

**Performance Psychology for the Church Musician and the Christian Day School Music
Teacher**

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Abstract

Despite the plethora of information on performance psychology and performance anxiety for music and sports, not much valuable information to the Christ-follower is available that is especially significant for ensembles, teams, or collaboration. There is a more substantial gap in the spiritual application of the exact science, especially concerning worship studies. The knowledge of performance psychology is essential to communicate the message of Christ in the best way possible to the most people possible. The study, done through qualitative methods and the method's results, is analyzed in the light of Scriptural principles. The facets considered are corporate worship performance psychology, performance psychology in a scriptural context, performance psychology as a discipline, and musical collaboration in performance psychology. This study is essential for improving worship (for the musical group *and* the congregation) and building stronger group ties. It will enhance the musical skill of the individual musician as mental and spiritual processes are improved. When applied to other disciplines, such as visual art and technology as art, the study results can facilitate a better understanding of Scripture and the value of performance psychology. This area is on the fringes of normal performance psychology, so there is a gap in the literature, especially for believers who genuinely want to live for Christ.

Introduction

Over the centuries, many people have struggled with performance psychology and performance anxiety. Musicians like Tchaikovsky were averse to interaction with people due to stress. Tchaikovsky wrote, “I always strive to bury myself somewhere where I can exist outside of society; I *want, desire and love* people to take an interest in my music, to praise it and love it, but I have never sought to encourage them to take an interest in me *personally*, in my appearance or my conversation.”¹ Other sources mention the frequent problems with anxiety that afflicted Tchaikovsky regularly. Those that study music history will notice that Tchaikovsky did not take the option of asking God for help with anxiety. A Christ-follower can struggle with performance anxiety in varying ways, just like unbelievers struggle because of the sinful flesh that remains in humanity. “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24, King James Version) This paper will attempt to give biblical answers to how to use good performance psychology and lessen the effects of performance anxiety to improve worship and performance.

Background of the Topic

Music is integral to spiritual formation in the church and the believer’s life. One author wrote, “Singing is as natural as speaking, and it should be effortless.”² Ms. Arman, writing from a Jewish perspective, also wrote: “Most of all, you must be willing to spiritually dedicate your voice, every day anew, to the ONE who gave it to you in the first place.”³ One author wrote that

¹ Philip Ross Bullock, *Pytor Tchaikovsky*, (London: England, Reaktion Books Ltd, 2016), 17.

² Miriam Jaskierowicz Arman, *The Voice: A Spiritual Approach to Singing, Speaking, and Communicating*, (Lightning Source, United States, 2nd edition, 2004), 31.

³ Arman, 31.

music moves the spirit, soul, and mind; it impacts the body and the essence.⁴ Scripture contains much information about spiritual formation and the connections between worship and quality music performance. Music can generate fresh and fruitful ways to communicate with God.⁵ An admonition for this communication is, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:19)

The Scripture also mentions musical collaboration that says believers should praise God together. If the music leaders or the group are struggling in front of the congregation with anxiety, a lack of teamwork, or a proper Christ-like presentation, the entire congregation senses tension. Lack of cohesion in the group or an individual’s pride can deflect the attention from God to other venues. The performance should be a sensory experience for the musician and the audience as the offering of worship transports to God. In addition to having well-prepared music, being comfortable, working together well as a group, and looking good are all essential parts of the process.⁶ Another writer wrote that being genuinely prepared, physically, mentally, (*and spiritually for the believer*) are the most important strategies a musician can implement to deal with performance anxiety.⁷ Some research verifies that the cohesion of a group can influence the perception of the group’s members individually, both to outsiders and the members of the group.

⁴ Arman, 35.

⁵ Jeff Astley, Timothy Hone, and Mark Savage, editors, *Creative Chords: Studies in Music, Theology, and Christian Formation*, (Herefordshire, England: Gracewing Publishers, 2000), 45.

⁶ Margret Elson, *Passionate Practice: The Musician’s Guide to Learning, Memorizing, and Performing*, (Oakland, CA: Regent Press, 2002) 84.

⁷ Gary L. Lingle, editor, *How Do You...? Help Students develop effective Strategies to Deal with Performance Anxiety?* (American Music Teacher Magazine, Volume 69, Number 2, October/November 2019), 8.

The cited study can apply to the venue of youth sports or musical groups.⁸ This lack of cohesion can hinder the entire performance *and* the worship intended to glorify God.

From a secular viewpoint, Robert Thies wrote: “that for many musicians, the struggle is just too much.” Many drop out of formal music because of the battle with performance anxiety.⁹ For the musician called by God to do worship, dropping out of corporate worship participation should not be an option. Still, it sometimes happens due to a lack of knowledge about biblical performance psychology principles and spiritual formation. This study is essential because as believers grow in grace, the desire should be to serve God more effectively in the ministry where God desires service. A supporting Scripture is "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18) A believer must analyze the methodology of worship performance and why chosen procedures are in place or improvements will not happen. Along with the methodology analysis, a believer must also build a relationship on a personal level with other collaborating worship performers to be sure that every activity is for God's glory.

Problem Statement

For the student of worship studies or a music educator, exploring this topic is frequently overlooked by most musicians and educators. Still, it is imperative if one is going to give God the excellence He deserves. Another important fact for the believer is the growth that God desires in the believer's life as life progresses. To grow in any area, one must begin a study. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly

⁸ Mark W. Bruner, Mark A. Eys, Kathleen S. Wilson, and Jean Côté. 2014. *Group Cohesion and Positive Youth Development in Team Sport Athletes*. *Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology* 3 (4): 219., accessed May 25, 2022.

⁹ Robert Thies, "Is the Music Conservatory Model Obsolete?" (*California Music Teacher Magazine*, vol. 43, no. 2, fall 2019), 15.

dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15) So, investigating performance psychology and anxiety should be a part of the believer's growth process.

Purpose Statement

The study aims to improve worship directed to God and increase the worshipper's spiritual formation. One author wrote that music has a unique power to help silence our preoccupations and make us ready to hear the voice of God.¹⁰ The study will include a plan to contend with the *flesh* during the performance. Also, part of the purpose will be instructional for the individual musician so that the individual understands more about their God-given personality and natural propensities. The individual can use that acquired knowledge to be more effective in communicating the Gospel through music and thus increasing the individual's spiritual formation. Although the flesh will never be contained and mastered in this life, a spirit-filled believer can improve toward the end of a better Gospel presentation as the believer grows in spiritual maturity.

Significance of the Study

The study of performance psychology/anxiety is significant because every living person will sometimes encounter the affliction of nervousness. The pressure must be understood and contended with for the best results possible. Ignored or buried anxiety will escalate and grow more significantly if not addressed. When overcome by fear, growth in spiritual formation slows considerably. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

¹⁰ Jeff Astley, Timothy Hone, and Mark Savage, editors, *Creative Chords: Studies in Music, Theology, and Christian Formation*, (Herefordshire, England: Gracewing Publishers, 2000), 128.

The problems caused by uncontrolled anxiety are not limited to a tense performance but may lead to the loss of health, the loss of a job, or even the loss of a ministry opportunity.¹¹ Standard practices in performance psychology will be studied from a secular worldview to avoid these potential hazards. The guideline will be standard practice data evaluation in the light of Scriptural examples and principles.

Standard practices that involve musical collaboration in worship are studied. The methods to be learned are biblically mandated and compared with historical precedents and current practices. The secular and Scripture data are synthesized and interpreted, with Scripture as the final authority. An example of a biblical mandate is "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." (Psalm 34:3)

Biblical examples of those persons who struggled with performance anxiety and God's answer to that individual's problem are many. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Corinthians 10:11) "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4)

Research Questions

Research Question One: How can studying performance psychology with performance anxiety, the Scripture, and the application of both benefit the individual musician, the teacher, the musical group, and the entire church congregation during personal and corporate worship?

¹¹ Dr. Keith Currie, *Performance Anxiety Coping Skills Seminar: Is It Effective in Reducing Musical Performance Anxiety and Enhancing Musical Performance Quality?* (Virginia Tech, May 5, 2001) <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/handle/10919/28032>, accessed June 15, 2022.

Research Question Two: How will the same study benefit the individual musician, the teacher, the group, and the church congregation or school community with increased spiritual formation, musicality, and understanding of music?

Hypotheses

Since the definition of research is a systematic search for adequate information to reach objective knowledge about a specific topic, one must also assert what one finds when writing about the research.¹² “A claim is an assertion (one sentence or several) that demands support. Your *main claim* is the assertion supported by your whole research argument.”¹³ Some writers use the term *directional hypothesis* instead of the *main claim*.¹⁴

Hypothesis One: A study of performance psychology with performance anxiety, the Scripture, and the application of both will benefit the individual musician, the musical group, and the entire church congregation during personal and corporate worship. The application of the study will help an individual’s spiritual formation and musical expertise and increase self-confidence so that Divine adoration is appropriate and of better quality.

Performance psychology, collaboration, and worship, when compared from a scholarly secular viewpoint and a biblical view looking for differences, some parts of the definitions will be identical. Still, Scripture teaches about man’s depravity and thus cannot overcome every obstacle simply by practicing performance psychology and positive thinking. While the exact reference to performance psychology and performance anxiety is not in the Scriptures, there are

¹² Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*, (Grand Rapids: MI, Zondervan, 2nd edition, 2008), 1.

¹³ Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 9th edition, 2018), 54.

¹⁴John W. Creswell, and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2018, 5th edition), 138.

definite mentions of both *concepts* in the Scripture through written description. Those that attempt to solve problems apart from the Scripture will not produce the best long-term solutions, so one must head to the Scripture. Sometimes life lessons like dealing with anxiety are learned through tribulations. “And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.” (Romans 5:3-4) So, one should not head to the Scripture only when a problem develops but should search the Scripture ahead of the problem.

Hypothesis Two: A study benefit will produce a more precise gospel presentation, the group performing the music will be knit together better in group cohesion, and all will experience a closer walk with God as the musical productions are more successful in completing the spiritual goals. A side benefit will be improving the musicians’ health as nasty attitudes or poor musical techniques have become history.

There is a point that the study of any form of psychology will not assist in worship when studied apart from Scripture. The study of traditional psychology will be helpful when Scripture is silent. (For example, Scripture is quiet in describing the individual’s personality.) However, the study of Scripture does nullify some of the principles of psychology. The study identifies Biblical characters who struggled with the concept of performance anxiety and a possible solution that did apply to each biblical example at that time.

The study will benefit the musician by improving personal skills, reassuring the individual, strengthening group ties, and making the congregation feel more at ease with the worship so that the church community will be comfortable participating. The study assists the musician’s spiritual formation as the individual listens to God’s direction in worship activities.

As the individual improves in spiritual formation, the spiritual formation of the congregation will be affected by these changes for good.

Core Concepts

An essential concept for the reader is that the research assumes that the Scriptures are the final authority of faith and practice. To thoroughly understand the ideas in this paper, one should begin with a study of the biblical text on the subject.¹⁵ When modern psychology differs from the Scripture, the Scripture is correct. Another essential presupposition is that the survey desires to improve worship and music education in the local church, local Christian school, or in an individual's quiet time since worship can also occur in these settings. A Christian educator teaches in the home, the church, or the Christian school. "Christian educators are also very often engaged in educational processes in which the learning outcomes are similarly related to certain feelings and emotions. In such cases, the analogy between religious and musical education can be very close."¹⁶ In other words, performance psychology must come from a Scriptural viewpoint to properly coordinate religious and musical training.

Of the three settings, the local church takes precedence over the school because God has ordained the church. The individual's quiet time of worship is taught in the Scriptures and addressed in this study through the reminders that every performance must be bathed in prayer so that the most spiritual fruit results.

While the exact words *performance psychology* and *performance anxiety* are not in the Scriptures, a thoughtful reader can discover the concepts described. For example, the following

¹⁵ Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2006), 38.

¹⁶ Jeff Astley, Timothy Hone, and Mark Savage, editors, *Creative Chords: Studies in Music, Theology, and Christian Formation*, (Herefordshire, England: Gracewing Publishers, 2000), 222.

is written: “And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue.”

(Exodus 4:10) Moses appeared to fear what Pharaoh would think of God’s mandate to let his people go. In that time, if an individual made the king angry, there were consequences, so that thought was probably in Moses’ mind when Moses answered the Lord’s call as he did.

Another example was when Gideon became aware of God’s call on his life to deliver the nation of Israel from the Midianites. The verse says, “And he said unto him, oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house?” (Judges 6:15) Gideon had not yet learned the concept of God’s leading also comes with God’s provision for the means to do what God asked Gideon to do. This statement by Gideon was a critical cultural notification when Gideon said he was at least in his father’s house. The youngest child was not as crucial as the firstborn in that culture, and Gideon answered, remembering that cultural fact.

A third example is in the statement by Barak to Deborah, the prophetess: “And Barak said unto her, if thou wilt go with me, then I will go but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.” (Judges 4:8) This statement reveals performance anxiety on the part of Barak even though Barak was an army general. For Barak to enlist, the help of a woman was unheard of at that time and in that culture. Enlisting help shows that Barak was *anxious* since the general was willing to go against strong cultural norms. One author noted that one could easily forget that reading the Bible is a *cross-cultural* experience.¹⁷ Understanding that the culture in Barak’s time

¹⁷ E. Randolph Richards and Brandon O’Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 74.

was completely different than what most people are acquainted with today is essential to study Barak's story properly.

The prophet Obadiah had struggles with performance anxiety. Obadiah was the governor during the time of the evil King Ahab. Obadiah had hidden fifty prophets from Jezebel because Obadiah feared the Lord greatly. (See 1 Kings 18:3-4) Obadiah and Ahab were out in Israel, looking for water for Ahab's horses and mules. Along the route, Obadiah met the prophet, Elijah. Obadiah immediately thought that the unscheduled meeting with Elijah was because of sin in Obadiah's life. Elijah told Obadiah to go to King Ahab and tell Ahab that Elijah was ready to meet Ahab. Obadiah doubted Elijah and consequently doubted God. Obadiah was expecting a trick from Elijah and knew that a scheme would result in Obadiah's death at the hand of Ahab. Sometimes performance anxiety is simply a lack of faith.

Another essential core concept relates to the definition of performance psychology and performance anxiety. One researcher defines performance psychology as a subdivision of the considerably larger discipline of psychology that examines psychological factors influencing optimal human performance in various domains such as sports, business, or musical pursuits. Established principles are available to help produce superior results.¹⁸ This definition only applies to secular situations; this definition also provides the invitation to study more about the subject in the spiritual realm and the Scripture.

