Discovering the Sound: A Case Study of the Equity of the Audition Processes of Chicago-Area Orchestras

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to discover the similarities and differences between audition processes of orchestras in the Chicagoland area. The research also compares the perceptions of both the musicians and the orchestra’s management on whether they believe the audition process is effective in selecting the best musicians and whether they think the process is fair. In past research, authors focused on one particular instrument or one person’s experience auditioning. This research attempts to synthesize multiple perspectives of the audition process. This information was gathered through in-person interviews, phone interviews and emails. The findings suggest that most auditions have the same standard format. Also, management tends to believe their auditions are effective and fair. Musicians believe auditions are as fair as they can be in their current form, but there are some aspects they would like to change.
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Recruitment

One of the best orchestras in the world is the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO), and in 1997 its HR director was Ellen Romberg. In an interview, she stated that they recruit for musicians by posting announcements in union papers and magazines and they also invite applicants to audition. Also, when they recruit they list specific solo pieces and orchestral excerpts. As of February 20, 2016, the CSO has a job posting for a Principal Horn on their website. The job posting tells candidates to send in a brief one-page résumé and it includes the repertoire list which has 26 solo and orchestral excerpts plus sight reading (“CSO Audition Information”). The Civic Orchestra of Chicago also has a job posting for a Bass Trombone for the 2015/2016 season (“Civic Auditions”). The Civic Orchestra of Chicago is under the direction of the CSO and offers training for young musicians who hope to have a professional career in music. It seems that audition information is readily available on these orchestra websites.

Another recruitment method is through union papers. For example, only subscribers to the International Musician magazine and American Federation of Musicians (AFM) members can view job advertisements in International Musician. The accounts of musicians seem to agree that the audition information is posted in papers and magazines. Jessica Halpin, a flute player, writes that most musicians look at the International Musician to find out about upcoming auditions (Halpin 39). Robert Langevin, a flute player, recounts that he saw the open position for flute with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in the paper. For the New York Philharmonic, Langevin said that the orchestra was not happy with the first set of auditions “so they started phoning people around, inviting them to play for a week with the orchestra” (Goodfellow 49). Something interesting that Langevin points out is that the music director of the New York Philharmonic went to Germany to hear players in Europe and then invited them to audition.
Therefore, some orchestras are able to recruit players from around the world, probably based on their size and prestige.

Cirque du Soleil may seem to be a strange example, but it actually has live musicians in all of its shows so it needs to find players. They have a head instrumental talent scout whose job is to recruit musicians. They have people apply by downloading an audition kit and submitting a video of themselves performing. The use of the internet in recruiting does seem to be a more recent trend. For example, Prince’s guitarist was found on the internet and then they asked her to come do a formal audition. According to Lonny Knapp, “that’s the reality for musicians; despite your skill or experience, if you want to land those big gigs, you have to audition” (38). Both Cirque du Soleil and Prince are not professional orchestras, but they both employ professional musicians that are recruited in similar ways to orchestras.

Selection

In the interview with the HR director of the CSO, Ellen Romberg, she also explains the selection process used by the orchestra. At the audition, “performers play for a committee of orchestra members behind a screen to help insure that decisions are based solely on the quality of playing” and then the final decision is made by the committee and the music director (Frazee). Individual musicians also describe the selection processes that they went through. The flute player Langevin did a preliminary audition in Pittsburgh and then made it to the semi-final auditions, but the music director was not there for these auditions. So, he returned a month later to do the final audition and describes the process: “For the finals we had to sit on stage, in the (principal’s) chair, in the spot, and the committee and the conductor sat in the hall. We were behind a screen for the semis but not for the finals” (Goodfellow 49). In Halpin’s surveys of flute players, one player believed that screens were “the fairest way to ensure that the committee is
judging solely on talent,” but on the other hand other flutists believed that connections play a role in winning auditions (Halpin 40). The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra (Met) also used a screen when it held auditions to find a new bass player. On the first day of Met auditions they used a plywood screen, but they would still talk to the players to ask them to play the selections a different way. On the fourth day of auditions, they were down to twelve candidates for the semifinals and then later that day they narrowed it down to three candidates for the finals (D’Agostino). Another way that orchestras attempt to make auditions fair is by having “candidates walk onstage over a carpet—so that jurors do not form an opinion by the sound of their footsteps,” since a clicking sound may indicate high heels and the sex of the musician (Gelfand).

In a typical audition for violists, there is a preliminary round, a semi-final round where it is narrowed down to about ten to fifteen candidates, and then a final round where it is narrowed down to five candidates or less (Noble). In the final round, the music director will be present since the audition committee believes the people in the final round are people that they want in the orchestra. This seems to follow the audition process in the accounts of other instrumentalists, from the number of rounds, to the number of people in each round. Noble also writes that during the final auditions, the candidates could be asked to play a piece with other members of the orchestra, there could be call backs if the committee cannot decide between two or three candidates, and some orchestras will even “invite two final candidates to play services with the orchestra before making the final choice” (Noble). During the auditions for a viola position in the Cincinnati Symphony there were four players in the final round. The four violists played and then they waited an hour while the jury deliberated. Then, when the jury could not agree they had to play all over again (Gelfand). Another interesting observation about the selection process
comes from a flutist who pointed out that the position the orchestra is trying to fill makes a difference in selection because they are “more likely to take a chance on an unknown entity for a second position than a principal one” (Halpin 40). Even though the Cirque du Soleil example is slightly non-traditional, they have a fairly traditional selection process for their musicians. For example, they only invite a few people to audition face-to-face. They also want dedication from their musicians: “We want people who want to be part of Cirque du Soleil…It’s not just a gig; it’s a lifestyle” (Knapp 41).

Although there are a lot of rounds to some auditions, “in the end, it all boils down to five minutes of playing” (Gelfand). According to the principal viola of the Cincinnati Symphony, “from a statistical chance, it’s probably easier to get into the NBA” but he believes the process is fair (Gelfand). Not only do musicians have to go through rounds of auditions, but they have to pay to stay in the town where the auditions are held and it can become expensive. Many candidates are coming from out of town and they have to pay to stay in a hotel for one or two nights. Sometimes they may not even get to use the hotel they paid for in advance if they do not move on to later rounds. Plus, the auditions can last all day so they are physically exhausting.

