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Improvisation in music education: empirical evidence, classroom practice, and teacher preparation

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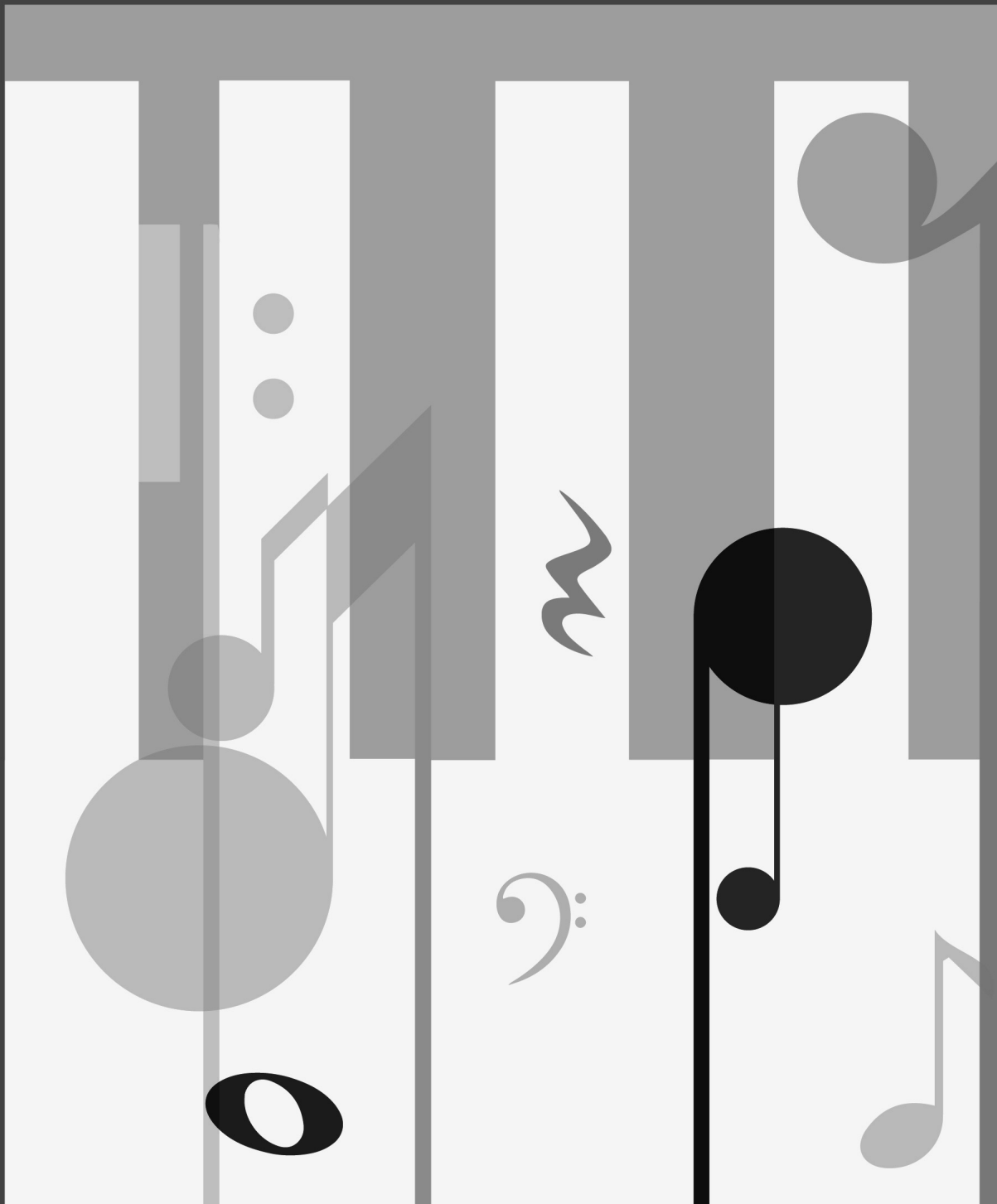
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Curriculum Vitae

Curriculum Vitae

Cheng Hua was born on August 31, 1997, in Jiangxi, China. She completed her high school at Fuzhou No. 1 High School, Jiangxi, before beginning her Bachelor's studies in 2017 at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Hungary. There, she studied Musical Creative Arts and Musicology, specializing in General Studies in Music, and obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in 2020.

