middle Ages, J-Cl. Schmitt explores this question: *what was a gesture, in the Middle Ages?*[7] The author takes time to analyse in depth the semantic categories of *gestus*, *gesta*, which gave "*gesture*", of *gesticulatio* (gesticulation) as well as that of *motus* (movement)[8].

In Latin, explains Schmitt, *the central word is* gestus, *which, making no distinction between them, is a general term referring to a movement or an attitude of the body, and with a more specific meaning, it refers to the singular movement of a body part, above all that of the hand*[9]. The term "*motus*" can be a synonym of "*gestus*" but it can more widely refer to all kinds of movement (of the earth, the stars, an animal, a soul etc.). The two terms' equivalent in Greek is *kinesis* and, from ancient times to the Middle Ages, the usage of Latin terms (*gestus*, *motus*) would not stick, even though *the singular nature of human gesture was beginning to be accepted,* and *in this sense Latin vocabulary made an essential contribution, which Medieval culture then expanded decisively, by giving a far better definition of what a gesture is*[10]. In ancient French, in the XIIth century, the word *gest* was a synonym of that of *attitude*, *perhaps*, explains Schmitt, *because the people of the time were more attached to the global perception of "attitude" than that of precise "gestures"*[11] ; whereas *gesticulationes* are *disorganized and light movements of parts of the body* (those of histrios and tumblers)[12] , *the very rich content of the notion of gesture* includes: *composure and manner of the body, support and poise, or poise and manner*[13]. The expressive dimension of the *gestus*, which does not appear in the *motus*, culminates in the definition given in the Encyclopedia in 1752: *an exterior movement of the body and of the face, one of the first expressions of feeling given to man by nature. It is and will always be the language of all nations. It can be heard in all climates. The meaning of the voice, the various movements of the face and of the body were expressions of what he had felt. They were the primitive language of the universe of the cradle*[14]. We will not analyse here this very particular speech of enlightened humanists and of the expressiveness thinking that is at its heart; an in-depth analysis of the concept of expressiveness can be found in the fundamental work by the philosopher Michel Bernard, *L'expressivité du corps (The expressiveness of the body)* (Chiron, 1986).

[5] *Idem.*

[6] Jean Claude Schmitt, *La raison des gestes dans l'Occident médiéval*, (*The reason for gestures in the medieval West*), Paris, Gallimard, 1990.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 34-35.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

[13] *Idem.*

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 363.

A semantic blur to be embraced?

In the vast field of dance, dancers and/or theorists often make no difference between the two terms, movement and gesture when using them in their discussions. Thus, Léandre Vaillat[15], a dance historian, talks of gesture (or of action); Laban, author of *Mastery of movement*, uses the term movement to a great extent, then that of action in the chapter on the analysis of effort; Doris Humphrey uses the term of movement before opening the chapter entitled "motivation and gesture" where she tries to classify gestures (see *Construire la danse*[16] (*The art of making dances*)); Laurence Louppe also makes no difference when talking of gesture and danced movement; additionally, Anne Boissière, who presents her work *Approche philosophique du geste dansé*[17] *(A philosophical approach to the danced gesture)*, with these words: *the dimension of the relationship to others appears as a constitutive part of movement training, through contact, play, and more generally through devices which install a framework encouraging the exchange and spontaneity of gestures.* The use of the Greek term "*kinesis*" (in the notion of "kinesphere" in Laban's work, for example) makes it possible to avoid the problem of the "correct semantic choice" and the indecision of dance thinkers wisely avoids closing the definition since, as Georges Didi Huberman[18] underlines, there is something final in the definition: *I don't like to define*, he says, *I like to approach, to grasp, to question, to feel and to analyse the multiple aspects of a thing, of a work, an image, a word,* and we could add *[of a gesture]*. If we adopt what the amateur dance historian declared about images, we could then say: *there is no [gesture] image in general. There is therefore no ontology possible, no universal definition of [gesture]. [Gestures] are always plural; they take position that is to say that, by placing themselves in relation to each other in an arrangement, they create configurations* [expressive kinetic melodies]. In an aesthetic reading (in other words relative to *aesthesis*) of choreographic works, the analysis of singular gestures, those of the performers, strives to name and describe these expressive melodies. The aim here is therefore to develop the full range of a word and not to close down its meaning … And, within the folds of the range, we can find several ideas: the idea that gesture is a global entity, a *configuration* to use Didi Huberman's term; that it cannot be separated from context; that gesture can also not be separated from the work of perception and not everything is immediately "visible" or "readable".

