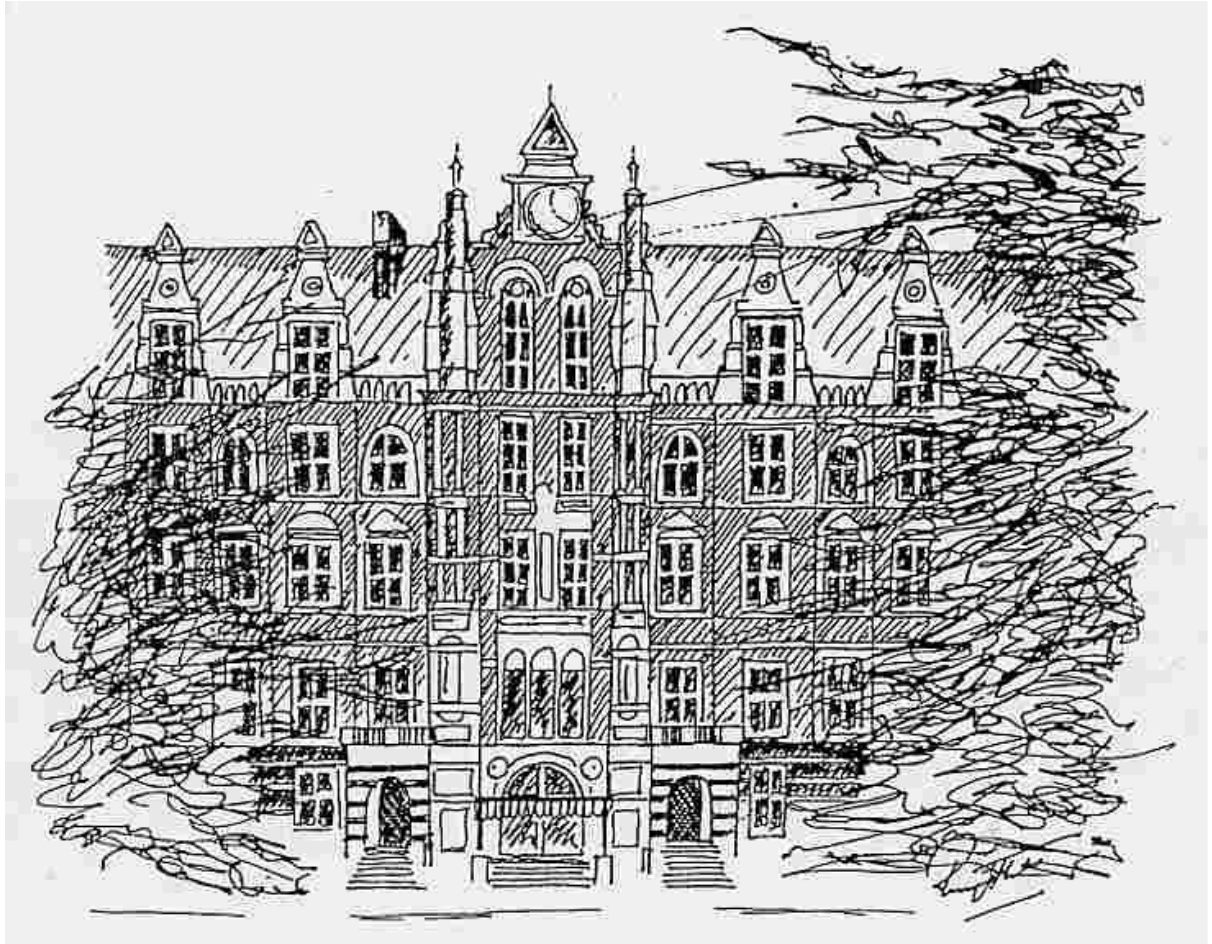


# ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

BMus(Hons) Programme 2013/2014



## ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

### Level 5 Option

**Module Leader for Alexander Technique: Peter Buckoke**

Lecturers: Peter Buckoke, Judith Kleinman

## ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

Level	Credit Rating	Core/Option	Prerequisite
5	20 credits	Option (in Applied Skills group)	Level 4 Professional Skills

Delivery	Availability	Module Code
75-minute weekly lectures and group seminars over 22 weeks	Available each year, if taken by a minimum of 6 students	22A01

