



Performative Aesthetics in Choral Conducting: A Case Study of The 3rd International Bandung Choral Festival

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how choral conductors articulate aesthetic perception within the milieu of an international choral festival, addressing a persistent lacuna in conducting scholarship that has privileged technical analysis over interpretive sensibility. Drawing on performative aesthetics (Fischer-Lichte, 2008) and tacit knowledge theory (Polanyi, 1966), the inquiry interrogates how conductors negotiate the dialectic between technical execution and aesthetic interpretation in cross-cultural performative settings. A qualitative case study was conducted at the 3rd International Bandung Choral Festival (2023), involving three conductors of distinct cultural and professional trajectories. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews, sustained observation of rehearsals and concert performances, and analysis of festival documents and musical scores, and were subjected to reflexive thematic analysis. Three interrelated themes emerged: aesthetic interpretation as embodied practice, the negotiation of cultural plurality, and the conductor's mediating function in the formation of collective musical identity. The findings suggest that aesthetic perception in choral conducting is irreducible to score-based analysis or gestural technique alone; rather, it constitutes a relational practice mobilising tacit, embodied, and dialogical modes of knowing. The study contributes to performance pedagogy scholarship by reframing conducting as an aesthetically generative, rather than merely executory, undertaking.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The aesthetic life of choral music resides not solely in the polyphonic textures it produces, but in the intricate web of interpretive decisions that bind individual voices into a coherent artistic whole. Among the agents responsible for this transformation, the choral conductor occupies a singular position: simultaneously interpreter, pedagogue, mediator, and aesthetic arbiter. Yet despite the centrality of this role, conducting scholarship has tended to privilege the technical and gestural dimensions of the craft—rehearsal efficiency, gestural vocabulary, score preparation—at the expense of sustained inquiry into the aesthetic perception that animates conductors' interpretive choices (Decker & Herford, 1988; Durrant, 2003). Aesthetic perception, here understood as the conductor's capacity to apprehend, interpret, and translate the expressive potential of a musical work into embodied performance, remains conceptually under-theorised, particularly within non-Anglophone and cross-cultural performative contexts.

This lacuna becomes more pronounced when conducting practice is examined within the milieu of international choral festivals. Such festivals operate as transcultural performance ecologies in which conductors must negotiate divergent aesthetic traditions, repertoires, and audience expectations within compressed temporal frames (Reimer, 2003; Bennett et al., 2014). The festival site is therefore not merely an evaluative platform but an epistemic laboratory in which the aesthetic sensibilities of conductors are activated, contested, and articulated under heightened reflexive conditions. Within Indonesian and broader Southeast Asian musicology, the international choral festival has become an increasingly significant site of cultural production, yet remains comparatively underexamined as a locus of aesthetic inquiry.

The present study addresses this gap by examining how conductors articulate and enact aesthetic perception at the 3rd International Bandung Choral Festival (hereafter IBCF), held in 2023. Conceived as a triennial event hosting choirs and conductors from across Asia, Europe, and the Americas, the IBCF affords a productive vantage point from which to interrogate how aesthetic perception is mobilised in cross-cultural performative encounters. The investigation is anchored in two complementary theoretical traditions. The first, Erika Fischer-Lichte's (2008) theory of performative aesthetics, foregrounds performance as a relational and emergent event in which meaning arises not from the score-as-object but from the dynamic feedback loop generated among performer, co-performers, and audience. The second, Michael Polanyi's (1966) account of tacit knowledge, illuminates the dimension of conductorial expertise that resists explicit codification—the embodied, intuitive, and pre-reflective competencies that conductors deploy in interpretive practice.

Read together, these frameworks furnish a productive analytic for examining choral conducting as an aesthetic practice. Performative aesthetics directs attention to the what and where of meaning-making, conceiving the choral performance as a co-constituted event; tacit knowledge theory, in turn, illuminates the how—the embodied, internalised competencies through which aesthetic perception is operationalised. Their conjunction enables the study to move beyond reductive accounts of conducting as either technical execution or charismatic leadership, toward a more textured understanding of conductors as aesthetically generative agents whose perceptual labour constitutes a distinct epistemic practice.

