



UNIVERSIDADE DE ÉVORA

MUSIC PERFORMANCE ANXIETY AMONG CLASSICAL MUSICIANS:

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING PERFORMANCE AND
APPLICATIONS FOR CLASSICAL GUITARISTS

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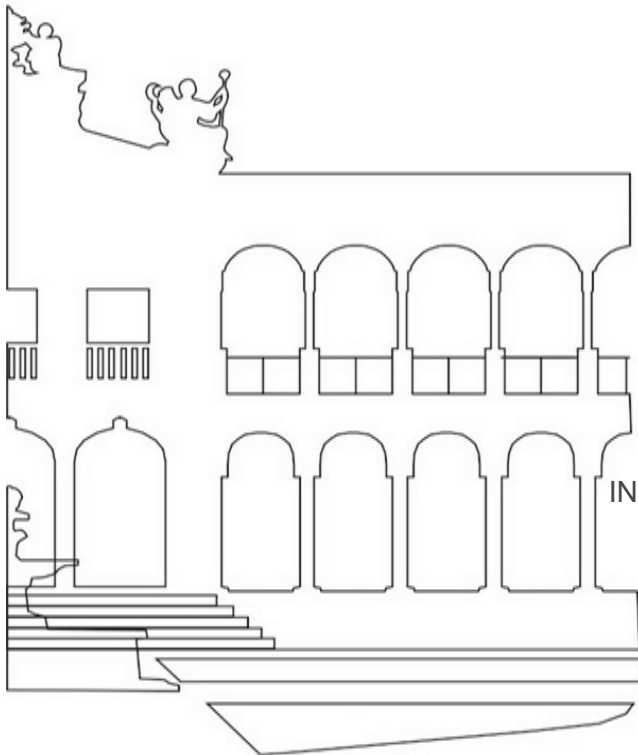


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*Let's leave our body and hands playing the sounds and our
mind and soul can be somewhere else.
Dare to do that, to enter the other world, the other dimension,
and you will open the door for those who are listening to you
so they can follow.*

– Denis Azabagic, in “Dealing With Performance Stress”

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Abstract

Music performance anxiety among classical musicians: Strategies for improving performance and applications for classical guitarists

Music performance anxiety (MPA) is experienced in varying degrees of intensity by most, if not all, musicians. It is particularly heightened in a classical music environment and if not addressed properly, it may cause significant harm to the careers and even wellbeing of individuals. Performers and teachers usually develop their own valid coping strategies through years of practical experience, but often lack a theoretical understanding of MPA and its mechanisms, considering it to be an insurmountable and career ending affliction. There are several articles and books addressing different aspects of this subject, and this knowledge can be utilized to develop practice and coping strategies, that incorporate practical and scientific information. This integration should be of special interest to the classical musician community in several aspects of performance and pedagogy, and particularly, for the future generations of musicians who often feel are not being adequately prepared for the reality of a performing career. Differentiating factors such as personality, age and gender are related to the way individuals perceive and experience performance anxiety. Another, somewhat understudied relation, is how the specificities of each instrumentalist affect, and are affected by MPA. By characterizing classical guitarists and their particularities, it is possible to ascertain if this sub-group of musicians has specific needs, and which are the best approaches for them to address music performance anxiety issues. This dissertation attempts to improve classical musicians' understanding of MPA and will hopefully contribute to a more effective approach to this issue within the community.

Keywords: music, performance, psychology, anxiety, coping.

Resumo

Ansiedade na performance musical dos músicos eruditos: Estratégias para melhorar a performance e aplicações para guitarristas clássicos

A ansiedade na performance musical (APM) é sentida em vários graus de intensidade pela maioria, senão a totalidade, dos músicos. É particularmente elevada no ambiente da música erudita e, quando não é abordada de forma adequada, pode causar danos significativos nas carreiras e até na saúde das pessoas. Intérpretes e professores normalmente desenvolvem as suas próprias estratégias de *coping* através de anos de experiência prática, mas frequentemente carecem de uma compreensão da APM e dos seus mecanismos, considerando-a como uma condição insuperável que pode ditar o fim de uma carreira. Existem diversos artigos e livros dedicados a uma grande quantidade de aspectos associados a este tema, e este conhecimento facilita o desenvolvimento de estratégias para o estudo da música e para *coping*, incorporando informação prática e científica. Esta integração deve ser de particular interesse para a comunidade dos músicos eruditos em diversos aspectos da performance e da pedagogia, e particularmente, para as futuras gerações de músicos que frequentemente sentem não estar a ser adequadamente preparados para a realidade de uma carreira como intérpretes. Factores diferenciadores tais como personalidade, idade e sexo estão relacionados com a forma como os indivíduos interpretam e experienciam a ansiedade. Outra relação, algo negligenciada, é a de como as especificidades de cada instrumento afectam e são afectadas pela APM. Ao caracterizar os guitarristas clássicos e as suas particularidades, torna-se possível aferir se este sub-grupo de músicos possui necessidades específicas e quais são as melhores abordagens para resolver problemas relacionados com a ansiedade na performance musical. Esta dissertação tenciona melhorar a compreensão da APM por parte dos músicos eruditos e contribuir para que este assunto seja abordado de uma forma mais eficaz pela comunidade.

Palavras-chave: música, *performance*, psicologia, ansiedade, *coping*.

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Preface

When embarking on this endeavor, I wondered about what would help me improve the most as a musician, and how could my contribution be meaningful to others. I realized that there was one topic, deeply rooted in the process of interpretation and performance, which could relate to most instrumentalists, in most genres of music. Music performance anxiety was a challenging subject to approach, but also one that was important to tackle.

As a guitarist and performer, I had my share of experiences with performance anxiety, in varying degrees of intensity, ranging from mild and harmless to severely detrimental. I also witnessed several of my friends and colleagues' struggles on stage, and that experience brought the realization that those experiences were quite common. Unfortunately, the frequency and pervasiveness of such experiences meant that there were no simple solutions to that problem. Having met a few competent musicians that often felt frustrated on stage and decided to not perform anymore, I became aware that the discomfort could be strong enough to remove a great deal of the joy of playing music. Noticing that these individuals felt that no help or improvement was possible, and myself having been dissatisfied with generic suggestions that were less than effective, I sought to research and understand what exactly musical performance anxiety is, and how anxious musicians could learn how to cope with it.

I found that within the classical musicians community, information regarding how to cope with performance anxiety relied mostly on practical experiences. Although useful, that knowledge was incomplete, lacking fundamental notions on the mechanisms through which anxiety operates. Therefore, in the search for answers, it became important to incorporate theoretical and practical knowledge. This broader understanding of music performance anxiety and how to cope with it could be of help not only to musicians, but also to music students and teachers. For coping to be possible, anxiety has to be accepted, understood, and worked upon.

Exploring how and why musicians are affected by anxiety, I understood that it could not be dissociated from performance. The experience of anxiety can inhibit how a musician interprets music, not only during performance, but also by preemptively, influencing the choices one makes during preparation. Proper awareness and information regarding the scope of performance anxiety, as well habits and strategies that are more likely to ameliorate it, are fundamental for interpreting music with a true sense of freedom.

Music interpretation does not originate in a vacuum. It takes musicians and composers, instruments and ideas. But in a broader, more human sense, interpretation is

giving, sharing, connecting, expressing. Does interpretation make sense without performance? Is it possible to separate the two? Is it worth it for a musician to work tirelessly on a piece of music, as near to perfection as possible, only to discover that on stage all that hard work, all those ideas, fade away in the presence of anxiety?

Believing that the answer to those questions is “no”, I decided to approach coping with music performance anxiety as another required component of a performer’s collection of interpretative skills. In the end, the contribution of this dissertation will not be how to interpret and play a certain piece, style or composer, but how to get the most out of the activity of interpreting music, especially in a public environment, by attempting to remove the barriers that music performance anxiety places on artistic expression and musical communication.

André Tempera

April 2018

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 – Motivation

It is widely accepted that all performers experience anxiety while performing, albeit with different levels of intensity. Musicians are particularly sensitive to such situations and often experience issues related with performance anxiety. Commonly, anxiety negatively influences performance quality, affecting focus, technique, tempo perception, and musical expression. However, in cases of severe performance anxiety, negative experiences and feelings associated with the act of performing will severely affect an individual's ability to enjoy the activity itself, often leading to dissatisfaction, avoidance and eventually even a career change. As such, these experiences are capable of influencing performers not only professionally but also personally, in their daily lives.

Evidence supports that musicians are particularly susceptible to anxiety related issues, as “in multiple studies, musicians show more psychiatric disorder, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoia, and psychoticism” (Arneson, 2010, p.538). Additionally, several examples of personal stories and struggles exist, revealing that even amongst highly trained and experienced professional orchestra musicians, performance anxiety is pervasive (Figueiredo, 2012; Kenny, 2016). Career musicians “demonstrate the highest levels of exhaustion, stomachaches, headaches, and sleep disturbances. They also belong to the top five life-threatening professions and top five occupational groups most at risk for mental illness (Brodsky, 1996)” (in Kenny, 2004a, p.9). Kenny (2004a) also states that these symptoms are attributed to several causes which are an inherent part of a musician's career, such as: high adrenaline, anxiety, fatigue, social pressure, and financial insecurity. Even in the case of successful careers, factors such as separation from family, irregular work hours, monotony of rehearsals and traveling are reported as stressors. Regarding the case of aspiring students, different factors are reported, namely uncertainty about future employment, professional competition, back-stabbing and irregular work hours.

The main motivation behind this dissertation is to raise awareness to the extent to which anxiety related issues affect performers, and acknowledging that musicians in general are not properly informed in about how to counteract it. In addition, personal experiences as a guitarist, performer and teacher also played a significant role in the choice of this complex subject. Considering that performing is an intrinsic part of a musician's career, it is imperative to address several issues regarding music performance anxiety. Consequently, in the attempt to understand these issues, several other questions were raised, which this work intends to address. For example:

- What is music performance anxiety, exactly? Are classical musicians adequately informed about it? Understanding the existence of several common misconceptions concerning this topic, it should be reasonable to expect that musicians will benefit from a deeper clarification regarding the definition, its symptomatology and implications. Similarly, the knowledge of coping approaches will contribute to the prevention and/or reduction of performance anxiety related problems.
- What does the literature state regarding effectively reducing performance anxiety levels? Can performance anxiety be, in fact, worked upon and ameliorated? The perception espoused by some musicians that no solutions are available to help them in dealing with performing anxiety difficulties can, presumably, be reframed via the presentation of scientific, factual and data based information intended to counter that original biased notion.
- What is the existing knowledge concerning the most effective ways to improve coping? Are theoretical knowledge and practical experience complementary? Reviewing the available literature and exploring the options amongst the therapeutic and self-help approaches, improves awareness of what methods are advisable and which can be more effectively applied in a classroom setting.
- In what manner is performance anxiety experienced and perceived by classical musicians? And specifically by guitarists? Does a defining profile that differentiates guitarists from other musicians exist? Despite having points in common, all individuals experience performance anxiety in their own unique way, but there may be relevant characteristics within groups. The specificities of the instrument someone plays might be a factor of considerable influence in that context.
- Do instrumental teachers approach music performance anxiety issues in the classroom? And do music students feel supported regarding these issues? How are the music schools' programs preparing future musicians for the reality of anxiety-related aspects of performance? An objective assessment of whether the issue is being approached and if the students feel adequately prepared by means of the

training they receive, should provide a valuable insight into a pedagogical direction to approach this subject.

- In addition, what else can be done to improve musicians' awareness on the fundamentals of performance anxiety? After the analysis of the existing theoretical, empirical and practical information it might be possible to stipulate what could be the most beneficial paths towards improving the comprehension of performance anxiety in the classical music community.

A multidisciplinary approach meant to investigate the aforementioned questions and examples will be conducted. Its results are expected to contribute to a level of knowledge and interdisciplinary understanding that may ultimately provide strategies and tools for musicians and music teachers to better cope with anxiety related issues, as well as contribute to a more positive perspective on addressing them.

1.2 – Brief Definition of Performance Anxiety

In generic terms, performance anxiety is the experience of nervous apprehension in a performance setting. It is found to be present, studied and characterized in several different areas, such as test anxiety (Zeidner, 1998), public speaking (Meritt et al., 2001), and sports (Juuso, 2011).

When addressing this issue, it is important to first distinguish between “trait anxiety”, when referring to an individuals' tendency of experiencing anxiety as a consistent personality characteristic, and “state anxiety”, when referring to a temporary state of arousal in response to a given situation (Spielberger, 1966). Therefore, performance anxiety in its essence classifies as state anxiety but its severity is often exaggerated when the trait anxiety level (considered to be a determining factor in this context) is high (Randall, 2008; Kototsaki & Davidson, 2003). Performance anxiety is in fact a very complex subject with multiple components, with state/trait anxiety, neuroticism/extraversion, self-efficacy/self-esteem and perfectionism being all correlated in one level or another (Langendörfer et al., 2006). While it may differ in some specific aspects depending on the task in question, reported performance anxiety causes and effects remain similar transversely to most, if not all, performing activities. This is corroborated by general symptoms reported by studies like Steptoe & Fidler (1987), who utilized test-anxiety as a point of reference. The authors highlighted that studies have shown that anxious people report high levels of task-irrelevant thoughts, worrying, and preoccupation with feelings of inadequacy and distraction by perceived somatic arousal, which are common performance anxiety symptoms. Similarly, Meritt et al. (2001) highlighted that anxiety driven negative thoughts often include feelings of lack of control, irrational

demands of perfection, exaggerated perception of stakes, fear of failure, impaired focus and/or being distracted by irrelevant thoughts, regarding public speaking.

Recent studies have shown evidence indicating that the presence of psychological stress or negative emotions leads to an activation of the motor system and that this may represent a state of physical readiness that facilitates defensive behaviors under a potential threat to survival, which is usually referred to as the fight or flight response (Yoshie & Kudo, 2009a). Riskind (1997) stated that perceived danger or threat is a cognitive antecedent of anxiety, as it is widely accepted that the cognitive phenomenology of threat is responsible for evoking anxiety and fear. Two types of appraisal processes related to the perception of threat are defined: judging a stimulus as threatening or benign, on one hand; and evaluating possible ways of coping with the threat and the conditions relevant to coping, on the other hand. The lines of coping may include direct actions that remove the threat, originating impulses such as fight, flight and inaction to stave off the threat or indirect actions, such as benign reappraisal, a cognitive defense that implies a distortion of reality, reassessing the situation as less or non-threatening.¹ The author adds:

Anxious individuals are cognitively biased to both: (1) perceive excessive threat or danger to their survival (primary appraisal); and (2) underestimate their degree of control or effectiveness in coping with this threat (secondary appraisal). Anxiety is evoked because such individuals form exaggerated expectancies of the imminence, probability, and severity of threat and underestimate their resources for coping (Riskind, 1997, p.687).

Anxious individuals tend to perceive the world through a mental lens of a looming sense of vulnerability, which encompasses previous experiences with threat and reinforces their cognitive bias. Biased processing results in confirmation bias, where expecting to fail originates failure, embedding negative cognitions even further. Tension in performance is akin to other focal anxieties or phobias, however, besides affecting physiology and cognition, stage fright also affects behavior (Steptoe, 1982).

Another important caveat is the existence of facilitating or low grade anxiety, which facilitates performance, and debilitating or high grade anxiety, which impairs performance. While some physiological arousal is good and beneficial to performance (cf. the expression “getting psyched up”), too much leads to the task being perceived as a threat; in that case, the nervous system activates the “fight-or-flight” defense mechanism, adrenaline is pumped up in the bloodstream and the whole body adjusts to deal with that “life-or-death” situation. Not being in real danger, the body’s exaggerated response hinders the ability to perform. Negative obsessions like self-criticism and worrying about the judgment of others contribute

¹ Referring to Richard Lazarus’ Appraisal Theory.

INTRODUCTION

to debilitating anxiety. There is also a tendency to interpret all physiological reactions as signs of fear and/or inability (Randall, 2008). Zakaria et al. (2013) also highlighted the duality of positive or negative effects, where no anxiety tends to originate a dull performance, too much anxiety will hinder any sense of control and lastly, the right amount of anxiety actually improves performance. Highlighting this point, Yoshie et al. (2009a) stated that there are few studies directly comparing performance quality under stressful and non-stressful conditions, and results are not consistent, ranging from the performance being considerably impaired to actually being enhanced in the stressful condition. The ability to cope and function in a stressful situation is thought to be ameliorated by age and experience.

Clark & Beck's (2011) model for social phobia is often considered as a reference, as well as a framework for defining other related disorders. It considers three main features as unique to social phobia: (i) socially driven embarrassment and shame as dominant negative emotions; (ii) fear of negative evaluation from others eliciting automatic inhibitory behaviors and disrupting social performance; and lastly, (iii) interpreting anxiety itself as a threat and as something that must be concealed to avoid negative evaluation by others. In addition, the model also characterizes three moments associated with the experience of social anxiety: (a) anticipatory phase – the anticipation of negative outcomes and discounting positive outcomes, focusing on distress and worry; (b) situational exposure – the automatic activation of negative cognitions and heightened awareness of internal anxiety cues when in a social situation; and (c) postevent processing – a negatively biased recall of the situation, often reinforcing the idea that avoidance would be better than dealing with the discomfort. Understandably, several authors consider performance anxiety to be a form of social phobia (Fehm & Schmidt, 2006; Georges et al., 2007; Osborne & Franklin, 2002; Zakaria et al., 2013), meaning that the psychological triggers of anxiety (like feelings of inadequacy and fear of judgment) are basically the same in both constructs, despite the difference between a social and a performance setting.

Music performance anxiety, or MPA, is a persistent experience of anxiety and/or diminished performing capabilities when in a public context, regardless of musical skill, training and preparation (Salmon, 1990). The term stage fright can also be utilized to describe that experience, although it is not exclusive to musical performance. It can be considered as a form of panic, so the same physiological, behavioral and psychological symptoms can apply (Zakaria et al., 2013). In this sense, referring to MPA, stage fright, or equivalent expressions, always implies a debilitating form of anxiety, which is associated with reactions to several factors, such as: loss of control; presence and perception of significant people (family, teachers and peers); fear of negative evaluation and judgmental attitudes; social situations; fear of crowds and catastrophising (Osborne & Franklin, 2002). Music performance anxiety does not only affect musicians' careers, it affects musicians' well

being (Georges et al., 2007); is related to health issues as “the altered muscle activity under psychological stress, if continued over a long period of time, can also add to the risk of playing-related musculoskeletal disorders such as tenosynovitis and focal dystonia” (Yoshie et al., 2009a, p.125); and ultimately it is viewed as a serious problem that may lead to a premature career ending (Steptoe, 1982; Steptoe & Fidler, 1987; Topoğlu, 2014).

The tools for the direct assessment of stress and anxiety are: psychophysiological measures (heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, muscle tension), self-report (questionnaires, checklists, interviews) and behavioral observation (observers look for facial expressions, heavy breathing, tremors, perspiration, postural orientation, nail-biting, eye blinks, pacing, hand wringing) (Kenny, 2004a). Several different psychological, physiological and behavioral manifestations of MPA have been identified and they do impact upon the overall life happiness of those who suffer from it (Boucher & Ryan, 2010). It can impair performance by disrupting attention, producing off-task, incompetent or competing behaviors, and also by reducing one’s efforts or choosing less competent behaviors (Kenny, 2004a). More specifically, stressful performance situations can increase heart rate, tempo perception, errors, as well as promote distraction and negative thoughts (Zhukov, 2009).

Anxieties (or phobias) are disorders that may occur due to heredity, general psychological vulnerability and specific psychological vulnerability, and can be generated by a single traumatic event or by repeated exposure to stressful events. It can also be developed without direct experience of events, by conditioned fear responses which possible through conditioning and modeling experiences. Being told something is dangerous and/or observing another person reacting anxiously to an event might also trigger anxiety response. This process is called vicarious conditioning and these are the mechanisms responsible for parents transmitting their own anxieties to their children (Kenny, 2004a), which is also applicable to an instrumental teacher and his/her students. MPA can be enhanced in a classical music environment due to several reasons: the need to learn and perform large amounts of music, concert outfits that may hinder natural movement, formal environment in regards to the audience and facing more subjective evaluations due to the formality of the structured tradition (Jimenez, 2015).

Some studies have shown that in other areas, perfectionism is associated with positive characteristics and outcomes such as functional coping, effort and achievement. However, this is not entirely true for musicians as perfectionism is often associated with negative anxiety generating aspects. In broad terms, it can be considered as an overconcern about small mistakes or flaws, accompanied by a tendency to focus on what is wrong and to overlook what is right (Dempsey, 2015). Furthermore, Kobori et al. (2011) posit that classical musicians in particular are more likely to suffer from performance anxiety due to the fact that

they cannot depart from the score, cannot improvise and are expected to play without any mistakes, leading to an increase in perfectionism, and consequently, to anxiety.

1.3 – Methodology

The applied methodology consists of several complementing approaches, conducted across all sections of the present dissertation.

An extensive research of published papers, dissertations and books related with music performance anxiety (MPA) was conducted in an early stage of this research, aiming to compile reliable information which would provide an adequate scientific background for the study of the chosen theme. The majority of the aforementioned research documents was available through online libraries and journals and accessed via institutional, public and private websites, while books were purchased. The contents were then carefully compiled in order to effectively integrate and connect the different sources of information, providing the main background presented in Chapter 2.

The research that was undertaken for this dissertation includes an original study. It consists in two different but complementary approaches, which are presented in chapters 5 and 6. The first approach refers to music student's answers to a questionnaire regarding music performance anxiety and a corresponding statistical analysis, while the second approach refers to a content analysis of individual interviews to professional guitarists where they shared their personal experiences and coping strategies regarding music performance anxiety. In regards to the statistical analysis approach, a questionnaire was specifically elaborated to address music students' anxiety and confidence levels, beliefs, cognitions and practice habits. For this purpose, two distinct versions were created, according to the students' educational level: a first version, in paper form, was distributed to younger music students through music conservatories; a second version was distributed to college level students through an online form in "GoogleForms". In both cases, a sub-population of guitarists was identified within the universe of music students. All data values retrieved from the replies to the questionnaires were initially compiled in Microsoft Excel spread sheets ; later, separate statistical analyses utilizing the SPSS software were conducted for all populations (the younger and older student groups, as well as the guitarist sub-group). Results were then interpreted, providing concrete values and correlations. This numerical approach allowed for a quantitative understanding of the pervasiveness of music performance anxiety in the formative years as well as an opportunity to identify classical guitarists' specificities. Concerning the content analysis approach, several internationally acclaimed guitarists were contacted and invited to share their personal perspectives and

experiences regarding MPA. A general guideline with bullet points for the intended topics was created and a mostly free-form, flowing conversation was the designated procedure for the interview model. This ensured less strictness in both questions and answers, less rationalizing and a more spontaneous, sharing of personal experiences. All relevant information was divided into groups and compiled into indices in an attempt to further characterize classical guitarists and define common ground among them, utilizing proven examples and strategies implemented by professionals.

As a part of this doctoral program, three solo recitals programs were selected. The chosen repertoire for the three recitals was the following (Fig.1.1):

1st Year Recital Program	2nd Year Recital Program	3rd Year Recital Program
Fernando Sor <i>Fantaisie Élégiacque, op.59</i>	Johann Sebastian Bach <i>Violin Sonata n.1, BWV1001</i>	Georg Phillip Telemann <i>Fantasia for Solo Violin n.7</i>
Johann Sebastian Bach <i>Chaconne, from Partita BWV1004</i>	Mauro Giuliani <i>Rossiniana n.2, op.120</i>	Mauro Giuliani <i>Rossiniana n.5, op.123</i>
Nuccio D'Angelo <i>Due Canzoni Lidie</i>	Francisco Tárrega <i>Gran Jota de Concierto</i>	Johann Dubez <i>Fantaisie sur des Motifs Hongrois</i>
Konstantin Vassiliev <i>Three Forest Paintings</i>	Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco <i>Tre Preludi Mediterranei</i>	Joaquín Rodrigo <i>Invocación y Danza</i>
Dusan Bogdanovic <i>Sonata n.1</i>		Astor Piazzolla <i>Invierno Porteño, Primavera Porteña</i>
		Francis Kleynjans <i>A l'Aube du Dernier Jour, op.33</i>

Figure 1.1 – Doctoral recital programs

In order to relate the performances with the main theme of this dissertation and its corresponding issues, the chosen approach was to understand how repertoire choices can be beneficial or detrimental towards anxiety levels. For an anxious musician, it is much more advisable to choose repertoire that is perceived as comfortable, rather than by any other criteria, as in this instance the goal should be to minimize anxiety and maximize coping skills. All musicians, in general, could benefit from this approach in order to gain insight upon themselves and consequently improve their performance. By having chosen challenging repertoire, anxiety was heightened, and the programs were thus utilized as exploratory tools to better understand the implications of assessing all alternatives when choosing a given piece of music. Diversity was also taken into account, and different characteristics such as the musical period, style, composer and tempo, included in the assessment. Beyond deciding which pieces of music to play, it is also important to organize them in a way that

promotes comfort while on stage, prioritizing a structure that will minimize anxiety, above other criteria. Formal approaches towards structuring recitals can still be applied as long as they are beneficial to the intended goal. This approach ties in with performance anxiety in general but also fundamental notions of self-efficacy, self-assessment during preparation, awareness of adequate goal setting, and repertoire as a potential trigger for anxiety. My choice of music in the three programs and corresponding recital structure is discussed in sub-chapter 4.2, and deeply connected to the issues addressed in the dissertation. Rather than approaching the choice of repertoire exclusively through musical or historical criteria, I propose reframing this notion, approaching it through a self-analyzed comfort level in order to reduce anxiety and maximize performance quality and fruition.

1.4 – Objectives of the Present Work

The main objective of this work is to attempt to positively demystify music performance anxiety for musicians, teachers and music students, providing knowledge and coping strategies that help change the paradigm of what is perceived to be a career ending affliction. By contributing to the enhancement of the general understanding of this sensitive subject, this work is intended to help promote a positive change in the mindset of struggling performers, as well as endowing future generations of musicians with better tools to overcome anxiety related issues.

This dissertation will also aim to provide unprecedented research and data pertaining to the reality of anxiety related issues of classical music students in Portugal, from conservatory to college level. It will allow for a more reliable representation of what are the feelings and cognitions regarding performance anxiety during formative years. Another important point of focus is the characterization of how classical guitarists are affected by anxiety and what their predominant concerns are, in an attempt to identify and define their specific needs towards coping. The inner workings of the associated psychological, physiological and behavioral symptomatology identified in literature will be addressed, described and discussed, in an attempt to emphasize the idea that although some authors defend that there is an innate component to the experience of performance anxiety, studies also indicate that performance anxiety can be prevented and/or reduced and, as such, can and should be worked upon like any other skill associated with music.

From a pedagogical perspective, it is also relevant to provide adequate information and coping strategies concerning MPA to instrumental teachers. Considering that these teachers can highly influence their students, it is important to ensure they have access to proper theoretical and practical knowledge. Providing such background and highlighting the

importance of correctly conveying the information to the students should improve the general level of understanding and anxiety related problem solving.

Finally, this dissertation should contribute to the opening of several adjacent lines of investigation that may be object of further studies, such as characterizing MPA differences according to musical instrument, utilizing cognition profiles to identify specific vulnerabilities, and investigating the effectiveness of coping strategies and practices.

1.5 – Thesis Outline

The structure of this dissertation consists of 7 chapters.

In Chapter 1, the motivation that originated this project is presented, as well as a brief description of the issues pertaining performance anxiety. Furthermore, the methodology is explained, the main objectives of this project are stated and a thesis outline included.

Chapter 2 presents a review of existing literature regarding music performance anxiety, highlighting the associated symptoms and common coping approaches.

In what concerns Chapter 3, ancillary concepts such as self-efficacy, perfectionism and flow, which are directly linked to music performance anxiety, are introduced and explained.

Chapter 4 consists in presenting knowledge on improving learning processes, practice and preparation strategies that may lead to reducing performance anxiety.

As for Chapter 5, part of the original research for this dissertation is presented, including the construction of a questionnaire and subsequent statistical analysis of music students' responses and their correlations and implications.

In regard to Chapter 6, the content analysis of interviews to several professional guitarists is presented.

Lastly, the general conclusions of this dissertation are presented.

Chapter 2

Music Performance Anxiety

An enhanced understanding of music performance anxiety (MPA) and its specificities by musicians favors an overall awareness that allows and facilitates coping. Thus, it is fundamental to identify it, to understand the concept and its mechanisms, to recognize how it can affect musicians and, according to specific circumstances, implement adequate treatment options.

2.1 – Characterization of MPA

Several terminologies have been used to address MPA throughout the years: “stage fright”, “performance anxiety”, “music performer’s stress syndrome” and “music performance anxiety” (Fehm & Schmidt, 2006). Although, to a certain extent, all of those nomenclatures are valid, nowadays the most consensual terminology amongst authors is in fact music performance anxiety, or MPA, term that will be applied throughout this dissertation.

According to Barbar et al. (2014), MPA is recognized as a social anxiety disorder ranging from normal stress and anxiety intrinsic to being a musician to severely disabling symptoms close to terror or panic. As defined by the American Psychiatric Association in 2002¹, social anxiety disorder corresponds to the strong and persistent fear of social or performance situations in which an individual is afraid of doing something or behaving in a humiliating or embarrassing way when faced with possible scrutiny by others. The exposure to such situations can trigger behavioral responses or be tolerated with feelings of dread. Negative cognitions and experiences are considered as predicting factors for performance anxiety proneness and intensity. Personality features like dependence, introversion, sensitivity to judgment, low self-esteem and perfectionism are facilitators to the onset of MPA, as well as trait-anxiety and negative self-expectations. Music performance anxiety is often associated to social anxiety and depression, which can impact not only on isolated performances but also on career and mental health, and therefore it can be regarded as an

¹ In Barbar et al. (2014), p.381.

“occupational health problem”, referring to Taborsky’s (2007) work, and should deserve better attention from the mental health community.

Kenny (2011) suggested a classification of music performance anxiety in three types, which differ in quality and severity, and presented them within a spectrum of other anxiety disorders (Fig.2.1):

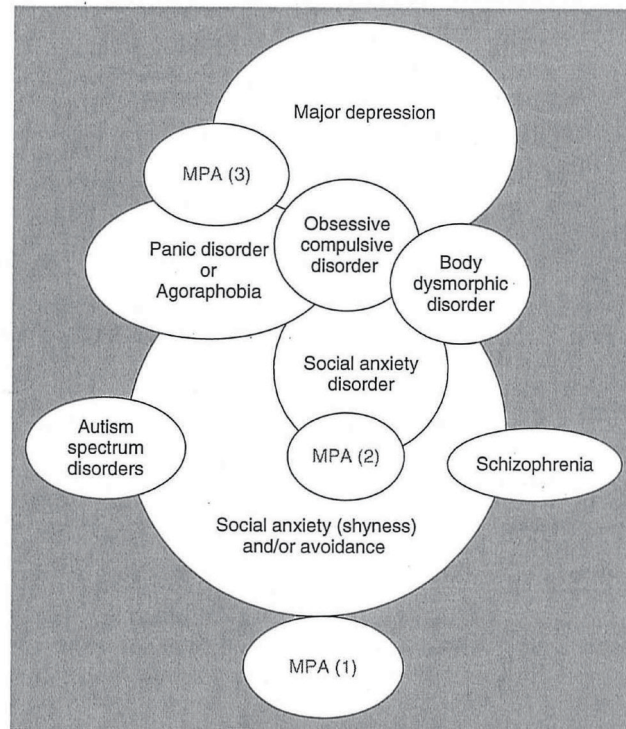


Figure 2.1 – Kenny’s (2011) proposed subtypes of MPA

This model allows for a more accurate understanding of the differences in intensity of music performance anxiety as well as the connection with other anxiety disorders. According to this characterization, MPA (1) consists in a focal anxiety disorder resulting of specific conditioning experiences; MPA (2) is a manifestation of (or comorbid with) social anxiety/phobia; and lastly, MPA (3) corresponds to the most severe form of performance anxiety, akin to panic, which may or may not be accompanied with depression and a pervasive problem with the sense of self and self-esteem.

As a construct, music performance anxiety can be divided into state and trait components. The state anxiety component (akin to fear) is a transitory emotional reaction to heightened tension whereas the trait anxiety component (akin to stress) corresponds to the difference between individuals and their anxiety proneness. Logically, high trait anxiety individuals have higher state anxiety levels (Kenny, 2004a). Kokotsaki & Davidson (2003) further described this important distinction, characterizing state anxiety as “subjective, consciously perceived feelings of apprehension and tension, accompanied by or associated

with activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (Kokotsaki & Davidson, 2003, p.46). Trait anxiety, on the other hand, was referred to as the “relatively stable individual differences in anxiety proneness, that is, to differences in the disposition to perceive a wide range of stimulus situations as dangerous or threatening, and in the tendency to respond to such threats with A-State reactions”² (Kokotsaki & Davidson, 2003, p.46). Furthermore, a proportional relationship between state and trait anxiety has been verified, where the stronger the trait, the more prone the individual is to state anxiety, which also increases in frequency and intensity.

In Cox & Kenardy’s (1993) study, MPA was also associated to social anxiety, commonly conceptualized as anxiety related to performance in front of others. Anxiety can be generated by the performer upon focusing on potential failures and mistakes despite of objective evidence of competence. The authors postulated that there is a correlation between trait anxiety and performance anxiety, and also between social phobia and performance anxiety. Corroborating this notion, Osborne & Franklin (2002) stated that social phobic models provide a valid account of the cognitive processes that occur during music performance anxiety and that performance anxiety is diagnosed as social phobia when it leads to marked impairment or distress. According to these authors, performance anxiety is therefore classified as a performance subtype of social phobia, and the majority of high MPA individuals also correlate to social phobia cognitions. The concern over a negative evaluation in every situation seems to be important for the conceptualization of social phobia; however, this is not entirely true for MPA, where the fear of a negative evaluation from the audience seems to mostly generate anxiety in solo situations, but not in group performances. Therefore, despite sharing common cognitive distortions, social phobia is not synonymous of MPA.

On the same note, Georges et al. (2007) highlighted that music anxiety and social anxiety are in fact strongly related, despite being unique in their own ways. In addition, other personality traits can correlate, such as catastrophizing cognitions³, perfectionism and public self-focus, corroborating the conceptualization of MPA as a special subtype of social anxiety. Kenny & Osborne (2006) added that “once triggered, the person shifts into a self-evaluative attention state, in which self-evaluation of perceived inadequate capabilities to deal with the threat, in this case, the imminent performance, is prominent. The attention typically narrows to a focus on catastrophic cognitive self-statements that disrupt concentration and performance. In this respect, MPA may share commonalities with social anxiety and in its extreme form appears similar to social phobia” (Kenny & Osborne, 2006, p.104). The

² On both definitions, authors are quoting Spielberger (1972), *Anxiety: Current Trends in Theory and Research*, p.39.

³ Not only anticipating a negative outcome but also exaggerating its significance; expecting catastrophe.

transfer of treatment knowledge related to social anxiety to music performance anxiety seems therefore justifiable, even if the approaches need to be adapted. Social anxiety, perfectionism, public self-focus, gender, professional status and the belief that the audience will or won't like the performance are essential to the extent of MPA.

Regarding schematic organizations of variable elements of performance anxiety, Zhukov (2009) wrote:

LeBlanc (1994) identified 11 factors contributing to performance anxiety: personal characteristics of the performer (age, amount of training and performance experience), difficulty of the music, adequacy of preparation, emotional and physical health, mood, performance environment, self-perceptions, physical and psychological arousal, focus of attention and self-appraisal during playing. Wilson (1994) simplified this theory into three main areas of stress: trait anxiety, task mastery and situational stress. Lehmann et al. (2007) divided factors associated with performance anxiety into four categories: the symptoms, the person, the situation, and the musical task (Zhukov, 2009, p.2).

The Yerkes-Dodson law is an inverted U (or rainbow) shaped function between performance quality and arousal (Steptoe, 1982; Steptoe & Fidler, 1987; Wilson & Roland, 2002; Kenny, 2011; Sinico & Winter, 2013) (Fig.2.2).

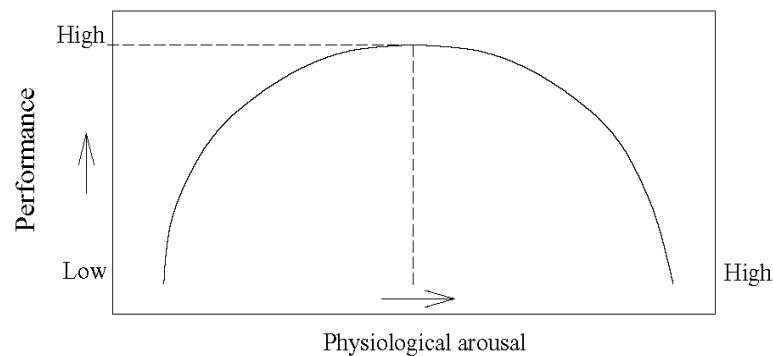


Figure 2.2 – Representation of the Yerkes-Dodson curve, in Kenny (2016)

It is a graphical representation of how low levels of arousal usually originate lackluster performances due to being insufficiently motivating, whereas excessive levels of arousal interfere with performance by disrupting concentration and motor coordination.

Naturally, for a simple task the optimal point of arousal (stress) is higher than for a more complex task (Kenny, 2011 & 2016; Sinico & Winter, 2013) (Fig.2.3).

MUSIC PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

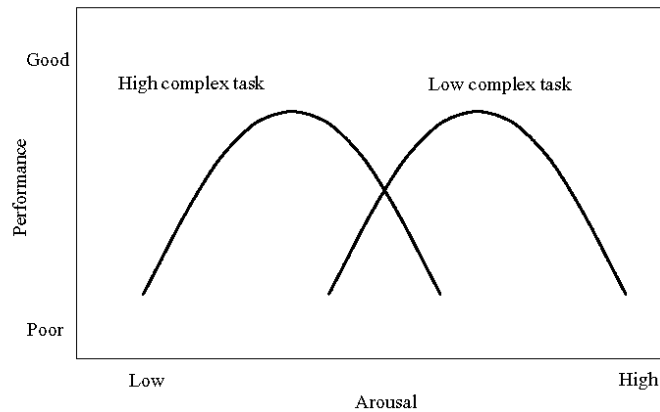


Figure 2.3 – Relation between arousal and task complexity, in Kenny (2016)

The level of physiological arousal that produces optimal performance is also related to the extent to which a task has been practiced to mastery (Kenny, 2011 & 2016) (Fig.2.4).

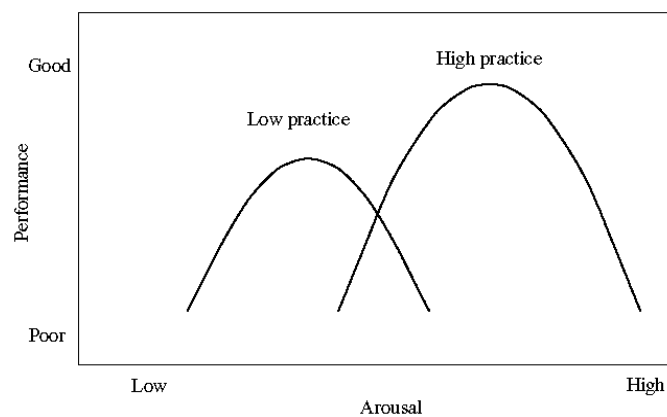


Figure 2.4 – Relation between arousal and mastery, in Kenny (2016)

As observed, a less practiced task will originate a poorer performance at optimal levels of arousal when compared to a well-practiced task.

A catastrophe model is also believed to be realistic, since after reaching a certain level of arousal, performance quality tends to plummet irreversibly as authors agree that cognitive anxiety is mostly responsible for this scenario, rather than somatic anxiety (Wilson, 1997). Wilson & Roland (2002) proposed an extension to this model by grouping the sources of stress in three categories: trait anxiety (personality), situational stress (occasion) and task mastery (preparedness). As the three sources vary independently, their interaction is what dictates whether the anxiety is detrimental or beneficial for performance, in each situation. This notion has practical implications for performers, as high-anxiety individuals perform better in well-prepared and relaxed settings, while low-anxiety individuals perform better in

challenging and high-pressure settings. In regards to this topic, Kenny (2004a) stated that the following cognitions are common for performance anxious individuals:

- i. stronger negative expectancies before the event
- ii. stronger negative bias in their retrospective self-evaluations of performance
- iii. stronger expectation that their performance will be judged negatively by their examiners/audience
- iv. stronger concerns about the consequences of a poor performance
- v. heightened responsiveness to changes in reactions of judges or audience
- vi. failure to derive comfort from evidence that they have handled the situation skillfully (Kenny, 2004a, p.10).

The referred cognitions mean that anxious performers will overestimate the likelihood and consequences of negative performance, as well as subsequent negative judgment; inversely, they will underestimate or fail to acknowledge their own accomplishments. In addition to this issue, Steptoe (1982) wrote:

People with stage-fright have a tendency to catastrophize, or exaggerate in imagination the consequences of a minor mishap. Thus a small mistake will be seen as ruining a whole performance, alienating the audience and critics, making friends or colleagues ashamed and damaging the individual's entire career prospects. They may also have negative thoughts about the self, seeing themselves as unworthy, technically incapable, not as talented as colleagues, and unable to give genuinely inspired readings (Steptoe, 1982, p.539).

Nevertheless, and despite high levels of MPA, actual performance catastrophes are rare occurrences (Kenny, 2004a). Anxious musicians may also be tempted to give excuses prior to playing, providing excuses for mistakes they have not yet made. This habit, usually referred to as "self-handicapping", derives from the preoccupation of being evaluated by others. Resulting negative cognitions tend to develop into self-sabotage (Zhukov, 2009). An extreme example of a high performance anxiety individual is that of the "impostor syndrome", considered to be one of the hardest-to-resolve performance anxiety issues: "These individuals are highly talented, competent, and knowledgeable but regard themselves as inept and as impostors and constantly fear being found out and exposed for their "true" incompetence" (Lazarus & Abramovitz, 2004, p.833).

Kenny (2011) elaborated a conceptual model of how a person develops, maintains and exits from music performance anxiety (Fig.2.5). This model consists in the organization of interactions between generalized or specific vulnerabilities, forms of conditioning and responses to a stressful event.

MUSIC PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

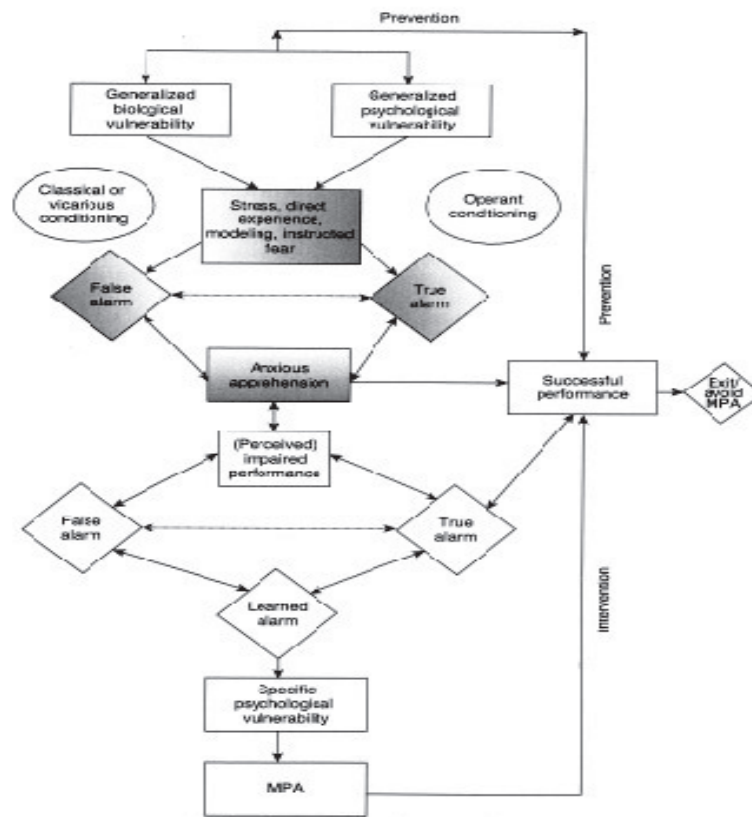


Figure 2.5 – Kenny's (2011) model for development, maintenance and exit from MPA

As illustrated in Fig.5, the shaded boxes represent basic conditioning processes that develop anxious apprehension and some form of social phobia, naturally influenced by biological and/or psychological vulnerabilities and shaped by forms of conditioning. Fear triggers physiological fight-or-flight responses in the presence of real or present danger (true alarms), whereas in anxiety and panic disorders (MPA included) there is usually an absence of real or present danger (false alarms). In a stressful moment, which for a musician is usually a performance situation, the general anxious apprehension becomes focused on the complexity of music performance, originating its impairment, or perceived impairment. The experience of too many alarms in a performance setting will start to condition the anxiety response to performing, establishing music performance anxiety. Therefore, prevention is required (in varying approaches) in order to avoid that conditioning from happening; however, after MPA is materialized, it entails some form of intervention to achieve a successful performance. Early experiences of true or false alarms also define the tendency for anxious apprehension in a performance setting and outcomes will vary according to the perceived success of the performance. The cumulative number of successful performances tend to reduce anxious apprehension to manageable levels, while the experience of

unsuccessful performances tends to involve negative emotions and self-evaluation, to aggravate anxious apprehension, and to trigger more alarms, increasing the risk of impaired performance. A vicious circle can then be formed, until the performance itself is increasingly able to trigger conditioned alarms.

The desensitization of exposure, social skills training and cognitive restructuring are mentioned by Cox & Kenardy (1993) as forms of treatment for social phobia, relating well to common coping strategies for MPA. Treatments for MPA have concentrated on characteristic social phobic themes such as fear of failure, fear of social disapproval and irrational and self-defeating thought patterns (Cox & Kenardy, 1993; Osborne & Franklin, 2002). The main obstacle for a musician's performance is that finer motor skills are greatly impaired by anxiety, which further increases anxiety levels, making it more difficult to cope with. Yoshie & Kudo (2009a) hypothesized that psychological stress leads to a temporary regression of muscle memory patterns to an earlier stage of motor learning, which is characterized by the loss of biomechanical freedom (stiffness) as an attempt to maintain motor functions under control, through the filtering of (anxiety) deteriorated neuromotor signals. This mechanism is thought to prevent performance impairment in simple tasks, but is found to be detrimental in complex manual motor tasks.

Since MPA is found to be relatively common among children, one of the most recurring questions within this subject is whether it is innate or developed. In case of the latter condition, one should ask how it is "learned" (Ryan & Andrews, 2009). Boucher & Ryan (2010) addressed this question and their results indicated that it can stem from either or both situations. In their research, children with prior experience had less anticipatory stress, but higher cortisol⁴ levels. Familiar location/environment was found to reduce stress and second performances in a short time frame elicit less stress responses, probably due to being a confidence building experience. The same study did not find any differences between genders in an early age, as they are thought to only become apparent at the onset of puberty. The authors highlighted that, by sixth grade⁵, children start to develop their own coping strategies, while advice from teachers regarding this subject is relatively uncommon. Opposing the reality of a generalized lack of studies regarding young children's performing experiences, several important pedagogical implications can be derived from this work. In fact, Burin & Osório (2016) stated that early diagnosis and intervention for young musicians may prevent future disadvantages in dealing with anxiety. Further supporting this argument, Taborsky (2007) stated that:

⁴ Cortisol is a steroid-based hormone involved in the regulation of cell metabolism which helps to regulate stress levels within the body, with higher levels of cortisol equating to higher levels of stress.

⁵ Between 11 and 12 years old.

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Music educators should try to prevent debilitating effects of anxiety from ever developing in young musicians, without discouraging developmental auditory exposure and positive factors such as concentration, intensity, and arousal. Young musicians might benefit from anxiety modification techniques in which coping strategies are explored (Taborsky, 2007, p.18).

Even if preemptive techniques fail to mitigate MPA effects on younger students, it is possible to explore treatments that improve confidence and musicality.

MPA may present systematic differences according to the types of musicians and instruments (Kenny et al., 2004). String players and singers have been found to display higher anxiety values than musicians that play other instruments (Iusca & Dafonu, 2012); wind musicians and singers have reported higher frequency of respiratory symptoms (Struder & Danuser, 2011); pianists, in turn, have been found to report lower levels of anxiety than other instrumentalists (Otacioğlu, 2016). However, the characterization of different instrumentalists and how music performance anxiety varies accordingly is still an understudied topic.

Several authors have stated finding a higher prevalence of MPA in women, as well as a higher severity (Leblanc et al., 1997; Kokotsaki & Davidson, 2003; Iusca & Dafonu, 2012; Barbar et al., 2014; Zakaria et al., 2013); this difference may be due to biological, psychological and cultural factors (Yondem, 2007), as well as (or) socialized gender roles, where males abstain from voicing emotional distress (Jimenez, 2015). In addition, Brooker (2015) postulated that females are subject to genetic and environmental factors that influence their cognitive, physical and social anxiety, which in turn exacerbate their sensitivity; males, however, only appear to be influenced by environmental factors, not genetic ones. Reportedly, females present a few differentiating factors in regards to MPA: women are more distressed during performance than men, feel that anxiety has a greater impact on their careers, view the audience more as threatening than supportive, are more likely to avoid performance, and have a higher tendency for performance interruptions and impairments (Dempsey, 2015). In the same study, women were also found to be more likely to seek treatment, engaging proactively in the resolution of MPA related issues. The variety of results and contrasting hypotheses in the mentioned studies suggests that there is a need for more research into MPA gender differences in order to reach definite conclusions.

Music and sports share many points in common, such as (i) achieving a level of mastery through training, (ii) engaging in the process of motor learning and its three phases (cognitive, associate and autonomous), (iii) searching and appreciating excellence, (iv) performing in front of an audience, (v) experiencing pressure due to performance anxiety and consequently (vi) experiencing performance impairment despite high levels of aptitude

and preparation. Sports psychology has provided extensive research for coping with performance stress; therefore, considering the significant similarities between the two activities, musicians may benefit from that knowledge (Yoshie et al., 2009b). Examples such as Suinn's Anxiety Management Training (AMT) program; Hardy, Jones and Gould performance enhancement model; and Hanin's Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning (IZOF) are all intended for athletes to achieve peak performance and may prove to be useful for musicians as well (Kenny, 2011).

2.2 – Research Overview

In recent years, more research specifically directed towards MPA has become available, as the topic has become the subject of more scientific interest. By compiling results from several studies, it highlighted how ubiquitous music performance anxiety really is and reinforced the idea that an increased necessity to adequately address it and deeply understand it exists. The following studies are summarized and presented in chronological order.

Cox & Kenardy (1993) investigated the relation between music performance anxiety and experience, state and trait anxiety, social phobia, differentiating between practice, group and solo performance settings. A total of 32 music students, between 18 and 40 years old were assessed through 3 different questionnaires. Low trait-anxiety students reported that performance anxiety had minimal effects on their playing, revealing a correlation between trait anxiety and performance anxiety. Furthermore, performance anxiety levels experienced in a solo performance setting were found to be higher than in a group setting. Although the authors stated that experience was not a factor in determining a student's level of anxiety during a performance, this claim has not been corroborated by more recent studies (Ryan & Andrews, 2009; Chapter 5 of this dissertation).

In Leblanc et al.'s (1997) study, 27 high school music students performed in 3 stages: alone, with one researcher, with all researchers and peer group plus tape recorder. The subjects responded to an anxiety questionnaire, had their heart rate monitored while performing and answered some questions in an exit interview. Although students self-reported levels of anxiety in all stages, 67% stated that playing for researchers and peer group was the most stressful. Therefore, the presence of an audience was associated with greater performance anxiety. In this study, females reported significantly higher anxiety levels when performing for peers and higher heart for all stages, despite showing higher performance quality.

Osborne & Franklin (2002) analyzed the cognitive processes present in music performance anxiety. In their study, 84 musicians (professional, student and amateur) answered several questionnaires, which assessed MPA, social phobia, and cognitive processes while performing. Results showed that most cognitive distortions associated with social phobia were found to be correlated with performance anxiety. A total of 26% of the respondents were considered to suffer from high music performance anxiety; this group was more likely to receive a negative evaluation, as well as to assign the greatest meaning to receiving one. MPA levels for females were found to be significantly higher than for males.

As for Kokotsaki & Davidson (2003), the study consisted in 43 college students answering a questionnaire regarding their state and trait anxiety before, during and after an exam. Descriptive results showed that 65% of the students reported experiencing anxiety that prevented them from playing to the best of their ability; only 7% believed that feeling anxiety actually helped them play better. The mean values for trait anxiety were higher for both males and females when compared to the published norm⁶; but for state anxiety, only females showed higher mean values. These findings confirmed that, in general, performing musicians are more anxious than the general population. In this particular study, no significant gender differences were found regarding MPA levels.

Also exploring the relation between state and trait anxiety in musicians, as well as other variables (such as stress, aspiration, perfectionism and MPA), Kenny et al. (2004) had 32 professional operatic chorus singers answer 9 different questionnaires. Results corroborated the findings of the previous study, as this group also revealed having a higher trait anxiety than the normative sample. Similarly, despite females scoring slightly higher than males in nearly all variables, results were found not to be statistically significant. In addition, the study found MPA to be positively correlated to perfectionism.

Fehm & Schmidt (2006) investigated the frequency of MPA, common symptoms and coping strategies in a group of 74 high school music students. Results showed that 73% of the students experienced performance anxiety as a negative influence on their performances and 10% believed that it already has a negative impact on their careers. As in the previously mentioned studies, no significant gender differences were found in regards to MPA. The most common reported symptoms were nervousness and sweaty palms (somatic), being concerned by mistakes and overcritical (cognitive). Regarding coping, short-term strategies such as rehearsing, positive thinking and praying; and long-term strategies such as practicing and talking to teachers and classmates, were found to be the most common choices. Lastly, results from the questionnaire revealed that more than half of the students (58%) declared that anxiety depended upon the status of the audience, increasing when

⁶ Authors utilized Spielberger et al.'s (1983) "Manual for the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory" (Palo Alto, CA, Consulting Psychologists Press) as a reference.

teachers and professors were present, due to professional knowledge and importance of their judgment.

Researching the correlation between various personality traits, coping strategies and performance anxiety, Langendörfer et al. (2006) presented a study where 122 orchestra musicians answered a questionnaire, differentiated between rehearsal and performance situations. A strong correlation between rehearsal and performance for physical symptoms and pleasant anticipation was found. Pleasant anticipation in rehearsal was predicted by extrinsic motivation and extraversion, while in performance it was predicted by intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. Personality traits such as lack of confidence, emotionality and worry were moderately intercorrelated amongst themselves, while emotionality was found to be highly correlated with physical symptoms. Although emotional and physiological aspects tended to decrease with age and experience, lack of confidence did not. The tendency to feel resigned was a predictor for worry in performance situations, while minimizing the situation was most effective in rehearsal situations. Pleasant anticipation appeared to be independent from performance anxiety.

In Georges et al.'s (2007) study regarding the relation between social anxiety and MPA, 142 instrumentalists answered several questionnaires. Results showed that students reported higher levels of anxiety than professionals, females reported higher levels of anxiety than males, and a positive high correlation between social anxiety and MPA.

Intercorrelating the effects of personality and gender with anxiety, Yondem's (2007) study consisted in 54 music students' responses to a questionnaire during their final performance examinations. Results showed that the need for approval was significantly correlated with anxiety. The study also revealed that students with higher perfectionistic attitudes experienced more anxiety, but the correlation was not found to be statistically significant. Females reported higher performance anxiety than males.

In Osborne & Kenny (2008), 298 adolescent music students were assessed utilizing two different questionnaires and a self-report regarding their worst performance experiences. In an attempt to establish an association between self-perceived negative performances and performance anxiety, the study found that students who reported negative performing experiences also reported higher levels of MPA. This suggests that early exposure to a competitive performing environment might have negative consequences. Also, those with higher trait anxiety performed worse, implying a higher vulnerability to negative cognitions, and MPA. The absence of negative cognitions was found to be more relevant for the improvement of performance quality than the presence of positive cognitions. Gender differences were not found to be statistically significant.

Another large group of individuals was analyzed by Ryan & Andrews (2009): 201 members of 7 semi-professional choirs were subjected to questionnaires about MPA, their

experiences with conductors and what coping mechanisms they would normally use. Out of the total number of participants of the study, 57% revealed to having felt moderate performance anxiety in at least half of their performances, 15% reported experiencing MPA frequently and 7% admitted having performing anxiety with a high level of severity. Additionally a low correlation between severity of anxiety and years of experience was found, possibly meaning that the arousal is shifted towards facilitating anxiety through experience or that in extreme cases, those with high levels of MPA tend to choose a different career. The number of years of experience is a factor that was found to have much more significant correlation than age in regards of performance anxiety, as expected. Self-help coping mechanisms were found to be common, but seeking medical and/or psychological help was not. 26% reported that MPA has impacted their lives in a significant way and might have pursued further objectives within music if not affected by it. This study also concluded that conductors had a high impact on the singers' level of anxiety.

As for Boucher & Ryan's (2010) study, 66 children that were between 3 and 4 years of age and had regular music lessons participated in two auditions. To assess performance anxiety three tools were utilized: an inventory, cortisol measurements, and videotape behavioral observations. Many of these children, slightly over 70%, revealed experiencing anticipatory stress about performing; and a positive correlation was found between anticipatory stress levels, and cortisol levels during performance. Children who had prior performing experiences presented lower anticipatory stress, suggesting that early performance experiences can affect children's responses to subsequent performances.

Kenny (2011) provides a thorough compilation of the results of several studies' assessment of MPA in musicians and music students, including a few that have already been mentioned. Table 2.1 encapsulates that information:

	Summary of results
Orchestras	Between 13% and 25% of musicians experienced severe performance anxiety; Between 59% and 70% experienced MPA with enough intensity to affect performance.
Choirs	Trait anxiety for choir singers is 3 times higher than normative sample; Over 50% experienced performance anxiety regularly.
College	Between 21% and 36% of college music students reported experiencing high levels of MPA; Only 8% reported not experiencing performance anxiety.
Adolescent	About 34% of adolescent musicians reported being significantly affected by MPA.
Children	Children considered musical performance more anxiety inducing than sports or tests; Around 23% reported being impaired by performance anxiety.

Table 2.1 – Summary of MPA assessment results, from Kenny (2011)

Approaching MPA and coping strategies, Huang (2011) conducted a workshop for 54 college piano students, who answered an anxiety survey as well as post-workshop questions. Results showed that 57% the respondents reported performing infrequently; and 51% responded experiencing performance anxiety symptoms frequently. Rapid heartbeat, sweating and tension were the most common reported symptoms; and deep breathing, thinking positively and visualization were the most common coping strategies. Only 37% admitted to having been exposed to the topic of MPA prior to the workshop.

Investigating hyperventilation complaints among classical musicians, Studer et al. (2011) assessed 169 college music students via questionnaires. The study found that hyperventilation was positively correlated with negative feelings before a performance, as well as with experiencing stage fright as a problem. Wind musicians and singers reported experiencing this symptom with a higher frequency than other instrumentalists. Females scored higher both in hyperventilation complaints and negative feelings of MPA than males.

Iusca & Dafinoiu (2012) studied gender and instrument differences in the perception of MPA by undergraduate music students during their final exams. Questionnaires were answered to assess performance anxiety and performance quality was rated. Females students were found to be more affected by MPA than males, but achieve higher performance ratings. String players and singers displayed higher anxiety values than other instrumentalists.

For another study, Sinico et al. (2012) analyzed the answers of an online questionnaire for 142 student, amateur and professional flute players, ranging between 5 and 20 years of experience. A significant difference between mean value levels of trait-anxiety and state-anxiety was found, which was interpreted as that reported anxiety for a performance situation was higher than in everyday life circumstances, as expected. No significant gender difference in reported in mean differences regarding state-anxiety, however it was found that males had a higher value increase from trait to state. Professionals reported lower state anxiety than amateurs and students.

Regarding Zakaria et al.'s (2013) study, 45 undergraduate music students answered a questionnaire and were interviewed regarding coping with performance anxiety. Results showed that 96% admitted to performance anxiety/nervousness, 69% reported MPA "before and during" performance and 88% acknowledge MPA affects their playing abilities. Concerning to what methods were used for coping with MPA, praying, positive thinking, rehearsing and relaxation were the most commonly reported strategies.

Researching the association of psychopathology indicators with MPA, Barbar et al. (2014) performed a statistical analysis of the results of self-rated inventories. Out of 230 amateur and professional musicians assessed, 24% were found to have MPA indicators,

19% social phobia indicators and 20% depression. Several inventories were utilized for this assessment and results were constrained taking into account the type of musicians and socio-cultural influences. The authors also found comorbidity between MPA and general anxiety, social anxiety, depression and negative cognitions. MPA between professionals and amateurs was similar, however general anxiety, social anxiety and depression means were higher in professionals. According to the analyzed data, musicians with social anxiety have a 3.22 times more chances to develop MPA, compared to those without; while musicians with depression have 3.87 times more chances to develop MPA, compared to those without. The study also found that amongst musicians, rates of MPA and social anxiety were found to be higher than the general population. Depression was not clinically diagnosed but personality traits that highly correlated to MPA suggest the presence of depressive symptoms in musicians: attribution of success to external factors, poor acknowledgement of effort accomplished, excessive self-demand, introspection, hopelessness and lack of confidence in self.

In Dempsey (2015), the relationship between MPA, perfectionism and self-efficacy was investigated. A total of 65 music students between the ages of 8 and 17 answered four questionnaires. The author found positive correlations between overall levels of perfectionism and anxiety; and a negative correlation between overall levels of self-efficacy and anxiety. Regarding age, no statistically significant differences in MPA between children and teenagers were present; however, older students displayed more physical symptoms associated with anxiety. As for gender differences, male and female students reported similar MPA values.

Lastly, Otacioğlu (2016) analyzed the connection between musical self-esteem and MPA. Several questionnaires were utilized to assess a sample of 306 students from 9 different professional music education institutions. A total of 67% scored in the mid-range for MPA, and 12% scored in the high-range. The study found no significant gender differences regarding self-esteem, but did find males to be more prone to performance anxiety than females. In addition, results showed anxiety levels varied according to the instrument, with piano students exhibiting the lowest MPA levels. This was attributed to more stage experience, considering that pianists, by playing both solo and accompanying other instruments, would be able to perform more often.

In an attempt to summarize the contents of all previously mentioned studies, results were compiled and presented in Table 2.2:

CHAPTER 2

	Population				MPA			
	N	Level	Age	Inst	Gender	Moderate	High	Positive Correlations
Cox & Kenardy (1993)	32	Student	18 ~ 40	All	-	84%	-	Solo performance, trait anxiety, social phobia
Leblanc et al. (1997)	27	Student	14 ~ 17	Band	♂ < ♀	-	-	Audience
Osborne & Franklin (2002)	84	Student Amateur Pro	16 ~ 66	All	♂ < ♀	36%	26%	Social phobia
Kokotsaki & Davidson (2003)	43	Student	College	Voice	♂ = ♀	65%	-	Trait and state anxiety
Kenny et al. (2004)	32	Pro	28 ~ 61	Choir	♂ = ♀	-	-	Perfectionism
Fehm & Schmidt (2006)	74	Student	15 ~ 19	All	♂ = ♀	73%	10%	-
Langendörfer et al. (2006)	122	Pro	25 ~ 64	Orch	-	-	-	Perfectionism
Georges et al. (2007)	142	Student Pro	17 ~ 65	All	♂ < ♀	-	-	Social anxiety
Yonem (2007)	54	Student	20 ~ 28	All	♂ < ♀	-	-	Need for approval (socially prescribed perfectionism)
Osborne & Kenny (2008)	298	Student	11 ~ 19	All	♂ < ♀	-	-	Trait anxiety, negative performance experiences
Ryan & Andrews (2009)	201	Semi-pro	17 ~ 70	Choir	-	57%	7%	-
Boucher & Ryan (2010)	66	Student	3 ~ 4	All	♂ = ♀	-	-	Anticipatory stress, cortisol
Studer et al. (2011)	169	Student	15 ~ 45	All	♂ < ♀	-	-	Hyperventilation
Huang (2011)	54	Student	College	Piano	-	51%	-	-
Iusca & Dafinoiu (2012)	130	Student	College	All	♂ < ♀	-	-	Cognitive anxiety
Sinico et al. (2012)	142	Student Amateur Pro	13 ~ 77	Flute	♂ = ♀	-	-	-
Zakaria et al. (2013)	55	Student	College	All	-	88%	-	-
Barbar et al. (2014)	230	Amateur Pro	Adult	All	♂ = ♀	24%	-	-
Dempsey (2015)	65	Student	8 ~ 17	Piano	♂ = ♀	-	-	Perfectionism, low self-efficacy
Otacioğlu (2016)	306	Student	< 18	All	♂ > ♀	67%	12%	Low musical self-confidence

Table 2.2 – Summary of studies regarding MPA and its correlations

The combination of the results from the studies seem to indicate that somewhere between 51% and 88% of music students report regular experiences with music performance anxiety, and that between 7% and 12% can be considered as experiencing a severe form of MPA. Interestingly, the presence of peers and professors in the audience is often reported as one of the major triggers for anxiety. Regarding the only study involving children, anticipatory stress responses in children were as high as 75%. Even for amateur, semi-professional and professional musicians, results show that between 24% and 57% reported regular experiences of performance anxiety. MPA has also been positively correlated with several traits, factors and symptoms.

The data pertaining to MPA gender differences suggests that female musicians tend to experience performance anxiety with more frequency and intensity than males. In the studies where gender differences were not considered to be statistically significant, females

still reported higher anxiety values than males. Still, as the last entry shows, there are some instances where the opposite is verified, possibly because there are several variables involved and “black-and-white” distinctions should be avoided.

It is reasonable to conclude that music performance anxiety has a significant impact during a musician’s formative years, even affecting the decision to continue pursuing music study or not. Although a correlation of studies with such varying conditions is not scientifically tenable, they do present a general picture. The existing amount of literature and collected data emphasize the intensity, occurrence and pervasiveness of MPA among music students and professional musicians, regardless of the instrument played.

2.3 – MPA in Music Education

Generally speaking, there is the notion that several things could easily be implemented by music schools in young musicians’ formative years, and there is plenty of literature recommending taking action in the early stages of development as the most effective way of minimizing performance anxiety. Boucher & Ryan (2010) highlighted that anxiety appears to be a topic of concern for young musicians, but one that they considered not being sufficiently addressed by teachers and institutions, situation also referred by Fehm & Schmidt (2006) and Ryan et al. (2009). As students that experience MPA tend to think there is something wrong with them, understanding that they are not alone and becoming knowledgeable about the problem are the first steps towards coping (Robertson & Eisensmith, 2010). Fehm & Schmidt (2006) advocated that it is easier to implement special courses that address MPA at a younger age, in a music school environment. In a university environment, the authors fear that such courses would probably not be attended by students, due to not being willing to share their fears. The same study concludes that the high and disturbing levels of anxiety reported justify the relevance of those offers in the curricula. Zakaria et al. (2013) emphasized that music students should undergo special training programs in order to develop proper breathing techniques and body communication, personal confidence, enhanced motivation and dedicated skills in managing stage fright.

Techniques to minimize MPA should be addressed in the development of young musicians from the commencement of their musical training, given that the professional development of musicians often begins in childhood or early adolescence and up to a third of adolescent music students report being adversely affected by MPA (Osborne & Kenny, 2008, p.457-458).

Despite the consensus, there is discussion on how to approach students and implement ways to provide them with knowledge about MPA and facilitate their perception of the condition. From a pedagogic standpoint, McPherson & McCormick (2006) claimed that it is the teacher's duty to provide the necessary tools for students to cope with the stress of auditions and exams on an earlier stage, as well as with that of professional recitals later on. Similarly, Leblanc et al. (1997) stated that "music teachers should be aware of the potential for stress in performing for an audience, and they should try to prepare their students for the audience experience in a way that will minimize student anxiety" (Leblanc et al., 1997, p.495). The reduction of performance stress can be achieved by the acknowledgement of every student's personal beliefs and mold them towards a more positive framework through support and encouragement. Zelenak (2011) added that "educators should be aware of the mastery experiences they incorporate into their instruction since these experiences exert a strong degree of influence on their students' self-perceptions of musical ability" (p.119). As such, the role of the teacher is of significant relevance and influence, and therefore, adjusting to each individual student's personality and needs is advisable. Referring to singers, Kokotsaki & Davidson (2003) wrote:

Through the identification of the singing student's learning background and experience, and by closely examining their individual mental and emotional processes, teachers will have at their disposal the essential background knowledge and information to work further towards the development of the student's self-confidence, with the application of strategies to enhance independence and self-sufficiency. Thus, the eventual aim would be for the desirable effects of anxiety to be maintained and optimised while its catastrophic consequences are eliminated as far as possible in performance situations. The goal should be the enhancement of a psychological state that allows students to function effectively on tasks that are within the scope of their ability. Within this framework, anxiety effects on performance can be optimised (Kokotsaki & Davidson, 2003, p.53).

Randall (2008) alerted that teachers can easily contribute to increase their students' performance anxiety levels if they are not careful. A competitive environment and the search for excellence, although well intended, often lead to overestimating the moment of performance as too different and special. As a result, students may study harder on the short-term while damaging their enjoyment of playing music on the long-term. Besides mastering the technical aspects, music teachers should encourage students to practice performing as much as they can, even if it is only for family and friends. Parents are advised to acknowledge and commend a child's accomplishments in music frequently, no matter how small. It is important to realize that "although social approval is important for almost all

people, music students, who have greater expectations for approval from others, were cognitively more vulnerable to develop anxiety” (Yondem, 2007, p.1422).

Providing feedback may contribute to a change in how others view themselves (Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Bandura, 1977, 1994). As an example, Weeks & McGrath (2004) described personal stories of how teachers can influence music students negatively, such as: a teacher relying too much on negative feedback and demoralizing the student in the process; or a teacher forcing an unwilling student into a competition; and another teacher that excessively criticized a student in front of her peers after the recital. It is advisable that teachers should utilize proper feedback to boost self-efficacy (Papageorgi et al., 2007), since external approval or disapproval can have ample influence on any level of self-confidence; and musicians are particularly exposed to it whether during lessons playing for the teacher or in any type of public performance. Also, teachers commonly use feedback without any kind of conscious criteria, although the feedback frequency should depend on the complexity of the skill. On some occasions, it is preferable to lead a student into formulating his/her own opinion about what he/she has just played in order to make him/her reflect and develop a personal judgment of his/her performance. Even when the skill is highly challenging, the student should never be interrupted while performing because that originates an increase in negative self-image, a reduction of the self-judging ability and a decrease in movement stability required for motor learning (Wulf & Mornell, 2008). As previously stated, feedback is a very powerful tool that should be used accordingly, otherwise it may hamper learning instead of promoting it. The only way for the teacher to accurately utilize feedback in an effective manner, is by developing proper lesson strategies that compensate time restrictions. When the student is facing a very challenging piece of music the teacher must carefully deconstruct it in small sections in order to avoid interruptions (concurrent feedback), facilitating learning as well as the generation of positive self-efficacy. Teachers should always re-examine how they criticize and provide feedback to their students, and should try to enable them to be more positive and proactive. In this way, by incorporating positive teaching techniques to calm performance anxiety, it will be possible to achieve in music what sports psychology regularly achieves with competing athletes (Randall, 2008). Teacher’s verbal advices have been found to have a limited effect, but the way they engage their pupils in the classroom, by demonstrating, encouraging and challenging, have a more profound influence on the way the students practice (Barry & Hallam, 2002).

Sinnamon (2012) suggested that educators might consider supporting and promoting flow experiences even for young students, given that flow is an unambiguous positive experience and promoting the frequency of this experience would encourage the student to persist in learning and performing. Iusca (2015) found a significant positive correlation between performance level and the flow state level in classical music undergraduate

students during exams. Furthermore, results showed that the correlation was stronger for piano and string players, medium for singers and insignificant for woodwind and brass players, meaning that each type of instrumentalist may have a specific relationship, necessity and requirements for achieving the flow state. With teachers becoming aware and sharing with their students that flow exists and is beneficial to performance, and that its existence is formally confirmed through empirical research, flow enhancement strategies might be relevant factors for success in competitive classical music performance and consequently, an important pedagogical asset.

The following excerpt is a good encapsulation of the pedagogical approach towards minimizing MPA in young musicians:

Music education literature suggests that performance anxiety can be reduced through various pedagogical strategies, including appropriate preparation through cognitive strategies such as piece dissection and structural analysis to enhance music memorization (Haid, 1999; Hallam, 1997). However, musical performance excellence involves the coordinated effort of numerous physical, psychological and general music skills (Williamon, 2004). This study adds to music education literature by suggesting that adolescent musicians can benefit through performance preparation programmes that:

1. Ensure adverse consequences associated with early evaluative performances are minimized by offering frequent, low-stress opportunities to perform so that students learn that performance is an integral, enjoyable and manageable part of their musical education. In addition, the repertoire should be well within the technical capability of the student and the material should be learned to the point of automaticity before it is performed.

2. Incorporate psychological skills training in which students are encouraged to provide feedback on their own performance and taught how to prevent and manage MPA by modifying any problematic cognitions that are articulated with more realistic and helpful alternatives (Kenny, 2004; Rae & McCambridge, 2004).

By integrating psychological skills practice with technical practice at the commencement of performance training, psychological skills are more likely to have a performance-specific focus (Weinberg & Williams, 2001) (Osborne & Kenny, 2008, p.458).

Music competitions can be a double-edged sword, especially for young musicians. On one hand, they are found to potentially reduce self-efficacy through the experience of failure (subjectively, any classification except for the 1st prize can be considered as failure), while on the other hand, competitions may encourage skill development (and playing at the peak of their abilities) (O'Neill & McPherson, 2002). In this sense, Smith (2005) advises music educators to take into account the evidences of the adaptive nature of task goals

(based on personal improvement) and the potential hazards of ego goals (based on social comparisons). Thomas (1992)⁷ wrote:

If competitive structures pose little problem to the “elite”... or to students with perceived high ability, we still need to ask what effect such practices have on the very young, the shy, the talented but insecure, the ordinary, the less aggressive, or otherwise “noncompetitive” student (in Smith, 2005, p.431).

This reasoning has several implications of how a competitive environment may negatively influence students with low self-efficacy and its contribution towards generating anxiety.

Musicians and teachers are beginning to acknowledge the issues of performance anxiety and the belief that “just practicing more” will solve the problem is gradually changing. In order to become increasingly more inclusive, music schools and universities should start addressing these issues, providing music teachers with the necessary platforms to reach and adequately prepare the students. In conclusion:

It is important to remember that ‘stage fright’ is a complex issue that does not have ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution. The coping strategies that will work for one student may not help another student. As teachers we need to have a wide range of approaches to this problem, monitor student reactions to our suggestions and adjust our advice until a particular combination of strategies will produce the desired reduction in performance anxiety levels (Zhukov, 2009, p.2).

2.4 – Associated Symptoms

There are several symptoms associated with stress and anxiety responses to a stressful situation. Although some may be the same regardless of the scenario, in a musical performance setting, where the minutiae of fine motor skills is imperative, particular sensitivities arise. Considering the degree of control that is required of musicians, common “physical symptoms like trembling, sweaty hands for string players, or a dry mouth for wind players have a great impact on the quality of performance” (Langendörfer et al., 2006, p.162).

According to Sinico & Winter (2013), the symptoms that are associated with performance anxiety are usually divided in three categories⁸: physical/physiological, cognitive/psychological and behavioral. These can be enunciated as:

⁷ Quoting Thomas, N.G. (1992) ‘Motivation’, in R. Colwell (ed.) Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning, pp. 425–36. New York: Schirmer.

- Physical/physiological symptoms experienced during performance may include headaches, increased heart rate, palpitations, shortness of breath, hyperventilation, dry mouth, sweatiness, nausea, diarrhea and dizziness, consistent with any other form of stressful situation.
- Cognitive/psychological symptoms include loss of concentration, distraction, memory failure, inadequate cognition, incorrect interpretation of the score and negative thinking, the latter being the result of over identification of self-esteem and self-worth with performance success.
- Behavioral symptoms may take the form of symptoms of anxiety such as shaking, trembling, stiffness, dead-pan expression, impairment of the performance itself, difficulty in maintaining posture or natural movement, and technical failures.

Emotions such as apprehension, tension, dread or panic, can also arise as symptoms of anxiety, and indeed they are the core experience of anxiety for most musicians. Additionally, Huang (2011) mentioned several other symptoms associated with performance anxiety, like increased blood pressure, faintness, chest pressure, choking, gasping, spasms, fidgeting, pacing, insomnia, wobbly legs, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, heartburn, vomiting, bladder pressure, increased frequency of urination, face flushed, face pale, itching, hazy/foggy mind, blurred vision, self-consciousness, hyper alertness, confusion, fear of losing control, fear of negative evaluations and mental repetition of fearful events. Any of these types of symptoms can interact and “feed” of each other, creating a downward spiral of anxiety that may lead to panic. However, it is important to realize that the physiological symptoms of general arousal are often mislabeled as anxiety. The alterations in pulse-rate, breathing, muscle tension and sweat-gland activity are non-specific, being equally valid for fear, anger, elation and desire. Arousal is only interpreted as performance disrupting anxiety through maladaptive emotional and/or cognitive responses (Steptoe, 1982). In reality, when it’s not being misinterpreted, the arousal is just the body’s way of getting ready to perform. From a physiological standpoint, any of the physical symptoms that impair performance are in fact consequences of natural bodily functions when dealing with stress, such as:

- (1) the heart pumps harder to supply oxygen to the muscles (resulting in palpitations);
- (2) the liver releases stored energy (producing a feeling of ‘edginess’);
- (3) the lungs work harder and airways widen (breathlessness);
- (4) the stomach and guts shut down so that energy is diverted to the muscles (‘butterflies’ and nausea);
- (5) bodily fluids such as saliva are redirected into the bloodstream (dry mouth and difficulty swallowing);
- (6) there is a sharpening of vision (visual disturbances, e.g. blurring);

⁸ Although authors such as Langendörfer et al. (2006) consider “emotional” as the fourth category.

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- (7) the skin sweats to cool the working muscles (sweaty palms and forehead);
 - (8) calcium is discharged from tense muscles ('pins and needles')
- (Wilson, 1997, p.229).

Although for highly anxious individuals the preoccupation with anxiety itself is a problem, there are several other factors that can act as triggers for worry. The practicalities of performing (such as unfamiliar hall, acoustics, travel arrangements, temperature, audience and personal issues) add to doubting the quality of performance (such as concentration issues, technical issues, musicality issues, fear of disapproval by others) (Steptoe, 1982). Subtle forms of anxiety can also be experienced long before a recital, affecting musicians' behavior and cognitions, originating irritability, dwelling on negative fantasies about performing, indecision regarding what pieces to play and believing the audience has negative intentions (Arneson, 2010).

"High levels of autonomic arousal, despite being an evolutionarily adaptive response in life-threatening situations, can have detrimental effects in music performance because they not only fatigue musicians, but also alter their temporal perception" (Yoshie et al., 2009a, p.124). As such, the effects of the "fight-or-flight" response that are ideal to preserve one's life in a threatening situation are less than ideal for musical performance purposes. When responding to stress, large skeletal group muscles become excessively tight, affecting fine-motor skills and breathing (Huang, 2011). Reinforcing this characteristic vulnerability, Steptoe (1982) wrote:

The musician is particularly unfortunate in that the physical systems sustaining a performance are precisely those most likely to be disturbed by excessive tension. Sweat gland activity, salivation, muscle control and the breathing pattern are among the most sensitive indices of bodily arousal, yet are crucial to most performing arts. The highly competitive nature of the professional musician's life and career can only exacerbate these problems (Steptoe, 1982, p.537).

Although general symptomatology is well known and often applied transversely to all performers, the specificities of each instrument play a part in an anxiety setting as well; indeed, McPherson & McCormick (2006) referred that musicians that suffer from anxiety will tend to worry about issues regarding their own instrument and consequently will focus their coping strategies on the more frequent symptoms they experience. For example, it was found that flutists drink more water as a form of combating the symptom of dry mouth (Sinico & Winter, 2013). There is still a generalized lack of studies regarding the characterization of each instrumentalist's specific symptoms, which hampers access to coping strategies that

are directly related to one's own instrument. The existing knowledge usually derives from the teacher's personal experiences that are conveyed to the students. Attending to this gap in knowledge, the research presented in Chapter 5 characterizes guitarists as a subgroup, specifying their anxiety levels and specific symptoms.

Ultimately, it is extremely important to realize that the symptoms themselves are not the problem, and that they can be directly targeted and minimized. Thus, the main aim towards an efficient coping should focus instead on what originates the symptoms and what allows them to manifest.

2.5 – Common Practices for Coping and Therapies

In the review of the literature concerning “what works and what does not” regarding coping with MPA, several distinct approaches and treatments applied in recent years were found, as well as their reported efficacy and usefulness. Although for more severe cases of performance anxiety external medical help is advised, individuals with mild to moderate MPA might benefit from self-regulated techniques to improve their situation. As such, this section of the dissertation aims to present strategies that are found in literature, ranging from literary reviews of all available treatments, like Kenny (2004b), to in-depth studies regarding the effectiveness of a single approach, like Sousa (2011). However, in general, there is a lack of studies outside of the medical and health care fields (Burin & Osório, 2016); as such, most of the invaluable resources anxious performers seek are to be found within these areas of study.

A more definite picture of what can be done to ameliorate performance anxiety is arising, either by medical treatments, self-help methods and a mixture of both approaches. Knowing that “effective coping – such as relaxation or using positive self-instruction – produces a salutary physiological state and fewer negative feelings, while ineffective coping – such as feeling resigned or wallowing in self-pity – leads to an increase in negative emotions” (Langedorfer et al., 2006, p.163), can ultimately not only enhance coping and higher performance quality, but also improve general wellbeing.

A list of most practices and therapies found in literature that have been studied regarding their effectiveness in reducing music performance anxiety, is presented.

2.5.1 – Practices

- Alexander Technique:

This method of kinesthetic education provides insight to the practitioner concerning the accumulation of unnecessary tension while walking, sitting, bending, reaching and, more specifically for musicians, when playing an instrument. Getting one's body naturally used to avoid excessive tension and utilizing that habit as a translatable skill during stressful events, may have a positive influence in the reduction of performance anxiety. There is evidence that this technique provides some degree of improvement in regards to musical skill, positive attitude and less generalized anxiety, but these benefits were confined to a low-stress environment (classroom) and not verified in a high-stress setting (recital) (Wilson & Roland, 2002). Although studies, like Kvamenn (2013), provide accounts of several musicians that have employed this technique to successfully reduce music performance anxiety, no specialized studies regarding the effectiveness of Alexander Technique in coping with MPA are known (Kenny, 2004), neither are there statistical analyses backing those claims (Burin & Osório, 2016). This approach was found to be helpful in relaxing muscle tension, but does not appear to have significant effect in performance anxiety (Ryan & Andrews, 2009).

- Deep / Diaphragmatic Breathing:

Breathing can easily be taken for granted in everyday life. This is also true for musicians whose instrument doesn't directly rely on breath in order to be played. Nonetheless, breathing is essential for providing oxygen and removing carbon dioxide and other toxins from the bloodstream. A lack of awareness and control of breathing leads to poor posture, poor health and emotional stress. The habit of taking fast and shallow breaths may lead to physical manifestations such as the feeling of pain in the neck, shoulders and back, while symptoms like insomnia, hypertension, headaches, anxiety and panic attacks are common in high stress individuals who breathe improperly. The diaphragmatic breathing technique consists in breathing in, deep into the lungs by flexing the diaphragm and expanding the abdomen. Huang's (2011) study mentioned that misconceptions regarding posture have been found to inhibit proper breathing in pianists, causing back muscles to tighten and impeding arm movement. In the same study, 78% of the subjects regarded deep breathing as an effective self-regulated technique.

While it is true that literature about the effectiveness of this one specific technique by itself in coping with MPA is scarce, it is undeniable that proper breathing contributes to a lower heart rate, better oxygenation of the blood and relaxation. It seems to be a therapeutic staple for anxiety, frequently utilized in conjunction with other techniques. In this sense,

Burin & Osório (2016) believe that a big part of the success of practices such as meditation and yoga are due to the fact that a great deal of emphasis and focus is given to breathing.

- Medication and other substances:

When referring to medication commonly used for performance anxiety coping, one usually means beta-blockers⁹. This type of medication acts upon the beta-receptors found in many cells of the sympathetic nervous system, preventing or diminishing excitement usually caused by epinephrine (adrenaline). Although there are many types, the most commonly prescribed are Propranolol (Inderal) and Atenolol (Tenormin). Beta-blockers alleviate the symptoms of arousal without having sedative effects, and they are able to ameliorate the incapacitating physical symptoms associated with performance anxiety, but some participants in studies reported that the absence of physiological arousal itself was disturbing. Ryan & Andrews (2009) referred studies that concluded that low-dose beta-blockers were effective in reducing the effects of MPA, but detrimental in high doses. The pharmacological approach is of no help regarding the cognitive aspects of performance anxiety despite physical calm. Some studies highlight that a large number of musicians utilize medication that acts upon the body's physiological control in order to limit anxiety in musical performance, often without medical supervision (Fehm & Schmidt, 2006; Sinico & Winter, 2013). However, this use of medication only masks performance anxiety symptoms, and does not solve them. In a worst-case scenario, it may also lead to addiction, if not physiological, at least psychological (Ely, 1991). Some studies suggest that beta-blockers can be useful when paired with other forms of therapy, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (McGrath, 2012). Ultimately, anti-anxiety drugs do not help self-reported anxiety and stage fright, but have potentially dangerous side effects (Kenny, 2004b), such as a possible disruption of the fine motor control that is critical to performing music at a high level (Khalsa et al., 2009). Other substances that can be included in this category are alcohol and tranquilizers, as they reduce arousal but also impair intellectual function and therefore are not advised (Steptoe, 1982).

Benzodiazepines such as diazepam (Valium), alprazolam (Xanax), and lorazepam (Ativan) are usually used for the treatment of anxiety, depression and muscle tension. They promote full-body relaxation and may cause drowsiness, loss of coordination and dependency, which makes them unsuitable for MPA treatment (McGrath, 2012).

Nicotine is known to promote calmness and well-being in low doses, and enhance alertness and relaxation in high doses. However, besides dependency, its side effects

⁹ A class of drugs that blocks the action of the sympathetic nervous system on the heart. Usually used to control heart rhythm, treat angina, and reduce high blood pressure.

include cancer, heart disease, lung disease and vascular disease. It is not considered a viable coping tool for anxiety (Kenny, 2011).

Musicians are known for using marijuana and other cannabis-derived substances to reduce performance anxiety. In low doses, those can act as an anxiolytic, but in high doses the effects are reversed, promoting anxiety and panic states. Like other substances, they may cause dependency and therefore are not advisable. Some authors are investigating the applicability of cannabidiol (CBD, the non-psychoactive constituent of cannabis) in anxiety treatment, but its therapeutic use in humans has not yet been confirmed (Kenny, 2011).

- Meditation:

There are several forms of meditation, ranging from a more psychological approach, like mindfulness meditation, to a more religious/esoteric approach, like Zen meditation. The practice of Chan (Zen)¹⁰ meditation involves two aspects: concentration (*samatha* – calming the mind) and mindfulness (*vipassana* – insight into nature). This process is called “silent illumination” by Chan masters. The term can highlight the nature of the goal, as “silent” indicates calmness, i.e. not being influenced by either inner or outer states, and “illumination” indicates awareness of all events that occur in a present moment, such as irrational thoughts and loud sounds. The concept of what modern psychotherapeutic literature has been calling mindfulness is similar to the “silent illumination” principle, involving self-regulated attention to focus on immediate experience and adopting a positive orientation towards that experience of the present moment (Lin et al., 2008). Despite the variety of approaches, there is a common ground in all meditative practices, namely the goal of relaxation, focus and positivity. Its effects in coping with music performance anxiety are still understudied and it is claimed that there is still no evidence that meditation is effective in treating MPA (Kenny, 2004b); yet, results from recent studies seem to present a decrease in MPA and stress symptoms (Burin & Osório, 2016).

