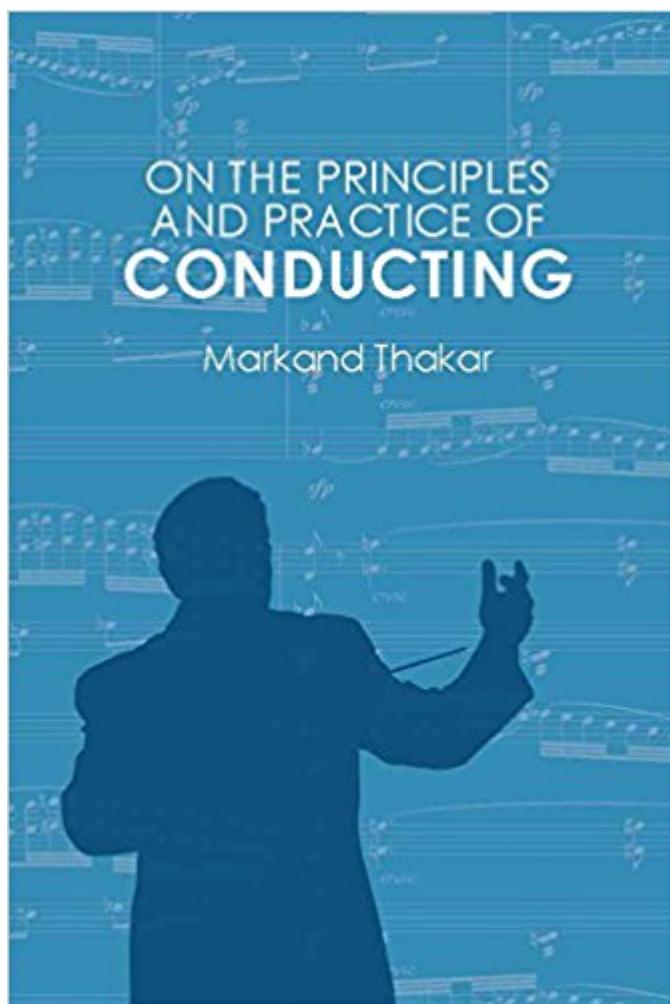


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# On The Principles And Practice Of Conducting



## **Synopsis**

This book is a practical manual for anyone who stands on a podium helping an ensemble make music. The four main chapters address the major obligations of the conductor: (1) bringing the musical tones to life in the most beautiful, most moving way possible; (2) freeing the mind to fully absorb all the tones; (3) freeing the body of unnecessary tension; and (4) effectively using the freed mind and body to influence the sounds. Each chapter begins with a summary of the underlying principles, presents real-life applications, and offers exercises for developing skills. Video demonstrations of the exercises as well as downloadable scores and parts are available on a companion website. The parts, in multiple transpositions, allow for hands-on experience where standard instrumental complements are unavailable.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

What distinguishes Markand Thakar as a conductor and a teacher is the unique balance he achieves between the technical and the emotional contents of music, and the ability to communicate that balance to both audiences and students. It is that quality that runs throughout this book, and it is that quality that makes this book both different from others and extraordinarily valuable. --Henry Fogel, dean, Chicago College of Performing Arts, Roosevelt University With insight into how mind and body contribute effectively, *On the Principles and Practice of Conducting* offers a fresh and highly detailed approach to successful music-making from the podium. The online video demonstrations clearly solve a multitude of technical issues confronting conductors. A must read for all students of conducting! ---David Effron, Professor of Orchestral Conducting, Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University

Markand Thakar is music director of the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra and a member of the graduate conducting faculty at the Peabody Conservatory. A protégé of the legendary Sergiu Celibidache and former assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic, Thakar leads annual conductor-training programs that draw students from around the world. He is author of *Looking for the "Harp" Quartet: An Investigation into Musical Beauty* (University of Rochester Press, 2011) and *Counterpoint: Fundamentals of Music Making* (Yale University Press, 1990).

I have never seen a more thorough and more useful guide to conducting. Thakar is the only conductor I know who has developed a clear logical understanding of how the motions of your body connect with the rhythmic and metric divisions of music. This short, easily understandable book would be worth getting just for that. But Thakar goes way beyond providing a guide to the mechanics of arm-waving. He also shows you exactly how you can put these tightly-coupled motions and rhythms to practical musical use. How, exactly, does conducting work? How do you go from knowing how to beat in 3/4 to knowing how to convey or reflect the energy of a phrase in 3/4? And why does it matter? Like every conducting book, Thakar's presents one way of approaching the endeavor. But, unlike any other conducting book I have seen in over 30 years, Thakar's synthesizes the physical, the musical, the practical, the psychological and maybe even the metaphysical into an understandable and useful technique and way of thinking about music-making. Whether you conduct only occasionally (perhaps you're a composer called upon to lead a film-scoring recording session, or a violinist who has to lead a sectional rehearsal, or a high school band director), reading this book will help you. Why? Because you will learn that the way your arms and hands move is directly connected to the rhythmic and metric divisions of the beats. Merely knowing WHERE to place a beat is not enough to make your motions clear, meaningful and useful. You need to know how to move from one beat to the next in a way that is predictable to musicians. This book shows you how to learn to do that. And if you succeed, then musicians can confidently rely on your conducting to be useful instead of tolerable. Try the approach Thakar has set forth and you might, at the very least, save yourself from getting in the way of the music. But if you work at it even just a bit more, you will discover how beautiful and powerful the strong connection between music and body can be. Thakar has been studying and refining this approach for decades. He himself was taught by one of the greatest conductors who ever lived, Sergiu Celibidache. If you want to understand what enabled Celibidache to connect with musicians in such a way that a single-minded team emerged to make great music, read this book.

A brilliant, concise book about the art and craft of conducting; I have read everything written about the profession for 20 years, and this is one of the best--to my knowledge, it is the only book currently in print which outlines the technical system of the late Sergiu Celibadache. There are wonderful exercises for freeing the body, and great advice on achieving and maintaining optimal physical/mental health in this field. However, the greatness of the book lies in Maestro Thakar's philosophy of the craft. There is no ego here. It is all about 'meeting the musicians at the sounds', assimilating the score to such a degree that it comes off the page and becomes a living, organic reality. A lifelong quest, to be sure, and a very, very high bar indeed, but one well worth keeping in mind at all times. I heartily recommend it to all conductors and musicians. I have read no clearer and more compelling statement of what music is, can be, and should be, nor of what conductors should strive to do and be.

Markand Thakar is an absolutely first-rate conductor (see his performances with the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra on YouTube for evidence), and he has produced a thoughtful, lucid, and compelling book. The first chapter -- dealing with beauty and energy -- is worth the price of admission on its own. Thakar's ideas continue to inform my music-making long after reading this text.(Disclosure: I studied with the author for two years at the Peabody Conservatory.)

This book is not only a testament to Markand Thakar's unparalleled genius, but also one of the great privileges that society has to offer. "On the Principles and Practice of Conducting" transcends all other conducting books in its quality, scope, and importance. The book first redefines and enhances our understanding of music; then it shows us how to apply that understanding to physical motions in order to express the totality of music; then it discards myths that have persisted in conducting literature for the past hundred years.Bravo!

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