Some experts have suggested some secular treatment options in the field. Julie Nagel is a licensed Ph.D. with a degree in psychology and social work but also has two music degrees from Julliard. The two degrees give Dr. Nagel a unique vantage point in the study because she

¹⁸ Larrymaguire.com, accessed May 24, 2022. A paraphrased version of this definition is also on the American Psychological Association website, apa.org.

understands the musical and psychological aspects. Julie Nagel wrote on her website that some “ideas about coping with this mental demon had included concrete suggestions and exercises, using medications, engaging in various kinds of exercise, nutrition, counseling, meditation, yoga, and professional psychotherapy or psychoanalysis. I have even heard that eating bananas will decrease performance anxiety.”¹⁹ Dr. Nagel uses the term *stage fright* instead of performance anxiety. None of the solutions listed above should be the first option for the believer, although some are good suggestions. Scripture should be the first intervention method, with prayer being a close second. A trusted mentor or teacher will also give some answers to help the performer deal with the feelings. The performer should *play detective* after a sort to learn about themselves and the performer’s feelings.

Cotterill explores the realms of various factors that influence and consequently direct performance. These factors are performing under pressure, decision-making, emotion, resilience, mental toughness, cognition, perception, aging and experience, confidence, nutrition, and recovery.²⁰ However, the performance in question is not just any performance because the term technically refers to performance within a field where *excellence counts*. Performers are judged at least subliminally and must meet specific performance standards. If standards are lacking, there are consequences.²¹

Kageyama has built a blog and internet following the principle that being a fantastic student and getting better in one’s chosen music field is *not* the same as being able to perform

¹⁹ Dr. Julie Nagel, <https://julienagel.net/how-to-increase-performance-anxiety/>, accessed June 29, 2022.

²⁰ Stewart Cotterill, *Performance Psychology: Theory and Practice*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), x.

²¹ Kate F Hayes, “Being Fit: The Ethics of Practice Diversification in Performance Psychology.” *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, Practice Diversification: Sport and Performance Psychology, 37, no. 3 (June 2006): 223–32. doi:10.1037/0735-7028.37.3.223, accessed May 25, 2022.

effectively.²² Kageyama is currently on the faculty of the Julliard School of Music as a performance psychologist. Kageyama feels that the principles of psychology should be part of the curriculum for students as young as elementary students in the classroom.²³ The study is practical for Christian day schoolteachers and those in worship ministry with children. Children should be aware of performance anxiety to address those feelings. Addressing the feelings could save the children much grief in the future because of the early training and realizing such feelings are *typical* for those in human flesh. Kageyama suggests that clarifying feelings with words is essential, especially for children.²⁴ Using words to describe the problem can also help with using words to find a solution.²⁵ A balance must be seen to encourage a *critical ear* during a performance, yet, that *critical ear* must never become a monster in and of itself.²⁶

Kageyama suggested that the child explain their feelings and solution to an inanimate object, such as a rubber ducky, and express some of their feelings in the *third person*.²⁷ One should train that person's brain and inner ear rather than the physical muscles.²⁸

Kageyama paraphrased the great musician Seymour Bernstein and said that one should blame the strategy, not the player; a mechanical cause must have an automated solution.²⁹

²² Vanessa Cornett, *A Bulletproof Interview with Noa Kageyama*, (American Music Teacher Magazine, December/January 2020, volume 69, no.3), 21.

²³ Cornett, 21-22.

²⁴ Noa Kageyama, *Performance Psychology for the Music Educator*, (www.bulletproofmusician.com) Session 1, 35:30, accessed August 15, 2022.

²⁵ Kageyama, *Ibid*.

²⁶ Kageyama, *Ibid*.

²⁷ Kageyama, *Ibid*, (37:31)

²⁸ Noa Kageyama, *Performance Psychology for the Music Educator* (www.bulletproofmusician.com), Session 1, 1:03:56, accessed August 1, 2022.

²⁹ Kageyama, *Ibid*., (41:10)

Because of genetic personality traits or circumstances thrust upon those performing music in public in times past, one can find anxiety comes easily. Other factors can be a real battle of spiritual opposition, or the musician operating in the flesh can instigate a struggle with performance anxiety. Music performance anxiety (MPA) is the experience of an unrelenting, distressful apprehension about performance skills in a public context to an unwarranted degree, given the individual's training, aptitude, and preparation.³⁰ Awareness of the list in this paragraph is critical in the individual's study of possible reasons to be anxious during a performance. At times, more than one item on the list is the problem. The musician performer should be aware of that too.

Miriam Arman wrote this description:

Nerves are a significant factor. If you were not nervous, something would be wrong. Everyone is and should be however, a person is overly anxious when unsure of himself. If you have done your work and preparation, there should be no reason for you to shiver before you sing. Nerves put you in touch with your vulnerability, and that is reasonably necessary. But use this to your advantage, feel it, experience it, and make it a positive rather than a negative thing. That's adrenaline, and you need it.³¹

Sometimes the issue of the musician relinquishing control of the performance *and* relinquishing the outcome of the musical endeavor to God is part of the anxiety discussion. A musician must prepare as all outcomes depend on that musician but pray since the result belongs to God. A Jewish author wrote:

One of the most challenging things for humans is giving up our control. We want to feel that we are the 'cause' in all things, that our intelligence and abilities reflect our beings and are appropriately appreciated. We need to 'create' everything that is happening in our

³⁰ Juncos DG, de Paiva e Pona E., "Acceptance and commitment therapy as a clinical anxiety treatment and performance enhancement program for musicians: Towards an evidence-based practice model within performance psychology," *Music & Science*. January 2018. doi:10.1177/2059204317748807, accessed May 25, 2022.

³¹ Miriam Jaskierowicz Arman, *The Voice: A Spiritual Approach to Singing, Speaking, and Communicating*, (Lightning Source, United States, 2nd edition, 2004), 142-144.

lives. When things that seem beyond our control occur, we feel lost and cannot find our way. We respond with anger, hurt, and embarrassment—myriad negative emotions and feelings.³²

Music encouraging others to worship is beautiful through the Holy Spirit’s power. Our flesh screams when control belongs to others, but success in God's eyes happens when the management resides with God. God is pleased when a person does not get the glory planned for God in worship.

When defeat happens (and failure will come since all believers still have the sinful flesh), if the loss is part of a team effort, chat with the other team members about what took place. Give the others a chance to talk and take the time to listen carefully. Make the fact clear that all team members are valued even though a mishap has occurred.³³ If the supposed failure was an individual effort, some principles still apply. The believer should head to the Scriptures and find the means to encourage themselves. King David presented an excellent example. “And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.” (1 Samuel 30:6)

Definition of Terms

The word for *worship* in Greek is *proskuneo*, which means to express deep respect or admiration.³⁴ The word translated as *worship* in Hebrew is *shachah*, meaning to kneel, stoop,

³² Miriam Jaskierowicz Arman, *The Voice: A Spiritual Approach to Singing, Speaking, and Communicating*, (Lightning Source, United States, 2nd edition, 2004), 165.

³³ John C. Maxwell, *How to Influence People and Make a Difference in Your World*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2013), 57.

³⁴ Vernon M. Whaley, *Called to Worship: The Biblical Foundations of Our Response to God’s Call*, (Nashville, TN, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2009), xv.

prostrate oneself, or throw oneself down in reverence.³⁵ These two words are closely related. Worship can occur individually or as corporate worship in a congregation. True worship demands excellence by worship's very nature. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24) The way to a relationship with God is through worship. When a believer worships God, the believer gets to know God better. The more God is known, the more the believer wants to be with God.³⁶

One author suggests that a lack of focus can contribute to feelings of inadequacy if the musician is distracted during the performance.³⁷ The author observed that a lack of focus can happen when the musician's mind is saying things to the musician, *even* good things, during a performance.³⁸ The thoughts in a musician's mind can cause anxiety because often, the ideas in the musician's mind are not true but become properly valid when the person makes a mistake. So, a singular focus is essential. One should think about only *one thing*, the performance that is taking place at that moment. Even when the comments are accurate, mental comments can keep the performer from completely absorbing what needs attention in the moment of performing.³⁹

One author did a study on this phenomenon. The conclusion was that musicians should be able to put their motor skills on autopilot. Still, the musician's thoughts should *never be* on autopilot since a musically expressive performance depends on enough cognitive resources to devote to actively creating positive, beautiful expressions. If a performer concentrates on the

³⁵ Whaley, xiv.

³⁶ Whaley, 17.

³⁷ Barry Green, *The Inner Game of Music*, (Barry Green, 2011), Loc. 373

³⁸ Green, *Ibid.*

³⁹ Green, Loc. 385.

scary thoughts of “what if,” the negative thoughts will fuel stage fright and raise the performer’s anxiety level. “Self-doubt is a master saboteur of competence, ability, self-esteem, and performance.”⁴⁰ Any self-doubts should be transferred immediately to the Holy Spirit.

Performance anxiety is the extreme nervousness experienced before or during participation in an activity in front of an audience. Here is a physiological definition:

Like any emotional state, MPA is expressed on the physical level and through the motor and cognitive behaviors. Physical symptoms mainly arise from sympathetic activation of the autonomic nervous system (ANS) and manifest as accelerated heartbeat, increased blood pressure, tremors, rapid and shallow breathing, dry mouth, bladder dysfunction, and other unpleasant symptoms. Symptoms may also include narrowing of thought, heightened alertness, concentration on fear of failure, behavior like rituals, general unrest, and avoidance.⁴¹

Genuine performance anxiety can occur when the individual has prepared but still experiences nervousness. A little apprehension has nothing to do with the amount of preparation for the activity. Stage fright and glossophobia are other terms that mean the same as performance anxiety. An original definition of glossophobia involves the fear of public speaking and thus is tied to performance anxiety. Some experts estimate that as much as 77% of the population is concerned about public speaking.⁴²

The way a person communicates with others is critical. Excellent communication skills distinguish between a clear message and a misunderstood one. A good communicator is confident, friendly, and respectful. The skill of communication is used throughout life in every area where one has contact with other people. Music performers are uniquely positioned to use

⁴⁰ Julie Nagel, <http://julienagel.net/thinking-about-thinking/>, accessed June 30, 2022.

⁴¹ Christos I. Eckart Altenmüller, *Performance Psychology: Perception, Action, Cognition and Emotion*, (New York, NY: Academic Press, 2016), 104. ISBN 9780128033777, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-803377-7.00007-7>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780128033777000077>)

⁴² Lisa Fritscher, <https://www.verywellmind.com/glossophobia-2671860>, medically reviewed by Steven Gans, M.D., accessed June 30, 2022.

communication *and* musical skills concurrently.⁴³ One can be a strong musician and a poor communicator. The reverse is also true.

Introverts prefer to look into themselves rather than look to the external world for reassurance. Often an introvert is content to be silent rather than talk. Silence does not mean that the individual is unaware of others. The reverse is often the case. The difference is that introverts must be aware of their introvert status and try to communicate when performing in front of others.⁴⁴ A great communicator is essential for more than just those in leadership roles. In a leadership role, a lack of good communication skills is more evident to those surrounding that leader. Every person can benefit from being a great communicator.⁴⁵ If communication skills are a problem, like any other problem, the need to improve must be taken to the Lord in prayer so the gospel message can go forth clearly.

One can also communicate better if one takes care of their body temple. One should be cautious about what is eaten and when. Sleep should be a priority so one can be more objective in situations. One should also talk kindly to oneself as one would to others.⁴⁶ The Scripture says “And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

The concept of *networking* is considered part of the music collaboration performance process. A secular psychologist will encourage networking to further a career.⁴⁷ A Christian

⁴³ Brandon Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: For a Better Life, Success at Work, and Happier Relationships*, (The Medici Publishing, 2019), 68.

⁴⁴ Goleman, 115.

⁴⁵ Goleman, 116-117.

⁴⁶ Goleman, 122-123.

⁴⁷ Angela Myles Beeching, *Beyond Talent: Creating a Successful Career in Music*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 19.

musician should network with others to further musical skills and encourage others to worship God and *not climb a ladder*. Good networking skills mean having good people skills; because of the word *skill*, the implication is that a skill must be worked at and polished.⁴⁸ Good communication or networking is about more than just talking but listening. One must pay attention to verbal and nonverbal cues.⁴⁹ As helpful information is shared and relationships are built, the favor will likely be returned to the individual.⁵⁰ Another essential part of networking is nurturing those that one makes music concurrently. People can respond positively and perform their best when they feel safe and secure.⁵¹ When musicians get along, the worship music team's performance has a more significant effect. Galatians 6:7b, "...for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Music collaboration is the effort of two or more creatives to produce a musical project. These collaborative partnerships can occur at various stages of the creative process. For this thesis, music collaboration is two or more people working together in church music activities or two or more collaborating on music used in a Christian school that is appropriate for worship.

Resilience is also a pertinent part of the discussion. Resilience can be defined as *stress management* when applied to the musician.⁵² Maguire defined resilience as the ability to ebb and

⁴⁸ Beeching, 21.

⁴⁹ Brandon Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, (The Medici Publishing, 2019), 68.

⁵⁰ Beeching, 23.

⁵¹ John C. Maxwell, *How to Influence People and Make a Difference in Your World*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2013), 26.

⁵² Cornett, 22.

flow with the environment.⁵³ For the believer, this is learning to follow where God leads moment by moment, exercise faith, and trust accordingly. Many times, unexpected events happen during worship music performances and can cause anxiety. The skill of retrieval must be practiced as any other skill needs practice.⁵⁴ A quick prayer and a deep breath can increase resilience in a challenging situation. If one is walking with God moment by moment, the Holy Spirit will give direction and calmness during a performance when intervention is needed due to an unexpected occurrence.

Abraham's servant spoke the Scriptural principle. "And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren." (Genesis 24:27) Resilience can include how the performer remembers the performance. One can be surprised when listening to that person's recording of how meaningful the song was in glorifying God. A person's memory can play tricks, so recall is not accurate.

Chapter Summary

Even though much information is available about the study of performance psychology and performance anxiety, not much is available in the spiritual realm. This study area is on the fringes of normal performance psychology, so more information is needed, especially for believers who genuinely want to live for Christ. This study is vital so that excellent worship of God can increase and the spiritual formation of the individual believer and the corporate church body can grow concurrently. Another benefit of this study is that the believer who utilizes the

⁵³ Larry G. Maguire, *What is Resilience? A Definitive Guide to Coping with Change*, (Dublin, Ireland: Larry G. Maguire Press, 2020), 12.

⁵⁴ Kageyama, *Performance Psychology for the Music Educator*, (www.bulletproofmusician.com) Session 1, 1:02:30, accessed August 16, 2022.

information will increase musical skills as the principles become part of the believer's personality. Corporate worship performance psychology study should include performance psychology as a discipline, and the benefits of the principles learned in a group setting. Every person will struggle with nervousness or anxiety at some point in their lives, especially those participating in spiritual activities. Since music and worship are tied together through the complex system of human emotions, improving music and properly handling negative emotions is vital to improving the quality of worship directed toward the God who made everything.

The purpose of this study is essential to improve worship (for the musical group *and* the congregation) and to build stronger group ties. It will increase the musical skill of the individual musician as mental and spiritual processes are improved. The study's results are helpful to other disciplines, such as visual art and technology as art, through a better understanding of Scripture and the value of performance psychology.

The study of performance psychology/anxiety is significant because every living person sometimes struggles with nervousness. The pressure must be understood and understood for the best results possible. The problems caused by uncontrolled anxiety are not limited to hampered performance but may lead to losing health, job, or even ministry opportunities.