The music director of the Cincinnati Symphony, Louis Langrée, believes that if a candidate makes it to the final rounds of auditions, then they are an excellent musician. Langrée says, “I ask them to approach the same musical passage in different ways, with different meanings, colors, styles, phrasings and articulations. What I’m listening for is flexibility, imagination and, of course, skill. I also listen for how the finalists would match the CSO’s identity and style, while at the same time anticipating what fresh elements they would bring to our ensemble” (Gelfand). It seems there is a lot to listen for at an orchestral audition.
The elements that music directors and other people are looking and listening for at auditions are kind of complicated. In an article about auditioning on the viola, Charless Noble writes that they are looking for “dead-on intonation, precise rhythm and a demonstrably superior musical sense” (Noble). Specifically in regard to violas, they are looking for “a rich and powerful sound with the ability to blend into the section sound; a mature sense of musical style; and a full control of technical issues of the left and right hands” (Noble). Occasionally, there will be more than one qualified person who fits all of the elements that the orchestra is looking for. Then, it will come down to who is the best fit for the orchestra. If there is a committee of people listening to an audition, “some jury members concentrate on intonation, others on rhythm. So each juror brings their own list of priorities,” according to the chair of the audition committee for the Cincinnati Symphony, Christian Colberg (Gelfand). Overall, he says that an audition is tricky and “your playing, mixed with what the committee is looking for, is really what is going to give you the win” (Gelfand).

An interesting selection technique used by the Southbank Sinfonia in London is video conferencing. They have used video conferencing in their audition process for two years and every year they recruit a new set of 32 players. Simon Over, the orchestra’s music director, believes the method is helpful because “in eight hours we saw players from New York, Madrid, Glasgow and Auckland. We obviously saved thousands of tons of carbon, and saved the players a lot of money too” (Nelson 12). One concern with auditions via video conferencing is the sound quality of the audition. Over addresses this concern when he says that “with this system, the sound quality is amazing: you can hear the most critical details. Of course, it can never replace being in the same room as a player” (Nelson 12). So, there are some benefits and drawbacks to using video conferencing for auditions. One last drawback to the method is that it does not work
for all orchestras. Keith Motson, the projects manager for the Association of British Orchestras, believes that it is “unlikely that video conferencing could be used by orchestras other than those such as the Sinfonia” (Nelson 12). It would not work for larger British orchestras because they find people in Europe so they do not have to travel as far and it would not work for the players because “auditioning in this way puts you at the mercy of whether the technology works, and how well it works” (Nelson 12). Even though video conferencing could never replace a live audition, Motson admits that it is “another useful weapon in orchestras’ armoury” (Nelson 12).

An audition is actually a type of work sample test. Work sample tests “are hands-on simulations of part or all of the job that must be performed by applicants” (Schmidt and Hunter 267). The validity of a work sample test is 0.54, which is better than all of the other selection methods in the study such as integrity tests, job knowledge tests, and peer ratings. Validity is “how well a test measures what it is purported to measure” (Phelan and Wren). Two ways to improve validity are to make sure the goals and objectives are clearly defined and to match the assessment measure to the goals and objectives. Orchestras could define their goals and then match the audition process to these goals in order to further improve the validity of their auditions. A type of validity is predictive validity which is “the ability to predict future job performance, job-related learning, and other criteria” (Schmidt and Hunter 262). What all of this means is that an audition (which is a work sample test) is a good predictor of how someone will perform at their job. This is a reason why an orchestra uses an audition as their mode of selection.

Factors That Dictate the Audition Process

Although an orchestra is creative and artistic, they still have to follow employment laws like everyone else. Employment laws are especially relevant for orchestras because there has
been a history of directors hiring and firing whomever they please and of hiring only white males. Now, contracts protect “employee liberties and rights as well as set limits on the liability of management and owners” (Lehman). The contracts can also be called master agreements and they are determined by the collective bargaining process, which in turn determines the audition process. For example, the Cincinnati Symphony sets the audition rules and the Cincinnati Musicians Union, Local No. 1 “oversees the proceedings to make sure the rules are followed” (Gelfand). In addition, there is a Code of Ethical Audition Practices that orchestras can follow to ensure that their auditions are ethical. This code is not a contract and is not binding, but it was created by the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM), the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) and the Major Orchestra Managers Conference (MOMC) in August 1984 (“Code of Ethical Audition Practices”). They were prompted to create a code of ethics after an examination of audition practices and problems at a 1982 conference and they created a committee to study the problems and then recommend improvements. The code covers recruitment, which it calls Preparation for Auditions, and the Conduct of Auditions. Examples of the suggestions that they include are:

“Auditions should be advertised in appropriate places, including the *International Musician* and the central auditions office. Notices should be clear and complete, specifying the position intended to be filled by the auditions, the person to contact in response to the notice, and the dates that applications are due and that auditions will be held. Notices should appear far enough in advance of auditions for interested musicians to apply and to adequately prepare” (“Code of Ethical Audition Practices”).

If an orchestra says that it adheres to these guidelines, the master agreement that they have will still have further specifications for audition procedures. In Lehman’s research, one of the
agreements included rules such as “Preliminary and semi-final auditions will be anonymous and held behind a screen. Finals may be either in the open or anonymous as each member of the Audition Committee chooses. Semi-final and final auditions will be scheduled to take place on the same day whenever possible” (Lehman). Therefore, some of the measures that determine how an audition is structured come from the code of ethics and from master agreements specific to each orchestra. But, all of these procedures could vary by orchestra because the code of ethics is not a requirement and each master agreement differs by orchestra.

Relevant Laws

The basic relationship that is being looked at is the employment relationship, which is “a contractual agreement between an employer and a worker,” and the worker is either an employee or an independent contractor (Moran 1). Most of the orchestra members will be independent contractors, which means they are hired by the employer to perform a specific task. Employers do not have to give independent contractors paid vacation, sick time, personal leave, or insurance. One exception to this generalization is the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Because they are a major orchestra and playing in the orchestra is the players’ main job, they are given a health care plan, a pension plan, and other benefits (Gillers and Grotto). The three main components that determine whether a person is an employee or an independent contractor are behavioral control, financial control, and relationship type. If the employer controls behavior such as assignment of the job, where, when, and how the work is performed, and the method used to complete the task, then the person is an employee. If the person is able to decide these factors for his or herself, then the person is an independent contractor. An example of financial control is if the worker is paid a wage or salary, then they are usually an employee. If the worker is paid by the job, then they are usually an independent contractor. For relationship type,
“employment at will applies to workers who are employees whereas independent contractors’ employment is terminated when the task is completed” (Moran 3).

