

## The process of nonverbal communication between choir and conductor

### El proceso de comunicación no verbal entre coro y director

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Recibido: 9-7-15 Aceptado: 1-11-15

#### Abstract

Some elements of nonverbal communication between conductor and choir singers might affect the sound and the response of the choir before and during a performance. This study is about these elements surrounding the performance. It was carried out an experiment with an amateur choir (N=25; 15 women and 10 men). The choir (Luleå Kammarkör) is considered an outstanding choir with strict requirements for admission within a mid-high class societal level. The same musical piece was conducted in two different ways, one inexpressive and the second one in an expressive manner. After the performance, the singers answered an anonymous survey. The experiment was recorded with two video cameras in order to study the role of the conductor and to observe the choir. After the analysis of the data included in the videotape and the responses of the questionnaire, it can be concluded that the conductor's gesture, facial expression and body language are important before and during a performance. Through gesture and these elements conductor shows musical intentions in a nonverbal language. This way to perform music is more useful for singers because they receive more information from the conductor and their response is different. These differences are appreciated in sound, intonation and attention of the choir. The results have a wide range of application, from music classrooms to professional choirs.

**Palabras clave:** Choral conducting, nonverbal communication, musical education.

#### Resumen

El objetivo de este trabajo ha sido comprobar la influencia de los elementos de comunicación no verbal entre cantantes de coro y el director en los resultados de la interpretación musical. Se realizó un experimento con un coro no profesional (N=25; 15 mujeres y 10 hombres). El coro que realizó el experimento (Lulea Kammerkor) es considerado un excelente coro de extracción social media-alta con estrictas condiciones de admisión. Se dirigió una obra musical en dos formas: expresiva e inexpressiva. El experimento fue grabado con dos cámaras de vídeo con el fin de estudiar el papel del director y de observar al coro. Después de la interpretación, los cantantes cumplimentaron una encuesta de modo anónimo. Después del análisis de la grabación y de los datos del cuestionario, se puede concluir que los gestos, la expresión facial y el lenguaje corporal del director son importantes porque afectan al sonido y a la respuesta del coro antes y durante de la interpretación. Este trabajo es relevante porque hace conscientes los elementos que rodean la interpretación. No sólo el coro y la obra musical, sino la capacidad de crear una atmósfera y el uso de lenguaje corporal y de expresiones faciales apropiadas. A través de estos elementos, el director muestra sus intenciones musicales con un lenguaje no verbal. Esta forma de interpretar música es más útil para los cantantes porque reciben más información del director y pueden generar una respuesta más adecuada a los requerimientos de éste. Estas diferencias se aprecian en el sonido, la afinación y la atención del coro. Los resultados de este trabajo tienen un amplio rango de aplicación, desde el aula de música a los coristas profesionales.

**Keywords:** Dirección coral, comunicación no verbal, educación musical.

## 1. Introduction

The present study is targeted at vocal groups (usually a choir) led by a single person. The ideas on nonverbal communication presented here are useful for different kinds of groups, from a primary school choir led by a teacher to a professional choir. The suggested techniques can be applied in the music classroom or in the concert hall, in short, to any group of people who perform a musical piece together. Gesture, body language and facial expression must be carefully prepared before conduct and during the performing. The study is not concerned with the quality of the choir but with the skills of the conductor. But what are these skills? Durrant (2009) states that the aspects of communication and leadership in conducting will be guided by gesture, verbal and non-verbal interactions, and music. In conducting pedagogy remains the idea of every gesture should have meaning (Kaplan, 1985). That meaning that express through gesture should be perceived by the choir. The conductor establishes a connection with the

performers to translate their own perception about the musical meaning of the piece. It's a kind of agreement between conductor and musicians, as said by Gallops (2005) "a type of social-cultural contract among musicians".

The influence of conductor over the performers can be different depending on the way to transmit the instructions. This nonverbal communication may result in various responses from the singers (Fuelberth, 2004). Depending on the interpretative proposal of the conductor, the singers perform with tension or relaxation because in some way they imitate the nonverbal conductor behaviours (Manternach, 2012). Moreover some authors like Litman (2006) assume that there's a relationship between gesture and sound. Therefore is very important that conductor controls in every moment the expressiveness that wants to convey. When these aspects are improved, the choir will sing better and collaborate more positively.

### 1.1 Field of research

This study is about musical education applied to the choir, especially the nonverbal communication of the choral conductor. It is asked how the choral conductor communicates interpretative proposals to the choir to improve the quality of the choir independently of other features. The choir is also studied as the receiver of interpretative proposals and consider how singers react to the expressiveness of the choral conductor. From a pedagogic point of view, when these techniques are used, the results are better than a simple conducting gesture.

### 1.2 Aim

The aim is to study the effect of the conductor's gesture, facial expression and body language on the attitude and sound of one choir singing one musical piece. The results can be useful for other choral conductors seeking to improve their choral technique or looking for new ways to work with a choir in rehearsals and performances. They can also be applied in the classroom during musical lessons when choirs must sing a vocal piece. The ideas given during this study can be applied to instrumental pieces but we are focus in choral /vocal music. Although a person who conducts an instrumental group like orchestras, bands, brass ensembles or Orff instruments in the classroom, could applied these techniques.

