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# Oboe Playing and Reed Making



REED MAKING SUPPLIES

**If you were to ask me to describe Bud the musician and probational non tenured member of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in 2002 I would have an opinion based on his limited time in the oboe section. Roughly about a year.**

**The audition that preceded his hiring in the early winter of 2001 was another in a long list of exercises with incompetent management of the BPO. Lisa , the orchestra something or other in charge of the audition made a decree two weeks before the cattle call at Kleinhans music hall that the whole thing would have to be moved to another location because the office of the Erie county commissioner wanted to use an adjacent hall for some function. Because Erie county contributes roughly \$500,000 to the orchestra's budget annually, management was going to bend over backwards for the commissioner at the expense of anything in it's way. So, what the hell, a second oboe audition, shoot we can move that anywhere. It didn't concern anyone that there were seventy plus candidates coming to town from all over. It wasn't a concern to Lisa that they didn't have another location in which to proceed.**

**In my free time of course, I had to accommodate the idiots to find some other location. The only place they could find was some unheated, smelly, mothballed, church on Main street. Because the church needed most of the building to function, the only solution was the basement. I scoped it out with Wes, stage manager at the time, and basically said that this environment was unprofessional, sub-par and all around unacceptable to run an audition. Poor Wesley, he took a lot of garbage from management and the musicians and his position was really untenable. I was impressed that he lasted as long as he did and I generally liked him. I thought he was a good person. Looking back I feel bad for him because he did take a lot of shit from people. It was a miracle that he could do his job at all while being paid next to nothing.**

**I could tell, that the guy was in dire straits because management at the BPO has a way of throwing stuff at people thinking its all going to be alright. What is art anyway. Subjective. BPO wants to fill seats. It doesn't matter if it's in the audience or on the stage. Desperate to fill seats with anything they can find so long as the numbers add up. This is generally the case I would say with the BPO. There is no venue they won't play. No concert that they won't do. So long as there is money involved.**

**So I tried to calm Wes' fears and say "OK" we will work with what we have.**

**Many oboists showed up that day not knowing that the venue had been changed because the BPO and Jenn, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra's personnel manager neglected to inform them of the new location. The plan was to get a van and caddy the candidates from the hall to the smelly stinky, unheated church. When I say stinky, I mean, moth bally smelling, moldy, creaky, drafty, acoustically dead shit hole.**

**If that were not enough, some members of the audition committee namely flute player Christine , and bassoonist Glenn, protested that the committee was not going to be split because there were so many candidates. It was a silent protest in that they never confronted or informed me of. When someone brought a split committee idea to me I responded that the contract is worded in such a way that the committee is not allowed to be split or evenly constituted under any condition. I guess that really chapped their asses because Christine in one of her many sissy fits decided not to show up.**

**So here we are in this unheated, smelly, moldy, rug covered, acoustically horrible office library in the basement of this Cathedral of shit, trying to run an audition. It was miserable and many of the fine players that could have done well were put off by this change and basically very uncomfortable venue. The warm up rooms were on the third floor of an attic space that were even colder than the basement. Smellier too.**

**There is a phrase that I have heard many times in my tenure with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and one that the locals shout from the rooftops. "World Class". The first time I heard it said was by a member of the violin section during a meeting that the musicians had when I first became a member of the orchestra. It was a meeting at a different basement of a smelly stinky old church to discuss the goings on with the recent lockout of eight weeks during the summer. I remember that meeting vividly because I had only been playing with the orchestra for two months before it was shut down. I had moved from Indiana and due to the cheapos at the philharmonic I couldn't get moving money from the orchestra. At the time I had to give most of my furnishings away to Salvation Army and Goodwill. All I brought were the things that I could fit in my Mazda. Three nine hour round trips I made to haul all my stuff to Buffalo and it wasn't enough. I had to part company with some things from my youth that I wish I could have kept but what the heck, it's only stuff and I was going to a new life. I would start over.**

**The problem with being locked out of work at that time was that I was up to my eyeballs in debt. I had to borrow money to pay rent. I had to live off of my credit card which was almost maxxed out. Not to mention the car loan and the College loan which was something around thirty eight thousand dollars. That was in 1988. This is 2015. When you are managing pittance for pay and living in the cheapest housing you can live, It's a another ball of wax for sure.**

**It was a funny meeting because many of the musicians thought that they could come with ideas to raise money. It had the feeling of some kind of communal cooperative where if we pooled our feelings and thoughts while holding hands in our collective misery that somehow we would come up with a solution. The**

**BPO was about 4 million in the hole and I don't know about you but, feelings aside I have no idea how to come up with 4 million to help an orchestra out of debt. Just to give you the scale of how much an orchestra like the BPO costs per week incidentally one of the lowest paid orchestras in the country. Lets say you've got 70 musicians which is what the world class BPO has at \$1000 bucks a week, in 1995 plus health insurance, emg, over-scale, unemployment insurance, etc. Just the musicians, you're looking at well over a hundred grand a week maybe two.**