**Recruitment and Selection Laws**

When recruiting, there are certain laws that orchestras must follow. When advertising an open position, the employer cannot indicate that they “prefer an applicant of a particular race, religion, gender, or national origin” (Moran 30). Also, in the course of the audition process if they interview the applicant, they cannot question the applicant about their religion, national origin, race, age, marital status, and disability status. The Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures is a federal law enacted in 1978 “to recognize and encourage the discontinuance of selection procedures that have a disparate impact on minorities and women” (Moran 32). Disparate impact means that something has “an adverse or detrimental effect on a particular group” (Moran 32). It can be brought against someone or an organization if there is a statistical difference in how each group is treated. Disparate treatment is “when an employer treats an individual differently because that individual is a member of a particular race, religion, gender, or ethnic group” (Moran 165). In this case, one would need to show that an organization purposefully excluded a particular group with, for example, a letter or email that says they will not hire people from group ‘X’.

Arguably the most important law governing hiring is Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is a federal law that governs all employers in the United States that employ at least fifteen individuals. Basically, the law says that “it is an unlawful practice to discriminate in failing or refusing to hire, train, discharge, promote, compensate—or in any other aspect of the employment relationship—because of an individual’s religion, race, color, sex, or national origin” (Moran 164). In addition, most states have their own laws that prohibit discrimination.
The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission enforces the provisions of Title VII. Another important piece of legislation is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Under this law, an employer cannot make medical inquiries prior to the conditional job offer, but “an employer can ask a person whether he or she can perform the essential functions of the job” (Moran 66). The last major law related to employment discrimination is the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967. This law “was enacted to promote the employment of individuals 40 years of age and older” and an employer has to have at least 20 employers for this law to apply to them (Moran 378).

**Unions**

Unions were originally formed to protect workers during the economic depression of the 1820s. At that time they represented public schools and mechanics (Moran 421). Now there are musician unions to protect and negotiate for musicians. The union that covers many Chicago-area musicians is the Chicago Federation of Musicians Local 10-208 of the American Federation of Musicians. Members have to pay dues and it has been chartered since 1901. A few of the benefits that the union offers its members include contracts, collective bargaining, pension and health insurance programs, and referral programs (“Why Join?”). Collective bargaining is “the negotiation process undertaken by a union on behalf of its members with the management of an organization with the intent of entering into a contract after the resolution of labor issues” (Moran 423). Then, the contract that they agree on, which is also called the collective bargaining agreement, binds all union members. Another benefit of being in a union is that the union has greater bargaining power than an individual employee. Recently, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra musicians were represented by the Chicago Federation of Musicians Local 10-208 to negotiate a new labor contract. They negotiated a three-year contract which included “wage and
pension increases and scheduling provisions that will provide more flexibility during the season and on tour” (Von Rhein). Other orchestras observe the CSO’s labor agreements and treat them as an example for top-tier orchestras.

Some unfair labor practices that can be committed by employers include refusal to collectively bargain with the union representative, discrimination against union members, retaliation against employees who file a grievance with the union, interference with union elections, and unduly influencing union members or representatives. Some unfair labor practices that can be committed by unions include coercing employees to join unions, pilfering union dues, refraining from collective bargaining, calling an illegal strike that will affect the health and safety of the nation, and blocking the entrance to employer’s facility (Moran 424).

**Fairness**

Fairness is one of the main subjects being looked at in this study and there are two theories of justice that could help explain perceptions of fairness. First, distributive justice is “the fairness of organizational outcome distributions” (Gilliland 695). People can evaluate these distributions according to some distributive rule, which is usually equity. Equity assessment compares one’s inputs and obtained outcomes to a similar other. The other type of justice is procedural justice which is “the perceived fairness of procedures used in making decisions” (Gilliland 696). Researchers have found that procedures are perceived to be fairer when participants in the procedure have the opportunity to influence the decision or offer input. In addition, “perhaps the greatest procedural influence on fairness perceptions is the job relatedness of the selection device,” which in this case is the audition (Gilliland 703). The definition of job relatedness is “the extent to which a test either appears to measure content relevant to the job situation or appears to be valid” (Gilliland 703). Another procedural influence on fairness is the
opportunity to perform. Participants perceive a procedure as being fairer if they have an opportunity to express themselves prior to a decision being made. The last procedural influence that is relevant to orchestral auditions is consistency. Consistency is “ensuring that decision procedures are consistent across people and over time” (Gilliland 705). These theories of justice will be applicable to the equity of audition processes, especially procedural justice and its components of the job relatedness of the selection device, the opportunity to perform and consistency.
From the Orchestra’s Perspective

Recruitment

The four orchestras in this study are the Fox Valley Philharmonic (FVP), the Wheaton Symphony Orchestra (WSO), the Northbrook Symphony (NS), and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO). The FVP and WSO are unpaid community orchestras, the NS is a paid community orchestra and the CSO is a large, elite, paid orchestra. In the small orchestras, the means of recruitment seem to be limited by geographic area and they rely more on word of mouth. As an elite orchestra, the CSO draws candidates from all over the United States and beyond. First, all of the surveyed orchestras use the Internet to advertise for auditions. Facebook, Twitter and the orchestra websites were the mediums used online. The orchestras even use print advertisements like the local newspaper and the Chicago union magazine, Intermezzo. A lot of recruitment actually occurs through print sources like International Musician, the official journal of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada. This is the recruitment method used by the CSO. In the back of every issue of this journal there are classified advertisements for different auditions. Most of them tend to be advertisements for larger orchestras. For example, in the December 2015 issue there are advertisements for a piccolo/flute and a section second violin in The Houston Symphony, assistant principal timpani/section percussion in the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and a section horn for the Lyric Opera of Chicago. It is also interesting to point out that a lot of these advertisements in International Musician include salary and benefits information.

All three of the community orchestras use word of mouth to recruit orchestra members. The current members of the orchestra pass along the audition information to people they know and recommend their friends. This seems like a good way of recruiting in a community orchestra.
because the current players should be able to recommend people of a similar playing caliber which keeps the orchestra at a high playing level. Another way that is similar to recommendations is that the WSO gets a list of string teachers and asks them for some of their students. The last way that community orchestras recruit is by putting up flyers at local colleges.

**Who Gets to Audition**

In all of the surveyed orchestras, almost all of the people that are interested in auditioning get to audition. The FVP estimates that they hear about 95% of interested candidates and the NS estimates 99% get the chance to audition. The CSO even accepts everyone who wants to audition and they do not screen résumés. One of the things that is very important to a community orchestra is the availability of the players, which determines a lot of who auditions. For instance, if someone cannot make a rehearsal they may not even audition because they do not have many rehearsals before each concert. Other factors that determine who auditions are not enough experience and the fact that some people do not like unpaid orchestras so they will not audition when they find that out. Even though almost all interested people get to audition, the community orchestras have candidates send in a résumé. The CSO also has candidates send in a résumé mostly through email, but in addition they require a deposit check that they will return to a candidate if he or she shows up to the audition. This ensures that candidates do not waste their time and “if they do not cancel by two weeks prior to the audition, we keep their check” (Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel). In the CSO, after the candidates send in their résumé, the orchestra sends them the audition repertoire list and the audition date choices. Next, the candidate chooses a date and the time slots are filled on a first-come first-serve basis. The orchestra then sends the candidate a confirmation letter with their audition date and time which
are in two hour time blocks. In addition, some larger orchestras will ask a musician to submit a CD of their playing.