In 2020, she continued her studies at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague in the Netherlands, where she completed a Master of Music degree in Music Education in 2022. During her Master's studies, she developed a research interest in improvisation in music education, which later became the foundation of her PhD research.

In September 2022, Cheng began her PhD trajectory at ICLON, Leiden University Graduate School of Teaching, where her research focused on improvisation in music education, teacher preparation, and classroom practice. Her Bachelor's studies and PhD trajectory were supported by the China Scholarship Council. During her PhD trajectory, she attended courses provided by the Dutch Interuniversity Centre for Educational Research (ICO). She also participated in the Orff International Summer Course at the Mozarteum University Salzburg – Orff Institute in 2023, further developing her interests in creative activities in music education.

Throughout her PhD trajectory, Cheng actively presented her research at international conferences, including the International Society for Music Education (ISME) World Conference and the European Association for Music in Schools (EAS) Conference. In addition to her research activities, she has been a member of the National Female Choir of the Netherlands and serves on the Scientific Committee of the International Conference of Dalcroze Studies (ICDS).

Publications and presentations

Peer-reviewed scientific publications

Hua, C., Admiraal, W., Nieuwmeijer, C., & van der Rijst, R. (2026). Perceived readiness to improvise and to lead improvisation activities: A mixed-methods study on attitudes and self-efficacy in music teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 181(October), 105689. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2026.105689>

Hua, C., Admiraal, W., Nieuwmeijer, C., & van der Rijst, R. (2026). Unpacking musical improvisation: Implementation and evaluation by primary music teachers in the Netherlands. *British Journal of Music Education*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051726100916>

He, H., Chen, S, & **Hua, C.** (2025). Adaptive or maladaptive music-listening coping strategy: How does neuroticism use music after experiencing a romantic relationship breakup? *PLoS One*, 20(8), e0331373. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0331373>