**Some of my colleagues had wonderful and fresh approaches to raising money. One said that we could have benefit concerts. Pretty good idea, there were some others that said we should bring the battle to the press and the public. Public awareness, another good idea. But my favorite was the one that Christine suggested and I'll never forget it. At one point she piped up and said that we should have a "bake sale" and sell "brownies and cookies". I almost pissed my pants laughing. I couldn't of course because that would have been rude and we were all in the same boat. However, a reality check every once in a while is not a bad thing. Chances are it would be impossible to raise 4 million dollars with a bake sale even if we sold them with our shirts off. I doubt we could raise a hundred at the time. Maybe it worked for the handsome men's club but I am pretty sure that it wouldn't work with a symphony orchestra and it's not something that you could take the kids to. Here's the thing. It's not the musicians "responsibility" to raise money for the orchestra. Quite frankly it's unprofessional.**

**The BPO has had a strange cooperative contentious relationship with management and their colleagues. It has been a pervasive and divisive wedge between what would be a properly run organization from one that is a dysfunctional cluster fuck of opinion. You have people in the orchestra like Monty and Clem and some others that have ideas and want to be heard or in general mix with the rich people or at least try to voice their opinions about business when in fact some of these individuals are merely just trust fund babies. It's not good for an orchestra to have spies for management or people who think that their ideas are effective. Let management manage I say and let the musicians make music.. or in another words. "just do your job." That is a tough one for the busy bodies and the noise makers though. I remember when former music director Max told me once that "the only thing Clem cares about is being invited to have dinner with the president of M and T bank" ....whats his...I can't remember it right now. Let me look it up. "B Wilmers."**

**Here's another little clip about Clem. That very summer when the orchestra was locked out I was invited to dinner oddly enough by some fair weather friends and Clem was there also. I remember standing in the kitchen watching Mrs. whats her name cook and Clem, short for "Clementine" I'm assuming came up to me and right off the bat without a formal introduction or knowing anything about me started criticizing my position in the orchestra. "why do you think you should make more money than the section players?" ....Why do you think that you deserve more money, because you play principal?!" .."what makes you so special?" .....holy shit man, I just came here to get something to eat. As I look back on the dysfunction of the BPO with regards to the individuals that work in it and management, it's no wonder that so many horrible things have transpired with me. I would allege that many of these former colleagues have disorders. Clem was relentless in her interrogation of me and the only response that I could come up with was "I'm not**

**working right now."**

**The world class phrase came up in this emotionally charged group therapy meeting however at the stinky church when one of the senior violinists started screaming in anger how we could be treated like this when we are "World Class". It was at that moment that I realized I was in the midst of a bunch of delusionals.**

**In my limited career I have worked with many fine orchestras. In my rehearsing or performing with these many orchestras I have played first oboe for the exception of one, Boston. I filled in for an ailing Wayne Rapier to play the "Symphony Fantastique" among other things. Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Atlanta, Louisville, Indianapolis, Grant Park, Houston, are some of the names that I have played in the sections of as first oboe. These orchestras may be considered world class and none of them have a bake sale to stay alive.**

**Back to the second oboe audition. The audition needless to say did not go well, the committee was uncommitted, the players did not play well. At the final, which was held at the hall magically because of course the music director JoAnn was there. None of the players who played were qualified to play with the world class BPO. I mentioned that I did not care to have any of them in the section but JoAnn in her constant desperation to fill seats objected and said we must choose. I responded by saying it would be a good idea to bring both candidates to perform a concert and some rehearsals so as to see how they would work in the section etc. JoAnn insisted that we hire one person only because of money of course. The suggestion was made that we have an alternate in case the candidate was not up to speed. It was agreed by the committee or what was left of it that none of the candidates were good enough to be considered alternates. A recipe for disaster provided by the newly acquired green behind the ears music director, JoAnn.**

**Some of the excuses that I will eventually describe are shocking in the lack of fundamentals of music.**

**Just for the record I'll give you an example. There is no official pitch with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. Meaning that when the oboe tunes the orchestra, that person, contractually speaking can play virtually any pitch they want. The reality is that we try to perform at the same pitch so that it doesn't come off sounding like a middle school orchestra orchestra. But there's got to be some consensus. Consensus merely means that we all agree. Rarely the case. Pitch in an orchestra is a hot topic with countless opinions. Realistically we try to play at the same pitch but if its off at all it's easy to blame the oboe player because they are the ones that play the tuning note.**

**When I first came to the orchestra they were playing a little high, somewhere around A=442. What this means is that the orchestra tunes to four hundred and forty two vibrations per second. That is the pitch. Slowly over time I was able to stabilize it at around 441. To a musician 1 vibration a second is a great deal. The laymen is not aware of the critical nature of it. It's hard for some to believe but that is the difference between good orchestras and great orchestras. I've played in both. I have also played professionally in orchestras that tune to 442 and 440. Buffalo is neither. The crux of the problem is that the strings like to**

**play high and they claim that it is natural to do so. I would argue that it is not natural and that playing high is the same as playing out of tune. One should hear the way some of these people describe the art of playing to pitch and how pitch evolves and has it's ups and downs etc. Sure amateurs have a way of making excuses for their inabilities but to lecture me on pitch is kind of a joke. I gather that I have played in my career probably around twenty thousand A's. That is not an exaggeration and every one of them I would say was spot on. But here's the rub. The good orchestra's that I have performed with do not have pitch problems. When we tune at 440 we play at 440. End of story. Pittsburgh, Grant Park, Atlanta and so on. 440 is 440 throughout the concerts rehearsals and it doesn't change. I am of the opinion that 442 is just an excuse to play out of tune. Not to mention that in this country wind instruments are not made to play at 442. In doing so one screws up some of the notes on the horn and you'll have next to an impossible time playing them in tune.**

