Research-Based Music Composition for Anxiety Reduction

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Prevalence & Impact of Anxiety

- Mean age: 15 years old
- 18.1% of the US above age 18 are affected by anxiety-related disorders
- 14 anxiety and anxiety-related disorders in DSM-V

(WHO, 2000)
(ADAA, 2018)
Prevalence & Impact of Anxiety

- College students vs. non-students
- Between the ages of 18-34

(Stewart-Brown et. al, 2000)
ACHA conducted National College Health Assessment

- 1,500 undergraduate college students
- 21.6% diagnosed with anxiety, 11.1% for panic attacks
- 17.9% treated for depression
- 14.4% comorbidity for anxiety and depression

Due to variety of stress factors

(Aselton, 2012)
(ACHA, 2017)
Youth Culture & Music

- Youth show great interest in music
  - Part of their day-to-day lives

- Adolescents 10-19 years old

- Helps give sense of self (identity), regulate mood(s), process emotions, and promotes socialization and self-awareness

(Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007)
(Schäfer et al., 2013)
Therapeutic Function of Music Plan

- Worksheet for evaluating the therapeutic function of musical elements related to a specific goal area

- Table with four columns
  - Musical Element
  - Theoretical Framework
  - Purpose of Musical Element
  - Description of Musical Element

(Hanson-Abromeit, 2015)
Purpose

Use music to reduce anxiety in college-aged students

Musical Elements:
- Melody
- Pitch
- Harmony
- Tempo
- Dynamics
- Rhythm
- Timbre
- Meter
- Form
- Lyrics
- Style
Key: C major (focus on C5)

Melody: stepwise motion, repetition, consonant intervals – 4ths, 5ths, unison, 8ves

Harmony: emphasis on I, IV, V, diatonic

Tempo: between 60-80 beats per minute

Rhythm: steady, predictable

Meter: simple duple, quadruple, or triple (2/2, 4/4, 6/8, 3/4)
Synthesis, continued

- **Form:** ABA, AABA
- **Style:** legato phrasing, smooth, connected
- **Dynamics:** small changes (p-mp or mf-f), not over 60 dB
- **Instruments:** piano, flute, and string instruments
- **Timbre:** gentle, mild, nature sounds (waves, rain, bird calls)
- **Lyrics:** none
Songwriting Process
Recording Process
“Refocus”

Original Recording

Recording with nature sounds: rain, waves, bird calls
Conclusion/Discussion

- Process began in May, earlier this year
- Songwriting: unfamiliar territory, input from cellist and flautist
- Recording and editing
  - WMU MAT student
  - Human limitations
  - Time Constraints
- Finished product
- Questions?


