Flute Association at Florida State University Newsletter

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THE FLUTE ASSOCIATION @ FSU

Greetings from the President

What an eventful year for the FSU Flute Association and the flute studio! We are so grateful for all of the wonderful opportunities we, the students, have had this year. Here are some highlights from this semester.

First, the Florida Flute Association Convention in January featured several FSU students, student groups, alumni, and our very own professor, Eva Amsler. It was a treat to see the FSU flute family represented so well within the larger flute community.

In February, the annual FSU Flute Day was a huge success, and we were all inspired by flutist Marina Piccinini's artistry and teaching during her residency. We also benefitted greatly from the visiting exhibitors including Haynes Flutes, J. L. Smith, and Beethoven & Company.

In April, Flute Choir Day brought together students from several different schools including Bethune-Cookman University (Daytona Beach, FL), Valdosta State University (Valdosta, GA), and Raa Middle School (Tallahassee, FL), as well as members of the local Tallahassee Flute Club. It was an incredible experience for the FSU flute choir members to perform combined pieces with over 40 students at once!

In August, the Raines Ensemble and the FSU Flute Choir will perform on separate recitals at the National Flute Association Convention in Orlando. The Raines Ensemble will premiere a work by Robert Raines that is dedicated to the memory of his teacher, former FSU professor Ladislav Kubík. Several other performances and sessions will feature FSU graduate students and alumni, and Professor Eva Amsler as well. Members of the FA and the studio look forward to representing FSU at this national convention.

Last but not least, we are excited to welcome Dr. Karen Large to the faculty in the fall 2018 semester as an Assistant Professor of Flute. What a year!

And finally, to all graduates - congratulations, and best of luck with the next chapter of your journey. You are always a part of the FSU flute family! Returning students - enjoy your summers, and don't forget to practice, smile, and have fun, too!

Your President,
Laura Clapper

A Fabulous Flute Choir Day

By Erika Andres

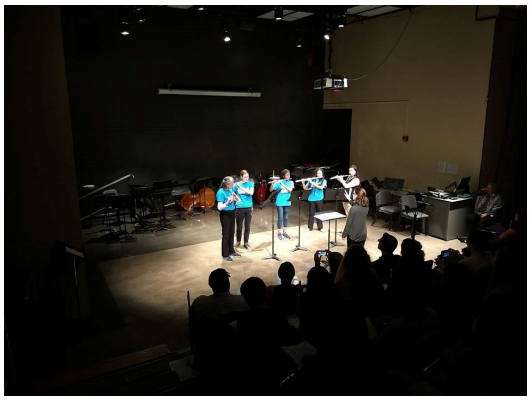
On Saturday, April 14, the flute studio had its annual FSU Flute Choir Day. It was an especially exciting event this year with many guests. There was a warm-up session with Daniel Alexander, flute professor at Valdosta State University, and a masterclass and flute choir reading session with Eva Amsler. The flute choir recital featured many ensembles, including the FSU Flute Choir with directors Alan Berquist and Elyse Davis, the Raa Middle School with director Sue Parsons and conductors Logan Faulkner and Gabrielle Sanchez, the Bethune Cookman University with director Sarah Jane Young , the Valdosta State University with director Daniel Alexander, and a combination choir of all of these wonderful groups with Eva Amsler directing. It was quite a varied and eclectic program, featuring works ranging from an arrangement of Pachelbel's Canon in D to Wil Offerman's Jungle Dance.

The FSU flute studio would like to thank all participants and guests for making 2018's FSU Flute Choir Day an especially memorable one.

Bethune-Cookman University with director Sarah Jane Young

Combined Choirs conducted by Eva Amsler

Valdosta State University



Raa Middle School conducted by Logan Faulkner

FSU Flute Choir with director Elyse Davis

The Physical Language of Success: Can Musicians Use Body Language to Reduce the Stress Response to Performing?

