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C01

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

Well, thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this survey. So, the first thing is - you are now being recorded, your audio recording will be transcribed, and that transcript maybe will be used for my master's exposition. But nobody will know it's you. You will all get either some combination of letters or a number, so only I will know who is who.

Interviewee:

Is it possible to choose a number?

Interviewer:

Do you really want to choose a number?

Interviewee:

Well, I haven't thought of it, but yeah.

Interviewer:

Well, I've never thought about it, but you can write it to me. If it's not a crazy six-digit number, then fine, you can choose a number. I can tell you your number so that if you read my master's exposition, you will know that the number represents you.

Interviewee:

OK.

Interviewer:

OK. Do you agree with this whole thing I just said?

Interviewee:

Yes, I agree.

Interviewer:

Okay. Can you say that "I, name and surname, agree with what Eglè said earlier"?

Interviewee:

I, [name], agree with what Eglè said earlier.

Interviewer:

Next, if you don't understand a question in the interview, just ask and I can try to rephrase it. And if you don't want to answer a question because there are going to be some quite sensitive ones, that's fine too. You can say "I don't want to answer this" and then we can move on.

Interviewee:

I see.

Interviewer:

So first of all, we already talked about this one, but I still want to have it in the interview. Have you ever had any experience with meditation before this whole thing we're doing now?

Interviewee:

I went to a meditation camp, but I don't remember much of anything there. Yeah, it was scary. And they didn't give meat. But I don't remember anything from there. But I do remember that once we were meditating there and I... I don't know if I had a dream or what, but it seemed like I was home. And somehow all the sounds from home were there and everything, and I thought "What the fuck?".

Interviewer:

How long did the meditation camp last? Did you practice anything afterwards?

Interviewee:

It lasted a week, and I didn't practice anything.

Interviewer:

Ok, so what is your attitude towards meditation now? What even is it?

Interviewee:

Well, I imagine it calms you down.

Interviewer:

And have you ever thought of trying it?

Interviewee:

Well, you wrote to me, then I did a bit of reading and thought maybe it's not so bad.

Interviewer:

Another question is, how do you feel now about your general well-being as a musician and as a person?

Interviewee:

So far, so good. Maybe I've changed my mind set a bit recently.

Interviewer:

Ok, can you tell me more?

Interviewee:

I think it has improved.

Interviewer:

Can you tell me a bit more?

Interviewee:

About the mindset... I used to think that, well, I want to be a cool trumpet player and that's the end goal. And then every time I play a concert badly, I think "Eh, I'm a bad trumpet player, bad" and so on. Well, my lecturer likes psychology, and his student also gave us a lecture on psychology. Apparently, it's not about the end goal, it's about moving forward a little bit, and the end goal still is to be a good trumpet player, but for now it's about the little steps, every concert.

Interviewer:

Ok, that's very nice. And how has all this mindset switch of yours affected all your stresses and stage fright and stuff like that?

Interviewee:

Yeah, now we have an audition training lecture. I mean, I've been to [names of two auditions] and, I don't know, I come to auditions and it's just funny to me, I'm just talking to these people there, then I play something, I make mistakes, I don't, I'm better here, better here, worse here, and it seems a bit more free somehow.

Interviewer:

Ok, that's great to hear. Do you have any concerns or something that you're hoping to get out of the meditation and how will it all affect your musical performance or your daily life?

Interviewee:

Maybe I don't know how much that can work, I think maybe the concentration would improve and now during the competitions I feel like maybe I lack concentration. I come, I kind of have fun playing in the competitions, but it's not that I come and concentrate on playing.

Interviewer:

Ok, do you think this will help you in your daily life?

Interviewee:

Perhaps? Maybe.

Interviewer:

How easy is it for you to concentrate when you're playing?

Interviewee:

Not that easy. I just had a lecture with a lecturer yesterday. The lecturer gave me an exercise, which is very easy. He told me to play this whole line with one articulation and we sat there for an hour before I managed to play a whole line with that one same articulation. He said that it's a thing that's very, very based on concentration.

Interviewer:

Ok, when you're playing alone, how are things regarding concentration?

Interviewee:

Not easy, sometimes you must play a part slowly, and I like another orchestral excerpt, so I keep playing that orchestral excerpt and see afterwards that half an hour has gone by.

Interviewer:

Ok, so you get a little bit distracted sometimes and start playing something random, if I understand correctly. Ok, and when you see that you're not focused anymore, is it easy for you to get back into being concentrated after that?

Interviewee:

No, then my lips are kind of tired already, or I think that maybe I should do orchestral excerpts that day, and I keep playing those all week somehow.

Interviewer:
That's not a bad thing?

Interviewee:
Yeah, I know, but I guess it's a kind of procrastination, because I find orchestral stuff more fun to play than what I actually need to play.

Interviewer:
Ok, so I was meaning to ask you, what about procrastination? You procrastinate by playing orchestral excerpts instead of main subject lessons, right?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
And what about this device? (points to phone)

Interviewee:
I've now done this thing on my phone, I deleted Facebook, Instagram, everything, and basically I do all of those through Google only, and then there's a timer on Google for 3.5 hours, and I reduce it by half an hour every month. So, when I'm at home playing with that phone and then the timer's up, then I feel fine about playing, but if the timer's not up, then I still feel I want to go back to the phone a bit.

Interviewer:
Ok, but there are still times when you think you're going to take a break until your lips recover, and then you notice that half an hour has passed?

Interviewee:
Well, I have a game that lasts for half an hour, so I specifically take half an hour for that, then I play, then I take a break for half an hour, and then it repeats.

Interviewer:
Oh, but that's a conscious thing? You take the phone thinking that you're resting, and your rest is the game?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Oh, so it's not procrastination then, it's just relaxation, but does it happen to you that you're playing your instrument and you think you're going to check your phone for 1.5 minutes to give your lips a rest, and then you watch an hour go by because you're watching reels?

Interviewee:
Yeah, that was before I put the timer on, and it helps me a lot. I've been doing it for two months now.

Interviewer:
Ok, so no problems with this?

Interviewee:

I had some, but I think if I took that timer off, it would be a disaster.

Interviewer:

Oh, so it's a kind of a precautionary measure, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And do you have any specific triggers that make you want to procrastinate?

Interviewee:

Orchestral excerpts, but generally, I don't know.

Interviewer:

By triggers, I mean, let's say that you can't play something right, or, I don't know, you see a good friend.

Interviewee:

No, [tells about a position in one of the orchestras which was won in the unfair manner according to participant's C01 opinion. Edited out for anonymity], and I got very nervous, and then I couldn't concentrate on anything, and I was playing orchestral excerpts all evening.

Interviewer:

So, some strong negative emotions can trigger you to start procrastinating?

Interviewee:

Yeah, something like that.

Interviewer:

Ok, and when you're playing the trumpet, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

Sound, I think.

Interviewer:

Sound?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Ok, and do you think that some aspects of your playing require more focus than others? In the sense that if you stop focusing, you will lose them?

Interviewee:

No, I don't think so. Somehow, if I focus on the articulation at the beginning and then forget about it, I notice that I lost my focus and the articulation is still good.

Interviewer:

Do you use any techniques to help you deal with problems regarding focus?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

How much actual good practice can you have in a day?

Interviewee:

Good practice... I don't know, maybe an hour. Not all at once, per day. At one time, I think it's like ten minutes of intense work, then a little bit of random stuff, then if I rest, it's the same good first 10 minutes again.

Interviewer:

And how long do you need to rest between the good ten minutes to get your brain back on track?

Interviewee:

If I take too many breaks, I stop playing that much. So, I somehow do those ten good minutes, and then finish up to a total of forty minutes.

Interviewer:

Of that good practice per day?

Interviewee:

Yeah, the lecturer said today that there's this seven-minute thing. You put a timer for 36 minutes... Wait, my tablet's been stolen, so I can't do it with the timer anymore. Anyways, so you take some exercises, and for seven minutes I play double tempo, then a legato and so on, for seven minutes, four times. That influences the brain, so if I want to practice the basics well, that's what I used to do, the thing with the timer.

Interviewer:

Okay. Have you heard of a concept called the flow?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

It's when you do something and you are very engaged... You're doing the best that you can, and there's no one to distract you, and you're fully immersed in the thing you're doing. So how often do you manage to achieve that kind of thing?

Interviewee:

I think it was in some competition, but not yet in [place]. I remember once I played "Petrushka", I drank some water, and I thought, like, that "Perushka" was good.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how hard is it for you to achieve that thing? Do you know how to induce this state yourself?

Interviewee:

I can't induce it, but when I play, for example, I focus on one thing one time and on another thing the next.

Interviewer:

Okay. And you haven't noticed that there are some environmental things that cause you to get into the flow?

Interviewee:

I guess, maybe stress?

Interviewer:

Okay, and how often do you rage quit while playing?

Interviewee:

I never rage quit, I guess?

Interviewer:

Like, you're playing and something doesn't work out very well, and then you think "eh, I'll try tomorrow instead"?

Interviewee:

Oh, well, if I'm not very good at something, I go play something else.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah. Or if I get really tired of playing, I go home.

Interviewer:

Yeah, and how often does it happen that you start to play something else or just leave?

Interviewee:

But it's not rage-quitting, maybe I'm just bored of it.

Interviewer:

Ok, how often does this happen?

Interviewee:

Probably once a month.

Interviewer:

Oh, okay. By the way, for how long have you been playing the trumpet?

Interviewee:

Started in fourth grade. I was 13.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you have any very big challenges or obstacles in your practice routine or performances?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I'm not very good at interpreting pieces.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you usually react when you have a bad practice session or a bad performance?

Interviewee:

Well, I used to just get very sad before. Now, somehow, I just think more about the good things and what went wrong, what didn't go right. Part of the journey, I guess.

Interviewer:

But how do those failures affect your self-confidence?

Interviewee:

Earlier, when there was [names two auditions], I was a third-year student and for some reason I thought I would win. And then I didn't make it to the second round. After that, I barely managed to play for three days. Then it was bad, but now I don't know, it doesn't affect me. Yeah, it used to reduce my confidence, yeah.

Interviewer:

And what about now?

Interviewee:

Well, of course, the way these competitions are run is a bit different here. The next day, you get an answer on whether you won or lost. And in [name of the place], you wait there for two hours and that's it.

Interviewer:

Okay. And then when you've been very unsuccessful, and you've... You know, you said that it reduced your motivation and maybe your confidence a bit - how did you... Did you have any methods for recovery, or did you just have the idea that time would heal the wounds?

Interviewee:

No, well... I'll still get up the next day to play. When I don't really want to play, I'm playing kind of meh. But still I go, I go and play, and play. And after a while I get myself together again anyway. Or I meet somebody, [name of a friend] or someone else, we play orchestral excerpts or something and everything recovers, I think.

Interviewer:

Ok, so you just keep pushing through until you feel better?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I guess.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you have music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

In orchestra, no. In auditions... in the past my hands used to shake, now they don't shake anymore. And regarding solo, yeah. With solo, I don't know what happens.

Interviewer:

Okay. And is this mostly before or during the performance?

Interviewee:

During the performance only.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Until then, I don't know, no anxiety at all.

Interviewer:

And what about lessons, do you experience performance anxiety before lessons?

Interviewee:

When there was a new teacher. There are three lecturers here. One used to be [a famous player in a major orchestra. Edited out for anonymity], I was like "Oh, no". So, I was shaking while working with him. Oh, when I'm having a lesson with the new teacher, and I take a piece that I've been playing there for a while, it seems that I... Something gets blocked or I don't blow any air or something and I don't know what to do, but it recovers in half an hour or so.

Interviewer:

Ok, so then can I conclude that performance anxiety has slightly reduced the quality of your performance both in the classroom and on stage?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Ok, and what happens to you when you have that performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

I just start thinking about where I used to make mistakes and try to make sure I don't make those mistakes, but most of the time I still do. Something like that.

Interviewer:

Okay, but physiologically, don't you get, I don't know, sweaty hands, shaking hands?

Interviewee:

Oh, my hands are definitely sweating. Sometimes the hands do shake. And my legs shake a little as well.

Interviewer:
And what about breathing?

Interviewee:
Regarding breathing, it seems to me that something gets blocked, but I don't know what, I don't know how it... It happens very rarely, I somehow don't...

Interviewer:
Okay, does your mouth get dry?

Interviewee:
It does, but only before a very scary part.

Interviewer:
Okay. Can you think of anything else that happens to you when you get really anxious?

Interviewee:
Well, if I'm very anxious, everything becomes very funny to me.

Interviewer:
I am jealous.

Interviewee:
Yeah. I don't know if you should be jealous because... Well, there was this exam and this new accompanist who's a jazz player, and we played Haydn. No, not Haydn, Hummel. So he plays a jazz chord and I'm just like "What the fuck?". I stopped.

Interviewer:
Okay. And you mentioned to me that you don't have performance anxiety all the time, for example, you don't have it in the orchestra, so I understand it depends on the type of performance. The more alone you are on stage, the more anxious you are to perform?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Yeah. And with teachers, if it's a new teacher, then you have some...

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Do you use some strategy to manage performance anxiety?

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:

No, okay. How much, when you play, do you think "I wonder what the audience thinks of me, they probably judge me" or something like "they probably think I'm a very cool trumpet player and they're jealous of me and they want to be me"?

Interviewee:

No, I think they hear all the mistakes.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But the audition training has also helped a lot, because we get to be both as those who are playing and those who are listening. So, when you listen and then you hear everybody there giving their feedback, who thinks what about this and that, it's like, "Ah, so nobody heard that mistake, oh damn".

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

It's like this now, yeah.

Interviewer:

But how often have you been like, when you play, that "Ok, the audience is judging me very, very much right now and they think I'm a disgrace to society" or something like that?

Interviewee:

Often... That used to happen in the orchestra, but now it doesn't happen to me anymore there. Oh, but it was in the [name of the orchestra], because I played with [another trumpet player] and he really doesn't like it when I make mistakes.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So yeah, if I know there's a difficult part, I always play more quietly so he doesn't hear that.

Interviewer:

Poor you. Okay. And how often does it happen to you that you play something and afterwards you feel like it was either a blur or a blackout and you don't remember anything?

Interviewee:

I don't know, it's just changed a lot for me recently in [name of a place], I guess, but I don't remember the concerts now. Earlier, after having played a concert, I would still keep thinking about that concert for some time, and I would be like, I don't know, "Ah, I made that mistake, ah, I played that place nicely", something like that. And now I just play the concert, we bow, leave, and it feels like there was no concert. No anxiety, nothing.

Interviewer:

Oh, so this is more from the perspective of anxiety, but generally, do you... Does it happen that you blackout and if someone would ask where you made some mistakes, you'd be like "I don't know, I don't remember"?

Interviewee:

Yeah, unless there's some terrible mistake, then I definitely remember, but other than that...

Interviewer:

Okay, and then the last question of this section, how often do you play on stage or for a teacher, and you're having a lot of fun, you're enjoying it very much?

Interviewee:

I... When I play what I like, I guess.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Because it seems to me that in [name of a country], they are just really pushing the main subject lesson, that you have to play it constantly. And here I come, I prepare an orchestral part, something else, and I don't even prepare that well or make a mistake, and it feels like "oh, okay, I played it".

Interviewer:

What about the stage? How often does it feel like "Oh, okay, this is nice, let's go"?

Interviewee:

It happened, but also, I had a piece here, it wasn't a difficult piece, it was just a fanfare, and I played everything, nice sound, all that, and I was like, "Oh, I played it well". And we bowed down to the audience and I was like, "Damn, I played well".

Interviewer:

But it's not really about appreciation, it's just that you enjoy...

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's... I think I have to feel that I've played well or that playing was fun, or something like that - then I have fun.

Interviewer:

Okay. That's very good, because this is connected to our other sections. How do you see yourself as a musician? How do you evaluate yourself?

Interviewee:

As an orchestral musician, or in general?

Interviewer:

Tell me about both.

Interviewee:

As an orchestral musician, I don't think I can play in those professional orchestras yet. Because it's... Well, I guess it's [a name of a specific orchestra] stuff, because they give you a part at the beginning of the week and you have to learn it in a week. Well, I'm not good at it yet, but when there's more time, then I seem to prepare well and it's all good. And as for solo - recently I started liking solo less. I guess it's because of procrastinating with orchestral difficulties, because if I have to spend two months doing the same piece, over and over again, I just go through it once and then I go play something else. And then I don't get much progress on that piece and then I get nervous that the piece doesn't sound that well. So it's the same as with solo - not so good, but orchestral difficulties as well.... Hm, I don't know.

Interviewer:

But you know, there's things where nothing... Do you generally think like, it's okay if you don't play it well now, you're gonna study and study and finally learn it? Or are you more like, "Ok, maybe this is not my way, maybe I'm doing something wrong here"?

Interviewee:

I kind of feel like I've got like... I was dealt a good hand by life, but somehow I haven't really made the most of it because I'm stupid. And now it seems to me that I really need to get a grip on myself. But at the same time, I think I'm doing that now, bit after bit. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. But do you think that you're going to get yourself together and everything will be fine for you?

Interviewee:

I hope.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you have any problems with your self-esteem as a musician or with mental resilience?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Yes. Could you please tell me more, if I'm not too intrusive?

Interviewee:

Well, I think I'm just doing too well. Although I don't really do the kind of things that I should do to be doing well.

Interviewer:

Oh, so you think you're just not putting enough effort into this thing?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Ok, suffering by success. Ok, I'm jealous, that's nice. Okay, and what motivates you to keep on blowing into that piece of metal, even if sometimes things don't go well?

Interviewee:

I don't know, it's just a desire, an addiction to a piece of metal. Or something like that.

Interviewer:

Meaning? Can you tell me more?

Interviewee:

I don't know, I'm very sad if I don't play for a day.

Interviewer:

Oh, okay.

Interviewee:

If... I will play just a little today, for two hours, and the next time I'll play will be only tomorrow evening. So, I'm like, "Ah, hell, I'd like to play some..." and I'm already thinking about what kind of piece I'm going to play or something, about what I have to learn. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, so you just like playing in general?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you have any problems with airflow and breath support when you play?

Interviewee:

Airflow? Oh, I just started working on it the day before yesterday.

Interviewer:

Oh, I'm just in time.

Interviewee:

Yeah. I realised that my sound was very, very... I make an attack, but I don't follow up with air, and it just sounds like **makes a glissando sound going down**.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I don't like that very much, now that I've figured out how to do it. Because the teacher here said that my sound just stops. If it's a short note, it's just, "pum", no note, that's it. And the note has to smoothly fly away and so on. I was trying to figure out how to do it and I was playing, playing, playing, playing the piano, and then I realized that I was playing this **playing the melody**. So, I'm playing that **plays the same tune** on the piano and I'm just blowing air. And then the same with the trumpet, and then all the notes are there, things are connected and everything. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And now, it seems to me, maybe I'm... working on it.

Interviewer:

Okay, but your problem is basically that you're dropping notes if I understand correctly? I'm just clarifying so that...

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And then I have another question for you. When you play, you still have to control things here, you control your breathing, the way you sit, stand, I don't know, how you practice most of the time. How aware are you that your embouchure is doing something or your breathing is doing something?

Interviewee:

I've never been that aware of breathing, anyway. I don't know. Now I'm very much focused on breathing. But right now, I'm just not doing breathing exercises. I do... I used to do breathing exercises, I have that breathing machine there. I used to do the exercises with it, I do all of that and then I play. And then I don't think about breathing at all and everything just works. And now I'm just thinking about breathing. Sometimes it helps to sing and stuff. And somehow now it seems that the sound is so... Well, the way I sing is the way I play, it's become a bit like that.

Interviewer:

What about the embouchure and body position? Does it happen to you that you're playing and then you say, "Oh, no, my back is not straight", or something like that?

Interviewee:

Oh, no, about the posture, I don't know how to say it... I never really think about it at all. I don't know, I just...

Interviewer:

And this apparatus? Like, everything around the lips?

Interviewee:

There, if I'm pushing myself, then I do feel it. If we're talking about high notes, I'm trying to move something here a little bit. But anyway, in that normal trumpet range, I don't think about it.

Interviewer:

Okay. How often is it that you're in a lesson and the lecturer gives you a remark that you're not doing something right? And it's like, you feel from the inside that, yeah, that was good, now I have to remember this and apply it to myself all the time?

Interviewee:

It happens, but then I kind of... Here in [name of a place]... [Lecturer] used to say things like that at the beginning, then just things about music, and somehow I didn't have such technical lessons with him, I would say. But here, here they say everything. Well, simple exercises like ones you had to do back at school and everything. They tell you and everything works well, and I picked up a lot of things this way. But at the same time I drop notes a bit, but I still remember the things they said. And sometimes I pick them up again, I play them for a week or so, and then I start dropping notes a bit again. I don't know.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how often do you feel that you're getting tense where you shouldn't when you play? If you feel that you have such things at all, that something is getting tense, I mean.

Interviewee:

I do. I do, but I think singing just relaxed everything.

Interviewer:

And where are you getting tense, if it's not a secret?

Interviewee:

My throat is a bit tense. And on the high notes I can pinch my lips too much, and then the note doesn't come out at all.

Interviewer:

But you said singing helps you, didn't you?

Interviewee:

Yeah. This main lecturer here, he said, basically, you can't blame the trumpet and stuff. You have to blame yourself all the time if you don't manage to pick up a note because, basically, the brain sends this signal to the lips. If you don't hit a note, it means there was a bad signal, it means you need to practice. Sing, improve your intonation, stuff like that.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you... oh, you said you weren't thinking about posture?

Interviewee:

Mhm.

Interviewer:

Okay, then we won't have this question...

Interviewee:

Well, of course, I try not to be curled up, but...

Interviewer:

Okay. But does it come quite naturally to you, or do you have to constantly keep an eye on it?

Interviewee:

I don't have to keep an eye on it, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Well, if my back starts to hurt or something, I'm like, "Oh, okay, I'll straighten up".

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you find it very difficult to stay focused during your lessons?

Interviewee:

Not during lessons. Although yeah, I guess. Now I almost don't play with the teachers anymore, I just talk to them. But at the same time we're talking about trumpet things, so... Yeah, naturally, I have some questions for them. I don't know if that's a loss of focus.

Interviewer:

No, if it's about the trumpet, then I think it's normal. I mean, do you just fade out and then you snap out of it to see that the teacher is saying something to you, and you don't understand what they are saying anymore, because three sentences ago your brain was already running somewhere down the corridor of the school?

Interviewee:

This... This one I used to have and still have it. But now it has really, really decreased.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what distracts you the most in class?

Interviewee:

Nothing does. I guess, just some thoughts if something has happened that day. Then I start thinking about those things a bit.

Interviewer:

But it must be some sort of quite an important event?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

I mean, something that makes you feel a certain emotion, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think it's usually if you're upset about something.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you react to feedback from your lecturers? How does it affect your opinion about yourself?

Interviewee:

Sometimes it's a bit like... If I'm doing that particular thing that someone asked me to do and they say, "Yeah, that was bad", I'm like "Bloody hell, what?". Then I'm like, "Well, what am I doing wrong, what the fuck?". And if it's just regular feedback, I think I accept it very well.

Interviewer:

Ok, so if you pay attention to something, you are very self-defensive about it, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah. And generally, if there's a teacher... If you're having, I don't know, let's say, a bad lesson, are you more like, "Ehh, I didn't do well this time, I'll do better next time", or is it more like that it affects you confidence and self – esteem very seriously?

Interviewee:

At first in [name of a place] it was that I would come to class and do a terribly simple exercise. They say "Play trills", set the metronome to 90 and I can't play it right. And I was like, "What the fuck, I didn't manage to play it", but now... Now if I'm told to do something, I try to do it while practicing, even if I don't do it well in the lesson, I still try to do it so that the next time if they ask me to do the same, it'll be fine.

Interviewer:

Ok, but you don't lose a lot of your self-esteem or somehow start judging yourself very much if you don't succeed in something?

Interviewee:

It used to be that way with playing pieces. Well, it's just, I'm playing a piece for an entire week, and it doesn't work out where it always doesn't work out, and the teacher's like, "Well, how come you can't play this?", I'm like, "Damn it"... And then yeah, then I say to myself like, "You don't know how to play" or something like that.

Interviewer:

Ok, but this doesn't happen very often, does it?

Interviewee:

Well, it used to happen quite often. I think I took it more seriously that I had to do things well.

Interviewer:

And how are things with stress? Do you get very anxious before the main subject lessons? Well, if it's a regular main subject lesson, not a masterclass, and you already know the lecturer.

Interviewee:

No, I'm not worried at all, it seems.

Interviewer:

Ok, and what do you focus on the most when your lecturers give you feedback?

Interviewee:

How to improve something, maybe? I don't know.

Interviewer:

Okay. So you just immediately start analyzing it?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And is it more important for you to understand things with your brain than to feel them? Like you said that your lecturers tell you to try something, and you get that feeling that something was right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think it's clearer to me when they explain to me how the thing is done. And then I can somehow do it myself. When I understand how it is done, then I can do it without a teacher. And if he also shows me an exercise for that, then I go through the exercise thinking... Thinking about how it's done, basically.

Interviewer:

Okay, and does your self-esteem depend on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

Well, when a [very famous player] approves of you, you feel not that bad.

Interviewer:

And when he doesn't?

Interviewee:

No, he was kind of an interesting guy. He's like, "Yeah, when I'm at auditions and someone is playing this Haydn like, **sings a tune**, and they drop the second note of the legato, that's it, when they finish, I'll just tell them to go out the door". I'm like, "And am I doing that?". He's like, "No, no, you don't". Then I play and he's like, "There you go, don't drop that second note", and I'm like, "Wait...". So yeah.

Interviewer:

So, for example, when you're told something nice, you're like, "Nice, good job, me, pat, pat", right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And if it's a very bad lesson, what then?

Interviewee:

I didn't have any lessons like that here.

Interviewer:

Okay, a worse one?

Interviewee:

When I was in [name of a place]... Oh, I was preparing for a competition with all the ensembles, and then I didn't prepare for the final exam. Well, I almost didn't prepare. And I still come to the main subject lesson, and the teacher's like, "Well, how did this happen..." and I'm like, "Damn, I don't have time for anything, I can't play the main subject lesson.". I don't know.

Interviewer:

But is it more like, "There's something wrong with me" or is it like, "Why is life like this, why do I have so many things piled up on me"?

Interviewee:

Both, in fact.

Interviewer:

Both?

Interviewee:

Because it seems to me that I should be able to do everything. But at the same time, I think that maybe there's just too many things piled up on me, why do I deserve this?

Interviewer:

Mhm. Okay. I forgot to ask this, but it's very common in orchestras, especially in symphonic ones, that you're sitting cold for 50 bars and then you have to play. So, how do you feel about this? Do you get very stressed before that? What are your thoughts when you encounter a situation like that?

Interviewee:

Well, if it's a forte, then, I don't know, nothing happens, but if it's a piano, then it's a bit stressful. But just for the first note, I know that the second note will be there for sure, but with the first note there might be something...

Interviewer:

Okay, and how do you deal with that stress? Do you have some kind of thing where you...

Interviewee:

I like to keep the mouthpiece in my pocket, then it's warm and it's easier to get air through the instrument. It's always fun to click buttons. Yeah.

Interviewer:

So you're fidgeting, essentially?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, so we're done with the interview. Wait, I'll press this right now because we're done with the recording. Thank you.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:

So, there you go, I've turned on the recording and that's how I inform you that you are being recorded. The transcript of the recording will be used in my master exposition. If you are aware of this and agree to it, then tell me your name and that you agree.

Interviewee:

I, [name], am aware and agree that there will be a recording.

Interviewer:

Ok, which meditations did you do most often?

Interviewee:

At first, I wanted to begin from the first one, from those three minutes, then 5, then 10, then 15. And I'm like "I'm not a pussy, I'll do 15", but it seems to me that I shouldn't have done that. Because distract... How do I say this... Well, no, yeah, I can't translate it to [language], I don't remember the words.

Interviewer:

Say it in [language].

Interviewee:

Yeah, I got distracted. And then for the last 5 minutes or so, I'm just trying to get my head around it, and it's not working. And then when I got back to [country] and I took that break, and then I started, then I sat for 3 minutes, and I sat the whole 3 minutes through. Wow, nice. And so, I kept that up. Then minute 5 came - "Wow, it's going well". Then 10 minutes. I didn't make it to 15 minutes though. But those 10 minutes was, I think, the golden point.

Interviewer:

It wasn't torture to sit there?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I sit down, everything passes by and I look up and I'm like, "Hm, it wasn't that long, okay, I'm going to go play".

Interviewer:

Okay. Have you noticed any changes yourself in the time since we last spoke?

Interviewee:

Yeah, things just seem more chill to me, but maybe that's a bad thing. Because right now I have a competition upcoming on Friday and I feel that I don't really give a fuck. I also played with an accompanist on Thursday, having not played in a main subject lesson for a week. But I'm still feeling, kind of, I don't know... meh?

Interviewer:

And where is the competition taking place?

Interviewee:

Yeah, but I'm not meditating this week, and I think maybe I've been missing it a bit. Now that I've played that main subject lesson with the accompanist really bad, now I feel like I want to... Well, I don't know, it kind of lit a fire under my ass. Now it's like that, motivation plays a

bigger part. And when I was meditating, it was just very chill. You come, you play and that's it.

Interviewer:

Okay. So you feel that you've become a bit too chill from meditation?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think so.

Interviewer:

Okay. How is your general well-being as a musician holding up?

Interviewee:

Not bad, I think. Maybe the fact that the conservatory is pretty cool now, and that's helped a lot. And somehow, I don't know, it's good now. In the orchestra, though... I was randomly assigned to an orchestra, even though I'm neither in the reserves nor anywhere, I'm still technically at Erasmus, you know. And they say, come to the orchestra. Well, I'm going. One part was a bit stressful in the orchestra, but in general...

Interviewer:

Okay. And generally, comparing your wellbeing, has it gotten better or worse?

Interviewee:

Maybe it has improved, I don't know.

Interviewer:

Which way?

Interviewee:

When it's quieter, when it's so much more chill, I think it's just better. Generally.

Interviewer:

Okay. How is your concentration when you play?

Interviewee:

Good. I don't know, to tell you the truth, whether it has improved or not. But now I just play the piano more. I'm less distant from the music. I used to play, then I'd play with my phone and then I'd go back to playing. And now I play, then while I'm on a break I sing while playing the piano, learn finger movements, do some other things and then I go on playing.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So it's, I don't know, I guess, a better break? A bit more useful one.

Interviewer:

Ok, and let's say playing outside the breaks - has the difficulty of getting focused changed? Or the length of time you can play with concentration?

Interviewee:

I don't know. I think... I think it hasn't changed. But I think I was in that "flow" once. But in general, I'm not sure.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah, I'm not sure.

Interviewer:

Ok, is it hard to distract you when you're playing, now?

Interviewee:

When I play the exercises, no. When I play exercises, I'm somehow very, very focused on the exercise itself, what I want to ... Because now I'm just playing Arban, I've been taught to play Arban. You think of a task for yourself and then you play, play, play until you do the task that you thought of in the beginning. So, when I play the exercises, yeah, it's hard to distract me, I think. But when it's pieces, it's... Well, sometimes. Sometimes it's easy.

Interviewer:

Ok, how do you get distracted most of the time?

Interviewee:

I'm just playing another part. Some part doesn't work out and I think that now I need to play it more. I play it twice and then "Eh, fuck it, I'm moving on".

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you procrastinate in general when you play? Like, using a phone or some other devices?

Interviewee:

I'm trying not to.

Interviewer:

Ok, and how does it actually go?

Interviewee:

Sometimes it happens. Less so now. Before [studying in a country] it happened a lot. In [the country], I tried to do that less, and now I'm doing that even less.

Interviewer:

Okay. And is there anything that would lead you to procrastinate?

Interviewee:

What do you mean, would this lead to procrastination? You mean... Some very bad things?

Interviewer:

Well, some people find that something doesn't work out and then they get stuck on their phone. Or... I don't know, they don't get enough sleep, they are hungry. Or they receive some

news that puts them in a bad mood and they're like "Eh, I can't play anymore" because they're ruminating about that one thing.

Interviewee:

Well, in that case, for me it would be not getting enough sleep then.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Because when I don't get enough sleep, it's kind of really hard. I'm just playing whatever then, and that's it.

Interviewer:

Okay. When you play the trumpet, what do you focus on most?

Interviewee:

For me, sound is what I care about the most. Well, in the sense of how I sound. And then there's the articulation, how it sounds and everything. Well, just how everything sounds.

Interviewer:

Okay. If you used some techniques besides meditation to help you focus and improve your performance, what would they be?

Interviewee:

I don't know about using techniques, I just practice "being" in music, I guess. Because where I said I play the piano and sing, that's where music enters the ear. The intonation comes and everything, and then when you start playing, something just clicks, and you play.

Interviewer:

Okay. How long can you play with good focus and quality?

Interviewee:

Half an hour, probably.

Interviewer:

Half an hour. And how many hours a day do you get when you add them up?

Interviewee:

I try to play for about five hours. But it's not half an hour most of the time. I'll play for about forty minutes, then an hour. In random intervals like that.

Interviewer:

Okay. But I mean, how much quality work do you get a day?

Interviewee:

I count singing and finger-work and everything as quality work. And it's taking place when I'm not actually playing my instrument yet.

Interviewer:

Ok, so how much quality work do you get per day? Including what you mentioned.

Interviewee:

I think it would be about four hours.

Interviewer:

You mentioned that you might have experienced the flow, so now please tell me more.

Interviewee:

I was playing a very difficult piece, and I kept playing it on the piano, then I worked with my fingers and played, played, played. For a while, maybe a week, I played all the time. And then one time I kind of just took the... Well, I just warmed up and then I thought "Oh, now I have to try to play it by heart". I took the trumpet, and it came out almost perfect. There were some mistakes, but somehow, I just played it through and managed to get the whole phrase correctly. And I managed to do the whole part. "Oh, wow, what was that?". I think it was the flow. And now I can't play that part correctly anymore.

Interviewer:

Ok, but do you mean that you were very, very busy working on that part?

Interviewee:

No, no.

Interviewer:

Or did it just work out and you call it the flow?

Interviewee:

I worked on that part for maybe a week. And that one day, I think... No, the week before last, I think, of this thing. It seems to me that it happened then... No, I can't remember when it was. But essentially, I warmed up - and this is happening in the morning. I warmed up from seven in the morning, I had a bit of a rest, then I started playing again and I thought, "Well, I've got to take this one". And somehow it just worked out without any effort, it seems. And that part was the hardest one, which I never managed to play correctly.

Interviewer:

Okay. Was it more like an experience of you working with very good concentration, or do you call the experience of just getting the part right and that's it?

Interviewee:

I just got it right and that's it. But I cannot get it right anymore.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And that one time I got it right, and now I don't know how to replicate it.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how often do you find that you stop playing prematurely because of something that's not related to your lips?

Interviewee:

Not often. Well, I do at least half an hour of this kind of practice. Then... Well, half an hour or more. So not that much... Unless somebody comes to the classroom to talk or something.

Interviewer:

No, I mean because of a lack of concentration, lack of brainpower, or you just get bored and then you plan to play for, like, four hours and somewhere in the middle you say "Eh, I'm kind of lazy". More from this perspective, I mean.

Interviewee:

I don't know, I guess, after orchestra or something.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

If I come to play, then...

Interviewer:

So if you're already tired, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you have any obstacles or challenges with your playing or performances?

Interviewee:

Not really. Unless sometimes I just tire my lips out, and then things don't work out.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you react to bad practice sessions, bad lectures, or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

Well, somehow, I haven't had any bad experiences recently, I think.

Interviewer:

Ok, so recently...

Interviewee:

Maybe you should ask me this question after the competitions...

Interviewer:

Okay. Have you had a chance to do some concerts somewhere, or just perform lately?

Interviewee:

Yesterday was the last time. Yeah, that concert I was talking about earlier.

Interviewer:

Okay. Did you experience music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No?

Interviewee:

I haven't experienced it at all, really. Nothing... In the past... I used to shake a bit, and the notes weren't confident. Now, yeah, when I think about it, somehow, I haven't even... I'm sitting there, looking at the audience, but somehow, I feel nothing.

Interviewer:

Okay. So that's an improvement, isn't it?

Interviewee:

Yeah, but of course I play the third trumpet as well. So maybe that's why. It's not... Not such an important part.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you get a bit anxious before lectures, classes?

Interviewee:

No. Well, when [lecturer] gave me a lecture. A "lecture". But only because he wanted to talk, [mentioned some non – music related things, edited out for anonymity].

Interviewer:

So regarding regular lessons... And, let's say, I don't know, maybe lessons with an accompanist or orchestral excerpt ones?

Interviewee:

Oh, these... I will have one with an accompanist today. And I had one with an accompanist back then, but I wasn't worried at all there. But I didn't manage to play right there. There were things after the orchestra as well, some other stuff, so...

Interviewer:

Generally, a lot of things that made you play not well, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And did you... When you had that concert, did you think a lot about how the audience saw you?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. And everything went normally? Yeah, well, if you were not worried, we'll skip this one. And did you have fun playing? Did you enjoy your performance?

Interviewee:

Yeah. I had a solo part. And it went pretty well.

Interviewer:

Okay. How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:

Like, in [a country]? I mean, like a trumpet player in [a country], or generally?

Interviewer:

Both?

Interviewee:

Like, in [a country], I would say, I think I'm not that bad at playing. As for Europe, I still have a long way to go.

Interviewer:

Okay. But it's not like you're really kicking yourself about it or anything?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you think meditating has helped a bit regarding that?

Interviewee:

I think so. For a while I was maybe thinking more about how to do something better than others or something like that, but now it's just like "Oh, I know I'm going to do this or not do that".

Interviewer:

Ok, and what motivates you to play through good times and the bad ones?

Interviewee:

I have nothing to do.

Interviewer:

Have you observed any differences in your airflow or breath support due to meditation?

Interviewee:

No, nothing at all.

Interviewer:

Okay, and playing a brass instrument requires a lot of control, in terms of embouchure, breathing, posture, sitting, I don't know how you play exactly. So, do you pay attention to these things?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I've been paying attention recently, because when I play while sitting down, I like to lean back, but that's very wrong, so I try to play straight. But otherwise, when I'm standing, I don't pay attention to it.

Interviewer:

I see. And you said you didn't have any lectures, so let's skip this one... Do you experience any tensions while practicing?

Interviewee:

If it's a high note, I get tense in my neck and a bit on my lips. But I already know how to do the lips correctly.

Interviewer:

Okay. Have you noticed any differences in this area?

Interviewee:

It seems to me that nothing has changed in this area.

Interviewer:

Okay. Okay, regarding the posture, you said, nothing changed, no, no, no... Has your sound changed in any direction?

Interviewee:

It has changed, but I don't think it's because of meditation. It's just that in [a country] I was taught to produce a sound that blends well in a brass orchestra. And here they teach that solo sound. So maybe it changed only because of that.

Interviewer:

Ok, and you said that you didn't have any lessons, right?

Interviewee:

No, except that one.

Interviewer:

So, you know what, let's not talk about that then and just end the interview.

C02

Pre-intervention

Interviewee:

Hello, my name is [name] and I agree that Eglè will use my voice and my testimony to her masters work thesis.

Interviewer:

Yeah, and if you want, we can talk in [a language], because I'm going to translate a lot of works, it's fine. Which way do you feel comfortable?

Interviewee:

I don't know, whatever is easier for you.

Interviewer:

Well, the questions will be half in English, because I've translated them all, so we can just mix the language as you see fit. But anyway, can you please tell me again your whole experience with the meditation that we talked about earlier, because I just didn't record all this?

Interviewee:

So, experience with meditation, what I used to do... Actually, I only started last year doing the Wim Hof breathing exercises, the meditation ones that every teacher recommended me to do. My two trumpet teachers say "Only these ones" because I asked them, "Shall I buy a breathing bag?", you know, 5-10 liters size or something. "No, you don't need anything, don't spend money on those bags. Just do the Wim Hof method, that's enough, you don't need anything else." So, everybody here recommended this to me, and all the students who are more advanced and knowledgeable, they all do Wim Hof exercises. That's how familiar I am with meditation, so I incorporate Wim Hof into my warm-up sessions at least 3-4 times a week, at least before I start playing. Or sometimes I even do it twice, even, for example, to relax a little bit before a concert, to relax the breath, to ground it. So that's it, that's how much I'm familiar with meditation. Or if you also count this as meditation, for example, when you lie in bed, you imagine how you're going to play everything from the very beginning - how you enter the hall, the notes, the tunings, for example, with the piano. You imagine everything like that, so maybe that is a sort of meditation as well.

Interviewer:

Okay, well, meditation is a very broad topic, but let's say, talking about traditional meditation, where you sit down, concentrate on breathing and try not to think about things too much. How about this experience?

Interviewee:

That's exactly what Wim Hof really is. I am doing the same thing now, but I only started doing it this year.

Interviewer:

Okay, then I'll have to look into that too, because I've heard of this whole thing, but I have to make sure whether this is the type of meditation that I'm talking about in my Master's exposition or not at all, I need to look into it. And how do you feel about your general well-being as a musician now?

Interviewee:

I don't know, it's just that for me it's all so... Sometimes it seems like it's going into a hole, a black hole, and nothing's progressing, but the progress varies. One day you do better, the next day you do worse, you just have to do it somehow. Because when you play every day, when you practice every day, it's like, "Oh, my God, I haven't improved here", something like that, and then you don't play a concert for a while, and then, bam, "Oh my God, I've improved here, I wouldn't have played like this last year". You have these thoughts, but I don't know, things are getting better. It used to be that I couldn't blow very bravely in the symphony orchestra, now it's just no hesitation and that's it. Whatever happens, happens, if you're going to jump under the train, then jump bravely.

Interviewer:

Ok, what about stress, anxiety and so on - do you have that or not so much?

Interviewee:

I do, I kind of said like, for example, I auditioned for [an orchestra]. And I was preparing, I don't know, I never was more prepared for a competition than for this one. Here in the conservatory, you know, I was playing for students, inviting random people. One night I came in a black shirt, you know, and I played for everybody. Well, nothing beats the stress of possibly having a job, having to play for that job. I got terrified just a little bit; you know. I mean, it was normal, the notes were there, but the sound just wasn't good, it was a bit shaky. I was fine in my head, I wasn't worried, but I got up on stage and just that fear started to kind of... I don't know, I need to deal with that stress, to put myself in situations that are really stressful. I should put myself in more stressful situations. So that's how I've learned to deal with it.

Interviewer:

Okay, is it mainly performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, do you have any idea how this whole thing that we're going to do is going to affect you as a musician? I don't know, are there some expectations or something?

Interviewee:

Expectations are such that it should probably help me to deal more with stress. And if I do those breathing exercises every day, maybe it'll somehow work into my motor skills. And then I can stop stressing so much. So that's the expectation.

Interviewer:

Okay. And one last question. How many years have you been playing the trumpet?

Interviewee:

That's a good question.

Interviewer:

You're in your M2 now, aren't you?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I've been playing in [name of a school] since the ninth grade, I think since I was fourteen, and I was also playing in the music school. And how many years do you study in a music school? Six years, I think. Or five. Maybe for five years I was studying at a music school. Maybe from age eleven, let's say ten.

Interviewer:

Okay, so how old are you now? Twenty-four?

Interviewee:

Fourteen years.

Interviewer:

Well, you already have 10,000 hours.

Interviewee:

Well, I play, but I can't play that good.

Interviewer:

Ok. How are things regarding concentration when you're on your own?

Interviewee:

Sometimes it's very bad indeed. There are days when you come in and you're concentrating and it's fine, and other days you just watch Netflix in the background and you're kind of playing - so is this actual practice? It's like, it's low-quality work. So sometimes it's like that, and you get sidetracked into social media, Instagram, etc. But I don't know, it happens maybe two days a week.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you very easily distracted? Or don't you have any problems with concentration?

Interviewee:

No, I don't have that much trouble concentrating. Anyway, if... No, I don't.

Interviewer:

Do you sometimes procrastinate when you play?

Interviewee:

If you count watching Netflix as procrastination, it happens sometimes.

Interviewer:

Okay, and if you've caught yourself procrastinating, how do you get back to that concentrated state?

Interviewee:

It's just that if I see that it's that kind of day, that there's no vibe to play and I'm not getting things right, just watching Netflix while playing, I just put the trumpet down and go home.

Interviewer:

Okay, so you just don't get back on track, you just go home?

Interviewee:

I think, what am I going to do? Try, force myself to play something of quality, when it's not what I have in my mind at all? I think, maybe I'd better go home, rest and come back the next day to do some quality work.

Interviewer:

Are there any specific triggers that cause procrastination?

Interviewee:

Triggers? I don't even know...

Interviewer:

Well, say you're not getting some section right or you meet a friend in the corridor and start talking?

Interviewee:

Well, it does happen that you meet some company, and you talk. But somehow, I don't know, I don't lose myself to that company that much. Unless it's a hangover or something, a day that you don't feel healthy. If you feel healthy, maybe then... Only if there's a series coming out on Netflix that I've been waiting for, I don't know, two or three months for it to come out. And then you watch it at the conservatory while you're playing. That's it.

Interviewer:

Okay. When you practice the trumpet, what do you pay attention to the most?

Interviewee:

Now I'm mostly paying attention to the sound quality and just listening to myself and trying to play with as little effort as possible, but with the best possible result. If you've got that... If you understand what I'm talking about.

Interviewer:

Yes, I understand. Do you have any techniques that help you to focus more when you play?

Interviewee:

I set a timer, then I put the phone somewhere on the note stand, somewhere further away. I set the timer for 20 minutes, in which I have to play and not look at the phone. And then, for example, if I finish playing and I want to take a break after playing, I also set a timer so that I can rest for an hour, like go to the shop, get something to eat, chill a bit. The timer goes off - you have to go back to playing. That's the only kind of technique I use. I know, I used to use an app for that, there was a kind of concentration app where it blocks all the apps on your phone and only that one application works for a certain amount of time until the time is up. And then, when the time comes, the phone unlocks.

Interviewer:

Wow, that's really interesting, I didn't even know such things existed. For how long can you practice in one session with good quality, good focus and very mindfully?

Interviewee:

Honestly, I think, for about 20-30 minutes.

Interviewer:

Okay, but then you take a break, and you can return to the same focus state?

Interviewee:

Yeah, 15 minutes and then I can do 20-30 minutes again.

Interviewer:

Ok, and how long in a day would you say is your maximum for this kind of good quality work?

Interviewee:

If you count in hours, I'd say I can play like that for about 2 hours in a whole day. Because my strategy is to play in the morning, rest, play in the afternoon, then go home until evening comes and then come to the conservatory when there are no people at 7-8 PM, and then play for another 1.5 hours. So, the perfect plan for me is to play 3 times a day.

Interviewer:

Oh wow, it takes a lot of willpower to do this. I just come in, do it and go out.

Interviewee:

But there are days like today when I'll be hungover all day. I've arrived at the conservatory, I'll go to listen to the opera at 6 PM, because I've been looking forward to it so much, all the tickets for "Otello" are sold out. I'll have to skip some playing time for that, I won't be able to play that much. And yeah, I won't go to the conservatory at 10PM, it's a Saturday night, and to play at this time...

Interviewer:

Yeah, but returning to the question, let's say 2 hours a day you can do very good, very high quality work. Ok. Have you heard of the concept of flow?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And how often do you manage to reach it?

Interviewee:

Well, I think, the flow is when you're not the only one practising, right? When you're kind of in the flow while playing during some exam, is that what we're talking about here?

Interviewer:

Flow is the state, where you are very much into the thing you are doing, so much so that you could even forget time and you only care about that one thing, but you are very, very efficient at it.

Interviewee:

Well, it's usually when you're stressed, when you need to do something fast, that's when you concentrate very quickly. I don't know, I'm stressed at least three times a week.

Interviewer:

Oh, well, that's a very good result. And is that the thing that helps you get into the flow? I mean, that you can't do anything about it, you have to be forced by circumstances?

Interviewee:

Well, yeah, you have to have a goal or a target that you have to do something at some point, and... I like to plan, like I know what's coming up next week, so I'll plan for the week. So, I'll play that day, I'll play the orchestral difficulties the next day, I'll get ready for the next gig the other day, maybe I'll do two things on the same day some other time in the week.

Interviewer:

And how hard is it for you to get into the flow?

Interviewee:

It's actually difficult, it's not really easy, it's kind of... If I'm stressed, then I'm concentrating, but if I'm not, then it's... Then it's not an easy task. I don't know, actually.

Interviewer:

Okay, one more question. You already mentioned that you start procrastinating and then you stop playing and go home. So how often does that happen to you?

Interviewee:

I don't know, maybe three times a week, maybe twice. Well, I sometimes find that I'm overplaying, I'm not getting something right, I'm kind of overworked, unfocused, and then I end up thinking, "What am I doing here..." I try to play it right, but there is nothing left in my head, so you just say to yourself, "I'm going home."

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you have any challenges or obstacles in your daily practice or performances?

Interviewee:

I think I do. I don't know, we're just trying new things with the teacher now, like, trying to base the attack more on the air, so I'm trying to do more exercises like this **blows air**, so I'm concentrating more on that thing, on the air attacks, where I'm not doing well. That's the question, right?

Interviewer:

Yeah, if you have any challenges or obstacles.

Interviewee:

Well, I don't know. The challenges that I have now... Maybe four concerts in a row, the operas. I'm going to play Menotti's operas with the conservatory symphonic orchestra, so it's a question of how I stay there sitting on a chair for two hours with 100% concentration. The hardest thing is probably not that you have to play high notes, but it's also a part of the process of me being able to play that high note if I concentrate. So, it's not easy to endure those two hours.

Interviewer:

Okay, and let's say, as a musician who plays in an orchestra, does it stress you out that you're sitting there cold for fifty bars and then have to play?

Interviewee:

It depends very much on the situation. Most of the time, if you have to play something simple after those fifty bars, then it's okay, but if you're resting for fifty bars and then you have to play something very complicated with a piccolo trumpet, then... But it's not that... You think of all kinds of things that would help you to keep the instrument warm, how to buzz it, you know, you bring some practice mute, you put it on. Maybe there's no such thing for the tuba, you know, that we can put a compact thing in and then nobody will hear you in the orchestra, even though you'll blow a single note.

Interviewer:

Ok, so you're solving this problem by just buzzing something with the practice mute. Okay, but don't you have, like, some mental blocks or something like that? Or similar things?

Interviewee:

Mental blocks, you mean like, not wanting to learn something and something not working out?

Interviewer:

Something, well, that should be kind of easy to execute. Something that for you, being at your level, you're supposed to do fine, but you do it and it just doesn't work out, even though it's very easy?

Interviewee:

Well, there are no easy things in music, but like, range is kind of... Like, high notes open up one day, and the next day something just blocks, you can't relax. It's all tense here, it's tense down here too. Do what you want, it's simply not going to work out. You have to somehow unblock. That mental block, which makes you just kind of tense, stressed, it moves into the trumpet and then you don't get to play those high notes as well.

Interviewer:

Okay, how do you tend to react when something doesn't work out while you're practicing, or if you have a concert and you don't do well at all?

Interviewee:

I don't know, I just think that if something doesn't work out, it's just the process, it will be better. It was shitty now, it'll be better next time. The process is there, I'm learning and it's all good.

Interviewer:

Okay, do these things affect your self-confidence in any way?

Interviewee:

Well, yeah, sometimes it can be affected. But sometimes you also learn from those mistakes and then you kind of think why it happened, why, I don't know... I just had a gig in a church and the organist gave me brand new sheet music an hour before the concert. And I stupidly agreed, I said come on, let's play. Damn, there was solo stuff in there, just organ and trumpet, it was the first time I've read from the sheet music during a concert. So, I thought, damn, I

shouldn't have agreed, because we were fucking up a bit, not only me, but the organist was fucking up as well, and he was like, damn, why are we here? Couldn't we have stuck to the old pieces? Why did I have to agree to those new pieces? Next time I think it will be a lesson that, well, you just have to disagree with the program changes an hour before the concert...

Interviewer:

Yeah. Okay, so did those unsuccessful concerts or practicing affect your motivation in any way?

Interviewee:

Maybe, but it still somehow affects me only for a day or two. Maybe for a week at maximum it could affect me. But somehow afterwards you get back to neutral state, and rediscover some motivation, you find some goals, and I don't know. It affects me most strongly for a day.

Interviewer:

Ok, and how do you deal with that? Do you have, like, some special things of your own that make you feel better, or does time just heal all the wounds, and you just push through that day or two?

Interviewee:

I don't know, it's just that if I'm kind of feeling down, I concentrate on things that don't require thinking about music. I mean, I like to play video games, so when I'm playing, I'm just thinking about the game, and I'm not thinking about some other, you know, stuff. It's kind of like, if I'm feeling really bad, something's not going well, you know, you just kind of drown yourself in some other activity. You go out with your friends, you know, to get away, or... Yeah, only like that. Breathing exercises don't really help to make you feel better, you know, except maybe to relax the body.

Interviewer:

So generally, you're distracting yourself somehow, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I'm trying to distract myself somehow.

Interviewer:

Okay, do you have performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Yes? When is it more frequent, before or during the performance?

Interviewee:

Before.

Interviewer:

Before. Okay, and can you tell me what's happening to you?

Interviewee:

I was just thinking, "Damn, now I'm going to play in front of so many people", you know, "How is it going to go?", whether I'm going to successfully play an upcoming difficult passage, what's going to happen if I don't. But somehow, when I get on stage, it goes away. You get on the stage and think only about breathing, about the beginning of the music, what tasks you'll have when playing.

Interviewer:

Okay, you're anxious, but does it have any effect on your performance quality?

Interviewee:

Well, sometimes it does, yeah.

Interviewer:

And is it more of a negative thing, or did that stress and adrenaline help you to do your best?

Interviewee:

More of a negative one, I haven't yet learned to turn that stress into a positive thing.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how does your performance anxiety manifest itself in physical symptoms? Because different things happen to people.

Interviewee:

Well, I don't know why, but my fingers and hands start to freeze, they start feeling numb, as if my hands are actually getting cold. My mouth gets a bit dry.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

That's all, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you always have that stage fright, or only sometimes?

Interviewee:

Only sometimes.

Interviewer:

And have you, perhaps, figured out roughly when you will be afraid and when you won't?

Interviewee:

I've kind of figured out that if there's some difficult material to play, I'll still be scared to mess it up, especially in front of an audience. If it's something that's easy to play, I don't really care.

Interviewer:

It depends on the complexity of the program, right?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay, and do you use anything, some technique perhaps, to help you deal with performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

As I said, I'm just trying to set some tasks for myself - to think about breathing, about how we're going to start the piece, whether I'm going to be the first one to blow or not the first one. If I'll be the first one to blow, I need to maintain eye contact with everybody else, to make sure that we start together. So, it's just setting tasks like that.

Interviewer:

Yes, so you just think about what you'll have to do and try to do that as well as possible?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you have performance anxiety when you have to play in front of the lecturers?

Interviewee:

No, not really, I think.

Interviewer:

There isn't, okay.

Interviewee:

Not here, at least.

Interviewer:

And do you think about how the audience perceives you when you play? Perhaps they're sitting there and laughing because you played that one note with "fra"? Or is that not very important to you?

Interviewee:

For some reason it's important to me, yeah. Maybe it shouldn't matter, but I don't know, it depends on the audience.

Interviewer:

Okay, but you do focus a little bit on how the audience perceives you?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it's such a stupid thing.

Interviewer:

And which audience do you think deserves this focus, and which does not?

Interviewee:

To me, students don't seem worthy of such a big focus. And, for example, people who can give you a job in the future, like other musicians working in the orchestra and so on, it's completely different. But if we're talking about people who have nothing to do with music... For example, at the concert that I played in the church, the audience consisted of elderly people, children, and families. Nobody there would even understand if you played well or badly. Like, do what you can do best.

Interviewer:

Okay. Has it ever happened to you that you're anxious before a gig and you play it, but afterwards it feels like a blur, almost a blackout, and you barely remember anything? How often does that happen to you?

Interviewee:

Well, rarely. It has probably only happened three times in my life.

Interviewer:

Okay. And perhaps you have any idea why this happens, what causes it? Maybe there were some common denominators between the three concerts?

Interviewee:

I don't know. Maybe... I don't really know what causes it.

Interviewer:

It just happened and you didn't analyze it, okay. How frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

It's kind of hard to say how often. Do you mean on a scale?

Interviewer:

No, just answer it in whatever way that you think is best. And perhaps when do you enjoy your performances the most?

Interviewee:

I enjoy them the most when things work out. When I've already learned something, I really enjoy playing it. For example, when I have to play in the symphonic orchestra, and I manage to play some solos. Like, damn, not only did I play it, but also the quality of the music was great too. That feels amazing.

Interviewer:

Okay, so the enjoyment triggers are just that you managed to play well?

Interviewee:

Well, yeah.

Interviewer:

How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:

Well, that's a good question, I don't even know.

Interviewer:

Well, let's say, how confident are you in all your musical abilities?

Interviewee:

I don't know, now it seems that I'm much, much more confident. I don't know, I am?

Interviewer:

So you just feel quite self-confident?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, pretty self-confident.

Interviewer:

Okay, this is very nice. And, you know, everybody's going through all sorts of nonsense, things don't go well or you have some challenging times. What motivates you to keep doing things despite that?

Interviewee:

When something ends, some projects perhaps, something didn't go so well, then I think, well, okay, let's forget this phase now. Analyze it, but forget it, and just set some new goals, and just work towards something else. Let's choose a competition or something and start preparing for that next thing.

Interviewer:

Okay, and what motivates you? Is it that, "Okay, I'm going to try another competition?"

Interviewee:

I want to get a job.

Interviewer:

Okay, so basically survival instincts kick in. Okay. Do you experience any difficulties with airflow or breath support while playing the trumpet?

Interviewee:

Yes, I do. Maybe when I need to take a quick breath, when there is a very fast passage, it sometimes is problematic that I need to take a quick breath when relaxed. You have to relax the breath when there's a fast phrase, so I have to not be tense, but somehow sometimes it's like I'm inhaling and... At least here they say that you have to keep the air working, like, circular breathing. And sometimes I breathe in and hold it, and I don't let it out straight away. It would be best to breathe in and blow straight away, so that there wouldn't be any holding of breath. So, these are the kind of problems I sometimes have.

Interviewer:

Okay, and when you're playing, a lot of things are working. I mean, you have all the lip muscles working, the breathing, and the body position is very important as well, so how aware are you of these things when you're practicing and performing?

Interviewee:

Actually, I try not to lie about those things, I'm mostly an overthinker about embouchure and how you have to raise your tongue to make things work. I just have to think less, blow more and be more active.

Interviewer:

How often do you find that you're playing a main subject lesson and your teacher makes a comment like "Now you've got it right", and you've really got it right?

Interviewee:

I didn't really understand the question.

Interviewer:

Well, does it happen to you that your teacher gives you some feedback during a lesson, then you play as they wanted, and they ask you, "Did you feel the difference?"

Interviewee:

It happens. It happened more than once that they asked whether I understood it.

Interviewer:

Does it happen that you lie by saying that you do understand when you actually don't?

Interviewee:

No, I used to, maybe when I was younger when I thought... Now I don't lie. I just want to figure out how I'm actually supposed to be doing something.

Interviewer:

Ok. Do you experience any tensions while practicing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I do have tensions. When I see a complicated passage, like, while playing some simple melody, and I see some upcoming high notes, I immediately tense up and I think about those high notes. Only this kind of tension.

Interviewer:

Okay, and where are you tense?

Interviewee:

I don't know, in my head and...

Interviewer:

And the corners of your lips, right?

Interviewee:

The corners of the lips, yeah. That the smile rises upwards too much, and it would be better to have a more angry face, something in that direction. And when you go upwards, afterwards everything should go...

Interviewer:

Forward?

Interviewee:

Forward. And sometimes I go back to old habits and smile.

Interviewer:

Okay. Next question. Do you pay a lot of attention to your posture when you play?

Interviewee:

Actually, yes. Yeah. I pay a lot of attention to it.

Interviewer:

And what do you pay attention to the most?

Interviewee:

That... That I wouldn't play like this, with my head down, that... That the shoulders... Well, when I'm playing, I want my feet to be in a normal position.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I don't know. Everything, so that I would stand correctly.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it's like that traditional way - both feet on the ground and a straight back, while sitting on half of a chair, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, or sometimes I fold my feet inwards a bit, bend them so the legs are a bit lower.

Interviewer:

Okay. When you're playing main subject lessons or orchestral excerpts, do you manage to stay focused?

Interviewee:

It depends on the day how focused I am. I don't know, sometimes there's a main subject lesson after some rehearsals, or the main subject lesson is your first playing session of the day. I don't know, it depends on the situation. We have a new trumpet teacher now, two teachers, actually, so when the new teacher started working, sometimes it would last for two, three hours and I would concentrate for the whole two, three hours, I mean, I don't even know how. During those hours I was actually highly aware. And then there are days when, well, I can't concentrate.

Interviewer:

And have you noticed what was distracting you the most, or is it just a mystery?

Interviewee:

Maybe the quality of sleep can sometimes be distracting, if I'm really not well rested or something. Yeah, I really kind of think it's mostly due to sleep.

Interviewer:

Okay, how do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

Well, I don't even know. When a teacher says something to me, I don't get angry at him. Sometimes, I've heard from a colleague that sometimes girls get angry when he says that they didn't play something right. I don't have that, personally.

Interviewer:

So you don't take it personally?

Interviewee:

No, I'm a chill guy.

Interviewer:

Okay, but doesn't it happen to you that you don't get offended, but they say something bad to you, and you leave after a slightly worse main subject lesson and you're very self – critical? Does it happen that you're not angry at the lecturer, you're angry at yourself and very self-critical too?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it happens to me, actually. And it does happen during main subject lessons, but this was mostly the case in [a country]. Here in [another country], it's somehow less frequent. Here in [a country], the teacher... I don't know if it's very visible that I'm feeling down. So after playing something, he said something to me. And he was like, "Why are you feeling so bad about this? Everything's all right". So yeah, it depends on the teacher.

Interviewer:

Okay, and you've mentioned that you're not stressed at all before the lessons, neither before the orchestral difficulties nor before the main subject lessons, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah. I may be in very exceptional cases, but mostly I'm not.

Interviewer:

And what are those exceptional cases?

Interviewee:

When I'm not prepared for a lesson, for example.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what do you pay most attention to when you get some feedback from teachers?

Interviewee:

When they give me some feedback, I think: "Okay, how do I fix this now? How do I practice? What exercises do I do, or how do I cope now? How do I fix this problem in the best and quickest way?"

Interviewer:

So you tend to analyze things rather than to think that, “Ok, I did it, and there was a feeling, and now I have to catch that feeling”. You want to understand things more intellectually, right?

Interviewee:

Well, if I understand what's going on, I can play. If I catch that feeling, then I won't be able to repeat that feeling next time. It's better for me to understand.

Interviewer:

And how much does your self-esteem depend on the approval of your teacher?

Interviewee:

I don't know. It's really a matter of self-esteem, but, you know, it's not like if I was roasted hard that I'm going to play bad the next day or something. It's kind of like the opposite for me, if I get roasted, I'm going to get up the next day, and practice with even more focus and intensity.

Interviewer:

So, it even motivates you more?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. That's it, the interview is over.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:

So, there you go, I started the recording, so now I'm informing you again that you're being recorded.

Interviewee:

Very good.

Interviewer:

So, the information from the recording will be used for my master's exposition, and the transcript as well. If you agree with what I have just told you, just say that you agree, and your name.

Interviewee:

I agree. [name].

Interviewer:

Okay, so how do you feel about your general well-being as a musician now?

Interviewee:

Well-being? I feel more relaxed after the breathing exercises, and perhaps my body is more relaxed. My head is calmer, too.

Interviewer:

Okay, have you noticed any changes at all?

Interviewee:

I'm thinking about how to answer that. What changes I could see...

Interviewer:

Meditation-related, I mean.

Interviewee:

Well, maybe that it's easier to kind of... I used to have to force myself, and now it's kind of a habit, and it's quicker and it's easier to do it.

Interviewer:

You mean, to meditate?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

And has there been any change with your playing, or not so much?

Interviewee:

Well, I wouldn't say it's changed much. I mean, the sound is almost the same, but I feel like my body and my head feels more relaxed. So, yeah, overall, it's better.

Interviewer:

Okay, and what length of meditation did you choose most of the time?

