



"L" ORCHESTRA

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

WHAT IS AN ORCHESTRA?

An orchestra is a select group of highly trained artists gathered to play the world's finest music.

WHAT IS A BAND?

A band is any group of people wearing the same uniform.

WHAT IS THE MAIN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BAND AND AN ORCHESTRA?

Orchestras are named after cities. Bands are named after bandleaders.

WHICH IS BETTER?

Orchestras are better than bands. (Wind Ensembles are better than bands also, but not as good as orchestras).

WHAT ABOUT CHAMBER MUSIC?

Don't worry about chamber music.

WHAT IS A JAZZ BAND?

Jazz bands have leaders and drummers. The leaders stand in front, the drummers beat time ... and throw everything they can into each beat. Conductors do this with orchestras.

CAN I PLAY IN THE ORCHESTRA?

No ... unless you are a string player. Orchestras never turn down string players, no matter how they play.

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY STRINGS IN AN ORCHESTRA?

Why are there so many fleas on a horse?

ARE SOME ORCHESTRAS BETTER THAN OTHERS?

ALL orchestras are better than others.

THE CONDUCTOR

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WHEN A MUSICIAN HAS BECOME A SUCCESSFUL SOLOIST
EARLY IN LIFE AND HAS NOWHERE ELSE TO GO, HE
BECOMES A CONDUCTOR,

WHEN A MUSICIAN HAS NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL AND IT'S GETTING
LATE, HE ALSO BECOMES A CONDUCTOR.

NOBODY STARTS OUT IN LIFE TO BECOME A CONDUCTOR,
THEY ALL LEARN SOMETHING FIRST.

EVERYONE WATCHES THE CONDUCTOR:
THE AUDIENCE
THE ORCHESTRA
THE SOLOIST
THE SYMPHONY BOARD
THE BANK ...



THE CONDUCTOR MUST DEAL WITH THE ORCHESTRA, THE BOARD MEMBERS, GUSHING
ADMIRERS, HUSBANDS, COMPOSERS, ORCHESTRA COMMITTEES, HIS WIFE, THE UNION,
CRITICS, AND ... THE MUSIC.

THE CONDUCTOR FACES EVERY REHEARSAL KNOWING THAT EVERY STEP, EVERY
GESTURE, EVERY WORD, WILL BE PARODIED IN THE ORCHESTRA ROOM... EVERY
MISTAKE WILL BECOME ORCHESTRAL FOLKLORE.

THE CONDUCTOR IS COMPENSATED FOR ALL THAT HE HAS TO GO THROUGH BY
BEING PAID A LITTLE MORE THAN THE CONCERTMASTER, AND A LITTLE LESS THAN
THE SOLOIST.

MONEY, HOWEVER, ISN'T IMPORTANT TO THE CONDUCTOR ... ONLY POWER.

CONDUCTORS NEVER REMAIN IN ONE PLACE VERY LONG. THE CONDUCTOR OF THE
AVERAGE ORCHESTRA IS EITHER GOING SOMEPLACE, OR HAS BEEN THERE.

THE VIOLINIST

VIOLINISTS ARE TRAINED TO BE SOLOISTS. NO VIOLINIST EVER STARTS OUT TO BE A SECTION PLAYER. THIS IS WHAT VIOLINISTS ARE LEAST TRAINED TO DO. THIS IS WHAT MOST OF THEM DO.

ASK A MUSICIAN WHAT HE PLAYS. IF HE SAYS 'VIOLIN', HE IS IN THE SECOND VIOLIN SECTION. FIRST VIOLINISTS SAY SO. CONCERTMASTERS AND PRINCIPAL PLAYERS SAY SO TOO.

EVERY VIOLINIST IN THE ORCHESTRA IS ASSIGNED TO A SPECIFIC CHAIR, AND EACH HAS A SPECIAL ROLE:

THE ASSISTANT CONCERTMASTER MUST !!!
TURN PAGES FOR THE CONCERTMASTER - CONSEQUENTLY HE NEVER PLAYS THE LAST FEW NOTES ON A PAGE, OR THE FIRST FEW NOTES ON THE NEXT PAGE.

