

Music Faculty  
Taylor University

January 20, 2000

Dear Music Faculty,

My advisory committee at Virginia Tech approved my doctoral dissertation proposal on October 12, providing I remove the “religious” components from the body of the study and place them in the Appendix. This changes nothing about the study itself, so I am very pleased to have been given the green light to proceed with my experimental study here at Taylor University. I met on Friday, January 7, with your chairman, Al Harrison, and Cathy Moore, to work out a calendar and logistics for this semester. We also were able to briefly get some valuable input from your vocal coordinator, Patricia Robertson. Here is the plan that we submit for your input and approval.

The Music Department (see the attached proposed letter) will send a letter to all music majors and minors taking applied music this semester, introducing me to them and explaining in general the nature of the experimental study that they will be participating in this semester. We simply will be asking them to take 5 minutes immediately after each of two solo performances, to fill in a brief questionnaire to honestly evaluate their performance and their feelings before and during the performance. Their self-evaluation will have absolutely no bearing on their grade, and will be kept with strict confidentiality. After Spring Break they will be randomly assigned to one of two study groups, which will meet simultaneously either in the Band Room or the Recital Hall from 10:00 – 10:50 am, depending on which group they are assigned to. They will then be asked to evaluate a second performance (possibly a Junior Proficiency Exam, a Senior Recital Hearing, or a Jury), just as they did for an earlier performance in the semester. Students who miss one or more of the study group sessions will be asked to view a video of the sessions made available in the music office.

I am asking that each private music instructor (full-time and adjunct) please fill out the INSTRUCTOR’S PERFORMANCE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE following each of his students’ performances. Instructors missing from the performance will please listen to the recording of the student’s performance and fill out the questionnaire and place it in a mailbox assigned to me in the Music Office.

### **SCHEDULE**

#### **February 17, Kick-Off of the Study & Performance Class (10:00 a.m.)**

Al Harrison will introduce me to the students as a Virginia Tech graduate student completing my doctoral studies doing an experimental study on performance anxiety. We will distribute a STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS form to complete and pass in before the student performances begin. I will then briefly describe the study and the PERFORMANCE QUESTIONNAIRE, our tool for measuring performance anxiety prior to and during the performance and its possible effect on the performance. I will report

that some studies have shown the positive value of some performance anxiety in making a more exciting performance. I will ask each student who performs today and throughout this semester to take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire at a desk outside the stage of the Recital Hall immediately following his performances. I will thank them in advance for their cooperation, and for the honest reporting of their feelings and evaluation of their performances.

**March 2, Performance Class (10:00 a.m.)**

**March 16, Performance Class (10:00 a.m.)**

**March 23, Performance Class (10:00 a.m.)**

**April 6, STUDY GROUPS (10:00 a.m.)**

GROUP A – Band Room

GROUP B – Recital Hall

**April 13, STUDY GROUPS (10:00 a.m.)**

GROUP A – Band Room

GROUP B – Recital Hall

**April 20, Performance Class (10:00 a.m.)**

**May 4, Performance Class (10:00 a.m.)**

**May 11, Performance Class (10:00 a.m.)**

**May 18, Performance Class (10:00 a.m.)**

**May 19, Junior Proficiency (1:00-4:00 p.m.)**

Faculty will please make sure each performer fills out the STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE immediately after his performance, and deposit the form in a box provided back stage.

**May 20, Piano Juries (9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)**

Faculty will please make sure each performer fills out the STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE immediately after his performance, and deposit the form in a box provided back stage.

January 21, 2000

Dear Applied Music Students:

I met with the music faculty last fall and received their approval to do a performance anxiety experimental study in the music department at Taylor University this semester. All applied music students (majors and minors) will be participating in this study that I will be conducting as part of the requirements for my doctorate at Virginia Tech. I completed the coursework for an Ed. D in 1993, and have been serving as worship and music pastor at Castleview Baptist Church, Indianapolis, for the past six years. Prior to coming here I taught for ten years in the music department at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia, and for five years at Grand Rapids Baptist College in Michigan. This experimental study is the culmination of research for the past fifteen years.

We will be asking you for two things:

- 1) honest answers regarding your feelings, and
- 2) your attendance at two study sessions (Thursday, April 6 & 13, 10:00 – 10:50 a.m.). Students who miss one or more of the study group sessions will be asked to view a video of the sessions made available in the music office.

Immediately after your first performance, you will be asked to fill in a brief questionnaire to honestly evaluate your performance and your feelings before and during the performance. Your self-evaluation will have absolutely no bearing on your grade, and will be kept with strict confidentiality. After Spring Break you will be randomly assigned to one of two study groups, which will meet April 6 and 13 simultaneously either in the Band Room or the Recital Hall from 10:00 – 10:50 am, depending on which group you are assigned to. You will then be asked to evaluate a second performance (possibly a Junior Proficiency Exam, a Senior Recital Hearing, or a Jury), just as you did for an earlier performance in the semester.

Enclosed are some tips for musical preparation that may help you eliminate a great deal of your debilitating performance anxiety. It is my sincere desire that this experimental study will provide you with coping skills to reduce debilitating performance anxiety and maximize your performances in the future. I want to thank you in advance for your honest answers to each question, and for your attendance at these two study sessions. Due to the experimental nature of this study, I will not be allowed to discuss any of the details with you until the study is completed. After the study is completed on May 20, I would be happy to offer any information or help.