By Elizabeth Laird

Introduction

Near the end of his 1985 volume on body language, Body Speech, Samy Molcho spends some time talking about the importance of self-esteem when taking on a task of importance. Molcho asserts that if we undertake tasks while under pressure to meet certain expectations then failing can be destructive to both self-esteem and possibly even overall performance ability. The more self-assure one is, he surmises, the less these tasks affect us even when we fail. For a musician, one of the greatest pressures is to perform well. The expectation in the profession is to make little or no mistakes and to convey to the audience musical ideas beyond simple notes and rhythms, something that can be difficult even for the well-prepared when standing before an audience. Assuming that Samy Molcho's assertions regarding the importance of self-assurance in tasks such as public performance is correct, then this is a beneficial quality for a performer to possess. How then does a musician reduce the stress response to this difficult situation and increase their self-esteem while performing?

There exists a plethora of methods to help musicians and other performers deal with performance anxiety. Among these are centering a few different possibilities like body awareness such as Alexander Technique, The Feldenkrais Method, body mapping, musician's yoga etc, therapeutic approach as rapid eye therapy or Kinesiology or medical help like Homöopathic remedies or beta blockers etc. This paper will explore the possibility of reducing pressure and increasing self-esteem simply by changing one's body language. There exists no one-size-fits-all answer to performance anxiety in musicians, but this work hopes to propose another method for consideration.

What is Body Language?

The Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics defines body language as "a form of non-verbal communication and typically associated with conveying information about attitudes, emotions, and interpersonal affiliations." To Molcho, body language is "the silent question-and-answer game in our bodily behavior." Despite the big differences between these definitions, Molcho, The Max Planck Institute, and the discipline of psychology all conclude that human beings do not communicate with words alone. Human body language is an intricate, multilayered form of communication closely connected to the perspective of the individual.

It is also important to note just what body language is not. In the conclusion of his work on the subject, Molcho urges his readers not to trust body language and the Max Planck Institute takes this further, writing that we should "understand these links between a certain position of a part of our body and the information this is supposed to convey as associations rather than as fixed one-to-one mappings…." A learnable 'secret code' with specific functions does not exist." Body language is a complex subject that cannot be completely categorized both because of this complexity and because of the variations in body language and mannerisms between individuals. The exception to this rule lies in facial expression.

Silvan Tomkins and Paul Ekman are the American psychologists known for their massive work, the Facial Action Coding System. This manual categorizes every muscle group in the human face and the way these muscles are used to create affect displays or often involuntary behavioral displays of emotion. FACS is a comprehensive and widely used facial identification system that has not only proved that human facial expressions can be assessed reliably, but also that the facial responses to many basic emotions are the same in humans all over the world, including both literate and preliterate cultures. According to David Matsumoto, "These findings are impressive given that they have been produced by different researchers around the world in different laboratories using different methodologies with participants from many different cultures but all converging on the same set of results." All of this combines to be an impressive amount of evidence that human facial expression is formed by the same set of responses to a few basic emotions.

Body Language: Cause and Effect

In his 1872 book, The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals, Charles Darwin made the assertion that "The free expression by outward signs of an emotion intensifies it. On the other hand, the repression, as far as this is possible, of all outward signs softens our emotions." This is the first instance of facial feedback theory, the idea that the human face not only shows emotion but also affects emotion. While not all psychologists and researchers agree on the amount which facial expression moderates emotion, the research available today shows that it does have a measurable impact, as shown by the following studies.

The 1988 article, "Inhibiting And Facilitating Conditions Of The Human Smile: A Nonobtrusive Test Of The Facial Feedback Hypothesis" is one good example. In this experiment, participants were broken into three groups: a control group, a group asked to hold a pen between their teeth (forcing them to smile), and a group asked to hold a pen between their lips (making it impossible to smile). The participants were then asked to judge the funniness of a series of cartoons. The smiling group ranked the cartoons much funnier overall, supporting the idea that smiling made them more open to humor. A similar study conducted in 2009 acknowledged that contracting the muscles used in facial expressions could make those emotions more intense and set out to determine whether or not inhibiting facial expression would moderate emotion. Interestingly, they discovered that inhibiting facial expressions did decrease the intensity of the corresponding emotion, but much more so with negative emotion than positive emotion. There is quite a bit more research regarding facial expression than posture or other aspects of body language, but a 1982 article in the peer-reviewed journal, Motivation and Emotion, outlines an experiment comparing participants in slouched and upright postures and showed that people whose bodies were placed in a dejected position were more likely to give up on a difficult task.

