



# UNA VOCE

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The Organization of Canadian Symphony Musicians (OCSM) is the voice of Canadian professional orchestral musicians. OCSM's mission is to uphold and improve the working conditions of professional Canadian orchestral musicians, to promote communication among its members, and to advocate on behalf of the Canadian cultural community.

## Attach Your Own Oxygen Mask before Assisting Another Person

Barbara Hankins  
Editor

Looking after yourself doesn't mean that you're selfish. In fact, it's the required first step in physical and mental first aid procedures. The same can be applied to daily life: ideally, your own physical and mental well-being is a priority for performing your best as an orchestral musician.

The articles in this issue by Mike Macaulay and Amber Ghent provide useful information for musicians interested in ways to both treat and prevent performance injuries. Katie Finch at the University of Waterloo is researching ways to reduce performance anxiety through mental imagery. Read how you can be part of her study!

In his article, Paul Beauchesne tells us how excited the Victoria Symphony musicians are about their new conductor, and Melissa Goodchild points out the family connections in a heart-warming story from the Saskatoon Symphony.

Breathe deeply, lower your shoulders, and treat yourself well so you can help others. Best wishes for great music-making in 2018!

## EMDR: Fixing Faulty Brain Wiring

Michael Macaulay  
Kitchener Waterloo Symphony

In the spring of 2013, my dream came true and I won a full-time orchestral position, giving me my first taste of the relentless pace of the modern orchestra schedule. The repertoire in my first year was an absolute treat,

and my colleagues were a continuous source of artistic inspiration. My own playing, however, was a source of deepening anxiety.



Mike Macaulay

My motor control was deteriorating. Under stressful performance conditions, my fingers and lip muscles would stiffen, impairing my playing to an extent that seemed to worsen with each occurrence. By the spring of 2014, my embouchure had become haz- ardously unreliable. My mind felt incredibly scattered, and my inability to focus in times of stress was causing problems in my life both on and off stage. At the age of 25, I was seriously considering retiring from performing, but my support group pushed me to keep looking for solutions.

I sought help from Dr. John Chong and Dr. John McMillan at the Musicians' Clinics of Canada, who helped me understand the nature of what I was dealing with in greater depth. I'd experienced events in my past that I hadn't been able to process in a healthy way at the time, and these events had left imprints in my nervous system that were prone to rise to the surface if poked. These imprints were now costing me sleep and flooding my brain with cortisol (the stress hormone), and in certain circumstances temporarily robbing me of control of muscles I depend on to play. The problem was being reinforced with repetition, so I hadn't just imagined it; I truly had been getting worse with each mistake. I had some faulty nervous system wiring, and I wasn't sure it would be possible to fix.

A family member suggested I look into EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprogramming), a remarkable therapy that has been used as a treatment for post-traumatic stress since the late 1980s. EMDR's effectiveness in treating post-traumatic stress is supported by around twenty scientific studies, and organizations, in-

cluding the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, endorse it as a recommended treatment. Anecdotally, therapists have also reported success using EMDR to treat a wide range of conditions, including performance anxiety, addiction, and personality disorders.

The therapy itself typically begins with preparatory work between the therapist and client, in which the treatment protocol is discussed and the therapist builds an understanding of the issue to be worked on. Once it begins, the actual EMDR work involves the senses on each side of the body being stimulated in an alternating pattern. This stimulation can be done through one's sense of sight, by wearing goggles in which a light can be seen in alternating eyes; hearing, with a tone played through headphones; or touch, by holding a small device in each hand that vibrates similarly to a cellphone. The session begins with the client recalling as vividly as they can the event or sensation they are trying to address and then, in my experience as the therapy begins, the mind jumps to other memories, sensations, and abstract ideas. The therapist periodically stops the process to ask the client to describe what they are currently experiencing, then asks the client to continue to focus on that experience and restarts the stimulation. The process repeats until the memory or sensation is no longer distressing.

My experience has been that over the course of treatment one's perspective on distressing memories shifts, without the memories being diminished or erased. During a session, I find myself coming to accept events in my past, and moving on from both the negative thoughts and the unwanted physical feelings attached to the memory. The really remarkable thing is how little intervention from the therapist the whole process requires. Regardless of the memory or feeling from which the client starts, the mind seems to know what related feelings or events it needs to recall for healing to happen. If this all sounds extremely bizarre to you, it did to me too. EMDR is difficult to describe to someone who has never experienced it, partly because its physical mechanisms are not fully understood. As a scientifically supported therapy, it is in a strange position – we know it works, but we do not know exactly what it does. Anecdotally, I can tell you that it has brought my playing back on track and lightened some heavy burdens on my emotional state that had been dragging me down for years.

