Regulating Attention and Emotion in Music Practice and Performance

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Abstract

The current literature survey was conducted starting with important concepts related to music performance, musicians' attention regulation and wellbeing as mentioned in books such as Bruser (1997), Green and Gallwey (2015), and McLachlan (2017). The survey was carried out to investigate current interdisciplinary research and academic explorations on music practice and performance, meditation, emotion-regulation and self-regulation. It is shown conclusively that attention to sound, internal singing, and imagery are the anchors of attention in music-making. They are similar to concentration tools such as breathing, mantra, and visualization in focused attention (FA) meditation. In a broad sense, the principles of open monitoring (OM) meditation and FA meditation could be seen as the strategic approaches to regulate attention and emotion, and promote self-regulation among musicians.

Keywords: Music Performance, Music Practice, Attention, Meditation, Emotion-regulation, Self-regulation.

Introduction. Mental Interference

Mental interferences in music practice and music performance occur for various reasons and take different forms. For example, they can be seen as a misplacement of attention to musical related or non-related thoughts. In this case, the absence of self-awareness, self-control or self-reflection may lead to self-doubt or rumination. With the intensifying competitive nature of music professions as well as sociological changes of modern time, over the last decade an imposing body of music practice and performance literature has been dedicated to concepts such as regulating attention, cultivating physical/aural awareness, reducing negative mental chatters, and promoting emotional wellbeing among musicians. (Bruser, 1997; McLachlan, 2017; Gordon, 2006; Green &

Gallwey, 2015). This article starts with concepts highlighted in the above publication and further relates the discussions around these concepts to the literature on meditation, emotion-regulation, and self-regulation in music practice and performance.

During music making, musicians need to self evaluate on issues such as tone production, playing dexterity or proper physical use. The purpose is to refine their performance skills to meet high technical and musical requirements. The concepts, strategies and implementations of the requirements are often formulated during lesson instructions. According to McLachaln (2017), during instruction, it is only natural for teachers to highlight errors and problems, and to provide solutions to help improve students' skills. Yeh (2016) argues that the improvement is expected to occur concurrently with students' repeated practice. However, those advices are strategic and effective only at times. They are not concrete rules that can dictate the entire course of performance preparation. The implementation of the strategies can be seen as two sides of the same coin. First, students might focus on less successful ones by default and, therefore, become unable to direct their attention elsewhere due to the aforementioned strategic nature of instruction (McLachaln, 2017). As a result, the residual thoughts from prior instructions may linger, thus causing mental interference during performance. Second, students might overlook or misunderstand the instructions and engage in mindless or faulty practices which lack of strategic planning, physical and aural awareness, and self-evaluation (Pike, 2017). Subsequently, this may produce inconsistencies in the quality of their practice which eventually lead to frustration. Cumulatively, self-doubt and negative thoughts will also arise. These frustrations and other negative thoughts and feelings become part of a musician's thought processes in a complex manner during learning, practice and performance. A high number of musicians have suffered from dwelling on previous bad musical experiences, being overly concerned about the outcome of their performances, or being plagued by non music-related matters such as the criticisms or opinions given by others. As pointed out by Bruser (1997)

> We are all familiar with the strong emotions that music elicits in us and how it can dissolve our preoccupation with problems or petty concerns. Yet strangely enough, such preoccupation also occurs when we practice. Either our mind wanders off the music, or we get caught up in musical concepts that obstruct direct experience of sound. (p. 170)

Indeed, music making is a complex activity consisting of fine motor control, human expression as well as thought-out interpretive devices fine tuned by attention and awareness (Sloboda & Lehmann, 2001) and emotions that are perceived or induced (van Zijl & Sloboda, 2010). According to Green and Gallwey (2015), the nature of playing music and sports can be described as "forms of self-expression which 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" (p. 7). Seeing expression, spontaneity, structure, technique and inspiration as compounded ingredients to a successful performance, Gordon (2006) explained that it is imperative for musicians to sustain or direct their attention with those ingredients in the right combination and the right time.