Gesture as a form of complexity

In the highly complex system of his *Anthropologie du geste*[19] (*Anthropology of gesture*) (a re-ligious anthropology, in other words one which studies the links of "Man" in his "Cosmos"), Marcel Jousse begins the chapter "la gesticulation universelle de l'homme" (the universal gesticulation of man) with these words:

For any external observer, man is a complexus of gestures. Gestures are what we call all movements which are performed within the human composite. Visible or invisible, macroscopic or microscopic, highly developed or a rough layout, conscious or subconscious, voluntary or involuntary, these gestures are all equally of a

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[15] Léandre Vaillat, *Histoire de la danse*, (*Dance history*) Paris, Plon, 1951.

[16] Doris Humphrey, *Construire la danse*, translated by Jacqueline Robinson, Arles et Paris, Bernard Coutaz, 1990. *The art of making dances*, 1st ed. Rinehart & Cie, Inc., 1959, p. 132 *and sq*.

[17] Anne Boissière, Catherine Kintzler & coll., *Approche philosophique du geste dansé*, (*A philosophical approach to the danced gesture)* Villeneuve d'Asq, Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2006.

[18] Magazine *Télérama* no 3283, 2013.

[19] Marcel Jousse, *L'anthropologie du geste*, (*Anthropology of gesture*) Paris, Gallimard, 1st Ed. 1974.

primarily motor character. The scale of normal visibility should not be used as the basis of the objective study of the psycho-physiological nature of human gesticulation. This scale of visibility varies constantly, depending on the configuration of our magnifying lenses and the more or less ingenious layout of our recording and amplifying material. Thanks to the attention that is focused on them, some gestures can also transfer, through an unfelt progression, from absolute subconsciousness to full consciousness, from a purely reflex action to a fully voluntary game[20].

"A complexus of gesture" means that we have here a view of Man as a system, a human composite, as Jousse says. Although the position of the observer, detached (observing from the outside) is a very dated image[21], Marcel Jousse insists on the necessity, in the observation of gesture, not to take into account what we can normally see according to our perceptive filters (what he calls our *magnifying lenses*) or what we can see thanks to the measurement instruments that we have. *The scale of visibility* varies constantly says Jousse, and, indeed, it is possible to weave a social history of our perceptive modulations as Michel Pastoureau does for the perception of colours[22] or Roselyn Rey does with that of pain[23]. The last sentence of this paragraph stresses the possibility of working on attention, in order to vary the border line between movement (reflex) and gesture (voluntary), with which we can more or less voluntarily *play* (Jousse). Jousse dismisses here the question of the unconscious, and yet our life is filled with *missing movements* (like *missing words*, the infamous Freudian *slips*) and *missing perceptions* like when something "is right before our eyes" and yet we had not "really" seen it …

For François Roustang, philosopher, hypnotherapist and ex-psychoanalyst, gesture is also a global entity which incorporates other elements: *gesture can gather and combine into one the spirit, heart, body, relation to other bodies and to personal history" says* Roustang in *Il suffit d'un geste*[24] *(A gesture is enough)*. Roustang stresses the fact that all gestures are in some way born by a feeling at work and he encourages us to make no distinction between action and perception. *Only a gesture is capable in its simplicity to mobilise and to interpenetrate mind, body, language, others, the surrounding space, because the gesture is unique in being able to gather together all the elements which make up a world and, conversely, it is alone in being formed by it. But,* Roustang adds*, even a gesture is not necessary, imagining it can be enough*[25], and today we know that imagining the action stimulates the same cortical zones as the action itself, that the brain is an organ of simulation, all motor images already being an action in some way (which is extremely well explained by Guillemette Bolens in the introduction to *Style des gestes*[26] *(The style of gestures)*. Roustang adds: *it's our lack of fine perception that makes us believe that the action has not been started in some way*[27] and today we know (Jeannerod, Godard) that the posture which precedes a gesture, the *pre-movement* (or *pre-gesture*), the *readiness to act* (Laban), is the basis of the expressivity of this gesture. We therefore