!!!
SUBSTITUTE FOR THE CONCERTMASTER WHEN NECESSARY - THIS IS WHEN THE NOTE-GAP SHOWS UP.

EACH MEMBER OF THE REST OF THE VIOLIN SECTION EITHER PLAYS UP TO THE PERSON ON HIS RIGHT, OR PATRONIZES THE PERSON ON HIS LEFT.

IN THE GENERAL SCHEME OF THINGS, THE INSIDE PLAYER ON A STAND IS JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE OUTSIDE PLAYER ON THE STAND BEHIND ... BUT NOT AS GOOD LOOKING.

VIOLINISTS SPEND SO MUCH TIME PRACTICING THAT THEY ARE OFTEN UNABLE TO COPE WITH PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THEMSELVES. THIS IS WHY STRING SECTIONS RARELY TALK TO EACH OTHER DURING REHEARSALS, LEAVING THE CONDUCTOR FREE TO YELL AT THE BRASS.

THE PRINCIPAL SECOND VIOLINIST IN THE ORCHESTRA, IS IN AN UNUSUAL POSITION; HE IS CERTAINLY THE BEST OF THE SECONDS ... BUT THAT'S IT.

THE VIOLIN

A GOOD VIOLIN COSTS AS MUCH AS A HOUSE AND CAR.

GOOD VIOLINS WERE MADE ONLY DURING THE 1700'S. NO VIOLINS MADE BEFORE OR AFTER, ARE ANY GOOD AT ALL.



THE CLARINET

OF ALL THE WOODWIND INSTRUMENTS, THE CLARINET HAS THE WIDEST RANGE, THE LARGEST DYNAMIC SPECTRUM, AND THE MOST UNINTERESTING SOUND,

ITS RANGE IS SO VAST THAT THERE IS A NAME FOR EACH OF ITS THREE REGISTERS.

THE CHALUMEAU: THIS IS THE LOW REGISTER, LIKE THE CAT IN PETER AND THE WOLF.

THE THROAT: THIS IS THE MIDDLE REGISTER, THE CHARACTERISTIC SOUND OF EVERY BEGINNING CLARINET CLASS.

THE CLARION: THIS IS THE HIGHEST AND MOST ANNOYING REGISTER,

THE CLARINET CAN PLAY HIGHER, LOWER, FASTER AND SLOWER THAN THE TRUMPET. IT ALSO SQUEAKS (AN AMUSING SOUND AT A BAND CONCERT BUT A DISASTER IN THE ORCHESTRA).

ALTHOUGH CLARINETISTS SPEND MUCH TIME SEARCHING FOR A GOOD REED, THERE IS NO SUCH THING. ORCHESTRAL PLAYING REQUIRES A REED THAT IS TOO HARD FOR THE PLAYER TO FEEL ANY DEGREE OF COMFORT.

THE CLARINET IS VERY DIFFICULT TO PLAY AND EVEN HARDER TO PUT TOGETHER.

OTHER CLARINETS

THE E FLAT CLARINET

CLARINETS ARE HARD TO PLAY, BUT THE E FLAT CLARINET IS IMPOSSIBLE. IT HAS BEEN KNOWN TO FREEZE FACES AND SPLIT LIPS.

THE BASS CLARINET

THE LOW REGISTER OF THE BASS CLARINET IS ONE OF THE FRIENDLIEST SOUNDS OF THE ORCHESTRA. ITS UPPER REGISTER IS A MISTAKE. THERE IS ALSO SOMETHING SUSPECT ABOUT THE FACT THAT IT PLAYS FROM THE TREBLE CLEF.

THE ALTO CLARINET

THE ALTO CLARINET LOOKS LIKE IT SHOULD SOUND BETTER.

