

New Standards: Women in Orchestras in the 21st Century

presentation by Lin Foulk, horn professor, Western Michigan University

Quotations and resources cited in the lecture

“I do not like, and never will, the association of men and women in orchestras and other instrumental combinations... As a member of the orchestra once said to me, ‘If she is attractive I can’t play with her, and if she is not then I won’t.’” *Sir Thomas Beecham, “The Position of Women in Music,” Vogue’s First Reader, 1942, p. 416*

“...indeed it can hardly be recommended or expected that the professors of fair faces and soft swelling lips should consent to puff out the one and conceal the other by use of the flute, while such a display of all the charms of grace and beauty wait upon the use of the harp.” *N. M. James, “A Word or Two on the Flute,” Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review 8, 1826, p. 54*

“Nature never intended the fair sex to become cornetists, trombonists, and players of wind instruments. In the first place they are not strong enough to play them as well as men; they lack the lip and lung power to hold notes which deficiency makes them always play out of tune...Another point against them is that women cannot possibly play brass instruments and look pretty, and why should they spoil their good looks?...” *Gustave Kerker, “Opinions of Some New York Leaders on Women as Orchestral Players,” Musical Standard 21 (Apr. 2 1904)*

“When I think of women as I see them in the musical world, what they are capable of doing, their fine spirit, excellent technique, I realize what a splendid power we are letting go to waste in this country, and in other countries, too. What poor economy it is to take it for granted that women are not ready to enter the world of art, are not capable of becoming fluent channels for the expression of genius...We are sacrificing accomplishment to tradition.” *Leopold Stokowski, “Women in the Orchestra,” The Literary Digest 52 (Feb. 26, 1916), p. 504*



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The good wife's guide

- Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal ready, on time for his return. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospect of a good meal (especially his favorite dish) is part of the warm welcome needed.
- Prepare yourself. Take 15 minutes to rest so you'll be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh-looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people.
- Be a little gay and a little more interesting for him. His boring day may need a lift and one of your duties is to provide it.
- Clear away the clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives.

- Gather up schoolbooks, toys, paper etc and then run a dustcloth over the tables.
- Over the cooler months of the year you should prepare and light a fire for him to unwind by. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too. After all, catering for his comfort will provide you with immense personal satisfaction.
- Prepare the children. Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces (if they are small), comb their hair and, if necessary, change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part. Minimise all noise. At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of the washer, dryer or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet.
- Be happy to see him.
- Greet him with a warm smile and show sincerity in your desire to please him.
- Listen to him. You may have a dozen important things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first - remember, his topics of conversation are more important than yours.
- Make the evening his. Never complain if he comes home late or goes out to dinner, or other places of entertainment without you. Instead, try to understand his world of strain and pressure and his very real need to be at home and relax.
- Your goal: Try to make sure your home is a place of peace, order and tranquility where your husband can renew himself in body and spirit.
- Don't greet him with complaints and problems.
- Don't complain if he's late home for dinner or even if he stays out all night. Count this as minor compared to what he might have gone through that day.
- Make him comfortable. Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or have him lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him.
- Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soothing and pleasant voice.
- Don't ask him questions about his actions or question his judgment or integrity. Remember, he is the master of the house and as such will always exercise his will with fairness and truthfulness. You have no right to question him.
- A good wife always knows her place.

A 1960 Woodwind World article gives advice parallel to this in a sidebar called "Advice to Girls:"

Advice to Girls

1. If you are a clarinetist planning to marry a clarinetist, take up oboe, arranging, or composition, unless you are obviously and happily much poorer than he.

2. If you are a clarinetist marrying a tuba player, don't forget your first responsibility is to the kitchen range — or he won't have enough strength to hold the horn.

3. If you are an instrumentalist marrying a "music lover" layman, play for him on request only. Don't take the chance of running it into the ground.

4. If you are marrying a layman (period), practise when he is at work. Play second fiddle to everything he prefers, but don't give up completely.

5. If you want to be happy, be a wife first and a musician second, not a sad musician first and a poor wife second.

“Both the harp and cello are decorative instruments whose curves and grace lend themselves to the same attributes of the women who play them... You get to the trumpets and trombones and tubas, however, and the image of femininity declines in direct proportion to the stridency and volume of sound produced...In other words, it just isn't a romantic sight to see a girl blowing through the mouthpiece of a trumpet or trombone and making a blasting sound... You wonder, in wool-gathering moments, whether female lips accustomed to compressing and making sounds through wind instruments aren't a little tougher, less pliant, than those of non-wind players...” *John Sherman, American String Teacher, March-April 1962*

“I just don't think women should be in an orchestra. They become men.” *Zubin Mehta, quoted in an October 18, 1970 New York Times article by Judy Klemesrud called “Mehta's Mystique: Baton In Hand, Foot in Mouth?”*

chart that lists number of women in the wind and brass sections of the top twenty-two American orchestras in the 1999-2000 season:
Douglas Myers and Clair Etaugh, “Women Brass Musicians in Major Symphony Orchestras: How Level is the ‘Playing’ Field?” *International Alliance for Women in Music Journal* 7/3, 2001, p. 29.

Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse, “Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of ‘Blind’ Auditions on Female Musicians,” *The American Economic Review*, Sept. 2000.

study that suggests when women reach a more than 40% “tipping point,” the organization begins to run more smoothly:
Jutta Allmendinger and Richard Hackman, “The More the Better? A Four-Nation Study of the Inclusion of Women in Symphony Orchestras,” *Social Forces* 74/2 (Dec. 1995).

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra quotations

“Many musicians, even if they won't admit it, secretly believe there's a difference in the sound produced by a man and a woman. I know three conductors who say this...I know a lot of men that sound like women. But not with us, mind you...This is something that we label our personal style. And it is, if you want to characterize it, masculine.”
Wolfgang Schuster, Press Secretary of the VPO (1997)

“Three women are already too many. By the time we have twenty percent, the orchestra will be ruined. We have made a big mistake, and will bitterly regret it.” *VPO member in the Austrian profil magazine, February 24, 2003*

both the quotations listed above and many more may be found at:
<http://www.osborne-conant.org/articles.htm>

at this website, see especially these articles by William Osborne:
“Art is Just an Excuse” and “You Sound Like A Ladies’ Orchestra”
and this article by Regina Himmelbauer:
“The Representation of Women in European and American Orchestras”

Other Articles, Books, and Dissertations of Interest (to brass musicians in particular)

Bruenger, David. "Women Trombonists in North American Orchestras and Universities," *International Trombone Association Journal* 20, 1992.

Dyer, Richard. "Of gender, bravado and brass; A trumpet star's blare at female students stirs debate over stereotyping." *Boston Globe*, April 21, 1991.

Foulk, Lin. "Works for Horn and Piano by Female Composers: An Annotated Guide," 2003 dissertation, available at www.linfoulk.org.

Jenkins, Ellie. "Women As Professional Horn Players in the United States, 1900-2005," 2005 dissertation.

Hersey, Joanna Ross. "Such Unfeminine Instruments," Women Brass Musicians in American Before 1940," 2006 dissertation.

Ammer, Christine. *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music*, 2nd ed. Portland: Amadeus Press, 2001.

Neuls-Bates, Carol, ed. *Women in Music*, rev. ed. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996

Bowers, Jane, and Judith Tick, ed. *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

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Groh, Jan Bell. *Evening the Score: Women in Music and the Legacy of Frédérique Petrides*. Fayetteville, AK: The University of Arkansas Press, 1991.