Gratefully yours,

Keith Currie

**SPEECH INTRODUCING EXPERIMENTAL STUDY  
TO MUSIC MAJORS AT TAYLOR UNIVERSITY  
2-17-00**

Thank you, Dr. Harrison, and Music Faculty, for allowing me to conduct this experimental study at Taylor this semester. I dare to say that everyone in this room has experienced performance anxiety to some degree. The situation may have been :

- Taking a final exam
- Asking that cute girl for a date!
- Giving a speech.

If you haven't experienced performance anxiety yet, you surely will when it comes time for your juries in May!

Symptoms of performance anxiety that you experienced may have included:

- Rapid heart rate
- Shallow breathing
- Muscle tension
- Butterflies in the stomach
- Sweaty palms
- Trembling
- Cotton mouth
- Nausea

Performance anxiety can be compared to fire. Fire under control in the fireplace provides warmth, ambience, romance, and is even useful for cooking. Fire out of control can burn the house down. Likewise, performance anxiety under control can be beneficial and even enhance your performance. Our goal is to provide you with some tools, some coping skills to help you get performance anxiety under control. It is possible that the majority of our performance anxiety is due to inadequate preparation. Please refer to the blue sheet you have in your hands. On it are the following tips to help you adequately prepare for performance this semester:

- Choose material that is within your interests, abilities, and relevant to your audience. If you don't like the music, or find it beyond your level of ability, or if it is inappropriate to the occasion, you are asking for trouble.
- Begin preparing early to allow time for each change or nuance to "settle" as you revise and improve.
- Be over prepared: study, analyze, and outline the musical structure. Memorize the music, whether you're required to or not. You must know it so well that it is your music and it is flowing out of you.
- Practice makes permanent; therefore, don't make errors permanent by practicing incorrectly!
- Rehearse the music mentally. Sing it in your head. Sing it aloud and conduct it as you sing.

- Rehearse the entire presentation mentally, visualizing how you want each part to happen: entrance, stance, gestures, pauses, sound, movement, exit, etc.
- Use creative energy and imagination to add human interest, humor, emotion, or drama. Look for opportunities to add color and enthusiasm to your sound and appearance.
- Plan to establish from the very start your desired emotional climate by taking command of the situation. Set a mood of anticipation and relaxation. Plan how you want to finish gracefully with confidence and a smile for a job well done.
- Practice! Practice! Practice! Rehearse it alone. Rehearse it with one or two friends present. Find other non-threatening audiences for practice performance: a nursing home, a gathering of friends or family, a classroom of elementary children, etc.
- Be expressive! Make music! Don't just do notes and rhythms. Savor and enjoy each aspect of the music, and others will enjoy it with you.
- Video or audiotape your practice performance so that you may make adjustments and improvements.
- Get proper rest, exercise, and diet. Avoid caffeine, which can add to the jitters. To do your best in performance, you must feel your best.
- Know your endurance limitations. Don't overdo it in practice the day before the performance. Trumpet players can't play if their lip is shot. Learn to pace yourself in practice. A vocalist obviously can't sing if his voice is shot from screaming at the basketball game.
- If you're a singer or wind player, have a cup of water nearby to combat the dry mouth. Wind players must also deal with practical matters such as keeping the instrument warm, either by blowing warm air into it, or wrapping it under the arm or coat. Brass players need to keep their lips limber, by buzzing a mouthpiece or using the "motorboat" technique, which by the way is great for singers, too.
- If you're a pianist or a string player, have a strategy for keeping your hands warm before a performance. Use giant arm swings, or put your hands under your armpit or under a faucet of warm water.

For our experimental study I will be asking you for three things:

1. Questionnaire: asking for honest answers regarding your feelings.
2. Attendance at two one-hour study sessions.
3. Demographic Information: Complete this white sheet with important information about you. Please turn this in today before you leave.

Let's look at these three expectations more closely:

1. Questionnaire (Please refer to your green sheet)
  - After you perform in this room, you are to go immediately to the table at the back and fill out this questionnaire.
  - Please answer the questions honestly. The purpose of this experiment is to add to our knowledge of truth.
  - Your answers will have no bearing on your grade.
  - This questionnaire will be kept in strict confidentiality. Faculty members will not see these. Do not put your name on the sheet; just your ID number.
2. Study Sessions

- Two separate groups will meet simultaneously (Thursday, April 6 & 13, 10:00-10:50 am):
    1. Band Room
    2. Recital Hall
  - Each of you will be randomly assigned to one of these groups after Spring Break.
  - Attendance will be taken.
  - Those who miss a study group session will be asked to view a video of the session missed, made available in the music office.
3. Demographic Information: Please complete this white sheet with important information about you right now and turn this in today at the back of the Recital Hall before you leave.

- Thank you for your participation and cooperation in this study.
- Thank you for taking the time to give us this demographic information.
- Thank you for remembering to go immediately to the table at the back after you perform in performance classes this semester.
- Thank you for remembering to complete the questionnaire on both sides.
- Thank you for your honest answers.
- Thank you for your attendance at the two Study Sessions (Thursday, April 6 & 13, 10:00-10:50 am).

It is my sincere desire that your participation in this experimental study will

1. Help you get the fire of performance anxiety under control.
2. Help you perform your very best.

God bless you. Thank you.

(The above speech was given by Keith Currie to the music majors and faculty at Taylor University, Thursday, February 17, 2000, in the Recital Hall, introducing the experimental study to them.)

