

Musician's Yoga: A Guide to Practice, Performance, and Inspiration by Mia Olson (Hal Leonard and Berklee Press, 2009)

Reviewed by BJ Nicoletti

5 out of 5 flutes!

"Yoga For Musicians is a practice that I developed out of my own experience with music and yoga. It can help in so many ways including the development of a concentrated and focused mind for performance, an awareness of the body to prevent overuse injuries, and an overall awareness of breath to help with relaxation and musical phrasing." (Mia Olson)

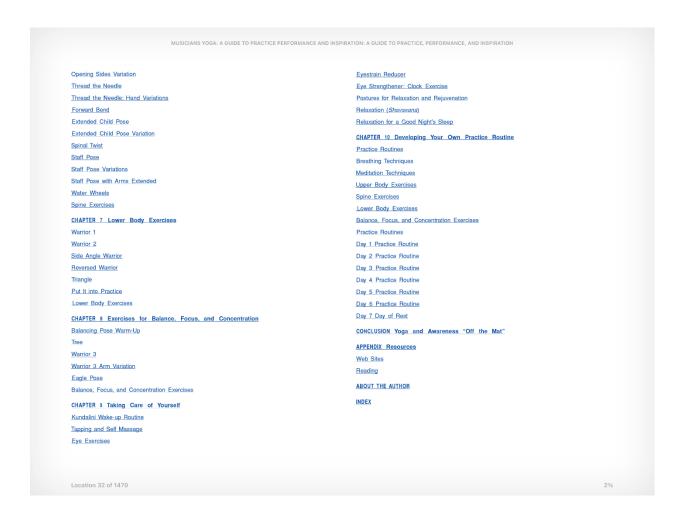
Become a better musician through yoga. By integrating yoga into your practice routines, you will develop a more focused and concentrated mind for performance. You will be able to increase awareness of how you use your body to allow for proper posture and ease of movement while performing, helping you to avoid overuse injuries and play with greater expression. These concepts, exercises, and practice routines present yoga from the musicians' perspective, focusing on the direct relationships between using yoga and creating music. You will learn to: * Practice meditation approaches, breathing techniques, and yoga postures that will help improve musicianship * Play using healthy posture and technique * Get more out of your practice through improved focus * Use your breath to improve your phrasing and also to ease performance anxiety * Play with deeper expression through inspiration. (Berklee Press)

Mia Olson is an accomplished flutist who is trained, certified and experienced in the practices she talks about. She describes herself as "a multi-media expressionist," "a diverse artist who expresses herself through music, painting, photography, and yoga." She is a Professor at the Berklee College of Music, an active performing flutist in different styles, painter and yoga instructor.

I recommend this book as useful to our GPFS membership for a range of reasons:

- She does an excellent job explaining the technical, mindful, and more spiritual part of the practice while doing so in a way that translates into our lives as musicians and playing an instrument. Her easy-to-follow exercises connect to our musical and instrument practice. See a snapshot from the table of contents for the book below. Note She offers a yoga lesson here on her website https://miamarieolson.com/yoga-lesson
- The book is very simply designed, organized well, and very accessible to different levels of players. It is meant for the musician that appreciates the connection between playing and physical wellness, mindfulness, performance presence/calmness/anxiety and strategies for breathing and posture. One might say it is more geared toward adults, but certainly the more aspiring and curious youth can take away plenty.

- ➤ If you are already a practitioner of some level of yoga, breathing awareness, meditation or mindfulness this book may still have perspective to offer. You can read it cover to cover or take on a section or two to discover specific ways to integrate these principles and practice into your actual flute playing.
- The book pairs well with other related resources such as the flutist/practitioner reviewed in the August, 2022 issue of *The Portland Piper* which is available in the Archives for the Portland Piper, on the Teaching & Learning Column webpage.







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