**Buffalo on the other hand has a number of factors that mess with the pitch. String players attitudes that it's ok to play sharp. The Celeste however is from Vienna and is a really fine instrument but it is pitched to 440. Because the strings play high the piano tuner has to turn the piano to 441. To make matters worse, not long ago the percussion were given cart Blanche to purchase new percussion instruments and some were pitched at 442. When I asked the principal percussion what the pitch that they bought the new instruments. He said "442, because that's what they play in Cleveland". I jokingly responded "they are going to have a tough time hearing you". I just stood there in disbelief that someone would buy new instruments for the orchestra and get them in the wrong pitch. Let me explain how it's not going to work out.**

**At the end of the third movement of Shostakovitch's Fifth symphony there is a beautiful little passage where the theme of the movement that the oboist started is reintroduced in the Coda section, or ending whereupon the Celeste, the glockenspiel and the harp play the notes at the same pitch at the same time. Guess what. It's out of tune. The BPO harpist Suzanne whom I've played golf with many times has spoken to me about the problems of tuning. Before every concert she must tune her harp. Once long ago I asked her what she tuned to. 441 was the response. So based on the facts. Celeste = 440, Harp = 441, Glockenspiel = 442. The numbers don't add up. You may be scratching your head but in layman's terms, it is out of tune.**

**JoAnn at my arbitration hearing defended the out of tune-ness whilst accusing me of playing out of tune and get this. The glocke and the Celeste are out of tune and it's because of an artistic decision on her part. And she defended it. Whenever I played that piece with the BPO I sat in wonder at how the end of the third movement could be anything but horribly out of tune.**

**After the audition was over it is customary for the Music Director and audition committee to meet with the new member of the orchestra. It's odd that both Bud and Catherine behaved the same way. Very standoffish. I remember Bud standing there with his arms crossed and legs spread like he had just conquered a mountain or slain a dragon. Now that in itself is not unusual behavior, having just won an audition but what was unusual in his demeanor was that there was no communication. I tried to make**

**small talk but he wouldn't talk with me. Strange. Just stood there, arms folded, legs spread. Catherine was the same. Couldn't get a word out of her. Maybe they were in disbelief. You know, Catherine said to me once, "when I lived in Madison, no one wanted to work with me." Now I know why.**

**He started playing with the orchestra in the fall of 2002. The first rehearsal of the first concert with JoAnn for opening night. Bud played three notes. THREE NOTES. The first three notes I heard him play. He sounded like a high school er. I would describe it as buzzy, honky, spit filled notes. I kind of looked over and he sheepishly stopped playing but I was thinking to myself WTF?.**

**That first day did not go well for him. Neither did any of the following days that he played with the orchestra. I don't feel bad for him because quite simply he was out of his league. During that first week knowing that there is a clause in the contract that states a probationary musician may be released during the first six weeks of their employment for any reason. None needs to be given. It is not unusual to do such things. I know of several musicians that were released during their first six weeks of employment because of whatever.**

**During the course of Bud's first week I approached JoAnn and I said to her " I don't think it's going to work out".**

**You must understand what type of person a music director is generally speaking and it doesn't matter what language they speak or what country they are from. Music directors do not want to be responsible for decision making or people. They do not want to have to make personnel decisions. Many of the music directors that I have worked with are for the most part, social misfits. Sure a few are brilliant, but some cannot maintain a conversation that doesn't have the word music in it. It's pathetic in so many ways but the crime is their inability to take responsibility for their position and make the tough decisions.**

**Joann routinely hands responsibility to others. Based on my experience with her.**

**When musicians know that the shenanigans and the buck stops with the music director, people don't screw around. When they also understand that the music director respects them and treats them professionally, most musicians will be content in their roles. It's a plus when a music director having these qualities also has a sense of humor. These types are few and far between.**

**In my professional career unfortunately I have spent much of my time working with music directors without such qualities. It makes for a bad scenario. The problem is some of these music directors like JoAnn run away from the very problems that they create.**

**On approaching Maestra JoAnn at the door to her green room backstage at the break of one of the rehearsals she did not want to hear anything about it. Her response was "we need to give it time". She brushed me off and would not listen to anything that I had to say. Things with Bud's playing did not get any**

**better. Maybe it was because I had spent the previous year 2001 working with oboist Erin who is now principal of the Dallas Symphony. Erin is an exceptional player and she was able to play second oboe with the BPO for about a year coming over from Rochester when she could. I allege that the oboe section when Erin and I were playing has never nor will ever sound better. That being said, JoAnn approached me one day and said that she wasn't sure about Erin's playing and that we didn't have to use her just because she was on the sub list....At that time I began to suspect that JoAnn really didn't know the difference between good playing and bad. In retrospect I believe it's because Joann would have rather hired someone she was more familiar with. A disciple perhaps.**

