

Seminar: Psychological Resilience Training for Musicians



see: Penn Resilience Program, Penn University

Resilience, definition: the ability to absorb life's challenges, persevere and thrive in the face of adversity.

A Resilience Training Program for Musicians is designed to enhance individual resilience and provide a forum for building awareness of the role of resilience in the everyday life of the musician. The program is forward-looking, meaning it seeks to prepare participants for future stressors and challenges encountered in the course of their studies as well as in their future lives as professional musicians.

The Seminar presents theories of resilience and places an emphasis on the acquisition and immediate practical application of psychological resilience skills through a variety of offerings: readings, discussions, exercises, and writing assignments.

Modules of the Seminar:

1. *Developing and increasing self-awareness*: the ability to monitor stress, thoughts, emotions, beliefs and somatic signals through honest, non-judgmental self-analysis
2. *Practicing Self-Regulation*: the ability to change, modify or direct thoughts, emotions, and actions in the service of a desired outcome. This module draws on elements from Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Program.

3. *Enhancing Mental Agility*: the ability to view complex situations from multiple perspectives and to think flexibly and creatively. Mihály Csíkszentmihályi's concept of 'Flow' is thematicized.
4. *Strengths of Character*: using innate strengths to authentically engage in overcoming challenges and to create a way of living that is aligned with one's values
5. *Connection*: the ability to build and maintain strong, trusting relationships
6. *Learned Optimism*: "Life inflicts the same setbacks and tragedies on the optimist as on the pessimist, but the optimist weathers them better." (Martin Seligman, 2006); learning to recognize and identify positive and negative attributional styles, tendencies toward catastrophizing, and aspects of permanence and impermanence in interpreting life events
7. *Visualization*: Using visualization techniques to build resiliency in performance. The Performance Simulator from the Royal College of Music in London is used to explore visualization techniques.
8. *Case Studies*: student presentations on case-studies of musicians who coped with mental / physical illnesses or disorders or who developed novel approaches to life-long professional resilience: Beethoven (deafness), Rachmaninoff (depression), Mendelssohn (intracerebral hemorrhage), Robert Schumann (poss. bipolar disorder), Clara Schumann (over-use syndrome), Mahler (endocarditis lenta), Chopin (tuberculosis, depression), Leon Fleisher (focal dystonia), Jacqueline du Pré (multiple sclerosis), Yehudi Menuhin (muscular pain treated through Yoga), Paderewski / Igor Levit (social engagement)

Selected Bibliography

Fleisher, L., & Midgette, A. (2011). *My nine lives : a memoir of many careers in music*. New York: Anchor Books .

Goertz, W. &. (2007). *Yehudi Menuhin*. Bucerius.

Green, D. (2017). *Performance Success: Performing Your Best under Pressure*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013). *Achtsamkeit für Anfänger*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Arbor.

Kahneman, D. (2012). *Schnelles Denken, langsames Denken*. München: Siedler Verlag.

Rauchfleisch, U. (2004). *Robert Schumann: Eine Psychoanalytische Annäherung*. Köln: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Reivich, K. &. (2003). *The Resilience Factor: 7 Keys to Finding your Inner Strength and Overcoming Life's Hurdles*. New York: Broadway Books.

Seligman, M. (2006). *Learned optimism : how to change your mind and your life*. New York: Vintage Books.

Wilson, E. (1999). *Jacqueline du Pre*. Elizabeth Wilson.