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# Orchestral Technique: A Manual For Students



## Synopsis

This comprehensive but concise guide for the student of orchestration is also an excellent book of reference for the practicing musician. Each instrument is considered within its respective group and helpful details are given on compass, technique, and timbre. The author takes many passages written for keyboard instruments and shows how they may be scored for a variety of combinations, thereby showing in the clearest possible manner the principles underlying effective orchestration. Exercises at the end of each chapter lead the student, by gradual stages, from simpler scoring for strings to the more complex art of writing for full orchestra. For this new edition Dr. Jacob has revised the text to reflect recent developments, particularly in wind and percussion instruments writing.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is an older book, but has.....get this: it actually has helpful examples of orchestration! This is rare for books on orchestration these days. About the most you get, usually, under this topic is a list of instrument ranges, spanning many chapters to fill up space. Then some chit-chat to encourage you to study hard and get experience, and/or a few morsels of by-the-way reminders for very advanced and very experienced composers. Even though this book could have been better, and it's a small, pretty short book, it's just too rare to get even this much practical stuff. Is it just me, or does anyone else notice that books on technical skills of this sort seem to offer info that's either so elementary, you would have to already know it to be into the subject enough to buy a book on it, or

else so advanced that in order to understand it you'd have to have enough experience to be way past buying books on the subject? My question is: where is the INTERMEDIATE stuff??????? Is there no such thing as "intermediate" in the field of orchestration & arranging?

Although I'm not sure that I would suggest this to someone who is an absolute beginner, this book has a lot of practical advice of what NOT to do, from someone who apparently made these mistakes himself at one time.

Jacob, Gordon. *Orchestral Technique, A Manual for Students*. 3rd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1981. - I had the pleasure of conducting the world premiere of Jacob's Concerto for Double Bass, aka Little Concerto for Double Bass and Strings (composed 1972), with soloist Robert Meyer, for whom it was written for and dedicated to, with my orchestra in Sidney, British Columbia, on April 14, 2000. The concerto, written many years before in 1972, is a fine piece of music. It displays Jacob's tremendous skill as an orchestrator and his first rate idiomatic instrumental writing. That orchestral knowledge shines through in this short book - 104 pages, written in 1931 - which can serve as an introduction to the art of orchestration. And though it is brief, the book contains many especially pleasing concepts which any student of orchestration can use. Particularly charming is his description of the percussion section, "The best way of avoiding temptation (of using the rest of the kitchen, i.e., instruments of indefinite pitch) is to make a habit, unless writing for an abnormally large orchestra, of employing only two percussion players, one for the kettledrums exclusively, and the other for the rest of the percussion. This practice has the merit of cutting down expense as well as checking one's primitive barbaric instincts." Stephen Brown, Music Theory Book Reviews. [stephenbrown.ca](http://stephenbrown.ca)

Written by Gordon Jacob, a professor of composition and orchestration at the Royal College of Music, *Orchestral Technique* serves to be a manual/reference book to any composer or music student that is looking to expand and enforce their knowledge of composing for orchestra quickly without having to wade through a lot of waffle. This book covers the full range of instruments used in orchestras individually, it also addresses composing for whole sections (strings/brass woodwinds etc) and also spends some time on composing for small orchestras and full orchestras and the differences between them. At the end of each chapter there are helpful exercises, there are also further suggestions for exercises in orchestration in the appendix. I found this book to be very helpful in learning more about the details of orchestration; I keep it close and refer to it all the time.

Although it is not as long as other books, it was very straight to the point, and very concise and above all, easy to understand.

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