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# Conducting Ma

An Open Space for Music Making  
with an Implication for Conducting Pedagogy

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On the cover:

The kanji character for Ma 間 is a combination of the characters for door 門 and 日 sun, the implication being the sun shining through the door is a sign of open space beyond.

Throughout this presentation, the definition we will explore can best be described as an open space that allows for the creation of a gesture, as well as the consciousness of that space in which an active element, be it graphic, sonic, or physical, can occur. In fact, it is this space that makes it *possible* for these elements to occur in their own character and purpose. In his writings on the topic, Tōru Takemitsu placed an emphasis on the concept as a place in which sound and silence balance one another.

# **P R E S E N T A T I O N**

*Conducting Ma:*

*An Open Space for Music Making*

11:30 a.m.

Friday, August 2, 2019

Recital Hall East

Sydney Conservatory of Music

# ESSAY

## ***Finding and Incorporating Ma as an Element of Conducting Pedagogy***

### **A Problem to Solve**

We musicians spend our lives in a musical feedback loop. We listen. We adjust after we listen. And, we do that from our earliest studies, through musical maturity into professional practice, and beyond. We always have a sonic reference to which we react, that we imitate, adjust to, listen to again, and to which we refine our response. Beginning student conductors often lack this kind of immediate and accurate aural feedback in acquiring a basic conducting technique. More often than not, they find themselves in front of either keyboard instruments only, or small instrumental and vocal ensembles that are also made up of other beginning conductors in the same class. As a result, the basic physical vocabulary of conducting is often learned not as a musical tool, but as a stand-alone physical movement vocabulary, devoid of a practical, musical purpose. This is much the same way dancers unwittingly learn their first moves, concentrating on minutiae of technique, rather than on a larger picture or context. Effective refinement of that technique into a serviceable and artistic tool for expression thus becomes a distant and often elusive goal.

For a conductor, that goal often gets delayed, as this new physical technique is just learned via the way it feels or looks on a basic physical level, rather than through the reaction it will illicit from an ensemble. A workable conducting technique should be appropriate to the individual physicality of the conductor. It should look natural, unstressed, and meaningful. And, it is completely personal, just like any musician's skill that has been acquired and passed through this aural feedback loop. Developing a readable

and comfortable gestural vocabulary is thus often at odds with how it is first learned.

Understanding how a gesture moves through space, rather than just how it looks, is a crucial part of refining an artistically effective conducting vocabulary. And so, the value of understanding the character and presence of the gesture becomes obvious. Once the way in which the gesture is *perceived* is the goal, rather than just where to place a beat or a cue, the seemingly unoccupied space through which a gesture will move becomes important to look at and to understand. That open space, which serves to give meaning, intent, and balance to the gesture, has significant roots in the Japanese concept of *Ma*.

## **Ma - Toward a Definition**

*Ma* is the perceived space around a gesture, or any other physical, visual, or aural manifestation of movement or static occupied space. It is the space that makes the movement or visual element possible and that allows for the perception of a larger context for something to exist with meaning. It is a concept that “makes presence”<sup>1</sup> and allows movement. The Japanese meaning of the word also points toward the idea that it is this open space that fosters both function *and* context. With a more complete appreciation of this ever-present aesthetic component, its intersubjectivity, as well as its psychological and social functions, we can refine the practice of recognizing and creating space around both musical and physical gesture to enhance our observation of the concept’s function. For our purposes today, the early stages of conducting pedagogy are the beneficiaries of that awareness.

To aid in the identification of *Ma*, three short ensemble works spanning one hundred fifteen years, by Jean Sibelius, Tōru

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<sup>1</sup> Yoshiko Arahata, personal interview, Eastman School of Music, February 23, 2018.

Takemitsu, and myself, will identify various aural manifestations of Ma. Extrapolating those musical examples into spatial ones and then utilizing them as precursors to motion through space, has extraordinary value in teaching a reliable movement vocabulary. Being aware of the space in which the movement vocabulary must function also has implications for an increased awareness of space in musical gesture that can be explored, mastered, and utilized as an interpretive tool in applied musical performance. With these observations informing our basic awareness, Ma can be used to teach a conducting technique that leads, rather than reacts to, a musical action. Taking the time to explore and discover Ma is beneficial in other musical performance and pedagogy techniques as well, as its presence can be applied in myriad teaching scenarios in which an awareness of a larger context is useful.

