

PERFORMANCE WELLNESS, INC. PRESENTS:

IN-DEPTH CASE STUDY OUTLINING THE PERFORMANCE WELLNESS APPROACH IN TREATING SUSAN Q., A PROFESSIONAL JAZZ MUSICIAN WHO SUFFERED FROM A NUMBER OF PERFORMANCE-RELATED DISORDERS

When dealing with performance-related disorders in professional musicians, it is important to work with the whole person - body, mind, and spirit. Over many years of treating stress-related disorders of professional musicians, Dr. Louise Montello has discovered a process that uses the curative power of music itself to foster deep healing of the whole musician. This process involves the awakening of what she calls Essential Musical Intelligence (EMI). EMI is our innate ability to use music as a self-reflecting, transformational tool to facilitate total health and well-being. Although all human beings have access to Essential Musical Intelligence, most do not comprehend its value and thus do not use it as effectively as they could. According to Dr. Montello, EMI is our ability to perceive the voice of truth - the "will to be" (life force) that informs our beings through the archetypal language of spontaneous sound and music making. This innate "will to be" is naturally perpetuated through the expression of human desires and emotions that must be acknowledged, processed, and integrated into the whole of our beings before total wellness can be achieved. Music is the most natural conduit for the expression of these desires and emotions, especially the ones that, for some reason, are hidden from ourselves, or repressed. From the perspective of Essential Musical Intelligence, music acts as a mirror of the inner life. By tuning into the deeper meaning of music in our lives, we naturally begin to understand ourselves and others better. Thus, the music that we listen to and/or create can foster self-awareness, emotional intelligence, transformation, and ultimately, deep healing of the body, mind, and spirit. Although EMI can be used by anyone who desires to become more self-aware and whole, it works particularly well with musicians.

Although awakening EMI is the centrifugal force driving Performance Wellness, Inc., there are other necessary components that are equally important in helping musicians in need. In order to assess, treat, and prevent performance-related injuries, the clinical approach of Performance Wellness, Inc. focuses on the following categories which account for the total experience of musicians' wellness: physical, educational (ergonomics), psychological, social, and financial. EMI is like a river that runs through each category bringing deeper levels of self-awareness, creativity, and healing into the therapeutic mix.

The following is a case study focusing on the healing process of a world-class jazz pianist who approached Performance Wellness, Inc. for help in coping with severe tendonitis that seriously curtailed her ability to achieve success in her chosen field. It is one of the many success stories of musicians who have walked the path of Performance Wellness.

PHYSICAL: The first step in dealing with a performance-related injury is to obtain a proper medical diagnosis from a physician who specializes in treating musicians. Susan was referred to Emil Pascarelli, MD, an expert in diagnosing performance-related injuries in musicians (then Director of the Miller Institute for Performing Artists). Once the diagnosis of repetitive stress injury (severe tendonitis in both forearms) was made, Susan was given a wellness prescription which included physical therapy, strengthening exercises, instrument retraining and ergonomic counseling which focused on helping Susan to play her instrument(s) with greater

ease, sans pain. After several weeks of physical therapy and two ergonomic sessions, Susan experienced a significant reduction in pain while playing her keyboards. She went back to her band leader and told him, "It would be better if I didn't have to play standing up anymore, or to play two keyboards at once with my hands contorted. Also, just adjusting the height of my piano bench made all the difference in how my body felt while I was playing." Susan continued, "This expert advice from physicians can empower musicians to take care of themselves while performing at home, on the road, and in other stressful situations."

RETRAINING - The next step for most injured players is instrument retraining. Most performance-related injuries stem from age-old problems with technique, and are exacerbated by overuse. For Susan, slowing down during her practice sessions and playing each note with consciousness was the first step in changing her technique. She also learned yogic breathing techniques which helped her to feel more connected to her body-mind while playing. "It was like I was 5 years old all over again. I had to relearn how to play the piano from scratch. And I was finally protected from those creepy, abusive teachers. I had to create my own piano teacher inside of me." Susan was empowered to start with a fresh slate and learn how to approach music in a healthy, safe way.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT: In order to assess the body-mind issues underlying Susan's tendonitis, Dr. Montello made a site visit to the venue where Susan was playing with her band. While watching Susan play, she observed both physical and psychological tension. Susan was holding her breath much of the time while playing. She also held tension in her arms, hands, and face. Dr. M. also observed the group dynamics of the players on stage. She noticed an air of competitiveness among the players. Susan seemed to be playing defensively, pushing away the other musicians with her improvisations, as opposed to welcoming them in. The music was loud, driving, filled with tension. Susan seemed nervous, frightened, and angry at times on stage. She often pounded the piano throughout the set. Susan's music displayed technical prowess, but limited emotional expression. Her true expression was swallowed up by her defensiveness.

