

Abstract

Music performance anxiety (MPA) is one of the most frequently reported problems among music students and professional musicians. It can potentially cause severe performance impairment and distress. Possible contributing characteristics are low musical self-efficacy, low self-esteem, inadequate preparation and previous performing experiences. The aim of the theoretical part of this study was to explain the phenomenon of MPA from various perspectives and with all its manifestations; to describe its psychological, social and educational contributing factors and to offer an analysis of coping strategies that could be used in the education system. The aim of the research project was to investigate the relationship between MPA, self-esteem and self-efficacy; to examine possible differences in the levels of MPA, self-efficacy and self-esteem between music students studying in three different higher education institutions, and to determine whether such differences could be attributed to their different educational experiences. Surveyed participants were 53 (quantitative study) and 10 (qualitative study) music students studying in the Manhattan School of Music in New York, the Music Academy in Prague and the Music Academy in Zagreb. Research data were collected using both quantitative (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Sherer Self-Efficacy Scale and Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory) and qualitative methods (semi-structured interview). Findings suggest that low self-esteem and low musical self-efficacy are significant predictors of MPA in all three groups and that there are significant differences between groups on the items from all three scales. Qualitative analysis indicated that a possible contributing factor is the educational context, confirming our hypotheses. Implications of these findings for teachers and students in instrumental education are also discussed.