



Fourth Annual MHRI Conference

**Musical Conversations Across the Interdisciplinary Landscape:
Bridging Research and Practice**

April 27-30, 2026 at The Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre



**Institut de recherche
en musique et santé**

**Music and Health
Research Institute**

**THE
/ LE ROYAL**

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Welcome from the Conference Organization Committee Chairs



It is a great honor to welcome you to the fourth annual conference of the Music and Health Research Institute (MHRI).

This year's theme, "*Musical Conversations Across an Interdisciplinary Landscape: Bridging Research and Practice*," reflects our core commitment to innovation through collaboration. We believe that the most profound breakthroughs in health and well-being occur when we create space for dialogue between diverse perspectives—from health sciences to music education and the creative arts.

Our program this year is designed to be a "musical conversation." We are thrilled to host a dynamic range of oral presentations, poster sessions, and workshops that showcase how integrated research can be translated into meaningful practice. By bringing together researchers, clinicians, students, and community members, we aim to foster partnerships that extend far beyond the walls of this conference.

We hope that the next four days spark new insights, forge lasting collaborations, and inspire you in your own work at the intersection of music and health.

Thank you for being part of this vibrant community. We wish you a stimulating and enriching conference experience.



Warm regards,

Erin Parkes (Executive Director, Lotus Centre for Special Music Education)

Anna Zumbansen (Associate Professor, School of Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Ottawa)

Conference organization committee:

- Tammy Beaudoin (Director, Clinical Research Administration, The Royal's Institute of Mental Health Research)
- Jennifer Johnson (Professional violinist, Association for Body Mapping Education)
- Yuanyuan Lu (Administrative Assistant, Music and Health research Institute, University of Ottawa)
- Rena Sharon (Professor, Collaborative Piano, School of Music, The University of British Columbia)
- Nicole Stanson (Education and Outreach Coordinator, Music and Health research Institute, University of Ottawa)
- Mikael Swirp (Research Coordinator, Music and Health research Institute, University of Ottawa)

Scientific committee:

- Christine Guptill (Associate Professor, University of Ottawa, School of Rehabilitation Sciences)
- Erin Parkes (Executive Director, Lotus Centre for Special Music Education)
- Rena Sharon (Professor, Collaborative Piano, School of Music, The University of British Columbia)
- Nicole Stanson (Education and Outreach Coordinator, Music and Health research Institute, University of Ottawa)
- Carol Wiebe (Physician at Bruyère Health, Radical Connections at the Ottawa Art Gallery)
- Anna Zumbansen (Associate Professor, School of Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Ottawa)

GENERAL INFORMATION

CONFERENCE LOCATION

- The Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre in Ottawa, 1145 Carling Ave, Ottawa, ON

ACCESSIBILITY

- The Royal's facilities are fully accessible with accessible entrances, washrooms, elevators, and parking that are clearly marked. The Royal continually strives to identify and remove barriers that could prevent a person with disabilities from fully accessing their sites, programs and services.

To make things easier and simpler for everybody, you will find:

- A quiet room is available for anyone who feels that a few minutes away from the activity would be beneficial. You are welcome to visit in its open time.
- Floor maps on which the conference rooms will be indicated.
- Accessible signage

REGISTRATION

- 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. every day, on April 27th to April 30th at the Lobby of the auditorium

LUNCH

- Will be provided every day in Auditorium crush space

DRINKS AND SNACKS

- Will be provided throughout the day by the Royal Café

PHOTO/VIDEO CAPTURE

- During the conference, we will be taking photos and video footages for social media and website

INTERNET ACCESS

- Free/public Wi-Fi (no passcode required)

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Music and Health Research Institute: music.health@uottawa.ca

CONFERENCE PROGRAM - Day 1 (Monday, April 27)

Posters in the central indoor-outdoor area; Snack breaks and Lunch in crush space; Quiet space in room 1420		
Time	Auditorium	Room 1424
9:00	<i>Opening remarks</i> Erin Parkes and Anna Zumbansen, MHRI 2026 conference chairs	
9:15	<i>Partner lightning round</i>	
10:30	<i>Snack break</i>	
11:00	<i>Oral presentations</i> - Group singing intervention to support adults living with chemotherapy-related cognitive impairment: A descriptive mixed-methods study (Dominique Tremblay) - Let's sing together: A mixed-methods study of a culturally tailored intervention to alleviate loneliness and wellbeing in older migrants (Manonita Ghosh)	<i>Workshop</i> Safe music initiative (Jemma Jones)
12:30 <i>Lunch</i>	<i>Posters</i> - Investigating the neural and physical effects of Body Mapping on musicians' playing-related pain (Elena Bakker) - Effects of singing in Parkinson's disease: A single-case experimental protocol (Narges Bayat) - A historical perspective on East Asian immigrant research within East Asian, music and mental health literature (Julia Ming Lo)	
1:30	<i>Film Introduction & Remarks</i> Gilles Comeau, MHRI director <i>Music and Health Research Institute Documentary</i>	
3:00	<i>Snack break</i>	
3:30	<i>Oral presentations</i> - Time as an accommodation in music performance assessment (Olivia Adams) - Accepting anxiety: Impacts of a self-guided intervention on music performance anxiety (Naoko Sakata) - Lessons from aphantasia: Reconsidering mental imagery in music education and performance (Neesa Suncheuri Sunar)	<i>Workshop</i> Living music: Facilitating social improvisation (Irene Feher)
5:00		

CONFERENCE PROGRAM - Day 2 (Tuesday, April 28)

Posters in the central indoor-outdoor area; Snack breaks and Lunch in crush space; Quiet space in room 1423		
Time	Auditorium	Room 1424
9:00	Oral presentations - Melodies of migration: Devotional music as a catalyst for identity, resilience and wellbeing among Bangladeshi Hindu migrants in Perth (Manonita Ghosh) - Music and ceremony as healing practices in a hospital-based setting for First Nations, Inuit & Métis: The art of healing (Hannah Burgé Luviano) - Singing to support father-infant relationships: Implications for music therapists and beyond (Kara Caine)	Workshop Integrating wellness into music instruction through the use of the steel tongue drum (Nisreen Jardaneh)
10:30	Snack break	
11:00	Oral presentations - Supporting the mental health of staff working in long-term care through the provision of high-quality concerts (Debra Chandler) - Music and everyday care: Person-centred practices in long-term care (Sinéad Almeida) - From access to wellbeing: Framework development and health impact evaluation of attending inclusive performative arts events (Eun Jung)	Funders' Roundtable (Rory McLeod)
12:30 <i>Lunch</i>	Posters - Stress as a moderator of the emotional and physiological effects of sad music in university students (Ya Yue Sun) - Testing the interrater reliability of the Rapid Measure of Spontaneous Singing (RMSS) (Madeline Skiffington) - Group singing and Parkinson's: A case study for social prescribing (Hannah Sparkes) - Measuring gait and movement dynamics in older adults participating in Dalcroze-based music and movement classes (Chantal Carrillo)	
1:30	Oral presentations - Harnessing rhythm for recovery: Auditory entrainment as a neuromodulatory strategy for gait rehabilitation after spinal cord injury (Umayya Krishnathas) - Musicians' perceptions of an artist training program for adaptive concerts (Rory McLeod) - Music and community for wellness: A model for post-secondary student life programmes (Laura Mitchell)	Roundtable La boîte à musique Music education as a social, developmental and therapeutic tool in social pediatrics (Félix Dallaire)
3:00	Snack break	
3:30	Oral presentations - Does bullying reduce access to music education? Can music education reduce bullying and contribute to a healthy school environment? (Annabel Cohen) - Evaluating the impacts of community music programming on student wellbeing (Richard Marsella)	Roundtable The neural impact of Body Mapping on music performance anxiety (Angela Katherine Boland)
5:00		

CONFERENCE PROGRAM - Day 3 (Wednesday, April 29)

Posters in the central indoor-outdoor area; Snack breaks and Lunch in crush space; Quiet space in room 1420		
Time	Auditorium	Room 1424
9:00	<i>Roundtable</i> Ketamine assisted therapy for treatment resistant psychological conditions: Experiences in practice, treatment, and research (Nicole Stanson)	<i>Workshop</i> Accessible Electronic Music Interfaces and Advanced Computer Interfacing for People with Quadriplegia II: An Update Involving New Developments in Hardware and Software (Dave Whalen)
10:30	<i>Snack break</i>	
11:00	<i>Workshop (Room 1425)</i> Eutony: Body awareness as a tool for vocal development (Nadine Dionne)	<i>Workshop</i> Rethinking excellence: Motivation, burnout and sustainable practice in music performance (Greta Chase)
12:30 <i>Lunch</i>	<i>Posters</i> - Emotional tone of popular songs in Japan and the United States: A cultural and generational comparison of music and lyrics from 2008 to 2026 (Dave Miranda) - The neural and physiological effects of somatic mindfulness during self-evaluative anxiety in musicians (Makayla Dagenais) - Metal vocal techniques as a resource for exploring clinical voice qualities: Development of a vocal database of simulated pathological voices (Ingrid Verduyckt)	
1:30	<i>Oral presentations</i> - Anthropometry and an ergonomically modified keyboard: Effects on pianists' upper body kinematics and muscle activity with injury prevention implications (Craig Turner) - Pianists' biomechanical load related to their expressive intentions (Robin Mailly) - Testing a PCA-derived method for assessing movement symmetry during pianists' performance of contrary motion scales (Jillian Beacon)	<i>Workshop</i> Building bridges: Helping musicians and singers deliver engaging community concerts (Gertrude Létourneau)
3:00	<i>Snack break</i>	
3:30	<i>Workshop (Room 1425)</i> Teaching with different brains in mind: Inclusive music pedagogy to support regulation and well-being for more learners (Andrea Unrau)	<i>Workshop</i> From performance anxiety to performer resilience: A Feldenkrais approach for developing embodied resilience to adversity for musicians (Jillian Beacon)
5:00		
7:00 - 9:00	Research and Performance Collaboration Showcase in Freiman Hall (University of Ottawa)	

CONFERENCE PROGRAM - Day 4 (Thursday, April 30)

Snack breaks and Lunch in crush space; Quiet space in room 1420		
Time	Auditorium	Room 1424
9:00	Oral presentations - Exploring the impact of a music and movement intervention on adolescents with myotonic dystrophy (Erin Parkes) - A novel observer-rated measure of the personality trait of absorption: Cross-cultural and musical pathways in ketamine-assisted psychotherapy (Alyssa Bensoussan) - Music listening as a psychiatric intervention: Acute effects on autonomic activity in youth (Tara Gaertner)	Workshop Creative practice, compelling performance (Amy Likar)
10:30	Snack break	
11:00	Oral presentations - The importance of sound and music in neuroarchitecture (Jonas Braasch) - Benefits of a music intervention in children with hearing loss: An intervention and a scoping review (Flora Nassrallah) - Music listening strategies for adult hearing aid users: Bridging research evidence and clinical audiology practice (Roghayeh Fereshteh Ahmadi)	Workshop Body mapping: Preventing & addressing musicians' common shoulder, arm & hand injury (Jennifer Johnson)
12:30 <i>Lunch</i>		
1:30	Oral presentations - Skill acquisition in beginner pianists during short-term practice assisted by EMG-based biofeedback (Luis-Angel Rivera) - Examining the intersections of physical literacy and music education in the early years (Terry Clark) - Participation in a music and early learning program, parental sensitivity, and attachment security: A randomized controlled trial (Aimée Gaudette-Leblanc)	Workshop The Alexander Technique: How to increase attention while playing music (Francis Caron)
3:00	Snack break	
3:30	Closing Remarks - Erin Parkes and Anna Zumbansen, MHRI 2026 conference chairs Deep Listening Concert in the Virtual Dan Harpole Cistern (Jonas Braasch)	

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A Novel Observer-Rated Measure of the Personality Trait of Absorption: Cross-Cultural and Musical Pathways in Ketamine-Assisted Psychotherapy

Authors: Alyssa Bensoussan (MSc Candidate in Mental Health, Department of Psychiatry, McGill University); Kyle Greenway (MD, MSc, FRCPC, Department of Psychiatry, McGill University); Michael Lifshitz (PhD, Division of Social and Transcultural Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, McGill University); Sara de la Salle (PhD, Department of Psychiatry, McGill University); Nathan Fisher (PhD, Department of Psychiatry, McGill University); Casey Cohen (PhD, Department of Medicine, McGill University); Camille Malaterre (BSc Candidate, McGill University)

Abstract: **Background:** Trait absorption, a personality characteristic denoting one's capacity to immerse in sensory, imaginative, or emotional experiences, has been linked to positive responses to psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy and is particularly relevant in music-supported interventions. Music can intensify imagery, emotion, and altered states of consciousness, yet individuals vary widely in how they engage with music during psychedelic therapy. These differences may be shaped by cultural and linguistic context. Existing self-report measures of absorption are constrained by lengthy items, self-report bias, and limited cross-linguistic validity. **Objectives:** This project introduces a novel observer-rated measure of absorption designed to capture cross-culturally meaningful indicators of sensory engagement, including responsiveness to music when used as an adjunctive therapeutic modality. **Methods:** Transcripts were drawn from 180 recorded ketamine-assisted psychotherapy sessions and 20 post-treatment interviews involving 32 individuals with treatment-resistant depression at the Jewish General Hospital in Montréal. Independent bilingual raters thematically analyzed over 120 English and French transcripts to identify observable dimensions of absorption, including emotional depth, sensory richness, and engagement with music. These qualitative insights informed the development of a culturally sensitive observer-rated absorption scale, currently undergoing validation against existing measures. **Findings:** Preliminary analyses reveal meaningful cross-cultural and cross-linguistic variation in how absorption manifests, particularly in patients' relationships to music, imagery, and affect. In addition, new complementary findings currently in press from our research group indicate that absorption meaningfully interacts with therapeutic context: individuals high in absorption experience more beneficial and more profound ketamine sessions when music is included, compared to sessions supported without music. **Conclusion:** This study introduces a culturally sensitive, externally rated measure of absorption, offering a less biased and more inclusive tool for assessing this personality trait in psychedelic therapy, while highlighting music as a powerful lever for personalizing psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy.

