



Interview with Lisa Marsh about the PSU Coordinate Movement Program

Written by GPFS Member BJ Nicoletti

THE COORDINATE MOVEMENT PROGRAM

The Coordinate Movement Program provides classes and events focused on health and well-being for musicians. Subjects include Body Mapping, yoga, meditation exercise physiology, the Alexander Technique, nutrition, performance anxiety and hearing loss prevention.

<https://www.pdx.edu/music-theater/coordinate-movement-program>



Tell us a little bit about the PSU Coordinate Movement Program.

The program was started twenty years ago by Lisa Marsh. It was originally a program to retrain injured pianists then it was made available to all musicians as a “musician wellness focus.” Currently, these classes are for music majors, but interested individuals can message Lisa Marsh to get into the class.



The program has been holding a special event every other year - Mind/Body/Music Event first held in 2020 and then again in 2022. The next is planned for 2024. Each of these events has been focused on different topics, with the 2022 event focused on practicing. The 2024 event will be advertised on their website. GPFS will promote it with its membership.

The program is growing and hopefully will continue to grow. Body mapping will be required for all music majors. Graduate classes are being added. PSU has also established an endowed scholarship for the program.

What is the relationship between body wellness and mindfulness, even performance anxiety/mental wellness? What is the relationship of body movements and postures to well-being and its effects on performance anxiety/mental wellness?

This is the basis of how we teach – mind, body, spirit connection (self-image, self-worth). We start students with the body because it exists in the present moment, the kinesthetic. We practice awareness of the body and then move into being aware of their state of mind.

What mindset are they bringing to lessons or performance – tensions in the mind, tensions in the body? We work on their “self-mapping” and ask, “how are they thinking of themselves as musicians?” Stephanie Cooke, faculty with the program, does a good workshop on this topic of self-awareness as musicians.

These practices all come together to alleviate performance anxiety. In addition to being prepared by having the music learned, the question of “what is your mindset before and during the performance” is central. Constructive rest is a very practical and effective exercise to incorporate into one’s practice and preparation for playing in the practice room or the performance hall. In summary, “inclusive awareness” and good traditional preparation beforehand.

The body feels best when free of unnecessary tension – to be in an organic and natural state “free flowing and reasonable.” We should notice when it feels great and how it feels when we are not hurting, not just how it feels when we are hurt. The body wants to refer to the pleasurable state. Keeps you in a relax, free state where you are free to move in any way you want.

The body feels best when free of unnecessary tension – to be in an organic and natural state “free flowing and reasonable.” We should notice when it feels great and how it feels when we are not hurting, not just how it feels when we are hurt. The body wants to refer to the pleasurable state. Keeps you in a relax, free state where you are free to move in any way you want.

What are the major body issues for flutists?

1. **Misunderstanding of anatomy and misuse of anatomy, particularly the arms.** It is important to understand all the joints and how they all work together. All musicians, including flutists, need this basic appreciation for anatomy.
2. **Understanding the physiology of breathing.** The magic of body mapping is once we get the anatomical truth, our behavior changes, particularly in freeing us up to breathe in the most relaxed yet strong way.
3. **Managing the asymmetrical nature of playing the flute.** Flutists play more on one side of their body versus in front and this definitely challenges and can negatively affect many aspects of playing.
4. **Self-care and life-work balance.** We can all use periodic self-examination and “tossing out” so-to-speak.

What are the fundamental activities you suggest flutists adopt?

1. The practice of taking **breaks every 20-30 minutes during practice**, resting for at least ten minutes.
2. **Try yoga for musicians.** There are online courses and resources, and PSU offers a class taught by Liz Kohl.
3. **Practice “constructive rest.”** (This technique is central to Alexander Technique practice as well as other methods). Here is [one resource](#), but others can be found online. Further, the book Lisa recommends below – *The Breathing Book for Flute*, by Amy Likar – has a section on construction rest.
4. **Improvise as a warm-up. Just explore sound.** Even playing scales in a funky way can serve this purpose. This type of start can give us time to “place ourselves,” to really “occupy the mindset and practice space.”

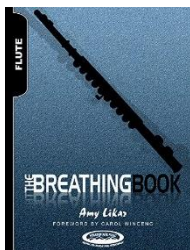
What are a few resources you would recommend to our flutist membership?