In a specific study (Lin et al., 2008), it was found that the meditation group had a decrease of state and trait anxiety, while the control group had an increase; furthermore, the authors mentioned other studies that have reported meditation as an effective way to reduce performance anxiety, public speaking anxiety, self-reported anxiety and also a reduction on mood disturbance and stress symptoms. Also, findings in several other studies suggest that meditation may change brain and immunity functions. As a corroborating example, Khalsa et al. (2009) mentioned the work of Chang (2003), where college music students who participated in an 8-week meditation course showed reduction in post-performance anxiety

¹⁰ Chan and Zen are different pronunciations of the same word, in Chinese and Japanese, respectively.

and also a trend towards more focus and less interference by intrusive thoughts during a solo performance. In addition, Lin et al. (2008) wrote:

Chan meditation, a practice that cultivates concentration and mindfulness, or silent illumination, may be beneficial to musicians who suffer with performance anxiety. By cultivating nonjudgmental awareness of the present moment, the musicians learn to accept their anxiety and performance on the stage as it is. Although the change in performance quality may not be noticeable, the musicians learn to appreciate their performance on stage, which leads to more self-satisfying performances. Traditional therapeutic approaches have focused on trying to alleviate or control anxiety, but this approach may be limited (Roemer and Orsillo, 2002). Thus, acceptance-based interventions may be valuable tools in the current treatment repertoire (Lin et al., 2008, p.150).

Some psychological approaches include a emphasis based on change, which can have unfavorable consequences. Others, like mindfulness, promote acceptance and communication rather than control, and results seem promising. Oyan (1996) defended that the philosophy behind mindfulness meditation is able to bring several benefits to anxious performers, but no empirical studies and data are provided.

- Praying:

Studies like that of Fehm & Schmidt (2006) indicate that a commonly utilized coping strategy is praying. It is acceptable to recognize that such a practice may be akin to entering a meditative state, which promotes relaxation, confidence and focus, therefore possibly promoting the same benefits. However, no studies regarding its actual effectiveness have been pursued.

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

Progressive muscle relaxation, sometimes referred to as deep muscle relaxation or Jacobson's relaxation technique¹¹, consists in a series of tensing and relaxing of the major muscle groups in order to become more aware of tension in the body and to gain the ability to relax it more efficiently, reducing stress in the process. Most people carry subtle tensions for extended periods of time in a modern, fast-paced society, and are unable to release them; consequently, that negatively affects breathing, heart rate, cognitions and emotions. This technique is known to reduce the activity of the sympathetic nervous system that triggers the fight or flight response when experiencing anxiety or fear (Huang, 2011).

¹¹ After its developer, physician, physiologist and psychiatrist, Dr. Edmund Jacobson (1888-1983).

Some studies found positive indicators that progressive muscle relaxation can be beneficial for ameliorating MPA (McGrath, 2012).

- Qigong:

Sousa (2011) studied the effects of a practice called Qigong on eight transverse flute students between the ages 10 and 12, measuring heart rates, blood pressure and cortisol levels. Results shown that, admittedly with low statistical significance, the Qigong group had a slightly higher decrease in perceived levels of performance anxiety than the control group, corroborating other studies. Regarding heart rate, data was very significant, decreasing in Qigong group and increasing for the control group before the concerts. Blood pressure and cortisol levels decreased in both groups, with a higher decrease in Qigong group, but not enough to be considered statistically significant. Although with a small sample size, preliminary reports show that Qigong can in fact reduce anxiety levels before concerts in music students.

- Systematic Desensitization:

The idea of performing as much as possible as a countermeasure for MPA is very popular, often being suggested by musicians and teachers as a possible solution (see Chapter 6 of this dissertation). In fact, systematic desensitization can be considered as an exposure therapy approach, consisting in a measured exposure to the anxiety inducing stimuli until habituation (or desensitization) is obtained (McGrath, 2012). The theory suggests that, by performing often, the performer will become increasingly less bothered by the negative effects of performance anxiety, and a sense of normalcy will be achieved. However, it is important to realize that this is proven to be true mostly for perceived successful exposures, or in other words, for those one is adequately prepared to handle. Perceived failure after performing, that can occur when the task is viewed as too challenging for one's ability, will most likely have an adverse effect and may often lead to quitting. Thus, an incremental approach, from small intimate presentations to big recitals, tailored to the needs of the individual, is often the best way to achieve results. Another important factor is the timeframe, as exposure within small windows of time is considered to be more effective than having performances that are too far apart in time.

McGrath (2012) presents several studies that seem to prove the effectiveness of systematic desensitization in reducing music performance anxiety; however, the approach should be personalized to each individual's needs.

- Visualization / Imagery / Mental Practice:

Visualization or imagery techniques are realistic thought processes that are created by focusing on the senses with the intent of promoting positive and desirable feelings and sensations. These visualizations can be varied, concrete or abstract, according to the intended goal. The most common technique, goal directed visualization, consists in focusing on the feelings of achieving a certain goal; it has been proven useful in self-development, relaxation and alleviating worries in performing artists (Huang, 2011). Similarly, mental practice consists in envisioning an upcoming performance with as much detail as possible and focusing on its desirable outcome, which has yielded positive results for musicians. Some defend its utilization not only for performance preparation but also for regular study (McGrath, 2012).

- Yoga:

Yoga can be defined as a “holistic system of mind-body practices for mental and physical health and incorporates multiple techniques including meditation, breathing exercises, sustained concentration, and physical postures that develop strength and flexibility” (Khalsa et al., 2009, p.279). Therefore, it is a very complete and well-rounded approach; in theory, it has several benefits that can possibly be useful in coping with music performance anxiety. Reviewed literature claims that yoga and meditation techniques can improve mood, resilience to chronic and acute stress; also, they enhance performance on cognitive, psychomotor and physical tasks. Performance-related musculoskeletal disorders, like pain from overuse, carpal tunnel syndrome, muscle cramping and involuntary contractions, are also common among musicians. Components of yoga practices like muscle relaxation and breathing regulation have already been incorporated into treatments for performance anxiety and musculoskeletal conditions; however, few studies have found evidences to support that these were effective interventions. In the study by Khalsa et al. (2009), 30 professional young adult musicians were assigned to two separate intervention groups: one group engaged solely in yoga and meditation practices, while the other group included yoga and meditation plus a lifestyle intervention (consisting in counseling); an additional 15 musicians were recruited to be the control group. Performance anxiety decreased in the first two groups, whereas in the control group it did not change. The first two group’s results were similar, attributing more relevance to yoga and meditation than the additional lifestyle aspect of the training. The yoga program showed a statistical tendency to reduce cognitive and somatic symptoms of MPA. Breath control techniques were reported as the most helpful in managing MPA, especially immediately before performance. Training also affected the general mood of participants, showing significant change in the tension/anxiety and depression/dejection subscales.

Ultimately, results for yoga's effectiveness in ameliorating performance anxiety related issues are favorable, promising and deserving of refined research (Burin & Osório, 2016).

2.5.2 – Therapies

- **Biofeedback Therapy:**

This therapy consists in attaching sensors to one's body with the purpose of measuring the heart rate, blood pressure and breathing rate, which are then translated into sounds, flashes of light or images in order for any stress response to be easily identifiable. Biofeedback therapy helps a person become more aware of his/her own anxiety states and also reduce their intensity, and can be a way of relieving body tension that otherwise might impair performance. Examples of techniques utilized in conjunction with biofeedback therapy include verbal psychotherapy, imagery, cognitive statements, autogenic therapy and systematic desensitization. This approach has been proven to be effective in improving muscle relaxation in violinists and pianists, which is extremely helpful from a technical standpoint and may indirectly reduce MPA. The latest development in this area is neurofeedback training, which utilizes an electroencephalogram (EEG) to monitor brain activity, which has been documented as effectively improving overall performance quality in conservatory music students. The main difficulty with this approach is that it requires specialized equipment and trained staff, which makes it somewhat inaccessible to the majority of musicians, music teachers and students (Zhukov, 2009).

Although in 2004 Kenny stated that there were still no concrete evidence to support an effective reduction of MPA by this therapy (Kenny, 2004b), results from Thurber's (2006) study showed that heart rate variability biofeedback techniques can be used as effective tools to reduce state and pre-performance anxiety. Aspects of this approach may in fact be responsible for alterations in physiological parameters but results are still considered speculative (Burin & Osório, 2016).

- **Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT):**

This form of therapy combines cognitive and behavioral strategies to change from automatic and detrimental forms of thinking and behaving to more positive ones.

Cognitive strategies, achieved through cognitive therapy, consist in identifying, examining and modifying maladaptive thinking styles through the process of teaching new skills, such as rational responding, objective self monitoring, formulating and testing personal hypotheses, behavioral self-management, and problem solving. Essentially, cognitive

therapy is a way of changing faulty thinking patterns that give way to maladaptive behaviors such as excessive muscle tension, avoidance or impaired performance. One form to achieve this cognitive restructuring is through stress inoculation, which implies replacing negative cognitions with positive ones before anxiety even takes place, as thoughts often elicit strong emotional responses. It is important to evaluate one's own self-talk, searching for negative statements and substituting them with positive or more realistic ones. The use of imagery may help the performer to reinterpret arousal as normal performance-enhancing excitement rather than a sign for impending disaster.

Behavioral strategies, realized through behavioral therapy, focus on changing the dysfunctional behaviors that arise when people feel anxious. Systematic desensitization, which implies a gradual exposure to the object of fear while maintaining a relaxed state, is one of these strategies. Through relaxation techniques, usually done by a gradual relaxation of muscle groups until the whole body is relaxed, musicians can learn how to recognize the feeling of deep relaxation and loss of muscle tension and then later replicate the feeling during performance. Also, breathing exercises help the body to relax and are fundamental for controlling air emission for some singers, woodwind and brass players (Sinico & Winter, 2013).

Cognitive-behavioral strategies include both cognitive and behavioral exercises at the same time. Individually, cognitive and behavioral therapies are reported to present inconclusive results or minimal effects in coping with MPA, while both therapies combined are proven to have consistent effectiveness (Kenny, 2004b). Considering the multiplicity of approaches within CBT, which combines complimentary facets and the ability to tailor them to individual or group needs, it is therefore viewed as one of the most pertinent treatment options for the psychological aspect of music performance anxiety (McGrath, 2012; Burin & Osório, 2016).

- Guided Image Therapy

This is a psychotherapeutic method that implies visualization techniques, guided by a therapist. It aims to employ a client's own mental imagery to uncover and resolve emotional conflicts. This therapy usually includes a Visuo-Motor Behavior Rehearsal (VMBR) method, which consists in combining relaxation and imagery, where relaxation always acts as a precursor to the imagery process, aiming to strengthen psychological and/or motor skills. It has been utilized successfully in athletes and there are some evidences to support its effectiveness in lowering anxiety in musicians, but more studies are required to substantiate these findings (McGrath, 2012).

- Hypnotherapy:

Hypnotherapy consists in facilitating suggestion, reeducation and analysis of emotional states that are more favorable to the patient. Although it has been proven to be useful in treatment for other types of performance anxiety (McGrath, 2012) and it may very well prove to be effective in MPA specifically, there is still a generalized lack of studies (Kenny, 2004b). One theory suggests that because this approach focuses on reframing the initial sensitizing event of an unresolved childhood trauma (which is often mentioned as the source of stage fright), the therapist could be able to reshape past negative experiences into positive and optimistic, via regression hypnosis (McGrath). A specific problem with this therapy is referred by Kenny (2011); indeed, the author stated that a study found that only about 12% of the population is able to enter a deep state of hypnosis, which renders this approach ineffective for most people. Still, more recently, Brooker (2015) found indication of a positive effect of cognitive hypnotherapy in the alleviation of MPA.

- Music Therapy:

Music therapy utilizes music as a vehicle for relaxation and can theoretically be utilized with the objective of ameliorating MPA. Results of studies aimed to assess the effects of this approach with musicians are inconsistent, some verifying an increase in musicality and decrease in stress and distraction while others were not able to confirm significant differences to control groups (McGrath, 2012).

Overall, music therapy as a means for reducing music performance anxiety warrants future investigation (Kenny, 2004b), as for the time being few studies regarding its efficacy have been conducted (McGrath, 2012).

- Psychodynamic Psychotherapy:

A therapy that focuses on personality, relationships and emotions, addressing the root causes of psychological distress and the complexity of human behaviour. Kenny (2016) provided a detailed successful case report for the utilization of short-term psychodynamic therapy with a severely performance anxious musician. It is uncertain that such approach would be effective or advisable for low and moderately anxious performers.

- Virtual Reality Exposure:

Perhaps one of the least common and most surprising tools was presented by Orman (2003); in her study, a group of saxophone players was exposed to several virtual reality environments with increasing anxiety-inducing levels and had their heart-rates measured. Results showed that regardless of environment, heart-rate always increases from

baseline when performing but those increased or high heart-rate readings do not always translate to self-rated high levels of anxiety. The majority of the subjects reported a higher discomfort rating when in an audience environment than in a practice room environment. While studying the effectiveness of this method, Bissonette et al. (2016) found that virtual reality exposure significantly decreased MPA from session to session and improved performance quality. Working with virtual reality environments might provide desensitizing experiences that enable coping with MPA, but despite the positive tendency, this therapy requires more studies to prove its effectiveness (Burin & Osório, 2016).

In this chapter, MPA was defined and characterized, available research was summarized, and the most common coping practices and therapies were presented. The next chapter will focus on the main constructs that are related to music performance anxiety.

Chapter 3

Main Constructs Related With MPA

In this chapter, several concepts that are related to MPA, affecting and being affected by it, are approached. The knowledge of these concepts should prove to be useful in reframing the understanding of music performance anxiety.

3.1 – Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as the personal belief in the ability that one has of performing any given task. Several authors have discussed the utilization of the concept of self-efficacy as a framework that is directly linked to the ability to overcome difficulties and improve success rate in many areas, ranging from academic studies (Margolis & McCabe, 2004; Zajacova et al., 2005) to performance (Bandura, 1977, 1994; Pajares, 1997; McPherson & McCormick, 2006; Wulf & Mornell, 2008; Zelenak, 2011, Ritchie & Williamon, 2012). Generally speaking, low efficacy values indicate that a person does not believe in having the ability to successfully accomplish the challenge at hand; while people with high efficacy values are confident about having the ability to succeed. The concept of self-efficacy is considered to be a generative construct, as it can influence practically every aspect of cognition, including feelings, thoughts and behaviors. The most common way of measuring self-efficacy levels is by answering questionnaires and choosing the most suitable description to questions or affirmations, usually utilizing a Likert-type scale where the lowest value means “strongly disagree” and the highest value means “strongly agree”. The objective is to evaluate “the amount of one’s certainty about performing a given task. These properties of self-efficacy judgments are measured using questionnaire items that are task specific, vary in difficulty, and capture degrees of confidence (e.g., from 0 to 100%)” (Zimmerman, 2000, p.83). As self-efficacy beliefs are task-specific, self-efficacy scales must also be adjusted according to the item to be measured. Therefore, several types of scales have been created so far. Ritchie & Williamon (2007, 2012) argued that self-efficacy is difficult to measure and advocate for a continued realization of specialized studies in this area, considering the results as useful assets for every music student and professional. It is

important to assure that those studies bear in mind that instrument specialization may originate different observations and results; as such, several individual one-instrument studies are required. The analysis of gender differences in regards to perceived self-efficacy also requires further research, as no definite results have been achieved in studies so far. According to Nielsen (2004), it was found that at a collegiate level, male music majors tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy, while in the music education program, the female students tend to have higher self-efficacy beliefs; however, this can be partly justified by a stereotype issue related to gender dominance in music programs (male) and music education programs (female).

Although self-efficacy is usually associated with self-esteem, Gist & Mitchell (1992) point out that:

There are important differences between the two. Self-esteem usually is considered to be a trait reflecting an individual's characteristic, affective evaluation of the self (e.g., feelings of self-worth or self-liking), more of a global construct, how people feel about themselves. By contrast, self-efficacy is a judgment about task capability that is not inherently evaluative (Gist & Mitchell, 1992, p.185).

This clarifies that the two concepts are distinct, despite the fact that self-efficacy does influence self-esteem through the perceived ability or inability to master specific tasks considered to be important to one's construct of self. That self-construct begins to be developed in early childhood, while exploring, experimenting, perfecting motor and language skills; from this stage, parents can already help their child to start developing initial self-efficacy beliefs. On the same note, Katsochi (2008) highlighted two main viewpoints concerning self-beliefs: first – beliefs are a part of personal cognitive processing; and second – beliefs include affective elements as they are shaped in certain socio-cultural contexts. In addition, the author stated that “self-beliefs are thought to affect behavior and attitudes, autonomy, strategies, individual differences, motivation, identity, attributions, anxiety, and willingness to participate in certain academic and non academic activities” (p.42) and that “self-concept refers to a generalized self-assessment incorporating a variety of self-reactions and beliefs such as feelings of self-worth and general beliefs of competence” (p.43). The term “attributions” pertains to the belief of what causes or caused success or failure, and it was found that music students tend to attribute success to their own ability and effort, whereas failure is usually attributed to external reasons, lack of effort or inappropriate strategies (and almost never to lack of ability). This particular attribution to failure can be very useful: McPherson & McCormick (2006) found a positive correlation between self-efficacy beliefs, music practice and achievement, adding that it derives from the fact that musicians with high levels of self-efficacy tend to have a more analytical approach to failure,

adopting adequate strategies to improve efficiency in future endeavors. Even when they fail, their confidence is not disrupted, as they do not overvalue the moment of failure, accepting it as just another stepping stone towards learning and growth.

Zelenak (2011) pointed out that music students tend to spend their time practicing their motor skills and improving auditory and visual perceptiveness while neglecting to nurture belief in each of those abilities. In this instance, development may become impaired, which can cause musicians to lack the necessary confidence to become performers and thus, may become unable to aspire to be professional musicians in the future. The usual symptoms for a musician with low self-efficacy are: anticipation of failure and fear of humiliation or exposure, intense anxiety and with occasional panic attacks, awareness that the fear is excessive, avoidance of performance situations or enduring them with intense distress, impaired performance, shyness, sensitivity to criticism, increased anxiety in situations other than performing and lowered self-esteem (Petrovich, 2004).

Despite the apparent simplicity of the self-efficacy belief system, where typically low levels are prejudicial and high levels are beneficial, there is a need of forewarning that on some occasions having high self-efficacy beliefs can turn out to be a negative factor due to the fact that it may lead to overconfidence and, consequently, to a neglectful approach, less investment, effort and persistence in completing tasks (Margolis & McCabe, 2004). Also, even upon failure, positive self-efficacy can be generated with the realization that the consequences of being unable to perform are less significant than anticipated.

According to Bandura (1977, 1994), self-efficacy can arise from four sources: (i) mastery experiences – successful experiences where one achieves the intended goal; (ii) modeling experiences – successful experiences from social models that vicariously affect the subject through perceived similarity; (iii) social persuasion – positive feedback from others; and (iv) stress management¹ – managing the effects of stress, physiological reactions and negative emotions which are perceived as vulnerabilities. Out of the four sources, mastery experiences are the most influential in the creation of self-efficacy.

In addition, four major psychological processes through which self-efficacy influences a person's functioning are defined: (a) the cognitive process; (b) the motivational process; (c) the affective process; and (d) the selection process.

The first process – cognitive – is related to behavior and thought, as every action is usually preceded by a mental scenario or imagery, which varies according to the existent level of self-efficacy (low levels originate pessimistic views and high levels originate optimistic views). Ultimately, it is easier for a person to lose analytical thought, succumb to

¹ This source is referred to as “emotional arousal”, “physiological arousal” or “physiological state” in other works.

pressure and give in to self-doubt when a strong sense of efficacy is absent, especially when confronted with demanding challenges.

The second process – motivational – is associated with a person's ability to self-regulate motivation through the three cognitive motivators and respective theories: attribution, expectancy-value and goal theories. Self-efficacy beliefs will then affect causal attributions by ascribing different reasons for failures, like insufficient effort for high levels and inability for low levels. They also affect outcome expectancies, as it is more likely for a person to generate motivation to undertake a challenge when there is a belief of a positive outcome; otherwise, the option will not be pursued due to lack of capability self-beliefs. Lastly, goal challenges are indirectly influenced by perceived self-efficacy and affect self-influence processes, as they determine personal goals, amount of effort and level of perseverance. Although challenging goals promote motivation, the obstacles could result in a lack of effort and consequent departure from objectives if the perceived beliefs of capability are not strong enough.

The third process – affective – corresponds to perceived coping capabilities of stress levels when faced with difficult challenges that will be considered as overwhelming and therefore, generate anxiety, distress, fear and other negative mindsets by someone with low self-efficacy. Stress, in this instance, is not a result of stressful situations themselves, but a consequence of the perceived inability to cope with them.

Lastly, the fourth process – selection – consists in the ability to choose activities and environments. While high levels of self-efficacy will provide the person with countless possibilities of careers and life-paths through the confidence of success in any situation, low levels of self-efficacy may originate an overly cautious and risk-free approach to life.

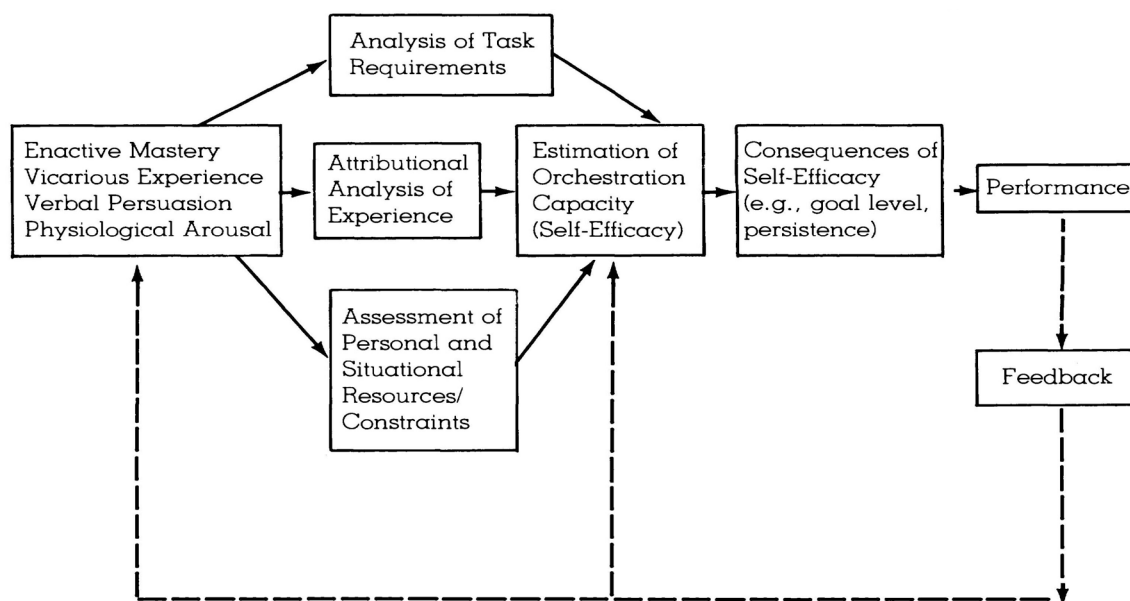


Figure 3.1 – Gist & Mitchell's (1992) model of self-efficacy – performance relationship

The previous diagram (Fig.3.1), proposed by Gist & Mitchell (1992), illustrates the cyclical process through which self-efficacy beliefs are generated. This model suggests that we have four generative sources of self-efficacy² (on the leftmost box) which directly influence the analysis one makes of the task requirements, one's experience and personal, situational and resource constraints. These three types of assessment processes are combined to form the perceived, task-specific, self-efficacy belief; through that evaluation, one will realize the difficulty of the goal and the amount of commitment and perseverance required in order to achieve success. Afterwards, regardless of the quality of the performance or, in other words, independently if one succeeds or fails in completing the designated task, the experience will be taken into account when forming new assessments for future tasks. In the event of having feedback, it will directly affect both self-efficacy sources and self-efficacy belief.

"Positive thinking" is a recurrent culturally embedded expression and, through self-efficacy beliefs, it becomes possible to interpret the validity of the said expression on a more scientific approach. As Pajares (1997) claimed, "because individuals have the capability to alter their own thinking, self-efficacy beliefs, in turn, also powerfully influence the physiological states themselves" (Pajares, 1997, p.5); which means that, by policing and directing thought patterns, an effective increase of the levels of perceived self-efficacy is expected. In this sense, cognition is very important because how a person thinks directly affects stress perception of events; thus, self-efficacy is paramount because the belief of successfully being able to cope with stressful situations will reduce anxiety levels. Supporting this claim, Brooks (2014) found that reappraising anxiety as excitement is significantly more effective than trying to calm down and that by deliberately selecting how to think and verbalize inner feelings it is possible for a person to effectively influence emotions and construct new mindsets.

Confident musicians do not derive exclusively from talent, excellence in training or the right teacher. The idea that any amount of preparation or practice will specifically resolve performance anxiety issues for a nervous performer is false. Managing stage fright requires self-efficacy, not only regarding technical and musical abilities, but especially in what concerns the ability to cope with performance anxiety in itself. Most strategies and methodologies for techniques, phrasing, interpretation, practice and performance have been presented in many books, but these do not translate in an effective management of performance anxiety (Petrovich, 2004), which suggests that self-efficacy based strategies and methodologies must be specifically targeted at performance anxiety related issues in order to work within this domain. As high levels of self-efficacy tend to generate self-esteem

²Although with slightly different names than those given by Bandura (1994).

and are not compatible with self-doubt, it may be of help regarding the psychological aspect of MPA. According to Yoshie & Shigemazu's (2009b) study, self-confidence was found to be a positive predictor not only of skill (technical and temporal accuracy), but also of artistic expression. Higher levels of cognitive anxiety (worry, apprehension) were found to negatively predict technical accuracy, whereas somatic anxiety (physiological symptoms) did not appear to be significantly related with the skill components of performance. Pre-performance self-confidence was found to be an indicative of improvement of the overall quality of performance, and it can be bolstered via techniques such as positive thinking and self-talk, arousal regulation and imagery, which are commonly utilized in sports psychology and may apply to musicians as well.

The advantages of knowing of how self-efficacy beliefs are formed, work and affect musicians, is particularly evident in music education. Objectively, if this information aids a teacher in better helping his students, he or she becomes a better teacher in the process. It becomes apparent that a teacher must nurture both technical and psychological aspects of the students, making sure that each of the four sources of self-efficacy generates positive beliefs. An adequate choice of challenges must be provided for every stage of evolution, as mastery experiences may dictate the course of a young musician's career. Also, feedback should be provided in an appropriate manner, in order to maintain the motivation required for studying music. Positive reinforcement is no longer just "common sense" but a scientifically proven self-efficacy generative tool (Zelenak, 2011). The same author states that strategies must be adopted in order to help the students feel comfortable during performance, minimizing the effects of anxiety. Healthy and constructive comparisons between colleagues and peers should be promoted for modeling benefits. Pedagogically, exposure to stressful events and anxiety symptoms can be beneficial if the task at hand is not perceived to be overwhelming. This can be achieved through cumulative successful experiences that enable the learning of coping and problem solving skills, which enhances self-efficacy and leads to persistence when coping with future stressors. In this perspective stress can be a motivator and fuel creativity.

Live performances should be regarded as a positive factor in music students' formative path. In Gomes' (2007) study regarding anxiety and confidence in music students , results showed that anxiety levels decreased after performance while confidence levels increased. This confirmed that frequent participation in class auditions by music students is extremely important, as it relates to the previously mentioned successful mastery experiences, the most influential of self-efficacy generating sources. Due to the one-on-one tuition system that is usually utilized in music lessons, the teacher is given a great deal of responsibility in managing the psychological characteristics of the student, one of the most important aspects being motivation. Zelenak (2011) mentioned that the influence of verbal

persuasion is increased after a mastery experience and that this finding may be of use in the scope of music teaching. Thus, correctly comprehending the usefulness of adequate positive reinforcement can prove to be of significant influence in creating motivation, as well as positive self-efficacy beliefs.

3.2 – Perfectionism

Perfectionism is defined as “excessive concern over making mistakes, high personal standards, perception of high parental expectations and high parental criticism, the doubting of the quality of one’s actions, and a preference for order and organization” (Frost et al., 1990, p.449). It is also a multi-dimensional construct consisting in personal and social components (Mor et al., 1995). The experience of performance anxiety is dependent upon personality characteristics and, like many others constructs, perfectionism can have positive and negative implications. The conducted research has shown that perfectionism is a contributor to performance anxiety, but can also be associated with motivation, effort and achievement. Thus, only certain facets of perfectionism are considered to aggravate MPA.

Two major distinctions have been described: perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns. The first, perfectionistic strivings, is associated with facets of perfectionism considered to be normal, healthy or adaptive, like striving for perfection, self-oriented perfectionism and high personal standards; they are usually related to positive characteristics and outcomes, as well as intrinsic motivation, showing positive correlations with effort, achievement and performance. The second, perfectionistic concerns, is associated with facets of perfectionism considered to be neurotic, unhealthy or maladaptive, like the concern over mistakes and doubt over actions, socially prescribed perfectionism, feelings of discrepancy between expectancies and results, as well as negative reactions to imperfections; they are usually related to negative characteristics and outcomes, extrinsic motivation, and show correlations with distress, depression and anxiety, including performance anxiety (Stoeber & Eismann, 2007; Kobori et al., 2011). Kenny et al. (2004) state that perfectionism as a personality trait in musicians is understudied; however, it is believed to have high impact on anxiety and self-efficacy. Supporting that belief, performers with high personal and social standards of perfection, tend to experience debilitating performance anxiety more frequently. A close relationship between anxiety and perfectionism exists and several studies have corroborated that correlation. Despite being definitely correlated to MPA, the presence of perfectionism does not predict anxiety (Dempsey, 2015).

Perfectionism evolves in three dimensions (Dempsey, 2015), namely: (i) self-oriented perfectionism, when it derives from the self, including unrealistic personal standards, severe self-evaluations and all-or-nothing thinking; (ii) other-oriented perfectionism, when it refers to the expectations one has about others, involving similar cognitions to self-oriented perfectionism; and lastly, (iii) socially-prescribed perfectionism, when it derives from the notion that significant others have unrealistic expectations and strict evaluations, leading to feelings of frustration and inadequacy. Mor et al. (1995) stated that both self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism are associated with performance anxiety, and that higher personal and social standards are associated with higher debilitating anxiety, higher somatic anxiety and lower facilitating anxiety while performing. Thus, it is important to notice not only the presence of debilitating anxiety but also the absence of facilitating anxiety as well. A low sense of personal control is also associated with higher debilitating anxiety and lower facilitating anxiety. The presence or absence of a sense of personal control is a moderator of the perfectionism-anxiety link. Higher self-oriented perfectionism combined with low personal control produced not only higher debilitating anxiety and lower facilitating anxiety, but also lower levels of goal satisfaction. As such, lower goal satisfaction is significantly associated with self-oriented perfectionism, socially prescribed perfectionism and lower personal control. This is consistent with Bandura's self-regulation models that state that:

(...) feelings of control or self-efficacy determine whether an individual with high personal standards will experience negative affective reactions such as anxiety and related feelings of goal dissatisfaction. Self-oriented perfectionists who feel in control may actually report enhanced psychological adjustment. However, self-oriented perfectionists with diminished senses of personal control will be especially prone to problems such as performance anxiety and goal dissatisfaction (...) (Mor et al., 1995, p.221).

In a musical context, self-oriented perfectionism is regarded as practicing and solving problems when distressed, without giving in to frustration. In this way, self-oriented perfectionists tend to breakdown difficult passages, practice slower, set personal standards and manage their own anxiety related symptoms. These characteristics have been associated with adaptive coping strategies and are believed to have a positive effect on ameliorating MPA (Jimenez, 2015). Self-oriented perfectionism is also found to be associated with functional, task-oriented and problem solving coping, while socially prescribed perfectionism is found to be associated with dysfunctional, emotional-oriented, distraction and avoidance coping. In regards to music, striving for perfection can be associated with intrinsic motivation, higher effort and higher achievement, while negative reactions to imperfection can be associated with debilitating performance anxiety, somatic

anxiety, a lower degree of happiness while performing, a lower sense of goal satisfaction, extrinsic motivation and distress. In a study where 275 musicians answered several questionnaires regarding the dimensions of perfectionism (Kobori et al., 2011), it was found that:

- There was a correlation between perfectionism and coping; perfectionism measures were somewhat associated with task-oriented, emotion-oriented and avoidance copings. This suggested that while engaging in problem-solving, an individual would become frustrated and tend to give up due to practice and/or public performance distress;
- Perfectionism measures were associated with indices of effort, but perceiving pressure from others would often not lead to more practice;
- Achievement was associated not with perfectionism cognitions but with perfectionism traits. In this instance, perfectionism traits would increase the chance of achievements, which in turn would reinforce the trait in order to obtain more achievements;
- Performance anxiety was weakly associated with perfectionism traits, moderately associated with the pursuit of perfection and concern over mistakes, and showed no association with personal standards. This suggested that perfectionism traits may provoke a mild level anxiety which increases performance quality, while preoccupation about mistakes and failure may lead to debilitating anxiety and decreased performance quality;
- Although there are positive and negative effects of perfectionism for musicians, individuals with this trait tended to practice more, solve their problems and achieve more awards;
- On a cognitive level, there are also positive and negative effects. Having a set of personal standards, striving for them and achieving them is positive and functional. Concern over mistakes and perceiving them as failure is negative and dysfunctional.
- Perceived pressure from others should not necessarily be classified as negative.

Ultimately, performance anxiety and perfectionism are deeply related, and the findings of Mor et al. (1995) suggested that cognitive-behavioral therapies designed to ameliorate levels of perfectionism and improve personal control would also be effective in reducing levels of performance anxiety.

3.3 – Deliberate Practice

In an attempt to understand what originates mastery of recognizably difficult activities such as music and sports, Ericsson et al. (1993) postulated that proficiency came from deliberate practice, which consists in a highly structured and focused activity with the explicit goal of overcoming weaknesses and improving performance, admitting that it is not necessarily enjoyable but effective. To achieve mastery in an area such as music performance entails several components:

Music performance requires a high level of skill in a diverse range of skill areas including fine motor dexterity and co-ordination, attention and memory, aesthetic, and interpretative skills. To achieve prominence requires the attainment of near perfection demanding years of training, solitary practice, and constant, intense self-evaluation (Kenny et al., 2004, p.760).

To be able to engage in deliberate practice requires overcoming resource constraints (time, energy, access to teachers, facilities, materials), motivation constraints (being able to focus on long-term goals, on improvement as a reward) and effort constraints (physical and mental limitations that may lead to exhaustion). Musicians, like athletes, will spend between 50 and 60 hours every week in domain-related activities, but less than half of that time engaging in deliberate practice, due to limitations of how long such a demanding task can be pursued with sustained benefits. Deliberate practice by itself does not warrant expert performance, however, it explains part of the variance in performance quality (Hambrick et al., 2013).

Several works have considered deliberate practice as a fundamental tool in studying music, which can only be achieved via self-regulatory processes, where the students set challenging goals for themselves, apply appropriate strategies to achieve them and enlist self-regulative influences that motivate and guide their efforts (Zimmerman et al., 1992). There is a correlation between the level attained and: (i) the age of exposure to music; (ii) the age of starting deliberate practice, with elite players often starting at an early age (Ericsson et al., 1993). For this type of practice to be possible for young students, they must rely on their teachers for guidance, as well as on their parents for support. In Clark's (2008) study, it was found that students with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to use more advanced practice techniques, suggesting a higher level of autonomy to be present, which is consistent with the requirements for deliberate practice. The ability to self-evaluate, as a fundamental skill of self-regulated learning (like deliberate practice), where students form judgments about the quality and impact of their work and choices, still requires clarity in

order to become better understood by music students (Hewitt, 2011). As such, Ericsson (2008) believed that it is critical for musicians, students and teachers to comprehend that:

(...) superior performance does not automatically develop from extensive experience, general education, and domain-related knowledge. Superior performance requires the acquisition of complex integrated systems of representations for the execution, monitoring, planning, and analyses of performance. Educators should therefore create training opportunities for DP [deliberate practice], appropriate for a given individual at given level of skill development. Performers may then make the necessary adjustments to improve specific aspects of performance to assure that attained changes will be successfully integrated into representative performance (Ericsson, 2008, p.993).

Although the notion that engaging in deliberate practice to a certain extent justifies why some people are able to become experts and others are not, Macnamara et al. (2014) found that deliberate practice accounts for 21% of the variance of music quality during performance, which is still significant but somewhat less influential than previous works argued. Corroborating this notion, Hambrick et al. (2013) also found that deliberate practice alone does not fully explain variance in performance, claiming that factors such as starting age, personality and intelligence might be important in determining mastery. While the correct approach might help lead a performer to an elite level, genetics do play a role, conditioning the ability to engage in deliberate practice as well as the benefits one might attain through it.

Topoğlu's (2014) study showed no correlation between the level of state anxiety and the number of daily practice hours and number of performances, presumably because musicians spend most of their time overcoming musical and technical problems and not necessarily addressing MPA. This suggests that although practice is fundamental to ensure performance quality, practice by itself does not provide anxious performers with a relief from anxiety. Therefore, a direct causal relationship between experiencing music performance anxiety and (the absence of) deliberate practice does not appear to exist. However, some degree of indirect influence might be inferred, considering that self-efficacy beliefs are directly linked to how a musician practices. Furthermore, it is entirely possible that, for some musicians and students, failure might be mistakenly attributed to MPA or their own perceived inability to understand and cope with it, when in reality what might be lacking is the correct awareness and focus during preparation. Deliberate practice by itself does not "solve" performance anxiety issues or guarantee an expert level of performance; nonetheless, it seems reasonable to claim that engaging in deliberate practice and obtaining a superior

degree of effectiveness and confidence in one's own preparation might prevent some anxiety related issues from appearing on stage, namely the inner dialogue of self-doubt.

3.4 – Flow

The state of flow is described as a complete immersion in activity, merging action and awareness, accompanied by an absolute sense of control (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2005). The conditions for flow include: tasks or opportunities for action that improve existing skills while engaging on challenges adequately suited to the abilities, clear proximal goals and immediate feedback upon progress. This state has been confirmed in several activities such as painting, music, writing and sports; its principles have also been utilized in varied contexts, such as police force, factory work and design of art exhibits and buildings (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). The same study mentioned that experiments are already being done in an educational setting, where students are immersed in a learning environment that fosters flow experiences and are helped to develop the capacity and propensity to experience flow. The flow state is intrinsically rewarding and so it leads an individual to replicate the experience, inducing a psychological mechanism that fosters growth. Experiencing it will encourage a person to persist and return to an activity due to the experiential rewards it promises, thereby fostering growth of skill over time. This sense of growth may imply that there is a correlation between the frequency of the state of flow and concepts like self-esteem, sense of success, relaxation and general physical and psychological wellbeing. Flow is described as a coveted and appealing, yet elusive, state of mind (Sinnamon et al., 2012) with the following characteristics:

- Intense and focused concentration on what one is doing in the present moment;
- Merging of action and awareness;
- Loss of reflective self-consciousness (i.e. loss of awareness of oneself as a social actor);
- A sense that one can control one's actions, that is, a sense that one can in principle deal with the situation because one knows how to respond to whatever happens next;
- Distortion of temporal experience (typically, a sense that time has passed faster than normal);
- Experiencing the activity as intrinsically rewarding, such that often the end goal is an excuse for the process (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002, p.90).

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Entering and maintaining a state of flow depends upon an intrinsically fragile balance between perceived ability and perceived challenge. If challenge exceeds skill, there is a tendency for anxiety; if skill exceeds challenge, there is a tendency for boredom. Therefore, a correct balance between perceived challenges and perceived skills is required and a relation between flow and optimal arousal/optimal experience is present. The following chart (Fig.3.2) accurately portrays this interaction:

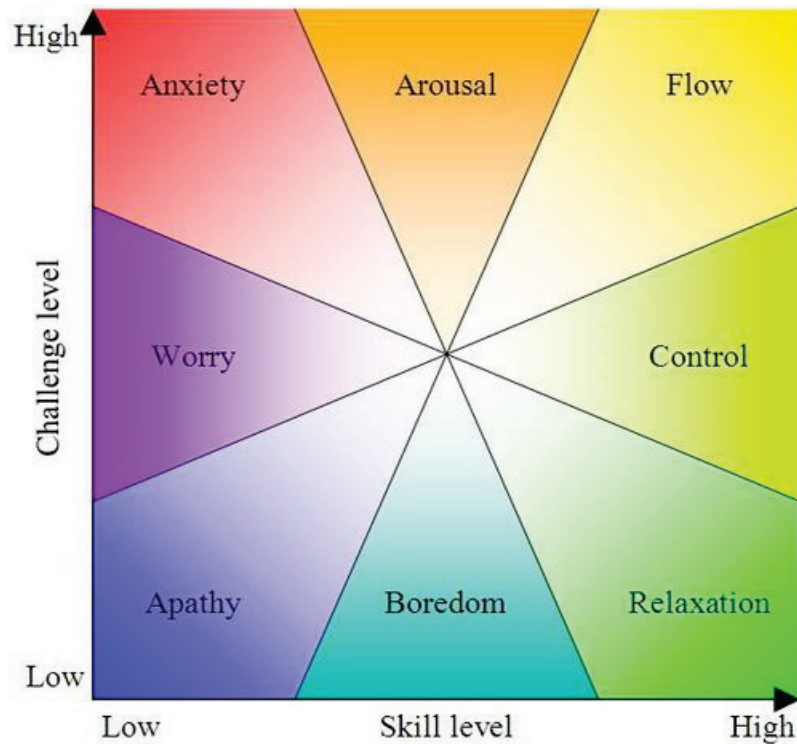


Figure 3.2 – Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) Flow Chart

The presented chart is not linear due to the motivational aspect of challenging one's abilities, which is a point of connection to self-efficacy. The more negative side of the chart displays feelings of anxiety and worry (left and top, red/purple colors), when the challenge is perceived to be considerably higher than the skill, and feelings of apathy and boredom (left and bottom, blue colors) when the skill is perceived to be considerably higher than the challenge. Neither of these feelings can be considered as adequate for performance. The more positive side of the chart displays feelings of relaxation, control, arousal and flow. Concerning relaxation (bottom right, green color), effortlessness is present but the motivation is lacking, which may result in a neglectful performance. Regarding control (right, bright green color) and arousal (top, orange color) a slight imbalance persists, by either the challenge side or the skill side, originating a precise but less emotional performance or an enthusiastic but a somewhat mistake-prone performance, respectively. Either of the two

feelings, although not ideal, is an adequate base for performance. The final feeling present in the chart is flow (top right, yellow), which consists in the perfect balance between perceived challenge and skill.

If the state of flow depends on the perception one has of both challenge level and skill level, and if those perceptions are governed by self-efficacy beliefs, it is fair to assume that flow is directly linked and, at least partially, dependent upon self-efficacy. Alluding to this notion, Csikszentmihaly et al. (2005) stated that:

Worrying about whether we can succeed at what we are doing – on the job, in relationships, even in crossing a busy street – is one of the major sources of psychic entropy in everyday life, and its reduction during flow is one of the reasons such an experience becomes enjoyable and thus rewarding (Csikszentmihaly et al., 2005, p.601).

Therefore, one can theorize that flow may very well operate like a sudden increase of efficaciousness to the highest possible level; or even beyond that paradigm, as there is no longer a belief in the ability to succeed, but an absolute certainty.

According to the literature, nine dimensions of flow with specific characteristics exist: (i) challenge-skill balance – feeling competent enough to meet the high demands of the situation; (ii) action-awareness merging – doing things spontaneously and automatically without having to think; (iii) clear goals – having a strong sense of what one wants to do; (iv) unambiguous feedback – knowing how well one is doing during the performance itself; (v) concentration on the task at hand – being completely focused on the task at hand; (vi) sense of control – having a feeling of total control over what one is doing; (vii) loss of self-consciousness – not worrying about what others think of oneself; (viii) transformation of time – having the sense that time passes in a way that is different from normal; and (ix) autotelic experience – feeling the activity to be extremely rewarding by itself. Measures of flow have been validated in sports performance, although not widely studied in other domains; also, there are scales to measure the propensity of an individual to access the flow state. Studies regarding flow experiences in music are surprisingly scarce, especially considering that music as an activity is understood to elicit peak performance experiences somewhat frequently, existing literature being considered unsatisfactory or inconclusive.

Sinnamon et al. (2012) stated that some authors, including Csikszentmihalyi, claimed that children spend much of their time in flow; and studies within natural music-learning environments seem to corroborate that suggestion. Students reported high frequency of flow experiences in global flow scores; however, individually analyzing each one of the nine dimensions revealed much lower values. The study highlighted that the “loss of self-

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consciousness” was the aspect with most significant correlations, but regarded all dimensions as important for the experience of the flow state.

The characteristics and conditions for flow render it impossible to coexist with performance anxiety, and as such may provide a fresh insight to addressing the problem. If students are properly informed about the possibility of experience this state on stage, they may become less inclined to perceive performing as negative; and for those who already associate negative cognitions with performing, knowledge of flow may help change that mindset into a more positive and hopeful perspective.

Having characterized the main constructs associated with MPA, the following chapter will address practical aspects of preparation that aim to reduce anxiety and consequently, improve performance.

Chapter 4

Reducing MPA Through Preparation

In most cases, coping with MPA does not necessarily require a therapeutic approach. This chapter presents ways for a musician to improve his/her knowledge on effective learning, practice and preparation. The following information can help musicians in developing preparation habits that may eventually lead to a prevention of excessive anxiety levels, and consequently, and improvement of performance quality.

4.1 – Self-efficacy Applications

Self-efficacy is not a tool *per se*, but its understanding facilitates the creation of a mental framework that is useful for diagnostic and strategic planning which, in turn, may help ameliorating MPA. Due to the nature of the concept, self-efficacy is extremely important and can be applied to most (if not all) aspects of a musician's preparation. According to Mcpherson & McCormick (2006), self-efficacy is the best predictor of a student's performance and consequent result in examination, so it's importance in regards to coping and feeling comfortable while performing should not be undervalued. It is naturally linked to confidence and self-esteem, but also affects the motivation to practice and to achieve goals, as well as the way practice is structured and executed. As Caprara et al. (2008) stated, self-efficacy and self-regulated learning are deeply connected. The capacity to regulate one's thoughts, motivation, affect, and action through self-reactive influence is a core property. Higher efficacy usually means higher aspirations and higher flexibility to solve problems; it also contributes to motivational issues and supports strategic thinking. Margolis & McCabe (2004) claimed that self-efficacy as a concept can be a utilized as a foundational framework to develop specific tools that can be used in the learning process, if correctly understood and utilized by teachers, and suggest several strategies for students with learning disabilities. Although the study had no relation to music, a transfer to this area is legitimate, as the process of generating positive self-efficacy always follows the same principles. The key focus is on the repetition of successful experiences, even in tasks in which the students expect to fail. This is achieved by strengthening "struggling learners' self-efficacy by linking

new work to recent successes, teaching needed learning strategies, reinforcing effort and persistence, stressing peer modeling, teaching struggling learners to make facilitative attributions, and helping them identify or create personally important goals” (p.241). Obviously, the teacher should bear in mind that the task at hand should be adequate to the student’s capabilities and an increase in difficulty should be progressive, while always keeping track of the student’s success rate.

With low self-efficacy, students will not make the effort to master a task, they will give up or avoid it. To reverse this situation, it is vital that teachers emphasize the importance of self-efficacy, getting students to invest and persist, overcome difficulties and take on increasingly challenging tasks. Through specific teaching strategies, positive reinforcement of effort and persistence and goal orientation, it is possible for the teacher to profoundly influence the student’s self-efficacy. Teachers must be careful not to choose tasks that might be perceived as frustrating by students, but rather of an adequate level of difficulty, that may be perceived as challenging but with a very high probability of success, reinforcing self-efficacy. It is important to divorce the idea of failure from lack of ability; instead, a teacher should present facilitative attributions that associate success to controllable factors such as strategy, effort and perseverance. Goals should not be too difficult or they can be perceived as impossible, leading to resistance and despair, nor too easy, leading to boredom and a lack of sense of achievement. For goals to be meaningful, to effectively improve self-efficacy, they need to be personally important to the students (the ones they genuinely want to achieve and/or regard as potentially making an impact on their lives), short-term, specific and achievable. Short-term goals prevent loss of motivation by being easily measurable, as long-term goals are often too remote and too difficult to perceive progress. It is important to realize that “low self- efficacy is not an immutable, global trait. Rather, it is a modifiable, task-specific set of beliefs derived largely from frequent failures” (Margolis & McCabe, 2004, pp.248).

Studies highlighting the importance of self-efficacy in a musical setting are mostly of a pedagogic nature, reinforcing the significance of the instrumental teacher’s role in developing the students’ sense of self-efficacy. Results from Mcpherson & McCorkmick’s (2006) study suggested that meaningful improvements can be achieved by enhancing young music students’ self-efficacy beliefs and that teachers influence students’ self-beliefs by giving them challenging and meaningful tasks to master, supporting and encouraging them along the way. Similarly, Chmurzynska (2009), in his work regarding self-efficacy on piano teachers, highlights the high impact instrumental teachers have on students’ lives by influencing musical development and impacting musical achievements, skills, general attitude towards music and musical professions, as well as shaping intrinsic motivation, musical interests and developing personality and self-confidence. A teacher’s attitude and

personality is especially important when addressing younger students. A bad relation between teacher and student will often lead to frustration and generalized negative feelings towards music and music education. Too much pressure leads to lesson experiences that are not gratifying for the students, fostering feelings of fear instead of pleasure. The major focus of future instrumental teachers' training is to acquire a high level of musical competence, that is, to become performers and not teachers, which generate a lack in psychological and pedagogical knowledge. As such, it can be concluded that music can generate high self-esteem in children if the correct practices are applied in the classroom, towards the goal of generating it (Katsochi, 2008).

Petrovich (2004) provided suggestions on how an instrumental teacher can contribute to increasing his/her students' self-efficacy through each of the four sources, previously described in Chapter 3.1. Although directly referring to students, some of the principles and strategies presented can easily be self-applied by adult musicians who have difficulty in coping with anxiety:

- Regarding mastery experiences, students are advised to approach rather than to avoid the dreaded performance situations, bearing in mind that the frequency of successful performance experiences accompanied by appraisal are predictors of low performance anxiety. Teachers should avoid excessive or untimely feedback during lessons, as constantly pointing out flaws and asking to repeat sections focuses too much time, attention and energy on the negative aspects of a student's playing. When a student is prone to anxiety and perfectionism, as well as overly sensitive to criticism, a vicious cycle is created and negative cognitions are reinforced. This criticism, however well intended, is perceived as an attack and absorbed in silence by the student, increasing performance anxiety in already susceptible individuals, leading to increasing feelings of dread and humiliation associated with performance which, if not resolved, lead to persistent stage fright or dropping out of music. Teachers should contribute to improving their students' self-efficacy by practicing graded mastery, which consists in helping the student by structuring challenging tasks in increasing order or difficulty; that is, in a performance context, scheduling many practice auditions that resemble the actual anticipated performance in increasing degrees of potential anxiety. Performing frequently from beginning to end and discussing what went right as well as what went wrong strengthens self-efficacy with lasting results.
- Concerning physiological/psychological arousal, it is a natural tendency for an anxious student to interpret any physiological symptom usually associated with performance anxiety as a sign that performance will be impaired. Non-anxious students usually interpret the same physiological symptoms as alertness and preparedness. Too much arousal leads to fight-or-flight response and impaired performance. Teachers can

explore coping skills such as relaxation training, repetitive internal verbalizations, breathing exercises, positive visualizations and meditation, adaptable to each student's necessities. Another approach (which is often used by actors) is to release pent up energy (adrenaline) before the performance by doing physical exercises such as pounding a chair with a racket, punching a pillow, shouting, moving one's body vigorously and calisthenics.

- In regard to vicarious experiences, it is important to realize that, while learning from role models is usually a positive source of self-efficacy, watching someone playing fearlessly and flawlessly might originate feelings of inadequacy in an anxious student. People learn best from someone they relate to so, in this situation, students might feel more encouraged to learn with someone that has struggled with performance anxiety and developed effective coping strategies rather than someone who plays perfectly. Teachers should openly discuss their struggles with performance anxiety and share their strategies and experiences with their students and help them find relatable role models. Students should look to other areas in their lives where they successfully coped with anxiety and try to employ those strategies in a musical performance setting.

- As for verbal persuasion, low anxious students can be easily encouraged by a trusted and/or admired person, usually the teacher. But words of encouragement regarding an impending performance are often not enough for the anxious student, who needs to feel reassured not only about the performance related aspects but also regarding anxiety coping related aspects. A common mistake for teachers consists in trying to persuade the students that preparation or practice guarantees a successful performance, or that preparedness assures an absence of MPA symptoms (Taborsky, 2007), when in fact that is simply not true, as there are several other factors involved. For a student suffering from stage fright, the notion that the teacher, peers and family believe him/her to be prepared acts as added pressure and often increases anxiety. Musicians should engage in positive inner dialogue, acting as their own verbal persuaders by choosing constructive and meaningful affirmations that actively help them manage performance anxiety. Obviously, if all of these strategies prove to be insufficient for generating positive self-efficacy, one should seek the help from a specialized psychotherapist.

Clark (2008) posed the possibility that "learning about a piece's historical significance or development, aesthetic response, or a composer's biography might also help students' self-efficacy develop in a positive way" (p.139). This relation does seem to make sense, as knowledge of background fundamentals on any given subject supports a person's confidence that he is making grounded and therefore justifiable choices.

For anxious musicians that are no longer students but still struggling after their formative years, the same principles apply. They can slowly but surely focus their time and attention on planning for experiences that will benefit their sense of self-efficacy. With the information presented above, it becomes possible to self-analyze, and to identify whether the anxiety issues are mainly related to low self-efficacy; if so, individuals should carefully devise the best strategy for increasing their own self-efficacy level, which should lead to an improvement in coping with music performance anxiety. Successful repetitions of positive experiences help to overcome momentary failures (Nielsen, 2004). This reinforces the idea that it is necessary to persist and keep challenging oneself, aiming for growth without being distraught by minor setbacks. Ultimately, “enhanced self-efficacy for coping with performance anxiety can prevent talented musicians from leaving the profession. Release from the grip of demoralizing anxiety can transform otherwise dreaded performing experiences into ones that are full of the joy of music” (Petrovich, 2004, p.27).

4.2 – Repertoire and Recital Structure Selection

Many musicians admit that repertoire and recital structure have a good amount of influence on their performance, whether for musical, technical or endurance reasons. Sinico & Winter’s (2013) study revealed that correct repertoire choices can also be considered as a coping strategy for music performance anxiety, a concept that may be further developed. Choosing repertoire that is too challenging at a certain moment in time will often result in a performance laden with technical mistakes and memory lapses. Furthermore, not all pieces are for all musicians and options may very well be limited. As such, finding the most suitable repertoire may take years, but when an appropriate concert program is established, the performance will be faced with elevated assurance and less anxiety (Käppel, 2016). Randall (2008) stated that musicians often play what others expect them to play and not the music that is really meaningful to them. In this instance, the repertoire itself becomes a source of anxiety, further highlighting that in the classroom setting, teachers should be careful on what repertoire they impose upon their students, especially if they are prone to anxiety. Also, in some cases, students overreach in an attempt to impress teachers and peers, tackling harder pieces than they should, which results in less overall performance quality. Meaningful challenges that push us outside of our comfort zones are, to a degree, helpful. But there is a narrow margin and if not carefully assessed, excessive challenge will eventually turn out to be detrimental.

Langendörfer et al. (2006) stated that, in general, solo performances generate more anxiety than group performances, as do public performances more than rehearsals; also,

difficult and/or poorly prepared work generates more anxiety than easy and/or familiar work. This highlights the importance of taking the type and the content of the performance into consideration. Solo concertos with orchestra are difficult to categorize. Despite being technically a group performance, the special role of the soloist can trigger increased stress and anxiety. However, this particular performance situation is still understudied. When a performance has higher stakes, like a final in a competition or a recital with higher visibility, the preparation must also be higher in order to cope with the added pressure. Also, if the repertoire is perceived as difficult, then not only will it require more time and effort in order to be technically, musically and psychologically, mastered, but also more concentration and confidence will be needed. In addition to the perceived degree of difficulty, less familiarity with the repertoire will result in added challenge for the musician. Of course it would be facile to state that the professional musician must always be prepared and play every repertoire flawlessly, but that expectation may often not be possible or realistic. There are usually time constraints, adverse conditions and even personal issues interfering with a regular recital preparation routine. Getting accustomed to less than optimal conditions for playing is also a part of the profession.

As a psychological device on approaching a recital program, McPherson & McCormick (2006) believe that a musician, especially in early stages of formation, should always start the repertoire with a piece of music that they feel is mastered (or at least genuinely comfortable), both technically and musically, in order to settle down and get a firm footing. This proclivity has always been part of a musician's common sense but, in the light of self-efficacy beliefs, one can begin to understand why this proves to be true and how it operates. By choosing the most comfortable piece to start a recital, a musician guarantees the highest probability of being able to control every aspect of performance due to reduced challenge, including the least physiological reactions to stress possible, considering the circumstances. Furthermore, immediate positive self-efficacy beliefs should be generated upon successfully overcoming the first challenge, as the musician would have then proved to himself (and internally perceived that he also had proven to the audience) that he is up to the task, transferring that conviction into the following piece of music and/or the next recital. This example embodies the concept of self-efficacy increasing task challenge, from easiest to hardest (Margolis & McCabe, 2004), applied to a recital structure. It is important to bear in mind that "anxiety-prone musicians should pick easy, familiar works to perform, especially for auditions or important public performances. However, hard preparation may turn a difficult work into a relatively easy one, thus reducing performance anxiety" (Wilson & Roland, 2002, p.51).

This information, paired with the opinions gathered in the interviews (presented in Chapter 6), has brought about a way to rethink the approach musicians typically take into the

selection of their repertoire. Before taking into account thematic or chronologic criteria for structuring a recital program, it is probably more effective to focus on which music in what order has the highest probability of generating a successful performance. For anxious musicians that struggle with practically every performance, any tactic that improves confidence and reduces MPA, even slightly, can be very valuable. In such cases it is important to choose repertoire for the right reasons, i.e. those that play into one's strengths, and if possible, to choose music that is emotionally meaningful.

In order to employ these notions in a more practical manner, it is important to realize how musicians tend to distinguish and categorize the music they play, such as tempo, perceived difficulty, impact, style, musical period and composer. They can all be utilized to create a consistent recital structure but, more importantly, these criteria can have a possible impact on the level of anxiety. If a piece is written in a fast tempo resulting in technical discomfort, if a piece is generally perceived as challenging or technically and/or musically difficult, if a piece requires more energy or showmanship, or if the music of a certain style, period or composer is perceived as weak point in the musical "vocabulary" of the performer, those aspects usually result in added tension and anxiety. One could argue that all of these stem from low self-efficacy regarding each one of these aspects and it would be possible to work on improving that, but it would certainly take time. Each performance where anxious musicians are exposed to their perceived weaknesses is detrimental to their self-efficacy, confidence and self-esteem, often spiraling down. So, in order to cope with this scenario, I propose a more careful planning and structuring of the repertoire, always taking into account the comfort level of each piece. For an anxious performer, playing comfortably will signify less added pressure and less tension, resulting in increasing the probability of being able to focus on the performance itself, which should enhance self-efficacy regarding performing. Obviously, with time, challenging pieces should be included in order to expand the comfort-zone. However, if simply being able to play comfortably on stage is already a challenge by itself, then there is no need for adding difficulty in the choice of repertoire, as the objective will be to improve on the experience of performing by reducing anxiety.

One of the most important distinctions to be made is the difference between level of comfort and perceived difficulty of any given piece. The two concepts are undoubtedly linked as usually when the piece is perceived to be more difficult the level of comfort tends to decrease, requiring more practice time. Low perceived difficulty may lead to problems such as overconfidence and neglect, while a genuine assessment of how comfortable one feels while playing, as subjective as it may be, is a more solid indicator of how it will feel on stage. However, rethinking the concept of "difficulty" in regards to music is vital. It shouldn't be perceived as an absolute characteristic, as something permanent; instead, it should be reframed as something temporary, to simply mean that it "requires more time" before

becoming comfortable. As Werner (1996) states, it is preferable to view music as familiar or unfamiliar, instead of easy or difficult. If there is time and motivation to work, then that perceived difficulty will surely subside. It is somewhat of a conflicting thought, a “cognitive dissonance”, retaining the notion that something that is intrinsically difficult excludes the possibility of it becoming comfortable. Holding on to the idea that a certain piece of music is “difficult” (as an absolute, unchanging fact) will only hamper the progress and the increasing of self-efficacy levels; doing so even after several days, weeks or months of hard work, can severely undermine one’s own progress. By eliminating the association of the concept of “difficulty” with music entirely may contribute to ending the stereotype that certain pieces, composers, or aesthetics are different, intimidating or unachievable. Avoiding those types of generic judgments is important for performers to have a mature, unbiased and focused approach to music, which is essential to be able to evolve as artists. Emphasizing aspects such as a thorough comprehension of the historical and analytical components of the music, as well as an awareness of the emotional impact each piece has may facilitate a deeper understanding of music and contribute to demystifying simplistic categorizations such as difficulty.

As a helpful preparation tool, I propose a different way of organizing a recital structure, taking into account the initial assessment of each piece (after one or two read-throughs, identifying potential trouble spots) and subsequent development into perceived comfort. These should not be definitive assessments, varying according to the available practice time. As such, the initial perception of every movement of every piece will always merely indicate how much time will be required to prepare, and not how “difficult” it is. Also, the level of comfort achieved for the entire program in the week before the recital will ultimately reveal how successful the preparation actually was. Using my own doctoral recital programs as an example, I provide an analysis of the program structures with an intuitive color scheme of green, yellow and red (representing comfortable, intermediate and challenging). A subsequent report could be as follows:

1 st Year Recital Program	Initial Assessment				Final Perceived Comfort Level			
Fernando Sor <i>Fantaisie Élégiique, op.59</i>								
Johann Sebastian Bach <i>Chaconne, from Partita BWV1004</i>								
Nuccio D’Angelo <i>Due Canzoni Lidie</i>	I	II			I	II		
Konstantin Vassiliev <i>Three Forest Paintings</i>	I	II	III		I	II	III	
Dusan Bogdanovic <i>Sonata n.1</i>	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV

Figure 4.1 – 1st year recital program according to comfort levels

1st year report: Five contrasting pieces were chosen for the recital program. The initial assessment of the repertoire was that nearly all pieces were perceived as challenging. Despite choosing the slowest and most comfortable piece to start with, a structure with this many demanding components would only work with intense preparation. In hindsight, it is now easy to realize that, although the concept structure could work, the repertoire could have been chosen more carefully, as it naturally didn't provide room for relaxation halfway through the recital. The third and perhaps fourth pieces should have been replaced with less demanding alternatives in order to guarantee an improvement on the overall comfort level and quality of the recital. Interestingly, as the first piece was perceived as the easiest one in the program, less time was allocated to practicing it, resulting in a less than adequate comfort level for starting the recital. It is fair to state that the chosen program was overly ambitious, considering the time available to prepare it. The structure containing a high initial perceived difficulty by itself is not necessarily wrong, as a challenging repertoire can sometimes be more motivating and rewarding to play, but in this instance it proved to be somewhat overwhelming.

2 nd Year Recital Program	Initial Assessment				Final Perceived Comfort Level			
Johann Sebastian Bach <i>Violin Sonata n.1, BWV1001</i>	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Mauro Giuliani <i>Rossiniana n.2, op.120</i>								
Francisco Tárrega <i>Gran Jota de Concierto</i>								
Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco <i>Tre Preludi Mediterranei</i>	I	II	III		I	II	III	

Figure 4.2 – 2nd year recital program according to comfort levels

2nd year report: Four contrasting pieces were chosen for the recital program. Compared to the previous program, a difference in the initial assessment is noticeable, containing an inferior global perceived level of challenge. This is a result of a more careful planning when choosing the repertoire, but also of my natural evolution as a musician, becoming increasingly more comfortable and confident when approaching new pieces. Still, the same basic “*crescendo*” structure was applied, from less challenging to more challenging. Although globally the first piece wasn't necessarily “easy”, the first movements allowed for a more tranquil start. The middle pieces were manageable and with additional preparation could have become more comfortable, providing some relaxation before the final piece.

3 rd Year Recital Program	Initial Assessment				Final Perceived Comfort Level			
Georg Phillip Telemann <i>Fantasia for Solo Violin n.7</i>	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Mauro Giuliani <i>Rossiniana n.5, op.123</i>								
Johannes Dubez <i>Fantaisie sur des Motifs Hongrois</i>								
Joaquín Rodrigo <i>Invocación y Danza</i>								
Astor Piazzolla <i>Invierno Porteño, Primavera Porteña</i>	I		II		I		II	
Francis Kleynjans <i>A l'Aube du Dernier Jour, op.33</i>	I		II		I		II	

Figure 4.3 – 3rd year recital program according to comfort levels

3rd year report: Six contrasting pieces were chosen for the recital program. It is worth noting that the chosen structure is slightly different, with a more balanced intention, starting with a more comfortable piece and alternating between challenge and comfort, providing for moments of relaxation within the recital. Preparation was adequate and as such, in the final assessment none of the pieces were considered as uncomfortable, or anxiety-inducing. This did not ensure a flawless performance, but contributed to a heightened sense of control and self-efficacy.

The three programs consisted almost entirely of new (unfamiliar) repertoire, maximizing the risk of performance anxiety and allowing for the perception of the stress potential within the structure of each program. In the event of repeated performances with the same program, the efficacy of the order of the pieces should be continually assessed in an attempt to achieve an optimal point. These assessments, of both piece and structure, are completely personal and subjective, and do not reflect any absolute values. They merely symbolize that (i) at any given moment some pieces “felt” more comfortable to play than others, and (ii) there should be deliberate thought regarding the order of the pieces in the program with the intent of enhancing comfort and confidence, reducing anxiety.

For the sake of simplicity, only three colors, or levels, were chosen. In case there is a desire for more accuracy, more levels can be easily created. It is possible to utilize this method as a log, recording the evolution of comfort during preparation. There seem to be several benefits to this approach to a recital program, such as forcing the musician to think about what pieces to choose, taking into account what styles or composers feel more natural to play and how much time is available to prepare. For an anxious performer, to be able to change the way he/she thinks about his/her struggles in music and difficulty with the

repertoire, is invaluable. The choice becomes personal, and by giving priority to “feeling good” and enjoying oneself while performing, instead of feeling “obligated” to play something and/or trying to impress others through music, it becomes possible to reframe the associated negativity into positive experiences. Having a way of objectively evaluating preparation while knowing that comfort will develop confidence is a foundational principle that probably most successful musicians utilize, but anxious students and performers might be unaware of. It may also prove to be a positive influence for younger students stuck on an “ends justify the means” mentality, believing that their own feelings while on stage are less important than how they perform. As for the “ideal structure”, it is also personal and subjective, varying greatly according to each musician. The only way to address this issue is by gaining knowledge of one’s own preferences and strengths, maintaining awareness on assessing comfort level and gaining confidence in one’s own choices.

While some musicians and students may find this aspect of preparation less relevant, others may acknowledge that the proposed structures result in improved knowledge about themselves, a greater degree of self-control regarding choices, and added confidence, which might in turn translate into less anxiety. This may be particularly helpful for high trait anxiety musicians that are seeking for some extra certainty when approaching their recitals. However, there is never one method, or “magic pill”, that solves all problems for everyone; instead, it is always up to the individual to select his/her own personal methods and variations that prove to be effective for coping over time. Lastly, this approach for selecting repertoire and choosing recital structure should be considered as speculative and will require future research in order to verify the extent of its validity and applicability.

4.3 – Structured Learning and Practicing

Throughout our lives we often heard the expression “practice makes perfect”. This is true, to an extent, but as previously mentioned, in reality practice by itself isn’t a guarantee of excellence as implied, as it is highly contingent on the utilization of effective practice strategies (Barry & Hallam, 2002). A more truthful expression would be “practice makes permanent”, giving more relevance to how one practices.

The way musicians practice and learn has been a subject of study in recent years. Methods and strategies for practicing and learning can obviously have a considerable influence in a musician’s technique and musicality, but memory and confidence are also important factors, which in turn will affect performance anxiety levels. Smith (2005) referred to Hallam (1997), stating that the learning process is influenced by several characteristics of

the learner, such as level of expertise, learning style, approaches to practice, motivation, self-esteem and personality. These characteristics influence and are influenced by context elements, like teaching strategies, parental support and school/home environment, which affect the practice process directly or indirectly.

According to contemporary theories of skill acquisition, as referred by Ericsson (2006), there are three phases of learning during the process in which any skill is acquired: cognitive, associative and autonomous (Fig.4.4).

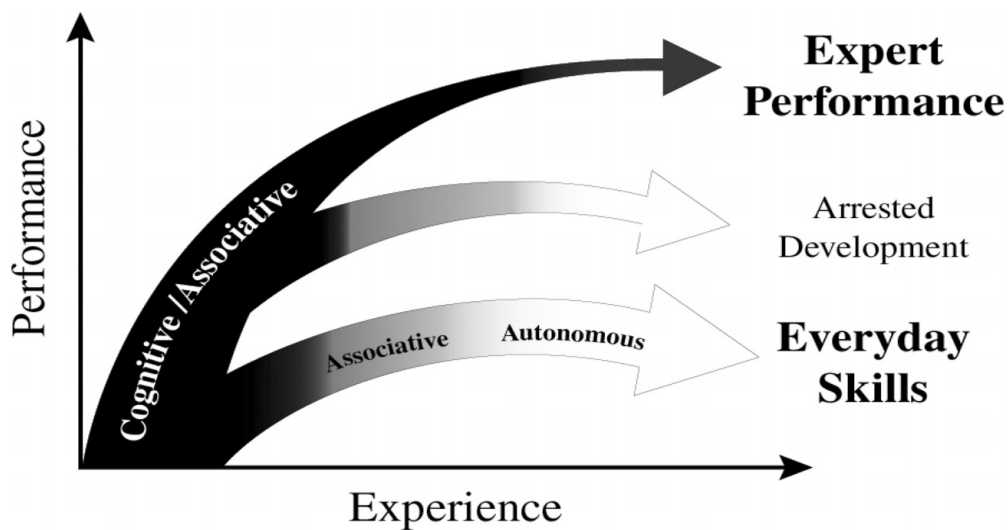


Figure 4.4 – Ericsson's (2006) model of skill acquisition

During the first phase, one simply focuses on generating actions while trying to avoid mistakes. On the second phase, there are fewer mistakes with a lesser need of focus. Reaching the third phase means that performance has become automated, virtually flawless and with minimal effort, but it also means that, as a consequence, the ability to control and modify the execution is lost, rendering further improvements difficult, if not impossible. For everyday activities, like driving and typing, the objective will be to reach the third phase as rapidly as possible. On the same note, amateurs on any given activity will only attempt to reach an acceptable level of performance while minimizing effortful skill acquisition, which is done by passing through cognitive and associative phases during study towards an autonomous phase. "In contrast, expert performers counteract automaticity by developing increasingly complex mental representations to attain higher levels of control of their performance and will therefore remain within the cognitive and associative phases" (Ericsson, 2006, p.687). This is only possible through deliberate practice and, evidently, through positive self-efficacy in order to persevere through the difficulties and to maintain clear and objective long-term goals. A very confident mindset is required in developing

successive practice strategies with the assuredness that they will result in the improvement of performance, especially when facing complex and high-risk challenges.

There is a general consensus that practice within the musical domain is considered to be self-regulated learning (Smith, 2005). In Lehman & Gruber's (2006) regard, the number of practice hours is not fixed, varying from instrument to instrument. However, practice does require much mental and physical effort and therefore can result in lack of enjoyment or even disliking the practice activity. Advices such as practicing slow in order to improve are usually given, but that by itself becomes irrelevant if critical thinking is not involved; in reality, practice has to include certain aspects and strategies, involving concentration about different components of music. Duration also does not sufficiently define the quality of practice as there must be a co-occurrence of cognitive processes. This is also akin to the concept of deliberate practice. Practice process strategies are connected with the outcomes of learning, like quality of performance, level of expertise achieved, communication with an audience, and affect. On the same note, Lehman & Gruber (2006) highlighted the importance of practice structures, which at first should be supervised by a teacher or parent. A structured practice has been found to correct more performance errors than a non-structured practice; and a practice structure devised by a teacher, as opposed to one devised by the student, will normally yield the best results due to experience and knowledge to develop an appropriate framework. As such, only when students gain maturity and adequate metacognitive skills, can they self-regulate their own practice.

Motivation plays an important role in this process too, especially in young children that naturally fully engage themselves when motivated by the piece, but play through it, superficially, when disinterested. Therefore, in order for students to become autonomous learners the most effective practice and learning strategies should be employed. Research has found that these consist in metacognition, combining physical and mental practice, organizing practice and goal-setting, analyzing scores, planning short and regular practice sessions, having intrinsic motivations and listening to appropriate music examples (Barry & Hallam, 2002). Csikszentmihaly et al. (2005) highlighted the autotelic nature of motivation to practice music in which the reward is the activity itself. Although there can be several additional motivations for music practice, it is clear that the amount of dedication and perseverance required to master such a difficult, time-consuming art is only possible if there is a feeling of gratification in the mere exercise of playing music. Enjoyment is an important part of musical success. Music students that are able to balance between the "daily grind" of practice and taking the time to learn new music of their choosing, improvising or just having fun with their instrument, are found to be the ones that practice and achieve better results (O'Neill & McPherson, 2002). Highlighting that different approaches to practice may be driven by individual, conscious or unconscious, preferences, Smith (2005) stated:

(...) underlying personality or temperamental differences between individuals that manifest themselves in practice preference. Teachers would no doubt be wise to consider these individual differences in tailoring practice programs to their students, either taking advantage of a student's strengths, or encouraging improvement in areas of relative weakness (Smith, 2005, p.49).

The same author further discussed that the motivation for students may derive from two types of goals: those based in personal improvement (task oriented) and those based in social comparisons with others (ego oriented); one does not necessarily exclude the other, being possible for an individual to maintain task-related goals and ego-related goals simultaneously. Further distinction is necessary for ego goals, as they can have two very different mindsets, one being ego-approach (demonstrating high ability relative to others) and the other ego-avoid (avoiding demonstrations of lack of ability relative to others). Generally speaking, research highlights that task goals are associated with positive affect, intrinsic motivation, deep processing strategies and challenge seeking, whereas ego goals are usually associated with negative affect (especially after failure), anxiety and use of surface strategies. While both task and ego-approach seem to support learning behaviors conducive to high achievement, the latter shifts the individual's focus towards social comparison in detriment of full engagement with the learning task. Ego goals in general account for lower interest in the subject, disorganization, rote memorization and rehearsal. Therefore, teachers should encourage ego goals as much as possible, deliberately avoiding the aggravation of social comparison between students and inadequacy feelings that may derive from it.

In addition, music students should be exposed to the incremental theory from early on, where ability is viewed as malleable and subject to change through individual effort, resulting in the belief that success in music derives from personal effort and strategy. This reassures students that anyone can improve his/her ability with time, patience and practice, further demystifying the concept of "musical talent" and possible negative outcomes of that belief (Smith, 2005). By viewing ability as innate, one is more likely to desire demonstrating said ability or seek to avoid demonstrating inability, paralleling the previous concepts of ego-approach and ego-avoid, which are not beneficial. In the nature-nurture debate, which opposes innate talent versus training, Ericson (1993) states that less proficient musicians practice less than highly skilled ones and that there is predictive validity in accumulating hours of practice and achieving musical excellence, debunking the implication that the existence of what is usually called "innate talent" means that there isn't a need to practice much.

Traditionally, successfully repeating a single component of a multi-task challenge before moving on to the next component has been considered as the most effective form of practice in order to acquire new skills. This is commonly referred to as blocked practice, and its application to music implies, for example, that one should always practice every section of a piece of music to perfection before attempting to play from the beginning to the end. However, recent research seems to be challenging that assumption, stating that utilizing interleaved practice strategies (alternating between tasks), more effortful processing is involved, which leads to increased long-term learning. This notion is designated as the “contextual interference effect”, where blocked practice (low contextual interference) is believed to lead to a superior performance immediately following practice, whereas random practice (high contextual interference) is believed to support superior performance at long-term retention. Despite some studies in the field of music learning that seemingly corroborating the effect (Carter & Grahn, 2016), current research in this regard is still inconclusive, being likely that the most effective approach may be to apply both strategies complementarily, in different moments of practice. Supporting this notion, Wulf & Mornell (2008) suggested that random/interleaved practice is better suited for skill level maintenance and durability of long-term memory, and should be applied after blocked practice, when concentration levels decrease causing stagnation or even deterioration of performance.

Chaffin & Logan (2006) stated that through practice musicians will start, stop and repeat, constantly reviewing every aspect of technique, interpretation and performance. This generates a behavioral record and provides a window to the cognitive processes involved in high level musical skill. Similarly, Nielsen (2004) refers that the most common tools that are utilized by first year college music students are: constant repetition for memorization and technical mastery, creation of alternative interpretations via listening to other musicians playing or giving lectures, self-assessment if the chosen path is the most effective, metacognitive strategies to focus the study on the most important points. Less common tools consist in structural thinking about the piece of music to be played, time and effort management, playing for colleagues and peers to obtain feedback, seeking the teacher’s help. Studies have also found that analyzing the score prior to practice increases performance accuracy and reduces the number of attempts needed to attain proficiency. Sight-reading while being consciously aware of key and time signature, and also scanning the score in order to identify potential obstacles is known to improve accuracy (Barry & Hallam, 2002).

The study of musicians’ cognitive representations of musical structure is important for understanding how music performance works and how mistakes happen; it also helps instrumental teachers provide their students with more effective learning processes and

methods (Lehman & Gruber, 2006). This ultimately may improve the understanding on how MPA might predominantly affect those cognitive structural “weak spots” as well as the most effective way to strengthen them.

In music and music practice, the mentalities remain somewhat retrograde and resistant to change as scientifically proven facts continue to be ignored due to a deep-rooted tradition of separation between art and science (Wulf & Mornell, 2008). The task is up to the new generations of musicians and music teachers as they embrace new and forward thinking mentalities, open to a new comprehension of music that encompasses both scientific and artistic approaches, therefore breaking the bonds of an inflexible traditional teaching method created and perpetuated for centuries. Barry & Hallam (2002) concluded that, considering the variation of practice and learning strategies that teachers provide to their students, there is lack of systematic pedagogy.

4.4 – Understanding Memory

On some instances, a musician might feel completely prepared to perform, having mastered the repertoire technically and musically, only to find out that on stage several blank spots start to appear. Understanding how a musician’s memory works and how MPA affects it, opens the possibility to prepare in a different way, which minimizes mistakes, including anxiety related ones. Lehman & Gruber (2006) consider the essential factor of expertise to be the accumulation of increasingly complex patterns in memory that can easily be retrieved. In that sense, optimization of how memory is utilized by musicians should prove to be useful.

Memory is broadly classified as short-term memory (STM) – utilized for short periods of time, loosely equated to attention, with a working memory component – and long-term memory (LTM) – more or less permanent repository of data which allows an individual to retain and recall information over long periods of time. Three main forms of memorization of music for a performance are characterized: (i) aural, imagining the sound of a piece, anticipating the score’s structural events and evaluating the performance’s progress; (ii) visual, visualizing the score, technical elements and abstract imagery; and (iii) kinesthetical, finger, muscle and tactile memory. These memorization skills cannot function properly without knowledge of musical structure, harmony, counterpoint and form. Performing from memory can be challenging and anxiety-inducing, but there are practical benefits, such as avoiding page turning, as well as artistic benefits, as it allows for the development of expressive ideas and their consequent communication to the audience with a greater degree of freedom (Aiello & Williamon, 2002).

It is important to understand how musicians organize, memorize and retrieve musical information. In regards to the organizational aspect of memory, Chaffin & Lisboa (2009) suggest two different types of memory organization:

- associative chaining – develops easily, each passage cueing what comes next in the chain. It tends to be unreliable, highly dependent upon identical conditions and external pressure will weaken links. If the chain is broken, the only way to retrieve it is to start from the beginning;
- content addressable – accessed by its contents, retrievable just by thinking of it, needs extended practice to make retrieval rapid and reliable, involves active thinking which disrupts highly practiced motor skills – cf. choking in athletics.

The memorization process is summarized by Mishra (2004), who presented a model consisting of three stages: (i) preview stage, where notation, aural and performance overviews are made, gaining a general idea of a piece of music; (ii) practice stage, where notational practice and conscious memorization is applied, putting effort into preparing and memorizing music; and (iii) over-learning stage, where re-learning, automatization and maintenance rehearsal is prioritized, correcting minor mistakes and being able to run through the entire piece with the minimum amount of conscious effort. The amount of time in each sub-division and practice sequence is personal and flexible. Musicians can apply two main learning styles, which are sensory based (Aural, Visual and Kinesthetic), consisting in retrieving information via the senses, and analytical based, consisting in a cognitive interpretation of patterns and repetitions. They also can approach a piece of music with four basic processing strategies: Holistic, Serial, Segmented and Additive. Expert memory is domain-specific and dependent upon enculturation; for musicians, this means that tonal music is easier to memorize than atonal.

Regarding retrieving information from memory, Chaffin & Logan (2006) state that motor and auditory memory play crucial roles in music memory, therefore being different than other domains. Despite this, skilled activity memory is thought to work the same way, by storing end products in long-term memory and accessing them through retrieval clues via short-term memory. There are three principles of expert memory:

- meaningful encoding of novel material – encoding new information into ready-made chunks that are already stored in memory;
- use of well learned retrieval structure – a retrieval scheme to organize the cues that provide access to the chunks of information in long-term memory;
- extended practice to reduce time needed for retrieval from long-term memory – extended practice permits the utilization of long-term memory in tasks that would have otherwise need working memory.

Musicians perfectly balance retrieval of declarative long-term memory so that the memory of what comes next arrives in working memory just at the right moment, before the corresponding motor sequence, but not so far in advance as to interfere with the execution of preceding notes. All contextual information is important for memory retrieval: finger movement, note pitch, tempo, rhythm and dynamics. Musicians also utilize structure points (bars) when practicing to facilitate memory retrieval and the ability to do so increases with experience and skill. These retrieval structures coincide with the composition's structure and are hierarchically implemented during practice in order to facilitate and guide retrieval during performance (Williamon & Valentine, 2002; Williamon & Egner, 2004).

Every performance requires the utilization of working memory; Robertson & Eisensmith (2010) defined it as knowing what to do and keeping track of all the processes. The properties of working memory include a limited amount of active information, dynamic content (as attentional focus changes over time), and lastly, high probability that conscious thought will interfere with the execution of task-relevant instructions. In skilled performance, the utilization of special structures, groupings and patterns prevents exceeding the limited capacity of working memory. For instance, musicians will think of an arpeggio or scale instead of thinking about each individual note contained in them. Dynamic content means the working memory is always changing; attention should be flexible, as it is impossible to be consciously aware of all the requirements for playing a piece of music. Dwelling on how you have just played (either the last bar, phrase, section, even from one piece to another) interferes with the proper functioning of working memory. When fear is triggered, it often produces conscious thoughts that disrupt working memory. Unconsciously interpreting a performance as a dangerous scenario, the fight or flight reaction is activated, mobilizing all physiological and cognitive resources to deal with the situation. Since survival isn't an issue and there is no real danger to avoid, the thoughts and physiological reactions become harmful in themselves. The inner threat evaluation system then sends messages to the working memory, increasing negative cognitions, sensitivity/awareness to perceived threats and physiological arousal. By forcing the working memory to monitor the perceived threat and therefore exceeding its capabilities, ongoing behavior is disrupted, often spiraling down with every mistake.

Reinforcing this point, Steptoe (1982) highlighted that task-oriented thoughts during performance require a high degree of concentration and usually dominate the mind of the musician. However, task-irrelevant (intrusive) thoughts may appear, either elicited from environmental factors or generated internally. The correct approach would be to calmly acknowledge these irrelevancies and dismiss them without becoming distracted. When a musician is not able to do so, performance is threatened, as the thoughts become over-intrusive, interfering with concentration and augmenting anxiety. Thus, a musician's inner

dialogue plays an important role in exacerbating anxiety. In Yoshie et al.'s (2009a) study, the authors found that the presence of an audience and jury increased the performers' levels of subjective anxiety, resulting from misdirection of attention to task-irrelevant cues. This was found to be detrimental to the performance, having a greater impact in the artistic aspect rather than the technical aspect, presumably because "artistic expression requires high-order associative functions involving the exploitation of real-time auditory feedback and the broad temporal integration of musical elements" (Yoshie et al., 2009a, p.123) adding that "psychosocial stress has been indicated to disrupt functional connectivity within a frontoparietal network, deterring people from shifting attention" (Yoshie et al., 2009a, p.123,124). In other words, MPA does not only affect a performer's general ability to focus but also the ability to disregard intrusive and task-irrelevant thoughts, making the shift of attention to the performance even more difficult (Yoshie et al., 2009a). The way anxiety affects concentration can often be misinterpreted and labeled by performers simply as memory issues, although as described, there are other processes in play.

In Simmons' (2011) study, 291 non-pianist music majors between the ages of 18 and 40 learned a 9 note sequence on a keyboard in three practice sessions separated by 5 minutes, 6 hours and 24 hours. The results confirmed that distributed practice among multiple sessions in a day is more beneficial than one big session, as rest intervals provide relief from mental and physical fatigue as well as memory consolidation through neurophysical processes. Consolidation is the mechanism through which motor skills (and other memories) are encoded and refined, becoming resistant to interference and forgetting. That process begins during practice and continues after the practice session ends. There are two forms of consolidation: wake-based, that allows for intact encoding and storage of fragile new memories, and sleep-based, that allows for significant enhancement of motor skill memories. Study found that performance accuracy is enhanced by sleep-based consolidation, consistent with the findings of other studies. In regards to performance speed, it was less attributable to sleep-based consolidation. Understanding how memory consolidation works should affect musicians' practice organization and scheduling. The higher effectiveness of distributed practice versus massed practice may also lead to higher levels of enjoyment and motivation, perceiving musical practice experiences as gratifying and having a greater sense of accomplishment. Ultimately, this information can guide the teachers' decision making, which will result in the students' learning experience being more rewarding.

Expert memory is deeply dependent upon practice, and some memory-related performance flaws can be attributed to preparation errors, while others are a result of anxiety-induced cognitive processes that can generate distraction, occurring even when adequate preparation is assured. For musicians, gaining the ability to recognize and analyze

their own memory problems and their origins from the presented perspective, may help reduce memory issues in performance, whether the origin of the problem lies in inadequate preparation or anxiety proneness.

4.5 – Key Recommendations

Several works are dedicated to practical advices that musicians can utilize to address music performance anxiety issues. Popular books such as “The inner game of music” (Green & Gallwey, 1987), “Fight your fear and win” (Greene, 2001), and “Performing in the zone” (Gorrie, 2009) focus on mental aspects of preparation, presenting varied strategies to ameliorate performance anxiety. Although these works are seldom scientific in nature, information that stems from practical experience should not be disregarded. These approaches may not be suited for severe cases, but may prove to be useful for those who seek to include MPA awareness and coping into their practice habits.

As a general mental attitude towards MPA, musicians should consider performances as learning and teaching opportunities (Contreras, 1998). Arnesen (2010) advised musicians to accept and understand their fears, to silence inner negative voices, to take responsibility for their performances, to identify and eliminate negative and/or self-destructive behavior, to learn how to accept and integrate criticism, to eliminate uncertainty by excellent preparation, to visualize positive outcomes, to release physical tension, to refuse to focus on nervousness and to have realistic expectations. Yoshie et al. (2009b) highlighted that it is highly possible that psychological techniques that aim to utilize negative thoughts in a positive way, control the negative thoughts and train positive thoughts should benefit musicians. Performing regularly is very important, even if it is in less formal environments and before small audiences. As Arneson (2010) stated:

Whatever the causes of performance anxiety are, we need to confront the resulting fear. Bringing fear into the light of conscious thought immediately weakens its power to frighten us. This means that we must learn to recognize the signs of fear as early as possible (Arneson, 2010, p.539).

After all, “there are no adaptive benefits to being immobilized by self-doubts about one’s capabilities and belief in the futility of effort” (Caprara et al., 2008 , p.533). While a good preparation will naturally boost confidence, it is also important not to allow it to heighten the expectations associated with the performance. A possible answer to this problem consists in

believing that one is doing his/her best effort and accepting eventual mistakes (Käppel, 2016).

As a habit, musicians should replace negative thoughts associated with anxiety with positive thoughts associated with practice (Kirschner, 2005). Accepting anxiety as natural and inevitable part of performing will help change the negative perception into a more positive mindset, such as joyous anticipation and excitement. Often times too much importance is given to playing without mistakes, somewhat neglecting expressive and artistic elements in the process, as music education from early stages values the perfect execution of music, particularly in a classical environment. There is a pressure to achieve, whether due to technical demands or to social pressure, enhanced by the advent of the internet and instant access media. So, without neglecting technical aspects, it is more useful to focus on one's own personal musical interpretation, expression and communication of ideas to the audience (Käppel, 2016). While practicing, it is beneficial to play really slow and thinking ahead in the music, about each note, finger and position. After a mistake, instead of restarting from one or two bars before, one should try to jump to the next bar. Musicians should also work out every piece's structural points so that one can jump to any of them in the event that a memory blank occurs. Musicians should also maintain a physical attitude and expression of ease, in order to ward off tension that would be enhanced in a public presentation (Contreras, 1998). Werner (1996) advised practicing in a "meditative" state, while focusing on relaxation and effortlessness, whether it is a simple exercise or a bar of music. While preparing for performance, audio/video recordings are also very useful, adding an additional element of pressure when playing and allowing for post hoc self-evaluation of all interpretative aspects.

