UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE ANXIETY IN VIRTUAL PERFORMANCES: A COMPARISON OF RECORDED AND LIVE PERFORMANCE CONTEXTS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

NORRIS MASON CONKLIN
Norman, Oklahoma
2011

Downloaded from SHAREOK. Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/319014

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE ANXIETY IN VIRTUAL PERFORMANCES: A COMPARISON OF RECORDED AND LIVE PERFORMANCE CONTEXTS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY

_____
Dr. Jane Magrath, Chair

_____
Dr. Nancy Barry

_____
Dr. Barbara Fast

_____
Dr. Sarah Reichardt

_____
Dr. Penny Hopkins

© Copyright by NORRIS MASON CONKLIN 2011
All Rights Reserved.

DEDICATION

For teaching and nurturing a love for music,

And demonstrating a dedicated work ethic,

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my parents,

Norris and Beckye Conklin.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the many individuals whose help and support were instrumental in making this research possible.

Sincere thanks to Dr. Jane Magrath and Dr. Nancy Barry for their methodological guidance and editorial suggestions. Your patience in this seemingly endless process was much appreciated.

I extend a special thank-you to Dr. Kathryn Koscho at the Crane School of Music, SUNY, Potsdam, for her excellent feedback on the virtual performances. All the participants were appreciative of your thoughtful and encouraging commentary.

Thank you to Doug Adams of *Doug's Applescripts for iTunes,* available at dougscripts.com. His scripts formed the backbone of the scripts I developed for automating the publication of the virtual performance.

Thank you to the many colleagues, family, and Facebook friends for their words of encouragement and cheerleading. Funny as it sounds, it was incredibly motivating to see 18 friends "liked" my dissertation updates.

To the eleven research participants of this study, your participation made this endeavor possible. I can never thank you enough for agreeing to be a part of my dissertation. I wish you the best of luck in your future, and may good research karma follow you in your future academic pursuits.

And finally, thank you to my beautiful wife, Jessica. You helped keep me focused when I needed to be, and kept me sane when I couldn't stare at the computer screen any longer. It's time for a long, relaxing camping trip (as soon as it warms up!)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter page

Acknowledgments iv
Table of Contents v
List of Tables ix
List of Figures x
Abstract xi

I INTRODUCTION 1

Background 1
Musical Performance Anxiety. 4
Exposure therapy. 5
Video camera as audience. 5
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions 6
Definitions 7
Live performance. 7
Virtual performance. 7
Podcast. 7
Need for Study 8
Procedures 9
Limitations 10
Organization of the Dissertation 11

II REVIEW OF LITERATURE 12

Musical Performance Anxiety 12
Definition and incidence. 12
Models 18
Symptoms 24
Exposure Therapy in MPA Treatment Modalities 39
"Pure" Exposure Therapy. 39
In vivo exposure as part of protocol. 41
Imaginal exposure as part of protocol. 44
Artificial Performance Contexts 48
Virtual reality. 49
Recording equipment as audience. 50
Summary 55

III METHODOLOGY 56

Research Questions and Research Rationale 56
Population 57
Data Instruments 59
Self-report measures. 59

Focused interviews....61
Group discussion....61
Procedure....62
Interest meeting and consent....64
Case selection....65
Performances and data collection....66
Data Analysis....74
Code Definitions....75
Methodological Rigor....83
Credibility....84
Transferability....85
Participants....86
Rhonda....88
Phoebe....92
Elliot....95
Olivia....96
Albert....99
Lester....104
Lauren....109
Graham....113
Winona....119
Kendra....122
Judith....127
Sophia....138
Summary....143

IV RESULTS....144

Questions 1: Level of MPA....144
Quantitative evidence....145
Qualitative individual interview evidence....147
Qualitative group discussion evidence....183
Rehearsal Performance vs. Virtual Performance....185
Question 2: Experience of MPA....192
Pre-performance phase....193
Long-term MPA strategies....194
Concert Attire....202
Symptoms and Coping Strategies for Live Performance....206
Symptoms and Coping Strategies for Virtual Performance....223
Performance Phase....234
Live Performance....235
Physiological Symptoms....235
Mental Symptoms....246
Performance quality....265
Coping Strategies....269
Summary....276
Virtual Performance....276

Physiological Symptoms 277
Mental Symptoms 279
Performance Quality 286
Coping Strategies 288
Post-Performance Phase 290
Live Performance 290
Virtual Performance 298
Summary 302
Question 3: Effects of Exposure Therapy 303
Virtual Performances 303
Live Performance 2 312
Summary 329

V DISCUSSION 332

Preparation 333
Repertoire 333
Venue and Instrument 346
Aesthetic Focus 353
Implications 357
Evaluation 358
Audience 359
Consequences 365
Feedback 369
Implications 376
Curricular Concerns 380
Implications 395
Future Research 398
Measures 398
Video Virtual Performances 401
Conclusion 404

REFERENCES 405

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Demographic and Repertoire Survey 411
Appendix B: Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (K-MPAI) 412
Appendix C: Conkin Performance Anxiety Inventory 414
Appendix D: Interview Protocol Following Virtual Performance 416
Appendix E: Individual Interview Protocol Following Live Performance #2 417
Appendix F: Group Discussion Guidelines 418
Appendix G: Informed Consent Form 420
Appendix H: Internet Audience Members 425
Appendix I: Instructions to Subscribe to Podcast 427

Appendix J: Instructions for Recording Virtual Performance.....428

Appendix K: Computer Scripts 430
Compression Script.....430
Upload Script.....434
Publish Script.....436

Appendix L: Example of Coded Interview Transcript.....439

Appendix M: Individual Interview Transcripts.....443
Albert, VP.....444
Albert, LP2.....462
Graham, VP.....472
Graham, LP2.....489
Judith, VP.....500
Judith, LP2.....527
Kendra, VP.....543
Kendra, LP2.....562
Lauren, VP.....572
Lauren, LP2.....590
Lester, VP.....601
Lester, LP2.....626
Olivia, VP.....636
Olivia, LP2.....655
Phoebe, VP.....667
Phoebe, LP2.....689
Rhonda, VP.....697
Rhonda, LP2.....715
Sophia, VP.....724
Sophia, LP2.....742
Winona, VP.....756
Winona, LP2.....777

Appendix N: Group Discussion Transcripts.....788
Group Discussion, Site A.....788
Group Discussion, Site B.....824

Appendix O: Feedback Examples.....847

LIST OF TABLES

Table III.1 Definition of qualitative codes based on symptoms reported by the subject. 78

Table III.2 Definition of qualitative codes based on coping strategies reported by the subject. 79

Table III.3 Definition of qualitative codes based on context and incidence of symptoms or coping strategies reported by the subject. 80

Table III.4 Definition of qualitative codes concerning contributory factors of MPA. 81

Table III.5 Definition of qualitative codes concerning subject evaluations of measures, performances, or exposure therapy. 82

Table III.6 Definition of qualitative codes concerning miscellaneous items of interest. 83

Table III.7 Summary of participant K-MPAI, experience and repertoire. 87

Table IV.1. Mean and standard deviation of CPAI scores from Live Performance 1, Virtual Performance, and Rehearsal Performance. 145

Table IV.2. Paired-samples *t* test comparing mean CPAI scores from Live Performance 1 to Virtual Performance and Virtual Performance to Rehearsal Performance. 146

Table IV.3. Individual CPAI scores for the Rehearsal Performance (CPAI-RP), Live Performance 1 (CPAI-LP1), and the Virtual Performance (CPAI-VP). 147

Table IV.4. Subjective rating of MPA experienced in Live Performance (LP), Virtual Performance (VP), and Rehearsal Performance (RP). 185

Table IV.5. Descriptive statistics for CPAI scores from the Virtual Performance (CPAI-VP) and Exposure Performance 1-5 (CPAI-EP1 – CPAI-EP5). 304

Table IV.5. Paired-sample *t* test showing a significant decrease in CPAI score from CPAI-EP1 to CPAI-EP5. 307

Table IV.6. Paired Samples *t* test showing significant decrease in CPAI-LP2 after exposure therapy treatment. 313

Table V.1. Pearson Coefficient results showing a strong, positive correlation between the K-MPAI and CPAI-LP2. 399

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Procedural flowchart identifying musical performances and data instruments collected at various points in the study.....63

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to compare the level and experience of Musical Performance Anxiety (MPA) in university level piano students performing in a traditional live performance context and a proposed virtual performance context. A virtual performance is a musical performance that is recorded and distributed to an audience not present at the time of the recording. Additionally, the research investigates exposure therapy in the virtual performance context and the possible transfer of benefits into subsequent live performances.

The eleven (11) participants of this instrumental case study performed in three performance contexts: a rehearsal performance with no audience that was not recorded, live performances in front of an audience, and virtual performances that were recorded and distributed to an internet audience via podcast. For each performance, the participants completed the Conklin Performance Anxiety Inventory (CPAI) to measure the severity of MPA experienced. After the Rehearsal Performance, Live Performance 1, and Virtual Performance, the subjects sat for an extensive interview comparing the manifestation of MPA in each performance context. The research population then recorded five additional virtual performances, constituting the exposure therapy. After exposure therapy, the participants played in a Live Performance 2, sat for another interview, and convened for a group discussion.

Statistical analysis of the CPAI scores reported for each performance and qualitative analysis of the individual interviews and group discussions show that the virtual performance context elicited significantly lower levels of MPA than the live performance context. The participants experienced almost no physiological symptoms

of MPA and fewer mental symptoms in the virtual performance. Interestingly, the first interview in which the participants identified individual symptoms of MPA proved a significant event. As they became more aware of the individual symptoms, they began to identify certain symptoms that could be overtly addressed and were also more accepting of those symptoms not under volitional control.

Exposure therapy indicated some success in reducing levels of MPA in the later Exposure Performances and in Live Performance 2. Qualitative analysis revealed that the improvement was the result of the subjects having more confidence in their level of preparation, either as a result of demonstrated success or by correcting weaknesses revealed in the virtual performance context.

Additionally, the Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (K-MPAI) used to categorize the population as those prone to experiencing high, moderate, or low levels of MPA showed a significant positive correlation with the CPAI scores from the Live Performance 2. Further validation efforts for the K-MPAI could provide a meaningful diagnostic instrument to identify individuals needing more focused and thorough intervention.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to compare the nature and phenomenology of musical performance anxiety as experienced by student pianists in live and virtual performance contexts. Additionally, the research evaluates the effectiveness of exposure therapy in the virtual performance context and possible transfer of effect into the traditional live performance setting.

Background

"I played it better at home." "But it was so good yesterday in the practice room. Why did it fall apart in the jury?" "I've never had a memory slip in that spot." "I could hear every cough, whisper, and shoe shuffle. It was so distracting."

Almost every musician has uttered or thought at least one of the preceding statements following a recital or a jury. Musicians spend hours upon hours in preparation for a big event, only to perform below their own reasonable expectations. Something happens when the eyes and ears of others are focused on the musician in public performance situations.

Musicians deal with performance anxiety in several different contexts, and to a certain extent, it would seem that part of a musician's training is the graduated introduction of progressively more stressful performance situations. For example, anxiety in the first lesson with a new teacher might cause a student to miss notes that were never missed at home. With time and familiarity, the student no longer sees the teacher as a threat, and lesson performances more accurately reflect the abilities of the

student. In college, anxiety about the first studio class performance in front of friends and colleagues may cause an unexplainable memory slip where none had ever occurred before. But over the course of the semester, the eyes and ears that once seemed oppressive are perceived as friendly and non-threatening. Likewise, the first appearance in a departmental recital can be initially nerve-wracking to an undergraduate freshman, but the same situation holds little threat years later when the same musician plays in a departmental recital as a graduate student.

In each situation, the performer is forced to concentrate despite the psychological arousal initiated with the perceived threat of negative evaluation (Wilson, 2002). In one sense, it is the continued elevation of anxiety provoking contexts that prepares the inexperienced performer for the demands of professional public performances. There is a considerable jump, however, from the more frequently encountered contexts such as the lesson or studio class, and the more public venues such as departmental recitals, degree recitals, or competitions. For some, the jump is not that hard to make as they have learned to thrive on the elevated levels of adrenaline. But for others, that next level produces a panic. The heart beats faster than in studio class, the hands seem to shake uncontrollably, and finally, the mind surrenders to the fear. The physical symptoms of anxiety may lead to the mental anticipation of certain disaster. This anticipation leads to a loss of concentration, which in turn might lead to technical inaccuracies. The missed notes cause regret and negative self-talk, which can lead to further distraction. A memory slip occurs, the mind goes blank, and in a panic, the musician cannot even remember what key the piece is in.

Does musical performance anxiety only occur in public situations? Switch scenes to a different context. A talented undergraduate senior has just completed an exquisite recital and is looking forward to the prospect of graduate school. Unfortunately, due to a technical malfunction, no recording of the event was preserved. Needing the recording to submit with the application, the musician schedules a recording session.

In the session, the initial strains of music are quite good, and the student is excited. However, in the coda, a glaring error occurs, and the student decides to re-record the piece. Again, the opening sections are brilliant, but the microphone is unforgiving. Even with mounting success, the pressure builds to make the recording perfect. Each mishap becomes magnified in the mind of the performer. Unlike a live event where the performance must continue and the artist must learn to be forgiving of inaccuracies, in the recording studio the minor errors can become major distractions.

Is the experience of performance anxiety the same when comparing a live performance and the recording studio? Would repeated recorded performances help the musician prepare for live performances? These are the questions to be explored in this study.

A brief survey of relevant literature will proceed below, including a general overview of musical performance anxiety (MPA) and related literature from the field of speech anxiety. The virtual performance context will then be defined and followed by a brief introduction to podcasting.

Musical Performance Anxiety.

Salmon (1990) defines musical performance anxiety as "the experience of persisting, distressful apprehension about and/or actual impairment of, performance skills in a public context, to a degree unwarranted given the individual's musical aptitude, training, and level of preparation" (p. 3). The problem can be particularly vexing when academic or professional evaluations are based on public performances.

The problem of musical performance anxiety is ubiquitous and has wide ranging manifestations. MPA has been documented in children (Ryan 2000, 2004, 2005), adolescents (Osborne & Kenny, 2005; Osborne, Kenny, & Holsomback, 2005; Rae & Mc Cambridge, 2004), college students (Brotons, 1993; Cox & Kenardy, 1993; LeBlanc, Jin, Obert, & Siivola, 1997; Nagel, Himle, & Papsdorf, 1989; Niemann, Pratt, & Maughan, 1993), adult avocational musicians (Wolfe 1989, 1990), and professionals (Fishbein, Middlestadt, Ottati, Strauss, & Ellis, 1988; Kirchner, 2002). MPA manifests with physiological symptoms including elevated heart rate (Brotons, 1993; Craske & Craig, 1984), muscle tension and/or shakiness (Kirchner, 2002), elevated respiration and/or hyperventilation (Craske & Craig, 1984; Widmer, Conway, Cohen, & Davies, 1997), gastrointestinal symptoms (Kirchner, 2002), and elevated stress hormones (Baker, 2005). Cognitive symptoms include distracting thoughts, inability to concentrate, negative self-statements, and low levels of confidence (Kirchner, 2002). Behavioral indicators include extraneous physical movements (Brotons, 1993; Ryan, 2000), and most distressful to the performer, decreased performance quality (Clark & Agras, 1991; Kendrick, Craig, Lawson, & Davidson, 1982; Montello, Coons, & Kantor, 1990; Sweeney & Horan, 1982).

Several treatment regimens are documented to be successful, but methodological weaknesses throughout the literature make identifying the most successful treatment difficult. In a recent survey of published studies, McGinnis and Milling (2005) conclude "the findings of several studies indicate the superiority of exposure and cognitive restructuring relative to no treatment . . . " (p. 368). This study focuses on exposure therapy as a treatment for MPA.

Exposure therapy.

Exposure therapy (ET) is also known as implosion or flooding. Wilson (2002) summarizes the rationale succinctly.

> The idea is that unreasonable fears are maintained because the relief from anxiety that attends escape from the object of dread reinforces the irrational connection between fear and that object. Therefore, what is needed is continued exposure to the source of fear for long enough that reality is tested and the fear extinguished. In the case of stage fright, this might mean performing in front of an audience two or three times a day for several weeks. (p. 217)

Exposure therapy has been documented as effective in the treatment of public speaking anxiety. Flooding sessions for speech anxiety require between one and two hours of public speaking to reduce anxiety (Richman, 1995).

Video camera as audience.

Richman (1995) investigated whether a video camera could substitute for a live audience in peer-directed flooding sessions treating public speaking anxiety. She reported that flooding sessions with a video camera functioning as the audience resulted

in reductions of self-report measures of anxiety and behavioral manifestations of anxiety.

If a video camera can adequately function as the audience in exposure therapy sessions to treat speech anxiety, could a microphone function as the audience in exposure therapy for MPA?

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) in the virtual performance context and the role that virtual performances could play in exposure therapy for MPA. The study is guided by the following research questions.

1. How does the level of MPA differ between the virtual performance setting and the live performance setting in student solo piano performances at the university level?
2. How does the experience of MPA differ between the virtual performance setting and the live performance setting in student solo piano performances at the university level?
3. How does exposure therapy in the virtual performance setting affect the level and experience of MPA in the performer in subsequent performances in both the virtual performance setting and the live performance setting?

Definitions

Live performance.

A live performance is a performance in which an audience is physically present. Examples of live performances are lessons, informal performance gatherings, studio classes, church services, degree recitals, competitions, and professional recitals.

Virtual performance.

A virtual performance is a recorded musical performance that is distributed to an audience not present at the time of the recording. A virtual performance is distinguished from commercially recorded performances by the level and amount of sophisticated editing. Most commercially recorded performances rely on a significant amount of electronic manipulation to produce the illusion of perfection. A virtual performance is recorded in a single take and involves minimal editing, such as trimming silence from the beginning and ending of a performance. Performances recorded specifically for college entrance exams, competition screenings, and job applications all qualify as virtual performances, provided they are not recordings of traditional live performances.

Podcast.

A podcast is a collection of media files that is automatically delivered to a subscriber's computer via internet syndication protocols such as RSS or Atom. Podcasts offer the additional advantage of allowing updates to be automatically delivered to subscribers' computers. A podcast is similar to a subscription to an online newsletter. Online newsletters are delivered directly to subscribers email inbox

whenever new issues are available. The individual issues of a podcast are called episodes. A program called a pod-catcher on the subscriber's personal computer checks for new episodes and, when a new episode is available, automatically downloads the episode from the internet to the subscriber's computer (Morris & Terra, 2006). The word "podcast" is often used as a verb, denoting the process of making media files available by syndication. The individual virtual performance recordings in this study were delivered to the internet audience by podcast.

The podcast used in this study is a collection of musical performances recorded by the study participants. The participants scheduled appointments to record their selected repertoire. Each performance was recorded in one take, that is, the performers were not allowed to abort a performance once it had begun in order to re-record it. The digital files of the performance were uploaded to an internet site, and subsequently, an entry in a web log included a link to the recorded performance. Once the web log entry was published, the digital files were available for automatic download to subscribers' computers, allowing the virtual audience to listen to the performances at their leisure.

Need for Study

There are currently no published studies investigating MPA in a virtual performance setting, and yet virtual performances are a common part of the typical musician's career. Recordings that are made specifically for college admissions, first round screenings for major competitions, or job applications qualify as virtual performances if they are not recordings of traditional performances with a live audience. Considering the importance of initial impressions in such situations, it is important to understand the nature of MPA in this artificial performance situation. Such

an understanding might compel performers to choose one performance context over another for important recordings.

If exposure therapy in a virtual performance setting proves an effective treatment for MPA, music educators would have another tool in preparing their students for juries, recitals, competitions and other important performances. Podcasting also offers other advantages to the applied student and teacher including documentation of adherence to a practice regimen, building a history of performances to demonstrate improvement, and staying in musical contact with friends, former teachers, and family.

Procedures

The study was designed as an instrumental case study with qualitative data generated from individual interviews and group discussions. In addition, several quantitative measures were employed for descriptive purposes. Cases were purposively selected to represent a variety of susceptibility to MPA, gender, and experience profiles.

Eleven solo pianists at the university level performed in three different contexts. After a rehearsal performance, a live performance and a virtual performance, the participants completed a self-report measure of anxiety for each performance, and then sat for an extended one-on-one interview about their experience of MPA in the different contexts. The participants then recorded five additional virtual performances over the space of approximately ten days, constituting exposure therapy, followed by a second live performance. The participants completed a self-report measure of MPA after each performance.

Following the second live performance, the participants were interviewed to elicit their views on the effectiveness of exposure therapy in the virtual performance

context, and how the exposure therapy may have changed their experience of MPA in the second live performance. Following the individual interviews, the participants convened for a group discussion that allowed them to interact with the other study participants while sharing their views on MPA, virtual performance contexts, and exposure therapy. The interviews and group discussion were analyzed using qualitative methods.

Limitations

The study relied on self-report measures of performance anxiety. The study is only generalizable to the target study population, which was comprised solely of pianists performing solo repertoire pieces from memory. The quality of the data emerging from the individual interviews was limited by the introspective skills of the individuals and their ability to communicate their perceptions.

As this is a study by a music educator designed for the benefit of other music educators, the cases selected include subjects experiencing low or moderate levels of performance anxiety as well as those experiencing high levels of performance anxiety. Brodsky defends using a population that includes subjects with subpathological levels of MPA since "subpathological levels of MPA are still bothersome, if not downright debilitating, to most musicians" (1996, p. 2).

Though the study had a small sample size of eleven cases, each case is presented in rich detail to allow readers to ascertain whether study findings are likely to be applicable in other real-world situations.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter two contains a review of related literature, followed by chapter three which presents a more detailed description of the study design. The results of the study are presented in chapter four, followed by discussion and implications of the results in chapter five.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to investigate musical performance anxiety as it occurs in the traditional or live contexts and in virtual performance contexts. For the purpose of this study, a virtual performance is a musical performance that is recorded and distributed to an audience not present at the time of the recording. Secondarily, the effects of exposure therapy in the virtual context will be explored, as well as the possible transfer effects into the live performance context.

The review of literature is focused on three broad areas of inquiry and their intersection: namely the manifestation and treatment of musical performance anxiety, the use of exposure therapy, and artificially created performance contexts.

Musical Performance Anxiety

The literature indicates that musical performance anxiety (MPA) is problematic for performers of all ages and abilities. MPA manifests with a variety of physiological, behavioral, and cognitive symptoms. This section of the review of literature provides background on the definition, incidence, theoretical models, and symptomology of MPA.

Definition and incidence.

Though the problem of MPA may be familiar, there are some discrepancies with the terminology used to indicate it. Studies alternately refer to this situation as "stage fright," "performance anxiety," or "performer's stress" (Brodsky, 1996, p. 90). The

most common terminology used in addressing this problem is musical performance anxiety (MPA).

The Salmon definition quoted in chapter one has become the industry standard in MPA research, and is reprinted here for convenience.

> MPA is defined as the experience of persisting, distressful apprehension about and/or actual impairment of, performance skills in a public context, to a degree unwarranted given the individual's musical aptitude, training, and level of preparation. (Salmon, 1990, p. 3)

While this definition has been the industry standard, some wish to redefine the issue to better conform to medical terminology. Brodsky (1996) proposes Musical Performer's Stress Syndrome (M-PSS), so as to include the many lifestyle and professional stresses that can compound the difficulty of performing in public. Brodsky advocates a definition that is more in line with psychological terminology that would allow for standard extension and modification terms used in designating other psychological conditions. Such terminology includes modifiers of frequency, such as chronic or intermittent, or of degree, such as limited, severe, or acute. Thus, a person suffering from limited, intermittent M-PSS would exhibit different symptoms and require different treatment than a person suffering from chronic, severe M-PSS.

Though not as widely cited as the Salmon definition, the Brodsky system of nomenclature combined with common descriptive modifiers points out the varying degrees and relative acuteness of MPA. In fact, it is the opinion of the writer as a music educator that every musician at some point in his or her career has experienced

"distressful apprehension" which led to an impairment of a musical performance in a public context.

Because this study is written from the perspective of a music educator and for the benefit of music educators, the Salmon definition will be modified by omitting the word "persisting." The definition without the word "persisting" would read:

> MPA is defined as the experience of . . . distressful apprehension about and/or actual impairment of, performance skills in a public context, to a degree unwarranted given the individual's musical aptitude, training, and level of preparation.

This slight modification allows for the "rite of passage" MPA that music teachers will encounter in most of their students as they progress through their musical training. Further, such a modification in the definition of MPA also highlights the need to focus on the "level of preparation," especially for the student musician. MPA of this nature will be referred to as "normal MPA" to distinguish it from more persistent and debilitative forms of MPA.

Musical performance anxiety has been documented in all stages and levels of musical development starting in childhood and continuing into adolescence and collegiate students. The problem also affects the seasoned professional.

Children.

Several studies have documented evidence of MPA in children. Ryan (2000) noted physiological and behavioral indicators of anxiety in sixth-grade pianists. In her study, children exhibited significantly higher heart rates while performing for an audience than while performing in a lesson. The study also noted some interesting

gender differences in the behavioral manifestations of anxiety. Using a checklist of behavioral indicators of anxiety that identified extraneous motions, boys exhibited more "fidgetiness" while waiting to perform than girls, but also had lower anticipatory heart rates. While on stage performing, the boys tended to have higher heart rates than the girls, but the difference did not rise to statistical significance.

Adolescents.

The problem of MPA continues into adolescence, as the possibility of musical careers and increasing emphasis on social inclusion occurs.

In one study (Fehm & Schmidt, 2006) 73% of German adolescent students reported that MPA negatively impacted performance. The sample was comprised of 76 students ages 15-19 who attended a special school focused on developing students for the arts. Of the 73% reporting MPA had a negative impact on their performances, 9.5% responded that MPA had already negatively affected their musical career. In addition, out of the entire sample of 76 students, 50 expressed a desire for special instruction in reducing anxiety, and 11 of those expressed an interest in more performance opportunities.

In a study examining how audiences affect MPA, high school band students from grades 9-12 exhibited higher heart rates when performing for an audience when compared to performing alone in a practice room (LeBlanc et al., 1997).

Two attempts have been made in developing specific measures for MPA in adolescents. These studies include subject populations between the ages of 15-18 performing in practical music exams of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (Rae & Mc Cambridge, 2004) and band students ages 11-19 from Australia and

the United States (Osborne & Kenny, 2005). Validation efforts for the Music Performance Anxiety Inventory for Adolescents (MPAI-A) points to a normal distribution of MPA severity in adolescents (Osborne & Kenny, 2005). Interestingly, adolescents who indicate a desire to pursue music as a career report less MPA than their counterparts (Osborne et al., 2005).

College students.

Many of the published studies investigating MPA use college students for the subject pool (Abel & Larkin, 1990; Brotons, 1993; Cox & Kenardy, 1993; Craske & Craig, 1984; DeForest, 1998; Hamann & Sobaje, 1983; Harris, 1987; Nagel et al., 1989; Niemann et al., 1993; Salmon, Schrodt, & Wright, 1989; Sweeney & Horan, 1982). This may be problematic as this population may experience MPA much differently than the younger musician or the seasoned professional. Brodsky (1996) notes that the preponderance of studies using students may have distorted the conception of MPA because they treat the findings of studies of student populations as though they relate to musicians of all ages and training.

Many studies have documented an elevation of anxiety symptoms in performance contexts (Abel & Larkin, 1990; Baker, 2005; Brotons, 1993; Cox & Kenardy, 1993; Craske & Craig, 1984; Hamann & Sobaje, 1983; Hamann, 1982; Miller & Chesky, 2004; Orman, 2004; Salmon et al., 1989) or have evaluated the effectiveness of various methods of intervention (Chang, 2001; Deen, 1999; Harris, 1987; Kim, 2005; Nagel et al., 1989; Niemann et al., 1993; Reitman, 1997; Sweeney & Horan, 1982; Valentine, Fitzgerald, Gorton, Hudson, & Symonds, 1995).

Few researchers have contributed information as to how collegiate students differ in their experience of MPA from professional musicians, or even how the manifestation of MPA might change as students gain training and experience. Indeed, there is some evidence that undergraduate students have a very different experience with MPA than their graduate student counterparts. Deen (1999) reports that a breathing awareness tape was more effective in reducing symptoms of MPA for vocalists with less than five years experience than for those with five or more years of experience. Miller and Chesky (2004) also found differences in the reaction to stressful performance situations amongst graduate and undergraduate students. The undergraduate students were debilitated by cognitive anxiety, whereas the graduate population found cognitive anxiety facilitative in certain contexts.

Professionals.

The problem of MPA does not go away as students enter the professional ranks. In a wide-ranging survey of professional orchestra members (Fishbein et al., 1988), performance anxiety was one of the most frequently encountered complaints. Of the 2212 musicians that returned the survey, 24% indicated that stage fright was a problem, and 16% indicated that it was a severe problem. Additionally, these professional musicians sought relief from stage fright in a variety of ways, including medication, psychological counseling, exercise, hypnosis, and yoga.

Kirchner (2002) reported on the phenomenology of MPA in professional pianists teaching in universities. In her study, the pianists reported a similar constellation of somatic, cognitive, and emotional symptoms that interfered with

performance. Her study offers a detailed description of what MPA feels like to the performer.

Avocational adults.

Even non-professional adults report that MPA has deleterious effects on their lives. Wolfe (1989) includes adult avocational musicians in her study examining adaptive and maladaptive components of MPA. The sample ($N = 191$) consisted of a variety of instrumentalists and vocalists with a wide range of experience. Forty-two percent of the sample reported having no full or part-time professional performance experience. Those who reported no professional experience were more likely to mention nervousness and apprehension in reaction to a performance situation, while those with professional experience responded with confidence in their abilities.

Models

Familiarity with certain models and concepts can clarify inquiry into musical performance anxiety. MPA has been compared to other anxiety models in psychology, including the three-systems model, test anxiety, and social phobia. Finally, the Yerkes-Dodson law is a frequently cited concept that correlates anxiety levels and performance quality levels, indicating that to a certain extent, MPA can facilitate optimal performance.

Three-Systems

The three-systems model of anxiety proposes three independent yet interlinked response systems triggered by anxiety (Reitman, 1997). The three systems are physiological or somatic, cognitive, and behavioral responses.

Physiological reactions to anxiety can include rapid heart rate, hyperventilation, muscle tension, and dry mouth. These physiological reactions can have debilitative effects on music performance, especially within certain instrument families. For example, a vocalist is dependent on a flow of breath to activate the vocal chords. Any reduction in the ability to control breath, or shakiness of the breath can result in changes in vocal quality.

Cognitive responses can include excessive worry or distracting thoughts that can reduce the level of concentration necessary for performance. These distractions can be particularly problematic in performances of memorized music.

Behavioral reactions to anxiety can include physical activity, such as excessive pacing or manipulation of the instrument. Behavioral reactions can also manifest in the weeks and months leading up to a performance and may include excessive practice and rehearsal, avoidance of performance opportunities, or perhaps even problems in relationships with friends, family, or colleagues.

Each system reacts in varying degrees to anxiety and the context in which the anxiety is presented. One situation may involve an immediate and strong physiological reaction, while another situation may primarily activate the cognitive system. The timing of the systems' response can also vary. Excessive worry can affect an individual

for many days prior to an event, but the physiological system may not react until the event draws closer (Craske & Craig, 1984).

Social Phobia

Because musical performances occur in a social setting involving an audience, some link MPA to social anxiety or social phobia. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition (*DSM-IV*, American Psychiatric Association, 1994) enumerates eight criteria for diagnosing social phobia. Five of those criteria are evident in MPA. First, the individual fears that in social or performance situations when under the scrutiny of others, they will behave or perform in a way that will humiliate or embarrass them. Second, these social or performance situations always initiate an anxiety response in the individual. Third, the individuals know that their fears are excessive or unreasonable. Fourth, the person will avoid the social or performance situations, or when forced, endure them with great distress. Fifth, the avoidance of the social or performance situations negatively impacts the individual's occupational functioning. Further, the *DSM-IV* cautions that "Performance Anxiety [and] stage fright . . . in social situations that involve unfamiliar people are common and should not be diagnosed as Social Phobia unless the anxiety or avoidance leads to clinically significant impairment or marked distress" (pg. 416). Though MPA may be "common" it is nevertheless problematic for musicians even if not rising to the level of clinical significance.

Cox and Kenardy (1993) found a statistically significant positive correlation between scores on the Social Phobia Anxiety Inventory (SPAI) and levels of performance anxiety in group performance settings and solo performance settings.

Those who had high scores on the SPAI reported higher levels of performance anxiety. Additionally, the solo performance setting caused higher anxiety levels in those scoring higher on the SPAI. The researchers hypothesize that in the solo setting the "performer is being exclusively evaluated by the audience. Therefore, the music student, in addition to being anxious about performing will also be anxious about the social situation" (p. 56).

Though the initial comparison with social phobia seems plausible, there is evidence that social phobia is just a single component in a larger, overarching model. Huston (2001) demonstrated that though measures of MPA and social anxiety were statistically correlated in a sample of 163 orchestral musicians, commonalities between the two measures accounted for only 12% of the variance. Additionally, trends evident in MPA on the basis of age or gender were not reflected in the social anxiety measures. In the sample, MPA levels decreased with increasing age, but the social anxiety measure held constant. Likewise, females reported significantly higher levels of MPA than their male counterparts, but again, the social anxiety numbers did not reflect the difference. Additional analysis showed differences between MPA and social anxiety in familial antecedents, and in experience. However, it is important to remember that the Cox and Kenardy (1993) findings of correlation were for solo performances, whereas the Huston (2001) sample was comprised of student and professional orchestral members who perform primarily in group contexts.

Test Anxiety

Given that most performers indicate they fear that a bad performance will negatively impact their career, some researchers have compared MPA to test anxiety.

Within the realm of test anxiety, researchers have documented different kinds of anxiety at play in test anxiety. Some test anxiety helps the test-taker by prompting them to prepare for test events. Such anxiety has a facilitative, or adaptive outcome and leads to better scores on tests. Other kinds of anxiety lead to maladaptive, or debilitating effects. Measures identifying facilitative and debilitative anxieties led to better predictive models for GPA in an academic situation (Alpert & Haber, 1960).

Wolfe (1989) found similar dimensions of anxiety at work in MPA. Factor analysis of an inventory designed to gauge attitudes about anxiety and performance yielded four distinct components. Two of the components showed evidence of facilitative anxiety that Wolfe categorizes as feelings of confidence and competence when faced with a challenging performance task, and feelings of arousal or intensity in response to a challenging situation. The other two factors showed evidence of debilitative anxiety. One involved feelings of nervousness or apprehension, while the other raised issues of concentration and distractibility.

Wilson Model

Wilson (2002) proposes a tri-partite model that explains the level of anxiety experienced on the basis of the individual's trait anxiety, the level of task mastery, and the degree of situational distress. The first item, trait anxiety, refers to an individual's propensity to react anxiously. Some individuals, because of their family history or experience, are more sensitive to anxiety than others. The degree of task mastery references the ease with which the individual can complete a task. A task that is relatively easy is less likely to be negatively impacted by MPA. Finally, the degree of situational stress involves the situation in which the performance takes place. Some

contexts may feel inherently safe, like an informal performance for family and friends, while others are weighted with great significance, such as a performance in a final round of a competition.

Yerkes Dodson

The Yerkes Dodson law is an oft-cited maxim that graphs performance quality against rising anxiety. The graph is described as an inverted U shape with performance quality along the Y-axis and increasing anxiety along the X-axis. As anxiety increases, performance quality increases until a certain threshold of anxiety is reached, after which, performance quality begins to decrease. It is interesting to note that this idea seems to indicate that at least some anxiety is necessary for optimal performances.

Hamann and Sobaje (1983) found that individuals with the most formal training scored significantly better on performance quality ratings during jury performances in comparison with non-jury performances. Students with moderate amounts of formal training performed better than the students with great amounts of formal training in a reduced anxiety performance, an outcome that seems counterintuitive. In the enhanced anxiety performance, the opposite held true. The more experienced performers outperformed the moderately experienced. The change was due to greater improvements in the more experienced versus slight improvements in the moderately experienced. The more experienced group needed the additional anxiety of performing in a jury situation to spur them on to better performances.

Symptoms

Symptoms for MPA range from various physiological, behavioral, and cognitive manifestations. Physiological manifestations include easily quantifiable measures of heart rate and hormone levels, as well as more subjective experiences of muscle shakiness, hot or cold flashes, and gastrointestinal symptoms. Behavioral manifestations are observed both in performance, and in life-style choices leading up to performance. Behavioral manifestations that occur during performance include extraneous physical motions and changes in performance quality, while pre-performance behavior includes avoidance behaviors, coping behaviors, and preparative behaviors. Cognitive manifestations of MPA include an inability to concentrate, distracting thoughts during performance, excessive worry, and feeling disconnected or out-of-body from the experience.

Physiological

Certain physiological symptoms of anxiety are easily quantifiable with medical methods of measurement. Such measurements are purely objective, ratio level data. Heart rate measurements are the most commonly employed medical measurement of physiological symptoms in MPA research and are used in a number of studies (Abel & Larkin, 1990; Brotons, 1993; Chang, 2001; Clark & Agras, 1991; Craske & Craig, 1984; Grishman, 1989; Kendrick et al., 1982; LeBlanc et al., 1997; Orman, 2004; Reitman, 1997; Ryan, 2000; Sweeney & Horan, 1982; Valentine et al., 1995; Wardle, 1969). Other physiological symptoms measured with objective medical tests include muscle response (Grishman, 1989), skin resistance and respiration rate (Craske & Craig,

1984), and hormone levels (Baker, 2005). Increases in the physiological measurements indicate an increasing level of anxiety.

Heart rate.

Heart rate has been used to document different levels of anxiety according to performance context, but it does not appear to be an effective diagnostic indicator of persistent, debilitative MPA.

Craske and Craig (1984) conducted one of the first studies in the use of heart rate as a measurement of MPA in performance. In the study, pianists ($N = 40$) were split into anxious and non-anxious groups on the basis of a screening questionnaire. Each subject performed a short solo in two different contexts. First, in order to familiarize the subjects with the various biometric recording devices, the subjects performed alone. Unbeknownst to the subjects, their performances were videotaped for comparison with a subsequent performance before an audience. The second performance was performed before an audience of five judges. The researchers collected a variety of physiological data including heart rate, respiration rate, and skin conductance levels in both performance contexts. The researchers also collected data measuring behavioral and cognitive indicators of stress, which will be recounted in the appropriate section below.

Data analysis showed neither significant differences between groups (anxious vs. non-anxious) nor interaction of group membership and context. The anxious group did not have a higher heart rate than the non-anxious group in either context. However, there was a significant effect in context across groups. The performance in front of the audience elicited higher heart rates than the performance without an audience.

Brotons (1993) reported similar findings. In her study, undergraduate and graduate students majoring in music ($N = 64$) performed in three pre-performance non-jury test periods and in a jury context. Baseline heart rates were determined in one of the three pre-performance test periods during a 7-13 minute practice session with no audience present. Heart rate levels increased from this baseline measurement to the jury situation. No attempt was made to categorize subjects' sensitivity to performance anxiety.

Ryan (2000) also reported differences in heart rate from a baseline pre-performance session and heart rate in performance. In her study involving sixth-grade pianists ($N = 26$), heart rate data were collected in a lesson with the subject's teacher, and in recital. A significant interaction was found between heart rate and gender. Boys had higher heart rate during performance than the girls, but girls had higher heart rate before the performance. There was no interaction on the basis of performance anxiety sensitivity as determined by the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for children.

Time and again, heart rate increases with higher profile contexts, but does not distinguish a musician who is debilitated by anxiety from one who thrives on the additional arousal. Sometimes researchers seem perplexed as to why an intervention strategy that significantly improves cognitive symptoms or performance quality shows no significance in reducing heart rate. In a study evaluating the effectiveness of cognitive behavior therapy with and without pharmacological intervention, the researchers indicated significant improvement in self-reported anxiety measures, but no similar reductions in heart rate (Clark & Agras, 1991).

Other.

Other physiological measurements of anxiety have been used in studies investigating MPA that confirm that the body reacts to higher stress situations, but that performers who suffer from debilitating MPA do not exhibit more acute physiological manifestations than their non-anxious colleagues. In addition to heart rate, Grishman (1989) analyzed muscle response in a study analyzing the effectiveness of progressive muscle relaxation in reducing MPA symptoms. Analysis of the muscle response measures mirrored heart rate measures. The experimental group noted improvements on the basis of cognitive inventories, but showed no statistical differences on the muscle response measures.

Reitman (1997) studied relaxation aided by music within a coping systematic desensitization treatment program in comparison with coping systematic desensitization without music and a wait list control. Physiological measures of heart rate and muscle tension in the forehead were used as measures of MPA. There were no significant differences in either measure from pre- to post-treatment performance tests.

In addition to heart rate, the Craske and Craig (1984) study mentioned above also analyzed skin resistance and respiration rate. Analysis of these physiological measures indicated that anxious and non-anxious performers did not significantly differ with respect to skin conductance or respiration rate.

Baker (2005) found similar results when analyzing levels of cortisol, the body's stress hormone. She found a small main effect in situation in both the study and control group, but no interaction. The cortisol levels rose slightly from non-performance to performance situations, but those musicians prone to debilitating MPA showed no

higher cortisol levels than those who report no such sensitivity. Interestingly, these results were mimicked in a self-report inventory of physiological symptoms of anxiety, indicating that even the *perception* of bodily reactions to an anxiety provoking situation does not distinguish those prone to debilitating MPA, and those who are not.

In addition to those physiological measures that feature hard numbers, there are some symptoms that are not as easily quantified. Kirchner (2002) noted that the professional pianist she interviewed complained of cold or hot sensations, muscle shakiness and/or tension, gastrointestinal problems, sweaty hands, hyperventilation and/or shallow breathing, as well as a racing heartbeat. While those symptoms are easily recognized by someone who has experienced MPA, it is hard to objectively quantify the severity of a symptom like "butterflies in the stomach."

In summary, the body exhibits a physiologic response to different performance contexts, with higher anxiety contexts initiating a larger response. The most documented response is that of higher heart rates, but other physiological symptoms such as hormone levels and respiration rate are also documented. In addition, musicians prone to the debilitating effects of MPA do not show greater physiologic response than musicians who do not suffer from debilitating MPA.

Behavioral

In addition to the purely physiological symptoms, performers experiencing MPA often manifest behavioral evidence of their anxiety. Some behavioral symptoms occur during performance while others may occur in the days, weeks, and months leading to a performance.

Physical motions.

Many of the studies mentioned here utilize similar procedures found in research in public speaking anxiety. The Craske and Craig (1984) study mentioned above uses a timed checklist of physical behaviors, a practice common in the research of public speaking anxiety. Raters observed videotaped recordings of the performances and counted the number of specific bodily motions occurring within a 20-second interval. The physical behaviors tallied included knees trembling, hands trembling, lifted shoulders, stiff back or neck, deadpan face, and moistening lips. Analysis of the timed checklist of physical behaviors yielded no significant differences between non-anxious and anxious performers in neither the reduced anxiety context, nor the enhanced anxiety context.

Brotons (1993) similarly catalogued behaviors in hopes of distinguishing anxiety levels between open jury and double-blind jury performance. In the study, the subject pool was comprised of musicians from many different instrument families. Brotons found no differences in the behaviors, and noted that such a system of observation may not be efficient, as many of the catalogued behaviors are common to playing the instrument.

Ryan (2000) videotaped children before and during performances. She found higher manifestations of "fidgetiness" in boys than in girls, and also showed that boys had lower pre-performance HR levels than the girls. Ryan hypothesized that the fidgetiness in male children is a coping mechanism that helps them burn off the feelings of anxiety. She also noted that boys with the highest fidgetiness also had the higher performance quality scores.

Performance quality.

A number of studies have used performance quality as a behavioral measure for MPA. Indeed, it would seem that the entire point of research and intervention in MPA is to reduce anxiety with the intent of improving performance quality. However, there are very few intervention studies that report statistically significant improvements in performance quality, and of those, several use evaluation tests that do not match real-world performance situations, or have problematic operational definitions of performance quality. In non-intervention studies comparing the effects of different performance contexts, confirmation of the Yerkes Dodson law appears when certain subsets of subjects show improvement in performance quality in higher stress performance contexts.

Kendrick, Craig, Lawson and Davidson (1982) used a performance error count as a dependent measure in a study investigating the effectiveness of behavioral and cognitive interventions. Two independent judges listened to recordings of performances and counted errors of pitch, omission, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and touch. Inter-rater reliabilities were above 87% for all treatment groups and tests. The study claims no statistical significance on the performance error count score at the post-test, but does claim significant improvement in quality of playing at follow-up. However, the follow up measure was a new measure created by asking "significant others" how much the subject's quality of playing had improved. Using different dependent measures makes true evaluation of the intervention's success problematic.

Sweeney and Horan (1982) also used independent judges' count of errors of pitch, omission, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and touch as a Musical Performance

Competence (MPC) dependent measure. The two judges scores had an amazingly high reliability coefficient of $r = .96$. The data show improvements in MPC on post-treatment measures following cue-controlled relaxation training and cue-controlled relaxation training with cognitive restructuring. However, in both the pre- and post-tests, the performance situation was atypical. Pianists typically perform music from memory that they have been studying for some time. In the Sweeney and Horan performance tests, the subjects were given thirty minutes to learn a new piece and read it in front of an audience. Use of such an atypical performance test raises questions of generalizing similar effects in a more traditional performance situation.

A slightly different performance quality measure was developed by Sweeney-Burton (1997). Rather than counting errors measure by measure, the Adjudicator Performance Rating Form used a 5-point Likert scale with ratings of 1 indicating inferior performances, and ratings of 5 indicating superior performance. These ratings were used to evaluate five categories: pitch, rhythm, tone-quality, expressiveness, and musicianship. At pre-test, the experimental and control groups showed no statistical differences on scores on the basis of a t-test comparison of means. At post-test, a t-test showed that the experimental group had higher scores. A more rigorous Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with pre-test measures serving as coefficient yielded no statistically significant results. Additionally, the experience of the subject population raises issues of generalizability. The study examined the effects of relaxation in music majors taking violin as a secondary instrument. It would be hard to conclude that an intervention which shows positive effects on performance quality for a musician who

has only played the instrument for a single semester would show similar effects for musicians who have considerably more experience on their own instrument.

In a study evaluating the Alexander Technique (Valentine et al., 1995), researchers claimed a statistically significant difference in musical and technical quality between instrumentalists trained in the Alexander Technique and a control group that received no training. Two expert raters graded recorded performances on a percentage basis. The study is one of the few that uses realistic performance situations for the typical musician seeking relief from MPA. However, the inter-rater reliability seems quite low ($r = .59$) in comparison to other performance quality measures using multiple judges.

Several studies comparing different performance contexts or subsets of subjects within a single performance context show that higher anxiety levels can actually promote better performances, providing confirmation of the Yerkes-Dodson law.

Craske and Craig (1984) compared performances in a reduced anxiety situation and an enhanced anxiety situation. The population ($N = 40$) was categorized as relatively anxious ($n = 20$) and relatively non-anxious ($n = 20$) on the basis of answers provided to Report of Confidence as a Performer scale. A performance quality measure was composed of Likert scales of 1 to 10 in the categories of Touch, Phrasing, Pitch, Rhythm, Tempo, Dynamics, Memory, and Overall Effectiveness. Inter-rater reliability for the PQ measure was above $r = .80$, but the specific r ratio was not given. An Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed significant differences between groups when performing in the enhanced anxiety situation. Subsequent analysis showed that the relatively non-anxious subjects had higher performance quality scores than the

relatively anxious performers. The difference was attributed to declines in performance quality from the relatively anxious group.

Hamann and Sobaje (1983) found similar results with the subject population grouped by amount of formal experience. A performance quality measure consisted of seven categories rated from 1 (Excellent) to 5 (Fair). In contrast with other measures that use two independent judges, Hamann and Sobaje collected scores from five judges. The inter-rater reliability between judges was $r = .74$. The entire population performed in a reduced anxiety situation (non-jury) and an enhanced anxiety situation (jury). When split on the basis of years of formal study, a significant interaction by group and performance situation emerged. In the non-jury situation, those classified as Medium years of formal study outperformed those classified as High years of formal study. However, in the jury situation, those with the most formal education received better ratings than Low and Medium years of formal study and led the researchers to conclude "that subjects with High years of formal study will perform consistently better in an anxious situation than will subjects with Low or Medium years of formal study" (Hamann & Sobaje, 1983, p. 46).

In a study of high school band musicians, researchers found that female musicians reported the highest level of anxiety in a performance in front of an audience, but also had the highest performance quality scores (LeBlanc et al., 1997). The four researchers conducting the study rated recorded performances on a scale of 1-10, and showed high inter-rater reliability with a coefficient of $r = .96$. However, some students were playing music of their own selection in preparation for competition while others were assigned music specifically for use in the study. More females were playing music

of their own choice, and the researchers caution that music selection might confound findings concerning performance quality.

In summary, researchers have developed a variety of methods for quantifying performance quality scores. Several studies show an improvement in performance quality after successful treatment modalities are employed, while others document differences between groups and/or situations with performance quality scores. Several studies show certain groups performing better with higher anxiety, a confirmation of the Yerkes-Dodson law.

Coping behaviors.

Often, those who suffer from MPA have reported implementing various methods of coping with their anxiety. Some studies report generally unhealthy coping behaviors, such as self-medicating with alcohol or other drugs, while others indicate more focused, anxiety specific coping behaviors.

Wolfe (1990a, 1990b) has published the most comprehensive analysis of coping behaviors in professional and amateur musicians. An initial study (Wolfe, 1990a) categorized responses to an open-ended question regarding coping strategies into mainly emotion focused or problem focused. Emotion focused strategies helped the performer deal with their feelings prior to and during performance. Emotion focused strategies included deep breathing, concentration on the music, positive self-talk, prayer or meditation, use of drugs or alcohol prior to performance, and engaging in distracting behavior before the performance. Problem focused strategies targeted the desired outcome, a high quality performance. Problem focused strategies included thorough

preparation, logistics of performance, issues of "performance hygiene" such as diet, clothing, rest, or fitness, and appropriate selection of music.

A follow up study (Wolfe, 1990b) correlated dimensions of performance anxiety with the primary coping strategy used. Analysis of the performance anxiety measures showed four primary factors involved. Two of the factors were considered facilitative; the anxiety resulted in better performances. Those factors were issues of arousal or intensity, and confidence and competence in the face of stressful performance situations. Two factors were considered debilitative. Those factors included nervousness or apprehension, and self-consciousness and distractibility. Statistical analysis shows that the presence or absence of certain coping strategies can be used to predict which of the four factors mentioned above would be dominant. For example, those who indicated they were mostly nervous or apprehensive about performance situations tended to avoid coping behaviors that helped them relax, establish rapport with the audience, or to be tolerant of minor mistakes. Similarly, those who used their anxiety to help them get ready for performances indicated the most use of coping behaviors that included thorough preparation, relaxation, mental practice, and meditation as well as positive self-talk and an effort to communicate with the audience. As Wolfe states, "the large number of coping strategies associated with this factor, as well as their nature, suggests that facilitating anxiety may promote effective management of performance stress without interfering with the performance itself" (Wolfe, 1990b, p. 145).

Cognitive

In addition to the physiological and behavioral symptoms, musicians experiencing MPA often report cognitive symptoms that include negative thoughts about performance ability, a tendency to catastrophize, over-concern with the reactions of others, worry about anxiety itself, and inability to concentrate. Cognitive symptoms have been quantified with a variety of psychological instruments, but the most illustrative reports of symptomology are qualitative in nature.

Kirchner (2002) conducted a qualitative inquiry into MPA that featured in-depth interviews with six ($N = 6$) professional pianists teaching in at the university level. Qualitative analysis revealed three broad categories encompassing the musicians' responses in the interviews: (a) mental symptoms, (b) somatic symptoms and (c) coping strategies. The mental symptoms category was further broken down into subcategories of intellectual reasoning difficulties, expectations of self and others, and negative emotions. The following section will use Kirchner's outline of cognitive symptoms with corroborating data gleaned from other studies.

The pianists of Kirchner's study indicated they had various problems with intellectual reasoning. They complained of thoughts dealing directly with the music as a source of distraction. Some would have "memory slips" or would find themselves drawing a blank on a specific chord. Others would find themselves so consumed with worry or attention to minor details that they would begin to feel disoriented and disconnected from the experience. At times, the performers reported that they would have visions in their head of the worst possible outcomes, imagining disastrous

mistakes resulting in them walking off the stage in the middle of a performance (Kirchner, 2002, pp. 72-73).

Other studies have attempted to quantify similar concerns with various psychometric inventories. In a study examining the effectiveness of meditation in treating MPA, Chang (2001) utilized the Cognitive Interference Questionnaire to measure the concentration of her subjects. Though the measure showed reductions in the number of intrusive thoughts and improvements in concentration, the results were not statistically significant.

Liston (2003) used the Catastrophizing and Realistic Appraisal Subscales of the Self-Statement Questionnaire to measure negativistic thinking and cognitive coping strategies. In a regression analysis using several other independent variables, catastrophizing thoughts emerged as the most significant variable, and on its own, accounted for 52% of the variance of an MPA outcome measure.

The pianists in Kirchner's study (2002) also mentioned placing unrealistic expectations upon themselves or attributing unrealistic expectations in significant others. The pianists expected perfection in memory as well as a desire to communicate effectively with the audience. They also felt that the audiences expected perfection from them. These expectations were not limited to musical qualities. The pianists also mentioned that they wanted to look good on stage so that the audience would not judge their appearance.

Such expectations have also appeared in quantitative studies. In a study investigating MPA in adolescent musicians (Fehm & Schmidt, 2006), the most often reported cognitive complaint was about the expectation of flawless performances. The

subjects indicated they worried about potential errors in their performance, and also felt they were over-critical of their own performances.

Lehrer, Goldman and Strommen (1990) conducted a study to determine the main components of MPA in musicians. A factor analysis of their survey instrument found five significant factors, two of which deal with unrealistic expectations. Factor 2 was described as "high standards/judgmental attitudes toward performance" and Factor 4 was described as "concern with the reactions of important others" (p. 15).

Finally, Kirchner's pianists describe a host of negative emotions that accompanied their MPA. They described emotions such as apprehension, fear, worry, low self-esteem, despondency, hopelessness, and depression. These feelings would occur during the performance causing additional distraction and anxiety, and after the performance.

In a study investigating the use of sound to augment cognitive desensitization training (Brodsky & Sloboda, 1997), improvements in MPA were accompanied by significant differences in emotions as measured by the Profile of Mood States (POMS). The POMS indicated lower levels of "Tension-Anxiety", "Depression-Dejection", "Anger-Hostility", "Fatigue-Inertia", and "Confusion-Bewilderment" following the cognitive desensitization intervention.

Additionally, there is some evidence that musicians who have avoided debilitative MPA, have done so primarily on a cognitive basis. Picard (1999) noted that certain factors modulate a fearful appraisal of performance context and personal abilities into a confident appraisal. Picard concluded that musicians who react with confidence have developed certain beliefs about their abilities as performers, and had

those beliefs confirmed by significant others. In addition, the confident performers learned to view jury performances as opportunities to share music with other musicians rather than a test in which judges would pick apart their performances. The confident performers began to see the members of the musical jury as people who wanted to help them grow as musicians, and not simply mistake counters, tallying every error in a desire to grade-down their performances. Further, Picard emphasizes the role of the teacher in both confirming the abilities of their students and reframing the jury context.

Exposure Therapy in MPA Treatment Modalities

Exposure to performance situations, whether *in vivo* or imaginal, plays a significant role in effective treatments of MPA. *In vivo* exposure is an actual musical performance in front of an audience. Imaginal exposure is an imagined performance or performance situation created exclusively in the mind of the performer. The following will focus on those treatment modalities that utilize some form of *in vivo* exposure, or imaginal exposure.

"Pure" Exposure Therapy.

In what might be termed "pure" exposure therapy, the musician simply performs many times in the performance context that causes the anxious reaction. Initially, one may dismiss pure exposure therapy on the basis that seasoned performers who have a wealth of performance experience still have difficulty with MPA (Wilson, 2002). Indeed, this would seem to be the case with the most persistent manifestations of MPA.

However, research suggests that "pure" exposure may be effective for non-clinical manifestations of MPA. Studies suggest differences in incidence and

phenomenology of MPA on the basis of performance experience that may reflect changes caused by more exposure to performance situations.

In a study applying multidimensional anxiety theory to MPA, researchers found differences in the manner in which undergraduate and graduate students reacted to jury performances (Miller & Chesky, 2004). Recognizing that not all manifestations of anxiety are debilitative, 59 musicians completed psychological instruments that measured the intensity and direction of cognitive and somatic anxiety. Subjects could have either a positive direction of anxiety, which would indicate that the anxiety served a facilitative function and improved performance quality, or a negative direction, indicating that the anxiety resulted in poorer performance quality. Though the sample was not evenly split among graduate students (n = 44) and undergraduate students (n = 15), some interesting differences in these subsets emerged. Undergraduate students reported negative direction in cognitive anxiety for the jury performance. The cognitive symptoms of anxiety hindered their ability to perform at their best. On the other hand, the graduate students reported a positive direction in cognitive anxiety, indicating that the anxiety helped them perform at their best.

Though not a conclusion drawn by the researchers of this particular study, it is possible that the *in vivo* exposure the graduate students of this study received throughout their previous undergraduate career may have helped them to learn not only to deal with cognitive symptoms of anxiety, but also to thrive on the anxiety. Simply performing juries as an undergraduate reduced the debilitative effects of anxiety in this context when encountered as a graduate student.

In a study of professional orchestral musicians (Fishbein et al., 1988), musicians over the age of 45 were less likely to mention stage fright as a frequent concern. Only 11% of those over 45 mentioned stage fright compared to 19% of those between 35 and 45 and 17% of those less than 35. Though not explicitly stated as a reason, perhaps the additional performance experience reduced stage fright as a major concern.

In a study featuring a diverse subject pool, those who reported professional playing experience showed a tendency to report higher levels of facilitative factors of MPA and lower levels of debilitative factors of MPA (Wolfe, 1989). Those without professional playing experience reported the opposite, with higher levels of debilitative factors of MPA and lower facilitative factors.

Though "pure" exposure therapy as a treatment for MPA has not been explicitly studied, the aforementioned studies show a pattern of those with more "experience" exhibiting either lower levels of MPA or higher facilitative marks in certain factors of MPA. However, one must be careful not to make a causal leap with this evidence. Indeed, it may be that the higher levels of dysfunctional MPA might make an individual less likely to seek performance opportunities or additional formal study.

In vivo exposure as part of protocol.

In vivo exposure is used as a component in many effective treatment regimens of MPA. The performance context or even the performance itself is often modified for the specific purposes of the therapy. Behavioral rehearsal and stress inoculation training feature *in vivo* exposure as a means of practicing specific coping strategies before they are needed in an actual performance.

There is some documented evidence that playing multiple performances in slightly modified situations is effective in reducing MPA. In a study comparing a cognitive-behavioral treatment protocol to behavioral rehearsal, researchers found that both methods reduced musical performance anxiety (Kendrick et al., 1982).

In the study, the subject pool was divided into a behavioral rehearsal group (n = 16), a cognitive-behavioral treatment group (n = 19), and a wait list control (n = 18). All test subjects performed in an initial assessment performance, and completed psychological inventories following the performance. In addition, the researchers measured heart rate during performance, and analyzed video of the performance for behavioral measures of MPA including an error count, and a tally of behavioral evidence of anxiety, such as trembling arms or lifted shoulders.

The behavioral rehearsal group met for three sessions, and performed before the other members of the group as audience. Additionally, they were given the homework of performing for family and friends, and encouraged to increase the size of the audience as time passed.

The cognitive-behavioral treatment group received instruction in monitoring their thoughts during performance. They were encouraged to challenge negative thoughts, and to focus on task oriented thoughts and positive thoughts. As part of the protocol, the therapist performed a piece and while speaking her thoughts aloud, and the members of the group did the same. The cognitive-behavioral group were also assigned the homework of performing for family and friends and encouraged to increase the size of the audience as time passed.

Both treatment groups showed improvement in MPA on self-report measures, error count, and visual signs of anxiety in comparison to the control group.

The members of the behavior rehearsal group performed in a modified context that featured "a non-threatening, friendly audience, (b) positive feedback and non-punitive reactions following performances, (c) hierarchical presentation of anxiety-producing performance situations, and (d) assured success experience during early behavior rehearsal performances" (Kendrick et al., 1982, p. 354).

The experienced music teacher will recognize these elements at work in a typical music studio. Students gather for "studio class" or "repertory class" in which one or more of the students perform repertoire currently in progress. In this modified context, the listening audience is comprised of fellow students and the teacher. In the healthiest of these classes, students and teachers will respond encouragingly to all performances. Other performance venues may be introduced as a student matures with a piece. In the conservatory or university, performances in front of the student body represent a slightly higher level of anxiety. In such institutions, departmental recitals held during the school day provide an opportunity for a more formal performance experiences. Such performances are scheduled to help the student get ready for performance contexts generating even greater amounts of MPA, such as degree recitals, competitions, or auditions.

Many protocols that have demonstrated success in reducing MPA include *in vivo* exposure as part of the treatment regimen.

Sweeney and Horan (1982) showed that a cognitive restructuring treatment regimen that included *in vivo* exposure reduced observable physical behaviors of anxiety, and lower state anxiety on self-report measures.

Harris (1987) reported that a group counseling treatment regimen featuring *in vivo* exposure in four of the six treatment sessions reduced MPA on a number of self-report measures.

Montello, Coons, and Kantor (1990) evaluated a group-counseling regimen that featured "reality rehearsal" performances as part of the treatment. In these rehearsals, the participants performed for the members of the group and outside visitors. The treatment group showed lower anxiety levels on self-report measures than the wait-listed control. In addition, qualitative data from the treatment group indicated that in the final test performance, they felt more confident and sensed a more intimate connection with members of the group and the outside audience.

In a study designed to evaluate the effectiveness of a pharmacological treatment, Clark and Agras (1991) found that a cognitive-behavior therapy program featuring *in vivo* exposure performance in three of the five group sessions reduced self-report measures of anxiety, improved musical performance quality, and also improved performance confidence. Additionally, when asked, "participants informally remarked that additional sessions would have been useful for *additional exposure* [emphasis added] as well as for further discussion of cognitive strategies" (1991, p. 604). Incidentally, the use of buspirone, a beta-blocking drug, was not found effective in treating MPA.

Imaginal exposure as part of protocol.

Some protocols require the vivid imagination of performance contexts. The use of the mind to create a vivid experience of a feared situation is called imaginal exposure. The most common use of imaginal exposure occurs in cognitive desensitization, which involves a patient practicing relaxation techniques while imagining progressively more stressful performance conditions. Another use of imaginal exposure is to imagine the ideal performance or to imagine practicing coping strategies.

Cognitive desensitization is a treatment method in which patients learn to relax while imagining progressively more stressful situations. The rationale is that the body cannot be simultaneously anxious and relaxed.

One of the very first intervention studies in MPA literature involves the use of cognitive desensitization. Wardle (1969) compared the use of insight relaxation and cognitive desensitization against a control group. Though the study has some methodological problems and conclusions that seem at odds with subsequent research, the article itself is particularly useful in explaining the use of cognitive desensitization in treating MPA.

First, the subjects are trained in progressive muscle relaxation and practice these techniques until they can learn to relax their body at will. Then, an anxiety hierarchy is created. The subjects place in order of progressively more anxious contexts a number of frequently encountered situations. In the study, a 28-item anxiety hierarchy was created. The first items featured low stress situations such as item 1, “assembling the horn for a practice session,” and item 2, “assembling the horn for a performance.”

Items further down the list are more stress inducing and included such situations as item 15, “sight reading for a position in the band,” item 20, “approaching a difficult high or low note” and item 28, “playing [a] solo in public” (pp. 195-196).

After constructing the hierarchy, the subjects use the relaxation techniques to completely remove muscle tension from the body. Then, the therapist instructs them to imagine in vivid detail an item from the hierarchy. While imagining the item, the subjects monitor their level of relaxation. If imagining the item causes tension, the subject practices relaxation until the tension is relieved. The therapist monitors the subjects for signs of tension, and once complete relaxation is confirmed, proceeds to the next item on the anxiety hierarchy.

Wardle reports greater improvements for the cognitive desensitization group in comparison with the control on a number of variables including number of behavioral manifestations of anxiety while playing and performance quality evaluations. Interestingly, this is one of the few intervention studies which report a physiological difference between the experimental and control group. The cognitive desensitization group had significantly lower heart rates than the control group, a finding that seems at odds with the subsequent body of literature in which heart rate is not an effective measure of the level of debilitative MPA in a certain context.

Norton, MacLean and Wachna (1978) presented a case study of a female pianist’s use of cognitive desensitization training to treat MPA. The protocol is much the same as the Wardle protocol mentioned above. The pianist learned relaxation techniques and constructed an anxiety hierarchy. A therapist would ask the pianist to imagine scenes from the hierarchy until the pianist showed no signs of anxiety. The

pianist reported the protocol was extremely effective in controlling anxiety. In addition, the authors posit that the cognitive desensitization training also allowed the pianist to practice coping behaviors in the imagined performances.

In a study investigating a combination of cognitive therapies (Nagel et al., 1989), researchers used a cognitive desensitization protocol with added coping strategies. Subjects were trained in relaxation, and presented with items from an anxiety hierarchy. When a subject experienced anxiety in reaction to an item, specific coping strategies utilizing concepts of rational emotive therapy were suggested. The subjects were aided in identifying thoughts that increased their anxiety and given strategies for replacing those thoughts with thoughts of a more positive and task focusing nature. The treatment group showed statistically significant improvements on self-reported measures of anxiety.

In a similar study, Reitman (1997) investigated a systematic desensitization strategy augmented with specific coping strategies presented when subjects reported anxiety. The treatment regimen was named coping systematic desensitization (CSD) to reflect the more active role of implementing specific coping strategies within the systematic desensitization framework. Reitman investigated whether a CSD regimen in conjunction with the use of relaxing music would be more effective than just CSD alone. Both the music-assisted CSD and the CSD group showed some signs of improvement on certain self-report measures over the control group.

Kim (2005) investigated a similar approach of augmenting relaxation training with music. In her study, the subjects improvised relaxing music to invoke a relaxing image or feeling. In this study, no specific coping strategies were introduced during the

desensitization training. Though the study used an extremely small sample size ($N = 6$) and featured no control group, the regimen resulted in generally lower anxiety measures as reported by the participants.

In a slightly different use of imaginal exposure, Esplen and Hodnett (1999) used guided imagery to treat MPA in university students. The group participating in the intervention listened to a ten-minute audio recording that guided the listener through an imagined performance, modeling healthy cognitions and coping mechanisms. This approach differs from cognitive desensitization in that it tries to create an ideal performance associated with specific positive thoughts. The guided imagery script reads much like a hypnosis induction.

> You're feeling quite comfortable as you take your place in front of the audience. The silence is soothing to you as you can collect your thoughts…. Take a deep breath … Slowly… You look at the audience and you think of the musical piece… You know it well. (p. 132)

The study has certain methodological flaws, namely lack of a control group and a true pre-test measure. For the pre-test, the participants were asked to imagine a typical performance and rate their level of anxiety, but for the post-test, the ratings were given for a specific performance. However, despite these methodological limitations, those receiving the guided imagery training reported lower anxiety levels and general satisfaction with the treatment protocol.

Artificial Performance Contexts

Planning and organizing *in vivo* exposure performances involves significant logistical concerns that may prevent amassing enough exposure to elicit an extinction

response. Further, performers may not wish to demand so much time from family, friends, and colleagues to serve as audience members in more informal performances. Additionally, imaginal exposure may be too nebulous for those wishing a more concrete and tangible experience. Perhaps an artificial performance context occupying a middle ground between these exposure contexts might provide similar benefits.

Virtual reality.

In an effort to reduce logistical demands, some researchers have turned to Virtual Reality (VR) technology for creating artificial environments. The idea is to "recreate a believable artificial environment that stimulates physical responses similar to those of a real environment that can be individually controlled, replicated, and tailored to the patient's experiences" (Romano, 2005, p. 580). VR has been used in treating such anxiety disorders as fear of flying, spider phobia, acrophobia, or fear of driving. VR exposure therapy offers many advantages over *in vivo* exposure including cost effectiveness, safety, and gradually increasing demands on the patient (Emmelkamp, 2005).

In fact, there has been VR research in the field of MPA. Orman (2004) found a corresponding elevation in anxiety levels among saxophonists immersed in VR performance contexts. In the study, three saxophonists performed while wearing a VR head mounted display. Four different performance contexts were projected in the headset. The first context was that of an empty practice room. The second context recreated a room with several members of the saxophone studio seated as audience. The third context recreated a jury with three members of the faculty seated as if to

evaluate the performance. The fourth context resembled an audition in front of the director of bands for placement into an ensemble.

Heart rate and self-reported measures indicated a differential response to the four generated environments. In general, the subjects showed higher heart rates as the context became more anxiety provoking. In addition, the participants subjectively reported higher levels of anxiety in the higher anxiety environments. There were insufficient numbers ($N = 3$) to demonstrate statistical significance.

Recording equipment as audience.

Researchers in public speaking anxiety also have looked at ways to create an artificial performing context, specifically, the use of a video camera. Jeger and Goldfried (1976) compared levels of anxiety across four different performance contexts: live audience of seven to eight people, one-way mirror, taped audience, and audience of two plus camera. In the taped audience condition, the subjects were told that they were giving a speech to an audience of eight who would be watching by means of a closed circuit camera. The participants would see this audience on a television monitor in the room in which they were giving the speech. In actuality, the participants were viewing a pre-recorded videotape of eight observers showing minimal expressive reactions. In the audience of two plus camera situation, the subjects were told that they were being videotaped for a more detailed evaluation to occur at a later date. The two "camera operators" were actually the speech evaluators.

Analysis of heart rate, behavioral indicators of anxiety, and self-report measures of anxiety showed no statistical differences between the four performance contexts, except for a lower heart rate in the one-way mirror situation. In other words, to the

speech giver, there was no difference between a traditional speech in front of a live audience, and artificially created contexts involving a video camera.

Richman (1995) conducted research investigating the use of a video camera used in exposure therapy to reduce public speaking anxiety. Her dissertation is a close analog of this study, and will therefore be treated in some depth.

In the study, Richman evaluated the effectiveness of the use of a video camera to substitute for a live audience in exposure therapy. The subjects ($N = 87$), were part of an undergraduate course in basic speech giving, and volunteered their participation as part of the requirements for the course. The subjects were divided into four groups: three treatment groups and a non-treatment control.

All groups gave a five-minute speech to an audience of their peers that functioned as the pretest for the study. The subjects completed a self-report measure of anxiety prior to giving the speech, and videos of the speech were analyzed for behavioral evidence of anxiety.

The three treatment groups practiced giving a five-minute speech in front of a video camera for at least an hour, or until symptoms of anxiety were reduced to manageable levels. All of the subjects were told that the video recording of the speech would be analyzed at a later date, and that portions of the video might be used for illustrative purposes in class.

The three treatment groups were categorized as therapist-directed, peer-directed, or self-directed. The therapist-directed group completed the flooding sessions in front of the video camera while a trained graduate student observed them for signs of speech anxiety. The subjects were told to inform the therapist when they no longer felt anxious

while giving the speech. If the therapist still noticed signs of anxiety, the subject was encouraged to continue giving the speech until such time as the therapist believed the anxiety was sufficiently reduced. In the peer-directed flooding sessions, the role of the therapist was assumed by a peer. In the self-directed flooding sessions, the subject would determine for themselves whether or not anxiety levels had been sufficiently reduced.

After treatment, all groups presented another five-minute speech to an audience of their peers. Again, the subjects completed a self-report measure of anxiety prior to giving the speech, and videos of the speech were analyzed for behavioral measures of anxiety.

Analysis showed statistically significant reductions in self-reported measures of anxiety and behavioral measures of anxiety. All three treatment groups had significantly lower anxiety scores than the control group on both measures.

A closer analysis of the three treatment groups revealed that there were no differences among the groups on the self-report measures of anxiety. However, analysis of the behavioral indicators of anxiety revealed some differences. The self-directed treatment group showed a greater improvement in the reduction of behaviors indicative of anxiety than the peer-directed group, and the difference was statistically significant. The therapist directed group also improved more than the peer-directed group, though the difference only approached statistical significance.

Further analysis showed that the peer-directed groups spent less time in treatment than the self-directed or therapist directed groups. The peer-directed groups

spent an average of 42.18 minutes in treatment, whereas the self-directed and therapist-directed groups spent 56.64 minutes and 57.33 minutes in treatment respectively.

In summary, flooding sessions in which subjects practiced giving a speech to a video camera lowered public speaking anxiety in both self-report and behavioral measures of anxiety. The video camera, in the minds of the subjects, functioned as an audience. There are several factors that might have led to this. First, the subjects were told that their recorded speeches would be reviewed to verify compliance with the treatment protocol. Second, the subjects were told that portions of their video might be used in class. This places two important psychological burdens on the subject. Their performances would be graded by a person of authority and might be viewed by their peers.

The comparison to this study is compelling. Rather than giving a speech to a video camera, pianists perform to a microphone. Instead of the video being viewed by the instructor, and possibly used in class, the recordings were digitally distributed to an internet audience, thereby creating the realistic possibility that the performances would be heard by both knowledgeable authority figures and perhaps even by friends and colleagues.

There are, however, some important differences to consider. The five-minute speeches in the Richman study are prepared speeches, but they are not scripted and memorized speeches. Instead, the subjects were allowed to prepare seven note cards to aid them in the delivery of the speech. It is quite possible that the results might be different if the subjects were instructed to memorize a five-minute segment of a famous

speech, and then deliver the speech word for word. That, in essence, is what is asked of a classical musician.

There is no similar study in the MPA literature, although belief that a recording device can influence performers is implied in certain studies. In the Craske and Craig (1984) study, the researchers made efforts to hide the video camera during baseline testing. The researchers wanted to compare performances of differing demands, a reduced anxiety performance, and an enhanced anxiety performance. The reduced anxiety context was a performance alone in the room. The subjects were informed that the performance was only to allow them time to become comfortable with the setting and instrumentation prior to the "real" performance. The subjects were also told that the performances were not going to be evaluated. However, the performances were videotaped to allow for evaluation of behavioral indicators of anxiety, specifically a timed checklist of observed behaviors and an error count.

> Subjects performed alone and were informed that this session was for practice and adaptation only to allow them to become familiar with the setting and procedures, and that evaluations would not be made. *The videocamera was hidden* [emphasis added]. (p. 271)

Why hide the video camera? Of course, the implication is that the presence of the video camera would add an element of anxiety in what was designed to be the reduced anxiety performance context. A video camera would cause anxiety if it served to function as an audience in the minds of the performer.

In a study evaluating progressive muscle relaxation as a treatment for MPA, Grishman (1989) conducted all performance tests in an empty hall with a video camera.

"For the performing pretest, during which physiological measures were recorded, the video camcorder assumed the role of eyes and ears of an audience" (pg. 37). A careful reading of Grishman's review of the literature revealed no historical basis for making this claim.

Indeed, there is no research in the field of MPA that specifically addresses MPA in recorded performances. The proposed study would be the first to document differences in the traditional live performance context and the proposed virtual performance context. Such documentation could aid further research in reducing the logistical requirements for evaluating MPA in performance.

Summary

In summary, MPA affects performers of all ages and levels of training, manifesting itself in a variety of physiological, behavioral and cognitive symptoms. Many of the treatment regimens that have documented a measure of effectiveness use *in vivo* exposure in the form of performances in front of an audience, or imaginal exposure in the form of visualized performances while practicing relaxation techniques or coping strategies. Researchers in the field of public speaking anxiety have evaluated various artificial performance contexts that reduce the logistical demands of recruiting audience members. Similar studies in the field of MPA research have not been published. Could a recorded performance, which the performer believes will be distributed to an internet audience, produce symptoms of MPA similar to traditional musical performance?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this inquiry is to investigate the nature of Musical Performance Anxiety (MPA) as it occurs in a virtual performance. Virtual performances are recorded musical performances distributed to an audience not present at the time of the recording. Additionally, the study investigates the effects of exposure therapy in a virtual performance context, and the possible transfer of effect into a traditional live performance context.

Research Questions and Research Rationale

As with all research, methodological considerations are derived directly from the research questions. The research questions are reprinted here for convenience.

1. How does the level of MPA differ between the virtual performance setting and the live performance setting in student solo piano performances at the university level?
2. How does the experience of MPA differ between the virtual performance setting and the live performance setting in student solo piano performances at the university level?
3. How does exposure therapy in the virtual performance setting affect the level and experience of MPA in the performer in subsequent performances in both the virtual performance setting and the live performance setting?

According to Yin (2003) a case study design "is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when

the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). In contrast, an experimental design "divorces the phenomenon from its context" (p 13). A case-study approach appears the best-suited research design to address these research questions that deal primarily with the phenomenon of MPA in different performance contexts.

This study is an instrumental case study featuring both explanatory and descriptive aspects. In instrumental case studies, the individual cases are examined to provide a better understanding of an underlying theoretical issue. The theoretical issue is more important than the individual cases (Silverman, 2005). Case studies that are explanatory in nature seek cause and effect relationships. Descriptive case studies provide rich detail, allowing the reader to determine applicability in other real-world situations.

Population

The study is designed for the benefit of music educators and students of piano. Undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in applied lessons at the university level are the target population of this study. Prior to recruiting and consent, the researcher determined to examine eight to twelve cases.

A prescreening instrument, the K-MPAI (discussed below), was used to categorize potential cases as being affected by high, moderate, or low susceptibility to debilitative MPA. This component was the primary factor in selecting cases. Prior to recruiting research participants, the researcher and his advisory committee determined that the sample must include a minimum of two participants that were highly susceptible to experiencing debilitative MPA. If this minimum requirement was not

met at a single research site, the researcher would recruit additional participants using an identical procedure at a second site and later date.

The initial location for recruitment of subjects was a large Midwestern public institution. In the fall of 2009, eight participants were recruited and signed consent statements, but only one subject was classified as being highly susceptible to debilitative MPA. This research location will be referred to as Site A in the remainder of this document.

To meet the minimum population requirements, the protocol was run at a second Midwestern public institution, hereafter referred to as Site B. In the spring of 2010, four participants were recruited and signed consent statements, and one of these participants qualified as being highly susceptible to debilitative MPA.

In selecting cases, the researcher was prepared to consider training and gender, as research points to differences in the experience of MPA on the basis of gender (Huston, 2001; LeBlanc et al., 1997; Osborne & Kenny, 2008; Osborne et al., 2005; Ryan, 2004; Ryan, 2000; Stephenson & Quarrier, 2005), and also suggests that training or education affects the severity and manifestation of MPA (Fishbein et al., 1988; Miller & Chesky, 2004; Wolfe, 1989). A brief demographic survey featured questions about education and experience as well as gender and is discussed below. Happily, those who signed consent forms exhibited great variety on these factors, and all who consented were chosen as research cases. The gender, experience, and susceptibility to MPA of the twelve research participants are introduced in rich detail later in this chapter.

Data Instruments

A variety of data instruments are used in investigating the research questions. Though primarily a qualitative study, a number of quantitative data come from self-report measures of anxiety. Some of these measures appear frequently in MPA studies, and inclusion will aid in integrating this research within the extant literature. Qualitative data collected include one-on-one focused interviews and group discussions.

Self-report measures.

Self-report measures were used to gather demographic information, to categorize subjects as experiencing high, moderate, or low susceptibility to MPA, and to measure specific MPA levels in individual performances.

Participant Demographics and Repertoire Information.

Potential participants completed a brief demographic questionnaire to provide general information about themselves and their selected repertoire. They were asked about their experience, level of education and training, as well the length of time they had studied their chosen piece, and how long the piece had been memorized (see Appendix A).

K-MPAI.

The Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (K-MPAI) was used as a diagnostic instrument gauging a participant's predisposition to MPA. The instrument is predicated on an emotion based theory of anxiety, and more successfully predicted high scores on music performance anxiety assessments than the Spielberger State Trait

Anxiety Inventory – Trait scale, and reports high internal reliability (Kenny, Davis, & Oates, 2004).

The measure consists of 26 statements to which respondents choose whether they strongly disagree or strongly agree according to a 7-point Likert scale (see Appendix B). In this study, it was used as a categorization tool in selecting participants for the study.

CPAI.

The Performance Anxiety Inventory (PAI, Nagel et al., 1989) is one of the more frequently encountered measures in the literature. This instrument is based on the Spielberger Test Anxiety Inventory with questions reworded to reflect a musical performance on the piano, rather than an academic test. Deen (1999) reworded the measure to reflect vocal performances, and clarified some problematic language.

The Conklin Performance Anxiety Inventory (CPAI) is a modified version of the PAI as it appears in the Deen study. It retains the clarified language of Deen's PAI, but has been reworded to reflect the performance medium of solo piano performance. In addition, five items addressing the temporal onset and severity of MPA have been added. To maintain the integrity of the often-used PAI, the original 22 questions are reported as the overall anxiety score, and the additional items are reported as the anxiety envelope. Respondents rate their level of agreement to 27 statements on a 4-point Likert scale (see Appendix C). The C-PAI was administered immediately following all performances in the study design and was intended to measure levels of anxiety specific to a single performance.

Focused interviews.

Individual interviews were conducted with each participant following the Virtual Performance. In recognizing the active role of both the interviewer and the study participant (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995), the interviews were guided through the use of specific similes comparing the anxiety felt during the performance to anxiety in other daily life situations. Subjects were asked to contrast their views from the perspective of student and performer with their views as a teacher. The interview guidelines are presented in Appendix D. To maintain the rich detail of the participants' own words, the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Following transcription, the interviews were analyzed for units of meaning, coded and categorized.

A second interview was conducted following Live Performance Two. Participants were asked to recount their experience as a student and performer throughout the exposure therapy treatment. Responses from the initial interview were addressed in the second interview. Again, to offer the contrast of perspective, the participants adopted the role of teacher in evaluating their perspectives on the exposure therapy (see Appendix E).

Group discussion.

After all musical performances and individual interviews were completed, the participants at each research location met for a group discussion. Participants from Site A were not present for the Site B discussion group and vice versa. The group discussion allowed the research participants to actively contribute to the analysis and

communicate their own conclusions concerning the research questions based on their experience.

Group discussions offer another point of data gathering that is distinct from the pencil and paper inventories and one-on-one interviews. Furthermore, group discussions offer the additional benefit of allowing participants to clarify points of agreement and disagreement (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). The protocol for facilitating the group discussion can be found in Appendix F.

Procedure

The study was conducted in several stages with multiple performances, interviews, and data instruments administered as indicated in Figure 1. First, informed consent was obtained from the participant pool, and then cases were selected based on a screening procedure. After case selection, the individuals chosen played multiple performances including the Rehearsal Performance, Live Performance One, and the Virtual Performance. Individual interviews were conducted after the Virtual Performance.

The participants then completed five additional virtual performances within a 10-day time frame, constituting exposure therapy. Following the exposure treatment

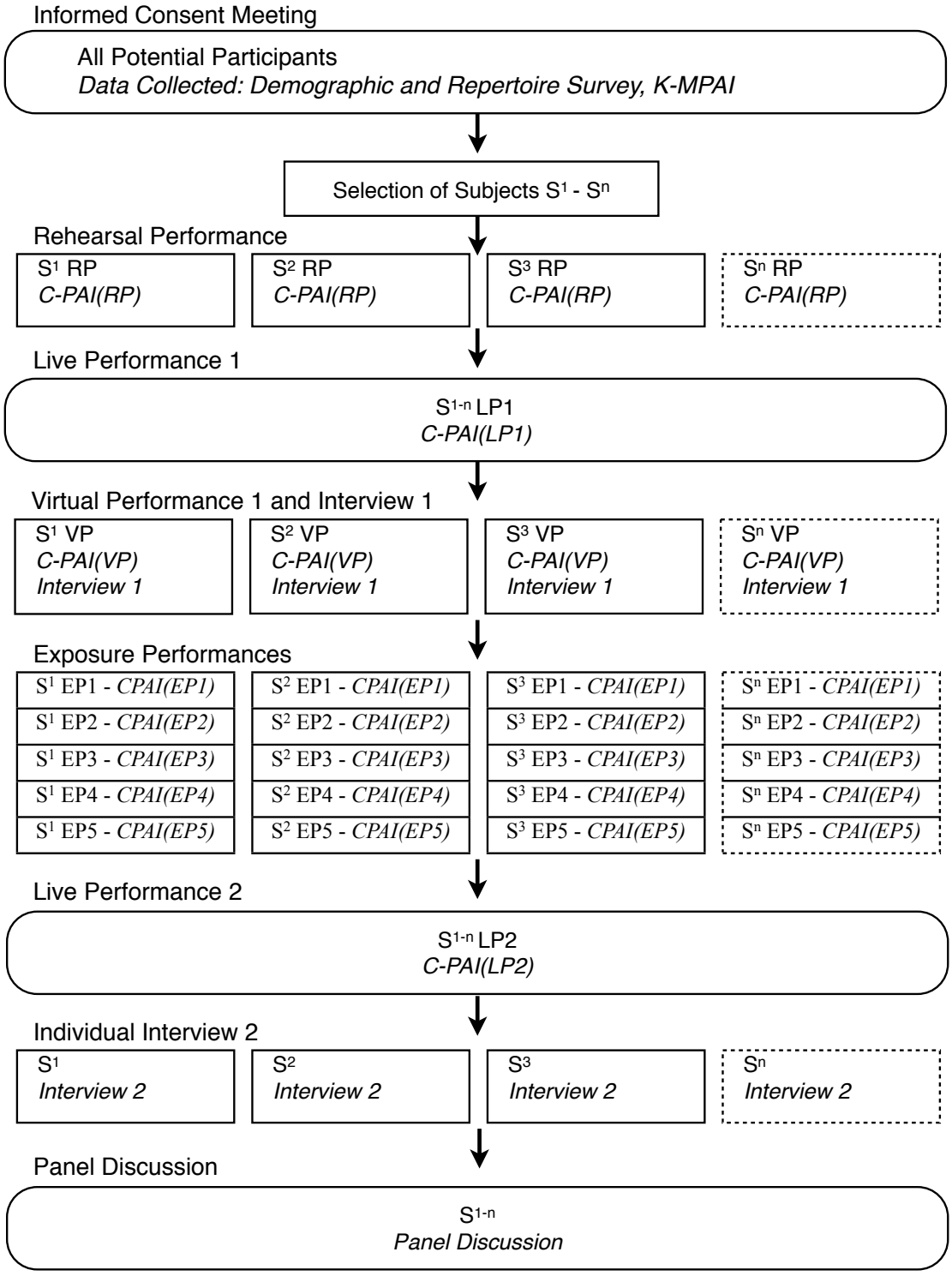


Figure 1. Procedural flowchart identifying musical performances and data instruments collected at various points in the study.

(Exposure Performance 1 through Exposure Performance 5), the participants performed in Live Performance 2. After a second round of individual interviews, the participants at each site met for a final panel discussion.

The research protocol was identical at both research locations, but logistical concerns may have led to different experiences by the participants of different research locations. The differences between research sites are indicated below within the description of each stage.

Interest meeting and consent.

Recruiting flyers advertising an interest meeting were posted in areas where pianists gather. At Site A, there was a brief presentation to potential participants held during a weekly seminar class. Email address lists were compiled by obtaining a list of students enrolled in applied lessons at each site. A letter describing the study, time commitments, and time and date of an interest meeting were emailed to potential participants. To be eligible for participation, the pianists were required to have a piece of music memorized and ready for public performance. For logistical concerns, the chosen piece needed to be less than six minutes in length. At Site B, this requirement was relaxed given the small number of pianists that would be performing in the Live Performance One and Two. The same repertoire selection was performed in all stages of the study.

At the interest meeting, the nature and time requirements of the study were outlined, as well as the specific dates and venues for Live Performance One and Live Performance Two. In addition, the possible risks and benefits of participation were explained. Those choosing to participate in the study signed a statement of informed

consent (see Appendix G), and received a copy of the informed consent statement to retain for their personal reference. The potential participants were informed that signing the consent form would not necessarily result in being chosen for the study. At Site A, the informed consent meeting was conducted in a classroom with all 8 potential participants in attendance. To accommodate the schedules of participants at Site B, there were two informed consent meetings held in the faculty lounge with three individuals at the first meeting and one in the second meeting.

After signing the consent form, the study participants received a study packet containing the K-MPAI and the Participant Demographics and Repertoire Information form. The packets were prepared with individual masculine and feminine pseudonyms, which functioned as the sole identifier throughout the study. The consenting participants chose from the prepared pseudonyms.

The participants completed the K-MPAI, as well as the Participant Demographics and Repertoire Information and returned it to the researcher at the end of the informed consent meeting.

Case selection.

As only 12 individuals consented, it was not necessary to eliminate any volunteers. All individuals who gave consent were included in the study. The returned K-MPAI was scored and the potential participants were categorized as being affected by high, moderate, or low susceptibility to MPA.

The subjects were notified of their inclusion in the study and were reminded of their rights as research participants to withdraw from the study at any time. The participants received additional instructions for completing the performance

requirements of the study, as well as the additional measures to be completed for each performance.

Performances and data collection.

The study participants performed their chosen repertoire in several different contexts and completed a CPAI for each performance. The participants completed the Rehearsal Performance, Live Performance One, and the Virtual Performance before sitting for an individual interview. After the interview, the participants performed five additional virtual performances (Exposure Performance One through Exposure Performance Five), and Live Performance Two. Individual interviews and a panel discussion concluded the data-gathering phase after Live Performance Two.

Rehearsal Performance.

Following notification of their inclusion in the study, participants were asked to schedule the Rehearsal Performance. A rehearsal performance is a planned performance of their chosen repertoire with no audience present. The participants were instructed to designate a portion of their regular practice time to play through their chosen repertoire. They were asked to treat the Rehearsal Performance as a real performance, and to play from memory from beginning to end, with no stops to correct errors. Following the Rehearsal Performance, they completed the CPAI (CPAI-RP). The Rehearsal Performance was completed at least two days prior to Live Performance One.

At both Site A and Site B, the Rehearsal Performance was completed at the participants' discretion. The researcher did not solicit information concerning venue or

scheduling, but assumes that these performances were completed in a practice room at each site.

Live Performance One.

The participants performed in a live performance setting following the Rehearsal Performance. Flyers publicizing the performance were posted to attract an audience. The participants performed their selected repertoire, and immediately following the performance, each participant completed the C-PAI for Live Performance 1 (CPAI-LP1). The participants returned both CPAI-RP and CPAI-LP1 to the researcher at this time.

At Site A, Live Performance 1 took place in a recital hall associated with the University.

Recent flooding at Site B had displaced much of the music department. Because performance spaces were in such high demand, it was not possible to secure a dedicated recital hall that allowed enough flexibility in scheduling to accommodate the disparate schedules of the participants. Instead, both Live Performance 1 and Live Performance 2 were conducted at a local retirement residence. The performances occurred in the recreation room of the retirement community on a studio grand piano with a fixed, un-adjustable bench. The piano was also on the same level as the audience, as opposed to being on an elevated stage. In subsequent interviews, participants at Site B commented on these differences from the typical recital context.

Virtual Performance.

The participants scheduled a recording session for the Virtual Performance to occur within three days of Live Performance One.

Pilot testing indicated a need to create the perception of an actual internet audience before beginning the recording process. To this end, a number of audience members were recruited to subscribe to the podcast. A sheet listing the recruited members along with a brief biographical sketch was distributed at the interest meeting (see Appendix H). In addition, participants received an email containing the instructions to subscribe to the virtual performance podcast (see Appendix I). The participants were encouraged forward this message to invite family, friends, and colleagues to become members of the internet audience.

At Site A, the Virtual Performances were recorded in a classroom containing a studio grand piano. At Site B, the Virtual Performances were recorded in an available practice room. In both locations, the researcher provided the recording equipment. The performances were recorded with a Zoom Handy Recorder H4n. The Zoom was configured to function as a digital audio interface and connected to a Macintosh computer via USB cable. The Zoom H4n features dual condenser microphones arrayed in a 90-degree coincident stereo configuration. The researcher adjusted the gain prior to the Virtual Performance recording sessions to obtain the best possible audio quality.

The participants received instructions on how to record, trim silence from the beginning and end of the performance, and save the performance using Audacity® for Mac OS-X. The performer saved the recording to a specific location on the computer. The instructions for recording a performance can be found in Appendix J.

Distributing the Virtual Performances.

The virtual performances were distributed using an internet technique called podcasting. Podcasts use internet syndication protocols that automatically deliver digital media files to subscribers' computers. Podcasting requires the media files to be posted to an internet repository accessible by an internet web browser. Then, subscribers point a dedicated application to a special internet file called a podcast feed. This file contains the necessary elements that automate delivery of media files to a subscriber's personal computer. One of the easiest ways to generate the podcast feed is to use free blogging websites and a podcast feed generation service (Morris & Terra, 2006).

Internet audio repository.

First, recorded performances must be uploaded to an internet accessible location. The researcher secured the necessary web space for posting the recorded performances. The recorded performances were transferred to the internet audio repository using an FTP (file transfer protocol) client. There was no web page associated with the recorded performances, and no publication of the web address to which the performances were posted.

Study "Blog."

A web log is an internet site that features an interface allowing frequent updates. Many web logs, commonly referred to as "blogs", are used as online journals that are available to the internet audience. Most blogs feature syndication capabilities that allow frequent readers to have the most recent posts to the blog sent directly to their computer

(Hill, 2006). Because of the syndication capabilities, blogs are an excellent place to originate a podcast feed (Morris & Terra, 2006).

This study used Blogger (www.blogger.com), one of the many web sites that offer free web log hosting. Prior to the commencement of the study, a study blog was established on Blogger. For each performance, a new post was created on the study blog with a link to the recording hosted at the internet audio repository.

Syndication feed.

The syndication feed by Blogger does not contain the enclosure tag, the necessary HTML language that automatically delivers media files linked in the blog post. A syndication service was used to generate the necessary enclosure tags. Feedburner (www.feedburner.com) offers such a service. Feedburner is pointed to the syndication of the study blog, and in turn, establishes a new syndication file containing the enclosure tags. It searches the content of each post and notices when there is a link to a digital media file. Feedburner then takes this information and generates the enclosure tag that allows automatic delivery of media content to the subscriber's computer. In addition, the Feedburner website offers simple subscription functionality (Morris & Terra, 2006).

Publishing a performance.

With the above logistics in place, each Virtual Performance proceeded in the following steps. First, the performer recorded a musical performance, trimmed the silence from the beginning and end, and saved the performance to a specific folder

using a specific file-naming scheme. The researcher was available at the time of the first virtual performance to answer any questions and troubleshoot any technological issues.

An automated computer script detected the new recording in the folder. The script directed the computer to open the recording in iTunes and compress the recording into MP3 format. The compressed version of the performance was saved into another folder. The original recorded performances were moved to an archive folder.

A second script detected the newly compressed version of the performance and directed the computer to send the performance to the internet audio repository using an FTP client. Following successful transfer to the internet audio repository, the file was moved to yet another folder that triggered a third script to send an email to the study blog. The computer scripts that automated this process can be found in Appendix K.

On Blogger, each email was saved as a draft post for publication. The researcher accessed the blog and made minor edits to the text to personalize each performance. After making these edits, the draft posts were published.

Once published, Blogger updated the RSS feed. Feedburner continually checked this RSS feed and if changes were detected, updated the podcast feed automatically.

Finally, on the audience end of the virtual performance, the audience member's podcatching client detected that a new performance was available. The podcatching client then automatically downloaded the new performance to the audience member's computer. The audience members were then able to listen to the performance at their leisure.

Individual interview following the Virtual Performance.

Immediately following the recording session, the participants completed the C-PAI for the Virtual Performance (CPAI-VP). After completing the CPAI-VP, each performer sat for an interview with the researcher that lasted approximately 45 minutes. In the interview, the participants were asked to compare their experience in Live Performance 1 with that of the Virtual Performance, with an emphasis on comparing and contrasting the manifestation of performance anxiety. The interview was recorded with a Zoom Handy H4n portable digital audio recorder. In a small number of interviews, the recorder was not functioning in the initial moments of the interview. In these cases, the portion missing was reconstructed from the researcher's notes, and the participant agreed to member check the reconstruction for accuracy.

Exposure Performances.

In the intervening time between the Virtual Performance and Live Performance 2, the study participants recorded five additional virtual performances. These virtual performances are referred to as Exposure Performances.

The five Exposure Performances proceeded similarly to the Virtual Performance. The participant recorded the performance using a Handy Zoom H4N connected to a Macintosh computer running Audacity. The performer had the option of editing the silence from the beginning and end of the performance, leaving a two-second frame of silence around the performance. The performer saved the recorded performance in a specific folder using a specific file naming guideline.

An automated script detected the new recording and converted the recording into MP3 format, saving the compressed version in another folder and moving the original to an archive folder.

Another automated script detected the compressed recording and uploaded that file to an internet accessible location. A third script sent an email to the study blog with the necessary HTML language to link to the URL of the web-accessible recording. The email was saved on Blogger as a draft post that the researcher edited to personalize each recording. The post was published, and internet applications continued the process to make each recording available on the study podcast.

After each exposure performance, the performer completed a CPAI (CPAI-EP1, CPAI-EP2, CPAI-EP3, CPAI-EP4, CPAI-EP5). At Site A, the performers completed the CPAI and deposited it in a lock box located in the room. The researcher collected the surveys for scoring at the end of each day. At Site B, the participants completed the C-PAI following each recording session and gave the survey directly to the researcher for scoring.

Live Performance Two.

Two weeks following Live Performance 1, the participants performed in Live Performance 2. Live Performance 2 occurred in the same venue as Live Performance 1 for both sites. At Site A, Live Performance 2 was in the same recital hall on the same piano as Live Performance 1. At Site B, Live Performance 2 occurred in the same room with the same piano at the retirement home. Immediately following their performances, the participants completed the CPAI-LP2 and returned it to the researcher.

Individual Interview Two.

Following Live Performance 2, the participants sat for an additional individual interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. Topics and themes from the first interview were addressed. The interview was recorded with a Handy Zoom H4N digital audio recorder to aid in accuracy of transcription.

Panel discussion.

After the individual interviews, all participants met for a final panel discussion concerning their Exposure Performances and Live Performance Two. Participants from Site A did not meet with participants from Site B. The Site A panel discussion consisted of the 8 participants from Site A. The Site B participants met for the group discussion at Site B.

The panel discussion offered the opportunity for participants to compare their perceptions of MPA in the virtual performance context and the live performance context. In addition, the participants discussed their perceptions of the effectiveness of exposure therapy in a virtual context. At both locations, the panel discussion was videotaped to ensure accuracy in transcription and lasted approximately one hour.

Data Analysis

Self-report measures were collected and entered into a statistical analysis computer program to facilitate calculation and manipulation of quantitative data. The quantitative data is used for descriptive purposes and to provide structural corroboration to the qualitative findings.

The recordings of individual interviews were transferred to the researcher's personal computer for transcription. The interviews were transcribed using TAMS Analyzer, an open source qualitative analysis software program that facilitates transcription through controlling playback of media files. The participants were given the transcripts of individual interviews to allow them the opportunity to amplify or clarify their responses. No corrections were made by the participants after reviewing the interview transcriptions.

After transcription, the researcher analyzed interviews for qualitative analysis coding. The researcher selected three cases to begin the coding process. The researcher read through the transcripts of the interviews several times, identifying units of meaning while labeling and codifying broad categories as they emerged.

After all units of meaning were identified and a preliminary code list developed, the researcher selected a new case and repeated the process. As new concepts or categories emerge, the previously coded interviews were re-examined to determine if new codes or categories apply. This method of qualitative data analysis is known as the constant comparative method. As each new unit of meaning is included in the data, category codes were changed or redefined to form a more accurate portrayal of the data as a whole (Ary et al., 2002, pp. 467-469).

Code Definitions

After analyzing the transcripts, seven broad categories emerged: symptoms, coping strategies, factors contributing to MPA, contextual setting, evaluative statements, and miscellaneous codes. Each of these broad categories divides into further subcategories.

Symptoms.

By and large, the symptom and coping strategy codes developed by Kirchner (2003) proved immediately applicable, and indeed the influence of Kirchner is evident in the both the construction of the interview protocols and the phrasing of individual questions within the interviews. Most of these codes are retained in this dissertation with a few subcategories being added, particularly for items addressing errors occurring in public performance situations and overt physical behaviors. Codes that are retained from the Kirchner study are marked with a superscript K.

The symptom codes fall into four subcategories: physiological, mental, behavioral, and performance quality. Each of these parent subcategories breaks down into several "child" subcategories. The categories, subcategories, and definitions are found in Table III.1.

Category *Subcategory* (subcategory)	Definition
Physiological	Physiological symptoms of anxiety that do not fit into subcategories.
Cardiovascular^{K}	MPA manifestations which affect the heart, such as increased heart beat
Gastrointestinal^{K}	MPA manifestations which affect the stomach and intestines such as butterflies in the stomach.
Muscle Reactions	Other muscle reactions not falling into the subcategories fatigue, shaking, or tension, such as sore muscles, or muscle pain.
Fatigue	MPA manifestations which cause the muscles to feel tired or weak. Can be in conjunction with or as a result of tension. Can be in conjunction with, or as a result of mental well-being. Exm. Arms feel tired.
Shaking^{K}	MPA manifestations which create a trembling or vibrations such as shaky feet, shaky hands, shaky legs.
Tension^{K}	MPA manifestations which create a strain or tightness such as arms, back, shoulders.
Respiratory^{K}	Manifestations which affect the breathing process such as holding breath, inability to breathe, shortness of breath.
Skin	

Cold[K]	Manifestations which result in a relatively low temperature compared with a normal body temperature such as cold hands.
Hot[K]	Manifestations which create an abnormal bodily warmth, such as flushed, or hot flashes.
Sweating	Manifestations which include perspiration, such as sweaty palms.
Mental[K]	Other mental symptoms of anxiety that do not fall under the heading of expectations, intellect and reasoning, negative feelings, or negative self-talk.
Expectations[K]	Levels of attainment placed on individual.
Others[K]	Expectations perceived as coming from others, such as pressure from others, opinion is being formed, see faces of critics past. Include issues stemming from receiving a grade from the performance.
(Physical Appearance)	Subject indicates concern over how he or she appears to other people such as facial expressions, physical mannerisms, and dress.
Self[K]	Self-generated expectations of performer such as desire to please others, fear of not communicating, or living up to own high standards.
Intellect and Reasoning[K]	Thought processes or thoughts creating potential hazards for performer.
Music Related[K]	Cognitive processes involving the music which create challenges for the performer such as memory slips, fighting to find the next idea.
Non-performance related[K]	Cognitive processes unrelated to the music which detract the performer from the music such as lack of focus, racing mind, distracting thoughts.
Performance ability doubts[K]	Cognitive processes in which the performer begins to question their ability.
Negative Self-talk	Subject describes internal negative or judgmental thoughts about the performance or reprimands for errors while performing.
Negative Feelings[K]	A mental state created by the feelings or negative emotions
Apprehension[K]	Those feelings which create a sense of alarm within such as fear, nervousness, tension.
Despondency[K]	Feelings which provide a sense of despair such as depressive feelings, being hopeless.
Poor Self-Esteem[K]	The perception an individual has of themselves such as devastated, failure, self-confidence issues.
Performance Quality	Subject indicates that MPA affects the quality of the performance.
Aesthetic	Subject indicates that the musical quality of the performance is not what the performer had hoped for such as performance lacks emotion or connection.
Musicianship	Subject indicates specific items of musicianship are lacking or forgotten such as tempo, articulation, dynamics, and pedaling.

Technic	Subject indicates awareness that there are technical deficiencies occurring as a result of MPA. Can include inaccuracies, unsure fingering, and foreign sensations in the playing mechanism.
Behavior	Subject indicates a voluntary or unconscious motion that can be overtly controlled once identified.
Jig	Subject indicates a voluntary, stationary, repeated motion, usually in the legs.
Pace	Subject reports pacing, usually in anticipation of performance.

Table III.1. Definition of qualitative codes based on symptoms reported by the subject.
[K]Indicates a category or subcategory is used as defined in Kirchner (2003).

Coping strategies.

Participants responded to questions in the individual interviews concerning how they dealt with symptoms of MPA. Responses included activities before performances as well as strategies used in preparation in the study and rehearsal of the repertoire to be performed. Again, many of the codes developed in the Kirchner study (2003) were adopted in the initial coding of the transcripts, but several additional codes emerged from the data.

Seven subcategories of coping strategies were developed: audience related, behavioral, mental during, mental prior, pharmacological, practice, and time management. The categories, subcategories, and definitions for the coping strategies are found in Table III.2.

Category *Subcategory* (Subcategory)	Definition
Audience Related[K]	These strategies focus on the performer in relation to the audience such as distance from the audience or engaging with audience members before the performance.
Behavioral	Behavioral strategies which the performer engages in immediately prior to a performance.
Mental	Voluntary mental behaviors engaged in prior to performing such as meditation, prayer, imagining a good performance.
Physical	Subject engages in some physical movement to deal with symptoms of MPA. Includes walking, calisthenics, stretching, deep breathing.

Social	Subject voluntarily engages in, or specifically chooses not to engage in, social interactions with other people.
Warm-up	Subject warms up on a piano prior to performing. Includes technical warm-up with scales, and repertoire specific warm-ups including run-throughs and spot-checking.
Dietary	Subject indicates specific dietary items in either the hours leading up to the performance, or self-imposed dietary restrictions in the weeks and months leading up to a performance.
Mental – During[K]	Mental strategies the performer engages in to create a positive experience, such as avoid inner dialog, create own space, mental endurance.
Mental – Prior[K]	Mental strategies centering on the music which a performer engages in prior to a performance such as establish ways to keep focus, memory stations, mental practice.
Pharmacological	Subject reports the use of drugs to help with symptoms of MPA.
Practice	Specific practice strategies used in preparing the piece which deal specifically with combating MPA.
Informal Performances	Subject participates in impromptu performances for a small group of friends or colleagues in preparation for a performance event.
Rehearsal Performances	Subject designates a portion of practice to mentally recreate the feelings of performance such as playing through the repertoire as if it were a performance, but with no audience.
Time Management	Managing events of the day to allow for appropriate pre-performance routine and general mental well-being.

Table III.2 Definition of qualitative codes based on coping strategies reported by the subject.
[K]Indicates a category or subcategory is used as defined in Kirchner (2003).

Context and incidence.

In conjunction with the symptom and coping strategy codes, eight codes were developed to designate the performance context in which the performer experienced symptoms of MPA. In addition, two codes indicating changes in symptoms or coping strategies were developed. The incidence codes identified places where symptoms mentioned in one performance are either completely absent in subsequent performance, or are significantly reduced. The definitions of the context and incidence codes are found in Table III.3.

Category *Subcategory* (Subcategory)	Definition
Context	Indicates the context in which a symptom or coping strategy occurs.
Daily life	Symptoms or strategies mentioned occur in a daily life situation that typically causes anxiety in the subject.
Typical Performance	Symptoms or strategies that the subject experiences in a typical live performance.
Rehearsal Performance	Symptoms or strategies that the subject experiences in the Rehearsal Performance (RP) of this study.
Live Performance 1	Symptoms or strategies occurring in the Live Performance 1 (LP1) of this study.
Virtual Performance	Symptoms or strategies occurring in the Virtual Performance (VP) of this study.
Exposure Performance	Symptoms or strategies occurring in any of the five Exposure Performances (EP1-EP5) of this study.
Live Performance 2	Symptoms or strategies occurring in the Live Performance 2 (LP2) of this study.
Other	Symptoms or strategies occurring in other specific performances not a part of this study such as competitions, masterclasses, or juries.
Comparison	Subject directly compare symptoms or strategies occurring in different contexts.
Negative Report	Subject indicates the absence of a symptoms or strategy that was present in prior performance.
Improvement	Subject indicates a specific improvement in a specific symptom. The symptom has noticeably less impact on performance

Table III.3 Definition of qualitative codes based on context and incidence of symptoms or coping strategies reported by the subject.

Factors.

A number of factors that exacerbate or ameliorate debilitative symptoms of MPA were identified. These factors were generally identified in portions of the interviews in which the participants responded to questions concerning the reasons they felt symptoms of MPA, or why symptoms were different in certain contexts. The definitions of the contributory factors are found in Table III.4.

Category *Subcategory* (Subcategory)	Definition
Aesthetic Focus	Subject indicates focusing primarily on the feeling, mood, and artistry of the performance.
Artistic Autonomy	Subject indicates a mindset that allows for personal artistic statements, or confidence in choosing among different aesthetic options.
Ceremony	Ceremonial aspects of performing such as dress, publicity, and designation of importance that exacerbate or alleviate symptoms of MPA.
Consequences	Perceived consequences for the performer's future based on specific performance. Includes issues about grades, degree plans, or professional opportunities.
Extraneous	Issues unconnected with performance that exacerbate or alleviate symptoms of MPA.
Preparation	Thoughts about adequate preparation that exacerbate or alleviate symptoms of MPA.
Confidence	Subject indicates that thorough preparation leads to confidence that alleviates symptoms of MPA.
Multiple Performances	Subject indicates that frequent performances of the selected repertoire exacerbated or alleviated symptoms of MPA.
Over Confidence	Subject indicates that feelings of over-confidence may have led to a lack of concentration or preparation for a performance.
Prior Experience	Issues that arise as a result of past performances that alleviate or exacerbate symptoms of MPA.
Repertoire	Feelings about the repertoire that alleviate or exacerbate symptoms of MPA. Includes issues about length, style, or general dissatisfaction with repertoire.
Setting	Issues arising from the specific setting of the performance such as lighting or architecture.
Audience	The size or members of the audience exacerbates or alleviates symptoms of MPA.
Familiarity	Subject indicates that familiarity or lack of familiarity with the setting exacerbates or alleviates symptoms of MPA.
Hall	Familiarity or unfamiliarity with the hall or performance space exacerbates or alleviates symptoms of MPA.
Piano	Familiarity or unfamiliarity with the instrument exacerbates or alleviates symptoms of MPA.
Symptoms Awareness	Awareness of typical symptoms alleviates or exacerbates symptoms of MPA. Includes situations in which the performer avoids or ignores symptoms of MPA.
VP Setting	Specific contextual differences in the virtual performance setting in contrast to live performances that exacerbate or alleviate symptoms of MPA.

Table III.4 Definition of qualitative codes concerning contributory factors of MPA.

Evaluative.

The participants were provided the opportunity to evaluate their own

Category *Subcategory* (Subcategory)	Definition
Measure Evaluations	Subject reactions to scores or thoughts related quantitative measures used in this study.
Performance Evaluation	Subject expresses an evaluation of their performance.
Exposure Therapy	Subject evaluates the effectiveness of exposure therapy as experienced in this study.
Transfer	Subject evaluates any benefits from exposure therapy in the virtual context that appear in subsequent live performances.
Virtual Context	Subject evaluates effects of exposure therapy in the virtual context which appear in subsequent performances in the virtual context.

Table III.5 Definition of qualitative codes concerning subject evaluations of measures, performances, or exposure therapy.

performances, the measures used in the study, and the effectiveness of exposure therapy. The definitions for these evaluative codes are found in Table III.5.

Other

Finally, a number of common experiences warranted coding, but did not fall into the categories enumerated above. These codes concern performance feedback that participants received, whether they listened to their own virtual performance recordings, and their thoughts when adopting the role of teacher. Additionally, subjects responded to the idea of MPA facilitating better performances. The definitions for the miscellaneous codes are found in Table III.6.

Category *Subcategory* (Subcategory)	Definition
Teacher Perspective	Thoughts from the subjects when adopting the role of teacher in answering questions.
Feedback	Subject thoughts concerning feedback on a performance from an audience member, judge, masterclinician, or jury.

VP Feedback	Subject's thoughts concerning feedback received concerning a virtual performance from a virtual audience member.
VP Listen	Whether the subject listened to his or her virtual performances, and subsequent thoughts on the possible benefits of listening to recorded performances.
VP Timing	Subject addresses the frequency and or time span allocated for multiple virtual performance.
Facilitative Anxiety	The symptoms or effects of MPA bring out higher quality performances.

Table III.6 Definition of qualitative codes concerning miscellaneous items of interest.

The interviews were coded with the assistance of TAMS Analyzer, an open source computer assisted qualitative data analysis software package. A portion of the transcribed material is selected, and the appropriate code applied. The appearance of the coded transcript is similar to HTML source code. The selected material is bookended with an open and closed tag that indicates the applied code. Multiple codes can be applied to any portion of the text. The code signifiers included the entire trail of "breadcrumbs." For example, if a portion of the text indicates that the subject experiences sweating, the code tag would read "Symptoms>Physiologic>Skin>Sweating." A sample of a coded interview is presented in Appendix L.

Following the coding of individual interviews, the qualitative software packaged facilitated the manipulation and juxtaposition of common themes.

Methodological Rigor

Because qualitative methods of data analysis are sometimes viewed as too subjective for applied research, a number of procedures have been adopted to demonstrate the objectivity and scientific posture necessary for scholarly contributions. These procedures address issues of credibility, and transferability.

Credibility.

In qualitative research, credibility concerns are analogous to internal validity concerns in quantitative research. In short, credibility addresses issues of accuracy and truthfulness in research findings. Credibility can be established through structural corroboration, consensus, and referential adequacy (Ary et al., 2002, p. 452).

Research that provides several data points and perspectives can provide structural corroboration. In this study, data emerging from individual interviews are corroborated with findings from self-report measures and the panel discussion. By addressing the research questions with both quantitative and qualitative data, a more complete picture of each case is painted.

Credibility is also enhanced through peer review of the codes and coding process used in the qualitative analysis of the data set. A peer coder received the definitions of the codes used to analyze the data, and independently coded the transcripts of interviews from two of the participants. The researcher and peer reviewer discussed any discrepancies in coding until consensus was achieved. Following the discussion of the independently coded interviews, the peer coder received copies of three additional transcripts already coded by the researcher. Finally, the researcher and second coder met to discuss any disagreements on the codes assigned in the additional interviews.

Referential adequacy refers to the accurate portrayal of participant views. The process of audio recording and transcription provides a low-inference representation of the data. Further, member checks allow the participants to review their responses in order to clarify or amplify their perceptions (Ary et al., 2002, pp. 452-454). The

participants of this study were given copies of their transcribed interviews to allow them the opportunity to change or clarify their responses. No participants requested any changes nor offered any additional clarification or amplifications.

Transferability.

To what extent can a reader be certain that the outcomes presented in the research will happen in the real world? Meaningful contributions to scholarly research need to prove applicable to the reader of the finished research. In qualitative research, this concept is known as transferability, and is analogous to external validity in quantitative disciplines.

Because case-studies involve such small sample sizes and limited populations, there can be no statistical certainty that an intervention demonstrated to be effective in one person will work for another in a different situation. Instead, each case is described with rich detail, and the findings are bound closely with the particular individual and circumstance. In the end, the issue of transferability is ascertained on the "goodness of fit" between the cases presented in the research, and the situations to which the research might be applied. The research might reasonably apply if the people, settings, and time closely match those of the original study (Ary et al., 2002, p. 454). The findings here are presented in rich detail, using low-inference descriptors and the participant's own words when possible. Such rich detail will allow the evaluation of transferability by the reader.

Finally, the researcher maintained a research diary or audit trail. An audit trail can allow future researchers to evaluate and/or replicate the circumstances leading to a

study's findings. The researcher kept a research diary using a computer aided journaling program.

Participants

Part of presenting each case in rich detail involves supplying background for each individual case. Before beginning the evaluation of the research questions, it is appropriate to meet the cast of characters whose experiences and thoughts form the body of data.

The following case summaries will present some brief information concerning the age, gender, and level of experience of the participants, and their experience with the repertoire performed for this study. Most of this information was collected through the Participant Demographic and Repertoire Information form. On that form, informal performances are performances for friends or colleagues in an informal setting, such as a studio seminar or an impromptu gathering of friends. Formal performances are events such as competitions, juries, departmental recitals, or solo recitals.

In the first interview following the Virtual Performance recording, the subjects were asked to describe the symptoms of anxiety that they might feel in daily life. In the interview protocol, these questions were designed to help participants begin to think about individual components of anxiety before analyzing their own experiences of MPA in performance. The responses to these questions help capture some of the personality of the individuals involved, and are included in the case summaries.

The participants also described the symptoms they typically feel in a live performance. Their responses are included here to help give background to the issues

Participant	**Site**	**K-MPAI**	**Clss.**	**Repertoire**	**Studied weeks**	**Mem. weeks**
Rhonda	A	-28	Sr.	Prelude and Fugue No. 22 in B-flat Minor, J.S. Bach	10	7
Phoebe	A	-23	Fr.	Invention No. 1 in C Major, J. S. Bach	8	2
Elliot	B	-21	Grad 5+	Selection from *Goldberg Variations,* J. S. Bach	47	13
Olivia	A	-18	Sr.	*Minuet sur le Nom d'Haydn*, M. Ravel	10	3
Albert	A	-18	So.	"Mouvement" from *Images, Book I*, C. Debussy	19	5
Lester	A	-17	Jr.	Prelude No. 14 in F-sharp Minor, J. S. Bach	10	2
Lauren	B	-14	Sr.	Nocturne in E-flat, Op. 55, No. 2, F. Chopin	44	15
Graham	A	-7	So.	Invention No. 4 in C Minor, J. S. Bach	10	6
Winona	A	-4	Sr.	Selection from *Valse Nobles et Sentimentales*, M. Ravel	12	4
Kendra	B	-3	Sr.	Variations in F Minor, J. Haydn	15	4
Judith	B	20	Grad. 5+	Toccata in E Minor, J.S. Bach	43	17
Sophia	A	28	So.	Le Papillon, E. Grieg	7	5

Table III.7 Summary of participant KMPAI, experience and repertoire.

and concerns they have generally felt in the past.

Table III.7 shows a summary of the Demographic and Repertoire Information form and the scores on the KMPAI for each participant.

When possible and particularly elucidative, the participants own words will be used. It is hoped that the rich detail provided will help readers evaluate the "goodness of fit" between the cases presented herein, and their own students. The interview transcripts are found in Appendix M, and are cited by pseudonym and the interview in which the exchange occurred. The first interview occurred after the Virtual Performance and is designated VP.

Rhonda

Rhonda was a 21 year-old female in her senior year at Site A, completing a Bachelor of Music in vocal music education. She had been studying piano for thirteen years. Rhonda selected Prelude and Fugue No. 22 in B-flat minor from the *Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I* by Johann Sebastian Bach. She had been studying this selection for about 10 weeks, and has been able to play this piece from memory for about 7 weeks. Prior to the study, Rhonda had performed this repertoire about five times in informal performances, and had one formal performance of this piece.

Rhonda scored a -28 on the K-MPAI, the lowest score of all participants in this study. This score suggests that Rhonda has a low susceptibility to debilitative MPA.

Rhonda claimed that school gives her anxiety, in particular, those times when she is preparing for a major project or test that comprises a large portion of her grade in her coursework. The symptoms she feels from this daily life stress include feeling drained and fatigued, tension in her shoulders and sometimes neck, headaches, and on occasion a change in appetite.

Rhonda also reported that she has a higher frustration level when dealing with school stress, and that can sometimes lead to her being short or impatient with friends

and coworkers. She maintains her mental clarity by making lists to keep her obligations on paper, rather than racing around in her head.

> So I mean there can be like a jumble of things happening in my mind, but normally, I just have, like, a planner or a piece of paper, and I just make sure that all of that is out there so I don't have to remember it anymore. (Rhonda, VP, November 2, 2009, p. 699. All quotes from Rhonda in Chapter III of this dissertation come from the VP interview, and hereafter will be cited by page number only.)

In addition to making lists, Rhonda also reported that she regularly makes time to enjoy entertainment in the form of movies either by herself or in a more social setting. She reported that these social events help her cope with her anxiety level, but only when she has fulfilled her schoolwork obligations.

> **NMC**: Do social events help alleviate your anxieties?
>
> **Rhonda**: Um if, if I know that I have nothing else to be doing. So, social events knowing that I have either schoolwork or progress done on stuff that I need to, then they can be stress relieving. But if I'm hanging out with people, and um, I know that I do have stuff to be done, it doesn't really help stress. (p. 700)

In a typical solo performance, Rhonda complained of relatively few physiological symptoms. She noticed that her hands will shake slightly, and her feet will also shake, especially when pedaling is involved. She mentioned that "…if I'm doing poorly (chuckles), then my stomach starts, you know, like, you just kind of get the feeling in your gut, that, you don't really want to be there anymore" (p. 702), but this

symptom is not very common. She also related that on occasion, she finds that she forgets to breathe, or finds her breathing very shallow.

Most of Rhonda's complaints concerning MPA in a typical performance revolve around her mental abilities in performance. She reported that she often "blanks" on memory, and must take special precautions to avoid major memory slips in performance. She can become distracted by thoughts about the audience's judgment of her performance. On occasion, stressors from her daily life will also claim her attention in the middle of a performance, which can become a distraction. She finds it hard to focus in the initial measures of a performance, but then settles in and reminds herself to concentrate on her playing. She also worries about her physical appearance, specifically her face and the level of emotional expression she's exhibiting, and feels she may be giving a deadpan expression.

> **Rhonda**: Um, I notice that, I'm prob, I'm more expressive in my face when I'm just practicing, and no one is watching, than if there is somebody watching. I guess a little self-conscious of being expressive.
>
> **NMC**: So do you feel, maybe deadpan?
>
> **Rhonda**: Yeah, a little bit.
>
> **NMC**: Um, why do you think you deadpan in a public performance?
>
> **Rhonda**: Um, one is just that, again, the strangeness of not used to being there. And then also, just the, uh, I don't know, self-consciousness of having other people watching. You're more conscious of what you're doing that may be considered strange by others. (p. 702)

To deal with her symptoms of MPA, Rhonda takes specific steps in preparation for a performance. She makes sure she has memory stations, or places in the score that she can immediately jump to should a memory slip occur. She reported that she will do a number of rehearsal performances in which she imagines a variety of audience members listening to her performance.

> **Rhonda**: Um, I occasionally just try to imagine that I have an audience, uh, especially, um, like the week up to a performance. Um, kind of have to psych myself into, "No, you're actually playing for somebody." Because then, when that thought enters my mind when I am performing for somebody, it's not a foreign thought.
>
> **NMC**: How do you psych yourself into believing there is an audience?
>
> **Rhonda**: I imagine specific people that are listening to me or, um, you know, think of, well, "Now strangers are listening to you. What are you going to perform then?"
>
> **NMC**: Do you set a chair up for them, or...?
>
> **Rhonda**: No. (laughs)
>
> **NMC**: What kind of specific people?
>
> **Rhonda**: My piano professor. Um, friends that may not be musically trained. Uh, my brother who is musically trained, who would probably be a harsh critic (chuckles). (p. 704)

In addition to these rehearsal performances, Rhonda will also invite friends into her practice room for informal performances. She reported that she feels this helps her get used to performing with an audience present.

In the moments leading up to a performance, Rhonda will warm up on the piano on the more difficult sections of her repertoire. She will make sure to look at her music, even if it is memorized, to be reminded of specific markings in the score. About ten minutes before her performance is to begin, she prefers to sit quietly and be still.

> Um, I just try to sit and be as, you know, still as possible. Because if I'm up and moving around it kind of heightens my anxiety. So, if I can just find a couple minutes to sit and be still, that's good. (p. 703)

When at the piano and ready to begin her performance, Rhonda reported using imagery as a mental cue to focus.

> I always try to have something in my mind before hand, of what, um, what I should be thinking of, or some visual representation, or um, so that after I get over that initial, "Oh my gosh, I'm in front of people," on stage, I can have something else to focus on. (p. 701)

Phoebe

Phoebe was an 18 year-old female in her first semester of study at Site A majoring in instrumental music education. She had studied the piano for 10 years. The repertoire she selected for performance in this study is Johann Sebastian Bach's "Invention No. 1 in C Major," a rather short piece lasting only 1 minute long. She had been studying the Invention for about 8 weeks, and had it memorized for about 2 weeks. She reported that she had performed the Invention in two informal performances, and has no formal performance experience with this piece.

Phoebe scored a -23 on the KMPAI, suggesting she has a low susceptibility to debilitative MPA, and indeed, judging from her CPAI scores and description of MPA

symptoms in the individual interviews, performing in public seems to give her very little problem.

In her daily life, Phoebe gets anxious about school and grades, particularly with tests for which she feels unprepared. She reported that she will sometimes get an upset stomach and might frequently need to go to the bathroom when undergoing test stress. She reported no further physical symptoms such as muscle tension or fatigue. Her chief complaint with daily life stress is that it makes her worry excessively. Thoughts about upcoming tests can prevent her from falling asleep at night. She finds herself preoccupied with going over her test material, even while trying to concentrate in other classes.

In a typical performance, Phoebe reported that her stomach will hurt, or feels upset to the point of nausea, particularly if the performance is not going well. She also feels hot and sweaty all over. Her arms and shoulders sometimes feel tense, and she might notice changes in her breathing or heart rate if the performance does not go well.

Sometimes her MPA manifests in a difficulty remembering music, and she fears that she might have to stop and start over if she gets really lost. She finds her mind wandering to the audience, and sometimes to grades that might result from the performance. When asked if she ever feels dissociated from the performance, she said that she sometimes depends on finger memory, and watches her performance while thinking about other things.

> **NMC**: Okay. Do you ever feel dissociated from the performance? In other words, maybe your hands are doing something, and you're separate from your hands?

Phoebe: Yeah, maybe if you're going by finger memory.

NMC: Okay. What's that like? What do you mean by finger memory?

Phoebe: Where it's like your fingers are just playing, and in your head, maybe you're thinking about, "Oh my gosh. I'm performing. " And you don't actually know which notes you're playing, kind of. Your fingers are just kind of going.

NMC: Okay. Does that happen to you often when you perform, or just sometimes?

Phoebe: Probably just when I'm really nervous. I feel like that happens, maybe. (Phoebe, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 670. Subsequent citation in Chapter III by page number only.)

In preparing a piece for performance, Phoebe establishes memory stations that she can jump to if she has a bad memory slip. She sometimes makes rehearsal performance a part of her practice routine in which she imagines an audience listening to her. In addition, Phoebe will perform for family and friends to help her get ready for upcoming performances.

On the day of a performance, she thinks it is important to arrive early to have a chance to warm-up prior to the performance. In the moments leading up to a performance, she tends to distract herself from the upcoming event by talking to people or listening to music. She believes this helps her relax prior to a performance.

NMC: Do you implement any relaxation strategies?

Phoebe: For me, what relaxes me is talking to people before I go. Like, I don't like to be by myself.

NMC: mm-hmm.

Phoebe: Like, when I do like, scholarship auditions and stuff, my mom would always be there to just like talk to me about random stuff before I go on, and not the performance (chuckles). (p. 673)

It is important to Phoebe to have this distraction, because otherwise, she would find herself dwelling on the performance resulting in increased anxiety. Phoebe also reported that she will remind herself of her abilities, and this helps her feel more in control of the situation.

I think performing, how you do is all in your head, kind of. So you have to tell yourself you're a good player, and you know your music, and just go out, have fun and do what you do. And just tell yourself that you aren't going to be nervous. Or maybe tell yourself that you're performing for yourself and no one's there. (Phoebe, pp. 670)

Phoebe also prays before a performance, relating "I just ask God to let me do the best that I can, and to help me stay calm" (p. 673).

Elliot

Elliot was a 29 year-old male who is pursuing a DMA in Piano Performance and Pedagogy at Site B. Elliot had over five years of experience at the graduate level, and had been studying piano for 26 years.

Elliot chose a ten-minute selection from Johann Sebastian Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, which he had been studying for 47 weeks. He has had the variations memorized for 13 weeks and reported one informal performance of the piece.

Elliot scored a -21 on the KMPAI, suggesting he has a low susceptibility to debilitative MPA.

Elliot declined further participation in the study shortly after consenting, citing personal and professional reasons. He did not perform in any of the study performances, did not complete any study measures except for the KMPAI and the Demographic and Repertoire Information Sheet, and did not sit for any interviews or for the group discussion.

Olivia

Olivia was a 22 year-old female in her Senior year pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree with a Major in Music, Piano emphasis. She had studied the piano for 11 years. Olivia chose Maurice Ravel's *Minuet sur le nom d'Haydn*, which she had been studying for 10 weeks. She had been able to play this piece from memory for about 3 weeks, and had given 4 informal performances of the piece and one formal performance.

Concerns about arriving on time to work, class, or other important appointments cause Olivia stress in her daily life. She fears the negative consequences of being reprimanded or losing her job should she arrive late. She reported that this anxiety results in muscular tension in her jaw, shoulders and neck, and in extreme cases, this tension can cause discomfort or pain. Olivia feels her heart racing and rapid breathing when getting ready to leave for work, but acknowledges that these symptoms may be due to her agitated, frantic efforts getting ready to leave for work or school. She also feels tension in her stomach that sometimes results in nausea if she has eaten recently. Mentally, she feels as though her mind races with thoughts of all she must get accomplished to be ready to leave on time.

In a typical performance, Olivia reported many of the same symptoms. She feels tension in her jaw and shoulders, but sometimes is not aware of this tension until a level of discomfort or lack of freedom causes her to recognize the need to relax. She also reported a concern that her effort at concentration may make her look like she is frowning. Her legs shake prior to a performance, and her hands will sometimes shake during a performance leading to missed notes. She reported that her stomach feels "fluttery," and she experiences a little discomfort.

> **NMC**: How about, uh, your stomach. You mention that it is "fluttery." What's that like?
>
> **Olivia**: Uh, It just feels kind of shaky. It's a really strange sensation. It's just...
>
> **NMC**: Hard to describe.
>
> **Olivia**: Yeah. It's kind of shaky, kind of, almost, kind of cramped a little. But not painful. It's just all of this... It has to do with my heart rate, too, I think. I just, it kind of, everything in there is kind of like "yuhyueah." (Olivia, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 639-640. Subsequent citations by page only.)

She notices that her heart rate is accelerated and she breathes more rapidly than normal.

During a performance, Olivia finds that her mind will wander to thoughts about the audience's reception of her performance, and sometimes will wander to items completely unrelated to the music or the performance. These thoughts distract her from focusing on the music, and she will frequently have a memory slip because of the distractions. In high school, Olivia remembered being dissociated from the

performance, and would watch her hands perform as she internally hoped for a good outcome. She attributed this dissociation to a dependence on finger memory. With her four years of training at the university level, she no longer feels this sense of dissociation because she knows much more about the structure of music, and coaches herself through a performance with specific memory related cues.

Olivia reported that she begins feeling symptoms of MPA about five minutes prior to a performance that peak just prior to the performance. In the initial moments of a performance, she actually feels calm and confident, but symptoms of anxiety begin to creep back in, especially after a missed note or memory slip.

Olivia has a standard pre-performance routine that she likes to adhere to. She arrives a little bit early to warm-up and play through her piece a couple of times. In the minutes leading up to a performance she paces to work off excess energy, and also prefers to talk with friends to distract herself from the upcoming performance. In the few minutes before entering the stage, she focuses on the music she is about to play.

> **Olivia**: Well I usually beforehand will play it maybe ten minutes, five minutes, at the most before the performance. And then usually I will, when I'm in the green room, walk around. Or just talk to people, just. I don't think about it at all. I just completely take my mind off the performance. And then, once I'm back stage about ready to go, I start focusing about what I'm going to do, and I don't think about the audience. I just think about my piece. And my, ... what's the question again?
>
> **NMC**: That. The steps you take to reduce your symptoms of anxiety.

Olivia: Yeah. Yeah. That's basically what I do. And then during the performance I just try to stay focused.

NMC: Does this pre-performance routine... Is that pretty consistent?

Olivia: Mm-hmm. It's very consistent. (p. 640)

Olivia also prays before a performance.

Olivia: I pray before I perform. I just usually ask God to help me play alright (chuckles) and not make a fool of myself. (laughs)

NMC: So what sort of things do you typically pray for?

Olivia: Oh, just that, I'll perform as well as I'm supposed to, or that I'll at least be able to perform well. Um, that I, that it just won't be something where I did all this practicing and it just comes out for nothing, in the performance. Just that I'll be able to show how hard I've worked. (pp. 641-642)

During a performance, Olivia tries to remain focused on her piece, and will also remind herself to take deep breaths at moments of repose in her piece.

In her practice, Olivia makes a special effort to practice memory stations, and reported that this helps her feel like she will be able to get through a performance even with a significant memory slip. She also tries to recreate her symptoms of MPA in the practice room as she performs her piece. Additionally, she likes to perform in informal performance settings for friends or in weekly seminar.

Albert

Albert was a 19 year-old male in his sophomore year pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance and Vocal Music Education. He had studied the piano for

13 years. For this study, Albert performed Claude Debussy's "Mouvement" from *Images*, Book I. He had studied this piece for 19 weeks and had been able to play it from memory for 5 weeks. Albert had performed the piece in five informal performances and in one formal performance.

In his daily life, Albert recognized symptoms of anxiety over whether he has set his alarm clock. Albert feels fear that he has not set his alarm, and will oversleep and miss class. When he second-guesses whether he has set the alarm, he will sometimes feel a slight queasiness in his stomach.

In a typical performance, Albert primarily complained of second-guessing his memory, particularly at formal junctures where he might accidentally play his piece out of sequence. "I'm asking myself where I'm at in the music, what's coming next, which often times there will be similar sections, so I'll have to determine whether I've, I'm playing the first section, as in an exposition, or the second section as in a recapitulation where the music changes" (Albert, VP, November 2, 2009, p. 447. Subsequent citations by page only). Additionally, Albert will sometimes find his mind wandering to events before or after the performance.

Physically, Albert reported feeling a knot in his throat, and also that he sometimes feels a little queasy. He reported that his hands usually feel either hot or cold, but that he prefers that they not feel cold. He also reportd that sometimes his hands feel hesitant.

> **Albert**: Not so much shakiness, but with the second-guessing myself, uh, I'll feel it in my neck, and then it sort of transfers to whether I'm confident enough to put my hand down, the actual motion of it.

NMC: So like a hesitancy?

Albert: Yes. That's what I'm looking for. (p. 449)

To deal with his MPA, Albert warms up just prior to a performance. He will sometimes take steps to keep his hands warm and also stretches his arms, wrists, and legs. In the minutes leading up to a performance, he focuses on his music, mentally running through it to help him establish a tempo. Shortly before he performs, he tries to step away from this focus for a moment, and also takes a moment to pray. The following exchange details this rather sophisticated approach to concentration and a genuinely decent view of performance.

NMC: Uh, what about prayer or meditation?

Albert: I usually try to pray before playing, but not always. It depends on whether I can actually, uh, remember to do it with all the focus on the piece. And so I try to take some of the focus off of the piece. And... So I guess my out of body experience, like you talked about before, wouldn't happen during the performance, but I try to step out of all my thoughts and do that before going out.

NMC: Okay. Can you explain that a little bit?

Albert: Um, let's see. Like, me personally, I, I as an individual will be thinking, like I said, through the piece mentally, having already run it. And then, I'll try to step back from the piece, uh, clear my mind, more, which would sort of make the sense of, like my individual... I guess I think, me as an individual, I'm thinking about the piece, and then when I'm not, it's more of a separate, not out of body, not a separate person but

a separate state of mind, or mindset. So I try to have that focused mindset that I can return to, but, I don't know if that, I don't know if that helps?

NMC: Is it kind of like, maybe, a focus break or a focus recess?

Albert: Yes, yes.

NMC: It's like, "Okay. I can focus. I'm going to take a moment to be myself."

Albert: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Okay, and when you pray, when you do remember to pray before a performance, what kind of things do you pray for?

Albert: I never play to, or, never pray to play all the right notes. I just pray that all the other performers do well, or their best that they can do for that performance, and that I do my best. And that no matter how a performance ends or begins, that I always walk out with my head held high, held high, with the audience hopefully still supportive, not necessarily gratified or, ecstatic about the performance, but just that there's still dignity at the end of every performance. (pp. 451-452)

During a performance, Albert maintains his focus on the music by cueing himself to look at his hands and at the piano.

NMC: Okay. Are there things that you do during a performance to help with anxiety?

Albert: If my mind's starting to drift to the anxiety or different parts of the piece, or different events or activities, or the audience, then I always

try to zone back in. Because I'm looking at my hands when I'm performing, and I try to zone back in on my hands. And, 'cause there's the, oh, what do you call it, the finger...?

NMC: The tactile?

Albert: Yes the tactile memory. And, sometimes you're prepared, I'm prepared enough that I can just let that take over, but that's never good, especially in that, those spots that we were talking about, the memory. So I try to keep looking at my hands, or the piano, uh, to stay focused on what's really going on right there in the music, the dynamics, the technic. (pp. 452)

In practice, Albert focuses on memory stations, in particular places that he calls "pith-falls," cueing himself to play the appropriate formal section as it appears.

Albert: Um, well there's the pith-falls, pith-falls, or the uh, difference between exposition and recapitulation.

NMC: What did you say before that?

Albert: Uh, the pith-falls. Like, where exactly the differences occur. If there's two sections that are similar, or the same up to a point, where they... I will try to think in my head, and even say even, "First time.", "Second time." And I'll just go back and forth between those two spots. (p. 451)

Albert also designates a portion of his practice time to completely run a piece, and then reflect on areas that need changing. He invites friends into his practice room to listen, and also schedules other informal performances.