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 687.

[21] See Jonathan Crary, *L'art de l'observateur Vision et modernité au XIX siècle*, (*The art of observing, Vision and modernity*) Ed. Jacqueline Chambon, Nîmes, 1994.

[22] See *Histoire d'une couleur, bleu*, (*The history of a colour, blue*) Paris, Seuil, 2000 or *Histoire d'une couleur, noir*, (The history of a colour, black) Paris, Seuil, 2008.

[23] See *Histoire de la douleur*, (*The history of pain*), Paris, La Découverte, 2011, 1st Ed. 1993.

[24] François Roustang, *Il suffit d'un geste (A gesture is enough)* Paris, O. Jacob, 2003, p. 83.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[26] Guillemette Bolens, *Le style des gestes,* (*The style of gestures*) Lausanne, BHMS, 2008.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

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need to learn to "read", to refine the dioptre of our *magnifying lenses* (Jousse), in other words to train our modulation ability to understand the stakes of the *postural attitudes*[28] which form the very essence of the gesture. Yet, the *in vivo* reading and analysis of gesture is not new (to be a good rhetorician, you had to be a good observer) and the stated aim of the semiological perspectives that we are now going to discuss was indeed to "decrypt" human gestures.

To read the gesture, to understand it: semiological perspectives

When observing communication situations, gesture is traditionally considered as an entity which doubles, reinforces or replaces the spoken word. Semiological perspectives consider the gesture as a sign and the analysis of this gesture is, most frequently, based on speech. Thus, for example, the study of a politician's gestural movements will mainly reflect the content of his speech[29]. There is no lack of works containing the codes to decrypt the "secret code" of our gestures and attitudes. Movement, global and segmental, is presented as a readable sign carrying a precise meaning. The most frequent works[30] are presented as practical guides which, through the reading of a gesture or attitude, are aimed at understanding the psychological profile of the person who is delivering it.

The gesture of the hand with the index finger raised and pointing to the sky, for example, can be presented in this way: "*meaning: 'listen to me well!' / circumstances: it is a gesture of domination where the index finger represents a raised club / region: universal*"[31]. And yet it is undeniable that, depending on the look, the mimicry, the attitude which accompany the gesture, it can indicate, not only a threat (such as the gesture of "La menaçeuse" (the threatener) by Yacinthe Rigault (1659-1743)[32]) but also an admonition, prohibition or command. The same gesture can also mean: "please", "please pay attention", "I'm here" etc. To give a supposed meaning to a gesture means neglecting the fact that, even as a coded signal, the gesture is still reliant on a specific spatio-temporal and cultural context.

So, there is a story behind the gesture and it cannot be decrypted out of context. In order to analyse a represented gesture, J.-C. Schmitt stresses the importance of replacing the gesture which is being studied within its context (in the example of the Bayeux tapestry, page 258 of his work, the gesture is presented as much in relation to its immediate context – an enigmatic sentence in the tapestry – as to its more distant context – other images). In the first scene of *Romeo and Juliette* by William Shakespeare, we can find an example of a gestural insult which it would appear is the equivalent of what we today trivially call "giving the finger". This scene presents the confrontation between two enemy clans, servants from the Capulet household against servants from the Montaigu household. One of the characters provokes his rival with

[28] Christine Roquet, "De la posture à l'*attitude*" (From posture to attitude) in *La scène amoureuse en danse,*

(*The love scene in dance*) Doctorate Thesis in Dance, Université Paris 8, 2002,

www.danse.univ-paris8.fr/diplome.php?di_id=1 consulted in March 2016

[29] See for example the analysis of Lionel Jospin's gestural movements by Geneviève Calbris in « Mots et politique. Les gestes qui parlent », (Words and politics. Gestures that speak), video document, Lyon, E.N.S. Fontenay-St. Cloud, September 2000.