This research suggests a number of important points regarding body language and emotion. First, that contracting the muscles used in a facial reaction associated with an emotion will intensify that emotion. For example, smiling can make one perceive something as more humorous. Secondly, inhibiting the facial reaction associated with a particular emotion will moderate that emotion. The third point is very similar to the second, but with one important difference: assuming facial expressions of positive emotions can inhibit negative emotions and vice versa. Lastly, it is likely that assuming positions related to either negative or positive emotions also triggers some emotional response correlating to those emotions.

Practical Applications

So far this work has presented the evidence that strongly suggests that while body language is complex and nearly impossible to codify, all humans do share some affect displays in the form of facial expression. Secondly, the evidence gathered here shows that purposeful control of body language has a provable affect on emotion. How, then, could musicians use this to increase self-esteem and manage anxiety? There is currently little or no research specifically combining body language and stress response management, however, the information that does exist suggests that to inhibit performance anxiety with body language, one would need to know the body language of self-assurance.

Molcho shows self-assurance by leaning back, lifting his chin, opening up his posture and placing his hands behind his head so that his elbows are poised to defend his position. While this is not a posture that would be particularly effective to perform in, the research in John Risking and Caroline Gotay's study supports the use of an open, upright posture by showing that people are more likely to persevere in difficult tasks when exhibiting good posture than when bent forward in a semblance of dejection. Relaxing the face can be another method to inhibit the fear of performing, especially if one takes care to release tension from the lips and brow. Joshua Ian Davis, Ann Senghas, and Kevin N. Ochsner found in their 2009 study that keeping a neutral facial expression lowered the intensity of negative emotions, and Tomkin and Ekman's FACS labels the lips and the brow as the places in which our faces tighten to show fear.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research available today indicates that it is possible to regulate emotional response by changing one's body language. For musicians with performance anxiety, this could be excellent news as this method can be achieved without the need to swallow a pill or see a doctor. It simply takes practice and the discipline to notice and regulate small muscles in the face and perhaps to rearrange one's posture.

The largest issue with this thesis is a lack of research specific to the body language and performance anxiety. The studies I have compiled here are all undertaken by calm participants in a pressure-free environment. They don't look into the human reactions to body language in the sort of stressful situation that could result in performance anxiety. In addition, in these studies, participants were largely unaware that their body language and emotions were being measured and tested. Conscious knowledge of inhibiting affect displays could change the effects, either skewing the results for or against the use of body language control to manage stress response.

This is a relatively small research paper, not designed to prove that body language regulation is a reliable method of managing performance anxiety, but rather to point out that it very well could be. This work's objective is simply to summarize and connect the evidence that changing one's body language, or at least facial expression, to affect the emotions is a topic worthy of consideration and further research as a possible method of dealing with the stress responses found in performing musicians.

The Effects of Constructive Rest on Perceived Levels of Stress, Tension, and Pain in Collegiate Flutists

By John Ross

The 21st-century musician faces many challenges. With the advent of the internet and cellular telephones, everyday tasks demand an almost constant level of attention and perfection in an age where connection and communication are at our fingertips. The study, practice, and performance of music has not been immune to these changes. The heightened difficulty level of repertoire, the use of extended techniques, and the shortages of employment opportunities in the arts can add stress and anxiety to the life of any musician. Unlike many other degree programs in higher education, the music curriculum starts from day one. Students begin courses in music theory, sight singing and ear training, group piano, and music history immediately upon entering an institution. Additionally, they are expected to take private applied lessons, perform in studio classes, and participate in any number of ensembles. Music students must practice scales, technical exercises, etudes, and solo works for their weekly lessons and are also expected to prepare their individual parts for ensemble rehearsals.