Lester

Lester was a 20 year-old male in his junior year of a Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance. He had studied the piano for 12 years. Lester played Prelude No. 14 in F-sharp minor from the *Well Tempered Clavier, Book 1* by Johann Sebastian Bach. Lester had been studying this piece for 10 weeks and had it memorized for 2 weeks. He had three informal performances of the piece, and one formal performance. Lester scored a -17 on the KMPAI, and is categorized as having a low susceptibility to MPA.

In his daily life, Lester feels symptoms of anxiety and stress when preparing for and taking big tests. Worry about upcoming tests causes him to excessively prepare, and in his studying, he feels like he jumps around from topic to topic. When actually taking the test, Lester thinks that symptoms of anxiety might actually help him focus on what he is doing, and is able to remain focused and concentrated. He reported that his heart rate is elevated and that he feels very warm. He jigs his feet up and down to relieve nervous energy. Though he doesn't recognize muscle tension and shakiness during a test, after the test is over, he sees evidence of shaking in his handwriting and assumes that he probably has some muscular tension as well.

In a typical performance, Lester experiences a variety of physical symptoms of MPA. He complained of trembling or shaking hands, and this sometimes leads to missed notes. He feels very warm all over his body, and notices an elevated heart rate and shallow breathing. He also experiences muscle tension in his shoulders and arms, and his stomach feels tight though he doesn't characterize the sensation as nausea or butterflies. Sometimes his hands are cold and clammy, and at other times they are hot.

Lester has doubts about his ability to perform and concerns about how the audience will judge his performance, and these considerations cause him to approach performance with trepidation.

> **NMC**: And again, let's consider mental symptoms. What do you feel mentally as you are in a solo performance situation.
>
> **Lester**: Well I probably want to add fear to that, you know, like, thinking about how, I was listening I'll think, I'll kind of let that get to me, and, I'm afraid I'm going to do poorly. People will be like, "He Sucks!" or something like that.
>
> **NMC**: So you would say an emotion you associate with it would be fear. Um...
>
> **Lester**: But then there's also that excitement kind of feel, you know, I mean like, "Yeah, I get to do this." So...
>
> **NMC**: Are there any other emotions you might associate with performance?
>
> **Lester**: Depending on how well prepared I feel, sometimes there's a little bit of dread. (Lester, VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 605. Subsequent citations by page only.)

Lester sometimes finds his mind wandering while he is performing, and also experiences a sensation of dissociation from his hands.

> **Lester**: But sometimes I feel like I'm just kind of sitting there, and my hands are just kind of doing their own thing, and I'm not a part of it

myself. It's just, my hands are just playing this piece, and I'm like, "Oh, well that's pretty." Or whatever, you know.

NMC: Do you feel out of control of your hands, or not as involved and connected with your hands?

Lester: I'd probably say not as involved. It's not that I don't have control, because I can try to get back in there and be a part of it, but sometimes when I do that is screws me up. So.

NMC: Do you think the dissociation is a product of the anxiety, or more a product of just the piece and the genre?

Lester: I think it's a mixture of both, but I think it's mostly the anxiety, because when I'm in the practice room, I don't have that nearly as much. (p. 607)

Lester thinks that his level of aesthetic involvement with a piece is negatively correlated with the anxiety he experiences. The more involved and in tune with the music he feels, the less MPA bothers him. He feels that some styles of music cause him greater anxiety because he fails to connect with the music. Baroque music, in particular, seems to give him higher anxiety because he is not as aesthetically involved.

NMC: Does it change from performance to performance or does that change within a performance in the same piece?

Lester: Pretty much from performance to performance. It kind of depends on the piece, how well-prepared I feel, and um, pretty much... Actually, a lot of it has to do with almost like, the style? 'Cause, when I play Romantic music, I feel like I'm a lot more in it, but when I play for

instance, Baroque music, I almost feel like I'm almost more, observing myself play it, in a way. And I don't know if it's just because of the technical versus emotional feelings are a lot different, or something like that. I don't know.

NMC: Is there anything else that's different about Baroque music for you? Do you practice it differently, or do you...

Lester: Um, I practice the technic, I practice a lot more technically, I guess. You know, I work on like the scales and the fingerings, and making sure it's a lot more even. I don't, and then I try to add the emotional aspect, but it's more difficult. It's more of just like, crescendos, and that kind of thing. 'Cause you can't really do as much rubato and such, because then it's not Baroque. So. yes. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. Do you have greater or lesser anxiety when you're playing Romantic music?

Lester: I have less anxiety when I'm playing Romantic.

NMC: And that's generally across the board?

Lester: mm-hmm (affirmative). No matter how difficult the piece is, if it's Romantic, I seem to connect with it better, I feel more comfortable playing, and therefore, I'm less anxious, and I'm more excited to share it with people. When I play Baroque music, I've never felt like I've played Baroque music that well, and when I get, there tends to be times when I lose my place, it's hard for me to get back. And so, I'm more anxious with that because I'm afraid I'm going to get off and won't be able to start

up again. I'm gonna lose my place and have to start over, which is bad. You know, and so it's, I'd say that there's definitely a lot more anxiety whenever I play Baroque versus Romantic. (pp. 605-606)

Lester also recognized that he tends to rush his tempos as a result of MPA. He also finds that his fingering becomes inconsistent, which is especially troublesome in Baroque music.

Um, it does affect tempo. I rush sometimes, and then, it's just, I, I can't concentrate to make it slow down. I'm like, "Oh, wow, this is really fast. Um, Um, uh-oh." (chuckles) And it, there have been times where it's been a problem, and I just try to make it through. And then, um, sometimes if, like, both, actually both the Live and the Virtual Performance, for this, um, it was like, for some reason I just wasn't connected with it, and like, my fingering got off, and I didn't know where I was, really. And so, it's like, I found it and I was able to play it, but it was a completely different fingering, and it was like, "Well this is awkward." So, that's, I definitely would say that it affected where I was mentally in the piece, not where my fingers were. (pp. 608-609)

In preparing for performances, Lester will frequently have rehearsal performances in the practice room by himself, and will also ask friends to come in and listen to him. Just prior to a performance, Lester takes a moment to center himself with deep breathing and positive thinking. He will pace or do jumping jacks to expel nervous energy. While in a performance, if he finds that his mind is wandering, he will cue himself to become more aesthetically involved with the music.

NMC: Okay. Um, is there anything that you do during a performance to help you with symptoms of anxiety?

Lester: Um, if I start to feel a little anxiety, I try to do the same kind of thing to calm myself, but I also...

NMC: What kind of thing?

Lester: The breathing, you know, to slow down my breathing, or whatever. Um, I generally, this might sound kind of weird, but I try to lose myself in the music. You know, I try to be a part of the music so much that it, it's a part of me, and I just kind of let it flow out of me through the keyboard, or whatever, so you know, it's like, I am the performance. It's not the piano, but it's me. And so, if I start to feel anxious, I just try to, you know, I don't know how to explain it, 'cause it's something that I just kind of do.

NMC: Okay.

Lester: You know, it's like, I try to be a part of the piece as much as possible.

NMC: So you cue yourself to allow yourself to be intuitive with the piece or, in concert with the piece?

Lester: Yeah. Yeah. (pp. 613-614)

Lauren

Lauren was a 22 year-old female in her senior year pursuing a double major in piano performance and English. She had studied piano for 14 years. Lauren chose to play Nocturne, Op. 55 No. 2 in E-flat major by Frederic Chopin for the study, a piece

she had been studying for 44 weeks. She had her piece memorized for 15 weeks, and had performed in four informal performances and two formal performances.

In her daily life, Lauren notices symptoms of anxiety when she is driving in an unfamiliar location. She notices that her body his tense from gripping the steering wheel and leaning forward. She feels uncertainty, panic, and worry, but also believes that anxiety helps her focus and might give her heightened senses in noticing what is going on around her.

In a typical performance, Lauren feels tension in much of her body, especially in response to the more technically demanding passages in her music.

> **NMC**: Um, do you have any physical symptoms of anxiety that you recognize?
>
> **Lauren**: Um, well I get more, my stomach clenches more. Um, and I also, my typical anxiety, the way I deal with anxiety, is getting tense in the shoulders and arms. Um, so I'll bring my shoulders up, typically during difficult sections. So it's a hunching...
>
> **NMC**: So it's like Frankenstein shoulders?
>
> **Lauren**: Yeah. Yeah, I'll hunch my shoulders up.
>
> **NMC**: Um, is it a squeezing tension? Is it a locked tension?
>
> **Lauren**: I think it's more of a squeezing tension. And it usually escalates. So I start a difficult section, and I might start out with fairly relaxed shoulders, and then gradually. Or, if I'm really afraid of it, then it's right away. (Lauren, VP, April 5, 2010, pp. 574. Subsequent citations by page only.)

Lauren also noticed that her heart rate is elevated, and sometimes she finds herself holding her breath. She gets butterflies in her stomach. Her hands shake during a performance, and sometimes her legs do as well, particularly if she is pedaling or wearing squeaky shoes.

Mentally, she can get distracted by thoughts not connected to the music, and will find herself playing on autopilot until she notices. She described the sensation as time slowing down, allowing her brain to have many thoughts in a short amount of time.

> Well, it's a little, I don't know, it's a little bit like driving, but it's different in that I have a million thoughts a minute when I perform. It's like there's a lot of extra space, or extra time to be thinking. So usually, when I perform, I go on rabbit tracks. My brain will just fly around all over the place and think about random... I remember the last time I performed, I found myself thinking about some friends Facebook page. Like just, and then I was like, "Oh! I'm playing Chopin!" So, um, there's that. So there's, I guess adrenaline that causes me to have a billion thoughts, um, but they're not as clear. Whereas when I'm driving, I become more clear, but when I'm playing, it's a little less clear. It's a little bit more panicked. Um, but there's also, I've over time, suppressed panic, so then it's kind of a dull, a dull panic, I guess. (pp. 576-577)

She reported that she feels worry and fear about not performing up to her abilities, and the audience being able to notice mistakes.

NMC: Fear. What's the fear from?

Lauren: Mostly fear of messing up. Failure. You know, worst case scenario type...

NMC: What is messing up, or failure to you?

Lauren: Um, well first it's failing to interpret the music the way I wanted to. Next it's making enough mistakes that it's noticeable to, you know, to the average listener. Um, so I'm not necessarily worried about making mistakes per se, I'm worried about making a lot of mistakes. Um, but yeah, um, failing to interpret the music. Being nervous enough that I won't allow myself to interpret the music like I can in a practice room. (pp. 577)

Lauren has a specific pre-performance routine that she follows to help her with MPA. In warming up before a performance, she prefers not to play her piece all the way through from beginning to end, fearing that she will have a mishap in warm-up that she will dwell on in performance. Prior to a performance, she will talk with people to distract herself from the upcoming event, and walks around to loosen up. She prays that she will have clear thought and be calm and relaxed, and that she does not play for personal aggrandizement.

During a performance, Lauren chooses specific moments in her piece to relax and re-engage with the music. She also cues herself to attend to specific items in the music as they occur.

NMC: Is there anything that you might do during a performance?

Lauren: To relieve tension?

NMC: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lauren: Um, relax. You know, if I notice that I'm tensing up, I'll try to relax. I'll even pick a spot in the music that it's, where I can relax. I don't do that a whole lot. I usually try to breathe deeply. And, you know, I'll try to reset, pick a spot if I find that I'm wandering, my mind is wandering, then I'll reset and think about the music.

NMC: And when you say, "think about the music," what sort of things are you thinking about?

Lauren: You know, what's going on right then. What I would think about while I'm practicing. You know, I think about something when I'm practicing like "Oh, here comes the two-note slur, so, tension - release." So, what I'm playing at that moment. (pp. 579)

In the weeks leading up to a performance, Lauren focuses on practicing the most difficult sections of her piece so she can perform with confidence. She also ices her hands to help recover from long practice sessions. She likes to read or watch television a little bit everyday to help her get her mind off of issues that cause her stress.

Graham

Graham was an 18 year-old male in his Junior year pursuing a double major in computer science and music. Graham had studied the piano for 13 years, and is performing Johann Sebastian Bach's Invention No. 4 in D minor for this study. He had been studying this Invention for 10 weeks, and had it memorized for 6 weeks. He performed it in two informal performances and one formal performance. Graham scored a -7 on the K-MPAI, and is categorized as being moderately prone to experiencing debilitative MPA.

In discussing daily life anxiety, Graham had a difficult time thinking of a situation that generally results in anxiety. In reading the transcript of the interview, he is careful to answer very specifically and literally.

> **NMC**: …Can you think of a daily life situation that causes you to feel symptoms of anxiety?
>
> **Graham**: Mmm. More than just, more than just performing?
>
> **NMC**: Mm-hmm.
>
> **Graham**: Something happens everyday?
>
> **NMC**: Or it doesn't necessarily have to happen every day, but something that comes up in life that causes you to feel anxiety.
>
> **Graham**: I'm drawing a blank here.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. Do you feel anxiety when it's time to pay the bills?
>
> **Graham**: Mm. I feel a sense of worry that I might not have enough money in my account.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. Do you feel anxiety, uh, taking a test?
>
> **Graham**: Sometimes.
>
> **NMC**: Do you feel anxiety if you're having a project that's being evaluated?
>
> **Graham**: Mm. Not so much when it's being evaluated. (Graham, VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 472-473. Subsequent citations by page only.)

Despite his difficulty in nailing down a specific situation that generally causes him anxiety, Graham recognized that anxiety affects his ability to concentrate, a symptom he considers ironic, as situations that generate anxiety tend to require more concentration.

In a typical performance, Graham's primary symptoms of MPA are distracting thoughts. Graham catches himself depending on finger memory while his mind wanders.

NMC: Do you find you have difficulties concentrating when you're performing?

Graham: Well, occasionally, yes. Occasionally I uh, I drift away in my, and uh, my muscle memory takes over, and it can be, it can be uh, a little bit surprising to realize that I haven't been thinking about the music, but I've kept playing it. And then I realize that I'm not thinking about it, and there's a little hiccup sometimes there, where the, where I have to go from, from my hands knowing what I'm doing to my head telling my hands what to be doing.

NMC: So your mind wanders a little bit sometimes?

Graham: Yeah.

NMC: Do you think that performance anxiety causes your mind to wander, or does your mind wander and that creates anxiety?

Graham: I think the anxiety causes it to wander.

NMC: Do you know to what things your mind might wander?

Graham: Well, it might wander to thinking about the performance, thinking about what mistakes I'm going to make. Or thinking about who's in the audience. Or it could wander to the most random and trivial things like something that happened yesterday at 11:18 A.M. that just randomly popped in to my head, and I can't stop thinking about it for a

little while. Even though it has no relevance to what's going on. (pp. 474)

Graham also reported a preoccupation with the appearance of the first mistake or error in his performance.

> Well, when I'm performing, one of the, one of the things that makes me most anxious is, that I go on, I keep, I keep, I start talking to myself in my head and hearing myself say that, that, "I haven't made a mistake yet. I'm gonna make a mistake now, because I haven't made a mistake yet." And it grows and grows until I make a mistake. And then even after that, it doesn't go away. (p. 473)

Graham reported very few physical symptoms of anxiety in a typical performance. He feels butterflies in his stomach prior to taking the stage, but that goes away shortly after the performance begins. He described a peculiar sensation of floating, or automatic muscle movements.

> **Graham**: … But there is sort of a floating feeling. Like I'm trying to position myself correctly. And, I might be moving, uh, moving in a rehearsed way that I'm not thinking about. That I'm, I'm bowing, and then I'm turning, and then I'm sitting down, and I have my arms in such and such a position. And my foot out extended to the pedal.
>
> **NMC**: So floating as in you're not really thinking about doing those things, you just do them because that's what you have to do before you perform?

Graham: Well, thinking about them a little bit. It just sort of feels like every part of my body is floating on something. It's not, it doesn't feel like, like I'm exerting the effort to keep my arm held up, it's just feels like it's being held up. (pp. 476)

Graham clarified later in the interview that this symptom is not necessarily bothersome, just something that he notices as different in performance than in the practice room.

NMC: Does the floating sensation, is that something that bothers you, or just something you recognize? Or is it something you enjoy?

Graham: It's a, it's a feeling like I'm not really in control of what I'm doing, and I, I guess I just recognize that.

NMC: Like you're a puppet on a string? No?

Graham: Not quite the analogy I would describe it with, but similar, I suppose.

NMC: So, it doesn't bother you, per se, it's just something you notice?

Graham: Yeah.

NMC: Okay.

Graham: 'Cause I know I'm doing what I planned to do. So obviously, I am in, I am in control of, or I was in control of what I am doing now. And just, it's just the feeling that there's, "This is what I'm doing now. I know what I'm going to do in the next couple of minutes. I know I'm going to perform this piece." (pp. 480)

Graham does not have an established pre-performance routine. He typically tries to take deep breaths while backstage waiting to perform in response to any

sensation of butterflies in his stomach. In his study of a piece, he is careful to prepare memory stations throughout the piece.

Interestingly, over the course of this study, Graham's responses seemed to indicate dissatisfaction with the repertoire he selected to perform. His responses belied a notion that he feels his repertoire is trivial and may not show his true capabilities.

> **NMC**: Okay. Anything else. Any other emotions that you might feel?
>
> **Graham**: I feel like, if they're if there are other people that I'm performing with, or who are on the same program that they may have prepared better than me. They may have better repertoire that they're performing. (pp. 473)

Later in the interview, Graham seemed dissatisfied with the emotional content of the Bach Invention.

> **NMC**: Okay. Uh, do you ever try to manipulate your emotions for musical reasons?
>
> **Graham**: Well, uh, the piece that I'm performing for this study doesn't really have too much emotion in it. But I have, there have been other pieces that I've performed where, where uh, it does help to be in a certain emotional state. Uh, and I have, I have tried to think about things and get in that emotional state to perform those pieces. I've also noticed that sometimes, uh, they result in me being in that state at the end of the piece. Uh, some, some uh, long and furious pieces might leave me feeling a little drained afterwards.
>
> **NMC**: And what piece are you playing for the study?

Graham: Bach's Invention No. 4 in D minor.

NMC: Um, and you don't feel that it is particularly one emotion or another?

Graham: I've never thought of what emotion it would be. There is, there is a feeling to the piece, but I've never thought of any particular emotion. (pp. 481-482)

The short length might also contribute to what may be dissatisfaction with his repertoire. "This is a rather short piece. If I had more music, and if it were more, uh, emotionally charged music, music that I feel very strongly about" (p. 483).

Winona

Winona was a 21 year-old female in her senior year pursuing a Bachelor of Music in piano performance. She had studied piano for 15 years. Winona chose a four-minute portion of Maurice Ravel's *Valse Nobles et Sentimentales* to perform for this study. She had been studying this piece for 12 weeks, and had it memorized for 4 weeks. She played in 4 informal performances and one formal performance.

Winona scored a -4 on the K-MPAI. For the purposes of this study, she is categorized as moderately prone to experiencing debilitative MPA.

In her daily life, Winona feels symptoms of anxiety while taking tests. She feels butterflies in her stomach, and feels shaky and trembly all over. Her face feels flushed and hot, and her palms sweat. She experiences muscle tension in her shoulders and neck. She notices that her heart rate is elevated and she sometimes feels short of breath.

Winona's symptoms are exacerbated if she feels unprepared. During a test, she will mentally upbraid herself for not preparing adequately. She feels an inability to concentrate and to recall information that she feels she really knows.

In a typical performance, Winona exhibits the classic constellation of physical symptoms that are associated with MPA. She notices that her face feels flushed and hot, and that her palms are sweating. She feels tension in her shoulders and neck, and shakiness in her arms and hands. In repertoire requiring pedal, she also feels her legs shake. She gets butterflies in her stomach that sometimes escalates to full-blown nausea. Her heart rate is elevated, and she often feels short of breath.

Winona feels panic concerning an upcoming performance, and anger at herself if she does not think she is prepared. She notices the effects of negative self-talk, or distracting thoughts that she directs to herself expressing regret over missed notes or inadequate preparation. She attempts to intervene by cueing herself to focus on the music to stop these negative thoughts.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any, uh, internal dialogue whenever you're faced with a performance situation.

Winona: Yes, but I try to cut that off. If I start doing that, I try to think about the music. 'Cause if I start talking to myself, then I will completely mess up my piece.

NMC: How do you go about cutting off the internal dialogue?

Winona: I think about something else, or I start listening, actually listening to what I'm playing.

NMC: Okay. What's that like? When do you know that you need to focus on the listening?

Winona: When I start getting angry. Or if I mess up, if I hear myself mess up I think, "Oh dear. I should concentrate more."

NMC: Does the mistake cause the internal dialogue, or is it the other way around? Does the internal dialogue cause a mistake?

Winona: I think both. It depends on when the internal dialogue starts. Like if I'm, if I'm unprepared then the internal dialogue begins as soon as I sit down at the bench. But if I feel like, "I can do this," then it only starts if, after I have a little memory slip. But I'm thinking, "Oh." You know, I'm talking to myself. (Winona, VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 760)

Winona believes that the key to conquering her symptoms of MPA is to be thoroughly prepared with adequate practice time. In the weeks leading up to a performance, she devotes a great deal of time to rehearsal performances in the practice room.

NMC: Now, do you ever take steps to reduce these symptoms of anxiety?

Winona: Well, preparation is key. Extensive preparation. Knowing how much I need to prepare in order not to feel so anxious . . .

NMC: So you mention preparation. That's I guess in practice. Getting ready.

Winona: Yes, yes.

NMC: So what things do you do in preparation, um, so that you feel ready to perform. Do you have any specific practice strategies?

Winona: Um, leading up, like right before, you know, the few days or the week before, I have to perform. I have to practice actually performing. Not stopping and going back. I have to do that pretty extensively, I think more than other people do. I don't know.

NMC: So what do you do to practice performing?

Winona: I just play my piece or my multiple pieces, I just play them straight through without the music. And I try to, um, copy the, the performance situation as much as I can.

NMC: In what ways?

Winona: Like with the piano. Like, I will, you know, raise the lid or lower the stand or whatever. (p. 763)

This preparation gives Winona confidence in performance, and helps quiet the internal negative self-talk. Just prior to a performance, Winona prefers to isolate herself from friends so that she can prepare to focus on the performance. She sometimes jumps around and shakes her hands to alleviate nervous energy. She also prays to "be able to get through the performance without panicking and messing up a lot. Without embarrassing myself, basically" (p. 764).

Kendra

Kendra was a 21 year-old female who had studied piano for 15 years. She was a senior pursuing a Bachelor of Music in piano performance and a Bachelor of Business Administration Finance. Kendra performed *Variations in F minor* by Franz Josef

Haydn, a piece that is nine minutes long. She had been studying the piece for 15 weeks, and had it memorized for 4 weeks. She had played her piece in one informal performance, and at the start of the study, had not played in any formal performance. Kendra scored a -3 on the K-MPAI, and for the purposes of this study is categorized as being moderately prone to experiencing debilitative MPA.

In her daily life, Kendra feels symptoms of anxiety when she gives presentations. She feels shaky throughout her body and notices tension in her shoulders. She feels a great amount of nervous energy that she expends by pacing and fidgeting with her hands. Her hands also get sweaty while giving the presentation. She notices that her heart beats faster.

Kendra said she feels a little outside of herself while she is giving a presentation.

> **NMC**: Okay. Mentally, what does it feel like when you're giving a presentation?
>
> **Kendra**: Um, I guess when I'm giving it, I don't feel like I'm giving it, if that makes any sense. You kind of go in to an autopilot mode, so. I know I'm always constantly trying to think of the words I'm saying, but I don't really feel like I'm in control of the words I'm saying, so.
>
> **NMC**: So you feel outside of yourself, maybe?
>
> **Kendra**: Yeah, yeah. Outside, an outer experience. (Kendra, VP, April 5, 2010, p. 544)

In addition, she also is concerned that her presentations are given in a monotone style, claiming she does not wish to go out of her comfort zone while giving a presentation.

Kendra also noticed that though she is nervous and feels symptoms of anxiety, her focus is improved in such stressful situations.

In a typical performance, Kendra feels many of the same symptoms. She noticed that she is tense in her jaw and in her shoulders. This tension might lead to a lack of freedom in her technique and contributes to feelings of fatigue noticeable after the performance is over. Her legs shake, especially when she must use the pedal. Her hands get sweaty and cold, and on occasion she forgets to breathe.

Kendra noticed that she has a difficult time concentrating, especially in the opening moments of her performance. She described her mental status as "discombobulated."

NMC: Um, alright. How about your mental symptoms while you're performing?

Kendra: Um, while I'm performing. They're probably discombobulated. (chuckles) Within the first couple lines, right when I start playing, then a little into the piece, I'll have to do a mental check and get into the piece, or make myself concentrate more on the harmonies and the emotion of it.

NMC: Could you describe or define discombobulated?

Kendra: (Chuckles). Um, well. Usually when I start playing my mind is just a big mess. And, like, I take the time to focus before I play, but usually in a live setting, everything will just get all muddled up, I guess. And so, once I get into the piece more, I'll just kind of realize that I'm not

just focusing on the piece so much, and that I'm kind of gone into autopilot. So.

NMC: Is discombobulated like overwhelmed? Or is it a wide focus? Or is it...

Kendra: I guess it's overwhelmed, more. Just trying to take in the audience members along with everything I should be focused with on the piece, and also being worried at the same time. (pp. 546-547)

Kendra feels apprehension about the audience noticing mistakes in her performance.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific emotions that you associate with performing?

Kendra: Um, scared. (chuckles)

NMC: Scared.

Kendra: Um, probably excited also. Um, heartwarming, I guess would be another one. I, it's hard, because it depends on what piece I'm playing. Those might be the three main ones.

NMC: Scared. What scares you performing?

Kendra: Um, all the people listening. So, if I make a mistake, it might be very noticeable. Or, you never know what's going to happen during a performance, what your mind's going to do, or, I don't know.

NMC: And what is it about a mistake and the audience that makes you scared?

Kendra: Well, if they're music majors, that's even more scary, because you know that they might know the piece, they might recognize it, and

they might be listening to every phrasing or the different passages. I guess that would be the main thing, of just messing up. A noticeable mistake.

NMC: And again, why, what is it about them noticing a mistake that makes you scared?

Kendra: Because you want it to be flawless. (chuckles) And it probably won't be. You want to show them everything you've been working on, and if you make a mistake, it just kind of shows that maybe there wasn't something you practiced enough. Or that's not normally how you play it, and they will never know that, so. (pp. 547-548)

To prepare for performance, Kendra creates mental stories to match the mood of the music. She uses these stories to help her focus on musicianship and to remind her of specific changes in character that she wishes to accomplish in her repertoire. She tries to schedule many informal performances of her repertoire to help her learn how to function in a live performance setting.

NMC: You try to do lots of performances? What do those performances, how do those performances help you?

Kendra: They help me play in front of people. Um, just to run through the entire performance without, other than by yourself, because you can always stop yourself in a practice room. So it's just, mostly to just do the whole thing in front of people, just to get the practice of it. So that when you do it for the first time in front of other people, it's not...

NMC: So is it a stamina issue, or...

Kendra: Um, I don't, I'm not sure. I think it's more of just, the more you play in front of people the more comfortable you feel in that setting. So it might just be like a different setting. (p. 549)

In the moments leading up to a performance, Kendra does light, yoga-like stretches and focuses on her breathing. In her warm-up, she prefers to have at least one complete performance of her piece. She also prays that she will get through her performance, and takes a moment to meditate and think through her piece.

Kendra: I'll do meditation, and, probably, yes prayer to get through it (laughs) so.

NMC: Okay. Can you describe your meditation?

Kendra: Just, kind of a moment to just close your eyes, and just run through the piece in your head. Maybe even sing it out loud to yourself. Or breathing, just breathing in and out, too. (p. 550)

Judith

Judith was a 30 year-old female who has studied piano for 22 years. She had more than five years of graduate school study in piano and was seeking a DMA in Piano Performance and Pedagogy. Judith chose *Toccata in E minor* by Johann Sebastian Bach to play for this study. She had been studying this work for 38 weeks, and had it memorized for 17 weeks. She had performed the *Toccata* in six informal performances and one formal performance. Judith scored a 20 on the KMPAI, and is categorized as being highly susceptible to debilitative MPA for this study.

In her daily life, Judith finds that fulfilling the demands placed on her by her doctoral studies give her symptoms of anxiety. She feels overwhelmed by the

expectations placed on her, both in the amount of work required, and the quality of that work. In her efforts to complete her work on time and in a satisfactory manner, she feels frustrated and frazzled, and sometimes finds herself thinking negative thoughts about her abilities and intellect.

> **NMC**: Do you, uh, have any kind of internal thoughts or talking to yourself when you get anxious?
>
> **Judith**: Um, I'm sure I do. I'm working on some of that stuff I guess. Um, I guess just a lot of self-doubt.
>
> **NMC**: Okay.
>
> **Judith**: Doubt on abilities and capabilities.
>
> **NMC**: So what sorts of things would you say to yourself in your head?
>
> **Judith**: Um, I don't know, "I must just be stupid," is probably the main one. "I guess I'm not as smart as everyone else." (chuckles) (Judith, VP, April 3, 2010, p. 501)

Her physical symptoms are pervasive and severe, and have become something of a general health concern. She finds that she will sometimes only become aware of these symptoms after a major incident, and also claimed that she is working harder to recognize her physical symptoms of anxiety before they reach a threshold of causing major disruptions in her life. In particular, she suffers from extreme tension in her jaw that continues into her sleep.

> **NMC**: ...let's just go down from your head down to your feet. Do you feel anything in your head and your face, or you know, your neck, whenever you get anxious from your doctoral work?

Judith: Um, well, um, I guess I'm becoming more aware of this stuff. I mean it's not just my doctoral work, it's stuff in general. Um, when I was little, I just had different stress. Everyone has stress, I guess. I used to grind my teeth a lot. And this last year, a year ago, April, May, I began to notice that I was grinding my teeth. Like, I became aware of it again, and I didn't know how long I was doing that before then. Um, and uh, in August, I was, yeah, uptight about different things, and blah blah blah, and um, I didn't realize, but I must have had a lot of extra tension in my face and jaw, because I ended up breaking my tooth. Um, but I didn't realize it until afterwards. And then, it broke again in November. So like, since then I've become more aware of not grinding my teeth and releasing tension, for example, from my face and my jaw. Um, but most of it, I haven't been aware of, so it's a new awareness that I've started to acquire in the past year. Um, uh, also, just everywhere, physically, neck shoulders, back, I'm not sure how to release tension in my back, but I have, I'm aware that it's there, which, I guess is a step forward. But I'm not sure what to do, how to make it go away.

NMC: Now the teeth grinding, is that a nocturnal teeth grinding during your sleep, or is that just during the day?

Judith: Mostly, um, it's during my sleep, I think. Like I would, in the last year, I would remember waking up. I was like, aware, I was grinding my teeth.

NMC: I do the same thing.

Judith: Um, but um, I have also noticed that um, like since then, like last fall, I did notice it a bit also during the day. Not so much last fall, end of last fall semester, December, and um, start of this semester, January. Getting anxious about upcoming things more so. I um, yeah. I had a lot of tension. There was one point where it really just hit me. So I've been trying to become more aware of those things. (pp. 501-502)

In addition to her jaw, Judith feels tension in her shoulders and neck, in her upper and lower back, and in her leg muscles. She sometimes experiences gastrointestinal discomfort, occasionally manifesting in full-blown nausea.

In a typical performance, Judith experiences a long anticipatory build-up in anxiety symptoms culminating in a general emotional breakdown. She attributed her difficulty in thinking clearly and negative emotions to what she feels are unreasonable expectations in performance.

NMC: Let's start with preparing before it, what sort of symptoms do you feel?

Judith: Well, I try to be pretty calm, and not get to worked up about the upcoming date and that sort of thing. Um, I guess sometimes I feel my brain just turns to mush. Like it all breaks up to little pieces, and it can't function. It can't think and do what it's supposed to do.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any emotions that you associate with preparing to perform?

Judith: Um, I guess anxiety. I don't know if that's an emotion. Lot's of anxiety. Um, yeah, just, I said that everything just sort of goes until it

explodes. So, sometime nausea comes with that. But, usually it ends up resolving in some sort of emotional falling to pieces. (chuckles)

NMC: Falling to pieces. Can you...?

Judith: Uh, I think, I just let out, I guess, after everything gets so tense. Yeah.

NMC: Um, do you feel as though your mind is working so fast on so many different things that you can't focus, or do you feel like there's just a, like a stalled engine?

Judith: More like it's stalled. And it like stalls because, I guess I feel about the, it's, I get anxious more because of the pressure and the expectation, or what I perceive it to be. And that those things always seem to be, um, higher than what is actually, humanly attainable. And so, it's sort of this, it's like, uh, this, you're, it's inevitable that you're going to fail. And so it's just crash, this psychological thing, that way. 'Cause it's like, you can't actually attain that anyway, but that's what you're expected to attain. And so it's this, this struggle of, um, wanting to but not being able to, but not having the means, or the help to get there. (pp. 503-504)

During a performance, she feels a constant panic, an experience she described as internal trembling. She finds herself having negative thoughts during performance related to her ability to perform and the inevitability of not being able to meet what she feels are unrealistically high standards.

NMC: Do you have any internal dialogue while you're performing. Do you talk to yourself while you're. . . ?

Judith: Um, I, I think that, I'm noticing that more. And I think it was there, but it was sort of hidden, too far hidden to actually hear what was being said.

NMC: What sort of things...

Judith: It's just like there were negative thoughts, but you don't really know what, you don't know what the specific thoughts were. Um, um, I guess, it's just, this constant thing of having this check list of things you ought to be doing, and whether or not you're actually doing it or not. It's still that, whether or not it's good enough to pass, whether or not you have that approval. Whether or not you're arriving to those expectations that need to be fulfilled. Um, lots of it, lots of it has been in the past, worry about memory in particular, and upcoming things, and blah blah blah, whether or not things are going right, or what so and so thinks. I don't know, even not, even not so much that, but just being aware of, I guess the biggest thing is the, "When are you going to screw up?" type of thing.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: And, um, somehow things not being good enough to satisfy all those people that you see out of the corner of your eye.

NMC: What sort of things do you think they need to hear to be satisfied? What specifically are these expectations that you feel from them?

Judith: Um, perfection.

NMC: Perfection.

Judith: Absolute perfection.

NMC: So that means not a missed note?

Judith: And, um, yeah, and also at the highest level of musicality. Like, getting to a spiritual realm of things to, yeah. Absolute, yeah. (p. 505)

Judith's mental symptoms of anxiety are accompanied by a host of physical symptoms, many of which she only recognizes after the fact.

NMC: Okay. Let's move to physical symptoms of what you typically feel for a solo performance. Um, do you feel the tension in your jaw that you mentioned, while you're playing?

Judith: Um, while I'm playing? I don't know. Maybe I notice it more afterwards. When I'm playing, I don't notice much physically, like all that. I notice it more afterwards. Like, if I'm tense playing, I don't notice it until after I'm done. And then I'm like, "Oh, my arms feel really tired." Or, yeah. But, um, I haven't quite. I'm starting to. I'm starting to notice a little bit more when I'm playing, but that, that transition hasn't fully been made. (p. 507)

She complains of tension in her arms, back, and sometimes legs. She gets light-headed, possibly related to moments when she realizes she is holding her breath. After she is

done playing, she notices that her skin feels hot, and perhaps sweaty. Judith also will realize that her arms or her legs are shaking or trembling, but again, this realization usually occurs after the performance is over.

Concerns about MPA cause Judith to make many lifestyle choices in the month leading up to a big performance. She carefully controls her diet to eliminate greasy foods and caffeine. Judith also tries to exercise vigorously to help release some nervous tension. In the weeks leading up to a performance, she prioritizes sleep over academic concerns. She also tries to manage her schedule so that she has fewer obligations.

NMC: Alright, do you typically take any steps to reduce your symptoms of anxiety?

Judith: Yeah. And actually in one sense, it also increases, I don't know about increases anxiety, but it produces a different type of anxiety a little bit. Like, for example, the month before a big recital, particularly a solo thing, I eliminate caffeine, well I don't take much caffeine to begin with, but I eliminate caffeine, sugars and oils and greasy things as much as possible. I mean, if for like the first two weeks or so, maybe I'll have a little bit, but particularly two weeks before, I don't touch any of that stuff at all. Um, I make sure I get regular exercise. I run particularly. In particular, I run. Um, just to get out extra adrenaline and nervous things and blah blah blah blah. And also, I have to sleep. And the week before, sleep is an absolute priority. Definitely. Um, which, then, and I have to have particularly before, I also have to have time for myself. I don't teach the week before, I don't have rehearsals. Um, yeah, I made that

mistake for my senior recital in my undergrad. Not doing that again! (Laughs) Like it went okay and everything, but it was just too much, yeah. Um, uh, and but then, academically, that puts meet behind that way. So it's a, it's quite a juggling issue.

NMC: Okay. So when you say you make time for yourself, that is reducing the amount of time you spend on other obligations?

Judith: Yeah, make sure that I have time to breathe. Rather than solo, rather than just rushing from point a to point b constantly and getting frantic over... Or trying to finish cramming whatever the next assignment is, you know, before 2:00 A.M., or whatever. You know it's like, "It's like 10:30. I have got to sleep. I've got to, I can't understand this. It's done." Because otherwise it doesn't work performing wise. I have to sleep, and I have to... Running helps a lot. I need to run, and I do that. And then, I also eat a lot of vegetables. I find that helps. A lot of vegetables. (p. 509)

Judith also tries to schedule many informal performances, and is careful to select an audience that she feels is supportive of her efforts. Interstingly, she does not include her applied professor or her doctoral committee among those in front of whom she feels safe performing.

Judith: Um, I also try to arrange some other performance of the recital, of the program.

NMC: What other things do you do...

Judith: With safe people. Another thing that I try to do, I try to play for people who are also planning to come to my recital who have the time to do that. You know, it's a huge time commitment. It helps me psychologically to know that, you know, it helps go over that hurdle. "I've already done this before. I've already played for these, these are not just strange people who." You know, and also, I only invite people who like me. (chuckles) Minus my committee, which of course, I don't have any choice in that. (laughs)

NMC: Who are "safe people."

Judith: Um, people, um as a general rule of thumb, not pianists.

NMC: Okay. What makes them safe?

Judith: That, um, they're accepting of me. It's like, they're not, I'm not thought less of, even if something happens. Um, yeah, I, people who I trust and have some sort of relationship with. That, that helps. Um, I guess also people who have, who I know have supported me in the past, and have, um encouraged me in different ways. Um, my studio, my students, and those parents are safe people. Because part of that trust is already there, first off me teaching, and I know that, they already, they have no doubt about my capabilities as a teacher or as a performer. And, yeah. And um, certain other people. So, there are some faculty, but I still get nervous around them, particularly if they are music people. Non-music faculty is better. (pp. 509-510)

On the day of the performance, Judith prefers to have a long, calming practice session a few hours before the performance. She will do some light stretching before she dresses for the concert, finding it difficult to stretch in her concert attire. She tries to arrive early at the performance venue to try out the piano and become accustomed to the acoustics of the hall.

Judith has recently begun taking beta-blockers prior to a performance to help with her symptoms of MPA. She finds that the beta-blockers help her maintain mental clarity and allow her to attend to specific elements of her performance.

NMC: Let's talk about that for just a minute. You mentioned it during our informed consent meeting. When did you start taking beta-blockers?

Judith: Um, about a year ago.

NMC: Um, and it's specifically to deal with performance....

Judith: Um, yeah, I also do it for class presentations.

NMC: Okay. And, uh, could you describe maybe dosage and timing?

Judith: Um, I usually take about an hour before, hour before the performance. Um, and, um, actually, I think I'm going to start making some alterations, slightly. I take about, um, two. Yeah. They're, so 20 milligrams.

NMC: Okay, so twenty milligrams about an hour before.

Judith: Yeah. Um, for a full solo recital, I have three.

NMC: Okay. Can you tell what it does to you? What sort of things change when you take the beta-blockers and when you don't?

Judith: I can think.

NMC: You can think.

Judith: I can think, yeah. And I hear. I can hear, I hear what I'm playing. Like before, I don't hear. Like everything just goes out the window and I get done playing and I can't say whether, it just all feels bad. And you can't, if someone says something is good about it, it doesn't make sense to what I perceive. It's sort of like people are lying, or just trying to be nice, or not really trying to help you improve. That has all that, those complications, too. But, um, I can, I can hear what's happening technically a little bit more. I can hear a pedal, like does it, it does stuff. And I can think and follow. I can follow musical lines. I can follow a harmonic progression. If something happens, there's not an immediate shutdown. And I can still, I can, like, get out of it a lot better. I'm still nervous, but the nerves, the debilitating aspect of it has been reduced. (pp. 506-507)

Sophia

Sophia is a 19 year-old female who has studied the piano for 14 years. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Music with an emphasis in Piano Performance, and is in her sophomore year. Sophia chose "Le Papillon," by Edvard Grieg to play in this study. She had been working on the piece for 7 weeks, and had it memorized for 5 weeks. She had performed it once in an informal performance setting, and had not performed this piece in a formal setting. Sophia scored a 27 of the KMPAI, the highest score among the cases presented here. Her score suggests that she is highly susceptible to debilitative MPA.

In her daily life, Sophia experiences symptoms of anxiety when giving instruction as a teacher's assistant in aural theory. Sophia had trouble identifying mental symptoms of anxiety, and distinguishing the mental symptoms from physical symptoms, an issue which appeared early in her interviews.

> **NMC**: Okay. So, what does that feel like, teaching? Um, what are the mental symptoms of anxiety that you feel?
>
> **Sophia**: Mental symptoms... Sometimes, I get the butterflies in my stomach, or I just get very, um, I get very anxious. Just fidgety. I get very fidgety. That's probably what it is. I pace a lot. (Sophia, VP, November 2, 2009, p. 724)

Sophia never did clearly identify mental symptoms of anxiety in her daily life, but she readily identified a few physical symptoms. She noticed that she paces, or that her legs will "jig," or rapidly bounce up and down. Sometimes, she gets butterflies in her stomach, or feels as though her stomach is churning or in knots.

Sophia feels a sense of dread in the days leading up to a performance. In a typical performance, Sophia has trouble with memory. She finds that her mind has gone blank, and that she must fight to hold a performance together.

> **Sophia**: Well, I think my main issue is forgetting the music. Even though I know I have it memorized well, I'll get panicky about remembering the music. So, then I'll try to play the piece in my head, and then I'll most likely get to a point where I can't remember where I am, and then that's when I start to panic and my mind starts to go on... it just starts winding, trying to think of where I am.

NMC: Can you describe that winding?

Sophia: Um... You're just trying to play the piece through in your head and figure out how it goes. So...I can't explain it very well. Let's go on, maybe I'll think of something.

NMC: Um, memory. Do you think, do you think the anxiety causes you to forget things, or does it distract you in ..

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: ...such a way that it causes other issues?

Sophia: It could be a little bit of both. I'd say a little bit of both. Because, memory is not a problem for me, and then when I get in front of people, then it becomes an issue.

NMC: Do you find you start second-guessing your memory?

Sophia: Yes. I have to say to myself, "[Sophia], your piece begins on g#," before I can go out on stage. (p. 727)

In the midst of fighting for the next idea, Sophia suspected that she may forget many items of musicianship such as articulation and dynamics. Sophia feels like she is highly focused during a performance because of the demands of holding it together. Interestingly, when Sophia performs as accompanist, she feels excited about the opportunity to perform.

NMC: Do you ever feel excited to perform?

Sophia: In groups.

NMC: Okay. Explain.

Sophia: Like, accompanying, I do a lot of accompanying. So I get excited to perform those things, but solo performances just are not fun for me. I don't enjoy them. (pp. 728-729)

Sophia experiences many physical symptoms. She paces and jigs her leg before a performance. Her stomach feels as though it is churning or in knots. She feels tension in her shoulders, and her face flushes and feels very hot. Her hands will get sweaty, and are sometimes hot, but more frequently very cold.

Just prior to a performance, Sophia will do some light stretching and focuses on breathing deeply.

NMC: Explain deep breathing. How do you incorporate...

Sophia: Just taking, taking good (demonstrates) in through your nose, out through your mouth. Just taking good deep breaths. Like you would at the doctor's office.

NMC: And when do you typically do this?

Sophia: Oh, in the practice rooms right before. Or I'll stretch, you know. Just do like, you know, um, hands up in the air. Little stretches just to try to calm myself down. You could call it mini-yoga. (p. 729)

In her warm-up before a performance, Sophia will play some of her favorite pieces to help her feel calm and confident. She prefers to warm-up mostly with scales and arpeggios, and just briefly run through a few sections of the repertoire she will be performing. Sophia also prays about her specific symptoms of MPA before a performance.

NMC: Do you implement anything like prayer or meditation before you perform?

Sophia: Yes. Yes. I pray.

NMC: Okay. And when do you do that?

Sophia: Probably right before I walk out on stage, and just when I sit down. Say a quick prayer and then hope for the best (chuckles).

NMC: mm-hmm. What kind of things do you pray for?

Sophia: Um, that, I that He keeps me calm, and I play the piece the best I can. And if I have specific areas where I have problems, you know, help me through those pieces. Help my hands not to be sweaty. Help me to enjoy this, and let the audience enjoy it as well. (p. 730)

Sophia regularly uses rehearsal performances as a means to prepare for upcoming recitals. She rehearses both the ceremonial aspects of performing as well as the repertoire to be performed.

NMC: Okay. What about in your practicing, do you have strategies that you implement while you're practicing to help you with performance anxiety?

Sophia: I'll pretend in the practice room, well, I'll get up and then bow like it's a performance, and then play the piece through like it's a performance, and then bow at the end. So, just have mock performances. (p. 730)

Summary

The procedures and methods of data analysis were developed to adequately address the three research questions in a systematic, academically rigorous manner. After data gathering at two research sites, scoring the quantitative self-report measures of anxiety, transcribing and coding the interviews and group discussions, and establishing credibility through member checking and peer coding, several themes emerged suggesting answers to the research questions posed. In the following chapter, these results are presented in rich detail, drawing from three distinct data sources: self-report measures of MPA, individual interviews, and a group discussion.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In evaluating the research questions, data are drawn from three distinct sources: quantitative data from self-response questionnaires, qualitative data from individual interviews, and from the group discussion. Though this research has an extraordinarily small sample size in comparison with research that is primarily quantitative in nature, it is important to note that the statistical evidences presented are not the primary factor in evaluating the research questions. Rather, they form one leg of a three-legged stool upon which strong conclusions might confidently repose.

The qualitative data are presented in rich detail, preferring the presentation of the words of the participants when possible. The interview transcripts are found in Appendix M, and are cited by pseudonym and the interview in which the exchange occurred. Thus, an interview with Graham following the Virtual Performance recording session is referred to as "Graham VP," and an interview with Sophia following Live Performance 2 is referred to as "Sophia LP2." The transcripts of the group discussions are presented in Appendix N, and are cited by the site of the discussion.

The results of this study are presented in order of the research questions. Each research question is reprinted for convenience at the head of the results sub-sections.

Questions 1: Level of MPA.

The section that follows presents data regarding the first research question, reprinted here for convenience.

1. How does the level of MPA differ between the virtual performance setting and the live performance setting in student solo piano performances at the university level?

Analysis of the three data sources strongly suggests lower levels of MPA in the virtual performance context in comparison to the live performance context. Interestingly, the level of MPA experienced in the virtual performance context does not appear to be substantially elevated from MPA experienced in a rehearsal performance context, though the data are conflicting.

Quantitative evidence

Statistical analysis of the self-report measures shows strong evidence that virtual performances generate fewer symptoms of MPA than live performances as measured by the Conklin Performance Anxiety Inventory (CPAI). A paired-samples *t* test was calculated to compare the mean CPAI score from Live Performance 1 (CPAI-LP1) to

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CPAI-LP1	**11**	**43.00**	**85.00**	**59.36**	**12.30**
CPAI-RP	**11**	**29.00**	**71.00**	**44.55**	**11.99**
CPAI-VP	**11**	**29.00**	**63.00**	**43.18**	**10.45**
Valid N (listwise)	**11**				

Table IV.1. Mean and standard deviation of CPAI scores from Live Performance 1, Virtual Performance, and Rehearsal Performance.

the mean score from the Virtual Performance (CPAI-VP). The mean of CPAI-LP1 was

59.36 (*sd* = 12.30), and the mean of CPAI-VP was 43.18 (*sd* = 10.45). A significant decrease from CPAI-LP1 to CPAI-VP was found ($t(10)=3.578$, $p = .005$).

To establish a base line for MPA symptoms, the participants completed the CPAI-RP following the Rehearsal Performance, under the assumption that a solo performance with no audience in attendance that is not recorded or distributed to an

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	CPAI-LP1 – CPAI-VP	**16.18**	**15.00**	**4.52**	**6.11**	**26.26**	**3.578**	**10**	**.005**
Pair 2	CPAI-VP – CPAI-RP	**-1.36**	**8.81**	**2.66**	**-7.28**	**4.56**	**-.513**	**10**	**.619**

Table IV.2. Paired-samples *t* test comparing mean CPAI scores from Live Performance 1 to Virtual Performance and Virtual Performance to Rehearsal Performance.

internet audience would provide a floor to the CPAI scores. Surprisingly, the mean score of the CPAI-RP was actually higher than the CPAI-VP, though a paired-samples *t* test indicated the difference was not statistically significant. The mean score for the CPAI-RP was 44.55 (*sd* = 11.99). No significant difference from the CPAI-VP to the CPAI-RP was found ($t(10) = -0.513$, $p = 0.619$). The means and standard deviations of all three scores are presented in Table IV.1. The results of the paired-samples *t* tests are presented in Table IV.2.

Qualitative individual interview evidence

By and large, qualitative data from the individual interviews confirm the statistical data. A few individuals reported higher CPAI scores in the Virtual Performance than in Live Performance 1, contrary to the quantitative findings. Several individuals reported lower scores on the CPAI-RP compared to the CPAI-VP, a situation that one would assume to be the case, but is contrary to the means of the population as a whole. The individual scores on the CPAI-RP, CPAI-LP1, and CPAI-VP are presented in Table IV.3. The cases are presented in order of increasing susceptibility to MPA based on the responses to the K-MPAI.

K-MPAI Category	Case	CPAI-RP	CPAI-LP1	CPAI-VP
Low	Rhonda	39[b]	64	52
	Phoebe	37	63	29
	Olivia	47	52	41
	Albert	32	43	31
	Lester	47[b]	68	49
Moderate	Lauren	47	64	43
	Graham	41	47	40
	Winona	41[b]	44	53[a]
	Kendra	29[b]	60	32
High	Judith	71	63	63[a]
	Sophia	59	85	42

Table IV.3. Individual CPAI scores for the Rehearsal Performance (CPAI-RP), Live Performance 1 (CPAI-LP1), and the Virtual Performance (CPAI-VP).
[a] Individuals reported Virtual Performance score is higher or equal to Live Performance 1.
[b] Individual reported Rehearsal Performance score is lower than the Virtual Performance score.

Participants, for the most part, experienced either a complete absence of symptoms mentioned in Live Performance 1, or their symptoms were noticeably reduced in the Virtual Performance. Representative examples from the individual interviews are presented below. Additionally, two participants whose CPAI scores

from the Virtual Performance are equal to or greater than the scores from Live Performance 1 are presented to illustrate cases contrary to quantitative findings.

Lauren, a participant from Site B, exhibited CPAI scores that conform to the mean scores of the study population as a whole. Lauren's responses concerning her physical and mental symptoms in Live Performance 1 and the Virtual Performance show either a complete absence of symptoms in the Virtual Performance, or symptoms with noticeably reduced severity. Her physical symptoms from Live Performance 1 include shaking in her arms and hands, tension in her shoulders, shallow breathing, and queasiness or "butterflies" in her stomach.

NMC: Okay. Let's move on now to the Live Performance, and this was the performance at the retirement center. Um, can you recall any of the physical symptoms you may have felt during the Live Performance?

Lauren: Um, shakiness.

NMC: Okay. And where did you feel the shakiness?

Lauren: In my arms. Arms and hands.

NMC: Okay. Um, is it a vibrating shakiness, or a weak shakiness, or a fluttering shakiness?

Lauren: A weak shakiness.

NMC: Okay. Uh, and when did you start to feel that?

Lauren: Um, a little bit before I performed, so while the others were performing.

NMC: Okay. Again, let's just sweep from the head down to the toes. Did you feel anything in your face or in your neck while you're performing?

Lauren: A little bit in my neck. I don't remember about my face. I probably bit my lip, but...

NMC: And in your neck, was it the tension again?

Lauren: Yeah, in the back of my neck.

NMC: Okay, your shoulders, did you feel the clenched shoulders, or I guess you said the hunched shoulders?

Lauren: Um, well, that performance was interesting because the bench was about, it felt like it was several inches higher than I usually sit. So I think that I actually tried to overcompensate, and not, I don't think my shoulders were that hunched. I think that they were tense, but since I felt like I was reaching for the keys, then they weren't hunching up as they would. (VP, April 5, 2010, pp. 581-582)

When questioned about her physical symptoms in the Virtual Performance, she clearly indicates that her physical symptoms of MPA were noticeably reduced in the Virtual Performance when compared to Live Performance 1.

NMC: Alright, let's now consider the Virtual Performance, the recording you just made. Um, did you recognize any physical symptoms of anxiety during the recording?

Lauren: A little bit. Not, not a whole lot. A little bit of tension.

NMC: Okay. And where?

Lauren: Um, my arms. A little bit in my shoulders.

NMC: Okay. Um, did you have the issues in you stomach that you mentioned for the other performances?

Lauren: No.

NMC: No. Did you have the clenching of the forearms that you mentioned for the other performances?

Lauren: No.

NMC: No. Um, did you have the shoulders raised or hunched that you recognized?

Lauren: Probably a little bit, but not that I noticed much.

NMC: Okay, how about your legs shaking. Did you notice that?

Lauren: No.

NMC: No. In general, would you say that your physical symptoms were about the same, less, or more than the Live Performance?

Lauren: Less. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 586)

When questioned about the mental symptoms of MPA experienced in Live Performance 1, Lauren complains of a lack of focus leading to memory slips and difficulties with her technic.

NMC: Uh, did it affect your focus or your concentration?

Lauren: Yeah.

NMC: How so?

Lauren: Um, the same as a general, um, lack of clarity of thought. And then, more thoughts per minute, I guess. So, thinking a lot more about what was going on, but not quite as focused.

NMC: Okay, so your brain on turbo speed.

Lauren: Yeah.

(later in the same interview)

NMC: Can you think of a specific instance during the performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Lauren: Yes. Um, at the end of the second page of the Nocturne, it usually is pretty solid, and that time it was not, uh, because I was not focused.

NMC: What was not solid about it?

Lauren: Memory.

NMC: Um, any other reactions, or any other instances in which the performance was affected?

Lauren: This Nocturne, if I get nervous playing this Nocturne, then the left hand gets a lot shakier, the memory, specifically in the left hand. So I missed more notes. So that occurred. And then there were a couple of ornamental passages, which are more difficult, and so if I'm tense or not focused, it will tend to, you know, vary in levels of how well they're performed. (VP, personal communication, April 5, 2010, pp. 584-585)

Later in the interview, when asked about her mental symptoms in the Virtual Performance, Lauren indicated that her ability to think clearly and to focus were not

noticeably impaired. She commented that her mind wandered with her curiosity about the recording equipment and the sound quality of the piano and the recording.

NMC: …Let's go on to your mental symptoms. Did you notice anything during the recorded performance?

Lauren: Um, I was thinking a little faster. Not a lot faster, but um, there was more capacity for thinking separate thoughts from the music.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any memorable internal dialogue, or thoughts that you said to yourself during the performance.

Lauren: Not much, other than thinking, thinking about the tone of the piano. I don't play on this piano much. It's a little bit softer. So I was, thought about that. I thought a little bit about the sound quality in the computer sitting on wood, randomly wondered about how that works. Not a lot.

NMC: Okay. Uh, did you have any particular emotions that you associated with this performance?

Lauren: Um, in general, satisfaction.

NMC: Okay. And your focus or concentration?

Lauren: Pretty good. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 587)

Similar passages appear in just about every interview following the Virtual Performance. For example, in Live Performance 1, Rhonda reported sweating, an elevated heart rate, gastrointestinal sensations, and muscle shaking in her feet and arms. The muscle shaking contributed to technical problems (Rhonda VP, November 2, 2009, pp. 708-709). She did not experience these symptoms in the Virtual Performance

(Rhonda VP, November 2, 2009, p. 712). She had severe memory problems in Live Performance 1, accompanied by negative self-talk and an inability to recover her focus or concentration (pp. 706-708), but reported that she felt she had better focus in the Virtual Performance (p. 713).

Olivia was one of the few participants who indicated a number of physical symptoms in Live Performance 1 were present in the Virtual Performance, albeit decreased in severity. In Live Performance 1, Olivia experienced tension in her jaw and shoulders, an elevated heart rate, a fluttery feeling in her stomach, and shakiness in her arms and hands (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 647). In the Virtual Performance, she experienced similar shakiness in her arms and hands. She reported that she felt the fluttery sensation in her stomach before the recording session, but did not notice it once her performance had begun. She experienced tension in her jaw and shoulders, but noted that the severity of the tension was decreased. She did not experience an elevated heart rate (VP, November 2, 2009, pg. 650-651).

Olivia also recognized several mental symptoms of anxiety from Live Performance 1 in her Virtual Performance, but again, these symptoms seem to be reduced in severity. In Live Performance 1, Olivia had feelings of doubt concerning her ability to perform, owing partially to mishaps in her warm-up prior to the performance. While performing, she had difficulty with her memory, possibly because she felt she was trying to overtly control details normally left to muscle memory in practice.

NMC: You said you had a problem focusing?

Olivia: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Um, was that mind wandering problem focusing, or just not knowing what to focus on?

Olivia: It was mind wandering. And, it seemed like earlier in my rehearsal when I had been practicing that when my mind... Like if I started focusing, I seemed to mess up more. So I was like, "I'm not sure what to do. Should I try to do that?" Or, so I was a little bit, I was unsure about...

NMC: Do you think it's possible to be overly focused on things?

Olivia: Yeah.

NMC: What kinds of, what would be a side effect of being too focused?

Olivia: Um, depends on what you're focusing on, but in this context? One thing that happens if I focus too much is I start thinking I'm forgetting what I already know. I start, like, I have memory points, but I don't have every single note in my piece memorized in my head. And I can't see every single note on the page in my head. So some of it's automatic, it has to be my fingers that just get me through those moments. So, I think that when I become too focused, what happens is I start thinking, "I need to know all the names of these notes," kind of idea. And so I start screwing up because what I usually left to my fingers, I'm now trying to figure out in my head. And so, and then I, before you know it, I've just completely lost...

NMC: It's an interesting balance, isn't it? Between, you mentioned in your high school days, depending almost completely on that finger

memory, and just being along for the ride. And now, with more education and training, knowing that you actually do have to attend to things as they're happening...

Olivia: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: ...but not too much!

Olivia: Yeah. (laughs) It's true. (VP, November 2, 2009, pp. 649-650)

Olivia still experienced doubts about her ability to perform prior to the Virtual Performance, and also struggled with focus and concentration after repeating an error she made in Live Performance 1 in her Virtual Performance recording. However, she believed her mind wandered less in the Virtual Performance, and that prior to the mistake, she felt more focused (VP, November 2, 2009, pp. 649-650)

Lester complained of a host of physical symptoms of MPA in Live Performance 1 that were almost completely absent in the Virtual Performance. In Live Performance 1, Lester's hands trembled, and he felt tension in his shoulders and upper back. He noticed his heart pounding, especially in anticipation of his performance. His face and hands felt warm (VP, November 3, 2009, pp.618-619). In the Virtual Performance, Lester's face still felt warm, but he attributed that to the temperature of the room, and not to feelings of MPA. He experienced no hand trembling, no heart pounding, and no tension in his shoulders and upper back (pp. 621-622).

In comparing Lester's mental symptoms of anxiety, the decrease in anxiety is a little less obvious. In Live Performance 1, Lester experienced some feelings of doubt concerning his ability to perform brought on by difficulties experienced during his warm up before the performance. He dreaded the performance, and worried about how

the audience would judge his performance. In recognizing his mental anxiety, Lester attempted to calm his fears with positive thoughts.

NMC: In this specific performance, did you notice any mental symptoms of anxiety?

Lester: Um, I definitely felt, like fear of what people would think. I was dreading it. I was not excited at all. I did not want to play this piece. I didn't feel ready for some reason. 'Cause, it was weird, right before the performance, when I was running through it, I just, couldn't play it straight through without messing up, and I was like... It was kind of unnerving, 'cause it was like, "Well, I haven't had this problem for awhile." And so, I don't know if it was just, like, my mind kept wandering or something. I, like I really don't remember, 'cause it just kinda happened all of the sudden, like, "Oh, I'm bowing." (chuckles) No, not really, but, like it was weird.

NMC: Um, can you recall any internal dialogue that you might of had?

Lester: Um, I didn't think I could do it, and I was like, "Okay, you can do it." You know. "Relax. Calm down. It's going to be fine." And like, the people, I was like trying to tell myself, you know, "People in the audience aren't going to judge you for one bad performance. You know, all seven of them." (chuckles)

NMC: So kind of talking yourself off of the ledge.

Lester: Yeah that's...

NMC: Giving yourself reasons not to be anxious.

Lester: Yep. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 617)

During the performance, Lester was critical of his musicianship and questioned whether he was playing with the appropriate style for his repertoire. He felt separated from his hands, and found himself in awkward fingerings, a problem that can be acutely disconcerting in Baroque music. Much of his anxiety seems to stem from concerns of his ability to play in the Baroque style.

NMC: Any internal dialogue during the performance itself?

Lester: Um, yeah, kinda like, "Oh, wow. This sucks." (chuckles) "This is completely unmusical." Like, you know, that kind of talking to myself, you know like, "That could have been better. Oh, I messed that up. Oh shoot, what should I do?" You know.

NMC: What sort of performance errors would cause that response to yourself? Is it...

Lester: Um, I didn't really feel, I think as much, like, dynamic change as I was hoping. Sometimes I think the style didn't seem quite right. And like, I messed up some places, and made up the fingering near the end. It was just kind of like, "Oh. Yay." (chuckles) So.

NMC: Okay. Uh, did you feel dissociation during this performance? Separate from your hands.

Lester: Yeah.

NMC: Did you attribute that mostly to the performance anxiety, or to the genre of the piece?

Lester: Can I say both?

NMC: Sure.

Lester: Yeah, I'd say both. Um, I think the anxiety because, for some reason, I didn't feel as prepared as I should have, even though I was. And then, the style because the style was, in a way, I guess you could say is more difficult for me to perform. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp 617-618)

Some of Lester's mental symptoms are present in the Virtual Performance, but to a lesser degree. He felt apprehension prior to recording, but does not describe it as fear or dread. He had difficulty focusing, but felt it was a result of trying too hard to focus on his fingering. He did not experience the same sense of dissociation from his hands that he felt in Live Performance 1, and also did not report self-critical thoughts in the Virtual Performance.

NMC: Okay. Can you recall any of the specific mental symptoms of anxiety for the Virtual Performance?

Lester: Uh, I was just kind of like, "Okay." It was kind of like the Rehearsal Performance, but there was a slight, I don't want to say fear or dread, but maybe?

NMC: Trepidation?

Lester: Sure.

NMC: Uncertainty?

Lester: Yeah. Probably uncertainty. Probably like, "Is this really gonna go well the one time I record it?" So, I like uncertainty. Let's go with that.

NMC: Did you have any internal dialog concerning the performance?

Lester: Not really.

NMC: Okay. And did you feel that sense of dissociation from your hands that you felt in the Live Performance?

Lester: hmm-mm. (negative)

NMC: How about your focus and concentration? How was it during the performance?

Lester: It was a little off, because I like, it seemed kind of weird at first. You know, I felt like I was focusing differently. 'Cause it was like, "Whoa." I was like focusing more, which got my focus off, you know. It was, it was, I was focusing on the fingers more than usual, I think, and that kind of threw off my concentration. I was kind of like, for a second I was like, "Where am I?" But then I, I was, I still knew where I was, actually. And it was weird. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 621)

Graham reported relatively few physical symptoms of MPA in Live Performance 1, and these symptoms were absent in the Virtual Performance. In Live Performance 1, Graham felt a peculiar "floating" sensation in his arms prior to performing, the same symptom described in Chapter III. Additionally, Graham felt a slight shaking in his hands after he made a mistake (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 482). Graham felt none of these symptoms in his Virtual Performance (pp. 484-485).

Mentally, Graham experienced a number of competing thoughts that distracted him during Live Performance 1. Similar to what he experiences in a typical performance, Graham found himself thinking about the inevitability of making a mistake. Additionally, Graham thought about events that occurred prior to the

performance. He had eaten a brownie in the green room before performing, and wondered if he would cause the keys to be sticky for the next performer (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 481).

In the Virtual Performance, Graham continued to have thoughts about whether a mistake would occur, but these thoughts were less powerful distractions in his performance.

> **NMC**: Um, Let's now consider the Virtual Performance. The recording session that we just did. Um, did you have any mental symptoms of anxiety in the Virtual Performance?
>
> **Graham**: There was still the feeling that I was going to make a mistake, although it, it influenced me significantly less in the Virtual Performance.
>
> **NMC**: Than in a Live Performance, or than typical, or than in the Rehearsal Performance.
>
> **Graham**: Than in the Live Performance. And less than typical.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. Why do you think that is?
>
> **Graham**: Well, I just suppose it's the intensity of the thoughts and how much they're distracting me from my playing. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 483)

Graham was also less distracted by his mind wandering to thoughts unrelated to his performance.

> **NMC**: Okay. Did you feel your mind wander in the Virtual Performance?

Graham: Not so much. Just to, just to the performance itself.

NMC: So would you consider your mind wandering better or worse in this performance than in the Live Performance?

Graham: Um,

NMC: In terms of how it affects performance.

Graham: Um, it affected the performance less.

NMC: So your mind wandered less, and so because your mind was not wandering, your performance was better.

Graham: Yes. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 484)

Both Kendra and Sophia reported drastically reduced symptoms of MPA in the Virtual Performance in comparison to Live Performance 1. Both described almost the perfect physical and mental state for performance in the virtual performance context.

Kendra's interview is particularly revealing in the way she describes her experience in the Virtual Performance. In Live Performance 1, Kendra noticed that her jaw was clenched, that she felt tension in her shoulders that caused her mobility to be restricted, and that her breathing was shallow or that she was holding her breath. She also mentioned a sensation of hesitancy in her technic that resulted in an anemic tone quality.

NMC: Okay. Um, let's now consider how you felt in Live Performance number 1, and this was the performance at the retirement center. Can you recall any physical symptoms that you may have experienced in that performance?

Kendra: Um, probably more hesitant. I know there was no shaky legs, as much. And, my shoulders were probably tense, more tense than they usually are.

NMC: I'm not sure I understand what you mean by hesitant. How do you feel physically hesitant? What's that sensation like?

Kendra: Probably, when I go to strike a key, it's probably a little more, it's not as projected as I wanted to be, or the sound, how I would strike was more hesitant. Probably more careful or cautious. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 552)

Kendra reported none of these physical symptoms in her Virtual Performance (Kendra, VP, April 5, 2010 p. 556-557).

In examining Kendra's mental symptoms, Kendra seemed to thrive in the Virtual Performance. In Live Performance 1, she indicated a few problems with memory, but was more concerned with what she considered a bland aesthetic. She felt like she was on autopilot and experienced a lack of emotion. Additionally, she felt that her tempi were erratic.

NMC: Okay. How about mental symptoms that you may have experienced in the Live Performance?

Kendra: Probably autopilot (chuckles).

NMC: Okay. Any particular emotions that you associated with that performance?

Kendra: Um, thinking of a good emotion. Um, probably... (chuckles) Sorry.

NMC: You mentioned...

Kendra: Yeah, I'm trying to think of a good emotion, sorry!

NMC: ...scared, excited, heartwarming, for a typical. Did you have any of those?

Kendra: I didn't feel as scared. I think, I don't know if 'blah' is an emotion, but (laughs).

NMC: A lack of emotion, maybe?

Kendra: Yeah, a lack of emotion, probably. Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Did you feel, you mentioned the autopilot. Can you describe specifically what that was like with this performance?

Kendra: Um, it was, I know when I finished playing, I wasn't very happy because there were a lot of things I was working on that didn't project or didn't come through. Um, yeah, that, it probably wasn't my best performance, but. (VP, April 5, 2010, pp. 554-555)

In the Virtual Performance, Kendra experienced none of the same mental symptoms, and in fact, rather than feeling that MPA was negatively affecting her performance, she believed the Virtual Performance context provided just enough additional anxiety to help her focus and concentration.

NMC: How about your mental symptoms. Did you notice any mental symptoms of anxiety during the performance?

Kendra: There was more focus, more concentration. Um, there was more mental preparation I think, before I started playing.

NMC: Do you have any emotions that you would associate with that performance?

Kendra: Um, *joyous and free* [emphasis added]. (laughs) (VP, April 5, 2010, pp. 557-558)

When asked about this drastic change from Live Performance 1, Kendra mentioned that she felt a strong desire to produce a quality recording for the podcast, and wanted to redeem herself from what she felt was a lackluster performance in Live Performance 1.

NMC: Why the change there? Why did you feel more focused for the Virtual Performance than for the Rehearsal Performance?

Kendra: Because, I'm being recorded, and it's going out to the i, iCast, or whatever.

NMC: The podcast?

Kendra: The podcast, yeah. So that, more focus so that it will be a proper recording to want to share.

NMC: Okay. And you have positive emotions with this, too? Did you say elation, joyous?

Kendra: Joyous. Yeah.

NMC: Okay. And how is that different, why was that different than 'blah'?

Kendra: (laughs) I probably wanted to redeem myself from my Live Performance, so, um, there was more character in this one, I felt. So,

more taking the time, and not as, how would you say, more free. So, I think that affected me. (VP, April 5, 2010, pp. 558-559)

Sophia also indicated a complete lack of symptoms of MPA in the Virtual Performance, but did not report the facilitative effects of anxiety that Kendra reported. Sophia was careful to mention that Live Performance 1 did not elicit the typical anxiety response that she normally experiences in performance. She did report that she felt tension in her upper body, sweaty hands, and butterflies in her stomach. She also mentioned that she paced prior to the performance.

Sophia: This one I didn't have the cheeks, thing. The hotness in cheeks. Usually that only happens when I am the most nervous. Um, I was a little tense in the upper body. My hands did get sweaty. My stomach was, you know, a little butterflyish. And I paced a little bit. I didn't jig, though. And then nothing in the feet.

NMC: Okay. And compare those symptoms to what you would typically feel.

Sophia: Um, well cheeks would be red. Upper body tense. Hands would be very cold and clammy and sweaty.

NMC: So it was, yesterday was it less than your typical performance?

Sophia: Yes, yes it was less. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 734)

Sophia had memory problems in Live Performance 1 and felt that her mind was racing so much that she could not choose an appropriate coping strategy to deal with her memory issues.

NMC: Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Sophia: Probably when I had the memory slip. I got more nervous because I made a mistake.

NMC: And how did that affect you?

Sophia: Mmm, it made my mind start to quickly race trying to find were I was in the piece. Whether I should go back and play it again or just skip to a new spot in the piece to try to iron it out. So.

NMC: So your mind was spinning?

Sophia: Yeah.

NMC: Is that the word you used? Or racing I think it was?

Sophia: Yeah, so, racing. Um, so mentally, I'm trying to picture the music in my head trying to find the spot to start.

NMC: Do you feel like you have time to think when you're in that situation?

Sophia: Um, no. No, because it's, you know, when you're sitting on stage, every second seems like a year. So actually trying to picture the music probably isn't helping, you should just pick up, try to keep going instead of find a new spot to start. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 735)

In the Virtual Performance, Sophia was emphatic in her denial of symptoms of MPA.

NMC: Okay. And compare your mental symptoms in this Virtual Performance with the Live Performance.

Sophia: None whatsoever.

NMC: None whatsoever.

Sophia: Completely different. I felt fine.

NMC: So just, this was almost exactly like a Rehearsal Performance, you would say?

Sophia: Exactly.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any physical symptoms of anxiety?

Sophia: No. None.

NMC: So no hot cheeks or red cheeks?

Sophia: No hand, jittery. My hands were maybe a little clammy. But no jigging, no pacing, no nothing.

NMC: Okay. Um, and compare that with the Live Performance.

Sophia: Um, night and day. (VP, November 2, 2009, pp. 736-737)

Both Albert and Phoebe reported lower levels of MPA in the Virtual Performance than Live Performance 1, but certain factors led them to have atypical anxiety profiles in Live Performance 1 than in what they would normally expect for a live performance. Because their experience in Live Performance 1 was so different from typical performances, conclusions from these two particular cases concerning the different performance contexts should be tempered.

Phoebe was unable to participate in the same Live Performance 1 event as the other participants at Site A. Instead, in a special accommodation, Phoebe performed at a later event with an audience consisting mostly of her peers. Phoebe was scheduled to perform at the end of a special event for students taking secondary class piano, but by

the conclusion of the event, she had not arrived. After making several attempts to contact her, she eventually arrived twenty minutes late, and the events leading up to her arrival made it clear that this experience was quite atypical for her.

NMC: Okay. Um, can you describe what you did before the performance, where you were, or what was going on that prevented you from being able to do your pre-performance stuff.

Phoebe: I was at marching band, and then right afterwards I went to the MU to eat. And I left my keys there. And, I thought I left my keys in Music Hall, so I was looking for them all over down here. And my roommate wasn't in the room, and I thought she would be, so I wasn't going to worry about it. And I didn't want to go to the performance in my sweatpants. So I finally went back to the MU and looked for them and found them. So I went to go change, and then I came here.

NMC: Okay. So it was a really hectic stressful time before the performance?

Phoebe: Yeah. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay.

Phoebe: And then like, C_____ and D_____ kept calling me, so I was really worried that it was over, and that I had missed it. I didn't have time to actually check the messages, I just saw that they kept calling.

NMC: mm-hmm

Phoebe: Yeah.

> **NMC**: Well, it was, actually it had been over for a while, and I asked them to stay. So I was like, "Would you guys mind sticking around for awhile?" So uh, yeah, I asked if anybody knew your number. I just wanted to, I didn't know what was going on, and I thought you might just need a reminder. So I hope I didn't contribute too much to your anxiety.
>
> **Phoebe**: No, it was my own fault. I should have, I don't know, I could have been more prepared in many ways. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 679-680)

Because she was not able to complete her typical pre-performance routine, Phoebe experienced severe symptoms of MPA. She felt warm and sweaty, had shaky hands and an upset stomach, as well as tension in her shoulders and neck. She felt distracted and unable to focus, and after a memory slip was unable to recover and had to start over from the beginning. Her symptoms of anxiety increased following the unfortunate memory slip (Phoebe, VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 676-677).

In the Virtual Performance, Phoebe did not experience the sensations of heat or sweatiness, felt no tension in her shoulders and neck, and had no symptoms manifest in her stomach. She was slightly apprehensive about only getting one chance to record, but when directly comparing her mental symptoms with Live Performance 1, she reported that her mental symptoms of MPA were reduced in the Virtual Performance (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 681-683).

Albert's experience in Live Performance 1 was also atypical. Albert had forgotten about the performance, but luckily was in the practice rooms at the time. Olivia saw him and reminded him of the performance just moments before his turn to

perform. Albert was not able to complete his normal pre-performance routine, and felt unfocused in the performance. He also felt unfocused because he was not wearing his normal performance attire.

> **Albert**: And, I wasn't as dressed up as I like to be. I still dressed up, but, uh, I try to be at least, uh, black pants, belt, collar, dress shirt.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. So physical appearance is part of your...
>
> **Albert**: I wouldn't say it's part of my, um, it doesn't... It does matter in the overall performance, but the reason it does is because, more focus, I feel like it's more of a, it's a more important event than the rehearsal type of performance, and so therefore my brain is able to focus in more because it's different.
>
> **NMC**: You feel like you make the performance special by dressing up?
>
> **Albert**: Yes. And so, the dress didn't really affect how I was going to approach the piece, how I was going to try to play it, it was just the prior preparation which did affect the actual performance. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 457)

Even thought Albert did not feel prepared for the performance, there was no mention of physical symptoms of MPA. He did experience some problems in second-guessing his memory, and was concerned with inaccuracy in his technic (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 455-457)

In the Virtual Performance, Albert specifically mentioned the absence of physical symptoms that he normally experiences in a typical live performance. He did not feel the tension, or knot in his throat, the hesitancy in his technic, or extreme

sensations of hot or cold in his hands (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 458). He also did not experience the second-guessing of his memory, but felt that his performance did not capture the proper aesthetic mood. Albert's response to a question about dressing up for a video podcast indicates that the additional ceremonial aspect of physical appearance in a performance might facilitate a better aesthetic performance.

> **NMC**: How would it be different if instead of just an audio recording, it was also video?
>
> **Albert**: I might have gotten in the mood a little more if it were video, because, the video, or, the visual aspect of performing wasn't necessary, somewhat. Well, it was because, if I achieved that, I think I would have achieved the mood that I was trying for. Not that I really changed anything physically in my face, like a big grin or anything, but uh, I didn't feel like I had to perform visual. I don't know if that...
>
> **NMC**: Would you have, would you have dressed up for a video recording?
>
> **Albert**: Yes.
>
> **NMC**: Would that have changed?
>
> **Albert**: Yes. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 459)

In each of the nine cases presented above, the participant confirms a decline in symptoms of MPA as measured by CPAI-LP1 and CPAI-VP. Most report that the physical symptoms present in Live Performance 1 were mostly absent in the Virtual Performance. If the Virtual Performance created manifestations of MPA, they were mostly mental symptoms, such as apprehension at having only one chance to record a

performance and the possibility of submitting a poor performance to the internet audience, but these manifestations were somewhat subdued in nature in comparison to Live Performance 1.

Winona and Judith had CPAI-VP scores that were higher or equal to their CPAI-LP1 scores. Winona scored a 44 for CPAI-LP1 and a 53 for CPAI-VP while Judith scored a 63 on both measures. A careful examination of Judith's interview following the Virtual Performance recording session suggests that she experienced slightly less MPA in the Virtual Performance.

In Live Performance 1, Judith had very few physical symptoms of anxiety that were recognizes only after the performance was over. Judith took a beta-blocker prior to the event, and this may have attenuated her physical symptoms of anxiety. She mentions that she noticed after the performance that she "was breathing again" (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 517), but also mentions that she did not notice holding her breath, or shallow breathing during the performance itself. Judith also seemed to misappropriate physical ailments that might be from her daily life as stemming directly from her performance. She mentioned feeling general fatigue in her arms the day following the performance, and complained of tightness in her calves. When asked if these symptoms might be related to her exercise and running, she agreed that might be the case.

NMC: Okay, did you feel any tensions in your arms or in your hands, before or after?

Judith: Um, no, I felt a little drained, a little tired, physical.

NMC: So general fatigue?

Judith: Yeah, but it might have also been all the emotional stuff going on earlier in the week, just everything together. But I did feel, do feel drained. I got done teaching yesterday and I was exhausted.

NMC: Did you have any issues...

Judith: This morning I felt, my arms felt tired. Exhausted.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any issues with your stomach, or lower back in the performance?

Judith: Um, no.

NMC: Okay. What about your legs, knees, and feet during the performance?

Judith: No, except for yesterday evening, I felt my calves started to tighten up, and I've had to stretch them several times today.

NMC: Okay. Is that...

Judith: But I didn't notice it while I was playing.

NMC: Do you think that's from running? Or is that from the stress of playing the piano, or is it from...

Judith: I don't know. It could be a bit of both. Or it wouldn't necessarily be stress from playing the piano, just stress in general. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 518)

Judith reported very few physical symptoms in her Virtual Performance. Considering that she did not take the beta-blockers for the Virtual Performance, the description of her symptoms might indicate that the Virtual Performance did not elicit a strong physiological anxiety response. She said that she did not feel completely calm, that she

always performs with a sense of internal trembling. She mentioned that her breathing was still affected, but that it was noticeably better in the Virtual Performance because she was singing along with the music.

> **NMC**: Were you aware, either during or after the fact, of your breathing?
>
> **Judith**: I think I was breathing better, because I was singing with it. I was thinking, "I hope this doesn't get picked up on the microphone." (chuckles) I was like, "No, just stay focused." Yeah, um, and I mean, I do try to breathe a little bit before beginning, just take a couple of deep breaths and such. I did notice that that, I was having a little bit of difficulty with that, so I wasn't breathing too incredibly deeply.
>
> **NMC**: Today?
>
> **Judith**: Yeah. But, I was more calm in general than yesterday, yeah. Definitely more calm. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 523)

Judith's mental symptoms of anxiety were more pronounced in both Live Performance 1 and the Virtual Performance, but she claimed she felt fewer symptoms in the Virtual Performance. In Live Performance 1, Judith had many internal thoughts that distracted her during the performance. She worried about memory slips and had doubts that she would be able to get through the entire piece. She also had many self-critical thoughts about her performance, and questioned whether her performance would be up to the standards of the audience, specifically the other pianists performing in the recital.

NMC: …Okay. Um, let's now consider the Live Performance. And that was at the retirement community. Did you feel any mental symptoms of anxiety?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Um, I guess, um, more talk...

NMC: Internal dialogue?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: What sort of things were you saying to yourself?

Judith: Um, uh, I don't remember. I was acutely aware of being listened to. Primarily from two other pianists.

NMC: Oh, really?

Judith: Yeah. Yeah. And, um, like yeah. Like whether things are good enough or blah blah blah blah. And you know, how to recover from a, hoping not have any sort of memory slip. And then like, the some things that happened, it was like, well I guess that was followed by some self-beratement, of like, "Well, why did that happen?" You know, "Why didn't you know that?" Like, "Couldn't you make an appropriate cadence like afterwards?"

NMC: So in reaction to things that were happening, you would kind of, critique yourself while you were playing?

Judith: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know that when I got to the last fugue, I was feeling shaky, a little bit. (VP, April 3, 2009, pp. 516-517)

After a memory slip occurred, Judith found it difficult to recover and did not feel like she could jump to her next memory station. She projected catastrophic consequences if this performance had occurred in her degree recital.

> **NMC**: Okay. Can you think of a specific instance during the performance in which anxiety may have affected your performance?
>
> **Judith**: Um, yeah. For example the last fugue. I started off anxious thinking, "I don't know if I can get through this." Even though I just did it before then. And I ran it for people Thursday. So yeah, um.
>
> **NMC**: Does the anxiety affect your memory?
>
> **Judith**: Yeah, definitely. Um, and, I went and, I didn't, I felt like, "I'm not going to try to jump somewhere. This is not going to work. My brain is not functioning that way." And so, I started it again, and I'm thinking, "Well, I would probably fail my recital. If I had done this in my recital, I would probably fail my recital, blah blah blah." So, I don't know. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 520)

In the Virtual Performance, Judith recalled internal dialog that belied mental symptoms of MPA, but her thoughts were less critical and framed in a more positive manner. She had a few minor memory slips, but in general felt more focused and able to think clearly.

> **Judith**: …I know doing it, there was some talk going on, of, things of like, "I should be focused on just making music," or something. Which automatically means that I'm, that's not happening. And yeah, some of that was going on yesterday, too. Or you know, like, "You're giving

something to your audience and blah blah blah." And it's just, it's, yeah, all that just needs to turn off.

NMC: Okay. So you were talking to yourself about the performance while it was happening?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: Did you feel any specific emotions...

Judith: ...Although it was more, I was a little bit, it was more positive with things.

NMC: Today, in the recording?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. What, how so? How was it more positive? You were just saying more positive things to yourself, or...

Judith: Well, I went and reviewed stuff before, and like, there's one spot that I really haven't had many problems with before, but then it happened yesterday, and it happened again today. So I need to check that out for some reason. I'm not sure why I'm having a blockage. Um, but then, I'm like, I was like, "Well, there that happened again. Blah blah blah." So I was like, "Well, at least now you know where to practice!" (Chuckles)

NMC: Okay, so that was more positive for you because that was a positive framing of ....

Judith: ...Yeah, it was (chuckles)...

NMC: "This is a moment of discovery! Look what I've discovered!"

Judith: Yes, rather than, "Why can't you do something better than that?" (VP, April 3, 2010, pp. 521-522)

Though Judith reported identical scores for CPAI-LP1 and CPAI-VP, it would appear that both her mental and physiological symptoms of MPA were reduced in the virtual performance context.

Winona was the only participant who reported higher levels of MPA in the Virtual Performance compared to Live Performance 1 as measured by the CPAI. However, Winona's responses in the individual interviews seem to contradict the quantitative measures. Winona reported drastically reduced physiological symptoms of MPA in the Virtual Performance. Winona felt calm and focused in Live Performance 1 and was able to recover focus after a minor mistake. In the Virtual Performance, she felt a sense of frustration following a mistake, and reported that her mind wandered.

In Live Performance 1, Winona reported a generally healthy mental attitude. In the Rehearsal Performance, Winona would get angry with herself for mistakes, but she did not feel the same frustration in the Live Performance. Winona attributed this healthy attitude to feelings of confidence resulting from multiple recent performances.

NMC: So. Mental symptoms, did you have the same kinds of internal dialogue?

Winona: Yes, but they weren't as upbraiding. I wasn't angry at myself. I was just reminding myself to concentrate.

NMC: Why do you think you weren't as angry with yourself?

Winona: Well, first of all because I didn't mess up. You know, I didn't have huge mistakes. Um, and I think I was used to, I've been kind of

used to performing this piece, you know, recently. So if I had that practice then I somehow don't get as nervous.

NMC: So, you performed this piece about how many times?

Winona: Um, four.

NMC: And what kind of venues were they?

Winona: Um, a jury. A competition. Um, a church. And then, I guess I was counting this. The Live Performance.

NMC: Okay. So would you say that your experience performing it prior to this specific performance helped give you confidence?

Winona: Yes. Because they, every time the piece went well, so that boosts my confidence.

NMC: Do you have any specific emotions that you associate with this performance Sunday afternoon?

Winona: Mmmm, no. I was pretty calm and I wasn't worried about it. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 767)

Winona felt a number of physiological symptoms, but did not feel they were severe enough to detract from her ability to perform.

NMC: Um, back to symptoms, this specific Sunday, what were your physical symptoms like?

Winona: Um, the palm sweating was there, the leg shaking was there, the flushed face was there. But it wasn't so bad that it, it, that my concentration suffered.

NMC: Did you have the stomach butterflies?

Winona: Right before but not during.

NMC: Did you feel, uh, heavy heart rate?

Winona: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

NMC: Did you have to remind yourself to breathe?

Winona: mm-hmm (affirmative). (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 768-769)

After a minor mistake, Winona felt these symptoms increase, but was able to control them by reminding herself to breathe.

NMC: Okay. Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Winona: I played one wrong note and it threw me off, and then I could feel my heart rate and my face flush and the shakiness. So that affected maybe the next few measures, but then it went away.

NMC: What did you do to help yourself get through that?

Winona: Uh, I breathed.

NMC: Do you tell yourself to breathe, or do you just breathe.

Winona: I tell myself.

NMC: So you say…

Winona: "Breathe." (laughs)

NMC: "It's okay, breathe."

Winona: Yeah, yeah. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 769-770)

In the Virtual Performance, Winona experienced some negative feelings of frustration following a mistake. She felt her mind wandering, and was unable to

maintain the focus necessary to perform well. Winona attributed her lack of focus to the absence of an audience.

> **NMC**: Okay. Uh, was your focus or concentration affected during this performance?
>
> **Winona**: Yeah. My concentration was affected by the mistake, and then my mind just kind of started wandering after that (chuckles).
>
> **NMC**: Do you have the same kind of mind wandering, did you have the same kind of mind wandering in the Live Performance after you noticed the mistake?
>
> **Winona**: No. No. Because I, I think I would have, but again I had to remind myself to concentrate on the music and the task at hand.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. So, uh, the mistake in this situation did not prompt you to redouble your efforts to concentrate?
>
> **Winona**: No. And I think because I was by myself. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 771)

Winona reported an almost complete absence of physiological manifestations of MPA.

> **NMC**: Okay. How about physical symptoms of anxiety in the Virtual Performance.
>
> **Winona**: None. Very little if any.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. So your face?
>
> **Winona**: Nope.
>
> **NMC**: Hands and palms sweaty or shaky?

Winona: I think my palms were a little sweaty, but otherwise I was pretty calm and relaxed.

NMC: Okay. Did your heart rate change much?

Winona: Nope.

NMC: Did you notice that you needed to breathe?

Winona: No, I was, I, I was aware that I was taking shallow breaths, but I, I was thinking about other things.

NMC: Okay. Um, about your knees and legs. Did they tremble at all, or shake?

Winona: Nope.

NMC: Nope. So, in general, your symptoms of anxiety that were present in the Live Performance, were they much less or absent in the Virtual Performance, or about the same, but maybe reduced a little bit.

Winona: They were much less.

NMC: So almost to completely different sensations?

Winona: Almost. Yeah… (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 771-772)

In summary, the qualitative evidence from individual interviews overwhelmingly confirms that the Virtual Performance elicited fewer and less severe manifestations of MPA than what the subjects experienced in Live Performance 1. Almost all participants reported that the physiological symptoms present in Live Performance 1 were greatly attenuated or completely absent in the Virtual Performance. The few mental symptoms of MPA that were reported in the Virtual Performance generally stem from the "one shot" nature of the recording session. Even those

participants who indicated the Virtual Performance elicited an anxiety response that was equal to or higher than Live Performance 1 seem to indicate in the individual interviews that the Virtual Performance context produced fewer symptoms of MPA.

Qualitative group discussion evidence

In the group discussions from both Site A and Site B, the participants confirmed that the Virtual Performance generated less MPA than the Live Performance. When asked directly if MPA levels were less in the Virtual Performance than in Live Performance, there was universal agreement at both Site A and Site B (Group Discussion Site A, November 16, 2009, p. 804; Group Discussion Site B, April 18, 2010, p. 836).

In the discussion, the participants compared Virtual Performance to nine different daily life situations, choosing two of the situations that were most like Virtual Performance. At Site A, it was evident that the participants were having a more difficult time comparing Virtual Performance to the supplied situations than they had in choosing two items that were most like Live Performance. The discussion about the difficulty offers a bit more elucidation on the levels of MPA experienced in the two contexts.

NMC: Is it harder for you to compare the Virtual Performance with these situations?

Graham: Yes.

Phoebe: Yeah.

Winona: Uh-huh.

NMC: What's making it more difficult?

Winona: 'Cause these are all live situations. There's immediate gratification.

Olivia: Because they don't have emotions that strongly tie to Virtual Performance like they do to Live Performance.

Winona: Yeah.

NMC: Let's not consider the event, as much, but consider what goes on mentally, and your physical symptoms.

Lester: For me, at least, the Virtual and Live were similar, just that the Virtual was more toned down. Because the audience wasn't there. I mean, to me it was like a performance because I knew an audience online was going to hear it and everything, but just, they weren't right there. So I wasn't nervous playing it a whole bunch. For me I voted it (inaudible)

NMC: Okay. Any other thoughts on why it's harder to vote for these?

Winona: I would say too, that, Virtual Performances are more easily forgotten.

Olivia: And I had less physical symptoms for Virtual Performing than…

Winona: That's why I thought that the Virtual Performances are more easily forgotten because your symptoms aren't so heightened then you don't remember them as much. (Group Discussion Site A, November 16, 2009, pp. 803-804)

Additionally, during both group discussions, the participants rated the level of MPA experienced in Live Performance, the Virtual Performance, and Rehearsal Performance

on a scale of 1 to 10 (Group Discussion Site A, November 16, 2009, pp. 804-805; Group Discussion Site B, April 18, 2010, p. 836). Their ratings, shown in Table IV.4, show clearly that Virtual Performance created less MPA than Live Performance. Interestingly, the ratings presented in Table IV.4 also indicates that the participants clearly felt that the Virtual Performance was slightly more stressful than the Rehearsal Performance, seemingly contradicting the quantitative evidence presented above. This is an important item of consideration, as it speaks to the rationale behind choosing the virtual performance context for exposure therapy.

Participant	LP	VP	RP
Albert	10	6	2
Graham	10	5	2
Lester	10	6	3
Olivia	8	5	2
Phoebe	10	3	1
Rhonda	9	5	1
Sophia	10	5	2
Winona	9	3	2
Judith	10	7	2
Kendra	10	6	-*
Lauren	10	5	-*

Table IV.4. Subjective rating of MPA experienced in Live Performance (LP), Virtual Performance (VP), and Rehearsal Performance (RP).
*Kendra and Lauren gave no rating for the RP, but expressed no disagreement with the rating given by Judith.

Rehearsal Performance vs. Virtual Performance

In the design of the study, it was assumed that the virtual performance context would be a somewhat stressful performance context, otherwise the same results could be achieved during regular practice time. To be effective, exposure therapy needs to occur in a situation in which the subject encounters the item or context that creates an

irrational fear in order to come to the realization that the fear is indeed irrational. The experience in exposure therapy should empirically demonstrate to the subjects that their worst fears seldom materialize in public performance situations. Though virtual performances are non-traditional and do not feature a live audience, they are indeed public performances, and as such should generate elevated levels of MPA.

There is additional qualitative evidence supporting the subjective ratings of MPA severity presented in Table IV.4. Excerpts from individual interviews show that the presence of the microphone and the belief of the performer that, some time in the future, the recorded performance will be heard by the virtual audience created more MPA in the Virtual Performance than in the Rehearsal Performance.

> **NMC**: Compare, again, these mental things, from the Virtual Performance to the Live Performance. How are they different?
>
> **Rhonda**: Um, again, I have to, kind of, add on an extra mental thing of making myself think of people that are listening, because I don't have the physical presence of them being there. Um, which makes, I have to make myself think of it as more of a real performance, and, I think the fact that I can't re-record something, I also have to make myself, you know, "You have to do this all straight through. There's no starting and stopping."
>
> **NMC**: How is that different? You mentioned that you make yourself think that people are listening. Does the microphone change that, at all, in the Virtual Performance compared to the Rehearsal Performance?

Rhonda: I think the fact that I know that it's getting recorded changes the way that I view it. Um, that I know that what I'm doing right here is going to be listened to by people, as opposed to the Rehearsal Performance, where I just think that people are there.

NMC: Okay. Physical symptoms of anxiety in the Virtual Performance?

Rhonda: Um, I didn't experience most of the normal, um, hand-shaking or feet-shaking that I normally do in a Live Performance.

NMC: In comparison with the Rehearsal Performance, was it different?

Rhonda: Um, I think if I had to compare those two, they'd be very similar, but, um, there was a moment where I did have a slight memory mix-up, and that's when I'm in here, I know that it's getting recorded, and it's only doing it once, and people are going to listen, and it's a little bit more, like, uh, the hands fumble for just a second, as opposed to a rehearsal performance where I might not think about it as much. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 712)

When asked to directly compare the mental symptoms of MPA of the Virtual Performance with the Rehearsal Performance, Lester indicated that the Virtual Performance was more stressful.

NMC: No. Okay, let's think now about the Virtual Performance, the recording session that we just did. Um, just thinking in general, was the anxiety more or less than the Live Performance.

Lester: Definitely less.

NMC: Less. More or less than the Rehearsal Performance?

Lester: More. 'Cause I knew people would hear it, eventually. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 620-621)

Both Rhonda and Lester reported lower CPAI scores for the Rehearsal Performance, but Phoebe and Olivia reported higher scores for the Rehearsal Performance. Yet in their individual interviews, they also seem to indicate that the severity of MPA was less in the Rehearsal Performance than in the Virtual Performance.

NMC: Compare the Virtual Performance to the Rehearsal Performance. About the same, a little worse, a little better?

Phoebe: Probably just a little bit worse.

NMC: So a little bit more anxiety with the recording?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Can you think of a specific instance in this performance where anxiety may have affected it?

Phoebe: Probably, just when you said you only get one shot at recording. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 683)

Olivia also reported that the severity of her physical symptoms was slightly worse in the Virtual Performance.

NMC: Okay. Let's talk a little bit about your physical symptoms, again we'll just go from head to toes. In your head and face?

Olivia: I think my jaw was a little tight.

NMC: More or less so than in the Live Performance?

Olivia: Less.

NMC: Less. How about in your shoulders and your neck?

Olivia: I had some tension.

NMC: More or less than the Live Performance?

Olivia: I'd say a little less.

NMC: A little less than the Live Performance?

Olivia: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: More or less than the Rehearsal Performance?

Olivia: More than the Rehearsal.

NMC: Okay. How about in your upper back, chest?

Olivia: Um, nope.

NMC: No. Heart rate? Breathing?

Olivia: It wasn't up that much, actually.

NMC: So not as bad as the Live Performance. Was it about the same or less than your Rehearsal Performance?

Olivia: It was about the same as the Rehearsal.

NMC: Arms, hands?

Olivia: Those were shaky.

NMC: Shaky. Uh, about the same, more, or less than the Live Performance?

Olivia: About the same.

NMC: Same question with the Rehearsal Performance. About the same, more, or less?

Olivia: Uh, it was probably more.

NMC: More shaky than the Rehearsal Performance.

Olivia: Yeah. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 650-651)

Finally, Judith was the only participant to report that her highest level of MPA as measured by the CPAI occurred in the Rehearsal Performance. However, in her interview, she indicated that the Rehearsal Performance marked the beginning of a realization that she would soon be facing a very important degree recital. Her anxiety in the Rehearsal Performance might originate from anticipation of a later live performance with extreme consequences.

> **Judith**: Um, not immediately, afterwards it was later. I went in just feeling very nauseous just about the whole recital and expectations of what I'm supposed to be doing. And, I was planning on running my program tomorrow for someone, and then I ended up canceling that because I'm like, "I'm not going to be able to do this, blah blah blah blah." Um, but I rescheduled that for another time. I try to go, and, I try to do some practicing, but I wasn't very focused. And then, I was also supposed to have a lesson on Monday, and I was supposed to be performing on Tuesday. And my lesson is usually on Thursday, so just that added, sort of put that all together. And, um, yeah, and that running my program for this week, and I'm like, "Oh, I don't have this fully memorized, and like blah blah blah blah." Later, I went out to run and I was not, I didn't do so well. Um, yeah, I just kind of fell apart. But I think I'm done with that. So that's good. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 515)

Judith's response might provide a clue to the apparent discrepancy between the CPAI scores and the qualitative evidence to the contrary. It is possible that in the group discussion, the participants rated their level of anxiety for generic rehearsal performance situations, but in the actual Rehearsal Performance completed for this study felt slightly higher levels of MPA, either as a result of other exigent factors, or because it marked the beginning of a two-week commitment in the participation of this study during an already stressful time of year. It is also possible that the first exposure to the survey itself caused some anxiety. In other words, the participants felt anxiety about their ability to complete the questionnaire and accurately assess their MPA, and that anxiety translated into a higher score on the CPAI. Again, Judith offered some confirmation for this supposition in her individual interview.

> **NMC**: Did you have any mental symptoms of anxiety during the rehearsal performance?
>
> **Judith**: Yeah.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. Can you describe them?
>
> **Judith**: I like shut down. Usually I have no problem. And I think I was, one of it was like, it was exactly a month before hand. I think part of it that did it also was, the questionnaire. I was thinking about all these things, and like, "Well, I don't? I really don't know, and blah blah blah blah." Then I became more aware of them, a little bit. And so, I think I just kinda got a little overwhelmed. And also, the thing of having it also to be a performance. And it, I don't know, I just. I usually, yeah, I just. I went into mini-panic mode. (VP, April 3, 2010, pp. 514-515)

In summary, all three data sources provide strong evidence that the Virtual Performance induced lower levels of MPA than Live Performance 1. The quantitative measures provide statistical evidence that is confirmed by the qualitative evidence in the individual interviews and group discussion. In the Virtual Performance, most participants claim a strong reduction in the physiological manifestations of MPA, and a slight reduction in the mental manifestations. The Virtual Performance also seems to show slight elevations in MPA in comparison to the Rehearsal Performance, but the data are conflicting.

Question 2: Experience of MPA

The individual interviews and the group discussions were analyzed to answer the phenomenological question posed in research question 2, reprinted below for convenience.

2. How does the experience of MPA differ between the virtual performance setting and the live performance setting in student solo piano performances at the university level?

In investigating this question, the experience of performing is broken into a timeline consisting of three distinct phases: pre-performance, performance, and post-performance. The pre-performance phase includes all actions and feelings occurring prior to the beginning of the performance. This phase includes dress, transportation, warm-up, and the ceremonial opening of the performance. The performance phase begins once the pianist is seated on the bench and the audience is silent. This phase lasts through the duration of the performance until the applause begins. The audience's applause at the conclusion of the performance marks the beginning of the post-

performance phase and includes the performer's assessment of the performance, any interaction with the audience, and notification of consequences as a result of the performance.

Pre-performance phase

The experience of MPA in the pre-performance phase has marked differences when comparing the Live Performance and the Virtual Performance. The participants reported the implementation of far fewer coping strategies prior to the Virtual Performance. Additionally, the absence of certain ceremonial factors in the Virtual Performance resulted in a far more casual experience for the performer.

The participants were questioned concerning their typical pre-performance routines prior to a live performance, and asked to compare that routine to their actual routine prior to Live Performance 1 and the Virtual Performance. In a typical pre-performance routine, the pianists consider their attire and physical appearance, transportation, warm-up and rehearsal, arrival at the performance venue, and use of coping strategies to deal with anticipatory anxiety just prior to the performance itself. For the most part, these routines were adhered to for Live Performance 1, with a slight tendency to employ fewer coping strategies. The participants were more likely to deviate from their typical routines prior to the Virtual Performance, partly due to the absence of the traditional ceremonial requirements. The pianists implemented fewer of their typical coping strategies prior to the performance because they felt fewer symptoms of anticipatory anxiety.

Long-term MPA strategies.

The experience of MPA is not limited to the days and weeks prior to performance, but also extends well into the daily practice and learning of new repertoire. The prospect of future performances and the possibility of experiencing MPA caused the participants to deploy specific practice strategies to insure success. Though not illustrative of the differences in the experience of MPA in the live and virtual context, they are presented here to form a more complete depiction of the phenomenology of MPA in the university student.

Lauren acknowledged that practice itself is sometimes a defense against symptoms of MPA, and that a prodigious amount of practice leads to confidence that the repertoire is ready for public performance. When asked about rehearsal and practice strategies, she notes that one of her strategies is simply, "… practicing a lot. Carefully looking at what is going to give me the most trouble, and trying to practice that as much as I can" (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 578).

Beyond simply practicing more, many participants reported preparing "memory stations" within their pieces. Memory stations are specific points in the music that the pianist can jump to in the event of a potentially catastrophic memory slip. If a pianist finds they are unable to continue the music after a memory slip, he or she will attempt to begin at one of several pre-determined locations in the music to resume the performance. Olivia explained how this practice strategy helps her feel more confident in live performance situations.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific practice strategies that you use?

Olivia: Umm. I'm not sure if I really, if I really do, except just to have lots of spots, memory points where I can start. And then I don't worry so much. I'm just like, "Well, if I completely mess that up, I can just jump forward to this." And so that takes away a little anxiety knowing that I'm gonna definitely be able to get through it, at least. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 641)

Albert explained a similar practice strategy dealing with formal sections of a piece. Albert has concerns that he will accidentally play the exposition instead of the recapitulation after the development, and practices mentally cueing the appropriate formal section.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific practice strategies that you use in the practice room?

Albert: Um, well there's the pith-falls, pith-falls, or the uh, difference between exposition and recapitulation.

NMC: What did you say before that?

Albert: Uh, the pith-falls. Like, where exactly the differences occur. If there's two sections that are similar, or the same up to a point, where they... I will try to think in my head, and even say even, "First time.", "Second time." And I'll just go back and forth between those two spots. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 451)

In addition to preparing memory stations, almost all participants report frequently treating part of their practice time as a performance, a strategy akin to the Rehearsal Performance of this study. In some instances, the pianist will go to some

length to create anxiety, either by imagining stressful situations, specific audience members, or manipulating the instrument by raising the lid and removing the music rack. Rhonda tries to imagine audience members that are knowledgeable about music and might have strong opinions about her performance.

> **NMC**: Uh, again, this is steps to reduce. We talked about rehearsal strategies, practicing with other people. Do you do anything in just your regular practice that's specifically designed to help you with symptoms of anxiety?
>
> **Rhonda**: Um, I occasionally just try to imagine that I have an audience, uh, especially, um, like the week up to a performance. Um, kind of have to psych myself into, "No, you're actually playing for somebody." Because then, when that thought enters my mind when I am performing for somebody, it's not a foreign thought.
>
> **NMC**: How do you psych yourself into believing there is an audience?
>
> **Rhonda**: I imagine specific people that are listening to me or, um, you know, think of, well, "Now strangers are listening to you. What are you going to perform then."
>
> **NMC**: Do you set a chair up for them, or...?
>
> **Rhonda**: No. (laughs)
>
> **NMC**: What kind of specific people?
>
> **Rhonda**: My piano professor. Um, friends that may not be musically trained. Uh, my brother who is musically trained, who would probably be a harsh critic (chuckles) (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 704)

Olivia clarified that the point of pretending to perform is to generate feelings of nervousness as a test to how she will perform in a truly stressful situation.

> **NMC**: Are there any rehearsal strategies that you use, specifically to help you with performance anxiety?
>
> **Olivia**: Umm. I try to play for other people and in seminar. And when I'm in the practice room, I let myself feel what it would feel like if there were an audience in there. I try to let, to make myself become really nervous, and then just sit down and play my piece. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 641)

For Winona, the rehearsal performances help her differentiate between what she normally does in the practice room and what must occur on stage. In daily practice, it is important to address technical errors as they arise to continually improve facility and accuracy, but at some point, practicing exclusively in this manner can threaten continuity. Winona uses rehearsal performances as a way to adjust to the imperative of continuity.

> **NMC**: So you mention preparation. That's I guess in practice. Getting ready.
>
> **Winona**: Yes, yes.
>
> **NMC**: So what things do you do in preparation, um, so that you feel ready to perform. Do you have any specific practice strategies?
>
> **Winona**: Um, leading up, like right before, you know, the few days or the week before, I have to perform. I have to practice actually

performing. Not stopping and going back. I have to do that pretty extensively, I think more than other people do. I don't know.

NMC: So what do you do to practice performing?

Winona: I just play my piece or my multiple pieces, I just play them straight through without the music. And I try to, um, copy the, the performance situation as much as I can.

NMC: In what ways?

Winona: Like with the piano. Like, I will, you know, raise the lid or lower the stand or whatever. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 763)

Lauren also changes her practice instrument to resemble the typical configuration used in live performances.

NMC: Do you have any rehearsal or practice strategies that you use to help with performance anxiety?

Lauren: Um, well, you know, performance, or practice room performances. So, running through a piece as if it was the performance except in a practice room. I do that fairly often. When I have a, when a piece is finished to the degree where I'm polishing it for a performance, usually I'll run through it like that once a day, where I put the music stand down and move everything off the piano. Or just play it through. It depends on how lazy I am. (chuckles) So I'll do that. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 578)

In addition to manipulating the instrument to match performance situations, Sophia chooses to rehearse certain ceremonial behaviors typical to a live performance. Sophia

sometimes initiates her rehearsal performance by bowing to acknowledge her imagined audience.

> **NMC**: Okay. What about in your practicing, do you have strategies that you implement while you're practicing to help you with performance anxiety?
>
> **Sophia**: I'll pretend in the practice room, well, I'll get up and then bow like it's a performance, and then play the piece through like it's a performance, and then bow at the end. So, just have mock performances. (VP, November 2, p. 730)

There is a certain sense of practicality exhibited by the participants in these rehearsal situations. In the case of rehearsal performances, the purpose is not to do something that will result in reducing the symptoms of MPA, but rather to practice the ability to perform in the presence of MPA. In a similar vein, many participants report the use of informal performances to help them prepare for recital appearances. These informal performances can be rather impromptu, simply finding someone available in the vicinity of the practice rooms.

> **NMC**: Do you implement any rehearsal strategies to help you with symptoms of anxiety?
>
> **Lester**: I pretend like there's an audience. I try to pretend like I'm performing for people. And sometime I even have, like, a couple friends sit in the practice room and listen to me perform. Just so I get used to there actually being people around. And I don't let myself stop if I mess

up. I just try to keep going, to like, see if I can cover for myself. (VP, November 3, 2010, p. 612-613)

Such small impromptu performances place additional pressure to perform with continuity, and to perform under the scrutiny of others.

NMC: So you like to do lots of performances?

Kendra: Try to. Yeah.

NMC: You try to do lots of performances? What do those performances, how do those performances help you?

Kendra: They help me play in front of people. Um, just to run through the entire performance without, other than by yourself, because you can always stop yourself in a practice room. So it's just, mostly to just do the whole thing in front of people, just to get the practice of it. So that when you do it for the first time in front of other people, it's not...

NMC: So is it a stamina issue, or...?

Kendra: Um, I don't, I'm not sure. I think it's more of just, the more you play in front of people the more comfortable you feel in that setting. So it might just be like a different setting. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 549)

Judith will sometimes schedule a slightly more formal performance, but carefully selects the audience to help build confidence for the recital.

Judith: Um, I also try to arrange some other performance of the recital, of the program.

NMC: What other things do you do...

Judith: With safe people. Another thing that I try to do, I try to play for people who are also planning to come to my recital who have the time to do that. You know, it's a huge time commitment. It helps me psychologically to know that, you know, it helps go over that hurdle. "I've already done this before. I've already played for these, these are not just strange people who." You know, and also, I only invite people who like me. (chuckles) Minus my committee, which of course, I don't have any choice in that. (laughs)

NMC: Who are "safe people?"

Judith: Um, people, um as a general rule of thumb, not pianists.

NMC: Okay. What makes them safe?

Judith: That, um, they're accepting of me. It's like, they're not, I'm not thought less of, even if something happens. Um, yeah, I, people who I trust and have some sort of relationship with. That, that helps. Um, I guess also people who have, who I know have supported me in the past, and have, um encouraged me in different ways. Um, my studio, my students and those parents are safe people. Because part of that trust is already there, first off me teaching, and I know that, they already, they have no doubt about my capabilities as a teacher or as a performer. And, yeah. And um, certain other people. So, there are some faculty, but I still get nervous around them, particularly if they are music people. Non-music faculty is better.

NMC: Okay. Why is that?

Judith: Um, because, I feel like they, um, that critical ear isn't necessarily there in judgment. (VP, April 3, 2009, pp. 509-510)

Concert Attire

On the day of the performance, most participants report having a structured pre-performance routine leading up to the actual performance.

Though the participants did not specifically address certain items in their interviews, a couple of novel cases point to the importance of considering dress and transportation. Both Albert and Phoebe indicated that time management and dress factor into the experience of MPA in performance. Phoebe lost her keys prior to Live Performance 1, and experienced a rather hectic half hour prior to her performance.

Phoebe: I was at marching band, and then right afterwards I went to the MU to eat. And I left my keys there. And, I think I left my keys in Music Hall, so I was looking for them all over down here. And my roommate wasn't in the room, and I thought she would be, so I wasn't going to worry about it. *And I didn't want to go to the performance in my sweatpants* [emphasis added]. So I finally went back to the MU and looked for them and found them. So I went to go change, and then I came here. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 679)

This decision, to forego her normal pre-performance routine so that she could change clothes shows the importance she places on physical appearance. The result of abandoning her routine was a severe memory slip that necessitated beginning the piece a second time in the performance.

NMC: Um, so you didn't get to do your pre-performance...

Phoebe: Calm-down time.

NMC: ...things. Calm-down time. Play through your piece. Take some time to talk to someone and socialize to relax.

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Did you do any relaxation techniques like deep breathing or muscle relaxation?

Phoebe: No. I was like praying on my way over here to relax. But, I was really worked up, so.

NMC: And did you pray before you performed, too?

Phoebe: No, just on the way, walking to [the recital hall.]

NMC: After the performance began, did you use any strategies to help you deal with anxiety while you were performing?

Phoebe: Um, um I don't know. I guess I tried to look relaxed when I walked out. Like, I smiled at the audience to acknowledge them. So maybe that's something that I tried, but I didn't really think about it that much for that performance.

NMC: Okay. So in contrast with a typical performance, you didn't get to do any of your pre-performance routines at all?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: Was it the lack of the routines that you think led to higher anxiety, or just the general anxiety of losing your keys and rushing around that caused you to be really anxious?

Phoebe: I don't think I would have lost my place on the keys if I wasn't that worked up, probably. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 680-681)

Albert forgot about Live Performance 1 until minutes before the recital. Because of this, he did not get a chance to change into performance clothes, and this created some problems in how he approached the performance. Albert believes that the effort it takes to dress up for a performance makes that event special for him, and this designation helps him focus and perform at his best.

Albert: And, I wasn't as dressed up as I like to be. I still dressed up, but, uh, I try to be at least, uh, black pants, belt, collar, dress shirt.

NMC: Okay. So physical appearance is part of your...

Albert: I wouldn't say it's part of my, um, it doesn't... It does matter in the overall performance, but the reason it does is because, more focus, I feel like it's more of a, it's a more important event than the rehearsal type of performance, and so therefore my brain is able to focus in more because it's different.

NMC: You feel like you make the performance special by dressing up?

Albert: Yes. And so, the dress didn't really affect how I was going to approach the piece, how I was going to try to play it, it was just the prior preparation which did affect the actual performance. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 457)

Thought not explicitly stated by the participants, it appears the performers were unconcerned with their dress when performing in the Virtual Performance. Phoebe

found that she felt much more relaxed without having to project an image to an audience.

> **Phoebe**: I guess I've never been recorded before, so. It just seems like a big difference because, I wasn't dressed up. I didn't walk on stage. I didn't see a bunch of people sitting watching me. I didn't have to acknowledge the crowd. I got to play with my shoes off, and be really relaxed. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 682)

Albert complained that he did not feel aesthetically connected in his Virtual Performance. When asked if a video recording of the Virtual Performance would have changed his performance, Albert agreed, and also agreed that he would have dressed up for the Virtual Performance.

> **NMC**: How would it be different if instead of just an audio recording, it was also video?
>
> **Albert**: I might have gotten in the mood a little more if it were video, because, the video, or, the visual aspect of performing wasn't necessary, somewhat. Well, it was because, if I achieved that, I think I would have achieved the mood that I was trying for. Not that I really changed anything physically in my face, like a big grin or anything, but uh, I didn't feel like I had to perform visual. I don't know if that...
>
> **NMC**: Would you have, would you have dressed up for a video recording?
>
> **Albert**: Yes.
>
> **NMC**: Would that have changed?

Albert: Yes. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 459)

Symptoms and Coping Strategies for Live Performance

In the moments leading up to Live Performance 1 and Live Performance 2, the participants felt a variety of physical and mental symptoms of anxiety. These symptoms prompted them to implement a number of coping strategies prior to performing.

Several participants indicated they felt certain physiological symptoms more acutely before the performance than during the performance itself. Lester, for example, was very aware of his heart pounding prior to the performance.

Lester: I felt my heart pounding. But like during the performance, it kinda died down. It was more before. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 619)

Winona felt symptoms of MPA in her stomach prior to the performance.

NMC: Did you have the stomach butterflies?

Winona: Right before but not during. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 768-769)

Lauren felt the muscles in her arms and hands shaking while waiting her turn to perform.

Lauren: Um, shakiness.

NMC: Okay. And where did you feel the shakiness?

Lauren: In my arms. Arms and hands.

NMC: Okay. Um, is it a vibrating shakiness, or a weak shakiness, or a fluttering shakiness?

Lauren: A weak shakiness.

NMC: Okay. Uh, and when did you start to feel that?

Lauren: Um, a little bit before I performed, so while the others were performing. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 581-582)

In addition to the physical symptom of MPA, many of the participants reported mental symptoms prior to the performance. Some had doubts about their readiness to perform.

Rhonda: Um, yes. Prior to going out, I had kind of, when I was doing my preparations before going out, um, I was kind of hit with the fact that my memory was not what it should have been before a performance, for the Fugue, specifically. And so I think, um, by kind of, I think that I kind of psyched myself out by convincing myself before hand that I didn't have the memory as well as I should have.

NMC: Is the Fugue pretty new?

Rhonda: Um, I started it at the beginning of, oh, not quite the beginning of the semester. Um,

NMC: So that would be about ten weeks.

Rhonda: Yeah, I would say the Fugue was probably, I've been working on seven or eight weeks. (VP, November 2, 2009, pp. 710-711)

Lester also experienced feelings of doubt prior to performing, and worried about how his performance would be received by the audience.

Lester: Um, I definitely felt, like fear of what people would think. I was dreading it. I was not excited at all. I did not want to play this piece. I didn't feel ready for some reason. 'Cause, it was weird, right before the performance, when I was running through it, I just, couldn't

play it straight through without messing up, and I was like... It was kind of unnerving, 'cause it was like, "Well, I haven't had this problem for awhile." (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 617)

Olivia felt additional pressure to perform because she knew that a specific person was in attendance, and she wanted to impress this person.

NMC: Alright. Now let's consider the specific performance Sunday afternoon. The Live Performance. Can you recall any specific mental symptoms of anxiety you may have felt in the Live Performance?

Olivia: Um, I had a little anxiety because, um, there was a person in the audience who I knew, which I hadn't expected. I hadn't seen him for like a long time. So, I felt a little anxiety because I was like, "Oh, I want to do well. I want to play well." More than if it were just a group of complete strangers. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 645)

The pressure to perform well can also come from the performer. Sophia had very high expectations for her performance, and she worried about whether she would be able to perform up to her own expectations.

NMC: Did you have any thoughts about your abilities to perform?

Sophia: Um, I knew I could play the piece well, and I set expectations. So I wanted to play up to those expectations. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 733)

The participants implemented a variety of coping mechanisms to help them deal with and possibly reduce their symptoms of anxiety. The coping mechanisms include

physical activity, social interaction or isolation, prayer or meditation, positive self-talk, and mental rehearsal of the music.

Warming-up is an essential part of the pre-concert routine partly because of its role in helping the student performer feel confident about their ability to play the piece. Several participants specifically mention how they managed their warm-up routine to help them deal with or prevent symptoms of MPA. Olivia was careful to warm-up on several different pianos so that she could feel more confident in dealing with the performance piano.

> **NMC**: Okay. Um, any specific rehearsal strategies prior to or in preparation for the Live Performance.
>
> **Olivia**: I didn't do my typical rehearsal strategy. Usually I play my piece, well, sometimes I play it a lot. But this time, I kept, I played it, I came too early, and so I ended up playing my piece a lot more than I had intended. And so, it seemed like the more I played it, the worse it got.
>
> **NMC**: Uh, what's the ideal number of times? Or what would be the ideal experience in playing before a performance.
>
> **Olivia**: Maybe three times at the most.
>
> **NMC**: Do you do them sort of the same way? At performance tempo?
>
> **Olivia**: Um, yeah. And I usually try to get in to a different piano each time, so that I'm ready to take on whatever the piano stage throws at me.
>
> (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 648)

When possible, some participants prefer to have some time in the performance venue to become accustomed to the acoustics and the piano.

Judith: Oh, and I got there early. Okay, and I had my banana and I had lunch and all that sort of thing. I had my water bottle. And I got there, got there early. Just to be in the space a little bit, um, by myself. And I touched the piano, a little bit. Uh, yeah. A couple of times.

NMC: And what are you doing in that time, to get there early?

Judith: Um, I guess getting acclimated. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 519)

As the performance drew closer, many participants indicated that they engaged in some physical activity to help alleviate feelings of anxiety or nervousness. The activities include walking, pacing, or jumping to expel nervous energy as well as stretching and breathing activities to calm the nerves.

Lester sometimes will engage in physical activity such as jumping jacks to release nervous energy.

NMC: You mentioned that you do some breathing and yoga-like centeredness. Do you do any other kinds of relaxation strategies before you perform?

Lester: There have been times when I needed to release some nervous energy, so you know, so I might do some jumping jacks, or something like that. Just because, it's like, you can't release all that energy just by calming yourself. Sometimes you actually have to move to get that energy out. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 613)

Winona also tries to alleviate pent up energy with physical motion.

NMC: Okay. Do you, um, do any kind of relaxation techniques?

Winona: Um, nothing huge. I just kind of shake my hands and jump around a little bit before I go on (chuckles) just to release the jitters. But not like, yoga, or anything. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 763)

Many participants used deep breathing as a way to quiet their physiological symptoms of anxiety.

Sophia: Uh, I prayed and did the deep breathing thing. And, yeah those were the two things I did.

NMC: Okay. So when did you do the deep breathing?

Sophia: When I was in the practice rooms, ten, twenty minutes before the performance.

NMC: And did you continue your deep breathing all the way up until then, or...?

Sophia: Yes. Taking just deep breaths to try to keep thinking, "In with the good. Out with the bad." (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 734)

In addition to deep breathing, Kendra engages in some light stretching to help reduce tension.

NMC: Okay. Um, relaxation strategies, you talked about breathing and stretching. Can you describe those and when do you do them?

Kendra: Yeah. Um, it's kind of like yoga, stretching. I guess just, I know when you play a lot of, your adrenaline or your blood will kind of go rushing. So just to kind of take time, and maybe touch your toes or something, or stretch your arms out, or just kind of get your body less

tense. So it helps you relax more and not tense up while you're playing so much.

NMC: And when do you typically do those?

Kendra: Typically before I play or before I warm up.

NMC: Minutes before? Hours before?

Kendra: Usually...

NMC: Right before you go on stage?

Kendra: (chuckles) No. Probably minutes before I actually warm up to go on stage, so. (VP, April 5, 2010, pp. 549-550)

The participants were also careful to manage their social interactions prior to the performance. Some participants chose to distract themselves from the imminent performance by engaging others in conversation. Lester mentioned the use of small talk as a way to keep his mind off of his upcoming performance.

NMC: Any other pre-performance routines that you did before this performance?

Lester: I guess, I like, right before I performed, like in general before I perform, you know, I try to like not think about it, you know, and just kinda like, talk to whoever is in the back and be like, "Hey, what's up." You know, I try to keep my mind off of it so I don't think about things, and I was, you know, doing that on Sunday. You know, trying to keep my mind off of it. 'Cause, you know, if I think about it too much then I dwell on it, and then I think I going to do poorly. It tends to be bad, so. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 620)

Rhonda is careful to avoid social situations that might cause her to feed off of the anxiety of others.

> **NMC**: There were also several other people involved in the performance, and it seemed to be a very social, uh, time, before the performance. Does that have, do you think that has anything to do with, uh, not being able to sit and relax and calm your hands?
>
> **Rhonda**: Yeah. If there's other people that you want to be talking to at the time, or just want to say, "Hey" to, um, it makes it harder to, um, have that time to sit and be quiet. Um, and they're all, you kind of feed off each other, too, if there's a group of you waiting all to perform, there's a lot of different ways that people react to performing. So you kind of have to make sure that you're distancing yourself from those who are getting very anxious before performing, so that doesn't carry on to you.
>
> **NMC**: So, it's a defense, it's a shield? You stay away from people who are...
>
> **Rhonda**: Um, I just have to be aware of those people who, um, in my opinion, would make a bigger deal out of the performance. You know, that they're, they're getting severely anxious, and really jittery and other things like that. And I just have to be aware of that. I don't necessarily have to distance myself, but I have to make sure that I'm saying, "You're okay. You don't have to get this anxious." (VP, November 2, 2009, pp. 709-710)

Phoebe attempted social communication with the audience prior to her performance in both Live Performance 1 and Live Performance 2. Though feeling very frazzled after losing her keys, Phoebe attempted to project a relaxed persona when acknowledging the audience prior to Live Performance 1.

> **NMC**: After the performance began, did you use any strategies to help you deal with anxiety while you were performing?
>
> **Phoebe**: Um, um I don't know. I guess I tried to look relaxed when I walked out. Like, I smiled at the audience to acknowledge them. So maybe that's something that I tried, but I didn't really think about it that much for that performance. (November, 3, 2009, p. 680)

In Live Performance 2, Phoebe decided to perform her Bach Invention on the celeste. Before playing, she spent a few moments explaining the instrument to the audience.

> **Phoebe**: Um, like the way I felt? Um, I was a little nervous, but once I walked out there I felt fine. And I started playing and I talked to the audience about my instrument. It was a relaxing performance compared to the first one. (chuckles)
>
> **NMC**: You talked about your instrument. Can you say some of the things that you mentioned?
>
> **Phoebe**: Um, I played the celeste, and I mentioned the year it was made and where. 1886 and it was made in France. And how it's different from the piano, that, the strings strike metal plates, or the hammers strike metal plates instead of strings, so it has a different sound.

NMC: Okay. Is that something you typically do before you perform, address the audience?

Phoebe: No. (chuckles)

NMC: Have you done that before?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: How does it make you feel when you address the audience before you perform?

Phoebe: I guess it makes me feel more relaxed, I don't know. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 690)

In addition to the physical and social strategies used to combat symptoms of MPA, the participants employed a variety of mental strategies including positive self-talk, prayer, and mental focus on the music. Lester and Rhonda gave themselves an internal pep-talk before the performance. Lester reassured himself that the audience would not judge him harshly for one bad performance.

NMC: Um, can you recall any internal dialogue that you might of had?

Lester: Um, I didn't think I could do it, and I was like, "Okay, you can do it." You know. "Relax. Calm down. It's going to be fine." And like, the people, I was like trying to tell myself, you know, "People in the audience aren't going to judge you for one bad performance. You know, all seven of them." (chuckles)

NMC: So kind of talking yourself off of the ledge.

Lester: Yeah…(VP, November 3, 2009, p. 617)

Rhonda reminded herself to be forgiving of small mistakes.

Rhonda: Um, the prelude was very much how I would expect a normal performance to go. Um, I was surprised. Normally, during a performance, I kind of, um, when thinking of before hand performance think, "Okay, like, you may make a couple mistakes that you're not used to." 'Cause that's normally what would happen in a performance. Um, it's not a spot that I'm used to messing up in, it'll just be a random spot that I kind of miss a note, and I just have to remind myself, "You're going to be okay with that. You have to move on." And so the Prelude was very normal, in that sense. Um, the Fugue was not so normal, in the sense that I just couldn't regain composure. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 708)

Phoebe's approach consisted of reminding herself that she is a capable performer, and that she had no reason to be nervous.

NMC: Concerning performance, do you have any internal dialogue or thoughts that you think to yourself?

Phoebe: I think performing, how you do is all in your head, kind of. So you have to tell yourself you're a good player, and you know your music, and just go out, have fun and do what you do. And just tell yourself that you aren't going to be nervous. Or maybe tell yourself that you're performing for yourself and no one's there.

NMC: So you kind of coach yourself before you play?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: You like to think positive thoughts or reassuring thoughts?

Phoebe: Yep. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 669-670)

Many participants reported using prayer or meditation as a way to help deal with feelings of MPA. Many who reported praying mentioned specific outcomes in terms of avoiding the catastrophic effects of MPA.

NMC: How about prayer or meditation? Do you pray or meditate before you perform?

Olivia: I pray before I perform. I just usually ask God to help me play alright (chuckles) and not make a fool of myself. (laughs)

NMC: So what sort of things do you typically pray for?

Olivia: Oh, just that, I'll perform as well as I'm supposed to, or that I'll at least be able to perform well. Um, that I, that it just won't be something where I did all this practicing and it just comes out for nothing, in the performance. Just that I'll be able to show how hard I've worked. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 641-642)

When Winona prays, she asks to be free of mental panic and that she will have a clean performance without too many errors.

NMC: Okay. Uh, do you pray or meditate before you perform?

Winona: Prayer, occasionally.

NMC: What kinds of things do you pray for?

Winona: Um, just to be able to get through the performance without panicking and messing up a lot. Without embarrassing myself, basically (chuckles). (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 763-764)

Lauren prays for mental clarity during performance, and that she will be focused on the music and not herself.

> **NMC**: Okay. Do you pray or meditate before a performance?
>
> **Lauren**: Yes, I pray before a performance.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. And what sort of things do you pray for?
>
> **Lauren**: Um, that I won't play for myself. Um, that I won't be thinking too much about me during a performance. Um, that I'll be calm and relaxed and have clear thought. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 579)

For Albert, prayer is more about a successful outcome for both the performer and the audience, and not so much about nervousness or MPA.

> **NMC**: Okay, and when you pray, when you do remember to pray before a performance, what kind of things do you pray for?
>
> **Albert**: I never play to, or, never pray to play all the right notes. I just pray that all the other performers do well, or their best that they can do for that performance, and that I do my best. And that no matter how a performance ends or begins, that I always walk out with my head held high, held high, with the audience hopefully still supportive, not necessarily gratified or, ecstatic about the performance, but just that there's still dignity at the end of every performance. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 452)

In addition to prayer, some performers take time to meditate, or focus on mental clarity and well-being. With Lester, the meditation involves deep breathing and positive self-talk.

NMC: Okay. What about prayer or meditation? Do you pray or meditate before you perform?

Lester: I'd almost say the centering is kinda like meditating, you know. It's kind of like a focus on your breathing, and try to like, be, trying to like talk to yourself, I mean like, "You're gonna do great. Don't have to worry about it, you know. You're well prepared. " That kind of thing. But I don't pray or anything. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 613)

Kendra focuses on her music during her meditation by thinking through the piece in her head, or singing it to herself.

NMC: Okay. Um, what about prayer or meditation?

Kendra: I'll do meditation, and, probably, yes prayer to get through it (laughs) so.

NMC: Okay. Can you describe your meditation?

Kendra: Just, kind of a moment to just close your eyes, and just run through the piece in your head. Maybe even sing it out loud to yourself. Or breathing, just breathing in and out, too. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 550)

Other participants also reported a mental run-through of the piece in the moments prior to performing. Albert uses this mental run-through to establish a tempo in his head prior to entering the stage.

NMC: Uh, when you were talking about thinking through a piece. What do you do to think through a piece? What kinds of things do you think about?

Albert: I always try to, at least, think of the beginning and how it starts off so I can establish a tempo in my head, so that when I go into the performance, there's sort of already a tempo established, and I'm less likely to get too excited and rush.

NMC: And when do you do this mental run-through?

Albert: Just moments before going out on the performance.

NMC: So before the door even opens?

Albert: Yes. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 450)

Prior to Live Performance 2, Judith implemented a more rigorous mental rehearsal, checking her memory by thinking each pitch of the *Toccata* in solfege.

Judith: Um, I did more mental work with the piece, prior, than physical playing.

NMC: Okay. Can you describe the mental work that you did?

Judith: Uh, basically, I went through and solfeged the whole thing. Yeah, um. Like in slow motion, away from the piano.

NMC: Singing and playing, or just?

Judith: More mental singing. So it took about, maybe 40 minutes, or something.

NMC: And just the melodic line, or did you...

Judith: All, all of it.

NMC: All of it.

Judith: And harmonically, going vertically.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: And how did that, did that help, do you think?

Judith: Um, I think so. Yeah, yeah. And I think that's sort of why I got thrown off so much with that memory slip. Particularly, that's a spot that I usually can jump to. It just threw me off, and I wasn't sure what to do with it. (LP2, April 18, 2010, pp. 531-532)

Judith was the only participant to use a prescription drug specifically to deal with MPA.

NMC: Okay. Did you take your beta-blockers before your performance?

Judith: Yes I did.

NMC: Typical dosage and timing?

Judith: Um, yeah, I just took one and everything, and then I was thinking I should do two for these, too. And actually, I had forgotten about that.

NMC: So, you just did one for the Live Performance?

Judith: Mm-hmm. (affirmative) (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 519)

As mentioned previously, Judith is very careful to manage her diet in the month prior to an important performance. Judith is also careful on the day of the performance to eat a banana, carbohydrates, and to stay hydrated with water (Judith, VP, April 3, 2010, p. 519). Judith elaborated on why she eats a banana prior to performance in the interview following Live Performance 2.

NMC: Can I ask a slightly unrelated question?

Judith: Mm-hmm.

NMC: I read another dissertation, and this was actually one that I had participated in as one of the subjects, and the writer noted that almost everybody mentioned bananas. What's the banana do for you? And when did you learn to do that? And when did you start doing that?

Judith: Um, I just started doing that recently. This year. This academic year. At the beginning of the year, I think it was. Yeah, I don't think I did it last, yeah, I don't think I did it last year. I don't remember. I don't think so. But, definitely this year, since the beginning of the year.

NMC: Okay, what's the banana supposed to do for you? What's the rationale behind it?

Judith: Um, I don't know how it works, exactly. Um, but, somehow it's supposed to calm you down. I know it also works, when I was in high school, I ran a lot, cross country and track and everything, and it's supposed to like, for then, it's supposed to prevent muscle cramps. And I think that's sort of what happens, and also with nervousness, because then, the muscles can't be so agitated. And so it calms that, all that stuff down, so you can actually, they can function more the way they're supposed to. But, it's the potassium, because they have high levels of potassium.

NMC: Cool.

Judith: So yeah, I have found out that 45 minutes prior is about...

NMC: It's good.

Judith: ...yeah, is the key for me. (LP2, April 18, 2010, p. 537. The dissertation referenced in this conversation was DeForest, 1998.)

Symptoms and Coping Strategies for Virtual Performance

In general, the participants reported fewer physiological and mental symptoms of MPA prior to the Virtual Performance and the Exposure Performances. Because they felt fewer symptoms, they did not implement as many coping strategies.

Only two participants reported any kind of physical symptom of MPA prior to recording performances in the virtual performance context. Olivia experienced gastrointestinal symptoms prior to recording that became unnoticeable after the performance began.

NMC: Um, your stomach?

Olivia: Um, it was fluttery right before hand. Not while I was playing. Well, it might have been, but I didn't notice it. It was not enough that I noticed it. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 652)

Judith noticed that she was having some difficulty with shallowness of breath prior to the Virtual Performance, but also noted that the problem was less significant than what she experienced in Live Performance 1.

NMC: Were you aware of, either during or after the fact, your breathing?

Judith: I think I was breathing better, because I was singing with it. I was thinking, "I hope this doesn't get picked up on the microphone." (chuckles) I was like, "No, just stay focused." Yeah, um, and I mean, I do try to breathe a little bit before beginning, just take a couple of deep

breaths and such. I did notice that that, I was having a little bit of difficulty with that, so I wasn't breathing too incredibly deeply.

NMC: Today?

Judith: Yeah. But, I was more calm in general than yesterday, yeah. Definitely more calm. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 523)

Judith also reported that she did not take her beta-blockers prior to the Virtual Performance (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 524), making her comparison to the Live Performance that much more meaningful. If she felt calmer before the Virtual Performance without the beta-blockers than she felt prior to Live Performance 1 with the beta-blockers, then her symptoms were indeed greatly diminished in the virtual context.

In the instructions for recording the virtual performance, the participants were told that they were not allowed to record the performance a second time in an attempt to submit a better performance to the virtual audience. This directive led to feelings of apprehension prior to the performance. Both Phoebe and Olivia mentioned that they had feelings of nervousness about getting only one shot at recording their performances.

NMC: Did you have any mental symptoms of anxiety?

Olivia: Um, before hand, like the last ten minutes before I played, I had some, I had some uh, nerves that, "Oh, people are going to be hearing this. I only get one shot at this," kind of thing. If it were a recording where I could just do it over and over, of course it wouldn't be a big deal, but you know, since I only get one shot at it, I was a little nervous about screwing it up. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 650)

NMC: Okay. Alright, let's now consider the Virtual Performance, the recording that you just did. Can you recall any mental symptoms of anxiety in this performance?

Phoebe: Um, not really. The only thing that I was worried about is that you only record it once, so if it was terrible, I wouldn't be able to do it again. That was the only thing that was a little anxiety causing. But otherwise, nothing really. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 681)

Lester reported that he felt doubts about his ability to play his repertoire due to difficulties experienced in his warm-up prior to the recording session. He felt concern that he would be sharing a bad performance with the virtual audience.

Lester: My first virtual performance, I think I was a little anxious about it because I didn't know, you know. Like thinking, "Oh, this is going to go online and whoever subscribes to the podcast is gonna be able to listen to it. Ah, it's gonna be awful," you know. And, I kept dwelling on that, and I hadn't played the piece completely through without messing up for awhile, so I was kinda nervous about it. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 629)

Graham also reported that concerns about the quality of his performance might have caused tone issues at the outset of his recording.

NMC: No. Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Graham: Uh, the very first note, I think, was not as strong as it should have been.

NMC: And you attribute that to the, to anxiety?

Graham: Yeah. Thinking, just, I guess wondering about how good the performance was going to be. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 485)

Several participants also reported that other stressors related to their daily life may have led to sub-standard performances in the virtual context. This indicates that the Virtual Performance was, perhaps, not the most significant stressful event of the day, and that the participants came to see the virtual performances as just one more obligation in their very busy academic lives. Similar language does not appear in the portions of the interview dealing with the Live Performance 1 or Live Performance 2.

When asked about CPAI ratings that seemed abnormally high in the Exposure Performance, Sophia mentioned that the stressors of the day prevented adequate focus prior to the performance.

NMC: There were a couple in here that were a little bit higher than those two. Performance 3, you rated a 58. Do you remember anything about that particular performance that made it different?

Sophia: Was that on Wednesday (laughing ruefully)

NMC: It may have been.