I'd highly recommend EMDR to any musician who is having trouble with their mental game on stage or having trouble moving on from a past experience, musical or otherwise. You can read more about EMDR and locate practitioners near you at (<https://emdrCanada.org>). I can be reached at ([mike.macaulay@gmail.com](mailto:mike.macaulay@gmail.com)) if you have any questions.

## SSO Family Christmas Concert

Melissa Goodchild

Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra

Greetings from the Saskatoon Symphony! Like many of you, the SSO plays a few holiday concerts. In addition to the *Messiah*, we have a holiday concert with a different theme each year. This year we had the great pleasure to share the stage with the Saskatoon Jazz Orchestra in our "Nutcracker Meets Duke Ellington" concert. The concert alternated between performances of the traditional *Nutcracker Suite* by the SSO and the jazzed up charts by Duke Ellington performed by the SJO.



During the concert it was brought to our attention how many parent-child pairs were sharing the stage.

Aaron Bueckert joined the SSO's trumpet section as second trumpet, his father Darrell Bueckert has been principal timpanist with the SSO for many years and also teaches at the University of Saskatchewan. You'll find Simon Fanner in the first violin section and his father Nick Fanner, who is a member of the SJO trumpet section; and principal bassoon Stephanie Unverricht with her father Brian Unverricht, who continues to grace the SSO trombone section.

We are so lucky to have such amazing musicians join us. It really was a fantastic concert with patrons leaving with smiles, humming tunes, and full of holiday cheer!

## Body Mapping for Musicians

Amber Ghent

The likelihood of an orchestral musician presenting with pain or muscle-skeletal injury affecting their ability to play over their lifetime is 84 percent (John Chong, Performing Arts Medicine Association). I was no exception to this statistic when I first encountered Body Mapping through a workshop given by violinist and Andover Educator Jennifer Johnson in 2011. At this point, after years

of frustration, I'd finally found the information I'd been looking for since my undergraduate studies.



Amber Ghent

Body Mapping is a technique used by Andover Educators, an organization whose mission is to eliminate injury and increase ease for musicians. It was first developed in the 1970s by Barbara Conable, renowned Alexander Technique teacher, and her husband, cellist Bill Conable, both

of Ohio, as an aid to learning the Alexander Technique. Today there are over a hundred licensed practitioners teaching at universities and studios world-wide.

### What Is Body Mapping?

Body Mapping is a specific technique used by licensed Andover Educators (<http://bodymap.org/main/>) to help musicians recognize the source of harmful movement, and to replace it with movement that is free and based on the truth of our anatomical structure. This technique is informed by the latest neuroscience about how the brain produces movement, and has helped hundreds of musicians play with more ease and heal themselves of injury and pain.

### What is the Body Map?

The Body Map is the neuronal representation we hold of ourselves; our conception of what our body is like. Often these beliefs are not in our awareness and are held unconsciously. This internal representation includes information about size of our body parts, how they are connected, and how they move. This information may or may not be aligned with the actual truth of our bodies' structures. Our body map governs all movement and wins out over mechanically advantageous movement. When our body map is aligned with the true design of our body, movement will look and feel easy and balanced. When our body map is in conflict with the truth of our structure, movement will be tense, awkward, and create discomfort and injury.

### A Teaching and Preventative Approach

Here are some of the key pillars taught in the Andover Educator six-hour workshop, "What Every Musician Needs to Know about the Body."

#### Clear Anatomical Information about the Body

Andover Educators teach clear concise information about the body using images and anatomical models, alongside palpating (feeling structures in one's body through touch) and movement explorations. The foun-

ation of the approach is built upon finding balanced relationships of skeletal structures and healthy movement at joints. Through this study it is common to uncover unconscious mismappings or ideas we hold about our body that do not correspond to the truth of our structure. Common mismappings include the location of a joint, the size or structure of body part, or a misunderstanding about the function and healthy use of our bodies. These mismappings will usually precede common injuries such as tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, and low back pain.

#### Train the Senses (including the Kinesthetic Sense)

Kinesthetic Sense is the sense that informs us about the degree of muscular contraction, the rate of movement, and the changing position of joints. Often this sense is not named and, due to many factors, often becomes lost in our awareness. When we have lost connection to this sense we will be unable to know when we are not in balance and when our muscles are tensed, and discomfort may not be recognized until the point at which the pain breaks into our consciousness.

- Train Sensitivity: Information is always available from our senses, but are we paying attention to it? Those who under-feel, overdo.
- Discern Quality: Is movement easy or strained, smooth or jerky, limited or free?
- Cultivate Response: When I feel hard contraction, I can release. When I sense imbalance, I can move into balance.