[30] For example, Desmond Morris, *Le langage des gestes*, (*Bodytalk*) translated from English by E. Ochs, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1997; Jane Lyle, *Le langage du corps*, (*Body language*) adapted from American by E. Léthel, Paris, Gründ, 1990.

[31] Desmond Morris, *Le langage des gestes*, *ibid.*, p. 65.

[32] Exhibition « Figures de la Passion », Musée de la Musique, Paris, 2001, see illustration.

this gesture to which he receives the reply: "*Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?*[33]" (translated to French by « *est-ce pour nous que vous vous mordez le pouce, monsieur?*[34] »). Out of context, for a French reader, the expression "to bite your thumb" evokes neither mockery nor insult, unlike the expression "to stick your tongue out". It was necessary to adapt, or reincarnate as it were, for the benefit of the XXth century reader, a defiant gesture dating back to the Middle Ages[35]. This has become in French translation « faire la nique[36] » or « siffloter[37] ». On stage, directors have had to transpose this gesture and today we are no longer aware how it was performed at the time. While we can imagine it, when it is removed from its context within Shakespeare's text, it loses all meaning. The information brought by the gesture, in the same way as that brought by words, can only be interpreted within the context in which it is delivered. The complexity of the problems posed by "non-verbal communication"[38] will not be solved by reducing the gesture to a sign. We all know that when simply shaking hands, we are not only receptive to the symbol of politeness. We react, more or less consciously, to many other elements, relating to the character of each person as well as to the actual situation.

A complex approach to expressive gesture at the centre of dance studies

A dancer's gestures cannot be reduced to a legible and easily decipherable sign, any more than it is possible for daily gestures. The spectator who sees a danced gesture does not grasp an isolated sign, with well-defined contours, that is possible to reproduce and which can be immediately understood. Even if we assume that the spectator, being a dancer himself, can exactly describe, name, reproduce this gesture, something unreadable, undecipherable will remain, something beyond the sign which means that, irrespective of its formal strictness, this gesture will change with each dancer that performs it. *To analyse a movement both precisely and in a non-reductionist way is a challenge which is difficult to meet as we cannot find the words,* as G. Bolens so rightly says[39]. Meeting this challenge is what is being attempted by the systems of qualitative gesture analysis, such as Laban at the beginning of the XXth century or the approach used today in the Dance Department of the university Paris 8. For the latter, the choice of the term "gesture" to talk about expressiveness (in other words how a human act has a meaning for the person who sees it, irrespective of how minimal or tiny it may be) is the answer to the singularity of an approach. Hubert Godard suggests "*distinguishing between movement, understood as being a phenomenon relating to the strict moves within space of different body segments – in the same way as a machine produces movement – and gesture, which is set in the gap between movement and the invigorating and gravity based substance of the subject:*

[33] William Shakespeare, *Roméo et Juliette*, translated from English by P.-J. Jouve et G. Pitoëff, Paris, Bilingual edition Garnier, 1955, p. 38.

[34] *Idem.*

[35] "*Mordre son pouce fut au Moyen Age un signe de colère et de défi.*" ("*In the Middle Ages, biting one's thumb was a sign of anger or defiance*") André Carénini, "La symbolique manuelle"("Manual symbolism") in *Histoire des mœurs*, t. 2, Paris, Gallimard La Pléiade, 1991, p. 82.

[36] In the translation by Maurice Pollet, Paris, Aubier Montaigne, 1961, p. 77.