Sophia: Yeah. I think I was a lot more distracted that day, so I was concerned with other things, and my mind wasn't focusing on the actual performing, so then I was more nervous about making, doing a good performance, because I couldn't focus. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 747)

Winona also noted that she was distracted by other obligations in her day, and that she felt more frustration with mistakes than in her other virtual performances.

> **NMC**: You've now also performed in several virtual performance. Compare your first virtual performance with your last virtual performance.
>
> **Winona**: Hmm. Well. The first virtual performance, I think I was more relaxed and better prepared for it, but the last one, I was in a hurry, and had a lot of other things that I was thinking about that day.
>
> **NMC**: Did one performance feel better than the other?
>
> **Winona**: Um, not the music itself. I probably felt better with the first performance, I wasn't as stressed. But I don't think the music differed that much.
>
> **NMC**: Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different in the last virtual performance?
>
> **Winona**: Um, yeah. They were slightly heightened, just because I was stressed out, so I was more easily frustrated by the mistakes I made. (LP2, November 15, 2009, pp. 780-781)

Clearly, by the fifth Exposure Performance, performing in a virtual context was a low priority in her day-to-day activities. It is hard to imagine a similar attitude concerning a live performance.

For the most part, the participants reported implementing fewer coping strategies to deal with symptoms of MPA prior to the Virtual Performance. The participants did not think the strategies were necessary because they did not feel many

symptoms of anticipatory anxiety prior to the recording sessions. Winona, for example, did not implement any of the coping strategies that she frequently uses prior to live performances.

NMC: Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety in this performance situation?

Winona: No.

NMC: No.

Winona: Because I didn't have any, really.

NMC: So no jumping around, working out energy?

Winona: Nope.

NMC: No isolation?

Winona: Nope

NMC: No prayer?

Winona: Nope. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 772-773)

Sophia also reported that she did not feel like she needed to use any coping strategies because she felt no symptoms of MPA prior to the Virtual Performance.

NMC: Okay. Um. Did you take any specific steps to reduce your anxiety before this performance?

Sophia: No.

NMC: Did you do any of the deep breathing?

Sophia: None. No praying. No deep breathing. Nothing. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 737)

Sophia clarified that there was no need to implement her normal pre-performance routine because she was not nervous.

> **NMC**: Okay. Compare your pre-performance routines with the Live Performance.
>
> **Sophia**: Um, I didn't do any of my pre-performance routines before today. Because I didn't need to. Because I wasn't nervous. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 738)

A few participants expressed regret over not implementing coping strategies after they began to experience some negative effects of MPA during the Virtual Performance. Rhonda, for example, noted that her Exposure Performances with the highest CPAI scores occurred on days when she did not feel she had time to sufficiently warm-up prior to the recording session.

> **NMC**: But you see here that number 3 and number 4 ended up being higher than your second live performance. Can you recall, and I'm not even sure which number 4 that would be, can you recall what may have made those a little bit more, would have given those a high score in your mind, as opposed to the others?
>
> **Rhonda**: Um, I think those were a couple days that I didn't have time to go through the music previously in that day. So it was probably the first or second time that I had gone through that music. Um, so I think that contributed some, if I didn't feel as confident with the performance that I did, and not be able to think about those things that I needed for improvement before hand. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 721)

Judith expressed regret over not taking her beta-blockers when she noticed that her hands were perspiring abnormally.

Judith: Um, I was perspiring. My hands were wet. Very slippery.

NMC: Okay. Is that unusual?

Judith: Um, it hasn't happened for a while. Actually, that usually doesn't occur when, I've noticed it hasn't occurred since taking the beta-blockers. And, I remember thinking, "Well, why didn't I take them? I should have done that. Or I should have had a banana or something." And blah blah blah blah. And I, and I, yeah, it was just the way the day went, and I didn't put all the pieces together until too late. And then it was, you know, 8:10, and I had to get over here, and "Fwah!" (LP2, April 18, 2010, p. 837)

Two of the participants alleviated pre-performance MPA with coping strategies peculiar to the virtual performance context. These strategies made use of the absence of the audience in the moments leading up to the virtual performance recording. Lester warmed up on the instrument used for the recording session in the moments just prior to beginning his performance. By doing so, he was able to acclimate himself to his surroundings and the idiosyncrasies of the performance instrument.

NMC: Okay. Um, did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety for the Virtual Performance?

Lester: I went through the piece as many times as I could to feel comfortable about it before playing.

NMC: Okay. This is when you're in here, prior to recording?

Lester: Yeah, 'cause, um, part of the Live Performance is, you know, I hadn't played that piano since the last time I performed on it, which would have been midterms.

NMC: mm-hmm.

Lester: And, that was a while ago. And this one, I got to play on this piano. And so I played through it, like, four or five times, and I felt comfortable with it. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 622-623)

Similarly, Judith felt she was free to take more time to compose herself on the bench before beginning her piece. She felt as though the presence of an audience causes her to short-change this opportunity in a more traditional live setting.

Judith: …I did take some time, and then when I went back, I cut off the beginning part. It was like 26 seconds. (chuckles) I didn't realize it was so long. But granted, part of that was just getting over, and etc. And, um, I maybe took a minute or so before going to, pressing start. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 521)

Judith clarified later in the interview that concerns about the audience getting restless during the time it takes to compose herself at the piano are not present in the Virtual Performance.

Judith: One thing about recording, I tend to give myself a little bit more time before needing to start, because there's no audience to get restless, or to start, yes. So that aspect disappears. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 522)

Though most participants reported implementing fewer coping strategies, Olivia and Phoebe reported using the same strategies they use prior to normal live

performances. Olivia experienced more physical and mental symptoms of MPA prior to the Virtual Performance than the rest of the study population, and therefore felt prompted to deal with her symptoms by utilizing her coping strategies.

> **NMC**: Uh, did you take any specific steps to reduce your anxiety before the Virtual Performance?
>
> **Olivia**: I tried to do as similar to what I do with normal performances. I played my piece, and then I went out in the hall, and um. I didn't have quite as much nervous energy, because I didn't feel like pacing or anything. I was able to just sit down. But, I did talk to people, and...
>
> **NMC**: So your pre-performance routine was mostly the same.
>
> **Olivia**: Yeah. Mm-hmm.
>
> **NMC**: Did you, so you did do a rehearsal before you performed?
>
> **Olivia**: Yeah.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. Um, did you pray before you performed?
>
> **Olivia**: Yes.
>
> **NMC**: What kind of things did you pray for?
>
> **Olivia**: About the same as what I said at the Live Performance. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 652)

Phoebe implemented many of the strategies she normally uses for a typical live performance. Phoebe made a special effort to call her mom prior to the Virtual Performance. She was also careful to manage her schedule to leave plenty of time to be ready for the performance.

NMC: No. Um, did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety before the Virtual Performance?

Phoebe: I called my mom.

NMC: You did?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. And you talked with her.

Phoebe: mmm-hmmm (affirmative)

NMC: And that made you feel?

Phoebe: Just relaxed. I don't know, it just helps to talk to her. She calms me down. We talk about other stuff.

NMC: So not at all, did you mention the performance at all?

Phoebe: I think at the very beginning of the conversation. And then I think that she just knows what I need. (chuckles)

NMC: What kind of things did you talk about?

Phoebe: Um, she's a teacher, so she told me about her day, and all the kids, and all the funny things they do in first grade. (chuckles)

NMC: Cool.

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Do you get to call her before other performances, or...

Phoebe: Usually she's here for performances, but.

NMC: Okay. Did you do anything else to help you prepare for this performance?

Phoebe: Um, I made sure that I like, I ate fast, kind of. So that I would have time to get here, and I wouldn't be late and rush. I practiced in the practice room. I ran through it once. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 684-685)

With a recent bad experience with MPA in Live Performance 1, it is perhaps understandable that Phoebe made a special effort to be ready for her next performance. Still, Phoebe also mentioned that she did not pray prior to the Virtual Performance, because she was not very nervous prior to the recording session.

NMC: Did you pray before you performed?

Phoebe: No, I didn't for this one.

NMC: What is it that um, would cause you to pray before, say, a live performance, but not, this performance?

Phoebe: I guess I tend to pray more when I'm nervous. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 685)

In summary, the participants experienced fewer anticipatory symptoms of MPA prior to the Virtual Performance. Because they did not feel the symptoms of MPA, they did not implement many of the coping strategies normally utilized prior to a live performance.

Performance Phase

The participants reported many symptoms of MPA experienced while performing in the live performance context. The symptoms were categorized as having physiological manifestations, mental manifestations, and problems with performance quality. Though presented here as distinct categories, these manifestations inter-react

with each other, causing the distinction between categories to become blurred. A pianist might have a mental reaction to a physiological symptom, which might in turn lead to problems in performance quality. Similarly, a missed note might lead to a sudden increase in muscle shakiness, causing mental recriminations and negative self-talk.

Live Performance

The participants complained of various symptoms of MPA occurring during performances in the live performance context. Those physiological, mental and performance quality symptoms are described below, as well as a number of coping strategies the performers attempted to implement during the performance.

Physiological Symptoms

The most commonly mentioned physiological symptoms affected the muscles. The pianists complained of muscle tension and shakiness during performance. Several participants complained of tension in their shoulders, causing their shoulders to become elevated toward their ears.

> **NMC**: Your shoulders, do you feel any tension or shakiness in your shoulders?
>
> **Kendra**: They'll tense up. Yeah.
>
> **NMC**: And what's, how do they tense up?
>
> **Kendra**: Um, upward. They won't be relaxed downward anymore, so they'll more go up towards my ears.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. And when do you notice that that happens?

Kendra: Probably within the first page, and then I'll notice it when I'm playing and try to adjust. So probably within the first minute or so, I'll notice it. (Kendra, VP1, April 5, 2010 p. 545)

Most report the tension as something they are unaware of until the tension reaches a certain threshold. Judith, for example, may not notice the tension until after the performance is over.

NMC: Okay. Let's move to physical symptoms of what you typically feel for a solo performance. Um, do you feel the tension in your jaw that you mentioned, while you're playing?

Judith: Um, while I'm playing? I don't know. Maybe I notice it more afterwards. When I'm playing, I don't notice much physically, like all that. I notice it more afterwards. Like, if I'm tense playing, I don't notice it until after I'm done. And then I'm like, "Oh, my arms feel really tired." Or, yeah. But, um, I haven't quite. I'm starting to. I'm starting to notice a little bit more when I'm playing, but that, that transition hasn't fully been made.

NMC: So after you're done playing, do you feel the results of tension...

Judith: Yeah. (Judith, VP, April 3, 2010, p. 507)

The tension can escalate in musical sections that are more technically challenging.

Lauren: …Um, and I also, my typical anxiety, the way I deal with anxiety, is getting tense in the shoulders and arms. Um, so I'll bring my shoulders up, typically during difficult sections. So it's a hunching...

NMC: So it's like Frankenstein shoulders?

Lauren: Yeah. Yeah, I'll hunch my shoulders up.

NMC: Um, is it a squeezing tension? Is it a locked tension?

Lauren: I think it's more of a squeezing tension. And it usually escalates. So I start a difficult section, and I might start out with fairly relaxed shoulders, and then gradually. Or, if I'm really afraid of it, then it's right away.

NMC: When do you notice that your shoulders are tensing?

Lauren: I don't always notice. Um, sometimes it's part way through the performance, but a lot of the time, it's not until afterwards that I think about it. (Lauren, VP, April 5 2010, p. 574)

In some instances, the shoulder tension can cause a general feeling of discomfort, but is not quite severe enough to cause pain or inhibited motion.

Lester: Um, I felt a little tense, like, in the shoulder area. Um, it wasn't a comfortable experience for me, you know. It's like I knew I, for some, I just felt really nervous and I had no idea why.

(later in the interview)

NMC: So, in your shoulders in your neck, what did you feel?

Lester: Some tension.

NMC: And what's that like? Where were your shoulders?

Lester: They were just kinda, almost locked right here, in a way. You know, I wasn't in a slouched position, I wasn't in perfect posture, I was kind of like in between a little.

NMC: Okay. So locked, unmoving.

Lester: Well not locked, it just, they weren't moving but I could move them if I needed to. It was kinda... (chuckles)

NMC: Would you say clenched? Does that feel right or is that a different...

Lester: That feels too much like locked. Because they weren't locked, they just weren't relaxed, you know. (Lester, VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 610-611)

In other instances, the tension can become so severe that it leads to inhibited motion and pain.

NMC: Your shoulders and neck get really, really tense, and almost painful, would you say?

Olivia: It depends. Usually I'm moving them enough that they are forced to be somewhat loose, but if I'm nervous enough, yeah, they can become painful.

NMC: And, you describe that tension as being locked.

Olivia: Yeah, mm-hmm. (Olivia, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 639)

The muscular tension is not limited to the shoulders. Lauren noticed tension in her forearms.

NMC: How about in your upper arms or elbows?

Lauren: Um, upper arms and elbows, actually not too much. Elbows more, but upper arms are usually...

NMC: And what do you feel in your elbows?

Lauren: Uh, tension. Well, I clench my forearms, so then that moves into my elbows.

NMC: Okay, so, can you describe clenching your forearms?

Lauren: Um, it's because I play, I try to use finger. I get nervous and I use more of a finger technique. And so that causes tension in my forearms. And then I hold my elbows closer to my body, rather than further away, so that they're, there tends to be...

NMC: So that clenched forearms, is that from a perpetually raised finger, or the...

Lauren: Yeah, it's from a lack of relaxation. I don't, you know I play an octave, and I don't always relax coming out of it. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 575)

Other areas of the body may exhibit tension as well. Kendra and Olivia experience tension in their jaw and the muscles of their face (Kendra, VP, April, 5, 2010, p. 544; Olivia, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 639). Judith sometimes feels tension in her back and legs (Judith, VP, April 3, 2010, p. 507). Though not tension exactly, Lauren reported that her wrists and fingers feel stiff (Lauren, VP, April 5, 2010, p. 575). Kendra also reported that the tension in her shoulders can lead to fatigue.

NMC: Okay. How about down your arms, like your upper arms and elbows, do you notice anything?

Kendra: Well, they get more tired. Well, the adrenaline helps keep them not tired, but they'll still get more tired because my shoulders are

tense. So it doesn't really help with what my arms are doing. (Kendra, VP, April 5, 2010, p. 545)

In addition to feelings of muscle tension, many participants reported that they felt their muscles shaking. The participants mentioned a trembling, or a shaking in their hands.

NMC: Okay. Let's think now about physical symptoms in your solo performance. Can you think of any?

Lester: On Sunday, my hands were trembling a lot, um, which I haven't experienced for a while, so that's kind of weird. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 610)

Olivia, Lauren, Rhonda, and Winona also felt their hands trembling or shaking when they performed (Lauren, VP, April 10, 2010, p. 575; Olivia, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 639; Rhonda, VP, November 2, 2009, p. 702; Winona, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 761). For Phoebe, the shaking began in response to missed notes in her performance.

NMC: And your hands, you said they shake after you make a mistake. Is it only after you make a mistake? Or does sometimes shaking cause the mistake?

Phoebe: Usually, I don't get nervous until after something goes wrong. (Phoebe, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 672)

In addition to shaking or trembling hands, several performers also reported shaking in the muscles of their legs, particularly in conjunction with pedaling.

Rhonda: … My feet do shake if I have to pedal.

NMC: Okay.

Rhonda: Um, especially long pedals. So, normally if I do a performance, I normally try to have a piece that does not need the pedal for the first one, 'cause that's, uh, it's a little bit of a nervous shake. And then once I get used to it, it's fine. But occasionally my foot is shaking as I'm holding down the pedal. (Rhonda, VP, November 2, 2009, p. 703)

For Winona, the shaking can interfere with her ability to control pedaling (Winona, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 762). Lauren will sometimes notice that her feet shake in response to problems with the pedal, specifically if she wears shoes that squeak when she pedals (Lauren, VP, April 5, 2010, p. 576).

Apart from tension or shaking, Graham noted a peculiar sensation that occurs as he begins to perform in which he feels as though his arms are floating in position.

Graham: But there is sort of a floating feeling. Like I'm trying to position myself correctly. And, I might be moving, uh, moving in a rehearsed way that I'm not thinking about. That I'm, I'm bowing, and then I'm turning, and then I'm sitting down, and I have my arms in such and such a position. And my foot out extended to the pedal.

NMC: So floating as in you're not really thinking about doing those things, you just do them because that's what you have to do before you perform?

Graham: Well, thinking about them a little bit. It just sort of feels like every part of my body is floating on something. It's not, it doesn't feel like, like I'm exerting the effort to keep my arm held up, it's just feels like it's being held up. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 476)

In addition to muscle reactions in response to MPA, the participants noted that they experienced changes in their breathing and heart rate. Many noted that on occasion, they would find themselves holding their breath, and had to remind themselves to breathe.

> **NMC**: Okay. Um, how about in your chest or your breathing?
>
> **Lauren**: I think that I sometimes forget to breathe. Um, but sometimes I think more about breathing. I think it kind of depends.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. And when do you notice something has changed, or...
>
> **Lauren**: If haven't, well, if I haven't breathed in a while, then I'll usually notice, and then I'll breathe more. And then I'll make a concentrated effort to relax and breathe. Um, usually it takes, I don't know, a little while before I realized. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 576)

For Judith, the realization that she has been holding her breath does not occur until after the performance is over.

> **NMC**: Okay. What about the way you breathe or...
>
> **Judith**: Oh, yeah. I have had a tendency to not breathe during performances.
>
> **NMC**: And when do you notice that?
>
> **Judith**: Um, now I'm noticing it more afterwards. Like before, it has just been a comment that people have given me. Like I noticed it yesterday, like I got done, like "Oh, I'm breathing now." Like I haven't had oxygen for the past six and a half minutes. (laughs) Or very little. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 507-508)

For Rhonda, after she notices that she is holding her breath, or that her breath is shallow, the cue to breathe can help her relax into the performance.

> **Rhonda**: …Because, occasionally when I do perform, I forget to breathe, er, it's more shallow breaths. And I find as soon as I can kind of get into a normal breathing pattern it relaxes me a lot more. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 705)

Rather than holding her breath, Olivia sometimes finds that her respiration rate is more rapid than normal (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 639).

Many participants also noted changes in their heart rate. Lester reported feeling his heart pounding and racing (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 611). Olivia, Winona, and Lauren also reported an elevated heart rate (Lauren, VP, April 5, 2009, p. 576; Olivia, November 3, 2009, p. 639; Winona, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 761). Judith reported that taking beta-blockers has helped with her heart rate during performance.

> **NMC**: Do you feel a change in your heart rate? Or are you aware of it?
>
> **Judith**: Afterwards? Maybe. I know, I noticed that usually before, I feel my heart rate increase. Although the beta-blockers stop that, too. It keeps everything calmer, so that helps everything else. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 508)

The participants also reported a variety of gastrointestinal symptoms of MPA. The sensation of 'butterflies in your stomach' was frequently reported, though an exact description of the phenomenon proved elusive.

NMC: So, in your stomach, you mentioned butterflies. Uh, is there tension too, or is it mostly that, butterfly feeling? It's kind of hard to describe, isn't it?

Lauren: A little bit of tension, but not a whole lot. So, yeah, more of just the nervous, pit of your stomach feeling. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 576)

Rhonda described the sensation as "the feeling in your gut, that, you don't really want to be there anymore" (Rhonda, VP, November 2, 2009, p. 702). Olivia reported that her stomach felt "fluttery."

NMC: How about, uh, your stomach. You mention that it is "fluttery." What's that like?

Olivia: Uh, It just feels kind of shaky. It's a really strange sensation. It's just...

NMC: Hard to describe.

Olivia: Yeah. It's kind of shaky, kind of, almost, kind of cramped a little. But not painful. It's just all of this... It has to do with my heart rate, too, I think. I just, it kind of, everything in there is kind of like "yuhyueah." (Olivia, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 639-640)

Both Winona and Phoebe reported feeling nauseated on occasion (Phoebe, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 672; Winona, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 762).

Finally, many participants reported feeling unusually hot during a performance. For Sophia, the sensation was limited to a flushed feeling in her cheeks, and she stated that "my cheeks will get red. They'll get hot. (Sophia, VP, November 2, 2009, p. 725). Phoebe and Lester reported an overall feeling of warmth and sweatiness.

NMC: Let's again, do a head to toe scan. In your head or in your face, did you feel any symptoms?

Lester: Warmth, definitely. Um.

NMC: Like a flushing, or?

Lester: Yeah, probably.

NMC: Was it a feverish warmth, or...

Lester: No. It was just kind of like, (pants), and it just, warmer than usual, but I wouldn't say it was like, you know, I had a temperature or anything.

NMC: Did you feel like you were about to sweat?

Lester: I may have been. (laughs) I didn't exactly check, but. (Lester, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 610)

NMC: Okay. Let's go ahead, again, and go from head to toe. Do you feel anything in your head or your face?

Phoebe: Probably, just like warmth.

NMC: Like fever warmth, or like work-out warmth, or like blushing?

Phoebe: Like sweaty, panicky warmth. (Phoebe, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 671)

Albert, Kendra, Judith, Lester, and Sophia reported that their hands get cold and clammy. Lester described the situation well. "…And actually, my hands generally feel cold. They tend to feel more, clammy even. Like they do a little sweating, and they're cold" (Lester, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 611).

In summary, the participants felt a variety of physical symptoms of MPA while performing. They reported muscle tension and shakiness, changes in the respiration and heart rate, sensations of physical warmth, sweatiness, as well as cold and clammy hands.

Mental Symptoms

In addition to the physiological symptoms, the participants experienced a number of symptoms involving their ability to concentrate, to remember the music, feelings of doubt about their ability to perform, and apprehension about making a mistake.

The participants reported that a number of competing thoughts made concentration during the performance difficult. The participants thought about the evaluations and expectations of the audience, their own expectations and evaluations, concerns about their physical appearance, and other thoughts completely unrelated to the music or the performance situation.

Concerns about the expectations and evaluations of the audience were a primary concern of the participants as they were performing.

NMC: Do you have any internal dialogue when you're at the piano?

Rhonda: Oh yeah. (chuckles) Normally, it's um, what I would be thinking of people that might say something to me afterwards, so the audience. Um, if I'm being evaluated on it by someone, what their comments might be. If they know my, my abilities before hand.

(later in the interview)

NMC: Okay. Can you maybe give me an example by speaking out loud something that you might hear in your internal dialogue?

Rhonda: Um, I don't.. Probably like, "Oh, there's people in here who really don't know how to play piano." Or whatever else I'm doing, "So, they'll probably think that I'm doing good regardless. But, there's somebody else out there who does know how well you're doing, and they're going to know that you did poorly." Or, other such things. (Rhonda, VP, November 2, 2009, p. 700)

Sophia gets concerned that the audience would think less of her if she makes a mistake in her performance. These concerns are magnified when the audience includes her teachers, or other individuals who have expertise in music.

Sophia: Um, I get more nervous when there's people in the audience whose opinion I care about the most. So, obviously if my teachers are in the audience, I want to do well. So, then I would get more nervous.

NMC: Are those the people that, whose opinion you highly esteem? Is that?

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: Are there other kinds of people like that, besides your teachers?

Sophia: Um, well I think the teachers are the ones I think of the most, but. Um, I can't think of any right now.

NMC: And what is it about your teachers, that if a teacher is in the audience it makes you more nervous than if they are not?

Sophia: Um, because they're good musicians, and they could be able to tell if I made a mistake. This is if you don't have a musical background, you might be able to cover up a quick mistake, they would probably be able to notice.

NMC: Okay. Why are you concerned with their noticing mistakes? How does that affect you?

Sophia: Um, because I want them to think that I am a good musician, a good performer. So, I don't want them to think, "Oh, [Sophia] made a mistake in her performance."

NMC: (chuckles) So you think they might be disappointed with...

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: With a mistake?

Sophia: Right. (Sophia, VP, November 2, 2009, pp. 738-739)

In addition to music faculty, Kendra feels heightened symptoms of anxiety when other music majors or pianists are in the audience. Kendra worries that these individuals might know the piece she is playing, and would be able to identify deficiencies in her performance.

Kendra: Well, if they're music majors, that's even more scary, because you know that they might know the piece, they might recognize it, and they might be listening to every phrasing or the different passages. I guess that would be the main thing, of just messing up. A noticeable mistake. (Kendra, VP, April 5, 2010, p. 548)

For Judith, the perceived expectations of the music faculty are so high that success seems completely unachievable. In addition to having a flawless performance with no wrong notes, she feels there are very refined artistic expectations placed on her performance. During performance, she finds herself constantly questioning whether her performance is adequate to meet the standards of the faculty on her degree committee.

> **Judith**: It's just like there were negative thoughts, but you don't really know what, you don't know what the specific thoughts were. Um, um, I guess, it's just, this constant thing of having this check list of things you ought to be doing, and whether or not you're actually doing it or not. It's still that, whether or not it's good enough to pass, whether or not you have that approval. Whether or not you're arriving to those expectations that need to be fulfilled. Um, lots of it, lots of it has been in the past, worry about memory in particular, and upcoming things, and blah blah blah, whether or not things are going right, or what so and so thinks. I don't know, even not, even not so much that, but just being aware of, I guess the biggest thing is the, "When are you going to screw up?" type of thing.
>
> **NMC**: Okay.
>
> **Judith**: And, um, somehow things not being good enough to satisfy all those people that you see out of the corner of your eye.
>
> **NMC**: What sort of things do you think they need to hear to be satisfied? What specifically are these expectations that you feel from them?

Judith: Um, perfection.

NMC: Perfection.

Judith: Absolute perfection.

NMC: So that means not a missed note?

Judith: And, um, yeah, and also at the highest level of musicality. Like, getting to a spiritual realm of things to, yeah. Absolute, yeah. (Judith, VP, April 3, 2010, p. 505)

Judith believes that these expectations are unrealistic and unfair to student performers, and hypothesizes that the ubiquity of recorded performances from well-known concert artists contributes to these expectations.

NMC: And again, back to the musical pressure, the musical expectations, where do those, where does those come from and where does that begin?

Judith: Um, recordings a lot. Feeling like you need to imitate recordings? Or, that's the expectation of what you're supposed to be able to do. You know, everything is, has to be flawless. Does that answer the question?

NMC: Yes. Do you feel that that is a fair expectation?

Judith: No. I don't.

NMC: For undergrads, graduate students...

Judith: For anyone. It's not fair for anyone. It's not human. People don't function that way. I mean, it's not about being able to regurgitate a list of notes in a specific order. I mean, that's not what music is.

NMC: Do you feel your professors, or the people who are tasked with, you know, evaluating your performances, do you feel like they are judging based solely on those kinds of criteria.

Judith: Um, I often have. Yeah, yeah. (VP, April 3, 2010, pp. 512-513)

Judith has difficulty concentrating in performance because she feels doomed to failure despite her best efforts.

NMC: Um, do you feel as though your mind is working so fast on so many different things that you can't focus, or do you feel like there's just a, like a stalled engine?

Judith: More like it's stalled. And it like stalls because, I guess I feel about the, it's, I get anxious more because of the pressure and the expectation, or what I perceive it to be. And that those things always seem to be, um, higher than what is actually, humanly attainable. And so, it's sort of this, it's like, uh, this, you're, it's inevitable that you're going to fail. And so it's just crash, this psychological thing, that way. 'Cause it's like, you can't actually attain that anyway, but that's what you're expected to attain. And so it's this, this struggle of, um, wanting to but not being able to, but not having the means, or the help to get there. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 504)

In addition to trying to meet the high standards of their audience, the performers place very high standards for themselves.

Sophia: …I get overwhelmed, and panicky.

NMC: And what's that like? What's that feel like?

Sophia: It's not fun. Um, I get, I know I can play my piece well, so I set high standards for myself. And then if I don't reach them, sometimes, I'm like, too high standard setter. Then if I don't reach them, I'm very upset with myself. So I think, so I kind of had a subconscious feeling, of you know, if you don't achieve this then you're not going to be satisfied with your performance. And, that's very frustrating. So I should stop doing that. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 726)

Albert also places very high standards on his performance because he feels privileged to have the opportunity to play in front of an audience, and does not wish to squander that privilege with a sub-standard performance.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any i-, any thoughts on what causes performance anxiety for you?

Albert: Uh... Performing is a privilege because, there's not so many chances to perform as there are, for a group of people, rather than just yourself. Or at least in my case. So I try to, uh, do my best for each performance, and, can you repeat the question?

NMC: Do you have any thoughts on the causes of performance anxiety, for you?

Albert: Oh. And so, the standards that I set for performance would be higher than in a, just, informal performance or practice situation. And, so, I guess the pressure to meet standards, to meet my standards...(VP, November 2, 2009, p. 452-453)

In addition to concern about the audience's evaluation of the performance, the participants indicated that they worried about what the audience would think about the performer's physical appearance.

> **NMC**: Okay. So, you mentioned your hands shake. What about, we'll just go from top down. In your head or in your face, do you ever feel like something is different there when you're playing?
>
> **Rhonda**: Um, I notice that, I'm prob, I'm more expressive in my face when I'm just practicing, and no one is watching, then if there is somebody watching. I guess a little self-conscious of being expressive.
>
> **NMC**: So do you feel, maybe deadpan?
>
> **Rhonda**: Yeah, a little bit.
>
> **NMC**: Um, why do you think you deadpan in a public performance?
>
> **Rhonda**: Um, one is just that, again, the strangeness of not used to being there. And then also, just the, uh, I don't know, self-consciousness of having other people watching. You're more conscious of what you're doing that may be considered strange by others. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 702)

Lester sometimes worries his concern for physical appearance may interfere with his musicianship. He feels that part of the audience's experience of the performance includes the physicality of the performer. In Live Performance 1, Lester worried that he was not moving enough, was not involved with the music, and that the inhibited motion was both a symptom and a cause for a flat performance.

Lester: I think it's because I don't have to worry about, you know, "Oh, there's a bunch of people there. They're watching me." You know, and then, I'm just kind of like, you know, sitting there. And if I mess up, you know, I fix it, or whatever. But like, when I'm in front of a bunch of people, and it's like, I start to wondering, you know, "What do I look like?" You know, I mean, "Am I a stiff board? Am I moving too much?" or something, you know. And then, my mind kind of wanders away from what I'm doing, in a way.

NMC: Um, why do you think people judge your movement with a Baroque piece, or do you think....

Lester: With anything, because I've always felt that, and I've heard from other performers and such that, the audience half listens, half watches. They like, you know, part of the listening is through watching the performer. And so, if the performer is just sitting there being extremely boring, and, you know, doesn't look like they're involved with the music, they don't feel like they're involved with the music, and they don't really connect with the music. But if the performer is really into the music, and they're, you know, like, they're playing something and it, like, is huge crescendo or something, and like, move into it or something, and it's like, it looks like they're really involved, the audience tends to hear better and feel more involved with the music themselves. And so. Like, 'cause I've had different experiences with that kind of aspect, 'cause, there was, um, a piece where I played, it was a Romantic piece, and it was an outdoor

concert. There were kids running around, and all sorts of things. And, I was just completely involved with the piece, and wasn't even paying attention to the kids who were running right by the piano. And, I had people comment, like, "It was amazing to watch you play, 'cause you were so involved." But then there have been times where it's like, you know, I don't feel involved and people are like, "That's nice." (chuckles) Like, "Okay." So I think I let that get to me sometimes, especially when it comes to pieces that I don't connect with as well.

NMC: So, you think that the physical motion is a part of the performance....

Lester: Yep.

NMC: ...and yet, you're worried about over-doing it? Am I hearing that right?

Lester: Um, a little bit of over-doing it, or under-doing it even. Because over-doing it almost seems cheesy. Under-doing it is just kind of, boring. You know, I mean, and, and, if I under-do it, which is what I felt like I did on Sunday, um, I don't connect with it. Like, I, it's like, here's me, here's my hands. But when I move, I'm part of the hand motions. And it, does that make sense?

NMC: Mm-hmm. So you're saying somewhat, the anxiety inhibits the motion of your body in tune with the music?

Lester: Mm-hmm. Right. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 607-608)

In addition to having thoughts about the audience and the audience's evaluation, the participants reported that they sometimes found themselves thinking completely irrelevant thoughts that had nothing to do with the performance at all. In these situations, the performers described a situation in which muscle memory takes over, and they suddenly realize they are not attending to the demands of the repertoire they are performing.

NMC: Do you find you have difficulties concentrating when you're performing?

Graham: Well, occasionally, yes. Occasionally I uh, I drift away in my, and uh, my muscle memory takes over, and it can be, it can be uh, a little bit surprising to realize that I haven't been thinking about the music, but I've kept playing it. And then I realize that I'm not thinking about it, and there's a little hiccup sometimes there, where the, where I have to go from, from my hands knowing what I'm doing to my head telling my hands what to be doing.

NMC: So your mind wanders a little bit sometimes?

Graham: Yeah.

NMC: Do you think that performance anxiety causes your mind to wander, or does your mind wander and that creates anxiety?

Graham: I think the anxiety causes it to wander.

NMC: Do you know to what things your mind might wander?

Graham: Well, it might wander to thinking about the performance, thinking about what mistakes I'm going to make. Or thinking about

who's in the audience. Or it could wander to the most random and trivial things like something that happened yesterday at 11:18 A.M. that just randomly popped in to my head, and I can't stop thinking about it for a little while. Even though it has no relevance to what's going on. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 474)

Graham reported that the realization that he is depending on muscle memory often leads to a mistake as he tries to regain mental control over the performance.

NMC: Can you describe what you mean by muscle memory?

Graham: Well. Well, uh, how there are several different ways that contribute to memorizing a piece, and one of them is that, the more you repeat it, the more your hands are used to going into those positions, in but da it (stutters), in certain time intervals, and they just go to those position. And in a way that's necessary to being able to perform it because otherwise they won't go into the right intervals, if you have to think about the music all the time. But then it makes it possible to, for your hands to run away when you, and and and, your mind starts thinking about laundry, and your hands are running away. And then your, and then your mind suddenly realized that, that, you were supposed to be performing, and somehow you've continued to do that without, without any problems up until now. And it usually makes some kind of hiccup at that point, where you try to get back into a real performance. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 475)

Lauren believes that MPA creates a situation in which the mind is able to think more thoughts per minute in a stressful situation. In some performance situations, she is able to harness this mental capacity into a hyper-vigilance of the musical necessities of her performance. In other performances, her mind will range to other issues.

> **NMC**: Okay. Um, let's move from physical symptoms now into the mental symptoms. Can you think of the mental symptoms that you typically feel during a solo performance?
>
> **Lauren**: Well, it's a little, I don't know, it's a little bit like driving, but it's different in that I have a million thoughts a minute when I perform. It's like there's a lot of extra space, or extra time to be thinking. So usually, when I perform, I go on rabbit tracks. My brain will just fly around all over the place and think about random... I remember the last time I performed, I found myself thinking about some friends Facebook page. Like just, and then I was like, "Oh! I'm playing Chopin!" So, um, there's that. So there's, I guess adrenaline that causes me to have a billion thoughts, um, but they're not as clear. Whereas when I'm driving, I become more clear, but when I'm playing, it's a little less clear. It's a little bit more panicked. Um, but there's also, I've over time, suppressed panic, so then it's kind of a dull, a dull panic, I guess.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. Do you ever find yourself having an internal dialogue, or talking to yourself while you're performing.
>
> **Lauren**: Yes. Yeah, to a degree. I mean I'll think about what's coming up. I'll think about possibilities, what could happen in what's coming up,

to a degree. If I'm really focused, I'll think about what I'm playing at the time, and kind of, it's not necessarily talking to myself, but it's making myself aware of what's happening. Or I'll think about the fact that I'm not thinking about performing. I'll think about that, or I'll think about the audience, and I'll tell myself to get back on track. Things like that. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 576-577)

The participants also reported that MPA may cause difficulties remembering memorized music. Sophia complained that she blanks on music that she normally can perform from memory whenever she performs for an audience

Sophia: Well, I think my main issue is forgetting the music. Even though I know I have it memorized well, I'll get panicky about remembering the music. So, then I'll try to play the piece in my head, and then I'll most likely get to a point where I can't remember where I am, and then that's when I start to panic and my mind starts to go on... it just starts winding, trying to think of where I am.

NMC: Can you describe that winding?

Sophia: Um... You're just trying to play the piece through in your head and figure out how it goes. So...I can't explain it very well. Let's go on, maybe I'll think of something.

NMC: Um, memory. Do you think, do you think the anxiety causes you to forget things, or does it distract you in ..

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: ...such a way that it causes other issues?

Sophia: It could be a little bit of both. I'd say a little bit of both. Because, memory is not a problem for me, and then when I get in front of people, then it becomes an issue. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 727)

A memory slip can occur in response to a loss of focus or even a missed note caused by shaky hands.

NMC: Okay. Do you feel like anxiety cause you to lose focus or lose concentration?

Phoebe: Yes.

NMC: And what happens when you lose focus?

Phoebe: Um, you miss your notes, or you can't remember what's next and you have to stop. Or maybe you'd get like, your hands get shaky, so that you mess up. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 670)

At other times, a brief memory slip can cause other symptoms to become suddenly worse. Even when the pianist has prepared memory stations to deal with the possibility of a memory slip, MPA can cause difficulties in the ability to think and formulate a plan to continue the performance.

NMC: Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Sophia: Probably when I had the memory slip. I got more nervous because I made a mistake.

NMC: And how did that affect you?

Sophia: Mmm, it made my mind start to quickly race trying to find were I was in the piece. Whether I should go back and play it again or just skip to a new spot in the piece to try to iron it out. So.

NMC: So your mind was spinning?

Sophia: Yeah.

NMC: Is that the word you used? Or racing I think it was?

Sophia: Yeah, so, racing. Um, so mentally, I'm trying to picture the music in my head trying to find the spot to start.

NMC: Do you feel like you have time to think when you're in that situation?

Sophia: Um, no. No, because it's, you know, when you're sitting on stage, every second seems like a year. So actually trying to picture the music probably isn't helping, you should just pick up, try to keep going instead of find a new spot to start. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 735)

For Albert, MPA causes him to doubt his memory in such a way that he might create a formal short-cut to the recapitulation or a loop back to the exposition in a piece in sonata form.

NMC: Does anxiety ever affect your memory?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: And how does it affect your memory?

Albert: Uh, like I talked about second-guessing myself. If I don't let the anxiety settle and try to push it away and concentrate, then instead of a, uh, calling of my memory, or feeling of what's coming next, then it

becomes for me a fifty-fifty chance for me of, either I'm going to play, like the exposition or recapitulation, I'll play the original way or the changed way. So... (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 448)

The uncertainty of the live performance setting, the possibility of a memory slip, or muscle shaking causing a performance error can also cause the pianist to have doubts about their ability to perform. Some feel that making a mistake is inevitable, and find themselves preoccupied with anticipation of that mistake.

NMC: Do you have any internal dialogue or thoughts that you think when you're anxious?

Graham: Well, when I'm performing, one of the, one of the things that makes me most anxious is, that I go on, I keep, I keep, I start talking to myself in my head and hearing myself say that, that, "I haven't made a mistake yet. I'm gonna make a mistake now, because I haven't made a mistake yet." And it grows and grows until I make a mistake. And then even after that, it doesn't go away. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 473)

The doubts about memory can also lead to catastrophic thinking, imagining the worst possible outcome.

Lester: And so, I'm more anxious with that because I'm afraid I'm going to get off and won't be able to start up again. I'm gonna lose my place and have to start over, which is bad. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 606)

In the midst of these fears and tendency to catastrophic thinking, a live performance can become more about just surviving and getting through the piece rather than performing to communicate musical ideas.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any internal dialogue when you're performing?

Sophia: Yes, My mind will start to wander. I, you want me to go more with that? I'll start thinking about holding it together, and if things aren't going so well, then, I don't stay, or I try to stay focused, but I feel like I'm not, um, involving the articulations very well. You know, the special techniques that you put into the piece. You know, just trying to get through it. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 727-728)

Given these mental difficulties, struggling to maintain concentration despite distracting thoughts about the audience's expectations, the performer's expectations, finding normally secure memory has failed, being unable to recover from minor mishaps, and just struggling to make it through a performance, it is no surprise that many of the participants approach live performance with fear and trepidation.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific emotions that you associate with performing?

Lauren: Um, worry, mostly. Fear, to a degree.

NMC: And what do you think contributes to the worry?

Lauren: Um, endless possibilities of what could happen. Um, past performances that have randomly not turned out well. Um, sections of the music that I know are going to be harder if I tense up more, which I know that I will do in a performance setting. So.

NMC: So you mentioned worry, and what was the other one?

Lauren: Fear. To a degree. So.

NMC: Fear. What's the fear from?

Lauren: Mostly fear of messing up. Failure. You know, worst case scenario type... (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 577)

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific emotions that you associate with performance?

Albert: Anxiety. Fear. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 447)

NMC: Okay. What kind of emotions do you feel association with performing or with performance anxiety.

Sophia: Dread. I dread performing. But then after, when I get through it, I'm very proud of myself.

NMC: When does the dread start?

Sophia: Um, maybe the week before a big performance? (chuckling) And then it gets worse as the performance gets closer and closer.

NMC: Okay. Any other emotions that you associate with performance anxiety?

Sophia: Um, Well obviously being anxious. But, let's see. I think dread is the perfect word for it. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 728)

NMC: Do you have any emotions that you typically feel when you're performing, or do you feel, uh, withdrawn from the experience?

Judith: Maybe a bit withdrawn. And also, a sense of this underlying panic.

NMC: Okay. Could you describe, what do you mean by panic. What's the panic about?

Judith: Um, like even, I mean, like, sometimes I've like, physically be trembling. But even if I'm not physically trembling, I feel like I'm trembling internally. Even if it doesn't exhibit itself, um, visually. (VP, April 3, 2009, p. 504-505)

Performance quality

Finally, MPA can cause problems with the quality of the performance. The participants complained about problems with their technic and accuracy, elements of musicianship, and performances that do not meet the aesthetic standards of the performer.

Olivia and Phoebe mentioned that MPA can cause them to miss notes, or to be inaccurate with certain elements of their technic (Olivia, November 3, 2009, p. 637; Phoebe, November 3, 2009, p. 670). MPA can also cause the performers to detect differences in their technic that cause issues in the performance. Winona felt that because of physiological changes, her touch was not as confident.

NMC: …Does the motion of your hands, uh, affect your performance? Like the shakiness and the sweatiness?

Winona: Yes.

NMC: How so?

Winona: My touch isn't quite as confident. I can't get the notes to sound, sometimes, where I normally could in a practice session. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 761-762)

Albert felt a similar sensation, where tension in his upper back and shoulders caused a feeling of hesitancy in his technic.

NMC: Do you get any shakiness or tension in your arms and hands that you don't have when you're practicing?

Albert: In most cases not tension. Not so much shakiness, but with the second-guessing myself, uh, I'll feel it in my neck, and then it sort of transfers to whether I'm confident enough to put my hand down, the actual motion of it.

NMC: So like a hesitancy?

Albert: Yes. That's what I'm looking for. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 449)

Lester had some issues with fingering in his performances.

Lester: …And then, um, sometimes if, like, both, actually both the Live and the Virtual Performance, for this, um, it was like, for some reason I just wasn't connected with it, and like, my fingering got off, and I didn't know where I was, really. And so, it's like, I found it and I was able to play it, but it was a completely different fingering, and it was like, "Well this is awkward." So, that's, I definitely would say that it affected where I was mentally in the piece, not where my fingers were. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 608-609)

In addition to technical issues, some participants complained the certain elements of musicianship such as articulation, dynamics, or tempo were affected by MPA. Lester mentioned that MPA causes him to rush his tempi.

NMC: Okay, um, does, is your focus or concentration affected by performance anxiety in general music performances?

Lester: Yeah.

NMC: How so?

Lester: Um, it does affect tempo. I rush sometimes, and then, it's just, I, I can't concentrate to make it slow down. I'm like, "Oh, wow, this is really fast. Um, Um, uh-oh." (chuckles) (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 608)

Both Rhonda and Kendra noticed differences in tempo during performance (VP, Rhonda, November 2, 2009, p. 711; VP, Kendra, April 5, 2010, p. 556). In addition to issues with tempo, Lester was dissatisfied with his dynamic contrast. "Um, I didn't really feel, I think as much, like, dynamic change as I was hoping. Sometimes I think the style didn't seem quite right" (Lester, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 617). Sophia gets so focused on surviving a performance that she glosses over special articulations that she has worked hard to incorporate into her piece. "… I feel like I'm not, um, involving the articulations very well. You know, the special techniques that you put into the piece" (Sophia, VP, November 2, 2009, p. 728).

Finally, as musicians, the participants feel that aesthetic communication is a vital part of performance, and MPA sometimes gets in the way of artistic expression.

NMC: What is messing up, or failure to you?

Lauren: Um, well first it's failing to interpret the music the way I wanted to. Next it's making enough mistakes that it's noticeable to, you know, to the average listener. Um, so I'm not necessarily worried about making mistakes per se, I'm worried about making a lot of mistakes. Um, but yeah, um, failing to interpret the music. Being nervous enough

that I won't allow myself to interpret the music like I can in a practice room. (Lauren, VP, April 5, 2010, p. 577)

Lester also noticed that he finds it difficult to find musical connection in live performance though he seldom has the same problem in the practice room.

Lester: Well, when I play, I try to like, you know, I try to feel the music with my entire body, you know, try to get into it, and have my hands and such, to be a part of it, you know. So it's like, you know, I feel this crescendo, so it's like, you know, it actually happens, and I move. (chuckles). But sometimes I feel like I'm just kind of sitting there, and my hands are just kind of doing their own thing, and I'm not a part of it myself. It's just, my hands are just playing this piece, and I'm like, "Oh, well that's pretty." Or whatever, you know.

NMC: Do you feel out of control of your hands, or not as involved and connected with your hands?

Lester: I'd probably say not as involved. It's not that I don't have control, because I can try to get back in there and be a part of it, but sometimes when I do that is screws me up. So.

NMC: Do you think the dissociation is a product of the anxiety, or more a product of just the piece and the genre?

Lester: I think it's a mixture of both, but I think it's mostly the anxiety, because when I'm in the practice room, I don't have that nearly as much. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 607)

Coping Strategies

Given the high demands of live performance, it is understandable that the participants reported fewer coping strategies to deal with MPA during the performance itself. The strategies reported include mental prompts to breathe or relax, following a mental plan of the performance, cues to refocus on the performance, and cues to become musically involved with the performance.

Several participants reported that a cue to breathe or relax helped calm certain physiological symptoms of MPA during the performance. These cues can be preemptive or in reaction to symptoms. Rhonda is careful to be conscious of her breathing to achieve a more relaxed state during the performance.

> **NMC**: And is there anything that you do during a performance if, if you need to deal with anxiety?
>
> **Rhonda**: I make sure that I'm breathing, or am conscious of my breathing. Because, occasionally when I do perform, I forget to breathe, er, it's more shallow breaths. And I find as soon as I can kind of get into a normal breathing pattern it relaxes me a lot more. (Rhonda, VP, November 2, 2009, p. 705)

Winona cues herself to take full breaths, particularly before beginning sections of her piece that are technically challenging.

> **NMC**: Is there anything you do during a performance to help you deal with anxiety as it's happening?
>
> **Winona**: Breathing. Like full breaths. Not really shallow or... Sometimes I hold my breath.

NMC: When do you, do you plan when you're going to breathe, or do you just remind yourself in the middle of the piece, or...

Winona: During the difficult passages, I remind myself to breathe, 'cause somehow that works. I can get through those passages. I guess oxygen to brain thing. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 764)

For Winona, the cue to breathe is simply an internalized thought commanding, "breathe."

NMC: What did you do to help yourself get through that?

Winona: Uh, I breathed.

NMC: Do you tell yourself to breathe, or do you just breathe.

Winona: I tell myself.

NMC: So you say…

Winona: "Breathe." (laughs)

NMC: "It's okay, breathe."

Winona: Yeah, yeah. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 769-770)

Lauren reported that on occasion she plans specific moments in her repertoire to mentally cue relaxation and deep breathing.

NMC: Is there anything that you might do during a performance?

Lauren: To relieve tension?

NMC: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lauren: Um, relax. You know, if I notice that I'm tensing up, I'll try to relax. I'll even pick a spot in the music that it's, where I can relax. I

don't do that a whole lot. I usually try to breathe deeply. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 579)

Olivia reported the use of a mental cue to relax when she noticed muscle tension.

Olivia: …Um, I tried to, well, er a couple times I tried to relax my shoulders. Um

NMC: So, when you relax your shoulders that's when you say, "Relax," and you just...

Olivia: Yeah. I just do.

NMC: Do you do that at the very beginning of the piece, or is there specific places in the piece where you do that, or is it just as it occurs to you?

Olivia: Um, It's a little... I did it at the beginning when I was first out there and sat down. I did it within the first fifteen seconds of the piece. I couldn't say if there were particular places I had planned out, or something, that I was going to relax, but yeah, as close to as when it occurred to me. (chuckles) (Olivia, November 3, 2009, p. 649)

Though many participants incorporated memory stations in the preparation of repertoire for performance, only Rhonda reported successfully following this mental plan for memory.

Rhonda: Um, Live Performance Two, like I said again, I was very aware of what I was doing the whole time. I was making sure that I was where I was needing to be in the music. Um, I was visualizing the music, 'cause I knew that memory was going to be a bigger, or not a

bigger issue, but something that I really wanted to work on. Live Performance One I wasn't thinking of those things, and so, um, instead of being over-prepared I was under-prepared, and then that equaled frantic mental state. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 717)

On many occasions, the participants noticed a lack of focus or concentration and mentally prompted themselves to maintain appropriate attention to the music. Albert reported that he refocuses on the performance by looking at his hands.

NMC: Okay. Are there things that you do during a performance to help with anxiety?

Albert: If my mind's starting to drift to the anxiety or different parts of the piece, or different events or activities, or the audience, then I always try to zone back in. Because I'm looking at my hands when I'm performing, and I try to zone back in on my hands. And, 'cause there's the, oh, what do you call it, the finger...?

NMC: The tactile?

Albert: Yes the tactile memory. And, sometimes you're prepared, I'm prepared enough that I can just let that take over, but that's never good, especially in that, those spots that we were talking about, the memory. So I try to keep looking at my hands, or the piano, uh, to stay focused on what's really going on right there in the music, the dynamics, the technic.

NMC: Is there some point in your performance where you remind yourself to look at the keys? Or is it just a constant?

Albert: Um, I guess there's not a specific point in each piece, and it's not constant, but just whenever it clicks that I've zoned out, or aren't in tune with what's actually happening right now and a little bit before hand, that I try to get back. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 452)

Lauren, in response to a wandering mind, also reported directing her by attending to specific elements of musicianship.

Lauren: …And, you know, I'll try to reset, pick a spot if I find that I'm wandering, my mind is wandering, then I'll reset and think about the music.

NMC: And when you say, "think about the music," what sort of things are you thinking about?

Lauren: You know, what's going on right then. What I would think about while I'm practicing. You know, I think about something when I'm practicing like "Oh, here comes the two-note slur, so, tension - release." So, what I'm playing at that moment. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 579)

Finally, many of the student performers reported that focusing on the artistic and musical aspects of their repertoire helped them to deal with the symptoms of MPA. Albert reported a simple shift from technical focus to an aesthetic focus in Live Performance 2.

NMC: Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different in Live Performance 2?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: How so?

Albert: Although I didn't think through the piece in the seconds before, before I started playing, I took more time to focus on the emotions of the piece rather than the technic of the piece. (LP2, November 14, 2009, p. 463)

Kendra reported that focusing on points of climax and changes in character in her music help her settle in to a performance.

Kendra: …And sometimes I'll have to just remind myself of the characters. So the mental check would be if I reach a certain climactic point in a piece, I'd have to do a check on, or a character change, or just where I am in the piece.

NMC: So, your first mental check, does that happen in cue with a specific point in the piece, or does it happen when you settle into the performance.

Kendra: Probably when I settle in, more. And that helps me settle in, so. (Kendra, VP, April 5, 2010, p. 547)

Judith reported that selective focus on just one musical element helps her to keep from getting overwhelmed.

Judith: Um, I know one thing that I have noticed has helped, if I have one aspect to focus on, just one, and not worry about everything else. Because, everything I guess, else, again ends up being too much, and it gets overwhelming and it's like, I can't do all these things. But if it's just like, the ends of a phrase, or like, just pedal, or dynamic contrast, or

solely the long line, or whatever. But just one little thing, or articulation, or depending on how the piece is, or a loose wrist, or whatever. Just one thing, that helps. And um, and, it has to last the whole piece. Not something that jumps around and is like "Ah!" But um, I find that, that helps a bit more. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 549)

For Lester, the goal is complete musical immersion in the performance. Lester has found that allowing himself to become completely absorbed in artistic expression reduces his feelings of MPA.

NMC: Okay. Um, is there anything that you do during a performance to help you with symptoms of anxiety?

Lester: Um, if I start to feel a little anxiety, I try to do the same kind of thing to calm myself, but I also...

NMC: What kind of thing?

Lester: The breathing, you know, to slow down my breathing, or whatever. Um, I generally, this might sound kind of weird, but I try to lose myself in the music. You know, I try to be a part of the music so much that it, it's a part of me, and I just kind of let it flow out of me through the keyboard, or whatever, so you know, it's like, I am the performance. It's not the piano, but it's me. And so, if I start to feel anxious, I just try to, you know, I don't know how to explain it, 'cause it's something that I just kind of do.

NMC: Okay.

Lester: You know, it's like, I try to be a part of the piece as much as possible.

NMC: So you cue yourself to allow yourself to be intuitive with the piece or, in concert with the piece?

Lester: Yeah. Yeah. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 613-614)

Summary

In summary, the participants felt a variety of physical and mental symptoms of MPA during live performances as well as a number of issues with performance quality including technic, musicianship, and aesthetic connection to the music. To deal with these symptoms, they implemented a number of coping strategies including mental cues to breathe, relax, and to refocus on specific elements of musicianship or aesthetic connection.

Virtual Performance

As mentioned above in the section dealing with the first research question, the participants noted a sharp decrease in the severity of symptoms of MPA in the virtual performance context in comparison with the live performance context. What few symptoms mentioned were often accompanied by qualifiers that indicated a very mild manifestation of MPA.

Physiological Symptoms

Lauren and Olivia noticed muscular tension in the virtual performance context, but both were careful to indicate that the tension was not as severe as what they felt in the live performance context.

> **NMC**: Alright, let's now consider the Virtual Performance, the recording you just made. Um, did you recognize any physical symptoms of anxiety during the recording?
>
> **Lauren**: A little bit. Not, not a whole lot. A little bit of tension.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. And where?
>
> **Lauren**: Um, my arms. A little bit in my shoulders. (VP, April 5, 2010, pp. 577-578)

Similarly, Olivia noted some tension in her jaw, neck, and shoulders, but indicated that the severity was less than what she experienced in Live Performance 1 (Olivia, VP, p. 650)

Olivia, Rhonda, and Sophia experienced muscular shakiness in their hands, but only Olivia experienced the same severity in the Virtual Performance that she felt in Live Performance 1.

> **NMC**: Arms, hands?
>
> **Olivia**: Those were shaky.
>
> **NMC**: Shaky. Uh, about the same, more, or less than the Live Performance?
>
> **Olivia**: About the same. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 651)

Both Rhonda and Sophia noticed that the shakiness only occurred in response to mistakes that occurred in the Virtual Performance, and that the severity of the shaking was reduced.

> **Rhonda**: Um, I notice that when I do the virtual performances, I don't, um, unless I, unless I made a mistake, I didn't have hand shaking. Or, I mean, hand-shaking is my most prominent physical symptoms. So, I don't, I noticed that that did not happen unless I made a mistake. (Rhonda, LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 719)

Sophia also noted some slight shakiness in response to a mistake. "Maybe if I made a little bit of a mistake when I played, my hands would get a little shaky. But other than that, nothing compared to the Live Performances" (Sophia, LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 748).

Some participants reported some sweating of the hands or palms during a virtual performance. Except for Judith, the pianists seemed dismissive of the severity of the sweating. Sophia mentioned that, "…I think a couple of times, my hands got a little sweaty, but other than that, nothing" (Sophia, LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 748). Winona's report sounds very similar. "I think my palms were a little sweaty, but otherwise I was pretty calm and relaxed" (Winona, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 772)

Judith commented that in one of her exposure performances, she noticed that she was sweating profusely. She also reported that she did not take a beta-blocker for the exposure performance, and felt somewhat hurried to make it to her recording session on time.

> **Judith**: …Um, I was perspiring. My hands were wet. Very slippery.

NMC: Okay. Is that unusual?

Judith: Um, it hasn't happened for a while. Actually, that usually doesn't occur when, I've noticed it hasn't occurred since taking the beta-blockers. And, I remember thinking, "Well, why didn't I take them? I should have done that. Or I should have had a banana or something." And blah blah blah blah. And I, and I, yeah, it was just the way the day went, and I didn't put all the pieces together until too late. And then it was, you know, 8:10, and I had to get over here, and "Fwah." (Judith, LP2, April 18, 2010, p. 537)

Mental Symptoms

The participants experienced some of the same mental symptoms of MPA in the virtual performance context, but again, the severity and intrusiveness of those symptoms were diminished in comparison to the live performance context.

The participants combated several competing thoughts in trying to maintain focus on their performance. Olivia seemed the most affected by thoughts about the virtual audience.

Olivia: I think it was because I was distracted, thinking about, wondering who was going to be listening to this, and what they were going to think. I was pretty nervous thinking about different professors, or teachers listening to this. Even though I knew they wouldn't know my name, it gave me a lot of nerves. (LP2, November 14, 2009, p. 659)

On the other hand, Sophia, who mentioned extreme anxiety about the audience's evaluation of her performance in the live performance setting, seemed somewhat indifferent about the virtual audience.

> **NMC**: Mind wandering to the audience? The internet audience?
>
> **Sophia**: Actually, no, that didn't bother me either, when I was doing the virtual recordings. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 748)

The participants noted fewer distractions unrelated to the music. Lauren was a bit curious about the recording equipment during the virtual performance, but other than that, felt able to focus on her performance.

> **NMC**: Okay. Did you have any memorable internal dialogue, or thoughts that you said to yourself during the performance.
>
> **Lauren**: Not much, other than thinking, thinking about the tone of the piano. I don't play on this piano much. It's a little bit softer. So I was thought about that. I thought a little bit about the sound quality in the computer sitting on wood, randomly wondered about how that works. Not a lot. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 587)

Similarly, Graham noted that his Virtual Performance was less affected by random thoughts, but instead was able to direct his focus to his performance.

> **NMC**: Okay. Did you feel your mind wander in the Virtual Performance?
>
> **Graham**: Not so much. Just to, just to the performance itself.
>
> **NMC**: So would you consider your mind wandering better or worse in this performance than in the Live Performance?

Graham: Um,

NMC: In terms of how it affects performance.

Graham: Um, it affected the performance less.

NMC: So your mind wandered less, and so because your mind was not wandering, your performance was better.

Graham: Yes. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 484)

Lester found that his intention to be completely focused actually caused some problems in his virtual performance. Perhaps in reaction to experiencing some problems with fingering in Live Performance 1, Lester was extremely attentive to his fingering, to an extent greater than what he was used to in the practice room.

NMC: How about your focus and concentration? How was it during the performance?

Lester: It was a little off, because I like, it seemed kind of weird at first. You know, I felt like I was focusing differently. 'Cause it was like, "Whoa." I was like focusing more, which got my focus off, you know. It was, it was, I was focusing on the fingers more than usual, I think, and that kind of threw off my concentration. I was kind of like, for a second I was like, "Where am I?" But then I, I was, I still knew where I was, actually. And it was weird. (Lester, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 621)

Interestingly, Winona noticed that she was less able to rein in distracting thoughts during the Virtual Performance, but did not attribute that to MPA, but rather to the lack of anxiety.

NMC: Okay. Uh, was your focus or concentration affected during this performance?

Winona: Yeah. My concentration was affected by the mistake, and then my mind just kind of started wandering after that (chuckles).

NMC: Do you have the same kind of mind wandering, did you have the same kind of mind wandering in the Live Performance after you noticed the mistake?

Winona: No. No. Because I, I think I would have, but again I had to remind myself to concentrate on the music and the task at hand. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 771)

Later in the interview, Winona clarified the role of facilitative anxiety in musical performance, particularly in a live performance setting.

Winona: But can I go back to that thing about the edge in the Live Performance? The only thing that's good about all of that anxiety that happens is that I do remind myself to concentrate, and so I have increased concentration. But whereas in the Virtual Performance, I didn't really care that I concentrated because no one was watching, and I couldn't feel the immediate effects of any mistakes that I made. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 773)

The participants reported a few minor memory slips in the virtual performance context. The memory slips in the virtual performance caused some performers to conclude that perhaps their memory was not as secure as they had thought. Because

they were experiencing less MPA than in a typical performance, it seems they felt they could no longer blame MPA for the deficiencies in their memory.

> **Judith**: Well, I went and reviewed stuff before, and like, there's one spot that I really haven't had many problems with before, but then it happened yesterday, and it happened again today. So I need to check that out for some reason. I'm not sure why I'm having a blockage. Um, but then, I'm like, I was like, "Well, there that happened again. Blah blah blah." So I was like, "Well, at least now you know where to practice!" (Chuckles) (Judith, VP, April 3, 2010, p. 521)

Rhonda also mentioned that she had some minor issues with memory in the Virtual Performance, but noticed that her ability to focus was not as impaired as in Live Performance 1.

> **NMC**: Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety may have affected your Virtual Performance? The one you just recorded.
>
> **Rhonda**: Actually, um, when playing the Fugue, I, you know, it's kind of a, I remembered what I had done yesterday, and not been so satisfied with my performance, and so that, I believe that that did affect how I did the Virtual Performance. Um, I was aware that I needed to improve those things, and, um, although I did have a memory, um, gap again. I think in the Virtual Performance I was more focused than I had been in the Live Performance. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 713)

Lester noticed a lapse in concentration towards the end of his Virtual Performance that led to a memory mishap.

> **NMC**: Um, do you think performance anxiety may have had a, an affect on this performance?
>
> **Lester**: I think it affected my memory a little, especially near the end.
>
> **NMC**: And how? How did that happen?
>
> **Lester**: I don't know, it just did. (chuckles) Like, all of the sudden, I was like I didn't know what note to play next. It was like my hands stopped doing the autopilot kind of think. But I also didn't know exactly where it was, so I kinda had to find it, which...
>
> **NMC**: And when did this happen?
>
> **Lester**: Like three measures before the end. So it was like right at the end. So I don't know if it was because, like, "I'm almost done. Yay." And then it threw me off or something, or what.
>
> **NMC**: Is it possible because you weren't as concerned with the performance you lost some concentration?
>
> **Lester**: It's a possibility. Also, it could be because I was more concerned. Like, I was less concerned than the Live Performance, but I was more concerned than the Rehearsal Performance, so I think almost, a mixture of the two threw me off. Or something. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 623)

For Sophia, the reduction of the severity of MPA in the Virtual Performance completely cleared up any issues she had with her memory.

NMC: Can you think of any instance during this performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Sophia: No.

NMC: So there were no issues with memory or distraction?

Sophia: No. Not this time. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 737)

For the most part, the participants did not feel the same doubts about their ability to get through a piece without a catastrophic error. Graham felt some of the anticipation of a mistake that had yet to occur, but it did not affect him as much as the live performance context.

NMC: Okay. Did you have the same kind of mental dialogue of "when will the mistake happen? I haven't made a mistake. When am I going to make a mistake?"

Graham: Yeah.

NMC: You still had that?

Graham: Yes. It didn't affect me as much, though. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 485)

Because the symptoms of MPA were substantially decreased, the performers did not have as many difficulties with distractions, memory, or the ability to focus. Their sense of apprehension and fear is almost completely absent in the virtual performance context. In fact, Kendra experienced very positive emotions while performing in the virtual performance context.

NMC: Do you have any emotions that you would associate with that performance?

Kendra: Um, joyous and free. (laughs) (Kendra, VP, April 5, 2010, p. 557-558)

In addition to the reduction in the feelings of fear and dread, Winona experienced less recriminations and negative self-talk following errors in the Virtual Performance context.

NMC: What were your mental symptoms of anxiety, if you had any, during the recording session?

Winona: Um, there weren't any anxious feelings before hand. But during the piece, I felt the anxiety about making the mistake as I typically do in a live performance.

NMC: Okay, so, you were fine before you began, but then you made a mistake, and then your symptoms started?

Winona: Yeah.

NMC: What were the mental symptoms that started when you did have a mistake?

Winona: Um, just frustration. Not full-blown anger at myself. So I guess that would be more like the Rehearsal Performance. (Winona, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 770)

Performance Quality

Performance quality was negatively affected in the virtual performance context, but not to the extremes of the live performance setting. Lauren mentioned that she missed a few notes in the left hand of her Nocturne, and attributed the wrong notes to

MPA (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 588). Rhonda also mentioned that she played a few wrong notes, but was able to quickly recover (LP2, November 2, 2009, p. 719)

Olivia recalled a specific moment when she realized she had forgotten some specific suggestion by her professor some time after that moment in the music had passed.

> **NMC**: Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety might have affected your performance?
>
> **Olivia**: Just trying to remember. There was, um, a moment when I was thinking about, oh, some of the musicality of the piece, and I kind of forgot something [my professor] had said that I should work on in trying to do this. And I had gotten past that point in the piece. And I went, "Oh no. I forgot to do that." So that might have affected it. Um, it, it was also affected a little bit by thinking about, oh, what it's going to sound like in the recording. (VP, November 3 2009, pp. 652-653)

Rhonda was able to make a switch in focus to aesthetic quality in the third or fourth exposure performance. By that time, she had become more confident in her memory and ability to perform.

> **NMC**: Did one virtual performance feel better than the others?
>
> **Rhonda**: I want to say, I think it was 3 or 4, when I finally felt that I could start being musical from the beginning of what I was doing. I was able to focus, um, more quickly than I had in previous virtual performances and first live performance. So I want to say it was either 3 or 4 that felt very comfortable. And then the ones after that were also

more comfortable, but I think that the recording was the best on one of those. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 719)

Albert, on the other hand, did not feel like he connected particularly well with the mood of his piece.

NMC: Okay. Did you have a lack of focus or lack of concentration? Or enhanced focus or enhanced concentration?

Albert: I did not get into the mood of the piece as much as I'd like to have. Uh, it didn't feel it was, I guess I didn't feel the piece was in the mood I wanted it to be. It was technically accurate. It was, the style was correct. It's just I didn't reach that feeling that the music can give. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 458)

In summary, the participants felt many of the same symptoms of MPA in the virtual performance context that they felt in the live performance context, but the severity of the symptoms was noticeably decreased. They experienced fewer and milder physiological and mental symptoms of MPA. What few symptoms they did experience did not significantly affect their ability to perform the repertoire. However, even with the reduced severity of MPA, some performers discovered deficiencies in their memory or aesthetic affect in their performances.

Coping Strategies

Because the severity of MPA was so reduced in the virtual performance context, the participants reported almost no coping strategies. Olivia, who seemed to exhibit the most MPA in the virtual context out of all the participants, reported that she cued herself to relax, and to remain focused on her repertoire.

NMC: Okay. Did you do anything during the performance to help you with your performance anxiety?

Olivia: Um, mostly just trying to relax, you know, all over. And, um, just think about the piece and not worry about what it's going to sound like. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 652)

Lauren tried to frame the situation as similar to her practice time. Her recording session took place in a practice room, and so she felt familiar with the space. "Um, I imagined that there was not a recorder. I thought about the fact that this is a practice room, and I play in a practice room everyday" (Lauren, VP, April 5, 2010, p. 587).

Rhonda focused on the aesthetic connection she has with her repertoire.

Rhonda: Um, again with the Prelude, um, I feel that I'm able to focus that one with emotions and tie into that one a lot deeper. So, um, before, before playing the Prelude, I just thought, you know, that this is a piece, again, that I really enjoy playing and performing, and so, um, it's easier to get connected with. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 712)

Kendra also found that she was more able to attend to musical elements in her Virtual Performance. Because she was not as concerned with simply surviving the performance and "getting through it," she was able to devote mental energy to a projected story-line that she has associated with her repertoire.

NMC: …Did you have any internal dialogue that occurred with the performance?

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. What sort of things were you thinking?

Kendra: Um, it was probably of the stories I put with the pieces, so.

NMC: Okay. When you tell these stories, are you like speaking a story and the music is the soundtrack? Or are you saying, "And now this is where thus and such comes in."

Kendra: Yeah. The second one. (chuckles)

NMC: So you're kind of, you're like, directing?

Kendra: Yeah. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 558)

Post-Performance Phase

The applause of the audience following a performance in the live performance setting, and the act of ending the recording in the virtual performance setting marked the beginning of the post-performance phase. During this phase, the participants experienced several symptoms of anxiety manifesting after the performance concluded, became aware of ignored symptoms that occurred during the performance, experienced feelings or regret or exhilaration, and sought meaningful feedback from members of the audience.

Live Performance

The participants noticed a few symptoms of MPA manifesting after the performance was over. These symptoms either carried over from the performance phase into the post-performance phase, or appeared after the performance was over. Olivia noticed that her arms and hands were jittery after the performance concluded (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 644). Despite taking her normal dosage of beta-blockers, Judith noticed that she was sweating profusely immediately after the performance (LP2,

April 18, 2010, p. 531). She also experienced some tension in her legs. Winona complained about pain in her lower back.

> **NMC**: Okay. What about in your lower back? Do you ever feel the anxiety in your lower back?
>
> **Winona**: Afterwards, not during.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. What's that like? What's your lower back feel like?
>
> **Winona**: Um, it just, I just. I get sore. I think it's a product of the extra heart rate or something. I just feel, I feel like I just got over a fever. (Winona, VP, November 3, 2009, p. 759)

After their performances, many participants noted that they became aware of symptoms that they ignored or were unaware of during the performance itself. Judith, for example, noticed sensations of heat and sweating after the performance.

> **NMC**: Okay. Do you ever feel sensations of heat or sweating or anything?
>
> **Judith**: Um, yeah. But I don't notice it until after the fact.
>
> **NMC**: Okay.
>
> **Judith**: Um, yeah.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. So it doesn't bother you while you are playing?
>
> **Judith**: No. It's, it's, it's more panic mode. Just trying to survive. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 508)

For Judith, this is a recurring theme. She tends to notice tension only after the performance.

NMC: Okay. Let's move to physical symptoms of what you typically feel for a solo performance. Um, do you feel the tension in your jaw that you mentioned, while you're playing?

Judith: Um, while I'm playing? I don't know. Maybe I notice it more afterwards. When I'm playing, I don't notice much physically, like all that. I notice it more afterwards. Like, if I'm tense playing, I don't notice it until after I'm done. And then I'm like, "Oh, my arms feel really tired." Or, yeah. But, um, I haven't quite. I'm starting to. I'm starting to notice a little bit more when I'm playing, but that, that transition hasn't fully been made. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 507)

Judith also recognized difficulties with her breathing after the performance ended.

NMC: Okay. What about the way you breathe or...

Judith: Oh, yeah. I have had a tendency to not breathe during performances.

NMC: And when do you notice that?

Judith: Um, now I'm noticing it more afterwards. Like before, it has just been a comment that people have given me. Like I noticed it yesterday, like I got done, like "Oh, I'm breathing now." Like I haven't had oxygen for the past six and a half minutes. (laughs) Or very little. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 507)

Both Lauren and Kendra reported the same tendency to notice physical symptoms only on reflection after the conclusion of a performance. Lauren noticed tension in her shoulders.

NMC: When do you notice that your shoulders are tensing?

Lauren: I don't always notice. Um, sometimes it's part way through the performance, but a lot of the time, it's not until afterwards that I think about it. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 574)

Likewise, Kendra noticed problems with her breathing only after the performance.

NMC: Anything in your chest? Breathing or heart rate?

Kendra: I probably didn't breathe that much, so. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. Is it something you noticed during the performance?

Kendra: Um, it's something that I don't really notice during, is something that I more notice afterwards. (Kendra, VP, April 5, 2010, p. 553)

Following a performance, the pianist often evaluates the quality of their playing. A personal evaluation of the performance sometimes is accompanied with feelings of regret, or recriminations about specific errors that occurred during the performance. During the group discussion, Rhonda mentioned that she sometimes feels as though a single error can cause her to feel as though her entire performance was a failure. Her thoughts below are in response to analogizing the feelings of anxiety that one might feel while competing in a game with the anxiety that occurs in live performance.

Rhonda: I think in a game you can come back from a making a mistake a lot easier than in a live performance. Like, if you just mess up one point, it's not going to lose you the whole game, but, I mean, missing notes in a performance, afterwards you can think that can ruin the whole piece. (Group, Site A, November 17, 2009, p. 795)

Judith recalled feelings of regret over being unable to cover for a memory slip that occurred in Live Performance 1.

> **Judith**: Um, uh, I don't remember. I was acutely aware of being listened to. Primarily from two other pianists.
>
> **NMC**: Oh, really?
>
> **Judith**: Yeah. Yeah. And, um, like yeah. Like whether things are good enough or blah blah blah blah. And you know, how to recover from a, hoping not have any sort of memory slip. And then like, the some things that happened, it was like, well I guess that was followed by some self-beratement, of like, "Well, why did that happen?" You know, "Why didn't you know that?" Like, "Couldn't you make an appropriate cadence like afterwards?" (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 516)

If the performer feels that the performance has gone particularly well, there can also be a sense of elation or exhilaration. Lester was very happy with his performance in Live Performance 2, and his excitement had physical manifestations.

> **Lester**: The first one, I was extremely nervous and didn't think I was [abel to] play through it completely, and by thinking so, I didn't. And it messed me up, and, you know, I got really shaky and such. And in the second one, I was a lot more comfortable with the piece and with performing it, and so, it was more just, "Okay, let's do it again." You know, and I went out there, and afterward, I felt like it went so much better that actually, I almost felt a little shaky afterwards. I was like, "Oh

boy!" So, it was very different, which I thought was interesting. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 627)

For Judith and Sophia, the two performers who scored highest on the K-MPAI and reported the highest CPAI scores for their Live Performances, the end of a performance is attended with relief.

NMC: Okay. What kind of emotions do you feel association with performing or with performance anxiety.

Sophia: Dread. I dread performing. But then after, when I get through it, I'm very proud of myself. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 728)

Judith mentioned being occasionally exhilarated, but mostly felt relief that the ordeal was over.

NMC: Okay. I think the first word that I heard about leaving on a vacation was it's relaxing. So by extension, does that mean that live performance is not at all relaxing?

(laughter)

Lauren: After the fact it is. But not during.

Judith: Yeah, I don't find it relaxing. And I don't think it's relaxing afterwards either. Sometimes I get exhilarated, but I am not in any sort of relaxed state. Relieved. (Group, Site B, April 18, 2010, p. 825)

Perhaps it is even this sense of relief that provides the negative reinforcement to an irrational fear of performing. With time, perhaps the end of a performance can provide the empirical evidence necessary for developing the belief that the worst-case scenario is a very rare experience. “When I'm done with a performance, it's more of a relief. For

myself. Like, 'Oh, maybe that wasn't quite so bad. I guess I lived after all'" (Judith, Group Discussion, Site B, April 18, 2010, p. 831).

Following a Live Performance, the participants reported a need for clear feedback and support from the audience. For Olivia, knowing that she will be greeted by sympathetic peers following performances in a jury recital helps in assuaging her anticipatory anxiety.

> **NMC**: Has, in just the last couple of years, we've kind of changed the jury process, at least for the final. We've gone to a jury recital.
>
> **Olivia**: Mm-hmm
>
> **NMC**: How is that different than a middle of the day jury?
>
> **Olivia**: It's different in that you have all, everyone's there. All the piano majors are there in the green room, and we're all nervous together. And, but there's also, as soon as you come out from your jury, no matter what happened, your results kind of, you know, they all care. They'll give you positive feedback even if you did terrible. They'll be like, "Oh, it couldn't have been that bad." You know, it's kind of like having a support group right there, whereas when it's in the middle of the day, you just kind of feel all by yourself. So, for me, I think that's what's most helpful. It just keeps me from getting too nervous before hand, and then afterwards there's positive feedback and support. (Olivia, LP2, November 14, 2009, p. 664)

Winona had the opportunity to play in a master-class for a clinician of international reputation. The complimentary feedback and constructive criticism the clinician gave her helped her view the performance as a positive experience.

> **NMC**: And did the master clinician, did his instruction after you performed, will that help or hurt you in future performances?
>
> **Winona**: Oh, I think it will help. He gave some good, some good comments. There weren't very many of them, but what he gave me, I'll take and use.
>
> **NMC**: Would you describe it as a positive experience?
>
> **Winona**: Yes.
>
> **NMC**: What in the demeanor of the clinician made it a positive experience?
>
> **Winona**: Um, he was very complimentary, and helpful. I, and I know his reputation, so the fact that someone with that kind of reputation could be so complimentary to me meant a lot. (Winona, LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 784)

In the group discussion at Site B, Judith and Lauren agreed that they needed the feedback from the audience to be very clear.

> **Judith**: No, I agree, but one thing I've noticed for myself is that I need, it needs to be very clear, the feedback I'm getting from my audience. If it's more subdued, um, I tend not to pick that up so well, because I'm in tune, attuned. Because, I remember when I did my Master's recital, um, when I got done I told my teacher that I didn't think the audience liked

my Bach. But he was like, "Oh, they loved it." And, I think it was just because of the reaction, and I guess I misinterpreted it, but I guess it was just more, silence, reflection type of thing, rather than you know overt applause and that sort of thing. So, and so, when you're up there and, and you're already uncertain, and stuff, already to begin with, blah blah blah, and then, yeah, I didn't see that as a positive reaction.

Lauren: Well that's an interesting point, too, though, I have to have positive feedback that I can tell. For example, after I played in seminar, I played the Nocturne, and I played some Debussy in seminar on Friday, and my professor for the first time this semester was really, really happy. And so that for me, all of the sudden, made my recital more...

Judith: It has to be to me, exaggerated.

Lauren: And, uh, so I have to realize that people like what I'm doing in order to feel, to have more fun and be more confident. (Group discussion, Site B, April 18, 2010, p. 845)

Virtual Performance

After the virtual performance, the participants had a much different experience in the post-performance phase. There appeared to be less recrimination and regret following the virtual performance.

Judith: ...Although it was more, I was a little bit, it was more positive with things.

NMC: Today, in the recording?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. What, how so? How was it more positive? You were just saying more positive things to yourself, or...

Judith: Well, I went and reviewed stuff before, and like, there's one spot that I really haven't had many problems with before, but then it happened yesterday, and it happened again today. So I need to check that out for some reason. I'm not sure why I'm having a blockage. Um, but then, I'm like, I was like, "Well, there that happened again. Blah blah blah." So I was like, "Well, at least now you know where to practice!" (Chuckles)

NMC: Okay, so that was more positive for you because that was a positive framing of ....

Judith: ...Yeah, it was (chuckles)...

NMC: "This is a moment of discovery! Look what I've discovered!"

Judith: Yes, rather than, "Why can't you do something better than that?"

NMC: Okay. Uh, any specific emotions that you associated with the recorded performance today?

Judith: Um, no I think there still tends to be a shutoff, though it was a more positive relief when I was done. It was more, yeah, more encouraging. Yeah. (Judith, VP, April 3, 2010, pp. 521-522)

Olivia had the same feeling of discovery following her Virtual Performance.

NMC: How about any specific emotions tied to the performance?

Olivia: Um, a little frustrated because it didn't go as well as I wanted.

NMC: What things happened that were frustrating?

Olivia: Um, the main thing was I made the same, same, I made mistakes in the same two places that I made on Sunday. So, it's also enlightening, because I'm now knowing, "Okay, I need to work on these spots." (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 650)

The participants also reacted to the lack of immediate feedback from an audience. Some of the performers used the time immediately after recording to listen to their performances to provide that feedback themselves. Many noticed that objectively hearing their performance immediately afterwards helped them recognize issues identified by their teacher.

NMC: Did you get to listen to your performances in the podcast?

Graham: Uh, I didn't listen to them from the podcast, but I did, a couple of times just play through the piece after I recorded it on the computer, because it was short enough that my sessions, it wouldn't run over the amount, the time for the sessions. And I think that was revealing.

NMC: Okay, what did that reveal to you?

Graham: Well, it revealed, how uh, how inconsistent my time was in several sections.

NMC: Timing as in tempo? Rhythm?

Graham: Yes. I uh, I don't think I would have caught that if I hadn't listened to the recording. How in a few of the measures, they get shorter or longer, and I don't mean them to. (Graham, LP2, November 14, 2009, p. 496)

For Lester, listening to his performance helped him hear some of the more positive moments.

> **NMC**: Did you get to listen to any of your performances?
>
> **Lester**: Um, well, there was a couple I listened to before I sent it, before I exported it.
>
> **NMC**: So immediately after you recorded it?
>
> **Lester**: Yeah. Immediately.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. How did that affect you, listening to your performance?
>
> **Lester**: Um, well it's weird, because it sounds different when you're playing it. And, I, like, there was a certain part I didn't realize I was rushing, and I was like, "Oh dear. I should probably look at that." So, it helps you, or it helped me, I should say, notice some things I was doing either inconsistently or inaccurately. But it also showed, like, there was some I wasn't sure if it sounded good, or, what-not, and I heard it and I was like, "Hey, that does sound pretty 'Dec.'" (slang for 'decent'?) So, it, it helped both with bad things and good things. (Lester, LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 632)

Not all performers had such positive experiences in the virtual performance setting. Rhonda was not pleased with her Virtual Performance, and could not bring herself to listen to it, even though she indicated that doing so had been helpful in the past.

> **NMC**: Okay. Did you get to listen to your performances?
>
> **Rhonda**: I haven't yet. (laughs)
>
> **NMC**: Have you subscribed to the podcast?

Rhonda: I haven't.

NMC: Okay.

Rhonda: I was scared to after my first virtual, or my first one I didn't like, so. I need to go back and listen to them, though.

NMC: How would listening to the performances change the process?

Rhonda: I found, um, when I participated in the study previously, um, and listened to those with my music in front of me, I was able to hear those things that, um, my professor was telling me that, you know. "You need to do this. You need to do this. You're not doing it." And in my mind I was thinking, "Well, yeah I am. I think it's enough." But when I listen to a recording and know those things to listen to, I don't have, I can then be objective. Because it's not, it's not me thinking while I'm doing. I can go back and listen, and be more critical to those things. (Rhonda, LP2, November 15, 2009, pp. 720-721)

Summary

Summarizing the results for question 2, the participants felt fewer anticipatory symptoms of MPA in the virtual performance setting, and implemented fewer coping strategies prior to the performance. During the performances in the live performance setting, the participants reported a variety of physiological and mental symptoms of MPA. In addition to the physiological and mental symptoms, the participants also reported that MPA created problems in the quality of their performance ranging from missed notes, elements of musicianship, or lack of aesthetic satisfaction. In the virtual performance setting, the participants experienced fewer and less severe physiological

and mental symptoms of anxiety. For some, the decrease in the severity of MPA symptoms led to positive experiences, but for others, the reduced arousal resulted in more distractions and unsatisfying performances. After the live performances, the participants evaluated their performances, often with recrimination or regret over mishaps, and sought clear feedback from the audience. The participants felt less regret over mishaps in the virtual performance, and some filled the need for immediate feedback by listening to their recorded performances.

Question 3: Effects of Exposure Therapy

The quantitative data from responses on the CPAI administered after each performance, the individual interviews, and the group discussion were analyzed to gauge the effects of exposure therapy as posed in research question 3, reprinted below for convenience.

3. How does exposure therapy in the virtual performance setting affect the level and experience of MPA in the performer in subsequent performances in both the virtual performance setting and the live performance setting?

There is strong evidence from all three data sources that the level of MPA experienced decreased from the first virtual performance to the fifth exposure performance. Similarly, all three data sources point to a decrease in the level of MPA from Live Performance 1 to Live Performance 2.

Virtual Performances

After performing in six (6) virtual performances, the participants experienced less severe symptoms of MPA as measured by the CPAI. The mean CPAI scores for

the initial Virtual Performance (CPAI-VP) and the five Exposure Performances (CPAI-EP1 – CPAI-EP5) are presented in Table IV.5. Examination of the means shows a curious uptick in the intensity of MPA in Exposure Performance 1 and Exposure Performance 3.

Exposure Performance 1 occurred after the first individual interview, and it is possible that increased awareness of the specific symptoms of MPA as identified by the participant during the interview led to a greater sensitivity to those symptoms in the next performance. There is qualitative evidence from the individual interviews and group discussions to support this hypothesis.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CPAI-VP	**11**	**29.00**	**63.00**	**43.18**	**10.45**
CPAI-EP1	**11**	**31.00**	**58.00**	**45.73**	**9.84**
CPAI-EP2	**11**	**28.00**	**55.00**	**40.00**	**10.09**
CPAI-EP3	**11**	**27.00**	**62.00**	**44.09**	**10.69**
CPAI-EP4	**11**	**28.00**	**54.00**	**38.91**	**9.05**
CPAI-EP5	**11**	**29.00**	**57.00**	**38.45**	**9.82**
Valid N (listwise)	**11**				

Table IV.5. Descriptive statistics for CPAI scores from the Virtual Performance (CPAI-VP) and Exposure Performance 1-5 (CPAI-EP1 - CPAI-EP5).

Lester noted that, following the interview, a new-found awareness of his particular MPA symptoms caused a heightened sensitivity, which perhaps led to stronger sensations of those symptoms.

NMC: Did you feel more or less aware of your symptoms of anxiety after the interview?

Lester: Yeah, I'd say so. Like, I always noticed that I was anxious, and it would mess me up. But I didn't actually, like, try to focus on what the symptoms were. But during this it was like, "Wow. I really, well, this was happening and then this was happening which was causing this." So, yeah.

NMC: So did it, how did it affect your awareness of those symptoms?

Lester: Um, it made me more aware. I actually, like, was kind of paying attention to what was tight or what was happening, I guess I should say. 'Cause, you know, like, flushed face, and the shaking. And I almost feel like, I don't, I don't know if it was, I just never noticed it, or, but being more aware the first time, I think it was almost more so, like, they were more extreme than I was, I'd remembered in the past. 'Cause I was kind of thinking about the symptoms, and I don't know if it was just, I was being more aware of them, or if it made it worse because I was thinking about them. (Lester, LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 633)

Lauren also reported that she was more aware of her symptoms following the first interview, but postulated that outside factors may have made her physical symptoms of MPA worse in later exposure performances.

NMC: Okay. How did the physical symptoms change?

Lauren: I was a little bit more uptight for some of the later, although, also, I was able to think more about how I was tight. So while recording the later performance, I would think about whether my neck was tight, or

whatever, and try to relax it, which I don't think I could say about the first performance.

NMC: So you were, would you say you were more aware of the symptoms and able to deal with them, or the symptoms were more noticeable because they were worse?

Lauren: Probably both, actually. They might have been a little bit worse, but I was also more aware of them.

NMC: What was it in the later performance that made the physical symptoms seem to be worse?

Lauren: I think just being tired. (LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 595)

In the group discussion at Site A, the participants discussed the effects of self-awareness of specific symptoms. Olivia and Lester mentioned that awareness led to a hypersensitivity to their symptoms, which in turn created a feedback loop, causing their symptoms to become more severe. Winona, Sophia, and Albert observed the opposite, that by becoming aware of their symptoms, they were more able to monitor and intervene to keep their anxiety level manageable.

NMC: Through the interview process, in identifying your own personal symptoms of anxiety, some people say, "My hand shakes," some people say, "I get this thing in my throat," some people say, "My shoulders get up here." By identifying them, you have more control of the situation because you know what to look for.

Winona: I agree.

Sophia: So, you know what your symptoms are going to be, so you can control them.

Olivia: I actually disagree, because then I'm looking for the symptoms, and then when I see them I start saying, "Oh, I'm nervous," and that just makes me more nervous. And that's kind of a cycle.

Lester: Yeah, when I identified the symptoms, they actually got worse. It's like, "Oh my stomach. AY!"

Albert: I agree, because I was able to know what the symptoms were going to be, and I was able to lessen them because I figured out how to.

Sophia: I agree with Albert.

Winona: I agree with Albert as well. (Group Discussion, Site A, November 17, 2009, p. 821)

Originally, the researcher planned to evaluate the effectiveness of exposure

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	CPAI-EP1 – CPAI-EP5	**7.27**	**9.48**	**2.86**	**.91**	**13.64**	**2.545**	**10**	**.029**

Table IV.5. Paired-sample *t* test showing a significant decrease in CPAI score from CPAI-EP1 to CPAI-EP5.

therapy by comparing the CPAI scores from the Virtual Performance, the first performance given in the virtual context, and Exposure Performance 5, the last performance in the virtual context. However, given the evidence that the individual

interview following the Virtual Performance was an event that changed the experience of MPA, it was decided to compare the first Exposure Performance (CPAI-EP1) to the last Exposure Performance (CPAI-EP5). A paired-samples *t*-test was calculated to compare the mean CPAI score from Exposure Performance 1 (CPAI-EP1) to the mean score from Exposure Performance 5 (CPAI-EP5). The mean of CPAI-EP1 was 45.73 (*sd* = 9.84), and the mean of CPAI-EP5 was 38.45 (*sd* = 9.82). A significant decrease from CPAI-EP1 to CPAI-EP5 was found ($t(10)=2.545$, $p = .029$). The results of the paired sample *t* tests are found in Table IV.5, and suggest that multiple performances in the virtual performance context reduced the severity of MPA in subsequent performances.

Qualitative data gleaned from the individual interviews and group discussions support the statistical evidence. In the group discussion at Site A, Albert mentioned an almost complete extinction of his MPA symptoms by the fifth Exposure Performance.

> **Albert**: I thought five might have even been too many, quantity wise, because, by the fifth one, it didn't seem so much like a performance. It felt more like practicing. (Group Discussion, Site A, November 17, 2009, p. 815)

Lester also noticed a reduction in the severity of MPA in the later Exposure Performances. Lester attributed the reduction to being more familiar with the setting and process.

> **NMC**: Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different in last performance, last virtual performance?

Lester: As opposed to the first virtual performance? Uh, yeah. They were definitely lessened or non-existent because I knew what to do, and I was used to it, and I had done it before. A lot of these things seem to be comfort levels, you know. If I've done things before, then I'm comfortable doing it again, so things go better. I'm not going to worry about other things, or whatever. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 630)

For Graham, the additional performances in the virtual context functioned as performance training, allowing him to become more accustomed to performing itself.

NMC: Okay. If you were to continue to record virtual performances, how do you think the tenth virtual performance would feel compared to the last one you did?

Graham: It would probably continue to feel better each time.

NMC: Okay. Why is that? Is it because you would be more prepared each time, or because you'd be more used to the process each time?

Graham: Well there's nothing particularly foreign about the process, unless it's just the process of performing in general. Uh, I don't, there's only a certain extent to which I could be more prepared for it. So I think it would just be, getting more, getting more used to performing often.

NMC: So being ready to perform for a length of time would change your confidence every time you came to perform it the n^{th} time?

Graham: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yes. (LP2, November 14, 2009, p. 493)

Olivia, one of the few participants who reported a substantial amount of physiological symptoms of MPA in the virtual context, reported that the multiple performances helped her feel more confident playing. In addition to solidifying her memory, a history of successful performances added to her confidence.

Olivia: Well, each time I played my performance got better, and so I was, I had been practicing the piece more carefully to make sure I knew. It was just mostly memory with this piece. So, just to make sure I knew the memory, since the technique and other things were pretty easy, actually.

NMC: How about the physical symptoms of anxiety. How were they different in the last performance from the first performance?

Olivia: The last performance, I felt like I didn't have any symptoms, except for, I don't even know if I had trembling hands. I just hardly felt nervous at all. In the first one, I had a lot of symptoms. Tenseness in my face and shoulders, to shaking in my hands and my stomach feeling kind of a little sick. Lot of nervous energy.

NMC: Do you attribute the change to the confidence in your memory, or to, that the process itself no longer felt that special?

Olivia: Uh, some of both. And I kind of had the sense that the more I was playing it, the better I was going to get. Just actually being in here and playing, I just kind of got used to doing it. And so, it wasn't such a big deal. And, I'd, I had just kept progressively getting better. Each, at

least it seemed that was to me, each recording session, so. (LP2, November 3, 2009, pp. 660-661)

In addition to reporting fewer symptoms of MPA, several participants noted that they felt they were able to present higher quality performances in their later virtual performances. Sophia, for example, believed that additional exposure performances would help her mature to the point that she could focus on aesthetic aspects of her performance because she would no longer be consumed with just surviving.

NMC: If you were to continue to record virtual performances, how do you think the tenth performance would feel different than the last one you recorded?

Sophia: I think I would probably feel even more confident, because I would've had more experience doing it. So, I think I would be relatively calm, and more, maybe I could focus more on being more musical, because I wasn't just focusing on playing. I could put more into the performance. (LP2, November 2, 2009, pp. 748-749)

Albert noticed that the multiple Exposure Performances allowed him to make a shift from a purely technical focus to a more aesthetically inclined focus. Albert used the Exposure Performances as a vehicle to set incrementally higher expectations for himself.

NMC: Okay. Do you think the process of recording influenced you to making that change from a technically focused to an emotionally focused state of mind?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: You do.

Albert: Mm-hmm. Because if it had just been one Virtual Performance, I would have focused once again on the technical side. But because there were multiple ones, multiple Virtual Performances, each time I came in, I wanted it to be a little better. I realized that I could fix a few notes here or there, but it became more important to me to fix the emotional aspect, where I would be feeling the music rather than just playing it. (LP2, November 14, 2009, p. 466)

In summary, the participants reported fewer symptoms of MPA in the later Exposure Performances as measured by the CPAI. Qualitative data from the individual interviews and group discussions confirmed the statistical analysis. Furthermore, as the symptoms of MPA decreased and the performers became more comfortable in the virtual performance context, they felt their performances were more aesthetically satisfying. But did these improvements transfer into Live Performance 2?

Live Performance 2

When compared to Live Performance 1, the participants reported statistically significant lower scores on the CPAI for Live Performance 2. A paired-samples *t* test was calculated to compare the mean CPAI score from Live Performance 1 (CPAI-LP1) to the mean score from Live Performance 2 (CPAI-LP2). The mean of CPAI-LP1 was 59.36 (*sd* = 12.30), and the mean of CPAI-LP2 was 47.09 (*sd* = 14.59). A significant decrease from CPAI-LP1 to CPAI-LP2 was found ($t(10)=3.341$, $p = .007$). The results of the paired sample *t* test are found in Table IV.6.

In the group discussion at Site B, all three participants agreed that their symptoms of MPA were less severe in Live Performance 2 (Group Discussion, Site B, April 18, 2010, p. 837). The participants at Site A were near unanimous on the same conclusion, with only Sophia dissenting (Group Discussion, Site A, November 17, 2009, p. 805).

Concerning their symptoms, the participants at Site A reported that they experienced some of the same symptoms from Live Performance 1, but that the symptoms were reduced. A couple of participants claimed the reduction was complete; some of the symptoms from Live Performance 1 were completely absent.

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	CPAI-LP1 – CPAI-LP2	**12.27**	**12.18**	**3.67**	**4.09**	**20.46**	**3.341**	**10**	**.007**

Table IV.6. Paired Samples *t* test showing significant decrease in CPAI-LP2 after exposure therapy treatment.

> **NMC**: Would you say your symptoms were mostly similar between Live Performance 1 and Live Performance 2? If yes, signify by raising your hand? (No votes) Would you say your symptoms of anxiety decreased in Live Performance 2? (W, A, R, G, O, L, P raise hands) Okay. Were they the same symptoms, just to a lesser degree, or different symptoms altogether?
>
> **Winona**: Number 1 choice.

Olivia: 1.

Graham: Same.

NMC: Same symptoms but to different degree. Can you talk about that for a little bit?

Lester: Well, for me, not only that, but I didn't have some in the second. I had some in the first that I didn't have at all in the second. So I guess they would be lessened to zero.

Olivia: Yeah. Same with me.

NMC: Anybody have a different experience?

Winona: Mine were all there, so, like the same ones from the Live Performance, but it was not for an extended period of time. And it wasn't as much. (Group Discussion, Site A, November 17, 2009, p. 806)

In the individual interviews after Live Performance 2, several of the participants identified specific symptoms that were noticeably less severe. Phoebe reported an almost complete extinction of her physiological symptoms.

NMC: Okay. Um, how about your physical symptoms of anxiety. How were they different in the second performance?

Phoebe: I didn't feel as, like, warm in my face, or my hands weren't shaky. I didn't feel sick at my stomach.

NMC: Would you say that in general, your physical symptoms of anxiety in the second live performance were less than your symptoms in the first live performance?

Phoebe: Yes.

NMC: How much less?

Phoebe: Like, a lot less. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. On a scale of one to ten, your physical symptoms in the first live performance would have been what for you?

Phoebe: Probably like, for ten being the worst, probably a nine.

NMC: And then the second live performance would be about?

Phoebe: A one, probably.

NMC: Oh really. So then, an extreme difference.

Phoebe: Yeah. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 691-692)

Olivia reported on several specific symptoms that were absent or drastically reduced in Live Performance 2. The only symptom that persisted was trembling in the hands, which may have been a little worse in Live Performance 2.

NMC: How about physical symptoms. Were the physical symptoms different in Live Performance 2?

Olivia: Um, yes. I was less, I felt less tension. I felt less nervous except this. The only symptoms I noticed that were the same were my hands trembled.

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Olivia: And maybe even more the second time.

NMC: So the hands trembled a little bit more in the second performance?

Olivia: Yeah, I think they might have, than the first.

NMC: Why do you think that is?

Olivia: I'm not sure, except maybe that that's just where I happened to channel all those nervous stuff was in the hands this time. A lot of times I get just slight trembling, not as bad as this time. Um, usually it's more of a shoulder tension that gets me.

NMC: You mentioned a jaw tension affects you a lot. You mentioned that for the first performance. Was that in the second performance, too?

Olivia: Not as, not as much.

NMC: Not as much. How about the face tension, or the holding of the face in a certain...

Olivia: I might have been. I wasn't really thinking about it, but, it's not like I was so tense that afterwards I felt it all relax. It was, if I was tense, it wasn't horrible.

NMC: You also mentioned that your shoulders are tense, to the point that you know that they're, later on you recognize that they're kind of frozen in one spot.

Olivia: That wasn't the case in the second one.

NMC: Heart rate and breathing, you also mentioned those for the first one.

Olivia: I didn't feel like I was breathing as fast, for the second one, or it was quite, I wasn't quite as nervous overall, I felt.

NMC: And you also mentioned that in addition to the shakiness in your arms and hands, sometimes you get it in the legs and feet?

Olivia: Yeah, I didn't this time.

NMC: In general, would you say your physical symptoms were more or less in the second live performance.

Olivia: I'd say less, overall. (LP2, November 3, 2009, pp. 657-658)

Winona reported that most of her symptoms appeared in the second Live Performance, but that they were reduced in severity. She also noted that the onset of symptoms was delayed for Live Performance 2.

NMC: Okay. How about your physical symptoms of anxiety. How were they different from Live Performance 2 to Live Performance 1?

Winona: I think they were all there, but they started earlier for the first performance. Um, they started when I was waiting to go on. But then, for the second Live Performance, it started as just before I went on stage, or when I was walking on stage, rather than waiting. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 779)

Kendra reported that though her hands were sweaty in Live Performance 2, her other physical symptoms were not as noticeable as in Live Performance 1.

NMC: Okay. Excellent. Um, were the physical symptoms of anxiety different in Live Performance Two compared to Live Performance One?

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: Okay, in Live Performance One I think you mentioned, um, maybe some hand sweatiness, and your shoulders were raised a little bit, and some shakiness.

Kendra: Yes. There was still hand sweating, slightly. I didn't feel as tense. I felt like I could relax more, so the shoulders weren't as tense.

NMC: And this is in the Second?

Kendra: Yeah. The shakiness wasn't exactly there. I wasn't shaky, I didn't think, at all really. (LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 564)

Several participants specifically mentioned improvements in their mental symptoms of MPA. Rhonda noticed that, although she was haunted by her memory debacle in Live Performance 1, she felt more calm and in control for Live Performance 2.

NMC: Okay. Okay, you have performed in two live performance situations. Compare how you felt during Live Performance One and how you felt during Live Performance Two.

Rhonda: Um, Live Performance Two, I felt very calm for most of it. The one thing that did affect my mental state while in Live Performance Two was that I did have several memory slips in Live Performance One. And being aware of that, and wanting to prove that I could come out and do a better performance was something that was on my mind the whole time. Live Performance One, that definitely was not on my mind, but as soon as those memory things started happening, it began to be a lot more frantic. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 716)

Lester did not experience the sense of dread leading up to Live Performance 2.

NMC: Okay. You mentioned from the first interview fear, excitement and dread. Did you feel the same things with Live Performance 2?

Lester: I'd say excitement. I don't think I was dreading it. It was almost like I was wanting to get it over with. (chuckles). But it wasn't like, "Oh

no. I have to go onstage." It was like, "Yay, I get to go on stage, and I can go on with the rest of my day. " (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 628)

Kendra also mentioned a certain sense of excitement leading up to Live Performance 2, contrasting the apprehension she felt prior to Live Performance 1.

NMC: Okay. Um, how about mental symptoms of anxiety, comparing Live Performance Two and Live Performance One?

Kendra: Um, what did I say in Performance One?

NMC: You mentioned the words scared, excited, heartwarming.

Kendra: Okay. Um, it wasn't as scared. More excited, just to probably show how much I've improved, or more comfortable, and that I'd really thought more about the characters and had been playing it more with that, so. (LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 565)

Lauren did not feel the "brain on turbo speed" that she felt in Live Performance 1. Instead, she felt mostly in control and able to think clearly.

NMC: Okay. Let's talk about your mental symptoms in Live Performance #2, were they different than how you felt in Live Performance 1?

Lauren: Yeah, I felt, um, I felt more in control of the situation. I, um, like I, like I said, I knew a little bit more of what to expect, so I prepared myself more going into it. Um, so my thoughts were a little bit more coherent. (LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 592)

Winona also reported feeling more in control, especially after performance errors.

NMC: Okay. So, let's compare your mental symptoms of anxiety in Live Performance 2 to Live Performance 1.

Winona: Um, I didn't worry about the second one as much before hand.

NMC: You mentioned in the first interview words like panic, anger, loss of focus, and a vigilance on your internal dialogue.

Winona: I guess those weren't as heightened in the second performance. I didn't think about them. There wasn't any internal dialogue, or, I didn't panic if I made a mistake. The first one, I think I did, though. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 779)

Though still affected by memory slips, Judith reported feeling more calm and attentive in the second Live Performance. Towards the end of her piece, she suffered a substantial memory slip, and had to improvise for a moment before finding a way to cadence and conclude her piece. In addition to being a reaction to negative self-talk during performance, the memory slip points to what may have been too much overt control of the notes as they were played. Up until the memory slip, the performance had been going quite well. Judith explained that her mind was just a little bit ahead of her fingers toward the end of the last fugue of her *Toccata.*

NMC: You mentioned 'brain fart' in the fugue, what happened?

Judith: I don't know if I'm remembering exactly, but it was a, one of those negative thoughts came in, expecting to mess up somewhere, I think. And then I just blanked out. Like, I knew what was coming up, I'm like, this is back, uh, yeah, I knew it was in b minor. And I sort of labeled that section, it's a part and has, and I know where it is, and all

that, and I just, I don't know, I just went to panic. I kind of got there mentally ahead, too far ahead before my fingers were there. Like, I was about two, three measures still before, and then I was, yeah, and then I got there and it just froze. And then all the other spots that I had, I'm like, "I know what..." and like, my brain wasn't thinking fast enough. I couldn't...

NMC: Did you feel like you were maybe in the way of your fingers? Trying to think too much?

Judith: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

NMC: Is that a feeling you get frequently, trying to do too much, to be in too much control over everything? Or was it just in the wrong place? You said you were two measures, a few measures too far ahead.

Judith: Um, I guess. A bit of both. A bit of both. And, um, I haven't really felt that on any of them I really fully let go, to just play. And that hasn't happened yet. It's gone more in that direction, but then there's still a lot of, I guess, distrust.

NMC: Distrust for?

Judith: Um, the performance? Myself? I don't know, it's what's going to happen and whether... Just too much second-guessing.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: And, trying to make sure everything is absolutely right, so therefore, it can't just flow naturally. It's still... And I think that's part of what came into that at that spot.

NMC: Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different between the two Live Performances? In your first interview, you mentioned things like frustration and feeling frazzled.

Judith: Um, yeah. I was, I was definitely calmer. More objective. As far as things, yeah. Let's put it that way. Um, still, I was still nervous, but... That was a bit disappointing, not being able to get myself fully back on track.

NMC: In the fugue?

Judith: Yes, that was a bit frustrating in itself. And it's like, I couldn't get even. Like I was just playing around in e minor for a little bit, and I'm like, "I can't even make a cadence." It was like, "Why can't I even find the dominant?" Like I couldn't make, it was, yeah.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Um, did I answer the question?

NMC: Um, comparing the mental symptoms between the first live performance.

Judith: Yeah, I would say it was better the second time, definitely. Although that kind of threw me off a little bit.

NMC: It through you off that you were more calm?

Judith: No, after, after the little memory slip.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Yeah, and then, yeah. But everything up to that point was definitely, I felt much more solid. (LP2, April 18, 2010, pp. 529-531)

Finally, two participants noted that they were better able to follow their mental plan for the performance in Live Performance 2. Rhonda reported being able to recall her memory stations and to visualize the score, a strategy that helped her avoid memory slips in the second Live Performance.

> **NMC**: Okay. Can you compare the mental symptoms of anxiety from Live Performance Two to Live Performance One?
>
> **Rhonda**: Um, Live Performance Two, like I said again, I was very aware of what I was doing the whole time. I was making sure that I was where I was needing to be in the music. Um, I was visualizing the music, 'cause I knew that memory was going to be a bigger, or not a bigger issue, but something that I really wanted to work on. Live Performance One I wasn't thinking of those things, and so, um, instead of being over-prepared I was under-prepared, and then that equaled frantic mental state. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 717)

Though Sophia experienced many of the same symptoms of MPA in the second Live Performance, she felt as though she was better able to think and plan ways to complete her performance. Sophia still has a long way to go to feel comfortable in the live performance context, but her ability to follow a plan for performance is improving.

> **NMC**: Okay. Let's compare, again, Live Performance One to Live Performance Two, anxiety before the performance and anxiety during the performance.
>
> **Sophia**: I'd say before is always worse, and then during the performance, oh, oh let's see, I'm supposed to be comparing them. Okay.

Um, Performance Two I was way more anxious before, than I was the first time. And then during, I think I felt a little more stable the second time 'cause I was trying to put together the plan of what I was going to play, where Performance One I was just blank. Just trying to piece things together.

NMC: Okay. You also mentioned several times in the previous interview, just trying to 'hold it together.'

Sophia: Mm-hmm. Um, Performance Two. I think I held it together a little better, because I was thinking about how to do that, and in Performance One I didn't have any idea how to do that. (LP2, November 14, 2009, p. 745)

When asked why they thought their symptoms of anxiety were reduced in Live Performance 2, the participants offered a variety of possibilities. Some explained that the exposure performances helped them feel more confident because their worst fears never materialized. Their experience in the virtual performance setting helped them realize that they did indeed know their piece well, and that they need not fear catastrophe.

NMC: Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with the symptoms of performance anxiety in the second live performance?

Winona: Um, in an indirect way, yes. I, because I was used to playing my piece, at all, you know five times in a week, just running through it

increased my confidence for the second Live Performance, so I was less worried that I would make a mistake. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 781)

Lauren's explanation of her improvements lies completely within the exposure therapy rationale. With the empirical knowledge that she has the ability to play her piece in a stressful situation without a major mishap, her irrational fears are attenuated.

NMC: Mm-hmm. Okay. Um, okay. Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performance changed the way you dealt with symptoms of musical performance anxiety in the second Live Performance?

Lauren: Yes, I think so. Um, something definitely changed in the two weeks, so.

NMC: Okay. What do you think changed?

Lauren: I think I felt more confident. Um, you do enough live performance, you start to realize that it's not going to fall apart every time, so.

NMC: And so recording multiple virtual performances helped you feel more confident?

Lauren: Yeah, I think so.

NMC: What is it about them that gave you that sense of confidence?

Lauren: Knowing that, well, when I was doing them, knowing that there wasn't necessarily a redo, and that it would go out on the internet, but still having the feeling that I was in a practice room. So, I think

having done several, and having had nothing really major go wrong, then that helped my confidence. (LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 597)

Other participants reported that the Exposure Performances gave them the opportunity to practice the art of performance itself. Lester felt like the Exposure Performances forced him to commit to complete performance of his repertoire. In his normal practice time, Lester deals with mistakes as they occur. Even when he attempts a rehearsal performance, he does not experience the same imperative to play to the end of his piece that virtual performances require.

NMC: Okay. Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with the symptoms of performance anxiety in the second Live Performance?

Lester: Yeah. It forced me to concentrate, in a way, where I had to focus on a piece, and actually perform it straight through. Because, what happens in a rehearsal performance, when I'm just doing it on my own, if I mess up, I might just go back and fix it. And then, I'm not going through the entire piece, like completely through it without stopping. So when I go to play it through completely at a real performance, it throws me off a little. So by doing the virtual performances, it was forcing me to treat every performance as a live performance.

NMC: As a complete performance.

Lester: A complete performance, right.

NMC: Is there any other things about the process that you think changed the way you dealt with the symptoms of performance anxiety?

Lester: It got me more comfortable with the piece. I mean, I think it was just the exposure, which, "Exposure Performances." (chuckles) So. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 631)

Kendra also reported that the Exposure Performances helped her develop performance skills in a somewhat stressful performance context.

NMC: Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Kendra: I think so. Yeah.

NMC: Why?

Kendra: It helps. It helps you to sit down and run through a piece and know that people will be listening to it. That you can get feedback back from it. Um, it gets you in the performance mindset without actually, well, with exercising the Live Performance and the Virtual, so you're getting like a taste of both the physical setting and the mental setting. So I think that helps a lot. (LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 568)

For Sophia, the Exposure Performances seem to have a different purpose. Rather than building confidence in her ability, and thus reducing her anxiety, Sophia seems resigned to the fact that she will always feel severe symptoms of MPA. Exposure Performances are more about developing the ability to play through the jitters, and might better be described stress inoculation. Unfortunately, the virtual performance context did not generate enough anxiety to be a beneficial setting for this kind of training. Sophia stated that she might get more out of multiple live performances.

NMC: Okay. Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with symptoms of performance anxiety in the second live performance?

Sophia: Mmm. Probably. Because the more you perform, the more used to the symptoms you are, so it probably helped a little bit. But for me, I just probably have to do more live performances, and more live performances, and more live performances, to get used to the feelings, and get used to dealing, or figuring out how to deal with them.

NMC: Mm-hmm. Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Sophia: Yes. Yes I think I would.

NMC: Why?

Sophia: Um, because the more practice you have at something, the better you get at it. So the more you do it, it becomes, um, more of a habit. So then it's, it's in you, so then you don't have to tr.... Is that making sense? You don't have to try, you would just do it. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 749)

Finally, several participants reported that the Exposure Performances helped them discover weaknesses in their pieces. By identifying those weaknesses and correcting them in the practice room, they felt their pieces were better prepared for performance. Rhonda spent more time preparing memory stations as a result of memory slips that occurred in the virtual performance context.

NMC: Okay. Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with symptoms of performance anxiety in the second live performance?

Rhonda: Yes. I do, because, um, I think it gave me a better awareness of the, the weaknesses of my performance. So by the time I got to the Live Performance Number 2, I was aware of those things that I needed to be thinking of, um, in order to have a good performance. So it gave me the practice of, um, making sure that I had those checkmarks made for what I needed to in my music. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 720)

Lester also mentioned that he used the Exposure Performances as a tool to identify weaknesses in his preparation. With the benefit of better preparation, he felt more able to focus on musical aspects of his repertoire in Live Performance 2.

Lester: Um, well the first performance I was focused on, "Can I get through the whole piece without messing up, trying to find the right notes." And through all the exposure, um, the recorded ones, um, I was able to kind of find out that I could and fix the spots where I wasn't able to. So by the second one, I was like, "I can do this completely all the way through." So I was able to focus more on the piece as a whole. (Group Discussion, Site A, November 17, 2009, p. 807)

Summary

Multiple performances in the virtual context affected the level and experience of MPA in subsequent performances. Three data sources confirm that the participants experienced fewer and less severe symptoms of MPA in the final virtual performance.

The beneficial effects, for most performers, carried over into Live Performance 2. Some participants reported that the exposure therapy gave them greater confidence in their ability to perform, and thus reduced the apprehension and anxiety in subsequent performances. Other participants reported that the Exposure Performances helped them practice the skill of performing. Still others reported that the Exposure Performances helped them discover and address deficiencies in their preparation.

This raises an interesting question. Can the reduced symptoms of MPA in the second Live Performance truly be attributed to the effects of exposure therapy? The rationale of exposure therapy is to provide ample empirical evidence that the performer is prepared, and that the worst possible outcome very rarely occurs. But if the Exposure Performances simply pointed out weaknesses in memory, or the inability to stay with a performance from the beginning to the end, is that really exposure therapy, or is that simply better preparation?

The next chapter will feature discussion on this and other themes emerging from the careful analysis of the qualitative data. Though the purpose of this research was not to build a grounded theory of MPA in university level pianists, several important causal and contributory factors emerged from the data. As these factors emerged, they coalesced into three broad categories.

First, for some university students, performance anxiety is not necessarily about the performance context, but about concerns for their level of preparation. Many of the participants simply were not sure if they were prepared for live performance, and that un-surety led to anxiety. Second, as students, the participants expressed that some of their anxiety resulted from thoughts about the evaluation of their performances,

particularly from individuals who have sophisticated musical knowledge and tastes. Finally, several pedagogical practices, if implemented by the applied teacher, might go a long way toward helping student pianists become more comfortable in performance. If applied teachers educate their students about the problem of MPA, that awareness can give the student an element of control over the situation. Additionally, applied teachers need to become aware of specific concerns that their students might have in order to address individual needs in the preparation of repertoire for performance

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

With the answers to the research questions firmly in hand, what conclusions can be reached concerning exposure therapy in the virtual performance context? Clearly, the virtual performance context elicited fewer symptoms of MPA than the live performance. The participants had very different experiences of MPA in comparing the live and virtual performances in terms of the symptoms experienced, the coping strategies implemented, and feelings about the performance immediately following its conclusion. Finally, almost all participants noted significantly fewer and less severe symptoms of MPA in the later Exposure performances, and reported similar reductions comparing Live Performance 2 and Live Performance 1. But can these results be attributed to exposure therapy in the virtual context?

Though a grounded theory of MPA in student pianists was not a goal of this research, a number of contributing factors were identified as the participants began to postulate causal reasons for the reduction in the symptoms of MPA in later performances. The study design offered the benefit of using the virtual performance context as a foil to compare and contrast MPA manifestations in different contexts. When certain symptoms showed up in the Live Performance and not in the Virtual Performance, it was the natural inclination of the researcher and participants to begin to question why. After all, many variables were the same in both contexts; both contexts featured solo musical performances from memory, and for the most part, the same level of preparation.

As the contributing factors of MPA emerged, they began to suggest certain causal relationships between the development and education of student musicians, and the effect this development has on the experience and severity of MPA in student performers. First, it became apparent that many student pianists did not know the level of preparation necessary for professional public performances or if they had in fact achieved the appropriate level of preparation. Second, many participants expressed concern about evaluations by the music faculty and their peers. Finally, a number of factors arose in which self-reflection on a few key items, perhaps facilitated by the applied studio teacher, could assist the student in gaining a sense of confidence and control in the face of MPA.

Preparation

Several factors that alleviated or exacerbated feelings of MPA related to the participants preparation to perform. To be ready for performance, the performers needed to feel a sense of confidence that they knew their repertoire well enough for their performances to be solid in stressful situations. Second, the participants mentioned that they needed to feel comfortable in the performance venue. Finally, the participants noticed that as they became more confident in their knowledge of the piece and familiar with the hall, they began to focus more on aesthetic qualities of the performance, and less on memory and technical aspects.

Repertoire

Many of the participants mentioned that feelings about their readiness to perform influenced the amount of debilitative MPA experienced in performance. As

students, their general lack of experience in public performance led them to question if they had done enough in the practice room to expect a solid performance on the recital stage. It is perhaps this uncertainty that is the root cause of their feelings of MPA, almost recasting the acronym as Musical Preparation Anxiety.

Several participants mentioned the relationship between their feelings about their preparation for performance and the anxiety they felt in the performance. Graham commented that his anxiety is a direct result of the feelings he has concerning his level of preparation.

> **NMC**: Okay. Um, how did Live Performance 2 compare to a typical performance? Mental symptoms of anxiety.
>
> **Graham**: Um, well I would say, it's uh, typical performance?
>
> **NMC**: About the same, that's normally what you would expect to feel like in a performance? Or was it, um, more anxiety provoking than what you would typically expect, or was it less anxiety provoking?
>
> **Graham**: I think it was about the same. *I mean my, my anxiety is usually, um, directly related to how well I've prepared the piece* [emphasis added]. So I would say both live performances probably reflected how I would feel in a, in a performance outside of the study, just because, uh, over the course of the study the piece has been better prepared for the second live performance than for the first live performance. (Graham, LP2, November 14, 2009, p. 490)

Lester offered a similar observation, noting that his anxiety comes from self-doubt.

Lester: A little. But I guess it makes sense though, 'cause a lot of my anxiety comes from self-doubt, so if I feel really confident then it doesn't, how to say this, but I'm more excited. So, I guess in a way, that does make sense. Maybe I just need to prepare more. (Lester, LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 626)

Winona, when asked about the steps she takes to reduce anxiety noted that, "preparation is the key. Extensive preparation. Knowing how much I need to prepare in order not to feel so anxious" (Winona, VP1, November 3, 2009, p. 763). Winona has also noticed, that as she has continued her education in music, she has become more aware of the kinds of things she needs to do to be prepared for performance.

NMC: Comparing yourself now to the performer you were back when we did the pilot study, do you think you've changed much?

Winona: Yeah, I've matured as a performer and as a person. So, now I, and I think I know how to deal a little better. I know how to practice in order to do this, and so that I feel more prepared and less anxious.

NMC: So as you've gone through your education you've learned more what you really need to know to feel confident to perform.

Winona: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

NMC: What kinds of things are those? Can you think of specific...

Winona: Um, well, now I, I make a practice routine, whereas last year it was just whenever I had a minute. So now I work my practice into my day. I know my teacher better. I know how to interact with him in a way that is beneficial to my playing and my performing.

NMC: Do you think your level of familiarity with the repertoire changed? Do you feel you know the pieces that you're playing now better than you knew the pieces you were playing then?

Winona: Oh. Yes. Yes because of those reasons. Because I practice them more, and because my teacher is better able to help me with any musical questions that I might have. Because I know how to ask now. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 776)

In the group discussion at Site A, the participants confirmed that feeling more prepared led to less anxiety in performance.

NMC: Okay, I'd like to offer some of my initial impressions from the interviews and get your thoughts on them, whether you agree with my interpretations or not. The Exposure Performances helped you feel more prepared, even if they didn't directly affect your symptoms of anxiety.

Rhonda: Yes.

Winona: I agree.

Phoebe: Yes

Olivia: Yeah.

NMC: Anybody disagree?

(no response)

NMC: Does feeling more prepared directly affect your level of anxiety?

Olivia: Yeah.

Lester: Yes.

Winona: Yes.

Rhonda: Yes.

Sophia: Yes. (Group Discussion Site A, November 17, 2009, p. 818)

So how did the exposure therapy help the participants feel more prepared? For some participants, the additional performance in the virtual performance provided reassurances in their ability to play their repertoire. The effect is exactly what would be expected in exposure therapy; with empirical evidence that the worst outcome rarely occurs, the anxiety response to the performance situation is attenuated. Lauren's words on the effectiveness of exposure therapy perfectly encapsulates the rationale.

NMC: …Um, okay. Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performance changed the way you dealt with symptoms of musical performance anxiety in the second Live Performance?

Lauren: Yes, I think so. Um, something definitely changed in the two weeks, so.

NMC: Okay. What do you think changed?

Lauren: I think I felt more confident. Um, you do enough live performance, you start to realize that it's not going to fall apart every time, so.

NMC: And so recording multiple virtual performances helped you feel more confident?

Lauren: Yeah, I think so.

NMC: What is it about them that gave you that sense of confidence?

Lauren: Knowing that, well, when I was doing them, knowing that there wasn't necessarily a redo, and that it would go out on the internet,

but still having the feeling that I was in a practice room. So, I think having done several, and having had nothing really major go wrong, then that helped my confidence. (LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 597)

Kendra echoed these sentiments saying, "Um, I think it, um, reassures me that, yes, I know the piece" (LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 566).

Additionally, the Exposure Performances led to confidence because the participants felt more experienced in performance situations. Live Performance 2 was approached with less trepidation because the performers felt like they had performed their piece successfully a number of times already. Rather than being the first test of their repertoire in a public performance as in Live Performance 1, the participants entered Live Performance 2 feeling like veteran performers.

NMC: Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with symptoms of musical performance anxiety in the second live performance?

Olivia: I felt like what it really did for me is it gave me a lot more experience playing that piece, you know, for an audience. And I think that made me less nervous the second time, going into the second time through, 'cause I felt like I'd, in a sense, played it for people many times. Instead of with the first performance when I had only played it once for mid-term and once for a friend. So, I felt like I had a lot more experience with the piece. (LP2, November 14, 2010, p. 661)

Interestingly, for Lester, the multiple performances helped him view each performance as part of a history of performance. Instead of being a final test of work

accomplished in the practice room, Lester began to view performance as a process in which he could demonstrate continued improvement.

> **NMC**: Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed your symptoms of performance anxiety in the second Live Performance?
>
> **Lester**: Yeah, because what gets my anxiety is the self-doubt and worrying about how people are going to judge me, or think of me, or whatever, you know, and by the second Live Performance, I was like, "People have already heard me live. There's the six Virtual Performances online, and this will be going online. Really it's just to show the same thing, and if not, how I can do it better, if not worse (chuckles) maybe." But you know, it was, it wasn't so much of a one-shot deal, you know. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 631)

A few participants also noted that the effects of recording multiple performance were augmented with other performances occurring outside the study design. Kendra noted a number of additional informal performances contributed to feeling more comfortable in Live Performance 2.

> **NMC**: Okay. Very good. Let's compare how you felt in Live Performance 1 and how you felt in Live Performance 2. First, did one performance feel better than the other?
>
> **Kendra**: The second one.
>
> **NMC**: The second one felt better. Why?

Kendra: Again, I was probably more comfortable, or I am a lot more comfortable playing the piece. Um. so it was easier to get more in the character...

NMC: When you say more comfortable, what do you mean?

Kendra: Um, that I've played it in front of people more often, such as seminars, or just bringing a friend into the practice room. Um, I've been able to run through it many times more, so.

NMC: Okay. Do you attribute any of that to, uh, recording it multiple times?

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: You do?

Kendra: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: How did that help, do you think?

Kendra: Um, it helps you just sit down and really concentrate, really try to get in the performance mode or mood, um, or mindset. And it just makes you run though it straight through regardless of any errors you might make, you just have to keep going. (LP2, April 16, 2010, pp. 563-564)

Winona, who had experienced fewer symptoms of MPA in Live Performance 1 than she normally experiences, attributed lower levels of MPA to multiple performances that occurred prior to this research study.

Winona: …Um, and I think I was used to, I've been kind of used to performing this piece, you know, recently. So if I had that practice then I somehow don't get as nervous.

NMC: So, you performed this piece about how many times?

Winona: Um, four.

NMC: And what kind of venues were they?

Winona: Um, a jury. A competition. Um, a church. And then, I guess I was counting this. The Live Performance.

NMC: Okay. So would you say that your experience performing it prior to this specific performance helped give you confidence?

Winona: Yes. Because they, every time the piece went well, so that boosts my confidence. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 767)

It is important to note that the level of confidence needed to be rooted in experience, and not just in response to one or two solid performances. A number of participants discovered that feeling over-confident in the early Exposure Performances led to poorer performances and higher levels of MPA in response to mistakes made in the performance. Graham noticed that a poor performance resulted from feeling over-confident after one successful virtual performance.

NMC: Mm-hmm. Do you recall any specific instance that might have made this first exposure performance to be the highest score of all of your performances?

Graham: Again, I think that I played the worst that time. And, I would say that I probably just assumed it was going to be like the virtual

performance before it, and, and then when I got here, it was something, it was completely new and I wasn't expecting that.

NMC: So do you think you did fewer preparations to perform in that performance?

Graham: Possibly. Um, I would think that I, I would literally, I think that I literally did the same amount of preparation, but it's just the attitude coming into the performance that influenced my anxiety.

NMC: And what attitude, how would you describe that?

Graham: The attitude of, "It's just gonna be like last time." And then having that, having that, uh, not that expectation not be filled, uh, creates more anxiety. I mean, not that it was significantly different from the last time, but it wasn't, it wasn't just an exact repeat of what I did. It was, it was another one. And I guess I wasn't expecting that specifically. LP2, November 14, 2009, pp. 494-495)

Kendra also noted that feelings of over-confidence led to a poor performance attendant with higher levels of MPA.

NMC: We do have one here that's a little bit higher than some of the others (pointing at EP scores). Can you remember what was happening?

Kendra: Yeah, I think it was that the first one, or no, what was it? The first one went well, and then the second one, I might have been overly confident, and I might have made a few more mistakes than I anticipated, so. (LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 563)

Finally, for some participants, the Exposure Performances functioned as a tool to identify weaknesses in their preparation. Rather than giving these performers confidence that they had prepared sufficiently, the Exposure Performances showed specific areas that needed attention. Lester, for example, recognized that the many performances helped him identify and resolve specific problems in his preparation.

> **NMC**: Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different in Live Performance Two?
>
> **Lester**: They weren't really there. They weren't bothering me, like... I think it was because, when you tend to perform, certain things kind of pop out. It's like, "Oh. I have issues with that." But by performing the, I guess it was six virtual performances all together and the one live performance, I was able to find those places that, you know, I thought were prepared, but when I go to perform it, they weren't. I would like, forget it. So I was able to work on those little spots. I was just a lot more comfortable, so it wasn't bothering me. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 628)

For Olivia, the issue in question was just a single note.

> **Olivia**: …Um, it was either the recording number 3 or number 4, when I finally figured out exactly at that time, what was causing me to make the same mistake that I had made in the first two, maybe even three recording sessions. So once I fixed that, it was like, "I can do this. It's not going to be a big deal anymore."
>
> **NMC**: What was it?

Olivia: It was, I kept putting my pinky up for a b instead of a b-flat. (chuckles) And that threw me every time, and so I had to jump ahead almost a measure. So, once I memorized that, "Yes, it's a b-flat," then I could just play through it without a problem. (LP2, November 14, 2009, p. 661)

Kendra used each Exposure Performance as a means to correct problems that she identified in the previous performance. As her symptoms of anxiety decreased, she was more able to stay focused on specific items to improve.

NMC: Okay. Um, you've now performed in several virtual performances also. Compare your first virtual performance with the last recorded performance. Did one performance feel better than the other?

Kendra: I'm trying to think back then. I think as they progressed, I got more comfortable with it, because it wasn't as, "Oh my gosh! People are listening to me, or are going to be judging me on my playing." So, I think as I did each one, um, I could feel myself just thinking like, "Okay, so last time this wasn't exactly how I wanted it to go." So, I kept like certain points in my music in thought. Just ways I could improve it each time. (LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 565)

Rhonda used the Exposure Performances to improve her concentration on following her memory cues.

NMC: Okay. Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with symptoms of performance anxiety in the second live performance?

Rhonda: Yes. I do, because, um, I think it gave me a better awareness of the, the weaknesses of my performance. So by the time I got to the Live Performance Number 2, I was aware of those things that I needed to be thinking of, um, in order to have a good performance. So it gave me the practice of, um, making sure that I had those checkmarks made for what I needed to in my music. (LP2, November 15, 2010, p. 720)

Finally, Olivia postulated that the Exposure Performances were beneficial for this particular piece of repertoire, but might not have a global effect on her attitude towards public performance in general. In other words, the beneficial effects of exposure therapy occur on a piece-by-piece basis.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything else you'd like to add about this process?

Olivia: I feel like that, as a whole, that doing recordings and performances like this, don't, I mean, I think in college I generally became less nervous performing in front of people, so it could have been somewhat to doing this study and the last one. But, especially the last one, I remember that I felt more confident performing after doing that study. But overall I feel like, what, what really gets, what it really did for me was give me confidence in the piece that I'm playing. Not so much in my overall ability to play, it's just piece-by-piece determines, how I'm doing on the piece determines how nervous I'm going to get. It could be something helpful, like recording, could be something helpful if I do it continually with each new piece, and maybe in the long run, it

could make me overall more confident. But, I'm not sure if it really would. It would just have to be a piece-by-piece thing, I think.

NMC: So, recording is really just kind of, another weapon in the practice arsenal. This is something that I can do so that I feel really confident and really prepared to perform in front of other people.

Olivia: Yeah, because it gives me a chance to become nervous, or at least, somewhat nervous, almost every time I do it. So I get used to being able to play with those nerves. I don't know if it actually, for me, reduced the nerves I feel, it just makes me more confident, so I feel less nerves. If you see what I'm saying. (LP2, November 14, 2009, pp. 665-666)

It is important to note in these cases that exposure therapy as a treatment is not really occurring. These participants' anxiety stems from a very rational, if not conscience, reason. Because they were not sufficiently prepared, the possibility of a less than perfect outcome is reasonable. Given the stress of public performance, many students fall to "hoping" their performance goes well rather than "knowing" they are prepared and ready. The Exposure Performances was a preparation tool, not a therapy functioning to dispel irrational fears.

Venue and Instrument

In addition to preparing the repertoire, the participants recognized that part of preparing for a live performance is becoming familiar with the hall and piano. Many participants remarked that they felt more comfortable in Live Performance 2 because they had become more familiar with the hall and the piano.

A couple of the participants noted different MPA occurred just as a result of the architecture of the performance venue. Graham noticed that he felt less anxious in the virtual performance setting because of the layout of the room and the lighting.

> **Graham**: Uh, it could also be that the setting, that uh, we're in this room that is uniformly lit, and there are, there are, there are seats in this room. There's no one in them, but they're, they're not, they're no all facing towards me.
>
> **NMC**: So you literally don't feel like you're the center of attention, or that you're in the spotlight?
>
> **Graham**: Yeah. Whereas in a, in a theatre there's a, the house is dark, the stage is bright, and the, all the chairs are pointing straight at you even if there aren't any people in those chairs. You're definitely in the focus.
>
> **NMC**: So let's say we recorded this performance upstairs in the recital hall, with the lighting that's typical, would that make a difference in how you performed?
>
> **Graham**: It might have, uh, might have increased the anxiety a little bit. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 483-484)

Lester also mentioned that the lighting and the seating configuration of a recital hall created anxiety. Lester found that even in a live performance with a small audience, the architecture and formality of the event created feelings of MPA.

> **Lester**: ….Um, well I guess, the one thing with the Live Performance is, it was almost weird, 'cause you know it's like, especially for the first one, I was like, I was feeling very nervous, and like, there was like seven

people in the audience. I was like, "oh." But then you know I was, I still messed up and I was like, "Yay." I think it would almost be more effective if it was a larger audience, because it would be so much more of an extreme, from going to a recording with no one to the live audience with maybe, like twenty people or something. But like, even with that few people, you're still being put up in the focal point of the entire room with all the lights on you and all these chairs facing toward you. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 634)

Perhaps it is knowing that the space itself can generate feelings of MPA that caused Judith to make an effort to get to the performance venue well before the performance began. In Live Performance 1, Judith noticed that the setting at the retirement home was quite different than what she would normally expect, and specifically mentioned the absence of a stage and the uniform lighting, which made the audience more visible.

Judith: And I got there, got there early. Just to be in the space a little bit, um, by myself. And I touched the piano, a little bit. Uh, yeah. A couple of times.

NMC: And what are you doing in that time, to get there early?

Judith: Um, I guess getting acclimated. Um, to the room, and...

NMC: Was this a typical performance venue for you, or was it...?

Judith: No.

NMC: Okay. Describe the differences.

Judith: Although I did realize I had been there before once. I was there once two years ago doing some accompanying.

NMC: So what are some of the differences in this particular performance venue?

Judith: The piano is smaller. It wasn't as well maintained. Um, it's not on a stage. Um,

NMC: Meaning it's on the same level as the audience.

Judith: Mm-hmm. (affirmative) It's also a smaller space.

NMC: Okay. How did those context issues affect you? Just those difference?

Judith: Um, I don't think...

NMC: Don't think they did?

Judith: No. No. Usually I had noticed I do better in larger spaces, on larger stages, because of the lighting issue and I can sort of block out the audience. But, I know that where I'm going to be performing, the lighting isn't so great, and so I actually see all those people, a little too clearly. (VP, April 3, 2010, pp. 519-520)

Many participants felt that the reduction in the feelings of MPA in Live Performance 2 could be attributed in part to feeling more comfortable in the recital space. Due to scheduling difficulties and recital hall availability, the participants at Site B performed at a local retirement community. Lauren, one of the participants at Site B noticed reduced MPA in Live Performance 2, and mentioned that, "Um, well I think a small part of it had to do with being more familiar with the situation. So I had, this is

the second time I played at [the retirement center], so I knew it a little better" (Lauren, LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 591). But Rhonda, a participant at Site A, and a Senior who had performed frequently in the space used for the Live Performances, also commented that Live Performance 2 felt more comfortable because she felt more at home in the hall. She noted that perhaps the temporal proximity of performances in the hall made her feel more comfortable in Live Performance 2.

> **NMC**: You also mentioned in the first interview that sometimes you feel a little disoriented with your surroundings, being on stage, being at a new piano. Did you feel that in the second Live Performance?
>
> **Rhonda**: Um, no. I think, um, just playing on the piano a little while before, I mean, since the first live performance and then going into the second one, I mean, I think I had only played on the recital stage once, so far that semester, this semester. So, having that second opportunity to do it, and then going out a third time, it was more familiar. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 718)

Finally, the participants remarked that familiarity with the piano also affected the level of MPA experienced. Lauren was a little thrown by the piano and the height of the bench Live Performance 1.

> **Lauren**: Um, well, that performance was interesting because the bench was about, it felt like it was several inches higher than I usually sit. So I think that I actually tried to overcompensate, and not, I don't think my shoulders were that hunched. I think that they were tense, but since I felt

like I was reaching for the keys, then they weren't hunching up as they would.

NMC: Okay. Um, so the bench was not adjustable at this performance venue?

Lauren: No. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 582)

In the second performance at that venue, Lauren was more prepared to deal with the piano and the bench.

NMC: Okay. Great. You've now performed in two live performance situations. Compare how you felt during Live Performance 1 and how you felt during Live Performance 2. Did one performance feel better than the other?

Lauren: Um, the second performance definitely felt a lot better.

NMC: The second performance felt better. Why?

Lauren: Um, well I think a small part of it had to do with being more familiar with the situation. So I had, this is the second time I played at [the retirement center], so I knew it a little better. I knew the piano a little bit better. I knew that the, like, the bench is a little high for me, but I knew that. I was ready for that going in. (LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 591)

Lester used the absence of an audience in the Virtual Performance to his advantage by warming up on the performance instrument prior to recording. Feeling more familiar with the instrument led to feeling more comfortable in his Virtual Performance.

NMC: Okay. Um, did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety for the Virtual Performance?

Lester: I went through the piece as many times as I could to feel comfortable about it before playing.

NMC: Okay. This is when you're in here, prior to recording?

Lester: Yeah, 'cause, um, part of the Live Performance is, you know, I hadn't played that piano since the last time I performed on it, which would have been midterms.

NMC: mm-hmm.

Lester: And, that was a while ago. And this one, I got to play on this piano. And so I played through it, like, four or five times, and I felt comfortable with it. (VP, November 3, 2009, pp. 622-623)

Judith, adopting the role of teacher, proposed that exposure therapy would be more effective if performed in the venue in which important recitals would take place. She hypothesized that this would help a student become familiar with the hall and acoustics of the space.

NMC: Okay. Would you change anything in the process to make it more effective for your student? So for example, we recorded five in the course of two weeks, some of those we did back to back. We recorded in the practice room every time. Is there anything in that that you would change that you think might make, make the process more effective in preparing a student for an important performance?

Judith: If it's someone who hasn't performed very much, I think it might be helpful to actually do it in the hall where they would be performing, most ideally. Just to help gain that sense of familiarity. And also, I think

that's most beneficial then, in listening to the recordings, to figure out what to improve. Because you know exactly what instrument you're going to be using, and how the acoustics works in that space. (LP2, April 18, 2010, pp. 541-542)

Aesthetic Focus

Several participants noted that as they became more confident in their preparation and more familiar with the setting, they noticed a shift in focus from memory and technic to the aesthetic qualities of their repertoire. Put another way, in performances in which they began to focus on mood, character, and musical communication, they noticed fewer symptom of MPA. Kendra noticed this shift occurring during her Exposure Performances.

NMC: Okay. Did the mental symptoms change at all from virtual performance to virtual performance?

Kendra: I think so. I think, at first, I was more thinking of, um, making sure I got all the right notes. And then as each virtual performance went on, I could know, already be comfortable with the fact that I can play the right notes, and that there's other things that I can start thinking about as well. Um, so I think, again, it's just more, um, the mentality of it just became more musical instead of just, um, just the fact that, "Don't mess up." (chuckles)

NMC: Is a musical mindset produce less anxiety than a technical mindset?

