

## C. THE MOVING MUSICIAN

### Summer Continuing Professional Development Course for Musicians at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, July 2002

SpiralArts ran this summer course with the support of a Curriculum Initiatives Grant. Some of the participants enjoyed the project so much that they continued to develop this work voluntarily. The subject was approached from three angles:

General health, attunement  
and alignment of the body

Creativity and freedom  
of expression

The integration of music and other art forms  
(in this case dance, drama, voice and painting)

#### Aims:

To find strategies through body awareness for better health for instrumentalists, including practising and playing without undue stress and tension

To explore the effect body awareness (attunement, alignment, breathing, emotional expression) has on the quality of the music played

To create a safe, supportive and non-judgemental environment where it is possible to explore creative processes without fear and inhibition

To enable musicians to explore their own creativity, finding new approaches to the music they play and discovering that spontaneity and fun does not mean losing clarity and focus

To explore how the structure and dramatic content of a piece of music can be experienced and expressed

To develop ways of embodying music and to create new work that, because of the embodiment, is more easily accessible to an audience

To gain an awareness of which pieces of composed music do, or do not, lend themselves easily to movement/dance

To find ways, such as improvisation, to unify and integrate different art forms

To explore the possibility of composition and choreography developing out of improvisation

#### Course Content:

Regular bodywork classes, including consistent practice in:

Finding alignment in the body with and without the instruments

Learning a good 'warm up' exercise routine as preparation before playing – releasing unnecessary tensions, co-ordinating the body/mind, opening and/or strengthening specific areas of the body appropriate to musicians and working with the breath

Learning how to walk, stand and sit without undue tension

Acquiring simple methods to aid relaxation and gain calm confidence

Themed workshops to:

Find areas of common ground between the arts, such as rhythm, breath, phrasing and voice

Explore subjects such as spatial awareness, balance, stillness, dynamics, impulse and communication

Creative and project work, including:

Imagery and use of the imagination

Finding new perspectives and inspiration from other art forms. For example, dance leading music and vice versa

Creating composition and choreography from improvisation

Working with traditional and familiar music in new ways, such as placement of musicians for

a site-specific performance, integrating musicians into the dramatic scene and processional playing

Gaining an appreciation of the value of movement and bodywork to feel, experience, embody, express and communicate music in a sensitive way

Learning to be able to play composed and improvised music with physical awareness and while moving (when appropriate)

Gaining confidence in individual creativity

Finding a physical relationship with the instrument

Becoming flexible in outlook and approach, gaining new skills to help personal, artistic and professional development

## BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES

"I enjoy becoming part of the dancing rather than just accompanying in the traditional way and find this creatively inspiring. I also find my concentration and focus have improved as there is so much to be aware of and this is an enjoyable challenge"

"the four elements have a direct application into music"

"It has physically given me a lot of freedom as well as broadening my imagination"

"Since I did this course I feel my body and instrument are one"

"postural changes which improve quality of sound produced"

"the pulse in the body transfers to the instrument"

"It relates to the artistic climate of the time"

"it gives a new way in"

Feedback from  
the participating students...