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President's Note



It is indeed an exciting time to be a part of the new executive committee and to be a member of the larger international community of professionals who are dedicated to making a holistic difference in the lives of the clients we serve. The momentum for the music therapy scene in Singapore continues to pick up, as AMTS builds on old platforms and launches new initiatives.

In April, AMTS hosted its 2nd MT Community Awareness Day with an interactive crowd at the Library@Esplanade. As this issue goes into print, plans are underway for the first local Music Therapy Healthcare Symposium in July. In addition, AMTS was invited to present our "strong and attractive" bid for hosting the World Congress of Music Therapy (2014 or 2017) in Seoul. More details will

be updated on our blog and website.

AMTS invites your partnership and involvement with music therapy by attending or volunteering at upcoming events. We welcome patrons and sponsors for our cause to serve the physically or cognitively challenged, chronically or terminally ill, and to support their emotional, social or spiritual wellbeing through music. As we continue to expand the reach of clinical services and promote music therapy as an allied healthcare profession locally, AMTS is in need of legal and financial expertise. Join us as a "Friend of Music Therapy" today!

We look forward to meeting you at our next event!

Melanie Kwan, MMT, LCAT, MT-BC
President, AMTS
June 2011

Editor's Note



This issue of Music Therapy Times is special as the perspectives of both therapists and clients are both presented. You have the opportunity to

come up close and personal with Fontane Liang, a music therapist working in the U.K. and discover how Huanting, a girl with hearing-impairment, experienced receiving music therapy. In addition, find out how music therapy is advancing in medical research in neurological rehabilitation, as well as about the potential application of music therapy in the community like at-risk youth in other countries and Singapore. I would like to thank the Editorial team and wonderful contributors for their time and effort in putting together another jammed-packed issue of Music Therapy Times, and to our readers for your support!

Charissa Tan, MA, MT-BC
Editor

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Music Therapy Day 2011

Reported by Melanie Kwan, MMT, MT-BC

“Building Musical Bridges,” the theme of AMTS’ 2nd MT Community Awareness Day event at the Library@Esplanade (Apr 10, 2011) showcased the wide impact of local Music Therapists’ work in a variety of settings. These professionals tailor music experiences toward functional outcomes for persons with behavioural, emotional, social challenges or learning differences. “Building Musi-

cal Bridges” also honoured the pioneering work of the first Music Therapists over the late 1980s and early 1990s. Three Music Therapists were awarded AMTS’ honorary lifetime membership to celebrate their efforts of building the first musical bridges for Music Therapy with special education clients—Audrey Ruyters, Eudora Low (Chiu) and May Goh Cluelee. AMTS professional mem-

bers engaged the audience in interactive music-making with commonly requested songs, and shared original songs created by hospitalized clients. The audience responded with questions about Music Therapy for wellness, impact on behaviour and communicational skills of children with autism, and the requirements of music therapy education and clinical training.



Here’s what some of those who attended MT Day had to say:

[During the Q & A,] the questioning faculties of the audience were matched with brilliant and insightful responses from the professional members of AMTS, followed by demonstration using different musical instruments.

~Manaff, Editor

It was good for me to see how MT works in collaboration with other helping professionals. It was also an eye-opener for me to hear and see examples of how MT can assist a variety of clients. It was heartwarming, inspiring and educational.

~Sophie, Medical Social Worker

I teared after listening to a song that was composed by a cancer patient during the presentation, which made me more determined to be a music therapist.

~Carol, Music Teacher

Up-close and Personal with *Fontane* Liang



Fontane is the newest addition to our AMTS family, having joined us early this year. The Editorial team is excited to present this email interview with her.

WF: What led you to decide on Music Therapy (MT) as a career?

FL: I learnt of MT through my piano teacher when I was in primary school. Music and medicine have been the two greatest passions in my life and music therapy seemed to me to be a marriage of my two interests in life hence I decided that MT would become my career.

WF: You are also a harpist - very rare to come by in Singapore! How have you been able to use the harp in clinical settings?

FL: Interestingly, I rarely use the pedal harp in my clinical work as clients might be put off engaging in the

sessions when they see a grand, alien, inaccessible instrument in the room. I also imagined having to work with possibly negative transferences and feelings of jealousy and worth. I have found the small lap harp more useful.