The pressure to achieve perfection in personal practice, rehearsals, and performances often causes a great deal of physical and mental stress, which can lead to performance-related anxiety, tension, and pain. While these conditions are not new to musicians and students, many music programs lack the space in their curricula to offer courses on how to deal with these issues. Furthermore, many students try to continue working when they experience fatigue, tension, and pain. A looming fear of falling behind in their studies, leading to failure and embarrassment, also causes them to avoid addressing these problems with teachers and healthcare professionals. Moreover, the rising cost of healthcare often makes it difficult for students to seek out professional help. When issues of tension and pain go untreated, they can often lead to repetitive stress injuries and serious musculoskeletal disorders, such as tendonitis, carpal tunnel disorder, ulnar nerve entrapment, and TMJ disorder.

Tension and pain are often exacerbated for flutists due to the unnatural way the instrument is held while playing. Flutists must hold the instrument to one side of the body, causing issues of balance that can affect posture and muscle tension. Both arms and hands are holding the instrument to the right side. The added weight of these appendages can be difficult for novice students to counterbalance. In 2011, researchers Ackermann, Kenny, and Fortune found that college-level flutists often self-report suffering from performance-related musculoskeletal pain that persists for longer than three months. In 2008, another study by Thompson examined various factors affecting performance-related pain of collegiate and advanced high school students, including limb length and technical specifications of individual instruments. These are factors that many school music teachers, particularly beginning band/orchestra directors, are not able to monitor closely enough before they become bigger issues. They are also factors that private instructors may not be equipped to deal with at the middle- and high-school levels. Furthermore, most music teacher training programs rarely include courses on how to handle issues of body awareness or stress management.

Medical professionals will give similar advice to musicians and athletes: when pain is experienced, take a break. Music pedagogues often echo this guidance in their teaching. While this may be effective for most people, are breaks to breathe and move around really enough for everyone? How can people supplement these ideas to optimize the release of performance-related tension and pain? Musicians and other performing artists are turning to somatic disciplines to connect with and gain awareness about what is happening in and around their bodies in an effort to figure out the root causes of tension, stress, and pain. Somatic disciplines include such practices as yoga, tai chi, the Alexander Technique, the Feldenkrais Method, and body mapping, just to name a few. Research studies by Chan and Ackermann (2014) as well as Khalsa et. al. (2009) on intervention therapy using somatic disciplines have found that

these practices are helpful in improving posture, focus, and musicality, as well as reducing levels of performance anxiety and tension. The use of these practices in reducing stress and pain still requires some examination.

Many of these somatic disciplines incorporate the use of meditation or mindful rest within practice. Through mindfulness exercises like this, a person is able to connect body, breath, and mind, allowing for a greater and more expansive awareness. Practitioners of these disciplines work to give attention to areas that are tense or have pain with the intention of releasing these muscles and allowing them to move more freely. Constructive, or active, rest is a practice derived from the Alexander Technique and body mapping. It involves lying on the floor in a semi-supine position and actively examining the body for tension and pain while also being aware of sensory information and breathing. While lessons and courses in any somatic discipline can be expensive (and are sometimes not available in all locations), guided constructive rest recordings are available on the internet for anyone to use. An examination of this practice and its use by flute students will highlight the potential benefits of restful awareness on stress, tension, and pain in the body. These benefits add credence to the need for somatic discipline courses in the music curriculum, teaching students how to use their bodies efficiently in practice and performance and how to connect mind and body when dealing with issues of performance-related stress and anxiety.

Body mapping was discovered by William Conable, Professor Emeritus of cello at Ohio State University and certified teacher of the Alexander Technique. A body map is defined as one's self-representation in the brain. Conable developed the idea of a body map by observing the congruencies of his students' movements in playing with their own ideas about the structures of their bodies. He discovered that when students' movements were based on an informed perception of their actual structure, they became more efficient, expressive, and appropriate for making music.