Mentally, it is useful to visualize the entirety of the performance, including walking on stage, performing, being acknowledged positively by the audience and leaving the stage (Kirschner, 2005). Imagining all of the notes, positions and motions of the hands during a piece, recognizing the moments when you don't know what comes next and are unable to continue visualizing as the "trouble spots". Once identified, it is usually necessary to rework those spots until they are no longer problematic (Azabagic, 2003).

Trial performances before big events, even if just playing in front of a few friends, are beneficial. Mistakes made during rehearsals and trial performances should be regarded as "trouble spots" that should be reworked (Azabagic, 2003). These can be also considered as desensitizing experiences, which makes them doubly useful.

Musicians should prepare all the logistics of a performance with time, without rushing, attending to non-musical matters in advance, and taking care of all the logistics involved in the performance beforehand. In the day of the concert, they should try to rest and relax, not spending too much energy, which should be saved for the performance. At that

moment, it is best to avoid last minute changes and reject perfectionism. Attention should be narrowed to the things that are possible to control and not to external factors like the audience. In addition, one should ignore the “mind chatter”, especially negative thoughts that appear like pressure and self-doubt, and focus on the music and what makes it better (Azabagic, 2003).

As for the moment of performance, there are a few small elements that can be applied. Musicians should avoid inner dialogue as it leads to distraction and feeling flustered; it is better to focus on the music, to concentrate on the present moment (Kirschner, 2005). In order to do so, musicians are advised to train their focus towards task-related cognitions, such as perceiving every nuance of tone, rhythm, melody and harmony (Yoshie et al., 2009b). Mistakes are bound to happen and a performer should not overvalue small flaws when playing for others; they belong in the past and the adequate response is to move on, not allowing small mistakes to evolve into bigger ones (Contreras, 1998). Performers should engage in imaginative interpretation; in fact, thinking that playing music is like telling a story without words, tends to develop a more emotional and meaningful connection to what the musician is trying to express and, at the same time, reduces stage fright by enabling focus on emotion/expression/art instead of inner fears (Azabagic, 2003). Hinckley (2008) described closing one’s eyes as a coping strategy, but with the caveat that it may lead to the audience feeling detached from the performer. The same author also suggested utilizing a variation on Stanislavsky’s idea of “public solitude” in order to overcome fear while on stage. This could be achieved by visualizing several circles and imagining that the musician is on the inner and smallest circle, safe and comfortable. The second circle could be the stage and the next could be the audience. The idea is that the musician will gradually expand the inner circle, including more area and people into it, always remaining in a safe and comfortable state and at the same time drawing the audience into the performance during the process.

In general, guitarists should be able to utilize the same suggestions that apply to other instrumentalists, but there are a few particular aspects to bear in mind. Käppel (2016) advises guitarists to undergo mental training in the final stage of preparing a piece, when the music is already well prepared. At that time, it is useful to visualize every note and every finger movement. However, this practice should not be done shortly or on the day of the performance, in order to avoid worrying about eventual memory lapses. Another form of mental training is to read the score without the instrument, developing the inner ear by imagining the sound and at the same time visualizing the technique required to play. Although this method has been reportedly experimented upon within piano pedagogy, it is less useful for guitarists as there are a multitude of fingerings and sound colors that can be explored, making the process more difficult to define. Azabagic’s (2003) description

suggests that guitarists tend to memorize pieces in a more “mechanical” manner, or in other words, memorizing the positions of every note on the fretboard tends to be more effective than memorizing the notes themselves. This is mostly due to the nature of the guitar, where the same note can be played in three or four different positions, which means that if those positions, as well as each position of every note organized in a flowing pattern of motion, aren't memorized, hesitation and mistakes will inevitably occur. Knowing which note to play is simply not enough, however, this does not mean that guitarists should memorize music exclusively through that process. Doing so would also originate problems, particularly in stressful performance situations, as any interruption of the motion (due to a technical mistake or a concentration/memory lapse) becomes more likely to disrupt the ability to continue playing without stopping and restarting from the beginning of the automatized segment.

Within this chapter, several aspects of preparation that can contribute to ameliorating MPA were highlighted. In the next chapter, an original study regarding performance anxiety in music students will be presented, and the results analyzed and discussed.

Chapter 5

Study: Assessment of MPA in Music Students

5.1 – Context

In order to characterize music students' perceptions regarding their own confidence and anxiety levels, common MPA symptoms, cognitions towards performance and practice habits, a questionnaire was developed, in two slightly different versions. The first version was intended for conservatory-level students, between the ages of 10 and 18. The second, intended for college-level students of 18 years old or older, only differed in a few added questions which might not have been properly understood by the younger and less experienced students. Between May and December 2015, the first questionnaire was distributed in paper form in three different conservatories in Portugal, filled by the students and collected, with a total of 351 valid replies having been obtained. The second questionnaire was distributed via an online form (GoogleForms) between May 2016 and March 2017, through the mailing lists of universities in Portugal. A total of 81 valid replies were obtained. Students were differentiated by gender, age and the instrument they play.

5.2 – Questionnaire Construction

The questionnaire was developed with the intention of gathering information that would facilitate a general characterization of the population of music students, and specifically guitarists. As mentioned in Chapter 2, several studies utilized specially designed inventories in order to quantify MPA the most accurately as possible. Those were not applied as the aim of the present study was not to rigorously quantify or diagnose MPA. For the intended purposes of this study, utilizing self-reported values for confidence and anxiety was considered to be more adequate.

Clark & Beck's (2011) model for social phobia, previously described in Chapter 1, was also used as a guideline for part of the questionnaire. The three moments associated with the experience of social anxiety (anticipatory phase, situational exposure, and postevent processing) were equated to the moments of pre-performance, performance, and post-

performance anxiety. In addition, the authors' examples of common negative cognitions activated during situational exposure were adapted to a music performance context and utilized for assessing the music students' cognitions regarding MPA.

The questionnaire questions were organized in three main groups: (i) self-reported confidence and anxiety (questions 1 to 3), (ii) anxiety related cognitions (question 4), (iii) practice habits (question 5). The college version of the questionnaire contained an added group (question 6), which approaches the experiences with self-efficacy, deliberate practice and flow; related constructs that were addressed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

5.2.1 – Questions Common to Both Versions

- Questions 1.1.1, 2.1.1 and 3.1.1

"Rate between 1 (lowest) and 10 (highest), the level of confidence you have in your abilities."

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lowest			Moderate				Highest		

These questions intended to have the students assess their degree of confidence in their own abilities, which can be a broad term for self-efficacy, in the moments before (1.1.1), during (2.1.1) and after (3.1.1) performance. These moments have been utilized in previous studies, such as Kokotsaki & Davidson's (2003); and are loosely related to the previously mentioned cognitive model of social phobia (Clark & Beck, 2011).

- Questions 1.1.2, 2.1.2 and 3.1.2

"Rate between 1 (lowest) and 10 (highest), the level of anxiety you usually feel."

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lowest			Moderate				Highest		

Similarly, these questions intended to have the students quantify their anxiety levels in the moments before (1.1.2), during (2.1.2) and after (3.1.2) performance. The goal was to ascertain if there was any relation between the students' perceived confidence and anxiety levels as well as any differences regarding the three moments.

- Questions 1.2, 2.2 and 3.2

"Which of the following symptoms do you usually feel? You can choose several."

<input type="checkbox"/> Palpitations	<input type="checkbox"/> Sweating	<input type="checkbox"/> Itching	<input type="checkbox"/> Muscle tension	<input type="checkbox"/> Cold hands
<input type="checkbox"/> Dry mouth/throat	<input type="checkbox"/> Dizziness	<input type="checkbox"/> Trembling	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty breathing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Nausea	<input type="checkbox"/> Butterflies	<input type="checkbox"/> Need to go to the bathroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Wobbly legs	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blurry vision	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty thinking clearly	<input type="checkbox"/> Memory lapses		
<input type="checkbox"/> Tendency towards negative thinking	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			

This group of questions aimed to identify the anxiety related symptoms students experience, also considering the moments before (1.2), during (2.2) and after (3.2) performance. This facilitated an assessment of which are the most common symptoms across all instruments, while attempting to establish any specific characteristics about guitarists in this regard. Furthermore, it also enabled assessing a relationship between the amount of symptoms with the previous anxiety and confidence ratings.

- Question 2.3

"When performing, how often does your focus shift from being centered in music to these kinds of anxiety related sensations?"

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

With this question, the intention was to ascertain how often the identified symptoms were perceived to impact performance and possibly correlate the corresponding answers to the previous question regarding the symptoms.

- Questions 4.1.1 to 4.5.3

Indicate how often do the following thoughts occur:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
4.1.1 – "People tend to dislike my performances."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1.2 – "I tend to falter when I perform."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1.3 – "I am more anxious than other people when I perform."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2.1 – "People are always judging and noticing our weaknesses and imperfections during a performance."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2.2 – "People tend to be highly critical of others when performing."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2.3 – "Other people know I am nervous or anxious when I am performing."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.1 – "It is terrible when people don't like my performance."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.2 – "It would be horrible if other people thought that I was weak or incompetent when watching me perform."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.3 – "To embarrass myself in front of other people during a performance would be unbearable, a catastrophe."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.1 – "It is important not to show other people any signs of weakness or loss of control during a performance."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.2 – "I should show confidence and competence in all my performances."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.3 – "When performing I must always sound musical and interesting to other people."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.1 – "Performance anxiety is a sign of weakness and loss of control."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.2 – "If other people see me sweating and trembling when performing they will think there is something wrong with me."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.3 – "If I am anxious I will not be able to perform."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In this group of questions, the students' cognitions regarding performance were assessed. These affirmations were based upon Clark & Beck's (2011) "maladaptive social self-schemas in social phobia" (p.350), adapted to a musical context. They were divided in 5

groups and pertained to different types of beliefs: core beliefs (4.1), beliefs about others (4.2), beliefs about disapproval (4.3), beliefs about performance standards (4.4) and beliefs about anxiety and its effects (4.5). This allowed for a characterization of the music students' mindsets.

- Questions 4.6 and 4.7

"How do you feel it is easier to perform?"

Alone on the stage In a group Either

"Do you think it is possible to reduce your performance anxiety?"

Yes, I only need to practice more Yes, it happens naturally with age and experience
 Yes, but I have to do specific exercises No, nothing can be done

These are simple questions that further characterized the opinions of the students regarding performance anxiety.

- Questions 5.1.1 and 5.1.2

"How often does your teacher give you advices or exercises to cope with anxiety?"

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

"I feel that the anxiety coping advices and exercises my teacher gives me:"

Do not help Help a little Help considerably Help a lot

This group tried to assess if MPA was being approached in the classroom and if the students felt supported.

- Questions 5.2.1 to 5.4

"Do you practice more when a performance date is near?"

Yes No

"Do you practice any differently when a performance date is near?"

Yes No

"When practicing, what helps you reduce anxiety? You can choose several."

Technique (scales and exercises) Music Practicing slowly Practicing more than usual
 Another. Which one? _____

"How do you prepare physically (without the instrument). You can choose several."

Try to breathe correctly Try to relax the body I stretch I exercise (workout)
 Another. Which one? _____

"How do you prepare mentally? You can choose several."

Try to think it will go well Avoid thinking about the performance Try to distract myself with other things
 I'm always thinking on what I'll play Try to think that if it doesn't go well, it's ok
 Another. Which one? _____

These questions were related to the students' practice habits, intending to verify if they were modified due to the proximity of a performance, and if simple strategies to reduce MPA were being utilized.

5.2.2 – Questions Exclusive to College-level Questionnaire

- Question 4.8

“Which of these factors do you consider as the most anxiety inducing? You can choose several.”

Number of people in the audience Memory lapses Wrong notes
 Technical mistakes Interpretation mistakes Sound quality Repertoire difficulty
 Another. Which one? _____

This intended to further characterize beliefs and opinions of students regarding possible triggers for MPA.

- Question 6.1

“While practicing, how often do you consciously and deliberately assess and raise your level of confidence in your own musical and technical abilities?”

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

This question intended to broadly verify if students were actively working on increasing their self-efficacy, whether or not being familiar with the concept.

- Question 6.2

“When performing, how often have you felt in complete control of every musical aspect of the piece you were playing, including the total absence of anxiety?”

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

This question was related to the possibility of students experiencing flow.

- Question 6.3

“Do you usually organize your practice in a structured way, defining short, medium and long term goals and deconstructing each task into smaller and easily accomplishable goals?”

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

This intended to ascertain if students had the habit of engaging in structured and deliberate practice.

- Question 6.4.1 and 6.4.2

“When you are about to go on stage, do you consider anxiety as a normal reaction?”

Yes No

“Do you feel this anxiety is exclusive to musicians?”

Yes No

This group further characterized students’ core beliefs regarding performance anxiety.

- Question 6.5

“How often do you feel that your teacher’s feedbacks contribute to increasing your level of confidence in your abilities?”

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

This question pertained to assess if the teacher’s feedback was perceived by the students as encouraging.

- Questions 6.6.1 to 6.6.4

“Do you consider that the training you acquired in the schools where you studied have adequately prepared you do deal with performance anxiety?”

Yes No

“Are you aware of any schools that provide specific training to cope with performance anxiety in their curricula?”

Yes No Which one? _____

“How important do you feel it is for schools to include specific training for coping with performance anxiety in their curricula?”

Not important A little important Moderately important Very important Fundamental

“Are you aware of any colleague that has stopped performing due to difficulties in dealing with performance anxiety?”

Yes No

Lastly, this group inquired about the students opinions regarding their training’s effectiveness in preparing them to better cope with MPA, and also what they felt the role of music schools and universities should be in this process.

- Question 6.7

“Do you have any further comments regarding this issue?”

With this final question, the students were given the opportunity to write their thoughts regarding musical performance anxiety freely and possibly comment on related issues that might have been overlooked.

5.3 – Results

5.3.1 – Distribution

In the conservatory-level student questionnaire, out of the 351 replies, 135 (~38%) were male and 216 (~62%) were female. As for the instruments they play, 49 (~14%) were guitarists and 302 (~86%) played other instruments. Regarding the age, 72 (~20%) were between the ages of 10 and 11, 171 (~49%) were between the ages of 12 and 14, and 108 (~31%) were between the ages of 15 and 18¹ (Table 5.1.1).

Concerning the college-level student questionnaire, out of the 81 replies, 37 (~46%) were male and 44 (~54%) were female. In regard to the instruments they play, 20 (~25%) were guitarists and 61 (~75%) played other instruments (Table 5.1.2).

	N	%
Total	351	100,00
Male	135	38,46
Female	216	61,54
Guitar	49	13,96
Other	302	86,04
10 – 11	72	20,51
12 – 14	171	48,72
15 – 18	108	30,77

Table 5.1.1 – Conservatory-level sample population distribution in numbers and percentages

	N	%
Total	81	100,00
Male	37	45,68
Female	44	54,32
Guitar	20	24,69
Other	61	75,31

Table 5.1.2 – College-level sample population distribution in numbers and percentages

5.3.2 – Self-reported Values for Confidence and Anxiety

Generally, results showed a consistent increase in confidence over time and a consistent, much more expressive decrease in anxiety. This was verified in all subgroups except for the guitarists' in "Before" to "During". In regards to direct comparisons, males

¹ Age groupings were chosen according to the common ages found in the three cycle of studies that are adopted by official conservatory programs in Portugal.

consistently reported higher confidence and lower anxiety levels than females. Guitarists started (before performance) with slightly higher confidence than non-guitarists but ended (after performance) with a slightly lower value. Concerning anxiety, the opposite was verified, as guitarists started with a lower level and ended with a slightly higher one than other instrumentalists. As for the age subgroups, the older students (15-18) seemed to start with lower confidence and higher anxiety than younger students, and after the performance showed lower confidence but also lower anxiety than the others age subgroups. In Table 5.2.1 we can see the means of the self-reported levels of confidence and anxiety for the conservatory-level questionnaire, as well as the standard deviation and standard error of the mean, for before, during and after performance.

		Before			During			After		
		M	SD	SEM	M	SD	SEM	M	SD	SEM
CONFIDENCE	Total	6,75	1.79	0.10	7,15	1.91	0.10	7,66	1.97	0.11
	Male	7,16	1.64	0.14	7,44	1.91	0.16	7,79	1.92	0.16
	Female	6,50	1.83	0.12	6,97	1.90	0.13	7,58	2.01	0.14
	Guitar	6,84	2.29	0.33	6,71	2.13	0.30	7,49	2.28	0.33
	Other	6,74	1.70	0.10	7,22	1.87	0.11	7,69	1.92	0.11
	10 – 11	6,90	1.67	0.20	7,28	1.95	0.23	7,99	2.19	0.26
	12 – 14	6,84	1.79	0.14	7,31	1.84	0.14	8,00	1.80	0.14
	15 – 18	6,51	1.84	0.18	6,81	1.97	0.19	6,91	1.89	0.18
ANXIETY	Total	6,86	2.38	0.13	6,33	2.67	0.14	4,03	2.87	0.15
	Male	6,59	2.48	0.21	5,80	2.90	0.25	3,79	2.98	0.26
	Female	7,03	2.30	0.16	6,66	2.46	0.17	4,19	2.80	0.19
	Guitar	6,31	2.69	0.38	6,00	2.92	0.42	4,12	2.96	0.42
	Other	6,95	2.32	0.13	6,38	2.62	0.15	4,02	2.86	0.16
	10 – 11	6,74	2.34	0.28	6,81	2.30	0.27	5,43	3.07	0.36
	12 – 14	6,65	2.53	0.19	6,16	2.80	0.21	3,75	2.82	0.22
	15 – 18	7,29	2.10	0.20	6,28	2.67	0.26	3,56	2.54	0.24

Table 5.2.1 – Conservatory-level mean, standard deviation and standard error of the mean for self-reported confidence and anxiety levels, before, during and after performance

For the college-level questionnaire there was a visible decrease in anxiety through time but confidence tended to increase during performance and decrease after performance. In regards to direct comparisons, males presented higher confidence than females until after the performance, where it was found to be slightly lower. Anxiety levels were consistently lower for males. Guitarists started with a slightly higher value for confidence than non-guitarists but ended with a slightly lower value. Results are presented in Table 5.2.2.

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		Before			During			After		
		M	SD	SEM	M	SD	SEM	M	SD	SEM
CONFIDENCE	Total	6,42	2.04	0.23	7,02	1.92	0.21	6,80	2.09	0.23
	Male	6,81	1.91	0.31	7,32	1.72	0.28	6,78	2.12	0.35
	Female	6,09	2.11	0.32	6,77	2.06	0.31	6,82	2.08	0.31
	Guitar	6,55	1.67	0.37	7,05	1.76	0.39	6,45	1.99	0.44
	Other	6,38	2.16	0.28	7,02	1.98	0.25	6,92	2.12	0.27
ANXIETY	Total	7,25	1.91	0.21	5,69	2.22	0.25	3,30	2.27	0.25
	Male	6,86	1.81	0.30	5,41	2.07	0.34	2,81	2.00	0.33
	Female	7,57	1.95	0.29	5,93	2.34	0.35	3,70	2.43	0.37
	Guitar	7,25	1.59	0.35	5,80	2.07	0.46	2,70	1.59	0.36
	Other	7,25	2.01	0.26	5,66	2.29	0.29	3,49	2.43	0.31

Table 5.2.2– College-level mean, standard deviation and standard error of the mean for self-reported confidence and anxiety levels, before, during and after performance

A set of statistical tests were ran in order to help analyze the data and reach some conclusions. In all tests a significance value of 0,05 (5%) was considered, as it is the most commonly used value in literature. As such, with *p*-values lower than 0,05, the null hypothesis² is rejected.

After calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*), data showed a weak negative linear relationship between anxiety and confidence, which means that, for this particular sample, more confidence is associated with less anxiety. This proved to be true for all phases of performance and for both groups of music students. After running a t-test for paired samples, to verify if there was any difference between the mean values for confidence and anxiety, it was possible to reject the null hypothesis and confirm that the difference between those two variables was statistically significant. (Tables 5.2.3 and 5.2.4).

	Before	During	After
Correlation	-0,24	-0,35	-0,09
Significance	0,26	0,00	0,00

Table 5.2.3 – Correlation between confidence and anxiety for conservatory-level students

	Before	During	After
Correlation	-0,17	-0,38	-0,33
Significance	0,01	0,00	0,00

Table 5.2.4 – Correlation between confidence and anxiety for college-level students

An ANOVA test was run in order to analyze the behavior of students in regards to confidence an anxiety levels along the designated phases “before”, “during” and “after”

² Default assumption that there is no statistically significant relationship between two variables, and observed differences are merely the result of chance or procedural errors.

performance. While descriptive statistics and calculating correlation coefficients merely pertain to a particular sample data, an ANOVA model tests the variance of population means.

Results for the conservatory-level students (Tables 5.2.5 and 5.2.6) showed that there was a change in behavior among the three phases, for both confidence and anxiety values, which is statistically unlikely to have occurred due to chance. Regarding the results for the college-level students (Tables 5.2.7 and 5.2.8) showed that the variance of anxiety levels in the designated phases “before”, “during” and “after” the performance was significant. However, the variance of the self-reported confidence values in this sample did not present a p -value lower than 0,05 which indicates that they might have occurred by chance and not necessarily due to a change in behavior related to performance.

	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squared	F	Significance	F Critical
Between Groups	146,55	2,00	73,28	20,47	0,00	3,00
Within Groups	3759,59	1050,00	3,58			
Total	3906,14	1052,00				

Table 5.2.5 – Analysis of variance in confidence for conservatory-level students

	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squared	F	Significance	F Critical
Between Groups	1585,39	2,00	792,70	113,11	0,00	3,00
Within Groups	7358,35	1050,00	7,01			
Total	8943,74	1052,00				

Table 5.2.6 – Analysis of variance in anxiety for conservatory-level students

	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squared	F	Significance	F Critical
Between Groups	15,17	2,00	7,58	1,86	0,16	3,03
Within Groups	976,52	240,00	4,07			
Total	991,69	242,00				

Table 5.2.7 – Analysis of variance in confidence for college-level students

	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squared	F	Significance	F Critical
Between Groups	641,61	2,00	320,81	70,04	0,00	3,03
Within Groups	1099,23	240,00	4,58			
Total	1740,85	242,00				

Table 5.2.8 – Analysis of variance in anxiety for college-level students

After running a chi-squared test regarding the self-reported values for confidence and anxiety, a significant difference between guitarists and other instrumentalists could not be established, with the exception of anxiety before performance for the conservatory-level students (Tables 5.2.9 and 5.2.10).

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	Before	During	After
Confidence	0,13	0,56	0,45
Anxiety	0,00	0,52	0,83

Table 5.2.9 – Significance between conservatory-level guitarists and non-guitarists for confidence and anxiety

	Before	During	After
Confidence	0,56	0,30	0,37
Anxiety	0,85	0,79	0,76

Table 5.2.10 – Significance between college-level guitarists and non-guitarists for confidence and anxiety

5.3.3 – Severity of Self-reported Anxiety

Self-reported values for anxiety were grouped and classified as low anxiety (from 1 to 4), moderate anxiety (from 5 to 8), high anxiety (from 9 to 10).

Results from conservatory students (Table 5.3.1) revealed that around 57% experience moderate anxiety and 27% of students experience high anxiety before performance. Values between genders were similar, with females reporting slightly higher values for high anxiety, for before and during performance. Similarly, values for high anxiety were higher for non-guitarists than guitarists, for before and during performance. Regarding age, results showed that fewer younger music students experience high anticipatory performance anxiety than older students, whereas after performance the opposite was verified.

As for college-level students (Table 5.3.2), close to 68% reported experiencing moderate anxiety and around 25% reported experiencing high anxiety before performance. A considerable decrease in anxiety during performance was verified. Among these students, gender differences were larger, especially before performance, where nearly twice as many females reported experiencing high anxiety than males. Fewer guitarists reported high anxiety than other instrumentalists in all moments.

	Before			During			After		
	Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High
Total	16.24	56.70	27.07	25.36	51.85	22.79	60.68	29.34	9.97
Male	17.78	56.30	25.93	34.81	42.96	22.22	66.67	22.96	10.37
Female	15.28	56.94	27.78	19.44	57.41	23.15	56.94	33.33	9.72
Guitar	18.37	57.14	24.49	26.53	51.02	22.45	59.18	28.57	12.24
Other	15.89	56.62	27.48	25.17	51.99	22.85	60.93	29.47	9.60
10 – 11	15.28	65.28	19.44	12.50	62.50	25.00	38.89	44.44	16.67
12 – 14	19.30	54.39	26.32	26.90	52.63	20.47	64.33	26.32	9.36
15 – 18	12.04	54.63	33.33	31.48	43.52	25.00	69.44	24.07	6.48

Table 5.3.1 – Conservatory-level severity of self-reported anxiety, in percentages

	Before			During			After		
	Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High
Total	7.41	67.90	24.69	30.86	61.73	7.41	76.54	20.99	2.47
Male	10.81	72.97	16.22	35.14	64.86	0.00	78.38	21.62	0.00
Female	4.55	63.64	31.82	27.27	59.09	13.64	75.00	20.45	4.55
Guitar	5.00	75.00	20.00	30.00	70.00	0.00	85.00	15.00	0.00
Other	8.20	65.57	26.23	31.15	59.02	9.84	73.77	22.95	3.28

Table 5.3.2 – College-level severity of self-reported anxiety, in percentages

5.3.4 – Number of Symptoms

In the following table we can see the mean of the number of symptoms conservatory students reported experiencing on each phase. As expected, there were more symptoms before performance, decreasing during and after performance. Males tended to experience less symptoms than females and guitarists tended to experience less symptoms than non-guitarists. There is also a visible increase in the amount of symptoms according to age (Table 5.4.1).

Results for college students with consistent the previous, with a decrease of symptoms in the three different stages, males reporting fewer symptoms than females and guitarists reporting fewer symptoms than other instrumentalists (Table 5.4.2).

	Before	During	After
Total	3,53	2,72	1,64
Male	2,91	2,32	1,25
Female	3,91	2,98	1,88
Guitar	2,63	2,41	1,33
Other	3,67	2,77	1,69
10 – 11	2,81	2,25	1,68
12 – 14	3,51	2,77	1,57
15 – 18	4,03	2,96	1,73

Table 5.4.1 – Conservatory-level mean number of symptoms, before, during and after performance

	Before	During	After
Total	3,86	2,62	1,35
Male	3,19	2,41	1,14
Female	4,43	2,80	1,52
Guitar	3,55	2,70	1,25
Other	3,97	2,59	1,38

Table 5.4.2 – College-level mean number of symptoms, before, during and after performance

Calculating the Pearson coefficient revealed there was a weak positive linear relationship between anxiety levels and number of symptoms for both conservatory-level students (Table 5.4.3) and college-level students (Table 5.4.4). After running a t-test, data was found to be statistically significant.

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	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	Correlation	Significance
Anxiety BEFORE performance	2,38	0,13	0,39	0,00
Number of symptoms BEFORE performance	2,53	0,13		
Anxiety DURING performance	2,67	0,14	0,36	0,00
Number of symptoms DURING performance	2,11	0,11		
Anxiety AFTER performance	2,87	0,15	0,28	0,00
Number of symptoms AFTER performance	1,45	0,08		

Table 5.4.3 – Correlation between anxiety and number of symptoms for conservatory-level students

	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	Correlation	Significance
Anxiety BEFORE performance	1,91	0,21	0,30	0,00
Number of symptoms BEFORE performance	2,02	0,11		
Anxiety DURING performance	2,22	0,25	0,47	0,00
Number of symptoms DURING performance	1,64	0,09		
Anxiety AFTER performance	2,27	0,25	0,27	0,00
Number of symptoms AFTER performance	1,25	0,07		

Table 5.4.4 – Correlation between anxiety and number of symptoms for college-level students

For the conservatory-level students, a chi-squared test between guitarists and other instrumentalists in regards to the types of symptoms revealed a significant p -value for after performance, but not for before and during. The values for the number of symptoms were not statistically significant (Table 5.4.5). As for the college-level students, neither the types nor the number of symptoms were found to indicate a significant difference between guitarists and non-guitarists (Table 5.4.6).

	Before	During	After
Types of symptoms	0,07	0,89	0,03
Number of symptoms	0,52	0,84	0,87

Table 5.4.5 – Significance between conservatory-level guitarists and non-guitarists for type and number of symptoms

	Before	During	After
Types of symptoms	0,55	0,09	0,40
Number of symptoms	0,43	0,25	0,45

Table 5.4.6 – Significance between college-level guitarists and non-guitarists for type and number of symptoms

5.3.5 – Symptomatology Before Performance

Before a performance, conservatory-level students reported “Negativity” (~45%), “Cold Hands” (~42%) and “Need to go to the Bathroom” (~36%) as the most common experienced symptoms. Females reported having a higher tendency than males to experience all symptoms apart from “Itching” and “Sweating”. Also, more males reported experiencing “No Symptoms”. Overall, guitarists appeared to be less afflicted by all symptoms than the other instrumentalists, except for “Sweating”. In regards to age, older students generally seemed to be more likely to experience MPA symptoms. The experience of “Cold Hands”, “Trembling”, “Palpitations”, “Butterflies” and “Memory Lapses” appeared to increase with age while the experience of “Negativity”, “Difficulty Thinking” and “No Symptoms” seemed to decrease with age (Table 5.5.1).

	Before							
	Total	Male	Female	Guitar	Other	10 – 11	12 – 14	15 – 18
Negativity	45,01	35,56	50,93	26,53	48,01	38,89	46,78	46,30
Cold Hands	42,17	37,04	45,37	38,78	42,72	22,22	44,44	51,85
Bathroom	36,47	35,56	37,04	24,49	38,41	30,56	30,99	49,07
Sweating	31,62	38,52	27,31	40,82	30,13	20,83	35,67	32,41
Trembling	30,77	20,00	37,50	24,49	31,79	16,67	32,75	37,04
Palpitations	25,36	14,81	31,94	20,41	26,16	20,83	25,15	28,70
Butterflies	22,22	14,07	27,31	18,37	22,85	13,89	20,47	30,56
Difficulty Thinking	19,66	15,56	22,22	6,12	21,85	26,39	19,30	15,74
Dry Mouth	19,37	11,85	24,07	14,29	20,20	13,89	16,96	26,85
Memory Lapses	18,23	15,56	19,91	16,33	18,54	22,22	14,62	21,30
Wobbly Legs	13,96	11,85	15,28	6,12	15,23	11,11	14,62	14,81
Tension	10,83	8,89	12,04	10,20	10,93	6,94	11,70	12,04
Itching	8,55	11,11	6,94	2,04	9,60	11,11	8,77	6,48
Difficulty Breathing	8,26	4,44	10,65	2,04	9,27	6,94	8,77	8,33
Dizziness	6,27	3,70	7,87	4,08	6,62	6,94	5,26	7,41
No Symptoms	5,98	11,85	2,31	4,08	6,29	9,72	5,85	3,70
Other	4,84	3,70	5,56	4,08	4,97	4,17	5,26	4,63
Nausea	4,27	2,96	5,09	0,00	4,97	4,17	4,09	4,63
Blurry Vision	2,85	2,22	3,24	2,04	2,98	2,78	2,92	2,78

Table 5.5.1 – Symptomatology of conservatory-level students, before performance, in percentages

As for college-level students, they reported “Need to go to the Bathroom” (~57%), “Cold Hands” (~48%) and “Palpitations” (~37%) as the most common experienced symptoms. In comparison to the previous table, there is a considerable decrease in reports of experiencing “No Symptoms”. Again, females seemed to have a higher tendency than males to experience all symptoms, with some exceptions, such as “Dry Mouth” and a few other symptoms with lower expression. In general, guitarists also appeared to be less

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afflicted by most symptoms than other instrumentalists, the exceptions being “Cold Hands”, “Dry Mouth” and few other symptoms of lower expression (Table 5.5.2).

	Before				
	Total	Male	Female	Guitar	Other
Bathroom	56,79	48,65	63,64	55,00	57,38
Cold Hands	48,15	45,95	50,00	60,00	44,26
Palpitations	37,04	21,62	50,00	15,00	44,26
Negativity	35,80	32,43	38,64	30,00	37,70
Sweating	32,10	24,32	38,64	30,00	32,79
Dry Mouth	30,86	32,43	29,55	35,00	29,51
Trembling	28,40	24,32	31,82	25,00	29,51
Butterflies	28,40	18,92	36,36	10,00	34,43
Tension	24,69	21,62	27,27	25,00	24,59
Memory Lapses	16,05	10,81	20,45	15,00	16,39
Difficulty Thinking	13,58	8,11	18,18	15,00	13,11
Nausea	12,35	2,70	20,45	5,00	14,75
Wobbly Legs	7,41	8,11	6,82	10,00	6,56
Difficulty Breathing	3,70	5,41	2,27	5,00	3,28
Blurry Vision	3,70	5,41	2,27	10,00	1,64
Itching	3,70	2,70	4,55	5,00	3,28
Dizziness	2,47	2,70	2,27	0,00	3,28
Other	1,23	2,70	0,00	5,00	0,00
No Symptoms	1,23	0,00	2,27	0,00	1,64

Table 5.5.2 – Symptomatology of college-level students, before performance, in percentages

5.3.6 – Symptomatology During Performance

During a performance, “Sweating” (~33%), “Cold Hands” (~29%) and “Trembling” (~29%) were the most common experienced symptoms by conservatory-level students. Females reported a higher tendency than males to experience all symptoms apart from “Sweating” and “Need to go to the Bathroom”; and more males reported experiencing “No Symptoms”. Overall, guitarists appeared to be less afflicted by these symptoms than the other instrumentalists, except for “Sweating”, “Palpitations” and “Memory Lapses”. Concerning age differences, results were more evenly distributed than before performance. The experience of “Cold Hands”, “Trembling”, “Dry Mouth” and “Butterflies” seemed to increase with age while the experience of “Itching”, “Difficulty Thinking”, whereas “No Symptoms” seemed to decrease with age (Table 5.6.1).

In regards to the college-level answers, students reported “Dry Mouth” (~33%), “Cold Hands” (~30%), and “Trembling” (~30%), as the most common experienced symptoms. Females continued to display a higher tendency than males to experience most symptoms, although to a lesser extent than in previous tables. Consistently with the previous tables, guitarists reported being less afflicted by the presented symptoms than other

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instrumentalists. Some exceptions were verified, such as “Cold Hands”, “Negativity” and “Memory Lapses” (Table 5.6.2).

	During							
	Total	Male	Female	Guitar	Other	10 – 11	12 – 14	15 – 18
Sweating	33,33	35,56	31,94	38,78	32,45	25,00	36,26	34,26
Cold Hands	29,34	25,93	31,48	26,53	29,80	15,28	31,58	35,19
Trembling	29,34	23,70	32,87	24,49	30,13	16,67	28,07	39,81
Negativity	23,93	21,48	25,46	18,37	24,83	18,06	26,90	23,15
Palpitations	19,94	11,85	25,00	22,45	19,54	18,06	20,47	20,37
Dry Mouth	17,95	11,11	22,22	14,29	18,54	13,89	15,79	24,07
Memory Lapses	16,81	14,81	18,06	18,37	16,56	18,06	16,96	15,74
Difficulty Thinking	16,81	16,30	17,13	10,20	17,88	25,00	15,20	13,89
Wobbly Legs	14,25	12,59	15,28	4,08	15,89	15,28	11,70	17,59
Bathroom	12,82	17,78	9,72	12,24	12,91	9,72	16,96	8,33
Tension	11,97	8,15	14,35	12,24	11,92	9,72	8,77	18,52
Butterflies	9,40	5,19	12,04	6,12	9,93	5,56	8,77	12,96
Difficulty Breathing	8,26	5,19	10,19	8,16	8,28	8,33	7,02	10,19
No Symptoms	7,98	13,33	4,63	10,20	7,62	12,50	7,60	5,56
Itching	7,41	5,19	8,80	6,12	7,62	11,11	9,36	1,85
Other	6,84	3,70	8,80	8,16	6,62	9,72	5,85	6,48
Blurry Vision	5,70	5,19	6,02	6,12	5,63	1,39	8,19	4,63
Dizziness	2,85	2,85	2,85	2,85	2,85	2,85	2,85	2,85
Nausea	1,99	1,99	1,99	1,99	1,99	1,99	1,99	1,99

Table 5.6.1 – Symptomatology of conservatory-level students, during performance, in percentages

	During				
	Total	Male	Female	Guitar	Other
Dry Mouth	33,33	29,73	36,36	15,00	39,34
Cold Hands	30,86	35,14	27,27	55,00	22,95
Trembling	30,86	21,62	38,64	25,00	32,79
Tension	29,63	27,03	31,82	30,00	29,51
Sweating	22,22	24,32	20,45	20,00	22,95
Palpitations	22,22	13,51	29,55	15,00	24,59
Negativity	20,99	27,03	15,91	40,00	14,75
Memory Lapses	19,75	27,03	13,64	35,00	14,75
Difficulty Thinking	14,81	13,51	15,91	15,00	14,75
Butterflies	9,88	21,62	0,00	5,00	11,48
Wobbly Legs	8,64	5,41	11,36	5,00	9,84
Difficulty Breathing	7,41	5,41	9,09	5,00	8,20
Dizziness	4,94	0,00	9,09	0,00	6,56
Bathroom	2,47	0,00	4,55	0,00	3,28
No Symptoms	2,47	2,70	2,27	5,00	1,64
Other	2,47	2,70	2,27	0,00	3,28
Blurry Vision	1,23	2,70	0,00	5,00	0,00
Itching	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Nausea	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00

Table 5.6.2 – Symptomatology of college-level students, during performance, in percentages

5.3.7 – Focus on Symptoms

Regarding whether students become focused on anxiety related symptoms rather than the music when performing, results for the conservatory-level showed that “Rarely” (~36%) and “Sometimes” (~36%) were the most common answers. Observing gender differences, females appeared to be slightly more likely to having their focus disrupted by symptoms. As for instrumental differences, results between guitarists and non-guitarists were fairly inconsistent, with no identifiable tendencies. Concerning the comparison between age subgroups, results revealed a clear tendency for less “Never” and “Rarely” and more “Sometimes” answers the older the students were (Table 5.7.1).

The college-level answers of “Never” (0%), “Rarely” (~25%) and “Sometimes” (~58%) revealed even less frequency of disrupted focus. In this instance, females reported less proneness to focus on symptoms than males. Regarding instruments, guitarists reported a slightly higher frequency for focusing on symptoms (Table 5.7.2).

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Total	12,54	35,90	35,61	13,96	1,99
Male	16,30	37,78	31,85	13,33	0,74
Female	10,19	34,72	37,96	14,35	2,78
Guitar	20,41	36,73	26,53	12,24	4,08
Other	11,26	35,76	37,09	14,24	1,66
10 – 11	15,28	48,61	27,78	6,94	1,39
12 – 14	13,45	35,09	34,50	14,62	2,34
15 – 18	9,26	28,70	42,59	17,59	1,85

Table 5.7.1 – Conservatory-level frequency of being distracted by symptoms during performance, in percentages

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Total	0	24,69	58,02	14,81	2,47
Male	0	18,92	59,46	18,92	2,70
Female	0	29,55	56,82	11,36	2,27
Guitar	0	15,00	60,00	20,00	5,00
Other	0	27,87	57,38	13,11	1,64

Table 5.7.2 – Colleges-level frequency of being distracted by symptoms during performance, in percentages

5.3.8 – Symptomatology After Performance

After a performance, conservatory-level students reported “No Symptoms” (~26%), “Negativity” (~16%) and “Dry Mouth” (~16%) as the most common experiences. “Other” symptoms, have a significant increase with the most common reports being of relief and

relaxation after performing³. When comparing genders, a considerably higher percentage of males reported experiencing “No Symptoms”. Females continued to show a higher tendency than males to experience nearly all presented symptoms. Generally, guitarists reported being less afflicted by these symptoms than other instrumentalists, except for “Sweating”, and less expressively, “Dry Mouth” and “Trembling”. In regards to age, results were evenly distributed. Still, the experience of “No Symptoms” and “Cold Hands” seemed to increase with age while the experience of “Need to go to the Bathroom” and “Palpitations” seems to decrease with age, but with less expression (Table 5.8.1).

	After							
	Total	Male	Female	Guitar	Other	10 – 11	12 – 14	15 – 18
No Symptoms	25,64	39,26	17,13	24,49	25,83	18,06	27,49	27,78
Negativity	15,95	12,59	18,06	4,08	17,88	20,83	12,87	17,59
Dry Mouth	15,67	9,63	19,44	18,37	15,23	19,44	13,45	16,67
Trembling	15,10	8,89	18,98	18,37	14,57	9,72	16,96	15,74
Cold Hands	15,10	9,63	18,52	10,20	15,89	8,33	16,37	17,59
Sweating	14,25	17,04	12,50	20,41	13,25	16,67	13,45	13,89
Other	13,68	11,11	15,28	16,33	13,25	11,11	15,79	12,04
Bathroom	13,39	9,63	15,74	2,04	15,23	16,67	12,87	12,04
Palpitations	10,26	5,19	13,43	8,16	10,60	11,11	10,53	9,26
Wobbly Legs	7,98	5,19	9,72	2,04	8,94	9,72	5,85	10,19
Butterflies	6,55	2,22	9,26	8,16	6,29	6,94	5,26	8,33
Itching	4,56	4,44	4,63	2,04	4,97	8,33	4,68	1,85
Difficulty Thinking	4,27	4,44	4,17	0,00	4,97	5,56	4,68	2,78
Tension	3,70	2,22	4,63	8,16	2,98	2,78	4,68	2,78
Difficulty Breathing	3,42	0,74	5,09	0,00	3,97	4,17	1,75	5,56
Dizziness	2,85	2,96	2,78	0,00	3,31	4,17	1,75	3,70
Memory Lapses	2,56	1,48	3,24	6,12	1,99	4,17	1,75	2,78
Nausea	1,14	0,74	1,39	0,00	1,32	1,39	1,75	0,00
Blurry Vision	1,14	1,48	0,93	2,04	0,99	1,39	1,75	0,00

Table 5.8.1 – Symptomatology of conservatory-level students, after performance, in percentages

Concerning the college-level questionnaire, students reported “No Symptoms” (~26%), “Negativity” (~20%) and “Dry Mouth” (~14%) as the most common experiences. Similarly to the previous table, “Other” symptoms had a significant increase, with the most common reports consisting of relief and relaxation after performing. Also consistent with the previous table, males that reported experiencing “No Symptoms” were considerably higher than females, who continued to show a higher tendency to experience most presented symptoms. In this case, a higher percentage of guitarists reported experiencing “No

³ Which are not exactly “symptoms” *per se*, but in this context worth mentioning as a consequence of the release of performance related stress.

Symptoms”. “Negativity”, “Tension” and “Difficulty Thinking”, were also noticeably higher for guitarists than other instrumentalists (Table 5.8.2).

	After				
	Total	Male	Female	Guitar	Other
No Symptoms	25,93	35,14	18,18	35,00	22,95
Negativity	19,75	18,92	20,45	35,00	14,75
Dry Mouth	13,58	18,92	9,09	5,00	16,39
Sweating	13,58	16,22	11,36	15,00	13,11
Other	11,11	5,41	15,91	5,00	13,11
Tension	11,11	5,41	15,91	15,00	9,84
Palpitations	9,88	5,41	13,64	5,00	11,48
Difficulty Thinking	9,88	10,81	9,09	20,00	6,56
Cold Hands	8,64	5,41	11,36	5,00	9,84
Bathroom	8,64	5,41	11,36	0,00	11,48
Wobbly Legs	7,41	5,41	9,09	10,00	6,56
Trembling	4,94	2,70	6,82	0,00	6,56
Dizziness	4,94	2,70	6,82	0,00	6,56
Memory Lapses	3,70	5,41	2,27	5,00	3,28
Itching	2,47	5,41	0,00	5,00	1,64
Difficulty Breathing	2,47	0,00	4,55	0,00	3,28
Butterflies	1,23	0,00	2,27	0,00	1,64
Nausea	1,23	0,00	2,27	0,00	1,64
Blurry Vision	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00

Table 5.8.2 – Symptomatology of college-level students, after performance, in percentages

5.3.9 – Relating Symptoms With Instruments

For a specific comparison, 4 instrumentalists (guitar, cello, flute and voice) and 3 symptoms (dry mouth, wobbly legs and cold hands) were selected to ascertain if some sort of relation between symptoms and instruments could be established⁴. The selected symptoms were not exclusive to musicians, but the nature of the instrument might be influential in heightening their experience. The basic assumptions were that (i) the symptom of “Dry Mouth” should affect flutists and singers more, since the mouth is directly involved in sound production; (ii) guitarists and cellists should be less bothered by “Wobbly Legs” since they play sitting down; and (iii) singers should experience “Cold Hands” less since they are not directly involved in sound production. This seems to have been somewhat verified by the results, with the biggest exception being the higher percentage of singers with “Cold Hands” (Table 5.9.1).

⁴ As the college-level students sample was too small for this comparison, only the conservatory-level student sample was utilized.

CHAPTER 5

	Before			During			After		
	Dry Mouth	Wobbly Legs	Cold Hands	Dry Mouth	Wobbly Legs	Cold Hands	Dry Mouth	Wobbly Legs	Cold Hands
Guitar	14,29	6,12	38,78	14,29	4,08	26,53	18,37	2,04	10,20
Cello	20,83	20,83	37,50	16,67	8,33	20,83	12,50	12,50	16,67
Flute	28,57	28,57	53,57	28,57	17,86	39,29	14,29	7,14	17,86
Voice	40,00	33,33	46,67	46,67	26,67	33,33	13,33	26,67	26,67
Total	19,37	13,96	42,17	17,95	14,25	29,34	15,67	7,98	15,10

Table 5.9.1 – Conservatory-level students relation between symptoms and instruments, in percentages

A chi-square test between those specific instruments and symptoms reveals a significant *p*-value for before and during, and close to significant for after performance (Table 5.9.2).

	Before	During	After
Significance	0,01	0,01	0,06

Table 5.9.2 – Significance between four instruments and three symptoms

5.3.10 – Cognitions

In order to facilitate the analysis of the frequency of anxiety related cognitions of the music students, values were attributed to all possible frequency responses, namely “Never” = 1, “Rarely” = 2, “Sometimes” = 3, “Frequently” = 4 and “Always” = 5. In this way it was possible to create tables and graphs profiles that aid the comprehension of the data.

	Total	Male	Female	Guitar	Other	10 – 11	12 – 14	15 – 18
4.1.1	2,09	1,93	2,19	2,00	2,11	1,93	2,02	2,31
4.1.2	2,48	2,32	2,57	2,45	2,48	2,19	2,37	2,82
4.1.3	2,60	2,39	2,74	2,59	2,61	2,60	2,56	2,69
4.2.1	2,41	2,24	2,51	2,37	2,42	2,26	2,30	2,69
4.2.2	2,38	2,16	2,51	2,18	2,41	1,97	2,31	2,75
4.2.3	2,75	2,72	2,77	2,86	2,73	2,69	2,75	2,79
4.3.1	2,91	2,76	3,01	2,73	2,94	3,21	2,69	3,07
4.3.2	2,70	2,41	2,88	2,39	2,75	2,67	2,46	3,11
4.3.3	2,94	2,70	3,09	2,80	2,96	3,17	2,79	3,03
4.4.1	3,55	3,50	3,58	3,37	3,58	3,63	3,52	3,56
4.4.2	4,03	3,94	4,08	4,04	4,03	3,90	4,01	4,14
4.4.3	4,05	4,13	4,01	4,14	4,04	3,86	4,04	4,21
4.5.1	2,25	2,24	2,25	2,16	2,26	2,13	2,20	2,39
4.5.2	2,21	2,21	2,21	2,27	2,20	2,56	2,11	2,14
4.5.3	2,30	2,07	2,44	2,24	2,30	2,07	2,47	2,17

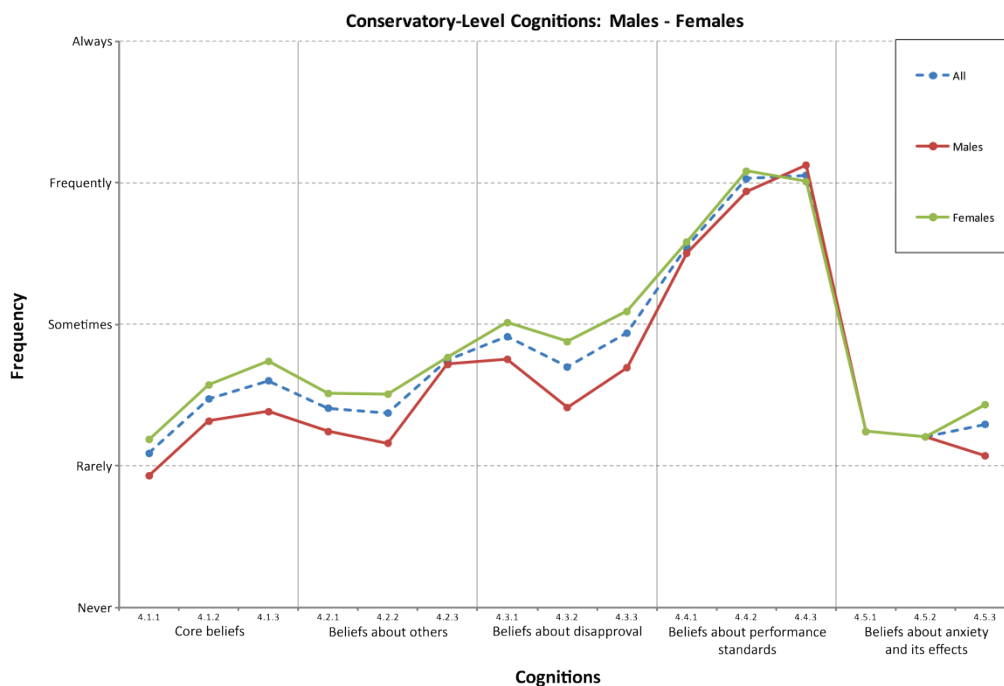
Table 5.10.1 – Frequency of cognitions for conservatory-level students

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	Total	Male	Female	Guitar	Other
4.1.1	2,49	2,38	2,59	2,50	2,49
4.1.2	2,89	2,81	2,95	2,95	2,87
4.1.3	2,56	2,49	2,61	2,60	2,54
4.2.1	3,14	3,08	3,18	3,05	3,16
4.2.2	3,23	3,00	3,43	2,90	3,34
4.2.3	2,80	2,68	2,91	2,95	2,75
4.3.1	2,67	2,32	2,95	2,50	2,72
4.3.2	2,88	2,68	3,05	3,00	2,84
4.3.3	2,58	2,27	2,84	2,45	2,62
4.4.1	3,25	3,35	3,16	3,45	3,18
4.4.2	4,21	4,19	4,23	4,00	4,28
4.4.3	4,28	4,30	4,27	4,50	4,21
4.5.1	2,16	2,19	2,14	2,55	2,03
4.5.2	1,86	1,84	1,89	2,00	1,82
4.5.3	2,30	1,86	2,66	2,45	2,25

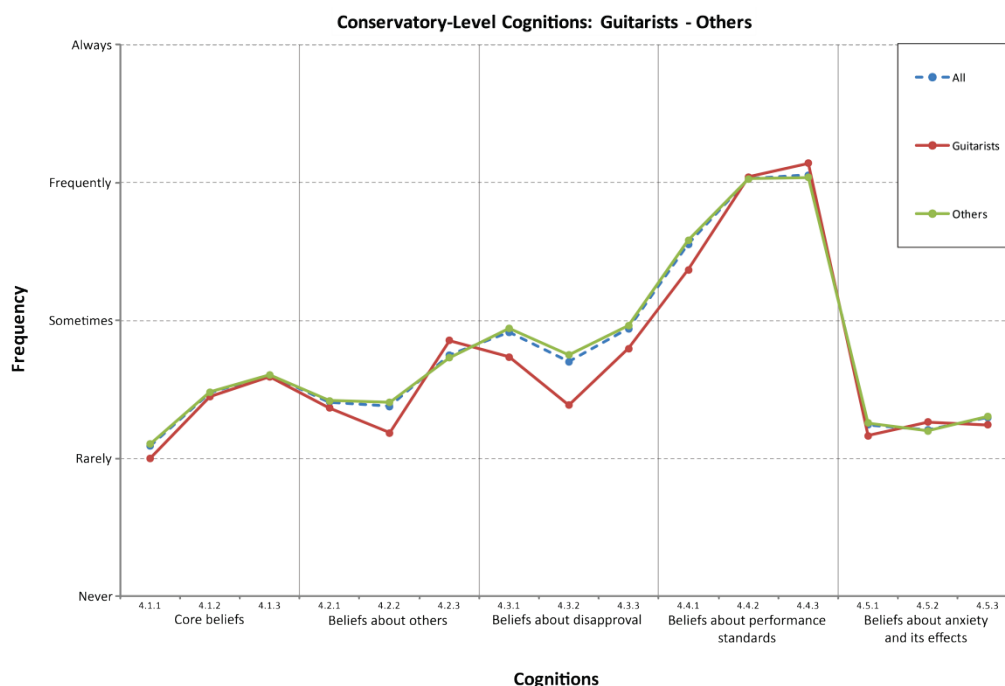
Table 5.10.2 – Frequency of cognitions for college-level students

In Graph 5.1, a general tendency was that all cognitions were reported as appearing between “Rarely” and “Sometimes” can be observed; with the exception of cognitions pertaining to “Beliefs about performance standards”, which was reported as appearing very close to “Frequently”. When comparing genders, males seem to experience these cognitions less often than females.



Graph 5.1 – Frequency of cognitions for conservatory-level students, differences between males and females

Graph 5.2 shows that guitarists seemed to experience these cognitions as often as other instrumentalists, except for cognition 4.2.2 (“People tend to be highly critical of others when performing”) and the third group “Beliefs about disapproval”, where it appeared to be slightly less frequent. A slight peak in 4.4.3 (“When performing I must always sound musical and interesting to other people”) is also visible.



Graph 5.2 – Frequency of cognitions for conservatory-level students, differences between guitarists and others

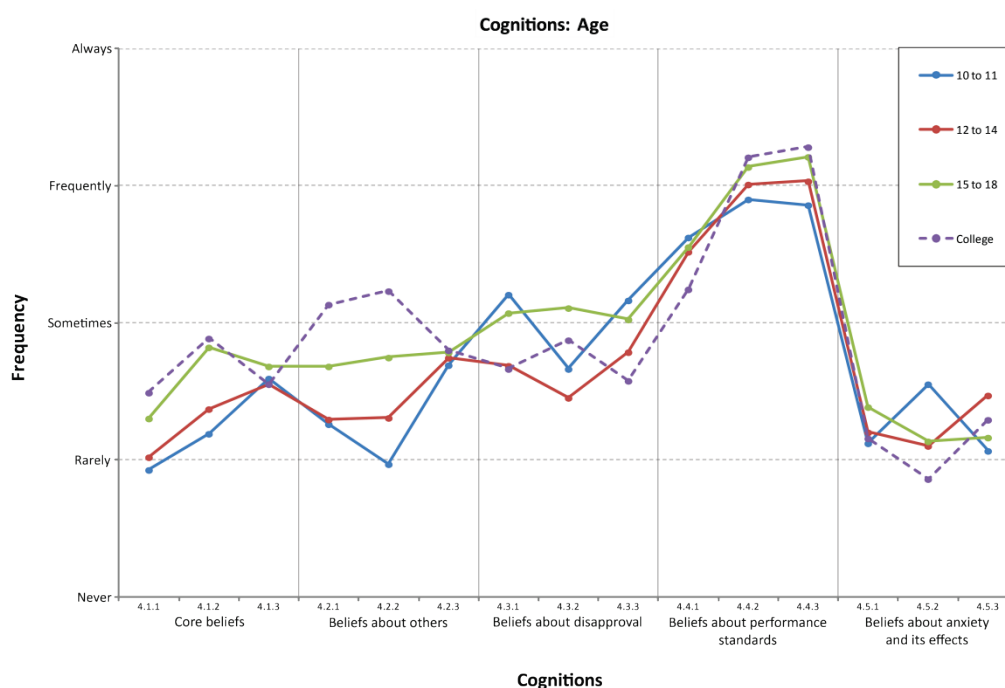
A chi-square test revealed that only two individual cognitions, 4.1.3 (“I am more anxious than other people when I perform”) and 4.4.2 (“I should show confidence and competence in all my performances”), presented a significant difference between guitarists and other instrumentalists. All other individual cognitions do not validate that assertion. In regards to the belief groups and the entirety of the cognitions profile, results also showed that there is no statistically significant difference between guitarists and non-guitarists (Table 5.10.3).

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		Individual Cognition	Belief Groups	Total
Core beliefs	4.1.1	0,78	0,28	0,84
	4.1.2	0,26		
	4.1.3	0,05		
Beliefs about others	4.2.1	0,98	0,85	
	4.2.2	0,15		
	4.2.3	0,81		
Beliefs about disapproval	4.3.1	0,23	0,45	
	4.3.2	0,27		
	4.3.3	0,53		
Beliefs about performance standards	4.4.1	0,47	0,20	
	4.4.2	0,03		
	4.4.3	0,44		
Beliefs about anxiety and its effects	4.5.1	0,97	0,99	
	4.5.2	0,79		
	4.5.3	0,65		

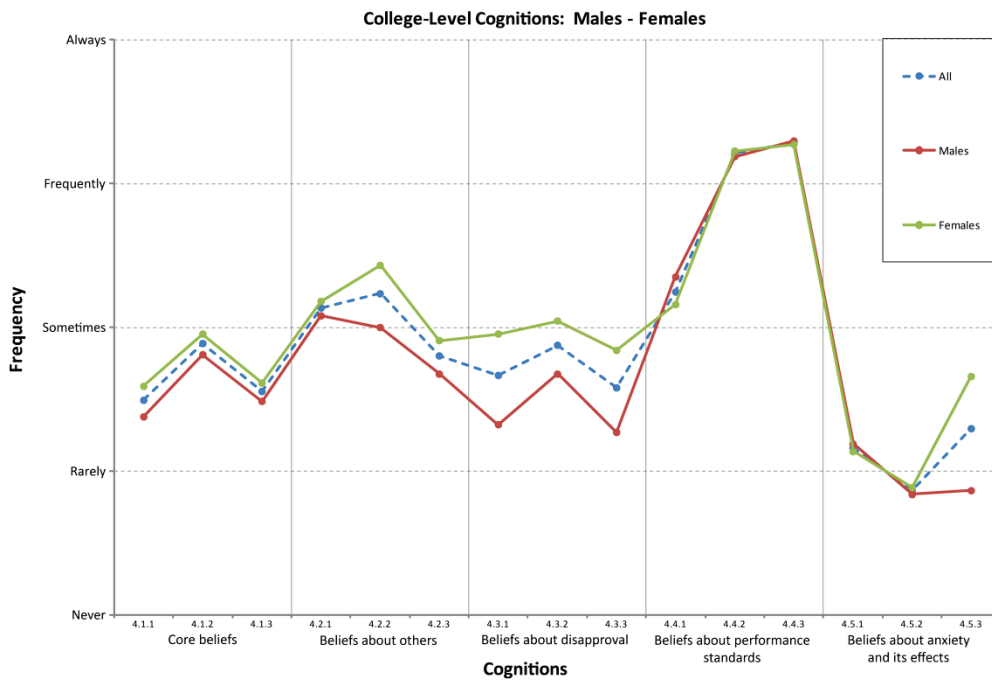
Table 5.10.3 – Significance between conservatory-level guitarists and non-guitarists for cognitions

Graph 5.3 shows that for “Core beliefs” and “Beliefs about others”, the frequency tended to increase with age. The same tendency, although less expressive, is observable in “Beliefs about performance standards”. Inversely, namely cognition 4.5.2 (If other people see me sweating and trembling when performing they will think there is something wrong with me”), the frequency seems to reduce with age. The profile for college-level students was added to the graph to further characterize age differences.



Graph 5.3 - Frequency of cognitions according to age

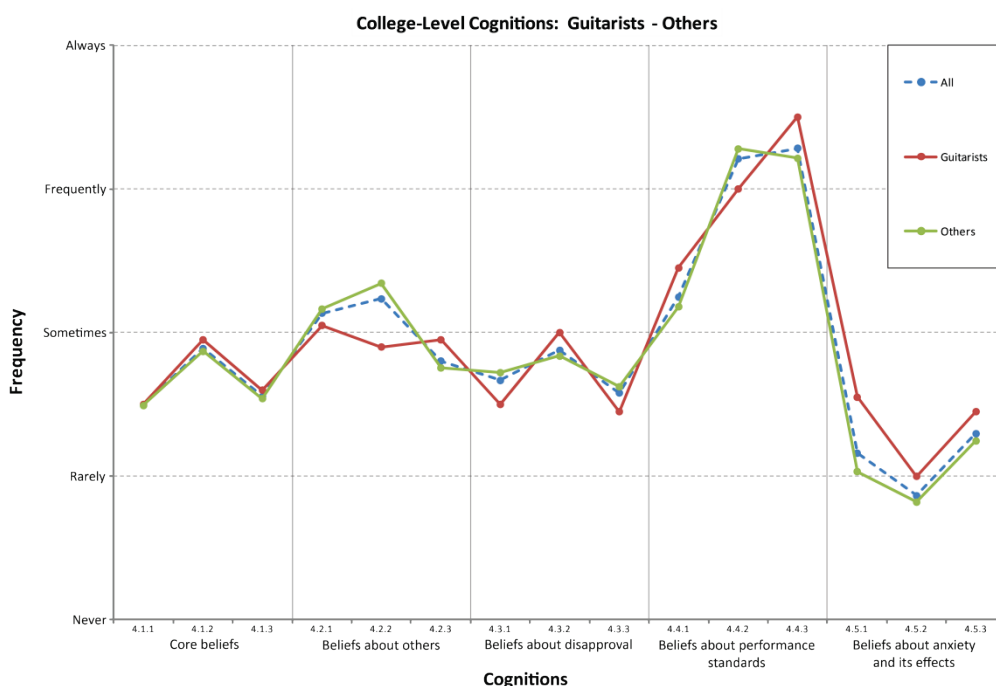
For college-level students' cognitions, Graph 5.4 shows that “Beliefs about performance standards” stood out as the most frequent cognitions, similarly to the conservatory-level students. Furthermore, the previous identified tendency that males reported experiencing these cognitions less frequently than females is also present.



Graph 5.4 – Frequency of cognitions for college-level students, differences between males and females

Lastly, in Graph 5.5, college-level guitarists seemed to maintain the same tendencies as their conservatory-level counterparts. Specifically, cognition 4.2.2 (“People tend to be highly critical of others when performing”) is less frequent, and there is also a peak in 4.4.3 (“When performing I must always sound musical and interesting to other people”). The main discrepancy found was in “Beliefs about disapproval”, namely in 4.3.2 (“It would be horrible if other people thought that I was weak or incompetent when watching me perform”), where college-level guitarists reported slightly higher frequency than other instrumentalists.

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Graph 5.5 – Frequency of cognitions for college-level students, differences between guitarists and others

For college-level students’ cognitions, results did not show any statistical significance between guitarists and other instrumentalists (Table 5.10.4)

		Individual Cognitions	Belief Groups	Total
Core beliefs	4.1.1	0,86	0,80	1,00
	4.1.2	0,84		
	4.1.3	0,15		
Beliefs about others	4.2.1	0,62	0,84	
	4.2.2	0,24		
	4.2.3	0,95		
Beliefs about disapproval	4.3.1	0,44	0,98	
	4.3.2	0,88		
	4.3.3	0,98		
Beliefs about performance standards	4.4.1	0,76	0,85	
	4.4.2	0,65		
	4.4.3	0,37		
Beliefs about anxiety and its effects	4.5.1	0,40	0,84	
	4.5.2	0,89		
	4.5.3	0,45		

Table 5.10.4 – Significance between college-level guitarists and non-guitarists for cognitions

5.3.11 – Perspectives About Performance and Coping

As expected, most students replied that it was easier to perform in a group than in a solo context. Similarly, for both conservatory and college-level students, over 70% stated being more comfortable in group performances (Tables 5.11.1 and 11.2).

	Alone	In a group	Either
Total	11,11	72,36	16,52
Male	9,63	68,15	22,22
Female	12,04	75,00	12,96
Guitar	10,20	75,51	14,29
Other	11,26	71,85	16,89
10 – 11	16,67	70,83	12,50
12 – 14	10,53	70,18	19,30
15 – 18	8,33	76,85	14,81

Table 5.11.1 – Conservatory-level answers regarding how it is easier to perform, in percentages

	Alone	In a group	Either
Total	2,47	74,07	23,46
Male	2,70	70,27	27,03
Female	2,27	77,27	20,45
Guitar	5,00	75,00	20,00
Other	1,64	73,77	24,59

Table 5.11.2 – College-level answers regarding how it is easier to perform, in percentages

Regarding the students' perspectives on how it is possible to improve coping with performance anxiety, nearly 50% believed that it happens naturally with "Age and Experience". Also, the older the students were, the less they reported believing that "they only need to practice more" in order to improve coping; becoming more aware that "they have to do specific exercises". Another noticeable difference is that, for college-level students, the idea that "nothing can be done" has the least supporters (Tables 5.11.3 and 5.11.4).

	Practice more	Age and experience	Specific exercises	Nothing can be done
Total	33,05	47,29	5,98	13,68
Male	37,04	49,63	2,96	10,37
Female	30,56	45,83	7,87	15,74
Guitar	28,57	55,10	4,08	12,24
Other	33,77	46,03	6,29	13,91
10 – 11	41,67	38,89	5,56	13,89
12 – 14	33,92	45,61	5,26	15,20
15 – 18	25,93	55,56	7,41	11,11

Table 5.11.3 – Conservatory-level perspectives on how MPA coping improves, in percentages

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	Practice more	Age and experience	Specific exercises	Nothing can be done
Total	18,52	48,15	29,63	3,70
Male	24,32	51,35	24,32	0,00
Female	13,64	45,45	34,09	6,82
Guitar	25,00	45,00	30,00	0,00
Other	16,39	49,18	29,51	4,92

Table 5.11.4 – College-level perspectives on how MPA coping improves, in percentages

5.3.12 – Advices From Teachers

In regards to how often the students were given anxiety coping advices by their teachers, 51% for the conservatory-level and around 43% for the college-level reported it occurring “Sometimes”, “Frequently” or “Always”. The high percentage of students that stated that their teacher never gives them advices and exercises towards coping with MPA, ~26% and ~28%, is worth noticing (Tables 5.12.1 and 5.12.2).

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Total	26,21	22,79	29,34	13,68	7,98
Male	28,89	22,96	26,67	13,33	8,15
Female	24,54	22,69	31,02	13,89	7,87
Guitar	24,49	24,49	22,45	18,37	10,20
Other	26,49	22,52	30,46	12,91	7,62
10 – 11	31,94	20,83	29,17	9,72	8,33
12 – 14	27,49	23,39	28,65	12,28	8,19
15 – 18	20,37	23,15	30,56	18,52	7,41

Table 5.12.1 – Frequency of conservatory-level students receiving MPA coping advices from teacher, in percentages

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Total	28,40	28,40	25,93	12,35	4,94
Male	37,84	24,32	24,32	10,81	2,70
Female	20,45	31,82	27,27	13,64	6,82
Guitar	30,00	35,00	15,00	15,00	5,00
Other	27,87	26,23	29,51	11,48	4,92

Table 5.12.2 – Frequency of college-level students receiving MPA coping advices from teacher, in percentages

On both conservatory and college levels, approximately 75% of the students stated that anxiety coping advices given by their teachers would “Help Considerably” or “Help a lot” (Tables 5.12.3 and 5.12.4).

	Do not help	Help a little	Help considerably	Help a lot
Total	5,79	18,15	47,88	28,19
Male	5,21	14,58	46,88	33,33
Female	6,13	20,25	48,47	25,15
Guitar	2,70	16,22	48,65	32,43
Other	6,31	18,47	47,75	27,48
10 – 11	4,08	12,24	44,90	38,78
12 – 14	4,84	21,77	45,16	28,23
15 – 18	8,14	16,28	53,49	22,09

Table 5.12.3 – Conservatory-level students' assessment of effectiveness of received advices, in percentages

	Do not help	Help a little	Help considerably	Help a lot
Total	0	25,86	39,66	34,48
Male	0	34,78	26,09	39,13
Female	0	20,00	48,57	31,43
Guitar	0	35,71	28,57	35,71
Other	0	22,73	43,18	34,09

Table 5.12.4 – College-level students' assessment of effectiveness of received advices, in percentages

5.3.13 – Practice Changes When Performance is Near

Students acknowledged practicing more when a performance is approaching, with ~92% of conservatory students and ~78% of college students responding “yes” to this question. On both questionnaires, guitarists’ “yes” answers were slightly higher than for other instrumentalists (Tables 5.13.1 and 5.13.2).

	Yes	No
Total	91,74	8,26
Male	91,85	8,15
Female	91,67	8,33
Guitar	95,92	4,08
Other	91,06	8,94
10 – 11	84,72	15,28
12 – 14	92,40	7,60
15 – 18	95,37	4,63

Table 5.13.1 – Conservatory-level students practicing more when performance is near, in percentages

	Yes	No
Total	77,78	22,22
Male	75,68	24,32
Female	79,55	20,45
Guitar	85,00	15,00
Other	75,41	24,59

Table 5.13.2 – College-level students practicing more when performance is near, in percentages

In regards to practicing any differently when a performance is near, ~56% of conservatory-level students replied “yes”. In this instance, it was possible to see a clear increase according to the age group, starting from ~51% for the younger students and ~66% for the older students. Continuing this tendency, ~69% of college-level gave the same answer (Tables 5.13.3 and 5.13.4).

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	Yes	No
Total	56,13	43,87
Male	57,04	42,96
Female	55,56	44,44
Guitar	36,73	63,27
Other	59,27	40,73
10 – 11	51,39	48,61
12 – 14	52,05	47,95
15 – 18	65,74	34,26

Table 5.13.3 – Conservatory-level students practicing differently when performance is near, in percentages

	Yes	No
Total	69,14	30,86
Male	59,46	40,54
Female	77,27	22,73
Guitar	65,00	35,00
Other	70,49	29,51

Table 5.13.4 – College-level students practicing differently when performance is near, in percentages

5.3.14 – Practice Habits

The most common practice habits that conservatory students felt being helpful in reducing their anxiety were “Practicing More” (~45%) and “Practicing Slowly” (~42%). According to the results, more females seemed to engage in these practice habits than males. Guitarists appeared to rely considerably on “Practicing More” (Table 5.14.1).

	Technique	Practicing Slowly	Music	Practicing More	Other	None
Total	25,07	42,17	33,33	45,01	4,56	4,27
Male	22,96	41,48	28,89	42,96	6,67	5,19
Female	26,39	42,59	36,11	46,30	3,24	3,70
Guitar	16,33	48,98	20,41	59,18	4,08	4,08
Other	26,49	41,06	35,43	42,72	4,64	4,30
10 – 11	29,17	38,89	31,94	40,28	2,78	2,78
12 – 14	24,56	46,78	30,99	43,86	4,68	4,09
15 – 18	23,15	37,04	37,96	50,00	5,56	5,56

Table 5.14.1 – Practice habits that conservatory-level students utilize to reduce MPA, in percentages

The same assessment for college students presented somewhat different results. The most noticeable differences were less engagement in “Practicing More” (~27%), and a considerable engagement in “Practicing Slowly” (~58%). All gender differences were quite small, except for focusing on “Technique”, where males had more than twice the percentage than females. College guitarists also reported considerable higher values for “Technique” and “Music” than other instrumentalists (Table 5.14.2).

	Technique	Practicing Slowly	Music	Practicing More	Other	None
Total	28,40	58,02	59,26	27,16	9,88	1,23
Male	40,54	56,76	59,46	29,73	8,11	2,70
Female	18,18	59,09	59,09	25,00	11,36	0,00
Guitar	40,00	55,00	75,00	30,00	10,00	5,00
Other	24,59	59,02	54,10	26,23	9,84	0,00

Table 5.14.2 – Practice habits that college-level students utilize to reduce MPA, in percentages

5.3.15 – Physical Preparation Habits

Concerning the activities without instrument that help conservatory students reduce their anxiety levels, to “Breathe” (~50%) and to “Relax” (~67%) were clearly the most common adopted strategies. The main difference in genders was females focusing more on breathing than males. Values for guitarists and non-guitarists were similar. In regards to the main differences in age groups, younger students reported focusing less on breathing and older students reported focusing more on stretching (Table 5.15.1).

	Breathe	Relax	Stretch	Workout	Other	None
Total	49,57	66,67	13,11	4,56	5,98	7,12
Male	40,00	68,89	11,85	4,44	3,70	7,41
Female	55,56	65,28	13,89	4,63	7,41	6,94
Guitar	51,02	69,39	6,12	4,08	2,04	6,12
Other	49,34	66,23	14,24	4,64	6,62	7,28
10 – 11	34,72	65,28	6,94	6,94	5,56	6,94
12 – 14	53,22	65,50	9,94	4,09	5,26	8,19
15 – 18	53,70	69,44	22,22	3,70	7,41	5,56

Table 5.15.1 – Physical preparation habits that conservatory-level students utilize to reduce MPA, in percentages

As for the college students, to “Breathe” (~70%) and to “Relax” (~77%) were also the most common strategies. In addition, a noticeable increase in the incorporation of “Stretching” and “Workout” as anxiety reducing activities was verified (Table 5.15.2).

	Breathe	Relax	Stretch	Workout	Other	None
Total	70,37	76,54	49,38	19,75	11,11	1,23
Male	64,86	78,38	48,65	24,32	8,11	2,70
Female	75,00	75,00	50,00	15,91	13,64	0,00
Guitar	60,00	70,00	40,00	35,00	5,00	5,00
Other	73,77	78,69	52,46	14,75	13,11	0,00

Table 5.15.2 – Physical preparation habits that college-level students utilize to reduce MPA, in percentages

5.3.16 – Mental Preparation Habits

Regarding the answers for the mental preparation habits conservatory-level students usually engage in, “Positive Thinking” (~68%) was the most common approach. Generally, more females reported adopting more of these habits with the exception of “Ruminate”, where males displayed a higher percentage. The main difference within age groups was for “Relativize”, with considerably less younger students adopting this habit (Table 5.16.1).

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	Positive	Avoid	Distract	Ruminate	Relativize	Other	None
Total	68,09	21,37	35,04	28,49	42,17	7,69	0,85
Male	60,00	17,78	32,59	32,59	38,52	5,19	1,48
Female	73,15	23,61	36,57	25,93	44,44	9,26	0,46
Guitar	61,22	26,53	32,65	38,78	34,69	8,16	0,00
Other	69,21	20,53	35,43	26,82	43,38	7,62	0,99
10 – 11	63,89	22,22	36,11	20,83	26,39	8,33	0,00
12 – 14	69,59	23,39	36,84	29,24	49,12	8,19	1,17
15 – 18	68,52	17,59	31,48	32,41	41,67	6,48	0,93

Table 5.16.1 – Mental preparation habits that conservatory-level students utilize to reduce MPA, in percentages

The corresponding table for college-level students presented similar results. Consistent with the previous table, college guitarists seemed to be slightly less “Positive” and tended to “Ruminate” more than other instrumentalists. (Table 5.16.2).

	Positive	Avoid	Distract	Ruminate	Relativize	Other	None
Total	62,96	13,58	28,40	32,10	40,74	14,81	0,00
Male	59,46	16,22	21,62	37,84	40,54	10,81	0,00
Female	65,91	11,36	34,09	27,27	40,91	18,18	0,00
Guitar	50,00	20,00	20,00	50,00	40,00	15,00	0,00
Other	67,21	11,48	31,15	26,23	40,98	14,75	0,00

Table 5.16.2 – Mental preparation habits that college-level students utilize to reduce MPA, in percentages

5.3.17 – Concerns

The college students indicated what they considered to be the most anxiety generating factors. “Sound Quality” (~68%) was identified as the most concerning factor and “Repertoire Difficulty” (~17%) as the least concerning. In general, females seemed to worry less about these factors than males, with the main exception being the “Number of People in the Audience”. Overall, guitarists also appeared to be more concerned with all factors, with minor exceptions (Table 5.17).

	People in Audience	Memory Lapses	Wrong Notes	Technical Mistakes	Interpretation Mistakes	Sound Quality	Repertoire Difficulty
Total	37,04	40,74	49,38	22,22	43,21	67,90	17,28
Male	29,73	43,24	54,05	29,73	48,65	72,97	16,22
Female	43,18	38,64	45,45	15,91	38,64	63,64	18,18
Guitar	35,00	45,00	65,00	35,00	50,00	85,00	15,00
Other	37,70	39,34	44,26	18,03	40,98	62,30	18,03

Table 5.17 – Most anxiety inducing factors for college-level students, in percentages

5.3.18 – Self-efficacy

When inquired about deliberately assessing and improving the confidence they have in their own abilities, over 70% of the students replied doing so “Sometimes”, “Frequently” or “Always”. Results were similar for all subgroups, with the exception for guitarists that presented an increase in “Frequently” (~45%) and a decrease in “Always” (~5%) answers (Table 5.18.1).

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Total	7,41	22,22	23,46	32,10	14,81
Male	5,41	21,62	24,32	35,14	13,51
Female	9,09	22,73	22,73	29,55	15,91
Guitar	5,00	25,00	20,00	45,00	5,00
Other	8,20	21,31	24,59	27,87	18,03

Table 5.18.1 – College-level students’ deliberate engagement in assessing and raising confidence levels, in percentages

Mean values for confidence were calculated according to each of the 5 possible answers to question 6.1, establishing a relation between self-efficacy and confidence. Results showed that the students that more frequently assessed and raised their confidence in their own musical and technical abilities also displayed higher self-reported confidence levels for before, during and after performance. The students that stated “Never” are the only exception (Table 5.18.2).

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
Before	6,50	4,67	6,37	7,08	7,67	6,42
During	6,83	5,78	6,74	7,58	8,25	7,02
After	6,33	5,61	6,42	7,50	7,92	6,80

Table 5.18.2 – Relation between assessing and raising confidence during practice and mean confidence levels

5.3.19 – Flow

Students were inquired about how frequently do they experience moments of complete control and lack of anxiety while performing. The most common answers were “Rarely” (~30%) and “Sometimes” (~33%). Males reported experiencing these moments slightly less often than females. Guitarists also reported fewer flow moments than other instrumentalists (Table 5.19.1).

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Total	17,28	29,63	33,33	19,75	0,00
Male	18,92	32,43	29,73	18,92	0,00
Female	15,91	27,27	36,36	20,45	0,00
Guitar	20,00	35,00	25,00	20,00	0,00
Other	16,39	27,87	36,07	19,67	0,00

Table 5.19.1 – College-level students’ experiences of complete control and lack of anxiety while performing, in percentages

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Calculating the mean confidence values for each answer to question 6.2, results showed that the students that reported experiences of control and lack of anxiety while performing more frequently also had higher levels of confidence before, during and after performance. Inversely, mean anxiety levels tended to be higher for those students who experience flow less frequently (Tables 5.19.2 and 5.19.3).

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
Before	5,36	5,71	6,63	8,06	0,00	6,42
During	6,07	6,21	7,30	8,63	0,00	7,02
After	6,07	5,92	7,00	8,44	0,00	6,80

Table 5.19.2 – Relation between frequency of flow experiences and mean confidence levels

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
Before	7,29	7,38	7,56	6,50	0,00	7,25
During	6,57	6,50	5,41	4,19	0,00	5,69
After	2,79	3,54	3,33	3,31	0,00	3,30

Table 5.19.3 – Relation between frequency of flow experiences and mean anxiety levels

5.3.20 – Deliberate Practice

When inquired about how often do they structure their practice according to small achievable goals, students reported doing so “Sometimes” (~30%), “Frequently” (~36%) and “Always” (~19%). Results for the subgroups showed that males reported engaging in deliberate practice slightly more frequently than females, and that guitarists also structured their practice slightly more frequently than other instrumentalists (Table 5.20.1).

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Total	3,70	12,35	29,63	35,80	18,52
Male	5,41	8,11	35,14	40,54	10,81
Female	2,27	15,91	25,00	31,82	25,00
Guitar	5,00	5,00	35,00	40,00	15,00
Other	3,28	14,75	27,87	34,43	19,67

Table 5.20.1 – College-level students’ deliberate engagement in structured practice, in percentages

Similarly to the previous questions, mean values for confidence were calculated according to the answers to question 6.3. In this instance, students that reported engaging in structured practice more frequently also reported the highest confidence levels before, during and after performance. Students who answered “Frequently” were the exception to this tendency.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
Before	4,67	6,00	6,92	5,90	7,27	6,42
During	5,67	7,10	7,25	6,34	8,20	7,02
After	5,33	6,90	7,00	6,21	7,87	6,80

Table 5.20.2 – Relation between deliberate engagement in structured practice and mean confidence levels

5.3.21 – Beliefs About Performance Anxiety

Regarding to whether students felt that performance anxiety was a natural response when going on stage, over 90% replied “Yes”. Also, ~95% stated that they did not feel that this anxiety was exclusive to musicians (Tables 5.21.1 and 5.21.2).

	Yes	No
Total	91,36	8,64
Male	94,59	5,41
Female	88,64	11,36
Guitar	95,00	5,00
Other	90,16	9,84

Table 5.21.1 – College-level students’ assessment of whether MPA is natural, in percentages

	Yes	No
Total	4,94	95,06
Male	0,00	100,00
Female	9,09	90,91
Guitar	5,00	95,00
Other	4,92	95,08

Table 5.21.2 – College-level students’ assessment of whether performance anxiety is exclusive to musicians, in percentages

5.3.22 – Positive Feedback

When inquired about how often their instrumental teacher contributed to an increase in the confidence in their own abilities, most students replied “Frequently” (~43%) or “Always” (~27%). In general, females reported receiving positive feedback more frequently than males and guitarists reported receiving positive feedback less frequently than non-guitarists (Table 5.22.1).

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Total	3,70	7,41	18,52	43,21	27,16
Male	2,70	10,81	24,32	40,54	21,62
Female	4,55	4,55	13,64	45,45	31,82
Guitar	0,00	15,00	25,00	40,00	20,00
Other	4,92	4,92	16,39	44,26	29,51

Table 5.22.1 – College-level students’ assessment of how often their teachers provide encouraging feedback, in percentages

When comparing mean confidence levels of each answer to question 6.6, it was possible to observe that the students that reported receiving positive feedback more often tended to display higher confidence values, with the exception for the ones that answered “Sometimes” (Table 5.22.2).

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
Before	3,67	5,67	7,00	6,20	6,95	6,42
During	4,67	7,00	7,47	6,77	7,45	7,02
After	4,00	6,17	7,27	6,77	7,09	6,80

Table 5.22.2 – Relation between frequency of encouraging feedback and mean confidence levels

5.3.23 – Perspectives on the Reality of MPA in Schools

Regarding the students’ opinions about the effectiveness of music schools in addressing MPA issues, nearly 60% stated feeling that schools where they studied did not adequately prepare them to deal with performance anxiety . Also, ~95% claimed being unaware of the existence of schools and universities that include specific preparation in this regard (Tables 5.23.1 and 5.23.2).

	Yes	No
Total	40,74	59,26
Male	43,24	56,76
Female	38,64	61,36
Guitar	45,00	55,00
Other	39,34	60,66

Table 5.23.1 – College-level students’ assessment of whether music schools address MPA adequately, in percentages

	Yes	No
Total	4,94	95,06
Male	2,70	97,30
Female	6,82	93,18
Guitar	5,00	95,00
Other	4,92	95,08

Table 5.23.2 – College-level students’ awareness of MPA specific preparation in schools, in percentages

Considering whether specific training for MPA issues should be included in the curricula, nearly 90% of the students believe it to be “Very important” or “Fundamental” (Table 5.23.3).

	Not important	A little important	Moderately important	Very important	Fundamental
Total	0	1,23	9,88	38,27	50,62
Male	0	0,00	10,81	29,73	59,46
Female	0	2,27	9,09	45,45	43,18
Guitar	0	0,00	15,00	20,00	65,00
Other	0	1,64	8,20	44,26	45,90

Table 5.23.3 – College-level students’ assessment of the importance of MPA training in schools, in percentages

Lastly, over 60% of the students claimed personally knowing someone that has given up performing due to unresolved anxiety issues (Table 5.23.4).

	Yes	No
Total	62,96	37,04
Male	56,76	43,24
Female	68,18	31,82
Guitar	55,00	45,00
Other	65,57	34,43

Table 5.23.4 – College-level students’ knowledge of people that gave up performing due to anxiety, in percentages

5.4 – Discussion

After the analysis of the data, certain characteristics and tendencies in both groups of students could be identified.

Regarding the three moments, before, during and after performance, results showed a significant correlation between the self-reported values for confidence and anxiety, which was expected. It was also possible to verify a definite change in self-reported confidence and anxiety values. For conservatory-level students, there was a consistent increase in confidence and a corresponding decrease in anxiety throughout the three phases. As for the college-level students, despite having an overall increase from “Before” to “After”, confidence increased from “Before” to “During” and decreased from “During” to “After”. This might have been verified possibly due to the fact that older students are more analytical and tend to scrutinize every element of performance after playing, potentially causing a decrease in confidence. In regards to the reported anxiety levels, the decrease was consistent in the three phases. Concerning age differences, results showed that older students self-reported higher mean values for anxiety before performance, but lower for during and after. This may indicate higher coping capabilities associated with age and experience, contradicting the results presented in Cox & Kenardy’s (1993) study.

When grouping students’ anxiety levels according to their severity, results showed that 27% (conservatory-level) and 25% (college-level) experienced high anxiety before performance. This does not necessarily imply that those students already suffer from severe MPA, as several other variables would be required to reach that diagnosis. However, it does reveal that 1 in 4 students is particularly sensitive to anxiety and proactive steps should be taken to prevent them from developing anxiety related problems in the future. While over 20% of conservatory students still reported high anxiety during performance, less than 10% of college students did so. This can be associated with a sort of “natural selection” process, meaning that with increased age and experience, music students will either learn to effectively cope with MPA or resign from performing and/or pursuing a career as a professional musician, a conclusion that was previously proposed Ryan & Andrews (2009). Sustained high anxiety during performance will probably negatively impact performance quality and these percentages should be considered as a closer representation of how many students effectively have MPA issues. Values close to 10% for severe anxiety and above 50% for moderate anxiety are also consistent with previous studies presented in Chapter 2, except for Osborne & Franklin (2002), where the cutoff between moderate and high anxiety groups seems to have been less conservative.

The number of anxiety related symptoms that students experienced tended to decrease throughout the phases of performance. Naturally, the moments before a

performance corresponded to the highest anxiety level and, consequently, highest number of associated symptoms. Amongst both groups of students, the most common symptoms before the performance were: tendency for negative thoughts, cold hands, need to go to the bathroom, sweating, trembling and palpitations; all around 30% or higher. During the performance, anxiety related symptoms were less expressive, the most common ones being sweating, cold hands and trembling for the conservatory-level students and dry mouth, cold hands, trembling and tension for the college-level students; all near 30% or higher. Lastly, after the performance the absence of symptoms was the highest rated answer, around 25% for both student groups. Within both samples, the most reported symptoms are fairly common, which can indicate that in regards to symptomatology, it is not possible to make a distinction between musical performance anxiety and other types of anxiety. As expected, results showed a significant correlation between the self-reported values for anxiety and the number of symptoms that were experienced. Regarding age differences, the data showed that among conservatory-level students, mean values for the number of symptoms increased with age, which is consistent with Dempsey's (2015) findings regarding a similar age group.

Around 70% of conservatory-level students and around 80% of college-level students reported focusing on anxiety related symptoms "Rarely" or "Sometimes". This focus on symptoms seemed to increase in frequency as students grow older, reporting less "Never" and "Rarely" answers and more "Sometimes". This might mean that older students can be more susceptible to the negative influence of their anxiety symptoms on performance and should benefit from instructions on how to cope with them. Reports of "Frequently" and "Always" combined were only around 15%, indicating that in general, MPA symptoms do not seem to be causing a significant disruptive impact on the focus of the general population of students.

