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Gudrat Amrahov

## A) THESIS CONCERT 3.6.14

## B) CONCERT MASTER

– How to be a good concert master?



TURUN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU  
TURKU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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Gudrat Amrahov

## A) THESIS CONCERT 3.6.14

## B) CONCERTMASTER – HOW TO BE A GOOD CONCERT MASTER?

This thesis consists of two parts. The artistic part is a thesis concert which I play in 3<sup>rd</sup> of June in Turku Arts academy's Crichton hall. In this concert I will show my artistic side through my technical skills and musicality to make music. This is the main part of my thesis.

The written part of this thesis is about how to be a good concert master. I have studied in Azerbaijan, Turkey and New York. I have had concerts in various locations such as Italy, Spain and Finland. I have experience on being concert master and also experience to be a soloist working with concert masters.

During my years in Turku I have been concert master several times and I have done conducting as well. I want to spread my knowledge about this matter to those who are just beginning their journey leading to this place as a concert master or to everyone who is interested in my opinion.

### KEYWORDS:

Orchestra, concert master,

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## A)OPINNÄYTEKONSERTTI 3.6.14

## B)KONSERTTIMESTARI – Miten hyvä konserttimestari toimii?

Opinnäytetyöni koostuu kahdesta osiosta, taiteellisesta ja kirjallisesta. Työn painopiste on taiteellisella osiolla.

Taiteellinen osio on opinnäytetyö-konsertti, jonka soitan Turun musiikkiakatemian Chricton -salissa. Konsertti on samalla muusikon tutkintooni sisältyvä B-tason kurssisuoritus. Konsertissa osoitan musiikilliset valmiuteni niin teknisillä kuin taiteellisilla osa-alueilla esittämäni musiikin avulla.

Opinnäytetyöni kirjallisessa osiossa tarkastelen seikkoja, joista minun kokemukseni mukaan koostuu hyvä konserttimestari. Olen opiskellut muunmuassa Azerbaidzanissa, Turkissa ja New Yorkissa. Olen konsertoinut lukuisissa eri maissa kuten Italiassa, Espanjassa ja Suomessa. Minulla on paljon kokemuksia konserttimestarina toimimisesta ja myös solistina konserttimestarin kanssa työskentelystä eri maissa. Niinä vuosina jotka olen asunut Turussa, olen toiminut konserttimestarina ja myös kapellimestarina useaan otteeseen. Haluan jakaa ajatuksiani niille, jotka ovat juuri aloittamassa taivaltaan kohti konserttimestarin tehtävää tai kaikille niille, jotka ovat kiinnostuneita ajatuksistani.

ASIASANAT:

Orkesteri, Konserttimestari

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis consist of two parts. The artistic part is a thesis which I play in 3<sup>rd</sup> of June in Turku Arts academy's Crichton hall. In this concert I will show my artistic side through my technical skills and musicality to make music. This is the main part of my thesis.

When I knew I had to write thesis for this school I started to wonder what subject I should write from. I decided to write something that could be useful for the other music students.

I have played in many countries, mostly as a soloist but also in orchestras. I was conducting my own chamber orchestra when I was 17 years old in Turkey. It has never been my dream or wish to be an orchestra player but I have of course played my share in orchestras.

During my years in Turku Art's Academy I have landed on concert master's seat several occasion. My favorite time has been definitely when we played Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade with Anna Rombach as conductor.

In my thesis I will try to point out all the things what makes a musician a good concert master.

## 2. ORCHESTRA

“An orchestra is a large instrumental ensemble that contains sections of string, brass, woodwind, and percussion instruments” (Wikipedia). Instrumental list is different based on the music written.

Quality orchestra consists talented individuals working as a team. Like in every company or work society there has to be a leader who decides with his knowledge things so that it works for all of the workers. In music also, especially in orchestras.

Orchestra hierarchy is basically conductor – concert master – other section leaders – orchestra players. Orchestra players are responsible of themselves. Their task is to play right notes in the right time with musicality. Then there are section leaders. In strings there are five sections: first and second violins, violas, cellos and contra bass. Section leader is responsible of its section. He/she makes sure that section plays right and with good tone. Section leader plays possible solos and he also is in charge of making decisions which are focusing on his section.

Talented musician and writer Kenneth Woods says that “An orchestra can only be as good as its leader/concertmaster.” Concert master is in charge of leading the whole orchestra. He/she is sitting next to the conductor closest to the audience (Wikipedia). All the section leaders should have visual contact to concert master so they can follow his lead and example. Concert master is also a link between orchestra and conductor. Conductor is in charge of the music as a whole picture. In my opinion very good conductor inspires players with his own attitude and thoughts. Conductor has a major role on what is the overall experience of the concert for listeners.

With fame and glory there comes work and responsibilities. In my thesis I concentrate on how to be a good concert master since that place is in my opinion the most valuable for orchestra musician. To pursue that seat or if you are al-

ready one, there is some qualities that makes you a good concert master. About them next.

