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Nov 17, 2018

Hanns Eisler School of Music Berlin

Dear Search Committee

I am honored by your request for my application. Thank you so much for your specific clarifications as well.

I address three issues in this letter: your requested references, German language, and the basis of my own interest in the position.

**References**, should you need them:

* Maestro Kurt Masur.

I worked with Mtro. Masur as an assistant conductor for many years at the New York Philharmonic. I substituted for him without rehearsal (or scores) at Avery Fisher Hall in a Masterworks series program (Brahms, Beethoven, Mendelssohn), an event well reviewed by The New York Times. I also substituted for Daniele Gatti under the same circumstances with the New York Philh. ( Beethoven, Mahler). I accompanied Mtro. Masur on international tours as his assistant, ready to jump in at any minute with any type of repertoire. He has not, however, observed me as an instructor, though I remember him saying that I would make a very good one.

* Maestro Harold Farberman, Director, The Conductors’ Institute.

<http://www.bard.edu/conservatory/faculty/?action=details&id=1522>.

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I taught masterclasses in this prestigious course for university-level conductors.

Mstro. Farberman was also one of my most valuable conducting teachers, particularly at a time when I had to fully conquer my left-handedness , which I did.

* Tomer Lev, Director of the Buchman-Mehta Academy of Music, Tel-Aviv University.

<https://en-arts.tau.ac.il/profile/tomerlev>

I taught conducting master-classes many times there over several years. Mr. Lev is an internationally accomplished concert pianist as well. He himself performed as soloist with me at various times over the years ( Brahms, Grieg)

* Maestro Zubin Mehta

Mstro. Mehta knows me since I was a 17 year old conducting student. He did not observe me as an instructor. It is I who was his student. I participated in his historic master-classes with the Israel Philharmonic filmed by the BBC for European broadcast. I was into the last month of expecting my first child. My assigned public concert work at the end of the course, with one run-through rehearsal, was Stravinsky’s “The Rite of Spring”. I had never conducted the work before. If the search committee is interested in speaking to him, he can possibly attest to my technical abilities, raw nerve, structural mind, and clear purpose. Those were his most significant comments to me during the course. Needless to say, a DVD is available of this performance should you request it.

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**German** Language.

I studied German at the Goethe Institute in Tel-Aviv many years ago, for pleasure. I am now immediately resuming my studies privately with one of their instructors, as there is surely nothing to lose by doing so, whatever your decision. I am very

optimistic that I can use the firm foundations I acquired as a younger person and quite rapidly build fluency upon that basis over the next months. I love languages very much, and speak 5 languages fluently (Spanish, Hebrew, French, English, Italian), to which I added studies in 3 other languages over the years (German, Arabic, Russian). My German was fluent enough at the beginning of my career, when I had quite a few engagements in countries behind the Iron Curtain. English was not to be spoken, but German was understood. I gave all my directions to the orchestras in German which Italian terms did not cover.

I had this letter translated for your convenience.

My interest in the position

I went into conducting studies and chose it as a career because I love to teach. I started conducting when I was 12, before I knew that conducting was a real profession. The teaching aspect – in addition to the innate musical ability and enjoyment- was my delight. I seem to have a substantial ability as a teacher.

Perhaps this is precisely the time of my life where I can devote a large amount of time to this endeavor. I studied with some of the great conductors of our time and my own experience as a conductor is vast and from all over the world, with many educational highlights.

I have of course researched all I could about your school and was very well

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impressed. I would indeed very much like to become part of your faculty, working towards mutually productive goals, for the benefit of the students, their careers and their futures. I would plan to maintain a residence in Berlin, in addition to those I currently have in the US and Israel.

As a final thought, one personal anecdote:

when I was a conducting student in Tel-Aviv University, Rubin Academy of Music, in the 70/s, I realized , as did many other conducting students, that in order to become an accomplished conductor I would have to study in another country, the one I thought most excellent. And that was Germany. I applied to the Hochschule in Berlin, auditioned in Berlin for an entire week, and was accepted, with scholarships. My name was Gisel Buka back then.

In returning to Israel, though, I discovered that my fiancée of many years (who became my husband of over 30 years and father of my two sons) would not accompany me to Berlin.

It was a very difficult decision, to reject studies in Berlin, studies I had looked forward to enormously. The second opportunity that came my way, three years later, was to study in the USA, at Yale University. I then married and left for the USA.

Life and opportunity now seem to bring me back to where perhaps I should have started. I am now divorcing, and yet again, there is an opportunity in Berlin. Americans say “what goes around, comes around”. Perhaps it’s a good omen.

Many thanks for your attention

Kindest regards

Gisele Ben-Dor

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