

Oboe – Your Body’s Language and Posture in Performance (Musicians, Pain, Strain, Injuries, Alexander Technique)

by ETHANKIND on JUNE 22, 2012

This ebook, published on [this website](#) in a PDF format and on [Amazon Kindle](#) and [Amazon.co.UK](#) and other Amazon websites, An Alexander Technique Approach to Oboe Technique, is very detailed and practical. It will give you the physical tools you need to take the limits off of your ability to create an extraordinarily accurate and kind oboe performance.

When an oboe player is performing, one of the major ways that the oboist conveys what he or she is feeling to the audience is through his or her posture and body language. As an Alexander Technique teacher and former concert guitarist, do I think that there is a negative way to show the audience how much you love what you’re doing? Yes.

What is the positive and negative effect on the oboist and the audience of showing the audience what the oboist is feeling, through the performer’s body’s movements and postures?

Here’s the negative side. If you create a hunkered down posture to convey to the audience that you really really want to play incredibly well, that you’re trying like mad to do so, then you’re paying a physical price as you perform. What do I mean?

If you are trying very hard to perform well, then by definition you are using too much effort and muscle to get the job done. (We have a saying in the Alexander Technique – DON’T TRY, DO!) It is fairly obvious when the oboist hunkers down and loses the support of the torso and/or legs for the shoulder girdle, because the oboist now has to tense the embouchure, neck, back, shoulder muscles, and legs to compensate for the body slumping forward.

This also sends excess tension into the hands and arms, as the

hands and arms don't have a fully supported shoulder girdle backing them up, because the shoulder girdle isn't floating on the torso and ribcage and/or legs.

SIMPLY, WHEN THE OBOIST CREATES AN EXPRESSIVE POSTURE TO CONVEY HOW MUCH THE OBOE PLAYER LOVES WHAT HE OR SHE IS DOING AND HOW WELL THEY WANT TO DO IT, AND THEY USE POOR HUNKERED DOWN POSTURE TO CREATE THIS, THE OBOIST COMPROMISES HIS OR HER TECHNIQUE.

Here is the positive side of showing the audience what you're feeling. In other words, what does a whole body expressive oboe posture look like that doesn't make you pay a physical price, and lets you convey to the audience your love of music?

YOUR HEAD, NECK, AND SPINE ARE RELEASED AND LENGTHENING, AS YOUR ARMS RELEASE OUT OF SHOULDERS FLOATING ON A SUPPORTIVE TORSO BALANCING ON THE SIT BONES AND/OR LEGS. SO, YOU SWAY FORWARD, SIDWAYS, AND BACKWARDS WITH INCREDIBLE FREEDOM, WITH YOUR HEAD LEADING A CONTINUOUSLY LENGTHENING, FLEXIBLE, AND DECOMPRESSED SPINE UPWARD OFF OF THE SIT BONES AND/OR LEGS IF YOU'RE STANDING.

IN OTHER WORDS, YOU CONVEY YOUR LOVE OF THE OBOE AND ITS MUSIC BY HOW EXPRESSIVELY FREE YOUR BODY CAN BE, AS YOU SIMULTANEOUSLY LET YOUR TORSO BE AT ITS FULL HEIGHT, WIDTH, AND DEPTH. YOU GET TO TAKE UP A WHOLE LOT OF SPACE, RATHER THAN BE HUNKERED DOWN IN A TIGHT BALL, WHICH IS INCREDIBLY HARD ON THE BODY.

When your body is telling the audience you love the music, and you're simultaneously not sacrificing your body and compromising your technique, then the audience gets to be as at ease in their seats as you are on the oboe. The audience will unconsciously (or consciously) pick up on your expansive, expressive, and high energy posture and movements, and they will sit and listen wide open with

high energy and lengthening spines and free necks.

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