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Performing musical silence: markers, gestures, and embodiments

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Performing Musical Silence: Propositions

1. Performers can employ many visible, audible, and contextual markers (such as gestures, breaths, rubato) to lead the audience to expect or experience silence.
2. Performers embody silence through a rich vocabulary of gestures, yet these are not notated and remain poorly documented.
3. Silence can serve a connective or a disconnective function in musical experience, sometimes simultaneously.
4. The visible gestures associated with musical silence can be as significant in conveying emotional and expressive intent as the silence itself.
5. Silence communicates in a way that sound cannot.
6. The tradition of performative decorum in Western classical music—which demands audience docility and silence as a mark of respect for the musicians, the score, and the composer—elevates silence to a status as sacred as the music.
7. Urban design that integrates quiet zones improves the quality of public life in noisy cities.
8. Mobile phones should be banned in the Concertgebouw because classical musicians want you to be present in person and spirit.
9. This room is designed to encourage audience silence.
10. Formula 1 racecar engines should be engineered to sound louder in order to improve the spectator's experience.