**One of the qualities of a good music director is that they at least understand what good playing is or at least know great playing. For many it's just a popularity contest or based on the recommendations of others. I would allege also that many directors in charge of Orchestras don't know a great deal about good playing is or what it means. And how could they. Some are performance rejects themselves. If music directors were any good at performing they wouldn't be music directors. It's a very strange thing. Musicians put a great deal of time and energy into performing and many of those that stand on the podium have no idea what performing is.**

**Working with former second oboist Colin was a wonderful pleasure also and days that I long for. Not that he was a phenomenal player but that he was a good man and understood his job well. Great sense of humor and not stressed out. Showed up and did what he was supposed to do. Many in today's generation quite simply don't get it.**

**Having worked with such good players and exceptional people I guess I had been spoiled because what followed was an avalanche of incompetence. During the fall of 2002 in what turned out to be typical fashion for JoAnn, she was not to able address issues in the orchestra that needed to be addressed. When there were things frequently that needed to be tended to, she would leave town. This would become her hallmark.**

**I went to management not knowing how the procedure for tenure etc. and if I was going to be a part of the tenure discussion and what my role as section principal was. I need to point out that this became an ongoing theme with management. At the time the new executive director was Larry. I was actually on his search committee and interviewed with him and former principal horn player Roy. I liked Larry generally but he did have the habit of talking too much and as time progressed he eventually came down with what I refer to as EDD. EDD is also known by me as Executive Director Disease. This is when an individual is in a position of authority or power for too long and it starts to seep into the nervous system. Larry got the disease early on and started to throw his weight around. When these ED's have the disease they are under the perception that they can do and say whatever because you are merely a plebe and that's all there is to it. Some of them won't even engage in civil conversation and will be dismissive or autocratic. Like I said, I did like him generally but you had to know his peeves. "If you don't sign your contract I'm going to fire you." Ok, but can't we discuss the contract?....I guess not. See... that's abusive talk and one should not talk to**

**employees that way particularly when they have the option to dick their contracts.**

**Larry got on a lot of people's nerves. When someone has a lot of responsibility, the pressure is high and we understand that. But that is no reason to treat people like shit because in the end you are being paid for it. For me that is the ultimate reasoning. To have a job and make a wage so that you can earn a living to foster your children's futures and the sanctity and security of your home. Nothing more needs to be said. ACT PROFESSIONALLY AND ACCEPT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. You, after all are making \$5000 a week to take the shit that is thrown at you. I have no pity for you because, you are getting paid.**

**In October of 2002 I had a meeting with Lisa the orchestra whatever and Larry. I said "what is my role in the tenure process and what are my responsibilities as section leader in overseeing the hires in my section?". I would say that that question is fairly pointed and succinct in my role as to other musicians. Larry responded in his bossy angry tone "this is JoAnn's decision and you have nothing to do with it. You will not be consulted and your opinion does not matter nor will it have any bearing on the outcome of Buds employment with this orchestra!"**

**Ok then. I have nothing to do with it. Not my job fine. During the time that J. Bud played with the orchestra unfortunately I had to contend with colleagues opinions of his playing. Feng a Cellist "he, not good enough to play in orchestra". I hear you doll. I would respond "please tell Joann I do not have anything to do with it".**

**Another musician, cellist Roman , "that guy is terrible" "he can't play".**

**Doug and Andrea "OMG what the heck is going on"**

**Dan "his playing is awful, did Jen get the numbers right at the audition?"**

**I'm not making this stuff up and I would swear to it under oath. After a while I got sick of it. Why do you think that I have anything to do with this person. Read the contract or something but you know I'm not your emotional whipping post. That's what many people in this orchestra like to do. Bitch bitch bitch.**

**During that time in 2002 the BPO hired Cally to play English Horn. Cally was new to the orchestra and she "got it". Meaning she had enough experience in the workplace to show up, be professional and keep her comments to herself. I have a lot of respect for her in that regard because she has some of the "old school" qualities in orchestral playing that are sorely missed. She approached me one day in the early winter of 2003 and said "I know it's not my place to tell you, but I don't believe that Bud is good enough to play in this orchestra". That was said in a respectful manner and I considered her opinion well because of her playing and demeanor and that was the way to do it. However, it was falling on deaf ears because as I was told by management and so forth that it was none of my business.**

**In the fall of 2003 life got real difficult for me. My wife and I lost a child.**

**Here's the thing, in course of ones existence there are things that matter and things that don't. Life**

**matters. The life of your child and your family matter and I don't want to sound like I'm talking in absolutes here but everything else including music can take a back seat.**

**Two weeks after the loss and when my wife and I were still in mourning, Bud decided to give me a call. But it wasn't to express his condolences. He was on the phone begging me for help. To add insult to injury this is what he said to me.**

**"I heard about what happened and it happens a lot."**

**Really.... Not to me it doesn't.**

**I'm not going to get into the details of what it's like to lose a preemie. If you want to learn more about I suggest that you visit sites that care for prenatal bereavement. Yes, it does happen but that does not make it any less emotionally devastating. When one suffers the loss of a preemie it is no less powerful of an emotion. As individuals we mourn differently. Some people can function while others cannot. It is normal behavior for a parent. My wife could handle the loss in her way but I could not. I desperately needed therapy and it continued for many years. I was not only dealing with the death of a child. I was coming to terms with my mothers passing, a neighbors passing, a relatives passing and a soon to be colleagues passing.**

