

Effects of Pre-Conducting and Conducting Behaviors on Collegiate Musicians' Evaluations of Conductor Competence

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of pre-conducting and conducting behaviors on perceptions of conductor competence. We modified and extended a previous research study (Frederickson et al., 1998) and asked undergraduate college musicians (N = 214) to evaluate recorded videos of conductors that displayed combinations of poor and excellent pre-conducting and conducting behaviors. The conductors approached and stepped onto a podium, prepared conducting materials, and conducted one measure in 4/4 time. Participants were also asked to describe the factors that impacted their ratings via open-ended questions. Results of a conducting behavior × order interaction signified that although participants' ratings were influenced by pre-conducting behavior conditions, the effect was mitigated by order. Results also indicated that observers' evaluations of conductors' competence began immediately. Analysis of free-response questions indicated that conducting technique, eye contact, facial expressions, and conductors' general confidence level impacted participants' ratings of conductors.

Keywords: appearance, conductor competence, nonverbal communication, pre-conductor behaviors

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