



MADRID

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THE HEALTHY ORCHESTRA

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INCREASING CONSENSUS ABOUT THE RELEVANCE OF HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

- Spreading consensus about the need for adequate prevention
- Consensus also needed about assessment of risks and efficient measures to be taken (risks may be sector- / instrument-specific)
- Risks include
 - ✓ Excessive acoustic pressure (peaks) :: hearing loss / hyperacusia
 - ✓ Inappropriate posture :: musculoskeletal disorders
 - ✓ Excessive workload :: repetitive motion injuries
 - ✓ Psychological stress, anxiety, emotional pressure :: burnout
 - ✓ Frequent traveling | odd working hours :: exhaustion = additional risk factor

DIALOGUE IS A KEY TO RISK PREVENTION EFFICIENCY

- European Social Dialogue ➡ OIRA online risk assessment tool
<http://www.oiraproject.eu/available-tools>
- Uniform measures may be inadequate: different instruments may require different approaches
- Feedback is essential to assess the relevance and efficiency of the measures applied
- Behaviors should be questioned at different levels. Example: individual protections are not the best-fitted response to noise exposure ➡ cooperation with other professionals (conductors, instrument makers)

RAISING AWARENESS: A RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOTH MUSICIANS AND MANAGERS

- Playing an instrument professionally is comparable to high level sport competition in terms of physical impact
- From the musician's perspective, pain is still too often perceived as a positive sign: "I must suffer if I want to make progress".
- The enormous amount of work that a musician produces as a student or at the beginning of his/her career may have a delayed but heavy physical impact that adds to natural aging issues
- Lifelong learning, re-training, permanent access to adequate, specialized medical advice or assistance are essential to awareness, prevention and early treatment
- Need to address age-related issues

ATHLETES VS MUSICIANS

A BRIEF COMPARISON

Strength

Repetition of macro-movements

Macro motor control

Emphasis on large movement

Great physical activity

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Accuracy

Repetition of micro-movements

Micro motor control

Emphasis on short movement.
Predominant use of hand and upper
limb

Sedentary lifestyle

ATHLETES VS MUSICIANS

A BRIEF COMPARISON (2)

Tendency to avoid vicious positions	:	Frequent vicious positions
Search for good body position	:	Little concern about body posture
Short time of professional activity	:	Long time of professional activity
Adapted care by specialized health professionals	:	Lack of specialized training of health professionals
Good body consciousness	:	Low body consciousness
Special clothes and accessories	:	...

SPECIFIC RISKS REQUIRE SPECIFIC APPROACHES

- Excessive acoustic pressure (peaks) :: hearing loss
 - ✓ Demand from the public
 - ✓ Conductor's request
 - ✓ Unbalanced programme or repertoire
 - ✓ Acoustic performance of the venue
 - ✓ Inadequate placement of musicians on stage
 - ✓ Pressure on / from instrument makers. Competition based on sound power.
- Inappropriate posture :: musculoskeletal disorders
 - ✓ Inadequate choice of chairs
 - ✓ Excessive workload induces exhaustion and wrong postures
 - ✓ Need for adapted treatment and re-training
- Excessive workload :: repetitive motion injuries
 - ✓ Warm-up and progressive work intensity are essential
 - ✓ Need to balance the programme at concert and season level
 - ✓ Simultaneous programmes of medium to high intensity increase risk

SPECIFIC RISKS REQUIRE SPECIFIC APPROACHES (2)

- Psychological stress, anxiety, emotional pressure :: burnout
 - ✓ The musician's activity is emotion-dependent
 - ✓ Constant confrontation to the public but also conductors and colleagues
 - ✓ Health-related performance issues may have a huge emotional impact
- Frequent traveling | odd working hours :: additional risk factor
 - ✓ Long traveling hours (and jet lag) reduce muscle performance and increase the risk of overstrain
 - ✓ Late working hours impact family life and increase the risk of exhaustion
 - ✓ Regular breaks are essential to the prevention of tendinites and other musculoskeletal troubles

WELL-BEING: A NATURAL OUTCOME OF MODERN ORCHESTRA MANAGEMENT

- Develop and renew risk prevention policies in consultation with musicians, so as to increase awareness and improve efficiency
- Facilitate access to information on professional ailments, contacts with specialists and access to adequate treatments
- Re-think the organisation of work to balance working time and personal practice + private / family life
- Associate musicians to decision making to ensure their full involvement in a collective project
- Invest in prevention and constant dialogue as privileged means to enhance efficiency at work and artistic success

RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL AILMENTS A DESIRABLE STEP FORWARD

- The recognition of the musicians' professional ailments would transform a financial risk into a reasonable, mutualized cost
- The prevalence of focal dystonia in the musicians' population and its impact on playing makes it a natural priority
- Long and difficult process, which would highly benefit from joint efforts by musicians' trade unions and employers' organisations

THANK YOU!



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