

Jardaneh, N. & **Comeau, G.** (2008, June). *Measuring young piano students' degree of motivation*. *The Neurosciences and Music III: Disorders and Plasticity*. McGill University, Quebec, QC.

A major concern in music education is the challenge of motivating students to continue learning the piano. A high percentage of young students stop piano lessons within the first 18 months, before they begin to master the instrument (Sloboda and Howe, 1991). A likely correlate of this dropout rate is insufficient motivation. This poster presentation reports the preliminary results of a multidisciplinary research project examining musical motivation in young piano students. Our measurement tool was based on Deci and Ryan's theory of motivation and self-determination (1985, 2000). We interviewed 100 North American piano students aged 7 to 15. We then interviewed 50 Chinese students of the same age in order to compare the two cultures in terms of motivational patterns and other music-related issues. Preliminary results indicate that some kinds of parental support have a significant impact on young children's musical motivation. Students from the two cultures showed different perceptions of parental support in the lesson as well as at the home practice. Student perceptions of talent, music success, and musical interests were also compared. The two samples had similar reactions to activities they liked or disliked (going to a music camp, going to concerts, taking an exam, etc.). However, they had different perceptions of musical talent and how to succeed in music. The majority of the Chinese students think music success is based on hard work, while most North American students think that music success is primarily based on talent.