

Re-embodiment of the 'Gendered Podium'

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His appearance is greeted with a storm of applause from the audience, and he bows low to acknowledge it. In fact, he dominates the big space, and as if to emphasize this, the auditorium lights are dimmed as he enters and the stage lights brightened. All eyes are on him, and he is the focus of all attention. The silence in the hall is complete, almost tangible, as everyone waits for him to make the gesture that will unleash the forces under his control and release the sounds they have come to hear. The conductor's appearance on the platform has brought the event into focus. From the audience's point of view the orchestra is an undifferentiated collectivity from which only the conductor emerges as an individual.¹

This quote from Christopher Small indicates that the visual impact of the conductor cannot be underestimated. This was brought home to me after a performance in which I was conducting, when a lady approached me and said, 'you might like to wear a longer jacket next time you perform. Your hips move when you conduct, in a most unlady-like fashion.' Her comment made me realise that I was being watched not only as a conductor, but also as a gendered body. This, of course, begs the question: would a male colleague be subjected to the same bodily critique and response? In this article I will discuss how the gendered body of a female conductor is perceived in terms of 'otherness' and how this has affected two well-known conductors Simone Young and Marin Alsop.

The visually prominent role of conductor has often been discussed in music literature in terms of its mythical status. As men have had the power to create discourses of knowledge throughout the conducting profession's history, the heroic role has been imbued with notions of masculinity. Schonberg, among others,² has described the 'super-human,' qualities of the role:

Above all, he is a leader of men. His subjects look to him for guidance. He is at once a father image, the great provider, the fount of inspiration, the Teacher who knows all. To call him a great moral force might not be an overstatement. Perhaps he is half divine; certainly he works under the shadow of divinity. He has to be a strong man; and the stronger he is, the more dictatorial he is called by those he governs. He has to but

¹ Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998) 78–80.

² For example, Philip Hart, *Conductors: A New Generation* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1979).

stretch out his hand and he is obeyed. He tolerates no opposition. His will, his word, his very glance, are law.³

Such a statement shows how his 'divine' eminence appears to transcend human flaws and the earthly nature of the body. As his 'godly stretched out hand' lays down the 'law' his role can be viewed as the incarnation of power itself.⁴ A woman's body on the podium obviously challenges this 'father image' and brings into question a number of issues for women in the conducting profession, in particular those relating to the gendered body. In this paper I will use narrative descriptions interwoven with theoretical concepts of corporeal feminism and ideas from poststructuralist theorist Michel Foucault, to explore how a female conductor's body is perceived in terms of 'otherness' on the podium, and how this has affected women negotiating their way through the power structures of the profession. Conclusions will then be drawn on the potential for female conductors to transform body image ideals on the podium with their increased presence.

Before analysing how women's bodies are perceived in relation to this masculine 'mythical role,' it is useful to have an appreciation of how the gendered body has been conceptualised and positioned in recent critical theory. The notion of the female gendered body has been present in the Western tradition from Aristotle to post-Cartesian modernism, and consequently has been central to feminist thinking.⁵ Despite the different feminist approaches to the body that have arisen, the unifying theme that has prevailed is simply that 'the body matters.'⁶ I have found the work of corporeal feminists such as Judith Butler and Elizabeth Grosz useful in understanding the construction of gendered bodies, and the ideas of Foucault—despite his lack of sensitivity to women's concerns—have also been helpful in understanding how modern power relations regulate gendered bodies through a process of normalisation.⁷

According to the aforementioned theorists of corporeal feminism, the body is crucial to understanding women's psychical and social existence, for the gendered body is interwoven with and composed of societal, political, cultural, and geographical systems of meaning, signification, and representation.⁸ In the Western tradition women have been equated with their bodies and restricted by their supposedly natural biological processes, for example, in the Cartesian split where man has been equated with the mind and woman with the body.⁹ Corporeal feminists have deconstructed this binary opposition and argue that the gendered body is not a singular being but rather a fluid and differential construct with overlapping identities¹⁰ that are always engaged with the world.¹¹ According to Butler, it is through this

³ Harold C. Schonberg, *The Great Conductors* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1968) 16.