Kendra: Yes. For me it does, anyways. (chuckles)

NMC: Why is that?

Kendra: I think it's because it's more enjoying? It's more for my own enjoyment and you're not thinking, because I know whenever I think like, "What's that note?" I will always probably mess up, because you're just psyching yourself out. So I think the more you have fun with it the more you can enjoy it. And, you're going to, I mean, if you mess up, you mess up. So just keep going. (LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 565)

Olivia and Rhonda were able to pinpoint the moment that this shift occurred in the Exposure Performances. Interestingly, both identified Exposure Performance 3 or Exposure Performance 4 as the point where they were able to focus more on musicianship and less on memory.

NMC: What was getting better with the performances?

Olivia: I was having less mistakes, and I was starting to be able to play more musically and not worry so much about making a mistake.

NMC: At what point did you feel like you were less focused on making mistakes?

Olivia: Um, it was either the recording number 3 or number 4, when I finally figured out exactly at that time, what was causing me to make the same mistake that I had made in the first two, maybe even three recording sessions. So once I fixed that, it was like, "I can do this. It's not going to be a big deal anymore." (LP2, November 14, 2009, p. 661)

Rhonda: I want to say, I think it was 3 or 4, when I finally felt that I could start being musical from the beginning of what I was doing. I was

able to focus, um, more quickly than I had in previous virtual performances and first live performance. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 719)

Albert noticed that his preoccupation with formal memory mistakes disappeared in Live Performance 2 when he began to focus on aesthetic qualities of his repertoire.

NMC: I think you also mentioned maybe, mind-wandering to formal aspects of the piece.

Albert: Yeah, that didn't happen either, today.

NMC: Okay. Why do you thing that is?

Albert: I guess the focus wasn't on the formal aspects of the performance. Because they were on the emotion, I wasn't as concerned about hitting all the right notes. I was more concerned about conveying the emotions of the piece through the notes, rather than just playing the notes. (LP2, November 14, 2009, p. 464)

In the group discussion at Site A, the participants had the opportunity to comment directly on the relationship between an aesthetic focus and lower levels of MPA.

NMC: Did you have a different focus in one performance? Live Performance 2 and Live Performance 1.

Rhonda: Mm-hmm.

NMC: How so? You're nodding your head, Winona.

Winona: I was more anxious for the first one, so I tried to concentrate more.

Olivia: I was really relaxed before the second one.

Lester: I couldn't concentrate the first time, because I was so anxious.

Albert: It was technical for the first one, and emotional for the second.

NMC: What do you mean by technical?

Albert: Uh, getting all the right notes. Accuracy. Precision.

NMC: And the second one you were more...

Albert: Focused on the piece as a whole, phrases, not just individual notes. And mood.

NMC: Why do you think you had a different focus in the second one?

Albert: Less anxiety, kind of. Able to think about multiple aspects.

NMC: Anybody have a similar experience to what Albert's described? (O and L raise hands)

NMC: Lester, how so?

Lester: Um, well the first performance I was focused on, "Can I get through the whole piece without messing up, trying to find the right notes." And through all the exposure, um, the recorded ones, um, I was able to kind of find out that I could and fix the spots where I wasn't able to. So by the second one, I was like, "I can do this completely all the way through." So I was able to focus more on the piece as a whole.

NMC: Olivia?

Olivia: First time I was having problems with my memory. Frequently, I had rehearsed the piece many times, and had many problems. So for the first one I thought I was going to do terribly. And that happened (chuckles). So the second one, I was a lot more confident, and my

memory was good, so I could focus more on actually making it sound beautiful. (Group Discussion, Site A, November 17, 2009, pp. 806-807)

Note that in each case, a shift to aesthetic focus seems to be the result of feeling more confident in memory and ability to play the piece without a major mishap. Thus, the shift to an aesthetic focus might be a signal to the performer that, indeed, their preparation of the repertoire is sufficient.

Implications

As teachers, it is important to recognize that anxiety about preparation is not necessarily indicative of insufficient preparation. Most students, at least early in their studies, might have severe symptoms of MPA simply because they are not sure if their preparation is adequate, though it might very well be. In cases where the preparation is indeed adequate, those students may need several tests of this preparation in performance situations to justify feelings of confidence. At least for several of the participants of this study, multiple performances in the virtual context, though not as stressful as live performance, were successful in engendering feelings of confidence in their preparation.

In other cases, students simply may not know that their preparation is inadequate, and the stresses of public performances may cause them to misattribute poor performances to the effects of MPA and not to weaknesses in their preparation. For these students, it is precisely the lowered stress environment of the virtual performance context that can help them identify those weaknesses. Because their symptoms of MPA are reduced in the virtual performance context, they can no longer blame a memory mistake on being in front of people. With fewer immediate

consequences of a poor performance, the pianists are able to evaluate their performances with less recrimination and more objectivity. Ideally, the weaknesses discovered in the virtual performance context are identified and targeted in subsequent practice sessions.

Additionally, it is important that student pianists become aware that acclimatization to the specific performance venue and instrument is a necessary part of their preparation. It is vital, especially for the more inexperienced student, to have access to the hall and piano prior to public performances of consequence.

Finally, applied instructors can help students recognize that a shift to aesthetic focus can be a confirmatory signal that the repertoire is adequately prepared. With continued monitoring in all formal and informal performance situations, perhaps in live and virtual contexts, the student can begin to recognize the kind of preparation necessary for successful performance.

Evaluation

The participants also identified a number of factors that ameliorated or exacerbated feelings of MPA that seem to originate from evaluations by the audience. First, they noted that the specific make-up of a live audience has a significant effect on the likelihood of experiencing debilitative MPA, being more nervous when the audience included members knowledgeable about music. Second, they noted that performances in which they were being evaluated on standards they might or might not fully understand created higher levels of MPA, mentioning that a single performance might not reflect their accomplishments of the semester. Finally, the participants seemed eager and grateful for positive and constructive feedback.

Audience

The participants generally differentiated audience members into those who had not formally studied music, and those who were either had studied music, or were in the process of studying music. By and large, the participants were more comfortable playing before a mostly uneducated audience because they believed those audience members would not be able to identify mistakes.

As might be expected, audience size was also a factor, with larger audiences generally creating more severe symptoms of MPA. But, as Olivia noted, large audiences consisting mostly of friends and family create less anxiety than large audiences of educated musicians.

> **NMC**: So is audience size a main factor?
>
> **Olivia**: Yeah. It is.
>
> **NMC**: Do you... just guessing, at about what audience size do you think your anxiety typically starts to kick in?
>
> **Olivia**: Um. Well, definitely the generals. If it's about the size of a general, or maybe a little less, that's when I start getting some more nerves. And also it depends on who I think is out there. Because in my senior recital, what made me less nervous is there were a whole bunch of people out there who had never studied music. You know, if I messed up they'd have no idea. They'd still think it was wonderful. But, with a general recital, everybody there studies music, pretty much. So they'll all know. Especially if they play piano. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 646-647)

This sentiment is echoed by Sophia.

> **NMC**: Okay. Do you remember how many people were in the audience?
>
> **Sophia**: Um, maybe 12, 15 at the most.
>
> **NMC**: Uh, does audience size affect your symptoms of anxiety?
>
> **Sophia**: Yes. The bigger the more nervous I get.
>
> **NMC**: Okay.
>
> **Sophia**: Or depending upon whose in the audience.
>
> **NMC**: Continue with that.
>
> **Sophia**: So if it was my friends and my family I wouldn't be very nervous, because then I actually want to share the music with them. But if it's higher up people who know music well, or they're people that I think highly of, then I want to perform well because I want to impress them. So. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 733)

Sophia later clarified that it is mostly her teachers that she wants to impress.

> **NMC**: Okay. Alright, let's talk a little bit more about in general, how you feel. This is not as specific again. I'd like to go back to the idea, you mentioned, um, being concerned with, not necessarily the size of the audience but the make-up of the audience.
>
> **Sophia**: Mm-hmm.
>
> **NMC**: Could you talk a little bit more about that?

Sophia: Um, I get more nervous when there's people in the audience whose opinion I care about the most. So, obviously if my teachers are in the audience, I want to do well. So, then I would get more nervous.

NMC: Are those the people that, whose opinion you highly esteem? Is that?

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: Are there other kinds of people like that, besides your teachers?

Sophia: Um, well I think the teachers are the ones I think of the most, but. Um, I can't think of any right now.

NMC: And what is it about your teachers, that if a teacher is in the audience it makes you more nervous than if they are not?

Sophia: Um, because they're good musicians, and they could be able to tell if I made a mistake. This is if you don't have a musical background, you might be able to cover up a quick mistake, they would probably be able to notice. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 738)

The members of the group discussion at Site A also recognized specific members of the audience at Live Performance 2 as musically knowledgeable.

NMC: What about the audience? Was the audience similar in both performances.

(General "no")

NMC: No, why not?

Rhonda: Winona's parents were there at the second one, and I knew they would know if I screwed up.

Winona: Yeah.

(Laughter)

Graham: Well, I didn't know your parents...

Winona: Right, not everyone knew who my parents were.

Rhonda: I'm saying that that was more stressful.

NMC: So it was different for you because you knew someone in the audience.

Rhonda: I knew people in the audience, but I knew it was somebody who would know if I messed up. Other people in the audience may not have known. (Group Discussion, Site A, November 17, 2009, pp. 805-806)

And, as Olivia commented, there might be some 'other' reasons to want to impress!

NMC: You mentioned in the first interview that sometimes your mind wanders, sometimes to musical things and sometimes to things that are not in the music. Did that happen in the second live performance?

Olivia: Yeah, because there was someone in the audience who I knew and I wanted to play really well. So I kept thinking about that as I was playing.

NMC: And this was in the second performance?

Olivia: Mm-hmm. It happened in the first one, too, but this person, I wanted to play even more, as well as I could.

NMC: Okay. Why did you feel like you wanted to play better for this person.

Olivia: Um, (chuckles) because I didn't particularly like them. (both laugh) Being honest!

NMC: So it was a "Show you!"

Olivia: So it was more like I, yeah.

NMC: Okay. Fantastic.

Olivia: (laughs) (LP2, November 14, 2009, pp. 656-657)

Perhaps recognizing that other music students may have developed strong likes and dislikes without having developed the discernment necessary to identify specifics, Winona indicated that she gets most nervous when playing for her peers. She feels her peers may listen more competitively than constructively.

Winona: …But I get more nervous playing for peers than I do for teachers or judges.

NMC: Who do you consider peers?

Winona: Um, other music majors my age.

NMC: Why is that?

Winona: Because they're more judgmental, I feel. They don't, they judge without wanting to help me get better. As opposed to a teacher or a competition judge who will make comments to help you improve, not just tell you, "You suck." Or whatever. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 768)

Lauren commented that her peers are more likely to listen with a critical ear, whether or not they are listening competitively or constructively. Lauren noticed that, knowing how she listens to her peers, she projects the same attitude on those listening to her.

NMC: …Was there anything about the venue that was different for you?

Lauren: Um, well it's a different dynamic. You know there's the few pianists in the audience, and then the rest of the people were um. The different dynamic that I tend to worry about the pianists in the audience more than the residents at [the retirement community.]

NMC: And why do you worry more about the pianists?

Lauren: Because they are pianists. They know, from their, they know… They might know the piece I'm playing, but they also know, you know, we listen to each other's technic. We listen to piano more often.

NMC: Okay. Um, if the other pianists weren't there, how would that venue feel for you?

Lauren: It would have been more relaxed.

NMC: Okay, and what is it about the make-up of the audience that would have been more relaxing without the pianists?

Lauren: Um, the fact that I don't know them. That is more relaxing. The fact, um, older people tend, well, to some degree are more forgiving of faults. At least's that's the feeling that I have. And because in general, I know that they are happy that I'm there.

NMC: Okay. Not to project, but do you feel like pianists are not as forgiving of faults?

Lauren: I don't know that we're not as forgiving, but, we definitely notice them more. So I might, you know, I know that if I listen to another pianist, I may understand the faults that they have, but I notice it.

I mean, I still notice what happens. And so the same thing applies to others, you know, I project it on other pianists. Um, but yeah, too, depending on the person, they could be less forgiving. I don't know.

NMC: What about "happy to be there." Do you think pianists are happy to be in the audience?

Lauren: It depends on why they are in the audience. Um, if they, yeah it depends on them. (VP, April 5, 2010, pp. 582-583)

Consequences

Many of the pianists involved in this study noticed that their symptoms of MPA were particularly acute in performances in which they perceived some form of consequence. Mostly, the consequences mentioned by the participants involved receiving a grade based on a performance, or passing a qualifying recital. The pianists mentioned what they perceived as a "one-shot" nature of juries and recitals.

NMC: Um, did you have any specific emotions tied to the performance?

Olivia: Um, well. While I did experience performance anxiety, it wasn't that. I actually felt pretty, uh, carefree about the performance because I was just like, "Well, I'm not getting graded for this." (laughs) "It's just a performance. There's like seven people out there." You know, they're the only people who are going to know how bad I mess up if I do. So I did feel, I didn't feel quite as scared as if it were a jury or something. Or. so.

NMC: What it is about a jury that is more anxiety provoking than this performance?

Olivia: I just get one chance to get an 'A'. (laughs) And so, like, it doesn't matter how well. Maybe he takes into account all my lessons. I don't know. But, it's possible that if he doesn't, and if you guys just go off of the performance, then you know, this could be my grade. Right here. Even though like, I may have sounded wonderful in the practice room five minutes ago, like if I mess this up, there could be consequences in my GPA. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 646)

Sophia also mentioned the 'one-shot' nature of juries.

NMC: …A lot of people mentioned grading as a source of anxiety in their performances. Do you agree with that?

Sophia: Yes. Are we talking about juries? Yes. That would make me nervous, or it does make me nervous. That my one performance is being graded, and if I have one, you know, bad performance, then that's the grade I get. Regardless of how well I could play the piece. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 750)

Part of the anxiety of juries could be that the participants are not sure of the process of assigning a semester grade. Olivia later clarified that she assumes that part of her grade is her history of progress in weekly lessons, but was not entirely sure.

NMC: Several people have mentioned grades as a source of performance anxiety. Um, is there anything you would change about the way grades are awarded in piano study at the university level that would change how you approach performances in general?

Olivia: Um, I think if I, I'm not sure how the process works exactly, right now. But I think if, if they were, if the teachers were able to take into account not just this one performance that I'm gonna do for them now, but also just, how I've been doing in my lessons, and in my midterm, and kind of take that all into account without making a judgment on one single event. Because sometimes you just have a bad day, and you do really poorly, and the day before, even a few hours before, you did it just fine in front of a few of your friends.

NMC: So you would just want them to take into account your entire history of the semester?

Olivia: Yeah. mm-hmm.

NMC: Is there any kind of feedback strategy that could make you feel that was happening?

Olivia: I guess I assume it's already happening, for the most part. I don't know exactly how it all works. I just go in to my juries thinking, "Well, I can do my best. And Dr. X knows how I play. He knows what my last few lessons have been like." You know, I just, I guess I've just assumed that must be how they do it. So. (LP2, November 14, 2009, p. 663)

For Judith, the consequences of a degree-qualifying recital loomed large in all her performances. She constantly evaluates her performance has "being good enough to pass."

Judith: Um, um, I guess, it's just, this constant thing of having this check list of things you ought to be doing, and whether or not you're

actually doing it or not. It's still that, whether or not it's good enough to pass, whether or not you have that approval. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 505)

In response to difficulty with memory in Live Performance 1, she projected the most catastrophic of outcomes.

NMC: Does the anxiety affect your memory?

Judith: Yeah, definitely. Um, and, I went and, I didn't, I felt like, "I'm not going to try to jump somewhere. This is not going to work. My brain is not functioning that way." And so, I started it again, and I'm thinking, "Well, I would probably fail my recital. If I had done this in my recital, I would probably fail my recital, blah blah blah." So, I don't know. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 520)

Part of Judith's anxiety about being evaluated is that she feels torn between performing to fulfill specific expectations, and performing in a way that is most satisfying for her. This friction, between how she thinks she needs to perform to satisfy her professor and how she feels most comfortable in interpreting her music, adds to her feelings of MPA.

NMC: Uh, a couple more questions, and I'm going to introduce some ideas that kind of came up when I ran this at the other school also. The idea of being evaluated on a performance comes up frequently as being a cause for performance anxiety. Do you agree with that?

Judith: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Um, what kind of evaluation causes that?

Judith: I have another one that also comes in, that is sort of related. Um, in playing a piece and preparing to play a piece, if I'm in a situation in which I feel expected to play a something in a certain way, that causes more anxiety than being able to play how I most feel it, how I best perceive the music. So that also creates, and that get intermixed with being judged, too. Because then it's, yeah, then I sort of feel like I'm being scrunched in a box, or your sort of a shape that doesn't fit into the right hole, you know.

NMC: So you feel sometimes you have to adjust your playing to the demands of the evaluaters rather than...

Judith: Mm-hmm (affirmative), and that is not an anxiety reducer.

(Group Discussion, Site B, April 18, 2010, p. 838)

Feedback

The participants exhibited both an eagerness for, and a willingness to apply constructive, specific, and encouraging feedback. One internet audience member provided extraordinarily detailed and specific feedback on the first virtual performance. An example of the comments made are presented in Appendix O. This audience member sent her feedback to the researcher, who printed and distributed the feedback to the participant during exposure therapy. All who received feedback mentioned the specificity and encouraging nature of the comments. In the group discussion at Site A, the participants were enthusiastic about receiving feedback that was positive, constructive, specific, and worded in such a way that made the participants feel they had options from which to make their own personal choice.

NMC: …Did you all have an experience with feedback in your performances? Could you talk a little bit about what the feedback did to you or for you?

Lester: It built my confidence.

Sophia: Yeah, I agree.

Winona: Yeah.

Lester: Because it was positive feedback.

Phoebe: Mm-hmm.

Winona: And it was constructive, so I was able to change things to make them better.

NMC: Can you tell me what you mean by positive feedback?

Lester: I was complimented on my articulation, and my dynamics. I didn't actually have any constructive feedback, it was all just, "good!"

Sophia: I got feedback too, and it helped.

NMC: But constructive feedback, what is, what do you mean by constructive feedback?

Winona: Um, basically the person said, "This sounded nice, but for my taste, I would have done it this way. So here's another option that you can maybe try."

Olivia: I had something similar to that. It made me feel affirmed. I'm glad they cared enough to, like, share that with me. It was kind of nice.

Graham: I had a technical suggestion that was made for me, but I think I could have figured that out for myself if I had just listened to a recording of myself.

Olivia: Yeah. (Group Discussion, Site A, November 17, 2009, pp. 808-809)

For many, complimentary feedback led to feelings of confidence in their ability to perform.

NMC: Okay. Um, you also received feedback. Did receiving feedback change your approach to the performances?

Sophia: Actually it did. It made me feel more confident, like, "Oh, you know, I am getting these passages." Um, so the positive feedback was very helpful, it made me boost my, boost my self-esteem just a little bit. (LP2, November 15, 2009, pp. 749-750)

Lester, who entered Live Performance 1 with doubts about his ability to play in the Baroque style, received positive feedback specifically on stylistic issues. The feedback helped him feel more confident in his stylistic understanding of his repertoire.

NMC: Okay. You received feedback from internet audience, or did that change how you approached the recording sessions?

Lester: Uh, yeah. I only got feedback from one person, and she was a professor at a university. And it was a complement on how I played the piece, and so that boosted my confidence, and it made me, "Oh, okay. So I can do this." So, um, and it was basically, she was complementing how, I think it was my articulation and how I played the piece, which is

always one of the things that I'm more worried about, because, you know, I don't want to make a Baroque piece sound Romantic, you know. It's not supposed to, so. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 632)

The participants also seemed willing to implement suggested changes, and believed that those changes made subsequent performances better.

NMC: You did receive feedback on one of your performances.

Winona: Umm-hmm.

NMC: How did that affect your, uh, your subsequent virtual performance recordings?

Winona: Well, it was positive feedback, so um, I was able to take it and apply it to the music. And, I think it improved it, so I was, I think, it helped me prepare for the next, um, recordings. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 782)

Lauren appreciated getting different opinions from musicians other than her applied professor.

NMC: Okay. You received feedback from the internet audience. How did that affect you?

Lauren: It was nice. It was good to get some feedback from someone other than my professor. It was also interesting, because some of them were a little bit contradictory of each other, just a little bit, so that was interesting to me. But I think, you know, I thought about it when I was practicing, I thought about it when I was playing.

NMC: Okay. Did getting the feedback change the way you approached subsequent performances?

Lauren: Yeah, a little bit.

NMC: Did it change the way you approached the virtual performance recording, recordings?

Lauren: Yes. A little bit the way I played, or the way I was thinking about how...

NMC: How so?

Lauren: Well, I read what they said, and took a couple of things in to mind. And, uh, so I thought, you know, for example, one said, the left hand is really just accompaniment, so you could think about making the left hand less, and so I thought about that. So for some parts, I tried to work that in. (LP2, April 16, 2010, pp. 596-597)

Judith found encouraging feedback from a technological source. Examining the graphic wave forms generated by Audacity made her reconsider her initial evaluation of the dynamic contrast in her Virtual Performance.

NMC: Okay. Um, can you think of a specific instance in which anxiety may have affected your performance, your recorded performance?

Judith: Um, there were a couple of small memory things. One thing, I do not think that I had a great as contrast, with, well dynamics and also some characters. I sort of thought I lost the characters a little bit. But then when I was looking up there, I saw lots of big lines and little lines, so. So maybe it was better than I.... But as I say, I tend to not notice so

much what's actually happening. Although, I'm getting better at that. A lot better at that. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 524)

Rhonda noticed that the feedback changed her mental symptoms of anxiety in later Exposure Performances. Initially, the feedback made the virtual performance context seem more real, that there actually was an internet audience listening to her recorded performances.

NMC: How did your mental symptoms of anxiety change?

Rhonda: Um, change between the virtual? Okay. Um, I think having the first virtual performance and then getting the real feedback from a real person that I knew was listening, kind of changed the way that I was going into the second virtual performance. And so I was, I think, for my second or third, I had kind of this, really big, you know, "Somebody's listening to me out there," and that was a little bit more, um, nerve-wracking than the others. And then, like I said before, going into the fourth, third and a half, four and five, I was able to, um, realize that there were people listening to me, but also, um, ignore that aspect when I was playing. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 719)

Several performers commented that receiving feedback was an important part of the effectiveness of the exposure therapy. Rhonda stated that feedback instigated a sense of reality to the virtual performance context and provided the impetus to produce high quality recordings.

NMC: Okay. Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Rhonda: Yeah. I think I would. Again, if I were to do it, it would be with maybe an audience and say, you know, give me feedback sometime, or when you would like to. Or, um, every other time that I post something, just so that I know that I have an audience critiquing what I'm doing to make my, push myself to do a better virtual performance, than just, I'm gonna slap a lot of these performances online. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 720)

When asked whether she would implement exposure therapy in a virtual context, Winona responded that she might if the technology were readily available and that feedback was a possibility.

NMC: Okay. Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Winona: Which approach? The virtual recording?

NMC: The recording.

Winona: Um. Well, that depends upon how available the equipment was. If it's not, if I have to go through, jump through a lot of hoops to get the equipment set up, I wouldn't bother with it. But, I think if I could record and get feedback before a Live Performance, then yeah, I would. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 782)

Kendra concurred, specifically mentioning the need to feel that an internet audience was actually listening, and provided feedback on her performance.

NMC: Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Kendra: I think so. Yeah.

NMC: Why?

Kendra: It helps. It helps you to sit down and run through a piece and know that people will be listening to it. That you can get feedback back from it. (LP2, April 16, 2010, p. 568)

Implications

Though certainly not a ground-breaking suggestion, teachers should realize that fostering an atmosphere of clear, honest communication can help attenuate the influence of these contributory factors to MPA. First, while developing the ability to present strong performances in a public or semi-public setting is clearly one of the main objectives of musical training at the university level, teachers should make clear the process by which semester grades are awarded, perhaps de-emphasizing the role of the end of term jury. Second, providing specific and positive feedback, perhaps including more than one artistic option, is necessary for the student to adequately assess their own performance and identify new concepts to incorporate into their repertoire. Third, though teachers cannot filter all feedback a student receives, especially from the student's peers, they can help develop the appropriate critical, yet empathetic attitude in listening to other student performances.

Clearly, grading criteria are usually explicitly stated in the syllabus or studio policy distributed at the outset of the semester, but some students may forget that weekly progress is often one of the primary components of assessment. Several of the participants of this study commented that they felt like their entire semester grade

depended on a single performance, and that having one bad day might have serious consequences on their GPA.

While the ability to perform in public is a certainly primary objective, especially for students seeking a degree in performance, it is important that students, especially younger students, realize that this is a learned skill. In light of the findings of the previous section, that students must learn what adequate preparation is, combined with the reasonable assumption that knowledge gained from academic coursework complements the efforts of the practice room, perhaps it is not unreasonable to expect some difficulty in the early stages in jury performances. Rather, the ability to perform well in stressful situations is a gradual adaptation, just as weekly progress in technic and stylistic awareness is a gradual, accumulative process. Certainly it is not helpful for students to develop a phobia of evaluative performance situations.

Second, the participants of this study demonstrated an eagerness for and a willingness to apply positive, constructive criticism. It also seems that getting this feedback from a source other than the applied professor made a meaningful impact. A collegial effort in sharing meaningful commentary on performances, especially from faculty other than the applied instructor, might help the student become less fearful of an audience contingent possessing sophisticated musical backgrounds. And here, the responses of the participants echo the findings of Picard (1999).

Picard concluded that students who developed beliefs about their abilities, and had those beliefs corroborated by significant others, tended to view jury performances as opportunities to share music with knowledgeable others who have the best interest of the student in mind. Rather than viewing music faculty as robotic scoreboards that

tallied mistakes, they came to view their jurists as concerned educators whose main goal is the healthy development of student musicians. The participants of this study indicated that the meaningful feedback they received from the internet audience helped them feel more confident in their abilities to perform while negating apprehension of an internet audience consisting to knowledgeable music sophisticates.

Finally, teachers will not be able to shield their students from feedback from student peers that is perhaps more competitively based. Many of the participants mentioned that performing for their peers was more anxiety provoking because they projected a judgmental attitude onto their cohorts.

Lauren was quite perspicacious in noting that she finds herself noticing the flaws in her peers' musical performances, but is careful to color her criticism with an empathetic attitude. She imagines the same listening stance from her peers, but conceded that some of her peers might not be as forgiving. Other participants projected far more negative and judgmental attitudes in their peers, frequently labeling their criticism as judgmental, or imagining feedback along the lines of, "You Suck!"

Perhaps, just perhaps, their projection is a reflection of their own critical stance. Understandably, students will develop strong musical preferences long before they are able to identify the specific components of a performance that create such visceral reactions. Also, given the ubiquity of commercially produced recordings, these students might be forming unrealistic expectations. Though a listening regimen is instrumental in developing an appropriate sense of style, the specific elements of style may not be overtly identified. Some students might need guidance on how to listen critically, yet

constructively, keeping in mind the difficulties inherent in mastering an instrument, repertoire, and the concert stage.

Studio classes or seminars could be an appropriate vehicle for providing such guidance to young musicians. Studio mates could be encouraged to provide written feedback for studio performances by the peers, and those comments could be screened by the applied instructor, providing both feedback to the performing student as well as feedback on the written comments supplied by the listeners. At Site A, the group discussion revealed that feedback from peers was not common in seminar performances, and that such feedback might be beneficial (Group Discussion, Site A, November 17, 2009, p. 811).

Finally, a similar feedback process could be facilitated online. A couple of the participants noted that they would utilize a process similar to the exposure therapy implemented in this study, provided the technology was readily available and that feedback was a possibility (Judith, LP2, April 18, 2010, p. 541; Winona, LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 782). The applied teacher could provide the technological infrastructure for students to post virtual performances. With a ready-made audience consisting of the studio and friends and family of the studio, comments could be directed to the applied instructor, who could forward appropriate feedback and continue guidance on critical listening skills for students. Such a practice would also provide a lowered stress environment, perhaps bridging the gap between lesson performances and studio performances.

Curricular Concerns

As was mentioned in Chapter IV, the interview that occurred after the Virtual Performance was a significant event that sensitized the participants to the individual components of MPA. Over the course of the subsequent interviews and group discussions, several participants mentioned that it was this awareness that demystified the phenomena of MPA and resulted in a pragmatic view of performing. Rather than feeling helpless in dealing with an undefined, disruptive experience, the performers identified specific elements that could be voluntarily controlled.

The researcher suggests that as a first step, perhaps even a pre-emptive step in promoting healthy attitudes toward performance, applied teachers implement a curriculum designed to educate their students on the problem of MPA. Such a curriculum should include the discussion of commonly occurring specific symptoms of MPA, leading the students to recognize the symptoms they encounter in performance.

In reading the interviews from Sophia and Judith, the two participants that were categorized as prone to experiencing high levels of debilitative MPA, one begins to get the sense that they tend to avoid thinking about the specific symptoms of MPA, and have developed a habit of speaking in generally pejorative, high-inference terminology about their experiences. Sophia expressed some difficulty in identifying specific mental symptoms of MPA, and Judith tended to ignore symptoms until a moment of crisis was reached. Additionally, both used negatively charged words in describing their experience of MPA.

On several occasions, Sophia expressed confusion about the difference between mental and physiological symptoms, and on occasion, directed the course of the

interview away from discussing mental symptoms. When first discussing mental symptoms of anxiety that occur in her daily life, Sophia mentions physical symptoms.

> **NMC**: Okay. So, what does that feel like, teaching? Um, what are the mental symptoms of anxiety that you feel?
>
> **Sophia**: Mental symptoms... Sometimes, I get the butterflies in my stomach, or I just get very, um, I get very anxious. Just fidgety. I get very fidgety. That's probably what it is. I pace a lot.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. So those are kind of physical symptoms.
>
> **Sophia**: Yeah. I can think of mental symptoms.
>
> **NMC**: Well, let's stick with physical for a little bit.
>
> **Sophia**: Okay. (VP, November 2, 2009, pp. 724-725)

Later, when discussing mental symptoms that typically occur in live performances, Sophia directed the conversation away from describing her mental state.

> **NMC**: So let's move now into performance. So these questions are how you generally feel in a solo performance situation. Um, so, mental symptoms of anxiety, generally in a solo performance situation?
>
> **Sophia**: Mmm. Going back to the overwhelming and panicky feeling?
>
> **NMC**: Mm-hmm (affirmative)
>
> **Sophia**: Well, I think my main issue is forgetting the music. Even though I know I have it memorized well, I'll get panicky about remembering the music. So, then I'll try to play the piece in my head, and then I'll most likely get to a point where I can't remember where I

am, and then that's when I start to panic and my mind starts to go on... it just starts winding, trying to think of where I am.

NMC: Can you describe that winding?

Sophia: Um... You're just trying to play the piece through in your head and figure out how it goes. So...I can't explain it very well. Let's go on, maybe I'll think of something. (VP, November 2, 2009, pp. 726-727)

When the course of the interview returned to physical symptoms, Sophia was relieved, appearing more confident in her ability to recognize physical symptoms.

NMC: Okay. Uh, let's talk now about physical symptoms of anxiety. Again, this is in general, performing in a solo performance.

Sophia: Okay. I can do these. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 729)

When prompted to compare the mental symptoms of anxiety of the Rehearsal Performance and a typical performance, Sophia again described physical symptoms.

NMC: Compare your mental symptoms in the Rehearsal Performance, or lack of them, with the mental symptoms you typically feel.

Sophia: Um, mental symptoms in...?

NMC: In performance.

Sophia: In performance? Oh. Phhhh! Night and day. I was not nervous. No hands sweaty, no stomach, you know, churning. Just, I was enjoying my playing. But then when I have to perform it, I don't enjoy it, because I go through all those anxious feelings. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 731)

Later in the interview, Sophia again seemed unsettled and confused about her mental symptoms of MPA.

> **NMC**: Did you feel any mental symptoms of performance anxiety?
>
> **Sophia**: Um, yes. Probably. Yeah.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. What kind of things did you experience?
>
> **Sophia**: Okay. Name some of the mental ones again that we talked about.
>
> **NMC**: Um, internal dialog, emotions, dissociation, focus, concentration, I guess memory could be a part of that, too.
>
> **Sophia**: Memory, memory was a part of it.
>
> **NMC**: And could you explain, specifically how that...
>
> **Sophia**: Um, well I got. I couldn't get one chord, and then that kind of set up for the rest of the piece, so then that threw me off with continuing on with the piece. But that's not really what we're talking about right now. The mental ones are confusing me. I can nail the physical ones. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 732)

At the end of the interview, when adopting the perspective of teacher, Sophia uses generic words of a very negative nature. She offered descriptions of mental symptoms when prompted to supply words that would help describe physical symptoms.

> **Sophia**: Um. Descriptive words. Okay. So I could use *dread*. I could use *panicked*. Uh, *terrified* [emphasis added]. Let's see, I'm trying to think of other ones. Well nervous, anxious. Um, all the easy ones. Are those the things you're looking for?

NMC: Yes exactly.

Sophia: Um, let's see. I, I can probably think of easier ones after we're done with this. I think those would hit it.

NMC: Okay. What if you were asking them to describe their physical sensations? What kind of words would you need to hear?

Sophia: Um, jittery. *Unfocused. Mind... Mindless. Can't concentrate* [emphasis added]. Um, let's see. Stomach churning. Stomach in knots. Um, sweaty. Clammy. Um, some people lose the feeling in their hands. Those types of things? (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 741)

Finally, in the second interview, Sophia's confusion about or avoidance of mental symptoms continued.

NMC: Uh, can you compare maybe, your mental symptoms of anxiety between your first virtual performance and your last one?

Sophia: And the last one? Um, let's see. You said mental, mental ones?

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Sophia: I'd say, I don't know if I can.

NMC: Were they almost exactly the same, or you can't remember the mental symptoms?

Sophia: Name some mental symptoms for me. (LP2, November 15, 2009, p. 747)

In Judith's interviews, she related that she has a tendency to ignore symptoms of stress until they to build to a significant trauma. She mentioned that, in her past, she

was unaware of her symptoms, and that in the last year, in response to a specific dental trauma, she has started trying to become more self-aware.

> **Judith**: Um, well, um, I guess I'm becoming more aware of this stuff. I mean it's not just my doctoral work, it's stuff in general. Um, when I was little, I just had different stress. Everyone has stress, I guess. I used to grind my teeth a lot. And this last year, a year ago, April, May, I began to notice that I was grinding my teeth. Like, I became aware of it again, and I didn't know how long I was doing that before then. Um, and uh, in August, I was, yeah, uptight about different things, and blah blah blah, and um, I didn't realize, but I must have had a lot of extra tension in my face and jaw, because I ended up breaking my tooth. Um, but I didn't realize it until afterwards. And then, it broke again in November. So like, since then I've become more aware of not grinding my teeth and releasing tension, for example, from my face and my jaw. Um, but most of it, I haven't been aware of, so it's a new awareness that I've started to acquire in the past year. Um, uh, also, just everywhere, physically, neck shoulders, back, I'm not sure how to release tension in my back, but I have, I'm aware that it's there, which, I guess is a step forward. But I'm not sure what to do, how to make it go away.
>
> **NMC**: Now the teeth grinding, is that a nocturnal teeth grinding during your sleep, or is that just during the day?

Judith: Mostly, um, it's during my sleep, I think. Like I would, in the last year, I would remember waking up. I was like, aware, I was grinding my teeth.

NMC: I do the same thing.

Judith: Um, but um, I have also noticed that um, like since then, like last fall, I did notice it a bit also during the day. Not so much last fall, end of last fall semester, December, and um, start of this semester, January. Getting anxious about upcoming things more so. I um, yeah. I had a lot of tension. There was one point where it really just hit me. So I've been trying to become more aware of those things. (VP, April 3, 2010, pp. 501-502)

Judith also claimed that she ignores mental signs of stress, developing "this ability to block off feelings and emotions in order to work through stuff" (VP, April 3, p. 502).

Judith described a similar scenario when the conversation turned to discussing how she deals with preparing for public performance. She ignores emotional signs of stress until they culminate into crisis.

NMC: Let's start with preparing before it, what sort of symptoms do you feel?

Judith: Well, I try to be pretty calm, and not get to worked up about the upcoming date and that sort of thing. Um, I guess sometime I feel my brain just turns to mush. Like it all breaks up to little pieces, and it can't function. It can't think and do what it's supposed to do.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any emotions that you associate with preparing to perform?

Judith: Um, I guess anxiety. I don't know if that's an emotion. Lot's of anxiety. Um, yeah, just, I said that everything just sort of goes until it explodes. So, sometime nausea comes with that. But, usually it ends up resolving in some sort of emotional falling to pieces. (chuckles)

NMC: Falling to pieces. Can you...?

Judith: Uh, I think, I just let out, I guess, after everything gets so tense. Yeah. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 504)

Like Sophia, Judith used words that are charged with significant negative emotion when talking about symptoms of MPA. For example, Judith clarified her use of the word "nervous" in an exchange exploring the possibility of facilitative effects of MPA.

NMC: Do you ever feel sometimes that the anxiety can help you, can give you any additional focus or better concentration, or edge or vitality to your performance?

Judith: Um, I've heard that it can. In general, no, I don't think so. I think it's too severe to give me any sort of extra edge. Um, I, I find nervousness to be a very negative, bad, bad thing. Um, being excited, or having an adrenaline rush is something different. And I don't use nervousness, I don't use the term 'nervous' in those situations. They, I have two very distinct, different meanings.

NMC: Okay. What are the differences to you? Between being excited and being nervous.

Judith: Um, excited, um. Excited is, uh, is like moving forward. There's like more potential of success. It's like meeting a challenge, I guess? Um, nervousness is like doomed to failure. It's like somehow there is some inadequacy. (VP, April 3, 2010, pp. 520-521)

When asked to adopt the role of teacher, Judith continued to use negatively charged words when questioning a hypothetical student about symptoms of MPA. However, her response at the end of the exchange belies a recognition of the need to create positive expectations through the use of specific 'word options,' but was unable to provide examples.

NMC: …But what sort of specific words would cue you in to what they're feeling. What kind of words do you think would resonate with you, hearing them from your students?

Judith: Um, panicky. Um, trembling. Um, I guess those are big ones. Um, the sensation of, uh, frustration, of feeling that they are not able to express what they know they can, or what is internalized, for some reason, is not coming out.

NMC: Okay. What kind of questions would you ask the student to help them articulate their mental symptoms and feelings?

Judith: Um, what type of questions? I haven't actually done this, this way with a student before. Um, I guess, um, I don't know. "How do you

feel?" "How did you feel?" Um, I think also, having some word options helps, um with certain students, it can help.

NMC: Okay. So what sort of word options would you give them?

Judith: Um, I've also been working on some more positive thinking, but that's an aside. (chuckles) Um, I don't know. (VP, April 3, 2010, p. 525)

Judith was among the many participants who noted that their feelings of apprehension were curtailed after they identified the individual symptoms of MPA. In the second interview, Judith spoke about the effect of analyzing her specific symptoms of MPA.

Judith: I know, also another thing that happened, I forget what had took place. We had that interview. Was that in-between the three?

NMC: It was in between. We did...

Judith: That helped. I think that it was more helped...

NMC: We did the Virtual Performance, the interview, and then two other recordings.

Judith: Yes, the interview between helped.

NMC: How did, what did the interview do for you?

Judith: I guess, just being able to acknowledge the anxiety more. And so that reduced it.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: I think that it was, yeah. Rather than feeling all the stuff trapped in, so much.

NMC: Okay. So, you kind of confronted the things that actually happened to you?

Judith: Yeah, yeah. And then after that, I was feeling more calm. Mm-hmm. Yeah, I remember that now.

NMC: In going through the interviews and filling out the paperwork, did that change the way you felt about the symptoms when they were occurring in the exposure performances?

Judith: Um, yeah, I think so. And also in the subsequent ones after, um, that we did the following week or so. Um, I think it just made it more, I was able to look at it more objectively, rather than seeing it more as a, I don't know. I want to say personal issue, but you know, not like a personal defect or something. But, you know, this is just, rather, yeah. Do you know what I'm saying?

NMC: There's a term called low-inference descriptors that's used sometimes in, I think it's rational emotive therapy, in which the therapist instead of saying to somebody who comes into the room, "Wow, you look angry," they will say instead, "Oh my goodness. Your face is red, you're speaking with a very elevated tone of voice, you're shaking a little bit in your arms, and uh, you're moving about in kind of a jagged manner. Are you angry?" So, instead of projecting a negative connotation by naming a certain symptom with a very high inference word, “angry,” you break it down into the low-inference words, and you identify each individual point that makes up the constellation that we

typically call angry. And you say, "Huh. You're speaking a little bit louder, and you're face is red. You're trembling a little bit, and you're moving around quite a bit. Are you agitated? Are you angry?" Is that sort of what you're talking about?

Judith: I think so. Yeah. Yeah, I think so. And then I was able to do that more so with myself.

NMC: Okay, so did you use the performances, kind of as a way to watch what was happening while it was happening?

Judith: Yeah, more so after that point. Because prior to that, and also with, um, the first practice performance, what was it called?

NMC: We did a Virtual Performance, then a recording of the exposure performances...

Judith: The first Virtual Performance, I don't know, I just fell into this panic. Like, "What's going on?" and duh duh duh duh. And um, and, I think there were also other issues that, I just sort of got bombarded with a whole number of things that weekend. And I was just very overwhelmed, and, yeah. So, that, yeah, I was able to, uh, make more of a separation between what was happening, uh, physiologically and mentally, and everything, as opposed to what I can actually do as a person. (LP2, April 18, 2010, pp. 535-536)

In the group discussion at Site B, the participants agreed that by breaking down MPA into specific, individual components, they were able to two things. First, they noticed the symptoms that were under their voluntary control, and addressed those

symptoms as they noticed them. Second, they accepted that while other symptoms might not be controllable voluntarily, they at least knew what to expect. The abstraction "MPA" was truly more than the sum of the individual parts. In realizing this, MPA, the monster in the closet, was in some sense de-fanged.

NMC: Um, great. I want to think out loud a couple of times, and get your reactions to it. Part of what I was reluctant to say as I was questioned at the Live Performance, about what would I hope to do differently, what do I hope to achieve in doing this study is this. Um, a lot of people have said that recording was helpful, but what was even more helpful was the interview and filling out the forms. Do you think that is, does that apply to you? Could you speak about that a little bit?

Kendra: Um, recording it is helpful, because it gets you to run-through it and everything, but I think the interviews and the questions really helped, for me it really helped me do a reflection on how I approach, um, recordings and live performances.

NMC: Okay. And what in that reflection was beneficial to you?

Kendra: Um, it helped me realize, like where the anxiety, exactly where, like were the shoulders tense, the shaking, so I can now like focus on how to control those. So, yeah, just focus more on exactly what is going on with my personal anxiety.

NMC: Okay. Anybody else?

Lauren: I think that what you don't know scares you a little bit more. So, the fact that I, um, know how I respond to the performance, that I've

really thought about it. Especially right after a performance, because a couple days later, I might not remember everything. But knowing how I am in performance makes it maybe slightly less scary, because, "Okay, this is how I respond. Alright. Deal with it." So.

Judith: And one thing I thought about with, um, that how beneficial the interview was, that even though most of the things were things that I was kind of aware of, um, the fact of verbalizing it just helps put it more concrete rather than this nebulous "performance anxiety." Not quite sure about where it comes from, where it goes and what it does, but it made it more concrete, so you know exactly what you're dealing with, and how to deal with that, and where those boundaries are. (Group Discussion, Site B, April 18, 2010, p. 843)

The participants at Site A provided similar assessments in their group discussion. There was some disagreement that mere knowledge of the individual symptoms reduced them, as a few participants (Olivia and Lester) commented that the self-awareness made them more sensitive. But in Olivia's disagreement, she continues to identify with an over-arching and negatively charged term "nervous," and it is her reaction to being "nervous" that escalates her MPA.

NMC: Through the interview process, in identifying your own personal symptoms of anxiety, some people say, "My hand shakes," some people say, "I get this thing in my throat," some people say, "My shoulders get up here." By identifying them, you have more control of the situation because you know what to look for.

Winona: I agree.

Sophia: So, you know what your symptoms are going to be, so you can control them.

Olivia: I actually disagree, because then I'm looking for the symptoms, and then when I see them I start saying, "Oh, I'm nervous," and that just makes me more nervous. And that's kind of a cycle.

Lester: Yeah, when I identified the symptoms, they actually got worse. It's like, "Oh my stomach. AY!"

Albert: I agree, because I was able to know what the symptoms were going to be, and I was able to lessen them because I figured out how to.

Sophia: I agree with Albert.

Winona: I agree with Albert as well.

Rhonda: I think there's some things, that when I'm aware of them, I can change. Like the fact that when I start playing, I don't breathe. Or like, I don't breathe as well. Once I'm aware of that, that's something I can change very easily. And if I'm aware that my foot is shaking and I can't pedal, then I can stabilize my foot. Those kinds of things I think you can voluntarily change.

Olivia: It depends, I think. Like for me, my shoulder tightness, I can change that. However, I can't stop my hands shaking, that's something that I've never been able to control.

Winona: But in general, I can control...

> **Lester**: For me, like it was when I was becoming aware right before I went on stage, like, "Oh, my hands are shaking," that's when it got worse. But when I knew like everyone, I was able to identify that, and I was able to prepare for it the next time. (Group Discussion, Site A, November 17, 2009, pp. 821-822)

Implications

The researcher suggests that a comprehensive curriculum can help develop a healthy cognitive framework for success in public performance by de-emphasizing broad, generic terminology, substituting specific descriptions about individual symptoms. Such a curriculum should include both an exposition of what to expect in public performance situations, as well as a number of performances in which the student carefully monitors and identifies their own particular symptoms.

Teachers should be careful to help students understand that they will likely encounter a number of differences in the way their body feels and their mind operates in public performance, stressing that these feelings are a natural and common. This exposition should be specific, using low-inference descriptors of the individual symptoms. Instead of saying, “You might get nervous,” the teacher should instead say, “You might notice you breathe faster or that you hold your breath. You might find that your hands feel abnormally hot or cold, and your palms may sweat. You could experience some tension in your shoulders or arms, and maybe even a little shakiness in your hands or your legs. You might find that your mind wanders to thoughts about the audience or to something unrelated with the performance.” The researcher suggests starting with those symptoms enumerated in the code definitions in Chapter III of this

study. The purpose of such instruction is to guide the student to begin to think about specific, individual components of MPA rather than developing a fear of a generic, abstract concept.

After knowing what to expect, the student should devote a number of performances to simply identifying the symptoms that occur in their performances. The participants of this study indicated that the exposure performances were at least partly responsible for any improvements they noticed in Live Performance 2 because the performances gave them the opportunity to self-reflect specifically on their symptoms of MPA.

> **NMC**: One more quick question before we're out of tape. You all mostly said that the process was beneficial for your performance. How much of the benefit was from the interviews and filling out the forms, and not the performances themselves.
>
> **Graham**: I don't think very much.
>
> **Rhonda**: Fifty-fifty.
>
> **Winona**: Fifty-fifty.
>
> **Lester**: Forty-sixty.
>
> **Winona**: How would we have filled out the forms without the performances?
>
> **NMC**: We could have done the performances without any of the forms.
>
> **Winona**: So what's your question?
>
> **NMC**: The interviews and the surveys that you filled out had as much to do with whatever improvement you saw as the performances themselves.

Olivia: No. The performances did much more for me.

Albert: For me, I wouldn't have known what I was improving, if I was improving. Like, it might have gotten better, but I might not be able to figure out what I improved.

Rhonda: It helped identify the differences between performances, instead of just saying, "Well, this one was better than the last one."

Winona: Yeah.

Graham: It may help with us learning to be piano teachers, but I don't think it helped us, specifically. I don't think it helped me specifically deal with my anxiety, but it might have helped me know how to deal with someone else's anxiety.

Olivia: The reason that really didn't help me all that much was because I already knew a lot about my anxiety and how everything worked for me. So, it was just kind of review.

Phoebe: I thought the forms were helpful, because we've already done performances before, so that wasn't like a new thing. But we probably haven't analyzed and thought about what we do to prepare ourselves not to be anxious, or what our anxiety, I don't know.

Olivia: I guess that's why it didn't affect me much, 'cause I already know what I do, and I try to do the same thing every time.

Winona: But that's not the same thing. I think the forms and the performances helped equally.

Lester: They both definitely helped. (Group Discussion, Site A, November 18, 2009, pp. 822-823)

After the symptoms are identified, the student can then learn how to successfully cope with symptoms that can be voluntarily controlled, lending a sense of at least partial control over their MPA. Perhaps some guidance along the lines of the "Serenity Prayer" might be in order: that the students gain the serenity to accept those symptoms which can not be changed, the courage to change the symptoms that can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Future Research

A number of items of future research are suggested by the results and conclusions. First, the KMPAI proved a good predictor of MPA in Live Performance, and warrants further validation efforts. Second, the CPAI suffered from a floor effect in low stress environments, being unable to reflect the differences in MPA as expressed in the individual interviews. Finally, though audio virtual performances did not prove an adequate analog for performances in the live context, there is some evidence that video virtual performances might provide higher levels of MPA.

Measures

The K-MPAI was used as a categorization tool in this study, and proved a reliable predictor of anxiety scores on the CPAI in the second Live Performance. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between the K-MPAI and the CPAI scores for Live Performance 1 (CPAI-LP1) and Live Performance 2 (CPAI-LP2). A weak positive correlation that was not significant ($r(11) = .429$, $p > .05$) was found between the KMPAI and the CPAI from Live Performance 1. A strong positive correlation was found ($r(11) = .729$, $p < .05$) between the K-MPAI and the CPAI from Live Performance 2. These results are presented in Table V.1.

Correlations

		K-MPAI	CPAI-LP1	CPAI-LP2
K-MPAI	Pearson Correlation	**1**	**.429**	**.729***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		**.188**	**.011**
	N	**11**	**11**	**11**
CPAI-LP1	Pearson Correlation	**.429**	**1**	**.601**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	**.188**		**.050**
	N	**11**	**11**	**11**
CPAI-LP2	Pearson Correlation	**.729***	**.601**	**1**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	**.011**	**.050**	
	N	**11**	**11**	**11**

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table V.1. Pearson Coefficient results showing a strong, positive correlation between the K-MPAI and CPAI-LP2.

These results confirm the suspicion of the researcher that most students that experience MPA will eventually find their symptoms reduced through additional experience and education. The participants who provided low scores on the K-MPAI showed the greatest decline in CPAI scores in Live Performance 2, and the researcher suspects that this decline is, at least in part, due to maturation in preparation over time.

Conversely, for some students, the symptoms of MPA will remain persistent and severe, even with continued experience and education. These performers will require substantial intervention, and any improvement they see may be far more gradual than their cohorts. Further validation of the K-MPAI could provide a much-needed diagnostic instrument, allowing teachers to address more focused and comprehensive interventions for those students requiring them.

By and large, the participants agreed that the CPAI scores were an accurate representation of the level of MPA they experienced in each performance. At the opening of the second interview after Live Performance 2, the scores on the various surveys were discussed. The exchange with Sophia typified the responses from all eleven participants.

> **NMC**: And the CPAI that you completed for each performance. Your lowest score was a 42 for the virtual performance. Your highest score was an 85 for Live Performance One, and Live Performance Two was the exact same score. Um, your exposure performances ranged from 44 to 58, and they were all lower than your Rehearsal Performance, which was a 59.
>
> **Sophia**: Okay. That seems.
>
> **NMC**: That's them there.
>
> **Sophia**: Yeah. I see them. Okay, yeah, that seems right.
>
> **NMC**: Does that seem about right?
>
> **Sophia**: Mm-hmm. (affirmative)
>
> **NMC**: Does anything in there surprise you?

Sophia: No. (LP2, November 15, 2009, pp. 742-743)

However, Judith noted that the 4-point Likert Scale of the CPAI did not allow for enough specificity in reporting minor changes in MPA symptoms.

Judith: I, one thing I did notice was that, my, uh, the degree of the different categories weren't necessarily the same. A 'somewhat' on one day wasn't necessarily a 'somewhat' on another day. But, it was still 'somewhat' under this broad terminology. But, they did have different degrees of, yeah. (LP2, April 18, 2010, p. 528)

Future researchers might consider implementing some form of a Linear Analog Scale, especially in research featuring comparisons of MPA in multiple performances. Additionally, the discrepancy between statistical evidence and the qualitative evidence concerning the Rehearsal Performance might point to a first-administration bias to higher scores. Future researchers may need to adjust research designs to allow the population an opportunity to adjust to the measure.

Incidentally, the anxiety envelope, the five additional questions added to the original PAI, provided little additional information, possibly because the virtual performance context produced such low instances of MPA.

Video Virtual Performances

As mentioned in Chapter 2, this research offered the possibility of reducing the logistical concerns of future research by providing evidence of a realistic performance analog in a controlled laboratory setting. Unfortunately, the audio virtual performance was shown to have a reduced anxiety profile in comparison to live performances.

However, several participants indicated that if the virtual performance included video, the dynamic of the virtual performance setting would change significantly. Phoebe remarked that she would be more concerned about her physical appearance.

> **NMC**: How would it be different if instead of just an audio recording, we did a video recording?
>
> **Phoebe**: Um, I think I would still be pretty relaxed. I don't know. Maybe I'd worry more about the way I look, or my posture, or maybe my, my technic.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. Um, how does how you look affect the way the music is going to sound.
>
> **Phoebe**: I guess with girls, if you feel like look bad, or you have a bad hair day, that really affects your mood. And, what you think people will view you as, or think of you. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 682)

Albert indicated that a video recording might make him focus on presentation, and might have helped him achieve a more aesthetically pleasing mood.

> **NMC**: How would it be different if instead of just an audio recording, it was also video?
>
> **Albert**: I might have gotten in the mood a little more if it were video, because, the video, or, the visual aspect of performing wasn't necessary, somewhat. Well, it was because, if I achieved that, I think I would have achieved the mood that I was trying for. Not that I really changed anything physically in my face, like a big grin or anything, but uh, I didn't feel like I had to perform visually. (VP, November 2, 2009, p. 459)

Lauren believed that a video recording would remove part of the protection of anonymity and that it would be more difficult to cover mistakes.

> **NMC**: What if this were a video podcast, would that affect you more?
>
> **Lauren**: Yes.
>
> **NMC**: Okay, and why is that?
>
> **Lauren**: Because of, because then there's a face with the name, I guess. And they see me play, and they see any tension that's going on. It's easier to mask, at least I tell myself, it's easier to mask nerves in sound than it is in the visual aspect. (VP, April 5, 2010, p. 588)

Finally, Winona indicated that a video camera was, to her, like a person sitting there watching her.

> **NMC**: Would it change if, instead of just an audio recording, we included a video element?
>
> **Winona**: Yes.
>
> **NMC**: Okay. How would that change? Would it be the lack of anonymity or is it something else with the video?
>
> **Winona**: I think it's the lack of anonymity. And the video is like a person.
>
> **NMC**: The video is like a person?
>
> **Winona**: Yeah, I mean it's, people will see it whether it's today or not. So, I mean, that's how I feel. The video is like a person sitting there watching me. (VP, November 3, 2009, p. 774)

Clearly, a video virtual performance would create a different level of anxiety. This research was conceived in the early days of podcasting prior to the explosion of YouTube. Indeed, it is quite easy to find a number of musical performances that have been recorded and shared with the internet population, so research in this vein already has a valid underpinning. Perhaps a video virtual performance could provide researchers with the laboratory analog to live performances.

Conclusion

In summary, the virtual performance context featured a lower stress profile than performances in a traditional live context. However, exposure therapy in the virtual context still proved beneficial for some participants as it provided confidence in their level of preparation. For other participants, the multiple performances in a reduced anxiety setting allowed them to objectively identify weaknesses in preparation and take steps to remediate the insufficiencies. Though not exactly exposure therapy *per se*, the multiple performances had the net effect of more thorough preparation and confidence in that preparation.

Finally, the interview process proved beneficial in reducing the specter of an abstract, over-arching concept by identifying individual components. The participants expressed less apprehension when thinking about MPA as a collection of identifiable components.

In conclusion, the process of analyzing individual symptoms of MPA, and then testing the performance readiness of repertoire through multiple virtual performances can, at the very least, be viewed as sound pedagogical practice. Perhaps widespread adoption of such practices can lead to earlier success in public performance situations.

REFERENCES

Abel, J. L., & Larkin, K. T. (1990). Anticipation of performance among musicians: Physiological arousal, confidence, and state-anxiety. Psychology of Music, 18, 171-182. doi:10.1177/0305735690182006

Alpert, R., & Haber, R. N. (1960). Anxiety in academic achievement situations. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 61(2), 207-215. doi:10.1037/h0045464

American Psychiatric Association. (1994). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV (4th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., & Razavieh, A. (2002). Introduction to Research in Education (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsorth/Thomson Learning.

Baker, K. R. (2005). Psychological, physiological, and phenomenological response in musicians with performance anxiety. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (AAT 3183320)

Brodsky, W. (1996). Music performance anxiety reconceptualized: A critique of current research practices and findings. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 11(3), 88-98.

Brodsky, W., & Sloboda, J. A. (1997). Clinical trial of a music generated vibrotactile therapeutic environment for musicians: Main effects and outcome differences between therapy subgroups. Journal of Music Therapy, 34(1), 2-31.

Brotons, M. (1993). Effects of performing conditions on music performance anxiety and performance quality. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (AAT 9322016)

Chang, J. C.-W. (2001). Effect of meditation on music performance anxiety. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (AAT 3014754)

Clark, D. B., & Agras, W. S. (1991). The assessment and treatment of performance anxiety in musicians. American Journal of Psychiatry, 148(5), 598-605.

Cox, W. J., & Kenardy, J. (1993). Performance anxiety, social phobia, and setting effects in instrumental music students. Journal of Anxiety Disorders, 7(1), 49-60. doi:10.1016/0887-6185(93)90020-L

Craske, M. G., & Craig, K. D. (1984). Musical performance anxiety: The three-systems model and self-efficacy theory. Behaviour Research and Therapy, 22(3), 267-280. doi:10.1016/0005-7967(84)90007-X

Deen, D. R. (1999). Awareness and breathing: Keys to the moderation of musical performance anxiety. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (AAT 9957025)

DeForest, G. R., III. (1998). The effects of pedagogical variables on musical performance anxiety. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (AAT 9901397)

Emmelkamp, P. M. G. (2005). Technological innovations in clinical assessment and psychotherapy. Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, 74(6), 336-343. doi:10.1159/000087780

Esplen, M. J., & Hodnett, E. (1999). A pilot study investigating student musicians' experiences of guided imagery as a technique to manage performance anxiety. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 14(3), 127-132.

Fehm, L., & Schmidt, K. (2006). Performance anxiety in gifted adolescent musicians. Anxiety Disorders, 20, 98-109. doi:10.1016/j.janxdis.2004.11.011

Fishbein, M., Middlestadt, S. E., Ottati, V., Strauss, S., & Ellis, A. (1988). Medical problems among ICSOM musicians: Overview of a national survey. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 3(1), 1-8.

Grishman, A. (1989). Musicians' performance anxiety: The effectiveness of modified progressive muscle relaxation in reducing physiological, cognitive, and behavioral symptoms of anxiety. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

Hamann, D. L. (1982). An assessment of anxiety in instrumental and vocal performances. Journal of Research in Music Education, 30(2), 77-90. doi:10.2307/3345040

Hamann, D. L., & Sobaje, M. (1983). Anxiety and the college musician: A study of performance conditions and subject variables. Psychology of Music, 11(1), 37-50. doi:10.1177/0305735683111005

Harris, S. H. (1987). Brief cognitive-behavioral group counseling for musical performance anxiety. Journal of the International Society for the Study of Tension in Performance, 4, 3-10.

Hill, B. (2006). Blogging for Dummies. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Huston, J. L. (2001). Familial antecedents of musical performance anxiety: A comparison with social anxiety. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (AAT 3001611)

Jeger, A. M., & Goldfried, M. R. (1976). A comparison of situation tests of speech anxiety. Behavior Therapy, 7, 252-255. doi:10.1016/S0005-7894(76)80284-5

Kendrick, M. J., Craig, K. D., Lawson, D. M., & Davidson, P. O. (1982). Cognitive and behavioral therapy for musical-performance anxiety. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 50(3), 353-362. doi:10.1037/0022-006X.50.3.353

Kim, Y. (2005). Combined treatment of improvisation and desensitization to alleviate music performance anxiety in female college pianists: A pilot study. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 20(1), 17-24.

Kirchner, J. M. (2002). Performance anxiety in solo piano playing. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (AAT 3067110)

LeBlanc, A., Jin, Y. C., Obert, M., & Siivola, C. (1997). Effect of audience on music performance anxiety. Journal of Research in Music Education, 45(3), 480-496. doi:10.2307/3345541

Lehrer, P. M., Goldman, N. S., & Strommen, E. F. (1990). A principal components assessment of performance anxiety among musicians. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 5(1), 12-18.

Liston, M., Frost, A. A. M., & Mohr, P. B. (2003). The prediction of musical performance anxiety. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 18(3), 120-125.

McGinnis, A. M., & Milling, L. S. (2005). Psychological treatment of musical performance anxiety: Current status and future directions. Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 42(3), 357-373. doi:10.1037/0033-3204.42.3.357

Miller, S. R., & Chesky, K. S. (2004). The multidimensional anxiety theory: An assessment of and relationships between intensity and direction of cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence over multiple performance requirements among college music majors. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 19(1), 12-20.

Montello, L., Coons, E. E., & Kantor, J. (1990). The use of group music therapy as a treatment for musical performance stress. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 5, 49-57.

Morris, T., & Terra, E. (2006). Podcasting for Dummies. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Nagel, J. J., Himle, D. P., & Papsdorf, J. D. (1989). Cognitive-behavioural treatment of musical performance anxiety. Psychology of Music Performance and Stress, 17(1), 12-21.

Niemann, B. K., Pratt, R. R., & Maughan, M. L. (1993). Biofeedback training, selected coping strategies, and music relaxation interventions to reduce debilitative musical performance anxiety. International Journal of Arts Medicine, 2(2), 7-15.

Norton, G. R., MacLean, L., & Wachna, E. (1978). The use of cognitive desensitization and self-directed mastery training for treating stage fright. Cognitive Therapy and Research, 2(1), 61-64. doi:10.1007/BF01172513

Orman, E. K. (2004). Effect of virtual reality graded exposure on anxiety levels of performing musicians: A case study. Journal of Music Therapy, 41(1), 70-76.

Osborne, M. S., & Kenny, D. T. (2008). The role of sensitising experiences in music performance anxiety in adolescent musicians: Effect of gender and negative cognitions. Psychology of Music, 36, 447-462. doi:10.1177/0305735607086051

Osborne, M. S., & Kenny, D. T. (2005). Development and validation of a music performance anxiety inventory for gifted adolescent musicians. Anxiety Disorders, 19, 725-751. doi:10.1016/j.janxdis.2004.09.002

Osborne, M. S., Kenny, D. T., & Holsomback, R. (2005). Assessment of music performance anxiety in late childhood: A validation study of the Music Performance Anxiety Inventory for Adolescents (MPAI-A). International Journal of Stress Management Performance Anxiety, 12(4), 312-330.

Picard, A. (1999). Qualitative pedagogical inquiry into cognitive modulation of musical performance anxiety. Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 140), 62-76.

Rae, G., & Mc Cambridge, K. (2004). Correlates of performance anxiety in practical music exams. Psychology of Music 32(4), 432-439. doi:10.1177/0305735604046100

Reitman, A. D. (1997). The effects of music-assisted coping systematic desensitization on music performance anxiety: A three systems model approach. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (AAT 9737986)

Richman, E. (1995). The camera as audience: Video observation in peer- and self-directed flooding sessions to reduce public speaking anxiety. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (AAT 9705617)

Romano, D. M. (2005). Virtual reality therapy. Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology, 46, 580. doi:10.1017/S0012162205001143

Ryan, C. (2000). A study of the differential responses of male and female children to musical performance anxiety. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (AAT NQ69925)

Ryan, C. (2004). Gender differences in children's experience of musical performance anxiety. Psychology of Music, 32(1), 89-103. doi:10.1177/0305735604039284

Ryan, C. (2005). Experience of musical performance anxiety in elementary school children. International Journal of Stress Management Performance Anxiety, 12(4), 331-342.

Salmon, P. G. (1990). A psychological perspective on musical performance anxiety: A review of the literature. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 5(1), 2-11.

Salmon, P. G., Schrodt, G. R., & Wright, J. (1989). A temporal gradient of anxiety in a stressful performance context. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 4(2). 77-80.

Silverman, D. (2005). Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Stephenson, H., & Quarrier, N. F. (2005). Anxiety sensitivity and performance anxiety in college music students. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 20(3), 119-125.

Sweeney-Burton, C. (1997). Effects of self-relaxation techniques training on performance anxiety and on performance quality in a music performance condition. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (AAT 9802807)

Sweeney, G. A., & Horan, J. J. (1982). Separate and combined effects of cue-controlled relaxation and cognitive restructuring in the treatment of musical performance anxiety. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 29(5), 486-497. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.29.5.486

Valentine, E. R., Fitzgerald, D. F. P., Gorton, T. L., Hudson, J. A., & Symonds, E. R. C. (1995). The effect of lessons in the Alexander Technique on music performance in high and low stress situations. Psychology of Music, 23, 129-141. doi:10.1177/0305735695232002

Wardle, A. (1969). Behavior modification by reciprocal inhibition of instrumental music performance anxiety. In C. K. Madsen, R. D. Greer, & C. H. Madsen, Jr. (Eds.), Research in Music Behavior: Modifying Music Behavior in the Classroom (pp. 191-205). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Widmer, S., Conway, A., Cohen, S., & Davies, P. (1997). Hyperventilation: A correlate and predictor of debilitating performance anxiety in musicians. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 12(4), 97-106.

Wilson, G. D. (2002). Stage Fright and Optimal Performance. In Psychology for Performing Artists (2nd ed., pp. 208-230). Philadelphia: Whurr Publishers Ltd.

Wolfe, M. L. (1989). Correlates of adaptive and maladaptive musical performance anxiety. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 4(1), 49-56.

Wolfe, M. L. (1990a). Coping with musical performance anxiety: Problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 5(1), 33-36.

Wolfe, M. L. (1990b). Relationship between dimensions of musical performance anxiety and behavioral coping strategies. Medical Problems of Performing Artists, 5(4), 139-144.

Yin, R. K. (2003). Case Study Research: Design and Methods (3rd ed. Vol. 5). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC AND REPERTOIRE SURVEY

Pseudonym:

Age: _____
Gender (circle one): Female Male
Classification (circle one): Undergraduate Graduate
How long have you studied piano? _____

Repertoire Information.
Answer the following questions regarding the piece you are choosing to perform for this study.

Composer: _____
Title: _____
Approximate length in minutes: _____
How long have you been studying this piece? _____
How long have you been able to play this piece from memory? _____
About how many times have you played this piece in informal performances, such as studio class or playing for friends? _____
About how many times have you played this piece in formal performances, such as departmental recitals, solo recitals, or competitions? _____

APPENDIX B

KENNY MUSIC PERFORMANCE ANXIETY INVENTORY (K-MPAI)

Below are some statements about how you feel generaaly and how you feel before or during a performance. Please circle one number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

		Str. Disagree						Str. Agree
1.	Sometimes I feel depressed without knowing why.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
2.	I find it easy to trust others.	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3
3.	I rarely feel in control of my life.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
4.	I often find it difficult to work up the energy to do things.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
5.	Excessive worrying is a characteristic of my family.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
6.	I often feel that life has not much to offer me.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
7.	The harder I work in preparation for a concert, the more likely I am to make a serious mistake.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
8.	I find it difficult to depend on others.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
9.	My parents were mostly responsive to my needs.	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3
10.	I never know before a concert whether I will perform well.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
11.	I often feel that I am not worth much as a person.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
12.	During a performance I find myself thinking	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

	about whether I'll even get through it.							
13.	Thinking about the evaluation I may get interferes with my performance	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
14.	Even in the most stressful performance situations, I am confident that I will perform well.	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3
15.	I am often concerned about a negative reaction from the audience.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
16.	Sometimes I feel anxious for no particular reason.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
17.	From the beginning of my music studies, I remember being anxious about performing.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
18.	I worry that one bad performance will ruin my career.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
19.	My parents almost always listened to me.	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3
20.	I give up worthwhile performance opportunities due to anxiety.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
21.	As a child, I often felt sad.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
22.	I often prepare for a concert with a sense of dread and impending disaster	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
23.	I often feel that I have nothing to look forward to.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
24.	My parents encouraged me to try new things.	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3
25.	I worry so much before a performance, I cannot sleep.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
26.	My memory is usually very reliable.	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3

APPENDIX C

CONKLIN PERFORMANCE ANXIETY INVENTORY

Name: Date:

Directions:
A number of statements which people have used to dexcribe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then circle the appropriate value to the right of the statement to indicate how you felt about your performance. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe your feelings about your performance.

	Not at All	Some-what	Moder-ately so	Very Much So
1. I felt confident and relaxed during the performance.	1	2	3	4
2. During the performance, I had a nervous uneasy feeling.	1	2	3	4
3. Thinking about how the listeners may judge me interfered with my performance.	1	2	3	4
4. If I made a mistake, I panicked.	1	2	3	4
5. Thoughts of doing poorly interfered with my performance and concentration.	1	2	3	4
6. I was so tense, my stomach got upset.	1	2	3	4
7. I felt jittery about performing.	1	2	3	4
8. Even when I'm well-prepared for the performance, I feel very anxious about it.	1	2	3	4
9. During the performance, I felt tense.	1	2	3	4
10. I wish performing did not bother me so much.	1	2	3	4
11. While preparing for the performance, I procrastinated or participated in other behaviors that kept me from being as well prepared as I could have been.	1	2	3	4
12. My shoulders and arms felt tense or shaky.	1	2	3	4

(Questions continue on the next page)

13. I worried about the performance beforehand.	1	2	3	4
14. As soon as the performance was over, I tried to stop worrying about it, but I could not.	1	2	3	4
15. My hands trembled.	1	2	3	4
16. I was really able to get into the feeling of the music as I performed.	1	2	3	4
17. It was hard to relax my shoulders and arms while performing.	1	2	3	4
18. During a performance, I get so nervous that I forget music that I really know.	1	2	3	4
19. I felt steady.	1	2	3	4
20. I felt pleasant.	1	2	3	4
21. I experienced feelings of performance anxiety.	1	2	3	4
22. I felt that my performance was as good as I thought it would be.	1	2	3	4
23. My anxious reactions got worse the longer I performed.	1	2	3	4
24. After I began playing, I felt less anxious.	1	2	3	4
25. I was more aware of my anxiety in the minutes leading up to the performance than in the performance itself.	1	2	3	4
26. I found myself thinking about the performance hours before it was time to perform.	1	2	3	4
27. During the performance, I felt an escalating fear of making a mistake	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOLLOWING VIRTUAL PERFORMANCE

Objective:
Gather descriptions of the subjective experience of Musical Performance Anxiety as it occurs in two different contexts. Explore in particular the difference in the experiences with regards to performance anxiety.

1. We often feel the mental and physical symptoms of anxiety in daily life. Compare how you felt in the "Live" performance with the following situations: riding a roller coaster, driving in an unfamiliar location, giving an informational presentation, or having a cavity filled.

- Which situation is most like performing?
- Is there another daily life situation that reminds you of musical performance anxiety?
- How are the mental symptoms of anxiety similar? …different?
- How are the physical symptoms of anxiety similar? …different?

Consider now the "Virtual" performance.

- Which situation listed above is most like how you felt when recording the "Virtual" performance?
- Is there another daily life situation that reminds you of how you felt during the Virtual Performance recording session?

Compare the "Live" performance and the "Virtual" performance.

- How are the two performance contexts different in terms of the mental and physical symptoms of anxiety?
- What was different before the performance?
- What was different during the performance?
- What was different after the performance?

2. Most of these descriptions you have given from the perspective of the performer. Imagine now that you are the teacher, and student of yours is trying to explain the symptoms you experienced in these performances.

- What kind of descriptive words would you need to hear from your student to truly understand the mental and physical feelings as experienced?
- What kind of questions would you ask the student to help them articulate their physical and mental symptoms and feelings?

APPENDIX E

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOLLOWING LIVE PERFORMANCE #2

Objectives:
Gather descriptive data about comparing the physical and mental symptoms and feelings of anxiety as experienced in Live Performance #1, and Live Performance #2.
Gather descriptive data about comparing the physical and mental symptoms and feelings of anxiety as experienced in the virtual performance and the final Exposure performance.
What are the participant's thoughts about using virtual performances to prepare for live performance?

1. You have now performed in two Live Performance Situations. Compare how you felt during Live Performance #1 and how you felt during Live Performance #2.
   - You might recall that you described your performance of Live Performance #1 as feeling similar to _____. Did Live Performance #2 feel like the same situation? How was it the same, how was it different.
   - Did one performance feel better than the other? Which one? Why?

2. You have now performed in several Virtual Performances. Compare your first Virtual Performance with you last Virtual Performance.
   - You might recall that you described the first virtual performance as feeling similar to _____. Did the last virtual performance feel the same? How was it the same? How was it different?
   - If you were to continue to record virtual performances, how would the tenth VP feel different than the last VP you recorded?
3. Do you think the process of recording multiple Virtual Performances changed the way you dealt with symptoms of MPA in the second Live Performance?
   - How so?
   - Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance? Why or why not?

4. Imagine you are a teacher, and one of your students is getting ready for a performance. Would you implement an approach similar to the process implemented in this study?
   - What advice would you give to the student to make the process effective?
   - What would you change in the process to make it effective for your student?

APPENDIX F

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Objectives:

- To elaborate and refine the subjective experience of anxiety in the Virtual Performance context and how it contrasts with the Live Performance context.
- To get performer perspective on the utility of exposure therapy in a Virtual Performance Context.
- To get the teacher perspective on the utility of exposure therapy in a Virtual Performance Context.
- To follow up on categories emerging from initial interviews.

Focusing Exercise #1

Compare your experience of Musical Performance Anxiety in the Virtual Performance context and the Live Performance context with the anxiety that might accompany the following daily life activities.

Leaving your home for an extended vacation.
Standing in line and riding a roller coaster.
Getting a cavity filled.
Competing against an equally talented individual in a game you enjoy.
Giving an academic presentation.
Getting medical tests (X-ray, MRI, blood work) done.
Teaching in a Master Class.
Watching a suspenseful movie.
Driving to a restaurant or store in an unfamiliar town.

1. Which two items are least similar to the Live Performance? How are the feelings of anxiety similar and how are they different?
2. Considering all possibilies, which two items are least similar to the Virtual Performance? How are the feelings of anxiety similar and how are they different.?
3. Which two items are most similar to Live Performance? How are the feelings of anxiety similar and how are they different?
4. Which two items are most similar to Virtual Performance? How are the feelings of anxiety similar and how are they different?

Use discussion of different anxiety experiences to transition into following areas:

1. How was your experience of MPA different between Live Performance One and Live Performance Two?

2. How was your experience of MPA different between Virtual Performance One, and the final Exposure Treatment Performance?

Focusing Exercise #2

Consider the following hypothetical situations as applying to you in your role as a pianist and performer. Based on your experience over the course of this study, what would you think about using Virtual Performances in the following situations:

1. You are getting ready for an important performance with familiar repertoire.
2. You are getting ready for a short-notice performance with familiar repertoire.
3. You are getting ready for a short-notice performance with new repertoire.

Focusing Exercise #3

Consider the following hypothetical situations as applying to a student whom you are teaching. Based on your experience over the course of this study, what would you think about utilizing Virtual Performances in these situations.

1. Preparing for a College Audition.
2. Preparing for a Local Competition.
3. Preparing for a lesson.
4. Preparing for a State or National level competition.
5. Preparing for a Master-Class.

Preparing for a Solo Recital.

APPENDIX G

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

University of Oklahoma
Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Project Title: Musical performance anxiety in virtual performances: A comparison of recorded and live performance contexts
Principal Investigator: N. Mason Conklin
Department: Music

You are being asked to volunteer for this research study. This study is being conducted at Iowa State University. You were selected as a possible participant because you are an undergraduate or graduate pianist taking applied lessons in piano at Iowa State University.

Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study

The purpose of this study is:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the nature of musical performance anxiety and possible benefits of exposure therapy in the Virtual Performance context. A Virtual Performance is a musical performance that is recorded and distributed to a non-present audience.

Number of Participants

About 8-12 people will take part in this study.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Choose a pseudonym from those supplied. Complete a brief demographic questionnaire. Choose a piece of music less than 6 minutes in length that you can perform from memory, and answer a few questions about your study of the piece. Complete a diagnostic psychological inventory regarding the level of music performance anxiety (MPA) that you typically experience. It is possible that not all people signing consent forms will be asked to participate in the study. Participants will be chosen based on the responses to the K-MPAI and the Demographic and Repertoire Information Sheet.

If you are selected, you will be asked to do the following:

Before the first live performance, perform your piece in a rehearsal performance for no audience, and complete a survey gauging the level of MPA experienced in that performance.

There will be a recital in which you perform the piece in a live performance in front of an audience. Following the recital, you will complete a survey gauging the level of MPA experienced in that performance. The first live performance will occur on

_____ at _____. (The researcher will provide you with the date, time, and location of this performance during the informed consent meeting.)

Sign up for an appointment to record the same piece in a studio in Music Hall. This virtual performance will be distributed to an internet audience after recording. Following the recording session, complete a survey gauging the level of MPA experienced in the recording session. Then, sit for a 45 minute interview with the researcher.

After the interview, sign up to record 5 more virtual performances before the second live performance. Complete surveys gauging the level of MPA experienced in these performances.

Perform in a final live performance and complete a survey gauging the level of MPA experienced in the performance. The performance will occur on

_____ at _____.

(The researcher will provide you with the date, time, and location of this performance during the informed consent meeting.)

After the Live Performance 2, schedule an interview with the researcher. The interview will take no longer than 30 minutes.

After all individual interviews are complete, meet for a group discussion of your experience in recording the virtual performances. The group discussion will last no longer than 60 minutes.

Length of Participation

All performances, interviews and group discussion will take place within a 16 day time frame. If selected, participation in the study will require about 6.5 hours of your time, not counting the interest meeting and consent process.

Keep in mind that many of the research procedures involve performances of your solo repertoire and will benefit you in your study of the piece.

This study has the following risks:

Musical performances are inherently psychologically stressful endeavors. This study involves placing performers in an unfamiliar performance setting. Though unlikely, it is possible that a bad performance experience could heighten sensitivity to performance anxiety.

In addition, once virtual performances are distributed via podcasting, they are no longer under the control of the participant. The content delivered to subscribers will exist on the subscribers' personal computers and could be subject to further distribution.

Finally, though you will not be identified by name in the virtual performance podcast, subscribers may be able to identify you by the repertoire you perform. The researcher offers no promise of confidentiality regarding the virtual performance or subsequent redistribution of recorded performances.

Benefits of being in the study are

Awareness of the different manifestations of musical performance anxiety will help performing musicians make performance context decisions for recordings to be used in admissions, job applications, and competition screening tapes. Additionally, prior research indicates that exposure performances are an important component in successful treatment protocols for music performance anxiety. The logistical concerns of such exposure components could be significantly reduced if these performances could occur in a virtual performance setting.

Finally, the additional experience in recording virtual performance could help participants become more comfortable performing in more traditional live performance settings.

Confidentiality

In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify you without your permission. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers will have access to the records.

Paper surveys will be stored in a lock box in the recording studio until retrieved by the researcher. Paper surveys will be transported in a locked briefcase to be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's private, locked office. Audio recordings will be transferred to the researcher's password protected personal computer for transcription. The video recording of the group discussion will be transferred to the researcher's password protected personal computer for transcription. All media files and paper surveys will be destroyed upon defense of the dissertation. Transcripts of the interviews and group discussion will be presented in the appendices of the completed dissertation with performers

identified by pseudonym only. Any discussion and/or quotations presented in the final research will refer to the performer by pseudonym only.

There are organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis. These organizations include the OU Institutional Review Board and the ISU Institutional Review Board.

Compensation

You will not be reimbursed for you time and participation in this study. However, you may request the digital files of your virtual performances.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you withdraw or decline participation, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the study. If you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any question and may choose to withdraw at any time.

Waivers of Elements of Confidentiality

Your name will not be linked with your responses unless you specifically agree to be identified. Please select one of the following options.

_____ I consent to being quoted directly.

_____ I do not consent to being quoted directly.

Audio Recording of Study Activities

To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty. Please select one of the following options.

I consent to audio recording. ___ Yes ___ No.

Video Recording of Study Activities

To assist with accurate recording of your responses, interviews may be recorded on a video recording device. Only the group discussion will be video taped to insure accuracy in transcription. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording. Please select one of the following options:

I consent to video recording. ___ Yes ___ No.

Contacts and Questions

If you have concerns or complaints about the research, the researcher(s) conducting this study can be contacted at:

N. Mason Conklin

515-294-3453
mconklin@iastate.edu

Dr. David Stuart
515-294-2924
dstuart@iastate.edu

Dr. Jane Magrath
405-325-4681
jmagrath@ou.edu

Contact the researcher(s) if you have questions or if you have experienced a research-related injury.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than individuals on the research team or if you cannot reach the research team, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Additionally, If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, Office for Responsible Research, (515) 294-3115, 1138 Pearson Hall, Ames, IA 50011.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature Date

APPENDIX H

INTERNET AUDIENCE MEMBERS

Name	Bio
Shirley Hanneman	Shirley teaches in Marion, Iowa and has been a Suzuki piano instructor for over 20 years.
Jessica Conklin	I have received a BM in piano pedagogy from Converse College and a MM from the University of Oklahoma in Piano Performance and Pedagogy. I maintain a private piano studio in Ames and teach at Keyboard West Studios in West Des Moines.
Fanchon Charnigo	MME in Piano Pedagogy from OU, BM in Piano Pedagogy from Converse. I'm currently teaching piano at the Gwinnett School of Music, Lilburn Georgia.
Dr. Si Millican	Si Millican is an assistant professor of instrumental music education at The University of Texas at San Antonio. He holds a BM and MME in Music Education from the University of North Texas and a PhD from The University of Oklahoma.
Dr. Mario Ajero	Mario Ajero is Assistant Professor of Piano at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX where he teaches class piano and piano pedagogy. Dr. Ajero has written articles for American Music Teacher and Clavier Companion magazines. He also has presented at national conferences such as MTNA, NCKP, and CMS/ATMI.
Dr. Courtney Crappell	Dr. Courtney Crappell serves as Assistant Professor of Piano Pedagogy at UT San Antonio where he coordinates the class piano program and teaches piano and piano pedagogy.
Kimberley Dreisbach	Kimberly Dreisbach teaches group piano and piano pedagogy at Oklahoma City University and is a DMA candidate at the University of Oklahoma.
Dr. Kathryn Koscho	Dr. Kathryn Koscho directs the piano pedagogy program and teaches group piano courses at The Crane School of Music SUNY Potsdam. She serves as Co-Director of the biannual Crane Piano Pedagogy Conference and Vice-President of Membership for the New York State Music Teachers Association
Katrina Thompson Fost	Katrina Thompson Fost, B. Mus., M.M.E., RMT maintains a private piano studio in Calgary, Alberta. She is Resource Development Administrator for the Calgary Arts Summer School Association and an executive member of Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Association-Calgary Branch
Frank Defranco	Frank teaches and performs piano in New Jersey.

Julie Knerr	Julie Knerr is a piano teacher in Norman, Oklahoma and coauthor of the new piano method series, Piano Safari (pianosafari.com). She is an adjunct faculty member at Oklahoma City University. She holds piano performance and piano pedagogy degrees from University of Puget Sound and University of Illinois and completed her PhD in Music Education from the University of Oklahoma in 2006
Barbara Landi Hause	Barbara Landi Hause runs a private piano studio in Florham Park, NJ. She serves on the Board of several music organizations, and judges for festivals, auditions and competitions.
Thomas S. Figula	Thomas S. Figula is a lifelong enthusiast of J.S. Bach and a former student of Eleanor Statmore. He is also a master chef of savory soups.
Michiyo Hattori	Michiyo Hatori teaches piano from elementary school students to adults and is an accomplished accompanist in the Ames area.

APPENDIX I

INSTRUCTIONS TO SUBSCRIBE TO PODCAST

Greetings!

You are invited to subscribe to a podcast featuring the Virtual Performances of several students of music. Virtual Performances are musical performances which are recorded and distributed to an audience via the internet. To subscribe, you will need a computer with an internet connection and iTunes. ITunes can be downloaded free of charge at:

http://www.apple.com/itunes/download/

To subscribe to the podcast:
1. Open Itunes
2. Click on Advanced in the menu bar (top of the screen)
3. Click Subscribe to Podcast...
4. Enter the following URL. (You may find it easiest to "copy and paste")
http://feeds.feedburner.com/Conklindissertation2009
5. Click OK.

After some wheel whirling, the podcast "tab" of iTunes will display with the podcast. You will need to **click the triangle to expand the podcast to show all the available episodes.** You will also need to click the "get all" button next to the podcast name. The name of the podcast is:

ConklinDissertation09

The performances will feature piano music from various composers. The first performances will be available in early November. The performances will be recorded multiple times, offering you the opportunity to hear different nuances and interpretations each time.
If you wish, you can put these songs on your ipod, or you can burn them to CD. If you would like to offer some feedback to the performers, please direct your emails to:
mconklinisu@gmail.com

Thank you so much for your time, and enjoy the performances!

Mason Conklin
Ph.D. Candidate in Music Education at the University of Oklahoma

APPENDIX J

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RECORDING VIRTUAL PERFORMANCE.

The following directions will shepherd you step-by-step in recording and saving your musical performances. If you have any questions, please make sure to contact me. I'll be available to help in the event you need some troubleshooting.

Step 1 – Launch Audacity
On the computer on top of the bookshelf, double click the icon for Audacity. The icon looks like a pair of headphones with blazing sound waves between the ear pieces.

Step 2 – Click Record
After the program launches, click the record button. The record button is a square button with a red circle inside it. As soon as you click record, the program begins recording. Go back to the piano bench.

Step 3 – Play
Have a seat at the bench for the piano closest to the computer. When you are ready, begin playing your piece. Play from the beginning of your piece to the end as you would in a typical performance.

Step 4 – Click Stop
When you are done with your performance, return to the computer and click the Stop button. The stop button is a square button with a yellow square inside it.

Step 5 – Complete the CPAI for this performance
It generally takes the computer a few seconds to be ready for trimming and exporting. Take this time to complete the CPAI for this performance. When you are done with the CPAI, place it in the box located on top of my desk.

Step 6 – Trim (optional)
If you wish, you may trim the excess silence from the beginning and end of the performance. Follow the following steps to trim your performance.
1. Scroll to the beginning of your performance using the scroll bar beneath the track you just recorded. Click in the track about 2 seconds before you see the "waves" begin. The numbers along the top of the track are marked in seconds.
2. Click Edit and scroll down to "Select". Choose "Start to Cursor"
3. Click Edit →Delete
4. Scroll to the end of your piece. Click where the sound waves are small. Press play. Listen and press pause when you get to the very end of your piece (including pedal release and appropriate silence). Notice the time of where the black line stopped.
5. Click the Stop Button. The program will not allow you to make changes to a paused recording. Unfortunately, it also will not remember where the cursor was when you paused.
6. In the track, scroll to the time from step 4. Click in the track at the time.
7. Click Edit and scroll down to "Select". Choose "Cursor to End"
8. Click Edit → Delete.

IF AT ANY TIME YOU ACCIDENTALLY DELETE YOUR RECORDING DON'T PANIC!!!! Simply select Edit→Undo Delete. In the event that you have difficulties, I would rather you keep an untrimmed recording than get frustrated with the trimming process.

Step 7 – Export As WAV
Choose File→Export as WAV.
Type in the file name according to this forma: *Pseudo*yymmdd. For example, if my pseudonym is Zelda, and date is April 12, 2008, I would type "Zelda080412"
MAKE SURE TO USE NO SPACES IN THE FILE NAME. Spaces in the file name make life very difficult when uploading to the internet and formatting hyperlinks.
Save to the "WAV folder" which is located on the Desktop.

Step 8 – Quit Audacity
After you have exported your recording as WAV to the "WAV folder" quit Audacity. Click Audacity→Quit Audacity. In the pop-up box that follows asking if you want to save, choose "No."

Step 9 – Dance a Little Jig
Congratulations! You recorded, perhaps trimmed, and saved a musical performance!

What Happens Next…
The rest of the magic that is required to make your recording available to the subscribing audience will happen in the dead of night. At 12:02, the computer will mysteriously wake up from a sound sleep, and run a program that will notice the new recordings available in the "WAV folder." It will copy these performances to iTunes which will compress them into MP3 format, moving the .wav file to an archive folder on the computer. Then, a copy of the new .mp3 file will be placed in the "MP3 folder". At 1:15, another program will run which notices all new files in the "MP3 folder." This program will upload the mp3's to the internet, specifically to www.masonconklin.com/Podrepository. After uploading and verifying that the files are web available, the program moves the mp3's from the "MP3 folder" to the "Publish folder." At 2:30, another program will notice new files in the "Publish folder." It will send an email to blogger with your pseudonym and a link to your performance. As soon as blogger receives the email, it publishes a new post in the study blog. Once the new post is published, www.feedburner.com notices the new post, and updates the RSS feed which subscribers typed into their iTunes "Subscribe to Podcast" window. The next time iTunes launches on a subscriber's computer, it will check the RSS feed and see that there is a new performance and will automatically download your performance to their computer. The subscriber can listen to your performance whenever he or she decides to do so.

APPENDIX K

COMPUTER SCRIPTS

The three scripts appearing below were developed in AppleScript by the researcher to aid in automating the workflow involved in publishing a podcast. The first script uses iTunes to compress the WAV recordings into MP3 recordings. The second script uploads the MP3 recording to the internet audio repository hosted at www.masonconklin.com. The last script sends an email to the study blog that publishes a new post with a link to the recording. The scripts are set off typographically with comments appearing as *italics* and the programming appearing in `courier font.`

Compression Script

```
(*Compression script, Version 1.0.
Mason Conklin, January 2008


This script takes WAV files from WAVfolder, converts them
  to MP3, moves the
MP3 to an MP3 folder, moves the original WAV files to an
  archive folder
*)

(* I am deeply indebted to Doug Adams of Doug's itunes
  scripts.  The following script
is an amalgamation and adaptation of three of Doug's
  scripts.  The three scripts I have modified
are addToLib, Convert and Export, and Delete Tracks Never
  Played.  The main changes I have made are
1.  hardcoding the following folders:
WAVfolder = the folder holding saved WAV files.  These are
  the files that need to be converted.
ArchiveWAV= the folder to which the files are moved after
  they are added to iTunes playlist "To Convert"
MP3folder = the folder that the converted files are saved
  to in mp3 format.
2.  Changing the delete song function of addToLib to move
  the file to ArchiveWAV
3.  hardcoding the encoder in the convert and export
  script
```

```
4.  hardcoding the selection to all items of playlist "To
  Convert"
5.  hardcoding the destination location (MP3folder) for
  the converted files.
6. in the Delete Tracks Never Played script, I changed the
  statement to delete all tracks
of a certain playlist of source library


I still need to figure out how to delete the original
  items completely from the source "Library"
*)
property type_list : ("MPG3", "MIDI", "AIFF", "MPG4")
--I added "wav" to the extension list
property extension_list : ("mp3", "mid", "aif", "m4p",
  "m4a", "wav")

global counter, playlist_status, this_playlist

on run

  -- set the following variable to the path to the
  WAVfolder on the study computer
  set temp_folder to "Macintosh
  HD:Users:Mason:Desktop:Pilot Applescript
  project:Apscript folderholder:WAVfolder"

  -- set the following variable to 0 or 1 depending on
  what you want done
  -- with the files after they are added to the library

  -- 0 - files will be left alone (DEFAULT)
  tell application "iTunes"
     set my_playlists to name of every playlist of source
  "Library"
     if my_playlists contains "To Compress" then
          beep
     else
          set new_playlist to (make new playlist)
          set name of new_playlist to "To Compress"
     end if
  end tell
  -- 1 - files will be moved to the ArchiveWAV folder

  set mov_song to 1
  process_folder(temp_folder, mov_song)
  my noodleconvert_playist()
  my Byebye_Playlist()
```

```
end run

-- this sub-routine processes folders. It makes sure to
  only attempt to add appropriate
--file types to iTunes.
on process_folder(this_folder, mov_song)
  set these_items to list folder this_folder without
  invisibles
  repeat with i from 1 to the count of these_items
     set this_item to alias ((this_folder as text) & ":" &
  (item i of these_items))
     set the item_info to info for this_item
     if folder of the item_info is true then
          process_folder(this_item, mov_song)
     else if (alias of the item_info is false) and ¬
          ((the file type of the item_info is in the
  type_list) or ¬
               the name extension of the item_info is in
  the extension_list) then
          process_item(this_item, mov_song)
     end if
  end repeat
end process_folder

-- this sub-routine processes files.  It adds individual
  items to a playlist in iTunes named "To Compress"
-- and then moves the file to the ArchiveWAV folder
on process_item(this_item, mov_song)
  try
     tell application "iTunes"
          launch
          set this_track to add this_item to playlist "To
  Compress" of source "Library"
          if the playlist_status is "OK" then
               duplicate this_track to this_playlist
          end if
     end tell
     set counter to counter + 1
  end try
  if mov_song is 1 then
     tell application "Finder"
          --change the alias to the location of the
  archiveWAV folder on the study computer
          move this_item to "Macintosh
  HD:Users:Mason:Desktop:Pilot Applescript
  project:Apscript folderholder:ArchiveWAV:"
     end tell
  end if
```

```
end process_item
--this subrouting is basically the convert and export
  script with some hardcoding
on noodleconvert_playist()
  tell application "iTunes"
     activate
     set sel to every track of playlist "To Compress" of
  source "Library"
     set encoderBackup to name of current encoder
     set myNewEncoder to "MP3 Encoder"
     --hard code destination to the MP3folder on the study
  computer
     set uD to alias "Macintosh
  HD:Users:Mason:Desktop:Pilot Applescript
  project:Apscript folderholder:MP3folder:"

     if uD is false then error number -128

     set current encoder to encoder myNewEncoder

     set cnt to 0
     repeat with this_track in sel
          try -- skip on failure
               set new_track to item 1 of (convert
  this_track)
               set loc to new_track's location
               set dbid to new_track's database ID

               -- move the file to new location
               do shell script "mv " & (quoted form of
  POSIX path of loc) & " " & (quoted form of POSIX path of
  uD as string)

               -- delete the track
               delete new_track
               set cnt to cnt + 1
          end try

     end repeat

     set current encoder to encoder encoderBackup
     --deletes from the playlist, but not from the
  library.  Figure out how to do this.
     --delete every track of playlist "To Compress" of
  source "Library"

  end tell
```

```
  tell application "Finder"
     open folder uD
     activate
  end tell


end noodleconvert_playist
--Byebye_Playlist deletes every track residing in "To
  Compress" folder
on Byebye_Playlist()
  tell application "iTunes"
     with timeout of 3000 seconds
          set these_tracks to (every track of playlist "To
  Compress" of source "Library")
          repeat with aTrack in these_tracks
               try -- will skip a track if any errors
  occur
                    set loc to quoted form of POSIX path
  of ((aTrack's location) as string)
                    set dbid to aTrack's database ID
                    set the_command to "rm " & loc
                    delete (some track of library playlist
  1 whose database ID is dbid)
                    do shell script the_command
               end try
          end repeat
     end timeout
  end tell
end Byebye_Playlist
```

Upload Script

```
(* Upload Script Version 1.0
Mason Conklin - January 2008*)


(* This script uploads all files in the MP3 folder to
  masonconklin.com/Podrepository directory,
checks to see that they exist on the server before moving
  to the Publishfolder.
It could use a logging feature if a file never uploads.

A number of items will need to be configured to run on the
  host computer.
1. make sure to have the correct path to the mp3_folder
2. Make sure to have accurate ftp server settings
```

```
2b. check how long to loop the delay in the confirmation
  loop
3.  Make sure to have the correct alias to the publish
  folder in the moove_item handler
*)

--change alias to path to mp3folder on current computer
set mp3_folder to "Macintosh HD:Users:Mason:Desktop:Pilot
  Applescript project:Apscript folderholder:MP3folder:"
set files_in_folder to (list folder alias mp3_folder
  without invisibles)
set num_files to count of item in files_in_folder
set j to 1
set added_items to ()
repeat with j from 1 to num_files
  set filetoadd to mp3_folder & item j of files_in_folder
  set added_items to added_items & filetoadd
end repeat

--change below to site particulars.  set theServer to
  domain name, set theUser to the username
--change thePassword to the correct password (if needed)
--change theuploadfolder to the correct upload folder.
  CAPS COUNT!!! don't end with /

set theServer to "sitename.com"
set theUser to "user"
set thePassword to "password"
set theProtocol to "ftp"
set theUploadFolder to "public_html/Podrepository"

set the item_count to the number of items in the
  added_items
if the item_count is greater than 0 then
  with timeout of 300 seconds
     tell application "Cyberduck"
          set theBrowser to (make new browser)
          tell (theBrowser)
               set encoding to "UTF-8"
               connect to theServer with protocol
  theProtocol as user theUser with password thePassword
  with initial folder theUploadFolder
               set c to 1
               repeat with theFile in added_items
                    set upload_file to theFile as alias
                    set check_file to item c of
  files_in_folder
                    upload item upload_file
```

```
                    delay 10
                    if not (exists file check_file) then
                         set del to 1
                         repeat while del ≤ 5
                              --say "waiting for 30"
                              delay 30
                              if not (exists file
  check_file) then
                                   set del to del + 1
                              else
                                   set del to 6
                                   --say "Finally, I can
  move this item"
                                   set c to c + 1
                                   my
  moove_item(upload_file)
                              end if
                              --say ("I have waited" & del
  as string) & "times"
                         end repeat
                    else
                         --beep
                         --say "Moving item"
                         my moove_item(upload_file)
                         set c to c + 1
                    end if
               end repeat
               disconnect
          end tell
     end tell
  end timeout
end if
on moove_item(moving_item)
  tell application "Finder"
     --remember to set the alias to the Publish_folder to
  the path to the publish folder on current computer
     set Publish_folder to alias "Macintosh
  HD:Users:Mason:Desktop:Pilot Applescript
  project:Apscript folderholder:Publishfolder:"
     move moving_item to Publish_folder
  end tell
end moove_item
```

Publish Script

```
--Publish Script, Version 1.0
--Mason Conklin, January 2008
```

```
--adapted from
--from Hanaan Rosenthal "Applescript: A comprehensive...
--pg 702


--This script sends an email to a publish by email address
  at
--blogger.com.  It uses the subject line "Virtual
  Performance by
--Pseudonym" and contains as its body the URL for the
  uploaded
--performance.  It also sends a carbon copy to
--me@masonconklin.com.
--


set mailing_items to list folder "Macintosh
  HD:Users:Mason:Desktop:Pilot Applescript
  project:Apscript folderholder:Publishfolder" without
  invisibles
--display dialog mailing_items as string
set howmanyfiles to number of items in mailing_items
set j to 1
repeat howmanyfiles times
  set current_item to item j of mailing_items
  set thePathprefix to
  "www.masonconklin.com/Podrepository/"
  set thePath to thePathprefix & current_item
  set the_subject_prefix to "Virtual Performance by "
  set the_subject_suffix to characters 1 through 4 of
  current_item
  set the_subject to the_subject_prefix &
  the_subject_suffix
  set the_body to return & "Enjoy the performance!" &
  return & thePath
  --set the_file_path to (choose file)
  tell application "Mail"

     set new_message to make new outgoing message with
  properties (subject:the_subject, visible:true)
     tell new_message
          set content of it to the_body
          make new to recipient at end with properties
  (name:"Blog",
  address:"mason_conklin.testsite@blogger.com")
          make new cc recipient at end with properties
  (name:"Mason", address:"me@masonconklin.com")
```

```
            --de comment the send and comment out close
  without saving
            --close without saving
            send
      end tell
  end tell
  my moove_item(current_item)
  set j to j + 1
end repeat



on moove_item(moving_item)
  tell application "Finder"
      --remember to set the alias to the MP3_archive to the
  path of the mp3 archive folder on current computer

      set Publish_folder to alias "Macintosh
  HD:Users:Mason:Desktop:Pilot Applescript
  project:Apscript folderholder:Publishfolder:"
      set moving_item_fullpath to (Publish_folder as
  string) & moving_item as string
      set MP3_Archive to alias "Macintosh
  HD:Users:Mason:Desktop:Pilot Applescript
  project:Apscript folderholder:ArchiveMP3:"
      move moving_item_fullpath as alias to MP3_Archive
  end tell
end moove_item
```

APPENDIX L

EXAMPLE OF CODED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

The following is an example of a coded interview transcript taken from Sophia's interview following Live Performance 2. TAMS Analyzer allows the researcher to select a portion of the interview transcript and apply a qualitative analysis code. The code appears in the form of an html-like tag. The color coding of the code tags is customizable. Portions of the transcript can have more than one code applied to it. Each coded section begins with an opening tag signified by the curly bracket ({Code}), and ends with the curly bracket and forward slash ({/Code}). Comments can be appended to the end of the closing tag.

TAMS Analyzer is an open source Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) application for the Macintosh Operating System, and is available for free download on the internet.

{Context>Comparison}NMC: Let's go on to your physical symptoms of anxiety in the Live Performance Two. Compare them to Live Performance One.

{Symptoms>Physiological>Gastrointestinal} {Context>LivePerformance2}Sophia: This time, my stomach was very tense, and I haven't had that before. Uh, when I was standing in the green room, my stomach was just in knots.{/Symptoms>Physiological>Gastrointestinal} {Symptoms>Physiological>Skin>Cold} {Symptoms>Physiological>Skin>Sweating [NMC]}Other than that, I experienced the same type of, sweaty palms, kind of cold and clammy hands.{/Symptoms>Physiological>Skin>Sweating [NMC]} {/Symptoms>Physiological>Skin>Cold} Everything else was the same as Performance One, except for the stomach part.{/Context>LivePerformance2}

{Symptoms>Physiological>Skin>Cold} {Context>LivePerformance2} {Symptoms>Physiological>Skin>Sweating [NMC]}NMC: So, sweaty palms, but cold and clammy hands.

Sophia: Mmm. Have you ever had that before, where your fingers are really cold, but they're, it's moist here (rubs palm)

NMC: Okay. Yeah. {/Symptoms>Physiological>Skin>Sweating [NMC]} {/Symptoms>Physiological>Skin>Cold} {NegativeReport} {Symptoms>Physiological>Skin>Hot}Uh, how about in your face, your cheeks get hot?

Sophia: Oh, actually, yeah, I didn't have the cheeks being hot. {/Symptoms>Physiological>Skin>Hot} {/NegativeReport}

{Symptoms>Physiological>Gastrointestinal}NMC: You mentioned your stomach churning, is it different than your stomach in knots?

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: How so?

Sophia: I didn't have the churning, that just feels just, like it's, you know something is moving inside you. This time it was just tight, like a knot being tightened and tightened.

NMC: Does the time of the day influence that? Had you just eaten before the other performance?

Sophia: No. No, I hadn't just eaten.{/Symptoms>Physiological>Gastrointestinal}{/Context>LivePerformance2}

{Context>LivePerformance2}{Symptoms>Behavior>Pace [NMC]}{Symptoms>Behavior>Jig [NMC]}NMC: You also mentioned jigging legs. Did you notice that before the performance?

Sophia: Yes, and I kept pacing, too, backstage. So that was the same.{/Symptoms>Behavior>Jig [NMC]}{/Symptoms>Behavior>Pace [NMC]}

{NegativeReport}{Symptoms>Physiological>MuscleReactions>Tension}NMC: Okay. And tense muscles?

Sophia: I don't, besides the stomach, nothing else was tense. Like, my arms weren't tense or anything. It was just the stomach, I think{/Context>LivePerformance2}.{/Symptoms>Physiological>MuscleReactions>Tension}{/NegativeReport}{/Context>Comparison}

{Context>Comparison}NMC: I'm sure you would prefer to have most of these symptoms...

Sophia: Go away! (laughs)

NMC: ...go away. But if you had to choose one of those performance, which of those would you choose? Performance one, the way you felt in Performance One or the way you felt in Performance Two. 'Cause they're kind of different. You rated them as very high, both of them.

Sophia: mm-hmm.

NMC: I'm sure they're very uncomfortable, but which would you prefer?

Sophia: I think I would almost prefer, even though I had the stomach thing going on, I would prefer the second one, {Factors>Preparation [NMC]}because I did feel a little bit more prepared for the performance{/Factors>Preparation [NMC]}, {Symptoms>Mental>Expectations>Self}but I was still very, very nervous, which I don't know why, because I felt more prepared. But I think it was because I wanted to perform well, so I was setting high standards{/Symptoms>Mental>Expectations>Self}.{/Context>Comparison}

{Context>Comparison}NMC: Okay. You've now also performed in several virtual performances. Compare your first virtual performance with your last virtual performance.

{Context>ExposurePerformance}Sophia: I was way calm for the last one. I'd say I was maybe a little nervous for the first one, but I was much more calm. I came in here, set everything up, was good, done.

NMC: Okay. In looking over your scores, you rated, if we called the Virtual Performance, the one we did before the interview the first one, that was your lowest score, and then your last, your exposure performance was really close to it.

Sophia: Mm-hmm.

{Symptoms>Mental>IntellectAndReasoning>NonPerformanceRelated}{Factors>Extranneous [NMC]}NMC: There were a couple in here that were a little bit higher than those two. Performance 3, you rated a 58. Do you remember anything about that particular performance that made it different?

Sophia: Was that on Wednesday (laughing ruefully)

NMC: It may have been.

Sophia: Yeah. I think I was a lot more distracted that day, so I was concerned with other things, and my mind wasn't focusing on the actual performing, so then I was more nervous about making, doing a good performance, because I couldn't focus{/Factors>Extranneous [NMC]}.{/Symptoms>Mental>IntellectAndReasoning>NonPerformanceRelated}{/Context>ExposurePerformance}{/Context>Comparison}

{Context>ExposurePerformance}NMC: Um, so talk a little bit about the last virtual performance that you did. How did you feel about it?

Sophia: The last one. {Factors>Preparation>MultiplePerformances [NMC]}{Factors>Preparation>Confidence [NMC]}I felt quite good about that one, because I knew what I had to do since I'd come in here four other times, and I felt prepared for it. I felt very calm, actually.{/Factors>Preparation>Confidence [NMC]}{/Factors>Preparation>MultiplePerformances [NMC]} {Factors>VPSetting

[NMC]}And it, I like doing the virtual performances much more because I'm just by myself, and I can come in here and play, and it's much calmer.{/Factors>VPSetting [NMC]}{/Context>ExposurePerformance}

{Context>ExposurePerformance}{Context>Comparison}NMC: Uh, can you compare maybe, your mental symptoms of anxiety between your first virtual performance and your last one?

{Interesting}Sophia: And the last one? Um, let's see. You said mental, mental ones?

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Sophia: I'd say, I don't know if I can.

NMC: Were they almost exactly the same, or you can't remember the mental symptoms?

Sophia: Name some mental symptoms for me.{/Interesting trouble with mental symptoms same as first interview}

{NegativeReport}{Symptoms>Mental>IntellectAndReasoning}NMC: Um, mind wandering to other things during the performance.

Sophia: Oh, no. I didn't experience that at all.{/Symptoms>Mental>IntellectAndReasoning}{/NegativeReport}

APPENDIX M

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

The transcripts of the individual interviews are presented by case in alphabetical order. Both interviews are presented back-to-back to allow readers the ability to form a more complete picture of the case presented. The first interview followed the Virtual Performance recording session, and the second interview followed the second Live Performance.

The transcripts begin on the next page.

Albert, VP

November 3, 2009

The preamble to this interview was cut off. As with the other interviews, I began by asking the subject his pseudonym, which in this case is Albert. I then reminded him of the three performance contexts (Rehearsal, Live, and Virtual) and that this interview would ask comparisons of his physical and mental symptoms of anxiety in these contexts. I then explained that the first portion of the interview would concern anxiety in daily life, and after that, we would move into discussing the performances. I read the opening statement of the interview.
The opening statement is as follows:

We often feel the mental and physical symptoms of anxiety in daily life. Some people might find the following situations trigger these symptoms: riding in a roller coaster, driving in an unfamiliar location, giving an informational presentation, asking someone out on a date, or having a cavity filled. Can you think of a daily life situation that causes you to feel symptoms of anxiety?

Albert responded that he recognizes symptoms of anxiety when setting his alarm clock.

At this point, I noticed the recorder was not recording and corrected that issue.

Albert: Setting my alarm clock.

NMC: Setting your alarm clock typically causes you anxiety?

Albert: I always have to double check whether it's gonna go off or not.

NMC: Okay. Um, what are the mental symptoms of that alarm clock anxiety?

Albert: Um, nervousness. Um, let's see, second-guessing myself. Uh, maybe, uh, I guess that's it.

NMC: Okay, do you have any, uh, internal dialogue about setting the alarm clock?

Albert: Uh, as I'm setting it?

NMC: Or, in whatever situation you feel anxious about it.

Albert: Um, yes.

NMC: Okay. What's that, what's your internal dialogue?

Albert: Um, I ask myself, "Okay, how long ago was I out of bed? Was I near my alarm clock? Did I set it? And, did I check the time?"

NMC: So, just, that kind of second-guessing.

Albert: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Okay. Do you have any particular emotions wrapped up with the alarm clock anxiety?

Albert: Fear, that I won't wake up in the morning.

NMC: And, why do you fear that?

Albert: Because if I oversleep, then I will miss a class.

NMC: Okay. Do you lose any focus or any concentration with this anxiety.

Albert: Let's see. Not really.

NMC: Not really? Okay. What about the physical symptoms of this anxiety. Do you feel anything physically in response to the alarm clock? Do you feel anything in your head or in your face?

Albert: Uh, no.

NMC: No. Do you feel anything in your shoulders or in your neck.

Albert: Mmm, no.

NMC: How about in your upper back or your chest?

Albert: Uh, no.

NMC: No. Arm? Hands?

Albert: No.

NMC: Stomach?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Yeah? What do you feel in your stomach.

Albert: Just a little queasiness.

NMC: Okay.

Albert: Which might be more mental, um.

NMC: Queasy, uh, unsettled?

Albert: Yeah, yeah.

NMC: How about your lower back?

Albert: No.

NMC: Legs? Knees?

Albert: No.

NMC: Feet?

Albert: No.

NMC: Nope, nope. Okay. So that's alarm clock anxiety. Now consider how you generally feel in a solo performance situation. And again, let's talk about any mental symptoms that you might feel in a performance situation.

Albert: Uh, second-guessing myself is consistent with the alarm clock. I ... hmm.

NMC: In what ways do you second-guess yourself in performance?

Albert: When I'm playing, I will have to think ahead, but I will often think back to what I've just played, and if it was right. And then if I feel that it was wrong, then, my focus lessens and ...

NMC: Okay. Do you ever second-guess things that you're about to do? Like you're getting ready to play a note, and you second-guess...

Albert: Yes. Yes.

NMC: Um, other mental symptoms. Do you have any kind of internal dialog in performance?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: What kinds of things are happening in your internal dialogue?

Albert: I'm asking myself where I'm at in the music, what's coming next, which often times there will be similar sections, so I'll have to determine whether I've, I'm playing the first section, as in an exposition, or the second section as in a recapitulation where the music changes.

NMC: Okay. Is there any dialog that is not specific to the music?

Albert: Um, maybe sometimes I'll ask myself, uh, how my posture is, or, I guess that's it.

NMC: Do you ever find yourself thinking about the audience, or thinking about people in the audience?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Okay. What kind of thoughts are those?

Albert: Uh, I try to avoid eye contact with the audience, but, uh that. In certain cases, the age, or experience, musical experience of the audience I'll consider, because, um, mentally, I might take something, a piece faster, if I think that the audience is younger or less experienced musically, because in my mind sometimes, that equals a more showy performance.

NMC: Okay. Um, other considerations of the audience? You mentioned age and musical experience. Is there any other factors in the audience that would think about?

Albert: Uh, maybe the size of the audience. Depending on whether it's a large or small audience, not so much the number or the classification of who's in it, in regards to numbers, just, large or small.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific emotions that you associate with performance?

Albert: Anxiety. Fear. Excitement. Does it have to be before a performance? Or anytime?

NMC: Sure. Anytime.

Albert: Um, joy, once it's done. That's it.

NMC: Okay. You mentioned excitement, can you kind of talk about that a little bit?

Albert: Uh, excitement, the adrenaline starts to kick in for me closer and closer to the performance, and I feel, not so much jittery, but like a swelling sensation is rising up to my neck, where sometimes it can get knotted. And, uh, I think that's it.

NMC: Okay. Uh, some people describe a sensation of dissociation, a feeling separate from the performance, or feeling separate from their hands. Does that?

Albert: Like an out of body experience?

NMC: Sort of.

Albert: Not for me.

NMC: Do you experience that?

Albert: No.

NMC: Do you have any issues with focus or concentration in performance?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: How so?

Albert: Uh, sometimes my mind will wander to activities before or after the performance, or uh, or sometimes to different pieces within that program that I'm playing, if I'm playing more than one piece. Or different sections of the piece, when I, uh, am trying to focus on the section that I'm on.

NMC: Does anxiety ever affect your memory?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: And how does it affect your memory?

Albert: Uh, like I talked about second-guessing myself. If I don't let the anxiety settle and try to push it away and concentrate, then instead of a, uh, calling of my memory, or feeling of what's coming next, then it becomes for me a fifty-fifty chance for me of, either I'm going to play, like the exposition or recapitulation, I'll play the original way or the changed way. So...

NMC: Okay. How about physical symptoms in a typical solo performance situation? And you can start from the head and go down to the toes. Anything that you feel in your head or in your face?

Albert: Uh, no. But, my neck, uh, sort of like if I were to do public speaking, uh, sometimes you just get what feels like knots in your neck.

NMC: Okay, is it like a clenched feeling?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Okay. Um, anything in your shoulders?

Albert: No.

NMC: Okay. How about in your upper chest, upper back?

Albert: No.

NMC: Arms? Hands?

Albert: Um, I guess not so much a physical symptoms, but, along with the second-guessing of myself, my hand will get, well I guess it is sort of physical, my hand will get clammy, or, hot and sweaty sometimes. Other times it will be getting colder. I'm not sure how that works.

NMC: Do you get any shakiness or tension in your arms and hands that you don't have when you're practicing?

Albert: In most cases not tension. Not so much shakiness, but with the second-guessing myself, uh, I'll feel it in my neck, and then it sort of transfers to whether I'm confident enough to put my hand down, the actual motion of it.

NMC: So like a hesitancy?

Albert: Yes. That's what I'm looking for.

NMC: Okay. Um, how about in your stomach?

Albert: A little bit of that queasiness, but not as noticeable because, uh, I feel more of it in my neck.

NMC: Okay. Uh, in your lower back?

Albert: No.

NMC: No. How about in your legs or your knees?

Albert: No.

NMC: Feet?

Albert: No.

NMC: Alright. Now, in a typical solo performance situation, do you generally take any steps to reduce your symptoms of anxiety?

Albert: I try to before hand to think through a piece. And, try to keep my hands warm, so that they're not going to get cold. And, I'd rather have them warm and sort of sweaty than cold. Uh, were you going to say something?

NMC: Uh, when you were talking about thinking through a piece. What do you do to think through a piece? What kinds of things do you think about?

Albert: I always try to, at least, think of the beginning and how it starts off so I can establish a tempo in my head, so that when I go into the performance, there's sort of already a tempo established, and I'm less likely to get too excited and rush.

NMC: And when do you do this mental run-through?

Albert: Just moments before going out on the performance.

NMC: So before the door even opens?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Okay. You keep your hands warm. How do you do that?

Albert: Um, I try to sit on them if I'm sitting, or rub them together if I'm standing.

NMC: Okay. Gloves?

Albert: Usually not.

NMC: Um, do you have any pre-performance routines that you like to do before performance?

Albert: mm,

NMC: This can include, like, from the moment you wake up until the performance, or in the hours of warm-up before performance, or...

Albert: Uh, I at least try to get a run-through of the piece so that it's not all a mental run-through, but there's a physical run-through as well.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific rehearsal strategies to help you with performance anxiety?

Albert: Uh. Yes. I try to play through a piece without stopping, and then I'll go back and address what issues arise. I try to, in the case of more than one piece or movement, not always go in the same exact order. And,

NMC: Do you ever invite friends to listen to you play?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Okay. Do you ever schedule informal performance?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific practice strategies that you use in the practice room?

Albert: Um, well there's the pith-falls, pith-falls, or the uh, difference between exposition and recapitulation.

NMC: What did you say before that?

Albert: Uh, the pith-falls. Like, where exactly the differences occur. If there's two sections that are similar, or the same up to a point, where they... I will try to think in my head, and even say even, "First time.", "Second time." And I'll just go back and forth between those two spots.

NMC: Okay. Do you do any kind of relaxation strategies before you play?

Albert: Um, stretching out my arms and wrists. Uh, my legs if I'm feeling tense.

NMC: Uh, what about prayer or meditation?

Albert: I usually try to pray before playing, but not always. It depends on whether I can actually, uh, remember to do it with all the focus on the piece. And so I try to take some of the focus off of the piece. And... So I guess my out of body experience, like you talked about before, wouldn't happen during the performance, but I try to step out of all my thoughts and do that before going out.

NMC: Okay. Can you explain that a little bit?

Albert: Um, let's see. Like, me personally, I, I as an individual will be thinking, like I said, through the piece mentally, having already run it. And then, I'll try to step back from the piece, uh, clear my mind, more, which would sort of make the sense of, like my individual... I guess I think, me as an individual, I'm thinking about the piece, and then when I'm not, it's more of a separate, not out of body, not a separate person but a separate state of mind, or mindset. So I try to have that focused mindset that I can return to, but, I don't know if that, I don't know if that helps?

NMC: Is it kind of like, maybe, a focus break or a focus recess?

Albert: Yes, yes.

NMC: It's like, "Okay. I can focus. I'm going to take a moment to be myself."

Albert: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Okay, and when you pray, when you do remember to pray before a performance, what kind of things do you pray for?

Albert: I never play to, or, never pray to play all the right notes. I just play that all the other performers do well, or their best that they can do for that performance, and that I do my best. And that no matter how a performance ends or begins, that I always walk out with my head held high, held high, with the audience hopefully still supportive, not necessarily gratified or, ecstatic about the performance, but just that there's still dignity at the end of every performance.

NMC: Okay. Do you ever do any kind of meditation?

Albert: Um, no.

NMC: Okay. Are there things that you do during a performance to help with anxiety?

Albert: If my mind's starting to drift to the anxiety or different parts of the piece, or different events or activities, or the audience, then I always try to zone back in. Because I'm looking at my hands when I'm performing, and I try to zone back in on my hands. And, 'cause there's the, oh, what do you call it, the finger...?

NMC: The tactile?

Albert: Yes the tactile memory. And, sometimes you're prepared, I'm prepared enough that I can just let that take over, but that's never good, especially in that, those spots that we were talking about, the memory. So I try to keep looking at my hands, or the piano, uh, to stay focused on what's really going on right there in the music, the dynamics, the technic.

NMC: Is there some point in your performance where you remind yourself to look at the keys? Or is it just a constant?

Albert: Um, I guess there's not a specific point in each piece, and it's not constant, but just whenever it clicks that I've zoned out, or aren't in tune with what's actually happening right now and a little bit before hand, that I try to get back.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any i-, any thoughts on what causes performance anxiety for you?

Albert: Uh... Performing is a privilege because, there's not so many chances to perform as there are, for a group of people, rather than just yourself. Or at least in my case. So I try to, uh, do my best for each performance, and, can you repeat the question?

NMC: Do you have any thoughts on the causes of performance anxiety, for you?

Albert: Oh. And so, the standards that I set for performance would be higher than in a, just, informal performance or practice situation. And, so, I guess the pressure to meet standards, to meet my standards, the standards of the audience...

NMC: Do you think anxiety helps you to get to those higher standards?

Albert: Anxiety before the performance, like moments before, in my case is good. Uh, way before the performance is good, too, because it motivates me to keep practicing. Uh, during the performance, for me though, anxiety is not good.

NMC: If instead of saying anxiety, I said excitement?

Albert: Hmm.

NMC: Would that change, If instead of calling it musical performance anxiety we called it musical performance arousal, or excitement, or heightened senses?

Albert: I guess then, it would be good in performance, because adrenaline, in my case, takes my mind to different parts that I hadn't thought about in practicing. So I'm still focused on the music, but more of a different aspect than I was in practicing.

NMC: You've said the word adrenaline twice. What does that mean to you, and what is the effect of adrenaline to you?

Albert: I don't remember the scientific explanation, but, just the impulses sent to the brain, and it excites everything. It makes your heart beat faster, and therefore, the jitteriness comes from all this extra energy. So, it's a little boost, which can be detrimental in that your focus goes in more directions than it would in a practice situation. I guess, yeah.

NMC: Okay. Let's now consider a specific performance, the Rehearsal Performance, and this was the performance in the practice room by yourself. Did you have any mental symptoms of anxiety for the Rehearsal Performance?

Albert: Mm. Yes.

NMC: Okay. What kind of symptoms?

Albert: The hesitancy we talked about earlier, with the uh, not so much my hands not... The tactile memory was still there, but, the head memory was, I was worrying about

whether I was going to be able to stay focused the duration of the piece, and therefore to, uh, play the piece correctly in the right order.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any kinds of internal dialogue or specific thoughts during the piece?

Albert: No.

NMC: Any specific emotions connected with the Rehearsal Performance?

Albert: I felt relaxed, uh, so there wasn't physical tension in really any parts of my body. There wasn't any tension. But there's, like I said, the hesitancy in my hands, which wasn't so much my hands, but was the mental (inaudible)

NMC: Can you compare that hesitancy in the Rehearsal Performance with how you normally feel when you perform? Was it more or less in the rehearsal performance?

Albert: Um, it wasn't in my neck. Or, I guess a better description, in my throat rather than my entire neck. But, can you repeat that question?

NMC: Sure, um, the hesitancy that you feel in your hands, was it more or less in the Rehearsal Performance compared to a typical performance?

Albert: Less.

NMC: Less. Okay. Um, physical symptoms. You already mentioned, uh, like the queasiness, no, was that you?

Albert: Queasiness in stomach, uh. Neck sometimes.

NMC: Neck. Did you feel that in your Rehearsal Performance?

Albert: Not in my stomach.

NMC: And did you feel that sensation in your neck, in your throat?

Albert: Um, not during the Rehearsal Performance.

NMC: Okay. Again, just thinking from head to toe. In the head?

Albert: Just the hands, the hesitancy.

NMC: Okay. Alright. And did you take any specific steps to reduce anxiety for the Rehearsal Performance?

Albert: Uh, just that focus before the piece even starts had to be there, similar to performance, but performance, it was a longer period of focus with a time of relaxation, and then more focus. Whereas this was just a smaller time of focus.

NMC: Okay. Did you pray before the Rehearsal Performance.

Albert: No.

NMC: Okay. Let's now talk about how you felt in the Live Performance that was Sunday afternoon. That specific performance. Did you have any mental symptoms of anxiety in that performance?

Albert: Uh, yes.

NMC: Would you characterize that as a typical performance for you, the Live Performance?

Albert: How the performance went, or the feelings that...

NMC: The feelings.

Albert: Uh, no.

NMC: Okay. What made it atypical?

Albert: Um, it was. Let's see. I was less prepared than I typically like to be before a performance. Uh, so that contributed, not so much to the adrenaline, but more to the second-guessing myself.

NMC: Okay. Why were you not as prepared as you typically are?

Albert: Uh, it wasn't as clean a performance, just missing notes here and there. And, I hadn't play a run-through prior to the performance, like I like to. I'd, I hadn't taken the focus med.. or prayer, and then focus step. I had just, it was more a Rehearsal Per, a, uh, in between a Rehearsal Performance and a Live Performance.

NMC: Okay. Why is that, do you think? Is it because the audience was small? Was it because...

Albert: I actually forgot about it.

NMC: Oh. Okay.

Albert: And so, I was practicing Chopin down in the practice room, and uh, [Olivia] came down and, uh, you gonna?

NMC: I'll edit that (referring to proper name above).

Albert: You'll edit, okay. A girl came down and reminded me about the performance, and so I went up. I prepared mentally. Not long enough to take a, sort of, relaxation break, I had to keep my mind in it. And, uh, I don't think I'm addressing the question. Can you...

NMC: No, I think you are. It's just what was it about this performance, uh, ...

Albert: I guess, I went into it with that small period of focus of a rehearsal performance, rather than a live performance. And so, I was less prepared mentally, and physically.

NMC: Okay. And, would you have forgotten about a performance if it were really meaningful to you?

Albert: Uh. No. I hadn't written it down, and so, in my brain, I didn't remember it because of that.

NMC: Okay. Not to say that it was not meaningful for you...

Albert: It was, it was...

NMC: But, it's not a competition, it's not a public performance in the sense that there was a lot of career consequence.

Albert: Correct. Correct.

NMC: So how does that, does that make you change any of your thoughts about performance anxiety?

Albert: Uh, it makes me want to make sure, again, once again, that I'm writing everything down. But as far the performance anxiety, are you asking the unpreparedness, if that changed it, or if the Live Performance changed my performance anxiety?

NMC: Why don't you answer the question the way you think I meant it, and then I'll ask it again to. Because the way I mean it is a little bit leading, but I'll let you answer it, and then I'll clarify it again.

Albert: Would you be able to repeat the original question?

NMC: (chuckling) I don't think I can.

Albert: Okay. That's fine. Um...

NMC: What I'm wondering is, if this was not a performance that generated enough anxiety to have a beneficial effect. Do you see where I'm going with that?

Albert: Oh. So you're saying...

NMC: So because you weren't really anxious about it, you didn't spend the time running through the physical run-through, you didn't give yourself enough time to do a mental focus, focus break, and refocus.

Albert: And, I wasn't as dressed up as I like to be. I still dressed up, but, uh, I try to be at least, uh, black pants, belt, collar, dress shirt.

NMC: Okay. So physical appearance is part of your...

Albert: I wouldn't say it's part of my, um, it doesn't... It does matter in the overall performance, but the reason it does is because, more focus, I feel like it's more of a, it's a more important event than the rehearsal type of performance, and so therefore my brain is able to focus in more because it's different.

NMC: You feel like you make the performance special by dressing up?

Albert: Yes. And so, the dress didn't really affect how I was going to approach the piece, how I was going to try to play it, it was just the prior preparation which did affect the actual performance.

NMC: Okay. Can you think of specific instances during the performances in which anxiety may have affected your performance?

Albert: Uh, I guess, like I said, it wasn't as clean technically, as I like it to be. So after I missed a note, I tried to focus more, so it, so the anxiety, didn't really cause me to miss the note, and it didn't really cause me to focus more, but the anxiety came with the second-guessing of myself. Was it going to happen again?

NMC: Okay. Let's now consider the Virtual Performance, what you just did, recording a performance which is gonna go to an internet audience. Did you experience any mental symptoms of anxiety with this performance?

Albert: Uh...

NMC: Did you have the same kind of second-guessing that you describe in a typical performance?

Albert: No.

NMC: Did you have any specific emotions?

Albert: No.

NMC: Okay. Did you have a lack of focus or lack of concentration? Or enhanced focus or enhanced concentration?

Albert: I did not get into the mood of the piece as much as I'd like to have. Uh, it didn't feel it was, I guess I didn't feel the piece was in the mood I wanted it to be. It was technically accurate. It was, the style was correct. It's just I didn't reach that feeling that the music can give.

NMC: The connection.

Albert: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Um, Did you have any physical symptoms of anxiety with the Virtual Performance? The thing you mentioned in your throat?

Albert: That wasn't there.

NMC: Did you have any of the hesitancy feeling in your hands?

Albert: No.

NMC: Did you have any of the queasiness in the stomach, or the...

Albert: No.

NMC: Okay. Anything in your arms? Hands? Cold? Hot? Sweaty? Clammy?

Albert: Um they weren't cold and they weren't hot, but they were warm. It was, it was good.

NMC: Okay. Did you take any specific steps to reduce anxiety for this performance?

Albert: I took more of the rehearsal performance approach, which may have been beneficial, although, I think praying and a longer duration of focus are very beneficial to me before a performance. The setting was more, it was different than a live performance. Very different. And so, I think, that was actually beneficial to me, in my playing.

NMC: Okay. How so? How does the setting...

Albert: Uh, there was no live audience. I didn't have to think about the virtual audience, because that comes later. It's not instant. If it were a streaming, where it was a live virtual audience, I think it would have taken on a Live Performance feel. I would have liked more preparation, but because of the delay.

NMC: How would it be different if instead of just an audio recording, it was also video?

Albert: I might have gotten in the mood a little more if it were video, because, the video, or, the visual aspect of performing wasn't necessary, somewhat. Well, it was because, if I achieved that, I think I would have achieved the mood that I was trying for. Not that I really changed anything physically in my face, like a big grin or anything, but uh, I didn't feel like I had to perform visual. I don't know if that...

NMC: Would you have, would you have dressed up for a video recording?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Would that have changed?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Okay. DId you take, oh we just talked about that. Um, can you think of specific instances during the Virtual Performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Albert: No.

NMC: No. Um, if you received feedback from the internet audience after your performance goes public, would that change a subsequent performance?

Albert: Uh, the anxiety or how I played it?

NMC: Both.

Albert: Okay. The anxiety would actually change a little bit, because the first has established a standard, and so they expect, with the feedback, the audience expects with the feedback, that the second performance will be a little better, because hopefully the feedback was beneficial to the performance. So therefore, it sets a standard and expects a higher standard for a subsequent performance.

NMC: Okay. Most of the descriptions we've given come from the perspective as performer, how you feel. If you were a teacher, and one of your students is trying to explain what's happening to them in performance, what kind of descriptive words would you need to hear from your student to truly understand the mental and physical feelings as experienced.

Albert: I guess I'd like to know what they're doing before a performance. If they're focusing, or if they're, how they like to prepare for a concert. If they need to focus. If they need to pray, meditate? Or, if they just need to not think about anything musically

related. I'd like to know during the performance if they have and physical differences from just a regular rehearsal. If they feel any of the adrenaline that we talked about, or if there's queasiness. Any anxiety that they can feel internally.

NMC: Okay. Uh, what kind of words, specifically, would help you clue into what they're feeling?

Albert: I guess a description of the location of where the anxiety is. Are you asking for the words they would use or the words that I would expect?

NMC: The words that they would use that would help you understand how they're feeling.

Albert: Okay. They would say, "I feel it in my foot. I can't stop jittering, moving it up and down." I'd ask them if it is related to the tempo of the piece. If it's, if they're conscious of this, it's unless. If they're conscious of this during a performance or if someone had to tell them about it or they saw it on a video. And I'd ask if they... they might say, "I feel queasy in my stomach, like I'm going to vomit." And, uh, I'd ask if that made them focus more, focus on the stomach, or if that was just during the performance, before the performance, those types of things.

NMC: Okay. Um, what kinds of questions would you ask to help students articulate their feelings.

Albert: I'd ask them if they had perf... Oh, how to. Can you repeat that?

NMC: What kind of questions would you ask to help the student articulate their physical and mental symptoms and feelings.

Albert: Articulate. Okay. Where the anxiety is. When, as in what kind of performance setting or rehearsal setting. Why they think it's happening. What's causing it, if they can identify a cause or not.

NMC: Okay. Um, would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications, amplifications, or corrections?

Albert: Uh, no. But would it be posted, would I be able to get, to view it outside.

NMC: No, what I would do is I would transcribe it, and then print off a copy to give to you. And then, uh, you could read it and say, "Well, I said this. I think what I really meant was this." Or, "I don't think that's quite the way I meant to express it." Or, "Yeah, and I've been thinking about this and..." Just a chance to kind of read over the interview and...

Albert: Yeah, I guess so.

NMC: Okay. It may take me awhile to have that available. It typically takes four to five times the length of an interview to transcribe it.

Albert: That's fine.

NMC: So, that may be next week some time.

Albert: Okay.

NMC: Okay. Alright. Thank you very much.

Albert: Thank you.

Albert, LP2

November 14, 2009

NMC: Alright, Albert. You have now performed in two Live Performance situations. We're going to talk about that, but before we do, would you like to know how you scored on the various surveys?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Okay. Your score on the K-MPAI, which is the diagnostic measure, and it's a diagnostic measure that says to what extent you are prone to debilitative performance anxiety. You scored a negative 18. So, theoretically, a score of zero would mean you're right in the middle. Anxiety doesn't affect you more or less than the average. So your score indicates that your anxiety actually affects you much less than the average performer. What are your thoughts about that?

Albert: Good.

NMC: Good. Is it something you thought was probably the case, or...

Albert: No. I thought I'd be a lot closer to the average.

NMC: Okay. Um, and then your various score for the different performances. Your lowest score, and a low score means, generally, that it was a lower anxiety, was for the fifth Virtual Performance, and it was, fifth exposure performance, and it was a 29. Your highest score was for the first Live Performance, and it was a 43. So there was kind of a big spread between your lowest and your highest. And your second Live Performance was a 32, which would rank it tied for third lowest. You can see them here, 29, 31, 32, 32, 34, 34, 36, 40, 43.

Albert: And so the lower, the less anxiety?

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Albert: Okay.

NMC: Does that seem about right?

Albert: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: In thinking about those two performances?

Albert: I was thinking the other way around at first, and so I was confused.

NMC: Okay. Okay, so let's compare how you felt during Live Performance 1 and how you felt during Live Performance 2. Did one performance feel better than the other?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Okay, which one?

Albert: The second.

NMC: Why?

Albert: I was able to get into the feeling of the piece more, because I, acquired the feeling of the piece, so that it was congruent, so my feelings or emotion was congruent with the piece.

NMC: Okay. How do you, why do you think you were more able to do that second one than in the first one?

Albert: The first one, I was less prepared. And, the second one, I was more aware of how to keep my focus, and to keep looking more forward than looking behind, so that, even if there was a mistake, I was already past that.

NMC: Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different in Live Performance 2?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: How so?

Albert: Although I didn't think through the piece in the seconds before, before I started playing, I took more time to focus on the emotions of the piece rather than the technic of the piece.

NMC: So it was a different focus in your preparation? Um, any other differences in the mental symptoms. You mentioned some second-guessing of your memory in the first Live Performance.

Albert: That was not there, today.

NMC: Wasn't there today. Why do you think that is?

Albert: I guess as I've played this piece more and more, I've just become more comfortable. But not only because of that, but, like I've mentioned before, I became aware of why my anxiety was rising up. And so I've tried to, like I said, keep looking forward and not focus behind where I'm at.

NMC: Okay. Can you recall any of the other mental symptoms from the first performance and how they were different in the second performance?

Albert: Um, just a minute.

NMC: Sure.

Albert: I guess the one that sticks out is the second-guessing myself, as far as mental symptoms.

NMC: I think you also mentioned maybe, mind-wandering to formal aspects of the piece.

Albert: Yeah, that didn't happen either, today.

NMC: Okay. Why do you thing that is?

Albert: I guess the focus wasn't on the formal aspects of the performance. Because they were on the emotion, I wasn't as concerned about hitting all the right notes. I was more concerned about conveying the emotions of the piece through the notes, rather than just playing the notes.

NMC: When do you think you made that shift? Or was it just in that first performance, you felt you were more note concerned and in the second performance you felt you weren't?

Albert: I think, because this was a second performance, my mind was able to, sort of see my progression of. I'll start over. The five virtual recordings sort of helped me to become more comfortable performing it, performing the piece, as I would in a rehearsal performance, rather than focussing on all the different aspects of the Live Performance. So used, sort of, the Virtual Performances as a tool, rather than. And I think that's one of the reason's the Virtual Performance wasn't as, uh, didn't provide or give as much anxiety as the Live Performances.

NMC: Okay. What about your physical symptoms of anxiety, how were they different in Live Performance 2?

Albert: Well, I remember I said, well, something along the lines of my hands were in between hot and cold, they were just about warm. But today, I remembered I said I wanted to err on being warmer rather than being colder. Today they were hot and sweaty. That sort of provided a little extra anxiety because it was different. It didn't cause me to second-guess myself, "Why am I different. Should I be changing something?" It rather, it was just different, it wasn't detrimental.

NMC: How did you make your hands hot? What did you do to manipulate the temperature?

Albert: I think maybe the adrenaline did it. I'm not sure.

NMC: Okay.

Albert: But it wasn't, I didn't run them under hot water. I didn't sit on them or rub them together.

NMC: They just were?

Albert: Yeah.

NMC: You mentioned, I think also, the feeling of a knot in your throat. Did you get that in this performance?

Albert: No. I did for the, I believe, fifth Virtual Performance, get that a little bit. But today, I did not.

NMC: And I think you also mentioned a hesitancy, like a sureness of where you're placing your hand.

