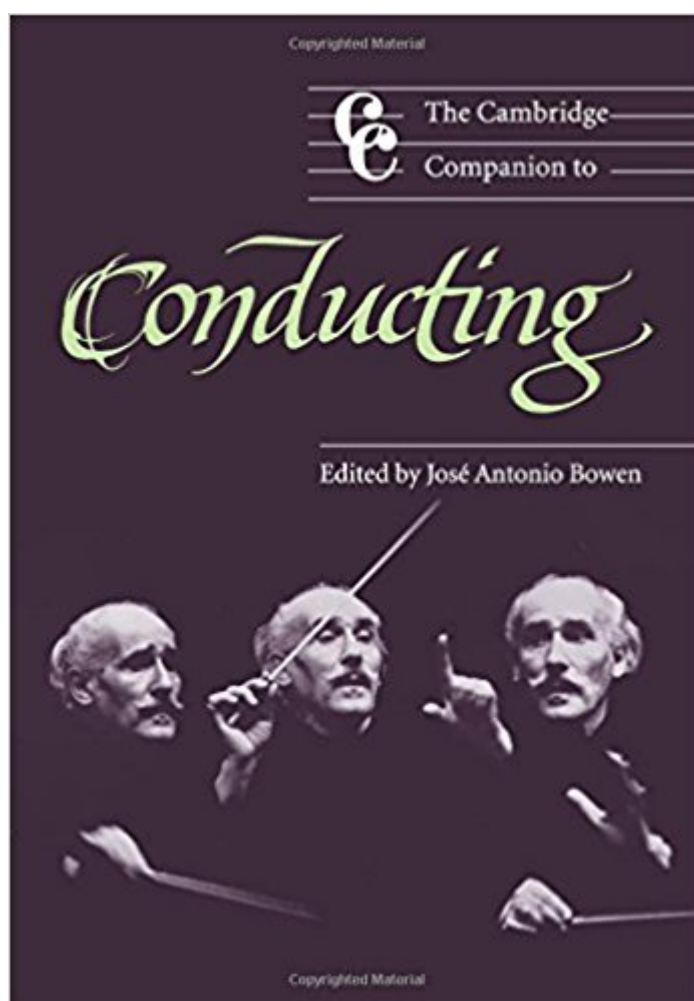


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# The Cambridge Companion To Conducting (Cambridge Companions To Music)



## Synopsis

Written by many working conductors, this book considers all facets of musical conducting. It includes practical advice on how to conduct different groups (choral, opera, symphony, early music) and a history of conducting presented as a study of national traditions. Designed for the lay reader who wants an inside look at the world of conducting as well as for potential students, it is a revealing study about a secretive industry. Managers, artistic directors, soloists, players and conductors openly discuss their different perspectives in this comprehensive work.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Fascinating reading...Dozens of absorbing topics make this collection a page turner. Highly recommended." --Opera Journal  
These essays, brought together by Jos  Antonio Bowen, are exploratory rather than didactic...Of particular use are the two bibliographies...By choosing practical musicians as his contributors, Bowen ensures that the vast majority of the commentary is perceptive and relevant to working musicians as well as to the interested reader. The essays are pithy, touching on a massive range of subjects without becoming stuck in a bog of polemics. Perhaps most admirably, Bowen is not afraid of opposing points of view...This is a rewarding and often revealing read. Robin Newton, Classical Music  
This volume presents a comprehensive (sometimes intersecting, sometimes contradictory) range of views about conducting. ... [Bowen]

provides depth and informed criticism of the conducting styles of different conducting luminaries...[and] meticulously detail how these conductors handled tempi, marking, the rehearsal process, a conducting ethos, realization of the composer's intentions, and sonic ideals...The American tradition as Bowen and David Mermelstein suggest, is unique in the paradox of its simultaneous rootedness in European origins and struggle to become independent of them...Their approach is original: they reference cities and their orchestras, instead of prominent conductors, as the central core of conducting traditions...As a whole, this volume clearly succeeds in providing illuminating insight, practical advice and insider information that is otherwise unavailable in academic circles...Most notably, however, this collection of essays displays the fundamental impact the conducting profession has had, and continues to have on fostering creativity and engendering social and cultural change.