The practice of body mapping utilizes all senses to develop awareness of the body, particularly kinesthesis. The kinesthetic sense is literally our sixth sense, involving our perception of body movement. It allows one to detect changes in body position and movements without relying on the other five senses. Alexander observed that people often misinterpreted the sensory signals sent to the brain, particularly kinesthetic signals. Conable believed this misinterpretation occurred in two possible ways: 1) pressure or tension in the body causes a distortion of the information being transmitted to the brain, or 2) the transmission of information is accurate, but is being misread by the brain due to lack of information and experience. The basis for Conable's development of body mapping lies in the second of these two possibilities. When one has a solid understanding of the structure, function, and size of different parts of the body – beginning first with the spine, then moving from the head to the feet – then one can begin to use the body more efficiently and effectively.

William Conable developed the practice of body mapping with his former wife, Barbara Conable. While William Conable originated the ideas and theories of mapping, Barbara Conable developed the method of teaching the practice. A certified Alexander Technique instructor herself, Barbara Conable wrote the book on body mapping. Her book, *What Every Musician Needs to Know About the Body*, outlines the course of instruction for teaching the principles of body mapping to musicians and other performing artists. Her text is also the basis of many other instrument- or discipline-specific books on body mapping. Additionally, she is responsible for developing and defining the practice of constructive rest for the body mapping discipline. Constructive, or active, rest was invented by dancers. It was derived from the understanding that the body works best when alternating activity with periods of rest and recovery. According to Barbara Conable and Likar (2009), constructive rest is believed to be more effective than regular rest because it involves the creative use of attention and intention. By bringing attention and awareness to the body, one can work with the intention of releasing tense muscles and making them available for efficient movement. It is practiced in sessions by lying on the floor in a semi-supine position with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. From this position, the body can move in any direction desired to increase awareness through movement.

A three-week study was conducted to determine if the practice of constructive rest would have an effect on perceived levels of stress, tension, and pain in flute students at a major post-secondary school of music. The specific research questions for this study were:

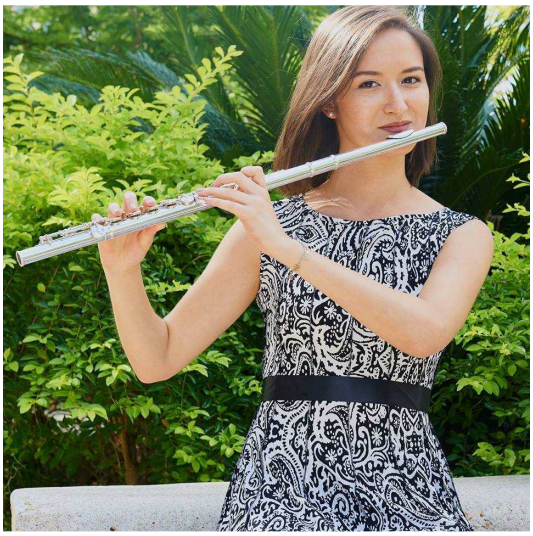
1) does the practice of constructive rest affect the perceived level of stress in flute students?
2) does the practice of constructive rest affect the perceived level of tension in flute students?
3) does the practice of constructive rest affect the perceived level of pain in flute students?

The dependent measure for this experiment was two questionnaires, a pretest and a posttest. The constructive rest sessions took place in an arranged classroom space within the College of Music at the university. The sessions were administered using David Nesmith's *Constructive Rest: The Audio Guide Series* recording, "The Guide for Everyone." The participants ($N = 30$) for this study were all students in the flute studio in the College of Music at Florida State University. Participants were divided into two groups. Group 1 ($n = 15$) participated in sessions of constructive rest. Group 2 ($n = 15$) was a control group, receiving no sessions of constructive rest. Results indicated significant differences in stress levels for both Group 1 and Group 2 participants. Significant differences were also found in reported pain levels for various areas of the body, more so for Group 1 than for Group 2 participants. Group 1 showed substantial improvement in in four areas of the body listed within the dependent measure, while Group 2 showed noteworthy change in only one area from pretest to posttest. Additionally, the majority of Group 1 participants noted a positive difference in their levels of stress (87%) and tension, numbness, and pain (93%). These data do indicate that a regular practice of constructive rest has a positive effect on the perceived levels of pain.

