



# WORKSHOP

“Bodymind awareness  
for orchestra musicians”

## PROPOSAL BY

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# CURRENT SITUATION OF THE ORCHESTRA MUSICIAN

**Orchestral musicians spend long hours playing seated**, which, over time, leads to physical and mental exhaustion. This exhaustion fosters unhealthy habits that impair performance and can lead to injuries related to these patterns.

**Developing healthy habits is key** to preventing health problems and improving the quality of musical performance. Furthermore, **mindfulness plays a fundamental role in musical expression**, benefiting both the individual musician and the orchestral ensemble.



Professional musicians face levels of stress, physical and mental training, and pressure **comparable to those of a high-performance athlete**. Studies show that during a concert, heart rate can increase from an average of 60-80 bpm to levels of 136-200 bpm, classifying this activity as "extremely demanding," according to Astrand and Rodahl (1985).

However, the methods commonly used by musicians and teachers are often based on unconscious repetitive habits, long hours of mechanical practice, and negative self-talk, all of which reinforce patterns that are detrimental to physical and mental health.

Although some institutions, such as the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, the Royal College of Music, and the Juilliard School, have begun to address these needs, **a training gap remains**, where these tools are optional or sporadic.

**The Alexander Technique offers an effective approach to these issues**, allowing musicians to work in conscious movement while avoiding the dissociation between mind and body. This improves performance quality and overall well-being, promoting fluidity, balance, coordination, presence, and a deeper group connection.





# WORKSHOP PROPOSAL

## BODY AWARENESS FOR ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS

### DESCRIPTION

The "Body Awareness for Orchestral Musicians" workshop offers easy-to-use, practical tools based on the principles of the Alexander Technique, with the goal of **improving body awareness**, preventing injuries, and optimizing rehearsal sessions.

Through various guided activities, musicians will explore **the relationship between body, instrument, and space**, developing healthy posture and overall performance habits that will allow them to practice their profession in a more sustainable, injury-free, and enjoyable way.

### WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

#### Group Workshop

Students learn basic concepts of the Alexander Technique applied to orchestral playing through experience and observation.

#### Individual Sessions

- Possibility of personalized attention, in addition to group work.
- Work with and without instruments.
- Observation and integration of psychophysical tools in specific situations of interest.



## WORKSHOP CONTENT

### Explored elements;

- Stopping, organizing, and conducting: fundamentals of caring for the musical body.
- Constructive rest: tools for rest and prevention before and after rehearsals.
- Spatial awareness applied to the orchestra section and the ensemble as a whole.
- Orchestral habits (sitting, moving, reading, conducting, listening, multitasking).



### Recommendations for music educators:

- Apply elements that allow for awareness during teaching practice.
- Develop a fluent, non-violent, or dogmatic vocabulary that generates enriching learning experiences.
- Through a process of pause and re-education on the economy of effort and tension, the teacher can show and guide students on how to have shorter and more efficient practices.

# GENERAL TIMELINE

## WORKSHOP IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

### **1 DAY - "QUICK TUNE"**

A complete 5-hour session with break included\*

### **2 DAYS - "DOUBLE TUNING"**

Session for two days or a week, 4 hours each day\*

### **5 DAYS - "FULL TUNING"**

Complete program compatible during an orchestral meeting\*

Proposed timeline attached to the next page.

**\*The three options have the option of complementing individual sessions.**

# TIMELINE "Full Tuning"

## Day 1

### Morning

Session with Strings  
Basic Elements

### Afternoon

Session with Winds and Percussion  
Basic Elements

## Day 2

### Morning

Session with Strings  
Teamwork

### Afternoon

Session with Winds and Percussion  
Teamwork

## Day 3

### Morning

Group session by section  
Orchestral habits

### Afternoon

Individual sessions, duos, trios, or quartets

## Day 4

### Morning

Group session in dress rehearsal  
Orchestral habits

### Afternoon

Individual sessions, duos, trios, or quartets

## Day 5

Session for Educators and Directors

Application of the basic concepts of the  
Alexander Technique.

