

How to Rehearse a Youth Orchestra

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ABSTRACT

This study is focused on an effective method of performing a youth orchestra. It has been highlighted that it can provide various kinds of benefits to involved stakeholders in terms of focus, cooperation, discipline, and practice. The rehearsals should be conducted following a well-defined schedule and plan to achieve suitable results. It must be conducted with the cooperation of the conductor and musicians rehearsing their responsibilities accordingly. Here, the role of the conductor is highly important who needs to develop a sound understanding of the musical scores and instruments during the process. The conductor should concentrate on the work of musicians and identify mistakes and issues so that they can be corrected in a timely manner. However, musicians should not be interrupted during the practice and offered guidelines afterwards or during the tutorial process. This will be beneficial for their actual performance in front of the audience.

Keywords: Youth orchestra, rehearsal, conductor

1. INTRODUCTION

A clear classical form has been employed in order to write the overtones to Ruslan and Ludmilla. The prelude is similar to the condensed version of the complete opera “trailer” employing the play’s significant essence. The most appealing aspect of the opera is the overtones and there are a variety of recordings found on the online website. The link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ArBmGttyzs> is the Family Orchestra Concert, which was conducted at Stony Brook University by a youth orchestra in March, 2018. Susan Deaver was the conductor who has also performed as the Music Director and Conductor at the university over a longer period. It can be analysed from the video that it has been taken with a wide-angle providing a clear view of the stage so it is viable to determine the cooperation between the conductor and the orchestra throughout the performance. However, considering the lack of experience of the young orchestral, it has been determined that there are limitations in reaching the full extent of the story behind the music and achieving the original music’s appropriate tempo. Nevertheless, from an educational perspective, it can be considered that there are valuable parts in the video that highlight effective performance, practice, and rehearsal. Therefore, it provides an opportunity to carry out a detailed analysis from an educational perspective and highlight valuable aspects of the performance.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE REHEARSAL PLAN

In the production, there is high importance of a rehearsal schedule that needs to be developed for appropriate performance. Moreover, there is a need for the appropriate plan that offers guidelines for dealing with different types of issues involved with instruments, conflicts between stakeholders involved, and overall recommendations for conducting the process in a smooth manner. Hence, a schedule for the rehearsals has been provided in the next sections:

Project 1 rehearsals

Tutti – 3 hours

Project 2 rehearsals

Tutorial – strings only (1 hour)

Tutorial – wind only (1 hour)

Tutorial – brass only (1 hour)

Project 3 rehearsals

Tutti – 3 hours

At the start, a tutti rehearsal related to the overall orchestra can be highly valuable for providing the conductor and the orchestra an appropriate knowledge of the score and enable them to understand different types

of musical problems that can arise. It can also be useful for the conductor to deal with issues while operating with a full orchestra to improve the performance later on. In addition, during the practice, the conductor can become accustomed to challenging sections of the record and develop a strategic plan to further practice the issues in later rehearsals that focus on bringing improvements and effectively conducting the sections. There are a variety of techniques that can be utilised for making scores and an effective technique has been highlighted by Elizabeth Green that is known as colour making [1]. Further, this type of rehearsal can be useful for the musicians in making effective use of the instruments as required and conducting their performances appropriately for all parts of the performance. For example, it can be highly useful for young musicians, as it provides an opportunity to listen to the practices and determine various kinds of issues that can arise in different sections of the score. Similarly, it can offer them an opportunity to develop a comprehension of the viewpoint of the conductor [2]. It can also enable the conductor and the musicians to have an interaction with each other and conduct discussions related to individual feelings about various sections and bring improvements by taking mutual suggestions [3]. Following the 1.5 hours rehearsal, there is technically a 20-minute break after the first rehearsal. In this way, they learn as an ensemble and have the opportunity to develop a strong blend of sections. Following the first tutti rehearsal, there is a 3 hour tutorial with the overall orchestra being divided into three sections that include strings, wind, and brass. Therefore, there is an opportunity for individual musicians in different sections to obtain a tutorial for one hour period so that they can give due importance to specialised areas of their instruments and concentrate on the difficulties that were encountered during the earlier rehearsal. Specifically, the benefit of these tutorials is that they can be utilised for developing sound and carrying out exercises regarding excessive notes and dynamic changes that were primarily associated with challenging sectional pieces. Here, it is important for the conductor to maintain objectivity in dealing with problems that arise at different stages of the practice and concentrate on technical and rational solutions to solving problems, which will improve the overall performance [3].

The work conducted during the sectionals and tutorials is substantially apparent during the process of carrying out the final tutti rehearsals. At this stage, it is important for the conductor to allow each act to be performed from the beginning to the conclusion at a minimum of one time. It needs to ensure that the orchestra is able to complete the overall piece without notable interruptions. During this process, the conductor should concentrate on the performance of the orchestra and highlight any mistakes that were encountered. It also provides the conductor with an opportunity to offer guidelines to correct the mistakes, which will be valuable

for improving performances later on. However, these guidelines should be offered after the completion of the piece, as causing interruptions during the practice can negatively affect the emotional experience of the music piece. The interruptions can cause inefficiencies that can translate during the actual performances in front of the audience as well. In the middle of the rehearsal, there will be a 20-minute break as well.