Accepting Anxiety: Impacts of a Self-Guided Intervention on Music Performance Anxiety

Authors: Naoko Sakata (School of Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Ottawa); Natalie Durand-Bush (School of Human Kinetics, University of Ottawa); Christine Guptill (School of Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Ottawa)

Abstract: **Context:** Music performance anxiety (MPA) is a prevalent issue among post-secondary music students (Orejudo et al., 2018). MPA interventions have been guided by sport psychology, since both musicians and athletes perform complex motor skills under pressure. Current research has identified CBT as the best practice for reducing MPA (Kenny, 2011). However, studies in sport psychology suggest that combining mindfulness-based approaches, such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) with cognitive approaches may be beneficial given the diversity of performance contexts (Durand-Bush & Lasnier, 2023). Sport psychology has shown that self-guided interventions can offer effective, cost-effective solutions to enhance mental well-being and performance (Linardon et al., 2025). **Objectives:** This study investigated the impacts of a combined acceptance and commitment and cognitive behavioural intervention on MPA and music performance quality. **Methodology:** Six post-secondary music students volunteered to participate in this multiple case study. Participants were randomly assigned to the experimental group (n=3) or the active control group (n=3). The experimental intervention integrated core concepts of ACT into the CBT intervention. The active control intervention was designed based on interventions used in previous MPA research. Both groups completed a self-guided, online workbook over 5-6 weeks. Measurements were pre- and post-intervention and at a follow-up. Measurements included the following: Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (Kenny, 2009), Self-Efficacy for Music Performance Questionnaire (Ritchie & Williamon, 2011), Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale (Cardaciottto et al., 2008), Stroop Word Colour Task, and music performance evaluations. For the performance evaluations, participants performed in front of three jurors. **Findings:** Data were analyzed using Hedges g, and findings showed that the experimental group had a greater reduction in MPA as well greater increases in self-efficacy and mindfulness at the post-test. **Conclusion:** Results from the study suggest that combining acceptance and commitment with cognitive behavioural approaches may enhance intervention impacts. Further investigation with larger sample sizes is needed.

Anthropometry and an Ergonomically Modified Keyboard: Effects on Pianists' Upper Body Kinematics and Muscle Activity with Injury Prevention Implications

Authors: **Craig Turner (Université de Montréal; S2M Lab);** Souha Baklouti (Université de Montréal; S2M Lab); Robin Mailly (Université de Montréal; S2M Lab); Justine Pelletier (Université de Montréal; Faculty of Music); Mickael Begon (Université de Montréal; S2M Lab); Felipe Verdugo (Université de Montréal; S2M Lab)

Abstract: Introduction: Upper-body movement of pianists may be influenced by anthropometry (i.e., body and segment size). Because keyboard dimensions are fixed, pianists of different body sizes may adopt distinct upper-body movement strategies and coordination, though this topic remains underexplored. Research has shown that a smaller handspan increases strained finger postures and muscle load, highlighting the benefits of alternatively sized keyboards such as the 15/16 keyboard (DS6.0). However, it is unknown whether keyboard size influences upper-body kinematics and muscular loading in smaller pianists. **Objective:** To determine how upper-body anthropometry and keyboard size influence upper-body range of motion (ROM), muscle activation, and proximal-to-distal sequencing across musical contexts and loudness levels. **Methods:** Inertial sensors recorded the upper-body kinematics of 24 expert pianists of varying body sizes while performing excerpts loudly and softly containing three musical contexts. All participants performed on a conventional keyboard, while 14 smaller pianists also performed on the DS6.0. Electromyography recorded right biceps, triceps, anterior deltoid, and upper trapezius muscle activations. Medio-lateral proximal-to-distal sequencing between segments (trunk, upper arm, forearm, hand) was assessed using peak segment velocity timing. Mixed-design and two-way repeated-measures ANOVAs assessed effects of anthropometry/loudness and keyboard size/loudness on ROM, muscle activation, and proximal-to-distal sequencing. **Results:** Smaller pianists showed $\sim 6^{\circ}$ - 10° greater pelvis and thorax sagittal-plane ROM and ~ 7 - 13% greater biceps and triceps activation compared to larger pianists. The DS6.0 reduced shoulder ROM by ~ 2 - 4° as well as deltoid, biceps, and triceps activations by ~ 1 - 2% . Proximal-to-distal sequencing was observed for most segment pairs, with anthropometry-related timing differences in soft playing. **Discussion:** Trunk motion may be compensatory based on upper-body anthropometry. Playing on the DS6.0 may reduce upper-arm muscular loading and change shoulder mechanics in smaller stature pianists. This study demonstrates that anthropometry and keyboard size influence pianists' upper-body movement strategies and muscular loading.

Benefits of a Music Intervention in Children with Hearing Loss: An Intervention and a Scoping Review

Authors: **Flora Nassrallah (CHEO Research Institute); Sarah Pignac (Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa)**

Abstract: Background: The benefits of music on well-being for children with hearing loss have not been widely explored and information about tools to assess its impact are limited, particularly in French. As part of a larger research program, our team is undertaking initiatives to examine the benefits of a music intervention for children with hearing loss and how these benefits are assessed. This intervention has been designed to complement existing services to facilitate hearing, speech and language development in either French or English at the CHEO audiology clinic. **Objectives:** This two-phase study investigates the benefits of a music intervention by : 1) examining the effectiveness a music intervention for children with hearing loss, 2) conducting a scoping review to identify the measurement tools used to quantify the impact of an intervention for this population of children. The feasibility of adapting tools for children and families who speak French is also explored. **Methods:** 1) Two sets of 8-to-10-week music sessions were offered to French-speaking children with hearing loss. Interviews or focus groups were conducted with parents after the sessions. 2) A scoping review was conducted to identify tools available to measure the benefits of a music intervention. **Results:** 1) Preliminary results indicate that parents perceived benefits for their children and valued the connections with other parents of children with hearing loss. 2) The scoping review revealed measurement tools for children including questionnaires and direct measurement of music-related skills, but tools were limited in French. **Conclusions:** The intervention sessions and the scoping review have provided information about key measures which will be important to include in evaluating the impact of a music intervention for preschoolers with hearing loss. This will allow us to assess the impact in both languages and extend our research to a broader population of children with hearing loss.

Does Bullying Reduce Access to Music Education? Can Music Education Reduce Bullying and Contribute to a Healthy School Environment?

Author: Annabel J. Cohen (Professor of Psychology, University of Prince Edward Island)

Abstract: The prevalence of bullying is a concern for Canadian schools. Of 10 countries examined in a 2019 OECD survey (one city per country including Ottawa, Houston, Bogota, Helsinki, Istanbul, Moscow, SuZhou), Canadian 15-year-olds had the highest rate of bullying in several categories. A recent survey of attitudes to music education of students, parents, teachers, and administrators, conducted by the Access to Music Education (AMUSE) project, included several questions about bullying. The results of pilot data primarily from Prince Edward Island, reported at Neuromusic (Guo et al., 2025), revealed evidence of bullying among music students and beliefs of parents of the subjection to bullying of students who engage in music. These results concur with past reports of bullying of boys who sing. Whereas the fragility of music in the public education system is often attributed to decision-makers undervaluing music, students fear of bullying, or being seen as “uncool”, might reduce the likelihood of their choosing music as an elective. Such apparent disinterest in music would reasonably lead decision-makers to reduce music programming in their schools. Bullying may equally target students taking other arts subjects, but it does not impact students of non-arts subjects to the same extent (with the exception of high achievers). Ironically, whereas bullying may disproportionately threaten students who engage in music, research on the social benefits of music participation suggests that music engagement in schools could increase positive feelings and reduce bullying. Research is needed to determine the prevalence of bullying in general as a function of the extent to which a school is music-infused. Finding an inverse relation between bullying and music engagement would argue strongly for the importance of music for building a healthy school environment.

Evaluating the Impacts of Community Music Programming on Student Wellbeing

Authors: Dr. Richard Marsella (Community Music Schools of Toronto); Andrea Unrau (Sarah McLachlan School of Music); Dr. Erin Parkes (Lotus Centre for Special Music Education)

Abstract: While the cognitive benefits of music education are well-documented, there is an increasing need to understand how accessible community music programming supports the holistic wellbeing of children and youth. Using the PERMA model (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment), this study explores the impacts of community-based music initiatives on student wellbeing. This project employed a mixed-methods approach to capture a comprehensive view of student experiences. Research was conducted at three specialized sites: the Lotus Centre for Special Music Education in Ottawa, Community Music Schools of Toronto, and the Sarah McLachlan School of Music in Vancouver. Students aged 12 and older who had been enrolled in lessons for at least one year were invited to participate. Data was collected through parent and student surveys. In-depth data was gathered from students through semi-structured interview, questionnaire, and lesson observation. Preliminary analysis indicates that students involved in the community music schools feel supported in their mental well being, confidence, and creativity. Students reported feeling connected to and supported by their teachers, and a strong sense of support and belonging in the music programs. Since starting music classes at the community music schools, students self-reported mood improvement, and increased confidence, motivation and focus as well as stronger social relationships. By exploring the experiences of students and the perspectives of their parents, this study demonstrates that community music programs provide not only music instruction, but also contribute significantly to student wellbeing. The findings offer a framework for educators, arts organizations, and policymakers to integrate music-based wellbeing strategies into broader community contexts.

Examining the Intersections of Physical Literacy and Music Education in the Early Years

Author: Terry Clark (Director, Mount Royal University Conservatory; Acting Vice Dean, Faculty of Continuing Education)

Abstract: Early childhood (EC) music education is known to support broad child development including cognitive, emotional, social, and interpersonal skills. Activities in the early years can also develop physical literacy (PL), recognized as a key contributor to life-long engagement in physical activity and healthy populations. Currently, it is unknown how music education might support the development of PL in EC. Understanding this could produce a more fulsome understanding of how music education can support healthy and holistic child development. This study sought to gain an understanding of how EC music classes might contribute to laying foundations of PL. Systematic observations of nine EC group music classes have been conducted from September 2025 until January 2026 utilizing a modified System for Observing Fitness Instruction Time tool. This tool provides a comprehensive way to measure the quality and effectiveness of physical education by recording the types and levels of physical activity of students as well as measuring a teacher's interactions with students. Analysis of the observational data will determine the proportion of time spent on different activities, student behaviours, as well as the relationships between teacher behaviours, lesson contexts, and student activity levels. This research seeks to contribute to our understanding of the development of PL in the early years and within the context of unconventional programming (i.e., EC music classes). This interdisciplinary research partnership stands to inform PL, early learning, and music curriculum by mapping music skill acquisition and instructional methods onto PL domains. Increased focus on PL within EC music education could also support long-term physical health of musicians and protect against the onset of playing-related physical health problems later in life. As such, this research stands to identify opportunities to enhance PL pedagogy in the early years and contribute to continued understanding of the multifaceted benefits of EC music education.

Exploring the Impact of a Music and Movement Intervention on Adolescents with Myotonic Dystrophy

Authors: Erin Parkes (Lotus Centre for Special Music Education); Olivia Adams (Lotus Centre for Special Music Education); Gilles Comeau (Music and Health Research Institute); Hanns Lochmüller (CHEO Research Institute); Tamara Burgess (CHEO Research Institute); Lindsay Bryden (Research assistant)

Abstract: Myotonic dystrophy (DM1) presents unique physical and cognitive challenges, often affecting motor control, social integration, and emotional regulation. While rehabilitative strategies often focus on physical therapy, there is a growing need to explore psychosocial and multisensory interventions that address the holistic well-being of this population. This study implemented a 10-week music and movement program tailored for five adolescents diagnosed with congenital myotonic dystrophy. Sessions focused on rhythmic synchronization and coordinated movement through group percussion ensemble work, body percussion, integration of music with balance exercises, and group improvisation through STOMP! activities. Qualitative observational data were collected throughout the intervention period to track behavioral shifts, social interactions, and musical engagement. Data were analyzed through thematic coding to identify patterns in participant development. Analysis of observational data indicates positive outcomes across three primary domains: 1) participants demonstrated improved self-regulation, showing a greater ability to manage sensory input and maintain focus during tasks; 2) social behaviors improved, evidenced by increased peer-to-peer interaction, shared turn-taking, and collaborative music-making, and; 3) there was a measurable progression in musical abilities, particularly in rhythmic accuracy. The findings suggest that structured music and movement sessions offer a viable, non-invasive medium for supporting the developmental needs of adolescents with DM1. By integrating physical movement with auditory stimulation, these sessions foster a supportive environment that enhances both functional skills and social-emotional health.