Three research questions structure the inquiry: (1) How do choral conductors at the 3rd IBCF articulate the relationship between technical execution and aesthetic interpretation? (2) What aesthetic frameworks emerge from conductors' interpretive

decisions in cross-cultural festival contexts? (3) How do conductors negotiate the tension between individual artistic vision and the collective identity of the choir?

The contribution of this study is threefold. Empirically, it offers one of the first scholarly accounts of conductorial aesthetics within an Indonesian-hosted international choral festival, thereby extending choral scholarship beyond its predominantly Euro-American base. Theoretically, it advances a synthesis of performative aesthetics and tacit knowledge as conjoint analytic resources for examining choral conducting—an intersection rarely operationalised in extant literature. Pedagogically, the findings carry implications for the design of conductor education programmes, suggesting that curricula attentive to aesthetic perception, alongside technical training, may yield more reflective and culturally fluent practitioners.

The remainder of the article proceeds as follows. Section 2 delineates the qualitative case-study design, sampling logic, and analytic procedures. Section 3 presents three thematic findings derived from reflexive thematic analysis of the data corpus. Section 4 situates these findings within ongoing scholarly conversations on conducting pedagogy, aesthetic theory, and intercultural performance practice. Section 5 synthesises the study's contributions and outlines avenues for further inquiry.

2. METHODS

2.1 *Research Design and Paradigmatic Orientation*

The study adopted a qualitative single-case design (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018) positioned within an interpretivist paradigm that conceives knowledge as co-constructed through situated dialogue between researcher and participants. The 3rd International Bandung Choral Festival (2023) was treated as an *instrumental case* (Stake, 1995): the festival itself was not the object of inquiry but the analytic site through which a broader phenomenon—the aesthetic perception of choral conductors—could be examined in heightened relief. This design was selected for its capacity to accommodate the interpretive depth and contextual sensitivity demanded by the research questions, which seek to elucidate the meanings conductors ascribe to their own aesthetic practice rather than to test pre-formulated hypotheses. The interpretivist orientation aligns with the study's theoretical anchors: both Fischer-Lichte's performative aesthetics and Polanyi's tacit knowledge presuppose that the phenomenon under investigation is irreducibly relational and situated, and therefore demand methodological tools attentive to contextual specificity rather than generalising abstraction.

2.2 *Research Site and Participants*

The 3rd International Bandung Choral Festival, hosted in Bandung, Indonesia, in 2023, served as the empirical site. The festival convened ensembles and conductors from multiple national contexts and afforded a compressed yet dense performative ecology in which aesthetic decisions became observable through rehearsals, adjudications, and concert performances. Three conductors were recruited through criterion-based purposive sampling (Patton, 2015), with selection guided by three criteria: (a) an active conductorial role at the festival; (b) substantive professional experience in choral conducting; and (c) representation of distinct cultural and pedagogical trajectories that would enable cross-case interpretive contrast. The three participants—designated in this article as Kosasih, Carpio, and Shangkuan—each brought a distinctive professional profile: Kosasih operated within an Indonesian community-choir tradition foregrounding ensemble cohesion and intergenerational mentorship; Carpio represented a Philippine choral lineage characterised by rigorous score-based interpretive practice; and Shangkuan articulated a reflective-

introspective approach informed by sustained international festival experience. Although the sample is intentionally small, it is consistent with the logic of *information-rich cases* (Patton, 2015), wherein analytic depth is privileged over statistical representativeness, and accords with the case-study tradition's preference for *intensity* over *extensity*.