### 1.3 Research questions

The following research questions target both the conductor and the choir:

- How do differences in the gesture, facial expression and body language of the conductor influence the choir?
- What are the differences in the responses of the choir during a performance with different ways of conducting?
- What are the singers' attitudes to different kinds of nonverbal communication?

## 2. Operative Definitions

Through this study some terms, that are important to have a clear meaning as it follows, are used; when we refer to a Choir, this term is used in a broad sense; choir is defined by the Oxford Dictionary (2013) as “an organized group of singers”. Singers are defined as any vocal group independently of their origin that is, in the classrooms of schools, universities, associations. Choir is understood as organized group in the sense that it performs a musical piece together led by a choral conductor. One feature, the study is focused on refers to the Quality of the choir that includes such aspects as sound, intonation, and musical education, in general, all factors and features surrounding the choir.

Besides the choir another important concept to define is Choral conductor. Regarding the choral conductor, it refers to the person conducting the choir, the main leader who gives instructions to the vocal group. This person can be a professional musician or teacher or simply the person who leads the ensemble during a performance. In this case, choral conductor in the broader sense is understood.

It's very important to distinguish the difference of meaning between Inexpressive version and Expressive version. In this study, an “inexpressive version” means the conducting is lifeless, without emotion, aseptic. In an inexpressive version, the conductor uses the minimum expressiveness possible. The Collins Dictionary defines inexpressive as “lacking in expression”. Instead in an “expressive version” the choral conductor conducts with emotion, with feeling, in an expressive way. The conductor transmits his/her feelings and thoughts through gesture, facial expression and body language. The Collins Dictionary defines expressive as “having a particular meaning, feeling or force; significant.” Synonyms of expressive are: vivid, strong, moving, lively, energetic, meaningful, indicative, demonstrative, significant.

The last term to be defined is Gesture. This is the basic movement in conducting to perform a musical piece. The New Harvard Dictionary of Music defines conducting as “leading and coordinating a group of singers and/or instrumentalists in musical performance or rehearsal” (1986, p. 192). Through gesture, the choral conductor indicates musical aspects as dynamics, cueing entrances, tempo; this leads to a concrete interpretative proposal

## 3. Method

In this research it was used an artistic method as practice-based research that combines artistic practice with theoretical reflection; its results are intended to make a contribution to art practice itself (Borgdorff, 2008). Also a comparative method to compare one choir, one musical piece conducted in two different ways. The authentic experimental method in the research consists of performing choral music with different conducting styles, observing the effects (William. Shadish, Cook & Campbell.2002). It is studied a performance with no expressive intentions in the gesture of the choral conductor, and compare it to one with expressive intentions and nonverbal language. This is considered a contrast experimental design because the researcher controls the system under study (Cox & Reid, 2000). After the performance, as

part of the experiment, it was asked the singers about their impressions during the performance answering a survey anonymously.

### 3.1 Design

The experiment consisted of the performance of a specific musical piece twice. The choral conductor conducted the piece in an inexpressive way and then conduct a second version with more expression. In this sense, the design is an authentic experimental method because conductor influences on several variables through nonverbal communication. Previously to the experiment, the conductor prepares itself the way to conduct with and without expressiveness. The conductor was studying their own movements, gesture and facial expression. The day of the experiment the conductor had a small rehearsal with the choir to fix aspects like tempo because is not the usual conductor of this choir. After the performance, the choir members answer an anonymous survey on their opinions. The experiment was recorded by two video cameras, one recording the choir and the second recording the choral conductor. With the recorded material, the interpretative proposals of the conductor and the reactions of the singers can be studied in more detail. The results of the survey and the findings of the recording session should lead to concrete suggestions for those people who conduct a choir. This experiment is a part of a Master's Thesis (Val, 2013).

### 3.2 Subjects

The subjects in this research (N=25; 15 women and 10 men) are the singers in a Swedish choir (Luleå Kammarkör) from Lulea, a city in the north of Sweden. It is the outstanding choir in the city, which requires high conditions for admission. Within the group of ladies, eight of them are soprano, and seven are alto. Within the group of gentlemen, there were five tenors and five basses. Most of the choir members don't have musical education, but they have good voices, and have been singing for a long time. They are skilled singers. A few have studied music but work in other areas, not music. Therefore, except for the conductor, no member of the choir is a professional musician. They have mid-high class societal level. Most of them possess high qualification (bachelor and university degree).

### 3.3 Data gathering tools and materials

To collect data, two video cameras were used. One video camera recorded the performance of the choir and the second one recorded the movements of the conductor. The audio was collected from the same video cameras. The quality of image and sound was quite good and reliable for the purpose of this work. The recording session took place in October 2012. The session with Luleå Kammarkör was recorded on Monday October 22 in the usual place of rehearsal in Örnäset (Luleå, Sweden) and at the usual hour of rehearsal. The purpose for this recording session was to keep the essence of normality, preserving the same conditions as a rehearsal. For this reason, the choir sang sitting, not standing up.

