



ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC BMus (Hons) Programme 2015/2016

Level 6: Alexander Technique

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ASSESSMENT

| Pattern of Assessment | 20-credit module | 30-credit module | Date |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| collaborative research project | 50% | 40% | 1pm, Friday 22 January 2016 |
| 4,000-word essay | n/a | 40% | 1pm, Friday 29 April 2016 |
| 2,000-word self-reflective statement | 50% | 20% | 1pm, Thursday 26 May 2016 |

What is being assessed?

| | Class | % | Description | |
|--|-------|--------|-------------|----------------|
| Collaborative research project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quality of questionnaire & data analysis arising from this pertinence & clarity of strategies emerging depth of knowledge of Alexander technique shown Essay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> originality of thought & depth of knowledge of Alexander technique shown structure/illustrations/presentation quotations/bibliography/citations Reflexive Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> range of personal issues addressed suitability of strategies chosen progress over the year | I | 90-100 | Exceptional | |
| | | 80-89 | Outstanding | |
| | | 70-79 | Excellent | |
| | | III | 60-69 | Very Good |
| | | IIII | 50-59 | Fair/Good |
| | | III | 40-49 | Limited |
| | | Fail | 30-39 | Unsatisfactory |
| | | | 20-29 | Weak |
| | | | 0-19 | Very Weak |

Important points about assessment in this module

- All coursework must be submitted via Turnitin.
- Marked work will be returned **after 3 teaching weeks** (i.e. excluding vacations, Audition Weeks, Performance Weeks).
- **COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT:** working initially with one or two other students in the group, a topic of mutual interest should be selected (e.g. technique, practice, communication in performance, performance anxiety) and all issues relating to this topic should be explored. A questionnaire should then be formulated by the group, allowing its authors to explore, with the RCM student body, student perceptions in relation to the topic and the issues arising from this. Individually, each student will then produce a written report (2,000 words) formulating the Alexander strategies they consider appropriate for dealing with the topic.
- **ESSAY:** 4,000-word essay from a list of topics that will be agreed with you during the course by your module lecturer.
- **SELF-REFLECTIVE STATEMENT:** critical evaluation of the effects of having followed the course. Particular reference should be made to any changes in instrumental technique, practice strategies, presence and spontaneity in performance, interpersonal interactions, and understanding of teaching and learning.
- **Assignments must be handed in by the published deadline.** 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 by the student. For further information about the College's policy on Mitigating Circumstances, see page 19 of your *Student Guide*).
- Students missing the stipulated deadline for coursework submission 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.

TUITION TO SUPPORT YOUR LEARNING

- 22 weekly 75-minute lectures/seminars given between September 2015 and May 2016.

What are you aiming for?

- recognising performance anxiety and knowing how to deal with it
- applying the Alexander technique to playing your instrument and decision making
- identifying habitual emotional responses to everyday stimuli through awareness of verbal and body language
- understanding how to achieve real communication and spontaneity in performance

Lecture Plan

| | |
|---------|--|
| Week 1 | All students to be recorded on video playing 5 minutes of standard. The challenge of this exercise will then be discussed and possible 'Alexander' strategies considered |
| Week 2 | How to be in the present and so communicate with an audience. Discuss the effects of performance anxiety. |
| Week 3 | Three different types of 'inhibition' and 'direction'. Finding the best for you. |
| Week 4 | How to practise efficiently. A general discussion of present and possible strategies of structure and problem solving. |
| Week 5 | Start the Research Project - As a brainstorming group, create questions that look at the problems encountered by musicians. Complete the final documents in small groups and distribute questionnaires to RCM students. |
| Week 6 | Look at the 'Inner Game' principles and compare to Alexander principles. |
| Week 7 | Alexander's procedure 'hands on a chair'. Make connections for all instrumentalists incorporating 'body mapping' principles. Collect the questionnaire responses. |
| Week 8 | Look at video from Week 1 and discuss the implications in the light of this term's work. This will involve writing short critiques of each student's performance prior to discussion. |
| Week 9 | Discuss research projects; look at results of the questionnaires. |
| Week 10 | The 'art of learning'. What is the process involved? How can it be improved in each of us? |
| Week 11 | Performance anxiety; what is it and how to work on it. |
| Week 12 | Work on the use of the visual mechanism |
| Week 13 | How to use Alexander in your teaching. |
| Week 14 | How to play from memory and how to play from music. |
| Week 15 | More detailed work on the use of the eyes. |
| Week 16 | 'How To Present Yourself' (Michael Gelb): how to be on stage. |
| Week 17 | Mock audition: all students present themselves for an appropriate job with students as panel members (with video recording). Discuss the issues that come up. |
| Week 18 | Breathing, the voice and Alexander's procedure; 'The Whispered 'Ah''. The effects on thinking, coordination and presence. |
| Week 19 | True spontaneity in performance, is it desirable and how is it possible? |
| Week 20 | Each student plays a 5 minute, (with video recording). |
| Week 21 | What ensemble skills are affected by Alexander work? Consider the application of these skills and the work on performance anxiety and communication with an audience. Play chamber music together. |
| Week 22 | Discuss the outcomes of the course and future possibilities. Each student to present about 10 minutes of self-observations using video recordings, as appropriate. |

Bibliography

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

Alexander, F. M. *The Use of the Self* (London: Orion, 2001)

Gelb, M. *Body Learning: An Introduction to the Alexander Technique*. (London: Aurum Press, 1987)

Kleinman, J. and Buckoke, P. *The Alexander Technique for Musicians* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)

Langford, E. *Mind and Muscle* (Leuven: Garant Uitgevers, 2008)

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

Rosenberg, M. *Non-Violent Communication: A Language of Life* (Encinitas, CA, Puddle Dancer Press, 2003)

GENERAL ADVICE FOR STUDENTS TAKING THIS OPTION

This course is a mixture of academic work and a voyage of self-discovery and will help you develop a deeper understanding of how you can make best use of your natural talent as a performer. You will look into the effects of habitual or automatic behaviour and develop the ability to avoid any damaging or unproductive tendencies. You will develop your critical observational capacities and the ability to give constructive advice, and will become more aware of how 'to make a good decision'. You will look at how to practise efficiently and relate practice to performance. There will be a great deal of experiential work and written work that will be inspired by essential reading and the personal experience of applying Alexander's ideas. Students who are prepared to examine their thinking in a completely open minded way throughout the course will complete it most successfully.