2.3 Data Generation

Data were generated through three complementary methods, each calibrated to capture a different dimension of the phenomenon. First, semi-structured interviews of approximately ninety minutes were conducted with each participant, organised around an interview guide that probed (a) interpretive decision-making, (b) gestural and rehearsal philosophy, (c) cross-cultural negotiation in festival contexts, and (d) conceptions of musical aesthetics. The interview guide functioned as a heuristic rather than a script, permitting digressions into themes that emerged in the conversational flow. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Second, sustained non-participant observation was undertaken across rehearsals and concert performances, during which the first author maintained detailed field notes attentive to gestural deployment, rehearsal discourse, and conductor–ensemble dynamics. Third, documentary materials were collected and analysed as triangulating evidence (Flick, 2018), including festival programmes, performed scores, and—of particular analytic value—the participants' published reflections compiled in *Conductors' Secrets #2* (Kandisaputra et al., 2023), an edited volume in which the conductors articulate their pedagogical and aesthetic philosophies for an audience of fellow practitioners. The inclusion of these published reflections permitted cross-referencing of interview data with statements the participants had previously authored in a different rhetorical register, thereby enhancing the analytic robustness of the inquiry.

The three streams of data were treated as mutually illuminating rather than hierarchically ordered, each affording entry into a different stratum of conductorial aesthetic perception: the *dialogical* (interview), the *embodied* (observation), and the *textual* (documentary, encompassing both ephemeral festival materials and the participants' published reflections).

2.4 Data Analysis

The data corpus was subjected to reflexive thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2019, 2021) revised six-phase procedure. Analysis proceeded recursively through (1) immersive familiarisation with transcripts and field notes; (2) generation of initial codes attentive to both semantic content and latent meaning; (3) construction of candidate themes through the clustering of conceptually related codes; (4) review of themes against the full data corpus; (5) refinement and definition of final themes; and (6) the production of the analytic narrative presented in Section 3. Coding was conducted manually to preserve interpretive sensitivity, and analytic memos were maintained throughout to document evolving theoretical insights and to trace the migration of codes into themes. Consistent with Braun and Clarke's reflexive orientation, themes are conceived not as pre-existing patterns *discovered* in the data, but as analytic constructs *produced* through the researcher's engaged interpretation. The two theoretical anchors—performative aesthetics and tacit knowledge—were mobilised in the latter phases as sensitising concepts (Blumer, 1954) rather than as deductive coding categories, thereby preserving the inductive integrity of theme generation while admitting theoretically informed interpretation in the analytic narrative.

2.5 Trustworthiness and Researcher Reflexivity

The study's trustworthiness was established through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) quartet of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was supported by methodological triangulation across interviews, observations, and documents; by prolonged engagement at the festival site; and by member reflection, in which preliminary interpretations were shared with participants for confirmation and challenge. Transferability is supported through thick description of the festival context and participant profiles, enabling readers to assess the applicability of findings to comparable settings. Dependability and confirmability were maintained through systematic documentation of analytic decisions in a research audit trail. The first author, an active practitioner within the Indonesian choral community, maintained a reflexive journal throughout the inquiry to surface and interrogate the assumptions, allegiances, and interpretive predispositions that this insider positioning entails (Berger, 2015). Reflexivity is here understood not as a procedure for eliminating researcher subjectivity but as a discipline for rendering it analytically productive—a stance particularly germane to research on aesthetic perception, in which the investigator's own perceptual sensibilities inevitably mediate interpretation.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with the research ethics protocols of the Indonesia University of Education. All participants provided written informed consent prior to data generation, with explicit consent obtained for the use of their names in academic publications. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw at any stage of the research and were granted access to interview transcripts for verification and amendment. Audio recordings, transcripts, and digital field notes were stored on encrypted devices accessible only to the research team.

3. RESULTS

The reflexive thematic analysis yielded three interrelated themes that together articulate the structure of choral conductors' aesthetic perception within the festival context: (3.1) *aesthetic interpretation as embodied practice*; (3.2) *negotiating cultural plurality in festival settings*; and (3.3) *the conductor as mediator of collective identity*. These themes are presented sequentially for analytic clarity, but they are best read as overlapping facets of a single perceptual practice rather than as discrete analytic objects. Throughout the presentation, illustrative excerpts—drawn from both interview transcripts and the participants' published reflections (Kandisaputra et al., 2023)—are reproduced in italics to preserve the interpretive voice of participants while subordinating quotation to analytic argumentation.