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module you should be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the historical development of the Alexander Technique, its underlying principles and associated literature
- recognise the personal habits which impede coordination of mind and body in the training of musicians and develop the means to work on kinaesthetic approaches to these
- apply the Alexander Technique to personal practice and performance

<b>Skills Developed</b> ( <i>refer to section 6 of the BMus programme handbook</i> )	<b>B3, D2, D3, F2, F4, F5, G1, G2 (ii), G3 (iii, iv, vii)</b>
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### Summary of Module

- background and history to the Alexander Technique
- exploration of: inhibition; direction; semi-supine; hands on a chair; whispered Ah!
- posture (walking and sitting; reading, writing and typing); breathing; practice efficiency; performance anxiety; singing and public speaking
- observation of practice and performing
- different styles of Alexander work; Alexander in education

### Assessment Synopsis (see 'Assessment' section for full details)

Assessment	Date	Weighting
Statement of knowledge (1,000 words)	End of Autumn Term	20%
Practice Portfolio: i. two-week self-evaluative diary ii. series of reports on class performances, completed in class time	February Final teaching week of Spring Term	30%
Essay (3,000-4,000 words)	Summer Term Level 5 options submission deadline	50%

At Level 5 we expect students to apply the knowledge they gain in this module in an assured way and to demonstrate security in the skills and communication it tests. For further information about what we expect across the different undergraduate levels, please refer to your Student Guide.

## OBJECTIVES

This module aims to enhance your understanding of the historical development of, and principles behind, the Alexander Technique. You will be encouraged to acquire the capacity to recognise the personal habits that impede coordination of mind and body and the means to work on these, thereby developing insights into how to apply Alexander Technique to personal practice and performance.

## DELIVERY

22 weekly 75-minute lectures/seminars given between September 2013 and May 2014.

## LECTURE PLAN

- Week 1: Monitored (virtual reality) video recordings of all students playing a 2-3 minute piece) Discuss the recommended introductory books.
- Week 2: Two students play. Look further into 'Inhibition', 'Direction' and recognition of habit. Discuss 'the next evolutionary step for man' (F.M. Alexander: *Man's Supreme Inheritance*). Semi-supine. Hands on work.
- Week 3: Two students play. Practice efficiency (Alcantara: *Indirect Procedures*). Introduce 'Body Mapping'. Hands on work.
- Week 4: Two students play. Discuss social implications of this work and influence on teacher-pupil relationships. How to sit on a chair in a rehearsal. Hands on work.
- Week 5: Reading, writing and typing. Two students work on practice. Hands on work.
- Week 6: Eyes. (Aldous Huxley: *The Art of Seeing*). Describe Peter Grunwald's work. Two students practise. Hands on work
- Week 7: Alexander's procedure: Hands on the back of a chair. Hands on work
- Week 8: Breathing. Alexander's procedure: The Whispered 'ah'. Two students practise. Discuss 1<sup>st</sup> written assignment. Hands on work.
- Week 9: Performance anxiety (Havas: *Stage Fright*, Alcantara: *Indirect Procedures*). Discuss first written assignment. Hands on work.
- Week 10: How to apply Alexander's principles to teaching a musical instrument. Hands on work.
- Week 11: Discuss effect of Christmas break on work. Anatomy (Gorman: *The Body Moveable*), Body Mapping (Conable: *What Every Musician Needs to Know About The Body*). Skeleton. Hands on work.
- Week 12: Walking, standing and sitting. Two students practise. Hands on work.

- Week 13: Looking at the different styles of Alexander Work. Macdonald, Carrington, Barlow, Barstow. Discuss self-observational diaries. Hands on work. Two students practise.
- Week 14: Visit an Alexander Teacher Training course.
- Week 15: Imitation (Alcantara: *Indirect Procedures*, Chapter 22). Parents, teachers, peers and heroes. Discuss essays. Hands on work.
- Week 16: Trial run for observation and practice strategy assignment. All students play for 3 minutes. Discuss performances and possible strategies. (This will be video recorded)
- Week 17: Discuss topics for essays. *How To Think Like Leonardo*. Hands on work.
- Week 18: Available literature; music related and other specific areas. Direction magazine. Review Reading and Writing. Two students practise. Hands on work.
- Week 19: Review performance anxiety and public speaking. How to perform with confidence. Discuss topics for essays. Hands on work.
- Week 20: **Each student to perform a five-minute solo.** All students to write a short report on the other performances. Reports collected for marking. Discuss essays. (These performances will be video recorded)
- Week 21: Alexander in Education. John Dewey (Frank Pierce Jones, Chapter 11). STAT Database. Discuss essays. Discuss teacher-pupils relationships in schools and Music Colleges.
- Week 22: Discuss essays. Each student to bring a written question for discussion. Hands on work.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**\*\* Suggested introductory books are starred**

