

# Research on Improvement Strategies of Psychological Training and Stage Expressiveness in Percussion Performance

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**Abstract:** With the continuous development of music education, percussion, as an important form of performance, has led to growing attention to the psychological training of its performers. This study aims to explore how psychological factors in percussion performance impact stage expressiveness and to propose corresponding psychological training strategies. By analyzing relevant domestic and international literature, we found that psychological training not only enhances performers' confidence and alleviates performance anxiety but also contributes to an overall improvement in performance quality. This study shows that methods such as emotional management and cognitive restructuring exhibit promising application potential in practice. Therefore, exploring a systematic psychological training program is significant for improving the stage expressiveness of percussion performers.

**Keywords:** Percussion performance techniques; Psychological training; Stage expressiveness; Emotional management; Cognitive restructuring

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## 1. Introduction

Percussion performance holds a prominent position in music education and performing arts, with its unique rhythm and expressive forms attracting many performers and audiences. However, percussion performance relies not only on technique and skill but also depends significantly on the performer's psychological state, which greatly impacts stage expressiveness. In recent years, a growing number of studies have focused on psychological factors in music performance, particularly in the field of percussion, where psychological training is regarded as an essential means of improving performance quality. The significance of this study lies in examining the relationship between psychological factors and expressiveness in percussion performance, identifying current research gaps, and proposing targeted improvement strategies to promote the comprehensive development of percussion performers.

## **2. Current research on psychological training in percussion performance**

### **2.1. Definition and importance of psychological training**

Psychological training refers to a series of systematic mental interventions and exercises aimed at enhancing an individual's psychological qualities and performance skills in specific fields, such as musical performance. In percussion performance, the importance of psychological training is particularly evident. First, it helps performers increase confidence and reduce performance anxiety, thereby optimizing their performance state. Through effective psychological strategies, performers can remain calm and focused under pressure, thus improving overall performance.

Furthermore, psychological training promotes emotional management and enhances performers' concentration and creativity, which are essential for managing complex rhythms and improvisation. In percussion performance, quick responses and flexible adaptability are required; good emotional management helps performers maintain a stable performance even in rapidly changing environments. Additionally, psychological training aids in improving team collaboration skills, enabling performers to better coordinate and communicate with other musicians <sup>[1]</sup>.

In general, psychological training not only impacts performance quality but also relates to the sustained development of an artist's career. Regular psychological training enables performers to continuously refine their psychological resilience, adapting to diverse performance settings and requirements, ultimately achieving greater accomplishments in the field of art. This long-term investment in psychological training undoubtedly establishes a solid foundation for performers' professional growth.

### **2.2. Research progress on psychological training in percussion performance**

In recent years, research on psychological training in percussion performance has gradually increased, mainly focusing on several areas. On one hand, scholars have explored the mechanisms by which psychological factors influence performance, including confidence, emotional regulation, and attention focus. These factors are considered critical in enhancing performers' stage expressiveness. Empirical studies have shown that methods such as cognitive behavioral therapy, relaxation training, and emotional regulation techniques yield positive results when applied to percussion performers. These methods not only help reduce performance anxiety but also effectively improve confidence and concentration.

Moreover, the integration of psychological training with musical performance has received growing attention, especially in the curricula of professional music institutions. Psychological training is increasingly being incorporated as a core component in these programs to help students develop a sound psychological foundation, enabling them to thrive in the competitive music industry. Through these studies and practices, psychological training in percussion performance is advancing toward a more systematic and professional direction, further driving innovation and development in the field of music education <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **2.3. Unique psychological challenges and technical difficulties in percussion performance**

Percussion performance involves unique psychological challenges that present distinct technical difficulties compared to other forms of musical expression. First, the diversity and complexity of percussion instruments demand a high level of flexibility and adaptability from the performer. Percussion instruments encompass a wide range, including drums, xylophones, and cymbals, each requiring different techniques and approaches. This necessitates the ability to swiftly adjust playing techniques to suit various musical styles, rhythm changes, and performance environments. Additionally, percussion often requires performers to coordinate both hands and the entire body, which imposes higher demands on psychological focus and physical coordination.

Secondly, the performance of percussion demands strict control over rhythm and dynamics. Performers must maintain intense focus in a dynamic musical setting to ensure precise rhythm and effective dynamic variation, accurately conveying the emotional content of the music. This ongoing psychological pressure can easily lead to anxiety, impacting stability and expressiveness in performance. Therefore, performers must possess strong psychological resilience, effectively managing pre-performance tension to ensure their stage presence remains unaffected.

Finally, the expressiveness of percussion often relies on a complementary blend of physical movements and visual effects. Performers need not only technical perfection but also to overcome possible psychological barriers in stage performance, such as performance anxiety or self-doubt. The effective integration of body language and emotional expression is a crucial aspect of percussion performance. Performers convey the essence of the music through movement and facial expressions, enhancing the emotional impact of the music and creating a richer auditory and visual experience for the audience.