**The Actual Audition**

In the literature review, most of the orchestras had multiple rounds, but the community orchestras only have one or two rounds. The first round is playing excerpts of music: the FVP and the NS let the musicians play whatever they want and the WSO has a set piece of music that everyone plays. The FVP also includes sight-reading if the candidate does not have a lot of experience playing in an orchestra setting. This orchestra is also the only one that has a second round and the second round is to have the candidate sit in on a rehearsal with the orchestra. About 85% of the candidates make it to this round. When asked, the music director believes that the second round makes the audition process effective in selecting the best or right people for the group. More discussion on the effectiveness of the audition process is presented later.

The CSO also has two rounds of auditions, but there is a little more that occurs at the audition. Before the audition, the candidates arrive an hour before their time block to warm up in a large general warm-up room. Then, fifteen to twenty minutes before their audition they get to practice in a small private room. The candidates in the first time block draw numbers to determine the order of players. In the actual audition the candidates play “a portion of a solo concerto (with no accompaniment), and then several orchestra excerpts chosen by the audition committee (judges panel) from the repertoire list” (Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel). This is similar to the community orchestra auditions where they hear both solo music and orchestral music, depending on the orchestra. Candidates are not told which excerpts they are going to play from the repertoire list until they are on stage at the actual audition. The candidate plays on stage and the audition committee sits behind a screen in the auditorium “so
they do not see the candidate and the candidate does not see them” (Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel). The audition committee is made up of nine judges who are all members of the orchestra and are usually from the same section as the vacancy they are trying to fill. In order for a candidate to advance to the final round, the committee must give them six ‘Yes’ votes. The final auditions are held at a future date and the music director is present for these auditions. Usually the finals consist of four to ten candidates and the finals are not done behind a screen. The same voting system is in place for the final auditions, but the music director has the final say. If no candidate receives at least six ‘Yes’ votes the position will not be filled and the audition process will start over. The CSO will re-announce the vacancy and hold another audition. If the opposite happens and “more than one person is qualified, there will be discussion, and in most cases, after input from the committee, the Music Director’s preference will be offered the job” (Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel).

Although the number of rounds was fairly similar, the person or people judging the audition differed between the orchestras. As mentioned previously, the CSO uses a committee of orchestra members from the same section as the vacancy and they include the music director in the final round. In the FVP, a committee of the principals of each section sits in on the auditions. In the WSO, the judges are professional musicians that are not members of the orchestra and in the NS only the conductor sits in on the audition. In the FVP and the WSO the judges speak to the candidates and in the NS they do not talk to them during the audition, but after the candidate is done playing they could ask them a question such as “Who do you study with?” or say “That music sounds familiar, have you played it before?” One thing that all three community orchestras have in common during the actual audition is that none of them have blind auditions. Based on previous literature it was expected that all of the auditions would be blind, but they appear to
value speaking to the candidate during the audition to get a better picture of their abilities and their personality. They especially want to know if the person will be a good fit in the orchestra and that is another reason why they talk to the candidates.

The FVP and the WSO wanted the candidates to be flexible and able to adjust their playing based on requests from the judges. The FVP and the NS also looked for the ability to play in an orchestral setting. The FVP accomplishes this by having the candidates sit in with the orchestra in the second round of auditions and the NS accomplishes this by having them play orchestral music at the audition instead of solo repertoire. The CSO is looking for an exceptional musician who is also a good colleague. The personality of the candidate matters to the orchestra, as it also does to the community orchestras. The CSO’s Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel said that the personality of the player can come through in their playing, especially in the final round when the candidates are visible to the committee. Also, “the way a person carries themselves and even minimally interacts with the music director and the committee can be telling” (Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel). It seems overall that orchestras not only care about the musical ability of the candidates, but also their personality and the way they interact with the current members of the orchestra.

A few other qualities that orchestras say they are looking for in a candidate and at an audition include skill, execution of solos, musicality, vibrato, tone, technique, rhythm, musicianship, talent, and an ‘intangible attitude’. This last attribute comes from the NS’s orchestra personnel manager who says that part of this ‘intangible attitude’ is someone who is willing to be part of a team and does not have a big ego. Technique was a word that was repeated three times and tone was repeated twice and this makes sense because a musician has to be able to at least play the music before a committee can look for other things like musicality and
musicianship. Another quality that the CSO looks for is “very mature and artistic music making” (Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel). This quality and that of a beautiful tone come through in the solo concerto the candidate plays. When the candidate plays the orchestral excerpts, the audition committee listens for the “candidate’s ability to play in different styles and their knowledge of the orchestral repertoire” (Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel). The orchestral excerpts need to have “exceptional intonation (pitch) and impeccable rhythm” and the person needs to play each excerpt at the right tempo and in the right style (Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel). All in all, there are a lot of elements that directors and committees are looking for at an audition and a musician has to keep all of these elements in mind.

When asked what quality someone has that could set them apart at an audition, the orchestras responded differently. The FVP says the ability to execute requests on the fly, the WSO says purely their scores on tone, technique, rhythm, and musicianship, and the NS says sheer technique and an intangible attitude. The CSO says that a quality that can set someone apart is having the whole package. According to the Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel, finding all of the skills in one musician is rare and if more than one person ends up having these skills, then “the winning candidate will show that they can be flexible and have room to grow and change” (Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel). The differences in what directors and managers are looking for could be due to individual differences in what they care about, or it could be due to differences in orchestras and what fits best with their sound or goal as an orchestra.
Effectiveness of Audition Process

All of the orchestras interviewed believe their audition processes are effective. Orchestra employees responded affirmatively with statements like “Yes. Definitely,” “Yes, for the most part” and “Yeah, I do.” Two of the community orchestras elaborated more on their affirmative statements with the FVP believing that without the second part of the audition process where the candidate sits in on a rehearsal, their process would not be effective. The NS says that people really get to talk at the audition and the conductor can tell pretty quickly if the person will be a good fit for the group. The CSO believes their audition process is effective but that “the most talented person can have a bad day” and “no one can play perfectly all of the time” (Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel).

