

# SHZM

## Swiss University Centre for Music Physiology



**Cooperation in music physiology and musicians' medicine between the Swiss music universities under the auspices of the Conference of Swiss Music Universities (KMHS)**

**Promotion of musico-physiological teachings and research in cooperation with the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology as well as universities in Switzerland and abroad**

**Support for the Master of Advanced Studies in Music Physiology**

**Organization of nationwide continuing education opportunities in the areas of music physiology and musicians' medicine**

**Representation of Swiss music universities at international conventions and in professional journals for music physiology and musicians' medicine**

## Initial Position

Experience from teaching and research over the last years shows that the physiological training at the Swiss music universities has considerably increased the level of contentment, productivity and sense of well-being among students and teachers. This is especially true for the education of future teachers, themselves responsible for the further development of music education. The musico-physiological activities of the Swiss music universities have been recognized as exemplary at international conventions. The founding of the Swiss University Centre for Music Physiology, to consolidate the competencies existing at various Swiss music universities, was decided, thereby establishing the possibility to educate a new generation of instructors of music physiology.

## Goals and Projects

The SHZM supports the development of musico-physiological teaching and research, for example in large projects involving the cooperation of several institutions. This cooperation, which began in 2002, includes the universities of Lausanne and Zurich, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH) as well as other research institutions in Switzerland and abroad.

The SHZM supports a series of post-graduate studies as a continuing education opportunity in music physiology for music teachers, designed and taught by instructors affiliated to various music universities. These certified courses, CAS, DAS and Master of Advanced Studies (MAS), were initiated in conjunction with the Bologna Reform Process and are currently being supervised by the Zurich University of the Arts. The graduates of the DAS and MAS degree are by now part of the pool of instructors, which local music schools in turn can hire for their continuing education programs. Various music schools and music universities have already institutionalized musico-physiological courses and individual counselling services taught by members of this pool.

Since its founding, the SHZM has organized numerous well-attended seminars led by internationally renowned speakers. These seminars, open both to students and faculty, are publicized nationwide. The abstracts of these events are available on the SHZM Homepage, [www.shzm.ch](http://www.shzm.ch)

The existing cooperation between the Swiss music universities has been intensified since official permission has been given for students and faculty to visit theme-related courses and consultations at institutions other than their own. This interaction has assumed a model character on an international level. The introduction of further courses for music physiology in all of the Swiss music colleges remains a focal point of the SHZM's work. The involvement of locally available specialists for physical training and self-awareness, therapists and doctors, is an increasing element in this process.

## Structure

The SHZM is a cooperation and special interest group between the musico-physiological and music-medical faculties of the Swiss music universities. The SHZM encourages cooperation and exchange of information between universities under the auspices of the Conference of Swiss Music Universities and it represents these institutions at international conventions and in specialised journals. The SHZM will continue to collaborate with other national and international associations. Each music university is independently responsible for its contributions to the SHZM and publicises events relevant to the topic of music physiology within this framework.

## Future Prospects

After nearly 30 years of intensified research in the area of music physiology and musicians' medicine including publication of numerous alarming studies regarding health problems of musicians, the founding of the SHZM permits giving impulses for the prevention of performance and health problems at music universities and music schools. Musico-physiological instruction and research should, on the one hand, improve the general education of students at Swiss music universities. On the other hand, the possibilities for post-graduate continuing education for professional musicians should be further expanded. By doing so, the significance placed upon continuing education in conjunction with the Bologna Reform is being acknowledged.

One of the most decisive advantages of the SHZM compared with similar institutions in the USA and in other European countries is that teachers are well integrated into the daily activities and faculty bodies of the universities in which they teach. Therefore, the danger of the SHZM being regarded as a foreign body lacking respect and support from students and faculty is minimised. Even though musico-physiological instruction and research requires numerous medical and therapeutic competencies, they should always serve the primary goals of the university: to provide a comprehensive education and to promote artistic and pedagogical abilities.

This is indicated by the very open term "music physiology" in the name of the SHZM. Helping musicians to develop skills of self-organization at an early stage in their career ("help for self help") is an excellent method to prevent particularly prevalent functional disorders caused by unhealthy music making, thereby counteracting the current pathologic and commercial tendencies in dealing with musicians' health problems.



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