1. The Association for Body Mapping Educators can provide workshops and point you to teachers in your area.
<https://www.bodymap.org/>



2. Link to [Kelly Mollnow Wilson's](#) website articles. Kelly is a flutist who has a substantial range of experience, credentials and skills in the area of body mapping, wellness and therapeutic prevention and recovery. She is the founder of Precision Performance and Therapy, LLC.
<https://precisionperformanceandtherapy.com/writing/the-flute-examiner/>

3. Coordinate Movement Mind/Body/Music series Spring 2024 free and open to the public. Event information will be posted on this webpage below. GPFS will also be advertising this opportunity to members as the event draws closer.
<https://www.pdx.edu/music-theater/coordinate-movement-program>



4. Read and practice from *The Breathing Book for Flute*, by Amy Likar. Note – This book was reviewed for *The Portland Piper* by GPFS Member Donna Maebori. You will find it in the archives and repeated in this December 2022 issue of *The Portland Piper*.
<https://amylikar.com/project/the-breathing-book-for-flute>

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM OF THE PSU COORDINATE MOVEMENT PROGRAM

There are no prerequisites for any of the classes offered through the Coordinate Movement Program.

Body mapping for musicians - [MUS 204](#) & [MUS 580](#)

Discover how knowledge of anatomy and movement promote freedom and artistry. Explore techniques for developing confidence as a performer in a supportive setting. Learn how to manage performance anxiety and prevent hearing loss.

Yoga for musicians - [MUS 187](#)

Experience yoga as a physical practice specifically applied to musicians. Learn how to use breathing and stretching to relax and strengthen your body.

Wellness for musicians - [MUS 224](#)

Learn how to prevent injury and create a healthy lifestyle. Topics of study include: diet, rest and sleep, exercise, common musicians injuries, meditation, the Alexander Technique and stress management.

GPFS 2021-2022 Program Sponsors

The Greater Portland Flute Society thanks our Sponsors for their extraordinary support! Please show your appreciation by giving them your patronage.



Brannen Brothers Flutemakers, Inc.
58 Dragon Court
Woburn, MA 01801-1014
781-935-9522, brannen@brannenflutes.com



Canter Flute Repair
Flute Repair Specialists
Beaverton, OR
Straubinger & Muramatsu Certified
JS Engineering Gold Pads
971-266-4096



Carolyn Nussbaum Music Company
625 Digital Drive, Ste 300
Plano, TX 75075
972-985-2662, 877-FLUTE4U (toll free)
info@flute4u.com
[Watch video](#)



Flute Center of New York
307 7th Ave. #401
New York, NY 10001
212-307-9737, info@flutecenter.com
[Watch video](#)

GPFS 2021-2022 Program Sponsors

The Greater Portland Flute Society thanks our Sponsors for their extraordinary support! Please show your appreciation by giving them your patronage.



[FLUTEWORKS Seattle LLC](#)

[Facebook Page](#)

781-526-3677, fluteworks@gmail.com

By appointment only

[Watch video](#)



68 Nonset Path, Acton, MA 01720

978-268-0600

www.wmshaynes.com

[Watch video](#)



[Ted Brown Music](#)

6228 Tacoma Mall Blvd

Tacoma, WA 98409

800-562-8938

253-272-3211

sales@tedbrownmusic.com

GPFS 2021-2022 Commercial Members

The Greater Portland Flute Society also thanks our Commercial Members for their support! Please show your appreciation by giving them your patronage.



Professional Woodwind Repair
Straubinger Certified
Flute & Double Reed Specialist

119 Neabeack Hill Dr, Philomath, OR 97370

Contact: Katie Cooper, 541-760-8865

katie@windsmithmusic.com

By appointment only.



Sherry Lee Dealer of Fine Flutes

678 Sperber Lane

Grand Junction, CO 81506

970-242-9364

sherrysflutes@gmail.com



Flute World

29920 Orchard Lake Rd.

Farmington Hills, MI 48334

248-855-0410, flutes@fluteworld.com



GPFS is also a proud and grateful recipient of an Oregon Arts Commission grant – 2022.