3. PREPARATION FOR THE CONDUCTING

Conductors need to be involved with the preparation of the score because it can help them develop familiarity and contribute to improving accuracy. It is crucial for the complete conductor to develop an appropriate set of multiple talents and obtain a depth of knowledge of literature that is higher than the knowledge necessary for other types of performing artists such as instrumentalists, pianists, singers, and others [4]. For example, a conductor should have appropriate knowledge regarding the development process of the art and music such as the one found in the score and have the ability to reflect on the creation process. Moreover, the conductor should also be able to perform an analysis of the inherent qualities of a score such as musical notations and relationships with the orchestra. Conductors should become familiar with the baton technique, an efficient rehearsal technique, and the limitations and limits of their instruments [4]. They can acquire higher success through developing abilities such as musicality, good manual technique, and communication. Here, a conductor hoping to gain authority and capability in performing the orchestra should offer due significance to the scores [1].

In addition, conductors should not see themselves solely as trainers of technique because it can cause limitations for them. In case they do not possess musical experience then they may be stuck in teaching "the notes and rhythms" [5]. They should have the ability to concentrate on the music that relates to them emotionally and share it with the musicians and the audience [3].

4. ANALYZING THE SCORES

The whole overture is a sonata. Prior to score learning, the overall tempo given at score's top should be conductor's main concern *Presto* $\text{♩} = 140$ ¹⁾. Here, tempo highlights that the marking is $\text{♩} = 140$, It requires performing 140 half notes in 60 seconds or 280 quarter notes. Further, presto is a highly rapid tempo though not too excessive. Glinka has stated pertaining to the presto that it suggests high activity that is similar to Figaro's overture by Mozart despite having dissimilarities with respect to character - Russian tradition.

With the opening of the overture, the orchestra plays fortissimo chords, and the entire band also comes along the string group. Conductors should be aware that lower-

pitched instruments like cello and contrabass respond slower to signals compared to higher-pitched counterparts, as they require greater physical effort to vibrate [6]. Nonetheless, it is the other way around in woodwinds. Owing to the delayed response from some of the instruments, the perpetration beat before the start has to be addressed.

The work begins with impressive chord progressions that play the role of the conductor informing the orchestra that the piece should be played in the right spirit. Therefore, the audience will be able to recognize its significance [7].

Violins, violas, and flutes will perform the sonata's main theme in D major right after the scrambling scales in the strings. While there is a parity in the dynamics *sf* with the overall sections, the primary theme played by violins, violas, and flutes should be emphasised and heard without any ambiguity.

Dynamics is also notable in the music performance, so it is important for the conductors to have deeper knowledge of a few crucial dynamics changes without doubt. Figure 1 highlights that the conductor needs to indicate to the second horn in D major that players should maintain upbeat immediately after *sf* notation. Here, all instruments start with *mf* except the timpani in the last bar, followed immediately by a crescendo. For the purpose of producing this crescendo, its power is being gradually elevated so that it continues to be heard.



Fig. 1. Glinka, Ruslan and Ludmilla, bars 43 – 48

Afterwards, following a fast passage in woodwinds, the cellos, violas, and bassoons, there is time to introduce the second theme that involves an appealing melody in *F* major. It has been illustrated in Figure 2. Violins begin from the piano in a soft and gentle manner. Moreover, cellos and bass are not involved during musical notation; the conductor should note, however, that there is a lack of crescendo from the introduction to the main theme. The main theme starts with *mf* after a scrambling passage in the viola that needs violas playing a crescendo from *p* to *mf* during this passage. It is because a smooth transition to the main theme can be ensured in this way. Furthermore, since the dynamics are pianissimo (*pp*), violins should be sounded in a highly soft manner. The conductor needs to be vigilant during the whole time so

that the string musicians do not "drag" when they play piano pianissimo [7].

Moreover, it is also crucial to consider that in the case music starts with a downbeat, an unprepared upbeat may suffice as an indication of attack [8].



Fig. 2. Glinka, Ruslan and Ludmilla, bars 79 – 85

It is essential to hear the essential melodic lines or themes clearly. Consequently, balance is crucial in all orchestral music, since it will affect the colour of the sound. For conductor, it is required to adjust a wind chord in case there is a fortissimo throughout the orchestra. In Figure 3, the pizzicato strings have been highlighted, which are echoed by the staccato in woodwinds having a prolonged background tone in the horn. Here, the conductor can signal to play the woodwinds and brasses in a quiet manner for enhancing the balance and among them, in the woodwind ensemble, there is a higher pitch for the flute compared to the first oboe. Oboists should also be quieter than the flute and it can be done by the conductor indicating the musicians to offer higher importance to flutes and giving less stress on the oboe.