From Access to Wellbeing: Framework Development and Health Impact Evaluation of Attending Inclusive Performative Arts Events

Authors: Eun Jung (Toronto Metropolitan University); Kaylce Carter (Xenia Concerts); Rory McLeod (Xenia Concerts); Eshtar Taha (Toronto Metropolitan University); Mikyung Lee (Toronto Metropolitan University)

Abstract: Adaptive concerts make artistic and cultural activities accessible to people with disabilities, fostering positive psychological and social outcomes. Existing research has examined the health and wellbeing benefits of arts engagement for people with disabilities, but it has predominantly adopted a medical approach and focused on active participation, such as creating music or artwork. However, research and empirical evidence are limited on the experiences of people with disabilities engaging in the arts as audiences or for self-guided leisure. Using a co-design approach between a research centre and a community partner, this study investigated the experiences of audience members, both disabled and non-disabled, attending adaptive concerts from a health and wellbeing perspective. The study developed a health impact evaluation framework that addresses individual, community, and structural dimensions and analyzed four years of audience survey data using this framework. Mixed research methods were used, including descriptive quantitative analysis and thematic qualitative analysis. Findings indicate that audience members experienced predominantly positive outcomes in relation to health and wellbeing. Attendees described enhanced personal wellbeing through enjoyment and social interaction. Audience members also benefited through social inclusion and a sense of belonging. Structural factors, including accessibility measures, were identified as essential for supporting both individual and community wellbeing and for promoting agency and social acceptance within and across diverse disability communities. The findings suggest that the survey items include demographic questions that use inclusive language, along with questions that better capture the impacts on community wellbeing. The framework and findings are expected to contribute to expanding knowledge of the health and wellbeing impacts of attending adaptive concerts and to assist other arts organizations seeking to understand or improve the health and wellbeing impacts of their arts offerings or accessibility features.

Group Singing Intervention to Support Adults Living with Chemotherapy-Related Cognitive Impairment: A Descriptive Mixed-Methods Study

Authors: Dominique Tremblay (Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Université de Sherbrooke; Centre de recherche Charles-Le Moyne); Catherine Prady (Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de la Montérégie-Centre; Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Université de Sherbrooke; Centre de recherche Charles-Le Moyne); Pierre Vachon (Civic Impact and Education, Opéra de Montréal); Sylvie Coallier (Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de la Montérégie-Centre); Anna Zumbansen (University of Ottawa; Music and Health Research Institute); Gilles Comeau (University of Ottawa; The Royal's Institute of Mental Health Research; Music and Health Research Institute); Sylvie Lessard (Centre de recherche Charles-Le Moyne)

Abstract: Background: Chemotherapy-related cognitive impairment (CRCI), commonly referred to as “brain fog” affects up to 75% of patients receiving chemotherapy treatment, impacting daily functioning and their whole quality of life. No proven pharmacological treatment is currently available, and patients often struggle to find effective support. Group singing has emerged as a promising non-pharmacological approach to enhance cognitive functioning and emotional well-being. **Objective:** This study assesses the feasibility and patient-reported outcomes of a group singing intervention called Singing to Take Care of Us, inspired by the Opéra de Montréal's Impact Program. **Methods:** A descriptive mixed-methods design was used. Fifteen adults living with or beyond cancer enrolled in 24 group singing sessions in spring and autumn 2025, led by a choir conductor specialized in opera techniques. Cognitive function was measured using PROMIS Cognitive Function Short Form v2 (8 items) at baseline and post-intervention. Symptoms (pain, fatigue, sadness, anxiety, well-being) were assessed pre- and post-session using ESAS-r (5 items). Semi-structured interviews (n=9) explored participants' experiences. Feasibility was assessed based on attendance, retention and engagement with the intervention. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively and comparatively; qualitative data underwent thematic content analysis. Integration of findings provided a comprehensive understanding. **Results:** Preliminary findings indicate the intervention is feasible and well-received. Participants reported moments of joy, self-care, and social connection. Quantitative assessments suggest improvements in cognitive function, fatigue, sadness, anxiety, and overall well-being. **Conclusion:** Group singing based on opera techniques appears feasible and beneficial for adults living with CRCI and post chemotherapy symptoms. Further implementation research should examine scalability and sustainability in survivorship care.

Harnessing Rhythm for Recovery: Auditory Entrainment as a Neuromodulatory Strategy for Gait Rehabilitation after Spinal Cord Injury

Author: Umayia Krishnathas (Queen's University)

Abstract: Spinal cord injury (SCI) often leads to long-term gait impairment, limiting functional independence and daily mobility. While rhythmic auditory stimulation (RAS) is well-established in stroke and Parkinson's rehabilitation, its clinical use in SCI remains limited. This narrative review examines how rhythm-based gait training has been applied to SCI, the mechanisms behind its effects, and barriers to broader implementation. Findings from early studies suggest that RAS can improve cadence, speed, and step symmetry in SCI by engaging central pattern generators and reinforcing sensorimotor timing. Tailored approaches, including music entrainment stimulation and cadence-matched cueing, show promise in improving coordination and tolerance. Meta-analytic evidence combining SCI and TBI studies points to moderate effects on gait outcomes, with results comparable to early-stage stroke trials. However, the field lacks large-scale, SCI-specific trials and consistent protocols. Adoption in clinical settings is limited by funding, staffing, and the absence of integrated practice models. Heterogeneity in injury level and rehab goals also makes it difficult to standardize care. At the same time, wearable devices and mobile platforms now offer ways to deliver auditory cues and track progress outside hospital settings, expanding access and scalability. These tools could support not only gait training but also interventions for upper-limb mobility, respiratory coordination, and psychological wellbeing. Targeted trials, paired with practical delivery models, are needed to move rhythm-based rehab into routine SCI care. This review identifies current gaps, compares findings with other neurological conditions, and outlines where future work should focus.

Lessons from Aphantasia: Reconsidering Mental Imagery in Music Education and Performance

Author: Neesa Suncheuri Sunar; University of Salford; researcher and person with lived experience

Abstract: Aphantasia is a form of neurodiversity bearing significant implications for musical cognition and theories of musical learning. Aphantasia refers to the inability to generate voluntary visual mental imagery. Many with visual aphantasia also experience reduced or absent imagery in other sensory modalities: sound, touch, and other core senses. Approximately 3.9% of the population has aphantasia, and about 0.8% experience total aphantasia, defined as absence of mental imagery across the five core sensory domains. Aphantasia is not a disability, and most individuals live typical lives. Neurologically, it is associated with reduced activation in sensory cortices during imagery tasks. Mental imagery is essential in many aspects of music pedagogy and performance. Musicians rely on imagery to inform interpretation, often by visualizing scenes. Mental practice is also widely encouraged, whereby performers recreate a performance in the mind by activating visual, auditory, tactile, and motor imagery. Ear training develops inner hearing skills through activities such as interval training, melodic and rhythmic dictation, call-and-response exercises, solfège practice, and the use of Curwen hand signs in Kodály-based pedagogy. Edwin E. Gordon concludes that “audiation” is the most important skill in musicianship: the ability to internally hear and understand music without external sound. For some musicians with aphantasia, any of the above tasks can be confusing. A student may not even realize they have aphantasia, and they can struggle to make meaning of a teacher's advice prompting mental imagery. There is also a risk for teachers, in assuming that mental imagery is accessible to all. Yet with increased awareness, new pedagogical possibilities emerge. Although mental imagery cannot be taught to aphantasics, inclusive teaching can acknowledge individual cognitive differences, and support the development of adaptive strategies. This presentation also introduces validated mental imagery assessments that can identify aphantasia across sensory domains and inform more inclusive approaches to music education.

Let's Sing Together: A Mixed-Methods Study of a Culturally Tailored Intervention to Alleviate Loneliness and Wellbeing in Older Migrants

Authors: Dr Manonita Ghosh (Edith Cowan University); Dr Simone Marino (Edith Cowan University); Professor Loretta Baldassar (Edith Cowan University)

Abstract: **Background:** Loneliness is a serious health risk for older adults and is especially pronounced among older migrants due to language barriers and disrupted social networks. Social prescribing “linking individuals to community-based activities” offers a promising approach, and singing has demonstrated benefits for mental and physical health. However, evidence for culturally tailored singing programs within social prescribing frameworks remains limited. **Aim:** This study examined the impact of the culturally tailored co-designed Let’s Sing Together intervention on loneliness and wellbeing, explored its feasibility, and its potential as a transferable implementation of social prescribing. **Methods:** A mixed-methods design was used. The program comprised 12 weekly two-hour sessions at two community sites. Quantitative data were collected using validated loneliness and gratitude scales pre-and post-intervention. Focus groups were conducted to capture participants’ experiences and perceived benefits. **Results:** Twenty-two Italian migrants with the mean age 84.7 participated. Individual patterns varied: most participants at reduced loneliness and increased gratitude, while some showed minimal changes or slight increases in loneliness. Qualitative findings revealed strong perceived benefits, including companionship, emotional uplift, cultural reconnection, and a sense of purpose. **Conclusion:** This study emphasises the importance of inclusive, culturally responsive social prescribing interventions in preventive health strategies. Let’s Sing Together shows potential for integration into aged care and community health frameworks to address loneliness among multicultural populations. Scaling such programs nationally could advance equitable, person-centered care and strengthen community wellbeing.

Melodies of Migration: Devotional Music as a Catalyst for Identity, Resilience and Wellbeing among Bangladeshi Hindu Migrants in Perth

Author: Manonita Ghosh, Social Ageing Future Lab, Edith Cowan University

Abstract: **Background:** Music and religion are deeply social phenomena that foster connection, cooperation, and communal identity. For migrant communities, these practices often serve as vital resources for cultural continuity and psychosocial wellbeing. **Aim:** This study examines how devotional music practices function as social instruments among Bangladeshi Hindu migrants in Perth, Western Australia, and how these practices contribute to identity formation, resilience, and well-being. **Methods:** Drawing on over two decades of ethnographic research and insider epistemology, this study employs participant observation and qualitative interviews to investigate the role of sacred music in community life. The analysis is situated within Émile Durkheim’s concept of collective effervescence, exploring how shared rituals and emotional energy sustain social cohesion in diaspora contexts. **Findings:** Devotional music practices transform ordinary spaces into sacred ones during rituals such as Durga Puja, creating heightened emotional experiences and reinforcing communal bonds. These gatherings help alleviate migration-related stress, promote intergenerational cultural transmission, and provide a “home away from home.” **Conclusion:** Sacred music serves as a powerful cultural resource for Bangladeshi Hindu migrants, fostering identity, resilience, and well-being while sustaining cultural continuity and social cohesion in transnational settings.

Music and Ceremony as Healing Practices in a Hospital-Based Setting for First Nations, Inuit & Métis: The Art of Healing

Authors: **Hannah Burge Luviano (Manager, Research and Knowledge Mobilization);** Shkaabe Makwa (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, PhD Candidate, Cultural Studies (Ethnomusicology))

Abstract: In November 2022, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO) announced a multi-year partnership, anchored by the leadership of Shkaabe Makwa, to support First Nations, Inuit, and Métis clients of the hospital through music and storytelling. Shkaabe Makwa at CAMH is the first Indigenous-led, hospital-based centre in Canada, established to improve the health and well-being of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples across Ontario by advancing wholistic models of mental health and wellness care rooted in traditional healing practices. During the winter months, clients met weekly with an Indigenous composer, supported by First Nations and Métis facilitators, to participate in ceremony, make music, and engage in healing practices. Clients described *The Art of Healing* as a welcoming space where they felt seen and valued, and where music contributed to their healing. Archibald and Dewar noted in an evaluation survey of 103 holistic arts-based projects for Indigenous Peoples that “music plays a [similar] role [to art therapy] in capturing and releasing deep feelings” (Archibald & Dewar, 2010, p. 14). Similarly, Ambtman-Smith et al. (2024, p. 13) emphasized “the critical importance of introducing Indigenous healing practices and spaces into biomedical environments.” This paper presentation examines the potential for collaborative and flexible programs that braid music and ceremony as healing practices into clinical settings, supporting healing for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.

Music and Community for Wellness: A Model for Post-Secondary Student Life Programmes

Authors: **Laura Mitchell (Director of Student Affairs, Camosun College); Irene Feher (Classical/Contemporary Voice Teacher, Concordia University, and Music for People Facilitator)**

Abstract: The benefits of recreational music practices for stress and anxiety reduction and emotional expression are being increasingly recognised (MacDonald & Wilson, 2014). Here, we focus on university students, a population subject to high levels of academic stress, which emerging evidence suggests may be mitigated by active musical engagement (Yu & Xu, 2025). Despite these benefits, many students encounter significant accessibility challenges owing to time pressures, financial constraints, social anxiety and self-perceived lack of musical ability, which may discourage participation in group music-making activities. Using facilitated improvisation techniques developed by the organisation Music for People, which emphasise social and creative engagement and personal expression, the Live Your Music at Concordia programme was designed to be immediately accessible to participants of all ages, musical experience levels, and cultural backgrounds. Delivered at Concordia University between 2018 and 2023, the programme offered weekly drop-in workshops that invited students to engage in vocal and instrumental improvisation, drumming, musical meditation, and movement-based practices. As awareness of the programme grew, participation expanded beyond students to include members of the wider university community, including staff and retirees. This presentation will discuss psychosocial outcomes observed by facilitators, alongside participant testimonials and feedback, as well as the evolution of the programme over time. Reported musical and extra-musical themes include feeling re-centred; support in navigating challenging periods and maintaining emotional stability; opportunities for musical exploration without pressure or fear of judgement; deepened connections with others; the development of listening and turn-taking skills; and enhanced intergenerational and cross-cultural communication. The presentation will also offer practical reflections and transferable insights for participants interested in establishing similar accessible, improvisation-based wellbeing programmes within post-secondary or community settings.