### **Musical Preparation**

Performance anxiety can be compared to fire. Fire under control in the fireplace provides warmth, ambience, romance, and is even useful for cooking. Fire out of control can burn the house down. Likewise, performance anxiety under control can be beneficial and even enhance your performance. Our goal is to provide you with some tools, some coping skills to help you get performance anxiety under control. It is possible that the majority of your performance anxiety is due to inadequate preparation. The following are some tips to help you adequately prepare for performance this semester:

- Choose material that is within your interests, abilities, and relevant to your audience. If you don't like the music, or find it beyond your level of ability, or if it is inappropriate to the occasion, you are asking for trouble.
- Begin preparing early to allow time for each change or nuance to "settle" as you revise and improve.
- Be over prepared: study, analyze, and outline the musical structure. Memorize the music, whether you're required to or not. You must know it so well that it is your music and it is flowing out of you.
- Practice makes permanent; therefore, don't make errors permanent by practicing incorrectly!
- Rehearse the music mentally. Sing it in your head. Sing it aloud and conduct it as you sing.
- Rehearse the entire presentation mentally, visualizing how you want each part to happen: entrance, stance, gestures, pauses, sound, movement, exit, etc.
- Use creative energy and imagination to add human interest, humor, emotion, or drama. Look for opportunities to add color and enthusiasm to your sound and appearance.
- Plan to establish from the very start your desired emotional climate by taking command of the situation. Set a mood of anticipation and relaxation. Plan how you want to finish gracefully with confidence and a smile for a job well done.
- Practice! Practice! Practice! Rehearse it alone. Rehearse it with one or two friends present. Find other non-threatening audiences for practice performance: a nursing home, a gathering of friends or family, a classroom of elementary children, etc.
- Be expressive! Make music! Don't just do notes and rhythms. Savor and enjoy each aspect of the music, and others will enjoy it with you.
- Video or audiotape your practice performance so that you may make adjustments and improvements.
- Get proper rest, exercise, and diet. Avoid caffeine, which can add to the jitters. To do your best in performance, you must feel your best.
- Know your endurance limitations. Don't overdo it in practice the day before the performance. Trumpet players can't play if their lip is shot. Learn to pace yourself in practice. A vocalist obviously can't sing if his voice is shot from screaming at the basketball game.
- If you're a singer or wind player, have a cup of water nearby to combat the dry mouth. Wind players must also deal with practical matters such as keeping the

instrument warm, either by blowing warm air into it, or wrapping it under the arm or coat. Brass players need to keep their lips limber, by buzzing a mouthpiece or using the “motorboat” technique, which by the way is great for singers, too.

- If you’re a pianist or a string player, have a strategy for keeping your hands warm before a performance. Use giant arm swings, or put your hands under your armpit or under a faucet of warm water.

@Copyright 2000 by Keith Currie  
All Rights Reserved



**Student Demographics Information  
Anxiety Coping Skills Program**

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Classification: Freshman \_\_\_\_\_ Sophomore \_\_\_\_\_ Junior \_\_\_\_\_ Senior \_\_\_\_\_

Performance medium: voice \_\_\_\_\_ instrument \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: M F Music Major? \_\_\_\_\_ Music Minor? \_\_\_\_\_

Years of private lessons in this medium \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate number of solo performances in this medium \_\_\_\_\_

Average weekly practice time \_\_\_\_\_ Place of  
practice \_\_\_\_\_

Currently on an academic scholarship? Yes No

Currently on a music scholarship? Yes No

Total number of credit hours currently taking \_\_\_\_\_

Number of employment hours currently working per week \_\_\_\_\_

Married? Yes No Number of children \_\_\_\_\_

Private music instructor's  
name \_\_\_\_\_

# Semesters studied with him/her \_\_\_\_\_ Day & time of  
lesson \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Length of lesson \_\_\_\_\_ Living on campus? Yes No

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ P.O. Box  
# \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT I.D.#-----

DATE\_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE  
PART ONE – YOUR HONEST FEELINGS**

Your answers to the following questions will better help us understand your perceptions of your performance. There are no right or wrong answers. Your responses should reflect your honest opinions. This information will be kept in strict confidentiality.

**CHOOSE ONE**

- |          |                            |                            |
|----------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>0</b> | <b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>   | <b>“Absolutely not!”</b>   |
| <b>1</b> | <b>MODERATELY DISAGREE</b> | <b>“I don’t think so.”</b> |
| <b>2</b> | <b>MODERATELY AGREE</b>    | <b>“I think so.”</b>       |
| <b>3</b> | <b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>      | <b>“Definitely yes!”</b>   |
| <b>4</b> | <b>DO NOT KNOW</b>         | <b>“I have no clue.”</b>   |

1. I was well rehearsed and musically prepared for this performance.
2. I performed the solo quite well in my latest private lesson.
3. I felt tense and nervous while performing in my latest private lesson.
4. I was under a lot of pressure to do well on this performance.
5. Minutes prior to the performance I felt very nervous and out of control.
6. Throughout my performance today I felt confident and in control.
7. Today’s performance seemed to be enhanced by my nervous energy.
8. Today’s performance was inferior compared to that in my latest private lesson.
9. I am pleased with my performance today.

What would you do differently if you could start over and do it again?

**STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**PART TWO – FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE**

What effect do you think the following factors may have had on your performance today?

**CHOOSE ONE**

**NO EFFECT**

**SLIGHT EFFECT**

**MODERATE EFFECT**

**GREAT EFFECT**

**DO NOT KNOW**

1. \_\_\_\_ Lack of sleep
2. \_\_\_\_ Injury
3. \_\_\_\_ Physical problem
4. \_\_\_\_ Not feeling well physically
5. \_\_\_\_ Caffeine
6. \_\_\_\_ Alcohol
7. \_\_\_\_ Nicotine
8. \_\_\_\_ Drugs (prescription or otherwise)
9. \_\_\_\_ Academic stress
10. \_\_\_\_ Family - related stress
11. \_\_\_\_ Stressful relationship
12. \_\_\_\_ Personal loss
13. \_\_\_\_ Death of family member or friend
14. \_\_\_\_ Tragedy
15. \_\_\_\_ Problem with accompanist
16. \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**MUSIC SELECTION** \_\_\_\_\_

**TEACHER NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE**

Your answers to the following questions will better help us understand your perceptions of your student's performance. Your responses should reflect your honest opinions. This information will be kept in strict confidentiality.

