

# **5 PSYCHOLOGICAL MISTAKES THAT DESTROY A REHEARSAL**

And no one ever explained to you

**Jose Alcácer**  
**Conductor · music educator**

**It's Not Just About Moving Your Arms**  
**The psychology of the conductor in amateur ensembles**

## INTRODUCTION

For years, we have been taught how to conduct music.  
How to beat time, correct intonation, demand precision.

But in real rehearsals — the ones that truly matter — problems rarely begin in the score.

They begin with the atmosphere.  
With communication.  
With what is left unsaid.

This document outlines five common psychological mistakes in amateur ensemble rehearsals.

If you recognize yourself in any of them, it is not a failure: it is experience.

### MISTAKE 1 · Believing the problem is musical

Many rehearsals do not fail because of notes, rhythm, or balance, but because of the group's emotional climate.

When a band is tense, unmotivated, or disconnected, the music inevitably reflects it.

Before repeating a passage ten times, it is worth asking:  
**what is really happening within the group?**

## MISTAKE 2 · Confusing silence with attention

Silence does not always mean concentration.

Sometimes it is fatigue.

Or fear of making mistakes.

Or simple disconnection.

A quiet group is not necessarily an engaged group.

## MISTAKE 3 · Failing to verbalize conflicts

What is not spoken about does not disappear.

It festers.

Ignored conflicts often turn into apathy, irony, or silent exhaustion, and end up affecting the rehearsal far more than any musical error.

## MISTAKE 4 · Leading only through authority

Authority is necessary, but not sufficient.

When leadership relies solely on position or title, distance appears.

Conducting is not about imposing solutions, but about creating a framework in which the group can function, trust, and move forward.

## MISTAKE 5 · Forgetting that the conductor is also human

Emotional fatigue in the conductor exists.

Denying it does not make you strong.  
It makes you fragile.

Acknowledging it is the first step toward conducting better... and for longer.

## CLOSING

If you have seen yourself reflected in any of these mistakes, it is not a problem.  
It is the starting point.

All of this — and much more — is developed in the book:

**It's Not Just About Moving Your Arms**  
**The psychology of the conductor in amateur ensembles**

**Jose Alcácer**

Conducting is not about moving your arms.  
It is about understanding people.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jose Alcácer is a wind band conductor, clarinetist, and music educator. His career has developed primarily within **the world of amateur ensembles**, where he has conducted, taught, and lived for years alongside the human realities that rarely appear in conducting manuals.

Beyond gesture and technique, his interest focuses on **the psychological and emotional processes** that influence how a group functions: motivation, communication, leadership, rehearsal atmosphere, and the conductor's emotional fatigue.

He combines musical direction with teaching and the training of future musicians and conductors, advocating for a vision of conducting based not only on controlling sound, but on understanding the people who produce it.

This perspective gives rise to his book **It's Not Just About Moving Your Arms**, an honest and practical reflection on the psychology of the conductor in real contexts, intended for those who lead bands, orchestras, and ensembles where the human factor is as important as the score.

Because conducting is not just about giving cues.

It is about holding groups together, caring for processes, and learning to listen to oneself.