Albert: That was there today. And that was where I messed up the notes, accuracy wise. So I guess that second-guessing myself was there, it just wasn't there for the entire piece. Uh, the measures where I got off, my right hand was not in the same place as my left hand, or not aligned correctly.

NMC: Okay. So, in the, I just want to recap. In the Live Performance 2, you felt like you were more able to put yourself in an emotional state that matched the music?

Albert: Correct.

NMC: And you weren't able to do that in Live Performance 1. And you think because you were focussing more on the emotional state, that you weren't focussing as much on the notes themselves, and so you did not have as much second-guessing?

Albert: Correct.

NMC: Do you think one is better than the other?

Albert: I believe the second is better than the first.

NMC: Focussing on the emotions?

Albert: It's sort of a balance. Focussing on the emotional side and the technical side, but I think the first performance was way more to the technical accuracy side, whereas

this performance wasn't as necessarily leaning to the emotional side, but, I'm not sure what the balance was, but there definitely was an emotional side there.

NMC: Okay. Do you think the process of recording influenced you to making that change from a technically focused to an emotionally focused state of mind?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: You do.

Albert: Mm-hmm. Because if it had just been one VIrtual Performance, I would have focused once again on the technical side. But because there were multiple ones, multiple Virtual Performances, each time I came in, I wanted it to be a little better. I realized that I could fix a few notes here or there, but it become more important to me to fix the emotional aspect, where I would be feeling the music rather than just playing it.

NMC: Okay. You've now performed in several Virtual Performances. Compare your first Virtual Performance with your last Virtual Performance.

Albert: Like I mentioned, the first Virtual Performance was focused more on the technical aspects, although the emotional aspects were there. And the last one combined the two aspects.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any different mental symptoms of anxiety comparing the first and the last Virtual Performance?

Albert: I think as I moved from one to two to three to four to five, I became more aware of the Virtual Audience, even though they weren't present, they weren't listening to me right at that moment, I became more aware of it. The performance was going to reach the ears of people, even though it was at a later time. That could have produced more anxiety, but because I was focussing less on the notes and more what I could do with the overall piece, I don't think it made too much of a difference.

NMC: Did you get to listen to your performances, your Virtual Performances?

Albert: Just the first couple of seconds at the beginning and end in order to trim.

NMC: Did you subscribe to the podcast?

Albert: No.

NMC: Um, if you had listened, if you had subscribed to the podcast and listened to your performances, do you think that would affect the way you approached each recording session?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: How would it have affected it?

Albert: I like to use listening as a tool to see what the audience is hearing rather than what I'm hearing, because the anxiety isn't so much a factor when you're listening, where it is when you're playing. So, in the few seconds that I did hear, I heard that the piece wasn't as steady as I thought it was. It might be, it might have been a good thing, because maybe the piece was just as steady as I thought it was, but it helped me to realize that the anxiety was there, and it was affecting my precision with regards to tempo.

NMC: How about physical symptoms of anxiety, comparing your first Virtual Performance with the last one.

Albert: I know the fourth one, I believe, I felt the least symptoms, but the fifth one, maybe because it was the final Virtual Performance, and maybe it took on the idea of, "This is what the final product should be," even though I had another live performance coming up. Maybe that contributed to a little more anxiety. But I know that the first, uh, can you repeat the question?

NMC: Sure. Um, comparing your physical symptoms of anxiety from the first Virtual Performance to the last Virtual Performance.

Albert: The first, I did have some of the, if not all, of the symptoms we've talked about, the alarm clock symptoms. They weren't too prevalent, as prevalent, prominent, as in the first Live Performance, but I picked up on them. And by the fifth, I had lessened the physical symptoms of anxiety, uh, not necessarily lessened. I know in the fifth, I did feel a little bit of tension in my neck, the knotting effect. As the, as I went from one to number five, I didn't acquire any more anxiety, I'd say. I didn't tremble in the first, and I didn't tremble in the last. I didn't feel anything in my feet in the first, I didn't...

NMC: How about in your throat?

Albert: My throat? It was there in the first, I can't recall whether it was in the second or third, and I noticed it in the fifth as well, but it was much stronger in the first than it was in the fifth. And it didn't produce any additional anxiety in the fifth where it may have in the first.

NMC: Okay. If you were to continue to record virtual performances, how do you think the tenth would feel different than the last one you just did?

Albert: Uh, well if I were to continue past ten, maybe I would become numb to the specialness of each virtual performance, because it wouldn't become as out of the ordinary. But for the tenth, I would probably would still be working to focus more on the music, and not necessarily eliminate the anxiety, I'm not sure if the anxiety would always be there, but to not let it interfere with my playing. So the tenth, I would hope,

would be better than the fifth, which was better than the first. And hopefully by the tenth, I would have attained the accuracy I desired for that performance. Maybe not note perfect, but. As well as the emotional.

NMC: Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with symptoms of MPA, of musical performance anxiety in the second live performance?

Albert: Uh. No.

NMC: Okay. Why?

Albert: I think, I think the symptoms were different for the second than they were for the first, so I didn't necessarily deal with the symptoms of the first, but rather, the symptoms changed for the second.

NMC: Do you think recording multiple performances changed those symptoms?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Okay.

Albert: Like I said, I felt the tension in my neck for the first and for the fifth, not as much for the second and the third, and not at all for the fourth. I think I became more aware of my symptoms of anxiety, because I'd always known I was anxious, but I hadn't really observed where the anxiety was, unless it was in my hands with the second-guessing or the hesitation.

NMC: Do you think the process of recording changed your symptoms, or do you think the interview changed your symptoms?

Albert: I'm actually not sure, because, because I wanted to improve or build upon each virtual performance, that fueled my wanting to play with more emotion. So I think the process of recording allowed me to change, whereas the interview helped me realized what I was changing. And, so I think I would have changed through the Virtual Performance, or the recording process, but I wouldn't have necessarily changed as much or became aware of what was actually changing. Whereas the interview sort of made me think about why I would feel that this first performance was different from the fifth, and why I preferred the fifth over the first.

NMC: Okay. Would you try this approach again when preparing for another performance?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Why?

Albert: I have attempted to listen to myself before going into competitions or large scale performances, but I think it would be helpful if I did it, if I recorded myself for every piece I play. I think it was a good process, and I don't know if I exactly, if I knew exactly what I was supposed to be doing. I could have came in and thought, "Okay, I'm going to play five times. So each time should be the same because that's what I want. I want precision in how I perform." So if I were to play in a competition or a master class or a rehearsal performance, it should all be the same. But because I wasn't satisfied with my performance, I think the recording was a good process to get me to that stage of, "Okay, this is how I hear it in my head and how I want to play it." So I don't think I'm there yet, but I thought it was a good process in helping me.

NMC: How would you implement it? Would you change anything, the timing of the recordings, when you did the recordings?

Albert: Mm.

NMC: Do you need to wait until you have a piece at a certain level before the recordings would be effective? Can you do them from the very beginning, from the time you first have it memorized?

Albert: I think you can do it from the very beginning but it wouldn't be as beneficial as when the piece has progressed. And, number one because of time, because if I can't play through an entire piece without stopping, then going back and listening to that, there's an extra minute or two minutes of fumbling through notes, or starting back at another place. Another reason is, let's see, could you repeat the question. Uh, never mind. Let's see.

NMC: I think we were talking about using the process of recording at various stages in a pieces development, and I asked if it would be as useful in the beginning stages, or would use it in the beginning stages. Or do you need to wait until it's at a certain maturity before you get the benefit from it?

Albert: I think for me personally, I would like to wait until it's at a certain maturity. I'm not sure when, uh, because of time, as I mentioned. And, when you're playing it in the early stages, it's pretty apparent to my, when I'm playing it in the early stages, it's pretty apparent to my ear, where I'm screwing up, which notes I fumbled on, where my memory slip occurred, whereas in the later stages, you're not focusing on the notes so much, you're focusing on how the audience hears it, how you're portraying the emotion, how the phrasing of the notes is, if you're speeding up, slowing down.

NMC: Okay. You received feedback from the internet audience. Did that change how you approached the recording process?

Albert: I only received one, uh, feedback, response, but it was helpful in knowing that they wanted, the person giving the feedback wanted something more than they heard,

and it was encouraging to me to keep trying to progress with the piece, and use these recordings as an opportunity to satisfy my inner ear, how I want to hear the piece, and to satisfy the emotion, the, uh, I guess the emotion of the audience in hearing the piece.

NMC: Alright, imagine that you are a teacher and one of your students is getting ready for a performance, would you implement an approach similar to the process implemented in this study?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Okay. What advice would you give to the student to make the process effective?

Albert: I would encourage them to use it as a tool to recognize their performance anxiety, to critique the piece themself, or theirself, rather than only receiving feedback from other listeners. And, I think the survey, although some of the questions didn't apply to me as much as a performer and dealing with anxiety, and some question were not on the survey that I might, may have, uh, identified a change in. But I thought the survey was great in that I could see the change transcribed, and the results, I think it was good that I didn't know my results after each session, because then I would have, yes I would have wanted to do better than the last session, but I think, I don't know why, but it wouldn't have been as effective. As where, if I hadn't learned the results just at the start of this interview, I believe I wouldn't have realized how much change actually did occur.

NMC: Would you change the process in any way to make it more effective for your student?

Albert: I would have the student identify their anxiety as we did in this process through an interview, but then I would have implemented maybe one or two questions more on the survey that dealt particularly with them and their performance anxiety.

NMC: So, through the interview, find additional things to ask about.

Albert: So I would have used the same survey through the entire process, except that maybe after the interview and two recording sessions, I would have added two questions that pertained to them and their anxiety.

NMC: What two questions would you have added to your survey.

Albert: Uh, "Did you feel tension in your neck?" Because that would apply directly to me, rather than having to decide whether that was a mental or physical symptoms, and trying to incorporate that into a question that was broader.

NMC: Okay, what would the second question be?

Albert: The second question? Well one question that I found interesting, that I thought was simple, was the "Did you feel steady?" And I felt steady at first, and then like I said, after I listened to a few seconds of it, I may have been steady throughout the rest, but in those few second of the opening I wasn't steady, and that, uh, changed my mind. So, but the final additional question would be, "Did I.." I'm not sure what the question would have been, but something about the second-guessing or the hesitation, and how it changed for each recording.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything else you would like to add about what we've done thus far?

Albert: I enjoyed the process. Coming into it, I wasn't sure if it was going to change my performance anxiety, eliminate it, or make it worse if I became conscious of it and wasn't able to deal with it. But I thought that the process was well-designed, and that it allowed for me to, not eliminate, but to become aware of the anxiety, to question myself how I could change it, through the interview process, and to actually change it over a series of recordings. And, now that I think about it, maybe it was good for this initial process that I didn't listen to each recording, rather that I sort of was shocked by the range of my anxiety for the performances. So if I were to continue this process in my life, I think it would be good to listen to each recording after it was recorded, but I thought for this initial one, the way it was set up was well done.

NMC: Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications or corrections?

Albert: Yes.

NMC: Alright. Thank you very much.

Albert: Thank you.

Graham, VP

November 3, 2009

NMC: Okay. So what is your pseudonym?

Graham: Graham.

NMC: Graham. Graham, you have performed now in three different performances. You've done the Rehearsal Performance. You've done the Virtual Performance, and you've done the Live Performance which was Sunday.

Graham: Yes. Yes.

NMC: So we're going to talk for just a little bit about, about those performances, but before we do that, let's talk some about anxiety in general. So, let me read you a statement. We often feel the mental and physical symptoms of anxiety in daily life. Some people might find the following situations trigger these symptoms: riding in a roller coaster, driving in an unfamiliar location, giving an informational presentation, asking someone out on a date, or having a cavity filled. Can you think of a daily life situation that causes you to feel symptoms of anxiety?

Graham: Mmm. More than just, more than just performing?

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Graham: Something happens everyday?

NMC: Or it doesn't necessarily have to happen every day, but something that comes up in life that causes you to feel anxiety.

Graham: I'm drawing a blank here.

NMC: Okay. Do you feel anxiety when it's time to pay the bills?

Graham: Mm. I feel a sense of worry that I might not have enough money in my account.

NMC: Okay. Do you feel anxiety, uh, taking a test?

Graham: Sometimes.

NMC: Do you feel anxiety if you're having a project that's being evaluated?

Graham: Mm. Not so much when it's being evaluated.

NMC: What are the symptoms of anxiety that you recognize? What are the mental symptoms that happen?

Graham: Uh. Well, it makes it difficult to concentrate which is ironic because, you're anxious because there is something you need to concentrate on, but your anxiety makes it more difficult to concentrate on it, and focus on it, and do it without mistake. There's a jittery feeling. Sometimes there's physical things associated, like jittery hands, or tenseness.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific emotions that you tie to anxiety?

Graham: I've never really thought about it like that.

NMC: Do you have any internal dialogue or thoughts that you think when you're anxious?

Graham: Well, when I'm performing, one of the, one of the things that makes me most anxious is, that I go on, I keep, I keep, I start talking to myself in my head and hearing myself say that, that, "I haven't made a mistake yet. I'm gonna make a mistake now, because I haven't made a mistake yet." And it grows and grows until I make a mistake. And then even after that, it doesn't go away.

NMC: Okay, so these are considering how you generally feel in a solo performance.

Graham: Yes.

NMC: Okay. Let's stay with that with just your solo performance. Do you have any emotions that you tie to performance situations?

Graham: Well, it's hard to feel like I've prepared enough.

NMC: Okay. Anything else. Any other emotions that you might feel?

Graham: I feel like, if they're if there are other people that I'm performing with, or who are on the same program that they may have prepared better than me. They may have better repertoire that they're performing.

NMC: What kinds of things, you mentioned the internal dialogue about mistakes, either that you haven't made them or that you're about to make them. Are there other things that you think while you're performing?

Graham: Well, uh, I do notice that when I, when it's not a solo performance, when it's in a group performance it's easier to think about things that I'm supposed to be thinking about like, uh, playing the right dynamics at a certain point, or the right articulations.

NMC: What kind of group situations do you find that in?

Graham: This would be, uh, uh, wind bands and choirs that I've performed with.

NMC: What do you perform in wind band.

Graham: I perform a variety of instruments.

NMC: Okay. So, group performances, you have different emotions than you do for solo performances.

Graham: Yes, its, there's a lot less anxiety. It's easier to focus on doing something correctly because I don't feel like there's a spotlight on me. Even if, necessarily, even if there is a, a solo passage in a group setting, it doesn't feel the same as being the only one performing.

NMC: Do you find you have difficulties concentrating when you're performing?

Graham: Well, occasionally, yes. Occasionally I uh, I drift away in my, and uh, my muscle memory takes over, and it can be, it can be uh, a little bit surprising to realize that I haven't been thinking about the music, but I've kept playing it. And then I realize that I'm not thinking about it, and there's a little hiccup sometimes there, where the, where I have to go from, from my hands knowing what I'm doing to my head telling my hands what to be doing.

NMC: So your mind wanders a little bit sometimes?

Graham: Yeah.

NMC: Do you think that performance anxiety causes your mind to wander, or does your mind wander and that creates anxiety?

Graham: I think the anxiety causes it to wander.

NMC: Do you know to what things your mind might wander?

Graham: Well, it might wander to thinking about the performance, thinking about what mistakes I'm going to make. Or thinking about who's in the audience. Or it could wander to the most random and trivial things like something that happened yesterday at 11:18 A.M. that just randomly popped in to my head, and I can't stop thinking about it for a little while. Even though it has no relevance to what's going on.

NMC: So you might think about laundry while you're performing.

Graham: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Um, do you ever get the since of dissociation, that you're not really performing, you're just kind of watching yourself perform? Or that you're not connected to your hands, they're just doing their thing and you're along for the ride?

Graham: Well that would be, that would be describing the situation where I, uh, where my muscle memory takes over, that I uh, I already mentioned.

NMC: Can you describe what you mean by muscle memory?

Graham: Well. Well, uh, how there are several different ways that contribute to memorizing a piece, and one of them is that, the more you repeat it, the more your hands are used to going into those positions, in but da it (stutters), in certain time intervals, and they just go to those position. And in a way that's necessary to being able to perform it because otherwise they won't go into the right intervals, if you have to think about the music all the time. But then it makes it possible to, for your hands to run away when you, and and and, your mind starts thinking about laundry, and your hands are running away. And then your, and then your mind suddenly realized that, that, you were supposed to be performing, and somehow you've continued to do that without, without any problems up until now. And it usually makes some kind of hiccup at that point, where you try to get back into a real performance.

NMC: Okay. What other kinds of memory are necessary to perform?

Graham: Well, uh, there's knowing the music itself, knowing the structure. Uh, having a knowledge of certain points in the piece where you can start if you have a problem and you have to start in the middle. Um, but knowing the structure and sometimes, sometimes it can also help to have an image of the music, the sheet music, in your head. If, if you can remember things like that, then that would be another way to memorize music, is to be able to keep seeing that. But otherwise it could get, the sheet music can get internalized into some other, some other form where you just know the chords by, you might know the chords by your chord inversions, or arpeggiations in some manner.

NMC: Do you think about the structure of a piece while you're performing it?

Graham: Well, sometimes during transitions, during transitions when you have to think, and think what the next section is, make sure you're not, you're not repeating back to somewhere and get caught in an endless loop that you don't know how to get out of. You'll be performing all day. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. Let's talk now about physical symptoms. Do you recall any physical symptoms that you typically feel in solo performances?

Graham: No. I don't really feel anything other than, I suppose that before a performance I can feel, uh, I guess butterflies in my stomach, somewhat. At the anticipation of going out on stage.

NMC: What about when you sit down to play? Do you feel butterflies in your stomach?

Graham: Um, no. But there is sort of a floating feeling. Like I'm trying to position myself correctly. And, I might be moving, uh, moving in a rehearsed way that I'm not thinking about. That I'm, I'm bowing, and then I'm turning, and then I'm sitting down, and I have my arms in such and such a position. And my foot out extended to the pedal.

NMC: So floating as in you're not really thinking about doing those things, you just do them because that's what you have to do before you perform?

Graham: Well, thinking about them a little bit. It just sort of feels like every part of my body is floating on something. It's not, it doesn't feel like, like I'm exerting the effort to keep my arm held up, it's just feels like it's being held up.

NMC: Mm. Okay. Let's go from your head to your toes. Do you ever feel anything in your scalp or your head or your face whenever you're performing?

Graham: No.

NMC: Okay.

Graham: Unless there's an itch.

NMC: Do you ever feel anything in your neck or your shoulders when you're performing.

Graham: No.

NMC: Do you feel anything in your upper chest, in your back, how your heart beats, how you breathe?

Graham: No, I don't think so.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any different sensations in your arms or in your hands?

Graham: Well, again they feel like they're being held up rather than that I'm holding them up.

NMC: Okay. Anything else?

Graham: Sometimes, my hands are just moving without me telling them what to do.

NMC: Okay. Do you ever feel sensations of heat or cold or shakiness in your arms and hands?

Graham: No.

NMC: Okay. How about in your stomach, besides the butterflies that you feel before you perform?

Graham: No.

NMC: Uh, lower back?

Graham: Uh, well, not related necessarily to anxiety, but, sometimes it gets lower back pain from the piano stool.

NMC: Okay. How about in your legs or in your knees?

Graham: No.

NMC: Okay. How about in your feet?

Graham: No.

NMC: Whenever you're getting ready to perform, do you take any steps to reduce your anxiety?

Graham: Well, if it's particularly bad, then I might take deep breaths. Try to, try to keep myself calm. And I do try to think about it. I don't try to, I don't try to, uh, ignore it. I try to think about it and get ready for it. So that I don't just suddenly find myself out on stage and wondering how I got there.

NMC: Mm. When do you take the deep breaths?

Graham: Uh, I suppose that, uh, that here at [name of school] there's the green room behind the recital hall. That would be, that would be where I'm preparing. Or unless it's uh, unless it's uh, a recital in which I'm waiting right behind the door before the next performer. Or before the performer, after, before me.

NMC: Do the symptoms that trigger you to need to breathe deeply, um, do they completely go away once you walk on stage?

Graham: Oh, well it's, it's the uh, butterflies, I guess. And, it doesn't go away when I walk on stage, it goes away when I start playing, or soon after I start playing.

NMC: Okay. Uh, do you have any pre-performance routines that you like to do before you play?

Graham: Not routines really. No.

NMC: Do you have any practice strategies or rehearsal strategies that you implement designed to help you with anxiety on stage?

Graham: Well, uh. I believe I have adopted some of the strategies that [my teacher] tries to instill in us. Which is, primarily having, having uh, places in the music where we can start in the middle if we, if we uh, lose ourselves. And having several of those places. and, and uh, he's also uh, mentioned practicing, mentioned practicing without looking at the keys, practicing with your hands in farther octaves out from each other. Uh, practicing for other people, having rehearsal performances. Um, those sorts of things.

NMC: Okay. Do you, uh, do any specific relaxation techniques before you perform?

Graham: Well I suppose the deep breaths...

NMC: Deep breathing.

Graham: ... is the only thing.

NMC: Okay. What about prayer or mediation? Do you ever pray or meditate before you perform?

Graham: No.

NMC: No. Um, is there anything you do during performance to help you with performance anxiety?

Graham: Um, I, I don't think I could. I am too concentrated on being anxious to be able to concentrate on something to control it.

NMC: Okay, so that's how you generally feel in a solo performance. I would like to now consider how you felt specifically in the Rehearsal Performance. And that was the performance you did by yourself with no one listening. Okay? Did you have any mental symptoms of anxiety in that performance?

Graham: Well, uh, just the same, uh, growing feeling that I'm going to make a mistake, and if I haven't made a mistake, that I'm going to.

NMC: Does worry about when you're going to make a mistake make you make a mistake?

Graham: Yes. Yes it does.

NMC: Um, When does that begin. Does that begin before you start the piece, or does that begin after you've played a little bit?

Graham: It begins after I've played a little bit. Uh, generally, I guess it, it's a, start going, and then, there's a short amount of time where I can concentrate just on the music. But soon after that, I might become disconnected and start thinking about other things. Primarily thinking about when I'm going to start making mistakes.

NMC: You say there's a short time when you're able to focus on the music, what do you mean?

Graham: Well I mean the first several measures, when everything, when everything is deliberate, and just, and just starting, and... It's just that, uh...

NMC: You feel like you can really attend to the opening measures?

Graham: Yes. Yes.

NMC: And then after your fingers get going...

Graham: Yeah.

NMC: ...then you kind of drift?

Graham: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Did you have any specific emotions associated with the Rehearsal Performance?

Graham: Well, there certainly was worry about people judging the performance. Uh, but there's the additional worry about is this ready for the upcoming performance that I'm practicing for.

NMC: Okay. Um, did your mind wander, like you described that typically happens, did that happen in the Rehearsal Performance?

Graham: Yes.

NMC: Would you say that it wandered more or less than it typically does? Or about the same?

Graham: About the same.

NMC: About the same. Um, did you have any physical symptoms of anxiety during the Rehearsal Performance?

Graham: No. Maybe some of the, some of the floating in my arms, but certainly a lot less than during other, during more real performance.

NMC: Does the floating sensation, is that something that bothers you, or just something you recognize? Or is it something you enjoy?

Graham: It's a, it's a feeling like I'm not really in control of what I'm doing, and I , I guess I just recognize that.

NMC: Like you're a puppet on a string? No?

Graham: Not quite the analogy I would describe it with, but similar, I suppose.

NMC: So, it doesn't bother you, per se, it's just something you notice?

Graham: Yeah.

NMC: Okay.

Graham: 'Cause I know I'm doing what I planned to do. So obviously, I am in , I am in control of, or I was in control of what I am doing now. And just, it's just the feeling that there's, "This is what I'm doing now. I know what I'm going to do in the next couple of minutes. I know I'm going to perform this piece."

NMC: Do you feel compartmentalized? That part of you is responsible for the performance, and that part of you is not?

Graham: I have not felt that way, or thought about it that way.

NMC: Okay. Did you take any steps to reduce symptoms of anxiety for the Rehearsal Performance?

Graham: No.

NMC: No. So, uh, okay.

0:23:44

NMC: Let's now consider the Live Performance that you did on Sunday afternoon. Can you recall any specific mental symptoms of anxiety on Sunday afternoon?

Graham: Well, it was all the things that I have described.

NMC: So you felt the feelings of suspension?

Graham: Uh-huh. (affirmative)

NMC: Did you feet that the distraction, or the mind wandering on Sunday?

Graham: Yes.

NMC: Can you think of specifically what your mind wandered to?

Graham: It was mainly wandering to, "I haven't prepared this enough. I have uh, I'm going to make a mistake soon." It was also in that instance wandering to, "I just ate a brownie. I'm getting the keys really sticky."

NMC: Okay. Anything else, specific to that performance?

Graham: Um. No.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any specific emotions that you felt during the performance Sunday night?

Graham: Well, I just generally felt emotionless throughout the performance.

NMC: Is that something that bothers you? Or... To feel emotionless?

Graham: I think it comes from, uh, knowing what I'm going to be doing in the next couple of minutes, and not necessarily being in control of it. But I don't, I don't feel that there really is an emotion to be had, with that experience. 'Cause, I'm going to be doing this, anyway.

NMC: So is it, it's kind of an existential sort of thought. It's going to happen anyway. Why worry about it?

Graham: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Uh, do you ever try to manipulate your emotions for musical reasons?

Graham: Well, uh, the piece that I'm performing for this study doesn't really have too much emotion in it. But I have, there have been other pieces that I've performed where, where uh, it does help to be in a certain emotional state. Uh, and I have, I have tried to think about things and get in that emotional state to perform those pieces. I've also noticed that sometimes, uh, they result in me being in that state at the end of the piece. Uh, some, some uh, long and furious pieces might leave me feeling a little drained afterwards.

NMC: And what piece are you playing for the study?

Graham: Bach's Invention No. 4 in D minor.

NMC: Um, and you don't feel that it is particularly one emotion or another?

Graham: I've never thought of what emotion it would be. There is, there is a feeling to the piece, but I've never thought of any particular emotion.

NMC: Okay. What were your physical symptoms Sunday afternoon? Did you feel, uh, anything in your head or in your face?

Graham: No.

NMC: No. Did you feel anything in your shoulders or in your neck?

Graham: No.

NMC: No. How about in your upper back or in your chest, or your breathing, or your heart?

Graham: No.

NMC: No. Arms and hands?

Graham: Maybe floating. The floating.

NMC: The floating thing? In your stomach?

Graham: Uh, didn't really have anything in my stomach.

NMC: Okay. Uh, lower back?

Graham: No.

NMC: Legs? Feet?

Graham: No.

NMC: Okay. Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety Sunday afternoon?

Graham: I did not.

NMC: Okay. So you did not do your deep breathing that you mentioned?

Graham: No.

NMC: Um, any reason why you did not do that?

Graham: Well I think on Sunday, I was just getting there and going out and I didn't think about it a whole lot before I went out there, and then, and then I was at the door,

and then, and then, going out on stage. And I just, I did have a thought of wondering how I got there. Just feeling like I hadn't prepared enough for the experience.

NMC: So what factors led to that feeling?

Graham: Well, that I hadn't really thought about the performance too much before hand. And that, I may not necessarily, have prepared well enough for it.

NMC: What would cause you to think more about a performance before you played.

Graham: Well, I suppose if I had more music that I was playing. This is a rather short piece. If I had more music, and if it were more, uh, emotionally charged music, music that I feel very strongly about. Or if there were important people in the audience. If I knew that, uh, if I knew that the people that were listening, that I cared about how they thought about the performance a whole lot.

NMC: What kind of people makes you care about what they think in the performance?

Graham: Well, mainly like family members. I, I want to make my family proud. And I supposed distinguished artists and musicians, say, if there's someone particularly distinguished in the audience, I would want to... I wouldn't want to appear the fool.

NMC: Any other people that might cause you to think more about a performance before hand?

Graham: Uh, I don't. I don't think so.

NMC: No. Okay.
0:30:52
NMC: Um, Let's now consider the Virtual Performance. The recording session that we just did. Um, did you have any mental symptoms of anxiety in the Virtual Performance?

Graham: There was still the feeling that I was going to make a mistake, although it, it influenced me significantly less in the Virtual Performance.

NMC: Than in a Live Performance, or than typical, or than in the Rehearsal Performance.

Graham: Than in the Live Performance. And less than typical.

NMC: Okay. Why do you think that is?

Graham: Well, I just suppose it's the intensity of the thoughts and how much they're distracting me from my playing. Uh, it could also be that the setting, that uh, we're in

this room that is uniformly lit, and there are, there are, there are seats in this room. There's no one in them, but they're, they're not, they're no all facing towards me.

NMC: So you literally don't feel like you're the center of attention, or that you're in the spotlight?

Graham: Yeah. Whereas in a, in a theatre there's a, the house is dark, the stage is bright, and the, all the chairs are pointing straight at you even if there aren't any people in those chairs. You're definitely in the focus.

NMC: So let's say we recorded this performance upstairs in the recital hall, with the lighting that's typical, would that make a difference in how you performed?

Graham: It might have, uh, might have increased the anxiety a little bit.

NMC: Okay. Did you feel your mind wander in the Virtual Performance?

Graham: Not so much. Just to, just to the performance itself.

NMC: So would you consider your mind wandering better or worse in this performance than in the Live Performance?

Graham: Um,

NMC: In terms of how it affects performance.

Graham: Um, it affected the performance less.

NMC: So your mind wandered less, and so because your mind was not wandering, your performance was better.

Graham: Yes.

NMC: And that was in the Virtual Performance?

Graham: Yes.

NMC: Okay. Did you have the same feeling, the floating feeling in your arms? Before you played?

Graham: Not really, no.

NMC: Okay. Uh, we've gone through the physical symptoms, and you say it doesn't affect you typically in your head and face. Is that the same here?

Graham: That's the same.

NMC: Is it the same with your shoulders, neck, not typically...

Graham: Yes.

NMC: Your upper back, chest?

Graham: Yeah, I, there weren't any additional symptoms, and I don't think the arms and the stomach were not really affected in the Virtual Performance.

NMC: Okay. Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety in the Virtual Performance?

Graham: No.

NMC: No. Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Graham: Uh, the very first note, I think, was not as strong as it should have been.

NMC: And you attribute that to the, to anxiety?

Graham: Yeah. Thinking, just, I guess wondering about how good the performance was going to be.

NMC: Okay. DId you have the same kind of mental dialogue of "when will the mistake happen? I haven't made a mistake. When am I going to make a mistake?"

Graham: Yeah.

NMC: You still had that?

Graham: Yes. It didn't affect me as much, though.

NMC: I don't think we asked that same question about the Live Performance. Can you think of specific instances during the Live Performance Sunday afternoon, where anxiety may have affected your performance.

Graham: Well yes. There were several mistakes in the latter part of the piece, in which my fingers fumbled around and I ended up in the wrong fingerings, which made it impossible to go through smoothly. Or I just, uh, was missing, ways... I think that my, my hands were getting, may have been getting a little jittery at those points, and I was thinking about, about when I'm going to make the mistake. And I was thinking about the, the brownie grease getting on the keys, and...

NMC: You mention that your hands get jittery. Do they get jittery in response to a mistake or prior to the mistake?

Graham: I think in response. I think after the first one, they started shaking a little bit.

NMC: And what do you think contributed to that first mistake? Was it a symptom of anxiety?

Graham: Yes.

NMC: Do you know, kind of what...

Graham: It was probably the thoughts.

NMC: The thoughts about, "When am I going to make a mistake?

Graham: Yes.

NMC: Was your mind wandering at that point, or were you thinking about making a mistake?

Graham: I was thinking about making a mistake.

NMC: Okay. Do you think, and this is for the Live Performance again, that any of the symptoms of anxiety actually helped your performance? Like helped improve your concentration or gave your performance more edge or more vitality than it might have had without the audience?

Graham: Not in this piece, no. I know of other pieces in which that might have happened, but not this piece.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any of the same things happen in the Virtual Performance, that anxiety or symptoms helped you to perform better?

Graham: No.

NMC: No. Of the three performances, the Rehearsal Performance, the Live Performance, and this Virtual Performance, which one do you think was the best?

Graham: The Virtual Performance, probably, by a narrow margin over the Rehearsal Performance.

NMC: Okay. What kinds of things made it better than the Live Performance and the Rehearsal Performance?

Graham: Well I know that the, uh, it's better than the Live Performance because it's, uh, because, there's uh, the room and the people and, it's just more anxiety associated with that. Uh, I, I'm judging it better than the Rehearsal Performance just based on how it sounded and how I did, I don't think anything in particular contributed to that. It was probably, it might have been that I was more prepared for this, just because I've been, I've been performing it. Because I had the Live Performance, and I had the Rehearsal Performance before this.

NMC: Do you judge a performance on the basis of an error count or the basis of, uh, um what, on what... What considerations do you take into account in judging a performance?

Graham: Well, it depends on the piece. Something like this I would judge based on, how close, generally on any piece, I would judge it based on how closely it, uh, how closely the performance, how close it was to what I wanted it to be. And what I want it to be is generally, in this piece, would be free of errors, and with some general dynamics in there, and keeping it steady throughout the piece. Other pieces from other eras might be significantly more focused on having an emotional impact.

NMC: Okay. Most of these descriptions we've given from the performance, from the perspective of the performer. Imagine now that you are a teacher, and a student of yours is trying to explain, uh, there performance anxiety symptoms. What kind of descriptive words would you need to hear to understand what they're experiencing.

Graham: Mm.. I guess I would need to hear if they're jittery or if their mind is wandering. Or, or if they're losing their place.

NMC: Any other specific words that would help you clue into what they're feeling?

Graham: Uh, butterflies. I don't really know.

NMC: Okay. What kind of questions might you ask a student to help them explain their feelings?

Graham: Uh, well I'm not much of a, I haven't been in the role of a piano teacher before, so I wouldn't really know.

NMC: Okay.

Graham: I guess I would, I would probably end up just asking specifically about things that I experience and asking if they experience those things. And then asking specifically about, uh, things that I've heard other people experience, and if they've experienced those things.

NMC: Okay. Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications, amplifications, or corrections.

Graham: I'm sure that with the exception of my, the construction of my sentences and the amount of, uh, poor grammar present in written, in spoken language, I've probably conveyed my point quite accurately.

NMC: It could also be that something occurs to you that you wish you had said, or that in reading something over, maybe you said something and on second thought your like, "Well, no, that's not really exactly what I mean." It'd give you a chance to make any clarifications that way, too.

Graham: No.

NMC: No. Okay. Okay, if you change your mind about that, it generally takes four to five times the length of an interview to transcribe it, and I'll have about eight of these interviews to do, so it may be, into next week before they're done. But if you do decide that you would like to read the interview and clarify anything, I would be more than happy, to, uh, let you do that. Is there anything else you want to add about the process, what we've done so far, or, um, something that we haven't covered yet?

Graham: No. It seems rather thorough.

NMC: Okay.

Graham: A lot of things that I wouldn't have thought of.

NMC: Okay. Well, we'll end with that.

Graham, LP2

November 14, 2009

The very beginning of this interview was not recorded by the digital recorder. The interview began with the general preamble, recapping the number of performances and asking the participant if he wanted to know the scores of the different surveys. We went through the scores until the point that I noticed the recorder was not functioning. I started the recorder and covered the scores a second time.

Graham: It wasn't recording?

NMC: No, but that's okay. We'll keep going. To review, the diagnostic you scored a -7. Your lowest CPAI was a 40, and that was the first virtual performance. The highest was actually Exposure Performance One, which was the very next recording, and that was a 53. Your Live Performance was a 47, and your Live Performance Two was a 40. Um, let's just start over. You've now just performed in two live performance situations. Compare how you felt during Live Performance One and how you felt during Live Performance Two.

Graham: I felt more prepared in the second performance.

NMC: And why do you think you felt more prepared in the second performance?

Graham: Well probably because of, having performed the same piece several times and failing in those performances. And I say failing because, in those performances, if you listen to them, there's a lot of, uh, breaks in the piece where I missed something, or, I don't think I ever forgot something, but I usually missed it in my hands. Missed where I was supposed to be. And it would, I guess I was being jittery for whatever reason.

NMC: And these were, this was in the recording sessions?

Graham: Yeah, this was in the exposure performances. I had those, uh, I had similar experience with the first live performance, but it was, but having the, the uh, having the audience there I think made it more real and made it more important that I do well.

NMC: Um, did one of the Live Performances feel better than the other?

Graham: Yes, the second one.

NMC: Okay. And what made it better to you?

Graham: Uh, that I performed better.

NMC: You felt the performance was more fluent, or more artistic or...?

Graham: It was, it was more free of mistake, and because of that, I was able to focus more on, more on, uh, how the piece sounded. And I think I did a better job the second time.

NMC: Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different in Live Performance Two?

Graham: No.

NMC: So you had the same sort of mental symptoms?

Graham: Yes.

NMC: And can you recall what those were?

Graham: Becoming distracted from, uh, from thinking of random things, or thinking of when my next mistake is going to be. Also, having a feeling of suspension over the piano where I don't feel like I'm actually there performing, although I didn't really feel that in the second live performance as I did in the first one.

NMC: Okay. You mentioned that a lot of times your mind anticipates mistakes that are yet to occur.

Graham: Yes.

NMC: Did that happen in the Live Performance 2?

Graham: I was thinking about it less, so I think that affected me less.

NMC: Okay. Um, how did Live Performance 2 compare to a typical performance? Mental symptoms of anxiety.

Graham: Um, well I would say, it's uh, typical performance?

NMC: About the same, that's normally what you would expect to feel like in a performance? Or was it, um, more anxiety provoking than what you would typically expect, or was it less anxiety provoking?

Graham: I think it was about the same. I mean my, my anxiety is usually, um, directly related to how well I've prepared the piece. So I would say both live performances probably reflected how I would feel in a, in a performance outside of the study, just because, uh, over the course of the study the piece has been better prepared for the second live performance than for the first live performance.

NMC: Okay. How about the physical symptoms in Live Performance 2. You mentioned you did have the floating hands sensation?

Graham: Not so much in the second. Uh, in the second live performance, although, I don't really think it's a, I wouldn't really describe it as a physical symptom. It's just a way that it feels, and a way that I think it is, not so much that my hand actually feels higher or, like it's on a cloud or something, but that it, it's just a different interpretation of how I'm holding my hands.

NMC: Does it feel foreign?

Graham: No. I think my recollection of the feeling is that it's, it's like I'm, it's like I'm doing something autonomously without, without fully controlling, without consciously controlling my own actions, but that I know what to do, and I'm just doing it. I've described it as a physical sensation.

NMC: And that was less in the second live performance?

Graham: Yes.

NMC: And compared to a typical performance, your physical symptoms. You also mentioned butterflies, sorry I forgot, in Live Performance 1 last time. They weren't that severe but getting butterflies in your stomach. Did the same thing happen in Live Performance 2?

Graham: No.

NMC: No. And you attribute that to being more prepared?

Graham: Yes.

NMC: Feeling more prepared?

Graham: Prepared. Yes.

NMC: Can we talk about being more prepared for a little bit.

Graham: Okay.

NMC: Um, in the two weeks between Live Performance 1 and Live Performance 2, would you say your practice of the piece has changed much?

Graham: Well, this was a piece, that I uh, performed in early October, and didn't really practice much after that. And, I uh, have been preparing a little bit for each of the performances. I'd say twenty minutes, probably. Not a whole lot. Just enough to

refresh myself. I think that little bit, and the uh, having the experience of the exposure performances has, has uh, influenced how prepared I feel to play the piece.

NMC: So doing the multiple performances, or having that in your schedule, helped you incrementally prepare the piece over the course of these two weeks, or incrementally review the piece over the course of this two weeks?

Graham: Yes. Yes.

NMC: Okay. You have now performed in several virtual performances. Compare your first virtual performance with your last virtual performance.

Graham: Well, I think the first one was better than any of the others after it. Uh, after that, the second one was pretty bad, then it started getting slightly better as it went on. I'm not sure if I wasn't taking it as seriously after the first one, or something, but.

NMC: Did the first virtual performance feel better than the last one, in terms of the performance itself?

Graham: Yes.

NMC: Okay. Why was that?

Graham: I guess because I did better is all that I can think of. I don't know.

NMC: Okay. Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different in the last virtual performance?

Graham: Well in all of the virtual performance, it was pretty much, there wasn't really distraction and thinking of other things. Uh, there was only the distraction of thinking of when I'm going to make a mistake, and even that was less than a live performance. And this was the same for all of the, uh, virtual performances.

NMC: Was there any general trend in that particular symptoms from the first to the last, or was it a random variation, a lot in one performance, and not so much in the next performance.

Graham: I'd say it was directly correlated to how well I did in each one. Which, again, was best the first time, then worst the second time, then getting better after that.

NMC: Okay. So this is a chicken and egg question from me. What caused each of those? Did the bad performance cause the mental symptoms to be worse, or did the mental symptoms cause the performance to be worse?

Graham: I think that, uh, the mental symptoms caused the performance to be worse. I had more mental symptoms because I was less prepared. Possibly because I was, I might not have taken it as seriously after the first one.

NMC: Okay. Um, how about your physical symptoms. DId you have many physical symptoms of anxiety in the virtual performance recordings?

Graham: No.

NMC: So none of the floating hands?

Graham: No.

NMC: No.

Graham: None of that.

NMC: Okay. If you were to continue to record virtual performances, how do you think the tenth virtual performance would feel compared to the last one you did?

Graham: It would probably continue to feel better each time.

NMC: Okay. Why is that? Is it because you would be more prepared each time, or because you'd be more used to the process each time?

Graham: Well there's nothing particularly foreign about the process, unless it's just the process of performing in general. Uh, I don't, there's only a certain extent to which I could be more prepared for it. So I think it would just be, getting more, getting more used to performing often.

NMC: So being ready to perform for a length of time would change your confidence every time you came to perform it the nth time?

Graham: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yes.

NMC: Let's talk some more about the scores you had on these different performances. The first virtual performance was the lowest. And, you actually scored the exact same score for the second live performance.

Graham: Uh-huh.

NMC: What are your thoughts on that?

Graham: Well I don't know. I'm pretty sure I did not give the same responses.

NMC: DId the second live performance feel that much different than the first live performance?

Graham: Yes.

NMC: It did. Are you at all surprised that the score is tied with your lowest score?

Graham: No, I guess not. I guess I'm not surprised.

NMC: Um, the fifth virtual performance, you scored a 47, and that was your last virtual performance. And that's really all of your exposure performances, well, here's something funny. Your first live performance and your last virtual performance were the exact same score.

Graham: Mmm.

NMC: Um. So, I guess I would expect this to look something more along these lines. Your rehearsal performance would be the least.

Graham: Mm-hmm

NMC: Uh, then I would expect maybe it to be EP5, 4, 3, 2, 1, the virtual performances, and then the live performances. I mean, in my head, do you see why I would put them in that order?

Graham: Yeah, it would certainly make sense. I think the position of each of those performance in relation to each other, affected how, how the anxiety was. Because the later performances, the later performance would always have a lower anxiety than the earlier performances, especially since I don't usually perform that often.

NMC: Mm-hmm. Do you recall any specific instance that might have made this first virtual performance to be the highest score of all of your performances?

Graham: Again, I think that I played the worst that time. And, I would say that I probably just assumed it was going to be like the virtual performance before it, and, and then when I got here, it was something, it was completely new and I wasn't expecting that.

NMC: So do you think you did fewer preparations to perform in that performance?

Graham: Possibly. Um, I would think that I, I would literally, I think that I literally did the same amount of preparation, but it's just the attitude coming into the performance that influenced my anxiety.

NMC: And what attitude, how would you describe that?

Graham: The attitude of, "It's just gonna be like last time." And then having that, having that, uh, not that expectation not be filled, uh, creates more anxiety. I mean, not that it was significantly different from the last time, but it wasn't, it wasn't just an exact repeat of what I did. It was, it was another one. And I guess I wasn't expecting that specifically.

NMC: Okay. Okay, um, do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with symptoms of music performance anxiety in the second live performance.

Graham: It didn't change the way I dealt with them. Uh, but it might have decreased the amount to which they occur. Certainly for this piece in particular, if not for performance in general.

NMC: Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Graham: I think so. I think that would be a positive thing.

NMC: Okay. Why?

Graham: Because it helped me, uh, get used to the idea of performing and the action of performing, so that the performance itself was not so much a, a big unexpected thing as it was a normal thing.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything that you might change about the approach? THe number of times you recorded it, where you recorded it, posting every performance or just posting some performances?

Graham: I don't think I would necessarily need to post the performance, because I was never really worried about the audience. But, uh, the action of recording it made me realize that I can't do it over, that there's the one recording. And, that would basically just be a, be a, uh, an extension of a rehearsal performance in that it really focusses on the fact that there's this one time to get it right. And then you leave the room, and you can't do it again.

NMC: Could you recreate the same, uh, the same thing without recording the performance?

Graham: I don't know. I think that the, the act of recording it does influence how it feels to perform, when, as opposed to not recording it and there being no one there, you're just performing for yourself. Even if no one listens to the recording, the act of having the recording does change the dynamic.

NMC: What if you still signed up for appointments, and you still changed the room, and you still came in to a new and novel room, you played your performance, and then you left the room. Would that have the same feeling as doing that and recording it?

Graham: You mean just going to a different room every time but not recording it?

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Graham: Uh, I guess if somebody were listening. If you were listening. If there was just no one there, I don't think it would really change.

NMC: So the recording, the fact that it's being recorded, in some sense, makes it a special performance?

Graham: Yes. It makes it singular. It makes it, well, of course you could do a recording over, but that doesn't, that doesn't mean that it never happened. And it's not that, it's not that it never happened if you don't record it, but, but it's more real and tangible if it's there and you can, and you can see it on a computer screen, you can see the wave forms of your piece. And you could listen to it over again, if you wanted to. And listening to it would also, uh, help to prepare the piece, to, to hear it differently than while you're playing it.

NMC: Did you get to listen to your performances in the podcast?

Graham: Uh, I didn't listen to them from the podcast, but I did, a couple of times just play through the piece after I recorded it on the computer, because it was short enough that my sessions, it wouldn't run over the amount, the time for the sessions. And I think that was revealing.

NMC: Okay, what did that reveal to you?

Graham: Well, it revealed, how uh, how inconsistent my time was in several sections.

NMC: Timing as in tempo? Rhythm?

Graham: Yes. I uh, I don't think I would have caught that if I hadn't listened to the recording. How in a few of the measures, they get shorter or longer, and I don't mean them to.

NMC: Mmm. Now these recordings will be available for a little while longer, so you can still subscribe to the podcast. And I think you can even cherry-pick just your recordings. You don't have to get 40, or yeah, 40. So you can just go in and record yours if you want them. You also received feedback from the internet audience. Did that change the was you approached the next performance?

Graham: Uh. Well, I did, I did think about that feedback, and, and I think it also ties into tempo, and it gave me a way of thinking of how to deal with that. And I think in the time I spent preparing it, I did a little bit of that, trying to, trying to make my tempo more consistent.

NMC: Did it in any way affect the way you viewed the recording process? Did it make the audience seem more real?

Graham: Not really. I guess maybe I was thinking that the, I was, I could've been thinking that the comment came from the recording of the Live Performance, or from the Virtual Performance, but not necessarily of the performances I was giving at the time.

NMC: Mm. But the live performance wasn't part of the podcast.

Graham: Well, I guess I didn't know that the comment was only coming from someone who listened to the podcast. But even so, that could still just have been from the Virtual Performance, which I guess was, in some way mystically different for me than the six after it.

NMC: Okay. A number of people mentioned that grades are a factor in their performance anxiety. Would you agree with that?

Graham: Well, I've never been one to care much for grades. Uh, and that could contribute to me scoring lower on the, on the uh, diagnostic survey, as well. That I don't really care about grades for the sake of grades.

NMC: Mm-hmm. Does a performance in which you know you're being graded, does it give you a different anxiety profile than a normal, typical performance?

Graham: No. But it does make the, does make the few people in the audience more important than it would be if it were just two guys sitting there, that were just random people off the street. It makes the graders more important.

NMC: Alright, just one more question. Imagine that you are a teacher and one of your students is getting ready for a performance. Would you implement an approach similar to the process implemented in this study?

Graham: I would suggest that the student, uh, uh, practice there, as a performance, and possibly get something to record themselves with, and listen to themselves play. And give those singular performances, that it's this one time, and you get this one chance to do it.

NMC: How would, how would the process be different if instead of saying you get to record it once and then you have to post it, what would it be different if for the last performance I said, "Okay for this last performance, you can record it as many times as you want and choose which performance you want to go on as your last performance." Would that change how you felt while you were playing it.

Graham: It would probably reduce the anxiety somewhat. But then, you would probably end up with several performances before something was adequate. And I wouldn't be able to tell how those other performances would do. They might be better, or they might be a little bit better but not good enough, and then, they'll never get good enough and that contributes to more anxiety. I wouldn't be able to say.

NMC: Okay. Going back to the imagine yourself as a teacher, what advice would you give to the student to make the process effective?

Graham: Only do it once. Maybe go to a different room than you're rehearsing the piece in, or practicing the piece in, go to a different room and then play it once and then leave. Uh, don't practice in the same room that you have a rehearsal performance in.

NMC: Okay. What about recording, recorded performances.

Graham: The same thing for those.

NMC: What would you change in the process as we did it to make it more effective for your student?

Graham: About recording it and posting it as a podcast?

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Graham: Well, I guess mainly, uh, it was a pretty simple process, probably the most complicated part of it was naming the files correctly. But that was after the performance so it doesn't matter as much.

NMC: What would you do to make the performances, or, what would you do to make the process more effective, logistics out of the question. Effective in terms of bringing about the positive change that you want, which in your case was to make you feel more prepared before you perform.

Graham: The only thing I could think of is doing it more often.

NMC: Okay. What kind of frequency would you suggest?

Graham: Well.

NMC: Would it be a frequency or just a number?

Graham: Just a number, I guess. Uh, we had the Vir, the recorded performances within a week of the live performance, and it would probably be prudent to have maybe a little longer than that. Maybe two weeks, dependent on how soon you have the piece ready.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything else you would like to add about what we've done so far?

Graham: No, I think everything's been covered.

NMC: Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications or corrections?

Graham: No.

NMC: Very good. Thank you, Graham, and I'll see you at the group discussion.

Graham: Mm-hmm.

Judith, VP

April 3, 2010

NMC: Okay, Judith. We've now participated in three different kinds of performances. There was the rehearsal performance, the live performance that was yesterday afternoon, and now this virtual performance recording. Um, let me read a statement and then we'll talk about those a little bit. We often feel the mental and physical symptoms of anxiety in daily life. Some people might find the following situations trigger these symptoms: riding a roller coaster, driving in an unfamiliar location, giving a presentation, asking someone out on a date, or having a cavity filled. Can you think of a daily life situation that normally gives you feelings of anxiety?

Judith: A daily life situation? Hmm. I don't know. Interviews.

NMC: Interviews give you anxiety. Okay.

(laughs)

Judith: I don't know if that's daily, but. Uh, doctoral programs is anxiety inducing, producing. Everyday, pretty much.

NMC: What sort of things trigger anxiety for you about your school work?

Judith: Um, I, uh, the level of expectation? Expectations. What is expected and um, both, uh, the quality and the quantity of it combined together under limited time restrictions.

NMC: What are some of the mental symptoms that you feel from these expectations?

Judith: Um. Mental symptoms. What do you mean, like emotion type things?

NMC: Sure.

Judith: Uh, I guess maybe, uh, frustration?

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Uh, feeling frazzled. Um, sometimes having a difficult time to focus, just because of being overwhelmed with everything. So, just focusing on one thing. Or getting started, you know, time is passing.

NMC: So you feel a little bit, you said "frazzled" and "overwhelmed."

Judith: Um, yeah.

NMC: And the number of things makes it harder to focus whenever you do sit down to work on something.

Judith: Um, sometimes. And then there's the fatigue aspect of it as well. Just the physical fatigue.

NMC: Do you, uh, have any kind of internal thoughts or talking to yourself when you get anxious?

Judith: Um, I'm sure I do. I'm working on some of that stuff I guess. Um, I guess just a lot of self doubt.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Doubt on abilities and capabilities.

NMC: So what sorts of things would you say to yourself in your head?

Judith: Um, I don't know, "I must just be stupid," is probably the main one. "I guess I'm not as smart as everyone else." (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. Um, and you do think that it affects your focus and your ability to concentrate?

Judith: I don't know. Maybe. Yeah.

NMC: What are you physical symptoms? And for those...

Judith: Physical symptoms.

NMC: ...let's just go down from your head down to your feet. Do you feel anything in your head and your face, or you know, your neck, whenever you get anxious from your doctoral work?

Judith: Um, well, um, I guess I'm becoming more aware of this stuff. I mean it's not just my doctoral work, it's stuff in general. Um, when I was little, I just had different stress. Everyone has stress, I guess. I used to grind my teeth a lot. And this last year, a year ago, April, May, I began to notice that I was grinding my teeth. Like, I became aware of it again, and I didn't know how long I was doing that before then. Um, and uh, in August, I was, yeah, uptight about different things, and blah blah blah, and um, I didn't realize, but I must have had a lot of extra tension in my face and jaw, because I ended up breaking my tooth. Um, but I didn't realize it until afterwards. And then, it broke again in November. So like, since then I've become more aware of not grinding my teeth and releasing tension, for example, from my face and my jaw. Um, but most of it, I haven't been aware of, so it's a new awareness that I've started to acquire in the

past year. Um, uh, also, just everywhere, physically, neck shoulders, back, I'm not sure how to release tension in my back, but I have, I'm aware that it's there, which, I guess is a step forward. But I'm not sure what to do, how to make it go away.

NMC: Now the teeth grinding, is that a nocturnal teeth grinding during your sleep, or is that just during the day?

Judith: Mostly, um, it's during my sleep, I think. Like I would, in the last year, I would remember waking up. I was like, aware, I was grinding my teeth.

NMC: I do the same thing.

Judith: Um, but um, I have also noticed that um, like since then, like last fall, I did notice it a bit also during the day. Not so much last fall, end of last fall semester, December, and um, start of this semester, January. Getting anxious about upcoming things more so. I um, yeah. I had a lot of tension. There was one point where it really just hit me. So I've been trying to become more aware of those things.

NMC: And you mentioned some like, tightness in your back and in your neck. Just tension?

Judith: Um, yeah. yeah. And it's, it's, I've been pretty tight for different reasons, I guess. It's all different stresses, or whatever. But like, over spring break, I had a concert coming up shortly after spring break, um, I was playing with a bassoon. Before then, I could tell I was getting really tight in my back and everything, and I was like, something needs to happen. So, I did went and get a, I got a massage done, and she said I was one of the tightest person, people, that she had ever worked on. Which is kind of ironic, because I know I've, I'm less tight than I used to be, so I'm not sure what that means. But, yeah.

NMC: So, let's maybe, um, in your upper arms or in your hands, do you feel anything from daily life stress?

Judith: Um I usually, not 'till like after the fact. But more often when I wake up the next morning, when everything sort of releases when you sleep, then like, my arms are tired. And like, "What did I do yesterday?" Or my hands feel like I, yeah.

NMC: Okay. In your stomach, do you feel anything, any symptoms there?

Judith: Um, I think I'm becoming more aware of that, too. I've had like, this ability to block off feelings and emotions in order to work through stuff. Um, yeah, uh, this past weekend I was very nauseous.

NMC: And you attribute that to the stress and anxiety?

Judith: Yeah. It was definitely that. Yeah, it got to the point that I thought I was going to vomit a few times. Um, yeah.

NMC: Okay. What about in your lower back. You mentioned kind of your shoulders area, and you upper back. Does your lower back have any symptoms.

Judith: Um, yeah. Periodically, but I usually don't notice that until after the fact, too.

NMC: How about in your legs knees or feet?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: What sort of symptoms do you feel?

Judith: Um, like particularly my calves tend to cramp up.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Actually, uh, I I noticed things starting to get tight last night and, they are a little sensitive, I guess. My feet usually not so bad. But sometimes. When I was an undergraduate, I uh, not my, my feet would cramp up. You know, like, your toes freeze and you can't walk. Um, but that hasn't happened so much in graduate school. Um, it was on a quite regular basis during my undergrad. LIke, I would wake up a night with muscle spasms, and that hasn't been happening. So, I mean, I'm better, I'm managing things better...

NMC: Is that because you're managing it better of because the stress is different than you felt as an undergrad.

Judith: Um, maybe both.

NMC: Okay. Alright, let's now consider how you generally feel in a typical solo piano performance. Okay. So, again, what sort of mental symptoms do you feel for a typical solo piano performance?

Judith: You mean,

NMC: Again, those emotions....

Judith: During? Like the day of, or like, preparing before it or?

NMC: Sure. Both. Yeah.

Judith: Okay.

NMC: Let's start with preparing before it, what sort of symptoms do you feel?

Judith: Well, I try to be pretty calm, and not get to worked up about the upcoming date and that sort of thing. Um, I guess sometime I feel my brain just turns to mush. Like it all breaks up to little pieces, and it can't function. It can't think and do what it's supposed to do.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any emotions that you associate with preparing to perform?

Judith: Um, I guess anxiety. I don't know if that's an emotion. Lot's of anxiety. Um, yeah, just, I said that everything just sort of goes until it explodes. So, sometime nausea comes with that. But, usually it ends up resolving in some sort of emotional falling to pieces. (chuckles)

NMC: Falling to pieces. Can you...?

Judith: Uh, I think, I just let out, I guess, after everything gets so tense. Yeah.

NMC: Um, do you feel as though your mind is working so fast on so many different things that you can't focus, or do you feel like there's just a, like a stalled engine?

Judith: More like it's stalled. And it like stalls because, I guess I feel about the, It's, I get anxious more because of the pressure and the expectation, or what I perceive it to be. And that those things always seem to be, um, higher than what is actually, humanly attainable. And so, it's sort of this, it's like, uh, this, you're, it's inevitable that you're going to fail. And so it's just crash, this psychological thing, that way. 'Cause it's like, you can't actually attain that anyway, but that's what you're expected to attain. And so it's this, this struggle of, um, wanting to but not being able to, but not having the means, or the help to get there.

NMC: What about during the performance. What sort of mental symptoms do you typically feel.

Judith: Um, I guess in general, I just tend to, it just shuts down. Yeah, mental states just kind of shut down.

NMC: Do you have any emotions that you typically feel when you're performing, or do you feel, uh, withdrawn from the experience?

Judith: Maybe a bit withdrawn. And also, a sense of this underlying panic.

NMC: Okay. Could you describe, what do you mean by panic. What's the panic about?

Judith: Um, like even, I mean, like, sometimes I've like, physically be trembling. But even if I'm not physically trembling, I feel like I'm trembling internally. Even if it doesn't exhibit itself, um, visually.

NMC: Do you have any internal dialogue while you're performing. Do you talk to yourself while you're
?

Judith: Um, I, I think that, I'm noticing that more. And I think it was there, but it was sort of hidden, too far hidden to actually hear what was being said.

NMC: What sort of things...

Judith: It's just like there were negative thoughts, but you don't really know what, you don't know what the specific thoughts were. Um, um, I guess, it's just, this constant thing of having this check list of things you ought to be doing, and whether or not you're actually doing it or not. It's still that, whether or not it's good enough to pass, whether or not you have that approval. Whether or not you're arriving to those expectations that need to be fulfilled. Um, lots of it, lots of it has been in the past, worry about memory in particular, and upcoming things, and blah blah blah, whether or not things are going right, or what so and so thinks. I don't know, even not, even not so much that, but just being aware of, I guess the biggest thing is the, "When are you going to screw up?" type of thing.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: And, um, somehow things not being good enough to satisfy all those people that you see out of the corner of your eye.

NMC: What sort of things do you think they need to hear to be satisfied? What specifically are these expectations that you feel from them?

Judith: Um, perfection.

NMC: Perfection.

Judith: Absolute perfection.

NMC: So that means not a missed note?

Judith: And, um, yeah, and also at the highest level of musicality. Like, getting to a spiritual realm of things to, yeah. Absolute, yeah.

NMC: Okay. Do you ever feel outside of the experience while you are performing? As though part of you is performing, and part of you is just observing it?

Judith: Um, not so much recently. I know when I was doing my Masters, that was still evident at that point.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Um, and then, also yeah, at various points in my undergrad and in high school. Yeah just sort (inaudible)

NMC: What sort of things changed?

Judith: Well, I'm getting more confidence, more personal confidence in my work in general, and my abilities to do things. And, um, those beta blockers help. And... A lot.

NMC: Let's talk about that for just a minute. You mentioned it during our informed consent meeting. When did you start taking beta blockers?

Judith: Um, about a year ago.

NMC: Um, and it's specifically to deal with performance....

Judith: Um, yeah, I also do it for class presentations.

NMC: Okay. And, uh, could you describe maybe dosage and timing?

Judith: Um, I usually take about an hour before, hour before the performance. Um, and, um, actually, I think I'm going to start making some alterations, slightly. I take about, um, two. Yeah. They're, so 20 milligrams.

NMC: Okay, so twenty milligrams about an hour before.

Judith: Yeah. Um, for a full solo recital, I have three.

NMC: Okay. Can you tell what it does to you? What sort of things change when you take the beta blockers and when you don't?

Judith: I can think.

NMC: You can think.

Judith: I can think, yeah. And I hear. I can hear, I hear what I'm playing. Like before, I don't hear. Like everything just goes out the window and I get done playing and I can't say whether, it just all feels bad. And you can't, if someone says something is good about it, it doesn't make sense to what I perceive. It's sort of like people are lying, or just trying to be nice, or not really trying to help you improve. That has all that, those complications, too. But, um, I can, I can hear what's happening technically a little bit more. I can hear a pedal, like does it, it does stuff. And I can think and follow.

I can follow musical lines, I can follow a harmonic progression. If something happens, there's not an immediate shut-down. And I can still, I can, like, get out of it a lot better. I'm still nervous, but the nerves, the debilitating aspect of it has been reduced.

NMC: Okay. Let's move to physical symptoms of what you typically feel for a solo performance. Um, do you feel the tension in your jaw that you mentioned, while you're playing?

Judith: Um, while I'm playing? I don't know. Maybe I notice it more afterwards. When I'm playing, I don't notice much physically, like all that. I notice it more afterwards. Like, if I'm tense playing, I don't notice it until after I'm done. And then I'm like, "Oh, my arms feel really tired." Or, yeah. But, um, I haven't quite. I'm starting to. I'm starting to notice a little bit more when I'm playing, but that, that transition hasn't fully been made.

NMC: So after you're done playing, do you feel the results of tension...

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: ... in your jaw?

Judith: Um, not so much in my jaw.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Um, I know also before hand, sometimes I get light-headed.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Light-headed, dizzy. Cold. Clammy.

NMC: What about the tension? Where in your body do you feel, after the fact, that yes indeed, you were carrying tension?

Judith: My arms. My back. Sometimes my legs.

NMC: Do you feel anything in your chest?

Judith: Um, I don't think so.

NMC: Okay. What about the way you breathe or...

Judith: Oh, yeah. I have had a tendency to not breathe during performances.

NMC: And when do you notice that?

Judith: Um, now I'm noticing it more afterwards. Like before, it has just been a comment that people have given me. Like I noticed it yesterday, like I got done, like "Oh, I'm breathing now." Like I haven't had oxygen for the past six and a half minutes minutes. (laughs) Or very little.

NMC: Do you feel a change in your heart rate? Or are you aware of it?

Judith: Afterwards? Maybe. I know, I noticed that usually before, I feel my heart rate increase. Although the beta-blockers stop that, too. It keeps everything calmer, so that helps everything else.

NMC: What about in your stomach?

Judith: Um, the stomach, I haven't really noticed that, per se. That, I've been becoming more aware of my stomach recently.

NMC: Okay. Um, your legs knees or feet, during a performance?

Judith: Yeah. Um, I notice more afterwards, my legs, yeah.

NMC: Okay. What about in your arms or hands?

Judith: Um, frequently, not all the time.

NMC: And is it limited to just tension, or are there other things that might happen.

Judith: Um, I think it's primarily tension.

NMC: Okay. Do you ever feel sensations of heat or sweating or anything?

Judith: Um, yeah. But I don't notice it until after the fact.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Um, yeah.

NMC: Okay. So it doesn't bother you while you are playing?

Judith: No. It's, it's, it's more panic mode. Just trying to survive. (Laughs)

NMC: And what are those things after the fact that you notice, what kind of things would that be?

Judith: Um, sometimes in the past, I've noticed that I've been trembling afterwards. Even trembling before. I've sometimes noticed trembling during, too. Um, although that hasn't happened so much either this past year, with the beta blockers. I know

before, hands trembling, also feet trembling. Had a really hard time with pedaling. And that has been an issue since high school, at least. All the way up through my Masters.

NMC: So your feet would tremble on the pedal, or because you have to keep some...

Judith: Well, I remember in high school, I was able to control either my hands or my feet, but not both simultaneously. (Laughs)

NMC: Alright, do you typically take any steps to reduce your symptoms of anxiety?

Judith: Yeah. And actually in one sense, it also increases, I don't know about increases anxiety, but it produces a different type of anxiety a little bit. Like, for example, the month before a big recital, particularly a solo thing, I eliminate caffeine, well I don't take much caffeine to begin with, but I eliminate caffeine, sugars and oils and greasy things as much as possible. I mean, if for like the first two weeks or so, maybe I'll have a little bit, but particularly two weeks before, I don't touch any of that stuff at all. Um, I make sure I get regular exercise. I run particularly. In particular, I run. Um, just to get out extra adrenaline and nervous things and blah blah blah blah. And also, I have to sleep. And the week before, sleep is an absolute priority. Definitely. Um, which, then, and I have to have particularly before, I also have to have time for myself. I don't teach the week before, I don't have rehearsals. Um, yeah, I made that mistake for my senior recital in my undergrad. Not doing that again! (Laughs) Like it went okay and everything, but it was just too much, yeah. Um, uh, and but then, academically, that puts meet behind that way. So it's a, it's quite a juggling issue.

NMC: Okay. So when you say you make time for yourself, that is reducing the amount of time you spend on other obligations?

Judith: Yeah, make sure that I have time to breathe. Rather than solo, rather than just rushing from point a to point b constantly and getting frantic over... Or trying to finish cramming whatever the next assignment is, you know, before 2:00 A.M., or whatever. You know it's like, "It's like 10:30. I have got to sleep. I've got to, I can't understand this. It's done." Because otherwise it doesn't work performing wise. I have to sleep, and I have to... Running helps a lot. I need to run, and I do that. And then, I also eat a lot of vegetable. I find that helps. A lot of vegetables.

NMC: Um, so there's diet, exercise, and sleep, and those are things that you manage in the month leading up to a performance. What sort of things do you do...

Judith: Oh, I...yeah. Go ahead

NMC: Go ahead.

Judith: Um, I also try to arrange some other performance of the recital, of the program.

NMC: What other things do you do...

Judith: With safe people. Another thing that I try to do, I try to play for people who are also planning to come to my recital who have the time to do that. You know, it's a huge time commitment. It helps me psychologically to know that, you know, it helps go over that hurdle. "I've already done this before. I've already played for these, these are not just strange people who." You know, and also, I only invite people who like me. (chuckles) Minus my committee, which of course, I don't have any choice in that. (laughs)

NMC: Who are "safe people."

Judith: Um, people, um as a general rule of thumb, not pianists.

NMC: Okay. What makes them safe?

Judith: That, um, they're accepting of me. It's like, they're not, I'm not thought less of, even if something happens. Um, yeah, I people who I trust and have some sort of relationship with. That, that helps. Um, I guess also people who have, who I know have supported me in the past, and have, um encouraged me in different ways. Um, my studio, my students, and those parents are safe people. Because part of that trust is already there, first off me teaching, and I know that, they already, they have no doubt about my capabilities as a teacher or as a performer. And, yeah. And um, certain other people. So, there are some faculty, but I still get nervous around them, particularly if they are music people. Non-music faculty is better.

NMC: Okay. Why is that?

Judith: Um, because, I feel like they, um, that critical ear isn't necessarily there in judgement.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Does that make sense?

NMC: Do you feel that it's part of the job of the music faculty to listen with that critical ear all the time?

Judith: Partly, yeah. And also, not only just part of their job, I sort of feel that it's just part of the training as a musician at that level, that it just happens. It just, it's something I don't think they know how to turn off. And, I sort of see that also with other people. Like last Saturday, I had performance, and um, the piano was out of tune, and the string people were incredibly critical about it. Just because they always, play, you know, and it's, yeah. Um, so, some of that just happens anyway. And so knowing that, and even though some of them are still supportive, I still, that underlining truth or whatever it is is still there, and so it's sort of takes away from, 'cause you wonder how much of it is

actually. It makes it, it's hard to know what they're really thinking. Like, is this really true, or just partially true, or are you just saying that because it's, yeah.

NMC: Okay, you mentioned when I asked who safe people were, you said, "not pianists." Does that extend to other musicians, or is it specifically, and which pianists?

Judith: Um, other musicians. Um, pianists in general.

NMC: Pianists in general. Anybody who's had...

Judith: Um, well, are more professionally oriented pianists. Um, I do better playing for undergrads than I do playing for other grad students.

NMC: Okay. Why do you think that is?

Judith: Um, I don't feel as if I'm going to be condemned by them. (chuckles) Or not so severely. If it's people who've had piano in their background, or in their previous lives, or whatever, that's fine. Some other musicians are also, I'm leery of. Um, but, that all depends with the person. Because some of them, they're like, "Oh, I don't know anything about the piano." So I just think piano is nice because it tends to cause intrigue with other people. So, yeah. That, that depends. I mean, I have some colleagues where I teach, other pianists, that, I'm okay with them. But they tend to be very specific people. Um, as a general rule of thumb, I don't like playing for pianists.

NMC: Where do you think...

Judith: I don't. I don't make big signs to advertise my recitals and stuff to pianists. I send out invitations to other people, who, um. But, I mean, other students find out, they're going to know about everything, and if they come, fine. But I don't do any extra, "Oh please come to my recital."

NMC: Right. Where do you think these expectations come from. What part of the educational experience, or the becoming of a professional calibre pianists, or a professional level pianist starts those, uh, expectations?

Judith: Uh, I think it's a variety of things. Um, I think with myself, part of it is just the way I grew up. And, I've always felt under a lot of pressure, even in grade school. And, it's kind of frustrating, 'cause it's like, when is it, when does it stop? When are things finally good enough? As a first-grader, we had on Fridays, these timed math tests of a hundred questions that we had to do in a given time period. Well, anyway, I had no problem with it, and I could finish it, I was the first person done. Well there was still time left, so I would go and check all my answers again, and there'd still be time left. So then, I would go through this series of how to check everything, so I checked everything forwards, across, then backwards, and I checked them all down, and I checked them all up, and I'd do this, and also diagonally, so there's like ten different ways I did this. Meanwhile, I couldn't finish all that within that time frame, so after that

we had recess. I missed all my recesses to do that, because I, I don't know this expectation of needing to, fully complete something. I don't know. So, I think it's just different things that way together. Although, and I also have known, have noticed at different point in my life, certain aspects of failure have been a release of tension and expectation for me. For example, when I finished high school, I was very glad not to be first in my class, and I graduated second. You know, just finishing second, I can't say that I consciously did that on purpose, but it, it's just, everything else that with that, what everyone expects you to fulfill after that, and all this, it just was a lot of, lot of lot of pressure for me. So just, even just finishing second was helpful. Um, and also I think that part of it, the grading system, of that, A's are sort of expected, so anything less than that ends up being some sort of failure. And that, with all the competition with tests and classes and blah blah blah blah, um, just throughout, if you don't have that then you're not good enough and you're not going to succeed. Um, I noticed, when I was an undergrad, yeah I felt a lot of pressure that way, too. And I was also told that I couldn't, I had two degrees that I did. I did a Bachelors in music, and also in French, and I was doing an education thing, and I was told that I couldn't do that, because I was also in the Honors program, and so I had supplementary classes, research things that I had to do as well, and, so I'm always feeling like I'm having to prove. Rather than someone just saying, "You know what, this might take an extra year, but if you want..." you know? So I haven't really felt that sort of confirmation. And, I had learned that, like for example, in the French, in the French education system, it was sort of based on failure. Like they only pass x amount of people, it's not so much about how many people get above a certain mark. So, there's a lot more with, you know, and, they're grading system is out of 20, and you know 10 is passing. You know, it's not like you need a 95 to keep your GPA up. Um, so, I had, I ended up doing an exchange program to France, and just knowing that was very helpful for me, and it made the whole system a lot less stressful than here, which is supposed to be based on success. Just because I'm like, if this is hard for all of the French people and they're going to fail, half of them fail anyway, then who am I as a foreign student who can't even fully speak this language, and I'm not engrossed in this, and blah blah blah. And so I did very well. I got 16's out of 20 and 18's out of 20 on most of my work, because that pressure wasn't there. But here, it's like, I don't know.

NMC: And again, back to the musical pressure, the musical expectations, where do those, where does those come from and where does that begin?

Judith: Um, recordings a lot. Feeling like you need to imitate recordings? Or, that's the expectation of what you're supposed to be able to do. You know, everything is, has to be flawless. Does that answer the question?

NMC: Yes. Do you feel that that is a fair expectation?

Judith: No. I don't.

NMC: For undergrads, graduate students...

Judith: For anyone. It's not fair for anyone. It's not human. People don't function that way. I mean, it's not about being able to regurgitate a list of notes in a specific order. I mean, that's not what music is.

NMC: Do you feel your professors, or the people who are tasked with, you know, evaluating your performances, do you feel like they are judging based solely on those kinds of criteria.

Judith: Um, I often have. Yeah, yeah. And I also think part of it also has to do with making a recital, and this is like from childhood, a more important event than something else. You know, it's more important than coming in and playing something for your lesson. You know, if things were more equal, then that would also, or at least for myself, would help reduce that extra stress. 'Cause all of the sudden it becomes something unattainable. Yeah, I'm feeling forced to have to attain that and expected that, well, "Everyone can do that." I know, I can't do that.

NMC: Okay. We kind of took a little detour there. Steps to reduce your anxiety before a musical performance. Are there other things you do, let's say, in the few minutes leading up to a performance.

Judith: Um, the day of, I don't do anything else except for just 'me stuff' and focusing on my recital. I might go out for a walk or whatever. I sleep as I need. I make sure I eat carbohydrates four hours prior. You know get dressed, be calm, blah blah blah blah. I do a little bit of practicing, maybe a couple of hours, you know just calmly. Um, uh, I do practice a bit before, um, but about 30 minutes before I don't touch a piano anymore, 45 minute before. And then it's just being calm and breathing. I stay away from people. And, um, yeah, I don't do well interacting with people before hand. And even people who mean well, and like want to say, "Good luck," or whatever, all of the sudden, I think that, and this is starting to click, that starts to raise that pressure of expectation. That all of the sudden, I can't just be me. I have to be some super pianist. So I avoid people. And I have lots of water. I tend to get very dehydrated. I drink lots of water.

NMC: Do you do any kinds of, um...

Judith: I remind myself that I have time to do things, 'cause, I noticed when I was in France, I was taking this sight reading class, um, I tend to just rush into things because time sort of stops. So like, I can sit at the piano and just breathe for a few seconds before playing. Or, like, okay so, let's say my recital starts at 7:00, two minutes before 7:00 is still a lot of time. Or it's 7:00, you know, I don't have to charge out there right now, I mean, I can take a few seconds. No one is going to know one way or another. So, I try to do more of that to, for myself.

NMC: Do you do any kind of relaxation strategies?

Judith: Um.

NMC: Like breathing or stretching or...

Judith: Um, a little bit. Um, I do that more so earlier in the day just because, um, I could always take my shoes off. But still, being in a dress, it's hard to stretch and stuff. And also with the way things have been with the flood, there are not like many places where you can like, get on the floor and...

NMC: What about prayer or meditation?

Judith: Um, yeah. A bit of that too. Both.

NMC: Okay. What sort of things do you pray for?

Judith: Um, I guess more so that um, my playing will mean something to someone, that it will impact. Because I feel that to be most essential part. And also for me to be calm (laughs). Yeah.

NMC: Is there anything that you do during a performance specifically to help you with anxiety?

Judith: Um, I don't know. Try to stay focused, calm.

NMC: And how do you, how do you do that?

Judith: Um, I know one thing that I have noticed has helped, if I have one aspect to focus on, just one, and not worry about everything else. Because, everything I guess, else, again ends up being too much, and it gets overwhelming and it's like, I can't do all these things. But if it's just like, the ends of a phrase, or like, just pedal, or dynamic contrast, or solely the long line, or whatever. But just one little thing, or articulation, or depending on how the piece is, or a loose wrist, or whatever. Just one thing, that helps. And um, and, it has to last the whole piece. Not something that jumps around and is like "Ah!" But um, I find that, that helps a bit more.

NMC: Um, we're running just a little bit long so,

Judith: Oh, that's okay. I was a little slow.

NMC: We're going to go through some of the specific performances now.

Judith: Okay.

NMC: Let's talk about the rehearsal performance. This was the practice time. Did you have any mental symptoms of anxiety during the rehearsal performance?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Can you describe them.

Judith: I like shut down. Usually I have no problem. And I think I was, one of it was like, it was exactly a month before hand. I think part of it that did it also was, the questionnaire I was thinking about all these things, and like, "Well, I don't? I really don't know, and blah blah blah blah." Then I became more aware of them, a little bit. And so, I think I just kinda a little overwhelmed. And also, the thing of having it also to be a performance. And it, I don't know, I just. I usually, yeah, I just. I went into mini-panic mode.

NMC: Any specific emotions associated with that rehearsal performance?

Judith: Um, I don't know. Right with it? I guess sort of freezing up. I had some memory things that happened, I couldn't get out of. Like, "What. What's going on here?" My mind just sort of went blank.

NMC: So you would say a difficulty focusing or a difficulty concentrating?

Judith: Yeah, but I didn't feel as if my mind was scattered on ten thousand different things going around. It wasn't as if I needed to focus down on something. I guess just letting go, a little bit. Not being able to let go and trust myself that I know what I'm doing.

NMC: Um, how about your physical symptoms for the rehearsal performance?

Judith: I thought I felt calm before hand, yeah.

NMC: Do you have, did you realize any of the tension in your face or in your neck after the performance?

Judith: Um, no. I felt kind of numb I think. (Laughs) I was like, "Oh no! What's going on? Like I can't do this." Blah blah blah blah.

NMC: Did you feel any like, holding your breath or the nausea?

Judith: Um, not immediately afterwards it was later, I went in just feeling very nauseous just about the whole recital and expectations of what I'm supposed to be doing. And, I was planning on running my program tomorrow for someone, and then I ended up canceling that because I'm like, "I'm not going to be able to do this, blah blah blah blah." Um, but I reschedule that for another time. I try to go, and, I try to do some practicing, but I wasn't very focused. And then, I was also supposed to have a lesson on Monday, and I was supposed to be performing on Tuesday. And my lesson is usually on Thursday, so just that added, sort of put that all together. And, um, yeah, and that running my program for this week, and I'm like, "Oh, I don't have this fully memorized, and like blah blah blah blah." Later, I went out to run and I was not, I didn't do so well. Um, yeah, I just kind of fell apart. But I think I'm done with that. So that's good.

NMC: Did you feel anything in you legs or your feet, your knees, with the rehearsal performance?

Judith: I don't think so.

NMC: Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety before the rehearsal performance?

Judith: Uh, no. I don't think I realized I was really anxious about it.

NMC: So you didn't do the prayer, or the insulating yourself from other people, or...

Judith: No. No.

NMC: No. Did you take your beta-blockers before the rehearsal performance?

Judith: No.

NMC: No. Okay. Um, let's now consider the live performance. And that was at the retirement community. Did you feel any mental symptoms of anxiety?

0:46:19

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Um, I guess, um, more talk...

NMC: Internal dialogue?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: What sort of things were you saying to yourself?

Judith: Um, uh, I don't remember. I was acutely aware of being listened to. Primarily from two other pianists.

NMC: Oh, really?

Judith: Yeah. Yeah. And, um, like yeah. Like whether things are good enough or blah blah blah blah. And you know, how to recover from a, hoping not have any sort of memory slip. And then like, the some things that happened, it was like, well I guess that was followed by some self-beratement, of like, "Well, why did that happen?" You know, "Why didn't you know that?" Like, "Couldn't you make an appropriate cadence like afterwards?"

NMC: So in reaction to things that were happening, you would kind of, critique yourself while you were playing?

Judith: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know that when I got to the last fugue, I was feeling shaky, a little bit.

NMC: Do you have any emotions associated with that performance?

Judith: Uh, it was better than the other one.

NMC: It was better than the rehearsal performance?

Judith: Uh-huh (affirmative). (Laughs)

NMC: Do you think the rehearsal performance influenced the Live performance?

Judith: No. I was able. I talked to some people and got myself back balanced, again.

NMC: Okay. Did you feel any kinds of dissociation or feeling outside yourself during the Live Performance?

Judith: Not so much. No.

NMC: Okay. Um, and would...

Judith: I felt aware of not knowing what my foot was doing.

NMC: What your foot was doing.

Judith: Yes.

NMC: Okay. Um, compare your mental symptoms in the Live Performance on Friday with what you typically feel. About the same, a little higher, a little lower?

Judith: Um, maybe about the same.

NMC: About the same. So it was a typical performance for you?

Judith: Um, I, I guess. I have performed quite better than that. I guess as far as some of the inner stuff is concerned, yeah.

NMC: Okay. What about your physical symptoms. Did you feel, were you aware of tension in your body while you were playing or after you finished playing?

Judith: Afterwards, I realized I was breathing again. But I didn't notice I wasn't breathing during it.

NMC: Okay. Did you feel the tension in your face?

Judith: No. I have been working on that in the past few months.

NMC: Okay, did you feel any tensions in your arms or in your hands, before or after?

Judith: Um, no, I felt a little drained, a little tired, physical.

NMC: So general fatigue?

Judith: Yeah, but, it might have also been all the emotional stuff going on earlier in the week, just everything together. But I did feel, do feel drained. I got done teaching yesterday and I was exhausted.

NMC: Did you have any issues...

Judith: This morning I felt, my arms felt tired. Exhausted.

NMC: Okay. DId you have any issues with your stomach, or lower back in the performance?

Judith: Um, no.

NMC: Okay. What about your legs knees and feet during the performance?

Judith: No, except for yesterday evening, I felt my calves started to tighten up, and I've had to stretch them several times today.

NMC: Okay. Is that...

Judith: But I didn't notice it while I was playing.

NMC: Do you think that's from running? Or is that from the stress of playing the piano, or is it from...

Judith: I don't know. It could be a bit of both. Or it wouldn't necessarily be stress from playing the piano, just stress in general.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Um, I'm learning to say no to things.

NMC: Sure. Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety for the Live Performance?

Judith: Yes.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Um, I did nothing yesterday except for, well I went in the morning, I took a little walk first. And then I did some practicing, just calmly for maybe like two hours. And then I went out, and I did sprint for a little bit. Um, just a series of 100 sprints.

NMC: Okay. Did you take your beta blockers before your performance?

Judith: Yes I did.

NMC: Typical dosage and timing?

Judith: Um, yeah, I just took one and everything, and then I was thinking I should do two for these, too. And actually, I had forgotten about that.

NMC: So, you just did one for the Live Performance?

Judith: Mm-hmm. (affirmative)

NMC: Okay. Um, again in your pre-performance...

Judith: Oh, and I got there early. Okay, and I had my banana and I had lunch and all that sort of thing. I had my water bottle. And I got there, got there early. Just to be in the space a little bit, um, by myself. And I touched the piano, a little bit. Uh, yeah. A couple of times.

NMC: And what are you doing in that time, to get there early?

Judith: Um, I guess getting acclimated. Um, to the room, and...

NMC: Was this a typical performance venue for you, or was it...?

Judith: No.

NMC: Okay. Describe the differences.

Judith: Although I did realize I had been there before once. I was there once two years ago doing some accompanying.

NMC: So what are some of the differences in this particular performance venue?

Judith: The piano is smaller. It wasn't as well maintained. Um, it's not on a stage. Um,

NMC: Meaning it's on the same level as the audience.

Judith: Mm-hmm. (affirmative) It's also a smaller space.

NMC: Okay. How did those context issues affect you? Just those difference?

Judith: Um, I don't think...

NMC: Don't think they did?

Judith: No. No. Usually I had noticed I do better in larger spaces, on larger stages, because of the lighting issue and I can sort of block out the audience. But, I know that where I'm going to be performing, the lighting isn't so great, and so I actually see all those people, a little too clearly.

NMC: Okay. Can you think of a specific instance during the performance in which anxiety may have affected your performance?

Judith: Um, yeah. For example the last fugue. I started off anxious thinking, "I don't know if I can get through this." Even though I just did it before then. And I ran it for people Thursday. So yeah, um.

NMC: Does the anxiety affect your memory?

Judith: Yeah, definitely. Um, and, I went and, I didn't, I felt like, "I'm not going to try to jump somewhere. This is not going to work. My brain is not functioning that way." And so, I started it again, and I'm thinking, "Well, I would probably fail my recital. If I had done this in my recital, I would probably fail my recital, blah blah blah." So, I don't know.

NMC: Okay. Uh.

Judith: And then attention to sound quality kind of disappeared a little bit.

NMC: Do you ever feel sometimes that the anxiety can help you, can give you any additional focus or better concentration, or edge or vitality to your performance.

Judith: Um, I've heard that it can. In general, no, I don't think so. I think it's too severe to give me any sort of extra edge. Um, I, I find nervousness to be a very negative, bad bad thing. Um, being excited, or having an adrenaline rush is something different. ANd I don't use nervousness, I don't use the term 'nervous' in those situations. They, I have two very distinct, different meanings.

NMC: Okay. What are the differences to you? Between being excited and being nervous.

Judith: Um, excited, um. Excited is, uh, is like moving forward. There's like more potential of success. It's like meeting a challenge, I guess? Um, nervousness is like doomed to failure. It's like somehow there is some inadequacy.

NMC: Okay. Let's talk now about the Virtual Performance, the recorded performance you just did. Did you have any mental symptoms of anxiety, with the recorded, Virtual Performance?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Could you describe some of them?

Judith: Um, I felt myself getting a little nervous, and such. I did take some time, and then when I went back, I cut off the beginning part. It was like 26 seconds. (chuckles) I didn't realize it was so long. But granted, part of that was just getting over, and etc. And, um, I maybe took a minute or so before going to, pressing start. Um, yeah. I did stretch my arms out a little and such. I know doing it, there was some talk going on, of, things of like, "I should be focused on just making music," or something. Which automatically means that I'm, that's not happening. And yeah, some of that was going on yesterday, too. Or you know, like, "You're giving something to your audience and blah blah blah." ANd it's just, it's, yeah, all that just needs to turn off.

NMC: Okay. So you were talking to yourself about the performance while it was happening?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: Did you feel any specific emotions...

Judith: ...Although it was more, I was a little bit, it was more positive with things.

NMC: Today, in the recording?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. What, how so? How was it more positive? You were just saying more positive things to yourself, or...

Judith: Well, I went and reviewed stuff before, and like, there's one spot that I really haven't had many problems with before, but then it happened yesterday, and it happened again today. So I need to check that out for some reason. I'm not sure why I'm having a blockage. Um, but then, I'm like, I was like, "Well, there that happened again. Blah blah blah." So I was like, "Well, at least now you know where to practice!" (Chuckles)

NMC: Okay, so that was more positive for you because that was a positive framing of ....

Judith: ...Yeah, it was (chuckles)...

NMC: "This is a moment of discovery! Look what I've discovered!"

Judith: Yes, rather than, "Why can't you do something better than that?"

NMC: Okay. Uh, any specific emotions that you associated with the recorded performance today?

Judith: Um, no I think there still tends to be a shutoff, though it was a more positive relief when I was done. It was more, yeah, more encouraging. Yeah.

NMC: Did you have any difficulty focusing or concentrating during the performance?

Judith: No, my mind was a bit clearer.

NMC: Um, would you say that your mental symptoms were about the same, less, or more than the live performance?

Judith: Um, they were different. And the preparation was different, too. I was more anxious leading up to it, than I was yesterday. And I think part of it was, you know, teaching before, and I had stuff to get done, and I was not getting all the stuff, and I didn't get here until like 10:35, and like, "Ah, I need to warm-up," and blah blah blah blah. So it was a little bit more anxious that way.

NMC: Okay, so...

Judith: That calm state was not there so much

NMC: You didn't have a chance to go through what you normally would do before a live performance...

Judith: Right, right.

NMC: ...and so you felt a little bit more anxious about...

Judith: Yeah. Yeah.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: One thing about recording, I tend to give myself a little bit more time before needing to start, because there's no audience to get restless, or to start, yes. So that aspect disappears.

NMC: Okay. Um, what about physical symptoms of anxiety? Did you feel any physical symptoms of anxiety during the Virtual Performance?

Judith: Um, I don't know. I guess not overly so. I guess there's always some symptoms. I'm never totally calm as if, when I'm doing it by myself, or whatever. Um, but, there's always a degree of that internal trembling, that is always present.

NMC: Did you, were you aware of tension, either during or after the fact, in your arms, neck, shoulders, jaw?

Judith: Um, I don't think so.

NMC: Were you aware, either during or after the fact, your breathing?

Judith: I think I was breathing better, because I was singing with it. I was thinking, "I hope this doesn't get picked up on the microphone." (chuckles) I was like, "No, just stay focused." Yeah, um, and I mean, I do try to breathe a little bit before beginning, just take a couple of deep breaths and such. I did notice that that, I was having a little bit of difficulty with that, so I wasn't breathing too incredibly deeply.

NMC: Today?

Judith: Yeah. But, I was more calm in general than yesterday, yeah. Definitely more calm.

NMC: So you would say your physical symptoms were less than...

Judith: More diminished. Yeah. Both physical and mental.

NMC: Okay. Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety before the Virtual Performance? The recording?

Judith: Um, I tried to be calm when I was going through it. What? Like the first little fugue, I went through and I counted it.

NMC: Okay. Did you...

Judith: ...And I, I did some, I did spot checks and going backwards, with leading up to, supposedly, next jump spots. Like,

NMC: So some practice or rehearsal strategies just before?

Judith: Yeah, um, just to confirm that, "Yeah, I have done work with this."

NMC: What about, um, banana, diet, before this performance. Um, having the carbohydrates before hand?

Judith: No. I had some stuff this morning, I wasn't feeling too hungry today. Yesterday, I didn't get to eat dinner, and I had to eat rather late. Um, I had uh, yeah some thick brown bread with peanut butter and stuff this morning.

NMC: What about insulating yourself, or making sure you have your own time today, so you could feel calm before the recording?

Judith: Um, a little bit in the practice room. I think that was the part where it was creating some anxiety, because I wasn't able... I didn't leave teaching as quickly as I thought I was going to. I thought I would be here, for some reason I was thinking 10:00. I don't know where I got that idea. I thought, "Then I'll have a full hour, and blah blah blah. Everything will be nice." But I thought for sure, I could be here at least by 10:15. ANd then, it was 20 minutes after that, at that point. Yeah, although, I did come over on my bike. I was on my bike today.

NMC: So you think that energy helps?

Judith: Yeah, that physical thing helps, as opposed to driving. Driving ends up being a stressful thing.

NMC: Did you take the beta blockers for the recorded performance?

Judith: No I didn't.

NMC: Did you pray or meditate before the performance?

Judith: Um, just a little bit.

NMC: Okay. Um, can you think of a specific instance in which anxiety may have affected your performance, your recorded performance?

Judith: Um, there were a couple of small memory things. One thing, I do not think that I had a great as contrast, with, well dynamics and also some characters. I sort of thought I lost the characters a little bit. But then when I was looking up there, I saw lots of big lines and little lines, so. So maybe it was better than I.... But as I say, I tend to not notice so much what's actually happening. Although, I'm getting better at that. A lot better at that.

1:04:41

NMC: Of the three performances, which would you say was your best performance?

Judith: I would say today.

NMC: Today, the recorded performance?

Judith: Yeah. Yeah.

NMC: Alright, most of these descriptions, you've given from the perspective of the performer. Imagine now that you are the teacher, and a student of yours is trying to explain the symptoms that you experienced in these performances. What kind of descriptive words would you need to hear from your students to truly understand their mental and physical symptoms. What kind of words could they use with you so that you would say, "Oh, I know what it is your talking about."

Judith: Um, well I have a lot of experience with this, with this issue. So, if I find a student not able to express to well, then I tend to give, well, examples of myself, and see if that triggers anything with them, or if they have something to say contrasting. Because, not having a nerve issue is not something that I deal with. I mean, it's definitely there, constantly. So it's not as if I have, does that make sense?

NMC: Yeah. But what sort of specific words would cue you in to what they're feeling. What kind of words do you think would resonate with you, hearing them from your students?

Judith: Um, panicky. Um, trembling. Um, I guess those are big ones. Um, the sensation of, uh, frustration, of feeling that they are not able to express what they know they can, or what is internalized, for some reason, is not coming out.

NMC: Okay. What kind of questions would you ask the student to help them articulate their mental symptoms and feelings?

Judith: Um, what type of questions? I haven't actually done this, this way with a student before. Um, I guess, um, I don't know. "How do you feel?" "How did you feel?" Um, I think also, having some word options helps, um with certain students, it can help.

NMC: Okay. So what sort of word options would you give them?

Judith: Um, I've also been working on some more positive thinking, but that's an aside. (chuckles) Um, I don't know.

NMC: Tell you what, and why don't you think about this a little bit, and we'll have a chance to address it in the second interview, too. And let me repeat, what kind of descriptive words would you need to hear from the student, and what kind of questions would you ask the student to help them articulate their physical and mental symptoms and feelings.

Judith: Um, maybe shaky, and nausea. Um, dizzy. Um, I know, uh, a sensation I've had before in the past, and this is disappearing a bit, it hasn't been a problem here, but,

um, sort of like your drowning. It's just of emotion and all this stuff, you can't breathe, you can't, yeah. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. Any other thoughts about anything we've discussed today?

Judith: I don't think so. Not at the moment.

NMC: Okay. Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications, amplifications, or corrections?

Judith: Um, when do you need it by?

NMC: Um, it's really kind of up to you. It will take me awhile to transcribe, but that gives you the chance to go back and read through things, and maybe you read something and you're like, "Well, I was thinking about that, and it's actually more like this." You know, you can kind of offer some clarifications. Or if there's something that maybe you think came out wrong, or you said wrong, you can have a chance to correct it. It's really, we have a lot of time. I would probably have this done by Sunday, but you don't, there's no responsibility for you to return it to me at any specific time.

Judith: Um, I could give it a try. Yeah. Um, yeah. I'm kind of swamped, but that's okay.

NMC: Sure, I understand. Okay, thank you very much. And we will end the interview there.

Judith: Okay.

Judith, LP2

April 18, 2010

NMC: Okay, you've done several performances in different contexts, and we're going to talk about them. But first, would you like to know how you scored on the different, um, diagnostic exams and the CPAI?

Judith: Sure.

NMC: Okay. You're KMPAI, which was the diagnostic, scored at a 20. So, theoretically, a score at a zero would mean you would be right in the middle of the Belle curve, that performance anxiety does not affect you more or less than the average pianist. A score of 20 means that you are probably more affected by performance anxiety than the general population of pianists. Okay.

Judith: I could believe that.

NMC: And then your scores on the different CPAIs, and I have them ordered from lowest to highest, on these a low score indicates that the anxiety had less of a negative effect, a high score means it had more of a negative effect. So you're lowest one was one of the middle exposure performances at a 46. A few more exposure performances....

Judith: Yeah, I did notice that. Um, I noticed when we, when I had those performance that I did sequentially, one after the other, I got less calm significantly after each run through.

NMC: So the second one...

Judith: Yeah, yeah. As opposed to starting again on a new day. I mean, then, that did help, but it wasn't as, the decrease wasn't as large.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: I felt that with them, myself.

NMC: Your Live Performance was a 63, that was the first one. Your Virtual Performance, the first recording that we did together was a 63. Your rehearsal performance was a 71, which, um, is a little odd. You don't normally...

Judith: I was a wreck! (Laughter)

NMC: ...see the Rehearsal Performances that high. And your second Live Performance was around a 44. There was a question that you did not...

Judith: Oh, I didn't answer one? I missed something?

NMC: Yeah. Number 5.

Judith: Oh. I went back over and looked over them again. I thought something was not quite there. (Answers question #5 on survey.)

NMC: Okay, so it's probably 44ish, 45. But if that is the case...

Judith: I was calmer, when things were happening.

NMC: ...you'll notice that that ends up being the lowest score of all of them.

Judith: Mm-hmm (thinking)

NMC: Lower than, uh, the exposure performances, definitely lower than the first Live Performance and the Virtual Performance which were about the same level. Do those scores seem about right, or does anything surprise you in those?

Judith: Um, yeah, that seems about right.

NMC: Okay. Good.

Judith: I, one thing I did notice was that, my, uh, the degree of the different categories weren't necessarily the same. A 'somewhat' on one day wasn't necessarily a 'somewhat' on another day. But, it was still 'somewhat' under this broad terminology. But, they did have different degrees of, yeah.

NMC: You've now performed in two live performance situations. Compare how you felt in Live Performance 1, and how you felt during Live Performance 2. Did one performance feel better than the other?

Judith: Um, I think the second one felt better than the first. Yes.

NMC: Okay. Uh, the second one. Why was the second one, why did that feel better to you?

Judith: Um, I guess being, um, more confidence in general. And also I think the, the different times of playing through it helped quite a bit.

NMC: Okay, so playing multiple times in one pass, is that what you're referring to?

Judith: No, but also the different performances that we had within that two week time structure.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: And also, I think possibly also the fact that, "Well, I've done this before." You know, being back in that same venue and sort of knowing what to expect.

NMC: Okay, so you were more familiar with...

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: ...the piano and the location?

Judith: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. And also type of audience, and just all the little things.

NMC: Um, musically, did you prefer one performance over the other, Performance 1 or Performance 2?

Judith: Um, I think the second one was better, until I had my brain fart at the end of the fugue. But, other than that. (chuckles)

NMC: It was...

Judith: I mean, up to that point, everything up to that point I was noticing that, "Oh, I can almost play now." (chuckles)

NMC: I was noticing to, especially coming out of, into and out of that second kind of improvisatory section, it was really just flowing very well, all the lines were just swelling and coming back down. It was really very nice.

Judith: Good. Thank you.

NMC: So...

Judith: I hope to recapture that.

NMC: You mentioned 'brain fart' in the fugue, what happened?

Judith: I don't know if I'm remembering exactly, but it was a, one of those negative thoughts came in, expecting to mess up somewhere, I think. And then I just blanked out. Like, I knew what was coming up, I'm like, this is back, uh, yeah, I knew it was in b minor. And I sort of labeled that section, it's a part and has, and I know where it is, and all that, and I just, I don't know, I just went to panic. I kind of got there mentally ahead, too far ahead before my fingers were there. Like, I was about two, three measures still before, and then I was, yeah, and then I got there and it just froze. And then all the other spots that I had, I'm like, "I know what..." and like, my brain wasn't thinking fast enough. I couldn't...

NMC: Did you feel like you were maybe in the way of your fingers? Trying to think too much?

Judith: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

NMC: Is that a feeling you get frequently, trying to do too much, to be in too much control over everything? Or was it just in the wrong place? You said you were two measures, a few measures too far ahead.

Judith: Um, I guess. A bit of both. A bit of both. And, um, I haven't really felt that on any of them I really fully let go, and just play. And that hasn't happened yet. It's gone more in that direction, but then there's still a lot of, I guess, distrust.

NMC: Distrust for?

Judith: Um, the performance? Myself? I don't know, it's what's going to happen and whether... Just too much second guessing.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: And, trying to make sure everything is absolutely right, so therefore, it can't just flow naturally. It's still... And I think that's part of what came into that at that spot.

NMC: Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different between the two Live Performances? In your first interview, you mentioned things like frustration and feeling frazzled.

Judith: Um, yeah. I was, I was definitely calmer. More objective. As far as things, yeah. Let's put it that way. Um, still, I was still nervous, but... That was a bit disappointing, not being able to get myself fully back on track.

NMC: In the fugue?

Judith: Yes, that was a bit frustrating in itself. And it's like, I couldn't get even. Like I was just playing around in e minor for a little bit, and I'm like, "I can't even make a cadence." It was like, "Why can't I even find the dominant?" Like I couldn't make, it was, yeah.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Um, did I answer the question?

NMC: Um, comparing the mental symptoms between the first live performance.

Judith: Yeah, I would say it was better the second time, definitely. Although that kind of threw me off a little bit.

NMC: It through you off that you were more calm?

Judith: No, after, after the little memory slip.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Yeah, and then, yeah. But everything up to that point was definitely, I felt much more solid.

NMC: Okay. Um, how about your physical symptoms? Were they different between the two live performances? Again, I think you mentioned like holding your breath, maybe a little feeling of nausea, some trembling.

Judith: Yeah, those were more so decreased. Why can't I speak English? Those were not quite as severe.

NMC: In the second performance?

Judith: RIght, yeah. Uh, I did perspire quite a bit. Or particularly, by the time, when I was done, I realized, yeah. But I do think I was breathing a bit more.

NMC: Okay, would you say that Live Performance 2, in terms of you physical symptoms, was about the same, felt much better, or felt much worse than Live Performance 1?

Judith: Um, it felt more controlled?

NMC: More controlled.

Judith: Yeah. Um, I suppose that would mean it would be better.

NMC: So it was different.

Judith: It was different. I was perspiring more profusely after the second one. Yes.

NMC: Did you take the, what about the beta blockers. What, how did you, what was the timing and how did you...

Judith: I did do that.

NMC: ...how much did you take?

Judith: I did take one. And, because, I was feeling better. I remember I had said that I was going to take two. And I took that normal, before, an hour before. So at 1:00 o'clock. Um, I did more mental work with the piece, prior, than physical playing.

NMC: Okay. Can you describe the mental work that you did?

Judith: Uh, basically, I went through and solfeged the whole thing. Yeah, um. Like in slow motion, away from the piano.

NMC: Singing and playing, or just?

Judith: More mental singing. So it took about, maybe 40 minutes, or something.

NMC: And just the melodic line, or did you...

Judith: All, all of it.

NMC: All of it.

Judith: And harmonically, going vertically.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: And how did that, did that help, do you think?

Judith: Um, I think so. Yeah, yeah. And I think that's sort of why I got thrown off so much with that memory slip. Particularly, that's a spot that I usually can jump to. It just threw me off, and I wasn't sure what to do with it.

NMC: Just to back track a little bit, you took the same dosage and timing of the beta blocker between Live Performance 1 and 2?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: So you don't think the differences were due to beta-blockers, necessarily?

Judith: No, but within this time frame, I'm feeling more stable, I guess. Since the first time, so, um, from that point, mental state and all that has helped. And also, um, I've had a series of performances, like, I performed my program yesterday. And then, I'm supposed to do that today at 3:00 o'clock again. And then, I'm playing Monday at the hospital at about noon. They weren't all scheduled so close together, but it turned out, because things got cancelled, and blah blah blah blah. So that, one thing I've noticed in the past, is that if I have a lot of performances, then taking, like, one of the supposed side effects is drowsiness. And that's not a problem when I just. But when I have a series of them, then it, I do end up getting fatigued. So I was, I think I was also being cautious, because of that, because I know that I'm going to have more. So.

NMC: Okay. When is, you're getting ready for a degree recital, is that correct?

Judith: Mm-hmm. (affirmative)

NMC: When is that?

Judith: A week from Wednesday. 28th.

NMC: The 28th. So it's coming up.

Judith: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Okay. You've also performed in several virtual performances. Compare your first virtual performance with the last virtual performance you recorded. Did one performance feel better than the other?

Judith: Um, I guess, they were different. Again, they were very different. And, I think the last one, the last one I would say felt better. Um, I do remember, I think there were a couple of flukes in there, but it was more fatigue, mental fatigue. And I remember thinking that I should have planned some more time to warm up and such, from coming after teaching and blah blah blah. So getting that, shifting that, um, shifting gears. Um, yeah, but I would say I felt, I felt calmer.

NMC: Did you feel a general trajectory in your anxiety...

Judith: My hands were perspiring.

NMC: In the last one?

Judith: I remember that, yes. Yes, yes. And I remembered, and I particularly noticed that because it's not on one of your questions. You asked about trembling hands, but you didn't ask about perspiration. Yeah, and I was wondering if my hands were going to slip off the keyboard. I was like, "I hope no one plays this after me!" (chuckles)

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Um, yeah, so I was very conscious of that. And I think that part of that was feeling, not, um, being able to prepare as well as I had, would have liked.

NMC: To get a run-though...

Judith: Right, right, right.

NMC: Warm-up, things like that?

Judith: Uh-huh. Uh-huh (affirmative)

NMC: Okay. Did you feel like, um, your anxiety was changing from performance to performance that were recorded?

Judith: What do you mean, by changing? Like the way...

NMC: For example, from Live Performance 1 to Live Performance 2, you mentioned the word confidence, or "I felt familiar," or "I felt more calm. I felt more controlled."

Judith: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

NMC: Did you feel any of that changing from the first recordings through to the last recordings?

Judith: Um, yeah. Most distinctly in the first three, because they were back to back. I did notice, yeah.

NMC: And how did they change?

Judith: In a more positive direction. So decreasing, becoming less so. I felt like I was starting to be able to do more of what I wanted to be able to do.

NMC: Okay. And that was in the first three recorded, right away?

Judith: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. (affirmative)

NMC: Okay. Would you have preferred to record, now that you know what it, what it helped you with, would you have preferred to record all five back to back?

Judith: Um, I don't know. Five might have been too much. I was definitely feeling done after the third one that day. Um, If I were to have done so, I think I would have wanted to change things a little bit, um, as well. Because, I think we did that one at 11:00 or something, or maybe at 10:00?

NMC: I can't remember what time it was.

Judith: Anyway, it was, it must have been 11:00, I think.

NMC: It was on a Saturday. I think it was 11:00.

Judith: Yeah. Yeah, that sounds better. Because I teach in the morning until 9:45, and I'm like, "Okay, I can get there by 10:00 o'clock," you know, and blah blah blah. Well, I didn't leave, it was about twenty after 10:00 before I actually got to leave from my teaching. Um, so, yeah, and then to get over here is another 15 minutes, and blah blah blah blah. Um, so, doing, if I were to do all of them, I would think I would want a more ideal preparation set up directly before.

NMC: Mm-hmm. Okay. Physically, did you feel like your symptoms changed over the course of recording the five exposure performances....

Judith: I know, also another thing that happened, I forget what had took place. We had that interview. Was that in-between the three?

NMC: It was in between. We did...

Judith: That helped. I think that was more helped...

NMC: We did the Virtual Performance, the interview, and then two other recordings.

Judith: Yes, the interview between helped.

NMC: How did, what did the interview do for you?

Judith: I guess, just being able to acknowledge the anxiety more. And so that reduced it.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: I think that it was, yeah. Rather than feeling all the stuff trapped in, so much.

NMC: Okay. So, you kind of confronted the things that actually happened to you?

Judith: Yeah, yeah. And then after that, I was feeling more calm. Mm-hmm. Yeah, I remember that now.

NMC: In going through the interviews and filling out the paperwork, did that change the way you felt about the symptoms when they were occurring in the exposure performances?

Judith: Um, yeah, I think so. And also in the subsequent ones after, um, that we did the following week or so. Um, I think it just made it more, I was able to look at it more objectively, rather than seeing it more as a, I don't know. I want to say personal issue, but you know, not like a personal defect or something. But, you know, this is just, rather, yeah. Do you know what I'm saying?

NMC: There's a term called low-inference descriptors that's used sometimes in, I think it's rational emotive therapy, in which the therapist instead of saying to somebody who comes into the room, "Wow, you look angry," they will say instead, "Oh my goodness. Your face is red, you're speaking with a very elevated tone of voice, you're shaking a little bit in your arms, and uh, you're moving about in kind of a jagged manner. Are you angry?" So, instead of projecting a negative connotation by naming a certain symptom with a very high inference word, angry, you break it down into the low-inference words,

and you identify each individual point that makes up the constellation that we typically call angry. And you say, "Huh. You're speaking a little bit louder, and you're face is red. You're trembling a little bit, and you're moving around quite a bit. Are you agitated? Are you angry?" Is that sort of what you're talking about?

Judith: I think so. Yeah. Yeah, I think so. And then I was able to do that more so with myself.

NMC: Okay, so did you use the performances, kind of as a way to watch what was happening while it was happening?

Judith: Yeah, more so after that point. Because prior to that, and also with, um, the first practice performance, what was it called?

NMC: We did a Virtual Performance, then a recording of the exposure performances...

Judith: The first Virtual Performance, I don't know, I just fell into this panic. Like, "What's going on?" and duh duh duh duh. And um, and, I think there were also other issues that, I just sort of got bombarded with a whole number of things that weekend. And I was just very overwhelmed, and, yeah. So, that, yeah, I was able to, uh, make more of a separation between what was happening, uh, physiologically and mentally, and everything, as opposed to what I can actually do as a person.

NMC: Would you say identifying the symptoms gave you control over them?

Judith: Um, in a sense, yeah. I wouldn't say I have mastery over them, but any means but (laughs). Um, or, it, or I wouldn't say that it felt like it had, necessarily, control initially, but that it made them less fearful.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: They were less intimidating, you know?

NMC: So in recognizing them...

Judith: It decreased the power from them.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: So in that sense, I had more control over them, even though I didn't really know, I wouldn't say that it was, that as a result I was able to handle it better. Or no, they couldn't affect me as much. Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Interesting. Um, physical symptoms, did you feel different in the last virtual performance than the first one?

Judith: The last one, that was Thursday. Um, I was perspiring. My hands were wet. Very slippery.

NMC: Okay. Is that unusual?

Judith: Um, it hasn't happened for a while. Actually, that usually doesn't occur when, I've noticed it hasn't occurred since taking the beta-blockers. And, I remember thinking, "Well, why didn't I take them? I should have done that. Or I should have had a banana or something." And blah blah blah blah. And I, and I, yeah, it was just the way the day went, and I didn't put all the pieces together until too late. And then it was, you know, 8:10, and I had to get over here, and Fwah!

NMC: Can I ask a slightly unrelated question?

Judith: Mm-hmm.

NMC: I read another dissertation, and this actually one that I had participated in as one of the subjects, and the writer noted that almost everybody mentioned bananas. What's the banana do for you? And when did you learn to do that? And when did you start doing that?

Judith: Um, I just started doing that recently. This year. This academic year. At the beginning of the year, I think it was. Yeah, I don't think I did it last, yeah, I don't think I did it last year. I don't remember. I don't think so. But, definitely this year, since the beginning of the year.

NMC: Okay, what's the banana supposed to do for you? What's the rationale behind it?

Judith: Um, I don't know how it works, exactly. Um, but, somehow it's supposed to calm you down. I know it also works, when I was in high school, I ran a lot, cross country and track and everything, and it's supposed to like, for then, it's supposed to prevent muscle cramps. And I think that's sort of what happens, and also with nervousness, because then, the muscles can't be so agitated. And so it calms that, all that stuff down, so you can actually, they can function more the way they're supposed to. But, it's the potassium, because they have high levels of potassium.

NMC: Cool.

Judith: So yeah, I have found out that 45 minutes prior is about...

NMC: It's good.

Judith: ...yeah, is the key for me.

NMC: If you were to continue to record virtual performances, how would the tenth performance feel different, do you think?

Judith: I think very much so.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: Extremely, like night and day.

NMC: It would be better, worse, same?

Judith: I think better. Yeah.

NMC: Better.

Judith: Yeah. I feel...

NMC: So the more you do it, you would continue to...

Judith: Yeah, yeah. Mm-hmm.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: I'm noticing my Bach solidifying.

NMC: Did you, uh...

Judith: I guess it's a more inner thing, not technical.

NMC: Did you listen to any of your performances?

Judith: I wanted to, but I haven't yet. I've been swamped. But I still have the email, where you have the link and all that.

NMC: Okay, so you can subscribe.

Judith: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And I have read through the, uh, feedback, the comments and such.

NMC: The feedback, okay.

Judith: And that was very helpful, too.

NMC: Did getting the feedback change the way you approached the recording sessions at all?

Judith: Um, a little bit, in the sense that, I do well if I have something to focus on. And so, just having a specific thing to focus on. Rather than, "What am I playing?" and "Is this going right?"

NMC: So the feedback prompted you to check certain things or to try certain things?

Judith: Um, yeah, and also to keep certain things in mind while performing. That helps reduce the anxiety for me, for some reason.

NMC: What sort of things might that be?

Judith: Well, like, for the last one it was a consistent tempo, or starting with a, just having a more solid tempo. So then that make me, I have to be more calm to to that, you know.

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Judith: 'Cause that's what the problem is. And, I know a couple said that they liked the second one with a little more time in there. So that helps me, too. Because time tends to disappear for me. And so, it's, I try to keep track of that. So just, having more breath, sense of breadth, both breath b-r-e-a-d-t-h, and breath as well.

NMC: Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with symptoms of musical performance anxiety in the second Live Performance?

Judith: Can you say that one more time?

NMC: Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performance changed the way you dealt with symptoms of musical performance anxiety in the second Live Performance?

Judith: The process of making multiple performance? Um, maybe, yes. I would say it helped. I can't say directly how. Um, but yeah.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: My recordings go better, I think, if I don't think about people going to listen. Because listen should be a nice word, but for some reason it means criticize. (laughs)

NMC: Well, again, just looking at the numbers from your CPAI, the Live Performance 1 was a 63 and the Live Performance 2 was a 44.

Judith: Yeah, I definitely felt a lot better, more solid in the keyboard, getting a better sound...

NMC: But you don't think it was necessarily attributed to recording the performance multiple times?

Judith: No, that had an effect, yeah.

NMC: Was it the recording...

Judith: Um, I can't, or, I can't say, I don't know if that was one hundred percent, that's what I'm saying. It's not, may not be necessarily one hundred percent of why it was better, but it did have a distinct positive effect. And what that percentage is, I can't say for sure.

NMC: Sure. So the recordings maybe in tandem with filling out the forms afterwards, or in tandem with the interview?

Judith: Yeah. And also, I think the aspect of time, things happening between there, and just.

NMC: So, two weeks later, you're going to feel more confident about things, just because it's two weeks later.

Judith: Yeah. Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Yeah, I don't, I think had we not done the performance, then perhaps the result would not have been as good, as high. Yeah, so yeah. So I would say that for beneficial.

NMC: Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Judith: Um, I guess I do try to do that. For example, for my recital, I have these other performances that I'm doing, and such. Like, yesterday I meant to record it, and I had someone trying to do that for me on my computer, and it didn't work. So I don't actually have a recording of it. But, um, and like last week, I was gone. I was in Wisconsin and I played up there, and my sister recorded it for me. Um, and the point of that is to, yeah, that helps and also gives me a record, so I can, when I actually go back and look at it, it's more objective rather than it's being emotionally. But I haven't gotten to look at it either. I hope to do that tonight. Same thing with recordings on the podcast.

NMC: You know, with the facilities here, you have the Wenger practice rooms. Have you ever used that as an objective ear?

Judith: Yeah, a little bit. A little bit, uh-huh.

NMC: Can you take those recordings and put them on your computer.

Judith: Maybe. I don't know how.

NMC: Would you find it helpful to have training in digital audio so you can take the recordings off the Wenger system, or so that you can record it to your computer for the purposes of preparing for a recital?

Judith: Um, that could be handy. Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Judith: Sure.

NMC: Did I just ask that?

Judith: That might have been the question.

NMC: Okay. (chuckles) I think it was. Alright, imagine you are teacher, and one of your students is getting ready for a performance.

Judith: Yes. I have that situation. (laughs)

NMC: Would you implement an approach similar to what we did in this study?

Judith: Um, as far as making recordings, and that sort of thing?

NMC: Making recordings, posting them to the internet for an internet audience to listen to.

Judith: Oh. Um, yeah, I'm just not so technologically savvy. I wouldn't want to set the whole thing up on my own, at least not at this point. Um, I think with some of my kids, just recording it period, even if other people don't, or not so many people listen to it, it would still be, would still prove beneficial.

NMC: What advice would you give to the student to make it as effective as possible?

Judith: Um, well, I guess it depends with the student. Um, it would depend whether the thought of recording it and having someone else hear it provides more anxiety or less anxiety. And if it becomes less so, then you need to instill that this is like an actual performance, blah blah blah blah. Um, and if not so, and if it creates more anxiety, then, um, and well, if it's the same, then that's most ideal. But if it's more so, then, focussing on not worrying about what those people think. "These people don't know you." They're not going to see them, or anything like that. Um,

NMC: Okay. Would you change anything in the process to make it more effective for your student? So for example, we recorded five in the course of two weeks, some of those we did back to back. We recorded in the practice room every time. Is there anything in that that you would change that you think might make make the process more effective in preparing a student for an important performance.

Judith: If it's someone who hasn't performed very much, I think it might be helpful to actually do it in the hall where they would be performing, most ideally. Just to help gain that sense of familiarity. And also, I think that's most beneficial then, in listening to the recordings, to figure out what to improve. Because you know exactly what instrument you're going to be using, and how the acoustics works in that space.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything else you would like to add, your thoughts, or anything that you discovered as part of being a part of this study?

Judith: Um, maybe. But I can't think of anything right now. I might have something tomorrow, tonight.

NMC: Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make clarifications or corrections?

Judith: Sure.

NMC: Okay. Very good.

Kendra, VP

April 5, 2010

NMC: Okay. Kendra, you've performed in three different performances now, a rehearsal performance, a live performance, and a Virtual Performance. We're going to talk about those, but first, let me read a statement. We often feel the mental and physical symptoms of anxiety in daily life. Some people might find the following situations trigger these symptoms: riding a roller coaster, driving in an unfamiliar location, giving a presentation, asking someone out on a date, or having a cavity filled. Can you think of a live situation that makes you cause, uh, makes you feel anxiety?

Kendra: Performances and presentations.

NMC: Presentations. Let's talk about presentations for a while. What are, how does your body feel when you're giving a presentation?

Kendra: It gets really shaky.

NMC: Really shaky.

Kendra: Uh-huh (affirmative). And, my knees, well, my legs will kind of like, not, kind of walk in place, I guess.

NMC: Okay. Let's go from head to toe. Do you feel anything in your face or in your neck when you're giving a presentation?

Kendra: Um, not so much in the face or neck.

NMC: Okay. How about your shoulders?

Kendra: Shoulders? Mm, probably not so much, but sometimes they get really tense, but I don't notice it as much.

NMC: Okay. How about in your arms or hands?

Kendra: Um, I notice the hands get sweaty, and there's like the need to, like, fiddle, or like twiddle your thumbs, or just keep them held.

NMC: Okay. How about in your chest, or your breathing or your heart rate.

Kendra: I know I talk faster, so my heart rate probably goes up. (Chuckles)

NMC: Okay. Anything in your stomach or lower back?

Kendra: Huh-uh (negative). No.

NMC: Okay. How about your legs, knees or feet?

Kendra: Yeah. My legs will lock up, and I can feel them getting shaky, so.

NMC: Okay. Mentally, what does it feel like when you're giving a presentation?

Kendra: Um, I guess when I'm giving it, I don't feel like I'm giving it, if that makes any sense. You kind of go in to an autopilot mode, so. I know I'm always constantly trying to think of the words I'm saying, but I don't really feel like I'm in control of the words I'm saying, so.

NMC: So you feel outside of yourself, maybe?

Kendra: Yeah, yeah. Outside, an outer experience.

NMC: Okay, do you have any emotions that you associate with giving a presentation?

Kendra: Um, monotone. I"ll just normally stick to what's comfortable, and not really go out of my comfort zone, so.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any internal dialogue whenever you're giving a presentation? Like, chattering, with yourself in your head?

Kendra: Not usually.

NMC: Okay. Uh, focus or concentration, is that affected when you're giving a presentation?

Kendra: Um, I'm more focused, because I'm more prepared, or prepared with what I'm going to say. Yeah, I guess more focused.

NMC: Okay. Let's transition now and talk about how you typically feel in a solo performance at the piano. Uh, physically, what does it feel like to give a performance at the piano?

Kendra: The shaking, mostly in the legs, again. You get tense. And, again, the hands will get sweaty.

NMC: Let's again sweep from top down. In your face, do you feel anything when your performing? In your face, or jaw, or...

Kendra: Maybe my jaw will clench, sometimes, but other than that, not usually.

NMC: Okay. How about your neck?

Kendra: Not usually.

NMC: Your shoulders, do you feel any tension or shakiness in your shoulders?

Kendra: They'll tense up. Yeah.

NMC: And what's, how do they tense up?

Kendra: Um, upward. They won't be relaxed downward anymore, so they'll more go up towards my ears.

NMC: Okay. And when do you notice that that happens?

Kendra: Probably within the first page, and then I'll notice it when I'm playing and try to adjust. So probably within the first minute or so, I'll notice it.

NMC: Okay. How about down your arms, like your upper arms and elbows, do you notice anything?

Kendra: Well, they get more tired. Well, the adrenaline helps keep them not tired, but they'll still get more tired because my shoulders are tense. So it doesn't really help with what my arms are doing.

NMC: Okay, is there a lack of freedom, or are they tense, also.

Kendra: Yeah, they'd be tense, too.

NMC: Okay. How about from your elbow down to your wrist, do you feel anything there?

Kendra: Not in particular.

NMC: Okay. You mentioned sweaty hands. Is there anything else you notice in your hands or fingers?

Kendra: They get cold.

NMC: Okay, so sweaty and cold?

Kendra: And cold, yeah. So, um, that's probably the main thing.

NMC: Okay. Um, in your chest, do you feel anything while your performing?

Kendra: Not usually.

NMC: Okay, so do you notice a racing heart beat, or shallow breath?

Kendra: Yeah. The adrenaline kicks in, so.

NMC: What, describe, when you say adrenaline kicks in, what does that do?

Kendra: It makes me more panicky, and so, I know subconsciously, my tempos will probably go faster. So I have to remember to think of everything slower in my mind. Yeah, everything will must be more panicky, and probably more in my mind than it actually sounds. So when I will make a mistake, I probably freak out a little bit more about it instead of taking time to adjust.

NMC: And, did you say it does affect your breathing, or doesn't.

Kendra: Um, it probably does, where I forget to breathe, most times. So, so yeah, I would say, yeah.

NMC: And when do you notice that?

Kendra: Probably, probably again the same within the first couple of pages of a big piece, but probably within the first couple of lines of a smaller piece. Because, I know whenever I sit down and play, I don't really take the time to focus as I probably should, so that's probably the scariest moment, when you first start playing.

NMC: Do you feel anything in your stomach?

Kendra: Not usually.

NMC: Okay. How about your lower back?

Kendra: I don't think so, no.

NMC: Legs, knees, or feet?

Kendra: Yeah, my legs will get shaky. So, sometimes pedaling is more difficult, I guess. That's probably the main thing, is shaky.

NMC: Now do your legs shake before you have to pedal, or do they shake on the pedal?

Kendra: During. On the pedal, yeah.

NMC: Um, alright. How about your mental symptoms while you're performing?

Kendra: Um, while I'm performing. They're probably discombobulated. (chuckles) Within the first couple lines, right when I start playing, then a little into the piece, I'll

have to do a mental check and get into the piece, or make myself concentrate more on the harmonies and the emotion of it.

NMC: Could you describe or define discombobulated?

Kendra: (Chuckles). Um, well. Usually when I start playing my mind is just a big mess. And, like, I take the time to focus before I play, but usually in a live setting, everything will just get all muddled up, I guess. And so, once I get into the piece more, I'll just kind of realize that I'm not just focusing on the piece so much, and that I'm kind of gone into autopilot. So.

NMC: Is discombobulate like overwhelmed? Or is it a wide focus? Or is it...

Kendra: I guess it's overwhelmed, more. Just trying to take in the audience members along with everything I should be focused with on the piece, and also being worried at the same time.

NMC: Okay. You also described a mental check that you make. When do you do that mental check.

Kendra: Probably, again, probably within the first couple minutes of probably a large piece, or, mmm, it depends. It depends on how focused I am when I actually start the piece. And sometimes I'll have to just remind myself of the characters. So the mental check would be if I reach a certain climactic point in a piece, I'd have to do a check on, or a character change, or just where I am in the piece.

NMC: So, your first mental check, does that happen in cue with a specific point in the piece, or does it happen when you settle into the performance.

Kendra: Probably when I settle in, more. And that helps me settle in, so.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific emotions that you associate with performing?

Kendra: Um, scared. (chuckles)

NMC: Scared.

Kendra: Um, probably excited also. Um, heartwarming, I guess would be another one. I, it's hard, because it depends on what piece I'm playing. Those might be the three main ones.

NMC: Scared. What scares you performing?

Kendra: Um, all the people listening. So, if I make a mistake, it might be very noticeable. Or, you never know what's going to happen during a performance, what you're minds going to do, or, I don't know.

NMC: And what is it about a mistake and the audience that makes you scared?

Kendra: Well, if they're music majors, that's even more scary, because you know that they might know the piece, they might recognize it, and they might be listening to every phrasing or the different passages. I guess that would be the main thing, of just messing up. A noticeable mistake.

NMC: And again, why, what is it about them noticing a mistake that makes you scared?

Kendra: Because you want it to be flawless. (chuckles) And it probably won't be. You want to show them everything you've been working on, and if you make a mistake, it just kind of shows that maybe there wasn't something you practiced enough. Or that's not normally how you play it, and they will never know that, so.

NMC: Um, do you get that sense of dissociation or autopilot like you do in a presentation?

Kendra: Yes. (chuckles) Probably.

NMC: Can you describe that?

Kendra: Yeah. It's not as, um, it's probably not as extreme, because you can always fiddle your way out it with a sentence, or just throwing, I don't know. I think it's easier to get out of a mistake when you're presenting than it is when you're playing because the music was already written for you, and in presenting you can kind of improvise. But, yeah, I can feel myself go into autopilot, just kind of reading the lines I already prepare for it, and not really doing anything with them.

NMC: So at the piano, what is that like?

Kendra: The autopilot? It's just playing notes and not thinking of the phrases or the characters. So, just hoping you get through the piece.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific thoughts that occur when you're performing or internal dialogue with yourself?

Kendra: Yeah. I try to make stories when I do my pieces, so I guess it's what the stories are. Some piece have more meaning than others, to me personally, so. Yeah, I guess those thoughts will come through.

NMC: And is your focus or your concentration affected when you're performing?

Kendra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). It's harder to concentrate, um, just because you're the only person making noise in the room, usually. So, the focus is more intensified, but it's harder to get there. If that makes sense.

NMC: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Do you take any steps do reduce your symptoms of anxiety?

Kendra: Um, play in front of people. In front of other students. Um, try to do at least one full run-through at a local place. And, um, sometimes do some stretches before I play. Like breathing exercises. Practice that concentration in the practice room. so.

NMC: So you like to do lots of performances?

Kendra: Try to. Yeah.

NMC: You try to do lots of performances? What do those performances, how do those performances help you?

Kendra: They help me play in front of people. Um, just to run through the entire performance without, other than by yourself, because you can always stop yourself in a practice room. So it's just, mostly to just do the whole thing in front of people, just to get the practice of it. So that when you do it for the first time in front of other people, it's not...

NMC: So is it a stamina issue, or...

Kendra: Um, I don't, I'm not sure. I think it's more of just, the more you play in front of people the more comfortable you feel in that setting. So it might just be like a different setting.

NMC: Okay. Um, relaxation strategies, you talked about breathing and stretching. Can you describe those and when do you do them?

Kendra: Yeah. Um, it's kind of like yoga, stretching. I guess just, I know when you play a lot of, your adrenaline or your blood will kind of go rushing. So just to kind of take time, and maybe touch your toes or something, or stretch your arms out, or just kind of get your body less tense. So it helps you relax more and not tense up while you're playing so much.

NMC: And when do you typically do those?

Kendra: Typically before I play or before I warm up.

NMC: Minutes before? Hours before?

Kendra: Usually...

NMC: Right before you go on stage?

Kendra: (chuckles) No. Probably minutes before I actually warm up to go on stage, so.

NMC: Okay. Um, what about prayer or meditation?

Kendra: I'll do meditation, and, probably, yes prayer to get through it (laughs) so.

NMC: Okay. Can you describe your meditation?

Kendra: Just, kind of a moment to just close your eyes, and just run through the piece in your head. Maybe even sing it out loud to yourself. Or breathing, just breathing in and out, too.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything you do during a performance to help you with performance anxiety?

Kendra: Um, hmm. That's a hard question. I think something I do differently is to, because I know sometimes if you concentrate on the piece too much you, I psych myself out. So I guess, try to think of more, um, being more free with it, but still keeping that focus.

NMC: Let's now consider specifically how you felt in the Rehearsal Performance, and that would be like a practice room performance, um, did you notice any physical symptoms of anxiety.

Kendra: Hmm-mmm (negative).

NMC: No.

Kendra: No.

NMC: Okay, so you didn't have, your hands weren't sweaty or cold?

Kendra: No they weren't.

NMC: Okay, did you have any tension in your shoulders?

Kendra: No.

NMC: Your legs, did they shake while pedaling?

Kendra: No.

NMC: Did you feel that adrenaline rush, the heart rate and the breathing?

Kendra: Hmm-mm, not that much.

NMC: Would you say in general, your symptoms were about the same, less, or more than a typical performance?

Kendra: Less.

NMC: Less.

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: How about your mental symptoms of anxiety? DId you have any mental symptoms of anxiety during the performance?

Kendra: Hmm-mm (negative)

NMC: No. So you didn't have, you weren't scared, excited, or any of those emotions?

Kendra: Well, the emotions to portray in the music. So yeah, so probably those.

NMC: Did you have any of the feeling of autopilot or dissociation?

Kendra: No.

NMC: No. How about your focus or concentration? Was it affected by performance anxiety?

Kendra: Um, it wasn't as concentrated as I'd probably be in a performance, but it wasn't just autopilot. So there was, it was about, middle, or.

NMC: Would you say your mental symptoms were the same, less, or more than a typical performance?

Kendra: Probably, probably less and more. (laughs)

NMC: That's fine. Describe that. What's less, and what's more?

Kendra: Well I know when I give a performance, I try to make the mentality of it even more. So during the rehearsal performance, it wasn't as, probably, what's the word, like completely focused, but it wasn't not focused. So there was still focus there, but not as much as there would be during a live performance, or a performance. So yeah, the mentality state is still there, trying to be more free and stuff, but not as much.

NMC: Did you have the discombobulation before you started?

Kendra: No.

NMC: Did you have any of that racing or settling in period?

Kendra: No.

NMC: Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety before the performance?

Kendra: No.

NMC: So no stretching? No meditation?

Kendra: No.

NMC: Okay. Um, let's now consider how you felt in Live Performance number 1, and this was the performance at the retirement center. Can you recall any physical symptoms that you may have experienced in that performance?

Kendra: Um, probably more hesitant. I know there was no shaky legs, as much. And, my shoulders were probably tense, more tense than they usually are.

NMC: I'm not sure I understand what you mean by hesitant. How do you feel physically hesitant? What's that sensation like?

Kendra: Probably, when I go to strike a key, it's probably a little more, it's not as projected as I wanted to be, or the sound, how I would strike was more hesitant. Probably more careful or cautious.

NMC: Cautious, okay I see. Um, again from your head down. Did you feel anything in your face or your jaw while you were performing.

Kendra: Um, my jaw was probably clenched.

NMC: Okay. How about in your neck or in your shoulders?

Kendra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). My shoulders were a little tense.

NMC: And tense, was that the raised...

Kendra: No, I think it was tensed as in, just not really moving them.

NMC: Not free?

Kendra: Yeah, not as free.

NMC: Okay. How about in your arms, and down into your hands? Did you feel anything there?

Kendra: Those probably, too. Just not as free. More cautious. More, um, huddled, or closed in.

NMC: Inhibited.

Kendra: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

NMC: How about in your hands. You mentioned cold and sweaty. Did that happen in this performance?

Kendra: Not so much as I thought would, so.

NMC: Anything in your chest? Breathing or heart rate?

Kendra: I probably didn't breathe that much, so. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. Is it something you noticed during the performance?

Kendra: Um, it's something that I don't really notice during, is something that I more notice afterwards.

NMC: Okay. In your stomach, did you have any butterflies or tension?

Kendra: No.

NMC: Okay. Uh, how about in your lower back?

Kendra: No.

NMC: Legs, feet, did they shake on the pedal?

Kendra: Um, not so much as they do sometimes. But yeah, they, yeah maybe a little.

NMC: Uh, compare the physical symptoms you experienced in the Live Performance with what you typically experience. Was it about the same, more, or less?

Kendra: It was about the same. Um, a little less, though.

NMC: Any reason why you think that the physical symptoms were a little less than typical?

Kendra: Probably not as much pressure (chuckles) of a performance, and I know it was more for, the audience was more there to enjoy. They, um, audiences are always there

to enjoy (laughs). I know it wasn't as big as a crowd, or there was no, you know, professor out, something that would affect my grade, so.

NMC: Okay. Let's talk about that for just a minute. Audience size, does that affect you?

Kendra: I think so, yeah.

NMC: Audience make-up, you mentioned the professors.

Kendra: Yeah, those will affect.

NMC: Why is that.

Kendra: Usually it's for, like, a seminar or a, um, solo recital where your grade counts on it. Those have more pressure added on to it. So I know that there was probably not many people there that had played my piece before, and so they wouldn't be noticing all the different phrases, or...

NMC: And what is it about people noticing, people who know the piece, how is it different playing for people that maybe don't know the piece.

Kendra: I think you're more self-conscious about it. Because I know whenever, you know, someone's played the piece before, you kind of have that in your head. "What if they played this differently? Am I doing this probably the way they like to hear it?" I guess it makes me more aware of all the little details that different people might put in a piece. Like, what, what they would like and what they wouldn't like, whatever.

NMC: Okay. How about mental symptoms that you may have experienced in the Live Performance?

Kendra: Probably autopilot (chuckles).

NMC: Okay. Any particular emotions that you associated with that performance?

Kendra: Um, thinking of a good emotion. Um, probably... (chuckles) Sorry.

NMC: You mentioned...

Kendra: Yeah, I'm trying to think of a good emotion, sorry!

NMC: ...scared, excited, heartwarming, for a typical. Did you have any of those?

Kendra: I didn't feel as scared. I think, I don't know if 'blah' is an emotion, but (laughs).

NMC: A lack of emotion, maybe?

Kendra: Yeah, a lack of emotion, probably. Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Did you feel, you mentioned the autopilot. Can you describe specifically what that was like with this performance?

Kendra: Um, it was, I know when I finished playing, I wasn't very happy because there were a lot of things I was working on that didn't project or didn't come through. Um, yeah, that, it probably wasn't my best performance, but.

NMC: So, did the frustration affect you while you were performing, and that caused the autopilot?

Kendra: Not so much. Yeah, I think it was just that, I haven't played that piece that much in front of people, so it might have just been playing it in front of an actual audience instead of just a few people, so that might have caused the autopilot more so.

NMC: Okay. Did your focus or concentration, was it affected by...

Kendra: Yeah, I wasn't as focused on the music, I was more focused on getting through it and on the notes, so.

NMC: Okay. Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety before the Live Performance?

Kendra: I did not.

NMC: Okay, so you didn't do your stretching?

Kendra: No.

NMC: Did you do your meditation?

Kendra: Not so much, not as much as I usually do.

NMC: Do you have a typical pre-performance routine that you like to do?

Kendra: Kind of. Yeah, yeah.

NMC: And were you able to do that for this performance?

Kendra: No.

NMC: Okay. Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Kendra: Um, yeah. I know that the piano, for me, was harder to get what the sound I wanted out of it. Um, I know sometimes, I couldn't get all the notes to come through, so, that was probably just me being more cautious than I usually am, and wasn't able to do all the musicality that I wanted to, so.

NMC: So playing on a new instrument, did that cause, on a foreign instrument or an unfamiliar instrument?

Kendra: Yeah, it caused a little, just more on sound wise.

NMC: Okay. Um, was your memory affected by anxiety?

Kendra: There were a couple of slips, yeah. A little bit. Not so much to where I had to stop, but there were some memory slips that usually don't happen.

NMC: And what about accuracy?

Kendra: Yeah. And I know the tempos probably all over.

NMC: And musicianship?

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: What about the performance anxiety giving you better concentration, or giving your performance edge or vitality?

Kendra: Um, I think, for me it was, I probably didn't mentally prepare myself for it as much as I usually do. And so, the lack of me thinking there was a need for concentration was there, and so, I didn't feel as concentrated.

NMC: Okay. Um, what is it about this performance that made you feel like you didn't have the need to be as concentrated?

Kendra: Um, I think it was, it might have been, whenever I go to like a retirement home or something, I usually went around Christmas time, or, I don't know. I felt like it was maybe the audiences, maybe they'll love it probably no matter what because they just love music.

NMC: So it did not feel as if there were many consequences to a performance.

Kendra: Yeah. Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Let's now consider the recording, the Virtual Performance that you just did. Can you recall any physical symptoms that you may have experienced during the performance?

Kendra: mm-hmm (negative). No, there was no shaking or...

NMC: Okay. Uh, let's go through some of the things you mentioned. You say sometimes your shoulders go up. Did that happen in this performance?

Kendra: Not so much.

NMC: You mentioned the feeling of an adrenaline rush, like in your chest. Did that happen?

Kendra: No.

NMC: You mentioned cold, sweaty hands. Did that happen?

Kendra: No.

NMC: You mentioned sometimes, maybe a little bit of, what was it, hesitancy?

Kendra: Yeah. No, I didn't notice that.

NMC: Your feet didn't shake?

Kendra: Hmm-mm (negative).