⁴ Norman Lebrecht, *The Maestro Myth: Great Conductors in Pursuit of Power*, 2nd ed. (London: Pocket Books, 1997) 3.

⁵ Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, eds, *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1999) 2.

⁶ Price and Shildrick, *Feminist Theory and the Body* 2.

⁷ While Foucault did not directly engage with issues relating to women in his work, many feminist scholars have found his ideas on bodies, power and regulation useful as theoretical tools. See Price and Shildrick, *Feminist Theory and the Body* 20.

⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1994) 17–18, 23.

⁹ The term 'Cartesian Split' refers to the mind/body dualism theorised by Rene Descartes (1596–1650) whereby the mental and the material comprise two different classes of substance and are independent of one another. See Barbara Brook, *Feminist Perspectives on the Body* (London: Longman, 1999) 14, 19.

¹⁰ Price and Shildrick, *Feminist Theory and the Body* 3.

¹¹ Gail Weiss, *Body Images: Embodiment as Intercorporeality* (New York: Routledge, 1999) 1.

continuous interaction of bodies and discourses that a particular body repeatedly performs stylised sequences, which eventually become 'natural' extensions of that gendered body.¹² This process of embodiment is never a private affair, but is always developed, learnt, lived and mediated through our continual interactions with other human bodies.¹³ This embodiment process, according to Foucault, is an effect of micro-political relations of power.¹⁴ In this sense, Butler believes that gender not only functions as a norm, but is also part of the regulatory practice that produces gendered bodies.¹⁵ This regulatory power is non-authoritarian, non-conspiratorial, and indeed non-orchestrated. Nonetheless, it produces and normalises gendered bodies to serve prevailing relations of dominance and subordination.¹⁶

According to Foucault, a person's body is the focal point of his/her subjective identity.¹⁷ When a conductor stands on the podium, he/she is not viewed as a gender-neutral entity given the obvious physical nature of the activity. It is our bodies that give substance to the social distinctions and differences that underpin gender relations.¹⁸ For Butler, gender is one of the norms that qualify a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility.¹⁹

Due to historical and societal precedence, men have had the power to develop the role of the conductor. The discourses that surround and inform it are saturated with masculine values, and therefore, the masculine gendered body and its associated behaviour are understood as being the norm. A female conductor, then, is defined by her difference to the masculine norm. On the gendered podium 'male' is the unmarked category and 'female' the marked. Woman is perceived as 'Other.'

This male/female Cartesian binarism has led people to harbour feelings of unease, antipathy and negativity towards the Other.²⁰ It has also led to systematic exclusion of women.²¹ Categorisation as Other has made it very difficult for them to fit into the role of conductor as it is presently defined. Until recently, the only way that women have been able to renegotiate these power relations successfully has been by desexualising themselves and conforming to a male-oriented paradigm.²² Despite the difficulty of conforming to such a role, there have been women who have managed to do so most successfully, and I have had the fortunate experience of meeting a number of them. In order to comprehend the gendered podium clearly, I will now examine the Australian Simone Young²³ and the American Marin

¹² Judith Butler in Barbara Brook, *Feminist Perspectives on the Body* 14, 19.

¹³ Gail Weiss, *Body Images* 5.

¹⁴ Moira Gatens, 'Power, Bodies and Difference,' *Feminist Theory and the Body*, ed. Price and Shildrick, 229.

¹⁵ Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993) 1.

¹⁶ Susan Bordo, 'Feminism, Foucault and the Politics of the Body,' Shildrick and Price, *Feminist Theory and the Body* 252.

¹⁷ Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1997) 15.

¹⁸ Henrietta Moore, *A Passion for Difference* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994) 71.

¹⁹ Butler, *Bodies That Matter* 2.

²⁰ Ruth Solie, ed., Introduction, *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 15.

²¹ Bronwyn Davies, *Poststructuralist Theory and Classroom Practice* (Geelong: Deakin University Press, 1994) 3.

²² Betsy Wearing, *Gender: The Pain and Pleasure of Difference* (Melbourne: Longman, 1996) ix.