3.1 Aesthetic Interpretation as Embodied Practice

A pervasive feature across the three cases was the conceptualisation of aesthetic perception as inseparable from the embodied conditions of its enactment. Carpio articulated this most directly through his insistence that conductors cultivate a depth of musical knowledge that exceeds even that of the composer: "*As conductors, we should already recognise the significance of acquiring musical knowledge prior to the initial rehearsal... We are unable to impart knowledge or skills that we ourselves do not possess.*" For Carpio, score preparation extended beyond technical analysis to encompass biographical reconstruction of the composer and contextual reconstruction of the work's genesis, since these constituted

the epistemic preconditions for interpretive transmission. Aesthetic perception, in this account, was less a moment of contemplation than a sustained labour of internalisation through which the score came to inhabit the conductor's body as a tacit possession (Polanyi, 1966).

Shangkuan inflected this embodied register through a meditative lexicon that reframed conductorial competence as a cultivation of perceptual disciplines. His reflections on breath, listening, reading, and presence—articulated through deceptively simple injunctions such as *"to breathe"* and *"to be"*—configured aesthetic perception as a practice of attentional stewardship. Particularly striking was his distinction between hearing and listening: *"Listening encompasses more than mere auditory perception... Engage in active listening to enhance comprehension, rather than solely focusing on responding or countering."* This formulation gestures toward what Polanyi (1966) termed the *from-to* structure of tacit knowing, in which attention is directed *from* a subsidiary awareness of bodily and perceptual particulars *toward* a focal apprehension of musical meaning. The conductor's body, in Shangkuan's articulation, becomes a perceptual instrument tuned through deliberate practices of attentional cultivation rather than an inert vehicle of gestural execution.

Kosasih, although less explicit in metaphysical register, configured embodiment in resolutely collective terms. The aesthetic life of the ensemble, in his account, was sustained by the corporeal rhythms of shared rehearsal, communal meals, outdoor activities, and concert tours—materialities that constituted the choir as a body before any individual aesthetic intent could be transmitted. This recasts the embodied dimension of aesthetic perception not as an individual cognitive achievement but as a distributed and relational accomplishment, in which the conductor's perceptual labour is inseparable from the ensemble's corporeal life.

Read across the three cases, the theme suggests that aesthetic perception in choral conducting cannot be apprehended as a pre-performative cognitive event subsequently translated into gesture. Rather, perception, knowledge, and bodily practice are co-constitutive: the conductor's aesthetic apprehension of the work both presupposes and is produced through embodied engagement, whether in the form of solitary internalisation (Carpio), contemplative attentional discipline (Shangkuan), or distributed ensemble corporeality (Kosasih).

3.2 Negotiating Cultural Plurality in Festival Settings

The second theme concerns the manner in which conductors articulated and negotiated cultural plurality as a constitutive feature of the festival context. The IBCF, by virtue of convening conductors and ensembles from heterogeneous national, linguistic, and pedagogical traditions, rendered cross-cultural negotiation an unavoidable rather than optional dimension of aesthetic practice.

Carpio's account foregrounded the encounter with composers of distinct national provenance as a privileged site of aesthetic learning. His recollection of performing Josu Elberdin's *Gaur Akelarre* in the composer's presence at the 2017 European Grand Prix for Choral Singing in Tolosa, Spain, alongside Jake Runestad's narration of *Let My Love Be Heard*, illustrated the manner in which cross-cultural composer–conductor dialogue reshaped the conductor's interpretive horizon: *"The criticism, comments, and ideas... enhanced his appreciation of the performance of the work."* Such encounters disclosed the score not as a self-sufficient artefact but as a node within a broader cultural and biographical web—an

insight that destabilises the score-centred conception of musical authority and aligns aesthetic perception with what Fischer-Lichte (2008) terms the *autopoietic feedback loop* between performer and the wider performative community.

