# History of Music Therapy in Singapore

## 1963
- 1st Malay music therapist, Louise Cheng, returned to Singapore after completing her studies in music therapy in Kansas University, USA.

## 1980s-1990s
- Music therapy programmes started at AESN (now APSN), Rainbow Centre & AWNA School.
- May Goh-Chulee awarded a scholarship by National Council Social Service to study music therapy.
- Presentation of 1st known local music therapy research conducted at a hospital: "Musical Experience of a Pre-Ungual Teenage Cachexia Inpatient in Singapore", by Dr-Peter Tan at the American Music Therapy Association Annual Conference.

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## 2006
- Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts began offering elective modules in music therapy for Music Diploma students.
- Music therapy programme began at St. Andrew's Autism Centre.
- Launch of Music Therapy Day by National Council of Social Service to pursue studies in music therapy.

## 2007
- AMTS formed
- Association for Music Therapy, Singapore (AMTS) formed in September 15, 2007, with 11 founding members.
- "Music to the Edge", first music therapy programme in South East Asia for the hearing impaired established at Singapore General Hospital (SGH), with Dr Rute Geller (USA) invited as a visiting expert for the launch.
- Music therapy services made available to patients at various institutions:
  - Hospitalised children at KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital (KKWH).
  - Patients with burns, heart and lung transplants and haematological conditions at Singapore General Hospital.
  - Persons with dementia at Alexandra Hospital (now Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH)).
  - Palliative care patients at Dover Park Hospice (the first intermediate and long-term care institution to offer music therapy services).

## 2008
- 1st Public Talk is Mandated by AMTS at Teachers Pol (by Hsu Yu Quan - 廖家勋副教授) as part of public outreach efforts.

## 2009
- 1st issue of "Music Therapy Times", the AMTS annual newsletter circulated to public as part of outreach efforts, published in December 2009
- 1st Public talk in Malay by AMTS at Oudin Max Community Centre
- Music therapy services made available to following client populations in institutions:
  - Hospitalised women with cancer at KKH through SingHealth Arts for Health grant
  - Tuas Heavenly Moral Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC)

## 2010
- Inaugural Music Therapy Day (subsequently an annual public outreach event) was preceded by Dr. Clive Robbins (USA), a co-founder of Creative Music Therapy Association.
- Publication of first music therapy study on dementia in Singapore - "A qualitative, naturalistic study on weekly music therapy and activity programs: disruptive and repetitive behaviors in dementia" published in Dementia and Geriatric Cognitive Disorders.

## 2011
- AMTS becomes a member of the World Federation of Music Therapy (WFMT).
- Inaugural MF and Healthcare Symposium, "Global Evidence of Effectiveness" with three visiting experts from the USA: Dr. Dolores Burns, Dr. Jeanette Learoyd, and Dr. Deforia Lane presenting on the research foundations that form the evidence-base of clinical practice. The Symposium was jointly hosted by 4 hospitals: KKWH, KTPH, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, and AIG Hospital.
- Music therapy services made available to following client populations in institutions:
  - Patients at the neurology ward at SGH.
  - Singapore Association for Mental Health.

## 2012
- "Music and the Special Child - Musically Motivating Developmental Milestones in Special Education and Early Intervention" the first local music therapy symposium with a focus on special education with visiting experts, Dr Katrina McFerran (Australia) and Elizabeth Schwartz (USA).

## 2013
- 1st Medical Music Therapy Day, an annual public awareness campaign in hospitals, hosted at a local hospital (KKWH).
- Patients at St Andrew’s Community Hospital (SACH) gained access to music therapy services.

## 2014
- 1st published journal article by AMTS members documenting the development of the profession in Singapore: "Developing Music Therapy as a Professional Allied Healthcare Discipline: The Task Ahead for the Association for Music Therapy, Singapore" published in the Music and Medicine Journal published by the International Association for Music & Medicine.
- 1st published journal article detailing the development and outcomes of medical music therapy services, including research, within a healthcare cluster in Singapore: "Music therapy at SingHealth" in the Music and Medicine Journal published by the International Association for Music & Medicine.
- 1st music therapy research collaboration between an acute medical institution and intermediate and long-term care facility at the International Conference for the International Association of Music and Medicine: “A Study on the Reasons of Music Therapy Referrals by Doctors in Neuro-Rehabilitation Works in Two Singapore Hospitals: Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and St. Andrew’s Community Hospital (SACH)“.
- Dr Katrina McFerran (Australia) and Dr Grace Thompson (Australia) as speakers for "Music Therapy, Young People, and Families with Special Needs", the 1st music therapy symposium focusing on youth and families organised by AMTS.
- Dr Cheryl Ollens, Director of Arts and Quality of Life Research Center at Temple University (USA), the 1st music therapy expert to be formally invited as keynote speaker for the Singapore Palliative Care Conference.
- AMTS-Lee Foundation Professional/Student Development Award given to a student training costs for professional and student members of AMTS.

## 2015
- 1st Guided Imagery and Music Training in Asia conducted in Singapore by Dr Denise Grocke, who established the music therapy programme in Australia in 1978, and Carolyn van Dort (Maitland).
- Senior Citizens supported by the AWNA’s Health and Senior Care Services able to access music therapy.

## 2016
- Inaugural local music therapy conference on Early Intervention and Special Education with pre-and post-conference training by visiting experts, Dr. Amanda Oldfield (UK), Dr. Patricia Kern (USA) & Dr. Vicky Abdy (Australia).
- Expansion of music therapy services to more community settings and hospitals:
  - St. Joseph’s Nursing home
  - Aisut Hospital
  - Yishun Community Hospital (Dementia ward)

## 2017
- 1st Presentation to MOE Special Education Branch & Principals of Special Schools on the role of music therapy in special education by AMTS representatives.
- AMTS celebrates decade milestones with more than 30 professional members since its formation.

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*music therapy services no longer offered
**information correct as of time of print