Even though all of the orchestras believe that their audition process is effective, there are a few things that they would like to change. The CSO would not so much change their audition process as they would change the candidates. They end up with a lot of underqualified applicants and the manager wishes that they would not have taken the audition. Everyone does get to audition, so they “receive lots of résumés from people who have not had enough experience and seem to have no idea of the level of position they are applying for” and this is especially the case with principal chairs (Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel). When they have underqualified applicants, they are usually dismissed early in the audition. The orchestra could solve this problem if they prescreened résumés more and possibly had candidates send in a CD of themselves playing. This would eliminate a lot of the underqualified candidates and save the orchestra time. Possibly the manager did not consider this change because that is just how auditions are done. Another possibility is that they allow underqualified candidates to audition to make the overall process fairer. A last possible reason that they do not prescreen résumés is
because they could assume that a lot of people will self-select out of the audition because of how difficult the music is and because they know they are not qualified.

The FVP says that changing any part of their audition process is a difficult call with a community orchestra. But, the music director says that having standard orchestral excerpts for people to play instead of people choosing their own solos to play at the audition would be something that they would like to change. The music director did not make it sound like this change would ever occur, but standardized music would make it easier to compare candidates and maybe it is something that they could do in the future. The NS says that the only problem with their audition process is that some people cannot make it to the audition on the particular day. Then, they resort to hearing a YouTube video of the person as their audition. The orchestra personnel manager did not propose a solution to this problem, but it is something that they would like to change. Possibly the manager means that something they would change is to make it a requirement that people audition in person. Another thing this orchestra personnel manager says is that having auditions only once a year is not ideal and this is something that they would like to change. Lastly, the WSO says that they would not change anything. Their current audition process where the candidates only play one piece is very telling, so they do not need to change anything. Overall, the orchestras seem fairly pleased with their audition process, but when they were asked what they would change, some of them would change fairly major factors. The CSO would change who auditions, the FVP would change what candidates play at the audition, and the NS would change when people audition. Although the interviewees downplayed the impact of these changes by thinking about their answers for a little while or originally saying they would not change anything, when they thought about it there were some important changes they would like to make. But, none of them seemed like they would or could actually make these changes.
Fairness of Audition Process

All of the orchestras also believe that their audition processes are fair. The CSO believes that their process is very fair because “no one is excluded, and no one is known to the audition committee until the very final round” (Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel). When asked if they believe their audition process is fair, the FVP responded that their process works for them. The music director then goes on to say that it is gentle and not intimidating, so it is fair in that respect. The director does bring up the fact that the auditions are not blind, but the process is laidback and welcoming, which the director defines as fair. The WSO says that their process is very fair. The NS also says that their audition process is fair and that sometimes they wish a candidate who has a bad audition could have another chance. This orchestra personnel manager acknowledges that some people get nervous or have a bad day, which is similar to what the CSO said when asked if they believed their audition process was effective. Although the orchestras recognize the fact that anyone can have an off day, it does not change the fairness of the actual audition process. It is also interesting that the community orchestras believe their auditions are fair even though they are not blind, while this is the component that makes the CSO believe its audition is fair.

Lastly, orchestras were asked if they believe the musicians think the audition process is fair. Again, all of the orchestras answered ‘yes’. The CSO says that they think the musicians think it is fair because of the same reasons that no one is excluded and the auditions are blind. The FVP says the musicians already in the orchestra believe it is fair because they have a voice. The WSO says that if it was not fair, then they would hear complaints and they do not hear any complaints. Also, the musicians must think it is a great audition since they only have to play one piece, so it is a very short audition. The NS responded that they have never asked any of their
current musicians if they thought the process was fair, but they think the musicians do think it is fair. Interestingly, the orchestra personnel manager says that having a blind audition is a lot fairer than playing behind a screen for five to six people because the candidates can talk to the conductor and the audition is very personable. The CSO believes their process is fair to musicians because it is blind and the NS believes that their process is fair because it is not blind. From a legal perspective, it is fairer to have a blind audition because one cannot tell the candidate’s race, gender, or any other identifier, but apparently this orchestra believes it is fairer to a musician to let them speak to the conductor or audition committee and explain their story. Overall, it seems that orchestras believe their audition process is fair to musicians, but for quite different reasons.

From the Musician’s Perspective

Recruitment

As previously stated, one of the main ways musicians find out about orchestra auditions is through union magazines. Three out of the four musicians interviewed find out about auditions through an advertisement in the musician’s union paper and two of them specifically named International Musician as the source. The percussionist and the oboist also find out about auditions via word of mouth, which is a more informal method. Additionally, the clarinetist said there is a Chicago local newsletter that sometimes advertises positions in the Chicago area and there is a Facebook group for clarinet jobs that posts job notices and sometimes will even post who advances to the next rounds and who wins the position. These methods seem to align with what the orchestra management uses as recruitment methods because International Musician and word of mouth are two of their main recruitment strategies as well.
The Actual Audition

Three of the four musicians say that the first step of the audition process is to send in their résumé. The next step is when they receive the audition date and time along with the excerpts. The percussionist says that the excerpts are orchestral excerpts, the trombonist says they are solo and orchestral excerpts and the clarinetist says they are orchestral excerpts. In addition, two of the four of them mention the deposit checks that the CSO manager says they require. The two musicians say that the deposit checks work the same where the orchestra will return their check if they show up to the audition. Specifically, the clarinetist says "the deposit check helps ensure that… people are somewhat invested" (Clarinetist). Next, all of the musicians say that they go to a general warm-up room where everyone is practicing. Then, three of the four say that the candidate gets about ten to fifteen minutes to warm up in a smaller room by oneself before going onstage for the audition. Something that all four of the musicians agree on is that the judges are behind a screen during the first round of auditions. Only the CSO uses a screen at their auditions, so it seems that most of the musicians in this study are and were auditioning for higher level, larger orchestras like the CSO and not community orchestras.

Also related to keeping the candidates anonymous, two of the four musicians mention the carpet that leads onto the stage for the actual audition. The clarinetist states that "the reason for the carpet is to mask any sounds of footsteps because the jury or the audition committee could very well identify whether you’re male or female on the type of shoes that are hitting the stage" (Clarinetist). Although none of the orchestras interviewed use a carpet, the reasoning behind using a carpet at auditions is in agreement with past research. The clarinetist goes on to say "because all auditions at least in the preliminary levels or rounds would be blind they’d be behind a screen or a curtain and they’re not looking at your résumé, they’re not looking at what
college you went to, how many degrees you have, all they’re wanting to hear is whether you play
the excerpts well or not” (Clarinetist).