[37] In the translation by Yves Bonnefoy, Paris, Gallimard Folio, 1968, revised and corrected 1998, p. 28.

[38] For a critical analysis of this concept, see Yves Winkin's works.

[39] Communication "Comment lire la musicalité corporelle ?" (How should corporal musicality be read?), on line: www-artweb. univ-paris8.fr/?-artweb-TV-

in other words, pre-movement in all its affective and projective dimensions. This is where the expressiveness of human gesture resides, expressiveness that a machine lacks"[40]. The distinction between gesture and movement does not therefore encompass that which we usually accept as segmental (concerning gesture) or global (concerning movement). The term gesture was deliberately chosen for the fact that it covers the expressive aspect of movement; here gesture is thought of as an *event* which indeed covers a movement drawn by a "body" (which we can possibly describe biomechanically), but a movement which is also and always highlighted by an unconscious postural-tonic-emotional *base(s)* (a reserve, a potential), that places the strictly human imaginary function in the game, and develops inter-corporeity[41]. The term gesture was also chosen because of its etymology, in that it presupposes our founding relation to gravity, how we stand and are carried – *gerere,* from which the Latin *gestus* comes - in our relation to weight, space, to the other. Whether corporeity is considered as an open system of which the different structures (somatic, perceptive, coordinative, psychic[42]) constantly interact, or whether it is thought of as the living articulation of two main functions, the haptic function and the phoric function, in our domain, the gravity reference is still the *verticality* of the perception (*gero*) of gesture.

In French, the *gestion* (same etymology) or management of our gravity organisation is the sign of our relation to the world and is in line with anti-gravity (sometimes known as "deep") musculature, the place where the instinctual and emotional history of our deeds and gestures (*gesta*) crystalizes.

The conductor's gesture

Both unique and generic, a conductor's gestures depend on subjectivity as much as convention. In practice, the latter is a codified gesture, which can be deciphered by the orchestra's instrumentalists, regardless of the country in which they play. This generic side is combined with the unique nature coming from the conductor's vision of the score. This is a question of interpretation and it conditions the fact that the movement becomes a gesture, that it is possible to go beyond the code. *The act of directing an orchestra,* says Fred Goldbeck[43], *brings together two kinds of gesture, belonging to distinct, contradictory categories:*

1.   – an ensemble of command signals, based on an arbitrary and conventional code. As soon as the musician in the orchestra sees one of these signs, in a manner of speaking he decodes the explicit order that it represents, translating it into a clear language.

2.   – an ensemble of expressive gestures, that are never conventional, that can never be translated by explicit orders and yet that are immediately intelligible.

The gesture is therefore coded but it also carries unique expressiveness. How does the passage from the first gestural level, a level that can be formalized (the legible sign, *l'obvie*[44] or *the obvious* side of the musical gesture) move to a second level (that cannot be formalized, beyond the sign, *l'obtus*[45] or *the obtuse*

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[40] "Le geste et sa perception" ("Gesture and its perception") in Isabelle Ginot, Marcelle Michel, *La danse au XXème siècle*, (Dance in the XXth century), Paris, Bordas, 1995, p. 225.

[41] Christine Roquet, *La scène amoureuse en danse*, (*Love scenes in dance*) op. cit.

[42] Hubert Godard, "Des trous noirs" (Black holes) in the magazine Revue *Nouvelles de Danse* no 53, Brussels, Contredanse, 2006.

[43] in *La Revue Musicale* no 147, June 1934.

[44] Roland Barthes, "Le troisième sens" (The third sense) in *l'Obvie et l'obtus*, Paris, Seuil, 1982.

[45] *Idem*.

(less obvious)? F. Goldbeck hints at the possibility of studying the expressive style of the conductor: *what characterises Fürtwaengler's technique is first and foremost an extraordinary differentiation of the expressive gesture. Studying the detail of this technique would be the subject of a treaty*[46]. By using the conditional, Goldbeck seems to be emphasising the fact that this type of study does not exist, or not yet ... For René Leibowitz, *in order to be a top-notch conductor, the qualities needed,* amongst others, are *the precision and clarity of his gestures*[47]. As he lists the qualities needed by the conductor, Leibowitz mentions others *about which it is extremely difficult to talk but which, if they are lacking, will mean that we will, at best, witness a correct performance, but not a living performance*[48]. Yet, this is precisely what interests us in dance: how can we give a "living performance"?