Music and Everyday Care: Person-Centred Practices in Long-Term Care

Author: Sinéad Almeida (Carleton University)

Abstract: Informal musical practices play an important role in shaping everyday life in long-term care homes, supporting connection, emotional regulation, and relational care beyond formal therapeutic interventions. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews conducted at The Glebe Centre, a long-term care home in downtown Ottawa that operates under the Butterfly Model of Care, this paper explores how non-specialist care staff use music informally in their everyday work with residents living with dementia, and how these practices function as person-centred care. I examine how music extends beyond formal, time-limited music therapy sessions to become embedded in the fabric of daily care—in the rhythm of walking someone to the dining room, in a weekly hymn sing led by a spiritual care coordinator, or through improvised musical moments between staff and residents. The Butterfly Model provides an institutional framework through which these practices are encouraged, enacting its ideals of relational caregiving, emotional connection, and home-like environments. However, these practices themselves arise from staff attunement and skill, rather than from formal training. Drawing on interviews with care staff, I show how music offers a means of access to residents with dementia whose abilities and needs are constantly changing, and through which staff must adapt to support their everyday experiences. I situate these moments within Tia DeNora's theory of music in everyday life and Christopher Small's concept of "musicking," framing informal musical practices as relational, ethical, and intersubjective rather than clinical. Musical practices are understood here as accessible and already-present resources embedded within the fabric of care culture. By recognizing informal music-making as an integral yet underacknowledged part of care culture, this research broadens understandings of music's role in supporting relational care and well-being in long-term care settings.

Music Listening as a Psychiatric Intervention: Acute Effects on Autonomic Activity in Youth

Authors: Tara Gaertner (University of British Columbia); Tamara Vanderwal (University of British Columbia)

Abstract: Heart rate variability (HRV) refers to subtle variations in the interval between heartbeats and is an indicator of parasympathetic activity, while electrodermal activity measure sympathetic arousal. HRV is decreased in people with psychiatric illnesses, including depression and anxiety. Interventions that increase HRV have shown promise in treating psychiatric symptoms in adults and youth. Music listening, a widely used emotional regulation strategy, has been shown to increase HRV and reduce electrodermal activity in adults. This study explores its effects on HRV, mood, and electrodermal activity in adolescents. Participants aged 11-17, with and without psychiatric illness (target n=28 in each group), underwent ECG, respiration, and electrodermal recordings at baseline and during five listening conditions: researcher-selected relaxing or energizing music, relaxing music with binaural beats, participant-selected relaxing music, or a pink noise control. Mood ratings were collected before and after each excerpt. HRV indices were derived from 5-minute artifact-free ECG segments. Data was analyzed via multi-level modelling. In control youth, HRV was significantly increased during relaxing music, relaxing music with binaural beats, and pink noise, but not during energizing or participant-selected music. Electrodermal activity decreased across all listening conditions. In control youth, HRV was significantly increased during relaxing music, relaxing music with binaural beats, and pink noise, but not during energizing or participant-selected music. Electrodermal activity decreased across all listening conditions. Preliminary analyses including data from youth with psychiatric illness shows overall significantly lower HRV in youth with psychiatric illness, but no other effect of group. Data collection is ongoing, and the full analysis will be presented at the conference. These findings suggest that listening conditions influence autonomic function and may hold potential as interventions for psychiatric disorders which impair autonomic function and emotional regulation.

Music Listening Strategies for Adult Hearing Aid Users: Bridging Research Evidence and Clinical Audiology Practice

Author: Roghayeh Fereshteh Ahmadi (MS in Audiology, PhD candidate in Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Ottawa)

Abstract: **Background:** Music is an important aspect of quality of life for many adults with hearing loss; however, hearing aid technologies and clinical practices have historically prioritized speech over music. Although a growing body of literature has examined challenges and potential strategies related to music listening for hearing aid users, it is unclear how these recommendations translate into routine audiology practice. The goal of this two-phase study is therefore to gain insight into existing strategies aimed at supporting music listening for hearing aid users, and to explore how these strategies are understood and used in everyday audiology practice. **Methods / Results:** A two-phase design is being employed. Phase one involves a scoping review of the literature to identify strategies, recommendations, and approaches aimed at supporting music listening for adult hearing aid users. Phase two consists of a national survey of Canadian audiologists examining how music listening is addressed during clinical consultations, what fitting and non-fitting strategies are used when music-related concerns arise, and how confident clinicians feel in supporting music listening through hearing aids. The survey also explores perceived patient concerns, commonly reported music-related difficulties, use of manufacturer music programs and accessories, counselling practices, and audiologists' training and confidence related to music listening. Preliminary mapping of the scoping review suggests that recommendations for improving music listening with hearing aids fall into two broad categories. The first includes hearing aid-focused strategies, such as fitting adjustments, signal processing considerations, and use of device features or accessories. The second consists of experience-based and narrative recommendations, often drawn from the perspectives of hearing aid users or musicians with hearing loss, who describe what they perceive as helpful or effective in real-world music listening. **Conclusions:** This ongoing work aims to clarify the degree of alignment between research-based recommendations and current audiology practice related to music listening. By explicitly linking evidence from the literature with clinician-reported practices, the findings are expected to support more intentional, evidence-informed approaches to incorporating music listening into audiologic rehabilitation.

Musicians' Perceptions of an Artist Training Program for Adaptive Concerts

Authors: Rory McLeod (Xenia Concerts), Erin Parkes (Lotus Centre for Special Music Education)

Abstract: Adaptive concerts provide valuable opportunities for the neurodiverse and disability communities to experience concerts in an adapted setting. Adaptations can include creating a sensory-aware environment, implementing accessible communication strategies, and providing a space where audience members can react to the concert experience in any way that is comfortable to them, even if this differs from culturally expected norms. Adaptive concerts can also include differences from a traditional concert program, with movement and visual components often incorporated. The development and delivery of adaptive concerts can be daunting for some musicians, particularly for those who have limited experience with people with disabilities. Many musicians report feeling under-equipped to engage effectively with audiences from the disability community. Xenia Concerts developed the Artist Training Program to provide guidance to musicians to enhance their understanding of the adaptive concert experience and equip them with the skills needed to adapt their program to meet the needs of the audience. The program includes several recorded webinars, written material, and a 1-hour workshop. Survey data was collected from participating musicians following the training in order to understand the impact and effectiveness of the program on improving their understanding of disability needs and their ability to deliver an adaptive concert to a diverse audience. The results suggest that targeted professional development is essential for the success of inclusive arts programming. By equipping musicians with specific adaptive skills, performances for the disability community are not only accessible but also artistically meaningful. Implications for performing artists and arts organizations will be discussed.

Participation in a Music and Early Learning Program, Parental Sensitivity, and Attachment Security: A Randomized Controlled Trial

Authors: **Aimée Gaudette-Leblanc (Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières);** William Trottier-Dumont (Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières); Maëlle Le Devehat (Université Laval); George M. Tarabulsky (Université Laval)

Abstract: Music-based interventions have been linked to improved parent-child interactions; however, previous studies often faced methodological limitations, such as the absence of control groups and reliance on non-validated measures. As a result, evidence regarding their impact on parental sensitivity and attachment security remains limited, and further research is needed. This randomized controlled trial explored the effects of participating in a Music and Early Learning Program (MELP) on parental sensitivity and child attachment security among families with children aged 2-5 years. Thirty-eight families were randomly assigned to either the MELP or a control group. Data were collected through semi-structured home observations conducted before and after the intervention. Parental sensitivity was assessed using independent, blind ratings based on the Mini Maternal Behavior Q-Sort (Tarabulsky et al., 2009). Child attachment security is being evaluated using a short version of the Attachment Q-Sort (Waters & Deane, 1985) as part of an ongoing secondary analysis. Initial findings from the first phase of the study show significant improvements in parental sensitivity for MELP participants compared to controls (Gaudette-Leblanc et al., 2025). Building on these results, we hypothesize that participation in MELP will also be associated with greater attachment security in children. The presentation will synthesize these findings and share emerging results from the secondary analysis, highlighting the potential of community-based music programs to support parent-child relationships and early child development.

Pianists' Biomechanical Load Related to Their Expressive Intentions

Authors: **Robin Maily (Université de Montréal; S2M Lab);** Craig Turner (Université de Montréal; S2M Lab); Luis-Angel Rivera (Université de Montréal; S2M Lab); Fabien Dal Maso (Université de Montréal; S2M Lab); Felipe Verdugo (Université de Montréal; S2M Lab)

Abstract: From an embodied-cognition perspective, gestures translate musical ideas into sound (sound-production function) while simultaneously shaping and refining those ideas (ancillary function). Research on pianists has shown that expressive intentions (i.e., personal musical ideas) can increase the range of motion from the pelvis to the wrist, supporting the embodied-cognition framework. Such changes in upper-body kinematics may, in turn, modify muscle load. To date, however, little is known about the effect of expressive intentions on muscle load, an important biomechanical risk factor for playing-related injuries. Building on a prior case study, this study investigated the effect of expressive intentions on pianists' upper-body muscle load. Thirteen expert pianists performed a short excerpt by Chopin (~30 s) on a MIDI-instrumented grand piano under two conditions: (i) normal (based on their own interpretation of the score), and (ii) objective (performance of the score as objectively as possible). Surface electromyography (EMG) recorded activity in ten upper-body muscles (at the trunk and upper-limbs). EMG signals were normalized to each participant's maximum voluntary contraction (%MVC) per muscle. The mean (mEMG) and the integral (iEMG) of the EMG signals were used as indicators of instantaneous and cumulative muscle load, respectively. A series of paired Wilcoxon signed-rank tests revealed increased mEMG in nine muscles under the normal condition (~ 1 %MVC = 10-29% relative increase). The iEMG was also higher for these muscles (~ 40 %MVC*s = 19-35% relative increase), partly due to the longer duration of the normal condition (~ 3.3 s = ~ 10 % relative increase; $p=.002$). These findings provide empirical support for the embodied cognition perspective, indicating that expressive intentions modulate the neuromuscular dimensions of piano performance. They show that expressive intentions increase muscle load at both instantaneous and cumulative levels. Biomechanical risk factors of injury may therefore depend not only on the score's sound-production demands, but also on individual interpretation.

Singing to Support Father-Infant Relationships: Implications for Music Therapists and Beyond
Author: Kara Caine (PhD, MT-BC, Assistant Professor, Music Therapy, The Ohio State University)

Abstract: Singing to infants is a cross-cultural parenting practice with specific acoustic characteristics that capture infant attention and modulate infant emotion (Trainor et al., 1997). Parents benefit from singing to their infants through decreased stress and increased emotional regulation (Creighton et al., 2013; Mackinlay & Baker, 2005; Pixley, 2015). Research suggests that singing to infants supports parental sensitivity and emotional attunement, promoting healthy parent-infant attachment (de l'Etoile, 2006; McLean, 2016). However, fathers are often left out of these studies. Greater understanding of fathers' unique experiences as caregivers as well as infant responses to fathers' singing is needed for music therapists to design interventions that are effective for fathers in clinical settings. This presentation will review current research on fathers singing to infants and share findings from an online feasibility study that examines infant responses to fathers' live singing. Implications for music therapists designing and implementing targeted music interventions along with applications for health promotion among nonclinical populations will be discussed.

Skill Acquisition in Beginner Pianists During Short-Term Practice Assisted by EMG-Based Biofeedback

Author: Luis-Angel Rivera-Garcia (Université de Montréal)

Abstract: **Background:** The control of muscular activity is central to the development of piano performance skills, yet its direct assessment during learning and teaching remains challenging. Electromyography (EMG)-based biofeedback has been explored in previous research on pianists to support the regulation of muscular activity while preserving performance quality. MappEMG is an interactive EMG-based biofeedback smartphone application that provides pianists with real-time access to muscle activity through haptic and visual feedback. However, its use in piano practice interventions remains to be evaluated. **Objective:** This exploratory study primarily examined EMG activity of upper-limb muscles during a short-term unimanual piano practice intervention and secondarily explored potential intermanual skill transfer effects in the untrained limb. **Methods:** Twelve right-handed pianists were assigned either to an intervention group using MappEMG ($n = 6$) or to a control group without biofeedback (Non-MAPP; $n = 6$). Both groups completed three consecutive days of right-hand piano training (35 minutes/day) following an identical practice protocol including alternating notes, chords, and a C major scale. Upper-limb muscle activity was recorded using surface electromyography. **Results:** The MAPP group showed reduced right-hand forearm muscle activity, with extensor mEMG decreasing by approximately $\hat{I}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} 4.2 \% MVC$ and flexor mEMG by $\hat{I}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} 3.4 \% MVC$. Smaller reductions were observed in the untrained left hand (extensor $\hat{I}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} 0.8 \% MVC$; flexor $\hat{I}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} 0.6 \% MVC$). In contrast, the Non-MAPP group showed smaller extensor reductions in the trained hand ($\hat{I}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} 0.4 \% MVC$) and comparable flexor decreases ($\hat{I}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} 3.8 \% MVC$), while the untrained left hand exhibited increases in extensor mEMG ($\hat{I}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} +1.8 \% MVC$) and reductions in flexor mEMG ($\hat{I}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} \hat{\alpha}^{\circ} 2.8 \% MVC$). **Discussion:** These findings suggest that EMG-based biofeedback using MappEMG may support the regulation of forearm muscle activity during piano practice and facilitate learning-related changes beyond the trained hand.