Shangkuan's articulation of cultural plurality was less anchored in specific repertoire and more diffused through a reflective sensibility cultivated by sustained international festival engagement. His emphasis on disconnection, contemplative distance, and the deliberate suspension of professional acceleration registered as an implicit critique of the homogenising tempo of globalised performance circuits. By insisting on conditions of slowness and reflectivity—conditions endangered, paradoxically, by the very festival economies in which they are most needed—Shangkuan reasserted aesthetic perception as a practice that requires temporal hospitality rather than mere temporal proximity to cultural difference.

Kosasih, in turn, located cultural negotiation within the internal heterogeneity of his own ensemble: the encounter between senior and junior members, between professors and students, between resident members and recent recruits. The choir, in his rendering, was already a microcosmic site of cultural plurality before any encounter with international counterparts. This domestic reading of plurality complicates the assumption that intercultural negotiation occurs only across national borders; it surfaces, rather, as a pervasive condition of choral practice that festivals merely amplify and render visible.

Considered together, the three articulations suggest that aesthetic perception within festival contexts is fundamentally a relational and dialogical practice. The conductor does not merely *bring* a finished aesthetic interpretation to the festival; the festival itself, as a transcultural performative ecology, reshapes what aesthetic perception can mean and do. This reading is consonant with Fischer-Lichte's (2008) thesis that performative aesthetics is generated through, rather than imported into, the performance event.

3.3 The Conductor as Mediator of Collective Identity

The third theme concerns the conductor's mediating function between individual artistic vision and the collective identity of the ensemble. Across the three cases, conductors articulated their work less as the imposition of an aesthetic vision upon a passive ensemble than as the orchestration of conditions under which a collective aesthetic identity could emerge.

Kosasih's reflections were perhaps the most explicit on this point. His insistence that "*every gathering and training session is not perceived as a burden, but rather as an opportunity for joyful expression*" signalled an understanding of conducting that subordinates immediate aesthetic outcomes to the long-term cultivation of an ensemble culture. The choir, for Kosasih, was a community whose aesthetic capacity rested on relational cohesion as much as on technical proficiency. Conducting, in this register, became an act of communal stewardship in which the aesthetic and the social are mutually constitutive rather than separable.

Carpio's articulation of mediation operated through a temporal lens. His attention to repertoire selection that would "*endure for numerous years to come*"—songs that, after singers had departed the ensemble, would "*evoke memories of the years they shared*"—reframed the conductor's aesthetic responsibility as extending beyond the immediate performance to the active production of collective memory. His conviction that "*the process holds greater significance than the end result*" further displaced the conductor's aesthetic authority from the moment of performance to the *longue durée* of ensemble formation,

identifying the conductor as a custodian of mnemonic continuity as much as an arbiter of present aesthetic execution.

Shangkuan, in turn, located mediation in the conductor's own self-cultivation. His insistence that the conductor must allocate time "*to be*" alongside the imperative "*to do*" implied a mediating function that operates not solely through outward direction but through the conductor's exemplification of perceptual and ethical dispositions. The conductor mediates collective identity by being a particular kind of perceiving subject in the presence of the ensemble—a stance that resonates with Fischer-Lichte's (2008) account of bodily co-presence as a generative force within the performative event.

Across these three articulations, the conductor's mediating function emerges as triadic in structure: *relational* (Kosasih), *temporal* (Carpio), and *exemplary* (Shangkuan). What unites these modes is a shared refusal of the conductor-as-sovereign-author. Aesthetic vision, in the accounts offered here, is neither unilaterally imposed nor merely transmitted; it is curated into existence through the conductor's capacity to host, sustain, and exemplify the conditions of collective aesthetic life.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings presented in Section 3 invite a reconsideration of choral conducting as a distinct epistemic and aesthetic practice. Three lines of analytic dialogue follow. First, the conjunction of performative aesthetics and tacit knowledge is shown to yield a theoretical articulation that neither framework, taken alone, fully sustains. Second, the triadic mediating function elaborated in Theme 3 is positioned in dialogue with extant conducting scholarship to derive implications for conducting pedagogy. Third, the festival is reframed not as a neutral evaluative platform but as an *epistemic site* in which aesthetic perception is actively constituted, rather than merely displayed. The section concludes with a reflexive consideration of the study's limitations.