²³ Simone Young has been Music Director of Opera Australia and Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. She has made significant debuts in opera houses such as the Komische Oper and the Staatsoper in Berlin, and both the Vienna Staatsoper and Volksoper. She was the first woman ever to conduct at the Vienna Staatsoper, where she returns regularly to perform. Recently she made her debut with the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, the Maggio Musicale in Florence, the ORF Radio Orchestra Vienna, NDR Hannover, and the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Japan. In 1998 she made her debut with the New York Philharmonic and has conducted a number of the Australian Orchestras.

Alsop.²⁴ These women have negotiated their way into the roles of conductor, have challenged some of the deeply entrenched power structures of this profession and have capitalised on the recent changing structures of orchestras.

As established earlier, when a woman stands on the podium she is not seen as a neutral entity, but rather as a gendered body. This has serious implications for female conductors, as normative femininity is centred on a woman's body.²⁵ The nature of one's appearance remains the criterion upon which femininity, sexuality, normality and acceptability as a human being are judged.²⁶ From a poststructuralist standpoint, dominant social discourses about women's bodies encourage them to conform to particular institutional regimes in the pursuit of an ideal femininity.²⁷

The situation of a woman standing on the podium thus presents a paradox: dominant social discourses encourage them to pursue femininity through their bodies, while dominant conducting discourses state that they need to renounce their femininity and adopt a surrogate masculinity. This is exemplified in a comment made by pioneer New York conductor Eve Queler (b. 1936): 'One of our leading artist managers stated at a meeting that women with good figures have a problem on the podium because they are sex symbols.'²⁸ In a similar vein, a musician working with conductor Sarah Caldwell (b. 1924) at the Boston Opera once remarked that, 'if she had been a babe we'd have walked right over her.'²⁹ The female conductor therefore has to consider not only the audience but also the orchestra members. On this subject Alsop commented,

I think what a woman wears is very important ... [I]t's different when you stand up ... if you're large-chested ... you have to be careful of what you wear because you don't want to be a eunuch. But, at the same time you have to be conscious not to draw attention to that, or where your arms are or how you [gestures with her chest].³⁰

Conditions of entrance onto the podium are often marked by prescriptive dress and body stipulations. While a female conductor does not have a set 'uniform' as male conductors do, she is still expected to de-emphasize her female sexuality and suppress it in a masculine gendered appearance, with whatever she decides to wear. This requirement is administered

²⁴ Marin Alsop is currently Principal Conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and has held conducting posts with the Colorado Symphony, City of London Sinfonia and Royal Scottish National Orchestra. In 1989 Alsop won the Koussevitsky Conducting Prize at the Tanglewood Music Center, where she was a pupil of Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa and Gustav Meier. She has since appeared with major orchestras throughout America including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco, Washington, and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras. During the past three years in Europe she has given return performances with the London Symphony, London Philharmonic and Orchestre de Paris. Marin Alsop has conducted the Sydney, Queensland, Adelaide and West Australian Symphony Orchestras.

²⁵ Sandra Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity and the Modernisation of Patriarchal Power,' *Women's Studies: A Reader*, ed. Stevi Jackson, et al. (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993) 229.

²⁶ Annette Corrigan and Denise Meredyth, 'The Body Politic,' *Contemporary Australian Feminism 2*, ed. Kate Pritchard Hughes (Melbourne: Longman, 1997) 54.

²⁷ Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity and the Modernisation of Patriarchal Power' 227.

²⁸ Shelley M. Jagow, 'Women Orchestral Conductors in America: The Struggle for Acceptance—An Historical View from the Nineteenth Century to the Present,' *College Music Symposium* 38 (1998): 132.

²⁹ Sarah Caldwell's large stature has been well documented in the media. See Jagow, 'Women Orchestral Conductors in America' 132.

³⁰ Marin Alsop, personal interview, 16 November 2000.

through a Foucauldian type of regulation that relies on the self-surveillance of these women.³¹ Thus, the public spectacle of a woman's body on the podium enacts an antithesis to the social identification of a feminine body.³² While society may approve of a woman's feminine appearance and sexuality, various aspects of this will often be seen as inappropriate on the podium. Female conductors face another paradox. Current dominant social discourses state that feminine movement should be restricted in its spatiality and should exhibit constriction, grace and a certain eroticism, restrained by modesty.³³ This conflicts with perceptions of how a conductor should act, creating a dilemma for female conductors; they are always under the omnipresent male gaze.