Interviewee:

When I was doing yours, I chose three minutes, and when I was doing Wim Hof's, the video was eleven minutes long, so eleven was the maximum.

Interviewer:

Okay, so you said that you used to switch every other day between mine and Wim Hof's, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, but it's the same in essence.

Interviewer:

Same essence, but I still need to register this, because you're not only using my sources.

Interviewee:

Oh, well, maybe I shouldn't have said that.

Interviewer:

No, it's OK, because I have analyzed the data that you have sent me, and it is very interesting. Okay, how are you doing with concentration when you play?

Interviewee:

Pretty good, I don't know. You see, maybe, I don't know, actually, when I had to start playing again after the holidays, I lost my concentration a bit. Because somehow, I fell out of the habit of concentrating a lot again. And then, when I got back into it, it got easier and easier. So maybe there was some other influence as well, not only the meditation. Maybe you saw that there was an upward curve, you know, each time?

Interviewer:

I'll show you all your files afterwards, but I don't want to say anything to you now so I don't influence your answer.

Interviewee:

Okay.

Interviewer:

But would you say that meditation has helped you to concentrate more?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, it helped. It really did, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, what about procrastination when you're practicing?

Interviewee:

Regarding procrastination, it actually varies. One day you can concentrate, the next day you can't, but I don't know if that's related to meditation.

Interviewer:

Okay, and compared to how it was a month ago, do you feel any difference for better or worse, or not so much?

Interviewee:

I don't even know, really. No, I don't think so.

Interviewer:

You don't feel it?

Interviewee:

Because I used to do those things before, so...

Interviewer:

Okay. Okay, everything's fine if it hasn't changed. It's also an answer and there is also very valuable data in it. Ok, and when you're procrastinating, what are the triggers that make you procrastinate?

Interviewee:

Instagram.

Interviewer:

Instagram?

Interviewee:

Instagram makes me procrastinate.

Interviewer:

Beautiful girls on Instagram, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, and all kinds of morons jumping off bridges. That's my content. Instagram pisses me off. Oh, I'm cursing again, now you're going to have to...

Interviewer:

Chill. It's funny to work afterwards.

Interviewee:

And... What was I saying?

Interviewer:

That Instagram pisses you off.

Interviewee:

And then I delete it sometimes.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And then I just don't use it.

Interviewer:

And when I say triggers, I mean... Instagram is a tool for procrastination. But by triggers I mean, it does happen that you don't get enough sleep or something doesn't work out. So, what triggers you to want to open Instagram?

Interviewee:

Probably because I want to take a break from playing, but then I just chill for too long and then you get... yeah.

Interviewer:

So, for you, procrastination basically starts as a break?

Interviewee:

The break starts and afterwards I start feeling too lazy to go back to practicing.

Interviewer:

Ok, what do you focus on most when you're playing the trumpet?

Interviewee:

Now I pay a lot of attention to whether the throat is relaxed, because those breathing exercises add a lot of relaxation to the body. So, at the same time, right after the meditation I

try to make my throat would be like *breathes out* The feeling that the throat is relaxed, and that's the one that I focus on the most. Sound is what I focus on the most.

Interviewer:

Ok, so in addition to meditation, you also used the Wim Hof method to help you play, right?

Interviewee:

Yes, yes.

Interviewer:

Okay, do you have anything else?

Interviewee:

No, I didn't use anything else.

Interviewer:

OK, now these questions are basically all about the most recent period, starting from our last conversation. So how long can you play with good concentration and good focus? In one sitting, I mean.

Interviewee:

I would say a maximum of 30 minutes in one sitting.

Interviewer:

Mhm, and how many of those concentrated periods of time do you get per day, roughly?

Interviewee:

I don't know, maybe 4-5 periods of 30 minutes each.

Interviewer:

Wait, I'm counting... 2-2.5 hours, right?

Interviewee:

Well, because it could also happen that I'm playing and I'm just not really concentrating. I usually play 3 times a day - in the morning, at lunch and in the evening.

Interviewer:

I see. We talked about flow last time if you remember.

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

So... does it happen for you that you reach that flow?

Interviewee:

It happens, it happens. Sure.

Interviewer:

It does?

Interviewee:
Mhm.

Interviewer:
Comparatively, more or less often, or just as often?

Interviewee:
Maybe even, I would say, more often now.

Interviewer:
Okay. So now it's a bit easier to reach that flow, right?

Interviewee:
Mhm. Maybe it wasn't so easy before, but now it's a bit easier, yeah, now that we've talked about it.

Interviewer:
And have you found a way to trigger that flow, or is it still a matter of luck?

Interviewee:
Maybe it's a matter of luck. Meditation might be one of the criteria, but I don't know.

Interviewer:
Mhm. And lately, does it happen to you that you play and stop playing earlier than you planned, whether it's because it's not going well, you're fed up, or you just don't feel like playing?

Interviewee:
Yeah, yeah. I went out to play this morning, for example, and I was very tired during all those days because I'm back in [a country] now and I've started practicing again. And the muscles in my lips felt very tired today, so I didn't play for the rest of the day, I just went for a walk, went to the swimming pool and I'm back now.

Interviewer:
Well, these are physical things. I mean, perhaps more from the mental side of it...

Interviewee:
No, no, I always force myself somehow.

Interviewer:
Okay. This answer has changed, because I read our first interview today.

Interviewee:
Yeah?

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:

Well, I force myself, but it never happens that I just cannot play at all. But your question was... Repeat the question.

Interviewer:

Do you often stop playing prematurely because you're lazy, something doesn't work out while playing, or because of some other things that come to mind?

Interviewee:

Well, maybe I used to. Perhaps I would finish earlier, but it's not like I don't play all day or don't go to play at all. I go and play for at least 15-20 minutes and then I go home.

Interviewer:

And regarding that "used to" - does it happen to you that you think, "Oh, I don't feel like playing, I'm going home"?

Interviewee:

Well, sometimes when I just don't feel like playing, I don't force it, but if I manage to play something, then I definitely continue doing that. That's the psychological thing - if I manage to play, it's fine, I keep doing that, but if I don't feel like it, then I don't really force it.

Interviewer:

And how often does it happen to you that you don't feel like playing?

Interviewee:

Maybe twice a week, actually. Or once.

Interviewer:

Are you experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your playing?

Interviewee:

In playing... Now we're preparing for the symphony orchestra session, so I'll be playing "Firebird" and Brahms, "Academic Festival Overture"... Anyway, the only struggles right now are to learn the notes, the parts and to play everything accurately.

Interviewer:

But no technical or mental things, right?

Interviewee:

They are always there, things can always be better, so... You always want to play faster, always want to play higher, quieter, louder. I would say there is always something. And if I have to specify, perhaps high notes? For example, this happens every other day for me - one day I can play high notes, the next day I can't. It's like a mental block or something, I don't know.

Interviewer:

And how do you usually react to bad practice sessions or unsuccessful performances lately?

Interviewee:

I haven't had performances recently. At the beginning, during the first week when I started filling out the forms, I had a performance and filled that in. But then the next week, I didn't fill it in because I just didn't have any performances.

Interviewer:

Okay, what about just playing, I mean, practicing in class, if you're not doing very well, does it affect your self-confidence or your motivation in any way, or not that much?

Interviewee:

I don't know, not really.

Interviewer:

Not really. You just come back the next day and try again, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, bit after bit. It's not like I'm always playing well, I struggle all the time. I didn't have talent or something, so I had to try and force myself to do things more than I needed to do all the time.

Interviewer:

Ok, but if something doesn't work out, everything's okay, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I'm used to... not doing well

Interviewer:

Ok, so you said you haven't had any concerts recently, right?

Interviewee:

No, I haven't had any recently.

Interviewer:

And did you have lectures?

Interviewee:

I had a lecture now, right after I came back, and I may have lied about some of them [in the weekly questionnaire], I thought, I'll add you some answers, I guess. So maybe I said in the form that I had lessons, but actually I didn't, for at least two surveys.

Interviewer:

Okay. Well, I'll have this in mind. So, you haven't had any lectures lately? Or have you had one recently?

Interviewee:

I had a lesson, when I returned to [a country] recently.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Immediately after returning, yes.

Interviewer:

And did you have any anxiety before that lesson?

Interviewee:

Yeah, maybe there was some anxiety.

Interviewer:

Yeah? Did it influence your playing in the lesson in any way?

Interviewee:

Maybe in the beginning. I was struggling for maybe the first five minutes or so, then I recovered and started playing better.

Interviewer:

And how does this struggle manifest itself?

Interviewee:

Well, I get a bit tense. When you're tense, the sound suffers immediately. The range suffers. So, I would say only that.

Interviewer:

Have you experienced any physical symptoms?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay. This question is about performances, this one is also a performance question, this one as well... So, we'll skip them if you haven't had any. And how do you feel about yourself as a musician now?

Interviewee:

I don't know, pretty good. Pretty good, actually. We recorded yesterday...

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yesterday we recorded... I have to make a recording every semester, or perform live with an ensemble of some kind, so at the last minute I put together an ensemble, I put together a piece, and somehow, I played it perfectly. So, I'm thinking, "Damn, it didn't used to be like this".

Interviewer:

So, you have quite a lot of confidence in yourself at the moment, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you think meditation contributed to this?

Interviewee:

It may have contributed. I'm not sure, but it might have.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what's driving you at the moment to keep playing and to keep doing things if you're experiencing some challenges? What is your motivation?

Interviewee:

Upcoming projects and deadlines of all kinds, you know. Concerts, I'm having a concert in three weeks, so that's that. Now...

Interviewer:

Okay. Sorry, please keep going. Sorry, I interrupted you.

Interviewee:

And also, there will be an audition in [a city], at the [orchestra], for a trumpet position. So, this is motivating me a lot lately. Now every week with the whole brass section we'll have like... So, everybody will play some orchestral excerpts or some pieces, whoever wants to play, and we'll evaluate each other. So, we'll have this once per week.

Interviewer:

So generally, it's just upcoming things, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

After meditation, comparing meditating versus not meditating, did you feel any difference in the air current, breath support, or in anything related to air?

Interviewee:

Did I feel any difference... I did. I felt, yeah, that I'm more relaxed, that my breathing is more active. Yeah, maybe this one helped the most, that the breathing is more active. What else... Nothing, breathing is more active, it's easier if we're talking about breathing... Well, yeah, my throat is more relaxed, where I was tense before. That's it. I don't know what else I can tell you. Perhaps you can point me somewhere?

Interviewer:

Well, if you say that breathing is more active, I think let's just keep that then. And how much do you notice physical things when you play?

Interviewee:

In fact, I do notice them a lot, because I don't know, everybody says to me to be less reliant on the way something feels. Instead, they say to listen more to what something sounds like, but somehow, I still like to prioritize the feel.

Interviewer:

Okay. Have you noticed any change in this aspect of awareness, especially regarding physical things after meditation, or not so much?

Interviewee:

I have. I remember when I first started to do it, immediately after meditation, my whole body relaxed, I even felt like I was in some kind of zen state. I like that feeling of being relaxed and then you can effortlessly produce sound. You don't have to struggle, you don't have to force something. I like that feeling.

Interviewer:

OK. Did you have a lecture where you were playing, like in this last lecture, and the teacher asked if you felt a difference, instead of if you understood a difference, or if you noticed a difference?

Interviewee:

Yes, I did, but my answer to that was that sometimes I feel it, sometimes I don't. So, I don't know. For example, the articulations, they... Where it was like, "Do you feel the difference, like now? Because here it was good, earlier it was bad", I didn't hear it somehow. But when he tells me, then I'm like, "Oh, maybe I do hear it".

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience any tensions when you play?

Interviewee:

Tensions? Like, getting tense?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, I do get tense. Mostly in my throat. But anyway, my body is quite relaxed when I'm sitting. Most of the time it's the throat that sort of gets tight and tense.

Interviewer:

Do you think that these things have changed somewhat after meditation, or has it made no difference at all?

Interviewee:

It changed. I think so.

Interviewer:

For the better, I assume?

Interviewee:
For the better, yes.

Interviewer:
Is this what you were saying earlier that you just feel more relaxed?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay, and you're thinking about your posture when you're playing lately?

Interviewee:
Yeah. And when I'm meditating, I think that one has to be relaxed when doing meditation. As relaxed as possible. And when I was playing, I tried to make sure that my legs and my back were straight, most importantly, and that my neck was as it's supposed to be as well. Well, I used to think more about those things before, but now I have to think less. Most of the time, yeah, my motor skills do it.

Interviewer:
Okay, and did meditation somehow affect your sound one way or the other?

Interviewee:
Yeah, I would say it's a bit darker now, maybe more based on air, I think.

Interviewer:
Okay. Was it easy for you to stay focused during the last lecture?

Interviewee:
Focused during the last one?

Interviewer:
Concentration.

Interviewee:
Oh...Yeah, yeah, it was quite easy.

Interviewer:
Was there anything distracting you, or not really?

Interviewee:
What?

Interviewer:
Was there anything distracting you, or not really?

Interviewee:
Oh, distracting. Well, there were some things that distracted me, but it's just my stupid thoughts - does it actually sound good here, does it sound nice there...

Interviewer:

Mhm, so a bit of a lack of self-confidence, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, there was a bit of that.

Interviewer:

Ok, and how did you react to the feedback from your teacher? Did you take the criticism personally or was it just, "Ok, this is a work thing, I will do it, I will fix it, but it doesn't say anything about me"?

Interviewee:

No, he just said it sounded very good, and I just kind of disagreed with that, and I didn't like it. I thought "Well, what's going on here, can't I hear that it sounds good or what?", so...

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Perhaps I just didn't notice it myself.

Interviewer:

So you were praised, and you didn't even believe it or trust it?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Ok, you said there was a bit of stress, right? I mean, before this lecture, the last lesson.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And when you heard the feedback from the teacher, did you focus more on how you felt when you corrected something, or did you try to understand how it works?

Interviewee:

I tried to understand, maybe, because that feeling may not always...It cannot always be trusted.

Interviewer:

Ok, let's move on. So, I take it that your self-esteem is not affected by the teacher's approval, because you don't believe the teacher when he tells you that something is good.

Interviewee:

Well, yeah, sometimes I don't believe it, really. Because, well, I hear that it's not like that, but maybe he's hearing something else, some other thing that was worse before and it's better now.

Interviewer:

Ok, do you think you're going to continue meditating after all of this is over?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I'll keep going.

Interviewer:

Ok, I think we're done, so I'm going to stop the recording now.

C03

Pre-intervention

Interviewer: So, I am turning on the recording and thus I'm informing you that you are being recorded. The recording will be transcribed, and the transcription will possibly be used in my research without revealing the real names of participants. If you agree, please state your name and the fact that you agree to all the previous information.

Interviewee:

Okay, I'm [name of participant] and I agree to all the previous information.

Interviewer:

Okay, that is great. If you don't understand any question, feel free to ask because sometimes my English is not "Englishing". And if I ask you something that you think is too sensitive, you don't feel comfortable talking about or you just don't want to answer, it is okay to skip questions, just let me know that you want to move on.

Interviewee:

Okay, okay.

Interviewer:

Okay, so could you please tell on the recording about your previous meditation experience?

Interviewee:

Yes, so I did a few guided meditations in the past, not really regularly, just sometimes in the evening before going to sleep or sometimes in the morning after I did yoga, for example. I sometimes do a guided meditation for just five to ten minutes. It was mainly about positive thinking and self-confirmation.

Interviewer:

How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

It changes from day to day. But in general, I would say I feel well in general, but I surely have doubts in between.

Interviewer:

Okay, would you mind sharing that?

Interviewee:

No, it's okay. I'm thinking a lot about my sound on the trumpet, whether it's nice or not so beautiful. And there is also this brass player or especially high brass players' fear to miss high notes, for example, or not being able to make it till the end, embouchure-wise. And yeah, those fears are still present, even though I'm experienced in brass playing and I practice regularly. But yeah, still there are some fears.

Interviewer:

So what is your experience with trumpet? In which semester are you and for how many years have you played the trumpet?

Interviewee:

Okay, so I'm in my fifth semester in Master's. So I've been studying for seven years already, and I will finish my studies now. And I've been playing the trumpet since the age of eight. So I'm 25 now. So it's 17 years already.

Interviewer:

You answered the question fully. Do you have any particular concerns or expectations about meditation and how it might influence your musical performance or daily life?

Interviewee:

Since I'm sometimes struggling with focus and I'm overthinking a lot, I think it could help me to find this focus and this kind of tunnel view, which I'm sometimes lagging off when it's needed. And yeah, so I'm open to experience a new meditation, new input. And yeah, I think I'm not concerned about any bad effects, I think, because I guess I'm already experienced enough to feel when something isn't good for me.

Interviewer:

Okay. So you've started to talk about the focus. How are your focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

I think they could be better in general. But of course, it changes from day to day. But mostly in the morning, I'm having the best concentration to the first practice session. I'm thinking a lot about my sound and I'm trying to listen to myself a lot and to find the way I want to sound. And in the afternoon, it's harder for me to get back because I don't know, I'm already a bit exhausted and I'm thinking too much about the feeling probably. And yeah, it's hard to get back for me.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what distracts you the most when you are getting distracted?

Interviewee:

Thoughts... I'm thinking about myself and whether I'm good enough. I'm thinking about what teachers told me, what was happening in the class or something. I'm taking words maybe too much to the heart. And instead of focusing on the music, I'm thinking about will it be enough in the exam, in the recital. Will they like it? Will I make it?

Interviewer:

Okay, and do you procrastinate during your practice? I don't know, with your phone or something like that?

Interviewee:

Yeah, sometimes I do that. But not too much. I think I try to stay in the concentration somehow. But sometimes, of course, as a brass player, we need some rest for a few minutes. And then I pick up the phone and I'm on Instagram or something, which doesn't really help.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you get distracted both by your thoughts or devices, how do you usually get back on track?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it's a tricky question because I don't really know the way. But yeah, sometimes I just take the music score and sometimes I sing the parts and then I play them or I just do a few breathing exercises. Because when I pick up the horn and try to play when I'm not focused or when I don't exactly know what I'm doing or what I want to produce, then it doesn't really work for me.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you have any specific triggers which encourage procrastination? And being distracted?

Interviewee:

Yeah, bad experience, bad feeling or bad sound makes me lose motivation. Yeah, not motivation, but it makes me want to drop the horn and just do something else, which gives me some dopamine.

Interviewer:

Okay. When you're practicing trumpet, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

That's probably the sound.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you currently use any techniques to help with your focus and improving your performance?

Interviewee:

I'm not really using certain techniques. There is one technique I sometimes used, which was the self-confirmation, just a few mantras, which you tell yourself while you're... I don't know if you've ever heard of this, but if you can knock on certain bones like here and here and also on the wrist of your hand.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah, it's something I heard in a masterclass, while you're telling yourself how great you are.

Interviewer:

Oh, does it help? I've never heard of this.

Interviewee:

I think it's helped sometimes. Yes, probably. I don't know. I cannot really measure.

Interviewer:

Okay. That's so interesting. Now I will have to read more about it. That's so cool!

Interviewee:

I don't know how it is in English, but in German there is a book. It's called "Klopfen gegen Lampenfieber". So it's like knocking against stage fear.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay. That's so cool. Thank you.

Interviewee:
You're welcome.

Interviewer:
For how long are you capable of practicing mindfully and with good focus?

Interviewee:
That's an interesting question because I have not... I don't really have... It's interesting. I thought about it, because I don't really have the... What's the word for remembering?

Interviewer:
That's the word - remembering.

Interviewee:
Yeah, the noun. I don't really remember the...

Interviewer:
Memory.

Interviewee:
Ah, memory! I don't really have the memory of how I practiced. For example, during my first two years of bachelor's, when I wasn't in [name of conservatoire], the other university, I really don't remember how I practiced there.

Interviewer:
Okay, but what about now? If you're planning your practicing life, for example, which sessions work the best for you?

Interviewee:
I try to plan a bit what I want to work on that day, but then it's still a bit flexible, how I feel, what works better and not so good.

Interviewer:
Okay, and that feeling, for example, that you're practicing, you know, like you come all fresh and with good brain and then at some point you start to like using your phone or getting distracted, like how long does it take for you to start getting distracted?

Interviewee:
Usually it starts after one hour, roundabout.

Interviewer:

Okay, but if you make a break and you come back, it's better again and you can practice for some time again, right? And for how long in a day, like how much of very good quality work are you getting in a day?

Interviewee:

Oh, it depends, but it's mostly not too much, it's two and a half hours or maybe three.

Interviewer:

Okay, have you heard about such concepts as the zone or the flow or golden hour?

Interviewee:

The flow principle or this word is quite often used. I heard a lot about it, but I don't really know how to get into this state.

Interviewer:

Okay, and it never has happened for you?

Interviewee:

Yeah, probably it has happened, of course. I think as a musician on a high level, you probably have experienced the flow state.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Because I don't think high performance is possible without being in a state where you just work without overthinking.

Interviewer:

Okay, and do you have like specific triggers to get the flow or you're just trying to get lucky?

Interviewee:

So far, I think it's a matter of luck.

Interviewer:

Okay. How frequently does it happen to you that you plan to do something and then you get like very, very bored, or lazy and you think like, eh, fuck it, I'm going home or for example something doesn't go well and then you just quit practicing because it's not going well?

Interviewee:

It happens from time to time, yeah. Yeah, I would say once or twice a week.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

At least, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, are you experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

Yeah, the hardest part is for me to, because I don't know how it is for tuba, but I'm really sensitive about the feeling of the lips and the body, the tightness. It's a lot about the feeling and the biggest challenge for me is to be professional, to just play and to focus about the music when the feeling is really bad.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Because you have to. It's like you're warming up or you're preparing to play and it feels really bad and it feels like you want to stop and go home, but you have to. For example, you have a concert or anything and you have to get yourself over this feeling and just be professional.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you generally respond to bad practice sessions, unsuccessful lessons or performances?

Interviewee:

I'm not really happy. But then I try to let it go and focus on the next day or the next session.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it affect your self-confidence, for example?

Interviewee:

Yeah, for sure. If a practice session or a concert or anything doesn't go well, I'm mostly not in a very good mood for several hours or even days.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what about motivation? Does it affect your motivation in any way?

Interviewee:

Actually, not that much, because I'm always keen to keep working and to... Yeah. Yeah. It doesn't affect my motivation. It even maybe motivates me even more.

Interviewer:

So it affects you in a positive way then?

Interviewee:

Yeah, probably. I mean, the feeling is negative, but it doesn't want me to stop. It doesn't make me want to stop playing.

Interviewer:

Do you experience music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I would say.

Interviewer:
Is it more before or during the performance?

Interviewee:
Mostly before.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
It gets better.

Interviewer:
And does it affect the quality of your playing?

Interviewee:
Luckily, not too much. But still, there is an effect. Um, yeah.

Interviewer:
Negative or positive?

Interviewee:
Sometimes like this, sometimes like that. Mostly it's... I experience two different kinds of stage fear. Sometimes I just really have a high pulse and I'm like, and I'm really, you know, like this. And then it's mostly positive.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
And sometimes I'm just, I have like a real anxiety about going on stage and performing. And then it's, yeah, it's hard.

Interviewer:
And do you have like, also, do you know what are the triggers for like both types of anxiety? Maybe it's the type of performance or something like that?

Interviewee:
Yeah. Yeah. It's the type of performance where I play and what for.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
And the the results, the consequences of my playing.

Interviewer:
Could you please elaborate on that a bit?

Interviewee:

It's... for example, if I'm playing in a group or in an ensemble where the focus is not completely on myself, but on the ensemble, I can play better because I'm feeling like part of a group and it's not, nobody's judging only me.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah. And in an exam, it's different because I know they're all looking at how I play and then it's, yeah, there's a bit more anxiety probably.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what are the physical symptoms of your anxiety?

Interviewee:

Very cold hands, sweating and negative thoughts. But no, this is not physical. Yeah, a bit of stiffness in the body.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you use any strategies to manage this anxiety?

Interviewee:

Yeah. As I said, like to try to focus on the good sides, on the positive effects. And I'm also doing a bit of stretching.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

And breathing exercises, trying to to calm down, to get the breath lower, to have a flexible belly. And yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you experience music performance anxiety in the lessons?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah. Also, it's mostly when the lesson starts with "Okay, play". Like, "Show me what you've practiced".

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And sometimes it's like, it's different because we're, we're talking about something positively. And then we're maybe also the, if the teacher is like singing to the, to the music and it's not, or it's, you know, accompanying you in some way, it makes it way easier than if, if the teacher is just sitting there and listening to what you play.

Interviewer:

Okay. And does it affect the quality of your performance and anxiety?

Interviewee:

Probably. Yes. Yeah.

Interviewer:

In a negative or positive way?

Interviewee:

The anxiety in the lessons - mostly in the negative way.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience any physical symptoms when you are in the lesson and experiencing that anxiety?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it's probably the same kind of stiffness in the body and cold hands.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you use any strategies to manage anxiety before the lessons or in the lessons?

Interviewee:

Yeah, in the lessons, sometimes I'm trying to focus on the, sometimes I try to filter what the teacher is saying and to, to focus on the good things.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

To tell myself, okay, this was not completely bad. And before the lessons, I also try to have a positive mindset to, to be, yeah, to be somehow proud, not the small little student who is going to be, yeah, you know.

Interviewer:

Scolded, like. Okay. And the trigger for the, just to check if I got it right, the trigger is that basically if the teacher is very interactive with you, when you are like, not that anxious, but if he's just sitting and going like "Now you play", then you're a bit more anxious, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And I know that you play plenty of things and it definitely has happened to you that you play in the orchestra and you have like 60 bars of breaks and when you get all cold and you have to play something, so are you getting anxious about that?

Interviewee:

Yes. Yes. But I'm trying to prepare for my entry like 10 bars before, because I'm picking up the trumpet already to my leg and, and I'm focusing on the breath, to have a lower breath and a good airflow. And then I'm mostly relying a lot on the conductor. When I pick up the horn before my entry, mostly I, I know how the sound is like, how the pitch is. And then I'm relying on the conductor and how he gives me the entry. And actually, mostly it goes well.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Good for you. Are you...? Please continue. I'm sorry.

Interviewee:

But, but, but if the conductor is bad and gives a very bad downbeat.

Interviewer:

Yeah.?

Interviewee:

Then it's really hard, and it makes me, yeah, miss the note a lot.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you during the performance?

Interviewee:

Yes. I'm thinking about it. Whether they like it or, yeah, if I missed something, I think, oh, okay, did they even hear it or not?

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And... But I try to perform professionally, to have a good body language and to have a, I don't know, basically just to smile and to have a... not to show the audience when I'm feeling bad or when something is going not well.

Interviewer:

Okay. Has it happened for you that after the performance you felt like it was like a blur or you blacked out completely or it happened very quickly and you're not capable of remembering the details?

Interviewee:

When I'm very nervous, yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it happen frequently?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Sorry?

Interviewer:

Does it happen frequently?

Interviewee:

Not too often anymore. Okay. Because I'm thinking... nowadays, I'm thinking a bit more, more in general and more technically and about a lot of aspects.

And in the past I was just really, really nervous. But then I went to the stage and most of the time it went quite well. And then I came back and I thought "Okay, yeah, it was quite good." And I don't really remember what I did out there.

Interviewer:

Okay. How frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

Yeah, regularly, but not too much. But yeah, it's, it's... how frequently is hard to say. Performances, like in front of an audience?

Interviewer:

Yes. Concerts, exams, whatever.

Interviewee:

Good question. Yeah. I would say 50 to 60% of the time.

Interviewer:

Okay, that's very precise. Thank you.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you feel confident in your abilities as a musician?

Interviewee:

I think I lack confidence.

Interviewer:

Okay. Like, for what you play?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm, I'm always doubting before I... not always, but most of the time I'm doubting before I pick up the horn and blow into it. It's "Oh, will it sound well? What comes out?"

Interviewer:

Okay. And what motivates, motivates you to keep practicing and performing after challenging times?

Interviewee:

Um, I think it's because I love playing the trumpet, even though it's a shit instrument and it's, uh, it's, yeah, it's not very grateful, but, um, I still really love it. And it's part of my life and I keep doing it. Yeah. Even though it's really healthy not to think about it too much, of course, but, it's part of me and, um, I keep doing it and I still want to improve all the time.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Or just to play, just to, to enjoy the sound when it's good.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you experiencing any difficulties with your airflow or breath support while playing the trumpet?

Interviewee:

Difficulties?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Interviewee:

Oh, yes, yes, yes.

Interviewer:

What are the difficulties?

Interviewee:

It's about, it's mostly about, um, the... sometimes the air is free and you can just... it's a feeling of letting go or sometimes it's a feeling of giving, like pushing the air, but it works. And sometimes it's a feeling of, uh, hard work with no output.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So like you're, you're pushing the air, but, but it's not, it's not helping in any way or it doesn't come to the, to, into vibration of the lips.

Interviewer:

Okay. So basically it's like instability. You don't know what to expect.

Interviewee:

I, um, it's not that I don't know what to expect. I, I have, I have a feeling before.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

When I breathe in, I know what comes out. Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. Brass playing requires careful control of embouchure breathing and body alignment. How aware are you of those aspects during practice and performance?

Interviewee:

Um, I think I'm aware a lot because, um, when I, when I warm up, um, I always focus on my body.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I mean, also on the sound, but mainly on my body, how it feels, and I'm trying to reach certain, um, goals - how I want to play and how the airflow should be. And, um, during performances, I always, I also think about it, but it doesn't help a lot. I should rather, um, rely on my abilities and just think about music.

Interviewer:

Okay. Um, have it ever happened to you, that you're in a lesson and teacher tells you some feedback for, and then he asked you to repeat, like the phrase or whatever, with the feedback that... you know? And he asked you, like, not, "Do you understand it", but "Do you feel it"?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

And how frequently do you feel it?

Interviewee:

Um, most... mostly it works for me. The improvement is, is, uh, is happening.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And then I wonder why I don't, I didn't do it in the first place. Like this.

Interviewer:

I feel you. I feel you.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you experience any physical tensions while practicing?

Interviewee:

Yes. Yes. After a while and I'm focusing on high notes or something on, or too much about the beginning of the sound, like the perfect response and everything. I'm trying to, I'm, uh, tending to tighten up too much. Yes.

Interviewer:

And where are you getting tense?

Interviewee:

Um, mostly in the body, in the belly or the throat or also in the tongue, stiffness in the tongue, which is also, um, yeah, combined with the other two.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how aware of your posture are you while you are practicing and playing in general?

Interviewee:

Um, more and more, but yeah, sometimes I'm playing, I'm walking around in the room and then I see myself in the mirror and I think "Oh my God, my posture is really bad" and then, yeah, I try to fix it.

Interviewer:

Okay. Uh, do you find it easy to stay focused during your lessons?

Interviewee:

Uh, it depends... In, yeah, in the lessons with our assistants – [name], you probably remember him - Um, he, um, he's very intense and, and you, yeah, I'm always focused from the first minute to the last.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

And with my professor, it's very much different because he's talking a lot about, uh, yeah, about things that are not really interesting to me.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Um, sometimes interesting, sometimes it's just information I don't need, but, uh, yeah, I lose focus there sometimes and then it's hard to come back and then I miss something and then it's, I feel, I judge myself for playing bad in his lessons and yeah.

Interviewer:

But is those, like, things that are not really interesting to you - is it like trumpet-related or is it "I bought a new dog" type of stuff.

Interviewee:

Yeah, they are, the second one.

Interviewer:

Okay. So if you get distracted, you basically get distracted because it's not really work-related things that you are talking about, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah. I'm not, yeah, not work related or not, not matching my thoughts. Also when it comes to music or to, yeah, to musical things. Sometimes I don't understand... I don't really understand what the person wants from me.

Interviewer:

Okay. Um, how do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

Yeah, as I told you before, I'm taking it to the heart a lot and, um, there are things I really want to improve or want to work on. And sometimes I just disagree and then I'm, yeah, I don't want to do it that way.

Interviewer:

Okay. So you have a tendency to take it kind of personally, right?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. And does it affect your self-esteem or maybe lead you to excessive self-criticism?

Interviewee:

What? Sorry?

Interviewer:

Does it affect your self-esteem or self-confidence?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I also feel it in the, um, yeah, as I told you, when I'm back in the practice room and I try to focus on the music or on my playing in general, then, um, then there are, uh, there are thoughts that make me, um, doubt, yeah. Take energy from me.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you are hearing the feedback from your teacher, are you more of that type of person who would go like "Oh, okay, I need to understand how it works" or are you like "Oh, okay, I have to feel how it works, and then chase the feeling afterwards when I'm practicing on my own"?

Interviewee:

Um, I mostly, yeah, I'm going for the feeling probably. I mean, I also try to understand because I'm also a teacher. I'm having my own students and I'm starting in the music school in March as a regular teacher. And, um, I, of course I want to... I want to understand the concepts of dictated teaching methods. And I really want to be able to give it further to other students. So, um, yeah, in a professional way, not to just like "Yeah, just try to feel it, try to

feel it”, and if they don't feel it “Ahh, okay, you're not talented”. That's, I mean, I don't want to be this kind of teacher.

Interviewer:

Okay. Thank you very much. I'm ending the recording right now.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:

So, hello, I turned on the recording and thus I'm informing you that you are being recorded. The information from this recording is going to be used in my master's research. If you agree, please state your name, and say that you agree.

Interviewee:

My name is [name of a participant] and I agree with the recording.

Interviewer:

That's great. So could you please tell me your overall impression, like what changed, what didn't change, how did you find the study?

Interviewee:

So, in general I can say that my overall mood was, I think, better than before. And also the reflection I had to do with the weekly forms helped me to understand myself better. Probably. And it was interesting to think about those things, also in the future, I think I will try to answer those questions for myself. But where I actually expected some change was in the ability to concentrate, or the duration, the span of concentration, which didn't actually change noticeably for me.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So I think it somehow stayed the same or it had the same kind of fluctuation, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Another question is, which length of meditation were you doing most of the time? Like, what were you choosing?

Interviewee:

Different. I tried to do 10 minutes most of the time, but when I didn't have a lot of time, I did 3 minutes. And sometimes 5 minutes.

Interviewer:

Okay. How would you describe your general well-being as a musician right now?

Interviewee:

Right now, I'm still a bit in doubt, but in general my acceptance, my self-acceptance got better.

Interviewer:

Okay. And about changes we already talked. Can you describe your recent focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

My focus from 1 to 10?

Interviewer:

Like recent levels. It doesn't have to be from 1 to 10, just how do you generally feel about your practicing?

Interviewee:

I feel... I think my focus at the moment is quite good.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

Yeah. I mean, I'm not where I want to be. That's for sure. But I think, I can find those moments where I really focus on what I'm doing without distraction, almost.

Interviewer:

Okay. So basically, you are a bit harder distractible?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Maybe you can say that. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you are getting distracted, how difficult is it for you to come back into that nice practicing?

Interviewee:

It still takes some time.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah. Maybe it didn't change that much. Maybe a bit quicker.

Interviewer:

And do you still experience procrastination during practicing?

Interviewee:

Sometimes, but it's not about... Yeah, it's about concentration, but sometimes it's also the feeling when I feel tired, when my lips feel tired, then I'm kind of waiting for the good feeling to come back. But yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you are procrastinating, not due to physical things, like physiological things, what are the triggers that encourage you to procrastinate?

Interviewee:

Thoughts about my, yeah, certainly about my exam, which is upcoming in nine days. And about my music. I don't know, my general level or how I see myself as a musician, those general things, they come up and they make me doubt sometimes. But it's easier for me now to accept those thoughts.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I think that point got easier for me.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

To accept and then to also let go, even though it's coming back, but always this come and go thing, it's easier now.

Interviewer:

That's great. And when you are practicing trumpet, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

It's still the sound. And I'm also, yeah, now I think a lot about my performance now, because of the exam. And yeah, I want to stand there and those things, the way I... my whole image, everything.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you use any other techniques besides meditation to improve your focus and performance?

Interviewee:

Yeah, not really. I couldn't say. Maybe I've tried to visualize myself, the situation, but not on a regular basis. It's just here and there.

Interviewer:

Okay. For how long are you capable to practice mindfully and with good focus at the time?

Interviewee:

Perhaps for 20 minutes and then I need a short break. And then I can do another 20 to 25 minutes and then I need probably a bit of a longer break.

Interviewer:

Okay. And combined, all of those little sessions, how much of good quality work you could get in a day?

Interviewee:

I think two and a half hours.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you remember that we have spoken about the flow last time?

Interviewee:

Uh-huh. Yeah, I do.

Interviewer:

Yes. So how frequently are you capable of reaching the flow?

Interviewee:

Oh, it's still hard, but I would say... I don't know, maybe it didn't change that much, but I could experience this, how do you say, the flow state Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you still find it hard to reach?

Interviewee:

It's still a bit hard, yes. Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you figured out, maybe, the triggers which help you induce the flow state?

Interviewee:

Um, it's, yeah, most of the time it's the breathing and the rhythm. Yeah, the metronome and the breathing.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently, like talking about recent past, does it happen to you that you stop practicing prematurely? But not because of like, not because of lip things, not because you're tired here, but because like the head things.

Interviewee:

Ah, yeah, not really frequently. A few times, two or three times maybe, I had to say, "Oh, I'm not capable of playing on", but yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

Um, yeah, I think that what is still hard for me is when I do a second... The first practice session is mostly quite concentrated, but when I do the second session per day, it's hard for me to come back.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I'm a bit... I feel a bit stiff.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

It's... I need a lot of time to get, um... To loosen myself a bit more.

Interviewer:

Okay. So you feel that after you come back from a break, you don't feel relaxed enough?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Have you noticed that before starting this meditation thing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, a lot. And it got better.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah. So it's still there, but it's slightly better.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you generally respond to bad practice sessions or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

Um, I keep thinking about it, but it's, um, it's easier for me to let go already, I would say.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I'm still, um, I try to... I just try to find a few factors, which I can still develop or which... I look for easy things, small things, which I can change for the next time. Not the whole thing, because it's way too complicated.

Interviewer:

Uh, so just to make sure that I got it right, basically, like when you are unhappy with your playing, you just make like, a plan of very small steps, which could lead for a big change instead of like, saying that I will renew this piece, relearn this piece, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do those bad practice sessions and unsuccessful performances affect your self-confidence or motivation?

Interviewee:

Um, the motivation - not, but my self-confidence - yes. Still.

Interviewer:

Okay. Yes. And what means do you use to recover from that bad place that could possibly put you there?

Interviewee:

Um, you mean after the bad performance, the unsuccessful performance?

Interviewer:

Yeah. How do you make yourself feel better, basically?

Interviewee:

Um, so the last time, I heard a recording of myself, and I thought "Oh, it wasn't that bad".

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

As I thought, on stage.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

And, um, I also... Yeah, I try to focus on the good things, good sides. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, how was your music performance anxiety recently?

Interviewee:

Um, still there, but I think, also a bit... it's easier for me to let go of bad thoughts.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you are experiencing music performance anxiety, do you experience it before or during playing?

Interviewee:

Um, before and during.

Interviewer:

Both. Comparing to like, one month ago, even though that you still experienced music performance anxiety, does it correlate with music performance quality as much?

Interviewee:
Um... Oh...

Interviewer:
Should I rephrase the question?

Interviewee:
No, no, I got it. Um, probably yeah. It's still depending on the quality quite a lot.

Interviewer:
What do you mean?

Interviewee:
Um, the correlation between my anxiety and the quality of my playing.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
Yeah. It's still there.

Interviewer:
It's still there. The anxiety still affects your playing in a negative way very much? Not very much, but like quite decently?

Interviewee:
Ah, ah, that's what you mean. Um, yeah, maybe, maybe also less.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
It's a bit more independent. Yeah.

Interviewer:
So, just to check if I got it right - you still feel anxious, but when you feel anxious, it doesn't make your playing that much worse as it did like, before, right?

Interviewee:
Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay. I'm sorry that I'm formulating those sentences in a very harsh way. I should have prepared for that.

Interviewee:
No, it's okay.

Interviewer:

Um, are you still experiencing physical symptoms when you are experiencing music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Um, yeah, a bit of a numb feeling.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

It's a bit different. The breathing is a bit more free.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

Not too effect... uh, affected.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Um, but yeah, the weird feeling, I mean, you know, as a brass player.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Weird feeling in the embouchure and the tongue when you, when you want to articulate and it feels weird.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

Um, it's still, or maybe, yeah, this is what I feel the most physically.

Interviewer:

Okay. Okay. And music performance anxiety, are you experiencing that always or just sometimes?

Interviewee:

Um, not... I mean, it depends on where I'm playing and who's listening, but, um, yeah, it'... I think it's there every time, more or less.

Interviewer:

Yeah. And this "more or less" is based on the audience?

Interviewee:

Yeah. On the audience and also how prepared I am, how the last time I played this piece, went.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what difference does the audience make? Is it like the last time, where like, professionals are making you feel a bit more scared, or did it change?

Interviewee:

Um, it's easier for me to play in front of my classmates.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

It got easier, but yeah, in front of my professor and my family, for example, it's still there.

Interviewer:

Okay. So basically, you are more anxious when it's like, professor and family, then maybe classmates and then like, all the other people who are like, non-music related, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And, uh, do you use any strategies to manage music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Um, yeah, the focus on the breathing and the trying to stay in the music, like, yeah. Thinking about musical questions, not about feeling and not music related stuff.

Interviewer:

Okay. Okay. And do you experience music performance anxiety during the lessons?

Interviewee:

Yes, also.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Sometimes, but it also got less. I feel more secure with what I'm doing.

Interviewer:

Okay. And does it still affect your performance as much?

Interviewee:

Yeah, maybe not too much.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Maybe less than before.

Interviewer:

Okay. And are you getting physical symptoms when you are playing in front of your professor or only just like the anxious feeling?

Interviewee:

Um, the anxious feeling, which leads to losing my embouchure earlier than as I would be alone.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience this anxiety always or just sometimes?

Interviewee:

Um, not always. It is also... Yeah, changed a bit.

Interviewer:

Okay. Okay. And what are the triggers to experience anxiety in the lesson?

Interviewee:

Um, personal and negative feedback from my teachers.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

When it depends, when it's going to me as a person and not about the music.

Interviewer:

Okay?

Interviewee:

You know, if the feedback is like "Yeah, you are an insecure person" and not like... Or "You're, uh, you're this kind of person", or you.... Yeah, it's your character-blame.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. I get it. Are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you during performance?

Interviewee:

Sorry, can you ask again?

Interviewer:

Are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you during performance?

Interviewee:

Yes, but, but I try to avoid that.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what are you thinking about when you're thinking, what they are thinking about you?

Interviewee:

Um, if I... The last time I was concerned about if the audience would... If I would give the audience the feeling that I'm secure and I know what I'm doing.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And has it happened for you in the recent past that after the performance you felt like it was a blur, or it happened very quickly, and you were not capable of remembering the details?

Interviewee:

No, not really.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently do you enjoy performances?

Interviewee:

Um, sometimes.

Interviewer:

Sometimes. You... yeah, please continue.

Interviewee:

Not too often.

Interviewer:

Okay. You, when we were talking about the thoughts during practicing, you mentioned your self-perception. So what is your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:

Um, well, in general, I think... Wow, this is a wide question. Um, I'm kind of an overthinker.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

Um, I'm thinking a bit too technically. But still I can... I think I can hear very well, intonation wise and also, yeah, music, musical wise. But, I think I'm playing better when I'm in company than alone, as a soloist.

Interviewer:

Okay. So you sound like pretty confident in your abilities, but not arrogant basically, right?

Interviewee:

No, yeah. And not too confident in my abilities.

Interviewer:

Okay. So you are a bit struggling with your self-doubt?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

If it's not too sensitive, can you please elaborate on that?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Sometimes I get lost in the technical questions, like how am I gonna... how to form the sound or how to breathe and how to articulate, too much, instead of thinking about the musical product and what I want to hear or what's, you know, just to be in the music. Yeah. That's my biggest obstacle, I think. To think, to self-analyze during performance where I actually just had to do, instead of reflect.

Interviewer:

Do you think that it has improved recently or not really?

Interviewee:

Sometimes. In general, I would say yes, but there was still, um... There were a few times where I did it too much and it influenced my performance quality in a bad way.

Interviewer:

Okay. What motivates you to keep practicing and performing during challenging times?

Interviewee:

The feeling that I can do it somehow, and I want to give my best.

Interviewer:

Have you noticed any changes in your airflow or breath support during this intervention?

Interviewee:

Yes, I think, it got a bit less stiff, maybe.

Interviewer:

Okay. So more relaxed.

Interviewee:

Yeah. It's easier for me to give this kind of warm air.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Which I need. Yeah.

Interviewer:

And do you perceive it as a positive or a negative change?

Interviewee:

Positive.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience any struggles giving support, or it hasn't been affected in any way?

Interviewee:

The breath support?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

I think I'm still... It didn't change the way I'm able to, to support my, uh...

Interviewer:

Okay. How much are you noticing the physical aspects while you are playing? Like, what the lips are doing or what breathing is doing, or what your body is doing?

Interviewee:

Um, I know what my breathing is doing more.

Interviewer:

Yeah. So you're more aware?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I'm more aware of that. But with lips and articulation, it's... I cannot really control it.

Interviewer:

Okay. And you remember that probably, that weird question about that, when your teacher asks, whether you felt the thing, how frequently do you feel the improvement?

Interviewee:

Um, my teachers still don't ask that much, how it feels to play.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

They're not really interested in those questions, but I sometimes feel the musical changes which happen in the lessons. So, I can... it gives me a certain feeling in my body how to...

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Yeah. How to form a phrase.

Interviewer:

Did it change in any way since we talked the last time or...?

Interviewee:

I would say maybe I'm a bit more capable of analyzing what's happening.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience any tensions while practicing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, still, still a bit, um, in... Yeah, my... somewhere here, certainly. The throat closes up sometimes. And my tongue gets stiff.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But yeah, it's not too frequently, but from time to time I can feel it.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you feel that your awareness about those things change in any way?

Interviewee:

Yeah, probably. I'm a bit more aware.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Of those things as well.

Interviewer:

How aware about your posture are you, while practicing and playing?

Interviewee:

Posture? When I record myself with video, I still see that my posture is going... is getting worse during practice or during performance, also. And yeah, I sometimes remind myself to fix that.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But I can't really feel it during my playing, how my posture changes.

Interviewer:

Did practicing meditation affect your sound in any way?

Interviewee:

Probably, yes. It got a bit more dark and maybe a bit rounder, also.

Interviewer:

Okay. The part where it got a bit more dark, do you perceive it as a positive or a negative improvement?

Interviewee:

Um, positive.

Interviewer:

Positive, yes. If it's negative, it's not improved. Like, change. But it's still a positive change, you think, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you find it easy to stay focused during lessons?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Yes? Has it changed since the last time?

Interviewee:

I would say yes. During the lesson. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Uh, to which side?

Interviewee:

Sorry?

Interviewer:

To which side?

Interviewee:

Um, yeah, to the positive side.

Interviewer:

I'm sorry that I'm like, so much asking, but you know, like, I have to get it from you. I cannot assume things. This is why I'm like "Oh yeah, okay, but like, which direction?"

Interviewee:

Ah, so, I think, my concentration span during lessons got longer...

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And I think, um... And also I can... I'm also quicker in changing the things.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

Um, I accept it, but I still have my own feeling or my own answer for myself, sometimes.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Maybe I don't get affected too much anymore.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how frequently do you find it to be leading to excessive self-criticism?

Interviewee:

Um, toxic?

Interviewer:

Excessive self-criticism, that you're too angry at yourself or you just exaggerate?

Interviewee:

Yeah, not too much. It got less.

Interviewer:

So, what is the thing that you are focusing the most when you are hearing the feedback from your teacher in the lesson?

Interviewee:

I try to filter what I can, um, develop and what is bullshit. I mean, what is just words, meaningless. And I try to trust mostly in what my teachers are saying.

Interviewer:

Okay. And are you trying to figure out things more rationally that "Okay, I have to play this and this, those and those exercises, and it works in that and that mechanism", or are you just trying to feel the right thing and then get the feeling afterwards in the classroom?

Interviewee:

It's both. Sometimes it's more about feeling and sometimes it's just about a plan, what you have to do.

Interviewer:

Okay. How dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

Um, I would say to a certain degree, but not too much anymore. It also changed a bit.

Interviewer:

Okay. And I think we are done. So I'm stopping the recording.

C04

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

Okay, it's recording. So, I started the recording and thus you are informed that you are being recorded. The recording will be transcribed. I am going to use the transcript in my research in a text format. Are you okay with that? If you are, okay please state your name and say that you are agreeing to all the things that I stated before.

Interviewee:

Okay I'm [name of a participant] and I agree with everything.

Interviewer:

Okay, that's great. My English is sometimes failing. If you don't understand something don't be afraid to ask and also I'm going to touch on many very sensitive topics, so if you think that I'm invading you or you're uncomfortable, you always can say that. Okay, let's move on to the next question. How much do you know about meditation? Do you have any experience?

Interviewee:

Uh, yeah, I tried it for a little bit, and I think it was for like a week and then I never did it again.

Interviewer:

Okay, why?

Interviewee:

Uh, it just happened. I just wanted to try it out and I didn't really feel like anything. Whether it was helping or something.

Interviewer:

Okay makes sense. Which year are you?

Interviewee:

I'm a fourth-year bachelor.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how much time have you been playing the horn?

Interviewee:

Well, I've been playing a brass instrument for 20 years now.

Interviewer:

How old are you?

Interviewee:

I'm 25.

Interviewer:

This doesn't go into research but that's quite impressive.

Interviewee:

Yeah, no, I've been playing the horn for 18 years.

Interviewer:

Okay, that's also quite impressive. How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

Um, yeah pretty well, it's a little bit stressful combining school and work.

Interviewer:

Okay makes sense. Do you have any particular concerns or expectations about meditation and how it might influence your musical performance or daily life?

Interviewee:

No, I'm just curious as to how it will affect it or if it will affect it.

Interviewer:

Okay, that's a great start. Can you describe your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

What do you mean?

Interviewer:

I mean like how concentrated are you or how easily distractible are you?

Interviewee:

During practice I'm pretty well concentrated. So, I tend to focus really well on the horn playing part there.

Interviewer:

Okay, do you get distracted sometimes or like never ever?

Interviewee:

Oh, yeah, I definitely get distracted.

Interviewer:

And what are the things that are distracting you mostly?

Interviewee:

Thoughts. Just random thoughts.

Interviewer:

How do you get back on track after that?

Interviewee:

Uh, usually I just let myself be distracted for five minutes and then go back. Because it only happens after I've been practicing for a while already.

Interviewer:

Okay. So it's like a mini break.

Interviewee:

It's a mini break I take, then.

Interviewer:

Do you experience procrastination or for example this devilish stuff (points to a phone) when you are practicing?

Interviewee:

No, I usually just put my phone to the side but procrastination definitely.

Interviewer:

Okay. What are you procrastinating?

Interviewee:

When I'm practicing I sometimes just practice the fun stuff, I don't practice the stuff I need to be practicing.

Interviewer:

And how do you get back on track?

Interviewee:

It just happens, I don't know if it's a good answer, but yeah, sometimes I'm like "Okay, yes, I need to prepare for my lesson now"

Interviewer:

So basically, you notice it then you snap out of it.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Are there any specific triggers which encourage you to get distracted or procrastinating?

Interviewee:

If there are, I haven't found them yet.

Interviewer:

Okay. When you are practicing your horn, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

I focus a lot on technique. Embouchure techniques because my tone tends to be quite forced sometimes so I focus a lot on relaxation during playing.

Interviewer:

Do you currently use any techniques to help you focus and improve your performance?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

For how long are you capable of practicing mindfully at a time?

Interviewee:

Well, usually it's about half an hour before that like random distraction stuff sets in.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how many hours per day do you get of that quality practice?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think three hours is real quality and then usually the last hour is just playing.

Interviewer:

Have you heard about the flow?

Interviewee:

I don't know much about it.

Interviewer:

Yeah, the flow is a working state when you are very much immersed into the job, sometimes you forget time and get super absorbed, and enjoy very much the thing you are doing. So have you ever reached like this this sort of state?

Interviewee:

Oh, definitely. It's happened sometimes where I'm like practicing for over an hour without any distractions.

Interviewer:

Does it happen frequently?

Interviewee:

I think maybe once a week.

Interviewer:

Okay, do you know like how to trigger this?

Interviewee:

No, if I could I would do it all the time.

Interviewer:

Okay, how frequently does it happen that you stop practicing prematurely.

Interviewee:

You mean in a session or during the day?

Interviewer:

Nobody asked me that question. I think you can answer both.

Interviewee:

Yeah, there's sometimes where I'm like in a practice session and it's just not working, and I just stop for that moment. Yeah, and I then continue with the rest of the day. Yeah, and also there's sometimes where I'm like I have already had a tiring day, but I haven't technically practiced enough, but I couldn't focus if I wanted to, so I just leave it be, so both of those have occurred sometimes but not often.

Interviewer:

Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

No during the practicing not really, it's just getting enough practice hours in.

Interviewer:

Okay, it's difficult just basically timing.

Interviewee:

Yeah

Interviewer:

And how do you usually respond to bad practice sessions or bad lessons or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

I think literally I just shrug my shoulders and go on.

Interviewer:

Okay, but it doesn't affect like your self - esteem or motivation?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

And you're not judging yourself?

Interviewee:

No, I basically never judge myself after practicing or during practicing.

Interviewer:

Okay, and after concerts? Like if it's a really shitty concert?

Interviewee:

After concerts I do judge myself a bit. But that's after the fact then.

Interviewer:

Does it affect your confidence or motivation?

Interviewee:

No, not in the long term.

Interviewer:

Ok so it just comes and goes?

Interviewee:

I'm very much like I'm still studying here, I'm still getting better and as long as I keep that line going upward, I'm good. And sometimes there's dips in it. Yeah, so it happens.

Interviewer:

Do you experience music performance anxiety? Before or during the performance.

Interviewee:

Yes, but it depends on what kind of performance, like in an orchestra or ensemble, I have barely any anxiety, but during a solo concert, like solo concert here in school is like medium anxiety, and like a month ago I had like a solo concert with an orchestra and that was super much anxiety beforehand, but I played very well. And no one noticed I was nervous.

Interviewer:

Good for you! And does your anxiety usually affect the quality of your performance?

Interviewee:

In my opinion it did a little bit but no one noticed.

Interviewer:

Okay, and generally?

Interviewee:

Not that much.

Interviewer:

Okay, and do you have any physical symptoms of anxiety?

Interviewee:

Yeah, just a feeling in my stomach like someone's gripping it, but that that's like and when I have so much anxiety, I can't handle it anymore.

Interviewer:

Yeah, you told me about different levels. Do you have any strategies to reduce that in case it happens?

Interviewee:

I mean usually I just try to calm my thoughts down because that's the main thing that happens then that my thoughts just run wild and then just try to calm them down a bit focus on "Okay I'm gonna do this" when I walk into the hall.

Interviewer:

Okay, and from now on I'm going to refer to it as lessons but I mean specifically your main subject and orchestra except lessons. Okay, so do you have musical performance anxiety in the lessons?

Interviewee:

No, no.

Interviewer:

Okay, then we have so we can skip the whole section.

Interviewee:

Okay.

Interviewer:

And when you play in the orchestra because you do play in the orchestras, I believe.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

For most of the brass, it so frequently happens that we have like 60 bars of rest and then we have to play. Does it happen for horns?

Interviewee:

Luckily, I'm a horn player and I have more to play than trombones or tubas. Yeah, entrances are always a bit tricky, but I'm not really nervous about them most of the time.

Interviewer:

Okay, but do you have any strategies on how to deal with that?

Interviewee:

I think yeah, I just count and stay focused. And most of the time in a concert or something I'm completely not thinking about how I play I just play.

Interviewer:

Okay, are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you during the performance?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Good for you! Uh, does it happen to you that after the performance you feel like it was a blur or happened very quickly and you are not capable of remembering the details?

Interviewee:

That happens a little bit, yeah, that during a concert I'm so focused on that one thing and then after that I'm not sure what happened.

Interviewer:

Oh, but it's not because of anxiety?

Interviewee:

No, it's just I'm really focused and then I just don't remember exactly what I did.

Interviewer:
How frequently do you enjoy your performances?

Interviewee:
Always. I really like it. Like solo performances not as much. I like ensembles and orchestra playing more but I just enjoy playing for people.

Interviewer:
That's nice. How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:
Yeah, pretty good.

Interviewer:
I mean you're pretty confident in yourself.

Interviewee:
Yes. I'm very confident in the level I'm at. I know I'm a bachelor 4 student, I still have ways to go to get better, but I'm very happy with where I'm at now because I've had to work really hard to get into the school.

Interviewer:
Okay. Good for you. I'm very happy for you. Um, and sometimes bad things happen. Sometimes you play not a very nice concert or like you have a bad rehearsal. What motivates you to keep practicing after that?

Interviewee:
Just forget about it and keep going. That's what I tell myself in those cases.

Interviewer:
So basically, just keeping the status quo. This is what you are doing, and this is what you have to do.

Interviewee:
Yeah, it's like what I said earlier, I know like this line I'm on and sometimes there are dips and shit happens.

Interviewer:
Okay, are you experiencing any difficulties with your airflow or breath support while playing the horn?

Interviewee:
Yes, breath support. I've always been bad at that and it's getting better, but it's more of a technical thing because I never learned to use it when I was little.

Interviewer:
So basically, you just have to strengthen the whole thing?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay, brass playing requires careful control of embouchure, breathing and body alignment. How aware are you of those aspects during practice and performance?

Interviewee:

Well, last year what I concentrated most on was my posture. Like for the performance side of thing, it's very important to stand like you're proud of what you're doing and not play for yourself. I focus a lot on my embouchure and my posture making sure that everything is just straight because I tend to sag into myself when I'm playing.

Interviewer:

Sometimes in your lesson your teacher gives you feedback and he asks you to do it once again.

Interviewee:

Yeah

Interviewer:

Does it happen for you that the teacher asks if you understand but if you feel it?

Interviewee:

Yes

Interviewer:

And do you usually feel it?

Interviewee:

Yes. Today we even focused on one thing where I had to use my tongue in a certain way, and I felt it and I heard it as well that it was different.

Interviewer:

Okay, do you experience any tensions while practicing?

Interviewee:

Well, what do you mean?

Interviewer:

I don't know like some people, for example I, I just notice when I go up (lifts shoulders) and here is getting tense (points to shoulders of themselves).

Interviewee:

No, I think for me, it's sometimes the opposite. I lose tension in my core, and I just slump over a bit while playing.

Interviewer:

Okay, that's interesting. You said that you've been very aware of your posture since last year so I'm not going to ask you about that. Do you find it easy to stay focused during your lessons?

Interviewee:
During the lessons, yes.

Interviewer:
Okay, how do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:
I think I always react good. I have a really nice teacher.

Interviewer:
And you don't have a tendency to take it personally or criticize yourself for that?

Interviewee:
No, never.

Interviewer:
What is the thing that you're focusing on the most when you hear the feedback from your teacher in the lesson?

Interviewee:
I mean I'm usually just focused on fixing the thing he is talking about right now.

Interviewer:
Yeah, but do you for example try to rationally understand the mechanism so you could work that way alone or it's like "I feel it and I have to get to the feeling and when I'm practicing alone, I also have to get the feeling"

Interviewee:
Yeah, usually in the lesson we do it once or twice and then I'm like "Okay it's not perfect yet. I will focus on that in my own studies" and then we keep going.

Interviewer:
Okay, how dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:
I think not at all. Yeah, I don't really seek approval from anyone. I just want to approve of myself. That's what therapy did to me.

Interviewer:
Okay, and we are done with the interview.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:
Hello, so I'm turning on the recording and thus I'm informing you that you're being recorded and the transcription of this recording is going to be used in my master research. If you are aware of that and you agree to that, please state your name and that you agree.

Interviewee:
Yeah, I'm [name of a participant], I agree.

Interviewer:

Okay, the first question is which meditation length have you been choosing the most of times?

Interviewee:

Five minutes.

Interviewer:

Five minutes.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Have you noticed any changes when it comes to your playing and general well-being as a musician during this period?

Interviewee:

Not so much the playing, but the practicing.

Interviewer:

Okay, can you please elaborate on that?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I've been, well, I've not really been distracted less, but I've been distracted for shorter periods of time. I catch it much easier when I'm distracted.

Interviewer:

How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

I think, pretty good.

Interviewer:

Pretty good?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, so let's talk about your practicing. What are your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

I feel like they're really good right now, but I had my horn exam today, so I was really hyper focusing on getting to here.

Interviewer:

Yeah, yeah. And you have noticed some change in being... like, the distraction thing. So basically, like, I'm just making sure that I got it right. So, it's not that you get distracted less easily, you're just like, noticing that you are distracted earlier.

Interviewee:
Yes, exactly.

Interviewer:
Okay, and did the amount of time of distraction like, decreased or is it still the same?

Interviewee:
Yeah, no, it's definitely decreased, because when I, like previous, I could be just going on autopilot, being like, with my thoughts somewhere else and just playing.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
And I do that way, way less now, so...

Interviewer:
Okay. And is the distraction still the same, your thoughts and just other pieces that are more fun? Or do you have like, any more distractions, or maybe some of those went away?

Interviewee:
It's just random stuff that I get distracted by. Could be a bird outside or could be just a random thought, which I just get into in my head.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you have any specific triggers right now, which encourage you to be distracted and procrastinating?

Interviewee:
I don't know if there's like, a specific trigger.

Interviewer:
Okay. I mean like, some of people give me answers such as, the things are not going well, or maybe they didn't get enough sleep that night, or maybe like, they're hungry.

Interviewee:
Ooh. I really don't know.

Interviewer:
Okay. If you don't have anything, you don't have anything, let's not push it.

Interviewee:
Like, I literally can get distracted by anything, so.

Interviewer:

Yeah. But there's like, no circumstance, which like, improves your chances of getting distracted?

Interviewee:

No, not really.

Interviewer:

Okay. When you're practicing your horn, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

I focus the most on making a good sound.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you currently use any other techniques than meditation to help you focus or improve your performance?

Interviewee:

Well, to improve focus, I think, a little bit. I... usually, when I have like an hour to practice, I take a five-minute break in between, like, in the middle, just to get out of it and then get back into it.

Interviewer:

Okay. And for how long are you capable to practice mindfully and with a good focus at a time?

Interviewee:

I think most of the time, at least the first half hour is pretty focused.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

So, I have it... It varies a lot with me. Like sometimes it's only 15 minutes, and sometimes it's an hour gone by and like, oh, it's done.

Interviewer:

Okay. But like, usually...

Interviewee:

I think the average is around half an hour, that I can really stay focused.

Interviewer:

And how many... And we are talking about recently, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, that's recently, but the five-minute break really helps to also do the other half hour focused.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how much quality practice time are you getting in the whole day?

Interviewee:

Yeah, usually around three hours.

Interviewer:

Okay. You remember us talking about the flow, right?

Interviewee:

Honestly, not really.

Interviewer:

Not really? So basically the flow, like it's a very amateur definition because I'm also not an expert on that. It's basically when you are very engaged in the activity to that level that, like, one of the most common symptoms is that you don't notice the time or you don't think about anything else. You just do that thing, and you do that thing, and that's all that you're doing. So, is it difficult for you to get to that state?

Interviewee:

No, I don't think so. It happens quite a lot, I'd say.

Interviewer:

Okay. Have you noticed any difference that meditation made in this aspect, or not really?

Interviewee:

No, I don't think so.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what usually it takes for you to reach the flow? Like, what do you have to do?

Interviewee:

Good sleep helps a lot.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah. That's maybe one of the previous points, that like, bad sleep can really give me a crappy day, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So, when I sleep well, usually that day is good as well for my focus.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently does it happen to you that you stop practicing prematurely?

Interviewee:

Oh, never.

Interviewer:
Never?

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:
Okay. So, it has never happened that you just quit because you're tired, bored, or what?

Interviewee:
No, I just center myself again and then do like the last 10 minutes that I still have to practice.

Interviewer:
Okay. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:
Well, yeah, there's one challenge, but I don't think that's really relevant. A few days ago, I dropped my mouthpiece. It got dented really bad. So, I'm playing on a different mouthpiece. It's almost the same.

Interviewer:
But it's not?

Interviewee:
It's like, it's not completely the same.

Interviewer:
That's a shame, especially before your exam.