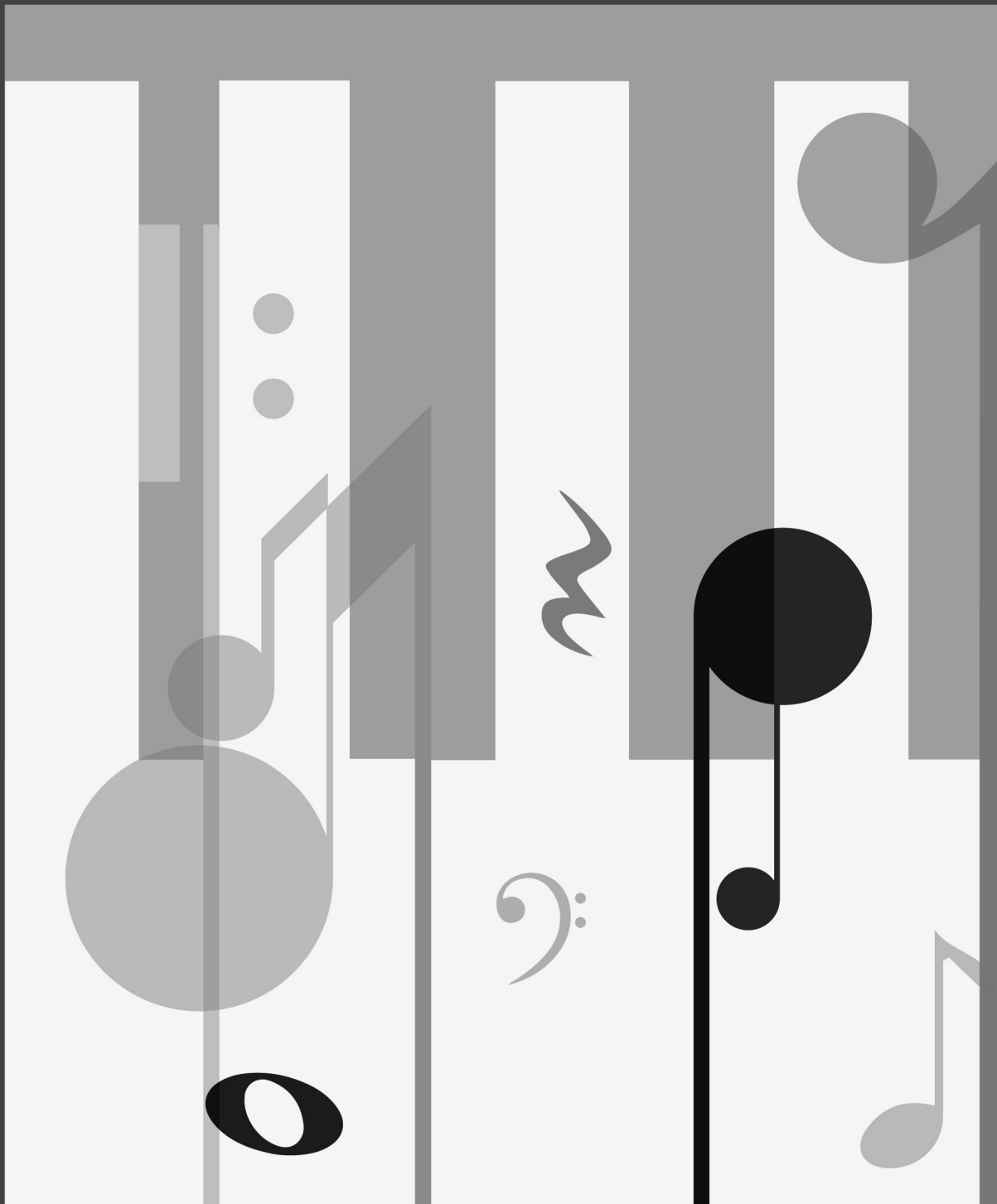
Manuscripts submitted for publication

Hua, C., Admiraal, W., Nieuwmeijer, C., & van der Rijst, R. (Under review). Improvisation in music education: A systematic mapping of activities and learning outcomes.

Hua, C., Admiraal, W., Nieuwmeijer, C., & van der Rijst, R. (Under review). Understanding teachers' intention to implement improvisation in the classroom: A multi-group study of pre-service and in-service music teachers.

Academic conferences and activities (selected)

- 2026 *Perceived readiness to improvise and to lead improvisation activities: A mixed-methods study of attitudes and self-efficacy in music teacher education.* Paper presentation, 37th International Society for Music Education (ISME) World Conference, Montréal, Canada.
- 2026 *Improvisation in music education: A systematic mapping of activities and learning outcomes.* Short paper presentation, 37th International Society for Music Education (ISME) World Conference, Montréal, Canada.
- 2025 *Unpacking musical improvisation: Implementation and evaluation by primary music teachers.* Round table, ICO Open Graduate Spring School, Blankenberge, Belgium.
- 2024 *Improvisation in higher music education: Pre-service music teachers' preparation and perspective.* Paper presentation, 36th International Society for Music Education (ISME) World Conference, Helsinki, Finland.
- 2024 *Can you improvise, can you teach? A mixed-methods study on attitudes and self-efficacy in music teacher education.* Paper presentation, 31st European Association for Music in Schools (EAS) Conference, Dublin, Ireland.
- 2023 *Orff International Summer Course 2023.* Attended, Mozarteum University Salzburg – Orff Institute, Salzburg, Austria.
- 2023 *Case studies in primary music teachers' implementation and evaluation of improvisation.* Poster presentation, 30th European Association for School music (EAS) / 9th International Society for Music Education (ISME) European Regional Conference, Lyon, France.
- 2023 *Unpacking musical improvisation: Implementation and evaluation by primary music teachers.* Pitch presentation, Crossing Bridge Symposium 2023 – A Sense of Freedom, Den Haag, The Netherlands.
- 2022 *5th International Conference of Dalcroze Studies.* Attended, online.



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I also feel very lucky to have met Christiane at the EAS 2023 conference in Lyon. Thank you for helping me to ground my thinking about improvisation in music education practice. Your connections with music educators and teachers in the Netherlands were specifically helpful during data collection and interpretation.

Thank you all for your trust, patience, and support throughout this journey. Whenever I felt lost, anxious, or stuck in endless rounds of revisions, your advice and encouragement always helped me find direction again. I feel incredibly grateful that I had three such wonderful supervisors. In fact, whenever people ask me what matters most for a positive PhD experience, my answer is always the same: good supervisors.