4.1 Toward a Performative–Tacit Reading of Choral Aesthetic Perception

The most consistent finding across the three cases is the irreducibility of aesthetic perception to either score-based analysis or gestural technique. The conductors articulated their perceptual labour as embedded in a relational ecology that both presupposes and exceeds the textual artefact of the score. This finding can be productively read at the intersection of Fischer-Lichte's (2008) performative aesthetics and Polanyi's (1966) tacit knowledge, but the intersection itself yields a more capacious account than either thinker has independently provided.

Fischer-Lichte's central claim—that meaning in performance arises from an *autopoietic feedback loop* among bodies copresent in the performative event—offers a productive frame for understanding how the conductors' interpretive decisions were shaped by, rather than merely communicated to, their ensembles, audiences, and (in Carpio's case) composers. Yet performative aesthetics, as elaborated within theatre studies, has been comparatively inattentive to the modes of pre-performative preparation through which conductors render themselves available to such feedback loops. It is precisely this dimension that Polanyi's tacit knowledge framework illuminates: the embodied, sub-articulate competencies cultivated through sustained engagement with the score, the composer, and the ensemble's corporeal life. Carpio's exhortation to know the music more deeply than the composer himself exemplifies what Polanyi termed *indwelling*—the assimilation of the work

into the conductor's tacit body of knowing, such that interpretive decisions emerge from, rather than are imposed upon, the performative moment.

Read together, these frameworks suggest that aesthetic perception in choral conducting consists of two phases that are dialectically related rather than temporally sequential: a phase of *tacit incorporation*, in which the conductor's body is cultivated as an instrument of perception (Polanyi, 1966), and a phase of *performative actualisation*, in which this incorporated knowledge becomes operative through the relational dynamics of the performance event (Fischer-Lichte, 2008). The contribution of the present study is to articulate this dialectic empirically, through cases that disclose how each phase reciprocally shapes and is shaped by the other.

4.2 The Conductor as Triadic Mediator: Implications for Conducting Pedagogy

The articulation of the conductor's mediating function as triadic in structure—*relational* (Kosasih), *temporal* (Carpio), and *exemplary* (Shangkuan)—warrants further interpretive elaboration. Conducting scholarship has traditionally emphasised gestural and analytical competence (Decker & Herford, 1988; Green, 1997; Wis, 2007), with the conductor figured as an interpretive authority who translates the score into legible gestural communication. While productive within its terms, this framing has been comparatively inattentive to those dimensions of conductorial labour that transpire outside the rehearsal room and beyond the moment of performance.

The findings reported here suggest a complementary rather than substitutive framework. The relational dimension foregrounded by Kosasih displaces attention from gestural communication to the community-building practices through which the ensemble is sustained as a body capable of aesthetic action. The temporal dimension articulated by Carpio displaces attention from the moment of performance to the longer arc of ensemble memory, in which repertoire selection becomes a curatorial act of mnemonic stewardship. The exemplary dimension foregrounded by Shangkuan displaces attention from outward direction to the conductor's self-cultivation as a perceiving subject whose very presence shapes the perceptual disposition of the ensemble.

These insights carry direct implications for conducting pedagogy. Curricula structured predominantly around gestural training, score analysis, and rehearsal technique may underprepare emerging conductors for the relational, temporal, and exemplary registers in which their aesthetic agency principally operates. Durrant's (2003) appeal for a more philosophically rigorous conducting pedagogy finds empirical support here: the conductors whose accounts inform this study repeatedly returned to questions of community, memory, and self-cultivation, suggesting that pedagogical attention to these registers is not supplementary to technical training but constitutive of conductorial competence as such. The findings further resonate with praxial perspectives in music education (Elliott & Silverman, 2015), which conceive musical understanding as enacted within community rather than abstracted from it.

