The Orchestral Violinist’s Companion

“Wulfhorst’s book should be part of every string player’s reference library.”
(American String Teacher)

“The book is so wide-ranging that it is essential reading for all musicians.”
(Arco)

“Just about everything you need to know to be an orchestral violinist…”
(Stringendo)

“... absolutely essential resource for both the fully fledged die-hard and the budding aspirant.”
(Strings)

“Perhaps the greatest strength of this volume is the author’s ability to reduce the most challenges to component parts…”
(Podium Notes)

“... Wulfhorst presents an awe-inspiring compendium for aspiring or already active orchestral violinists who are thirsting for information to further develop and refresh their skills and knowledge.”
(Neue Musikzeitung)

“What Wulfhorst assembled here deserves the highest respect. ... expressly recommended, not only to orchestral violinists.”
(Das Orchester)

“An extremely useful guide that teaches students, assists professionals and makes them reflect, and appeals to the amateur.”
(docenotas.com)
The Orchestral Violinist’s Companion

This book is a guide to the art of playing the violin in a professional orchestra. It is a workbook, reference tool, and textbook for:

- conservatory and college students who are preparing for an orchestral career
- audition candidates
- orchestral players at the beginning or at later stages in their careers
- string teachers, conductors, and composers
- classes at conservatories, universities, and summer programs.

The Orchestral Violinist’s Companion provides a comprehensive survey of the vast range of skills and knowledge an orchestral player needs: strategies for practicing and sight-reading, bowing and left-hand technique, pizzicato and other special techniques, ensemble playing and command of complex rhythms, knowledge of notation and performance practice, familiarity with a core repertoire of orchestral works, audition preparation, and strategies for coping with career issues including the physical and mental stresses of long-term orchestral work.

1 Training as an Orchestral Violinist – History, Challenges, Concepts

A brief historical sketch of orchestral training, a critical analysis of the current state of orchestral training, and a proposal for an original system for comprehensive orchestral training.

2 The Orchestral Mode

What is the essence of orchestral playing? And what are the musician’s priorities when playing in an orchestra? There is a particular mindset that is specific and essential to orchestral playing.

3 Learning, Practicing, and Sight-Reading

- A comprehensive learning system covering: goal setting, self-assessment, planning, mental and physical practice, self-monitoring, and strategies for coping with performance anxiety
- Practice strategies for learning orchestral repertoire

3.9 Strategies for Physical Practice: Speed

- Include any passage into consecutive segments of two, three, four, six, or eight notes and shift the pattern note by note or beat by beat. Group and then play each segment as a single unit: “It feels as if one single action plays all the notes of the group together.” (P. Tucker 2004, 24)

- Overlapping segments are very useful for covering the “seams” but are a little awkward because of the continuous bow stroke.

4 Basic Orchestral Technique – Principles, Routines, and Maintenance

- Daily practice routines for orchestral violinists: bowing, shifting, scales, arpeggios, double stops, and chords
- Strategies for improving ease and endurance

5 Bowing Technique, Sound Production, Coordination

- Blending within the violin section
- Adapting to the conductor’s interpretation
- Great variety of strokes from legato to ricchet, fast repetitions and tremolo, numerous bowing patterns, articulations, dynamics (including extremely soft dynamics, a typical challenge of many orchestral parts), colors, and special techniques such as ponticello and col legno
- Musical examples for each bow stroke or pattern

Excerpts

from more than 340 works by 87 composers are provided with bowings, fingerings, metronome markings, stylistic suggestions, and tips for practicing.

These excerpts represent a variety of genres: symphonic repertoire, operas, operettas, ballets, and oratorios.
6 Left-Hand Technique
• Orchestral intonation and fingering
• Particularly tricky pitch patterns: diatonic and chromatic scale patterns, arpeggios, leaps and silent shifts, extremely high passages, remote keys, whole-tone motion, free tonality and atonality, trills and other ornaments, portamento and glissando, harmonics

9 Decoding and Marking Orchestral Parts – A Manual of Orchestral Notation and Performance Practice
• Specific suggestions for marking your part
• Detailed discussion of all aspects of notation and performance practice

10 Repertoire and Style
• A suggested core repertoire of orchestral works
• A guide to building this core repertoire and creating a style grid
• Different styles and their unique challenges

11 Profession and Career
• Career planning
• Setting goals (profiles of various orchestra types and various orchestral positions such as concertmaster and section players)
• Auditioning
• Orchestral life
• Coping with the challenges and stress of long-term work in an orchestra

12 Resources available at http://www.orch.info
• A list of published excerpt collections
• A guide to additional resources: websites, technical studies, articles, books, recordings, and software
• Introductory videos

7 Pizzicato and Other Special Technical Issues
• Basic and advanced pizzicato techniques required for repertoire of the 19th and 20th centuries
• Switching between pizzicato and arco
• Techniques specific to the playing of contemporary music

8 Rhythm and Ensemble Playing
• Two-part exercises and excerpts for partner practice or for string classes
• Basic conducting technique
• Counting
• Syncopation, tuples, cross-rhythms
• Irregular meters
• Rubato and accompanying
• Ensemble playing
Martin Wulfhorst

The Orchestral Violinist’s Companion

Vol. 1: Training · Practicing and Sight-Reading · Basic Orchestral Technique · Bowing Technique and Sound Production
Vol. 2: Left-Hand Technique · Pizzicato and Other Special Techniques · Rhythm and Ensemble Playing · Notation and Performance Practice · Repertoire and Style · Profession and Career · Resources

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Approx. 1,000 excerpts from 340 works by 87 composers; approx. 30 illustrations, diagrams, and tables.

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The volumes cannot be purchased separately.

The Author

Prior to joining the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra as Associate Concertmaster, Martin Wulfhorst was a member of the Berlin Deutsche Oper Orchestra and served on the faculty of Colgate University (NY), teaching violin and chamber music.

His CDs include world premiere recordings of chamber music from the circle of Brahms and by contemporary American composers, issued by Jambus and Spectrum/Innova.

He studied with Ernő Sebestyén in Berlin and with Masao Kawasaki and Itzhak Perlman at Brooklyn College, and received a Ph. D. in musicology from the City University of New York.

In addition to publishing numerous journal and encyclopedia articles, he has contributed to performing editions of Bach’s orchestral violin solos, Mozart’s concertos and sonatas, Mendelssohn’s Concerto in E minor, and cadenzas for Beethoven’s Concerto, all published by Bärenreiter.

www.martin-wulfhorst.com

Irvine Arditti, Robert HP Platz

The Techniques of Violin Playing

In English and German (2013) 128 pages, with a DVD; paperback
ISBN 978-3-7618-2267-8

Irvine Arditti who is an extraordinary violinist and a specialist for contemporary music, worked together with the composer and conductor Robert HP Platz to produce this book on contemporary violin technique. It presents detailed explanations of the technical possibilities of the violin for performers and composers.

This publication takes into account the virtuosity of a new generation of soloists. These are soloists who with their exceptional ability, have succeeded in paving the way for a greater understanding of classical and contemporary music.

The chapters on bowing techniques, vibrato, pizzicato, glissando, harmonics, tablatures, rhythm, and electronic sound production are illustrated with numerous musical examples and diagrams.

Particularly helpful is the accompanying DVD, on which Irvine Arditti demonstrates and explains the described techniques. Chapters on the basics of violin technique and on Arditti’s personal experience with notable composers make the book equally interesting for non-violinists.

Additional resources available at http://www.orch.info

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