

CELEBRATING 140 YEARS OF THE ISM

ISM

MUSIC JOURNAL

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MUSIC FOR THE CORONATION

ISM members take centre stage to perform at the service

THE EMPOWERED MUSICIAN 3

'Unity is Strength' is the message as our members face the current storms in musical life

THE PRIMARY SINGING TOOLKIT

Introducing our new resource, produced with the Voices Foundation

HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR HEARING HEALTH



Fiona Butterworth, Senior Clinical Audiologist at Musicians' Hearing Services, explains how to maintain good hearing health and outlines what the Musicians' Hearing Health Scheme can do for you

As a musician, your ears are an asset of your professional life and it is important to take care of them in order to sustain a long-term career in music.

What is hearing health?

Hearing health considers the physical health of the ears, the level of your hearing, the level and duration of noise exposure, and the potential need for appropriate hearing protection. A combination of exposure to unsafe levels of sound and the ageing process will cause gradual changes to your hearing that can be difficult to notice in real time. Changes to your hearing due to noise exposure are 100% permanent, but also 100% preventable. Having a regular audiological check-up enables you to take control of your hearing health and ensure that you are aware of any changes as they occur.

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Musicians should always be aware that it is highly likely that the level and duration of the sound you are exposed to through your work and performing or teaching time will reach and surpass the threshold that will cause permanent damage to your hearing, even if it may not seem that loud.

What does this mean for me?

If you notice a change in your hearing, or are experiencing something that is causing you concern, do not ignore it and do not assume that it will get better on its own. You should raise any concerns with a health professional as they arise, so that support can be provided in a timely manner.

HAVING A REGULAR AUDIOLOGICAL CHECK-UP ENABLES YOU TO TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEARING HEALTH AND ENSURE THAT YOU ARE AWARE OF ANY CHANGES AS THEY OCCUR.

Even if you have no concerns, it is still important to keep track of your hearing by having regular hearing tests. The Health and Safety Executive recommend that where there is a greater risk of hearing damage due to noise exposure, hearing tests should be carried out more often than once every three years. We recommend having a hearing test completed annually.

Following exposure to unsafe levels of sound, it is not unusual to experience a dullness of hearing or the presence of tinnitus temporarily; this is a warning sign from your ears, telling you that the environment you were in has the potential to damage your hearing permanently. You should aim to reduce the level of sound you are exposed to, and for musicians, the most effective, and easiest step to this is to get a set of custom-made musicians' ear plugs. These will reduce the overall level of sound entering the ear canal and as noise exposure is cumulative, will help the individual to manage their own noise exposure personally in all environments. We recommend that ear plugs are worn when playing, rehearsing, or performing, so that you can acclimatise to a new way of listening.

Like the rest of your body, your ears also need rest time, so ensure you are allocating time into your week that allows your ears to relax without noise.

What are my responsibilities in the workplace?

If you are an employee or worker, you are obliged to take reasonable care of the health and safety of yourself and those around you. Your employer will have certain duties towards you as well.

If you are a self-employed musician and your work activity poses no potential risk to the health and safety of other workers or members of the public, then you don't need to carry out your own risk assessments. However, employers have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that self-employed people are not exposed to risks to their health or safety in a workplace.



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What are the employer's responsibilities with regards to noise in the workplace?

Employers should follow the Control of Noise at Work Regulations (2005). These regulations require employers to prevent or reduce risks to health and safety from exposure to noise at work. The regulations apply to employees, workers and the self-employed.

There are additional requirements in respect of employees, where the employer must provide health surveillance, including hearing tests, if they identify a risk to health. This means that if you are self-employed it is your own responsibility to ensure you take the appropriate steps to manage your hearing health.

What is the Musicians' Hearing Health Scheme?

The Musicians' Hearing Health Scheme from Help Musicians offers affordable hearing protection, delivered by Musicians' Hearing Services.

ISM members get a 25% discount on the scheme, subsidised by the ISM Members Fund.

For just **£37.50** you can access:

- an **audiological assessment and check-up** from a specialist in musicians' hearing (worth up to £100)
- a **set of custom-made, ACS Pro Series plugs** (worth £149)
- **expert advice** on referral routes and next steps to manage any problems
- **option of wax removal**, if necessary, at a subsidised rate of £50

Your appointment will be carried out by a qualified audiologist with experience in supporting musicians with their hearing. Developing a working relationship with an audiologist who can support you in taking care of your hearing health is incredibly important, and the scheme allows you to take the first step in making this connection.

Access hearing support:
ism.org/musicians-hearing-health-scheme

REMEMBERING PAULA FAN

(1952-2023)

A personal tribute
by **Rhiannon Mathias**



Photo:
Chris Richards

The music world was shocked to hear about the unexpected death of American pianist and ISM member, Paula Fan. Her loss is deeply felt by her family, friends, colleagues and pupils as well as music lovers all over the world.

Paula was a vibrant and proactive member of the Tucson musical community and was principal pianist of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra from 1984 to 2016. With her extraordinary pianistic technique – she could sight-read any music with ease – and her attention to the smallest musical details enabled her to excel as a chamber music player and accompanist of the highest calibre.

Paula met the love of her life, the English clarinettist John Denman, at the University of Arizona (UoA) in 1976, and the couple married in 1982, performing together as the Denman-Fan Duo in America, the UK and the Far East. Two other important musical partnerships stood out in her career. In 2002, she formed Duo Amabile with the German-American violinist Steven Moeckel and, from 2013 onwards, she regularly performed with Jeremy Huw Williams. Paula first met Jeremy at the UoA when she accompanied him in a recital of songs as part of a Benjamin Britten festival. During the next decade, this duo gave over 300 recitals together on five continents and recorded 13 CDs. Speaking shortly after her death, Jeremy

'She had an extraordinary pianistic technique – she could sight-read any music with ease - and paid attention to the smallest musical detail.'

described Paula as an *'incomparable pianist'*, adding that *'she possessed a fierce intellect, a formidable technique, and was hugely inquisitive, great fun, gregarious, and an incredibly kind, generous and caring person'*.

After completing undergraduate and postgraduate music degrees at the UoA and the University of Southern California, Paula served as a Music Lecturer at the UoA (from 1976) and, in 2005, became the first and only Regents Professor to be appointed by the University's Fred Fox School of Music. Following her retirement from the music faculty in 2014, she helped to found the University's Conflucenter for Creative Inquiry, serving as its first Senior Fellow from 2014 to 2018, while continuing with her international performing career.

I first met Paula in 2016 and was fortunate to see her on a regular basis when she came to the UK, including when I invited her to give a recital with Jeremy at the First International Conference on Women's Work in Music at Bangor University in 2017. I have precious memories of her brilliant musicianship, her wonderful stories – often larger than life and always tinged with a mischievous sense of humour – as well as her warmth, wisdom and sheer verve for life.