In an attempt to relate symptoms with instruments, a brief comparison was made. Within this context, the moment after performance was considered to be less relevant because at that point in time, existing symptoms are less influential, since they will no longer cause worry or disrupt performance. The distinction between specific instruments and specific symptoms was found to be statistically significant. Results seemed to indicate that the type of anxiety related symptoms that instrumentalists tended to experience are somewhat influenced by the specificities of the instrument they play, but do not entirely define them. The data showed that before and during performance, flutists and singers tended to experience the symptoms of dry mouth, wobbly legs and cold hands more than guitarists or cellists. The percentage of singers that reported experiencing cold hands is probably higher than anticipated, but it is worth realizing that it is one of the most common anxiety related symptoms, not at all exclusive of MPA. Also, noticing the symptoms does not necessarily mean that the performance was affected by them. Therefore, results were

unclear as this sort of questionnaire was not devised for ascertaining a definite answer in this regard.

Regarding music students' cognitions about anxiety, it was clear that their predominant concerns relate to beliefs about performance standards, as those were the only ones that appeared "Frequently". Within this group of affirmations, the cognitions that were reported to arise more frequently are indicative of the inherent pressure associated with the act of performing. As for the remaining groups of cognitions, results showed that, overall, they tend to appear only "Rarely". The main distinction between the conservatory-level and college-level student profiles is that the latter seemed to be more wary in regards to their "beliefs about others". As previously stated, this group of cognitions was the one that presented the most noticeable distinction between age subgroups, possibly meaning that, as the endeavor to become performers reaches a certain point, students become more aware of other peoples' judgment and maybe worry more about their reputation as musicians.

Most students stated performing in a group to be easier than in a solo setting. This was expectable, since being alone on stage is usually perceived as added pressure and more anxiety inducing due to being the center of attention. Also, it is consistent with the results of previous studies that have reported higher MPA levels for solo performances when compared to ensemble performances (Cox & Kenardy, 1993; Ryan & Andrews, 2009).

Results seemed to indicate that the main belief among students was that with "age and experience" MPA will naturally decrease. While this can be true for some people, it is far more common to have to work at it in order to improve. College-level students seemed more aware of this as nearly 30% reported believing they will require "Specific Exercises" to improve coping with performance anxiety, opposed to only 6% of conservatory-level students. A decrease in the belief that students only needed to "Practice More" was also verified for older age subgroups. Lastly, the fact that only a few students reported believing that "Nothing can be done" to improve their performance anxiety can be considered as positive.

Between 25% and 30% of students reported "Never" receiving anxiety coping advices from their teachers. This is not necessarily negative, as teachers must adapt their feedback and advices to each student and be mindful about how they are influencing them. For those who received said advices, they were mainly regarded as helpful.

In general, students tended to practice more when a concert is near, with over 90% of conservatory-level and almost 80% of college-level students admitting to doing so. That indicates that the proximity of performance acts as added pressure, not unlike any other deadline and therefore not surprising. What should be questioned is the motivation behind the extra hours of practice. Are students practicing more just because they want to make an extra effort or because they feel unprepared? Do they feel unprepared due to inadequate

preparation or lack of self-confidence? In any case, the benefits of such an approach are questionable, as most likely more practice near a performance will result in more tiredness and accumulated tension. Students also stated practicing differently when a concert is near, with over 50% for conservatory-level students and almost 70% for college-level students answering “Yes” to this question. An increase across age subgroups was also verified, which may indicate that, as students get older (and gain more experience and maturity), they start becoming more aware of how to adjust their practice accordingly. Still, as practice routines should naturally vary according to short, medium and long term goals, even higher percentages would have been expected for this question.

Students reported that the inclusion of certain practice habits with one’s instrument helps reduce performance anxiety. Results were similarly distributed among “Technique”, “Practicing Slowly”, “Playing Music” and “Practicing More”. It is entirely possible that all of the mentioned approaches result in increased confidence and self-efficacy and therefore decrease anxiety. Interestingly, college-level students are less adept of engaging in extra practice as a means of reducing anxiety, maybe due to already being aware that quality is more important than quantity, and that over-training may lead to exhaustion and is therefore counterproductive.

In regard to the physical preparation habits students engage in, in an attempt to reduce MPA, “Breathing” and “Relaxation” were, unsurprisingly, by far the most common. Those two items are a part of most therapies and approaches mentioned in Chapter 2 and seem to be fundamental in reducing stress and ameliorating anxiety. College-level students, presumably more aware of their own bodies and needs, also incorporate “Stretching” and “Working out” in their routines.

As for the mental preparation habits perceived as anxiety reducing, both conservatory and college music students (over 60%) indicated that “positive thinking” was the most usual choice. Also consistent in both groups, the second most common habit was thinking that “if it doesn’t go well, it’s ok”, which reduces perceived pressure by relativizing the importance of the performance. To “always be thinking on what one will play” can be interpreted as focused mental preparation or as a sign of insecurity and rumination, therefore it is not clear if this is a positive or a negative approach for the students who reported doing so.

Regarding the factors which were considered to originate anxiety, “sound quality” was reported as the highest concern for college-level music students. Although this might simply reflect a concern for the quality of the sound that is produced, it might also indicate that there is some degree of exaggerated worry about factors outside a performer’s control, such as how will the resulting sound reach the audience in any given concert hall. A certain amount of anxiety regarding what is within our control is natural and associated the will to do

well, but anxiety for that which is outside our control might already be a symptom of negative thinking and/or neuroticism. Further questions would be required to enable making that distinction among this group of students. The concern about “number of people in the audience” was considerably higher for females than for males, which is consistent with the also higher values for “beliefs about others” and “beliefs about disapproval” cognitions in question 4. Seemingly, female music students tended to worry more about what other people think of them than males.

In relation to deliberately assessing and improving the level of confidence they have on their own abilities during practice, most students appeared to be utilizing this strategy, with results showing around 70% claiming to do so “sometimes” or more often. There was a clear trend that the students who stated seeking to assess and improve their level of confidence more often were the ones that reported higher levels of confidence before, during and after performance, with the only exception being for the students that replied “Never”. A possible explanation for this is that only 6 students chose this answer and with such a low sample the mean for confidence might have been skewed. Another reason could be that that particular group of students might have an above-average confidence without deliberately working on it. In fact, naturally confident people do not require deliberate thought or action in order to maintain or increase said confidence. Similarly, it might be the case that the students who incorporate confidence building habits in their daily routines are the ones who feel the need to improve it. Regardless of the motivations and how confidence awareness is incorporated into practice, results seem to indicate that it is beneficial for reducing anxiety, which should improve performance.

Students appear to have had some experiences with flow, as over 80% claimed feeling in complete control (including a total absence of anxiety) while performing, ranging from “Rarely” to “Frequently”. Although the concept of “flow” is not directly mentioned in the question, results are consistent with other reports of its experience, including the fact that 0% of the students answered “Always” to this question. In fact, it is often characterized in literature (and also mentioned in Chapter 6 of this dissertation) as a phenomenon that is not possible to be permanently maintained, even within a single piece of music. This elusiveness also explains why it is possible to experience moments of total absence of anxiety during a performance, while still self-reporting an overall level of anxiety above the minimum. There seemed to be some correlation between reported levels of confidence and anxiety and the reported frequency of flow experiences. It is plausible that higher confidence levels (and consequently lower anxiety levels) allow for an increased frequency of experiences of control during performance, and that engaging in flow experiences can increase confidence levels for following performances, creating a positive loop.

In regards to how often the students structured their practice into small achievable goals, it seemed that the majority was engaging in deliberate practice on a regular basis. This seems to be an important habit to nurture as the results showed that the students that replied “Never”, displayed lower confidence levels. Inversely, the students that replied “Always”, displayed higher confidence levels. Although a relation of influence between the structured practice and confidence levels is expectable and inferred by the presented data, several other variables can have affected the students’ reported levels of confidence which may justify some inconsistencies in the results.

Less than 10% of the students believed performance anxiety is not a natural reaction and only around 5% believed that it is exclusive to musicians, meaning that the vast majority of the students is correctly informed. It is important to establish that it is in fact natural and that every type of performer experiences it in one level or another.

Regarding to whether teachers contribute to increasing their students’ confidence levels through feedback, results were very positive, indicating that this was probably not a source for eventual MPA problems. Since teachers can have a high impact on a student’s self-confidence, they could inadvertently originate anxiety issues, which doesn’t seem to be the case. Still, students who reported “Never” and “Rarely” receiving encouraging feedback from their teachers tended to have lower confidence levels upon performance, which can imply some degree of influence. For the students who reported “Sometimes”, “Frequently” and “Always” receiving encouraging feedback, the confidence levels were on or above average. These responses do not take into account the effectiveness of the feedback, but only its frequency, and therefore is not surprising that the results were not linear.

Considering that nearly 60% of students did not feel that the schools they attended have prepared them adequately to deal with musical performance anxiety, and taking into account that over 60% of students claimed to know someone that has quit performing precisely due to these issues, it is reasonable to state that this crucial element of their training is being somewhat overlooked. Overall, there was an overwhelming consensus among students that designated courses to address MPA issues should be included in music schools curricula, with over 50% considering it to be fundamental. This should clearly indicate the students’ perspectives on this subject and the fact that their needs are not being met. Furthermore, over 90% of students were also largely unfamiliar with schools and universities that provide specific training in this regard, and although students may simply be misinformed, results seem to suggest that there are still many schools where courses that allow for better understanding and coping with MPA are not yet included as standard practice.

As a subgroup, guitarists seem to have a few particularities that set them apart. They reported slightly higher values for confidence than the remaining instrumentalists before the

performance but slightly lower after the performance. A possible explanation would be a tendency for overconfidence but the data was insufficient to make that claim. Regarding the symptomatology it is possible to state that guitar students, from conservatory to college level, tended to experience MPA symptoms like sweating, cold hands, negativity, trembling, difficulty thinking, memory lapses, tension and palpitations before and during performance; while after performance some symptoms persisted, like sweating, difficulty thinking and negativity, most students reported no longer experiencing any symptoms. All of these are very common anxiety responses and do not seem to have any specific relation to guitarists. In regards to the cognition profiles, affirmations such as “other people know I am nervous when I am performing” (beliefs about others) and “when performing I must always sound musical and interesting to other people” (beliefs about performance standards) were more frequent for guitarists than other instrumentalists; and inversely, “people tend to be highly critical of others when performing” (beliefs about others), “it is terrible when people don’t like my performance” and “to embarrass myself in front of other people during a performance would be unbearable, a catastrophe” (beliefs about disapproval) were less frequent for guitarists. These were consistent for both conservatory-level and college-level students and, although not very expressive, may be an indicator of what a guitarist’s usual mindset is in regards to anxiety. Nearly all direct comparisons of answers between guitarists and non-guitarists were found to be statistically insignificant, meaning that guitarists as a subgroup are not sufficiently different from the remaining instrumentalists. Overall, this was found to be true for confidence, anxiety, type of symptoms, number of symptoms and cognitions. However, when comparing specific instruments (including guitar) and specific symptoms, the differences between them were statistically significant. This indicates that any individual subgroup of instrumentalists will maintain certain characteristics associated with the nature of the instrument they play, but when comparing a single subgroup with the remaining instrumentalists, they are likely to have more similarities than differences.

The data presented in this chapter merely pertains to the validated replies of music students in Portugal and it is not possible to claim that identical results will be obtained in other countries, or that with a higher sample size results would remain unchanged.

The study presented in this chapter allowed for a general description of the population of music students in Portugal regarding MPA issues, as well as characterizing classical guitarists as a sub-group. The next chapter will consist in a content analysis of professional guitarists’ interviews concerning their personal and professional experiences with performance anxiety.

Chapter 6

Interviews

In order to provide insight on valid strategies that have effectively worked for successful musicians, this chapter specifically addresses practical knowledge predominantly obtained through direct experiences of professional classical guitarists, both as performers and as teachers. Compiling the resulting information regarding several subjects in all interviews facilitated the identification of certain principles, ways of thinking and attitudes towards performance anxiety that shed light on effective coping approaches. Furthermore, common traits and concerns also bring insight into the requirements for becoming a successful classical guitarist, further characterizing this subgroup of instrumentalists.

6.1 – Context

As a starting point, an interview guideline was created pertaining to several aspects of guitarists' careers, including early performing experiences, perceptions regarding MPA, coping strategies, major concerns as guitarists, pedagogical approaches, among others. In order to ensure spontaneous responses and avoid excessive analysis, the chosen format for the interviews was more of an open, free flowing conversation and less of a strict, direct question and answer.

Between September 2016 and August 2017, several internationally acclaimed guitarists were approached for an online interview regarding the issues of music performance anxiety; during this period, twelve replied positively to the approach. In those interviews, they discussed their personal experiences throughout their careers and shared personal coping strategies and tools. The contents were recorded in order to be later transcribed. The complete transcriptions of all interviews are available in Annex II, minimally edited to facilitate reading without misrepresenting the original material. In order to have an accurate sense of the depth of knowledge that these guitarists kindly shared, a reading of the entirety of the interviews is advised. Upon completion of the transcriptions, the contents of all interviews were compared and divided into different sections. Points in common were

identified and favored in order to portray a common profile of a professional classical guitarist. The resulting compilation is presented in the next section.

6.2 – Content Overview

6.2.1 – Early Age

All of the guitarists that were interviewed started to play and study music at a young age, between 5 and 10 years old, although some started with other instruments and switched to the guitar later on. The most common testimonies reflect that those early memories are very pleasant and playful, not at all concerned about any sort of anxiety related problems associated with music playing. Accounts of being encouraged to play for visiting family members and friends were frequent, with those experiences being assumed as having generated positive associations with playing for other people at an early age, being interpreted as something natural rather than an extraordinary event. Some recalled very constructive and influential experiences with their first guitar teacher and were highly appreciative for always receiving a reinforcement of positive aspects of music, an experience which they characterized as something wonderful, light, fun and playful, excluding any sort of negativity from the lessons. These early confidence-building approaches to music were viewed as an important stage for later development of confidence and reduction of anxiety while performing.

For most guitarists, the first public performances occurred shortly after they started learning how to play their instrument, usually in a music school setting. Playing in auditions, usually one or two solo or ensemble pieces, and having the opportunity to hear other students playing as well is viewed as a generally positive experience. At this stage, little or no anxiety was reported, and despite somehow “sensing” that the environment was a somewhat more serious, the memories shared indicate that those moments were mostly pleasurable and fun.

6.2.2 – First MPA Experiences

For those who experienced and struggled with music performance anxiety, it usually first manifested itself during adolescence. As teenagers, many of the interviewed guitarists started feeling self-conscious about performing, which in some cases stemmed from personal aspects of life that translated to the stage. Also, several mentioned that while growing up and beginning to understand music and performing as less of a game but

something more “serious”, they felt affected by added pressure and responsibility. This also included a more demanding, in-depth approach to studying music, including many more details and different aspects to practice and control. For some, it coincided with the first years of college, and being surrounded by teachers and colleagues that had a deeper comprehension of music was perceived as an intimidating factor.

In this phase, mistakes became more likely to happen due to performance anxiety and, consequently, the worrying about mistakes was heightened, as was excessive self-criticism. However negative or frightening, those experiences did not deter any guitarist from continuing to practice, perform and enjoy music. Overall, difficulties are perceived as an important stage for gaining awareness, maturity and growth.

6.2.3 – Symptoms

The most common symptoms associated with performance anxiety that were mentioned include shaking hands, doubting oneself and excessive tension, which is not surprising considering that these are very usual in general performance anxiety. They were frequently reported to appear just before going on stage and during the first 10 or so minutes of performance. After that point, any symptoms would usually subside and not hinder performance. Mild symptoms, such as general worry or apprehension, elevated heart rate and above average tension was, in some cases, said to appear as soon as waking up in the morning of the concert. Other symptoms, namely after the performance was over, consisted mainly of negative self-evaluation, whether it being for the quality of the performance itself or for recognizing that anxiety was too much to handle.

Not all guitarists reported these symptoms as something that would prevent them from playing at the usual level. In fact, the guitarists that reported having little or no problems with performance anxiety were precisely the ones that mentioned being able to “ignore” the symptoms relatively easily and/or reframing mild nervousness as excitement.

It was also reported that the complete absence of anxiety related symptoms would be interpreted as emptiness or emotionlessness, being therefore undesirable for performance. The presence of the right amount of adrenaline/excitement, without losing control, is perceived as positive and beneficial while on stage.

6.2.4 – Negative Experiences on Stage

Most guitarists shared their worst experiences in regards to performance anxiety and, although some of the accounts were of significant intensity, none were completely overwhelming or catastrophic. MPA did, however, prevent them from playing normally, originating more mistakes, like missing strings with the right hand or missing frets with the

left hand. Mental struggles were more intense, originating lack of focus and concentration, which increased the probability for memory lapses and technical mistakes to happen. Those negative experiences were commonly used as motivation, as the most usual reaction of the interviewed guitarists was to work harder in order to prevent them from happening again. The guitarists that stated not being significantly affected by performance anxiety did not experience any sort of considerably negative or traumatic performances neither in their formation as music students nor in their professional careers.

There is always the possibility of having negative performance experiences due to factors other than anxiety. In such cases, situations as insufficient preparation time before a concert, having to play through pain, sickness or injury, performing while tired and/or jet-lagged and juggling several different repertoires were mentioned as stressful factors that affect performance negatively without necessarily being related to anxiety issues. These situations can, in fact, increase the pressure of going on stage and maybe even contribute to added anxiety, despite not originating from it.

It is also worth pointing out that having a bad experience while performing may simply mean that there was an internal struggle and/or lack of enjoyment while playing, not necessarily that the performance itself was severely affected.

6.2.5 – Coping

A strong mindset was seemingly an essential aspect for coping with MPA for these guitarists. Some shared that, despite being more or less nervous, nothing would change their resolve, the intention of proving themselves and becoming professional guitarists. Other informants mentioned accepting performance-related anxiety as a part of the job, while yet others referred to the feeling that they somehow “belonged” on stage, that being natural for them.

While performing, musicians should not presume to be able to play at the best of their abilities every single time. Also, the perfect conditions for playing, including mood, energy, hall acoustics and other performance related factors, are very rarely met and should not even be expected. Pushing aside any preconceived notions of “perfection” while performing and simply doing one’s best was regarded as probably the most effective and realistic approach. Being a professional musician does not equate to flawlessness, it should simply be viewed as honest and heartfelt work. When performers truly present their best effort, no negativity should be associated with eventual mistakes. When performances that were perceived as negative by the informants occurred, they were used as learning experiences and as a source of motivation to work harder, instead of enabling self-defeating cognitions.

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In regards to addressing music performance anxiety at a mental level, it seems that simply accepting it as a natural part of the profession, instead of trying to fight it and wishing it would not exist, was the most beneficial way of addressing it. As such, the symptoms of MPA proved to become less and less influential through time, meaning that, despite always being present, those symptoms progressively become less able to affect performance. This attitude of acceptance is also significant in those instances when a musician has to play in less than optimal conditions, whether due to physical issues like pain, jetlag and sickness, or external problems like logistics and not enough time to prepare for short notice concerts.

Having an overall positive attitude seemed to be a common characteristic among the interviewed guitarists. This attitude can include positive aspects of personality traits like extraversion and perfectionism. Positivity was also applied to the way the performers perceived the audience, as friendly and supportive instead of hostile and judgmental. This ensured less dwelling on mistakes and temporary failures, as well as a more positive self-assessment throughout their formative years.

For all guitarists that expressed having been affected by music performance anxiety in their careers, the process of improving their coping with it was gradual. It required much thought and continuous effort in order to reach a point where they regularly felt pretty much in control of performance situations. This was achieved through exhaustive preparation with attention to detail, integrating breathing and relaxation in their daily practice sessions, and through the acceptance of eventual anxiety symptoms as natural but not disruptive. Following this approach, the mental aspects of performance anxiety also subsided, as self-efficacy and confidence became higher. Frequent performance opportunities were also an important factor, which allowed for experimenting in order to attain more effective coping strategies. Despite the value of theoretical approaches, it was generally accepted that coping only improves significantly if musicians do apply it into practice and performance, in order to discover what actually works for them individually.

From their experience, both personal and with students, all interviewed guitarists agreed that the ability to cope with MPA is, like most human characteristics, partly innate and partly worked upon. This means that, for the most part, there are always ways to improve coping, either through learning about it, doing relaxation exercises or preparing and practicing in a more strategic way. Some musicians will have a natural ability or aptitude for dealing with the pressure of being on stage and will be less affected by anxiety related issues. In those cases little or no intervention is required.

Deep breathing was highlighted as extremely important by several guitarists. It was reported as reducing heart rate and muscle tension, while improving focus. Learning to relax while playing difficult passages minimizes the possibility that tension will interfere with

playing. Alexander Technique was also found to be helpful in releasing excessive tension by the guitarists that utilized it.

Most guitarists stated never having felt the need to use external substances to aid with coping, such as beta-blockers. However, it was often mentioned that their usage is relatively common, even among friends and colleagues. Beta-blockers were generally not viewed as a solution but as sort of crutch, an easily available device to rapidly alleviate the physical symptoms associated with anxiety. Several manifested concerns that this approach might cause addiction.

Other aspects of life, like sleeping and eating well, getting enough rest, socializing with friends and family, are perceived as important factors that help to balance anxiety in general and to reduce its intensity during the moment of performance.

6.2.6 – Guitarists' Concerns

Several particularities were identified while discussing what guitarists tend to worry about when anxious about performing. The instrument's characteristics and the way it is played have a considerable role in the nature of the preoccupations that occur.

The minutia of playing guitar was mentioned as being a prominent concern. Guitarists generally felt that the instrument is particularly sensitive to minute changes and that the technique involved is like a millimeters' game, involving extremely small movements and a precise touch. The accuracy required was perceived as being more demanding than in most other instruments. In addition, the coordination between the two hands required to produce each note is also viewed as difficult.

The limited acoustics of the instrument equally mentioned. Since the guitar produces less sound than the majority of other instruments, it also works in a narrow dynamic range. The difficulty of controlling dynamics in such a small range is equally perceived as a big hurdle. This increases the sensitivity to the room guitarists play in and consequently the concern that the output might be considerably different than what was practiced and planned.

Difficulties concerning tuning and intonation were considered as important factors. A good string condition is extremely important for the best sound possible, but replacing strings too close to the performance date and the guitar will rarely remain in tune. In addition, within a recital program there can be pieces that require different tunings, which can further aggravate tuning problems and cause concern. Guitars are also particularly sensitive to differences in temperature and walking from the green room to the stage can be enough to destabilize intonation.

The complexity of the fingerboard layout was also a concern. As it is possible to play the same notes in several positions, this tends to affect pattern memorization and confidence while playing, because even when the notes are right, if the fingering is wrong it is often not possible to continue playing.

The use of nails on the right hand is one of the most specific characteristics known to guitarists. It was frequently mentioned as a point of concern, as it is responsible for sound production. Nails influence tone, volume, articulation and sometimes the slightest difference can affect the fluidity of playing. Probably due to heightened sensitivity during performance, the contact between nail and string will often sound and feel different while on stage. Suggestions to deal with this problem included not playing too much after taking care of the nails in the day of the concert, as they will become rougher the more they are used, and also not expecting them to feel and sound exactly the same as during practice, accepting that slight differences will be perceived.

The asymmetrical position of the body can also be a cause of concern, since it is difficult to maintain a general relaxed posture when the arm and leg in one side are usually skewed and off-centered in regards to the other side.

Overall, the guitar was viewed by guitarists as a difficult instrument to play and master. There is a sense that the nature of the instrument often works against musical intentions and expression. In playing the guitar, expressive components such as legato, phrasing and dynamic control are extremely hard to achieve, and guitarists feel that in order to be of service to the music they must step out of the “natural habitat” of their own instrument.

6.2.7 – Practice Strategies

It was generally accepted that utilizing certain practice strategies and principles will be helpful in several ways, such as improving the quality of the preparation, gaining confidence and reducing anxiety symptoms.

Marking trouble spots on the score of every piece was also referred to as a means of not only identifying the passages that need more work but also highlighting the moments where more concentration is required when performing. Planning for everything, including structural, musical and technical aspects, was mentioned as a habit that reduces self-doubt while performing.

Being logical, careful and precise with the way fingerings are chosen in every piece was mentioned as an important strategy for guitarists to reduce doubt, memory issues and consequently, anxiety.

Any mistakes while practicing should be acknowledged and worked upon, as this reduces the likelihood of them happening during live performance. In practice sessions, it is also necessary to employ adequate focus and awareness in identifying and classifying mistakes in order to properly solve them.

Musicians should have the habit of recording and constructively criticizing themselves. Playing for a recorder is not the same as playing alone, and getting used to that added pressure can be helpful towards coping. Furthermore, listening to the recording provides an opportunity to hear from the audience's perspective and to verify if the end result is as intended.

A good control of tempo is fundamental, knowing in advance that, with the increase of adrenaline, musicians tend to play faster during live performances. This problem can be avoided with the help of including breathing and relaxation in practice and with the habit of never playing too close of one's physical limitations.

Experimenting with adverse conditions was viewed as a positive preparation habit, like trying to play without warming up, sleepy or tired, with cold hands, anything that might replicate at home potential problems on stage. This may be of help to expose potential weak points in a piece while simultaneously helping the guitarist to adjust and play according to the capabilities of the moment.

Visualizing the moment of performance, including what it will feel like, was mentioned as a useful tool to get used to potential feelings of anxiety that might occur.

Obviously, no amount of strategies will be a substitute for preparation. They should be regarded as an addition to preparation skills and making sure the program is technically and musically mastered should always be the primary focus and the foundation to work upon. Detailed work and preparation is in fact referred to as the first and foremost strategy to reduce anxiety.

6.2.8 – Different Moments of Preparation

In regular practice routine, meaning that a concert is far away, the usual approach consists on taking the necessary time to work out all the technical and musical details of each piece. Normally, the piece is divided into several small blocks of a few measures, which are perfected individually, then put together. Most guitarists tended to focus on the musical aspects and tend not to worry in advance about eventual performance anxiety related issues. Working from a musical ideal and towards a musical objective contributes to centering practice on what is most important, while preventing musicians from excess worry and too much focus on themselves. In this stage of practice, most guitarists prefer to maintain focused control of playing, avoiding playing automatically through muscle memory,

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in order to ensure a comprehensive preparation that relies on both mental and physical components. Some time is also dedicated to working on technical exercises, sight-reading music, and other things that are not directly related to preparing repertoire.

When a concert is near, most guitarists stated choosing to play the entire program several times not worrying too much about the details, as that type of work is already done at that time. This approach mimics concert conditions, where performers are expected to play continuously without interruptions, except for pauses between pieces or movements. It also creates the habit of going forward even when mistakes happen. In fact, this stage of preparation should not be considered as practice anymore, but as concert rehearsals. The most popular option at that point is to forgo a regular practice schedule which includes technique and reading new pieces, in favor of playing the entire recital program several times a day.

On the day of the concert, most guitarists referred preferring to preserve their energy and not play too much. The whole program can be played but the focus should preferably be on the music. When focusing on other things the emphasis should be on relaxation and not on potential worries. Similarly, during the moments before a concert (sound check and warm-up), the most common approach was also to not play excessively. Deep breathing was said to be important in promoting concentration and relaxation.

The separation between practice and performance, in regards to the general attitude and objectives, was also highlighted. It was often referred that during preparation there should be a great deal of rationality and control in order to practice and learn adequately. While performing, the opposite should occur, as musicians ought to utilize their artistic, intuitive side to express music meaningfully. This would be akin to primarily using the left hemisphere of the brain for practicing and primarily using the right hemisphere of the brain for performing. This switch is not easy, as the rational side struggles to retain control, originating self-doubts and intrusive thoughts. So, it is necessary to practice bearing in mind that, at some point in time, performers need to let go of control, to lose themselves in music and to accept whatever comes out. Overconcentration on the technical aspects of playing can also originate mistakes and is considered to be harmful to the fluidity of performance.

Musicians should expect that the mind will start questioning everything during a performance. The way to address self-doubts and intrusive thoughts consists in guaranteeing that one is thoroughly and sufficiently prepared to endure any questioning that the mind might create and not let it undermine the work that has been done. Positive and determined self-affirmations are also said to help in overcoming excessive self-doubting, both before and during performance.

6.2.9 – Self-Efficacy

Although most guitarists were not familiar with the term “self-efficacy”, a basic understanding of the concept was relatively easy to grasp. Almost all revealed a high sense of self-efficacy regarding their performance capabilities and especially their preparation, which was what allowed them to perform confidently. As such, despite not being familiar with the underlying theoretical aspects, self-efficacy was regarded as an important factor in the ability to cope with performance anxiety, both during preparation and performance. Although not directly stated, it was implied through the interviewee’s answers that their high self-efficacy regarding their ability to perform stemmed greatly from possessing a high sense of self-efficacy concerning the ability to practice and prepare thoroughly.

Nearly all interviewed guitarists have developed a high sense of self-efficacy related to several aspects of practicing, playing and performing. This seems to have occurred naturally, as the informants developed a thorough approach to music, apparently without any conscious action towards that goal.

6.2.10 – Performing Often

Naturally, all guitarists agreed that performing often is fundamental in reducing the effects of performance anxiety. Some even admitted that if they take a break from concerts, the first performance after that break will always carry added nervousness. Concerts are viewed as personal tests and can be used to determine what effectively works on a technical level, as sometimes what works at home doesn’t work on stage. This learning experience is regarded as fundamental for a professional musician. Therefore, young guitarists should try to perform as often as they can and make the best of every opportunity, including playing in small auditions for friends, family, colleagues and teachers before bigger events. In case a “bad” performance occurs, it should not be over-valued; musicians should learn from eventual mistakes, keep practicing and move on, keeping in mind that the next performance will probably be better.

Also, not only performing often but repeating the same program usually provides an increase in confidence, as the repertoire grows more and more familiar. On the other side, every time a new piece is debuted, there are usually added feelings of anxiety. This means that playing an entirely new repertoire in a recital is, in most cases, the most dangerous option in regards to performance anxiety.

As a caveat, it was generally implied that performing often by itself won’t be useful if the rest of the preparation work has not been done properly. This notion is particularly important for students and should be emphasized by their teachers. In addition, although some degree of desensitization to MPA will occur with consecutive performances, there

should be a rational process and a conscious effort to improve from one recital to the next, in order to effectively learn from each performing experience.

6.2.11 – Competitions

Generally, competition experiences were viewed as quite different from playing recitals. Both pressure and anxiety are perceived as much more intense due to the very nature of competing and to the fact that competitors know that they are being judged and compared. Although portrayed as a more “artificial” environment than a regular performance situation, the perceived benefits of participating in competitions revolved mostly around facing one’s fears and proving oneself. Not only participating but also waiting for the results was a factor that was considered as anxiety inducing. Opinions were divergent, some saying that, in the long term, competing was helpful in dealing with performance anxiety more effectively, while others stated that those experiences were actually more stress inducing and not helpful at all. Yet, others referred to competition experiences as being neither helpful nor harmful towards coping.

The amount of existing competitions was also viewed as worrying. From a young age, music students are being prompted to participating in the hopes of becoming the next “wonder kid”. This approach may very well be detrimental in regards to several aspects of a young musician’s life, including psychological health, even for the ones that eventually are awarded prizes. Musically, it can also be detrimental if a young musician chooses to repeat the same program over and over again, thinking that playing familiar pieces will increase the odds of winning. In the long term, this choice will inevitably stifle musical growth.

Ultimately, competitions are not suited for every musician. Not all have the correct personality and temperament to participate, and therefore competitions should not be regarded as mandatory experiences in a musician’s career. Participating can be a very positive experience for some, but it is viewed as something detrimental and even dangerous for mental and physical health for most people. It is up to the teachers to evaluate if their students are not only prepared for competitions but also suitable to participate, taking into account their personalities, and to advise them accordingly.

6.2.12 – Flow

All enquired guitarists had flow experiences while performing. Most said that it would happen relatively often and that it was an extremely positive experience. Flow was mostly reported as not being continuous throughout a recital, but more like a “weaving in and out” of the heightened state. Some guitarists mentioned that they were more likely to achieve the

flow state with familiar and/or comfortable pieces than with difficult ones. It was also mentioned that the more they performed, the more often they would be able to go into flow.

Flow was viewed by some as a goal to be pursued, in the sense that knowing it and experiencing it would reframe the negativity associated with performance for an anxious musician, providing hope that it may become a pleasant experience. However, since it is not controllable, it was also viewed as an unreliable way to reduce MPA symptoms. Additionally, flow was described as being potentially dangerous, given that, on one hand, it is not possible to predict the moments when it will occur, and on the other hand, exiting the state during a piece might disrupt concentration. Furthermore, becoming dependent on that sensation might even increase anxiety if, for some reason, the performer was unable to enter the flow state in some particular occasion.

6.2.13 – Repertoire and Recital Structure

Most interviewed guitarists agreed that the structure of a recital is an important factor in establishing the musician's confidence, and can be used as a tool. Since most reported anxiety related symptoms are largely experienced during the initial 5 or 10 minutes of the concert, the first piece was considered as the most delicate moment. In order to minimize anxiety, the most common advice was to start with a piece one feels comfortable with, which can mean a piece that is perceived as not challenging or very familiar. As such, guitarists should avoid choosing a fast piece begin their recitals with. Variety was also considered to be important; choosing pieces with different characteristics will help keep the balance, alternating between challenge and comfort. It was also mentioned that the final piece of the program should not be too demanding, as by the end of the recital the performer is usually tired, both physically and mentally. Ultimately, the structure is entirely personal, subjective, and should be designed in such a way that favors each individual's characteristics.

The guitarists that stated not really being affected by MPA were naturally less worried about the comfort associated with the recital program structure, choosing to focus more on musical criteria. These performers were less concerned by the starting piece, often even choosing a difficult one to begin the recital with.

6.2.14 – Addressing MPA With Students

All of the interviewed guitarists seemed to think that addressing MPA issues with students can be useful. However, it is important to see each student as an individual case and attend to his/her specific needs. In general, teachers should be more aware of the theoretical aspects of music performance anxiety, providing information, coping tools and strategies, selecting the adequate repertoire and encouraging performance when the student

is prepared. Some felt that anxiety related issues should only be discussed if the student is afflicted by those problems. Teachers must be aware that they can often project their own feelings regarding anxiety towards their students and, if not careful, influence them negatively. It is important to realize that extreme cases of anxiety will not be solved by instrumental teachers and external psychological help will most likely be required.

With the emergence of easy, fast and global access to media, there is the concern that young music students are often comparing themselves to prodigies and virtuosos, developing feelings of inadequacy and exacerbating anxiety in the process. Nowadays, professional recordings are also abundant and unrealistic expectations of perfection tend to arise. Perceiving this as added pressure is neither healthy nor productive. Students should be guided towards a realistic perception of those situations and be encouraged to focus on working hard and improving. Motivation should not be driven by comparisons or other external factors. The objective should be to attain artistic and emotional meaningfulness, to move the audience rather than try to impress it with virtuosity and flawlessness.

6.2.15 – The Role of Music Schools and Universities

Most guitarists reported that they did not receive much help concerning performance anxiety issues during their formative years. The coping strategies devised throughout the years were mostly individually developed. This means that, in those cases, this aspect of musical training was somewhat neglected; therefore, the way to overcome anxiety related problems consisted of devising and trying out coping strategies mostly by themselves. Also, some stated that there weren't any real opportunities to discuss these issues openly, almost as if the subject was taboo.

Although nowadays the context might be a little different for the new generations of musicians, all guitarists agreed that music schools and universities should be doing more to prepare future musicians for the reality of performance, especially in higher degrees of education. There were several reports of music degrees that do not have a course designed to address MPA. Lectures on the subject were also few or non-existent. Reports about the pressure associated with exams in some European universities are examples of how sometimes music students are not adequately supported when experiencing anxiety issues. Those who require little or no help with coping will in most cases thrive, while those who are struggling with MPA are often met with lack of understanding.

Suggestions include lectures and workshops that may be useful for addressing some of the problems, but these are still viewed as insufficient. Curricula should be revised in order to provide regular performance opportunities for the students. Knowing that experiences with MPA are subjective and often difficult to talk about, students might benefit

from including a specific class in the program where all issues would be clarified and addressed accordingly.

Since Master degrees in Music Education seem to be something that is fairly common globally, those programs would also benefit from a special attention to the psychology of music performance anxiety, in order to endow instrumental teachers with the necessary tools to reduce and prevent eventual anxiety related problems in their students as early as possible.

6.3 – Summary

All interviewed guitarists started studying music at a young age. Early contact with music and the development of certain habits might have been considerably influential in their success as musicians. The first guitar teacher was acknowledged as being very important and recognized as someone who can instill a positive relationship with music performance, reducing the likelihood of developing performance anxiety related issues later on. Even so, adolescence is a delicate phase, prone to general self-consciousness and self-doubt, feelings that can translate into the students' performance experiences. When those experiences with music performance anxiety occur, it is important to have the necessary resolve to overcome such difficulties, focusing more on the music and on the goals established rather than on an illusory sense of inadequacy. Meticulous preparation and an overall positive attitude are fundamental in developing robust confidence, as well as potentially increasing self-efficacy and reducing anxiety.

Despite some characteristics and symptoms that are common amongst all instrumentalists, guitarists tended to be concerned about specific particularities related to the guitar, like nails and intonation. It is not clear whether these concerns can be considered as an expression of preexisting MPA or if they take part in originating it. Since these issues are very personal, each individual should make that assessment, as both conjectures may be true. Surprisingly, most coping strategies and suggestions shared were not guitar-specific, consisting mostly in the same type of relaxation, breathing and visualization exercises, applicable to any instrumentalist. This seemingly indicates that it is more important to address broad music performance anxiety issues than minor instrumental specificities.

Adequate practice strategies are fundamental to ensure the minimization of MPA. A thorough analysis and approach to all perceived difficulties while learning and preparing each new piece of music were key factors in the process of developing self-efficacy and confidence the interviewed musicians bring to the stage. This includes being able to identify

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the necessities of each moment of preparation and putting the most effective strategy into practice, in order to reach high-standard and well defined goals.

Whether flow can be considered as useful towards ameliorating performance anxiety is unclear, as it can be a transcendental experience, albeit unreliable. Still, most of the interviewed guitarists reported achieving flow state fairly regularly, despite not requiring it in order to perform competently. Therefore, flow should not be considered as a necessity, but a possible positive outcome of performance that could provide hope to anxious students, as well as encouragement to explore and perform regularly.

The importance of performing regularly as referred in these interviews is consistent with the information presented in Chapters 2 and 3, where desensitizing experiences are thought to play a major role in the reduction of anxiety and the increase of self-efficacy. Regarding the choice of repertoire and recital structure as tools to address anxiety, the opinions seem to validate the contents presented in Chapter 4.2.

Pedagogically, it is important to address MPA with students in a personalized way. It is important to prepare them for the reality of a performing career but it is also important not to influence them negatively, in order to avoid the risk of aggravating their anxiety. This includes carefully pondering at each point in time, whether it would be beneficial for each student to participate in competitions or if it would be best to refrain from doing so. Overall, it is generally accepted that music schools and teachers can and should play a bigger role in helping students to address MPA. Ideas such as creating dedicated courses, providing more performance opportunities for students and instructing new instrumental teachers about performance anxiety can be implemented, to the greater benefit of students.

This chapter consisted in exploring personal and professional experiences and perspectives of internationally acclaimed classical guitarists regarding MPA. The next section will present the conclusions that were reached throughout the completion of this dissertation.

Conclusions

This dissertation provided a detailed characterization of music performance anxiety, including its mechanisms and manifestations, and possible solutions to ameliorate the problems it brings. A study was conducted, characterizing music students from Portugal in their experience and cognitions regarding anxiety, and identifying certain traits associated with guitarists. Lastly, internationally acclaimed classical guitarists were interviewed on their personal and professional experiences, providing an outlook on how to overcome the struggle with MPA.

Some limitations of the conducted research can be acknowledged, namely: (i) the utilized self-reported confidence and anxiety values are subjective measurements and have natural restrictions to what can be inferred with them; (ii) the sample for the college-level students was relatively small, skewing the results and rendering direct comparisons with the conservatory-level students somewhat unreliable; and (iii) due to their active performing schedules, it was not possible to interview additional professional guitarists.

Music performance anxiety is a considerably complex topic that has been increasingly studied, a trend that we can safely assume will continue. The information presented in Chapters 2 and 3 highlights this complexity and, at the same time, hopefully simplifies it enough to be of practical use to performers. Musicians have direct experience in dealing with MPA and tend to develop intuitive ways to cope, which can be sufficient in some cases. In other instances, further knowledge regarding the psychology behind the experienced anxiety can be helpful. While on severe cases of anxiety medical help is advised, on the remaining situations there is always room for improvement, whether it is through self-help or a teacher understanding the most reliable way to help a student. Improving coping may require an understanding of anxiety mechanisms, as well as assessing self-efficacy and perfectionism, identifying certain personality traits and cognitions, restructuring practice habits, choosing adequate repertoire and recital programs, breathing and relaxation exercises, mental training and visualization. Coping with MPA is not an easy task, but considering that it improves not only performance quality but also musical enjoyment, self-esteem, and even overall quality of life, it is definitely worthwhile.

Most symptoms involved are common and relatable to all performative activities, and bear parallels with social anxiety, which means that the anxiety musicians' face should not be considered as special or terrifying, but rather as a natural occurrence of human nature. However, musicians do feel more exposed due to the disruption of the fine motor skills; the awareness that this is to be expected should act as an incentive towards a thorough

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preparation. More importantly, the notion of performance anxiety as something negative should be reframed, as the existence of facilitating anxiety has been fairly well established. As such, no assumption that the experience will be necessarily debilitating should be made; quite the contrary, the focus of coping strategies should be on maintaining an adequate level of excitement that will, in fact, improve performance.

Several other points of information should endow musicians, as well as music teachers and students, with the ability to view and address the problem from a different perspective. It is safe to state that the experience of MPA is personal and can be both innate and “learned” through the environment. Correspondingly, the ability to cope with it can also be innate and worked upon, reinforcing the notion that there are many courses of action to address these issues. Understanding the differences between state and trait anxiety by itself provides insight into the context of each individual situation. By noticing if anxiety only occurs in stressful moments or if it is somewhat present in daily life, one can begin to identify the depth of the problem and the most adequate course of action. Being aware of the construct of self-efficacy and knowing that it has a great deal of influence in the experience of performance anxiety can be of tremendous value. Finally, knowing that tools and strategies may be employed to effectively ameliorate MPA issues should further ensure anxious musicians that there is no need to dwell in hopelessness.

A few aspects that could be indicative of specific traits regarding guitarists were found; yet, their characterization as a subgroup was inconclusive in the sense that no significant differences between guitarists and non-guitarists could be established. The reported confidence and anxiety levels, as well as the most common symptomatology, appeared to be predominantly the same across all instrumentalists. It is reasonable to state that, when directly comparing specific types of instrumentalists, their particular characteristics will likely be significant (as evidenced in Chapter 5.3.9); but as a sub-group, results showed that guitarists were not significantly different from non-guitarists. Ultimately, in what concerns MPA, guitarists seem to have more in common with other instrumentalists than elements that set them apart. It matters less if the nails, the nature of the instrument or the minutia of the technique are what triggers MPA, than the whole psychological background that uses those arguments as anxiety-inducing. Similarly, in regards to coping, it is fair to conclude that the principles that are found to be effective for other musicians (or even other types of performers) should also prove to be useful for classical guitarists.

All approaches considered to be effective in coping with MPA involve, first and foremost, the gain of awareness. Excess tension, harmful habits, behaviors, and thought processes that are usually automatic are elements that increase performance anxiety, and can be resolved only if an individual is aware of them. As such, awareness seems to be the common “root” that allows for the resolution of most problems. A proactive attitude,

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consisting in practicing while focused, noticing mistakes and correcting them, is usually adopted to improve on all musical aspects, and it should also be applied when addressing anxiety-related issues. Popular wisdom states that “the first step for solving any problem is recognizing it does exist”¹ and it seems that it also proves to be true in the context of improving coping with MPA.

This dissertation also provides insight into several pedagogical aspects that are associated with studying to become a classical musician. Music students and performers should include practices that benefit coping in their daily study routines. Music teachers should learn how to assess anxiety levels as well as their mechanisms and origins in order to properly advise their students. Several coping approaches can be included in instrumental classes from a young age, like being aware of breathing, focusing on relaxation, and developing visualization techniques, for example; those strategies may prevent the early onset of MPA and derived problems into adulthood. Teachers should be meticulous with the feedback they provide and assess how the criticism is being received. In addition to careful repertoire selection, frequent and gradual desensitizing experiences should also be provided, with proper preparation and accompaniment. In addition to fostering familiarity with all kinds of performing experiences and environments, it is also important to reframe anxiety as positive instead of negative, as excitement instead of nervousness.

As for addressing music performance anxiety in music schools, the available literature, the contents of Chapter 6 and a perusal through online curricula of college music degrees, make it possible to verify that a standardized inclusion of MPA coping courses does not yet exist. Considering the pervasiveness of music performance anxiety, it is of greater benefit to the classical music community that music schools and universities give more attention to this topic and seek to address it. The existence of seminars and performance training classes in some schools is incredibly valuable and a step in the right direction. An open debate involving university directors, professors and musicians would be welcome and should contribute to ascertain if the needs of the students are being met in regards to the preparation they obtain for the reality of a performing career. Music education and pedagogically oriented music degrees can and should play an important part in guaranteeing that the future generations of musicians are being adequately accompanied in regards to music performance anxiety issues.

The data and information presented in this dissertation, may promote several ideas and avenues for future research, as music performance anxiety is not yet fully understood and its effects and particularities should continue to be explored:

¹ Phrase coined by Hilary “Zig” Ziglar (1926-2012), an American author, salesman, and motivational speaker (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zig_Ziglar).

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- Several forms of interventions and workshops can be applied to music schools and universities, assessing the effectiveness of individual approaches regarding coping with MPA;
- Questionnaires should continue to be applied to different populations of music students, in order to assess and correlate anxiety levels, cognitions and personality traits;
- In-depth statistical analyses can be helpful in characterizing populations of music students and musicians;
- A study regarding biometric/physiological measurements during performance can be conducted and compared to the perceived levels of anxiety. This distinction will help assess the interaction between the physical and psychological reactions to MPA;
- Personal variables like gender, age and personality have a great impact on how MPA is perceived and how it affects an individual. By continuing to investigate how these individual traits correlate with performance anxiety it may be possible to develop specific coping strategies that suit each individual's needs;
- More studies on how MPA affects each instrumentalist should be pursued. This characterization will allow the identification of particular vulnerabilities and, consequently, which approaches are more likely to be effective in each case.

In conclusion, I hope this dissertation will have contributed to an enhanced understanding of music performance anxiety, providing an improved outlook on how the classical musician community should approach it, both pedagogically and professionally.

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Annex I

Questionnaires

3 – Depois de uma actuação:

3.1.1 – Indica, entre 1 (mínimo) e 10 (máximo), o grau de confiança que tens nas tuas capacidades.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mínimo			Moderado				Máximo		

3.1.2 – Indica, entre 1 (mínimo) e 10 (máximo), o grau de ansiedade que costumavas sentir.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mínimo			Moderado				Máximo		

3.2 – Quais destes sintomas costumavas ter? Podes escolher vários.

- Palpitações Suores Comichões Tensão muscular Mãos frias
 Boca/Garganta seca Tonturas Tremuras Dificuldade em respirar
 Náusea Frio na barriga Vontade de ir à casa de banho Fraqueza nas pernas
 Visão desfocada Dificuldade em pensar com clareza Falhas de memória
 Tendência para pensamentos negativos Outro: _____

4 – Pensamentos

Indica com que frequência surgem os seguintes pensamentos:

	Nunca	Raramente	Às vezes	Frequentemente	Sempre
4.1.1 – “As pessoas tendem a não gostar das minhas actuações.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1.2 – “Tenho tendência a fraquejar quando tenho uma actuação.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1.3 – “Tenho mais ansiedade que os outros quando vou actuar.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2.1 – “Nas actuações as pessoas estão sempre a julgar-nos e a olhar para as nossas fraquezas e imperfeições.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2.2 – “Nas actuações as pessoas tendem a ser muito críticas das outras.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2.3 – “As pessoas sabem que estou nervoso ou ansioso quando estou a actuar.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.1 – “É terrível quando as pessoas não gostam da minha actuação.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.2 – “Seria horrível que as pessoas pensassem que eu era fraco ou incompetente ao assistir à minha actuação.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.3 – “Passar uma vergonha em frente às pessoas durante uma actuação seria insuportável, uma catástrofe.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.1 – “É importante não demonstrar às pessoas qualquer sinal de fraqueza ou perda de controlo durante uma actuação.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.2 – “Devo demonstrar confiança e competência em todas as minhas actuações.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.3 – “Ao actuar devo sempre soar musical e interessante para as pessoas.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.1 – “Ansiedade ao actuar é um sinal de fraqueza e perda de controlo.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.2 – “Se as pessoas me virem a suar e a tremer ao actuar vão achar que há algo de errado comigo.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.3 – “Se estiver ansioso não vou ser capaz de actuar.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.6 – Como sentes que é mais fácil actuar?

- Sozinho em palco Em conjunto É igual

4.7 – Pensas ser possível reduzir a tua ansiedade relacionada com a actuação?

- Sim, basta praticar mais com o instrumento Sim, acontece naturalmente com a idade e experiência
 Sim, mas tenho de fazer exercícios específicos Não, não há nada que se possa fazer

5 – Lidar com a ansiedade:

5.1.1 – O teu professor dá-te indicações ou exercícios para lidar com a ansiedade com que frequência?

Nunca Raramente Às vezes Frequentemente Sempre

5.1.2 – Sinto que as indicações ou exercícios dados pelo meu professor para lidar com a ansiedade:

Não ajudam Ajudam pouco Ajudam razoavelmente Ajudam muito

5.2.1 – Praticas mais ao aproximar-se a data de uma actuação?

Sim Não

5.2.2 – Praticas de forma diferente ao aproximar-se a data de uma actuação?

Sim Não

5.2.3 – Ao praticar, o que te ajuda a reduzir a ansiedade? Podes escolher vários.

Técnica (exercícios e escalas) Música Estudar lentamente Praticar mais do que o habitual

Outra forma. Qual? _____

5.3 – Como te preparas fisicamente (sem instrumento)? Podes escolher vários.

Tento respirar melhor Tento descontraír o corpo Faço alongamentos Faço exercícios (ginástica)

Outra forma. Qual? _____

5.4 – Como te preparas mentalmente? Podes escolher vários.

Tento pensar que vai correr bem Evito pensar na actuação Tento distraír-me com outras coisas

Estou sempre a pensar no que vou tocar Tento pensar que se não correr bem, não faz mal

Outra forma. Qual? _____

NOME: _____ SEXO: _____
IDADE: _____ INSTRUMENTO: _____

QUESTIONÁRIO UNIVERSIDADE

1 – Antes de uma actuação:

1.1.1 – Indique, entre 1 (mínimo) e 10 (máximo), o grau de confiança que tem nas suas capacidades.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mínimo				Moderado		Máximo			

1.1.2 – Indique, entre 1 (mínimo) e 10 (máximo), o grau de ansiedade que costuma sentir.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mínimo				Moderado		Máximo			

1.2 – Quais destes sintomas costuma ter? Pode escolher vários.

- Palpitações Suores Comichões Tensão muscular Mãos frias
 Boca/Garganta seca Tonturas Tremuras Dificuldade em respirar
 Náusea Frio na barriga Vontade de ir à casa de banho Fraqueza nas pernas
 Visão desfocada Dificuldade em pensar com clareza Falhas de memória
 Tendência para pensamentos negativos Outro: _____

2 – Durante uma actuação:

2.1.1 – Indique, entre 1 (mínimo) e 10 (máximo), o grau de confiança que tem nas suas capacidades.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mínimo				Moderado		Máximo			

2.1.2 – Indique, entre 1 (mínimo) e 10 (máximo), o grau de ansiedade que costuma sentir.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mínimo				Moderado		Máximo			

2.2 – Quais destes sintomas costuma ter? Pode escolher vários.

- Palpitações Suores Comichões Tensão muscular Mãos frias
 Boca/Garganta seca Tonturas Tremuras Dificuldade em respirar
 Náusea Frio na barriga Vontade de ir à casa de banho Fraqueza nas pernas
 Visão desfocada Dificuldade em pensar com clareza Falhas de memória
 Tendência para pensamentos negativos Outro: _____

2.3 – Enquanto actua, com que frequência o seu foco de atenção, em vez de estar centrado na música, se desvia para este tipo de sensações relacionadas com a ansiedade?

- Nunca Raramente Às vezes Frequentemente Sempre

3 – Depois de uma actuação:

3.1.1 – Indique, entre 1 (mínimo) e 10 (máximo), o grau de confiança que tem nas suas capacidades.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mínimo			Moderado				Máximo		

3.1.2 – Indique, entre 1 (mínimo) e 10 (máximo), o grau de ansiedade que costuma sentir.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mínimo			Moderado				Máximo		

3.2 – Quais destes sintomas costuma ter? Pode escolher vários.

- Palpitações Suores Comichões Tensão muscular Mãos frias
 Boca/Garganta seca Tonturas Tremuras Dificuldade em respirar
 Náusea Frio na barriga Vontade de ir à casa de banho Fraqueza nas pernas
 Visão desfocada Dificuldade em pensar com clareza Falhas de memória
 Tendência para pensamentos negativos Outro: _____

4 – Pensamentos

Indique com que frequência surgem os seguintes pensamentos:

	Nunca	Raramente	Às vezes	Frequentemente	Sempre
4.1.1 – “As pessoas tendem a não gostar das minhas actuações.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1.2 – “Tenho tendência a fraquejar quando tenho uma actuação.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1.3 – “Tenho mais ansiedade que os outros quando vou actuar.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2.1 – “Nas actuações as pessoas estão sempre a julgar-nos e a olhar para as nossas fraquezas e imperfeições.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2.2 – “Nas actuações as pessoas tendem a ser muito críticas das outras.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2.3 – “As pessoas sabem que estou nervoso ou ansioso quando estou a actuar.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.1 – “É terrível quando as pessoas não gostam da minha actuação.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.2 – “Seria horrível que as pessoas pensassem que eu era fraco ou incompetente ao assistir à minha actuação.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.3 – “Passar uma vergonha em frente às pessoas durante uma actuação seria insuportável, uma catástrofe.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.1 – “É importante não demonstrar às pessoas qualquer sinal de fraqueza ou perda de controlo durante uma actuação.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.2 – “Devo demonstrar confiança e competência em todas as minhas actuações.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.3 – “Ao actuar devo sempre soar musical e interessante para as pessoas.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.1 – “Ansiedade ao actuar é um sinal de fraqueza e perda de controlo.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.2 – “Se as pessoas me virem a suar e a tremer ao actuar vão achar que há algo de errado comigo.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.3 – “Se estiver ansioso não vou ser capaz de actuar.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.6 – Como sente que é mais fácil actuar?

- A solo Em conjunto É igual

4.7 – Pensa ser possível reduzir a sua ansiedade relacionada com a actuação?

- Sim, basta praticar mais com o instrumento Sim, acontece naturalmente com a idade e experiência
 Sim, mas terei de fazer exercícios específicos Não, não há nada que se possa fazer

4.8 – Quais destes factores considera como principais geradores de ansiedade? Pode escolher vários.

- Número de pessoas no público Falhas de memória Notas erradas
 Erros técnicos Erros interpretativos Qualidade do som Dificuldade do repertório
 Outro. Qual? _____

5 – Lidar com a ansiedade:

5.1.1 – O seu professor dá-lhe indicações ou exercícios para lidar com a ansiedade com que frequência?

- Nunca Raramente Às vezes Frequentemente Sempre

5.1.2 – Sente que estas indicações:

- Não ajudam Ajudam pouco Ajudam razoavelmente Ajudam muito

5.2.1 – Pratica mais ao aproximar-se a data de uma actuação?

- Sim Não

5.2.2 – Pratica de forma diferente ao aproximar-se a data de uma actuação?

- Sim Não

5.2.3 – Ao praticar, o que o/a ajuda a reduzir a ansiedade? Pode escolher vários.

- Técnica (exercícios e escalas) Música Estudar lentamente Praticar mais do que o habitual
 Outra forma. Qual? _____

5.3 – Como se prepara fisicamente (sem instrumento)? Pode escolher vários.

- Tento respirar melhor Tento descontraír o corpo Faço alongamentos Faço exercícios (ginástica)
 Outra forma. Qual? _____

5.4 – Como se prepara mentalmente? Pode escolher vários.

- Tento pensar que vai correr bem Evito pensar na actuação Tento distraír-me com outras coisas
 Estou sempre a pensar no que vou tocar Tento pensar que caso não corra bem, não faz mal
 Outra forma. Qual? _____

6 – Outros:

6.1 – Enquanto estuda, com que frequência tem a preocupação consciente e deliberada de aferir e aumentar o nível de confiança que tem nas suas capacidades técnico-musicais?

- Nunca Raramente Às vezes Frequentemente Sempre

6.2 – Ao actuar, com que frequência se sentiu em perfeito controlo sobre todos os aspectos da música que estava a tocar, incluindo a ausência total de ansiedade?

- Nunca Raramente Às vezes Frequentemente Sempre

6.3 – Costuma organizar o estudo de uma forma estruturada, definindo metas a curto, médio e longo prazo e desconstruindo cada tarefa em pequenos objectivos facilmente concretizáveis?

- Nunca Raramente Às vezes Frequentemente Sempre

6.4.1 – Quando está prestes a entrar em palco considera a ansiedade como uma reacção normal?

- Sim Não

6.4.2 – Sente que esta ansiedade é exclusiva dos músicos?

- Sim Não

6.5 – Com que frequência sente que os comentários do seu professor (ou professora) contribui para o aumento do seu nível de confiança nas suas capacidades?

- Nunca Raramente Às vezes Frequentemente Sempre

6.6.1 – Considera que a formação obtida nas escolas onde estudou até ao momento o/a preparou devidamente para lidar com a ansiedade na performance?

- Sim Não

6.6.2 – Tem conhecimento de escolas que forneçam formação específica para lidar com a ansiedade na performance no seu programa curricular?

Sim Não Quais _____

6.6.3 – Considera importante que as escolas incluam no seu programa curricular formação específica para lidar com a ansiedade na performance?

Nada importante Pouco importante Moderadamente importante Muito importante Fundamental

6.6.4 – Tem conhecimento de algum colega que tenha abdicado de tocar em público devido a dificuldades em lidar com a ansiedade na performance?

Sim Não

6.7 - Deseja acrescentar algum comentário relacionado com esta temática?

3 – After a performance:

3.1.1 – Rate between 1 (lowest) and 10 (highest), the level of confidence you have in your abilities.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lowest			Moderate				Highest		

3.1.2 – Rate between 1 (lowest) and 10 (highest), the level of anxiety you usually feel.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lowest			Moderate				Highest		

3.2 – Which of the following symptoms do you usually feel? You can choose several.

- Palpitations Sweating Itching Muscle tension Cold hands
- Dry mouth/throat Dizziness Trembling Difficulty breathing
- Nausea Butterflies Need to go to the bathroom Wobbly legs
- Blurry vision Difficulty thinking clearly Memory lapses
- Tendency towards negative thinking Other: _____

4 – Thoughts

Indicate how often do the following thoughts occur:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
4.1.1 – “People tend to dislike my performances.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1.2 – “I tend to falter when I perform.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1.3 – “I am more anxious than other people when I perform.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2.1 – “People are always judging and noticing our weaknesses and imperfections during a performance.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2.2 – “People tend to be highly critical of others when performing.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2.3 – “Other people know I am nervous or anxious when I am performing.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.1 – “It is terrible when people don’t like my performance.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.2 – “It would be horrible if other people thought that I was weak or incompetent when watching me perform.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3.3 – “To embarrass myself in front of other people during a performance would be unbearable, a catastrophe.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.1 – “It is important not to show other people any signs of weakness or loss of control during a performance.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.2 – “I should show confidence and competence in all my performances.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4.3 – “When performing I must always sound musical and interesting to other people.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.1 – “Performance anxiety is a sign of weakness and loss of control.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.2 – “If other people see me sweating and trembling when performing they will think there is something wrong with me.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5.3 – “If I am anxious I will not be able to perform.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.6 – How do you feel it is easier to perform?

- Alone on the stage In a group Either

4.7 – Do you think it is possible to reduce your performance anxiety?

- Yes, I only need to practice more Yes, it happens naturally with age and experience
 Yes, but I have to do specific exercises No, nothing can be done

5 – Dealing with anxiety:

5.1.1 – How often does your teacher give you advices or exercises to cope with anxiety?

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

5.1.2 – I feel that the anxiety coping advices and exercises my teacher gives me:

Do not help Help a little Help considerably Help a lot

5.2.1 – Do you practice more when a performance date is near?

Yes No

5.2.2 – Do you practice any differently when a performance date is near?

Yes No

5.2.3 – When practicing, what helps you reduce anxiety? You can choose several.

Technique (scales and exercises) Music Practicing slowly Practicing more than usual

Another. Which one? _____

5.3 – How do you prepare physically (without the instrument). You can choose several.

Try to breathe correctly Try to relax the body I stretch I exercise (workout)

Another. Which one? _____

5.4 – How do you prepare mentally? You can choose several.

Try to think it will go well Avoid thinking about the performance Try to distract myself with other things

I'm always thinking on what I'll play Try to think that if it doesn't go well, it's ok

Another. Which one? _____

4.8 – Which of these factors do you consider as the most anxiety inducing? You can choose several.

- Number of people in the audience Memory lapses Wrong notes
 Technical mistakes Interpretation mistakes Sound quality Repertoire difficulty
 Another. Which one? _____

5 – Dealing with anxiety:

5.1.1 – How often does your teacher give you advices or exercises to cope with anxiety?

- Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

5.1.2 – I feel that the anxiety coping advices and exercises my teacher gives me:

- Do not help Help a little Help considerably Help a lot

5.2.1 – Do you practice more when a performance date is near?

- Yes No

5.2.2 – Do you practice any differently when a performance date is near?

- Yes No

5.2.3 – When practicing, what helps you reduce anxiety? You can choose several.

- Technique (scales and exercises) Music Practicing slowly Practicing more than usual
 Another. Which one? _____

5.3 – How do you prepare physically (without the instrument). You can choose several.

- Try to breathe correctly Try to relax the body I stretch I exercise (workout)
 Another. Which one? _____

5.4 – How do you prepare mentally? You can choose several.

- Try to think it will go well Avoid thinking about the performance Try to distract myself with other things
 I'm always thinking on what I'll play Try to think that if it doesn't go well, it's ok
 Another. Which one? _____

6 – Other:

6.1 – While practicing, how often do you consciously and deliberately assess and raise your level of confidence in your own musical and technical abilities?

- Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

6.2 – When performing, how often have you felt in complete control of every musical aspect of the piece you were playing, including the total absence of anxiety?

- Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

6.3 – Do you usually organize your practice in a structured way, defining short, medium and long term goals and deconstructing each task into smaller and easily accomplishable goals?

- Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

6.4.1 – When you are about to go on stage, do you consider anxiety as a normal reaction?

- Yes No

6.4.2 – Do you feel this anxiety is exclusive to musicians?

- Yes No

6.5 – How often do you feel that your teacher's feedbacks contribute to increasing your level of confidence in your abilities?

- Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Always

6.6.1 – Do you consider that the training you acquired in the schools where you studied have adequately prepared you do deal with performance anxiety?

- Yes No

6.6.2 – Are you aware of any schools that provide specific training to cope with performance anxiety in their curricula?

Yes No Which one? _____

6.6.3 – How important do you feel it is for schools to include specific training for coping with performance anxiety in their curricula?

Not important A little important Moderately important Very important Fundamental

6.6.4 – Are you aware of any colleague that has stopped performing due to difficulties in dealing with performance anxiety?

Yes No

6.7 – Do you have any further comments regarding this issue?

Annex II

Interview Transcriptions

Jordan Dodson: So tell me about your PhD.

André Rafael Tempera: I'm trying to describe and characterize issues regarding performance anxiety. First I'd like to get a broad picture and then funnel it down to what specifically affects guitarists.

JD: Like what?

ART: Like nails, for instance. I think that worrying about nails is an issue that only affects guitarists.

JD: Yes, I get that... We get worried about getting the nails just right. Before this set of five concerts I had, I actually broke my thumbnail and had to patch it up. Got a bit stressed there for a while so it's a factor.

ART: Definitely a factor... When you break a nail it's really bad, but even if you don't break it, even if you just file the nails and they are slightly different, it feels a bit "off", like something is less comfortable than usual and that variability can cause anxiety, right?

JD: Yes, I usually say that playing guitar is like a millimeters game, you have to get it just on the right spot otherwise it won't sound the way you want to, you can still play but it throws you off a bit.

ART: Especially with long runs or fast scales it can really affect the fluidity.

JD: Right.

ART: I have a few topics I'd like to address so let's get started... Please introduce yourself.

JD: My name is Jordan Dodson, I started playing electric guitar at ten, but before I played a bit of Saxophone and Piano. I only started playing classical guitar at when I was fourteen or fifteen.

ART: So how did studying other instruments influence your learning of classical guitar?

JD: Well, for one thing, I could already read music and that made it easier to learn a new instrument, it was just a matter of knowing the notes on the fretboard. Another thing was that before I ever performed with the classical guitar I had already performed with a rock band playing the electric guitar and in a school band with the saxophone so it gave me a good background. I already had an idea of what it felt like to play in front of other people.

ART: Did you ever perform solo with sax?

JD: No... It was always with a group of students. It's easier that way. I guess it's probably easier for everybody. I don't even recall being nervous.

ART: And how was your first classical guitar performance like?

JD: Oh, right! I was probably around sixteen, seventeen... I was playing a Carcassi etude and I think a Ponce piece and all the other kids were younger, playing things like “Twinkle twinkle little star”, I felt a bit out of place.

ART: Any thought, physical or emotional related reactions that you remember?

JD: Not really... Maybe I got a bit nervous but it was ok. It was only when I went to college and started playing different pieces for the professor and the classmates who knew enough about music to see if I was doing something wrong or not that I started to get really nervous.

ART: So the higher responsibility was a factor?

JD: Yes, that’s a good way to put it. I went from playing those easier pieces to a college level where everyone was really good in a short amount of time and that was a lot to handle. I got a lot more nervous then.

ART: And those nervous feelings, do you have a distinction of what you felt before, during and after?

JD: Hmm, that’s a good question... Before I think it was just the hands shaking. I wanted to stop it, kept trying to convince myself not to react that way but it wouldn’t work. During the performance I kept second guessing myself, if I knew the notes, if I knew the piece well enough, or as well as I thought I did... I also as conscious of my body, I felt a lot of tension in my shoulders, that’s how it is for me. Later on I did a little bit of Alexander technique and that helped me out. Have you ever heard about it?

ART: No, haven’t tried it personally but I know of it.

JD: Ok... then after performing I was always mad at myself for playing so badly.

ART: Then not only were you feeling bad while you were performing but then afterwards you would beat yourself over it...

JD: Oh yeah! I kept thinking “why I was so nervous?”, “why did I miss so many notes?”, “why did I play so poorly?”...

ART: Yes, that doesn’t help...

JD: No, not at all. But then I started to look at it as a thing that I had to overcome. I kept thinking that playing nervous or not it wouldn’t change the fact that I wanted to be a professional guitarist. No one was forcing me to be one; I could just switch careers and do something else. But I really wanted to play music so it strengthened my resolve that I would continue to pursue this objective.

ART: That’s nice, to have that resolve and to go around it. Some people just accept defeat and I’m sure you may know of some people that gave up on being musicians due to anxiety issues.

If you can, try to remember your best and worst public performances and really try to distinguish the difference of the thought, physical and emotional reactions in those two events.

JD: Does it matter if they were far apart in time?

ART: If it was a gradual evolution in dealing and coping with performance anxiety it would be interesting to notice where you started from to the confident guitarist you are now.

JD: Well, when you said “worst” one immediately popped to my mind. I was about eighteen or nineteen and was playing a duo with a colleague of mine in CCM and for some reason I was really nervous, I was shaking so much that before playing my uncle, who is the nicest guy in the world, came to ask me what was wrong with me and if I was alright. I don’t know if it was the worst but...

ART: When I said worst I meant the worst you’ve felt while performing, not in absolute terms. Often when you think you are not playing well people in the audience don’t even notice.

JD: Yeah, that’s true... And the fact that my uncle came and asked what was wrong with me even though he normally wouldn’t do such a thing made me feel even worse... I don’t think I can recall my best performance though.

ART: Don’t think of it as the best, think of a performance or a group of performances where you felt good, relaxed and in control.

JD: Let me think... I remember one... it was probably 5 years ago in Tennessee, I played half a concert and a friend of mine played the other half. Had a lot of time to prepare, knew the pieces very well and did pretty much everything I wanted to do with the music.

ART: How about your mindset, how was it different?

JD: I was completely relaxed, no anxiety at all, just enjoying the music. Plus I had been performing a lot and it really helps, each time you grow more used to the stage.

ART: So you keep building upon that?

JD: Yes. You have to reach a point where you are confident that you can just go out and play, no matter what. One time I had to play a Concerto in South Korea with the Philharmonic, first time I was there and only had a month and a half to prepare.

ART: Whoa!

JD: It was really hard, messed up a few times. It wasn’t great, I knew it wasn’t going to be great, but it was ok, I got the job done. I think it’s important to know that it’s not going to be perfect every time. If it’s great it’s ok but even if it’s not it’s still ok, if that makes sense.

ART: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. What I was understanding from what you said is that you reach a certain point that even in your worst day you can still give a competent performance.

JD: Yes. It’s like what Pavarotti said in an interview, the voice is a very sensitive instrument, vulnerable to small changes, so singers never really know how the performance will go, so you have to be used to not performing at your best, in a way. 90% of the time you won’t be on your “best” day and you still have to perform. And in the end if you mess up most of the time the audience won’t even know, they can’t hear the difference...

ART: Yes, most of the time they won't know. Even musicians sometimes don't notice, especially with more complicated pieces or with contemporary music.

JD: Yes, that's true.

ART: So let me backtrack just a bit... When you were still dealing with your anxiety, did you ever feel overwhelmed? Or did you feel uncomfortable but able to get through it?

JD: Well I don't know if I felt overwhelmed but I felt bad. I had to play a lot of times feeling that way. We had these Performance Classes every Friday and everyone had to play at least one piece. I would study hard, feel fine while practicing but then when I went to perform it would always go wrong, would always get too nervous and shaking a lot. I must have played about 20 or 30 of them feeling like that.

ART: So that is the most usual symptom for you, the shaking?

JD: Yes but I don't get that anymore.

ART: Sure, back then... How much did it prevent you from playing normally?

JD: Oh, 100%! With all the tension and the shaking I couldn't get my fingers to move properly, I kept missing notes, missing strings completely with the right hand. Actually, this may get a bit out of track but I think it's worth mentioning, there is this guitar teacher from Yale that has these books of performance pieces and you're supposed to learn a new piece and perform it every week and in there are also preparation notes and thoughts about performance anxiety and how you should approach it. The idea is that you should perform a lot, really as much as you can! Another thing that helped me is the idea behind consciousness in Buddhism; I've always been interested in stuff like that. It's like you're going to perform and you're getting nervous, but why? Why should you identify with that feeling? It's like observing your own thoughts and feelings from an external perspective. Yourself, your soul, is not getting nervous, you're just identifying with that "nervous energy". I don't want to sound too "new age" but if you realize how your mind works then you are able to put that nervousness aside and enjoy your playing. It's not about dominating those anxious feelings; it's more like accepting them and working through them.

ART: Yes, earlier when you were recalling your first experiences with anxiety it sounded like you were fighting it, trying to fight the symptoms instead of just relaxing and not give them too much importance. From what I've read Zen-like mentalities and meditation practices are helpful in dealing with performance anxiety. Nowadays we have "Mindfulness Meditation" which is nothing new, the same ideas have been around for centuries...

JD: Yes, it's like they take all the old knowledge and adapt it to modern times. It's the same thing, it's not new.

ART: Earlier you said that the process of coping with anxiety for you was gradual. When did you start feeling regularly in control, playing like you want to play instead of being overwhelmed by anxiety?

JD: I think when I was still at CCM... By the time I did my final recital I felt good, I was pretty happy with how I played.

ART: And in your experience in dealing with performance anxiety, do you feel like you had help from your teachers to overcome it or was it through personal tools you developed?

JD: The teachers weren't much help; it was mostly working on it by myself. This issue is also a bit taboo so students usually don't feel comfortable talking about it and admitting it. I don't blame any teacher for not doing more because I as a teacher also have a hard time advising students about this. In the end it's very subjective talking about those feelings.

ART: So do you believe that the ability to cope with anxiety is innate or worked upon?

JD: For me it was worked upon, for sure.

ART: When you think about other musicians do you feel it's the same for them?

JD: I don't know... I guess everyone is different and it's really hard to really understand what another person is going through and feeling while performing. What do you think?

ART: Thinking about the musicians I know I believe they don't cope that well... I feel that everyone could be helping each other out and talking more about this.

JD: But it's hard to talk about this, it's hard to reach a level of understanding.

ART: Of course, it's subjective, even if we agree we are both nervous we will have our own personal definitions of what that means. I have seen many performers walk on stage and you can see they're nervous, maybe at an acceptable level, but they're still nervous. In your case you walked on stage very confident, was it an act?

JD: No, not at all...

ART: That's one of the tricks, even if you are nervous you should act confidently... but that's just hiding the symptom, not coping with it.

JD: Right.

ART: I noticed in your performance you showed a really relaxed and confident image of yourself.

JD: Yes, I felt good. I knew the program well, had played it several times before, so it went fine. I know I worked hard so I don't get nervous anymore. I was actually very happy that Clare Callahan was there. I wasn't sure how I was going to feel, because she was my teacher for so many years, but I was really glad that she was there, made me feel at home.

ART: So when you step on stage you are really confident, not acting confident?

JD: Yes, definitely!

ART: Yes, that's the better way... When you practice, do you do so taking into account issues regarding performance anxiety?

JD: I think about the music mostly... One thing I do is a month before a recital I start playing through the entire program every day, sometimes two or three times a day. It's like I press

play and don't stop until it's over, even if I mess up I move on. Then I get really used to when and when the recital comes it's just a matter of playing it one more time.

ART: That ties into what I was going to ask you next... Do you think there should be different forms of practice according to how near is the recital?

JD: Yes, I actually do that. If a recital is months away I take my time and warm up slowly with some exercises, if it's getting near I'll just play through the program and just before the concert I don't even bother to warm up, I just play the first piece, to get used to starting with that and I know the rest will follow...

ART: Regarding self-efficacy, believing in your ability to perform, do you feel like it helps in coping with performance anxiety issues? For example, a musician may practice a piece 1000 times but not being able to play it in a performance setting due to lack of confidence (self-efficacy).

JD: Yes, that happens...

ART: But for you, as you progressed and began to feel less and less the effects of performance anxiety, how important was it for you to believe in yourself and in the work you put in and that it will hold up in a performance situation?

JD: Well I actually never thought about that in that way, I just kept playing because it was what I really wanted to do. About what you were asking, it relates to self-esteem...

ART: Yes, self-esteem.

JD: Hmm... actually don't know what to say...

ART: It's ok, there is no wrong answer, everyone is different and I just want to hear the personal experiences.

JD: I actually don't think I ever worried about that while practicing; I just focus on the music. Sorry if that's not helpful.

ART: Well when something is working then there is no need to over-analyze it.

We are almost done, just a few more small questions. I believe you already said that it was important to play live often?

JD: Yes. It's important to perform as much as you can, even if you don't play well. It is actually important to learn how to pick yourself up after a bad performance. It happened but tomorrow I'll pick up my guitar and practice again, like I do every day, it doesn't change anything.

ART: That is interesting because it relativizes the whole aspect of performing, you won't die if you miss a note, that's just something our minds exaggerate.

JD: When you think about it, what we do, playing music, it's not that important.

ART: Sure, I had a friend of mine say something like "there are people dying of hunger in Africa, who cares if I mess up, it's not that big of a deal..."

JD: Exactly... I sometimes actually feel guilty about getting to do what I do, somehow feels unimportant, feels like I should be contributing more to the world.

ART: Yeah, it's all relative... Did you feel that the demands of a competition helped you in dealing with performance anxiety or not at all?

JD: Well it helps because you have to be really well prepared. I was never much of a competitions guy... I would play very good on one and not so good on the other. Competitions are tricky and demanding, but that can be a good thing.

ART: How about recital structure? What do you think is more important, choosing the order of the pieces according to some musical or musicological aspect like chronology or simply starting with a comfortable piece?

JD: Oh, I never choose the recital structure according to chronology... I always start with a comfortable piece. In my last recital I almost did a chronological order, but then the second piece I played was contemporary and I did that deliberately because I wanted to challenge myself.

ART: I mentioned chronological order just as an example... In reality I feel that any reasoning behind recital structure will be less important than comfort.

JD: Yeah, sure. You can slowly build your confidence on that.

ART: So as a student and as a teacher, how important do you think it is to address these issues and preparing to deal with them?

JD: Well my students are young, about 12 years old, so they still don't know what's really going on. It's hard to talk to them on a level that they understand and often they don't even feel it. But they do benefit from the experience of performing early on.

ART: Yes some of the students, even when they are really young, some of them don't get nervous but others do. It's important to start early, to find ways to get out of that "mind space".

JD: My experience is that younger students tend to not get worried, but they all are different.

ART: Yes it depends, I had young students performing without a care in the world and I had others crying because they didn't want to perform in front of other people...

JD: Oh really? I never had that...

ART: Yes it happened to me with one or two students... That's actually one of the big debates, is performance anxiety innate or is it due to some sort of traumatic experience. Do you think music schools are doing enough to address this issue?

JD: Well I think they could be doing more. There are some classes that are being offered like performance techniques in Manhattan School of Music; Alexander Technique helps a little bit... or some classes that are more geared towards these issues. I wonder if there could be a more direct approach, I don't know, but they should do more, yeah. I think it takes more than five minute lessons... teachers and these dedicated classes that are geared towards these issues; I think both together will help.

ART: Have you had or heard about the experience of flow?

JD: Yes, the flow state!

ART: What is your experience with it? Is it common?

JD: I would say it's fairly common. I mean, athletes experience this, musicians experience this, right? I would say that not all the time, obviously, sometimes I can't quite get out of my head, I can't quite get out of the realm of logical thinking or critical thinking, but occasionally I can just give up the reins and go into this flow state I would say maybe about 50% of the time...

ART: Wow! That's really good!

JD: Maybe I'm shooting a too high here, let's go with 35%.

ART: Even so, that's good. Do you think that this is something that should be pursued?

JD: That's a good question... I don't know... A concert lasts like an hour, an hour and fifteen, and you're not going to be in a flow state the entire time and you got to weave in and out, sometimes you can start and you're in a bad place and you kind of gradually get into a flow state, sometimes it's the opposite, it's going to be an in-and-out thing... Don't know if you should try to achieve that...

ART: I meant regarding performance anxiety, because people feel awful while performing and if the ability to enter the flow state can be practiced and pursued, wouldn't that be helpful?

JD: This is tricky... I think this kind of plays into what you brought up earlier in terms of masking the problem. Leaving music aside, I want to become the best person that I can be and the most in control person I can be and I want to be able to be in my head, thinking critically and logically and I want to be able to do that in front of a large audience on Friday night at 8 o'clock on a stage and I want to feel fine. Because that is a skill that will translate to many other parts of your life. So I don't want to have to access this "sacred mental space" to perform and if I'm on stage and haven't accessed it I won't feel terrible because I had practiced being in my own head and being in control - kind of. If I can get better at that and not be nervous and give an ok performance and still feel fine afterwards that's a good thing. It is also great if I can enter a flow state and have a great spiritual moment that's awesome, obviously, but I don't think it is and "either / or", I think you have to set yourself up to experience either state and both are going to be fine. That's always been my approach.

ART: Any final thoughts you would like to share?

JD: I think we covered pretty much everything... If some thoughts or ideas come up in the meantime I'll send you an e-mail.

ART: Ok, thank you very much!

JD: No problem!

Pedro Rodrigues: Então diz-me lá, em que te posso ajudar?

André Rafael Tempera: O tema central da minha tese de doutoramento é a ansiedade na performance, como é que afecta os músicos e em particular os guitarristas. Tenciono dar uma visão geral e abrangente do que é a ansiedade na performance e tentar de certa maneira caracterizar a classe dos guitarristas, perceber como são afectados e se o são de uma forma particular ou se é igual para todos os músicos. Posteriormente, tentarei avançar com algumas sugestões e ferramentas para lidar com esta problemática. Nesta fase estou a contactar vários guitarristas que sei que tem experiência, vários concertos dados a nível internacional, para falarem das suas experiências pessoais, se houve muita ou pouca ansiedade, se foi um processo longo ou rápido de resolver e quais as ferramentas utilizadas.

PR: Ok. Então vamos a isso.

ART: Para começar gostaria de uma breve introdução, mencionando com que idade começaste a tocar guitarra e se achares pertinente, o que te levou a começar a tocar.

PR: Ok. Eu comecei a estudar música com 5 anos de idade, era mais uma questão de estudar apenas a teoria, a formação musical, e por volta dos 8 ou 9 anos comecei a estudar guitarra e não tem muita história, basicamente havia uma guitarra em casa e os meus pais decidiram ocupar os meus tempos livres com o instrumento disponível. Foi uma coincidência, digamos. Depois, a partir dos 16 anos, no âmbito do conservatório, do Orfeão de Leiria, haviam sempre bastantes audições escolares e começaram os primeiros concertos assim mais a sério.

ART: Ok. Ainda antes de passarmos aos concertos mais sérios, se puderes fala-me da tua primeira audição, primeira actuação em público, que idade tinhas e o que é que sentiste e pensaste, como foi essa experiência.

PR: Lembro-me que foi divertido. Não sei que idade tinha, mas lembro-me que me diverti bastante. Toquei a solo e em duo com o Eurico Pereira. Foi divertido, não tenho assim muita imagem de como foi, sei que estava com uma camisa verde às riscas meio estranha, parecia do Sporting, mas só sei isso porque tiraram uma fotografia. Mas tenho uma boa sensação, era a audição final do ano, era a azáfama típica dos pais a sair e a entrar à medida que os filhos iam tocando. O programa era enorme, eram 4 ou 5 folhas de programa em que cada aluno tocava uma peça de 30 segundos, portanto era mesmo muita gente. Mas foi uma azáfama bonita de ver.

ART: E que idade terias?

PR: Devia ter uns 9 ou 10.

ART: E recordas-te de alguma distinção da sensação que tiveste antes de tocar e depois de tocar? E até durante? Ou foi sempre uma experiência agradável do princípio ao fim?

PR: Foi tudo agradável, penso que sim. Pelo menos é assim que eu agora reconstruo esse momento, na altura talvez não tenha sido assim.

ART: Achas que eventualmente por seres novo não terias ainda a noção de o que é que significa estar a tocar para outras pessoas ou tinhas consciência disso e mesmo assim estavas tranquilo?

PR: Acho que o meu professor na altura, José Horta, fazia do acto de tocar uma coisa tão bonita e tão feliz que não tinha porque sentir essa pressão adicional. Mesmo durante o ano lectivo, eu e o Eurico tocávamos juntos, havia alguma competição mas simultaneamente um apoio, fizemos coisas que me recordo como divertidas.

ART: Acima de tudo, desde cedo associações positivas ao acto de tocar perante um público.

PR: Sim. Essas perguntas já pressupõem alguma mistificação do acto de tocar e a pressão existente perante um público. É uma pressão que existe sem o público estar lá, portanto nós não tínhamos isso, era divertido tocar, sem público, com público, nunca nos disseram que o público era uma coisa assustadora. Só muito mais tarde é que me apercebi que era uma coisa assustadora.

ART: Ok. Pegando nisso, vamos então saltar para essas actuações “assustadoras”, ou alguma em que não necessariamente tenhas tocado mal mas que te tenhas sentido pior do que o costume. Não quero dizer a pior, mas lembras-te de alguma actuação em que te tenhas sentido genuinamente mal em palco?

PR: Lembro, ainda em contexto de conservatório, devia estar no 3º grau ou assim. Normalmente as audições corriam-me bem, mas houve uma em que senti que correu muito mal, basicamente porque eu não conseguia fazer ligados descendentes, então chego a um estudo do Sor e aquela parte era complicada... Ainda hoje em masterclasse quando chega algum aluno com esse estudo fico meio... “Olá, velho amigo!” .

ART: Traz-te más memórias...

PR: É engraçado. Essa foi a experiência que quando era novo marcou, apenas pela dificuldade, uma dificuldade técnica e que condicionou toda a apresentação, digamos assim. E estamos a falar de um opus 35 de minuto e meio...

ART: Pronto, mas as experiências são sempre válidas, seja com uma obra de minuto e meio ou com uma de dez minutos.

PR: Claro.

ART: Por alguma razão essa ficou na memória. Falaste na componente técnica em sentir dificuldade com os ligados, houve em momento algum uma componente psicológica, emocional, associada ao stress de palco ou nada disso?

PR: Houve como tentativa de me redimir daquela actuação menos conseguida. Não no sentido de pensar que correu mal e portanto as próximas vão ser um desastre, mas pelo contrário, correu mal e deixa-me cá trabalhar para que as próximas sejam boas, para que eu consiga provar que consigo trabalhar bem.

ART: Então dirias que esse pequeno momento de insucesso, se é que podemos chamar assim, motivou-te ainda mais para que não se repita?

PR: Sim, aliás, é a principal lição que eu tento reter de todas as coisas, mesmo na fase em que era mais velho e participava em concursos, às vezes corriam bem e outras vezes não e eu tentava perceber o que é que se poderia aprender com isso. Mais do que uma pessoa deixar-se traumatizar por coisas que não valem a pena.

ART: Logicamente faz todo o sentido mas com certeza conheces pessoas que...

PR: Ah, eu sei! Mas lá está, eu penso que essa coisa do “bicho papão” para mim, como nunca existiu, entendes? Nunca me disseram “tens que estar bem vestido por causa do público”. Não eu fui com uma t-shirt verde horrível... Portanto foi bastante descomprometida, toda a sequência.

ART: Mesmo mais tarde, com o aumentar da responsabilidade, sempre mantiveste essa atitude de descontração em relação a actuar?

PR: Não vou dizer que era descontração mas acho que havia bastante fruição do momento, mais do que muita gente que conheci. Sim, houve alguns momentos em que me recordo que eram particularmente penosos para colegas meus, quando estava em Paris, era uma prática recorrente o uso de beta-bloqueadores e outras coisas. Eu não conseguia entender o porquê daquilo.

ART: Então ao longo da tua carreira nunca passaste por uma situação onde te sentiste completamente asoberbado pela ansiedade, isso nunca te afectou?

PR: Pela ansiedade não, pelo cansaço sim. Já me aconteceu estar a viajar, ficar com jet-lag durante uma semana, e estar a tocar de memória, as coisas não vão sair...

ART: Sim, claro, isso afecta a memória. Mas apenas em relação à ansiedade, nunca foste afectado a esse extremo?

PR: Em concerto creio que não, mas em concurso sim e a partir daí comecei a fazer alguma preparação psicológica para evitar a ansiedade, para ter um pouco mais de controle. Não tenho uma capacidade perfeita, mas dá para lidar. Aí passa por fazer uma auto-tranquilização e isso vem da experiência de participar em bastantes concursos.

ART: Então sentes que participar em concursos contribuiu para te ajudar a lidar com a ansiedade?

PR: Ah, sem dúvida.

ART: Apenas pela razão de te obrigar a preparar melhor ou há mais qualquer coisa por detrás disso?

PR: Preparar melhor tem várias componentes, a componente musical, técnica, etc., depois é necessário um certo tipo de resistência mental. Lembro-me que durante um certo período, quando existiu alguma concorrência que nesse tipo de concursos nem sempre é muito saudável, levava os meus phones, com músicas pseudo-motivacionais, ou um rock pujante, para me tentar inserir num mundo mais protegido, digamos. Tinha assim alguns truques.

ART: E nessas andanças, a lidar com a pressão e a ansiedade, nos concertos e concursos, consegues descrever os sintomas? O que costumavas sentir? São reacções mais físicas, são problemas de memória?

PR: Não, memória não. Na altura era as mãos frias e passado uns tempos, na altura em que fazia muitos concursos, tinha úlceras. Isso acontecia.

ART: Tens ideia de alguma preocupação específica, como guitarrista? Lembro-me sempre das unhas, já que os outros instrumentistas não têm essa preocupação, para nós acaba sempre por ser um factor de stress acrescido. Achas que sim ou isso também é tranquilo para ti?

PR: Não é tranquilo... Acho que há sempre determinados rituais, possivelmente cada um tem os seus, mas sim é um cuidado. Da mesma maneira que um violinista terá com o seu arco. Parece-me que pode ser uma minudência, uma vez que tem toda uma conotação quase feminina, mas que as unhas são tão fundamentais como uma corda , parece-me que são.

ART: Sim, sem dúvida. É sempre uma questão milimétrica, já que as unhas estão sempre a crescer e a ser desbastadas, às vezes é difícil encontrar aquela zona de conforto que é bastante restrita.