For Leibowitz, *authentic musical interpretation (...) has its roots in a* radical reading *of the musical text*[49]. Of course, Leibowitz expands on what he means by "radical reading":

1)   This reading is an intentional act by the performer's conscience,

2)   This reading consists of several different levels of information:

-   *some musical data can be considered as "absolute"*: pitch, tempo, rhythm ... this is measurable data that is not open to discussion

-   *other data, on the other hand, can only be considered as "relative":* nuance, intensity ... Hacène Larbi, conductor[50], stresses that the perception of the quality aspect always depends on context (a nuance of *crescendo* or a *decrescendo* depends on the concert hall, for example).

-   *A last category encompasses "indemonstrable" data,* for example certain articulations (detached, tied), not specified by the composer.

For Liebowitz, a radical reading is one which takes into account all data and the relation between them, which therefore considers the system as a whole and *succeeds in penetrating and making the complex meaning of all these elements understood, by explaining each one in relation to the others*[51]. The analysis of his posture, of the walk towards the conductor's stand, the transfer of weight; the observation of the kinesphere, his moves, the coordination between his hand, arm and chest; the reading of the expressiveness of his face, breath, vocalisations ... are, amongst others, "analysers" of what is experienced when directing the orchestra. A fundamental element in the exchange between the conductor and his musicians is that of eye contact. The power of the conductor is indeed sometimes understood as being the result of the exceptional strength that is held within a glance: *his glance, as intense as possible, embraces the whole orchestra (...) To hold [the musicians] together under his control gives him the prestige of* omnipresence, says Elias Canetti[52]. But is it not possible to reverse the situation and to consider the conductor as also having all eyes

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[46] Fred Goldbeck in *La Revue Musicale*, *op. cit.* .

[47] René Leibowitz, *Le compositeur et son double*, (*The composer and his second self*), Paris, Gallimard, 1971, p. 52.

[48] *Idem.*

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

[50] My thanks to Hacène Larbi, conductor, for very his precious contribution to this part of my work.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

[52] Elias Canetti, *Masse et puissance*, (*Mass and power*), Paris, Gallimard, 1966, p. 421.

on him – *the conductor is the focus of all the musicians' eyes, as well as the audience's,* says O. Moll[53] - and does this position not immediately give him a certain fragility against which he needs to fight in order to assert himself?

Between control and surrender, the art of relationships

A true conductor is someone who knows how to adapt his gestures to the orchestra he has in front of him[54], explains Emilio Pamarico, who is himself a conductor. Whether he appears to be bored (Strauss[55]) or to enjoy himself (Beecham, Bernstein), whether he is subdued (Strauss, Reiner) or on the contrary, very expansive (Karajan, Stokovski), the conductor does not direct the orchestra with the movements of his arms (in the traditional meaning of the term), he directs with his whole body[56]. The more or less broad movements of his arms are supported by a *postural attitude* which is the basis of his expressiveness. Bernard Gavoty points out how Fürtwaengler, who was always *very calm*, (made) *very few gestures* (but) *a constant vibration* (seemed to run through him); *Fürtwaengler indicates the start, strangely, with a sort of concerted oscillation of his entire structure*[57], he explains. Whether it be a concentric movement, the body flexed as if bending over himself (Toscanini, Karajan) or rather an eccentric movement, the body completely extended, the torso seemingly opened up to the orchestra in front of him (Klemperer), the conductor's *attitude* directs the musicians as much as the movements of his arms[58]. This *attitude* is a dynamic dialogue between the relation with gravitational force and orientation in space. This dialogue can play on all modulations between the two extremes, that are control and letting go[59]. *Fürtwaengler is unique in reconciling, within the art of conducting, initiative and abandon,* says Goldbeck[60]. Admittedly, Fürtwaengler controls his gesture, *muscular discipline can occur at any moment,* but, as Goldbeck explains, this is not *to dictate the gesture, but to eradicate anything which could hamper its smooth path*[61] :