Supporting the Mental Health of Staff Working in Long-Term Care through the Provision of High-Quality Concerts

Authors: Debra Chandler (Executive Director, Concerts in Care Ontario); Dr. Kate Dupuis (Schlegel Innovation Leader, Sheridan Centre for Elder Research)

Abstract: Long-term care staff face workload burden and low job satisfaction. Bringing live music into their workplaces could provide a meaningful solution. Our groundbreaking Ontario study placed professional musicians in 12 long-term care homes, transforming daily routines with high-quality concerts for both staff and residents. The results were meaningful: among 120 participating staff members—from personal support workers to housekeeping teams—more than half reported that these musical moments significantly boosted their well-being and job satisfaction. Staff described feeling "stress-free at work" and experiencing renewed connection with residents through these shared musical experiences. And the mood lifts were not always temporary - participants reported lasting improvements in mental health and workplace satisfaction across all departments, from recreation to dietary services. Our research confirms that music is uniquely accessible and universally appreciated in care settings, creating moments of joy that benefit everyone present and even nearby. Evidence from staff (M age = 37 years, 95% female) indicates positive impacts from musical programming. The downstream effects include happier, more connected staff which can lead to more effective resident care and improved retention rates. In an industry struggling with workforce challenges, these concerts offer scalable intervention that addresses staff well-being while enhancing quality of life for vulnerable older adults. This study underscores the need for sustainable funding for musical programming in long-term care that isn't just about arts access. The focus is on creating healthier workplaces and better care outcomes for our most vulnerable populations.

Testing a PCA-Derived Method for Assessing Movement Symmetry during Pianists' Performance of Contrary Motion Scales

Authors: Dr. Jillian Beacon (Ph.D., Human Kinetics, Research Associate, Carleton University); Dr. Donald Russell (Professor of Engineering, Carleton University)

Abstract: Background: Characteristics of pianist's head, torso, and arm coordination may be related to their experience of playing related pain or injury. However, existing studies on pianists' movement tend to measure individual joint systems rather than exploring coordinative relationships between larger parts of the body. Researchers need a means of creating quantitative coordination profiles that can be used to explore relationships between coordination features and playing-related pain or injury. Quantitative coordination profiles would also aid in tracking changes to pianists' coordination characteristics in response to health interventions, such as physiotherapy or somatic training. **Purpose:** This study seeks to test a novel application of principal component analysis (PCA) for creating coordination profiles that describe coordination features of pianists' arms and torsos during bimanual piano performance. Research Question: Can PCA-derived functional subspace identification be used to create movement profiles for pianists that classify their coordination style as "symmetrical" or "asymmetrical" for contrary movement scales? **Methods:** Six advanced pianists performed seven consecutive repetitions of a three octave, contrary motion scales at three separate data collections, one week apart. Their movements were tracked using a 9-camera Vicon motion capture system. Analysis: Using our method of functional subspace identification, we compared the PCA characteristics from different groupings of anatomical markers to assess the degree of symmetry in their movements. This process included a task-filtering algorithm that reduces data variation related to expected patterns in the musical task. **Results:** Application of functional subspace identification generated movement profiles that classified two pianists' movement as symmetrical, three pianists' movement as asymmetrical, and one pianist as having both symmetrical and asymmetrical characteristics. We discuss the results of individual pianists in relation to their playing experience and history of playing related pain as possible factors in the adoption of symmetrical or asymmetrical movement strategies. Recommendations for future research are described.

The Importance of Sound and Music in Neuroarchitecture

Authors: Jonas Braasch (School of Architecture, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute); Ute Besenecker (School of Architecture, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute); Alicia Walf (Cognitive Sciences, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute); Robert Whalen (Arts Department, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute)

Abstract: Neuroarchitecture is an interdisciplinary field that examines architectural design through a neuroscience lens to create built environments that support human cognition, emotion, and well-being. Rather than treating architecture as a primarily visual or aesthetic discipline, it frames the built environment as a multisensory system that shapes how people perceive, interpret, and inhabit their dwellings. This talk focuses on how integrated natural, musical, and other artificial sounds influence human experience, approaching the topic from both evolutionary and sound-design perspectives (Braasch, 2020). From an evolutionary standpoint, hearing emerged as an early-warning, orientation, and group-communication system, and humans continue to extract meaning from acoustic cues to understand their surroundings. The talk highlights how humans share an intuitive grasp of natural soundscapes, yet rely on different cultural concepts for artificial sounds like music. It concludes by discussing how electronic immersive multisensory environments can be incorporated into architectural spaces, drawing on psychophysical studies to quantify perceptual fidelity and cognitive benefits as a foundation for future design strategies. The main tool for our multimodal framework is the Collaborative-Research Augmented Immersive Virtual Environment Laboratory (CRAIVE-Lab) at RPI, utilizing 8 video projectors and 134 loudspeakers for audiovisual immersion. It serves as a testbed for perceptual research, a demonstration tool for complex virtual scenarios, and a research environment for designing scalable architectural solutions with varying technological complexity.

Braasch, J. (2020). Binaural modeling from an evolving-habitat perspective. In *The Technology of Binaural Understanding* (Blauert, J. & Braasch, J. eds., pp. 251-286). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Time as an Accommodation in Music Performance Assessment

Author: Olivia Adams (Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Ottawa in Interdisciplinary Music Research)

Abstract: Additional time for exams is a common academic accommodation for students with disabilities (Elliot & Marquart, 2004; Lovett & Leja, 2013; Lovett, 2020) and researchers and professors have long questioned the use of time as an accommodation and how it affects testing outcomes (Bolt & Ysseldyke, 2007; Sireci et al., 2005; Wei & Zhang, 2023). Music performance assessments are no different. Time, and in particular the speed at which a music exam candidate performs their exam elements, is often an unnamed factor in successful conservatory examinations. This research study takes into account data collected from surveys and interviews from teachers, examiners, and adjudicators on accommodations for neurodiverse musicians in performance assessments. Out of the emergent themes found in the collected data, a prominent theme centered the use of time as an accommodation. The notion of time applied to many areas of accommodation, including how much time is given to complete a task, time limits on examinations, time for repetitions of questions, additional time for auditory processing, and the scheduling of events. This paper presentation discusses the different subsets of time as an accommodation that arose during interviews with examiners and adjudicators and narratives shared by music teachers. Discussion will include time in relation to anxiety, scheduling, and the flexibility of time afforded in music festivals versus examinations. The participant's views in this paper reveal a larger narrative of the value of time not as a unit of measure, but also as a currency of equity.

Accessible Electronic Music Interfaces and Advanced Computer Interfacing for People with Quadriplegia II: An Update Involving New Developments in Hardware and Software

Leads: Dave S. Whalen (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute); Jonas Braasch, (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute); Christopher Bialas (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute)

Abstract: The workshop will cover ongoing developments in accessible electronic music interfaces and adaptive computer interaction systems, with a focus on recent hardware and software updates, live demos and applications for individuals with quadriplegia. Support materials prior to the workshop will be added below. Dave has a number of free software demos for the conference below and links to further information. Contact [him](#) for more info.

- Below are links, resources and videos to experimental webpages for playing music off the web. Links below use sound input as a way to trigger notes as well as other inputs such as a cell phone or webcam head tracking to choose different notes or you can use commercial breath control inputs and other types of hardware.
- Limited DIY Kits available for nonprofits and universities. Dave continues working on research previously supported by the Craig Nielsen Foundation and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute that developed special sensors for hands-free music. See links below. We have limited components we can share with individuals that wish to participate in our ongoing symposiums. He will demo [FaceNav](#), a free, powerful motion tracking software application from [MotionInput Games](#), a spinoff of University College London.

Acknowledgments: Much of the information below has been generously supported through contributions from the Craig Nielsen Foundation. **Prof. Dean Mohamedally**, University College London (UCL), Professor in Computer Science specializing in Software Engineering and Industry Projects and his spin-off company from UCL MotionInput Games pioneer countless assistive technologies including FaceNav, highlighted in examples below. **Prof. V.J. Manzo**, Professor of [Music](#) at Worcester Polytechnic institute as well as his students have provided tremendous support for development and implementation of new hardware sensors. **Prof. Jonas Braasch** is a Professor at the School of Architecture at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and teaches in the Graduate Program in Architectural Acoustics. He has critically supported a number of different projects including supporting the ISATMA program since 2014.

University of Ottawa presentation links: free experimental links for noncommercial use

Adaptive Midi Controller Webpage

Experimental Web Music Interface

Assistive Audio Switch

Experimental Web Music Interface

Adaptive Hardware Designs

This research was previously supported by the previously sponsored by the Craig H. Nielsen Foundation. Limited DIY Kits available for nonprofits and universities. Dave continues working on research previously supported by the Craig Nielsen Foundation and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute that developed special sensors for hands-free music. See links below. We have limited components we can share with individuals that wish to participate in our ongoing symposiums. Contact [Dave](#) for more info.

Body Mapping: Preventing & Addressing Musicians' Common Shoulder, Arm & Hand Injuries

Lead: Jennifer Johnson (Professional violinist, Association for Body Mapping Education (ABME))

Abstract: Injury and poor tone quality result when musicians are not moving in ways aligned with the body's actual design. In this Body Mapping for Musicians workshop, the focus will be on improving the quality of movement for the shoulders, arms and hands of musicians. Through the use of anatomical images and interactive movement explorations, the four main joints of the arm and how each is designed to move specific to music-making will be explored. The workshop will guide musicians of all instruments to learn to identify the red flags of the most commonly occurring faulty movement patterns that can lead to injury- both for themselves and for their students. The causes of arm and hand injuries such as tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, thoracic outlet syndrome and stiff fingers will be examined and new, healthy movement patterns will be explored interactively once the truth of the anatomy has been grasped.

Common misconceptions about the design of the arm are often revealed in traditional pedagogical language such as "Keep your shoulders down"! Some of these adages will be discussed and suggestions will be provided for improved pedagogical language that can produce freer arm movements for all instrumentalists and singers.

All participants are invited to bring their instruments to this interactive Body Mapping workshop in order to personally experience the direct relationship between quality of movement in their arms and hands and quality of their sound.

Building Bridges: Helping Musicians and Singers Deliver Engaging Community Concerts

Lead: Gertrude Létourneau (Musicians Building Bridges; Musician and performance coach)

Abstract: For over 30 years, I have performed for a wide variety of audiences such as seniors and children, including those with exceptionalities. I learned that a community concert is more than excellent music - it's a human connection. Musicians might excel in technical and artistic performance but are often unprepared for community venues. How do you speak to your audience? How do you choose music that is meaningful to them? How do you play the music you love and make it accessible for different audiences?

This hands-on workshop will equip musicians with the skills to bridge that gap, using their musical skills and turning them into communication skills. Genuine connection transforms concerts into inclusive community experiences.

Workshop Objectives:

Participants will learn to:

- Overcome common barriers to connecting with a community audience.
- Use warm, accessible storytelling to share music.
- Manage performance anxiety related to speaking in intimate settings.
- Design flexible programs that consider listeners' emotional and social needs.

Structure & Methods:

This is an active, participatory session. We will blend discussion with hands-on practice, starting with how communication transforms an audience's experience. Participants will then workshop how to introduce a piece of music for a specific community group. Finally we'll reflect on how to be fully present for the audience, so the concert is both professional and engaging.

Relevance to Music and Health:

This workshop is about the social side of health. We give musicians simple tools to connect with their audience. This turns passive listening into active participation. These skills are key to building relationships, fighting loneliness, and improving life for everyone in communities and healthcare. It makes a real difference for both the listener and the musician.

Creative Practice, Compelling Performance

Lead: Amy Likar (DMA, M. AmSAT, Licensed Body Mapping Educator, Member Oakland Symphony Orchestra)

Abstract: This workshop/roundtable is a follow-up to last year's "Creating Meaningful Change for Women in Music" session. The Safe Music Initiative aims to foster a music community free from harassment, discrimination, and abuse. Participants will learn about the Initiative's accomplishments over the past year, as well as its strategic plan to transform how harassment complaints are addressed within the music community.

Key efforts include the development of a National Code of Conduct to be adopted by Canadian orchestras and music institutions, and the establishment of an independent third-party body to administer the Code. This body will be responsible for receiving complaints of misconduct, conducting investigations, maintaining a public registry, and providing harassment training and education.