Interviewee:
Yeah, no, it was fine. It's the same enough. My exam went well. I got an eight. It's all good.

Interviewer:
Yeah, but like, it must have been stressful.

Interviewee:
I had, yeah, I had, I think... Yeah, I had three days to get used to the other mouthpiece and it was fine.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
But yeah, there was a lot of trying out.

Interviewer:
Okay. But yeah, nothing research related?

Interviewee:

I already ordered a new one and it's coming on Wednesday.

Interviewer:

So, it's like, the worst timing.

Interviewee:

And next week, Tuesday, I have an audition.

Interviewer:

Where?

Interviewee:

In [city]. It feels out.

Interviewer:

Oh, good luck there.

Interviewee:

So, at that time I will, on Wednesday, I get my like, other mouthpiece, my usual mouthpiece back.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

So then I'm happy again.

Interviewer:

I'm very much looking forward to that for you.

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah. So right now, sometimes it's like, a little fight with the mouthpiece I'm playing on.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you generally respond to bad practice sessions or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I just shrug my shoulders and then move on.

Interviewer:

So, it doesn't lead you to like, decreased self-confidence or motivation?

Interviewee:

No, never.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience... Like, when we are talking about lately, do you experience music performance anxiety before or during performances?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
Yeah, a little bit.

Interviewer:
Okay. Has it changed since last time we spoke?

Interviewee:
I don't think so. I think it's just good nerves beforehand.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
Nothing bad.

Interviewer:
And does it affect the quality of your playing?

Interviewee:
Yes, today it did.

Interviewer:
Okay?

Interviewee:
For the first few bars, like, I was nervous beforehand and then I started too soon. So it's like, "Okay, it's quiet, I have to go now".

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Yeah. And then, after a few bars, I really was able to focus finally.

Interviewer:
Okay. And has it changed since the last time we spoke?

Interviewee:
I don't know exactly. I think, honestly, today was just an outlier in my performances.

Interviewer:

Okay. I mean, then I will just check your previous interview and compare to that.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Have you felt any symptoms of... Like, physical ones of music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. And have you been performing like, a bit more recently?

Interviewee:

No, I've been performing less since I think I've had, since our first interview, I had one concert and my exam.

Interviewer:

Okay. And both times you felt a bit of anxiety, right?

Interviewee:

No, for my concert last Saturday, not really. But that was in an orchestra. So, it's a very different setting.

Interviewer:

Yeah, I get it. And are you using any strategies to manage such things as music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Breathing exercises. They help a lot. So, it's like meditation.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

But without the voice talking me through it.

Interviewer:

Okay. And with what do they help?

Interviewee:

They just help me calm down a bit. It's like, sometimes, like, today before the performance was like "Oh, no, it's on". And just breathing like, yeah, loosens my muscles as well, just to go in as relaxed as possible.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience music performance anxiety during your lessons?

Interviewee:

With my lessons here? No.

Interviewer:
Where else do you take lessons?

Interviewee:
Because last week and the week before that, I'm trying out teachers in the [place] because I'm looking for a place to do my master.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
So I was like, went to [city]. I had two lessons there and two lessons in [city].

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
And for those lessons with teachers, I've never met before, I was a bit nervous.

Interviewer:
So, the trigger is the new person.

Interviewee:
Yes. The trigger is the new person. I think that's also with solo playing for a new person that I don't know. It's a bit tense for me.

Interviewer:
And were you experiencing any physical symptoms in those lessons, that you kind of felt worried?

Interviewee:
I don't really experience physical symptoms now.

Interviewer:
Okay. And did the music performance anxiety affect your level of performing in the lessons?

Interviewee:
No, not in the lessons.

Interviewer:
Okay. And were you using any strategies to mitigate that anxiety before the lessons, or no?

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:
Okay. Are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you during performance? Also talking about like, the latest ones?

Interviewee:

Oh, no. Well, today, yes, because they were grading me.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

But usually, no.

Interviewer:

Okay. And does it happen for you that after performance you feel that it was a blackout or a blur? Or you just don't remember the details?

Interviewee:

No, that's... I think last time, I answered yes on this. But no, that has been less the case now.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

Orchestral performances, I always enjoy a lot.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

Those solo performances, it's a bit in the middle.

Interviewer:

Okay. How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:

I mean, yeah, pretty good.

Interviewer:

You do trust yourself?

Interviewee:

What?

Interviewer:

You do trust yourself? You believe in your capabilities?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yes. I know what I can do now. And I'm still learning...

Interviewer:

Okay. I'm sorry, I interrupted you...

Interviewee:

Yeah, I'm just... I know what I can do. I'm very realistic about that.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you comparing yourself to other horn players?

Interviewee:

Yes, a little bit. But that's just because, you know, like if someone is playing better than me, I'm trying to figure out how and why, and if I can teach myself to play like that.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, like in a very positive light?

Interviewee:

Yeah. I just want to use it to get better myself.

Interviewer:

Okay. What motivates you to keep practicing and performing during good and bad times?

Interviewee:

I want to get better.

Interviewer:

You want to get better?

Interviewee:

It's as simple as that. Also, I love doing it. That's also very important.

Interviewer:

Oh, that's a great reason. Okay. Have you noticed any changes with your airflow or breath support during this intervention?

Interviewee:

I don't think so.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah. It's always been pretty good for me. My breath support and stuff.

Interviewer:

Okay. In that case, that's great.

Interviewee:

Although, I have been... like, yeah, it was good. Maybe it has improved a little bit because I have been filling my lungs up further than usual lately.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you like, brought more attention maybe to the way you breathe?

Interviewee:

Yes, definitely. Because I was noticing that I wasn't filling up completely.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it helped, basically, with your awareness, and by being aware you fix the thing?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

That's nice to hear. And how aware are you about other physical aspects, such as embouchure or body alignment?

Interviewee:

Body alignment - not so much. Embouchure - very.

Interviewer:

Okay. Has it changed?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No?

Interviewee:

That's just a leftover from my first year. My embouchure was so horrible that I'm still pretty much always aware of it.

Interviewer:

Okay. And has it happened to you lately in the lessons that teacher was asking you if you are feeling a change instead of like, understanding it?

Interviewee:

Not really feeling a change, but hearing a change, mostly.

Interviewer:

Can you hear the change?

Interviewee:

Oh, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. That is also great. Do you experience any tensions while playing?

Interviewee:

I'm sorry, what do you mean?

Interviewer:

Like, getting tense somewhere in your body that you shouldn't.

Interviewee:
Yeah, but like this.

Interviewer:
Oh, your shoulders?

Interviewee:
My shoulders forward sometimes. Not extreme, but a little bit. Usually, I let go of it pretty easily as well.

Interviewer:
Okay. Have you noticed any changes?

Interviewee:
No, no, I haven't really noticed any changes there, because it was already not happening that much anymore, I should say.

Interviewer:
Okay. And what about awareness? Are you more aware or less aware perhaps?

Interviewee:
Just in general, or?

Interviewer:
Like, about the whole physical stuff?

Interviewee:
The whole physical... I think, a little bit more aware.

Interviewer:
Okay. And posture also? Just like, not slouching, or are you aware about some other stuff about posture when you're playing?

Interviewee:
I don't pay a lot of attention to my posture because most of the time it's fine.

Interviewer:
Okay. And do you feel that practicing meditation affected your sound in any way?

Interviewee:
No, I don't think so.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you find it easy to stay focused during your lessons?

Interviewee:
Yeah. During my lessons I'm always good.

Interviewer:

Do you think that it changed, or it was just always good?

Interviewee:

No, it was always good during my lessons.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

Honestly, I think, pretty neutral. My teachers don't make me feel like I'm doing something wrong or something. It's just improving little things. It's very functional.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it doesn't lead you to excessive self-criticism or something like that?

Interviewee:

No. Not at all.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what do you focus on the most when you're hearing feedback? Is it more like trying to understand how it works, and then knowing the mechanism and doing the right thing, or the feeling thing, that "Okay, I feel that, and that way and I have to chase the feeling after the lesson, so I would feel the same way"?

Interviewee:

No, it's really how can I apply the tips they're giving immediately to my playing.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

Not... Well, no. Not at all.

Interviewer:

Not at all. That's it. We're done.

C05

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

So now I've started the recording. This recording will be transcribed and for my master's research, without revealing people's real names. So, if you agree, please say your name and that you agree with all the information that I have given you before.

Interviewee:

I, [name], agree with all the information.

Interviewer:

Ok, if you don't understand the question, don't be afraid to ask, I will reformulate. And since I'm touching on quite sensitive subjects, if you don't want to talk about something, feel uncomfortable, or think it's inappropriate to ask such questions, then just say that you want to skip that, and we'll skip.

Interviewee:

Okay.

Interviewer:

Ok, let's go. Now, on the recording, please tell me about your meditation experience and whether you have done anything related to that.

Interviewee:

I've read about it. I've tried meditation maybe once or a few times, but it didn't work until I knew what to think about. I've also tried a few times to do that while just concentrating on breathing. But that's it, I don't have much experience.

Interviewer:

Ok, how long have you been playing the trombone and what year are you in?

Interviewee:

I am in my fifth year. But in bachelor's studies.

Interviewer:

You took the extension, didn't you?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I'm in the extension, but because I'm in the orchestra right now, my extension will be next year.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

How many years have I been playing? Ten.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:
Not bad.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Suitable answer? I mean, better than last year, but not completely satisfied.

Interviewer:
Can you tell me what you are unhappy about?

Interviewee:
What I'm unhappy about?

Interviewer:
Or whatever you're happy with, everything works.

Interviewee:
Happy because of my emerging self-confidence. Unhappy maybe because of some practice-related things, for example, not concentrating, thinking that maybe I don't do that enough.

Interviewer:
We will talk a lot about this, so I will ask more questions. Do you have any expectations or concerns regarding this meditation thing and the experiment itself?

Interviewee:
I don't have any concerns, but I hope that maybe it will help me to concentrate more and not have some unnecessary thoughts while playing.

Interviewer:
When you're practicing on your own, how are things regarding concentration?

Interviewee:
It varies a lot, but things have gotten a bit simpler now. A lot of thoughts come from things that are completely unrelated to what I am doing at the time. I don't know, like you said, what I'm going to do in the evening, or something like that. I am fighting those thoughts a lot.

Interviewer:
Ok, so would say that you are quite easy to distract?

Interviewee:
I wouldn't say it's very easy either. But as far as playing alone is concerned, then maybe it's a bit easier now.

Interviewer:
And when you get distracted, how do you usually return to that good, quality work?

Interviewee:

Good question. I don't know, maybe I'll do something else and then come back. I mean, I go away from the trombone, I go away from what I'm doing and then I come back with a slightly fresher mind.

Interviewer:

Ok, so it's like a break, right? And do you procrastinate when you play?

Interviewee:

Procrastination, meaning something you don't do? Like, what you think about but don't do?

Interviewer:

Or generally, that, "Oh, I need to get ready for the exam, I'm going to clean the house".

Interviewee:

Yes, yes, yes. In other words, not doing things you think about at the right time, and then not doing them at all.

Interviewer:

You do everything except what is actually needed.

Interviewee:

While playing?

Interviewer:

Or social media, that kind of thing, when you start scrolling so hard you don't know when to stop.

Interviewee:

Yes, yes.

Interviewer:

And how do you go back after this?

Interviewee:

I don't know.

Interviewer:

You don't know, you just stop?

Interviewee:

I don't know, it's just like, you're watching a series or something like that. And then after an hour or so you realize that, "Wow, I haven't learned anything yet". And then you have to go back, because you have to. It's just that, you have to. Yeah.

Interviewer:

So basically, it's just something you notice and then duty calls. Okay. Is there anything that would trigger you to procrastinate and get distracted?

Interviewee:

If something doesn't work out. Only thing that immediately came to mind. I don't know, maybe more things will come to mind, but... If, for example, something doesn't go right on the trombone or I just can't play something well, or if it's just a bad day, then I just want to put on a TV series to keep my mind off what's going on, to take my mind off the trombone.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you play the trombone, what do you focus on most?

Interviewee:

On sound.

Interviewer:

Do you use any specific techniques to help you concentrate and improve your performance, whether it's in the classroom, before lessons, before rehearsals or before concerts?

Interviewee:

I don't know if it helps concentration, but I always try to... Not that I try, but it helps me to just play the piece only using air instead of making a sound before I go. You know what I mean? To just blow into the trombone and imagine that I'm playing.

Interviewer:

Okay. For how long can you... I mean, how much good, quality work can you have at a time?

Interviewee:

At a time? Not that much, maybe half an hour to forty minutes, surely, but it also depends a lot on...

Interviewer:

Well, let's say it's the best-case scenario, where everything is already optimal and working out very well for you that day.

Interviewee:

Well, let's say, with small pauses, forty minutes.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how much quality playing time would you do in a day, then?

Interviewee:

2,5-3 hours.

Interviewer:

Okay. Have you heard of concept called the flow? So, how often do you manage to reach these things? Has it ever happened to you?

Interviewee:

Certainly, it has. Yes, yes, yes. Sometimes I manage to be in that moment. Our [main subject teacher] teaches that a lot.

Interviewer:

Do you have some things that help you to enter that flow or is it just a matter of luck?

Interviewee:
Matter of luck.

Interviewer:
Okay. How often do you find that you're playing and you've already roughly planned what you're going to do that day and then something just doesn't work out at all, or there's that "eh, I'm lazy" thing and then you stop playing earlier than you should have? Does this ever happen?

Interviewee:
It does. Now that the routine has changed a little bit, with the orchestra and so on, sometimes you don't have those scheduled playing slots. So then sometimes you imagine that you have to warm up and then you have to play orchestral excerpts or something and you don't have the will to do it.

Interviewer:
Are you experiencing any obstacles or challenges right now regarding practicing or performing?

Interviewee:
Regarding performing? Yes, maybe a little. I mean, it's not that some kind of big performance anxiety appeared. No, it didn't change, but during the playing I noticed that my thoughts were drifting, and I was concentrating more on the mistakes.

Interviewer:
Okay. How do you usually react if you have a bad practice session or a bad lesson, or a bad performance?

Interviewee:
How do I react afterwards?

Interviewer:
Yeah. I mean, how do you usually react regarding self-confidence or motivation?

Interviewee:
Maybe it's not as bad as it used to be. I'm no longer putting myself under extra stress. I try to let go, forget, to think, "I didn't play this right, so what? Nothing has changed. I can still play".

Interviewer:
Okay. What about motivation? Does it make a difference or virtually no difference?

Interviewee:
It makes no difference.

Interviewer:
Do you experience performance anxiety before or during the performance?

Interviewee:

Regarding fear or...

Interviewer:

Music performance anxiety.

Interviewee:

I don't experience anxiety.

Interviewer:

Okay. But is there even a tiny bit of nervousness?

Interviewee:

Feeling nervous - yes, always.

Interviewer:

Does it affect the quality of your playing in any way?

Interviewee:

It depends on where I'm playing and what I'm playing. And whether it's an audition or a concert, let's say.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how is it different? What needs to change to make you feel nervous or not?

Interviewee:

In a concert, maybe it doesn't affect me that much. I mean, it does affect me to some extent, but only minimally. In auditions, maybe it affects me more. I'm more in the situation that somebody is judging you, no matter how much you want to not think about it. And then that nervousness makes things worse.

Interviewer:

Do you experience any physical things when you get nervous?

Interviewee:

Mhm. I'm getting cold. My mouth starts to dry. What else? I can't breathe in properly. I mean, it's harder to breathe. I can't think of anything else.

Interviewer:

Do you have any strategies to help you control all these things?

Interviewee:

To breathe. Just to try breathing as freely as possible. If I'm very nervous about a piece, then I just go through the breath to the trombone, I blow and play the piece.

Interviewer:

And which symptoms do all these things help to manage?

Interviewee:

I don't know about the cold. Maybe it also depends a lot on the environment. But regarding the capacity to breathe, yes, definitely. Regarding dry mouth, I think it also depends on my confidence. If I'm confident and feeling like I'm ready to go on stage, then it calms down too.

Interviewer:

Do you feel nervous at all before main subject lessons and orchestral excerpt lectures, or not so much?

Interviewee:

Sometimes I do.

Interviewer:

And what does it depend on?

Interviewee:

Maybe who I'm having it with. Maybe I'm a bit nervous with my professor because I just don't see him very often. But if it were with some other professor, then I would be nervous.

Interviewer:

And does it affect how you perform in that lecture?

Interviewee:

Mostly no.

Interviewer:

Are you experiencing any physical symptoms?

Interviewee:

Sometimes I shake a little, it's harder to talk, but not much more.

Interviewer:

And do you use any techniques to control yourself, or is it usually not necessary?

Interviewee:

If it's really bad, breathing always helps me, but generally it just passes.

Interviewer:

Now that you're playing in an orchestra, there are probably situations where you have 60 bars of pauses and then you have to play. So, are these situations somewhat stressful or not so much?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

How do you deal with that?

Interviewee:

Maybe you just have to believe that if it worked out before, it will work out during the concert. I don't know, I'm kind of giving in to that.

Interviewer:
It just kind of passes, right?

Interviewee:
Yeah, I'm just trying to concentrate on the fact that I'll have to play, and the cold, and all the stuff. You understand that.

Interviewer:
When you're playing, do you think a lot about what the audience thinks of you?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Ok, and what are you thinking?

Interviewee:
Oh, what will they think about how I'm playing, if I make a mistake - how unprofessional it is, and so on and so forth. Well, that kind of thing.

Interviewer:
Okay. Has it ever happened to you, because of the nervousness, that your whole performance feels like a blur after you get off the stage, or that it happened very quickly and you don't remember the details?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Ok, how often does that happen?

Interviewee:
Not very often. Probably mostly at the auditions, if it's a bad audition.

Interviewer:
Mhm.

Interviewee:
Yeah, and probably if some concert doesn't go well, but it's not like that happens very often... It's rare enough, but it happened a week or so ago at an audition, so yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay. And how often do you enjoy playing on stage?

Interviewee:
Often. Yes. No, I can't say every time, but very often.

Interviewer:
Okay. How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:
Hm. Not bad.

Interviewer:
I mean, it's about how confident you are, how resilient you are to setbacks and things like that?

Interviewee:
Yeah, like I said, it's a big improvement from last year, so I'm happy about that. Because before there was very little confidence and that always was a big drag. So, because it has improved, it has made me perceive myself better.

Interviewer:
Okay. I'm sorry, I didn't hear you, can you please say it again because there was a stutter?

Interviewee:
Oh. When did the stuttering start?

Interviewer:
I don't know, I saw you doing something with your mouth. You told me you got better and then I see something going on, but I don't hear you.

Interviewee:
I see. It's improved since last year, so there's more confidence, and I think that's why... Yeah, that's better. And how do I see myself as a musician? Yeah, I look better at myself. Normally.

Interviewer:
And sometimes nonsense happens for everyone, like bad performances, generally bad things. So, what motivates you to take the trombone the next day and keep moving forward?

Interviewee:
I don't know, maybe it's the idea that all kinds of stuff happens, but that doesn't mean you're a piece of shit.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Still, there are very good performances and there are worse performances, and that doesn't mean anything.

Interviewer:
Do you have any problems with airflow or breath support when playing the trombone?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Can you tell me more, if I'm not going too deep?

Interviewee:

No. Yeah, sometimes I don't have enough air and sometimes I don't give enough support to just get that phrase, all those things from falling out. So that you'd always hold it. So sometimes I don't have enough of that.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you're playing brass instruments, you still have to control the whole embouchure, the breathing, and there's a lot of physical things going on. So how much attention do you pay to that physical aspect when you play?

Interviewee:

I try to stay relaxed.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I try not to raise my shoulders, not to hunch myself, and I always try to stand up straight.

Interviewer:

How often does it happen to you during the main subject lessons that the teacher gives you feedback, then you play, and he asks, "Did you feel it?" - not whether you understood it rationally, but whether you felt it?

Interviewee:

It does happen, yes.

Interviewer:

And how often do you find that you have actually felt it?

Interviewee:

Maybe not very often.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience any tensions while playing?

Interviewee:

Yes. At the shoulders. And on the face.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Then wrinkles appear here.

Interviewer:

I see. Do you think about your posture a lot when you're playing?

Interviewee:

Do I think about it very often?

Interviewer:

Yeah. Well, I mean, do you think about it? Or is it just, it is what it is?

Interviewee:

Yes, I think so. Especially when something difficult is coming up. That's when I try very hard to just stand up straight. My natural movement while playing is to walk and so on. That's it, but that's what I concentrate on.

Interviewer:

I see. Do you find it easy to keep your concentration during main subject lessons and orchestral excerpt lessons? Well, I'm referring to these as lessons from now on, because it's just too long.

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

I try to accept it, to draw conclusions accordingly.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it happen that a bad main subject lesson leads you to be very self-critical about yourself?

Interviewee:

In the past, yes, very much. Maybe a little less now, but... Also, because I don't go to main subject lessons that often now, because I just can't, the last time I had a main subject lesson, all the criticism was useful. I didn't take it negatively.

Interviewer:

What do you focus on the most when your teacher gives you some feedback?

Interviewee:

What do I focus on the most?

Interviewer:

Should I rephrase the question?

Interviewee:

Perhaps.

Interviewer:

Some people think about how they feel when they do that thing well, that they're trying to replicate that feeling they felt when something was good. Others are trying more to understand all the mechanisms of how something works rationally, so you'd just know the

whole process of replicating things from a very rational side afterwards. To which one do you relate more?

Interviewee:

Got it. It seems to me that maybe not so much from the rational side. I try to repeat it, and if something doesn't work out, my professor plays it again, and then I try to repeat it again, just from the feeling side. How it feels.

Interviewer:

And how much does your self-esteem depend on the approval of your teacher?

Interviewee:

Better ask me how my self-esteem depends on my dad's approval.

Interviewer:

You can tell me about both.

Interviewee:

From the teacher's, I think it's nice for everybody when the teacher says "You're doing well", you know. But, I don't know, it's nice for me when he says something good to me, but I don't need it too much. From my dad's - yes.

Interviewer:

Well, but I'm thinking of him as your first teacher, no?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

That's it, that's the end of the recording part. Thank you.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:

So, there you go, I'm turning the recording back on and thus I'm informing you that you are being recorded. As I did last time, I am telling you all the information - that the recording will be used for my Master's research, or the transcript of it, I can quote you, all the information that I am gathering will certainly be used, so if you agree with what I have just said, then say your name and that you agree.

Interviewee:

I, [name], agree to your use of this information.

Interviewer:

How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

Not bad, things are getting better.

Interviewer:

Ok, compared to last time, as well?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Is there anything you can tell on your own? Any observations that you can make about what's changed in your playing, or maybe in your everyday life due to what you've been doing?

Interviewee:

I don't know, perhaps I started to notice some details more. There is a slight improvement in concentration, not that there is a very big difference, but there is an improvement. Which I think also comes from meditation, because somehow, I don't know, I concentrated. I don't know, maybe if I thought about it a bit more, I could find something else, but...

Interviewer:

Then I'll ask you more questions, it was just to find out what you have noticed yourself. What meditation lengths did you choose the most?

Interviewee:

Usually, five to ten.

Interviewer:

Five or ten minutes?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Ok, so how is your concentration when you're playing?

Interviewee:

It seems to me that concentration is improving. Especially when I'm playing all kinds of pieces or preparing for, I don't know, auditions or something, then the concentration is much better. When I'm practicing some basics and so on, it's still a bit hard to keep that concentration.

Interviewer:

Ok, so are you easily distracted?

Interviewee:

It depends on the situation, I think. I find that when I'm concentrating on doing something, I'm not easily distracted. But there are situations where, if I have a lot of things going on in my head and, I don't know, if there's more or less stress, then maybe it's a little bit easier. But yeah, basically I think maybe not so easy. It's such a difficult question, you have to imagine all kinds of situations.

Interviewer:

It's all good, especially if you tell me what the different situations are, that's very good. And how has it been going with procrastination lately when you're playing or practicing? Do you do this thing or not? Because I remember you mentioned watching a TV series.

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, there's still a little bit of that. But maybe it's getting a bit better too, I would say. When I look back at the last few weeks now, as far as I can remember, I watched fewer series because there wasn't as much time, but yeah, maybe there wasn't as much desire to do that.

Interviewer:

OK, do you still find that there are some specific triggers that make you procrastinate and get distracted?

Interviewee:

I don't know if I said this last time, but when something doesn't go well, then you really want to just watch the series, and then you don't pay attention to what you're playing, and then you kind of, well, you get into the flow. That just makes things easier.

Interviewer:

Okay, I see.

Interviewee:

So maybe it's from that... It sounds very strange because, on the other hand you're not concentrating on what you're doing, but maybe that automation and that flow helps you not to hear some mistakes or not to try to make them worse, or something, I don't really know, maybe I'm going off-topic.

Interviewer:

Ok, so just to make sure I'm getting this right - sometimes you're playing and something's not going well and the fact that you're sort of distracting your mind from playing helps you to get into the flow because you're not thinking so hard about what's going wrong?

Interviewee:

Exactly.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And then it starts to work out as it's supposed to.

Interviewer:

Yeah, that totally makes sense. Actually, quite a nice hack. Thank you.

Interviewee:

You're welcome, feel free to try.

Interviewer:

What do you focus on the most when you're playing the trombone?

Interviewee:

Hasn't changed - on sound.

Interviewer:
On sound.

Interviewee:
Yes. And now - on articulation as well.

Interviewer:
And articulation. Do you use any additional techniques to improve overall concentration and performance, or just meditation lately?

Interviewee:
Just meditation. Unless that includes thinking about why I have to put myself under extra stress because I'm going to play. So, there are some thoughts like that, but regarding any techniques, I don't know...

Interviewer:
Okay. So, self-analysis and meditation?

Interviewee:
Self-analysis and meditation.

Interviewer:
Yeah, if I ask something twice, it's just to make sure I understand everything correctly.

Interviewee:
Yes, that's very good, because I don't know how to talk a bit.

Interviewer:
It's all right, it's very easy with you. So, how is your playing time lately? How much good quality work can you do at a time?

Interviewee:
It varies too, but I would say, at one time 45 minutes are good, then a pause, and so on, etc. I don't know, I can sit for two hours with pauses and watch a TV show sometimes, play sometimes, and so on and so forth.

Interviewer:
No, no, no, I mean good quality work, when you don't watch TV shows and do really good work. Unless the shows help.

Interviewee:
Let's say 40 minutes, I think.

Interviewer:
Okay. And how much quality work do you get per day? Adding up all those sessions of 40 minutes?

Interviewee:
Two and a half maybe?

Interviewer:

Okay. You know, I read your interview yesterday, so nothing has changed yet.

Interviewee:

No?

Interviewer:

No, answers are exactly the same.

Interviewee:

Pfft, nice.

Interviewer:

Yeah, but it's OK.

Interviewee:

Well, it means I'm not lying, you know.

Interviewer:

Yeah. And about the flow, so how are things regarding flow for you lately? Do you reach that flow a lot or not so much?

Interviewee:

I think, often. Yeah, unless there's some external stuff going on in my head like, I don't know... If there's something stressful going on in my life, then of course, maybe it's not so easy. But if I'm just practicing, then it's easy enough.

Interviewer:

So, compared to the last time we talked, I understand it's a little bit easier, right?

Interviewee:

Yes, it's a little easier.

Interviewer:

And did you find some... Maybe some way that helps you get into that flow quicker, not counting the TV series?

Interviewee:

Hmm. Maybe that's the way it works for me sometimes: just do this thing, and then you can go out. I mean, then you can do something else.

Interviewer:

Ok, and is this a new thing, or have you used it before because you didn't mention it last time?

Interviewee:

I used to use it sometimes before, but recently this happened to me too.

Interviewer:

Ok, and how often do you find yourself stopping playing prematurely lately - whether because you're nervous, because something is not working out, or because some laziness sets in, and you can't do anything?

Interviewee:

Yeah, sometimes it happens, but I don't criticize myself very much, which is why it always helps me that if I don't feel like playing, I don't force myself, because I don't think anything good will come out of it.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

It's just that I'm very... I can plan my playing, but if something doesn't work out or if plans change, it's not hard for me to change that.

Interviewer:

Okay, also, is this a new thing, or did you have this before, because...?

Interviewee:

I had this one before, but I probably didn't mention it.

Interviewer:

Yeah, I'm going to ask you again if I remember that you didn't mention something before, that's why I'm asking you whether these things are new or not?

Interviewee:

Yeah, this one's there, just like always.

Interviewer:

Okay, do you face any challenges or obstacles practicing by yourself or in your performance routine?

Interviewee:

Challenges, you mean, playing challenges, or...?

Interviewer:

Be it technical or mental blocks, doesn't matter, just something that maybe kind of gets in the way of you being where you want to be?

Interviewee:

I think there are always some technical ones, where you want to improve and make things better. Like, for example, my technique, articulation. Mental ones... There are also some of those. There is some lack of self-confidence, but it's also constant work, a process, which is kind of getting better. Everything's alright with that, but it's still there sometimes. Yeah, and sometimes there are those things that, "Oh, I don't practice as much as the others, I don't do enough", or, I don't know, if there's something that doesn't work out, of course, you think about it and think, "Oh, what am I doing here, why are things like this, too little". But, yeah, I try to fight it in my head.

Interviewer:

Ok, and how do you react to bad practice sessions or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

I try not to react. Of course, something turns in your head, you think about that minimally, but I try to put it aside and move on.

Interviewer:

Did it work out somehow? Sorry, go on.

Interviewee:

It's OK. No, no, it's fine.

Interviewer:

Are you sure you're finished, I didn't interrupt your thought?

Interviewee:

No, I think I may have made my point. I'm just trying to put these thoughts aside and move on. Sometimes it takes a few minutes, sometimes it takes more, but I try not to criticize myself.

Interviewer:

Okay, so if it does affect, for example, your self-esteem, it lasts very shortly?

Interviewee:

Maybe regarding self-esteem, yeah, okay, that's a good question, I need to think a bit. Self-esteem might be affected by some unsuccessful concerts and so on and so forth. But then the ones that are successful help to get that self-esteem back. Or, I don't know, helps you to kind of realize that, hey, these things happen, but good things happen too. And then - to keep working on those good things. I mean, that happens, but yeah.

Interviewer:

And if you compare it to, let's say, a month ago, regarding those fluctuations that you said, where if it's good then you feel good, and if it's bad then you feel bad - are they as strong as before? Have they decreased or maybe even increased?

Interviewee:

I think it may have even decreased. Yeah. Because, yeah, somehow, I'm trying to calm down inside and put it aside. Of course, it doesn't always work, it's not something absolute either.

Interviewer:

And do those failures, whether it's when you're playing by yourself or performing, do they affect your motivation in any way?

Interviewee:

No, I don't think so.

Interviewer:

Have you experienced performance anxiety recently?

Interviewee:
Normal nervousness, yes.

Interviewer:
But there's nothing very drastic?

Interviewee:
No, there is nothing drastic.

Interviewer:
And do you feel that nervousness more before playing or during playing?

Interviewee:
Before playing. During playing, it weakens.

Interviewer:
I see.

Interviewee:
If everything is going well. Or decently, at least.

Interviewer:
Do you have any physical symptoms when you are nervous?

Interviewee:
It's probably the same as before - occasional shivering, dry mouth, sometimes my stomach hurts.

Interviewer:
Mhm.

Interviewee:
Yeah. Sometimes it hurts, but it also depends on the situation.

Interviewer:
Okay, and you have that nervousness all the time, right?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Then we skip the rest of the section because it is not relevant. Oh, do you use any methods to deal with that nervousness?

Interviewee:
I breathe before I go. I mean, I breathe intensely. Now I have noticed it again, because I used it in my last audition, that it helps me a lot to play with a mute before I go. I did that before the last... Generally, no. I tried that once half a year ago, it helped a lot. Then I didn't try it and it didn't help, and it was bad. And then I tried it last time and it was good.

Interviewer:

Okay, so this is like a trial, like a warm-up for you, right? Before you go out to play.

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think it frees me quite a lot. And because you're using a mute, you have to do everything very actively. And yeah, then you imagine things differently on stage, that you're almost like playing with a mute and doing everything more.

Interviewer:

I see. And one last question from this section. Did that nervousness somehow affect the quality of your playing? Counting the last four weeks.

Interviewee:

The last four weeks? I don't think so.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Well, I can definitely say it was better. Even though I was nervous, it didn't affect me as much as before.

Interviewer:

And what about lessons? Do you have any nervousness before class? Again, by lessons I mean, main subject and orchestral excerpt lessons.

Interviewee:

Sometimes I do, yeah, a tiny bit.

Interviewer:

And what does this "sometimes" depend on?

Interviewee:

It depends on the teacher, who I am studying under.

Interviewer:

Oh, if it's a new teacher, you're anxious?

Interviewee:

If it's a new teacher, I'll be anxious. If it's the first trombone in my orchestra here, I'll still get a bit anxious sometimes. If it's my professor, I'm not really anxious.

Interviewer:

I see. And did that anxiety affect your performance in lessons and the quality of your playing?

Interviewee:

Not really.

Interviewer:

Mhm. And the symptoms probably aren't as severe as on stage?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

I see. When you're performing on stage, do you think about how the audience perceives you?

Interviewee:

Sometimes. But not lately.

Interviewer:

I see. And in the last four weeks, when you've been doing all this, has it ever happened that you finish playing and it feels like a blur or a complete blackout where you don't really understand what happened?

Interviewee:

No, it wasn't that bad, but it often happens to me that if I get into that flow, and everything is going normally, then I forget about it afterwards.

Interviewer:

But not because of anxiety?

Interviewee:

No, not out of anxiety. Just because it happened and that's it.

Interviewer:

I see. And how frequently have you been enjoying your performances lately?

Interviewee:

It's fun. Recently.

Interviewer:

Okay. What is your self-perception as a musician now?

Interviewee:

It's changing as well, perhaps. It changes often for me, but so far, everything feels normal.

Interviewer:

Okay, so generally, you're confident, you can do anything, let's go?

Interviewee:

Yeah, as I said, it changes quite occasionally. Not that it changes drastically, but there still are those thoughts that, no, maybe not everything's good yet. Or, I don't know, self-doubt appears. But other than that, normally, I think it's kind of not bad.

Interviewer:

Ok, do you think it's changed somewhat in four months or not so much?

Interviewee:

Weeks, you mean?

Interviewer:
Yeah, weeks. Sorry.

Interviewee:
It's OK. Yes, I think it has changed a bit.

Interviewer:
To which side?

Interviewee:
For the better.

Interviewer:
For the better. What has been motivating you lately to keep practicing and playing, even when things go wrong?

Interviewee:
I don't know, searching for a job.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
It motivates you.

Interviewer:
Ok, understandable, we all like to eat.

Interviewee:
Exactly.

Interviewer:
Do you think meditation has had any effect on your motivation or not?

Interviewee:
Motivation, by itself? I don't know if it affected that.

Interviewer:
If not, you can say no, it's fine.

Interviewee:
No, I don't think so.

Interviewer:
Okay, yeah, you don't have to say that what you did helped. I mean, if it didn't help, that's very good data for me too.

Interviewee:

OK.

Interviewer:

Have you noticed meditation interfering in any way with your breathing when you're playing, for better or worse?

Interviewee:

Mmm... Maybe, I wasn't trying to observe it completely, but now I think that when I used to meditate, I always felt how the air filled me very well. And I kind of feel the exact same thing when I'm practicing. So, I don't know if the meditation itself helped me to focus more on that, but maybe it did.

Interviewer:

So, essentially, you started noticing more.

Interviewee:

I'm noticing more, yeah, I think so.

Interviewer:

Aha, and regarding support or airflow - did it have any effect on that or not?

Interviewee:

No, I don't think so. The inhalation itself, yes, I suppose so, but from... No.

Interviewer:

But as for inhalation, that's the thing where you just started noticing your breath, right?

Interviewee:

Yes. Maybe more often than before.

Interviewer:

I see. And anyway, how aware of all the physical aspects of playing have you been lately? Regarding embouchure, the breathing, and the posture when playing.

Interviewee:

I notice the posture, because I also had all sorts of problems with tensions, and so on. I noticed that, but not the embouchure, and we already talked about breathing.

Interviewer:

Okay, breathing aside because we already talked about it, do you think that meditation has somehow helped you notice these things more?

Interviewee:

Perhaps yes, because before the class, when I meditated, it was almost like a big breathing exercise. And then I would bring all of that into the practice session itself, so I think that helped.

Interviewer:

Ok, so again, you probably remember this question where I asked whether it still probably happens to you that you play something in a lesson, and the teacher asks you not whether you understood it, but whether you felt the difference.

Interviewee:
Mhm.

Interviewer:
So how have things been regarding this aspect over the last few weeks?

Interviewee:
I don't remember what I said then.

Interviewer:
That's all right, tell it like it is.

Interviewee:
But I think it's better now because I know... I was in the same situation recently when they asked me if I felt it, and this time I actually did feel it.

Interviewer:
And what about the tensions? Where do you get tense when playing, if you do get tense?

Interviewee:
Shoulders. Maybe the arms are not that relaxed, more tense here, near the chest. And in the face. Yeah, that's my big problem.

Interviewer:
Okay, and do you think that meditation has had any effect on this thing? Again, is it because you simply started noticing that you were getting tense, or is it because you started getting tense or not tense somewhere?

Interviewee:
I don't know if meditation helped, but it was during this period that I rediscovered that my face was very tight, and then I started to concentrate on that during practice. And I don't know, things are getting a bit better.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
So maybe meditation helped me to concentrate more.

Interviewer:
Have you been paying a lot of attention to your posture, sitting or any other position when playing lately?

Interviewee:
No, not really.

Interviewer:

Do you think that meditation could have somehow affected your sound for better or worse?

Interviewee:

Perhaps it could have?

Interviewer:

Okay, to which side?

Interviewee:

But I don't know if it did.

Interviewer:

Okay, so you haven't noticed that yourself?

Interviewee:

I haven't noticed it myself, but I could imagine that.

Interviewer:

No, if you haven't noticed that you just haven't noticed that, that's all. And that's okay.

Interviewee:

Okay.

Interviewer:

OK. How is your concentration during lessons lately?

Interviewee:

Good.

Interviewer:

Good?

Interviewee:

Mhm.

Interviewer:

And compared to before, what do you think?

Interviewee:

Maybe there's been some improvement, but not that much. I used to have pretty good concentration during lessons.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how do you react to feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

I accept it well.

Interviewer:

Does it somehow lead to some kind of very strong self-criticism or a drop in self-esteem?

Interviewee:

No, I have good teachers.

Interviewer:

Oh, okay, but regarding teachers, I mean, you didn't have it before? Or did you?

Interviewee:

I used to have this one.

Interviewer:

Okay, do you think that this is a change that has happened during the last few weeks, or is it more just somehow...?

Interviewee:

No, maybe not during the last few weeks. I don't think so.

Interviewer:

Okay, so you think that what happened here is unrelated? Just to clarify.

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, when you hear some feedback from a teacher, what do you focus on the most? I mean, are you trying to look rationally at things, or is it more of just catching a feeling and then chasing it?

Interviewee:

I didn't understand that again, I guess.

Interviewer:

Well, I mean, comparing myself and a colleague, we studied with the same teacher, and for me it happens all the time that when I get a remark, I try very hard to understand how it works and why it works, and what mechanism makes it work. And my colleague is more of... He hears a note, he tries it and if it works well for him, he has this thing that, "Ok, I felt like this and that at the time when I did well, so when I'm playing by myself, I have to feel the same way to do that thing well".

Interviewee:

Mhm, I see. I may have a bit of both.

Interviewer:

Okay, a mix.

Interviewee:

I would say it's a mix, but maybe more of the feeling part. A bit.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how much has your self-esteem depended on the teacher's approval or disapproval over the last four weeks?

Interviewee:
Not much.

Interviewer:
Not much. Has there been any improvement since we last spoke, or do you think it's always been like this?

Interviewee:
I think it has been that way for a while now.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Generally, it has not improved.

Interviewer:
You mean, it got better, but not because of meditation, right?

Interviewee:
I think it's just been kind of... Unrelated for a while.

Interviewer:
Unrelated, this is what I wanted. Okay, do you think you're going to keep doing this whole thing after the experiment?

Interviewee:
I think so.

Interviewer:
Okay... That's it. I'm stopping the recording.

C06

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

I am now turning on the recording to inform you that you are being recorded. The recording will be transcribed and used in my Master's research. If you agree with what I have just said, please state your name and that you agree.

Interviewee:

I, [name], agree.

Interviewer:

OK. The thing is, if you don't understand the question, ask me and I will rephrase it. And if something is too sensitive and you don't want to answer the question, then just say so, that's OK. Because I am going to ask about some deep things.

Interviewee:

OK.

Interviewer:

Did you have any experience with meditation before this whole experiment?

Interviewee:

Very, very minimally.

Interviewer:

What experience?

Interviewee:

I visited your workshop a couple of times and I meditated for 10 minutes some other day. But that was quite a long time ago. A month ago, maybe even longer.

Interviewer:

OK, you're in the second year of your master's now, right?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

How long have you been playing euphonium?

Interviewee:

Actually, I don't even know the exact number, I'll count it in a minute. 14.5 years now.

Interviewer:

OK. How do you currently feel about your general well - being as a musician?

Interviewee:

Wait, can you repeat that?

Interviewer:

How do you currently feel about your general well - being as a musician?

Interviewee:

Well, I wouldn't say it's very good. It's just that somehow this year, right from the beginning, I started to feel that my playing level is dropping quite steadily and it's hard for me to control it, and it's very strange and I can't understand why it's happening. Now, after a long time, I'm starting to accept it, but at the very beginning it was quite strong emotionally. I just felt that the technique, the range, the color of the sound started to lose quality.

Interviewer:

Do you have any particular concerns or expectations about meditation and how it might influence your musical performance or daily life?

Interviewee:

Yes, I'm interested to see if meditation could have any positive effects on me. I have a hunch that it could help clear my mind, or rather to get rid of distractions.

Interviewer:

Can you describe your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

I would say maybe it's not bad, because I'm always analyzing how I'm playing, what I'm feeling, trying to remember if I'm doing things with the same sensations as I did the day before, trying to remember the things I'm always doing when I'm trying to play. It's that concentration itself though, at least, trying to concentrate on those things, is quite big. Well, it actually works for me without interruption almost every time I play.

Interviewer:

So you don't get distracted? You don't get distracted by anything when you play?

Interviewee:

Well, like, if I'm analyzing how I played, yes, but if I saw a person moving or a door opening, it would get my attention and I would stop playing in that case.

Interviewer:

Ok, but regarding phones and stuff?

Interviewee:

It's not enough of a stimulus, if I see that it's not something important, it's not enough of a stimulus to take my mind off playing.

Interviewer:

Ok, and when you get distracted by people, how do you get back to that focused state?

Interviewee:

I don't do anything special, I just start playing and then the whole analysis just naturally works again. But regarding having some kind of a feeling of concentration, focus - I don't have that.

Interviewer:

Ok, and you said you're not really easily distracted, right?

Interviewee:

When I play, not so much.

Interviewer:

And is there still something, on those rare occasions when you do distract yourself, that pushes you towards that?

Interviewee:

The playing itself can distract me. When something really doesn't work out, the thoughts come out, but not those that are trying to analyze and try to find solutions to fix it, just the negative thoughts.

Interviewer:

Which ones?

Interviewee:

Well, that it's not working out, it's not going to, is it really worth it and how hard is it.

Interviewer:

Ok, when you're playing euphonium, what do you pay attention to the most?

Interviewee:

To sound.

Interviewer:

Do you use any techniques to help you focus and concentrate better?

Interviewee:

To my sound?

Interviewer:

No, in general.

Interviewee:

I don't use anything special like that. Maybe it's more of a personal thing for me, that I try to sing one note, to think one note ahead of my playing. So, to hear the pitch of that note in my head before I have to play it.

Interviewer:

Ok, how long can you play with good focus and good quality at a time?

Interviewee:

It varies a lot, because I've told you that I sometimes have these so-called golden hours, and I'm much better at playing than usual, when it seems that my thoughts and my body are coming together and I'm finding a balance, and at that stage I could play for four hours and not break my focus at all. And I'm being honest, because of this good playing, I'm feeding myself with good emotions, which are driving me to do it more and more. If I don't have this thing, I would still think that I could play for an hour.

Interviewer:

And how much focused time is there in a day, because you still take breaks, especially when you don't have that golden hour?

Interviewee:

I have never thought about it before, so I cannot give a firm answer. I would say that, well, let's say that about 50 percent of my total practice sessions per day are quite focused, so two or three times a day.

Interviewer:

And how often do you manage to reach the golden hour that you have just mentioned?

Interviewee:

Very, very rarely. Also, it's very, very unstable, sometimes I can reach it every other day for a two-week period. At this point I haven't had it for a good month, if not longer. I used to have these moments quite often during the past year and the year before that. This year, for some reason, they have disappeared.

Interviewer:

And do you have something that would somehow push you into the golden hour or not?

Interviewee:

I have found a couple of things that happen to me when I am in that golden hour. First of all, it usually happens quite late in the evening, from eight PM at the earliest. And usually the later it is, the stronger the feeling is. I always feel a little bit hungry, because even though I can concentrate well on playing, I always have the thought in my head that I would like to have something to eat. The other thing is that I feel that my heart is very, very calm. Well, I don't even feel it exactly, it's even difficult for me to feel my pulse. And the other thing is that I feel that my head is very, very clear, it's not really full of thoughts, it's really quiet. And I'm just in the moment and I'm just, even the fact that I'm thinking about what I'm doing, but I just accept what I'm feeling and then while feeling it I can adjust something and then I manage to play better.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how often does it happen to you that you're playing and then it's like, "Oh, I'm lazy", or something really doesn't work out, and you get nervous, and go home early?

Interviewee:

Very rarely. Mainly, if it happens to me, it's when I'm trying to develop my range and when I have to play in the register where notes are nearing the edge of my range, I think you can get tired quite quickly while practicing it. So only in this case, after some hours...

Interviewer:

But it's physical fatigue, not mental?

Interviewee:

Yeah. I don't usually have psychological fatigue when I am playing an instrument, I only have, basically, physical fatigue.

Interviewer:

Okay. Well, then I'm going to consider that it doesn't happen, because you just get tired, you can't torture yourself.

Interviewee:

Well, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

Yes. I'm trying, basically, to keep discovering and refining my sound color, my personal understanding of what euphonium should sound like, and, well, expanding the range, of course.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you usually react to bad practice sessions or bad lessons with a main subject teacher, or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

Well, it's rather demotivating. Well, it works, but I keep moving forward and the next day comes, if I feel that I've improved a little bit, then I think, I don't think about it so much anymore, but just after such an event, it can affect me.

Interviewer:

And does it affect your self-esteem negatively?

Interviewee:

In some cases, it does. For example, like last time when we played Holst's "Planets", I didn't have the mental preparation before I went on stage, so I didn't hear what I sounded like yet, but sensually, when I had to play, I was extremely tense and I just felt as if I went back to the first year at the conservatory when I didn't know and I felt that I was somehow playing incorrectly, that I was playing in an unnatural way and my whole body was fighting very hard with the instrument. And there was just this disappointment, that I hadn't had that for a long time and now I couldn't concentrate, and it came out again.

Interviewer:

And how long does it take you to find the motivation and get your self-esteem back to normal?

Interviewee:

It mostly depends on the process of how well I'm playing. If I'm struggling for the next couple of days, the event that was more important, well, it's still there and it affects me, but if I manage to improve again and play better or feel better, or be more satisfied with my playing, then those thoughts clear up pretty quickly.

Interviewer:

Do you have performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Is it usually before or during the performance?

Interviewee:

Both before and during.

Interviewer:

Does it affect the quality of the music you play?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Positively or negatively?

Interviewee:

Negatively.

Interviewer:

And what are the physical symptoms when you feel performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

I feel that I am starting to push my lips against the mouthpiece, I feel that I am somehow holding the embouchure not like I am always used to.

Interviewer:

But I mean, regarding such uncontrolled processes like, some people's palms sweat, some people's legs shake.

Interviewee:

Yeah, I haven't been paying that much attention recently, but mainly my hands are sweating and sometimes one of my legs is shaking.

Interviewer:
Which one?

Interviewee:
Right one, most likely.

Interviewer:
Do you always have performance anxiety or only sometimes?

Interviewee:
Most of the time I have it, but on very rare occasions it is minimal or non-existent.

Interviewer:
And what determines that? What makes the times when it is absent, stand out? Have you noticed something common between them?

Interviewee:
The only thing I have noticed is that whatever I am sick with, I have to treat myself with. If I have concerts periodically or some appearances where I play in front of people who might give me anxiety, I can get used to it over time and the next concert will have less or no anxiety, but if I don't do it for a month or two, I forget that feeling and then the performance anxiety comes back.

Interviewer:
Do you use any strategies to deal with performance anxiety?

Interviewee:
So, my main strategy was to just go and play, and just try to accept the fear.

Interviewer:
Do you have performance anxiety before main subject lessons?

Interviewee:
Very rarely, when I feel that I am completely unprepared for a main subject lesson.

Interviewer:
And how do you deal with that anxiety?

Interviewee:
I wouldn't do anything special, I would just go to a lecture.

Interviewer:
I know that you have played with orchestras, and with a symphonic orchestra as well. Have you ever had a situation where you have 60 bars of pauses and then you have to play?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Is it scary?

Interviewee:
I've only had that happen once, when I played with a symphonic orchestra. And because it was such a rare chance, I learnt all the music by heart. And I didn't even have to count the bars anymore, and my body knew the music.

Interviewer:
Maybe it's not about counting, it's more about the fact that you're sitting cold all the time.

Interviewee:
I hadn't really paid attention to it. Most of the time I somehow don't get lost when I have to wait during pauses.

Interviewer:
Are you very focused on how the audience perceives you when you're playing on stage?

Interviewee:
Not always. If I feel that I have an unnatural feeling while playing with my embouchure, then I might start thinking about how I might look to the audience on stage.

Interviewer:
Oh, but from the negative side, right?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Does it happen to you that you get off the stage and it's like the whole performance was a blur, or that it's gone by very quickly and you don't remember much detail?

Interviewee:
Well, rarely. I seem to be quite good at remembering details.

Interviewer:
Which ones, and what are the cases?

Interviewee:
Those cases that are rare?

Interviewer:
Yeah, the ones that feel like a blur.

Interviewee:

The last time I had a blur was when I played Holst's "Planets". I was playing the first or the second part. It seemed to go by in a second. I just remember a feeling that something was wrong, but I can't put my finger on it clearly. And before that, as far as I can remember, the last time I had such a pure blur was five years ago in the twelfth grade in [school], when I had to play a piece on the piano. It was personally difficult for me, I had put a lot of work into it and when I had to play it, I just remember starting to play the piece and then suddenly I was almost at the end, and I didn't play a single note right. And then I looked at the piano as if I was seeing it for the first time, and then suddenly I felt that I had finished the piece. I last had such a pure blur five years ago.

Interviewer:

Ok, but these things are caused by performance anxiety on stage, right?

Interviewee:

nods

Interviewer:

How often do you enjoy your performances?

Interviewee:

Rarely. Very rarely, I would say 30% of the time.

Interviewer:

Okay. Anyway, are you confident as a musician? Are you confident in your abilities?

Interviewee:

I try to be. I can't say that I'm a completely bad musician, but I can't say that I'm a good musician either.

Interviewer:

Ok, so you kind of know that it's not bad, but there is room for improvement? Kind of in the middle, right?

Interviewee:

Well, a little below the middle.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when bad stuff happens, what motivates you to keep playing euphonium?

Interviewee:

In fact, I have never even thought about it, how I manage that. I guess it's more just that I need a rest, and then I just naturally want to play again and I want music.

Interviewer:

Do you have any difficulties with your airflow or breath support when you're playing?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

What difficulties?

Interviewee:

I just feel that I don't always manage to form the air pressure so it would be there, sometimes it feels like the air is coming out without resistance or that it's not coming out at all. At this point it's just difficult to find that balance, to feel that I'm blowing out the air comfortably, but at the same time that it can have that pressure.

Interviewer:

Okay, and when you're playing a brass instrument, a lot of the lip muscles are working, a lot of the breathing muscles are working as well, the whole body works quite hard. So how aware are you of all those physical processes?

Interviewee:

Well, I'm quite aware of them, because I've been concentrating on them and I've been trying to find those good feelings that I can follow and trust and play better.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it happen to you that you're playing in [main subject teacher's] lesson, and [main subject teacher] is not asking "Did you understand", but "Did you feel it"?

Interviewee:

It has happened.

Interviewer:

Yeah, and how often do you actually feel it?

Interviewee:

It is quite rare, about 30 percent of all those times.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Sometimes it seems that they've explained how to do it differently and I've tried, but I feel that it hasn't really happened in my body sensation-wise for me personally, but, well, they've said that something has changed. But in that case, it's hard to believe because, well, you didn't feel it in your body, and you can't be sure that something was different.

Interviewer:

Are you experiencing tensions somewhere when playing?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:
Where?

Interviewee:
These are usually different things. If I have performance anxiety, my neck muscles might tighten, at the back of my neck, sometimes when I'm playing my lips start to tighten and tremble, other times my chest tightens, some other times my stomach tightens, some other times my arm tightens. Well, it is very different.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you think a lot about how you stand when you play? Or sit, I don't know how you practice?

Interviewee:
When I'm practicing, I've been thinking about that lately because I'm trying to find the most natural, most comfortable posture, and not so that I would approach the instrument and adapt to it, but so that the instrument would adapt to my whole body.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you find it easy to stay focused during lessons?

Interviewee:
It is usually easy to maintain concentration.

Interviewer:
And if something does distract you, what is it?

Interviewee:
The most distracting thing is, if I've been working with a teacher for more than two years, I would say that, because I started to feel that in [a country], that it seems like even though you're trying, somehow you can't find the strength to sincerely concentrate during lectures.

Interviewer:
Okay. How do you react to the feedback given by the teacher?

Interviewee:
I try to respond constructively.

Interviewer:
Does it happen that it affects your self-esteem in some way, or that you accept it personally in some way?

Interviewee:
Not really, because they haven't said anything that would make me take anything personally.

Interviewer:

Okay. What do you pay most attention to when you get feedback? I mean, what is the mechanism for responding? Do you try to just remember the words and understand how the whole thing works? Or do you try to play and just feel the feeling and then somehow...?

Interviewee:

I would say it's both for me because I'm trying to remember the words that were said and then I'm trying to anchor that through the playing, where I'm trying to find that feeling that would be that anchor.

Interviewer:

Okay. How dependent is your self-esteem on your teachers' approval?

Interviewee:

It affects me to some extent, but I don't know, I'd say maybe 40%.

Interviewer:

Okay. That's it. I'm pressing to stop.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:

So I'm now turning on the recording and thus I'm informing you that you are being recorded. The transcript of your recording will be used in my master's research. If you agree to this, please state your name and that you agree.

Interviewee:

My name is [name] and I agree with the whole interview.

Interviewer:

OK, my first question is, what length of the meditations did you usually choose?

Interviewee:

I did five-minute meditations.

Interviewer:

Okay. Have you noticed any differences yourself?

Interviewee:

There were differences, maybe not very big, maybe not ones I expected, but there definitely were differences.

Interviewer:

Can you tell more about what you were hoping for and what actually happened?

Interviewee:

Well, it helped me with what meditation is probably supposed to help with - calm my mind. But mostly I was maybe hoping that by being in a state of calmness, I might be able to feel the surroundings and all the sensations more clearly. And maybe it will be a bit easier for me

to analyse things which might help me to play better. But I just felt that maybe it only helped me to calm down. A little bit less, how to say, maybe to separate the emotion from all those times when I had to rehearse.

Interviewer:

Meaning, that if you have a strong emotion, to deal with it and continue working, something like that?

Interviewee:

Yeah, after the meditations I didn't really react emotionally to it in any way.

Interviewer:

Okay, how do you feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

Average, I do have value, and... Maybe I just know that I'm not the best, but I just try to walk my own path and get better.

Interviewer:

Okay, how is your concentration when you're playing?

Interviewee:

Mostly good. I mean, when I play, I think about music, too. The only thing that maybe distracts me from time to time is when I start to feel strong sensations in my playing that I don't like and they irritate me. But considering my distractions, when... to pick up the phone or whatever, it doesn't happen to me. I play and then I know that I have one, two minutes to take a break and then maybe I allow myself to do that, but I can't say that it would somehow distract me from playing.

Interviewer:

You said there are sensations, so what are these sensations?

Interviewee:

Mostly in the lip muscles, that they are tired, that sometimes they tremble, that sometimes when I play, I feel that they don't buzz enough.

Interviewer:

Did you start to notice the sensations more when you started meditating?

Interviewee:

It's hard to say, because I didn't play during the winter holidays, I rested for more than one week, I'm just... I still feel that I'm still getting back into shape, so... Anyway, you could say that I've noticed them more, but you have to keep in mind that I haven't played for a long time and maybe I still need some time to recover now.

Interviewer:

And did the concentration change in either direction during this experiment or not so much?

Interviewee:

After the meditations, perhaps I felt a bit more focused while I was playing.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you have any specific things that make you distracted?

Interviewee:

The only thing is if someone came to talk to me.

Interviewer:

Okay, but let's say, from general things that happen while working, it happens to people that something is not going well, you don't have anything like that?

Interviewee:

Well, as far as emotions and personal life are concerned, it still influences the playing a bit. But I try not to think about it and just move on anyway. And I know that that thing is there, and it might bother me a little bit, but I try to just do my own thing and not pay too much attention to it.

Interviewer:

It does affect concentration a bit, but you can handle that, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it's more that maybe before or after I play it starts to affect me more. But while I'm playing, it's not like I'm thinking about some general things that might not be going well in life.

Interviewer:

No, no, no, no, I mean, there are some people who, when they are playing, if they see that they are not doing well, then they start to get uneasy or distracted. So do you have this?

Interviewee:

Not too much, because then I still mostly try to stick to the things that I do and go with them anyway, because very rarely, yeah, there's still that distraction, when you feel that something is not going well and then you immediately start looking for how to do better. So maybe I could see that as a distraction.

Interviewer:

No, I would say this is more of just finding a solution.

Interviewee:

Otherwise, there are no distractions for me then.

Interviewer:

There aren't any, okay. When you're playing the euphonium, what are you paying attention to the most?

Interviewee:

The feeling of comfort and the color of the sound.

Interviewer:

Have you used any other techniques besides meditation to help you with your concentration or performance in general?

Interviewee:

Not really, I would say. Unless sport counts, just to feel better, just to feel healthier.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But apart from that, I did nothing else.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how long can you play with good concentration at a time?

Interviewee:

That's a good question, because I usually wouldn't even pay attention, and feeling-wise I would say that I can do it for a long time, as long as I'm rehearsing, even for a couple of hours.

Interviewer:

And for a couple of hours, that is, with absolutely no loss of focus?

Interviewee:

Yeah. That's the thing, I don't think about anything else when I'm playing, just the music. But when I need to rest, I just either get on my phone or I think about something. But the second I need to play, I'm just thinking about the music.

Interviewer:

But still, the human brain has a certain limit where you can't concentrate anymore. So, how long is your limit? I mean, after you've rested for ten minutes, so...

Interviewee:

Then I would say... This may sound very optimistic, but I would say 25 to 35 minutes.

Interviewer:

Okay. And you have a lot of sessions, of course, and how many do you... If you're not very busy - if you have a free day, how much quality work could you have in a day with good concentration?

Interviewee:

I think a good 3-4 hours.

Interviewer:

Mhm. Next, how are you doing with your golden hour?

Interviewee:

Very rarely, during all the times I did meditation, I had only 2 occurrences of that.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But I can say that it probably helped me to reach that state maybe even a little bit faster, because it usually takes me 4-5 hours when I'm playing. And then it happens on the evenings, but a couple of times, once it was even during the day after 2 hours of playing.

Interviewer:

Okay, it's not that it happens more often for you, but you get into it faster?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

I see. And how often does it happen that you stop playing prematurely, not because your lips are tired, but because you're bored or something doesn't work out, or just you're feeling lazy?

Interviewee:

No, I stop playing completely when I feel that I am already physically tired. But mentally, maybe, well, maybe there was only one time when I just didn't want to play anymore, and it was only after a couple of hours.

Interviewer:

Do you have any obstacles or challenges regarding your everyday playing or performances?

Interviewee:

I do. And that's the technical nuances in playing.

Interviewer:

Can you tell me more?

Interviewee:

It is, well, high register, loud sound, to have an already powerful sound - these are the main things.

Interviewer:

How do you react to bad practice sessions or bad lessons or failed performances?

Interviewee:

And what are the bad lessons? When I just...?

Interviewer:

Well, when you get a lot of negative feedback.

Interviewee:

Well, it does have some influence, but an hour after the lesson, all those thoughts are gone, and I don't think about it anymore.

Interviewer:

It's just momentarily, right?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
And regarding momentarily, what happens? Do you somehow lose self-confidence or motivation?

Interviewee:
Well, let's say, yeah, maybe I'm losing confidence that maybe I won't do as well as I hoped, to reach that level.

Interviewer:
And in terms of these self-esteem things, do you feel a change or not so much? Or how can it affect you, I mean, from the resilience aspect?

Interviewee:
Well, I wouldn't say I feel much of a change regarding my self-esteem.

Interviewer:
Mhm.

Interviewee:
And if I manage to concentrate, if my head is calmer, maybe I don't think too much that day, but if I don't manage to do that, it does affect me a bit.

Interviewer:
Okay, do you have performance anxiety?

Interviewee:
I do.

Interviewer:
OK, first question - have you played anywhere publicly on stage since the beginning of our experiment?

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:
Then I won't ask this, because you can't tell me anything new.

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
What about lessons, do you get anxious before lessons lately?

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:

That's fine, then we'll skip this one as well, since you haven't had any performances, this one is irrelevant, irrelevant, irrelevant. How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:

Ah, perception. How do I perceive myself in the future, so to speak, or how do I perceive myself in general?

Interviewer:

Well, how do you see yourself as a musician?

Interviewee:

Well, I just look at myself as an ordinary musician who hopes to get a job in an orchestra, and well, who should be able to play the repertoire that is in the orchestras.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah, because, well, I... If I could play in a symphonic orchestra, then maybe I would doubt my abilities for the time being, but as far as just wind band music is concerned, since I've worked with it before and I'm already familiar with the repertoire, what the euphonium parts are like, I believe that I should be able to do that.

Interviewer:

So, you think you'll be adequate in the job market, and you'll do the rest bit by bit, right?

Interviewee:

I think so.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you think that meditation has done something for you, in terms of self-perception, or not so much?

Interviewee:

I can't say that it fixed my self-perception, but maybe it's more... Maybe it has calmed it down. Maybe in a way it can fix your self-perception, but maybe you just feel calmer sometimes, and then you think less about the things that affect you. Because at that point you've cleared your thoughts, there's less of them, so there's just less of them floating around in your head, which well, just naturally means you think less about it, and you feel a bit calmer.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what motivates you to keep playing through good times and bad ones?

Interviewee:

My motivation is that I still want to be a better musician.

Interviewer:

Have you noticed any changes in airflow or breath support?

Interviewee:

I wouldn't say that I have.

Interviewer:

Neither negative nor positive?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Great. What about all the physical aspects of playing? That includes breathing, embouchure, posture. Have you noticed that maybe you've started to pay attention to that a bit more naturally?

Interviewee:

Well, I used to pay quite a lot of attention to those things, so I wouldn't say that I'm paying any more attention to it.

Interviewer:

Ok, so general awareness didn't improve?

Interviewee:

Not really.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you had a teacher ask you to feel the difference instead of understanding it lately? I mean, when you go through the main subject lesson and they say, "Did you feel the difference" instead of "Did you understand the difference"?

Interviewee:

It has happened a couple of times, and I usually don't feel the difference.

Interviewer:

Okay, but you mean recently too, right?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience tensions somewhere when playing?

Interviewee:

In some cases, yes.

Interviewer:

Will you tell me more?

Interviewee:

In the lips. I just feel that sometimes I can't get them to buzz, that they are not loose enough.

Interviewer:

And have you started to pay more attention to that during meditation, or not so much?

Interviewee:

At the moment, yes, but I still keep thinking that having lost my form is an influence.

Interviewer:

I see. Do you think a lot about your posture, your sitting position when you're playing?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

I see. And do you think meditation has affected your sound in any way?

Interviewee:

Perhaps it made me think less about it. But I didn't notice any pure change in the color of sound.

