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The Spontaneity of Therapeutic Improvisation from Zhuangzi's Perspective*

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I. Introduction: Free Spirit in Therapeutic Improvisation and Zhuangzi's philosophy

What is therapeutic improvisation?³ Therapeutic improvisation is one of music therapy's clinical methods; it means 'musical performance played on the spot without preparation.' In a broad sense, all musical compositions and performances at the time when there were no musical scores can be actually considered as improvisation. After the musical score was developed, it made a clear line in occupation between composers and musicians. A composer writes every detail of music notes and images on a musical score while a musician fulfils her duty only by playing the musical notes as clearly as the notes in the score. Reviewing the research on performance anxiety,⁴ we find

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1. **LEE Kook Bong** is Professor of the School of Marxism at Shanghai Jiao Tong University.
2. **CHUNG In Ji** is Music Therapist certificated by The National Association of Korean Music Therapists.
3. In relation with music, we can approach to improvisation from two aspects. One is from that of musicology, and the other is from music therapy. What we talk here in this study is improvisation in music therapy. Namely, in this paper, we refer to improvisation in music therapy as 'therapeutic improvisation.' Improvisation in musicology is that musicians improvise just short melodies in already formed music. It is for decorating music. Improvisation in musicology's main goal is music itself. On the contrary, improvisation in music therapy is to cure participants through improvising sounds. Therefore, the main purpose of improvisation in music therapy is clinical improvement (Chong and Kim 172). Accordingly, the process of making music and the participants' thoughts and emotions are important in therapeutic circumstances.
4. Performance anxiety refers to the set of affective, and also cognitive and behavioral

these related results; in the research of Wesner, Noyes, and Davis (180-82), which targeted 300 students and professors at the University of Iowa music department, 61% of the respondents show performance anxiety; research from Choi (67-68) shows that 79.31% of the music majors in Korea have performance anxiety. Through these studies we can surmise that most musicians complain about the same symptom⁵ regardless of where they are. In Korea, ironically, most young musicians suffer, not from the pain of making creative works, but from performance anxiety. For example, the emotional pressure that she must play the musical scores mechanically and perfectly throughout endless competitions for survival in which she is evaluated and ranked for her performance is immense.

We can find a common point between therapeutic improvisation and Zhuangzi's philosophy of seeking a free spirit. First of all, let's look at the part of "Lǎozi and Hán Fēi Lièzhuan[老子韓非列傳]" in *Shǐ Jì*[史記]: Records of a Grand Scribe about the record of Zhuangzi's story. The emperor 'Wēi[威]' of Chǔ[楚] Kingdom[楚威王] heard many people saying 'Zhuangzi is a wise man,' so he sent his ambassador to propose to Zhuangzi the post of prime minister of his kingdom. Zhuangzi said, "The thousand pieces of gold is a great profit and the position of prime minister is a great noble post, but haven't you seen a cow sacrificed for an ancestral rite? Although the cow has been served with great food and has been dressed in golden silk, after his destiny he is to be sacrificed for the ritual."⁶ Zhuangzi's answer was very firm. He emphasized that what we have to seek for in our life is not a noble position or great wealth in society, but the right to a just, free spirit of life.

We had better find the fundamentals for a free spirit advocated in Zhuangzi's philosophy. Zhuangzi replied in a low voice to the ambassador, who was still waiting for Zhuangzi's approval, "Do not spoil me and please leave me alone! I would myself rather roll in mud in pleasure than have my life confined to an emperor who possesses a country. I won't enter any government position, but I will enjoy my life." In his words, "Do not spoil

responses that accompany concern over possible negative consequences contingent upon performance on the stage (Leitenberg 477-85).

5. For example, the heart beats faster, hands sweat more, and/or worries about mistakes are aggravated, etc. (For a more concrete understanding, see page 5 of participants (A, E, C, B)'s excerpts from therapy sessions.)
6. “千金，重利，卿相，尊位也。子獨不見郊祭之犧牛乎？養食之數歲，衣以文繡，以入大廟。當是之時，雖欲為孤豚，豈可得乎？” (*Popular Guoxue*)

me,” it means that he will not relinquish his unique character and free spirit. Superficial objects wàiwù[外物] make people overly aware of others' judgments and they make one's body and spirit unnatural, and thus damage one's own free spirit. Therefore, the core point of Zhuangzi's philosophy is zìkuài[自快: *enjoyable by one-self*].⁷

If we can say that the root of Zhuangzi's philosophy is zìkuài[自快], we should look into it associated with therapeutic improvisation. The reason that musicians need therapeutic improvisation is for 'joy[快]' and since the stress of competitive evaluation is constantly in their faces, it is hard for them to play the music with 'joy' in their heart. Actually, most musicians expect to be personally ecstatic about expressing themselves through music performances, and expect to delight in sharing their performances with their warm audience. However, the stage is not a pleasant place any more where they can express themselves, but a lonely cold test arena in which they must have themselves verified for how perfect they are and how well they do. This is why musicians get performance anxiety.

