

## **Musicking to Embody *Kyosei* in the Framework of the Musical Theme and Variation**

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### **Abstract**

This study explores the process of *kyosei* construction in a musicking practice within the framework of the musical theme and variation. *Kyosei* is a philosophical term means harmonious and synergetic interaction (Gordon, 2019). *Kyosei* practice reflect cooperation between and among individuals and communities working together in a variety of environments (Miyazawa, 2017; Kaku, 1997).

This study presents that musicking has universal validity to build a musical community by engaging individuals with different musical skills and interests. Such a voice is echoed by Small (1998) that music is an act for everyone to participate in any capacity of musical lives, which is defined by singing, listening, playing, practicing, composing, dancing and any other methods of participation.

Under the online setting, we divide participants, including the practitioner-researcher, in small groups and create the original variation of *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*. Mixed instruments, any objects that makes sound, voices, physical movement and technological sound were combined alongside the visual images in creating a uniquely original variation of the *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*.

Based on the practice, researchers investigate the application of *kyosei* during music teaching and learning. By applying the methodology of Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa's video-cued multivocal ethnography (2009), we reflect a series of voices all talking about the same practice and experience. A musical community is built without exclusion of different voices as might be expected given the population under consideration. Teachers can imagine the benefits of applying *kyosei* in developing rich and sincere relationships among students in musicking practice. At the end, the study also drew practical applications and process how the teachers could apply musicking in classroom practice and reach out to the communities outside the school.

*Keywords: kyosei, musicking, technology, theme and variation*

### **Introduction**

*Kyosei* (共生), a Japanese term translates as a symbiotic relationship between individuals and the community around them. Kaku (1997) defined *Kyosei* as "spirit of cooperation" both for individuals and organizations to work together for common good. There are three core characteristics of *kyosei*; 1) Understand each other, 2) Leave nobody out, 3) Make friends (Miyazawa, 2011). These characteristics of *Kyosei* represent a structure for application during teaching and learning.

In Musicking practice, we encourage everyone's participation with a special emphasis on embodiment of *kyosei*. *Musicking* is the term originally introduced by Christopher Small

(1998) that simply means the act of music making. For Small (1998), music is not a fixed artwork, but an act, which is defined by singing, listening, playing, practicing, composing and dancing (Small, 1998). Dissanayake (2015) criticized the contemporary changes in the concept of overemphasis on performance outcomes, which, like sports, requires tough competition, and ignores the community sense of musical sharing. According to Dissanayake (2015), in a traditional society in any culture, music was originally shared in community from the religious ceremony to the local carnivals, and there was no wall between performing and listening. Everyone used to participate in music in a shared sense either by singing, dancing, playing instruments, composing and many more. Instead of equally treat every student by offering the same instrument, part and task in a conventional manner, we make fair division of work reflectively with multiple perspective to build a musical community to achieve the *kyosei* direction. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate a practice model of Musicking with a special emphasis on the embodiment of *kyosei*.

In the online Musicking occasion, everyone would participate with her/his specialty from home environment online. In the previous workshops similar to this settings, researchers integrated multiple voices such as *shakuhachi*, violin, human voices, physical movement, technological instrument and sound, and they were combined alongside the visual images in creating a uniquely originated variation of the *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*. In and through the process of Musicking construction, the authors reflected the series of Musicking practice to reveal how the participants understood each other, and made friends without exclusion to build a musical community. This study also illustrated the process how the teachers understood the related *kyosei* philosophy as a foundation, and seek a possibility to apply Musicking practice in Japanese schools. Although there were quite a few studies that investigated musicking, there was an obvious lack in making connections between philosophy and practice and designing the research-informed practice of Musicking (Nishijima, 2020; Frierson-Campbell, 2016; Golden, 2016).

