

Hearing Problems for Music Students and Teachers: Reasons, Solutions and Effective Precautions

Presented by Howard Lehman, Director UW-Eau Claire Indianhead Arts & Education Center

- I. Definition of hearing loss, and examples of the various types.**
 - A. Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)**
 - B. Hearing loss in all frequencies; high frequencies etc.**
 - C. How various types of hearing loss can relate to students and teachers of music.**
 - D. Warning signs of hearing loss for music teachers**
 - 1) Ringing in the ears.**
 - 2) Loss of being able to accurately discriminate pitches in the upper register.**
 - 3) Becoming more difficult to hear inside voice parts.**
 - 4) Having problems understanding students' questions.**
 - 5) Increasing irritability, tension, nervousness, anger and even antagonism toward those around you.**
 - 6) Fatigue, loss of concentration, more frustrations.**
 - 7) More headaches, upset stomach, dizziness, even nausea.**
 - E. What factors in our lifestyles today can speed up the damage?**
 - F. What precautions can you take now to lessen this "erosion" of your ability to hear well?**

- II. How do you know if your rehearsal room has acoustical problems?**
 - A. Learn to use a decibel meter, monitor and record your findings.**
 - B. Read up on this topic; be your own advocate. Where can you find good information on this?**
 - C. What makes up a "good" acoustically treated room, and, conversely, what makes up a bad room?**
 - D. What you can do to improve the room(s).**
 - E. Be aware of the myths and half-truths associated with improving a rehearsal place.**
 - F. Understand the logarithmic and exponential properties associated with the amplitude response of the ear to the various differences of decibels.**
 - 1) The difference between decibels varies exponentially with the power that produces those decibels.**
 - 2) 103 decibels is two times the pressure of 100 decibels. 105 decibels is three times the pressure of 100 decibels.**

- III. What safety precautions should you take?**
 - A. Get your hearing tested regularly.**
 - B. See an Audiologist.**

- C. Purchase AND WEAR earplugs, not just in musical settings. Lawn mowers, vacuum cleaners, shop equipment etc. can all contribute to the “erosion” of your hearing.**
- D. There are several treatments that can work for tinnitus and noise induced hearing loss.**
- E. How protected are teachers and students in regards to hearing problems and the workplace?**

Always remember, for most of us, life WILL go on after we leave teaching. We are entitled to have as happy and fulfilling of a life as is possible. Hearing the screaming noises in our ears continuously, everyday of our life after retirement is a terrible burden to bear.