Regulating Attention and Emotion through Meditation

The effectiveness of meditation has been proven to help with attention regulation (Chambers et al, 2008; Jha et al., 2007; Moore et. al., 2012; Tang et al., 2007), self-regulation (Jha et al., 2007; Tang et al., 2007; Tang et al., 2013) and emotion-regulation (Moore et.al., 2016; Jones, 2018). Since they are also highly desired mental qualities in music making, how do musicians apply and relate the principles of meditation practice to cultivate those known effects? How relevant meditation practice is to musicians? Pianist and piano pedagogue Madeline Bruser, also a long term meditator, simplified her practice method in layman language to musicians:

> Meditation was simple. I sat still and focused on my breathing in order to develop an awareness of ordinary events in the present moment. This discipline slowed down my chattering, goal-oriented mind. I learned to relax, not worry so much about the past or the future, and perceive present events more clearly. (1997, p.2)

After an unsuccessful audition, she started her meditation practice in an attempt to alleviate performance anxiety and other emotional turbulences. Gradually, meditation transformed her piano practice and performance. The awareness and ease cultivated from the practice had enabled her to be more attentive and reflective about the 'present moment' of music making, and improved her aural awareness and physical control.

> I found myself taking half-minute breaks on the bench while practicing, no longer in a hurry to accomplish anything. It felt good just to sit there and take my time deciding what to do next. Subtleties I'd never noticed before —about the movement of my hands and the harmonies in the music —became striking and engaging. Gradually, I developed a new understanding of the physiological mechanics of playing. I also found that listening more attentively improved my physical coordination. (Bruser, 1997, p.3)

Benefits of meditation have been explored in music-related research. It is commonly used as an intervention to treat Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) (Baird, 2016; Lin et. al., 2007). Lin et al. (2008) studied the effects of chan (zen) meditation practice for treating performance anxiety among musicians. In post-study performance, the participants had positive feedbacks on their ability to ease their performance anxiety. Baird (2016) designed a meditation-training program tailored to musicians. The program consisted on centering breathing, phrase, past positive performance visualization, and future performance visualization. After the training, participants were reported calmer with less negative thoughts in their musical activities. They were able to regain focus and recover from performance mishaps more promptly.

Meditation, like music or sports, is an umbrella term of various practice techniques derived from various religious backgrounds, and has been widely researched in scientific field and practiced in secular settings (Goleman & Davidson, 2017; Travis & Shear, 2010). Goleman and Davidson (2017) states for those who are not in pursuit of religious or spiritual enlightenment, meditation practice formulates healthy being, and cultivates 'altered traits' that generate positive changes in thinking and behavior. Similar to physical workouts that require regular practice, meditation can function as 'mental workouts' that strengthen 'mental muscle'. They further categorize mental

state in two categories: 'unhealthy' and 'healthy'. An unhealthy mental state "highlights desire, self-centeredness, sluggishness, agitation and the like" (p.42), while a healthy mental state refers to "even mindedness, composure, ongoing mindfulness, and realistic confidence. Intriguingly, a subset of healthy states applied to both mind and body: buoyance, flexibility, adaptability, and pliancy" (p.42). Accordingly, some of the characteristics of healthy mental state mentioned above are undoubtedly crucial qualities for any performing artist. 'Composure' and 'confidence' serve as the arsenals of performance, whereas 'mindfulness' brings out both mental and physical 'flexibility,' 'adaptability' and 'pliancy' allowing the performers to cope with unexpected and ongoing external events.

Goleman and Davidson (2017) state that one of the practice techniques of meditation is to sustain attention through a selected object, such as breathing, to stay vigilant. They define differences in attention into following categories:

1. *Selective attention*, the capacity to focus on one element and ignore others.
2. *Vigilance*, maintaining a constant level of attention as time goes on.
3. *Allocating* attention so we notice small or rapid shifts in what we experience.
4. *Goal focus*, or "cognitive control," keeping a specific goal or task in mind despite distractions.
5. *Meta-awareness*, being able to track the quality of one's own awareness-for example, noticing when your mind wanders or your've made a mistake. (p.128)

According to Lutz et al. (2008), attention can be sustained by two kinds of meditation, namely focused attention (FA) and open monitoring (OM) meditation. Both are based on differences in practice rather than religious or methodological schools. During FA meditation, meditators choose an object, such as breathing, mantra, or visualization to monitor the quality of the attention moment by moment. "At first, the attention wanders away from the chosen object, and the typical instruction is to recognize the wandering and then restore attention to the chosen object" (p. 164). Furthermore, still according to Lutz et al. (2008) the practice cultivates three skills in attention regulation.

> The first is the monitoring faculty that remains vigilant to distractions without destabilizing the intended focus. The next skill is the ability to disengage from a distracting object without further involvement. The last involves the ability to redirect focus promptly to the chosen object. (p.164)

A longitude practice may transform FA meditation into OM meditation, in which the chosen object is replaced by general effortless awareness to the present. At this stage, emotional reactivity is lessened.