The pressure on aspiring musicians is growing all the time. As colleges and universities raise their standards for excellence, the expressed requisite for perfection is continuing to expand. It is very easy for music students to get lost in the details of precise technique, beauty of tone, and communication of phrasing while remaining unique and original enough to stand out in a sea of others trying to achieve the same goals. Despite the increase in expectation on students, many institutions still lack courses that could equip music students with tools to deal with stress, anxiety, tension, and pain. As this external pressure builds, so too does the internal stress and tension all musicians often experience while trying to keep up with these rising demands. It can be very easy to work oneself into such a state of tension and pain that there is no other choice but to stop playing or risk lasting conditions that will inevitably lead to that very outcome at some point. The modern flutist is no stranger to these conditions. In an era where newly-composed music often utilizes extended techniques such as singing while playing, beatboxing, producing quartertones and multiphonics by using awkward hand and finger positions and combinations, a flutist must be as technically sound and precise as possible to achieve such effects. Additionally, flutists must also possess a high level of musicality and flexibility to create a convincing performance regardless of whether the desired effects occur as planned or not. These new and rising expectations make it very difficult to avoid some amount of stress, tension, and pain when playing.

Results showed that, even in a short period of time, a regular regimen of constructive rest can reduce stress, tension, and pain in multiple areas of the body. These results add merit to the claim that an active, guided rest practice that brings an inclusive awareness to the body can help the practitioner learn to use his or her body in a more efficient way, ultimately reducing stress, tension, and pain. But these results are only part of the overall landscape in body awareness. Constructive rest is a tool used in the large disciplines of the Alexander Technique and body mapping. By adding elective courses in these or similar practices into the curriculum, institutions can better prepare their students to meet the growing demands of the performing arts field. For flutists and all performing artists, this can ultimately mean a longer, more effective, fruitful, and fulfilling career.

Goodbye to All Leaving the FSU Flute Studio!



Ayça Çetin received her Doctor of Music degree in flute performance while serving as a teaching assistant. She was the Social Media Coordinator for the Flute Association at FSU. Ayça is a Miyazawa Emerging Artist and performs regularly with Duo Esplanade, Cosmos New Music, and several orchestras in Florida.

Laura Clapper graduated with a Doctor of Music degree in flute performance. She served as a flute teaching assistant and has been an elected board member of the FA at FSU for three years. Laura will remain at FSU for the next academic year to finish an MM degree in Historical Musicology. She currently directs the FSU Collegium Musicum early music ensembles and is a research assistant.

Elyse Davis is a Doctor of Music flute performance student and flute teaching assistant, and she served as this year's Flute Association Vice President. Among her many accomplishments, she made her Carnegie Hall debut in 2017 and has won national and regional flute competitions throughout the United States. Elyse is taking a break from school and will be relocating to California in August where she will go full time with her small business, *Tidy Clutterings*.

John Ross completed a Doctor of Music degree in flute performance. He was the president of the Flute Association at FSU during the 2016-2017 academic year. He is planning to return to a teaching position at West Virginia State University beginning in August 2018.

Erika Andres completed a Master of Music degree in flute performance. She was a teaching assistant and served as Corresponding Secretary of the Flute Association at FSU. She will be returning to her hometown, Savannah, GA, to establish her own private flute studio.

Jennifer Luechauer is completing a degree in Instrumental Music Education in December 2018. She will be leaving the flute studio as she starts her education internship at Silver Trail Middle School in Broward County in August.

Quinn Smith received his Bachelor of Arts degree in music and archeology. He served multiple terms as fundraising chair with the Flute Association at FSU.

Contact the FA@FSU!

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