**CHOOSE ONE**

- |          |                            |                            |
|----------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>0</b> | <b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>   | <b>"Absolutely not!"</b>   |
| <b>1</b> | <b>MODERATELY DISAGREE</b> | <b>"I don't think so."</b> |
| <b>2</b> | <b>MODERATELY AGREE</b>    | <b>"I think so."</b>       |
| <b>3</b> | <b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>      | <b>"Definitely yes!"</b>   |
| <b>4</b> | <b>DO NOT KNOW</b>         | <b>"I have no clue."</b>   |

10. My student was well rehearsed and musically prepared for this performance.
11. My student performed the solo quite well in his latest private lesson.
12. My student seemed tense and nervous while performing in his latest private lesson.
13. My student was under a lot of pressure to do well on this performance.
14. Minutes prior to the performance my student seemed very nervous and out of control.
15. Throughout the performance today my student seemed confident and in control.
16. Today's performance seemed to be enhanced by my student's nervous energy.
17. Today's performance was inferior compared to that in the previous private lesson.
18. I am pleased with my student's performance today.

## **Performance Anxiety Coping Skills**

*A seminar by Keith Currie*

### **Instructions**

Please sign in at the back for Performance Class credit and for our attendance records, if you haven't already done so. If your name is not on the list, you probably belong in Session A and need to report to the Recital Hall with your instrument immediately. The contents of this seminar will be given to you as a handout at the end of this hour, so you do not need to take notes. It is very important that you not share this information with any of the music majors in the other session. They will have access to this material after the experimental study, but please do not leave the printed handouts anywhere to be read by the students in the other group. It will render the results of the study useless.

### **Introduction**

There was a time in my life as an adolescent that I could not give my name in public without becoming nervous and self-conscious. I realized that if I was ever to amount to anything in life, I was going to have to overcome this problem of self-consciousness. I began to search through my Bible for insight into this problem.

Looking at life through the lens of scripture gave me a unique perspective on all of life, a Christian world and life view. I found the Bible to be my best source for shaping my perspective of myself and all of life, giving me renewed confidence and strength. Accepting myself, with all of my imperfections, as a unique person that God designed for His special purposes before I was born, was a liberating discovery. "Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139: 13-14). A healthy self-image based upon divine revelation in the scriptures freed me to be myself, realize my potential, and capitalize on my assets.

Coming to recognize and accept my abilities and my limitations, I no longer found it necessary to impress people with my musical performance abilities. I now viewed musical performance opportunities as a chance to somehow enhance the lives of others while seeking to bring glory to God. "Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31). "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Though I want to give my very best to God, I now recognize that my well-being and acceptance with God is not based on my performance, but on His unfailing love and grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). God's acceptance of me gives me freedom from the pressure of perfectionism. Yes, I want to please Him with my performance, but now His power enables me to do far more than I could ever do on my own. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind." (II Timothy 1:7) His presence within me is my source of power and strength. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous.

Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:8-9)

- **Fire under control in the fireplace** provides warmth, ambience, romance, and is even useful for cooking. Fire out of control can burn the house down. Likewise, performance anxiety under control can be beneficial and even enhance your performance. Our goal is to provide you with some tools, some coping skills to help you get performance anxiety under control, and even use it to your advantage!
- **Performance anxiety can be classified in one of three levels:**
  1. REACTIVE
  2. MALADAPTIVE
  3. ADAPTIVE

*Reactive* performance anxiety is that which you experience as the natural result of being ill prepared. None of the coping skills, which you learn today, will help you overcome reactive performance anxiety. Only practice, hard work, and skill development will remove the problem of reactive performance anxiety. If however, you are well prepared to perform and still have a problem with the jitters, you have what is called *maladaptive* performance anxiety. The coping skills presented today and next week could very well help you to get the fire under control and move up to the third level that we call *adaptive* performance anxiety, where you actually use performance anxiety to enhance your performance. Our goal is to get everyone in this room to the third level, adaptive performance anxiety, where the fire is under control and used to your advantage.

### **Physical Relaxation Skills**

- **What can you do when panic strikes?**

Have you experienced the butterflies in your stomach? Your muscles tense up? Your heart begins to race? Your breathing becomes shallow? What can you do? There are some proven physical relaxation techniques that will slow down the racing heartbeat, relax your tensing muscles, and get you breathing deeply, while you renew your mental perspective. How does this work?

- **Biofeedback experiment.**

Did you know that you can consciously send feelings of relaxation to your fingertips at will? Using biofeedback equipment, I've attached electrodes to my fingertips, and consciously sent feelings of relaxation to them. The electrodes monitor skin temperature, and when the muscles relax, the blood circulation increases in the fingers, and the temperature goes right up! We are “fearfully and wonderfully made!” Our minds are much more complex than any computer, and control all the systems of our bodies.