The concept is not only found in Japan. Analogues exist in other cultures as well. The bridge between Japanese and Finnish aesthetics is not difficult to construct when looking at their designed spaces, objects, as well as the graphic and plastic arts. Both countries value Nature's influence on design. Noted travel journalist Jessica Wood, in what would otherwise be an anecdotal observation, hits on some key elements that lead toward Ma, as "both Finns and Japanese are highly traditional, hardworking, polite, and introverted people who appreciate nature, simplicity, technology, good food, and escapist fiction among many other things. Communal bathing is a social activity in both nations; the sauna in Finland and the hot spring or public bathhouse in Japan."<sup>2</sup>

The open, clean lines we often think about when looking at Finnish architecture or Japanese design can be traced to the same natural influences that exist in both countries. Finding instances of

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<sup>2</sup> Jessica Wood. *Are Finland and Japan Obsessed with Each Other?* Accessed March 27, 2018. <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/finland/articles/are-finland-and-japan-obsessed-with-each-other/>

Ma in music from both countries becomes a compelling addition to the visual similarities already present, particularly when the composer's intentions are either programatic in nature, or reflective of a national aesthetic. Ma is integral to the musical construction of the Sibelius *Kurkikohtaus*, or *Scene with Cranes*, in a fairly open and easily communicated way. This piece of theater music is based upon the flight of a group of birds, so its affect would naturally be one in which free movement would play a part. Observing movement through an expanse of sky awakens this perception of uninhibited movement while looking at anything in flight. Sibelius makes expansive room for large gestures in this score that command the attention of the listener to starkly different and distinctly visual impressions. Eliding very thick ensemble textures directly to open spaces, in which there is a diminution of sonic material without forward movement, is a hallmark of this score. The work is very short, and not nearly as well known as the other half of opus 44, the *Valse triste*. In fact, the work received its Eastman premiere on March 31, 2018, as it was unpublished from its creation in 1906, until its rediscovery in 1973.

Figure 1 highlights an instance of this opening of space by suspending forward motion under an imagined bird call, and



**Figure 1**

Measures 18 through 20, showing the gestures suggestive of Ma highlighted in red

concluding the section with a shimmering, open string texture. That airy sonic impression (a widely spaced stack of open fifths, with only a viola harmonic determining the tonality of the A major triad) is indicative of the characteristic of gliding, unfettered flight. The fermata before that widely spaced, open texture is significant as well. It makes room for the consequence of the next entrance. It creates space.

Tōru Takemitsu's *Rain Coming* also manifests Ma in significant ways. The composer himself provides a helpful beginning guide to his personal aesthetic in his commentary on a children's poem.

*The work is based on a poem I found in Miracles, an anthology of poetry written by English-speaking children.*

*"Hours are leaves of life,  
And I am their gardener...  
Each hour falls down slow"*

*That poem by Susan Morrison, an 11-year-old Australian girl, expresses very clearly the way I feel about music.<sup>3</sup>*

This artistic declaration of a non-traditional composer (in referencing his work *Garden Rain*) who was self-taught, naively dauntless, and connected to a large community of fellow artists, reveals a man deeply concerned with how his music functioned. The world his music would inhabit was extraordinarily important to this sensitive, visually inspired composer (he composed at least ninety film scores), and part of a highly personal musical development. Throughout his life, he collaborated with both *avant garde* and mainstream artists across the world. John Cage, Akira Kurosawa, Igor Stravinsky, and Aaron Copland would cross his path in both creative and career enhancing ways. Fellow Japanese artists concerned with making a more international presence for their dance, sculpture, writing, and filmmaking would also be part

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<sup>3</sup> Tōru Takemitsu. "Dream and Number" in *Confronting Silence: Selected Writings*. Translated and edited by Yoshiko Kakudo and Glenn Glasow. Berkeley: Fallen Leaf Press, 1995, p. 117.



of his environment, through the Jikken Kōbō, an experimental workshop of which he was a part, from its founding in 1951. As *Rain Coming* comes from a time late in the composer's life when he was looking inward and acknowledging his national cultural identity more so than earlier in his career (which saw him more outwardly and internationally focused), there is a freedom in this score that allows for both those seemingly opposing influences to come through. It is thus perfectly appropriate to identify instances that reflect Ma in this score. While a detailed analysis of pitch classes would reveal a symmetry that illuminates both vigorous and less active spaces of the composition spatially, for the purposes of

The image displays a musical score for measures 12 through 15 of a piece. The score is written for a large ensemble, including A.P. (Alto Saxophone), Cl. (Clarinet), Bn. (Bassoon), Hr. (Horn), Trp. (Trumpet), Trbn. (Trombone), Pr. (Percussion), Vib. (Vibraphone), I. (Illuminated), VI. (Violin), Vla. (Viola), Vc. (Violoncello), and Db. (Double Bass). The score is divided into two main sections: a blue-shaded area representing the ensemble framework and a red-shaded area representing a textural shift suggestive of Ma. The blue-shaded area covers measures 12 through 15, while the red-shaded area covers measures 16 through 19. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (pp, p, mp, f, ff). The tempo is marked as 'a tempo' and the time signature is 8/8. The score is annotated with 'Freely' and 'poco rall.' (poco rallentando). The blue-shaded area also includes a section labeled 'arco l.v.' (arco, l.v. = arco, l.v. = arco, l.v.). The red-shaded area includes a section labeled '3/8' and 'Agitato'.