Participants will also have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Initiative as it continues its rapid progress toward making the Safe Music Program a reality.

Eutony: Body Awareness as a Tool for Vocal Development

Leads: Nathalie Dumont (Eutoniste G.-A., chanteuse et animatrice – *MusiCorpus*, organisme dont l'objectif est de sensibiliser les musiciens et les artistes à l'importance du travail corporel pour leur santé); Nadine Dionne (Eutoniste G.-A. et coach vocal – *MusiCorpus*, organisme dont l'objectif est de sensibiliser les musiciens et les artistes à l'importance du travail corporel pour leur santé)

Abstract: This workshop offers an integrated approach that combines Eutony Gerda Alexander® with vocal technique to support and optimize the voice, enhance learning effectiveness, and contribute to injury prevention.

Eutony Gerda Alexander® is a body awareness approach based on listening to sensations and refining one's perception of the skin, bones, muscles, and internal spaces. It supports the use of the body as an instrument by helping to identify what needs to engage physically during sound production, while promoting efficiency of movement, sound quality, and the prevention of unnecessary tension. This approach enables musicians to embody sound with greater ease.

The workshop highlights how the development of body awareness, combined with contemporary approaches in vocal pedagogy, can foster a more effective, nuanced, and body-respectful approach to singing. Particular attention is given to cultivating healthy vocal habits that support long-term practice and vocal health.

The session begins with a brief theoretical introduction, followed by practical work in Eutony Gerda Alexander® aimed at refining sensory perception and deepening awareness of the bodily structures involved in vocal production. Participants will explore the relationship between postural habits and sound quality, as well as the regulation and flexibility of muscle tone—key elements in the coordination of breathing, muscular support, and vocal projection.

Designed as a 90-minute session (if possible), this workshop is intended for musicians, students, and teachers interested in exploring new approaches to voice teaching and singing practice through body awareness.

From Performance Anxiety to Performer Resilience: A Feldenkrais Approach for Developing Embodied Resilience to Adversity for Musicians

Lead: Dr. Jillian Beacon (Ph.D. Human Kinetics, Guild Certified Feldenkrais Practitioner, Research As-sociate, Carleton University)

Abstract: Musicians face many forms of adversity as they develop their craft over the course of their lives. However, traditional discussions of music performance anxiety tend to emphasize the negative physical and psychological symptoms experienced before, during, and after formal performances, giving little consideration to the broader context of musicians' lives. In this workshop, we will explore the alternative concept of *embodied performer resilience*, which considers the dynamic, lived experience of the musician as a learning, sensing, and adaptive individual who can harness self-knowledge to grow through adversity, rather than merely endure it.

We will examine how the Feldenkrais Method's "Awareness Through Movement" lessons can support the development of embodied resilience by enhancing sensitivity to subtle variations in posture and movement. These sensory insights often reveal habitual patterns of self-use that are closely linked to emotional states and one's sense of self. "Awareness Through Movement" lessons involve slow, mindful movements in novel coordinative sequences, approached with playfulness and curiosity. Participants are encouraged to move beyond self-criticism by engaging with the movements in a non-judgmental way. As individuals learn to access a wider range of adaptive movement possibilities, they develop embodied self-knowledge that fosters a sense of security, agency, and confidence in their ability to respond to adversity or trauma.

This workshop invites participants to take part in an "Awareness Through Movement" lesson consisting of whole-body movement sequences that incorporate breathing, rhythmic motion, and the intentional use of the eyes, ears, tongue, and hands. The lesson may be completed either lying on a mat or seated in a chair. No prior experience is required. Participants are encouraged to wear comfortable clothing suitable for movement.

Integrating Wellness into Music Instruction through the Use of the Steel Tongue Drum

Lead: Nisreen Jardaneh (Private piano teacher)

Abstract: This session demonstrates how to integrate wellness into music learning and teaching. As a piano teacher, I used the steel tongue drum for my personal mindfulness and relaxation, then shared this approach with my students during lessons and workshops. Attendees will play the instrument and learn practical uses for relaxation, mindfulness activities, and mental breaks in teaching.

Living Music: Facilitating Social Improvisation

Lead: Dr. Irene Feher (Concordia University / Music for People / Improvisation Facilitator, Voice Teacher & Sound Artist)

Abstract: Musical self-expression is a joyful and deeply human form of communication available to everyone, regardless of age, background, training, or ability. As articulated in David Darling's *Bill of Musical Rights*, any combination of people and instruments can make music together. Yet for many individuals, the idea of creating music without a score evokes anxiety or resistance, largely because improvisation has not been fully integrated into formal music education.

In everyday life, humans constantly improvise through speech, movement, and social interaction. This workshop explores how social improvisation (Music for People) can be intentionally facilitated in educational, clinical, and community contexts. Improvisational music-making supports active listening, emotional awareness, social connection, confidence, and creative problem-solving, while offering an inclusive, accessible, and flexible approach to music participation across diverse populations.

Meaningful musical experiences can emerge through radical simplicity. By returning to core musical elements—silence, pulse, and tone—a stable platform for creative exploration is established. As musical ideas unfold, the facilitator moves beyond the podium to empower participants as active creators, weaving together diverse musical and cultural expressions through attentive listening and responsive musicianship. This evolving process forms a kind of musical alchemy in which individual and collective creativity continually emerges.

Practical facilitation strategies using breath, voice, handclaps, and movement are introduced as adaptable frameworks that can inform future research design, intervention development, and program evaluation in music and health. Sequenced melodic and rhythmic activities guide participants through a creative and relational transformation grounded in active listening, fostering connection, communication, collaboration, creation, and inspiration.

Participants are welcome to bring their own musical instruments; small hand percussion instruments will also be provided. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

Rethinking Excellence: Motivation, Burnout and Sustainable Practice in Music Performance

Lead: Greta Chase (MPC Provisional, CSPA Member)

Abstract: Burnout is increasingly recognized as a significant challenge in music performance, arising from prolonged exposure to performance pressure, uncertainty surrounding professional opportunities, and the internalization of perfectionistic standards. High-performers are frequently socialized to prioritize performance outcomes at all costs; however, this approach is associated with diminished psychological wellbeing, reduced intrinsic motivation, and lower retention and engagement (Haraldsen et al., 2020). This 60-minute interactive workshop addresses the central question: How can musicians pursue excellence while maintaining psychological wellbeing and sustainable performance practices?

Safe music initiative

Leads: Jemma Jones (Assistant Principal Double Bass; Symphony Nova Scotia/coach with Nova Scotia Youth Orchestra/Co-Founder Safe Music Inc); Gwen Klassen (Assistant Principal Flute/Piccolo; Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra/University of Calgary Sessional Instructor/Co-Founder Safe Music Inc)

Abstract: This workshop/roundtable is a follow up to last year's "Creating Meaningful Change for Women in Music" workshop. The Safe Music Initiative strives to create a music community free from harassment, discrimination, and abuse. Hear what the Safe Music Initiative has accomplished over the last year and our strategic plan to change the way harassment complaints are handled in the music community. This includes creating a National Code of Conduct to be adopted by Canadian orchestras and music institutions, and establishing a Third Party group that will administer the Code, intake complaints of misconduct, lead investigations, maintain a public registry, and provide harassment training and education. Participants will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Initiative as we continue on our fast paced trajectory of making the Safe Music Program a reality.

Teaching with Different Brains in Mind: Inclusive Music Pedagogy to Support Regulation and Wellbeing for More Learners

Lead: Andrea Unrau (Director of Programming, Sarah McLachlan School of Music)

Abstract: Music learning environments bring together learners with diverse sensory needs, self-regulation capacities, learning styles and neurocognitive profiles. As music educators and facilitators are increasingly working in inclusive, community-based and health-informed contexts, there is a growing need for practical teaching approaches that support regulation, psychology safety, and wellbeing alongside musical development.

In this interactive workshop, we will explore inclusive music pedagogy through a health and wellness framework, with a focus on group and private music teaching "with different brains in mind". Drawing on current frameworks in music cognition, neurodiversity, trauma-informed practice, and nervous system regulation, we will try out innovative instructional strategies to support regulation and wellness in the music classroom.

Workshop participants will have the opportunity to experience and reflect on topics including:

- Setting up the classroom space and schedules
- Transitions
- Access points and scaffolding for groups
- Encountering unexpected behaviours
- Choice frameworks

Participants will also have a chance to share their challenges, learnings and research findings in connecting wellbeing and musical growth. This session was developed with Community Music principles in mind, emphasizing openness, experiential learning, and opportunities for knowledge sharing.

This workshop is designed for music educators, community music practitioners, teaching artists, therapists, music students and researchers interested in expanding access to joyful and supportive music participation for more learners. Participants will leave with practical approaches that can be immediately applied in their educational and community settings.

The Alexander Technique: How to Increase Attention While Playing Music

Lead: Francis Caron (Certified Alexander Technique teacher, Member of Alexander Technique Canada)

Abstract: Many factors in a musician's life can contribute to a cycle of fatigue, pain, chronic injury, and compensatory habits, often leading to difficulties in regaining the ability to fully enjoy practicing, playing, and performing.

The Alexander Technique (A.T.) offers an insightful and grounded approach to musical performance, creating space for greater ease and reducing the impact of anxiety. It encourages a focus on the present moment, where experiences can be explored, adjusted, and enjoyed, rather than feared. As a mindful approach to self-care, it is both educational and therapeutic, guiding individuals to attend to the coordinated functioning of the whole body while engaging its individual parts.

This workshop introduces the five principles of the Alexander Technique, along with the insights and concepts developed by F. M. Alexander. These will be explained and experienced through practical exercises designed to increase awareness of habitual and inefficient movement patterns. Participants will begin to explore how to apply A.T. principles not only in musical practice but also in everyday activities, where many of these issues originate.

Funders' Roundtable

Moderator: Rory McLoed (Xenia Concerts)

Panelists: Patrick McCormack (Program Officer in Supporting Artistic Practice, Canada Council for the Arts); Kelly-Anne Maddox (Lead research advisor, faculty of Arts, University of Ottawa); Miles Bowman (Executive Director of The Song Program); Caroline Matt (Portfolio Manager of Cultural Funding at the City of Ottawa)

Description: Securing and sustaining funding is an integral part of both research and artistic projects at the intersection of music and health. Though there are many options for funding, researchers and community practitioners may not be aware of the opportunities, how to access them, and how to improve their chances of success while staying true to the vision of their projects. In this roundtable, funding professionals from government funding bodies will meet with research and arts professionals to discuss current trends and challenges in funding for arts, health and wellbeing; what opportunities exist for research and practice projects; and emerging trends regarding funding priorities and application processes.

Ketamine Assisted Therapy for Treatment Resistant Psychological Conditions: Experiences in Practice, Treatment, and Research

Moderator: Gilles Comeau (Director, Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa)

Panelists: Dr. Manuela Joannou (University of Ottawa); Nicole Stanson (Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa)

Abstract: Systematic reviews have shown ketamine therapy for treatment-resistant depression (TRD) to be effective in reducing symptoms and suicidality (Veluri & Mansuri, 2021), and improving quality of life (Cheng et al., 2025). Ketamine is typically classified as a dissociative anesthetic (Quibell et al., 2015), however, its psychoactive properties are akin to psychedelics (Santos, 2021) and evidence suggests that they may share a similar mechanism of action when used for treating TRD (Wong et al., 2024). Moreover, studies have found that music plays a crucial role in facilitating the depression reducing effect of psychedelic therapy (Dwyer et al., 2025 ; Kaelen et al., 2018). Given the therapeutic parallels between ketamine and psychedelics, it would be worth investigating whether music serves a similarly facilitative role in ketamine therapy as it does in psychedelic treatment. In fact, recent evidence has found that music can aid ketamine therapy for depression by enhancing tolerability and treatment outcomes (Hauser et al., 2024; Kheirkhah et al., 2024). However, no studies have yet undertaken a qualitative phenomenological inquiry specifically aimed at exploring patients' subjective experiences of music in this context. Dr. Gilles Comeau and Dr. Manuela Joannou are currently collaborating on research to address this gap. The findings from this work may help elucidate the significance and psychological mechanisms of music in ketamine therapy for TRD. This proposed roundtable will bring together health care professionals, researchers, and people with lived experience to discuss the intersection of ketamine assisted therapy and music' past and present research, therapeutic practice, and future directions.

La boîte à musique Music Education as a Social, Developmental and Therapeutic Tool in Social Pediatrics

Moderator: Félix Dallaire (BAM coordinator and music teacher)

Panelists: Mélina Dalaire (Certified Dalcroze teacher); Vincent St-Onge (Psychosocial worker and music specialist for BAM); Dre Caroline Brassard (Family doctor in Gatineau); Sophie Watson-Roiling (Researcher affiliated with uOttawa)

Abstract:

1- Social pediatric center of Gatineau (CPSG)

Context: The populations targeted and the services offered by the CPSG

2- Founding mandates and principles guiding the Boîte à Musique (BAM)

Main goals and strategies

3- Today's BAM

Programming: individual, small, and large group teaching

Research project on the Dalcroze method and children's well-being

Open discussion on community music and its general and specific challenges

4- Tomorrow's BAM

Open discussion: Moving forward: upcoming programming/projects

- consistency of services

- expansion: growth versus depth

Partner Lightning Round

Moderator: Richard Marsella (Executive Director, Community Music Schools of Toronto)

Panelists: Guylaine Lemaire (Executive Director and Director of Artistic Planning, Thirteen Strings); Jennifer Johnson (Professional violinist, Association for Body Mapping Education (ABME)); Debra Chandler (Executive Director, Concerts in Care Ontario); Miles Bowman (Executive Director, SONG: Sounds of the Next Generation); Rory McLeod (Xenia Concerts)

Abstract: Join various partner organizations from the Music & Health Research Institute as they give insight into their work and related research. Through doing this lightning round session, we hope to foster new paths to research and engagement within the Institute.

