

POWER OF MUSIC

Music Therapy and Alexander Technique symposium

Saturday 20 March 1999, Mansfield College, Oxford

An exploration of music therapy and related areas by teams from Oxford, York and London. It is aimed at students and professionals in the fields of music, psychology, counselling and education, and provides an introduction to this fascinating subject as well as a review of recent developments. There is also a British Society of Music therapy bookstall and an art exhibition.

Anna Stevens, Richard Vendome (convenors)

“Let me tell you... there is something very odd indeed about this music of yours. A manifestation of the highest energy - not at all abstract, but without an object, energy in a void; in pure ether - where else in the universe does such a thing appear?.. But here you have it, such music is energy itself; yet not as idea, rather in its actuality. I call your attention to the fact that this is almost the definition of God.”

(Thomas Mann - *Doctor Faustus*)

“Now, What is music? This question occupied me for hours before I fell asleep last night. Music is a strange thing. I would say it is a miracle. For it stands halfway between thought and phenomenon, between spirit and matter, a sort of nebulous mediator, like and unlike each of the things it mediates - spirit that requires manifestation in time, amid matter that can do without space. We do not know what music is.”

(Heinrich Heine)

TIMETABLE

- 0930 *registration and coffee*
 - 1000 introduction to music therapy - Abi Stevens (Oxford)
 - 1040 video case study 1: working psychodynamically with autistic children - Auriel Warwick (Oxford)
 - 1115 *break*
 - 1125 video case study 2: adults with learning disabilities - Sheila Hale (Oxford)
 - 1200 electronic tools for music therapy - Ross Kirk (University of York, Music Technology Group)
 - 1250 *lunch*
 - 1400 "hands on" exploring interdisciplinary aspects - Mary Abbotson (York)
 - 1530 plenary session
 - 1600 *tea*
 - 1645 Alexander Technique and musical performance - Elizabeth Valentine (Royal Holloway College, University of London)
 - 1800 concert by the Oxford Girls' Choir (profits will go towards the research project "Expanding the boundaries of music therapy" at the University of York).
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MUSIC THERAPY

The ability to appreciate and respond to music is an inborn quality in human beings. It usually remains unimpaired by handicap, injury or illness, and is not dependent on music training. For those who find verbal communication an inadequate form of self-expression, music therapy offers a safe, secure space for the release of feelings.

WHAT IS MUSIC THERAPY?

Music therapy is NOT about:

- teaching clients to play instruments
- the therapist entertaining the client and playing music all the time
- promising to be a miracle cure which will work for all clients.

it is about:

the establishment of a therapeutic relationship between client and therapist. Within this safe relationship, interactive improvised music is used as a communicative, expressive and symbolic tool, to work towards individual therapeutic objectives. It is used to promote growth and change in the client.

There are different approaches to the use of music in therapy. Depending upon the needs of the client and the orientation of the therapist, different aspects of the work may be emphasised. Fundamental to all approaches, however, is the development of a relationship between the client and therapist. Music-making forms the basis for communication in this relationship. As a general rule both client and therapist take an active part in the sessions by playing, singing and listening. The therapist does not teach the client to sing or play an instrument. Clients are encouraged to use accessible percussion and ethnic instruments and their own voices to explore the world of sound and to create a musical language of their own. By responding musically, the therapist is able to support and encourage this process.

The music played covers a wide range of styles in order to complement the individual needs of each client. Much of the music is improvised, thus enhancing the individual nature of each relationship. Through whatever form the therapy takes, the therapist aims to facilitate positive changes in behaviour and emotional well-being. He or she also aims to help the client to develop an increased sense of self-awareness, and thereby to enhance his or her quality of life. The process may take place in individual or group therapy sessions.

WHO IS MUSIC THERAPY FOR?

Music therapists work with adults and children of all ages. People who can benefit from music therapy include:

- people with learning, physical and sensory disabilities, including multiple disabilities and neurological conditions
- people with mental illness or emotional disturbances
- people with speech and language impairment
- people with disabilities within the continuum of autism
- elderly people

Music therapy is also increasingly being sought by people who may not have specific difficulties but who would like to gain insight into themselves and their ways of relating to others.