**So hear I am on the phone with someone who needs reassurance that his job is going to be there for him. On the one hand there are colleagues coming up to me and complaining. Then I'm put in this situation where it's like I have some kind of influence over the hiring procedure. Larry rejected me, JoAnn rejected me yet here I am being held responsible for the job of music director.**

**You know what I did. What kind of person that I am. Instead of saying something like 'piss off' or 'go to hell', or leave me the f&^\* alone, I tried to pacify him. That's exactly how I would describe it. Pacify. I said to him, "you know Bud, I'm not going to be playing with the orchestra for a while and JoAnn is really the individual that you should be speaking with. All I can say is to play your best and hope for a good outcome. Bud you should talk to JoAnn about this, she is the one making the decision".**

**Bud, thought that he would fill in for me. Play first oboe while I was out in mourning. By all accounts at least those that filled me in, it didn't go very well. The strangest account that I recall was from the flute player Christine.**

**Christine in my opinion is a very angry person and not one that is conducive to docile relations. She has said to me on several occasions "I'm the biggest bitch in the orchestra, you better believe it. Ohhhh yeahh." No shit, those were her words. I find it so ironic that she would say these things to me about Bud because the woman would essentially try to find anything that she could grasp about me or something I said in order to turn it against me. For many years this has been her Raison d'être.**

**After rehearsal in the fall of '03 after I returned she felt obliged to give me her opinion of Bud in that angry dismissive tone of hers. "you know, Bud really shot himself in the foot", She barked at me like a dog. "We were doing a simple Mozart symphony and Paul Polivnek the guest conductor asked Bud to play an octave during the rehearsal and my God, he couldn't do it." she said and she went on "I couldn't believe my ears it was so bad". Then she said "if he had any chance of getting tenure he blew it".**

**Wow that's an earful coming from someone who themselves allegedly can't play an octave in tune. But I already knew these things and at that point in my life I didn't really care much about it. In fact I didn't really care about any of these a-holes that I had to work with. But that's not why we go to work each day is it?**

**I've told my Dad a couple times that loving something is not a prerequisite for being good at it. In fact I know of many who love music but suck at it. It's not love that makes you good at something. It's discipline and perseverance and many of the qualities that makes one a good person. Loving something is not a prerequisite for being good at it and being good at something doesn't mean that you love it.**

**There are a couple other scenerios that are interesting and applicable to the cluster fuck that is the J Bud debacle.**

**I mentioned earlier that Dan the horn player came up to me to comment about Bud. He said "did Jen get the numbers wrong at the audition?" This may sound odd but it did happen. My former colleague Alex was a victim of incompetent management. Several years earlier there was an audition for principal trumpet. Alex was informed after the preliminaries that he had been eliminated. So he went back to the hotel and gathered his stuff from the room and made arrangements to return to the airport. He was standing at the guest services desk checking out when the phone rang. The concierge said "why yes, he is standing right here. I'll let you talk to him." He handed the phone to Alex "hello", Alex said. "this is Jen the personnel manager from the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and I made a mistake in the numbers, you are supposed to play in the semi-finals which are happening right now so you need to get over here quick".**

**How's that for incompetence. She can't count. It became something of an inside joke with members of the BPO even though it's not really funny. Alex eventually won the gig. Dan was being half serious when he raised the issue.**

**Throughout the probational process Bud did not really understand that it's best to prove to your colleagues that you want to be there. He could be very demeaning. One time during a rehearsal, the strings were having a little trouble with some lick and it wasn't going so great. So Bud spoke and said sort of under his breath but not really, "what the strings need to do is go home and practice!"**

**Another comment from him was after the principal clarinet missed a note in rehearsal and Bud turned around and yelled to John. "it's like a bad smell, that never goes away!". John responded "I don't think you**

**have tenure yet do you?" I'm not sure if John was joking or not but Bud clearly wasn't. He wasn't kidding when he spoke up in rehearsals, he was insulting.**

**Probably one of the biggest faux pas as a nontenured musician is to insult other players. Bud was keen to do that. I don't know what his motivation was but it clearly was not a positive thing to do. Boundaries are important in relationships so that people can have peace of mind. Some people particularly socially inept ones don't understand boundaries. These are things that you learn early on and if by the time you are an adult these childlike behaviors are not corrected they are considered a disorder. Now I'm not speaking as an expert in human behavior but I've lived long enough to know when an individual does not understand boundaries particularly if your employment is dependent on it. However, this one is kind of funny and also became somewhat of an inside joke.**

**One day during rehearsal in 2002-2003 season one of the newer players in the orchestra was sitting in the back of the Viola section and had gotten a hold of a plastic candy wrapper. Janz was his name and he placed the wrapper under his foot and made it make a crinkly sound to the beat with the music when we were not playing. Actually he wasn't doing it with the music but during the quiet parts when the Maestro was talking. I wasn't really aware of it and could care less quite frankly but Bud couldn't take it. He finally yelled over to the violist "Janz, this isn't a walk in the park!" I can't remember what we were playing but it wasn't a big deal. That became a catch phrase for Janz who would turn around during rehearsals many times and say to me "this isn't a walk in the park..." ahuh.**

