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### Symphonic metamorphoses

*Variations on vulnerability: orchestral musicians' employment in times of crisis*

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“This book is only the table of contents for another book.”

György Konrád *A Feast in the Garden*

## **With Gratitude**

“For the unlearned, old age is winter, for the learned it is the season of the harvest.” Words of wisdom passed down over the centuries from early pietists of the populist Hasidic movement in the hinterlands of present-day Ukraine teach us that age has its advantages. The benefit of decades of learning has provided me with a great number of giant shoulders to stand upon. To close an enquiry of considerable girth with voluminous praise for all those who have reached out along the way would add another heft of print, thus forgiveness in advance to all those whose names have not been mentioned: you have not been forgotten!

Although true praise reaches far back to superlative high school mentors, the roots of this enquiry were planted during a collective behavior seminar at Yale in the mid 1970s when Professor Hillel Levine encouraged me to consider ‘that peculiar’ orchestral organism. A few years later, experiences at Gian-Carlo Menotti’s Spoleto Festival dei Due Mondi prompted my first venture in standing up for orchestral musicians’ rights.

Most of my research took place far from the halls of the University of Amsterdam Law School where many colleagues have sweetened my academic life. As a middle-aged law student, inspiration gleaned from lectures given by Friedl Weiss, Jan Klabbers, and Ted de Boer stimulated the search for ‘more.’ In 2004, Edgar du Perron took the risk to offer me the exceptional chance to teach at the law school. Since then, I have reaped the benefits of working in a fantastic educational environment with encouragement from Dean André Nollkaemper. Thanks to the Private Law department for helping a ‘stranger in its midst’ always feel welcome with special gratitude to my dedicated team-teaching partner, Marieke Oderkerk and department chairs (Marco Loos; Aukje van Hoek) past and present. For well over a decade, my brilliant officemate Chantal Mak has always set a shining example of excellence. 8th floor pleasantries with the best and the brightest and beyond ‘the’ department, stimulating repartees with Jack Jan Wirken, my fellow Works Council members (including the wise and witty, Dirk Korf) have sweetened my years at the university. Unforgettable experiences on academic exchange with Marjoleine Zieck and hours of conversation with Hege Kjos helped balance long months of wanderings through heaps of material.

From the very first meeting with my supervisor Evert Verhulp, when my ideas were embryonic at best, to a certain freezing January day when I was treated to a climb to the top of the Great Church in Naarden (Grote Kerk) and the chance to look eye-to-eye at age-old frescos, his capacity to challenge thinking processes and raise the bar while maintaining faith in my ability to craft (“it’s just a book”) made this voyage viable and particularly pleasurable. Extending the eye-to-eye metaphor further, zoom sessions with co-supervisor Beryl ter Haar were of incalculable benefit. Her insider knowledge of the orchestral profession and staunch commitment to fair practice are the stuff that inspiration is made of. She carefully separated thicket from forest and helped line up the trees to march harmoniously in the key of vulnerability.

Great thanks to my PhD committee members (Professors Irene Asscher-Vonk, Marion Crain, Marc de Wilde, Edgar du Perron, Martin Senfleben and Dr. Bassem Akiki) who have undertaken the intrepid task to consider such a massive manuscript. I look forward to absorb and incorporate your invaluable commentary.

Often-repeated and true, one learns more from students than vice-versa. A myriad of former students over the past 18 years who have netted success in a diversity of pursuits continue to add spice to educational pathways. Merijn Rademaker, Alejandra Bouts, and Laura Burgers, along with scores of ‘legal eagles’ past and present have kept my fires of learning burning.

For the past several decades, I have had the fortune to operate not only within the magical worlds of orchestral performance and university teaching but also, music criticism. Without the doors opened through affiliations with Strad Magazine (special thanks to Eric Wen and Ariane Todes) and Laurie Niles’ [www.violinist.com](http://www.violinist.com) my aspirations to integrate music stakeholders within the research would have been curtailed.

Special thanks to truly unsung heroes: librarians at the National Széchényi Library Budapest (Boglárka Illyés), the Archives at Yale University, the Library of Congress and archivists at the Atlanta Symphony and the New York Philharmonic.

The ever dynamic Kathie Somerwil Ayrton, musician and scholar extraordinaire prodded patiently to make the ‘elephant’ take shape. And, the unstoppable Stuart Blume, the embodiment of a scholar who embraces research with gusto, encouraged me to leave no stone unturned. Dawn Hannay and Willa Kozupsky: my journey,

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your journeys.. Much of the final march forward in this project took place during COVID-19 lockdown periods. Chamber music with a happy few (Cathrien [suggested FAQs] Gideon, Ilonka, Katja, Luc, Martin, Yaël, and tête-à-têtes with Cordelia, Ivana, Monica, Norma, and Quirine to name but a few provided much-needed relief.

Part of my PhD learning curve included the discovery of the ‘paranymph.’ The effervescent Sacha Tamboer paved the way with humor and grace, all the while challenging me to rethink my vintage persona. My amazing sister Ruth Ann Kurzbauer, editor extraordinaire and best sibling imaginable, learned quickly to reset her powerful diplomatic skills into paranymph mode. The vivacious and caring Wendeline Wijnants and intellectual sparring partner Merijn Rademaker stepped in with gusto to join the shadow paranymph cabinet: four heads better than...

Additional kudos go to the keepers of strength-in-unity, my beloved union and alt-labor warriors: Benoît Machuel and Thomas Dayan (International Federation of Musicians FIM); Martin Kothman (FNV), and the intrepid founders of the Platform voor Freelance Musici (PvFM), Caroline Cartens and Dorine Schoon. Thanks to aforementioned FIM and FNV colleagues, I have been privileged to participate at international conferences dedicated to improving the lot of cultural workers and freelancers.

The list of musicians whose words prompted further study fills the pages of *Recitative: the interviewed*. To all those, deep gratitude. From present day Sinfonia Rotterdam colleagues to former members of the Radio Kamerorkest, along with a shout out to the Grand Teton Music Festival Players Committee members whose actions spoke louder than words in crisis year 2019, your contributions have been immeasurable. Your voices, my words.

Nothing, absolutely nothing would ever have come off the ground without the love, understanding, and intellectual prodding of the two who know me the best: my life partner Ben Bonouvrier and our wonderfully creative force of a daughter, Yaël. Along with my bonus sons Rogier and Michel, they prove that true love is boundless.

Without the shining example of perseverance in the face of vicissitudes and the love of learning instilled by my courageous parents, Dr. Robert Kurzbauer and Lisa Rates (Runes) Kurzbauer, these words would be but a meaningless mumbo jumbo. This defense takes place on what would have been my father’s 107<sup>th</sup> birthday, full faith that he is listening patiently ready to provide appropriate criticism.