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P2.32 Negative and positive thoughts in low- and high-anxious music students after a public performance

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Music Performance anxiety (MPA) is a major problem for a large number of music students (Studer et al. 2011). Post-event rumination is believed to contribute to the prolongation of stress responses (Brosschot et al, 2006). The aim of the present study was to investigate ruminative thoughts after a public performance in low- and high-anxious music students and the relationship between their thoughts, self-evaluated performance and mood. Forty-five (29 females) healthy music students (mean age=22.6, sd=2.7) performed individually in front of an audience of 11 to 15 people. Ten minutes, 24 and 48 hours after the concert, they judged their performance and assessed the frequency of negative and positive thoughts related to the concert. We used the Thoughts Questionnaire from Abbott & Rapee (2004) and adapted it to a soloist music performance. Mood was measured five times per day with the Multidimensional Mood State Questionnaire Short-scale (Wilhelm & Schoebi, 2007). The degree of general MPA was assessed with the State Trait Anxiety Inventory-State (STAI-S) adapted to a soloist music performance. Three groups were built based on the STAI-S scores: low-anxious (scores 20-44), moderate anxious (45-59) and high-anxious (60-80) music students. Compared to low-anxious music students, high-anxious students judged their performance more negatively and reported more negative and less positive post-event ruminations at all three time points. Finally, the students reporting more negative post-event rumination felt less positive and less energetic immediately after the concert. This study shows for the first time that MPA has effects that go well beyond the performance situation. Post-concert self-appraised performance, rumination and mood may be important in understanding how the stress response is prolonged and how MPA is maintained.