Interviewer:

And by less thinking, you mean, like, less sitting and overthinking what sound you want, and just doing more, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you find it easy to stay focused during lessons?

Interviewee:

Yes, I feel quite comfortable. I seem to be able to understand everything they ask me of, and I don't seem to get lost in my thoughts or lost in my lessons.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you think this one has changed a bit?

Interviewee:

Maybe, yeah, maybe it's changed a little bit, because I used to be a little bit more, well, critical of myself in my head, but now, somehow during the last few sessions that I had to play with the lecturer, it's just that something didn't work out, and then I'm just trying to find a solution, and I just do it. I don't think about how I didn't do it that well.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you generally receive feedback from a teacher?

Interviewee:

Positively, as an opportunity to improve and be a better musician.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it happen that you start criticizing yourself a lot after feedback?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Did this change during the meditation period, or not much?

Interviewee:

Didn't change.

Interviewer:

Didn't change. Ok, you said you don't worry, and I don't know, you probably remember the question regarding rationalizing what the teacher is telling you, or trying more to just feel that, "Aha, well, that's how I'm going to feel now, when I'm playing on my own, I want to feel the same way, and that means everything is right"?

Interviewee:

I am trying more to rationally understand what is being asked of me.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how much does your self-esteem depend on whether your teacher approves of you?

Interviewee:

Well, it's a little bit of a minimal influence, but it's exactly the same as I said before, that I think about it up to an hour at most after the main subject lesson, and then I don't think about it anymore.

Interviewer:

Has this one changed a bit?

Interviewee:

I wouldn't say that it was a significant enough difference to say that something has changed.

Interviewer:

Ok, that's it.

C07

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

But from now on, this is the official beginning of recording. Let's put it that way. And the recording probably is going to be transcribed. And the transcript is going to be used in my research, perhaps. So, if you agree to that, please state your name and say that you agree to the previous information.

Interviewee:

I'm [name] and I agree.

Interviewer:

And if the questions are unclear, just feel free to ask to reformulate or something like that. And if I'm touching too sensitive subjects or you feel invaded or you just simply don't want to answer, it is okay to skip questions.

Interviewee:

Okay.

Interviewer: What is your experience with meditation?

Interviewee:

Well, usually what I heard about it is that it makes you more calm and that you can get more focus after you did meditation. And it's also healthy to clear the mindset sometimes. So, I don't really know that much about it, but that's like the stereotypical things I know about it

Interviewer:

How many years are you playing the trombone? And in which study of the conservatory are you?

Interviewee:

I am a year two. So, bachelor two. And I think I am playing trombone for 13 years now.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

Not too good. Not too bad. Yeah. But I feel like I'm improving a lot and the welfare is improving a lot for me as well. So, it's fine. Like I know that it will improve even further.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you have any particular concerns or expectations about meditation on how it might influence your musical performance or daily life?

Interviewee:

Not really. I only talked with a friend about it once and he studied meditational things in foreign country. And he said that he can now literally think three hours straight about doing nothing. Like literally nothing. And that it helps him a lot. So, I'm expecting kind of a bit but I'm not sure how much.

Interviewer:

How are your current focus levels during your practice sessions?

Interviewee:

Quite bad.

Interviewer:

Quite bad. Maybe you could elaborate on that.

Interviewee:

Well, yeah. The thing is that usually like I have two sides. Or it's really good or it's really bad. So, or I can practice like a specific spot really nicely for a few 20-30 minutes. Or it's like really bad and I only play like through and it's not nice. So, it's one of the two.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, either you're like completely distracted or you're very well focused, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And maybe you know like what triggers your distracted periods.

Interviewee:

How do you mean periods?

Interviewer:

Like when you are getting distracted. Maybe you know like what determines if the practice session is going to be good or bad.

Interviewee:

Yeah. What determines if it's going to be good or bad. If I end the session and it feels for myself like I really accomplished something.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Then it feels satisfied, you know. Then it feels satisfying. And if it doesn't really have that feeling then it's...I know that it's not that I didn't learn anything but it's still... It doesn't feel as useful as the other one.

Interviewer:

Yeah, but what determines if you are going to be distracted? Are there any specific things that happen to you?

Interviewee:

I think if I'm tired, if I already had a really long day usually. If I'm stressed, that will also be a big thing, I think. So, if there is an audition on the same day then the practice sessions will be either really good or really shit. Yeah, that's basically it, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay, and what distracts you? What are the things that are getting you distracted?

Interviewee:

Yeah, of course people coming in the practice room of course. But yeah, that's in school. It can be really small things. It can be even thoughts. So, if I think about something then it's gone, you know.

Interviewer:

Yeah, and do you use any... Like do you have a bad habit of using any devices during your practice? Maybe that's also sometimes a big thing.

Interviewee:

Yeah, that's true. Honestly, if I really start practicing and I just put it in my case, and it buzzes then I don't really pay attention to it. But it's more like then I have the thought of maybe I got a text then I will check. But it's not really the device itself. It's more like I have to do something different than practicing. Because I also sometimes have the same thought. Maybe I need to play a bit piano and then I'm going to sit behind the piano and I play piano. But I stop practicing my instrument. So, it's a completely useless time. Not completely, but it's almost useless time. And it's because I just think about it. I don't know.

Interviewer:

And how do you get back on track when you get distracted?

Interviewee:

It's also thoughts. So, at some point I think, okay, now I should really just again keep going, play the instrument. And then, yeah, again, I put the phone. I always don't have it in my pocket or on the stand. So, it's always in my trombone case. So, I just say to myself, okay, now we just again keep going. And metronome usually helps because that really gives the switch in my head of, okay, I really have to study something. So, metronome works. Yeah. Just thinking about it. That's really, really, really it.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you are practicing the trombone, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

The sound is always primary. So, if I play something really shitty or something really doesn't come out or something doesn't feel nice or whatever, if the sound is nice, that's okay. So maybe if I have to play something really fast or something really high or low and the sound is not nice, then it's not good.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

So always the sound.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you currently use any techniques to help you focus or improve your performance?

Interviewee:

I used to do the Pomodoro a bit, not too much, but like having small brain breaks, let's say. Not really that I'm going to do something different, but like that I don't think about the music and the passage. But I'm not doing it always. It's like sometimes when I feel like "Oh man, I really need to do this really well now and I really need to practice this well now", then I try to insert it in the practice.

Interviewer:

Okay. For how long are you capable of practicing mindfully and with good focus at a time?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think if I have those really small breaks of maybe grabbing a water or just after 20-30 minutes checking my phone once and then put it back, like all those small breaks, I think then I can probably practice like one, one and a half hour in one piece.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you go take like a normal rest, like a bigger one and you come back, so how much of quality work do you usually do in a day?

Interviewee:

In one day?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Interviewee:

Usually, I have one hour of warm up and yeah, with quality you mean like that I really, really practice a certain part of a solo piece or something, no?

Interviewer:

I mean like you are really practicing, you know, because there sometimes happens that you think like I'm going to practice and then you realize that you're really not up to that and you just do some random stuff in the classroom, instead of really working.

Interviewee:

Yeah, that's actually really true. I think from the three hours that I study, maybe one and a half or two hours are really, two and a half is much already. I think the half of the time I practice is really efficient.

Interviewer:

Okay, so it would come to like one and a half hours basically?

Interviewee:

Yeah, probably, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and have you heard of a concept like the flow?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Basically it's that state where you are doing something and you are so immersed that you forget time, you are enjoying it very much and you are super focused, and you just do really good quality work.

Interviewee:

Yeah, when I feel that, then I know that it's a good practice.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how frequently do you feel that?

Interviewee:

It's not once a day, I think it's like once in two days, once in three days.

Interviewer:

Okay, so it's not hard for you to achieve it, right?

Interviewee:

No, like when I'm really focused and I'm really working and I tell myself "Okay, I really need to work on this right now", then it's fine, then I can get in that phase.

Interviewer:

Okay, and do you have any specific things to reach that flow state or is it more of a luck thing?

Interviewee:

No, it's not luck, it's just having proper goals. I mean, if I don't know what I am going to do, then I really don't get in this phase, but if I start my practice session and I look at the score and I think "Okay, today I'm going to have these 20 bars really nice, and practice it slow and if something cracks, then do it again and try something different". And if I try all those things, the time really goes fast, so yeah, it's more knowing what I want to achieve and then it gets quite easy to get in this phase.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how frequently does it happen to you that you stop practicing prematurely?

Interviewee:

Prematurely?

Interviewer:

Prematurely, basically you get like very bored or very lazy, and you go home, even though you thought that you would be practicing for a longer time.

Interviewee:

No, I don't really have that, so if I really plan a practice session and I don't get out of the room earlier, so maybe the last 30 minutes are totally useless and maybe I practice like nothing, but I still play, so I never leave the room early.

Interviewer:

Okay, are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I get really, still really closed up when I have a performance, so all the things that I discuss in the lesson and where I work on at home, if there is a performance, basically my environment makes me being not aware of what I do and what I practice and what I did, so sometimes people really open up when they are scared and stressed and sometimes people really pull themselves back in and I think that's what I do because I don't play as convincing as before. So, it's stress, playing under stress, that's the most difficult thing for me.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how do you generally respond to bad practice sessions, bad lessons, or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

Pretty bad, usually people can say “Ah yeah, yeah, it's fine, it happens, you have to go to the next thing”, but for me, the opinion of people about me is almost more important than the own opinion about myself, you know, so if people really like my playing and I don't, then it's fine I guess, but if people really don't like my playing or people say “Man, this really sounded bad, you have to do something”, then it does something to me, so yeah, it's more about people's opinions for me.

Interviewer:

Okay, so after going through that bad thing, you kind of lose self-confidence, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, to be honest, a bit, and on the other side, when people say to me “Man, you sound really nice and you should do this and this and it really will help you grow and it's all fine and you sound good”, then it boosts the confidence and then you go home happy.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how long does it take for it to recover like to the normal levels?

Interviewee:

Depends on how bad it is or how good it is, like if someone says “Yeah, you did something great and you're going to win this audition and it's fine”, then it will take maybe longer than sometimes someone says “Hey, you have a nice sound”, you know, because that's also a really nice compliment, but yeah, it's not really detailed and it's not really strong and the same for negative feedback, it's never negative, but if someone says “Hey, yeah, yeah, you should slide a bit faster and then it will be fine”, that's one thing, but if someone says “Man, you really need to play louder and because for weeks now you don't do this and you have to do this”, then it will take longer too, but I think in overall, it will not take longer than a day.

Interviewer:

Okay, and after those negative things, how is your motivation doing? Do they affect your motivation?

Interviewee:

Depends on how the comment is placed, because if someone really gives some feedback and some things to work on, that's different than receiving feedback like "Man, now something really needs to change because this sounded like crap". So sometimes you feel even more motivated and sometimes you even feel less motivated, let's say.

Interviewer:

Okay, you have already mentioned that you have problems with music performance anxiety, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, sort of, yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah, do you experience it more before or during the performance?

Interviewee:

I experienced it more before, so I had it last time with the [name of the orchestra] audition, before I was like really nervous and then I got into the venue and I started practicing and I felt like everything was going pretty okay and fine and it sounded nice and I was really confident and ready to play the audition. And then when I entered the stage, the first piece was quite fine, I think, and then for the second piece I was really hasty and I really didn't think about anything and I just swiped to the next page and I started playing without thinking, without imagining the music, so I was really hasty.

Interviewer:

Like panicked and unfocused, basically panicked and unfocused and doing things without thinking? So it definitely does affect your quality of playing, right?

Interviewee?

It does, yeah.

Interviewer:

And do you have any physical symptoms?

Interviewee:

Yeah, of course, it's always before stage, it's like the feeling in the stomach, the tickly feeling in the stomach, that's before. And during the performance, usually at the beginning it doesn't occur, but after, yeah, let's say the heartbeats feeling up here, you can feel your heart. I can also notice that my breath comes more from here than from the lower parts of the torso. I think I also stiff up a bit, like my whole body, instead of being relaxed and play, it's more like having a really stressed posture. And when I try to not have all those things in the concert or whatever it is, then it's fine for like three more minutes and then it comes back.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Because I have to think about not being stressed all the time and then you don't really think about making music and that's even worse, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience this anxiety always when you are performing or just sometimes?

Interviewee:

Sometimes. For example, yesterday I felt like really nothing, but I don't know why. Maybe it's because it's a bigger group, maybe because the audience, which was in the hall, I didn't really care about, to be honest. I didn't really know anyone in the hall, yeah, a few students I knew, but I didn't really care. So, you could say maybe that's the key to play, because I really played nicely, in my opinion, and it's fine, because I was not really stressed. But yeah, I don't know why.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you use any strategies to deal with performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Yeah, sometimes eating a banana helps, doing breathing exercises helps a lot, doing many high movement things, so running, jumping, you know, all those things.

Interviewer?

Cardio, you mean?

Interviewee?

Yeah, sort of, yeah. But not really meant to train the heart, but mainly meant to let your body do something different than experience stress. Yeah, besides that, someone really, a meditation teacher really told me, don't try to put away that you have stress, but try to feel how it is. So, I always try to feel where my nerves are, and if I can control it better, and think about what will happen to me on stage, and how to control that as well.

Interviewer:

And do you experience music performance anxiety in the lessons? I mean, mostly orchestral excerpts and main subject.

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, in the lessons as well, because then it's mostly the teacher's opinion. And I know that it's still a lesson, but if you play better, the teacher will be more impressed than when you don't play good.

Interviewer:

And does it affect the quality of your performance?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

In a negative or positive way?

Interviewee:
Negative, definitely.

Interviewer:
Something similar to stage anxiety, or maybe something different?

Interviewee:
Yeah, I think it's pretty much the same. I feel almost the same when I really have to perform. For example, in an audition when two people are watching, or in my lesson when my teacher is watching.

Interviewer:
Okay. Yeah. And do you experience any physical symptoms when you are dealing with your performance anxiety in the lesson?

Interviewee:
Yeah, mainly it's the breathing. So, when I'm home, I can always do like the simple nice breath. And when I'm in the lesson, I always, now it's when it goes better with every week, but it still is a bit more shit than when I practice at home. So, yeah, I can notice it.

Interviewer:
Okay, and are you always anxious about the lessons or only sometimes?

Interviewee:
No, but it's very often. So, like eight of the ten lessons, I'm not anxious, it is a bit of a big term, but I feel a bit stressed before my lesson begins.

Interviewer:
Okay, and those two left times, how they differ? What makes both lessons special? Why aren't you anxious before them?

Interviewee:
I don't know. Maybe at that moment I'm pretty, pretty, maybe I feel pretty safe because the day before, for example, we had a mock audition or let's say a piano class. And then you play very nice and then you know that, yeah, for sure it will be really nice in the lesson as well.

Interviewer:
Okay, and do you use any strategies to deal with that music performance anxiety in the lessons?

Interviewee:
No, no, no.

Interviewer:
Okay, and I assume that you are playing in the orchestras?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:

And I know that for low brass players it sometimes happens that you have to wait for 60 bars and then play something really, really special. Are you getting nervous in such situations?

Interviewee:

Yeah, maybe at the moment I do, but it's not like that I feel really stressed about it. Maybe it's like two bars before, it's like, okay, boys, are we together? And then, bam. And if that's good, like the first touch is good, then there is nothing special. So yes and no, but it's not really big.

Interviewer:

Okay, so you have mentioned that you're focusing very much on how the audience is going to perceive you and do you think about that during your performing?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

What are you usually thinking?

Interviewee:

Yeah, especially when something bad happens, everyone says not to do it. And that makes it only more difficult than you think about what happened wrong and if the people heard it and how badly was it in the hall.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you experienced the thing where you're so stressed that you feel like the whole performance was like a blur or you kind of like blacked out and everything happened quickly and you don't really remember so many things from it?

Interviewee:

Afterwards, it's always more difficult to tell for me how it went. But at the moment itself, I always recognize my mistakes and my things that I didn't do and did do really well. And it also differs really per let's say per performance. So, if it's an audition, then usually I remember less and when it's a concert, a solo concert or something, then I remember really much.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

Depends. If I really played nice, then I can say that I enjoyed it. And even if you don't play nice, I know that you can still enjoy. But in the orchestra, I almost always enjoy it. It's always nice. Yeah, you also don't mess up that bad. And especially when you're with a nice group, then it's also always enjoyable. And yeah, I think one of the two concerts is enjoyable.

Interviewer:

Are you generally confident in your abilities as a musician?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:
Why?

Interviewee:
Especially when I compare myself to other students and I see that maybe my musical skills are really nice, and I can make musical, lyrical lines quite easily. And it goes nice. Maybe I can improve a lot as well. But still the basics and the easiness of maybe some other students playing, then I still need to have that as well. So, then I'm not really confident about how I am at the moment. Like, of course, I can improve, and I will improve and that's fine. But for the playing I have now, I'm not really satisfied, let's say.

Interviewer:
Okay. And what motivates you to keep practicing and performing even during challenging times?

Interviewee:
Yeah, I don't really need that much motivation because it's always more or less the most important thing to do, practicing and improving and doing auditions and concerts. So, I don't really need that much motivation and I usually don't really have it as well. It's just going with the flow.

Interviewer:
Are you experiencing any difficulties with your airflow or breath support while playing trombone?

Interviewee:
My air support? Yeah, if I'm stressed, I am. If I'm calm in my practice room, then it's all fine.

Interviewer:
Maybe you can share what is going on when you are experiencing those difficulties?

Interviewee:
Yeah, like I told before, the breath is going to be really here and usually I know where I'm going to breathe in a piece and then I'm short of breath and I need to take more breaths.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
Yeah, and then it goes worse and worse. Still, I have a point where I really have a clear breathe and then I can just do. Sometimes I really need to blow out before I blow in, get the air in because I think I blow less air and I need more oxygen in my body.

Interviewer:
Okay, I know what you mean.

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:

Brass playing requires careful control of embouchure breathing and body alignment. How aware are you of these aspects during practice and performance?

Interviewee:

Practicing, I'm really focusing on it. For me, it's one of the most important things during the practice. In the concert, the breathing I try to focus on the most, embouchure and slide - I really forget about it. I try to make music and more often at that time, I notice that my slide gets sloppy again because I really don't pay too much attention to it. That's a pity, but I think it should be like this on the performance.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it happen for you that you're in the lesson and you get some feedback about your playing, and you do it again, adjust it, and the teacher asks you not, "Do you understand it?", but "Do you feel the difference?"

Interviewee:

Yeah, sometimes it happens. For example, when I was trying to do a lip trill, I really couldn't do it. And then this teacher said "Try this and maybe try this and feel this".

Interviewer:

Yeah, do you feel it?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, I feel it. Yesterday I had something in the lesson and I had to do a different place of my tongue and doing a really soft attack. And for me, it sounded like the sound was worse and the attack was like really nice, how he wanted it to be. But he said that the sound was nice as well. And I didn't really hear it. He asked me "Did you hear the sound changing?" And I said "Yeah, a bit". And he said "No, no, it's really still nice". So sometimes, but it's not happening often. It's like really not happening often.

Interviewer:

And do you experience any physical tension when you are practicing?

Interviewee:

No, not when I'm practicing, to be honest. Yeah, sometimes, sometimes when I'm holding the trombone really long in this hand, I feel like a bit of stiffness in my wrist. Maybe if you don't move much and you keep it in the same position and maybe the arm is a bit stressed, then it hurts a bit. But for the rest, yeah. And also the lip. If I like what we did with [name of collective] the first day when we practiced like five, five hours or something, maybe six. And then I did one hour warm up for myself and one hour study. So then you play too much. And then in the evening, I really needed to prepare for a concert. So that was another one and a half hour. So, I really played too much. And then I felt like things hurting here without me trying to push or doing crazy things. But it just hurt. I don't know why. And it was for the other guy as well. We had to play duets. And yeah, he felt pretty bad as well.

Interviewer:

Okay. Okay. I mean, it's normal, I think.

Interviewee:

Yeah, probably it is. But I didn't really experience it that often.

Interviewer:

How aware about your posture are you while practicing and playing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, you can say pretty aware. If I have a bad posture, I will feel it. But I will also check myself on it because my teachers in the first year, they really said like many times “Hey man, look at your posture”.

Interviewer:

And do you find it easy to stay focused during your lessons?

Interviewee:

Yeah, during my lessons, it's pretty nice. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Is it like impossible to distract you or sometimes you do get distracted?

Interviewee:

No, I don't really get distracted in my lesson. [explained how sometimes teacher distracts them. This was edited out for anonymity] Yeah, then I get distracted. But it's not really, that's only because of the teacher himself, but not something outside of the teacher.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

I always do something with it. So, if he says something is good, something is bad, something is good, then I thank him for it. And I remember it and I try to improve it even more. And I try to do the same thing as what I did. And if something is really bad, then I work on it.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it happen that you take it like very personally or at least excessive self-criticism?

Interviewee:

No, I never take it really personally. If he says something to me, it's never to make me feel bad as a person, but it's always like on his right. So, when he says something to me, I know that it's for sure not to make me feel bad, but to actually become better as a musician.

Interviewer:

And does it perhaps sometimes lead you to decrease self-esteem or excessive self-criticism? Or you don't really do that as well?

Interviewee:

Well, I think it will improve if he says “Now you need to really focus on the specific parts of the piece”. Then I really think “Okay, so it was not really delicate enough”. So, I really need to make it more delicate for the next lesson. So, I think it will only improve.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you're receiving the feedback from your teacher, do you usually try to understand like the mechanism of how the improvement should occur? Or is it more that you try to feel when you play it right and then you chase the feeling after when you're practicing alone?

Interviewee:

Well, usually he does do a few little exercises and then he says, yeah, and I'll try it again. And then it feels better. So, usually it's first trying and then feeling and then he is explaining why, if I ask him to. And that works really nice.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it's combined. That's so sweet.

How dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

Okay.

Interviewer:

I think we are done. Thank you.

Interviewee:

Yeah, see you. Have a nice day.

Interviewer:

Bye. Bye.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:

So, I'm turning on the recording and thus I am informing you that you are being recorded. The transcript of this recording is going to be used in my research. If you agree to that, please state your name and say that you agree.

Interviewee:

My name is [name of a participant] and I will agree to this.

Interviewer:

Okay, the first question is, which meditation length were you choosing most of the time?

Interviewee:

Well, if I were meditating, I tried to use more than one. But for me, the most useful one was just sitting straight on my bed and closing my eyes. Also, trying to think about nothing. I talked with some people about it, and they told me it's a very nice way. So, really thinking about nothing, trying to hear everything around in the room, trying to feel the body, being nicely comfortable and then just doing this for like a few minutes and trying to keep the focus as long as possible, you know. So, I could also feel stretching the focus more and more, and it's becoming easier and easier. And yeah, for me, that works the best.

Interviewer:

So, just to make sure that I got it right, most of the time you weren't using my meditations and you were just doing that on your own, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, all meditations, yeah. Because for me, they worked better.

Interviewer:

Okay, and the way you meditated, you just described, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

Well, really, I didn't think that it would happen, but I feel more... in myself, in a way, because usually I'm very... Yeah, all the time thinking about what other people think about me and stuff. And still, that's there, of course, because it's nature, you know, some people think about that, and some people don't. But you can put it away more easily, if you meditate. For me, I never did it before and it helps me really getting all the facts together instead of thinking about what people think. And that's really nice.

Interviewer:

Okay. Can you describe your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

Yeah, during practice sessions... Yeah, what happens when I meditate and become relaxed really much is that the focus level in the beginning... Like, of course, in the whole practice session, but especially in the beginning, it changes the audiation, so I can hear much more. And directly from the start, you can notice the sound, you can notice more things in the attack, you can notice more feeling in the breathings. And I stay more relaxed in the face and in the rest of the body, because that's one of the... pity things, as well is that when I practice and play in lessons and everything, then my face gets stressed. So, I move a lot and it only makes it worse, let's say. And I feel when I am on myself and when I have meditated, that it feels more relaxed, so it's more easy to pay focus on what am I doing in my face, what am I doing with my air, and let's just take it as easy as possible. So, it makes it more easy with the focus in it.

Interviewer:

Okay, and what about, for example, just general, like... Maybe, comparing focus and distraction, like, have you noticed any differences in how long are you capable of not getting distracted by something, like staying in that focused work that you are actually working on, not sitting in your classroom and scrolling the phone or thinking about random things?

Interviewee:

Um, yes, well, of course, it helps a bit. Like, I'm not really sure if it's a specific thing that always happens when you do the meditation, but I think that for me, it helps because you get relaxed and you really start doing it before the practice and then you get into the practice.

Also, you think “Ah, I already did all of this, I should not get disturbed and let's just go”. So, it's a background thingy, but it... Of course, it helps, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and are you easily distractible?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Usually, like, um, of course, when your phone hums, you know, like *makes phone noise*, then you always think “Ah, my phone is going on”, and, of course, I can just think “Yeah, let it be there”, but then you're already distracted. So, yes. And when some people pass by in the room and look in the window, in school especially, yeah, then you're already distracted. It's not a big problem because you can just continue after this, but it is distraction. So, yeah, quite easily.

Interviewer:

After this month of meditation, do you feel that it is maybe easier to come back from the distraction to focused work again?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, because before, indeed, if I was distracted by one or another thing, then it took some time to get into this focus again. And when you do a few minutes of meditation, then, it's weird, if someone distracts you or something, then it's shitty and then you think “Ah, okay, yeah, fine”, and then you just go on. It's a bit different, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and what are you focusing on the most when you play the trombone?

Interviewee:

On what? Sound, that's always the main thing. But for me, it's quite difficult to focus on more things than one. And that's a pity. But I try to focus on all different things. So, when I start with the practicing, then I try to focus on “How do I sound? What do I feel? Is my face relaxed?” And then, when I try to play in front of a small audience or a performance class, then I already, again, start focusing on my stress and on these things, but I still need to work on this. So, it's always focusing on a different thing in different moments. But yeah, it differs.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you currently use any other techniques besides meditation to help you focus or improve your performance?

Interviewee:

Uh, yes. I also had the course “Effective Practice” this semester. So, some things overlapped. There are these methods to begin the warmup with a relaxed body. This will always help. What I do before the performances is do a few things and breathing exercises with the nose, because when you do it with the nose, the whole throat opens up, so... Then immediately this is destressed, and your face can be de-stressed easily this way too.

Interviewer:

Okay. And for how long are you capable to practice mindfully and with good focus at a time?

Interviewee:

Like, when I really lose focus, I think it's between 15 and 20 minutes. Really focused on one specific thing, I can do it for 15, 20 minutes and then it's... It's not bad, but it's not the optimum focus anymore. So, then I'll... Sometimes I just continue knowing that it's not that efficient, but still going on because I want to. And sometimes I just go out and go to the toilet, and take a glass of water, and then drink it and go back, and then try to get in the same focus as before. So, like, 15 to 20 minutes.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how much of that good quality work are you getting in a day?

Interviewee:

How many of those moments?

Interviewer:

How many, combining those 15 to 20 minutes, are you getting in one day in hours?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah, depends on how much time of the day I am playing in an orchestra or performance class and how much I'm studying. But take an average of three hours of study a day. Then, I think, one hour of those three is really, really focused. And the rest is like... also not bad, you know, it's not that I am just playing some things, but the optimum thing is one hour, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you remember us talking about “the flow” and “the zone” last time?

Interviewee:

To be honest, no.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, then I will do the whole little talk again. Basically, the flow is a state when you are very engaged into something that you are doing. And sometimes, you don't even look at the time and you're like “Oh, I practiced two hours” or whatever time it is. But you just don't notice the time. So, does it happen for you frequently, this sort of state?

Interviewee:

Yes. Not in the time interval of two hours, but still a half an hour is already quite some time. And then you're just practicing one really difficult passage, I don't know. And you practice it slowly. You practice it beginning with first notes, then the first three notes, then the four notes and five, you know, then build it up. And then you do all different things to memorize the thing. And then sometimes it works and you know it by heart, and you can play it. And sometimes it doesn't, and you have to do it the next practice session or the next day again. But especially in those moments, then it can be not shocking, but like “Oh shit, it's already 20 minutes” or 30 minutes, or... And then it feels like you're doing it for five minutes. And yeah, it's that. And especially, also, when you practice like, really specific bars in excerpts, so really difficult ones. So, for example, in Bruckner 4, you have the *sings Bruckner*... Like, these big intervals, and then you practice them with slurs, you practice it with flutter tongue to make the air flow nicely. And you do all different things. And then, at some moment, it works and it's fine. It feels better and it feels easier. And then you try to ease everything up again and go how you are supposed to play. And usually, that also takes a while and it's not

another problem, because then you really focus on specific spots and it's nice. It's one in three days that this really happens, something like this.... So yeah, quite frequently, but not every day, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. And this is hard for you to reach? Maybe like, you know, what specific things you have to do in order to come to that state, or is it more of a luck thing?

Interviewee:

No, no, it's... I think it's really clear what I need to have to get in this state, because it's not random. I can already know that if I'm going to practice, for example, Rossini, "William Tell overture" again, that I'm going to get in this state. Like, I know, because these notes are quick, difficult, many things to focus on. The slide, the air, the attack with the tongue, which attack you want, everything. And it takes a lot of focus in order to get in this state.

Interviewer:

Okay. So basically, it has to be a challenge for you in order to get there, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed any differences since you started meditating, about reaching the state? Maybe it became more frequent or less frequent, or more easy to get into?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think it's coherent with the focus part, like being focused is being able to pay all the attention you have on one specific thing. And I feel that a lot of times when I pay really much energy and focus on one specific thing, then this state will appear. So I don't say everything and every practice session where I am focused, because I can also be very focused and study a concerto, and then I play a bit and then this doesn't sound nice, and I try and I try, and this is better, and then I go to the next thing - that's not really when I'm in this thing, but actually, I think it's coherent. Like, I'm more focused the most days and then I get in the state more easily.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently does it happen to you that you stop practicing prematurely?

Interviewee:

There are some moments that I stopped practicing, because I got distracted and some people walk in, and then, you know, then it's completely gone. But most of the times, I plan to stop, you know, then I think like "Oh, I'm going to be there one hour and if I reach the one hour and my focus is still there, then I continue for a bit". But usually, I plan it. So yeah, most of the times, I stop the practice session with planning, and maybe it is also, sometimes, that I'm not really focused in that moment, but most of the times, it's because of planning.

Interviewer:

Okay. And you probably haven't noticed any differences, then? Like, in this aspect, since you started meditating?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

Yeah. In performance, it's still the... trying to get the focus right on the right thing. So, try to think about the music, try to think about... Yeah, try to sing the melody in the head because that helps a lot. Try to focus on the things that you wrote on the sheet music or discussed with the teacher before. And don't think about all the stressful things like "Oh, what is he thinking now" and "Oh shit, I messed up this note two bars ago, shit, what should I do?", because that's still what I tend to do. And it's not really on purpose. It's like a mental thing, but that's one thing that still disturbs my performance playing for... Mostly.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed any difference in this thing?

Interviewee:

Uh, yeah, a bit. I always do the meditating before my practice, so it affects my practice more. But I also try to do it before audition and performance class. And what happens and what I feel is that I am very focused for the first... let's say, the first page. And I'm really, like, completely in the mindset of playing nicely, having a nice sound, et cetera. But then after a while, it still comes back, you know, the sort of anxiety thing. So that's something to work on. It's not really that it's a major big deal, that will happen for the rest of my life, but it's something to work on. And yeah, that's fine.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you generally respond to bad practice sessions, bad lessons or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

If I have a bad practice session or something that I wouldn't suspect, then it's still a pity of course, because you think, like "Oh, this hour could have been really much more useful and more efficient". And then it still feels a bit shitty, of course. In the lessons, when you have to do something, it became less with the, with the meditation thing, a bit. But it still feels about... Like, that the lesson is sort of a concert thing that you have to play, really nicely for the teacher. And still, if the teacher thinks it's good, then it's nice. And if he thinks that it's bad, then it's not nice. And it will... It still affects the mood, generally, a bit. Not as much as before, there is a nice difference, but it still does, so... I think it will never, be gone completely, but you know, the more you get used to it, the less it will be disturbing you, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do these sorts of experiences affect your self-confidence or motivation?

Interviewee:

Sometimes it does. For example, if I notice my playing is not that well on the day and then it looks like the rest of the things you do, the opinion of the teacher is affected by the things you

did wrong before, you know. That feels shitty. And then the mood, of course, it's also not nice, because then you feel like "Yeah, I played one shitty thing and then, now the rest of the rehearsal is shit because I played one thing wrong and the rest is nice", you know? So, of course, that's not giving you a nice mood. So it still affects mood and... But like, perception on how you are as a musician, it became less, you know. Especially with the thinking more about the lessons and the performances itself, and how I feel about it, then yeah. What do I care about one guy seeing that I play my wrong notes in one moment, you know. But at the moment, of course, the mood will be affected.

Interviewer:

Okay. Did you have a chance to play some performances this month that you've been meditating?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

That's difficult to say. Um, no, I don't think so. I don't think it's anxiety. Like, I can always come to myself, be relaxed and stuff. But it's most of the times happening during the playing that the body gets stressed, because, you get in this biologically stressed situation where your body wants to cramp up or wants to go somewhere or... you know? So, of course, that happens, but no, I don't think it's anxiety. No.

Interviewer:

Yeah. But still, you do get stressed?

Interviewee:

Yeah. During the play. Not before. Before, everything is nice. If I have an audition, I can be very relaxed before, and just drink a cup of coffee and play a warm up a bit. And then, the first page I play really nice. And then the second page, then I start thinking about "Hmm, was the last one nice", and then I don't focus on the new character of the next excerpt, for example. And then the entering is a bit not perfect. And then I start thinking about that point, and then I start thinking about that point... So, it's like a snowball thing, but it's not because I'm stressed in the beginning, you know, it's because I mess up something really small and then it will become bigger, let's say.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed any changes in this music performance stress that you experience?

Interviewee:

Yeah, like what I said about being able to play at least one page or one piece, or even two pieces in the exam I had last week, last two weeks, I don't know. Yeah, it was much better than before, because I was able to play at least my etudes on my... Almost all my practice level. So that's nice. And then the excerpts I played... Yeah, for me, the sound and the characteristics of the pieces are the most important, and they were there. So, of course, still there are still some issues with the breathing at some points it's very chaotic at some moments

and that's something to work on. It's also a bit about structure in practicing, I think. But overall, I think I can say that it improved a bit, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And there's like a relationship, there's two things - stress and the quality of the performance, compared to what you can perform in the practice room. And some people... for some people it's like, when they stress, they play worse, for some people it's when they stress, they play better. And when you are stressed, I assume that you also play worse?

Interviewee:

Yeah, better and worse is a bit... It's a bit general, but when I'm stressed, I really get in a focus. So that's the good part. Then I start going for it and I start thinking about the characteristics, about the sound. Those things are good, but there are also bad things. So, it's like. On the one side, I feel that I get more focus, on the other side, I feel that it's also disturbing me. So, both.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed any changes on how stress affects the quality of your performance?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah. Well, it's a bit weird, but before, I remember myself being in stress situations playing better. And it changed a bit to being in stressful situations, where my basics are becoming a bit sloppy. But maybe that's also because I improve with the lessons of my teacher and he teaches me basics, which are not in my standards in the brain. And then when I go to a performance, then I expect myself to play on those basics. And then, because of the stress, they become less and less, and then it's a bit disappointing. So, I think, it's also a bit about learning new things and expecting myself to use them right away while it's not really cooked in the brain.

Interviewer:

Just to make sure that I understood this right - so, basically, you're just improving your basics, but you don't really have the time to make them in your muscle memory or to make them a habit. And you expect that when you're on the stage, it will come out, but because it's not a habit yet, it doesn't happen. Yeah?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Not with everything, of course, but with some things. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you experience music performance anxiety in the lessons?

Interviewee:

No, not really. Yeah, maybe the first time when you play something for the teacher, then it can be a bit stressful. Like “Oh shit, what is he going to think”, you know? But after I play and he gives his comments, then everything's like “Boom”. And then I can just play whatever I want and don't give anything...

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed any differences in this aspect?

Interviewee:

Yeah. It was worse before. There were some lessons where I could really be the whole lesson, like “Is this nice, is this nice?”. And I'm trying to do everything the best you can, while in the lessons, sometimes, I noticed it's better to just try some things, you know, instead of thinking that it's a concert where you have to play perfectly everything that the teacher asks. So yeah, it changed a bit. I'm not sure if it's really because of the meditation or that it's just something that I noticed someday. I don't know. But yeah, it improved.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you during performance?

Interviewee:

Yeah, that's a difficult one. Not really. It differs with which audience there is. If it's a jury, then yes. If it's just an audience in the hall, then no. And also, if there are some people in the hall I know, then yes. If there is no one I know, then no. So, it differs really on the audience. For example, we had this tour with [name of the orchestra], and then we had the same program for, I think, five, six, seven concerts. And the first six were great. And then the last one, the hall was completely full of people I knew. Like, my family was there, some students of the conservatory were there. You know, all people I know. And then it starts being stressful a bit more, let's say. So yeah, it depends really much on who is in the audience.

Interviewer:

Okay. And does it happen for you lately that after a performance you feel like it was a blur or happened very quickly, or you're just not capable of remembering the details?

Interviewee:

With solo performances, yes. With orchestral things, no. Because when I played in the orchestra, I could remember, every single note that was not nice and where we, as a group, maybe didn't sound nice at all, and where some things in the woodwinds happened. And, you know, I could remember all those things. But when I did solo, you know, you start playing and it's nice, and then you make a mistake. And then in the end you think “Ah, I made this mistake”, and then you don't even remember where it was. So yes, it still happens a bit.

Interviewer:

Okay. Is it because of stress or because of some other things?

Interviewee:

I don't really think that it's stress. For example, if I would read a book and I would stutter, if I would read it to you and I would stutter in some places, then I don't remember, like, in which place I stuttered, you know?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Like, it's just... You tell the musical story and then you mess a small thing up. But if the overall performance was nice, then I don't remember, you know.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you think that it changed during this meditation thing or not really?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I didn't have many solo things before and after as well. In the orchestra, it was never really happening because I always kind of remember what's happening. In the solo, yeah, maybe a bit. Like, when I'm doing the performance class, I can remember a bit easily, more easily what happens and where things go wrong and stuff. But sometimes, I also feel that it's good that, this actually happens, that you don't remember anything of the mistakes you made in the piece. Because if the rest was nice and the teacher just says "Focus on this and this and that", then you can think about all the mistakes that you made and think about it back. But if it was nice in the performance, yeah, okay, fine.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

Yeah, usually...

Interviewer:

As of lately, I mean.

Interviewee:

Yeah, that's a tricky question. Yeah, depends, again. for example, I had to play with the [name of the orchestra] and yeah, I got the chance to play there. And it's a dream to play in such a high-level wind band and they invite you. So, you want to make a good impression. Every note you don't play very nicely or in tune, or whatever, can be something they don't like. So, there is this really big focus on playing everything how it should be. But after all, it's fun because you played with an amazing wind band and during the rehearsals and the concerts, there are some amazing things happening, the loud tuba section playing and then there is this screaming drum... You know, all nice and fun things happen. So, still, it is fun, but it can be stressful and fun at the same time, I think. So, a lot of concerts I play are fun. A few of them are not fun and too much stressful to be really fun. But the most of them are still fun.

Interviewer:

Okay, how would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:

Yeah, that's difficult. It's being realistic and not positive and not negative at all times. Because I talked about it with my teacher as well and he said "We noticed that you can be very negative in some moments and that's actually really good because then you start noticing on which things you have to work", and stuff. And that's actually really good. But it shouldn't be too bad. But on the other side, it's also too bad to think like "Oh yeah, I can play this and

it's fine", you know, "I can play this", and then you come to the rehearsal and then you can't, you know. So, it's about being realistic. And if I hear someone playing, for example, a nice bolero, then I think "Ah, but this is how I should be able to play it as well". And then, it's realistic to think "Ah, I can achieve this, but I have to practice". And it's positive to think "Ah, you know, in a few years I can do this as well". And if you think negatively, then you think "Ah, I can't do this shit, now I am doomed", you know? So, for me, it's all about being realistic at the most of all the times, you know.

Interviewer:

Okay, so just to make sure that I got it right, you are... Like, you are aware that some people, some things are not going that well now, but you trust in your ability to become better?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what about your confidence and things like that?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah, that's a difficult one. It's maybe a bad thing, but it still depends pretty much on what people say. So, if people say I play something really good, then, of course, the confidence raises. But when I have to play a concert or something, and something goes wrong, then it's not that my whole confidence drops or something, you know. Usually, it's there. Sometimes it's a bit worse. Sometimes it's a bit better. Depends a bit on how I play in concerts, in lessons, you know, what the teacher says, all those small things depend, but...

Interviewer:

Okay, and have you noticed any changes in your self-perception since you started meditating?

Interviewee:

Yeah, a bit. Before I was more in the "Shit, I can't do this". And now it became more, like I said, and like you told – "If I can, if I will practice this, then it will be easy to do it". So yeah, it changed a bit. Again, I don't know if it's, like, really only because of meditating or maybe, that it also has to do a bit with a different type of practicing or... You know, can be everything, but yeah, it changed.

Interviewer:

Okay, and what motivates you to keep practicing and performing even during challenging times?

Interviewee:

Future. So, you know, thinking about future, you want to get the best out of the thing inside. So yeah, of course, we all, all the students in the conservatory, have some talent, and the one becomes better than the other one. But for me, the most important thing is to get the most out of myself. And if that's, in the future, good enough to win an audition, then I will be very happy. And if it's not, that's also fine. But I want to get everything out of there.

Interviewer:

Okay, how is your airflow and breath support?

Interviewee:

Yeah, in the midterm exam, my teacher said that it improved in the last semester. So, of course, it's not perfect. And mainly there has to be a focus more on prepared breathing, so, knowing exactly in a piece where you breathe all the time, and don't breathe in other random spots during a performance. But overall, if I can find some relaxed moments to *inhales in controlled manner*, then it's going much better than last year.

Interviewer:

Okay, and do you feel that during this month, it improved or decreased, or changed, in no way?

Interviewee:

No. No, I don't feel anything about being changed this meditation period. It changed in the last semester, but I think it also has to do with breathing exercises and being aware of taking some rest moments in the piece to really calm down and have a nice, fresh breathing. So yeah, maybe, I'm not sure.

Interviewer:

Okay. How aware are you of the physical aspects of playing when you're playing?

Interviewee:

During practice, I try to focus on it as much as possible. So, the muscles in the face, the muscles of being stressed, the stomach muscles and locked up legs, and all stressed body parts during practice. I always try to focus on it. And during performance, sometimes it gets a bit sloppy, you know, then at some point, you're still doing something that you don't want to do. And then your teacher says "Hey, hey, hey, get back up". And then, "Okay". And then you have to fix it. So yes, I'm aware, but sometimes in the performance, not.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed any changes in the awareness of physical things since you started meditating?

Interviewee:

Yes. Actually, before, I really had problems with being able to, and have a good breath, and standing straight and listening good to what you do, and trying to get this as correct as possible, and give the good amount of air, and sing the part in your head... Like, all these different things, they build up. But yeah, again, I don't know if it's because of meditation or the practice sessions I did, but now, if I'm going to practice, then I first think "Okay, first of all, I have to have a nice posture and stand like this". And then, when I play, I play relaxed and just go with it, and listen, and know which notes you have to make, and then... So, being aware of it, yes, it improves.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it happen to you that in the lesson, you get some feedback from your teacher and they ask you, do you feel the difference instead of understanding?

Interviewee:

Yes. Yeah. Most of the time with using this too much and using too less air. So yeah, to play, for example, nice, clear, high notes, you can either make this very thin and sharp, or you can

use your tongue to make the air go fast, or you just give more air. And for example, when you have to play a really long, high passage, then you can do this, but it's nice to use a combination of all three instead of only using this and still don't... yeah, that you don't give enough air. So then the teacher asks "Yeah, okay, okay, now do everything with more air, more air, and, and just do the same with your lips, but give more air". And then he, of course, asks "Yeah, how does it feel?". And if you compare it to what you did before and then the answer is always more easy because that's what the teacher wants to achieve and it works with the tips he gives.

Interviewer:

Okay. Just note to myself - by "this", the participant means embouchure and lip muscles.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Because I'm not filming you. So, I would know what you were talking about.

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, sorry. Yeah.

Interviewer:

No problem. Okay. And do you experience any tensions while you are practicing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it's very irregular, but sometimes, when I play for a while, then my muscle in the bicep where I hold the trombone starts feeling a bit sore. Not, not like stress, but like, for keeping it in the same position for a really long time. Whereas muscles, of course, when you play high and loud excerpts, even though you don't feel that you're pressing the embouchure, still the lips can get a bit sore after a while as well. But for the rest, no.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed any improvement in this, maybe, like, the tensions themselves or just the awareness of the tensions?

Interviewee:

Yeah, actually, when I feel that my lip is getting sore, then I just try to finish clearly with the loud and the loud and high excerpts and try to do something else while. In the past, I just pressed through it and I was like *buzzes*, it's actually not nice to do this. So, it's better to do some cooldown things or maybe a low excerpt slowly, um, softly *buzzes*, easily playing. Yeah, it helps a bit. So yeah, I noticed more.

Interviewer:

Okay. And you have mentioned that you are also more aware about your posture, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you think that practicing meditation affected your sound in any way?

Interviewee:

Well, again, my teacher said in the midterm exam that my sound improved. If it's because of meditation, I don't know. I always try to focus on sound. With a good posture, the sound is more bright and more open. With a good breathing, the sound is more bright and more open. So, it can be many things. But yeah, could be meditation, as well.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you find it easy to stay focused during your lessons?

Interviewee:

Yeah, during the lessons. But before meditation, it was also not a big problem. But still, yeah.

Interviewer:

So there's no improvement, as I understand?

Interviewee:

I always am interested and focused in my lessons and I can do what the teacher asks me without being distracted. I'm never distracted in my main subject lessons, no.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

Yeah, maybe a bit different. Instead of waiting for the feedback of him, I try already to make a plan myself a bit more. So instead of playing a piece and waiting for him to say "Hey, this was bad, this was bad", I already... Because he asks me, as well, so I know that he will ask me after the piece I played "What went nice, how did you feel?" and "What went wrong?", and "How do you feel about this?", so I already know it. And then I try to remember it and tell him afterwards. And then he says, "Okay, and how do you think that's able to be better?" or "How do you think you could practice it better?"

Interviewer:

Okay. And does your teacher's feedback lead you to self-criticism or decreased self-esteem, or demotivation, or something like that?

Interviewee:

No, no, not really. Sometimes he says some nice things as well. So, like "Yeah, your sound has improved a lot" or "You can play high very easily, and it's really a gift that you can do this, but you have to use it usefully and effectively to really make it nice and confident". So, he always also says some positive things. And even though he says that I will have to do something to make it better, for example, he said "Hey, you know, your sound improved, your breathing improved, your musical ideas are great, but now it's time to really get focused on being really secure". I think you can use that word to the right amount of rests, the length of them, the accent, you know. Like, the really small things, which can make a big improvement in the performance that I have to really get used to be... Yeah, to be more easy with them. And I get more used to it, according to my teacher, by doing more etudes. So, he just said "Yeah, just play more etudes and then we can improve the thing". It doesn't really affect my... No, it's just useful.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you are hearing feedback, are you more focusing on the way you feel and then you try to replicate the feeling when you're practicing alone? Or is it like, more understanding the mechanism, how you have to do it, and then just try to do that rational thing to get the improvement when you're practicing alone?

Interviewee:

I think it's more the second. So, if he shows me an exercise or a thing where I can improve the playing or the passage, or whatever, then I just remember it and I try to do it in my own practice session as smooth as possible and how he told me to do it. So yeah, it's more the second one, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

On the teacher's approval? Yeah, well, if my teacher approves on something or says "Hey, you played this very nicely", of course, then the esteem will really raise and that's a nice feeling, and good. So yes, it happens, but yeah, maybe a bit less than before, you know?

Interviewer:

Okay. Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah. Like, it's a bit less. So, if he says something nice, it's "Yeah, okay, cool, thank you", instead of "Ah, he likes this", you know, it's a bit less.

Interviewer:

Okay. I think we are done. So, where's my mouth? Yes. Mouse, not mouth. I'm stopping.

C08

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

So, I started the recording and I... First, I'm informing you that you are being recorded. The recording will be transcribed, and transcription will be used in my research without revealing the names of the participants. If you agree, can you please state your name and say that you agree to the conditions stated before?

Interviewee:

Okay, my name is [name], and I agree.

Interviewer:

Okay, thank you very much. So, if you don't understand the question, please ask. I will clarify because my English is very, very bad. And if you... I will be touching some quite sensitive topics and if you feel that I'm kind of violating you or you don't feel like answering a question, also tell me. It's okay to skip questions if you don't want to answer them.

Interviewee:

Sure, okay.

Interviewer:

And I know that I asked you before, but please state that on the record. What is your meditation experience?

Interviewee:

I have no meditation experience. I've never done any meditation.

Interviewer:

Okay, and have you considered trying it before, maybe?

Interviewee:

Yes, I have considered it. I know some people that had a really great experience with meditation and recommended it, especially for like, anxiety. So, I have definitely thought about it, but just never, never did it.

Interviewer:

Okay, in which year of conservatory are you?

Interviewee:

I'm a second year master.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how many years do you play?

Interviewee:

The trumpet I played... I mean, I started when I was eight, so like 18 years, basically, but I only started taking it like, seriously, like 10 years ago, I would say. I started like, actually practicing 10 years ago.

Interviewer:

Okay, how do you feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

Pretty good.

Interviewer:

Pretty good? You're not stressed, not anxious, everything is nice?

Interviewee:

I mean, yeah, sometimes I'm stressed about concerts, I'm anxiety, but like, generally, I don't have so much anxiety. Not anymore, at least. I used to have.

Interviewer:

Okay, that's nice to hear. Do you have any particular concerns or expectations about meditation and how it might influence your musical performance or daily life?

Interviewee:

Honestly, I have no idea. I'm just excited to see, just to try it out. I have no expectations, really.

Interviewer:

Okay, that's super nice. Can you describe your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

Okay, yeah, well, that depends. Sometimes I'm like, feeling really engaged, super focused, you know, peace, if it's going like, really well. Especially like, if I already like, ate, but if I'm like, tired and hungry, I'm just not focused at all. I don't know, it really depends.

Interviewer:

So like, the triggers of being distracted is your physical needs are not being met?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I guess that's definitely something to consider. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Yeah, but if you have like, a nice day and you are well rested, well... and you ate well, then you're not really distractible, are you?

Interviewee:

Sometimes, if it's like, not going well, I'm practicing a really hard piece, for example, and let's say, I have to play a really hard piece and I know I have to play it in the concert in like, two weeks and it's not going so well, then I usually like, lose a bit of focus.

Interviewer:

Okay, so hardships and....

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and do you experience any procrastination during your practice sessions?

Interviewee:

Not on the trumpet, I think. I procrastinate a lot with like, my research, for example.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But I love playing trumpet, that's like... I do that instead of doing other stuff.

Interviewer:

Oh, that's great. Good for you. And about triggers, we have already talked. When you are practicing trumpet, what are you focusing the most on?

Interviewee:

I'd say it really depends on the piece. Sometimes I'm just really focused on, for example, trying to like, physically increase my rates, like what I'm doing to be able to play higher notes. But I really try to focus on musicality when I practice, because I've noticed that also helps with the sort of physical side. So I try to focus on how to play musically, basically.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you use any techniques to help you focus and improve your performance?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

That's great. Have you heard of the concept of the flow?

Interviewee:

I've heard the flow concept. Oh, yeah. True. Yeah, my teacher tends to talk about that. But I have to say I'm not... Yeah, I don't know how to do it, like how to work on it, like how to use it.

Interviewer:

Okay, so you have never experienced that?

Interviewee:

I don't know. Flow - that's like, when you, for example... sports people get into the flow and like, right?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

I don't know. I feel like people talk about it, but I'm not sure. Honestly, I don't really recognize like, having that feeling, at least not regularly.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And how frequently does it happen to you that you stop practicing prematurely?

Interviewee:

To... prematurely? Yeah, when I... How frequently? I mean, I usually... When I stop, like before I want to stop, it's just because I'm too tired, like, I can't and I recognize that it's not useful for me to continue playing. How often does that happen?...

Interviewer:

I mean, you don't have to say like, 16 days per month. Approximately.

Interviewee:

Yeah, I'm just, I'm thinking about it. I mean, I'd say like, it has to happen at least like, at least once or twice a week, probably like, sometimes if, yeah, play too much and then just like, okay, you have to stop. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And for how long are you capable to practice mindfully and with good focus at the time?

Interviewee:

I don't know. Okay, I've experimented with like 20 minute, like, sessions and I found that very helpful to like, try to really focus for like 20 minutes and then just, yeah, I think that works really well for me. Then I take like, a short break and go for another 20 minutes. But more than 20 minutes - really hard. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how much quality work can you get per day by combining those 20 minute sessions?

Interviewee:

I think like, probably three hours. I think more than three hours is quite exceptional, I would say. Really quality practice - yeah, I think three hours is around the top.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

Hmm. Yeah. Yeah, so for me now, one thing I'm sort of challenged with is that... So, I play a natural trumpet, but I'm also trying to practice more on the cornetto. And the challenge is fitting that into my routine, into my practice, like without, I don't know, just doing more, playing another instrument and then like, still practicing enough on the other.

Interviewer:

So basically you're kind of trying to find the balance.

Interviewee:

Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer:

And how do you respond when a bad practice session or a bad lesson, or a bad performance happens to you?

Interviewee:

About bad practice session, I usually just try to say “okay, it wasn't a good session, fine, tomorrow will be better”, or something, you know. A concert is maybe a bit more difficult. Depends a bit. Sometimes it's a bit frustrating when the concert goes really bad. But I always try to just think, “Okay, next time it will be better”. Try to, I don't know, think about why it didn't go so well.

Interviewer:

Okay. So you were talking about unsuccessful performances and concerts. Let's move to music performance anxiety. Do you have it?

Interviewee:

Honestly, not that... I mean, I get stressed or anxious about some concerts. For example, next weekend. But I wouldn't say I have anxiety about it. I just get a bit nervous, let's say, but... I mean, not like I used to. I used to get really nervous, and it was just super hard to play during concerts because I just got so anxious. But not so much anymore. I get like, I get stressed, but like, I think it's... If I wouldn't get a bit stressed, then it would be super weird, I guess.

Interviewer:

Okay, and does it affect the quality of your playing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think it does sometimes. Like, if I'm too stressed and I used to experience that a lot, then it gets super hard to... I always lose endurance. Playing the trumpet, you need stamina. And when I'm anxious, it's always less stamina, so I'm not sure why. I think it changes the way of playing, I guess.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you have like, any physical symptoms?

Interviewee:

From anxiety?

Interviewer:

Some people have dry mouth, some people have sweaty palms.

Interviewee:

Okay, oh yeah, I get sweaty palms, it's true, but I didn't think about that, oh yeah. It's just like, I guess sometimes, if it's a stressful solo and the heart goes pumping, you know. You

feel it's going way faster in the heart, for example. And sweaty palms uh... You don't really want to shake someone's hand after a stressful concert. But yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and are you using any strategies to manage this nervousness?

Interviewee:

I just try to, first of all, be really prepared. I like to, sort of play this... If there's a solo I'm stressed for, I try to play it for some people before like, the concert to just try it out, try playing it like, putting myself in situations that I know I'm a bit more tense, you know. That's it. Also, during the concert, just taking deep breaths, I guess. Taking a few seconds before I start playing, if I can. Take time before playing, just think "Okay, a deep breath and let's go".

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience performance anxiety in the lessons?

Interviewee:

No, not at all in my lessons.

Interviewer:

Not at all? Okay, then let's move on. Do you play in the settings where you have to wait for an extended period of time and then play something?

Interviewee:

Yeah, definitely a lot. Yeah, I mean, some pieces like Messiah solo, the famous trumpet solo, you have to wait. It's like a two and a half hour piece and then you have to wait like an hour before you play your solo without playing anything. So, that's definitely something you do a lot.

Interviewer:

Okay, and do you feel anxious in those situations?

Interviewee:

Yeah, a bit. But I know that a lot of players, they are always trying to play a few notes, but I like to just not play and just go. I know I have to do this all the time, wait a long time. It's just, doing it enough times, I think, to get used to it. I don't really have any strategy or anything for it, to be honest.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you during performance?

Interviewee:

Oh, that's a good one. It depends who's in the audience. If I don't know anyone in the audience and it's like some random old Dutch people, I'm really not thinking about it. But sometimes, for example, last year I played a concert and I saw my old teacher, my teacher from [a country], who was in the audience. And then I got super stressed because I was thinking "what is he thinking about my playing?". Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, so basically if they are proficient in what you're doing and your work. Yeah?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I guess. If it's someone I know and I care about how they perceive my playing, I think that's, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it happen to you that after the performance you feel like it was a blur or happened very quickly and you are not capable of remembering the details?

Interviewee:

No, not really. I think a lot about all the details. Like afterwards, I'm always like "How was that part?"

Interviewer:

Good for you. How frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

Hmm. Nowadays I tend to enjoy it. I used to be too stressed to enjoy it. But now sometimes, I mean, I kind of am maybe something like selfish or something, but I get like, a bit of a thrill. Like, even if I'm stressed, and if it went well, I'm like... It's a little bit of a thrill. So I think I usually enjoy it now.

Interviewer:

It's nice to hear. How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:

Self-perception? What do you mean?

Interviewer:

I mean, are you confident in your abilities, for example?

Interviewee:

Oh, not too much, honestly, which maybe is funny after the last question, but I wouldn't say I'm the most confident, but I always feel like there's a million guys better than me, so... But I also feel like I'm better than some, so I don't know, medium?

Interviewer:

Basically, you're like, adequate.

Interviewee:

Yeah, I feel like I'm adequate, like I'm just a random guy.

Interviewer:

Okay. What motivates you to keep practicing and performing even after negative experiences happens?

Interviewee:

Yeah, my motivation is that at least next time bad things happens, it's not the same bad things. If that makes sense. Let's say during this concert I fucked up this passage or

something. And I think “Okay, next concert I will probably fuck up some passage, but not that passage again”.

Interviewer:

Okay, so it motivates you to go practice the things that you failed.

Interviewee:

Yeah, like thinking “Okay, that didn't go so well, I need to work on this”.

Interviewer:

Okay, but it's not that you start to think of yourself as a bad player or start beating yourself up too hard.

Interviewee:

Honestly, no, not that much. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Oh, good for you. Are you experiencing any difficulties with your airflow or breath support while playing the trumpet?

Interviewee:

I guess. Sometimes keeping steady airflow during really high passages where you need a lot of pressure, a lot of air pressure. But still having good flow. Steady, good flow, despite it being a lot of pressure. Yeah, if that makes sense.

Interviewer:

Yeah, that makes sense. Okay, brass playing requires careful control of embouchure, breathing and body alignment. How aware are you of these aspects during practice and performance?

Interviewee:

How aware of embouchure?

Interviewer:

Just generally everything physical about your playing.

Interviewee:

Yeah, it's something that I don't think a lot about it. But sometimes, because I know from experience that I had a little bit of a breakthrough a couple of years ago, where I used to always think about my embouchure, but I kind of stopped thinking about my embouchure and just started thinking about my tongue, my tongue position and what I'm doing actually inside the cavity. So sometimes I think about that when things are not going super well or I have to play a high part, and I really try to think a bit about what I'm doing. Not with the embouchure, but with the tongue position, basically.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And I guess also with the pressure, like how I'm standing, I guess. Like, how I can affect the air pressure coming from my lungs, basically.

Interviewer:

Okay. I don't know if you experienced that situation, but sometimes when you're in the lesson, the teacher sends you some feedback, and you do things, and you do things well, and they ask you like, not "did you understand", but "did you feel it".

Interviewee:

Okay, yeah.

Interviewer:

So, how frequently do you feel it when they ask you to feel it?

Interviewee:

That's always a funny question, because it always feels like you can't say "No", right? I always feel like "no...". Yeah, how frequently? Nowadays, much more, I think. I mean, not all the times, but usually I feel it when it goes really well.

Interviewer:

Do you experience any tensions while practicing?

Interviewee:

Tensions, like physical or like...

Interviewer:

Yeah, like noticing that maybe you're doing this, or maybe like your muscles are tensing up.

Interviewee:

Yeah, sometimes I get really tense, or like maybe, especially if I'm losing a bit of focus, and I start playing like, a bit stupidly, like trying to repeat the patches, and then I realize that I'm all really tense, I just try to loosen up the shoulders, I do like a bit like of this, to sort of open up the chest, because I realize I'm coming like this or something, yeah.

Interviewer:

And how aware about your posture are you while you're practicing and performing?

Interviewee:

Now I'm usually pretty aware, because I felt that it made such a huge difference for me, playing the baroque trumpet especially. Just the whole... having an open chest, good posture, everything makes playing, especially in the higher exercises, so much easier, so much efficient, so it's something that I think about quite a bit, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you find it easy to stay focused during your lessons? By lessons I mean like, orchestral excerpts and the main subject, not theory.

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, just playing, yeah. Yeah, I also find it easier during my lessons, I don't know why.

Interviewer:

Okay, and when you get distracted, what distracts you?

Interviewee:

Okay, like during the lessons?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Yeah. Sometimes I start talking too much to the teacher or something, and we start just talking and I realize I'm not actually focused on my lesson anymore. That's something, yeah. Another thing could be if I see someone walking past, like past the room, and I start to think "Oh, they're listening to my lesson", or something. Yeah, two things.

Interviewer:

How do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

React? How? In what way, like...?

Interviewer:

I mean, some people, they're like "Okay, this is feedback, I'm going to do this and that from now on, practicing". Some people are like "I'm the worst player on the planet Earth, I hate myself". Those are two radical examples.

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, I like to take every feedback I can, and sometimes, at least try it out, and sometimes I think that doesn't really make sense, but maybe I'll try it out anyways, or... I usually... I just appreciate at least some feedback.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how frequently do you find it to be leading to excessive self-criticism?

Interviewee:

How frequently? Excessive? Man, I feel like such a narcissist now. I don't know, I don't feel like I don't really excessively criticize myself that much.

Interviewer:

I think it's more that you're not a narcissist, it's okay.

Interviewee:

Okay. Okay, yeah, I feel like I'm definitely more... Sometimes I'm like "Why this guy played so much better, why can't I?". But then I think, maybe next year I'll be better.

Interviewer:

Okay. About that we talked... What is the thing that you're focusing the most when you hear the feedback from your teacher in the lesson?

Interviewee:

Just focusing on like, what do they mean, how can I apply it, how is it different from what I did. Like, focusing like...

Interviewer:

So basically analysis, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

My self-esteem... Sorry, can you repeat that?

Interviewer:

On your teacher's approval.

Interviewee:

How dependent?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Interviewee:

I wouldn't say dependent, it's nice to get like, teacher's approval, but I also do things, I do a lot of things without telling my teacher even, or that I know my teacher is... not what they would do or something I like to do also. I don't agree, we don't always agree, and that's okay, I think.

Interviewer:

And we are done.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:

Okay, so I'm turning on the recording and thus I'm informing you that the transcript of this conversation is going to be used in my master research. If you are aware of that, and if you agree to that, please state your name and say that you agree.

Interviewee:

Yes, my name is [name] and I agree.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, the first question is, which meditation length were you choosing most of the time?

Interviewee:

The five minute one.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah, it was nice for me. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Have you noticed any changes yourself?

Interviewee:

Like, in general, I don't know, but I felt it really nice to do and especially, like, when I was doing it for some practicing after work... So, I'll get maybe a bit closer. Yeah, when I was like, practicing after work, I found it really helpful to just do a meditation and really set a mood of practicing, sort of. I definitely noticed that on the more busy days, when I took the time to do it, it made a difference for sure.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

Yeah, pretty... I think, okay, pretty good in a way, yeah. Very busy now, playing a lot and I feel not too stressed and terrible about it, if that makes sense. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah. I mean, like, objectively, you should be a bit more stressed, that's what you're saying?

Interviewee:

No, I think I shouldn't be, but like, looking back a few years ago, I would have been, you know... You know what I mean? Yeah, I have a concert tonight and it's just like, okay. It's a job, in a way. Not just a job, I mean, like, it's nice to play a concert, but you know, I'm not freaking out.

Interviewer:

Okay. Can you describe your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

Could you elaborate a bit more?

