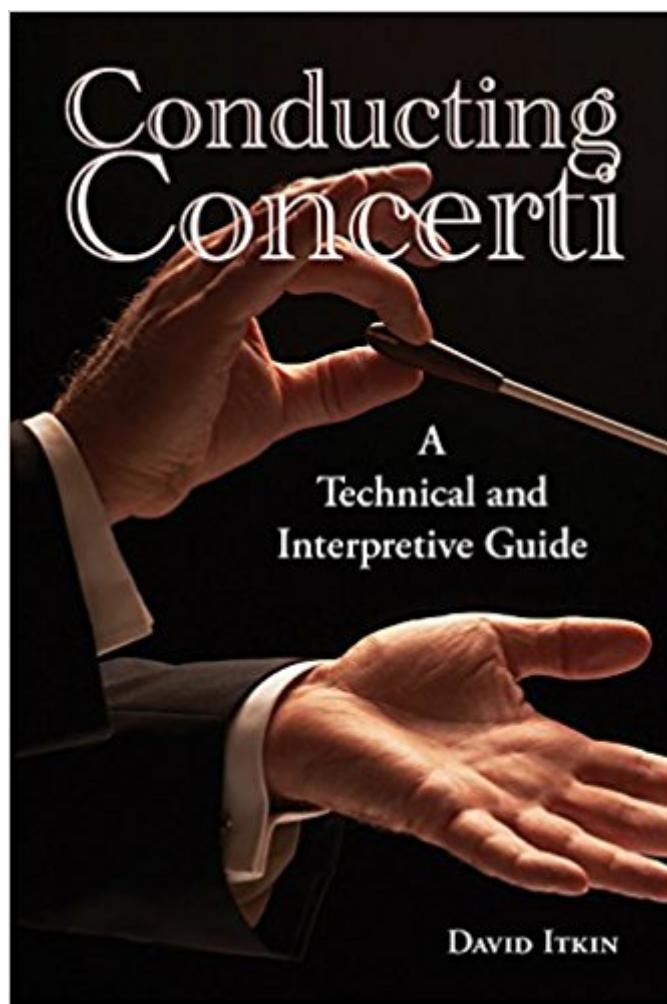


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# Conducting Concerti: A Technical And Interpretive Guide



## Synopsis

This book examines 43 great concerti and discusses, in detail, the technical, aural, rehearsal, and intra-personal skills that are required for "effortless excellence." Maestro Itkin wrote this book for conductors first encountering the concerto repertoire and for those wishing to improve their skills on this important, and often understudied, literature. Often misunderstood is the fact that both the physical technique and the score study process require a substantially different and more nuanced approach than with the major symphonic repertoire. In short, this is the book that Itkin wished had been available when he was a student and young professional.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"There are many books about conducting, some technical, some biographical and some are memoirs. David Itkin's work falls clearly into the first category but with a difference. Whereas most books of this sort focus on the purely orchestral repertoire, Mr. Itkin looks at an important subspecialty: concerti. "This area is perhaps the most difficult for those who wield a baton. Not only do you have to convey everything to the orchestra, you must also get into the head of the soloist. By concentrating on familiar pieces, David Itkin is offering a valuable textbook for the aspiring maestro. His instructions are clear and to the point. Looking at the difficulties involved, he gets right to the heart of this important facet of the conductor's art. "Highly recommended." •Leonard Slatkin "This is a must own book for any conductor or conducting student. David Itkin has written a very thoughtful and insightful book

concerning the most frequently performed standard concerti. This volume looks at works from many perspectives including problems of accompanying, the conductor/soloist relationship, interpretation and balance problems as well as errata wherever necessary for many of these concerti. This is a book written by a conductor with many years of experience with these works and is an invaluable addition to the world of conducting books.

•Samuel Adler, Professor of Composition, the Juilliard School

“This book is truly wonderful, lucid and intelligent. Would that many of Maestro Itkin’s colleagues devoted such attention to mere concerti! I’m certain that this will prove very inspirational and helpful to conductors on every level.