## Methodology

This study illustrates a case of Musicking which is conducted as online virtual workshop via Zoom on the theme of *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*. Specifically, as one of the model of this workshop, this paper illustrates one of the most recent case of Musicking by offering an online virtual workshop via Zoom on the theme of *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* with a participation of local elementary students, including a student with severe and multiple disabilities, and two international students ( $N=27$ ). The authors were originally planning to hold the workshop for 30 elementary students who attend public school in a small town in Japan; however, DOE of the city had to either cancel or postpone the event due to the spread of COVID-19. The author and DOE discussed the issue and decided to hold the workshop online by using Zoom. Because of the decision using the online to hold the workshop, team of the researcher re-invite students of the elementary schools and special schools in this occasion.

The process of the workshop was the following. First, we began the workshop by finding either any choice of musical instruments or any objects that make sound at home. Participants also considered by participating the workshop by singing, dancing, drawing or arranging the melody based on their multiple interests. At the end of the first part of the workshop, we introduced each other with the participants' choice of either musical instruments or any selection of art form.

Next, the researchers arranged the group of three or four via Zoom. The participants including those who also plays musical instruments like recorder or harmonica, and who manages technological devices also participate the group work. The researcher also facilitated the discussion and collaboration. Each group spent time on discussion and rehearsal and created the different variation of *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* for 30 minutes. Finally, we connected each product of the tune, listen to each group, and connect them to complete our original variation of the *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*. For this workshop, the use

of computer or laptop or tablet is encouraged instead of mobile phone for better sound quality.

Prior to the above mentioned occasion, the researcher collaborated with the specialists of music education, technology education and special education, and offered several workshops obtaining the same structure and repertoire in elementary school, university and local communities more than 10 times. In the following section, we present one of the practice models to design Musicking online on the theme of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. In this workshop, after the practice, by applying the methodology of Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa's video-cued multi-vocal ethnography (2009), we reflect a series of voices all talking about the same practice and experience.

## Case Presentation

In this section, the author describes the case in detail and illustrates the process. The researcher set the purpose of the workshop to provide musical activity that could be enjoyed at home under COVID time. The study also aimed to facilitate international exchange with music. In this workshop, the author collaborated with a local teacher, and music education specialist. Because of the online usage, we were able to invite international participants and guests easily. Ultimately, we set the following objectives: 1) Experience the enjoyment of music by using any instruments or tools at home, 2) Enjoy the ensemble online by overcoming the technical and technological obstacles, 3) Experience musical communication with everyone.

About a month before the workshop, the we asked the participants to prepare any instruments such as recorder, harmonica, also called melodeon, and any musical instruments or non-instrumental objects at home that make any sound. The authors asked the participants to decide what instruments or objects that they would like to play and give a brief advice for each participant either to play melody or rhythm. If no instruments or object, we can also advice how to make the instrument. We also prepared several recordings of the Twinkle Twinkle Little Star in C major. We had discussion on which keys shall we select, and we decided to set the key of C because many Japanese children are familiar with the key of C because every single first grader would learn melodeon in their music classes at elementary schools.

X, who has a severe and multiple disabilities, was also participating the workshop with her mother at home. The researcher delivered the iconic grid instrument with large sized buttons to her home, which was created by Professor Yutaka Nakanishi of Shujitsu University and she and her mother used the tool to participate this time. Since the device was arrived about a week before, she was able to practice the tool to create the tune of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star by herself. Other three students from the special school wanted to use the violin, so the researchers also delivered the violin to their home. The second researcher made a phone call to the caregivers, and asked them not necessary playing the violin, but they could create any sound on the violin like plucking the strings or tapping the body of the instrument.

At the day of the workshop, we first test the internet connection and microphone and speaker. We introduced each other including the guest teachers, two of the authors. The coordinator of the workshop from the city described the purpose and the objectives of the workshop mentioned above.

The authors first explained that any objects could make sound and create the variation based on the tune of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. Next, the authors demonstrated to add physical movement to the piece. We also provided several examples of trees and created different Twinkle Twinkle Little Star as examples to transform visual images to music. We also showed some rhythmic variations and examples of changes in rhythm to differentiate the character of the piece.