Also, a survey was elaborated to be answered anonymously by the singers after the experiment to know their impressions. Survey is an important tool to discover the singers' opinions and to compare them to those of the choral conductor. Fink (2002) says: "A survey is a system for collecting information from or about people to describe, compare, or explain their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior." The survey was administered in English because the language proficiency of the respondents was very high. In Sweden most of people speak English and Swedish with the same fluently. The survey (Appendix II) was structured in three parts:

- Questions 1 to 6 are related to the first version.
- Questions 7 to 12 are related to the second version.
- Questions 13, 14 and 15 are general questions.

The survey was answered anonymously but the choir members were asked where they sang; soprano, alt, tenor or bass.

For this experiment, the Swedish amateur choir "Luleå Kammarkör" was conducted by Ana Val, the author of the present work, researcher and a choral conductor. On the day of the experiment, 25 people were singing in the choir. The choice of the musical piece was also important. For this research was choosed the typical Swedish song "Som ett blommande mandelträd" by Hildor Lundvik. It has a slow tempo, long phrasing and a very kind and warm style. It has a soft expressiveness in the sense that the musical changes are small and gradual.

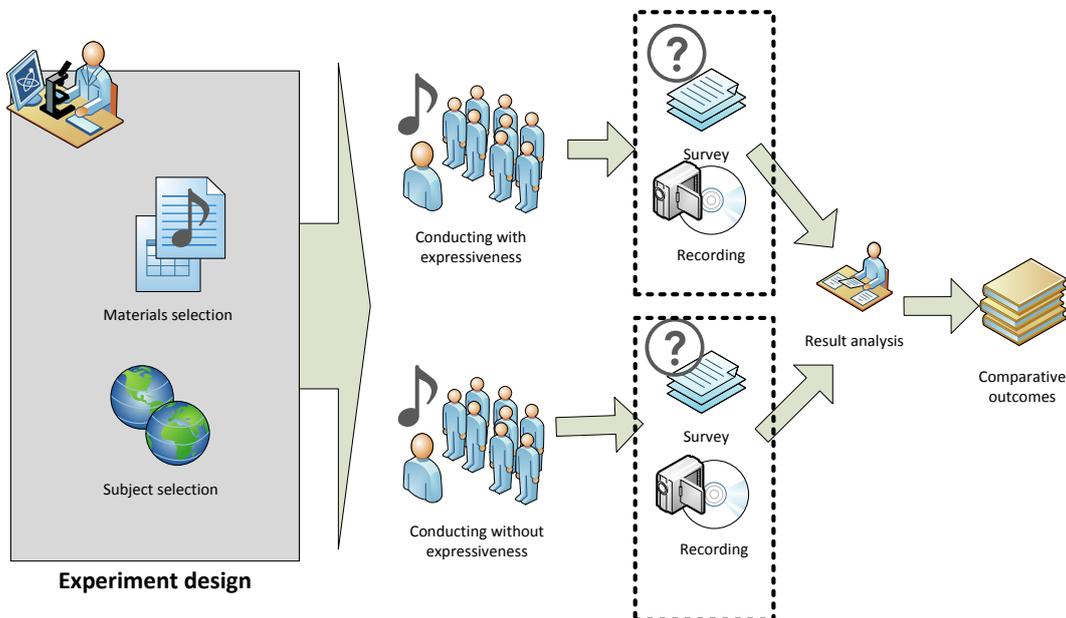
The complete musical score is in Appendix. The text of the score is in Swedish written by Pär Lagerkvist and the English translation (Sydenham, 1997) is given below:

### **Like a blossoming almond tree**

Like a blossoming almond tree  
is the girl I hold so dear.  
Sing, o wind, sing softly to me  
how lovely she is.  
Like a blossoming almond tree,  
so delicate, so light and pure.  
Only you, tenderest morning breeze,  
know how lovely she is.  
Like a blossoming almond tree  
is the girl I hold so dear.  
When the darkness falls so heavy around me,  
will she be able to live here?

### 3.4. Procedures

The procedures of the experiment are shown in the diagram below:



Once the materials have been properly selected the musical piece was twice conducted. The choir knew previously the procedure. They were aware about recording. Firstly the piece was conducted without expressiveness or with small expressiveness, that is, very little visual communication, no facial expression. Only the entrances and beating tempo were marked. Later the piece was conducted with more expressiveness. After that they were responding the Survey anonymously. With the video recording of the choir and the conductor, reading the answers of the survey, comparative outcomes started for discussion and extract conclusions.

## 4. Results

The results of the experiment were analysed using two perspectives; first, the perspective of the video recording, analysing the behaviour of the choir and the conductor; second, the perspective of the survey, determining the opinion of the singers.

### 4.1 Results of the video and audio recordings

At the beginning of the rehearsal the choir was informed about the experiment. They were told the piece was going to be twice conducted twice, in two different expressive ways. They were also told after that, they should answer a survey to anonymously know their opinion. Only they answered which voice sing, soprano, alt, tenor or bass. They were aware about the existence of two video cameras recording to the choir and conductor.

