

Why Do You Always Insist
On Playing When I'm
Trying To Conduct

Quotes from a Famous Conductor



Limited Edition: Number of Copies.

I can conduct it better than I count.

Intonation is important, especially when it is cold.

It is not together, but the ensemble is perfect.

Don't ever follow me because I am difficult.

I purposely gave you a slower tempo because I did not know what the right one was.

Suddenly I was in the right tempo, but it wasn't.

Brass, stay down all summer.

My bowings are only general.

After two minutes after this time, and I am already here.

This is one bar you should take home.

Beauty is less important than quality.

There is a number missing; I can see it.

That was perfect. It was just the opposite from what I said yesterday.

Please follow me because I have to follow him and he isn't here.

I need one more bass less.

Yes, the mutes are on already. You took them off in the beginning.

I am glad you asked me, or am.

You know me. I am a maniac when it comes to rhythm.

I forgive you for shaving yourself.

Start four be forty two.

Did you play? It sounded very good.

I never say what I mean, but I always manage to say something similar.

Percussion a little louder. *We don't have anything.* That's right.
Play it louder.

As PP as possible - even softer.

It's very good now. You had to get the notes. It's not in my fingers.

Play it faster than before. Now it's faster than fast-fast.

I can't help it if I misunderstand myself.

(To a player sporting a new hairdo) I know you, you used to look like somebody else.

I made a speech yesterday and every second word I said my whole life was a mistake.

(At Saratoga) If you are bitten by a bee, tell the manager and he will do something about it.

(After a wrong note) Better now than before.

The later you come in, the more correct you are.

He's playing alone except for the accompaniment.

Maestro, I only have one note in that measure. I know, but what is your second note?

(At a point where the orchestra needed someone to beat time) I don't know who to follow, you or the soloist.

I misunderstood myself.

(After misbeating and a wrong entrance) For the public it makes no difference, but for us it does.

Do you know where you are. How could you. I don't.

You don't have what I don't.

(After being introduced to a substitute violin player) I hope she plays better than she looks.

The repeat is too long for the size of the orchestra.

You read my mind and it is sometimes difficult.

Everybody must know this part and the other people's part.

You know what everybody has to play...or not play.

I can only keep the beat. You have to come in before.

Why don't you mark it? If you mark it, I'll be somewhat relieved.

(To the audience) It's not what it is that's important, it's the sound. It was exactly 1930 or 1931, I don't remember exactly. I know every member of the orchestra. I'm very close to them.

(To chorus) Sing with my beat, not with what you hear.

(At rehearsal after a concert when the front row of stage lights went out during Zarathustra) We were in so much darkness, I didn't know at what point I would have to stop because I had no score.

Would you give me the 6/4 that used to be 3/2?

(Rehearsing a concerto without the soloist) I'm singing it because he's playing. You see, he's playing alone except for the accompaniment. I'm beating to myself, not to you.

(To the percussion) I don't know what you have in your part. All I have is the score.

You started right, but it was in the wrong place.

Somebody is crazy, but I don't think I am.

I'm trying to be helpful. How I can be helpful, I don't know.

Do you know what I do sometimes when I forget it? I put a circle around it so I will remember. (orchestra response) *Oh! Oh!*

Maestro, is the trill a half step or a whole step above the note? It's a full step.

Watch me at 13. I have to watch so I can catch him because he starts in the middle of a phrase.

It's easier with him because he's playing on the downbeat. Here I'm only giving the beat.

All of you are ready to start so I must be ready.
 It's not important. It's only important when it's late.
 It's difficult to remember if you haven't played it before.
 I'm conducting slowly because I don't know the tempo.
 I don't want to repeat this 100 times. When you see crescendo, it means P.
 I cannot give it to you, so try to watch me.
 I was trying to help you, so I was beating wrong.
 The minute you slow down a fraction, you're behind.
 I wrote it the right way so it was copied the wrong way, right?
 - I mean the right way, wrong.
 You have to do two things. Watch it and me.
 I never know where I am.
 Even if the right instruments are not here, we will play it anyway.
 It is only a short piece.
 I am thinking it right, but beating it wrong.
 It is not as difficult as I thought it was, but is harder than it is.
 It's marked *accelerando*, so you push ahead.
Is that a G or a G sharp Maestro? Yes.
 Even when you're not playing, you're behind my beat.
Is there an upbeat before I come in at letter B? We're fine.
Maestro, there's a terrible draft on stage. Yes, yes, I saw it.
 Why do you always start after my beat and then rush to catch up?
Do you want us to stay behind?
 (Before walking on stage) Is the audience all here?
 (Said at rehearsal) Tonight I'm going to listen with my ears.

Give me number 3 - 3 - 3 - I mean 4.

I almost didn't hear you. You know why? You didn't play.

Excuse me. I almost messed up.

Start at the same place - three before something.

(After hanging up the telephone at a recording session) *What did he say?*
I forget.

Not attacca, but immediately. Quasi attacca.

The tempo is less important than the rhythm.

Mark it so you will remember it because you won't. I know human memory.

Only the strings. That means everybody.

Too soon. (Basses) *We don't play yet.* I didn't mean you. *But we don't play yet. I didn't mean you. But you looked at us.* By mistake.

