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*to promote communications among trumpet players around the world and to improve the artistic level of performance, teaching, and literature associated with the trumpet*

**Kris Chesky, Health and Awareness Editor — Music, Health, and Education: Toward Greater Understanding (Jan 04/42)**

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## Music, Health, and Education: Toward Greater Understanding

BY KRIS CHESKY

The cause-and-effect relationships between learning and performing trumpet and various occupational diseases are far from being fully understood. As with other occupational diseases, those associated with music may be slow to develop and symptoms may be confused with changes due to the aging process. Plus, not all individuals react in the same way to similar exposures and, in some cases, non-music exposures may contribute to or be a primary cause of illness. Further complicating this issue, the World Health Organization characterizes work-related problems as multi-factorial to indicate that a combination of risk factors including physical, work organizational, psychosocial, individual, and socio-cultural, contribute to the onset, progression, and severity of occupational diseases. Controversy and debate emerges from disagreement regarding the relative importance of multiple and individual factors in the development of occupational health problems. The debate increases in complexity when considering how early in life most musicians become exposed to the physical and psychosocial demands of learning and performing music. In light of this complex perspective, a holistic view is critical when considering the conditions that may contribute to particular problems, particularly the details of one variable or set of variables in isolation. As editor of this column, my hope is to nurture this perspective and offer an ongoing range of inter- and multi-disciplinary contributions.

In addition to acknowledging the complexities associated with occupational diseases, an important and general feature is that they are preventable and that prevention does not require detailed knowledge of all pathogenic mechanisms. However, prevention does require addressing the role of education, specifically the socio-cultural environments that influence young musicians' attitudes and knowledge. A first step toward prevention is to steer educational communities toward common goals, norms, and values regarding awareness and the general importance of prevention through education. A second step is to develop basic resources for teachers. After all, in addition to providing instruction about the mechanics of playing and how to practice and progress, teachers dictate the sequence and set the pace for musical learning and are in direct contact with students before and during skill development. In addition, private or studio teachers often represent the most influential role model for young musicians.

Unfortunately, it is much easier to rationalize a role for teachers than it is to characterize the requisite knowledge or generate specific goals and objectives for communication and pedagogic tactics. Although some notable attempts have been made to educate college music students, this educational role has not developed into a standardized practice or a socio-cultural norm, particularly in the U.S.

Currently, however, an agenda is being developed in response to new guidelines set forth by the accrediting organization for schools and colleges of music in the United States. The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) has acknowledged the importance of occupational safety and health among musicians by instructing member schools to include appropriate educational programs in all graduate and undergraduate curricula. As a new and recent addition to the NASM Handbook (2001), this directive states that: "Institutions should assist students to acquire knowledge from qualified professionals regarding the prevention of performance injuries" (page 79 for undergraduate and page 100 for graduate programs).

Because NASM establishes threshold standards for undergraduate and graduate degrees for over 500 institutional members, this directive offers unprecedented opportunities to establish effective educational programming regarding occupational safety and health for young musicians. In order to advance an effective agenda, though, it must be recognized that music school administrators and faculty have not received substantial, if any, formal or informal education regarding occupational safety and health or prevention-based educational programming.

To help with this deficit, the National Endowment for the Arts, The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (Grammy Awards), International Association of Music Merchants (NAMM), and the International Foundation for Music Research recently awarded the Texas Center for Music and Medicine at the University of North Texas, together with The Performing Arts Medicine Association, grants to develop health promotion materials specifically for NASM music school students.

With sufficient funds from these grants, we are now constituting working groups of medical/science experts within four health areas (hearing, neuromusculoskeletal, mental, and vocal health). These groups will work for a year developing core content materials for a national health promotion campaign. This fall (September 30 – October 2, 2004), this information will be presented during an interactive conference at the Doral Tesoro Resort in Fort Worth, Texas, titled, "Health Promotion in Schools of Music." Details about the conference and related activities can be viewed at <http://www.unt.edu/hpsm/>. Primary attendees will be NASM music school administrators and faculty. Subsequent to the conference, revised materials will be packaged in a computer-deliverable format using public health methodologies, field-tested and further revised, and then disseminated to all NASM schools for use with students.

Another goal of this conference is to provide practical infor-

mation for NASM faculty members that are designed to direct and encourage the use of existing resources on their respective campuses. For most campuses, these resources include counseling centers, health clinics, and speech and hearing services.

Since the inception of this historic project, our goals include remaining collaborative and open to all input. One obligation to the funding agencies is that we reach out to various organizations and create ample opportunities for participation and representation. We believe that project strength is related to whom and what organizations are involved and endorse the process. Therefore, we have asked various organizations to partner with us. The ITG leadership has agreed to such a partnership and will be listed among several non-funding partnering organizations on project materials, including the final health education module for music students.

In addition to my role as executive director for this project, I will be representing ITG and functioning as a resource for ITG members about the project. Please contact me if you have questions or comments regarding this process. Hopefully, several ITG members, especially those with interest, experience, and/or expertise in health related matters, will join us at the conference and become involved in this highly interactive

process.

We hope this process will shorten the time frame between the development of disease prevention and health promotion techniques, and the practical application in the music school setting. Finally, we hope this project will inspire musicians, students, and teachers to evaluate their own attitudes and actions as we seek to collectively develop a culture that considers the importance of how we teach and its positive impact on the health and well being of our students.

*About the author:* Kris Chesky holds a unique joint faculty position with the University of North Texas College of Music and the UNT Health Science Center Department of Medicine. He is the Director of Education and Research for the Texas Center of Music and Medicine. Dr. Chesky serves on the Board of Directors for the Performing Arts Medical Association, the Scientific Review Board for the *Medical Problems of Performing Artists Journal*, and the Editorial Committee for the *ITG Journal*. His degrees are from the Berklee College of Music (BM) and the University of North Texas (MME, PhD). His research focuses on the medical problems of musicians and applications of music in medicine.

