



Kat Agres

Kat Agres is an Assistant Professor at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music at the National University of Singapore (NUS), where she teaches classes related to the Psychology of Music, as well as Music and Health.

She received her PhD in Psychology with a graduate minor in Cognitive Science from Cornell University in 2013, and conducted her postdoctoral research at Queen Mary University of London with Geraint Wiggins and Marcus Pearce. She also holds a bachelor's degree in Cello Performance and Cognitive Psychology from Carnegie Mellon University. She has received numerous grants to support her research, including a Fellowship from the National Institute of Health (NIH), a training fellowship from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and several Singaporean-based granting agencies. Her research explores a wide range of topics, including music perception and cognition, music technology for healthcare and well-being, brain computer interfaces (BCI), computational creativity, statistical learning, and the evaluation of creativity in humans and artificial systems. She has presented her work in over fifteen countries across four continents, and remains an active cellist.

Abstract

In this talk, Prof Agres will present two recent projects relating to the intersection of music, technology, and health. The first is a survey-based study of music therapists around the world that explores the changes that have been necessary to conduct music therapy (MT) during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the extent to which technology has been embraced to support MT across geographical locations. Music therapists from over 20 countries across three major regions (Asia/Oceania, Europe, North America) participated in the survey. Significant differences across regions emerged in terms of the impact of the pandemic, as well as differing views towards technology use within the practice of MT. The second study is an ongoing research project that aims to develop a music-based Brain Computer Interface (BCI) system to help emotion self-regulation in stroke patients. Evidence from preliminary results suggests that the system, which combines neurofeedback and real-time music generation, offers an effective tool to help listeners mediate their own emotional states. Takeaway messages regarding the power of music to promote health and well-being will conclude the presentation.

Rachel Ho



Proficient in both modern and baroque flute, Singaporean musician Rachel Ho is a member of Red Dot Baroque, Singapore's premier baroque ensemble and has performed with Baltimore Baroque Band, Metropolitan Festival Orchestra and Sichuan Symphony Orchestra. She has represented Singapore to be a Festival Artist at the 10th Asia Flutists Congress 2019 in Shanghai and was a jury member of the 3rd Asia Flute Federation Junior Competition.

After being exposed to the field of community work while participating in the New Audiences and Innovative Programme courses in Europe, Rachel has curated several performances and creative music workshops in Asia, Europe and United States at hospitals, dementia homes, refugee camps and centers for children. She also participated in the "Training Music Leaders with refugees" course by Musician Without Borders in Germany. Rachel was invited to present at the YST Performers(') Present International Artistic Research Symposium 2019 "Telling Stories" and Princess Galyani Vadhana Institute of Music International Symposium 2020 "Is the Virtual Real" on her creative music-making community projects with the elderly and children.

Rachel completed her undergraduate studies at YST with a full scholarship, majoring in Flute Performance. She also holds a Masters in Music Education from Royal Conservatory of The Hague, Netherlands. Rachel is currently a 2021 cohort member of the Global Leaders Programme, an Ivy League-curated executive education for impact-focused Arts Entrepreneurs and is part of the Southeast Asian Music Leaders 30 Under 30 Project. Rachel holds a position as a Teaching Assistant in the Career Orientation and Community Engagement team at YST.

Abstract

How can we as music practitioners enhance our art and at the same time play a part in contributing a significant positive influence on the quality of life amongst the ageing population in our society?

Opening this talk, Rachel will present about her involvement in two projects relating to creative and participative group music-making activities which promotes wellbeing and active ageing in the elderly. Based on Rachel's participation in facilitating "Music and Dementia" workshops at WoonZorgcentra Haaglanden (Residential Care Home for Dementia Patients) in The Hague, Netherlands, the first project is about creating a live and shared experience through musical improvisation to rediscover the person behind the dementia and strengthen relationships between people with dementia and their caregivers. The second project is about intergenerational creative musical practices where the children (musicians), young adults (musicians) and the elderly collaborate to create a piece of music based on the elderly's life story. Through these musical activities, the social interactions between the different generations supports the wellbeing of the elderly through social affirmation, purpose and autonomy. These projects will discuss how music can be taken out of the conventional environment to directly impact the community.