Fig. 3. Glinka, Ruslan and Ludmilla, bars 145 – 153

Figure 4 shows the song becoming a secondary theme such as an *Andante molto animato* in this part. Here, it is highly difficult for the conductor to maintain the mechanical beat time constantly, as it can be notably rigid and standardized to follow. Conductors should offer a slowdown tempo that is applicable. A crescendo from *pp* to *sf* is played by Trombone, bassoon and timpani from bar 207 to bar 220 in the orchestra, but other players must maintain a comparatively quiet movement. However, if it continues to hit *sf* in bar 221, the second horn should maintain piano immediately, as the following bars are progressing towards upbeat. Under bar 223, as the violin plays, a notation *poco a poco* crescendo is given under the scale that must be recognized. The tone colours can be significantly altered through the bow. Here,

conductors should develop a comprehension of the string bowing to achieve the sound colours required [3].



Fig. 4. Glinka, Ruslan and Ludmilla, bars 219 – 224

Figure 5 also shows timpani notation found in the bar 218. Its score is unable to suggest necessary accentuation of the motivic since it can be conveniently converted into a style:


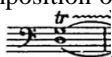
Trp. . However, other efficient methods are available for the composition of this roll in its essence and it is different from . Since there is a high similarity between these techniques, it can viable to refer to them Interchangeably. However, there can be issues with the dramatic intention of composer's in the case they are altered [9].



Fig. 5. Glinka, Ruslan and Ludmilla, bars 209 – 218

Having repeated the orchestral fortissimo, the third theme from one of Ruslan's arias then appears. Figure 6 shows that in the recapitulation, the main theme is played by cello with vibrato notation that provides expression to the string instruments. Here, Ruslan is calmly calling his lover Ludmilla through the cello's top position to produce a lyric effect. For the purpose of achieving an effective sound from the cello, it is necessary for the conductor to inform the musicians of this story and allow them to concentrate on the main melody. Additionally, maintaining balance within string instruments is necessary so that the front stands play the loudest while those in the back are gradually quieter.



Fig. 6. Glinka, Ruslan and Ludmilla, bars 292 – 299

During the process of the rehearsal of the orchestra, there is substantial importance of having eye contact with the musicians working together because it can be employed for the communication of different aspects including style, expression, and mood. It can have

positive impacts on enhancing the overall sense of involvement of different players so it needs to be utilised appropriately at the right moments. Moreover, it can also be valuable for enhancing the confidence of the players in the band and giving indications when a certain player has to enter with their part (Seaman and Richards, n.d.). It is also important to consider that in case the conductor does not give importance to a member for a period of more than 10 minutes then it can have a negative impact on their confidence leading to retreat or mistakes on their part. In this regard, it can be valuable for the conductor to give eye contact and indication to the musician before the start of their part or an important moment. However, it can be achieved by the conductor giving substantial time to the preparation and memorizing important moments where various members of the orchestra have to play their roles. Thus, it highlights the importance of interaction and communication during the performance of the orchestra.

First, a rousing coda with a repeating exposition is played having a descending bass forming the part's basis. There is a climactic appeal and effusive enthusiasm in the passage at overture's end. As illustrated in Figure 7, until the second section of the epilogue with the broken octave and scrambling scale, the tempo alters from Presto to Piu mosso that is a quicker tempo compared to Presto in the prior section. Therefore, there can be major concerns if the conductor fails to consider the Piu mosso tempo at the epilogue section effectively. Therefore, if there are challenges in maintaining the overture speed within a certain range then the conductor cannot go any further with the epilogue.



Fig. 7. Glinka, Ruslan and Ludmilla, bars 369 – 374

The Figure 7 continuation highlights further lilting character in the cello and bass parts. Thus, a lilting beat is required in the given example owing to the top of the notes' accents that cause the beats to recoil further [8].

5.CONCLUSION

It has been highlighted that the work of Glinka has a substantial level of colourful and transparent characteristics that provide an effective foundation for Russian tradition and they have been inherited by Rimsky-Korsakov and Prokofiev. There are substantial benefits of performing a youth orchestra for various stakeholders involved including the conductor and the musician. While it can be recognised that various students do not take music professionally, there are

opportunities for them to gain benefits such as focus, cooperation, discipline, and practice involved during the tutorial and rehearsal (Seaman and Richards, n.d.). Moreover, it is also necessary for the conductor to have a sound understanding of the musical scores, instruments since the practice is mostly conducted in a one-way and conductor-oriented manner. In the first rehearsal, the conductor has the opportunity to regulate the ensemble as required, highlight mistakes and issues in the instruments, and offer guidelines and solutions to the stakeholders involved in the process. Nevertheless, in case detailed work on a particular section or the instrument is required then it should be tackled during the tutorial process so that effective use of the time can be made.

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