- **Relax specific muscles and breathe deeply.**

Make a fist with both hands, tightening your hand and arm muscles. Now, let your hands drop to your sides and hang heavy and limp. Close your eyes and send feelings of relaxation to various muscle groups in your body. Raise your shoulders; now let them drop, keeping your tall posture. Roll your head around and relax all your neck muscles. Swallow and yawn as you inhale slowly through your nose and exhale ever so slowly. Inhale and exhale slowly and deeply, relaxing all your muscles. This simple relaxation

exercise can be practiced whenever you feel yourself getting stressed out, or tensed up, five minutes before you get up to perform! When your heart begins to race and your breathing becomes shallow, you can counteract the feelings of panic with this simple relaxation exercise, while you work at getting your head together. How do you reprogram your mind?

### **Mental Perspective**

- **What is the root of the problem?**

I believe that most of our performance anxiety problems are rooted in our thinking. Our irrational thoughts, our skewed perceptions, and negative self-talk can put us into an emotional and physical tailspin. We need to build a healthy self-concept, view of others, and all of life. What better way is there to do this than with the Word of God? Wisdom is looking at all of life from God's point of view. Our mental perspective is in a constant state of flux. Our thinking can shift on us without our knowing it. We can lose our bearings by neglect, or by being led astray. Our minds must be maintained and renewed, as our culture and the world around us continually bombard us. A healthy perspective is not a once-for-all fixed thing, but requires ongoing maintenance.

- **What is a healthy self-image?**

Have you accepted yourself as a unique person that God designed for His special purposes? A healthy self-image frees you to be yourself, and become others-conscious instead of self-conscious. Self-consciousness is synonymous with debilitating performance anxiety. There was a time in my life that I was so self-conscious that I could not speak a sentence in public, let alone give a speech, without being overcome by self-consciousness. How was I to overcome this self-consciousness? It began by accepting myself, with all my imperfections, and actually saying the words, "Thank you, God, for my skinny bones and my crooked teeth." Do you wish that you were taller? Shorter? Bigger? Smaller? Smarter? More talented? If there is anything about you that you wish you could change, you are in essence saying that God goofed when He made you. You are not a product of chance, of genes and chromosomes randomly coming together. According to Psalm 139, God designed you before you were born. You were intricately wrought in your mother's womb. I believe if you can right now specifically thank God for those very things that bother you about yourself, you will have taken a giant step in developing a healthy self-image and freeing yourself from self-consciousness.

- **To the degree that you can look at people and love them, you will not be afraid.**

"Perfect love casts out all fear." (1 John 4:18) Loving others takes the spotlight off you and shines it back on them. How can you demonstrate love to people in your audience? Let's begin to answer that by identifying what it is that you can give them. You can give them the beauty of your musical expressions. You can give them Jesus, outlived in your life and shining through your eyes and countenance.

- **Think of your music as communication, not performance.**

Performance is self-centered; communication is others-centered. Decide what it is you want to communicate. How would you like your audience to feel or respond? Music has the power to express what words cannot. Something special happens when music begins. Are you creating a mood or impression? Are you telling a story? Are you representing a

character? Does your music move people to dance? Perhaps your music does all of the above through drama. Perhaps your music will be an encouragement to someone in your audience, and challenge them to realize their potential in life. Do you think that your music could cause them to worship God and give Him glory? Lovingly communicate to each person in your audience with your music and with your whole being.

- **Reject all images of failure and all irrational and catastrophic thoughts.**

Feelings are determined by thoughts. Use clear thinking to replace negative self-talk and cognitive distortions. One mistake does not mean total failure. Don't let unrealistic expectations of perfection ruin your ability to enjoy your music. Strive to do your best, but be ready to accept minor mishaps as "par for the course." View your audience as vulnerable human beings like yourself with imperfections of their own.

- **Visualize your ideal performance: how it looks, how it feels, and how it sounds.**

If you can't visualize it, it won't happen. Allow your imagination to rehearse a wonderful rendition of your music, totally free from tension and anxiety.

- **Focus on the music and the process of making the music.**

Savor and enjoy every phrase of the music. If you enjoy the music, your listeners will too! Let it flow from your inner being. Consider your music as a gift providing your listeners with pleasure and beauty that could motivate them to worship the Creator.

### Spiritual Resources

- **Be reconciled to God.**

Before you can begin to understand or appropriate the following spiritual resources, you have to become a new person in Christ through faith in Him. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them... We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." (II Corinthians. 5:17-20)

- **Confess and forsake all known sin.**

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John. 1:9) We cannot expect to appropriate God's blessings if we are living in sin. We can only expect the chastening of our heavenly Father.

- **Yield yourself wholly to God.**

"Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:1-2) He will transform us as we renew our minds into the image of his Son Jesus.

- **Claim the power of the Holy Spirit for boldness to be His witness.**

Prayerfully depend on Him, not your own expertise or abilities. "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly." (Acts 4:31) These were uneducated fishermen boldly speaking the Word of God.

- **God's power is able to give us victory in our thought life.**



“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, to the pulling down of strongholds, bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (II Corinthians 10:4)

- **I am responsible for what I allow myself to think about.**

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.” (Philippians 4:6-8) I must reject and replace all other thoughts with the above.

- **Claim victory over fear.**

“God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.” (II Timothy 1:7) “The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1-2)

- **He is the source of peace.**

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.” (Galatians 5:22) How can that peace be yours?