First, therapeutic improvisation is needed in that it helps musicians express their emotions and feelings through music unlimitedly so as to feel 'joy[快]' in their heart at the moment they play. The other reason is related to 'by one-self[自].' Whoever wants to be joyful should express their feelings as they are without worrying about the surroundings and absorbing themselves in the situation [playing] itself. Once they pay attention to others' eyes, they lose confidence in their music and cannot express their own feelings. They cannot be happy. It is only when getting absorbed in one-self and spouting their own feelings that they can feel joyfulness accompanied with a kind of catharsis. In this sense, shēngzhīdé[生之德], we can derive the significance of spontaneity from 'zì[自]' in Zhuangzi's philosophy.⁸ When we understand

7. 'Enjoyable by one-self' is combined words of 'joy[快]' and 'by one-self[自].'

8. In Zhuangzi's discussion, we can think of spontaneity from the viewpoint of dé[德]: “物得以生謂之德”[“Things got hold of it and came to life, and it was called Virtue.” (Watson 36)] (*Zhuangzi* chapter 12 “üändi”). A. C. Graham says, “The spontaneous aptitude is the *te*, the 'Power,' the inherent capacity of a thing to perform its specific functions successfully (As an English equivalent of *te* many translators prefer 'virtue,' to be understood however as in 'The virtue of cyanide is to poison' rather than as in 'Virtue is its own reward')”(7). I agree with Graham's interpretation on the meaning of dé[德] in *Zhuangzi*. Like in its meaning, Zhuangzi doesn't distinguish human-being from all things in nature and understand human-being within the boundary of nature and

the basis of free spirit in Zhuangzi's philosophy as 'enjoyable by one-self,' it means that one can lead to one's contentment and a great 'joy[快]' only when they are not assessed by someone else and their personality is not confined by others, but can express themselves [自] freely. This is the common point that therapeutic improvisation and Zhuangzi's philosophy share together.

This study is focused on the spontaneity of therapeutic improvisation from Zhuangzi's perspective. In this paper, the goal of this project is to find the answers to (1) how individual musicians can maintain spontaneity, (2) how musicians can solve the performance anxiety that they have had, and (3) finally how they can maximize their competence and ability as professional musicians from Zhuangzi's view of spontaneity. Finally, this study reviews a music therapy article on young Korean musicians and applies the concept of spontaneity as the free spirit of life in Zhuangzi's philosophy to an empirical case and interprets the case's results to answer the questions above. However, there is one condition: if the young musicians want to be able to enjoy music, they have to set themselves free from others' eyes. They can feel joyfulness accompanied with a kind of catharsis, which can be only possible when they express their own feelings and become absorbed in their performance. This is the meaning of spontaneity as the free spirit of life, which is namely shēngzhīdé[生之德] in Zhuangzi's philosophy.

II. Therapeutic Improvisation and Zhuangzi's View on Music

Therapeutic improvisation means that any kind of sound can be music. It is like drawing on white paper. This perspective sees that every sound made by music players has its special meaning in it, intentionally or not. It even sees that therapeutic improvisation can bring change to a young musician's mind. This is the most important distinctions of therapeutic improvisation.

In this way, therapeutic improvisation, which focuses on any sound, has something to do with the free spirit of life in Zhuangzi's philosophy. It is especially focused on the sounds of nature. When wind blows through a tree,

see human-being as a life shēngmìng[生命] from dé[德]. Zhuangzi's dé[德] is quite different from a kind of morality that Mencius describes in rényìlǐzhì[仁義禮智]. Which are basic principles human-being should abide by. A. C. Graham approaches to Zhuangzi's dé[德] from the dimension of spontaneous energies (6-8).

soil, ground and all the things it can go through, it makes unique sounds by meeting with them and the sounds are all different by size and the material it runs into.⁹ At this point, he notices the harmony made by all of the different natural sounds. We can think that this is Zhuangzi's musicology. Nature is also the very motif of Zhuangzi's philosophy about music. The reason that all of the different sounds from various materials of nature can be sublimated into harmony is that they are very 'natural.' This can be identified by the fact that Zhuangzi's musicology does not distinguish shēng[聲] from yīn[音] in his discussions.¹⁰

Zhuangzi does not distinguish shēng from yīn. "Sound can be short, long, soft or strong. However, it converges on one in the process of change."¹¹ That is, Zhuangzi thinks that any kind of sound can be yīn.¹² From nature's point of view, every sound is part of nature and is equal to itself. From this philosophy,