Figure 2

Measures 12 through 15 highlighting the ensemble framework in blue and the textural shift suggestive of Ma in red

this essay, we can look at both pacing and phrase structure for a more salient presence of the concept.

By moving abruptly from larger metered textures to solo textures that immediately suspend the established rhythmic pace, Takemitsu makes the listener suddenly aware of the open sonic space in which that solo line moves. Often this is done via an upward sweep that is then countered with motion in the opposite direction, coupled with a longer, trailing line. Figure 2 maps out this motion, utilizing these devices as well as contrasting fermatas and large dynamic shifts.

The creative motivation, goals, and soundscape of the percussion ensemble *Avoim Tila* (Finnish for *Open Space*) are detailed further in the attached program notes below. But, it is appropriate to mention here that I have attempted to create a musical space in which very simple elements reflect the aesthetic aspects of Ma by hinting at, rather than trying to directly define, a larger sonic space. My time in Finland and Japan was bound up in music making. Between rehearsals and performances, I found myself connecting with people whose lives moved at a very different pace from my own. The solidity, serenity, kindness, and inward focus of people in both countries made a very deep impression on me. I still look to those experiences to provide a platform of centered awareness, strength, and confidence for my own work. That it would now come out in a score seems part of the evolution of my association with Ma. In *Avoim Tila* I have included instructions for the physical layout and travel of the players from instrument pair to instrument pair. The nature of that movement is intended to mirror the source and character of the sound. That mixture of choreographed physical intent keeps the dramatic elements deeply connected to the sonic events they foster. In the opening portion of the work, the intertwining of two extended tympani voices expands both upward in pitch and forward in

motion, then gives way to an overtly simple counterpoint, muddled, halted, and extended by the placement of jax on the tympani heads. That paired down counterpoint contrasts immediately with the established space. Figure 3 details the opening of the work.

### Breathe

$\text{♩} = 36$   
Place four or five metal toy jax on the heads of each timpani

Timpani I

Timpani II

*pp*

*p*

Gradually increase the tension on the heads to raise the pitch over four repetitions of the opening two bar phrase.

**Figure 3**  
*The opening of Avoin Tila with the first spatial shift highlighted in red*

A dependence on Ma that is present in the structure of the music, and thus capable of mirroring the concept itself, is the thread through each of these scores. As mentioned by both cultural historians and journalists<sup>4</sup>, it is reasonable to compare parts of the Finnish and Japanese cultures that end up illustrating a common cultural characteristic, the awareness of and respect for the space in which a natural or artistic phenomenon occurs. The Japanese have evolved an entire cultural principal and philosophy around the concept that touches not only on these aspects, but on how native Japanese people value the personal space of the individual on a daily basis. The Finns have internalized the same principles to a more introverted end, but with a strong similarity to

<sup>4</sup> Olli Matti Kalervo Alho. *A Guide to Finnish Customs and Manners*. March, 2010. Accessed February 20, 2018. <https://finland.fi/life-society/a-guide-to-finnish-customs-and-manners/>

Ma. Both cultures exhibit a reliance on the natural world for design inspiration, a similar influence on inner focus and open physical spaces and mental states, an integration of other aesthetic elements into various works of art that look to these qualities, and finally an emphasis on personal space and the importance of quiet.<sup>5</sup>

### **Locating, Exploring, and Using the Concept**

The musical examples above can all foster an aural and physical manifestation of Ma to illuminate the space in which physical movement vocabularies happen. Choreographers live in a world in which this is a basic concept. Many musicians don't usually get to this kind of awareness until much later in their careers, if at all. Logical first steps for pedagogy can be gleaned from longtime dance teachers who, likewise, have to describe the concepts they want to share with someone for whom the concept doesn't yet exist. While Yoshiko Arahata mentioned above that Ma is a space that makes possible what happens in that space, that it gives a presence for something to develop, choreographer Karen Stokes, Professor of Dance at the School of Theater and Dance at the University of Houston, speaks of "How the open or negative space will be filled or left alone as a primary concern in building technique."<sup>6</sup> The technique itself is not the goal, but rather, how it's going to be used in space. The fact that she uses this in a primary stage of teaching is important. Also essential is the concept of "effort shape"<sup>7</sup>, a term from Labanotation<sup>8</sup> that addresses the level of energy and the shape of the movement to

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<sup>5</sup> Alho.

<sup>6</sup> Karen Stokes, personal interview, University of Houston, March 21, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Stokes.

<sup>8</sup> Christian Griesbeck. *Introduction to Labanotation*. Accessed March 28, 2018. <http://user.uni-frankfurt.de/~griesbec/LABANE.HTML>

be notated, or in this case, taught. Both these seemingly advanced terms, broken down for the beginning dancer, are excellent ways to describe the speed and weight of motion as it moves through a space.