As one studies the Scripture, one will realize that Moses, Gideon, Barak, and Obadiah are four examples of biblical men that struggled with feelings of inferiority and anxiety. There are other examples in the Scriptures as well. God had a different solution for all four of these men but showed each man that God had chosen each for a reason and would provide the means to help each one in exact accordance with each situation.

Core concepts and definitions are the definitions of worship, performance psychology and anxiety, networking, and resilience. The study will address the issue of knowing how to play or sing music and realizing that learning to play is a different skill set than performing well. Because of natural personality traits, circumstances thrust upon those performing music in public in times past, the authentic battle of spiritual opposition, or simply that one time the musician is operating in the flesh, one can struggle with performance anxiety for any of these reasons.

Some secular experts would quickly prescribe medicine, suggest yoga exercises, or dietary changes, but other solutions exist, such as the *rubber ducky* idea explained in detail above. The anxious performer can explain every detail to the *rubber ducky* in the third person to relieve some of the personal stress of the situation. One must develop a *critical ear* without turning the *critical ear* into a monster.

When musicians collaborate, the group dynamic can affect how well the performance goes. If members are musically uncertain, at odds with each other, or have other problems, the worship of the Lord God is affected individually and corporately.

Another presupposition is that the study can improve worship and music education in the local church, local Christian school, or an individual's quiet time since worship can also occur in these settings. The local church is to take precedence over the school because God has ordained the church. The school must assist the parents and church with the spiritual formation of children. Our goal should constantly make believers grow in grace, so study is needed. The study will benefit individual musicians by improving personal skills, reassuring the individual, strengthening group ties, and making the congregation feel more at ease with the worship the church community offers to God. The teacher needs this study to effect positive changes in the students' lives under that teacher's teaching.

As the individual grows in managing performance anxiety, that individual's spiritual formation will increase. The individual will also grow in character and improve in other areas of life. The church congregation will grow in spiritual formation, so worship will be more effective in furthering the growth process.

After having taught at a Christian day school and having been a church musician for almost forty years, this writer recognizes there is a need for this study. Individuals of any age with performance anxiety are encountered frequently, and most individuals do not have a viable solution for anxiety except for *more practice*. Some have yet to learn what *more practice* means. To some, more practice is simply doing more repetitions of the chosen repertoire without fixing mistakes. Some assume that everything will turn out all right if the song is done five times a day or a pre-determined amount of time, such as thirty minutes. When some individuals encounter performance anxiety, the false assumption can be made that anxiety is a lack of spiritual formation. Both statements need to be corrected.

Those in leadership that are not necessarily musically trained need to learn how to encourage musicians who need help communicating correctly so that worship can improve. This involves a time commitment from leadership to develop a relationship with the performers under the leader's direction. Leadership skills are separate from musical skills and should be addressed because the leader should continually learn. Performance anxiety will take over if a musician is under pressure from leadership that is not musically trained and does not understand what the musician is encountering. Ministry leadership involves building people at all levels since no two individuals are at the same level at any given time. This paper will attempt to provide some solutions derived from forty years of experience, more research, and in conjunction with the Scripture.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This is a review of literature for Christ-followers seeking to improve musical performance by managing anxiety issues that may arise, whether the context is worship on a Sunday morning or in a Christian school setting. Performance issues can hinder both musical and spiritual growth. Some of the problems to be addressed in the study are excessive nervousness, anxiety, and poor practicing habits. “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:” (1 Peter 2:21) Another verse that guides those trying to be more like Christ is found in Luke. “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” (Luke 2:52) Jesus was constantly improving in those four areas.

While a believer does not have control over stature, the other three areas should constantly improve because of Scripture study, prayer, Holy Spirit guidance, and the proper handling of life experiences. One should have a *growth mindset*; this mindset can show that the believer is growing in wisdom. The *growth mindset* believes that one’s essential qualities can be cultivated.⁵⁵ A *fixed mindset* believes one’s characteristics are carved in stone and, therefore, unchangeable.⁵⁶ A secularist says behavior combines genetic endowment and learning from one’s actions.⁵⁷ A believer with a growth mindset is constantly growing in wisdom and grace, “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18a)

⁵⁵ Larry G. Maguire, *What is Resilience? A Definitive Guide to Coping with Change*, (Dublin, Ireland: Larry G. Maguire Press, 2020) 11.

⁵⁶ Maguire, *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Maguire, 12.

The growth of wisdom is two-fold. “In Scripture theology, wisdom is true religion; godliness; piety; the knowledge and fear of God and sincere and uniform obedience to his commands.”⁵⁸ Wisdom is also the “right use or exercise of knowledge.”⁵⁹ So, one type of wisdom is being wise about the fear of God, while the other is the correct exercise of musical knowledge and performing for this paper.

One can grow in the opinion of men as the musical sounds are pleasant to those listening. Volumes have been written about why music is enjoyable to one person but not pleasant to another. Every well-written piece of music has *sameness* with *differences*.⁶⁰ This gives the listener security so that the music and the musician can be adequately evaluated. Poorly performed music or poorly written music makes listeners insecure. As performers and listeners, men should use this God-given capacity to generate new resources to explore communication with God in new ways.⁶¹ As the type of music and communication is analyzed (sometimes subliminally), the listener begins to assume a favorable opinion about the performer.

One should grow in favor with God, as God’s opinion of the music and the performer is sought out through the scripture. The musician should have the goal of playing for *an audience of One*. A musician is naturally calmer when playing just for God and not necessarily for the people in attendance. When one grows in favor of God, the growth is evident to those around; a consequence is a growth of favor with man.

⁵⁸ Webster’s 1828 dictionary.com, accessed October 17, 2022, definition number five of wisdom.

⁵⁹ Webster’s 1828, accessed October 17, 2022, definition number one of wisdom.

⁶⁰ Jeff Astley, Timothy Hone, and Mark Savage, editors, *Creative Chords: Studies in Music, Theology, and Christian Formation*, (Herefordshire, England: Gracewing Publishers, 2000), 47.

⁶¹ Astley, 45.

One author commented that painters paint because something is said through the design crafted. The same applies to music because God upholds and blesses human conversation through written music and lyrics.⁶² One psychoanalyst commented after a self-study that specific music themes came into her mind during the self-study, evoking strong feelings and new insights. So many thoughts would rush her mind simultaneously, and she commented, “If only I could communicate all of this in music because I would not be limited to speaking one word at a time.”⁶³ For the believer, music speaks without words, strengthening a relationship with God. The melodies and harmonies of the music send a message in addition to the lyrical message. The statement of melodies and harmonies is also true for the believer that is a non-musician, even though that non-musician cannot necessarily explain *why* the melodies and harmonies are speaking.

A balance between relying on the Lord during a performance and self-confidence must be struck. In every area of life, the believer should depend upon the Lord, but this is an area where individual practice enters the equation. The Scripture is silent on some details of musical performance, but much *is* written and should be acted upon. This paper will help the church musician strike the proper balance between relying on the Lord and self-confidence for a clear gospel presentation and Christ-honoring directed worship to God.

Purpose

Since church and school music requires much preparation to be excellent, this paper hopes to lessen some time invested in striving for this goal by streamlining preparation. At times

⁶² Paul Munson, and Joshua Farris Drake, *Art and Music: A Student's Guide*, (Wheaton: Illinois, Crossway Publishing, 2014), 41.

⁶³ Julie Jaffee Nagel, *Melodies of the Mind: Connections Between Psychoanalysis and Music*, (New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2013), xii.

the anticipation of stressful events can bring more anxiety than the event itself.⁶⁴ High anxiety levels tend to result in poorer performances.⁶⁵

“People *play* sports and *play* music, yet both involve hard work and discipline. Both are forms of self-expression that require a balance of spontaneity and structure, technique, and inspiration. Both demand a degree of mastery over the human body and yield immediately apparent results which can give timely feedback to the performer.”⁶⁶

It is easy to fall into the trap of negativity. Secular psychologists believe humans have a stronger desire to avoid pain than to experience a pleasure. In acting on the strong urge to avoid pain, a human can habitually behave as if the enemy were within since negativity abounds.⁶⁷ Gordon continues that thought patterns must be purposefully interrupted to change.⁶⁸ A biblical admonition that recommends the same idea is found in 2 Corinthians. “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:5) Negative thoughts should be interrupted purposefully and continually. “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices. (2 Corinthians 2:11)

So, one should not deny reality and be optimistic about a fault. Still, a believer can help create the circumstances for success in the musician’s mind by thinking thoughts that are from the list in Philippians,. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,

⁶⁴ Dr. Keith Currie, *Performance Anxiety Coping Skills Seminar: Is It Effective in Reducing Musical Performance Anxiety and Enhancing Musical Performance Quality?* Virginia Tech, May 5, 2001, <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/handle/10919/28032>, 5.

⁶⁵ Currie, 6.

⁶⁶ Barry Green, *The Inner Game of Music*, (Barry Green, 2011), 1-2.

⁶⁷ Stewart Gordon, *Mastering the Art of Performance: A Primer for Musicians*, (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 13-14.

⁶⁸ Gordon, 15.

whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” (Philippians 4:8) God can use a surrendered vessel for glory even when a mistake happens during the performance.

Many educators agree that “a positive environment is the most conducive for maximum learning results.”⁶⁹ Positive is defined as constituting a motion that is definite, unyielding, certain in pattern; not fictitious; accurate, and logically affirmative.⁷⁰ Experiments have been conducted aiming to resolve the relationship between self-efficacy and performance.⁷¹ Performance feedback moderates this relationship.

A master teacher, with Scripture in hand, is a living definition of a moderator for a performer or student. A student is loved, prayed for, and encouraged yet, gets corrected when needed. This statement should also be true for those in charge of a church music ministry because those under them are loved, prayed for, encouraged, and to a minor degree, corrected. With proper correction and other interventions, the individual will increase in skills. A biblical reminder is in Hebrews. “For they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” (Hebrews 13:17b)

Another vital part of the preparation and the purpose of this paper is to select what is essential to focus on to make improvements. Since each person is an individual, each has qualities in different areas that will lead to success. “Competence is highly dependent on context.”⁷² A Christ-following musician or Christian school teacher should be aware of

⁶⁹ Tim Lautzenheiser, *The Joy of Inspired Teaching*, (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 1993), 153.

⁷⁰ Lautzenheiser, 154.

⁷¹ Maria Kavussanu, “Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology: Past, Present, and Future.” *Sport, exercise, and performance psychology*. 6, no. 1 (2017): 4-5.

⁷² James Clear, *Atomic Habits*, (New York: New York, Avery Publishing, 2018), 219.

individual strengths and weaknesses, try to strengthen the flaws and capitalize on the strengths. This principle applies to performers *and* teachers. Anders and Pool assert, “In pretty much any area of human endeavor, people have a tremendous capacity to improve their performance, as long as they train in the right way.”⁷³ However, the term *right way* training is not the same for every person. Some crumple under pressure, while others step up and perform the best under pressure. Many others are in the middle of these two scenarios. This performance preparation should improve one’s chosen musical skill and help one learn to perform effectively.⁷⁴ One can be a great performer and not have excellent musical skills, while another has trouble performing but can have outstanding musical talents. Those excellent musical skills can also be hidden if someone has difficulty functioning. These two skills have only separated in the last thirty to forty years.⁷⁵

Those who overcome inevitable adversity during performing will become more resilient and grow in life skills in other areas. “If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.” (Proverbs 24:10) Adversity and tribulation provide life lessons regularly. For example, a pastor uses performing skills in one sense during every sermon. If a pastor looks uneasy or unprepared, the gospel message can be hindered,

Another purpose of this paper is to improve the spiritual formation of the musician and worship in the organization with which the student or teacher is conjoined. As the student becomes more at ease in performing, the message written into the music becomes more apparent and more easily understood by the performer and the audience.

⁷³Ericsson Anders, and Robert Pool, *Peak: Secrets from the New Science of Expertise*, (Boston, MA: First Mariner Books, 2017), 113.

⁷⁴ Vanessa Cornett, *A Bulletproof Interview with Noa Kageyama*, *American Music Teacher Magazine*, December/January 2020, volume 69, no.3, 21.

⁷⁵ Cornett, 21.

Nagel wrote about the power of the message in music. “Through music’s nonverbal language, composers could and did acquiesce to or defy dictators who applied their own unique interpretations to nonverbal sounds for political purposes.”⁷⁶ Nagel is not a believer but made this observation a few pages later. “It is time to reconceptualize the cliched phrase *outreach* as literally *reaching out* and *going out* into the community, beyond our comfort zones and our psychoanalytic and musical choirs, and beyond our offices, our institutes, and our concert halls, to collaborate with others formally, informally, and meaningfully.”⁷⁷ The need for this outreach is to make changes for the good in our communities.⁷⁸ If Nagel feels this way as a nonbeliever in Christ, the need for outreach and spiritual formation through music is more evident and necessary for the believer in Christ.

Williamson wrote about considering those that perform music as worship leaders rather than spiritual performers.⁷⁹ A *leader* inspires those being led to change, which is a change to a closer walk with God. A leader will prepare more thoroughly and for a different reason than a performer, though a leader does perform. Williamson wrote: “The culture around us is changing, and we need to come up with more effective ways to communicate to succeeding generations the UN-changing truth of the gospel.”⁸⁰ In a human sense, much of this will fall on leadership. The responsibility does not stop there. Everyone must strive to be the best version of that individual.

⁷⁶ Nagel, 111.

⁷⁷ Nagel, 118.

⁷⁸ Nagel, *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Dave Williamson, *God’s Singers: A Guidebook for the Worship Leading Choir in the 21st Century*, (Nashville, TN: Incite Media, 2010), 50.

⁸⁰ Williamson, *Ibid.*

This process will be continuous until the individual enters heaven. The process can involve practice, adapting to change, personal study, or any applicable lesson.

An effective gospel presentation should reflect clarity and excellence to those participating and those listening during the presentation process. The biblical basis for this principle is found in 1 Corinthians. “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise, ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?” (1 Corinthians 14:8-9a)

Definitions of Terms

Music performance anxiety, or MPA, is expressed on a physical level and through physical and cognitive behaviors. Any changes in a music performer’s behavior arise from activating the autonomic nervous system during a bout of performance anxiety.⁸¹ Some physical symptoms can include an accelerated heartbeat, increased blood pressure, tremors, changes in breathing, dry mouth, or bladder dysfunction.⁸² Symptoms can include thought changes such as a narrowing of thought, heightened alertness, a concentration on fear of failure, and other unwelcome behaviors.⁸³ Another interesting fact is that a person can have emotional symptoms but not physical symptoms or the reverse with no emotional symptoms and yet have physical symptoms.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Christos I. Eckart Altenmüller, *Performance Psychology: Perception, Action, Cognition, and Emotion*, New York, NY: Academic Press, 2016. ISBN 9780128033777, [https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-803377-7.00007-\(https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780128033777000077\)](https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-803377-7.00007-(https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780128033777000077))

⁸² Altenmuller, Ibid.

⁸³ Altenmuller, Ibid.