\*\* P. de Alcantara, *Indirect Procedures* (Oxford University Press, 1997)

F. M. Alexander, *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (STAT, 1992)

F. M. Alexander, *The Use of the Self* (Centerline Press, 1984)

\*\* W Barlow, *The Alexander Principle* (London, 1979)

\*\* J. Chance, *Alexander Technique* (Thorsens-HarperCollins 1998)

B. Conable, *What Every Musician Needs to Know About the Body* (Portland: Andover Press, 2000)

\*\* M. Gelb, *Body Learning* (London, 1981)

P. Grunwald, *Eyebody* (Auckland: Eyebody Press, 2004)

K. Havas, *Stage Fright* (London, 1973)

A. Huxley, *The Art of Seeing* (London, 1994)

\*\* E Langford, *Mind and Muscle* (Leuven, 2001)

\*\* Glynn Macdonald, *The Complete Illustrated Guide to Alexander Technique* (Element Books, 1998)

\*\* Glen Park, *The Art Of Changing* (Ashgrove Press, 1989)

\*\* F. Pierce-Jones, *Freedom to Change* (London, 1997)

*RCM Conference Papers* (Peter Buckoke 1998 and 2000)

## ASSESSMENT DETAILS

*NB: All coursework must be submitted via the Registry postbox. Please note the deadlines for submission. Marked work will be returned after 3 teaching weeks (i.e. excluding vacations, Audition Weeks, Performance Weeks).*

### **(1) Statement of knowledge**

**20% of the overall module mark**

You will be asked to write a 1000-word introduction to the technique referring to at least two published introductions to the Alexander Technique. Suggestions of introductory books are made in the bibliography above.

**Deadline for submission: 1pm, Friday 13 December, 2013**

## **(2) Practice Portfolio**

**30% of the overall module mark**

The practice portfolio contains two elements:

(1) a two-week self-observational diary (kept during Course Weeks 14 and 15) on a variety of issues (for example: discussion of what you have noticed about your use of the Technique, decisions you have made in the light of your experience of the Technique, insights from your reading, your practice or from observation of other performers, etc).

**Deadline for submission of diary: 1pm, Friday 21 February, 2014**

(2) A series of short written reports on a performance by each of your colleagues. These reports should be as detailed as possible within the time available for each (approximately 15 minutes) and should focus particularly on the coordination of mind and body during performance, after noting your observations you should suggest suitable practice strategies to encourage relevant progress for each student.

**To take place in the last week of the Spring Term**

Assessment of the elements within this portfolio will take into account the quality of the observations made and insights shown.

## **(3) Written Essay**

**50% of the overall module mark**

You should submit a 3,000 to 4,000 word essay from a list of topics that will be agreed with you during the course by your module lecturer.

**Deadline for submission: 1pm, Tuesday 20 May, 2014**

## **INFORMATION FOR PRINCETON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FOLLOWING THIS COURSE**

The assessment pattern for this is as follows:

### **ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE DIARY**

**100% of the overall unit mark**

Assessment will be on the basis of the quality of the diary and the written question submitted with the diary, mitigated, if necessary, by an overall assessment made during the course by your Alexander teacher. The diary should demonstrate breadth and depth in your personal approach to the Technique, your awareness of habitual responses and the strategies that you have developed over the course of the classes.

**Deadline for submission of Diary and Question: 1pm, Friday 13 December 2013**

*Written questions should be taken to the final Alexander session. Alexander Diaries, with a copy of the written question attached, should be handed in to the Registry*

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK

Written assignments must be handed in using the Registry postbox. Please note the deadlines for submission. Coursework assignments must be completed and handed in by the published deadline (no extensions are offered). Failure to do so will result in the application of a capped mark of 40% which may be lifted by the Board of Examiners only after consideration of mitigating circumstances submitted in writing by the student. For further information about the Submission of Late Coursework, and about the College's policy on Mitigating Circumstances, see page 16 of your *Student Guide*).

Students missing the stipulated deadline for coursework submission should note that they have up to **one week** after the published deadline to submit work if they wish this to be marked and receive a bare minimum pass (40%). Work submitted after this one-week period will not be eligible for marking: it will be marked over the Summer Vacation, should the student fail the module and be offered a reassessment opportunity.