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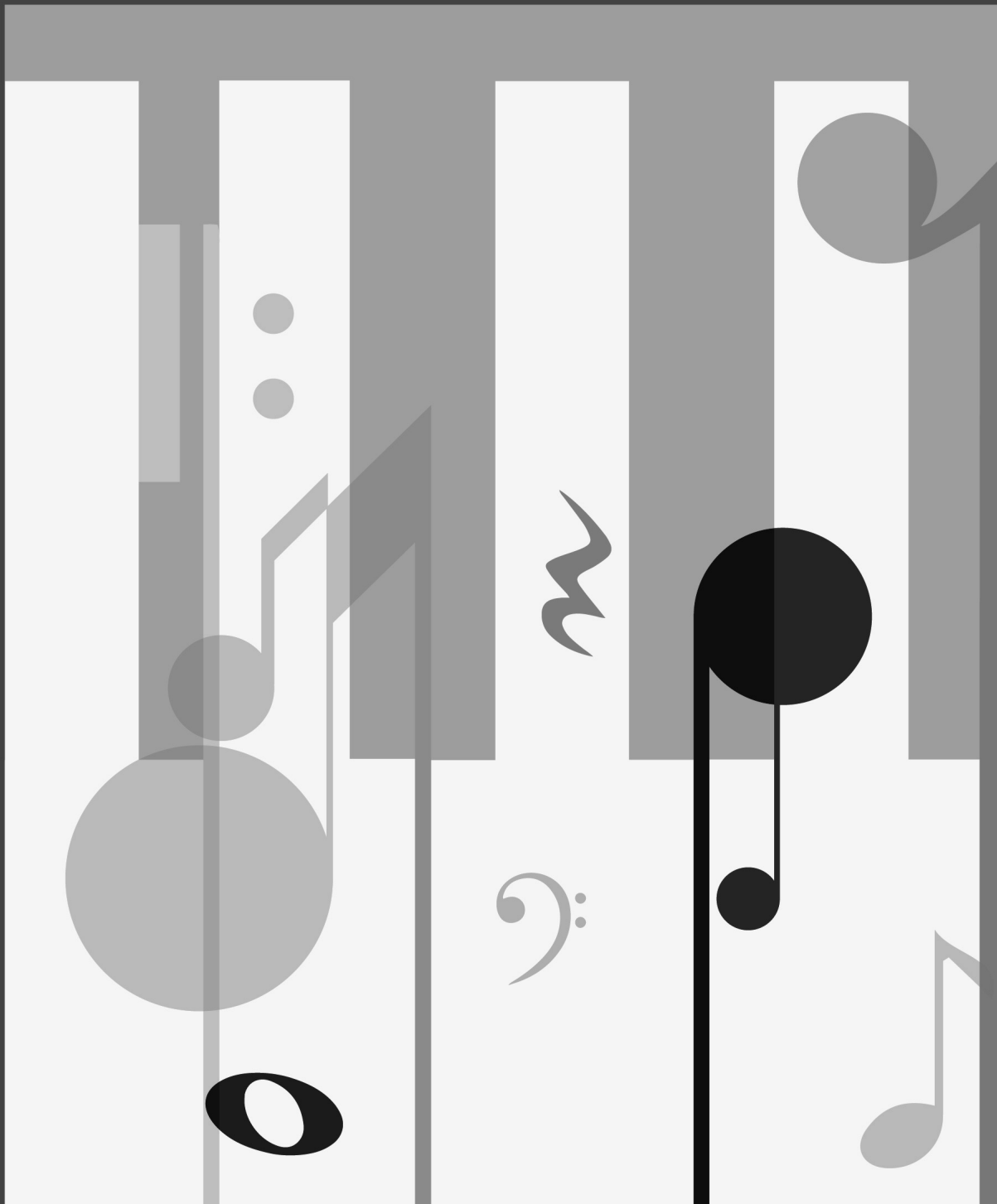
I am also deeply grateful to my former teachers. Katalin Körtvési, during my bachelor's studies in Hungary, your three-year Kokas pedagogy classes introduced me to improvisation and inspired many of the ideas that I continued to explore later. I would also like to thank my bachelor's vocal teacher and thesis supervisor, Renáta Darázs, for introducing me to academic work for the first time, guiding me through my first research project, and for your warmth and kindness. Finally, my master's supervisor, Daniel Salbert, thank you for discussing and developing this topic with me and for supporting me in continuing this research.

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Cheng Hua
Den Haag, May 2026

A



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