⁸⁴ Altenmuller, Ibid.

One study said that performance anxiety happens more frequently in women than men.⁸⁵ A similar study concluded that performance anxiety is also a form of social anxiety because the performance is in front of an audience, and the reactions of the performer and the audience are difficult to predict. Individual characteristics such as gender, age, trait anxiety, self-esteem, self-concept, and self-efficacy are all part of the equation.⁸⁶ Other influencing factors include audience presence, perceived degree of audience characteristics, and venue characteristics. Venue characteristics can include acoustics, microphone set-up, and other variables.⁸⁷

A teacher should be reminded that the symptoms alone are not anxiety, just an overt manifestation of stress. Since the mind and body work together, the two can be considered a *duet*.⁸⁸ As a duet can emphasize one part or the other, there is also a simultaneous aspect.⁸⁹ A physical response causes the sensation of cold hands before a performance, and the blood flows primarily to large organs such as the heart and lungs.⁹⁰ This is part of a natural flight mechanism installed in humanity by the Creator. Since stage fright does not develop overnight, positive changes do not happen overnight. This requires patience on the part of the teacher and the performer.

Because musicians require fine motor control and movement planning, a high-pressure situation can lead to motor failures during performances. This is frequently referred to as CuP or

⁸⁵ Gary McPherson and Graham F. Welch, editors, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education*, (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2012), Ioulia Papageorgi and Reinhard Kopies, *Psychological and Physiological Aspects of Learning to Perform*, 733.

⁸⁶Papageorgi and Kopies, 734.

⁸⁷ Papageorgi, and Kopies, 734.

⁸⁸ Julie Jaffee Nagel, *Managing Stage Fright: A Guide for Musicians and Music Teachers*, (New York: NY, Oxford University Press, 2017), 19-20.

⁸⁹ Nagel, *Managing Stage Fright*, 20.

⁹⁰ Nagel, *Managing Stage Fright*, 21.

choking under pressure.⁹¹ Fine motor muscles can stiffen and cause the performer to lose agility. Choking under pressure can happen in many areas of life, not just music. One possible suggestion is to use the term *sharing music* instead of the idea of proving oneself while performing.⁹²

The next question should be answered: who is susceptible to music performance anxiety? One study suggests that 15-25% of professional musicians suffer from this disorder.⁹³ University students' percentages are 20-35%.⁹⁴ Non-professionals have a slightly higher risk due to a lack of experience in performing at high levels. Anxiety can show through a reticence to learn new repertoire, avoiding eye contact with the audience or evaluators, or sometimes avoiding performing entirely.⁹⁵ Everyone, even those in ministry, can be susceptible to performance anxiety. If a performer decides to quit instead of dealing with the symptoms, the cause of Christ is affected, in addition to the individual performer being influenced. Performance issues will get more significant as the individual remembers past incidents if not addressed.

Cornett wrote some guiding principles that an astute reader must remember when performing. "First, performance anxiety is not *all in your imagination* because it is a very real and universally experienced physical and psychological phenomenon. Second, performance stress is not a mark of a weak performer or a flawed musician."⁹⁶ This discomfort does not get

⁹¹ Altenmuller, Ibid.

⁹² Nagel, *Managing Stage Fright*, 14.

⁹³ T. A. Shaw, D. G. Juncos, & D. Winter, (2019). Piloting a New Model for Treating Music Performance Anxiety: Training a Singing Teacher to Use Acceptance and Commitment Coaching with a Student. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00882>, accessed November 21, 2022.

⁹⁴ Shaw, Ibid.

⁹⁵ Shaw, Ibid.

⁹⁶ Vanessa Cornett, *The Mindful Musician: Mental Skills for Peak Performance*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 56.

easier with time. What does get easier with time is the ability to recognize the symptoms so that anxiety can be managed more easily.⁹⁷

Application of Terms -Individual and Group

A church musician or Christian day schoolteacher does not usually get to choose what situations, the abilities of others worked with, or the personalities that God has given that musician to strengthen in God's service. A church musician should be willing to work with *anyone* that shares the same philosophy even if the person worked with appears to be approaching the same goals from different directions.⁹⁸ This can cause performance anxiety in a group situation. Some directors or educators will fear a lower level of performance because of group collaboration.⁹⁹ The fear of individual competition within a group, the release of control, or an imbalance in a workload can cause performance anxiety in a church music group, especially in leadership.¹⁰⁰ Any person that walks with God can contribute positively to a group. A wise leader will notice individual competition within the group and strive to head the competition off before the entire group is affected.

One study indicated that 71% of church musicians have a *judging temperament*.¹⁰¹ A judging disposition shows an affinity for an orderly, organized approach to life that prefers to be in control.¹⁰² This study concluded that this fact might be a sign of the maturity of church

⁹⁷ Cornett, Ibid.

⁹⁸ Tim Sharp, *Collaboration if the Ensemble Arts: Working and Playing Well with Others*, (Chicago, IL: Gia Publications, 2014), xiv-xv.

⁹⁹ Sharp, 37.

¹⁰⁰ Sharp, Ibid.

¹⁰¹R. Shuter-Dyson, (2016). Personality characteristics and the attitude to religion of church musicians. *Psychology of Music*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735606064844>, accessed November 21, 2022.

¹⁰² Shuter-Dyson, Ibid.

musicians or may show that the value of systematic planning of everyday life may be the norm for this group.¹⁰³ This tendency could also indicate the physical and mental mastery required for a practical church musician.¹⁰⁴ The leader or teacher of any group performing sacred music should know this temperament in the leader *and* the performer. Also, part of this discussion is that, at times, there is active spiritual opposition to sacred music performance because much spiritual good is being accomplished through the music that honors God. Every aspect of church and school music should be bathed in prayer because of the potential for spiritual opposition.

This puts much responsibility on the teacher or the worship leader in charge of a particular ministry to reassure those within the teacher's mentoring sphere of influence. As a mentor, the teacher must put *the self* (and the judgment temperament) behind for the sake of others. Ensemble members do not expect the leader to be without flaws nor to sustain an image of perfection in the judgment of the teacher, the group, or the individual.¹⁰⁵ The leader must balance nurture and challenge in the musical and spiritual realms.¹⁰⁶ In helping, the teacher should remember that other students frequently make good suggestions to help each other.¹⁰⁷ Both positive and negative suggestions should be given simultaneously. Team members coaching each other can relieve the teacher of some emotional responsibility involved in coaching.

¹⁰³ Shuter-Dyson, *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Shuter-Dyson, *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Tim Sharp, *Mentoring in the Ensemble Arts: Helping Others Find Their Voice*, (Chicago: IL, GIA Publications, 2011), 103.

¹⁰⁶ Sharp, *Mentoring*, 106.

¹⁰⁷ Nagel, *Managing Stage Fright*, 170.

Another critical element of performance consultation is the teacher's own performance experience.¹⁰⁸ A compatible, experienced background will give credibility to the teacher in the performer's eyes.¹⁰⁹ A teacher/practitioner who is also a musician will understand the performer's struggle.¹¹⁰ The performance experience of the practitioner can be formal or informal. One can learn through relevant reading, observation, or discussion with others and still be helpful.¹¹¹ In a spiritual application, the performer who seeks help from others should choose a believer *and* a church musician to be the most beneficial. The teacher should be a constant learner to best assist those under that teacher's tutelage. Secular disciplines can be consulted but must be adapted to scriptural guidelines.

“Simultaneously, many teachers feel a strong need to help, but they believe they are unqualified due to their lack of education and training in psychotherapy or other health disciplines. While this belief is understandable, it is not fully accurate. Certainly, teachers can receive training in alternative treatments like the Alexander Technique.”¹¹²

The Alexander Technique has been designed for anyone who skillfully engages with an audience.¹¹³ The Alexander Technique provides keys to having the different parts of the body cooperate, beginning with the relationship between the head and spine for vertebrate coordination.¹¹⁴ Excessive work enters the relationship between the head and spine, throwing

¹⁰⁸Kate F Hayes, “Being Fit: The Ethics of Practice Diversification in Performance Psychology.” *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, Practice Diversification: Sport and Performance Psychology, 37, no. 3 (June 2006): 223–32. doi:10.1037/0735-7028.37.3.223., accessed November 25, 2022.

¹⁰⁹ Hayes, *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Hayes, *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Hayes, *Ibid.*

¹¹² Shaw, *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Madden, Catherine. *Integrative Alexander Technique Practice for Performing Artists: Onstage Synergy*, Intellect Books Ltd, 2017. *ProQuest E-book Central*, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=1809027>, 3.

¹¹⁴ Madden, 17.

the entire body into a different realm.¹¹⁵ This unnecessary exertion can limit breathing, hinder the movement of arms and legs, and cause pain.¹¹⁶ The music produced is of higher quality when the whole body works as a team.

Pain, of course, hinders musical expression. Madden defines coordination as: "... the ability to conceive of an idea and carry out that idea as conceived."¹¹⁷ Music expression happens naturally if a musician's mind, body, emotions, and spiritual aspects work together. To use Madden's coordination expression, pain results if the body is uncoordinated. God has designed the human body in a certain way. The musician must learn as much as possible about the human body in general and specifically the body inhabited by that musician and use the information gained to be more effective in communicating the gospel message. This study does not have to be a serious study in anatomy but pays attention to what the human body does and why.¹¹⁸

An adrenaline rush can cause the heart and respiration to speed up while toning the muscles necessary for action just before a performance.¹¹⁹ The performer then has an interpretive choice - "Am I in danger?" or "Is this response exactly what is needed to do my performance in the best way possible?"¹²⁰ The answer to the question may help decide how well the performance goes. A performer should be vigilant in consulting the Holy Spirit for guidance

¹¹⁵ Madden, 21.

¹¹⁶ Madden, Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Madden, 22.

¹¹⁸ Madden, 37.

¹¹⁹ Madden. 257.

¹²⁰ Madden, Ibid.

and analyzing this adrenaline rush or other changes in the body. One author wrote, ‘relax is a lousy word for a performer.’¹²¹

The musician should also become a *professional breather*.¹²² Breathing is a simple, often neglected area of study and activity that is important. One should not fight to breathe correctly but go along with God’s natural way of inhaling breath.¹²³ Proper breathing can lower blood pressure and calm an anxious spirit, especially if practiced concurrently with prayer. This is true even for keyboard musicians or violinists, not just wind players or singers. “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.” (Psalm 139:14) So, the best performance technique combines adrenaline mastery and slow, relaxed breathing.

Bad (performance or practice) habits are often repeated because the bad habits serve the perpetrator somehow. This makes bad habits hard to leave behind.¹²⁴ One author suggests that the best way to overcome this cycle of bad habits is to increase the speed of punishment associated with the behavior.¹²⁵ The author means that bad habits can have an immediate consequence via a *habit contract*.¹²⁶ A habit contract is a verbal or written agreement in which the commitment to abandon a particular practice is spelled out.¹²⁷ Knowing someone else is

¹²¹ Madden, Ibid.

¹²² Madden, 39.

¹²³ Madden, 40.

¹²⁴ Clear, 206.

¹²⁵ Clear, Ibid.

¹²⁶ Clear, 207.

¹²⁷ Clear, 208.

paying attention to the individual's horrible habit can motivate change.¹²⁸ One can choose a person to help with the contract, but the believer should not ignore the tremendous help that the Holy Spirit of God can be in this situation. The Holy Spirit should be consulted for guidance early when getting help. "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (1 John 3:20-21) These thoughts can help with injured pride or laziness associated with an improper lack of preparation for the performance.

Group application is also needed and must be understood. Group membership, especially for youth, fulfills a psychological need for belonging and a desire for affiliation and social status.¹²⁹ A group context can help with positive individual development.¹³⁰ A group can build or crush personal development depending on the group's attitude toward each member. At times group members can turn on one another and hinder the gospel message that is being portrayed. A wise ministry leader or schoolteacher will remember the biblical admonition in 1 Corinthians. "And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble are necessary:". (1 Corinthians 12:21-22) The group should be encouraged to remember that relationship struggles hinder the entire group.

Each member of the group is vital to the group's existence. Those that do not appear to fit in at first glance are also necessary and must be cared for in the same manner as those that

¹²⁸ Clear, 211.

¹²⁹Mark Bruner, Mark A. Eys, Kathleen S. Wilson, and Jean Côté. 2014. "Group Cohesion and Positive Youth Development in Team Sport Athletes." *Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology* 3 (4): 219.

¹³⁰ Bruner, 220.

appear to help the group the most. Everyone's attitude (individually) contributes toward the group performance at stake. The teacher must empathize with the group member who expresses anxiety before a presentation. The individual may feel slightly ashamed of the feelings, so a caring teacher can be a tremendous help at that moment.¹³¹ Group members can and should reassure each other as others notice.

One way a teacher can offer help is to ask about found solutions in time past for the student in non-musical situations.¹³² Examples could include but are not limited to an academic test, writing a paper, or a social event.¹³³ Teachers should know the importance of helping individuals identify and articulate those feelings through words.¹³⁴ One of the first biblical solutions for those in ministry is to communicate insecure feelings through prayer to God, who can give peace in traumatic situations. Another thought is to sing a song of peace and God's deliverance from other trials. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD forever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength." (Isaiah 26:3-4)

The teacher or ministry leader can help choose a repertoire that is appropriate and not beyond the performer's technical ability and emotional capacity.¹³⁵ Often the student will ask to play something technically more complex, but that temptation should be resisted until the right moment. One author suggested the following criteria for performance. First, the selection should

¹³¹ Julie Jaffee Nagel, *Managing Stage Fright: A Guide for Musicians and Music Teachers*, (New York: NY, Oxford University Press, 2017), 12.

¹³² Nagel, *Managing Stage Fright*, 13.

¹³³ Nagel, *Managing Stage Fright*, Ibid.

¹³⁴ Nagel, *Managing Stage Fright*, Ibid.

¹³⁵ Nagel, *Managing Stage Fright*, 13-14.

contain only notes that the participant already knows. (This applies to winds, brass, strings, or beginning piano players.) Next, any musical signs should be understood ahead of time. Rhythm should be quickly figured out or played. The range of the music should not be beyond the student or performer's current abilities. The performer's emotional maturity should match the selection as well.¹³⁶ The music should be prepared long before the performance date to give more security.¹³⁷ A mock performance should be done if time allows. The teacher should build the student or individual over time, not just in the moments immediately preceding or following the musical presentation. This involves building relationships outside of the group setting. A teacher will be readily listened to if the individual feels the teacher understands and cares about the nuances of that situation.

Biblical Examples

In the first portion of Exodus, God informed Moses that there was a job for him to do. The job was to lead God's people out of Egypt. The Lord gave Moses two signs that would validate his ministry. The first sign was the sign of the rod. When Moses threw the rod on the ground, the rod became a snake. The second sign involved the contraction of leprosy on Moses' hand and the subsequent healing of Moses' leprosy. "And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." (Exodus 4:10)

In Barnes's commentary on the Bible, he writes that a slow tongue seemed to imply Moses had difficulty finding words and giving them utterance, a natural result of so long a period

¹³⁶ Frances Clark, *Questions and Answer: Practical Advice for Piano Teachers*, (Northfield, IL: The Instrumentalist Company, 1992), 30.