NMC: In general would say that your physical symptoms were about the same, more, or less than the Live Performance?

Kendra: Less.

NMC: Would you say that your physical symptoms were about the same, more, or less than your Rehearsal Performance?

Kendra: Probably a little more, but about the same.

NMC: So slightly different but on the high side of the same?

Kendra: Yeah. Yeah.

NMC: How about your mental symptoms. Did you notice any mental symptoms of anxiety during the performance?

Kendra: There was more focus, more concentration. Um, there was more mental preparation I think, before I started playing.

NMC: Do you have any emotions that you would associate with that performance?

Kendra: Um, joyous and free. (laughs)

NMC: Okay. Very nice! Did you have any internal dialogue that occurred with the performance?

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. What sort of things were you thinking?

Kendra: Um, it was probably of the stories I put with the pieces, so.

NMC: Okay. When you tell these stories, are you like speaking a story and the music is the soundtrack? Or are you saying, "And now this is where thus and such comes in."

Kendra: Yeah. The second one. (chuckles)

NMC: So you're kind of, you're like, directing?

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: Um, did you feel any of the sensation of autopilot?

Kendra: Um, not so much. Maybe a little, but no.

NMC: Okay. Was your focus or your concentration affected?

Kendra: Yeah, but in more focus.

NMC: So it was better, you had better focus?

Kendra: Yeah. Better focus.

NMC: Um, better focus than the Live Performance?

Kendra: Yeah (emphatic). Yeah.

NMC: Better focus than the Rehearsal Performance?

Kendra: Yes.

NMC: Why the change there? Why did you feel more focused for the Virtual Performance than for the Rehearsal Performance?

Kendra: Because, I'm being recorded, and it's going out to the i, iCast, or whatever.

NMC: The podcast?

Kendra: The podcast, yeah. So that, more focus so that it will be a proper recording to want to share.

NMC: Okay. And you have positive emotions with this, too? Did you say elation, joyous?

Kendra: Joyous. Yeah.

NMC: Okay. And how is that different, why was that different than 'blah'?

Kendra: (laughs) I probably wanted to redeem myself from my Live Performance, so, um, there was more character in this one, I felt. So, more taking the time, and not as, how would you say, more free. So, I think that affected me.

NMC: Um, can you think of a specific instance in which performance anxiety may have affected your Virtual Performance?

Kendra: Um, probably if my, mmm, I know my focus probably, not so much in some areas, but more in other parts of the piece. So, I mean, not so much, but.

NMC: Um, I going to think out loud for a second and I want you to respond to it. In anxiety research, scientists will talk about maladaptive reactions, those are bad things that happen because of anxiety, and they'll talk about adaptive reactions, and those are the good things that happen from anxiety. It sounds to me like you had more adaptive reactions to the Virtual Performance than maladaptive reactions. And it seems like, in the Live Performance, you had more maladaptive reactions than adaptive reactions.

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: Do you agree with that?

Kendra: Yeah, I agree with that.

NMC: What is it about the recording situation that does that?

Kendra: Um, I think it's the setting. There's not so much, I mean, I'm probably used to playing on this, or in this practice room, or, all of them are like this one. So, so yeah, I'm used to playing with this certain sound, and you can hear the projection.

NMC: It's a familiar place to you.

Kendra: Yeah, it's familiar. And, um, I know that if I make a mistake that, I don't know.

NMC: You're Rehearsal Performance, I would assume, was also in a similar space.

Kendra: Yes.

NMC: So how is the recorded performance more adaptive for you than maybe the Rehearsal Performance, if it was?

Kendra: Um, I think in the Rehearsal Performance, when you're just playing by yourself with no pressure at all, just for yourself, you tend to overlook more, or lose your concentration more easily, because it's only for you. But, yeah, I guess this one had a little more reason to get in full character and everything, so.

NMC: Okay. Do you think you would have the same reaction, if instead of just an audio recording, there were a video recording that was going to be podcast?

Kendra: Probably not (laughs).

NMC: Why is that?

Kendra: Um, 'cause people would see me (chuckles). And, I don't know, sometimes I get a little self-conscious on how I play the piano. It's different when someone physically sees you play, other than just listening. I don't know.

NMC: Okay. Alright, most of these descriptions, you've given from the perspective of the performer. Imagine now that you are a teacher, and you have a student that's trying to explain these symptoms. What kind of words would you need to hear from the student to truly understand their mental and physical symptoms as experienced?

Kendra: What kind of words? Um, frustration. And, nervous. Anxious. Um, scared. But, yeah, scared but knowing they could play better, I guess. Knowing that they want to show the audience what they can do. I don't know what word that would be.

NMC: What kind of questions would you ask the students to help them articulate their feelings?

Kendra: Um, well I'd ask them what music means to them, or to talk about their piece to me. As in, how it makes them feel, the piece. What's going through their head when they perform. What they're concentrating on. Probably how they get nervous, or as you asked me, what physical things are happening. Um, yeah that's probably most of it.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything else you would like to add about things that we've talked about so far.

Kendra: I don't think so.

NMC: Okay. Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarification, amplifications, or corrections?

Kendra: No. It's fine (chuckles)

NMC: Alright. Thank you very much.

Kendra: Alright.

Kendra, LP2

April 16, 2010

NMC: Alright, you have now performed in two live performance situations, and we're going to talk about all the performances in just a minute. But before we do, would you like to know the scores that you had on the different surveys that you filled out?

Kendra: Um, no, yes.

NMC: No, yes?

Kendra: Sure.

NMC: Sure.

Kendra: Why not.

NMC: Okay. We'll start with the KMPAI. That was the diagnostic survey. It's the one that I used to categorize people as to how performance anxiety generally affects them. You scored a -3, which means, um, typically performance anxiety is not going to affect you much more or less than anybody else. A zero, theoretically, would be you're right in the center. So actually, a negative three kind of means you're kinda on the side where you can learn to deal with your performance anxiety to some extent.

Kendra: Yeah. Okay.

NMC: Does that sound about right to you?

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. And then here are the different scores you had on the CPAI for the different performance, and I've got them in order of severity. A low number here means that anxiety did not affect you negatively. A high number means that anxiety did affect you a little bit. You're lowest score was for the Rehearsal Performance at a 29. Clustered very close around that were all of the virtual performances: EP1 at 31, the Virtual Performance where we did the interview after it, at a 32, EP 5 at 33, EP3 and 4 at 34, EP 2 at 36. Your first Live Performance you scored a 60. Your second Live Performance, you scored a 57. Do those sound about accurate?

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: Okay, good. Does anything in there surprise you in looking at those scores?

Kendra: Um, not so much.

NMC: Not so much. We do have one here that's a little bit higher than some of the others (pointing at EP scores). Can you remember what was happening?

Kendra: Yeah, I think it was that the first one, or no, what was it? The first one went well, and then the second one, I might have been overly confident, and I might have made a few more mistakes than I anticipated, so.

NMC: Okay, so that was the EP2, the second one.

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: And your scores for the two Live Performances are pretty similar: 60 and 57. LP2 is a little bit less, um, any thoughts on that?

Kendra: Um, I think I got more comfortable playing the piece, so, that probably caused it to be less.

NMC: Okay. Very good. Let's compare how you felt in Live Performance 1 and how you felt in Live Performance 2. First, did one performance feel better than the other?

Kendra: The second one.

NMC: The second one felt better. Why?

Kendra: Again, I was probably more comfortable, or I am a lot more comfortable playing the piece. Um. so it was easier to get more in the character...

NMC: When you say more comfortable, what do you mean?

Kendra: Um, that I've played it in front of people more often, such as seminars, or just bringing a friend into the practice room. Um, I've been able to run through it many times more, so.

NMC: Okay. Do you attribute any of that to, uh, recording it multiple times?

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: You do?

Kendra: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: How did that help, do you think?

Kendra: Um, it helps you just sit down and really concentrate, really try to get in the performance mode or mood, um, or mindset. And it just makes you run though it straight through regardless of any errors you might make, you just have to keep going.

NMC: Okay. Um, did you think Live Performance One or Live Performance Two, which do you think was the better performance?

Kendra: Probably Two.

NMC: Two was the better performance?

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: What was it about the second performance that you felt better about?

Kendra: Um, well, it's the setting isn't extremely new. And, I've already played on that piano once, so kind of knowing what to expect, more. And then also, yeah, playing the piece, having played the piece multiple times before.

NMC: Okay. Excellent. Um, were the physical symptoms of anxiety different in Live Performance Two compared to Live Performance One?

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: Okay, in Live Performance One I think you mentioned, um, maybe some hand sweatiness, and your shoulders were raised a little bit, and some shakiness.

Kendra: Yes. There was still hand sweating, slightly. I didn't feel as tense. I felt like I could relax more, so the shoulders weren't as tense.

NMC: And this is in the Second?

Kendra: Yeah. The shakiness wasn't exactly there. I wasn't shaky, I didn't think, at all really.

NMC: Okay. Um, in comparison to how you typically feel during a performance, how was Live Performance Two?

Kendra: Um, it was...

NMC: In terms of physical symptoms.

Kendra: Yeah. It was probably more comfortable than I would feel, normally, 'cause normally I still get the hand shaking a little bit. So, um, I think there's still like slightly more anxiety, but not anything too much more.

NMC: Okay. Um, how about mental symptoms of anxiety, comparing Live Performance Two and Live Performance One?

Kendra: Um, what did I say in Performance One?

NMC: You mentioned the words scared, excited, heartwarming.

Kendra: Okay. Um, it wasn't as scared. More excited, just to probably show how much I've improved, or more comfortable, and that I'd really thought more about the characters and had been playing it more with that, so.

NMC: Okay. Um, you've now performed in several virtual performances also. Compare your first virtual performance with the last recorded performance. Did one performance feel better than the other?

Kendra: I'm trying to think back then. I think as they progressed, I got more comfortable with it, because it wasn't as, "Oh my gosh! People are listening to me, or are going to be judging me on my playing." So, I think as I did each one, um, I could feel myself just thinking like, "Okay, so last time this wasn't exactly how I wanted it to go." So, I kept like certain points in my music in thought. Just ways I could improve it each time.

NMC: Okay. Did the mental symptoms change at all from virtual performance to virtual performance?

Kendra: I think so. I think, at first, I was more thinking of, um, making sure I got all the right notes. And then as each virtual performance went on, I could know, already be comfortable with the fact that I can play the right notes, and that there's other things that I can start thinking about as well. Um, so I think, again, it's just more, um, the mentality of it just became more musical instead of just, um, just the fact that, "Don't mess up." (chuckles)

NMC: Is a musical mindset produce less anxiety than a technical mindset?

Kendra: Yes. For me it does, anyways. (chuckles)

NMC: Why is that?

Kendra: I think it's because it's more enjoying? It's more for my own enjoyment and you're not thinking, because I know whenever I think like, "What's that note?" I will always probably mess up, because you're just psyching yourself out. So I think the more you have fun with it the more you can enjoy it. And, you're going to, I mean, if you mess up, you mess up. So just keep going.

NMC: Okay. What about physical symptoms in the virtual performances? Did they change from the first time you recorded to the last time you recorded?

Kendra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, there was, um, unlike the live performances, I didn't get shaky or sweaty or anything. So, that was a factor that was already eliminated right from the first one, which was a positive. And then each time, I don't know if it was more physical, I think it was more the mentality of it, got better each time, because I don't think I got tense or shaky in any of them.

NMC: Okay. Do you think your physical symptoms are a result of your mental symptoms, or is it the other way around? You have mental symptoms and it causes physical symptoms. Or you have physical symptoms and it causes mental symptoms?

Kendra: Yeah. I don't know, I haven't really thought about it. Um, I think the physical might be the cause of the mental, 'cause I know the more mentally relaxed you are, I mean naturally you're going to be physically relaxed as well. Um, but yeah, and I think that might be part of it, is that the more you really think about each note on the page before you go up to play, you're going to get more nervous.

NMC: If you were to continue to record virtual performances, how do you think the tenth performance would feel different than, say the last one that you did?

Kendra: I'm not sure. It might feel around the same. Um, yeah.

NMC: About the same?

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: Good. Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with symptoms of musical performance anxiety in the second Live Performance?

Kendra: I think so, yeah.

NMC: How?

Kendra: Um, I think it, um, reassures me that, yes, I know the piece. And it just kind of gets you set in the performance mindset without actually being in an unusual setting. So you're not really dealing with the physical things around you so much, your more, like you said, the mentality of it. You can deal with the mentality of it first, and then when you're placed in the physical setting, you can just feel more comfortable, 'cause you know that your mental state of mind already knows, like, knows what you're going to do.

NMC: Would you say that recording gave you more confidence?

Kendra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

NMC: Okay. You also received feedback from the internet audience. What did you think of the feedback?

Kendra: I liked it. I liked it a lot. Um, some of the feedback I got were things that I was actually questioning in the piece, so it was kind of nice to hear, um, maybe that it's okay to do something one way, then another. And some of the feedback's were opposing, which is also nice, because then you realize that there's multiple ways to do something, and then you can just kind of play around with the piece.k

NMC: Did getting feedback change the way you approached subsequent recording?

Kendra: Yeah, because is, um, let's you know that there are people actually listening to it (chuckles), so. Yeah, 'cause that means you don't want to get too laid back in the virtual performance, that people will be listening.

NMC: Okay. Do you think that participating in the interviews or filling out the forms affected you in the second Live Performance?

Kendra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, I think it lets you see how you're feeling on paper in stead of just having a bunch of thought running through your head, you can kind of take one thought at a time on a piece of paper, and it kind of lays it flat in front of you.

NMC: Did you have any moments of self-discovery in participating in the interview or filling out the paper work?

Kendra: I think so. I think I realized that, um, I might take things, I might think about things too much, if that's possible (chuckles). Um, so I think it was nice to know that, or to hear the physical symptoms, and then help me realize what they are. So, yeah.

NMC: In naming those physical symptoms, how did that affect you in later performances?

Kendra: Um, it helps you realize more about them, so that you can kind of like, when you're waiting to go on to the performance, you can kind of, take and check what's going on, and how you can more approach the piano so you can deal with it easily, or not easily, but better.

NMC: So would you, let's say we talked about the hand sweating. In talking about the hand sweating, whenever you go up to perform, is there something you can do that changes the hand sweating, or is it just something that you're aware of, now?

Kendra: It's just something you can be aware of now, and, just kind of like, I mean, always to breathe. Because that's the one thing I forgot, which probably contributes to a lot of physical symptoms. But, I think it makes you more aware, so you can think more

about how to deal with them instead of just going up there and being like, "Oh my God, my hands are sweaty. What do I do?" (laughs) So.

NMC: Anything similar for mental symptoms? In naming these mental symptoms did that help you in any way in the subsequent performances?

Kendra: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I think so. Um, 'cause again, I think it helps you realize that it's okay to be scared or nervous. You're not the only one. But then, you're also their for the sake of the music, and it's not just note for note for note. So I kind of think it helps me think of music more as music, and not just notes on a page.

NMC: Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Kendra: I think so. Yeah.

NMC: Why?

Kendra: It helps. It helps you to sit down and run through a piece and know that people will be listening to it. That you can get feedback back from it. Um, it gets you in the performance mindset without actually, well, with exercising the Live Performance and the Virtual, so you're getting like a taste of both the physical setting and the mental setting. So I think that helps a lot.

NMC: Were you able to listen to any of your recorded performances?

Kendra: I didn't. I didn't know if I wanted to. (laughs)

NMC: Do you think listening to your performances would have been helpful?

Kendra: Yeah, it is helpful, but I just didn't want to listen to them on the iCast.

NMC: Is that something you've done before? Recording and listening to them?

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: And what sort of things do you find that that is helpful with?

Kendra: I think it's helpful, because you might think you're doing something and it sounds like something completely different. And then also, you can hear, like, where you're rushing, and you can hear more of, like, the musicality of the piece.

NMC: Is there any particular reason that you decided not to listen to these? Was it ...

Kendra: Um, I don't know if it's for any particular reason. I just didn't set it up, (laughs) on the iCast, and then I, I don't know.

NMC: Okay.

Kendra: That's pretty much it.

NMC: Okay, imagine you are a teacher, and one of your students is getting ready for a performance. Would you implement an approach similar to the processes implemented in this study? To help them get ready for a performance?

Kendra: Yeah, I might. Um, yeah. I think it would help them a lot.

NMC: What goals would you have for them in having them do this sort of thing?

Kendra: Um, I think the biggest goal would just to be, to feel confident when they sit on the bench. 'Cause I'm not sure if getting rid of anxiety is a realistic goal. So, just to help them deal with it more, so that they can still create the music they intend to.

NMC: What aspects of recording do you think would help them with that?

Kendra: As in, for...?

NMC: As in gaining confidence.

Kendra: I think the recording for a live audience, um, like the virtual recordings, you have the live audience that's not watching you, but they're always listening, I think that could help a lot. 'Cause I think that gets their mentality in the right setting. But yeah, oh, then playing before a live audience, as well, is very beneficial. I think the mixture of both of them would help.

NMC: So you kind of need a live audience experience in addition to the virtual performance experience?

Kendra: Yeah. Yeah.

NMC: Is there any particular facet in which the live performance is more beneficial than the recorded performance?

Kendra: I think so, because you're not dealing with just one, you're dealing with the new physical setting along with the anxiety at the same time. So, I mean, it's something that's beneficial, but I don't, I don't know, it might be more beneficial, but I think it's easier to start with the Virtual and then work up, rather than just throwing them out there.

NMC: What are the advantages of starting with the virtual performances, do you think?

Kendra: Um, it makes them run through the entire piece. Um, it let's them treat it like a real performance, but it's not, because they can not have, like, the self - um, be self-

conscious that people are watching them right there in the moment. They'll still listen to them, but it's later in time, not right then in front of them.

NMC: What advice would you give to the student to help them get the most out of the process?

Kendra: Um, um. (chuckles) I'd probably say to just concentrate, um, and just create music, I guess. 'Cause, yeah.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything that you might change in the process that we did to make it more effective?

Kendra: I'm not really sure what else you could change, but, I know you mentioned like a video camera, but I don't know if I would do that.

NMC: Would a video camera cause more or less anxiety?

Kendra: I think it would cause more.

NMC: Why is that?

Kendra: Um, I don't know. I think some of the problems with anxiety is that, well, I sometimes feel like I look goofy if people are just watching me. So, I think the Virtual Performance is nice, because they're listening and not just watching.

NMC: Goofy. What do you think look's goofy when you're performing.

Kendra: (laughs) I don't know. Sometimes I just think that when I perform, that people look goofy. (laughs) Maybe it's the posture and everything.

NMC: Okay. Would you change anything, maybe in the timing of the recordings? Let's see, we did one recording about two days after the Live Performance, and we got five recordings in the next weekend.

Kendra: Yeah. I think that five in one weekend was maybe a lot. Especially when they're back to back. Because you're just, just keep running through it. It might be kind of like, um, I don't know. I liked, I liked having the Virtual after the Live Performance, though. I liked that a lot.

NMC: Okay. So you would spread them out a little bit more.

Kendra: Yeah, but not too much. Maybe one or two. Yeah, I'd say five within a week. I don't know, the weekend was, short (chuckles).

NMC: Do you have any other thoughts to add about performance anxiety and being a part of this study?

Kendra: Um, no I don't think so.

NMC: Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications or corrections.

Kendra: No thank you.

NMC: Okay. Thank you very much.

Kendra: Okay. Thank you.

Lauren, VP

April 5, 2010

NMC: Alright, so, your pseudonym for this is Lauren? Is that right?

Lauren: Mm-hmm. (affirmative)

NMC: Okay. Um, we're going to talk about your three performance, but first let me read a statement. We often feel the mental and physical symptoms of anxiety in daily life. Some people might find the following situations trigger these symptoms: riding a roller coaster, driving in an unfamiliar location, giving an informational presentation, asking someone out on a date, or having a cavity filled. Can you think of a situation that causes you to feel symptoms of anxiety?

Lauren: Um, well definitely driving in an unknown area.

NMC: Okay, so when you're driving in an unknown area, what does your body feel like?

Lauren: Um, I feel tense in my core, and I tend to, I don't know, lean forward and kind of hunch.

NMC: Okay, so you feel tense in your stomach area. You said your core?

Lauren: And shoulders. And my arms, upper arms and shoulders.

NMC: Okay. Let's go, let's just sweep through the body from head to foot. Do you feel anything in your face or your head or your neck?

Lauren: Slightly. More in my neck than in my face.

NMC: And in your neck it's the tension?

Lauren: Tension in the back of my neck and in my face. I tend to bite my lips.

NMC: Okay. How about in your upper back and in your chest?

Lauren: Same, it tends to be very tense. That's probably, I hunch my shoulders, or grab them up, I guess.

NMC: Okay, how about in your arms, elbows, or hands?

Lauren: Um, same but to a lesser degree. They're still tense. I mean, if I'm driving then I'll usually hold the wheel higher and tighter.

NMC: Okay. Um, stomach?

Lauren: Not, in, the stomach is not actually as tense, it's a little bit, but.

NMC: Okay. How about in your lower back?

Lauren: I guess I tend to lean forward, so it's a little bit tense because of that, but it's not too bad.

NMC: Okay. Your legs, knees, or feet?

Lauren: Not really that I've noticed. I mean I think that they're a little more tense, but not particularly.

NMC: Okay, uh, now let's think about mentally what you feel like, when you're driving in an unfamiliar place. What's that like?

Lauren: Um, anxious. Uncertain. Um, I'm usually, I usually have heightened senses.

NMC: Okay, can you describe that?

Lauren: Um, so, because I'm, you know, because I'm leaning forward, I'm usually, like, looking more carefully at things, and thinking a lot faster about what's going on. So more possibilities of making a wrong turn, etcetera, are going through my brain. Um, but it's not, I don't know, there's a little bit of panic, but it's more just heightened concern and awareness.

NMC: Okay. Do you ever, do you have any particular emotions that you associate with that feeling?

Lauren: Usually frustration.

NMC: Frustration. Why is that?

Lauren: Um, well if I'm driving, we're talking about a driving situation, then it's because, I don't know, I either blame the directions that I've been given, or, um, or I'm just frustrated that I can't find where the turn-off is, or something.

NMC: Okay. Any other emotions?

Lauren: Um, worry to some degree.

NMC: Okay. Do you ever feel outside of the experience, or dissociated, like you're watching yourself going through the motions instead of being in your body while that's happening.

Lauren: To a degree, if you're talking about, there's another part of my brain that will watch me acting like this, and will usually laugh. So there's, there's that. It's not, I don't know, it's not really out of body, it's just more like, split personality, I guess. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. Does it affect your focus or your concentration while you're driving?

Lauren: Um, not really. Uh, actually, it might heighten it.

NMC: Okay. So you actually feel like you can focus better?

Lauren: Yes.

NMC: Okay. Great. Let's switch and think about how you generally feel in a solo performance on the piano.

Lauren: Okay.

NMC: Um, do you have any physical symptoms of anxiety that you recognize.

Lauren: Um, well I get more, my stomach clenches more. Um, and I also, my typical anxiety, the way I deal with anxiety, is getting tense in the shoulders and arms. Um, so I'll bring my shoulders up, typically during difficult sections. So it's a hunching...

NMC: So it's like Frankenstein shoulders?

Lauren: Yeah. Yeah, I'll hunch my shoulders up.

NMC: Um, is it a squeezing tension? Is it a locked tension?

Lauren: I think it's more of a squeezing tension. And it usually escalates. So I start a difficult section, and I might start out with fairly relaxed shoulders, and then gradually. Or, if I'm really afraid of it, then it's right away.

NMC: When do you notice that your shoulders are tensing?

Lauren: I don't always notice. Um, sometimes it's part way through the performance, but a lot of the time, it's not until afterwards that I think about it.

NMC: Okay. And again, let's just go from head to toe. Do you feel anything in your face whenever you're performing that you think may be a symptom of anxiety?

Lauren: I don't know. I tend to bite my lips. That's about all.

NMC: Okay, is that too, like, concentrate, or is that a...

Lauren: Well, I do that when I practice, too. It's, so I don't know if it's anxiety. Maybe it's a concentration thing. Maybe a little bit of anxiety.

NMC: Does it bother you when you perform?

Lauren: Yeah, I notice it. Um, so then I usually try to stop, so then I concentrate on that.

NMC: Do you feel anything in your neck, or in your, you mentioned the shrugging shoulders?

Lauren: Shoulders, yeah. The shoulders definitely. The neck, maybe a little bit. I haven't noticed it too much.

NMC: How about in your upper arms or elbows?

Lauren: Um, upper arms and elbows, actually not too much. Elbows more, but upper arms are usually...

NMC: And what do you feel in your elbows?

Lauren: Uh, tension. Well, I clench my forearms, so then that moves into my elbows.

NMC: Okay, so, can you describe clenching your forearms?

Lauren: Um, it's because I play, I try to use finger. I get nervous and I use more of a finger technique. And so that causes tension in my forearms. And then I hold my elbows closer to my body, rather than further away, so that they're, there tends to be...

NMC: So that clenched forearms, is that from a perpetually raised finger, or the...

Lauren: Yeah, it's from a lack of relaxation. I don't, you know I play an octave, and I don't always relax coming out of it.

NMC: Do you feel anything in your wrists, or in your hands and fingers?

Lauren: Wrists and hands, a little bit. They get stiffer. The fingers, not tension, necessarily.

NMC: Okay. Is there any other things that might happen in your arms that aren't related to muscle tension, or...

Lauren: Well, I get shaky when I perform, so hands shake. Not, um, to some degree.

NMC: Okay. Um, how about in your chest or your breathing?

Lauren: I think that I sometimes forget to breathe. Um, but sometimes I think more about breathing. I think it kind of depends.

NMC: Okay. And when do you notice something has changed, or...

Lauren: If haven't, well, if I haven't breathed in a while, then I'll usually notice, and then I'll breathe more. And then I'll make a concentrated effort to relax and breathe. Um, usually it takes, I don't know, a little while before I realized.

NMC: Um, what about your heart? Do you feel anything happening there?

Lauren: Um, I think it beats a little bit faster. There's more of like a fluttery.

NMC: Okay, moving down into like the stomach and the lower back area, while you're performing.

Lauren: I get some butterflies in my stomach. Um, a little bit. Um, in my lower back, since I, since I lean forward. But I haven't noticed a whole lot of tension. But, you know, if I play a lot, if there's a lot of, I've been doing a lot of playing under stress, then I can feel my lower back.

NMC: So kind of a cumulative effect?

Lauren: So it's accumulative.

NMC: So, in your stomach, you mentioned butterflies. Uh, is there tension too, or is it mostly that, butterfly feeling? It's kind of hard to describe, isn't it?

Lauren: A little bit of tension, but not a whole lot. So, yeah, more of just the nervous, pit of your stomach feeling.

NMC: Okay. Um, how about in your legs, knees, or feet?

Lauren: I have, in the past, randomly my legs will shake when I perform. The rest of the time I usually don't notice, and it's only if there's some problem with the pedaling that I notice my feet. You know, if I'm wearing shoes that squeak or something.

NMC: Okay. Um, let's move from physical symptoms now into the mental symptoms. Can you think of the mental symptoms that you typically feel during a solo performance?

Lauren: Well, it's a little, I don't know, it's a little bit like driving, but it's different in that I have a million thoughts a minute when I perform. It's like there's a lot of extra space, or extra time to be thinking. So usually, when I perform, I go on rabbit tracks. My brain will just fly around all over the place and think about random... I remember the last time I performed, I found myself thinking about some friends Facebook page.

Like just, and then I was like, "Oh! I'm playing Chopin!" So, um, there's that. So there's, I guess adrenaline that causes me to have a billion thoughts, um, but they're not as clear. Whereas when I'm driving, I become more clear, but when I'm playing, it's a little less clear. It's a little bit more panicked. Um, but there's also, I've over time, suppressed panic, so then it's kind of a dull, a dull panic, I guess.

NMC: Okay. Do you ever find yourself having an internal dialogue, or talking to yourself while you're performing.

Lauren: Yes. Yeah, to a degree. I mean I'll think about what's coming up. I'll think about possibilities, what could happen in what's coming up, to a degree. If I'm really focused, I'll think about what I'm playing at the time, and kind of, it's not necessarily talking to myself, but it's making myself aware of what's happening. Or I'll think about the fact that I'm not thinking about performing. I'll think about that, or I'll think about the audience, and I'll tell myself to get back on track. Things like that.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific emotions that you associate with performing?

Lauren: Um, worry, mostly. Fear, to a degree.

NMC: And what do you think contributes to the worry?

Lauren: Um, endless possibilities of what could happen. Um, past performances that have randomly not turned out well. Um, sections of the music that I know are going to be harder if I tense up more, which I know that I will do in a performance setting. So.

NMC: So you mentioned worry, and what was the other one?

Lauren: Fear. To a degree. So.

NMC: Fear. What's the fear from?

Lauren: Mostly fear of messing up. Failure. You know, worst case scenario type...

NMC: What is messing up, or failure to you?

Lauren: Um, well first it's failing to interpret the music the way I wanted to. Next it's making enough mistakes that it's noticeable to, you know, to the average listener. Um, so I'm not necessarily worried about making mistakes per se, I'm worried about making a lot of mistakes. Um, but yeah, um, failing to interpret the music. Being nervous enough that I won't allow myself to interpret the music like I can in a practice room.

NMC: Okay, um, we mentioned dissociation, or feeling outside of yourself. Have you ever felt that while you're performing?

Lauren: Um, maybe a little bit. Not, not a whole lot. I mean, there's a little part of myself that can step back and look at what I'm doing, but it's to a lesser degree I think.

NMC: Okay, how about your focus or concentration while you're performing. Is that affected by your anxiety?

Lauren: Yeah, usually. Um, in a smaller setting, I mean, I've had performances where I've really focused, and it works really well. But then I've had other performances where it doesn't, and where I lose track of thoughts, and, um, so then my focus isn't as good.

NMC: Okay. Now, do you typically take any steps to reduce your symptoms of anxiety?

Lauren: Yeah, I've tried different methods. Um, I've tried playing, well, I think to a degree I've tried playing more before. Generally I play a little bit less. I don't play a piece all the way through, because that, right before I perform, because, um, if I make a mistake it'll psych me out before a performance. Um, I talk to people. I have someone else there to talk to.

NMC: You will talk to people?

Lauren: Yeah, if there's someone else to talk to, I'll talk to them. You know, if I'm giving a performance with someone else, it actually helps to have someone else to take my mind off what I'm about to do. Um, yeah, so that's mostly what...

NMC: Okay. Um, so your pre-performance routine, you would, you say typically you like to play less?

Lauren: Play less, well, play through parts of the piece. You know, I'll warm-up. I'll usually play, I'll play the piece or pieces earlier in the day before I perform, so you know, several hours before. And then, in the last hour or so before I perform, I usually won't play the piece all the way through. So I'll play parts of it, I'll warm up, um, but otherwise, then, I'll talk to people. I'll walk around and try to loosen up.

NMC: Do you have any rehearsal or practice strategies that you use to help with performance anxiety?

Lauren: Um, well, you know, performance, or practice room performances. So, running through a piece as if it was the performance except in a practice room. I do that fairly often. When I have a, when a piece is finished to the degree where I'm polishing it for a performance, usually I'll run through it like that once a day, where I put the music stand down and move everything off the piano. Or just play it through. It depends on how lazy I am. (chuckles) So I'll do that. Um, otherwise just practicing a lot. Carefully looking at what is going to give me the most trouble, and trying to practice that as much as I can.

NMC: Okay. Uh, do you employ any relaxation strategies?

Lauren: Leading up to a performance? Or in, like, the weeks leading up?

NMC: Sure. Either.

Lauren: Okay. Um, more away from the piano. Um, I'll ice my hands. Um, do things like read or watch television a little bit everyday so that I'm not thinking about other things, you know. Try to get my mind off of anything that's stressing me out. Um, talk to people. Talking to other people who have performances as well usually relieves tension.

NMC: Okay. Do you pray or meditate before a performance?

Lauren: Yes, I pray before a performance.

NMC: Okay. And what sort of things do you pray for?

Lauren: Um, that I won't play for myself. Um, that I won't be thinking too much about me during a performance. Um, that I'll be calm and relaxed and have clear thought.

NMC: Is there anything that you might do during a performance?

Lauren: To relieve tension?

NMC: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lauren: Um, relax. You know, if I notice that I'm tensing up, I'll try to relax. I'll even pick a spot in the music that it's, where I can relax. I don't do that a whole lot. I usually try to breathe deeply. And, you know, I'll try to reset, pick a spot if I find that I'm wandering, my mind is wandering, then I'll reset and think about the music.

NMC: And when you say, "think about the music," what sort of things are you thinking about?

Lauren: You know, what's going on right then. What I would think about while I'm practicing. You know, I think about something when I'm practicing like "Oh, here comes the two-note slur, so, tension - release." So, what I'm playing at that moment.

NMC: Let's now consider how you felt in the rehearsal performance, and that would be like the practice room performance that you were talking about. Um, what were the physical symptoms that you might have felt during the performance?

Lauren: Um, a little bit of tension, but not much at all.

NMC: Okay, in what places?

Lauren: In my arms mostly. So a little bit of tension in my arms, maybe slightly in my upper body, but more in my arms.

NMC: You mentioned your shoulders in a typical performance, did you feel that in the rehearsal performance?

Lauren: Um, a little bit. Not a whole lot.

NMC: You mentioned your stomach. Do you feel that in the rehearsal performance?

Lauren: Maybe slightly. Not really, no.

NMC: Um, clenched forearms?

Lauren: Not really.

NMC: Okay. How about your legs shaking?

Lauren: No.

NMC: No. In general, would you say that the physical symptoms were about the same, more, or less than a typical performance?

Lauren: Live, a typical live performance?

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Lauren: Less.

NMC: Less. Okay. How about your mental symptoms for the rehearsal performance? Did you notice any mental symptoms of anxiety?

Lauren: A little bit. I mean there was a little bit of nervousness.

NMC: Okay, uh, and did you have any particular emotions that you would associate with the rehearsal performance?

Lauren: Um, um, I don't know. Maybe satisfaction.

NMC: Okay. Is that something you would typically feel in a live performance?

Lauren: It depends on the performance. Um, sometimes. Not always.

NMC: So the rehearsal performance was a particularly good performance for you?

Lauren: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. What led to that sense of satisfaction?

Lauren: Um, well since I wasn't tense and I wasn't worried about other people listening, then I was able to perform, um, like go a little bit more when I performed. I could concentrate better on what I was doing.

NMC: Um, how was your focus or your concentration during the performance?

Lauren: Pretty good. Not complete, because I was still thinking a little bit about the fact that it was a mock performance, but, um, good.

NMC: Okay. And in general would you say that your mental symptoms were about the same, more, or less than a typical live performance?

Lauren: Less.

NMC: Less. Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety for the rehearsal performance?

Lauren: Other than telling myself that it was a rehearsal performance, not really.

NMC: So did you like, go out and talk to people before the performance?

Lauren: No, I didn't. I had just been practicing, so.

NMC: Did you pray before the rehearsal performance?

Lauren: No.

NMC: Okay. Um, are there any other strategies that you typically do for a live performance that you did for the rehearsal performance, or did not do for the rehearsal performance?

Lauren: Um, well usually in a live performance, I'll take time to settle myself with the piano. I'll take a little longer before I start playing. I did that. Um, otherwise...

NMC: Okay. Let's move on now to the Live Performance, and this was the performance at the retirement center. Um, can you recall any of the physical symptoms you may have felt during the Live Performance?

Lauren: Um, shakiness.

NMC: Okay. And where did you feel the shakiness?

Lauren: In my arms. Arms and hands.

NMC: Okay. Um, is it a vibrating shakiness, or a weak shakiness, or a fluttering shakiness?

Lauren: A weak shakiness.

NMC: Okay. Uh, and when did you start to feel that?

Lauren: Um, a little bit before I performed, so while the others were performing.

NMC: Okay. Again, let's just sweep from the head down to the toes. Did you feel anything in your face or in your neck while you're performing?

Lauren: A little bit in my neck. I don't remember about my face. I probably bit my lip, but...

NMC: And in your neck, was it the tension again?

Lauren: Yeah, in the back of my neck.

NMC: Okay, your shoulders, did you feel the clenched shoulders, or I guess you said the hunched shoulders?

Lauren: Um, well, that performance was interesting because the bench was about, it felt like it was several inches higher than I usually sit. So I think that I actually tried to overcompensate, and not, I don't think my shoulders were that hunched. I think that they were tense, but since I felt like I was reaching for the keys, then they weren't hunching up as they would.

NMC: Okay. Um, so the bench was not adjustable at this performance venue?

Lauren: No.

NMC: No. Okay. Was there anything about the venue that was different for you?

Lauren: Um, well it's a different dynamic. You know there's the few pianists in the audience, and then the rest of the people were um. The different dynamic that I tend to worry about the pianists in the audience more than the residents at [the retirement community.]

NMC: And why do you worry more about the pianists?

Lauren: Because they are pianists. They know, from there, they know. They might know the piece I'm playing, but they also know, you know, we listen to each other's technic. We listen to piano more often.

NMC: Okay. Um, if the other pianists weren't there, how would that venue feel for you?

Lauren: It would have been more relaxed.

NMC: Okay, and what is it about the make-up of the audience that would have been more relaxing without the pianists?

Lauren: Um, the fact that I don't know them. That is more relaxing. The fact, um, older people tend, well, to some degree are more forgiving of faults. At least's that's the feeling that I have. And because in general, I know that they are happy that I'm there.

NMC: Okay. Not to project, but do you feel like pianists are not as forgiving of faults?

Lauren: I don't know that we're not as forgiving, but, we definitely notice them more. So I might, you know, I know that if I listen to another pianist, I may understand the faults that they have, but I notice it. I mean, I still notice what happens. And so the same thing applies to other, you know, I project it on other pianists. Um, but yeah, too, depending on the person, they could be less forgiving. I don't know.

NMC: What about "happy to be there." Do you think pianists are happy to be in the audience?

Lauren: It depends on why they are in the audience. Um, if they, yeah it depends on them.

NMC: Okay. Uh, okay, let's go back to your physical symptoms. Anything in your chest or in your breathing?

Lauren: I think I had more shallow breathing. So yeah, there was that.

NMC: Okay. In your stomach, did you feel the queasiness or the tightness?

Lauren: Yeah, yeah a little queasiness or butterflies.

NMC: Uh, in your lower back?

Lauren: Not that I really noticed, but probably a little bit of tension.

NMC: Okay. Anything in your legs knees or feet?

Lauren: Other than feeling higher than usual, so a little uncomfortable, I guess, um, no, not too much.

NMC: Okay. How did your physical symptoms compare with a typical performance? About the same, more, or less?

Lauren: About the same.

NMC: About the same. Okay. Let's move to your mental state. Um, what did you feel during the performance?

Lauren: Um, thrown off because I felt too high. And I hadn't, I mean, I had played on it before, and I think I was upset that it affected me more than I thought it would. That the bench was a little high. So there was, I don't know, incredulity. And then...

NMC: Incred... Explain, incredulity.

Lauren: Um, I was surprised I guess.

NMC: Okay.

Lauren: I was surprised and kind of annoyed that I was that bothered by the fact that it was high. Um, so then, then frustration that it affected my playing that much. Um,

NMC: Okay. Did you have any particular emotions that you associated with that performance?

Lauren: Frustration.

NMC: Uh, did it affect your focus or your concentration?

Lauren: Yeah.

NMC: How so?

Lauren: Um, the same as a general, um, lack of clarity of thought. And then, more thoughts per minute, I guess. So, thinking a lot more about what was going on, but not quite as focused.

NMC: Okay, so your brain on turbo speed.

Lauren: Yeah.

NMC: Um, how would that compare with a typical performance, your mental state? About the same, more, or less?

Lauren: About the same.

NMC: About the same. Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety before the Live Performance?

Lauren: Um, I talked to [Kendra.]

NMC: Okay. Um, did you get to play through your sections like you normally do? Before this one? Before this performance?

Lauren: I played a little bit on the piano. I had, earlier in the day, practiced. So I'd played through piece. I'd played through parts of the piece.

NMC: Did you, uh, pray before the performance?

Lauren: No.

NMC: Okay. Um, did you do anything during the performance to help with your anxiety?

Lauren: Um, reset mentally. You know, I just decided that things were the way they were, and so I had to learn to deal with it.

NMC: Is there any reason why you did not pray before this particular performance?

Lauren: I didn't really think about it.

NMC: Can you think of a specific instance during the performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Lauren: Yes. Um, at the end of the second page of the Nocturne, it usually is pretty solid, and that time it was not, uh, because I was not focused.

NMC: What was not solid about it?

Lauren: Memory.

NMC: Um, any other reactions, or any other instances in which the performance was affected?

Lauren: This Nocturne, if I get nervous playing this Nocturne, then the left hand gets a lot shakier, the memory, specifically in the left hand. So I missed more notes. So that occurred. And then there were a couple of ornamental passages, which are more difficult, and so if I'm tense or not focussed, it will tend to, you know, vary in levels of how well they're performed.

NMC: Okay, um, is there any sense, sort of like you mentioned when you're driving, that the performance anxiety may help your performance, or give your performance edge or vitality?

Lauren: It depends on the performance. If it's a, well for example a seminar performance, I tend to be a lot more focussed than another live performance. And I'm not...I think because I've played in that setting so often, it doesn't affect me as much anymore.

NMC: Alright, let's now consider the Virtual Performance, the recording you just made. Um, did you recognize any physical symptoms of anxiety during the recording?

Lauren: A little bit. Not, not a whole lot. A little bit of tension.

NMC: Okay. And where?

Lauren: Um, my arms. A little bit in my shoulders.

NMC: Okay. Um, did you have the issues in you stomach that you mentioned for the other performances?

Lauren: No.

NMC: No. Did you have the clenching of the forearms that you mentioned for the other performances?

Lauren: No.

NMC: No. Um, did you have the shoulders raised or hunched that you recognized?

Lauren: Probably a little bit, but not that I noticed much.

NMC: Okay, how about your legs shaking. Did you notice that?

Lauren: No.

NMC: No. In general, would you say that your physical symptoms were about the same, less, or more than the Live Performance?

Lauren: Less.

NMC: Less. Uh, in comparison to the Rehearsal Performance, would you say they were the same, more, or less than the Rehearsal Performance.

Lauren: About the same.

NMC: About the same. Let's go on to your mental symptoms. Did you notice anything during the recorded performance?

Lauren: Um, I was thinking a little faster. Not a lot faster, but um, there was more capacity for thinking separate thoughts from the music.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any memorable internal dialogue, or thoughts that you said to yourself during the performance.

Lauren: Not much, other than thinking, thinking about the tone of the piano. I don't play on this piano much. It's a little bit softer. So I was thought about that. I thought a little bit about the sound quality in the computer sitting on wood, randomly wondered about how that works. Not a lot.

NMC: Okay. Uh, did you have any particular emotions that you associated with this performance?

Lauren: Um, in general, satisfaction.

NMC: Okay. And your focus or concentration?

Lauren: Pretty good.

NMC: Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety before you recorded the performance?

Lauren: No. Well, I played a little bit. Yeah, so I played like the beginning of the piece, so I warmed up a little bit.

NMC: Did you, uh, talk to anybody before hand, or...

Lauren: Other than you, setting up the...

NMC: Okay. DId you pray before the performance?

Lauren: No.

NMC: Okay. Anything during the performance that you did to help you manage anxiety?

Lauren: Um, I imagine that there was not a recorder. I thought about the fact that this is a practice room, and I play in a practice room everyday.

NMC: Okay, can you think in any instances in which anxiety may have affected your Virtual Performance?

Lauren: There were a few notes that I missed in the left hand, maybe from my anxiety.

NMC: Okay. Um, in general, would you consider the anxiety for the Virtual Performance more or less than the Live Performance?

Lauren: Less.

NMC: Why do you think it's less?

Lauren: Because, there were not live people sitting there. Um, a little bit, um, because they, no one will see me while I'm performing. You know, they'll only hear the recording of the performance.

NMC: Why does that make a difference? The visual factor.

Lauren: Mostly because I don't have to face them afterwards. So it's a displaced, is that how you say it? I may never meet these people. I don't have to finish a performance and look at them. Or listen to them talk to me afterwards, etcetera. Um, and it was lessened also, I think a little bit, because they don't even know who I am.

NMC: If for some reason anonymity, if you performed these under your own name instead of under a pseudonym, do you think that would affect you? Would it affect you differently?

Lauren: Probably a little bit. I don't think a whole lot, but a little bit.

NMC: What if this were a video podcast, would that affect you more?

Lauren: Yes.

NMC: Okay, and why is that?

Lauren: Because of, because then there's a face with the name, I guess. And they see me play, and they see any tension that's going on. It's easier to mask, at least I tell myself, it's easier to mask nerves in sound than it is in the visual aspect.

NMC: Okay. Um, most of these descriptions you've given from the perspective of the performer. Imagine now that you are the teacher, and a student is trying to describe their symptoms. What kind of descriptive words would you need to hear from the student to truly understand the mental and physical feelings they're experiencing.

Lauren: Um, tension. Frustration. Worry.

NMC: Anything else?

Lauren: Um, fear, perhaps.

NMC: Okay. What kind of questions would you ask the student to help them articulate their physical and mental feelings?

Lauren: Um, I'd ask them what they were thinking during the performance. I would ask them how their body felt, and whether they were thinking about that. Whether they were thinking about tensing their arms or shoulders. Um, I would ask them specifically whether they were worried about the audience, people in the audience. About specific parts of the piece.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything else you would like to add to our discussion thus far?

Lauren: No.

NMC: No. Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make clarifications, amplifications, or corrections?

Lauren: No.

NMC: No. Thank you very much.

Lauren, LP2

April 16, 2010

NMC: Okay, you've now performed in several different contexts, and we're going to talk about those, but before we do, would you like to know the way you scored on the different surveys you filled out.

Lauren: Sure.

NMC: Okay. On the KMPAI, that was the diagnostic you took on the very first day of the study...

Lauren: Right.

NMC: ...it's what I used to decide whether you're really affected by performance anxiety to a negative degree, or whether it's something that you generally can deal with. You scored a -14. Theoretically, a score of 0 would mean that performance anxiety does not affect you more or less than a typical pianist. A negative score means typically you're able to deal with it a little bit better than most.

Lauren: Oh.

NMC: Does that surprise you? That score?

Lauren: Yeah, kind of.

NMC: Okay. And here are your scores on the different CPAIs, and these were specific to each performance, and I've arranged them from lowest to highest. Your lowest was the Virtual Performance recording, and that was a 43, then your Rehearsal Performance at 47. All of your Exposure performances were between 51 and 58: 51, 52, 54, 55, 58. Your first Live Performance was a 64, and your second Live Performance was a 48, which actually puts them below your Exposure performance. So here, a lower score means that anxiety had less of a negative effect. A higher score means anxiety had...

Lauren: More.

NMC: ...more of a negative effect. Is there anything in those scores that surprises you?

Lauren: Um, so the RP is?

NMC: That's the Rehearsal Performance. That's just the run through in a practice room.

Lauren: Right. It was the run through in a practice room. That's interesting. Otherwise it's...

NMC: It's interesting that it's?

Lauren: It's interesting that it's almost as high as the second Live Performance.

NMC: Second Live Performance. Is it interesting to you that the Exposure Performances are a little bit higher than the second Live Performance? Does that seem about right?

Lauren: Um, theoretically yes, but knowing my mental preparation, or how my mental state on the days that I, that those were recorded, and today, it's not too terribly surprising.

NMC: Okay. Great. You've now performed in two live performance situations. Compare how you felt during Live Performance 1 and how you felt during Live Performance 2. Did one performance feel better than the other?

Lauren: Um, the second performance definitely felt a lot better.

NMC: The second performance felt better. Why?

Lauren: Um, well I think a small part of it had to do with being more familiar with the situation. So I had, this is the second time I played at [the retirement community], so I knew it a little better. I knew the piano a little bit better. I knew that the, like, the bench is a little high for me, but I knew that. I was ready for that going in. Um, I also felt that I was more prepared with the piece. I felt that in the intervening weeks, the recordings that we had done, the virtual recordings, and then I played in a lesson on Monday, I believe, and my professor really liked the Chopin, and so that gave an added boost of confidence. I wasn't quite as nervous about it.

NMC: Okay. Did you feel like one performance was a better performance than the other, musically?

Lauren: Yeah, I felt like the second one was better.

NMC: Okay. And why do you think the second one was better?

Lauren: I think because I felt more relaxed. I felt a little bit more in control of the situation than the first time around.

NMC: Okay. Were the physical symptoms of anxiety different in Live Performance 2 compared to the first performance? In the first performance, you mentioned a little bit of shakiness in your arms and hands, perhaps your shoulders were raised a little bit, uh, the stomach was maybe a little bit of an issue in the first performance.

Lauren: It was, I would say it was roughly the same.

NMC: Your physical symptoms?

Lauren: Yeah, maybe less shakiness.

NMC: Okay, so, let's talk about the second Live Performance from head to toe. Did you feel anything in your face, neck, or shoulders?

Lauren: I noticed that I was biting my lips and clenching my jaw a little bit.

NMC: Okay. Anything in your chest, your breathing or your heart rate?

Lauren: Heart rate was raised.

NMC: Okay. How about in your stomach?

Lauren: A little, a little queasy, I guess.

NMC: Okay. Anything in your lower back?

Lauren: No.

NMC: Okay. How about your arms and your hands?

Lauren: Um, they felt a little bit shaky. My palms were a little bit sweaty.

NMC: Feet? Legs?

Lauren: Not that I noticed.

NMC: Okay. Uh, in comparison to a typical performance, was Live Performance 2 about the same, better, or worse in terms of physical symptoms?

Lauren: Um, maybe slightly better. It depends, better than the average performance, slightly.

NMC: Okay. Let's talk about your mental symptoms in Live Performance #2, were they different than how you felt in Live Performance 1?

Lauren: Yeah, I felt, um, I felt more in control of the situation. I, um, like I, like I said, I knew a little bit more of what to expect, so I prepared myself more going into it. Um, so my thoughts were a little bit more coherent.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any specific emotions that you felt in Live Performance 2?

Lauren: Well, I was thinking about, um, or for the most part, trying to think about what the, what this Nocturne means to me. So I was thinking about, a little bit about the emotions of the piece.

NMC: Okay.

Lauren: But I was also aware of the people in the room, and, so kind of in the back of my mind thinking about that to.

NMC: Did you have any difficulty concentrating on the music in the second Live Performance?

Lauren: Some.

NMC: Some. Was it about the same as Live Performance 1, or...

Lauren: Less.

NMC: So you were more able to concentrate in the second Live Performance?

Lauren: Yes.

NMC: Uh, what about compared to a typical performance? Your ability to concentrate?

Lauren: Um, I would say it was better than my concentration in a typical performance, at least of this piece.

NMC: How much of that is due to the venue and the audience, and how much of that is due to other factors?

Lauren: Some of it, at least, is due to the venue and the audience. Well, like talking to the residents before hand helped a little bit.

NMC: Okay. What did you talk about with them beforehand?

Lauren: I was, we were talking about my musical training, the fact that my dad plays the cello, and some of their musical training. Um, there's a former bass, professor of bass viol who is a resident there, so just different musical...

NMC: Would you, in a more formal performance situation, feel comfortable talking to the audience beforehand?

Lauren: Um, it depends on who's in the audience. Somewhat.

NMC: Do you think the experience you had today would influence you to try to talk with the audience more?

Lauren: I don't know. Maybe, I might consider it. But I'm not really sure.

NMC: Okay. Um, in general, your mental symptoms of anxiety between Live Performance 2 and Live Performance 1, about the same, a little bit better, a little bit worse?

Lauren: Leading up to it, um, there was maybe a little bit less anxiety leading up to Performance 2, but not a whole lot.

NMC: Okay. So slightly less. About the same, maybe slightly less.

Lauren: Slightly less. Yeah.

NMC: In comparison to a typical performance, about the same, less, or more.

Lauren: Less.

NMC: Okay. Alright, you have also performed in several Virtual Performances. Consider your first Virtual Performance and your last Virtual Performance. Did one performance feel better than the other?

Lauren: Actually, I think my first Virtual Performance felt slightly better than my last.

NMC: Okay. Why do you think that is?

Lauren: I think it has to do somewhat with my mental, my mental state on the different days recording. Um, the last performance, I wasn't in a bad mental state, but I was tired, and kind of tired of the Chopin. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. You've recorded several Virtual Performances in the span of two days, I guess. You recorded...

Lauren: Five, I think..

NMC: Five in two days. Do you remember if you did two the first day or three the first day?

Lauren: I did two.

NMC: Two the first day. Did that affect your last Virtual Performance, it being the fifth of five in a two-day time span?

Lauren: Yeah, I think so. It was a little, maybe a little wearing, especially being the third of three, more than the fifth of five, I think. Um, but, yeah.

NMC: Anything else that, being the third of three, caused any difference in the way you played, or the way you approached the piece?

Lauren: Well, it was better, I felt better about that one than I did about the other two that I had done that day. I think, because I thought about it more, took more time. It was the third time I'd done it, so, I took more time to prepare myself and thought about it more, and felt a little more confident.

NMC: Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different between your first Virtual Performance and your last Virtual Performance?

Lauren: Maybe slightly. Um, but not, I'm not really sure they were in a quantifiable way.

NMC: So, they were just, were they mostly the same?

Lauren: Yeah, mostly.

NMC: Um, were the physical symptoms of anxiety different, from virtual performance to virtual performance?

Lauren: Yes.

NMC: Okay. How did the physical symptoms change?

Lauren: I was a little bit more uptight for some of the later, although, also, I was able to think more about how I was tight. So while recording the later performance, I would think about whether my neck was tight, or whatever, and try to relax it, which I don't think I could say about the first performance.

NMC: So you were, would you say you were more aware of the symptoms and able to deal with them, or the symptoms were more noticeable because they were worse?

Lauren: Probably both, actually. They might have been a little bit worse, but I was also more aware of them.

NMC: What was it in the later performance that made the physical symptoms seem to be worse?

Lauren: I think just being tired.

NMC: Fatigue.

Lauren: And having done five.

NMC: Okay. If you were to continue to record Virtual Performance, do you think the tenth one would feel different than your fifth one?

Lauren: Yes.

NMC: Okay. How would it feel different?

Lauren: I think it would feel more comfortable.

NMC: Okay. So you would project that, the more you did them, the more at ease you would be with recording the virtual performances?

Lauren: Yeah. Especially if it was of the same piece.

NMC: Okay. Um, do you think your mental symptoms would follow the same path?

Lauren: Yes. It's a little hard to say, but yeah.

NMC: I see you qualifying that. Why do you?

Lauren: More because I, I'm not always certain how I'm going to react. So, I wouldn't have been able to tell you after the first virtual performances that the, performance, that the later ones would have actually had worse mental symptoms. I would have assumed that they would have gotten better. So, I would assume that the mental symptoms would get better if I kept recording, but I'm not sure.

NMC: Okay. You received feedback from the internet audience. How did that affect you?

Lauren: It was nice. It was good to get some feedback from someone other than my professor. It was also interesting, because some of them were a little bit contradictory of each other, just a little bit, so that was interesting to me. But I think, you know, I thought about it when I was practicing, I thought about it when I was playing.

NMC: Okay. Did getting the feedback change the way you approached subsequent performances?

Lauren: Yeah, a little bit.

NMC: Did it change the way you approached the virtual performance recording, recordings?

Lauren: Yes. A little bit the way I played, or the way I was thinking about how...

NMC: How so?

Lauren: Well, I read what they said, and took a couple of things in to mind. And, uh, so I thought, you know, for example, one said, the left hand is really just accompaniment, so you could think about making the left hand less, and so I thought about that. So for some parts, I tried to work that in.

NMC: Mm-hmm. Okay. Um, okay. Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performance changed the way you dealt with symptoms of musical performance anxiety in the second Live Performance?

Lauren: Yes, I think so. Um, something definitely changed in the two weeks, so.

NMC: Okay. What do you think changed?

Lauren: I think I felt more confident. Um, you do enough live performance, you start to realize that it's not going to fall apart every time, so.

NMC: And so recording multiple virtual performances helped you feel more confident?

Lauren: Yeah, I think so.

NMC: What is it about them that gave you that sense of confidence?

Lauren: Knowing that, well, when I was doing them, knowing that there wasn't necessarily a redo, and that it would go out on the internet, but still having the feeling that I was in a practice room. So, I think having done several, and having had nothing really major go wrong, then that helped my confidence

NMC: Okay. Did you listen to any of your virtual Performances?

Lauren: No, unfortunately.

NMC: No, okay. Have you recorded yourself to listen to it?

Lauren: Yes.

NMC: Okay. We have, you have these wonderful Wenger systems...

Lauren: Yeah, they're great.

NMC: ...do you use this frequently?

Lauren: Yeah, yeah.

NMC: And was is it that you get from recording yourself and then listening to it?

Lauren: I get an audience perspective. So, um, you notice that, or I notice that when I'm playing for myself, things that I'm doing, rubato, melody shaping, whatever, which might be enough for me when I'm sitting there knowing what I'm doing, is not necessarily going to project the same way into the audience. So I record myself, and I listen from an audience member's perspective.

NMC: What is different between recording yourself so that you can listen to it and fix things, and recording yourself so that you can post it to an internet audience?

Lauren: Um, well I can't fix it, you know, for the internet audience. And, the recording myself on a Wenger, it would just be me who hears it. So it's, there's less pressure.

NMC: Would you ever consider recording yourself, I see they've got a USB port there, using the Wenger to record yourself and then posting that?

Lauren: Maybe. Um, the quality isn't, the quality is okay, it's not amazing. So, I might.

NMC: Okay. Did participating in the interviews or filling out the paper work change how you felt in the second Live Performance?

Lauren: I think it made me more aware of the symptoms of anxiety that I have.

NMC: Is that helpful, being more aware of the symptoms?

Lauren: I think so, but it's a little hard to say, actually. Realizing the number of symptoms of anxiety that I have, is maybe, I don't know, I don't know if it necessarily hurts my performance but it's interesting, it's kind of a slightly stressful thing. But, I think that notice, realizing what they are, being able to quantify them helps me to address them during a performance.

NMC: Okay. And how, how do you address them differently?

Lauren: I think I just think about it a little bit more. Not necessarily doing an all over body check while I'm playing or anything, but thinking about how my shoulders feel a little bit tense, and trying to relax them.

NMC: Okay. What about mental symptoms. Did you come across any new mental symptoms through the interviews or through filling out the paperwork.

Lauren: Um, not necessarily. I guess I defined them a little bit more, but not, I kind of knew what my mental state was, usually.

NMC: Okay. Alright. Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Lauren: Yeah, I think I would.

NMC: Okay, what is it about this approach that you think would be beneficial in other performances?

Lauren: Well, just the, for one thing, the practice of running through a piece from beginning to end without stopping to fix any mistakes is really good. And then there's some added pressure. I mean, I could do that in a practice room by myself with nobody listening to me. But, the added pressure of having a recording, even if no one else listens to it, actually, is, would be helpful, I think.

NMC: So even just the idea, "I'm going to record it and post it," you think gives the performance, the recording a little bit different feel?

Lauren: Yeah. It's a little bit more formal. It feels more like a real performance.

NMC: Okay. Um, would you know how to go about posting your performances to the internet later on?

Lauren: Well it depends on where. I mean, I could post them on Facebook. I know how to do that. Yeah, so it depends on where I post them. I'm sure I could figure out someplace to.

NMC: Okay. Alright, imagine you are a teacher, and one of your students is getting ready for a performance. Would you implement an approach similar to the process implemented in this study?

Lauren: Yes, um, well I would tell them to record themselves. Maybe not necessarily, maybe only for me to hear, but, or maybe only for them to hear. But I would definitely tell them to record themselves. And, I might help them do an inventory of their anxiety symptoms.

NMC: Okay. What would you do to help them inventory their anxiety symptoms?

Lauren: Um, a little like you do. Ask them where, you know, where they tense, how does it manifest itself. Um, and then, also probably ask them how they would deal with that, to think about how they would deal with that in a Live Performance.

NMC: Okay. We did a live performance, and then several virtual performances, and then another live performance. Would you do something similar, or...?

Lauren: Um, yeah. Probably on a smaller scale, if we're talking about maybe a live performance maybe in seminar, and then several recording sessions, and then another live performance.

NMC: At what point would you do an inventory of their symptoms? Would you do that at the beginning of the process, or just continually through the process?

Lauren: Most likely continually, but probably starting fairly early. I don't know if at the beginning or not, I mean, maybe after they had performed at least once so they had an idea of what happened to them when they performed.

NMC: Okay. What advice would you give to your student to make the process effective?

Lauren: Um, to treat, or tell them to treat each virtual performance as much like a live performance as they can. So, simulate, try to simulate the feelings of live performance as much as possible. And then, maybe to simulate the feelings of virtual performance as much as possible in live performance.

NMC: Okay.

Lauren: But you know, that might be what I would say. I don't know.

NMC: Uh, what would you change in the process to make it more effective for you student?

Lauren: Um, I'm not really sure. I think it would depend on the student.

NMC: Would you do more recorded performances?

Lauren: Maybe. I mean, it depends on how long of a time period we have. I would probably not do as many virtual performances in a row, I guess.

NMC: Okay.

Lauren: Maybe do them on, a, one a day for a week, or something like that.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything else you would like to add? Uh, any moments of self-discovery as a result of participating in the study or any particular thoughts about recording, or about performance anxiety, or about piano in general?

Lauren: Um, not really. I thought it was an interesting study. I thought it, I feel like it helped me, a little bit. So, I would try it again.

NMC: Okay. Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to offer any clarifications or corrections?

Lauren: No, that's okay.

NMC: Alright, very good.

Lester, VP

November 3, 2009

NMC: So your pseudonym is Lester?

Lester: Yes.

NMC: So let's talk for a little bit. Okay, Lester. You have now performed in three performances.

Lester: Yes.

NMC: The Rehearsal Performance, the Live Performance Sunday afternoon, and now this Virtual Performance that we've just recorded. We'll be talking a little bit about all three performances, but first I want to talk about anxiety in daily life, just in general, not specific to piano performance.

Lester: Mm-hmm.

NMC: So, we often feel the mental and physical symptoms of anxiety in daily life. Some people might find the following situations trigger these symptoms: riding in a roller coaster, driving in an unfamiliar location, giving an informational presentation, asking someone out on a date, or having a cavity filled. Can you think of a daily life situation that causes you to feel symptoms of anxiety?

Lester: Besides those?

NMC: Or including those.

Lester: Well, I definitely agree with the informational presentation, driving a new area, um, for me, taking big tests. Even if I'm well prepared I don't feel like I am, and then I go take the test, and I'm like, "Well, that was easy."

NMC: Okay. So taking a big test causes you to feel anxiety?

Lester: umm-hmm. (affirmative)

NMC: Can you describe some of the mental symptoms of that anxiety in getting ready for a test, or before a test?

Lester: Like, I just ...

NMC: Do you have specific thoughts that happen?

Lester: Um, I guess, I, I, wonder if I can do it, and so like, I think um, you know, "Crap," or something.

NMC: So, do you have feelings of self-doubt?

Lester: Yes. That's a good word.

NMC: Are there, is there any internal dialogue that goes on in that situation?

Lester: Like, I don't know.

NMC: Like talking to yourself.

Lester: Usually, I just kind of, wonder if I'm prepared, and I just try to do as much as I can to keep preparing. And just think, "I'm not going to be prepared. I'm not going to do well." And then, but, I don't think I would say I have, you know someone talking to me and they're like, "You suck!" or anything like that, so.

NMC: Okay, so these feelings cause you to study to excess or to over-prepare, would you say?

Lester: Yeah, probably.

NMC: Do you have any particular emotions associated with taking a test?

Lester: Well afterwards, there's relief. (chuckles)

NMC: Relief. Okay.

Lester: Um, I probably, I'd say worry before hand. You know, but then like, during, it's kind of like, information regurgitation is the way I like to put it. And it just, it, it, it's kind of like, "Wow, I really do know this," and, you know, I start to feel better about myself, and then I get through and I'm like, "Wow, I feel really good about this," and everything.

NMC: Okay.

Lester: Unless it's not what I was expecting, and then I'm like, "Oh, crap." (chuckles). But...

NMC: Do you ever feel dissociated from yourself in this situation? In other words, you're watching yourself take the test, or you feel disconnected to the test taking?

Lester: I wouldn't say that, no.

NMC: Okay. Does the anxiety affect your focus or concentration?

Lester: While preparing, mostly, I think. For like the test, you know, it's, I have, I have problems studying the same information over and over again. I like, kind of jump around. But during the test, I pretty much go from front to the back in order, and just kind of go through it, and it doesn't break my concentration.

NMC: Do you think that, uh, the symptoms of anxiety during the test may even help your focus or your concentration?

Lester: Possibly. It might like, make me try harder, and get it done quicker, or something, maybe.

NMC: Okay. Let's talk a little bit about the physical symptoms of this test anxiety. What are some physical symptoms that you may notice?

Lester: Um, I feel my heart beat faster, or something like that. Or, anything, but I like, I don't feel jittery, and I don't get upset stomach or anything. Just, kind of like (demonstrates panting, or hyperventilating), "I have to get done." That's about it. (chuckles)

NMC: So does your breathing change?

Lester: No.

NMC: No.

Lester: Sorry. That was just me being like, excited or something.

NMC: Okay. Would you say that excited is a word that you kind of...

Lester: Maybe.

NMC: Okay.

Lester: Especially when I feel good about a test. You know, 'cause there's the anxious feeling of, you know, like, you're excited, and you're not really sure how it's going to go, but you're excited because you feel like, you feel good about it.

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Lester: But then there's one where you don't feel good, and it's just how, "I dread it." So...

NMC: Okay.

Lester: It depends on how well prepared I feel.

NMC: Let's go back to physical symptoms, and we'll just start from your head and go to your feet. Do you feel any symptoms in your head or in your face?

Lester: I might feel warm, maybe.

NMC: Okay. How about in your shoulders or in your neck, do you feel any symptoms there?

Lester: Like test taking or piano?

NMC: Test taking.

Lester: Probably not. I mean there might be some tenseness, but I don't think I notice it.

NMC: Okay. How about in your upper back or in your chest?

Lester: No.

NMC: No. In your arms or in your hands?

Lester: I, okay, I don't feel it, but I notice my hand writing is a little shakier looking, so it must be some ...

NMC: Okay.

Lester: So like maybe there's a little bit of shaky hands.

NMC: How about in your stomach? You mentioned...

Lester: (shakes head no)

NMC: Lower back? Legs? Knees? No?

Lester: Not really.

NMC: Feet?

Lester: I might, I might you know, be tapping my feet, kind of, expel some excess energy or something.

NMC: So, like a fidgety or shake.

Lester: Sometimes I get a little fidgety.

NMC: But it's not a trembling or a tremor, or shivering feel? So fidgety, bouncing feet.

Lester: (chuckles)

NMC: Um, now let's transition from test taking to how you generally feel playing the piano in a solo performance.

Lester: Okay.

NMC: And again, let's consider mental symptoms. What do you feel mentally as you are in a solo performance situation.

Lester: Well I probably want to add fear to that, you know, like, thinking about how, I was listening I'll think, I'll kind of let that get to me, and, I'm afraid I'm going to do poorly. People will be like, "He Sucks!" or something like that.

NMC: So you would say an emotion you associate with it would be fear. Um...

L But then there's also that excitement kind of feel, you know, I mean like, "Yeah, I get to do this." So...

NMC: Are there any other emotions you might associate with performance?

Lester: Depending on how well prepared I feel, sometimes there's a little bit of dread. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay.

Lester: Um, I guess that's probably about it.

NMC: Do you notice any internal dialogue when you're performing the piano?

Lester: Sometimes I think I'm like wondering, "Oh, am I going to do this right?" you know. Instead of like trying to play it, I'm like, wondering like, is it going to happen? I'm like, disassociated with, from my hands, or something like that. So... But then, but then, that's not all the time. Sometimes I feel like I'm in control, but other times I feel like it's just happening and I'm observing. So it's like I'm wondering, "Is it gonna happen? Oh, that wasn't very good. Is it going to get worse?" You know, that kind of thing.

NMC: Does it change from performance to performance or does that change within a performance in the same piece?

Lester: Pretty much from performance to performance. It kind of depends on the piece, how well-prepared I feel, and um, pretty much... Actually, a lot of it has to do with almost like, the style? 'Cause, when I play romantic music, I feel like I'm a lot more in

it, but when I play for instance, Baroque music, I almost feel like I'm almost more, observing myself play it, in a way. And I don't know if it's just because of the technical versus emotional feelings are a lot different, or something like that. I don't know.

NMC: Is there anything else that's different about Baroque music for you? Do you practice it differently, or do you...

Lester: Um, I practice the technic, I practice a lot more technically, I guess. You know, I work on like the scales and the fingerings, and making sure it's a lot more even. I don't, and then I try to add the emotional aspect, but it's more difficult. It's more of just like, crescendos, and that kind of thing. 'Cause you can't really do as much rubato and such, because then it's not Baroque. So. yes. (chuckles)

0:10:00

NMC: Okay. Do you have greater or lesser anxiety when you're playing Romantic music?

Lester: I have less anxiety when I'm play Romantic.

NMC: And that's generally across the board?

Lester: mm-hmm (affirmative). No matter how difficult the piece is, if it's Romantic, I seem to connect with it better, I feel more comfortable playing, and therefore, I'm less anxious, and I'm more excited to share it with people. When I play Baroque music, I've never felt like I've played Baroque music that well, and when I get, there tends to be times when I lose my place, it's hard for me to get back. And so, I'm more anxious with that because I'm afraid I'm going to get off and won't be able to start up again. I'm gonna lose my place and have to start over, which is bad. You know, and so it's, I'd say that there's definitely a lot more anxiety whenever I play Baroque versus Romantic.

NMC: What about Contemporary genres? Would you say you're more or less anxious with Contemporary in comparison with Baroque.

Lester: Probably less anxious, because there are some aspects of Romantic in Contemporary, you know, the, like you can do the rubato kind of thing, and if you mess up chords, depending on the piece, nobody's gonna notice. But, um, there are some parts where I probably might be just as anxious because that it has some more extremely technical stuff, that it's just kind of like "bullibuililiub" (pantomiming fast passage work) all over the place. But, it's not like that all the time, if you know what I mean.

NMC: What about Classical music? Do you have any particular....

Lester: Classical would probably be closer to Baroque, but it's not nearly as much. It's kind of like, I'd probably be the most anxious with Baroque, then Classical, then

Contemporary, then Romantic, is probably how that'd work. And I think it's kind of weird that it's by the different eras, that I feel more anxious with, but at the same time, I think it kind of makes sense.

NMC: You said the word "dissociated from my hands" and, um, what does that mean to you?

Lester: Well, when I play, I try to like, you know, I try to feel the music with my entire body, you know, try to get into it, and have my hands and such, to be a part of it, you know. So it's like, you know, I feel this crescendo, so it's like, you know, it actually happens, and I move. (chuckles). But sometimes I feel like I'm just kind of sitting there, and my hands are just kind of doing their own thing, and I'm not a part of it myself. It's just, my hands are just playing this piece, and I'm like, "Oh, well that's pretty." Or whatever, you know.

NMC: Do you feel out of control of your hands, or not as involved and connected with your hands?

Lester: I'd probably say not as involved. It's not that I don't have control, because I can try to get back in there and be a part of it, but sometimes when I do that is screws me up. So.

NMC: Do you think the dissociation is a product of the anxiety, or more a product of just the piece and the genre?

Lester: I think it's a mixture of both, but I think it's mostly the anxiety, because when I'm in the practice room, I don't have that nearly as much.

NMC: Why is that?

Lester: I think it's because I don't have to worry about, you know, "Oh, there's a bunch of people there. They're watching me." You know, and then, I'm just kind of like, you know, sitting there. And if I mess up, you know, I fix it, or whatever. But like, when I'm in front of a bunch of people, and it's like, I start to wondering, you know, "What do I look like?" You know, I mean, "Am I a stiff board? Am I moving too much?" or something, you know. And then, my mind kind of wanders away from what I'm doing, in a way.

NMC: Um, why do you think people judge your movement with a Baroque piece, or do you think....

Lester: With anything, because I've always felt that, and I've heard from other performers and such that, the audience half listens, half watches. They like, you know, part of the listening is through watching the performer. And so, if the performer is just sitting there being extremely boring, and, you know, doesn't look like they're involved with the music, they don't feel like they're involved with the music, and they don't really

connect with the music. But if the performer is really into the music, and they're, you know, like, they're playing something and it, like, is huge crescendo or something, and like, move into it or something, and it's like, it looks like they're really involved, the audience tends to hear better and feel more involved with the music themselves. And so. Like, 'cause I've had different experiences with that kind of aspect, 'cause, there was, um, a piece where I played, it was a Romantic piece, and it was an outdoor concert. There were kids running around, and all sorts of things. And, I was just completely involved with the piece, and wasn't even paying attention to the kids who were running right by the piano. And, I had people comment, like, "It was amazing to watch you play, 'cause you were so involved." But then there have been times where it's like, you know, I don't feel involved and people are like, "That's nice." (chuckles) Like, "Okay." So I think I let that get to me sometimes, especially when it comes to pieces that I don't connect with as well.

NMC: So, you think that the physical motion is a part of the performance....

Lester: Yep.

NMC: ...and yet, you're worried about over-doing it? Am I hearing that right?

Lester: Um, a little bit of over-doing it, or under-doing it even. Because over-doing it almost seems cheesy. Under-doing it is just kind of, boring. You know, I mean, and, and, if I under-do it, which is what I felt like I did on Sunday, um, I don't connect with it. Like, I, it's like, here's me, here's my hands. But when I move, I'm part of the hand motions. And it, does that make sense?

NMC: Mm-hmm. So you're saying somewhat, the anxiety inhibits the motion of your body in tune with the music?

Lester: Mm-hmm. Right.

NMC: Okay, um, does, is your focus or concentration affected by performance anxiety in general music performances?

Lester: Yeah.

NMC: How so?

Lester: Um, it does effect tempo. I rush sometimes, and then, it's just, I, I can't concentrate to make it slow down. I'm like, "Oh, wow, this is really fast. Um, Um, uh-oh." (chuckles) And it, there have been times where it's been a problem, and I just try to make it through. And then, um, sometimes if, like, both, actually both the Live and the Virtual Performance, for this, um, it was like, for some reason I just wasn't connected with it, and like, my fingering got off, and I didn't know where I was, really. And so, it's like, I found it and I was able to play it, but it was a completely different

fingering, and it was like, "Well this is awkward." So, that's, I definitely would say that it affected where I was mentally in the piece, not where my fingers were.

NMC: Okay. So in practice, whenever you practice, do you find that you are better able to stay with the specifics of each fingering, each note as they're happening, or that, it generally just happens, and you don't have to think about it while you're practicing?

Lester: Um, I kind of experience both. Um, sometimes I kind of feel it by section, but when there's like, something that's a more difficult run, or it's a weird fingering, I'm finger by finger, you know kind of focusing on that. And, I'm able to kind of do the finger by finger or whatever you said, but not always, because I notice sometimes when I do that it actually messes me up. Like, I'm like, "Oh wait, what is that fingering supposed to be?" cause it just, it usually just happens. So I start to think about it. I start to question what it is. So.

NMC: Okay. Uh, and, with your focus and concentration, do you ever find that your mind is wandering?

Lester: (chuckles) Yeah. (chuckles) Um, there have been times when I'm practicing, all of the sudden, I'm like, thinking about my day, or, what I'm going to do when I get home, or, you know, something like that. And it's like, "Why am I thinking about that?" 'Cause something makes me think of something, you know, tangent, tangent, tangent.

NMC: Does that happen in performance?

Lester: It has.

NMC: Do you, can you, do you have specific instances or specific things that you've found your mind wandering to?

Lester: They're different. I mean, sometimes I think about something that happened last week, or I'm thinking about something that's going to happen. Or I'm just trying to think of what I'm supposed to be doing, and sometimes I'm even just thinking of, you know, like random things like my cat, or something like that, you know. (chuckles) It's not always something specific, it just kind of wanders wherever it feels like. And I try to, I try to bring it back, and usually I'm able to, but sometimes it messes me up.

NMC: How do you do that? How do you bring yourself back?

Lester: Um, I realize that I'm wandering, and then I listen to the music to hear where I am in the piece. (chuckles) Sometimes, I'm just kind of like, "Oh. Yeah. I should have been paying attention." And then, um, I hear where I am, and then, I'm like, "Okay, I need to be right there and be a part of it." And there have been times where that screws me up.

NMC: Okay. Let's think now about physical symptoms in your solo performance. Can you think of any?

Lester: On Sunday, my hands were trembling a lot, um, which I haven't experienced for awhile, so that's kind of weird. Um, I felt my heart beating. I got really warm. I guess in a way, I was almost just shaky all over. But it was mostly in the hands, which was kind of weird. Um, I felt a little tense, like, in the shoulder area. Um, it wasn't a comfortable experience for me, you know. It's like I knew I, for some, I just felt really nervous and I had no idea why. I mean it could be because it was Baroque and I haven't performed Baroque for awhile.

NMC: Let's again, do a head to toe scan. In your head or in your face, did you feel any symptoms?

Lester: Warmth, definitely. Um.

NMC: Like a flushing, or?

Lester: Yeah, probably.

NMC: Was it a feverish warmth, or...

Lester: No. It was just kind of like, (pants), and it just, warmer than usual, but I wouldn't say it was like, you know, I had a temperature or anything.

NMC: Did you feel like you were about to sweat?

Lester: I may have been. (laughs) I didn't exactly check, but.

NMC: Did you notice any tension in your head or in your face?

Lester: Hmm-mmm. (negative) Like, well, I may have had some, like, in my neck, but that's more of, like, with the shoulders I think.

NMC: So, in your shoulders in your neck, what did you feel?

Lester: Some tension.

NMC: And what's that like? Where were your shoulders?

Lester: They were just kinda, almost locked right here, in a way. You know, I wasn't in a slouched position, I wasn't in perfect posture, I was kind of like in between a little.

NMC: Okay. So locked, unmoving.

Lester: Well not locked, it just, they weren't moving but I could move them if I needed to. It was kinda... (chuckles)

NMC: Would you say clenched? Does that feel right or is that a different...

Lester: That feels too much like locked. Because they weren't locked, they just weren't relaxed, you know.

NMC: Okay.

Lester: You know (chuckles).

NMC: How about in your upper back or in your chest?

Lester: I felt my heart pounding, that was it, really.

NMC: Does your breathing change?

Lester: I have noticed sometimes my breath is short, kind of. And so before I go on, I try to take a few deep breaths. You probably noticed me doing this. I was just kinda like, trying to relax myself, and that helped. But I don't think I did it enough, so. But, again, it's you know, trying to relax yourself and be like, "It's going to be okay, you know. You're just gonna be out there for like two minutes" (chuckles)

NMC: And in your arms or your hands, do you typically feel things there?

Lester: Um, my hands were trembling. And actually, my hands generally feel cold. They tend to feel more, clammy even. Like they do a little sweating, and they're cold. But sometimes they're real hot. But they're mostly usually cold.

NMC: Okay. Did you feel anything in your stomach?

Lester: Maybe some tightness. I wouldn't say, like, I wouldn't say I had like butterflies, or like I felt like I was gonna vomit or anything. Just a little tight.

NMC: How about in your lower back?

Lester: No.

NMC: No. Legs? Knees?

Lester: Maybe a little jittery, but, like I don't notice it as much when I'm sitting down. So, like, when I'm singing or something like that, I definitely feel more.

NMC: When you're singing?

Lester: Yeah.

NMC: Jittery, again, is that more like nervous energy, or is it a shivering, trembling kind of jittery?

Lester: I feel more like a nervous energy kind of thing.

NMC: Okay. How about your feet?

Lester: Same thing. Just the nervous energy. And so, usually, when I'm on stage they're note moving. Except for the pedal, but, I don't use the pedal with the Baroque stuff, so.

NMC: Again, considering how you generally feel in a typical solo performance, do you take any steps to reduce your symptoms of anxiety?

Lester: Yes.

NMC: What things do you do?

Lester: Um, well, I do like some basic like, yoga kind of things, where, you know, you focus on your breathing, and try to relax yourself. Like, I'm not doing the full out stretches or anything, but you know, it's centering yourself, trying to relax. Keep your breath slow, not you know, slower your heart down, 'cause one of the things is my heart tends to race. And so it's like, I try to slow it down, stay relaxed, stay calm. So when I do go out there, I don't royally screw up, or you know, rush like crazy. And, doesn't always work as well as I hope, but it definitely works, 'cause I didn't use to, and (chuckles) and well, I don now. (laughs)

NMC: When do you start that, uh, stretching and breathing and centering?

Lester: Well, not so much stretching, I don't actually do stretching. Well, I might do some arm stretches, but. Um, usually back stage, or like, it's when I start to feel the anxiety kick in. So I might be in the green room, I might be back stage. I'm not doing it like hours before, so.

NMC: Do you have a pre-performance routine that you like to do?

Lester: I run through the stuff, feel comfortable, wait to go play, and then I go play. (chuckles)

NMC: Do you implement any rehearsal strategies to help you with symptoms of anxiety?

Lester: I pretend like there's an audience. I try to pretend like I'm performing for people. And sometime I even have, like, a couple friends sit in the practice room and

listen to me perform. Just so I get used to there actually being people around. And I don't let myself stop if I mess up. I just try to keep going, to like, see if I can cover for myself. And, like there have even been times where I, like, I bow before hand, or whatever, you know, to practice being on stage without actually being on stage. So it's like, you know, I , I have a mock performance, whether or not there's people there. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific practice strategies that you use in preparation to help you deal with anxiety?

Lester: Um, well like, with this piece, I would practice the runs in different rhythms so the runs were more steady. So, it becomes more of second nature kind of thing so I don't have to worry about it being wullabuluble (pantomimes run) or anything. You know, keeping it steady. Um, I practice the emotions, or the emotional state that I want to be in, or like, the different crescendos or rubatos and stuff. And I try to practice them the same every time, so it just, I try to practice things so it becomes second nature. So, it doesn't always work, but.

0:27:08

NMC: You mentioned that you do some breathing and yoga-like centeredness. Do you do any other kinds of relaxation strategies before you perform?

Lester: There have been times when I needed to release some nervous energy, so you know, so I might do some jumping jacks, or something like that. Just because, it's like, you can't release all that energy just by calming yourself. Sometimes you actually have to move to get that energy out.

NMC: Okay. What about prayer or meditation? Do you pray or meditate before you perform?

Lester: I'd almost say the centering is kinda like meditating, you know. It's kind of like a focus on your breathing, and try to like, be, trying to like talk to yourself, I mean like, "You're gonna do great. Don't have to worry about it, you know. You're well prepared. " That kind of thing. But I don't pray or anything.

NMC: Okay. Um, is there anything that you do during a performance to help you with symptoms of anxiety?

Lester: Um, if I start to feel a little anxiety, I try to do the same kind of thing to calm myself, but I also...

NMC: What kind of thing?

Lester: The breathing, you know, to slow down my breathing, or whatever. Um, I generally, this might sound kind of weird, but I try to lose myself in the music. You

know, I try to be a part of the music so much that it, it's a part of me, and I just kind of let it flow out of me through the keyboard, or whatever, so you know, it's like, I am the performance. It's not the piano, but it's me. And so, if I start to feel anxious, I just try to, you know, I don't know how to explain it, 'cause it's something that I just kind of do.

NMC: Okay.

Lester: You know, it's like, I try to be a part of the piece as much as possible.

NMC: So you cue yourself to allow yourself to be intuitive with the piece or, in concert with the piece?

Lester: Yeah. Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Alright, let's now consider, specifically how you felt in the Rehearsal Performance.

Lester: Okay.

NMC: Which was the performance for nobody else, just you in the practice room. Can you recall any of the mental symptoms of anxiety present in the Rehearsal Performance?

Lester: I just felt, like, "Um, I shouldn't screw up." (chuckles) I really didn't feel anxious about it, it just kind of like, 'cause it felt like part of my practice. So you know, I was practicing, blah blah blah, and then I was like, "Okay. This is gonna be a Rehearsal Performance. I'm just gonna play through it completely, and not say anything, not stop, just keep going. And so it was part of my practice, and so I just kinda played through it. And I screwed up a little, and I like, I was thinking to myself, "Aw. Shoot." You know, "I usually don't screw that up." And then, when I was done with it, I was like, "Ug." Then I went back to try and fix it or something.

NMC: Do you have any specific emotions that you might attach with the Rehearsal Performance. You mentioned fear, excitement, and dread with the general solo performance.

Lester: I wouldn't say any of those. I mean, it was just, it was just part of my practice, so it was kinda like, "Okay. Like, try to be happy." Like, be happy about it, you know. So I was trying to feel, you know, positive.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any kinds of internal dialog?

Lester: "Okay, this is it." (laughs) Nothing really, no.

NMC: How about the dissociation you describe in general, do you have that in the Rehearsal Performance?

Lester: Not really. I'm able to stay with it pretty well.

NMC: And, focus and concentration during the Rehearsal Performance?

Lester: hmm.

NMC: No problems?

Lester: I mean, I might phase out a little, but, for the most part, I'm with it.

NMC: Is your mind more apt to wander in a rehearsal performance, or in a typical solo performance?

Lester: Probably more like a rehearsal performance. Well, it definitely wanders more when I'm practicing, especially when I'm just running through the piece. And, but, when it was a rehearsal performance, I'm like, "Okay, I have to stay with it." So, it didn't as much. And then a live performance, I'm usually like, trying to be with it as much as possible so it doesn't wander, but sometimes it does. But, probably I'd have to say that it wanders more in the Rehearsal Performance, actually.

NMC: Okay. Would you say that your mental symptoms of anxiety are generally better, worse, or about the same comparing your Rehearsal Performance to a typical performance?

Lester: I'm sorry, what?

NMC: Your Rehearsal Performance symptoms of performance anxiety, are they better, worse, or about the same as your typical solo performance?

Lester: Better. Like, I feel a lot less anxious in a Rehearsal Performance.

NMC: Okay. How about your physical symptoms? You mentioned, in a typical performance, your face feels hot.

Lester: I don't really feel almost any anxiety in a Rehearsal Performance.

NMC: So there's nothing in your head or face?

Lester: No.

NMC: Nothing noticeable in your shoulders or your neck?

Lester: I might get a little tense, just because I'm trying to play it perfectly.

NMC: But to a lesser degree than a typical performance?

Lester: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. (chuckles)

NMC: Uh, what about in your upper back? chest? No. Heart rate? Breathing? Not really?

Lester: Not really.

NMC: Arms? Hands?

Lester: hmm-mm (negative).

NMC: Nope. Stomach?

Lester: No.

NMC: Nope. Lower back?

Lester: No.

NMC: Nope. Legs, knees, feet?

Lester: No.

NMC: Nope, nope, nope. So, in a rehearsal performance, this specific Rehearsal Performance, it was fewer noticeable symptoms of anxiety than in a typical performance.

Lester: Yeah.

NMC: Did you any steps to reduce your anxiety in the Rehearsal Performance?

Lester: No
0:33:06

NMC: No.

Lester: No. I didn't feel the need. I usually try to reduce the anxiety when I feel the anxiety. And since I didn't feel the anxiety, I didn't need to.

NMC: So, no centering, no breathing?

Lester: Not really, no. I mean, I may have stretched my arms a little bit, like, "Okay, I gotta go." You know, but, that's about it.

NMC: Anything during the performance that you may have done?

Lester: Nope. Just the same kind of thing, you know. Try stay with it, try not to let my mind wander, not be with the music.

NMC: Okay. Alright, now let's consider the Live Performance Sunday afternoon. This specific performance rather than what happens in general.

Lester: Okay.

NMC: In this specific performance, did you notice any mental symptoms of anxiety?

Lester: Um, I definitely felt, like fear of what people would think. I was dreading it. I was not excited at all. I did not want to play this piece. I didn't feel ready for some reason. 'Cause, it was weird, right before the performance, when I was running through it, I just, couldn't play it straight through without messing up, and I was like... It was kind of unnerving, 'cause it was like, "Well, I haven't had this problem for awhile." And so, I don't know if it was just, like, my mind kept wandering or something. I, like I really don't remember, 'cause it just kind happened all of the sudden, like, "Oh, I'm bowing." (chuckles) No, not really, but, like it was weird.

NMC: Um, can you recall any internal dialogue that you might of had?

Lester: Um, I didn't think I could do it, and I was like, "Okay, you can do it." You know. "Relax. Calm down. It's going to be fine." And like, the people, I was like trying to tell myself, you know, "People in the audience aren't going to judge you for one bad performance. You know, all seven of them." (chuckles)

NMC: So kind of talking yourself off of the ledge.

Lester: Yeah that's...

NMC: Giving yourself reasons not to be anxious.

Lester: Yep.

NMC: Any internal dialogue during the performance itself?

Lester: Um, yeah, kinda like, "Oh, wow. This sucks." (chuckles) "This is completely unmusical." Like, you know, that kind of talking to myself, you know like, "That could have been better. Oh, I'm messed that up. Oh shoot, what should I do?" You know.

NMC: What sort of performance errors would cause that response to yourself? Is it...

Lester: Um, I didn't really feel, I think as much, like, dynamic change as I was hoping. Sometimes I think the style didn't seem quite right. And like, I messed up some places,

and make up the fingering near the end. It was just kind of like, "Oh. yay." (chuckles) So.

NMC: Okay. Uh, did you feel dissociation during this performance? Separate from your hands.

Lester: Yeah.

NMC: Did you attribute that mostly to the performance anxiety, or to the genre of the piece?

Lester: Can I say both?

NMC: Sure.

Lester: Yeah, I'd say both. Um, I think the anxiety because, for some reason, I didn't feel as prepared as I should have, even though I was. And then, the style because the style was, in a way, I guess you could say is more difficult for me to perform.

NMC: DId you lose focus, concentration, or feel your mind wander during the performance?

Lester: Yeah, I think that was because I was just, kinda like, "Oh, this is happening."

NMC: To what sort of issues would your mind wander?

Lester: Like, what did I think about?

NMC: mm-hmm.

Lester: It was mostly probably about the performance. But I wasn't thinking about me playing, I was thinking about the performance. Uh, like, what's gonna happen, what should I do. Blah blah blah, that kind of thing.

NMC: Okay. Were there any factors in this particular performance that you think led to these feelings of self-doubt, before you went on?

Lester: Besides what I've said already? No.

NMC: Okay. How about physical symptoms?

Lester: My hands were trembling more than usual. I felt, I had a feeling of being uneasy, but my stomach wasn't upset or anything. I just kinda felt like, you know what I mean. I was like, "Ooo, I'm not sure about this." Um, I definitely felt my heart like, pounding. That's when I was like, "Okay. Calm down." Trying to calm myself down. I felt warm, mostly in the face.

NMC: Again, from head to toe, in your head or face, did you feel....

Lester: Warm.

NMC: Warmth. How about in your shoulders or your neck?

Lester: Tenseness.

NMC: Upper back?

Lester: Not really, well maybe a little tenseness.

NMC: Not really. How about chest?

Lester: I felt my heart pounding. But like during the performance, it kinda died down. It was more before.

NMC: You mentioned your hands, did anything happen with your arms?

Lester: They may have been a little shaky, but it was mostly my hands.

NMC: Uh, we talked about your stomach. How about your lower back?

Lester: No.

NMC: Legs? Knees? Feet?

Lester: No.

NMC: No. DId you take any specific steps to reduce performance anxiety Sunday afternoon.

Lester: Well, I didn't feel anxious until right before, until I was about to go on. And so, I was like, "Oh, my." So I tried to take a few deep slow breaths, trying to be like, "It's gonna be fine. Relax." And then, you were there and were like, "Ready to go?" And I was like, "No." (chuckles) And so, I tried to an extra like, five seconds, to calm down before going on.

NMC: Why do you think it didn't hit you until just before in this particular performance?

Lester: I don't know. It was kinda weird. I'm wondering if it was just because it was such a short piece, and it was a smaller audience. You know, it was a smaller performance. It was kind of, you know, I haven't been preparing for this for the past month. And so it was not like I had all this time to like, so.

NMC: So the event itself didn't generate a lot of anxiety, but as the performance became a reality, it generated a little bit.

Lester: Yeah, yeah.

NMC: Okay. Um, did you do any of your relaxation, the breathing and centering?

Lester: No. Except for right before I went on.

NMC: Okay. You did it but less of it?

Lester: Yeah.

NMC: Any other pre-performance routines that you did before this performance?

Lester: I guess, I like, right before I performed, like in general before I perform, you know, I try to like not think about it, you know, and just kinda like, talk to whoever is in the back and be like, "Hey, what's up." You know, I try to keep my mind off of it so I don't think about things, and I was, you know, doing that on Sunday. You know, trying to keep my mind off of it. 'Cause, you know, if I think about it too much then I dwell on it, and then I think I going to do poorly. It tends to be bad, so.

NMC: Okay. Do you think that, uh, there were specific instances where your anxiety may have affected your performance on Sunday?

Lester: Umm-hmm. (affirmative) I really feel like it, I almost feel like it, like I caused the disassociation. And, like I just, I didn't feel like I was playing it. Or like, you know, a part of it was, like, you know, it seemed bland.

NMC: So it affected your musicianship?

Lester: Definitely. And some of my memory.

NMC: Do you think that perhaps that the anxiety may have helped your performance in any way?

Lester: (chuckles) No. (chuckles)

NMC: No. Okay, let's think now about the Virtual Performance, the recording session that we just did. Um, just thinking in general, was the anxiety more or less than the Live Performance.

Lester: Definitely less.

NMC: Less. More or less than the Rehearsal Performance?

Lester: More. 'Cause I knew people would hear it, eventually.

NMC: Okay. Can you recall any of the specific mental symptoms of anxiety for the Virtual Performance?

Lester: Uh, I was just kind of like, "Okay." It was kind of like the Rehearsal Performance, but there was a slight, I don't want to say fear or dread, but maybe?

NMC: Trepidation?

Lester: Sure.

NMC: Uncertainty?

Lester: Yeah. Probably uncertainty. Probably like, "Is this really gonna go well the one time record it?" So, I like uncertainty. Let's go with that.

NMC: Did you have any internal dialog concerning the performance?

Lester: Not really.

NMC: Okay. And did you feel that sense of dissociation from your hands that you felt in the Live Performance?

Lester: hmm-mm. (negative)

NMC: How about your focus and concentration? How was it during the performance?

Lester: It was a little off, because I like, it seemed kind of weird at first. You know, I felt like I was focusing differently. 'Cause it was like, "Whoa." I was like focusing more, which got my focus off, you know. It was, it was, I was focusing on the fingers more than usual, I think, and that kind of threw off my concentration. I was kind of like, for a second I was like, "Where am I?" But then I, I was, I still knew where I was, actually. And it was weird.

NMC: Why do you think that was the case in the Virtual Performance?

Lester: I think it was because I didn't have the audience to distract me. But I also didn't have the worry of anyone ever hearing it. 'Cause it was like, you know, the Rehearsal Performance, it's like, "No one's gonna hear this. If it's horrible, who's going to notice or care?" And, the Live Performance, there's, you know, the people there. And it's like, "Oh no. What are they going to think?" You know, so I'm, almost thinking more about that. But with the Virtual Performance, I'm actually able to be with it, and still kind of, in a way, worry about what's gonna happen. But I don't have to worry about, you know, there people being there. So.

NMC: Um, physical symptoms in the Virtual Performance. More or less than in the Live Performance?

Lester: Less.

NMC: More or less than in the Rehearsal Performance? Or about the same?

Lester: It was probably about the same.

NMC: So did you feel the hotness in your head or your face?

Lester: I do now. (chuckles)

NMC: Now. Okay.

Lester: But I think it's just because the room is warm.

NMC: The room is a little warm. How about in your shoulders or your neck. Did you feel any tension there?

Lester: No.

NMC: No. Upper back? Chest?

Lester: No.

NMC: Heart rate? Breathing?

Lester: No.

NMC: No. Arms? Hands? Stomach?

Lester: No. I felt pretty relaxed.

NMC: Okay. Um, did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety for the Virtual Performance?

Lester: I went through the piece as many times as I could to feel comfortable about it before playing.

NMC: Okay. This is when you're in here, prior to recording?

Lester: Yeah, 'cause, um, part of the Live Performance is, you know, I hadn't played that piano since the last time I performed on it, which would have been midterms.

NMC: mm-hmm.

Lester: And, that was a while ago. And this one, I got to play on this piano. And so I played through it, like, four or five times, and I felt comfortable with it.

NMC: Okay. Did you do your centering and breathing?

Lester: Didn't need to.

NMC: Didn't need to. Um, do you think performance anxiety may have had a, an affect on this performance?

Lester: I think it affected my memory a little, especially near the end.

NMC: And how? How did that happen?

Lester: I don't know, it just did. (chuckles) Like, all of the sudden, I was like I didn't know what note to play next. It was like my hands stopped doing the autopilot kind of think. But I also didn't know exactly where it was, so I kinda had to find it, which...

NMC: And when did this happen?

Lester: Like three measures before the end. So it was like right at the end. So I don't know if it was because, like, "I'm almost done. Yay." And then it threw me off or something, or what.

NMC: Is it possible because you weren't as concerned with the performance you lost some concentration?

Lester: It's a possibility. Also, it could be because I was more concerned. Like, I was less concerned than the Live Performance, but I was more concerned than the Rehearsal Performance, so I think almost, a mixture of the two threw me off. Or something.

NMC: Uh, is part of it maybe that things were going really well, and that made you anxious?

Lester: It didn't make me anxious. I mean, I was, I was pleased how much better it felt than the Live Performance.

NMC: mm-hmm.

Lester: I wouldn't say that it made me anxious.

NMC: Okay. Do you think performance anxiety may have helped this performance, the Virtual Performance?

Lester: Um... No. I don't think so.

NMC: Okay. Alright. Most of the descriptions we've given from the perspective of the performer. Imagine now that your are a teacher, and a student of yours is trying to explain their symptoms of performance anxiety. What kind of descriptive words would you need to hear to understand them? What specific words would they need to use so that you would understand what they're trying to communicate?

Lester: You mean like, fear or, to do with anxiety? Probably things like fear, or um, I forgot some other things. Um, like, probably talk about tenseness in different places. You know, upset stomach, butterflies, racing heart beat, jittery or trembling, um, maybe excitement, dread.

NMC: Any other specific words, words or phrases?

Lester: No. Nervous energy. Uh, I don't teach. (chuckles)

NMC: Uh, what kinds of questions might you ask to help a student articulate their feelings?

Lester: Um, probably what they were thinking or how they felt before the performance, during the performance, and after the performance. Um, what makes it feel different than a rehearsal performance. Um, like, what they, what happened, even. See if they actually remember the performance or like, you know, if they felt like they weren't there. Um, I guess how they felt about it. I already said that.

NMC: One more question about the three performance. Of the three, the Rehearsal Performance, the Live Performance, and the Virtual Performance, which one do you think was the best performance?

Lester: I don't know. I messed up in all of them, like, you know, with the memory, so that's kind of, down. But I feel like, the Virtual Performance might have been more musical, and I felt more with the piece. Except for the end. I was like, the Rehearsal Performance was surprisingly not perfect. Or, whatever, you know. Which is annoying.

NMC: Okay. Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications, amplifications, or corrections?

Lester: Sure.

NMC: Okay.

Lester: Make sure you don't quote me incorrectly. (chuckles)

NMC: Um, just so that you know, it generally takes four to five times the length of an interview to transcribe an interview, and I have about six hours of these to do, so it may be a while before this transcript is ready. But probably by the end of next week, I should have something for you.

Lester: That's fine. I'm in no hurry. Are you? (chuckles)

NMC: No. Are there any other thoughts you'd like to mention before we end.

Lester: No. I guess I'm sorry people have to hear this piece. (laughs)

NMC: I'm sure it was fine. Okay.

Lester: Cool.

Lester, LP2

November 15, 2009

NMC: Lester.

Lester: Hello.

NMC: Hello. You have now performed in two Live Performances and a number of Virtual Performances.

Lester: Correct.

NMC: We're going to talk about those. But before we do, would you like to know how you scored on the various instruments that you completed.

Lester: Sure.

NMC: Okay. On the K-MPAI, which was the diagnostic test, you scored a negative seventeen. A score of zero would be that your average in terms of how performance anxiety affects you and affects your performances. A negative score means performance anxiety typically affects you less than other performers.

Lester: Really.

NMC: So a negative seventeen would indicate that...

Lester: It wouldn't affect me.

NMC: ... your in a position where, through thorough preparation you can really conquer performance anxiety.

Lester: Yeah.

NMC: With a reasonable amount of certainty.

Lester: Interesting.

NMC: Does that score surprise you?

Lester: A little. But I guess it makes sense though, 'cause a lot of my anxiety comes from self-doubt, so if I feel really confident then it doesn't, how to say this, but I'm more excited. So, I guess in a way, that does make sense. Maybe I just need to prepare more. (laughs)

NMC: Okay. And then on the C-PAI's, you filled out one for every performance.

Lester: Right.

NMC: A low score indicates fewer symptoms of anxiety, a high score indicates more symptoms of anxiety. Your lowest score was a 31 for EP4. The lowest possible score is a 22. Your highest score was for the first live performance. It was a 68 and the highest possible score is an 88.

Lester: Okay.

NMC: And, the second Live Performance, you scored at a 38, which was lower than your Rehearsal Performance, lower than the Virtual Performance, and lower than the first Exposure performance.

Lester: I felt really confident and really comfortable with the last Live Performance.

NMC: If you want to look at them, you can see these three, 2, 4 and 5 really clustered together at the lower end. This one's slightly higher, but still you can group them together. These kind of group together, and then this is all by itself.

Lester: Yeah.

NMC: And your Live Performance 2 is kind of in that lower grouping. Does that seem about right as you look at those?

Lester: Yeah.

NMC: Okay.

Lester: I think it was just because, by then I had been performing it in so many different ways, you know. It was like, "Oh, I've done this. I'm used to it by now."

NMC: You've performed in two Live Performance situations. Compare how you felt in the first Live Performance with how you felt in the second Live Performance.

Lester: THe first one, I was extremely nervous and didn't think I was play through it completely, and by thinking so, I didn't. And it messed me up, and, you know, I got really shaky and such. And in the second one, I was a lot more comfortable with the piece and with performing it, and so, it was more just, "Okay, let's do it again." You know, and I went out there, and afterward, I felt like it went so much better that actually, I almost felt a little shaky afterwards. I was like, "Oh boy!" So, it was very different, which I thought was interesting.

NMC: So you would say that one performance was better than the other.

Lester: Oh yeah.

NMC: Which one?

Lester: The second one.

NMC: Why?

Lester: Um, more time with the piece. More experience with it. I felt more comfortable.

NMC: Where the mental symptoms of anxiety different in Live Performance Two?

Lester: They weren't really there. They weren't bothering me, like... I think it was because, when you tend to perform, certain things kind of pop out. It's like, "Oh. I have issues with that." But by performing the, I guess it was six virtual performances all together and the one live performance, I was able to find those places that, you know, I thought were prepared, but when I go to perform it, they weren't. I would like, forget it. So I was able to work on those little spots. I was just a lot more comfortable, so it wasn't bothering me.

NMC: Okay. You mentioned from the first interview fear, excitement and dread. Did you feel the same things with Live Performance 2?

Lester: I'd say excitement. I don't think I was dreading it. It was almost like I was wanting to get it over with. (chuckles). But it wasn't like, "Oh no. I have to go onstage." It was like, "Yay, I get to go on stage, and I can go on with the rest of my day. "

NMC: You mentioned dissociation and feeling a little bit disconnected to the music. Did you feel that in Live Performance 2?

Lester: No, I didn't. I felt like I was with the piece a lot better. And, like I was able to be with the piece, and I was, I felt like I was in control.

NMC: How about mind-wandering. Did your mind wander in the second live performance?

Lester: Not that I recall. I don't think so.

NMC: Concentration?

Lester: I think it was pretty good. There was like, I think, one spot in the middle somewhere, where there was, like, a little hiccup or something, and it kind of threw me off a little bit, but I was able to stick with it pretty well, so.

NMC: Were the physical symptoms of anxiety different in the second Live Performance?

Lester: Yeah. They were almost weren't there. I mean, I was, I could feel my heart beating, and like, I felt like maybe a little shaky. But I wasn't over heated, and I wasn't shaking beyond belief, or anything. I think like, I think part of that was like, before hand I was a lot more focused on calming myself down. 'Cause I remember how the Live Performance went last time, so um, for the second one, I was focusing on breath a lot more, and trying to, uh, like, try to stretch out my arms a little, and just slow myself down.

NMC: So you spent more time before you performed in the second Live Performance attending to your physical symptoms.

Lester: Right.

NMC: You mentioned in the first interview your hands trembling, your shoulders felt tensed, locked, you had a warm, flushed face, heart pounding, clammy hands, jittery, and a tight stomach.

Lester: Right.

NMC: So, you were aware of your heart in the second performance, but it wasn't as much?

Lester: Right.

NMC: What about your shoulders, then tension?

Lester: It wasn't, I didn't notice it so, it didn't bother me, I guess. I mean if it was there, it didn't bother me, but, I don't think it was.

NMC: How about flushed face?

Lester: No.

NMC: Okay. You've also performed in several virtual performances, compare your first virtual performance with your last virtual performance.

Lester: My first virtual performance, I think I was a little anxious about it because I didn't know, you know. Like thinking, "Oh, this is going to go online and whoever subscribes to the podcast is gonna be able to listen to it. Ah, it's gonna be awful," you know. And, I kept dwelling on that, and I hadn't played the piece completely through without messing up for awhile, so I was kinda nervous about it. But at the same time, I was like, "No one's here." So I was able to run through it on a piano a few times before I performed it, so that helped. But then by the last time, you know, I'd done it four time,

or five times before including the virtual performance, and I was just like, "Okay, and now this is just another one," you know. And, I didn't really worry about it as much, 'cause you know, I, it's, you know, I was becoming more habitual, in a way. It was something that I had been doing, and I was used to it by now, so.

NMC: Did one performance feel better than the other?

Lester: I think EP4 actually was the best. But then EP5 would have felt the second best out of all of them.

NMC: Okay. Why is that?

Lester: Um, well, I did both of them on the last day. And I was feeling more comfortable with it. And so, I went in with the second to last one, and that felt pretty good. And I had to go straight in to the last one after that. And so it was kinda, I don't think I was quite with it as much as I was for the first one, 'cause like, "Oh, I just did this." So. But it was still better than the first one, 'cause the first one was like, "What am I doing?" (chuckles) So. The very first one, that is.

NMC: Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different in last performance, last virtual performance?

Lester: As opposed to the first virtual performance? Uh, yeah. They were definitely lessened or non-existent because I knew what to do, and I was used to it, and I had done it before. A lot of these things seem to be comfort levels, you know. If I've done things before, then I'm comfortable doing it again, so things go better. I'm not going to worry about other things, or whatever.

NMC: What if it were a new piece, now, and you came in to do a virtual recording of a new piece. Would it be more similar to the last virtual performance, or more similar to the first virtual performance?

Lester: It would probably depend on the piece. But I would probably say more towards the last one, because I'm more used to this set-up and what to do. But if it was like, for instance, another Bach prelude, maybe not as much, just because, I have problems connecting with Baroque pieces, I guess. So.

NMC: Were the physical symptoms of anxiety different in the last virtual performance?

Lester: I don't remember any. You know, I wasn't flushed, or at least, I didn't have any tightness, no jittery, no clammy hands, nothing.

NMC: Was that in any of the virtual performances or just the last one?

Lester: Um, like the last few. Like, I think the first one there was a little bit, 'cause I, you know, I was like, "This is my first one." But, by the end it was like pffhhhh. (dismissive) "I can do this."

NMC: If you were to continue to record virtual performance, how would the tenth one feel different than the last one you recorded?

Lester: The tenth one as opposed to the fifth one?

NMC: mm-hmm.

Lester: It would probably just feel more habitual. I, I would, I'd definitely be more comfortable with it, I'd be more used to it, so I'd just be, like, you know, going through the process again, you know. I wouldn't probably be feeling anxiety at all.

NMC: Okay. Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with the symptoms of performance anxiety in the second Live Performance?

Lester: Yeah. It force me to concentrate, in a way, where I had to focus on a piece, and actually perform it straight through. Because, what happens in a rehearsal performance, when I'm just doing it on my own, if I mess up, I might just go back and fix it. And then, I'm not going through the entire piece, like completely through it without stopping. So when I go to play it through completely at a real performance, it throws me off a little. So by doing the virtual performances, it was forcing me to treat every performance as a live performance.

NMC: As a complete performance.

Lester: A complete performance, right.

NMC: Is there any other things about the process that you think changed the way you dealt with the symptoms of performance anxiety?

Lester: It got me more comfortable with the piece. I mean, I think it was just the exposure, which, "Exposure Performances." (chuckles) So.

NMC: Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed your symptoms of performance anxiety in the second Live Performance?

Lester: Yeah, because what gets my anxiety is the self-doubt and worrying about how people are going to judge me, or think of me, or whatever, you know, and by the second Live Performance, I was like, "People have already heard me live. There's the six Virtual Performances online, and this will be going online. Really it's just to show the same thing, and if not, how I can do it better, if not worse (chuckles) maybe." But you know, it was, it wasn't so much of a one-shot deal, you know.

NMC: Again, if you were to change pieces, would it have the same effect for a changed piece. Let's say now, you took some other piece of repertoire and you performed it live, would you feel more like Live Performance One, or more like Live Performance Two?

Lester: I don't know. Again, it would depend on the piece, because it all seems to do with comfort level. In certain pieces I just feel more comfortable with, and so. But because of this experience with all of this performing, it might be closer to two, because I'm getting more used to, you know, being in front of people. But I don't see these people (chuckles). But, so, it would probably be closer to two because it's, I'm learning how to deal with the anxiety more.

NMC: Okay. You received feedback from internet audience, or did that change how you approached the recording sessions?

Lester: Uh, yeah. I only got feedback from one person, and she was a professor at a university. And it was a complement on how I played the piece, and so that boosted my confidence, and it made me, "Oh, okay. So I can do this." So, um, and it was basically, she was complementing how, I think it was my articulation and how I played the piece, which is always one of the things that I'm more worried about, because, you know, I don't want to make a Baroque piece sound Romantic, you know. It's not supposed to, so.

NMC: Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Lester: I haven't actually thought of that. That, that's probably a good idea. You know. 'Cause then, you know, it forces me to perform it, and then I can actually listen to myself, and, you know, fix what I need to fix before the actual live performance.

NMC: DId you get to listen to any of your performances?

Lester: Um, well, there was a couple I listened to before I sent it, before I exported it.

NMC: So immediately after you recorded it?

Lester: Yeah. Immediately.

NMC: Okay. How did that affect you, listening to your performance?

Lester: Um, well it's weird, because it sounds different when you're playing it. And, I, like, there was a certain part I didn't realize I was rushing, and I was like, "Oh dear. I should probably look at that." So, it helps you, or it helped me, I should say, notice some things I was doing either inconsistently or inaccurately. But it also showed, like, there was some I wasn't sure if it sounded good, or, what-not, and I heard it and I was like, "Hey, that does sound pretty 'Dec.'" (slang for decent?) So, it, it helped both with bad things and good things.

NMC: Did the interview process or the act of filling out the forms change the way you approached the performances?

Lester: No. Or, I just performed and then I reflected back on how I performed to fill out the sheets, or to do the interview. I didn't worry about, "Oh, how am I gonna fill out this CPAI" or whatever. I just worried about that after the performance.

NMC: Did you feel more or less aware of your symptoms of anxiety after the interview?

Lester: Yeah, I'd say so. Like, I always noticed that I was anxious, and it would mess me up. But I didn't actually, like, try to focus on what the symptoms were. But during this it was like, "Wow. I really, well, this was happening and then this was happening which was causing this." So, yeah.

NMC: So did it, how did it affect your awareness of those symptoms?

Lester: Um, it made me more aware. I actually, like, was kind of paying attention to what was tight or what was happening, I guess I should say. 'Cause, you know, like, flushed face, and the shaking. And I almost feel like, I don't, I don't know if it was, I just never noticed it, or, but being more aware the first time, I think it was almost more so, like, they were more extreme than I was, I'd remembered in the past. 'Cause I was kind of thinking about the symptoms, and I don't know if it was just, I was being more aware of them, or if it made it worse because I was thinking about them. So,

NMC: In which one?

Lester: The first one. The first Live Performance. And so, for the second one, I tried not to think about it.

NMC: Okay. Imagine that you are a teacher, and one of your students is getting ready for a performance. Would you implement and approach similar to the process implemented in this study?

Lester: Similar, yeah. I would probably suggest they record themselves so they can listen to themselves. And, so, they can hear what it sounds like to the audience, because, from what I've noticed, it really does sound different from behind the keys to out in the audience. So.

NMC: What advice would you give to the student to make the process effective?

Lester: Like, you mean like to deal with anxiety?

NMC: Uh, to do the process effectively. For example, I might say, "Make sure you tie your shoes before you perform, each time." That would be a silly thing to say.

Lester: Right. (laughs). I don't know. You mean like the whole recording process, or the whole performing process?

NMC: Both.

Lester: Or, all of the above. So, make sure they do. Um, think about the piece before they play it. You know, try to stay calm and actually think. Don't go on autopilot. Like, that's what tends to get me sometimes. I, I, am I answering the question? I don't.

NMC: I'm, I'm asking more about, what would you advise them to do to make the recording sessions effective.

Lester: Oh, you mean like filling out the work sheet, kind of thing?

NMC: Any of that.

Lester: Um, well, I guess it would be to make recordings, multiple recordings. Not all in a row, but, you know, to give, like make, do a recording, and then maybe like a day later or so do another recording, so it's like, you know, you can hear your progress. To see, you know, especially to see if it's more steady, or whatever.

NMC: Would you change anything in the process to make it more effective?

Lester: No. I can't think of anything.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything that you would like to add concerning what you've done in the study so far?

Lester: No. Um, well I guess, the one thing with the Live Performance is, it was almost weird, 'cause you know it's like, especially for the first one, I was like, I was feeling very nervous, and like, there was like seven people in the audience. I was like, "oh." But then you know I was, I still messed up and I was like, "Yay." I think it would almost be more effective if it was a larger audience, because it would be so much more of an extreme, from going to a recording with no one to the live audience with maybe, like twenty people or something. But like, even with that few people, you're still being put up in the focal point of the entire room with all the lights on you and all these chairs facing toward you. And people clap when you go on stage, so, you know, it is a live performance, but, I think it probably would be more effective if there was more people in the audience. Which, I know is hard, especially when, you know, it's a thirty minute recital. So.

NMC: Okay. Anything else you would like to add?

Lester: It was fun, and I'm glad I got to do it. (chuckles)

NMC: Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications or corrections?

Lester: Sure.

NMC: Alright. We are done.

Lester: Woo-hoo.

Olivia, VP

November 3, 2009

(The first ten minutes of the interview was not captured by the digital recorder. The researcher will reconstruct the interview from notes made during the interview, and Olivia will be reading the transcript to offer clarifications, corrections, or amplifications.)

The interview began concerning daily life anxieties. Olivia reported that concerns over arriving to work, class, or important appointments often give her a sense of anxiety. She relates that she feels nervous and fearful that she will arrive late and suffer negative consequences such as being fired, being reprimanded, or missing important information in class.

She relates that she experiences some internal dialogue that is typically centered around planning with her to do items and what she needs to accomplish to be ready to arrive on time. She reports that she does not typically experience dissociation nor loss of focus or concentration.

When talking about her physical symptoms, Olivia reports that she carries a lot of tension in her jaw and sometimes finds that it is clenched. She also experiences tension in her neck and shoulders which she notices when she tries to move. On many occasions she demonstrated raised shoulders. When asked if her shoulders feel as though they are locked in position, she readily agreed and reported that sensation. She also mentioned that when she recognizes the tension and tries to move to free up the shoulders, in some extreme cases she experiences discomfort and pain. Olivia reports some minor tension in her upper back, but nothing in her chest. She notices elevated heart rate and more rapid respiration, but also mentions that it may have something to do with her increased activity as she assembles things to get ready to go. Olivia reported that her stomach sometimes feels tense in this situations, and depending on whether she has eaten recently, will also sometimes feel a little sick or nauseated. Olivia reports no symptoms of anxiety in her lower back, legs, knees or feet.

In solo performances, Olivia generally feels many of the same symptoms. Mentally, she reports that sometimes her mind will wander to what the audiences is thinking about her or her performance. Sometimes her mind will wander to completely extraneous matters that have little to do with the music, audience, or her performance. When asked if she ever experiences dissociation, she reports that she was very familiar with the experience, especially as a high school performer. She related that when in high school, she would sit down to perform and depend entirely on finger memory, and would hope that her fingers would do their tasks while she watched. She draws a comparison with how she plays now, and reports that she is much more attentive and present with the music as a result of her training and education as a music major. She reports that her professor has helped her know more about the music, the structure of the music, as well

as specific memory strategies. She reports that she now coaches herself through the performance while she is playing, thinking about specific notes that are coming up or specific music ideas. Olivia says that she no longer feels the same dissociation in performance as she did as a high school pianist because she is more attentive to the music as she is performing it.

Olivia says she can expect a typical anxiety profile before a performance. She says she normally begins to feel anticipatory anxiety about 10 minutes before the performance. This anxiety peaks just before it is time to perform. She then reports that in the first 30 seconds or so of the first part of a piece, she feels generally calm and confident. After this initial period, sometimes she will catch herself thinking about her situation or the audience instead of attending to the music she is playing at the moment. These moments of realization sometimes are enough to cause her to begin to second-guess what is coming next and can sometimes lead to a missed note or a memory slip.

Physically, in a solo performance, Olivia reports that she thinks about her face in performance. She has heard that it looks like she is frowning while playing. She attributes this to extreme tension in her jaw, that she is clenching her jaw muscles tightly. She also thinks that the effort of concentration might be visible in her face, and that this perhaps looks like a frown. Olivia also says that she notices that her shoulders and neck are tense, but usually not until after she feels them relax. In other words, she is not aware of the tension as it builds, but only when it reaches a point that she is forced to command them to relax. She reports some shakiness and jitteriness in her hands which sometimes causes a missed note. She describes her stomach as feeling "fluttery," a sensation that is not exactly tension, but something akin to tension. She reports no tension in her lower back. Sometimes her legs make shake a little bit, but reports no symptoms in her knees or feet.

Olivia has an established pre-performance routine that she adheres to in order to help her deal with anticipatory anxiety. She likes to play through her piece a few times before the performance. In the ten minutes prior to a performance, she prefers to talk to people or work off nervous energy by pacing and moving around. Olivia also prays prior to a performance.

(At this point, I noticed the recorder was not recording. We paused for a moment to correct the issue, then resumed the interview.

NMC: Okay. I'll reconstruct what I can of that. Uh, let me quickly recap kind of what we talked about. In your daily life, sometimes getting to work, you can get anxious and that causes you sometimes to feel nervous or fearful that you'll miss things.

Olivia: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Um, we've mentioned some specific symptoms of anxiety that you have. Your jaw can get tight. You get tense in your shoulders and neck, like they're locked in position. Your upper back kinda has the same thing. Your heart rate and your

breathing are elevated because you're walking around really quick trying to get stuff done.

Olivia: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Your stomach can get tense, and then maybe even sick to your stomach if you've just eaten. Nothing in your lower back, legs, knees or feet.

Olivia: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: And then, in performance in general, you like to, you start feeling performance anxiety about five minutes before you perform, and just prior to performance, about thirty seconds, sometimes you feel the symptoms come back.

Olivia: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: But then, about thirty seconds after you begin, those moments are really calm. Is that correct so far?

Olivia: Mm-hmm. (affirmative)

NMC: Um, Mental symptoms. You used to get really dissociated from the music in high school.

Olivia: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: That, um, you would kind of let your hands start going and you would just watch, and be along for the ride and say, "I hope they do it right."

Olivia: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: But now, after you've had some more training and more education, you are more attentive to the music as it's happening. You're more present. Cues about notes, about what's coming up next.

Olivia: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Um, when your mind wanders, it typically wanders to what the audience is thinking about or how they're judging the performance.

Olivia: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: But it can also wander to random things, uh, that aren't connected to the performance either. Um, sometimes when you're thinking about performing to an audience, rather than thinking about the music, you get nervous. Is that correct? Did I say that right?

Olivia: When I think about performing to an audience?

NMC: When you think about what you're doing.

Olivia: Yes. When I think that I'm, yeah, in front of an audience. And not just in the practice room or something. That's when I can become nervous.

NMC: Okay. And your physical symptoms. Your face, sometimes you feel like it looks like you're frowning, because you're really clenching your jaw tight.

Olivia: mm-hmm. mm-hmm. (affirmative)

NMC: Your shoulders and neck get really, really tense, and almost painful, would you say?

Olivia: It depends. Usually I'm moving them enough that they are forced to be somewhat loose, but if I'm nervous enough, yeah, they can become painful.

NMC: And, you describe that tension as being locked.

Olivia: Yeah, mm-hmm.

NMC: Uh. You don't feel much in your upper back or chest?

Olivia: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: But your heart rate does what?

Olivia: It's accelerated.

NMC: And your breathing?

Olivia: I definitely breathe faster. Yeah.

NMC: Okay. What happens in your hands whenever you're performing?

Olivia: Uh, sometimes they start trembling a little. Shaking. Usually not terribly. Just enough that when I'm done I realize they're doing it.

NMC: How about, uh, your stomach. You mention that it is "fluttery." What's that like?

Olivia: Uh, It just feels kind of shaky. It's a really strange sensation. It's just...

NMC: Hard to describe.

Olivia: Yeah. It's kind of shaky, kind of, almost, kind of cramped a little. But not painful. It's just all of this... It has to do with my heart rate, too, I think. I just, it kind of, everything in there is kind of like "yuhyueah."

NMC: Do you feel any symptoms in your lower back when you're performing?

Olivia: No. Not usually.

NMC: How about in your legs or your knees?

Olivia: Um, sometimes my legs can be a little shaky as well, right beforehand.

NMC: Do your legs shake during the performance or just before?

Olivia: Um, usually not during the performance unless I'm really nervous. Sometimes they can almost shake in a performance. But yeah, before sometimes, if I'm really nervous they can shake as well.

NMC: Okay.

Olivia: Or I just have a lot of nervous energy, and I feel like walking.

NMC: How about in your feet? Do you feel any symptoms in your feet.

Olivia: Um, no.

NMC: Okay. Do you typically take any steps to reduce your symptoms of anxiety when you're performing solo?

Olivia: Well I usually beforehand will play it maybe ten minutes, five minutes, at the most before the performance. And then usually I will, when I'm in the green room, walk around. Or just talk to people, just. I don't think about it at all. I just completely take my mind off the performance. And then, once I'm back stage about ready to go, I start focussing about what I'm going to do, and I don't think about the audience. I just think about my piece. And my, ... what's the question again?

NMC: That.. The steps you take to reduce your symptoms of anxiety.

Olivia: Yeah. Yeah. That's basically what I do. And then during the performance I just try to stay focused.

NMC: Does this pre-performance routine... Is that pretty consistent?

Olivia: Mm-hmm. It's very consistent.

NMC: So you like to run through the piece a couple of times.

Olivia: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: And then distract yourself, or not think about the performance.

Olivia: mm-hmm. Yeah.

NMC: And then just before you perform you...

Olivia: Mm-hmm exactly.

NMC: Are there any rehearsal strategies that you use, specifically to help you with performance anxiety?

Olivia: umm. I try to play for other people and in seminar. And when I'm in the practice room, I let myself feel what it would feel like if there were an audience in there. I try to let, to make myself become really nervous, and then just sit down and play my piece.

NMC: Okay, so that kind of "pretend" performance is kind of like the Rehearsal Performance?

Olivia: Mm-hmm. Yes

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific practice strategies that you use?

Olivia: Umm. I'm not sure if I really, if I really do, except just to have lots of spots, memory points where I can start. And then I don't worry so much. I'm just like, "Well, if I completely mess that up, I can just jump forward to this." And so that takes away a little anxiety knowing that I'm gonna definitely be able to get through it, at least.

NMC: Okay. Do you implement any kinds of relaxation strategies before you play?

Olivia: Mm. Not really, except just trying to walk around the room and swing my arms, and talk, and stuff.

NMC: Do you feel that's working off excess energy?

Olivia: Yeah. That's what it feels like. It feels like I have just tons of energy right before I perform..

NMC: How about prayer or meditation? Do you pray or meditate before you perform?

Olivia: I pray before I perform. I just usually ask God to help me play alright (chuckles) and not make a fool of myself. (laughs)

NMC: So what sort of things do you typically pray for?

Olivia: Oh, just that, I'll perform as well as I'm supposed to, or that I'll at least be able to perform well. Um, that I, that it just won't be something where I did all this practicing and it just comes out for nothing, in the performance. Just that I'll be able to show how hard I've worked.

NMC: Is there anything you do during a performance to help you with performance anxiety?

Olivia: Um. Basically what we've talked about before with just trying to remain focused on the piece. Uh, maybe trying to take some deep breaths, like in moments of like, sometimes pieces have little moments of breaks, and just like, trying to relax there. But yeah, my biggest strategy I think would be to just to remain really focussed on the piece.

NMC: Okay. Let's now consider specifically the Rehearsal Performance that you did for this study. What were the mental symptoms of anxiety in that Rehearsal Performance.

Olivia: Um, I was worried that it was, for the Rehearsal Performance, I was worried, it was hard for me not to, or it was hard to think of it as a performance. But, I still was able to create some nerves, and pretend there was an audience there. But I was mostly worried because the piece, uh, because the piece had been going, I'd played it earlier that day, and it had been going terribly. And so I was nervous that I really wanted to do really well. But, I didn't. (laughs) So it didn't really, I got pretty nervous in the middle of it.

NMC: Did you have any moments of internal dialogue in the Rehearsal Performance?

Olivia: I went, "Oh man. Maybe I shouldn't have practiced it so many times, or maybe I should have practiced it more. I should have done something different."

NMC: Do you have an specific emotions tied to the Rehearsal Performance?

Olivia: Um, a little frustration. Anger. I just like, "I can believe I botched that."

NMC: Any sort of, again that feeling of being outside of the performance while it's happening?

Olivia: A little bit. It's easy for me to do that when I'm in a less, well, less stressful. I can tend to let my mind wander if I'm just, if it's not quite as stressful of a performance.

NMC: Why do you think that is?

Olivia: Mmm. Because I don't feel as concerned. I don't feel like I have to watch every note, be really careful. I just kind of let myself go, and then. Some, um then, sometimes when I just play pieces through. Like that happened right in the middle. And then I messed up (laughs).

NMC: Okay. And your focus and concentration. Did your mind wander in the Rehearsal Performance?

Olivia: Yeah.

NMC: Would you say it wandered more than in the Live Performance or less?

Olivia: More.

NMC: More. To what things did it wander?

Olivia: I don't remember.

NMC: You mentioned that in a live performance, typically your mind wanders to what the audience is thinking.

Olivia: mm-hmm

NMC: Uh, what kinds of things were you thinking about that were not about the music, in your Rehearsal Performance?

Olivia: It could have been anything. It was probably something random that had happened earlier that day. That can happen a lot. I'll start thinking about things that have happened during the day, or things that are going to happen later.

NMC: Okay. So this is more of a random mind wandering than a specific situation that you're reacting to.

Olivia: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. What were your physical symptoms during the Rehearsal Performance.

Olivia: Well I got some kind of butterflies in the stomach. I didn't feel that tense though. It was mostly just, I felt a little weird in the stomach. Kind of the same feelings I get before I perform. But not as bad.

NMC: So not as much, you mention your jaw clenches, typically. Did that happen in the Rehearsal Performance.

Olivia: No. I don't think so.

NMC: How about the shoulders and neck? Did you have the tension.

Olivia: No. I didn't notice that.

NMC: Didn't notice it.

Olivia: It was just mostly the stomach.

NMC: How about your heart rate and your breathing?

Olivia: Yeah, that was accelerated.

NMC: As much as a typical performance or less than.

Olivia: Um, not as much.

NMC: And your arms and hands? Did you have any of the jitteriness.

Olivia: Afterwards I noticed just a little bit.

NMC: Stomach, did it have the fluttery feeling.

Olivia: Mm-hmm.

NMC: And your lower back? Anything there?

Olivia: No.

NMC: How about in your legs or knees?

Olivia: mm-mm. (negative)

NMC: Feet?

Olivia: Nope.

NMC: Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety in the Rehearsal Performance?

Olivia: Um, not really. I just played through it, and I tried not to think about the performance that was coming. I think that may have been, I felt less that there was an actual performance here, but I felt like, "This is what my performance is gonna sound like when I get out there." Kind of thing. And so, I just, if I felt real anxious I stopped thinking about playing for an audience, in you know, fifteen minutes.

NMC: Did you go through any kind of pre-performance routine before your rehearsal performance?

Olivia: No. I just played. I was just practicing warming up, and then...

NMC: Did you pray?

Olivia: Um, I may have. But I don't think so.

NMC: Alright. Now let's consider the specific performance Sunday afternoon. The Live Performance. Can you recall any specific mental symptoms of anxiety you may have felt in the Live Performance?

Olivia: Um, I had a little anxiety because, um, there was a person in the audience who I knew, which I hadn't expected. I hadn't seen him for like a long time. So, I felt a little anxiety because I was like, "Oh, I want to do well. I want to play well." More than if it were just a group of complete strangers.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any internal dialogue?

Olivia: Um. I definitely had some during the performance, because I was just trying to stay focused. I had a hard time focusing. Um, especially, I had some dialogue concerning if my piece, if I'd even be able to play it well. Because I'd played it poorly, like, the five other times that I had played it that day, all of them had been bad, so. (chuckles) I was like, "Oh, we're just gonna have to get through it."

NMC: You said you had a problem focusing?

Olivia: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Um, was that mind wandering problem focussing, or just not knowing what to focus on?

Olivia: It was mind wandering. And, it seemed like earlier in my rehearsal when I had been practicing that when my mind... Like if I started focusing, I seemed to mess up more. So I was like, "I'm not sure what to do. Should I try to do that?" Or, so I was a little bit, I was unsure about...

NMC: Do you think it's possible to be overly focused on things?

Olivia: Yeah.

NMC: What kinds of, what would be a side effect of being too focused?

Olivia: Um, depends on what you're focusing on, but in this context? One thing that happens if I focus too much is I start thinking I'm forgetting what I already know. I start, like, I have memory points, but I don't have every single note in my piece memorized in my head. And I can't see every single note on the page in my head. So

some of it's automatic, it has to be my fingers that just get me through those moments. So, I think that when I become too focused, what happens is I start thinking, "I need to know all the names of these notes," kind of idea. And so I start screwing up because what I usually left to my fingers, I'm now trying to figure out in my head. And so, and then I, before you know it, I've just completely lost...

NMC: It's an interesting balance, isn't it? Between, you mentioned in your high school days, depending almost completely on that finger memory, and just being along for the ride. And now, with more education and training, knowing that you actually do have to attend to things as they're happening...

Olivia: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: ...but not too much!

Olivia: Yeah. (laughs) It's true.

NMC: Um, did you have any specific emotions tied to the performance?

Olivia: Um, well. While I did experience performance anxiety, it wasn't that. I actually felt pretty, uh, carefree about the performance because I was just like, "Well, I'm not getting graded for this." (laughs) "It's just a performance. There's like seven people out there." You know, they're the only people who are going to know how bad I mess up if I do. So I did feel, I didn't feel quite as scared as if it were a jury or something. Or. so.

NMC: What it is about a jury that is more anxiety provoking than this performance?

Olivia: I just get one chance to get an 'A'. (laughs) And so, like, it doesn't matter how well. Maybe he takes into account all my lessons. I don't know. But, it's possible that if he doesn't, and if you guys just go off of the performance, then you know, this could be my grade. Right here. Even though like, I may have sounded wonderful in the practice room five minutes ago, like if I mess this up, there could be consequences in my GPA.

NMC: Are there performance situation where you're not getting graded that you're still anxious about it?

Olivia: Um. I was anxious about my senior recital, and generals. I usually get a little more anxious about. And it's because there are people. I know the people out there, and I want to play really well.

NMC: So is audience size a main factor?

Olivia: Yeah. It is.

NMC: Do you... just guessing, at about what audience size do you think your anxiety typically starts to kick in?

Olivia: Um. Well, definitely the generals. If it's about the size of a general, or maybe a little less, that's when I start getting some more nerves. And also it depends on who I think is out there. Because in my senior recital, what made me less nervous is there were a whole bunch of people out there who had never studied music. You know, if I messed up they'd have no idea. They'd still think it was wonderful. But, with a general recital, everybody there studies music, pretty much. So they'll all know. Especially if they play piano.

NMC: Let's talk about your physical symptoms in the Live Performance. Did you have the jaw tension in this Live Performance.

Olivia: Yes. Mm-hmm

NMC: Did you feel the tightness in your shoulders and in your neck?

Olivia: Yeah.

NMC: Was it better or worse, or about what you would normally expect?

Olivia: About what I expected.

NMC: How about in your upper back or chest?

Olivia: No. Nothing.

NMC: Heart rate? Breathing?

Olivia: Heart rate was up. Stomach was fluttery.

NMC: Arms and hands?

Olivia: My hands were shaky. Maybe the arms a little bit.

NMC: Okay. How about in your lower back.

Olivia: Uh, I didn't notice anything.

NMC: And your legs and knees?

Olivia: mm-mm (negative)

NMC: How about in your feet?

Olivia: Nope.

NMC: For the Live Performance, did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety?

Olivia: Um, I did what I normally do. I played it before hand. I talked to people. I ate a brownie. And, um, I didn't have quite enough time backstage. I should have gone backstage a little bit sooner, because about the time I went backstage, [the performer before me] was just finishing.

M I'll fix it (regarding the use of a proper name in the response above.)

Olivia: So.

NMC: Okay. Um, any specific rehearsal strategies prior to or in preparation for the Live Performance.

Olivia: I didn't do my typical rehearsal strategy. Usually I play my piece, well, sometimes I play it a lot. But this time, I kept, I played it, I came too early, and so I ended up playing my piece a lot more than I had intended. And so, it seemed like the more I played it, the worse it got.

NMC: Uh, what's the ideal number of times? Or what would be the ideal experience in playing before a performance.

Olivia: Maybe three times at the most.

NMC: Do you do them sort of the same way? At performance tempo?

Olivia: Um, yeah. And I usually try to get in to a different piano each time, so that I'm ready to take on whatever the piano stage throws at me.

NMC: Okay. Did you do any relaxation strategies prior to performing?

Olivia: Um, I walked around a lot. I talked to people. Um,

NMC: So working off that excess energy?

Olivia: Yes. Energy. Yep.

NMC: Did you pray before you performed?

Olivia: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: What sort of things did you pray for?

Olivia: Oh, that I would play alright. And, um, that it, that it wouldn't be, horrible. Something similar to, "Lord help me." (laughs)

NMC: Okay. And did you do anything during the performance to help you with your performance anxiety?

Olivia: I worked hard at keeping my face normal even when I made mistakes, because then people really know. Um, I tried to, well, er a couple times I tried to relax my shoulders. Um

NMC: So, when you relax your shoulders that's when you say, "Relax," and you just...

Olivia: Yeah. I just do.

NMC: Do you do that at the very beginning of the piece, or is there specific places in the piece where you do that, or is it just as it occurs to you?

Olivia: Um, It's a little... I did it at the beginning when I was first out there and sat down. I did it within the first fifteen seconds of the piece. I couldn't say if there were particular places I had planned out, or something, that I was going to relax, but yeah, as close to as when it occurred to me. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Olivia: Um, yes. There were a couple of spots... There was one spot for sure where I lost track of exactly where I was, because I stopped thinking about what I was doing and started thinking about what was happening out there with the audience. And, um, yeah.

NMC: Okay. Um, did it affect your memory, or your musicianship or...?

Olivia: It affected my memory.

NMC: Does the anxiety ever help your performance? Give you better focus or give your performance edge or vitality?

Olivia: If I'm playing a fast piece it does. It can, it can actually, it seems like sometimes when I'm playing fast pieces, I actually play the faster parts, or the parts that are more virtuoso, I actually play them... A lot of times I'll play them better unless my hands are really shaky. But it seems like I'm able to play them with greater energy and speed if I wanted to. A lot of times I have to rein myself in so I don't speed up, but I feel like I could play them a lot faster than I normally could.

NMC: Okay. Let's now consider the Virtual Performance, and that was the recording session we just had.

Olivia: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Did you have any mental symptoms of anxiety?

Olivia: Um, before hand, like the last ten minutes before I played, I had some, I had some uh, nerves that, "Oh, people are going to be hearing this. I only get one shot at this," kind of thing. If it were a recording where I could just do it over and over, of course it wouldn't be a big deal, but you know, since I only get one shot at it, I was a little nervous about screwing it up.

NMC: Did you have any internal dialog about the performance?

Olivia: Um, right before hand I was like, "Well, just relax. It's going to be fine. Nobody's really gonna care that much. They don't even know your name." (chuckles)

NMC: How about any specific emotions tied to the performance?

Olivia: Um, a little frustrated because it didn't go as well as I wanted.

NMC: What things happened that were frustrating?

Olivia: Um, the main thing was I made the same, same, I made mistakes in the same two places that I made on Sunday. So, it's also enlightening, because I'm now knowing, "Okay, I need to work on these spots."

NMC: Okay. Did you feel like your focus or your concentration was affected?