Before beating time, *Fürtwaengler warns that perhaps time does not wish to be beaten. Therefore, he very often gives up "informing" the musicians of the start with the conventional gesture. But in doing this, he simply suggests it to them even more accurately. And the musicians begin perfectly simultaneously and, being driven by a direct impetus and not as a result of an "order", they have the feeling that they began "by chance" (it is chance occurrences like these which distinguish between the jump of a living cat and that*

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[53] *Structures de la jouissance musicale : une interprétation psychanalytique.* (*Structures of musical pleasure: a psychoanalytical interpretation*) Doctorate thesis in Aesthetics, Science and Technologies of the Arts, Music option. Directed by Christian Corre. Université Paris 8. Décembre 2003, p. 22.

[54] Interview with Emilio Pomarico in the magazine *Geste* n°3, 2006, p. 159.

[55] The recollection of conductors' gestures taken as examples below draws on the analysis of a video documentary, *The Art of conducting. Great conductors of the past*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYnqU4AJvtA, consulted in March 2016.

[56] *With [Seiji Ozawa], everything directs, even hair* says Olivier Messiaen (quoted by Christian Leblé, Magazine *Geste* n°3, *op. cit.*)

[57] *Idem*.

[58] Hubert Godard, "the *pre-movement* or the non-conscious language of posture" in « Le geste et sa perception », postface by I. Ginot I. and M. Michel, *La danse au XXème siècle, op. cit.*

[59] We can see in the Labanian system of *effort* the two tendencies at the basis of the organisation of human gesture: *struggling against* (lutter contre) and *indulging in* (s'abandonner à).

[60] Fred Goldbeck in *La Revue Musicale, op. cit.*

[61] *Idem*.

of a mechanical rabbit). This technique requires the orchestra to pay extreme attention and to be free of constraint[62].

The same phenomenon of withdrawal, of *non-action*, the same requirement to be sensitive to context, to the dynamic commitment of adjacent physiques is demanded of the dancer who wants to dance "while listening" and not use markers other than the actual musicality of their gesture (counting time, for example). Like Mahler who said: "*I do not only compose but I am also composed*"[63], so the conductor, just like the musician or the dancer could in turn state that he does not move but that he is moved ... Is it for this reason that critics sometimes evoke the conductor's "dance"?

In *The Art of Conducting* we hear that *the aim of conducting an orchestra is to make a current flow,* and this current can (must?) also flow between the conductor and the audience. According to Canetti, the conductor holds a power over the audience, *he acts as a guide to the crowd in the hall. He stands at the front, with his back to them. He is the one we follow because he makes the first move*[64]. According to Olga Moll, *it [is] important to first highlight the power which is given to him with the opposition of noise/silence. At present, his appearance alone is enough to silence the audience, whereas the orchestra which is already present on the stage, is most often ignored*[65]. The conductor silences the audience, which is always noisy; with his back turned, his simple presence invites it to take on a sort of perceptive disposition, to place itself in a state of listening. Like a dancer or an actor, the conductor can (or not) encourage a certain empathy with the audience, he then belongs to *the school of "catalyst" conductors whose presence provokes reactions which would not take place without him*[66]. And to be in the condition to receive what does not normally take place, is that not one of the secret desires of those who come to listen/watch a concert or dance piece?

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[62] *Idem.*

[63] Interview with Emilio Pomarico, in the magazine *Geste* no 3, *op. cit.*

[64] Elias Canetti, *op. cit.*, p. 420

[65] Moll O. *op. cit.*, p. 20

[66] Bernard Gavoty talking about Fürtwaengler in *The art of conducting*, *op. cit.*