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The Kindred Spirits Orchestra plays at the CBC Glenn Gould Studio April 8.

# Conducting: no sweat

**In The City** Thien Huynh



When I was first offered to write this column, I wasn't excited about the money (paid only 1 cent per word) or the potential newspaper groupies (zero). I was more excited about using the column to cross things off my bucket list.

So far, my stories have allowed me to: Meet celebrities, go drag racing, practice with the Raptors Dance Pak, cook with Iron Chef Susur Lee, train for the Break Dancing Championships, drive a TTC bus and sword fight with Sikh martial artists, among countless other misadventures.

Recently, I got to conduct the Kindred Spirits Orchestra ([www.ksorchestra.ca](http://www.ksorchestra.ca)) at the CBC Glenn Gould Studio. I feel sorry for the 40 professionally trained musicians who probably felt like they were part of a finely tuned April Fools joke.

My musical talent begins at

playing Guitar Hero and ends at singing Taylor Swift songs on karaoke. To make sure the orchestra doesn't miss a beat, Maestro Kristian Alexander puts me through conductor training back stage. I start with my arms high and extended. Alexander tells me that as soon as I lower my conductor's baton, the orchestra will start playing. The faster I swing my arms, the faster the orchestra will play.

"The orchestra members' ages range from late-20s to mid-60s. Many hold a master's degree in music. When we first started, we had over 150 applicants vying to audition for 48 positions... Good luck," says Alexander, doing his best to calm my nerves.

Showtime: I sheepishly walk on stage, ready to lead a full orchestra. The musicians welcome me by tapping their instruments – which Alexander tells me is a tradition whenever a new conductor enters the stage, even a fake one apparently.

I start swinging my arms

slowly, but start to feel the music take over and quickly work myself into a frenzy.

It's only a four minute song but my arms are burning as they flail around like a rag doll. Forget Tae Bo, if you want a real workout, try conducting in a tuxedo. There's no rhyme, rhythm, or reason to my actions as the orchestra soldiers on in spite of me. I'm afraid I'm going to fling sweat into an oboe in the first row before the song ends.

The Kindred Spirits Orchestra's next show is on April 8 at 8:00 p.m. in the CBC Glenn Gould Studio. Alexander will be conducting Beethoven's *Third Symphony*.

The orchestra has donated tickets to Dixon Hall Music School, a group that provides children from low-income families with free music lessons.

Who knows, maybe a lucky guest conductor from the audience will also get to make beautiful music together with these talented musicians. Just make sure to bring a towel.

THIEN RUNS THURSDAYS IN 24 HOURS. E-MAIL HIM AT [THIEN112@YAHOO.COM](mailto:THIEN112@YAHOO.COM)