Interviewer:

Has it perhaps become, like, a bit easier for you to practice or to focus during practicing, or maybe it stayed the same?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think yeah. Do you mean, regarding to, in general or when I do the meditation, or like, after the meditation?

Interviewer:

I mean, you can talk about everything.

Interviewee:

Yeah, it's gotten easier just to focus. I've worked, actually, on that for a few years, you know, sort of dividing my practice and doing, like, smaller sessions and that kind of stuff, and... And like I said earlier, the meditation helped me a lot on days where I didn't really feel like focusing, if that makes sense. Like, finishing work and you're like "Ugh, practice...", or like, I don't feel focused, and really helped to just, you know, take the time to settle down and do it. And then I felt like, yeah, way more focused, actually.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Yeah, yeah, so in that sense, yeah, my focus levels are definitely better than they used to be. Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay. But also, is it like, after you meditate? Like, this precise session is better or maybe you feel the improvement throughout the whole day?

Interviewee:
I feel... Yeah, throughout the whole day. It's just somehow... Something with a bit clearing my mind a bit. Like, yeah, it makes it... just the day, kind of in general, the practicing a bit nicer, or... Yeah, if that makes sense. Yeah, I feel mostly... Yeah, maybe in the practice afterwards, but I also feel a bit better after...

Interviewer:
Okay, and is it easy for you to get distracted when you're practicing?

Interviewee:
Yeah, depends a bit. When I am, like, tired... When I'm stressed let's say, I don't have endurance, then I can so easily just get distracted because, I don't know... Yeah, but when I'm really like, yeah, in a good shape, and I'm practicing something that's not too demanding, then I don't get too distracted.

Interviewer:
So basically, just make sure that I got it right, it's like, either you get physically tired or you just do something really mentally demanding?

Interviewee:
Or like, when I'm physically tired, I also feel like I get more distracted, because then I feel it's more difficult to get into... I guess, the flow of practicing.

Interviewer:
Okay. Yeah, but like, by physically initially I meant like, your lips are tired and then you're getting distracted?

Interviewee:
Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer:
Okay, and then it's like, some mental hard things, like... And physical.

Interviewee:

Yeah, and again, like... yeah, it depends. Sometimes, like yesterday, I was, because my instrument doesn't have a... It doesn't have a tuning slide, it has the tuning bits. So I can't, like, I'm a bit low, I can't just, like, push in the tunings, I have to like get a different set of, like, kind of crooks and put them in. And I was getting, like, crazy because I was never in tune, and then I couldn't focus at all on practicing. So, these kind of things, when... I don't know, distract me when it's not going well, you know what I mean?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And have you noticed any difference about you being distracted? Are you getting distracted more easily? Less easily? Maybe still the same?

Interviewee:

Um, I haven't really noticed anything, maybe because... I haven't, yeah. I don't know, I haven't really noticed anything to be honest.

Interviewer:

Okay, and is it easy for you to come back to practicing after you get distracted?

Interviewee:

Yeah, if I notice it and I actually take time to do something about it, like, either "Okay, I'm super distracted, I'm gonna, you know, get a quick coffee", or in... Now I tried meditating and it worked really well, you know. I was like "Okay I'm getting distracted, I'm gonna...". So in that sense, yeah, I think it... I don't know. I want to say easy, but I can do it for sure.

Interviewer:

Okay, and have you noticed any difference in this regard, coming back after being distracted?

Interviewee:

Um, yeah. Yeah, with the meditation, yeah, for sure. That's something I noticed a difference with.

Interviewer:

Can you please elaborate?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it's the... Doing the meditation was like, a way to settle down and just really think "Okay, I have to do something". I don't know how to explain. Yeah, just settling my mind and after doing it, I felt more like I could focus again, if that makes sense. I was not thinking so much about, you know, work or what I'll have for dinner, or something like that. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you usually get distracted? Like, is it the phone, window or whatnot?

Interviewee:

The phone is definitely a culprit a bit, that's for sure. And when you get a notification, something, that's for sure. But I try not to look at them, try not to think about it. But sometimes it can be really distracting, yeah. Windows..?

Interviewer:

Yeah, I just mentioned...

Interviewee:

Yeah, I'm thinking about it. I'm just considering it. Okay, yeah, I'd have to say the phone, for sure. I can't think of like, anything specific other than that, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, that also works. If you have to think about it, probably, there's no more things. When you are practicing trumpet, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

Depends a bit. When I'm practicing pieces, I try to focus on actually doing music a lot. Like, okay, if I were listening, would I think this guy is actually a musician or just a trumpet jock. But sometimes, I also really think about what I'm doing technically. So, sometimes technique, sometimes musicality. I try to... But when I'm trying to think of musicality, I try not to think about the technique specifically, so I do different sessions. Sometimes I do sessions that I really try to think, like "Okay, what's my tongue doing, what's my tongue level, what's my articulation", and other sessions I really try to leave that behind in the other session and just focus on how I want the music to be, let's say.

Interviewer:

Okay, do you currently use any other techniques besides meditation to help you focus or improve your performance?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. For how long are you capable to practice mindfully and with good focus at one sitting at a session?

Interviewee:

Like 15 to 20 minutes, I guess.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And how much focused work could you get in a day?

Interviewee:

Maybe a couple hours. Like, two hours or something. I find it hard to do more really focused work, more than that.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you remember us talking about the flow?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer:

So, how is it for you right now?

Interviewee:

I think, definitely for me it's a little bit hard to recognize when I'm in the flow. Maybe I'm not the most analyzing my feelings kind of guy. But if being in the flow, it's a bit like, if I look back, like, "Oh, that was a really nice session. I felt really good about my playing". Wait, what was the question?

Interviewer:

How were thing regarding flow recently? Is it hard for you? Do you get there?

Interviewee:

Now I feel like I'm getting there. Yeah. I think in our last interview... It's just something I never really thought about, but now I've been thinking about it and what you just described. And yeah, I feel like I get there. Yeah, for sure. Not in every practice session, that's for sure. But yeah, also with my research, sometimes I'm like "Holy shit, I was doing this already for an hour".

Interviewer:

The research is somehow easier for me, at least.

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah. Kind of. At least the time flies more.

Interviewer:

Yeah. So, it became better?

Interviewee:

Yeah. I think so.

Interviewer:

Okay. That's nice to know. And as of late, how frequently does it happen to you that you stop practicing prematurely? Not to, like, your lips being tired related reasons.

Interviewee:

That almost never happens. Oh, wait, sorry...

Interviewer:

I mean, like being bored or like, tired or like "I don't feel like it and I want to talk...".

Interviewee:

I mean, it never happens to me because I love practicing and I have to. I have to really stop or my girlfriend is like "Stop, let's go home". So yeah, I feel like more happens to me that I don't have enough time to practice. Like, I have to stop because I actually have to go.

Interviewer:

Okay. And was it that way always? Or is it a new development?

Interviewee:

I was definitely not always like that. I used to struggle a lot with practicing for longer times, like "When do I finish, oh my God, can't get this over with". Yeah. But I've always also been a bit stubborn, so I don't know when to stop a bit.

Interviewer:

So it's not meditation related? You're just that way?

Interviewee:

No, I think that, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

Um, yeah, mostly just not having enough time, I don't know. There's never enough time.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you generally respond to bad practice sessions, bad lessons or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

I mean, definitely for the performances, it can be a little bit of a bummer, like, it could have been better. But usually I just put it myself "Okay, it could have been better, but next time maybe it will be better". And then the next time it will be better. And yeah, I just try to do it like that. Same for practicing, I guess. I reflect, think "Okay, that note I couldn't play in tune". I had a performance like that two weeks ago. There was a certain note I just couldn't play in tune, like, every rehearsal. And it's okay. I finished the concert thing. It wasn't in tune. Well, I'm going to work on that note now.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do such situations affect your self-confidence or motivation?

Interviewee:

Definitely not motivation. It makes me more motivated. Maybe it does affect, because it makes me a little bit more motivated.

Interviewer:

Yeah, so positively.

Interviewee:

Yeah, positively. Like, okay, I want to improve this. And yeah, in the past, when I used to have, like, for example, in the modern department, I used to play pieces that really... I wasn't really at the level to be able to play them properly. And then it made me feel a bit like crap, like, because I just... If I was playing a piece that was really above my level, and it sounded like crap, and I felt like I couldn't make it good, then I felt like crap. But now I'm, maybe, better at picking my pieces or my level improved as well, so I can play more pieces. So yeah, if I have the feeling that I could play it better, if I, you know, do some things, then it feels okay. If that makes sense.

Interviewer:

Okay, so basically, if you see yourself doing the thing that you failed in the foreseeable future, then you feel okay?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And if you feel like it's impossible, then it's kind of affecting you.

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, exactly. If I feel it's impossible, then I feel like "I'm suck". But if I feel like it's possible, it's okay, then I feel like I can do it.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you feel any changes in this regard? Like, for example, unsuccessful things not affecting your self-confidence or motivation, since you started meditating?

Interviewee:

I wouldn't necessarily say I noticed the change in the past month.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience...? Okay, first of all, have you had a chance to play concerts since we last spoke?

Interviewee:

Yeah, a lot. Like, at least seven concerts or something.

Interviewer:

Oh, that's great. So, do you experience music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

No. Or yes. Yes and no. For example, back in December, I played a really difficult piece. And I don't know if I would call it anxiety, but it was a bit definitely like, I was definitely a bit nervous. Like, okay, am I gonna be able to make a good performance with this piece? But I don't, like, start shaking. Like, maybe I used to. I don't feel my heart really racing, maybe a little bit more. But yeah. So in that regard, I don't know if you call it anxiety or not.

Interviewer:

It's like a bit milder version than what you used to experience?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah. There's definitely some adrenaline going, like, of course.

Interviewer:

Yeah. So like, you still feel something?

Interviewee:

Yeah, for sure.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what are the physical symptoms?

Interviewee:

Hmm. Yeah, well, the heart maybe goes a little bit faster, but I don't notice that as much as I used to, actually, anymore. But I'm sure it still does a bit. What else? Yeah. Okay, also, yeah, definitely, for example, with that difficult piece during the concert, I felt that my sound isn't as good when I'm really quite nervous. I don't manage to have proper technique, I guess. But I'm not sure what exactly the physical reasons are, just more that I noticed from hearing my sound and playing, that it's not as good as it could be.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Does that make sense?

Interviewer:

That makes sense completely. And do you notice any improvement in this area?

Interviewee:

Hmm. Yeah, it always improves. I'm not sure if I notice specifically improvement since I started meditating or not. But yeah, maybe a bit. I did some meditating, actually, during one of the concerts while I was playing. Not while I was playing, while another piece was going, I was waiting to play and I was a bit nervous. I was like, "Okay, I'm gonna use this time and do a bit of the meditation that I learned". Actually, it kind of helped me to calm a bit down and just, you know, think, yeah. I think I played a bit better because of it actually. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And generally since you started meditating, there's two terms - music performance anxiety and music performance quality. And there's some relationships with that with all the people. And for some people, music performance anxiety affects music performance quality, so if they are nervous, they play worse, or if they are nervous, they play as good as they have never played before. And do you think that relationship changed since you started meditating?

Interviewee:

Not necessarily, I think. It's not something that I noticed changed, since I started meditating.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I'm completely honest, I think it's not something... Yeah.

Interviewer:

So like, just to sum up the whole music performance anxiety chapter and to make sure that I got it right, like, it got a bit better, but music performance quality is still affected in the same way?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah. It felt really good when I meditated before my concerts, but I'm not sure if it made my playing actually better or not. But it felt good. So maybe it did. I don't know. So, maybe to be more clear, I didn't notice a change in the quality of my playing, but it could be. I noticed a change in my... A bit in how I felt about playing, but quality - I'm not sure. Does it make sense?

Interviewer:

Okay. So, you just felt better, but it doesn't necessarily mean that you play better?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

You have to ask the audience.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Sometimes I feel like I don't really care about the audience, but I care about someone that's listening. And more often it's like, how the people playing with me are going to perceive me. So, I guess it's kind of like the audience a bit.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So yeah, sometimes I think about that. Depends on the situation. Yeah. A bit. Depending on who I'm playing with, who's listening. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience music performance anxiety in your lessons?

Interviewee:

No, definitely not.

Interviewer:

And you never did?

Interviewee:

I... Yeah, I used to, but I definitely don't anymore, but maybe it's also my teachers. Yeah. I used to feel a bit, but I never did with this teacher. So I don't know if there's a change with the meditation or not.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

But it's definitely not a recent development?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. Okay. And as of late, has it happened for you that a performance felt like a blur or it happened very quickly and you are not capable of remembering the details?

Interviewee:

No, it definitely never happens to me.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

Um, yeah, I enjoy most of them, I think. I enjoy most of them for sure. Yeah. The more difficult ones that I'm more nervous about, that I don't necessarily enjoy as much because, yeah, I'm not as confident with it, but yeah, most concerts I enjoy.

Interviewer:

How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:

Um, could you elaborate a bit on that?

Interviewer:

I mean, do you trust yourself? Are you confident in your abilities? Are you confident in your ability to improve? Generally, does thinking about playing makes you sad or maybe you're like "Yeah, it's my job", like "I'm gonna do that and I'm gonna have another day of nice practicing"?

Interviewee:

Okay. Um, yeah, I always have a feeling that I can improve. Not that I couldn't improve. I always feel like, okay, I can improve. I always feel like in two weeks I'm going to be so much better than this week. But sometimes I feel like... Sometimes I get the feeling, like, I wish I were better. Like, when you hear a kid or something and they play really well, you're like "I should be better". And then I always get more of the feeling "I'm gonna become as good as them". Does that make sense?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

So, yeah, just to make sure that I got it right again, it's just like, that you are... You think that you're capable of improving. You maybe think that you could be playing better for the stage that you're at now, but you don't see it as a very big problem.

Interviewee:

Yeah, exactly. I always feel like... I've always felt average. I always feel like I'm average, but I don't think that's necessarily bad. I just think that I could always become... I've always been average and I could always be better.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And I always think I will be better, let's say.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed some changes in this, like, self-perception sphere as of lately or not really?

Interviewee:

As of lately, not really.

Interviewer:

Yeah. So basically, not because of meditation?

Interviewee:

No, I wouldn't say so.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you experiencing any difficult... Oh, I'm sorry, wrong question. What motivates you to keep practicing and performing even during challenging times?

Interviewee:

For one, now I really enjoy the music and I love the feeling when I play something and it sounds good. And also, one thing that motivates me recently is that I maybe hear others, like other professionals play and like... I feel like, I get the feeling, like, not that I could play better, but that I wish they played it in a different way because I feel like the piece should be played in a different way. And that kind of motivates me too, to actually play it.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And how is your airflow and breath support?

Interviewee:

My airflow and breath support, I haven't noticed any problems with it.

Interviewer:

Okay. Have you noticed any differences since you started meditating?

Interviewee:

Um, actually, yes. When I... After meditating, maybe, I feel I have more support and I think it's because I'm like, less distractions in my mind, more focused. When I'm more focused, I usually play with more support.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how aware are you about all the other physical aspects of playing, for example, embouchure or body alignment?

Interviewee:

I'm quite aware about posture because that's something I've experienced a big change in and how much it can affect my playing. And it's like a teacher told me, actually, it's for free. Like, all you have to do is change your posture. It takes nothing and you play better. So, it's something for sure. And I think I'm quite aware of things... Especially when I'm playing high tongue position, because also that's something I've experienced a lot of help just from being aware of that, and, you know, doing some exercises to sort of find the physical sensations and physical, how do you say it... Really, what I have to do physically to be able to play. So, I'm quite aware, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed any differences since you started meditating in the awareness aspect?

Interviewee:

Like, generally, maybe not, but I always notice it after meditating. That is something I find easier to think about, these things, somehow. After meditating, it feels a little bit easier for me to reflect on what I'm doing.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does this happen for you in the lesson, that the teacher asks, like, to feel the difference instead of understanding it?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

Yeah. My teacher really... Oh, she always talks about feeling the difference. I think maybe it's... I don't know how it is with other students. We talk a lot about feeling how a phrase sounds and how it felt differently when it sounds better, for sure.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you usually feel the difference when she asks you?

Interviewee:

When there is a genuine difference, I usually feel it. Yeah. When she asks me, like "Oh, that sounds so much better, did you feel it", I would say yes. I usually do.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience any tensions while practicing?

Interviewee:

Tensions? Like physical?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Sometimes I get shoulder pain in my shoulder, if I'm playing a lot. Something I experienced.

Interviewer:

Have you noticed any changes in that? Maybe like, you being more aware of your tensions or just them improving?

Interviewee:

Um, no, I haven't noticed that.

Interviewer:

Okay. And about posture, we have already spoken. Did practice and meditation affect your sound in any way?

Interviewee:

Affected definitely my awareness of sound. So, I think so. Yeah, affecting my awareness of being able to focus on the really small things, so my sound... Generally, I think my sound hasn't changed, but I feel after meditating that it's easier to focus on my sound. Does that make sense?

Interviewer:

Just to make sure I got it right, it didn't change your sound, but you are more aware? So, if something happened, you would notice quicker?

Interviewee:

Yeah. And I'm not sure if I would necessarily be able to fix it immediately. Because I felt really a difference from meditating. And now I know, maybe I need to do a bit of meditation or calm down and just, if I do this, my sound will be better.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you find it easier to stay focused during your lessons?

Interviewee:

It's not something I noticed a difference in.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

Um, the same as I said after the concert. What can I do with this feedback, how can I use it in my practice session?

Interviewer:

Can it lead you, to self-criticism or lowered self-esteem, or something of that kind?

Interviewee:

Um, I don't know. My teacher never gives feedback like that, I think. So, I never get the feeling that I have feedback and it's like "Oh, I suck" or something.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And when you hear the feedback from your teacher, do you focus more, on just getting the feeling, how you play it right and then catching the feeling after the lesson, or do you just try to understand the whole mechanism of how it improved and then to, like, approach it rationally when you're practicing alone?

Interviewee:

Sorry, can you rephrase that a bit?

Interviewer:

Yeah. I've noticed two sorts of people. Most of them are in between actually, but there's some people who are basing everything on their feelings. So, they get the feedback, they try to get it right and they're like "Oh yes, it feels that way, so I kind of have to feel like that when I'm practicing and it's going to be good". And the others are like "Okay, I have to do this, this, this and this step in order to improve".

Interviewee:

Okay. Yeah. I see what you mean. I think I would definitely say I'm a little bit more in the feelings camp. I'm not so technically oriented, let's say. I get more, like "Okay, this felt like that in my lesson and I get this feedback, so how do I get that feeling when I play?", rather than "Okay, I have to do this and this with this note and this thing", you know what I mean?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

Not, I would say.

Interviewer:

Not at all?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. We are done.

C09

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

So now I'm turning on the recording and thus, you are being informed that this whole interview is being recorded. It is going to be transcribed, and transcription and possibly like, parts of the transcription are going to be used in my research. If you agree to participate with previously stated conditions, please state your name and say that you agree.

Interviewee:

Yeah, I'm [name] and I agree.

Interviewer:

Okay, so I know that you did it off the interview, but can you please tell me about your meditation experience once again, because I want to have it like, on the recording?

Interviewee:

Okay, during Corona time I took a small course in... For what it's called... In mindfulness for musicians. It lasts more or less four months, I think, but since that I didn't manage to do it like, regularly, so I think I know some things about meditation, but it's been a while since I don't practice it like, weekly or daily.

Interviewer:

Okay, and one other thing that I forgot to say - if any question makes you feel uncomfortable, you at any time just say "okay, maybe we skip this thing".

Interviewee:

Yeah, no problem.

Interviewer:

Okay, in which year of your studies are you?

Interviewee:

Bachelor 4. I'm bachelor 4.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how many years do you play the trombone?

Interviewee:

15, I think. Since I was 8 years.

Interviewer:

Okay, how do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

I think I'm happy, I'm in a good environment with good colleagues, with good teachers. I feel confident and with a good environment to continue growing up. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, do you have any particular concerns or expectations about meditation, and how it might influence your musical performance or daily life?

Interviewee:

No, I'm just curious about what would happen, but specifically about anything.

Interviewer:

Okay, how are your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

I would put myself at 3.5 out of 5, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay, so you are like, not really easily distracted, but sometimes you do get distracted, right? Something around that?

Interviewee:

Yeah, something like that.

Interviewer:

Okay, and what usually distracts you when you get distracted?

Interviewee:

I think it's not something that happens outside the world, let's say. I think it's something that happens inside my mind. Maybe you have one thought about a technical thing, and you are focusing on practicing, or maybe writing up a piece and suddenly you have a thought that, I don't know, interferes with the whole experience. So, I would say that it's not about external elements, it's more about thoughts.

Interviewer:

Okay, and what about all of the mobile devices? Do they distract your playing, or you don't use them when you practice?

Interviewee:

No, I put it in flight mode, and I try not to look at it in between the practice session.

Interviewer:

Okay, and when you get distracted, how do you usually get back on track?

Interviewee:

Okay, maybe sometimes, when I realize and I know that I can switch my brain, and immediately go back to practice, I do that. But when I realize that maybe I need a small break and that's why I got distracted, I take a small rest, like two or three minutes, and then I go practice again. So, it depends, in that moment how I felt with myself.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are there any specific triggers which encourage you to procrastinate? Or like...

Interviewee:

Sorry, specific...?

Interviewer:

Specific triggers, like, specific things that encourage you to get distracted?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I would say that maybe one recurring thing is my... What I have to do after the practice. Let's say I'm practicing in the morning, what I have to do the rest of the day. I have to cook, I have to go to the gym, I have a rehearsal, maybe I'm occupying my mind with things that will happen after the practice session. Yeah, I would say that.

Interviewer:

Okay, when you are practicing trombone, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

I don't try to do anything perfect, but I try to focus on the bigger process, let's say. So, I'm accepting that there are bad days and good days, so I don't push and I try to not to push myself too hard. I don't want to do everything perfect.

Interviewer:

Okay, so basically, for you the most important thing is the process itself, right? Do I get it right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I would say.

Interviewer:

Okay, do you currently use any techniques to help you focus or improve your performance?

Interviewee:

I could not say that it's a technique. It's something that I learned from my teachers. When you have to perform - that's what they said to me, and I really do that and it really worked for me, is... Once you have to perform or do an audition, just try to... Don't try to separate the nerves from your mind, because it's impossible. So instead of doing that, I think "Okay, I don't have to be nervous", maybe think about "Okay, let's take a good breathing, let's focus on the line". So don't try to separate that kind of thoughts and instead of that, replace them with helpful thoughts.

Interviewer:

Okay, for how long are you capable to practice mindfully and with good focus at a time?

Interviewee:

I would say that around one hour.

Interviewer:

Okay, and I do believe that you get like, multiple sessions per day, so how much of good quality work are you getting from yourself in a day?

Interviewee:

Three hours is good. I mean, if I do three hours of good practice, I mean, yeah, of good practice, I'm quite happy. Sometimes you spend three hours and then you realize "Okay, of

the three hours I did, only two hours were quite useful and quite good spent time". So yeah, I would say, three hours.

Interviewer:

Okay, and have you heard about the concept of the flow?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Have you ever reached the flow?

Interviewee:

Sometimes, and in small, how do you say it, like, in small periods of time. Like, super short periods of time.

Interviewer:

Do you find it hard to reach the state?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I would say so.

Interviewer:

And do you know any things that would help you to reach this state?

Interviewee:

I think it has to be with what I just mentioned, like, the things you have in mind during the performance or during the practice. I think it's quite a crucial thing, but I don't know.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how frequently does it happen for you that when you're practicing, you get bored or you see that you are not concentrated or, for example, the things are not going well and you think like "Okay, I'm done, I'm going home"?

Interviewee:

Yeah, good question. I think, as I said, I'm quite demanding with myself and I think that because of that, I would say like, every two weeks I have one of those days.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

I mean, of course, but I don't know of something special, or at least special to mention.

Interviewer:

Anything goes, like, it doesn't have to be special, it has to be like, just your thing that you are now trying to solve.

Interviewee:

Yeah, the mental setup that you put before practicing. I think “Okay, let's work on this, don't worry about... if something doesn't work - we are here to try things out, and if something doesn't work, tomorrow we will try again”. Yeah, I would say that that's the hardest thing for me and it's the thing I'm trying to improve right now.

Interviewer:

Okay, how do you generally respond to bad practice sessions, bad lessons, or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

At the moment, I can be a little bit mad with myself, but after, or maybe the day after, I start seeing the things with perspective and I try to analyze the things that I can learn from that experience, and yeah, I have to continue working.

Interviewer:

Okay, do you experience music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No?

Interviewee:

No

Interviewer:

Good for you.

Interviewee:

No, actually, what teachers told me - and it's a common thing that quite a lot of people told me - I'm super relaxed during the performance, more relaxed than needed. So, for me, the key is to get a little bit... You know, with that excitement. So, yeah, for me it's quite the opposite, but yeah, maybe it's a different type of nerves. Maybe I'm nervous, but my body doesn't react as maybe with some shakiness in the leg or with stomach pain, or, I don't know, maybe it's another response from the body.

Interviewer:

Okay, so probably, you're not nervous in your lessons as well, then?

Interviewee:

A little bit.

Interviewer:

A little bit?

Interviewee:

But I think... A little bit, and it's that little bit that helps you to do, I don't know, maybe that pushes your stamina a little bit up and allows you to do something good, yes?

Interviewer:

So, it's like, the good nervousness, which is not like, it doesn't affect you in a negative way, basically?

Interviewee:

No, no, no.

Interviewer:

Okay, as a trombone player, you probably have played in plenty of orchestras and for low brass it frequently happens that you have like, very long breaks, I don't know, like, 60 bars or something like that, and then you have to play something important. Are you getting nervous in those situations?

Interviewee:

Well, yeah, of course, it's not super comfortable to play and to pick up the horn and, you know, the mouthpiece is cold, you don't feel like... very good lips, but it's something you have to train because, as you mentioned, it happens a lot for us, especially for trombone and tuba. I think we are the instruments that rest the most in the orchestra, but also, as you mentioned, sometimes, after the break we have to play something important and something difficult, something high, something low, so, yeah, I think it's not a pleasant situation, at least for me.

Interviewer:

Okay, and do you have like, any strategies which maybe help you to go through the whole experience?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I try to... Sometimes, when I'm facing a situation like that, maybe some days to just start playing or practicing the piece or the excerpts, I have to play without warm-up, or just randomly pick up the horn after playing something and play the excerpt I have to play, so I try to train my body and my mind to that stressful situation, because I think it's mostly something mental, not physical. Because, I mean, if you spend 20 minutes without playing, okay, maybe you are not in the best conditions, but you can play, I'm sure you can play good, so I think it's more here *points to the head* than in the lips or in the mouth, or something.

Interviewer:

Okay, are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you during performance?

Interviewee:

No, I don't think so, no.

Interviewer:

Okay, you don't get nervous, so this question also doesn't apply. How frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

Very little, I would say. Yeah, in the moment of performing, I would say maybe a few times, yeah, not very much.

Interviewer:

Okay, and are you generally confident in your abilities as a musician? Do you tend to compare yourself to other players, perhaps?

Interviewee:

No, I tend to compare myself with the version I have in mind of myself, let's say, but not that much with other people. I mean, it's good to compare with, in the lessons, in the group lessons you have to... Okay, maybe that guy, that girl do a super good, I don't know, concerto. And yeah, it's good to know that, but I tend to compare myself the most, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and do you generally trust like, your skill level and your abilities as a musician or not really?

Interviewee:

Sometimes.

Interviewer:

Sometimes. On what does it depend?

Interviewee:

I think it depends of what... How are you doing in the last days, maybe. If you are in a good mood, you had some days of good practice, you have some good lessons, maybe you had some good auditions, I think that can increase your... Yeah, you are more, how do you say it... You look more confident, yeah, I would say.

Interviewer:

And what motivates you to keep practicing and performing in challenging times?

Interviewee:

In challenging times... Okay, maybe I try to remind what I'm looking for, let's say, job-wise.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

And also, maybe if I, for instance, like one or two weeks ago, after, I mean, since September, a lot of playing, quite some auditions, a lot of stuff with the trombone class... So I faced a period of "Okay, I don't want to practice anymore" just after the auditions, like two weeks ago, and I talked with my teacher, and it happens. It was actually the first time it happened to me, and I decided to take like, a few days of rest to pick up the horn again with some energy and some with some willing to. Because at that time, I could practice and I did some lessons, but I told my teacher "Okay, I think it's not healthy to keep forcing the situation, because I don't have anything coming up, like, very soon", so I decided to rest a little bit, and now I have the energy and the willing to do it again, so...

Interviewer:

Okay, are you experiencing any difficulties with your airflow or breath support?

Interviewee:

No, I would say no.

Interviewer:

Okay, and brass playing requires many physical things, you know, like, plenty of lip muscles working, plenty of breathing muscles working. How aware are you of those physical aspects while playing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think, I try to do a little bit of everything you mentioned, like in the warm-ups, a little bit of... Okay, you know, in the muscles I use during each breathing, maybe to warm up a little bit the mouth or the lips, and so I think I'm quite conscious about what happens in my body during the playing, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and does it happen for you in the lesson that the teacher says you some feedback, and then you try to play, and he asks not "Did you understand it", but "Did you feel it"?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it happens sometimes, yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah, and do you usually feel it?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, are you getting tense anywhere physically while playing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think that my... So, it's the right shoulder, it suffers a little bit... And I think that, yeah, my right shoulder tends to be a little bit tense, and it's calling me again. The right shoulder gets to be a little bit tense, because it's also the arm we use for the slide, yeah, and I'm trying to work on that. Right shoulder, and a little bit the neck, so I would say that.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how aware about your posture are you while you are playing?

Interviewee:

I would like to be more conscious, honestly, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, do you find it easy to stay focused during your lessons?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I would say so, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how do you usually react to the feedback of your teacher?

Interviewee:

I think I react in a good way. I mean, everything they have told me is not the absolute truth, but it's super helpful always to have that feedback, and also to listen to people that know a lot of the instrument and play super good, yeah. As they say, they don't have the absolute truth, maybe some things they say don't work for me or for someone, but it's super helpful to find and to have that feedback.

Interviewer:

Okay, and does it lead you to excessive self-criticism, or maybe, like, decreased self-esteem, or something like that?

Interviewee:

Sorry, you mentioned that, if that feedback affects my self-confidence?

Interviewer:

I mean, like, if your teacher says that you're doing something not in a good way, do you take it like, personally? Do you start like, maybe judging yourself or criticizing yourself?

Interviewee:

No, no. I say "Okay, in fact, I'm doing it maybe not the best way, so let's work on it". No, but I react in a good way, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and when you are hearing some feedback, are you more of the person who has to like, react to everything, like, to understand how it works, like rationally? Or are you more like "I have to feel the difference, and then when I'm practicing on my own, I have to try to, like, remake the feeling again"?

Interviewee:

Sorry, I didn't understand very well the... [How] I'm reacting, when I'm hearing some feedback about my playing?

Interviewer:

Yeah, are you like, more trying to understand the whole mechanism, how it works, or try to feel it, and just when you're practicing, you're also trying to feel the same way?

Interviewee:

Maybe I would say both. During the feedback moment, I would try to understand what this guy or this girl is saying to me, and then when I pick up the horn again - "Okay, let's see, what if I try this new thing for me", or "What if I try to do it that way".

Interviewer:

Okay, how dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

It's quite high. I would like it to be a bit less, but I think it's quite high.

Interviewer:

I'm sorry, can you please repeat, because something's with connection and I didn't hear anything at all.

Interviewee:

No, I was saying that it's quite high, and I would like it to be a little bit less. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, that's it.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:

So, I'm turning on the recording and thus I am informing you that you are being recorded. The information that you are going to say is going to be used in my research, I'm going to make a transcript of this recording and put it in my research. If you are aware of that and you agree to that, please state your name and that you agree to the things that I said.

Interviewee:

Okay, I'm fine with that. My name is [name]

Interviewer:

Okay, so the first question is which meditation length were you choosing most of the time?

Interviewee:

The medium one, like the five minutes one.

Interviewer:

The five minute one?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and have you noticed any changes related to your playing or things related to your playing, yourself?

Interviewee:

I don't know if it's about my playing, but I noticed that the session after the meditation was... The beginning of the session, super, how do you say, super controlled in a way that I was more in control of my body and also in my mind.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

Yeah, good. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Good, okay. Can you describe your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

Okay, during practice sessions, now three months before my recital, I am focusing especially into the pieces I have to perform there, but also some technical things that will do it. The

pieces, I mean, will be better. So, on one hand, the technical things, on the other hand, just to read and to, yeah, to study the repertoire I have to perform in the recital.

Interviewer:

And is it easy for you to stay focused while you're practicing?

Interviewee:

If I decide before the practice session what I'm going to do, let's say, I'm focusing on that piece, on that section, and I want to improve my, I don't know, my legato or whatever, yeah. If before the session I say to myself "I will do that", it's easy for me to stay focused. If not, if I just take the horn out of the case and practice, it's... You know, you can do a lot of things, but not very, very specific work. So yeah, I would say that I don't have problems with the focus, if I do the work of deciding what I'm going to do.

Interviewer:

Okay. And are you easily distracted when you're practicing?

Interviewee:

I would say that if I get distracted, it's because of the mistake, you know. If you made a mistake and you try to solve the mistake and it doesn't get better and you focus much harder on the mistake than on the thing you want to improve. So, if I get distracted, it's because of the mistake, it's not because of, I don't know, people passing through the rooms or something. I think it would be more here than in the external world.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed any changes in your focus levels, in your concentration because of the intervention or not really?

Interviewee:

Not really.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Not really. Only the thing I mentioned to you before, like the practice session just after the warmup was super focused because of the time I decided to spend on the meditation at the beginning of the day.

Interviewer:

So basically, it helped like, immediately after, but like, the first session that you practice, but not later in the day?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Maybe would be nice to improve or implement a little session of meditation, maybe not five minutes, but even, I don't know, three minutes of breathing exercises or something just before every session. Maybe, I didn't try it, but maybe it's a good idea to try to copy that, that presence and that concentration I have in the beginning of the day.

Interviewer:

Okay. So basically, it helps right after, but like, not in the long run?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Right after. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you're practicing your trombone, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

I would say, make a beautiful sound.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you currently use any other techniques besides meditation to help you focus or improve your performance?

Interviewee:

Visualization could be.

Interviewer:

Visualization?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Mostly for the performance, let's say, not for the practice session, but even though in the practice session, yeah, if I have to.. If I decide how I want to sound and if I imagine the sound I want to make, a lot of the time it's much easier to get it. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And for how long are you capable to practice with good focus at one time?

Interviewee:

Difficult question, because it's not that once you get it, you do it every single day. I mean, you have ups and downs, depends on the, I don't know, a lot of things, but I would say that from the beginning of this academic year, I think I'm spending a good and quality time with the trombone here. It's not just play for play. It's like, a good time.

Interviewer:

Yeah. But you cannot tell like, how much you are capable to focus, like, on one goal?

Interviewee:

On one... It's about practice sessions, you mean, or it's about...? Because...

Interviewer:

It's about, like, when you come to practice, how much time would you actually practice like, well, until your mind's... Like, until you get tired mentally or you get distracted, or your mind just starts doing something unrelated?

Interviewee:

I never time it, but I would say like, maximum half hour of deep work. Yeah. I think I never get much farther than the half hour.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how much of good work are you getting in the day? Like, if you don't have any rehearsals and if you don't have anything to be in, you can just practice.

Interviewee:

With three hours, I'm fine. I'm happy. If I spend the three hours with most of the time, I mean, with good quality time, I think I'm super happy. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you remember us talking about the flow?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

How frequently are you capable of reaching that?

Interviewee:

Not that much. I would like to get better on that. Not that much. I mean, I think not even every day, but yeah, not even every day.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it's still, like, kind of hard, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer:

And do you think that it improved since you started meditating or not really?

Interviewee:

I would say not really.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But... It didn't get worse, but it also... I didn't notice that it was better now than before. So, I would say not really.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently does it happen to you that you stop practicing because you get bored or you don't feel like that, or you are unmotivated, or you just cannot concentrate before the time that you wanted to stop practicing?

Interviewee:

I mean, sometimes it happens. You asked me about the time I spent before that happens, right? During the day, for instance, after two hours, sometimes I got that feeling or it's...?

Interviewer:

No, no, no. It's more like, for example, you have planned your day and you say that you want to practice all of your stuff for three hours. And sometime before you reach those three hours, it's like "Ah, I'm bored", or...

Interviewee:

Sometimes, yeah. I mean, it makes sense also when you put the attention on the things that you are struggling at that time the most. If you are focusing on difficult things for you, sometimes when you don't have, maybe, the power in your mind to keep on, sometimes it happens that before the three hours or even before the two hours or something, you feel that "Okay, let's stop here today and tomorrow we will continue here". Yeah. Sometimes it happens. I would say maybe once every two weeks, once every... Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And are you currently experiencing any obstacles or challenges in your practice and performance routine?

Interviewee:

I think... I talked about this with my teacher. The level... Because he told me, I mean, everyone has two levels in their playing. The level in a good day, in a good moment, in a moment that you don't have any pressure, the moment, maybe, that you are alone in the practice room. That's your peak level, let's say. And then you have another level that you show, that's maybe, the "bad mode" level or the normal level that you show during stressful situations like an audition or a recital, or something. And for me, the difference in between my playing, in between the good day and the bad day, I think is maybe too big. And I'm struggling a little bit to get the bad version of myself a little bit better. So, that could be, maybe, my focus right now.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you generally respond to bad practice sessions, bad lessons, or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

I mean, just after, I'm not in a very good mood but after maybe a couple of hours, I just realize that it's only a thing to improve, you know? If you had a bad experience, it's because of something and you have to give it the right amount of... How do you say it? Don't waste energy on that. Just say to yourself "Okay, it didn't go so well, so let's do something, next time it will go better".

Interviewer:

Okay. And does it affect your self-confidence or motivation in any way?

Interviewee:

I would say, just after the recital or the lesson, yeah, you don't feel super great. But after that is... you have the pride and the energy in your mind to keep going. I think it's not even there, that feeling. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, you mean, like, right after unsucccess, you're like... It affects, but then it gets like, evened out pretty quickly, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah. You see the things with more perspective. Yeah. And usually, I'm okay.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience... Okay, the first question. Did you have a chance to play, like, to perform since the last talk?

Interviewee:

I mean, I had my exam, so that could be a thing. And I think I played in front of my colleagues, like maybe two or three times. So yeah, quite a few times.

Interviewer:

Okay. Did you experience musical performance anxiety lately?

Interviewee:

No, I would not call... The thing I mentioned to you, like a few minutes ago, I would not call performance anxiety because the thing is, I'm more relaxed than I would like to, before the... So, it's difficult to explain, but maybe it's performance anxiety, but expressing it in a super different way because I don't feel super nervous. I just feel without hope of doing a good job. It's like, I don't have, maybe, the energy or the confidence to do it. It's not about the nerves or the... afraid I may be of the situation. It's just about the confidence.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it's not that you're nervous. It's just, you feel weird about the performance?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah. That would be a good point. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And does it affect your quality of playing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I would say so. Otherwise, it would not be a problem itself. It would be something to improve. But yeah, I think, not every time, but usually in a situation that has that feeling, just before doing it, usually the performance level is lower than I would or lower than I can make. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And are you experiencing, like, any... Does it go with any physical symptoms? Because this is the first time that I'm hearing that from a person, so I just want to know everything about it as well.

Interviewee:

I would not say physical. No, I don't feel anything in my stomach, anything in my chest. I don't feel anything. No, I wouldn't say it is physical. No, not at all. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you think that, like... You say that there's like those two versions of you playing, and one is what you can do in the classroom on a good day, and one is when you're under stress?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you think that the gap narrowed during this meditation thing or not really?

Interviewee:

Not really.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience any sort of performance anxiety in your lessons?

Interviewee:

No. If I experience something, it's something very similar to what I explained to you, like the...

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah, what I explained to you.

Interviewer:

Okay. When you are playing, are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you? As of lately, I mean.

Interviewee:

Not during my playing, but just before the concert or... Yeah, I would say so. I think, not very much, but I give a thought about it. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what are you thinking about, usually?

Interviewee:

If I'm playing for my teacher, maybe I think about what he would think about me since the last week or what he would think about my level. If I play a concert in front of random

people, maybe I think something different, maybe what they think about this guy, what they think about, yeah, whatever. But it's something that is in my mind just before the concert or just before a meeting with people.

Interviewer:

Okay. Has it happened to you recently that you go to play and it seems like a blur or you don't really remember the details and like, go super fast?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I had that experience in my exam, but I think it's only after the exam. Then the day after, the next day, I thought about it and I quite remember how it went, almost everything. So, but just after the exam or just after any performance, you know, because of that feeling of not being super confident, I felt, usually, the last time super... with low energy and no thoughts in my mind at all. Like, I only remember the last notes I played, but anything before...

Interviewer:

But it's not you being scared? It's just you, like, not being able to focus on the playing?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That feeling. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And lately, how frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

I mean, it's difficult because of what I told you. I try to enjoy them, but at the same time, I'm facing that obstacle. So, I would say six out of ten, maybe.

Interviewer:

Okay. How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:

Okay. I think I'm a good musician, but right now I'm facing that thing. I'm also quite professional, which is, I think, good for the time you spend in the practice room. But once you left the practice room and you are in the concert hall, whatever you did in the practice room, has to... You have to trust the work, but you can't be a professional at all times during the concert. You have to just try to reach the flow that you mentioned before. So yeah, I would say that.

Interviewer:

Okay. So basically, everything would be fine, if not the thing that you just described, like being a perfectionist and feeling apathetic towards the performance.

Interviewee:

Yeah, I would say that. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. But you generally feel like a quite good trombone player, and you trust yourself, and so on?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think so. Everyone has their things to improve, and that's my thing right now, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what motivates you to keep practicing and performing during challenging times?

Interviewee:

Well, that's a good question, because usually... When I have a problem or I have a thing to solve, I really... That thing or that bad thing in my playing usually motivates by itself me to practice. So, I don't know, just to get better every day and to... Yeah, to get better every day. I mean, you will never be perfect, so just to face the difficulties and to... Maybe the auditions. You have some auditions that I could consider as goals. For instance, if I have an audition in two months, I will really pay attention to the repertoire and to perform and to practice it well for the audition. And during those two months, you will get better. And then after that, you will face another audition. And yeah, you put to yourself some goals, and the work you do to achieve that goal, I think, is what it makes you get better. Yeah. And it also motivates you. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Okay, have you noticed any differences about your airflow or breath support since you started practicing meditation?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No? Okay. And do you pay attention to the embouchure and body alignment when you are playing?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Not every time. I mean, not all the time, but I have moments in my practice which I focus on, maybe, on my body, on my posture, on my shoulder, on my embouchure, yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you think that you became more aware since you started practicing meditation?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. Okay. And how frequently does it happen for you in the lesson that the teacher asks you to feel the difference instead of understanding something?

Interviewee:

Yeah, sometimes, yeah.

Interviewer:

How frequently are you capable of feeling that?

Interviewee:

Do you mean by feeling, like, physically or maybe to listen to the differences?

Interviewer:

Both.

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think it's... The times I experienced that, the differences were quite big, so it was easy to understand and to perceive the differences. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience any tensions while practicing?

Interviewee:

Physical tensions, you mean?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think I mentioned to you the last time. In my... Sometimes in my left shoulder, because of the posture. I think it could be a thing to improve.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you think that it changed in any way since we started doing this experiment or not really?

Interviewee:

Not really. I mean, I think I'm a little bit better, but because I went to the physiotherapist, now I'm better, but yeah, it's still there.

Interviewer:

Okay. And you are also aware about your posture while playing, that's the answer you gave last time?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you think that practicing meditation affected your sound in any way?

Interviewee:

I don't know if about my sound, but for sure about the perception of the sound. I pay more attention to my sound. I don't know if it affects directly to my sound, but I'm more aware

about how I am sounding or how I want to sound in that phrase, or yeah, things like that. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed some other awareness, like you becoming more aware of things or is it only about the sound?

Interviewee:

I would say, mainly about the sound. Yeah. About other technical things, maybe articulation or things like that - not that much.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you find it easy to stay focused during your lessons? And by lessons, I mean orchestral excerpts and main instrument. We don't talk about theory.

Interviewee:

Yeah. I would say... I mean, yeah, it's maybe about the little pressure you feel before the lesson during that hour or that hour and something, you try to be as concentrated as possible. And I think that most of the times, I managed to do that. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

Usually... I mean, if not every time, almost every time he's right. And most of the times, also, I also noticed the things that he listened to. I mean, during my playing. So, I react, I think, in a good way, but also a little bit... I don't know, like, worried or something because I already noticed the things he's telling me right now, you know, that most of the times I agree with him about the problems or things that went wrong. We share the feedback almost every time, but the thing is, what maybe creates stress on myself, is to not be able every time to get it better.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Okay. So, just to make sure that I got it right - so, basically, sometimes you feel like you already know what your teacher is going to tell you, but you haven't managed to improve that yet?

Interviewee:

Yeah. I would say, not every time, but quite a few times it went like that. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And does the feedback from your teacher lead you to excessive self-criticism or any changes in your self-esteem?

Interviewee:

No. No because we share it, you know, it's not something new.

Interviewer:

So even if the feedback is bad, like, you're pretty confident about yourself?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Maybe I'm mad about... Not about the feedback, but about the performance that lead to the feedback, you know. I'm mad about "Oh, okay, I'm playing bad", not about "Oh, the feedback was shit". No, I'm mad about the playing, not about the feedback.

Interviewer:

Okay. And does the playing quality affect your self-perception or something like that?

Interviewee:

Yeah. As I mentioned to you, just after - yeah, for sure. Maybe the next day you feel different, but... Because it's something you care about. So right after the bad moment, it affects me, yeah, for sure. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you're hearing feedback, are you more trying to get the feeling of how it feels to play right or to understand it rationally and then just make rational steps in the practice room to make it happen again?

Interviewee:

I would say, second option. Yeah. But it would be interesting to get to... With the feedback, imagine yourself doing in the right way. That would be interesting, instead of "Okay, I did this, this and this, but let's do this and this and this to improve it". Yeah. But right now, the second option, like, the square on the structure option. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

I would say, six or seven out of 10 is something there. Yeah. You want to do a good job.

Interviewer:

Okay. We are done.

Interviewee:

Okay. Nice.

C10

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

So, now we are on a recording, and I am informing you that you are being recorded. The recording will be transcribed, and the transcription will possibly be used in my research without revealing the real names of participants. If you agree to that, can you please say that I, your first name, last name, agree that this data is going to be used in the research?

Interviewee:

Okay, me, [name], agree to use the research.

Interviewer:

Yes, if you don't understand the question, don't be afraid to ask. My English is not great, so I can just try to communicate it another way. The second thing, I'm going to touch on some really sensitive subjects, so if you don't feel comfortable answering a question, then you just say "can we please move on to the next one"? I really don't want to make you uncomfortable, basically.

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, so you said that you don't have any experience with meditation, right?

Interviewee:

Meditation. Yeah, I don't do that normally, but sometimes it's... Like, before I start my concert, sometimes I will do that, actually.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Just for relax, like if you have some really strange, some important recital and a strange piece, before I play, I will take some time to do the meditation and like, before I play, I will take a really big breath.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah, like that.

Interviewer:

How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

How do I feel? Like when I'm playing, how do I feel?

Interviewer:

No, like, maybe you're like, experiencing a lot of stress, anxiety, or maybe you have like, some challenges in your playing, or maybe you're not happy with yourself. In this sense.

Interviewee:

I got it. Actually, sometimes, at least until now... Actually, before when I was studying for my bachelor, most of the time, when I'm playing some difficulties and face some challenges, when I'm playing, I will play one sentence for like one hour, I will be really, really angry.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

I want to, I just want to punch something.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Yeah, like that. I think, maybe you can understand that, but until now, I think I'm more chill for practice.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Especially after I have more experience in some orchestra and some chamber music, I will be more, before I play, I will be more calm down, just think, have fun instead of to be something challenging or something just for fun.

Interviewer:

And do you have any expectations about meditation and how it might influence your musical performance or daily life?

Interviewee:

That is a hard question. Actually, like I mentioned before, just like, use some application to help you to do the meditation.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

They also have something that can help you to do that. Like, in some application, I have to do this before, like last year, sometime. And in the application, they have an image, a picture, always, like a movie, just see what happened and really focus on the video for one minute, only one minute. I think this maybe, suppose, can help me to relax and just release my stress like that.

Interviewer:

Okay. What are your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

Ah, I think it really depends on the day. Sometimes I'm really hard to focus, but sometimes I'm really focused.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So, I cannot give you a really specific answer. But for me, I think, like, a week I have three days is really focused and another four days isn't really focused.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience procrastination during practicing?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Good for you. Okay. So, this is not relevant, then. When you're playing tuba, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

Actually, this is totally [dependent] on what you practice, like if you practice for auditions, I will more focus on the breathing and the sound quality. And if I practice the piece, the specific music, like some solo piece, I will more focus on the music, how to create the music and for the more practice, the daily exercise like that.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I will more focus on, yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you currently use any techniques to help you focus or improve your performance?

Interviewee:

Alexander technique.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And haptonomy

Interviewer:
What?

Interviewee:
Like that. I sent you the....

Interviewer:
Oh, yes.

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
The thing that you sent me. Okay.

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay. How long are you capable to practice with good focus and work productively?

Interviewee:
Uh-huh. Sorry. This is also depend on day, but equally it's like three hours, I think.

Interviewer:
Per day?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Most.

Interviewer:
Most. Um. Wait... And have you heard of a thing called the flow?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Yeah. How frequently are you capable of reaching that?

Interviewee:
Reaching about that?

Interviewer:

How capable are you, like... How frequently are you like, in the flow when you're like, so focused that you're immersed and you forget what time exists and you're just like, into the work?

Interviewee:

Uh, I'm, I'm not really sure I should be.

Interviewer:

Should I maybe like, rephrase the question?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, just, just skip it, I assume.

Interviewer:

What?

Interviewee:

Just skip this.

Interviewer:

Okay, I will skip this.

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

How frequently does it happen for you that you stop practicing before you want it? Like, if something bad goes, you say, like "Oh no, I don't want to play tuba today, I just go home" or like, you say that "Okay, I feel really lazy, maybe today instead of four hours, I will practice two", or something like that?

Interviewee:

You mean how, how long I will leave my tuba?

Interviewer:

No, no, no, no, no. I mean like, how frequently do you plan that you are going to practice this and that, but then, because of something, you are not going to practice that whole time. You just stop practicing earlier than you planned.

Interviewee:

Uh-huh. Actually, this is... Like, if I have holiday.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

Sometimes, if I have holidays, I have more free time. I will plan more time, schedule more time to use for practice.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

And if... After, uh, if I finish some really important goal, like I achieve some goal, like I'm after the audition or finish my research, I will just relax myself. Like, just don't play anything like, for five days.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Or four days.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But normally... Mhm?

Interviewer:

Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

Yeah, for sure.

Interviewer:

Uh, what are the challenges?

Interviewee:

Uh, it's like, like the register.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

For playing.

Interviewer:

Upper or lower?

Interviewee:

Both.

Interviewer:

Oh, okay. How do you generally respond to bad practice sessions or unsuccessful performances and/or lessons?

Interviewee:

Uh, it's like, if my practice is really good and I only have like, uh, 60%, I will think this is bad. But if I have 70%, I think it's fine.

Interviewer:

No, but like, if you, if you practice bad, how do you feel afterwards?

Interviewee:

If I practice... I will feel it's a long day.

Interviewer:

Okay. But you are not like, you're not angry or disappointed at yourself. You're like "It's okay".

Interviewee:

Of course I will disappoint, but if like, in the morning I'm really happy and after that I will be really upset.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Like, this will continue for two days like that.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience...?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I can share with you... Yeah?

Interviewer:

Please continue. I'm sorry. I thought you were finished.

Interviewee:

Sorry. I can share you a concert. I just have a charity concert of in last month, 22nd of November.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

And I have brass contest concerts and we have 40 minutes repertoire, and we only have two hours, uh, rehearsal.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

And we have the rehearsal on 21st and we have concert at 22nd. And before that I did never see the score. I almost forgot this. And so, I just go to the rehearsal and in the 22nd, we have a really bad concert.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
So, after that, I'm always thinking about that. I'm really afraid of the brass contest after that.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
And it continued for a week. And after that, I have another brass contest concert. It's a gig.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
So I'm still really afraid [it will] happen again...

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
To play some wrong things, but I don't know. Uh, but I do that. It's not that bad. And I can say it's really good, but actually in my mind is really afraid, not really chill.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you experience, uh, music performance anxiety before or during your performances?

Interviewee:
Uhh...

Interviewer:
Do you want me to put it like, in a simple way?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Do you feel nervous before or during the concert?

Interviewee:
Uh, do you mean like, recital or every concert?

Interviewer:
It doesn't matter actually. Just a performance.

Interviewee:

Actually, in the chamber music, I will be more chill and for the recital, I will be more nervous.

Interviewer:

Okay. And does this nervousness affect the quality of your playing?

Interviewee:

Of course.

Interviewer:

And in a negative way, I would assume?

Interviewee:

Yeah. It's... If I am really nervous, it's... Of course, will make... Like, sometimes before you start a piece and your mind is really, really nervous and think a lot of things. So, I think most of the time I will play really fast, faster than normally.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what physically happens to you? For example, some people, they are getting sweaty hands when they are nervous. What happens to you?

Interviewee:

Sorry?

Interviewer:

I mean, like, when you are nervous, something happens to your body, and some people, they feel like, you know, like their mouth is very dry. Other people have like, very wet hands. What happens to you when you are nervous?

Interviewee:

So I, I'm not... I'm not really sure what do you mean "When nervous and someone is doing some other things".

Interviewer:

I mean, what happens to you when you are nervous? Maybe you are shaking. Maybe you have like, very sweaty hands, or...

Interviewee:

Yeah, sorry. No.

Interviewer:

No?

Interviewee:

I don't think I have this action. Uh, when nervous... I'm thinking if I have any special things. Actually, when I'm playing, I will [find it] hard to focus.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:
Hard to, yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay. And do you have like, any strategies to be less nervous before performing?

Interviewee:
Take a big breath.

Interviewer:
Okay. So, breathing.

Interviewee:
Drink some water.

Interviewer:
Okay. And what about lessons? Are you nervous before your lessons with [teacher]?

Interviewee:
Uh, sometimes.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Sometimes if I know [I didn't] practice really good, I will [be] nervous.

Interviewer:
Okay. And when you are nervous before the lesson, do you play worse?

Interviewee:
Play worse?

Interviewer:
Do you play like, not as good as you would play normally? Does it affect the quality of your playing when you are nervous?

Interviewee:
Uh-huh.

Interviewer:
It does?

Interviewee:
Uh, yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay. And when you are playing a concert, are you focusing on how the audience is perceiving you when you are playing?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No.

Interviewee:

Actually, no. Yeah, but I only will, uh, to see that after the concert.

Interviewer:

Okay. Another question. When you are playing in the orchestra, sometimes it happens that you have like 50 empty bars. Are you getting nervous when you know that you are like, sitting with a cold instrument and then you will have to play something?

Interviewee:

Yeah, for sure. I am, I will, like, sometime... I don't remember what specific time, like last month, also last month, I have, uh, I have six time, uh, concerts. Uh, the piece is Harry Potter.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

And, uh, there is a big solo for tuba. And anytime before that, I need really, really need to prepare for that. Like, I have to rest for 10 minutes and just play a high note in C tuba.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

So...

Interviewer:

Please continue. I'm sorry.

Interviewee:

No, no, no, no. You can say.

Interviewer:

No, no, no. I really want to hear what you were going to say next.

Interviewee:

Uh-huh. Uh, I just will try to... Try to warm up with nothing.

Interviewer:

Okay?

Interviewee:

Sometime also try to [do] the accent. But first time I'm trying the concert, I crack the notes.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

In the [name of the orchestra]. So, after that, I don't try that.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Um, does it happen to you that you are playing a concert and then you just don't really remember the concert because you were so nervous?

Interviewee:

Oh, no.

Interviewer:

No?

Interviewee:

I think it cannot. If I am really nervous, I will really remember that concert, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you frequently enjoy playing in the concerts?

Interviewee:

Not really, actually.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

If in the orchestra, I will really enjoy, but if for the recital, I'm not enjoying that because I don't like solo piece, actually.

Interviewer:

Okay. Um, the next question is, are you self-confident as a musician?

Interviewee:

Mhm. I think... Uh, how to, how to identify if I...

Interviewer:

Do you trust yourself as a musician? Like, do you think that you play good, or...?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay. Okay. And, even sometimes, you know, like, even due to the fact that sometimes bad concerts happen, what is motivating you to continue playing the tuba and...

Interviewee:

Uh-huh. Uh, it's like, it's hard. One of the reasons is, it's hard to change.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Change the study and other things. And, uh, and another reason should be, I think I can get more improved after these bad things.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

And it will be fine.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So just...

Interviewer:

Oh, I'm sorry. I just thought you finished again. Please continue.

Interviewee:

No, no, no. I have nothing, you just keep....

Interviewer:

Okay. Uh, do you have any difficulties with airflow or breath support?

Interviewee:

Uh, yeah. Like, sometime I go to the low register, it's hard to control the... everything, I think. Even from breathing and blow, is hard to catch the quality and, uh, tuning.

Interviewer:

Okay. When you play a tuba, it requires many things to work. For example, your lips, your breathing and like, your whole body. Do you think about it when you are playing?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Most of the time I will think, my legs, actually.

Interviewer:

Okay?

Interviewee:

I will try to balance my tuba most of the time.

Interviewer:

Okay. How frequently in the lesson does a teacher asks you “Okay, you did this thing not really good, please try it another way”, how frequently when he asks you, like, to feel the difference, you actually feel the difference?

Interviewee:

Most of the time, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. That's also great. Do you have any tensions when you are practicing?

Interviewee:

Any attention?

Interviewer:

Tensions.

Interviewee:

Uh-huh. While practice... Uh, no, I don't think.

Interviewer:

Okay. Um, do you think about your posture a lot when you are practicing?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Yes? What are you thinking about?

Interviewee:

Like I said before, I will really focus on the body, uh, between the body and tuba, how to balance everything.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Like, if I play not really comfortable, I will want to... I will lose the attention, lose the focus.

Interviewer:

Okay. So basically, you have to look at your posture so you wouldn't lose your focus, yeah?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Like that. I need to keep the position when I play my tuba. If it's out of balance, I will feel really bad.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you find it easy to stay focused during your lessons with [main subject teacher]?

Interviewee:
No. No, actually.

Interviewer:
What is distracting you?

Interviewee:
Uh, actually for me, it's... I have different steps in the lesson. When I just come to the room.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
I will be little bit nervous. And after I start playing for 20 minutes, I will be really chill.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
I will relax, but I don't know why.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Like, I just know the environment. Right.

Interviewer:
Okay. And do you take it personally when you receive feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:
I take personally when I receive the...?

Interviewer:
Like, do you, like, when somebody says that you played a thing, like, not that good, are you like “Oh no, I'm a terrible player”, or are you like “Okay, I played something bad, I'm just gonna fix it”?

Interviewee:
Uh, I think I prefer the second one.

Interviewer:
Okay. So you choose the second one. That's great.

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
How stressed are you during your lessons with [main subject teacher]?

Interviewee:

How stressed? I will only have stress, uh, in the beginning. And after that, I will relax, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. What is the thing that you are focusing on the most when you hear the feedback from your teacher in the lesson?

Interviewee:

Uh-huh... Uh, first thing I will think, uh, because [main subject teacher] will say nothing, which thing is wrong. And I was thinking that. And I will, uh, try to have an answer for this question, "How would it happen?"

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah, and ...

Interviewer:

Please go on.

Interviewee:

No, no, I don't have any word. I just...

Interviewer:

Okay. And if, for example, your teacher says "good", does it change the way you feel about yourself? Or if your teacher says "bad", do you feel bad after the lesson?

Interviewee:

Yeah, for sure.

Interviewer:

Yes. So, it changes the way you feel?

Interviewee:

Uh, but sometimes if [main subject teacher] says it's good, but I think it's bad, I will still keep the bad.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it's, it's more about if you feel that you played good, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. That is the end of the interview, thank you.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:

Okay, we are recording. So now I am informing you that you are being recorded and the transcript of this recording is going to be used in my research. If you agree to that, please state your name and say that you agree.

Interviewee:

Me, [name], agree this.

Interviewer:

Okay, the first question is, which type, like... Which length of meditation were you using the most frequently?

Interviewee:

I didn't count, but I think it should be 5 minutes.

Interviewer:

Okay, and have you noticed any changes in playing-related things yourself?

Interviewee:

Yeah, actually when I play now, the more change, I think, is in the orchestra and even in the ensemble, something. Because when I play, I will try to feel something else, like other guys instead of just myself to play that.

Interviewer:

Could you please rephrase it? I am not sure that I understood what you meant.

Interviewee:

Yeah, I mean, I think I got more change in orchestra playing and ensemble playing. Yeah. Because, I think, after this one, I can extend my feeling when I was playing.

Interviewer:

Okay, so you are feeling more when you are playing, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I also can feel other guys feeling like that. Like, when you play with bass trombone, you can feel his breathing and motions. Like, you will notice the atmosphere or environment, like that.

Interviewer:

Okay, so it's like, you are more aware of how you feel while you are practicing, and you are more aware of what other people in the ensemble are doing as well?

Interviewee:

Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it's fine.

Interviewer:

It's fine. Can you describe your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

How many grades? 1 to 10?

Interviewer:

No, I mean... You can do that as well, honestly.

Interviewee:

Yeah, if in 1 to 10, I think it's 5.

Interviewer:

It's 5. And do you think that your focus improved since you started meditating?

Interviewee:

Actually, when I just started this experiment, I think I got improved. But after like 2 weeks, I just go to normal.

Interviewer:

Okay, so it increased and then it came back, yes?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yes.

Interviewer:

And are you getting as distracted as you used to get when you started the experiment?

Interviewee:

Sorry?

Interviewer:

Do you know what is "distracted"?

Interviewee:

Distracted?

Interviewer:

Distracted. For example, you are practicing and then you see something, and then you are not focused on practicing anymore, because, like, that something happens.

Interviewee:

Ah, so you mean I have that before the experiment?

Interviewer:

No, like, I am asking if it changed. Like, maybe you had it and now you don't or maybe you didn't have it and now you have, or maybe it stayed the same?

Interviewee:

Ah. I think it's the same.

Interviewer:
The same?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay, and when you are practicing the tuba, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:
I think, it's air and the breath.

Interviewer:
Okay. For how long are you capable of practicing mindfully and with good focus?

Interviewee:
For a day or...?

Interviewer:
Like, you come into a classroom, and for how long can you practice until your mind goes somewhere?

Interviewee:
Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think it's three hours, but in the middle, I will play my phone, I think.

Interviewer:
Okay, and how much can you practice until you, like, start doing stuff with your phone?

Interviewee:
Uh-huh. It's like... It's hard to say. Like, two hours, I think.

Interviewer:
So, after two hours you start using the phone and then you practice one more hour, and then you are done for the day?

Interviewee:
Yeah, that's it.

Interviewer:
Okay. There is this thing that, you are practicing and sometimes you are, like, very into practicing, and you are very busy practicing, and you just don't notice what is happening outside, and you just forget the time, and you forget all the other things that are happening. How frequently are you capable of reaching that state?

Interviewee:
Uh-huh. I think, it's hardly happening, this situation.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
If I'm really busy, I think, this can happen.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
If not, I think it's fine.

Interviewer:
Okay, and do you think that it has become more frequent or more rare since the last time we talked?

Interviewee:
Uh-huh. Let me think... I think, it's more rare.

Interviewer:
Okay. And how frequently does it happen for you that you are thinking that "Okay, today I'm going to practice this, this, this and that" and at some point, in the middle of practice you get bored or something doesn't go well and you get angry, and you just stop practicing before you should have?

Interviewee:
Uh-huh. Actually, I will not be angry, but I will just... Don't want to practice.

Interviewer:
Yeah. Okay, and do you think that those times, when you don't want to practice anymore in the middle of practice, became more frequent or more rare?

Interviewee:
Actually, it's more frequent, but I think it's because of myself.

Interviewer:
Okay. Could you please tell me what is happening? Maybe you have exams, or you're stressed?