### 3. CONCERT MASTER'S QUALITYS

“The concertmaster is the second-most significant person in an orchestra, symphonic band or other musical ensemble after the conductor or director” (Wikipedia).

Now I think that good concert master is a natural born leader. He doesn't need to find his leadership from anywhere, only confidence for his own decisions will grow. Natural leader is a person who somehow ends up in leading parts in everything he does, even if it is not in his zone so to speak. I think natural leader is very creative and enthusiastic. That person doesn't mind if someone else is leading, but because of their talent they end up leading anyway.

Les Mckeown, the president and CEO of Predictable Success made “three-point assessment tool” for people to find out if they have what it needs to be a leader. First “You lead only when you have to, not all the time”. Second “You see much more than you do” and third point is “You change people. They achieve outcomes”( [www.inc.com](http://www.inc.com)). I couldn't agree more.

Concert master needs to be a person who can deal with lot of different types of conductors. It is vital for the orchestra to have a good concert master who can really co-operate with conductor. As every person is different from each other so is every conductor different. They have their styles and ways of making music and orchestra is merely just a tool in conductor's hands. Whether the conductor is good or bad, concert masters work is to deal with this person and try to make orchestra sound as good as possible.



Concert master needs to be authority to the orchestra. How to get to that point when you are authority rather than trying to be one can be tricky. In order to be authority you need to know better than rest and you need to obtain that through out each projects. You need to know the piece but you can't behave arrogant to others. Always make everything sound like you want to help your whole group, it usually makes people pleased. They don't start to feel like they need to push their own ego up. It is a slight problem with working in a bigger groups, ego. But when you make limits clear, I think it helps.

Because concert master plays violin, he needs to know how to use his body in leading. Preparing and giving clear signs when to entrance is one thing where body leading has a major role. It means that you can one bar before entrance lift your violin on playing position. This way rest of the group sees that soon is happening. Bow movement can show up beat to entrance and when its been done in tempo it helps to get everyone playing together.

Rhythmical leading can be difficult. You need to be accurate but clear with your leading. It is good to train these parts front of a mirror for example, that's how you can see is it readable for others. Besides rhythmical leading concertmaster needs to also show dynamics. This can be done by your body movements also. Prepare everything on time, that's how you give time to others to react on your movements and read you.

Talent is something that concert master needs for sure. Concert master has to have very good technical skills to play violin as well as musicality and understanding of music. He has to have capacity to do everything that will be asked for. He is an example for all the rest. If concertmaster can do it, others will pursue on doing it also. If he can't, trust on his knowledge will be questioned and it can effect on relationship between concert master and the orchestra. This works exactly like in whatever work society, if boss makes bad decisions and fails, workers stops trusting him and start to gossip and act out.

Kenneth Woods tells that "You (concertmaster) need to be confident enough with the part to keep half an eye on the conductor at all times, and technically in

command enough that you're never sacrificing a fluid following of gesture simply because you're struggling with the notes. You also need to know what is going on in the score and to understand how the parts work together". This is very important message and it tells exactly how multitasking situation concertmaster has.

In student orchestras concert master has even bigger role than in professional. It is vital to have section rehearsals and in these rehearsal concert master should definitely take a major role. Bowings should be made before rehearsal and then during it should be checked that everything works as a group.

Seating order can be made by concert master. Then it is very vital to think how you create your section. Good "rule" is to put strong players next to weaker ones and remember that sitting in the back is much harder than in front for the player, since you are not really in the music, you are so far, distance to conductor is more so visual seeing gets harder. It is good to put strong players to the last row, that's how weaker players are supported from the front and back.

#### 4. RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: SHEHERAZADE

In 2012 we played with Sigyn Sinfonietta Rimsky-Korsakov's Sheherazade, which is a piece for symphony orchestra. Music is based on a main story of one and thousand nights or otherwise known as Arabian nights.

Story tells that king of Persia found out that his brother's wife was being unfaithful to his husband and due this king started to look at his wife's life and found out that his own wife had been even more shamelessly unfaithful to him. To protect his own honor he executed his wife. After this incident king was sure that all women were not to be trusted and so he asked his vizier to bring every night one virgin for him and the next morning he had her executed before they could embarrass him.

After a while vizier didn't had anymore virgin to bring to the king so vizier's own daughter asked to become next one for her king. Vizier of course didn't want this to happen since he knew what was the destiny of these girls. But his daughter Sheherazade was something different. First night with the king he started to tell a story for king. He left the story in so exciting place that king had no other option then let her live to next night since he really wanted to know how the story continued. Next night Sheherazade continued her story and again when it was time to finish, she finished so that king had again no choice than give mercy for the girl so he could hear the finish of the story. This continued one thousand and one night and finally king fell in love with Sheherazade and let her live.

Rimsky-Korsakov composed his music based on this story. In this piece there is many beautiful solos for concert master. Solo's are the sound of Scheherazade, telling the story.

