

Back in Action UK Summary of Findings - *Alexander Technique and Ergonomic Evaluation of the Opus 1 Musicians' Posture Chair*



Alexander Technique Analysis

Many musicians train in Alexander Technique, a way of improving the quality of body usage. One of the key elements of the technique is to allow the chair to trigger anti-gravity reflexes in the spine - thus allowing tension-free sitting and better playing. Most chairs cannot be used in this way - the seats are too soft, their angles inappropriate, and musicians have to perch on the front edge to use Alexander-type sitting.

The seat on the the Opus is excellent in that it allows for both Alexander sitting and conventional sitting using the backrest. The Back in Action AT teacher was adamant, "If F. M. Alexander was a musician, this is a chair he would have enjoyed using".

Ergonomic Analysis

The most crucial feature of the chair relates to the height and contouring of the seat. A degree of forward tilt is present on the Opus 1 chair, which is particularly important for helping to sustain a more upright and poised position.

Studies measuring inter-vertebral disc pressure have found that an open angle between the thighs and trunk reduce disc pressure and help maintain lumbar lordosis (the natural 'S' shape of the spine), ensuring that the weight of the trunk and head is evenly distributed down through the pelvis to the thighs.

An upright posture will also help musicians with wind instruments, as the diaphragm and stomach muscles will be less constricted.

The implementation of reflex foam in the seat provides more sustained comfort and support; this is an obvious advantage in postponing the onset of fatigue and discomfort normally associated with extended periods of static seating.

The orchestral environment must hold one of the most varied groups of people and 'equipment' in terms of size, shape, and activity undertaken. With that in mind - 'a very well researched and developed chair in terms of being fit for the intended user group' according to the Back in Action ergonomist.



Opus

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