#### Retrain Movement

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Most tension is caused by inappropriate relaxation somewhere else in the body. — Patrick MacDonald, Alexander Technique teacher

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The goal is even distribution of muscular work throughout the body. — Wilfrid Barlow, MD

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Our bodies' structures changes in relation to how we use them. We can change our movement habits to utilize the true design of our bodies and eliminate or reduce patterns that are working against mechanical advantage. This process can be aided by working with somatic practitioners in such fields as Feldenkrais, Alexandre Technique, and Yoga.

#### Develop Awareness

Our awareness has a direct relationship to the way we use our bodies: overly concentrating on one thing often leads to a narrowing and tensing in a player's body. We need to include the audience, the conductor, our collab-

orators, and our body in our awareness, but we can't pay attention to each one equally and all at once. We must learn to gently shift our focus in concentric rings of awareness that expand and narrow depending on our needs. Training awareness is key in preventing performance anxiety which is often interconnected with discomfort and injuries.

What drew me to this approach was the clear practical way of teaching information about the body in a format that I could study and explore independently between lessons. For me, playing cello is now more secure and free than it's been in nearly a couple of decades, and it's certainly more enjoyable.

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Amber Ghent gives body mapping lessons and teaches the course "What Every Musician Needs to Know About the Body." In addition to her work as a licensed Andover Educator, Amber Ghent is cellist with the Madawaska String Quartet and teaches with the Laurier String Academy. She lives in Hamilton, Ontario, and performs and teaches across the country.

Amber Ghent: [www.amberghent.com](http://www.amberghent.com)

Andover Educators: [bodymap.org](http://bodymap.org)

## The Victoria Symphony's New Maestro

Paul Beauchesne  
Victoria Symphony

This is an exciting year for Canadian orchestras as almost one third of us are in the process of welcoming new music directors. For the musicians of the Victoria Symphony, the party started two years ago as we combined a season of guest conductors, our 75th anniversary, and a small Canadian tour led by our music director of fourteen years, Tania Miller. Tania has done an excellent job of building the orchestra over her long tenure. She had previously announced her intention to step down, so the search was on to find her successor. The next season, 2016–17, was planned as a second chance to work with the few finalists from the hundreds of applicants and we were all very keen to see how the year would unfold.

First up was Christian Kluxen, a young up-and-coming conductor from Denmark looking for his first post as music director. He had recently been the Dudamel Fellow with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and completed a three-year assistant conductorship with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. During his first visit he had conducted us in an exuberant performance of Brahms'

Symphony no. 2 so there was a fair amount of anticipation over his return and speculation over whether he could be "the one." The second program was on our Classics series, and included music of Mozart, C.P.E. Bach, and Haydn. As the week of rehearsals progressed the musicians of the orchestra became increasingly enamoured with his approach to the music, his leadership style, and his positive energy. The result was a fantastic concert that invigorated the orchestra and induced the audience to leap to their feet at the end of Haydn's Symphony no. 82. Members of the search committee were encouraged by musicians and audience alike not to let him get away and the process of confirming him in the position began almost immediately. The other finalists had to be notified that the position had been filled and the suspense of our planned season of conductor finalists would no longer fly. There was however no doubt that we had found the person we were looking for.



Christian Kluxen

The logistics fell into place quite quickly and, as fate would have it, our conductor for the following week had to cancel at the last minute, providing Christian the opportunity to save the day and stay with us an extra week. The administration quickly put together a publicity campaign to launch our new Music Director Designate. The orchestra with Christian at the helm did not disappoint, delivering an incredible performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony to a packed house at the Royal Theatre. The end of the performance was greeted with another enthusiastic standing ovation from the appreciative audience.

His first official concert in his new position was this past summer for Symphony Splash, where we play on a barge in Victoria's beautiful inner harbor for an audience of about fifty thousand people. He candidly admitted to all of them that he was a bit nervous, but seemed quite at ease as he led the orchestra through a very successful performance, complete with audience sing-along and fireworks during the 1812 Overture. You couldn't ask for a better way to start a relationship that is really still in the honeymoon stage. The orchestra and the larger Victoria community are excited for what the future will bring with Christian as Music Director.

The early decision enabled Christian to have a role in putting the finishing touches on programming for his

first season and to make Symphony Splash his own. He described the music he had chosen for Splash as a musical postcard for the audience. It featured music from his Danish and German roots such as the final movement of Nielsen's Second Symphony and the Prelude from Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*.