9. The big holes of the trees in a high mountain have various shapes like as a nose, as a mouth, and an ear: "山林之畏佳，大木百圍之竅穴，似鼻，似口，似耳，似枅，似圈，似臼，似窪者，似汙者"["In the mountain forests that lash and sway, there are huge trees a hundred spans around with hollows and openings like noses, like mouths, like ears, like jugs, like cups, like mortars, like rifts, like rusts." (Watson 36)] (*Zhuangzi* chapter 2 "qiwulun"). Zhuangzi focuses on various sounds made by nature, which come from different holes when wind blows.
10. In this study, shēng[聲] refers to 'tone sound' and yīn[音] refers to 'sound of note.'
11. "其聲能短能長，能柔能剛；變化齊一，不主故常"["Its [sound] notes I was able to make long or short, yielding or strong, modulating about a single unity, but bowing before no rule or constancy." (Watson 157)] (*Zhuangzi* chapter 14 "tiānyùn").
12. There are two extreme examples. In the scene in which the cook Ding kills a cow with knife for King, Wen-hui, the sound made by the knife is not expressed as shēng[聲], but as yīn[音] in chapter 3 "yǎngshēngzhǔ[養生主]" of *Zhuangzi*: "庖丁為文惠君解牛，手之所觸，肩之所倚，足之所履，膝之所踣，砉然响然，奏刀騞然，莫不中音"["Cook Ting was cutting up an ox for Lord Wen-hui. At every touch of his hand, every heave of his shoulder, every move of his feet, every thrust of his knee—zip! zoop! He slithered the knife along with a zing, and all was in perfect rhythm." (Watson 50)]. And also it wrote that the crying sounds of chickens or dogs are yīn[音] in chapter 10 "qūqiè" of *Zhuangzi*: "昔者齊國鄰邑相望，雞狗之音相聞"["In times past there was the state of Ch'i, its neighboring towns within sight of each other, the cries of their dogs and chickens within hearing of each other." (Watson 105)]. It shows that Zhuangzi stresses that all the sounds shēng[聲] are equal to yīn[音].

he does not acknowledge the authority of the formal court music of the noble classes at that time.¹³ He does not distinguish shēng from yīn but treats all the sounds equally, and finally shēng makes harmony. He does not admit that yīn is fixed and that there should be fixed rules to make melodies. Instead, he pays attention to the unintended sounds and harmonies made every time sounds bump each other. This is the agreed space between Zhuangzi's musicology and therapeutic improvisation, which is used in music therapy.

III. Therapeutic Improvisation and Zhuangzi's Discussion on Anxiety

We need to review the music therapy research by CHUNG In Ji (2009) with Korean college music students, who show performance anxiety.¹⁴ They have been forced to memorize all the music scores perfectly without any mistakes since they were little. Therapeutic improvisation lets young musicians express their own emotions and unique feelings, which is one of the many musical therapy methods. For all of the participants, both musicians and audience alike, this occasion provided a meaningful chance of exchanging emotions through therapeutic improvisation. The more they improvised their emotions, the closer they got to music. Their music changed into a form of mutual communication. They became less attentive to others' judgments and engrossed themselves into playing itself. After musical therapy sessions, they even became comfortable on stage and after the performance. Their satisfaction with their performance grew. As a result, therapeutic improvisation played an important role in literally helping these musicians perform better on stage, and contributed to decreasing their performance anxiety.

13. To be direct, Zhuangzi sees JiǔSháo[九韶] as a court music in his discussions and take a negative attitude in adding authority to traditional music.

14. The research by CHUNG In Ji (2009) studied about music college students in Korea, their way of the thinking (perfectionism) and the reduction of performance anxiety. However, in this paper, a deep consideration on perfectionism will not be made. The study used a questionnaire to collect data on the level of the participants' performance anxiety by State-Trait Anxiety Measure of Spielberger and a questionnaire of performance anxiety by Neasuk Pyo, Jungsuk Kim, and Jonghyun Pyo. Analyzing the comparison before and after the music therapy, we could see that performance anxiety decreased.

Let's analyze how therapeutic improvisation affected the musicians. As mentioned above, they played other composer's music, not their own. In this manner, musicians must deliver to an audience the composer's intentions expressed on the notes very accurately and precisely. Therefore, young musicians have very limited discretion, if any, while playing music in such a situation. It is because each and every individual note has an important meaning imposed by a composer. They work hard to study and practice music under this environment for a long time starting at a very young age. Moreover, when they are on stage, they are under high-pressure to play very well and to get a good review. This mental pressure and stress divert their attention into memorizing music scores and practicing technique mechanically rather than focusing on their musical expressions and feelings. The stronger they feel mental stress, the more distant they become from artistic sensitivity and expression as musicians. In particular, young musicians go through psychological pressures in this environment. In therapy sessions, they shared their experiences about performance anxiety as follows.

Participant A: "I had thought I had to play it well...but suddenly my heart ran so fast! I was fine until I entered the stage. However, you know? Once somebody comes and says, "Get ready. You're next." Then, I can even hear my heartbeat! Pitter-patter, pitter-patter..." (Chung 47)

Participant E: "Sometimes I think why a musician plays that part like that and I wonder what others think about me just like I do when I play the music. Then I think it would be better not to play it unless I can play it perfectly." (Chung 56)

Participant C: "When my friends watch me playing, they evaluate me like 'she is so...' Then, the judgment will last in their memory about me and they may say, 'she is so.' I don't feel good about people judging me by just only a one time performance." (Chung 56)

Participant B: "I feel very heavy about playing music all the time before a performance. I don't feel light anymore, no matter what! It doesn't matter how much I practice. I feel that it always not enough..." (Chung 48)

We can summarize the symptoms that musicians showed as performance

anxiety. Also, we can define technical perfectionism as the cause that presses them on stage. Why do young musicians become so sensitive like this?