Further to this, Marin Alsop stated that

when a woman makes a physical gesture, which conducting is, it's all about gesturing and getting a response, it's interpreted very differently societally than the same gesture from a man. For example, if I am very strong to you as a woman ... people say, 'oh she's a bitch,' excuse my language, you know 'oh my god ... she's too macho.' ... [B]ut if a man does that ... people melt, 'oh he's so manly.' If a woman is very ... frilly and delicate they say 'oh it's too lightweight, it's too feminine.' If a man's like that he's sensitive. You know there's a different interpretation and I'm guilty of it too, I'm not saying it's not universal.³⁴

This comment could be interpreted on many levels, particularly the use of the term 'universal.' Taking into account her international experience, Alsop could be hinting at how overwhelmingly widespread these negative perceptions are. Interestingly, Gatens also contends that the very same behaviour that makes a man appear well adjusted, 'attractive' and socially appropriate appears to make a woman appear maladjusted, 'unattractive' and socially inappropriate.³⁵ Although we may be dealing with the same type of behaviour, in the one case it is commended and rewarded, in the other condemned and punished. These social responses cannot help but have a profound effect on the way each female lives and experiences her own particular combination of masculine and feminine characteristics on the podium.³⁶ As Alsop stated, if women take on a surrogate masculinity in their gestures they are criticized; if they use a feminine manner of gesturing they are also criticized. When speaking about meeting Simone Young for the first time, Daniel Barenboim exemplifies this:

I was slightly apprehensive about her conducting. I admit it freely because I mean whenever I have seen female conductors, I have been struck by the fact that either they try to conduct in a false masculine way and to show, you know, we women are just as strong and here we go. Or else they didn't even try that and had a very effeminate nature and that didn't work at all.³⁷

³¹ 'Foucauldian regulation' relies on the women to monitor their own personal appearance and ensure that they comply with the profession's implied dress expectations.

³² Brook, *Feminist Perspectives on the Body* 111–12.

³³ Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity and the Modernisation of Patriarchal Power' 67.

³⁴ Alsop, personal interview.

³⁵ Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality* (London: Routledge, 1995) 30.

³⁶ Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies* 30.

³⁷ *The Young One*, prod. Emma Calver and Margie Bryant, perf. Daniel Barenboim, SBS Serendipity Production, 1995.

Feminist writers have suggested that such a situation induces a kind of ‘doubling’ of the Lacanian mirror, in which the female watches an imaginary other watching her.³⁸ Weiss proposes that this notion of the ‘split subject’ arises in response to a patriarchal social system in which women internalise and respond to the reactions of others to their bodies before, during, and after their action.³⁹ As a result, Kaschak believes, men often see themselves in relation to the task at hand, and women as they appear performing that task.⁴⁰ This could certainly be the case on the podium, as Marin Alsop and Simone Young mentioned that they are very aware that others are watching them closely and often critically. Yet, these female conductors said that as a matter of survival they block out thoughts of how their gendered bodies are being perceived on the podium and make a concerted effort to focus on the music.

Regardless of how these women negotiate their way through such issues, due to the dominant discourses of the conducting profession they are still measured in relation to the masculine norm. This is not isolated to the conducting profession, for across the spectrum in the public sphere, ‘woman’ continuously appears to be configured as irreducibly female and in relation to ‘man.’⁴¹ According to Luce Irigaray this results in a woman being ‘homeless’ within the symbolic order as she is shut out from its phallogocentric system of representation.⁴² The problem with this binary view of sexual difference on the podium, or indeed elsewhere, is that it takes into consideration only single aspects of people in isolation from their other characteristics and experiences.⁴³ As many corporeal feminists have argued, such binarisms do not inscribe balanced oppositions, but instead, a single standard whereby the devalued term—most often that associated with the feminine or indeed with the body—is measured against the primary norm and found wanting.⁴⁴

On this subject Alsop commented,

I mean the thing that distresses me the most is when people say ‘oh ... I have heard you are the best woman conductor.’ So you get lumped in a group because of your gender, which is absolutely, I think, unconscionable ... [H]ow can you emerge from a group? It also does the group a disservice.⁴⁵