> A central aim of OM practice is to gain a clear reflexive awareness of the usually implicit features of one's mental life. It is said that awareness of such features enables one more readily to transform cognitive and emotional habits. In particular, OM practice allegedly leads one to a more acute, but less emotionally reactive, awareness of the autobiographical sense of identity that projects back into the past and forward into the future. Finally heightened sensitivity to body and environment occurs with a decrease in the forms of reactivity that create mental distress. (p.164)

OM meditation is alternatively referred to as 'mindfulness meditation' and it known to promote emotion-regulation ability (Moore, 2016; Jones, 2018; Menezes et al., 2012). Emotion is a multifaceted and subjective feeling that comes from expectation, interaction and recollection of internal or external events (Robazza & Ruiz, 2018). Emotion-regulation is a skill to observe, evaluate and modify the type, duration, and intensity of temporary emotional reactions to minimize their impacts on task or performance (Patel et al., 2018; Robazza & Ruiz, 2018), in which non-reactive attitude is formed despite perceptual changes.

Regulating Attention in Music Practice and Performance

In FA meditation, breathing, mantra or visualization could be a medium to focus attention. In music performance, based on references of three aforementioned authors, parallelism was established for each of the three attention-focusing medium with attention to sound, internal singing, and imagery.

According to Bruser (1997), each individual with a beginner's mind tends to experience openness and freshness upon hearing musical sound. Curiosity is triggered by musical sound, which then leads to attention and awareness. If the curiosity is sustained from practice to performance, natural physical response and spontaneity can be easily be initiated. However, curiosity might be hampered or restricted due to the excessive concern of technical demand or its operating principles. As argued by Green and Gallwey (2015), technical principles are indispensable, but sustained attention to musical sound allows spontaneity and expression to blossom in performance. Apart from that, awareness of musical sound can reduce mental interference as well as develop effortless concentration during a performance (Green & Gallwey, 2015; McLachlan, 2017; Bruser, 1997). Bruser (1997) suggested that sensing the sound vibration through microsecond could minimize physical tension and connects the performer to the instrument more intimately. She prescribed slow practice, also a common dose from most teachers, to build such connection. The process allows musicians to involuntarily and purposefully sense the sound and in turn makes the music making more engaging and enjoyable.

> When you focus on the vibrations going through you, you experience music more viscerally […] try to feel the vibrations going all the way down to your feet. You will find that just giving them your attention allows them to expand and to move more freely than before. You become saturated with them, achieving direct contact with the living texture of music. (p, 171)

MaLachlan (2017) highlighted the necessity of slow practice because the attention could shift to sound more naturally and easily. This would result in clarity of performance. "Accuracy, speed, or memory" (p.30) is no longer the primary concern in the performer's mind. Different physical responses would be awakened as a result of this monitoring mechanism. Green & Gallwey (2015) further stated that physical jittery tension would be eased because overthinking or negative thoughts would be muted. MaLachlan (2017) claimed that the body tends to make subtle and necessary changes by itself as a result of attentive listening. The findings of a study conducted by van Zijl and Slobada (2010) also revealed that attention to sounds also enhance expressive musical performances.

Internal singing of melody or rhythmic pattern is another medium that can help focus one's attention during music making. According to the Organization of American Kodály Educators (2012), everybody is born with a human voice and singing is a fundamental tool that helps realize and shape musical requirements (i.e. dynamic, agogics, phrasing) as well as musical expression. More importantly, it links the body and mind to the music without much analytical process. McLachlan (2017) stated that the purpose is to sense the drive and flow of music (i.e. momentum or fluctuation of pulsation, space between musical phrasings.) as well as formulate musical expression (i.e.the compounding and effect of articulation, dynamics or pitch as the music unfolds). Furthermore, aural awareness can only be activated through this process (Bruser, 1997). For example, a successful performance on a contrapuntal keyboard piece is dependent on clear delivery of each melodic lineage. Bruser (1997) indicated that practicing singing each line, first out loud, then silently, enhances one's understanding of melodic traces and their developments. The heightened aural awareness sustains attention during music making and reduces the fear of memory lapse. Internal singing allows the mind, body and instrument to be more intimately connected. MaLachlan (2017) said, "[p]re-playing all of your repertoire as a proverbial clapping, singing dancing will most certainly blow away any negative sluggishness, focus your brain with energized clarity on the music" (p.12). Therefore, we can perceive singing a short melodic phrase or rhythmic pattern as like repeating a short mantra during meditation. It helps to draw attention to music making.