Our regular season began September 13 and everyone in the orchestra was excited to start working with Christian in earnest. The first order of business was an acoustic rehearsal in which we tried out a few different seating positions in the Royal Theatre. This has resulted in a new setup for our orchestra, placing the basses on risers at the back of the hall and the second violins opposite the firsts instead of upstage of them. Orchestra members and audience alike are enthralled with the new sound and with the rhythmic vitality of Christian's musical interpretations. To date we have done four programs with him. Symphonies by Mahler, Brahms, and Beethoven were featured along with two premiers of Canadian composers and guest soloists Stewart Goodyear, James Ehnes, and Raphael Wallfisch. Christian has also collaborated with two of our own musicians in concerto performances, Terry Tam on the first two Mozart violin concertos, as well as myself on the Vaughan Williams Concerto for Bass Tuba.

The audience response has been overwhelmingly positive with many symphony supporters saying the orchestra is sounding better than ever. As an organization it is very affirming to receive such an enthusiastic response. There does seem to be something very special happening onstage with Christian at the podium. We are thrilled that the audiences can feel it too. The most recent program concluded with Elgar's *Enigma Variations* and this November 27 performance was an incredible experience that is still being talked about by those who were lucky enough to have been there to hear it. One longtime concert-goer, David Watson, informed me that the *Enigma* is one of his favourite orchestral pieces and he had never heard it done better. This is definitely a new chapter in the life of the Victoria Symphony and it promises to be a good one.

## Using Imagery to Manage Performance Anxiety

Katie Finch

The symptoms of music performance anxiety (MPA) are all too familiar for many performing musicians. Despite extensive training and skill, approximately 15 to 25 percent of professional musicians are affected by debilitating MPA. What can be done to help?

## MPA Research



Katie Finch

Researchers have investigated the helpfulness of different strategies to combat MPA, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) and progressive muscle relaxation (PMR). Mental imagery is another strategy that can be used to combat MPA, and is often used with other techniques (e.g., CBT) in existing MPA research. Mental imagery can be used for multi-

ple purposes to intentionally "see," "hear," and "feel" performances before they actually take place.

Although imagery is a powerful rehearsal technique, MPA research has fallen behind other performance-based domains, such as sport performance, in specifically addressing *how* mental imagery can be best used to manage performance anxiety. For example, sport performance research suggests that multiple approaches or orientations to mental imagery can help performers effectively reduce performance anxiety under certain conditions. These include anticipating or accepting heightened arousal during imagery (e.g., "butterflies" in one's stomach), or conversely, imagining performing in a relaxed state.

Preliminary research on MPA has *only* investigated the use of relaxation imagery, and this limits our knowledge of whether other approaches currently used in the broader imagery literature might also help musicians to reduce MPA. As well, current work is limited by the fact that imagery is used at the same time as other techniques (e.g., PMR and imagery), which makes it difficult to determine how relaxation imagery alone impacts MPA. At the same time, preliminary MPA research as well as imagery-based research from sport performance suggests that imagery can impact performance anxiety. Future research is clearly required.

## Our Lab

The Psychological Intervention Research Lab at the University of Waterloo plans to conduct a series of studies on mental imagery and music performance and we are currently running an online study that takes no more than twenty minutes to complete. This study will help to lay important groundwork for future imagery-based MPA interventions by gathering important qualitative and descriptive information that is missing from the current literature. Some questions that we would like to address are:

- How do musicians use imagery?
- Do musicians use imagery to manage MPA from ap-

proaches or orientations (e.g., acceptance or relaxation imagery) that have been identified in the larger performance-based literature?

- Are musicians using imagery to manage MPA from approaches or orientations that haven't yet been captured by researchers?

These are important questions and addressing them is essential to the progress of imagery-based MPA research, and our lab hopes to address them with your help.

### Interested in Participating? Be Part of the Study

If you are interested in learning more about our study or participating, please follow this link to our study website:

[https://psychologyuwaterloo.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3EOBBZM687J6cYt](https://psychologyuwaterloo.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3EOBBZM687J6cYt)

We will be offering two cash draws worth \$100 each and all musicians who participate and wish to be entered into the draw will be included.

Please note that you must be at least sixteen years of age to participate and must play a musical instrument (voice included) and have performed in front of at least one person – casually or formally – over the past 24 months. If you think that other musicians you know would be interested in completing the survey, please feel free to pass along this information.

This study has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance from a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#22026) and the Research Ethics Board at Wilfrid Laurier (REB #5475). However, the final decision about participation is yours.

De-identified electronic data collected during this study will be kept for at least seven years on secured servers online (Qualtrics) and at the Psychological Intervention Research Team Lab at the University of Waterloo and only research staff connected to the project will have access to it.

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Katie Finch is a cellist and is currently completing a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of Waterloo. This study is part of her Master's thesis.

For more information on mental imagery, see C. Connolly and A. Williamon, "Mental Skills Training," in A. Williamon (Ed.), *Musical Excellence: Strategies and Techniques to Enhance Performance*.

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