Irigaray has also spoken of the power of reducing all others to the economy of the same and believes that this underpins the construction of masculine and feminine subjects.⁴⁶ Therefore, terms such as ‘woman conductor’ label females as the marked category on the podium, as opposed to the unmarked male. This idea is also exemplified in the media’s treatment of these women. They have been portrayed as something out of the ordinary. Both Young and Alsop made mention of being questioned by journalists who are keen to categorise and portray them as a separate group. Young said, ‘that’s the one thing people often ask me, if

³⁸ The term ‘Lacanian mirror’ refers to French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s (1901–1981) idea that one must learn to see one’s self from the outside before one can have an internal identity. See Weiss, *Body Images* 47.

³⁹ Weiss, *Body Images* 49–50.

⁴⁰ Weiss, *Body Images* 39.

⁴¹ Brook, *Feminist Perspectives on the Body* 112.

⁴² Brook, *Feminist Perspectives on the Body* 16.

⁴³ Solie, ed., Introduction, *Musicology and Difference* 17.

⁴⁴ Price and Shildrick, *Feminist Theory and the Body* 218.

⁴⁵ Alsop, personal interview.

⁴⁶ Gatens *Imaginary Bodies* 43.

I think it's different being a woman conductor to being a man, and I say, "I don't know because I was never a man."⁴⁷

Another typical example of this treatment by the press is a feature on Simone Young written by Janet Hawley in the *Sydney Morning Herald's* supplement, "Good Weekend" three years ago. Hawley labelled her the 'Maestro in Stilettos' and portrayed her on the front cover as a musical mistress.⁴⁸ A male conductor would very rarely be scrutinised in the public arena in such a manner.

Both Young and Alsop commented on the fact that they have received much more media attention than their male colleagues and spoke of the pressures that such public scrutiny placed on them. Young remarked,

every time I went to a city where it was the first time they were having a woman conduct the orchestra ... that was a big deal. I mean there would be a lot of stuff in the press about it and ... I would always have the extra pressure on my back knowing that if I did a bad job it was going to be that much harder for the next woman who came through.⁴⁹

Not only are these women perceived differently in how they look and act, these perceptions of difference have obviously been used by the profession as a means to justify discrimination against them. A piece of advice relayed to Young by an American conductor supports this notion, 'he said, "look this is the deal, as a young conductor under thirty standing in front of an orchestra for the first time ... you have got about ten minutes to prove yourself. If you are a woman you have got about two."⁵⁰ Success for women trying to fit into certain roles and combat this discrimination currently depends on how they mitigate against their gender. It is clear that the conducting profession not only expects women to desexualise themselves, but then requires them to masculinize their appearance, their gestures and their leadership methods. When discussing this process, Alsop stated that 'as women, we have a different approach to life and interpersonal relationships, so we have to retrain ourselves in order to be the figure of authority.'⁵¹

The notion that female conductors have to 'retrain' themselves presents yet another paradox, involving conflict between work and their personal lives. Dominant social discourses state that the ideology of motherhood is deeply entwined with being a 'real' woman.⁵² Yet conducting discourses do not acknowledge this subject position and indicate that female conductors must make the familial sacrifices needed to pursue this profession. Those who challenge dominant discourses often do so at their own social, material and emotional expense.⁵³ Whichever path a female conductor takes, she is going to have to make significant career or personal sacrifices. Alsop chose not to have children, whereas Young did. They have had to live with the consequences of their choices. Alsop's response to this was,

⁴⁷ Simone Young, personal interview, 13 August 1999.

⁴⁸ Janet Hawley, 'The Music Mistress: How Simone Young Gets what she Wants, Ever so Nicely,' *Good Weekend*, 4 September 1999, front cover, 16–23.

⁴⁹ Young, personal interview.

⁵⁰ Young, personal interview.

⁵¹ Alsop, personal interview.

⁵² Moore, *A Passion for Difference* 25.

⁵³ Moore, *A Passion for Difference* 65.