Both the trombonist and the clarinetist have found that during the audition, if the
committee lets you keep playing the excerpts then that is a good sign. But according to the
clarinetist, “that’s one of the more stressful parts of the audition because you have to play
extremely well and very consistently in the space of five minutes” (Clarinetist). The trombonist
also states that sometimes the audition committee may choose not to hear the last excerpts from
anybody, so if they stop a candidate before these last excerpts it might not mean anything. As for
the number of rounds, two of the musicians say there are two rounds, one says three rounds and
the other does not specify a number. This seems fairly in line with the orchestras interviewed
who all had one or two rounds. For the trombonist the second round is usually the next day, for
the percussionist it is usually the same day, and for the orchestra the clarinetist is currently in all
three rounds take place on the same day. Both the percussionist and the clarinetist did say that
they take down the screen in the final round. The percussionist states this round “is now not
behind a screen so then they get to see who you are, what you do, and how you play and how
you look and all that” (Percussionist). The clarinetist also states that in the final rounds “if
something doesn’t go right or you have a little flip, they might actually give you the chance to
play again if they like your playing because everybody understands that nobody is perfect”
(Clarinetist). Lastly, all of the musicians mention a lot of waiting at auditions. After a candidate
auditions, they sit and wait to hear who makes it to the next round and “the pulse is racing. It’s
torturous” (Clarinetist).

This leads to the next part that asks how the musicians feel at an audition. The trombonist
is “pretty nervous,” the oboist is nervous until she actually plays, the clarinetist is also nervous
until he plays and then it is fun, and the percussionist feels nervous and excited (Trombonist). The overall consensus is that it is nerve-wracking to audition. The percussionist and oboist also qualify their statements by saying that how they feel depends on how prepared they are. For the clarinetist, his feelings at the audition depend on how he feels physically, like if he got enough sleep the night before. Both the clarinetist and the trombonist agree that everyone gets nervous. For example, the trombonist says that people who are good at auditioning are still nervous; it is just that they handle it better. The clarinetist takes this sentiment one step further when he says, “anyone who looks at you and says, ‘I love the audition process’ is insane. It’s horrible because you’re trying to prove in the space of five minutes that you can hold onto a job for decades” (Clarinetist). He also says that a player needs to focus at an audition because they could fall into comparing themselves to everyone else when warming up in the large practice room. Focus is also important to the oboist, who focuses on one thing like breathing in order to calm herself before an audition. One last statement from the clarinetist that sums up his feelings on auditioning is this: “When everything starts going well the blood pressure lowers, you start calming down, the training takes over and you’re like, ‘ok, this is going to be fine,’ but if something happens early in the audition there’s this pit in your stomach, this black pit that starts forming” (Clarinetist). It is a dramatic depiction, but the other musicians seem to think a similar thing: that if you are well-prepared and focused, the nervousness will decrease.

**Audition Preparation**

The way in which musicians make sure they are well-prepared for an audition is by practicing. All of the musicians practice for hours and hours, even if they already have played the excerpts required at the audition, they have to make sure that the pieces are in the best shape. The trombonist describes the preparation process as painstaking. She makes an Excel spreadsheet to
keep track of where she is at in practicing each excerpt because she has found that the more
organized she is, the better the audition will go. Closer to the audition, she will shift into
performance mode where she will play for friends or colleagues and treat it like a recital. In
addition, the trombonist records herself, listens to the recording, and then acts as her own teacher
in order to correct her playing. She also compares preparing for an audition to training for a
marathon because she starts to taper off her practicing before the audition. The clarinetist
prepares in a similar manner. He records himself and plays for colleagues in a way that simulates
the audition process. In addition, he practices the excerpts which “involves studying scores,
seeing how the music fits into the broader context of the orchestra, and listening to recordings to
get different styles and ideas” (Clarinetist). All of this preparation can last for months, but if he
already knows the music then the preparation can come along quicker. The oboist says that the
most she has practiced for an audition is four hours per day. In order to not tire herself out too
much she will practice her technique in 45 minute spurts, she will space out easy and hard
excerpts, and she will limit articulation in some of the excerpts. The percussionist also dedicates
“hours of practice, hours of repetition” to preparation because he says practice is repetition
(Percussionist). Unlike the other musicians, the percussionist has to practice on multiple
instruments for an audition, which makes the preparation process a lot longer. In addition, he
started to learn a lot of the orchestral excerpts that are asked for back in college “so then it’s just
a matter of getting them back in shape” and “(percussionists) live and breathe those (excerpts) all
the time” (Percussionist). Overall, there are hours and hours of very carefully planned practicing
that comes before an audition.

After all of this preparing and auditioning, it is interesting to find out what musicians
hope to gain from the audition process. Of course, they all want a job. The trombonist says that
in addition to a job she also is looking for job security, and when she was younger she was looking to get better at the audition process. The oboist also wants to learn from the experience and get better if she cannot get the job. The percussionist also agrees that “when you start out for some it’s experience sometimes you have to take a lot of auditions” (Percussionist). Lastly, the clarinetist wants steady employment, but if this is not possible the secondary goal would be to continue to get better at playing an audition, which he says can take a while. Therefore, not only do musicians want a job from an audition, they are also looking to get better at the audition process and learn from the experience.

It was discussed earlier what directors and managers are looking for at auditions, so now it will be interesting to compare what musicians think directors are looking for at auditions. All of the musicians answered the exact same way: it depends. It depends on the instrument, the director, the audition committee, and the group “because all of the groups have a certain way of playing, certain personality” (Percussionist). The trombonist is not exactly sure what a director is looking for, but after she thought about it she thinks they are looking for a fantastic musician. This is someone who plays every single note musically and from the heart and is able to phrase the music beautifully and be thoughtful. On the other hand, a less enlightened director would be looking for 100% perfection. The percussionist agrees that musicality and “not sounding like a machine” is something that directors listen for (Percussionist). He adds that “a director might be listening for a percussionist to somehow sound musical or project that he knows what’s going on in the music which is not easy, say, on a snare drum” (Percussionist). This is different than a wind or string instrument that produces a pitched note and can do more with different dynamics and articulation. The clarinet player says that in the preliminary rounds, the audition committee is looking to see if someone can play the piece at its written tempo and play it beautifully and
rhythmically solid. This requires a basic knowledge of how the piece is supposed to be played and the audition committee “can tell very quickly whether an applicant knows the piece or not based on their tempo, their phrasing, style of articulation, things like that” (Clarinetist). Then, in the later rounds the audition committee and director are looking for flexibility. Not only should the musician be able to play different composers in their correct style, but they should be able to adjust their playing based on requests from the director. For example, the director could ask the musician to play something shorter and the candidate needs to play it shorter “because if it sounds exactly the same, they’ll be like, well I don’t want a person in my orchestra that’s going to hold up the rehearsal process because they can’t adjust to what I’m looking for” (Clarinetist).