When young musicians enter the music field, they have to participate in many competitions in order to develop a brilliant career. The reason why they are pitiable is that there is hardly a chance that musicians stand on a stage and show their own artistic expressions and feelings. Under the governing principle that judgment has to be fair and objective, the judgment is based on how the musicians play precisely each and every musical note, controlling their emotion technically with no mistakes. Perfect! Furthermore, because these evaluations are used as critical data for the musicians when they enter 'university,' they fall into a situation where they have to risk everything for entrance to a university. Although musicians begin such a career because they want to do music, they are tied up in the mission of entering university, which is realistically the No.1 priority in Korea. Then, music degrades into a supplementary tool for getting into school in real life, and not something that they absorb themselves in with musical enthusiasm within the ideal of their musical world. This is why they cannot enjoy[乐] music anymore when they do music[乐]. In this situation, music even becomes pressure, and something musicians really want to avoid. And then performance anxiety Bùān[不安] starts from there.

Participant D: "I get all the stress from scoring, so I don't care anymore how I'm playing music on a stage but I care about who else gets better scores. While playing, I don't have time to think about who writes the music and which intention the composer had. I just thought I had to play music better than any other students." (Chung 56)

Participant C: "After performing on the stage, I feel disappointed about 'why I couldn't reach the goal, I wanted to do this much at least.' Like this. I also fear that I may repeat mistakes again and I don't like this kind of feeling, even, now!" (Chung 51)

Participant B: "I start remembering all the bad memories about my mistakes on the stage and at the same time I came to think 'I must not make mistakes again.' Then, this kind of thought made me nervous and I felt 'I might make a mistake again this time!' This worrying made me more and more nervous. I want to overcome this bad feeling but I feel it is impossible. I keep thinking the same thing over and over again, so I even finally feel pain." (Chung 52)

Like the above statements, in music therapy sessions, young musicians say they cannot overcome performance anxiety on the stage. Let's look at what Zhuangzi's opinion is about this anxiety Bùn[不安]. We can distinguish 'natural[自然的] anxiety' from 'artificial[人爲的] anxiety' by who causes it.¹⁵ The useful example of 'natural anxiety' is one found in Zhuangzi's reaction to the death of his wife.

It may come as a surprise but Zhuangzi started playing the drum when his wife died.¹⁶ He played a therapeutic improvisation. Most people cry for their dead wife, but Zhuangzi's reaction is not understandable or common. Death is perfectly natural to him and no human being can avoid it. Zhuangzi's therapeutic improvisation keeps him away from the 'natural anxiety' that accompanies the deep sadness and fear about his wife's death and helps him find an internal peace in his heart. It means that he overcomes loneliness by expressing himself through drumming and singing. He can control his mind, and find peace in himself again, free from the fear that he has to be left alone after his wife's death.

On the other hand, 'artificial anxiety' is opposite to 'natural anxiety.' It is an anxiety that humans can prevent or avoid in advance depending upon what he does. 'artificial anxiety' is found in the story about the feudal lord of the country named Lǔ[魯] and a sea bird in Zhuangzi's discussions: One day, a sea bird visited the back yard of the feudal lord of Lǔ Country. The feudal lord tried to make the sea bird happy, so he threw a great party, asking a cook to make a lot of delicious food and even calling in a band to play a type of court music called JiǔSháo[九韶]¹⁷ for the sea bird. However, the sea bird died after three days. In this story, we can imagine that one poor sea bird, even though it had all the great treats from the feudal lord, is obsessed with

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15. Xunzi appraised about Zhuangzi as follows: “莊子蔽於天而不知人” (*Popular Guoxue* 『荀子』「解蔽」). It implies that Zhuangzi has two axes from which he looks to things[物]: nature and human. We can also apply this in understanding his discussion about anxiety. Also it can give a base for us to divide his anxiety into two types: 'natural anxiety' and 'artificial anxiety.'
16. “莊子妻死，惠子弔之，莊子則方箕踞鼓盆而歌”[“Chuang Tzu's wife died. When Hui Tzu went to convey his condolences, he found Chuang Tzu sitting with his legs sprawled out, pounding on a tub and singing.” (Watson 191)] (*Zhuangzi* chapter 18 “zhilè”).
17. If I add more, it is told as the ancient music at the time of King Shùn[舜] in China (Wáng 237).
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ZuòBùānXí[坐不安席: being unable to sit comfortably from anxiety] and so the great food and music are nothing for the sea bird itself. In this situation, ‘artificial anxiety’ is created at the point when the sea bird could not refuse the great offerings and kindness from the feudal lord, who has power and the bird’s spontaneity is suppressed under the strong power.