- **Claim His peace as you pray with thanksgiving.**

“Be anxious 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 passes all understanding shall keep (garrison) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

- **Claim His presence and His love.**

“I will never leave you or forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5) “Lo, I am with you always.” (Matthew 28:20) “Nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ.” (Romans 8:35)

- **Know and obey His commands, and all you do will succeed.**

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.” (Psalm 1:1-3) “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:8-9)

- **Remember that a flawless performance without love is worthless.**

“Though I speak (sing or play) with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.” (I Corinthians 13:1)

- **Engage the prayer support of godly friends.**

There are times when we’re getting beat up by the enemy, and we need others to come to our rescue. “Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel... Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.” (Ephesians 6:19-20)

- **After every success, beware of the insidious sin of pride.**

“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18) “You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.” (Psalm 18:27)

- **Acknowledge and thank Him as the source of all that’s good.**

“Every good and perfect gift is from above...” (James 1:17)

- **Seek to bring glory to God.**

“Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” (I Corinthians 10:31)

- **Remember that He is the one you want to please.**

“We speak (sing or play) as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts.” (I Thessalonians 2:4)

@Copyright 2000 by Keith Currie  
All Rights Reserved

**Seminar Part Two**  
**Performance Anxiety Coping Skills**  
**Review of the Related Literature**

Definitions

Performance Anxiety is a state of anxiety or stage fright prior to and during a performance.

Symptoms **transparency:**

1. Muscle tension (lock-up or "freezing" of the body, or quivering hands, lips, knees, etc.)
2. Rapid heart rate or palpitations
3. Sweating (palms, forehead, etc.)
4. Dry mouth (cotton mouth)
5. Mental block, or loss of concentration
6. Clipped speech, stammering, & stuttering
7. Shallow, rapid breathing
8. Nausea
9. Nervous twitching
10. Feelings of suffocation/difficulty getting enough air
11. Elevated temperature

(Salmon, 1995; American Academy of Family Physicians, 1994; Steptoe, 1987; Wolfe, 1989)

Measurement

It can be assessed by self-report or with the use of laboratory equipment measuring physiological symptoms such as heart rate, blood pressure, galvanic skin response, muscle tension, respiration, etc. One of the problems with physiological measures is the possible distraction they may cause the performer, perhaps even adding to his anxiety. This may have been a problem, particularly with self-conscious female adolescents, in the study by LeBlanc (1997), where a heart monitor is strapped to the chest, and must be in contact with the bare skin.

Another problem is that persons reporting performance anxiety manifest different physiological symptoms. Physiological arousal is not necessarily a measure of anxiety; it may just reflect excitement or the tempo of the music being performed. "Studies comparing anxious and non-anxious musicians have found that both groups show increased physiological activity when performing, without differences between them" (Steptoe, 1989, p. 4). Since we are defining performance anxiety as feelings of apprehension and nervousness prior to and during a performance, it seems that self-report is the best measurement we can make of those feelings at this time.

Auerbach's study (1981) and the success of his "do-it-yourself" treatment program, provided this researcher with encouragement to develop an easily accessible treatment program for music students, and to use self-report measures of performance anxiety. "Because elaborate measure of students' responses (e.g., psychological monitoring, videotape recording, audience or professor evaluation) could impart their

own demand characteristics, the measures of results were kept simple and unassuming. The participants evaluated themselves after each talk on a 5-point scale of how successful the program was in alleviating their stage fright and of how easy it was to follow the program... Students do not, presumably, seek help in order to be able to handle galvanic skin response (GSR) electrodes, cardiometers, trained judges, or questionnaire batteries. Surely what they do want is an easy-to-follow and inherently logical regimen that will allow them to speak in public with less discomfort than before. It may be unnecessary to measure more than that” (Auerbach, 1981, p. 107-108).

If you were an organ major at IU in 1978, you might have participated in the following experimental study:

Performance Conditions [transparency](#)

Physiological Indicators [transparency](#)

### **Levels of Anxiety [transparency](#)**

- Reactive
- Maladaptive (debilitating)
- Adaptive (facilitating)

Hamann's studies with music students at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro assessed the musical quality of performances under enhanced and reduced anxiety performance conditions. The results indicated that anxiety can facilitate the performance of better trained musicians (Hamann 1982, p. 70 and 1983, p. 37) . Lehrer (1985, p. 4) presented in a paper to NASM that anxiety can improve or interfere with one's performance on various tasks. He said that excess muscle tension and excess anxiety can severely impair performance and that anxiety can have both positive and negative effects on performance of a variety of tasks.

## **Scope of the Problem**

### Musicians with Performance Anxiety

Vladimir Horowitz & famous musicians [transparency](#).

To Cope with Tension [transparency](#).

Severe Stage Fright [transparency](#)

Social Phobic Musicians [transparency](#)

Impairments of Musicians [transparency](#)

Stress & Anxiety Symptoms [transparency](#)

At the 12th International Trumpet Competition in France, many of the outstanding competitors performed below their level of expertise, reportedly due to debilitating performance anxiety. Leading professional trumpeters and judges present at this competition, Philip Jones, Roger Voisin, Timofei Dokschidzer, Roger Delmotte, and Jean-Pierre Mathez, expressed their concern for this problem. Mathez suggested, “Why not devote half or more of one’s practice time to exercises in self-control and relaxation?” (Brass Bulletin, vol. 59, 1987, p. 116).

Undergraduate music students have higher performance anxiety than professional or amateur musicians (Steptoe, 1987, p.7).

## FACTORS LINKED TO DEBILITATING ANXIETY [transparency](#)

Influencing Factors [transparency](#)

### Coping Strategies

#### Drug therapy

- Drug therapy [transparency](#).
- Sedatives & alcohol [transparency](#).
- Propranolol [transparency](#).
- 34 social phobic musicians [transparency](#).
- Beta blocking drugs [transparency](#).
- Nadolol and diazepam [transparency](#).
- Propranolol [transparency](#).
- Possible dangers [transparency](#).