In summary, the unique psychological challenges and technical difficulties present in percussion performance demand that performers not only master high-level technical skills but also develop strong psychological qualities. These factors collectively form the complex psychological and technical environment that percussion performers must overcome on stage, making it an important area of research for enhancing stage expressiveness.

### **3. Relationship between psychological factors and stage expressiveness in percussion performance**

#### **3.1. Mechanisms of psychological influence on performance quality**

The quality of percussion performance is influenced not only by technique but also by psychological factors that play a crucial role in the process. Research shows that performers' psychological states can impact their performance quality through multiple mechanisms. First, cognitive processes are key elements affecting performance, where factors such as attention, memory, and decision-making abilities are modulated by the performer's psychological state. For example, a positive psychological state aids in enhancing concentration, enabling performers to handle complex rhythms and harmonic changes more effectively.

Second, emotional states directly influence performers' expressiveness; positive emotions often enhance the impact of the performance, whereas negative emotions can lead to mistakes or mediocre performance. Pre-performance emotional management strategies, such as self-motivation and emotion regulation, can significantly improve the quality of performance. Additionally, the emotions experienced by the performer during the performance can also affect their interaction with the audience, where positive emotions facilitate a deeper emotional connection with the audience<sup>[3]</sup>.

Resilience also plays an essential role in performance. Resilient performers are better equipped to handle unexpected situations on stage, thereby maintaining a stable performance. For instance, when facing unforeseen technical issues or audience reactions, performers with strong resilience can quickly adjust their mindset, refocus, and continue performing. This ability not only improves performance quality but also supports the performer's long-term development.

In summary, psychological factors in percussion performance impact both immediate performance and the long-term artistic growth of the performer. Therefore, enhancing the understanding and management of these psychological factors is a vital approach to improving percussion performance.

### **3.2. The role of self-confidence and performance anxiety**

Self-confidence and performance anxiety are two major psychological factors influencing the stage expressiveness of percussion performers. For example, studies by Smith and Gordon revealed that percussionists with high self-confidence perform better in public, with lower anxiety levels. Another study by Brown noted that performance anxiety leads to instability in percussion performances, affecting the overall quality of the performance. These studies emphasize the importance of self-confidence and performance anxiety in stage expressiveness. Self-confidence helps performers remain calm during performances, enhancing the fluidity and impact of their presentation. Research shows that confident performers tend to display higher technical levels and deliver more impressive performances. They can respond swiftly to unexpected situations, maintaining continuity and rhythm in their performance. Furthermore, an increase in self-confidence enables performers to respond more positively to audience feedback, further stimulating their creative expression.

In contrast, performance anxiety often negatively affects performers. It can lead to distraction, physical tension, and execution errors, preventing performers from reaching their full potential at critical moments. Such anxiety not only impacts performance quality but can also diminish the performer's overall satisfaction with the performance. Therefore, psychological training for performers should focus on boosting self-confidence and alleviating anxiety to optimize stage performance.

To achieve this goal, training programs may include psychological regulation techniques, cognitive restructuring, and relaxation exercises. These methods help performers identify negative thoughts and employ positive self-talk to enhance their self-confidence. Meanwhile, anxiety management strategies, such as deep breathing and mindfulness meditation, can help performers stay calm and focused before performances. Through systematic psychological training, percussionists can better cope with stage challenges and achieve higher artistic expression.

### **3.3. The impact of emotional management on stage expressiveness**

Emotional management plays a significant role in percussion performance. Effective emotional management strategies help performers regulate their emotions, ensuring they remain in their best state during performances. Techniques such as deep breathing, mindfulness meditation, and emotion restructuring allow performers to reduce anxiety and improve focus, thereby enhancing the quality and expressiveness of their performance. These techniques not only aid in relaxing the body and easing tension but also cultivate self-awareness in performers, enabling them to adjust their mindset promptly during performances.

Furthermore, emotional expression directly impacts the audience's experience. Through emotional management, performers can better convey the emotional content of the music, strengthening their interaction with the audience. For example, appropriate emotional expression allows the audience to engage more deeply with the emotional layers of the music, enriching the live atmosphere. Therefore, effectively harnessing their emotions during performances not only improves performers' individual expression but also significantly enhances the performance's appeal and impact on the audience <sup>[4]</sup>.

In summary, emotional management affects not only the personal performance of the performer but also the overall stage effect. Performers should emphasize emotional management techniques in their training, developing systematic psychological skills to not only control their emotions during performances but also express them freely, achieving a higher level of artistic performance. Ultimately, this capability will help percussionists stand out in their professional field.

## **4. Psychological training and strategies for enhancing stage expressiveness in percussion performance**

### **4.1. Cognitive restructuring and emotion regulation techniques**

Cognitive restructuring refers to adjusting a performer's cognitive approach to specific situations to alter emotional responses and behavior. In percussion performance, performers can identify negative thoughts (e.g., "I will fail") and replace them with positive self-affirmations (e.g., "I am well-prepared") to enhance self-confidence. Increased self-confidence not only improves the performer's mental state but also directly impacts the fluency and expressiveness of the performance.