About the language used: Saving time and  
effort in rehearsals



# RESOURCES & FUNCTIONS

## ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

For effective implementation, music institutions need to allocate specific resources as follows:

- **Facilities:**
  - Stage hall for at least two out of five group sessions.
  - Large, spacious room for remaining sessions, enabling movement, instrument playing, and constructive rest practice.
- **Equipment:**
  - Mattresses for constructive rest practice.
  - Music stands for ensemble rehearsals.
  - Video camera for session recording for self-assessment and evaluation.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Main Teacher**
  - Qualifications: Alexander Technique teacher with a music master diploma.
  - Responsibilities: Guiding group and individual sessions, providing verbal and hands-on guidance, and conducting final assessments of students' progress.
- **Participants**
  - Requirement: Enrollment and adherence to scheduled dates.
  - Expectation: Mandatory attendance of all sessions.
  - Encouragement: Practice of learned tools between sessions and maintenance of a personal progress diary.

# CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the analysis of the current landscape of musical performance and education highlights several key aspects. Often, many topics of interest remain unaddressed due to time constraints and varying priorities. For this reason, it is essential to explore more flexible formats, such as workshops distributed throughout the academic year, safe spaces for group expression, and high-quality individualized attention during the educational process.

These initiatives can not only improve musical quality but also have the potential to enhance the well-being of musicians and the collective. It is crucial to integrate these methodologies from the early stages of musical training.

## Results of the Body and Stage Awareness Workshops

The implementation of these tools can generate positive changes at both the individual and collective levels in a relatively short period of time. Among the observed results, the following stand out:

- **Reflection and decision-making:** Fostering critical reflection and the ability to make informed decisions.
- **Expanded attention:** Development of broader and more conscious attention, useful for musical performance.
- **Significant musical improvements:** Notable transformations from a musical perspective.
- **Support:** Creation of an environment that nurtures the growth of musicians in a respectful and constructive way.
- **Catalyst for change:** Introduction of educational methodologies that could stimulate a paradigm shift in the current system of music education.
- **Satisfactory compatibility:** The combination of ensemble performance with psychophysical approaches has demonstrated excellent compatibility, improving expression, sonority, and group connection.
- **Clarity and spontaneity:** Contribution of clarity and spontaneity to the desired musical goals.

# BUDGET

The budget for each workshop will be further discussed and negotiated with the institution, ensuring that it covers essential expenses to facilitate the program's successful implementation (according to number of participants).

## The budget must at least encompass:

- **Professional Guidance:** Allocation of funds to compensate professional instructor for their time and expertise in delivering the program's educational content and guidance to participants.
- **Delivered Written Tools and Audioguides:** Funding to cover the production of tools provided to participants to support their learning and practice outside of session times.
- **Transport:** Provision for transportation expenses.

## Potential sources of funding:

Additionally, to supplement the budget and ensure financial sustainability, support may be sought from external funding institutions.

- Cultuurparticipatie ([cultuurparticipatie.nl](http://cultuurparticipatie.nl))
- NICAS Small Project Grants ([nicas-research.nl/small-project-grants/](http://nicas-research.nl/small-project-grants/))

By leveraging support from funding institutions, the program can access additional financial resources to enhance its scope and impact, ensuring that it remains accessible and beneficial to participants.

## Prices approximation:

WORKSHOPS	1 day €360/hour	2 days €350/hour	5 days €330/hour
INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS	Adults <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 hour → €65</li></ul>	Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 45 min → €45</li><li>• 30 min → €35</li></ul>	

# Links

- **Before the Sound - Guiding Ensembles**

<https://youtu.be/mq8NQqPvMwA>

- **AT Lessons**

<https://youtu.be/swXbWD4qMxk>

- **Musicians & AT - Testimonials**

<https://youtu.be/URLA7fsQQUE>

- **The Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique**

<https://alexandertechnique.co.uk/>

- **How the AT can help musicians**

<https://alexandertechnique.com/musicians/>

- **The health and wellbeing of professional musicians and music creators in the EU**

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/35056e64-922f-11ed-b508-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

- **Science and Alexander Technique**

<https://alexandertechniquescience.com>

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