Norwood Pennewell, principal dancer and rehearsal director of Garth Fagan Dance, speaks of a similar larger kind of space. "Think about the rhythm, not the technique."<sup>9</sup> was a primary concept he stressed in speaking about his instruction to dancers. "Become a part of the score, rather than a reaction to it"<sup>10</sup> also illustrates the importance of being part of a complete picture, not only of what a performance should reflect, but how a performer should envision the entirety of their physical motion. His further encouragement to the dancers with whom he works includes asking them how they function within a phrase. This total awareness of the space allows another component of a dancer's physical movement vocabulary to be at its most vital: the concept of stillness. Stillness, he describes, is not a cessation of movement only, but part of the continuation of what comes next. Only then can a dancer's stillness be effective and complete. George Szell's famous admonition to the Cleveland Orchestra comes to mind immediately. "Rests aren't there to rest. They are there to prepare for the next entrance."<sup>11</sup> Both Pennewell and Stokes end up speaking about being part of a larger physical picture, and this is where we can utilize an awareness of Ma in teaching the movement pedagogy that makes up conducting, with the idea that "entirety of motion" is the basis of observation. That phrase is an excellent distillation of what beginning conducting students can now use to enlarge their awareness, envision, and thus execute an effective and readable conducting vocabulary.

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<sup>9</sup> Norwood Pennewell, personal interview, Rochester, New York, March 26, 2018.

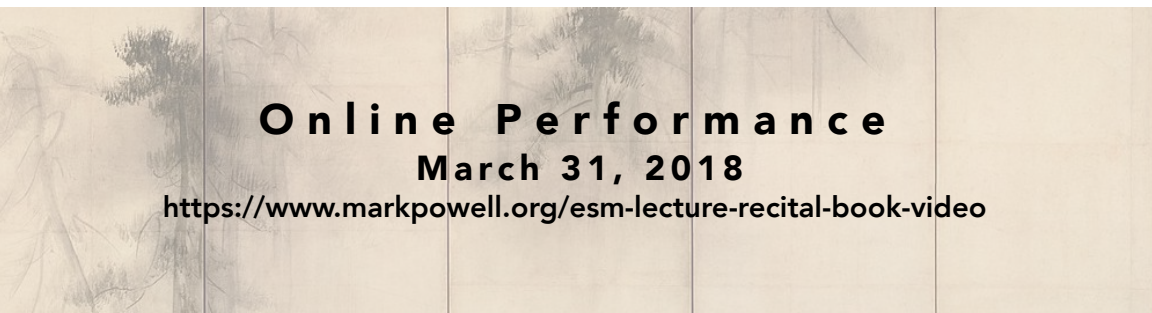
<sup>10</sup> Pennewell.

<sup>11</sup> Sue Knussen. *The Art of Conducting: Great Conductors of the Past*. Teldec, 1996.

Very often, when beginning conductors are asked to concentrate on a specific aspect of their technique, purely visual observation completely takes over their attention. This is frequently accompanied by other signs of a narrowed focus. Raised shoulders, craning the neck forward, or a complete visual lock on a point of the arm, hand, or wrist in question can all be part of this detrimental narrowing of awareness. Being able to open that awareness to a larger visual field, and thus a larger source of accurate visual information, is of enormous benefit. A step toward that goal is accomplished often by just moving the arm slightly away from the body. The ability to be aware of a more complete picture of their arm, wrists, and hands, means deliberately moving their visual and physical focus. This keys other changes that can open up the physicality of the student's technique. Standing up with weight distributed equally over each foot, placing the head at the top of the spinal column, and a greater physical ease in movement can all be fostered by this larger awareness. Character of movement then becomes the focus, not minutiae of posed technique. Asking a student to look past their arm to the goal of where it will end up is another excellent direction to aid this change of focus. In much the same manner as a Dalcroze student practices filling a beat with motion or sound and can then move on to divert their attention to another task, so too can this increased field of movement foster the physical approach necessary to begin refining a more fluid conducting technique that is ultimately at the command of the student's musical creativity. The key to that awareness is an acknowledgement of a larger space that supports, that makes possible, a more complete gesture. Once this approach becomes part of a conducting student's regular course of practice, both basic and more detailed enhancements of a technique can be more accurately addressed.

Like many good teaching strategies, increased awareness of Ma can transfer from music to other physical, sonic, graphic, and language environments. By identifying and exploring the concept in music, we build another avenue with which to share our art, its practice, and its value to students, listeners, and fellow teachers. I hope the musical explorations we made today and those available online will stay with you and encourage your own increased awareness of the spaces in which we all make music, speak, and interact. The benefits of the concept are far reaching and extraordinarily positive.