¹³⁷ Nagel, *Managing Stage Fright*, 14.

of being a shepherd, especially in a foreign land.¹³⁸ Another plausible explanation could be that Moses was looking for approval from others before expressing any thoughts due to previous poor judgment in other situations. In any case, God showed that Moses' uncertainty was understood and considered, so God told Moses' brother Aaron to accompany Moses when going before Pharaoh. God *does understand* human insecurity.

John Gill observed in writing about Exodus 4 that Moses was answered with an assurance that God had made Moses' mouth, would guide his words, and would teach Moses what to say. In addition, God sent Moses' brother Aaron who was eloquent as a spokesperson.¹³⁹

Matthew Henry wrote that Moses had much cowardice, slothfulness, and unbelief contained inwardly.¹⁴⁰ Henry continued, "A great deal of wisdom and true worth may be with a slow tongue. The tongue of Aaron, with the head and heart of Moses, would make one completely fit for this errand."¹⁴¹

Some have described Moses as a *compulsive leader*. This is another possible reason for the hesitancy on Moses' part. A compulsive leader needs to maintain total order by controlling situations.¹⁴² Moses' initial attempt to liberate the children of Israel had failed. The resulting feelings of uncertainty probably came from this failure and contributed to Moses' lack of faith and fear about speaking to Pharaoh.¹⁴³ This is an example of performance anxiety that resulted

¹³⁸ Albert Barnes, *Albert Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible*, Kindle Edition, Location 9764.

¹³⁹ John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, 1746-1763*, Kindle Edition, Location 16359.

¹⁴⁰ Matthew Henry, *A Commentary on the Whole Bible, Volume One*, (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1975), 287.

¹⁴¹ Henry, *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Gary L. McIntosh, and Samuel D. Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: How to Become an Effective Leader by Confronting Potential Failures*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2007 edition), 105.

¹⁴³ McIntosh, 104.

from a previous public failure. A person must be careful not to rush into situations without God's direction and approval. Moses did run in when the Israelite man and the Egyptian argued. The Egyptian was murdered, and Moses learned a hard lesson. Individuals with a bad experience can still be used for God's glory, but they must be aware that this experience has entered *who they are* and must be dealt with accordingly. Sometimes the failure was the fault of the character. Many biblical characters had a loss in their resume.

Despite his resume's failure, Moses became a great leader over time. David Green, the CEO of Hobby Lobby, wrote this thought-provoking question for those in leadership as Moses was and others are today: "Whatever your leadership role, are you listening to the Holy Spirit? Are you allowing the people on your team to listen to Him as well? If you want to bless the world through your work, make prayer a priority."¹⁴⁴ This is true in business used for ministry (as in David Green's case) and the believer's work for God in church or school ministry. This would include any public performances where excellent communication skills are a necessity. These public performances do not have to be in music necessarily.

The biblical account of Barak and Deborah is in Judges 4. Deborah told Barak that God wanted an army to be raised, and Barak was the one to head the army raised. Barak insisted that Deborah accompany the endeavor. Matthew Henry wrote that Barak valued satisfaction of mind and success more than honor and insisted that Deborah accompany the endeavor.¹⁴⁵ Gill noted that Barak's high opinion of Deborah made Barak ask for Deborah's presence.¹⁴⁶ Deborah

¹⁴⁴ David Green, *Leadership Not by The Book: 12 Unconventional Principles to Drive Incredible Results*, (Grand Rapids: MI, Baker Book House, 2022), 49.

¹⁴⁵ Henry, *Volume Two*, 139.

¹⁴⁶ Gill, location 57398, Judges 4:8.

consented that even though Barak's weakness was detected, Barak desired to do what God had directed: build an army. ¹⁴⁷

Performance anxiety can often be simply a lack of faith in God's ability to help with the assigned task. This appeared to be the case for Barak and was manifested in Barak's hesitations to agree to do as God commanded quickly. "Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." (James 2:18) When faith starts to be exercised, this faith becomes more robust and more evident to others. Barak did learn this principle eventually. "But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword, and there was not a man left." (Judges 4:16) However, the final sign of the victory was left to a woman. Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, executed God's final judgment on Sisera rather than Barak. Since Sisera fell at a woman's hand, God got the glory for the victory.

The account of Gideon begins in Judges chapter 6. According to Gideon's admission, Gideon was brave but in obscurity most of the time. An angel appeared to Gideon directly from God. This account is given: "An angel of the Lord appeared unto him and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." (Judges 6:12) Matthew Henry observed that while God calls Gideon valiant, God also *made* Gideon bold. Gideon desired to have Gideon's faith confirmed. These days, one should not expect external signs before the believer's eyes, as Gideon wanted. After earnest prayer to God, God will show the believer a movement in that same believer's heart by the powerful working of God's Holy Spirit. ¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Gill, *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Henry, Vol 2, Judges 6:11.

Gideon was looking for natural signs of leadership. Still, God promised supernatural enablement. “. . .Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Zechariah 4:6b) God gave Gideon supernatural enablement. “But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, and Abiezer was gathered after him.” (Judges 6:34) Gideon did accomplish the task assigned to Gideon by God through God’s enablement. Gideon had to be available and obedient. Sometimes, God delights in using those with less evident skills because God gets the glory.

The biblical account of Obadiah, the governor of King Ahab, begins in 1 Kings 18. In Israel’s history, the nation was far from the God of Israel. Because of the distance between the nation and God, God had to get the nation’s attention by withholding rain. Albert Barnes noted that Obadiah’s name meant *Servant of Yahweh*.¹⁴⁹ This was a bold statement of the worship of Jehovah in a land where Baal was the primary god at this time. Barnes continued, thinking King Ahab could hardly have been ignorant of Obadiah’s faithfulness to Yahweh.¹⁵⁰ Even so, Obadiah knew that any action that helped God’s prophets could cause serious trouble with either King Ahab or Queen Jezebel.

Obadiah voiced these concerns. “And he said, what have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of King Ahab, to slay me?” (1 Kings 18:9) Elijah reassured Obadiah that the Lord of hosts liveth and consequently would take care of Obadiah in the situation. Obadiah overcame fear and obeyed Elijah. Sometimes performance anxiety and uncertainty are simply a lack of faith that God will do as promised. Obadiah discovered this lack of trust as Elijah reassured Obadiah that God would indeed keep his word given through his

¹⁴⁹ Barnes, I Kings 18, location 30096.

¹⁵⁰ Barnes, Ibid.

prophet Elijah. As Obadiah's mentor, Elijah was responsible for encouraging those being mentored.

Health Aspects of the Principles

Mental wellness is essential for the musician. A musician should have self-awareness, learn how to manage stress, balance life, and self-care, have goal setting, focus through distractions, and sometimes, learn how to multitask. These skills are universal, even outside of music performance.¹⁵¹ A worship team leader or teacher should teach those under their tutelage how to study and learn about themselves for mental wellness. A teacher should teach how to set specific goals, a schedule specifically to achieve those goals, and be aware of self-care issues that will arise.¹⁵² The worship leader or teacher should suggest dealing with distractions from the listed goals during a typical week and in performance.¹⁵³ The teacher can help the performer make a concrete plan of action if negative thoughts appear during the time preceding a performance.¹⁵⁴ Have the performer plan what will be done on the day of the next version of their ministry. One should schedule practice, warm-up time, meals, and especially rest.¹⁵⁵ This article did not include prayer time with the teacher and students, but it should be on the agenda during meetings, especially on performance day.

¹⁵¹ Cornett, V. (2015, Feb). PLAYING Healthy STAYING Healthy: Mental Skills and Music Performance: The Teacher's Role. *American Music Teacher*, 64, 28-30.
<http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fmagazines%2Fplaying-healthy-staying-mental-skills-music%2Fdocview%2F1666970401%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>

¹⁵² Cornett, *Playing Healthy*.

¹⁵³ Cornett, *Ibid*.

¹⁵⁴ Cornett, *Ibid*.

¹⁵⁵ Cornett, *Ibid*.

Emotional wellness is essential for the musician. Teens need to develop emotional health in a straightforward linear manner rather than haphazardly, as is often the case.¹⁵⁶ A Christian day school music teacher should be aware of this. Teens (or adults, for that matter) can fluctuate from needing to be nurtured to pulling away in a show of independence.¹⁵⁷ The junior high age is characterized by emotions all over the spectrum. Human emotions of all ages will often automatically fill in gaps when explaining confusing, conflicting feelings and life events to understand complex circumstances; often, these explanations are not based on reality.¹⁵⁸

A quality mentor and protégé relationship provides three things: a safe place to share feelings, someone to confide in, and someone who helps that protégé feel connected and accepted.¹⁵⁹ If one avoids a situation, such as a performance, this will feed anxiety and contribute to emotional instability. The best approach is to engage the subject incrementally, moving forward in baby steps.¹⁶⁰ Progress, however small, should be expressly noted and applauded.

The music teacher can sometimes become a psychotherapist if that teacher listens to an individual student's needs. A teacher must lend a sympathetic ear and help the student work through underlying emotional issues.¹⁶¹ These two are not mutually exclusive. As the teacher

¹⁵⁶V. Cornett, N.C.T.M. (2020). Untangled. *MTNA e-Journal*, 12(2), 5-8.
<http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Funtangled%2Fdocview%2F2469252969%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>

¹⁵⁷ Cornett, *Untangled*.

¹⁵⁸ Nagel, *Managing Stage Fright*, 48-49.

¹⁵⁹ Cornett, *Untangled*.

¹⁶⁰ Cornett, *Untangled*.

¹⁶¹ Margret Elson, *The Couch, and the Piano: When the Piano Teacher is also a Licensed Psychotherapist*, (The California Music Teacher Magazine, Volume 37, No. 1, Winter 2014) 30.

borrow information from one area, the other area is enhanced.¹⁶² Consequently, bridges are built between music and the student's spiritual growth or emotional issues. Though the conscious motivation for taking lessons differs from someone seeking therapy, similar psychological principles link the two thoughts together because music has such strong ties to emotions.¹⁶³ This is true because a music teacher often works with a particular student for many years, so a strong relationship is nurtured and developed. Usually, a remark from the teacher will encourage the student to share current thoughts and emotions.

A teacher should also monitor emotional responses within that teacher. At times, the teacher wants to be singled out as exemplary by colleagues because that teacher's students perform well.¹⁶⁴ If others think highly of that teacher or worship ministry, that worship ministry can grow simply because of that good reputation and meet that teacher's emotional needs for a time. Those emotions will be observed and absorbed by those under that leadership. One should be pleased with one's work in one sense, but in another avenue, pride can be an emotional enemy. "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty¹⁶⁵ spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18) The wrong type of pressure from a teacher with solid perfection tendencies can harm a protégé. A teacher must constantly be *watering* to help a student grow, and this must not be for the teacher's gain. Paul told the Corinthian believers, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." (I Corinthians 3:6).

¹⁶² Elson, 31.

¹⁶³ Elson, 31.

¹⁶⁴ Nagel, *Managing Stage Fright*, 52-53.

¹⁶⁵ Haughty is defined as proud and disdainful, having a high opinion of oneself, with some contempt for others. Websters1828dictionary.com, accessed November 25, 2022.

Physical wellness is essential. During learning, progress can be assessed through three interrelated phases. The cognitive phase involves the performer acquiring an understanding of *what to do*.¹⁶⁶ Next, the performer enters the associative phase and lines the desired parts into a smooth action.¹⁶⁷ Last is the rehearsal of a skill until the skill becomes automatic.¹⁶⁸ If tension or poor physical habits enter at any point, the outcome immediately is askew. Again, poor physical habits can include manipulation of the body during music performances or everyday personal physical routines such as sleeping and eating.

As a performer advances in age, there is some decline in physical prowess, as the author is experiencing. However, an accumulation of experience and domain knowledge can assist in maintaining a certain level of proficiency.¹⁶⁹ Older performers can be more selective in practice habits and learn how to compensate for deficiencies.¹⁷⁰ One should never *perform through pain* but immediately start investigating why the pain exists. Again, poor physical habits and tension should be avoided since audience members easily spot stress, and the message could be clouded. One should ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom even in discerning poor physical habits hindering performance.

Spiritual health is vital for the musician performing sacred music. The importance of an everyday walk with God in Scripture and prayer cannot be emphasized enough. This is in addition to being prepared in the best way musically. Spiritual truth is best communicated through a clean vessel equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit. “Likewise the Spirit also

¹⁶⁶ Cotterill, Stewart, *Performance Psychology: Theory and Practice*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 94.

¹⁶⁷ Cotterill, *Ibid*.

¹⁶⁸ Cotterill, *Ibid*.

¹⁶⁹ Cotterill, Stewart, *Performance Psychology: Theory and Practice*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 71.

¹⁷⁰ Cotterill, 70-71.

helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Romans 8:26)

On an opera house door in Monona, Germany, a quote says, “Bach gave us God’s Word. Mozart gave us God’s laughter. Beethoven gave us God’s fire. God gave us music that we might pray without words.”¹⁷¹ The Holy Spirit does use God-honoring music and the performance of music to move the performer and the audience closer to God much in the same way that the Holy Spirit prays for the believer in ways that are hard to explain or understand. Giving the Holy Spirit the proper tools for encouraging growth in others is a heavy responsibility but has rewards both now and in eternity.

A Few Tips

Sometimes a teacher will encounter someone who says that music is a passionate hobby, but that individual feels like something other than a *professional musician*. One can be a professional and get helpful information from this paper’s principles and tips, but professionalism is not mandatory.

“Musicians are the ones who show up day after day and make music. They are not necessarily the ones with the most degrees or the ones who reminisce of glory days but the ones who are out there “in the field” doing the hard work or sight reading, passage-work repetition, counting aloud, managing nerves, and walking out on stage yet again—whether that stage is Bass Hall, a Sunday morning church service, or a studio recital.”¹⁷²

Some practical tips for the teacher are that the teacher should try to make music fun by using games, rewards, or technology.¹⁷³ If a variety of social opportunities are created, students

¹⁷¹ <https://ststephensmonona.org>. accessed November 26, 2022.

¹⁷² Jessie Walsh, “Strive for Ordinary: Where the Magic Happens,” *American Music Teacher Magazine*, June/July 2021, vol. 70 no, 6, 27-29.