The difference between ‘artificial anxiety’ and ‘natural anxiety’ has something to do with one’s own choice. We can find the reason in the story of ‘the feudal lord and a sea bird’ why Zhuangzi refused the offer from the emperor of Chǔ[楚] Country. He did so to avoid the tragedy of ending up like the sea bird. The death of the sea bird is not a matter of choice like the death of Zhuangzi’s wife. He does not have a choice for ‘natural anxiety’ like the death of his wife, but he has a firm faith in choice by which he can prevent ‘artificial anxiety’ like the sea bird and himself from being put in an uncomfortable position to that will cause anxiety. He has a clear opinion about how one can change the fate of ‘artificial anxiety’ by one’s own choice.

Through his philosophy and his real behavior as recorded in Shǐ Jì[史記], we can look at how Zhuangzi prevents anxiety Bùān[不安]. When we apply Zhuangzi’s way to prevent anxiety to the situations in which musicians are in, we face a kind of puzzlement. It is because musicians have already made their choice of being musicians. Therefore, it is hard to give up the choice to set them free from ‘artificial anxiety’ such as performance anxiety. Are there not any other ways to prevent artificial anxiety without giving up a dream or refusing to be musicians? What we can do next is enjoy reviewing Zhuangzi’s discussions to find a way to access the solution to relieving performance anxiety, something which music players face, and apply it to the lessons that can be learned from the therapeutic improvisation that Zhuangzi played through ‘natural anxiety’ while not avoiding ‘artificial anxiety.’

IV. The Meaning of the Spontaneity in Zhuangzi’s Philosophy for Therapeutic improvisation

We need to review Zhuangzi’s therapeutic improvisation that he played for his wife’s death more deeply.

Chuang Tzu’s wife died. When Hui Tzu went to convey his condolences, he found Chuang Tzu sitting with his legs sprawled out, pounding on a tub and singing. “You lived with her, she brought up

your children and grew old,” said Hui Tzu. “It should be enough simply not to weep at her death. But pounding on a tub and singing—this is going too far, isn’t it?” Chuang Tzu said, “You are wrong. When she first died, do you think I didn’t grieve like anyone else? But I looked back to her beginning and the time before she was born. Not only the time before she was born, but the time before she had a body. Not only the time before she had a body, but the time before she had a spirit. In the midst of the jumble of wonder and mystery a change took place and she had a spirit. Another change and she had a body. Another change and she was born. Now there’s been another change and she’s dead. It’s just like the progression of the four seasons, spring, summer, fall, winter. “Now she’s going to lie down peacefully in a vast room. If I were to follow after her bawling and sobbing, it would show that I don’t understand anything about fate. So I stopped.” (Watson 191-92)¹⁸

This review is not for the cause of anxiety but about the relationships between his therapeutic improvisation and how he stopped crying and found peace in himself again. In fact, his old friend Hui-zi[惠子] made a visit of condolence for the death of his friend Zhuangzi’s wife. However, Hui-zi was surprised to see his friend hitting on a tub and singing in the next room instead of crying. At first, Zhuangzi could not control his sadness the initial moments after her death. However, he started thinking again about ‘the origin of life and death.’ Then, as he states in his conclusion, it is very natural for human beings to die. He told his friend Hui-zi about the reason why he stopped crying.

We can figure out the reason why Zhuangzi stopped crying and started playing therapeutic improvisation and the meaning of it by his explanation. First, his therapeutic improvisation of pounding the tub and singing beside his dead wife is based on the sadness that he has to let his loved one go away. It implies that therapeutic improvisation is one’s expression of one’s true feelings about the situation he faces. Second, he is totally free from the surroundings such as from Hui-zi’s gaze and situational evaluation. It tells us that his therapeutic improvisation was possible only when a player feels free from the eyes of the others and focuses only on expressing his true emotions honestly. Third, he focuses on making sounds that express the changing of

18. 『莊子』「至樂」: “莊子妻死, 惠子吊之, 莊子則方箕踞鼓盆而歌。惠子曰, 與人居, 長子老身, 死不哭亦足, 鼓盆而歌, 不亦甚乎! 莊子曰, 不然。是其始死, 我獨何能無慨然! 人且偃然寢於巨室, 而我嗷嗷然隨而哭之, 自以爲不通乎命, 故止也” (*Popular Guoxue* 『莊子』「至樂」).

his emotions in that situation, rather than memorizing and playing every piece of musical scores and notes of the formal court music such as JiùSháo[九韶: Court Music]. Therapeutic improvisation lets us know that it is not musical notes or scores but emotional changes and faithful expressions about the changes of the heart that musicians should not miss. In that point, what makes Zhuangzi's therapeutic improvisation outstanding is that he initiates and realizes his own spontaneity in the free spirit of life.

The reason why musicians feel performance anxiety is not that they dislike music. We have to focus on this point. If we borrow Zhuangzi's expression regarding the external environment and evaluation, it can be known that musicians fall into a situation where they cannot play music willingly in a way they want because their artistic expressions and emotions are suppressed by external things WàiWù[外物]. Therefore, the most important thing to musicians with performance anxiety is to awaken their original motivation ChūXīn[初心] by which they decided to do music in the first place. Therefore, the discussions about therapeutic improvisation should be how to help musicians recover their spontaneity. For this, first of all, musicians should be allowed to express their inner-anxiety through therapeutic improvisation.