Additionally, emotion regulation techniques are crucial during the performance. These methods, which include emotion recognition, emotional expression techniques, and emotion management strategies, help performers effectively manage their emotional states. For example, performers can use techniques such as deep breathing, relaxation exercises, or mindfulness meditation to regulate emotions before performing, helping them remain calm and focused. Deep breathing effectively reduces physiological tension, relaxation exercises relieve mental pressure through physical relaxation, and mindfulness meditation aids in focusing attention and heightening present-moment awareness.

It is noteworthy that emotional management is not limited to the pre-performance preparation stage. Performers should continually regulate their emotions throughout rehearsals and performances. Regular emotional reviews and reflections enable performers to better understand their emotional fluctuations in different scenarios, allowing them to adjust coping strategies accordingly. These methods improve psychological resilience, enabling performers to adapt and express themselves more effectively under stage pressure.

In short, the effective application of cognitive restructuring and emotion regulation techniques prepares percussion performers psychologically for their performances. By boosting self-confidence and managing emotions, performers will excel on stage, realizing their artistic potential and establishing a deeper emotional resonance with the audience, thereby enhancing the performance's overall impact.

### **4.2. Design and implementation of practical psychological training**

To effectively enhance the psychological resilience of percussion performers, practical psychological training design should include multi-faceted content and structure. Training programs can cover aspects such as emotion management, anxiety relief, concentration, and improvisational performance to meet performers' needs in various contexts. During implementation, a combination of simulated performances, group exercises, and individual coaching can be used to increase the realism and efficacy of practice. For instance, simulated performances allow performers to experience realistic stage scenarios in a stress-free environment, while group exercises promote teamwork, mutual support, and a sense of trust and cohesion among performers <sup>[5]</sup>.

In addition, organizing regular performances and feedback sessions can incorporate real performance experiences into training, allowing performers to apply and reinforce learned psychological strategies in real settings. In the feedback sessions, performers can identify strengths and weaknesses through peer reviews and coaching guidance, enabling targeted improvement. This cyclic training model not only enhances skills but also boosts self-confidence and psychological resilience, helping performers stay composed under stage pressure.

To further enhance the effectiveness of training, courses may integrate psychological theories and practical tools, such as using psychological assessment tools to evaluate the performers' mental states and employing cognitive-behavioral therapy as a psychological intervention. This comprehensive, systematic training approach can significantly improve performers' stage expressiveness, enabling them to reach their highest artistic potential. Ultimately, this multi-dimensional psychological training will lay a solid foundation

for the long-term development of percussion performers and support their success in the music industry.

### **4.3. Psychological training strategies for percussion techniques**

Given the unique psychological challenges in percussion performance, this section explores psychological training strategies tailored to specific performance techniques to enhance performers' stage expressiveness and mental resilience.

#### **4.3.1. Rhythm and psychological stability coordination training**

To improve performers' rhythm control, a combination of rhythm training and psychological adjustment strategies can be used. Specific methods include practicing in segments with a metronome, gradually increasing the complexity of exercises. During practice, performers should utilize breathing techniques and meditation to enhance psychological stability and focus. This training not only improves rhythm sensitivity but also effectively reduces performance anxiety, boosting self-confidence <sup>[6]</sup>.

#### **4.3.2. Integration of dynamic variation and emotional expression**

In performance, dynamic variation is essential for emotional conveyance. To achieve this, emotional guidance methods are recommended, where performers analyze the emotions in specific music passages to understand and feel how different dynamics influence musical expression. During training, performers should repeatedly experience emotional shifts at varying intensities, combined with self-reflection, to enhance sensitivity to emotional expression and self-regulation abilities.

#### **4.3.3. Enhancing body awareness and multi-coordination**

Multi-coordination of the body is indispensable in percussion performance. To strengthen body awareness and coordination, performers are encouraged to engage in comprehensive physical training, such as yoga, Pilates, or dance classes. This training helps improve body flexibility and coordination while fostering psychological relaxation and focus through body movement awareness exercises. When practicing percussion, performers can observe their movements in a mirror to make timely adjustments to their body language, thereby enhancing stage expressiveness.

#### **4.3.4. Improving stage presence and mental resilience**

To address psychological barriers related to stage performance, performers can practice in simulated performance environments, such as small public performances or recording sessions, to help them acclimate to stage atmospheres. Combined with visualization training, performers should engage in positive self-suggestion before a performance, imagining a successful performance scenario to build self-confidence. Additionally, team collaboration exercises are an important strategy for enhancing stage expressiveness; interacting with other performers strengthens understanding of musical coherence and boosts confidence.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study analyzed the relationship between psychological training and stage expressiveness in percussion performance, proposing a series of feasible enhancement strategies. Future research should further explore the effectiveness of different psychological training methods, especially those tailored to the individual needs of different types of performers. Interdisciplinary collaboration can offer new perspectives for the design



and implementation of psychological training, fostering the integration of music education and psychology. Through systematic psychological training programs, percussion performers' stage expressiveness is expected to improve significantly, thereby advancing the field of percussion performance.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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