In processing the assessment with Dr. Montello the following day, Susan described her feelings about the performance. "I was feeling a lot of anger, rage. I felt like I had to be better than everyone else in order to survive. I just deal with it [the tension]. I was thinking - you should be grateful you have a job." In talking about the roots of these beliefs, Susan related them to early childhood experiences that were uncomfortable. "I had to be the best in order to gain my teachers' favor and be deemed worthy. Physical and sexual abuse was not uncommon. I felt like I would have to take tough love in order to be worth anything. Musicians - like children - have no choice but to take it. It's like the "be-bop" mentality - shut up and take it and get your training - you don't know anything, so just shut up and pay your dues so you can play with pain and suffering . . . cause there's so few crumbs to go around. Musicians need to work together to advance our artistry rather than keep self esteem poor so just a few can benefit."

PSYCHODYNAMIC MUSIC THERAPY - "EMI is what really transformed my life," Susan explained. "I learned how to play the piano with feeling, instead of playing to be the best." Because her role in her family was the "star", she developed a "false self" quite early in life that forced her to focus on impressing people vs. expressing her truth. "I was like a dancing clown." She resented that fact that she had been

deprived of having a real childhood. At the same time, she also felt an overwhelming sense of entitlement. "I had no grounding in reality."

Dr. Montello observed that Susan wasn't connecting her heart with her playing. Most of her music was intellectually driven, and it was obvious that Susan wasn't getting much joy out of that particular style of playing. She asked Susan to simplify her improvisations and to play from a feeling level. At first, allowing herself to really feel what was going on inside was terrifying for Susan. She soon realized, however, that she had to know what she was feeling in order to create a life that worked. "Before therapy, it was just about being the best - being perfect, not feeling pleasure in living your life."

Although Susan was an expert improviser, it was difficult for her to let go and allow her true self to come through in her playing. A breakthrough happened for Susan about three months into therapy when Dr. Montello asked her to improvise the "music" of her father at the piano. Breaking from her usual elegant improvisational style, the music sounded raw and filled with conflicting emotions. This was the first time that Susan had connected with her deeper self while improvising. During a series of free piano improvisations that followed, Susan also realized that finding her true voice was compromised by her co-dependency with narcissistic men. She called this her "love addiction." Susan explained, "more women have love addictions than men - it's related to perfectionism; we need to fill the emptiness inside us with another person."

TOOLS OF EMI: The following EMI techniques were used to help Susan to release the shackles of perfectionism; transform her love addiction; and find her "true self":

1. Spontaneous song writing as a mode of problem solving - "I wrote 14 songs to break through the love addiction. Louise asked me to sit at the piano and to sing how I felt. I had never done that before." Susan was asked to do daily vocal improvisations to tell her life story through music. She was also asked to sing about what was going on in the moment. She recorded these sessions and used a lot of the improvisational material in her compositions. Her treatment also included yoga breathing techniques for anxiety reduction; chakra tuning for emotional balancing; guided imagery and music - a way of exploring inner landscapes through recorded music and externalizing the images/symbols found there through mandala drawing - "GIM helped to melt frozen feelings."; and toning - a method of expressing the music of the body. This physically active technique is an effective way of transforming painful memories and feelings.

According to Dr. Montello, through connecting with EMI, music becomes a tangible expression of one's higher self. This "truthful" communication is most easily expressed through the voice . . . and, because the voice is always accessible, you can call on it at any time. Instrumentalists, as well as singers, should be comfortable using the voice as a mode of expression.

The first phase of therapy focused on creating a safe space where Susan could reawaken her EMI, explore her feelings, and "play". According to the eminent psychoanalyst and child psychiatrist, D.W. Winnicott, it is only in play (improvisation) that we discover the self. Through music therapy, Susan shared, "I discovered my own personal way of expressing truth - as opposed to the 'shoulds' that I grew up with." (a move away from perfectionism)

The first step in accessing EMI is witnessing - to be able to step aside and become the observer of thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions as opposed to be caught up in and controlled by them. The following steps comprise the process using EMI for self-transformation and healing:

1. Identify the problem through witnessing.
2. Remember your EMI and trust that you are safe and secure no matter what the outcome; trust that you are totally loved.
3. Ask for help from your EMI
4. Connect with your center of creativity (throat chakra)
5. Express yourself and allow a solution to the problem unfold through the music.
6. Give thanks for the gift of your EMI.

"EMI is like a transformational 12 step program," Susan explained, "where we use music to directly access the higher self. You can also do it by accident - take, for example, Charlie Parker. Just playing music every night in itself kept him alive." Most genius musicians/composers have naturally tapped the power of EMI to inform their creative process. These inspired individuals probably spent a lot of their time in the consciousness of the throat chakra (the center of consciousness that is associated with receptivity/ surrender to a Higher Power for inspiration/expression). Unfortunately, when looking at the numbers of creative/inspired musicians who have succumbed to serious pressures of the music industry, it is obvious that there is more to being healthy and whole than just being a channel for higher consciousness. All creative people need a safe, secure foundation upon which they can build their "castles" of light.