**I really don't need to comment on Bud's playing and there are many things that I could say. If this thing had been approached correctly from the beginning, lives would have been spared. If JoAnn had done what she is paid ten thousand dollars a week to do it could have been avoided.**

**During the winter of 2002-2003 the union for some reason took it upon themselves to draft a letter to Bud saying that if his behavior did not improve and his playing did not improve, he would be in jeopardy of tenure. I recall it was February or March of 02. Mark, the president of the union at the time met with me at the break of a rehearsal and wanted me to sign this letter. Here's the thing about letters and myself. I don't like letters. And I don't care for the people who write them. If you have a beef with someone, tell them. That's how problems are solved. Writing letters is how problems are created. So Mark Jones showed me this letter and said we are going to give it to Bud. I repeated what Larry had said to me. That I had nothing to do with it. I told Mark that I'm not signing any letters. It is not our responsibility to discipline each other and that's that. He buried it.**

**Where is the music director JoAnn in all of this? This is her job. The orchestra personnel is her responsibility. Not the musicians, not management and not the union. The leader of the orchestra is the one that stands on the podium. The one that gets paid the big bucks. You do not get to enjoy all the spoils unless you can lead an organization. Unfortunately, JoAnn does not know or does not care to take any responsibility. This is an ongoing issue with her.**

**One day in the fall of the 2003-2004 season Bud's tenure was up. JoAnn had a "meeting" with me. She started by saying that she was not going to give Bud tenure. She said "I don't know what Bud was thinking when he thought he could fill in for you, fill your shoes so to speak but my god Pierre, it was like I had a high school oboe player."**

**Throughout this time JoAnn not once asked me my opinion.**

**However, there was another matter that concurrently raised it's ugly head.**

**In February of 2001 the orchestra had a piccolo audition. During the audition the candidates also had to play the flute. During auditions sometimes candidates can make funny noises or whatever. During the break after a long afternoon of listening I was walking to the stage with Glenn the bassoon player and I said to him " you know if we took down the screen" referring to the screens that separate musicians from the committee for anonymity, "we could see what some of these players are doing that makes them so noisy". Glenn responded "if we took down the screens we could tell if they were straight or gay because we don't want any Lesbians in the orchestra". Now this is where I responded with my now infamous statement. It was meant as a joke and nothing more and it was a joke that Glenn understood at the time because we were having the same private or so I thought conversation. Glenn couldn't stop at that point. He had to go on with his humor. "so who in the orchestra is gay? Well there's that person and this person and I don't know is he gay?.....Ok so who are the lesbians in the orchestra, well there's her...ew gross and then there's her...." By that time I had moved on and wasn't interested in the rest of his joking. We were all tired and a little punch drunk. In any case my "alleged" comment wasn't spoken to Bud because he was not member of the orchestra yet. Not once did I make a personal or critical statement to Bud about his lifestyle. Not once did I make a homophobic comment to him. Nor did I refer to him about his personal choices or anything outside the business of making music.**

**Unbeknown to me two of my colleagues were listening intently. Christine and Betsy the two flute players.**

**For some reason Christine is someone that has held a grudge against me since almost the beginning of our employment. I'm not exactly sure why but I have spoken with some of my colleagues about it and one in particular clarinetist Patti thinks it has something to do with rejection and that I will not give certain individuals my approval or some such insecure nonsense.**

**When I first joined the orchestra Christine was showing up at my doorstep unannounced. She would call and leave these cute fun little messages on my answering machine and she would send me cards and ask me to go out for dinner. She would tell me how much she liked older men and other stuff. I got the feeling that she kind of liked me but I wasn't really interested in her. Sometimes rejection for some people takes an ugly side. I don't know what else is up except having my own ideas about her as a person based on a lot of reading that I've done suffice to say that I learned early on that in my opinion she is a very dangerous**

**person.**

**One example that I can give of many is one that I had personal experience with. It was after we had both received tenure and sometime in the fall of the following season. During a rehearsal the conductor asked a player in the wind section if they could give more crescendo. Meaning to gradually play louder. The individual under their breathe said something like "Sure, I've got the biggest crescendo in the orchestra". It was funny and we all laughed including Christine. Factually, this individual really did have one of the biggest crescendos in the orchestra. But of course there is an adult world which most of us live in and then there is a child's world. Some people don't know the difference. In any case.**

**Later, that evening I got a phone call. It was Christine.**

**"I am writing a letter to management about what happened today at rehearsal and I want to read it to you so that you can tell me what you think. "**

**"what happened at rehearsal today?" I said**

**"well just let me read you the letter and you can tell me what you think" she responded.**

**"today in rehearsal so and so said that they had the biggest crescendo in the orchestra and they were referring to their penis".**

**"Whoa" I said "Christine I don't think that's a good idea. You really shouldn't say something like that to management, it was just a joke"**

**"Well" she said "I think it's sexual harassment because he should not have said it"  
I was dumbfounded.**

**I repeated "Christine I really don't think that it is a good idea and he didn't mean it, it was just a joke...." she wasn't listening. She was off in some kind of world that I don't know much about. I kept saying "I really don't think this is a good idea.."**

