

BIOGRAPHY

Markand Thakar is renowned world-wide as one of the major conducting pedagogues of the 21st century. For 20 years co-director of Graduate Conducting (with Gustav Meier) at the Peabody Conservatory, he is Director of Conducting Programs International and frequent Visiting Faculty at the Juan N. Corpas University School of Music in Bogota, Colombia.

As a conductor Maestro Thakar has appeared with some 40 orchestras across North America, in addition to orchestras in Asia and Europe. Currently Music Director emeritus of the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, his career included stints as Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic, Associate conductor of the Colorado Symphony, and Music Director of the Duluth Superior Symphony.

Awards and prizes include The American Prize in Orchestral Conducting, the Geraldine C. and Emory M. Ford Foundation Award for immersion in contemporary music, a Fulbright fellowship for study of orchestral conducting in Romania, and the national Exxon Conductors Program auditions. He earned a bachelor's degree in composition and violin performance from The Juilliard School, a master's degree in music theory from Columbia University, and a doctorate in orchestral conducting from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory, and he undertook special studies in orchestral conducting at the Curtis Institute and the Ciprian Porumbescu Conservatory in Bucharest, Romania. Other conducting studies were with Gustav Meier, Max Rudolf and Peter Perret.

Most significant was his work conducting the Munich Philharmonic under the mentorship of Sergiu Celibidache, the legendary former music director of the Berlin Philharmonic. "From Celibidache I came to understand that the 'magic moments' that we all experience from time to time can extend - even possibly from the very first sound of a movement through the very last. In such an extended 'magic moment' we experience a remarkable transcendence: we accept the sound, we absorb the sound, we become the sound, and in so doing we transcend everyday consciousness of time and space; we touch our conscious soul in a most remarkable way. My driving interest has been an exploration of the conditions - from the composer, from us performers, and from the listener - that allow this most profoundly exquisite, life-affirming experience."

Thakar is the author of three seminal books. [*On the Principles and Practice of Conducting*](#) (University of Rochester Press, 2016) is a manual for acquiring necessary and invaluable skills and understandings. [*Looking for the "Harp" Quartet; An Investigation into Musical Beauty*](#) (University of Rochester Press, 2011) is a journey through the experience of musical beauty from the standpoint of the composer, performer and listener. The book is described as "a 225-page tour de force," and "an exercise in academic excellence and a seminal contribution for personal, professional, and academic classical music studies" (Midwest Book Review). [*Counterpoint: Fundamentals of Music Making*](#) (published in English by Yale University Press, 1990) also issued in Italian and Czech) uses species counterpoint to promote an understanding of how both composer and performer contribute to the experience of musical beauty.

Students of Maestro Thakar have won significant conducting positions across North America and internationally, including music directorships of the Aachen & Bochum Symphony Orchestras and the Württembergisches Kammerorchester Heilbronn, in Germany, the Orchestre national d'Île de France, the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Venezuela, the Changwon Philharmonic Orchestra of South Korea, the Orquesta Sinfónica de Navarra of Spain, the Orquesta Sinfónica de Michoacán of Mexico, the Sofia New Symphony Orchestra of Bulgaria, and the symphony orchestras of Winnipeg, Hartford, Charleston, Oklahoma City, Eugene, Bozeman, El Paso, Lubbock, Muncie, Williamsport, Amarillo, Illinois, Berkeley, Canton (OH), Yonkers, Mid-Atlantic, Sioux City, Waterloo-Cedar Falls, Fresno, Lake Forest, Hamilton (Ontario), Washington-Idaho, Young Musician's Foundation, Grande Ronde, and Fort Bend Symphony Orchestras. Students of his have held staff conducting positions with the Metropolitan and Indianapolis Opera Companies, and the orchestras of Philadelphia, New York, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, Dallas, Atlanta, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Seattle, Portland (OR), Richmond, Winnipeg, Buffalo, Phoenix, Charlotte, Kansas City, Canton, Portland (ME), Winston-Salem, and El Paso, as well as numerous collegiate positions. Among his students are Grand Prize winners in the Malko, Eduardo Mata, Memphis International, Mario Gusella International, and Fifth International Prokofiev Conducting Competitions.

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