

**Performance Related Musculoskeletal Disorders  
in Bassoon Players**

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of requirements for the degree of  
PhD in performance

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## **Declaration**

I, Paula Brusky, hereby declare that this submission is my own work. It contains no material previously published or written by another person except for properly acknowledged research. This thesis contains no material that has been previously submitted for the award of a degree.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Abstract

Performance related musculoskeletal disorders (PRMDs) are a frequent reality for practicing musicians. Many aspects of the bassoon make bassoon players particularly susceptible to PRMDs. This thesis explored the prevalence of PRMDs among bassoon players and assessed the frequency, types, and locations of PRMDs. Also identified were treatments used for PRMDs, contributing factors to PRMD development, and the perceptions of the bassoon community regarding PRMDs.

The *International Bassoonist Questionnaire* was distributed via the World Wide Web ( $n = 166$ , 58% male, 42% female). Eighty-six percent of bassoon players reported PRMDs. Pain was the most common PRMD symptom reported (78%). Females reported PRMDs (96%) more frequently than males (78%). Younger bassoon players reported more PRMDs.

Most bassoon players (88%) were attempting to treat their PRMDs. The most common self-administered treatments were rest (60%) and reducing playing time (53%). Bassoonists attributed the cause of PRMDs to “long hours of practice” and “sudden increase in playing time.”

Bassoon players felt strongly that the medical profession did not know how to treat a bassoon related injury. They believed that a knowledgeable teacher was the best resource against the onset of PRMDs even though technical aspects of playing were not identified as significant contributors to PRMDs. The bassoon playing population needs more information about PRMDs in order to develop treatment and prevention strategies.

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