Dr. Joel Novarro, 19th-century Music Review

The essays on national traditions in the Companion are rich in anecdote...The 'Issues' section is also unusually interesting.

Richard Osborne, The Oldie

This is a very comprehensive, honest and highly interesting book, both for a broad public who wants to see behind the face off this profession and for practicing conductors: dieses Buch nur also sehr umfassend, ehrlich und hoch interessant ansehen kann, sowohl, für ein breites Publikum, das etwas hinter die Fassade dieses Berufs sehen will, als auch für angehenden Dirigenten.

Pizzicato 5

Jos Bowen's aim is to bridge the gap between textbooks on conducting and biographies of conductors through the combination of practical details with a fresh look at the musical, social, and economic history of conducting (pp. xvi-xvii). The result is a highly engaging and colorful book, reflecting the complexity of the subject... Bowen avoids the danger of overlap in the use of so many different voices... Bowen's opening chapter to Part II of the book on The Rise of Conducting is an excellent brief historical introduction to the ensuing six chapters on the most influential conducting traditions... Bowen did a superb editing job, avoiding redundancy as the contributors offer their individual perspectives... The Cambridge Companion to Conducting delivers on its promise to be an unusually honest book about the secretive industry, (in which) managers, artistic directors, soloists, players, and conductors openly discuss their different perspectives for the first time (p. i). It is highly recommended for any serious conducting student and the sophisticated musical layperson. The broad range of essays will raise more questions than the book itself can answer, which seems appropriate and necessary. Because Bowen and his contributors identify many of the important issues to be considered before entering the complex and exceptional world of conducting, this volume will be an important companion and catalyst for further discussions in the near future. "

Dr Siegwart Reichwald, *Journal of Musicological Research*; The Cambridge Companion to Conducting, edited by JosÃ© Antonio Bowen, offers tangible observations on the real world of conducting.Â This is a welcome addition to the current choice of conducting texts, which consist mainly of extensive description and illustrations of conducting technique.Â Paula Zerkle, *IAWM Journal*; This book falls into three parts - 'Practice', 'History' and 'Issues' - which is as good a way as any of getting this almost unwieldy subject into some kind of order...I welcome the contributions from the practitioners of the craft...worth the attention of any aspiring accompanist...full of practical and valuable advice." Robert Matthew-Walker, *International Record Review*

Written by many working conductors, this book considers all facets of musical conducting. It includes practical advice on how to conduct different groups (choral, opera, symphony, early music) and a history of conducting presented as a study of national traditions. It is designed both for the lay reader who wants an inside look at the world of conducting and for potential students. It is an unusually honest book about a secretive industry and managers, artistic directors, soloists, players and conductors openly discuss their different perspectives for the first time.

This a book with chapters by many notable conductors and those connected with such. I learned a lot about the inner world of conducting and managing from reading this. Actually, only two chapters deal with any specifics of executing music those being by Raymond Holden on orchestral conducting and Vance George, who systematically gets into the use of consonants and vowels in articulating choral parts. The excellent chapter by Charles Barber was unusually perceptive where he said that any unnecessary words from the podium are nails in the coffin. My experience is having played violin and viola intermittently over a 35 year period in a major orchestra, civic symphonies and as a student at Indiana University. I especially appreciated The Rise of Conducting by J. Bowen in Part II History. Joseph Silverstein even contributed some insight into playing as a soloist under renown conductors although I have heard some criticisms of Eugene Ormandy from career musicians. Bob Ripley, a former cellist in the Boston Symphony and Cleveland, contributed some interesting remarks about his experiences playing in an orchestra and under many famous conductors. I have a lot of respect for Harold Farberman as a teacher and performer of the subject, who is now at Bard College. He enjoys a better reputation today than the notorious six conductors of the 50s-70s: Izler Solomon-Indianapolis Symphony; Dr. Hans Schweiger-Kansas City Philharmonic; Donald Johanos-Dallas Symphony; Werner Torkanovsky-New Orleans Philharmonic; Benjamin Swalin-North Carolina Symphony; Walter Hendl-Dallas Symphony and former director of Eastman.