1) The Expression of Anxiety

The participants in the music therapy program experienced therapeutic improvisation. It was a chance to express their emotions through music. They were given various instruments to choose from such as a drum, a bell, a thunder tube, and wind-chimes. Before playing, they had conversations about their own experiences with performance anxiety and improvised their anxious minds.¹⁹ The following are extracts from their conversations after therapeutic improvisation.

Participant A: “Wind-chime. It swings with even a very little movement and that's just like my mind.” (in Participant A's 2nd session personal log)

Participant D: (will be on stage a few days later) “I feel I'm out of my mind today. I am not ready and I haven't practiced enough, so I am not confident with myself, so I felt anxious. I can hear knocking sounds

19. Imagining their anxious feelings as sound, they explored instruments and how to perform them. After that, they improvised their anxious minds.

(another participant played a drum) and it matches my mind.”
(Chung 62)

Participant F: “When I played the thunder tube, I expressed the feeling of being extremely difficult now, thinking I will work it out. I expressed my feeling like I was in a situation that I couldn’t help but being soaked by cold rain during the rainy season. Waiting, but no bus came in the rainy season. I was too cold and shaking. So I wanted to sit in a warm place but it wasn’t easy to do so...I expressed such feelings.” (Chung 53)

Participant E: “I felt anxiety and stress going away as I hit the drum very loudly.” (Chung 62)

Participant B: (after expressing anxiety) “I feel better now. I felt something like energy spouting out of me. I thought I had better let it go out than hold it inside me. It felt a lot better after doing that.”
(Chung 62)

Therapeutic improvisation gave the participants a chance to express their anxiety with various instruments such as a wind-chime, thunder tubes, bells, and drums. They felt their anxiety being set off by the sounds most similar to it (their anxiety) as if Zhuangzi did it with the tub and the drum to get comfort by expressing the sadness of losing his wife. If the musicians took all that anxiety out of their heart, the next step is to recover their spontaneity[生之德] through playing spontaneously. To do this, they need to play instruments and study their own music scores with the creative expression of their emotions.

2) Spontaneous Play

The music therapy program provided various instruments to the musicians and they had the chance to express their emotions naturally. The program asked the participants to play therapeutic improvisations, not only in the therapy session, but also in daily life. Below are parts of the conversations where they shared their feelings after a session.

Participant F: “I felt so good doing the ocean drum. It was nice to freely put my feelings into the performance and it really worked. If I wished it be small, then it became small. If I wanted it big, it became

big and soft.” (Chung 63)

Participant C: “I went to a practice room on the 4th floor in the music school building to play the piano and the room was all red by the sunset. I was in a really nice mood, so I was touching the piano keys spontaneously a few minutes before practicing. I felt great and good about my major and I thought that because of it I could play the piano as freely as I wanted. Then I felt thankful for the reality and great about the beautiful view.” (Chung 68)

All the participants expressed their inner-sounds through therapeutic improvisation. The sounds were not planned, practiced nor taught in advance but only heard from their inner-selves. This kind of music might not be beautiful or elegant to the audience, but it is very meaningful for the participants to express ‘their inner-sounds[內面的聲音].’ If they regain some confidence from the experience by playing music spontaneously, we can then suggest that musicians work together with other musicians and share their emotions, and at the same time, naturally strengthen the way of sharing feelings through music.

3) Emotional Sharing Through Music

In music therapy, they played therapeutic improvisation in a group, not individually. Therefore, they came to communicate naturally with others in music. They improvised music, mingled with each other and made a piece of music. In an orderly manner, also, one participant led the therapeutic improvisation and the others played a supportive improvisation for her. Below are extracts from their conversations after such a performance.

Participant D: “Even though we played different instruments, I felt we were harmonized.” (Chung 62)

Participant E: “We started playing without prior practice and without a plan. Though, I felt that we played like something well planned and harmonized. I think we all gave a nice performance.” (Chung 62)

Participant A: “I had fun. Lots of fun! I could hear a lot of rhythms. The sound of the drum, and I felt I heard something. If I play now with this kind of feeling intact, I think I can play classical music well. I was really happy with it (this kind of feeling), as if I could have owned

the whole world. For a long time, I had felt less and less of such fun. But right now, I feel the same feeling I used to feel! Hahaha!” (Chung 62-63)

Participant C: (After finishing the performance first led by one main player and supported by the other musicians) “I felt like all my friends were standing by my side, not like as judges.... They said that I could do it well and some did not say anything but I felt secured and supported by them. I feel I’m just ready to cry...” (in Participant C’s 5th session personal log)

Musicians have to play music in front of an audience, as a necessity. They communicate with the audience through their music and they touch the audience’s heart by this communication and exchange emotions with the audience. As their first audience, young musicians meet parents, teachers, judges, and friends in the process of becoming a musician. Therefore, it seems very natural that they feel a great deal of anxiety before those who judge a young musician’s performance. In this therapy, the participants were grouped and played therapeutic improvisation in a music therapy session. They ‘listened to’ and ‘supported’ each other’s music. They were new audiences to each other. They even played the role of an audience that was impressed and touched by music.