Lastly, the oboist believes in an oboe player a director is looking for pitch, sound, and the ‘wow’ factor if the position is for principal oboe. Principal oboes have to have a lot of star quality and so a director will look for their vision of that star quality. In addition, an oboist has to sound great with the orchestra. To summarize, musicians believe that what a director is looking for depends on the instrument, director or group. But, more specifically they also believe a director is looking for musicality, excellent playing, flexibility and even a star quality.

**Effectiveness of Audition Process**

All of the orchestra directors and managers think their auditions are effective, but the musicians have their doubts. The oboist and the percussionist immediately answered ‘no’ when asked if they thought the audition process is effective, and the trombonist and the clarinetist answered with a reluctant ‘yes’. Both that reluctantly said ‘yes’ say it is because they do not know if there is a better way and they both say that the best people do not always win the job. Specifically, the clarinetist says “I don’t think it’s a good indicator of whether a musician can do the job because what they’re doing is they’re testing whether that musician can play in a group
and blend together and work well…and when you’re on stage alone you don’t get that sense” (Clarinetist). The trombonist believes that there is not a perfect audition process out there. The oboist that gave a definitive ‘no’ says it is because the process is extremely corrupt, especially in higher orchestras. She says that orchestras invite people to the final audition even after four days of auditions where everyone else has auditioned, and usually the invited people win the job. She continues, “Don’t tell me all those other people weren’t worth it” because those people are at the same talent level and could have gotten the job (Oboist). Even the clarinetist who thinks that the audition process is effective gets frustrated when an orchestra holds auditions and does not hire anyone and he “sometimes wonder(s) if they do that just because they already have somebody in mind that they want to invite to audition or whether they truly didn’t hear anyone that was up to the standard,” which he has a hard time believing because there are so many talented clarinetists out there (Clarinetist). The percussionist agrees that this happens when the orchestra will say “we have the audition but we already know we want that guy” (Percussionist). Another reason he believes the audition process is not effective is because “sometimes the audition process will sometimes take or select the most technically experienced…person and that doesn’t mean that person is musical or can even play, say, in a large ensemble or orchestra” (Percussionist). This mirrors what the clarinetist says as well that the audition process is not good at selecting someone who can play well in a group. Although orchestras believe their auditions are effective, the musicians do not think so because auditions are not a good way to tell if someone can play well in a group, and they already have people in mind that they want to win and they invite these people to audition. But, two of the musicians believe there is not a better way to hold auditions.

Despite their negative view of auditions, there are ways in which the musicians would like to remedy the problems with the audition process. The trombonist describes the perfect
audition as starting with the candidates playing with their section. Then, the orchestra should be looking for someone who can play well with the group, blends well, and is easy to work with. The oboist would like to have more of a pre-screening process where maybe a candidate sends in a tape. Plus, she would not have any invitations at auditions; the people they usually invite should audition like everybody else in the preliminary rounds. She also believes it would be a good idea for a candidate to play a concert with the orchestra as part of the audition. The clarinetist would give a candidate that makes it far in the process a trial week with the orchestra. Lastly, the percussionist says similarly “that in the finals, maybe there would be some sort of piece or excerpt that could actually be played with, say, a small group in the finals” (Percussionist). Both the percussionist and clarinetist want to make sure that candidates can play well in a group. The percussionist also adds that if the candidate plays with a small group, they can show off their musicality. In general, all of the musicians thought that this was a difficult question and they had to put a lot of thought into their answers. In the end, they determined that they would like to have candidates play with a small group or the entire orchestra as part of the audition and the oboist would like to have a pre-screening for the audition.

**Fairness of Audition Process**

There were varying answers as to the fairness of the audition process, but nobody was able to say that yes, the audition process is completely fair. This is in contrast to the orchestras who all believe their audition processes are fair. First, the trombonist says that the fairness depends on the actual audition. In the past, she has heard of instances where people in the know already know who is going to win, which is not fair because people spend a lot of their own money on the audition if it is out of town. The good thing is that she has not heard of this unfairness in Chicago. The oboist calls the audition process medium fair. She mentioned before
that she did not like that orchestras invite people to come audition, so that is one thing that does not make the process completely fair. She does understand that it is hard judging all day, but one time she could smell the judges eating pizza behind the screen, and she did not think that was fair because they were not paying attention to her audition. But, while she believes the judges try to do their best, she still believes the audition process is not necessarily fair. The percussionist also said yes, but he says it is mostly fair. This is because “there’s always rumors always but maybe that’s fair, too” (Percussionist). He does acknowledge that the audition process today is fairer than in the past because in the past if they needed a specific player, an orchestra “would call their friend at a major college or university and say ‘hey do you have somebody?’ and they say ‘yeah, yeah he’s a great player’ and they’d send him” (Percussionist). So, now that there are actual auditions in place, the process is fairer than it was. Lastly, the clarinetist says the process is “as fair as it can be” (Clarinetist). There are a few logistical things that he believes are not fair such as changing temperatures between rooms at the audition venue. For example, if a reed player walks from a 68 degree room to a 72 degree room, the reed is not going to react very well because reeds like constant humidity and temperature. This is frustrating to a musician “because a reed may feel great in the practice room and then you get onstage and it’s different” (Clarinetist). Some orchestras are fairer than others in this respect as, “a lot of orchestras will go to great lengths to regulate their temperature but others you walk through four different climate zones before you get onstage and that’s frustrating” (Clarinetist). Another logistical aspect that the clarinetist believes is unfair is when an orchestra sends a huge excerpt list and then a few weeks before the audition they will release an updated list that says the musician only needs to play a few measures out of each piece instead of the entire piece they had listed before. Similarly, at some auditions “they have one excerpt list posted online and they distribute another
excerpt list to candidates so sometimes candidates show up knowing different sets of music. That’s not cool either” (Clarinetist). But, the clarinetist does not get angry about either one of these things and he would never complain to the orchestra because that would give them another reason to dismiss him. Ensuring fairness should be a very important part of the audition process, but musicians are not satisfied with the level of fairness at auditions. Inviting people to audition and knowing ahead of time who an orchestra is going to pick but still having people come to audition is unfair. Also, the clarinetist mentioned logistical aspects that are unfair such as not regulating the temperature and not having a well-organized, specific excerpt list, but according to him these are nitpicky complaints. Still, they are aspects that can negatively affect an audition and they are aspects that are in the orchestra’s control that could make the process as fair for everyone as possible.