The third method to focus attention is through creating or recreating imagery. It heightens sensory experiences, facilitating a more engaging and profound musical performance. White and Hardy (1998) defined imagery as "an experience that mimics real experience. We can be aware of 'seeing' an image, feeling movement as an image, or experiencing an image of smell, tastes, or sounds without actually experiencing the real thing" (p.389). In contrast to visualization in meditation that only involves sight, the statement suggests imagery as multisensory (Munroe-Chadler & Guerrero, 2017). Green and Gallwey (2015) suggested that musicians focus on the present moment with feelings evoked by musical texts to achieve an expressive musical performance. In other words, it is important to see the music score as a play script. A script does not come alive without an actor's inflection of speech, and display of emotions and gestures. If notes are words in a script, we can perceive dynamic signs and music terms are parenthetical. For example, when a fast tempo passage is marked *forte*, one can affiliate it with 'agitated' or 'cheerful' feeling by recalling an event that can provoke such feeling or physical readiness. Or, when playing a slow passage marked *pianissimo* and *dolce,* one can imagine '*my arms are light like feathers but fingertips are focused*

like eagle's alert eyes' thus activating a proper physical control in producing a soft yet projected tone.

Therefore, the resemblance between performing a piece of music and acting a script is uncanny. As Russian theatre practitioner Stanislavsky says "[…] take your attention from what should not be noticed, what should not be thought […] to lock the attention on what is useful for the role" (as quote from Berman, 2000, p.195). Musicians do not always identify their 'perceived emotion' with every piece. Nevertheless, corresponding emotion can be induced according to the musical texts to create an expressive musical performance (Ziji & Slobada, 2010).

Regulating Emotion in Music Practice and Performance

Emotion regulation has been broadly discussed in sports and performance psychology. Similar discussions related to the topic in recent music literatures are presented in the current literature survey. According to the 'Process Model of Emotion Regulation' proposed by Clauido & Ruiz (2018), attentional deployment, mindful- and acceptance-based model, adaptive situation selection, self-efficacy appraisal are relevant and applicable in music practice and performance.

'Attentional deployment' takes place when an individual modifies and allocates his/her attention to achieve the desired performance results (Robazza & Ruiz, 2018). As previously mentioned, imagery can sustain attention to musical tasks and induce the corresponding emotions to music texts. For example, in a performance situation, one can shift attention away from technical concerns (i.e. not playing fast or soft enough) to expressive contents by focusing on the imagery created from the musical texts.

Next, in Robazza & Ruiz (2018)' mindful- and acceptance- based model', "the performer experiences, accepts, and tolerates his or her own internal cognitive, emotional, and physiological reactions, making no efforts to reduce feelings or bypass them" (p.12). Corresponding to the above, Bruser (1997) addressed that the first step in music making is to recognize mental interference without autobiographical involvement and letting it go. She said:"When negative thoughts come up during your practicing, just notice them without identifying with them. Your thoughts are not you. They are just thoughts, habits" (p.61). Consequently, this regulatory process induces a 'relaxed concentration'.

Green & Gallwey (2015) stated that a good mental quality for musicians is a 'relaxed concentration,' where the mind is "alert, relaxed, responsive and focused" (p.35). The ingredients to this mental state are 'awareness,' 'will' and 'trust' as stated in their book 'The Inner Game of Music'. In relation to emotion regulation, we can perceive the three elements as the foundation of self-efficacy appraisal. Self-efficacy appraisal happens when an individual believes in his or her ability in dealing with certain task as a result of their previous successful practice and mental preparation (Robazza & Ruiz, 2018). It should be noted that awareness, will and trust play different roles at different stages in music making. According to Green & Gallwey (2015), awareness is simply 'being' in the present moment. In other words, one does not develop an elaborative storyline when a thought arises. This is similar to mindful- and acceptance-based model of emotion regulation. For example, a pianist might experience clumsiness during an octave run whereby one might start with a self-criticizing internal dialogue:

'*I play badly in those octaves*' or further elaborate: '*It has been weeks, why does this run not improve*? *I am so clumsy at this! No! I am simply bad at this because I have small hands. OMG! I will never get it right!!*'. In contrast to the negative internal dialogue, one should simply acknowledge that '*my wrist is now tensed*' with an open awareness to allow further corrective physical responses. Next, one should use his or her 'will' to come up with corrective measures. Therefore, the above narrative can be further developed as the following: '*how about trying just two successive octaves and see how it goes. Try soften the wrist and feel the agility to it*'. Assuming the attempt is successful and the following up executions are consistent, self-trust will be established. Consequently, with the assurance of 'know-how,' self-efficacy appraisal can be implemented so as to build up performance confidence.

