

# Book Notes

## Functional Disorders in Musicians

By Raoul Tubiana. (Paris, Elsevier, 2001, 190 pages, soft-cover). ISBN: 2-84299-326-8

Dr. Raoul Tubiana is known and revered throughout the world as a pioneering and premiere hand surgeon, teacher, and author. Of particular interest to readers of *MPPA*, he was the first physician of his stature to identify that musicians have special medical problems and needs. Thus, when he speaks, in person or through his many articles and texts, we listen with respect and interest.

He has written widely in the general hand surgical literature and has written what have become standard texts. In the smaller arena of performing arts medicine, his writings also have achieved prominence, especially in my opinion through the excellent book on musicians' medical problems coauthored and coedited with his American colleague, Peter Amadio. At a stage of life when many withdraw, Dr. Tubiana has remained active and productive, including by writing the book *Functional Disorders in Musicians*. Although modest in size compared with the previously mentioned text, Dr. Tubiana nevertheless again has added a new dimension to the available literature of performing arts medicine.

The book covers a wide spectrum of issues that must be confronted by clinicians assuming medical responsibility for musicians. Some subjects are perhaps appropriately barely discussed, for example, problems of wind players and psychological issues. Others, in which the author is known for his expertise and interest, for instance, anatomy and focal dystonias, are dealt with in great detail. Some of these chapters I found of particular value, especially the first chapter that deals with functional anatomy. It is clearly written and is accompanied by excellent drawings. One is conscious in reading here of Dr. Tubiana's long experience in explaining and teaching the fine details of the upper extremity and especially of the wrist and hand as they apply to the care of musicians.

I wished for greater detail in some chapters, for instance, in the discussion of tendinous and other anomalies, an area in which the author has unique experience and which are rarely touched on in other books in the field. Also, it is a shame that the chapter on examination of musicians is so abbreviated, when it would have been valuable to learn more of Dr. Tubiana's approach to this subject. (As an aside, the criticisms of the Aspen meetings often include the disappointment of attendees that there was not more specific

information on this subject.) Given that Dr. Tubiana is one of the world's most eminent hand surgeons, it would have been forgivable to skip discussion of wind players in favor of more detail on the subjects in which his expertise and experience is known.

Dr. Tubiana gives his greatest attention in this book to an area in which he has long been active as a spokesperson, focal dystonias. Long before brain plasticity was recognized and most clinicians doubted the benefits of retraining afflicted musicians, Dr. Tubiana and his associated physical therapist, Phillippe Chamagne, were insistent that behavioral treatment of these disorders was a possibility. Although one may take issue with some of his thoughts about dystonias, including some of the features of their treatment protocol, one must give them kudos for remaining positive when many remained skeptical and negative. Likewise, Dr. Tubiana is to be congratulated on his recognition of the need for psychological assessment and treatment of musicians along with dealing with the more purely physical aspects, a stance rare among physicians in general.

I think it is the editors and publishers of this small text that could be criticized. Dr. Tubiana is fluent in English, but he speaks like the Frenchman that he is (e.g., the chapter title "Indications of Surgery" instead of "for Surgery"). Unfortunately, throughout the book, one hears his Gallic English, which is charming, but with cursory editing could have been replaced with more idiomatic and grammatically correct English. There also are small errors, such as referring to the (questionably useful but often performed) test for thoracic outlet syndrome as "the Ross test," which in fact was the work of Dr. Roos of Denver. These are relatively minor criticisms, but when one has an otherwise elegant and attractive book by an authority such as Raoul Tubiana, one seeks perfection.

*Functional Disorders in Musicians* deserves a space on the shelves of practitioners who see musicians as patients on an occasional or a routine basis.

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