Coursework submitted in the Autumn and Spring Terms will be marked, countermarked and returned after three teaching weeks (ie excluding vacations, Audition Weeks, Performance Weeks). Final submissions will be marked, countermarked and returned after the Undergraduate Exam Board.

## ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

### (1) Philosophy of the Course

This course is a mixture of academic work and a voyage of self-discovery. Students who are prepared to examine their thinking in a completely open minded way throughout the course will complete it most successfully.

### (2) Assessment Criteria

<b>Assessment Criteria for the Statement of Knowledge</b>		
<i>Class</i>	<b>%</b>	<b>Description</b>
I	80 and above	Outstanding understanding of principles, assimilation of chosen texts and referencing to content of lectures. An exceptional standard of presentation.
I	70—79	Excellent understanding of principles, assimilation of chosen texts and referencing to content of lectures. An excellent standard of presentation.
Ili	60—69	Good understanding of principles, assimilation of chosen texts and referencing to content of lectures. A high standard of presentation.
Ilii	50—59	Reasonable understanding of principles, assimilation of chosen texts and referencing to content of lectures. A satisfactory standard of presentation.
III	40—49	Limited understanding of principles, assimilation of chosen texts and referencing to content of lectures. A low standard of presentation.
Fail	39 & below	No understanding of principles, assimilation of chosen texts and referencing to content of lectures. An inadequate standard of presentation.

<b>Assessment Criteria for the Portfolio</b>		
<i>Class</i>	<i>%</i>	<b>Description</b>
I	80 and above	<i>Diary:</i> shows outstanding depth and breadth in the personal observations and in the development of appropriate strategies. References to performing, practising and teaching are extensive, as is apparent knowledge of AT. <i>Reports:</i> connections between observations and strategies are outstanding and practice strategies suggested for individuals exceptional.
I	70—79	<i>Diary:</i> shows excellent depth and breadth in the personal observations and in the development of appropriate strategies. References to performing, practising and teaching are meticulous, and apparent knowledge of AT is excellent. <i>Reports:</i> connections between observations and strategies are excellent, as are practice strategies suggested for individuals.
IIi	60—69	<i>Diary:</i> shows good depth and breadth in the personal observations and in the development of appropriate strategies. References to performing, practising and teaching are frequent and apparent knowledge of AT is developing securely. tions between observations and strategies are evident, and practice strategies suggested for individuals are appropriate.
IIii	50—59	<i>Diary:</i> shows a satisfactory depth and breadth in the personal observations and in the development of appropriate strategies. References to performing, practising and teaching are incorporated though not always sufficiently followed through and show knowledge still in the process of developing. <i>Reports:</i> connections between observations and strategies are made but not always followed through fully; practice strategies are suggested for individuals but could be more insightful.
III	40—49	<i>Diary:</i> shows only a limited depth and breadth in the personal observations and limited understanding of how to develop appropriate strategies. References to performing, practising and teaching are limited and suggest only a surface knowledge of the subject. <i>Reports:</i> connections between observations and strategies are weak and practice strategies suggested for individuals show limitations.
Fail	0—39	<i>Diary:</i> shows unsatisfactory depth and breadth in the personal observations and little or no understanding of how to develop appropriate strategies. References to performing, practising and teaching are inadequate. <i>Reports:</i> connections between observations and strategies are unsatisfactory and practice strategies suggested for individuals are inadequate.

<b>Assessment Criteria for the Essay</b>		
<i>Class</i>	<i>%</i>	<b>Description</b>
I	80 and above	Outstanding originality of thought and depth of knowledge. Essay structure has outstanding clarity. An exceptional standard of presentation.
I	70—79	Excellent originality of thought and depth of knowledge. Essay structure has excellent clarity. An excellent standard of presentation.
IIi	60—69	Good originality of thought and range of knowledge. Essay structure has good clarity. A high standard of presentation.
IIii	50—59	Some originality of thought and understanding of AT principles . Essay structure has some clarity. A satisfactory standard of presentation.
III	40-49	Limited originality of thought and limited knowledge/understanding of AT shown. Essay structure has limited clarity. A low standard of presentation.
Fail	below 39	No originality of thought and a lack of knowledge/understanding shown. Essay structure has no clarity. An inadequate standard of presentation.