

You will hear a musician called Anita Kumar talking to a group of students about her life.

Highlight the words that she stresses to make her speech more comprehensible. Some of them would be providing some contrasting ideas. Can you spot some examples?

I'm here today to tell you about my life as a musician in an orchestra, as I understand some of you may be considering this as a career. If you play the flute, like me, then I'd certainly recommend as a great way to become a professional musician. I used to wish I played the violin as my sister does, as that'd offer more opportunities for work as a soloist, but now I don't think I'd exchange orchestra work for a solo career- even if I had the opportunity and the talent.

Some of you are studying for a degree in music at the university here. I was very tempted by that option, but in the end my parents persuaded me to do math instead. They thought it was more likely to lead to a steady job.

After graduating, I was considering becoming a teacher but decided to take a job in a bank first while I made up my mind. Being a cashier during the day left me with plenty of time and energy in the evenings, and I began to play in my local orchestra. I loved it, and when someone suggested I try for one of the bigger national orchestras, I jumped at the chance.

It's extremely enjoyable and I love the path I've chosen, but it's certainly not an easy life. I spend a lot of my time living out of a suitcase. We spent last month playing a series of concerts in Australia, for example. We got back last week and are off again next Monday. To Canada. Then later in the year, we're off to France.

The orchestra I play for is one of the best known in the country. And that's just because we've got a pretty good marketing manager. The thing is we have a brilliant conductor. He's still quite young and he has an amazing future ahead of him, I'm sure. We all feel very fortunate to have the chance to be working with him.

Although I love travel, I wouldn't say that's the best part of my job. It's often fun, but it can be exhausting. But what I do love is the companionship. It's great to spend one's life with a group of people who share the same passion for music.

Although we spend most of our time giving concerts in this country and abroad, we did have one rather unusual experience last year when we featured in a movie. You may have seen it- it was called Storm- and it was about a touring orchestra that got stuck on a Caribbean island during a hurricane. The same director says he's going to use us in his adaptation of a novel called Piano, which he's planning to start shooting next year.

I hope this has given you some idea of what life in an orchestra is like. I'd say it can best be described as being fulfilling. I feel incredibly lucky to be paid for doing something I love so much. At times, of course, it's exhausting and difficult, but it's never boring and I have no hesitation in recommending it as a career. So, I'd be happy to answer any questions...