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## Online Performance

March 31, 2018

<https://www.markpowell.org/esm-lecture-recital-book-video>

## P R O G R A M

Jean Sibelius

*Kurkikohtaus (Scene with Cranes), Op. 44, No. 2 (1903/6)*

**Eastman Premiere**

Tōru Takemitsu

*Rain Coming (1982)*

Mark E. M. L. Powell

*Avoin Tila (2017)*

**World Premiere**

# Ensemble Musicians

## *Sibelius*

Violin  
Shannon Steigerwald  
Holly Workman  
Barak Schossberger  
Zoe Merrill  
Shengming Liang  
Michael Wheatley  
Willa Finck  
Raina Arnett  
Lydia Becker

Viola  
Isaiah Chapman  
Cindy Lan  
Katie Brown  
Alex McLaughlin  
Violoncello  
Isaac Bovyer  
Rachel Rice  
Charles Reed

Bass  
Kevin Sullivan  
Sean Knapp  
Andrew Brunson  
Clarinet  
Hattie Bestul  
Laura Hundert  
Tympani  
Vicky Shin

## *Takemitsu*

Violin  
Shannon Steigerwald  
Holly Workman  
Viola  
Isaiah Chapman  
Violoncello  
Charles Reed  
Bass  
Andrew Brunson

Flute  
Benton Gordon  
Oboe  
Andra Bane  
Clarinet  
Hayley Jensen  
Bassoon  
Jake Fowler  
Horn

Shimon Ohi  
Trumpet  
David Puchkoff  
Trombone  
Nicolas Hogg  
Keyboards  
I-Hsiang Chao  
Percussion  
Brant Blackard

## *Powell*

Percussion Duo  
Brant Blackard & Conner Stevens

# Program Notes

*Kurkikohtaus (Scene with Cranes)*, Op. 44, No. 2 (1903/6) Jean Sibelius

Scored for a pair of clarinets, timpani and strings, this single work was originally two pieces of theater music for Arvid Järnefelt's play *Kuolema (The Death)*. Unsuccessful in its theatrical run (six performances only, with the last two featuring heavily discounted tickets), the play has long fallen out of theatrical history. But, some of the music would go on to have a life of its own. The complete incidental



music, a suite of six compositions created by the playwright's brother-in-law, Jean Sibelius, contains the famous *Valse triste*, which shares the same opus number as the piece you'll hear today. Three years after the play's premiere, Sibelius combined the third and fourth pieces of the group under the title *Scene with Cranes*. In the play a flock of cranes flies overhead. Then, one of them separates from the group, to carry a newborn to a young couple.

As it originated as theater music, there would naturally be a programmatic element in the music's affect. I have found the score absolutely crystalline in its construction, deceptively simple looking on the page, and full of potential for dramatic phrase sculpting. There is a definite expanse of negative musical space at play here that aids in a musical depiction of the qualities of flight: serene gliding, swooping changes of direction, and the singularity of breaking free from a group for solo flight.

*Rain Coming* (1982)

Tōru Takemitsu

Written in 1982 via a commission funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation for the London Sinfonietta, *Rain Coming* is part of a larger collection of works inspired by the natural phenomenon of rain. The first performance was given by the London Sinfonietta conducted by Oliver Knussen and, as the American musicologist Andrew Frank mentions in an early review of the score, the sound worlds of Debussy and Ravel are both present. As Takemitsu's first exposure to Western music was via a French recording of *Parlez-moi d'amour* by Jean Lenoir, the strong impression of the circumstance in which he heard it (in postwar Japan, on a phonograph, with an improvised bamboo needle), the influence of Lenoir's finely detailed, almost ethereal melody are not hard to hear in much of Takemitsu's later work. In fact, that connection to non-Japanese cultural influences in Takemitsu's compositional work was deliberate. The composer himself wrote that he wanted to pursue a more active relation to the present and felt that traditional Japanese music was not the route that would lead him there.

As Andrew Frank also mentions, it is evident from the beginning that what he called "a shimmering, mystical atmosphere" is sustained throughout the piece, only occasionally broken by "violent outbursts"

from within. He also acknowledges the subtleties of Takemitsu's orchestration, describing the end of the work as passing into a "sea of tonality", and thus referencing Takemitsu's famous 1984 lecture in Tokyo, in which he described the tonal area "from which many pantonal chords flow."

### *Avoim Tila*

*A Monodrama for Percussion Duo* (2017)

Mark E. M. L. Powell

By definition a monodrama is, of course, for a single performer. But, the subtitle here is deliberate, to emphasize the combined single entity created by the performers. The score's directions are intended to enhance the focus on the aural experience by creating a complementary visual aesthetic. The overall aural space and deliberate development create a contrapuntal interplay and the performance instructions urge each player to emphasize these points as smoothly as they can. The Japanese concept of Ma, or that by which open space gives meaning, was certainly present in my mind as I assembled both the musical and dramatic materials. But, Ma alone was never a deliberate focus or stated goal. Rather, like the concept itself, this music is a suggestion that I hope will work on a deeper level of awareness. For a Westerner, the idea of negative space playing on a visual or aural picture is not new. But Ma goes further in the Asian perspective, encompassing an approach not only to visual, aural, and physical spaces, but on the mental effect generated by them. It is a social and aesthetic phenomenon. An accurate Western European analog might be the Finnish aesthetic of utilizing negative space by concentrating texture, context, and materials as a smaller, more substantial piece of an environment. Alvar Aalto came close to this definition when he said that "nothing is ever reborn but neither does it totally disappear. And that which has once been born, will always reappear in a new form."