When we played this piece we started with sectional rehearsals. As a concert master I had read score and got familiar with it. I had looked what hard parts there is for each string section and then I could start the project. First we had each section separately and then all strings together. In sectional rehearsal it was important to see that intonation was correct and discuss about bowings.

Also I pointed out the places to each section where there was something important to play. Winds had their own rehearsal with one of the teachers who made their intonation and articulation correct.

Project week started and it was time to play all together. Due to the fact that we had prepared our parts so good in advanced everything was very smooth from the first rehearsal. It was really awarding to see how pieces just clicked on their places.

We had a good conductor Anna Rombach, who really made an effort to help student orchestra by showing all what was possible to show. Everyone gave their 101 % into this project.

We discussed about solos with ms Rombach and came some mutual conclusion. I had prepared my solos and then I played them to her, I had thought all the solos as a part of the story and each one had a different meaning. That is how I could explained myself, why I want to play like I did. What was the purpose? This is good thing to remember always when preparing solos inside orchestra piece. There is some meaning to it, and since its definitely smaller group of playing when there is solo it is good to remember that you have to make impression, and how to make it is with beautiful sound and a message in your music.

## 5 CONCLUSION

Whether it is your first time as a concert master or you have been concert master for years you should always be inspiring. A good orchestra has a good concert master. Concert master is the representative of the orchestra and orchestra should be its mirror. If you want to have so called good staff behind you, you need to work for it.

If you are bad prepared or don't know your parts, it will effect on your authority and effect on hierarchy of the orchestra. As a concert master you should have confidence in yourself and stand behind your words. Think carefully in advance and base your decisions on logics and you can't be wrong. There can just be different ways of making things, but this is how you maintain your "wisdom".

It is better to do too much at least with students, than do little. Work with your body language so that it is readable, video yourself and analyze your own movements. Try to keep up your own enthusiasm even if everything doesn't go as planned. Concert master has big influence on the other players, don't underestimate it.

Everyone makes mistakes, even the concert master. But still be brave and carry your mistakes too. Stay relaxed but serious and most of all enjoy the seat. You haven't got there for no reason, there are people who believe in you. Now it is your turn.

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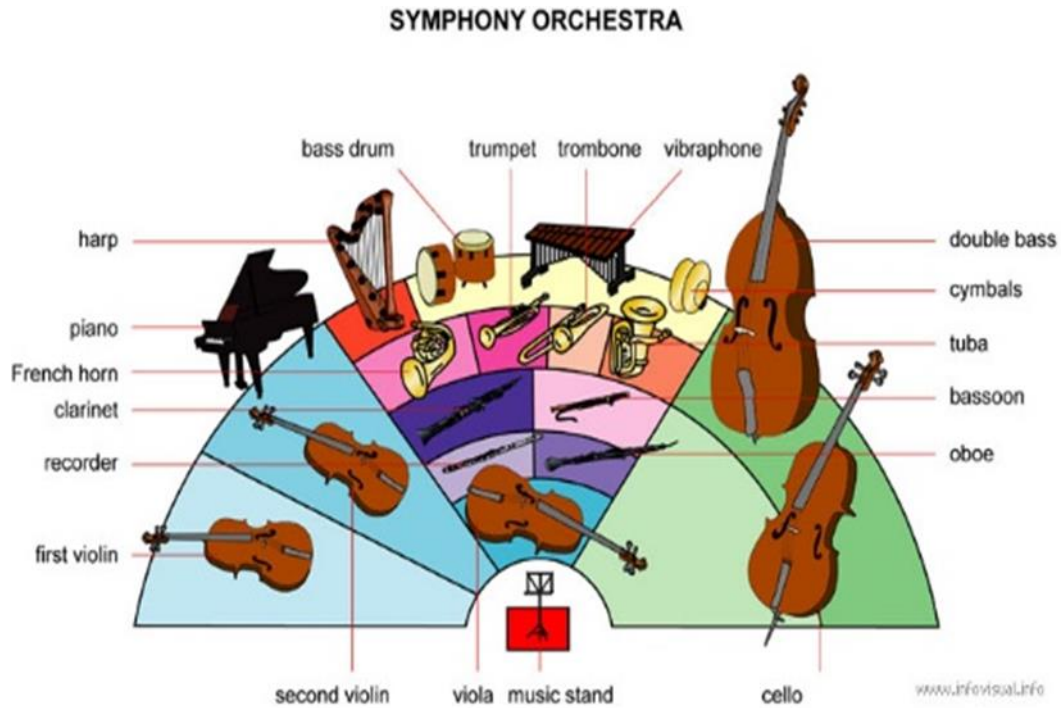
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photo of symphony orchestra:

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## ATTACHMENTS

Nr 1 picture of a symphony orchestra



Nr 2. Hand program of thesis concert:

Nr 3. Recording of the thesis concert