

Warm Ups, Cool Downs and everything in Between: String Players and the Legacy of Dr. Alice Brandfonbrener, Founder of Performing Arts Medicine

Presenter: Daniel Mason, University of Kentucky

American String Teachers Association 2018 National Conference, Atlanta, Georgia

Some Core Principals for Playing and Teaching

Sleep enough! Drink plenty of water (for many reasons, not least joint lubrication)

Long view – younger players may experience problems from habits only (years) later

Balance – Skeletal support, properly employed, means less stress for muscles. Opposing groups of muscles must stay in balance

Breath – exhale is inherently tension-releasing and could be incorporated into basic skills; camera shake is least likely at bottom of exhale and good wind players never breathe in sharply to hold breath before playing

Set-up – violinists and violists can benefit from some experimenting with chinrest and shoulder support; collar bone contact is most stable and least work for right arm. Under instrument is often much smaller space than players used to a lifting type shoulder rest actually need. Custom chinrests (such as from Frisch and Denig) or Kredde adjustable chinrests may be worth exploring.

Back – active role – Gerle exercise. According to Professor of Cello Alan Harris (Eastman School; close colleague of Alice Brandfonbrener) message is “scapulae flat, like plastered against a wall”

Holistic Approach – Warming up and cooling down habits developed early; general exercise as a routine; stress reduction; planning and being prepared ahead of rehearsals, lessons concerts - all work in favor of injury prevention.

Efficient practice - and mental practice reduces time needed with instrument, through use of imagery, score study, etc.

Cultivate positive thought- and steer away from negatives. Maintain a generous attitude toward peers and colleagues.