And so, I hope that my effort to create for a percussion duo this open space, in which a balanced musical and dramatic statement can fashion its own world, is something in which you will dwell with both a sense of adventure and a deep sense of peace.

# Annotated Bibliography

Alho, Olli Matti Kalervo. *A Guide to Finnish Customs and Manners*. March, 2010. Accessed February 20, 2018. <https://finland.fi/life-society/a-guide-to-finnish-customs-and-manners/>

Professor Olli Alho is chief of cultural anthropology at the University of Jyväskylä and an authority on modern Finnish societal mores. He also serves on the faculty of the University of Helsinki and served as the Chairman of the Finnish Commission for Unesco from 1999 to 2002. His writings on the intricacies of Finnish social practices and how they are communicated, particularly to non-Finns, immediately reminded me of how Japanese natives also value the details of personal space and communication.

Arahata, Yoshiko. 2018, February 23. Personal Interview.

For a native Japanese musician, the concept of Ma is part of the cultural vocabulary of growing up and learning one's instrument. I am indebted to my friend and colleague for her candid and illuminating conversations with me on both the manifestations of Ma and the spoken language of which the concept is a part.

Blocker, Gene H. and Christopher L. Starling. *Japanese Philosophy*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2001.

Designed as a college level introduction to both the scope and history of Japanese philosophy, Blocker and Starling examine the historiography of Japanese thought, distinct from the Western interpretations that have dominated the instructional and historical narrative.

Davies, Roger and Osamu Ikeno. *The Japanese Mind: Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture*. North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 2002.

This book's description of *amae*, or the dependence upon someone else's benevolence or understanding was a key point in trying to add a social context to the concept of Ma. As an artistic principle, this wasn't difficult to grasp, but how contemporary Japanese societal communication treats the idea of a person's personal space was greatly aided by this narrative.

De Mente, Boyé. *Elements of Japanese Design*. North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 2006.

Concentrating more on the literal meaning of Japanese design elements for a Westerner, these elements are also related to their cultural origins. While not a scholarly text, this book did help me envision a more complete picture of the society in which Ma functions as the basis not only for design decisions but, filtered through my own experience in Japan, a feel for how respect for personal, environmental, and artistic space has evolved.

Frank, Andrew. Review of *Rain Coming*. *MLA Notes*, December, 1986.

Andrew Frank, now professor emeritus at the University of California, Davis, was a composition student of Jacob Druckman, George Crumb, and George Rochberg. His early enthusiasm for this and other pieces of Takemitsu's music is evident in this very sympathetic, respectful, and almost celebratory review of the work. He shares his musical tastes similarly in the same piece of writing for Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's Symphony No.1 and *Idem*, as well as Elliott Carter's *In Sleep, In Thunder*.

Galkin, Elliott W. *A History of Orchestral Conducting in Theory and Practice*. New York: Pendragon Press, 1989.

The only volume of its kind, Galkin's survey of the practices, musicological influences, personalities, and circumstances that influenced the development of the practice of conducting as we know it today, remains a relevant reference for anyone concerned with conducting pedagogy. Fully examining practices of early modern pedagogues like Karl Schröder and Max Rudolf, Galkin offers a work that is both detailed in its description of the physical aspects of conducting and an excellent overall narrative of the art's development from Thomas Morley to Zubin Mehta. In addition to his work as an author, conductor, violinist, and music administrator, Galkin was both the director of the Peabody Conservatory and the music critic for *The Baltimore Sun*.

Green, Elizabeth A. H. *The Modern Conductor*, Fifth Edition. Princeton: Prentice Hall, 1991.

When this volume was initially published in 1961, Elizabeth Green credited the original ideas presented in the text as those of her mentor, Nicolai Malko. Interpreting his concepts for the college music classroom of her time, Professor Green (known to her students, in more significant ways than can be counted, as Ma Green) added her own thorough pedagogy experience to

the elements Malko presented. Not all of the original material made it into this first edition, as she thought some of it too advanced for college music students of the time.

Kurki, Eija. "Sibelius and the theater: a study of the incidental music for Symbolist plays." in *Sibelius Studies*, edited by Timothy L. Jackson and Veijo Murtomäki, 76-94. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Tracing the creation of the music for *Kuolema (Death)*, *Belsazar's gästabad (Belshazzar's Feast)*, and *Svanevit (Swanwhite)*, Eija Kuki gives some very rich historical detail as to the contacts between composer and playwright, the process Sibelius used in writing music for the theater, and how the music heard today developed its own history, once the play for which it was written fell out of the repertoire. *Kurkikohtaus* or *Scene with Cranes* is part of an exceptionally rich trove of music.