**What kind of person writes something like that. It was a joke and not even a literal one. It was left up to the imagination of the listener. That is a joke with a double meaning. Meant for adults. Innocuous. How could someone interpret that as anything but? I was in shock. I didn't nor do I understand how someone could interpret it as anything but.**

**After I pleaded with her not to send such a letter she said, "I'm going to send it anyway because that kind of behavior is not acceptable".**

**Not only is her premise confusing but I'm not sure of the end game. Do you want an apology? Would that make you feel better? Do you want money for damages. Do you want a window office? What is the point? What do you want? Just to write letters.....I'm not sure what the reasoning is but I would allege it has something to do with childhood trauma and perhaps some Daddy issues.**

**On that audition day Betsy and Christine overheard some of what was said but enough for Christine to phone and write a letter stated that I was engaging in anti something or other comments.**

**I got a call from Mark the president of the union,**

**"Pierre whats going on?"**

**"what do you mean what's going on?" I said nonchalantly,**

**Mark responded "you said something at the audition today."**

**"What did I say at the audition today?" I answered.**

**"You were making anti gay comments" he shot back**

**"no I wasn't" I responded**

**"well" he said, "Christine said that you were"**

**I realized that she will take the truth or remnants of it and turn against whomever she wants. I did not want to have any thing to do with her. That is not how colleagues treat colleagues.**

**From then on Christine was looking for a way to screw me at work. When I say screw I mean it in the not so nice way. It became a way of life for her. When it wasn't me it was someone else that she could focus her acute anger at. Mostly men but sometimes women also. In fact all the years that I sat with her in the BPO she could not restrain herself from her hatred of two individuals. Monty the cello player and JoAnn herself.**

**It was the fall of 2003 and Bud got wind that he wasn't going to get tenure hence the phone-call I alluded to earlier. I'm not sure how but from what I've heard he began to panic. The union informed me that he filed two lawsuits against JoAnn in the spring of 2003 and that they were both thrown out. Of course if you have already filed a lawsuit against your music director, it makes it kind of hard to call her up and say "hello". Does that make any sense? I fail to see the logic of suing your boss in court and then expecting to get tenure, Allegedly. one was the failure of management to properly inform him of tenure and the other was some kind of harassment, allegedly, suit against JoAnn.**

**Of course people in the orchestra heard through the grapevine that this stuff was going down and according to JoAnn thats when Glenn intervened and told Bud about my comment at the 2001 audition.**

**I met with JoAnn in a meeting in the fall of 2003 and she told how Glenn had approached Bud with my alleged comment. She said "I don't know what Glenn was thinking when he told Bud what you said but some people will take anything and use it. I'm sure that if Glenn knew what this was going to do, he would take it back." Then she said that we need to move on. I was kind of confused about the "meeting" because**

**JoAnn was merely telling me what she was going to do and that she had made her decision. So why was I there? Culpability?**

**That was the ammo that Bud needed. Then it became a shit-storm. I was threatened by the management that if I didn't fill the forms that I could be subpoenaed and I really felt that the truth would settle it. That was a very naive assumption and not one that scum of the earth lawyers use. In retrospect I should have done nothing. It was not my concern and I had nothing to do with it.**

**Let me clarify if somehow the dateline doesn't add up for you.**

**Bud was given a notice sometime in the late spring of 2003 from JoAnn allegedly outlining the things that he needed to work on. But being a genius, rather than working harder at being better he used the list as a means to file some kind of lawsuit against JoAnn for hostile work environment. Allegedly. Now this was sometime in the summer of 2003.**

**I know what your thinking. His tenure wasn't up until the end of 2003 or beginning of 2004 so why did he file two lawsuits against his employer if he wanted to get tenure? Wouldn't you figure that somehow that might work against you?**

**That's right, he allegedly sued his music director before he got tenure.**

**What really set things in motion was when at a hearing before a judge of the third summons and complaint that both JoAnn and Bud were present. Now Bud and his lawyers allegedly made grandiose statements that I was homophobic and treated him terribly and all kinds of other nonsense. Also, at the hearing from what I was told Bud was crying to the judge and saying what a horrible person I was allegedly. When the Judge asked JoAnn, "is this true do you take Mr. Roy's advice when giving tenure to musicians in the orchestra?" That is when the moment of truth happened. That point in time was critical and one in which a leader would have risen to the occasion. That is when someone with a spine should have been asked that question and answered. "no your honor, it was my decision and my decision alone." Problem solved.**

**For those of you that have not seen JoAnn in action it's something to behold.**

**Let me give you a couple of examples.**

**Not long ago during a rehearsal Lisa the orchestra I don't know what came upon the stage and said that management would like to meet with all the orchestra principals. Now anyone who knows anything about the way orchestras function would never come upon the stage and say that the principals of the orchestra are needed for an opinion of something or other. Wars have started for less. That is not something you say in front of section players. Its akin to class warfare. Only an idiot would say such things. The meeting of course was without it's leader JoAnn and ironically it was about orchestra discipline. It happened sometime**

**in 2006.**

**Lisa started the meeting in her typical droning quiet voice. "JoAnn has been concerned about discipline issues in the orchestra and she wants to know what to do about it?"**

