

# Martin Wulfhorst, *The Orchestral Violinist's Companion*

## REVIEWS

Herwig Zack in: *Das Orchester* 61/6 (June 2013), p. 62

[http://www.dasorchester.de/de\\_DE/journal/issues/showarticle,36334.html](http://www.dasorchester.de/de_DE/journal/issues/showarticle,36334.html)

“Martin Wulfhorst hat jetzt mit *The Orchestral Violinist's Companion* ein Handbuch in englischer Sprache vorgelegt, in dem er nahezu jeden erdenklichen Aspekt des Jobs eines Orchestergeigers eingehend unter die Lupe nimmt, eine Art orchesterorientiertes Gegenstück zu Fleschs *Die Kunst des Violinspiels*. Was Wulfhorst hier zusammengetragen hat, verdient höchsten Respekt. Gleiches gilt für die Kompetenz und Anschaulichkeit der Darstellung. Er widmet sich ausführlich und systematisch zahlreichen geigerischen und musikalischen Fragen, präsentiert bewährte, effektive Übetchniken (hier greift vieles über den spezifisch orchestralen Bereich hinaus), befasst sich detailliert mit Stilistik und spezifischer Notation. Wie bereite ich ein Probespiel vor, wie stelle ich mich auch mental darauf ein? Wie studiere ich schnell und zweckmäßig ein? Was muss ich üben (das Problem des `Notenfressens', ein Operngeigenpart hat oft einen Umgang von 90 Seiten und mehr) und wie? Wie verbessere ich mein Blattspiel? Wie erhalte ich mir im Alltag meine geigerische, aber auch meine körperliche und mentale Fitness?

“Das außerordentlich umfangreiche Werk – zwei dicke Bände, dazu noch zahlreiche weitere Kapitel als Download erhältlich aus dem Internet – unternimmt es, Antworten auf nahezu alle erdenklichen Fragen zu geben, in der Regel sehr überzeugende. Ob man dabei mit jedem Detail, mit jedem Fingersatz- oder Strichvorschlag etc. einverstanden sein mag, ist unwichtig. In dieser Systematik und in diesem Umfang ist mir kein vergleichbares Werk bekannt. *The Orchestral Violinist's Companion* sei nicht nur Orchestergeigern nachdrücklich empfohlen.”

Cyrus Ginwala in: *Podium Notes. A Conductors Guild Publication* (June 4, 2013)  
<http://www.conductorsguild.org/podiumnotes/book-review-the-orchestral-violinists-companion/>

“...Though not described as a conducting text, conductors (string players and non-), orchestral string players and those who train them, will find Martin Wulfhorst's *The Orchestral Violinist's Companion* invaluable. TOVC helps bridge the gap between 'platform and podium'....Along with essential volumes, including Norman Del Mar's *Anatomy of the Orchestra*, Martin Wulfhorst's *The Orchestral Violinist's Companion* should be part of every conductor's reference library.”

*Translation*

*The Orchestral Violinist's Companion* by Martin Wulfhorst is a handbook that covers in depth virtually any aspect of an orchestral violinist's job. It is, so to speak, an orchestral pendant to Flesch's *Art of Violin Playing*. Everything that Wulfhorst has compiled deserves the highest respect. The same is true also for his competence and the clarity of presentation.... The extraordinarily comprehensive work—two thick volumes, in addition to various chapters that are available online—gives answers to virtually any possible question, answers which are generally very convincing.... I do not know any other book that is comparable in systematic organization and comprehensiveness. *The Orchestral Violinist's Companion* should be strongly recommended not only to orchestral violinists.

Mary Nemet in: *Strings* (July 2013), pp. 104–5 [www.allthingsstrings.com](http://www.allthingsstrings.com)

*“An indispensable Guide for an Auditioning Orchestral Violinist. Any Question a Player Might Have is Addressed in These Comprehensive Volumes.*

Martin Wulfhorst has chosen a large canvas: a comprehensive guide to the art of playing the violin in a professional orchestra. He comes with illustrious credentials, serving as associate concertmaster of the Hamburg Symphony, a member of the Berlin Opera Orchestra, and on faculty at Colgate University, New York. A violin student of Ernő Sebestyén, Masao Kawasaki, and Itzhak Perlman, and contributing editor to many Bärenreiter performing editions, Wulfhorst is well placed to enlighten players on the vast portfolio of orchestral playing.

“While string training is indisputably in better hands than ever before, many violinists, in spite of a rigorous course of study, come relatively unprepared to an orchestral audition. Concertos under their belts they may have, but what of the nitty-gritty of orchestral life and skills?