'Adaptive situation' can be defined as an individual "knowing personal needs, anticipating the emotion that will be experienced, and considering these emotions when selecting the situation" (Rabozza & Ruiz, 2018, p.8). Gordon (2006) advised that it is imperative for musicians to anticipate the stressful feeling particularly when performance draws upon. This is done through proactive physical and mental preparation. Specifically, the former refers to the set up of a physical environment for performance rehearsal, whereas the latter is achieved through self-talk and imagery. He said:

> As performance time rolls around, use your full arsenal of firepower again and again to demolish negative thought patterns and maximize your will to do your best—remind yourself over and over again of your high level of preparation, of successful dress rehearsals, of the communication you want to establish, and of the results you know you can achieve. Envision yourself as calm, strong, unbeatable, focused and successful. (p. 114)

In a study conducted by Braden et al. (2015), mental rehearsal of music, imagery of performance situation, and psycho cognitive reprogramming, such as identifying personal strength, are deemed effective strategies in conquering music performance anxiety (MPA). McLanchlan (2017) mentioned that the deliberate practice of envisioning a successful performance and plotting it into an internal film is one way to formulate positive mind, boost self-esteem and self-awareness during the performance preparation. As emotion is multifaceted (Rabozza & Ruiz, 2018), it is necessary for musicians to adjust their emotional intensity to produce a positive impact on their performance.

In conclusion, emotion-regulation is imperative in performance preparation. As mentioned by McLachlan (2017), "happiness, comfort and inner contentment are see as essential 'technical tools for piano mastery" (p.5). It is a type of emotional wellbeing that is applicable to most musicians despite this quote being specifically addressed to pianists.

Sustaining Attention by Self-Regulation in Music Practice

Mindless practice is the breeding ground of scattered attention. When such attention quality becomes the norm in music practice, attention in musical performance would be even more scattered. Contrastingly, mindful practice contains consistent awareness,

clear intention and strategic planning of current musical task, which resonates with 'awareness' and 'will' as stated in the theory developed in Green & Gallwey (2015). In recent years, self-regulation theory proposed by Zimmerman (2000) has been vastly discussed in the context of education. The theory comprises of forethought (i.e. analysis, goal setting, task planning), volitional control (i.e. self-observation, experience, focus attention, imagery) and self-reflection (i.e. self-evaluation, causal attribution, adaptive responses) (Varela et al., 2016). Barry (2007) investigated how undergraduate students who took applied lesson practiced outside of their instruction. Noticeably, the students applied very few practice strategies and lacked self-efficacy and self-reflection during practice. Because their instructors gave most strategies, it was implied that instructors played influential roles in shaping students' self-regulation skills in music practice. Paradoxically, based on Pike (2017)'s investigation, the findings revealed that teachers who are mostly accomplished performers themselves tend to provide direct instruction, instead of cultivating students' abilities to self-observe (awareness) and self-instruct (will). This was due to time-constraint or desire for quick outcome. As a result, students are prone to engage in repetitive mindless run-through that leads to more mistakes and subsequently induces self-doubt and rumination (trust). Apart from that, the findings also showed that if students are guided to formulate their own music perception and solution to the technical problems during instruction, they are more likely to employ self-regulation skills in music practice. Varela et al. (2016) suggested teachers are responsible for increasing students' awareness of proper strategies, expanding the inventory of strategies, and educating better time management.

Referring to the three powers, namely awareness, will and trust established by Green and Gallwey (2015), it is clear that the self-regulatory process is similar to Zimmermann's model. According to an investigation on highly skilled musicians, Araújo (2016) identified traits of self-regulation. They are "practice organization, personal resource, and external resources" (p.278). The practice organization includes setting long term or short term goal through constant evaluation, practicing time management, and proper organization of activities and practice environment. The personal resource includes high cognitive function, resourceful of knowledge, awareness and self-appraisal. The external resource includes the ability to outsource external help such as referring to literature, web source or seek help from teachers and peers. The findings also showed that when the challenges are somewhat beyond the current level of an individual, his or her concentration is more likely to heighten. The corrective measures would be done more persistently during practice and alternative strategies are more likely to be developed as well. It is revealed that a highly skilled musician tends to have a stronger personal resource and higher practice organization instead of relying on outsourcing external help. Other than that, the practice quality also showed a negative correlation to practice time.