Interviewee:
Yeah, that's because I just got sick and fever the last two weeks, and that's why I didn't do a lot of the questionnaire before.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
And after that, I'm feeling a little bit bad and like... I got some cold or something.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:

So, when I play and just feel boring or something, I think I just stop that and take it another day.

Interviewer:

Okay, so maybe... Basically, you haven't recovered after your sickness completely, so if you don't feel like playing, you don't play, right? I got it right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

Of course.

Interviewer:

Okay, can you please tell me which ones?

Interviewee:

For preparing some concert and recital or something, like, I need to play some difficult piece and then I will face some technical issues, and I need to solve that. Also, when I play in the orchestra, I also need to try to make the sound better and because my colleagues will ask that, to get more high quality.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you generally respond when something goes bad with your playing? For example, you have a bad practice session, you have a bad lesson, or you have a bad performance?

Interviewee:

Actually, after those things, I think, I don't really care about that.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I will just go to the bed and have a nice night, and... Another day.

Interviewer:

Okay, so it doesn't influence your motivation or self-esteem?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

It doesn't?

Interviewee:

It's not, really, but just a little bit, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay, has it changed since you started to meditate?

Interviewee:

I think there's not that much change for me.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Mm-hmm.

Interviewer:

Like, do you have nervousness when you go on the stage to perform?

Interviewee:

Ah, sure.

Interviewer:

Sure? Okay. Do you think that this nervousness changed since the last time we spoke?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think it's more rare.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you have that nervousness, does it make your playing worse as much as it used to before?

Interviewee:

I think since... After I used this, I got less nervous.

Interviewer:

Yeah, but when you get nervous, sometimes you play worse. And do you think that relationship of you being nervous and you playing worse has become bigger or smaller?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah. I think if I am nervous and I keep playing, it will be worse for me.

Interviewer:

Yeah, yeah. But, like, when you are nervous... It's always when you are nervous...?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Like, sometimes, when you are nervous, it gets worse. But now, if you are nervous, does it get as bad as it used to or is it a bit better?

Interviewee:
Sorry, I got it.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
I think it's going better if... After these experiments, if I get nervous and keep playing, I can move fast to change my situation to more calm down.

Interviewer:
Okay. And do you experience that nervousness when you go to the lesson?

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:
No. Did it change since the last time we spoke or is it the same?

Interviewee:
The same.

Interviewer:
The same. Do you think about what the audience thinks about you when you are playing something on the stage?

Interviewee:
Yeah, I also will think about that. But after the concert, I don't really care. But I will listen to some feedback. And last time... Sorry, last week, I had a mock audition in the [name of the orchestra]. And on the stage, I'm really nervous. But I also want to hear the audience's feedback. And I just ask everyone to give some feedback, but... I think it's useful for me, but I don't really care at that point.

Interviewer:
And do you do that when you are playing? Do you think about what they have to say when you are sitting on the stage and playing?

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:
Okay. Has it changed since the last time we spoke?

Interviewee:
It's the same.

Interviewer:
The same. Okay. And does it happen to you that after you play on the stage, it seems like you don't remember anything? Or you just don't remember many things from the performance?

Interviewee:

Yeah. It always happens, these things, for me. But it really depends on the environment, I think. If I play a solo piece, it's like, some recital and chamber music, it can happen. But if I play in the orchestra, I think I will remember everything.

Interviewer:

Okay. And if you don't remember, do you think that it happens because you are nervous?

Interviewee:

Yeah, sure.

Interviewer:

Okay. And that thing that you don't remember playing yourself, has it become more frequent or more rare?

Interviewee:

More rare, I think.

Interviewer:

Rare. Okay. And how frequently do you enjoy performing?

Interviewee:

I think after this experiment, I enjoy every performance, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. That is very nice to hear.

Interviewee:

Yeah, because I think... I don't know. It just changed.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you trust yourself when you play?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No? What are the reasons that you don't trust yourself? Why don't you trust yourself?

Interviewee:

I think maybe because I'm not sure what will happen for me. Because it also depends on my practicing.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

If I have bad practicing, I will not really believe in myself. And most of the time, I want to get a really high quality, but it's really hard to achieve.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
So that's the point, I think.

Interviewer:
And do you think that after this experiment, you trust and believe in yourself more?

Interviewee:
Yeah, I think. A little bit.

Interviewer:
Okay. What motivates you to keep playing the tuba when some bad things happen, or you just don't feel like it?

Interviewee:
Do you mean, what helps me to keep playing tuba?

Interviewer:
What motivates you?

Interviewee:
Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's life, I think.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
No jobs.

Interviewer:
Okay. And have you noticed any changes in your air or breath support while practicing the meditation?

Interviewee:
Let me think... I think there are no changes for those points. But I think just by closing my eyes, I just can feel more after the experiment.

Interviewer:
Okay, so you are more aware of what you are feeling, right?

Interviewee:
Yeah, yeah. I think more on the feeling instead of something else.

Interviewer:
Okay, and are you more aware of how you feel about your breathing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, sure. I think this is also because I do more exercise on this.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Okay. And are you aware about your lips or like, how you sit when you are playing?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. Do you think it has changed since the last time that we spoke?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. Does it happen for you that your teacher in the lesson asks you if you feel the difference instead of understanding it?

Interviewee:

Uh-huh. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

And do you usually feel the difference?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Yes. And do you think that the frequency of you feeling the difference has changed since you started meditating or not really?

Interviewee:

I think it's the same.

Interviewer:

It's the same. And are you getting tense somewhere in your body while playing the tuba?

Interviewee:

Tense...

Interviewer:

Tense? Like, not relaxed?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm thinking. I think it's the same. Because I always give some pressure in my body when I'm playing tuba.

Interviewer:

Okay. And where in your body do you give tension?

Interviewee:

Leg.

Interviewer:

Leg. And have you noticed any changes since the last time we spoke?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Maybe you notice that you are tense a bit more? Maybe you are more aware of being tense? No?

Interviewee:

Hm... I need to think about that. I don't think so.

Interviewer:

You don't think so. Okay. Do you pay attention to your posture when you play the tuba?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you think that it has changed since the last time?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. In which way?

Interviewee:

Actually, I will try to find a more comfortable posture to play tuba. Actually, I usually do some experiments when I'm playing tuba. Because I cannot find a really good posture to play tuba in my situation, so I always change that. For this month, I will pay more attention in my leg to holding my tuba.

Interviewer:

Okay. So you are more aware of what is happening with your body when you are playing, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you think that practicing meditation affected your sound in any way?

Interviewee:

My sound?

Interviewer:
Sound of the tuba.

Interviewee:
Uh-huh. No. I think this can influence my emotional, but not for my sound.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you find it easy to be concentrated in your lessons?

Interviewee:
Yeah, but I think it's the same after the experiments and before.

Interviewer:
It's the same. Okay. And how do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:
I will just write down and remember that and keep practicing.

Interviewer:
Okay. And do you sometimes feel sad or angry or attacked because of what your teacher says to you?

Interviewee:
Actually, if sometimes I play really bad, I will just be upset. But this is not because of teacher's comments or something.

Interviewer:
Okay. It's because of yourself, right?

Interviewee:
Yeah. Because of myself.

Interviewer:
Okay. And have you noticed any changes in that? Like, you feeling upset after you play badly in the lesson?

Interviewee:
Uh-huh... I think it's the same.

Interviewer:
It's the same?

Interviewee:
Because if I play really bad, I will really... I, of course, will be upset.

Interviewer:
Okay. And how dependent is your trusting yourself and believing in yourself from what your teacher says to you in the lesson?

Interviewee:

I think there's not really much influence.

Interviewer:

Okay. So even if your teacher says that you're playing not that well in that particular lesson, you still trust yourself?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And that is the end of the interview, so I will stop recording.

E01

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

So, as I have turned the recording on, I'm informing you that this thing from further on is going to be recorded, transcribed, and used in my research. If you are agreeing to that, can you please state your name and the fact that you are agreeing to the things that I have said before.

Interviewee:

So, [name], and I agree.

Interviewer:

Okay. If my question isn't clear because they are very vague, feel free to ask me to reformulate or give you examples on anything, and if at a certain point you feel that I'm being very much invasive or I just make you feel uncomfortable or you just don't want to answer that, also we can skip questions. So, first let's do the basic information, and please tell on the recording your meditation experience, because I won't remember probably that.

Interviewee:

So, I did some laying down exercises, also focused on breathing, I did that a couple years ago. I did also the walking with music, and the sleeping meditation, so you get to like see sounds, also focused on breathing.

Interviewer:

Okay. For how long have you been doing that?

Interviewee:

I think, yeah, two years ago, three years ago I started for like one year of meditation, then I quit. And now I did last month.

Interviewer:

Okay. Which year in your studies are you?

Interviewee:

I'm a third year bachelor.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how long have you been playing trumpet?

Interviewee:

I've been playing for ten years.

Interviewer:

How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician? I know it's a very insensitive question, what I have to gather is data, I'm sorry.

Interviewee:

In general, yeah, it's fine. It's just sometimes you have your downs and ups.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Okay. Okay, and do you have any particular concerns or expectations about meditation and how it might influence your musical performance or daily life?

Interviewee:

I think it will influence something good. It will help.

Interviewer:

Okay. Can you describe your current focus levels during practice sessions? Like, are you focused when you're practicing?

Interviewee:

Oh, yeah. Always. I practice like 30 minutes, so it's always 30 minutes full focus.

Interviewer:

Okay, so you're not getting distracted as well. Good for you. And you don't procrastinate as well.

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay, good for you. And when you're practicing the trumpet, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it is different per session. But in general, the basics, so the breathing, how I sound or sit. Yeah, and sound.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you currently use any techniques to help you with your focus?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay. And, okay, this is maybe like not for your current situation, but for how long are you capable to practice like mindfully and with full focus at the time?

Interviewee:

I don't get the question.

Interviewer:

Like, you know, like you have the focus state, but the human brain gets tired. So, for how long can you keep focused while practicing?

Interviewee:

Oh, it depends on each day. Sometimes I can practice two bars, three hours straight. But mostly all the time I'm focused.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how many hours of that focus state? Yeah, like combined all sessions.

Interviewee:

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Interviewer:

Okay. Have you heard about the concept of the flow?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Basically, it's like the state that you are so immersed into what you are doing, like you forget the time and you forget everything else. And you are just very, very productive, and very much doing the thing.

Interviewee:

Yeah

Interviewer:

Have you ever experienced that?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. How frequently do you experience that?

Interviewee:

One time a week.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you know like what you have to do in order to be able to reach that?

Interviewee:

No, it's very random.

Interviewer:

And how frequently does it happen for you that you just stop practicing because you get bored or you are very angry that something is not going on or for any other reason than earlier when you wanted to?

Interviewee:

It almost never happens. Only when it's something worse.

Interviewer:

Okay, so like physical tiredness. Okay. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice and performance routine? The injury, right? *shakes head in a positive way* But like nothing mental, only the physical stuff. How do you generally respond to bad practice sessions, bad lessons, or performances?

Interviewee:

Mostly, I just cry and then I go on.

Interviewer:

Okay. And does it influence like your self-esteem, for example?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Like in a correlative way, if it was bad, that you are feeling kind of bad, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah

Interviewer:

Okay. And does it influence your motivation in any way?

Interviewee:

It will help me to practice it more.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it's like positive reinforcement.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Before or during the performance?

Interviewee:

Both.

Interviewer:

Both. Does it affect your playing quality?

Interviewee:

Yeah. My jaw will shake.

Interviewer:

So, in a negative way, I presume. And what other symptoms do you have, like physical ones?

Interviewee:

Yeah. So, my jaw will really shake pretty badly. Sweating, dry mouth.

Interviewer:

Okay. Yeah. And do you experience that anxiety always or just from time to time?

Interviewee:

Always.

Interviewer:

Always. Do you use any strategies to deal with that?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

And do you experience music performance anxiety in the lessons?

Interviewee:

Only when I have to play for people in the lesson. But I don't private lessons.

Interviewer:

Not with your teacher.

Interviewee:

Oh, no. Not with my teacher.

Interviewer:

Okay. Then we are going to skip this section. You probably have played in many orchestras, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And very frequently it happens that you want to have 60 bars of rest, and then you have to play and you get all cold. So, do you get anxiety about this?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, you just go through and that's it.

Interviewee:

Yeah. If I kix, I kix.

Interviewer:

That's a very straightforward thing. And when you are playing, are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And what do you think?

Interviewee:

Oh, no. "Am I good enough? What are they going to talk about the trumpet player?"

Interviewer:

Oh, okay. So, you're just worried about your playing. Okay. Does it happen for you that you just finished a concert or something and you feel that it was a blur or like it went really fast or you just sort of blacked out?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah? Does it happen too frequently?

Interviewee:

No, no. Almost never. It's like one or two times, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you know maybe what triggered it?

Interviewee:

No, I don't know what triggered it.

Interviewer:

It just happened?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently are you enjoying your performance?

Interviewee:

Almost never.

Interviewer:

Why?

Interviewee:

I just get so nervous.

Interviewer:

Oh, okay. Okay. And how would you describe yourself as a musician? Do you trust your abilities?

Interviewee:

I don't trust my abilities.

Interviewer:

Do you want to elaborate on that?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah. I can elaborate on that. Do you want to listen more?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Yeah. So, when I was younger, I didn't play so good trumpet. So, I always got told like you're not good enough, you're not good enough. So that's all I brought to now.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it's just like something from the past. It's not like you think that, oh, my sound is bad or something like that. It's just the thing that they made you believe.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Like it's not, there's like no specific thing that you think that, "Oh, I'm not good".

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewee:

Okay. Sorry. Something from the past was not really, yeah. That's it.

Interviewer:

That's a shame. I love how you play.

Interviewee:

Oh, thank you.

Interviewer:

And everybody experiences bad performance, lesson and so on. What keeps you motivated after that?

Interviewee:

I just like practicing, like the technical stuff. So, when I'm practicing, I'm just enjoying it.

Interviewer:

Oh, so you love the process.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Oh, that's so nice. Are you experiencing any difficulties with your airflow or breath support properly? The airflow or breath support when you're practicing. Is everything okay with that?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And brass playing requires many physical things in order to make a sound. Like, for example, muscles around your lips should work, your breathing muscles should work, your body should also be in a very specific position. Are you focusing on that when you're playing, on the physical aspects of playing?

Interviewee:

During the technical exercises, yes. During playing a piece, no.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you focus, what do you focus on?

Interviewee:

Especially the airflow and the breath support. That I don't play too much on my lips.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, when you're having your lesson, sometimes it happens that the teacher tells you some feedback. And they ask you to do the thing again. And it doesn't sometimes happen for you, but he doesn't ask, like, did you understand it, but he asks if you felt it.

Interviewee:

He asked if I felt it.

Interviewer:

Yeah. And how frequently do you actually feel it?

Interviewee:

If he asks it, I will feel it. But he does not always ask, do you feel it? Or just, oh, now do you do it right? And then like, oh, did I do it right?

Interviewer:

Oh, so it's not always there for you. Yeah.

Interviewee:

So it's like 50-50.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience any tension while playing? Physical tension?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Are you aware of your posture?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you find it easy to stay focused in your main subject lessons?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you usually react to this feedback from teacher?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I just keep practicing.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it happen that it leads you to excessive self-criticism?

Interviewee:

More frustration than something if I don't succeed in a part of the music.

Interviewer:

Okay. But it goes back very quickly? Or do you just like ruminate the whole thing that "Oh no, I failed that part?"

Interviewee:

Yeah, so sometimes my teacher really wants me to correct my mistakes. But if I don't correct it and I don't get it correct for a lesson, then it will get really frustrated.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what is the thing that you most focus on when you are hearing the feedback from the teacher?

Interviewee:

Mostly what the feedback is. I would say you are not using enough air, I am focusing on air.

Interviewer:

Okay. But you are trying to understand the things rationally? Like to know the sequence of what you have to do? Or are you more like, oh, okay, this is the right feeling. Then after the lesson you are chasing the feeling that you had in the lesson.

Interviewee:
Yeah, the first one.

Interviewer:
The first one. Okay. And how dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:
Wait, so how? Once more.

Interviewer:
How dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:
gesticulates

Interviewer:
So, like a bit?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
But nothing terrible?

Interviewee:
No, nothing terrible.

Interviewer:
Okay, like, just differently, but like if you had a bad lesson, for how long are you affected by that?

Interviewee:
It depends on how bad the teacher was. Like what the other said to me. If he was really mean, then it can take a week. If it's just like a normal lesson, then do some correct things and it will be one day.

Interviewer:
But more or less really short term?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay, nothing major. Okay, and I think we are done.

Post-intervention

Interviewee:
So, I'm turning on the recording and thus I'm informing you that you are being recorded, and the transcript of this recording is going to be used in my master research. If you are aware of

that and agree to the previously stated information, please tell me your name and say that you agree.

Interviewer:
[Name] and I agree.

Interviewee:
That's great. Anyway, so which length of meditation have you chosen the most times while you were practicing and participating in this experiment?

Interviewer:
The three minutes.

Interviewee:
The three minutes?

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
Okay, and have you noticed any changes related to your playing?

Interviewer:
Yes, so immediately when I was meditating for the first couple of times, my breath got instantly deeper.

Interviewee:
Okay?

Interviewer:
Also, because I only had [to] play one note and just let it go of my thoughts, I got more concentration for when I was actually playing my exercises. So, it was really nice.

Interviewee:
Okay, that's great to hear. And how do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewer:
Oh, good.

Interviewee:
Good?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
That's great. How are your focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

High. Yeah, I have a lot of focus.

Interviewer:

Okay, have you noticed a difference since last time we talked or not really?

Interviewee:

It is a little bit that I go deeper in making more exercises in the exercise. So, I make variations. Normally I couldn't do it, but because I'm that concentrated, I get new thoughts.

Interviewer:

Okay, so basically you are concentrating and you're getting new ideas?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And do you get still distracted or not really?

Interviewee:

Not really.

Interviewer:

Not really. Okay, and when you're practicing the trumpet, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

My flow. The airstream.

Interviewer:

The airstream. Do you currently use any other techniques to help you focus or improve your performance?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

And how long are you capable to practice mindfully and with good focus at a time?

Interviewee:

For one session, 30 minutes.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah, and then I can do that a couple times.

Interviewer:

Okay, so how much quality practice time do you get in a day?

Interviewee:

Now, one and a half hour.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But it's because normally I would have three hours, but because of the injury, I cannot.

Interviewer:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Do you remember us talking about flow?

Interviewee:

I think so, yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah, do you need a reminder what it is?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Basically, it's like a state where you are so engaged that you don't feel time anymore and you don't think about anything else. You just do that thing and you are not getting really distracted.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

So, how frequently are you capable of reaching that state?

Interviewee:

It's more than it was before. But I think, yeah, one time a day.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So it's pretty... more than I had.

Interviewer:

It's very frequent.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And have you figured out what things make it easier for you to come to the state?

Interviewee:

I just let go of... A little bit of the feeling of how I should play. I just... Because [during the recording] I have to play like one note just without thoughts. That helps. Because then I just can't play it wrong or whatever.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
And so, I will play my warm up, or also like that.

Interviewer:
Okay. So basically, like the whole act of meditation helps you to get in, if I'm understanding it?

Interviewee:
Yep.

Interviewer:
Okay. I'm going to make, like, many clarifications because I really want to get it right like, in my head as well.

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
And how frequently does it happen for you that you stop practicing before you should, and it's not related to you getting tired or like, physical things?

Interviewee:
I'm not. I don't have that.

Interviewer:
You don't have that?

Interviewee:
Always I practice and I go till the end.

Interviewer:
Okay. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:
No, only the injury.

Interviewer:
Injury...

Interviewee:
Otherwise, I'm not.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you generally respond to bad practice sessions or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

I just think how I could make my next practice sessions more useful. So, if I need to do articulation, I do articulation. So, it's like "Oh, what can I do to make it better". Sometimes it's rest, and sometimes it's another form of technique.

Interviewer:

Okay, but does it affect your self-confidence or motivation in any way?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. You're just directly analyzing and thinking how you can make it better, right?

Interviewee:

Yep.

Interviewer:

Okay. Have you had the chance to perform since the last time?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Do you still get lessons?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience music performance anxiety in the lessons?

Interviewee:

Yes, in the first note.

Interviewer:

In the first note?

Interviewee:

Yeah, but afterwards it's gone.

Interviewer:

Do you think that it has improved since the last time we spoke?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. And does this anxiety affect the quality of your playing?

Interviewee:

Only a little bit of shaking. And for rest - not.

Interviewer:

Like, shaking in the breath support system?

Interviewee:

Yeah, but also my jaw, it shakes.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you have any other physical symptoms than shaking jaw?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. And does it happen every lesson or just sometimes?

Interviewee:

Sometimes.

Interviewer:

Do you know what are the triggers?

Interviewee:

In a group lesson, it's because other people are around. And for my private lessons, sometimes I'm scared. "Oh, did I do enough, a little bit enough for the lesson?"

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Or do I sound good?

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you use any strategies to mitigate that?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay. Because you didn't have a chance to perform, that doesn't apply. That doesn't, also doesn't... Okay, we're going to skip this. How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:

Like, perception...?

Interviewer:

Like, do you feel confident in your abilities? Are you struggling with some doubt? Maybe you're comparing yourself to other people too much?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I do that. But for now, because I have the injury, I'm pretty closed off to other people.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

So now it's not. So, but the meditation didn't help me to improve that.

Interviewer:

Okay, it's just like the circumstances that you are in right now?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and like, you are in a pretty difficult state as a musician right now. So what motivates you to keep practicing and performing?

Interviewee:

I just shut off my feeling, and just go.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Just, I don't know, just practice. If it's better than the day before, it's good.

Interviewer:

So basically, the feeling of improvement, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

Are you experiencing any difficulties with your airflow or breath support while playing your instrument? And maybe like, do you feel any change in that regard, which is connected to the breathing?

Interviewee:

Um, no, I don't have any difficulties with the airflow or breath support.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Have you noticed like, any change of those two aspects since the last time we spoke?

Interviewee:

The airflow was getting better, is getting better. It's better. So, I have more flow than I had before, because of the meditating.

Interviewer:

Okay. That's great to hear. And, do you think about other physical aspects, for example, embouchure or body alignment when you're practicing trumpet?

Interviewee:

Yeah. For the body, I always think "chest up". That's for me very important. Just that you really...

Interviewer:

"Chest up"?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So yeah, but that is one of the only things besides the airflow. And the breath support.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed yourself maybe being more aware of the way how your body works, both with breathing and with...?

Interviewee:

It feels the air is getting deeper in my lungs.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

So that...

Interviewer:

But have you been noticing things more?

Interviewee:

Um, not really, I think, no.

Interviewer:

Not really. Okay. Anyway, how frequently in the lesson does it happen that your teacher asks you to feel the difference instead of understanding it?

Interviewee:

He doesn't.

Interviewer:

He doesn't. Okay. Do you experience any tensions while practicing? Physical tensions.

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

And how aware are you about your posture while practicing, like, except for chest thing?

Interviewee:

I'm pretty aware.

Interviewer:

Pretty aware. What are you thinking about?

Interviewee:

I always stand with my feet and my knees. It's not like, locked in.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

That kind of things, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you think that meditation affected it in any way?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Yes?

Interviewee:

So, my breath got deeper. So, my body got more relaxed. So, I got faster in a good position.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you think that practicing meditation affected your sound in any way?

Interviewee:

Yes, because my air got deeper in lungs. And that's why my sound got opener.

Interviewer:

Okay. Maybe you have received any comments from your teacher on that, or is it like, your own feeling only?

Interviewee:

No, he's happy.

Interviewer:

Oh, that's good. Do you find it easy to stay focused during your lesson?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it's easy for me to stay focused.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you usually react to the feedback of your teacher?

Interviewee:

Good, normal. No tension or that kind of things.

Interviewer:

You don't take it like, personally or?...

Interviewee:

No. Not at all.

Interviewer:

Not at all. That's great. Do you think it's changed since last time or not really?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay. What is the thing that you're focusing the most when you hear the feedback from your teacher? Is it more like, how you should do it, like, trying to understand it rationally? Or is it more trying to feel, how does it feel to do it right, and then you're trying just to chase the feeling after the lesson?

Interviewee:

Oh, that's a difficult question. Mostly I think about it logical, rational. But sometimes, I just listen and just react on that. Just from "Oh, this is how it sounds, let's try it without thinking".

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah, so it's like, both of each.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

Oh, it's not dependent on my teacher's approval.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you think that you noticed change in that?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. So the main change that you notice is the breathing and the focus, as breathing got more relaxed and you have better airflow, and the focus - that you are not necessarily able to focus for a longer time, but to focus like, deeper into the thing that you are doing?

Interviewee:

Yes. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. That was a very productive interview. And we are done.

E02

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

I have now switched on the recording, so this way I'm informing you that you are being recorded. For my Master's research I will be using a transcript of this whole thing. If you agree, then tell me your name and that you agree with the aforementioned information.

Interviewee:

[Name], I agree.

Interviewer:

Ok, and if you don't understand the question, don't be afraid to always ask. And I'm digging into very, very sensitive topics where it might be painful for somebody, so if I inadvertently touch on something that you don't want to talk about or if you're uncomfortable, or you feel like I'm invading, it's okay to say, "I don't want to answer this question, let's move on".

Interviewee:

OK.

Interviewer:

OK, basic information: I know I asked this, but I want to have it on the record. What is your experience with meditation if you have any?

Interviewee:

I did a bit of yoga, but nothing more than that.

Interviewer:

How long have you been doing it, and do you still do it?

Interviewee:

No, I don't anymore, but when I did it was about maybe half a year, if not more, maybe even a year.

Interviewer:

What study year are you in and how many years have you been playing the French horn?

Interviewee:

Good question. Master's first year, I don't know, if you count by courses, that's sixth, right?

Interviewer:

Master's first.

Interviewee:

And this is the fifth year.

Interviewer:

How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

What do you mean?

Interviewer:

Some people have some physical problems that prevent them from playing, others are very anxious and stressed, and this prevents them from playing, some other obstacles occur, for other people everything's fine. So, do you have any of these things?

Interviewee:

No, I don't know, I never thought about it.

Interviewer:

So, if you haven't thought about it, you probably don't. Do you have any fears or something that you expect from this whole meditation thing?

Interviewee:

Probably not, maybe it's just interesting, I'm just excited about what will happen.

Interviewer:

Ok, good to hear. Can you tell me about your concentration levels when you're practicing on your own?

Interviewee:

I feel like it depends on the day, because there are times when, well, actually, I've been working with quite good concentration for half a year now, but still, after the warm-up, after an hour and a half, perhaps an hour, the attention starts to drift somewhere, maybe someone wrote me, so maybe it's going to go to that time reserved for technologies. There are things that steal attention.

Interviewer:

Ok, but this one starts after some fatigue, right, when you do a bit more work and then you get distracted?

Interviewee:

Well, I think so.

Interviewer:

Ok, so what do you do when you get distracted?

Interviewee:

It's awful, exactly what I do is pick up my phone and sit down.

Interviewer:

Ok, and when you see that you've started to fidget with the phone, how do you then return to normal, adequate, focused work?

Interviewee:

Well, it's awfully hard, because you're angry with yourself for doing this at the time and not playing. Well, but you realize that you need to take a little break from it all. But then the rest is too long of just chilling. And then, when you have to go back, you are no longer in the

same state as you came in, concentrating on the work. So, then you have to go to the main subject lesson and concentrate there.

Interviewer:

Ok, so generally, if you get distracted, you don't come back easily?

Interviewee:

Well, with great difficulty.

Interviewer:

Ok, and are there any specific triggers that would cause this distraction?

Interviewee:

No, maybe.

Interviewer:

For some people it's that if they're tired, for others it's that if something doesn't work out very well, or something like that.

Interviewee:

Well, maybe when, you know, when you work, work on the same place of a piece and it doesn't work out, then you get fed up, and then you just throw everything out. And, like you said, you throw it out the window and go on doing some nonsense.

Interviewer:

Ok, when you're playing the French horn, what are you concentrating on the most?

Interviewee:

Right now, it is about breathing in the flow of air, about its fullness and its direction.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you use any techniques to improve your concentration and overall playing? Well, I mean from that mental side, not playing some exercises.

Interviewee:

No, nothing from the meditation side.

Interviewer:

Ok, nothing, all good. How long can you play well with full concentration in one session?

Interviewee:

Well, if you include the main subject lesson, I can concentrate for an hour and a half.

Interviewer:

Ok, and would it happen to you that after that hour and a half, you would go to eat or do something else and then return? So, do you get that concentration back? Or is it more like, it's all gone for the day?

Interviewee:

Well, you can concentrate, but you get less concentration. You're still not fully in that thing. I would say 60 percent concentrated.

Interviewer:

Ok, how much quality work do you expect yourself to produce per day?

Interviewee:

Well, I'd like at least three hours, four hours.

Interviewer:

And realistically, how much do you actually do?

Interviewee:

Well, realistically, about an hour of concentrated work, but the unfocused - about two, three hours of work really, something like that.

Interviewer:

Ok, have you heard of things like the flow?

Interviewee:

OK, I've heard of the flow, but I can't really say what it is now so suddenly.

Interviewer:

Well, it describes state of very intense concentration, when you're doing something and you forget everything else, and time seems to be passing wrong, or it's very slow, that you have all the time in the world to do things, or very fast, that you're working here and you're not watching the time, and it's like, oh yeah, two hours have gone by. It's just, let's say, a state of very deep concentration, where you don't really care about anything anymore, just the thing you're doing. Have you ever experienced that?

Interviewee:

Yeah, there's that moment when you're concentrating and time explodes, and you think, huh, where did the time go, and you need more of it. But yeah, time explodes quite often.

Interviewer:

Ok, but is this due to concentration or just due to a weird way of planning things?

Interviewee:

No, it's when you've earned it, you've lost track of time, and then time explodes and you're still lacking time.

Interviewer:

Ok, how often does this happen to you?

Interviewee:

Well, once or twice a week.

Interviewer:

Do you find it difficult to reach the state?

Interviewee:

Oh, you mean, time exploding?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Interviewee:

Well, I'm not trying to reach it.

Interviewer:

Ok, so this is not a good thing for you?

Interviewee:

No, well, I'm not saying it's bad, but I'm not saying it's good, because what happens is that you keep working on that part, your time explodes, and you've actually got a lot left to do, and you've used up all the time you had on that one, you know, episode.

Interviewer:

Ok, ok, I got it. So wouldn't that be problematic for time management?

Interviewee:

Well, at times, yes, it can even be this. Well, but it's not bad, in the sense that you're still then, you're enjoying the fact that you managed to perfect a certain place, and you're not going to make mistakes in that place any more.

Interviewer:

Yeah, yeah, because you're the first person who doesn't try to reach that, "I was a bit bad with the planning". Ok, so I'm very interested now. Ok, and do you have any, I don't know, triggers as well that would help you to achieve this whole time explosion?

Interviewee:

Well, no, I mean, people are trying to make time explode? I don't know.

Interviewer:

Well, they want that deep concentration, that kind of "Oh, ok, I'm working with high concentration here", because most of the time because that's where you're most often most productive, apparently, at the time. Ok. And at least a larger proportion of people feel that way and a larger proportion of people just maybe preferred this instead of sitting and fiddling with the phone.

Interviewee:

Okay. Because it seems to me that everybody does have that period of concentration, at least in the main subject lessons. It's like, for us, those main subject lessons go by in, like, five minutes.

Interviewer:

And how often does it happen to you that you stop playing because "Oh, I'm feeling lazy", or something doesn't work out, or you just don't feel like it?

Interviewee:

This is a good question, because even though I am a bit lazy, it's now that half of the year when I am not lazy because I can't be. So, I don't have that "Oh, I'm lazy, I won't play", you still get out of the house, you go there on your day off, you go, you play, and in any case, you've played at least a little bit during the day.

Interviewer:

No, but what I meant was that you plan that, "Oh, I'll just play for three hours", and then after an hour you notice that something doesn't work out, and then you think, "Well, maybe I'll go home and watch a movie".

Interviewee:

This has never been the case.

Interviewer:

Never.

Interviewee:

I mean, if we had talked during the undergraduate period, yeah, that would have been me, but currently - not at all.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think everybody does. Well, I have a lot of them because I was accepted into conservatory after playing the French horn for only half a year. Well, actually, I'm such a novice. I mean, during those four years I didn't do a lot. And now, well, we're fixing quite a lot of things. It's all about realizing that it's a wind [blowing] instrument, not an wind-holding instrument. That it is affected by the air and the sound quality, the whole embouchure thing, and the posture of the body. Well, everything's getting into place, bit after bit, you know, into these tiny drawers where things are supposed to be.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you usually react to your own bad practice sessions, where you notice that you've already fidgeted with your phone half the time, or bad lessons, or bad performances?

Interviewee:

Generally, I'd say practicing is different from performances, because, well, if you do that shitty, ah, I can't swear like that...Well, if you're practicing unproductively and unnecessarily, well, yeah, you're like, "What the hell am I doing here, why am I doing this?", and, you know, you judge yourself. Well, and regarding performances, I have moments of performance anxiety, or, you know, some kind of brain thing that I've had a couple of times where it just feels like everything's falling apart and you just walk off the stage.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, as I'm saying, how do you react - does it affect you more in terms of self-confidence? And that bad performance where you said that you were thinking, "Why am I doing this", does it affect you for a shorter time or for a longer time?

Interviewee:

Well, no, maybe not a very long time. For that evening only, maybe. The maximum time for such a feeling was maybe a week.

Interviewer:

You mean after the performance, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do these experiences affect your motivation in any way?

Interviewee:

They affect it strongly.

Interviewer:

Which way?

Interviewee:

To the bad side, you don't want to do anything anymore.

Interviewer:

Okay. Also, for how long?

Interviewee:

Well, it can fluctuate a lot. From a day or two to a week.

Interviewer:

Do you have any methods of recovering from such situations, or is it just "time will heal all wounds"?

Interviewee:

Well, let's be honest, we go to [a pub].

Interviewer:

Ah, I see. Thanks for honesty.

Interviewee:

I don't know. You feel down for a bit and then you get back to work. What happened, happened. Let's move on.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Well, it's fifty-fifty. Sometimes I don't feel it at all, and I can do whatever I want to do on the stage, and sometimes I'm suffocated by performance anxiety, I guess, or maybe just fear of people, I don't know. And then it's really not good.

Interviewer:

Okay. This affects your playing in a negative way, as I understand it.

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

What physical symptoms do you feel when you get anxious?

Interviewee:

My legs are shaking terribly. And, well, actually, then the thoughts start flying all over the place and I can't concentrate.

Interviewer:

Okay. And you mentioned that it happens sometimes, so do you have a rough idea of what kind of performance is going to give you performance anxiety, and what kind of performance is just going to go by without any incidents?

Interviewee:

Maybe there is, after all, a bit of intuition. Come to think of it, I said before the concert that "It's going to be no good and it's going to be crap". And then now it was the same thing that I said, "Well, no". So, then I feel, maybe there's some sort of intuition.

Interviewer:

Ok, but you don't have a reason why good concerts are like this and like that, and bad concerts are like this and like that?

Interviewee:

No, not really. Maybe you just feel confident somehow, or... Well, I can't say I'm confident because, well, I did my BA exam, I wasn't confident, but, I was preparing. Well, and there was this thing that I actually prepared for the exam alone. But, well, I walked in, stood there and there was no fear. And I did my best version of what I could do. But, well, sometimes you go on stage and you realize that it's like, "So, today it's going to be a disaster".

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you have any strategies on how you can deal with all these things?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. Good. Do you have performance anxiety, a little bit of nervousness before lectures? And now, speaking of lectures, here and further on by lessons I'm referring to main subject lessons and orchestral excerpt lessons.

Interviewee:

I had. I've had a brutal one. Especially when I went to the lecturer, as I had orchestral excerpts in my bachelor's degree, I had a horrible fear before every orchestral excerpt lesson, because I knew that it would still be bad, no matter how much I prepared.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And now, for the first two, maybe three months, when I changed my main subject teacher, it was also this whole stressful thing when you go to a lecture almost like before an exam. And now somehow, at this very moment, last week, the week before last, somehow it has started to flip itself, so that that big fear is no longer there.

Interviewer:

Ok, did that anxiety affect the quality of your playing in the lecture?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it felt like it did a bit.

Interviewer:

But probably not as much as on stage?

Interviewee:

Well, you know, there were still quite a few. Almost like an exam performance. But only at the very beginning of the lecture. Then you'd talk, you'd recover, and then it was normal. But the first 20 minutes were brutal.

Interviewer:

Okay. Did you have those physical symptoms you mentioned that your legs were shaking, for example, during main subject lessons?

Interviewee:

No, maybe it wasn't a panic type of fear, but just that you were afraid, and something was stirring inside you. But for me, when my legs are shaking, it's almost a panic thing.

Interviewer:

And do you use any strategies before main subject lessons to manage that fear, or not so much?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

As someone who plays in a lot of orchestras, you still get that experience of sitting there and there's like 60 bars of pauses, and then you have to play something very difficult. So, how do you react to those situations?

Interviewee:

Somehow, I don't have any anxiety in the orchestra, I guess for me the aura is that it's not a solo performance and it's cool.

Interviewer:

OK, do you think about how the audience sees you when you play on stage?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Have you ever had a moment when you're playing and the whole performance looks like a blackout or a blur because of anxiety?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Does this happen often?

Interviewee:

I don't know, I can count the blackouts on my fingers, but it happens that you've gone from the stage and then you're like, "That's it, I played it all?" Or it's the last few bars, your brain is normal again, and it's over. It happens from time to time, but I wouldn't say that it happens often.

Interviewer:

I have noticed that this usually happens for two reasons, anxiety or concentration. Which is it for you?

Interviewee:

I think because of concentration.

Interviewer:

Ok. How often are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

I enjoy... I mean, no, I work there normally.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I will be able to answer this question in a week's time.

Interviewer:

So, we'll have the same interview in a month's time, we can talk then. The main subject lessons will be over, I'm told the main subject exams are the second of January, no?

Interviewee:

Yeah, no, well, the French horns rescheduled, they're doing a class concert, so it's gonna happen faster.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you feel about your self-confidence as a musician?

Interviewee:

Well, it's a bit low for me.

Interviewer:

Ok, are there any reasons or just generally?

Interviewee:

Well, apparently my outlook is such that if I don't play much, I'm, well, shit.

Interviewer:

Is it just because you've been playing for six years and you don't have much experience, in your opinion?

Interviewee:

Yeah, and little experience, and anyway, I don't know. Seems like I could do better.

Interviewer:

Okay. And there's all sorts of, you know, nonsense that happens, like things don't work out or whatever, so what motivates you to push through and keep on playing?

Interviewee:

I'm motivated by the lecturer, well, very much so. And maybe I'm motivating myself because I can't fail her.

Interviewer:

Okay. We've talked about this here, but tell me more about how are things regarding airflow and breath support when you're playing?

Interviewee:

Now we're trying to practice this and I didn't really breathe like this before, but now it's trying to fill all the cavities so that there's a full inhalation, full exhalation, and then there's the fact that it turns out that while playing the French horn you also need to control the airflow, that there has to be, well, a certain... strong airflow for certain notes. Nowadays there's really a lot of things on breathing, you know, we use all sorts of devices and, anyway, you're still doing a breathing exercise before every practice session.

Interviewer:

Then, playing the brass requires a lot of control - embouchure, breathing and so on. You already said that you think a lot about breathing. What about all the other physical aspects?

Interviewee:

Maybe I would leave embouchure in the second place, but not really anything else

Interviewer:

Does it happen to you during main subject lessons that you receive some feedback, and you're asked to play having corrected mistakes based on feedback? And then you are asked not whether you understood, but whether you felt the difference?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

And how often do you feel the difference?

Interviewee:

You can feel it on the breath, and you can feel it on the beginning of the notes, too. Maybe it's just the sound quality that's harder to feel the difference at, because you're not used to hearing that open, good sound. And then they say "Oh, good sound", and you think it's similar. But there's a change just because of the color, you know, it's harder to hear.

Interviewer:

Are you experiencing physical tensions yourself when you're playing?

Interviewee:

Maybe it's just the diaphragm itself, which doesn't work all the time. And I'm getting more tense than I should.

Interviewer:

Do you think a lot about how you stand or sit when you're playing?

Interviewee:

Well, when you are sitting, you try not to lie down when others are lying down. Sitting is... No, well, I don't think about specifically sitting in some exact way. But regarding standing, I try to keep my back straight and my arms relaxed.

Interviewer:

Do you find it easy to stay focused during lectures?

Interviewee:

During main subject lessons, yes. During theoretical ones, no.

Interviewer:

No, no, no, no, we're only talking about the ones you play now.

Interviewee:

Then it's quite easy.

Interviewer:

Okay, does it happen that something distracts you, or is it almost impossible?

Interviewee:

No, we're kind of very concentrated anyway. I don't know, it's very strange, but yeah, it's kind of concentrated, you know, you're... I mean, we're starting to get tired, we're talking a bit, you know, something random, some topics just appear. But it's really all about the work, about playing, about blowing, about the quality of the notes, about the technique and everything else. It's such a rain of thoughts.

Interviewer:

Ok, and how do you react when you get some feedback from a lecturer?

Interviewee:

I react well, it doesn't matter what it is, whether there's, you know, some criticism there or whether it's good. Although I react worse to the good feedback, rather than to the criticism. Because when they say what's bad, I know what to work on and what to do, where I can improve. And when they say, well, okay, good, then you're like, "no..."

Interviewer:

Okay, does it somehow affect your self-esteem, do you become very self-critical after the main subject lessons?

Interviewee:

No, it's normal. I understand that she is demanding what is needed from me.

Interviewer:

Okay. What do you pay attention to the most when you hear some feedback from a teacher?

Interviewee:

I feel it in the very... It depends what they're saying. I mean, what it's about, then that's what I pay attention to.

Interviewer:

Okay, but are you more of the type that tries to rationally understand all the mechanics of how something works, or are you more trying to feel what it's like when it's better, and then chasing that feeling when you're playing alone?

Interviewee:

Maybe it's just that I'd quite like to understand how it works. But what happens when you do everything is that nothing seems to change, but you manage to play just fine. And then you're like, "That's kind of how it works?". "Yeah", but they say, "don't think about how it works, just do it because you manage to do it well."

Interviewer:

Okay. And how much does your self-esteem depend on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

Well... Well, it's all good so far, so I can't say anything bad. Well... I don't know.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it's not like if you have a bad main subject lesson, you think that, "I'm a terrible person and I should not play the French horn"?

Interviewee:

No, it's totally opposite, I'm getting motivated that, damn, I've played shitty, I'll do better next time, come on.

Interviewer:

Okay. And, yeah, that would be it. So I press the button to...

Post-intervention

Interviewer:

I'm now turning on the recording, so I'm informing you that you're being recorded, the transcript of this recording will be used for my Master's research. If you agree, please say your name and that you agree.

Interviewee:
[Name], I agree.

Interviewer:
Ok, so the first question. Which meditation length did you usually choose?

Interviewee:
I was expecting this question. Ten minutes.

Interviewer:
Okay. Have you noticed any changes yourself, comparing a month ago and now?

Interviewee:
I don't know. Maybe it was just that time itself was passing faster than I expected.

Interviewer:
You mean, while playing?

Interviewee:
I mean, meditation time itself... At the very beginning I wanted to try all the options. And I ended up doing three minutes on the first day, I started, and I was already thinking how nice it is, and then it's over. And I'm like, "What do you mean?". Well, then regarding five minutes, I'm already thinking that it's going to be longer, more fun. And the five minutes are also like that. No, I think, it's not fun. So yeah, regarding those ten minutes the first time was a little bit boring near the end, kind of annoying. But after that, those ten minutes seemed to be not enough.

Interviewer:
Okay. And did it affect things regarding your playing in any way?

Interviewee:
I don't know, the breathing exercises may have calmed me down a bit. And that same feeling, you know, it makes you a little bit more confident in yourself.

Interviewer:
How do you feel about your well-being as a musician in general now?

Interviewee:
Regarding this, critical thinking still does its thing, and you understand that you're not very good at it.

Interviewer:
Okay, have things changed a bit for you, or have they not changed at all?

Interviewee:

Well, I just... Yeah, you could say it's changed from that side, because you're trying to convince yourself that you can't do it, and you have to do it this way, and you have to think that way. Because it affects your playing anyway. And the fact that as before, you know that you're actually shit. But on the other hand you go and you think, "Okay, now you're not shit, now you're going to do the best you can and you're going to bring out the best in yourself. And let's go because you can. You go, let's go!", you know.

Interviewer:

So, the main change for you is that you have started to focus more on the progress rather than on where you are?

Interviewee:

Yeah, maybe from that side.

Interviewer:

Okay. How are things with concentration when you're practicing on your own?

Interviewee:

Maybe it's a bit lower now. It could be because of the exam periods, it's just that after all the exams, you want to let go of all the... It's like, yeah, you warm up, and then you're like, "Oh, I'm lazy". That's the kind of thing that just creeps in. But if it was in the middle of studying, I don't think it would work. I mean, it would work in a good way.

Interviewer:

Ok, so can you tell me when you've had your exam, so I can just add it to consideration?

Interviewee:

When did I take my exam?

Interviewer:

I mean, when did it begin that you didn't have to practice that much?

Interviewee:

It was just before Christmas. It was the 19th of December, if I'm not mistaken.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So, I played the main subject lesson and well... It was a bit tense. And that's when all of this started. That first week, the first two even, everything was still so intense. And then there was this kind of, you know, distraction, because of the holidays, everything else. And here we are, just a week left. Because there was also the quintet exam, I needed to get back into shape a bit. So, it was a matter of concentrating again, you know, having to do everything.

Interviewer:

And what would usually distract you while you were playing, when you said that your concentration dropped?

Interviewee:

Well, on the one hand, maybe there wasn't much of a purpose. Now I don't have that very, very specific goal that I have to get to. On the other hand, maybe it's the same thing, where you can give yourself a bit of freedom.

Interviewer:

Ok, but what do you do when you get distracted?

Interviewee:

You go on your phone.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Or it usually happens that a colleague comes in, so you have tea with him.

Interviewer:

Mhm. And how do you get back from that unfocused work to focused work?

Interviewee:

Well, this is a difficult mission, but anyway, I'm starting with breathing. Then you go back to some sort of a breathing exercise, you breathe, then you concentrate and you go on.

Interviewer:

Did you find it any easier to come back compared to before this whole thing started, or not so much?

Interviewee:

Maybe not that it is easier. Maybe it actually helped me just to stay so focused, because I had already decided to work with high concentration by that time, and because I had kind of a free week, I was like, okay, let's do a breathing exercise, then your exercise, and then I'm once again here and now, let's go. That maybe helped me more with concentration, I mean, that now I have to work.

Interviewer:

It just helps you to practice session by session, so that, if you do it before you play, you have more concentration, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

I'm just checking to make sure I understand it correctly.

Interviewee:

Okay, okay, okay.

Interviewer:

When you're playing the French horn, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

I mean, the concentration of the air itself... I mean, how to say, the blowing of the air itself, and at the moment, the intonation.

Interviewer:

Ok, returning to concentration, have you ever noticed that something has been encouraging you to not concentrate? It happens to some people that, for example, if something doesn't work out, they pick up the phone or, I don't know, some other reasons.

Interviewee:

There's a bit of this thing that if it doesn't work out, sometimes, yeah. I mean, you try, try, try, but it still doesn't work out, then you start to get a bit nervous, and due to that nervousness instead of trying again, you just kind of give up a bit. Then you go and take a break, just disconnect from it, and, well, if you don't waste too much time, that's fine, then you go back and try again. But if you do, then that's it for the day, you give up and go home.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you use any additional techniques to help you concentrate or to help play music better?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. How long can you practice with good focus and quality at a time?

Interviewee:

Well, I don't think the answer is going to change here, it's actually an hour and a half, I think?

Interviewer:

Is that during the whole day or at a time?

Interviewee:

Well, it's at a time, where you practice while fully concentrated.

Interviewer:

And how much quality work do you get per day?

Interviewee:

Quality? Well... Well, one hour in the morning. Then, if there's a main subject lesson, one and a half. Well, maximum three, but that's questionable. Maybe two.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you remember the last time we talked about flow?

Interviewee:

There was something, yeah.

Interviewer:

So are you able to achieve the time explosion, because I was just reading our interview this morning and you described it like this?

Interviewee:

Yes. For me, time explodes. Yeah, there's still that. And maybe even sometimes it explodes faster than it should.

Interviewer:

I mean, this happens to you more often, and the time passes more quickly, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Ok, and how often does this happen to you?

Interviewee:

Should I count the occurrences, or how do you want me to respond?

Interviewer:

Use whatever scale you like.

Interviewee:

Well, I mean, from that point of view, it happens really often that you come, and you've got your things to do planned and you see that there's no more time because there's still this and that to do. And already a couple of hours have passed. I don't know, you could say four out of five.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how often has it happened to you lately that you stop playing prematurely for some reason that is not related to physical things? For example, tiring your lips out.

Interviewee:

You mean, because of similar stuff like tiring your lips out or the other way around, because of other reasons?

Interviewer:

The other way around, for other reasons - you get bored, something doesn't work out, you're just feeling lazy, something's boring.

Interviewee:

It happens that I'm lazy once a week.

Interviewer:

Are you currently experiencing any obstacles or challenges related to playing and performing on stage?

Interviewee:

Maybe not?

Interviewer:

Not. How do you react if you have a bad practice session or a bad performance?

Interviewee:

Quite positively. It's gonna sound very funny. But yeah, in a way, I started to see it from the point of view of, like, "Ok, I still have something to learn from", and that was the fact that I can use and move on. And then you go to the good side again.

Interviewer:

Ok, so this one has changed, right?

Interviewee:

I don't remember what I said last time.

Interviewer:

That's ok, then I'll compare it with what you said, and I'm not asking you to compare it, it's my job after all. But now you're evaluating yourself in a perspective of progress - you've failed, well, you'll succeed next time, you'll just work towards it, that sort of thing, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

Ok, I got it right then. Do you have performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Well, yeah, but it's kind of calm now. I don't know, now I just go about things like that normally. There weren't any kind of fears there, any that would've been very big. I played everything very chill.

Interviewer:

Ok, so do you think it has something to do with what you're doing, or is it just luck?

Interviewee:

Maybe it helped a little bit, I think. Well, maybe I'm calmer, you know. It doesn't look like something that would appear out of clear sky.

Interviewer:

Ok, and do you have performance anxiety when you have to play in front of the teacher?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I still have some of this. The class playing itself can be like that sometimes... Maybe you're not fully prepared or you're not sure that it's going to go well and in front of the teacher I still have a little bit of that.

Interviewer:

Does it affect the quality of your playing?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:
To the negative side, right?

Interviewee:
Well, it drops a bit.

Interviewer:
Do you have any physical symptoms?

Interviewee:
At that particular time, or just in general?

Interviewer:
In general as well, but if you said that you haven't had performance anxiety lately, then it probably doesn't really matter to me, I'll calculate... But recently, when you've been playing with a teacher?

Interviewee:
Oh, no, nothing then, lately.

Interviewer:
Nothing?

Interviewee:
For me, no, there was none.

Interviewer:
Did you use any additional strategies to deal with performance anxiety?

Interviewee:
No, I didn't do anything.

Interviewer:
When you played recently, did you think a lot about how the audience perceives you?

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:
No. And were there any performances that felt like a blur or a blackout, or it passed very quickly and you don't remember what you were doing?

Interviewee:
No, maybe I was very focused and trying very hard to do what I have to do, so the concert went by quickly, but at this point I remember really everything just because I was concentrating on the things that you have to do, not just to play and be done with it.

Interviewer:
Okay. And how often do you enjoy your performances?

Interviewee:

Can we skip this one? This one is not fun at all. I don't know, so I would enjoy it... Well, maybe there's a bit of that kind of happy time, ones that are kind of nice. Anyway, maybe I even enjoyed my main subject lesson quite a bit because a lot of things went right.

Interviewer:

Okay. Did that increase a bit?

Interviewee:

Maybe, maybe a little bit... Well, in general, it was nice, it was good, you know, and then you get feedback from the teacher that you're great, you've done everything that we wanted to do. I mean, obviously, we still have a lot to work on, but it's nice, like, keep going, yeah. It's like, everything is improving.

Interviewer:

Ok, and how do you perceive yourself as a musician? Do you have confidence in yourself, or do you compare yourself with other French horn players?

Interviewee:

No, I don't compare myself with others. Well, I mean, I know my place. And what was the second question?

Interviewer:

In general, do you trust what you do, how do you perceive yourself as a musician?

Interviewee:

Oh, well, regarding that, I'm a realistic and here I know it's not good. But the thing is that, well, you have to give yourself that confidence before you go on stage, anyway. So I'm giving that to myself a bit. I figured out that you have to support yourself a bit.

Interviewer:

Ok, and in the general sense, not necessarily on stage, but in everyday life?

Interviewee:

I don't know, maybe I wasn't paying attention.

Interviewer:

Ok, but what do you think, has this part of self-confidence changed or not so much?

Interviewee:

Well, maybe there is a little more certainty that actually... Well, yeah, you could say that yes, there is more certainty.

Interviewer:

Ok, and what motivates you to keep playing and performing on stage when you're doing well and when you're not?

Interviewee:

What motivates... Wanting to not disappoint my teacher motivates me. That's one of the biggest criteria here, I think. And, well, of course, the fact that you want to improve yourself and be a little bit higher than, like, a music school musician.

Interviewer:

Have you felt any changes related to your airflow or breath support?

Interviewee:

Oh, wow, this one's...

Interviewer:

If you haven't noticed anything, you haven't noticed anything.

Interviewee:

No, I mean, there is an improvement in my air blowing, so, well, you could kind of say that yes.

Interviewer:

Ok, but this is not related to meditation?

Interviewee:

I'm not sure, because I did both meditation and breathing exercises at the same time, every day. So, it could have been the influence of meditation, it could have been the influence of breathing exercises. I mean, I am not sure.

Interviewer:

Ok, but you don't feel anything getting worse?

Interviewee:

No, I don't feel that, on the contrary - it feels like an improvement.

Interviewer:

Ok, and where exactly? Is it at the airflow or more related to breath support?

Interviewee:

Perhaps related to breath support.

Interviewer:

And what got better?

Interviewee:

Because... Well, I've started to keep things very much the way they should be.

Interviewer:

Mhm.

Interviewee:

Well, yeah. But it also makes the airflow more stable and orderly, as it should. Well, in that sense, they've both moved up a step.

Interviewer:

Ok, have you started to pay more attention to these things during this last month?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

Was it more of a conscious attention or just that you started to notice things more?

Interviewee:

No, I was, I mean, consciously observing it, so...

Interviewer:

Because you worked with the teacher on that, right?

Interviewee:

No, this time alone.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Well, I mean, I worked with a lecturer before. But anyway, you get to do it on your own, so that's the thing you pay attention to, yeah.

Interviewer:

Ok, do you pay attention to all the other physical things, like embouchure, or just some things related to posture or sitting?

Interviewee:

Not really, but I should, well. Sometimes, when I am reminded, I pay attention to the chin position.

Interviewer:

Okay. I don't know how many lessons you've had now, but... if you haven't had lessons, you haven't had lessons, has it happened to you on any recent occasions that the teacher, instead of asking you if you understood something, has asked you if you've felt a difference?

Interviewee:

She asks often, so...

Interviewer:

Ok, and lately, do you often feel the difference?

Interviewee:

Not always.

Interviewer:

Not always. Do you experience any tension when playing?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. And do you think meditation has affected your sound in any way?

Interviewee:

Since it affected the airflow, it has.

Interviewer:

Positively or negatively?

Interviewee:

Positively.

Interviewer:

Ok, can you tell me a bit more?

Interviewee:

Well, just maybe the width of the sound itself, if I may say so. Well, it fills the room more.

Interviewer:

Okay. How is your concentration during lessons?

Interviewee:

It is still there.

Interviewer:

It is still there. Is it easy to be distracted from that concentration?

Interviewee:

Not during one-on-one lessons, no.

Interviewer:

No. If you get distracted by something, what is the most common thing that distracts you?

Interviewee:

Maybe, just maybe, if there are people in the same environment, then maybe people are distracting. Or there's, I don't know, an unexpected phone call from people that are not supposed to call.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it's just some external thing that's not supposed to happen to you. It doesn't happen that you distract yourself without external things?

Interviewee:

No. Not during lessons.

Interviewer:

And how do you usually react to feedback from the lecturer?

Interviewee:
I accept it.

Interviewer:
You accept it. Can this in any way make you criticize yourself too much?

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:
No. Regarding anxiety, you said that you are anxious. What do you focus on most when you hear the feedback? Is it more about understanding how things work and knowing, in a sense, all the mechanics of how things are going, or is it more about feeling what the right feeling is when you play and chasing that feeling?

Interviewee:
Maybe the second option, because as they said, not all bodies are the same and not everything fits everyone. So, regarding this I'm more focused on the fact that if it fits from the sound perspective and everything else, then I do it my way. But then you're just kind of focusing on the sound and not on the technique.

Interviewer:
Ok, and how much does your self-esteem depend on whether or not you've been approved or disapproved by a lecturer?

Interviewee:
Well, there's that middle ground where it's not falling, but it's not rising. Well, it's like...

Interviewer:
Ok, so in that sense, you can be told... You can be praised a lot, you won't be very positive, but you can be criticized a lot, and you won't be very sad either? Have I got that right?

Interviewee:
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:
Ok, so we've finished the interview, I'll finish the recording.

E03

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

I've just turned on recording on my phone, thus I'm letting you know that you are being recorded. This recording will be transcribed and used in my Master's research. If you agree, please tell me your name and that you agree with the given information.

[Speaker2]

My name is [name] and I agree with all the information.

Interviewer:

If you don't understand a question or if something is unclear, don't be afraid to ask for clarification. And if I'm touching on a very sensitive subject that you don't feel comfortable answering, you can always say "Let's skip this question or stop the interview". First question, now that I'm recording, I'm sorry that I wasn't recording then. Do you have any experience with meditation?

Interviewee:

Yeah, given that I also have some of that religious practice, it's, well, maybe not meditation but adoration, which is very similar. Also, a moment of silence, also ten minutes, fifteen minutes, maybe less, but it's concentrated on some single moment. Of course, the thoughts wander all the time, but still the purpose of that adoration or meditation, whatever you want to call it, is the same. And what I mentioned about the Alexander's technique, that is also for that very conscious relaxation during the playing. There is also this method in the lying position, just to try to consciously relax the body.

Interviewer:

You're in your fourth year of undergraduate studies now, right?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

And how long have you been playing the French horn?

Interviewee:

I've been playing since the second year of middle school. I'd have to count it. Fifteen years. Fifteen, yeah. Fourteen full years, currently in year fifteen.

Interviewer:

How do you feel about your general well-being as a musician now?

Interviewee:

You mean, things related to healthy living, nutrition, rest, sleep or something like that?

Interviewer:

Sometimes some people get problems regarding physical things. It could be stress, it could be nervousness, it could be something from some psychological problem that's bothering you, a spontaneous block. Something from that side.

Interviewee:

I see. So anyway, I don't know, the Alexander's Technique has helped me a lot with all the physical pains and things like that, because whenever I feel that I'm getting tense in something like my arm and things like that, I apply all the information that I've got from the Alexander's Technique lectures and it helps me. So, I'm quite good at dealing with that, maybe it's more difficult to deal with the psychological problems, but it's also very much dependent on a certain period of time. I don't know, two months ago my psychological state was definitely worse than now. So anyway, I don't know what it depends on, I don't know, I can't say, but it's more difficult to deal with it.

Interviewer:

Do you have any concerns or something that you expect from meditation and this whole experiment?

Interviewee:

Maybe this kind of meditation is quite new to me, I would say. I don't know, I wonder if I myself will get any benefit from it. That's why I signed up for this experiment, because I'm quite interested in it and I think it's relevant and, I don't know, if it helps, I'll have gained a lot from this experiment myself.

Interviewer:

Okay. How is your concentration when you're practicing on your own?

Interviewee:

It also depends on a lot of things. I try very hard, when I go to play, to make sure that I have my basic needs met, like eating, sleeping, not being tired. If I already see that there's, I don't know, my brain doesn't work and so on, then I try not to play. If I see that it is very necessary, essential and so on, then I make myself do it. But anyway, I'm very, very much trying to pay attention to this thing, that just if I see that my general state of mind is not so good and I'm annoyed by the fact that I'm hungry, or I don't know, anything, I try to avoid practicing, because my concentration is completely different then, and I'm not distracted, I'm not scrolling through the phone. It never happens that I play a bit, then scroll if I'm in the mood to work. But anyway, it varies, sometimes it happens that it is very difficult to concentrate. Often it helps just to be in airplane mode, but it varies, it happens that you just, I don't know, don't feel the vibe and you just play there, you scroll for five minutes, you play one orchestral excerpt, you scroll again. I try very hard to avoid that.

Interviewer:

So, if you're distracted, you're distracted because there's either something wrong with your physical state or because of the phone, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Ok, and when you get distracted, do you find it difficult to get back to adequate, focused work?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, I'd say I do.

Interviewer:

Ok, and when you succeed, what methods do you use to return to that focused state?

Interviewee:

I don't know, maybe it helps to plan the work, that I want to work on this, on this, on this, and when I'm done, I can go home. Just having a very detailed plan of what I want to play, what I want to work on and so on. Maybe that helps? And, for example, if I want to eat, it just helps to take a break there, to eat, to go somewhere for a coffee or something like that, and then it's a completely different mood for work as well.

Interviewer:

When you're playing the French horn, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

In general, when I'm practicing? I don't know, I usually start playing with the sound in mind. Yeah, I don't usually start with some technical stuff, but once I see that I like the sound, that, yeah, that it's just a satisfactory sound for practicing, then I move on to other things. I don't know, there might be different goals of the session, if it's technical, then you just make a plan. But anyway, I mostly pay attention to the sound, because for me the sound gives the quality.

Interviewer:

Do you use any techniques to help you concentrate or to improve the overall quality of your playing?

Interviewee:

I don't know, well, I haven't applied the Alexander's Technique for the last few years, I couldn't make myself do it. While I was in Erasmus and then six months after Erasmus, I applied it all the time, almost every day. But no, I don't think I know or apply any theories, methods for concentration, I don't really apply them.

Interviewer:

How long can you practice while maintaining a good concentration while playing at a time? When do you start doing all that scrolling stuff or looking out the window?

Interviewee:

Maybe it also depends on the day, on the mood, on, I don't know. But I would say maybe, because sometimes an hour goes by just like that, terribly fast, and most of the time I take a break because I just want to rest my lips, but not because my concentration is gone. I don't know, sometimes half an hour is enough, sometimes 40 minutes.

Interviewer:

And per day, roughly how much of that quality work do you get in those few sessions?

Interviewee:

Regarding quality, I think that my best average of practicing is between two and three hours. So, I feel like I've done my work. An hour is too little, everything less than two hours is too little, but everything with a sum of over three hours is definitely not. Between two, three hours, I would say that's the optimal time.

Interviewer:

Ah, and you mentioned that time passes quickly, so there's a concept called the flow, have you heard of that?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Yeah, essentially, the flow is a kind of state that musicians. It's a state in which you're so concentrated, you're doing something, and you're focused on it so much that it seems like there's no more time, and nothing else matters, nothing's distracting you, and you're doing that one thing, and it's very productive, you know. Does it often happen to you that you fall into that state?

Interviewee:

Not that often, no. I don't know, maybe sometimes would be the best word. Not rarely, not often, sometimes.

Interviewer:

And do you know how to trigger it yourself, or is it more a matter of luck?

Interviewee:

I would say it's absolutely a matter of luck.

Interviewer:

I see. Is it often the case that you're playing, it's somehow very boring, or there's a lack of concentration, or something goes very wrong and you think "Ah, I'm done, I'm going home"?

Interviewee:

Yes. Yes. How often, have you asked?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

I don't know. I don't know, often not. Maybe rarely, no. Sometimes.

Interviewer:

Sometimes, ok. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

You mean, in the technical sense or in the psychological sense?

Interviewer:

From either side.

Interviewee:

Anyway, I think my biggest enemy is performance anxiety. Yeah, just to make yourself show the result that you've been working on all the time. And more than that, I don't know, there are technical things too, well, I'm mostly working now on opening up the sounds in the high register, on that kind of expressive articulation, contrasts, so that everything that I want to convey, and show could be heard. Because the French horn is still an instrument that, well, because there's a bell going to the back, you put your hand in the bell and everything you do seems to be reduced in percentage and doesn't go as far to the listener. It's just something I'm working on very hard. I've been recording myself more lately, that also helps just to get that kind of quality result quicker.