In Gotterdammerung: This is a famous place where the numbers suddenly change.

When I beat, I cannot hear you play.

She's very famous, but I don't know her name.

When you are speaking, you can't hear your brain.

It isn't possible for me to give it to you before, so you have to guess.

To me it seems a little too much, but it's probably all right.

I made a mistake-you were trying to follow me.

Would you write in accelerando, even if you have nothing to do because I have to follow him.

Quieter, in other words, slower.

At letter A I move forward, so that's why it seems to be fast. Otherwise, it slows down.

Can you hear me? It's not terribly important.

I know now that you were playing, so I'll give you a cue.

(Rehearsing Bruckner's 7th Symphony) There's something that I'm wondering about...this transcription, not transcription, I mean edition, was done by Mr. Haas, the greatest Bruckner genius of all time, and he gave numbers to the bars. So, if you didn't have numbers, we're in trouble.

Don't try to count - then you'll be late.

You join him on the way down - he's already down.

I have marked this music in three and also in nine.

Please! Only one person talk at the same time.

Even when you don't play, you are behind my beat.

(At a recording session) Play louder! There are only three mikes.

(At an award banquet) IF and when I die.....

He plays so freely that by the time I catch him, I'm watching him.

Maestro, the librarians would like to know the rehearsal schedule this morning. What would you like to start with? (Maestro) Oh yes, we will start with the music.

(To a player) I'm sorry my dear. I didn't recognize you standing up.

I took the score home to study last night because I know that there are mistakes in the parts.

The movement goes forward, but not the tempo.

(Woodwinds) *We can't hear the piano, the ensemble is impossible.* Then play louder. *But if we play louder, we'll hear even less.* Don't worry, this is one of the finest pianos in the world. It's a Hamburg Steinway.

(With soloist) I'll try to follow you, but I lose him.

(With soloist) He might slow down a little but for you - actually, he doesn't.

I don't get into politics, general or musical, but just call me if you get jury duty. Even in Jersey I was able to help somebody.

More basses because you are so far away.

Relax, don't be so nervous. My God, it's the Philadelphia Orchestra.

You're looking at me so strangely.

I purposely didn't do anything and you were all behind.

It can either be too soon or too late or not together.

I go forward in tempo.

There is a shadow on every page.

You know who you are.

(To the woodwinds) There are no woodwinds at number 6. *We're at number 15.* I know it. That is why.

Who is sitting in that empty chair?

(To the audience) Now we will play something we never played before as an encore. I didn't mean that. Mahler wrote it as the third movement of his fourth symphony, I mean the fourth movement of his first symphony. We play it third. The trumpet solo will be played by our solo trumpet player. It's named "Blumine" which has something to do with flowers.

With us tonight is William Warfield, who is with us tonight. He is a wonderful man and so is his wife.

(On the occasion of the death of David Oistrakh) I told him he'd have a heart attack a year ago, but unfortunately he lived a year longer.

I conduct faster so you can see my beat.

The next movement is still in the factory.

Think of your girlfriend or your boyfriend or whomever you want to.

Every concert I've sensed a certain insecurity about tempo, clearly marked quarter-note=80, uh, 69.

It's very good now. You had to get the notes. It's not in my fingers.

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That C major chord is always out of tune. I don't know why; it can't be you.

Let me explain what I do here: I don't want to confuse you more than absolutely necessary.

That's the way Stravinsky was - bup bup bup. The poor guy's dead now: play it legato.

(To an orchestral pianist) Did you play? Yes. I know, I heard you.

We can't hear to balance it yet because the soloist is still on the airplane.

I think one thing and say another.

Start at B. No - Yes - No - Yes - No.

Congratulations to each and every one of you for the concert last night in New York and vice versa.

Watch me closely: only one can spoil it.

Accelerando means in tempo. Don't rush.

It's so legato, it's difficult to splice. Sibelius was famous for that.

I can see none of you are smugglers, that's why it's so loud.

Tonight is the night when 500 years ago Johann Strauss was born. That's why this year is important.

Something went wrong. It was correct when I studied it.

There has been confusion since I stood here 35 years ago.

He told me two years ago in a letter.

We'll see in a minute right away.

During the rests - pray.

Don't make too much of it: you might get lost.

It has no rhythm, but it will because it's so much faster.

Don't play louder, just give more.

(At the United Nations while performing the Beethoven 9th Symphony)
Play it loud. It is being heard all over the world.

(About Paul Hindemith) He's typically German. He wrote everything in German.

Are the harps here yet? *Yes Maestro.* Good, we'll practice the Beethoven 5th next.

We'll stick to more or less of the tempo.

I didn't see you listen.

(After coming offstage) That Brahms symphony didn't start together and it stayed that way. (The orchestra had just played the Tchaikowsky 5th)

Maestro, what are you going to do next? I don't know, but don't tell them.

Whenever I listen to the radio I can always tell when it's the Philadelphia Orchestra, no matter which orchestra it is.

(He kept hearing a wrong note during rehearsal) Bass trombone, that's a B not a B flat. *But Maestro, the bass trombone's at the dentist.* Well, tell him to play a B when he returns.

Why do you always insist on playing when I'm trying to conduct?