#### 4.1.1 Analysis of the inexpressive version

##### - Recording of the choir singing first version

Most of the singers are in a good sitting position, but they are looking at the score all the time. They are not looking at the conductor. At times, some may look at her, but for the most part, they are paying more attention to the score. When they turn the pages, they do so almost at the same time and with a terrible noise. They seem to be absolutely concentrated on the score. The sound is lifeless without any energy. It is a low sound in the sense that most of the vowels are down, and it sounds sad. It seems the choir doesn't want to sing the piece.

##### - Recording of the conductor during first version

In general, this version seems to be a lesson of musical language, beating and intoning instead of a musical piece. It lacks expression or emotion. The first impulse that the conductor gives to the choir is absolutely aseptically. The tempo of the piece is indicated, nothing more. The facial expression of the conductor is quite neutral. Her mouth does not move at any time. She doesn't open her mouth during the piece. Neither does she smile. Her lips are closed and do not move. For most of the time, her eyes are looking at the score and the desk.

In general, there is no visual communication between conductor and choir. The conductor looks at the choir only to give some entries, and when she looks at them, her facial expression is static. She doesn't express anything with her mouth, eyes or eyebrows. She only looks at the choir when she gives the impulse; she gives no information about musical intention or anything like that.

#### 4.1.2 Analysis of the expressive version

##### - Recording of the choir singing second version

While singing, some people move their bodies according to the phrasing. But when one person is not singing, he/she remains steady waiting to start singing again. This means the choir members are paying attention to the rest of the choir and are not distracted. When a voice starts to sing again, some begin with a slight body movement. Another feature we notice in the choir is the visual communication with the conductor. They look at the conductor most of the time. Finally, the phrasing is very clear in this version. They even start to sing a little bit lower; they recover the intonation and the phrasing is well supported. They emphasize some syllables in several ways, not only with more sound but with body movement. Even when they are singing to emphasize a single syllable, they move their heads.

##### - Recording of the conductor during second version

First, the conductor calls for the choir's attention with her gaze. She looks at the choir from left to right. In this version, the conductor gives several types of impulses throughout the piece. Sometimes the impulses are softer; at other times, they are made with acceleration. If we continue watching the gesture of the conductor, we see that in this version, her gesture is

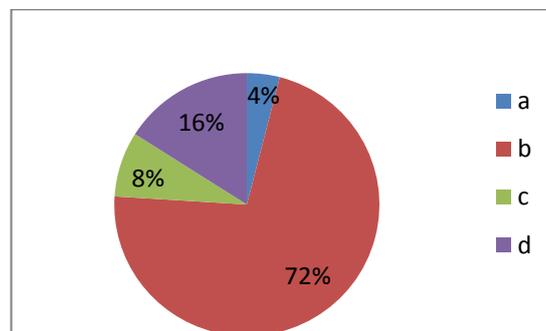
broader. It is more legato, bigger, and open for broad sounds. Sometimes it is a little bit circular, but it remains fluent. We can hear in the recording that the choir emphasizes these points in the phrasing.

#### 4.2 Results of the survey

Below, are shown the singers' answers to each item of the survey:

##### 1. What feature of the first version attracted mainly your attention?

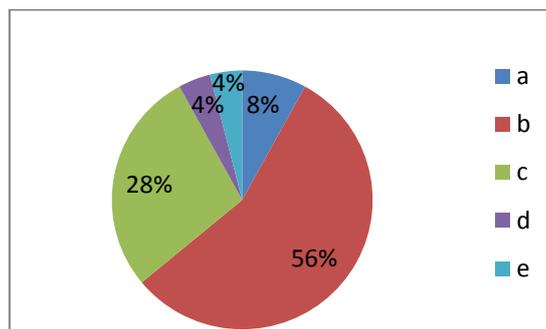
a- Facial expression    b- Gesture    c- Body movement    d- I don't know



Almost three quarters (72%) said gesture was the number one feature that attracted their attention in the inexpressive version of this piece; the second most frequent choice was “I don't know” (16%).

##### 2. Did that feature help you?

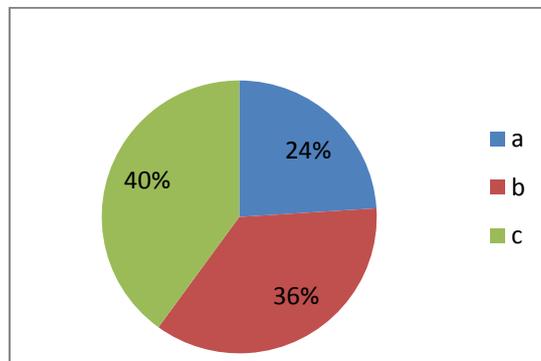
a- Yes, very much    b- Yes, to some degree    c- No, not very much  
d- No, not at all    e- I don't know



More than half the members of the choir said the feature that attracted more of their attention in the first version also helped them (56%). The second most frequent answer, representing 28% of the answers, was “No, not very much”.