Interviewer:

How do you usually react if you have a bad practice session or a bad lesson, or a bad concert, or something?

Interviewee:

In general, if it's a concert, I very often pay much more attention to what didn't work out than to what did work out. If it's a practice session, I try to evaluate myself more objectively, not just notice the bad stuff and then kick myself for it, but somehow I manage to be more objective. If it's a concert, I think a lot about the listener, what kind of opinion they'll have and so on. Maybe I don't think about my own feelings, but about what the listener heard or didn't hear. Can you repeat the question?

Interviewer:

That's all right, you gave a great answer, so I'll just touch on the other side of it a little bit more. Does failure affect your self-confidence in any way?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

For a long time?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah, like, I don't know, I've been feeling pretty good about it lately. Recently I had orchestral excerpt playthrough sessions, main subject lesson playthroughs where I used to get that kind of stress seemingly in the middle of nowhere. I've noticed lately that I've been coping with it better, somehow, I haven't done anything in particular to achieve that, but I don't know, maybe it depends also on the words of the teacher, what I get during lectures. Maybe it depends on the successful practice sessions, something failing, succeeding. But it happens for sure that I can live for a full month with a negative emotion of some kind.

Interviewer:

Do you have any ways of dealing with it yourself, or do you just try to hang in there, wait it out because you know it will pass?

Interviewee:

Yeah, maybe the second option is the most accurate. Anyway, I've been thinking about getting help from a psychologist very often over the last six months at least, but somehow, I still haven't gotten around to do it. But I feel that I just can't deal with it. I usually lash out at my parents, my brothers, my sisters. It might help to express what you feel and so on. And

maybe they look at the situation more objectively and somehow encourage or allow you to see some positive aspects.

Interviewer:

And do failures affect your motivation to play in any way?

Interviewee:

How?

Interviewer:

Do all these things affect your motivation in any way?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it has different effects. Sometimes it's an incentive to work harder or something like that, and sometimes it's just really demotivating. And, I don't know, to the point where you start wondering if this is really the instrument for you, if you really want to go on studying, if you really want to go deeper. Well, generally, such questions arise.

Interviewer:

Do you experience any performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Is it more before or during playing?

Interviewee:

Before playing, the breathing is already getting faster, some trembling and so on, a stagnation of the body, everything seems to be tense, but during the playing as well.

Interviewer:

Does performance anxiety affect the quality of your performance in any way?

Interviewee:

Yes, 100%.

Interviewer:

Negatively or positively?

Interviewee:

Negatively.

Interviewer:

Do you have any physical things that happen to you when you get nervous before you go on stage?

Interviewee:

Yeah, there are times when you get those shakes, sometimes in your hands, sometimes in your legs. Just general tension in the body, dry mouth happens very often. What else? That's it, I think the main ones are these.

Interviewer:

Do you always have performance anxiety or only sometimes?

Interviewee:

If it's a more serious performance, it's always there. But anyway, yeah. I mean, there could be some kind of exam and I'll still get anxious there. Yeah, I think most of the time there's that performance anxiety.

Interviewer:

Do you use any strategies to manage performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

The Alexander's Technique would be one of the ways. Breathing exercises help me. I do breathing exercises all the time before I go on stage. It's a relaxation, I don't know, a kind of flexing.

Interviewer:

Do you have performance anxiety before class? And for the rest of the interview, I'm going to refer to main subject lessons and orchestral excerpt lessons as lessons, the ones where you have to play.

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

I know that you play in orchestras, so it's a good thing I can ask you that. Does it ever happen to you that you have sixty bars of pauses and then you have something very responsible to play?

Interviewee:

Mhm.

Interviewer:

So, do you get anxious before such things?

Interviewee:

Yeah, well, it also depends on the piece, on the playing, I mean, the passage, the melody and so on. Is it important or does it stand out a lot in the context of the whole orchestra. And whether you can hear it. It depends on the dynamics too. If there's pianissimo, it's immediately a hundred percent tension. I don't know if I have answered the question.

Interviewer:

You have answered the question perfectly. How do you deal with that anxiety?

Interviewee:

How do I deal with it?

Interviewer:

Yeah, what do you do, you know, when situations like that happen?

Interviewee:

I don't know, it helps to just not overthink it too much beforehand. Think about how you want the listener to hear it. It's all about sound projection and so on. Yeah, you just think about how you want that person to hear you. And then the playing becomes sort of different. Anyway, I don't know, it helps when the other musicians in the group don't show that they're anxious. A calm inspiration.

Interviewer:

How often does it happen to you that you play something, and it seems that you don't remember much of what you were playing, like it's a blackout or a blur?

Interviewee:

The only time I have experienced that is when I played a piece by heart, exactly a year ago. And it was just a blackout because I didn't remember what happened next. I just blocked myself. And it was the first time in my life that it happened to me. I've never had any problems with playing by heart. And anyway, it doesn't happen that I don't remember something.

Interviewer:

But does it ever happen that you finish playing and think, "Huh, interesting, how did I do"?

Interviewee:

No, it might be that I create a wrong opinion about myself. I remember that it was one way, but actually you listen to the recording and it's different. But to think, "Wow, how did I play that", no.

Interviewer:

Ok. How often are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

In general, I rarely enjoy solo playing. Ensemble playing, I like chamber playing very much. I enjoy chamber ensembles more often, but it also depends on whether I'm just playing an exam, or whether I'm playing a very important concerto, or whether I'm playing a very difficult piece. And I just think about how not to get out of tune, not to get lost and so on. In the orchestra, it also depends on the program, but I really like all the big pieces there, like symphonies and things like that. So anyway, when I play that kind of music, it's very, I don't know, fun, there are times when you feel down and so on, but in general I enjoy it very much.

Interviewer:

Are you confident in yourself as a musician, in your skills, or do you compare yourself with other French horn players?

Interviewee:

Yes, there is a comparison. I don't always trust myself. In fact, I would say more often I don't trust myself than the other way around. Well, yeah, and there's certainly a comparison.

Interviewer:

What motivates you to keep playing and moving forward with this instrument even when something bad happens?

Interviewee:

I don't know, maybe opportunities, I think. If I was playing, I don't know, a trumpet, for which there are no jobs, and there was a lot of self-doubt, then maybe I wouldn't really want to continue my career. But when there are some future career opportunities, maybe that's motivating. I don't know, other people's praise, comments motivate me as well, and so on. Or, well, for example, just the fact that they see some potential. I don't know.

Interviewer:

That's enough, you've named quite a few points. Do you have any difficulties with the airflow or with the breath support when you're playing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, for me, the big problem is that I can breathe a lot, I can have a lot of air in myself, but I don't have an airflow, and pushing of air happens very often. Because some muscles get involved and it seems that I'm letting the air out forcefully. And I've noticed that when I'm playing on the air, well, of course you're making an effort, but there's no physical effort involved, so that well, I'm letting the air out here and I'm playing some random melody there. There's just this light feeling. The big problem with me is that I used to be told by a teacher in [a country] that you look at me and it's like I don't know, I'm putting a million efforts in there and I don't know what a French horn should sound like from the way I look physically, but if you close your eyes, it's like a completely different picture from what you hear.

Interviewer:

When you play a brass instrument, there are still a lot of muscles working around the lips and while breathing. How much attention do you pay to the physical aspects of your playing?

Interviewee:

I pay attention to that quite a lot, and I often play in front of the mirror, because I think facial expressions and stuff like that have a lot to do with it. It's just that I try to make as few changes in the face as possible, so that there are, for example, if it's the lips, I always make sure that they don't turn into a smile when you're going higher to the upper register, but just that the lips are more collected and so on. But anyway, I pay attention to the physical aspects.

Interviewer:

Have you ever had a lecture where the teacher gives you some feedback, and then they tell you to try and do it now that you already know this feedback, and you try it and they ask you not if you understood, but if you felt the difference?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I'm often asked by my lecturer what I did to make it sound like that. And it makes me very analytical and just when I'm trying to change something, I just have to watch myself a lot and try to understand what I changed. Because she's always telling me, "I can't go inside you, I can't see what's going on in your mouth", and stuff like that. Maybe sometimes it's just some imagination that makes that minimal change. There's like a very basic example, but if you've got a hot potato in your mouth and it's just opening up everything, your throat, the root of the tongue doesn't rise, and just this mental imagination itself makes some minimal

change. But anyway, I'm always being asked, "What did you do?", or "What you were thinking about?", or "What did you consciously do to make it sound like that?".

Interviewer:

Do you experience physical tension when you play?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Where?

Interviewee:

My hand is very often tense, well, this one, the one I use to press the valves, my belly gets tense, so I don't know, I think these are the main ones.

Interviewer:

And do you think a lot about standing or sitting when you're playing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, when I'm sitting, I try to be stable while sitting. Especially when I'm playing in the orchestra, I try to sit properly on the edge of the chair - not to have one foot in front, one foot in the back, simply at a 90-degree angle, and when I'm standing, I try to pay attention not to put the French horn up too high, just keeping it at a lower position for a more stable posture of the body.

Interviewer:

Do you find it easy to stay focused during the lectures where you play?

Interviewee:

Yeah, lectures, yeah.

Interviewer:

Ok, do you have a tendency to react in a very self-critical way after a teacher gives you some feedback, and to take it personally somehow?

Interviewee:

Well, I see the lecturer as a big authority figure, so I absorb everything very much into myself. Both the good things - the praise, the positive comments - but also the negative things just as much. And well, usually if I'll practice later on, I'll definitely remember what they said to me and so on.

Interviewer:

And do negative comments have a big impact on your self-esteem? Are there any overreactions?

Interviewee:

Maybe there have been some. Well, I would say very rarely, but there might have been some. But, anyway, I understand that feedback is not there to insult you, but to help you improve. So, I see that as an incentive to improve, or just some kind of criticism so that you can give

up some bad habits and so on. But there are times when, for example, how do you say it, that you get scolded. Maybe it's just the wording itself, or I don't know whether the lecturers have good intentions all the time as well.

Interviewer:

And when a teacher tells you something, do you try to understand it more rationally in a way that, oh, this works like this and that, and I have to do, I don't know, this and that, such and such exercises. Maybe more from that rational side, or more from just trying to feel that, ok, I should do this here and try to chase that feeling afterwards?

Interviewee:

I'm looking at things from a more rational point of view. I don't know, for me the light feeling comes automatically too and I think the body remembers the light feeling anyway and then you play automatically the way the body remembers. But anyway, I try to change things by thinking rationally.

Interviewer:

Ok, and how much does your self-esteem depend on the teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

It really depends a lot.

Interviewer:

Very, so if they tell you that you're not playing well, that's when the sadness kicks in, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, well, if someone says to me that I'm a piece of shit or whatever, I'll definitely won't feel good or play good afterwards.

Interviewer:

That's it for today, thanks.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:

So, I have just turned the recording on, and thus I'm informing you know that you are being recorded. This transcript of the recording will be used for my Master's research. If you agree to this, please state your name and that you agree.

Interviewee:

[Name], I agree.

Interviewer:

Ok, first question then. Which meditation lengths did you choose most often?

Interviewee:

Ten minutes. I didn't even try three minutes because it seemed too short. So, I started with five minutes and then I kept doing ten minutes all the time.

Interviewer:

What changes have you noticed yourself? If you have noticed any.

Interviewee:

Not that there was a very clear, very big change. But maybe I'm taking more positivity with me now. Yeah. I would emphasize that I am more positive about the whole situation. Maybe regarding relaxation and so on - no because there's still tension appearing and things like that. It's not that kind of meditation where you can totally relax your body and stuff like that. But yeah, in the psychological sense, I do take more positivity with me, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how do you feel about your general well-being as a musician nowadays?

Interviewee:

Better. When I was doing these meditations, I didn't have many lectures, because the main subject lesson exam session was already over. I had already passed the exams, orchestral excerpt one as well. But, for example, I had quintets and so on. So, I concentrated more on that. Or, for example, I also treated the work as performing. Because there were questions about how you felt when you were performing there and so on. So, I just focused more on maybe those work concerts and stuff like that, so... But it helps. Regarding, well, especially that self-esteem, or something like that, in that area maybe the most.

Interviewer:

Okay. It's all right that you've been treating the work concerts as performances, I mean, I expected you to, so...

Interviewee:

OK.

Interviewer:

How are things regarding concentration when you are practicing?

Interviewee:

It's a more complicated question. Well, maybe I felt the difference, but maybe I just have to force myself more. Like, not answering the phone, setting the amount of hours and so on. But really, I was paying more attention. It's just that maybe it has to be my initiative, that I have to force myself not to do it. I don't know how much meditation helps with that.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I don't know if I said it, well, clearly now...

Interviewer:

Can I rephrase a bit then?

Interviewee:

Oh, yeah.

Interviewer:

So, if I understand correctly, you have started to notice more when you feel like getting distracted?

Interviewee:

Yeah, maybe. Yeah. Well, in a sense, just maybe, because there's still that weekly questionnaire and so on, you're analyzing yourself more. And just, yeah, maybe you start paying attention to it more then. And you just realize that you need to change something, you need to do something. But maybe, yeah, it's not that there's meditation, maybe it's more that the questionnaire is there. It's just that, well, yeah, you start paying attention to it. Before that, it was just, yeah, you'd just scroll a bit, but maybe you wouldn't think about it too much.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you accidentally got distracted, because I still suspect that's what used to happen...?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

So, did you find it difficult to return and how did you do it?

Interviewee:

No, not difficult, there's just this moment of noticing yourself and returning. But no, it's not hard for me - you just notice, and you put the phone down, you turn off the internet, if there are, you know, notifications and messages and stuff, you just turn it off, so it doesn't bother you. Or you just put it away, I don't know. That's kind of it.

Interviewer:

Are there any specific things that would provoke this distraction or procrastination?

Interviewee:

I think it's mainly because of the phone.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah, that there are all sorts of messages and stuff. So, yeah, basically, I would say that.

Interviewer:

You mentioned to me last time that you still had a little bit of a tendency to do this when things didn't work out. So, what about this now?

Interviewee:

No, no, no, that is not the case at the moment. Somehow there was definitely more motivation, well, to work on the hard stuff and so on. Yeah, I wouldn't say that it was like that at this time.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what did you usually focus on when you played the French horn?

Interviewee:

The sound, that the body would be relaxed, you know, because of the airflow and all that. It's to keep the tension and that force in the muscles from kicking in.

Interviewer:

So basically, on sound, and on keeping you from getting tense?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you use any other techniques besides meditation to help improve your concentration or just to help you refocus?

Interviewee:

The Alexander's Technique - I did it, well, now, you know, I did the sitting meditation anyway, and I mentioned there that the Alexander's Technique is in the lying position. Well, those ten minutes are also like, well, not meditation, I don't know what to call it. But in the Alexander's Technique there's all sorts of body positioning, how you can just know that you're in the right position while sitting or standing or something like that. That's what I think about all the time.

Interviewer:

Mhm?

Interviewee:

Yeah, no techniques aside from that.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how long can you practice with good focus and concentration at a time?

Interviewee:

It varies because, for example, yesterday, when I played, it was very long and without breaks. It was really, well, almost two hours, and that without breaks. But usually it's like forty-five minutes, that's the lesson time, and then I take a mini break. But that's usually the case, because I'll go through, I'll do the technical exercises, it's about forty-five minutes, I'll take a break, then I'll go play the pieces, I'll do forty-five minutes as well, I'll take a break, then orchestral excerpts. Well, that's kind of how I plan it.

Interviewer:

Mhm, and how much of that good playing time do you get in a day?

Interviewee:

Purely playing, it also varies. If I have time, it's three hours of playing. If I don't have that much time, I don't know, two. I think two hours, purely for practice.

Interviewer:

But you're talking about that good quality work, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Remember that last time when we talked about the flow?

Interviewee:

Mhm.

Interviewer:

So, what about this one, has something changed or...?

Interviewee:

Maybe minimally, I don't know, but I think it depends a lot on your mood and your psychological state on that day. So, I don't know, if it has changed, it was not much, I would say.

Interviewer:

Okay. I mean, it doesn't have to change. If it hasn't changed, say that it hasn't. Then we take it as no. And how often did it happen to you lately that you stopped practicing prematurely? Was it because you were nervous, or because you were bored, or for some other reason that's not related to your physical condition?

Interviewee:

It has changed, but I think just because now there was no upcoming main subject exam, it was all gone, somehow that intense time was gone. So now, in the last few weeks, because I'm the curator of my own time and my own work, it's easier, really easier.

Interviewer:

Are you currently facing any challenges or obstacles in your daily practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

I don't know, well, if it's about this last month, no. But, I mean, it's very... Well, when we were talking a month ago, it was a completely different time, that was the peak of the exam session or something like that, so I suppose that had a big impact. Now, somehow, I'm really much more relaxed, I mean, I'm calm. If something doesn't work out, it doesn't work out, I have time to sort things out and so on, so I don't really overstress myself.

Interviewer:

Ok, and how do you usually react to such bad practice sessions or unsuccessful performances, lately?

Interviewee:

Lately I blame myself less for that because I understand that there are those bad days, but also, well, it's a great thing that there is not some important performance coming up. So, I think that's a really big influence. But I think meditation helps a little bit and, well, I don't know if it's the thinking that it's not necessarily the bad day that has to determine your value as a musician.

Interviewer:

So, if I understand correctly, it affects your confidence a bit less?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

What about motivation?

Interviewee:

The motivation is there. And, I say, it wasn't that there... Well, because usually the motivation to play comes when you have to be very prepared for something. But I don't know, for me now, it's also enough to work, just to realize that I have to be in shape, and that I want to practice every day, and so on. It's motivation really.

Interviewer:

And if something doesn't work out, does it affect motivation in any way, or not so much?

Interviewee:

Well, lately, I would say not so much. Maybe a little, but not really... Well, I wouldn't worry about it.

Interviewer:

I see. And do you have performance anxiety lately?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. In particular, we had a quintet exam. The day before that we did a playthrough, and it was a tragedy. I mean, so much stress. And it seems like it came from nothing, because we were playing for each other, so it shouldn't be that stressful. But it was just a lot, and somehow and... Anyway, I was really disappointed with the performance that day. But the next day, for example, during the exam, I felt really much better and very satisfied with the result, and so on. But there definitely, yeah, there was performance anxiety.

Interviewer:

And was that performance anxiety more visible before or during the performance?

Interviewee:

Maybe a little bit more before, but usually it's more intense, maybe physical even. Well, the physical symptoms are already present before you go out.

Interviewer:

Mhm. So, what would those physical symptoms be?

Interviewee:

Butterflies flying in your stomach. There's always a bit of nausea, a bit of diarrhea, but maybe, I don't know, an hour before. And on the stage, it's mostly kind of shivering. Yeah, the shivering, maybe the mouth gets a bit dry as well, but it also depends on the room.

Interviewer:

Mhm. And you mentioned that performance anxiety is still there. I remember what you said about the playthrough, but in general, taking an average, has the performance anxiety equally affected the quality of your playing, or has it changed in some way?

Interviewee:

It's hard to make that kind of evaluation now. I don't know, I wouldn't say there's a huge difference.

Interviewer:

And is that performance anxiety always there, or just sometimes?

Interviewee:

Sometimes, yes. I don't know what it depends on. Because sometimes it doesn't even depend on the difficulty of the program, or... Yeah, I can't say.

Interviewer:

Not sure what it depends on?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

And how do you deal with that anxiety before and during the performance?

Interviewee:

Most of the time I try to pay attention to my breathing. Just to calm down, to blow out all the air, so that it doesn't rise up here somewhere. And, yeah, somehow you pay attention to the breath to make sure it's full, because the air does everything anyway, so it all starts with the breath in my case. Plus, I'm tiny, so if there's, I mean, if I'm not paying attention to it while practicing on a regular day, there's already a difference for me. In that sense, for me breathing has to be a very, well, significant part of the whole performance. So, if there is also stress and stuff like that, anxiety, and it takes away a certain percentage, then I have to try harder to fulfil it.

Interviewer:

Do you pay any attention to how the audience perceives you when you're performing?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

And what are you thinking about?

Interviewee:

What they're thinking, what they're hearing. Yeah, what they think about that piece being performed, or a certain part. Yeah, I'm really thinking about their opinion.

Interviewer:

And have you had any recent experiences where a performance seems like a blur, or that it happened very quickly and you don't remember half of it, or all of it?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

And how often have you been enjoying your performances lately?

Interviewee:

I'm enjoying it. I really enjoy playing. And especially when you get into that routine and work, that whole regime, you're performing, performing, performing, and you don't even have time to go listen to other people or whatever. So, for me, I usually force myself very much to just go to the opera house, to go to somebody's concert, to listen to them or something like that, because it's, well, when I see other people's performances, I realize, well, what kind of work I'm doing and what kind of... Well, yeah, that it's a very, very good job, and that I like it very much. And just that I have to enjoy it. So, for me, mostly, listening to other artists, other concerts helps me to just realize that this is what I like and that I have to enjoy it.

Interviewer:

Okay. What is your perception of yourself as a musician now? Do you trust yourself or not so much?

Interviewee:

Anyway, yeah, I trust myself. More positively lately, well, there are more positive nuances than negative ones. I don't know if there's anything very critical regarding myself... Perfectionism sometimes really does overshadow everything, but anyway, I think it's more positive than negative.

Interviewer:

Yeah, and do you think that meditation is a contributing factor here, or just the fact that there are no exams?

Interviewee:

I think it did. Yeah, it did.

Interviewer:

Do you compare yourself with other French horn players?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. What do you compare most often?

Interviewee:

Capabilities, ability, I don't know, quality of performance. Maybe sometimes... Most of the time it's jealousy that other people, for example, are better at dealing with anxiety than I am. And that they go out on stage more than I do. Yeah, that's about it.

Interviewer:

And what motivates you to play, whether in good times or bad ones?

Interviewee:

Well, maybe, as I said, maybe the concerts, other people's performances, maybe just seeing that other people are enjoying it. And sometimes I think, "I want that too". I don't know, and comparing myself, maybe, to good performers.

Interviewer:

Have you noticed any changes in the airflow or breath support?

Interviewee:

That meditation would have helped regarding this?

Interviewer:

By helping or influencing negatively. It doesn't matter, but just in some direction to make a difference.

Interviewee:

I don't know if meditation, purely, had any effect. Because, I don't know, I emphasize and pay attention to my breathing at all times, do breathing exercises, work with the spirometer and so on. So, I don't know, I kind of treat it like maybe it had more of an effect on how I deal with the airflow.

Interviewer:

Ok, and how much attention do you pay to the physical aspects when you're playing? To the work of the lip muscles, of all the muscles of the breathing apparatus, and just how you stand or sit - I don't know, how do you practice?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I usually play sitting down, I practice sitting down, so... But I'm very attentive and I usually play in front of the mirror all the time. Of course, lip work is important too, not to press them especially, when I'm playing in a higher register and so on. So, I do pay attention. And the tension of the hand as well, so that the hand doesn't tense up, because automatically the whole body tenses up then, so I really pay attention to that.

Interviewer:

Have you noticed any changes in this area?

Interviewee:

I have noticed that it is very good to have the meditation right there at the beginning of the session, so I am just starting the practice session well. Well, I mean, a good start is half the work, it's just, well, I'm trying to make sure that... Well, you still have to hold the instrument and stuff, and also, what you're thinking about, so that the body doesn't get tense, and stuff like that. It's just, well, I think it helps.

Interviewer:

It helps more on the relaxation side, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah, well, to reduce tension.

Interviewer:

Okay, and do you tend to notice things more, maybe you pay more attention? Not necessarily to correct something, but to notice that, "Okay, now I'm doing this thing here that I shouldn't be doing", or, "Oh, I'm doing this okay", regarding all the physical stuff?

Interviewee:

Yeah, well, I think that meditation, too, sorts of things out by itself. Somehow, it's still like, if your thoughts go somewhere, you should come back to the breath. And actually, the Alexander's Technique also very often emphasizes things like, well, there's the four directions, there's the direction of the head, there's the direction of the knees and so on. It's just that thinking that your head direction has to go up or not, for example, forward, up - that's automatic. You may not consciously make a big movement there, but just that conscious thinking influences the position of your body, and so on. So, I think that's where meditation helps regarding this aspect.

Interviewer:

And is that awareness, did it carry over into your further playing, or was it that you did a meditation and then you played there for, I don't know, half an hour and then went back to your old habits?

Interviewee:

No, it carried over. Yeah, I think so.

Interviewer:

Okay. Now, you said you didn't have many lectures, but you had quintets?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

So have you ever been asked... Have you ever been given feedback and then asked if you felt a difference? But just from the sensory side, not from noticing or hearing a sound, or something?

Interviewee:

No, not really, I think.

Interviewer:

Ok. And do you tend to get tension somewhere when you play?

Interviewee:

Tense?

Interviewer:

So that...

Interviewee:

Yeah, the arm mostly, maybe the neck too, just maybe from the intensity and stuff like that. Maybe when I'm playing standing up, my knees can lock up too. But Alexander's Technique

also has this "Monkey position" where I have to bend my legs a little bit over my knees. But yeah, well, in that sense, the tendency is always there to be tense.

Interviewer:

Okay, have you noticed any improvement? Maybe not necessarily that you're getting tense less, but you've started noticing that you're getting tense more?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, definitely.

Interviewer:

So again, what would be the improvement?

Interviewee:

Regarding meditation, it's usually the tension of the hand. Because as far as holding the instrument is concerned, maybe I pay most attention to the tension of the hand, this one. Well, then there's also, like, the blowing out a sound, so also just to not to think too much, not to get tense - whatever the sound is going to be, it's going to be.

Interviewer:

That brings us to sound. Do you think that meditation has affected your sound in any way, for better or for worse?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, for the better, I think. And, well, you start the warm-up with meditation, and that's the introduction to the good sound, so yeah. I think there's some positive influence.

Interviewer:

Okay. Did you find it easy to concentrate during the lectures?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

Did you used to get distracted?

Interviewee:

Except fatigue. Well, it's usually difficult to practice there during the evenings too. Especially the quintet, five people, all there after a full day, that's the most difficult for me. But, for example, during the working hours, in the mornings and so on, it wasn't a big problem.

Interviewer:

And how did you usually react to feedback from your teachers?

Interviewee:

I just understand that they know what they are saying, so I don't know. I take it as a willingness to help and a willingness on the part of the teacher to make it better.

Interviewer:

So, it didn't happen that you somehow took it personally, or that the feedback made you very critical of yourself?

Interviewee:

No, I don't think so.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you feel that performance anxiety during the lectures, or not so much?

Interviewee:

Not performance anxiety, but anyway, not that... Maybe I'm not talking from the personal side either, but the quintet really... Well, I felt very much that there was a teacher or there wasn't. Especially with the woodwind quintet it makes a big difference. It's, well, there was just none of that anxiety when we were rehearsing on our own, there was definitely that music, and somehow... And we sounded better as an ensemble anyway. And with the teacher, somehow, I don't know if some kind of tension appeared, some kind of psychological pressure.

Interviewer:

But this isn't your personal stuff, this is the interaction of all five of you?

Interviewee:

Yeah, probably more like that.

Interviewer:

Didn't you feel any difference yourself? Well, I mean, the way you did things, you didn't really feel any difference? Well, of course, if the other people play worse than they're used to, it has some effect, but apart from that.

Interviewee:

No, I wouldn't say that it's purely my personal obstacle. Of course, I'm not saying that I was doing a great job there and other people were bullshitting, no. But, yeah, maybe it's more, well, not from the personal side, but from the... ensemble side.

Interviewer:

Yeah, well, it affects the general atmosphere, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Ok, and what did you focus on most when you would hear some feedback from the lecturers?

Interviewee:

What did I focus on? I don't know.

Interviewer:

Please tell me, I interrupted you.

Interviewee:

No, maybe, well, just what they say. I don't know.

Interviewer:

More maybe... Okay, then I'll rephrase the question - was it more about trying to understand things rationally, how things work, or was it more about somehow feeling when you were doing the right thing and then chasing that feeling outside the classroom?

Interviewee:

I don't know, maybe it depends on the feedback. If there are some technical issues, articulation issues and so on, type of the attack and so on, then you think more rationally. But if it's musical, if it's, I don't know, a solo, a lyrical melody, and it doesn't really work on the lecturer, then you try to change something from the emotional side of it.

Interviewer:

Okay, and I think we're done. So, I'm stopping the recording.

E04

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

So I am beginning the recording and first I'm informing you that you are being recorded. It's only voice recording, I will transcribe it and I will use it in the research. If you are okay with that, please say your name and say that you are accepting everything that I said before.

Interviewee:

I'm [name], and then, I'm accepting everything you just said before.

Interviewer:

Yes, thank you. So, if the question is unclear, don't be afraid to reformulate it, because they are very vague, and each person leads the conversation somewhere completely differently. So, I'm just trying to get the information I need out of you. And I'm going to touch some very uncomfortable and sensitive subjects, so if you don't feel like answering a certain question, also it's okay to say "Okay, I'm not going to answer you that, let's move on".

Interviewee:

Okay.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, can you please once again tell me about your experience with meditation?

Interviewee:

So, my experience with meditation starts around one year before, and then basically, I just do it every morning after I wake up and I finish my cold shower routine. In my meditation, I'm mainly focusing two topics. The first topic is the things that I need to do on that day. And the second topic is about play trombone. So, should I tell more?

Interviewer:

Well, yeah, of course. Tell everything that you think, that, I mean, you know...

Interviewee:

So, for the first topic, as I said, it was about my goals every day, like stuff I need to do in school. I will just mainly have a mental rehearsal in my mind, in my meditation. For the trombone playing, basically, I will imagine the whole process from unpacking my instrument until to, how I stretch my body in real life, to how I should buzz the mouthpiece. And then, at the end, I will have the mental rehearsal for the whole repertoire that I'm practicing at that moment. That's all.

Interviewer:

Okay. And, okay, this is completely out of the topic. In which year of your studies are you?

Interviewee:

Now?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Interviewee:

I'm in my fourth year of bachelor.

Interviewer:

How long have you been playing the trombone?

Interviewee:

I started playing trombone since 15 years old, and now I'm 24. So, I think it is approximately nine years.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

Very big topic. My well-being as a musician...

Interviewer:

Do you have that much to say, that you don't know where to start, or should I maybe give you some examples?

Interviewee:

I don't know where to start. I don't know how to answer this question. Sorry.

Interviewer:

I mean, some of the respondents say that they are too stressed, anxious, or they are not happy with their playing, or there are some physical challenges that are limiting them. So, do you have anything like that, or you're more or less okay and you're just coming to school to do your job?

Interviewee:

I'm... Actually, I never feel I am anxious with trombone playing.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

For me, it's quite normal to play trombone and just come to school, practice, play recital and stuff like that.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I think that is fine. Neutral, I would say.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you have any particular concerns or expectations about meditation and how it might influence your musical performance or daily life?

Interviewee:

It affects my daily life and also musical performance in a positive way. For my daily life, it is more organized. And then since I already meditate every morning, I already predict the possibilities that I will encounter in my life. So, I'm more easy with my life and more proactive in some way. For the musical performance, since... Yeah, as I said, the process of the performance is already in the imagination in the meditation. So, it works more fluently since I start to meditate every morning.

Interviewer:

Okay. How would you describe your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

Hmm, my focus level, I would say... Should I rate from one out of ten?

Interviewer:

Oh, you can, but you don't have to.

Interviewee:

If... I will make a comparison. Before I make the meditation, my focus is always between on and off. It is around three to six. But after I start the meditation routine, I think, basically, I have around seven to nine, especially when I'm holding my instrument, because I know exactly what I need to do and how, what I should feel in a certain way. Because I focus on a certain way of the information, if it makes sense.

Interviewer:

Yeah. And do you get distracted easily?

Interviewee:

Not anymore.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you procrastinate while you're practicing?

Interviewee:

Sorry, can you repeat?

Interviewer:

Do you procrastinate while you're practicing?

Interviewee:

What do you mean for procrastination?

Interviewer:

One way of explaining is that you are doing everything but the thing that you are supposed to do.

Interviewee:

Ah, like a machine, you mean?

Interviewer:

No, no, no. Like you're doing everything else, but not the thing that you are supposed to do. Or maybe you just scroll some social media or something like that.

Interviewee:

Ah, I never do social media. When I'm practicing, I'm only practicing.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

If it makes sense. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Okay. Okay, when you are practicing the trombone, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

For me, I focus about... It depends if I'm in my practice condition or pretend performance condition, because, basically, my trombone playing, except real performance, I usually focusing with the practice mode and the performance mode. And then in the practice mode, I focus with the stuff like, breathing, tone color. Yeah, all the stuff that we should practice [on] a daily basis. But if I'm practicing in a performance mode, I will focus on how I feel. Like, I would imagine if I'm nervous and then how would I feel, like, biologically, will I be more stiff or have difficulty to breathe properly in terms of playing trombone.

Interviewer:

Okay. Yeah, you use meditation to help you focus, right?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay, sorry. For how long are you capable to practice mindfully and with good focus at one time?

Interviewee:

At one time. So, you mean per sessions?

Interviewer:

I mean, like, once you start to focus, like, how long can you keep it until you start doing some random stuff in the classroom?

Interviewee:

Around 20 minutes to 50, if it is a very good day. I would say, normally it is around 20 minutes to 30 minutes-ish.

Interviewer:

Okay. And, like, in the day, how much of that good focus work are you getting?

Interviewee:

How much? You mean the total hours or minutes?

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
I would say around two to three and a half hours, maximum three and a half hours.

Interviewer:
Okay. Have you heard, like, about the flow?

Interviewee:
Ah, I heard about those stuff and it feels like it is quite obvious that how my mind... Oh, this is very difficult to say in English. When I'm in the flow, I don't really feel the time, but I feel lots of information in the practice.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
But for me to get in the flow... For example, I get in the flow when I'm practicing. After that, I will be very tired, because I spend lots of focus in certain sensor, if it makes sense.

Interviewer:
Yes. And how frequently does it happen for you when you're in the flow?

Interviewee:
How frequently? I would say, most of the time I'm holding up my instrument, like literally, because nowadays it is just getting in progress. And also, when I'm learning or reading as well.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
And how frequently does it happen for you that you plan to practice, but then you are like "Ahh, I'm very lazy", or things don't go well and you just stop?

Interviewee:
Hmm, I would say once or twice in two weeks.

Interviewer:
Okay. Let's move on. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:
Not really.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you generally respond to bad practice sessions, bad lessons or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

How do I deal with it?

Interviewer:

How do you react? Are you like “Ah, it's okay”, or are you very mad at yourself and you just start judging, or?...

Interviewee:

I will not be mad with myself. I think I will just accept it, but with no extra negative emotions.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience musical performance anxiety before or during the performances?

Interviewee:

I experienced that specifically in the first year that I moved here. And then, yeah, I think I experienced around... the performance anxiety for the whole year.

Interviewer:

And what about now?

Interviewee:

I don't really feel nervous or anxious by playing to people.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what about the lessons? Are you a bit nervous before the lessons?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

No. And when you are playing in the orchestra, for example, there happens sometimes that you have like 60 bars of pauses and you have to play. Are you getting nervous before this?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you during your performance?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it happen for you that after the performance, you feel like it was a blur or happened very quickly and you are not capable of remembering the details?

Interviewee:

Sorry, can you repeat your question? In a more simple English?

Interviewer:

Oh, yes. Okay. Does it happen to you that you go on stage, you play, and after that, you're like, "Oh no, I don't remember, what happened", like, you black out.

Interviewee:

Oh, yes, sometimes.

Interviewer:

Yeah? When?

Interviewee:

When?

Interviewer:

When does it happen? Like, what are the outside things that make that happen?

Interviewee:

A good performance.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it's basically, like, from the focus and how you are involved, and not from fright or something like that?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay. Good for you. How frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

I would say most of the time when I am well prepared.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you trust yourself as a musician?

Interviewee:

Musician? You mean as an instrumentalist?

Interviewer:

Like general, like, do you feel confident in your abilities?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Speaker 2]

Yes? Okay. And do you think that meditation helped with that?

Interviewee:

I would say it is a big part of the success.

Interviewer:

Okay. And I know that, you know, like, you're doing a good job as a trombone player, but sometimes bad stuff happens and sometimes things don't go as well. What motivates you to go forward from those bad places?

Interviewee:

I just recall those good memories that I played trombone, and then use them to be the motivation of me.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you experiencing any difficulties with your airflow or breath support while playing the trombone?

Interviewee:

Breath support. When I was nervous, like it was quite a while ago.

Interviewer:

No, we're talking, like, now.

Interviewee:

Now? If I feel difficult to take breath now on trombone?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Not really.

Interviewer:

Not really?

Interviewee:

Not really.

Interviewer:

Brass playing requires careful control of embouchure, breathing and body alignment. How aware are you of those aspects during practice and performance?

Interviewee:

For performance, I don't really put them in mind. But with my practice, I'm taking them quite carefully. I do stretch, because I have a Spanish document for all the nerves here, how should I do *mouth moving*, how should I stretch my face... Since this summer, I start doing them like one or two times every week to make sure they are loose or at least how should I feel. I

can feel the difference if I do those exercises before my warm-up session, or without those exercises. So, yeah, to avoid something like dystonia, I think it's very important.

Interviewer:

Okay. How frequently when you're in the lesson, when teacher says to you, like, to fix something and you fix it, and he asks, not "Did you understand it?", but "Did you feel it"? Does it happen for you?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Before, yes.

Interviewer:

Do you usually feel it?

Interviewee:

You mean in general, at this moment?

Interviewer:

No, like last year perhaps. Do you feel it when your teacher asks ,like "Do you feel it"?

Interviewee:

It depends [on] the teacher if I'm answering the question correct, and relatively. I think it really depends how the teacher's instruction to let you feel it. For example, I have very bad experience with my first trombone teacher. And then most of the time, I don't really feel it. I just answer randomly because I want to finish the lesson. But after, yeah, I get a new teacher and then I can feel most of the time, for the very first time he asked me to feel. If not, usually the second time with the additional instruction. And then I can also feel it.

Interviewer:

Okay, this is great. Do you experience any tension while you are playing?

Interviewee:

Physically or mentally?

Interviewer:

Answer about both.

Interviewee:

Mentally, I don't really feel tension. In physically... yeah, playing trombone is not very physical-friendly, because yeah, the position is not nice. So sometimes I can feel the tension. For example, when I'm breathing, I can feel my rib cage is tight or my shoulder, or some back muscle is not relaxed or strengthened enough to support the playing.

Interviewer:

Okay, are you aware about your posture when you're playing?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay, what do you think about the most?

Interviewee:

I would say is... how do I distribute the weight of my instrument, especially from different position. For example, I would say my left shoulder and elbow, they are in different angle between the first and the seventh position. Usually, I will open up a bit when I go into the further position. Yeah, I will also pay attention with the angle between my feet. Because it is also related to the muscle around the hip and the lower back area.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you find it easy to stay focused in the lessons?

Interviewee:

You mean, comparing between lessons and practice sessions?

Interviewer:

No, no, like generally.

Interviewee:

Okay, then can you repeat your question once again?

Interviewer:

Do you find it easy to stay focused in the lessons?

Interviewee:

Yes. In the lessons? Yes.

Interviewer:

How do you usually react to feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

Usually, because of my cultural background, I'm always looking for negative feedbacks. Because my teacher is a very positive person. And then usually I don't really care about the positive feedback, but I'm always only focused on the negative feedbacks, because he's critical with the stuff I need to improve. So, I would rather focus on that part instead of the compliments.

Interviewer:

But does that negative feedback lead you to, like, self-criticizing and maybe lowering of self-esteem? Or are you just thinking "Okay, this is a thing that I need to fix", and that's it?

Interviewee:

The second one. I think the negative feedbacks appear, it is because some parts of me is... Some parts of my playing are not really working well, so this is an act of pointing out and emphasis of the stuff I need to work extra, or in different way. Especially in different way.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

On what are you focused the most when you hear the feedback of the teacher?

Interviewee:

What do you mean? Can you elaborate?

Interviewer:

Sometimes people think “Okay, I'm listening to the teacher and I'm trying to realize rationally the mechanics of what I have to do, so I have to practice this and that, and that, and that way, and it will come”, and some people think “If they ask me to repeat the thing in their way, I'm just really trying to feel it, and then in the classroom, I'm just chasing the feeling”.

Interviewee:

I think I'm more this first group of people you have mentioned.

Interviewer:

Okay. How dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

What do you mean? Sorry.

Interviewer:

There are some people that, if a teacher says that they play good in the lesson, they start to really trust themselves, and if the teacher says that they play bad, they get very critical of themselves.

Interviewee:

I don't really mind my reputation or reviews from him because we are musicians. It's not playing to... we are not only playing to our teachers, but I'm more focusing the real feedback from different audience, or even my colleagues in the trombone studios. I think it's more objective in general.

Interviewer:

We are done. I'm finishing the recording.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:

So, I am turning on the recording and thus I am informing you that you are being recorded.

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

The transcript of your recording is going to be used in my master research. If you are aware and if you agree to what I am saying, please state your name and say that you agree to previously stated information.

Interviewee:

Yes, I agree to all the information.

Interviewer:

Okay, so the first question is, which of my meditations were you choosing for the majority of time? Maybe like the most frequent one, which length?

Interviewee:

I did the 15 minute one.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

And what was your question?

Interviewer:

That's the thing, like, which of them were you doing the most of the time?

Interviewee:

Which of them, but I...

Interviewer:

Because you were doing every day, so one day maybe you did like 15, the other 5, so which was like, the most frequent one?

Interviewee:

I tried all of them for one time before I decided to stick the one. And then I decided to do the 15 minute one for most of my time.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Like, basically more than 90% of my meditation is with 15 minutes.

Interviewer:

Okay, I am just going to check like, how the waves... Okay, it's recording the waves, that's good.

Interviewee:

I can sit closer, yes.

Interviewer:

And have you noticed any changes yourself?

Interviewee:

It's quite a lot through the process of meditation. Should I just say the result, like what I...

Interviewer:

Yeah, this is the point of the interview, I want to compare how you feel with the numbers.

Interviewee:

I find the small sensation of the posture, that when I'm standing and holding my trombone in the playing position, and then my, yeah, posture, the balance of the posture with the instruments now is quite well balanced. Because before that I always have back muscle pain, and now I think I can play physically more freely because I find the way to such position of my elbow and shoulder, so I play more freely. And then the second thing is, I feel more with my lips, my embouchure, especially with different register and playing different pieces, I feel different sensation. For me, it works... It helps the most that, for example, when I'm doing an orchestral audition, I need to study some excerpts. For me, by recording the memory of certain part of sensation and, muscle reaction helps to perform better with those excerpts and solo piece for the audition, because meditation is... Also helps me to focus well, to perform everything correctly in the first attempt, if this is understandable.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Just to clarify, you are talking about this month that you were doing, not like your general meditation since you started some years ago, right?

Interviewee:

Not that one, this is the benefit, what I just said was the benefit of your meditation experience.

Interviewer:

Because like this is, just to clarify, this is what I want you to compare because... Before this and after that.

Interviewee:

Yeah, I would say before your experiment, what I focus more is mentally how I... my mindset built, but with your experiment, it is mainly focused on looking for those different sensations with different action that I do on trombone, so it's quite different. I benefit quite a lot. And then coincidentally, I think in general, I just perform better, the sound is improved, the quality of the tone colors was also improved. And I would say the biggest benefit is the duration of my playing, endurance.

Interviewer:

Endurance, you mean physically or mentally?

Interviewee:

Both, both, but I will say physically is bigger because mentally I know what should I do, so I conserve lots of energy, I save lots of energy to play longer. Yeah, this is what's in my mind.

Interviewer:

Okay. Now I'm going to give you more questions - maybe you forgot something, maybe I want to clarify some of the things that you've mentioned.

Interviewee:

Please.

Interviewer:

How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:
Healthy.

Interviewer:
Healthy?

Interviewee:
Fine, nothing really special, I would say. I would say, I'm in the positive way.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
And can you describe your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:
It is quite high, maybe from 0 to 10, my practice session usually is between 8 to 10. Yeah, it's quite high.

Interviewer:
Have you noticed any improvement, or is it more or less the same to what it used to be when the last time we spoke?

Interviewee:
I realized the improvement is mainly the focus level and physically I coordinate better with my tongue, hands, slide, air and breath.

Interviewer:
So basically, just to understand if I got it right, when you are playing you are giving more attention to the physical things that you are doing and thus you improved your endurance? Or did I get it wrong?

Interviewee:
Can you repeat your...

Interviewer:
I just want to check if I understood correctly. Basically, you started to pay more attention to the things that you do physically and because you did that, that improved your physical endurance and thus you are getting more quality practice?

Interviewee:
Yeah, something like that. And I have to say, as I mentioned, if you remember, I split my playing in two scenarios - practice and performance. I realized that endurance improved during the performance section, but during the practicing mode, I just pay all the attention and sensation with the instrument.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah, if I am clear enough.

Interviewer:

I think so.

Interviewee:

Yeah, okay.

Interviewer:

If something is unclear, because I will be listening to that again, I will text you.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you experience any procrastination while you are practicing?

Interviewee:

Sorry, what is that?

Interviewer:

Procrastination - when you are doing something that you are not supposed to do. Like, for example, you want to practice and you just start reading a book or scrolling the phone and then you are like "Oh no, I am supposed to be practicing".

Interviewee:

Not really. Usually, if I start practice, I will feel I have lost the track of the time.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

Usually, yeah, time works really fast when I am practicing. I think because I was very focused. Yeah, basically, I don't scroll my phone or do something else.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you are playing the trombone, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

Nowadays, I focus on just breathe in and blow. The rest will come, because it is part of my system already. During the practice section.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you currently use any other techniques than meditation to help you focus or improve your performance?

Interviewee:

I would say mainly yoga and stretching.

Interviewer:

Yeah. And with what do they help you?

Interviewee:

So, the yoga helps to improve the elastic stuff.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

I don't know the English word.

Interviewer:

Like flexibility, right?

Interviewee:

Flexibility. Yeah, basically, it helps with my flexibility. It shows the difference by, the longer I play, the more I feel, oh, the yoga helps, because I know exactly how it feels instead of just pushing somewhere there to, yeah, try to hold a bit long.

Interviewer:

So, basically, like, you are not using the wrong muscles to overcompensate the lack of work of the right muscles?

Interviewee:

Exactly. Good. And then for the stretching, yeah, because I will say yoga is something you do it actively, but the stretching is something passively, and the stretching helps just with my posture. That's it.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

For how long as of lately are you capable to practice mindfully and with good focus at one time?

Interviewee:

What do you mean? Sorry.

Interviewer:

For example, when you are starting to practice, you have limited amount of concentration.

Interviewee:

Exactly.

Interviewer:

And after some point, you realize that you are not being productive anymore. So, for how long are you capable to keep the productivity at one sitting?

Interviewee:

I think for now, is generally around 30 minutes to 50, something like that. More than that, I will feel I'm zoned out and just drained.

Interviewer:

Has it changed since we last spoke?

Interviewee:

The duration is not changed that much, but the quality of focus changed a lot.

Interviewer:

Okay. And by quality of focus, you mean that thing that you are just focusing more on the sensations of doing in the physical realm.

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. And to combine those 30 to 50 minutes a day, how much of quality work are you getting in a day?

Interviewee:

Quality work?

Interviewer:

Like, good quality focus playing in one day.

Interviewee:

How much? What do you mean?

Interviewer:

Like, how many hours?

Interviewee:

Maximum... I would say, if we put it together, around 2 hours. But I need to take rest between, because it just takes a lot of energy out of my mind.

Interviewer:

Okay. And you talked about the thing that you just lose the track of time. So how frequently do you get in that state?

Interviewee:

Maybe four to five times a week, because when my body feels tired, then it doesn't go as good as those good attempts.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you know what you should do to make yourself go into that state or it's a bit of a matter of luck?

Interviewee:

I think for me, I think it takes steps. First of all, just turn off my phone, all the connection with other stuff and then make sure my surrounding is silent. And then I will start to really focus on one or two commands at that moment. Like oh, I unpack my trombone and then for example, I do some free-buzzing, mouthpiece buzzing. I will just have the pitch and then think "Now this is the only thing I need to do". Then I just stick with that.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Instead of list everything I should do in the day, or go to get grocery later, you know. If I have too many things in my mind, I'm not capable of that.

Interviewer:

So basically, you're focusing at one thing at a time and when you're done with that, you're moving forward, right?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. Yes, this is why I'm re-asking because I just want to make sure that I got it right.

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

How frequently does it happen for you that you stop practicing earlier than you intended to?

Interviewee:

Not that often, but sometimes if I realize there are not enough source energy, and I would just rather pack my instrument and then just go to take some rest or move on with other stuff that I need to do.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it's quite rare. Like it happens, but it's not very frequent?

Interviewee:

Not very frequent.

Interviewer:

Okay. And about that state where you lose track of time, have you noticed any changes in the frequency of you reaching that state?

Interviewee:

Have I noticed the frequency?

Interviewer:

Like, the difference in frequency. Maybe, like, it was more before you started the experiment, or less.

Interviewee:

For sure, it was more before I started the experiment.

Interviewer:

What do you mean? Could you please elaborate? I mean did it get for you more easy or more difficult after you started to do my stuff to get...?

Interviewee:

It's more easy.

Interviewer:

More easy. Yeah.

Interviewee:

Okay. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

Does it count, if technically it's not there yet or something?

Interviewer:

I mean, you can tell me. You can tell me, if I don't need it - just don't write about it.

Interviewee:

Obstacles... I don't have anything, specifically to my mind, because we always have different goals, like for auditions, for exams. But now...

Interviewer:

If you don't have anything, you don't have, probably nothing.

Interviewee:

Not really.

Interviewer:

How do you generally react to bad practice sessions, bad lessons, or bad concerts? Or any other type of performance?

Interviewee:

Yeah, my solution, if I have a bad practice, bad performance, is just detach from my instrument and then go to do something else, like getting an ice cream.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Of course, I will evaluate what is the reason, why it failed or something is not working in a playing. But apart from that, I don't have anything else negatively with the trombone.

Interviewer:

Okay, but for example, maybe it affects your self-esteem or motivation or something like that?

Interviewee:

Not really.

Interviewer:

And have you noticed a difference in that since you started the experiment?

Interviewee:

I will say, I understand everything is part of the process. If something is not working, it means I need to change my concept or just change something instead of really putting a lot of attention on what has happened. But I'm more focused on how to develop or how to fix in the future.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

In this sense.

Interviewer:

So you don't dwell on mistakes, you just think about solutions, right?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay, and what about motivation? Does it affect your motivation in any way?

Interviewee:

I think my motivation is increasing.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

I guess, more happy when I play trombone, and I also can feel the sense of rewarding. Like, if I can play something nicely, beautifully, and then I have more motivation that maybe I should practice this more or play that to people more often, something like that.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Not really.

Interviewer:
Not really?

Interviewee:
Not really.

Interviewer:
Okay. And are you a bit nervous before your lessons?

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:
No?

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:
Okay, then let's skip this part. Are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you during the performances?

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:
No. Okay. And does it happen for you that you are playing something for the people, and you experience blackout or you don't remember stuff afterwards, because you were so nervous?

Interviewee:
Ah, in that sense, not really.

Interviewer:
No. How frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:
I would say most of the time. At least, I don't remember when was the last time I don't enjoy my performances.

Interviewer:
How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:
What is perception?

Interviewer:
What do you think about yourself as a musician?

Interviewee:

I'm a trombone player. What do I think? Actually, I would say, just ordinary musician, if that makes sense. Because I don't have too many things in mind about myself as a musician.

Interviewer:

Okay, but do you trust yourself?

Interviewee:

Yes. I trust myself.

Interviewer:

Okay, and are you comparing yourself to other trombone players?

Interviewee:

What should I answer?

Interviewer:

I mean like, are you like "Okay, that and that guy can play this and that, and I cannot play this and that", this kind of stuff?

Interviewee:

Ah, okay. So, I think I can play... Yeah, I think I can play better than most of them, my colleagues.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

It's true, it's quite objective, you know, nowadays. I love them.

Interviewer:

No, but like, do you think a lot about it?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Yeah, because I'm not asking you to compare, I'm like, do you think that, you know, "Oh, this and that colleague does this and that". But if you don't think about it, then it's great.

Interviewee:

Not really.

Interviewer:

Do you think that this experiment helped you in this aspect about your self-value and self-perception, or not really?

Interviewee:

It is never part of my focus point with my self-perception.

Interviewer:
It was never a problem?

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:
Okay. And what motivates you to keep practicing and performing during good and bad times?

Interviewee:
Getting a job, nice life, professionally, and then just, yeah, try to, I don't know, make a life with that. I think most of us think in that way.

Interviewer:
Survival instinct, basically.

Interviewee:
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:
You like eating.

Interviewee:
I like eating. Yes.

Interviewer:
Have you noticed any differences with your airflow or breath support since you started the experiment?

Interviewee:
If you're talking about the airflow, related to the resistance when you're playing, I feel...

Interviewer:
In any kind.

Interviewee:
Yeah, I can feel it more, and the breath support, you meant, right?

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
So, yeah, I realized I focus more here, and then it is more supportive.

Interviewer:
So, you are more aware of those things, basically?

Interviewee:
Not actively, but I can sense when I'm not there doing the right things.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
If it is making sense.

Interviewer:
Yes.

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
I mean, you don't necessarily change it, but at least you know that "Oh, okay, at this moment I'm kind of not doing it right", right?

Interviewee:
Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Interviewer:
Okay, and also, you've mentioned that you started to pay more attention to the physical aspect. So, to what exactly?

Interviewee:
To the weight distribution. So, before the experiment, I realized what should I do with my bottom part, but with that experience, I can find different spots to feel, to hold my instrument in a certain angle, and then I can move my slide freely.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
So, I can... I think now I can distribute more weight in good condition on my left shoulder.

Interviewer:
Can I just check if I got it right? So basically, you just feel more your instrument in a way, that it's not as much bothering your playing and not making you as tense, as you were before.

Interviewee:
Yes. Yes, correct.

Interviewer:
Yes. So, improved connection with the instrument?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
And do you think about your embouchure?

Interviewee:
A little bit. For me, embouchure now is part of the things I will be focused.

Interviewer:
Okay. So basically, you base it on the way it sounds and if it sounds right, then it means that you're doing things right?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Okay. How frequently do your teachers in the lessons ask to feel the difference instead of understanding it?

Interviewee:
Not that frequent.

Interviewer:
But when they ask, do you feel the difference or are you like, more like “Oh, what do you want from me”?

Interviewee:
I don't have the answer of this one. But can you ask a bit more with this?

Interviewer:
I mean, for me, for example, when I'm playing, I had teachers who said like “Do you understand, what you have to do for the next lesson?”. And some other teachers ask “do you feel the difference?” So, when people ask you if you feel, instead of understanding, do you usually feel it?

Interviewee:
I will feel it. And sometimes my teachers, because we have the new one nowadays, and then, yeah, usually they ask me if I feel the difference.

Interviewer:
Yeah. And you usually feel it?

Interviewee:
Yeah, I always feel it.

Interviewer:
Okay. And you said that you experience tension in your slide arm. Are you experiencing tension anywhere more?

Interviewee:
Slide arm...

Interviewer:
And shoulder, right? On which you hold your trombone?

Interviewee:
Yes. Shoulder and arm. Not really, just these two sections.

Interviewer:
Okay. And do you think that since the start of the experiment, you are a bit more aware of that, or maybe it helped it fix, or didn't make like, any difference whatsoever?

Interviewee:
Since I'm aware of that in the meditation, then later in the day, I just don't pay attention with that. I just stick with the same posture and sensation.

Interviewer:
Okay, so it helps you to build, like, good habits in the beginning and to stick with them?

Interviewee:
Yes. And it just runs.

Interviewer:
Okay. And you mentioned that meditation affected your sound, so could you please tell me more about that?

Interviewee:
I think because of meditation with the instrument, I focus more on how to breathe and the cozy feeling of blowing out, so it is less aggressive, with more harmonics and every note more in center.

Interviewer:
Okay, so it's in center, but it's a bit, like, wider and rounder.

Interviewee:
Wider, just, yeah, more decent. And one more thing I think it is worthy to mention is the, how should I say... Nowadays for the first time, it always works. Because before the experiment, I need to try two or three times to get a very good, decent sound.

Interviewer:
Okay, and now you're capable of getting it from the first time?

Interviewee:
From the first time, yes.

Interviewer:
Okay, and what do you mean by trying? Like, you just, like, make a sound and you're like "Oh no, that's wrong, I try once again and change something"?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay. Oh, that's very interesting. You're the first person to tell me that. Thank you very much.

Interviewee:
Before I was trying so hard to hold everything in one piece in my mind, like, if I'm not capable, play a one piece, technically, but if I still play it, I will focus a lot here and play this, play that thing about the sound, the slurs, very mechanically. But nowadays, if things don't work, I take my time and just work step-by-step and I can also build it up, but in a different mental process.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Yeah. Because my first-year recital was almost falling apart in every pieces. So...

Interviewer:
So, to make sure, again, if I got it right, because it's very abstract concept that we are talking about...

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Basically, what changed is that you were looking at first very mechanically, that "I have to play this and this exercise to fix that", and now it's a bit like "It kind of feels not right, so I have to fix it, so it feels right and then the sound is going to be good"?

Interviewee:
Yeah, naturally.

Interviewer:
Something like this?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
This is the change? I got it right?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Okay, that's great. And do you find it easy to stay focused during your lessons?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Yes?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Have you noticed any change in that, or was it always easy for you?

Interviewee:
Yeah, I think it is always easy.

Interviewer:
Okay. And how do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:
Yeah, if they make feedback, it is always very objective, first of all - "Oh, this sounds good, but some of this and that, it fails, because this is happening, so it is not as good as those good stuff". So, yeah, I don't feel anything particularly with feedbacks or comments, actually.

Interviewer:
Okay, and you don't take it personally?

Interviewee:
No, no, no, never personally.

Interviewer:
You don't start criticizing yourself or something like that?

Interviewee:
No, no.

Interviewer:
Okay, and I'm sorry if I asked you that before, but as of late, when you are in the lesson and you receive some feedback, are you more trying to understand it rationally, like, when you see it mechanically, or are you more like "Okay, this feels right, and after I finish my lesson and I'm going to practice, I want it to feel right again"?

Interviewee:
I don't understand. One more time, please.

Interviewer:
I mean, like, I have noticed two groups of people so far, and like, some people in the middle, and one group is like, "I try to understand mechanically what I have to do and when I do that", and the other group is like "I try to understand how I felt, when I made it sound right,

so after when I go to practice alone, I don't need the mechanics, but I need to just get this right feeling and then it's going to sound right”.

Interviewee:

I think I'm in the second group.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

How independent of me from my teacher's approval? I think I'm quite independent.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

If he doesn't like my playing, it means we are just not in the same taste yet. It doesn't mean anything else.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And I think that's it. We're done.

Interviewee:

Nice.

E05

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

I am turning on the recording and thus I am informing you that you are being recorded. The transcript of this recording will be possibly used in my research. So, if you are aware that you are being recorded and you agree to previously stated conditions, please state your name and say that you agree to that.

Interviewee:

My name is [name] and I do agree.

Interviewer:

Okay, moving forward if any question isn't clear, please let me know, my English sometimes is not really Englishing, and if you don't feel comfortable answering something or I'm being too invasive, just tell me and we can skip the question, or just cut the interview, according to your preference. Is everything clear so far?

Interviewee:

Sounds good.

Interviewer:

Okay, let's go. I'm sorry to ask you once again, but it was off recording and have you ever had any experience with meditation prior to the study?

Interviewee:

I did two or three years ago, was recommended it by brass player over the summer, for performance anxiety related reasons having to do with some sort of strange embouchure dysfunction, and the core like there, so I tried it a few times and then not really since.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And then a little bit after reading Rick Rubin's book. He talked about a sort of kind of similar idea of meditation with your eyes open, where you go between deliberately focusing on a really specific thing in the center of your vision, and then go out and try to expand your vision, and pay attention to as many things, and alternate between.

Interviewer:

Okay. Was it a regular thing, or...?

Interviewee:

No, it was just a few times.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So not much experience.

Interviewer:
Okay, and you are in your Master's one, right?

Interviewee:
Correct.

Interviewer:
For how long have you been playing the trombone?

Interviewee:
Like, since beginner band, or?

Interviewer:
No, since it touched your lips for the first time.

Interviewee:
Like, about 10 years.

Interviewer:
Okay. How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:
Uh, it could be better probably.

Interviewer:
In which ways?

Interviewee:
I think I could have a healthier, more calm approach to practicing problem solving and performing on stage.

Interviewer:
Okay, we are going to touch all of those topics, that's great. Do you have any particular concerns or expectations about meditation, on how it might influence your musical performance or daily life?

Interviewee:
I am hopeful that it will result in greater calm when practicing and performing on stage, and maybe a greater capacity to accept negative emotions, when they come up.

Interviewer:
How are your current focus levels during your practice sessions?

Interviewee:
Highly variable. Sometimes dialed.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:

Colloquially, of course, means very focused. Sometimes really distracted. Distracted by news articles, random shit, text from friends, sorry, random stuff. Yeah, sometimes I get deeply frustrated or anxious, especially with certain chop problems that occur that I've been working on for the last six months or so.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So sometimes that derails the session entirely, and I have to leave.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

But it depends. It can be good.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you know what triggers those bad focus practice sessions?

Interviewee:

Not really.

Interviewer:

It's just very like a luck-based thing?

Interviewee:

Yeah. I think it might be the degree to which my focus is internal or external, when I start to try to manipulate things, like in play, very specifically by feel...

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

It obviously does not work very well.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

It tends to get worse, but it kind of depends on a number of factors I'm not really aware of, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, you mentioned that things that distract you are, like, just some random things. Are you a phone-using person, when you're practicing?

Interviewee:

Probably more than I should be. It depends.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Not always. You know, not most of the time, but some of the time, yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay. And when you get distracted by anything, how do you usually get back on track?

Interviewee:
Sometimes I go for a walk. Change when I'm practicing. A lot of the time I feel like, if my focus is just completely depleted on whatever I'm working on, I've probably been doing that thing for too long. So, if I'm like, playing lip slurs and I cannot focus on lip slurs anymore, I might play an articulation exercise or work on some music, or pick up an excerpt or something.

Interviewer:
Okay. And when you are practicing your brass instrument, trombone, in this case, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:
Making a nice sound. Trying to replicate, what I hear in my head.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you currently use any techniques to help you focus or improve your performance?

Interviewee:
Improve focus... I guess, not really. Kind of just start doing things.

Interviewer:
Okay. For how long are you capable to practice mindfully and with good focus at a time?

Interviewee:
And this is excluding breaks? Like, this is not the most... you're not talking about the longest, like, practice session, where you can be in the room, but like, the longest time you can spend like actually playing?

Interviewer:
I don't feel like playing necessarily means mindful practice. I mean quality work because you can just play some random stuff and, you know, theoretically it's practicing, but does it really help?

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
So, really helpful and stuff that you know what you are doing, you know why you're doing and you're very aware of what is happening.

Interviewee:

It's probably half an hour at a time, but I can stack half hour segments depending on how late it is in the day, two or three of them with breaks in between.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Like, usually first session can be about 90 minutes in three chunks.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

But it's really half an hour at a time, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay, and how much of that quality work are you getting in the day?

Interviewee:

It kind of varies. My schedules... sometimes I just don't book enough rooms, but it's kind of between two and four hours a day.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Which is not, maybe enough, but...

Interviewer:

Have you heard of such concept, called the Flow?

Interviewee:

I have, in my music performance strategies course in undergrad, we talked about flow state and getting into it.

Interviewer:

Okay, so do you get into the flow state?

Interviewee:

Very rarely.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But occasionally.

Interviewer:

And do you know how to trigger that?

Interviewee:

No clue, not a, not a clue.

Interviewer:

How frequently does it happen to you that even though you plan to practice something, you feel bored or just distracted or something is not going well, and you say, like, "I'm done, I'm going home"?

Interviewee:

Oh man, it's a few times a week.

Interviewer:

Okay. Okay. Let's move on. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

What sorts of obstacles?

Interviewer:

Whatever, mental blocks, physical things, technical issues...