The Neural Impact of Body Mapping on Music Performance Anxiety

Moderator: Angela K. Boland (School of Psychology, University of Ottawa)

Panelists: Andra M. Smith (School of Psychology, University of Ottawa); Jennifer Johnson (The Association for Body Mapping Education, Teacher Trainer, Professional violinist)

Abstract: **Background:** Considering the powerful impact of music on society, it is crucial to support musicians' physical and mental health. The Body Mapping teaching community has observed that musicians suffering from performance anxiety also frequently report excessive muscular tension and injuries. They also reveal that they are playing/singing either with primarily internal or external attention, which can increase panic, fear, and muscular tension, often leading to a sense of loss of control over one's skillset. **Objectives:** This roundtable will present Body Mapping methods as they apply to music performance anxiety. We will also present our findings on the neurophysiological impacts of Body Mapping among musicians with performance anxiety. **Methods:** Our research sought to investigate the effects of a three-week-long Body Mapping intervention on brain activity during an anxiety-provoking task and a working memory task from pre- to post-intervention. We also examined the effects of Body Mapping on subjective anxiety, mindfulness, musculoskeletal discomfort, and working memory performance. Themes from participants' experiences with Body Mapping were also assessed. **Intervention:** Jennifer Johnson will lead interactive explorations to guide attendees experientially through the Body Mapping interventions used in the research, including movement and attention retraining. This roundtable will provide tools to help musicians improve and integrate their physical and mental health. **Results:** During the anxiety-provoking task, blood flow in brain regions involved in emotional processing and rumination decreased from pre- to post-intervention. Post-intervention, participants also reported lower anxiety after the task. During the working memory task, blood flow in brain regions devoted to sensorimotor integration increased from pre- to post-intervention, as did accuracy on the task. Additionally, state, trait, and performance anxiety decreased post-intervention. Thematic findings (pending) will also be presented. **Discussion:** Results offer neuroscientific support for Body Mapping, indicating that it may reduce performance anxiety through enhanced sensorimotor processing and nonjudgmental awareness.

A Historical Perspective on East Asian Immigrant Research Within East Asian, Music and Mental Health Literature

Authors: Julia Ming Lo (University of Ottawa); Dave Miranda (University of Ottawa)

Abstract: Historically, although the impact of music on mental health is increasingly studied, a cultural lens looking at East Asian immigrants in Western societies is often overlooked. Instead, research typically discusses broad Western and East Asian comparisons across countries. There is documented mental health stigma within the East Asian immigrant community, which may have delayed research on music and mental health in this population. Nonetheless, music has also become a more common theme of East Asian immigrant upbringing, particularly in the last few decades (e.g., developmental impact of formal music training). The objective of this study was to observe the proportion of research on music and mental health in East Asian immigrants within all research on music and mental health in East Asian populations over 155 years. Keywords for East Asian immigrants, East Asian populations, music, and mental health were inputted in the publication database, PsycINFO, for each decade from 1870 to 2025. Preliminary results from a relative publication curve suggested that the proportion (%) of research focused on East Asian immigrants within research on East Asian populations has remained very small in Western music psychology and mental health research. There was a potential peak in research interest for this population in the 2010s, but likely a scarcity of such research interest before the 2000s. Notably, since the 2020s, there may be a recent relative decline in music research focused on the mental health of East Asian immigrants. Together, results will be discussed through different sociohistorical interpretations, such as stereotypes about the mental health of East Asian immigrant communities (e.g., “model minority myth”) coupled with an expansion of research on music and mental health in East Asian societies.

Effects of Singing in Parkinson’s Disease: A Single-Case Experimental Protocol

Authors: Narges Bayat (PhD student, School of Rehabilitation Sciences, MHRI, University of Ottawa); Anna Zumbansen (Assistant Professor, School of Rehabilitation Sciences, MHRI, University of Ottawa)

Abstract: Singing has gained increasing attention as a therapeutic approach for communication disorders due to its shared anatomical, respiratory, and neurophysiological mechanisms with speech. In Parkinson’s disease (PD), hypokinetic dysarthria affects approximately 70–90% of individuals and is characterized by reduced vocal intensity, impaired prosody, and laryngeal dysfunction, all of which significantly affect everyday communication and quality of life. Given the limited impact of pharmacological treatments on speech and voice symptoms, there is a clear need for evidence-based, nonpharmacological interventions targeting both physiological and psychosocial aspects of communication. Although group studies investigating singing in PD have shown promising results, many are limited by small sample sizes and insufficient statistical power. Rigorous single-case experimental designs (SCEDs) may help overcome these limitations by allowing systematic, controlled evaluation at the individual level. This study protocol outlines a multiple-baseline across participants SCED) investigating the effects of structured singing practice in 4 individuals with PD. Participants will complete a minimum of five baseline sessions followed by six in-person singing sessions over three weeks (60 minutes, twice weekly), with repeated measurements collected across baseline and intervention phases. Primary outcomes include mean voice intensity during connected speech and intensity-related laryngeal measures assessed through acoustic analysis and high-speed video laryngoscopy. Secondary outcomes encompass voice quality, articulatory control, vocal fold contact patterns, respiratory function, nasality, speech intelligibility, functional communication, voice-related quality of life, singing ability, mood, and activation. Handwriting will serve as a non-treated control behavior. A three-month follow-up will evaluate maintenance of primary outcomes. Data will be analyzed using visual inspection and non-parametric effect size statistics (Tau-U, BC-Tau). This protocol integrates physiological, acoustic, perceptual, and patient-reported measures to comprehensively evaluate singing as a rehabilitation strategy in PD. Findings are expected to provide clinical evidence supporting singing-based interventions in neurogenic speech rehabilitation.

Emotional Tone of Popular Songs in Japan and the United States: A Cultural and Generational Comparison of Music and Lyrics from 2008 To 2026

Authors: Dave Miranda (University of Ottawa); Sachiyo Kanzaki (Université du Québec à Montréal); Julia Ming Lo (University of Ottawa); Kiran Matharu (University of Ottawa)

Abstract: The emotional nature of music may explain many of its implications for wellbeing across cultures and historical periods. Popular songs are cultural products with music and lyrics that may reflect and contribute to societal patterns of emotional expression and wellbeing across generations. Our main objective was to compare the emotional tone of popular songs between cultures (Japan and United States) and across generations (2008 to 2026). This allowed to directly compare the recent evolution of popular music in Japan and the United States, as well as if music's emotional cues align with lyrics' emotional connotations. Three hundred and sixty-five #1 songs were sampled from the weekly Billboard Japan Hot 100 (n=185) and the Billboard Hot 100 in the United States (n=180). Musically, the emotional tone (positive and negative) was inferred from mode (major/minor) and tempo in beats per minute (bpm). Lyrically, the emotional tone will be estimated from the proportion of text with positive and negative connotations. Preliminary results suggest that mode (major/minor) and tempo (bpm) remained stable over the years in both countries. Although major mode was similarly predominant in both countries, tempo was faster in Japan. Songs also decreased in duration over the years in both societies, with greater reduction in Japan. Lyrics have not yet been analyzed, but results will be available at the conference. In sum, over recent years, those #1 popular songs revealed some similarity in positive emotionality between cultures (mode) but also some differences (tempo and duration). Interpretations will address how these patterns relate to changing music industry practices and broader sociocultural evolution. Findings will be compared to prior studies on the emotional evolution of popular music and lyrics. We will also outline methodological considerations relevant to future research on music, culture, and wellbeing (e.g., musicality, linguistics, validity of cultural comparisons, selection of songs).

Group Singing and Parkinson's: A Case Study for Social Prescribing

Author: Hannah Sparkes (School of Music, Memorial University)

Abstract: Parkinson's disease (PD) is a progressive neurodegenerative condition that primarily causes disorders of movement (Zarotti et al., 2021). It affects over 100,000 Canadians and is more common amongst older adults (Parkinson Canada, 2023). People with PD often struggle with social isolation; they may avoid social interactions because of their symptoms or may not be able to participate in their usual social activities (Prenger et al., 2020). Care partners of individuals with PD may also experience social isolation (Seshadri et al., 2024). Group singing has been shown to have a variety of health benefits and can contribute to social benefits among several populations, including people with PD and their care partners (Butala et al., 2022; Forbes et al., 2021; Hersh et al., 2023; Tamplin et al., 2019). Social prescribing, which involves referring individuals to non-clinical services available in the community, is also effective at reducing social isolation (Chatterjee et al., 2018). Although many researchers have demonstrated the benefits of singing for people with PD, fewer studies investigate the relationship between group singing and specifically social connection for individuals with PD. Additionally, the relationship between social prescribing and social connection has not been robustly explored in this population.

Investigating the Neural and Physical Effects of Body Mapping on Musicians' Playing-Related Pain

Authors: **Elena G Bakker (School of Psychology, University of Ottawa);** Angela K Boland (School of Psychology, Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa); Jennifer Johnson (Music and Health Research Institute (MHRI), University of Ottawa; Association for Body Mapping Education); Nicole Stanson (Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa); Gilles Comeau (Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa; School of Rehabilitation Sciences, School of Music, Institute of Mental Health Research, University of Ottawa); Andra M Smith. (School of Psychology, Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa)

Abstract: **Background:** Chronic pain and injury (most notably playing-related musculoskeletal disorders; PRMDs) are alarmingly prevalent among performing musicians and pose significant risks to their physical, psychological, and professional well-being. Body Mapping, an intervention that integrates somatic education and mindfulness to retrain musicians' maladaptive patterns of movement, may combat the occurrence and severity of PRMDs. However, empirical research on its effects is limited. **Objectives:** The present study examines whether structural brain changes and improvements to PRMDs are observable following Body Mapping training. **Methods:** Adult professional musicians (n = 23) underwent a three-week Body Mapping intervention, which included in-person courses and self-directed practice. Measures of musculoskeletal discomfort and mindfulness were collected pre- and post-intervention. High-resolution T1-weighted structural magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans were acquired at both time points to assess changes to grey matter volume. **Results:** Following Body Mapping training, increased grey matter volume was observed in regions including the left inferior orbitofrontal cortex, the right superior orbitofrontal cortex, the left middle frontal gyrus, the right precentral gyrus, and the right angular gyrus. No significant changes to mindfulness or musculoskeletal discomfort were observed; however, the high variability in post-intervention changes to musculoskeletal discomfort was notable. **Conclusion:** Taken together, these results provide insight into the effects and underlying mechanisms of Body Mapping training, suggesting its potential role in the improvement of musicians' well-being.

Measuring Gait and Movement Dynamics in Older Adults Participating in Dalcroze-Based Music and Movement Classes

Authors: **Chantal Carrillo (Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa);** Mikael Swirp (Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa); Gilles Comeau (Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa)

Abstract: Community-based movement and music classes based on the well-established Dalcroze method have been implemented to improve the health and well-being of older adults. Growing research demonstrates improvements in psychological well-being and cognitive function, and previous studies have also reported improvements in gait and balance following weekly Dalcroze classes in older adults. Despite growing adoption of Dalcroze-based programs, objective physiological markers of short-term change remain poorly characterized. It is unclear whether these improvements can emerge over shorter intervention periods, and little is known about the broader physiological effects of the Dalcroze method. To address this gap, we have begun collecting physiological and movement data, including gait parameters and movement acceleration. In the current study, participants walked across a 20' GAITRite walkway under single-task (walking only) and dual-task (walking while counting backwards) conditions. Preliminary findings (n = 9) show significantly faster walking speeds and reduced double support times in single- compared to dual-task conditions. After 10 weeks of participation in the program, participants will repeat these assessments to determine whether gait parameters improve across both conditions. Additionally, pilot data were collected from accelerometers worn continuously during the 1-hour classes. These data demonstrate the feasibility of using smartwatches to quantify tempo matching, within-group synchrony, movement smoothness, and overall movement volume across the intervention period. This approach enables the integration of objective, continuous measures of movement and physiological engagement in community-based programming for older adults. As the need for systematic, high-quality research on intervention strategies continues to grow, an interdisciplinary framework combining psychological and physiological outcomes is an essential step toward understanding the mechanisms underlying music- and movement-based interventions.

