

# **Instrumental Music Student Perceptions of Teacher Support for Experienced Music Performance Anxiety**

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## **Abstract**

Music students often experience feelings of anxiety when they perform. Sometimes this anxiety is severe enough to be a detriment to the student's performance. Teachers who are aware of their students' Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) may be able to provide aid and support to them in their times of need. This research study was designed to learn how students view their own performance anxiety and to see how they view their teacher's involvement in their anxiety issues. The specific questions of the study were: (a) To what degrees are music students experiencing anxiety, (b) In what ways do these students seek treatment to alleviate the anxiety they experience, and (c) How do these students feel their teachers help their MPA experiences?

Few studies regarding MPA have been conducted with middle and high school student musicians. Thus, little is known about how pre-college musicians handle MPA and where they turn for help. The purpose of this study was to examine how student musicians view the intensity of their own experienced anxiety and to investigate how they view their teacher's knowledge of and ability to help them with it. Teachers need to develop an assortment of strategies to provide such help and support for students who suffer from debilitating anxiety while performing. This study may provide insight into the needs of their students so that they might begin to effectively do so.

Participants were instrumental music students from public schools in and around a large Southwestern city. Participants were selected from a pool of 60 band students, chosen to cover a broad spectrum of instrumental choices, both male and female, and from grades six through nine. Data were collected through a survey instrument. A significant difference was found in participants' perceptions of their teachers' willingness and ability to alleviate the effects of anxiety. A significant difference was also found in the usefulness of mock performances as an aid to negative effects of anxiety. This study may provide a starting point in investigating how music students experience MPA and how they seek advice from their teachers. This research may also help to uncover weaknesses in how teachers are equipped to help their students with MPA. The author can be reached at [csieger@email.arizona.edu](mailto:csieger@email.arizona.edu)