In this way, the scene where the musicians extracted their musical spontaneity through therapeutic improvisation and exerted their unique musical personalities, making a harmonious sound is exactly the same as that of Zhuangzi’s *Tiānlài*[天籟: the pipes of heaven] in which wind skimming through or over all the holes of nature makes sounds and they communicate with each other creating harmonious natural sounds.²⁰ The reason that the

20. “子遊曰，地籟則眾竅是已，人籟則比竹是已，敢問天籟。子綦曰，夫吹萬不同，而使其自己也，咸其自取，怒者其誰邪？”[“Tzu-yu said, “By the piping of earth, then, you mean simply [the sound of] these hollows, and by the piping of man [the sound of] flutes and whistles. But may I ask about the piping of Heaven?” Tzu-ch’i said, “Blowing on the ten thousand things in a different way, so that each can be itself—all take what they want for themselves, but who does the sounding?” (Watson 37)] (*Zhuangzi* chapter 2 “qíwùlùn”). It means that the pipes of earth are the sounds from many holes and the pipes of men are the sounds of a recorder. *Tiānlài*[天籟], say, is the sound of the pipe of heaven. Although it makes different sounds from its holes, they are naturally mingled into a beautiful natural harmony.

musicians were able to sublimate their unique sounds to harmonize is to recover their own spontaneity. In other words, they got their confidence back and equalized themselves with the other musicians after therapeutic improvisation relieved the anxiety in their hearts. It proves that the spontaneity of musicians has room for being able to listen to others' music like in Zhuangzi's philosophy. It is the meaning of spontaneity in therapeutic improvisation from Zhuangzi's perspective.

V. Closing Remarks: The Meaning of Spontaneity as Free Spirit and Remaining Questions for Discussion

Based on the free spirit of life, Zhuangzi's musicology emphasizes 'one-self [自]' and 'joy[快]' from nature's point of view. It means that we should be able to pursue 'joy in oneself' by ourselves. This is also why musicians, who complain about performance anxiety, need music therapy, such as therapeutic improvisation. In fact, young Korean musicians can feel joy and worth by communicating with the audience through expressing their emotions in music and exchanging them with many people. However, what is waiting for them, even before empathizing with the audience, is severe competition and evaluation. The most crucial thing to young musicians is their ranking. In Zhuangzi's perspective, when young musicians can get free from external stuff *WaiWu*[外物], for example, ranking, they can overcome performance anxiety and be absorbed in their own music. This is why Zhuangzi talked about 'Do not depend on external stuff *WaiWu*[外物]' and emphasized 'one-self[自]' and 'joy[快].'

Therapeutic improvisation music therapy is a program to return the meaning of music to musicians, who are alienated from music. It helps them express their emotions and feelings freely and finally focus on the music itself that they enjoy. There is one condition: if they want to be able to enjoy music, they have to set themselves free from others' eyes, attention and evaluation. They can feel joyfulness accompanied with a kind of catharsis only when they express their own feelings and get absorbed in their performance. This is the same meaning of spontaneity in Zhuangzi's philosophy. Therefore, the main theme of this study is focused on the spontaneity of therapeutic improvisation from Zhuangzi's perspective, on the reason why young Korean musicians need spontaneity, and on the implications and ideas for the spontaneity of

therapeutic improvisation and Zhuangzi's philosophy, which can be shared with musicians who suffer from performance anxiety based on eastern culture. However, two questions remain unanswered.

First, it is related to anxiety Bù'ān[不安]. Let's look at what Zhuangzi's opinion about this anxiety is. We can distinguish natural anxiety from artificial anxiety on the basis of his discussions. 'Natural[自然的] anxiety' is what is caused by natural reasoning, so it is unavoidable while 'artificial[人爲的] anxiety' is caused by choice, so it is avoidable and preventable in advance. Although this classification is made by whether human-beings intervene in the anxiety or not, both anxieties have one common point: an 'individual' is not a dominant trigger of anxiety but it takes place by a complex "social relationship" in a special context.²¹ It can be called 'the anxiety from relationships[關係不安]'. If we study more about this kind of anxiety, we will know that we should study the context of performance anxiety in terms of the reasons and scale of anxiety. Therefore, we should not ignore the relationships between young musicians and their families, the musicians and their teachers, and the musicians and their co-musicians, because 'the anxiety from relationships[關係不安]' is created by those relationships, even if we find out clearly why musicians are anxious about being on stage.

