

1. Basia VIOLIN

I met with a representative of my country's embassy to talk about a possible funding for a concert I wanted to organize. He insisted to talk it through at a dinner. Ø

He listened to me for an hour, but I noticed early enough that he's not interested in music but rather in my appearance. Ø

At some point he started pressuring me to let him hold my hand. Ø

He was getting off on the fact that I needed his help and I have to follow him to his car, because I left my bag there. Ø

2. Ola PERCUSSION

A professor insinuated that my piece was chosen to be programmed because the director of the ensemble wanted to sleep with me. The same professor also made numerous comments about my physical appearance, sometimes during class in front of other (male) students. Ø

I doubted my talent as an artist, wondering if my appearance was carrying me forward, and I excused highly inappropriate comments which only enforced this belief because they were "compliments." Ø

I regret not defending myself by calling him out. But I was young and just in the very beginning of my career, and he was my first real mentor. Ø

The insidious nature of these comments is that you believe their lies just like everyone else. They make you complicit. Ø

3. Martyna PIANO

I had a very difficult experience working with a conductor of an ensemble. Ø

The musicians were all wonderful, however the conductor seemed to take issue with me from the very beginning. Ø

As the only woman composer in the group, I started to suspect it was a gender-related issue. He proceeded to shame and humiliate me in front of the entire ensemble for writing a challenging piece. Some days after that somewhat traumatizing first rehearsal, my professor reached out to me to ask me what happened. He said the conductor called him to complain about my "arrogance." Ø

It became clear to me that even though my behavior was really no different than the other male composers in the room, I was expected, as a woman, to behave more submissively towards the conductor. And that submission was not only expected in terms of my behavior, but also in terms of my music -- how complex it was or was not allowed to be. Ø

4. Paulina VIOLIN

I've been told that I should smile more after a performance because it makes me look prettier and more approachable. Ø

I've also been told that I should look happier because I'm lucky to be in this position (whatever that position was at the time). Ø

5. Alena ACCORDION

A student colleague of mine was making what seemed to be innocent jokes with a group of men during a brief break from the class we were in. Ø

I walked up to the group to hear him joking about raping one of my female colleagues. Ø

After expressing my disgust for and outrage at his behavior, he told me that I shouldn't worry; he would never rape me because he considered me too "masculine." Ø

After recounting the incident to my professors, they told me that I should settle this issue on my own, since it was not the institution's responsibility. Ø

It didn't take long for me to feel ostracized by majority of the male students. Ø