I. What is Focal Dystonia?

- Understanding of Focal Hand Dystonia:
  - Also known as musician’s dystonia.
  - Neurological disorder characterized by the loss of fine motor control of instrumental playing.
  - No pain or deformation associated with the loss of control.

- Symptoms:
  - Hands or fingers are responding in unintended ways, and parts of the body may twisted into abnormal postures.
  - The finger may start to curl or shake unconsciously instead of touching the intended key.
  - The finger may freeze into a locked position.

II. Did Robert Schumann have Dystonia?

- Looking at the symptoms and the progress of his illness based on his diary and medical history, researchers believes that Schumann suffered from task-specific focal dystonia.

- Toccata Op. 7
  - Study in double notes
  - Several years in making
  - Figuration of the right hand: avoiding playing with the middle finger

III. Famous Pianists with Focal Dystonia

- Leon Fleisher
- Gary Graffman

III. Possible Causes of Focal Dystonia

- The neurobiological origins of this injury are still unclear, but researchers believe that the dystonia is caused by the dysfunctional (or maladaptive) brain plasticity.
  - Physical tension: Overuse/Misuse
  - Psychological tension: Anxiety and Perfectionism

IV. Possible Preventions (recommended sources)

- Physical approaches
  - Lister-Sink, Barbara. *Freeing the Caged Bird*. Wingsound, 1996. Film.

- Psychological approaches
References


Lister-Sink, Barbara. *Freeing the Caged Bird*. Wingsound, 1996. VHS.