Healthy Conservatoires

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Musicians’ Training, Health and Wellbeing

Aaron Williamon
Overview

- Musical Impact
- Healthy Conservatoires
- Innovations in Teaching and Student Support
1. Musical Impact
Professionals 60-75%
Students 70-85%
Debilitating anxiety
15-25%
Conservatoires UK (in 2013)

Guildhall School of Music and Drama
Leeds College of Music
Royal Academy of Music
Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
Royal College of Music
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Royal Northern College of Music
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama
Trinity Laban Conservatoire for Music and Dance
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Guiding questions

- How do the physical and mental demands of making music interact with and determine musicians’ health and wellbeing?
- What can we learn from existing international educational and professional approaches to promoting musicians’ health?
1. Fit to Perform
   A survey of musicians’ physical and mental fitness

2. Making Music
   A study of the physical demands of practice and performance

3. Better Practice
   Promoting health in music education and the profession

Timeline:
- Year 1: 2013/14
- Year 2: 2014/15
- Year 3: 2015/16
- Year 4: 2016/17
- ...2018
● 90-min mental and physical **fitness assessments** for 600+
● 3-hour **vocal health screenings** for 150+
● 4-hour **biomechanical assessments** for 20+
● 1-hour **physiological assessments** for 30+
● 20 hours of **in-depth interviews** with over 30+

➢ New, evidence-based approaches for promoting and enhancing the health and wellbeing of musicians.
ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Profiling the Location and Extent of Musicians’ Pain Using Digital Pain Drawings

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Fit to Perform: An Investigation of Higher Education Music Students’ Perceptions, Attitudes, and Behaviors toward Health

Liliana S. Araújo, David Wasley, Rosie Perkins, Louise Atkins, Emma Redding, Jane Ginsborg and Aaron Williamson

Making music at the highest international standards can be rewarding, but it is also challenging, with research highlighting pernicious ways in which practicing and performing can affect performers’ health and wellbeing. Several studies indicate that music students’ perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward health and healthy living are less than optimal, especially considering the multiple physical
Perceived Enablers and Barriers to Optimal Health among Music Students: A Qualitative Study in the Music Conservatoire Setting

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Student health and wellbeing within higher education has been documented as poor in relation to the general population. This is a particular problem among students at music conservatoires, who are studying within a unique educational context that is known to generate both physical and psychological challenges. This article examines how conservatoire students experience health and wellbeing within their institutional context, using a framework from health promotion to focus attention on perceived
II. Healthy Conservatoires
Homes

Cities

Schools

Communities

Ageing

Hospitals

Prisons

Markets

Municipalities

Villages

Workplaces

Islands
Healthy Conservatoires

Aim to create environments that promote and enhance the health and wellbeing of performing artists, enabling them to achieve their full potential and to build healthy, sustainable careers.
Key characteristics

- It uses a settings-based approach.
- It focuses on promoting health.
- It is informed by the demands of performing.
- It engages directly with research.
Key characteristics (cont)

- It is NOT health and safety.
- It is NOT a clinical service.
Resources

- Network meetings (120+)
- Case studies of good practice
- Mapping of expertise and services
A healthy conservatoire...

- creates an environment that openly embraces and embeds health and wellbeing in all aspects of its culture and community
- works towards a holistic health and wellbeing provision that addresses a wide variety of factors affecting its performing arts community
- frames and promotes health and wellbeing in positive ways to enable those within its community to achieve their full potential and build sustainable careers
Rounded support

Environmental
Spiritual
Social
Physical
Occupational
Intellectual
Emotional
Financial
A healthy conservatoire

Resources and services

Curriculum and professional development

Policies

Relationship with community and profession

Environment

Research

Healthy Conservatoires

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www.HealthyConservatoires.org (coming soon)