PR: Há o desenho mental que uma pessoa tem da unha e evidentemente tenta protegê-lo, mesmo nos ensaios e concertos, há que ter essa salvaguarda.

ART: Seguindo em frente, apesar de nunca teres sofrido muito com as questões relacionadas com a ansiedade, a partir de quando ao longo da tua formação é que te começaste a sentir genuinamente em controlo durante a performance? Que as coisas estavam realmente a sair como idealizas e praticas?

PR: Nunca.

ART: Nunca!?

PR: Nunca. Tenho que dizer a verdade, nunca está como eu idealizo e nunca está como eu... não, nunca.

ART: Afugentar um pouco a ideia do perfeccionismo em concerto e aceitar o que sai? Por aí?

PR: Sim, basicamente é isso. Acho que uma pessoa pode e deve trabalhar nesse sentido. Vamos lá ver, é aquele cliché, ser perfeccionista não quer dizer que a pessoa seja perfeita. Quanto mais não seja, mais bonito é aceitar que uma pessoa erra e tentar viver da melhor maneira com isso. Às vezes é fácil e outras vezes não. Daí até dizer que estou em controlo, não, não posso dizê-lo.

ART: Se calhar controlo não é a palavra certa... Quando entras em palco tens a certeza ou confiança nas tuas capacidades e que vais conseguir tocar bem, ou tocar o teu melhor?

PR: Sim, penso que isso será diferente de uma interpretação de que foi perfeito ou aquilo que foi idealizado. Terá a haver mais com a percepção de uma pessoa estar num determinado momento, trabalhou para esse momento e tenta realizar as coisas da maneira mais honesta que conseguir. Às vezes vai dar certo, outras vai dar asneira.

ART: É a vida...

PR: Faz parte. Eu consigo ouvir uma gravação de um concerto e podemos ser daqueles guitarristas chatos e dizer “ah, pisou mal o dedo” ou “aquela nota não ficou equilibrada no meio da escala”, podemos passar o tempo todo a fazer isso. Agora, a questão é: vamos querer que aquela gravação seja editada pela Deutsche Grammophon ou queremos guardar essa gravação para nós? Depende muito do objectivo. Depois, a gravação acaba sempre por ser um momento como se fosse uma fotografia em zoom de um determinado objecto, portanto falta o contexto acústico, falta o contexto social, falta muita coisa nas gravações.

ART: Interessante... Relativamente às questões da ansiedade na performance, como vêes o papel de professor em relação ao aluno? Tiveste professores que te ajudaram com isso? falaste naquele teu primeiro professor que sempre deu uma ideia muito mágica e alegre do acto de tocar, que acho extremamente positivo... Como foram os papéis dos teus professores em relação a isso e como te vêes a ti próprio como professor a ajudar um aluno a lidar com eventuais problemas de ansiedade?

PR: Vamos fazer um pequeno parentesis, que penso que terá relevância para a tua pergunta. Eu comecei relativamente cedo a fazer concertos, então por volta dos 20 ou 21 anos fiz uma tournée bastante grande de um mês em que fiz 22 concertos. Ou seja, evidentemente muito exigente mas aquele nervoso miudinho, que me consumia ao deixar o estômago um pouco embrulhado, a deixar as mãos frias, não pode acontecer 22 vezes por mês senão uma pessoa vai parar ao hospital!

ART: Ou então muda de carreira...

PR: Exactamente! Portanto, isso dá um grande ensinamento que é basicamente a experiência ser uma grande professora.

ART: Então consideras fundamental actuar frequentemente em público? Isso contribui para a confiança e para ganhar as ferramentas necessárias para lidar com a ansiedade?

PR: Eu acho que sim. Depende também dos casos, se há casos de alunos que têm fobias bastante acentuadas... Já tive alunos que o primeiro concerto que fizeram já tinham 19 anos, em situações em que, por exemplo, estavam a tocar uma peça de Carulli quando o aluno de piano que ia tocar a seguir ia tocar Rachmaninoff, ou um aluno de violoncelo a tocar Dvorak, no meio de um auditório em que ninguém vai ouvir a guitarra, com as pessoas do público a gritar “não se ouve nada, toca mais alto!”... Já tive alunos desses e a aproximação desses alunos à performance não pode ser de uma maneira tão violenta quanto para outros que estão habituados a tocar desde jovens.

ART: Claro, claro.

PR: Cada caso é um caso, não se pode estipular que um aluno tem que tocar 40 vezes por semestre e que assim já vai tocar bem, é possivelmente preciso uma espécie de acompanhamento psicológico a um aluno que necessite de maiores cuidados.

ART: Daí o papel do professor. Achas que a figura do professor deveria fazer esse papel? De orientar o aluno nesse sentido?

PR: Acho que idealmente o professor deve retirar o melhor que cada aluno tem. Se o professor lança o aluno para concerto e ele basicamente não está pronto, alguma coisa está a falhar nessa educação.

ART: Como disseste, cada caso é um caso. Quando disse “tocar frequentemente” obviamente não me estava a referir a tocar a qualquer custo e em quaisquer condições. Tocar frequentemente está referido na literatura como um factor importante mas definitivamente não é o único. Outro factor importante já referiste é o ter começado cedo, pois dá mais tempo e abertura para trabalhar a eventual ansiedade na performance a longo prazo. Quem começa com 19 anos e já tem imensa bagagem psicológica para perceber o ambiente, mais facilmente cria “bichos-papões”. Todos os factores são importantes, não há uma única coisa que resolva a ansiedade.

PR: Claro. O quanto positivo que existe entre os diversos alunos independentemente da sua faculdade ou dificuldade na sua apresentação em público, deverá ser sempre o reforço positivo por essa acção, ou seja, cada concerto tem que ser algo positivo. Já me aconselhei com alguns psicólogos sobre alguns alunos que têm essas dificuldades, transtornos fóbicos, e o que sugeriram não foi “falinhas mansas”, mas quase uma conversa de balneário de um jogo de futebol, no sentido de atijar a pessoa, de o revoltar, e que essa revolta seja usada para coisas positivas.

ART: É uma abordagem, mas isso também pode fazê-los fugir...

PR: Pode...

ART: Se a fobia for muito grande, ou sentida como inultrapassável, podem fugir na direcção oposta.

PR: Exactamente, podem recolher-se ainda mais.

ART: Pois, novamente, cada caso é um caso e há que fazer o melhor possível no papel de professor e no papel de aluno. Na tua experiência, achas que a capacidade de entrar em palco confiança e tocar e a capacidade de lidar com a ansiedade na performance é mais inata ou trabalhada? Um pouco como a técnica, se é inata ou trabalhada, se há uma apetência para isso. No teu caso particular, o que consideras, que tens uma facilidade natural em lidar com a performance?

PR: Penso que não se pode isolar assim tão facilmente um aspecto do resto. Penso que pode existir uma certa, não quero chamar facilidade, uma certa disposição para as apresentações, mas essa disposição, essa vontade é fruto de muitas combinações, provavelmente desde o primeiro ano. Lembro-me de ser pequenino e de estar a tocar para a minha mãe, ou havia gente que entrava e pediam-me para tocar... sim, tenho esses reforços positivos.

ART: Sim, não nasce do vazio, há uma experiência por detrás que ajudou a consolidar essa tranquilidade.

PR: Pois, estamos a falar de uma coisa altamente especializada, é preciso haver um professor e instrumentos de música, daí até ser uma coisa inata vai uma grande distância.

ART: Compreendo o que estás a dizer... Por outras palavras, como professor e observando alunos, ou simplesmente observando colegas, reparo que há sempre aqueles músicos ou aqueles guitarristas que têm uma naturalidade em palco muito superior à média. Um pouco como no sentido popular, como se costuma dizer, “ele nasceu para isto” ou “ele é animal de palco” . Obviamente que há sempre um trabalho por detrás, as coisas não são isoladas, mas também sei que para atingir os mesmos resultados há pessoas que têm de trabalhar mais do que outras.

PR: Sim, isso para todas as vertentes do ensino da música.

ART: Ao praticar, ao preparar repertório, normalmente o teu foco recai para aspectos técnicos e musicais ou há alguma preocupação com a situação de performance, questões de postura, respiração? O foco é 100% na música e não tanto na própria mente?

PR: Normalmente são questões musicais. Este ano aconteceu-me uma coisa que aí sim senti que havia essa pressão. Foi um concerto na Gulbenkian, tive que ir substituir alguém assim de um dia para o outro, chamaram-me na quarta-feira para ir tocar na quinta e era repertório novo. Então estar a ver a Gulbenkian deu-me alguma pressão e então aí comecei a estar um pouco mais atento à respiração e essas coisas. Porque aí sim, senti-me bastante pressionado.

ART: Pois, questões de tempo. E ao praticar, sentes que há fases diferentes de acordo com a proximidade de um concerto e que praticas de forma diferente? Ou é sempre a mesma rotina, sempre a mesma forma?

PR: Não te sei dizer. Ultimamente tenho feito programas bastante variados. No último mês foram 4 concertos e 4 programas diferentes. Portanto, tento orientar aquilo da melhor maneira que consigo, é o que posso dizer.

ART: Ok. O que sentes a respeito da importância da auto-eficácia? Resumidamente no acreditar na capacidade que tens de concretizar algo com sucesso, nomeadamente tocar uma peça do princípio ao fim ou um programa de recital inteiro. Sentes que existe uma relação, de alguma forma, entre a ansiedade e a confiança que tens nas tuas próprias capacidades? Que o facto de te sentires confiante e saberes o que és capaz de fazer te ajuda a estar mais tranquilo em palco.

PR: Eu... como é que hei-de explicar isto? Eu quando vejo uma peça, seja o que for, eu acho que nunca vou conseguir tocá-la, acho que nunca sou capaz. Portanto, será quase uma auto-eficácia negativa.

ART: Mas isso é um pouco contraditório, pois no entanto chegas ao palco e és capaz de dar bons recitais! Portanto como é que isso funciona? Tenta explicar, por favor.

PR: Basicamente como acho que não consigo fazer as coisas motiva-me a que faça o trabalho.

ART: Ok, então logo na primeira abordagem da peça podes ter um instinto de não acreditar, de não confiar, mas acima de tudo confias e tens auto-eficácia no teu próprio trabalho, na forma como trabalhas e na capacidade de trabalho que tens para resolver as eventuais dificuldades e para as superar, ou não?

PR: Se formos a ver bem as coisas, não... Isso tem a haver com o que referi de não ficar satisfeito com a minha performance ou quando ouvia a minha gravação se achava que estava de acordo com o que tinha idealizado. Não, basicamente não. Mesmo quando há pessoas que dizem que já me ouviram a fazer coisas boas eu raramente acho que está assim, bem.

ART: É interessante. Confesso que não estava à espera, mas é uma forma interessante de ver as coisas. Mesmo achando que não está bem, nada disso te impede de chegar ao palco e tocar? E de ter prazer com aquilo que estás a fazer?

PR: Vamos lá ver, uma coisa é eu divertir-me a jogar à bola, não sou o Cristiano Ronaldo mas isso não me vai impedir de jogar à bola.

ART: Claro.

PR: Portanto, eu tenho uma ideia do que há-de soar determinada partitura. Na minha cabeça é uma coisa, mas não me importo de me divertir em busca de um ideal.

ART: A única diferença é que, não sendo o Cristiano Ronaldo, também não és jogador profissional de futebol, mas és um músico profissional, essa distinção não pesa na tua capacidade de simplesmente te divertires enquanto tocas? Essa pressão extra não existe para ti?

PR: Não. Não porque o trabalho que tentei fazer foi honesto.

ART: Ótimo! Eu acho que isso é extremamente saudável. É interessante essa abordagem.

PR: É uma maneira de equilibrar uma coisa que não é positiva, a maneira de encarar determinada obra, determinado estudo ou determinado resultado, ou seja, a perspectiva com a vivência. É um modo que... por enquanto vai resultando!

ART: Ótimo. Estamos quase a terminar. Já ouviste falar no âmbito da música, e também ligado ao desporto, no estado de flow?

PR: Já ouvi falar, já. Sim.

ART: Tem sido descrito na literatura como um estado de consciência elevada onde a auto-confiança e auto-eficácia é tal que tudo sai bem, aparentemente sem esforço. No desporto é muito utilizada a expressão “in the zone”, é como estar imparável, conseguir fazer tudo praticamente sem esforço e sem errar, sabendo que naquele momento nada vai falhar. Em concerto, já tiveste experiências assim?

PR: Aconteceu-me umas duas ou três vezes, sim.

ART: Então não é uma coisa muito frequente?

PR: Ah, não.

ART: E achas que isso seria eventualmente um objectivo a ser perseguido, principalmente na perspectiva de quem sofre com a ansiedade e que acha que é tudo negativo enquanto está em palco?

PR: Se beneficiar a comunicação musical, a comunicação da partitura, acho que sim. Agora se for uma coisa meramente hedonista acho pouco necessário, artisticamente falando, claro.

ART: Ok. E em relação aos conservatórios, escolas de música e universidades com que tenhas contacto achas que achas que as questões relacionadas com a ansiedade na performance estão a ser devidamente abordadas ou essa abordagem é escassa?

PR: Do problema ou da temática?

ART: Da temática, tendo em vista a resolução de problemas de estudantes que sofrem com a ansiedade, muitas vezes até silenciosamente, mas que eventualmente não têm abertura para falar e não têm a ajuda necessária para lidar com os problemas que sentem.

PR: Eu acho que não é um problema muito falado assim abertamente, nem acho que exista tanto apoio quanto isso. Em Portugal nem por isso, mas quando estava a estudar em Paris era frequente a quantidade de pessoal que sofria... A pressão dos exames também era diferente porque se uma pessoa chumbasse no exame intermediário em Abril ou Maio, já não podia fazer o exame final, já tinha chumbado o ano. Portanto, aquilo era bastante agressivo.

ART: Lá está, sendo agressivo, não consideras que deveria ser criado um sistema, quase ao nível da ajuda psicológica, para ajudar? Não consideras que deveria ser da responsabilidade das escolas de música e universidades fornecer essa preparação aos futuros músicos?

PR: Eu penso que para muitas escolas isso não é visto como uma necessidade. Por exemplo, neste caso do conservatório de Paris, se houvesse alguém que estivesse nervoso, estavam lá vinte que não estavam e que queriam mostrar o seu valor. Portanto há uma questão bastante desumana no tratamento e penso que acabará por ser algo como um estigma. A temática do músico que sofre e é nervoso acaba por ser quase uma conversa invisível. Não se discute, à imagem daquelas histórias de rappers que são homossexuais, porque são coisas que parece que não podem existir no mesmo universo. E as pessoas quase que têm uma falta de compreensão bastante grande, e eu admito que durante bastante tempo também tive essa falta de compreensão. No sentido de alguém tocar e se sentir nervoso, a pergunta básica é “então mas qual é o problema?”. Isso revela não só falta de sensibilidade dos músicos que depois se vão tornar professores e directores de conservatórios e etc.

ART: Então há alguma falta de sensibilidade...

PR: Muita falta de sensibilidade!

ART: ... e eventualmente seria benéfico tentar ajudar, mesmo que seja 1 aluno em 10, ou 1 aluno em 20, esses futuros músicos de outra forma, talvez possa haver outro tipo de esforço, senão acaba por se tornar uma selecção natural onde quem consegue dominar a ansiedade está tudo bem e quem não consegue sofre ou muda de carreira.

PR: É, mas em relação a isso não estamos a falar a falar só de universidades, estamos a falar de muito antes. A agressividade com que as crianças agora são expostas em concursos de várias categorias, até aos 6 anos, dos 6 aos 8, dos 8 aos 9, dos 9 aos 10 e acho que isso musicalmente, humanamente e em termos de felicidade é muito prejudicial.

ART: Pois, concordo, é preocupante, não só do ponto de vista musical mas também, como disseste, do ponto de vista humano.

PR: Sem dúvida. Depois tens crianças que ganharam 30 prémios até aos 18 anos, prémios esses que são irrisórios. Ganhou o 1º prémio do concurso de Miranda do Carrapato, ok, é irrelevante, mas toda a agressividade com que foi preparado para participar nesse concurso possivelmente seria melhor aproveitada para outras situações que fizessem uma pessoa feliz.

ART: Pois, podem tornar-se pessoas infelizes, se calhar muito bons músicos, bons profissionais, mas infelizes. É se calhar um preço demasiado alto a pagar para ser considerado “competente”, está um pouco desvirtuado esse princípio.

PR: Penso que é essa a noção que se tem, que é necessário ser essa pessoa “maquinal” e que só através do sucesso medido em pequenos itens é que se valoriza a capacidade de determinadas pessoas, quando vai muito para além disso.

ART: E como é que podemos ajudar a contrariar esse paradigma, como podemos ajudar os alunos que não são “máquinas”, que são mais sensíveis, o que podemos fazer enquanto músicos e professores?

PR: Primeiro que tudo devemos estimular o bem-estar de todos, de igual modo. Penso que isso é o mais importante, não devemos fazer qualquer espécie de diferenciação.

ART: Achas que deveríamos falar mais abertamente sobre estes assuntos? Eventualmente até criar disciplinas teóricas que pudessem ajudar a compreensão do fenómeno da ansiedade, relacioná-lo com perfeccionismo e auto-estima e tudo o mais. Valorizar mais o aspecto musical e não o aspecto “maquinal”, como disseste.

PR: Nem sei se é uma questão de estar a falar em música... mas, o aspecto pessoal e a maneira como cada um encara determinada actividade. Não sei se uma disciplina será o contexto ideal ou um ambiente tipo terapia de grupo...

ART: Não, não, isto mais no sentido de ajudar os alunos mais velhos, ajudar a desmistificar os sintomas relacionados com a ansiedade na performance e que fazem muita gente deixar de acreditar em si próprios, sofrer em palco ou desistir. É no sentido de tentar ser mais abrangente e não “deitar fora”, porque no fundo, com o sistema em vigor há os que são bem-sucedidos e os que são descartados. Se calhar é assim em todas as áreas, todas as profissões, mas eventualmente haverá qualquer coisa que se possa fazer em relação a isso. Ajudar os que sofrem com a ansiedade e que sentem que não podem falar com ninguém.

PR: Vamos lá ver, a ansiedade não é em si uma coisa muito má. Há a história da actriz Sara Bernhardt, em que está a fazer uma peça de teatro em Nova Iorque e há uma rapariga nova que diz que nunca fica nervosa antes das actuações. A Sara Bernhardt, que ficava nervosa, responde “isso é porque não tens talento, no dia em que tiveres talento vais ficar nervosa!”. Acho que a questão da ansiedade também dá uma certa consciencialização.

ART: É importante distinguir que há dois tipos de ansiedade, a *facilitating anxiety*, o nervoso miudinho mas que nos põe mais alerta, aquele nível de adrenalina ideal...

PR: Saudável...

ART: ... sim, saudável e que não nos “desequilibra”. Tudo o que seja para além desse nível, é a *debilitating anxiety*. Todos os problemas que estão associados à ansiedade na performance estão relacionados com esta forma debilitante, pois é a que nos impede de tocar ao nível habitual.

Muito bem, já abordámos todos os tópicos que eu pretendia falar, peço-te só, se quiseres dizer mais alguma coisa relacionada com esta temática, algo que eventualmente não tenha sido abordado e aches pertinente, umas últimas palavras, últimas ideias...

PR: Falaste há pouco da questão de preparar os alunos, mas acho que também seria fundamental então, sobretudo agora com esta vaga de mestrados em ensino, algumas sessões de preparação para os professores.

ART: Para ajudar os professores a preparar os alunos de outra forma.

PR: Exactamente. Penso que isso acabará por ser importante.

ART: Ok! Então só me resta agradecer imenso o teu tempo, a tua disponibilidade para me ajudar nesta entrevista. É sempre muito interessante perceber como é que cada um funciona para depois tentar encontrar um fio condutor entre os vários guitarristas. Muito obrigado!

PR: Ok, um abraço! Bom trabalho!

ANNEX II - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

Martha Masters: So what can I do for you today?

André Rafael Tempera: Well, I have a few topics I'd like to approach but first of all I'd like you to tell me the story of when and why you started playing guitar.

MM: Ok, so when I was about 6 years old my sister started playing the violin and I just kind of wanted to be like her and so I actually really wanted to play an instrument, any instrument and an uncle of mine recommended the guitar. I was actually quite interested in the cello but I ended up with the guitar and it was my first teacher that made me love it, because I was not super excited about the guitar going in. But it was a very quick change; once I got started there was no desire to do anything but the guitar.

ART: Good. Was it in a school? Private lessons?

MM: Private lessons, yes.

ART: Ok. If you can, tell me about your first public performance. Was it in a school, was it just playing for family? How was it?

MM: With my first teacher we would have student recitals and so I remember playing in one of those, it was held like in a university classroom kind of thing. I was still very young and it was with all of his students. It was very cool to see other people playing because as guitarists we get somewhat isolated. So you sit in the audience, watch everyone else play and then you wait your turn and go up and play and I remember that being a cool experience. Also, anytime my parents had friends over, I would "have" to play. I only say "have to" because I was shy, it wasn't like it was torture, I mean at the end of the day I probably enjoyed it, but I wasn't offering, let's put it that way, and they were definitely asking. And when family was around I'd always play for family.

ART: So during those first public performances were there any anxiety-related physical or emotional reactions? What were you feeling before, during and after? Do you recall anything that stands out?

MM: I recall, and I don't know if this is just a favorable memory, not having any anxiety at all, I was just looking forward to it, I enjoyed it and afterwards I felt really good. I don't remember feeling anything other than that until I was about 15 years old. Many, many years of nothing but awesome feelings when playing.

ART: That's good; it builds up positive associations with playing for other people.

MM: Exactly, it did.

ART: Jumping a bit in the timeline... If you can, compare your memories of a performance where you felt bad while on stage as opposed to one where you felt good.

MM: Yeah, the first time I remember really feeling bad on stage, it was terrible, I was probably about 15 or 16 years old and it was related to memory slips in a piece by Bach, I was playing the prelude from the 1st Cello Suite. I still remember it, I remember where I was

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and it was the first time I remember or that I perceived anything like that happening. I'm confident that I'd had a memory slip before, probably, in a performance because I did play a lot, but it was the first time that it felt bad to me. So what I don't know is whether that was because I was becoming more aware of other people judging me, I mean, not that they were but you start to feel like they are. Or whether if I was becoming more aware of my mistakes... Or whether because my mistakes were worse, because I was diving into more difficult repertoire. But I remember how bad it felt.

ART: Maybe a mix of all those things...

MM: Right.

ART: So during the performance you felt affected, but was there any anxiety previous to performing?

MM: No, not the first time. But after you have that experience then you worry that in the next time it might happen again. But I don't remember that, no, the very first time I remember sort of being surprised by it. And thinking "I was prepared so why did this happen?".

ART: And when it happens you keep beating yourself up over it...

MM: Yes, of course.

ART: So how do you compare that experience to one where you play and feel really relaxed and in control? What is the difference in the mindset, the physical and emotional reactions you have?

MM: I think a successful performance that... I'm trying to forget the early years right now, for this discussion, just because I think those were naïve years, which I think are very useful but they are not real in terms of what I do now. So, in terms of a good performance, from the time that I've been more aware to the fact that performance anxiety exists, I would say that it feels the same going in, I feel nervous, I feel anxious, I feel like I have to focus on the task at hand and "these are the spots I need to think about", but then, during the performance, a good performance feels focused, I don't feel distracted, I feel engaged so I focus on the music and I feel engaged enough that if I need to focus on the technique at one point I can, but ideally I'm mostly just listening to the music I'm making, I'm responding, I'm able to let any little errors kind of stay "back there", you know, they happened but I don't let them distract me. In other words, I feel fantastic!

ART: During your formative years, while you were still struggling with anxiety, did you ever get to a point that you felt overwhelmed by it?

MM: Yeah. I'm going to say, while I was finishing my undergrad and a couple of years after, I think I got so much awareness of all the things I didn't do well and I felt so much pressure of being judged by peers, by teachers, getting constant criticism that is a necessary part of school. I felt it was really paralyzing, I really did not look forward to performing for a few years, because I was afraid of making a mistake.

ART: Yeah, I know that feeling... And what were the usual symptoms for you and how much did they prevent you from playing normally and even enjoying what you were playing?

MM: So I never had shaking hands... One time! I don't know why one time, but one time my hands shook. I remember thinking "how awful that must be for people who deal with that all the time". But I don't have shaking hands, I am not sweaty... For me the main symptoms are that my mind starts to race and the heart starts to beat really, really fast, and I feel anxiety, anxiety is the big word there. I remember one time, early in my competing days, when I got on stage and I just felt like "I don't know if I can play right now..." and I did, but it felt so bad. And when your mind is running like that and your heart is racing like that, it wasn't a good feeling.

ART: And what were your greatest concerns? What occupied your mind the most? Was it memory issues, technical issues, repertoire?

MM: Basically 95% memory. Occasionally a little bit of concern about "can I play this passage as clean as I want to play it?" but most of the time it was memory.

ART: And do you think that is a personal issue to you or is it maybe because of the nature of the instrument we play?

MM: I think it's a little bit of both. I think the instrument is complex in terms of how it's laid out, the fingerboard patterns are complex, and of course I understand it by now, but it is complex and with everything else you're doing... I'm not geographically oriented in terms of how I think of things and so it doesn't always lay out the way you imagined, when you're on the fly. At any rate, I think the instrument being complex is one part of it, but I also think I have a poorer than average ability to memorize music.

ART: Really!?

MM: Yes!

ART: Ok. So on a more positive note, when did you feel like you started to become comfortable and more relaxed and confident in your performing?

MM: Yeah, it took me a few years to come out of this state of heightened anxiety and one of the things that really helped me through it actually was competing, because it really forced me, it just forced me to confront all of these fears, fears of judgment, because you absolutely are being judged! Without a doubt, that is absolutely what's happening! For me, when I was competing, the first round was always the most intense, the one that I felt the least comfortable playing in, because it was usually the most artificial, there was usually no audience at all, usually just the jury, if there was an audience it would be just a couple of people. It felt artificial, it didn't feel like a real performance and it heightens your awareness of being judged. So, first rounds were awful for me, I hated it, but what I eventually started to get towards was "ok, they're going to judge how they're going to judge me and I just have to do my job and I'm just trying to enjoy it". So, the more I did it, it became easier, it was torture at first but it became easier for me and by the time I was in my last year of doing competitions, I'm not going to say I started to feel comfortable in first rounds but I had very low anxiety, I was willing to accept whatever they thought of me and was comfortable with their judgment. Understanding that people will judge based on different criteria and I was going to play how I was going to play and I was happy with how I was playing. So I think it was a few things, it was experience but it was also that by that point I was actually happy with how I was playing, whereas before that I knew I was still exploring, I was still trying to find things. It's a combination, I think, between experience and actually finally really being content with how I played.

ART: So it was a gradual process for you?

MM: Absolutely.

ART: And while you were driving yourself out of those feelings of anxiety did you get any help from teachers, colleagues, or was it all with personal tools, working within yourself?

MM: It was a lot of things. I talked to anybody about it, anyone that wanted to talk, I read every book that I could read on the subject, I re-read some of them, I tried different meditation things, different physical exercise things, breathing exercises, beta-blockers... it was like a big combination of things that led me to a place that really helped me to be able to feel comfortable physically.

ART: And what strategies or coping mechanisms did you find to be more useful for you?

MM: For me, the two things at the end... I think everything was useful, but I would say that the two things at the end that were gamechangers for me. The breathing exercises that focused around tension because I was having things like tension in the jaw, you couldn't really see it, nobody could see it but I had it and it would lock up everything. Playing was not physically as easy as it was when I was relaxed, so learning how to do that, breathing exercises combined with muscular tension and release exercises that I was doing. That was one, and I really think it allowed me physically to do what I wanted to do. But then the other was, honestly, beta-blockers, because for me it was inconsistent, sometimes I was fine, if I was prepared and focus and could focus on my breathing and everything, it was fine. And I would go through and I'd have ten performances that were fine and then for whatever reason in number eleven all of the sudden my heart would start freaking out, and that's frustrating when you're actually really ready, you've done all your work and this organ inside your body takes over your entire body. For me the beta-blockers really worked and I used them a little bit towards the end of my competition days and then I've used them on and off, but I would say fairly consistently throughout my performance days and I don't think I need it, actually, I think it's like a placebo effect most of the time now. I make sure that I perform without them still, sometimes, so that, God forbid, I run out or I lose them and I don't think I can play guitar without them. I know I can play without them. But I also know that sometime, one in ten concerts, all of the sudden for whatever reason that I cannot explain, my heart just goes crazy, it's physical, you could take my pulse and it's insane. So I like the idea of avoiding that situation.

ART: In your experience, do you believe that the ability to cope with performance anxiety is innate, worked upon, a little bit of both?

MM: Both. I think I had to pass through the age where it was problematic because that is an age of awareness and you're not growing if you're not becoming aware of the challenges within your own playing and the people's perception and how you respond to that. I think it's a natural thing to go through it but the question is "what do you do with it?" and do you let it define you or find ways to overcome. Going through it is inevitable and it's just a matter of your response.

ART: And when in practice, do you practice taking into account all of these issues that we've talked about or do you just focus on the music?

MM: It depends. Right now I would say I'm not focusing on these issues too much, because I do feel like I've overcome them, but from the time I was 24 to 28 it was a big part of my practice. When I was doing a lot of practice, my regular daily schedule would be waking up, go running so that I was having a heightened sense of connection with my muscles, come

back, have a shower and go straight to practice, while I had this heightened sense of awareness of my muscles and I would start every practice session lying on the floor, doing the breathing exercises and tensing and releasing different groups of muscles, feeling that connection and then I would go right into the music and some of the most difficult passages and focus on if tension was creeping in anywhere and if it did, let it go while I was playing, versus stopping and then letting it go. Training my body to feel like, if I tense up while I am playing can I relax while I am playing? So that I was becoming aware of how to release it while I was playing, because otherwise you can't solve anything.

ART: That's true... And do you feel like there's a difference in your practice routine when a concert is near?

MM: I do more run-through kind of work when a concert is nearer, but otherwise I'm going to say no, I mean I do a lot of practicing, all the time, I do a lot of slow practice, all the time, I probably also try and take up the tempo a lot more as I get closer and I practice tons under tempo, but as I get closer I have to bring it up, because that's actually not easy for me.

ART: Are you familiar with the term "self-efficacy"?

MM: Yes.

ART: So how do you feel about that relationship between the performance anxiety you felt and believing in the way you work and believing in your own ability?

MM: Right. I think... it's huge! I do now have very good confidence in my ability to learn something. I think part of, you know, those kind of formative years 24 to 28, I'm going to say, when I was really changing a lot, I remember one competition I entered had a required piece and it was like, full of scales and I felt I was really bad at scales and I remember saying to my teacher, I had three months to learn it, "why am I doing this? I'll never ever be able to play this piece like all those other competitors that play really fast and loud!" and I felt like it was "just a huge waste of my time and I don't know why I am doing this". He then kind of set me on a task on how to prepare this and it was a huge accomplishment for me, I played the piece really well and made the finals of the competition and I learned it fast, quickly, and I was able to play those scales just as fast as everybody else. I probably had to work twice as hard as the rest of the guys, it's my guess, I don't know, it felt really hard to me. But, maybe they all worked that hard over the last however many years to play scales when I just didn't care about them. The point was, I really did gain a lot of confidence in my ability to basically play what I want to play. Then, what has come from that is that I realize that those are decisions I'm making, like if I think I can't play scales well is because I have decided that it's not important for me. So, I learned that I can do it when I sit down and have a method and do the work. I think that I have built a lot of confidence in my ability to accomplish the task at hand with a system in hand.

ART: Can you tell me a little bit about how does your thought process work like, you've already talked a bit about how you practice and approach the work, but in the last hour or so, before a concert, what are the usual things you think about?

MM: So in the last hour before a performance... I'm practicing! I know that not everybody does that and sometimes people would actually recommend against it, but I practice. Because for me, it keeps me focused on the areas of the piece that I really want to stay mentally engaged with. First is kind of just listening, and I don't want to trivialize listening, I think it's actually the most important thing we do when we are playing, but what I mean by that is that if I just changed the fingering on one spot, or if I feel this spot is a little bit risky and I want to do a little *ritardando* going into it so I feel more confident, or if I feel like I

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sometimes buzz or rattle because of how my left hand is working... So I review all those spots, they're all marked in my music and I sit there and I study every one of them. To keep points of focus, I think it helps my concentration staying, as I still have nights when I'm focused and nights when I'm not and things like that help keep my focus, if I have kind of a checklist of things I have to move through, they keep my focus while I'm listening. Because it's very easy for me when I'm listening, to just get lost in the listening.

ART: That's true... And for you how important do you feel it is to perform often?

MM: Yeah, I perform much better when I perform more often. I have a friend who performs much more and one time he was comparing his schedule to mine, he plays three concerts per week fairly consistently and I will play two concerts in a weekend and a couple of weeks later I'll have one concert, and another couple of weeks later I'll have two. And those couple of weeks in between are pretty "killer" actually! I can't explain why but they are. So in this last trip I played in Louisville on Saturday night and I played in Cincinnati on Tuesday night, and Cincinnati was better than Louisville because my brain was more "on track" with performing and I think it's partly because I do many other things and partly you just lose a little bit when you're not on stage. It's always a challenge for me... If I have a couple of concerts in a row, the second and third ones are always better, the first one is always like a struggle for me. I have to work harder.

ART: So the frequency helps you to become naturally more engaged to performing?

MM: Yes. I can't believe that I'm actually much more prepared than three days earlier, right? Well, maybe a little, you learn a few things but I think it's an ability to focus on just that task at hand that comes when you're practicing as much as you're practicing on concert days.

ART: You already talked a bit about competitions... How did they help you in coping with your anxiety?

MM: Well, they create very uncomfortable situations. Because there are people there but they are not clapping for you between pieces, it's very awkward.

ART: Some say it's the most uncomfortable situation to play in...

MM: It is.

ART: ... and if you can beat that you can beat anything!

MM: Pretty much, I think it's true! It's unnatural, there are humans but no interaction, they are there to pick their favorite and unless you manage to be the winner, you are not their favorite, so there is a judgment being passed. I learned a lot from just having to overcome the uncomfortableness while playing and to overcome feelings of judgment. I think when I actually started to finally have success, it was two things, number one when I chose the right repertoire, it is a big part of that, but number two when I really stopped worrying about them judging me and I just started playing how I wanted to play.

ART: You mentioned the repertoire, how important it is to you, choosing the right repertoire and the right recital structure, one that suits your playing and enhances your confidence?

MM: That was another mistake... So, with competitions, you have to do certain things to prove yourself, so you have to choose a certain degree of difficulty, because otherwise they

will rule you out for not having a high enough degree of difficulty. You have to show a certain range of styles so that they know you can do different things. Choosing repertoire for competition is one thing, choosing repertoire for concerts is another. One thing I discovered shortly after I stopped competing, pretty much after winning GFA and I chose my tour program, and I chose it kind of like a competition to be perfectly honest, it was really high degree of difficulty, pieces that I thought all had great meat and substance, it was a really, really long and hard program. What I found was that I didn't actually really want to play a program that was that "meaty", I wanted more of a mix. It's hard, with as much teaching as I do, to practice enough to be able to play a program of 70 or 80 minutes of really high degree difficulty music, that's a lot of music without a break. So I started eventually realizing that, number one "this is just stressful for me and it doesn't feel good", so I started mixing it a little bit more and I always have a couple of pieces that are that level of intensity because I want them to practice, but if I want to be able to change up pieces every now and then it's nice to have a couple of things that maybe aren't as incredibly intense and I think a lot of general public appreciates that too.

ART: And what are your criteria for the recital structure you end up choosing? What are the factors you take into account? Music? Comfort? Starting with an easier piece...

MM: Yeah, I usually do somewhat try to start with an easier piece but it doesn't always work out, you get what you get musically... I mean I wouldn't start right off the bat with something crazy fast but other than avoiding crazy fast to start I think anything is fair game. I want something musically that feels like an invitation when you sit down and play the opening notes. Often for me it's been baroque music, quite often.

ART: Ok. What is your experience with flow? Does it happen often? Is it rare? What can you tell me about it?

MM: I'm not going to say if it is often or rare... It happens, right? I would love it if it was more often but I think that would come only if I performed more often, that's when I think it comes more. It's not rare but yeah, I think if I was playing all the time it would happen more often. Or if I was playing things with a lower degree of difficulty or just more in my comfort zone, but my programs pretty much are always stretching me still, so it's a challenge in that regard.

ART: And do you feel like there could be a relationship between flow and performance anxiety? As in, flow could be sort of like the "light at the end of the tunnel" for someone that has really high anxiety and it doesn't have to be like that. Could it be made more aware for students?

MM: I think that for high anxiety students creating a bank of positive performance experiences is incredibly important and that sometimes involves choosing pieces that are much easier than they would typically play so that they can get up there and have a high degree of success. There are people who simply get nervous around other humans regardless of what they are doing so it's a harder task, right? But if their anxieties are tied to judgment and things like that, sometimes just choosing the right degree of difficulty piece and putting it and making sure it's entirely prepared and comfortable and getting them out there and allowing them to experience that, that can be incredibly successful.

ART: Since we are talking about students, how important do you think it is to address performance anxiety issues with them?

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MM: I only talk about it if they show a problem. If they show no issues with it, we don't talk about it because I think you can "plant" it in someone's mind who doesn't even have a problem with it. So I don't even talk with them unless I see them have a problem.

ART: Ok. And for those that you see have a problem, what is your approach with them?

MM: I talk about it, about how normal it is. I really encourage them to build a bank of positive performance experiences, like I said before. Basically, the number one answer to anxiety, it's not the only, but a definite cause of anxiety is if you are not prepared. I think a lot of the students go into performances only half-prepared. So, making sure that they understand what full preparation means, so that they are not setting themselves up to feel that way, setting themselves up for failure. We talk a lot about what it means to be fully, fully prepared. Then we talk about getting positive performance experiences and if it's related to memory we play with music for a little bit and build confidence in that way, because if you just had bad experiences then we need to wash out that bank. Then I have them read all the books that are available, then we slowly start to create positive experiences.

ART: And do you believe that in schools, conservatories and universities, this issue is being addressed enough?

MM: I would say no... Actually, in one of my schools this Fall, we did a performance workshop in the beginning of the semester where this was the subject and one of our other faculty members came in and he's thought about this a lot and struggled a lot himself. He came in our cello faculty and he did a big presentation and the students were very engaged and had a lot of questions about it and that was the first time I'd really officially seen us present something and the students were very eager to hear and talk about it. So I think most schools could do more, let's say.

ART: I usually think about it this way: if a student has issues with technique, the teacher helps him, if the student has issues with musicality, the teacher helps him, but what usually happens is that if a student has issues with performance anxiety, he's somewhat abandoned. I'm confident that it can be worked upon like any other skill.

MM: Absolutely.

ART: So we've ran through all the topics I wanted to approach, so if you have any final thoughts, any final words that you'd like to say about this subject, something that you feel is important, feel free...

MM: I can't think of anything, I think you hit a lot of really great subjects and I think that it's absolutely something that is workable for most people, except for probably the most debilitating cases. I think that is something in which improvement can be seen.

ART: Ok, so thank you very much for giving your time, with your busy schedule.

MM: My pleasure, no problem. Thank you and good luck with your project!

ART: I have a few topics I'd like to approach, mostly regarding personal experiences in recitals and maybe some personal coping strategies, things like that. You can talk as much or as little as you want, it's up to you. Ok? It's all about sharing what you feel it's important to share.

AB: Ok, got it.

ART: So the first thing I would like to ask you is about your earlier experiences. How old were you when you started playing and how were your first recital experiences?

AB: I think I started when I was around 10/11 years old. Frankly, it is hard to remember the very first performance but you know what? As a teen, as a kid, you never care about stage presence and how the preparation went before performance, you just go on stage and perform. I think something switched in the age of 15/16, when you start to realize that "ok, this is something different, you need to get well prepared for performance, you need to practice well, spend more time preparing for live performance", I think that is important. Kids, if you ask and see them playing in recitals, they never care, they aren't afraid, they don't waver, they don't really care about performing, but something changes when you turn into your teens. In my experience it's like around 16/17 when you start to realize what the difference is between having fun and a good performance on stage.

ART: And do you feel like it's a matter of becoming more self-conscious, becoming more self-aware?

AB: Probably.

ART: Because when you are younger you basically don't realize what is going on.

AB: Yeah, I think so. Like I just told you, you can go and see a kids' recital and they don't care, they are just having fun on stage.

ART: ... as it should be...

AB: As it should be but when you are in your teens and realize that this is fun and that is something more serious, a serious work should be done during the preparation. But of course, the main goal is to enjoy yourself and make the public happy with your performance and not for them to see you struggling with difficult pieces.

ART: Yes, of course. And in your experience do you feel like it has any relationship with the notion of added responsibility as you get older?

AB: Yes, absolutely! Yes, it is a responsibility. In my vision that realization of responsibility appears in your teens, 15/16/17, something like that. Responsibility is a good word, yes.

ART: So when you were younger you never felt any problems with memory, thoughts, physical and emotional reactions, until that switch?

AB: No, as a kid never. A memory lapse may occur but you never care about this.

ART: Ok. If you can, in regards to performance anxiety, compare one of your best experiences while playing in a recital and one of your worst. What were the differences, what was going through your mind, what were you feeling? How well or how poorly you felt while on stage?

AB: Ok, I got the question. To me, personally, dealing with stage fright or anxiety is all about the preparation, the amount of preparation, the amount of work that is done. So if I prepared well, if I learned the music well, with the score I can start from anywhere on the piece and I have a structure of the piece in my head, that is a kind of a guarantee that the performance will go well. If this work is not done, the good preparation, that's when stage fright appears.

ART: Do you have any memory of a specific time when that happened to you?

AB: I have had a bad experience. I always tell the students, the young performers, "you need to have a disaster performance" to realize that ok, now you should start to do something different. A different way of preparation, a different approach to practicing, to not continue to make the same mistake over and over again. So, some kind of bad experience on stage, memory lapse, losing control, something we would call a disaster. You need to have some kind of experience of this to realize that "ok, I need to change something".

ART: And can you compare how you felt physically and emotionally when you had a "disaster" on stage, like you said, with when you had a really good performance? What is the difference you feel internally in your mind and body?

AB: Mind and body... I think it is really hard to explain... I can't really remember the feelings, but you can always see how the public reacts to the performance, even general public, not musicians, they respond really well when the performance goes well. I mean, technically and emotionally, if you prepared well for the concert, the public will always appreciate it and you can feel it, kind of waves from the public, you can feel it. About the personal, inner feelings, it's really hard to say something, because it's almost unexplainable. I think it's all about self-control on stage, if you lose control it also means you need to change something in the way you prepare for a concert and your general presentation on stage, how to behave or act while on stage.

ART: There is also a balance between giving yourself into the music and retaining that amount of control you need for a good performance. Or for you it is letting go of everything and trusting in your preparation?

AB: 50/50, of course. The best way is to work hard on the piece, get into the structure, into the details and so on... but eventually when you appear on stage ok, you just need to let the music flow, not keep on mind all the other stuff, "ok it's measure 7, there is a scale, measure 19 should be diminuendo" or whatever. No, that work should be done at home, on stage just let it flow. But to make it flow, you need hours, weeks, months and years practicing behind it.

ART: Yes, I understand. When you said you had that "disaster" performance, did you actually feel overwhelmed, like you couldn't handle it at that time? Or was it a more subtle feeling like simply realizing "I'm not playing well"?

AB: Let me think... The point is that the inner feeling about how the performance went is different for the people who listen to you. You may feel like it is a disaster but when you ask someone, even a professional musician that attended the concert, they may say that it went pretty good.

ART: Yes, yes...

AB: Maybe there was something wrong, but in general, the piece in general, the shape of the piece or whatever, was good. That's why I always suggest to people and to my students to record themselves during practice sessions. Audio/video recordings, especially the video can help, you can even do it like a dress rehearsal. You can put your suit on, turn on the camera and sit and bow and do everything like on stage and you will feel almost the same feelings.

ART: Sometimes when you have a recorder with the red light on that is enough to make you feel different.

AB: Yes, the small red light works like a listener, like something different.

ART: I know that the perspective of the audience is very different than the perspective of the performer, so that's why I'm asking more about the inner feelings because, in the end, what the audience feels is less important for me, as what I'm searching for is how a musician can feel good with himself while on stage. Because some musicians don't, even if they play well they feel bad, because the experience of performance was unpleasant for them, because they are struggling inside even if they don't show it. What kind of symptoms do you usually feel? Like trembling, high heart rate? Do you ever feel anything like that?

AB: Yes, I do have it. I have low blood pressure, that's not good for a musician, I mean it is normal but it is close to the lower end.

ART: And do you start to feel faint because of it?

AB: Personally, yes. Of course it doesn't help to feel to feel good before a performance, but then you start to think about ways to get it through. What I personally do is I don't practice right before appearing on stage. I just relax, calm down and try to kind of "fall asleep" for a few minutes.

ART: A deep relaxation...

AB: Yes, a deep relaxation, it really helps. Instead of you know, playing fast scales right before going on stage. Deep relaxation, yeah.

ART: Do those symptoms of faintness or others related to anxiety prevent you from playing normally? Or do you get over them with those techniques of deep relaxation?

AB: This relaxation really helps when you are well prepared for the concert. When you practiced a lot, you played the program well at home, when stage fright appears this relaxation technique helps. Without this amount of technical work behind it doesn't really work.

ART: And do you feel like you can overcome anything that appears? Any problem, any tension?

AB: Yes, yes. It can appear over and over again.

ART: Several times during a concert, you mean?

AB: Yes.

ART: What do you think are the greatest concerns for a guitarist specifically? What things do you feel makes us struggle more than other instruments?

AB: Hmm, it's hard to compare... but it's all about the touch, you know, our technique is very "touchy", all about small movements and a very precise touch. Comparing with a pianist for example, you can touch the key in several ways and it doesn't matter that much. Sometimes I compare guitar technique with a "laser" selection, because of the precision. Yes, there might be some specifics with the guitar performance and our technique, because it is really small and really precise.

ART: After that stage where you said you were 15/16 and started to worry a bit more about performance and preparation, at what age did you start to feel in control?

AB: Well, just recently.

AB: Really?

AB: Just recently, yeah. What helps you is those kind of big tours like GFA can offer, or whatever. If you win a big competition or if you play a lot of concerts with the same program that really helps, because if you have like one performance in a year, or a couple of performances in a semester it doesn't really help you to get through and to have experience. And then if you say "today I didn't play very well", tomorrow I play the same program and I feel better, and after tomorrow, over and over again, you feel the pieces getting better and better. I think this is important, the amount of performances, the amount of concerts, it might not be commercial concerts; it might be concerts for free, just playing for other people.

ART: And during that evolution, where you slowly started to feel more in control with each performance, were you working on it by yourself or did you seek help from teachers or friends?

AB: Personally I just analyze my own feelings, my own thoughts... Like I told you before, I do a lot of recordings, daily, I spend hours every day recording and afterwards I analyze everything, the music itself, the stage presence, how the hands look, there might be something wrong with the hand position or whatever, what we call general presentation, several things that work all together. Personally, I always work on this, but at the same time I suggest to people, the students, other players, young players, to get the information, to get the feedback from others, from the teachers and other musicians. The best way, I think, is to get a lesson from non-guitarists, you know? They don't care about nails, strings or whatever, they only think about the music in general and that is important, especially for advanced players.

ART: Do you believe, in your personal experience, that the ability to deal with stage fright is innate or it is something that you can and should work upon?

AB: I think we all are born with this, because it's a part of our evolution. When we start feeling stage fright and all physiological stuff, when you feel the cold on your fingertips, it's because the blood comes over. When you feel there is danger, it's the same feeling. You know, our grand-grandparents when they felt danger, it was the same physiological stuff, the blood comes over and leaves the small parts of your body to help you get through the danger. What you need to do is just realize the switch, that a performance is not the same as meeting with a wild animal or something that can kill you.

ART: Yes, your life is not really in danger...

AB: Yes, that helps to prevent it and perform well. We are all born with these feelings, it's a part of evolution.

ART: But some musicians feel that sense of imminent danger more than others, would you agree? Or do you believe everyone feels it more or less in the same way?

AB: No, we are all different. It depends on... it's all personal, I mean, the way you deal with this is personal. Definitely we are all born with this feeling, but dealing with it is different for each of us.

ART: But anyone can work on it, right?

AB: Yes, absolutely! We should work on it. What else... A lot of material is published on this topic, especially in psychology and physiology; you can learn a good volume of information from that.

ART: Yes, I've been reading a lot on that. Earlier you said that preparation is really important to give a good performance on stage. When you are preparing, what do you focus on? Do you just focus on the music and technical aspects or do you also focus on confidence and the mental aspects to performing?

AB: I think I concentrate on both the technical and musical stuff and I never separate it. There is a good video by Matthew McAllister, the Scottish guitarist, with the title "How to practice musically", because we spend a lot of time working on scales and arpeggios, but McAllister speaks of how it should be during a performance, to practice musically. I recommend watching that video. Also it is kind of a part of the Russian musical tradition, in our tradition we never separate the technical stuff and the musical expressivity when working on it, we don't separate it. In western tradition there is kind of a separation, for instance, western European violinists they have to pass through all the capriccios by Rode and Paganini before starting to play "normal" music, which is the way how western music pedagogy works. They separate technical stuff and musical stuff. In Russian tradition it's all together, and I now feel like part of this tradition, even being a guitarist, anyway as a part of Russian tradition, which means technical and musical stuff all connected.

ART: And what about the mental aspect of performing, do you prepare that as well?

AB: Yes. I think... when I play I'm thinking about a melodic line, sometimes not on the top, it might be in the bottom or a middle line, and I think about the notes and it helps, like *solfeggio*.

ART: Yes, that's important. Do you practice any different when a concert is near? Or do you practice the same whether you have a concert pending or not?

AB: I think it is a different way, because if you don't have a concert, personally I just need 1,5 or 2 hours a day to keep myself in form, to play a set of exercises or a set of pieces just to keep myself ready. But when the concert is approaching, personally I spend more time, 5, 6 or more hours a day, start working with a recorder, scores and so on.

ART: Ok. Are you familiar with the term self-efficacy?

AB: No...

ART: Basically, self-efficacy is the belief in one's own ability to accomplish a task successfully. In regards to musicians, if you want to give a good performance, you will need high self-efficacy, or a high belief that you are able to do it.

AB: Ok.

ART: What I want to ask you is, how important is that belief, that confidence in your preparation and in your own ability to deal with the demands of a professional performance?

AB: Ok, I got it. I think of course it's important but without the work it doesn't really help. It might help with the lots of hours you spend practicing. Without this it's just a kind of substitution, you don't really practice a lot but you believe you will give a good performance, it won't work.

ART: Yeah, that won't work.

AB: That's a kind of, you know, wrong substitution. For me there is no substitute for the amount of hours you spend with the instrument.

ART: You know the opposite can happen too, right? You can practice a lot of hours and if you have severe problems with stage fright, it doesn't really matter how many hours you practice if you don't believe you will be able to play well.

AB: Yes, that's true, but what I personally feel is that you should do a kind of mental training, say to yourself "Ok, I'm confident! I'm ready!" and this really helps when you prepared well. If you are not prepared it doesn't really work.

ART: Yes, but then you have confidence in your preparation...

AB: Yes, right!

ART: Earlier you mentioned competitions like GFA, do feel like the demands of a competition help working through the personal issues of performance anxiety?

AB: It might help and it might be kind of destructive... because, you know, regarding competitions, sometimes people have just a few pieces they prepared very well and come over and over on those competitions and they may win, but they don't grow as musicians. In this point, competitions are kind of destructive.

ART: Yes, I agree.

AB: Competitions can help at the same time; it can be a good experience. The preparation for concerts for general public and the preparation for competitions, with judges, professional musicians, should be different. On stage, for general public you need to be more emotional, you may lose some notes or whatever, it doesn't matter, the general performance is more important. On the other side, competitions, it's all about the quality, precision, there might be less expressivity but more control and less amount of lost notes and mistakes, like playing out of tune and so on. There should be a different way of preparation and, let's say, a different quality of performance.

ART: Yes, good perspective. While performing have you ever had experiences with flow? When you feel like you are in absolute control, totally confident and nothing can go wrong?

AB: I think I have had those kind of feelings, once again it was kind of an inner feeling, what the people felt it might have been different. There might have been some wrong notes but the general presentation was really good and the inner feeling was pretty good, "ok, I'm making music and I see how people are getting happy". It's all about the emotions, I think, it's not the practical or technical stuff.

ART: When you decide on a program or a recital structure, do you feel like the way you organize the pieces helps you with your confidence? Or can you start with anything?

AB: Good question! Let's say that the general approach is to put an easy piece, or a piece you can deal with easily, in the beginning of the concert and then it's growing and growing... how to say this...

ART: ... increasing the difficulty and the challenge...

AB: Right! But there might be another approach to the program, for instance, I know some players, really top players, that love to play kind of monographical concerts, for example all the Rossiniana by Giuliani, 3 in the first part and 3 in the second part, so the first approach wouldn't work in this case.

ART: Yes, because they are all hard!

AB: Yes, they are all hard; every section of every piece is a real challenge. I think the best solution is always in between, a varied program, some easy pieces just to relax and if you have a piece that is really hard to play, after this one there should be a piece for relaxation. It might be easier technically and easier for the general public to understand, I think it makes sense to compose a program in this way.

ART: So the recital structure could then be used as a tool to make you feel more comfortable, right?

AB: Absolutely, yes, absolutely!

ART: Earlier, you mentioned your students and the advice you give them, how important do you feel it is to address these issues about performance anxiety?

AB: Of course it's important. It's really important because normally the students have less concerts, less live performances than professionals and you need to organize it and whatever. What I suggest is to perform more, to take any chance to perform live, for any public, especially for general public, general audience and not musicians. You know, somebody told me, I think it was a button accordion player, you know what it is? It's like a folk instrument...

ART: Like a bandoneon, what Piazzolla played...

AB: Yes, but bigger! They can play everything, even Bach, it's a universal instrument. So one button accordion player, a really good one, said to me once "you know why it is important to play for general public? Because if they react well, if they like what you play,

ANNEX II - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

and it doesn't matter what you play, you can play contemporary music for 40 minutes, if you prepared well and do it well, people feel it and will like it". It's kind of an illustration, "ok this is really good, and that is not good", if the public likes what you do, that means your way, your approach to practicing, of everything is good. If the general public, not the musicians, don't like it somehow, emotionally or whatever, that means you need to change something, your approach to playing or performing on stage.

ART: In your opinion do you feel like music schools, conservatories and universities are doing enough to prepare students for dealing with the demands of performing, such as performance anxiety?

AB: I don't know about the western educational system, in my experience I never studied abroad, I got my degree here in Russia. In our tradition, in our structure, we have nothing to do with this, and it's not really good, we need to have some lectures on this. The actors, the theater and film actors, they really train this point really well. Maybe we can start attending classes with them, because some universities have degrees in theater, what we can do just to start is learning from them because they are dealing really well with stage fright, they have some experience, some volume of research, literature on this. I can remember Stanislavsky and his work.

ART: As long as it helps the next generations of musicians I feel like any change would be positive. Because they become even more prepared and feel better on stage and probably will even play music better.

AB: Absolutely, yes.

ART: Any final words you would like to say? Any other topic you feel like we should talk about?

AB: I think I've said what I wanted to say, all the important stuff. So, preparation... once again, it's all personal, you might find musicians that don't really care about preparation, they might not practice with the instrument, and they might just practice with scores. I know a couple of guitarists who are working in this way, playing no more than 1,5 hours a day.

ART: Really?! That's impressive!

AB: Really. I know a couple of guitarists, really good players, which practice in this way. And it's a different approach and if it works it means its ok, it might be good for someone. Me, personally, I need to practice a lot, I need to spend a lot of time in preparation. A lot of hours, days, weeks and months, and so on.

ART: Yes... So, thank you very much for doing this! It's been really nice talking to you and learning about your perspective of these issues and... Merry Christmas!

AB: Merry Christmas! It's been my pleasure, hope it helps!

ART: It will for sure, it was really insightful.

Michalis Kontaxakis: So about the subject, it's such a nice subject that you are doing.

André Rafael Tempera: Yes, when I was choosing the main theme of my thesis I really wanted it to be something that would be really useful, not only for guitarists but for possibly for any musician.

MK: It is a nice subject. I am one or two generations older than you in the guitar, so when I was a student, people were not talking a lot about performance anxiety, it was a topic that... there was the feeling that each one of us would have to fight alone. You had to find a personal way of getting over it and there was no theory.

ART: I've heard that before, like it was taboo...

MK: It was also a taboo but it was also that people didn't know how to help, because people didn't think deep enough about what it was actually. And what could we do, and how would it be possible to make a more scientific approach to help people. Exchanging experiences was also not very common and, of course, teachers didn't speak a lot about this, during class to the students. If you speak to guitarists before me, one or two generations older than me, they will probably tell you that it was even worse in their time, people were talking even less. I am very glad that I can see now that the people are talking about this, there is knowledge about this. My personal experience is... I can talk to you about my experiences as a player and my experiences as a professor, because I speak a lot about those things in class, trying to help students.

ART: That will be useful.

MK: So, it seems that in my case, as a player, whatever I read as theory is really true. I feel like I really experienced exactly what theory says. I say to the students, most of the times, if you think that the brain has a part which is more for mathematics, more for logical processes, more for coherencies, I think this is the left part if I remember correctly...

ART: Left hemisphere, yes.

MK: And there is another part of the brain that is more for art, more for feelings, for colors, for impressions, for kinesthesia, for everything like that. Then try to use more the left part of the brain when you study and right part of the brain when you play. I think this is one thing that could help but before that, there is another, very basic thing. It took me some years when I was young, to accept it. This is the very basic step, the very first step, is to accept that this is a part of the job, there is no way to avoid this. It is in vain, completely in vain, to try somehow, by taking medicine, by doing yoga, by praying, by thinking of things, to try to avoid it. To try for this adrenaline, this stage fright as we call it, not to come. So the basic step, the very first step for me is to accept that it will come, it is going to be there. Personally, I've been playing professionally in concerts for 20 years now, and I have the same kind of stage fright now or even worse than I had when I was 20 years old. Thank God that I accepted early enough that it was going to be like that forever and there is only one way, which is not trying to force it somehow not to come or trying to hide it. Try to deal with it! It is said that really great players they actually make it into an advantage in their performances. Personally I felt that very rarely to be honest but at least I have the feeling now, after all

those years of experience, that I can deal with it. Actually, it would be terrifying if one moment I walked on the stage and didn't feel the adrenaline running inside.

ART: You would feel empty...

MK: Yes, it would feel like I'm dead! Like I have nothing to give and it would probably make me feel very afraid. But you know, after playing many times on stage you know how it is when it comes, the basic thing is to accept that it will always be there and try to find a strategy to deal with it. The strategy is, first, to use the left part of the brain when you study. There are types of memory that we use when we play and they say there is mental memory, aural memory, photographic memory... and there is also muscle memory which is when the body is taught to do something and you don't need to be very concentrated, it can do by itself. Like when we drive and we are thinking of something else but we can still drive the car because the legs and hand know perfectly what they are doing. Like when you are watching television but you are playing a piece in the guitar and the fingers know exactly where to go. This is the kind of thing that we should never do when we practice. Muscle memory is sometimes very, very, very useful in concert but we should not use it very much, in fact we should use it as less as possible, when practicing. Because, for me, what really works is using the mental memory and trying to be always as concentrated as possible when practicing. To make my plan very in detail concerning putting the piece in memory and also, solving the technical stuff of the piece, putting everything in order in the brain, very carefully and playing always with maximum concentration, as concentrated as possible in the studying room. On stage, the brain will try automatically to concentrate as much as possible because of adrenaline, but you should try maybe to concentrate on different things than while practicing. For example, to concentrate on what you really want to do, how do you want the piece to sound. It also helps to look at a certain part of the stage, at the first row or towards your feet and footstool, but to think more about the music and less about the technical part of the job. And to rely sometimes more on muscle memory while in concert, to trust more on muscle memory in concert. But everything is based on what you did before, this will never work in concert if you previously didn't do, in practicing, what you should have done, if you didn't mark very well all the checkpoints in memory, if you didn't try to study with maximum concentration. I describe this situation to the students sometimes like that; I say "when you sit on stage, your brain will start asking you questions. Do you know what is the first note of the piece? Do you know which finger you use to play that first note of the piece? Do you know which finger on the right hand? Which finger on the left hand? Do you know where it... And it will bombard you with questions. You should expect that". You should study at home expecting that, because of adrenaline, your brain will start asking you all these kinds of questions. You should have an answer ready for all those questions, and then you will feel more relaxed on stage. Now could you imagine what would happen if in the practice room you always practice using muscle memory, watching television, talking to someone, really relying very much on muscle memory and then you go on stage and this bombardment of questions begins? There are people who forget the first note of the piece. And then you are in panic, then you are in complete panic, and there is a domino effect of mistakes and you start feeling worse and you are not capable of controlling anything. So, it is very useful to expect that your brain is going to work like that, it will automatically try to concentrate as much as possible on the stage and to ask you all these questions. You should expect that and you should have the answers. "Yes, I know!" If you always say to yourself that you know, you are prepared for that. "I know! C'mon, ask me anything you want!", I know which is the finger for the first note and for the second and for the third and I know I am prepared for the worst. And even if I have a complete memory block, I am so well prepared that I know exactly what my checkpoints are and where to go. So this immediately makes you feel more relaxed, makes you feel that you are in control of what is happening there on stage. Then you can even use the adrenaline to make more passionate and more musical performances, when you pass through that first phase with the bombardment of questions, to the second

phase which is “Ok, c’mon, I know what I am doing here, I am very well prepared, I trust myself” which is very important, to trust ourselves. “Now, let’s concentrate on music, not on which is the finger or if I remember the piece well, now let’s concentrate more in more important, or more artistic things, let’s really try to play some music” And then you feel that even in some points you can use adrenaline to help you play in a way that is more extroverted, more musical even, sometimes.

ART: Wow, that is very interesting! Your perspective reminds me of some things I read, which basically say the same thing, that when an expert, whether a musician or something else, tries to improve their ability they should postpone the automatic execution of a task as much as possible, because once it becomes automatic it no longer improves.

MK: Exactly. I say to my students that when this happens it is only gymnastics for the fingers but it’s nothing really more than that. It is only to move the fingers, it is only for the muscles but nothing more, it doesn’t really make anything else better. We speak a lot about those things in class, I can see that nowadays many professors speak and there are also many books to study, but this is something which we should do. The feedback I get from the students, I can tell you my experience about this, I say many times that there is a point where they don’t have the ability to classify very well what they are doing, to classify their playing. So, I saw them sometimes in student concerts coming down from the stage saying “It was really very bad” and I am happy because they did better than they usually do in the class, but they don’t understand. Why? Because when they are practicing they don’t have enough consciousness, they play using the muscle memory and they don’t classify their mistakes well, they don’t mind their mistakes much, they think that it’s a small mistake but in fact they know how to play it. In the concert, when they are concentrating and with all this adrenaline, every small mistake they may seem really huge to them, like they did something really, really bad. And they lose the ability to know what they are really doing, to judge if they are playing well or not. Another thing we lose, every one of us, on stage because of stage fright, is a good sense of time. One second seems like one minute, almost, because of high adrenaline. We should have this in mind, we should always think of this situation and we should always try to think of the music more slowly, we should push our mind to think more slowly, because of adrenaline we think faster. Sometimes people go in different tempos than they practiced, than they planned, and they get in trouble. It’s good to know that it is better to think more slowly, it’s better to get a slower tempo than planned, than the opposite. Also, another thing which is very useful is trying to learn how to breathe, this something that singers know very well but instrumentalists don’t take very good care of. To breathe with diaphragm, to breathe slowly and deep, it helps to reduce the cadence, to reduce the heart rate, because due to adrenaline it can get very high and this is a problem. Breathing normally and not holding our breath during difficult passages, trying to control our posture in the right direction to help breathing, not being tense, it really helps a lot. This can also help before going to stage, when you are in the green room, preparing to go on, it helps to take in good, very deep, diaphragmatic breaths, it also helps. Personally I would also say something, and it is something that I am always doing, I try to think about the concert from very early in the morning. When I have a concert at night, I try to think and sometimes I try to get nervous in the morning, which helps, because you have time to think, you have time to work in your head about all those things and for me it is never a very good sign when I’m very relaxed in the morning of the concert. I like it when I am tense, when I am stressed in the morning because it means that if I work with that stress during the day, I will be more relaxed at night in the concert. By more relaxed I don’t mean I try to avoid it, I mean I try to think about the concert, to think about what I want to do, to think that I want to fight against this stage fright and to be ready to fight against it, and to convince myself that I am prepared enough to deal with it and to do my music without letting this anxiety be a very big problem in my performance.

ART: Yeah, those are some interesting points of view. So, if I understand your perspective correctly, you really feel like there should be a different functioning of the hemispheres of the brain, relating to the difference between practicing and performing.

MK: Exactly. But I think it is not very easy to do this without practicing because this is a thing that we should practice because we don't have a switch to switch mode very easily. You should press your mind when practicing and you should practice with those ways that will give you confidence. This is what I thought before reading all those books, before knowing about how the brain works in detail, and before this knowledge became a common thing between musicians, I was thinking that I should practice in a way that would give me maximum confidence when I am on stage. This way was always to practice using the left hemisphere of the brain, this is what I discovered later, that what I was doing actually was that I was always trying to use my "mathematical" side of the brain when practicing, to know, to put everything very well in order. The practicing room is not a place where you should make art in the way you make on stage. At least, not always. Of course, you will rehearse, you will try to play the same way that you will play on the stages in the room, but this is another thing, when you practice you don't actually rehearse, only sometimes, and all the rest of the practicing time should be very conscious, putting the things in order like I described before.

ART: So, one could say something like: practice is left hemisphere, then rehearsal is like a bridge between the left and the right hemispheres, maybe...

MK: Yes, trying to switch.

ART: ... trying to switch between one and the other and during performance, trying to remain confident while working more with the right hemisphere.

MK: Exactly.

ART: That makes a lot of sense. But that "bridge" is not very easy, not easy at all to make the switch.

MK: It is not easy, but there you will hear from musicians many kind of tricks or ways that each one has. I read once that, it was a pianist, I don't remember who it was, but it was one of those very big names like Rubinstein, maybe it was him, he said that he likes, when he goes to the stage, to see one person, to focus on one person in the public, usually sitting on the first or the second row, and to think that during the entire concert he is playing for that person.

ART: Just one person?

MK: Yes, just one person. So you go out on stage and you see a beautiful lady on the first row and you think "Ok, I will play the complete concert for her". So you choose one person from the public, the one that maybe catches your attention first. It is a kind of trick which helps you to concentrate on more artistic things, in fact, "How will I play? How will I do my dynamics?" even with your body movement, "How will I do it? How will I impress?", because music is an art of impression, also. This helps you not to concentrate on notes, if it is Do-Re-Mi-Fa, or if it is second finger, or if it is another thing... which is always useful. Because most of the mistakes are happening on stage when you are over-concentrating on the technical part, when you are over-concentrated on fingering, on notes, on sequences, that kind of stuff.

ART: That is true. I'm interested in hearing more about your practice process to prepare for a performance, what is the difference between day-to-day practice and practicing when you have an upcoming concert? And do you actually take into account relaxation, confidence, visualizing the upcoming performance, or do you just focus on technique and musicality?

MK: Actually, when concert is coming, what I do is not practicing. Practicing already finished days before the concert. What I'm doing, this is personal, I don't know if other people do it, what I feel works for me and am usually doing is only rehearsing the program. If I'm playing tomorrow, for example, then today I will not practice any technique and I will not practice the technical part of the program, I will not play it in parts, I will not study like usual practice. But I will play the complete program three or four times, with a small break in between. And I like the feeling to wake up, grab the guitar and try to play the complete program from beginning to end like on stage, but maybe in that case I'd do it a little bit more slowly, like what I told you before, pressing the brain to think more slowly, pressing the brain to enlarge everything. But if the concert is in 10 days for example, and I am still in the process of practicing, it would be different, because since we don't have a concert tomorrow we can practice those left part of the brain things I was talking about before, so I would do the memory very carefully, passages, I would study in parts, I would study the pieces one by one and not complete program, etcetera. What in fact I now realize talking to you, what I'm doing actually is trying to teach myself to have control of that bridge we spoke about earlier, that I think is what I'm trying to study the days before the concert, by rehearsing, rehearsing the program, playing only the program from beginning to end. It is like I'm saying to myself that practicing is over, what is done is done and you cannot play any better, you cannot make anything better, what you can do is try to work in order to keep that level you already have reached, in the concert. This is by working that bridge we talked about before.

ART: And when you are practicing and working with that "bridge", do you work on things like relaxation and emotional responses or you just focus on the music?

MK: Sometimes I work... I try to make a plan, in fact, what I'm trying to do is to have a very detailed plan about what I will try to think, where I will concentrate, on each moment of the program. For that, you have to take into account the construction of the program. Where do you have the difficult stuff? Where do you have the easy stuff? At one moment I would have to think on the relaxation of the right part of my body, at another I should avoid thinking about fingering because it's a very tricky part and it might originate mistakes or something, at yet another moment I should focus on, I don't know, dynamics. So I try to make a plan of what is important to think about. When you are making these kind of plans, when you are rehearsing, it is better in my opinion, to concentrate on "do's" instead of "don'ts", on what you want to do and not on what you want to avoid. Because it is better to think positive things rather than negative things. So, when I want to say to myself "Ok, now this is a very tricky part" it is not a good idea if you overconcentrate on fingering, a problem may happen. So I try to think on something else, not to avoid, but to force myself to focus on something else "Ok, now this is a good moment to think of... a garden in the village", something like that, I don't know, which is also a good trick. If you manage to have a good plan on what you are going to be concentrating in, for every single part of the concert, it is a fantastic thing, it really helps a lot.

ART: Yes.

MK: But I was telling you that this is not always something that has to do with the body, or with expression or music elements, or with technique, it can be anything. You can have a plan which contains focusing on body tension and muscle relaxation on one point, and then in another point on *forte* and *piano*, or on articulation, or on the rhythm... and then on the

next moment think of a very good friend that you lost, or about something very sentimental that happened.

ART: It can be anything really...

MK: Yes!

ART: Just to keep you focused on one thing instead of letting your mind get scattered, overthinking things and becoming overwhelmed, making more mistakes... Yes, it makes sense.

Let me ask you, are you familiar with the term “self-efficacy”?

MK: No, I'm sorry.

ART: No problem, I'll briefly explain. It relates to self-confidence and self-esteem but it's more specific. It is basically the belief in the ability you have of accomplishing a certain task. So it's really important in music, for example, believing in the quality of your practice and preparation, and believing that when you go on stage you will still be able to play well. How is it for you, do you work on that consciously?

MK: Believing in what we are doing, believing that we are capable of going on stage and play and perform is maybe the most important thing. And in the way you practice also. It is important, it is vital; it is really the basis for everything. Or, let's say, if you don't have that it is very difficult to go and perform. Extremely difficult. So, for that, I would say what I said before, to concentrate on what you want to do, and what you can do and not on what you can't do. Even if we have a very high level of professionalism and mastery in our instrument, there are things that we cannot do. We should never focus on those things, when we are in the process of preparing a performance, we should focus on what we can do. We should always believe that what we can do is enough for us to go on stage and perform. So, about doubts... I'm always saying to my students, and it is something that I am saying to myself also, that “when you are planning your interpretation, your performance, how do you want that piece to sound?” Actually, there is quite a big amount of decisions that you will make, a collection of decisions, many, many decisions. “How about this note? How about this *crescendo*? How about...” Always in music there is a very big subjective aspect to it. You can always have doubts, if what you are doing is ok or not ok. The point is that you should make those decisions, and making those decisions helps a lot. Actually, what helps me is to decide about everything, not to leave anything to luck. My motto is “It is better to make a bad decision than no decision”. If you ask all those masters of music about their past performances they will probably tell you about many performances that they don't like anymore and now they play completely different. This is something that is absolutely normal. What we are doing now, in 5 or 10 years, we will look at that and think that now we would do it differently. When you go on stage and support what you are, what you decided, now, this is something that you should believe deeply before going to perform, that actually what you are going to present are your decisions about everything that is inside the piece. You should decide about everything and then you should go and support it. It is very simple but it is not easy. So, this kind of confidence, this kind of belief in what we are doing, it comes easier when we plan everything and make decisions about everything. Because then we feel we worked and planned and what we are going to present is us, our personal opinions and views. Normally, when you have worked very hard in preparing the pieces, the public is there to recognize that. Another interesting thing is the relationship the artist has with the public. Does he feel the public as an enemy? As a friend? As support? It is very important in psychology, for the stage. There are musicians that sometimes think that public is only there to criticize, that they are waiting for you to make a mistake, they don't feel the public is there

to support. Every time I go on stage, I really think that the public loves me. Not because I am a star, but because they paid for the ticket and they are there to listen to me. They should have nice feelings for me, otherwise they wouldn't have come! I really feel like that, like they are a big support. If I really practice so much, if I really dedicated my life completely to what I'm doing, if I really dedicated so many hours into practicing, they will recognize that for sure. And even if I make mistakes, some silly mistakes sometimes, people will forgive me for sure. Because they will recognize that I am not cheating, I'm not here to pretend I'm somebody else, I'm here to give them my truth, what I have been working all my life for. And they will appreciate that, I'm sure, even if they disagree or dislike some things, at least they will recognize my work, my effort. This kind of thinking about the public really helps a lot, psychologically. It really is a big help, it gives you strength to overcome difficulties. I cannot imagine how it would be if I would feel that the public is there to criticize everything I do, that they are against me. I would probably die from stress.

ART: And it doesn't even make sense, when you think about it rationally, it doesn't make sense to think that the public would be against you. It's just one of those things that the mind does, it distorts the perception and we get worried for no reason. But yeah, it happens...

MK: And I know people who think like that! Especially when we were younger and we were going to competitions... and competitions can make you think like that because the public and the jury are comparing everyone, because it is a competition. They will always discuss about who was better than the other. These kind of competitions sometimes can make you think like that, like the public is only there to compare and criticize. I did many competitions in the past, when I was a student, and I didn't feel so well with the public then, like I am feeling now.

ART: Do you believe that being involved in competitions helped you to cope better with anxiety? In any way at all?

MK: Personally, no. It didn't help. Actually, the opposite, I was always very, very stressed in competitions. I was always looking forward to the period where I would no longer be in competitions. I was feeling extremely stressed, and comparing to how I feel now, it was not very good for me. I should have convinced myself earlier that I should not have felt like that. With what I know now, if I would go back I would feel differently, but you cannot. When you are 20 you are 20, when you are 25 you are 25... we are getting more mature. Musicians are able to mature more and more until a very late age, always, until they get really old, I really believe that. In a few months I will be 40, but knowing musicians that are older than me I really feel that wisdom and maturity comes, as long as you are working really hard and with honesty and with love. And it makes me very happy to think that.

ART: For sure. What I would like to ask you now is, do you remember your first auditions, your first public performance? How old were you when you started?

MK: I remember everything but it is not very easy to say which was my first public performance because I was participating in student concerts from a very early age, but they were not professional concerts. I started when I was about 8 or 9 years old, in student concerts. Do you mean those?

ART: Yes, the very first public appearances, in student auditions and stuff like that. I would like to know what were your feelings when performing for other people at the time. Was it frightening? Was it fun?

MK: I was about 8 years old... I did not have any idea of what was going on. I felt great, I felt like it was a game. I was very young, I was a child. I was playing and trying to look to the audience to find my mom, 3 minutes before going on stage I was playing football or something, there was no stress at all. But I think when I was 11 or 12, around that age, I feel like stage fright was already present, mildly in the beginning and then as I was growing it was more and more present, until I was 18 or 19, it was the peak. It seemed impossible to deal with stage fright at 18, I was desperate.

ART: At that time did you feel overwhelmed? Like you were helpless and could not do anything about it?

MK: Exactly. There were moments that I felt like that. And there were moments that I was thinking that there was no way I could deal with that, that the others must be another kind of human beings, those who could play concerts. "It is not for me...", there was a moment I thought like that. Around 18, something like that, this was the worst age. There was a bad period of 2 or 3 years around that age. Then I think in my mid twenties it was already much better. And from that age, every year it gets better and better. It is present, it is always strong, I am always stressed when I go on stage, but what is better and better is the way I deal with it. Now I am not afraid of it, I am waiting for it. I know that it will come and I'm waiting.

ART: That is a nice and positive attitude. When you did feel overwhelmed what were the symptoms you would usually feel? More related to memory? More physical? Emotional?

MK: It was everything together but it was more physical. The right hand was trembling and I felt it was very difficult to control. There were many, many mistakes, playing the wrong strings, not being able to control the dynamics and not being able to play as fast as when practicing, and this was very frustrating. But left hand also, oh my god! I remember the first time I played for Leo Brouwer, it was not even a concert, it was a masterclass. I played "*El decameron negro*", the first movement, and there a section with parallel chords, I think I missed all of them, the wrong fret in the left hand in all of those. I don't think I played even one of them right. And I was so disappointed after that masterclass. I think I was 19 at that time. In that period, playing in a masterclass in front Leo Brouwer was enough to feel like I could not control anything. There were other people there, public, I felt really humiliated.

ART: Now you can laugh about it but I bet at that time it was a really bad feeling.

MK: It was a bad feeling, yes. But in a way I felt that I wanted to fight against that. I remember that after that I tried to play again for maestro Brouwer in the next day. I was thinking about it the entire night, "I need to vindicate myself somehow and play better tomorrow". I always felt I wanted to fight, but there were moments I felt really weak.

ART: As a guitarist what do you feel that are our major concerns, what makes us anxious? Are there any particularities that make us feel more anxious?

MK: I don't know if there is a matter of more or less. There are particularities, there are differences. I think every musician, every performer, actors or musician, whatever, they have the same kind of feelings when they go on stage, but there are particularities. Personally, I think guitar is an extremely difficult instrument to play at a concert level. That is because it is very easy to make mistakes, extremely easy. A tiny loss of coordination is enough, the kind of accuracy of movements you need you don't find in many other instruments. The accuracy you need in the right hand movements is something I think is very unique. The way you are in touch with the instrument and produce the sound, there is nothing else, no mechanism

between you and the instrument, not even a bow, you are producing everything with your hands and nails and body. I feel the guitar is an instrument that is extremely “sensitive”, in a way. You know, you go one millimeter off and it sounds completely different. That is, of course, something which makes us extremely nervous. Another particularity I think about the guitar, even though there are other instruments with this also, but I feel this very strongly with the guitar, is that you have the same notes in different positions, in other strings. So you can play the same stuff with different fingering and on different strings. That’s why, I think with guitar, visual memory is also very important, it helps very much. I suggest many times to the students that it is usually more effective to memorize the left hand positions and the fingerings than to memorize the notes. Sometimes the notes do not matter, because if you know them but you go with the wrong fingering, play it on the wrong string, then you are in trouble, you will not be able to continue. In piano, for example, you just need to remember the notes and there is only one way to play, of course you also have different fingerings, but at least you do not have the same note 2 or 3 times like guitarists have in the *tastiera*. Also, if you go in detail you can find some very “guitaristic” things in the body position, posture, etc., using the footstool sometimes creates some difficulties in body relaxation, because you have one side of the body in a different position than the other. This is also something exclusive to the guitar. Another thing that concerns guitarists a lot is the acoustics, because the guitar is a very quiet instrument. When you go to a hall and have unexpected acoustics, everything that you planned to focus on can be destroyed. That is why I always take that into account, when I go to a hall that I don’t know, I think “Be prepared to not be able to listen to anything, that the guitar will have very little sound, don’t lose your plan, no matter how much or little you can hear the guitar, focus on the plan”. It is a trap, also, when you don’t hear the guitar well, we press much more and we lose much more energy and we think that something is wrong. We should also take that into account.

ART: How about the nails, do you also feel like they are a concern?

MK: Yes, of course! You know, I don’t warm up before a concert. The day of the concert I play a lot, I want to play at least 3 or 4 hours, but from the time I get the final shape of the nails, I do not want to play more. So I take care of the nails 20 minutes before the concert and then I do not warm up anymore, because I don’t want to ruin them. It is a compulsion sometimes but I it is very important. If you think of how important they are to us, they produce the sound, the quality of the sound is of tremendous importance. Of course we get concerned about the nails.

ART: Not only the sound quality but also how it feels, because if the shape or length is a little bit different than you are used to, it can feel very “off”, like you don’t know how to play anymore.

MK: Yes, you are right.

ART: In that period that you were experiencing more performance anxiety, how did it get better? Was it gradually? Did you work upon that?

MK: It was gradually, like an evolution. Every time a little bit better, but always working with all those things I mentioned. Of course, I didn’t have much knowledge at that time. You said you read psychology articles but all those things I talk about now, I discovered them in the process of preparing for concerts and go out and play. Trying things by myself. That made me better little by little. Always trying to work on what did not go very well, didn’t go according to plan, work with confidence, work with different ways of practicing, work with tricks for concentration, work on that “bridge” we spoke about.

ART: And you worked that out all by yourself? You didn't get any help for colleagues or teachers?

MK: No, just by myself. When I was studying in the class we didn't speak about those things so from professors I didn't get any help. Then from colleagues, of course we sometimes exchanged impressions but I don't remember it being helpful. I think it is also something very personal you have to work on. Of course it is very helpful to listen to other people's opinions and experiences, to read articles written by non-musicians, to get some advice, but in the end it is something that is personal and everyone has to work for themselves.

ART: Yes, everyone has their own "way". We can relate on one issue or another but everyone ends up developing their own personal way of dealing with this. That is interesting to me.

In your opinion and experience with students, do you find that the ability to cope, to deal with anxiety, is it more innate or you believe it is more worked upon?

MK: I don't know. There are people that have stronger personalities than others, or naturally more confidence. It is hard to speak for other people, but I think that some are stronger and some weaker in this point. But in the end I don't think that there is anyone that goes on stage and doesn't feel anything, as relaxed as in the living room. Even if there is someone like that I'm not jealous at all, I wouldn't like to be like that. For me it is a part of our work, it is strongly connected to what we are doing, a feeling that we are responsible for the audience also.

ART: And in the process of learning how to deal with anxiety how important do you think performing often is?

MK: It is very important, but it is not the only thing. It can help but only if it is combined with other things we spoke about, not by itself. If you don't think deeply about what is really happening, how your mind works, on what is really going on deep inside you, about all this process. If you don't think, if you don't try to deal with it, to do something more, to have a plan, then only by playing again and again I don't think it will get any better, especially for people who are very sensitive and not very strong, like I told you I was when I was 18 or 19 years old. If I hadn't thought about things, if I hadn't made plans, if I hadn't analyze... analytical thinking really helps a lot, if I didn't thought analytically about what was going on and how to deal with it, I don't think it would have gotten any better. With 40 years I would still play the same, with the right hand playing wrong notes all the time.

ART: Do you recall any experiences with flow, that feeling you have that everything is wonderful on stage, playing effortlessly? Is it frequent or rare for you?

MK: In almost every concert there are moments, some moments that I catch myself feeling like that. But it is not possible to feel the entire concert like that. I don't know... it is not easy to imagine how that could be. But in every concert there are some moments, maybe a few seconds or a few minutes that you feel like that. It is really a great feeling. But it's dangerous, you know? If you lose concentration and you go out of the plan, it is dangerous. If you are speaking with actors, in this sense it is easier to understand, imagine that you get too emotionally involved with what you are doing, it is then very easy to lose control. For example, if you want to play something sad and you want to make people cry, but if you yourself are crying, it would be very difficult to control what is going on and probably not play that well. You should not cross the line of not being able to control yourself. So this feeling of flow and everything is going well, I am a little bit afraid of that feeling if it is more than 10 or 15 seconds, because then I feel it is dangerous. For example, you have a theater play and you have a role of somebody that is drunk, would an actor play the role better or a real drunk

play it better? Of course the actor would! Maintaining the control is very important in art, we should not get too emotionally involved, there is a line, if you go past that you start laughing in the happy passages and crying in the sad passages. You should not be an audience for your own concert, you want to be the player. When you go to listen to a concert it is different, you can sit and close your eyes, you can cry when you want, you can think of anything you want, you can dream, you can do anything. But when you are playing you should have everything under control.

ART: And how about recital structure and choosing repertoire, how important do you think it is to build up your confidence?

MK: It is also very important but this is also very personal. Everyone should choose according to who they are, what are their advantages, their personalities as players, technique, feeling, everything. It is very personal. There are people who prefer to start, for example, with a very difficult work because it helps them to keep the concentration. David Russell once told me that, he always prefers to start with a very difficult piece in the program, it helps to keep the concentration. There are other people who prefer to start with something very relaxed, to not get any tension in the body immediately in the beginning. The technical part of the program we should also take into account. Then, of course, there are other things we should think about when building the program, according to our musical tastes and preferences, where are we going to perform, and so on...

ART: It is all about feeling comfortable, right? Because if you challenge yourself to play something difficult on stage, it is always a risk.

MK: Yes, it is true. Not every piece is for everyone. It is very good when you go to a concert and you listen to players who choose repertoire that suits them well. But this also has to do with knowing ourselves better. To really know and understand ourselves better, who we are, and to accept it. That helps in many ways, to deal with stage fright, to make good choices in the program also.

ART: How important do you feel it is for the new generations of guitarists, musicians, to address these kinds of subjects, anxiety and tools to solve the problems?

MK: It is extremely important! The new generation, nowadays, it has so many opportunities of communication, with easy and fast access to knowledge and information. I have a feeling that the new generation in music in general, and especially in guitar which is our instrument, their starting point is extremely high. Now there are people in their first year of college that have so much experience, knowledge and information that in the past would require 30 years of career as a performer to get. The level is going up and getting extremely high, which is something that we are enjoying and are very happy for. Of course it is very important to speak about those things, about anxiety and how to deal with it.

ART: Do you feel like the schools, universities and teachers are already doing enough in this regard, or could they be doing more?

MK: They are definitely doing more than in the past, but they can do more. They should do more. They should inform themselves more, first. It is a subject that not all of us are very well informed, not all of us have access to the available information, and what you are doing is going to be a big contribution to that direction.

ART: Thank you, I hope so. Do you feel that the formality of classical music, the style, the way it is taught, the training, does it accentuate the possibility of anxiety? Jazz musicians always seem more relaxed, they do not seem to suffer as much...

ANNEX II - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

MK: I know. It has to do with the kind of music we are playing. It has to do with the amount of detail we are trying to achieve. For classical music, sometimes, what we are trying to give is extreme details, which cause us stress. It's not only playing the notes, we are trying a certain sound quality, certain dynamics, a certain groove in the rhythm, certain accents, a certain interpretation... sometimes what we are doing is extremely difficult. We are asking too many things from our instrument. Classical music repertoire many times is pushing the player to the limits. This is a factor that causes stress.

ART: Ok, pretty much wrapped up here. Do you have any final words you would like to say, any subject that we might have missed?

MK: I think we spoke more than I thought we would and that's nice. I think I spoke a lot, I cannot remember anything else I would like to say right now, anything that we missed. There is hope. If I think about how I was and how I am now, I would say to students that there is a way of dealing with this. Even if you see people having very huge problems with performance anxiety, if they work in a way, let's call it, more scientific than older people use to, than there is really hope, it can get better. Because it is really a pity when you see people not being able to give on stage what they really are capable of, being afraid, playing much less than their real abilities. That's it, I think people will learn how to do it, but no matter how much we read, how much we are informed, how much we get in touch with psychologists, there will always be a part of this that is personal and we will have to discover for ourselves. That is also something magical about music. I think the same way about technique, there are so many things to learn, so many schools you can get information from, but in the very end technique is something very personal, the last part is something very personal and each one of us.

ART: Thank you so much for doing this, it was a pleasure talking to you and listening to your experience.

MK: It was a pleasure for me also. Send me the work when is ready, ok? I would appreciate it.

ART: Yes, once it is finished I'll send it for sure.

Entrevista com Dejan Ivanović (n. 1976)

10 de Fevereiro de 2017 (via Skype)*

André Rafael Tempera: Bem, esta sequência de entrevistas que tenho estado a fazer tem o objectivo de conhecer as experiências pessoais de cada um e os mecanismos que os ajudaram a lidar com a ansiedade na performance ao longo da carreira. Não tenho muitas perguntas diretas mas tenho uma série de tópicos que gostaria de abordar. Podemos começar, por exemplo, por falar da altura em que começaste a tocar guitarra, com que idade, e das memórias que tiveres das primeiras atuações em público.

Dejan Ivanović: Comecei a tocar guitarra com cinco anos de uma forma descontraída e aos oito anos entrei na escola de música. Lembro-me que a minha primeira atuação pública aconteceu numa audição de classe na nossa escola onde toquei *Malagueña*, uma dança popular espanhola. Nunca esquecerei esse momento e a sua sensação: de ter uma importância acrescida e de protagonismo.