Olivia: Yeah, when I made the mistakes for sure. Before then, I felt a lot better, actually, than I did on Sunday. I felt a lot more focused, and it felt a lot more, honestly, like a practice room, because I was alone.

NMC: Did your mind wander during the performance?

Olivia: Not that much.

NMC: Okay. Let's talk a little bit about your physical symptoms, again we'll just go from head to toes. In your head and face?

Olivia: I think my jaw was a little tight.

NMC: More or less so than in the Live Performance?

Olivia: Less.

NMC: Less. How about in your shoulders and your neck?

Olivia: I had some tension.

NMC: More or less than the Live Performance?

Olivia: I'd say a little less.

NMC: A little less than the Live Performance?

Olivia: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: More or less than the Rehearsal Performance?

Olivia: More than the Rehearsal.

NMC: Okay. How about in your upper back, chest?

Olivia: Um, nope.

NMC: No. Heart rate? Breathing?

Olivia: It wasn't up that much, actually.

NMC: So not as bad as the Live Performance. Was it about the same or less than your Rehearsal Performance?

Olivia: It was about the same as the Rehearsal.

NMC: Arms, hands?

Olivia: Those were shaky.

NMC: Shaky. Uh, about the same, more, or less than the Live Performance?

Olivia: About the same.

NMC: Same question with the Rehearsal Performance. About the same, more, or less?

Olivia: Uh, it was probably more.

NMC: More shaky than the Rehearsal Performance.

Olivia: Yeah.

NMC: Um, your stomach?

Olivia: Um, it was fluttery right before hand. Not while I was playing. Well, it might have been, but I didn't notice it. It was not enough that I noticed it.

NMC: How about in your lower back?

Olivia: Nope.

NMC: No. Legs, knees, feet?

Olivia: No. Nope.

NMC: Uh, did you take any specific steps to reduce your anxiety before the Virtual Performance?

Olivia: I tried to do as similar to what I do with normal performances. I played my piece, and then I went out in the hall, and um. I didn't have quite as much nervous energy, because I didn't feel like pacing or anything. I was able to just sit down. But, I did talk to people, and...

NMC: So your pre-performance routine was mostly the same.

Olivia: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

NMC: Did you, so you did do a rehearsal before you performed?

Olivia: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Um, did you pray before you performed?

Olivia: Yes.

NMC: What kind of things did you pray for?

Olivia: About the same as what I said at the Live Performance.

NMC: Okay. Did you do anything during the performance to help you with your performance anxiety?

Olivia: Um, mostly just trying to relax, you know, all over. And, um, just think about the piece and not worry about what it's going to sound like.

NMC: Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety might have affected your performance?

Olivia: Just trying to remember. There was, um, a moment when I was thinking about, oh, some of the musicality of the piece, and I kind of forgot something [my professor]

had said that I should work on in trying to do this. And I had gotten past that point in the piece. And I went, "Oh no. I forgot to do that." So that might have affected it. Um, it, it was also affected a little bit by thinking about, oh, what it's going to sound like in the recording.

NMC: Do you feel like performance anxiety helped you focus, concentrate, or aided your performance in any way?

Olivia: Uh, today I did. Today I felt like it made me, it made me feel more serious about playing than I would have been in a practice room. It made me more serious about trying to do as well as I can. You know, in a practice room you can mess up, and it's fine. You can just do it again. But this one, it helped me just play, a little better I think than I would have.

NMC: Okay. Most of these descriptions have been given from the perspective of the performer. Imagine now that you are a teacher, and a student of yours is trying to describe how they're feeling. What kinds of descriptive words would you need to hear to truly understand them?

Olivia: mm. If they're able to use words like, you're talking about performance anxiety type words?

NMC: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Olivia: If they use things like 'butterflies in my stomach' and things like that, I think I'd be able to understand better what's going on. Um, they'd have to tell me what they're thinking about, I think, also. For me to really know, is this just some physical symptom they get because they're nervous, or is there something that's really causing them to be very anxious about this. Maybe some other time they performed and like, were really embarrassed. Or who knows what. I'd have to know, kind of.

NMC: So what kinds of questions would you ask the student to help them explain their feelings?

Olivia: Um, well I'd probably be asking them questions about, um, their past experiences in performing. And um, I'd probably want to know if there had been times where they've completely messed up, or if they're, uh, or if they overall have had much experience performing. I would kind of want know their background a little bit, where they're coming from. You know, to see if this is like just my recital that I'm giving for my students that they're nervous about or if this is something in general. They just generally do very poorly with like performances. And then, that would help me know how I can help them.

NMC: Okay. Um, would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications, amplifications, or corrections.

Olivia: Sure.

NMC: It takes generally about four or five times longer than an interview to transcribe an interview, and I have several of these to do. So it may be next week sometime before they're all done.

Olivia: Okay. Well if takes longer, that's fine to.

NMC: And we did miss the first part of this interview, and I'll do my best to reconstruct it. I'll include that in the transcript.

Olivia: I think that's the main reason I want to go over it to make sure I didn't give you the wrong idea or something.

NMC: Okay. So I'll try to do that and let you have it to look over. And that will do it. Thank you for your time.

Olivia: Great!

Olivia, LP2

November 14, 2009

NMC: Olivia! You've now performed in two Live Performances.

Olivia: Yes.

NMC: We're going to talk about those, but first I wanted to ask if you wanted to know how you scored on the various surveys.

Olivia: Sure.

NMC: Okay. On the K-MPAI, and that was the diagnostic inventory, you scored a -18. Now, a score of 0 would mean you would be right in the middle of the responses, that anxiety, that you were not more prone to anxiety than the average, nor less prone to anxiety than the average. A score of -18 means that you are less likely to be affected by performance anxiety in your performances. What do you think of that score?

Olivia: I think that's reasonable.

NMC: That's kind of what you thought?

Olivia: I used to be so much more nervous, anxious with recitals, but, just all the performing I've done here has really helped me, just to calm down, and the world goes on if you mess up.

NMC: So that's just throughout your college experience?

Olivia: Yes.

NMC: Okay. And then your CPAI scores came out this way. Your lowest score was a 29, and I think the lowest score possible was a 22. So your low score was a 29. Your high score was a 56. Your low score was for the fourth exposure performance and the fifth exposure performance: they were tied. Your high score was for the first exposure performance. Your Live Performance One was a 52, and your Live Performance 2 was a 50. So do you have any thoughts, and you can kind of see them there, do you have any thoughts on the way they panned out?

Olivia: No.

NMC: Does anything surprise you, or?

Olivia: No. The more I played here in recordings, the less nervous I became. And, I still had a bit of performance nerves, the second time I played in the recital, so.

NMC: Okay. You've performed in two live performance situations. Compare how you felt in during Live Performance 1 and how you felt during Live Performance 2.

Olivia: Um, Live Performance 1 I was a lot more concerned about, um, my memory, and my ability to play the piece well, because I had been struggling there. So that made me more nervous. And then in the second one, I was less nervous, a lot less nervous I thought, because, because I felt like I knew the piece better, but when I actually got out there, it didn't go as well as I thought, and I started getting more nervous.

NMC: Did one performance feel better than the other?

Olivia: The second one, definitely.

NMC: Okay. Why was the second one better?

Olivia: Well, I played better, and I had been playing better for the last week. I'd had a lot more experience playing my piece, so I felt less scared of messing up.

NMC: Okay. Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different in Live Performance 2?

Olivia: I would say so. They were different because I was, I felt more confident. Um, uh, that was really the main difference I think is, I felt overall more confident, but I still had some nerves when I ended up actually being out there and playing.

NMC: Comparing Live Performance 2 to a typical performance.

Olivia: Well that's usually...

NMC: About the same?

Olivia: Yeah, about the same. Live performance One was worse because I had a lot more issues with my memory.

NMC: You mentioned in the first interview that sometimes your mind wanders, sometimes to musical things and sometimes to things that are not in the music. Did that happen in the second live performance?

Olivia: Yeah, because there was someone in the audience who I knew and I wanted to play really well. So I kept thinking about that as I was playing.

NMC: And this was in the second performance?

Olivia: Mm-hmm. It happened in the first one, too, but this person, I wanted to play even more, as well as I could.

NMC: Okay. Why did you feel like you wanted to play better for this person.

Olivia: Um, (chuckles) because I didn't particularly like them. (both laugh) Being honest!

NMC: So it was a "Show you!"

Olivia: So it was more like I, yeah.

NMC: Okay. Fantastic.

Olivia: (laughs)

NMC: How about the about the first person?

Olivia: The first person, I knew them and I liked them, and that's why I wanted to play well.

NMC: So you were just surprised to see them. But, wow, that's interesting.

Olivia: (chuckles)

NMC: How about physical symptoms. Were the physical symptoms different in Live Performance 2?

Olivia: Um, yes. I was less, I felt less tension. I felt less nervous except this. The only symptoms I noticed that were the same were my hands trembled.

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Olivia: And maybe even more the second time.

NMC: So the hands trembled a little bit more in the second performance?

Olivia: Yeah, I think they might have, than the first.

NMC: Why do you think that is?

Olivia: I'm not sure, except maybe that that's just where I happened to channel all those nervous stuff was in the hands this time. A lot of times I get just slight trembling, not as bad as this time. Um, usually it's more of a shoulder tension that gets me.

NMC: You mentioned a jaw tension affects you a lot. You mentioned that for the first performance. Was that in the second performance, too?

Olivia: Not as, not as much.

NMC: Not as much. How about the face tension, or the holding of the face in a certain...

Olivia: I might have been. I wasn't really thinking about it, but, it's not like I was so tense that afterwards I felt it all relax. It was, if I was tense, it wasn't horrible.

NMC: You also mentioned that your shoulders are tense, to the point that you know that they're, later on you recognize that they're kind of frozen in one spot.

Olivia: That wasn't the case in the second one.

NMC: Heart rate and breathing, you also mentioned those for the first one.

Olivia: I didn't feel like I was breathing as fast, for the second one, or it was quite, I wasn't quite as nervous overall, I felt.

NMC: And you also mentioned that in addition to the shakiness in your arms and hands, sometimes you get it in the legs and feet?

Olivia: Yeah, I didn't this time.

NMC: In general, would you say your physical symptoms were more or less in the second live performance.

Olivia: I'd say less, overall.

NMC: Less. Why do you think that is?

Olivia: I think it's because I, I felt more in control of the situation. I felt like I knew the piece, and I had, oh, backup, more backup plan spots that I could go to, or if I messed up I could just playing here. I felt more prepared overall, like I could do it pretty well.

NMC: Okay. You've now performed in several virtual performances. Can you compare your first virtual performance with your last virtual performance.

Olivia: The first one I was, I had um, almost all the same symptoms of anxiety that I had for my first live performance. Uh, I just felt shaky hands, lots of nerves, my stomach felt weird. Um, shoulder tension, pretty much all of the above except I don't think my legs were shaking.

NMC: And if fact, your first exposure performance, was the highest rated of all the performances.

Olivia: Mm-hmm.

NMC: It was even higher, had a higher score than the first live performance.

Olivia: Yeah.

NMC: But, it had, your virtual performance, which was the first one you did, and we had the interview after that, was lower than the first exposure performance. Why do you think this one performance seemed to generate the anxiety it did?

Olivia: I think it was because I was distracted, thinking about, wondering who was going to be listening to this, and what they were going to think. I was pretty nervous thinking about different professors, or teachers listening to this. Even though I knew they wouldn't know my name, it gave me a lot of nerves. And then, I had a big memory slip, pretty sure I did. So that kind of made me go, "Ahh! Kind of nervous."

NMC: Does a big memory slip make you notice symptoms of anxiety more, or does it actually make those symptoms worse?

Olivia: A little bit of both, I'd say. 'Cause I feel for, I feel like I'm kind of, maybe I could mess up more, maybe I'm not quite as in control of this as I thought i was. So that makes me nervous. But, usually right and then, I always seem to, when I have a memory slip, come to a moment where, I, it feels like a huge pause to me, even though there probably isn't really much of a pause. And I always notice right at that pause that my hands are like, "Oh." Shaking. So I do notice, if I have a memory slip, that's when I see, "Oh, I'm more nervous than I thought."

NMC: So in that first exposure performance, was it, did you feel more nervous going into the performance, or was it after something happened that it would have made you categorize that as the highest anxiety performance?

Olivia: Um, I think it was after something happened.

NMC: Okay. What changed in the last performance. How would you compare the two?

Olivia: By then, I was like, "Well, they've heard me four other times. I mean, I can't do much worse than I did, worse than I did the first time." So, when I, and I was kind of used to the room and my surroundings. I was kind of used to just hitting record and figuring out how to just, kind of tune out the fact there might, there will be people playing, or listening to me playing. So, when I played I just felt pretty confident that I could do it well.

NMC: Okay. You received feedback from the audience. Did that affect the way you approached the recording sessions?

Olivia: It made me think about how I could play the piece more musically more than anything. It made me, it actually encouraged me because it made me think that, "Oh,

they're not out there just judging me, and thinking about how bad I am, but they actually want to help me improve." And, that they're giving me feedback is actually pretty helpful. So. It made me feel a little better, actually.

NMC: Your mental symptoms of anxiety, compare them from the first virtual performance to the last virtual performance.

Olivia: Um, I definitely was thinking ahead more about the first one than I did the last one. I was thinking about making sure I had enough time to practice, so. Preparing myself to, in a sense, give a performance.

NMC: So you were giving more time for the last performances?

Olivia: For the first one.

NMC: For the first one.

Olivia: Than I did the last. The last one actually, I might have played the piece once that day, and not even very soon before I did it. So.

NMC: So there was fewer preparatory concerns for the last one.

Olivia: Yeah, I. Yeah.

NMC: Why is that?

Olivia: Well each time I played my performance got better, and so I was, I had been practicing the piece more carefully to make sure I knew. It was just mostly memory with this piece. So, just to make sure I knew the memory, since the technique and other things were pretty easy, actually.

NMC: How about the physical symptoms of anxiety. How were they different in the last performance from the first performance?

Olivia: The last performance, I felt like I didn't have any symptoms, except for, I don't even know if I had trembling hands. I just hardly felt nervous at all. In the first one, I had a lot of symptoms. Tenseness in my face and shoulders, to shaking in my hands and my stomach feeling kind of a little sick. Lot of nervous energy.

NMC: Do you attribute the change to the confidence in your memory, or to, that the process itself no longer felt that special?

Olivia: Uh, some of both. And I kind of had the sense that the more I was playing it, the better I was going to get. Just actually being in here and playing, I just kind of got used to doing it. And so, it wasn't such a big deal. And, I'd, I had just kept

progressively getting better. Each, at least it seemed that was to me, each recording session, so.

NMC: What was getting better with the performances?

Olivia: I was having less mistakes, and I was starting to be able to play more musically and not worry so much about making a mistake.

NMC: At what point did you feel like you were less focused on making mistakes?

Olivia: Um, it was either the recording number 3 or number 4, when I finally figured out exactly at that time, what was causing me to make the same mistake that I had made in the first two, maybe even three recording sessions. So once I fixed that, it was like, "I can do this. It's not going to be a big deal anymore."

NMC: What was it?

Olivia: It was, I kept putting my pinky up for a b instead of a b-flat. (chuckles) And that threw me every time, and so I had to jump ahead almost a measure. So, once I memorized that, "Yes, it's a b-flat," then I could just play through it without a problem.

NMC: Okay. Was it the recording that helped you realize that, or was it?

Olivia: I already knew I was making a mistake somewhere in there, and so, it somewhat had to do with my practice time, how much time I had to actually sit down and see what I was doing, or check the note for sure. So that was some of it. I didn't listen to any of my recordings, so, that didn't, I probably should have done that, 'cause that might have helped me, too.

NMC: Okay. If you were to continue to record virtual performances, how do you think the tenth virtual performance would feel different than the fifth one?

Olivia: I think it would be even better than the fifth. I think I'd probably be able to play my piece a lot more musically, or, not a whole lot better, but I think it would be better.

NMC: Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with symptoms of musical performance anxiety in the second live performance?

Olivia: I felt like what it really did for me is it gave me a lot more experience playing that piece, you know, for an audience. And I think that made me less nervous the second time, going into the second time through, 'cause I felt like I'd, in a sense, played it for people many times. Instead of with the first performance when I had only played it once for mid-term and once for a friend. So, I felt like I had a lot more experience with the piece.

NMC: Did it change your symptoms rather than changing how you dealt with the symptoms?

Olivia: Did it change my symptoms? It just made them less. It either made them non-existent or just a lot less. I don't know if I changed the way I dealt with it, except that I was a lot more relaxed before hand.

NMC: Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance.

Olivia: Yeah, I might. At least, to start listening to myself in a recording might be helpful, now that I think about it.

NMC: So you did not listen to your recordings this time?

Olivia: Yeah, I guess I didn't. I didn't even think about it. (chuckles)

NMC: Did you invite people to subscribe to the podcast?

Olivia: No. Figured there were enough people listening, and I didn't know if my parents would get time to anyway, so.

NMC: You can still get the recording, by the way. They'll be up for awhile, and you can even just cherry-pick your performances. You don't have to listen to all 48. Um, would you change anything if you decided to implement the same process for a future performance?

Olivia: I would definitely use a piece that I was planning on doing for a midterm or a jury or something. Because that would make a difference I think in the amount of practice I was putting into that piece.

NMC: Okay. Was it the performance for a microphone that changed? Could you do the same thing if you said, "In the week leading up to the mid-term, I'm going to schedule a rehearsal performance five times. I'm going to make it a special event. Designate a certain room." Do you think it would have the same effect?

Olivia: It wouldn't have as much of an effect if there weren't any, if there were not an audience. I think, because, having, knowing that there were going to be people listening to it is what made me get nervous, and try to always do as well as I could. If I were recording it for myself, I would be tempted to just hit delete or something if I did poorly.

NMC: What do you think would have changed, if for the last performance, the last virtual performance, I said, "Okay, for the last performance, you can record and re-record as many times as you want. Just keep doing it until you finally get the one you want, and that can be your final virtual performance."

Olivia: It would have made me feel really, really confident, just like, "Aw, this is going to be so easy." Like, it would have probably made me less focused and determined to do really well on that one chance that I had.

NMC: Do you think it would take you many recordings to get your performance?

Olivia: It would probably take a few. I'd probably be like, "Oh, I could do this little thing better, or this little thing better." You know, I'd probably get really picky with exactly what I wanted to change.

NMC: Okay. Again, one more question about the difference between the first exposure performance and even your first live performance. Why do you think that first exposure performance was the highest rated of your performances?

Olivia: It might be because I've overall had more experience on the stage performing for people, on that piano, on that stage, than I have, um, playing, especially in this room, and the idea of being recorded, I've just not had that happen a lot. I think that might have been a big difference there.

NMC: Several people have mentioned grades as a source of performance anxiety. Um, is there anything you would change about the way grades are awarded in piano study at the university level that would change how you approach performances in general?

Olivia: Um, I think if I, I'm not sure how the process works exactly, right now. But I think if, if they were, if the teachers were able to take into account not just this one performance that I'm gonna do for them now, but also just, how I've been doing in my lessons, and in my midterm, and kind of take that all into account without making a judgement on one single event. Because sometimes you just have a bad day, and you do really poorly, and the day before, even a few hours before, you did it just fine in front of a few of your friends.

NMC: So you would just want them to take into account your entire history of the semester?

Olivia: Yeah. mm-hmm.

NMC: Is there any kind of feedback strategy that could make you feel that was happening?

Olivia: I guess I assume it's already happening, for the most part. I don't know exactly how it all works. I just go in to my juries thinking, "Well, I can do my best. And Dr. X knows how I play. He knows what my last few lessons have been like." You know, I just, I guess I've just assumed that must be how they do it. So.

NMC: Okay. But it still is a pretty nerve-wracking performance.

Olivia: Not terrible.

NMC: Oh. Okay.

Olivia: I mean, it can be, it depends on how well prepared I feel I am. If I'm not well-prepared it can be nerve-wracking, because it's just, I'm just thinking, "Oh, I could have done more preparing myself." And he probably sees that, and that's probably why I'm not going to get as great a grade.

NMC: Has, in just the last couple of years, we've kind of changed the jury process, at least for the final. We've gone to a jury recital.

Olivia: Mm-hmm

NMC: How is that different than a middle of the day jury?

Olivia: It's different in that you have all, everyone's there. All the piano majors are there in the green room, and we're all nervous together. And, but there's also, as soon as you come out from your jury, no matter what happened, your results kind of, you know, they all care. They'll give you positive feedback even if you did terrible. They'll be like, "Oh, it couldn't have been that bad." You know, it's kind of like having a support group right there, whereas when it's in the middle of the day, you just kind of feel all by yourself. So, for me, I think that's what's most helpful. It just keeps me from getting too nervous before hand, and then afterwards there's positive feedback and support.

NMC: Okay. Imagine that you are a teacher, and one of your students is getting ready for a performance. Would you implement an approach similar to the process implemented in this study?

Olivia: I'm might if I had the equipment. I think it could be pretty helpful to a student. I found it helpful in preparing, in making me feel prepared for the second live performance. I felt like I would probably do better because I'd had all this experience in the recording. So, it depends on the students, too. Some students it might not be effective.

NMC: Can you think of a student type where it might not be as effective?

Olivia: Um, there's some students who get so nervous that you just wonder if there's even a way to help them become less nervous. I've wondered that before. Of course, I've never tried doing recordings with them, but, I think for some kids that I've taught, they, it's just so scary for them, begin in front of a live audience and being able to see their faces. Know that they're all looking at you. I think that's really scary for some, for some of my students.

NMC: What advice would you give to the student to make the process effective?

Olivia: Well, I'd probably give them advice along the lines of, "Just pretend that you're practicing. And just play through it like you would in a lesson." I also do lots of, um, group lessons, which are similar to, um, our Tuesday afternoon times, in seminar, so they get a chance to perform in front of their peers a lot, once a month. So, that seems to help them as well.

NMC: What would you change in the process to make it more effective for your students?

Olivia: I might think about doing something where you have a different person listen to each recording. If you did a podcast, like, have a couple of teachers listen to the first one, so it's different people each time. Almost like you would have a different audience each time. 'Cause that would, if it were me, it would make me continually nervous, I think. Just thinking that, "This is the one time they're going to hear me. This is going to be their only impression of me."

NMC: Um, one more quick question, you mention that you think the process of recording multiple performances helped give you more confidence, and that that had a beneficial effect in the second live performance. How much of the process of the recording was influenced by what happens in the first interview?

Olivia: Mmm. I think I was more, I noticed more my physical symptoms than I think I usually had in the past. It caused me to think more about what my symptoms were, and then try to remember them so I could write them down when we were done. Um, I think that I was influence by the interview. I think I was also influenced a little bit in thinking about how I get nervous in general, and things that made me nervous. And, it also, it kind of made me realize that I probably shouldn't ever, if possible, be late. I should probably be early for pretty much any recording session or recital because that's going to influence, the nerves I feel about running late is going to influence the nerves I feel when I'm playing. So just realizing that from the interview I think helped me a little. Yeah.

NMC: Did it change the way you approached those first exposure performances? Because those were the first performances that occurred after the interview.

Olivia: I think it might have influenced it in that I was thinking, like I said, about the, my physical symptoms more. I felt like I was a little more aware of my nerves and how nervous I was getting than maybe I usually am.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything else you'd like to add about this process?

Olivia: I feel like that, as a whole, that doing recordings and performances like this, don't, I mean, I think in college I generally became less nervous performing in front of people, so it could have been somewhat to doing this study and the last one. But, especially the last one, I remember that I felt more confident performing after doing that study. But overall I feel like, what, what really gets, what it really did for me was give

me confidence in the piece that I'm playing. Not so much in my overall ability to play, it's just piece by piece determines, how I'm doing on the piece determines how nervous I'm going to get. It could be something helpful, like recording, could be something helpful if I do it continually with each new piece, and maybe in the long run, it could make me overall more confident. But, I'm not sure if it really would. It would just have to be a piece by piece thing, I think.

NMC: So, recording is really just kind of, another weapon in the practice arsenal. This is something that I can do so that I feel really confident and really prepared to perform in front of other people.

Olivia: Yeah, because it gives me a chance to become nervous, or at least, somewhat nervous, almost every time I do it. So I get used to being able to play with those nerves. I don't know if it actually, for me, reduced the nerves I feel, it just makes me more confident, so I feel less nerves. If you see what I'm saying.

NMC: Mm-hmm. Anything else you would like to add?

Olivia: Not that I can think of right away.

NMC: Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications or corrections?

Olivia: I don't think we need to. With this one I feel like we're good. And the other one I read through, and it's okay.

NMC: Okay. Good. Thank you. Alright, I guess that's all. I will see you Monday evening.

Olivia: Alright.

Phoebe, VP

November 3, 2009

NMC: Okay. Phoebe. You've now performed in three different performance: a Rehearsal Performance, a Live Performance, and a Virtual Performance. Phoebe, I'm gonna pause this recording. I need to get my interview guidelines, so I'll be right back, okay?

Phoebe: Okay.

NMC: Okay we are recording again. Alright, so we are going to talk about all three of performances, but before we do that, I'm gonna talk just a little bit about anxiety in general daily life. We often feel the mental and physical symptoms of anxiety in daily life. Some people might find the following situations trigger these symptoms: riding in a roller coaster, driving in an unfamiliar location, giving an informational presentation, asking someone out on a date, or having a cavity filled. Can you think of a daily life situation that typically gives you some anxiety?

Phoebe: Um, school and grades. And tests coming up.

NMC: So tests. Let's go with tests.

Phoebe: Okay.

NMC: What are some of the mental symptoms you feel when you have a test coming up.

Phoebe: Usually, I don't know, I guess the night before it will worry me. Maybe I can't sleep as well. You just think about it a lot. And, I don't know, maybe get an ups, I don't know. Sometimes I get an upset stomach.

NMC: Okay.

Phoebe: If I don't feel prepared.

NMC: Do you have any emotions or emotion words that you would associate with a test?

Phoebe: Um, stress.

NMC: Okay. Happiness? Excitement? Fear?

Phoebe: Dread.

NMC: Dread. Anything else?

Phoebe: Um, angst, maybe, to get it over with.

NMC: Okay. Do you find that you have internal dialog, or that you talk to yourself about the anxiety?

Phoebe: Um, I don't know, not really.

NMC: Okay. What about, does the anxiety cause you to lose focus or to lose concentration?

Phoebe: Maybe, yeah, during like other classes. I don't know, sometimes you go through notes in your head, or something, like to prepare yourself for the test. You keep going over stuff, your information.

NMC: Okay.

Phoebe: So you aren't focused on your other, whatever else you're doing.

NMC: Okay. Now let's think physically about what might happen, with a test coming up. Do you have any physical symptoms that you can think about?

Phoebe: Um, sometimes my stomach hurts. And I get really stressed. I have to go to the bathroom a lot. (chuckles).

NMC: Okay. Let's think about it from head to feet. Do you feel anything in your head or in your face when you have a test coming up?

Phoebe: MM. No, not really.

NMC: Okay. How about in your shoulders or in you neck?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: No. In your upper back, in your chest?

Phoebe: no.

NMC: What about your heart or your breathing?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: Nope, nope. Arms and hands, anything happen there?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: You feel a little bit queasy in your stomach. What about in your lower back?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: Legs? Knees?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: Feet?

Phoebe: Nope.

NMC: You mentioned that sometimes you lose a little bit of sleep over, uh , a test that's coming up.

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Do you find it difficult to fall asleep or to stay asleep.

Phoebe: To fall asleep, 'cause you just keep thinking about it.

NMC: Okay. Alright, so that's how you feel when you take a test. Now I want you to consider how you generally feel in a solo performance on the piano. Okay? Do you feel any mental symptoms in solo performance playing?

Phoebe: Yes.

NMC: Okay. What kind of things do you notice?

Phoebe: Um, it's really easy to psych yourself out. Like, you think about it too much. Think about screwing up and having to stop and start over. Thinking about everyone watching you. Maybe you're being graded, you might think about that.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any emotion words that you associate with performance?

Phoebe: Um probably stress again. Nervousness.

NMC: You mentioned the word dread with test taking. Is it the same feeling with performance?

Phoebe: Maybe, if you don't feel prepared.

NMC: Concerning performance, do you have any internal dialogue or thoughts that you think to yourself?

Phoebe: I think performing, how you do is all in your head, kind of. So you have to tell yourself you're a good player, and you know your music, and just go out, have fun and do what you do. And just tell yourself that you aren't going to be nervous. Or maybe tell yourself that you're performing for yourself and no one's there.

NMC: So you kind of coach yourself before you play?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: You like to think positive thoughts or reassuring thoughts?

Phoebe: Yep.

NMC: Okay. Do you ever feel dissociated from the performance? In other words, maybe your hands are doing something, and you're separate from your hands?

Phoebe: Yeah, maybe if you're going by finger memory.

NMC: Okay. What's that like? What do you mean by finger memory?

Phoebe: Where it's like your fingers are just playing, and in your head, maybe you're thinking about, "Oh my gosh. I'm performing. " And you don't actually know which notes you're playing, kind of. Your fingers are just kind of going.

NMC: Okay. Does that happen to you often when you perform, or just sometimes?

Phoebe: Probably just when I'm really nervous. I feel like that happens, maybe.

NMC: Okay. Do you feel like anxiety cause you to lose focus or lose concentration?

Phoebe: Yes.

NMC: And what happens when you lose focus?

Phoebe: Um, you miss your notes, or you can't remember what's next and you have to stop. Or maybe you'd get like, your hands get shaky, so that you mess up.

NMC: Do you ever find that your mind wanders while you're performing?

Phoebe: Maybe not so much away from the performance, but more towards the fact that everyone's watching you, kind of.

NMC: So you might have thoughts about the audience while you're performing.

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Okay, let's think a little bit now about the physical symptoms that you typically feel in a solo performance.

Phoebe: Um, sometimes my stomach hurts, too, kind of like the same as the test thing. If I screw up, sometimes my hands will get shaky, too, I guess.

NMC: Okay.

Phoebe: Maybe you feel like, warm and sweaty.

NMC: Is that your hands, or just generally?

Phoebe: Like, your whole body.

NMC: Okay. Let's go ahead, again, and go from head to toe. Do you feel anything in your head or your face?

Phoebe: Probably, just like warmth.

NMC: Like fever warmth, or like work-out warmth, or like blushing?

Phoebe: Like sweaty, panicky warmth.

NMC: Okay. How about in your shoulders or in you neck?

Phoebe: Maybe they get tense. Like with your arms, too. Your arms and shoulders get a little tense.

NMC: And what does that feel like? How do you know that you are tense?

Phoebe: Um, you just don't feel very relaxed. I don't know, it just feels kind of like there's pressure there.

NMC: Mm-hmm. And your upper back and your chest?

Phoebe: Probably not so much.

NMC: Okay. What about your heart rate or your breathing?

Phoebe: Um, sometimes, if I have a really bad performance, you like forget to breathe. So, it's like, maybe your heart goes faster when you start breathing again.

NMC: Okay. Um, you mentioned that your hands can sometimes feel shaky?

Phoebe: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And sweaty and clammy, and hot.

NMC: Sweaty, clammy, hot.

Phoebe: Mm-hmm.

NMC: And your hands, you said they shake after you make a mistake. Is it only after you make a mistake? Or does sometimes shaking cause the mistake?

Phoebe: Usually, I don't get nervous until after something goes wrong.

NMC: Okay. Uh, you say your stomach hurts?

Phoebe: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Is it, what kind of hurt is it?

Phoebe: Like, maybe, throw-up kind of. Like uneasy.

NMC: How about in your lower back? Do you feel anything in your lower back when you perform?

Phoebe: I don't think so.

NMC: Legs or knees?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: Feet?

Phoebe: Nope.

NMC: Nope. Okay, in a typical performance, do you take any steps to reduce your symptom of anxiety?

Phoebe: Um, the biggest thing is getting there early, or on time, so you have time to relax. For me, I don't like playing with cold hands, so I like being inside for awhile. And getting a chance to warm-up. And just doing something that makes you relax before hand, like talking to your Mom. Like if she's going to watch you, meet her outside, or something. And just like I said before, just kind of coach yourself like, "It's a good performance. You've prepared yourself, and you're ready to do this."

NMC: Okay. So your pre-performance routine. Take me through exactly what you would do before a performance.

Phoebe: Um, I would probably get to the place where I'm going to perform, and there's a warm-up room, then I'd warm up. Not like right before, though, but a ways before.

NMC: About how long before?

Phoebe: I don't know. Maybe like ten or twenty minutes before. And then, just in between that, just take that whole time to just relax, and not try to like, really focus on the performance to psych yourself out. Just like, sit and talk with someone in the hallway, or something, or listen to music, or read or something.

NMC: Okay. And then as the performance is closer, let's say three or four minutes before you're going to perform, do you do anything to help yourself then?

Phoebe: I don't know. That's probably when I would coach myself, tell myself to just relax, and yeah.

NMC: Do you implement any relaxation strategies?

Phoebe: For me, what relaxes me is talking to people before I go. Like, I don't like to be by myself.

NMC: mm-hmm.

Phoebe: Like, when I do like, scholarship auditions and stuff, my mom would always be there to just like talk to me about random stuff before I go on, and not the performance (chuckles).

NMC: Okay. Um, do you do anything in your rehearsal to prepare for musical performance anxiety?

Phoebe: Um, I try to play in front of my friends or my family. Or, maybe I'll just sit down and say I'm going to just run through the whole thing, and not, like stop and work on a part if I screwed it up. Just to see if I could get through it all.

NMC: What about specific practice strategies that you might use to help with anxiety?

Phoebe: Um, start at different spots of your piece. So if you screw up, you have a spot that you can go to that you know really well. The starting point. Maybe you have several of those in your song. Maybe you like work on one hand, or practicing without a piano, see if your fingers remember.

NMC: Do you pray or meditate before you perform?

Phoebe: I usually pray.

NMC: Okay. What kind of things do you pray for?

Phoebe: Um, I just ask God to let me do the best that I can, and to help me stay calm.

NMC: Okay. And is there anything that you might do during the performance itself to help with the anxiety.

Phoebe: Um, not that I can think of. I don't know.

0:13:31

NMC: Okay. Alright, so that's how you feel generally when performing in a solo. Now I want you to think specifically about the Rehearsal Performance, this was the performance by yourself, where you just imagined that it was a performance. Uh, did you have any mental symptoms of anxiety in the Rehearsal Performance?

Phoebe: Um, no not very much.

NMC: Okay. So, you mentioned that you felt stressed, nervous, maybe a sense of dread, or a sense of being watched in a typical performance, do you feel any of those in a rehearsal performance?

Phoebe: Um, yeah, maybe if I make mistakes. Then it kind of gets you wondering, "Maybe I'll do that in the actual performance."

NMC: Okay. Do you have any internal dialog with this Rehearsal Performance?

Phoebe: Maybe not so much dialogue, but you could picture the audience or the stage.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any feelings of dissociation, or being separate from your hands in the Rehearsal Performance?

Phoebe: Not really.

NMC: Uh, did you lose focus or concentration in the Rehearsal Performance?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: In general, comparing the Rehearsal Performance with what you typically expect in a performance, would you say your mental symptoms were better, worse, or about the same?

Phoebe: A lot better.

NMC: So you had less anxiety?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Let's think now about your physical symptoms of anxiety, in the Rehearsal Performance, again. Anything happening in your head or in your face?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: No. So no sensations of heat or sweatiness or...

Phoebe: nnhh-hmm. (negative)

NMC: What about in your shoulders or in your neck.

Phoebe: nnhh-hmm. (negative)

NMC: No. In your upper back? chest?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: Arms? Hands?

Phoebe: Maybe hands, a little bit, when I made the mistake. I don't know, I made a couple of mistakes in rehearsal, so maybe, I don't know, I'll get a little bit uneasy with my fingers.

NMC: Okay. How about your stomach? Any pain in your stomach?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: Lower back?

Phoebe: Nope.

NMC: Legs? Knees?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: Feet?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: So in general, would you say the physical symptoms of anxiety in your Rehearsal Performance were less than the anxiety you typically experience in performance.

Phoebe: Yeah, a lot less.

NMC: A lot less.

Phoebe: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Why do you think that is?

Phoebe: Because it's not an actual performance, even though you're imagining it is. No one can hear your mistakes, or hear you, really, except for yourself.

NMC: Okay. Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety in the Rehearsal Performance?

Phoebe: Um, I didn't really need to, because I wasn't nervous for it.

NMC: Okay. So, you didn't take time to talk to someone before you performed?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: Okay. Did you pray before you did the Rehearsal Performance?

Phoebe: No I didn't for the Rehearsal one.

NMC: Did you do anything during the performance to help you with anxiety in the Rehearsal Performance.

Phoebe: I was just like, naturally relaxed during it, so.

NMC: Okay. So no need to?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Great. Let's now consider the Live Performance, and this is what you did last night, on Monday. Did you have any symptoms of anxiety in last night's performance? Mental symptoms?

Phoebe: Yes.

NMC: Okay. What were some of the mental symptoms you had.

Phoebe: Probably all the ones I listed before. Like, I was really anxious and nervous. I felt really flustered when I got there because I was really late.

NMC: Okay.

Phoebe: And I didn't have time to like calm myself down, so that made me even more nervous, kind of.

NMC: Okay. Um, did you have any internal dialogue in last night's performance? Like, thoughts in your head.

Phoebe: No, not really. Just worried about getting there and being able to play. (chuckles)

NMC: Did you have the sensation of dissociation, being separate from your hands?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: No. Uh, did it affect your focus or concentration?

Phoebe: The performance? Um, yeah.

NMC: Okay. How so?

Phoebe: I was really really nervous when I first started, so I had to start over, because, I don't know, I wasn't thinking about my notes at all. My fingers were just kinda going, so I guess maybe that is disassociation, maybe?

NMC: Mm-hmm. Could be.

Phoebe: I don't know, mistakes just like, really screwed me up, and, like I got all the physical symptoms after that.

NMC: Okay, um, so when you first started, you felt nervous then.

Phoebe: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: And then you felt you needed to start over, and that made it even worse?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. What were some of the specific physical symptoms that you felt?

Phoebe: Um, like all the ones I listed about being warm and sweaty, and your hands are shaky, and your stomach hurts.

NMC: Did you feel the heat and sweatiness in your face?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Um, any tension in your shoulders or in your neck when you performed?

Phoebe: Maybe a little bit in my shoulders and neck. Just because my, I don't know, I was tense in general.

NMC: Did you notice that in the performance, or did you notice it after the performance when it was over.

Phoebe: During the performance, I noticed it, yeah.

NMC: Okay. Anything in your upper back or your chest?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: What about your heart or your breathing?

Phoebe: I don't thinks so.

NMC: Okay. Your arms and hands, you mentioned your arms felt shaky, or your hands felt hot and sweaty?

Phoebe: Both.

NMC: Both. What about your arms?

Phoebe: Um, no, just mainly like your hands.

NMC: You said your stomach. You had a pain in your stomach?

Phoebe: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

NMC: Is it that queasy, sick at your stomach feel, or...

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: ...like a cramping pain?

Phoebe: Like uneasy stomach. Maybe you're going to be sick, kind of.

NMC: Anything in your lower back?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: Okay. Your legs or knees?

Phoebe: Nope.

NMC: Feet?

Phoebe: Nope.

NMC: If you compared your physical symptoms of anxiety in last night's performance to what you typically expect, was it better, worse, or about the same?

Phoebe: It was a lot worse.

NMC: A lot worse.

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: So this was, a performance that was a lot more anxiety filled than what you're used to?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. DId you take any steps to reduce your anxiety?

Phoebe: Um, not really. I was just like really rushed to get there, so that, I didn't really have time to do anything, besides like think about it. (chuckles)

NMC: Right.

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: So what would you have done if you had been able to get there a little earlier?

Phoebe: I would have done a warm-up, maybe. And maybe I would have been able to sit down and watch the other kids, or something.

NMC: Okay. Um, can you describe what you did before the performance, where you were, or what was going on that prevented you from being able to do your pre-performance stuff.

Phoebe: I was at marching band, and then right afterwards I went to the MU to eat. And I left my keys there. And, I think I left my keys in Music Hall, so I was looking for them all over down here. And my roommate wasn't in the room, and I thought she would be, so I wasn't going to worry about it. And I didn't want to go to the performance in my sweatpants. So I finally went back to the MU and looked for them and found them. So I went to go change, and then I came here.

NMC: Okay. So it was a really hectic stressful time before the performance?

Phoebe: Yeah. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay.

Phoebe: And then like, C_____ and D_____ kept calling me, so I was really worried that it was over, and that I had missed it. I didn't have time to actually check the messages, I just saw that they kept calling.

NMC: mm-hmm

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Well, it was, actually it had been over for a while, and I asked them to stay. So I was like, "Would you guys mind sticking around for awhile?" So uh, yeah, I asked if anybody knew your number. I just wanted to, I didn't know what was going on, and I thought you might just need a reminder. So I hope I didn't contribute too much to your anxiety.

Phoebe: No, it was my own fault. I should have, I don't know, I could have been more prepared in many ways.

NMC: Um, so you didn't get to do your pre-performance...

Phoebe: Calm-down time.

NMC: ...things. Calm-down time. Play through your piece. Take some time to talk to someone and socialize to relax.

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Did you do any relaxation techniques like deep breathing or muscle relaxation?

Phoebe: No. I was like praying on my way over here to relax. But, I was really worked up, so.

NMC: And did you pray before you performed, too?

Phoebe: No, just on the way, walking to Music Hall.

NMC: After the performance began, did you use any strategies to help you deal with anxiety while you were performing?

Phoebe: Um, um I don't know. I guess I tried to look relaxed when I walked out. Like, I smiled at the audience to acknowledge them. So maybe that's something that I tried, but I didn't really think about it that much for that performance.

NMC: Okay. So in contrast with a typical performance, you didn't get to do any of your pre-performance routines at all?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: Was it the lack of the routines that you think led to higher anxiety, or just the general anxiety of losing your keys and rushing around that caused you to be really anxious?

Phoebe: I don't think I would have lost my place on the keys if I wasn't that worked up, probably.

NMC: Okay. Can you think of a specific instance during the performance where anxiety may have affected the performance?

Phoebe: The whole thing (laughs).

NMC: The whole thing. Um, did the anxiety primarily cause you problems with your memory, or with your musicianship, or with accuracy, or with other things?

Phoebe: Probably with memory and accuracy.

NMC: Is there any sense that anxiety may have helped your performance? Some people describe that a little bit of anxiety helps them feel a little bit of edge or vitality in a performance. That the extra attention causes them to focus more and that makes the performance better.

Phoebe: Maybe that would work for a sport or something, but I don't really see that applying to music.

NMC: Okay. Alright, let's now consider the Virtual Performance, the recording that you just did. Can you recall any mental symptoms of anxiety in this performance?

Phoebe: Um, not really. The only thing that I was worried about is that you only record it once, so if it was terrible, I wouldn't be able to do it again. That was the only thing that was a little anxiety causing. But otherwise, nothing really.

NMC: So your emotions are different, it's not as anxious? It's not nervous, or flustered? What would you say that is?

Phoebe: I think it was pretty much as relaxed as the Rehearsal Performance.

NMC: Okay. DId you have any kinds of internal dialogue while you were performing?

Phoebe: Um, like the Rehearsal Performance, I didn't really feel like I needed to, that much. I don't know, it was a lot more relaxing because no one was actually watching you, even though you were being recorded. I don't know.

NMC: What's different about being watched, and just being listened to?

Phoebe: I guess I've never been recorded before, so. It just seems like a big difference because, I wasn't dressed up. I didn't walk on stage. I didn't see a bunch of people sitting watching me. I didn't have to acknowledge the crowd. I got to play with my shoes off, and be really relaxed.

NMC: How would it be different if instead of just an audio recording, we did a video recording.

Phoebe: Um, I think I would still be pretty relaxed. I don't know. Maybe I'd worry more about the way I look, or my posture, or maybe my, my technic.

NMC: Okay. Um, how does how you look affect the way the music is going to sound.

Phoebe: I guess with girls, if you feel like look bad, or you have a bad hair day, that really affects your mood. And, what you think people will view you as, or think of you.

NMC: So let's compare, uh, your mental symptoms of anxiety in the Virtual Performance, with the Live Performance. About the same, worse, or much better.

Phoebe: Much better.

NMC: With the Rehearsal Performance, about the same, much worse or....

Phoebe: The Rehearsal compared to the recording?

NMC: Yes, to the Virtual Performance.

Phoebe: I'd say they were both about the same for the amount of relaxedness. Yeah.

NMC: Let's talk about physical symptoms, this is how your body feels, in the Virtual Performance. Any sensations in your head or face?

Phoebe: Nhh-hnn. (negative)

NMC: So none of the feelings of heat or sweatiness or?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: In your shoulders or neck? None of the tension?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: In your upper back or chest?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: No. What about heart rate or respiration? Breathing?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: Arms and hands?

Phoebe: Nope.

NMC: Nope nope. Stomach?

Phoebe: Nope.

NMC: Nope. Lower back?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: No. Legs? Knees? Feet?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: No, no no. Okay, so in general you would say that your physical symptoms were much better than in the Live Performance?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Much less anxiety in the Virtual Performance?

Phoebe: Yes.

NMC: Compare the Virtual Performance to the Rehearsal Performance. About the same, a little worse, a little better?

Phoebe: Probably just a little bit worse.

NMC: So a little bit more anxiety with the recording?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Can you think of a specific instance in this performance where anxiety may have affected it?

Phoebe: Probably, just when you said you only get one shot at recording.

NMC: So how did that make you feel in the performance itself?

Phoebe: I guess, I don't know. I guess I was still pretty relaxed.

NMC: Do you think any of the, anxiety, may have helped your performance, or helped you focus and concentrate?

Phoebe: Mmmm, no.

NMC: No. Um, did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety before the Virtual Performance?

Phoebe: I called my mom.

NMC: You did?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. And you talked with her.

Phoebe: mmm-hmmm (affirmative)

NMC: And that made you feel?

Phoebe: Just relaxed. I don't know, it just helps to talk to her. She calms me down. We talk about other stuff.

NMC: So not at all, did you mention the performance at all?

Phoebe: I think at the very beginning of the conversation. And then I think that she just knows what I need. (chuckles)

NMC: What kind of things did you talk about?

Phoebe: Um, she's a teacher, so she told me about her day, and all the kids, and all the funny things they do in first grade. (chuckles)

NMC: Cool.

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Do you get to call her before other performances, or...

Phoebe: Usually she's here for performances, but.

NMC: Okay. Did you do anything else to help you prepare for this performance?

Phoebe: Um, I made sure that I like, I ate fast, kind of. So that I would have time to get here, and I wouldn't be late and rush. I practiced in the practice room. I ran through it once.

NMC: Did you pray before you performed?

Phoebe: No, I didn't for this one.

NMC: What is it that um, would cause you to pray before, say, a live performance, but not, this performance?

Phoebe: I guess I tend to pray more when I'm nervous. Or afterwards, I'll pray if it went well, kind of.

NMC: mm-hmm

Phoebe: Like, "Thanks," and stuff.

NMC: Okay. So, this performance, it wasn't, uh, it didn't make you nervous enough to want to do that?

Phoebe: Yeah, I guess not.

NMC: Why do you think that is?

Phoebe: Because I had time to calm myself down, and do all my usual things. And, I knew that people weren't going to be in the room watching me. And, I think performing is really a mental thing. I don't know.

NMC: Do you think it would change, uh, your experience of a Virtual Performance if you received feedback from the audience?

Phoebe: Um, maybe. I don't know. I used to put videos on YouTube of me playing the marimba, and people would comment, and it didn't really bother me.

NMC: Okay.

Phoebe: Because, musicians all have their own opinions, and there's so many different ways to interpret songs. If they say that, "This was bad," or, "Your technic was bad," if you're happy enough to put it on, happy enough with your performance to put it on the internet, then I don't really care what people say, I guess.

NMC: What's the difference in posting your own performance on YouTube and something like this.

Phoebe: I guess for this, they don't really know who you are, but on YouTube, maybe they could, 'cause they can see who you are. Or maybe your name is, or your username is your actual name, maybe.

NMC: Okay. If you used your actual name with this performance would it change? Do you think it would change the way you approached it?

Phoebe: No. It probably wouldn't bother me.

NMC: Okay. What if there was a hefty monetary prize associated with this Virtual Performance. If all the performers were going to be ranked, and receive a monetary prize, would that change how you felt about the Virtual Performance?

Phoebe: No, probably not.

NMC: What if the Virtual Performance was for your professor in lieu of a jury?

Phoebe: Uh, maybe.

NMC: That might affect you a little bit more?

Phoebe: 'Cause I don't feel I've known the song long enough to actually have it be graded, kind of. 'Cause I've only had it memorized a couple of weeks.

NMC: So it's still a very new piece?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Alright, uh, a lot of these descriptions you've given from the perspective of the performer. I'm going to ask you to change perspectives now, and imagine that you are a teacher, and a student of yours is performing. What kind of descriptive words would you need to hear from a student to truly understand their mental and physical feelings as they experienced them?

Phoebe: Like about them performing?

NMC: mm-hmm. What kind of words would help you understand what they're going through?

Phoebe: Um, probably not if they're just like, "I can't do this. I suck." or something. Maybe if they said like, "I'm nervous," you might be able to help them calm down, or something. I don't know. I'm not really sure what the question is asking.

NMC: If you were trying to, if your student was talking to you about how they felt about the performance, or what happened during the performance, what words could they use, specifically, that you would go, "Oh, I know what you're talking about."

Phoebe: Oh. Okay. Um, maybe they would just say, "I'm nervous," or "I don't feel good," kind of. They're just like really worried about it, maybe.

NMC: Would you ask, what kind of questions would you ask to help them describe how they're feeling.

Phoebe: Um, I don't know. Like, "Do you feel okay?" or, I don't know.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any other thoughts that we haven't covered that you would like to share about the performances, about this experience, or about playing piano in general?

Phoebe: I think another thing that is a big part of performance anxiety for piano majors is that you don't have your music in front of you. 'Cause your music can really be a crutch. Like, you can just look at it and play it. Like, if you actually forget your music, you're screwed. So that's one thing that can probably cause a lot more anxiety than other majors, where you get to use your music.

NMC: Okay. Anything else?

Phoebe: I guess I play a lot of other instruments to, and when I would do saxophone solos, I would have an accompanist, and that makes you feel a lot better when someone's on stage with you. Or maybe if you're playing a duet with someone, or if you're just in a large group. I feel like I get a lot more nervous when I'm just by myself.

NMC: Uh, do you get nervous when you play in a large group?

Phoebe: Not really. Even if it's really hard. Or, like, I'm playing the piano for the percussion ensemble, and I don't get nervous when I play for it. It's just when I'm by myself.

NMC: And you get to use your music when you play with the percussion ensemble?

Phoebe: Yeah, I do that.

NMC: Okay. And do you feel better using your music in front of you than having it memorized.

Phoebe: Oh yeah. Yep. (chuckles)

NMC: Um, anything else about other experiences you have performing and performance anxiety, besides just piano?

Phoebe: Um, I don't know. I think I've gotten to the point where I don't get that nervous anymore if I'm allowed to do all the things to calm myself down.

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Phoebe: And then I don't, not that I don't care what the audience thinks, but their opinions, like, won't hurt me. It's just like, if I think I did a good job, then I'm happy with my performance. I don't know, it' like all in your head, kind of.

NMC: Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications, amplifications, or corrections? So, for example, you read the transcript and you read what you said and you're like, "Well, that's not really what I think. I was trying to get at it, but what I really meant was this." Or, "Yeah, I've been thinking about it and these words I associate with performance anxiety, too."

Phoebe: Uh, no thanks.

NMC: Okay. If you do decide that you want to, it may be awhile before they're all done, because it takes a while to transcribe these.

Phoebe: Okay.

NMC: Alright, Phoebe. Thank you very much.

Phoebe: Yep.

Phoebe, LP2

November 15, 2009

NMC: Okay. You are Phoebe, yes?

Phoebe: Yep.

NMC: Alright, you've now performed in two live performances as well as a number of virtual performances. We're going to talk about those, but before we do, would you like to know the scores that you had on the various surveys.

Phoebe: Sure.

NMC: Okay. The first one was the KMPIA, the K-MPAI, and that's a diagnostic instrument, and on that one, you scored a -23. If you scored a 0, that would mean that you are no more likely or less likely to experience anxiety than a typical pianist. A negative score means you're not as affected by performance anxiety than somebody who scores a positive score. So you had, really, a fairly low score on that indicating that you'll be able to deal with performance anxiety fairly well as you continue with your music studies. Does that sound about right to you?

Phoebe: Um, I guess yeah, maybe. If I feel prepared, I don't get as, I don't get, I don't know, as nervous for things.

NMC: Okay. And then the next scores were your C-PAI scores, and that was a measure of how anxious you were in individual performances. Your lowest rank was a 27 for your third exposure performance. Your highest one was a 63 for your first Live Performance. Um, and there's actually quite a huge jump from the highest to the next highest. You went from 37 in your rehearsal performance to a 63 in your first live performance. Your second live performance was a 36, which was just right in line with your rehearsal performance, so. (Shows the scores) You can see those there. They're all clustered, most of your exposure performances, are all clustered right around 27, 28, and that is about as low as you can score on this particular diagnostic. I think the lowest score would be a 22 or 23. Um, and the highest that you could score is right around an 88 or an 86. So you can see from there to there, you have quite low scores on all of these anxiety inventories, except for that first live performance. And as I recall, there were a lot of extenuating circumstances with that particular performance, too. Yep. Do you have any thoughts about that. Do those seem about right to you?

Phoebe: Yep.

NMC: Okay. You have now performed in two Live Performance situations. Compare how you felt during Live Performance 1 and how you felt during Live Performance 2.

Phoebe: Um, my second performance, I wasn't really nervous at all. And it didn't really bother me, and I didn't have performance anxiety near as badly as the first one.

NMC: Okay. Can you describe the second performance?

Phoebe: Um, like the way I felt? Um, I was a little nervous, but once I walked out there I felt fine. And I started playing and I talked to the audience about my instrument. It was a relaxing performance compared to the first one. (chuckles)

NMC: You talked about your instrument. Can you say some of the things that you mentioned?

Phoebe: Um, I played the celeste, and I mentioned the year it was made and where. 1886 and it was made in France. And how it's different from the piano, that, the strings strike metal plates, or the hammers strike metal plates instead of strings, so it has a different sound.

NMC: Okay. Is that something you typically do before you perform, address the audience?

Phoebe: No. (chuckles)

NMC: Have you done that before?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: How does it make you feel when you address the audience before you perform?

Phoebe: I guess it makes me feel more relaxed, I don't know.

NMC: Okay. Um, did one performance feel better than the other?

Phoebe: Yeah, the second one.

NMC: Okay, why?

Phoebe: Um, I was just more relaxed before I performed. And I'd already performed once, I know what is was like, maybe. I had my instrument out there. I had time to, um, warm-up. The first one I didn't.

NMC: Did you do most of your pre-performance routine with the second live performance?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Can you describe what that was for this specific performance.

Phoebe: Um, I guess I did pray for the second one, and I had time to warm-up and just relax before I went on stage, like five or ten minutes, just talk to someone in the hallway. Just, not think about it, I guess. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different in Live Performance 2?

Phoebe: Yeah, probably.

NMC: Do you remember some of the things we talked about in the first interview that you typically experience in a performance, mental symptoms?

Phoebe: Like sick in your stomach, and shaking hands, or?

NMC: Well sick in your stomach would, yeah, that's more of a physical symptom.

Phoebe: Oh, okay.

NMC: I think you mentioned over-thinking a performance, getting psyched out about it, depending on finger memory, dissociation, problems with memory, mind wandering to audience.

Phoebe: Yeah, I didn't really have any of those problems with the second one.

NMC: Okay. Did you feel that you were separated from your hands while you were performing?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: No. Did you have any problems with memory in the piece?

Phoebe: Um, just a little bit. Like a couple little mistakes, but nothing that really bothered me.

NMC: Okay, so those little mistakes did not bother you as much as in the first performance?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: Okay. Um, how about your physical symptoms of anxiety. How were they different in the second performance?

Phoebe: I didn't feel as, like, warm in my face, or my hands weren't shaky. I didn't feel sick at my stomach.

NMC: Would you say that in general, your physical symptoms of anxiety in the second live performance were less than your symptoms in the first live performance?

Phoebe: Yes.

NMC: How much less?

Phoebe: Like, a lot less. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. On a scale of one to ten, your physical symptoms in the first live performance would have been what for you?

Phoebe: Probably like, for ten being the worst, probably a nine.

NMC: And then the second live performance would be about?

Phoebe: A one, probably.

NMC: Oh really. So then, an extreme difference.

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. And you talked a little bit about your physical symptoms, you said you were not as hot and sweaty in this one?

Phoebe: Yeah. Correct.

NMC: And, what about in your shoulders, arms, and neck. You mentioned a little bit of muscle tension in the first performance.

Phoebe: No, I didn't feel tense or anything.

NMC: Your breathing was normal?

Phoebe: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

NMC: Okay. Would you compare live performance 2, instead of to the first live performance, but to just a typical performance, how did that, how was Live Performance 2?

Phoebe: Yeah, that's probably how I usually perform. I don't get that nervous, I guess.

NMC: Okay. Alright, you've now performed in several virtual performances. Compare your first virtual performance with your last virtual performance.

Phoebe: I, maybe I was a little bit more nervous for the first one, just because I've never done it before. But I wasn't really nervous for any of them.

NMC: Okay. Did one performance feel better than the other? In thinking about your recorded performances, was there one that was better than the other, you think?

Phoebe: Probably my third or fourth one are the better ones. I just felt like I made less, like, mistakes kind of. And I tried to make the changes, like, about not slowing down as much at the end, as that lady said about the podcast.

NMC: Okay. Did you treat the recordings differently after you received feedback?

Phoebe: Um, not really, I was just more aware of the changes I could make, maybe.

NMC: Okay. Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different in the last virtual performance?

Phoebe: Compared to the first? Not really a whole lot different.

NMC: Because they were both so low, or because nothing changed?

Phoebe: I guess nothing changed.

NMC: Okay. How about your physical symptoms of anxiety in the last virtual performance?

Phoebe: Um, I would, didn't really have much for anxiety, I guess.

NMC: Okay. If you were to continue to record virtual performance, how would the tenth virtual performance feel different than the last virtual performance you recorded?

Phoebe: Um, I don't know, probably about the same. (chuckles)

NMC: Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with MPA in your second live performance?

Phoebe: Not really. Maybe if at all, just that I got to practice my piece like straight through without it being, like, a practice run. It was more of a rehearsal run.

NMC: Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performance changed your symptoms changed your symptoms of performance anxiety.

Phoebe: No.

NMC: No. Okay. Um, would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Phoebe: Maybe it would help just do, to make yourself do a full run-through and to have something to listen to. So you could like listen to it and look at your music and see things that you aren't doing right or things you could fix.

NMC: Did you listen to your performances?

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: So you subscribed to the podcast and,

Phoebe: Yup.

NMC: Good. And what did you learn in listening to your performances?

Phoebe: Like spots that I could work on making more even. And, like my second page, I could get a lot more quiet, and yeah, the ending sounded weird when I got that slow.

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Phoebe: Yeah. It helped a lot to listen to it.

NMC: Okay. When would you use this as a preparation performance? Would you do it at the beginning of studying a piece, in the middle of studying a piece, right after you have it memorized, prior to big performances, or as a polishing tool.

Phoebe: Probably more as a polishing tool, when you know the piece really well, towards the end, like before a performance.

NMC: Okay. Um, did you invite other people to subscribe to the podcast.

Phoebe: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. About how many people did you invite?

Phoebe: Um, two. But my mom couldn't figure it out, so I'm gonna help her do it over Thanksgiving break. And then one of my friends from band.

NMC: Okay. Um, a lot of people mentioned that grades play a role in their music performance anxiety. Um, do you agree with that?

Phoebe: Um, yeah.

NMC: Is there some way that the grading system could be changed that would lessen your performance anxiety.

Phoebe: I guess I'm not really sure how performances are graded here, 'cause I haven't done that yet.

NMC: Okay.

Phoebe: So I guess I'm not really sure.

NMC: Okay. Did you feel more aware of your performance anxiety symptoms, no matter what level they were at, after the interview.

Phoebe: The first interview? Yeah, probably. Like I didn't realize the things that I do that make me relax. I just do them, kind of, I mean you think about it.

NMC: Does thinking about it help you deal with the symptoms as they come up in performances?

Phoebe: Yeah probably.

NMC: Okay. Alright, just a couple more questions. Imagine that you are a teacher and one of your students is getting ready for a performance. Would you implement an approach similar to the process implemented in this study?

Phoebe: Um, like recordings and practice? Yeah definitely.

NMC: Why?

Phoebe: Because it would really be hard on them if they just, like, did a performance, and never did like a practice run-through for me. Or, I guess the recordings would be a good idea, too.

NMC: What advice would you give to the student to make the process effective?

Phoebe: Um, just to tell them to treat it as a performance, and if you screw up, try to keep going. I don't know.

NMC: Okay. What things do they need to do to treat it like a performance?

Phoebe: Like, to visualize, or? Um, I don't know, maybe visualize an audience. I don't know.

NMC: Is it mostly just to start at the beginning and go all the way to the end without stopping to practice, or is it rehearsing the, uh, ceremony of performance? You know, walking in...

Phoebe: Probably both.

NMC: Okay. What would you change in this process to make it even more effective for your student?

Phoebe: Maybe do the recording where you're actually going to do the performance. So you could actually, like, walk on to the stage and play there. Or maybe do your rehearsal performance on the stage, too.

NMC: Anything else that could make it even more effective?

Phoebe: Um, not that I can think of.

NMC: Okay. Do you have anything else that you would like to say about this process that we've gone through?

Phoebe: Um, no.

NMC: Okay. Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications or corrections?

Phoebe: No.

NMC: No. Alrighty.

Rhonda, VP

November 2, 2009

NMC: And what is your pseudonym?

Rhonda: Rhonda.

NMC: Rhonda. Hi Rhonda. Okay, Rhonda. We just completed the first Virtual Performance. This was after the Live Performance that was last night.

Rhonda: Yes.

NMC: Yes. Um, and so, I just want to talk a little bit about the symptoms of anxiety. I'm going to read a statement. We often feel the mental and physical symptoms of anxiety in daily life. Some people might find the following situations trigger these symptoms: riding in a roller coaster, driving in an unfamiliar location, giving a presentation, asking someone out on a date, having a cavity filled, taking a test, doing your taxes. Um, what is a daily life situation that causes you to feel symptoms of anxiety?

Rhonda: School.

NMC: School. What aspects of school cause you anxiety?

Rhonda: The evaluation of performance in classes.

NMC: So grades?

Rhonda: Yes.

NMC: Is it specific to certain events, or is it just in general?

Rhonda: Um, I guess like the larger scale projects that are done in class.

NMC: Okay. So tests, papers...

Rhonda: Presentations.

NMC: Presentations. What does that anxiety feel like to you physically?

Rhonda: Um, normally, like very draining.

NMC: Okay.

Rhonda: I'm, like, much more tired than I would be normally. Um, and, the more stressed out I get the more tense I get in my shoulders.

NMC: Okay. Do you have, do you feel any symptoms, like you mentioned your shoulders, do you feel any symptoms, like, in your face or in your head?

Rhonda: Um, occasionally I get headaches. I don't know if that's related to my stress level, but...

NMC: Okay. What about, you mentioned your shoulders, do you feel any symptoms in your neck?

Rhonda: If it gets bad enough, then it (chuckles) kind of travels up, so, yeah, sometimes.

NMC: How about your upper back, or your chest?

Rhonda: Um, not so much.

NMC: Arms? Hands?

Rhonda: No those are usually pretty good.

NMC: Stomach?

Rhonda: Mmm, um, not more than just like eating habits. Like, stress can, um, usually affects me that I don't want to eat as much. I have a lower appetite if I've had a stressful week.

NMC: Okay. How about your lower back?

Rhonda: Mmmm. Occasionally. Occasionally I'll have problems with my lower back, and I don't know if that, again, I don't know if it correlates to stress but it could.

NMC: Okay. Legs? Knees?

Rhonda: Nope.

NMC: Nope. Feet?

Rhonda: They're good. (chuckles)

NMC: They're good. Good feet. Okay, so those are the physical symptoms that school anxiety brings on. How about mental symptoms of school anxiety?

Rhonda: Um, I can't think. I mean normally I'm pretty clear headed throughout the week, so I don't know. Just that the stress affects my mental abilities.

NMC: How does it affect your mental abilities? Does not?

Rhonda: Does not.

NMC: Oh, okay. Do you have, like, do you talk to yourself about things that are happening, that are giving you stress? Like an internal dialogue?

Rhonda: Um, no. I normally make lots of lists. So I mean there can be like a jumble of things happening in my mind, but normally, I just have, like, a planner or a piece of paper, and I just make sure that all of that is out there so I don't have to remember it anymore.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific emotions associated with school anxiety?

Rhonda: Probably like a higher frustration rate. Um, because when I get very stressed and very busy, then I, I'm not as patient with either coworkers or classmates. Usually.

NMC: Any other emotions?

Rhonda: Um. No. Not really

NMC: Okay. Um, you mentioned your focus and your concentration, that sometimes you get a head full of things that need to be done, and you deal with that by...?

Rhonda: Um, writing it all out.

NMC: Do you ever get the feeling, dissociated feeling, that, um, you're not where you are? That you're kind of outside of yourself when you get anxiety?

Rhonda: Um, no.

NMC: Okay. And what things do you do specifically to deal with your school anxiety? We mentioned the, uh, notes and your daily planner.

Rhonda: Mm-hmm.

NMC: What other things do you do?

Rhonda: I just do my homework. (laughs) I don't... I mean, besides making sure that I'm organized with what I'm doing, um. Uh, making sure that I have some time, mostly on the weekend, that I can relax a little more. Either, by like, watching movies, or um, reading books.

NMC: Is watching movies for you, is that a social event, or do you like to do that by yourself?

Rhonda: Both. (laughs) Um. More on the social event side of things, but.

NMC: Do social events help alleviate your anxieties?

Rhonda: Um if, if I know that I have nothing else to be doing. So, social events knowing that I have either schoolwork or progress done on stuff that I need to, then they can be stress relieving. But if I'm hanging out with people, and um, I know that I do have stuff to be done, it doesn't really help stress.

NMC: Okay. Okay, so these are general symptoms of anxiety. I'm going to check and make sure it's still recording. Make sure we don't lose this. Yes. Would you say a few things real quick?

Rhonda: "Few Things"

NMC: Excellent. Okay, let's now consider how you generally feel in a solo performance. Not specific to any one, but generally, how do you feel? Um, what are the mental symptoms of anxiety in a solo performance?

Rhonda: Um, I normally just blank on things that I know fairly well. So, it's harder for me to concentrate on things that I know. So, it's like, an extra, I have to remember before hand that I have to be thinking.

NMC: Okay.

Rhonda: Um, I can't think of any other mental things

NMC: Do you have any internal dialogue when you're at the piano?

Rhonda: Oh yeah. (chuckles) Normally, it's um, what I would be thinking of people that might say something to me afterwards, so the audience. Um, if I'm being evaluated on it by someone, what their comments might be. If they know my, my abilities before hand. Um, and then normally to myself, that same like, trying to remember thing of, "Are you remembering that this is coming up?" or, you know, kind of a memory check for me.

NMC: Okay. Can you maybe give me an example by speaking out loud something that you might hear in your internal dialogue?

Rhonda: Um, I don't.. Probably like, "Oh, there's people in here who really don't know how to play piano." Or whatever else I'm doing, "So, they'll probably think that I'm doing good regardless. But, there's somebody else out there who does know how well you're doing, and they're going to know that you did poorly." Or, other such things.

NMC: Do you have any emotions associated with solo performance?

Rhonda: Um, not usually. Um, I probably should. Um, I think if it's something that I enjoy playing and or doing, if I'm excited about the material that I'm doing, then I can be more excited about the performance itself. If it's something that, um, is kind of just required of me to do, then I'm not as excited about it.

NMC: Do you ever try to manage your emotions to match the music?

Rhonda: Yeah. I always try to have something in my mind before hand, of what, um, what I should be thinking of, or some visual representation, or um, so that after I get over that initial, "Oh my gosh, I'm in front of people," on stage, I can have something else to focus on.

NMC: Does anxiety in a solo performance situation hinder that kind of practice with your emotions where you do something before hand?

Rhonda: It does initially. Normally for, like, a standard performance for me, there is,like, the first couple of lines or something like that, where I forget to focus myself, and then once I get over that point, it's easier for me to focus.

NMC: Um, we mentioned dissociation in the daily life activity. Do you ever feel that at the piano?

Rhonda: Like where I don't feel like I'm at the piano?

NMC: Or that you're watching your hands, not necessarily in control of them.

Rhonda: Mm, I guess that happens to an extent? Kind of because it's, um, not a familiar setting of me playing the piano. Because, normally if I'm practicing, that's a different experience than performing. So there is, a, a slight feeling of kind of, it doesn't belong there, or something like that.

NMC: How about your focus and concentration when you're playing the piano?

Rhonda: Um, I guess sometimes those daily life things can kind of intrude. Either performance or practicing, that um, 'cause I'm always kind of a list in my mind type person, which is why I have to put out on paper. But some, occasionally, if I have a lot of list things going on in my head, um, it can also kind of intrude to when I'm playing the piano as well.

NMC: Are there other mental symptoms? We've gone through internal dialogue, emotion, dissociation, focus, concentration. Are there, are there anything, does anything else happen that you would categorize as a mental symptom of anxiety in piano?

Rhonda: I don't believe so.

NMC: Okay. Let's talk now about the physical symptoms. How you generally feel in a solo performance. Um, what kind of symptoms do you get physically when you play the piano?

Rhonda: Um, aside from my fingers, or my hands shaking slightly when I play, I normally don't have any other physical symptoms.

NMC: Okay. So, you mentioned your hands shake. What about, we'll just go from top down. In your head or in your face, do you ever feel like something is different there when you're playing?

Rhonda: Um, I notice that, I'm prob, I'm more expressive in my face when I'm just practicing, and no one is watching, then if there is somebody watching. I guess a little self-conscious of being expressive.

NMC: So do you feel, maybe deadpan?

Rhonda: Yeah, a little bit.

NMC: Um, why do you think you deadpan in a public performance?

Rhonda: Um, one is just that, again, the strangeness of not used to being there. And then also, just the, uh, I don't know, self-consciousness of having other people watching. You're more conscious of what you're doing that may be considered strange by others.

NMC: Okay. Uh, anything in your shoulders or your neck whenever your performing generally?

Rhonda: No.

NMC: How about in your upper back or in your chest?

Rhonda: No.

NMC: No. And we talked about your hands shake, what about in your arms?

Rhonda: Um, I can't think of anything at the moment.

NMC: Okay. Your stomach?

Rhonda: Well, if I'm doing poorly (chuckles), then my stomach starts, you know, like, you just kind of get the feeling in your gut, that, you don't really want to be there

anymore. But, normally I don't have any, I mean, for a typical performance there's nothing that affects my stomach.

NMC: Okay. How about your lower back?

Rhonda: No.

NMC: Legs? Knees?

Rhonda: Nope.

NMC: Feet?

Rhonda: Nope. Oh, my feet. I take that back. My feet do shake if I have to pedal.

NMC: Okay.

Rhonda: Um, especially long pedals. So, normally if I do a performance, I normally try to have a piece that does not need the pedal for the first one, 'cause that's, uh, it's a little bit of a nervous shake. And then once I get used to it, it's fine. But occasionally my foot is shaking as I'm holding down the pedal.

NMC: Okay. Do you take any steps to reduce symptoms of anxiety before you perform?

Rhonda: Um, it depends on the performance, how big I categorize what I'm doing. Um, I mean, I'll, I'll play, I'll practice before hand and sometimes have people stand in there and listen to me while I'm practicing to get used to having an audience that's listening.

NMC: Okay. So that would be kind of a rehearsal strategy.

Rhonda: Mm-hmm. Yes.

NMC: Do you do anything just prior to the performance?

Rhonda: Um, I just try to sit and be as, you know, still as possible. Because if I'm up and moving around it kind of heightens my anxiety. So, if I can just find a couple minutes to sit and be still, that's good.

NMC: Do you like to play through your pieces before you perform?

Rhonda: Yes.

NMC: How soon before, when, when do you like to stop so that you're up and ready to go?

Rhonda: Mmm, maybe like ten minutes before. Again, it kind of depends on the situation, if have, if I'm in the middle of a concert if I can, er, uh, if I can be practicing before hand, but normally like, I like to run through and then have a little space before performing. So I'm not practicing right up to the performance.

NMC: Okay. What sort of things do you do in that rehearsal time just prior to a performance?

Rhonda: Um, I make sure to look at my music if the piece is memorized, so that I know that I'm making, um, the corrections, er, for the difficult passages that I have, that I make sure that I'm looking at those. Um, normally I'll run a couple of the difficult, er, my more difficult passages, and then I'll just play the whole thing through.

NMC: Uh, again, this is steps to reduce. We talked about rehearsal strategies, practicing with other people. Do you do anything in just your regular practice that's specifically designed to help you with symptoms of anxiety?

Rhonda: Um, I occasionally just try to imagine that I have an audience, uh, especially, um, like the week up to a performance. Um, kind of have to psych myself into, "No, you're actually playing for somebody." Because then, when that thought enters my mind when I am performing for somebody, it's not a foreign thought.

NMC: How do you psych yourself into believing there is an audience?

Rhonda: I imagine specific people that are listening to me or, um, you know, think of, well, "Now strangers are listening to you. What are you going to perform then."

NMC: Do you set a chair up for them, or...?

Rhonda: No. (laughs)

NMC: What kind of specific people?

Rhonda: My piano professor. Um, friends that may not be musically trained. Uh, my brother who is musically trained, who would probably be a harsh critic (chuckles).

NMC: You mentioned that you like to be still, before you perform. Are there any specific relaxation techniques that you employ?

Rhonda: Um, not necessarily, not. I mean, I make sure to have my hands still before hand, so that they're not shaking excessively before I go out.

NMC: Okay. Um, what about prayer or meditation?

Rhonda: Um, yeah. I do pray before I perform. Um, so, yeah. But, it's not consistent before every performance. But...

NMC: And is there anything that you do during a performance if, if you need to deal with anxiety?

Rhonda: I make sure that I'm breathing, or am conscious of my breathing. Because, occasionally when I do perform, I forget to breathe, er, it's more shallow breaths. And I find as soon as I can kind of get into a normal breathing pattern it relaxes me a lot more.

NMC: Anything else?

Rhonda: Um, what was the question?

NMC: During performance.

Rhonda: Okay. Um, again visual, visualizing the parts of the music that I'm in, or making sure that I'm hitting the, um, roadblocks that I should be, in the music that I'm playing. Um, and yeah just, focus, draw all of those thoughts that are going on and focus them in on what's going on at that time.

NMC: Okay. We've done three different kinds of performances. We've done a Rehearsal Performance, a Live Performance, and now we've just recorded, uh, the Virtual Performance. Let's consider now how you feel in the Rehearsal Performance. This was the performance for yourself and nobody else. It's a lot like, like when you say you imagine your audience, it's very much that performance. What are some of the mental symptoms of anxiety that you felt in the rehearsal performance?

Rhonda: Um, I think that, I don't have as many mental things. Um, if any, it's, it's making my mind focus more on what I'm doing.

NMC: So, in comparison to a typical performance?

Rhonda: Um, I find that I'm able to focus better in the Rehearsal Performance versus the Live, because I'm able to kind of control what I think is going on in that situation. Like if that, if at that I'm not thinking that people are listening, I kind of have to make my mind think that people are listening. But in the Live Performance, there are people listening regardless if I think they are or not.

NMC: Okay. Uh, how about physical symptoms in the Rehearsal Performance?

Rhonda: I don't really experience any of the previously mentioned ones.

NMC: Okay. So nothing in your head, face, shoulders, neck, upper back, chest, arms, hands?

Rhonda: No.

NMC: Do you get any of the shakiness in your feet, whenever you?

Rhonda: No.

NMC: And no shakiness in your hands?

Rhonda: No.

NMC: Okay. Um, and for the Rehearsal Performance, did you take any specific steps to reduce anxiety that might have in a Rehearsal Performance?

Rhonda: No.

NMC: No. So you did not sit quietly and control your hands?

Rhonda: Nhmm-mm. (Negative)

NMC: Did you pray?

Rhonda: No.

NMC: Okay. How does, if... Scratch that. Let's move on.

Rhonda: Okay.

NMC: Let's now consider the Live Performance number one, the performance that we had Sunday afternoon.

Rhonda: Mm-hmm.

NMC: What were the mental symptoms of anxiety in that performance?

Rhonda: Umm, Sunday afternoon's was a very, a very atypical performance. Um, because I was playing a Prelude and Fugue. Um, it felt like two kind of separate pieces. I felt very comfortable, and able to focus very quickly on the Prelude, and the Fugue just, my mind basically just fell apart. (chuckles)

NMC: So, what did that feel like, mentally, in the performance?

Rhonda: Um, very un-stabilizing. Um, I wasn't able to, to gather my thoughts or start from a familiar spot. So, it was, um, I think at that point, once I start making mistakes, my, my mind immediately starts to un-focus, and then it's harder to rein that back in.

NMC: Did you have any internal dialogue during the performance?

Rhonda: Basically, "Oh crap oh crap oh crap!" (laughs) Um, and, kind of that, "Okay, you need to find a spot that's familiar to you," and "What spot is that going to be?" And, um, "You need to pick this up really quick, 'cause you're not doing well."

NMC: Did you have any specific emotions?

Rhonda: Um, I think I was able to connect my emotions better to the Prelude, because it was going more smoothly. Um, and, um, for what those would be? It's more of, um, solemn piece, and just has some beautiful dissonances. So just being able to enjoy the, the music that has already been written. Um, so it's enjoyable. I mean, it's kind of funny 'cause it's a solemn piece but there's just this enjoyment of how beautiful it is.

NMC: Mm-hmm. Any other emotions, maybe associated with the Fugue?

Rhonda: Um, I think with the fugue, it was just kind of caught off guard. Like, I was a little bit surprised that it didn't go as well as I wanted it to. And I think that was what was hard, too, is that I was unable to rein in all of those emotions and just be focused on what I was doing.

NMC: Did it feel a little out of control or...

Rhonda: Yes. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay.

Rhonda: That would be a good way to describe it.

0:24:56

NMC: Okay. Um, did you feel any dissociation in the performance? Outside of yourself.

Rhonda: Um, yeah, I think at the beginning of both the Prelude and Fugue, like I said before, there's always that little, spot of, um, "Okay, you have to play the piano now, and these are your hands." You know, the, and then you just have to get used to doing that at a different piano.

NMC: How about your focus or your concentration during the performance?

Rhonda: Um, It, it got more scattered the longer I performed. Um, So that was, a little, yeah, again, like once I, basically, completely lost my focus and concentration it's very hard to get that back again.

NMC: How did the specific performance compare with a typical performance, for you?

Rhonda: Um, not the same. (chuckles)

NMC: Not the same.

Rhonda: Um, the prelude was very much how I would expect a normal performance to go. Um, I was surprised. Normally, during a performance, I kind of, um, when thinking of before hand performance think, "Okay, like, you may make a couple mistakes that you're not used to." 'Cause that's normally what would happen in a performance. Um, it's not a spot that I'm used to messing up in, it'll just be a random spot that I kind of miss a note, and I just have to remind myself, "You're going to be okay with that. You have to move on." And so the Prelude was very normal, in that sense. Um, the Fugue was not so normal, in the sense that I just couldn't regain composure.

NMC: Okay. How about the physical symptoms of anxiety? Again, if you just want to start from the top of the body and work your way down.

Rhonda: Oh, if I could have a videotape to see what I looked like, it was probably pretty scary. (laughs) 'Cause, when I, when I lost that control I'm pretty sure there was just panic. A panicked look on my face. Um, I definitely start sweating more when I start making mistakes, and have to, uh, my, my heart rate is probably going quite a bit faster than it normally would. Um, in that one, uh, in the, in the Fugue, I only pedal slightly. But I can definitely feel, um, when I start to get nervous, the little tension in the back of my calves. Um, kind of with that same pedaling and foot-shaking. But, um, yeah, my fingers just wouldn't work. (chuckles) Which was probably more of a mental, but...

NMC: Did you have any symptoms in your shoulders or in your neck, like clenching or...?

Rhonda: I don't think I clenched.

NMC: Okay. Did your hands shake?

Rhonda: Um, they were either shaking or just 'spaghetti fingers.' I'm not sure which one it was. But...

NMC: Can you describe 'spaghetti fingers'?

Rhonda: Um, that for some reason they just couldn't hit the notes that I thought they should be hitting. So again, kind of that disconnection of mind and what my hands. You know, my mind was thinking, "You know where you're supposed..." you know, and I could see it, but my hands were not doing that. So kind of a, just a limp hitting all sorts of notes.

NMC: Um, you mentioned that your heart rate, maybe was pounding?

Rhonda: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: How about in your stomach?

Rhonda: Um, there was probably, um, I mean along with heart rate, there was probably a little bit of the gut feeling of, just the nervousness of not performing well. Um, and it's kind of, when I get the gut feeling when I'm performing, it's more of like a hollow feeling. I don't know how to describe that any better, but, when, like right when I get done and when I go off stage, it's kind of just, you know, a hollow feeling in my stomach.

NMC: Did you take any steps, well, wait. Let's first compare your physical symptoms of anxiety in the Live Performance One, with the Rehearsal Performance.

Rhonda: Well, um, I, the Rehearsal Performance went pretty well, so I didn't experience the same physical.

NMC: Uh, did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety before the performance?

Rhonda: Um, I did take out the music and look through the more difficult passages and run those a couple times. Um, I did not prepare enough before hand, to take the other measures that I normally do before a performance.

NMC: So did you get to sit quietly and control your hands?

Rhonda: Um, I was able to just kind of stand for a couple of minutes in the green room before going out. But I didn't have the amount of time that I would normally have to sit and relax.

NMC: Why is that?

Rhonda: 'Cause I didn't plan far enough in advance (chuckles).

NMC: There were also several other people involved in the performance, and it seemed to be a very social, uh, time, before the performance. Does that have, do you think that has anything to do with, uh, not being able to sit and relax and calm your hands?

Rhonda: Yeah. If there's other people that you want to be talking to at the time, or just want to say, "Hey" to, um, it makes it harder to, um, have that time to sit and be quiet. Um, and they're all, you kind of feed off each other, too, if there's a group of you waiting all to perform, there's a lot of different ways that people react to performing. So you kind of have to make sure that you're distancing yourself from those who are getting very anxious before performing, so that doesn't carry on to you.

NMC: So, it's a defense, it's a shield? You stay away from people who are...

Rhonda: Um, I just have to be aware of those people who, um, in my opinion, would make a bigger deal out of the performance. You know, that they're, they're getting severely anxious, and really jittery and other things like that. And I just have to be aware of that. I don't necessarily have to distance myself, but I have to make sure that I'm saying, "You're okay. You don't have to get this anxious."

NMC: What about prayer? Did you pray before the performance?

Rhonda: Uh, no I didn't.

NMC: Anything during the performance, that you did?

Rhonda: Um, well I was breathing pretty well, so I didn't have to remind myself to breathe. During the Prelude, I was able to focus my mind on, um, what I had already thought of to mentally focus on during the piece.

NMC: Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Rhonda: Um, during the Fugue, during the Fugue subject right when I start, it was one of those where, where I made a mistake where I normally don't, and it caught me off-guard I think a little bit too much. And from that point on, I think I was a little, my anxiety was heightened by that kind of un-stabilizing missing a note that I wasn't used to.

NMC: So in reaction to a specific, uh, I guess you would call it, um, an error.

Rhonda: Yeah.

NMC: A specific missed note.

Rhonda: Yes.

NMC: Um, does performance anxiety affect your memory? Did it affect your memory in this specific performance?

Rhonda: Um, yes. Prior to going out, I had kind of, when I was doing my preparations before going out, um, I was kind of hit with the fact that my memory was not what it should have been before a performance, for the Fugue, specifically. And so I think, um, by kind of, I think that I kind of psyched myself out by convincing myself before hand that I didn't have the memory as well as I should have.

NMC: Is the Fugue pretty new?

Rhonda: Um, I started it at the beginning of, oh, not quite the beginning of the semester. Um,

NMC: So that would be about ten weeks.

Rhonda: Yeah, I would say the Fugue was probably, I've been working on seven or eight weeks.

NMC: Okay. And how long has it been memorized?

Rhonda: Um, probably five or six?

NMC: Okay, uh, other places where anxiety may have affected your performance. Do you think it affects your musicianship, in this specific performance?

Rhonda: Um, I think the anxiety affects my musicianship, again from that initial time of being used to performing, and until I get used to the performing is when I, my mind also focuses, again on that mental picture of what I want to be thinking of. But also the reason that I focus on that is to become more musical. So, there's like that little split second where, if I was to really analyze it, I would probably say that I'm not being the most musical at the beginning of a piece.

NMC: What about giving your performance edge or vitality? Or something that the anxiety brings out in the music that's not normally there? In this specific performance?

Rhonda: Mm, can't think of any specific ones. I know, um, occasionally, in, again it's always hard for me to recall every specific thing that happens in a performance, but occasionally, um, when I'm more anxious, I will speed up the tempo of something that I've been playing, which could have been very possible in playing the Prelude. Um, maybe a bit faster than I normally would, which, I don't always consider a bad thing. It's, it's a difference though.

0:35:37
NMC: Okay, let's now move into the Virtual Performance. That would be the recording that we just made.

Rhonda: Mm-hmm.

NMC: Did you have mental symptoms of anxiety in recording the performance?

Rhonda: Um, not necessarily. I mean, again, to have myself practice to make this seem like a real performance, I did, I did think of the list of people that I knew that were going to be listening to the podcast beforehand, to kind of make myself strive to do a better performance.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any internal dialogue during the performance?

Rhonda: Um, probably right before the Fugue, I was thinking, "You shouldn't screw this up this time." (chuckles)

NMC: Emotions?

Rhonda: Um, again with the Prelude, um, I feel that I'm able to focus that one with emotions and tie into that one a lot deeper. So, um, before, before playing the Prelude, I just thought, you know, that this is a piece, again, that I really enjoy playing and performing, and so, um, it's easier to get connected with.

NMC: Compare, again, these mental things, from the Virtual Performance to the Live Performance. How are they different?

Rhonda: Um, again, I have to, kind of, add on an extra mental thing of making myself think of people that are listening, because I don't have the physical presence of them being there. Um, which makes, I have to make myself think of it as more of a real performance, and, I think the fact that I can't re-record something, I also have to make myself, you know, "You have to do this all straight through. There's no starting and stopping."

NMC: How is that different? You mentioned that you make yourself think that people are listening. Does the microphone change that, at all, in the Virtual Performance compared to the Rehearsal Performance?

Rhonda: I think the fact that I know that it's getting recorded changes the way that I view it. Um, that I know that what I'm doing right here is going to be listened to by people, as opposed to the Rehearsal Performance, where I just think that people are there.

NMC: Okay. Physical symptoms of anxiety in the Virtual Performance?

Rhonda: Um, I didn't experience most of the normal, um, hand-shaking or feet-shaking that I normally do in a Live Performance.

NMC: In comparison with the Rehearsal Performance, was it different?

Rhonda: Um, I think if I had to compare those two, they'd be very similar, but, um, there was a moment where I did have a slight memory mix-up, and that's when I'm in here, I know that it's getting recorded, and it's only doing it once, and people are going to listen, and it's a little bit more, like, uh, the hands fumble for just a second, as opposed to a rehearsal performance where I might not think about it as much.

NMC: Okay. Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety for the Virtual Performance?

Rhonda: Um, I, again, took out the music to review the parts that are a little bit more tricky, and played through since it's a new, or a different, piano that I was working on today.

NMC: Did you sit quietly and compose your hands?

Rhonda: I made sure I was quiet when I hit the record button. (laughs)

NMC: Did you pray before the performance?

Rhonda: No.

NMC: Okay. Do you prepare differently for a Live Performance One, and this Virtual Performance?

Rhonda: Um, from yesterday and today, there really wasn't a lot of difference between the preparation for the two.

NMC: Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety may have affected your Virtual Performance? The one you just recorded.

Rhonda: Actually, um, when playing the Fugue, I, you know, it's kind of a, I remembered what I had done yesterday, and not been so satisfied with my performance, and so that, I believe that that did affect how I did the Virtual Performance. Um, I was aware that I needed to improve those things, and, um, although I did have a memory, um, gap again, I think in the Virtual Performance I was more focused than I had been in the Live Performance.

NMC: DId, were there any adapt, uh, any symptoms of anxiety that may have helped your performance?

Rhonda: Mmm, I can't think of any.

NMC: Okay. Now most of these descriptions we've done from the perspective of the performer. Let's switch perspectives for just a moment, and pretend that you are a teacher, and you are talking with a student about how they feel in performance. What kind of descriptive words would you need to hear from your student to truly understand the mental and physical feelings experienced?

Rhonda: Um, so I'm asking for the student to describe their performance anxiety? Uh, I think a common one is the hands shaking, especially when you play the piano. Um, so, shaking for physical. Um, focus, for mental. Um, possibly if they're more focused on other people's opinions or that they're self-conscious. Um, so any indicators that they're worried about what other people think would probably be indicators of performance anxiety is a problem.

NMC: What kind of questions would you ask a student to help them articulate their feelings?

Rhonda: Um, maybe, "What, What are you worried about in a performance?" Um, "Is there something that you're thinking about during your performance to focus yourself?" What are they doing before hand to prepare.

NMC: Any other questions you might ask?

Rhonda: Mmm. Um, ask them why they're nervous to perform. Or why they're anxious.

NMC: Okay, we are about out of time. Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications, amplifications, or corrections?

Rhonda: No.

NMC: No. Okay. Alright. Thank you very much.

Rhonda, LP2

November 15, 2009

NMC: Rhonda?

Rhonda: Yes.

NMC: You have now performed in a couple of live performances and several virtual performances, and we're going to talk about those. But before we do, would you like to know how you scored on the different surveys that you filled out?

Rhonda: Sure.

NMC: Okay. On the KMPAI, which was the diagnostic that you did at the very beginning, you scored a -28.

Rhonda: What does that mean?

NMC: Okay. A zero score would indicate that you are not more or less likely than anybody else to experience performance anxiety, you're right in the middle. A score of -28 means that performance anxiety affects you less than somebody who scores a positive score.

Rhonda: hmm. Alright.

NMC: Does that seem about right to you? Or does it surprise you?

Rhonda: Um. I guess it doesn't surprise me. Um, I guess like, my, my normal demeanor, I mean getting up in front of public, and other things like that, would be that, I shouldn't have reasons that would make me more likely. Um, I'm sorry. (phone rings)[re do sol ti do] (chuckles) Can you transcribe that?

NMC: Transcribe that. I'll do it in solfege. Yeah.

Rhonda: (laughs). Yeah I don't know, and sometimes I think that performance anxiety doesn't affect me at all, and sometimes it does. So that would probably be accurate.

NMC: Okay. And then on the CPAI, which is what you filled out after each performance, your scores ranged from, your lowest score was for the Exposure Performance number 2, and that was a 31. In this case, the lower score means that you were experiencing less symptoms of anxiety, fewer symptoms of anxiety.

Rhonda: Okay.

NMC: Um, score was a 31 for the lowest. And then your highest was your first Live Performance, and that was a score of 64. The lowest that you can score is a 22 I believe, and the highest you score, you can score, is an 88. So, your first live performance was a 64, and your second live performance was a 38, which put it just below the anxiety you experienced in a rehearsal performance.

Rhonda: Hmm.

NMC: So here you can see them. (shows list of scores) This is where your second live performance lined up, and you can see that all of these are clustered pretty closely.

Rhonda: mm-hmm. Yeah.

NMC: And then these last three are kind of on the higher end.

Rhonda: Mm-hmm.

NMC: What do you think of that. Does that surprise you in any way or does that seem about right?

Rhonda: I think that seems about right. I think I was better prepared for the second live performance, and therefore, I wasn't as nervous as I had been for the first one, especially that sticks out.

NMC: Okay. Okay, you have performed in two live performance situations. Compare how you felt during Live Performance One and how you felt during Live Performance Two.

Rhonda: Um, Live Performance Two, I felt very calm for most of it. The one thing that did affect my mental state while in Live Performance Two was that I did have several memory slips in Live Performance One. And being aware of that, and wanting to prove that I could come out and do a better performance was something that was on my mind the whole time. Live Performance One, that definitely was not on my mind, but as soon as those memory things started happening, it began to be a lot more frantic.

NMC: Okay. Did one performance feel better than the other?

Rhonda: The second, well, the second one over all was much better when I compare the two because it was Prelude and Fugue. I think the Preludes were very similar, the only difference being that I was more aware of musicality in the second live performance. Um, so the Preludes were fairly similar. Overall Live Performance Two I felt much more comfortable.

NMC: Okay. Can you compare the mental symptoms of anxiety from Live Performance Two to Live Performance One?

Rhonda: Um, Live Performance Two, like I said again, I was very aware of what I was doing the whole time. I was making sure that I was where I was needing to be in the music. Um, I was visualizing the music, 'cause I knew that memory was going to be a bigger, or not a bigger issue, but something that I really wanted to work on. Live Performance One I wasn't thinking of those things, and so, um, instead of being over-prepared I was under-prepared, and then that equaled frantic mental state.

NMC: Okay. So you were over-prepared for Live Performance Two, and you felt like you had more planned focus on memory in Live Performance Two?

Rhonda: mm-hmm. Yeah.

NMC: Because you didn't plan that focus for Live Performance One, something happened, and then it caused you to be frantic.

Rhonda: Yes.

NMC: Okay. Some of your other descriptions from the first interview, you mentioned sometimes your mind watering, to the, watering, wandering to the audience's reception.

Rhonda: (chuckles)

NMC: Did you feel that in the two performances?

Rhonda: At the second one, I was aware of some people who were going to be there. I recognized people in the audience. Um, and so, I did kind of think of that before hand, but once I got out there, um, again something that I had focused with the virtual performances was, don't be so concerned with who's listening, and make sure that you're making music. So, um, I think I was able to do, "Okay. Yes there are people here. I know that they're going to listen to me, but I need to do what I need to do." So, that was a lot better focused for the second live performance.

NMC: You mentioned memory for the first live performance. I think we kinda discussed that.

Rhonda: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

NMC: Uh, sometimes you say you feel like your focus is impaired for the first few bars. Did that happen with the second live performance?

Rhonda: Um, it was not with the Fugue. I remember being very intentional. But that was the second one. The Prelude, I believe that I was able to get into the music by at least the second note of what I was playing, so it was not the delayed getting into the music that can happen sometimes.

NMC: You also mentioned in the first interview that sometimes you feel a little disoriented with your surroundings, being on stage, being at a new piano. Did you feel that in the second live performance?

Rhonda: Um, no. I think, um, just playing on the piano a little while before, I mean, since the first live performance and then going into the second one, I mean, I think I had only played on the recital stage once, so far that semester, this semester. So, having that second opportunity to do it, and then going out a third time, it was more familiar.

NMC: Okay. How about your physical symptoms of anxiety, comparing Live Performance 2 and Live Performance 1?

Rhonda: Um, there were very few symptoms for Live Performance 2. The only thing that I noticed was that I had a little finger shaking in the right hand, um, during the Fugue section. Um, and for the first couple bars of the Prelude, a little bit of that foot shaking while I hold down the pedal. But those were the only two I experienced in Live Performance 2.

NMC: Okay. You mentioned a deadpan face for Live Performance 1.

Rhonda: Yeah.

NMC: Do you feel like you had the same thing in Live Performance 2?

Rhonda: Um, again hard to say, because sometimes I think I am being expressive, and yet, if I were to watch it I would probably say that I wasn't being. But I was a little bit more free with, um, not being so concerned with who was watching me.

NMC: Okay. And you also mentioned your stomach in the first performance. Did that bother you in the second performance?

Rhonda: No.

NMC: Okay. You have now also performed in several virtual performances. Compare how your, compare your first virtual performance with your last virtual performance.

Rhonda: Um, with my. Oh, wait. There was the one that I did, and then I did an interview right after you. Was that the first virtual? Was that...

NMC: Well, we had the virtual performance and interview, and then exposure performance...

Rhonda: Okay.

NMC: ... which I guess is a virtual performance. So that would be the second one. And then your last one would be the last one.

Rhonda: Okay. So we're talking about the one right before I had my interview with you.

NMC: Sure.

Rhonda: Okay. Um, in that one, I was still very concerned about those memory problems that I was having, um, being that was the first one after the, um, the first Live Performance. So I did have a few memory slips in the first one. Um, and then, for the last one, there were no memory slips. I had a few wrong notes but was able to correct them very quickly. Um, and by the last performance, I was also very comfortable with the software that we were using, and, um, could just come in a get it done. So.

NMC: Did one virtual performance feel better than the others?

Rhonda: I want to say, I think it was 3 or 4, when I finally felt that I could start being musical from the beginning of what I was doing. I was able to focus, um, more quickly than I had in previous virtual performances and first live performance. So I want to say it was either 3 or 4 that felt very comfortable. And then the ones after that were also more comfortable, but I think that the recording was the best on one of those.

NMC: How did your mental symptoms of anxiety change?

Rhonda: Um, change between the virtual? Okay. Um, I think having the first virtual performance and then getting the real feedback from a real person that I knew was listening, kind of changed the way that I was going into the second virtual performance. And so I was, I think, for my second or third, I had kind of this, really big, you know, "Somebody's listening to me out there," and that was a little bit more, um, nerve-wracking than the others. And then, like I said before, going into the 4, third and a half, four and five, I was able to, um, realize that there were people listening to me, but also, um, ignore that aspect when I was playing.

NMC: Were the physical symptoms of anxiety different in your last virtual performances?

Rhonda: Um, I notice that when I do the virtual performances, I don't, um, unless I, unless I made a mistake, I didn't have hand shaking. Or, I mean, hand-shaking is my most prominent physical symptoms. So, I don't, I noticed that that did not happen unless I made a mistake.

NMC: Okay. If you were to continue to record virtual performances, how would the tenth feel different than the last one you did?

Rhonda: Um. I think if I were going to continue them, I might, if I were running something, I would have the immediate feedback from somebody who could just email or something like that, to keep myself aware that there were people listening, and not

get into a pattern that would make me feel comfortable with recording the virtual performances.

NMC: Okay. You've talked about the feedback that you've received. How did that, how did that change the way you performed in the subsequent performances?

Rhonda: Um, I took the, the comments that were given into consideration when playing. I took those comments and then went back to my music and saw how I could apply them in ways that would work, so that changed some ways that I was working on the music based on the comments. Um, like, like I didn't know after getting the first comments, I thought, "Oh, am I going to get comments after every single one of these?" you know, or, "Am I going to get comments again?" So I was just more aware that there could be comments made regarding those performances.

NMC: Okay. Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with symptoms of performance anxiety in the second live performance?

Rhonda: Yes. I do, because, um, I think it gave me a better awareness of the, the weaknesses of my performance. So by the time I got to the Live Performance Number 2, I was aware of those things that I needed to be thinking of, um, in order to have a good performance. So it gave me the practice of, um, making sure that I had those checkmarks made for what I needed to in my music

NMC: Okay. Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Rhonda: Yeah. I think I would. Again, if I were to do it, it would be with maybe an audience and say, you know, give me feedback sometime, or when you would like to. Or, um, every other time that I post something, just so that I know that I have an audience critiquing what I'm doing to make my, push myself to do a better virtual performance, than just, I'm gonna slap a lot of these performances online.

NMC: Okay. Did you get to listen to your performances?

Rhonda: I haven't yet. (laughs)

NMC: Have you subscribed to the podcast?

Rhonda: I haven't.

NMC: Okay.

Rhonda: I was scared to after my first virtual, or my first one I didn't like, so. I need to go back and listen to them, though.

NMC: How would listening to the performances change the process?

Rhonda: I found, um, when I participated in the study previously, um, and listened to those with my music in front of me, I was able to hear those things that, um, my professor was telling me that, you know. "You need to do this. You need to do this. You're not doing it." And in my mind I was thinking, "Well, yeah I am. I think it's enough." But when I listen to a recording and know those things to listen to, I don't have, I can then be objective. Because it's not, it's not me thinking while I'm doing. I can go back and listen, and be more critical to those things.

NMC: Okay. Did the interview process and filling out the different forms change how you deal with symptoms of anxiety?

Rhonda: Mmm. I think it, the forms that I was able to fill out made me more aware of some of those things. I mean, some, some categories just didn't really apply to my form of performance anxiety, but some things were very relevant in how I have performance anxiety, so it made me more aware of how I react to performance anxiety.

NMC: Can you think of some of those specific things. I don't know if I have any forms left in here.

Rhonda: Like I said before, the, the physical of the hands shaking, um, thinking about a performance afterwards and not being able to just, let that go. Um, thinking of how the audience affects my performance. Um, oh, the, um did I think that I was being musical in my performance. I think those were the main ones.

NMC: Okay. Um, there were a couple of exposure performances that had higher ratings than the others. I'm wondering if you can let me know what happened there. Also, you actually did six exposure performances, because I have two EP4 scores.

Rhonda: Oh.

NMC: And I have six recordings on the podcast. Following the...so. Over-achiever. Go-getter.

Rhonda: (laughs)

NMC: But you see here that number 3 and number 4 ended up being higher than your second live performance. Can you recall, and I'm not even sure which number 4 that would be, can you recall what may have made those a little bit more, would have given those a high score in your mind, as opposed to the others?

Rhonda: Um, I think those were a couple days that I didn't have time to go through the music previously in that day. So it was probably the first or second time that I had gone through that music. Um, so I think that contributed some, if I didn't feel as confident with the performance that I did, and not be able to think about those things that I needed for improvement before hand.

NMC: Okay. Imagine that you are a teacher and one of your students is getting ready for a performance. Would you implement an approach similar to the one implemented in this study?

Rhonda: I think I would use... Yes. I think that answers the question.

NMC: Okay.

Rhonda: I think I would use something where, I think it is good for the student to listen and evaluate their own performance, based on comments that, um, either the teacher or somebody else has given them, so that they can start to develop that critical ear for their own playing. Um, and I think, in the sense that it's good to prepare, you can do a recording, and I think it's most effective to practice that performance anxiety, if they know that somebody is going to listen and critique it. Um, so in those two aspects, I think it's very useful.

NMC: Okay. What advice would you give to the student to make the process effective?

Rhonda: Um, I would, I would tell them to treat it as a real performance. To know that they will, even though that they don't have an immediate audience there, that they will have an audience that's going to be listening to it. And to start practicing that mental map of how their music is going to be played. I think it, that was one of the most helpful aspects for me with this project, was um, just starting to practice that, "Okay this is a performance, and this is what my mind needs to be doing while I'm doing this, and while I'm doing a performance."

NMC: Okay. And, what would you change in the process to make it effective for your student. You mentioned feedback would be important.

Rhonda: Mm-hmm

NMC: And that, the students should be encouraged to listen to the performances. Anything in addition to that? For example, the timing or spacing of the exposure performances.

Rhonda: Um.

NMC: We did five in about a week's time.

Rhonda: Yeah. I think if I were preparing for a specific performance, it might be good, I mean, there's two different sides to this. If I was preparing for a performance and knew what time of day I was going to do it, I would try to line up the virtual performances to be at that time of day. But on the flip side, if you are doing this not specifically for an upcoming event, but are just working on your performance skills, to

do it at various times throughout a span of time, to be comfortable doing that at any time of day.

NMC: Okay. Anything else.

Rhonda: I don't think so.

NMC: Is there anything you would like to add to our discussion about what we've done thus far?

Rhonda: Mmm. I think it's a very, this being the second time that I've had the chance to be a part of this, I think it's a very useful process. And I think if people are given the opportunity to have an experience like this, they'll realize that there's benefit in it. It's not just, "Oh, well somebody told me I had to go through and do all these things." There is a lot of benefit to it, as well.

NMC: Okay. Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications or corrections?

Rhonda: Nope, I would not.

NMC: Alright. We are done.

Sophia, VP

November 2, 2009

NMC: Okay, so that was the Virtual Performance and you are now done with that.

Sophia: Okay.

NMC: And now we're going to talk for awhile.

Sophia: Okay.

NMC: And what is your pseudonym?

Sophia: Sophia

NMC: Okay, Sophia. You've just finished recording a virtual performance. Last night, or yesterday afternoon, we did a live performance, and you've also done a rehearsal performance in the last few days. And we're going to talk a little bit about those. But before we do that, I'm going to read a statement. We often feel the mental and physical symptoms of anxiety in daily life. Some people might find the following situations trigger these symptomSophia: riding a roller coaster, driving in an unfamiliar location, giving a presentation, asking someone out on a date or having cavity filled. Now, can you think of a daily life situation that typically causes you some anxiety.

Sophia: Yes. Do you want me to say what that is?

NMC: Yes.

Sophia: Oh, I'm a TA, so I get a little nervous before I go into class, because I want to make sure I'm teaching the class well, and doing my job, and making sure they're learning. So I get a little anxious.

NMC: Okay. You're a TA for...

Sophia: Aural Theory.

NMC: Okay. So, what does that feel like, teaching? Um, what are the mental symptoms of anxiety that you feel?

Sophia: Mental symptoms... Sometimes, I get the butterflies in my stomach, or I just get very, um, I get very anxious. Just fidgety. I get very fidgety. That's probably what it is. I pace a lot.

NMC: Okay. So those are kind of physical symptoms.

Sophia: Yeah. I can think of mental symptoms.

NMC: Well, let's stick with physical for a little bit.

Sophia: Okay.

NMC: Uh, and let's just go from head to toe. Do you feel anything in your head or in your face whenever you're anxious about teaching?

Sophia: Um.... Not about teaching. But performing sometimes my cheeks will get red, they'll get hot.

NMC: How about in your shoulders or in your neck. And this is, again, in your daily life, what you feel..

S; No. No

NMC: Okay. How about in your upper back or in your chest?

Sophia: No.

NMC: No. Do you feel any symptoms of anxiety in your arms or in your hands?

Sophia: No. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. You mentioned the stomach?

Sophia: Yeah

NMC: You have some anxiety in your stomach? What's that like?

Sophia: Yeah, I guess it's like butterflies in the stomach, or it'll feel like it's in knots, or it's churning.

NMC: Okay. In your lower back. Do you ever feel symptoms of anxiety there?

Sophia: No.

NMC: Okay. How about in your legs or in your knees?

Sophia: Um, probably, because I would jig.

NMC: Jig? You mean shaking your leg up and down?

Sophia: (Chuckles) Yeah. Yup

NMC: Anything else in your legs or your knees?

Sophia: No.

NMC: How about in your feet?

Sophia: I don't think so.

NMC: Okay. So let's go back to mental symptoms, and I'll give you some examples of mental symptoms. Maybe that will help your memory.

Sophia: That would be helpful. Yes.

NMC: Some people might find they have an internal dialog going that is perhaps distracting. Some people find they lose focus, they lose concentration. Some people feel that maybe they're outside of themselves, they're a little bit dissociated from the event. Some people feel lots of emotions about things, different kinds of emotions. Some people feel distracted or overwhelmed or panicked.

Sophia: Overwhelmed and panicked would probably hit home.

NMC: So that's an emotion you might feel?

Sophia: Yes. Yep

NMC: Okay. Um, what about any internal dialog? Do you...

Sophia: Like distractions? Usually I stay pretty focused on what I'm doing because it's taking over my entire brain. You know, I have to perform, I have to focus. So I don't have any focussing problems, but I get overwhelmed, and panicky.

NMC: And what's that like? What's that feel like?

Sophia: It's not fun. Um, I get, I know I can play my piece well, so I set high standards for myself. And then if I don't reach them, sometimes, I'm like, too high standard setter. Then if I don't reach them, I'm very upset with myself. So I think, so I kind of had a subconscious feeling, of you know, if you don't achieve this then you're not going to be satisfied with your performance. And, that's very frustrating. So I should stop doing that.

NMC: So let's move now into performance. So these questions are how you generally feel in a solo performance situation. Um, so, mental symptoms of anxiety, generally in a solo performance situation?

Sophia: Mmm. Going back to the overwhelming and panicky feeling?

NMC: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Sophia: Well, I think my main issue is forgetting the music. Even though I know I have it memorized well, I'll get panicky about remembering the music. So, then I'll try to play the piece in my head, and then I'll most likely get to a point where I can't remember where I am, and then that's when I start to panic and my mind starts to go on... it just starts winding, trying to think of where I am.

NMC: Can you describe that winding?

Sophia: Um... You're just trying to play the piece through in your head and figure out how it goes. So...I can't explain it very well. Let's go on, maybe I'll think of something.

NMC: Um, memory. Do you think, do you think the anxiety causes you to forget things, or does it distract you in ..

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: ...such a way that it causes other issues?

Sophia: It could be a little bit of both. I'd say a little bit of both. Because, memory is not a problem for me, and then when I get in front of people, then it becomes an issue.

NMC: Do you find you start second-guessing your memory?

Sophia: Yes. I have to say to myself, "[Sophia], your piece begins on g#," before I can go out on stage.

NMC: But, do you, how would it be different if you weren't second-guessing?

Sophia: I don't think I know what you mean.

NMC: If you didn't have the anxiety of other people watching you...

Sophia: Oh, then I wouldn't have a problem with it. You mean if I was just practicing by myself?

NMC: Right.

Sophia: Oh, then I have no problem with it. It's just a performance thing I think.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any internal dialogue when you're performing?

Sophia: Yes, My mind will start to wander. I, you want me to go more with that? I'll start thinking about holding it together, and if things aren't going so well, then, I don't

stay, or I try to stay focused, but I feel like I'm not, um, involving the articulations very well. You know, the special techniques that you put into the piece. You know, just trying to get through it. Do you mean, you know, like, distractions like, from the crowd? or...

NMC: Could be from the crowd. It could be a thought that you have in your head.

Sophia: Oh. Crowd doesn't. I don't. I try not to pretend like there's anybody in the audience. Um, but, I don't. I think I'm associating things that aren't internal dialogue as internal dialogue.

NMC: That's fine. What are you... Just, continue about that.

Sophia: Um, I don't really know where I was going with that. Oh, well, just holding the piece together. When I get nervous and then if it, the piece is kind of starting to crumble, then I'm just focusing on holding it together so I don't have an entire melt-down while performing (chuckles).

NMC: Okay. Do you feel any feelings of dissociation when you perform? Dissociation is, you kind of, it's kind of like you're watching your hands play and you're not really there.

Sophia: Sometimes. That's happened before. Yeah. I've experienced that.

NMC: We've talked about focus and concentration, too.

Sophia: Mm-hmm. I can stay pretty focused because, obviously I'm trying to hold the piece together, so.

NMC: Okay. What kind of emotions do you feel association with performing or with performance anxiety.

Sophia: Dread. I dread performing. But then after, when I get through it, I'm very proud of myself.

NMC: When does the dread start?

Sophia: Um, maybe the week before a big performance? (chuckling) And then it gets worse as the performance gets closer and closer.

NMC: Okay. Any other emotions that you associate with performance anxiety?

Sophia: Um, Well obviously being anxious. But, let's see. I think dread is the perfect word for it.

NMC: Do you ever feel excited to perform?

Sophia: In groups.

NMC: Okay. Explain.

Sophia: Like, accompanying, I do a lot of accompanying. So I get excited to perform those things, but solo performances just are not fun for me. I don't enjoy them.

NMC: Okay. Uh, let's talk now about physical symptoms of anxiety. Again, this is in general, performing in a solo performance.

Sophia: Okay. I can do these.

NMC: Start again, from the top of, from the head and go down to your toes.

Sophia: Okay. My cheeks will get hot, and probably become red. Um, I wouldn't say anything happens to my neck or my shoulders or upper body. Or I could probably be, probably tense. But it's mostly in my hands. They'll get very sweaty, and then I get nervous about slipping on the keys. Um, and then stomach, you get butterflies, churning, knots. And then I pace a lot. And then I jig. That would be the legs.

NMC: Okay. How about in your feet?

Sophia: Nothing in my feet.

NMC: Okay. Now, typically when you get ready to perform as a soloist, do you take any steps to reduce your symptoms of anxiety?

Sophia: Yeah. I've tried, just in warming up, I'll play one of my favorite songs to try to calm me down, to try to do something enjoyable. Deep breathing, thinking happy thoughts. All those things.

NMC: Explain deep breathing. How do you incorporate...

Sophia: Just taking, taking good (demonstrates) in through your nose, out through your mouth. Just taking good deep breaths. Like you would at the doctor's office.

NMC: And when do you typically do this?

Sophia: Oh, in the practice rooms right before. Or I'll stretch, you know. Just do like, you know, um, hands up in the air. Little stretches just to try to calm myself down. You could call it mini-yoga.

NMC: Namaste?

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: Uh, do you have any kinds of routines that you like to go through before performance?

Sophia: Um, just what I mentioned. Just playing things that I like, breathing deeply.

NMC: Is there specific things you do in the practice room with the pieces you're going to perform?

Sophia: Um, I have a problem with over-practicing the piece. So I've made myself stick to scales. So I'll do the scales and arpeggios and then try to run the parts of the piece that I have problems with. Um, yeah.

NMC: Okay. What about in your practicing, do you have strategies that you implement while you're practicing to help you with performance anxiety?

Sophia: I'll pretend in the practice room, well, I'll get up and then bow like it's a performance, and then play the piece through like it's a performance, and then bow at the end. So, just have mock performances.

NMC: Okay. Do you ever feel that performance anxiety makes you practice more?

Sophia: Yes. Because I know how I'm going to feel before the performance, so I want to try to prepare myself the best I can, because I know how I'm going to feel. So I try to you know, make myself strong against the angst (chuckles).

NMC: Um, relaxation. You mentioned deep breathing and stretching. When do you do that before the performance.

Sophia: Oh, ten minutes before I perform.

NMC: Do you, implement anything like prayer or meditation before you perform?

Sophia: Yes. Yes. I pray.

NMC: Okay. And when do you do that?

Sophia: Probably right before I walk out on stage, and just when I sit down. Say a quick prayer and then hope for the best (chuckles).

NMC: mm-hmm. What kind of things do you pray for?

Sophia: Um, that, I that He keeps me calm, and I play the piece the best I can. And if I have specific areas where I have problems, you know, help me through those pieces. Help my hands not to be sweaty. Help me to enjoy this, and let the audience enjoy it as well. So.

NMC: And is there anything that you do during the performance itself to help you with your anxiety?

Sophia: Um, I don't think so. Most of the time, I'm just trying to keep it together.

NMC: Alright, so that's how you generally feel about performance. Let's talk a little bit about the Rehearsal Performance. This was in the practice room by yourself. Did you have any mental symptoms of performance anxiety in the Rehearsal Performance?

Sophia: No.

NMC: No. So no internal dialogue?

Sophia: No.

NMC: No particular emotions or... No distractions or loss of focus or concentration?

Sophia: No. No. When I'm alone I can stay focused.

NMC: Compare your mental symptoms in the Rehearsal Performance, or lack of them, with the mental symptoms you typically feel.

Sophia: Um, mental symptoms in...?

NMC: In performance.

Sophia: In performance? Oh. Phhhh! Night and day. I was not nervous. No hands sweaty, no stomach, you know, churning. Just, I was enjoying my playing. But then when I have to perform it, I don't enjoy it, because I go through all those anxious feelings.

NMC: Again, considering the Rehearsal Performance, what about physical symptoms of anxiety?

Sophia: Um, none.

NMC: So you mentioned, uh, your face might get hot and turn red. That doesn't happen in the Rehearsal Performance?

Sophia: No, no sweaty hands. No jigging.

NMC: No tension in your shoulders?

Sophia: No.

NMC: No sweaty hands?

Sophia: No.

NMC: Okay. Um, and in the Rehearsal Performance, did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety before then?

Sophia: Well, no, because I didn't need to, because I wasn't nervous.

NMC: So there was no routine you went through before hand?

Sophia: No.

NMC: Did you, did you pray before the Rehearsal Performance?

Sophia: (Chuckling) No.

NMC: Okay. Alright so that's the Rehearsal Performance. Let's now consider yesterday afternoon, the Live Performance recital.

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: So, if you could think specifically about that single performance...

Sophia: mm-hmm.

NMC: Did you feel any mental symptoms of performance anxiety?

Sophia: Um, yes. Probably. Yeah.

NMC: Okay. What kind of things did you experience?

Sophia: Okay. Name some of the mental ones again that we talked about.

NMC: Um, internal dialog, emotions, dissociation, focus, concentration, I guess memory could be a part of that, too.

Sophia: Memory, memory was a part of it.

NMC: And could you explain, specifically how that...

Sophia: Um, well I got. I couldn't get one chord, and then that kind of set up for the rest of the piece, so then that threw me off with continuing on with the piece. But that's not really what we're talking about right now. The mental ones are confusing me. I can nail the physical ones.

NMC: Okay. Sure. Did you have specific distracting thoughts like, "Like, oh my gosh, I forgot turn the laundry off."

Sophia: No. No. Nothing like that.

NMC: DId you have any thoughts about the audience?

Sophia: Um, no. I knew that they were going to be there. No.

NMC: Did you have any thoughts about your abilities to perform?

Sophia: Um, I knew I could play the piece well, and I set expectations. So I wanted to play up to those expectations. Does that answer your question?

NMC: Sure. Did you experience specific emotions with this performance?

Sophia: I didn't dread it as much as I would some other performance, like a jury or a jury recital, but I was still nervous for it. So, I don't say 'dread' would be a good word, but just, not feeling up to it.

NMC: Why do you think this performance didn't elicit the dread response as much as a jury?

Sophia: Because I wasn't being graded on it, and there probably weren't as many people there.

NMC: Okay. Do you remember how many people were in the audience?

Sophia: Um, maybe 12, 15 at the most.

NMC: Uh, does audience size affect your symptoms of anxiety?

Sophia: Yes. The bigger the more nervous I get.

NMC: Okay.

Sophia: Or depending upon whose in the audience.

NMC: Continue with that.

Sophia: So if it was my friends and my family I wouldn't be very nervous, because then I actually want to share the music with them. But if it's higher up people who know music well, or they're people that I think highly of, then I want to perform well because I want to impress them. So.

NMC: Okay. How did your mental symptoms, again these emotions and internal dialog, compare with a typical performance?

Sophia: So not yesterday?

NMC: So yesterday versus what you typically experience.

Sophia: Oh. I experience the same emotions, but not at such a high level.

NMC: Alright. Physical symptoms. Again this is yesterday afternoon in the Live Performance, starting with the head, down to your toes.

Sophia: This one I didn't have the cheeks, thing. The hotness in cheeks. Usually that only happens when I am the most nervous. Um, I was a little tense in the upper body. My hands did get sweaty. My stomach was, you know, a little butterflyish. And I paced a little bit. I didn't jig, though. And then nothing in the feet.

NMC: Okay. And compare those symptoms to what you would typically feel.

Sophia: Um, well cheeks would be red. Upper body tense. Hands would be very cold and clammy and sweaty.

NMC: So it was, yesterday was it less than your typical performance?

Sophia: Yes, yes it was less.

NMC: And yesterday, did you take any specific steps to reduce your anxiety?

Sophia: Uh, I prayed and did the deep breathing thing. And, yeah those were the two things I did.

NMC: Okay. So when did you do the deep breathing?

Sophia: When I was in the practice rooms, ten, twenty minutes before the performance.

NMC: And did you continue your deep breathing all the way up until then, or...?

Sophia: Yes. Taking just deep breaths to try to keep thinking, "In with the good. Out with the bad."

NMC: Okay. And you did pray before you performed?

Sophia: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: And, what kinds of things did you pray about?

Sophia: Um, just help me through the performance. Uh, help me play the piece the best I can right now. Keep my hands from being sweaty, and help them move, you know, don't stumble over each other. Don't go to fast.

NMC: And the steps that you took to reduce your anxiety yesterday, compare them to what you typically do. Did you do anything different, anything extra, or not as much of?

Sophia: Uh, no. Maybe not as much praying. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. And again this is because, the event in your mind....

Sophia: Was a little smaller than normal.

NMC: Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Sophia: Probably when I had the memory slip. I got more nervous because I made a mistake.

NMC: And how did that affect you?

Sophia: Mmm, it made my mind start to quickly race trying to find were I was in the piece. Whether I should go back and play it again or just skip to a new spot in the piece to try to iron it out. So.

NMC: So your mind was spinning?

Sophia: Yeah..

NMC: Is that the word you used? Or racing I think it was?

Sophia: Yeah, so, racing. Um, so mentally, I'm trying to picture the music in my head trying to find the spot to start.

NMC: Do you feel like you have time to think when you're in that situation?

Sophia: Um, no. No, because it's, you know, when you're sitting on stage, every second seems like a year. So actually trying to picture the music probably isn't helping, you should just pick up, try to keep going instead of find a new spot to start.

NMC: Okay. Um, do you find sometimes, sometimes the visual I get is the deer in the headlight. The frozen...

Sophia: A little bit. When your mind goes blank and you have nothing. I've had that sometimes, but not yesterday.

NMC: Okay. Um, do you think, what about this? Do you think that anxiety gave your performance edge or vitality, or made it better than it typically is?

Sophia: No. (emphatic)

NMC: Okay. Alright so that was the Live Performance yesterday afternoon. And we just finished recording this Virtual Performance, and we're going to talk about that for a little bit.

Sophia: Okay.

NMC: So, these questions are concerning just the Virtual Performance and in comparison with your other performances. Did you experience any mental symptoms of anxiety recording your piece?

Sophia: No.

NMC: So no sense of dread?

Sophia: No dread. No memory scares. Nothing.

NMC: Okay. Um, why do you think that is. Why is it different recording for this audience than playing for a...

Sophia: Because I was just by myself and I was just playing for me.

NMC: Okay.

Sophia: Well it seemed like I was just playing for me, even though I know other people are going to view it.

NMC: Okay. And compare your mental symptoms in this Virtual Performance with the Live Performance.

Sophia: None whatsoever.

NMC: None whatsoever.

Sophia: Completely different. I felt fine.

NMC: So just, this was almost exactly like a Rehearsal Performance, you would say?

Sophia: Exactly.

NMC: Okay. Did you have any physical symptoms of anxiety?

Sophia: No. None.

NMC: So no hot cheeks or red cheeks?

Sophia: No hand, jittery. My hands were maybe a little clammy. But no jigging, no pacing, no nothing.

NMC: Okay. Um, and compare that with the Live Performance.

Sophia: Um, Night and day. (chuckles)

NMC: WIth the Rehearsal Performance?

Sophia: The same.

NMC: About the same?

Sophia: It was about the same as the Rehearsal Performance.

NMC: If you had to say one performance was more stressful than the other, could you, or are they equal?

Sophia: It would be the Live Performance was the most stressful, and then this one, and then Rehearsal. But, Rehearsal and the Virtual were relatively the same.

NMC: Okay. Um. Did you take any specific steps to reduce your anxiety before this performance?

Sophia: No.

NMC: Did you do any of the deep breathing?

Sophia: None. No praying. No deep breathing. Nothing.

NMC: Can you think of any instance during this performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Sophia: No.

NMC: So there were no issues with memory or distraction?

Sophia: No. Not this time.

NMC: Do you feel like any anxiety may have actually helped, make you more focused, give your performance more edge or vitality?

Sophia: Mm, no. No, because I wasn't nervous?

NMC: Okay. Compare your pre-performance routines with the Live Performance.

Sophia: Um, I didn't do any of my pre-performance routines before today. Because I didn't need to. Because I wasn't nervous.

NMC: Okay. Alright, let's talk a little bit more about in general, how you feel. This is not as specific again. I'd like to go back to the idea, you mentioned, um, being concerned with, not necessarily the size of the audience but the make-up of the audience.

Sophia: Mm-hmm.

NMC: COuld you talk a little bit more about that?

Sophia: Um, I get more nervous when there's people in the audience whose opinion I care about the most. So, obviously if my teachers are in the audience, I want to do well. So, then I would get more nervous.

NMC: Are those the people that, whose opinion you highly esteem? Is that?

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: Are there other kinds of people like that, besides your teachers?

Sophia: Um, well I think the teachers are the ones I think of the most, but. Um, I can't think of any right now.

NMC: And what is it about your teachers, that if a teacher is in the audience it makes you more nervous than if they are not?

Sophia: Um, because they're good musicians, and they could be able to tell if I made a mistake. This is if you don't have a musical background, you might be able to cover up a quick mistake, they would probably be able to notice.

NMC: Okay. Why are you concerned their noticing mistakes? How does that affect you?

Sophia: Um, because I want them to think that I am a good musician, a good performer. So, I don't want them to think, "Oh, [Sophia] made a mistake in her performance."

NMC: (chuckles) So you think they might be disappointed with...

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: With a mistake?

Sophia: Right.

NMC: Okay. Um, are you concerned that recording a performance might lead to similar evaluations?

Sophia: You mean if they listen to a recording?

NMC: Let's say, what if your teacher, or you knew your teacher was subscribing to the podcast?

Sophia: Oh. Um, I might be a little more nervous than I was, for instance, today.

NMC: How would your opinion of the process change if you were to receive feedback from the internet audience?

Sophia: Oh. I think I might think about it a little more seriously. And I might do some deep breathing (chuckles) and pray, you know, "Help me play this piece the best I can."

NMC: How would it be different if instead of just an audio recording, it were a video recording going online?

Sophia: Mmm. I don't know if that would make any difference. Mm-hmm.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any other thoughts about, uh, your symptoms of performance anxiety in the three different contexts that we've been in so far?

Sophia: Um, I don't think so. I think we talked about everything.

NMC: Most of the descriptions we've talked about have been from the perspective of the performer. Imagine now that you are the teacher, and a student of yours is trying to explain the symptoms experienced in these performances. What kind of descriptive words would you need to hear from your student to truly understand the mental and physical feelings as experienced?

Sophia: Mmm. Okay. So. mmm. That's broad.

NMC: Yeah.

Sophia: Um. Read the question one more time.

NMC: What kinds of descriptive words would you need to hear from your student to understand what they're going through?

Sophia: Um. Descriptive words. Okay. So I could use dread. I could use panicked. Uh, terrified. Let's see, I'm trying to think of other ones. Well nervous, anxious. Um, all the easy ones. Are those the things you're looking for?

NMC: Yes exactly.

Sophia: Um, let's see. I, I can probably think of easier ones after we're done with this. I think those would hit it.

NMC: Okay. What if you were asking them to describe their physical sensations? What kind of words would you need to hear?

Sophia: Um, jittery. Unfocused. Mind... Mindless. Can't concentrate. Um, let's see. Stomach churning. Stomach in knots. Um, sweaty. Clammy. Um, some people lose the feeling in their hands. Those types of things?

NMC: mm-hmm.

Sophia: Um, I can't think of anything else at the moment.

NMC: Okay. What kinds of questions would you ask the student to help them articulate their physical and mental symptoms and feelings?

Sophia: To articulate? To narrow down?

NMC: What kind of questions would you ask?

Sophia: Well kind of like the same things you're asking me. Well start from head to toe, and let, let, or tell me how you feel. And then you can focus on the areas they have issues with.

NMC: Okay. Other things you might ask?

Sophia: Um, well. Maybe why, well, a lot of the same questions you've been asking me. Why do you get nervous? What do you think makes you nervous? What do you do to help yourself with the nerves? Those types of things.

NMC: Okay. Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript to of this interview to make any clarifications, amplifications, or corrections?

Sophia: That would probably be a good idea.

NMC: It may be a while before that transcript is ready.

Sophia: Okay. That's fine.

NMC: It typically takes four to five times as long to transcribe an interview as the interview itself lasts. So I have about eight hours, six hours of interviews, that I'll be getting over the next few days.

Sophia: Right.

NMC: So it's going to take awhile to get through the transcript. But I will definitely let you have a copy of that when it's available.

Sophia: Okay.

NMC: Do you any other closing thoughts before we conclude the interview?

Sophia: No. I think that's good.

NMC: I do have a suggestion for an article for you to read.

Sophia: Okay.

NMC: And I'll help you with later on.

Sophia: Okay.

NMC: But do remind me. Say, "Hey, you said there is an article I need to read." So remind me about that, and I'll get that to you, and discuss it with you.

Sophia: Okay.

NMC: Okay. Alright.

Sophia, LP2

November 15, 2009

NMC: And you're Sophia?

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: Okay, Sophia, you've performed in two live performances and several virtual performances, and we're going to talk about those.

Sophia: Okay.

NMC: But before we do, would you like to know your scores on the different surveys that you completed?

Sophia: Sure.

NMC: Okay. On the K-MPAI, that was the first one you filled out, it's the diagnostic, you scored a 25.

Sophia: Okay.

NMC: Um, a score of zero indicates that you're right in the average, a negative score indicates that anxiety does not bother you as much.

Sophia: Oh. Okay. So I scored quite high. (laughs)

NMC: You score quite high. Um, and does that score seem about right to you, or...

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: ...does that surprise you?

Sophia: No. It's right on.

NMC: And the CPAI that you completed for each performance. Your lowest score was a 42 for the virtual performance. Your highest score was an 85 for Live Performance One, and Live Performance Two was the exact same score. Um, your exposure performances ranged from 44 to 58, and they were all lower than your Rehearsal Performance, which was a 59.

Sophia: Okay. That seems.

NMC: That's them there.

Sophia: Yeah. I see them. Okay, yeah, that seems right.

NMC: Does that seem about right?

Sophia: Mm-hmm. (affirmative)

NMC: Does anything in there surprise you?

Sophia: No.

NMC: Okay. Okay. You've now performed in two live performance situations. Compare how you felt in Live Performance One, and how you felt during Live Performance Two.

Sophia: Live Performance Two, I'd say I was more nervous. And I think it was because I wanted to perform better than the first Live Performance, so I was probably putting more pressure on myself to do better. And I was a lot more nervous. Even though there were, I knew that there were only five or six people in the audience, that still didn't matter. I was still very nervous.

0:02:09

NMC: Okay. Can you compare your mental symptoms of anxiety between the two performances?

Sophia: This time, I kept getting distracted. I kept, um, thinking about the concert that I was going to go to that night, and then what I was going to have for dinner. I couldn't stop thinking about what I was going to have for dinner. And then, I would catch myself and say, you know, "Focus. You have to go and play." But then my mind would would just start to wander.

NMC: So this was before you played?

Sophia: This was before I played.

NMC: Okay.

Sophia: mm-hmm.

NMC: Um, and this distraction, that's different than how you felt in Live Performance One?

Sophia: I wasn't distracted as much in Live Performance One, for some reason. I'm not sure why. In Live Performance One, while I was performing, I had a few memory slips, and in Performance One, I was blank, so I then just started over at a spot that I knew. In

Live Performance Two, I was playing along and then could tell, I could see, "Okay, I know I'm going to be playing this part," but then I couldn't remember what came after that. So then I was thinking ahead going, "I don't know what's coming next, so I'll flip to that." You could say that I was prepared for failure, (chuckles) you know what I mean?

0:03:28

NMC: (chuckles) You know, as a teacher, you have to teach the memory spots...

Sophia: Mm-hmm.

NMC: ...but it's hard to broach the subject, because you don't want to say...

Sophia: I know. "If you mess up..."

NMC: Yeah. "If the worst happens..." Because you don't want to put that in people's heads.

Sophia: No.

NMC: I've started calling them 'escape hatches' instead of memory points.

Sophia: That's good. That's really good. So I could see that coming this time, and then try to put together a plan quickly, like, "I don't know what's coming next, so I'm gonna start here." Instead of last time, I was just completely blank and thought, "Okay, well, I'll just try that again and see if I can figure out what the chord is."

NMC: Okay. You called what happens in your head your mind winding. Did that happen in the second performance?

Sophia: No. Not this, no, not this time. I didn't experience that this time.

NMC: During the performance, did you experience your mind wandering?

Sophia: During Performance Two, no, because I was focussing on coming up with a plan of what to play. (laughs)

NMC: Okay. You mentioned the words dread and fear.

Sophia: Oh, okay. Um, I'd say I didn't fear or dread this performance as much as the first one because I had been through it one time before, but I still didn't really want to perform, do a solo performance.

0:05:01

NMC: Okay. Let's compare, again, Live Performance One to Live Performance Two, anxiety before the performance and anxiety during the performance.

Sophia: I'd say before is always worse, and then during the performance, oh, oh let's see, I'm supposed to be comparing them. Okay. Um, Performance Two I was way more anxious before, than I was the first time. And then during, I think I felt a little more stable the second time 'cause I was trying to put together the plan of what I was going to play, where Performance One I was just blank. Just trying to piece things together.

NMC: Okay. You also mentioned several times in the previous interview, just trying to 'hold it together.'

Sophia: Mm-hmm. Um, Performance Two. I think I held it together a little better, because I was thinking about how to do that, and in Performance One I didn't have any idea how to do that.

NMC: Compare Performance Two to a typical performance. Worse, about the same, or better?

Sophia: Um, about the same.

NMC: About the same.

Sophia: Same.

0:06:27

NMC: Let's go on to your physical symptoms of anxiety in the Live Performance Two. Compare them to Live Performance One.

Sophia: This time, my stomach was very tense, and I haven't had that before. Uh, when I was standing in the green room, my stomach was just in knots. Other than that, I experienced the same type of, sweaty palms, kind of cold and clammy hands. Everything else was the same as Performance One, except for the stomach part.

NMC: So, sweaty palms, but cold and clammy hands.

Sophia: Mmm. Have you ever had that before, where your fingers are really cold, but they're, it's moist here (rubs palm)

NMC: Okay. Yeah. Uh, how about in your face, your cheeks get hot?

Sophia: Oh, actually, yeah, I didn't have the cheeks being hot.

NMC: You mentioned your stomach churning, is it different than your stomach in knots?

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: How so?

Sophia: I didn't have the churning, that just feels just, like it's, you know something is moving inside you. This time it was just tight, like a knot being tightened and tightened.

NMC: Does the time of the day influence that? Had you just eaten before the other performance?

Sophia: No. No, I hadn't just eaten.

NMC: You also mentioned jigging legs. Did you notice that before the performance?

Sophia: Yes, and I kept pacing, too, backstage. So that was the same.

NMC: Okay. And tense muscles?

Sophia: I don't, besides the stomach, nothing else was tense. Like, my arms weren't tense or anything. It was just the stomach, I think.

NMC: I'm sure you would prefer to have most of these symptoms...

Sophia: Go away! (laughs)

NMC: ...go away. But if you had to choose one of those performance, which of those would you choose? Performance one, the way you felt in Performance One or the way you felt in Performance Two. 'Cause they're kind of different. You rated them as very high, both of them.

Sophia: mm-hmm.

NMC: I'm sure they're very uncomfortable, but which would you prefer?

Sophia: I think I would almost prefer, even though I had the stomach thing going on, I would prefer the second one, because I did feel a little bit more prepared for the performance, but I was still very, very nervous, which I don't know why, because I felt more prepared. But I think it was because I wanted to perform well, so I was setting high standards.

NMC: Okay. You've now also performed in several virtual performances. Compare your first virtual performance with your last virtual performance.

Sophia: I was way calm for the last one. I'd say I was maybe a little nervous for the first one, but I was much more calm. I came in here, set everything up, was good, done.

NMC: Okay. In looking over your scores, you rated, if we called the Virtual Performance, the one we did before the interview the first one, that was your lowest score, and then your last, your exposure performance was really close to it.

Sophia: Mm-hmm.

NMC: There were a couple in here that were a little bit higher than those two. Performance 3, you rated a 58. Do you remember anything about that particular performance that made it different?

Sophia: Was that on Wednesday (laughing ruefully)

NMC: It may have been.

Sophia: Yeah. I think I was a lot more distracted that day, so I was concerned with other things, and my mind wasn't focusing on the actual performing, so then I was more nervous about making, doing a good performance, because I couldn't focus.

NMC: Um, so talk a little bit about the last virtual performance that you did. How did you feel about it?

Sophia: The last one. I felt quite good about that one, because I knew what I had to do since I'd come in here four other times, and I felt prepared for it. I felt very calm, actually. And it, I like doing the virtual performances much more because I'm just by myself, and I can come in here and play, and it's much calmer.

NMC: Uh, can you compare maybe, your mental symptoms of anxiety between your first virtual performance and your last one?

Sophia: And the last one? Um, let's see. You said mental, mental ones?

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Sophia: I'd say, I don't know if I can.

NMC: Were they almost exactly the same, or you can't remember the mental symptoms?

Sophia: Name some mental symptoms for me.

NMC: Um, mind wandering to other things during the performance.

Sophia: Oh, no. I didn't experience that at all.

NMC: Okay.

Sophia: Um, let's see...

NMC: Mind wandering to the audience? The internet audience?

Sophia: Actually, no, that didn't bother me either, when I was doing the virtual recordings.

NMC: Okay. What about, uh, holding it together?

Sophia: Oh, I felt much more confident with the playing, when I was just in here by myself. I didn't...

NMC: So, did that change from virtual performance to virtual performance, or was it pretty constant?

Sophia: No. It was pretty the same, yeah, pretty consistent. I didn't worry about holding it together in the virtual performances. I felt more confident, I think.

NMC: What about the sense of dread leading up to a performance?

Sophia: I did not dread these at all.

NMC: Okay.

Sophia: It was like, "Let's go! Let's go get the recording done."

NMC: Uh, physical symptoms of anxiety in the virtual performances?