EMI teaches you to trust your intuition and to make choices from a heart/soul perspective. "Finally you've connected all the wires (between body, mind, and spirit). Music is the most direct way to do that." Susan found that her success in music came with her ability to communicate genuine feelings through her music. She found that EMI also helped to transform relationships. In her love relationship, music became a catalyst for change. "Love in music is catalyst for love in relationships. Music is a safe place to express the true self - it activates the giving and receiving feedback loop that is a must in all personal and professional relationships."

The following are the developmental stages of Susan's psychological transformation, with EMI as the central motivating force.

1. Creativity/play - Susan began the process of developing a strong sense of self. Many people do not receive adequate skills for developing emotional intelligence as children. "I didn't learn how to cope with emotional issues growing up. Through working with EMI, I became more aware of my feelings and learned healthy ways of communicating with others. I also started attracting more healthy people into my life."
2. Labor pains - Susan learned to express dissociated feelings related to early trauma/abandonment through musical improvisation. (These feelings are at the root of most addictions). Once Susan acknowledged, felt, processed, transformed, and integrated these feelings, she was able to give birth to her real self. "I had to first put down the drug - rageful interactions with others and addictions to power and fame." She learned to discriminate between her own personal issues and what others expected from her. Musical role playing was the most effective way of learning how

to discriminate between roles and behaviors that are true to the self, and others that are introjected from dysfunctional others. Dr. Montello and Susan engaged in "struggle" exercises at the piano (role playing - exploring the music of "what is you" and "what is introjected") and finding the core of self within that struggle.

3. Grappling with love addiction - At this stage Susan explored her need to be dependent on others in order to feel worthy and loved. She connected with her true self through spontaneous vocal improvisation and song writing.

4. Opening the center of creativity through singing - "After freely singing at the piano, I heard my true voice for the first time. I didn't realize how much tension I held around my throat, neck, and jaw. I spent a lot of time every night singing and then listening back. I was amazed at what came out - it was frightening at times - I was speaking my truth. I also realized that while many musicians connect with their emotions through music, they seldom integrate the idea of music wellness into their lives. Though many musicians are successful financially, they don't always connect happiness with their financial success. I think all musicians need Musicians' Wellness!"

5. Evaluating success of treatment - Post-treatment, Susan reported a significant increase in joy, abundance, and body-mind integration in both her personal and professional life. "I want the readers to know that through awakening EMI, my band and I had a joyous recording experience that resulted in a powerful record that received critical acclaim from reviewers."

SONG CYCLE: The following is a progression of songs that emerged as a result of Susan's process of exploring and healing herself through EMI and music therapy:

1. Shelter Me - a prayer for safety
2. Say a Little Prayer - favorite line, "Pray for me to fly without you." A powerful song that helped her to transform a long-standing love addiction.
3. Walking on Water - favorite line, "Walking on the sea of love." Led her away from dependency on narcissistic men into dependency on the Christ mind.
4. Protect this Child - "I was able to admit that I was afraid and needed protection from abusive teachers and others to be able to sing."
5. Take Your Hands Off Me - a song of fighting back - "I was able to confront past abusers through this song."
6. Grace and Pain - two songs about exploring the possibility of standing alone, and the fear of being loved
7. Abundance - These Things I Love - "I had the courage to look at the good things that were happening in my life and give thanks."

FINANCIAL - Performance Wellness, Inc. offers musicians training in business skills to empower them to create a life that is financially sound. "Most musicians live in a fantasy world with regard to money. When I broke my pinky, I was forced to deal with reality. I did not have insurance and was forced to pay over \$8,000 for medical bills. I realized that musicians need to implement a program where record companies insure their artists. I also realized how to empower myself with a record company. By having your own vision and business plan, musicians can attract business partners with similar goals." Performance Wellness, Inc. offers financial training for musicians to create a solid, reality-based foundation so that they do not have to be dependent on the music industry for their sense of identity/power.

GROUP EMI - All working bands experience relationship and communication issues. When extreme, these issues are often the primary reasons why bands break up and/or creative musical output suffers. The dynamics of any group usually reflect functional and dysfunctional patterns of the band members' primary family dynamics. With awareness and proper communication skills, dysfunctional patterns of relating can be uprooted and transformed. Performance Wellness, Inc. has a long track record of helping musical groups to reach their highest potential through exploring and transforming relationship/ communication problems. Here EMI is employed as a centrifugal force in uniting band members in the spirit of love, respect, emotional intelligence and service to humanity through music.

