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Spotlight Poster

Fine-Tuning the Future: Addressing Physiological and Psychological Needs in Young Orchestral Musicians

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The increasing prevalence of physiological and psychological challenges among young orchestral musicians highlights the need for immediate, targeted interventions to promote their well-being. Our research project aims to fill this gap by addressing three key aspects: hearing protection, management of stage fright and physiological coaching. Led by an interdisciplinary consortium including board members of the Austrian Society for Music and Medicine (ÖGfMM), experts, young musicians and conductors, the project is a collaboration between the Norwegian Youth Orchestra, the Hamburg Youth Orchestra and the ÖGfMM. Together, these partners are developing a 10-day summer music camp that will culminate in a classical orchestra concert at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg in 2024.

Using a mixed methods research design, our project combines qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies. Anonymous surveys and statistical analysis will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programmes and interventions. In addition, qualitative indicators such as written and verbal feedback will be integrated to provide a more nuanced understanding of participants' experiences. The use of digital technologies such as VR, emotion tracking, online video and online questionnaires as other SharePoints will enable modern and seamless collaboration.

Emphasising the importance of preparation for high level performance, coaches will teach specific warm-up exercises and mental strategies to improve performance. A video training programme, tailored for young musicians, will allow participants to learn first-hand and continue to benefit from it as a free resource.

The results of this study will address critical gaps in the existing literature and influence best practice in youth orchestra projects. By focusing on holistic aspects of musicians' needs such as hearing protection, stage fright and physiological coaching effectiveness, the results of the study could have a lasting impact on the career longevity and mental well-being of young artists. The participatory approach, involving orchestra members in decision-making, adds further authenticity to the study and ensures that its findings are directly rooted in the lived experience of young musicians. Importantly, the project aims to be sustainable by providing learning health aspects and open access online video resources.

An Erasmus+ partnership (2023-2025) between De Unges Orkesterforbund (UNOF), Landesmusik Hamburg (LMR HH) and Österreichische Gesellschaft für Musik und Medizin (ÖGfMM) for the project "The Future of Youth Orchestras".

This work is supported by the European+ [KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth].

Bodø | Hamburg