Second, it is the question on how long the effect of therapeutic improvisation lasts. Therapeutic improvisation helps musicians to cure performance anxiety, fade it out slowly, and get interested in music again. Also, this effect should keep working on them, even on a stage. For the solution, Zhuangzi's discussion about Xīnzhāi[心齋: the fasting of the mind] and Zuòwàng[坐忘: sit and forget everything] gives a good idea. If we apply this Xīnzhāi²² to music therapy for musicians with performance anxiety, it can make the state of free-anxiety and recovered confidence of musicians outside

21. In this paper, for example, 'natural anxiety': relationship between Zhuangzi and his wife (on death); 'artificial anxiety': relationship between the feudal lord of Lǔ[魯] and the sea bird(toward death).

22. “回曰，敢問心齋。仲尼曰，若一志，無聽之以耳而聽之以心，無聽之以心而聽之以氣！聽止於耳，心止於符。氣也者，虛而待物者也。唯道集虛，虛者，心齋也。”[“May I ask what the fasting of the mind is? Confucius said, ‘Make your will one! Don't listen with your ears, listen with your mind. No, don't listen with your mind, but listen with you spirit. Listening stops with the ears, the mind stops with recognition, but spirit is empty and waits on all things. The Way gathers in emptiness alone. Emptiness is the fasting of the mind.’” (Watson 57-58)] (*Zhuangzi* chapter 4 “rénjiānshì”).

of a stage last on the stage naturally. Next, when we apply Zuòwàng²³ to therapeutic improvisation, we can first ask musicians to forget distracting thoughts such as the evaluations and rankings they received on previous stages. In addition, we can secondly ask them to be free from the gazes and attention of judges and the audience when on stage, focus on the music itself, and consider their instrument as part of their bodies.

If we try to work on and think deeply about two remaining issues, we can interpret the meaning of the spontaneity of Zhuangzi's philosophy more richly through understanding 'anxiety from the relationships[關係不安]' caused by the social relationships that young musicians are related to: 'natural(parents and family)' and 'artificial(teachers, co-musicians, friends, and judges).' And if we actually apply this interpretation and understanding to the scales that measure anxiety, it will be helpful for us to make a good therapeutic improvisation music therapy program in Korea. As well, we need to do more empirical research and find an approach to how we should use Xīnzāi[心齋: the fasting of the mind] and Zuòwàng[坐忘: sit and forget everything]. Which is better? Should it be approached as a method of meditation or practice? If we keep working on these and apply them to a therapeutic improvisation program, it can be used as a more solid and effective plan to make musicians express their spontaneity as much as they want on stage.

23. “仲尼蹴然曰，何謂坐忘？顏回曰，墮肢體，黜聰明，離形去智，同於大通，此謂坐忘。仲尼曰，同則無好也，化則無常也。而果其賢乎！丘也請從而後也”[“Confucius looked very startled and said, ‘What do you mean, sit down and forget everything?’ Yen Hui said, ‘I smash up my limbs and body, drive out perception and intellect, cast off form, do away with understanding, and make myself identical with the Great Thorough-fare. This is what I mean by sitting and forgetting everything.’ Confucius said, ‘If you are identical with it, you must have no more likes! If you’ve been transformed, you must have no more constancy! So you really are a worthy man after all! With your permission, I’d like to become your follower.” (Watson 90-91)] (*Zhuangzi* chapter 6 “dàzōngshī”).

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Abstract

The main theme of this study is focused on the spontaneity of therapeutic improvisation from Zhuangzi's perspective. Based on the free spirit of life, Zhuangzi's musicology emphasizes 'one-self [自]' and 'joy [快]' from nature's point of view. It means that we should be able to pursue 'joy in oneself' by ourselves. This is also why musicians, who complain about performance anxiety, need music therapy, such as therapeutic improvisation. In fact, young Korean musicians can feel joy by communicating with the audience through their emotions in music and by exchanging them with many people. However, what is waiting for them, even before empathizing with the audience, is severe competition and evaluation. Why do young Korean musicians need spontaneity? Which implications and ideas for the spontaneity of therapeutic improvisation and Zhuangzi's philosophy can be given to those musicians complaining about performance anxiety based on eastern culture? On Zhuangzi's perspective, when young musicians can get free from external stuff *WaiWu* [外物] like ranking, they can overcome performance anxiety and be absorbed in their own music. This is why Zhuangzi talked about 'Do not depend on external stuff *WaiWu*' and emphasized 'one-self' and 'joy.' The goal of this project is to find answers to (1) how individual musicians can maintain spontaneity, (2) how musicians can solve the performance anxiety that they have had, and (3) finally how they can maximize their competence and ability as professional musicians from Zhuangzi's view of spontaneity. Ultimately, this study reviews a music therapy article on young Korean musicians and applies the concept of spontaneity as the free spirit of life in Zhuangzi's philosophy to the empirical case and interprets the case's results to answer those questions above. There is one condition: If young musicians want to be able to enjoy music, they have to set themselves free from others' eyes. They can feel joyfulness accompanied with a kind of catharsis, which can be only possible when they express their own feelings and get absorbed in their performance. This is the meaning of spontaneity as the free spirit of life, which is namely *shēngzhīdé* [生之德] in Zhuangzi's philosophy.

Keywords: Zhuangzi, therapeutic improvisation, spontaneity, performance anxiety, music therapy

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