Discussion

There is a large disparity between what orchestras think of the audition process and what musicians think of the process. There is also a large disparity between the way an audition works in a community orchestra as opposed to a large orchestra such as the CSO. First, the orchestras believe their auditions are effective while musicians as a general consensus do not believe they are effective. This is a problem because the orchestras believe they are getting the most out of the audition experience, while the people who are actually auditioning do not think it is a good method. The orchestras apparently never ask for musician feedback or think much about what the musicians think of the process. Therefore, a possible solution could be more communication between orchestras and musicians. Most members of an audition committee are musicians as well, so they should be aware of what it is like to audition and adjust the audition process accordingly or talk to management about adjusting the audition process. But apparently it is not a
very large problem because musicians keep going through a process that they do not think is effective or fair without complaining to orchestra management. Both groups also seem very set in their ways and do not think that change is likely or even possible. In some cases, change may not be possible if there are restrictions and agreements set in place by collective bargaining agreements, but some of the minor complaints should be able to be fixed. For example, the clarinetist’s complaint that one excerpt list gets put on the website while another excerpt list is distributed to musicians could be an easy fix that does not involve unions.

Another problem is the issue of fairness. The community orchestras do not hold blind auditions, which seems unfair because there is nothing preventing them from discriminating against candidates. The CSO also does not have blind auditions in the final round, so there is the possibility for discrimination between the few candidates that make it to the final round. It is possible to have blind auditions all the way through. For example, the clarinetist mentioned the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra which leaves the curtain up for the entire audition process and “interestingly enough, that orchestra tends to hire people that nobody has really heard of” (Clarinetist). This would be the ideal way to hold an audition because an orchestra would not run the risk of violating the Civil Rights Act and it would increase the musician’s perception of the fairness of auditions. Some groups may argue that a candidate’s personality and fit with the group is important to find out during the audition process, but their playing is the most important factor on display at the audition. Plus, the candidate could play with a small group to hear their fit with the section while still keeping the audition blind. Then, one would just have to rely on the confidentiality of the orchestra members that play with the candidate and hope that they do not reveal anything to the audition committee.
Most of the people interviewed did not seem very confident that any changes could ever be made to the audition process because that is just the way auditions work. But, there has been a change that was mentioned by the percussionist and that change is that groups used to not even have auditions, but now they do. This was a step toward fairness, but there is much more that can be done to make the process as fair as possible. Furthermore, if unions are in place to ensure the fair treatment of their members, then they could probably be doing a better job. They are able to negotiate good salary and benefits, but maybe they should work more toward ensuring that their members are treated fairly in auditions. Possibly they could have a union representative on-site at major auditions to watch over the process. When asked if the union determines any part of the audition process, the Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel responded that the CSO musicians set the audition rules, “and the basic guidelines are included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the CSO Association and the local union,” plus there are more specific details of the audition that are determined by the musicians and staff (Manager of Auditions and Orchestra Personnel). Therefore, even though the union does not determine the entire audition process, they still have a say in the basic guidelines governing the process. In addition, the musicians should be fairer to their fellow musicians when determining the audition process. Unions could be a good way to help increase the fairness of the audition process.

The orchestras could also use the theories of justice discussed in the beginning to help refine their audition processes. Specifically, the job relatedness of the selection device, the opportunity to perform, and consistency that are all a part of procedural justice could help orchestras make their auditions more equitable. Auditions are already related to the job because playing one’s instrument at an audition is exactly what one will be doing at the job. But, they could increase job relatedness if they followed the suggestions of some of the musicians and had
playing with a small group or the entire orchestra as part of the audition process. This would increase job relatedness because most of the job is playing with a group, not playing a solo, so having a candidate play with the group would increase job relatedness and therefore increase fairness. Next, some of the orchestras already give the candidates the opportunity to express themselves prior to a decision being made. The orchestras that do are the community orchestras because they talk to the candidates during the audition process and let them describe themselves to the audition committee. The downside of this practice is that discrimination could occur because the auditions are not blind. Therefore, a way that all orchestras could let candidates express themselves is by having an exit survey for all candidates to take after the audition. This would ensure anonymity while at the same time allowing a candidate to express how they felt about the audition process and possibly offer suggestions to the orchestra on how to improve the process. Lastly, orchestras could improve their consistency in order to improve fairness. A few of the musicians said that orchestras invite people to audition in the final round even though they have not gone through the whole audition process, and this is not consistent because not everyone is auditioning in the same way. They are consistent in the fact that they have everyone play the same excerpts in the same setting, but if everyone went through the exact same audition process this would improve consistency and therefore fairness. Overall, orchestras could have an equitable audition process if they worked on the job relatedness of auditions, let candidates express their views, and improved consistency.

Future research could look at groups that hold blind auditions and groups that do not and compare the diversity between the two groups. In addition, future research could use an empirical method to study the effectiveness of orchestral auditions instead of using opinions. It also could be interesting to observe the audition process taking place and confirm what happens
in each round, talk to the musicians before and after they audition, and hear what the audition committee discusses behind the curtain. Another idea could be to compare auditions in other cities or to focus on just community orchestras or larger orchestras. It also could be interesting to interview musicians in a group because the musicians could react off of one another and generate a good group conversation.

Some limitations of this research include that no string players were interviewed and they could offer a different perspective on the audition process. Another limitation is that a few of the interviews were conducted over the phone and so it was not possible to have direct quotes that are more than a few words from these interviews. Also, the handwritten notes from the phone interviews could not be the most accurate representation of what was said. In general, the research could have included more interviews in order to compare more opinions. More specifically, it could have been beneficial to include another larger orchestra to compare to the CSO.
Appendix

Interview Questions

Orchestra

1. How do you get the word out about auditions?
2. How do you decide who gets to audition?
3. What are the steps in the audition process?
4. What happens at the audition?
5. What are you looking for in a musician?
6. What do you listen for or look for at an audition?
7. What is a quality that someone has that can set them apart?
8. Do you believe the audition process you have in place is effective? That is, do you think you end up selecting the best or right people?
9. If you could change anything about the audition process, what would you change?
10. Do you believe the audition process is fair?
11. Do you think the musicians think the audition process is fair?

Musicians

1. What instrument do you play?
2. How did you hear about the auditions for this orchestra?
3. What are the steps in the audition process?
4. What happens at the audition?
5. How do you feel at an audition?
6. How do you prepare for an audition?
7. What do you think directors are listening or looking for at an audition?
8. Do you believe the audition process that is in place is effective? That is, do you think the director ends up selecting the best or right people?

9. If you could change anything about the audition process, what would you change?

10. Do you believe the audition process is fair?
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