Sophia: Um, I think a couple of times, my hands got a little sweaty, but other than that, nothing. Maybe if I made a little bit of a mistake when I played, my hands would get a little shaky. But other than that, nothing compared to the Live Performances.

NMC: Did those symptoms change from performance to performance, or was it just episodic within specific performances of the piece?

Sophia: Yes. Yeah. Which, right, just pertained to, yep.

NMC: If you were to continue to record virtual performances, how do you think the tenth performance would feel different than the last one you recorded?

Sophia: I think I would probably feel even more confident, because I would've had more experience doing it. So, I think I would be relatively calm, and more, maybe I

could focus more on being more musical, because I wasn't just focusing on playing. I could put more into the performance.

NMC: Okay. Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with symptoms of performance anxiety in the second live performance?

Sophia: Mmm. Probably. Because the more you perform, the more used to the symptoms you are, so it probably helped a little bit. But for me, I just probably have to do more live performances, and more live performances, and more live performances, to get used to the feelings, and get used to dealing, or figuring out how to deal with them.

NMC: Mm-hmm. Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Sophia: Yes. Yes I think I would.

NMC: Why?

Sophia: Um, because the more practice you have at something, the better you get at it. So the more you do it, it becomes, um, more of a habit. So then it's, it's in you, so then you don't have to tr.... Is that making sense? You don't have to try, you would just do it. Does that answer your question?

NMC: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Did you have a chance to listen to your performances?

Sophia: I listened to one of them, and I think it was the first or second virtual recording that we did.

NMC: Okay. And how did that change your approach?

Sophia: Um, it made me hear some places, hear some places in the piece that I didn't hear before. Like, "Oh, so that's what that sounds like. I'm not sure I like that or I'll try changing that." Or, "Oh, I really like how that came out." So it sounds differently from when you've listened to it while you're actually playing it and when you listen to it as a recording. So.

NMC: When you listened to it, did you follow along in your score while you were listening?

Sophia: No, I just listened to it quick.

NMC: Okay. Um, you also received feedback. Did receiving feedback change your approach to the performances.

Sophia: Actually it did. It made me feel more confident, like, "Oh, you know, I am getting these passages." Um, so the positive feedback was very helpful, it made me boost my, boost my self-esteem just a little bit.

NMC: Okay. Uh, what was I going to say? Hmm. A lot of people mentioned grading as a source of anxiety in their performances. Do you agree with that?

Sophia: Yes. Are we talking about juries? Yes. That would make me nervous, or it does make me nervous. That my one performance is being graded, and if I have one, you know, bad performance, then that's the grade I get. Regardless of how well I could play the piece.

NMC: Is there anything you would change in the grading process that would help with that?

Sophia: I don't think I completely understand the grading process, so, can't really answer that, answer that question. So.

NMC: If you could, if you were designing a, your own grading process, what would it look like?

Sophia: Um, let's see. Well, I'd kinda base it on, I guess, I just know the Iowa, I did the state piano contest in high school. So have musicality as one sections, technicality is another section, memorization, and there's two others. Based on, keeping the piece memorized. You know, if you have any mistakes, are they large? How do you deal with them if you make them? Um, let's see, are your runs, if you have any technical runs, are they clean? Um, are you putting emotion into your piece or is it just flat. Um, let's see. Those are just some big things to hit.

NMC: So is it more, would you prefer more feedback from the jury to know what grade goes into it?

Sophia: Yes, that would be nice, to have more feedback with the jury like, you know, measures such and such to such and such, you maybe had these few problems, but from measures such and such to such and such, you know, this was, you know, you did this well. That would be nice to hear.

NMC: What about more opportunities to be graded, rather than just a mid-term and a jury?

Sophia: Mmm, I think the mid-term and the jury is sufficient.

NMC: Okay. Okay, imagine that you are a teacher, and one of your students is getting ready for performance. Would you implement an approach similar to the process implemented in this study?

Sophia: Yes. I think I would. To have them do mock recitals, just for practice, where they could, where I would sit and be the audience and listen, and make them play like they are at a recital. I think that would be very beneficial to the student.

NMC: What about recording?

Sophia: Oh, I think recording would be great for them. Um, to hear what it sounds like, so then, they can hear if they want to change something, or you know, what it sounds like as a whole, because it always sounds different when you're not playing. So I think, I think that would be a great idea as a teacher.

NMC: Okay.

Sophia: I will use that maybe.

NMC: And what advice would you give to the student to make the process effective?

Sophia: You mean if they asked me about how to deal with nerves, or...?

NMC: About recording multiple times. What would you tell them so that they got the most out of the practice?

Sophia: Mm. That we were going to record mock, like to pretend that it was a recital.

NMC: Okay. And how would they, what would they do different to make it 'pretend' recital, rather than just a, another lesson performance?

Sophia: Ummm, take their music away. Make them, make them perform their piece memorized. Have them come up, and you know, bow and then sit-down and play, and then when they were finished, stand up and bow, obviously. Um, mmm. You could, if you had, you could get all of your students together, if there was a time, and then you could do like what we do in seminar, and have the students perform for each other.

NMC: Mm-hmm.

Sophia: Or have their parents come in at the end of the lesson, and have the student perform for the parents. That would be a good idea.

NMC: Okay. What would you change in the process of recording to make it more effective for the student?

Sophia: In the process of recording? I don't think I know what you mean.

NMC: So, what we did is, uh, I set up the equipment, and I said you can record it once, save it, and we'll put it out to the audience.

Sophia: Mm-hmm.

NMC: And then I had you do five of those. Is there anything you would change in any of that? For example, "Come in. Record it as many times as you want, and pick the best one."

Sophia: Oh, no. I wouldn't allow them to do that, because you only have one shot at your recital, so you should only get to play it once.

NMC: Okay.

Sophia: You know, you don't get to walk out on stage and start playing, and then play your piece once and be like, "Oh, that wasn't very good. I'm going to do that again. So you have to listen to my piece again." No. You should just have to come in and do it once. So they should have just one shot at it.

NMC: Okay. What about it the number and the spacing of the recording sessions.

Sophia: Oh. Um.

NMC: We did five in about a seven, eight day time frame.

Sophia: Does the time between the recordings matter? It didn't matter to me. I just came in and made the recordings. So I'm not sure if when you made the recordings makes a difference. To me, it didn't really make a difference.

NMC: Okay. What about, uh, dress and ...

Sophia: Oh. You could make the students dress up or wear something a little more formal, so it would feel more like a recital.

NMC: Anything else that you might change in the process, along those lines, or completely different from that.

Sophia: I don't think there's anything else I would change. I can't think of anything right now.

NMC: In addition to doing the recordings, you also completed a survey after each performance. DId completing the survey affect your performance anxiety symptoms at all?

Sophia: No, because I knew that I could express how they, how I felt during a certain performance. So, no, it didn't affect me.

NMC: Okay. Did it affect your awareness of the symptoms as you were performing.

Sophia: Um, I don't, I don't think so. No.

NMC: How about the interview? Did you notice your performance anxiety symptoms more or less after we had our first interview?

Sophia: Neither, really. I didn't notice them any more, and I didn't notice them less, it was still about the same. I was still very aware of my performance anxiety.

NMC: Mm-hmm. What sort of things would you like additional help with, do you think?

Sophia: You mean?

NMC: In terms of performance anxiety.

Sophia: Um, hmm. Maybe.... I don't know if I can answer that right now. But, um, let's see.

NMC: Is it hard to answer because you're not sure of what the options are?

Sophia: Yes. Yes.

NMC: Okay.

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: Um, so would you enjoy some kind of special seminar or special class that dealt with performance anxiety issues.

Sophia: I think that would be really interesting to have a performance anxiety class. And it would, I'm sure, within the class, you would have to have performances to deal with your performance anxiety, which I wouldn't enjoy at all, but it would benefit me a lot, probably. So that would be very interesting.

NMC: Are you aware of any performance anxiety treatment therapies that are available?

Sophia: I know some people take a pill before they go and perform, like beta-blockers or something along those lines. Um, you know some people do yoga and Pilates, and stuff like that. Um, hmm. I guess, you kind of have your escape hatches that you try to have, just in case. But, I can't think of any way to answer that question well.

NMC: Well, in, I can go over some of the things that I've come across in my research, and I would be happy to share that with you.

Sophia: That. Yes. Please.

NMC: Okay. There are some things that focus on techniques of relaxation so that you learn how to relax your body. It's called progressive muscle relaxation. And the idea is that you can use these techniques to lower your symptoms of anxiety before you go on stage, so that you're at a lower level before you go on stage, and that you don't ramp up much whenever you do walk out on stage.

Sophia: Mm-hmm.

NMC: There are some things where you use progressive relaxation in conjunction with imagining performances. It's called, um, the, it's called cognitive something, the name is escaping me right now.

Sophia: Mm-hmm.

NMC: But basically what you do is you imagine, you come up with a list of performance situations that cause you anxiety.

Sophia: Mm-hmm.

NMC: And you rank them. So, performing for myself in the practice room might be number the one, the least causing.

Sophia: Mm-hmm, right.

NMC: Performing in the final round of the Van Cliburn might be the most, you know, number forty-eight or whatever. And then a therapist assists you in relaxing and monitors you, and then instructs you to imagine you are in performance situation one. And you use your mind to recreate that as much as possible, and the therapist watches you and looks for symptoms of anxiety, and then prompts you to relax, and doesn't move through this progression until bringing up the scene causes no more symptoms of anxiety, or symptoms of physical tension. The idea being that you can't be simultaneously anxious and relaxed, at the same time.

Sophia: That's really interesting.

NMC: So you learn to deal mentally with the prospect of performing, by relaxing in the face of imagined... There are rehearsal behavior, uh, therapy, uh, things that you can do. And that, a lot of what you do in seminar is designed to help you with performance on stage, where you just practice the mechanics of performance.

Sophia: Of performing. Mm-hmm.

NMC: Um, there are some, tips, it's called imagineering. You imagine your most successful performance, or what the most successful performance would be like, and then you rehearse that in your head. What you're going to feel prior to the performance.

What you're going to feel while you're sitting down. The things you are going to say to yourself while you're performing, even if, you know, a minor mistake happens.

Sophia: I've done that before, where you try to imagine, or you try to play in your head what you would like your performance to sound like. And then I always have to tell myself that the world will keep turning.

NMC: Yeah.

Sophia: The world goes on.

NMC: Yeah. Mr. X (name of internationally known guest clinician who visited the campus during the course of this study) said that, too.

Sophia: Yes, he said that. I really loved his, um, you know the theory the three people, where you have Person A who hears what you want to hear, Person B who is playing, and the Person C who interprets it. And then how C tells A, no C tell B to change it if it's not right. I thought that was really interesting.

NMC: So there are some different techniques that are available that have been studied that do show some improvement. So, uh,

Sophia: Your question was, would I like to learn about them? Yes, I would like to learn about them.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything else that you would like to add to this process or to what we've done thus far.

Sophia: I don't think so. No. I don't have anything.

NMC: Okay. Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications or corrections?

Sophia: Um, yes.

NMC: Okay. Alright. I think that will do it.

Sophia: Okay. Good.

Winona, VP

November 3, 2009

NMC: Okay. So. Your pseudonym is?

Winona: Winona.

NMC: Winona, you have performed now in a Rehearsal Performance, a Virtual Performance and a Live Performance. And we're going to talk a little bit about those. And also, you participated in the pilot study when I did this back in 2008, correct?

Winona: Correct.

NMC: Okay. Um, so we may reference very briefly your experiences there just because you've done this before. Were you in the experimental group or the control group?

Winona: Experimental.

NMC: So you did the five extra performances?

Winona: Yeah.

NMC: Very good. Okay. We often feel the mental and physical symptoms of anxiety in daily life. Some people might find the following situations trigger these symptoms: riding a roller coaster, driving in an unfamiliar location, giving a presentation, asking someone out on a date, or having a cavity filled. In your daily life, what is a situation that causes you to feel symptoms of anxiety?

Winona: Um, definitely what you said about the car. Driving in an unfamiliar place.

NMC: Do you have anything other than the items mentioned?

Winona: Oh, other than? Um, being in a situation where I'm unprepared.

NMC: Okay. What kind of situations?

Winona: For example, classes. Taking tests.

NMC: Okay.

Winona: Performing, obviously.

NMC: Okay. So, let's talk about what that feels like, taking a test when you don't feel prepared. Um, what are the mental symptoms of that kind of anxiety?

Winona: Panic. Um, anger at myself for not preparing ahead of time.

NMC: Okay. Any other emotions that you associate with that kind of anxiety?

Winona: No, not off the top of my head.

NMC: So anger, panic. Do you ever talk to yourself or have some kind internal dialogue when you're in that situation?

Winona: Yes.

NMC: Can you think of some of the things that you might say to yourself?

Winona: (chuckles) Um... Appropriate things? (chuckles)

NMC: Sure.

Winona: Um, "Dangit, [Winona], why didn't you study the night before?" or, "Why didn't you start studying last week?" Stuff like that.

NMC: So kind of upbraiding yourself?

Winona: Yeah, yeah.

NMC: Are there anythings that you say to yourself in the test situation besides these, um, blaming of yourself.

Winona: Um, occasionally I'll blame the teacher in my mind. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. Besides the internal dialogue and the emotions you mentioned, panic and anger, do you ever feel dissociated in this test situation? That means do you feel outside of yourself, that you're not really in the situation, you're kind of just observing yourself in this situation?

Winona: No.

NMC: Okay. Does the anxiety cause you to lose your focus or lose your concentration?

Winona: Yes.

NMC: Okay. And how does that affect you when you take a test?

Winona: I get anxious, and information that I have just kind of goes out the window, and I can't retrieve it. I can't remember. I just get so frazzled that I can't think of the information that I actually studied. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. So, you kind of blame yourself for not studying, but even those things that you did study...

Winona: They leave too.

NMC: They leave too. Okay. What are some of the physical symptoms that you feel in this test situation?

Winona: Um, I can feel an increased heart rate, for sure. And I can feel my face get red. My palms sweat. That, that's all.

NMC: Okay. Let's go ahead, and we'll go from head to toe.

Winona: Okay.

NMC: So in your head and face, you mention that your face turns read?

Winona: Well, I can't, I don't look in the mirror, but I can feel the blood rushing to my face, yeah.

NMC: Okay. Is there any sensation of like, heat or flush.

Winona: Yeah, heat. I can feel it when I touch my face.

NMC: What about in your head? Like your scalp and your hair and...

Winona: Oh, I have no idea.

NMC: Okay. Um, your shoulders and neck? Do you feel anything in your shoulders and neck in this situation?

Winona: Um, definitely tense, but not pain, really.

NMC: Okay. How about in your upper back and in your chest?

Winona: Um, I guess I get short of breath, like I forget to breathe normally. But nothing in my back.

NMC: How about in your arms and in your hands whenever you are taking a test?

Winona: Well palms sweating. That's all.

NMC: Okay. In your stomach?

Winona: mm. Butterflies. How would you describe that? I don't know exactly...

NMC: I think butterflies does it.

Winona: Is that good enough? Okay.

NMC: Some people say they feel hollow. Is that similar to butterflies?

Winona: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. What about in your lower back? Do you ever feel the anxiety in your lower back?

Winona: Afterwards, not during.

NMC: Okay. What's that like? What's your lower back feel like?

Winona: Um, it just, I just. I get sore. I think it's a product of the extra heart rate or something. I just feel, I feel like I just got over a fever.

NMC: Mm. Okay. How about in your legs or in your knees?

Winona: Um, they tend to shake sometimes.

NMC: Shaky as in a, uh, like a shivering shake, or as in a nervous...

Winona: Like a shivery shake.

NMC: And in your feet?

Winona: Nope.

NMC: Nope, Okay. So this is how you feel in a test situation.

Winona: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

0:06:39

NMC: Let's now consider how you generally feel in a solo performance. So, using the mental symptoms that we've mentioned so far as kind of a comparison, what are the mental symptoms that you typically feel in a solo performance?

Winona: The same only magnified.

NMC: Okay, so you mentioned some emotions of panic and anger.

Winona: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Do you have the same emotions in solo performance?

Winona: Yes.

NMC: Do you have an additional feelings, or ....?

Winona: I just had one and I can't remember what it was. Um, I guess loss of focus. That's all.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any, uh, internal dialogue whenever you're faced with a performance situation.

Winona: Yes, but I try to cut that off. If I start doing that, I try to think about the music. 'Cause if I start talking to myself, then I will completely mess up my piece.

NMC: How do you go about cutting off the internal dialogue?

Winona: I think about something else, or I start listening, actually listening to what I'm playing.

NMC: Okay. What's that like? When do you know that you need to focus on the listening.

Winona: When I start getting angry. Or if I mess up, if I hear myself mess up I think, "Oh dear. I should concentrate more"

NMC: Does the mistake cause the internal dialogue, or is it the other way around? Does the internal dialogue cause a mistake?

Winona: I think both. It depends on when the internal dialogue starts. Like if I'm, if I'm unprepared then the internal dialogue begins as soon as I sit down at the bench. But if I feel like, "I can do this," then it only starts if, after I have a little memory slip. But I'm thinking, "Oh." You know, I'm talking to myself.

NMC: Okay. What about the feeling of dissociation, being outside of yourself and watching yourself perform. Do you get that in solo performances?

Winona: Um, occasionally, but again, I try, I do my very best not to let that happen.

NMC: And focus and concentration. How is that affected?

Winona: By... anxiety?

NMC: In solo performances.

Winona: Oh, by solo. Oh. Focus and concentration on my piece or in regular life.

NMC: Well, in the performance situation.

Winona: In the performance situation. Um, it's, it's effected by nerves. I, I, I don't concentrate as well.

NMC: Okay. Let's move on now to the physical symptoms that you feel generally in a solo performance.
0:09:59
Winona: Okay. They're the same as before, only magnified, again.

NMC: So you mentioned before, your heart rate. You can feel that in solo performance.

Winona: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: How about your face flushing and turning red?

Winona: Yes.

NMC: Do your palms sweat?

Winona: Yes.

NMC: Does that.... go ahead.

Winona: And I think my arms shake. I don't, I think I didn't, I don't think I said that they do that during the test, but they do.

NMC: Okay.

Winona: Like, my hands are trembly.

NMC: So your arms and your hands will tremble in a solo performance?

Winona: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: And your palms sweat. Does the motion of your hands, uh, affect your performance? Like the shakiness and the sweatiness?

Winona: Yes.

NMC: How so?

Winona: My touch isn't quite as confident. I can't get the notes to sound, sometimes, where I normally could in a practice session.

NMC: Again, let's just go from your head to your toes.

Winona: Okay.

NMC: Head to face, we talked about...uh, shoulders and neck?

Winona: Um, I guess there's tenseness there. But I definitely get how while I perform. From head to toe.

NMC: Okay. Uh, how about your upper back and in your chest?

Winona: Nothing different.

NMC: You mentioned the breathing before. Does that affect you in solo performance?

Winona: Yeah, I forget, I have to remind myself to breathe during, while I'm playing.

NMC: Your arms and your hands?

Winona: They are shaky.

NMC: Okay. Stomach?

Winona: Um, butterflies and sometimes nausea. Like full-blown nausea.

NMC: Really?

Winona: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Um, your lower back?

Winona: Nope.

NMC: Nothing. How about your legs or your knees?

Winona: They shake, which makes it hard to pedal sometimes.

NMC: Okay. And your feet?

Winona: (shakes head no)

NMC: Now, do you ever take steps to reduce these symptoms of anxiety?

Winona: Well, preparation is key. Extensive preparation. Knowing how much I need to prepare in order not to feel so anxious. Um, I have to remember to go to the bathroom before I play. And not talking to my friends or messing around with other things right before I play so that my concentration is as effective as it can be.

NMC: So you mention preparation. That's I guess in practice. Getting ready.

Winona: Yes, yes.

NMC: So what things do you do in preparation, um, so that you feel ready to perform. Do you have any specific practice strategies?

Winona: Um, leading up, like right before, you know, the few days or the week before, I have to perform. I have to practice actually performing. Not stopping and going back. I have to do that pretty extensively, I think more than other people do. I don't know.

NMC: So what do you do to practice performing?

Winona: I just play my piece or my multiple pieces, I just play them straight through without the music. And I try to, um, copy the, the performance situation as much as I can.

NMC: In what ways?

Winona: Like with the piano. Like, I will, you know, raise the lid or lower the stand or whatever.

NMC: Do you have, so that's kind of like a rehearsal strategy, a practice strategy. Do you have any pre-performance routines that you like to do? That can include the entire day leading up to the performance.

Winona: No.

NMC: Okay. Do you, um, do any kind of relaxation techniques?

Winona: Um, nothing huge. I just kind of shake my hands and jump around a little bit before I go on (chuckles) just to release the jitters. But not like, yoga, or anything.

NMC: Do you do any deep breathing or...

Winona: Nope.

NMC: Okay. Uh, do you pray or meditate before you perform?

Winona: Prayer, occasionally.

NMC: What kinds of things do you pray for?

Winona: Um, just to be able to get through the performance without panicking and messing up a lot. Without embarrassing myself, basically (chuckles).

NMC: Is there anything you do during a performance to help you deal with anxiety as it's happening?

Winona: Breathing. Like full breaths. Not really shallow or... Sometimes I hold my breath.

NMC: When do you, do you plan when you're going to breathe, or do you just remind yourself in the middle of the piece, or...

Winona: During the difficult passages, I remind myself to breathe, 'cause somehow that works. I can get through those passages. I guess oxygen to brain thing.

NMC: Do you ever try to breathe in concert with the music?

Winona: No.

NMC: Okay. Do you do anything in between movements, or in between pieces?

Winona: I think through the first few measures of each movement of a piece.

NMC: And what's that do for you?

Winona: Um, it helps me kind of, leave things before, behind. Whatever mistakes I made. Um, and, it helps me focus on what I'm about to do.

NMC: What kind of things do you consider a mistake?

Winona: Wrong notes. Stopping where I shouldn't stop. Memory slips.

NMC: So wrong notes and memory slips primarily?

Winona: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

NMC: And how do you think a mistake affects the performance?

Winona: Well, I know it affects the audience, because if I stop abruptly or play obviously wrong notes, then their ear goes to that, and I know it affects their visions of how the piece should be. But then I start panicking, and I, um, keep messing up, usually. It just throws me off balance.

NMC: How long does a mistake stay with your while your on stage?

Winona: All the way to the end. I can remember everything that happens and count them, and know exactly what measure numbers they are at the end. But the good stuff I don't remember. (laughs)
0:17:49
NMC: Okay. Let's consider now how you felt in the Rehearsal Performance. This was the performance with no audience that you played just for yourself. And it sounds a lot like what you mentioned in preparing for big performances.

Winona: MM-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Um, did you have any mental symptoms of anxiety for the Rehearsal Performance? The ones that you've mentioned, feelings of panic and anger, um, the internal upbraiding of yourself for not being prepared, loss of focus, concentration.

Winona: Um, not so much panic and anger, but frustration if I made a mistake. You know its, "My only chance, I can't go back. Dang it. Why'd I mess that up?" But I was still able to go on and finish. Like I wasn't, I didn't just get scared and freak out.

NMC: Can you compare the mental symptoms that you feel in the Rehearsal Performance with what you typically feel in a solo performance?

Winona: Uh. I'm not, I'm not as anxious, by myself. Um, and I don't get a lot of, like the physical symptoms. I don't get flushed or shaky at all.

NMC: Do things happen in a Rehearsal Performance that don't happen in a solo performance, or vice versa?

Winona: Occasionally, but it's not a pattern really.

NMC: And we mentioned a few of your physical symptoms. You say, the shakiness is not as much in a Rehearsal Performance?

Winona: Right.

NMC: What about some of the other things you mentioned. Your heart rate?

Winona: Um, sometimes that goes up just like in a solo performance, but not usually.

NMC: Um, your breathing.

Winona: Um, I don't remind myself to breathe in a rehearsal performance.

NMC: How about what happens in your face, the flushing?

Winona: That doesn't happen in a Rehearsal Performance.

NMC: Uh, do your hands shake?

Winona: Nope.

NMC: Palms sweat?

Winona: Yeah.

NMC: What about the butterflies?

Winona: Sometimes.

NMC: Sometimes. And would you say that the symptoms are basically the same as a typical performance, or basically different.

Winona: They are basically different. Like I said, I don't remind myself to breathe, because reminding myself to breathe is to calm down the other symptoms that go on. So if those symptoms don't happen, then I don't have to tell myself to breathe. So I think, I think they're different.

NMC: Okay.

Winona: Basically.

NMC: And in the Rehearsal Performance, this specific one, did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety?

Winona: Mm.

NMC: You mentioned kind of jumping around and shaking your hands to get the jitters out. Uh, you mentioned, um prayer.

Winona: Oh. No I didn't do any of that. I mean I set up the piano the way I thought it would be in my solo performance, but that's about it.

0:21:22

NMC: Okay, let's now consider how you felt in the Live Performance number one that was Sunday afternoon. Again let's start with the mental symptoms, um, and compare the specific instance of this Live Performance with, say, the Rehearsal Performance and a typical performance.

Winona: Okay.

NMC: So. Mental symptoms, did you have the same kinds of internal dialogue?

Winona: Yes, but they weren't as upbraiding. I wasn't angry at myself. I was just reminding myself to concentrate.

NMC: Why do you think you weren't as angry with yourself?

Winona: Well, first of all because I didn't mess up. You know, I didn't have huge mistakes. Um, and I think I was used to, I've been kind of used to performing this piece, you know, recently. So if I had that practice then I somehow don't get as nervous.

NMC: So, you performed this piece about how many times?

Winona: Um, four.

NMC: And what kind of venues were they?

Winona: Um, a jury. A competition. Um, a church. And then, I guess I was counting this. The Live Performance.

NMC: Okay. So would you say that your experience performing it prior to this specific performance helped give you confidence?

Winona: Yes. Because they, every time the piece went well, so that boosts my confidence.

NMC: Do you have any specific emotions that you associate with this performance Sunday afternoon?

Winona: Mmmm, no. I was pretty calm and I wasn't worried about it.

NMC: Did you have any sense of dissociation, or being separate from the performance?

Winona: No.

NMC: No. How was your focus and concentration during the performance?

Winona: I felt that it was pretty good. Because the audience wasn't very distracting or large. I was able to kind of forget that there were people watching, so it felt just like a practice session. So I could concentrate more.

NMC: So a large audience creates more anxiety?

Winona: Yes.

NMC: Okay. Do you remember about how many people were in the audience?

Winona: On Sunday?

NMC: mm-hmm.

Winona: Mmmmm, mmmmm, seven?

NMC: It was about that. Uh, how many would it take to make it a more, uh, anxious performance?

Winona: Well, that's kind of a loaded question. Because it depends on who they are, where they're sitting, you know. It's not really the numbers that bother me.

NMC: Okay, so what it is about where they're sitting that would bother you?

Winona: Well, for example, if a child were sitting in the front row and coloring, and I could hear it, that would, I would just lose it. My concentration would just go, and I would get mad at that child (chuckles). Or, um, if they're in my line of vision and making faces at me, or something like that. Then I would lose my concentration.

NMC: Okay. Then, what about the people themselves. Is it mostly children that distract you?

Winona: Um, no, it's anybody who's talking, or rustling their program, or whatever. But I get more nervous playing for peers than I do for teachers or judges.

NMC: Who do you consider peers?

Winona: Um, other music majors my age.

NMC: Why is that?

Winona: Because they're more judgmental, I feel. They don't, they judge without wanting to help me get better. As opposed to a teacher or a competition judge who will make comments to help you improve, not just tell you, "You suck." Or whatever.

NMC: Um, back to symptoms, this specific Sunday, what were your physical symptoms like?

Winona: Um, the palm sweating was there, the leg shaking was there, the flushed face was there. But it wasn't so bad that it, it, that my concentration suffered.

NMC: Did you have the stomach butterflies?

Winona: RIght before but not during.

NMC: DId you feel, uh, heavy heart rate?

Winona: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Did you have to remind yourself to breathe?

Winona: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: DId you take any steps to reduce your anxiety for this particular performance?

Winona: No.

NMC: No. Um, so, I'm just going to go through them. You mentioned, I think, prayer?

Winona: mm-hmm

NMC: Did you pray before this performance?

Winona: No.

NMC: You mentioned jumping around and shaking your jitters out. Did you do that?

Winona: No.

NMC: Okay. You mentioned kind of a self-imposed isolation. Did you do that?

Winona: No.

NMC: No. Why do you think you did not do those things with this particular performance?

Winona: Because I felt well prepared with the piece, and so I wasn't worried about it. I wasn't worried about the performance itself. So.

NMC: Okay. Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety may have affected your performance?

Winona: I played one wrong note and it threw me off, and then I could feel my heart rate and my face flush and the shakiness. So that affected maybe the next few measures, but then it went away.

NMC: What did you do to help yourself get through that?

Winona: Uh, I breathed.

NMC: Do you tell yourself to breathe, or do you just breathe.

Winona: I tell myself.

NMC: So you say..

Winona: "Breathe." (laughs)

NMC: "It's okay, breathe."

Winona: Yeah, yeah.

NMC: Do you think that the anxiety may have given you, uh, better focus or better concentration, or gave your performance edge or vitality?

Winona: No. (chuckles) No.
0:29:05
NMC: Okay, let's now consider the Virtual Performance, the recording session we just had.

Winona: Okay.

NMC: And I'd like you to, again, think of your symptoms in comparison with the Live Performance, the Rehearsal Performance, and what you typically feel.

Winona: Okay.

NMC: What were your mental symptoms of anxiety, if you had any, during the recording session?

Winona: Um, there weren't any anxious feelings before hand. But during the piece, I felt the anxiety about making the mistake as I typically do in a live performance.

NMC: Okay, so, you were fine before you began, but then you made a mistake, and then your symptoms started?

Winona: Yeah.

NMC: What were the mental symptoms that started when you did have a mistake?

Winona: Um, just frustration. Not full-blown anger at myself. So I guess that would be more like the Rehearsal Performance.

NMC: Okay. Do you have any specific emotions that you would tie to the Virtual Performance? Besides frustration.

Winona: Um, I felt that the performance was not great. But I don't know if that's an emotion. (chuckles)

NMC: Uh, well...

Winona: Like if I just feel okay about the way I played it.

NMC: So you weren't particularly excited about it?

Winona: Right, yeah. So what, I don't, what would that be called?

NMC: Lack of excitement? I'm not sure...

Winona: Lack of excitement. (laughs) Okay.

NMC: I'm not the best with emotion words.

Winona: Okay. (laughing)

NMC: Um, did you have any internal dialogue besides telling yourself to breathe? Or did you tell yourself to breathe?

Winona: I did not tell myself to breathe. Um, no, I didn't have an internal dialogue.

NMC: Okay. Uh, was your focus or concentration affected during this performance?

Winona: Yeah. My concentration was affected by the mistake, and then my mind just kind of started wandering after that (chuckles).

NMC: Do you have the same kind of mind wandering, did you have the same kind of mind wandering in the Live Performance after you noticed the mistake?

Winona: No. No. Because I, I think I would have, but again I had to remind myself to concentrate on the music and the task at hand.

NMC: Okay. So, uh, the mistake in this situation did not prompt you to redouble your efforts to concentrate?

Winona: No. And I think because I was by myself.

NMC: Okay. How about physical symptoms of anxiety in the Virtual Performance.

Winona: None. Very little if any.

NMC: Okay. So your face?

Winona: Nope.

NMC: Hands and palms sweaty or shaky?

Winona: I think my palms were a little sweaty, but otherwise I was pretty calm and relaxed.

NMC: Okay. Did your heart rate change much?

Winona: Nope.

NMC: Did you notice that you needed to breathe?

Winona: No, I was, I, I was aware that I was taking shallow breaths, but I, I was thinking about other things.

NMC: Okay. Um, about your knees and legs. Did they tremble at all, or shake?

Winona: Nope.

NMC: Nope. So, in general, your symptoms of anxiety that were present in the Live Performance, were they much less or absent in the Virtual Performance, or about the same, but maybe reduced a little bit.

Winona: They were much less.

NMC: So almost to completely different sensations?

Winona: Almost. Yeah, yeah almost another (inaudible)

NMC: Did you take any steps to reduce your anxiety in this performance situation?

Winona: No.

NMC: No.

Winona: Because I didn't have any, really.

NMC: So no jumping around, working out energy?

Winona: Nope.

NMC: No isolation?

Winona: Nope

NMC: No prayer?

Winona: Nope.

NMC: Can you think of specific instances during the performance where anxiety may have affected the Virtual Performance?

Winona: No.

NMC: Okay. Do you think at any point that anxiety may have helped your performance, with better focus, concentration, edge or vitality.

Winona: In the Virtual Performance? No.

NMC: No.

Winona: But can I go back to that thing about the edge in the Live Performance. The only thing that's good about all of that anxiety that happens, is that I do remind myself to concentrate, and so I have increased concentration. But whereas in the Virtual Performance, I didn't really care that I concentrated because no one was watching, and I couldn't feel the immediate effects of any mistakes that I made.

NMC: Which performance was better, do you think? The Live Performance or the Virtual Performance?

Winona: The Live Performance.

NMC: Do you think the anxiety, either as a direct effect or an indirect effect made it the better performance?

Winona: Yes, oddly enough.

NMC: Can you explain that.

Winona: Um... I only get anxious about things that are important to me. So, and if something is important to me, then I really want to do well, and sometimes when I really want to do well, then it happens for me. (chuckles) So again I was, I was able to focus more than if I were just by myself. I was able to focus in front of an audience, and, actually think about the music.

NMC: Can you compare maybe, the Live Performance with your competition performance?

Winona: I would say that they were similar. Especially the number of people in the audience. Um, but, the people, I care more about impressing the people at my competition than I did about the Live Performance Sunday.

NMC: Was your level of anxiety different in the two? Between your Live Performance and your competition performance?

Winona: Yes. It was more, I was more anxious for my competition, just because my program was longer. I had to play, I had to be able to concentrate for a longer period of time.

NMC: Um, what would have made the Virtual Performance more important to you, that the concentration, that you would focus on maintaining concentration?

Winona: Um, if I knew that it had a direct effect on my future, maybe. I'm just thinking, 'cause I'm trying to, you know, send in recordings for grad school and stuff. So if I knew that this recording was going to be heard by someone who had an influence on my future career, then I would care a lot more, I think.
0:36:43
NMC: Would it change if instead of publishing under your pseudonym, we used your real name with the Virtual Performance?

Winona: Yeah, it would change.

NMC: Would it change if, instead of just an audio recording, we included a video element?

Winona: Yes.

NMC: Okay. How would that change? Would it be the lack of anonymity or is it something else with the video?

Winona: I think it's the lack of anonymity. And the video is like a person.

NMC: The video is like a person?

Winona: Yeah, I mean it's, people will see it whether it's today or not. So, I mean, that's how I feel. The video is like a person sitting there watching me.

NMC: Okay. What if they're sitting there listening to you? Here's a hypothetical. This is kind of funny. You're playing to an audience of blind people.

Winona: mm. Then...

NMC: How would your concentration be affected?

Winona: I think, I would be concentrated on different things. I would be concentrated on making it sound good, rather than what I looked like.

NMC: So, when do you concentrate on what you look like? How does that affect your performance?

Winona: I get really self-conscious when I'm in front of people, performing. So, you know, I don't really know what I do because I'm self-conscious. But my concentration on the music is less because I'm concentrated on about what I look like.

NMC: What kinds of things about yourself do you think you are self-conscious about on stage?

Winona: Um, like, well if my pantyhose are ripped, then I would be thinking about that. And I try not to make funny faces while I play.

NMC: Do you make funny faces when you practice?

Winona: I think so. Sometimes I catch myself like biting my tongue or doing something weird. I don't know.
0:39:12
NMC: Okay. Most of the descriptions we've given have been from the perspective of the performer. Pretend now that you are a teacher, and you have a student that is trying to explain how they feel in performance. What kind of words would make you understand what they're feeling. Specific words.

Winona: Specific words? Um, if, if they said, "I panic," or, um, "I get butterflies." But I think if they just said, "I'm nervous," then I wouldn't really know what that meant specifically to that person. They would have to describe, probably, their physical symptoms.

NMC: So what kind of words...

Winona: So like, um, "My heart starts beating really fast." I would understand that.

NMC: Okay. Would you ask any questions to help students articulate their feelings?

Winona: Mmm, yes. I mean, they would be similar to the ones you just asked me.

NMC: So what kind of questions would you...

Winona: So like, "Do your hands shake?" "Do your legs tremble?" "Do you get red in the face?" Stuff like that.

NMC: We are about done. Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications, amplifications, or corrections?

Winona: No thanks.

NMC: Do you have any other thoughts about what we've talked about, or things that have occurred to you later on?

Winona: Um, nope. I think, I think I've answered pretty clearly.

NMC: Comparing yourself now to the performer you were back when we did the pilot study, do you think you've changed much?

Winona: Yeah, I've matured as a performer and as a person. So, now I, and I think I know how to deal a little better. I know how to practice in order to this. And so that I feel more prepared and less anxious.

NMC: So as you've gone through your education you've learned more what you really need to know to feel confident to perform.

Winona: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

NMC: What kinds of things are those? Can you think of specific...

Winona: Um, well, now I , I make a practice routine, whereas last year it was just whenever I had a minute. So now I work my practice into my day. I know my teacher better. I know how to interact with him in a way that is beneficial to my playing and my performing.

NMC: Do you think your level of familiarity with the repertoire changed? Do you feel you know the pieces that you're playing now better than you knew the pieces you were playing then?

Winona: Oh. Yes. Yes because of those reasons. Because I practice them more, and because my teacher is better able to help me with any musical questions that I might have. Because I know how to ask now.

NMC: Okay. Thank you very much.

Winona: Mm-hmm.

Winona, LP2

November 15, 2009

NMC: Winona.

Winona: Yes.

NMC: Let me find you. Okay, you've now performed in a couple of live performances, and several virtual performances, and we're going to talk about those. But before we do, would you like to know how you scored on the different surveys that you took?

Winona: Yes.

NMC: Okay. On the KMPAI, which was the diagnostic survey that you took, you scored a negative four. A score of zero would indicate you're right in the middle of the way people react to performance anxiety. Negative four indicates that performance anxiety affects you a little bit less than the typical performer, but negative four is kind of close.

Winona: Okay.

NMC: Uh, what do you think about that score? Does that feel about right?

Winona: I thought it would have been higher.

NMC: Higher, okay. Does it surprise you that it's negative four?

Winona: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. On the CPAI's, which was the individual instrument you filled out after every performance, your lowest ranked performance was the EP2, and that was a 31. Your highest ranked performance was EP3, and it was a 62. Your Live Performance Number 1 was a 44, and your Live Performance Number 2 was a 50. Does that sound about right?

Winona: I don't know what that means.

NMC: Okay. A lower number means you felt symptoms of anxiety less, a higher number means you felt more anxiety symptoms.

Winona: What were the Live Performances?

NMC: Live Performance was a 44, that was number 1. Live Performance 2 was a 50, and your highest score was on the third Exposure Performance, and it was a 62.

Winona: So, what's the lowest number?

NMC: The lowest one you had was EP2.

Winona: But I mean, what's the lowest...

NMC: Possible?

Winona: Yeah.

NMC: The lowest possible, I think, is a 22 or a 24.

Winona: Oh. Okay.

NMC: The highest possible is an 80-something. 86, 88, something like that.

Winona: I guess that sounds about right.

NMC: Sounds about right?

Winona: Yeah.

NMC: Does any of this surprise you at all, in the way they lined out?

Winona: Um, it surprises me about the Live Performance number 2, that it was higher than the first one. But the virtual performances, I can't remember, so.

NMC: Okay. You've now performed in two live performance situations. Compare how you felt during Live Performance 1, and how you felt during Live Performance 2.

Winona: Um, they were similar. For the Live Performance number two, there were people in the audience that I, uh, cared about their reaction more so than the first one. But...

NMC: Why is that?

Winona: Well, they were related to me.

NMC: Okay.

Winona: But, otherwise, in regards to physical symptoms of performance anxiety, and think there was more.

NMC: Okay. So, let's compare your mental symptoms of anxiety in Live Performance 2 to Live Performance 1.

Winona: Um, I didn't worry about the second one as much before hand.

NMC: You mentioned in the first interview words like panic, anger, loss of focus, and a vigilance on your internal dialogue.

Winona: I guess those weren't as heightened in the second performance. I didn't think about them. There wasn't any internal dialogue, or, I didn't panic if I made a mistake. The first one, I think I did, though.

NMC: Okay. Did one performance feel better than the other?

Winona: Um, yeah. The first I thought went better, but I was calmer for the second one.

NMC: Went better in terms of the performance itself?

Winona: Yes, yes.

NMC: Okay. How did it go better?

Winona: Oh, the music was just there, and I didn't have as many memory slips.

NMC: Okay. How about your physical symptoms of anxiety. How were they different from Live Performance 2 to Live Performance 1?

Winona: I think they were all there, but they started earlier for the first performance. Um, they started when I was waiting to go on. But then, for the second Live Performance, it started as just before I went on stage, or when I was walking on stage, rather than waiting.

NMC: So your symptoms didn't start until your performance was imminent.

Winona: Yes.

NMC: Um, you mentioned from the first interview your face would flush. Did you get that in the second performance?

Winona: Um, no.

NMC: No. How about hands sweaty and trembly?

Winona: Yes.

NMC: Yes. You mentioned that your touch feels less confident. Is that in the second Live Performance also?

Winona: I didn't notice it.

NMC: Queasy stomach?

Winona: Nope.

NMC: Nope. How about legs shaking when you're pedaling.

Winona: No.

NMC: Didn't happen in the second Live Performance?

Winona: hmm-mmm (negative).

NMC: In general, would you say your physical symptoms of anxiety were more, less or about the same as the first performance?

Winona: I think they were about the same, but on the lower side, if that makes sense.

NMC: So, slightly less to about the same.

Winona: Yes.

NMC: And which performance do you think went better?

Winona: The first one.

NMC: The first one. Do you think the symptoms that you experienced in the first one had any impact on the performance?

Winona: I think so. I'm becoming more and more convinced that the anxiety can either enhance your performance or take away from it considerably. So I think at that time, it was an enhancing factor.

NMC: How does it enhance?

Winona: Um, it increases my concentration. I have to concentrate more to overcome my physical symptoms. So, I'm able to remember what I worked on to make the music happen.

NMC: You've now also performed in several virtual performance. Compare your first virtual performance with your last virtual performance.

Winona: Hmm. Well. The first virtual performance, I think I was more relaxed and better prepared for it, but the last one, I was in a hurry, and had a lot of other things that I was thinking about that day.

NMC: Did one performance feel better than the other?

Winona: Um, not the music itself. I probably felt better with the first performance, I wasn't as stressed. But I don't think the music differed that much.

NMC: Were the mental symptoms of anxiety different in the last virtual performance?

Winona: Um, yeah. They were slightly heightened, just because I was stressed out, so I was more easily frustrated by the mistakes I made.

NMC: Okay. How about the physical symptoms. Were they different in the last performance, compared to the first Virtual Performance.

Winona: No. They were pretty much the same.

NMC: And, in terms of the same, were they low, middle, or high instances of those symptoms?

Winona: They were low. They only get high, I think, if I'm performing in front of people that I see.

NMC: Okay. If you were to continue to record virtual performances, how would the tenth performance feel different than the last performance you recorded?

Winona: I think by that point, I would start to get tired of the music and just stop (chuckles) worrying about it so much. So, in terms of anxiety, it would be considerably less than the last.

NMC: Do you think the process of recording multiple virtual performances changed the way you dealt with the symptoms of performance anxiety in the second live performance?

Winona: Um, in an indirect way, yes. I, because I was used to playing my piece, at all, you know five times in a week, just running through it increased my confidence for the second Live Performance, so I was less worried that I would make a mistake.

NMC: Okay, how would doing the same thing, but without recording it affect you? If instead of knowing that you were coming in for a recording session five times, you just said, "Okay. Five times this week, I'm going to go to the practice room. Zip, and I'm done. And then I'll do it again tomorrow."

Winona: I think it would be about the same.

NMC: About the same?

Winona: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

NMC: Okay. Would you try this approach again when preparing for a performance?

Winona: Which approach? The virtual recording?

NMC: The recording.

Winona: Um. Well, that depends upon how available the equipment was. If it's not, if I have to go through, jump through a lot of hoops to get the equipment set up, I wouldn't bother with it. But, I think if I could record and get feedback before a Live Performance, then yeah, I would.

NMC: You did receive feedback on one of your performances.

Winona: Umm-hmm.

NMC: How did that affect your, uh, your subsequent virtual performance recordings?

Winona: Well, it was positive feedback, so um, I was able to take it and apply it to the music. And, I think it improved it, so I was, I think, it helped me prepare for the next, um, recordings.

NMC: Okay. Would you mind talking about your performance in the master class that was not a part of the study.

Winona: What about it?

NMC: Could you compare that performance with any of the live performances that we did as a part of this study?

Winona: Uh, I definitely thought about the Live Performances. I've really had to think about how I deal with anxiety because of this study. And so, I was, I was in that mind set playing for the master class. Um, so I think I was able to just kind of deal with, and to some extent, get rid of the, uh, feelings of anxiety playing for the masterclass. Which is odd, because there were a lot of people there, and there was a famous guy sitting behind me. But, um, I was able to really listen to the music that I was making, and...

NMC: How would you rate this, in terms of the anxiety that it generated, uh, to the Live Performance that we did as a part of this study, to a jury performance, to a competition performance.

Winona: Um, if a 5 is the highest anxiety, I would give the Live Performance of this study a 2, competition a 3, a jury a 3, and the master class a 4 or 5.

NMC: What was it about the master class that made it so much more anxiety generating than a jury or than the Live Performance in this study?

Winona: I think it was the potential for negative feedback from someone, I don't know, someone important in the world of music.

NMC: And, to those of you who may read this transcript, uh, the master clinician was of international reputation.

Winona: Yep.

NMC: Did that affect how you performed?

Winona: Um, I don't think so. It was just more of his physical presence. I didn't think, "Oh, my gosh. He has toured the world." I just thought, "Oh, he's like my 80 year old grandpa sitting back there." (laughs). But at the same time, I knew, uh, I thought about the consequences of making a mistake, or playing well, too.

NMC: Did the audience, was the audience significantly different than what you're used to?

Winona: Yes. They, it was a large, well, pretty large audience, and lots of, um, not my peers. It was an older audience. But still influential in the community, so.

NMC: Would you consider them a knowledgeable audience, or a lay audience?

Winona: I think some of both. On the knowledgeable side, though.

NMC: And before you performed in this master class, you, were you in the audience when they showed the video?

Winona: Yes.

NMC: So about how long were you seated in the audience waiting to go up to perform?

Winona: Um, thirty to forty-five minutes.

NMC: Did that affect your anxiety? In either way?

Winona: Um, no. Had it been longer, I would have gotten more anxious. But, I mean, it didn't seem like thirty or forty-five minutes. And so, I was still warmed-up when I was ready to go play.

NMC: And did the master clinician, did his instruction after you performed, will that help or hurt you in future performances?

Winona: Oh, I think it will help. He gave some good, some good comments. There weren't very many of them, but what he gave me, I'll take and use.

NMC: Would you describe it as a positive experience?

Winona: Yes.

NMC: What in the demeanor of the clinician made it a positive experience?

Winona: Um, he was very complimentary, and helpful. I, and I know his reputation, so the fact that someone with that kind of reputation could be so complimentary to me meant a lot.

NMC: Okay. You mentioned that because you were involved in this study, that you thought it helped you in preparation for the master class, at least in dealing with your...

Winona: mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: How so?

Winona: Um, it helped me know how much to prepare for a performance. Um, and I think analyzing symptoms of performance anxiety, my personal symptoms of performance anxiety, is helpful in general. Just so that I know what's going on.

NMC: Would you say that the interview process made you more aware of your symptoms of anxiety, or...

Winona: I think...

NMC: ...Or the virtual performance recording?

Winona: I think the interview and the forms, the survey things. 'Cause I, I can't, I don't put words to my feelings when I'm playing, but then later if I think about it, and I'm not under pressure to keep playing, then I can really sit down and think about how and why this is happening.

NMC: And how does thinking about those symptoms assist you in later performances?

Winona: Um, for the most part, it just tells me that I don't really need, that my body doesn't need to react that way. I mean, there's no reason, if I've had enough preparation, it shouldn't matter, the size of the audience or who's in it. I should be able to play consistently well if I've had enough preparation. So there shouldn't be in sweating, or face-reddening or heart beating or anything, so.

NMC: What is enough preparation?

Winona: Uh, consistent practice, a routine.

NMC: Okay. I also have a follow up question with your first interview. You mentioned that you've become better at communicating with your teacher.

Winona: Mm-hmm.

NMC: How has that communication changed, from freshman year until now?

Winona: I think because I've evolved as a musician. Um, as a knowledgeable musician, I know, um, the areas, I know more the areas that I need to improve. And so, if my teacher doesn't address something that I think needs improved in my playing, then I know what to ask for. And I'm more comfortable with him as a person, just because I know him better.

NMC: Could you maybe give an example of an area, where, uh, the communication has improved, and compare it to your first year here and now.

Winona: Um, an area?

NMC: Or an issue.

Winona: Oh, um, mmm. I can't think of specific examples, but, um, I'm more willing to ask him about musical aspects of the various pieces that I play, and I'm more willing to stick to my guns about something if I feel differently about it than he does. And I'm okay with that. I don't feel like I'm disrespecting him by doing that.

NMC: So it's more you know how to ask about certain aspects now? You know the vocabulary behind asking things?

Winona: Yeah. Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Several people have mentioned grading as a source of performance anxiety. Do you agree with that?

Winona: Uh, no.

NMC: No. Okay. Imagine that you are a teacher and one of your students is getting ready for a performance. Would you implement an approach similar to the process implemented in this study?

Winona: Mmm. I don't know. I really, I really don't. It would depend on the student, I guess.

NMC: Okay. Why would it depend on the student?

Winona: Well, if I had particularly confident students, then I, it might be more of a waste of time than anything. But, if I had students that were good, but they were fearful of performing, then this might be a way, just because it's helped me address the issues in my playing, so it might help them, too.

NMC: Okay. Did you get to listen to any of your virtual performance recordings?

Winona: No.

NMC: No. If you had listened to them, do you think it would help you?

Winona: Yeah, yeah. Listening to recordings of my playing has always helped.

NMC: So, do you frequently, perform, record yourself and then listen to them?

Winona: Not frequently, but I have.

NMC: About on what frequency?

Winona: Um, I haven't in about five years, but in high school, about once a month, I would do (inaudible.)

NMC: Okay. Um, and you haven't done much of it in your collegiate career?

Winona: No.

NMC: Do you listen to recital performances that you've played in?

Winona: No.

NMC: Okay. Is there any particular reason you don't do it anymore, even though you say it's a valuable thing?

Winona: I just don't have access to recording stuff. And I don't want to take a lot of time to set something up, I just want to press a button and go in a practice room, and I don't have the equipment to do that, so I don't.

NMC: If the equipment were available for check-out at the music office, would you do it?

Winona: Yeah.

NMC: And, it would have to be easy to use.

Winona: Right. (chuckles)

NMC: Okay. Um, which was more beneficial to you, the process of recording, or the process of the interview and filling out the forms?

Winona: The process of the interview and the forms.

NMC: Okay. Why do you think so?

Winona: Well, like I already said, it got me thinking about something that I usually wouldn't, I would just kind of put it out of my mind. But if I'm forced, not forced but, you know, if I really, if I really analyze and think about it, then it's, it's a helpful process.

NMC: Okay. Is there anything else you would like to add? Thoughts on what we've done so far in this study?

Winona: Nope.

NMC: Nope. Would you like the opportunity to read the transcript of this interview to make any clarifications or corrections?

Winona: No thank you.

NMC: No thank you. Okay, we're done.

APPENDIX N

GROUP DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPTS

Group Discussion, Site A

NMC: Okay, you guys have now performed in two Live Performances, you've done six virtual recordings, you've sat for a couple of interviews, and you've filled out lots of papers, and this is the final event of this study.

(laughter and clapping)

NMC: Cheers! Um, we want to talk just a little bit about how you felt in the different performance contexts and get some comparisons between them. And to kind of help get the comparisons rolling, I have these questions. Compare your experience of musical performance anxiety in the virtual performance context and the live performance context with the anxiety that might accompany the following daily life activitieSophia: leaving home for an extended vacation, standing in line and riding a roller coaster, getting a cavity filled, competing in a game, giving an academic presentation, getting medical tests (x-rays, MRI. etc...), teaching in a master class, watching a suspenseful movie, or driving to a restaurant in an unfamiliar city. Which two items are least similar to the Live Performance?

Phoebe: Vacation.

NMC: Vacation.

Sophia: I agree.

Lester: Yeah.

Olivia: Roller Coaster.

NMC: So I've got a vote for vacation.

Lester: Yes.

Winona: Cavity.

NMC: Least. This is Live Performance.

(Inaudible discussion, R, W, and L. laughter)

NMC: I've got three votes for extended vacation, leaving home?

Lester: I vote for vacation.

Rhonda: I said vacation.

Sophia: Oh, did you count me?

NMC: Everyone for vacation.

(S, P, L, G, R, A raise hands)

NMC: Six. Who said cavity?

(W raises hand)

NMC: One.

Olivia: I did, too.

NMC: Two.

Olivia: I also vote for roller coaster, that's my other one.

NMC: Okay. Roller Coaster.

Olivia: Yeah.

NMC: These are least like playing in a performance, in a live performance, correct?

Winona: Correct.

NMC: What is different?

(L inaudible)

Rhonda: We only get one vote?

NMC: Yeah.

Olivia: I thought we got two.

Rhonda: You said which two things.

NMC: Okay. Two votes. This is vote number two.

(laughter)

Olivia: I already put my two in.

Sophia: Roller coaster.

NMC: Two more for roller coaster.

Winona: No, three for roller coaster.

Rhonda: I was raising my hand to give an answer. Take mine off of roller coaster. Watching a suspenseful movie.

Lester: I was going to say that one. Me, too.

Graham: Me, too. Watching a suspensful movie.

Phoebe: I vote for that one, also.

Rhonda: That's four.

NMC: Okay.

Lester: Albert's raising his hand.

NMC: What's that? Albert.

Albert: Roller coaster.

NMC: Okay. Let's take these one-by-one. Why is leaving home for an extended vacation not like a live performance?

Rhonda: Because it's exciting.

Lester: And planned.

Phoebe: It's fun.

NMC: It's exciting, planned, fun.

Lester: With people, usually.

NMC: With people.

Sophia: You're going on a vacation. You're relaxing.

NMC: You're relaxing.

Graham: It's not really an anxious thing. It's not like you're...

Winona: Unless your afraid of leaving.

Graham: What are we, twelve years old?

Winona: Well you could...

Rhonda: Some people are nervous, but you're not.

Graham: Some people are twelve years old.

NMC: Okay. What is not like standing in line and riding a roller coaster.

Olivia: It's so much fun. It's not like... Performance is just not that much fun.

Rhonda: A roller coaster is just really thrilling.

Winona: What if it's a roller coaster that you puke on?

Olivia: Well, that's still fun.

Lester: That's just nasty.

(laughter)

Sophia: It's all part of the experience.

Rhonda: There's some people who like riding roller coasters.

NMC: Okay, is there anything about riding a roller coaster, or standing in line and riding a roller coaster that is like a live performance situation?

Sophia: Yeah.

Lester: Standing in the green room before performing.

Sophia: When you go down, sometimes you feel like your stomach is in your mouth, and sometimes you get so nervous, that's how you feel!

NMC: Okay. Yes.

Albert: It feels like you're waiting forever.

NMC: Oh, good. The longer you wait, the longer you wait. It gets even worse. I could kind of, myself, make a case, that that is a lot like Live Performance. That there's the anticipation of the event, and then once it's going there's nothing you can do about it. You're along for the ride. It's an exhilarating feeling, it can be very exciting. The way it's different is that you're not in control. You don't have to turn the roller coaster, you just sit and wait. When you're performing you're actually in control. You're flying the machine, or you're controlling the...

Graham: And it's not like you can make a mistake with the roller coaster. All you have to do is sit there.

Lester: Well, you could.

NMC: Right. How about getting a cavity filled. How is that not like performance.

Winona: 'Cause they put you out.

Olivia: Or, you just don't have to do anything. You can just lie there...

Lester: Just sit back and...

Olivia: Fall asleep if you.

Lester: Pretend it's not you.

(laughter)

NMC: Okay. Watching a suspenseful movie.

Rhonda: It's very controlled, and you don't really have to participate.

Lester: You can skip it if you want.

Rhonda: Close your eyes.

Winona: Yeah, you can close your eyes.

Lester: I have.

NMC: There's some level of control. You don't have to be extremely involved. If you know it's going to overwhelm you, you can look away.

Graham: There isn't really an anticipatory period. There isn't a time when you're saying, "It's going to happen soon."

Winona: Yeah.

Lester: But if you're in the shack where the killer is, you're just waiting for the knife to come. That's anticipation.

Graham: But that's in the movie. You're not waiting for the movie to start and like, "It's going to start any minute now."

Winona: But during, during the movie.

Lester: During the movie, watching the suspenseful part, you know, it's like, you're waiting for the suspense to happen.

Winona: We're all agreed, so.

NMC: Now let's consider how one of these or two of these events is like a live performance. Vote number 1 for leaving home. No? Two, roller coaster. Anybody? Three, cavity filled?

Winona: Do we get two votes.

NMC: Sure. Four, competing in a game?

(S, O raise hands)

NMC: Two. Five, giving a presentation. (All raise hands) Eight. Getting medical tests? No?

Rhonda: Does that include giving blood?

NMC: Sure. (R raises hand) Giving blood.

Winona: But it depends, like, what if you think there's like, cancer? Like, I don't, I'm not afraid of getting a strep test, but, if I thought I had cancer, I would be nervous about that.

NMC: Is that like performance?

Winona: Yeah.

NMC: I'll give you a vote for it.

Winona: Performance is like cancer!

(All laugh)

NMC: Teaching in a master class?

Winona: I've never done that before.

(L raises hand)

NMC: One.

Lester: I haven't either, but I could just imagine.

Graham: Have any of us done that? Who's done that?

(A raises hand)

NMC: Two.

Phoebe: Oh, okay. (Raises hand)

NMC: Three. I've done that. Watching a suspenseful movie. Nope? Driving to a restaurant in an unfamiliar city. (W raises hand) One. Okay, let's talk about these. How is, competing in a game. My long description of this was competing against an equally talented individual in a game you enjoy.

Graham: Oh, it's one on one? Can it be like a team sport?

NMC: Or game, however you want to take it.

Rhonda: But if it's going to be similar to...

NMC: How is it like live performance?

Olivia: There is a lot of anticipation before hand. And then there's, when you have to perform in front of everyone. And you have to, well I guess it's not like a performance unless you're performing with a whole bunch of other people, it's almost like people are going to measure you against the other person.

NMC: Okay.

Lester: If it's like equal between you and the other person, then I could see how there would be some uncertainty. So, if you know, if for a performance if you are feeling uncertain, you could feel the same way as competing in a game.

NMC: Okay. Anybody else? Is there a level of focus or concentration that's different when you're really involved in a game?

Olivia: (Shakes head no) I don't feel it's the same, like competing in a game.

Rhonda: I think in a game you can come back from a making a mistake a lot easier than in a live performance. Like, if you just mess up one point, it's not going to lose you the whole game, but, I mean, missing notes in a performance, afterwards you can think that can ruin the whole piece.

Olivia: I agree with that.

Graham: I haven't experienced, competing in a game, I haven't experienced my anxiety making me worse in a game.

NMC: Okay.

Lester: Well, it's like a team, too. If you mess up, someone can cover for you, or the other way around. With solo performances, it's you and only you.

Sophia: All you. Mm-hmm.

Olivia: Unless you're being (inaudible)

Lester: True.

NMC: Okay. How about giving an academic presentation. This got eight votes.

Lester: Standing in front of a large group of people and being judged.

Graham: It's the same...

NMC: Being judged?

Winona: Yeah.

Graham: It's the same idea pretty much. In a performance, you do something wrong and everyone is going to look up from their sudoku, and stare at you, and like, "What did you just say?"

Winona: Or your teacher is going to know that your information is incorrect. Or you're going to get burned for plagiarism.

NMC: So there's a lot on the line.

Albert: In some instances, people can't tell if you've made a mistake.

Olivia: A lot of times, presentations are graded.

Lester: Well, what about juries and...

Olivia: That's why I said sometimes.

(R and L laugh)

Lester: Oh. Okay.

Rhonda: We're going for similarities.

Lester: Well, the way I see it is that Live performances are an artistic presentation. So an academic presentation is, yeah.

Albert: You have to research for both.

Phoebe: It's like you get something for (inaudible) and you only have one shot at it. You don't get to make it up, usually.

NMC: Any other similarities with giving a presentation.

Rhonda: If it's a big one, you probably practice, giving your, I mean how you would, if you have, say like technology that you're using, or other visual aids, you would probably rehearse with those things to make sure everything is going to go smoothly, just like you would in a dress rehearsal.

NMC: Okay. Getting medical tests, like giving blood. Rhonda, you said giving blood.

Rhonda: It's a terrifying experience. (Laughs)

Winona: Why?

NMC: So, it's an event that you dread before hand?

Rhonda: Yes.

NMC: And yet you feel like you have to do it anyway?

Rhonda: Well, now, I've never actually given blood. I'm like,

(Laughter)

NMC: Oh.

Rhonda: I've had blood tests done twice. But, it's one thing where I know that it's coming, it's something that I'm aware of and I dread for days leading up to, whenever it has to happen.

NMC: Can you recognize any of the physical symptoms that are similar in waiting for a blood test and waiting to perform?

Rhonda: I get light headed. But I don't get light-headed when I perform. Um, I do get the sinking gut feeling, same if I'm very nervous before a performance.

NMC: Anybody else with getting medical tests done? No?

Lester: I think it's different because just because, you know, you don't really control it. I mean you go to the office, you sit there, they pull the blood out, and you're just waiting, I mean you're not, on the spot or anything. I mean, it's just you, your body, or whatever. It's not like, it's not just giving blood, it's your body doing something. It's not like, "I did this wrong, I'm going to fail."

Graham: But anticipation is a pretty powerfully anxious experience.

Winona: I think it's similar in that you just want to get it over with. You just want the test over, and you want to know the results and then go home, and for it to be over.

Olivia: And they're both painful.

(L laughs)

Winona: Yes.

NMC: They're both painful.

Winona: Well not all medical tests are painful.

Graham: (laughs) But all performances are painful.

NMC: Okay. Driving to a restaurant in an unfamiliar city got one vote.

Winona: Yeah. (chuckles) I get really, uh, nervous 'cause I know, especially if there's traffic, like, I suck at driving. Because there's people behind me, and I'm afraid I'm going to get in a wreck and die. 'Cause, you know, you have to like, slow down to look for a restaurant. And then if you can't find it, you end up going the wrong way on a one-way street. (laughs)

Graham: Did that happen to you?

Winona: Maybe.

Rhonda: I think it's kind of similar because when I drive in an unfamiliar city, I just know I'm going to get lost. It's kind of like the same way in a performance, before I go out, I mentally say, "You're probably going to make a mistake, and that's okay." Like,

your audience isn't going to know, you just have to keep going. Just like if you're driving around, and all of the natives think that you're crazy, you just sort of like put up a block. You're just going to have to get lost for a little bit.

Graham: I find it to be more anxious experience when there's someone else in the car. Especially since it's someone else, usually, thinks that they know better.

Lester: I think it's better with other people, 'cause then it's like, "We're in this together!" (laughs)

Winona: That's a little far reaching, for us to say.

NMC: Okay, so that was Live Performance. Would you change your votes if you were comparing these situations to the Virtual Performance.

Winona: Yeah.

Rhonda: Yes.

NMC: Okay. So let's segregate these. These were the votes for the Live Performances. This is least similar to Virtual Performance. Votes for leaving home for a vacation?

Lester: Wait, least similar?

NMC: Least similar.

Winona: Wait, for the Virtual?

NMC: For the Virtual. One?

(W raises hand. G raises hand.)

Lester: I vote for the last one.

NMC: Standing in line for a roller coaster? (to Lester:) This one?

Graham: Me too.

NMC: Two, three. Standing in line, roller coaster. Riding a roller coaster. No? Getting a cavity filled?

(A raises hand)

NMC: One. Competing in a game.

(G and O raise hands)

NMC: One, two. Giving an academic presentation?

(O, S, P raise hands)

Winona: Least like.

NMC: Least. One, two three. Getting medical tests?

(W, R, P, and S raise hands)

NMC: Four. Teaching in a master class?

(A raises hand)

NMC: One. Watching a suspenseful movie.

(L raises hand)

NMC: One. Driving to a restaurant in an unfamiliar city?

(no votes)

NMC: Okay. Let's talk about these one by one. Leaving home for an extended vacation. How is that not like the Virtual Performance.

Winona: It's exciting. And fun.

NMC: Kind of the same reasons that it's not... Now, why is this, why do we have four votes that Live Performance is like a roller coaster, or is not like a roller coaster, and nobody says that Virtual Performance is not like riding a roller coaster? What's the difference between the two?

Winona: It's like the waiting, and you're not really nervous, until you get on the roller coaster, and then it's over, and you're fine.

Lester: (inaudible)

(laughter)

Graham: Let's go again! Let's go again!

Olivia: I find that the stress level is like closer than it was, because riding a roller coaster is not stressful at all. It's something I get really excited about. And so, um, the Virtual Performance is also less stressful. So I find it was actually similar.

Graham: Have you ever tried to ride a very scary roller coaster.

Olivia: Yeah. Okay, my knees shook a little.

Graham: What scary roller coaster.

(Others shush G)

Graham: I think it's important to....

(laughter)

NMC: Competing in a game.

Graham: Did we skip getting a cavity filled?

Lester: Nobody's watching you.

NMC: Getting a cavity filled, sorry. Why is their a difference here, well, not so much, but.

Winona: Yeah, Albert.

(laughter)

Albert: I don't know why I voted different.

NMC: Okay. Competing in a game. Why two votes here, and no votes for Live Performance. What's the difference that makes Virtual Performance a different profile?

Lester: No one's watching?

Olivia: I think for me it's that, I'm used to competing one-on-one, that's the type of sport and stuff that I've been in. It just doesn't feel like I'm competing against anyone when I'm in a Virtual Performance. It feels more like that when I'm in a Live Performance with a bunch of people watching. But, it just feels less like it.

Lester: The Virtual Performance I would say would be a little bit more like practice, with like, you know, if you're in a sport or something, and you're practicing for the game, and like, if there were people there observing you practicing, but not the actual game. And so you're not as nervous for the practice just as you're not as nervous for the Virtual Performance versus the Live Performance.

NMC: Okay. Giving an academic presentation is not like the Virtual Performance. Why?

Sophia: No one's watching you. You're not presenting any information to anybody, you're just playing to be recorded.

Winona: What if you were giving an academic presentation...

Lester: Via the internet.

Winona: Yeah.

Sophia: Hmm. That would be interesting.

Rhonda: Or something that was recording just your voice.

Winona: Like, you couldn't see your audience, but you knew they were there.

Olivia: You could edit it, maybe, though.

Sophia: But it could be a live recording.

Rhonda: Like the news.

Winona: You can't see the audience then.

NMC: What's the difference between people being able to hear you and people being able to see you? Because you had an audience for the Virtual Performances, they just didn't see you, and they didn't hear you at the same time.

Winona: Because people judge your composure as well as you're playing.

Lester: People half listen, half watch.

Winona: Yeah.

Lester: Like, they listen half by watching.

Graham: And they're eyes are staring at you.

Winona: Yes.

Lester: Generally.

NMC: Okay. Teaching in a Master Class.

Lester: Getting medical tests?

(general laughter)

NMC: Getting medical tests. Again, this is a lot different. Why did this receive no votes for a Live Performance, and received four votes for not being at all like a Virtual Performance?

Lester: You're not recorded? (Chuckles)

Winona: I think medical tests might be more nerve wracking than a Virtual Performance.

NMC: Anybody else, we had four votes for that. Okay. Teaching in a master class?

Albert: It's a live audience, and there's a student involved.

NMC: Okay, because it's Live, it's not like recording a performance?

Albert: Yeah.

NMC: Watching a suspenseful movie?

Rhonda: You can turn off the movie, but you shouldn't stop your Virtual Performance.

NMC: Movies have a pause button.

Lester: And a skip.

NMC: And a skip.

Olivia: In my opinion, suspenseful movies are much, much scarier than Virtual or Live Performance for me.

Albert: But did we not have the option to like start over a Virtual Performance, which I didn't but...

NMC: You were supposed to start it, record it.

Albert: Right. I'm saying that that's not an option.

Graham: Did you use it as an option?

Albert: No.

NMC: Alright. This is probably more telling, comparing it to what the Live, er, Virtual Performance is. So your votes are for which of these situations is most like a Virtual Performance.

Rhonda: Can I think before we start voting?

NMC: Yes.

(General Laughter)

Graham: Can you repeat it?

NMC: Which of these situations is most like Virtual Performance? Are we ready to vote? Okay, leaving home for vacation? (no votes) Standing in line, roller coaster? (W, O, P raise hands) 1, 2, 3. Getting a cavity filled? (S, P, W raise hands) 1, 2, 3. Competing in a game? (R raises hand) 1. Giving an academic presentation? (L raises hand) 1. Getting medical tests? (no votes) Teaching in a master class? (no votes) Watching a suspenseful movie? (no votes) Driving to a restaurant in an unfamiliar city? (R, O raise hand) 1, 2.

Sophia: Add a vote to the roller coaster for me.

NMC: Is it harder for you to compare the VIrtual Performance with these situations?

Graham: Yes.

Phoebe: Yeah.

Winona: Uh-huh.

NMC: What's making it more difficult?

Winona: 'Cause these are all live situations. There's immediate gratification.

Olivia: Because they don't have emotions that strongly tie to Virtual Performance like they do to Live Performance.

Winona: Yeah.

NMC: Let's not consider the event, as much, but consider what goes on mentally, and your physical symptoms.

Lester: For me, at least, the Virtual and Live were similar, just that the Virtual was more toned down. Because the audience wasn't there. I mean, to me it was like a performance because I knew an audience online was going to hear it and everything, but just, they weren't right there. So I wasn't nervous playing it a whole bunch. For me I voted it (inaudible)

NMC: Okay. Any other thoughts on why it's harder to vote for these?

Winona: I would say to, that, Virtual Performances are more easily forgotten.

Olivia: And I had less physical symptoms for Virtual Performing than. . .

Winona: That's why I thought that the Virtual Performances are more easily forgotten because your symptoms aren't so heightened then you don't remember them as much.

Albert: I would also argue that it's easier to prepare because there's multiple ones, whereas Live Performance, so like, you could go from one to the next and the next, whereas Live Performance, you can't don't have a next to like prepare.

NMC: Do we need to talk about each of these individually? I'd like to get your direct thoughts. How many of you thought the physical symptoms of anxiety were less in the Virtual Performance?

(All raise hands)

NMC: All 8. How many of you thought the physical symptoms of anxiety were less in the Virtual Performance compared to your Rehearsal Performance? (no votes). How many of you thought that the Rehearsal Performance was about the same as the Virtual Performance? (W, G, S, L raise hands) 4 of you. How many of you think that the Rehearsal Performance was much less than the Virtual Performance?

Rhonda: I'd say a little less.

NMC: A little less than the Virtual Performance? (R, A, P raise hands)

NMC: Live Performan... 1 to 10, 10 being the most anxious, 1 being the least anxious. What would you rate a Rehearsal Performance? (Raising fingers to indicate rating) (W) 2, (R) 1, (O) 2, (L) 3, (S) 2, (P) 1, (G) 2, (A) 2.

Sophia: Albert what is this (makes hand gesture with fingers 2 and 5)

Albert: I changed my mind.

NMC: Alright, Virtual Performance, 1 to 10. Albert.

Albert: Can you come back to me?

NMC: Sure. Winona says 3. Rhonda says 5. Olivia says 5. Lester says 6. Sophia says 5. Phoebe says 3. Graham says 5. Albert says 6. Live Performance, 1 to 10. 10? 9 from Winona. 9 from Rhonda. 8 from Olivia. 10 from everyone else.

(Laughter)

NMC: Okay. Let's compare from your experience Live Performance 1 and Live Performance 2. Who thought that Live Performance 2 had less anxiety than Live Performance 1, raise your hand.

(A, W, R, O, L, P, G raise hands)

NMC: We have a yes vote from everyone except Sophia.

(S laughs)

Winona: Even though it didn't go as well, I would say I was less anxious.

NMC: Okay. How many of you had better performance in Performance 2? (A, R, G, S, L, P, S raise hands) How many of you had better performance in Performance 1? (W raises hand) Okay. Question. What made Live Performance 2 the better performance?

Graham: We'd done it before.

Olivia: I had more experience with the piece, overall.

Rhonda: I didn't mess up.

Lester: More exposure!

Graham: More experience with the piece, and more experience performing.

Lester: That piece.

Albert: Knew what to expect.

NMC: What about the audience? Was the audience similar in both performances.

(General "no")

NMC: No, why not?

Rhonda: Winona's parents were there at the second one, and I knew they would know if I screwed up.

Winona: Yeah.

(Laughter)

Graham: Well, I didn't know your parents...

Winona: Right, not everyone knew my parents were.

Rhonda: I'm saying that that was more stressful.

NMC: So it was different for you because you knew someone in the audience.

Rhonda: I knew people in the audience, but I knew it was somebody who would know if I messed up. Other people in the audience may not have known.

Graham: For me, the first performance, I didn't know how many people were going to be in the audience, I went out there, and it was less people than I was expecting. And then for the second one I was kind of expecting it small again, and it was. And so, I wasn't taken aback, I guess.

NMC: Would you say your symptoms were mostly similar between Live Performance 1 and Live Performance 2? If yes, signify by raising your hand? (No votes) Would you say your symptoms of anxiety decreased in Live Performance 2? (W, A, R, G, O, L, P raise hands) Okay. Were they the same symptoms, just to a lesser degree, or different symptoms altogether?

Winona: Number 1 choice.

Olivia: 1.

Graham: Same.

NMC: Same symptoms but to different degree. Can you talk about that for a little bit?

Lester: Well, for me, not only that, but I didn't have some in the second. I had some in the first that I didn't have at all in the second. So I guess they would be lessened to zero.

Olivia: Yeah. Same with me.

NMC: Anybody have a different experience?

Winona: Mine were all there, so, like the same ones from the Live Performance, but it was not for an extended period of time. And it wasn't as much.

NMC: Did you have a different focus in one performance? Live Performance 2 and LIve Performance 1.

Rhonda: Mm-hmm.

NMC: How so? You're nodding your head, Winona.

Winona: I was more anxious for the first one, so I tried to concentrate more.

Olivia: I was really relaxed before the second one.

Lester: I couldn't concentrate the first time, because I was so anxious.

Albert: It was technical for the first one, and emotional for the second.

NMC: What do you mean by technical?

Albert: Uh, getting all the right notes. Accuracy. Precision.

NMC: And the second one you were more...

Albert: Focused on the piece as a whole, phrases, not just individual notes. And mood.

NMC: Why do you think you had a different focus in the second one?

Albert: Less anxiety, kind of. Able to think about multiple aspects.

NMC: Anybody have a similar experience to what Albert's described? (O and L raise hands)

NMC: Lester, how so?

Lester: Um, well the first performance I was focused on, "Can I get through the whole piece without messing up, trying to find the right notes." And through all the exposure, um, the recorded ones, um, I was able to kind of find out that I could and fix the spots where I wasn't able to. So by the second one, I was like, "I can do this completely all the way through." So I was able to focus more on the piece as a whole.

NMC: Olivia?

Olivia: First time I was having problems with my memory. Frequently, I had rehearsed the piece many times, and had many problems. So for the first one I thought I was going to do terribly. And that happened (chuckles). So the second one, I was a lot more confident, and my memory was good, so I could focus more on actually making it sound beautiful.

NMC: Did anyone have an opposite experience to what Albert's described?

Rhonda: A little. A little bit.

NMC: Explain.

Rhonda: Um, I noticed in my second one I was aware, I was more aware of parts that I was missing technically. So, while I was aware of those and focussed on the technical ones, it did actually make the second performance more musical, but I was more focussed on getting those technical things.

NMC: Any other thoughts along the same lines or same experience. Okay. Consider the following hypothetical situations as applying to you in your role as a pianist and a performer. Based on your experience over the course of the study, what would you think about using Virtual Performance in the following situations. 1, you are getting ready for an important performance with familiar repertoire. How many of you might implement Virtual Performances to get ready for that?

Winona: And by Virtual Performances, you mean with an audience on the other end, right?

NMC: Yes.

(A, R, O, L, P, S raise hands)

NMC: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Okay. Why would you use, Sophia, Virtual Performances to get ready for an event?

Sophia: Oh, you could have the people give you feedback about the performance so you could make it better.

NMC: Okay, feedback. Did you all have an experience with feedback in your performances? Could you talk a little bit about what the feedback did to you or for you?

Lester: It built my confidence.

Sophia: Yeah, I agree.

Winona: Yeah.

Lester: Because it was positive feedback.

Phoebe: Mm-hmm.

Winona: And it was constructive, so I was able to change things to make them better.

NMC: Can you tell me what you mean by positive feedback?

Lester: I was complimented on my articulation, and my dynamics. I didn't actually have any constructive feedback, it was all just, "good!"

Sophia: I got feedback too, and it helped.

NMC: But constructive feedback, what is, what do you mean by constructive feedback?

Winona: Um, basically the person said, "This sounded nice, but for my taste, I would have done it this way. So here's another option that you can maybe try."

Olivia: I had something similar to that. It made me feel affirmed. I'm glad they cared enough to, like, share that with me. It was kind of nice.

Graham: I had a technical suggestion that was made for me, but I think I could have figured that out for myself if I had just listened to a recording of myself.

Olivia: Yeah.

Graham: And that mattered, recording yourself was pretty helpful too.

Winona: Yeah, and that's the thing with the Virtual Performance, like it's so, it can be so difficult to find an audience. Like it seems like it would just be easier to record yourself and listen to your recording.

NMC: And not worry about distributing it to an audience?

Winona: Yeah, yeah.

Lester: You could make your friends listen to it. "Hey, listen to me!"

(Laughter)

Graham: Listen! Now!

Albert: But I think to argue against that, you don't have the same kind of symptoms that we've been talking about because you know that you're the only one that's going to listen to it. Unless you shared with other people.

Lester: Or even if you just have the idea of sharing with other people, it could be imitating the same symptoms, but then, you don't have to end up sharing it with someone.

Rhonda: And I think the thing with...

Lester: 'Cause it's trying to make the situation as much like...

Winona: You can imitate the situation, if that's what you're trying to do.

Rhonda: But I think in that case, you can kind of, I guess I wouldn't really mention that I was doing it, and be like, "Oh, this is kind of turning out to not be my favorite, so I'm not going to share it with people." But if I knew, like, there was the possibility that someone could listen to it, whether I tell them to or not, like, it doesn't mean that someone's listening to it but there's the possibility, that would cause me to have the same symptoms every time.

Winona: And a recording of it would make it easier to just stop and start over.

Olivia: Though, even when I record myself and no one's going to listen to it, I still do get some anxiety.

Winona: Yeah, I get nervous.

Olivia: Because, it's kind of like you're striving to have your piece sound perfect. And so when you get nervous, that, then you're going to mess up.

Albert: You do have the option, like we sort of mentioned, to start over. And if you're just going share with people. But for the Virtual Performance, we were instructed not to start over, same for Rehearsal, and it's the same exact thing for the Live Performance.

Lester: Part of just recording yourself is just that, I'm almost afraid when I listen to it, it's going to sound nothing like what I expect, and like it's gonna sound awful. And so it would be like, "Hmm, the way I thought I was playing this piece is like completely opposite." Which would make me feel like, I would need a lot more work or something. So that's what gets me anxious, just recording myself.

Graham: But if it sounded that bad, wouldn't you want to know?

Lester: Well yeah, but, I'm just saying, that's why I get anxious. 'Cause it's like, you know, you have your feedback from your teacher in your lessons, and you think it sounds a certain way, but when it sounds different, you just like, "AH!"

NMC: Phoebe.

Phoebe: I think like it would be more of a better polishing tool to play in like seminar, or "Hey, come watch me play this," than to do the Virtual Performance.

NMC: Okay. Can you elaborate?

Lester: Or do a Virtual Performance with people watching you!

NMC: Phoebe said that she thinks that playing in front of people or a small group of people, like seminar, is more beneficial than recording and posting.

Winona: Well, it's a faster and quicker way to imitate the situation of a Live Performance, which is essentially what you're trying to do with the Virtual Performance is imitate those feelings of anxiety.

Lester: I like the option of feedback, though, and I don't think I've ever gotten any feedback in seminar.

Olivia: We can start.

(laughter)

Graham: We should.

NMC: You know we rated Rehearsal Performance, Virtual Performance, and Live Performance on a scale of 1 to 10. Where would you put seminar?

Winona: I would say 8. Yeah, it's right under Live Performance.

Sophia: I agree with that.

Rhonda: Mm-hmm.

Phoebe: Yeah.

Lester: 'Cause it is a Live Performance.

Phoebe: I don't think you guys are judging me, though. As much as Performance is.

Olivia: For me, the first time I recorded though, was almost... That's the thing, like later recordings for me were a lot lower than Live Performance, but the first one made me very, very nervous, because I thought that this is going to be the first time that these people are going to hear me. So, I think I said this before, but if I had an audience that changed every single time I recorded, it would be really effective in helping me play through my nerves.

Lester: I think also part of it was I got familiar with the situation. Like that the reason I was anxious because I was like, "Oh now I'm being recorded." And I had to start it, sit-down, play it, and stop it, and everything. So it was an unfamiliar situation.

Albert: Um, the Virtual Performance 1, you don't really know who is going to, well I guess you sort of do. But I guess you do know who will be listening.

Lester: Not necessarily.

Rhonda: But I think the thing that's advantageous for the Virtual Performance, is that even though I knew like, the backgrounds of the the people that were listening, I didn't

know them. They didn't know my performing style. And so that was different than a seminar setting would be for me, and more like a LIve Performance, because in seminar, those are people that have listened to me for awhile, and they may have been people that I've called into my practice room to let, or to listen to me, and they're more familiar with me. But playing for someone who would be more like a complete stranger would be closer to a Live Performance.

Phoebe: And they don't know who we are for a Virtual Performance either, so.

Graham: In seminar, you get pretty chummy with the people in the room, and they're your friends.

Winona: But not Dr. X. (Name of teacher)

(laughter)

NMC: What about the formality of seminar? Is seminar a very formal concert event or...

Phoebe: No.

Lester: I think the formality of Live Performance also boosts the anxiety from seminar.

Graham: So we should start wearing tuxedos to seminar.

Lester: You can.

NMC: How many of you subscribed to the podcast.

(P, S raise hands)

NMC: Okay. How many of you invited other people to listen to the podcast? (W, R, P, S raise hands) Okay. Does that change, would that change if you knew that all 8 of you had subscribed and all 8 had sent emails to 3 other friends, because that would be more of a familiar audience.

Olivia: I wouldn't worry about their friends, I would worry about some of my friends.

NMC: Why is that?

Olivia: Like, if they are people that I really respect that I would want to subscribe to this, if I totally mess up and fail, I'd feel really stupid, or something.

Graham: You have judgmental friends?

Olivia: No. It's just, you know, I wouldn't want to, you know...

Lester: You want to show them what you can do.

Olivia: Yeah, yeah.

Lester: I understand.

Olivia: You get this reputation as a piano major and...

(Inaudible joke and much laughter)

NMC: What if you invited your former piano teacher, like your high school teacher, to listen?

Lester: I did.

NMC: Would that change how the Virtual Performances affected you.

Rhonda: I believe he'd love it. My piano teacher would, I mean.

Winona: I did in fact invite him.

Rhonda: I think, I mean, since I haven't studied with him for four years, he would have been happy, because he hasn't heard me play, so there's progress that he's not aware of.

Graham: What if you made like a big gigantic mistake?

Winona: Yeah, but anybody would notice that.

Olivia: Well, he's heard her make mistakes before.

Lester: The thing with that is like, you know, you want to show your work, like how much you've progressed and everything, but also, what if it's not as much as they were expecting, so it's like, there's both sides to that.

Sophia: That's true. It's like a double edged sword.

NMC: Okay, consider the following hypothetical situations as applying to a student whom you are teaching. You can transport yourself to many decades in the future when you have advanced students, or you're teaching in a University.

Graham: Can we have cell phones in our heads?

NMC: Certainly. Um, what would you think about using Virtual Performances in these situationSophia: preparing for a college audition?

Rhonda: Yes.

Sophia: Yes.

Phoebe: Yes.

NMC: Why would that be helpful preparing for a college audition?

Lester: Well some auditions you do record yourself.

Olivia: I'd just say, "Put yourself," make them put themselves in lots of unfamiliar situations, and try all sorts of things so they'll be prepared for almost anything.

Winona: Yeah, and then they'll be used to it. The unfamiliar will become familiar.

NMC: We did five Exposure Performances in the space of about eight days. Would you implement the same kind of timing getting ready for a college audition, or would you space them out more, or compress them more?

Sophia: I'd space them out a little bit more, because if you do them all too close together, then it becomes a routine, and it doesn't seem special, so then you won't think of it the same way, or you won't take it as seriously as you should, maybe.

Winona: But if the purpose for doing the virtual performance is to get practice performing, then I would compress it. Because doing a lot in a short amount of time can be really helpful in preparation.

Olivia: But if your doing it for nerves, you'd do it more...

Phoebe: Yeah, you'd spread it out

NMC: Elaborate.

Olivia: I'd say that if it's for nerves, then you'd spread it out more, because like, for me, it's a more nervous situation when it's unfamiliar. And so, if you spread them out more, it'd be less practice, but you can practice in a practice room.

Winona: Part of my nerves is just being unprepared. So, part of the preparation process is performing a lot, over and over.

Lester: What I'd suggest is to kind of mix the two, because I'd do the Virtual Performance not as close together, but then I'd suggest doing a lot more Rehearsal Performances, or something, or it's just for you or pulling people into the practice rooms, where you are performing, but it's not the same kind of performing. So,

Rhonda: I think if I had a student who was preparing for a college audition, I would spread it out only a slight bit more than we had, because I think the thing I found that it was hard to do when it was so compressed, was have time to do improvements that would actually change my performance.

Olivia: That's a good point.

Rhonda: And so I would give them at least a day between their virtual performance to listen and evaluate, and maybe be able to change things. 'Cause there were things I wanted to change with my performance, but I couldn't do that until I was done with this project, because my memory would have gone. It wouldn't have been the same. So I think spreading that out would give them a better overall thing. I'm not saying that would help necessarily with the nerves aspect, but I think it would give them a better experience overall.

NMC: Okay, we have two different opinions here. We have one opinion, if you're doing it for your nerves, spread them out so that each instance is novel and new. And we have another one that is, if it's for your nerves, do them all at once, so the performance does not feel as stressful. You get used to performing and not feeling as stressed.

Graham: I think it would be useful to vary the difference between the performances. Certainly start three or four weeks before, whenever you have to start performing, and start with large spaces and prepare it better, and go to a different room every time. And then, in the week leading up to it, have one every day, and that can even desensitize you to the kind of anxiety that you're going to feel in the performance.

Albert: I thought five might have even been too many, quantity wise, because, by the fifth one, it didn't seem so much like a performance. It felt more like practicing.

Olivia: I think the difference between these two goals are what we're going for. For me it would be learning like, this point of view with spreading it out, would just be the idea of learning to play through your nerves. What they were saying is more like, learning, like not being as nervous because you have more experience. Because it's compressed.

Winona: Right, so if there's a way to not be as nervous, then why would you put yourself through the nerve thing.

Olivia: Unless you're like me, and you know you're going to be nervous in any situation.

Winona: Any situation? Even being really prepared, you still get nervous?

Olivia: Yeah.

Sophia: I do too.

Graham: But then what I said, you'd be able to play through your nerves and be less nervous.

Lester: The way I see this whole thing is, if you do it more frequently, you get used to performing, and when it comes to the performance, you're used to it and your ready to go, and it's a lot easier. But at the same time, if you do it too frequently, it will feel just like practicing, and then when you go to a performance, it's a performance again, and you're back to square one. So it's like

Winona: And, we haven't even addressed how anxiety affects your performance, like does it make it good or bad.

Rhonda: It depends on the person.

Sophia: It depends.

NMC: How can anxiety make your performance good.

Rhonda: Can I just say something on the last one?

NMC: Sure.

Rhonda: I think if I was preparing a student for a performance, and wanted them to be comfortable in unfamiliar situations, I would use the virtual performance, but I would not let that be the only one. Because, like we said, you just start going in and pressing the button and, "I'm doing a recording." But if you have them do, like, different locations, like, for real audiences but not like the formal recital. Like play it at nursing homes, because they can't hear you anyway, like, that's a good opportunity for your students to get out there. And then you can do the virtual performance saying, "You don't know what kind of situation you're going to be in." It just helps them practice the different types of nerves.

Winona: Or you could have them just record it once. And then switch pieces, or maybe change audiences.

Albert: It's just sort of difficult to standardize this for a single student, because every student is different. Some need the anxiety, and some don't.

NMC: Would it be different, would you advise a student to do Virtual Performances to prepare for a lesson?

Winona: No, that seems like to much of a hassle.

Lester: A lesson is to help you prepare, so why would you tell them to prepare to prepare? It seems redundant.

Olivia: But we do that practicing.

Lester: Right, but that's just, that's part of the lesson practicing it.

Rhonda: Again, I would probably use the Virtual Performance, I mean, I would use doing the recordings possibly about once a month type thing, just to have them do that evaluation of themselves. Because a lot of times, when I start practicing, I think I'm doing things, but then, I'm really not. But I'm not aware of it unless I listen to it.

Winona: So not for a weekly lesson.

Rhonda: Not for a weekly lesson, but as a part of lessons.

NMC: So not just for record and distribute, but record, distribute, and listen reflectively.

Sophia: I like that idea.

Olivia: And them maybe once they have the piece pretty much learned, you know, they can play multiple...

Rhonda: Yeah.

NMC: What about preparing for a state or national level competition.

Winona: Yeah.

Albert: Hmm.

Rhonda: Yep.

Sophia: Yes.

Winona: You want as much constructive feedback as you can get, I think.

Lester: Especially, it's almost, (inaudible)

Winona: Because competitions are so subjective, I think.

Olivia: As a teacher, that would be nice.

Lester: Almost more so if they're college aged. Because it's your one chance. I mean with auditions, you can go audition next year, if necessary.

Winona: Or to a different school.

Lester: Or to a different school, exactly.

NMC: Okay, I'd like to offer some of my initial impressions from the interviews and get your thoughts on them, whether you agree with my interpretations or not. The Exposure Performances helped you feel more prepared, even if they didn't directly affect your symptoms of anxiety.

Rhonda: Yes.

Winona: I agree.

Phoebe: Yes

Olivia: Yeah.

NMC: Anybody disagree?

(no response)

NMC: Does feeling more prepared directly affect your level of anxiety?

Olivia: Yeah.

Lester: Yes.

Winona: Yes.

Rhonda: Yes.

Sophia: Yes.

NMC: Could you do the same kind of preparation without recording? Would it have the same affect if you said, five times this week I'm going to designate a performance time.

Graham: I think so.

Winona: Yes.

Lester: It's probably more of a hassle though. 'Cause you'd have to find the people, or something to listen to you, but with virtual...

Winona: O wait. Say that again.

NMC: A rehearsal performance 5 times versus...

Winona: A rehearsal performance in front of people or...

NMC: A rehearsal performance by yourself.

Winona: Oh. By yourself, I would say yes, that would be as helpful.

NMC: As helpful.

Lester: I don't think for me it would be as helpful, 'cause for me, a rehearsal performance is like, "Oh. By myself. Whatever." I mean, it's just a rehearsal performance. But if you had people there.

Olivia: I think the recording would be more helpful than just a rehearsal performance.

Sophia: I'd put the recording like a level ahead rehearsal.

Graham: Well, I think you can convince yourself that something is more like a performance...

Sophia: I tell that to myself, but no.

Graham: But if you go in, and you just have one, especially if it's in a different room, you just go in and do it once and leave, and pretend that there's someone there.

Winona: But the thing is, I start getting really nervous if I can't even make it through a piece for myself, much less for people.

Olivia: I think it just depends on the person.

Lester: I kind of see it as stages. First you do the rehearsal performances by yourself, and then you do it for people, and then maybe virtual performances after that.

NMC: How about, how about this idea? You create your own performance anxiety with the level of specialness that you give to the performance.

Lester: Yes.

Olivia: Yes.

Albert: Yes.

Winona: Yes.

Rhonda: Yes.

Sophia: Yeah.

NMC: So ultimately it is in your control.

Graham: If you didn't take it very seriously, then I guess you wouldn't be anxious.

Lester: Well...

Winona: What is in our control?

NMC: Your level of anxiety is in your control.

Albert: I agree with Graham, if you don't take anything seriously you're not going to be anxious.

Olivia: Like for example, my senior recital I was really concerned, and yeah, so I got nerves. For someone that I accompanied on Sunday, he was not at all nervous for his Senior recital, and things could have gone, Pfft, and he wouldn't have cared.

Winona: But it's not in control. Like we can monitor them, the symptoms, but I can't control my heart rate. Like, I can't...

NMC: But you can control how much you care about a performance.

Lester: Well then why care about any performance.

NMC: Okay, well, to me, it seemed like it was easier for you to perform in some of the Virtual Performances because you didn't take them as seriously as a Live Performance.

Olivia: I didn't take the Live Performances as seriously as I would a jury.

Winona: So we can control our anxiety symptoms on an indirect level.

Lester: But then we have to convince ourselves that certain things aren't important when they actually are.

Winona: We have to trick ourselves into it.

Rhonda: Maybe we can say, like, you don't necessarily say that, "I'm going to have anxiety or not," but you can do the level of.

NMC: Is it a good thing to not take a performance as seriously?

Graham: No. You need some anxiety, or else you're just gonna flop and not care.

Olivia: I think you need to take it very very seriously up until, like, a half an hour before. And then, well, that's how I get through performances.

Lester: You have to tell yourself to have fun, or for me at least. I have to tell myself it's going to be fun and try to enjoy it as much as possible, because if I take it just completely seriously, then I actually screw up more, and I don't enjoy it.

NMC: Okay, here's another thought. Um, in identifying your individual symptoms of anxiety, you feel more in control of the situation.

(Laughter)

NMC: Through the interview process, in identifying your own personal symptoms of anxiety, some people say, "My hand shakes," some people say, "I get this thing in my throat," some people say, "My shoulders get up here." By identifying them, you have more control of the situation because you know what to look for.

Winona: I agree.

Sophia: So, you know what your symptoms are going to be, so you can control them.

Olivia: I actually disagree, because then I'm looking for the symptoms, and then when I see them I start saying, "Oh, I'm nervous," and that just makes me more nervous. And that's kind of a cycle.

Lester: Yeah, when I identified the symptoms, they actually got worse. It's like, "Oh my stomach. AY!"

Albert: I agree, because I was able to know what the symptoms were going to be, and I was able to lessen them because I figured out how to.

Sophia: I agree with Albert.

Winona: I agree with Albert as well.

Rhonda: I think there's some things, that when I'm aware of them, I can change. Like the fact that when I start playing, I don't breathe. Or like, I don't breathe as well. Once I'm aware of that, that's something I can change very easily. And if I'm aware that my foot is shaking and I can't pedal, then I can stabilize my foot. Those kinds of things I think you can voluntarily change.

Olivia: It depends, I think. Like for me, my shoulder tightness, I can change that. However, I can't stop my hands shaking, that's something that I've never been able to control.

Winona: But in general, I can control...

Lester: For me, like it was when I was becoming aware right before I went on stage, like, "Oh, my hands are shaking," that's when it got worse. But when I knew like everyone, I was able to identify that, and I was able to prepare for it the next time.

NMC: One more quick question before we're out of tape. You all mostly said that the process was beneficial for your performance. How much of the benefit was from the interviews and filling out the forms, and not the performances themselves.

Graham: I don't think very much.

Rhonda: Fifty-fifty.

Winona: Fifty-fifty.

Lester: Forty-sixty.

Winona: How would we have filled out the forms without the performances?

NMC: We could have done the performances without any of the forms.

Winona: So what's your question?

NMC: The interviews and the surveys that you filled out had as much to do with whatever improvement you saw as the performances themselves.

Olivia: No. The performances did much more for me.

Albert: For me, I wouldn't have known what I was improving, if I was improving. Like, it might have gotten better, but I might not be able to figure out what I improved.

Rhonda: It helped identify the differences between performances, instead of just saying, "Well, this one was better than the last one."

Winona: Yeah.

Graham: It may help with us learning to be piano teachers, but I don't think it helped us, specifically. I don't think it helped me specifically deal with my anxiety, but it might have helped me know how to deal with someone else's anxiety.

Olivia: The reason that really didn't help me all that much was because I already knew a lot about my anxiety and how everything worked for me. So, it was just kind of review.

Phoebe: I thought the forms were helpful, because we've already done performances before, so that wasn't like a new thing. But we probably haven't analyzed and thought

about what we do to prepare ourselves not to be anxious, or what our anxiety, I don't know.

Olivia: I guess that's why it didn't affect me much, 'cause I already know what I do, and I try to do the same thing every time.

Winona: But that's not the same thing. I think the forms and the performances helped equally.

Lester: They both definitely helped.

NMC: Any final parting thought before the tape runs out?

Rhonda: I think Mr. Conklin is awesome!

Winona: A-plus!

Graham: I think you need to transcribe the word "hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia."

NMC: O darn. The tape just ran out.

(Laughter)

(end of discussion.)

Group Discussion, Site B

NMC: Okay. And we're going. Alright, first, thank you very much. I really appreciate your participation. It helps me out a lot, and I hope you got something out of it, too. Let's start by playing a little bit of a mental game. Compare your experiences of musical performance anxiety in the virtual performance context and the live performance context with the anxiety that might accompany the following daily life activities: leaving home for an extended vacation, standing in line and riding a roller coaster, getting a cavity filled, competing against an equally talented individual in a game you enjoy, getting tests - x-rays, MRI's, blood work, etc..., teaching in a master class, watching a suspenseful movie, or driving to a restaurant or store in an unfamiliar location. Which two items are least similar to live performance? So think about it for just a second, and maybe we'll vote on it. Which two items are least similar to the live performance? So you get two votes. Who votes for, Live performance is not at all like getting ready to leave for a vacation? (All three vote yes) One, two, three. Agreement there. (laughter) How about roller coaster? Live performance is not at all like a roller coaster? (not votes) Live performance is not at all like a cavity filled. (Lauren votes yes) One. Live performance is not at all like a game, competition. (Kendra votes yes) One. Live performance is not at all like medical tests? (no votes) Teaching in a master class? (no votes) Suspenseful movie? (no votes) Driving in an unfamiliar location? (Judith votes yes). Alright, well first let's talk about an extended vacation. What's it feel like to leave for an extended vacation?

Kendra: Relaxing.

NMC: It's relaxing.

Judith: It's exciting.

NMC: It's exciting. Anything else.

Lauren: Well, there's maybe a little bit of anxiety there, I suppose.

NMC: But how is that anxiety different from what happens whenever you're playing in a live performance.

Judith: I wouldn't call it anxiety. Or, for myself. Maybe a little bit stressful, but I wouldn't... Anxiety in a performance is completely different for me, it doesn't compare.

NMC: Okay.

Lauren: There's also the sense of fate, I guess.

NMC: Sense of fate with the Live Performance, or with the...

Lauren: There's more of a sense of fate when you're giving a Live Performance. I mean there's, a lot more depends on it. When you're on vacation it's, the aim is usually to relax.

NMC: Okay. I think the first word that I heard about leaving on a vacation was it's relaxing. So by extension, does that mean that live performance is not at all relaxing?

(laughter)

Lauren: After the fact it is. But not during.

Judith: Yeah, I don't find it relaxing. And I don't think it's relaxing afterwards either. Sometimes I get exhilarated, but I am not in any sort of relaxed state. Relieved.

NMC: We had one vote for getting a cavity filled. What is it about getting a cavity filled that produces anxiety? And anybody can chime in, here. Doesn't have to be your vote.

Lauren: Well, I don't think it's like, for me, it's not like giving a performance, because I'm not afraid of dentists. I've never, so , it's just kind of a routine thing, for me. I mean, I can understand people who are afraid of dentists, or like having hands in their mouths and everything. It's...

NMC: Why are you not afraid of dentists?

Lauren: Um, my mother was a dental assistant, and she pounded it into our heads that dentists are our friends, not foes.

(general laughter)

Kendra: For me, it's not really anxiety, it's just like, I don't know what they're doing. And I don't like keeping mouth open for so long. So I guess it's more like, uncomfortable for me.

NMC: And so that's different from performance, how?

Judith: Um, for me, I don't know how much different it is. I don't want to say I have a fear of dentist by any means, it's not as if I dread going to see a dentist, or that I get really anxious when I'm in there. But, I guess for me, it tends to be more some sort of fear of having things done to you. And, I , I had a couple of dental appointments this year, and I was kind of surprized in my reaction to them. I was grinding my teeth, and I broke my tooth a bit, and it happened over time, so I have like less than half of a tooth back there, so this isn't going to work (chuckles). Um, and, one of the gals said that I was really noise sensitive. And I didn't know if that's part of being a musician or part of just, who I am, I don't know if it has to do with it being part of dentistry, or whatever.

But, um, she, she did notice that. She mentioned that I was sensitive to different sounds, even before anything was actually at, on me, through all of that. And I know when they, later I had to go back in December to get the tooth extracted, it was almost gone anyway, like before hand, they took my pulse, and all of this stuff, and my pulse is usually quite low. I mean, my resting pulse is often below 60. Um, and, my blood pressure is low, it's like 104 blah blah blah, and all of this. And I get, I notice my body freezes up. I get really tense, completely physically, even when they do stuff. Like, I can keep my mouth open and let them do their thing, but, um, it is a lot of anxiety.

NMC: And how is that different, that kind of anxiety different. Is it different for you?

0:07:07
Judith: I don't know. Lot's of those things have happened in performance for me, too. Um, then it's just that, it's a, I mean not recently, I wouldn't say that that's the case in these past ones, but, um, then it's playing on automatic, even though you're stiff and frozen. The biggest thing is my brain doesn't function.

NMC: Game competition. Competing against somebody in a game. How is that, does that produce anxiety or symtpoms of anxiety, and how is that different from live performance?

Kendra: I said no because I think games are more fun. And with performances, to me, I mean, they can be fun, but like, I don't know, for games, I usually don't care whether I win or lose. But like, for a performance, I want to win, so. I guess it's different anxiety for me, then anxiety in a game.

NMC: So, there are more consequences for a performance than for a game.

Kendra: Yeah.

Judith: Or, I would go to a similar fact, too. Although I might be a little bit more competitive. (Laughs) Um, and, but it's not, for me it tends to be more of an adrenaline thing, rather than an anxiety thing. Because, when I've played sports before, or ran a race, or whatever, I might be, I was never anxious about the event. It was extra adrenaline, I mean, focus and all of that. But that, that anxiety, that petrifying anxiety is not there.

NMC: [Kendra] I saw you nod. What were you agreeing with?

Kendra: Um, that I can see like the competitive side to it too, but, I don't know. For me I just think of games as more fun.

NMC: What about the idea...

Judith: I think one of the things that's different is that with games, you also have an outlet, if you have any of that in there, you're doing something physical and active,

while when you're at the piano, it is very physical, but there's a very precise order of events that has to happen to make this work. When you're in a sport, there's not. You have a rule of things that you do, but you can't foresee what's going to happen, and so there's not so much a definition of, "that was wrong," or "that's right," you know. Um, because..

NMC: The situation is more fluid.

Judith: Yes, yes.

NMC: [Judith] described a difference between adrenaline and anxiety. Do you guys agree with that distinction.

Lauren: Yes.

Kendra: I think so, because I think anxiety is like, more than adrenaline. Adrenaline could be for anything, but you're just excited for it. But I think of anxiety as like, the shaking, and like the sweating.

Judith: Anxiety becomes detrimental, and I find adrenaline is more beneficial. That's my own thing.

NMC: Do you guys agree?

Lauren: I think, well for me, I think adrenaline and anxiety go together to some degree. Um, because I feel the most adrenaline when I, um, give a concert or take a test, or, I'm kind of competitive too, so I tend to look on game competition as not exactly the same way as performing, but it's kind of similar. Um, so I don't know, I think I look, I look on anxiety as the down side of adrenaline, maybe.

NMC: What is the adrenaline reaction? What does that feel like?

Judith: In performing, or?

NMC: In general. Whenever you say, "I felt the adrenaline rush," or "I felt the rush of adrenaline," what is that sensation?

Lauren: For me it's a really heightened sense of awareness, and hopefully, an, um, heightened ability to concentrate. Not always. But if I'm directing the adrenaline well, then that's what happens. I also think it can be dangerous though, because it tends, adrenaline tends to make everything seem like it's going a little slower, almost like, it's almost like you're Spider Man, or something. You have "spider sense" so you can see things going just slightly slower than what they actually are. So, in performance, the downside is I tend to rush things.

NMC: You describe adrenaline as a helper. It gives you increased focus?

Lauren: Yeah, if I'm using it right. Then I have more time to think about what is coming next, and to concentrate on all the million little things that have to happen.

NMC: What changes that turns... First of all, in performance, is there an adrenaline aspect to it?

(All nod heads)

Lauren: Yes.

NMC: Yes, there is. And, what changes that helpful adrenaline into something that is unhelpful anxiety? Is there a change?

Kendra: Um, when I think of adrenaline, I think of it as more as like the mentality of how you react, and whereas, anxiety, I think of it as like, more the physical reaction. So, I know for adrenaline, yeah, your senses get heightened, and like, you might react to something quicker, just because your mental state of mind is kicking in better. But when it starts affecting, like your physical aspect, that's when it's like, not good.

NMC: That's interesting, because adrenaline is a hormone, and it is a very physical effect that it dilates your blood vessels, your heart starts pounding a little faster, uh, your muscles are on trigger, you know, you can do feats of amazing strength on adrenaline. Um, so that's interesting. Anybody else want to talk about the difference, or what happens that causes something that could be helpful and makes it an impediment.

Lauren: I think anxiety is, I'm not really sure how it would categorize it, but I think anxiety is what forces adrenaline over the top. Like forces you to lose control, or not forces. But, um, anxiety is what makes the adrenaline so high that you can lose control.

NMC: Alright, let's do the opposite. Now instead of what is least like live performance, what is most like live performance. And again, you have two votes. So, think for just a second. And these are imperfect comparisons, but which one of these is most like live performance? Extended vacation? (no votes) Zero. Waiting in line and riding a roller coaster? (J raises hand) One. Getting a cavity filled? (no votes) Game competition? (no votes) Medical tests? (K raises hand) One. Teaching in a masterclass? (K and L raise hands) One, two. Watching a suspenseful movie? (J raises hand) One. And driving in an unfamiliar location? (L raises hand) Alright, let's talk about those. Riding a roller coaster is like live performance how? What are the similarities?

Kendra: I could see like, when you're waiting in line, it could be compared to when you're waiting to go on stage. Um, but, I don't know. It wasn't my pick, and I love roller coasters, so.

Judith: I hate roller coasters. They freak me out. They're not fun at all.
(laughter)
NMC: So you love roller coasters. Now we're talking about maybe, the shape of the anxiety.

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: You're anticipating something, and then it's time for you to go, and then you're actually doing it, and then it's over. So you think the shape of the anxiety may be similar?

Kendra: Yeah.

Lauren: There's also the aspect of the unkown, I guess, you know with roller coasters you don't know exactly what's going to, unless you've ridden it before, you don't, may not know what's going to happen. Kind of like in a performance, you don't necessarily know how you're going to react, until after.

Judith: For me, I also find that part of it is the aspect of feeling things out of control, or not under your own control. And that's, yeah.

NMC: You are a passenger in some regards.

Judith: Mm-hmm.

NMC: Do you feel that you're a passenger when you're performing?

Judith: Um, less so than I have in the past. That is starting to turn around. I know, or I think that's part of what, um, in the past it has been, I don't know, it's almost a dizzying effect. And, I, you, I don't know, a sense of out of controllness.

NMC: Okay. Um, getting medical tests done, that is similar to live performance how?

Kendra: Um, I guess when I think of medical tests it's more like blood draws, or like, those freak me out. I can't take those.

NMC: Okay, and that's like live performance because you have the same level of dislike for both?

Kendra: I don't know if I dislike live performance, but it's just like the, I don't know. I just don't like medical tests. Just maybe the same, like, uncertainty of the outcome, maybe.

NMC: Okay. Teaching in a masterclass. We had two votes for that. How is that similar to performing live.

Lauren: I think because you know that the audience is to some degree judging you, just like in a live performance. Um, and it's not necessarily like live performance in that you have to come up with things to say on the spot, but, um, it's also kind of level of skill, of how well prepared you are. You can be more well-prepared for a masterclass, or not.

NMC: Okay, so it's similar in that generally there's an audience present who are evaluating you in some regards. And in most occasions with a masterclass, they are there to learn something, too, and hoping to learn that from you.

Judith: That to me is a lot easier. Teaching for me is relatively to, relatively speaking to performing is a piece of cake.

NMC: Even in public, on a stage with people watching?

Judith: I've been giving Masterclasses, and that's more nerve wracking than teaching privately, but it still doesn't compare to performing. I think part of it is that, um, I don't find it to be such a judgement of myself, because you have another individual there, another student, and you, in a sense, are also observing, and seeing what the student can do. Rather than, you having to pass that test yourself. But that's my own perspective on it.

Lauren: But I think with masterclasses, that like, just judging my own reaction to masterclasses, when I watch them, yes I pay attention to the person who's playing, and I do judge that, but I really, how the student plays kind of pales in comparison to how the instructor teaches. So that's what I remember, that's what I bring away from a masterclass. Because with a bad masterclass I'm going to remember that, no matter how the student plays.

NMC: Okay. Watching a suspenseful movie, how is that like live performance?

Judith: It creates more tension.

NMC: Tension, okay. Explain.

Judith: (laughs) Um.

Lauren: I think there's adrenaline involved.

Judith: There's a lot.

Lauren: I've found that a lot.

Judith: For myself, yeah. Um, it's like a milder effect of... I find a suspensful movie is like a mild version of a roller coaster, but you have more control over it, in a sense.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: You can leave, you can press pause, you can go over... It's not this total out of controllness. And then also, the other aspects, the fact that it's not directly happening to yourself, but while in a roller coaster, you're actually on that ride, completely. Um, I don't know, there are other aspects too, that we can think about and talk about aftewards.

NMC: I find it interesting that both roller coaster and suspenseful movie, they have a definite end. Like, there's a time that it's going to be over, and you know that it's coming.

Kendra: Yeah.

Lauren: Yes.

NMC: And it's really, in some sense, part of why you do it. I mean you enjoy the roller coaster, but you also really enjoy the relief of when it's done, or you enjoy the realization...

Judith: I guess that's part of it, too. When I'm done with a performance, it's more of a relief. For myself. Like, "Oh, maybe that wasn't quite so bad. I guess I lived after all."

Lauren: I think with a movie though, there's actually... Well I guess there is some parallel to performing, because you don't know, if it's a really good movie, you don't know how it's going to turn out. It could turn out horribly, and then it wouldn't necessarily be a relief that it's over. And the same thing is true in a live performance, it could eventually turn out horribly, and that's the fear. And so then there's not as much relief. Um, so you know I guess there's some.

NMC: What, happens to a performance that you would say it turned out horribly?

Judith: You get lost and you can't get back.

Lauren: Yeah. For me it's mostly memory slips. Or getting so out of control in a technical section that I just flub the whole thing and have to move on. That's what I'm thinking.

NMC: But in terms of, you know, I can think of a suspenseful movie going horribly, and that means that lots of people die, at least in the movie. Do those translate?

Lauren: I think the feeling, I mean because, you're sad that people have died, but you know it's not real. (chuckles) So, I think the level of depression is not necessarily the same, but it's comparable.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: For me, a good performance, there's a certain aspect of, I need to be able to enjoy this, too. If I make it through, and all of these things happen right, then yeah, it was still a terrifying experience.

Lauren: Yeah.

Judith: Even if the audience likes it, it's not, I can't judge it as a good performance, it's still just a, "Blah. What did I do that for?"

NMC: Okay. I see agreement here. When do you make those value judgements of what makes a good performance. Do you do it while it's happening? Or do you do it after a piece is over? Or?

Judith: Part of it is while, for me. If I'm able to get into what I'm doing, the music and stuff. I mean, I don't want to say, sort of be more relaxed, but it's not like relaxed like I'm just drinking coffee, or something, but um, when the anxiety is down to a point that I can participate more in what's happening rather than just regurgitate stuff while I'm playing.

Lauren: Well I don't feel if I am not enjoying the performance, and I usually notice that while I'm performing, not necessarily afterwards, I'm not enjoying it, then I generally have, generally the thoughts going through my mind are like, "I don't want to do this. I'm ready for this to be over." And so then I feel like, even if I played all the right notes and rhythms, and done the dynamics that I wanted to, I don't actually feel like I've played as well, and I probably haven't because I wasn't involved in the performance.

NMC: Okay. Driving in an unfamiliar location. How is that like performing live?

Lauren: For me, I think it's because of the adrenaline, and the heightened senses because of the anxiety. Um, and some of the physical symptoms are the same.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: I see it as an adventure.

Kendra: Me too.

Judith: I have no problem with driving in an unfamiliar location. Um, well I don't like driving in an unfamiliar location when I have a specific destination and it's night. I prefer not to do that. But just in general.

NMC: Okay. Let's switch gears, just a little bit, and now we're talking about the Virtual Performances. And we're going to play the same game. Which of these is least like the virtual performance. You get two votes.

Judith: Least like the virtual?

NMC: Least like the virtual performance. Extended vacation.

Judith: Wait, let me think.

NMC: Okay.

(Laughter)

Judith: This is going to be tough.

Kendra: Yeah.

NMC: Okay. Extended vacation?

Judith: I guess that's not like a virtual performance for me.

NMC: Extended vacation?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: Roller coaster? (K, L raise hands) Cavity filled?

Kendra: Um, yeah I guess.

NMC: Okay. Game competition? (no votes) Medical tests? (no votes) Teaching in a masterclass? (no votes) Suspenseful movie? (no votes) Driving in an unfamiliar location? (L raises hand)

Judith: I'm thinking.

Kendra: I know, I'm (inaudible).

Judith: I vote teaching in a masterclass.

NMC: Alright now, just in general, without going through all of those again, you'll notice that the least like in virtual performance, is somewhat different than the least like in a Live Performance. Let's quickly go through extended vacation. How is that least like virtual performance?

Judith: I think it's more like a virtual performance compared to a live performance.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: If you just want to compare them that way. Um, I guess I'm, for me there's a good aspect of carefreeness, preparing for and going on an extended vacation that doesn't exist in the virtual performance.

Lauren: Yeah it's not, it's a lot more fun.

Judith: Yeah, and if there's something that happens, that's just a part the adventure, rather than some catastrophe that you're going to be condemned for forever, or whatever.

NMC: Riding a roller coaster is not like virtual performances how?

Lauren: There's a lot more adrenaline involved in riding a roller coaster. And for me it would be more anxiety.

NMC: Cavity filled.

Kendra: Um, yeah, I guess it's not really like one because, like for me I mean, getting a cavity filled is not really a big deal, but there's still like a sense of uncomfort, and for me, I don't feel that sense of uncomfort in a virtual performance.

NMC: Um, and then we've got down to driving in an unfamiliar location, and that got a couple of votes.

Lauren: I think again, there's more adrenaline involved.

NMC: Okay. Let's now do what virtual performance is most like. Virtual performance is most like an extended vacation? (no votes) Most like riding a roller coaster? (K raises hand.) Like getting a cavity filled? (J, L raise hands) Like a game competition? (no votes) Medical tests? (J raises hand) Teaching in a master class? (no votes) Suspenseful movie? (L raises hand) Driving in an unfamiliar location? (no votes) Okay, again notice, we've got some different, well here's a same vote. This is quite a bit different. I guess that's the same.

Judith: I put virtual performance least like a suspenseful movie.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: I didn't vote on that last time.

NMC: Alright.

Judith: Someone else said it's most like. (laughter)

NMC: So, virtual performance is like getting a cavity filled, but live performance is not. Explain the difference.

Lauren: I think for me, even though they're not for me, either a virtual performance or getting a cavity filled stresses me out, necessarily, but there not, you know if I'm just going to choose spending an afternoon doing something, I'm not necessarily going to choose either of those. So it's not something that I really enjoy, but it's not something that I'm that stressed about.

NMC: Okay.

Judith: I get stressed about both.

NMC: Okay. How about medical tests. Virtual performances are like medical tests.

Judith: I put that. Um, medical tests, I know, um, they really don't bother me so much. I mean there's some anxiety and stuff in there, but I can handle, I guess the difference is, or, the results of the test are nothing that I can do anything about. They're not in my control, and I can't really control them either. This is nothing that's going to be my responsibility. It's just something I have to learn how to deal with. And not getting those tests does not change whatever the issue is happening within my body. Those issues are still going to be there, even if I don't get those tests done. But getting those tests just gives you information, it's just knowledge. So I don't have, for me, it doesn't, that anxiety isn't as severe. Does that make sense?

NMC: Okay, so you kind of feel like the virtual performance is a chance for you to test your performances?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: And so, it doesn't matter if things go bad?

Judith: There's a safety net. Yeah. There's more of a safety net. Yeah. Yeah. And the fact that there aren't actually people there gawking at me, um, also, I mean even though I'm conscious of the fact there will be people listening to me, and that does sometimes run through my head as I'm playing, um, the adrenaline is, or the anxiety is less. The anxiety has been reduced to a more healthy state, helpful state.

NMC: I see you nodding, I'd like to hear what in that rings true for both of you.

Lauren: That the anxiety is less. I mean, there is still adrenaline, obviously, I mean, it's a performance. There's not as much adrenaline, there's a lot less anxiety.

Kendra: I don't agree with that, I guess. (chuckles) For me there's a lot more anxiety and more adrenaline when I do medical tests.

Judith: For me though, the adrenaline I have in the virtual performance would be ideal for a live performance. I'm not in a relaxed state like, "This is easy, piece of cake, nothing for me to worry about," but that to me is the difference.

NMC: I would like now to directly compare the live performance to the virtual performance. We kind of warmed up with these other situation. Would you say in general, the virtual performance is less stressful than a live performance.

Kendra: Yeah.

Judith: Mm-hmmm (affirmative)

Lauren: Yep.

NMC: You would. How does a virtual performance compare with a typical rehearsal performance, just playing it in a room from beginning to end by yourself.

Judith: I would say, that for me, proportionately, the difference between rehearsal performance and the virtual performance is about equivalent to, proportionately speaking, to the difference between the virtual performance and the live performance.

NMC: Okay, so is it, l let me draw an analog. This is zero, this is ten. Where would you put live performance? Tell me when to stop.

Judith: Zero to ten. Let's call live performance 10.

NMC: Okay, where would you put virtual performance?

Judith: Then let's say, um, I can't think, I'm under pressure! Um, about 7.

NMC: Here?

Judith: Yeah.

NMC: Here. And where is rehearsal performance? Lower, higher?

Judith: Let's say lower. Well maybe, I didn't quite say that right. Let's call it... You mean just me by myself, without people?

NMC: Yeah.

Judith: Um, maybe a 3, 2.

NMC: Okay. Somewhere in there.

Judith: Let's call it a 2.

NMC: Does that feel right to both of you? Would you move any one of those in any direction?

Lauren: Well, I mean, I guess it depends on where you put live performance. If you're saying on a scale of one to ten, ten being the most anxious you feel. I don't know, I would probably put virtual performance around a five.

NMC: So you would move this a little bit closer to the rehearsal performance?

Lauren: Yeah.

NMC: What about you [Kendra]?

Kendra: I would be in between. I would say about six. There's a little bit more but...

NMC: But you all agree that virtual performance is a little bit more than rehearsal performance and less than a live performance?

Lauren: Yeah.

Kendra: Yep.

NMC: If I could get you to compare, now, Live Performance 1 to Live Performance 2. Um, how many of you felt better in Live Performance 2 than Live Performance 1? (all raise hands). Okay. Why is that? And just speak freely.

Lauren: There were several factors for me, I think, personally. Um, well, I had two more weeks to work on the piece. I had, um, a successful lesson on the piece within that two week frame. And the, because I had practice performing it several times. It made me, it probably, um, give it a performance like run-through, whether in virtual performance or (inaudible) of the piece more often than I would have.

Kendra: I mean, I thought the same. I had more time that I could work on it. The virtual performance gave me the opportunity to do continuous run-throughs on it. Um, yeah, I think it was the same thing. Just knowing, like the setting of [the retirement community] was more comforting.

Lauren: Yeah.

Kendra: Having like played it already once on the piano, too.

Lauren: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Okay. It seemed to me, there was also a little bit more interaction with the audience, before Live Performance 2, also. Did that affect you in any specific way?

Lauren: Yeah, I think it did. Knowing that an audience, or to some degree, knowing that an audience not only wants me to do well, but is just happy that I'm there, and looking forward to the performance makes me look forward to the performance as well.

Judith: For me, also, another aspect that hasn't been brought up yet, the fact of knowing who else I'm playing for a little better. Like, knowing that [Lauren] and [Kendra] were also the other ones there. Like, the first time, that was also another unknown.

Lauren: Right.

Kendra: Yeah.

Judith: Like knowing who else was also participating in this. So, I guess therefore everything had a more human element. Like, "Oh, we all have flaws. We know how difficult this is." You know, this is okay.

Kendra: Right.

Lauren: Right.

NMC: Uh, a couple more questions, and I'm going to introduce some ideas that kind of came up when I ran this at the other school also. The idea of being evaluated on a performance comes up frequently as being a cause for performance anxiety. Do you agree with that?

Judith: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

NMC: Um, what kind of evaluation causes that?

Judith: I have another one that also comes in, that is sort of related. Um, in playing a piece and preparing to play a piece, if I'm in a situation in which I feel expected to play a something in a certain way, that causes more anxiety than being able to play how I most feel it, how I best perceive the music. So that also creates, and that get intermixed with being judged, too. Because then it's, yeah, then I sort of feel like I'm being scrunched in a box, or your sort of a shape that doesn't fit into the right hole, you know.

NMC: So you feel sometimes you have to adjust your playing to the demands of the evaluaters rather than...

Judith: Mm-hmm (affirmative), and that is not an anxiety reducer.

NMC: Okay. At what point do you think you're allowed to override the expectations of others with how you feel? Because, you know, as students at some point we're learning, right? We're told that, you know, generally you don't use that much pedal in Bach, or generally, your ornaments, there's not as much rubato. You know, we have the process

of learning what is stylistically correct. At what point are you allowed to say, "I'm gonna play it the way I play it, even if you're telling me to do it differently."

Lauren: I think it depends on the professor you have, and I think it depends on how they are telling you to do something. I mean if they say, "You should play less pedal in Bach, and really, no one does it that way, and it sounds romantic," then you probably should take their advice. But then, you know, if my professor says to me, "Well, I think it might be a little too fast." That is a little bit more his opinion. And so, I will take that into consideration, but I won't necessarily, I might decide, "Well, I like it at this speed." So, I think it depends on the relationship and how they're saying it, whether it's kind of just a personal suggestion, or whether it's, "really, you should..."

NMC: Okay. Consider the following hypothetical situations as applying to you in your role as a pianist and performer. Based on your experience over the course of this study, what would you think about using virtual performances in the following situations? You are getting ready for an important performance with familiar repertoire. Would you decide, okay, "I've got an important performance coming up. I remember I did this back in 2010 with this guy, and it seemed to be helpful, so I'm going to record myself and post it."

Lauren: I would do, well, for example, I'm planning on starting next week, recording myself a lot. Um, I have two weeks until my recital, so that's the week right before my recital. I'm going to do a lot more run-throughs, and I'm going to record them. I don't know that I'll post them, um, partially because it's more work, and I have a lot of stuff to do. But, I think I will record myself, and I might, it's possible I might have someone else listen to it.

NMC: Okay.

Kendra: I mean, I think it's always, it's never a bad thing to record yourself or post it. I mean, because, even when we posted it, I got feedback that I thought was, some was very helpful, or some like, you don't actually really know about your, um, like, you're not like actually listening to your piece as much as you think you are, sometimes. Yeah, so I think if it's familiar repertoire it would be helpful to just post it and see if anyone gives you feedback, 'cause they're might be some things that you just kind of forgot about over time.

Lauren: Right.

Kendra: That you could just bring up.

NMC: Now there is a little bit of infrastructure that I've provided as part of this study. I had the place to post it. I had recruited an internet audience. Um, how would you go about replacing those steps if you wanted to, say, get ready for your recital coming up?

Lauren: If we wanted to post it? Um, well it's possible that I would use Facebook. And in that case, you would just put it up there, and I have a lot of pianist friends, and chances are a couple of them are going to look at it.

NMC: Would you solicit an audience? Say, "Would you please listen to this? I'm getting ready for something. This is something that I'm doing to help myself get ready. Would you listen to this and give me a couple thoughts?"

Lauren: Yeah. And I might just do that without posting it. I might just get friends to listen to my recordings.

NMC: Someone said, even just recording it and not posting it is beneficial. What is it about recording it in itself that makes it different than a typical practice room performance?

Kendra: It just, it gets you to just run through a piece, all the way through, but also it helps, like whenever I record, I try to get into the same mental setting that I would for a performance, even if it's not in front of other people. I think it's still beneficial to just run through a piece, and then you have the opportunity to listen to what you just did. And then you can just make, like, little notes to yourself, or play around with different passages.

Judith: For me, it's sort of a, not as much as it used to be, but I know initially, the first time I ever tried recording things, they were just horrible experiences. Like, I was like, so crazy, crazy nervous. It was not good. Um, and an aspect of it, sort of seeing it as being put in stone, and it's going to be there all eternity, type of thing. Um, and then that, um, creates undo pressure. So from that aspect, it makes it more similar to a live performance.

NMC: Since it's a permanent record.

Judith: Yeah. But, um, I've discovered delete buttons. Sometimes, another thing that helped me was, this is just a practice before you're actually going to have to record it. You know, so you just go through to, you know, video cameras have also sort of done that same thing to me, too. I, it's just, I freak out. Practicing in front of a mirror is much healthier for me than in front of a video camera. Maybe no one else thinks that, but.

Lauren: I think there's an aspect, there probably is the aspect of recorded performances, is that this is how you're going to play it in performance. I mean, I get a little bit more nervous when I'm timing myself, like, no recording devices around, but I'm timing, the stop watch on my phone is running, and so I have to play it, I have to play the piece like I'm going to in performance so I know how long it's going to be.

NMC: So because there is intent to make this as much like the performance that you're aiming for, that makes it more special than just a typical.

Lauren: Right. Yeah.

Judith: Stopwatch doesn't bother me.

Lauren: I mean it's not terrible, it's just a little bit, you know.

Judith: No, no, I understand, I understand what you're saying.

Lauren: I want to know how long it's going to be, so I want to play it the way I would in performance.

NMC: What if you're getting ready for a short notice performance with familiar repertoire? Would you use this kind of strategy.

Kendra: Posting it on the internet? I don't know if I would, because sometimes people are busy, and they probably wouldn't listen to it right away. So I think, if it was a short notice, I would probably just grab people to come into the practice room and watch me.

Lauren: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

NMC: Okay. So short notice performance with new repertoire?

Kendra: Probably a mixture of both. I don't know, I mean, it's always good if it's brand new to do run-throughs and everything, but, I mean if it was short notice, I probably would still grab a bunch of friends, and just tell them...

Lauren: Yeah, but it depends on how short notice it is.

NMC: Okay. Consider the following hypothetical situations as applying to a student whom you are teaching. Based on your experience over the course of this study, what would you think about utilizing virtual performance in these situations? Preparing for a college audition. Yes, no?

Lauren: Yes.

Kendra: Uh-huh (affirmative)

Judith: I think it would be helpful. Yeah, and I think it's good for students to hear things from that perspective.

NMC: Okay, what about preparing for a local competition?

Judith: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Kendra: Yeah.

Lauren: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

NMC: Yeah. What about preparing for a lesson. Would you advise your student to, uh, treat part of their practice time as a virtual performance and post it to the internet so that they are more able to play in their lesson to the best of their abilities.

Judith: If they have a problem doing so.

Lauren: For me, maybe if they wanted to, but I don't think so.

NMC: Preparing for a state or national level competition?

Kendra: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lauren: Mm-hmm.

NMC: Would you change anything different between preparing for a local competition or preparing for a state or national competition? Or would you use it the exact same thing for both.

Kendra: I would probably use the same approach for both, but I know that the anxiety level for a national or state level would be a lot higher.

Judith: I think I would have them change who I would choose as my audience.

Lauren: Yes.

NMC: Well, how would you change that?

Judith: Um, for a national competition, I would choose people who had more experience, higher calibre pianists and teachers, both.

NMC: Okay. What about preparing for a masterclass?

Kendra: I don't know. Because you're going to get feedback from the, whoever is giving the masterclass. I mean, it would be helpful, but, if you get feedback from the virtual, then it might, you might change what you...

Judith: And I also see masterclasses as different. They're not, I don't think masterclasses are aimed to have perfect performances, as recitals are, or as competitions are.

Kendra: Yeah.

Lauren: Yeah.

Judith: So.

Lauren: But, I think the most successful masterclasses are the ones where a piece is pretty good, but it's not perfect. I mean, I've been to masterclasses where the student played really, really well, and so then, obviously the person giving the masterclass has little to say. They're just up there going, "Well, okay. We can work on style issues." But, so I think that for a masterclass it's less important. Of course you want the student to be really well prepared, but if they weren't completely prepared, they might could actually get more out of it.

NMC: You're also mentioning feedback as part of these performances. How important is it to get the feedback from a virtual audience if you're going to have a student do it.

Judith: I think, for me it's very important.

Lauren: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Judith: For the student and also for myself.

Lauren: You know, it's another opinion. Kind of like having a masterclass.

Judith: Otherwise, I don't know why I'd post it.

NMC: You don't need to post it if you're not going to get feedback.

Judith: Right.

NMC: Um, great. I want to think out loud a couple of times, and get your reactions to it. Part of what I was reluctant to say as I was questioned at the Live Performance, about what would I hope to do differently, what do I hope to achieve in doing this study is this. Um, a lot of people have said that recording was helpful, but what was even more helpful was the interview and filling out the forms. Do you think that is, does that apply to you? Could you speak about that a little bit.

Kendra: Um, recording it is helpful, because it gets you to run-through it and everything, but I think the interviews and the questions really helped, for me it really helped me do a reflection on how I approach, um, recordings and live performances.

NMC: Okay. And what in that reflection was beneficial to you?

Kendra: Um, it helped me realize, like where the anxiety, exactly where, like were the shoulders tense, the shaking, so I can now like focus on how to control those. So, yeah, just focus more on exactly what is going on with my personal anxiety.

NMC: Okay. Anybody else?

Lauren: I think that what you don't know scares you a little bit more. So, the fact that I, um, know how I respond to the performance, that I've really thought about it. Especially right after a performance, because a couple days later, I might not remember everything. But knowing how I am in performance makes it maybe slightly less scary, because, "Okay, this is how I respond. Alright. Deal with it." So.

Judith: And one thing I thought about with, um, that how beneficial the interview was, that even though most of the things were things that I was kind of aware of, um, the fact of verbalizing it just helps put it more concrete rather than this nebulous "performance anxiety." Not quite sure about where it comes from, where it goes and what it does, but it made it more concrete, so you know exactly what you're dealing with, and how to deal with that, and where those boundaries are.

NMC: Okay. Um, another interesting thing that I've heard in some of the interviews was, especially in the advice you would give to a student to make it effective, try to take the live performance in with you when you're doing the virtual performance recordings. But then also, try to take the virtual performance feelings in with you when you try to do the live performance. Did you actively try any of that? Were you thinking about the virtual performances as you got up to the second Live Performance?

Kendra: I don't know if I was thinking about it, but I know that the virtual performance helped me exercise, like, my ...

Lauren: Mental state?

Kendra: Yeah, my mental state. Like, how I would be out in a live performance. Whereas like, the live performance helped me realize the physical state. So I guess taking that virtual performance mentality and just applying it to like a new physical setting.

NMC: Okay.

Lauren: Yeah, I think I, um, I didn't necessarily think, "Okay, this is like virtual performance," but um, I thought about the mental state, and I tried to take that mental state with me into the Live Performance.

NMC: Okay. One other thing. Um, maybe it was not the interviews, maybe it was not recording the performances, but in making myself do those six additional performances, at the end of two weeks I just felt a lot more confident in my ability to play the piece. Did that apply to...

Lauren: Yeah. Probably.

Kendra: Yeah. It applied to me.

Lauren: The more you perform it without falling apart, the more confident you're going to be.

NMC: Okay. Alright, is there anything else that you guys want to talk about? There's about three or four minutes of tape left. Is there anything that you discovered as part of doing this, that you wanted to see if anybody else felt the same way, or is there anything that we didn't cover in our interviews that's occurred to you, about either the interviews or the live performances or the recorded performances?

Lauren: What I think I discovered, a little bit, um, a difference between live performance and virtual performance, particularly the second Live Performance, and then I actually performed that Nocturne about two hours later in my seminar, so both of those performances, after I had gone through a practiced them a lot, I felt more comfortable about them. So that was good. But I think I also noticed that when I have a live audience, I actually feel, I have a little bit more fun playing. When I feel well-prepared, I have more fun playing in a live performance than in a virtual performance. So I just thought that was interesting.

NMC: Okay. Why, why do you think that is?

Lauren: Well there's more, there's immediate feedback. So, right away you get to hear whether the audience liked it, what they thought about it.

NMC: I kind of agree, and personally I feel it almost approaches this. It's almost a game or a competition in that you're reacting to a specific situation. Or you're, uh, you're feeding off of this event in some way that's going to translate through your music.

Lauren: Mm-hmm. Yeah, that's true.

NMC: Does anybody disagree with...

Judith: No, I agree, but one thing I've noticed for myself is that I need, it needs to be very clear, the feedback I'm getting from my audience. If it's more subdued, um, I tend not to pick that up so well, because I'm in tune, attuned. Because, I remember when I did my Master's recital, um, when I got done I told my teacher that I didn't think the audience liked my Bach. But he was like, "Oh, they loved it." And, I think it was just because of the reaction, and I guess I misinterpretted it, but I guess it was just more, silence, reflection type of thing, rather than you know overt applause and that sort of thing. So, and so, when you're up there and, and you're already uncertain, and stuff, already to begin with, blah blah blah, and then, yeah, I didn't see that as a positive reaction.

Lauren: Well that's an interesting point, too, though, I have to have positive feedback that I can tell. For example, after I played in seminar, I played the Nocturne, and I

played some Debussy in seminar on Friday, and my professor for the first time this semester was really, really happy. And so that for me, all of the sudden, made my recital more...

Judith: It has to be to me, exaggerated.

Lauren: And, uh, so I have to realize that people like what I'm doing in order to feel, to have more fun and be more confident.

NMC: As a piano teacher, would you like some guideline for taking a student through their symptoms, or guidelines for treatment modalities that have worked with performance anxiety in the past, so that you know what to say?

Kendra: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lauren: Yeah. Exactly.

Judith: Absolutely.

NMC: Okay. Anything else? Okay. Let's stop the tape.

APPENDIX O

FEEDBACK EXAMPLES

Kendra,

In general, I think you do a wonderful job of controlling the changing moods of this work. I like the cleanliness of your playing, and I am impressed with how much control you have over tone without using too much pedal to smooth things out.

In the opening theme and its subsequent return, I would think of the shorter notes as more elegant and a little longer. Try not to release them so sharply or quickly--I think this will lend a more tragic air to these sections. First variation (major)--Have you tried a lighter tough for the ornaments with good forearm support? This might help them be more even and reliable. Second variation--Good control of long line in this disjunct section.

Dr. Kathryn Koscho, NCTM
Assistant Professor of Piano Pedagogy
(Contact Information)

Lauren,

You have beautiful tone quality, and I like how your melody projects over the accompaniment. Keep listening for the long lines. Make sure your musical ideas carry over many bars and that they lead logically from one to the next. You might try singing the lines in different ways to discover what pacing works well and what does not. You might also rethink your pedaling. Sometimes you change in the middle of a harmony. I am guessing you do this to keep the melody notes clear, but the change of pedal stops the forward motion of the harmony. Maybe there is a way to keep your melody clear while maintaining forward momentum?

Dr. Kathryn Koscho, NCTM
Assistant Professor of Piano Pedagogy
(Contact Information)

Rhonda,

I love your sensitive performance of the prelude. You use different colors of the piano to represent the different voices to great effect. Every once in a while, the forward motion stops a little too much for my taste, especially when you are rounding out a phrase and decrescendoing. See if you can keep the line spinning out, even when you reach a small resting place.

Fugue--Lovely finger legato. Have you considered using little bits of pedal to smooth out those places where you have some non-legato sneaking in? You used pedal rather freely in the prelude, so you might consider it in small bits for the fugue. Are you playing from memory? If so, brava! This is a tricky one to memorize!

Dr. Kathryn Koscho, NCTM
Assistant Professor of Piano Pedagogy
(Contact Information)