**3. Did you understand the nonverbal language of the conductor in the first version?**

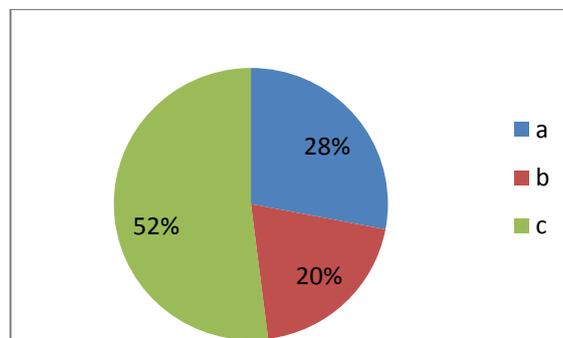
a- Yes      b- No      c- Sometimes



As seen, there was no agreement about whether the nonverbal language of the conductor was understandable in the inexpressive version: 24% answered “Yes”; 36% answered “No”; 40% said “Sometimes”.

**4. Do you think that there was connection between choir and conductor during the first version?**

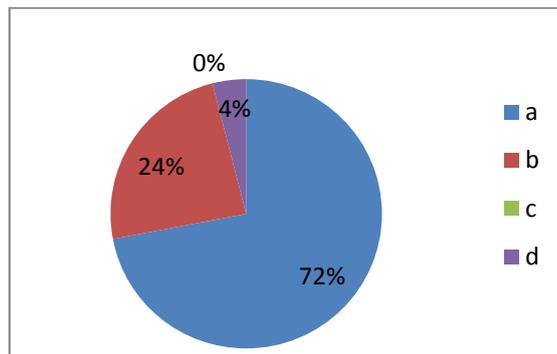
a- Yes      b- No      c- Sometimes



More than half (52%) of the amateur choir considered that sometimes there was connection between choir and conductor. It seems the connection between choir and conductor in the inexpressive version was sometimes present and sometimes absent.

**5. What is your opinion of the conductor’s general attitude in the first version?**

a- It was too neutral (too little expression)      b- It was appropriate for the piece  
c- It was overdone (too much expression)      d- I don’t know



Almost three quarters of the choir (72%) answered that the general attitude of the conductor in the first version was too neutral; 24% considered it was appropriate for the piece. Interestingly, some choir members answered “I don’t know” (4%).

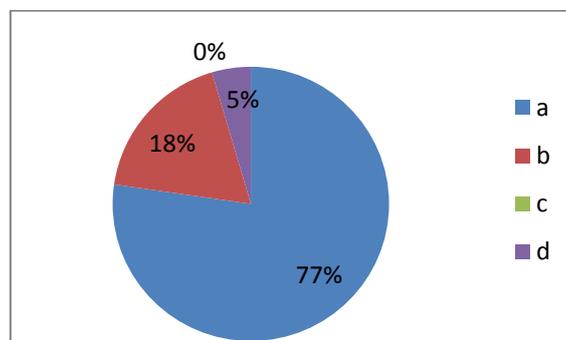
#### 6. Was there anything you missed, or did not like, or particularly liked, in the first version? If so, what?

The following answers are transcribed from the survey:

- Too laid back
- Too little facial expression which made the performance a bit lifeless.
- Too few expressions. Conductor did not communicate.
- *Nyanser gick inte fram* (in Swedish: The nuances were not conveyed [to the choir])
- There was too little facial expression nearly no eye contact. Did not like it!
- Indeed more articulated “gestures”; *ritardando*, *pesante*, articulated fourths.
- It was hard to “see” the nuances dynamics (p, mf and so forth). It felt very mechanical.
- It was kind of “mechanical”.
- Your ----- (illegible; responses were not very clear).
- Too little feeling.

#### 7. What feature of the second version mostly attracted your attention?

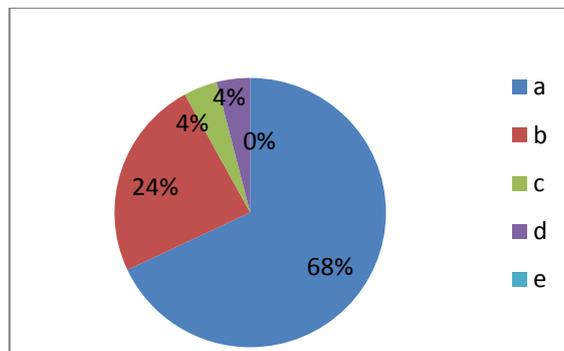
a- Facial expression    b- Gesture    c- Body movement    d- I don’t know



A large majority said facial expression attracted their attention during the expressive version: 77%.

**8. Did that feature help you?**

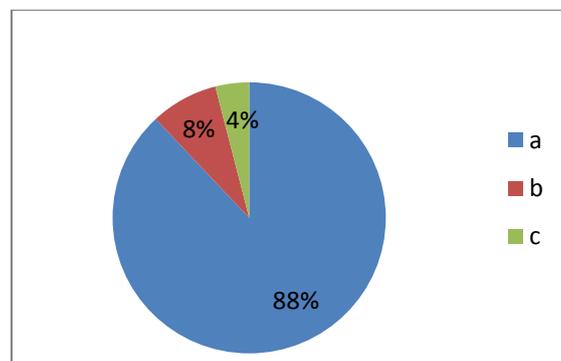
- a- Yes, very much      b- Yes, to some degree      c- No, not very much  
d- No, not at all      e- I don't know



The facial expressions used by the conductor in the second version helped the choir sing. The majority said “Yes, very much” (68%). Almost one quarter responded: “Yes, to some degree” (24%).