A case study by Pike (2017) shows how self-regulation intervention can provide positive changes to the quality of attention and practice efficiency. In the study, one doctorate piano student was chosen to participate in a four-month reflective practicum. Prior to the study, the subject was identified by his instructor as a hard working individual who is analytical but not quite efficient. With his willingness to improve his practice routine and efficacy, he decided to participate the four-month reflective practicum. He was engaged in reflection-in-action in front of a video camera during his

practice session and reflection-on-action through journaling. In videos and journals, he explained the practice goals that have been set and how he planned to achieve and revise them, followed by identifying his success and feelings. Discussions based on video recordings and journals were carried out between the subject and the researcher who acted as a mentor and observer during the study. In the early phase of the investigation, there were a few traits observed. The subject often turned to an autopilot mode and repeatedly glossed over parts without actually fixing the problems. He was unable to shift attention from the technical issues to other musical requirements even though he had met the technical demand, thus causing negative impact on the readiness of performance. He also lacked personal resources such as practice strategies and solutions due to the poorly defined goals, and limited self-observation, reflection and self-instruction. He was frequently distracted by external object such as mobile devices or negative thoughts. However, the video camera served as a medium of mental discipline, which helped him coming up with a better goal setting. The self-regulation skills were also instilled to him as the study unfolded. As a result, he became less dependent on his instructor and managed to increase his attention because he clearly understood the purpose and meaning of the musical tasks, thus enabling him to be more productive and efficient with his practice time. He also claimed that he had better mental ease in facing problem or difficulty. It was concluded that the subject had become mindful throughout practice with a clear awareness of his actions.

As mentioned earlier, excessive teaching and over control might be counterproductive to performance (Green & Gallwey, 2015); however, the lack of mindful habit in practice also leads to scattered attention and unproductivity. Subsequently, such practice will result in self-doubt that will affects the performance confidence because the actions during the practice were taken without awareness, will and trust.

Conclusion

Attention and emotional wellbeing play important roles in music practice and performance. As stated by Gerig (2007) in the following quote:

> Proper mental and nervous control can greatly affect such important areas of technique as accuracy, dexterity and fluency, relaxation and poise. The student can also improve technical skills by developing strong habit of mental discipline and concentration … Technique is initially mental; the conscious mind must train the sub-conscious mind. (p.509)

Hence, it can be concluded that music making is a compounding process of conscious control (self-regulation), proper allocation of attention (FA meditation), general awareness of being (OM meditation), or mind programming (emotion regulation and imagery). Recent evidence found in the literature encouraged the present study to discuss the techniques that can regulate the required attention and emotion during music practice and performance. In meditation practice, breathing is one of the fundamental methods that can increase attention, while in music sound serves as a referential point of attention. Accordingly, simple awareness of the musical sound can

anchor our attention away from any distraction and mental interference. Similar to mantra meditation, internal singing enables the attention to remain on the music flow. It also links the body and mind more intimately to the instrument. On the same note, visualization is considered an approach in meditation whereby imagery is utilized as a way to sensitize the perception of musical expression, heighten physical sense in sound production, and induce appropriate emotional intensity in delivering musical characteristics. Therefore, in when it comes to attention-regulation, a seeming parallelism between music making and meditation was observed. On another note, emotion-regulation skills are relevant to adaptive attention selection, mindfulness, and three powers: awareness, will and trust, proposed by Green and Gallwey (2015). They help promote emotional wellbeing and reducing negative thoughts. Emotion-regulation tools, such as mental cue, positive thought and self-talk, and imagery (Robazza & Ruiz, 2018, Munroe-Chandler & Guerrero, 2017; van Raalte & Vincent, 2017; Braden et al., 2015) can be utilized to modify emotion and enhance readiness to deal with performance challenges. Overall, all of the above correlates to the extent of how self-regulatory process is implemented during daily practice. Notably, it is clear that the regulatory skills can help build strategies in coping with musical tasks, the foundation of self trust, as well as sustain attention and awareness to music practice and performance.

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