The following are the stages of instituting Performance Wellness with musical groups:

1. Awareness of group dynamics - We all bring our past "baggage" (unresolved emotional conflicts) into new group relationships. This old "baggage" usually gets triggered when conflicts arise within the group. In order to understand how these unresolved conflicts affect current relationships, we must look at how each person within the group typically deals with conflict (denial, fight, flight, dissociation). People have different styles of coping based on early modeling. The first step in dealing with conflicts within a musical group is developing awareness. What roles are being played by each individual group member? Are these roles functional or dysfunctional? Does each group member feel empowered by his or her role in the group? Is there an imbalance of power, and why? What are the different styles of coping within the group? How can group members respect differences among them as opposed to trying to "destroy" people who are different than them? Many band leaders use their power position to control others when dealing with conflict. They establish a kind of artificial pecking order. They use dysfunctional techniques to rule the band thereby by making it an unpleasant environment for creative bonding and expression. For example, a domineering conductor who is disliked and feared by orchestra members may have had his or her own unresolved control issues. He or she repeats patterns of hostility and omnipotent control in order to get his desired result. This conductor may have been treated similarly by his past teachers, conductors, or parents. Once group members begin to disclose their fears, disappointments, and desires regarding their role in the group and their vision for the group's future, lines of communication open and potential for growth ensues.

2. Awakening EMI - creates a playful environment for band members where the ultimate goal is group harmony, not competition and control. When people are operating from their Essential Musical Intelligence, conflict resolution is always a win-win situation. Each group member is respected and honored for his or her unique contributions to the group.

3. Group members view the process of creating as a sacred and joyous act - here group members perform in the spirit of play, not the drudgery of work. In Susan's words, "Work becomes more like play rather than an act that has to be done perfectly so I can be famous and sell a lot of records."

4. Developing trust - by aligning themselves through practicing specific EMI exercises, group members begin to trust that the group will have what it needs to survive and thrive - activating Step 2 of the EMI process.

5. Mind-body awareness techniques - sensitivity training - relaxation and breath

awareness - techniques to establish empathy, trust and safety with each other.

6. Abundance consciousness - Band members must be on same page with regard to their mission and goals. The band leader/conductor has to be focused on the concepts of harmony and abundance, and offer players clear guidance and direction. All players must develop "playful" self-discipline and endurance. As a leader, Susan offered her group, Shalimar, opportunities to practice EMI techniques. Out of these interactions, came several finely crafted songs. "The whole band can do the exercises in Dr. Montello's EMI book and be guaranteed to have success." Susan feels the underlying message of Shalimar is to empower listeners that they can let go of dysfunctional relationships and learn to stand alone. The music encourages people to become more whole individuals through being honest and asking for what they need. Each person in her group writes songs that are helpful and inspirational for the others. For example, George (drummer) wrote "Everlasting" which was about trusting that we are everlasting, not just finite being; Paula (bassist) wrote "Don't Forget To Say Goodbye." The song is about leaving a relationship, but not just walking away coldly - seeing it as meaningful a transformation, " I'll be moving on, but I it's not that I don't care about you. According to Susan, "The mission of our music is to explore and present the process that takes place in relationships and to show that people can be loving within them - to show that guys and girls have the same problems." "The band really wants to be functional. We are all concerned with the concept of a total life - not just the desire to be famous for fame's sake. We hope that our music will make people have more joy in their lives." Because EMI has shown her how to heal herself with music, Susan is trying to bring this message out to her listeners so that they also can heal. She is able to mentor her younger band members because of that. "I'd like to spread the message that once you are empowered, you can empower others."

7. Performance anxiety is dealt with empathy and humor, not betablockers.

8. Empowering bands to become business operations vs. dependency on the music industry. Susan's band was able to attract venture capitalist to help her build her business.

In summary, Performance Wellness, Inc. offers a combination of medical, educational, psychotherapeutic, social, spiritual (EMI), and business principles:

1. Musicians are empowered to heal themselves and others through music; EMI = harmony. All group members feel like they are in win-win situation.
2. Musicians learn communication skills and understand the dynamics of group process.
3. Musicians learn to use business concepts for financial success and independence.
4. Musicians learn to develop the state of "being" vs. the need for perfection in musical performance and practice. Through engaging with EMI, they can achieve a state of non-duality/bliss. Self-imposed time constraints often foster stress and hostility. Musicians learn that each creative project has its own rhythm. Often creative people feel that they have to do everything right now. Pressure/time/money worries takes the joy out of musical performance. In symphony orchestras there is often no way around these time constraints. When one is connected with EMI, however, they have transcended the limitations of the ego/mind; trusting in their

own technical abilities, these musicians can then let go and allow themselves to be instruments for higher good. They will then be much more prepared to give outstanding performances. EMI helps to integrate heart and head. Under extreme pressure, many orchestra musicians lose this sense of integration and forget about the healing power of their music.