**9. Did you understand the nonverbal language of the conductor in the second version?**

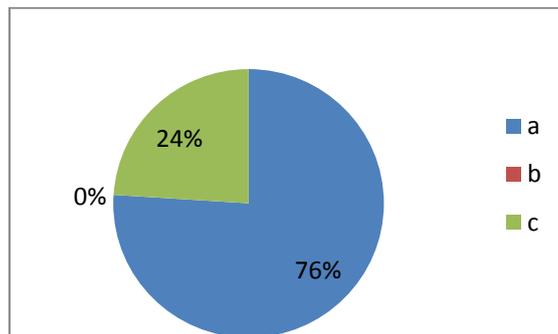
- a- Yes      b- No      c- Sometimes



A large majority in the choir said they understood the nonverbal language of the conductor during the second version (88%). Only 8% answered “No”. The third option, “Sometimes”, was selected by only 4% of the singers.

**10. Do you think that there was connection between choir and conductor during the second version?**

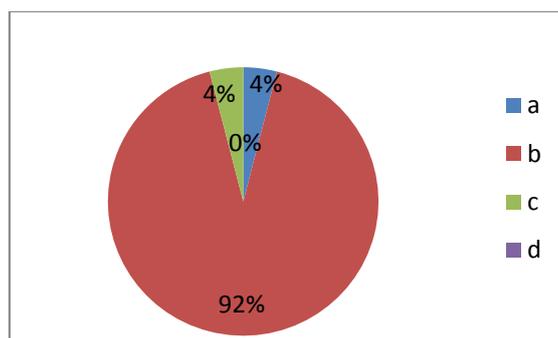
- a- Yes      b- No      c- Sometimes



In the expressive version, many singers found a connection between choir and conductor during the piece (76%). The answers were “Yes” (76%) or “Sometimes” (24%); nobody said “No”.

### 11. What is your opinion of the conductor’s general attitude in the second version?

- a- It was too neutral (too little expression)      b- It was appropriate for the piece  
c- It was overdone (too much expression)      d- I don’t know



A large majority considered the general attitude of the conductor was appropriate for the piece. In fact, it was almost unanimous at 92%. A small part of the choir considered it was too neutral (4%). Nobody answered “I don’t know”. As this was an expressive version, it is understandable that some choir members thought the conductor was overreacting, but is surprising to read that someone considered it too neutral.

### 12. Was there anything you missed, or did not like, or particularly liked, in the second version? If so, what?

As above, these are direct transcriptions of responses:

- I enjoyed that the conductor seemed more active than in the first version.
- Much more alive.
- Better than the first version, more connection between choir and conductor.
- Eyes, very helpful.
- Second was so much better.
- I really liked the connection between the choir and the conductor in the second version. It made me want to sing at my very best!

- The combination of facial expression, gesture and body language made it easy to follow.
- I liked your expression, it was very clear. You showed clearly what we should do, dynamics, tempo.
- Facial expression was very good, you used your body language and showed us very well.
- The nearness of the conductor.

**13. What is, in your opinion the most important feature for the conductor to do in order to bring out the qualities of this piece? Rate the following aspects in order of importance (1 for the most important, 2 for the second most important, etc).**

- a- Conduct in a simple manner
- b- Create an atmosphere
- c- Show the musical details of the score (dynamics, articulation, etc.)
- d- Communicate the feeling of the poem
- e- Establish a connection between choir and conductor

#### Rating in order of importance

- 1-
- 2-
- 3-
- 4-
- 5-

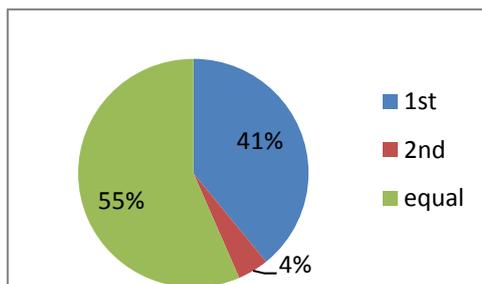
The results were:

- 1- Establish a connection between choir and conductor (average 1.7)
- 2- Communicate the feeling of the poem (average 2.5)
- 3- Create an atmosphere (average 3.1)
- 4- Show the musical details of the score (average 3.25)
- 5- Conduct in a simple manner (average 4.4)

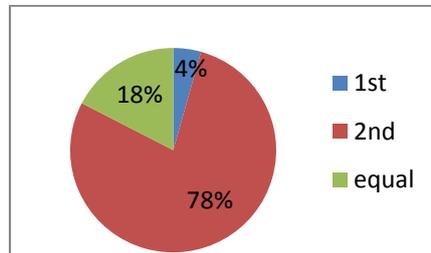
Based on the answers, it seems the most important thing was to establish a connection between choir and conductor. The least important aspect was conducting in a simple manner. With the rest of the options, there were a variety of opinions.