#### Holistic Coping skills

#### COPING STRATEGIES [transparency](#)

Another 1990 survey of 162 performing musicians conducted by Wolfe (1990, p. 139) supported the concept of musical performance anxiety as a multidimensional cluster of traits: physiologic, behavioral, and cognitive variables. The wide variety of coping strategies seems to be the key to effectively coping with a multidimensional anxiety.

#### Cognitive Therapies

#### **COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS [transparency](#)**

Adapted from *Feeling Good*,

by Dr. David Burns

Professor of Psychiatry

University of Pennsylvania

1. All or nothing thinking.
  - If I miss this note it's over!
  - If I don't play this perfectly, I'm a failure.
  - My musical career is over if I don't play this right.
2. Overgeneralization.
  - That memory lapse proves I can't do this.
  - That error makes this a terrible performance.
3. Mental filter.
  - That passage was terrible; it ruined the whole second movement.
  - That memory lapse ruined the whole performance.
4. Disqualifying the positive.

- They don't want to hear this; they're just here because they have to be here.
  - They don't mean it; they're just being polite (with applause or compliments).
5. Jumping to conclusions
    - One person in the audience falls asleep, and you conclude the whole audience is bored with the performance.
    - I just know I'm going to miss that difficult note.
    - They're going to think I'm terrible!
  6. Magnification or minimization
    - What a terrible mistake; my reputation is ruined! (Most people probably didn't even notice it!)
    - I can't seem to do anything right today.
  7. Emotional reasoning.
    - I feel overwhelmed with the last page; it is impossible to play.
    - I feel so inadequate.
    - I feel so out of control.
    - I feel like quitting.
    - I don't deserve to be up here.
  8. Should statements.
    - I should have practiced more.
    - I should have chosen a different piece.
    - I should have never taken that faster tempo.
  9. Labeling and mislabeling.
    - What a loser!
    - What a spastic!
    - What a klutz!
    - What an idiot!

U of M & LONDON U [transparency](#)  
 CAUSAL ELEMENTS [transparency](#)  
 EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES [transparencies](#)  
 U of LONDON & INNER GAME. [Transparency](#)

### **University of British Columbia University of British Columbia**

An experimental study involving 53 pianists at the University of British Columbia demonstrated that both the cognitive and the behavioral therapies conducted over a 3-week period were effective in reducing musical-performance anxiety in pianists. The cognitive therapy was superior to the behavioral therapy in reducing visual signs of anxiety and in enhancing expectations of personal efficacy. Finding that high-anxious performers were more self-preoccupied and self-deprecating than low-anxious performers, Kendrick urges the development of additional cognitively based techniques. (Kendrick, 1982, p. 353)

### Behavioral Therapies

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES [TRANSPARENCY](#)

**Physical Relaxation**

- Breathe deeply
- Relax specific muscles
- Biofeedback

BIOFEEDBACK **TRANSPARENCY**  
ARNOLD JACOBS **TRANSPARENCY**

Classroom and Group Therapies

Clinical therapy may not be necessary in many cases of performance anxiety; the teaching of cognitive coping skills has been demonstrated to be beneficial in the conventional classroom setting (Carnahan, 1981). Approximately 64% of performance anxiety in musicians may be classified as state anxiety, and can be overcome with the assistance of a music teacher as easily as with the help of a psychotherapist (Lehrer, 1981, 1990).

In regard to public speaking anxiety, Ortiz (1988) proposed an instructional approach for minimizing stage fright, based on insights from A.H. Buss's theory of audience anxiety: that audience anxiety correlates with feelings of self-consciousness, characteristics of the audience, and the novelty of the speaking role.

Ayers (1986, p. 277) conducted three extensive studies with college students in basic public speaking classes. The third study included a cognitive modification treatment which was effective in lowering speakers stage fright levels.

Auerbach used two treatments, in the form of read-it-yourself handouts, systematic desensitization and 16 tips for combating stage fright, and compared their effectiveness in reducing public speaking anxiety. Student subjects rated the 16 tips as more successful and easier to follow (Auerbach, 1981, p. 108).

A study investigating speech anxiety in the basic college speech course indicated that students felt their should be a unit on stage fright and that discussion about it was helpful (Mandeville, 1991, p.1).

Questionnaires filled out by 201 college music students at three schools (Southwest Texas State University, University of Miami, and the Manhattan School of Music) regarding musician stresses and coping patterns. The findings revealed that the students sought help first from their friends, second from their teachers, and then a family member. Professional help (psychiatrist, social worker, psychologist) was sought least frequently for aid with problems related to their music. Among the top ten sources of stress were music progress impatience, pre-performance nervousness, stage fright, and concentration (Dews, 1989, p.37,39).

A survey of 193 performing musicians, amateur and professional, revealed that 162 of them used at least one coping strategy. The importance of learning to keep one's emotions under control before and during a musical performance was supported by the fact that the total number of emotion-focused coping strategies reported was nearly twice the number of problem-focused strategies. Those employing the emotion-focused coping strategies reported feeling greater confidence and competence than the others. The results of this study suggest that music teachers add basic stress-reduction techniques to their teaching routines. (Wolfe, 1990, p. 35-36).

Is there a need for another coping skills model for reducing performance anxiety? The surveys show that we need to do more at the educational level to nurture coping strategies for surviving the pitfalls of public performance. Dr. Kyle Pruett (1988, p. 74), Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Yale Child Study Center, suggests that we must arm our students with psychological and behavioral skills to render them more durable in the crucible of public performance.