¹⁷³ Gail Lew, “Motivate Students to Excel,” *The California Music Teacher Magazine*, Volume 36, No.1, Fall 2012, 10.

will thrive.¹⁷⁴ Long-term and short-term goals should be set.¹⁷⁵ The teacher should choose a pedagogically sound and stylistically attractive repertoire that includes input from the student.¹⁷⁶

If a competition is included in the goals, the students should be taught that a music competition differs significantly from an athletic competition.¹⁷⁷ Since a music competition contains a high opinion factor on the part of the judges, a competition should be entered with a different spirit than an athletic competition.¹⁷⁸ Every competition is a performance, and every performance is a competition with the individual performer.¹⁷⁹ The standard that the performer is trying to *beat* is the performer's personal best. If a performer increases their skill while preparing for a competition, that musician is a winner even before the competition begins. A student must be encouraged in this regard from the onset. Any disappointment in the outcome can be offset before the evaluation begins. An award may disappear over time, but the experience and skills earned will remain.¹⁸⁰ The time for skill improvement is now. Ecclesiastes 9:10, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

For the Christian school teacher, returning to lessons in the fall after the short summer recess should be a significant event. All new music should be given as lesson assignments unless the student is advanced. These new songs are the preparation and groundwork for pieces to be

¹⁷⁴ Lew, Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Lew, Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Lew, Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Robert Turner, "About Competitions," *The California Music Teacher Magazine*, Volume 38, No. 2, Winter 2015, 20.

¹⁷⁸ Turner, Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Turner, Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Turner, Ibid.

performed later in the year. This is when the latest necessary technical skills are introduced for later. There should be a balance between long and short pieces to set the student for success in performing later in the school year. A good performance often starts months in advance in the teacher's mind. ¹⁸¹

A teacher or church music director should learn how to retreat gracefully from a repertoire that proved to be an unwise choice after all. With so many great options available, the teacher should quickly replace one song with another when needed. ¹⁸²

Communication skills are essential when performing music. Good communicators tend to be similar in characteristics. A good communicator will pay attention to verbal and non-verbal cues, both their own and those in the audience. One should pay attention to a favorite public speaker or musician and watch how the speaker or mentor carries themselves in front of an audience. One will pick which essential communication skills that will be of help to the individual. ¹⁸³ Some skills are universal and can be applied to music performance.

A music psychologist compiled this list. This person that wrote the list was not a believer, but there is some merit, so the list is included. The performer's attitude should be: 1) I have prepared and practiced, and there is good reason to believe I will play well. 2) Almost everyone (but not all) will like my performance if I play my personal best. 3) I do not need to compare myself with anyone else. 4) The audience is not coming to judge me. 5) I can recover from mistakes and keep going. 6) There is no such thing as a perfect performance. ¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Clark, 31.

¹⁸² Clark, 54

¹⁸³Brandon Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, The Medici Publishing, 2019, 68.

¹⁸⁴Dr. Julie Nagel, <https://julienagel.net/how-to-increase-performance-anxiety/>,
<http://julienagel.net/thinking-about-thinking/>

The same music psychologist listed thirteen tips for managing performance anxiety. 1) Uncomplimentary remarks are not personal criticisms 2) One should believe in oneself. 3) A performer should allow themselves to leave their comfort zone. 4). Learn to tolerate discomfort. 5) Seek advice. 6) Make performing fun. 7) Strengthen your belief in yourself. (For the believer, this means your faith in God's provision.) 8) Ask for what you need. 9) Learn to grow from rejection and competition. 10) When feeling *stuck*, solve problems creatively. 11) Stay motivated by keeping one's eyes on one's goals. 12) Do not judge yourself as *good* or *bad*; how one manages with stage fright is what counts. 13) Anxiety is managed over a long haul. Progress adds up. ¹⁸⁵

More practical tips appeared in the American Music Teacher Magazine in 2019. 1) A performer must think positively. One should not mentally admonish one's performance. 2) A performer should keep a journal as a reminder of pleasant experiences. 3) A performer should be a supportive audience member. 4) One should act the part of confidence even if the confidence is not felt. 5) One should remember that there is a *magic line* at the stage door, and all actions should be performance orientated after entering the stage. 6) Write in one's music, especially inspirational reminders, to help achieve performance goals. 7) One's story should be performed. An audience can spot authenticity. 8) One should practice performance skills daily. 9) Act the part of confidence until the confidence is felt. 10) One should choose the path of long-term and short-term goals. ¹⁸⁶ These principles are adapted, but the believer should add Holy Spirit guidance to every step in the process. Practice must be done as if depending on the individual, and simultaneous prayer as the performance depends entirely on the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸⁵ Dr. Julie Nagel, *13 Tips for Managing Performance Anxiety*,

¹⁸⁶ Gary L. Lingle, editor, *How Do You...? Help Students develop effective Strategies to Deal with Performance Anxiety?* (American Music Teacher Magazine, Volume 69, Number 2, October/November 2019).

Conclusion

A Christ-following musician must have a *growth mindset* in every area of ministry. This growth should include spiritual maturity, musical maturity, emotional maturity, and social skills. As the musician grows in these areas, a balance must be struck between relying on the Lord and having the self-confidence necessary for a clear gospel presentation to those listening.

This paper aimed to help musicians avoid the natural trap of negativity and look at situations realistically. The individual should not be favorable to a fault but have a generally positive outlook. The musician needs to have goals to focus on to make improvements. Part of the goals includes understanding one's capabilities and shortcomings.

Since music contains a powerful, non-verbal message, the musician should understand the message portrayed through the chosen piece. The goal should be *outreach* both to the believer and the non-believers. The believers should be helped to grow in grace, while the unbelievers should be taught to believe in Christ.

Music performance anxiety is expressed on a physical level and through cognitive behaviors. The symptoms are emotional and physical. A person can have one sign without the other type, or the two types can exist concurrently. The symptoms are so intense that fine motor control and movement planning are affected adversely. Regardless of musical experience or style of music performed, any musician can be susceptible to music performance anxiety.

A church musician or Christian day schoolteacher generally does not get to choose those they instruct and must be willing to work with anyone the Lord sends with the same philosophy. Not having control over who is taught can cause anxiety in some leaders. Most will rise to the occasion and successfully mentor those entrusted to their care.

A musician should seek help from an experienced source. One can learn from relevant reading, observation, discussion with others, and successes and failures. The Alexander Technique is one option for the musician, but the study should be tempered with Scripture. Group and individual application of the principles must be understood.

Biblical examples are part of the study. While the words *performance anxiety* is not in Scripture, the principles are there in the lives of those written about. Moses was an example of this; after a failure, Moses stuttered and tried not to do what God had asked Moses to do. The Holy Spirit must be consulted regularly for guidance. Other biblical examples discussed were Barak, the army general; Gideon, the judge; and Obadiah, the assistant to King Ahab.

Health aspects of the principles of performance anxiety were reiterated. A musician should strive to be well mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually to ensure success. Mental wellness involves managing stress, life balance, self-care, and goal setting. Emotional health is manifested through allowing oneself to express feelings in safe situations and not avoid performing because of emotional stress. Physical wellness involves the necessary practice of skills and body maintenance. Spiritual health is vital for the church musician. The importance of an everyday walk with God, reading the Scriptures, and personal prayer time cannot be emphasized enough.

Last in the discussion were some practical tips that make music performing a little easier. One of the most obvious tips is to choose an appropriate repertoire. Specific suggestions were given. Some of these tips were helpful in everyday communication and not just music performance. Again, the Holy Spirit is the key to applying practical tips.

The chapter could be summed up succinctly by the thoughts from Philippians 4:13 that Pastor Alfredo Cervantes gave in September of 2022. The verse reads, "I can do all things

through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Mankind is self-centered. The passage is not to be read *I can do all things*. The verse also should not be read: *I can do* all things so that the admonition does not become a *self-motivation* verse that depends on our natural abilities. This verse is also not self-imagined and reads: *I can do all things through Christ; reading* this verse as if the believer thought of the task that needs to be done. If this verse is read correctly, the ideas are centered on Christ as the one who calls, gives direction, *and* equips the believer to perform appropriately to glorify Christ’s name. Training the believer can include guidance on the proper practice techniques. This confidence gives the believer tools that are necessary to accomplish the task.¹⁸⁷

When the performance is over, compliments should be accepted gracefully and give credit where it belongs. As much as possible, the praises belong to God, the teacher or mentor, other team members, and the individual musician should get compliments last to avoid a battle with pride. The performer should plan what to say since those who compliment are trying to encourage the performer, which also should be acknowledged. Simple statements like *praise the Lord, thank you for your encouraging words, or I am glad that the music was a blessing* are some examples of possible responses to compliments. Serving in a music ministry is a beautiful opportunity to give out the Gospel, worship together in corporate worship, and glorify God.

¹⁸⁷ Pastor Alfredo Cervantes, *I Can, But I Can't*, a sermon given at Faith Baptist Church of Canoga Park, California, on September 11, 2022.

Chapter Three: Resources for the Study

About ten years ago, this author began to feel that complacency was starting to restrict her teaching habits. This led to an investigation into an organization called the *Music Teachers Association of California*. This organization offers plans to teach music lessons and provides a testing program for students to verify knowledge with certainty according to the given standard. A student will take five tests annually in February or March. Enrollment is during the month of October. These tests are for pianists, violinists, and wind players. Memorized repertoire (for pianists) will be played with the number of pieces and difficulty adjusted for the student's level. The student will also take a technique test, with the complexity of the technique increasing yearly. A written theory test is administered, and a sight-reading test and an ear training test will also be given. This organization thoroughly checks the background of the teachers applying to enter the organization.

This author had been teaching for about twenty-five years, and her college transcripts were being scrutinized. There were some gaps in her background, so she finished a Master of Arts in church music degree from Maranatha Baptist University in 2014 to fill in the gaps to be fully accredited by the MTAC organization. The syllabus from this organization is full of practical help to give more structure to music lessons. Syllabi are available for piano, strings, winds and brass, guitar, harp, and voice. Completing the master's degree, the author obtained double flute and piano certification from MTAC in 2014.

MTAC has a yearly teachers' convention of three or four days long. The routine alternates between San Jose in the north and Los Angeles/San Diego in the south. The days are filled with workshops, student and professional performances, and a place to buy discount supplies. The first teacher convention that the author attended offered a workshop by Dr. Julie

Nagel on performance anxiety or stage fright. Since the author had noticed gaps in her knowledge and experience in this area, she attended. The room was packed, and the impression was that this was a common malady among performers. This began a quest for qualitative research into the study long before the thesis was even possible since the author had not yet completed her Master of Arts Degree.

The first book purchased about performance anxiety was by Barry Green, entitled *The Inner Game of Music*, because Dr. Nagel mentioned that the book was new and had pertinent information on the topic of study. Green's volume was an adaptation of other works written for sports, such as tennis. Green's methods were time-tested in sports, and the music application was easy to understand. Again, this was long before the thesis process was even in the author's plan.

At that time, Dr. Nagel wrote a weekly blog that offered new thoughts on the subject. Dr. Nagel was well qualified on the subject matter since she is a psychologist, a psychoanalyst, and a Julliard School of Music graduate. This led to the purchase of some of her books.

Getting the weekly email from Dr. Julie Nagel led to exploring the internet to find other blogs that would give teaching tips in general. The author signed up for a blog entitled *Choral Net Daily*. This blog post still comes daily. This posting has reviewed books and choral music, but performance anxiety has been discussed. Some helpful tips about working with people, and leadership qualities, in general, have come from that website.

Another similar website named *Choral Clarity* recommended the book *Atomic Habits*, which was purchased and cited in the literature review. The author, James Clear, recommends four laws that help establish new habits. Time and materials management are critical components

in reducing performance anxiety for a teacher or overseer of a ministry. Clear has ideas that will help apply the laws to other areas, such as business and parenting.

Another book read was titled *Creative Chords: Studies in Music, Theology and Christian Formation* by Jeff Astley, Timothy Hone, and Mark Savage. These men provide a synoptic view of the relationship between music, theology, and Christian learning. A book written by John C. Maxwell, *How to Influence People and Make a Difference in Your World*, gave general leadership principles that were based on Scripture. Maxwell writes from a scriptural perspective but does not always quote Scripture directly. Some of his books have the Scripture portions deleted to appeal to a larger audience.

The Mindful Musician: Mental Skills for Peak Performance by Vanessa Cornett contributed to the thesis. Vanessa Cornett has often come up as the author of various articles and books. Cornett is a Fulbright Scholar and is currently the piano, piano pedagogy professor, and director of keyboard studies at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis. She specializes in research on performance anxiety management. Her website also says that she is a certified meditation instructor.

The book *Emotional Intelligence* by Brandon Goleman was bought and read because of a recommendation when a different book was purchased. The book's cover notes that people with higher emotional intelligence naturally cooperate better with colleagues because this skill goes with life. Emotional intelligence is the ability to be cognizant and control one's emotions. This includes the ability to express feelings appropriately.

The two books *Performance Psychology: Theory and Practice* by Stewart Gordon and *The Joy of Inspired Teaching* by Tim Lautzenheiser have been helpful. *Passionate Practice: The*

Musician's Guide to Learning and Memorizing is a book worth reading. The author of this volume is Margret Elson. The literature review has two entries by Margret Elson. Frances Clark is a well-known piano pedagogy specialist. She wrote *Questions and Answers: Practical Advice for Piano Teachers*, a valuable addition to any piano teacher's library.

Many articles used in the literature review came from searching the Jerry Falwell Library online at Liberty University. The keywords entered were *performance psychology*, *performance anxiety*, and *worship studies*. Some names kept recurring and made the looking easier.

The book by Catherine Madden, with thoughts about the Alexander Technique, came from the Jerry Falwell Library. This topic is so broad that another thesis could easily be written on the Alexander Technique. Other sources from Liberty include textbooks from other classes. Vernon Whaley wrote *Called to Worship: The Biblical Foundations of Our Response to God*. Another text was *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: How to Become an Effective Leader by Confronting Potential Failures*. This book acknowledges the sinful nature of every person (and consequently, each leader). The authors of this book are Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima. Dave Williamson wrote: *God's Singers: A Guidebook for the Worship Leading Choir in the 21st Century*.

Two volumes by Tim Sharp were course textbooks. The two volumes are entitled: *Mentoring in the Ensemble: Helping Others Find Their Voice* and *Collaboration in the Musical Arts: Working and Playing Well with Others*. Other course textbooks are: *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation*. Allen P. Ross wrote this book. Many Liberty courses had textbooks worth reading and provided food for thought in the thesis process.

The article *Performance Anxiety Coping Skills Seminar: Is It Effective in Reducing Musical Performance Anxiety and Enhancing Musical Performance Quality?* was recommended by Dr. Thomas Seeley during a class in the summer of 2022.

Commentaries were consulted for the biblical examples of performance anxiety to learn more about scholars' thoughts about each scenario. The verse-by-verse analyses used in this paper have been standard practice for the study of theology by pastors and teachers for hundreds of years. Albert Barnes first copyrighted *Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible* between 1884-1888. Matthew Henry is similar because his notes were copyrighted in 1706. John Gill wrote his commentary between 1697 and 1771.

Other sources for the thesis came from a visiting missionary. This missionary recommended the book that E. Randolph Richards and Brandon O'Brien collaborated to write: *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible*. This book was indeed an eye-opener for those that do serious Bible study.