**We sat there and said we were unaware that there were any discipline issues in the orchestra.**

**Lisa responded "well we are having problems"**

**I said "what section is it?"**

**Lisa responded "well we can't tell you." droning on.**

**Glenn asked what section is it?**

**Lisa said "I'm not supposed to tell you but it is in the string section."**

**Someone asked what part of the string section. Lisa again droned in her monotone "I am not supposed to tell you but it's the second violin section and JoAnn wants to know what to do about it" ..... silence**

**If you have ever played with an orchestra you know that the second violin section is not to be messed with. They are essentially the mafia of the orchestra. Avoid their gaze. It's not a section that you want to pick a fight with. The most rebellious, loudest, intimidating section of the orchestra of any symphony is the second violin section. At the breaks you will notice that no one dares to cross their territory. People will hop over cellos and plow down first violins upon exit but nobody will tread through second violin territory. You may disappear quietly if you try. Naturally, we as musicians and seasoned at that understood that maybe there were problems, but I'll be damned if I get involved with some of that.**

**The consensus of course was that it's not our fucking job to discipline our colleagues.**

**Alex "that's her job".**

**Amy "discipline is the job of the music director"**

**Glenn "that is JoAnn's job, to discipline the orchestra."**

**Val "that is not our job".**

**Too bad some of these people couldn't take their own advice but in any event we basically told the drone that you know....and where the heck is the boss any way.**

**Here is another example of JoAnn in action or lack thereof.**

**Recently there was an audition for timpani with the BPO. I was on the committee as I had been for so many auditions. I can't count them all. The audition went ok except for a couple of things that I'll clue you in on in the near future on the topic of fairness. But for the time being lets just assume that it went ok. Here's the thing. When people know who is on the other side of the screen or have an inkling and there is a posse in the band that wants someone in. There are ways in which you can do so. One of the ways is to invite two candidates to perform with the orchestra and hope that one of 'em is your boy. That is sort of what happened with the timpani audition because the percussion already knew and JoAnn already knew who they wanted, allegedly.**

**One of the candidates was a young man from Cleveland and the other was the now timpanist Matt. Each were invited to play with the BPO on a concert and then the committee met and hashed it out at the break of some rehearsal. The contract states that the committee and the music director are to settle any differences by “amicable discussion”. That is just a moronic way of saying that the music director gets to decide. It’s a horrible contract. So for some reason JoAnn wanted everyone to have a kind of group therapy session to discuss who we should hire. The young man from Cleveland whom I don’t know his name performed Beethoven Nine with the BPO. I would have to say having played that piece many times that he was nothing less than phenomenal.**

**Matt on the other had played with the orchestra many times and was a solid player but not the caliber of this wiz kid from Cleveland. As a member of the orchestra I have never been concerned with whom I have to sit next to so long as they can hold up there end. It doesn’t mean they have to be Heifetz or Debussy but you know if they can play then they should get the gig. I however have learned that is not the way the world works. It’s about relationships how could I be so ignorant? The more you like someone the better they sound. Really?**

**At the meeting, Joann said to me “Pierre tell us what you think”. Now that is an expression that one should not ask me in a situation where a difficult decision must be made because I am going to tell you what I think and you are probably not going to like it. So I did. Not what she wanted to hear. There was an obvious conflict in the room amongst the players and no amount of amicable discussion was going to change it. We should have just had a vote, maybe even a secret ballot but I don’t trust that stuff because I have witnessed people Like Clem throwing ballots out during a count claiming that they are invalid. You know the best medicine really is to not give a shit but then eventually you are going to be blamed for it.**

**This was JoAnn’s reason to hire Matt over the wunderkind and I’ll not forget it any time soon. “This is one of the last timpani jobs that Matt will have the opportunity to win and he has a family”.**

**In classic JoAnn fashion she felt the walls closing in because the committee could not amicably reach a decision so she decided to plan her exit strategy which BTW is something to behold.. As she reached for the doorknob and slowly bent her head down muttering to herself like some bag-lady in Central park, Jonathan T-bone player, and a rusty one at that begged the question, “so whats the decision? who are we voting for “ As JoAnn muttering to herself quietly exiting “well I have decided to hire Matt.... and that’s.....(in silence).... what we are going to.....door closes and she drifts off in the background of musicians in the hall.**

**There we were all sitting quietly staring at one another wondering what the fuck we were doing there in the first place if she was going to decide anyway. It’s just part of her, lets make everybody feel good so long as we all decide the same way.**

**So here we are back in the courtroom and what do you think happened. Did she come out and say that in**

**fact she was the music director in charge of all the hires and fires or did she try to hide behind some invisible object that would protect her from her responsibility?**

**Well according to my sources it went something like this. Judge leans on JoAnn and JoAnn in typical fashion caves, allegedly. Stuttering and muttering to herself inaudible chatter "ah well I don't know ahhh and well yeah I guess maybe I do...sure I take his opinions but well uhhhh....stammer mutter yap.....Ah yes....." Clack went the gavel.**

**The case goes on. So the long and short of it is now because of JoAnns lack of leadership and her inability to decide and be responsible for her position she has ruined many peoples lives including mine.**

**Allegedly.**