**INFORMAL PRACTICE PERFORMANCE SESSION**

Dr. Kerchal Armstrong, moderator  
Thursday, April 6 & 13, 10:00-10:50 am  
Recital Hall, Taylor University

Welcome to the first of two sessions on Performance Anxiety. We need to make sure you are in the right section. The following persons have been randomly selected to be here in this session:

*(Read roll call roster):* Please answer when your name is called....

Persons not on this list need to report immediately to the Band Room. The Coping Skills materials presented to the other half of music majors in the Band Room will be available to you on videotape and printed form in the music office at the end of final exam week. The design of the experiment is comparing the differences between the two separate approaches.

Performance Anxiety has been compared to fire. Under control in the fireplace it is useful for providing warmth, ambience, and for cooking. Out of control, it can burn the house down. Your goal should be to get it under control and use it to your advantage to make for a more exciting performance. This session is based upon the premise that practice performance in non-threatening situations will help you build your confidence in front of an audience. We want this to be a relaxed, informal, environment, in which you demonstrate something from your practice routine that you can do in your sleep: a warm-up routine, an etude, a scale, or an excerpt from a solo. The time limit per person will be 1 - 2 minutes, so everyone has a chance to demonstrate something. To help keep this informal, feel free to talk about what you're doing and what its value is. Some of you may need to run to your locker right now to get your instrument. If your instrument is not on the premises, stay put and you'll be given 1 – 2 minutes to verbally describe your practice routine. All of you be sure to come prepared with your instrument next week to demonstrate something different in another informal practice performance.

To keep things moving so that everyone has a chance to share, we'll start down front in this corner and work our way to the back.

*After everyone has shared:*

Don't forget to come prepared with your instrument next week, Thursday, April 13, 10:00 am, here in the Recital Hall. Be prepared to demonstrate something different (1 – 2 minute exercise, drill, scales, etude, or solo excerpt) in another Informal Practice Performance. Thank you for your participation. See you next week.

**ADJUSTMENT TABLE  
FOR QUESTIONNAIRES**

DEFINITION OF NUMBERS ON QUESTIONNAIRES

0 = STRONGLY DISAGREE  
1 = MODERATELY DISAGREE  
2 = MODERATELY AGREE  
3 = STRONGLY AGREE  
4 = DO NOT KNOW

NEW DEFINITION OF NUMBERS

0 = DO NOT KNOW  
1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE  
2 = MODERATELY DISAGREE  
3 = MODERATELY AGREE  
4 = STRONGLY AGREE

**ADJUSTMENT FORMULA**

Q #1-5, 7, 9 (ADD ONE TO EACH EXCEPT 4)

0>1  
1>2  
2>3  
3>4  
4>0

Q # 6, 8 (REVERSE; THEN ADD ONE TO EACH EXCEPT 4)

0>3>4  
0.5>2.5>3.5  
1>2>3  
1.5>1.5>2.5  
2>1>2  
2.5>0.5>1.5  
3>0>1  
3.5>-0.5>0.5  
4>0

**THANK YOU'S  
FROM TAYLOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN  
PERFORMANCE ANXIETY SEMINAR**

Date: 05/23/2000 10:02:46 AM  
From: isaiah\_koh@TAYLORU.EDU (Koh, Isaiah)  
To: DrKeithCurrie@aol.com

I just want to say that you've challenged me and encouraged me a lot when you mentioned that we should play with love for God and for the people we perform to, or else it's nothing. Thanks for this spiritual input that I can share with my people who even struggle with playing in church. Take care and God bless!

By His grace,  
Isaiah Koh

Date: 05/24/2000 9:47:43 AM  
From: cameron\_gaither@tayloru.edu (Gaither, Cameron)  
To: DrKeithCurrie@aol.com

This past fall my fiancée and I worked through a book entitled Telling Your Self the Truth, by William Bachus and Marrie Chapain. Many of the helpful techniques of monitoring self talk and choosing to remember the bits of truth which end up influencing one's emotional state were reiterated in your seminar. Thank you. And you might even want to check out the book. Traditionally it is for depression, but I've found it useful for much more than just that.

Thanks again,  
Cameron Gaither

Vita

Keith Currie

2307 Greystone Drive  
Moon Township, PA 15108  
E-mail: keithcurrie@juno.com

**Education**

<b>Virginia Polytechnic Institute</b> , Blacksburg, VA Ed D (Doctor of Education in Teaching and Learning; Music Cognate)	2001
<b>Indiana University of Pennsylvania</b> , Indiana, PA M. Ed (Master of Education in Music Education)	1977
<b>Grace College</b> , Winona Lake, IN B. Music Ed. (Bachelor of Music Education)	1969
<b>Moody Bible Institute</b> , Chicago, IL Diploma in Sacred Music	1967

**Employment**

<b>Christ Church of Grove Farm</b> , Sewickley, PA Minister of Music	2000-present
<b>Castleview Baptist Church</b> , Indianapolis, IN Worship and Music Pastor	1994-2000
<b>Liberty University</b> , Lynchburg, VA Assistant Professor of Music	1983-1993
<b>Grand Rapids Baptist College</b> , Grand Rapids, MI (now Cornerstone University) Assistant Professor of Music	(half-time) 1978-1983
<b>Berean Baptist Church</b> , Grand Rapids, MI Minister of Music	(half-time) 1978-1983
<b>Homer Center Schools</b> , Homer City, PA Director of Choirs: elementary, junior high, and senior high General Music Teacher: grades 4-9	1973-1978
<b>Inter-City Christian Schools</b> , Allen Park, MI Director of Choirs and Band General Music Teacher: elementary and secondary	1969-1971