Next, the participants decided what kinds of instruments and they would like to try this time. During the Zoom session, we offered both individual and small group sessions. In the individual session, we offered instrumental lessons to gain knowledge and skills to play in online ensemble settings. In the small group sessions, the authors separated the group with

those who would play the melody lines or rhythmic part. We also asked them to move to music while they are playing, or they could create visual and physical expression if they prefer during the workshop.

At the end of the workshop, instead of playing altogether, the authors explained the way the participants could create the videos in a few weeks after the workshop. They were asked to listen to the sound track created by the researchers by using the ear phone, and perform along with the tune. Some videos were made at a historical building in the city because a first grader thought that the characteristics of the Twinkle and the historical building match perfectly. The student's younger brother and father wore Ninja costume with the handmade fake sword, and moved them responding to the musical sound. Another second grade student decided to wear costume like Hawaiian Hula, because she selected the sound track like Hawaiian, and she found the connection with the musical sound and her memory of her previous visit to Hawaii about a year ago. Her grandmother danced along with the tune. X at home excitedly played the iconic grid instrument and other two of her friends from the special school played the violin by plucking and tapping on the Twinkle's tunes.

## Discussion

This section offers a brief discussion based on the same set of practice to overview the author(s)-designed Musicking practice by reflecting with a special emphasis on investigating the connection between Musicking and kyosei, and of its application to the school music education curriculum in Japan.

In music education settings in Japan, there were a few major problems inherent in the direction of a practice model of musicking for participation within the context of music education. Elliot criticized that "there can be no such thing as a course or class called general music," and said "any kinds of general or liberal education is music must always be a *specialized* music education" (p.56); however, in Japan, all of the music curriculum in schools and preschools were considered general music.

Secondly, a conventional model of music performance and listening are pervasive in Japan music education. Small (1998) criticized the Western tradition of concert music and design of the music performance and listening as to call *auditorium model*. In usual settings in auditoriums, performers are normally on the stage, and audiences just sit quietly and listen to the performance (Small, 1998). Small (1998) observed that "the auditorium's design not only discourages communication among members of the audience but also tells them that they are there to listen and not talk back" (p. 27).

In Japan music education, the auditorium design is so pervasive that musical activities in Japan that "discourage communication among members of the audience but also tell them that they are there to listen and not to talk back" (Small, 1998, p. 27). Such a view is echoed by Shor (1996), in the realm of education in a broader sense, describing students' seating choice named as *Siberian Syndrome*, that is, their learned habit to automatically avoid seating in the front, and sit far from the teachers. Instead of sharing the experience of learning among learners and teachers, there is a unilateral authority for the teacher (Shor, 1996). In contrast, in musicking practice, "such ideas held in common about how people ought to relate to one another..." (Small, 1998, p, 95), and to define a community; thus music is used as an act of affirmation of community. In this study, the author strived to illustrate how a model of musicking invites everyone to participate and to build a musical community.

The use of technology and the development of technology always progress. Having an open mind and to adopt a new idea is the key to expand the possibility of Universal Design in music education. The researchers would now consider the invented devise as a selection of musical instruments like the piano or violin. It certainly enriched musical activity, sound and promotes everyone's participation in musical activity. At the same time, the team of researchers decided to improve the button for some students with physical difficulties who could press the button with less effort.

In this case, although there was a failure to offer an opportunity for everyone to use the iconic grid instrument, the use of the instrument facilitated individual's musical interests and supported the participation. Later, a team of researchers prepared larger buttons and connected the total of eight buttons to the device so that several people could play the instrument at the same time with less physical difficulties.

The study focused on constructing a practice model of musicking for everyone to participate in the context of Japanese music education. After the study overviewed the philosophy of musicking and of its applications, based on the action offered by the author for past 3 years in Japan, the study analyzed the process on how the musicking practice was constructed, and shared in Japanese schools. The collaboration among teachers of the special schools and the researchers of music education and technology successfully opened up the opportunity for more students to participate in the musical activity in a shared sense.

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