**14. Which version did, in your opinion, best showed these qualities of the conducting?**

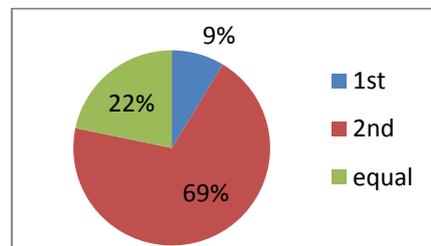
- a- Conduct in a simple manner
- 1<sup>st</sup> version - 2<sup>nd</sup> version - equal



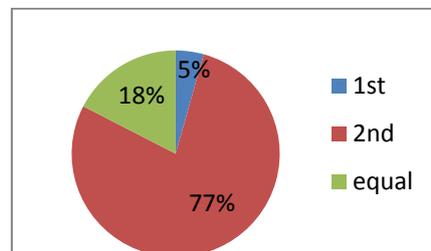
b- Create an atmosphere

- 1<sup>st</sup> version - 2<sup>nd</sup> version - equal

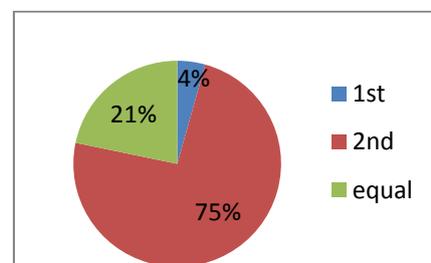
c- Show the musical details of the score (dynamics, articulation, etc.)

- 1<sup>st</sup> version - 2<sup>nd</sup> version - equal

d- Communicate the feeling of the poem

- 1<sup>st</sup> version - 2<sup>nd</sup> version - equal

e- Establish a connection between choir and conductor

- 1<sup>st</sup> version - 2<sup>nd</sup> version - equal

For the first feature, “Conduct in a simple manner” more than half of the choir members considered that both the first and the second version showed this quality in equal measure. By way of contrast, for “Create an atmosphere,” most agreed the second version was the best

version. For the feature “Show musical details,” a majority said the second version was clearer (69%). As for “Communicate the feeling of the poem,” they considered the second version to be better. Finally, for the feature “Establish a connection between choir and conductor”, most people answered that the second version was the best.

#### 15. Do you have any other comments?

(No responses were given here)

### 5. Discussion and conclusions

As the findings show, the conductor’s preparation before the beginning of the piece and his/her attitude during performance are important to the quality of the performance and to the attitude of the choir. There are three elements to consider when attempting to improve a conductor’s didactical skills:

1-Gesture: Gesture refers to the movement of elbows, arms and hands as a unit and with coordination. The arms may or may not be independent. Conductors must be very careful with gesture because certain gesture (or lack of gesture) could cause vocal tension in the singers. It is also necessary to communicate intention through gesture. Gesture is not only beating tempo and showing dynamics; it must express something to get the attention of the singers. As Durrant (2009, p.331) says, “The quality and nature of communication through gesture is fundamental in the choral conducting and musical learning context and contributes to the development of effective musical leadership”.

2- Facial expression: Facial expression is complementary to gesture and a very important factor in the expressiveness of conductor. Various choral music educators say conductors should attend to facial expression because this promotes expressive communication within the ensemble. The elements of facial expression include eyes, eyebrows and mouth, as well as the facial muscles in general. Facial expression is essential to establish a connection and therefore communication, visual and general, with the choir. If the singers feel supported by the conductor, they collaborate for a better interpretation. Before starting to gesture, it is important to get the attention of the choir through facial expression and create an atmosphere among the singers. Facial expression gives information that is additional to gesture.

3- Body language: This is complementary to gesture as well. A shrunken body is not helpful for singing. An open body position is better for conducting and expressing music. Through body language, we can express many things nonverbally, and the conductor can use it for several purposes. Breathing is important in body language; the conductor must breathe with the choir, and this too is a way of communication. The conductor should be very careful, however, because an excess of body movement can cause problems. With too much movement, singers may think the conductor is overdoing it or is disturbing the music. It is important to have enough control over body movements to offer the best interpretation.

“The single element that most affects the eventual sound quality of a chorus in performance... is the actual conducting technique or physical movements of the conductor” says Kaplan (1985 p.18). In this study, differences were found in sound depending on the attitude of the conductor and the attitude of the singers. In the expressive version of the experiment, the conductor establishes a connection with the choir and a way of communication; there are consequences in the sound and in the reaction of the choir.

With the findings listed above, it could be answered the research questions raised at the beginning:

*-How do differences in the gesture, facial expression and body language of the conductor influence the choir?*

It can be concluded it is important to have a good gesture and conducting technique, but gesture must be complemented by facial expression and body language. Facial expression is essential to encourage singers and achieve a good interpretation of the piece; it is basic in the process of nonverbal communication. Body language must be involved as well, participating alongside gesture and facial expression. The body language must suit the feeling of the piece to transmit the interpretative intentions. These elements influence the sound of the choir. When gesture is correct, facial expression is good and body language has a meaningful influence on the choir, the sound of the choir is better.