•Misha Dichter

“David Itkin brings a wealth and variety of experience to the subject matter, displaying a firm grasp of both the practical and artistic issues. This is a much-needed book that provides a great deal of important information for any aspiring young conductor.

•Paul Rowe, previously an artist of the Waverly Consort; Prof. of Music, University of Wisconsin

“Itkin devotes a chapter each to twenty piano concertos, ten violin concertos, and six cello concertos from the standard repertory that students and young professional conductors are most likely to encounter. . . . Itkin discusses accompanying and the conductor/soloist relationship, preparation (study of the score and solo part), balance and ensemble, and other aspects of interpretation.”

—The Beethoven Journal

“Each concerto is given detailed attention from one who clearly has had vast experience with these works and thorough knowledge of the scores. Maestro Itkin has carefully gone through each of the concerti in this book in a methodical manner. . . . This book is a valuable addition to the conductor’s library.”

—Podium Notes/The Conductors Guild

Born in Portland, Oregon, DAVID ITKIN’s conducting career includes more than eight hundred symphonic, operatic, and theatrical performances worldwide and throughout North America. He is currently Music Director and Conductor with the Abilene Philharmonic and Professor of Music and Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of North Texas.

I have found "Conducting Concerti: A Technical and Interpretive Guide", Maestro Itkin's book to be extremely helpful. It opened my eyes to critical moments in the music, informed me of possible challenges, explained how to technically execute each case, and deepened my musical understanding of the works. I usually am not a fan of conducting books or guides, but I found this one is different. It is very clear, practical, and comprehensible, while also being intellectual and thought-provoking. The specific concerti Maestro Itkin decided to address in his book are usually not

found in other conducting guides and is therefore a necessity in the conducting literature. I highly recommend this book to any conductor wishing to take their artistry to the next level in one of the most difficult genres, the concerto.

The voice of this book utilizes subtlety and nuance in a most unique gestation which I would use a quote from the book itself to describe: “These two passages are not identical twins; they are fraternal twins with very different personalities” (from page 31 on “Nights in the Gardens of Spain”). Although that thought referred to passages of music, I believe the abiding allure of this book is how David Itkin presents the characteristics of subtlety and nuance to create of music’s moments, mountains of expression and discovery. I found his guidance, though quite technical, most attentive to detail, and penetratingly precise, to be unexpectedly poetic and aesthetic, carrying the distinction of nuance and subtlety to create at times a magnificent experience of music through words alone. I encountered the most impressionable examples of this in his notations on Gershwin’s “Concerto in F” (from pages 35-41): “Some soloists slow nearly to a stop, lingering lovingly over the last triplet...” “Once the gong sounds on the downbeat, the conductor should be completely, but unobtrusively still from head to toe. This is the kind of moment in music when the listener should be afraid to draw breath, lest one disturb so important an event.” “The conductor’s body language should also reflect this respect for the moment, without becoming part of it or trying to add to it in any way. When the tension of the decaying gong cannot be endured any longer, the conductor, with one eye on the soloist and one on the orchestra, gives a decisive, fortissimo preparation for the following downbeat.” “This gentle swell settles comfortably back at piano in the penultimate bar (though the composer does not specify this dynamic), allowing for a long, slow crescendo toward the final chord.” The capture of subtlety. The transcendence of nuance. The final chord indeed, and there are numerous examples throughout. This book is not only an informative and expansive guide, but a pure joy of reading for poetic souls.

Maestro Itkin’s delightful guide will be an invaluable asset to any conductor seeking a profound understanding of any of the 43 concertos discussed in this book, or to any musician or classical music enthusiast who desires a detailed technical guide to what’s going on not just musically, but emotionally and intellectually as well. It’s truly unusual to find so much informational detail packed into a book that is

also so accessible and enjoyable to read. The description of any one concerto is by itself well worth the price of the book, yet this book pays for itself an additional 42 times. Bravo, Bravissimo.

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