4.3 Festivals as Epistemic Sites: Rethinking Cross-Cultural Aesthetic Practice

The third axis of discussion concerns the epistemic status of the international choral festival. The findings indicate that the festival functioned not merely as an arena in which conductors displayed pre-formed aesthetic interpretations but as an ecology in which aesthetic perception was, in part, constituted. Carpio's encounters with Elberdin and

Runestad reshaped his interpretive relationship to the works in question; Shangkuan's reflections on disconnection were responses to the temporal economy of festival circuits; Kosasih's negotiation of internal heterogeneity was rendered visible by the contrast that international participation made possible.

This reading complicates accounts of music festivals that have figured them primarily as evaluative or promotional events (Bennett et al., 2014). The IBCF, in the analysis offered here, operated as what may be termed an *epistemic site*: a transcultural performative ecology in which aesthetic knowledge is generated through encounter, comparison, and contestation rather than imported from elsewhere. This claim carries broader implications for how scholars conceptualise the global circulation of choral practice. Rather than figuring festivals as nodes through which canonical Euro-American aesthetic norms diffuse to peripheral contexts, the study suggests that festivals can equally function as sites of mutual aesthetic constitution in which the categories of centre and periphery are themselves rendered unstable. The location of this inquiry within an Indonesian-hosted festival underscores this point: the IBCF is not a satellite of Western choral culture but a generative site for choral aesthetics in its own right.

4.4 Limitations

Three limitations warrant acknowledgement. First, the study draws on three participants, a sample appropriate to the intensive case-study design adopted but limited in its capacity to disclose the full range of conductorial perspectives at the festival. Future inquiry might productively expand the sample or pursue comparative case studies across multiple festivals. Second, the first author's positionality as an active practitioner within the Indonesian choral community, although managed through reflexive practice, may have shaped both the access afforded and the interpretive lenses brought to bear on the data; the reflexive journal maintained throughout the study sought to render this productive rather than to eliminate it. Third, the analysis foregrounds the conductors' own articulations of their aesthetic practice; complementary perspectives from singers, composers, and audiences would enrich the picture and constitute productive avenues for further inquiry.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has examined how three choral conductors at the 3rd International Bandung Choral Festival articulated and enacted aesthetic perception within a transcultural performative context. By bringing performative aesthetics (Fischer-Lichte, 2008) and tacit knowledge theory (Polanyi, 1966) into productive conjunction, the inquiry has sought to render visible those dimensions of conductorial labour that remain marginal within technically oriented conducting scholarship.

Three contributions warrant emphasis. Theoretically, the study advances a *performative–tacit* reading of choral aesthetic perception that conceives the conductor's perceptual practice as a dialectic between phases of tacit incorporation and performative actualisation. This formulation extends performative aesthetics by attending to the modes of pre-performative cultivation that condition the autopoietic loop, while extending tacit knowledge theory by situating it within the relational ecology of performance. Pedagogically, the elaboration of the conductor's mediating function as triadic—*relational, temporal, and exemplary*—offers a corrective supplement to gesture-centred and analytically focused conducting curricula, suggesting that pedagogical attention to community-building, mnemonic stewardship, and the cultivation of perceptual disposition is constitutive of conductorial competence rather than supplementary to it. Conceptually, the reframing of the

international choral festival as an *epistemic site* rather than a merely evaluative arena destabilises diffusionist accounts of global choral practice. The Indonesian location of the inquiry is itself part of this conceptual contribution: choral aesthetic knowledge is generated within the Global South as much as imported into it.

Three avenues for further research follow. First, comparative studies across multiple international choral festivals would test the transferability of the present findings and may yield a richer typology of conductorial aesthetic perception. Second, complementary inquiries incorporating the perspectives of singers, composers, and audiences would furnish a more textured picture of the autopoietic loop within which conductorial perception operates. Third, longitudinal investigations tracing the development of aesthetic perception across a conductor's career would illuminate how the dialectic between tacit incorporation and performative actualisation matures over time. The choral conductor, this study has argued, is best understood not as the sovereign author of aesthetic interpretation but as a perceptive mediator whose labour consists in cultivating, within the self and within the ensemble alike, the relational, temporal, and exemplary conditions under which choral aesthetic life can flourish.

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