ART: Desde cedo tiveste essa noção...

DI: Sim. Não sei se é por causa da atenção, mas senti naquele momento ter ganho um maior relevo, ou pelo menos as pessoas levaram-me um pouco mais a sério. Agora, se isso tem a ver com o facto de eu tentar mostrar o meu conhecimento e a capacidade com o instrumento, ou com uma questão narrativa, ou de ser uma linguagem nova para mim, isso não sei dizer. Não consigo identificar.

ART: Talvez o facto de ser um local diferente, de haver mais pessoas à volta a assistir...

DI: Talvez. Era um público normal, constituído por pais e professores. Mas a sensação da primeira atuação foi muito positiva no sentido de não recuar, de não me reter, de não me fechar, e de produzir um efeito contrário: “Ah! Finalmente estão a ouvir o que estou a dizer.”

ART: Então, de um modo geral, essas primeiras experiências foram positivas?

DI: Extremamente positivas, sem dúvida.

ART: Isso é bom. Saltando um pouco para a frente no tempo, recordas-te de quando começaram a surgir eventualmente algumas questões relacionadas com a ansiedade no teu percurso de formação como guitarrista?

DI: Sim. A ansiedade na minha formação está ligada com o acesso à informação, ou seja, com o momento em que comecei a ter uma maior responsabilidade em relação ao conhecimento. Por outro lado, se me perguntares qual foi a minha melhor sensação de sempre durante uma apresentação em público, diria que foi em 1990 durante o meu primeiro recital de guitarra, tinha eu catorze anos. Toquei um programa de extrema dificuldade para a minha idade: *Prelúdio, Fuga e Allegro BWV 998* de J.S. Bach, *Catedral* de A. Barrios-Mangorê, algumas obras de I. Albéniz, e a sensação era como se tudo fosse relativamente fácil e sem percalços significativos. Tive a impressão de um domínio total das minhas próprias emoções. Todo o recital correu muito bem e sem a mínima ansiedade. Mas, quando cheguei à Universidade, — Academia de Música de Zagreb — e comecei o estudo superior, logo na primeira audição de classe, lembro-me de uma sensação mais negativa em relação às minhas exigências dessa altura: como se tudo fosse extremamente pesado e difícil. E isso tem muito a ver com o nível analítico, com o conhecimento que fui recebendo, e, ao mesmo tempo, com o facto de tentar corresponder as expectativas do professor. Acho que, no meu caso, ansiedade está ligada com a exigência analítica e interpretativa.

ART: E a noção de responsabilidade?

DI: Claro! Esse é um bom termo. Quando somos jovens alunos, sentimo-nos à vontade e não pensamos numa grande quantidade de detalhes. Estamos a tocar notas, ritmo, melodias e estamos naturalmente livres e despreocupados. Ou pelo menos, no momento da atuação, naquele momento da verdade, não nos preocupamos com tantos outros elementos que depois, no processo académico, colocamos como importantes.

ART: Exatamente. Então essas questões começaram a surgir mais na altura da licenciatura?

DI: Sim, sim. Eu tive um professor com quem estudei praticamente durante nove anos, o prof. Predrag Stanković, e ele desenvolveu o seu conhecimento na base do instinto musical e da própria experiência, porque na sua época de aprendizagem não havia possibilidade de estudar guitarra numa escola de música. Ele é um professor que se dedicava verdadeiramente aos jovens alunos. O ensino básico de música nos países de ex-Jugoslávia tem uma duração de seis anos, e depois seguem-se mais quatro anos do ensino secundário de música. Por causa da falta de habilitações do prof. Stanković, tiveram de contratar o prof. Vojo Ivanović, compositor e guitarrista, que vinha de Sarajevo e que lecionava a guitarra na escola secundária, lamentavelmente, só durante um período de sete meses, devido ao início da guerra. Depois disso, terminei o curso forçosamente com o prof. Stanković porque a sua lecionação na dita escola foi autorizada pelo ministério devido à situação em que nos encontrávamos, e ingressei logo a seguir à Universidade de Zagreb. Portanto, a conclusão lógica é, por eu ter tido uma aprendizagem baseada nos mecanismos didáticos e pedagógicos do prof. Stanković, senti um pouco mais de liberdade nas minhas apresentações em público. Igualmente, reparo essa problemática nos jovens alunos. Estive recentemente na Croácia e tive contacto com as crianças de catorze anos que pensam nas suas interpretações em muitos mais detalhes do que eu pensava quando tinha essa idade. E eles conseguem fazer isso e têm capacidade cognitiva necessária. O problema é que, na minha opinião, o ser humano não mudou muito em relação ao amadurecimento emocional e psicológico. Ou seja, no caso deles noto, especificamente para essa idade, uma falta de sorriso, uma falta de alguma felicidade nos seus olhos. Parecem-me demasiado sérios, determinados, muito diretos e objetivos, e com isso perdem alegria numa parte da sua vida. Talvez seja melhor, para o desenvolvimento normal da nossa personalidade, passar por todas as fases de crescimento humano, porque é normal ter essa liberdade e irresponsabilidade com catorze anos de idade. Agora, carregá-los com tanta informação, não me parece bem. Lembro-me de uma miúda na *masterclass* que tinha um sentido de frase absolutamente fantástico, um som cheio de harmónicos por estar constantemente a procurar os nós dos harmónicos de oitava — algo extremamente raro para essa idade — mas, por outro lado, transmitia a seriedade de um adulto, misturada com muita tristeza na sua interpretação. É uma situação que não deve ser normal para a sua idade. Portanto, no meu caso, posso dizer que tive uma adolescência musical normal, e talvez por isso só senti a noção de *stress* de palco durante o curso de licenciatura.

ART: Faz sentido. Nessa altura de maior *stress* há algum concerto, alguma audição que tenha ficado na memória como francamente má? E quais foram as sensações que surgiram? Físicas, psicológicas, emocionais?

DI: Queria adicionar mais um detalhe que é importante referir sobre o prof. Stanković. A base do seu trabalho é feita de um sentido de positivismo e de paciência ilimitadas. Mesmo em situações mais difíceis, onde se pode criar uma sensação de frustração de um jovem, ele vira isso ao contrário e tenta pensar positivamente. Eu acho que, por causa disso, ele teve imenso sucesso com jovens alunos na nossa cidade de Tuzla — com uma população de cento e vinte mil pessoas — e deu inúmeros guitarristas que terminaram a universidade e

construíram uma carreira acadêmica e concertística. Por isso, acho relevante esse positivismo logo no início do estudo de música. Agora, esse positivismo passou a uma maior responsabilidade na universidade, o que igualmente me parece normal. Em relação à tua pergunta, não me lembro de nenhuma atuação minha ter sido desastrosa, mas considero importante realizar uma boa preparação, e isso significa que qualquer detalhe numa atuação ao vivo é pensado, visualizado e estudado previamente. O que fazemos no nosso estudo diário é simplesmente eliminar a probabilidade de erros ou de situações frustrantes usando várias estratégias, mecanismos e conhecimento. Portanto, quando vou sair para uma atuação, praticamente está tudo colocado no seu lugar e é difícil acontecer algum percalço grave. Não me lembro mesmo de nenhuma ser desastrosa, excepto aquelas que não foram tão bem preparadas e, nesse caso, é fácil explicar o seu resultado. Da mesma forma, penso em mim próprio como uma pessoa extremamente positiva e, portanto, quando algo não funciona totalmente bem, viro o meu pensamento para algum elemento bem sucedido. Raramente tenho alguma sensação negativa, desde sempre.

ART: Ok, isso é muito bom. Então nunca passaste por uma experiência onde te sentiste completamente dominado por nervos ou ansiedade? Nada desse género?

DI: Não, mas posso partilhar a experiência que tive durante a minha primeira aula na universidade. A primeira informação que o prof. Darko Petrinjak me disse é que devia aprender a respirar de uma forma correta. A minha pergunta lógica foi logo a seguir: “Respirar como? Toda a gente sabe respirar!” E ele explicou-me que, para que consiga manter os níveis de ansiedade aceitáveis e controlar a ansiedade numa atuação, é preciso aprender a respirar com o diafragma. Aprendi isso logo na primeira aula de guitarra! O prof. Petrinjak explicou-me também que os instrumentistas de arco têm tendência para fazer ruído nas notas longas porque começam a tremer devido a falta de controlo da respiração pelo diafragma. Todos os músicos têm esse problema. Investiguei sobre isso quando mais tarde comecei a cantar no coro e, realmente, o conhecimento do diafragma abriu-me uma visão totalmente diferente sobre o controlo da ansiedade. Portanto, uma solução encontra-se na respiração. Mais um detalhe peculiar da mencionada aula: antes de chegar à universidade, eu não sabia frasear bem. Como sabes, para conseguir fazer bem um arco de frase na guitarra ou um fraseado com um arco grande, é preciso pressionar as cordas para baixo, é preciso gastar mais energia, mais força, para que se consiga controlar a dinâmica progressiva de cada nota em sucessão. Para isso é preciso mais envolvimento, mais desgaste físico e psicológico. Logo por aí, eu não conseguia controlar os nervos e não encontrava uma linha ténue entre *stress* e aquilo que se pode produzir no instrumento, ou seja, nunca ultrapassar essa linha e, conseqüentemente, entrar na *zona vermelha*. Por isso, até à universidade, a frase não era muito desenvolvida. Não havia muito envolvimento nem desgaste. Talvez seja essa a razão para a conclusão final do meu período anterior. Mas, na universidade consegui mudar isso. Nessa aula, lembro-me de quando comecei a tocar o *Prélude BWV 995* de J.S.Bach, o professor estava a sugerir-me simplesmente um arco de dinâmica até à função harmónica dominante e seu conseqüente retorno à tónica. Eu não conseguia fazer isso bem e senti-me fisicamente muito cansado, como se estivesse a *cavar numa mina de carvão*. Nunca me esquecerei da sensação nessa aula. Após essa frase é que o prof. Petrinjak falou da questão do diafragma.

ART: Mesmo não tendo tipo muitas experiências com os sintomas associados à ansiedade houve, no entanto, uma preocupação com o relaxamento e respiração, correto?

DI: Sem dúvida! Especialmente porque percebi que não tive a insistência por parte do prof. Stanković para a realização de uma execução clara de fraseado. Por outro lado, quando o professor da universidade começou a insistir nisso, eu não conseguia corresponder logo porque simplesmente os níveis da ansiedade

e da respiração não ajudavam. Então, ele explicou-me o processo de respiração e comecei a estudar com isso em mente. Por exemplo, estou neste momento a falar contigo e também penso nisso, ou seja, não faço a inspiração com a parte superior dos pulmões mas com a parte de baixo. Isso faz com que uma pessoa fique a controlar os níveis de ansiedade de uma forma muito eficaz.

ART: Então nunca houve sintomas ligeiros, comuns a todos os instrumentistas, como mãos frias, pequenas tremuras ou suores?

DI: Esses elementos sempre estão presentes.

ART: Ok, mas nunca sentiste que isso te impediu de tocar ao nível habitual?

DI: Isso nunca foi impeditivo porque simplesmente eu sempre tenho outros objetivos. Por exemplo, recentemente em Split, tive as mãos frias na igreja durante o recital inteiro. O que ajuda no próprio momento da atuação é ter outras prioridades. Normalmente, tenho em mente aquilo que quero transmitir, algo que quero dizer, elaborar ou realizar. Automaticamente, as mãos frias passam para o segundo plano. A respiração é consideravelmente mais importante do que as mãos frias.

ART: Tanto como intérprete como professor, sentes que há alguns fatores que preocupam mais os guitarristas do que os outros instrumentistas? Há coisas exclusivas aos guitarristas que sejam causadoras de maior *stress*? Características do próprio instrumento ou da técnica?

DI: Sim, claro que há! Estávamos agora a falar do fraseado, de um maior arco. No nosso caso, o envolvimento físico para um maior arco da frase é muito mais complexo do que nos outros instrumentos. O mais simples seria usar um instrumento como o órgão, onde com um botão mudamos a textura e a dinâmica. Segunda opção seria um som dinamicamente equilibrado e sem qualquer desenvolvimento dinâmico na frase, como cravo, por exemplo. Depois, temos os instrumentos que naturalmente, só por colocar um pouco mais de pressão, consegue-se produzir uma amplitude grande de dinâmica, como em instrumentos de arco e de sopro. Agora, no nosso caso, qualquer nota é feita com um dos quatro dedos da mão direita. Eles devem aprender a controlar a produção da amplitude de vibração de uma corda para que se consiga fazer um arco da dinâmica de boa qualidade. Na minha opinião, o controlo da mão direita ou da produção do som numa frase é muito mais complicado na guitarra do que noutros instrumentos porque, simplesmente, o que é natural para todos eles não é natural para nós, e vice-versa. Um exemplo muito claro: é consideravelmente mais fácil para qualquer outro instrumento realizar oito notas da mesma intensidade dinâmica e independentemente da articulação, do que para guitarra. No nosso caso, fazer oito notas equilibradas, em termos de timbre e dinâmica, é muito complicado! Por outro lado, para que os outros instrumentos façam acento numa nota seguindo-se uma dinâmica de *pp*, *ff*, *mf* e *p* é muito complicado, mas para os guitarristas é perfeitamente natural! Por isso, considero a ansiedade intrinsecamente ligada à interpretação simplesmente porque não podemos separar o fraseado com o nosso *modus operandi*. Uma solução é baixar todos os níveis e tocar num *habitat* agradável de pequena amplitude dinâmica, o que para a guitarra é a dinâmica de *mezzo piano*, ou seja, dinamicamente nunca subir demasiado mas também nunca descer muito. Essa é uma situação onde qualquer guitarrista se sente bem e confortável. No entanto, as pessoas que conhecem bem o que pretendem com a música e que querem elevar o estatuto da guitarra, normalmente tentam aproximar o instrumento a interpretação dos outros instrumentos. Isso significa tentar obter uma dinâmica ampla no fraseado. Aliás, qualquer compositor contemporâneo vai pedir o mesmo.

ART: Sim. E a coordenação entre ambas as mãos para os guitarristas? Usamos dois dedos de duas mãos diferentes para produzir um som, algo que não é comum nos

outros instrumentos. E as unhas? Sentes que são coisas que tendem a preocupar os guitarristas?

DI: Claro que sim! Isso tem a ver com a particularidade do instrumento. Não existe um outro cuja produção do som seja tão intimamente ligada ao corpo, excepto a harpa que também é dedilhada. Os outros instrumentos não costumam ter esse contacto íntimo e direto com uma parte do corpo, na produção do som. Também, por aí pode surgir uma questão da ansiedade de proteger o que é íntimo. Agora, a realidade é totalmente diferente para o público geral. Os guitarristas muitas vezes pensam pelo seu prisma, mas o que sai para fora é bastante diferente do que aquilo que se sente durante uma atuação.

ART: Ok. Já ficou estabelecido que nunca te sentiste particularmente afetado pela ansiedade, mas ao longo do teu percurso houve alguma fase em que sentiste com uma menor capacidade de controlo sobre a performance? E houve uma evolução nesse aspecto, um processo gradual?

DI: Não, porque faço um exercício que estabeleci durante o curso da licenciatura, entre outros princípios, e serve como um desafio: interpretar uma obra inteira sem qualquer contacto anterior com o instrumento e sem interrupções. Aconteça o que acontecer, continua-se até ao fim e faz-se uma análise sobre o que correu bem e o que não. Isso significa que, de alguma forma, criei um sentido muito importante de nunca ir além das minhas capacidades no próprio momento da atuação. Imagina: posso dormir um pouco, comer algo ou tomar café, e quando for tocar uma obra, estou seguro que não ultrapassarei o meu limite nos *tempi* e que não exagerarei na dinâmica. Nesse sentido, a velocidade e a dinâmica encontram-se juntos e fazem com que a peça seja controlada ou não. Por outro lado, se me perguntares se isso é positivo ou não, isso não sei dizer. Por exemplo, há público e profissionais que preferem quando alguém perde o controlo. Isso provavelmente cria uma má sensação em nós próprios, mas uma grande parte do público geral não se importa. Preferem até quando alguém se engana do que não ouvir qualquer erro! Alguns dias atrás, os colegas disseram-me em Zagreb, após o recital, que estava perfeito, o som estava bom, técnica como nos livros, mas faltava de *perder-me* um pouco. É, de facto, engraçado. Compreendo o que isso quer dizer: nunca é bom ter somente o controlo. Aliás, não é essa a minha intenção mas, talvez os princípios que criei para mim próprio me tenham ajudado a nunca ir além das minhas capacidades. Talvez por causa disso nunca tive uma sensação de não conseguir controlar os nervos em público.

ART: Sim. Isso revela controlo emocional, nunca chegar àquele ponto onde é a música que controla o intérprete. Mas como disseste, há pessoas que apreciam isso, músicos e público que apreciam o *perder-se* numa peça, mesmo que isso seja menos seguro.

DI: É verdade. E tentarei fazer o mesmo, só para experimentar. Talvez nos próximos concertos perderei o controle, e não pensarei na questão do controlo. Mas é difícil, é muito difícil conseguir isso. Agora, voltando à questão dos concertos na Croácia, não era a minha intenção de controlar tudo ao máximo, mas é essa a sensação que alguns colegas tiveram.

ART: Por vezes esse *controlo* pode ser interpretado como *frieza*, ou falta de emoção...

DI: Isso não foi mencionado! Disseram que estava lá a emoção, o fraseado, algo especial na interpretação, mas nunca sentiram que eu passasse o limite, e isso incomodava-os. Talvez isso seja por tocarmos um instrumento limitado em vários níveis, mas também depende do programa interpretado. Eles referiam-se à parte do programa neo-romântico, enquanto nas obras contemporâneas já não houve esse problema.

ART: Sim, claro. São estilos completamente diferentes. Ao longo da tua formação, para além do professor que ajudou com a questão da respiração e controlar a tensão, houve mais alguma procura de ajuda externa relativamente ao controlo da performance? Ou a aprendizagem veio mais de experiências pessoais?

DI: Foi sempre uma experiência pessoal. Inclusive mesmo quando descobri na Croácia, durante o curso de licenciatura, a técnica de Alexander. Compreendi-a, mas não precisei de a aplicar de uma forma acentuada porque não a achava fulcral. Sugiro-a somente como informação e não como um modo de viver. Talvez no caso da técnica de guitarra ela crie um relaxamento excessivo. Por outro lado, a música vive de tensão. Imagina ouvirmos somente as harmonias da tónica...

ART: Nunca experimentei a técnica de Alexander mas do que li, a forma como interpreto a sua utilidade, será mais para aquelas pessoas que naturalmente não conseguem fazer o relaxamento após tensão. Fazem tensão e não relaxam completamente, e essa tensão vai acumulando e há um limite em que o corpo *quebra*. Para essas pessoas acredito que seja útil, para evitar o acumular constante de tensão.

DI: Claro.

ART: Como professor, qual é a tua experiência em relação ao facto de a capacidade de lidar com a ansiedade ter um carácter mais inato ou trabalhado? Varia de pessoa para pessoa?

DI: Acho que varia, mas pode ser trabalhada. Tudo tem de ser planeado e pensado porque não é possível enviar um aluno para uma primeira audição sem pensar como será o resultado. Para que ele seja positivo é preciso preparar bem a situação. O estudo anterior de todos os elementos deve ser realizado para preparar e antecipar qualquer percalço que possa existir. Posso dizer que, na minha experiência como professor, não tive muitos casos complicados, mas um caso especial é o Pedro Ribeiro Rodrigues. Ele foi talvez o aluno que ficava mais condicionado com a questão de ansiedade que tive até hoje. Lembro-me de estarmos a trabalhar na sala de aula, onde ele conseguia corresponder a todas as minhas exigências a cem por cento. Tudo o que eu lhe pedia ele conseguia fazer a uma semana da audição. Quando chegou o momento da verdade, ele tocou na audição pelo menos cinquenta por cento abaixo das suas capacidades porque as suas mãos tremiam de tal forma que eu nunca tinha visto. Não consigo explicar. Eu era positivo, dava-lhe toda a informação, ele pensava de uma forma positiva, correspondia com tudo o que fazia, mas no momento da atuação algo acontecia. Seria uma boa ideia fazer uma entrevista com ele porque realmente passou pelas dificuldades e resolveu-as. Como ele mudou, não sei. Nas nossas aulas falámos de tudo: de respiração, de todos os meios para controlar a ansiedade.

ART: Pois. Ao praticar, numa sessão de estudo, há alguma preocupação extra em pensar em questões relacionadas com a ansiedade ou o foco é apenas no aspeto musical?

DI: A defesa perante a ansiedade prepara-se no dia-a-dia e durante o estudo. Os meus próprios princípios — de digitação, da escolha de interpretação, de como estudar — isso tudo cria uma melhor base para evitar qualquer angústia. Quando a base de uma atuação é bem sólida, duvido que haja algo que a possa destruir. Duvido mesmo. Ela tem de ser construída dessa forma sólida, forte, onde há poucas probabilidades de ter algum percalço. E mesmo quando aconteça alguma *branca*, duvido que haja um sentimento negativo. Eu tento lidar com a ansiedade na base de princípios de trabalho.

ART: Há alguma mudança na forma de estudo consoante a proximidade de um concerto?

DI: A diferença é que quanto mais perto houver um concerto, não se entra nos detalhes com tanta profundidade. As peças não são *dissecadas* e não se estuda por motivos isolados ou frases pequenas. Todo o material musical é unido. Mesmo antes do concerto, o trabalho é principalmente mental e não físico, com o objetivo de poupar energia. Mais uma observação: quando passo um programa inteiro na sala de estudo, tento verificar o que não correu bem e porquê, memorizo os erros em *real time* da atuação, isolo-os e tento aplicar uma

solução. Quanto mais tempo houver até ao concerto, a estratégia é totalmente diferente.

ART: Pelo que percebi, ao praticar, há uma relação bastante grande entre a forma como se pratica e a auto-eficácia. O acreditar no método de estudo, no método de preparação, e confiar que esse método terá bases sólidas para sustentar uma performance. Correto?

DI: Disseste tudo.

ART: Ótimo. Sentes que atuar frequentemente ajuda a lidar com os sintomas de ansiedade?

DI: Bastante. Primeiro, porque qualquer atuação é uma forma de autoexame. Na base de tudo estão as questões sobre a quantidade de trabalho que investimos antes do concerto. Foi suficiente ou não? Foi produtivo ou não? Quando se tem uma família numerosa, como é o meu caso, frequentemente não há tempo para estudar. Isso faz com que, ao chegar ao momento do concerto, eu comece a tremer mais do que em condições normais.

ART: Questionar se o estudo foi suficiente ou não?

DI: Questionar se houve tempo para uma preparação bem sucedida ou não. Estou consciente de não haver tempo, mas tento fazer tudo de uma forma mais prática e organizada possível. Em menos tempo e mais condensado. Depois, no momento da verdade, começo a questionar-me: “Será que foi suficiente?”. É um método complicado, mas ajuda bastante. Adquirimos uma sensação de automatismos serem estabelecidos no momento da atuação. E quanto mais experimentarmos esses automatismos, ganhamos uma sensação de maior controlo e de menos ansiedade.

ART: E em relação a competições, achas que ajudam ou prejudicam a questão do domínio da ansiedade?

DI: Nem todos os músicos têm a predisposição de atuar num concurso simplesmente porque o seu temperamento não os deixa. Considero os concursos a situação mais complexa para qualquer músico e que, inclusive, pode criar problemas da nossa saúde geral. Para que consigamos participar com sucesso nesse tipo de eventos, precisamos de aprender a lidar com situações hostis emocionalmente e psicologicamente. Considero um concurso de música um bom exame que nos pode determinar com clareza de que fibra somos feitos. Compararia isso com o atletismo. Qualquer pessoa corre oitocentos metros. Agora, uma maratona — quarenta e dois quilómetros — já não é para todos. Os concursos de música são dificilmente aceitáveis na arte em vários aspetos: existenciais, filosóficos, musicais, artísticos ou interpretativos. É uma situação muito complicada e nem todos têm capacidade de passar por isso de uma forma saudável. Pode prejudicar, e a alguns pode deixar marcas para o resto da sua vida, se se viver uma experiência negativa.

ART: Sim. Mesmo quem ganha o primeiro prémio pode não se sentir bem em palco, são coisas distintas.

DI: Sim, nem sempre. Podes vencer a prova mas, para que consigas lidar com esse tipo de *stress* frequentemente, tens que começar a pensar em mecanismos que te conseguem ajudar, bem como o uso de estímulos externos: álcool, cigarros, comida, calmantes, etc. Como já referi, muitos dos que passam por concursos, acabam por ter algum problema de saúde. Se um músico participar em dez ou quinze concursos por ano, o *stress* é tão grande que acaba por influenciar o seu organismo. Está provado que o aumento do *stress* tem consequências graves no nosso corpo. Começa-se a perder o cabelo, aparece arritmia cardíaca, tensão alta, etc. O mesmo efeito acontece também em recitais. Tenho um relógio de *fitness* e estava curioso de como estava a medição do meu batimento cardíaco durante o dia do concerto em Zagreb. E fiquei atónito! O coração batia como se eu fosse fazer um corrida de *jogging* durante um dia

inteiro: desde as novas horas da manhã até às dez da noite! Era de 105 batimentos por minuto, enquanto a minha pulsação em repouso e em condições normais é abaixo de 60. É como se eu fosse correr um dia inteiro. Agora imagina: era só um recital e não era um concurso. Normalmente, as pessoas começam a procurar como lidar com isso. Por exemplo, o álcool ajuda a sair da realidade, a comida ajuda para nos confortarmos um pouco, e há muita gente que passa por isso. O problema é sobreviver esse ambiente.

ART: O conceito de competição é mesmo esse. Seria outro debate pensar se é adequado ou não para a música, mas não iremos por aí. Gostava agora que me falasses de experiências de *flow*, ou seja, quando estamos em palco e tudo parece perfeito, mágico e sob controlo.

DI: Eu tenho essa sensação a cada concerto, todo o tempo praticamente! *Flow*, para mim, acontece desde a primeira até à última nota. Uma boa pergunta é como definir uma atuação. Na minha opinião, ela é como uma viagem na *corda bamba*. Quanto mais calmo estiver e sem me mexer, significa que estou bem e não tenho problemas. Por outro lado, quanto mais me inclino para a esquerda ou direita, sinto que vou perder o controlo. É mais ou menos essa a sensação.

ART: Interessante, interessante. Que importância dás à escolha de repertório e à estrutura de um recital de modo a dar mais confiança ao músico?

DI: É relevante, também, pensar nisso. Antes de tudo, não faz sentido avançar para uma obra que seja inalcançável em aspetos técnico-interpretativos. Portanto, não faz sentido demonstrar e transmitir sofrimento, sacrifício e tortura se a própria peça não o pedir, como, por exemplo, a *Stigma* de Paulo Brandão. Agora, durante um recital de duas partes devo pensar que a primeira parte do concerto é mais difícil porque é o início do concerto. A primeira peça é a mais difícil e, por causa disso, existem guitarristas que escolhem umas obras mais fáceis só para que *quebrem o gelo* e para que se sintam mais à vontade. Eu sou diferente e gosto de desafios e, por isso, ponho a 1.^a Partita para Violino solo BWV 1002 de J.S.Bach para começar, uma obra de extrema dificuldade técnica e que é raramente interpretada na guitarra. Mas, se a 1.^a Partita for bem conseguida, sinto que tenho o mundo aos pés e que consigo fazer magia e milagres! Estamos a falar da meia hora de música constante e sem interrupções e aplausos. É uma montanha para subir, mas quando se alcança o topo, tudo o resto parece fácil. Portanto, existem diferentes estratégias. Por outro lado, a tendência é colocar uma peça mais ou menos acessível, mais lírica e mais livre para o fim do concerto, para que nos consigamos sentir ainda mais próximo ao fim e à meta.

ART: Como professor, achas que é importante falar nestes assuntos de ansiedade na performance aos alunos? Para os ajudar a preparar para a realidade de serem músicos?

DI: Sim, acho muito importante discutir esse assunto com os alunos no seu trabalho semanal e falar da ansiedade. Aliás, eu sinto nas aulas quando alguém está ao pé de mim e se está ansioso ou não. Sinto tensão ou alívio no momento da mudança de posição da mão esquerda ou quando é preciso fazer um maior arco no fraseado ou no clímax. E daí vejo qual é o carácter dessa pessoa e qual é o seu nível de resistência, onde posso avançar nas minhas exigências, como adaptar a minha linguagem, que repertório sugerir para que o carácter dessa pessoa se encaixe bem com a música, etc. Acho muito importante pensar nisso e falar com os alunos porque faz com que se sintam melhor no momento da atuação.

ART: E sentes que as escolas de música, conservatórios e universidades, estão a fazer o suficiente para abordar este assunto?

DI: Não sei sobre as escolas de música, mas parece-me que ainda não houve tentativa desse tipo de pesquisa com os alunos. Talvez em alguns casos graves seja preciso fazer alguma abordagem especial. Também não sei se os

professores têm algum tipo de formação para lidar com essa área. Nas universidades, creio que a situação é diferente porque os alunos já têm uma maior responsabilidade em atuações. Além disso, precisam de ser concertisticamente ativos.

ART: Uma coisa é a abordagem que o próprio professor de instrumento pode fazer durante as aulas, outra é criar um espaço, não necessariamente uma disciplina, onde se possam falar das coisas, recorrendo a artigos de psicologia de modo a ajudar a auto-compreensão. Creio que isso ainda não está a ser feito, pelo menos em Portugal creio que não.

DI: Vai ser, mais cedo ou mais tarde. Não conhecendo bem a área, creio que já estamos a ajudar os alunos nesse aspeto. Mas, ao existir um caso de maior gravidade, com certeza é que me informaria mais. Neste momento, só posso isolar o Pedro Ribeiro Rodrigues como esse caso maior. Como eram os meus primeiros anos de docência, não sabia bem o que fazer e sentia-me de mãos atadas. Hoje em dia, não tenho esse problema na universidade ou, pelo menos, ainda não experienciei uma situação particularmente muito grave.

ART: Ok. Estamos a terminar. Há algum assunto, tema ou episódio que ainda gostasses de partilhar?

DI: Acho que não... o que poderia dizer mais? Posso indicar os fatores para conseguir uma melhor sensação no palco e aprender a controlar os níveis de ansiedade. Em primeiro lugar estão os princípios do estudo, da interpretação e das escolhas de digitação. Esses princípios ajudam no processo de aprendizagem da obra e do seu progresso de uma forma sólida, para que se evite uma ansiedade adicional. O segundo é a já mencionada respiração. É preciso saber controlar os níveis de ansiedade fisicamente, e isso faz-se com a nossa respiração. Certamente percebeste que há alunos — já tive contacto com vários — que, ao terem um maior grau de *stress* no momento de uma peça, param a respiração! Simplesmente a param, o que faz ainda pior e pode provocar vários problemas de saúde. Saber respirar com o diafragma é essencial. Número três é, sem dúvida, o positivismo. Podemos ser exigentes connosco, mas somente durante o processo de aprendizagem e de estudo. No momento da atuação, pensemos de uma forma positiva. É algo que aprendi com o meu professor da escola primária, na altura quando não havia responsabilidades de mil e tal informações. Era tudo espontâneo: “Toca lá! Está tudo bem! Ótimo! *Recuerdos, Asturias, Ciaccona*, etc. À vontade! Não importa!” Eu acho que esses três elementos são os mais relevantes: os princípios, a respiração e o positivismo.

ART: Ok, muito bem. Então muito obrigado por esta conversa, pelo tempo disponibilizado!

DI: De nada!

Denis Azabagic: Let's start, you can go ahead with your questions.

André Rafael Tempera: Ok, I have a few topics I'd like to approach. First of all I would like for you to tell me about how old were you when you started playing guitar and how were your first public appearances in auditions.

DA: Ok. I started learning guitar when I was 6 years old. I do not remember very clearly my first few performances. I do remember when I was in my early teens, I was going to the high school for music in Sarajevo, and when I would have some performance to play, I would feel anxious that day. I remember it clearly, that the feeling was so uncomfortable that I was wondering "What is this? What is this about?" and it felt like my body wanted to turn itself inside out, like a sock. That was the feeling I had. That sort of feeling more or less persisted, or changed or mutated since I don't think I ever got rid of it, it's still here, I'm just managing it differently.

ART: Even if you don't remember the exact moment of your first audition, you don't have any negative associations with it, right? You can say it was a positive experience?

DA: Of course, I don't have a negative experience with that. I have much more clear feelings of my later years, but from that time I don't. When I was that little I really do not. For sure any negative things did not "stay" with me.

ART: I'm only asking because it appears to be common for those who start playing guitar when they are young, to have natural and positive experiences while performing at an early age, but then during adolescence, they start feeling anxiety.

DA: Yes. I think that it is not just among guitarists, I would really think that common "human" thing, because I see it also with our son who is playing piano. Because I can observe it as a professional and seeing it very closely with him, and observing his performances and development. He started when he was very little, he was 3, and it was always a game, it was always fun. But the more he realized that he could do it well and the more serious he became in terms of playing "serious" repertoire. Realizing that it is not just a game, it can become something serious. When the expectations are there and the threshold is high, to fulfill them then we push our limits. You start feeling that you are there not just enjoying no matter what, you are really, really trying to push it to the furthest extend of what you can do, I think that that is the threshold when the anxiety kicks in, because you are trying to push yourself as far as you can.

ART: Yes, I would agree as well. Would you say that the worst phase in dealing with anxiety were those teen years?

DA: No, I would not. It was later on and due to other reasons. The last month a doctor diagnosed me with tendinitis on my index finger and I have been for many years having some trouble with my right hand, not feeling comfortable also. I do not know if that is like a focal dystonia. So, my definite worst, worst, worst moments of anxiety in performance are within my last few years, because the more I'm affected physically, the more anxiety kicks in.

ART: Yes, I understand that. But you can say that is due to “external factors”, like a medical condition...

DA: A physical condition, yes.

ART: ... and not just anxiety by “itself”.

DA: No.

ART: Your anxiety at the moment is merely related to that condition and not in regards to the perception of your own abilities as a musician, correct?

DA: No. I think that it is a mixture of both. I think that there are certain personalities of people that are more prone to be anxious or nervous than others. I remember speaking with a very good friend of mine, a former principal flutist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and he told me “You know? I’m always nervous.” – And he plays at an extraordinarily high level and pressure – “I just think that there are people who are supremely confident and they go out and play like it is nothing!” And there are other people that play incredibly well and they still feel this anxiety, they still feel that pressure, still feel nervous. Observing and watching and investigating about other instrumentalists, world famous instrumentalists, and seeing that they have this “condition”, regardless of any external factor, more and more it makes me think that it is a question of the personality of each of us, that makes us become anxious in certain situations, or not. I really think it is personality. Now, that doesn’t mean that those who become nervous and anxious will play worse. I don’t think that will happen, I just think that those people have to work much harder in accepting the situation, knowing what they are dealing with, and taking steps to deal with it. So, going back on what you were saying, about my anxiety simply being due to the physical factor I have now, it is not, it is paired. I mean, it certainly has been elevated to the point where I’m taking a break from solo work, because I don’t want to give myself that pressure. In my case, my personal experience, I remember that one of the most intense periods in playing under pressure was when I was competing. Let’s say, from when I was 17 or 18 to 26, that’s about the period which I competed in guitar competitions. I remember what it meant to be nervous, lots of things were going through my head, and how to develop a strategy to focus on the music and to keep my anxiety at bay. Present but without ruining my performance. That is what I think that is simply me, that’s my personality, how I am hardwired. When I went into the professional part of my career, started developing that and playing concerts, what happened was that I could have anxiety and be nervous, but the more concerts I played then obviously I would get used to it and the anxiety tended to drop. So if I have a tour of concerts, first concert I would be nervous, the second less, the third not, etc., but if there is a break in between and I return, the same thing comes back again. Now, I wish I never had any issue with the fingers to see how those things would have developed, so this is why I am saying that the medical or physical problem is definitely the part that “fuels” the anxiety to a higher degree, but maybe, I’m contemplating now, the fact that my anxiety could have been, perhaps, the thing that started my physical problem. I don’t know, it’s one thing or another. In many cases people say that it could be the emotional or mental part that started the physical symptoms. Right now, in my case, a lot of things are mixed and you cannot really make a clear cut. But I do know from observation and seeing other people, my students or my colleagues, speaking with them, I really think it’s a question of personality, that there are certain people who are not that affected and there are other people who are.

ART: Ok. Would you agree that, maybe like technique and musicality, there is a natural skill for dealing with anxiety, for some people to be good at that, to remain calm under pressure, on stage?

DA: I am definitely convinced that is true, yes.

ART: But even if you don't have that natural skill to deal with anxiety, you can still work upon it, it is not "set in stone", correct?

DA: Absolutely! Some people have better conditions than others but, I mean, that applies to any other aspect of life. Some are stronger than others, in terms of physical buildup, but that simply means that someone else has to work a little harder to achieve the same results.

ART: Of course, I agree. If you can, please try to describe what went through your mind, thoughts, emotions and also physical feelings, in a performance where you felt anxious and compare with one where you felt relaxed. What are the differences?

DA: Before I go into that, I have also written about it, I would ask you to get this little booklet of mine that is published by MelBay, called "On competitions: Dealing with performance stress". There I do describe those things, but I'll repeat them here. I know that the mind plays tricks and exaggerates. When I have to perform, when I am playing, first what my mind would be thinking is "Who is listening to me? Are there any guitarists, colleagues?". I can think about the colleagues, the great players that are listening to me and I have to uphold my reputation. Then I have to think about the students who are listening to me, who know my reputation and I have to demonstrate to them that I am playing very well. Or those who have played for me in a master class and sometimes play the same piece I have to play in the concert later, and they play very well and I am feeling intimidated by the players, even. You know, the self-doubt... The more you have the ability to think things through in any regard, it's the same ability your mind has to dig deeply into your self-doubt. Do you understand what I mean?

ART: Yes, it is very interesting, the way you put it.

DA: So, you know, the sort of imaginary world that my mind would create by thinking about all these negative emotions can be pretty deep. To the point of imagining that I will go to the stage and it will be a total disaster and I will completely freeze and I will have to walk out of the stage and I will never play again in my life. It's just astonishing to what extent the mind can do that. And I'm sure that everybody who has anxiety thinks of this. If not the same, very, very similar thoughts. That is what can go through my mind. Now, what goes through my mind when I do not worry? Well, then the mind is free. Whether it is just thinking about the music, all the musical aspects of playing and performing, what the piece is about, what the music is about, what does it mean to me, listening to the sound, just enjoying myself. To the point where the mind can wander off to completely irrelevant things, anything that I'm doing at the moment that has nothing to do with the music, and then one can lose concentration. So I don't like when I'm completely relaxed, really. I would like to be, if I can choose it from my worst anxiety to no anxiety at all, I would choose to be maybe 20 or 25% anxious. That keeps me alert, that keeps me knowing where I am, knowing what I have to do, just keeps my concentration.

ART: Yes, in that case it is called facilitating anxiety, that point where it actually is helpful.

DA: Yes. And in some ways, I've been thinking about it over these years, is that perhaps that element of anxiety has helped me focus in my playing, because I had to work conscientiously on focusing my mind on the things that matter and that are relevant to the music and to the performance, in spite of the onslaught of the thoughts that try to distract me. So, that focus, or that threat of anxiety, perhaps was even beneficial to me and to my career, to making my performances better, when I look in retrospect.

ART: That is definitely a possibility...

DA: It's what I'm telling you, the depth of thoughts, right? If my mind is trying to bring me to a very, very deep place of anxiety, in order to combat that I felt like I also had to put my mind into a very, very deep world of music... and feelings, and sensitivity, and imagination, and creativity, I don't know, every element that can be related to music.

ART: Yes. You were talking more about the mental aspect of anxiety, but did you ever experience physical symptoms?

DA: Well my physical symptoms that would be related to anxiety would have been a very strong heart beat, pumping or thudding heart beat, and cold hands or loss of mobility or dexterity, especially in my right hand.

ART: And those types of feelings, and also emotions, did they occur mostly before, during or after performance? When were they more intense?

DA: I was telling you before, when I was in my high school in Sarajevo, the feeling of anxiety, that feeling that my body wants to turn itself inside-out, it would start the morning of my performance, when I would wake up. Yes, already that early I would be nervous. It would be persistent throughout the day. Later on it would not be as much persistent in the entire day, it would subdue in length but it would come back, it never would go away completely. Then, I would say, another timeframe would be when I would get to the hall and started warming up, I had to be careful not to warm up too quickly, or want to be warmed up too quickly, to give myself time. So, it could also be there. But then, the most critical moment is the few minutes before getting on stage and the very first few minutes, 5 to 10 minutes in the performance itself. That is the timeframe. Later on, as the first moments of the performance pass, then I would be more relaxed.

ART: And after playing you would feel a sort of relief, I suppose?

DA: Absolutely! I mean, it could be a mixture of both. There is a sense of relief, but actually the sense of relief is already present after those first few minutes, where I can then relax and play music. Again, going back to this thing about my hand, the worst thing is that if something is wrong with the hand, the feeling persists, all the time, throughout the concert. And then I would feel more relief afterwards. At the times when my hand was functioning more or less properly then the relief, as I said, would occur after the first 5 or 10 minutes of performance. I know what I would play in the first minutes of performance, because I know that that is the most critical time that I am facing. So, then I would program the pieces that I know very well, that are perhaps not as difficult, things that even if anxiety is there, present, the fingers can still do their job, and I can still do the music and manage it. So that was the most critical point. Relief would happen after that and later on, more than relief, was simply the fact that you enjoyed the concert. And not a relief from anxiety, but a relief from the intensity of playing, I would feel after the concert.

ART: Ok. Regarding the symptoms, were there any concerns with things that you think might specifically affect guitarists and not other instrumentalists?

DA: I would not say anything like that at this point. I don't think we'd have anything that would not affect other people. Given the fact that we are people, that what I see from mental or emotional aspects, I think they all influence us the same. I've heard of people that would have to consistently take beta-blockers. People who play in high pressure situations like orchestras. Even if you play in an orchestra, then again it's that mental thing. Some instruments in the orchestra are more exposed than the others. So, I've heard people who

are playing in the orchestra or some soloist and have to constantly take that. I have tried once, taking beta-blockers and it did help, it did help. So I used it once because I wanted to see what it meant, how it did feel. I felt as it “shaved off” a certain edge, reducing the physical symptoms of the thumping heart and so on. I never had that much a problem of trembling hands, but it did help a little bit in the physical aspect. Mostly it helped in the sense that my heart was more at ease.

ART: Yes, I would agree that most symptoms, how the mind works, it affects every musician regardless of the instrument. But what I was trying to ask was, for instance, a guitarist would not be concerned with the symptom of dry mouth, but a flutist would. And the nails for instance...

DA: Well if you are putting the example of the flutist, when working with my wife, who is a flutist, she tells me very often that having a dry mouth for her is better. That's interesting, isn't it? Because when she is not nervous, sometimes there is too much saliva in the mouth, which actually bothers her when she plays. And then I remembered that, it is curious that you mentioned it, in concert that doesn't happen because she has a dry mouth. In her case it is a positive effect.

ART: That is interesting. Yes. I mentioned that because I read an article that said that a dry mouth is was a symptom of concert for flutists. Usually they don't like having the feeling of dry mouth and think it might affect their playing. It only shows that each person is different and has their likes and dislikes.

DA: I absolutely agree! And one thing that I think, since we are people, since we are human, there are a great deal of things that are very common, we share a lot of things. But, there are specifics, every person is different, what works for one may not work for another. In general, nobody likes stress. Right?

ART: Yes, it is unpleasant, usually.

DA: Nobody likes feeling stress, everyone likes to be relaxed and so on. Stress is a natural aspect of life. If we didn't have stress, if we didn't have a deadline, we wouldn't push ourselves, we wouldn't have to be held accountable for anything. Stress is our survival mechanism, not only to us, to animals as well. So, managing the stress is a symptom of... maybe not a symptom, it's a necessity to acquire, to learn how to manage it. To accept it! One of the best strategies that I feel I have is to accept the condition, to accept the stress, and to find the best way to deal with that. And eventually, hopefully, to turn it into an advantage.

ART: Yes. Even though at the moment you are not playing in solo recitals, when you were doing so, was there a point in time where you started feeling regularly in control of that anxiety?

DA: Well, more or less to the same point, I always felt I was in control of that stress.

ART: So you never felt overwhelmed due to stress?

DA: Not for a single concert, no. This is why I tell you, maybe I'm not the best “test subject”. There is an added element to my experiences, which is a physical problem. When I feel overwhelmed, it is due to the physical issue and playing in concerts under the stress that the physical problem brings. In that regard, what happens is that my energy level that is required to discipline myself, to work with myself, in order to be calm and enjoy the concert, despite the physical discomfort, to a certain extent, that is what has a huge drain. Not so much in

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one concert, because right after the concert I'm fine, the next day I'm great I'll go to the beach or somewhere else and whatever, I will be fine. It's the prolonged exposure to said situation that creates an effect of feeling exhausted. Not necessarily the performance itself. Performance is a spike, and after that spike you can have the release, I never had problems with that. I assumed that that would be the case throughout my career, and there are other people that have that. So the fact that I had to deal with performance stress has not had a long lasting impact, no. The physical discomfort and medical condition, that yes.

ART: I understand. When you were preparing those recitals and big tours, did you take into account possible anxiety issues and coping while practicing?

DA: Not while I'm practicing, no.

ART: Just focusing on the music, then?

DA: Just practicing and focus on what I'm doing. Again, as I said, that intense period of my life, 8 years of competing, was a period where I developed that strategy. When I was in a concert and I was too relaxed, would become lazy to use that strategy, and my concentration and performance would be affected. But when I accepted that I have to continue to do the strategies and techniques I have for myself do deal with stress, when I accepted that it is a part of my work requirement that happens in the day or a few hours before the concert, it felt better, because I simply put in place that strategy to cope with it, to deal with it. Being at home, working at home and thinking about the stress ahead of time, that I don't do. I know that it will come, I know that I have things in place that work for me and it doesn't affect my preparation at home. I am prepared for the possibility of anxiety, in fact, I know that it is more that a possibility, it is a certainty that there is going to be anxiety, I know that it is going to be there and I'll deal with that when I'm there. I know that I have things in place and experience that helps me to deal with that. I am not dealing with that before because I cannot evoke the same feeling, I know what is going to feel like and what I'm going to think, but the actual feeling of being anxious, I cannot evoke that at home. At home I'm relaxed when I'm practicing, alone or with my wife, I can be stressed about other things but with playing, no. So, I'm not preparing at home for the possibility of anxiety, I know that it's going to happen and I know that I will have to work through it.

ART: Ok. Not considering anxiety, do you practice any differently whether a concert is near or far, do you have different routines?

DA: No. My routine doesn't change. My routine is such that I deal with what I deal at the moment. I practice differently when I start working on a piece initially, and of course I practice it differently when it's in the final stage or when I have played it many times.

ART: Despite the proximity of a concert? That doesn't influence the way you work?

DA: Well, proximity of a concert simply means that I have to have the entire repertoire in my fingers. If there is one month before the concert I can work on one piece, but if there is two days before the concert I have to have them all. Right before the concert I am simply working more intensely because of the amount of repertoire I have to prepare at that moment. But not that the proximity of the concert changes my practice because of anxiety, no.

ART: Yes, of course. How about the concept of self-efficacy, are you familiar with it?

DA: No.

ART: In short, it's the belief in the ability someone has of accomplishing a certain task successfully. So, what I'm trying to ask you is, what do you feel about the relationship of your own preparation and the way you practice, and the belief you have about being ready for performance, feeling more or less anxiety?

DA: Again, it is mixed with me right now because of the physical aspect and knowing that at this moment there are certain things that my fingers cannot do. When I feel that, then I am anxious at home already.

ART: I can understand that.

DA: If I pickup my guitar and try to play something that years ago I would play with ease and cannot play now, my anxiety kicks in right there and then. Because I know it is not going to be better in the concert. But if I am playing something and I know that I'm doing it well and enjoying it and I know I'm getting the results that I have imagined, that I want to achieve with the piece, musically speaking, if I can do that at home then I'm confident enough that even if I get some loss of what I think is my maximum at home, even if I don't perform to the maximum on stage I am still confident that it's going to be good enough, that it has enough merit to be played on stage and people will enjoy. So if I can do something at home, I have enough confidence that I can do it on stage. Accepting that there is going to be anxiety, but if I can do it, I can do it. That's it, I can do it, and there is no reason why I shouldn't be able to do it on stage. I will simply deal with the fact that there is going to be anxiety. The greatest problem, I think, is if we are trying to lie to ourselves. If we have problems playing at home, we are sufficiently self-aware to understand what the level we can play at is. What are the difficulties we have? What are the unsolved problems? Unsolved issues? Technical or musical. One cannot expect that the things will go better on stage, if there are things that you cannot solve at home. That, for sure, will be the main cause of anxiety. But if you can play well at home, if you can feel confident about your playing, I think you lose very little when you go on stage. I think you are already building up the confidence, just playing and practicing by yourself or with other people in rehearsal.

ART: You mentioned earlier that the amount of concerts would help in reducing anxiety and feeling more comfortable on stage. How about your competition phase, did you feel that the competition environment also helped you cope any better with performance anxiety?

DA: It did help me focus. It helped me develop this strategy of coping with stress. Because a competition is not just playing yourself and dealing with anxiety of you playing and people listening in the hall. Competition is more than that, it is playing something and then being compared to many other people right there. So it's even more of a stressful situation, I would say. Those years of competitions, yes, they did help me find the focus and to develop a strategy on what to think and how to focus my mind on what I had to do, rather than other thoughts that would come to mind, not just undesirable but counterproductive.

ART: And those strategies and tools you developed throughout the years, did you work them out all by yourself or seek advice from teachers or colleagues?

DA: No, I did it all by myself, because I was competing so much that I had to come up with something for myself.

ART: OK. And how about more positive experiences, like flow, does that come about often in your concerts, is it frequent for you?

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DA: Oh, yes, often! I mean, flow comes, lately less because of the actual physical reason, but apart from that yes, I would say that flow comes frequently. I did not think of it as flow until I came across this book from Csikszentmihalyi. But what he has done is to summarize in a book the experience that I felt. Many times, in competitions, in concerts... That doesn't mean that it was there every time, all the time, far from it. But it was sufficient that I could recognize it and I could aim for it and know it from my personal experience, know it sort of instinctively.

ART: And do you believe that that experience can be beneficial to helping someone with anxiety that maybe feels like performing is too negative of an experience? Could it convey some sort of hope? Should it be pursued?

DA: You mean, should flow be pursued?

ART: Yes, it is what I'm asking, knowing about flow and trying to achieve that state as a means to reduce anxiety, would you believe it to be a valid option?

DA: Not only for the reasons you are mentioning but also for having a healthy life. Flow... if we could live in a constant state of flow, it would be a blissful life, you know? And we have flow when we play, when we do an activity that we can master very easily. That is why I think videogames are so popular, because they are easy to learn. And you get into a state of flow because that is the only task that the mind is busy with and doing. I actually played videogames when I was doing my competitions. Just to focus my mind, to take it away from worrying. But flow is absolutely like the ultimate "nirvana", a paradise for everything. If you have anxiety, it's not like the flow is one of the options you can use, it's the holy grail you are seeking!

ART: Yes, although it's not that easy to achieve.

DA: No, it's not.

ART: You mentioned earlier about the recital structure, if you were nervous in the first 5 or 10 minutes you would chose an easier piece or a more familiar piece. How important was for you to develop that idea of recital structure and to choose the repertoire in order to make you more comfortable?

DA: It was extremely important. Not only for that reason but also for structuring the program with a sense of flow and energy between the music, through the pieces, and what did I felt about it. And also how that would work with the audience. So, one of the most important elements on how we shape the program, is to know how it works, what sort of emotional voyage and contrast does it bring. An emotional intensity throughout the concert, there is a great deal of planning that goes into structuring a program. Then, there is this element of saying "You know what? In my personal case I don't feel comfortable in starting with the most difficult or the most recent piece. So I'll star with something more familiar to me.". But there are those people who simply like to make the biggest entrance by playing the most difficult and most bombastic piece right in the beginning. And it works for them and it's great, it's a different approach.

ART: Once again, it varies according to personality...

DA: Absolutely.

ART: It all boils down to comfort, right? If you feel comfortable with big pieces in the beginning that's ok, if you only feel comfortable with easier pieces that's ok as well.

DA: It's ok as well and we are talking about a concert, it's not about competing. Not about who can do bigger, better, faster, stronger, louder, and right at the beginning. All these elements do play a role, but those are just tools to express musical ideas and how you shape that music. How you bring those elements into your playing, throughout your entire performance, I don't think it really matters in what point you do put them in the program. I think you just have to have a variety and an emotional intensity in your program. Not necessarily, where that happens.

ART: Yes. I was speaking more in the sense of comfort, that a guitarist or any other musician, will probably give a better performance when comfortable with the choice of repertoire and recital structure, rather than just making an effort to play big pieces to impress the public.

DA: Yes.

ART: So, for me it kind of boils down to comfort level.

DA: Comfort level is for me is one of the things you have to keep in mind but not as a primary goal throughout the entire recital. It can play a role in the beginning and, to a certain extent, throughout, to not do something that makes you totally uncomfortable, you don't want that because then you would be just worried. But we also need challenge, we also need to put ourselves out of the comfort zone and to push.

ART: Yes, even to be able experience flow, the perceived level of challenge is an important factor for achieving the flow state. If there is no challenge involved then the experience tends to boredom.

DA: Exactly.

ART: Almost done here. How important do you feel it is to address these issues of music performance anxiety, with students and future musicians? Do you feel it should be talked about more?

DA: Like always, the education evolves, so we are always bringing new aspects to education. Yes, I think that it should be brought into the classroom. In my educational activity as a professor in Chicago, I certainly have brought and had workshops and discussed very often that this should be a strategy and even a coursework. It is a psychological aspect of what we do and it is a subject that is very, very necessary to be part of education.

ART: Do you feel like music schools and universities are already addressing this issue adequately? Or could they be doing more?

DA: I think it has just begun. You know, some schools address it more than others but it has already begun so I think it will simply continue.

ART: So we are done with all the topics I had, I would like to ask you, do you want to say any final words? Any topic you feel we might have missed?

DA: Well, my main summary on all this is: performance anxiety is a natural condition that humans have. Why do musicians feel it so strongly? I think that it is because it involves such

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a high degree of our mental involvement when you play a piece. Scientifically it has been studied and proved that playing music activates the brain to an extraordinarily high level of activity. The brain is so excited when there is so much going on at one moment that there is a high alert level. So, anxiety would be at the highest alert level as well. To be aware of it, to be aware that it is a natural process and to demystify, I think the most important thing, as you are doing now is to demystify this thing. To make it look human and to simply understand that this is something we cope with, that's it.

ART: So, thank you so much for this conversation. I was really nice getting to know you and hear your insights about this subject. Thank you very much for your help!

DA: You are very welcome. I wish you all the best with your work. I hope to meet you in person someday.

André Rafael Tempera: Para começar gostaria que falasse das suas primeiras experiências com guitarra. Com que idade começou? Já existia alguma ansiedade das primeiras vezes que tocou para outras pessoas?

Fábio Zanon: Eu comecei “várias vezes”. O meu pai tocava, era amador, tocava só em casa. Na época ele não tinha muita ideia de pedagogia, ensinava do jeito que tocava. Então, a primeira vez que comecei a guitarra era muito grande, não conseguia tocar. Parei e voltei com um pouco mais de idade, ficou tudo mais fácil. Já sabia ler partitura e também por isso ficou mais fácil. Mas isso era tudo em casa, fiquei muito tempo só lendo música em casa. Não me apresentava para ninguém, tocava com o meu pai, mãe e irmã ouvirem, só isso. Toquei muito em casa e a primeira vez que toquei para alguém que não foi em casa, foi numa reunião escolar, uma reunião literária. Eu fiquei muito, muito nervoso. Não fazia ideia porque eu nunca tinha feito isso, foi a primeira vez que senti.

ART: Com que idade?

FZ: Isso eu tinha 12... 13 anos, 13. Suor frio nas mãos, mãos trémulas, parecia que nada tinha controle, a guitarra não era minha, enfim, essa situação foi muito difícil. Daí a partir daquele momento comecei a estudar com um professor, aliás, um excelente professor, e ele organizou a minha técnica, até aquele momento eu não sabia usar o banquinho, não sabia tocar com unhas, não sabia o que era com apoio ou sem apoio, não tinha absolutamente nenhuma noção teórica da técnica da guitarra e muito menos das variantes. Então esse professor, o meu primeiro professor formal, António Guedes, ele organizou todo esse trabalho. Como eu já lia bem música, dentro de alguns meses já comecei a tocar em algumas apresentações curtas. O professor era muito cuidadoso com isso, então ele queria que os alunos mais avançados tivessem uma experiência de palco, mas ele fazia isso de uma forma muito gradual. Então organizava um concerto de alunos, a gente preparava duas ou três músicas apenas. Isso da primeira vez. Ele fazia isso quase a cada dois meses, mais ou menos, organizava um pequeno concerto de alunos. Aí no segundo concerto, se bem me lembro, a gente tocou alguns duetos com um outro aluno dele que tinha mais ou menos o mesmo nível. Como era mais fácil de tocar não foi muito traumático. A partir desse momento ficou mais fácil, acho que tanto pelo facto de eu ter uma base técnica mais racionalizada, quanto pelo facto de que a maneira como as apresentações foram organizadas favoreciam os nossos pontos fortes. Mas eu lembro de uma das vezes, foi muito, muito difícil. Deve ter sido a segunda ou terceira vez que eu toquei nessas apresentações de alunos. Eu tinha que lixar as unhas e a minha mãe era manicure! Eu pedi uma lixa emprestada para ela e ela perguntou “Quer que eu lixe a unha para você?” e eu era um bobo, falei “Pode lixar.”. Então lixou e a unha ficou muito curta, muito mais curta do que eu estava acostumado. Na hora que eu fui aquecer para tocar com público, foi um desastre. Eu não sentia as cordas do jeito que estava acostumado, daí fiquei bem nervoso, tinha muita coisa falhando. Então essa foi uma das vezes em que eu fiquei nervoso. Mas foi tudo bem gradual, o professor era muito rigoroso com isso. Para ele você tocar no Carnegie Hall ou tocar num colégio de crianças com necessidades especiais era exactamente a mesma atitude. Ele sempre insistia nisso, de tocar como se fosse a última coisa da nossa vida. Então estava sempre 110% preparado para isso, você já tinha tocado aquilo cem vezes em casa, sem nenhuma falha, não tinha razão nenhuma para acontecer algum problema.

ART: Bom. E essas experiências iniciais ao tocar em público foram as “piores”? Ou houve alguma fase posterior em que a pressão foi mais acentuada?

FZ: Não, eu acho que varia muito. A variação da ansiedade de uma apresentação para outra é brutal. Porque depende de vários factores, alguns sob o nosso controle e alguns completamente à nossa revelia. Muitas vezes você aceita por exemplo fazer uma estreia de uma obra contemporânea que você nem conhece e faz isso ou porque oferecem um pagamento ou porque o compositor é amigo... e na hora que a música chega não é nada do que você esperava e tem que estudar tudo de última hora. Assim não é favorável. Sim, tem tantos factores que podem ser desfavoráveis que isso gera uma oscilação no grau de ansiedade. Eu acho que a ansiedade aumenta proporcionalmente em relação aos factores imprevisíveis.

ART: Sim, sim. Também está dependente da forma como cada um lida com esses factores.

FZ: Claro. Já aconteceu de eu subir ao palco para fazer uma leitura à primeira vista, praticamente. Num festival de música contemporânea em que a pessoa que deveria fazer a estreia de uma peça ficou doente. Ou eu tocava aquela parte ou teria de cancelar a apresentação. Então subi ao palco com uma partitura para ler à primeira vista. Claro, você fica ultra nervoso. Faz parte do ofício, então a gente aprende a lidar um pouco com isso também. Situações competitivas em geral, enfim. Se todos os concertos fosse num mundo completamente ideal, completamente controlado, em que a gente só pudesse tocar as músicas que quer, no teatro que quer, com todo o tempo do mundo para preparar, no dia em que você está bem com a cabeça, no dia em que você está sentindo bem fisicamente, dormiu bem... mas quase nunca você tem isso! Tenta ter tudo isso, mas nem sempre é possível.

ART: E quando essa ansiedade está presente, independentemente dos factores, mais externos ou internos, quais são as coisas que normalmente passam pela cabeça, factores emocionais, o que é que o corpo sente normalmente?

FZ: Tem muitas coisas relacionadas com a ansiedade que são profundamente incómodas. Uma delas é o efeito físico que podemos ter. Você sentir que o teu corpo não te pertence. Isso pode-se manifestar de várias maneiras. Primeiro, há uma inquietude na sua maneira de se sentar, você não encontra uma postura para tocar, parece que se a cadeira está alta, está muito alta, se baixa um pouco, está muito baixa, só que não tem um ponto exacto, sente sempre que a guitarra está mal colocada, está caindo. A outra coisa é a sensação das mãos, ou frias ou suadas ou frias e suadas ao mesmo tempo, derrapando sobre o braço da guitarra. Unhas que parece que estão muito curtas ou muito longas, parece que não acha o ponto certo da unha em nenhum momento. Tem um lado emocional, claro, você sente aquilo amplificado, e tem um lado que é objectivo, claro que a unha não está nas melhores condições, mas nunca está. A gente deveria estar vacinado contra isso, a gente sabe que as unhas nunca estão boas, faz parte do preparo você aceitar o destino. As unhas nunca vão estar maravilhosas no dia em que você mais precisa delas. Então isso são factores mais, como dizer, orgânicos. Agora do ponto de vista puramente mental/emocional, acho que a principal coisa é o divórcio entre a actividade de tocar e onde está a sua cabeça, a sua concentração, o seu foco. Então, muitas vezes você começa a tocar e está mais preocupado com a tua ansiedade do que com a tua música. Você percebe que a música vai acontecendo sem que você tenha nenhum controle sobre aquilo, como se tocasse num piloto automático enquanto a sua cabeça está pensando no táxi que pegou para ir até ao concerto e quase teve um acidente, ou que tem a conta do gás para pagar, que esqueceu de ir buscar o filho na escola, enfim, tem um milhão de coisas que podem passar pela tua cabeça enquanto você está tocando. E aquilo vai criando cada vez mais um divórcio entre você e a música, cada vez mais você se afasta daquele roteiro mental que preparou com tanto zelo em casa. Acho que isso aí é o que mais incomoda, aquela sensação que tem um divórcio profundo entre você e a música que está tocando. Que mais pode acontecer com a

cabeça? Acontece muito, por exemplo quando eu tou muito cansado, quando eu viajo para um lugar com muitos fusos horários de distância, um jetlag muito grande, um cansaço muito grande, o ficar muito tempo sem dormir, que você sobe no palco e começa a tocar e a tua atenção está uma fracção de segundo atrás da música. Você até consegue trazer o foco da sua mente para a sua actividade com esforço, mas ela parece que está sempre uma fracção de segundo atrás, não se antecipa. Então aquele roteiro de “bom, agora vou fazer um acento naquela nota, agora vou acelerar nesta passagem, agora vou passar o dedo 1 por cima do dedo 4”, você pensa em todo esse roteiro, porém, um pouquinho atrasado. Então a música acontece e você de repente até se assusta. “Ah, aquela passagem já foi!” e isso dá uma ansiedade profunda, é muito ruim. Essas são as principais coisas.

ART: Opondo a essa ideia de um recital onde há ansiedade, qual é a diferença para um recital onde nos sentimos bem e tudo corre bem? Também em termos mentais, emocionais e físicos? Mais concentração provavelmente?

FZ: Nem sempre. Eu tenho um pouco de desconfiança quando eu estou calmo demais. Eu acho que o nervosismo e ansiedade elas se somam ao senso de responsabilidade, que tem de ser muito forte em quem toca. Se você toca como se aquilo fosse uma actividade corriqueira, como guardar os pratos no armário ou escovar os dentes, não dá. Ela tem que ser uma actividade que mantém uma certa aura, mantém uma certa mística ao redor de si. Eu acho que a ansiedade faz parte disso, é uma cerimónia que a gente cumpre quando sobe ao palco para tocar. Então quando eu fico tranquilo demais, na verdade eu me preocupo! Porque eu acho que a chance de dar algo errado é maior. Eu acho que a ansiedade, de certa forma, é uma auto-defesa. É a ansiedade de quem está numa situação de pressão, de stress. Ela, de uma certa forma, torna a sua concentração mais nítida. Faz com que você fique mais aberto para a actividade e que tem um pequeno ganho de consciência que faz com que você preste mais atenção e reaja mais rapidamente ao imprevisto, de uma forma que num estado emocional completamente uniforme você não consegue. É assim, bocejar antes de entrar no palco, eu fico preocupadíssimo quando isso acontece! É sinal que você está numa concentração normal, uma concentração que você teria para assistir televisão ou para ler um livro, para tocar precisa de ter mais que isso.

ART: Sim. É a tal noção daquele nível de ansiedade que ajuda à performance.

FZ: Sem sombra de dúvida. O problema do nível de ansiedade é quando tem um efeito físico tão brutal que você começa a tremer, a esbarrar. Na hora que você toca a primeira música que, no meu caso, procuro que seja uma música relativamente fácil, se acontece alguma coisa ali você pensa “Puxa, se nessa música que é fácil eu tou errando, o que vai acontecer quando ficar difícil?”, arruina o resto, os seus próximos 10 minutos. Até você se recuperar e voltar a um estado de consciência exaltado mas não descontrolado.

ART: O nível ideal de adrenalina.

FZ: Eu acho que a definição seria um nível em que você está exaltado mas não descontrolado.

ART: Exacto. Menos que isso, demasiado relaxamento pode promover o desleixo.

FZ: É, daí fica uma coisa completamente prosaica, isso não é bom para a música. Eu suspeito que esses artistas que têm fama de cancelar demais os concertos, a gente sabe quem é, esse pessoal que a cada 5 concertos cancela 2, eu acho que é um pouco por isso. Eles devem chegar no teatro e começam a ensaiar e falam “Não, isso aqui está um desleixo hoje, não vou tocar!” pois eles têm um hábito de trabalhar num nível tão alto que não se propoem a trabalhar num nível inferior a esse. É por aí, acho que quando você não encontra

aquele ponto exacto do comprometimento com a música é muito difícil entregar, “to deliver the goods”.

ART: Sim, fazer jus à música. Alguma vez ao longo da carreira chegou ao palco e se sentiu completamente dominado e assoberbado pela ansiedade? Ou sempre foi uma coisa que deu para ir lidando e contornando?

FZ: Deixa eu pensar... Descontrolo ao ponto de arruinar completamente a apresentação eu acho que nunca tive. Tenho a sorte de ter uma boa memória então problemas graves de memória foram tão raros que eu consigo lembrar exactamente em que ocasião aconteceu. Foi assim 1 recital em 500. Eu ainda assim consegui me safar, acho que isso ajuda muito. Acho que a pessoa que tem falhas de memória e não consegue superar, olha, a gente sabe que isso é paralizante. Uma vez que você tem aquela falha de memória grave, que por exemplo não consegue terminar a música, e eu já vi gente maravilhosa ter esse problema, um Julian Bream, uma Alicia de Larrocha, ter um branco total no meio de um recital. Para mim, quando isso aconteceu, puxa, levou uns dois ou três concertos para que eu não ficasse com aquele “fantasma” na minha cabeça. Você fica sempre com aquela iminência do desastre, “toquei essa música no concerto anterior e foi neste ponto que esqueci”, fica o tempo inteiro naquela música esperando aquele ponto crítico chegar. Em vez de se concentrar em tocar melhor a música você fica na ansiedade, esperando por aquele ponto que você sabe que teve um acidente numa apresentação anterior. Imagino que quem tenha esse problema de uma forma recorrente, pode ser bem difícil de lidar. Eu tive isso uma ou duas vezes na vida inteira. Acho que não, nunca tive uma coisa assim, paralizante, de “não vou entrar”, “acabou”, “desisti”, “sai do palco”, não isso eu nunca tive. Eu posso lembrar por exemplo de uma situação, agora tive um branco tocando “Apassionata” de Ronaldo Miranda. Não foi bem um branco, a música é muito complicada e tem uma passagem que eu pulei um trecho, não encontrei de novo a digitação e a partir dali eu não consegui prosseguir. Aí eu voltei, toquei tudo aquilo de novo, chegou no mesmo ponto cometi o mesmo erro... tive que voltar 3 vezes para conseguir prosseguir. Isso para mim foi assim uma abominação, eu não estou acostumado que isso aconteça, então me deixou muito ansioso aquilo.

ART: Mas deu para superar.

FZ: É. De uma forma geral, tocar com orquestra é sempre um momento que tem um pouquinho mais de ansiedade do que outras ocasiões. Porque o público é maior, porque você tem músicos experientes tocando junto a si, porque uma falha grave pode ter consequências mais funestas. Tocar com orquestra é sempre... Outra coisa que prejudica muito as apresentações com orquestra é o facto que como você toca somente uma música, não existe aquele ritmo um pouco mais dosado de um recital solo. Você vai tocar por exemplo o “Concierto de Aranjuez”, a primeira página vai bem, quando começa o solo da guitarra ele é muito difícil. Se tem alguma coisa muito séria nesse começo isso aí arruína todo o resto da música e não dá tempo de recuperar, você perde o primeiro momento todo.

ART: Normalmente não há primeiros andamentos fáceis nos concertos...

FZ: É, raríssimamente, só no “Fantasia para un Gentilhombre” e acabou, só esse.

ART: Pois, é isso.

FZ: Outra coisa é, a primeira vez que eu toco uma nova obra em concerto é sempre um momento assim, especial. Você pegar numa obra, por exemplo, “Nocturnal” de Britten, e tocar pela primeira vez em público, tem aquele “demónio” dentro do seu peito que te tenta. Então a primeira vez sempre é complicada. Depois que você faz esse “baptismo de fogo”

ela tende a ficar mais fácil. Uma obra longa, importante e complicada, a primeira vez sempre provoca uma ansiedade maior.

ART: Estes sintomas que temos estado a falar, o quanto é que o impedem de tocar normalmente em palco? Quando comparado com a naturalidade e familiaridade de ensaiar em casa?

FZ: Quantificar eu não consigo. Acho que impede... muitas vezes é o limite entre você tocar uma apresentação realmente artística, em que cada frase, cada momento da música é tocado com muito carinho, com muito cuidado. Há uma realimentação constante entre o que se ouve e o que se toca. Você se ouve bem, aquilo gera uns disparos de consciência no teu cérebro e aquilo resulta na próxima passagem sendo tocada de uma forma mais integrada com aquilo que já aconteceu. Isso aí depende, eu acho, do ponto certo de consciência. Você está um pouquinho exaltado, mas não totalmente relaxado. Acho que isso é o que conduz a uma grande apresentação. Quando você ultrapassa o ponto, ou você fica nervoso demais ou relaxado demais, o grande perigo é ficar uma apresentação prosaica, uma apresentação em que você segue um roteiro, porque claro estudou muito e se preparou bem, mas sem grandes consequências artísticas. Aí, pior até do que a ansiedade, é a distração. Aquela sensação que falei antes, você toca porque está estudado mas a tua cabeça não está ali. Você não tem muita consciência do teu corpo, você não procura fazer aquele controle fino, aquele controle minucioso dos movimentos, daí você começa a falhar notas. Não é que você erra e se interrompe, fica uma performance truncada, não é isso, você começa a “pifar” a nota, pisa mal as notas, a mão direita esbarra nas outras cordas, as cordas batem na unha, fica uma execução meio bruta, meio grosseira. Dá a impressão que você não toma cuidado em tocar todas as notas realmente centradas. Isso é um resultado decorrente de um excesso de ansiedade ou o revés, o excesso de despreocupação.

ART: E especificamente em relação aos guitarristas, quais é que acha que são as maiores preocupações que um guitarrista tem? Já falámos um pouco das unhas, para além disso ocorre-lhe alguma característica especial dos guitarristas que possa ser um foco de preocupação?

FZ: Deixa eu pensar um pouco. Eu tive colegas que sofriam muito com a ansiedade. Lembro por exemplo, quando eu era estudante em Londres, a classe era de um nível muito alto e tinha um rapaz que quando ele tocava a solo ele ficava tão nervoso, mas tão nervoso, que ele perdia a respiração e chegava a desmaiar. Tinha que fazer um esforço consciente para continuar com o ritmo da sua respiração sob pena de ele realmente ficar um pouco mareado. Lembro de ele ficar quase inconsciente tocando a “Partita em Mi maior” de Bach. Porém, quando ele começou a tocar em duo, ele não tinha esse problema, ele se sentia muito mais amparado. Depois, conversando, eu fiquei muito amigo dele e ele falou que ele tinha tido um professor que era muito negativo, que era uma pessoa que tinha sido muito desencorajadora. Dizia que se ele continuasse tocando daquele jeito ele jamais teria uma carreira em música, enfim, aquele tipo de professor sem muita psicologia e sem muito respeito pelo estudante, na verdade. Aquilo realmente criou uma condição emocional muito negativa para ele tocar a solo. Então a saída para ele realmente foi se dedicar a música de câmara, por sorte que conseguiu um parceiro que completava, criava uma boa química com ele. Você deve conhecer, é o duo Eden-Stell. O que é que pode criar ansiedade? Bom, eu acho que uma das coisas que, para mim pelo menos, mais cria ansiedade é a afinação. Porque tem sempre aquela coisa, você quer estar com as cordas na melhor condição possível. Se você troca com muita antecipação, a sonoridade fica ruim, se você troca muito próximo ao concerto, você vai ter problemas de afinação. Muitas vezes não dá, apesar da experiência de tocar muitas vezes em público a gente aprende a lidar com esse problema, não dá para ter controle, ou arrebenta uma corda ou a corda está velha e fica desafinada.

Às vezes você troca na véspera e por alguma razão a afinação não estabiliza, isso é muito incômodo. Nossa, me deixa nervosíssimo!

ART: As diferenças de temperatura também, de uma sala para outra. Às vezes está afinada e depois... deixa de estar.

FZ: Demais! Eu lembro quando era mais novo, eu tendia a ficar no camarim aquecendo até ao último segundo e quando dava o terceiro sinal eu corria para o palco, e eu percebi que isso aí provocava problemas de afinação. Hoje em dia eu prefiro aquecer por menos tempo e ficar mais próximo do palco alguns minutos antes de entrar, para a guitarra acostumar um pouco à temperatura do palco. Mas muitas vezes nem isso funciona. Isso, pelo menos para mim, provoca muita ansiedade. Acho que o pior de tudo é sempre o efeito imprevisto. Tudo o que pode acontecer no palco, as luzes estão quentes demais, a luz está fraca demais, você não consegue ler se vai tocar música de câmara, ou então tá calor e começa a suar demais, a sua mão vai escorregar, a plateia muito desatenta ou tem muita criança no público e começa a conversar e fazer barulho. As pessoas não fazem ideia. Muitas vezes quando você está muito concentrado, as pessoas falam “Puxa, aquela criança chorou o tempo inteiro no seu concerto!” e você não se apercebeu, estava muito concentrado mesmo. Tem aquelas senhoras que pegam no caramelo e começam a fazer barulho ao desembulhar, e fazem devagar porque acham que não vai fazer barulho, e continua, e você olha, e a pessoa olha para você e pára para fingir que não é ela. Daí que você continua a tocar e ela continua a fazer barulho com o caramelo, isso pode-se estender por 2 ou 3 minutos, arruína o movimento de uma sonata! Esse tipo de coisa imprevista pode gerar muita ansiedade também. Outra coisa que eu vejo que muita gente se incomoda, e eu me incomodo também, para falar a verdade, normalmente eu gosto de chegar com tempo suficiente para fazer uma passagem de som, garantir que a iluminação está boa, que a cadeira está do meu gosto, que eu conheço a acústica do lugar, isso normalmente eu faço em 20 ou 30 minutos, não mais que isso. Então chego uma hora e meia antes, faço a passagem do som e vou para o camarim. Tem um, não diria ritual, mas tem um roteiro que eu cumpro de relaxamento, de concentração, de tentar não conversar com ninguém, fazer o meu aquecimento com tranquilidade, tocar um par de músicas, enfim, eu descobri a minha maneira de aquecer para entrar no palco já com 100% de rendimento. Só que às vezes você está fazendo isso e vem alguém e bate na porta do camarim. Fala “Ah, você poderia dar uma entrevista para a rádio?” e eu “Não, não posso dar uma entrevista para a rádio agora! Eu estou me concentrando para dar um concerto” e ele “Mas são só cinco minutos!” e para não parecer antipático dá uma entrevista de cinco minutos. Isso aí para mim arruína completamente o roteiro de concentração. Eu lembro uma vez que eu dei um recital de duo com flauta, eu tenho esse duo com flauta há 30 anos, é o meu melhor amigo, a gente toca junto desde adolescentes. A gente foi dar um recital numa cidade do interior e então faltava assim 2 minutos para entrar no palco e a gente começou a afinar. Vem uma pessoa com um microfone “Estamos aqui na rádio, ao vivo para falar com os artistas Fábio Zanon e Marcelo Barboza. Podem dar uma declaração? Como se sentem por entrar no palco?” e eu “Eu estou sentindo que... não está bom!”. Você pronto para afinar o instrumento e aparece uma pessoa ao vivo, não tem como você escapar. Olha, vou-te falar, com a partitura na frente, eu tive um branco. Um horror, acho que foi o pior recital que a gente já deu, esse tipo de coisa atrapalha muito. Não sei se no caso é ansiedade ou se é irritação. Tem uma coisa que eu posso te dizer. A ansiedade é diferente em duas situações muito importantes na nossa vida musical. A ansiedade do palco é o inverso da ansiedade de um estúdio de gravação. No palco normalmente o que acontece? Você começa o concerto muito ansioso, na medida em que a 1ª e a 2ª músicas saem bem, você gradualmente se tranquiliza e a partir daí o recital é uma grande satisfação, é uma grande festa, onde você se sente bem, se sente à vontade, normalmente. No estúdio de gravação é o contrário, você chega e pensa que está bem preparado, tenho o estúdio o dia todo à minha disposição, a guitarra está bem ajustada, as cordas são novas, estou com o meu afinador electrónico. Você pensa “Tenho

todo o tempo do mundo para fazer essa gravação, não pode acontecer nada de errado". Você começa e na primeira música demora 40 takes até conseguir bem. Começa a 2ª música e são 50 takes até sair bem. Aí já se passaram 4 horas de gravação, já está exausto e faltam 50 minutos de música para gravar. Aí a ansiedade vai aumentando. Então num estúdio de gravação a ansiedade é o inverso do palco, você vai ficando mais ansioso à medida que a gravação progride.

ART: Durante o período de formação e aprendizagem, até à transição para músico profissional, quando acha que começou a sentir com alguma regularidade uma sensação de controle, na posse da capacidade necessária para dar um recital competente?

FZ: Quando eu já tinha me tornado adulto de verdade. Até a uma idade de 22 ou 23 anos, sempre saía muito insatisfeito. Entrava inseguro nos concertos e saía insatisfeito. A partir dessa época, 24 ou 25 anos, aí eu já tinha 10 anos de palco, começou a ficar um pouco, não vou dizer satisfatório, mas mais realista. Agora eu sei que quando toco um bom concerto foi um bom concerto, quando não sai tão bem, eu sei que não saíu tão bem mas não fico me punindo por causa disso. Não uso o "silício" depois do concerto. Você sabe que é uma coisa emendável, é uma coisa que você pode melhorar depois, com um determinado tipo de trabalho. Quando eu tinha, digamos 18 ou 19 anos, acho que foi a época mais difícil, em que eu tinha mais oscilação de humor, de grau de ansiedade. Eu lembro um caso bem específico, eu tinha que tocar num concurso bastante importante, eu tinha sido classificado para a semi-final, era um concurso enorme, com todos os instrumentos, eu lembro que tinha de tocar a "Sonatina" de Berkley nessa semi-final. Eu tocava-la bem, ela estava muito bem preparada, porém, naquela semana que antecedia o concerto eu tocava e falava "Não, isto aqui está completamente chato, não consigo criar nenhuma atmosfera com a música, não vou conseguir convencer ninguém, isso aqui está completamente pedestre, completamente prosaico". Eu achava que, apesar de acertar todas as notas e fazer todas as indicações da partitura, artisticamente não achava o som da música, tudo o que eu imaginava que a música deveria ser eu não conseguia fazer. Eu não sabia se era um problema técnico, se era um problema do meu estado psicológico naquele momento, não conseguia realmente identificar onde é que estava o problema que me impedia. E lembro de ir para o palco um pouco derrotado, assim, "vou tocar profissionalmente porém não vai ser uma coisa artisticamente superlativa". Incomodou muito, essa certeza que artisticamente seria uma coisa irrelevante. Então eu tinha muita ansiedade por causa disso, eu me sentia muito "abaixo" da música, aquém da qualidade da música. Inclusive foi uma época que eu parei de tocar obras, por exemplo, certas Suites ou Sonatas de Bach, porque eu sempre achava que tocava muito pior do que a música merecia.

ART: Não seria um certo perfeccionismo?

FZ: Mas se não é perfeccionista aí você está na profissão errada! Tem que ser perfeccionista. O problema é que o perfeccionismo não pode ser paralizante.

ART: Há uma dose saudável de perfeccionismo, digamos assim.

FZ: É difícil você ser "fanático" na medida certa. A ideia de fanatismo pressupõe descontrole, uma total submissão às circunstâncias.

ART: É isso. Na sua experiência de lidar com a ansiedade ao longo da formação e da carreira, teve ajuda de professores ou colegas? Ou foram apenas ferramentas pessoais que foram sendo desenvolvidas ao longo dos anos?

FZ: Eu acho que em última análise, a nossa profissão, especialmente sendo guitarristas, é muito cruel porque você está sozinho. Ninguém pode entrar na tua cabeça e saber como você se sente e pensa. Então, por mais que você possa ter uma grande ajuda, você tem que se resolver. É mandatório, é inescapável, tem que se resolver sozinho. Por mais que um professor mantenha uma atitude positiva e construtiva, quando aquilo não encontra um eco na sensibilidade da pessoa, é muito complicado. Agora sim, eu acho que eu tive grandes ajudas, primeiro de todos foi o meu pai que acho que ele é em larga escala responsável por essa medida, do perfeccionismo que não é paralizante. Ele tinha uma atitude muito madura em relação a isso. Ele jamais me deixou ser relaxado. Acho que hoje em dia tem uma tendência dos pais quererem ser muito doces, muito carinhosos, muito condescendentes com os filhos, que é uma coisa boa, porém, se você passa da medida você se torna permissivo demais e ninguém consegue se desenvolver numa actividade de alto nível assim. Aqui no Brasil é muito forte isso, você sempre ouve dizer “As crianças são o rei da casa”, “Tudo o que eles fazem é lindo”, dão uma cambalhota e você bate palmas. Então, isso não conduz a uma busca de perfeição numa actividade artística ou esportiva, ou qualquer coisa, pode até ser dentista. Então eu acho que nisso eu sou muito grato ao meu pai. E ao professor Guedes, hoje eu tenho 50 anos, eu continuo exactamente com a mesma atitude que ele me transmitiu. Não interessa se eu vou tocar na sala Tchaikovski em Moscovo ou no centro cultural de bairro de uma cidade do interior do Brasil. Eu toco rigorosamente com a mesma atitude perfeccionista, para mim aquilo é sempre o principal momento da minha vida. Aquele concerto tem que ser melhor que o concerto anterior, é essa a minha meta.

ART: Mas sempre de uma forma positiva, certo?

FZ: Claro. Eu acho que os meus outros professores foram por esse caminho. Eu acho que isso foi sempre muito... Quando eu fui estudar em Londres eu já tinha 24 anos, então eu acho que essa parte de atitude mental no que se refere ao palco eu já tinha mais ou menos resolvida. O meu professor em Londres ele nunca teve de dedicar nenhum momento das aulas para lidar com a minha ansiedade, eu acho que nessa época já estava mais ou menos resolvida.

ART: Bom. E sente que a capacidade de lidar com a ansiedade é mais inata ou trabalhada? Um pouco de ambas as hipóteses?

FZ: Eu acho que são as duas coisas. Eu acho que claro, há pessoas, há crianças de 2 ou 3 anos, uma delas vai reagir a uma situação de perigo ficando extremamente nervosa, tendo um ataque de pânico, e a outra criança vai ter uma atitude um poquinho mais racional nesse momento e se consegue afastar do perigo, tem aquela tranquilidade para lidar com a situação. É um pouco como uma pessoa que derruba um objecto, tem pessoas que vão se assustar e destruir o objecto, tem outras que não se assustam e conseguem reagir de uma forma que conseguem aparar e consertar o desastre. Claro, varia muito de pessoa para pessoa. Agora, nada é tão ruim que não possa melhorar, e nada é tão bom que também não possa melhorar.

ART: É um bom princípio esse.

FZ: Pais e professores têm um papel muito forte na criação dessa “fortaleza” de personalidade que é um presente que a gente tem na nossa actividade. Se você consegue ter essa força pessoal que te permite lidar com situações de pressão de uma forma tranquila, é uma dádiva.

ART: Ao praticar, numa sessão de estudo normal, tem em conta esta problemática da ansiedade? Há algo que faça para tentar precaver uma eventual ansiedade em palco? Ou durante o estudo o foco é só a música e a técnica?

FZ: Como eu te falei, essa coisa de criar uma espécie de rotina mental, rotina de prática, que é quase uma espécie de ritual, realmente não, tenho só esse ritual de aquecimento para tentar entrar num estado mental favorável. Agora, na preparação, sim, tem algumas coisas. Tem um exemplo, faz um par de semanas eu toquei o Concerto do Villa-Lobos na Alemanha e na França, e puxa, eu devo ter tocado esse concerto na minha carreira quase 100 vezes, então eu acho que já sei mais ou menos onde estão os pontos complicados nesse concerto e que eu sei onde é que a ansiedade me vai prejudicar. Por exemplo, na primeira página, no primeiro compasso você toca as cordas soltas da guitarra e toca a última nota da guitarra na casa 19 na primeira corda. Eu sei que se aquela nota não sair bem, eu vou ficar desmoralizado para o resto da música. Então, no meu preparo, inclusivé no meu aquecimento, eu tento fazer com que aquela passagem se torne praticamente inabalável. Se eu tocar aquela passagem 20 vezes eu me garanto que acerto aquilo 20 vezes. Mais para a frente no concerto tem passagens difíceis que claro, estudo para acertar tudo, mas não é tão crucial como essa primeira. Essa primeira página realmente eu tenho que estar muito seguro, muito sólido, quase como se fosse um ginasta olímpico que vai fazer um salto sobre o cavalo, que é uma prova muito rápida. Não tem possibilidade de retorno, ou você acerta ou você é desclassificado, é quase isso. Esse primeiro compasso do Concerto do Villa-Lobos é uma passagem que eu estudo com uma estratégia voltada à vitória sobre a ansiedade. Eu posso estar muito ansioso, posso estar tocando com um público muito grande, com uma orquestra que não está tocando bem, não interessa, essa passagem eu sei que eu vou tocar bem. E uma vez que eu toco isso bem eu já me tranquilizo um pouco para o resto do concerto. Então esse tipo de coisa eu faço, estudar passagens críticas. Ou então, por exemplo, às vezes terceiros movimentos difíceis de sonatas, você vai tocar uma peça que nem a “Sonata” do Castelnuovo-Tedesco ou a “Sonata III” de Ponce, ou o final do Ginastera, que são movimentos que te empolgam no momento que você toca. Quando eu acho que a música está pronta, eu gravo ou filmo uma execução completa da obra para eu identificar os pontos fracos, os pontos onde a ansiedade me leva a tocar rápido além da conta ou não fazer respirações. Eu tento marcar, colocar uma espécie de marco, uma bandeirola, em que eu devo prestar atenção para não passar do ponto daquele momento sob pena da música ficar toda atabalhoada. Acontece muito, o exemplo clássico que toda o mundo conhece é o final da “Sonata” do Ginastera. Você quer tocar com aquele ritmo “*campero*” e “*malambo*” argentino e ela vai ficando cada vez mais rápido e chega a um ponto que é só barulho.

ART: Há uma forma de praticar diferente dependendo da proximidade de um concerto?