“In two generous volumes, Wulfhorst focuses on training the violinist for the job ahead, discussing how to practice and sight read, and introducing players to basic orchestral technique, bowing, and sound production. His survey encompasses the huge range of skills and knowledge required, as well as a familiarity with the core repertoire, the orchestral aspirant will need to know about ensemble playing, performance practice, command of complex rhythms, priorities, and strategies for coping with the rigors of life in an orchestra.

“Wulfhorst proposes an original system for comprehensive orchestral training and discusses the unique mindset that is essential for success in a group. Citing excerpts from more than 340 works by 87 composers, he provides bowings, fingerings, metronome markings, style suggestions, and, importantly, valuable tips for practicing. Do you want to know how to play grace-notes, interpret differences in composers’ styles, decipher the conductor’s beat, decode illegible parts, or how much vibrato to use? No facet has been overlooked. Whatever a player needs to know, she will find it here, from learning strategies for playing ‘impossible’ pieces, playing under pressure of time or nerves, adapting to the conductor or your desk partners, dealing with tricky pitch patterns, very high notes, and atonality to career planning and setting goals.

“Rodney Friend, in his brilliant two volumes, *The Orchestral Violinist* (Boosey & Hawkes, 2006) paved the way—now Wulfhorst gives players these exceptional in-depth users’ guides to the whole gamut of orchestral know-how. His volumes are nothing less than a tour-de-force and an absolutely essential resource for both the fully fledged die-hard and the budding aspirant. Don’t leave for Symphony Hall without this indispensable companion in your arsenal.

“Additional resources, including technical studies, articles, books, and recordings are available at [orch.info](http://orch.info).”

Ana Llorens in: *Doce notas* (June 9, 2013)

<http://www.docenotas.com/portada/publicaciones/libros/ser-musico-de-orquesta-e-s-una-eleccion-no-una-aspiracion-frustrada>

“...una utilísima guía que enseña al estudiante, ayuda y hace reflexionar al profesional y atrae al aficionado... Quien por el contrario desee sumergirse en la atmósfera que rodea al músico de orquesta y desee enfrentarse a ella desde una nueva perspectiva se verá plenamente satisfecho.”

*Neue Musikzeitung* 6/13 LXII (June 2013)

<http://www.nmz.de/artikel/muntermacher-fuer-eine-messemuede-branche>

“*Pedagogical novelties from the Frankfurt Music Fair*

“Endgültig ans Eingemachte geht es schließlich mit ... und Martin Wulfhorst's *The Orchestral Violinist's Companion* .... präsentiert Wulfhorst ein Ehrfurcht gebietendes Kompendium für den angehenden oder nach Weiterbildung und Auffrischung dürstenden Orchestergeiger.”

(See also the [interview](#) in the same Journal)

*Música y Educación* 94 (June 2013)

“La obra aborda el conocimiento y habilidades que tiene que tener el violinista dentro de una orquesta. Esta manual de capacitación sirve como guía para el ciclo completo de la carrera - los mismo le prepara para una audición que para el trabajo a largo plazo en la orquesta-. No sólo aborda cuestiones técnicas sino también otras que atañen al cuidado y la salud del músico (por ejemplo, cómo afrontar el miedo escénico). Los capítulos técnicos incluyen ejemplos de más de trescientas obras par orquesta, qu abarcan las esferas de la sinfonía, el oratorio, la ópera, la zarzuela y el ballet del período comprendido entr 1750 y 1950. Sin duda, estos volúmenes constituyen un valioso material didáctico.”

Rachel Greenwood in: *Arco* (Summer 2013)

<http://www.estastrings.org.uk/>

“The book is so wide-ranging that it is essential reading for all musicians. ... it is a worthy compendium and Wulfhorst has worked extremely hard. We have a duty to buy this book and also work extremely hard!”

*Translation*

...an extremely useful guide that teaches the student, help the professional and makes him reflect, and also appeals to the amateur .... Anyone who wants to immerse himself in the atmosphere surrounding the orchestra musician and wants to cope with it from a new perspective will be fully satisfied.

*Translation*

*Pedagogical novelties from the Frankfurt Music Fair*

Publications that go right down into business are...and Martin Wulfhorst's *The Orchestral Violinist's Companion* ... Wulfhorst presents an awesome compendium for aspiring orchestral violinists and those who want to further develop and freshen up their skills and knowledge.

(See also the [interview](#) in the same Journal)

*Translation*

The book addresses the knowledge and skills that an orchestral violinist must possess. This training manual is a guide for the full course of one's career—from preparing for auditions to long-term work in the orchestra. It addresses not only technical issues but also issues of musician's health (for instance, how to deal with stage fright). The technical chapters include excerpts drawn from more than three hundred works, from the realms of symphony, oratorio, opera, operetta, and ballet, dating from between 1750 and 1950. Undoubtedly, these volumes represent valuable pedagogical material.