I think if I wanted to have children it would be a very difficult life. For me, I think I'm ok not having kids. You know you have to find a 'wife,' basically ... You have to find someone who will fulfil that role and take care of the kids ... 'cause you can't drag them around.⁵⁴

Young also spoke of the difficulties of fitting into a role that does not recognize a woman's as a mother:

being an international conductor means by definition a huge amount of travelling and trying to maintain any sort of real home life as well is next to impossible, unless you are prepared to make massive sacrifices of your own time. I mean people like me, how we do it ... I have an extraordinary husband. The same with the children, I mean there were so many times, I wasn't there once when my elder daughter lost a tooth. I missed every single one of them ... [T]here have been many times when I've conducted *Lohengrin* or *Die Meistersinger* and been home in my bed at two and been up at five to get the six o'clock flight so I could get to the school sports day, for example and then go to the airport to get back on the plane at four p.m. and I work terribly hard to make sure that my kids don't miss out too much ... and for the last two years I have had the baby travelling with me at all times. And there would have been nothing I would have liked better while I was pregnant than just to stop. But, I knew that if I did that not only would the criticism be, oh, she hasn't got any stamina; there would be the criticism of what happens when you are a woman. Grossly unfair.⁵⁵

As more females face the issues discussed above and challenge the masculine conducting paradigm through their increased presence on the podium, as well as in conducting positions in tertiary institutions, one wonders how much longer the traditional gender constructs can last. As was intimated earlier, these modern power relations Foucault speaks of are in fact, unstable and have the potential to be turned around.⁵⁶ Alsop believes that as more orchestras begin to restructure their personnel in order to foster a collegial approach to music making, there will be further opportunities for women to redefine various aspects of the masculinised role.

I think it is a very good time to be a woman conductor because the structure is changing rapidly. Orchestras no longer want to be dictated to, they want to create a team of people, most orchestras anyway. So, it's a good time because I think women—and this is a gross generalisation—are fairly good at dealing democratically with a lot of people, being negotiators, trying to work things out. That's what we're brought up to do, be peacekeepers. So ... it's a very good time because, even though people still have the old tradition in their minds of what a conductor should be, I think it's changing a lot ... [Y]ou don't have to fit into that mould. It is what you create.⁵⁷

Conductors such as Marin Alsop and Simone Young are proving that women can do it. Both women have shown how different the lives of female conductors can be, and from a poststructuralist point of view this is unproblematic. They are negotiating their way through a male dominated space and finding their own different paths.

⁵⁴ Alsop, personal interview.

⁵⁵ Young, personal interview.

⁵⁶ Bordo, 'Feminism, Foucault and the Politics of the Body' 154.

⁵⁷ Alsop, personal interview.

To conclude, I refer to the poststructuralist idea that power and knowledge intersect to produce socially accepted conventions.⁵⁸ In the conducting profession those who have had the power to create discourses of knowledge have been men, and thus, through the weight of historical and societal precedence, masculinity is largely unchallenged as the norm on the podium. As discussed in this paper, these conducting discourses are often in conflict with dominant social discourses on how a woman's gendered body should act, thus presenting female conductors with a number of paradoxical situations. These two conflicting discourses have a number of subplots which are not within the scope of this paper. However, I have demonstrated that these two 'currents' are pulling female conductors in very different directions and making it all-too easy for them to sink, and correspondingly difficult for them to swim. Until we acknowledge this and its implications, our podiums are going to continue to remain bastions of male supremacy.⁵⁹

Further research could help to develop long-term strategies that would assist more women in this elite profession. As more women turn around the power relations in this field with their positive presence, they will begin to combat this notion of otherness. Since the modern power relations Foucault speaks of are in reality unstable, the positive presence of more women conductors, could combat this notion of 'otherness.' As current corporeal feminist research indicates, we need to reclaim the marginalised female gendered body⁶⁰ and to develop new body image ideals for the podium.⁶¹ These image ideals would obviously embrace feminine bodies as normal and desirable. Consequently, when a woman stands on the stage she will not be seen as a misfit female in a masculine role, moving her hips in an 'unlady-like way,' but as a conductor who is simply doing her job.

⁵⁸ Helen Crowley and Susan Himmelweit, eds, *Knowing Women: Feminism and Knowledge* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992) 237.

⁵⁹ Lebrecht, *The Maestro Myth* 261.

⁶⁰ Price and Shildrick, *Feminist Theory and the Body* 218.

⁶¹ Weiss, *Body Images* 168.