FZ: Eu tenho uma enorme inveja das pessoas que conseguem conduzir a carreira de uma forma em que você só toca as obras que você consegue preparar nos mínimos detalhes e 100% adiantado, sem stress nenhum. Mas, na prática, qualquer pessoa que tenha uma actividade de concerto constante, está sempre a estudar de última hora, sempre. Uma vez eu conversei com o Maxim Vengerov, “Qual é o teu principal problema para tocar em público?”, “Ah, estou sempre estudando tudo de última hora...”. Sempre. Todo o mundo que tem uma actividade muito intensa tem essa sensação de que nunca tem tempo suficiente para estudar as coisas como deveria. Então acho que isso aí é um factor muito complicado, essa sensação profunda de que você poderia estar mais bem preparado, caso tivesse tido mais tempo, mais tranquilidade, mais tempo livre antes. Como eu tenho uma carreira que me leva a tocar muitas coisas diferentes em sequência, por exemplo, o ano passado eu toquei o concerto do Berkley, Aranjuez, Villa-Lobos, Gentilhombre, Radamés... só de concertos com orquestra eu toquei 6 diferentes ao longo de uma temporada. Toquei “Le

Marteau sans Maître” de Boulez, toquei vários programas a solo, fiz estreia de uma obra, gravei um CD... quer dizer, muitas vezes o repertório que você grava no CD não dá para você tocar aquele repertório em concerto, certamente não entra o repertório todo. Quando você acumula essa quantidade de trabalho, na sequência, você tem que se preparar de um jeito a vencer a ansiedade. Porque você claramente vai ter, na hora do seu concerto, a sensação de que você está menos preparado do que deveria. Isso é inevitável. Eu acho que numa situação dessas faz parte da tua preparação admitir que o máximo que você consegue fazer para aquela situação tem que ser o suficiente. O maestro Elezaar de Carvalho, grande maestro aqui no Brasil, ele falava “Quando você não pode ter o que ama você tem de amar o que tem”. Acho que essa é a solução para alguns casos. Quando não tem jeito, quando você não vai ter tempo de preparo que você julga ideal, você tem que se contentar em fazer o melhor possível com um tempo de preparo que é realista.

ART: Em Portugal temos uma expressão que diz “o ótimo é inimigo do bom”.

FZ: Exactamente. Isso é que é o pior. Muitas vezes com pouco preparo você consegue alcançar o ótimo, isso é que é o inexplicável. Você claramente tem a sensação de que ficaria muito melhor se se preparasse mais só que na hora que você ouve a gravação do concerto depois fala “Está tudo bem! Porque me preocupei?”. Agora é isso, nós somos movidos a responsabilidade. O músico é como se tivesse alguém com uma foice correndo atrás dele o tempo inteiro.

ART: Certo. E em relação ao conceito de auto-eficácia, a capacidade que temos de acreditar que seremos capazes de cumprir uma tarefa com sucesso, como por exemplo, tocar num recital. Qual é a importância desse “acreditar” no nosso método de estudo, preparação, capacidade, para criar uma base que permita “vencer” a ansiedade?

FZ: Sim, o problema é que a gente tem que... nós estamos numa época em que o mundo todo, e aqui no Brasil em particular, em que as pessoas tendem a fazer uma transferência de responsabilidade o tempo inteiro. Tem um buraco na rua que a administração pública não tampa, há um problema da administração pública, ninguém se responsabiliza por nada. Teus filhos tiram uma nota ruim na escola, a culpa é da professora. A gente está sempre a transferir a culpa para alguém. Isso não é uma coisa que ajuda muito. Eu acho que psicologicamente, para nós músicos, é melhor a gente ter a sensação de que nós somos donos do nosso destino, que nós somos os únicos responsáveis por aquilo que acontece de bom ou de ruim nas nossas apresentações. Agora, a maneira como a gente lida com o bom e o ruim muitas vezes está fora do nosso controle. Lembrando que a gente está numa época em que o mundo inteiro é “culpado” pelas nossas mazelas, acho que nesse caso é verdade, nós não somos completamente donos do nosso destino nesse aspecto. Porque, sejamos realistas, imaginemos que eu dou um concerto muito ruim numa situação muito importante, digamos que eu vou tocar aqui em São Paulo, que é a minha cidade, onde eu conheço muita gente e muita gente me conhece, onde eu realmente tenho um público, eu vou tocar com a principal orquestra na principal sala de concertos e imagina que eu chego lá e toco muito mal. É tão ruim que eu não consigo terminar o concerto e tenho de parar, na situação hipotética. Sim, é uma coisa muito grave, é uma coisa que potencialmente pode prejudicar muito a minha reputação. Por outro lado, eu também tenho de ter a segurança de que, se isso acontecer, no dia seguinte eu ainda teria uma boa relação com a minha esposa, uma boa relação com os meus filhos, o meu cachorro ainda vai gostar de mim, a minha mãe não vai esquecer de mim no seu testamento, enfim, a gente tem que ter uma certa segurança que você tem um suporte emocional por parte das pessoas que lhe são próximas. Os meus amigos continuarão a ser os meus amigos, os meus alunos continuarão confiando na minha capacidade... então acho que é muito importante, para que a gente tenha uma certa “fortaleza de espírito” para enfrentar este tipo de situação, que a gente se

sinta bem amparado pelo nosso entorno social, família, amigos, alunos e colegas profissionais. Eu tendo a ser muito compreensivo com os meus colegas, quando vou assistir a um concerto de um amigo que digamos, está ficando já com bastante idade, pianista ou guitarrista que com 75 anos vai dar um concerto. Puxa, se alguma coisa não sair bem, ele foi um grande artista, ele continua a ser um grande artista, a gente não pode julgá-lo unicamente por uma ocasião em que ele teve uma infelicidade, um infortúnio. Eu acho importante se sentir amparado pelo nosso entorno, e acho que isso tem muito a ver com a maneira como a gente se relaciona com a nossa família, com os nossos fantasmas da infância. Se você pensa em grandes artistas que tiveram períodos muito grandes de ansiedade, há casos que vêm logo à cabeça como Claudio Arrau, Vladimir Horowitz, puxa, são verdadeiros mitos, são totens da arte da interpretação, e eles pararam de tocar por 7 ou 8 anos por ansiedade. De onde é que vem isso? Será que não é um pai ou uma mãe que colocaram demasiada expectativa sobre a pessoa? Vincularam demais o afecto à realização profissional? A Martha Argerich falava muito disso, que quando ela era muito pequena, tinha 8 ou 9 anos de idade, a mãe dela que era uma “louca de pedra” colocava tanta pressão sobre ela que antes de ela tocar ela ia à casa-de-banho, vomitava, ou tinha uma crise de ansiedade fortíssima e pensava “se eu errar uma nota eu vou explodir”. Quer dizer, uma criança de 9 anos fazer isso? E o que aconteceu com ela? Na hora que estava conhecida, famosa, ela parou de tocar a solo. Ela falou “nunca me senti tão sozinha na minha vida como dando um recital solo”. Ela só toca com orquestra ou música de câmara. Então a gente perdeu muito, a gente poderia ter tido muitos concertos da Martha Argerich se ela tivesse tido uma infância mais estável, mais “normal” talvez. Por outro lado, excesso de “normalidade” não cria grandes artistas. Você vai e toca “Geensleeves”, uma música que tem 16 compassos, erra 12, e seus pais falam “Meus parabéns, foi lindo!” , puxa, também não é a mensagem certa porque a criança vai pensar que não importa que bobagem faça que os pais vão achar tudo lindo o tempo inteiro. Então onde é que você encontra essa boa medida? Em que se permite a ser honesto com a criança mas sem uma cobrança excessiva? Até pelo facto de eu não ter sido criança prodígio, ter começado relativamente tarde e ter sido sempre muito responsável pelo que eu fazia, talvez seja a chave para o problema. Comecei com uma idade em que era responsável pelo que eu fazia, não dependia muito da aprovação dos meus pais. Acho que é por aí, acho que tem muitas coisas que a pobre criança que se prepara para uma carreira de concertista não pode controlar.

ART: Essa base realmente é bastante importante, mas do ponto de vista pessoal, da auto-eficácia e auto-confiança, conceitos relacionados com a capacidade de acreditar em nós próprios, que somos capazes, qual é a importância que atribui a isso para uma carreira de concertista?

FZ: Dou uma importância bastante moderada, para falar a verdade. Acho que auto-confiança é uma das qualidades mais superestimadas que existem. Acho que é melhor a gente não ter auto-confiança, porque em excesso faz com que a gente se torne, como se diz aqui no Brasil, “cara-de-pau”. Não interessa vai lá e toca tudo errado, você ainda coloca um sorriso, agradece os aplausos e vai para casa e se sente bem. Isso é a “morte”!

ART: Então tem que ser uma confiança baseada e fundamentada no trabalho?

FZ: É, eu acho que mais do que auto-confiança a gente tem que ter uma atitude realista frente ao nosso trabalho.

ART: Qual a importância que dá ao tocar regularmente perante um público, isso ajuda a atenuar os efeitos da ansiedade?

FZ: Acho isso fundamental! Isso aí é o que faz a maior diferença. Até hoje, puxa, eu dei o meu primeiro concerto aos 16 anos, então eu tenho 35 anos de carreira, se eu fico um mês sem tocar o primeiro recital depois desse mês é sempre muito difícil. Imagina aquelas pessoas que só dão recital no exame final. O meu primeiro professor que eu tive com 13 anos, ele era muito sábio nessa questão. Primeiro, na maneira de dosar o repertório, que eu uso até hoje, ainda trabalho com essa metodologia. Você tem as obras que você estuda para o teu crescimento pessoal, você tem as obras que você estuda para diversão e as obras que você estuda para tocar em público. As obras para tocar em público elas exigem um tratamento especial. Então eu lembro até hoje o meu repertório na época, tocava uma “Suite” do Robert de Visée, tocava a “Gavotta-Rondo” da partita de Bach, tocava “Sonata op.15” de Sor, tocava “Choros nº1” do Villa-Lobos, tocava “Madroños” do Torroba, enfim, daí aos poucos eu fui ampliando o meu repertório. Mas o que é que o professor fazia? No primeiro ano, ele me colocava para tocar nos seis primeiros meses as 3 ou 4 músicas que eu tinha a mais absoluta segurança. Eu devo ter tocado aquilo pelo menos umas 10 vezes. Paralelamente eu ensaiava umas obras com um outro aluno que tinha a mesma idade, do mesmo nível técnico que eu, a gente tocou aquelas duas músicas em dezenas de concertos. No segundo semestre, aí eu já tinha mais obras preparadas, ele me colocou para tocar 15 minutos num recital, tocava ali 4 ou 5 músicas. Aí depois de dois anos a gente juntou todos os pouquinhos de música que a gente tinha tocado ao longo de 2 anos e eu dei meio recital. Esse método gradual de você só tocar um recital solo com aquilo que você já tinha testado antes num monte de situações diferentes. E olha, ele botava a gente para tocar, eu toquei em escola primária, em asilo de velhos, em hospital, em igreja mórmon, em quadra de basquete, em clube, em baile. Quando eu tinha 15 anos nenhum público me assustava, eu já tinha tocado em asilo de idosos, onde todo o mundo era surdo, pessoas babando na minha frente, eu já estava acostumado com situações adversas. Então, quando eu finalmente fui dar um recital inteiro a solo, com responsabilidade muito maior, eu já tinha uma prática de 3 anos de tocar em público em situações menos expostas. Acho que até hoje ainda uso esse método. Quando você assiste ao meu recital você está vendo menos do que a ponta de um icebergue. Para eu chegar naquelas músicas eu estudei dezenas de outras. É aquela coisa, você estuda ali por uma semana, duas semanas, até decora a música, chega a resolver, e se dá conta que não está bom, que aquela música não é para você, que é melhor não tocar, então descarta e aquilo se transforma numa bagagem. Que te ajuda mas não é o momento tocar aquilo em público. Tem aquele monte de músicas que eu estudo em casa por puro prazer. Por exemplo eu estava olhando aqui para o “El maestro” do Luis de Milán, que é um livro com 40 fantasias, eu devo ter estudado umas 20, nunca toquei nenhuma em público. Não acho que é música boa para tocar em concerto, na verdade, é música boa para se tocar em casa. Acho que eu cresci muito estudando essas músicas que eu nunca usei em público. Stressa menos, inclusivé, porque se você tocar uma música que você adora, chega lá e o público fala que achou a música meio chata, é preferível guardar, manter uma boa relação com a obra. Acho que é importante ter um tratamento especial para as músicas que sustentam a nossa actividade de concertista.

ART: E em relação a concursos, competições, sente que ajudaram a ajudar melhor com a ansiedade?

FZ: Olha, eu fiz muito concurso de jovens artistas aqui no Brasil, nos anos 80 aqui tinha muitos e eu fiz vários deles. Esses foram os que me deixaram mais nervoso, para falar a verdade. Especialmente aqueles que tinham muita exposição. Aqui no Brasil tinha um prémio que, o concurso se chamava “Prémio Eldorado”, que saia reportagem no jornal, a final era na televisão. A primeira vez que eu toquei na televisão, aquilo era muito tenso, você saber que vai tocar um concerto, uma final de um concurso, toca com orquestra e aquilo está sendo televisionado. E nos anos 80 todo o mundo assistia TV. Sim, foram situações de alta ansiedade, não tem sombra de dúvida. Eu não gostava particularmente dessa ansiedade, uma coisa que me incomodava muito em concurso era quando você tinha

uma eliminatória, lembro que você só tinha 5 minutos de prova. Essas situações de pouca duração sempre me deixaram muito incomodado. Parece uma coisa meio circense. Aqui na TV tem um programa que se chama “Se vira nos 30”, é um programa que a pessoa tem 30 segundos para fazer alguma coisa que chame a atenção do público. Se o público aplaudir ele passa para a próxima fase, se o público vaiar, acabou a sua participação. É isso, você tocar num concurso e ter só 5 minutos é como se fosse um programa de TV onde o público aplaude no final ou vaia. Isso aí sempre me incomodou muito. Agora, quando você já chegava nas fases finais, claro, tinha muita ansiedade mas... olha, eu tinha estratégias para isso. Vou-te falar de onde vieram essas estratégias, vieram de um grande amigo que eu tenho que se chama Marcelo Kayath. Ele é um grande guitarrista que ganhou em 1984 os principais concursos da época, o de Toronto e o da Radio France em Paris, ganhou no mesmo ano, com poucos meses de distância entre eles. Na mesma época o Marcelo fazia Faculdade de Engenharia, depois que ele começou uma carreira internacional, gravou discos importantes, tocou nos grandes centros, estava fazendo uma carreira brilhante, em 91 ele parou de tocar. Hoje ele é uma pessoa de extraordinário êxito no mercado financeiro aqui no Brasil. Mas ele tinha uma coisa que era muito diferente dos outros músicos que eu conhecia, ele tinha uma mentalidade de esportista. Ele fazia um treinamento que eu acho que deve ser corriqueiro para um tenista de alta performance ou para um piloto de fórmula 1 ou para um craque de futebol. Ele tinha um método de preparo em que ele praticamente ficava imune às vicissitudes como músico. Então a primeira coisa era o foco no repertório que ele ia tocar, antecipação com que ele preparava tudo, a maneira como estudava ao longo do dia, e certas estratégias do tipo, ele pegava post-its e ele grudava no espelho do banheiro, no caderno, na chave do carro, com mensagens assim positivas, de encorajamento, ou até de pressão mesmo. Isso eu nunca fiz, acho um pouco exagerado na verdade, mas ele tinha uma coisa de ir para os concursos e nunca assistia aos outros candidatos. Eu perguntava “Você não tem curiosidade? Eu morro de curiosidade.” E ele falava “Claro, porém, se eu assistir aos outros candidatos na situação de concurso eu vou projectar naquele candidato tudo o que eu sei que não está bem comigo. Então, se ele tocar a música de confronto mais rápido ou mais bonito do que eu, vou sempre achar que a minha interpretação está equivocada e que a dele está boa. Então vou projectar todas as minhas fraquezas nos outros candidatos e isso aí vai me prejudicar psicologicamente. Eu prefiro encarar como se fosse um concerto normal, sei que tem outras pessoas tocando mas eu não quero ver. Depois que for eliminado ou passar a minha última apresentação, aí eu assisto os colegas.”. Eu tomei isso aí como uma norma, eu nunca assisti aos meus colegas em concurso. Isso faz toda a diferença, nunca assistir aos outros, francamente, nunca dar muita importância para o que os outros estão fazendo numa situação competitiva. Isso me poupou muito stress, certamente me poupou muita ansiedade. E claro, o grau de preparo. Acho que o Marcelo foi muito importante nessa fase em me dar esse tipo de orientação, que é uma coisa que os professores nunca me deram, porque eles nunca se tinham envolvido nesse tipo de situação.

ART: Passar por essas experiências de competição e pressão ajudou realmente a lidar com a ansiedade de outra forma? Deu alguma bagagem ou são coisas diferentes?

FZ: Francamente aquilo que os concursos me trouxeram certamente não foi nada negativo, nenhum trauma ou algo do tipo, mas certamente não trouxeram nada de muito positivo também. Quando era situações das quais eu não gostava, que eu tentava de uma forma evitar, tentava minimizar o problema do concurso. Qual era o momento de maior ansiedade? Não era na prova de 5 minutos, não era na final, o pior momento dos concursos era esperar pelo resultado. Aquele hiato que tinha entre a minha última apresentação e a espera pelo resultado, eu morria, ia até ao inferno e voltava, naquelas horas. Lembro de um concurso em particular, em Havana, Cuba, em que a final foi numa 4ª-feira e só soltaram o resultado no Sábado. Fiquei assim, foi um horror, foi uma coisa horrível, aquilo fez um mal

para a minha saúde, foi uma coisa terrível. A mesma coisa, todos os outros concursos em que participei, sempre aquela sensação de enjoo, de que está com algum problema gástrico, é horrível, a ansiedade da espera pelo resultado é o pior de tudo. Nesse sentido não acho que os concursos trouxeram nada de bom, não.

ART: E quanto a experiências com o estado de *flow*, não sei se conhece o termo?

FZ: Não, o que é?

ART: É o equivalente a quando os desportistas dizem “*in the zone*”, quando estamos naquele momento de concentração absoluta e sentimos que tudo corre bem e não há qualquer hipótese de errar. É frequente ou raro em concerto?

FZ: Diria entre 10 e 30%. Não é tão comum mas não é que nem um nirvana, não é uma coisa que acontece só uma vez na vida. Mas certamente não é uma coisa muito controlável e não é uma coisa assim tão frequente, eu diria que se a gente atinge esse estado 1 em cada 5 concertos, é um saldo bem positivo.

ART: E sente que de alguma forma isso poderia ser perseguido como um objectivo de modo a eventualmente reduzir ansiedade e beneficiar a performance?

FZ: Acho que sim. Levando em conta que as pessoas são todas muito diferentes... eu acho que há pessoas que olham muito para si, há pessoas que são muito introspectivas. Elas prestam demasiada atenção em si, são muito susceptíveis. Talvez esse tipo de pessoa funcione bem com essa atitude, essa busca de *flow*, porque daí é uma coisa de você, é a pessoa e a relação dela com a actividade. Eu não sou muito assim, eu não presto muita atenção em mim mesmo o tempo inteiro. Eu tendo a focar mais na música, eu busco mais um resultado musical mesmo. Se no meio de um recital eu sinto alguma tensão, sinto algum desconforto tocando, não me incomoda muito, desde que a música saia bem.

ART: No início falou da forma como estrutura os recitais, onde a primeira peça é sempre mais confortável. Poderia falar um pouco mais sobre isso? Qual é a importância que dá à escolha do repertório e à estrutura do recital para beneficiar a confiança?

FZ: Se me permitir vou citar alguns colegas. O Judicael Perroy, que é um guitarrista e professor que respeito muito, ele tem um hábito com os alunos dele que é de sempre ter uma obra no repertório deles, que é quase de teste. Uma obra que é muito mais fácil do que os alunos são capazes de tocar, em que eles têm uma compreensão intelectual completa, que eles conseguem dominar tecnicamente com uma boa margem de folga, sem jamais chegar perto do seu limite, mas que ainda assim exige uma concentração. Ele prepara uma obra dessas que normalmente não é uma obra longa, eles preparam minuciosamente e essa é a obra de teste, a obra que a pessoa toca no momento em que abre o estojo pela primeira vez na sua sessão de estudo. Uma pessoa abre o estojo da guitarra, afina e toca essa obra, procurando se concentrar profundamente tanto nos elementos técnicos quanto musicais, mantendo o foco mental enquanto toca. Ele usa isso porque acho que é um estado mental que tem que ser buscado em todas as obras, não importa a dificuldade. Eu concordo com ele. Então, a minha intenção em montar um programa em que a primeira obra é um pouco mais fácil do que eu sou capaz de tocar, dentro de uma zona de conforto, é essa, de realmente estabelecer um padrão que deve se manter ao longo de todo o programa. Tem uma razão musical para isso também. Como a guitarra é um instrumento de pouca tessitura, de pouca amplitude de dinâmica, tem uma limitação sonora e expressiva muito grande, então eu acho que você dar um recital completo a solo na guitarra na verdade é uma coisa muito difícil, pode ser muito repetitivo, pode ser muito cansativo, tocando

sempre nas mesmas tonalidades, tocando sempre dentro de uma faixa de dinâmica que vai do *piano* ao *mezzo-piano*. Como a gente já está lidando com uma quantidade enorme de limitações, acho importante criar uma trajetória musical dentro do programa, em que dá a sensação que a guitarra se “amplia” ao longo do programa. Portanto você começa com uma música que usa mais as primeiras posições, que não usa extremo de dinâmica, digamos, uma obra renascentista, por exemplo. E gradualmente a gente vai adicionando outras plataformas expressivas e também musicais. Na hora que você chega ao final do concerto, aí você exhibe tudo o que a guitarra é capaz de fazer. Então eu procuro construir os meus programas dessa forma, tem uma razão psicológica e tem uma razão musical.

ART: Faz sentido.

FZ: Agora, eu tenho muita inveja de um colega, citando um outro colega que eu admiro muito, que é o Ricardo Gallén. Ele senta, afina a guitarra, e toca as “Cinco Bagatelas” de Walton. Eu tenho problema para terminar o concerto com essa obra! Ele toca como se fosse uma obra de aquecimento.

ART: Sim, entramos no patamar em que certos guitarristas deixam de parecer humanos e começam a parecer “extra-terrestres”.

FZ: É. Tem outra que faz isso, a Xuefei Yang. Também abre o recital com as “Cinco Bagatelas” de Walton. O Zoran Dukic, ele abre o recital com a “Ciaconna” de Bach. Eu jamais faria isso! Inclusive uma vez que você toca a “Ciaconna”, qualquer música que você toque depois vai parecer trivial. Não consigo pensar num lugar para essa obra que não seja o final do concerto.

ART: Isso. Qual a importância que dá a falar abertamente destes assuntos relacionados com a ansiedade com os alunos?

FZ: Eu tendo a ser muito cauteloso com isso. Porque a exposição que um artista tem acaba obtendo uma certa “mítica” ao redor dele. Então, para um aluno, talvez não tanto fora, mas aqui no Brasil onde eu tenho uma reputação muito forte, tem muitos estudantes, especialmente os mais jovens, que olham para mim como se eu fosse um semi-deus. Qualquer coisa que eu fale acaba se tornando numa lei, então eu tendo a ser muito cauteloso com isso. Essa é a primeira coisa. Um outro aspecto que acho que devemos observar é que muitos professores têm uma tendência a projectar no aluno as suas próprias inseguranças, a sua própria trajetória, as suas próprias dificuldades. Tem muito professor que fala “Ah, quando eu era jovem errei nisso, então vou impedir os meus alunos de errar também” que é uma atitude muito profissional, muito louvável, mas muitas vezes projecta no aluno um problema que ele nem tem. Então, digamos que eu tive uma tendinite por estudar por muito tempo os ligados do “Fandango” de Rodrigo. Quando o meu aluno for tocar essa peça, não posso chegar para ele e falar “Cuidado! Se estudar demais esses ligados vai ter tendinite!”. Não sabemos, pode ser que ele não estude demais, pode ser que ele estude de uma forma mais madura do que eu estudei. Certamente vou falar para ele “Olha, cuidado com a execução dos ligados, a gente tem de ser cauteloso com isso” mas eu não vou projectar a minha tendinite para o aluno. Desde que a gente se dê conta que esse fenómeno é muito comum... hoje em dia muita gente tem distonia focal, é uma condição neurológica muito grave que pode simplesmente encerrar a carreira de uma pessoa. Uma pessoa que tem distonia focal, passa muitos anos sem tocar tentando se recuperar. Uma vez que ela consegue dominar aquela condição com a técnica completamente modificada ela vai ensinar aos alunos a tocar com essa técnica modificada porque o que a pessoa fazia antes ficou associado com a condição de distonia focal. Muitas vezes isso não funciona, o aluno está com a técnica bem resolvida, porque eu vou mudar? Então a gente não pode projectar os nossos infortúnios automaticamente na formação dos alunos. Eu tendo a ser

muito cauteloso com isso. Se existem problemas de ansiedade eu tento identificar qual é que é o problema nessa pessoa que está na minha frente, eu tento não antecipar os problemas. Tem muito professor que fala “Essa última escala do concerto de Aranjuez ninguém acerta!” , como assim ninguém acerta? O aluno tem que acertar, ele vai acertar eventualmente se ele trabalhar de uma forma racionalizada, consciente, controlada. Esse tipo de comentário tem que ser cuidado. Principalmente isso de antecipar ansiedade, problema físico e tal, que não apareceu ainda. Se não tem ansiedade não precisa falar muito disso. Acho que o que a gente pode falar é esse tipo de coisa, “procure estudar com a roupa que vai usar no concerto. Você pode estudar com uma roupa ou com um fato em que as calças escorregam demais e na hora que for dar o concerto aquilo vai gerar ansiedade”. Isso é uma questão objectiva, é uma recomendação prática, que vai poupar muita ansiedade desnecessária. Ou cuidado com as unhas, ou a maneira de se trocar as cordas em antecipação, ou então questões de aquecimento, tudo o que se refere ao preparo a gente pode explicar para os alunos dizendo “olha, subir ao palco já é tão difícil, a gente não precisa conviver com essas dificuldades que estão sob o nosso controle, por exemplo, afinar a guitarra antes de subir ao palco”, isso ajuda o aluno a criar bons hábitos, só isso. Por outro lado, acho importante o professor não ser desleixado. Por exemplo, o aluno vai dar um concerto que pode até nem ser importante, mas é uma ocasião importante para o aluno, e o professor não vai nem assistir. Ou você é professor ou não, não é?

ART: No fundo, cada aluno é um caso particular e da mesma maneira que se adapta a técnica e se adapta a aprendizagem da musicalidade, também se pode encontrar a forma certa de abordar esses temas com aquele aluno especificamente sem generalizar para todos os outros.

FZ: É. Para uma pessoa que sofre qualquer espécie de distúrbio ou reacção exagerada, por exemplo, uma pessoa que é excessivamente tímida. A pior coisa que pode fazer é falar “você não pode ser tímido assim! Tem que se abrir para a vida, tem de conversar com as pessoas” e assim a pessoa vai cada vez se sentindo mais insegura, inadequada. Então se você tem um aluno que tem um grau exagerado de ansiedade, não pode falar “não, não fica nervoso!” , como se fosse possível controlar.

ART: Mas lá está, julgo que este tipo de conversa ajuda a desmistificar o “bicho papão” que é a ansiedade. No fundo, com um grau de intensidade ou outro, todos acabam por sentir.

FZ: E há uma outra questão que é, as pessoas mudam muito ao longo da vida, e na juventude mudam muito mais rápido. Tem uma fase muito delicada que é a fase da adolescência. As pessoas que têm muita insegurança para dividir essas preocupações com os pais e muitas vezes também com os professores. Então às vezes a pessoa sofre de uma insegurança enorme, uma ansiedade enorme, e ela não consegue conversar sobre isso com os adultos. Aí eu acho que, na medida do possível, se o professor conseguir criar um vínculo com um aluno, para que ele pelo menos possa dizer “olha, sofri muito com a minha ansiedade no concerto” e então pode encaminhar, conversar com os pais, encaminhar para um tratamento, um aconselhamento que seja. Isso em casos agudos, em casos em que a ansiedade é paralizante.

ART: Claro. Sente que as escolas de música, conservatórios e universidades de um modo geral estão a fazer o suficiente para preparar os alunos neste sentido?

FZ: Algumas escolas sim, outras não, acho que varia muito. Acho muito salutar a maneira de algumas escolas lidarem com o assunto que é não tratar da ansiedade em si. Claro, quando você está num grande conservatório e você tem uma aula de performance, como existe por exemplo em Londres, você tem *performance classes*. O que é que é isso?

Simplesmente os alunos vão para uma plataforma para tocar uma obra nova ou uma parte do programa de exame final, para outro professor que não é do seu instrumento. Esse professor vai fazer o seu comentário, manifestar a sua percepção de um ponto de vista um pouco mais afastado. Isso eu acho uma coisa muito boa, e aquele é um bom momento para se discutir a questão de ansiedade, que muitas vezes o aluno não consegue discutir com o seu próprio professor. Outra coisa que eu também acho salutar são terapias alternativas ou actividades esportivas ou terapêicas, como por exemplo Alexander Technique ou Feldenkrais ou alguma actividade grupal, em que a pessoa possa lidar com essas ansiedades e com os efeitos que isso tem na sua postura, na sua atitude no palco, até na sua maneira de segurar o instrumento e virar a página, em que ela pode pensar nisso e relacionar de uma forma subliminar. Eu vejo que para muita gente a técnica Alexander é extremamente salutar, às vezes uma pessoa não tem um problema postural, mas tem um problema de ansiedade que essa técnica tende a ajudar. Tenho um grande amigo aqui em São Paulo que é clarinetista da Orquestra Sinfónica de São Paulo, a principal orquestra do Brasil, ele é primeiro clarinete, uma posição de muita responsabilidade. Ele faz Alexander há já pelo menos 15 anos. Ele era gago e isso curou a gaguez!

ART: Interessante.

FZ: Gagueira também é uma forma de ansiedade, tem uma componente de ansiedade forte. Então eu acho que essa maneira oblíqua de abordar o problema pode ser muito interessante para algumas pessoas.

ART: Sim, qualquer técnica de relaxamento, de respiração, pode muito útil.

FZ: Para algumas pessoas fazer Yoga, para outras fazer Kickboxing. Tem pessoas que têm uma energia muito grande acumulada e precisam soltar isso de alguma maneira. Há o revés, tem pessoas que têm um tônus muscular muito fraco, que se percebe que a pessoa é um pouco despencada. Às vezes uma pessoa fazer uma actividade física mais exigente, com mais energia, pode ser interessante.

ART: Ok, já percorri a minha lista de tópicos que tinha em mente abordar. Gostaria só de pedir umas ultimas palavras, sugestões, sobre algo que possa eventualmente ter ficado esquecido.

FZ: Não, acho que cobrimos alguns aspectos importantes. Especialmente o que falei acerca da gravação versus apresentação ao vivo. Acho que a ansiedade é motivada por razões muito profundas. Acho que por mais que um músico possa ter uma tendência introspectiva, de falar pouco de si, guardar para si os seus problemas, se tem uma área que a timidez não ajuda muito é essa coisa de procurar ajuda. Acho que as pessoas deixam passar muito tempo até que procurem ajuda para resolver um problema agudo, e acho que isso não deveria acontecer. Acho que a inteligência para encontrar o professor, o orientador, o psicólogo, quem quer que seja que possa ajudar numa situação extrema, numa situação incapacitante, deveria ser estimulada. Quanto mais a pessoa conseguir trabalhar isso melhor.

ART: E quanto mais informação houver disponível para entender melhor o fenómeno e as ferramentas que possam ajudar, melhor.

FZ: É. E as pessoas não podem ter vergonha de pedir ajuda. Posso falar por exemplo de um colega meu, grande guitarrista, já está com quase 80 anos, uma pessoa já bastante idosa, e ele foi um grande guitarrista no final dos anos 50, início dos anos 60. A um dado momento a carreira dele começou a deteriorar, continuou como professor e compositor mas passou décadas sem tocar. Ele tinha fama de ser até uma pessoa um pouco “estranha”,

ANNEX II - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

com hábitos estranhos e ninguém entendia direito porque ele tinha parado de tocar. Um belo dia foi consultar um psiquiatra e falou dos problemas que tinha, de ansiedade, que lhe falou “você tem um caso clássico de síndrome do pânico”. É um problema químico, é uma substância que falta no corpo, toma um remédio e resolve. Ele já estava com quase 70 anos de idade, depois de ter passado uma vida desperdiçada, aí é que ele foi descobrir que se tivesse tomado aquele remédio 20 anos antes teria tido uma vida de concertista.

ART: Voltamos à questão da informação, se ele tivesse acesso a essa informação mais cedo ter-lhe-ia poupado imensa angústia.

FZ: É. Ele tinha na verdade um transtorno obsessivo-compulsivo, foi só tomar um remédio, forte, que tem lítio, passou. Acho que é assim, quando a gente está em perigo tem que gritar por socorro, uma recomendação que faria é essa. Outra coisa é, parafraseando um grande pianista aluno de Liszt, Carl Tausig, conhecido por ser uma pessoa totalmente senhor de si, dava concertos de duas horas tocando só música muito difícil, parecia que tava tudo muito fácil. Uma vez aconteceu um episódio em que estava num hotel, numa cama muito alta e a cama desabou, quebrou as pernas da cama e desabou no meio da noite. Acordou, viu que a cama tinha desabado, percebeu que já estava no chão, e pensou que se a cama já caiu, agora não ia acontecer mais nada, voltou a dormir. O ideal é buscar esse tipo de atitude mental, encarar o imprevisto como se ele fosse o previsto.

ART: Aceitar. Bem, só me resta agradecer, foi um grande prazer esta conversa e oportunidade de debater estes assuntos. Muito obrigado pelo tempo e disponibilidade!

FZ: Espero que não atrapalhe demais a sua pesquisa!

ART: Não, só contribui! Foi um contributo valioso.

FZ: Está bom. Quando tiver o trabalho escrito ficaria muito honrado se você me enviar.

ART: Terei todo o prazer.

FZ: Boa sorte!

Carlo Marchione: I am here, whatever you want to know from me go ahead. I made this kind of reminder for myself but if you have specific questions just go ahead.

André Rafael Tempera: I have a few topics to approach but I like to let the conversation flow, I don't want it to be too strict. Whenever you want to jump in and add something it's ok, more like a conversation and less like an interview, I prefer it that way.

CM: Ok. It is a quite interesting theme because I think everyone wants to play for an audience. To be a musician, I think the very first quality you have to have, I would say even before the technical or musical skills, is the capability to be on a stage and perform. As a teacher I have seen "millions" of students, highly talented, but when they come to the stage somehow they couldn't have a performance on their level. So, I think it is the most important quality for a musician, more than the others.

ART: For me it is a real shame to see someone that is really talented but doesn't even consider a solo career because he or she feels that they get too nervous and doesn't believe that there is any way to improve that.

CM: Yes. On the other side I know colleagues that have a career but many times after the concert they have to cry, they are so nervous. They sometimes say that maybe they should change jobs. Why is it that you have to suffer so much? Of course it is a crucial question, what are the strategies to deal with it, to soften these effects? I thought about it because I don't suffer from stage anxiety at all, so I had to try and find why I don't.

ART: Yeah, that works too.

CM: I found out that basically, we cannot face this problem without facing also the different situations in which my generation grew up as musicians and yours, or even the younger generations. Well, I can tell you my experience. I think that there is a natural aptitude so, a kind of character, open personality, a kind of positive exhibitionism, egocentrism, but positive. Of course in my case the environment was very important. I grew up in a family, they were all musicians, not professional but nevertheless, they could really make me excited for making music. It was a joy for them. Because they were not professional, they were contagious with this, this genuine enthusiasm for making music. All the time someone would come visit or we went to someone's house specifically for playing. "Oh I have this new piece, let's go to uncle Giuseppe's house and play it for him!". So for me this was also an incredible motivation to practice, and my practicing was always with the goal to play for someone. I never practiced for myself, for my own private pleasure; it was always practicing something to play it for someone. Then it is obvious that anxiety is not a part of it growing up.

ART: Yes, a positive association with the activity of playing for other people.

CM: Yes, it is really very nice. Of course, I think the very first teacher is very important on this. My very first teacher also always encouraged me to play very often during lessons, for the student before me and the student after me, staying and letting me play for them. So, for me, I grew up with this absolute obvious "equation" of studying and playing for someone.

ART: It was natural.

CM: Very natural.

ART: And how old were you when you started playing?

CM: I started playing with my father and brother when I was already 9 years old. I started my, let's say, structured study with a teacher, when I was 10. I think it was the ideal age.

ART: And since you started you always played for family and friends?

CM: Always. I cannot remember a moment of my studying where I was not encouraged to play for somebody. Really, from my very first class, I come home and my father says "C'mon, play for mama what you learned today!". Somehow for me it was like, "ok, it is like this". Of course it is easier for a kid of this age to digest. I think that for a person that starts with 16, let's say, it might be more difficult, this natural flow into this mentality. That's ok, but for me it was as simple as this. But, I was actually thinking, what is exactly the situation nowadays? I try to make order in what I wrote. Nowadays, concert life, is in a way much tougher than in my time. Meaning that, nowadays, anxiety on the stage, more than by a natural nervousness you might have before playing, it is how the social network can influence our being as musicians. I try to explain it: there is not once single event that doesn't have notes, recordings, live streaming, so wherever you go to play you know that there will be millions of eyes and ears watching and listening to you.

ART: More exposure.

CM: Absolutely, absolutely. This is one element. The second element, I see this in my girlfriend who is a young guitar player or in my students many times, they say "oh, I saw on Facebook a 10 year old kid playing crazy things and I'm already 21 and I still have to go such a long way!". So in a way it makes those people already nervous and anxious before going on stage, because they have that feeling. It happens so much in the world, but actually it always happens, there are always wunderkinds and you know better than me, if you look on Facebook they are all presented like the new genius of the guitar or piano. Somehow they also lose this positive criticism and they become anxious because with 20 or 21 they are not big stars yet. That might affect the young generation in a negative way. Honestly, the only anxious aspect of my work is the big mediatic carousel around the concert. Now the concert has lost a little bit its intimacy, its unique character, you can always go and watch it again and again on Facebook or on Youtube. I miss this very much, I think a concert should be just what happens at that moment. Because if I want to record something I go to a studio and I record with all the new technologies, and I can make something perfect. But this mania of perfection is also affecting our society in general, not only the musicians, very badly. How you look, how you do something, everything has to be perfect, otherwise you are nobody.

ART: Everyone expects every concert to be like a professionally recorded CD with no flaws. But it is not real or realistic, right?

CM: Exactly, it is unreal. There are surely players who can play like this, you just put a microphone and they can record as if it was a CD, we know that. But I think that that is not the point, that is what people do not understand. The point is not to play perfectly, is not to astonish people, but to move them. As long as you can move people, it doesn't matter how many mistakes you do, and it is much better than to play perfectly and have people going back home and forgetting what you played. Not how you played, but what you played, which is our worst "crime", musically immense. I try to always tell my students to speak about that and it's very interesting. I know some of the things I am talking to you also because I can experience them through the students. Nevertheless, they go home, they open Facebook and "oh look, the new wonder player from...wherever" or whatsoever, then it starts again. I

think it is unavoidable, if there are strategies against this, I don't know. For my generation there was the strategy of autogenic training and stuff like that, or just to speak and convince yourself that it is just a concert and the world won't end. Actually, you cannot have this job if you have no joy in doing it, that's the center point. If you have no joy, the audience will also not enjoy what you do. What I always try to let understand to my students is that if they are nervous they must not be anxious because they are nervous. To be nervous is a good sign, actually, it is a sign of alertness, it is a sign that you feel the concert. But, I say it is like the wind, a skipper with his sailboat, if he manages to put the sail in a way he will use the wind to go faster, in another he doesn't accomplish anything.

ART: To use it in your advantage.

CM: So, in a way I think everyone must learn to by their own experience how to use this because again, a certain amount of nervousness is positive. It happened sometimes to me that I didn't feel anything before a concert, then you go on stage and you say "Oh, I'm on stage, what now?". Some more practical things, I think the way you practice, the strategy in practicing, is very important. It is important to choose a program which fits in your musical and technical skills. I have seen many times in master classes or in competitions, guitarists playing pieces which are by far above their realistic capabilities. This can make you, of course, nervous because the pieces do not work. It is very important also the role of the teacher to speak very honestly with the student and say "look, for the moment you are here, you should play this range of pieces and maybe add one challenging piece, just to push the borders". That I see very often and it creates more stage anxiety. Also, taking care of physical aspects of practicing, the posture, how many hours you practice, how many hours you rest. If you have pain in the back, pain in the neck, this is already a huge amount of anxiety, it's obvious. As I understand it, actually the musical aspect of stage fright is one part of the problem. When I was in my thirties, I had just moved to Berlin, I had many problems with my back. I was still playing with footstool and I was really practicing like an idiot, without intermissions, just straight 6 hours. I had many problems, in the finger, in my back, in my neck. Of course this made me extremely nervous before a concert.

ART: Because you were uncomfortable.

CM: Of course! Like a football player that goes to play with an injury. It is really like this, I think we can really learn a lot from athletes. We are in a way, small muscle, micro athletes. I also say that taking care of social life is important, isolation makes people nervous.

ART: If with isolation you tend to project your feelings exclusively towards the moment of the concert, you don't have anything else in your life...

CM: Yes, it becomes too important; it becomes something other than a sharing moment, sharing something. Isolation makes you play only for yourself. I also say that isolation can be a good thing, when you can go to a party and know it's time to sleep and stop drinking and go to sleep if you have an appointment in the next day. So often I had hugely talented students who were not able to do that, they had too much social life. Especially one, when he went to competitions and normally would win the second or third prize. Why? Because in the night before he was out drinking and smoking until 7. As a teacher it is difficult, I am not the father. Actually, I have no power over him to say that he should go to sleep. Ultimately that is a lesson which the student must learn by himself. I think the isolation also makes the people a little bit suspicious towards other people; you become anti-social in a way. The social aspect is very important for being a musician. So, practicing well but also caring and having contact with people, to share emotions. If you are not able to do this you cannot be a musician, in my opinion. It is surely a part of the nervousness.

ART: Yes.

CM: I always tell my students “look, how you play at home doesn’t count for anything, how you play for your friends doesn’t count for anything, how you play in the classroom doesn’t count for anything, what you play only counts on that moment, on that stage”. Like in figure skating, how many times they practice the turns? They go to the Olympic Games and they fail the performance of a difficult figure, they cannot say “yes, but it was always good before!”.

ART: They only have one chance.

CM: Yes, one chance. So, it is the same with us. We must be aware of this and not count on this “invisible net” that you can do it well at home. Mental strength is that you must do it well in that moment. The other side, as a balance to this, is that if in the concert it does not come out perfect, it is not against the law, nothing wrong will happen, no crime against music, even if you make a stupid mistake in a very important place. I think there is a right combination of these two elements. It’s like when a student goes to a competition and I say “go there to win the 1st prize. If you don’t win, it doesn’t matter, but go there with this mentality”. Otherwise it makes no sense to go to a competition. So, if you go to a concert you go there in order to play a perfect concert. Again, it doesn’t mean to make zero mistakes, no, it must be a good combination of communication with the audience and other things. If a concert is not as good as you expected, work harder for the next. Therefore, I almost force my students to go to try-outs, for instance, class concerts, to play in any possible occasion, I say “if you are alone at home, put a plant in front of you, always have the feeling of playing for somebody (plants are living beings...)”.

ART: The more you play for others, the more you get used to it.

CM: Of course! Routine is not a bad word if it is useful. If you can exploit the routine, only for this aspect, not for the way you play, only for creating good conditions for playing well. Surely, routine is very important. Also, I think that nowadays, the younger generation on one hand has so many problems, because there is a ridiculous amount of competitions around the world, and they want perfection, loud, fast and without mistakes, it is also a point that makes young people really nervous.

ART: And sometimes they don’t value musicality enough in competitions...

CM: In many occasions. There are of course wonderful exceptions, but most of the time they look for that “perfection”, besides some minor musical choices they can agree or not with. When you think about competitions is “loud”, “strong” and “fast”, those are the three categories. Which are exactly the same as in my generation, but again, we had maybe five competitions in Europe by then. Today you just google “guitar competitions 2017” and you don’t even get to the end of the list. It is really like this.

ART: Do you believe that competitions actually help to cope better with anxiety? Or are they detrimental?

CM: I think it is, as everything, different from case to case. For many students it really gives them the right “kick” to practice well, to prepare pieces, to play for an audience. For others, yes, this makes them completely “kaput”, because they cannot stand this pressure. Many times also because they go to a competition without the right preparation, for instance, with too difficult pieces. Maybe because they have this anxiety to arrive to the top fast, they don’t give time to mature... it’s like taking the pizza out of the oven 10 minutes too early only because you are hungry. Everything in its time. In my time, of course, nobody knew about

this, no Facebook with competition here, GFA live streaming. For us it was just, if you were lucky, some months later you knew from someone who knew from someone else that the first prize was “that guy”. But you didn’t know anything about how they played unless you spoke with someone that had attended the competition. Nowadays, they are so exposed, I really admire people like GFA finalists or Wroclaw Guitar Masters Competition, huge competition with video preliminary rounds, really amazing and all live streaming, you can listen to all of them. On one side very nice, on the other side not so good. The winner, Andrea De Vitis, a terrific musician, is a very good friend of mine and he was saying that it was so hard to play in such conditions, knowing that everyone is watching you. I know that it is our job, playing for other people, but I understand what he means. For me it would be almost impossible, I hate to be recorded, I really hate it. Again, it very much loses this unique aspect, unrepeatable aspect of the concert. I don’t like it but ok, it’s the new generation, the new culture of sharing, everything must be recorded otherwise it never happened. From the birth of a kid, to surgery, to marriage, if you don’t film it and post it, it never happened. Well, those were my observations on the topic. Maybe you have some specific questions?

ART: Yes. You already covered some of the things I wanted to talk about, but let’s get back to when you were younger. You said you played a lot for family, do you remember your first concert where you played in a bigger hall, for an audience of people other than family?

CM: So, my first concert was in Italy, in Salerno, in a fantastic crypt, under a church. Of course my father and mother were there, but there actually was quite a big crowd.

ART: How old were you?

CM: In this concert I was 14. But like I told you, I was playing 3 or 4 times per week in front of an audience, if you consider relatives and friends.

ART: Yes, a smaller audience but still an audience.

CM: Very often in Italy I would just go on the street with the guitar and start playing there, people would stop and I’d continue to play and really enjoy it. So, for me, this flow from being a student and becoming a concert player was completely natural, I never felt the difference. Many times, of course, you feel the difference when you play in a big festival in the beginning of your career. I remember a concert, I was sharing it with the great Hungarian guitarist Jozsef Eötvös and he was playing “The Goldberg” on guitar before me. So I enter the stage on the second half and sitting there in the audience was Duo Assad, Cotsiolis, all the gods of the guitar world. Somehow this gives me a “kick” to perform more, I never see my colleagues as enemies.

ART: Well, they shouldn’t be.

CM: They shouldn’t be, I don’t see them as competitors, I see them as help. If there are good musicians playing, people will come to the concert. So if they come to my concert, we are in a kind of alliance. These are things that I think a young player has to learn in his “own skin”. You can speak with them, you can try to make them understand that things need time and if they are good they will come out good. Again, they must have this wish to share what they learn. Many of them I see in my class, they learn very well, they play very well in the classroom but they never go to the class concerts or the try-outs. Then they go to the exam and they are there like, almost paralyzed. Of course, they don’t play as they can and they get mad, they should be mad, they should learn from it, why did it happen?

ART: So for your first concerts, even as young as you were, you never felt intimidated with anxiety, it was always natural for you?

CM: Yes. Again, I don't remember being anxious, clinically nervous, trembling. I was very excited, of course, that's normal, but I really enjoyed it. Actually, I was always much more anxious when there was a football match and Roma was playing, I could get diarrhea days before! But never for a concert. Maybe I felt like this because I knew that it was not in my hands.

ART: So, those usual physical or mental symptoms, being uncomfortable or distracted, you never actually felt bothered by them? Was there a bad phase that eventually got better?

CM: Look, normally there are phases in the career where you might enjoy a concert less than usual, but not because one plays worse. Just because maybe in private life something happens, there are things which disturb your wellbeing, but it has nothing to do with the music itself. Let's say the anxiety is coming from the outside, not from the stage.

ART: Yes, I totally understand that. What I was trying to ask is not actually about playing better or worse, is more like feeling better or worse while on stage, because sometimes you can feel bad but can still give a good performance.

CM: Yes, that's right. And other times I had the experience that I was so "destroyed" inside because of something that happened in my private life, this anxiety to think that "I will go now to play for these people that came to listen to me but I feel so empty inside, what can I share with them? I don't want to share these bad feelings". On the other side, you know, music is therapeutic, so when you are there you finally "clean" all the bad feelings inside through the music, and it can really come out as a fantastic concert. Other times I had the feeling I could not really share everything the way I wanted, but more than from the concert I was disturbed by something outside of the concert. But again, I always say to my students that "the audience doesn't know anything about this, they don't want to know anything about this". They come and pay to listen to music and that's it, not for listening to your personal problems. Again, it is not an aspect that is directly connected to music and anxiety. I played a concert the day after burying my father. It was fine for me; it was really the right thing to do in the moment. More than staying there mourning for him, it was something that was very good, I think.

ART: Yes, that therapeutic process with music can be really important. Even if you don't experience it for yourself, from what you see from your students, what do you think are the usual symptoms that affect performers?

CM: The most usual ones are making mistakes. Again, the personal aptitude, some students are shyer than others so they don't have easiness in showing themselves, they are more reserved. But normally I try to let them study pieces which are in their range of skill and most of the times it goes well. We speak a lot about this. What I told you before, only what you do on the stage matters, but what you do outside of the stage is also important. In the classroom, if you have a teacher that screams to you on every mistake, the student will become anxious. I always say "don't worry, if you make a mistake don't mind it, but if you leave me cold with your playing, then something is wrong". Behind all the speeches of articulation, dynamics and agogic, you must share something. Have not only fun but also joy. Even pain, if necessary. But you must share, you must put yourself "naked" in front of the audience. Only in this way the audience will have empathy with you. Again, it is very personal and some students do not change their attitudes, with others it works very well.

ART: I believe that the concern of making mistakes is valid for all instruments. Can you think of any concern that affects guitarists specifically? Or things that guitarists tend to worry about more than other instrumentalists?

CM: Well, I see that specific passages worry. An example, the Rodrigo "Fandango", you can feel in their playing that they become so nervous when they start the section with the scales that some bars before they start to rush. Typical symptom of anxiety. In "Zapateado", again those scales. I think every piece has a section where you can become really nervous. I notice now, after so many years teaching, that for each piece there is a specific part that is there to make you nervous. Why? Well, I think is just because it is in the nature of things that 'difficult' things make us nervous. I know, it sounds cheap, but it is a plain lesson of life. On the top you see on the internet that this player or that player can play that passage perfectly. In a way, maybe for some passages it's right, that's the point, to play them virtuosic. But the fact that everything is shared online, and with just a mouse click you know how many people can play Rodrigo's "Fandango".

ART: Do you think that maybe, generally speaking, guitarists have a "bad" relationship with fast passages in music?

CM: Yes, of course.

ART: Maybe it is somehow harder for guitarists than other instrumentalists?

CM: That I don't know, I can't really play the piano or violin, only in a basic way. Maybe reading slow pieces in the piano, but no more than that. But I think that in fact what you said is quite right. Guitar is an instrument where speed is quite difficult. Also the production of the sound doesn't allow too much fast playing. The rendition becomes a little bit blurry, even if you pluck all the notes. Above that, we can say we have a repertoire which is in a very small percentage original for guitar. When you say José "Sonata" or Rodrigo's "Invocacion y Danza", this is not really original guitar music, it is piano music written in one staff. So there is also this kind of added difficulty which a piano or violin player actually does not have. You can find Rachmaninoff's "3rd Concerto" very difficult because you don't have big hands but it was actually written by a composer that played the concert himself, so everything is playable. Whereas for us, some pieces are unplayable in the way they are written, they require a "transcription", in a way. So there are a complex problems, the speed, the repertoire, and let's also say that the guitar is a quite "dirty" instrument. On piano you can either play right or wrong notes, you can't play a right note that sounds bad, like in the guitar. So, it's maybe an instrument where the size plays a great role in feeling well or not. I know that for myself I had 65 centimeter scale guitar and I didn't feel comfortable in it. The 64 centimeter makes me feel much better, and then, making music feels much better.

ART: I am playing in a 64 scale guitar as well.

CM: Bingo! You see it.

ART: I played too long with a 65 and it was "ruining" my left hand, I was always struggling, it was not worth it.

CM: Yes. If you see the repertoire for piano or violin, it usually doesn't require great players to play on smaller instruments. Well, Daniel Barenboim built a piano with smaller keys, but it is really an exception. Usually the repertoire is written by composers that played the pieces themselves. So you never find an impossible chord. Even if the instrument is a little bit bigger than it should, it will not make it impossible. And if it feels impossible you play something else. I know some piano players who don't play Schumann because, for example,

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the “Toccatà” has this huge 10th and they just don’t play it, they play something different. But for a guitar player, how can you skip the “Sonata” by José? Or the “Invocacion y Danza”? Practically impossible.

ART: Recently I have been seeing a lot of players using the left hand thumb for the big stretches in José “Sonata”.

CM: Yes, it is a kind of self-defense for the guitar player. It is a very complex instrument.

ART: I am currently playing “Tre Preludi Mediterranei” from Castelnuovo-Tedesco, and I am actually using my nose to play a low note in the first movement.

CM: Nice! That is something that I use very often.

ART: Definitely not for showing off. It’s because it’s useful, I can’t reach that note any other way.

CM: Yes. I also had to use it in some of my transcriptions, I use it very often. Why not? It’s there. I was in a festival in Italy, completely devoted to Castelnuovo-Tedesco. I had a master class of three days, basically the whole day we were only playing pieces from that composer. I tell you, my left hand was hurting. I remember that after this festival I went to Roma for a master class in an academy and there was this student that had a really big hand, he could press the third fret of the sixth string and reach the Mib on the first string, comfortably without stretching. Of course, he played Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s “Ciaccona” and for him we could find fingerings that would be impossible for any other student. So you see we have problems which no other instrument has, actually. Flute players never write down fingerings. The difficulties lay somewhere else.

ART: The nature of the guitar is hard to get around.

CM: Yes.

ART: So, while you were still learning, you were still a student, did you ever received advices on dealing with performance from you teachers or since it was so natural for you there was no need?

CM: In fact, we never approached that, because my official concert was when I was 14 and I was playing frequently despite my age. I really never had suggestions from my teacher because he saw me and I was tranquil, concentrated, alert and enjoying playing, so there was never really a need to do it. Sorry I cannot help you in this matter. It was a point we never touched, it was never a problem which required action from my teacher.

ART: And you always felt in control? Not losing focus due to anxiety?

CM: Yes, I have a very good capability to focus. Of course, sometimes in concert there is something in your private life which doesn’t fit well in that moment, and there might be a moment in the concert where your head is somewhere else but I think that’s quite human. And as human beings you must take this into account. Unless you live isolated. But this is also not a point for me, musicians must share human feelings through the music, not just their own feelings, so there is a kind of general, universal message while playing. That’s another topic, maybe... but as I told you before, I am not really affected by isolation with the goal of becoming a great musician. You can make music but if you really move people it is

special. That type of extroversion, that sort of emotional exhibitionism is important for making music.

ART: Yes, art is expression.

CM: Yes.

ART: While you practice, do you always just focus on the music or do you take into account performance aspects of playing? Do you ever change your routine according to how near a concert is?

CM: Yes, sure. I never have a fixed schedule for practicing. Actually, to be honest, once I reach the basic shape of the piece I can practice very gladly while watching a movie, for the mechanical aspect. This comes, I think, from my youth. Because I was always encouraged and they made me understand that it was actually much nicer to play for someone than to play for yourself. In a way I can say without any problems that I play much better on stage than at home. The motivation to play for someone for me is much stronger, therefore, when I practice I will sometimes be watching a movie, other times reading a book, it is not a problem, I can do both. Especially in the day of the concert I try to go too much into the program, it's like if a football player would play the whole day before a match in the evening, I would feel exhausted. More empty than charged.

ART: That's interesting.

CM: To be honest, nowadays this entire mediatic circus around the events makes me quite anxious, or disturbed, it touches an essential nature of a concert, in my opinion. But again, it is a generational clash, nowadays if you don't promote it on Facebook or Youtube, it does not exist. So I try to adapt to the demands, you cannot do anything else if you want to continue work.

ART: What do you think is the relationship between performance and confidence building during practice and repeatedly performing? And self-efficacy, the ability to believe you can accomplish a task successfully?

CM: Oh, a little bit what athletes do, repeating "you are the best" over and over again?

ART: Not exactly those types of affirmations, it is more like an inner belief, for instance, if you believe that if you practice in a certain way that will lead you to give a good performance.

CM: Certainly! That is a very important point.

ART: That has influence in our perceived anxiety, do you agree?

CM: Yes, I certainly think it may have. Of course when you practice you must believe that it works, but also remaining open to understand when it doesn't work and you have to choose another strategy. For instance, like a fingering for a difficult passage, many times you don't know if it works, you practice it for a long time and play it with the right tempo but then you play it on the stage and because of anxiety you don't play it well. Sure, I told you, find your own practice strategy, it was for me a very important element not to eliminate nervousness, because I didn't really have it, but to prevent it from appearing. With this, I also mean the choice of repertoire. I normally practice a piece for 3 days and then I leave it for a while, filtering within myself. Amazingly, the first day usually is very good, the second not so much

and the third is bad. Then the piece doesn't work anymore, I leave it for 2 or 3 days. Then when I get back to it works well, so in those days my brain somehow works on it on its own. I know that this works for me so it doesn't make me nervous. It is very important if you have to play a new program, when to start learning a new piece. If I have to play a new program with new pieces, this can cause anxiety also. But everyone must find for themselves. If I have to play a full new program it will be difficult if I don't have at least a whole month, completely free, which is very difficult to have.

ART: Well, one month is actually not that much time to learn a full new program...

CM: It's a lot of time if you have 24/7!

ART: Only if you don't sleep for one month, then maybe!

CM: But if you don't you have to learn how to put new pieces into an old program, mixing it and then it becomes a new program. I think in this case, for a young player, it helps a lot what the teacher suggests. It must be an experienced teacher who himself plays concerts and knows how it works.

ART: You mentioned the repertoire, choosing the right one that suits the player, how do you feel about the structure, about the way to organize the pieces? Do you take into account the comfort level, to not start with a piece that is too fast or difficult?

CM: Well, I actually like very much to start with a difficult piece. Because if I make a mistake I don't mind that much, I think "ok, it's difficult". When I start with easy pieces and make a mistake I think "Oh no! C'mon Carlo!" so, for instance, in many concerts last year I started with the 2nd "Sonata" by Rebay which is quite difficult but I never had any disasters, it was quite good. It's like learning how to swim and diving in the deep end and surviving instinctively. Whereas if you want to enter slowly first you have the water to the heels, then the knees, then the hips... it's like, you never go into the music. I don't have a fixed way to start the recital; it very much depends on how the piece "catches" me. It can also be an easy piece but it must "catch" me, so I can catch the audience through it.

ART: And when advising students, what do you usually tell them?

CM: I always tell them to start with a piece that you really feel comfortable and confident with, that you really have joy in playing it for someone. I mean, this is valid for any piece of the program, but I think, as you very smartly noticed, the first piece and also the last, I would say, are by definition the most important. The first piece is even more important because you can really catch the audience with it. I don't mind if it's slow, fast, easy, difficult, but it must really be something that makes the audience feel.

ART: How about having flow experiences while performing? That feeling where everything is magical, effortless, being "in the zone", like it's a different dimension?

CM: Of course! It's like making love, it's the same energy in a way.

ART: Does it happen often? Is it something that you can more or less control?

CM: As far as I can say, I cannot control it, it just happens, I don't know how. I think it does not depend only on me; it also depends on the energy of the audience. Yes, many times it happens in concerts, not necessarily where I didn't expect it but the moment before was not exceptionally inspiring or whatsoever. But then in the concert you come into this "other

dimension” as you called it, it is really the right definition. It’s like you are invincible, like nothing can go wrong. And the moment where something goes wrong is also nice, which is even cooler.

ART: Perfect just the way it was.

CM: Yes! It is really a cool feeling. For instance, I experienced this many times in concerts when I play “Fantaisie Elegiaque” by Sor, there is a moment near the end and I usually say to my friends “this is the time that makes it worth it to be a musician. The time that makes it worth it to be open, away from family, to basically work 24/7”. It is our job, if someone asks me “what do you do in your free time?” I say “I listen to music, make music, read about music, watch videos about music”. We are really 24/7. If you write to an employee of a school in the weekend you receive an automatically generated response saying that “we are not available at the moment”. So we really have a kind of tough life, we don’t earn that much money for the work we do, and yet, for those 40 seconds, maybe one minute, where the time just stops and the audience doesn’t even dare to breathe, I am there and I don’t dare to move. You really feel super light, like you could fly away, and then they start to clap... yes, in my modest and humble opinion, it is the most magical moment I have in my life as a musician. Not so much while playing, but in the end where people, including myself, are completely in bliss from the music.

ART: Do you believe that those types of feelings and experiences would be helpful for someone that has a lot of anxiety, to make them realize that performing doesn’t have to be something negative, that it can actually be a wonderful experience?

CM: Yes, sure, absolutely, although we cannot really control it.

ART: Yes, there are always two sides, some say that it could give hope to anxious performers and should be pursued, while others say that because we cannot control it we shouldn’t rely upon it.

CM: Something which I would never suggest is chemical help.

ART: Yes, that exists too.

CM: Let’s speak about it, let’s be honest, it’s like doping. I find it outrageous. I don’t know guitarists who use it but especially in orchestras, musicians go to play full of beta-blocker pills. They did a large survey here in Holland, over 90% of musicians that play in orchestras and take those pills say that it works. So it really works, it makes you like a “golem”. I am also very skeptic about relaxation techniques, like Alexander Technique. Once a girl was telling me “I was kicked out of a competition and the reason was so stupid. They said it was because I looked too relaxed. I actually do Alexander Technique for it”. I replied “Have you ever seen Daniil Trifonov playing? Does he look relaxed when he plays?”, I mean, the body language is very important in music. This said, Alexander Technique is a wonderful help for daily life and people with serious body issues!

ART: Well, too much relaxation might translate into carelessness...

CM: Yes! If you play, I don’t know, Ginastera’s “Sonata” you cannot play relaxed. That’s something that I really take care a lot with my students and myself too, because think more as a conductor than a guitar player. I say “look at piano players, the way they place the fingers and remove them from the keyboard”. If you are too relaxed, everything sounds the same, in a way. At least for me. I don’t like someone that is relaxed, I like someone that is

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“burning”, who is really 100% there. In this reasoning I would not suggest beta-blockers, even though in the world of music it is something that is absolutely normal, it’s amazing.

ART: It’s one of those things, I think it masks the symptoms so people can feel more comfortable but that’s not actually addressing the problem if you are anxious. It is a mask, not a cure. And only for the physical symptoms because if you have psychological symptoms it does not work for those.

CM: Sure. And everything that is symptomatic makes you addicted to it.

ART: Yes, then it becomes a crutch.

CM: Imagine if one day you are warming up for a concert and notice that you have finished the pills?

ART: Yes, that would be absolute panic.

CM: Ha, it’s ridiculous! Look, I have a very good friend; he is one of the best on Carlevaro and Alexander techniques teacher in Europe. We speak very often about this and I think Alexander Technique is fantastic for normal life, teaches you how to sit on a chair and get up without bothering your back and figuring out a natural posture and stuff like that. But for playing I need someone that really wants to “eat” the instrument, you cannot be too relaxed, it doesn’t work. You must have your whole soul and body involved in the action so you cannot really apply Alexander while playing. Of course you should have a natural, not painful, posture. I think everyone agrees on this. But on the other side, if you see a Horowitz or a Trifonov, or a violin player, they don’t have a “natural and relaxed” posture. It’s a hard thing, making music.

ART: I think it is more in the line of preventing building up too much tension. If you keep accumulating tension it reaches a point where your fingers don’t move. It can be useful in that sense, releasing and preventing tension, but like everything else, too much can be detrimental.

CM: Absolutely.

ART: How important do you think it is to address anxiety issues with your students? Only when you feel they need it?

CM: For some students it’s from the very first class, because you can see that they are there almost trembling. Then they cannot play 3 notes in a row and I tell them to calm down and try to explain that the lesson is not a concert and it is like a laboratory where we experiment in order to become musicians. Then for playing on stage there is still a long process for them. There are try-outs, class concerts, maybe there are 4 or 5 students in the classroom and you have to play for them, it’s like a little concert, it’s more difficult. It is also a point we should mention, not only how to prepare for a concert but what you do in the day of the concert. What do you do when you are in the warming up room? How do you warm up? I don’t have a specific warm up, it depends on what is the first piece, so that I have the best feeling in my hands for that piece. If it is a piece with a lot of repetitions in the right hand, I play “Study n°4” from Villa-Lobos, just to have more strength. If the left hand needs more work, I work out the left hand more. This also brings a lot of anxiety, if a student does not have a good warm up. With students, there is another problem that sometimes comes in the first class concert, or worse, in the first exam. If I see that in the first exam they don’t play as well as they can, in the next semester I tell them they have to go to 10 try-outs, otherwise they can’t go to the exam. Some of them don’t even improve with the try-outs; they slowly

have to find the way in their life to handle the problem. For instance, my girlfriend had this problem, she bought some books, she started playing a lot of try-outs, and now she actually says that she is happy playing for people, she doesn't feel that pressure anymore. It's possible; the student has to be very smart, in order to understand that there is no shame in going to try-outs and playing really bad there. It is actually more educational than to play perfectly in his-her own room. We must understand that we may do this, the important thing is where. If you don't go to the try-outs you will surely do it in the exam. If they are smart and understand this... actually we always do a meeting in the beginning of the year, I explain these points to them and say "please go to the try-outs, I don't have the power to force you to go". What I told you before, there are students that are very good but on stage they don't play as well.

ART: And do you believe that music schools and universities are addressing these anxiety issues enough? Are they preparing the students adequately for the harshness of performing?

CM: From my experience, what I know from many conservatories in Europe, no. If you see the curricula, there is no stage presentation, maybe only on a single class of a few hours. The curricula is inadequate, in music schools where we should grow musicians to be ready for the stage, there is no stage. Of course there are always glorious exceptions, like the Glasgow's Conservatory, where an ex-student of mine is doing her Master. There it is mandatory to play at least once per week, the student concerts are recorded on camera and the classmates must write a reflexive review on the playing of their friends. If I think to my Conservatory this sounds like science fiction...

ART: They should play every week.

CM: They should play every week, exactly! It should be obligatory to play every week. Not optionally, "if I have time I will come". There should be grades and there should be the possibility for the teacher to decide if the level reached by the student is good enough for the exam. It is ridiculous that it is normally not like this. Also, this Bologna Process, they created a Master degree in Music but they cut an exam in the middle, now there are 3 exams, 20 minutes, 20 minutes and 45 minutes. It is very weird. And in my school the second exam is only there because I insisted with the directors. But there isn't a class like "Stage". You addressed amazingly right the weak point of our educational system.

ART: It is basically what I have been perceiving. Music schools, especially universities, are not preparing music students for the reality. Classes that address performance anxiety issues are rare and the schools don't provide enough performance opportunities.

CM: Look, it is like a school where you teach surgeons and you don't let them practice on pigs or cadavers (sorry for this crude imagine, but that is how it works in such professional schools), or whatever. It's just the theoretical stuff, what they do with me in the classroom is only theoretical. You can say "it should be like this" but the fact that during lessons you barely are able to listen to the whole piece, often study it bit by bit, and then you finally have this sort of "Frankenstein" of a piece that really needs to go and be played on stage. If you have a minimal experience of performing, you know that there are some things that work at home but don't work on stage. So the first step to improve the work is to be aware of this. Then you can start to let them work. Then I think "what is this?!", we should be grooming concert players, not theory. I mean, if you are in pedagogy that's fine, just one exam to show how you play, but that's it. But performing art should be different. So that's a very big problem. I think that in the United States and Canada it's different, because from what I've heard from guitar students of those countries they have obligatory weekly performing, in

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class concerts. Another violin student I heard from, I don't remember in which city he studied, he said the same thing, once per week. And there is a teacher there, not just you go unexpected, you must apply first then discuss it with the teacher, what to improve.

ART: In this case I believe that the teachers are very important in pressuring the directors into structuring the courses in a better way.

CM: But the problem is that they usually just count on the "good heart" of the teachers. For instance, in the last year I went to all try-outs, all of them. I basically stayed from 10 to 10, so 12 hours in the school, but of course it is not paid. I am the "worst business man" you can speak with. But of course it is ridiculous, they should correct a wrong educational system. Losing so much time of my life, even if I do it with joy, there comes a point where... I tried telling the directors many times to introduce obligatory performances, with a teacher with stage experience to accompany them. I do it with pleasure but I cannot work 6 more hours every day without pay. Especially with the schedule I have.

ART: Let's hope things are slowly changing. Mentalities are slowly changing and let's hope that the students will get what they need.

CM: We also spoke about the mediatic aspect. Create a class about to play for recording. If already in the school you learn how to play in front of a microphone, a camera, you start to enjoy the advantages of those things. One day when you go on a stage and there is a camera and a microphone you will not have extra anxiety because of it, it will be something normal. We have one of the best sound recording studio in the Netherlands, what can we want more? Just do it! We already have everything. But bureaucracy is something we artists cannot understand. Especially with this Bologna Process it became a disaster, all the bureaucrats in the important positions of schools and everything must be done in a way to show it to the government.

ART: Yes, everything is quantified for showing, everything has numbers, credits... Artistically and pedagogically speaking, it is meaningless, basically.

CM: Exactly, absolutely meaningless. You must imagine in 45 minute student exams, from when the student enters the stage to when he leaves it must only be 20 minutes. Not 20 minutes of music, 20 minutes for the whole thing. Then after there are 25 minutes of speaking and deciding, writing down everything, the bureaucratic way. You really should point this out, it is one of the most important things we talked about today. Currently, most of the schools and programs are absolutely not build for creating active performance musicians.

ART: What also happens is that those who have some kind of innate ability to perform will always do well, but those that don't have that natural ability don't get the chance to work on it, they are almost "discarded".

CM: Yes, that's right.

ART: Basically I have gone through all the topics I wanted to address. Is anything else you would like to say?

CM: At this moment nothing else comes to mind. I think we both agree that it is a very complex topic. There is physical, psychology, natural aptitudes, school programs... I really think school programs are crucial. Anxiety issues can really affect the life of a person. I also think that it is not something that is "incurable".

ART: Of course, it can be worked upon. We just have to find the right tools and also understand and demystify performance anxiety, it doesn't have to be this big "monster", it is normal.

CM: In a way it is like when my wife was pregnant, I went to those prenatal classes and they say "it's a birth, it's a joy, a kid is coming on this world, it's not a sickness, be happy!" so I think of performing as also a birth, a birth of personality, just enjoy it. I am not saying to do it in this sort of "we are the best" mentality, but it's just music, it is maybe one of the most wonderful experiences you can have. Again, the police will not arrest you when you do something wrong. I think since music exists there is also this aspect of perfection, since the romantic period it became sort of like a mania, to play virtuoso. It also depends on the program because if you play the "5th Capriccio" by Paganini you must play it virtuoso otherwise there is no sense in playing it. For some pieces you are just expected to do it, like "Flight of the Bumblebee". But, if you are a player, I am not like this anymore, I would think that I needed to show how good I am, it is normal at that age, but my programs now are not easier but you don't notice that they are the same difficulty. It's the age, one should mature. I remember I used to practice a lot in terms of quantity for those programs. I remember when I played "Sor Variations" by Miguel Llobet, extremely difficult and virtuosic; I was practicing and practicing... Nowadays I practice much more by listening to music. Actually the physical practice became really minimal. It's ok; it's the natural process of evolving.

ART: That is good, something to aim to. So, I really enjoyed this conversation. Thank you very much for your time and insights.

CM: Thank you, my dear. It was a pleasure. If you need anything else just call.

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Rafael Aguirre: We can start whenever you are ready.

André Rafael Tempera: Sure. I have a list of topics to make sure I don't forget anything. I usually start with the early stages, how old were you when you started playing guitar, what were those first experiences like, including the first times you performed in front of a public?

RA: So I was 8 when I started. My first concert was just like 3 months after starting. I only had to play one very simple piece with another guitarist doing the accompaniment. That was, for sure, my first performance in front of an audience.

ART: Was it through a school?

RA: Through a conservatory, yes. After that we played maybe 3 or 6 months later, I don't remember, at the end of the first term. But at least I remember playing in the first year twice. At that time I was also performing at home, for family and friends, something like that. I have a very funny anecdote. The first time I tried to play in my school, not conservatory, I think it was in the first year, I took the guitar with me and before I played in a concert my teacher used to tune the guitar for me. So I had no idea how to tune it in the first year and I remember, going to the school, my guitar teacher was not with me, I was alone and took the guitar with me. Then, the guitar was out of tune, really too much out of tune, and I tried to tune it, like I said, having no idea and couldn't find the way. So that first attempt to play for my schoolmates was not successful. Also, they were also asking me to play some flamenco because they come from southern Spain and I had no idea what flamenco guitar was and how to play it. So it was a very unsuccessful first experience outside, with people that were not music lovers or were studying music. So that was the very beginning.

ART: OK. Do you remember any thoughts, physical or emotional reactions to playing for other people? What was the difference from playing at home for family?

RA: I remember that when I played in the auditions for the conservatory, it was beautiful, almost like a theater, I remember that it was a very positive experience. I never had... besides that thing in the school, all experiences were positive. Because when I was playing I was realizing that that is something very difficult, something other than what I had experienced before. Even playing football or doing things I loved a lot, because I felt that that was really the opposite of routine, for me, the routine of the daily life. In the moment I was playing, somehow the feeling I had about time and atmosphere was really new, different and much more interesting in a way. And somehow I felt like I am responsible to change that within the time, I understood that from a very early age and I really liked that and I thought I want to do it in a way that is going to make people happy. Then I felt that is a very nice opportunity for me to do something good for other people. And for me also, of course.

ART: In these early performances there were no experiences with anxiety?

RA: Hmm... I would say that the only bad experience that I had was at home, not in a concert hall. Just because some things in the guitar were very difficult for me, like, for example, doing the *barré*, was really difficult for me. I remember I was even crying because my father gave me exercises that he did when he was already 20 something years old and he had big strong hands and maybe it was too much for me, I don't know. So that was a bit

frustrating but then I would say that the first 3 years went really smoothly. Even not being anything like a child prodigy, I never was something like that, it was just kind of easy for me and I liked to learn a lot of pieces and for me going on stage was more like a game, you could say. Where you could just be excited for what is going to happen and you like the idea that you don't know exactly what is going to happen. So I wasn't analyzing or thinking too much about it, I was just remembering that "ok, every time I go on stage I like what happens". This kind of idea was like the thing that was leading me, always, I guess.

ART: So, overall, positive associations with those early performances?

RA: Yeah, I only had a bad experience like we all... I mean, not "we all" but I read a lot of musicians' biographies, not only guitarists, that in their student years they had some kind of "bad teacher". I had one in the fourth year, when I changed the conservatory and that person made me a bit insecure, not really insecure, but maybe doubt myself a little bit. But I was quite sure I liked the guitar, and I am a person that when I like something I don't really care what people think. But I was surrounded by many adults, they were worried, my parents and my older teacher were asking what was going on, trying to help. So because of that person that basically told me I had to work so much, because the conservatory where I studied in the beginning was very bad...

ART: Putting a lot of pressure?

RA: Yeah, she was not sure if I was talented. I realized later that this person was under psychological treatment and many things... in the end I had like a public exam with a lot of teachers judging me and I got like, the best score you can get. So, suddenly, within a year, going from "maybe that is not for you" to getting first prizes and things like that. Then all the teachers came to my parents and said "please don't worry, just send him to us and we'll take care of him, he is so talented". And in that year, I was kind of naïve, kind of doubting, of course sometimes I had arguments with my parents, because I was feeling somehow that I was playing ok, good for my age, and I didn't understand why so much alarm. In the end it was just one year, I got good feedback and said "everything is ok".

ART: And you were still really young at that time...

RA: I was 12 maybe. Yes.

ART: Throughout your formation as a student have you, even if later, ever felt some anxiety "creeping in"? Or was it only in that year where you doubted yourself?

RA: That year I didn't play so many concerts. We didn't have really any auditions or concerts, so it just made me kind of... in my daily life I was thinking about this, was worried. Then later, I remember that playing in front of that person, even not being a student anymore, I was a little bit nervous, maybe. Somehow I always managed to play good. I remember one year later I had to be in a competition against her student and I won it. After that, it was a very important moment, the next year I did my first big competition, I was 14. The people, that was the first time I was playing for people outside of the conservatory, international people from all countries in a festival, and they all came to tell me "wow, you are so talented, everything is going to be good". The year before I was having this problem with that teacher so the whole thing was weird. From that moment I understood, at that time I was with a very good teacher that supported me a lot, he told me that maybe one day I could make it, I could be a concert guitarist, he told me that. And then that gave me a lot of confidence and I remember that by that time I started, little by little, to take part in competitions. Of course, competitions are like, sometimes you win, sometimes you don't, so sometimes I would play and had the feeling I played well enough to maybe go to another

eliminary, or to the final, or get a prize, and I didn't. This made me kind of angry, and always for the next competition I had a little bit of anxiety. Just a little bit, but you know, I think I am a person that can deal very good with this anxiety because from one side, I am a very nervous person, but from the other side, I am a very positive person. Somehow, I can transform this anxiety, this energy, through being positive, into a nice energy, that "carries" me while I am playing. Somehow, I've always been nervous, particularly doing competitions, starting in 1999 and the last one was in 2012, so it has been a lot of years competing. Of course, every time... I remember some competitions that, particularly the ones I did after maybe 2 or 3 where I didn't win, accumulating not having prizes, I was a bit insecure. Then of course when I started to win, 1, 2 or 3 in a row I was, sometimes, not even really nervous. Always, somehow, I would say that in concerts, very few times in my career I have been nervous, really, really nervous. When I was nervous in a concert somehow I would like it, because I knew it was probably because it was a very important concert and that made me think that it was a beautiful chance. I was enjoying it, I was nervous but enjoying it.

ART: Ok. So the anxiety you felt never actually prevented you from playing and enjoying music and being on stage? You never felt overwhelmed with negative feelings associated with anxiety?

RA: I think I have, like, a "trump card", you know, I always say this to people. I have a very decisive moment in my life that sounds like a fairy tale but it is true. One or two years after I started, my mother was telling me about "Recuerdos de la Alhambra", that it was a very nice piece for guitar, and I never heard it, we had no internet, so I had no idea how this piece sounded and I was going "crazy" because my mother told me that was the most incredible guitar piece. She is a pianist, but she said it was incredible. So she told me we had it on CD and I started searching for that CD for weeks and months. That CD was not a guitar CD, that's why it took me so long to find, it belonged to a classical music selection, with orchestra, piano and everything. And in the middle of that CD you had 2 or 3 guitar pieces played by Narciso Yepes. So I remember finding that CD, going "crazy", putting the CD and pressing play, and sitting in my sofa and starting listening to it and... I had two feelings. The first feeling is that "this is incredible, this is something that has nothing to do with the guitar music I am playing right now. This is too complicated, I don't know if I will be able to play like that". That was the first feeling, the magic and how incredible it is. But from the other side, I had like a "revelation", you know, like a very spiritual thing where I saw, or had an intuition that I belonged to this world, somehow. I knew it from before, from another life, I don't know, that it was my thing, my world. It was very contradictory, because from one side you think you are not able to play like that, and from the other side you see "oh, that's my thing", and see it incredibly clear. So, that moment has helped me, and helps me even nowadays, in the last concert I played this weekend. Always, when I am in trouble and doubting, that's the moment I try to explain to people, if you have a moment in your life where you understood "this is your thing, this is what you love", when I am nervous or something like that, I try to remember the nice feeling that I had discovering that, living that moment. So I always try to live this moment again, on stage, every time I'm having doubts about my playing or whatever. This helps me and makes me "indestructible", it protects me, it protects me a lot. Then I can play without anxiety, I can play without fear, I can play with happiness and I can play giving a positive energy. Because I think when you are a child you have less "baggage" going on through your mind and you have to attach to that. When we get older we just analyze too much and we feel less. And I think that for a musician it is so important to feel. On stage, you have to be feeling that moment that you are on stage, not the day before and not being on stage and not feeling anything, you have to give 275% on stage. Even if I am not thinking on that in every concert consciously, I think unconsciously that feeling and that moment, always travel with me. And that is something very, very personal.

ART: Of course. It is a beautiful story.

RA: So far it has always worked.

ART: So that helps you to cope with those usual feelings of trembling, elevated heart rate, common symptoms like those?

RA: Of thinking too much.

ART: So it helps you mentally?

RA: Yes.

ART: And the physical part never affects you enough to bother you?

RA: No. It's like a football player that is very good, you can be very good in training but when you have to play in front of 100.000 people maybe your skills are not that good and you fail. You see great football players, when they are in a stressful situation, suddenly they start playing incredibly fast, accurate, good, and they look very free when they play. I think they probably have something mentally that helps them. It's not only talent, not only work, it is an attitude, it is a thought, something that you always try to use.

ART: Would you say that as a guitarist do you have any specific concerns, regarding preparing and performing? Something that specifically worries you as a guitarist and maybe it is less common in other musicians?

RA: This question you can answer in so many different ways. The first thing that comes to my mind is that I am very worried if I cannot, for every piece that I play, to have a general feeling or emotion. Of course on every phrase or section I can have different emotions, but if you name me a piece I can get an immediate general emotion. Because it is very helpful to reduce a complex thing into just one word or one idea. If I am not able to communicate or to give that emotion that I feel when I play the piece, to the audience when I'm playing it live, then I think I didn't succeed. For me, somehow, I have a very strong intuition, and I know when the audience felt that or not. For me, that is even more important than playing perfectly or making mistakes. I think that many people have anxiety because they are afraid to play with mistakes and if they make one mistake they are already nervous, if they make one more mistake they are more nervous, another mistake, even more nervous, and there comes a moment where you don't enjoy performing anymore. I think live performance are not about perfection, I think that they are about something that is much more deeper, I think they are about, from the beginning to the end of a piece, to be able to draw a line, a line that is like a travel. If you are traveling with your car, sometimes the car will suddenly jump, because there is something on the road or whatever, and that doesn't mean you can't have a nice trip from California to New York, or something like that. Many, many things are going to happen, but once you arrive to New York you say "wow, that was an incredible trip!" but, if you do that trip always analyzing too much and scared, you are not enjoying the landscape and the trip in itself, you are just suffering because of your anxiety of thinking too much. So, I think it is very important, when you work in your preparation at home, it is very important to prepare very, very carefully, that you look for perfection at home, that you really work on how to play a phrase exactly how you imagine it. And you will think a lot, you'll read a lot, analyze a lot, listen a lot, you will feel, but once you go on stage I think it is very important to transform into a more natural being, you know, into a person that just feels and is able to do things naturally, not artificially. Always keeping this process of expression and communication, that is what music is all about. And we have to be very self-indulgent when we play music, because every concert is going to be different, you are going to feel different, sometimes you will feel more tired, less tired, better mood or worse mood. I think that if you always have this attitude to be natural, to be positive and to enjoy it, a very, very important word that doesn't

come along very often in the classical music world particularly. Enjoying, it's not about thinking, studying, analyzing, practicing... but enjoying doesn't come as often as in pop, rock, flamenco or whatever. I think that in a way we have to feel more and think less, and no matter how you feel, in the end, in your worst day you can succeed. Because you are giving the best you have, and if the best you have is only 65%, don't worry, if you are really nice with the audience, I think the other 35% the audience is going to give it to you. But if you are playing with your 65% with anxiety and bad attitude, then the audience is just not going to react and is just not going to help you. Certainly this is very important and I like to point this out, I have performed a lot in my life, many times and I started very young, so I have developed a sense of knowing what is going on with the audience, which kind of energy is in the audience, even if I close my eyes. This I know, it is always different depending on the country, the place, the type of audience you play for. I say this because you have to play for the audience, you cannot block yourself, you always have to give when you play music, not keep for yourself. Many times people most of the time are just keeping, because they are scared. You just have to give it. I was listening to an interview and someone was saying "you know, as an artist you cannot always please everyone and it's not good to please everyone". You just do your thing, it is always better when you do something, you give something and you trust that people are going to like it. But first, you have to like it. And so I think it comes back to work, if you do it like this, for others, not for yourself.

ART: So, eventually any concerns you may have, are always related to musical aspects and performance in general, and not specific to the guitar? Things as nails, tuning do not worry you?

RA: I have a general philosophy that preparing is very important. If you are not well prepared at home, you cannot expect to make an incredible performance, maybe it's going to happen once in ten times. But ok, my philosophy is: I prepare very well, I go on stage really being focused all the time in the music and really to play for the audience and to enjoy myself, and whatever happens, it already happened, you cannot change it. So, if it already happened, it happened and you can only concentrate for the end of the concert. You will have time after the performance to reflect about it and maybe to think and try to find a different way to practice that piece, or to practice the concert in general. I am not worried with myself because I always say that after the concert, the practice still goes on. There is no point in being worried, we are all humans, we cannot control our emotions and anxiety, we just try our best. You can be nervous, ok, this I can forgive, but if you don't give 100% this I cannot forgive. Great composers like Schumann have said that. You know, I always make an effort during the performance, to enjoy it. To enjoy it you always have to try to open yourself for positive things and why do you like certain parts of the piece, on why it is beautiful, to focus on why the piece is beautiful, on why do you like it, and if you focus on that all the time and in the music, you are going to enjoy a lot. That's the only way for the audience to enjoy it, and if the audience enjoys it they are going to give you very nice feedback and this is going to build your trust, your personal trust as a musician, which is something that is very important. But never be scared to just go on stage and do the things the way you feel them in that moment.

ART: Yes, I understand, although that's probably not the usual approach in the classical guitar world, as it is a little strict, conservative maybe, favors a more controlled approach...

RA: Yes, too much thinking, probably.

ART: Yes, probably. Was there ever a defining point for you where you started to feel regularly in control of the performance situation? Was it a gradual evolution or was that feeling always present?

RA: Hmm... control...

ART: Yes, maybe “control” is not the right word...

RA: No, but I can tell you two things. The first thing I want to tell you is about “Concierto de Aranjuez”, which is the piece I started my career with when I was 16, my first international tour. I remember, when I was playing that piece with 16, I was not nervous, I just played it like a game. Like if your friends come and ask if you want to play football and you go and play football, but instead of playing football you go on to a stage. And now, when I have to play “Concierto de Aranjuez” I am 20 times more nervous than when I was 16. And why? If I have played it 200 times already? I don’t know, it’s very strange. I think that when I was 16 I just wanted to enjoy and I didn’t analyze too much, but through the years I had to analyze in order to find new things and to get better, to be in constant practicing and repeating of those patterns and now I know all the possibilities I have when I play this piece. When you expect a lot from yourself it makes you a little bit nervous. What hasn’t changed is what I told you before, when I go on stage I always try to remember, when I start the piece, is how it felt when I was 16 and playing it. The fun I had, and not thinking and not analyzing. Of course I don’t succeed as good as when I was 16 because now I am 32, but somehow I keep it quite similar, because it is something that I practice every time before I go on stage. For example, before a concert people are in this concentration and doing rituals and everything, I just like being with people and telling jokes and just feeling good and then I pick up the guitar and play a little bit, it’s always different. That is the first thing I wanted to tell you about, the “Concierto de Aranjuez”. The second thing is that I am a guitarist that has changed and is still changing almost every month, or every two weeks, the way I practice. So, in a way, “control” is pretty much is the reason why I change my way of practice. That is why I told you before, I always try new things. For example, talking about very guitaristic things, maybe for other instruments as well, talking about fingerings for example. Fingerings are a very important part to succeed or not in a piece and every guitarist probably need slightly different fingerings where they are going to feel good. Sometimes I realize in a concert, after practicing a lot of times at home, a fingering that works at home and then on the stage it doesn’t work. That’s why I think that to be a good teacher, it’s difficult to be a 100% good teacher if you don’t play concerts regularly, because the teacher has to probably try many different fingerings through the master pieces of classical guitar on stage to really understand through the years why some work and some don’t. If they don’t work, I don’t become concerned with contrary things, I always have this kind of relaxing thought that I have something to practice after the concert. Which is always good, because I think that if you would just play flawless and perfect in every concert you would just go home and play tennis or do something else, and playing concerts wouldn’t be exciting. Anxiety and excitement I think are very similar, in a way, it is something that moves you. I think the atmosphere people develop in conservatories in general affects music students to develop this anxiety, because sometimes what you see out there is not very healthy. This kind of, always comparing, having to play in a certain way, always waiting for what the teacher has to say instead of developing self confidence and self searching in students in order to be more creative in musical and technical ways. For example, on this weekend I was thinking about the difference between luthiers and guitarists. Luthiers they don’t go to a conservatory, guitarists do, they go to a place where they tell you how to do things. Luthiers they don’t, they are just constructing in a room in their house, in a way, I think that they are more creative and just have to find the way, they talk to each other but always keep some secrets for themselves. They don’t have a teacher, a real teacher usually, they have to make a lot of mistakes and, in a way, they are more in the real world and being creative, than being in this battle of comparisons and teachers that sometimes get into a routine of teaching. Teachers have to be very careful on how they talk to the students, psychologically, if they give this routine feeling, if they put it in the students, it makes it difficult for the student to be creative and passionate. I always say it is like a mirror, the student and the teacher. I was very much

a kid when I moved to Germany to study with Joaquin Clerch, who was a student of Leo Brouwer, and you see him talking about music with so much passion and knowledge, and about life in general. Then you see Clerch talking the same way, like poets talking about music, and they don't make you anxious, they just let you play the way you are. In a way, that was always really helpful for me in going to competitions and everything because every time I played for him, before going to a competition, he always told me the same. I just realized this years later. He told me "wow, you are so well prepared, it's incredible, I don't know how you did it". This is the last thing he tells you before going into a competition. So, you know, this is one of the best teachers in the world, he has a lot of great guitarists as students. He tells you that and you go to a competition with this feeling. You arrive and you see other great teachers in the jury, you see other great guitarists competing, but somehow you always have this one idea. Again, we go to a point of having one idea instead of a thousand, instead of too much analyzing. You have the idea that you are so well prepared that the even the teacher doesn't know how you did it. It's great, you are able to just go, it puts a smile on your face, and you are just going to experience how much prepared you are. I think those things are very important. Control is... we play a very difficult instrument, we have to be self-indulgent, we have to forgive ourselves and we have to be patient and wait years to really find out how to play the instrument. It takes years, it takes a lot of repertoire, it takes a lot of practice, it takes a lot of thinking outside the box and outside the practice room. Sometimes I realize things in a plane, about how to play better, then when I arrive and get to the guitar, it works. You have to be a very open minded person, always thinking that you are going to find, not through the guitar but through another inspiration, the solutions, even for technical problems. Not just waiting for the teacher or the colleague to tell you, which happens because we teach, we kind of put music inside walls, in conservatories. You go to popular music and you just see people playing by themselves and they have to find solutions by themselves. So, they are researching, always searching and once they find it they are so happy that this happiness is forever and they are never anxious.