HOW CAN MUSIC THERAPY HELP?

The benefits gained from music therapy may be as varied as the needs of the clients using the service. For example, music can convey feeling without the use of words. For a person whose difficulties are mainly emotional, music therapy can provide a safe setting where "difficult" or repressed feelings may be expressed and contained. By offering support and acceptance the therapist can help the client to work towards emotional release and self acceptance.

Music is essentially a social activity involving communication, listening and sharing. These skills may be developed within the musical relationship with the therapist and, in group therapy, with other members. As a result clients may develop a greater awareness of themselves in relation to others. This can include developing greater confidence in their own ability to make relationships and to find positive ways of making their needs known. It can greatly enhance their self-esteem.

Music can be a great motivator and can be used to promote developmental work, for example with clients with physical and/ or learning disabilities. Involvement in creative music-making can assist physical awareness and develop attention, memory and concentration. Obviously, as each person's needs are different, the various possibilities offered by music therapy will not be so easy to separate. There will normally be a considerable overlap between the areas described.

WHERE DO MUSIC THERAPISTS WORK?

Music therapists work in a variety of settings, such as hospitals, special schools, day centres, the community, the prison service and in private practice. This means that they may be employed by the National Health Service, local education authorities or the Department of Social Services. Some may be funded by charitable organisations, trusts or be self-employed. In all work settings, music therapists function as part of the multidisciplinary team, their observations adding greatly to the understanding of each client's needs, abilities or problems.

MUSIC THERAPY AS A PROFESSION

Music therapy has become established as a profession during the last 30 years and there are now more than 200 registered music therapists in the United Kingdom belonging to the Association of Professional Music Therapists (APMT). This association was developed to create job opportunities, protect the interests of music therapists and uphold clinical and ethical standards.

To become a qualified music therapist in the UK it is necessary to hold a degree or diploma in music and then complete one of the postgraduate courses recognised by the Department of Health.

REFERRALS FOR MUSIC THERAPY

If you wish to gain access to a music therapist, there are Area Co-ordinators throughout the UK. They will be able to put you in touch with your nearest therapist.

THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL MUSIC THERAPISTS

The APMT was formed in 1976 with the purpose of fulfilling the needs of qualified music therapists in Great Britain. Two main areas dealt with by the association are those of employment and sharing of information. The APMT acts as a protective body to music therapists already in work and assists in the creation of new posts. It also promotes the exchange of information between music therapists, both in Britain and abroad.

contact: Diana Abridge, APMT Administrator, 26 Hamlyn Road, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 8HT (tel: 01458 834919)

THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR MUSIC THERAPY

The BSMT was formed in 1958 by Juliette Alvin. Its aims include the promotion of the development and use of music therapy. It organises conferences, workshops and meetings, and is a centre of information. Its membership is open to all whose vocational activities enable them to further the objects of the society, and there is student membership at reduced rate for full-time students.

contact: Denize Christophers, BSMT Administrator, 25 Rosslyn Avenue, East Barnet, Herts EN4 8DH (tel: 0208 1368 8879)

THE JOURNAL OF BRITISH MUSIC THERAPY

This is published jointly by the APMT and BSMT twice a year. It is available to members of both these organisations (contact Denize Christophers for further details).

ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE AND MUSIC PERFORMANCE

In a study funded by the Research Council for Complementary Medicine, music performance students were randomly assigned to an experimental group given a course of lessons in Alexander technique, and a control group not given lessons. The taught group showed improvement relative to the others in their overall musical and technical quality of performance (judged from video-recordings by experts who didn't know which students had had lessons). They displayed less variation in heart rate under stress, less self-rated anxiety and an increase in self-rated concentration, boldness, warm-heartedness and positive, adaptive attitude towards performance. However, these results bore no relation to ratings of bodily use made from the videos by experts in the Alexander technique. The results suggest that lessons in Alexander technique may have beneficial effects on physiological, behavioural and experiential aspects of music performance, but the exact mechanisms underlying the obtained effects clearly require further investigation.