*- What are the differences in the responses of the choir during a performance depending on different ways of conducting?*

The survey answers reveal that singers are very sensitive to different ways of conducting; they appreciate a connection with the conductor. When the conductor shows musical intentions with gesture, facial expression and body language, they feel the conductor is helping them more than when there is an absence of this expressiveness. Singers want information from the conductor in several ways: through musical details, interpretative proposals etc. When the conducting lacks expression, the level of attention decreases, and they think that the conductor is unsure. There is no connection between choir and conductor.

*- What are the singers' attitudes to different kinds of nonverbal communication?*

Gesture is the main feature used by the conductor, but singers react differently to facial expression and body language. For singers, the facial expression of the conductor helps them to sing and to establish a connection. Visual communication is essential before and during the performance. Adequate nonverbal communication brings the conductor closer to the choir, and the reaction of the choir is positive in all aspects.

#### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisors Prof. Erik Westberg from Lulea University and Prof. Sverker Jullander from Gothenburg University for the patient guidance, encouragement and advices. I want to express my gratitude to Lulea Kammerkör for their extremely good willingness and collaboration during the experiment.

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## APPENDIX I: The musical piece “Som ett blommande mandelträd” by Hildor Lundvik

## Som ett blommande mandelträd

Text: Pär Lagerkvist (1891-1974)  
Musik: Hildor Lundvik (1885-1951)

*Allegretto moderato*

S  
A

*p*

T  
B

*pp* Som ett blom-man-de man-del-träd är

Som ett blom-man-de man-del-träd, man

5

Sjung vind, sjung sak-ta

*mf*

*mf pesante*

hon, som jag har kär. Sjung du vind, sjung sak-ta för mig

del-träd. Sjung vind, sjung sak-ta,

9

*molto rit.*

*pp*

*a tempo*

om hur ljuv-lig hon är. Som ett blom-man-de man-del-träd, så

*pp*

sjung. Som man

13

*mf*

*p*

späd, så ljus och skär. Ba-ra du, öm-mas-te mor-gon-

del-träd. *mf* *p*

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17

vind, vet hur ljuv-lig hon är. vet hur ljuv-lig hon är.

21

vet hur ljuv-lig hon är. Som ett blom-man-de

24

Som ett blomman-de man-del-träd är hon som jag har man-del-träd, man-del-träd.

28

När det mörk-nar kär. När det mörk-nar så tungt om-kring mig träd. När det mörk-nar.

31

kan hon väl le-va här? le-va här?

GE 10400

APPENDIX II: The Survey

---

Voice: S A T B

**FIRST VERSION****1- What feature of the first version attracted mainly your attention?**

- a- Facial expression   b- Gesture   c- Body movement   d- I don't know

**2- Did that feature help you?**

- a- Yes, very much   b- Yes, to some degree   c- No, not very much
- 
- d- No, not at all- I don't know

**3- Did you understand the non-verbal language of the conductor in the first version?**

- a- Yes   b- No   c- Sometimes

**4- Do you think that there was connection between choir and conductor during the first version?**

- a- Yes   b- No   c- Sometimes

**5- What is your opinion of the conductor's general attitude in the first version?**

- a- It was too neutral (too little expression)   b- It was appropriate for the piece
- 
- c- It was overdone (too much expression)   d- I don't know

**6- Was there anything you missed, or did not like, or particularly liked, in the first version? If so, what?****SECOND VERSION****7- What feature of the second version mostly attracted your attention?**

- a- Facial expression   b- Gesture   c- Body movement   d- I don't know

**8- Did that feature help you?**

a- Yes, very much    b- Yes, to some degree    c- No, not very much

d- No, not at all    e- I don't know

**9- Did you understand the non-verbal language of the conductor in the second version?**

a- Yes                      b- No                      c- Sometimes

**10- Do you think that there was connection between choir and conductor during the first version?**

a- Yes                      b- No                      c- Sometimes

**11- What is your opinion of the conductor's general attitude in the second version?**

a- It was too neutral (too little expression)    b- It was appropriate for the piece

c- It was overdone (too much expression)    d- I don't know

**12- Was there anything you missed, or did not like, or particularly liked, in the first version? If so, what?**

**GENERAL QUESTIONS**

**13- What is, in your opinion the most important feature for the conductor to do in order to bring out the qualities of this piece? Rate the following aspects in order of importance (1 for the most important, 2 for the second most important, etc.**

- a- Conduct in a simple manner
- b- Create an atmosphere
- c- Show the musical details of the score (dynamics, articulation, etc.)
- d- Communicate the feeling of the poem
- e- Establish a connection between choir and conductor

### Rating in order of importance

1-

2-

3-

4-

5-

### 14- Which version did, in your opinion, best show these qualities of the conducting?

- a- Conduct in a simple manner
  - 1<sup>st</sup> version    - 2<sup>nd</sup> version    - equal
- b- Create an atmosphere
  - 1<sup>st</sup> version    - 2<sup>nd</sup> version    - equal
- c- Show the musical details of the score (dynamics, articulation, etc.)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> version    - 2<sup>nd</sup> version    - equal
- d- Communicate the feeling of the poem
  - 1<sup>st</sup> version    - 2<sup>nd</sup> version    - equal
- e- Establish a connection between choir and conductor
  - 1<sup>st</sup> version    - 2<sup>nd</sup> version    - equal

### 15- Do you have any other comments?

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