ART: And those answers are always personal, what you search and find for yourself might not work for other people.

RA: Yes. That is why it is very important to be open minded when someone shows you something. Just listen carefully and you will have the ability to work in two or three different ways, without prejudice. I always remember, my teacher was giving me two or three fingerings and told me "I like this one but practice these three". In the end, the one he told me he preferred was the best for me also, almost every time. But I remember being at home and really practicing these, and other students telling me "oh, the teacher told me to practice this and that and I don't want to do it" and I would say "why would you mind practicing this for 10 minutes and then decide which one you want to use for the concert?". You know? Often there is like a misunderstanding of the music teaching that I see very often, which is, the teacher says something that you don't like and you go into a depression. Some things about interpretation, this has to be played like this, and you don't agree, and you don't tell him. I always had a very healthy philosophy, for me music teaching is not dictatorship, is you just go to the lesson, take what you like, make it your thing or not. What doesn't interest you or what you don't like, just don't take it. You don't even have to tell the teacher. I think that if the teacher is clever he will understand that in the concert "oh, look, he found this other way and works as beautifully" and sometimes there is even no need to talk about it.

ART: I agree. An in regards to dealing and coping with anxiety, did you talk to teachers and colleagues or did you work out those things by yourself?

RA: I had a very good advice from my teacher for competitions. Actually, now I remember two advices that helped me a lot. Maybe the first one didn't help me but it's just funny. He told me, for example, "I would like you to go to this big competition" and I remember saying

ANNEX II - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

“you know, I think I am not prepared, I am not going to win” and he told me “it doesn’t matter, you just have to go there, because in the beginning you are not going to play your best, you just need to start going, then at some point it is going to feel so easy like brushing your teeth, and when you play like that you are going to be liked by the jury, then you can win”. That is something that it makes you work, and after working and working so hard for something with some goal, you can achieve this level of mastery. That was the first thing. There were competitions that I had to do two or three times before I could win. The second thing that really changed a lot, on my mind, and we go again to this one thought versus a thousand, it was the first time I did the Benicàssim competition in Spain, the Francisco Tárrega, that is the most important competition in Spain and one of the most important in the world. So, I remember waiting many, many years to go to that competition, and I tell you, in that competition I had a little bit of anxiety. Why? Because I wanted to be perfect, just perfect. And I remember I wanted to make every *glissando*, everything just perfect. And for the first time in my life I wasn’t doing *glissandos* perfectly. So, the more perfect you try to be, the less perfect and the more mistakes you are going to have, because you are under too much pressure. I remember I passed to the semi-final, I passed to the final, and I had a talk with my teacher and told him about that, being concerned about every *glissando*, every ornament, every little thing, that I sometimes did stupid mistakes. Then he told me “I forgot to tell you something about the Tárrega competition” that was 2006, 11 years ago, and later I realized this was good not just for that competition but any competition and good for aiding performance, he told me “when you play in the Tárrega competition”, he was in the jury 2 or 3 times before, “you cannot show that you are scared, you can be super-nervous, doesn’t matter what is inside, but you have to find a way to go on stage...” and I think we can apply this to give a speech, play in concerts, play football, to sing, whatever, “just go on stage and show that you are not scared”. And he didn’t teach me how to do it but I found out in the next year that I went there and I saw a flamenco concert by Gerardo Núñez, one of the best flamenco players, that was all about power and enjoyment and I remember after the concert he told to all the participants outside the theater “well, you saw what it is all about, enjoyment” so I thought that in the competition I would try to play like Gerardo Núñez, to show that I’m not scared and play with so much energy because it is my personality. Everyone has to find out which is their personality. People came to me after the performance and said “what happened to you? You were incredible!” and yes, then I won the competition. That year I won that competition and then I won all the competitions I did, five competitions in a row, in different countries. And I understood that you cannot control the level of anxiety or nervousness, this you cannot control, but what you can control is your attitude. Just go there and say that you are not going to show, and the best way to show that you are not scared is to enjoy what you do and to be self-indulgent. I can tell you, honestly, in almost every competition that I won I played with mistakes, but you can make mistakes without showing that you are scared or you can make mistakes and show it. This somehow disconnects the listener, or the jury, from the actual line of the piece and makes them think about your mistakes. In the other way, the line of the music is just so powerful that people get moved, and I think that is the most important thing in music. If someone moves me I want to see him again. This is the one that, for me, deserves to play a concert. We don’t want “computers”, you know. We want human being that can play so beautifully, that’s the thing. Sometimes in a concert the first phrase of a great musician is enough to be happy to have gone to that performance. I remember I used that every time I was nervous in competitions that year, I was going on stage and my hands were maybe cold or whatever, “just don’t show that you are scared, just play”. Every time I was advancing I was feeling better and better. That is something that you have to practice, of course never without preparation and just using this, of course preparation and concentration are super important. But I have been always using that if I am nervous. For example, competitions are now finished and you start your real concert life, which is even more difficult. What happens? When you go on stage, when you have a very important concert with a big audience, you cannot control if you are nervous. Actually, it is not the audience’s fault that you are nervous. It’s not their fault and it’s not your fault, it’s nobody’s fault that you are nervous. If you

understand that concept, and you just try to play not showing that it is going to make things much easier.

ART: Yes. In your personal experience as a player is your ability to cope with anxiety is innate or did you work on it deliberately?

RA: Ha. Well, I think partly is probably innate, because I always had a lot of facility to play the guitar, I think this helps a lot. But again, we are talking about things we cannot control, we cannot control the amount of time you have for something and you cannot control the amount of anxiety you have. I always like to go to the things you can control. I always like to see a person that has not much talent but playing very well. I love watching that because sometimes I see them and they are almost playing better than people with talent that don't work so hard. As Paco de Lucia said, "it's not about being a genius, it's about having a certain amount of talent and working so hard". And always thinking. I always wake up, play the guitar and have the feeling that I have no idea how to play and I have to rethink everything and I think a lot, but I have to compensate that with some moments of joy during the day, and of course, in the performance.

ART: And from what you see from your students, are they different? Maybe someone that has a less natural ability to cope would anxiety would have to work more on that?

RA: Personally I don't teach, at the moment, but I taught for 5 years in a university in Germany, where I myself studied. What I can tell you is that sometimes I had the feeling that some students are open to hear what the teacher tells them and others are just not. Maybe it's a problem of personal compatibility, I don't know. But sometimes you just feel that the students don't get it or they don't try or they are just so closed in a way that you cannot do anything, you have the feeling you have no influence on them or maybe only bad influence, I don't know. Anyway, nobody's happy, not me and not them. Maybe what they need is not a guitar teacher, what they need is something else, a psychologist, a better emotional education from their parents, or just going to a beautiful place outside this competitive world, or just read a good book, or do some sport, I don't know. We are dealing with the problems of human beings, not problems of a musician, that is something much more complex. It affects you as a musician, in a way I don't think a teacher can make miracles. For example, I remember my teacher telling me "when I tell you something about doing something, you come to the next lesson and you do it. Other students I tell them, and in the next lesson I tell them again, they just don't pay attention". If there is a lack of attention that might not be related to your abilities as a guitarist, that might be related with how you developed attention since childhood, in the school and with your parents. I remember since my childhood when someone explained something to me, particularly if it was something I liked, I was 100% into that. So I guess even if I would not play guitar, if I have focus on something, if I like it, I could have more or less talent, more or less results but at least I can let myself be influenced by what someone is telling me and I can always try to do it. The problem is when you see the students don't even try it because they forgot, because they are not paying attention. That is the problem, I always say that when the teachers taught me I was not "facebook generation" but I teach in the "facebook generation". This lack of concentration has a lot to do with doing 1000 things at the same time. We also live in a visual society, where you get everything done, but when I was a student the only thing I had in my room was not even a television, it was a monitor for music, and I had to imagine all the time. When you work in your imagination so much you develop the concentration and attention much more than someone that is just watching and watching and not listening and not imagining. If you get everything through images, at some point you cannot imagine something by yourself. The human being needs something, to be in front of nothing and to imagine. It is so important when you are a musician and if you play, for example, the "Fandanguillo" by Turina, the beginning that we all know. This is so evocative, so slow, not much going on. If you are not able to imagine which

kind of sound do you want, how can you make it? That's the thing, you have to develop a lot your emotional intelligence. Everything is very logical, I see a picture, I have to like it... so there is no room for deciding for yourself, in a way. So I always say that somehow I felt like these children should be more emotionally intelligent than they are because they are the next generation, it should always get better but, you know, maybe sometimes they had more problems than me with learning because they weren't paying attention.

ART: Yes, that lack of concentration affects the ability to learn in general, whether it's technique, musicality or concepts associated with anxiety and coping, makes it harder overall.

RA: Yes.

ART: Ok. In your usual practice session do you take into account any possible anxiety related issues or you just focus on playing music?

RA: Just on music. Because I have to be so much into the music, knowing exactly what is the musical gesture I want to make, so that I repeated so many times that when I am on stage I just enjoy doing that, reproducing that. That is very, very important.

ART: So you don't worry about problems in advance?

RA: No.

ART: Because of your deep focus in the music while you practice it already "solves" everything else?

RA: It is all psychology; if you start thinking "what happens if that problem..." then the problem will appear. You have to be positive. Usually, positive people they are more happy with what they do than negative people. In a way, if you are just negative, negative, negative, usually those people aren't very intelligent, or in other words, they should use their intelligence to realize that this attitude leads them nowhere. They kind of transform themselves into "computers" but they are all human. So, it is very simple, you don't have to be a genius to realize this: everyone watches football, how many times have we seen someone missing the penalty in a World Cup final? And sometimes that player is considered is considered the best in the world. So, why are we so "rude" to ourselves? Most people that worry about that are not yet in the level of that football player, and if he is allowed to miss that penalty, are you not also allowed to miss anything in the guitar? Of course you are! And if you realize this you should totally stop thinking about all those things and just concentrate... What is that football star is doing? Waking up and training every morning. While training what is on his mind? Only winning. Cristiano Ronaldo is so successful not only because he is talented but because of his attitude. Winning, winning, and every day working on his training. Many times he doesn't succeed, but in the end he is one of the best players in the world. But because of his attitude, he believes in himself. If you don't believe in yourself, if you are playing at 120 kilometers per hour, football or guitar, and these are not my words, they are Manuel Barrueco's words, who is quite an amazing guitarist, if for a millisecond you start thinking "oh, am I on the right way?" you start doubting and you crash. That is why it is not good to do it. Even being very positive, you might crash, you might doubt or whatever, but, for example, I don't think about anxiety in stage performance when I am performing a piece at home, I just try to do it as well as I can, as musical as I can, as I imagine I want the piece to sound. It doesn't make any difference if I'm playing it for myself or for the audience, I will do the same. But I have to satisfy myself. If there is some kind of mistake during the performance or whatever, it's very simple, when you finish the piece you work on that passage, and you work, and you work, and you work...

ART: Yes, that is a good approach. Does your practice routine change, even if slightly, according to if a concert is near or far in time?

RA: I don't have a practice routine, I would say. I never had one. You know, I am a very intuitive person so I just do what I feel and sometimes before a concert I just practice small passages that need work or just play the piece. I try to feel what is the thing that I really need the most, which are the priorities. I think this is related to the intelligence of an instrumentalist. So, the more repertoire you play, the more you perform, the more you reflect on guitar and music, the better your intelligence as an instrumentalist becomes and your experience is going to be higher. There isn't any recipe to succeed in a concert, because sometimes I tried to do everything perfectly and then I fail in the concert, you won't always find the perfect way. When you study in a conservatory it is very far apart from what is the life of giving concerts. The lifestyle of a student in a conservatory is very routine; you go, practice, have lessons every week and go out with your friends, always the same. But when you are a touring artist it is always different, so you have to be prepared to play under any circumstance. For instance, I was in Holland the past weekend and I flew from Spain. When I arrived I was quite tired, but I had to do an interview a couple of hours later where I played three different pieces in segments where I was just waiting. With not much time to warm up and being tired from the trip, how can you calculate what your amount of how much tired or anxious you will be? You cannot. But what I can control is, when I play in the interview, I try to be incredibly focused on the music and I try to say the message as beautifully as I can. You cannot think too long about the mistakes you are doing, you have to turn the page and focus immediately on the next thing, otherwise you crash again, and again, and again, because you think too much. When you are performing, ideally you can only be thinking on one thing, on the music and what it makes you feel. Of course, if you feel incredibly relaxed and you think that you can think about football and other things at the same time, ok, but only if you feel you are in a good and smooth situation.

ART: You mentioned earlier about the importance of believing, how do you feel it shapes the way you approach guitar and music? Believing in yourself, your musical and coping abilities, on what you can accomplish successfully? Self-efficacy is the term that is used in this context...

RA: You know, I only know myself, I am only one person. My entire life I have been positive and playing the guitar was never really difficult for me and I cannot see through another person's eyes. But what I have done is observed a lot of guitarists, how they are as a person and how they play. They develop, I see players that are now 27 and I've been listening to them since they were 18 or something, for the last 10 years. I always see, the more positive, the more passionate and the more focused they are, the better the development always is, they are always playing better. The person that is always thinking too much, not through guitar playing but through speaking, you feel that they are talking in a negative way and they are telling you it is going to be bad. There are exceptions from very talented people, but usually those negative people play worse every year. So I think attitude is very, very important because if you match the right attitude with discipline, this makes a lot of difference. The thing is, sometimes in conservatories, if you are surrounded by people that are negative, and I think this is very important, it is not going to be healthy if you are surrounded by people that don't love performing. People that think that it is difficult, bad, dangerous, horrible, a nightmare, a reason to kill yourself or to be unhappy, all these things. And you meet a lot of people like that, unfortunately. So I always say, not only to guitarists because I have friends from all instruments, sometimes when they ask me for advice. They play much more chamber music in their repertoire, so I always tell them "please try to play music with musicians that give you a positive energy, otherwise this is going to destroy your love for performing". Unfortunately, you have to make decisions, tough decisions in life. I would never, now that I am 32, if I would have children that want to learn music, I would

never send them to teachers that are negative people. Never! Because children absorb things so fast, everything, anything, they even copy the way you walk. It's incredible, they copy everything. So, it is better they copy your love, your passion, because that is what an audience really wants to see. And it's very interesting that always with guitarists, if they are in happy moments of their lives, usually they are always playing better. Playing with less fear, more relaxed. I have a friend of mine that is now doing very well, I follow him in the social media, he is playing so well. And I've known him for many years, I've seen his ups and downs, related to love stories, to family problems, many things. As a musician, they ask me many times to give an advice for other musicians and I always say the same, "always try to find motivation. Motivation is everywhere but sometimes it's a bit hidden. So you have to search, you have to be like a monkey that grabs a banana, always grab motivation in every way you can, because it is never enough, the motivation for musicians. It is a very tough and hard life and the most beautiful". That is very important, because without that you cannot practice for long, you cannot enjoy your performance... sometimes it is not only about performance, when you talk about music with another person, you may be in a day where you doubt your skills a little bit, for example. And you go to a person, you meet a friend, you tell him something about music with passion, and this friend reacts saying "wow, you told me that so beautifully!" and suddenly this makes you more confident as a musician, you want to go back to the guitar and you play differently. It's all about... we want to be accomplished musicians, teachers, colleagues, with very, very fast results, but good things in life they take their time. And we now live in this fast world where everyone has to have the answer for everything, "can you give me the recipe for great scales? For good tremolo? For good stage presence? The recipe to have great managers? To understand a symphony?" or whatever. No, nothing! It is just hard work and attitude.

ART: Yes, good advice. Sometimes even if you give them the recipe they might not be willing to do the work.

RA: Yes, their laziness is something that the teacher cannot control. Often there are very talented people that are lazy and know they are lazy, but just find excuses. What can you do? You cannot change someone's personality.

ART: Yes... Throughout your career was performing often a key factor in becoming more and more comfortable and enjoying yourself on stage?

RA: I always see, when there is a group of guitarists, very often someone asks "ok, can you play something?", not in an audition, maybe in a restaurant, maybe a birthday party, maybe just in the corridor or something. Very often I have seen guitarists saying "No, no, no, no..." avoiding it. I remember that since my childhood, many times at home. I never had parents that pushed me to a career or tell me that I had to be successful, never. I did it for myself. They just said I need to work regularly and so on. Sometimes they would just ask me to play for friends and I never said no, and sometimes I would play without even warming up. You know, I think that is a wonderful training, because you cannot play with 100% conditions, with perfect hands, you just got a massage for 2 hours, ate in the best restaurant, stayed in the best hotel, watched your favorite movie with your favorite girl. This doesn't happen. Or happens very few times in your life. If you learn to always play with difficulties, this is a very good training, because then, after those experiences... of course, always enjoying, that's the main point... after those experiences you go to your room and you reflect and you have something to practice, something to work on. It is very important to not always say no, because every time, particularly if you are not a famous musician, you won't have 100 opportunities to play in a year. So, any performance that you have the opportunity to do, you just do it. You know, the people that just start complaining, avoiding, these are the people that just one day they will stop playing guitar, as simple as that. There is nothing you can do.

ART: And did competitions also help you in coping with anxiety? Was the added pressure of competitions helpful?

RA: That is a difficult question to answer because I would have had to have lived a life without competitions to be able to tell you what is better. I only know a life doing competitions. I think both yes and no. Yes, because I was able in the end to deliver a good performance with, let's say, a little bit higher than normal level of anxiety. But, on the other side, all this anxiety somehow can be a bit dangerous if you have to play and the situation reminds you of a competition. It's not a competition anymore and then you can be nervous without reason. So, sometimes, you see musicians like Evgeny Kissin and Anne-Sophie Mutter, they did not do many competitions and they always look so incredibly self-commanding on stage, and always sure, it is so incredible. Then you can ask yourself, "if they would have done 30 or 35 competitions and mostly got 3rd prizes and semi-finals, would they play the same?", I don't know. Maybe yes, maybe no. Or maybe they would be even better, I don't know, that's the thing. I think it is good and it is bad. For example, when I was teaching I never forced my students to do competitions. When I saw that someone was into competing, I would help him and give him advices to do it. But for me it's just more important to stop being a guitarist and transform into an artist guide for the student. What is his path to follow as an artist? Who is he as an artist? What is the thing that can make him special in the music world? I feel that is more important.

ART: You talked about your enjoyment on stage. Do you have experiences with the flow state? Are they often? First of all, do you know what it is?

RA: No.

ART: Ok. It is like when in sports you say "being in the zone", it's a state where you feel nothing can go wrong, you can do everything effortlessly, a sort of transcendence, where everything flows naturally. Is it frequent for you to achieve this state while performing?

RA: With easy pieces yes, with difficult pieces, not that often. You know I play very difficult pieces so I'm kind of always on the edge. Sometimes I feel a little bit more commanding or less commanding, or whatever, but with easy pieces, or with pieces that I have played for many, many years, that happens quite often.

ART: And how about recital structure and choosing the right repertoire, how important do you feel that is to gain confidence and to help reduce anxiety for those who have it?

RA: I think it is important to start and to finish with pieces that you feel very secure. If you have difficult pieces, maybe put them in the middle. In the beginning it's like, what is responsible for the rest of the concert, and in the end if you played well people will ask for encores, they are usually more enthusiastic near the end. So I think it's important to choose the first and last pieces well. The rest, I think maybe try not to put many difficult pieces in a row, this is something I also have learned. To rest your hands a little bit.

ART: Exactly. During your teaching experience, did you feel it was important to address performance anxiety issues with your students? Should they be somewhat ignored in order to not influence the students negatively or should they be approached openly and directly?

RA: I think the best way is the "elegant" way, where you don't talk about it but you talk about it, you put it subconsciously in the students. I think it is something that you should not work in

the last lesson before an audition or a competition. It is something you have to work in all lessons and the students has to feel that he plays good, that the piece is right for him and everything. So, probably you have to find a balance between letting him choose pieces that he wants to play and giving him pieces that you know he is going to play well. Playing well but at the same time with a little bit of a challenge, also. There is always like this middle way which I think is good.

ART: And about the psychological aspect, do you think it should be approached? At least to make the students realize anxiety is natural and it is better to just focus on the music and enjoyment, to try to take a little bit of the pressure off?

RA: Yeah, I think you have to make them to perform as much as you can, and it becomes sort of a routine, a beautiful routine to them. That is very important, you cannot achieve everything in just one performance.

ART: And from the schools you know and have contact with, do you feel that overall they are addressing music performance anxiety issues enough? Are they preparing the new generations of musicians adequately in this aspect or could they do more?

RA: No. Usually, the teacher is always a bit... unfortunately, he wants to show his musical knowledge and how great he is and they don't talk about other topics. It's all about music, it's not about how you practice, this is something I have seen a few times. Because to teach how to practice you have to have a very good technical basis. Technical basis doesn't mean you can play fast, it means you understand the mechanics of things. Teaching how you practice and... it's very important that as a teacher somehow you give the student the feeling that you are teaching him in the desert, beach, or nature, in the middle of something where they feel free. Not in a conservatory where whatever door you open you will have some kind of pressure. That I think is very important and I think that just talking to them very openly in a way they can feel they can trust you and they can ask you questions and everything can be spoken. That you also had the same concerns and everything is about finding what is good for you. In a way, teaching is teaching everyone differently, without killing the student's personality, just developing it. He has to feel free to make decisions, that this is something positive in his life, that he is the boss.

ART: Exactly. And also the liberty to express themselves which is something that is often restrained in the classical music environment. Well, I have gone through all the topics I wanted to talk about so if you have any final remarks, any other subject that might pop up in your mind, please feel free to say.

RA: Yeah, I think it is very important that we come from the so-called "classical guitar" world, which I hate, these names "classical music" and "classical guitar", because it's like, when I hear the word "classical" it's like it has no future because it's classical, it has no possibility to be changed because it is a tradition. So, I think that the key to success, and by success I mean happiness and creativity and fulfillment and enjoyment and so on, the key is to always keep the doors open to learn from everything and just connect it to the guitar. Mostly there is a misconception that playing guitar is very beautiful and the guitar is like "opium" for guitarists, so in a way you will find the solutions by only listening to guitar recordings, but that is not true. If you are playing Leo Brouwer, for instance, in my opinion you will learn 250 times more by listening to Chucho Valdés, the Cuban pianist that is in a way a student of Brouwer, than listening to three guitarists performing a piece on youtube. This is very important, what I said, find the motivation by looking for it everywhere, by asking people, by searching for information, by learning, by having curiosity, because in the end you are the one that has to develop, not the teacher. The teachers kind of speak a lot and sometimes they say that teaching is so great because you learn so much from the students, and

sometimes they even learn more because they repeat the words so much they finally understand something. But it's not the teacher that has to be better, it's not the teacher that has to teach you, it is you that has to teach you. That's very, very important. I always had that feeling, the whole week that I was practicing. When I went to the lesson it was just like an opportunity to see other possibilities, that's it.

ART: Yes, I always said that to my students, that the teacher only shows you the way, he doesn't "hold your hand" and work for you.

RA: Yes. The teacher was in the same position when he was the student's age, probably, and he had to go through all of those things and had to work by himself to achieve, to become the teacher. So, he didn't become a teacher because he had a good teacher, he became a teacher because what I told you. In the end, many people have stopped playing now. So, that's important, you have to be constantly learning and observing. I think not only in the guitar... People believe that going to guitar lessons or going to guitar festivals is going to make them the next David Russell or something, it's nothing like that. If you see David Russell, for instance, the sound he has, nobody in guitar history played like that before, with his sound. So he probably had to find this for himself, and he didn't find it just by going to lessons. This thing of "learn, fast" is not real, it is a work of years. And maybe someone else is going to work for years and is not going to achieve that sound but is going to achieve his own thing. Which is, in my opinion, much more valuable than being the copy of someone else.

ART: Agreed. So, thank you very much for your time, I know that you are very busy. I really appreciated this conversation.

RA: Fantastic! It was nice to meet you, I hope you succeed with your work.

ANNEX II - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

ART: To start, I'd like you to tell me a little bit about your background, how old were you when you started playing guitar and how your first performance experiences were.

ME: Well, I don't remember very well my first performance. I was in the Conservatory of Madrid, I was in my last year I think, and I went with my teacher to a village not very far. I was quite excited, I enjoyed it a lot. I was a little bit nervous about playing the "Rossiniana n.1" because I never played it before for more than 4 or 5 people and there were about 30 people in the hall, not a big audience but for me it was a lot.

ART: How old were you then?

ME: I was 20 or 21, I can't remember.

ART: Ok. That was already a recital? How about when you were younger?

ME: That was my first solo program, one hour concert. In my first short performances I was 11 or 12 years old, probably. It was in my village, there were a lot of people and I was not nervous, nothing. I was very motivated and really enjoyed it a lot. That was the first performance I remember, it was with a friend, we played a duo.

ART: And at that time have you had been playing guitar for how long?

ME: I started when I was 8 so it was around 3 years.

ART: So, when you were younger you didn't have any experiences of anxiety, playing for an audience was mostly pleasant?

ME: Yes.

ART: And throughout the years, did you notice a change at some point, where you started to feel more self-conscious or nervous?

ME: Of course, yes. When I was a teenager I started to feel more nervous. I remember a few short performances were I was really shaking. Then when I did my first concert I was kind of more relaxed. I don't know, it has not been regular, when I was a teenager and a little bit older, 19 or 20. I think it depends more on the repertoire, probably. But it was a mix of joy and a little bit of nervousness, but I wouldn't say it was anxiety. I kind of was always looking forward to the concert and very much excited about it, in a good sense, not in a bad sense.

ART: Ok. So, you always had a positive mindset towards performing?

ME: That's it, that's right.

ART: Good. And even though the overall sensation was positive, did you ever feel any physical or emotional symptoms that might have worried you? Like cold, sweaty or shaking hands, anything like that?

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ME: Yes. Never sweaty, never cold, mostly shaking hands. A little bit, not much, enough to be able to control it. Of course I was a little bit afraid of that before the performances, but somehow it was just in the beginning, I would control that after the first 5 or 10 minutes I was ok.

ART: So you notice a change before, during and after the performance?

ME: Yes. What I don't remember is exactly before the performance, if I was especially nervous, back then. I remember on stage, but not before that. Now for example I am very nervous before, the last minutes before a concert are terrible, but then it disappears. This is what I remember from my first performances.

ART: Ok. Did you have any performing experience that you would consider negative, where you felt bad?

ME: Not really. Do you mean physically?

ART: Well, anxiety symptoms can manifest in several ways. Sometimes people can go on stage and even play well, but somehow feel that it was a disaster because of the negativity, the anxiety didn't let them enjoy the performance.

ME: I had negative experiences in a different way. I am very demanding of myself and it's not if I played well or terribly, it is simply that I always think that I can do it better. In a way I am never satisfied, but always happy. So there is a difference, it is not that I was thinking what I did was bad, it is just that I always think that I can do it better, it doesn't depend on the nervousness.

ART: So you have a kind of positive perfectionism approach, demanding but also feel good about it?

ME: Kind of, yes. I am never sad, whatever happens in a concert, I am always happy. It's ok, I can do it better, the next time will be better.

ART: Ok, that is positive. So you never really felt overwhelmed by anxiety, like it was too much for you to deal with?

ME: No, I don't think I ever had that. What I am more afraid of is not my hands, is my memory. Sometimes I think that I am going to lose what is coming next and then I think "I should not be here, I should be home, this is my last concert, I won't play anymore", but this lasts for 1 or 2 minutes and once one piece finishes and the next starts, I try to be positive and mostly I get it. I see this in my students, they play one piece, they are not that good with memory and in the concert they have problems. Anyway, I think I am a positive person, I think I can control it.

ART: And when you felt those symptoms like shaking hands and memory problems that can be related to anxiety, did you feel like they prevented you from playing at your best or did you feel like it's just a part of the job?

ME: That is a very good question. I think it's a little bit of both. Of course when my hands are shaking I notice that I don't play as well as I could but, on the other side, I think to myself "what can you do? Just try to enjoy what you are doing. People are here to enjoy and you should enjoy as well". It's kind of both things.

ART: From your experience, what do you think guitarists worry about the most? Is there anything special that only guitarists are concerned about? Things like nails, posture, tuning?

ME: Of course nails are a very important issue in most guitarists, and posture and tuning as well, but I have never heard that they were important to the extent of increasing anxiety. I think that the main concerns are nervousness, memory, and to have possible problems due to not having practiced enough. For me personally, nails are a concern but they don't affect my nervousness. My nails are very weak and if I have problems with my nails on the day of the concert I will have problems before the concert. Before the concert if I have bad nails I really am nervous and worry about that, maybe some kind of anxiety, I don't know. But when you are on stage you have to combat it. So, nails don't really affect me. It depends, when it's connected with sound I can forget it, but if for example one of the nails is not round enough and I am uncomfortable, it of course lasts the entire concert. But that is not the origin of any kind of anxiety, it is simply that I am not satisfied, I am not happy with what I am doing, I try to be safe, maybe play a little bit slower. I have to accept that. But it's not an origin of nervousness, nothing to do with it. The memory, yes, it affects me a little bit more. What else?

ART: Maybe the position, the posture while playing, might cause some strain in the back...

ME: Oh, I do Alexander Technique.

ART: And does it help?

ME: Yes. It helps a lot and also, I think, it helps regarding nervousness because I can control my breathing very well. So I always breathe with my belly, a profound breathing, this helps a lot to control any possible symptom of nervousness. It helps, if I am nervous I will keep being nervous, but I don't stop breathing, so my heart rate doesn't go faster and faster.

ART: It releases part of the tension.

ME: I think so.

ART: So, was there ever a point in your career where you started to regularly feel in control of your performances? Or were you always in control and comfortable on stage?

ME: It depends. If I play a few concerts, one after the other, I'm not nervous, I don't worry about anything, it is so easy. I enjoy it a lot, I am happy. If I play a concert after 4 months without performing, I have to deal with nervousness, of course. I try to be as positive as possible, to visualize the stage, the people, to play a few days before for my friends, all of that. After 4 months without playing, to play again on a stage is so new that I feel that my adrenaline comes up much easier than when I play regularly.

ART: Ok, so for you, performing regularly is an important part of feeling comfortable on stage?

ME: Yes, 100%.

ART: And do you also feel that is true for your students and for other guitarists?

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ME: Definitely. For my students, of course.

ART: Your experience with dealing with these issues of anxiety and nervousness, did you work on them by yourself or did you get advice from teachers and colleagues?

ME: No, I didn't have any help. Did you mean by a psychologist?

ART: Not necessarily, just being able to talk openly with teachers and colleagues, sharing experiences...

ME: Not really. No. I don't remember talking with my teacher about these things.

ART: Do you think that could have helped? Could it have made things easier? Or do you think everyone has to work on their own issues individually?

ME: I think it could have helped. For example, the fact of playing for other people before the concert, if he would have insisted that I should have done that I think it could have been much better. Or the fact of visualizing, it helps a lot as well. Or the fact of controlling the breathing better. All these things I have discovered on my own. I think it is important, I talk with my students about all these things.

ART: Those helpful strategies to reduce anxiety that you have learned by yourself, you pass on to your students?

ME: That's right, yes.

ART: There are always some people that get more anxious than others, do you believe coping with performance anxiety is more innate or worked upon? A little bit of both?

ME: Probably is a little bit of both. Some people have that in their genes, I think. I am thinking about a student of mine that was so nervous in the beginning, when he started studying with me. I was not able to help him but he started to do some type of hypnosis, he tried that and it worked very well. Right now, I don't know what he does, but he doesn't get nervous on stage. I do believe that it is a combination of both things, innate and worked.

ART: When you are practicing, are you already taking into account possible anxiety issues or are you just focusing on the music and worry about anxiety later?

ME: My experience is that you memorize everything, from the beginning, when you start to do fingerings and analyze your new music. You memorize everything, even your feelings about the composition, what you like and don't like, and I always try to be positive and thinking that one day I will play this for an audience and I would like them to enjoy it. I always try to be positive, from the very beginning. But it's more for the fact of memorizing positiveness than for a fact of avoiding anxiety.

ART: Yes, I understand.

ME: Also, because of the memory, as I said before, it's my main problem. To memorize everything I also try to visualize the audience from the very beginning, so that I feel familiar with the image of having people in front of me.

ART: Ok. So while working on a new piece you are already working on how it will feel like when you perform it?

ME: That's right, yes.

ART: That's a good exercise.

ME: For me, I think it works.

ART: And do you feel that you practice differently according to when a concert is near or far away in time? Or is your routine pretty much the same?

ME: No, it's completely different. For example, I have a concert in a couple of days. What I do these last days, 3 or 4 days, I don't practice, I just play. I play the whole repertoire, as I said before, visualizing the audience and I videotape myself and watch it. This is the only thing I do. One hour and a half playing the repertoire, then I see it and I try to analyze what can be better and in the next day, I try to do it better. This is what helps me.

ART: Are you familiar with the term self-efficacy?

ME: No. Self-efficacy?

ART: It's a psychology term that basically refers to the belief one has on accomplishing a certain task. For musicians it can be the belief you have of studying correctly, of being able to play a certain piece of music from beginning to end, or the belief you have of being able to somehow control your anxiety while on stage. So, self-efficacy can be applied to several, if not all, aspects of life. What I want to ask is, how important do you feel that your belief in being able to practice effectively and perform successfully impacts performance anxiety?

ME: It's complicated, I don't know. I would need some time to think about that. In fact, what you are telling me is that this self-efficacy it is kind of self-confidence, how is it different?

ART: It can be similar; the main difference is that self-efficacy is task-specific. For example, I can have positive self-efficacy regarding the way I practice, believing that it is effective and will produce good results, but at the same time I can have negative self-efficacy regarding my ability to cope with anxiety, therefore hindering my performing capabilities.

ME: Yeah, I understand. This concept is new for me, but I guess so... I guess that there must be a connection between that and anxiety, but I don't know since I'm not that familiar with this. This is still is a new concept for me but it seems logical, I would say that it probably has a very strong impact.

ART: Ok. You mentioned earlier that while practicing you are already visualizing, do you have any other strategies that help you prepare mentally?

ME: I do some other things on the day of the concert. For example, I try to make sure I have a good sleep, I like to have a big nap before the concert. When I go to the stage I try to breathe very well, 3 or 4 profound breaths. I drink a lot of water, somehow I think it is related to memory, I feel much more confident when I am hydrated. These are the 3 most important things I do in the day of the concert, and they work. Of course if I don't have a nap it doesn't matter, and if I do not drink water it doesn't make me worry more, I just try to make sure I do these 3 things, sleep, drink and breathe.

ART: It helps you to be more comfortable.

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ME: Yes, comfortable and confident.

ART: Of course. In your experience, do you believe that competitions are helpful for coping with performance anxiety?

ME: Oh, I don't know, it probably depends on the personality. In my period of competitions I was especially nervous. You won't believe this but would normally lose 1 or 2 kilograms after a competition, because I was so nervous. I could not even eat well. In the beginning I had, I confess, to take beta-blockers a few times. Step by step I kind of got more used to these situations and I got to go on stage without having to take anything. This period of competitions was terrible, but it probably helped me, precisely because of that. It was so difficult for me, a very difficult situation not only because playing for an audience, it was the fact of competing. I am not a competitive person, I hate that. I think this was the reason why I was so nervous in the first years of this period. Even now, I get so nervous when I am in the jury.

ART: I believe you. Well, if a person is not competitive in nature, doing such a demanding thing as a guitar competition is awkward. But, in the end, because the pressure was so high, it might have helped you to deal with anxiety a little bit better?

ME: Yeah, probably. In fact, I'm pretty sure that it helped me a lot.

ART: Now I would like to ask you about your knowledge and experience about the flow state, that feeling on stage where you are completely into the music and it's like everything is perfect and effortless. Are these experiences frequent for you?

ME: Yes. Not as frequent as I would wish. It depends, as I said before, on when was my last concert. For example, I played a concert last week, ok, and I will play in 3 days. I'm pretty sure that I will enjoy and will have this feeling in the next concert, because it was only a week in between. If not in all the concert, probably in the second half, for a few pieces I will completely forget, I will be completely transported to... wherever.

ART: Do you feel like these positive experiences while on stage could be a way, a tool for anxious people? To let them know that it is possible to feel good while performing?

ME: I don't know... I am not a psychologist so I don't know. Normally my experience is that the students learn what they experience themselves. They don't learn from other people's experiences. And this is very profound, they can maybe learn from other's experiences regarding something simple, but the fact of enjoying and forgetting your fingers on stages, of just being in the music, all of that, this is so complicated that probably it's not possible to reproduce by just telling the students that it could happen.

ART: But maybe it can give them hope?

ME: Yes, probably. Hope? Yes, sure. You are right, you can "push" them to become more positive, right?

ART: Yes, for those anxious students and musicians that feel like performing is negative and dark and that don't have this information, that it is possible and quite common to have flow experiences which are overwhelmingly positive experiences, maybe by learning that it exists they will start perceiving performing with a different point of view.

ME: Yes, you have convinced me. Yes.

ART: It wasn't my intention to try to convince you...

ME: Yes, but I recognize what you say.

ART: Ok, moving on. How important the choice of repertoire and recital structure are for you to feel comfortable and confident on stage?

ME: I always try to play a repertoire that I like, this is the first thing. If I don't like it, if I don't enjoy playing it, I don't program it. But I noticed that I'm much more relaxed and confident and happy and I transmit much more good things when I am really satisfied with the program. But not in terms of difficulty, more in terms of connection to the pieces for example. There is some kind of connection to the different pieces you have in the repertoire and everything makes sense, then I like it much better and enjoy it much better. So I don't like to play one piece from "here" and another piece from "there", you know, everything has to be connected. I like to think of a program that you could choose a title for it, if you understand what I mean. Of course it is important that, like I said in the beginning, I always play pieces I like. And I think that somehow the technique is connected to the piece... this is difficult to explain. The point is that normally the pieces that I like are pieces that I know that I can play well. But it's not that all pieces I can play well are pieces that I like.

ART: And are you careful with the structure, like choosing an easier piece to play first and more challenging pieces near the end? Or does that not make a difference to you?

ME: Yes, it is important. But, again, it is not for anxiety reasons, it is more for the fact that you need to warm up. I prefer to start with pieces which are not that demanding for my fingers. And if there are pieces that are more difficult to memorize, I try to avoid playing them at the end, I try to play them while I am still not that tired, probably in the beginning of the second half. Yes, I take care of that too.

ART: How important do you feel it is to address the issues we've been talking about with the students openly?

ME: Ah, very important of course, yes. It's really important. In fact, we try to organize little concerts for the students, as many as possible, so that they can try themselves and, after that if they get nervous we talk about not all things we are talking now, but little tricks to be less nervous and to control themselves, how to practice, all of these things.

ART: I have heard that some guitarists feel that in the past decades or so, talking about these issues was almost like taboo, but slowly it is improving. Was that also your experience?

ME: No, that was not my experience, it was never taboo.

ART: Ok. Do you think that schools and conservatories and universities are they addressing this issue enough? Are they providing enough opportunities for the students to perform and talk and gain knowledge about performance anxiety?

ME: Step by step I think it is becoming more important for teachers to have some kind of masterclasses or lectures about all of this.

ART: And in your experience are schools doing that regularly? Could they be doing more?

ME: Of course, they could be doing more. Here in our region we have a special class which is "Techniques of emotional and physical control", so, how to deal with physical and emotional tensions. We have this in the conservatories in my region, in Galicia. Now, regarding the number of concerts, I think that it is clear for the teachers that this is important to organize concerts for the students, but it depends on the teachers. Here, we try to organize at least once a month. But there are places that I know that organize more that, even once a week. On the other side, there are places where they just play once all year. So, it varies a lot. The point is that I think that step by step it is getting better. More activities and more seminars.

ART: Ok. I have gone through all the topics I wanted to approach. Do you have any other subject to approach that you might feel we have missed? Any final remarks?

ME: I don't think so. I don't think that there is anything we missed. But I would like you to inform me when you have your thesis finished, it may be important for our students and for me, to hear your conclusions and to know a little bit more about what you are doing.

ART: Yes, I would love to share it, I would really like if people would read it and find it useful. So, thank you very much for your time and insights, I appreciate it very much.

ME: I hope that it has been helpful for you and your work. Good luck and keep in touch!

André Rafael Tempera: To start, I would like to know a little bit about your background, how old you were when you started playing guitar, in what environment, in a school or private lessons, things like that.

Irina Kulikova: Ok. My mom is a cellist and I started playing piano first, when I was 5, and then when I was about 5 and a half I started playing guitar. In Russia there is very strict obligations, at first you go to school, then you go for the Bachelor, then Master, so I have been studying in the music school where we have 1-on-1 lessons, twice per week. We are obliged to also have theory lessons, music history and piano. This is all part of the music education.

ART: At such a young age?

IK: Yes, when you start you have it on different levels but you have all the subjects. Of course, when you grow older you have some extra lessons. So I finished music school, then did a Bachelors, then a Masters in Moscow, then I started in Mozarteum in Salzburg for the concert diploma... In Russia you always have two qualifications, for teaching and performance. You can have more, you also have conducting lessons, but I didn't go for the qualification. Also studied in Maastricht, in the Netherlands, for the concert diploma.

ART: Ok. When you were really young, what are your memories of playing in auditions? What did they feel like?

IK: Yes. In the beginning, when I was a kid, I was not afraid at all. I liked it, it was very natural. So there were no problems.

ART: Around what age? 5 or 6?

IK: My first concert was when I was 8 and I was super confident, I don't remember any problem playing by memory. I remember when I played on a very big festival, the concert hall was huge, like for 1500 people, I was about 9 or 10 years old. So when I had to play on a flat ground, even if there were a lot of people, it was not scary or anything, but when I had to really go on a stage, the big light was kind of disturbing, I was alone on that huge stage and that gave me some awareness that I was actually not at home. I remember that when I was younger and played with my dolls, I was very much in deep concentration; I would "disappear" in my world. I still feel the same when I'm cooking, and then because I'm so focused when someone comes in I can get scared. I train this focus with my daughter, she is 5. I was helping her train this focus and it was easy, she is like me. I would call it a natural talent, some kids her age are not that well focused as she is. It's really a matter of training and something that you are born with. When she read a book she can "disappear" into the book and be so quiet like she is not in the room. I was the same when I played, doesn't matter what things are around, I was just focused. When I was a child I learned to memorize many, many pieces. I learned really a lot of pieces, for my development. Only when I was a teenager and started winning competitions I began to feel the pressure to play super well, I was like a wonderkid, a big star in my town. When I was doing the competitions I was still in my music, in my world and performing well. As soon as I went to interviews on television and everybody pays attention to your playing I started being more aware that I had to play well. When you get older you have more subjects to study, you get more tired, I had my brother... there are many things to do so you try to combine practice and other studies. It was still a lot

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and you are obliged, if you didn't pass your exams you are kicked out. You have a second chance, the exams were before the holiday, if you didn't pass you would have another chance during holiday but if you failed again you were out. The education is for free so it was how it is... There was no option to pay for the lessons, now there is, but it is a lot of money and most people cannot afford it. At my time there was no such choice so if you lose that path it was very scary, so you just work hard. I realize that because of this, the amount of time to prepare pieces and all the tiredness, made me become very nervous and sometimes my fingers would go "the other way". I remember that when I broke my arm then for one and a half years I didn't play concerts; it was a very long brake. When after that I went on stage again my legs were shaking. I experienced a real nervous problem and I went through a long path to solve this for myself. Now I see it a lot with what happens with my students. I once had a big "blackout" because I was so exhausted, the piece was new. It was on one of the competitions where I was really going for the 1st prize. In the last movement of my whole performance I just didn't know where to go, just nothing in my head. I was very tired, I didn't sleep very well, I had a lot of tension, I had bad news, so I was not feeling ok, and I didn't know this piece very well, it was very new. So once in my life I had this "blackout" and had to realize what was the case, I was working in a different way with myself. I had some small "blackouts" sometimes being nervous on stage so I figured out why and it very much helped me to study with Marco Tamayo, because he has a very specific, very strict system for how you practice and also what fingerings you are using. So when I became aware of what both my hands were doing, when they got very stable it gave me a lot of security. Also, when I started visualizing the score and playing it on my head without the guitar and practicing, not always playing from beginning to end but really practicing the end first and then all the difficult parts of the music, it helped me a lot. It gave me a lot of stability to feel confident on stage. Also I read a book by Stanislavski, a theater book, the Stanislavski system, his suggestions worked very well for me. When I play at home, I train myself to imagine that I have many people around me and try to create my own circle, where I feel comfortable. It's like, you imagine also that you are on stage and that everything is black around you and that is your circle, that is your home, that is your confident place. What I do when I go to a concert hall, I don't like to spend too much time... this is also my experience, when I spend too much time on stage before the concert, afterwards I don't feel the same excitement playing there, I was too much used to the acoustics. There was always something like the concert was not as great as when I spend just a little bit of time studying the hall, not really staying in the hall and "living" there. Just choosing the chair, feeling the chair, looking around for what I can see when I am playing, the size of the hall, a certain detail, getting used to the light, I train my eyes so that they can go from the score to the fingerboard, I just train this and memorize it, and that's it. I need about 10 or 15 minutes for all this. Then, checking the acoustics and if I need to check the amplification because of the sound engineer I can stay a bit longer, for the sound engineer but not for myself. And I would not play the entire program. That has helped me a lot to feel completely relaxed and comfortable on stage. I found a way to switch between talking and playing, at the beginning it would distract me a lot. When I stop playing I think "It doesn't matter what I said, it is not important, your English is not important, now I am going to give such beauty to the public and this will be a wonderful piece". Just, guiding myself to focus on the right tone for the piece. That helps a lot, this way of talking to myself helps me a lot to switch from talking to playing, I really need to go very deep into my playing and then nothing can disturb me so it's again, like that focus from childhood. Also, I practice more intensely 1 or 2 days before the concert but not on the day of the concert. That is, in short, some of the experience that has helped me to become very familiar with being on stage.

ART: Yes, there are a lot of factors involved, a lot of information there.

IK: For me, it is also very much about building the energy, and even if I have like a huge jet-lag, stress or a bad mood, I still have to go in and play. Pain, sometimes I played through a lot of pain...

ART: Really?

IK: Yes, it happens sometimes... I had, in Montenegro, that was very serious. I got sick from the water. Since then I never drink even filtered water, I always take from the bottle. So I got so sick and I had to go through the concert with a lot of pain, a lot of cramps, a huge problem, and running to the toilet, it was hard. Then I was thinking "How am I going to be on stage? The toilet is so far if I need one!", and the cramps were so huge I could not even stand up. When I went on stage I had a lot of pain, also to bow to people and try to smile, but when I sat down to play I had no pain, nothing. As soon as I finished and had to stand up and bow again that was hard, that was so painful. That was an interesting thing. Then one time last year, I fell of my bicycle and I tore my meniscus, so I had a lot of problems walking. There was continuous pain and I took painkillers but I could not take too high dose otherwise my fingers would not move. Then I had very small, little mistakes that I usually don't have, like not pressing the note hard enough, you know, acceptable mistakes. It also happened because I was so exhausted, tired from taking painkillers for a month and not having enough sleep. But in general the concert was good, if I felt it wouldn't be good I would have cancelled it. You have to go through a lot of difficulties and in this way you find what works the best for you. Also, foodwise, I try to have some protein with me because if don't eat enough, if I am hungry, I cannot focus on playing. I have earplugs with me. I now have special plasters to warm up the muscles and if there is tension they help a lot to relax. So there are a lot of tricks and things that I found out for myself, let's say, to be 100% ready for the show, physically, mentally and technically.

ART: That is really good. Earlier you said that you started experiencing anxiety when you were a teenager. Were you starting to become more self-conscious? Did you feel more responsibility?

IK: Yes. Also I had a problem with my family. I felt my parents didn't really understand me, I felt low self-confidence and I think that was why on stage I didn't feel good enough. My mom was criticizing me a lot, typical Russian system, to punish and criticize. I was not beautiful enough for her, I didn't play good enough for her, and altogether it was this that made me feel really insecure everywhere. Plus, at my school, because I travelled a lot for competitions and I was very successful, some people were jealous, others could not understand why I would disappear from school and come back, so I was like an outsider from school groups. When you are a teenager you find it very difficult, especially in our schools, where it is always a group you belong. It is not like I see at my daughter's school where you work with each individual. I had like, you are in a group and you study with the same people from 10 to 15 years old and you cannot change the class. When you study in the Bachelor you have a group of students together for four years, it is not like you choose the subjects and you go and meet other people who also chose it. Because of this I felt more pressure that I was excluded from the group, and again, low self-confidence. When I went to Europe and started seeing different people, and I was so much on my own that I had to find a way to be with myself. And then, also when you are away from your mom you just achieve a certain goal and you feel happy. There is no one behind you. That bit by bit, builds up the confidence. Then I met my husband who also gave me a lot of confidence and told me that there was no more judging, you do what you feel is right. This way you get mature and you start believing in yourself and, because of that, I won all the competitions I was planning to win, of the bigger international ones. And finding the way to deal with the pressure of competitions... actually, after I started touring and playing concerts it's not 10 or 20 minutes and you are finished, it is really like one hour of non-stop playing, and you are alone and touring. That

was for me a very serious experience, how to deal with those things. Then you feel “Oh, playing in competitions is easy, the concerts are what is difficult!” . But now, since my daughter was born, when I play in concerts I feel “Oh, this is so easy, parenting a child is difficult!” . So it changes.

ART: So, at least for you, any anxiety or extra tension on stage was a reflection of what was happening in your personal life?

IK: That was the number one reason. Number two was when I practiced pieces I was not aware of what finger and why had to be played there. This is the typical system that I am working with my students now, which I learned from Marco Tamayo and I go further about it. There are certain principles, why a certain finger should not start a certain passage, because it will make you feel very insecure. Sometimes, if you played difficult repertoire and are using the wrong fingerings it gives you insecurity, and then on stage you start feeling stressed. I was also not aware of my breathing, I was not really working on phrasing like now, like a singer, like a conductor, like a composer, like if I would be orchestrating the piece. So I think about music in a different way now, not just like a player, but like a musician. The way of working on the pieces helped me have the stability in my technique and because of that I also felt really relaxed on stage. I have another talent that some people don't have, I always play better on stage than at home. Some people have this and when they deal with pressure, when they play for the public, something “opens up”. I always had this and now I meet people that always play much better for an audience and don't play so well in the lessons. I also know that a few of my schoolmates they played incredibly well at home or during lessons but on stage it is strange, something is “closed” about them. The same with Marco Tamayo, in my opinion, in the lessons he plays with so much freedom, so much charm, and in concerts although it is still a super good quality, it is more mechanical when compared to what I hear indoors.

ART: For some people that little bit of anxiety, that little bit of excitement, that little bit of adrenaline helps them to play better. For some people it is actually helpful.

IK: Yes. In my situation, it helps me a lot and I somehow know how to control that. What I noticed when I was a child is that I would start playing faster and faster and faster. But being an adult you also learn how to control the tempo, to work on stage and not lose the sense of speed and interpretation.

ART: On those concerts that you really felt affected by anxiety, what were the usual symptoms? Was it more mental? More physical?

IK: Very often I had the feeling that something was physically happening with me. Sometimes you can have a headache just because of the jetlag and the tension as well. As soon as I start playing I don't have a headache and after I don't have a headache anymore, but before that I have. Sometimes I want to go to the bathroom, like something is happening with the stomach. It has never happened that my hands cannot move. What I remember is that after I broke my arm and started playing concerts again, my legs were shaking, and that was so strange for me. Actually, what I started doing I... First of all, you have to learn the program very well. I have to be very secure before going on stage, if I am not ready it is better I don't go. I learned my lesson. Because of this I never had any shaking hands or knees. I also realized never to drink coffee before going on stage, never. But then through the years and with jetlag it is good to have a little bit of coffee, but it depends on how much. Sometimes I can have a double-espresso just before and it feels completely right. Other times I took the same amount and the hands were shaking but I was able to control it. Very important also, half an hour before the concert, while I'm getting dressed, doing the makeup, even one hour before the concert, I don't want the people to disturb me and have my mind

worrying about other things, because this way I get very tired mentally. So I do a lot of breathing, deep breathing. I circulate my kidneys, it makes me calm, I learned that from a great musician, so I just make clockwise circles 60 times on the kidney area and in this way I activate the blood flow, it helps me a lot. I also before the concerts do a massage on my hands and fingers in a way that helps against the stiffness. Sometimes the stiffness can come just because you were sitting in a plane for 10 hours, or you had a bad night and your neck is locked. I can take in the morning of the concert a very warm shower to heat my back and neck and it also helps a lot. So things like this you learn and become aware of. As soon as I became aware of my body and to find a good balance for it, I lost any kind of symptoms. Another thing is, at first I thought "Oh, the stage!" and I was putting a lot of pressure on myself, something would always come up, like a pain in my stomach or a headache or feeling like I really want to stop playing concerts, like a big hate for my life. Everything was gone as soon as I told myself "It is so amazing that these people would come especially for me, this will really be a wonderful evening." And it is like a party time, when I turn all the stress into excitement, a positive excitement. Then of course, you have to know your pieces, and then I started to accept mistakes, if something happens I just take it easier, I don't blame, I'm not too hard or critical of myself. I change my perspective from hate/stress to love, and "This is my time, really my time". I was never using concerts for my own ego, like I am a big star or I'm famous, and that was the reason why I wanted to stop playing concerts. But then you change your mind when you see that people are happy after the concert and you are not allowed to quit because people are so happy, I love to make people happy. So, changing the perspective and also learning through experience when you play a lot and you are aware of things, not like when I had just won competitions and was playing concerts and never really thought about enjoying it. It was like, "I did it and it was good and the next one also has to be good, now again and again the pressure..." and "now everyone gets to go for a swim and I have to sit in my room and practice". Now, for some of my repertoire I use score, but I can play with the score feeling completely free, so it doesn't disturb me, so this way I enjoy life more. On the day of the concert I can do something really wonderful, just go for a walk somewhere, then come home, warm up and go and play. This way my music is more "fresh", I don't "kill" the music because I need to memorize it. I present the music so for me it's also like a little bit of a surprise what will come out on stage because it's fresh and I can play with the acoustics, with my mood, a little bit slower or faster, but I would not change the fingerings or ornaments in the piece during the concert, I don't like to do that. Everything is ready but also a little bit different. As I said before, knowing your practice, knowing what to expect from travelling and concerts, sometimes there is no time to warm up and for some people that can be a huge stress, and suddenly they have to give masterclasses on the day of the concert and they can be very frustrated about it and because of that they play a bad concert. For me this is unprofessional. For me it is a goal, you have to set up a goal for yourself. I want to play a very beautiful concert no matter what. Point. It is not "I will try to play a concert" no, "I will play a concert", it's a big difference. For me there is no problem, to give a masterclass on the day of the concert, or arrive to the place on the day of the concert. Afterwards I like to have a good glass of wine, good food and good sleep. That is kind of my experience, really to be aware of your body, how you learn the pieces, you need to know them very well and even for me, if I play new repertoire and use the score, I memorize it at home, so for myself I tend to play by heart, but on stage with a new piece, first time performance, you feel an excitement and worries as well, but those worries should not take over. Of course you have thoughts, doubts, "oh, do I really know this piece?", and as soon as you have that voice "teasing" you, doubting you, I imagine that I have two ears and on one is a devil and on the other there is an angel, like earrings. One says one thing, the other says another thing. Every time I try to stop that "evil" voice I'm telling myself "C'mon Irina, you have been playing guitar for so many years already, you have achieved so much and you really practiced those pieces, you didn't practice them for nothing, c'mon, you are not going to forget anything, stop it!" and when I am so hard and decisive it works. I am playing and at the same time I am "fighting" all those voices. "Why are you here? If you are afraid then stand up, go away and never come back on the stage, otherwise stop it, play and

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enjoy.” and also I started singing, singing the piece so this gives me another focus. I realized that there were some pieces that I need some rest, you go on tour and you play this piece for many years and at a certain moment you don’t realize what you are playing anymore, your fingers are just moving, and then those doubts, those voices come again. “You know the piece so well, you played it so much, but now you will forget how to play it by heart!” and another voice is saying “C’mon this piece is so beautiful, you really love it, and now comes that Spanish flavor, let’s give it” so I always try to “speak” over the evil voice with a positive voice. Then, for me it’s always a sign, if I start doubting the piece so much, then this piece needs some rest, I should not play it for a while. Even if it is in the program, I will take it away and then put another in its place. It’s just because the piece is a little bit “tired” and in one or two years, or sometimes only a month, I can go in and play it again, because there are some pieces that I always love to play.

ART: Interesting, really interesting. That is an important symptom, that many people have, that little voice that doesn’t shut up.

IK: And sometimes it can be so disturbing that when you start playing you realize “Oh my God, the guitar is out of tune!”. What I realized is that when you prepare in advance for a situation like that, or if your chair is not comfortable, find a way to make a joke about it, be prepared for it. If something is squeaking on the chair it is easy, just freeze and then after one movement or one piece, solve the problem. If my guitar is out of tune, if it is in the beginning of the concert it is very hard to solve, you just started and you will have to restart. The audience doesn’t hear it as sharp as musicians do. So, it may be possible to restart the piece, it depends on how bad the tuning is. I remember hearing one musician, he had a piece playing in D and then he started another piece and he forgot to tune the sixth string back up again. That was funny, but for some people, if you take everything seriously the stress can give you trouble. Nowadays I always check my tuning before going on stage, and with the tuner you can clip on the guitar, it helps a lot. I also try before going on stage is to never check the difficult passages, no, it is absolutely not a good thing to do, it will only disturb you and then you create more tension and insecurity. So I just try to focus on doing makeup, the dress, thinking about something good, looking at pictures, looking at the beginning of the score, thinking about what I am going to say, anything that gives you stress, take away. Another thing I have to talk about is the book, “Inner Game of Music”, it helped me a lot. And the other by Stanislavski, he wrote it in the style of a diary, like the student went to the theater education to become an actor and he speaks about all the theater tricks and it is very easy to read and there are so many things that I could apply to my own performance as an artist on stage. Actually this book really helped me a lot to change my idea about what the stage is. Some people feel like the stage is a strange environment and at home it is much easier to play. Some people just don’t like so much attention on them. I always got attention on me, even when I was a baby and I think it helped a lot. I had this photographer, he used to photograph me a lot, so in this way I was used to perform as a child, to be in front of a public. It helped a lot in feeling confident, and it’s more about the confidence and knowing your body well. For me these will always be like the two great keywords, three with practicing. You need to know how to practice, to know when the piece is ready to be performed on stage and then, it won’t matter where you play. There will be no fear, as well.

ART: Well it sounds easy enough...

IK: It sound easy but it is a lifetime of work.

ART: Yes, I know. I totally understand that. Some people just can’t get over that fear no matter how hard they try, they still haven’t figured it out.

IK: I also know one person, he is so shy! In normal life, very shy, but still he goes on stage and he loves to perform. That is an interesting example, I never could imagine, usually the extroverts, the leaders, they like to be on stage. I'm both, I can follow and I can be a leader, I don't know what I like more, I think both ways are fine for me, but I will always have an opinion. Also in the playground with other kids I think I was a leader, and it does help you to have good skills for stage performance.

ART: You already mentioned several anxiety related symptoms you experienced. Do you feel like there are some of those that are specific to guitarists? Some that only guitarists worry about?

IK: I don't know... the nails, probably. They are not the biggest worry, but I guess... For instance, cellists don't really worry much about their bow, because they always have a second one. So I think nails make it more difficult and I have experienced that myself. Broke a nail, tried to play with a plastic nail and it fell off during the concert, it was a big worry. What I also experienced for myself besides that is about the height of the chair. For me with the guitar is important to sit super comfortable and when the seat is too high it is usually a trouble for me. Sometimes this is the first thing to check before a concert. Besides the acoustics, it is also important to know which chair I'm going to use. If it is too high I just go for a different, simpler chair, even if it is not as beautiful. I noticed when I play in chamber ensembles that for other musicians that is not really a big issue as it is for me. I noticed the same for other guitarists. When the chair is too low it is still ok, but when it is too high I get very tense in my hands while playing because the guitar tends to slip. I found a way now, with the use of anti-slips, it prevents it a little bit, but it also depends on what dress I am wearing. When there is no possibility to change the chair and it is quite high, this usually helps. What else? I am thinking that other things such as light and amplification are common for everybody.

ART: Yes, many things are common to all instrumentalists; I am just trying to understand if there are some factors that only guitarists worry about. Nails, obviously the first thing that comes to mind, but maybe other things like posture, intonation...

IK: Intonation is a thing that for violinists and cellists is even worse but for example I have now some pieces that utilize a different tuning, then you have to consider that the next piece will be out of tune. If I play a piece that has different tuning for 3 of the string it is ok, but afterwards I cannot play anything else, it will always be out of tune. If you have solo pieces with different tunings that can be a little bit of a problem, but for me that is not as important, mostly for me is the nails. What I also noticed is that during Summer, when it is very hot, I should have longer nails for concerts because the hands get more sweaty. For me it's those two issues, the nails and the chair.

ART: Ok. Was there ever a point in time where you started to feel regularly in control of your performances? Was it a gradual process of becoming more comfortable on stage and less affected by worries and anxieties?

IK: I was in different phases of life. When I was a child I felt very comfortable on stage and performing. Coming from a poor country in comparison to the rest of Europe, when I had the opportunity to play in a beautiful hall, to stay in a beautiful hotel where everything is clean and nice, it was an incredible inspiration for me. It was such an inspiration that all concerts were super successful, it was like an extra impulse. I knew the program really well but it was like an emotion that you need to have as an artist, an inspiration. Professionally, being in control, so that was also in different phases, I suppose, I was very stable after I won competitions. While I was doing competitions I just learned to practice the right way, not just to learn the piece well and having a lot of time, to practice like a maniac for 6 or 7 hours a

day. I felt that this is what is necessary but I never thought how I could continue my life doing this, never thought much about living life and enjoying life, I was really spending a lot of time with the guitar. Then when I would have concerts, I would always have tension on the day of the concert. One day I asked myself “is it really good to be like this? Is it really nice to play concerts like this? With such tension before I perform?”, so I kind of started changing my approach, also in my preparation for the concert and it influenced the way I practiced. Then, appreciating things in daily life, things that I wanted to do. Plus, when my daughter was born 5 years ago it practically changed my life because there is no time to practice a lot but my practice actually got very efficient. The things that I was doing before in 7 or 8 hours I started doing in 2. This was already coming through the experience of doing the competitions and doing big tours from winning prizes. This way you can really experience travelling, having jetlag and still having to go out and play well. With these experiences I got more control and the way I practice became different. In short, it is very important how you practice, how you start to learn the piece, then you can be super-confident on stage and it doesn't matter if you didn't sleep enough, if you are sick, whatever, nothing is important. Because from the beginning the piece was developed in a very secure way. When I was doing competitions I was still studying with Marco Tamayo and learned about the principles of fingering, which are very important. So I was very aware, from the first moments of studying a piece, what fingers I had to use and why, if it was better for the music or the easiest solution. So this way I developed the security and stability. When I play more concerts and chose the program that I like to play, I feel very confident. I found my way to practice in a super-efficient way. One of the tricks, of course, is to study a piece in small blocks and leave it for a while to rest and then play something else. Actually, before I was studying one piece 5 hours non-stop, now I am not doing that anymore, I am practicing different pieces in a shorter amount of time. I play a variety of pieces and sometimes I play them on one day, then maybe 4 days after I come back to it, in the meantime I play other pieces. It helped me to develop a larger repertoire, to keep it fresh, while learning new pieces. And I noticed that my concentration is very high, it is very good while I'm doing various things. I now switch off the phone while I practice, it helps as well. When I practice with a full, deep focus, it has an incredible effect in the memorization and the connection to the instrument. That influences, of course, what I play on stage. Everything comes from the practice. I try never to go on stage with a new piece that I am unsure of. Some people do this and have a very big stress because of it, I don't like that.

ART: Yes, I understand. Further along I would like talk more about the influence of the repertoire choices, but before that I would like to ask you if, in your experience of dealing with performance anxiety issues, did you get any help from teachers or relied mostly on tools you developed personally?

IK: It is both. I have learned a lot from when I was a student, I have learned a lot from Marco Tamayo from a guitaristical point of view, the most logical fingerings and also the approach to the pieces, so when I practice is a bit like a “factory work” before some beauty comes out. Then, of course, there is a lot of experience on my own because I am always asking myself questions like “is it good? Is it comfortable? What can I do better?” so that I can keep developing. There are also books I read about meditation, breathing exercises, self-help, whatever, all those books helped psychologically, I read them to help myself as a musician. Also, listening to other musicians helps to find something new for myself as a performer so that I can discover a different color, a different touch, a different technique... So yeah, a combination of both.

ART: Exactly.

IK: Right now I don't have a teacher but I keep changing, developing, because I am not only playing how I learned to play, I always find new ways. Sometimes with pieces I never played

before, technically different than what I am used to playing, very challenging, I noticed that it is easier to develop them and I always discover something new.

ART: Good. From your experience, as well as from colleagues and students, do you believe that the ability to cope with anxiety is more innate or worked upon? Or both, depending on each person?

IK: Well, it is definitely a combination. There are some people that are born shy and there are some people that absolutely do not like being on stage. But, let's say, they have to because it's their final exam to get their diploma and later on they become amazing teachers, but absolutely not performers. It was like that for my mom. Definitely some people are born very shy, some are just afraid... others can be super energetic, super excited and they cannot control their emotions while on stage. Like a friend of mine, he was getting so excited and playing so fast that he started getting some memory problems and feeling very nervous being on stage, just because he was super excited and had so much energy he just didn't know how to control it. It took him some time to learn that self-control. In both ways, if you are very shy but you love performing and chose to go on stage it is very much possible to train, to practice different techniques, very individual techniques that make you feel as comfortable as possible on stage. It is really a very big topic, this I also talk with my students, it sometimes can be very simple like the piece is very difficult or too new, reasons that stop you from a successful and comfortable performance. You can practice for many hours but if the fingerings are not clear, difficult passages do not always work, but the student might think that he still needs to practice more hours. But it is better to just look at the fingerings, maybe make some changes, and the fingerings should work in about 5 minutes time, always. Then there are the others, the psychological reasons, like with my mom, she was not born shy but she had so many, how to say, strict teachers, everything she was doing was wrong, not getting enough compliments, so she ended up not having a very good self-confidence. Probably also she had irregular practice because she had other jobs, she had to earn money, it made her become super nervous on stage. She could play amazingly well, 10 out of 10, and then she went to the stage and would play like a 6, out of being nervous. She knew the piece very well, she could play it very well, but the stage would make her completely frozen.

ART: Yes, that happens.

IK: It is always possible to train this if the person really wants to.

ART: Yes, I believe it is always possible to improve.

IK: Yes, and completely lose that fear of the stage. Actually, I had that fear of the stage although I really wanted to play. I could not understand what I was doing at a certain point because I had been doing it all my life. At a certain point I was not sure if I really wanted to be on stage, I felt like it was an obligation, so much pressure, but at the same time, where else would I perform if not on stage? I had this kind of dilemma because the stage made me kind of irritated with my own performance and nervous the day before the concert. Now I still feel nervous but I turn it into excitement, so I like to be nervous before a concert but, first of all, I am prepared to play on stage. How I divide my practice, my energy level, especially with a little child in the evening I am more tired, but when you go on stage you have to be completely fresh... I cannot sleep in the afternoon, other musicians do, like a "power nap", but it doesn't work for me, simply because I am too tense, or excited. But I found different ways to relax, like positive thinking, on the day of the concert I never play too much so that I don't exhaust my fingers; and I prefer to practice in the morning and with a slow tempo, analyzing, visualizing the pieces; in the afternoon I like to have a warm shower for the muscles to relax, and breathing... Every minute I am thinking about the concert, I am

visualizing being on stage, visualizing happy people and myself being happy, it helps, actually. I notice a big difference from thinking “oh my god, I have to go on stage! I want to play this program but it is so hard and I feel so lonely, how will I concentrate?” and things like that. Like I said before, sometimes on stage I hear those good and bad voices, that fight in my own head. Actually, yesterday I had a very talented student, we were working together and she was performing in GFA, she is still young but won many competitions, but this time in GFA she didn't perform well and we discussed the situation. She started to play the first piece and made a mistake in a place where she never made a mistake before. She got very upset about that mistake and the rest of the piece and most of the program she didn't play well. She is not just my student but afterwards, I said “let's work on that situation. You have to learn to accept the mistake and be able to get out of it in a way that nobody notices”. There are some tricks, some training, there is also a lot of self-help, finding your own way, you cannot just learn from your teacher. But the best way is to accept the mistake, it happens, no worries, stay focused on the music. In this way you kind of refocus the energy and avoid too much tension. Even for very successful musicians, for musicians that love the stage and are comfortable, they are nervous or excited before and sometimes during the concert. I think it is very important to change the energy, to think about your own tension, this way it doesn't get worse, the performer becomes looser.

ART: Ok. And when you are practicing, are you already taking into account potential problems with performance anxiety or do you tend to just be focused on the music?

IK: I am not busy thinking about anxiety, I try not to think about it at all. I get a piece and I immediately try to imagine it as the final result, how it will sound on stage. So when I practice it is not only technical issues but it's always with a “final picture” in mind, how it will sound in a CD or in a concert.

ART: So you mostly focus on the music?

IK: Yes, I focus on the music but also on some technical difficulties. If I know that this piece is dangerous and can cause me some trouble and tension, I memorize it and practice it in a slightly different way. Then it is not just the music, I call it “fixing”, detail by detail. In that case it is not really the music, I am very much into the technique. But in general, yes, I am only busy with the music when I practice.

ART: And does that type of practice change? Do you do it any differently when a concert is near or far away?

IK: Yes, I do change my routine. When I don't have concerts I practice the new stuff more, and just a little bit of parts where I have more trouble from time to time. On a daily basis I never play a concert program from the beginning to the end, and I don't play all pieces, just some difficult parts; I focus more on new repertoire. Closer to the performance, I focus more on the concert pieces, the whole concert program is then the priority, and I practice it in different *tempi*. For example, the 3rd movement of Barrios' “*La Catedral*”, I would play it in a very slow tempo with a strong articulation, feeling every finger, practicing the *ligados*, I basically use it as a warm-up. If I will play it in the concert, I would practice it in tempo, with more detail in the difficult passages, I play them again and again. If not for concert I play it as a warming-up exercise. This is just one example. It can also play the 1st movement, I just play it through, not really mechanical but maybe more focused in the timing between notes. But in some days, before the concert, I can play different blocks, with the full emotional value, because then the hands feel the piece in a different way. I will train very much with the music, the timing, the sound, the color.

ART: Yes. Are you familiar with the term “self-efficacy”?

IK: No, what does it mean?

ART: So, it is similar to self-confidence, it is basically believing that you are capable of accomplishing a certain task successfully. In this regard I would like to ask you what do you think about the relation between believing in your own ability to prepare, believing you are able to perform, and actually coping with performance anxiety?

IK: Yes, it really influences a lot. In a situation with me, for example, I can be a very good student, I can completely follow what the teacher tells me and what I don't understand I ask. This way I have the ambition to play very well for myself, not to be better than anyone else. I noticed with some students that they have the ambition to be really good, but they are not good. They are very confident, they have lessons with me and they learn a few tricks but don't understand that it is a system, there are other things. Then if they get some success they get really ambitious and maybe stop with the lessons and not follow my advice, to take some time without concerts to build a new technique or something. It takes time to establish this, this way generates confidence. We need to have a full program, a stage 1, 2 and 3, this is the way to "build" a musician, stable, confident and professional. If halfway they feel they know enough, it is not true. They want to get attention, they want to get the 1st prize, but if it doesn't go well they get super disappointed. If find this way of believing in yourself to be a wrong way. You have to have an awareness about your abilities and being really honest and critical of yourself, not to blindly say that everything will work. It is dangerous, and I have met people like this, completely convinced they are really great and amazing when they are really not. But, on the other side, if you are aware of what situation needs to be developed, what is going well and what isn't, then of course it is very important to go on stage and in that moment there should be no doubts. Where you really tell yourself everything will be good and you will play well. Some people try to practice on the day of the concert to change passages and fingerings in the last minute, I hate that! I don't believe in this, you shouldn't do that, you can do it after the concert. Because you put this crazy pressure on yourself and sometimes it works, but it generates a lot of nervousness and tension, and it shows on stage. That is not the right approach, it is very dangerous. I did this when I was doing competitions, it is a good practice to relearn new fingerings from your teacher, but it is really not a good approach for a daily basis, for a stable and happy life. It is ok to do it as a student but as an adult and professional it is very important to be prepared before the concert and there definitely should not be any doubts. Even when you start learning the piece, from the beginning you should feel you love the piece, you want to play it and it will sound really beautiful. You have to know, of course, your capabilities and not take on a piece you cannot play at all. But I have to believe in it, definitely, even if it is super difficult and I never played it before, it is very challenging but I know in advance I will manage it, maybe not in one month but maybe in a year's time. It is quite logical, there has to be a right balance, it comes from experience. Sometimes I give my students advices but they have to go through their own mistakes. My mom was very often telling me I did this or that wrong after the concert, she never told me it was wonderful, she was only analyzing my mistakes. Maybe she didn't realize she was doing that too much and my confidence was getting lower and lower. The criticism was very high, too high, everything was wrong, and after the concerts I was not enjoying the compliments, I was only focusing on the things I didn't do well.

ART: That is not positive...

IK: And then of course I didn't like to go on stage anymore! I had a kind of "breakthrough" and thought that if I continued this way it wouldn't be honest, it wouldn't be artistry. It was too much self-criticism, music is not about this. In a kind of philosophical way understanding that music is not about stress and all the stress we create is taking us away from the beauty. This feeling helped me find a new way, a new approach, and it includes of course a strong belief in success. I noticed that it is super healthy to look at the good things, to notice the bad

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things but not really getting into it emotionally, it is like “ok, this has to be fixed, developed, but let’s focus on the bright side”.

ART: Yes, that’s important too. For you to be able to deal with performing on stage, the pressure and the anxiety, how important do you feel it is to play live often?

IK: It is important for an artist to be on stage, because it is “home”. You have your home and you love your home, how long can you be away from it? So, it’s like, 2 days? Fine. A week? Ok. One month? You start missing your family. For me it’s the same with stage performance, if you are away for a long time you start missing it. It’s where you really belong and I notice I’m a different person, my personality, everything changes when I’m playing concerts. So that’s an important part of the life as an artist.

ART: But do you just miss it or do you feel like it increases your level of anxiety if you spend a long time without performing?

IK: Not anymore. Now if you talk about when I was a student, that was totally important to me to be on stage in a regular basis, and if I was only once in half-year that would give me a lot of nerves. When you are on stage every 3 or 4 weeks it is, of course, much better. When you have concerts regularly, it is like you are a different person, you regulate all your life, your biorhythm, and everything is regulated according to the moment of the concert. For me now it is not a big deal if I go on stage or not, if I play for an audience or not, it doesn’t matter because the way I practice the pieces are always with me in the same way. Only difference for me it is that on stage I always play much better. What I noticed for me was very difficult when I had a long break, and having a daughter, my biorhythm changed a lot. On the evenings I usually go to bed at 8pm because I am already tired and now I have to play a concert at that time. That was giving me a lot of trouble, just to “pump up” the energy, it was very unnatural for my body. I never experienced a break of 1 year, or 2 years, maybe that would influence the nerves, I don’t know. I heard stories from famous artists that they feel even better after a long break from performing. One of the examples is Janine Jansen, the Dutch violinist, she took a break for a little over a year and she felt much better after. But she did it with a good planning, she really wanted to do it. Afterwards there was an interview where she said she was happy to come back, there was nothing mentioning being nervous, it was the opposite; she had plenty of energy again to give. Because it’s a lot of giving to people, when you are performing on stage. What I experienced a few months ago, I fell from the bicycle, I tore my meniscus, was in a lot of pain, but had a concert to do. I was nervous for this concert because there was too much pain in my knee, this pain was taking over all my concentration, even with painkillers. So, the concert went well for the people but I felt kind of uncomfortable because I had a very big disruption. Then afterwards I didn’t have concerts for 4 and a half months. I also got pneumonia in January, February was my rehabilitation and in the end of March was my first concert. All of this was about 5 months without being on stage. I felt happy to be back! I was really nervous before going on stage, I felt strange getting ready for the concert, felt uncomfortable being in the dress but being on stage was amazing. It was like a fish back in the water.

ART: Good! How about the time when you were participating in guitar competitions, did you feel that they helped you to cope better with performance anxiety?

IK: No, not at all! I remember I was completely nervous when I had to go and play only for 5 or 8 minutes for the first round. It’s the worst! That was kind of difficult. What helped me a lot was not actually the competition, it was not hanging out with people but being in my own world, following my own “body signals”. It helped me to concentrate better for the performances. I actually won all competitions when I started to have a good and single hotel room instead of a shared one. Because when share a room you want to rest but your

roommate wants to practice and you go for a walk instead, which is nice but also makes you more tired. All these little details are very important; it is what I realized with my experience. Another thing is, because I was doing 3 or 4 competitions per year, I just focused on performing like it was my last time. I put myself in a type of frame of mind that “this is my last concert and that’s why it will be the best”. I like to hear the Queen song “The show must go on”, to this day I love to hear it before going on stage, it gives me strength. It doesn’t matter what happens, I have to go and play. Maybe it’s my Russian dramatic soul, I don’t know, but that is one of my tricks. For another person maybe dancing samba and eating chocolate can help with the nerves, everyone has to find their own way. But definitely stay on the positive side, believing that it is really going to be beautiful. In a way, there is truth in my philosophy of saying that “this is my last performance” because after playing it is already the past. I will never repeat the same concert because every time will be a new moment. I would also imagine that time would stop when I perform, like the universe would be “on hold”. I helped a lot with motivation, to find the right “artistry” in my performances, because when I play for myself or for a few people in a small room I play ok, but it’s not exactly the same as when I’m on stage. I definitely need a big stage. When I receive those standing ovations, those beautiful compliments, I never take them personally, like “oh, I am so great!”. Other musicians might do, but I am just happy to play guitar, to be part of being in music. I was already happy on stage, sharing my feelings with the people, my thoughts about the music, like a painter would be painting or a dancer would be dancing, expressing everything through the body. For me it’s the same, I enjoy the moment of the concert so much and afterwards I just tell people “thank you very much, it is a great motivation to continue working and practicing” and I think being humble helps. It helps to move away from all those tensions, from being nervous, there is no place for it anymore.

ART: Exactly. On a more positive note, could you talk about your experiences with flow? That feeling we sometimes have while performing where everything is magical, having absolute confidence and it becomes impossible to make a mistake.

IK: Yes, I have that. But sometimes I think “oh this is magical, this is so wonderful” and after I make a mistake.

ART: Do those experiences happen often for you?

IK: It is difficult to say... I think it also depends on the concentration, the concert hall, the acoustics, how people are receiving the music. If from the beginning people are receiving the music with enthusiasm it gives you more encouragement to play better, which naturally also requires a deeper focus. But sometimes it’s true, everything sounds beautiful and I have that magical feeling that something incredible is happening right now, and then in the moment I’m thinking this, I make a silly mistake like a harsh nail sound or play a wrong note. Yeah, it happens, maybe on every concert but not on every piece. In one piece I can completely keep thinking about the light, or a book that I was reading, with a weak concentration and I don’t like it. So to stop it, before I tried to be angry at myself, which is a very natural reaction, then I realized it doesn’t work, because in being angry I was putting more pressure on myself. “Why did you do that mistake? You need to practice better! This is not appropriate, a professional should not do this!”, and those types of thoughts really do not work. What actually works is giving yourself more compliments and again, believing in yourself. Thinking about feelings, emotions, imagery, with these types of things I can go into that meditative feeling where I can then have no thoughts. If a mistake happens, just accept it and not punish yourself for it, helps very much in getting a positive flow, to relax and be in that magical moment. Then in another concert, in the same piece that I was distracted, I can be completely involved in the piece. So, from my own experience, I know that in a one hour concert I cannot play every piece like at the highest level with no thoughts at all. It happened only a few times in my life, in a few concerts and they were incredibly successful. Even when

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I feel I have low concentration, people don't really notice that, it is something that I notice for myself. Knowing that in the next concert it will be completely different, this is what I like about being on stage, it is always a surprise, you never know what will happen. Sometimes I need to drink coffee before going on stage, other times it is not good at all. Sometimes I like really bright lights on stage, other times I prefer it to be a little bit darker. It all influences the performance, even with the same program it will always sound different, the experience will be different.

ART: How important it is for you to carefully choose and plan your repertoire and recital structure? In terms of confidence and maybe reducing anxiety.

IK: It is very important. For example, I have a concert in San Francisco in November and I have to send the program and I am still thinking about it. I still haven't written it down, it is in my head and I have to be completely sure about what pieces I really want to choose, and if I want to play the same pieces as in the concert in England. For me it is very important to think about what I will play in each concert. Also, I have to know in advance if I have to play a requested piece. I have to know the piece and calculate how long it will take me to prepare it well, and it has to be ready weeks before the concert, not on the day before. Some guitarists go on competitions without knowing the piece well and think "let's see how it will go...", they are playing with a risk, I don't. One of the reasons is that I cannot improvise, this is my weakness, I am aware of it. There are some people that can improvise and easily get over a memory mistake and do something around it in a correct style, so it is easier for them to play a "half-ready" piece. Some can bring the score on stage, not completely prepared, but they can read it very well, good sight-reading. With this I often feel it is a boring performance, I feel like there is something missing from the music. When I use the score on stage, I know the pieces by heart anyway, I only bring the score for a different reason, to not "kill" the piece or my "emotions" with 7 hours a day practice. It just makes me extra relaxed and the score is just like the signs on the road, you already know how to drive the car.

ART: And how about the recital structure? Do you take care in putting different pieces in different places, for example, a more comfortable piece to start with? Do you think about things like that?

IK: Yes. For difficult pieces, I do not really think about it for myself or for my hands, because if I am going on stage I should be able to play anything in any moment. I am thinking more about the people, more about the story. It is like a "design", a road, how it will go from one piece to another. Before I was very classical, I would start with Baroque, then 19th century music, then 20th century music and contemporary, so I would go gradually from the early music to the more modern music. Now I am not doing that anymore, I started to combine pieces in a different way. Same thing with clothes, before I was very strict with colors, it was all very simple, but now I experiment. Program contrast can be drastic but all in good taste, I have to like it, I have to feel confident, I can start with Bach and after I play contemporary music, then I go back to Romantic, so I will have a big variety in sound and not a gradual change. In my own experience, no one will like everything from your program, some people prefer Baroque music, other Classical, and others Contemporary, that's why I try to have variety on my concerts. I am delighted to go on concert and hear a suite by Bach, but I cannot listen to a concert entirely of Bach's suites, or only Brouwer's music... some people like to choose programs like this, only works by Barrios or something, but I cannot. That's the reason why with Naxos I cancelled, they asked me to learn and play all pieces from one composer and I said I couldn't. So what I am doing now is playing one composer, José Maria Gallardo del Rey, and I cannot play one hour of solo pieces from this composer, although I love them. I do not want to study them all at once. So I am going to do about 25 minutes of solo and then there will be duos of guitar and cello, guitar and violin, different chamber combinations, and in this way I love the project.

ART: Good. In regards to your students, how important do you feel it is to address performance anxiety issues with them? Is it important to talk and prepare them in a special way in regards to these issues?

IK: You know, I have been a super enthusiastic teacher, even with tough students. For me, it has to be part of the whole of being an artist, including the talk about stage performance. And that's was also a part of my work in my Masters in Mozarteum, the preparation of an artist. So my method of teaching is definitely not only learning one piece, or one technique, it's everything together. Now I changed my method, so I don't "open" that issue immediately. To some students I speak about it, it's all important in different levels, the music, the technique, the preparation, the stage performance, and some students need training to play for the public before they actually go and do it. Now if a really good student wants to have that, then it will definitely part of the program, otherwise it won't.

ART: So it depends, case by case...

IK: Yeah, I noticed that in the beginning I was the one that was very enthusiastic in sharing everything, saying "it has to be, it is very important, playing a piece now but already thinking about how you will do it on stage or for a recording", because this is how I work. But they don't get it, or they are just more relaxed. But playing on stage is not only joy, it is really preparation to be on stage, it is not very natural, it's not like playing in a couch at home, it's not the same, but it has to become natural. That's what I noticed from a lot of students, they come with a program saying they play it well at home but not in public, they freeze and get nervous about thinking on going on stage. So they say "help me please! I want to be a concert artist!", and I say that first of all you have to love the stage, to be able to become a concert artist. Then there are different ways you can work on the tension. If you are threatened by the public and you still want to go on and play you have to work hard on that. So the choice of an artist is like people in sports, some people want to become trainers and others want to compete on the Olympic Games, so it depends on the personality of each person.

ART: How about the music schools and universities, are they addressing these issues enough? Are they preparing the students, giving them enough performance preparation and opportunities?

IK: It depends. In Russia I was always on stage because we have many exams during the year. About schools in the United States I don't know, but other schools in Europe absolutely do not, there are not enough possibilities to perform and address these issues. Also, in Russia there are usually very ambitious parents that "force" you to be on stage, and I saw some children that didn't really want to be there. In Europe they are more about your own choice, being free. If you look for opportunities you will find them but the universities do not really provide specific preparation. Only once in 2 years you have to do an exam/recital, you have to do those and for some people this is a really dramatic experience. So they could do more but there are plenty alternatives, everyone is going into meditation, yoga, things like that. They have options to become more comfortable, and the ones that really want to be on stage they have plenty of options to train themselves to be on stage. When I was doing my Masters, my teacher talked about this, he wanted to talk about this and people would ask him questions, but we never really had a special course or subject. I find it important, and that was part of my work, because I remember it was difficult after I broke my arm and came back and was shaking, felt really insecure. I was 18 at the time and had to develop slowly. In my experience it is easier if you create a comfortable environment where you can experience and experiment if you want to be on stage, if you like it or not. So if you only go on stage once in 2 years for the exam, you might begin to hate the stage.

ANNEX II - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

ART: Ok then, I have gone through all the list of topics I wanted to approach. Do you have any final words to share regarding these issues?

IK: I don't know... One thing I realized is that when people speak in regards to guitar and stage performance, they speak a lot about technique. You have to practice this and practice that. People don't really talk about self-confidence, which I find to be super important. Also, when people discover meditation and control of breathing, it helps a lot. You don't have to become a spiritual person, but I realized that this kind of balance in your own body and mind helps so much to feel more happy and stable, to have a more effective practice, and to be more secure on stage. This is what I think people don't talk much about, not even in guitar programs and festivals, where you should get most of the information. They mostly focus on "guitar things".

ART: Ok, we have finished. Thank you very much!

IK: You are welcome!

ART: I appreciate you taking the time for this interview.

IK: I hope it was helpful and I wish you a lot of success.



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