Lubman, Brad. 2017, October - December. Personal interviews.

One of the great gifts of applied study is the ability to connect with people who share and expand your vision for what music can be as a transformative, teachable, communal activity. I am fortunate that the space and time I have had to communicate with Brad Lubman has included how we relate to one another, our communities, our profession, and the music we both care about.

Malko, George. 2017, July 8. Personal interview.

American playwright, novelist, screenwriter, and New York University professor George Malko is Nicolai Malko's son. His willingness to share his impressions of his father, the Malko Archive, and his time with me last summer gave me an even greater appreciation for the work of a conductor and composer I already held in awe. That awe has tempered to a more human context for, and respect of, Nicolai Malko's musical mind and his ability to fashion what was a very complex conducting pedagogy, born of his long experience, into a discernible commentary on the art.

Malko, Nicolai. *The Conductor and His Baton*. Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, 1950.

The discernible commentary mentioned immediately above, is this book. Written at the request of the Danish publisher Wilhelm Hansen, the work still exists in its first edition, as a reprint. It was

to have been the first of three volumes of a larger work on conducting that Malko planned to write and is the primary material upon which Elizabeth Green based her book, *The Modern Conductor*. It is also the source for a volume of my own commentary and annotation, due to be completed later this year.

Morris, Robert. 2017, December 3 & 5. Personal interviews.

This project got an initial boost in both scope and context in my conversations with Robert Morris, a co-sponsor of this lecture. His ability to relate *Ma*, not only in his eponymous composition (that mirrors the concept) but in his ability to relate *Ma* to other extramusical examples like yoga, as well as the concept's intersubjectivity, were nothing short of sea changes in my understanding. Those conversations have helped place in motion a much longer arc of rehearsing, performing, research, writing, and teaching.

Morris, Robert. "Ma for computer-generated sounds: Program Notes." Accessed January 20, 2018. <http://lulu.esm.rochester.edu/rdm/notes/Ma.html>.

"The effect of stillness can paradoxically intensify the transience of experience." is part of the composer's own description for this piece, written in 1992. Morris's treatment of the materials in the work take on the reflective properties of both the societal and aesthetic principals of *Ma*, as he says, "In my piece, the flow of sound and gesture is interrupted by silences or moments of repose. Sometimes these caesuras contain echoes of the surrounding music." I can think of few better musical descriptions of *Ma*, from the creator of a piece that illustrates the expansiveness *around* a musical gesture.

Pennewell, Norwood. 2018, March 26. Personal interview.

Norwood (PJ) Pennewell's value to the American dance world is incalculable. His originality, unfailing optimism and creativity, joy in movement, and choreographic leadership are all well documented, both with the Garth Fagan Dance company and in his own work elsewhere. His work with Garth Fagan, for whom he has served as interpreter, originator, and muse, is matched only by his enthusiasm and kindness in talking to a musician about movement. Our time together yielded valuable information about how a choreographer / teacher envisions the space in which a dancer creates both stillness and movement,

while never losing sight of being part of a larger, expansive, communicative whole.

Powell, Mark. *Avoin Tila*. Modern Musical Arts. 2017.

(See the program notes section above.)

Saito, Hideo. *The Saito Conducting Method*. Tokyo: University Press, 1952.

Hideo Saito's legacy to conducting pedagogy, particularly in Asia, has become a national treasure to its inheritors in Japan. It is as much a monumental cornerstone to the discipline as Malko's is in the West. Saito's method, without overtly mentioning it, (appropriately) clearly involves Ma as a basis for the movement that it teaches. Speed and intent of movement are diagramed via a series of lines, calligraphically rendered with their relative thicknesses and diminishments to indicate speed and weight of gesture. The Labanotation of "effort shape" is clearly an analogue in evidence here.

Sibelius, Jean. *Kurkikohtaus*, Op. 44, No. 2. Boosey and Hawkes, 1906.

(See the program notes section above.)

Stokes, Karen. 2018, March 26. Personal interview.

In 2006, I asked Karen Stokes to create a dance exploration program for a project called *The Discovery Series* at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. To date, that series has served over 35,000 Houston students for whom live theater and dance would not otherwise part of their school or extra-curricular experience. Our collaboration has always been illuminated by her understanding of movement pedagogy and how dance can be utilized as a teaching tool. I have been privileged to see these singular gifts in action and I am grateful for the time we had to revisit them for this project, particularly as they pertain to an awareness of negative space. A dancer's movement effort as the illuminating unification of that space, coupled with a completely original movement vocabulary, remain compelling aspects of both Karen's work and her exceptional value as a teacher.

Takemitsu, Tōru. *Rain Coming*. Boosey & Hawkes, 1986.