The *American Music Teacher* is a peer-reviewed journal published every other month. Many articles from that magazine are also published separately in the Jerry Falwell library of Liberty University. In these magazines, the name *Noa Kageyama* kept reappearing. Dr. Julie Nagel also recommended Noa Kageyama at the MTAC workshop. Dr. Kageyama is the author of a blog called *The Bulletproof Musician*. Dr. Kageyama is a performance psychologist and Julliard alumnus with violin proficiency. Dr. Kageyama is known for teaching musicians to beat performance anxiety and play their best under pressure through live classes, coaching, and an online study course. Dr. Kageyama sends out a weekly blog post with practical tips. Some of the principles learned will be in this thesis' Practice Hacks Appendix.

Dr. Kageyama recommended the book *Peak: Secrets from the New Science of Expertise* by Ericsson Anders and Robert Pool. These men have made a career out of studying the science of excellence in areas as varied as chess champions, star athletes, musicians, and those specializing in memorizing anything. The book was written to encourage the reader to strive for excellence, regardless.

Vanessa Cornett (mentioned above) wrote other performance psychology recommendations published in the American Music Teacher Magazines. In addition to an article about Noa Kageyama in the December/January 2020 issue, Cornett wrote about mental skills and music performance in the February 2015 issue. Dr. Vanessa Cornett has also been a speaker at the Music Teacher's Association of California. Another American Music Teacher Magazine featured an article entitled *Strive for Ordinary: Where Magic Happens*. This was written by Jessica Walsh and published in the June/July 2021 American Music Teacher magazine.

The book by David Green titled *Leadership Not by the Book: 12 Unconventional Principles to Drive Incredible Results* was included because of the leadership principles in the book. Mr. Green is a Christ-follower, and the book reflects this in philosophy and has many Scripture quotations. The principles in the book do work since the ideas were used in the everyday operations of Hobby Lobby. There are many helpful thoughts worth reading if anyone oversees any area of ministry. Mr. Green considers *anything* done in life to be ministry. The principles are good reminders for those mentoring others to serve the Lord better, be the service to be in music or anything in another area.

To sum up, when writing an effective thesis, the sources can be derived from anywhere at any time. Different sources and ideas were added as the paper was written because more material kept coming to light.

Chapter Four: Tools Used in the Study and Findings

Introduction

This section of the paper will discuss tools used in the qualitative study of performance psychology and anxiety from a biblical perspective. Classes taken in preparation for the thesis, textbooks for those classes, other books that proved to be helpful, the Jerry Falwell Library at Liberty University, and various blogs are all worth mentioning for input into the thesis. The writings and videos of Noa Kageyama, the author of The Bulletproof Musician's blog, were beneficial.

The next portion of this chapter will list the conclusions from the study. First, little has changed over the thousands of years since the creation of the earth. People are sinners and struggle with the flesh continually. 2) Performers can distract themselves during a performance because they need a more singular focus. 3) Perfectionists can inadvertently cause more mistakes by not allowing for mistakes, which will happen. 4) Frequently, repertoire changes can assist a struggling performer. 5) A performer's place in the family order can influence the methods used to assist a performer. A person assisting a struggling performer should also be aware of the family's ethnicity or other pertinent cultural information. 6) Any changes to performance routines made must be in *baby steps*. 7) A wise performer will also make specific time for performance practice. 8) Each performer is responsible for that performer's spiritual formation. 9) Life, for the performer, must be about balance. Excellence must balance with the reality that mistakes happen. 10) A performance can be excellent without excellent spiritual formation, but the performance will be less effective in worship. 11) Each performer should evaluate themselves before the Lord. 12) Group performers must put individual desires aside for the group's good, or anxiety can result. 13) A performance is a critical culmination tool that helps

synthesize skills gained and gives an important goal that spurs specific practice to meet that goal as the music is shared with others. 14) There are three sides to managing performance anxiety: the spiritual side, the physical side, and the mental side. 15) The last important finding of the study is that the performer should learn to rely on God for the performance. This is only done through experiential learning and cannot be taught only with words.

Tools Used

The tools used in the study were the Scriptures first. Other tools that have proved valuable were the preparation classes offered for the Doctor of Worship Studies degree. The professors at Liberty University were experienced and gave helpful guidance along the way. The textbooks for those classes were carefully chosen and full of information that eventually gave insight into the thesis process in general and information specific to the thesis topic. Other books accumulated along the way that were used in papers for those classes were helpful. For example, John C Maxwell and Tim Sharp have written several books. After buying one of these men's books, others were purchased simply because the author was familiar.

Other tools were blogs aimed at music teachers, the Liberty library, and another course unrelated to degree requirements offered by Noa Kageyama called *Performance Psychology for the Music Educator*. The weekly blog entitled *Bulletproof Musician* is an excellent source of information about performance psychology and anxiety and gives many hints that will assist in practicing technical skills. Incidentally, chapter five of this thesis will discuss a missing ingredient in Dr. Kageyama's work.

Another valuable tool for reference in arriving at conclusions was the author's twenty-four years of teaching in an elementary classroom. During her time in the elementary classroom,

the author taught private or group music lessons or was an elementary choir director. She was a church musician until she became a full-time music teacher in the same school where she had taught elementary for an additional sixteen years. Therefore, the author often observes different criteria than a typical music teacher. For example, the same skills are necessary for reading music that is necessary for reading a book. Visual, sideways tracking is the same if reading notation or alphabet letters to read books or literature. Analogies are often compared between math and music, such as *checking the sign* when identifying music note names for elementary students.

Another eye-opening reference tool was being a parent and attempting to raise her two sons to love the Lord and be church musicians with the proper attitudes toward presenting in ministry without undue anxiety or extra pride. When parenting child musicians, the goal should not be to raise professional musicians or cause the child stress when sharing music. The priority should be to instill a love for the Lord and a love for listening to the Holy Spirit's direction. This calms many nervous children. Life is about balance. The author watches the results of this attitude in her children as grandchildren are taught to love the Lord and play excellent music.

After teaching for a while, the author noticed that some children (the author's students) progressed well but did not *love what they were doing*. Some students were exceptional because of parental pressure but walked away from music and the Lord when the opportunity came because the pressure imposed was too much. Again, *life is about balance*. A love for the Lord and a love for watching oneself improve are both necessary for a life-long church musician. If acquiring skills is the only reason a student is given for practice and performing, burnout will occur. If burnout does not happen, another danger is excessive pride on the performer's part, as other musicians are looked down upon because of perceived lower achievements. Some consider

fast fingers and a loud, powerful sound a standard for measuring achievements in the instrumentalist world. Sometimes fingers with tension can produce a loud, powerful sound that will cause problems for the musician later.

Findings of the Study

Several conclusions can be drawn from this study. First, very little has changed over the thousands of years that the earth has existed. Sin blinds people and hinders believers frequently. Because of this blindness, believers can be unaware of spiritual needs hindering spiritual performances. Spiritual opposition (from the evil one) also frequently hinders people from doing what God has directed. A believer's most prominent enemy is in that believer's mind. Pride is a significant enemy. Satan loves to hinder believers and does not mind using that believer against themselves to affect what good is accomplished.

The performer often has distractions that lead in directions that do not help the situation. Musical mistakes occur more readily when the mind wanders. Frequently, the performer will analyze the performance *while the performance is going on*. The performer may wonder how the audience or other thoughts are receiving the music being given. Sometimes the performer's thoughts have nothing to do with the performance and are on a different, unrelated topic. Either way, distracted thoughts are detrimental to what the performer is trying to do.

Another conclusion has been drawn that many people are needed to *make each believer* the best version of that individual for the Lord's service. The parent and the teacher must work together and support each other, or the child will be confused. In music ministry, the team should support each other. There is a reason that Hebrews 10:25 is in the Scripture. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so

much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Believers need the Lord first, and believers need each other for encouragement. A believer should be quick to build up a fellow musician that is a believer and not criticize. If criticism or correction is needed, a loving spirit should accompany either, and something positive should be offered simultaneously. At any given time, a musician needs both suggestions and encouragement. A wise and caring teacher can help another teacher build up a struggling student even though the student is not their student.

Solutions for the problem of performance anxiety vary with each performer. A caring teacher or ministry leader can make a difference for the struggling performer. At times, the teacher must become a counselor to help the struggling performer understand that performer’s genuine fear, which may or may not have a relationship with the music performance. The performer must permit themselves to make a mistake. Suppose permission is not given to make a mistake. In that case, several more mistakes can happen when an error is made while the performer is mentally chastising themselves during the performance.

Other issues encountered may be unrelated. Prayer is a universal solution for every problem, but the prayers may vary. A teacher should pray about repertoire. A change in repertoire could help a struggling performer. If a performer is struggling, the repertoire chosen should be technically more accessible so that the performer can relax and communicate more effectively. The teacher should pray about the best venue for a new performer to present first. A different forum could be used to increase the confidence of the struggling performer. (Nursing homes are an excellent example of a non-threatening venue.) Another less threatening option could be having the person perform in a larger group until confidence is gained. Every aspect of practice and performance must be continually bathed in prayer.

A solution that may work for the oldest child in the family may not work for the youngest child. The child's spot in the birth order affects the solution. For example, the youngest child is often a natural performer. One's ethnic culture also affects the solution. In some cultures, *family honor is at stake* if a mistake is made. The performer's home and church culture enters the picture and will change potential solutions. The teacher should constantly pray, observe, and make mental notes, at the very least, to notice what is going on with the student so that any changes can be made.

Any changes made in performance routines must be taken in *baby steps*. If too many variables are changed at once, the performer sets the stage for a disaster because too many changes are hard to process into long-term memory. For some performers, even adding a microphone in front of them at the time of performance can mentally send the performer into a downward spiral. Every detail must be noted and prepared for as much as possible since many unexpected events occur naturally during performances.

Performance must be practiced regularly as a separate skill to be practical. Performance practice can be inserted into one's regular practice time by performing a song straight through at the beginning of a practice session. During this preliminary run-through, the one practicing should keep going regardless of what happens during the run-through. After completing the run-through, one should note any trouble spots and correct them. At the end of the practice session, the song should be played again, double-checking to see if the trouble spots are permanently fixed. If one needs to add more pressure to one's routine, one should video those preliminary run-through songs. The videos do not have to be watched at that time to be effective. Adding the camera will tell the performer much about his or her knowledge of the piece. One should

encourage the performer to watch the videos in six months and note skill improvements. (See Appendix A for practicing hacks that benefit the performer in the practice room.)

Each performer is responsible for their spiritual formation and for practicing the necessary repertoire of the performance as well as possible under the circumstances. While the performer will *never arrive* at complete spiritual formation until the day they go home to heaven, strides toward that goal should be a regular part of his or her life. “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:” (Philippians 1:6) The performer’s attitude toward the necessary repertoire should be like that found in Colossians. “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto me; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” (Colossians 3:23-24)

Balance must be the goal of the performer committed to Christ. Performance should be excellent and prepared as much as possible, balanced with heartfelt emotion and praise to God. This emotion could include the musician permitting themselves to make a mistake. If this permission is not given and an error occurs, several more mistakes will frequently occur in the following moments. In one sense, God does not mind mistakes in performance. “He remembereth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” (Psalm 103:14) The other side of the pendulum is Matthew 5:48, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” The word *perfect* is assumed to mean to perform without mistakes, which is a helpful definition. Webster’s 1828 sheds more light on the word’s report by saying that *perfect* means finished, complete, or complete in moral excellencies.¹⁸⁸ A modern dictionary defines *perfect* as

¹⁸⁸ Websters1828dictionary.com, accessed February 27, 2023.

meeting the need in a particular situation.¹⁸⁹ This is the balance between a lack of mistakes and the spiritual formation necessary to communicate spiritual truths in a way that honors God as the music intended.

Excellent performance skills can help a performer communicate spiritual truth even if the musician lacks spiritual formation. God uses spiritual truth regardless of the messenger that proclaims the message. A biblical example of this would be the wayward prophet Balaam. Balak, the son of Zippor, was king of the Moabites. Balak tried to convince Balaam to curse the children of Israel. God gave Balaam definite direction that God's people must not be condemned. Balaam was not inclined to obey, but God had to get Balaam's attention through a talking donkey. He did not curse the children of Israel but blessed them anyway, and Balak was angry. This account is found in Numbers 22. Balaam went to live with the Midianites, another ungodly group, apparently because in Numbers 31, he was slain in battle by the children of Israel with the Midian kings.

A New Testament reference to Balaam is found in Revelation. "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." (Revelation 2:14) Another reference is found in 2 Peter. "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet," (2 Peter 2:15)

So, Balaam did speak the correct spiritual truth when the children of Israel were blessed, but one must wonder how much more effective Balaam would have been if Balaam had been

¹⁸⁹ Dictionary.com, accessed February 27, 2023.

right before God. Balaam will have to answer to God one day because of the stumbling blocks inserted before others. Balaam certainly would not have met an untimely end if Balaam had been right with God. To be recognized by Balak must have given him some credibility in some eyes, but people are not the ultimate test of credibility.

This author has seen this in action with various performers throughout the years. Some have served in full-time Christian ministry with a lack of spiritual formation, sometimes walking contrary to direct commands in Scripture with habits that later became common knowledge. A performer can appear impressive on the surface at first because of their outstanding performance and musical skills, but further examination will show that the performer needs to improve in spiritual formation. Sometimes, the lack of spiritual formation is so significant that an observer must wonder if a performer knows the Lord personally. But God does use these somewhat unfit vessels to communicate spiritual truth and bless others despite the lack on the part of the performer. Like Balaam, these performers that walked contrary to God could have been significantly used by the Lord but fell short and were used less because of the lack of spiritual formation.

The person performing music (or any other Christian ministry) must evaluate themselves before the Lord first, then assess personal ministry workings that the believer has been called into to ensure that all is well. This evaluation is not a one-time occurrence but should be continual. The musician should check for pride, anxiety, or other undesirable traits hindering a ministry presentation. In 1 Corinthians, there is a reference to believers examining themselves before the Lord's Supper. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." (1 Corinthians 11:28) This should be applied to everyday life so the believer can draw closer to God *and* not be a stumbling block to others. "Let us not therefore judge one

another anymore: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." (Romans 14:13)

Another conclusion from the study is about group performance. Often, if the group performance is to be successful, an individual must give up personal desires for the group's good. If an individual stubbornly hangs on to a wish, the result can be anxiety in the group, so the performance will not be as excellent. For example, a pianist can love to deviate from written notation when accompanying. Pride can be the root cause of this example. Another possible cause could be a lack of music theory knowledge and how the piano part fits in with the group's effort. If the pianist goes too far afield, this can cause anxiety and confusion in the soloist or group being accompanied. God's plan is for people to worship God together. "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 15:6) "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1)

A performance brings the weeks and months of practice to a culmination shared with others. Intentional practice can be pushed out of a busy schedule by other, more demanding items. A goal is a beautiful motivator. A musician needs to look forward to a performance. With a specific purpose, often, more is accomplished in skill advancement because the practice cannot be set aside for the seemingly more meaningful activity. For the teacher of children, outside evaluation in a non-threatening manner helps consolidate learning, especially when compliments are given.

Some naturally anxious musicians avoid performing, but performance is necessary for musical and character development. A presentation holds the performer to a universal standard of meeting goals. One of the goals is to have learning be inserted into long-term use, so it is wise to review the previous repertoire frequently. Goals are met that increase the confidence of the one

performing, and the confident spirit easily transfers to other venues, such as gospel communication or everyday interactions with others.