SPEAKERS

Abi Strevens graduated from the City University in London, with a BSc (Hons) in music. She trained as a flautist at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where she also did one year's postgraduate instrumental performance training. She later moved to Cambridge to train as a music therapist on the MA music therapy course of the Anglia Polytechnic University. Since qualifying in 1995 she has worked in the NHS with children and adults who have learning disabilities and mental health needs. Abi is currently running a pilot music therapy study at Littlemore Psychiatric Hospital and is setting up a private music therapy practice in Oxford. In addition to this she leads music workshops for health and education professionals, performs as a flautist and teaches the flute to students all ages.

Auriel Warwick studied on the postgraduate music therapy course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and is Senior County Music Therapist to the Oxfordshire Education Authority. She edited and wrote additional chapters for the 2nd edition of Music Therapy for the Autistic Child (Alvin and Warwick). Auriel is an external examiner for the Guildhall course, and an approved clinical supervisor for the Association of Professional Music Therapists. She is also a member of the Supervision Panel for the Professional Association and has lectured extensively and has led workshops throughout Britain, Europe and New Zealand.

Sheila Hales obtained her LTCL (Mus Ed) in 1992 and was a postgraduate at the University of Bristol where she received her diploma in Music Therapy in December 1995. As a registered music therapist, practising in Oxfordshire, her work with adults includes multiple and profound learning disabilities, blind/ deaf people with the 'Sense' charity, and those with additional mental health problems. She is also on a panel of therapists for Oxfordshire County Council supporting children in mainstream schools who are in crisis or need of extra support. Each year she visits orphanages in Romania with the charity 'Muzika in Romania', and most recently worked at a centre in Bucharest with special needs children, many of whom have Aids.

Ross Kirk graduated in electronics at the University of Leeds. He worked for many years in Computer System design and as a Lecturer in Communications Systems at the Army School of Signals. He is presently Senior Lecturer in the Department of Electronics, University of York. He is co-founder of the successful Masters Course in Music Technology at the University of York and Chairman of the Ensemble Research Group, which is responsible for investigating the use of electronics and music technology in Music Therapy and Special Needs Education.

Mark Hildred graduated with a master's degree in Electronic Engineering from the University of Hull in 1997 and recently completed an MSc in Music Technology at the University of York. Mark is a Research Assistant working on the Expanding the Boundaries of Music Therapy project, and is primarily concerned with making the CAMTAS (Computer Aided Music Therapy Analysis System) more accessible to Music Therapists. He is also especially interested in the development of new musical instruments for people with disabilities.

Mary Abbotson is a highly experienced music teacher with LRAM Diplomas in Aural Training, Class Singing and School Music. She holds the ARCM Diploma in pianoforte teaching and the Nordoff-Robbins Diploma in Music Therapy and has experience in primary and secondary schools as Music Specialist. She was Director of Music (1956-1962) of the Malayan College, Liverpool, and then Senior Lecturer in Music, Notre Dame College (Liverpool Institute of Higher Education). From 1980 she worked as a freelance Music Therapist and composer, founding the North Yorkshire Music Therapy Centre in 1987 of which she was the director until 1994. She is currently a consultant Music Therapist for both the Expanding the Boundaries of Music Therapy research project and the Ensemble Research Group.

Raymond Abbotson has 26 Years experience in Special Schools, with 10 years as Headmaster of a School for Mentally Handicapped Children on Merseyside. He is currently a maker and designer of early keyboard instruments. Raymond acts as a consultant in Special Education to the research project and the Ensemble Research group. He holds the Certificate of Education Diploma in Mental Handicap (Central Training Council).

MIDIGRID is an internationally recognised computer musical instrument which can be adapted for people with special needs. It was devised by Andy Hunt, Experimental Officer in Music Technology at the University of York. A former trainee with GEC-Marconi, he graduated from York with a BSc Hons Electronic Engineering in 1987. Andy specialises in computer music software design and interactive music systems. He runs workshops at the annual 'Share Music' course in Surrey for disabled/able-bodied people, led by Richard Stilgoe.

Elizabeth Valentine is Reader in Psychology at Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, University of London, and Director of the Psychology of Music Research Group. Dr Valentine is an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, whose research interests include the psychology of musical practice and performance, memory and attentional skills (with reference to methods of improvement) and philosophical psychology.