Metal Vocal Techniques as a Resource for Exploring Clinical Voice Qualities: Development of a Vocal Database of Simulated Pathological Voices

Authors: Ingrid Verduyckt (Université de Montréal); Stéphanie Younes (Doctoral student Speech Language Pathology, vocal coach, Université de Montréal); Sébastien Croteau (Singer and voice artist, La Fabrique des Monstres); Maude Théberge (Singer and voice artist, independent,); Neus Calaf (Researcher in voice science, entrepreneur, AllVoiced); Timothy Pommée (Researcher in voice science, Université de Montréal)

Abstract: Vocal quality is a central indicator of vocal health in both singers and non-singers. Vocal health professionals rely on auditory-perceptual evaluation, structured through rating scales targeting specific perceptual parameters, to guide assessment and therapeutic intervention. Training in auditory perceptual skills traditionally relies on clinical samples, which offer limited parametric control and raise ethical constraints. Synthetic voices provide greater control but lack naturalness and are typically restricted to sustained vowels. Metal vocal practices involve refined control of distortion and noise modulation, constituting a relevant expertise for exploring vocal qualities that approximate clinical targets. This presentation describes the development of a database of simulated pathological voices in collaboration with one female and one male metal singer for the training of auditory-perceptual skills. **Method:** The singers were first exposed to clinical samples illustrating varying degrees of roughness (R) and breathiness (B), two key perceptual parameters in speech-language pathology. They trained to reproduce these qualities along a four-step categorical scale (0–3). A recording session followed, including a calibration phase during which two speech-language pathologists with expertise in auditory-perceptual analysis guided productions toward predefined perceptual targets. Each R–B combination was recorded with as many repetitions as necessary to reach the intended quality. **Results:** The resulting database comprises 64 samples covering all combinations of R and B (grades 03), recorded on sustained vowels and continuous speech (32 per singer). Samples are currently undergoing acoustic analysis (Praat) and independent perceptual validation by four speech-language pathologists. **Discussion:** This project mobilizes musical vocal expertise to support training in vocal health and fosters dialogue between speech-language pathology and voice pedagogy. It also invites reflection on aesthetic and cultural dimensions shaping perceptions of vocal pathology and vocal mastery, and examines how embodied vocal practices can inform clinical listening and pedagogical approaches.

Stress as a Moderator of the Emotional and Physiological Effects of Sad Music in University Students

Author: Ya Yue Sun (University of Ottawa)

Abstract: **Background:** Academic stress poses a significant threat to university students' well-being, particularly within a population that may lack sufficient emotional and financial support. Sad music has been associated with both beneficial effects, such as emotional catharsis and mood enhancement, and negative effects, including heightened distress. However, findings remain inconsistent. Given that university students frequently engage with music for extended periods, understanding how academic stress shapes emotional and physiological responses to sad music is essential. **Aim:** This study aims to examine whether academic stress is a moderator of sad music and well-being, focusing on emotional and physiological responses to selected music excerpts. **Method:** A mixed-methods correlational design will be carried out with approximately 200 undergraduate students recruited from three universities in Ottawa. Four strata will be formed based on year of study, with proportional allocation reflecting the population distribution to ensure representativeness. Academic stress will be assessed using the DECORE-30 Student Questionnaire; emotional responses will be measured using the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS); physiological responses will be measured via heart rate using a photoplethysmography finger sensor. Moderation analyses will be conducted to test whether academic stress alters the emotional and physiological impact of sad music. **Expected Results:** It is hypothesized that higher levels of academic stress will diminish the beneficial emotional and physiological effects of sad music and amplify negative ones. **Conclusion:** Findings will provide insight into the role of stress as a moderator of music and well-being. It will also offer guidance to future practices aimed at enhancing the benefits of music, thus, enriching the quality of the subjective reality.

Testing the Interrater Reliability of the Rapid Measure of Spontaneous Singing (RMSS)

Authors: Madeline Skiffington (School of Rehabilitation Sciences, Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa); Madeline Skiffington (School of Rehabilitation Sciences, Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa); Kylan Song (Faculty of Health Sciences, Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa); Valerie Sun (Faculty of Social Sciences, Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa); Ava Zidek (Faculty of Health Sciences, Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa); Anna Zumbansen (School of Rehabilitation Sciences, Music and Health Research Institute, University of Ottawa)

Abstract: **Background:** There is a growing interest in research on the therapeutic role of singing in health and well-being. Nevertheless, few methods exist to measure singing ability. Current methods require specialized equipment for analysis of frequency and/or intensity. We propose a new measure, the Rapid Measure of Spontaneous Singing (RMSS), to rapidly and easily quantify singing ability in the general and clinical populations. Pitch accuracy, rhythm accuracy, and musicality are rated based on the acapella performance of the song "Happy Birthday". **Objectives:** To measure the interrater reliability of the RMSS. **Methods:** Sixty audio samples were selected from three previous studies with a variety of populations. Three judges with musical experience independently rated each audio sample. The raters received 30 minutes of training on using the scale. Pitch, rhythm and musicality subscales are rated from 1 to 5, with the total score out of 15. Analysis of intraclass correlation (ICC) of the data was completed using the statistical software JASP. We tested two types of ICC. ICC2,1 indicates the reliability of the scale when rated by one rater only. ICC2,k indicates the reliability of the scale when averaging the scores of two or more raters. Interpretation followed the most recently accepted benchmarks. **Results:** We found a good ICC2,k (0.800) for the total score. For each of the subscales ICC2,k ranged from moderate (Rhythm accuracy, ICC2,k = 0.656; Musicality, ICC2,k = 0.618) to good (Pitch accuracy, ICC2,k = 0.794). In contrast, ICC2,1 results ranged from poor to moderate. **Discussion:** The RMSS is most reliable when used by at least 2 raters and scores are averaged. Future studies may improve interrater reliability by refining the rating guidelines in order to improve the overall usability of the scale as a measure of singing in the context of health and well-being.

The Neural and Physiological Effects of Somatic Mindfulness during Self-Evaluative Anxiety in Musicians

Authors: Makayla Dagenais (Honours Bachelor of Science in Psychology, University of Ottawa); Angela K. Boland (University of Ottawa); Jennifer Johnson (Professional violinist, Association for Body Mapping Education (ABME)); Nicole Stanson (University of Ottawa); Gilles Comeau (University of Ottawa); Andra M. Smith (University of Ottawa)

Abstract: Music performance anxiety (MPA) is a debilitating condition among musicians, often characterized by heightened physiological arousal and altered neural activity during evaluative performances. Body Mapping is a somatic mindfulness approach that uses bodily awareness to support brain-body regulation; however, the neural and physiological mechanisms through which it may influence self evaluative performance anxiety remain unclear. This study examined whether a three-week Body Mapping intervention was associated with changes in physiological arousal and task-related neural activity during self-evaluative performance anxiety. Twenty-three professional musicians aged 17–66 completed pre- and post-intervention testing. At each timepoint, participants completed the revised Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (KMPAI), performed a recorded solo repertoire in front of a mock jury panel, and underwent functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) while viewing their own performance to elicit self-evaluative anxiety. Heart rate was recorded during scanning using an MRI-compatible pulse oximeter. Task-related neural activity was examined in regions involved in threat detection and regulatory control. Significant post-intervention decreases in activation were observed in the left middle temporal gyrus, left superior frontal gyrus, left superior temporal gyrus, left inferior frontal gyrus, and right posterior cingulate cortex. These findings suggest reduced cognitive control demands, rumination, and hyperreactive performance monitoring during self-evaluation. Decreased left middle temporal gyrus activity was also associated with reduced K-MPAI worry/dread scores, linking neural changes to lower self reported MPA. Pulse oximeter analyses will examine post-intervention changes in heart rate and associations with neural activity as an index of brain-body coupling. Results offer neuroscientific evidence that Body Mapping may help musicians regulate arousal and reduce self-evaluative processing during performance.

Deep Listening Concert in the Virtual Dan Harpole Cistern

Performers: Jonas Braash (School of Architecture, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute); Jesse Stewart (Carleton University); Joshua L. Braasch (CRAIVE-Lab, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute)

Description: Pauline Oliveros's *Deep Listening* practice offers a unique framework for understanding how sound, attention, and environment interact to shape human experience. Deep Listening emphasizes expanded awareness of both external and internal sound, encouraging practitioners to engage with the acoustic environment as an active partner rather than a passive backdrop.

Pauline Oliveros, Stuart Dempster, and Panaiotis formed the Deep Listening Band and recorded in a two-million-gallon underground tank—the Dan Harpole Cistern—which features a remarkable 45-second reverberation time. This recording exemplifies how extreme acoustic conditions can transform perception.

In 2012, we developed an electronic simulation of the Cistern, which you can read about here: <https://news.rpi.edu/luwakkey/3027>

You can also listen to a performance celebrating Pauline Oliveros's 80th birthday at EMPAC: <https://youtu.be/EqZafH3szs8?si=N2zfTPb1U1ixaq72>

Music and Health Research Institute Documentary

The Music and Health Research Institute Documentary presents an overview of the work and impact of the Music and Health Research Institute. The video highlights the institute's interdisciplinary approach to exploring the relationship between music, movement, and health across the lifespan.

Through interviews, research footage, and program examples, the documentary showcases how music-based interventions—such as Dalcroze Eurhythmics and community music-making—can support cognitive, emotional, and social wellbeing. Particular attention is given to initiatives involving older adults, demonstrating how structured music and movement activities can enhance quality of life, foster social connection, and promote active aging.

The documentary also emphasizes collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and community partners, illustrating how evidence-based practices are translated into real-world programs. Overall, it communicates the institute's mission to advance research and knowledge mobilization in the field of music and health, while advocating for the integration of arts-based approaches in healthcare and community settings.

Research and Performance Collaboration Showcase

Join the Music and Health Research Institute for an inspiring concert that highlights the powerful connections between music and well-being. The program features MHRI research initiatives, including participants from the Music and Movement program and guitar instructor Michael Fahey, alongside projects led by MHRI members and collaborators, such as Wabano's Men's Drum Group, GAD-7 with Carol Wiebe, and *Echo for Life*, directed by Steve Jourdain.

This special event celebrates the meaningful connections fostered within the community through performance, research, and collaboration.

Location: Freiman Hall, 50 University Private, University of Ottawa (610 Cumberland Street, K1N 6N5)

Date and Time: Wednesday, April 29th, 7:00pm-9:00pm

Program

1. Welcoming works by Dr. Gilles Comeau
2. Steve Jourdain - Guitar and Singing
3. Moe & Mélina - Piano and Singing
4. Plastique Anime by Jihye's classes

-15 MINUTE INTERMISSION-

5. Fahey - Guitar and Singing
6. The 300 Lacasse group: Demonstration/performance
7. Men's Drum Group from Wabano
8. GAD7 Choir

Steve Jourdain (Col(Ret), MSM, CD, Veteran Partner and Echo for Life Project Director)
Echo for Life™ offers bilingual workshops facilitated by Steve Jourdain, a Canadian Armed Forces Veteran who served for 31 years. The in-person music workshops are bilingual, free, and open to Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police who have been impacted by trauma, stress, or emotional challenges.

- La Gang de Chums: A song written by the participants of the first session (in French)
- Lullaby (The bilingual version)

Mo Royer (A client of the Day Program at the EORC's Aline Chrétien Health Hub)
Mélina Dalaire (Certified Dalcroze teacher)

- Can't Help Falling in Love with You - Weiss, Peretti, Creatore
- My Way-Thibault, Revaux & Francois (English translation by Anka)

A Plastique Animée performed by Jihye Kang and the Music and Movement Class
Jihye Kang (Licensed Dalcroze teacher)

Participants in the Music and Movement program at Élisabeth-Bruyère Hospital and The Dementia Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County, express the inspiration and diverse musical elements of music through physical movement. The experience of combining music and movement not only develops participants' vocabulary of body movement, but also experiences physical, emotional, social, and cognitive well-being. The positive experiences in this group help to foster creative artistry in later life.

Michael Fahey (Guitar instructor)

The first two songs were composed from the CCI experience with the women's group. The first one was from a spontaneous experience with the women starting to dance and sing in their own languages. Something they hadn't done before. The 2nd song was from a description from one of the women of how she had left her chickens with her mother in Somalia. The third song was composed on the schizophrenia unit with some of the clients. It's been a big hit with all the groups.

- Africa
- My Somali Sisters
- I'm feelin' alright

The 300 Lacasse group

Demonstration/performance: feeling music together in joy and play

Presented by the beautiful ladies of the Music & Movement 300 Lacasse, led by Mélina Dalaire. This group has been running on Thursday nights since the fall of 2022. The Centre Communautaire de Vanier has been supporting these classes for 4 years. Many of the participants here tonight have been part of the group for at least 3 or 4 years. This interactive demonstration will highlight some of the processes we follow during a movement class and show how we can collaborate together and use objects to enjoy music together.

Men's Drum Group from Wabano

The Men's Drum Group is composed of members of the Indigenous community. Gathering in a supportive circle around the big drum, the Grandfather Drum, participants experience its powerful heartbeat. It is a shared journey of cultural connection, learning, and community.

GAD7 Choir

The GAD7 choir is a collaborative wellness project between the Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Family Medicine (DFM), consisting of medical students, doctors and staff who meet weekly for rehearsals and perform several times per year. The choir is directed and managed by Erika Tanner, MD CFPC BMus AD, a lecturer in DFM, with the help of many enthusiastic and talented medical students.

We want to thank all presenters, panelists, workshop animators, and partners who have made this event possible.

THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU FOR ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE

THIS CONFERENCE WAS MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE SUPPORT OF

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