The musical and character development goals accomplished will help with all of life. “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” (1 Peter 3:15) One needs to interact with other people to let them know about God’s love and mercy. The practiced communication and musical skills will assist with the giving out of God’s message.

A performance also will help synthesize learning into permanency. If one does not have performance opportunities, one should use electronics such as cameras to tie all learned skills together in a recorded performance. In this day of technology, a long-distance relative can be an active part of a performance. The specific compliments from others go a long way to building a performer. A standard cell phone does a great job; one does not need special equipment.

Performance anxiety should be managed spiritually, *then* physical and mental issues should be addressed. If the performer has the wrong motivation for performing, problems will arise, such as pride. Other sinful feelings are inferiority complexes that are sometimes prideful but in a different form. All three listed above can be addressed concurrently if they are closely intertwined.

Any time a musician spends preparing worship music for others to enjoy is making a spiritual sacrifice to God. Again, heart attitude is everything. This sacrifice is like the *widow’s mite* in Luke 21. “For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.” (Luke 21:4) King David, when buying a threshing floor to offer a burnt offering on, said the same thought differently. “And the king said

unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing.” (2 Samuel 24:24a) Even a child can offer this type of sacrifice to God. David’s gift had long-lasting effects long after David was gone. This is also true for the church musician who leaves the results to God.

Finally, performing shapes the musician’s character and teaches the individual to rely on God for much of life. This concept of relying upon God is only accomplished through first-hand experience and not through the mere words of the teacher, group leader, or parent. The performance should ultimately be for *an audience of One*.

Conclusion

Scripture was the most critical source consulted in the study for this thesis. Other helpful insights came from the pre-thesis classes offered by Liberty University in the Doctor of Worship Studies program. Since the teachers were experienced, many helpful ideas were given to the students through class materials, discussion board questions, and assignments that were given. Many other books, pedagogical magazines, internet blogs related to music and performance, and the Liberty Library contributed much to the tools of the study. In addition to these, the author took a course that was unrelated directly to the Doctor of Worship studies but was related indirectly. The course was titled “*Performance Psychology for the Music Educator*.” Dr. Noa Kageyama, a performance psychologist on the faculty of the Julliard School of Music, taught the course.

The author’s life experiences of teaching in an elementary classroom for twenty-four years contributed to the study. That experience led her to break concepts down so anyone could easily understand them. After twenty-four years, the author was moved to teach music full-time

in the same school. Frequently, students will study with her for years so that the author can watch and learn from her students over a long period.

Some helpful observations emerged as a parent herself and through watching students over a long time. A love for the Lord must be established first; then, music should be loved second. The student needs to continue the balance between the Lord and the love for music. Burnout or excessive pride is a serious possibility and must be guarded against.

The findings of the study were several. A musician's sinful nature, inherited from Adam, will cause performers to battle with the flesh. This sinful nature can cause a performer's mind to wander during a performance; an intentional, singular focus is needed. A performer, while practicing perfectionism, can open the door to *more mistakes*. As the performer reacts adversely to an error, another mistake will occur.

One should evaluate the repertoire being performed. Repertoire should be accessible for the performer. Any technical problems should be isolated from the typical issues associated with performing. This is only possible if the performer can relax and enjoy the work.

Children often respond to life and problems impacted by the family birth order. A second-born child has a much easier time with life just from watching the oldest sibling make mistakes. Some cultures give some parental responsibility to the oldest sibling as well. This puts extra pressure on the oldest sibling since the oldest child can get punished if the second sibling does not perform well. The youngest child can be treated as a *baby* or a miniature adult. The teacher or church music director should know which scenario is in play, even if working with adults. When working with adults, the changes between siblings are less obvious but still come into the equation.

Changes to a performance routine must be taken in *baby steps*. In a well-done performance, much should be done without extra thought. Confusion will result in too many changes too fast. Every part of the performance should be practiced. In addition, one should practice as if performing. This is done by going through a piece without stopping, even if mistakes occur. Recovery (from errors) is a part of the performance that must be rehearsed. This should be done once at the beginning and end of every practice session.

Balance is the key to a successful life for a musician who believes in Christ. Mistakes will occur because we are still operating with sinful flesh. A musician should be responsible for that his or her spiritual formation. A performance can be excellent without the proper spiritual formation but is far less effective if the performer is not walking with Christ regularly.

Group performers must put individual desires aside for the group's good, or anxiety can result. Strife and contention within a group can cause a mixed message to those listening. A strong group bond makes a united message evident.

Goal setting is necessary for those wishing to improve their music and communication skills. A specific performance is an essential culmination of skills learned by an appointed date. A wise teacher will establish short-term and long-term goals for each student to encourage their musical journey.

Finally, a performer must rely on God and play specifically for God *during a performance* and in the practice room. God should be the only one in the audience in the performer's mind. This skill cannot be taught with words but must be learned through the performer's experiences. The teacher can make the student aware of what must be known, but the learning is not synthesized until the student finds God faithful on their own. As the student

grows in faith, the understanding of the truth of God's faithfulness and friendship will be evident to those around them. This verse is valid for the teacher and the student as well. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

As the student grows in favor with God, men will be pleased *for the most part*. Men's personal opinions will differ, but Scripture does not change. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52)

Chapter Five: Study Findings and Changes Effectuated

Introduction

This chapter will discuss why the study of performance psychology is essential for worship, growth in spiritual formation, and building the performer's character. Teaching a musician how to present the skills acquired is vital and should be kept from chance or happenstance. These communication skills should be taught alongside technique, music theory, and other necessary skills, such as sightreading. A scriptural viewpoint of performance skills should be regularly integrated into the teacher's or group leader's lesson plans. For those in church music ministry, scriptural performance skills description could occur during group devotionals, ministry training, handwritten notes, or even an encouragement email.

The next portion of this chapter will postulate reasons for pedagogical changes and the details of the changes in the author's teaching since the study began more than ten years ago. The author has been more intent on teaching students how to perform well. Performance practice is inserted into the curriculum through monthly group lessons for piano students when the students play for each other. Both constructive and instructional feedback is provided to each student regardless of the student's level of proficiency or how the student played that day. In the alternating months, each student makes a video sent to that student's parents through email or phone messaging.

The author's attitude toward performance and the accompanying details has changed drastically. In time past, the author frequently encountered performance anxiety. Because of wanting people to be happy, the problem compounded quickly. Now the author considers each opportunity to be given by God, and the outcome results are handed over to Him. With this change in attitude, the author performs much better, even under circumstances that are not ideal.

The author prepares more thoroughly because God has asked her to do at that moment. Doing a task for God is different from doing a task for men. Every detail is examined, not out of fear of men but of a desire to be an excellent offering to God.

Practical details of performance will be discussed, and the effect of those details ultimately on the performance anxiety or the lack of anxiety for the performer. Slight nuances in the music or small elements in the preparation can make a difference in the music presented. For example, one should wear the chosen performance shoes in practice since different shoes cause the piano to respond accordingly. One wants to avoid discovering this during a performance.

Lastly, the Scripture has the final answer to the questions of performance anxiety, performance psychology, and God's thoughts about both. God does not leave the believer without any clues about how to deal with the problem. The Scripture says, "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." (Proverbs 29:25) Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13) God is not as hard on the believer as other people.

Why Performing Skills Should Be Taught

The first reason performing skills should be taught is because these skills were taught in the Scripture. Numbers chapter one offers details about the children of Israel. God told Moses what to teach the Levites, the musicians and worship leaders of this period. "But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony." (Numbers 1:53) God is a God of order and punished deliberate offenders for non-compliance in

that era. Punishment was quick and effective, frequently calculating offenders who received the death penalty. God will punish those today that do not worship correctly. The sentence is sometimes delayed or subtle, but discipline does happen.

The reverse is promised for those that worship God correctly. God blessed and continues to bless those that properly worship him today. “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.” (Psalm 50:23) Attitude is everything when worshipping God. Preparation for worship starts in the practice room, among other places.

Performing skills should be taught to build the character of the individual. Those working with musicians should desire the best for those in their care. Part of care is making the individual the best they can be for the Lord’s service. When performing in ministry, the musician often is required to put pride aside for the sake of the glory of God. This must be taught and modeled in front of the student.

Attention to other details in life is guided through music nuances. A musician can learn to budget time properly, take care of one’s belongings efficiently, pay attention to personal details such as appearance and grooming, and prioritize finances. Finances must be considered because music lessons are expensive. The tithe belongs to the Lord, but music training is also part of the treasure principle. If one pays lesson tuition, the teacher should make the student’s parents glad that the decision was made. The student is responsible for making the parent delighted that lessons were chosen to be part of the child’s life. A caring teacher should remind students to thank their parents for the opportunity to learn. The teacher should teach as unto the Lord also.

Changes in Teaching

As a teacher, the author has learned to recognize varied growth areas. Some students are great at reading new notation. Others are great at playing what is viewed on YouTube or by ear. Some enjoy written theory, and other students consider theory an enemy. So, milestone awards in the author's music studio combine all those skills. The *Ten Awards* (frequently a chocolate bar) can be earned by one method or a combination but happens much faster when written theory, sightreading, and memorization are utilized. Any variety of completed ten sightreading exercises, memorized pieces, or completed theory pages, results in a score of ten and an award. Award frequency is about one per month for most students. Minor achievements are celebrated at the end of each lesson with a small candy or memento, such as a pencil or toy.

Frequently during the school year, there are four-day weeks due to various holidays. Most children do a group rather than a private lesson to complete the author's schedule on those weeks. The students look forward to playing for each other, playing music theory games on the floor, or using small whiteboards for rhythmic dictation. The author occasionally will get out electronic devices so the students will play video games that teach music theory principles such as note names or rhythm. In this way, students enjoy learning from many different angles.

At the end of the school year, there is a recital. Leading up to the recital, pieces are reviewed that were memorized earlier in the school year. In the last two lessons before the recital, ten memorized pieces are played that review those learned earlier. The student then chooses one of the ten to share at the recital. Upper-level students may review pieces learned in years past but must choose a recently mastered piece for the recital. That way, all recital material is prepared early, and the students are rewarded with a trophy for the ten-piece completion at the recital. Consequently, recitals are less stressful for students *and* the teacher.

Each lesson is approached from the view that the class for that student is essential, and opportunities should be taken seriously and appreciated. As the child is walked back to their class, the question is asked about what the student learned that day as a matter of review.

Attitude toward Performance Changes

The author considers every opportunity to perform, even in a rehearsal, as a gift from God. The Levites were chosen as a gift for the Lord. “And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the Lord, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.” (Numbers 18:6) A secondary application can be that today’s Levites are believers who lead worship in the local congregations or teach children how to sharpen skills for future ministry. Any preparation, ministry opportunity, the building of others, or any other act of service is a gift to God directly. God does not owe anyone performance opportunities. Because of this, moments with a musical connection to others should be taken seriously, prepared for, and yet enjoyed in the process. This strange paradox is possible through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Performance Details Discussed

Every performance detail should be examined to make ministry opportunities as smooth as possible. One should practice introductions and endings especially. Subliminal decisions about the one sharing the music and the performance being given are usually made quickly, even before the music begins. One should observe others to learn more about the performance setting. One should do a warmup in the exact venue so acoustics, the instruments, the microphones, and other equipment can be evaluated.

One should keep a great relationship with God and others continually so that nothing will hinder a music ministry opportunity from a human standpoint. There will be spiritual opposition, but the believer does not want to add to this in any form.

Scriptural Answers to Performance Questions

Recently, the author heard a speaker during the opening session of a Fine Arts Competition at West Coast Baptist College in Lancaster, CA. The speaker spoke from Philippians 4:13 and took a slightly different interpretation from the passage discussed earlier in this thesis, but this application is also appropriate to mention. The purpose for writing the verse was directed by the pronoun *I*.¹⁹⁰ The verse applies to everyone that is a believer. The second word *can* remove any doubt as to possibilities.¹⁹¹ A participant must do their part to commit, prepare, and love the Lord individually. The perspective is only limited by God's will and the participant's faith.¹⁹² The power to perform the ministry only happens through Christ. Occasionally one will encounter a situation that only Christ can handle, even though the individual is prepared.¹⁹³ The verse promises that Christ's strength will accompany those performing.¹⁹⁴ The person doing the ministry should also examine the motivation for ministry. The lowest level of motivation is fear, the next level is doing ministry for reward (either from

¹⁹⁰ Pastor Jim Schlettler, *How to Enter a Fine Arts Competition*, (Lancaster, CA: West Coast Baptist College), March 10, 2023.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

men or the Lord), and another motivation is a duty. Still, love for God is the highest motivation for ministry performance.¹⁹⁵

Evangelist Scott Pauley does a daily ten-minute podcast entitled, *Enjoying the Journey*. On February 1, 2023, Evangelist Pauley did a podcast, *Having God's Favor*, based on Luke 2. A believer should seek favor with God by fearing God.¹⁹⁶ To get favor from God, one must praise God, which results in favor with people.¹⁹⁷ Favor begins with God since James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."¹⁹⁸ Favor is needed to deal with all people; fruitfulness results when a believer has God's blessing.¹⁹⁹ To paraphrase Scott Pauley, one should do ministry for *an audience of One*. Jesus Christ set the example for this by increasing in wisdom and stature, and favor with God and man. (See Luke 2:52) This is the missing ingredient from the blog entitled the *bulletproof musician* written by Noa Kageyama.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the importance of studying performance psychology for the believer trying to live for Christ. God is a God of order and expects worship to be performed excellently according to scriptural mandates. With excellent worship, the believer also grows in their relationship with God. A side benefit for the believer is that the believer will grow in faith

¹⁹⁵ Pastor Jim Schlettler, *How to Enter a Fine Arts Competition*, (Lancaster, CA: West Coast Baptist College), March 10, 2023.

¹⁹⁶ Evangelist Scott Pauley, *Having God's Favor*, (enjoyingthejourney.org), accessed February 1, 2023., (1 minute 45 sec.)

¹⁹⁷ Pauley, (3 minutes 14 sec.)

¹⁹⁸ Pauley, (5 minutes 33 sec.)

¹⁹⁹ Pauley, (7 minutes 40 sec.)

and spiritual formation. The daily life of a believer will also be affected positively as they grow in character and favor with men.

The following section delineated the changes in the author's teaching methods as this subject was researched. Specific details were given, noting how the author has improved both pedagogical techniques and teaching of spiritual formation. The author's attitude toward performing in ministry and teaching duties has also evolved. Each opportunity is sacred and a gift from God.

One should be detailed in performance preparation to give the best presentation possible. This honors God and builds the performer, both musically and spiritually.

Last, scriptural answers to performance psychology were given. The proper scriptural perspective will minimize performance anxiety if the performer is well prepared. Ultimately, the ministry performance will be directed to an *audience of One*, expecting Christ to use the ministry offering for God's glory in a way that the performer could never have accomplished solely on their own.

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