(See the program notes section above.)

Takemitsu, Tōru. *Confronting Silence: Selected Writings*. Translated and edited by Yoshiko Kakudo and Glenn Glasow. Berkeley: Fallen Leaf Press, 1995.

Published the year before his death, with an admiring forward by Seiji Ozawa, this compilation offers an excellent bridge for the reader linking Takemitsu's compositional practice to his evolving cultural and spiritual influences. Personal accounts of other composers, formative conversations, and seemingly small interludes are woven into what ends up being a very well assembled and cogent picture of Takemitsu's creative life.

Varley, Paul. *Japanese Culture*, Fourth Edition. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000.

Both history and culture are given equal importance in this volume, the current favored college text on the subject. Most important to me, as I began my research for this project, was the very long timeline that public education has occupied in Japan. That considerable amount of time (beginning before the middle of the 19th century) has seen reiterations of personal responsibility for both cultural and artistic literacy that are key to Ma's presence in present day Japanese society.

## Acknowledgements

My deepest thanks go to the Oxford Conducting Institute for their kind invitation to present here in Sydney today. I'm indebted too to the musicians with whom I worked at Eastman who all helped realize the live performance vision of this project. Your being able to experience the featured concert online will, I hope, help to fully illuminate the concepts discussed above. I thank Matt Curlee, Henry Klumpenhower, Seth Monahan, Norwood Pennewell, Paul O'Dette, and Bruce Frank, all of whom deserve special mention here for their unceasing goodwill. I'm grateful to the American composer Robert Morris, whose knowledge of Ma and whose willingness to share its richness and possibilities are rare. Similarly Athene Mok, Kathleen Holt, and Steve Lurie are to be celebrated and thanked. Michael Frazier, mon frère, a chance conversation during a composition lesson last year started all this. So, today is mostly your fault too. Thanks. Finally, as all academic couples know, particularly musicians, the work and success of studies and projects and performances belong as much to one as they do the other. To my ever patient and ever present spouse Katherine, you make every day a privilege and a treasure.



## Author's Biography

Mark E. M. L. Powell is a recent graduate of the Eastman School of Music from which he holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree. He is currently Associate Professor of Orchestral Studies at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College in New York and a Ford Foundation American Conductor's Award winner. He is the founding music director of the American Radio Chamber Orchestra (ARCO) and has served on the faculty of the Eastman School of Music's Institute for Music Leadership since 2010. Guest conducting and teaching activities have recently taken him to the Interlochen Arts Academy, the University of Alabama, Opera Viva! in Verona, and the Boston Conservatory @ Berklee. His conducting pedagogy research has most recently yielded a book length commentary and annotation of Nicolai Malko's first text: *The Conductor and His Baton: Fundamentals of the Technic of Conducting*. He trained at Interlochen, the University of Michigan, Tanglewood, and Eastman.

Last season, with the Eastman School of Music's *Ossia*, he led the U.S. premiere of David Horne's *Splintered Instruments* featuring Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra harpist Rosanna Moore. *The Plain Dealer* has praised Powell's "exceptionally vivid" Cleveland debut, while Buffalo Philharmonic Music Director JoAnn Falletta has called Powell "a musician's conductor" of "deep musical understanding and insight." The NRC Handelsblad (Amsterdam) noted at his Concertgebouw debut his "impressively expressive final movements of the Mussorgsky cycle [*Pictures at an Exhibition*].", while Peter Eötvös wrote that Powell's "musical and personal contact with the musicians and composers left a deep impression on me. His approach to music is extremely serious and penetrating, his appreciation of structure as well as his sensibility towards the character of the pieces were remarkable."


A veteran of both the Malko and Besançon conducting competitions, he was the only American featured twice in the Kirill Kondrashin Series with the Netherlands Radio and Chamber Orchestras. As guest conductor, he has led the Fort Worth Symphony, the Korsholm Music Festival Orchestra (Finland), the Rochester Philharmonic, and the Cleveland Chamber Symphony. He counts among his mentors Brad Lubman, Jorma Panula, Peter Eötvös, and Elizabeth Green.

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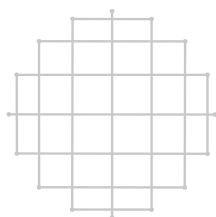
Allow someone else to speak before you.

Maintain a level of patience with your own mind and the speed of your own thoughts, long enough to allow a solution to a problem to begin to present itself, rather than be wrested from the question you're dealing with.

Listen for larger spaces in music you already know well. Place an emphasis, your attention, and your patience in service to listening where the music addresses openness, suspended movement, and introspection. Move on to new music with the same expectations.

Give anything you do on your instrument the benefit of an awareness *around* what you are trying to learn: the space your arm occupies; the space through which your fingers have to move; see the whole motion as a complete piece of physical movement vocabulary *that exists within a larger space*.

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