Interviewee:

Um... strange embouchure dysfunction under stress.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Like, I pull my face into weird shit.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But that's... that's been ongoing, like you're learning, how to play in a more efficient manner.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

And that's kind of, it's come a long way in the last year.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, you're just basically trying to fix your face so it wouldn't do weird things when you are playing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, like, I played a master class once and I was really nervous for this bass trombone player.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
I played “Rheingold”, and you know it's kind of a tough excerpt to play, really sustained and beautiful, and it like, shook as hell.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
I was like, “Oh god”. So, you know, trying not to do that.

Interviewer:
Okay. How do you generally respond to bad practice sessions or bad lessons, or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:
I don't know. Go home, sit in the dark.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Be pissed off.

Interviewer:
So, but you're getting pissed off at yourself.

Interviewee:
A lot.

Interviewer:
How long does it take for you to get over it?

Interviewee:
It depends. Sometimes, you know, you push through and then the practice session improves, and then I'm fine, and then it's, you know, like five or ten minutes.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
And sometimes it kind of just wrecks my whole day.

Interviewer:
Okay. And, for example like, the bad lessons or unsuccessful performances... Are they affecting your self-confidence in any way?

Interviewee:

To some degree. Yeah. I think when they stack up over time.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But the trend has been in a better direction as of late.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what about your motivation? Does it affect your motivation in any way?

Interviewee:

Not in the long term. Like, in a given day, that sucks.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

You know, like everyone, I think. You think about quitting.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

I should find a real job. Screw this. Pardon me, of course. But I think, long term it doesn't really affect my motivation too much.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you have, like, any strategies to recover mentally from those things?

Interviewee:

I think the biggest one for me is just learning when to leave.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

The room, because otherwise, I'll just sit in there for hours, like, and get nothing done.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

So that, that helps.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Feel less insane.

Interviewer:

Do you experience music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Before or during the performance?

Interviewee:

Immediately before and then during.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it affect the quality of your playing?

Interviewee:

It kind of makes auditions a non-starter, until I tried one with beta blockers. Like I'd shake so much I can't really make a good sound.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Well, it feels that way to me. I think on the other end of the bell, it doesn't sound as bad as it feels. But in other musical contexts, not so much. Like, playing in the orchestra, the nerves really feel more like excitement and it's a lot of fun.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, when you're playing solo it's a bit more tricky.

Interviewee:

But like, playing solo stuff with piano, like, that kind of thing, it's more a combination of nerves and anxiety. It's not an excitement. It's not really debilitating.

Interviewer:

Yeah. But like, solo solo, this is, that's the thing?

Interviewee:

Mostly like, auditions with excerpts, I think, versus like, playing.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Repertoire.

Interviewer:

So basically, like, the audition is like “Oh, no”, and like, piano and orchestra, inside of the orchestra is more or less...

Interviewee:

That's much, much better, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. What physical symptoms are you experiencing, if any?

Interviewee:

My legs shake, hands sweat. I start to do the weird chop stuff, like I pull with other stuff, and then, I don't know, like, it creates some sort of tension in my lips, like, it creates kind of a sound change.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But yeah, taking beta blockers kind of got rid of almost all of that.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Which was nice. Yeah, I know you're not supposed to rely on that, but...

Interviewer:

I mean, I haven't ever looked at that, but if it helps, it helps, and if it doesn't affect your health.

Interviewee:

Yeah. My blood pressure is probably tense, high anyway, so.

Interviewer:

Do you have any other strategies to manage music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

I try to breathe deeply and slowly before playing.

Interviewer:

So breathing exercises, basically.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience music performance anxiety in the lessons, and by lessons, I mean main subject and orchestral excerpts, and I will refer to those two, like, as lessons for the rest of the interview.

Interviewee:

With my main subject teacher - no, not at all. Playing excerpts in a master class setting, like, for excerpts class - definitely, to some degree.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

That's gotten much better, at the beginning of the year it was more nerve-wracking, because I hadn't done it in a while.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

But seems to very much improve over time. So not so much anymore.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you get the same physical symptoms, when you're getting anxious, as?..

Interviewee:

Yeah, but to an increasingly, like, lesser degree.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you use any strategies to deal with that specific type of anxiety?

Interviewee:

Not really. No.

Interviewer:

Okay. And as you're a trombone player, and I share some experiences with you - for low brass it very frequently happens, that we have like 60 bars of breaks and then we have to play something really important.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Are you getting anxious about that?

Interviewee:

Sometimes, if it's soft, yeah. I think, like, really soft, exposed entrances.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

After a lot of rest kind of challenging for everyone in the industry, except for a few people, of course.

Interviewer:
And how do you deal with that?

Interviewee:
I just, you know, white knuckling, like, pick up the horn, blow some air through it and then play.

Interviewer:
So basically, push through?

Interviewee:
Er, what?

Interviewer:
Push through.

Interviewee:
Yeah, I guess so.

Interviewer:
Okay. Are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you during performance?

Interviewee:
When it starts going badly, yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay. And what do you think about the whole situation?

Interviewee:
I don't really think about the audience too much.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
But when I do - in a negative way, probably thinking... Yeah. Like "I just, like, sound like a really terrible trombone player. My goodness".

Interviewer:
Okay. Does it happen to you that after the performance you feel like it was a blur or happened very quickly, and you're not capable of remembering the details?

Interviewee:
Not often, but I've had that happen before. I had, like, one time, it wasn't even in a performance, it was the first time I was rehearsing a piece with piano and my teacher in my undergrad. I was so nervous. They like, had me, there's like, "play 10 measures from this bar", and I, like, couldn't count to 10 to start in the right place. And I like, fucked it up three times in a row, like, my brain shut off completely. But generally, that doesn't really happen.

Interviewer:

Okay. And I have a question. How frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

As of late, more and more. I'd say like, most of the time, if not almost all of the time.

Interviewer:

Oh that's great. Are you generally confident in your abilities as a musician?

Interviewee:

That's a tough question to answer, I think.

Interviewer:

Tough question, as in, you need more time to think, or tough question, as in, you want to skip?

Interviewee:

No, no, I just am trying to formulate it in words. I think it kind of... it's this sort of fluctuation between the thought, like, an extreme lack of confidence, and then like, undeserved arrogance that sort of rotate around, like, a deserved amount of confidence.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

So, so kind of, not really.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you comparing yourself with other trombone players?

Interviewee:

Of course, constantly. Whether I want to or not.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it bring you more good or bad things, like?...

Interviewee:

Probably mostly bad. I don't think there's much benefit inherently.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Okay. And what motivates you to keep practicing and performing even during challenging times?

Interviewee:

I remember that I love music.

Interviewer:

Oh.

Interviewee:

And the trombone... I don't necessarily, like, love deeply playing the trombone, but that's my ticket to participate in music.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
So mostly for that, and a lot of stubbornness. When something doesn't work and I feel like I cannot achieve what I set out to learn in a session, it pisses me off to no end, and I am determined to, like, figure out how to make it work.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
Which sometimes does not work, but...

Interviewer:
Okay. Are you experiencing any difficulties with your airflow or breath support while playing the trombone?

Interviewee:
I think it's been a recurring issue that I don't take enough, like, very deep breaths, when I play.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
So, trying to program that into like, how I approach the instrument when I'm not thinking about it. Something I'm working on.

Interviewer:
Okay. And there are plenty of muscles working around your mouth.

Interviewee:
Ugh, so many.

Interviewer:
And also, in order to breathe in... How aware are you of those physical aspects when you are playing?

Interviewee:
Sometimes too much. Like, not aware of them in a way that I can control them. But, well, to some degree. But it kind of occupies my thoughts too much.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:

And then I get, I don't know, it's very distracting.

Interviewer:

Okay. Does it happen for you in the lesson, that, like, you get the feedback from the teacher, then you try again to play according to the feedback, and instead of asking “Did you understand it”, they ask “Did you feel the difference”?

Interviewee:

They mostly ask if I heard the difference, I think. I don't know if I've been asked if I feel the difference.

Interviewer:

Okay. Then we skip this one. Do you experience any physical tension while practicing?

Interviewee:

I think I'm really relaxed when I play, like, maybe a little bit of my throat, but I don't notice much, like, I don't sit or stand super upright, but like my arms are really relaxed to a degree that it actually makes my slide technique worse.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

No, not really.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how aware about your posture are you, when playing?

Interviewee:

Not at all. And it gets really weird. I think I've seen, like, videos where I play and I end up like, very much like, I stand super wide and, like, move a lot more than I thought, so.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you find it easy to stay focused during your lessons?

Interviewee:

Yes. Unless they're going horribly, then I... my mind can sometimes wander.

Interviewer:

Okay. Where does it wander?

Interviewee:

Completely randomly, like, what am I going to buy for groceries.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

What's happening tomorrow? Oh, I have an assignment due.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But that's not too common.

Interviewer:

How do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

That depends. My teacher here is like, suspiciously nice, but really encouraging. And I'm like "I don't know about that, bro". You know what I mean?

Interviewer:

I know what you mean.

Interviewee:

It's very different from my undergraduate experience, which... I didn't have a mean professor at all. He's a super nice guy and I really like him. But it was very much like, you play something, he's like "This note was sharp, this note was flat, this one's not centered, try your like...". It's like, you get this barrage of information.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

Constantly. And very minimal, sort of, reassurance that you're doing well. Except occasionally, be like "Oh yeah, by the way, like, it's getting better". I'm like "Oh, I didn't know". But like, it was a little distressing, but it was... I didn't take that negatively.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

But here I think I'm constantly suspicious of how nice [the teacher] is.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But it's very inspiring at the same time.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

You feel like you're playing well, and you feel like you can get better.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when something doesn't go that well, could it be leading to perhaps, like, excessive self-criticism or decreased self-esteem or something along those lines?

Interviewee:

I think temporarily, but you know, bounce back pretty quickly.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Have a nice walk or lunch, or something.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what is the thing that you are focusing the most when you hear the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

Like, focusing on...

Interviewer:

I mean, I can give you a couple of examples. Some people are like "Oh, okay, I try to think what the teacher is saying, and I try to understand the whole mechanism, and so that I would know how to do that". And some people are like "I try to feel, like, what if it's right, like, how do I feel when I play it right, and then in the classroom I chase the feeling". This is the most two popular options.

Interviewee:

Okay. I think I just try to make sure I totally understand and hear the difference in my head between the things that I played and what he's suggesting.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And then try to think about how to implement it.

Interviewer:

Okay. How dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

I would say not very, like, it hurts your feelings if you... if your teacher, you know, is excessively critical or very disappointed in you, but I think that's, for me, at least, very temporary.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But I haven't ever really had a teacher who is excessively disapproving or super mean to me, so maybe under those circumstances I would feel differently.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
There was a master class where I played very badly and I felt terrible afterwards, but it was mostly because I played badly and knew it, and not because he was super critical.

Interviewer:
Okay. Well done. That's it. We are done.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:
So, I have turned on the recording, and thus I'm informing you that you are being recorded. The transcript of the recording is going to be used for my master research. If you are aware of the information that I've told you and you agree to that, please state your name and say that you agree.

Interviewee:
I agree, my name is [name].

Interviewer:
That's great. The first question is which meditation length were you choosing the most?

Interviewee:
I did the three minute a couple of times, the 15 minute like, once, but it was mostly the five minute.

Interviewer:
Okay, and have you noticed any changes yourself?

Interviewee:
Yeah, it coincided with a couple of other things, like there's some confounding changes that occurred at sort of the same time, which might be a challenge for the research, but I haven't gotten so anxious I've had to like, leave a practice session and hyperventilate in the stairs.

Interviewer:
Oh, you do that?

Interviewee:
They started happening this semester, a couple of times.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
That hasn't happened. I'm not full of rage when I practice.

Interviewer:
That's nice.

Interviewee:
It seems to be a lot different.

Interviewer:
Okay, I will ask you like, more specific questions or maybe that will help you like, to specify more.

Interviewee:
I feel a bit more calm.

Interviewer:
You feel more calm?

Interviewee:
I had a master class, or a studio class, excerpts class not too long ago and like, we played excerpts.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
And it was like, fine. It didn't drive me insane, like, earlier in the year or years ago it would have made me really nervous, and it would have been in my head about how nervous I was. Like, the physical sort of manifestations, and it felt like, kind of fine.

Interviewer:
Oh, that's great. And how do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:
I don't know, a little better. I don't really feel like quitting all of the time, so that's good.

Interviewer:
That's good. Were you feeling like quitting all of the time?

Interviewee:
Not exactly, but kind of.

Interviewer:
Okay, and now you're thinking about it like...

Interviewee:
Feeling okay.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Let's see where it goes.

Interviewer:

Okay, that's great. Can you describe your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

Last couple of days have not been great, but usually it's not bad. Like, 15 minutes uninterrupted and then a little space out, and then like, the nap for several hours. It seems fine.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you notice any sort of improvement?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think so.

Interviewer:

In which direction?

Interviewee:

Good.

Interviewer:

No, like in the depth of focus or the duration, or both, maybe, or like any other stuff?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Durational focus I think, as well. Depth of focus - certainly, because I'm not like, so anxious all the time when I play.

Interviewer:

Okay. And are you still easily distracted?

Interviewee:

I think I can be.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

It's like, easier to get back on track when I get distracted.

Interviewer:

Okay, and what distracts you the most?

Interviewee:

Let me think... Well, sometimes, if my iPad's dead, I have to use my phone as a metronome, and I'll get a message from my friend [name of the friend]. It's always [that friend]. So that's distracting. Sometimes I'll have thoughts about other things or if it's really warm in the room - that's a big one. Some of these rooms are so warm.

Interviewer:

Okay, so, some of the environmental stuff. And are there any specific triggers which encourage you to get distracted?

Interviewee:

Triggers in what sense?

Interviewer:

Triggers, I don't know, like there are some people who are like "Oh yeah, if this stuff is not going well, then I'm definitely getting distracted".

Interviewee:

I think if I'm like, physically exhausted, like if it's too close to training, then I'm really easily distracted because it's actually like, more difficult to hold the instrument up, which sounds so silly, but that becomes distracting. If I haven't slept or eaten enough, those kinds of things. Hmm, what else? Oh yeah, if things don't go well, like if I feel like I'm having job problems or the sound isn't quite right and things feel difficult, I get in my head about that kind of thing and get derailed more quickly.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you sit on your phone while practicing? Or tablet, or whatever which has internet and social media?

Interviewee:

Only if I'm like, getting distracted. Sometimes things just go down, usually not.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Sometimes during breaks I'll like, read the news.

Interviewer:

Yeah, but like, break is a break, not a distraction.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And have you noticed any difference on the procrastination aspect?

Interviewee:

Procrastination?

Interviewer:

Yeah, in the sense that, you know, like you read the news when you're not supposed to.

Interviewee:

Oh, yeah, like in practicing specifically?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

It feels like I don't really do that that much.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

As of now, so I guess, improvement.

Interviewer:

Okay. What are you focusing the most when you're playing your trombone?

Interviewee:

Well, I've been trying to figure out different cues to think about, to like, play in a more sort of focused way where I don't do weird stuff and the sound is a bit more compact. So, I've been thinking about that and thinking about like, what things I'm doing lead to what sort of sound, so like, trying to play in a very easy way.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And then thinking about music, like what I want to do musically with an excerpt and how central the notes feel, that kind of thing.

Interviewer:

Okay, makes sense. And do you currently use any techniques besides meditation to help you focus or improve your performance?

Interviewee:

Hmm, I don't know. I don't think so.

Interviewer:

If you don't know, probably you're not.

Interviewee:

Yeah, fair enough.

Interviewer:

For how long are you capable to practice mindfully and with good focus at a time?

Interviewee:

I'd say no more than 20 minutes.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But then a short break and you can do it again.

Interviewer:

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewee:

But in terms of like, absolute mindful focused practice, it's really not that long.

Interviewer:

Okay. Have you noticed any improvement here? If you say no, it's also okay.

Interviewee:

Not a ton, but like, I didn't really get to that length a lot as consistently before doing this. So, I would get so frustrated so quickly.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So, I don't know if my capacity for focus has increased, but I'm more consistently getting closer to it.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

If that makes sense.

Interviewer:

So just to make sure that I got it right, like, your maximum capacity of being focused, let's name it like 100% of the possible time that you're being focused, has not increased, but you are reaching that 100% of the possible time more frequently?

Interviewee:

I think so. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how long are you capable to practice mindfully and with good focus in a day? Like, combined all those little 20 or so minutes?

Interviewee:

I feel like three and a half hours is probably about it. Like, the maximum.

Interviewer:

Okay. You remember us talking about flow?

?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

So, are you capable of reaching it more frequently than you used to?

Interviewee:

Well, it used to be basically never.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

And now I can maybe point to a couple of moments.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So yeah, I guess so.

Interviewer:

Yeah. But it's still kind of hard, isn't it?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you maybe figured out like, which things lead you to getting into the flow?

Interviewee:

I think that like, holding the mouthpiece on the face part of the meditation and relaxing is especially helpful.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Because I'm like, I've been doing this for so long, that sort of trying to not think about it and feeling the sensation is... It seems to be a helpful cue.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently does it happen for you lately that you stop practicing prematurely?

Interviewee:

Out of?

Interviewer:

Anything that is not physical stuff related. Like, if you get tired, you get tired, you don't hurt yourself. But if you get bored, or you get mad at yourself, or just you get distracted or something like that?

Interviewee:

Almost never.

Interviewer:

Good for you, I don't remember your answer one month ago, so I will have to look into that.

Interviewee:

I think it was not that.

Interviewer:

Okay. I will let you know. Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

I mean, my focus could still get better.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

I've got something to work on. It's still getting in the way, but it's hard to get enough hours, like, in [classroom reservation application] to like, actually practice enough.

Interviewer:

I do get that.

Interviewee:

Like, it's not really, but it's sort of related. Like, I can't really push the amount of time I'm playing per day because I can't get space to do it as much.

Interviewer:

So, your problem in your practice routine is not enough rooms, basically.

Interviewee:

Yeah. And I don't like building up the physical endurance to like, do it all at once. Like, I can't like, play for three hours at once. So that, you know, but I guess other than the focus thing, that's probably the biggest one.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how do you generally respond to bad practice sessions, bad lessons, or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:

I had a masterclass where... Recently, where I think, I took a beta blocker and then I guess I didn't really need it because I thought I was going to get really nervous because it was a guy from [a major orchestra].

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

The other proff has been like, yeah, you should play well for this guy, like, to all the trombone players, because he gives out the gigs. It's like "Okay, I better be on every dial".

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
And I was like, so falling asleep the whole time and didn't get nervous. And then I like, threw the wrong valves down and like fucked the shit out of "Fountains" and was like "what's going on"? It was like watching myself in a movie, like, fuck it up. I was like "What the hell?". So, I think, pharmacologically, I might've fucked myself up. Um, and so that pissed me off. And I don't know. I was just like, very angry, but I think I got more calm more quickly than I'd like. Usually that would kind of wreck my whole day.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
But then I had excerpts class later that evening, like, coincidentally and had to play again, and different excerpts, and that went much better.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
So, you know, like sitting upset for a little bit. I don't really do anything. I just kind of sat there.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
But, uh, so I bounced back faster.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
It was pretty bad. Oh, it was not good. And I played it a week ago in a different like, studio class. It was fine. Like, I could play the notes.

Interviewer:
But it's a risky excerpt. Like, you never know if you're going to get it.

Interviewee:
Yeah. And then other guys played it, and it went really well, and they sounded great. It was like, it's the combination of like, playing like really badly, and...

Interviewer:
It's okay. I think that you will have plenty of chances to prove yourself.

Interviewee:
Anyway.

Interviewer:
Okay. Uh, and do you experience.... Okay, have you played any concerts since we spoke the last time?

Interviewee:
Unfortunately, not.

Interviewer:
No. Okay. Um, maybe we can also count in master class because it's like, you had some, right? Or only that one?

Interviewee:
Just the one with [aforementioned player from a major orchestra] and then our like, regular excerpts class, which is like a master class format.

Interviewer:
Oh, okay. Let's, let's put it as a lesson then, perhaps. But maybe you can just like... If it's different from your usual lessons and the aspect that I'm talking about, maybe like, just separate those two. Uh, so do you experience music performance anxiety in your lessons and master classes?

Interviewee:
Master classes? Absolutely. Uh, lessons, it's like, initially, like when I'm due to a teacher. Yes. But so far with the current people - no.

Interviewer:
Okay. And, uh, then you are experiencing anxiety in master classes. Does it affect the quality of your performance?

Interviewee:
Yes, but I think less so now.

Interviewer:
So, you are still anxious, but you are just better at dealing with that.

Interviewee:
Yeah. Like, heart rate still goes up. I still feel a little shaking in my hands. Like, I could look at them and I'm like "Oh", but it's not extreme.

Interviewer:
Okay. Besides shaking of your hands, what are the other symptoms?

Interviewee:
I do weird stuff with my chops. Less so now pull the right one out to the side and sound gets thin and it's not... It's more noticeable to me than committee people, but it's just, it's really hard to control. And I revert to very inefficient habits.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, you said that you don't experience music performance anxiety in the lessons, right?

Interviewee:

No, not really.

Interviewer:

Uh, and in master class, did you experience it always or just sometimes?

Interviewee:

Nowadays, just sometimes.

Interviewer:

What are the triggers to the anxiety?

Interviewee:

I mean, wanting to play well, having to play excerpts for people or solo repertoire for people makes me anxious. For classmates, especially.

Interviewer:

Okay. Uh, so if there's no classmates in your masterclass, then you're doing fine?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Do you use any strategies to manage the anxiety besides beta blockers?

Interviewee:

Unsuccessfully. Um, I don't know. A mini meditation for like 30 seconds, but that doesn't probably do much. A couple of deep breaths.

Interviewer:

Okay, and, are you focusing on how the audience, like the audience going to perceive you during performance?.

Interviewee:

I try not to; I feel like that's not the first thought I have when stuff goes wrong.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

It feels or sounds terrible to me. And then you think "Oh my God", like "I wish I didn't sound bad in front of people", but I try to just think about music.

Interviewer:

Have you noticed any difference?

Interviewee:

Yeah. I feel like it's... A couple of times I've had this sort of like, studio class lesson. Things have been easier.

Interviewer:

Okay. And has it happened to you lately that you have been playing in any sort of stressful environment and it was a blur, happened very quickly and you don't really remember what you did there?

Interviewee:

That [aforementioned masterclass] wasn't really a blur, but it did move kind of quickly. And I was like... I didn't feel like, super aware of what I was doing.

Interviewer:

Okay. Is it like, beta blockers or you're being nervous?

Interviewee:

I don't know, but I didn't feel physically nervous. That was a thing, like...

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I was like, really sleepy and I could... My heart rate was not elevated.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

So, it wasn't like, stress induced.

Interviewer:

How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:

Getting better.

Interviewer:

Getting better?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Can you please compare it, like, better from where to where?

Interviewee:

Like, relative to other people or just in general?

Interviewer:

Speak about both, if you can.

Interviewee:

I don't know. Like, I know I'm not like, some sort of amazing, like, definitely going to win a job kind of person.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

The question I always ask myself is does it seem feasible that I could have a career? Maybe. If yes, continue. If no, consider switching to a different career. The question of is it possible that I could belong in this industry? Like maybe, maybe not. I feel like the "maybe, yes" part is more than "perhaps" previously.

Interviewer:

Okay. So basically, you are a bit more confident that you actually could get there.

Interviewee:

Yeah. I mean, a little bit.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you compare yourself to other trombone players?

Interviewee:

Oh, absolutely.

Interviewer:

More or less than before?

Interviewee:

Well, there have been some external results that have caused more comparison to specific people recently.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

And you know, when people play similar things to you in a masterclass, but they played way better - absolutely. Or worse than you.

Interviewer:

Yeah. And what do you think of those times?

Interviewee:

I just feel bad.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed a difference in that?

Interviewee:
Not a huge one.

Interviewer:
Okay. And what motivates you to keep doing what you're doing?

Interviewee:
Stubbornness.

Interviewer:
Okay?

Interviewee:
And I like music.

Interviewer:
Okay. And yeah, I remember your quote from the last time, but it's just like, trombone is the key to music.

Interviewee:
Oh, yeah.

Interviewer:
That's a pretty cool one, actually. I liked it. I liked it very much. Have you noticed any differences about your airflow or breath support?

Interviewee:
No, not at all.

Interviewer:
Great.

Interviewee:
Okay. Part of that, though, is like, I've been thinking about airflow very deliberately in other ways, in sort of conflicting ways, in part based on what I've been getting from my teachers, based on my own habits. And in part because of my friend. Yeah. But he, so he's been doing this, maybe I mentioned this, this embouchure training.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
Because he got like, pre-dystonia and quit playing, he's going to be a lawyer. So, I've been doing some of the things that he has been doing with her in his retraining to sort of like, just to try it and see if it can help me play in a more relaxed and natural way. And part of that is like, a specific approach to air support.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:

So, I've been thinking about being more active in my intercostals and trying to like, use less air, total volume, like, through the instrument while playing, which seems to not make sense. But anyway, I've been thinking about it deliberately. So maybe it hasn't changed in other ways because I'm actively changing it. I don't know if that...

Interviewer:

So basically, there's no way to tell because you have been doing other things, which might influence it way more than meditation does?

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Let's put it like this, then. And...

Interviewee:

I haven't noticed as much trouble starting notes out of nerves and air not working. But I've also been practicing that before I started the meditation.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But it started around the same time. So maybe, it improved it. And I feel like there's a possibility that start up notes are easier and I'm not as hesitant.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So that could be a factor.

Interviewer:

Okay. And are you aware about physical aspects of playing? Embouchure, breathing, the whole expanding your stomach and so on, and the posture?

Interviewee:

I feel like I am.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Like, I'm aware about what my face is doing, but I feel like I have very little control over it.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

But I'm like, constantly sort of perceiving things and what's going on.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you think that you are more aware since you started this experiment or not really?

Interviewee:

I'm not sure because I was already very neurotically aware before.

Interviewer:

Oh, so there's like, no space to improve, you already did it?

Interviewee:

But I feel like becoming a little bit less consciously aware of it has helped me relax.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

The first couple of days I did the meditation thing and I got way more in my head about what I was doing with my face, and I had horrible practice sessions.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But like by the end of the first week, it seemed to feel a lot better.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But for about one to three days, it felt really terrible. And all I could think about was like *unintelligible*

Interviewer:

Yeah, that *unintelligible* is E05 putting hands to his face and explaining that it felt terrible.

Interviewee:

Yeah. Correct.

Interviewer:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Because I'm transcribing and I hear so many interesting noises and I just have to like, look in my head, what did that person do at the time. So, I just made it easier for myself. Has it recently happened to you that in the lesson, your teacher asks you to feel the difference instead of understanding it?

Interviewee:

Hmm. Feel the difference in what way?

Interviewer:

Physically or like, hearing the difference, like, any sort of sensation.

Interviewee:

Ask me to feel something differently or?

Interviewer:

No, no, no. Like you play, you get feedback, you play again and you do it well. And they're like, not "Do you understand what you do?", but like "Do you feel the difference"?

Interviewee:

I don't think so.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, this is a question we are also skipping. Do you experience any tensions while practicing?

Interviewee:

There's something in my head, face a little bit. I don't know how to describe it. But not really. I feel like I'm a pretty relaxed player, except for some sort of weird tension, like unwanted pulling in my face.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Other than that, I'm pretty relaxed.

Interviewer:

Do you feel it changed? Do you feel this changed during the month?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I feel like it got a bit better.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how aware about your posture are you when you're practicing?

Interviewee:

Not at all. My posture is so bad. I know it's bad because people tell me it's terrible.

Interviewer:

Oh.

Interviewee:

Like, in this masterclass, he's like "Don't stand like an S, you're like, really bent over". And I think I was standing kind of like, like this.

Interviewer:

So your hips in front and your back is going like, towards the back.

Interviewee:
Yeah. It's really not very...

Interviewer:
Stable.

Interviewee:
Yeah, I know. And it looks very silly.

Interviewer:
I have the same problem, actually. I do get that.

Interviewee:
Yeah. Like, [colleague] actually pointed out, that when I am really engaged in playing, I stand super wide. It looks really funny.

Interviewer:
Okay. And did practicing meditation affect your sound in any way?

Interviewee:
I feel like I was more relaxed in a way that let me make deliberate changes to my sound.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Where I wouldn't have been, maybe, able to before.

Interviewer:
How did your sound change?

Interviewee:
Working towards something that's more focused, a little bit more clear and compact.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you find it easy to stay focused during your lessons?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Have you noticed any difference?

Interviewee:
Neutral positive, maybe a little bit. I'm also with a new teacher mostly, because [previous teacher] has been out now for a couple of weeks.

Interviewer:
Okay. And do you have like, no distractions or sometimes you still get distracted?

Interviewee:
In lessons?

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
I feel pretty non-distracted.

Interviewer:
Okay. How do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:
It's like, always really good. And so I treat it with a bit of.... I'm a little bit suspect. Like, that didn't sound nice. What are you talking about, dog? But I mean, a lot of it's like, really very practical. And then I do the thing he tells me in the lesson and then it sounds better. I'm like "Oh, okay".

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
I've always come out of lessons feeling better. Just... nice.

Interviewer:
Okay. That's great. When you are hearing the feedback, are you more focused on like, understanding what has happened, like, the mechanics, for example, what exercise you should do to get the result? Or are you more "Okay, then I did that right thing, it felt that and that way, so if I practice and I feel the same way, it's going to be right as well"?

Interviewee:
I don't think I quite understand the question.

Interviewer:
I mean, like mostly I notice two types of people, and there's like one type of people who are, when they are hearing the feedback from the teacher, like, they are trying to understand sort of mechanically. Like, play this and that exercise or like do this and this and that, and it is going to get better. And some of the people are like, when they get it right, they are more like "oOay, I felt this way when I got it right, so when I practice, uh, I have to feel this and that way to also make it right".

Interviewee:
Oh, like understanding physically what you're doing versus like, trying to get a... change the feeling?

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:

Oh, um, moving towards the second one. I think my, like, natural state is to think very explicitly mechanically about what I'm changing. And I don't think that's always super helpful.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:

That's a hard one to know because I feel like I always get it. And I'm like, always suspicious of it because [certain nationality] trombone pros are so absurdly positive.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Um, it definitely had a positive effect on my self-esteem.

Interviewer:

Okay. That's nice to know. Do you feel that it changed in a certain way?

Interviewee:

Feel what, sorry?

Interviewer:

Like, that it changed your correlation between your self-esteem and teacher's approval in the last month or not really?

Interviewee:

Not really.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I mean, I've never really had super harsh teachers, so I don't really know.

Interviewer:

Okay. We're done. I'm stopping it.

E06

Pre-intervention

Interviewer:

Okay, so I started recording, and basically you are being recorded right now. The recording will be transcribed and the transcription will be possibly used in my research without revealing the real names of participants. Do you agree to that? Can you say your full name and say that you agree if you do agree?

Interviewee:

Hello, I'm [name] and yes, I agree.

Interviewer:

Okay, that's great. If you don't understand some question of mine, feel free to ask because I'm not very good with English. And if you don't want to answer a question, it's also okay not to answer a question because I'm going to go to some really sensitive stuff. So, brace yourself.

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

So, let's talk about the basic information. Can you tell on the recording if you have any meditation experience?

Interviewee:

No, I don't.

Interviewer:

Okay, that's great.

Interviewee:

No, I just last year I did it from time to time, but then it was like five minutes of just basically trying to clear my head, so no professional experience or anything.

Interviewer:

I mean, like, you didn't... you just did what you felt was the best, right?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. So that you don't have experience, what is your perception of meditation? Have you ever considered trying it before?

Interviewee:

I mean, yes, I did, but mainly as a way to clear my brain from... I like to call it thought clutter. So, in my perception, meditation is a way to focus on things and to, well, to clear your brain of influences from outside or inside.

Interviewer:

OK. How many years are you playing the tuba?

Interviewee:

Now, it should be 12 years.

Interviewer:

Okay, and in which year of university are you?

Interviewee:

I'm in fourth year.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

Define well-being.

Interviewer:

Mental, physical, not experiencing stress, anxieties, not crying every time that you start to practice.

Interviewee:

Okay. I think in general I'm doing quite well. Like, physical, I'm doing good. I've been doing quite a lot of sports outside of music. Mentally, I'm currently having a little bit of struggle, especially with my perception of myself. But also, with the feeling of not having the right teacher or not being able to work perfectly together with the teacher. And what else?

Interviewer:

Yeah, I mean, that's not like, if it doesn't come to mind, probably it's not a struggle, you know. I don't want to give you ideas that you're struggling. Like, if you said it, you said it. Do you have any particular concerns or expectations about meditation and how it might influence your musical performance or daily life?

Interviewee:

I don't have any expectations, to be honest.

Interviewer:

How is your focus during your practice sessions?

Interviewee:

Depends on the day time and depends on the motivation I have. So, if it's like really early in the morning, I have no struggles practicing for four hours straight. If it's late in the evening, I usually struggle with half an hour.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you get easily distracted while you're practicing?

Interviewee:

Oh, absolutely, yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when you get distracted, like, maybe you can tell what the distractions are, what are you doing when you're distracted?

Interviewee:

While practicing, as I'm mostly practicing in the tuba room, usually it's classmates coming in and talking. Sometimes it's dogs outside. Sometimes it's just my own thoughts.

Interviewer:

And do you procrastinate with your phone, perhaps, or not really?

Interviewee:

Not really, because usually I time it. Like, I finish the exercise, then I take five minutes, and then it's back to practice.

Interviewer:

Oh, that is great. And you said that you would get distracted by dogs, thoughts, and people. How do you get back on track when you get distracted?

Interviewee:

I just start practicing again.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I don't really understand the question, to be honest. Like, there's no problem getting back on track for me. It's just, like, sit down, grab your instrument, and start working.

Interviewer:

Okay. That's good for you. And are there any specific triggers which encourage you to get distracted?

Interviewee:

Dogs?

Interviewer:

Yeah, but, you know, like, there's dogs almost all of the time. But sometimes, you know, like, you get distracted by dogs, and sometimes you don't.

Interviewee:

It really depends how deep I am in the workflow.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

So, I don't think there are any special triggers. It's just... sometimes it happens, and I haven't found any trigger yet.

Interviewer:

Okay, and once you get distracted, like, how much time does it take for you to come back to working?

Interviewee:

Well, it depends if I'm going out for a break with a classmate...

Interviewer:

Oh, a break is not a distraction.

Interviewee:

Well, it is a distraction if you plan to practice.

Interviewer:

Oh, yeah. Then yes.

Interviewee:

Usually with a dog, it's like, "Oh, a cute dog". Then I look at it for, like, 10 seconds, and then I go back to practice.

Interviewer:

Oh, that's cute. Okay, and when you are practicing your tuba, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:

Sound.

Interviewer:

Sound. Do you find that certain aspects of your playing need more focus than others in order to be good?

Interviewee:

Yes, sound and stability.

Interviewer:

So, this needs more focus?

Interviewee:

It's the two I struggle the most with, and those are the two I'm the most actively working on.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you use any techniques to help you focus or improve your performance?

Interviewee:

No, not really. Like, there are some breathing techniques to help you relax, but I wouldn't call them specific techniques. Mostly they're just, like, breathe in and breathe out.

Interviewer:

Okay. I mean, there is a technique of breathing exercises, so probably we can put you in that category.

Interviewee:

Okay.

Interviewer:

Okay, for how long are you capable to practice mindfully and with good focus at a time?

Interviewee:

Maximum is, like, three and a half hours at the moment.

Interviewer:

Okay. And if you, like, practice those three and a half hours, and you go make a break, like, maybe eat your lunch or something, and you come back, like, could you repeat that again?

Interviewee:

Nope.

Interviewer:

Okay, and what is your, like, maximum good work time in a day?

Interviewee:

It depends. There's a difference in the time I think I spend practicing and the time that I would call, like, really productive.

Interviewer:

Yeah, yeah, I mean the productive time. How long can you do that?

Interviewee:

The productive time is at the moment around five hours.

Interviewer:

Have you heard the concept of the flow? Have you ever reached that?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Have you ever reached that?

Interviewee:

That's a good question. I'm not sure, to be honest.

Interviewer:

Okay. I mean, when I was asking, like, how frequently are you capable of reaching that, that probably you don't know?

Interviewee:

The thing is, if I practice, like, really early in the morning when my brain isn't, like, really functioning yet, usually it's the first hour or the first one and a half hours where I just do basics and I shut the lights off and then it's just okay. That's also kind of flow. It's just one

and a half hours where I know nothing's going to happen. I'm just going to do my basics and work with those.

Interviewer:
Yeah.

Interviewee:
So, there's almost no distraction and, I don't know, it's just really nice and relaxed. So, I guess that you could also call it flow, although it's probably not the one you're searching for.

Interviewer:
Okay. Basically it's described that you are so deep immersed into the activity that you forget time. It's just, like, you are very, very immersed in the work.

Interviewee:
No, then I never had that.

Interviewer:
Okay. And how frequently does it happen for you that you cease practicing prematurely?

Interviewee:
Can you simplify it? Sorry.

Interviewer:
Stopping practicing earlier than you intended to.

Interviewee:
The thing is, I currently have a deal with my teacher that it's like, if I'm not motivated or if I stop being motivated halfway through, I just stop and go home and do something else. So, it doesn't happen very frequently, but from time to time it happens.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
You probably want numbers, right?

Interviewer:
I mean, if you said, like, once a week or once per two weeks, or once per month, that would be great.

Interviewee:
Yeah, then it's like once or twice per week.

Interviewer:
Are you currently experiencing any challenges or obstacles in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Can you please elaborate?

Interviewee:
The problem is mainly myself. In the sense that I have struggle working with myself and also against myself. So, the hard part is basically keeping me practicing and keeping me on the toe about my practice.

Interviewer:
Can you please elaborate on that as well?

Interviewee:
In the sense of, if I start practicing and a passage isn't working, it's sometimes hard for me to stay hard, if that makes sense, to be exact enough to work this passage till it's good.

Interviewer:
So basically, you are saying that you are not diligent enough.

Interviewee:
I'm not consequent enough, yeah.

Interviewer:
Yeah, okay. How do you generally respond to bad practice sessions or unsuccessful performances?

Interviewee:
I don't really know. Hold on. The thing is, I rarely have really bad practice sessions.

Interviewer:
Or maybe bad lessons as well?

Interviewee:
For bad lessons, usually I go home for the rest of the day.

Interviewer:
Okay. And does it affect your self-confidence in any way?

Interviewee:
Oh, yes, absolutely.

Interviewer:
Okay. I do believe that it's like, if your teacher says that you are not playing good, your self-confidence also lowers and vice versa.

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Okay. And does it affect your motivation?

Interviewee:
No, not really.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Because the thing is, usually... Should I not elaborate?

Interviewer:
Oh, please, I just thought that you were done.

Interviewee:
Okay. The thing is, if I have a bad lesson, usually I have the will to have a better lesson next week, so I start practicing a lot. If I have a really good lesson, I usually want to keep that going, so I also practice a lot, so it's like...

Interviewer:
So, you are always motivated?

Interviewee:
Mostly, yes.

Interviewer:
But you said that it still affects your self-confidence, so how do you recover mentally from this kind of situations?

Interviewee:
Usually, I go home and have a nap.

Interviewer:
Okay. And does nap solve all the things?

Interviewee:
No, but it's nice.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
And that helps already a lot.

Interviewer:
Do you experience music performance anxiety before or during performances?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:

Before or during performances?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

No, no, like, which one? Or both?

Interviewee:

No, both.

Interviewer:

Oh, okay. If yes, how does this thing affect the quality of your performances?

Interviewee:

The problem is, as soon as I'm nervous (I would call it nervous, not really anxiety), my breathing isn't as round or stable as it should be. So usually, the first thing that changes is just the stability in my sound.

Interviewer:

And what are, like, the physiological symptoms if you have some?

Interviewee:

Physiological symptoms are cold hands, shaky breath. Also, I start to tremble a little bit.

Interviewer:

And do you experience that in every performance or just sometimes?

Interviewee:

Most of the times.

Interviewer:

Most of the times. Can you see the triggers not to experience the anxiety?

Interviewee:

Sorry, what again?

Interviewer:

Have you noticed patterns, in which performances do you experience anxiety and in which ones you don't?

Interviewee:

Oh, usually I experience anxiety when my teacher is there, so it's, like, "Well...".

Interviewer:

Okay, okay. And do you use any strategies to deal with music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

I tried relaxation strategies and usually they work till I step on stage, so it's, like... Yes, I tried, but till now nothing really helped.

Interviewer:
But before the concert, what symptoms do they mitigate?

Interviewee:
God dammit, my English didn't get better...

Interviewer:
Like, reduce?

Interviewee:
Yeah. How would I call that? Sorry... Heavy heart palpitations.

Interviewer:
Okay. Okay, and what about the lessons? Do you experience performance anxiety in front of [main subject teacher]?

Interviewee:
Mostly, yes.

Interviewer:
Mostly, yes. And do they affect how...

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
...the quality of your lesson? In which ways?

Interviewee:
No, they affect my performance in the lesson.

Interviewer:
Yeah, in which ways?

Interviewee:
Okay, there's a huge difference between, like, my practicing performance and my lesson performance.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you experience any physical symptoms of anxiety in your lessons?

Interviewee:
Yeah, shaky breath mainly.

Interviewer:
Okay. And do you experience this anxiety always or just sometimes?

Interviewee:
I would say around 80%, something like that.

Interviewer:

Okay, and what is that other 20% that you do not experience anxiety? How it differs from the other times?

Interviewee:

The funny thing is most, like, if it doesn't happen, usually I'm too tired.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you use any strategies to calm yourself down in front of [your main subject teacher]?

Interviewee:

No, I don't.

Interviewer:

Okay. Let's move to another question. Are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you during performance?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Do you want to elaborate?

Interviewee:

No, not really. It's just when I play, basically, there's the main part of my mind focusing on what I play, and there's a little part in the back being like, "Yeah, that was nice" or "You can't play!".

Interviewer:

Okay, okay. This is what I wanted to hear. That's wonderful. I mean, like, not because I wish it upon you, but just now it's more clear for me. Okay, being a tuba player, there are some situations where you have the rest for, like, 120 bars, and then you have something to play.

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Do you experience anxiety because of that?

Interviewee:

I wouldn't call it anxiety.

Interviewer:

But you're a bit nervous, aren't you?

Interviewee:

Yes, a little bit, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you deal with this?

Interviewee:

Usually, I just go. Or, like, I start playing. Yeah, no, it's like the only thing that helps. It doesn't work just sitting there and being afraid of the thing that comes.

Interviewer:

Okay, so you just play.

Interviewee:

I want to make the thing better. I try to, yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And does it happen to you that after the performance you feel like it was a blur or happened very quickly and you are not capable of remembering the details? And we are not counting in the times that you were drunk.

Interviewee:

Are we talking about solo performance or orchestra performance?

Interviewer:

Both.

Interviewee:

Okay, because I feel like in solo performance, the thing is... I feel like solo performance is way more blurry when I think back afterwards than like orchestra performance. And also in a solo performance, usually, even if just small things happened, it affects my whole perception of the whole thing.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently does this blurry thing happen?

Interviewee:

Not that often, I don't know. It doesn't happen that often.

Interviewer:

Okay, not that often. This is the answer. How frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

Oh. So, we're talking about like, performance in the sense of concert, class lessons or lessons, right?

Interviewer:

Yes. Also practicing. How frequently do you enjoy practicing?

Interviewee:

Oh, practicing quite often, actually. The other ones, very rarely.

Interviewer:

How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:

I would describe myself as close to professional, but also very far away.

Interviewer:

Are you generally confident in your abilities or do you struggle with self-doubt?

Interviewee:

The thing is, it's both yes. I struggle with self-doubt, but also I'm quite confident that I can actually play the tuba.

Interviewer:

So basically, you're like "I'm not in the level", but you believe that you can reach the level?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

What motivates you to keep practicing and performing, even though that shit happens?

Interviewee:

Mainly that I didn't give myself another choice.

Interviewer:

Okay. So basically, it's your survival instinct?

Interviewee:

It's do or die, basically, yeah.

Interviewer:

Are you experiencing any difficulties with your airflow or breath support while playing the tuba?

Interviewee:

Not while practicing, while performing, yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you want to elaborate?

Interviewee:

I mean, we've talked about anxiety before, about performance anxiety. That affects my breath.

Interviewer:

So, it's only anxiety?

Interviewee:

I think so, yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. Then there's no need to elaborate.

Interviewee:

It's just that I'm not relaxed on stage, so yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Brass playing requires careful control of embouchure, breathing and body alignment. How aware are you of these aspects during practice and performance? And maybe some other aspects that you might think of?

Interviewee:

Like, the one thing I actually think actively of while performing and also mostly while practicing is just air. And all the other things, as long as they sound good, I don't really care about. Because as long as they sound good, they're usually in the right place.

Interviewer:

Okay. How frequently, when in lesson your teacher asks to feel if you are doing something right, you actually feel it?

Interviewee:

Please elaborate.

Interviewer:

Sometimes teachers give you some feedback. And then instead of asking whether you understand it, they ask if you felt the difference.

Interviewee:

To be fair, I don't think I've had that over like the last half year.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

That a teacher wanted me to feel something.

Interviewer:

Okay. Then we will assume that this question is not applicable for you. Do you experience any tensions while practicing?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Where? Which kind of?

Interviewee:

In my right back shoulder.

Interviewer:
Right back shoulder. It's left, so this one is right. Okay.

Interviewee:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
How aware about your posture are you while practicing and playing?

Interviewee:
Yes, very.

Interviewer:
Very? What are you paying attention to?

Interviewee:
How I'm sitting.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Like, what are my legs doing? How am I sitting? How is my spine? How are my shoulders? Are my shoulders relaxed? Is my neck relaxed? Is my belly relaxed? So, okay, to elaborate, the pain in the shoulder, it's on the inside of my right scapula.

Interviewer:
Thank you. I will use that information. Do you find it easy to stay focused during your lessons?

Interviewee:
Depends on what I did before, but usually yes.

Interviewer:
Okay. When you don't find it easy, what are the distractions and what do you have to do before?

Interviewee:
The distractions are usually my thoughts running wild. And what exactly do you mean with what do I have to do before? So, I'm not concentrated during the lesson? So, I'm able to concentrate during the lesson?

Interviewer:
No, no, no. You said that it's just different depending on what you did before, so we can elaborate in both cases. What you do when you can concentrate and when you cannot.

Interviewee:
It simply depends on how active, how brain-ly active I was before. Like, if I have a lesson late in the night and I didn't have a break before, I'm not going to be as concentrated.

Interviewer:

Okay. So basically, if you're tired, there's no concentration. If you're not, you're okay.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. How do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:

I say "Yes, write it down", and then think if I should practice that or not.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently do you find the feedback to be leading to excessive self-criticism?

Interviewee:

How often? Yes.

Interviewer:

Yes?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Like, almost every time, because then my focus is going to be especially on that part, and that part usually is a weak one of mine. So, it's like, not very healthy, probably.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you take the feedback personally, or is it just like "Oh no, it's the music, but probably they think I'm a good person"?

Interviewee:

I don't take it personally anymore.

Interviewer:

You are stressed before your main subject lessons, as we have talked before, right?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what is the thing that you are focusing the most when you hear the feedback from your teacher in the lesson?

Interviewee:

How I can work it into my practice.

Interviewer:
Okay. So basically analyzing?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
And how dependent is your self-esteem on your teacher's approval?

Interviewee:
At least for me there's a difference between musical self-esteem and general self-esteem.

Interviewer:
Talk about both.

Interviewee:
I mean, my general one usually doesn't suffer or anything, my musical does.

Interviewer:
Okay. The interview is done.

Post-intervention

Interviewer:
Yeah, so I started the recording. You are being informed that you are being recorded. The transcript is going to be used for my master research. If you are aware of that and you agree to the previously stated information, please tell me your name and that you agree to the previously stated information.

Interviewee:
Yeah, I'm [name] and I agree to the previously stated information.

Interviewer:
Okay, the first question is, which meditation length were you choosing most of the time?
Like, the most frequently?

Interviewee:
In the beginning I think it was 5 minutes, in the end it was 3 minutes. Mostly because of not having enough time to do the longer ones.

Interviewer:
Okay, have you noticed any changes in your playing or focus, or self-perception, or what not related to the playing?

Interviewee:
Not really, no.

Interviewer:
No. Okay, and how do you currently feel about your general well-being as a musician?

Interviewee:

As a musician? Oh, bad topic! No, decent, I don't know. If we are talking about the scale from 1 to 10, it's like 6-7, something like that.

Interviewer:

Okay, and could you please compare it to the time that we have previously spoken to each other?

Interviewee:

Well, it's a little complicated, because a lot happened in between that. I would say in comparison, I'm more self-confident, but that's mainly because I also had lessons with other teachers.

[part of interview is edited out because the events mentioned would make participant E06 very recognizable]

Interviewer:

Can you describe your current focus levels during practice sessions?

Interviewee:

I mean, last time I practiced was yesterday, where I wasn't really focused in general, but that's been a problem for the last week.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Where there just was too much going on in my head.

Interviewer:

So, you are basically tending to overthink, and that is making you unfocused?

Interviewee:

Oh yes. Yes.

Interviewer:

Can you perhaps share what, what are you overthinking? If it's not too personal, if it's too personal, don't.

Interviewee:

It's mostly personal, yes.

Interviewer:

Okay, then I won't push you. Yeah, like, you can choose to not answer any question. I forgot to say that in the beginning, but...

Interviewee:

Okay, then this will be a quick one.

Interviewer:

Yeah, because I'm really pushing.

Interviewee:

Yeah, we'll not answer this one.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

No, just kidding. Okay, yeah, it's mostly personal things, and it's also things about my self-perception in the sense of, am I a good enough musician for where I'm at in my studies right now.

Interviewer:

Okay, you're finishing your bachelor's 4, right?

Interviewee:

I'm right now in the seventh semester of bachelor.

Interviewer:

Oh, okay.

Interviewee:

And the current plan is that I'm finishing in the tenth, so it's like, still three semesters to go.

Interviewer:

Oh, okay. And is it your thoughts distracting you during practice sessions or maybe something else?

Interviewee:

Is it my sorry, what?

Interviewer:

Only your thoughts distracting you during your practice sessions, or?...

Interviewee:

Oh, it's mainly my thoughts, absolutely. Oh, yes, dogs as well, but that actually turned back quite a lot. The thing that for me works at the moment best, when practicing is like 10, 15, 20 minutes, maybe, very intense practicing and then just a five to ten minute break.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

So in general what's distracting me is mainly my brain.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

But then as well other people and maybe also some things outside. But usually, those things I just notice and be like “Oh, yeah, that's nice”. And then just move on and go back to practicing.

Interviewer:

Okay, you're practicing in the tuba class, so that's what you mean by other people - just folks coming in and having a little chat?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay, and have you maybe noticed specific triggers which encourage you to get distracted?

Interviewee:

Yeah, parts of the practice that won't work even after like 10 minutes or something. It's just like, I keep repeating and repeating and trying other angles and everything and it still won't work. And sometimes when I'm really frustrated instead of, I don't know, hitting my tuba or anything else, I choose to just sit down somewhere else and like, look at my phone.

Interviewer:

Okay, so phone is also a teeny tiny bit of a problem?

Interviewee:

Absolutely.

Interviewer:

Okay, this is like, a frequently occurring problem or not really?

Interviewee:

The phone?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Interviewee:

I mean, it's the one thing I do in basically every break. So yes, it's a recurring problem.

Interviewer:

Yeah, but a break is a break. Like, I mean, maybe like when you're not aware?

Interviewee:

Yeah, but the one thing I'm not sure of is, am I taking the break to look at the phone or am I taking the break because I need it mentally?

Interviewer:

Okay, so basically, can I make sure if I get it right? Because it seems kind of complicated. So sometimes when the stuff is not going well, you are taking your phone just because, and you're not sure if you really need that break or is it just like, quick dopamine is going to make you feel better?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you think that your focus level changed since last time we spoke?

Interviewee:
Yeah, I think in the last week it was horrible. But apart from that, I'm not sure. Yeah, no. Yes. Yes, it changed. It changed a little bit, but mainly for other reasons than the meditation, I think.

Interviewer:
Could you please name your reasons?

Interviewee:
Okay, I had a meeting with a music psychologist.

Interviewer:
Yeah?

Interviewee:
And one thing she basically told me was that I stopped moving for some reason. I was like "Yeah, sure, my prof told me because of this and that". And she was like "Yeah, just start doing it again", which is actually one thing that helped me a lot to actively focus on what I'm practicing.

Interviewer:
Because you feel more engaged in that?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Okay, that figures.

Interviewee:
Because as soon as I move to the music while I'm practicing, my brain is like "Oh, yeah, this, we have to do that".

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
And then almost everything, like a phone or even a tablet, is quite distracting, which is more annoying to me than anything else.

Interviewer:
Okay. And when you're practicing your tuba, what do you focus on the most?

Interviewee:
Sound.

Interviewer:
Sound. So, it's not really a technique, but it's also a mean to help you focus and improve your performance? So, you started going to the music psychologist, right?

Interviewee:
I had one meeting till now, and I'm going to have a second one on Friday.

Interviewer:
Okay. Are you using any other techniques or doing some other things which are supposed to help you play your instrument without actually playing it? Let's put it that way.

Interviewee:
No.

Interviewer:
No. And you have mentioned that you are capable of practicing with good focus at a time for 10 to 20 minutes, right?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
How much of good practice time are you getting in a day?

Interviewee:
Three and a half hours, around.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Interviewee:
Three and a half to four, yeah.

Interviewer:
Do you remember us talking about the flow?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
So I don't need to explain what it is, right?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
How frequently are you capable of reaching that state?

Interviewee:

I think, actually, with those very short and tense intervals of 20 minutes or something, I mostly reach a flow.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

But then also at some point or at some time, my brain just, well, basically shuts down and it's like "Yeah, stop it, we can't do this". And then I have to take a break. So I think I'm reaching it quite frequent with the way I practice right now, but it's not like that I can stay in it for like two hours.

Interviewer:

Okay. And it's basically because you change the way you practice, you don't think it's because of meditation, right?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

And the trigger which encourages you is basically just changing the intervals that you practice or are you doing something else to encourage that state?

Interviewee:

I mean, the one thing I'm doing is basically removing all distractions, which are like phones, tablets, or well, I use my tablet as like, metronome and notes and everything, but basically removing the ability on my tablet to do anything else. And then it's just like "Okay, this stuff has to be done and I'm going to do this stuff now". And as long as I move to it and as long as I'm very heavy concentrated, those are the 10-20 minutes, then.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how frequently does it happen to you lately that you stop practicing prematurely?

Interviewee:

Good question. I don't know. I think, in the last week, it's been quite frequently.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But mainly because of concentration issues and yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah. So basically, just to make sure that I understand it right, you are feeling that your brain is somewhere else, you are not doing anything useful anyway, so you just decide to go home.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. Are you currently experiencing any obstacles or challenges in your practice or performance routine?

Interviewee:

In my routine? Yeah, the room situation in [the school].

Interviewer:

So, you are not getting a classroom, basically?

Interviewee:

Yeah. It's like, okay, you got a room now for an hour and afterwards you don't have a room anymore.

Interviewer:

Yeah. But nothing you related?

Interviewee:

The only thing that's me related is me being like "I have to be somewhere at that time" and then I start looking at the phone again and again, because I'm not sure of the time.

Interviewer:

Which encourages you to look at the phone instead of practicing?

Interviewee:

gestures

Interviewer:

Yes. He finger – gunned me, showing that he agrees to what I said. Just some notes for me when I'm transcribing.

Interviewee:

Oh, sorry. Okay. It's just voice. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Okay. And how do you generally respond to bad practice sessions, unsuccessful performances or bad lessons?

Interviewee:

I go home and cry myself to sleep. No, I don't. The thing is, with very bad practice sessions, for example, I had one on Sunday where I went to school, I started practicing, nothing worked. There was nothing like a flow, there was no real work state. It was just like me trying to be able to play some proper notes, which was horrible. And I went home two hours later. I mean, I was a little bit pissed, mainly at myself.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

And at some other things, which also didn't help about this whole thing. But in general, I didn't do anything different. I did my sports then, and... So, in the end, I tried to carry on my normal day as usual, except like, all of a sudden I have way more free time.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, it leads you to a teeny tiny bit of self-criticism, but basically you just try to move on?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

And how does it affect your motivation for further practicing, for example, the coming days?

Interviewee:

The thing is, usually, then I feel like the next day that I now really have to do more in comparison, which is kind of short-sighted, but that's how I feel. So, the question is, is it really like, just me being excited to being able to practice, or is it my feeling of having to achieve something? And I'm not sure of that.

Interviewer:

Okay. But it kind of motivates you anyway?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience music performance anxiety as of lately?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you experience music performance anxiety in your lessons?

Interviewee:

Just, just, just, okay. Okay. No, no, wait, wait. I think I have to elaborate on the performance anxiety. I get anxious a little bit right beforehand, but not that much anymore, at least when I'm prepared or when I feel really prepared.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Same goes for lessons, by the way.

Interviewer:

Okay. Let's talk about the performances. Does that anxiety, even that little anxiety, affect your quality of playing?

Interviewee:

Depends, because I had very various results with that. I had one class lesson where I just played horrible. Because that's like the main performance I had over the last weeks, except like gigs. But that's a different story because it's in an orchestra or like in an ensemble. So, if you're talking about solo performances, yes, I think it affects me, mainly if I don't think I'm that well prepared. Because I realized for myself that, when I feel like and I know in my head "Okay, I know this piece very good, I can play this piece without any problems", then usually I'm quite relaxed and I'm quite self-confident on stage. If not, well, things get shaky.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you experience any physical symptoms?

Interviewee:

Yes. Cold hands, heavy heartbeat and just unstable airflow. Unstable.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you use any strategies to mitigate that?

Interviewee:

Breathing. One thing I had with the music psychologist, or what she told me was like "Okay, just the questions you have in your head like, am I good enough or anything other than that, just turn it into like a checklist, like things you have to do", which helped a little bit.

Interviewer:

What do you mean?

Interviewee:

Okay. Basically, if you have the question of yourself "Okay, will this part of the piece work or can I play this part of the piece" - just turn it into "Play this part of the piece".

Interviewer:

Oh.

Interviewee:

And put like, a checkmark behind after you've done that. Yeah. So, it helped a little bit.

Interviewer:

Okay. And how does that little music performance anxiety affect your quality of playing in the lessons?

Interviewee:

I mean, it affects me because I would say that, usually in the lessons, I'm a few percentages below what I can actually play. So, yeah, I think that's like, the main part.

Interviewer:

Do new teachers affect you any differently in the respect of music performance anxiety?

Interviewee:

Yes. Yes. I know at least that with [teacher's name]. I mean, I went there, and I was like, okay, I got to check out if I can work with him. So basically, I turned it into something to do

for me and not that it was like an exam thing, or like, I go there because I need to show him how good I am. It was for me like “Okay, I need to check how well can I work with this guy”. So, yes, it affected me. Like, I wasn't really nervous.

Interviewer:

Okay. And are you focusing on how the audience is going to perceive you during performance?

Interviewee:

Not anymore.

Interviewer:

That changed?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. Why do you think it changed?

Interviewee:

I don't know.

Interviewer:

Fair enough.

Interviewee:

I think it's just that I'm too focused on how I play and how happy I am with the playing.

Interviewer:

Okay. And has it happened as of lately that you perform on stage and it feels like a blur, or it happened really quickly and you are not...?

Interviewee:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay, great. How frequently are you enjoying your performances?

Interviewee:

Yeah, like once every two weeks, at the moment.

Interviewer:

So, like, every second one?

Interviewee:

Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer:

That's not that bad. How would you describe your self-perception as a musician?

Interviewee:

I think this is a horrible question, by the way.

Interviewer:

Thank you. I tried my best.

Interviewee:

I don't know. Like, I perceive myself as a musician.

Interviewer:

Okay, maybe I can elaborate on the question a bit. Are you generally confident in your abilities? Or maybe you're a bit doubting yourself, or maybe you're comparing yourself to other tuba players and also that could bring good and bad. Like, this sort of stuff.

Interviewee:

There's always doubt in myself, but no, like, I'm not comparing myself anymore that much and I think of me in general as at least a capable tuba player.

Interviewer:

Okay. Did it change since the last time we spoke?

Interviewee:

Might be, I'm not sure.

Interviewer:

Well, then I will have to compare. What motivates you to keep practicing and performing even during challenging times?

Interviewee:

Self-hatred.

Interviewer:

Very mindful of you.

Interviewee:

No, mainly... No, it's not fear... Mainly just the will to be better.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

But also, a little bit, probably, the fear of letting myself down.

Interviewer:

Are you experiencing any difficulties with your airflow or breath support while playing the tuba?

Interviewee:

Are we talking during performance or during practice?

Interviewer:

Both. Talk about everything.

Interviewee:

During practice, not that much.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Interviewee:

Usually, hardly any problems with airflow or air control, which is kind of problematic because in performance situations or also sometimes lessons, I have kind of a little bit problems with it. And there's like, the missing basses because it just worked while practicing, but it doesn't work while performing. So, it's like, a little stupid.

Interviewer:

Okay. And have you noticed any changes in your airflow or breath support since the last time we spoke, both in practicing and performing?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I mean, it got better, but that's mainly because of practice.

Interviewer:

So it's not meditation, it's just you doing a good job?

Interviewee:

I think so. I would like to tell that myself, yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. Brass playing requires careful control of many physical aspects. How aware are you of doing that?

Interviewee:

Of controlling my physical aspects?

Interviewer:

Maybe not controlling, but just generally what you are doing with the whole lip muscles thing or breathing apparatus, or just general body alignment?

Interviewee:

Okay, I think I'm quite aware of my breathing. I think, I'm not that aware of my lips, but mainly because as soon as I'm aware of my lips, I tend to screw things up.

Interviewer:

Okay. Makes sense.

Interviewee:

Also, I'm quite aware of the state of my throat or back mouth, but that was just something that basically got pointed out to me during the last lessons.

Interviewer:

Okay. And does it happen for you in the lesson that a teacher asks you to feel the difference instead of understanding the difference?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Yes. And do you actually feel it, most of the time? How frequently do you feel it?

Interviewee:

Most of the times.

Interviewer:

Okay, most of the times you feel it. Do you experience any tensions while practicing?

Interviewee:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Where?

Interviewee:

In my right shoulder blade.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

Also, in my left butt cheek.

Interviewer:

That is very precise. Thank you.

Interviewee:

You're welcome.

Interviewer:

And also, have you noticed any differences of your awareness since last time we spoke, be it about tensions, about generally what your body is doing?

Interviewee:

I don't think so, no.

Interviewer:

Okay. And do you think that practicing affected your sound in any way?

Interviewee:

Practicing affected my sound?

Interviewer:
Meditation, I'm sorry. Practicing meditation. I'm sorry.

Interviewee:
Yeah, no, I don't think so.

Interviewer:
Okay. And do you find it easier to stay focused during your lessons?

Interviewee:
In general, do I find it easy, or do I find it easier?

Interviewer:
Both.

Interviewee:
I find it quite easy in comparison, although sometimes, I just tend to drift off and basically get pulled back by my teacher keeping on talking.

Interviewer:
Did it change?

Interviewee:
I don't think it's easier. No, I don't think so.

Interviewer:
It didn't. How do you usually react to the feedback from your teacher?

Interviewee:
Depends on the feedback. If it's a very positive feedback, usually I go home with, you know, like a light, with a big smile. No, that's a little bit too much, but yeah, I try to react immediately to everything. And if it's like, it has been in general a positive lesson, I tend to feel also very positive afterwards, and the same goes into the bad.

Interviewer:
So, it affects your mood?

Interviewee:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Does it affect your self-esteem or lead you to excessive self-criticism perhaps?

Interviewee:
No, not excessive, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay. What is the thing that you're focusing on the most in the lesson? Is it maybe like, trying to rationally understand what you have to do when you're practicing on your own, or is it just trying to feel the difference and chasing the feeling afterwards?

Interviewee:

Chasing the feeling. The thing is, currently I'm trying to rationally understand how I work best, how my brain works best also in practice, which I think I should have figured out by now, but I still don't. And about how I try to work, I mean, in the lessons, it's just I try to play the best I practiced. So not the best I can, but the best I practiced.

Interviewer:

Okay. And I think we are more or less done. I'm going to stop the recording right now.