The final chapter and word is by Leon Botstein, who delves into the future of producing concerts and criticizes programs that only feature the war horses and little of the great music of the past.

I had effectively rated it 5 star before I ordered it. I had the book as a 'borrowed item' from my local public library and I got sick of renewing it, so now I have my own copy. Thank you! Sorry, I forgot to add a note about the (physical) quality of the book - excellent.

I have very much enjoyed reading this book, and I have recommended it to all my friends who are interesting in studying conducting.

Full disclosure: I wrote one of the chapters (see the TOC below for detail -I can't figure out how to put my name in the "public nickname" slot at ). But I don't get paid royalties as far as I know, and I don't mind if you skip my chapter when you get the book - I did! (Haven't had the courage to read it yet.) I mention all this to be upfront, and not use a pseudonym on - a common practice by authors, I've heard. I'm writing because I read the book (the parts by everyone else) and feel too enthusiastic to keep quiet about it. I literally couldn't put the book down. When I received my copy, I stayed up way past my bedtime reading it, ignoring sleepiness and the fact that I had to go to work the next morning. If you are at all interested in the topic, I don't know of anything of its type that's richer or more engaging. Don't assume that it's another collection of academic papers; instead it has insights not only from scholars but also from conductors (e.g., Mackerras), orchestral players, record producers, and managers. To give you an idea and help you determine if this book would interest you, here's the table of contents, with my short notes on a few chapters - and they all deserve comment, but I will leave that to others:

Part I. Practice:

1. The technique of conducting - Raymond Holden
2. Conductors in rehearsal - Charles Barber [conductor, archivist of conducting films, so this has details on historical greats like Furtwaengler]
3. Studio conducting - Michael Haas [producer of Solti and Abbado recordings- fascinating information about their recordings and why conducting in the studio, which is what most of us hear in our CD collections, is so different from conducting in concert]
4. The conductor and the soloist - Joseph Silverstein [he's outstanding both as a conductor and a soloist, and former concertmaster at Boston so he played with many greats; again, a lot of interesting stuff]
5. Choral conducting - Vance George [SF chorus master, great choral conductor, very useful]
6. Opera conducting - Sir Charles Mackerras [need I say more?]
7. The orchestra speaks - Robert L. Ripley [played in Cleveland and Boston SOs for many years. Great chapter! A lot of detail about famous conductors and what they did well or badly in working with orchestras.]

Part II.

History: [as good a history as I've seen. It really clarifies the context out of which such apparently unique figures as, say, Toscanini arose.]<sup>8</sup>. The rise of conductors - Jos<sup>9</sup> Antonio Bowen. The central European tradition - Jos<sup>10</sup> Antonio Bowen and Raymond Holden. The French tradition - David Cairns<sup>11</sup>. The Italian tradition - Michael Rose<sup>12</sup>. The American tradition - Jos<sup>13</sup> Antonio Bowen and David Mermelstein. The English tradition - Stephen Johnson<sup>14</sup>. The Russian tradition - David Nice<sup>15</sup>. Part III. Issues: 15. The conductor as Artistic Director - Bramwell Tovey [if you're aware of his work you will need no further encouragement]<sup>16</sup>. Women on the podium - Michelle Edwards<sup>17</sup>. Conducting early music - Bernard Sherman [that's me]<sup>18</sup>. Training conductors - Harold Faberman [Perhaps America's leading teacher of conductors; his own book on conducting technique is outstanding]<sup>19</sup>. The composer/conductor and modern music - Martyn Brabbins<sup>20</sup>. Managers and the business of conduction - Stephen Wright<sup>21</sup>. The future of conducting - Leon Botstein. [Again - need I say more? Fascinating chapter by this extraordinary conductor/scholar/university president.]

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