WF: Tell us more about the fundraiser you organized for Rainbow Centre in 2008 to fund MT services for young children with special needs.

FL: In my 3rd year, I needed to do a concert project for my degree, so I thought it would be good to try to raise money for Rainbow Centre for that as there were some funding issues for MT at the time. I took the opportunity to promote MT amongst the S'poreans in London, and also to rally them for a good cause and contribute to their country. I invited Asian musicians in my school to play duets, solos and some chamber music to build a network of Asian musicians. I was able to gain the backing of the High Commissioner, Mr. Michael Teo, and with his help, many companies were willing to support us. We publicised this concert widely through the S'pore students' network and managed to raise funds for this concert.

A Parent's Journey:

FROM "RELATIVE" TO "ABSOLUTE" HAPPINESS

Mrs Cheong shares how cochlear implantation and Music Therapy changed her life, and that of her daughter, Huan Ting:

Life was blissful until 2001 when our youngest daughter Huan Ting was born. When she was 2 months old, the doctor diagnosed her with acute hearing loss which resulted in behavioral problems as a toddler, as well as speech and communication difficulties.

When she was 10 months old, the doctor proposed to have a cochlear implant in her left ear. The implant cost \$30,000, excluding hospitalization and surgical charges. We prayed earnestly to have the best outcome for Huan Ting; we were subsequently blessed with the necessary funds – provided by sponsors (from hospital and welfare organization). Two months after Huan

Ting was successfully implanted with a Cochlear device, she could hear! I vividly remember her rapturous laughter when she heard sounds from the toys she was playing with.

When Huan Ting was 5, she started Music Therapy at the Singapore General Hospital. Despite being hard of hearing, Huan Ting had always shown an interest in music. The therapist worked with her to recognize the difference in pitch with the use of an electronic tuner. As therapy also helped in her breathing, timing and articulation, Huan Ting's speech began to improve, as did her confidence. This March, Huan Ting's other ear was implanted with a Cochlear Nucleus 5.

One of my constant prayers is that Huan Ting would be able to live like other kids. I was overjoyed when she qualified for mainstream education when she was 7. Last year, Huan Ting scored full marks on mathematics. She is now attending Primary 4.



*Story was taken from "Creative Life" "Issue 4, 2011.

Upcoming Music Therapy Events

Music Therapy Healthcare Symposium

11-12 July, 2011

Singapore

Updates on <http://singaporemusictherapy.wordpress.com>

Australian Music Therapy Association's 37th National Conference

17-18 September, 2011

Brisbane, Australia

<http://www.austmta.org.au/conf/>

NZSM Music Therapy Conference 2011

11-13 November, 2011

Wellington, New Zealand

<http://www.nzsm.ac.nz/events/MusicTherapy2011.aspx>

XIII Annual Conference of the American Music Therapy Association

AMTA in the ATL: Advocacy, Therapy, Leadership

16-20 November, 2011

Atlanta, Georgia

<http://musictherapy.org/conference/confindex.html>

38th Conference of the Canadian Association for Music Therapy

3-5 May, 2012

Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

<http://www.musictherapy.ca>

International Conference of Gender, Health and the Creative Arts Therapies

5-6 May, 2012

Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

<http://creativeartstherapies.concordia.ca>

2nd International Conference of the International Association for Music and Medicine

3-6 July, 2012

Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

<http://www.iammthailand.com>

Drop us a line at musictherapy.sg@gmail.com

Music Therapy for comatose patients?

Reported by Ng Wang Feng, MMT, MT-BC

This column aims to highlight an interesting topic or question that has been partially or fully addressed by recent scientific research.

According to Aldridge, Gustorff and Hannich (1990), improvised singing¹ is a useful tool in Music Therapy as it provides human contact, and promotes perceptual responses in the comatose patient. The range of responses observed include change in breathing, fine motor movements, eyes opening, and the regaining of consciousness. Music can be used to assess patients with severely-altered states of consciousness (SSC). The Music Therapy Assessment Tool for Low Awareness States (MATLAS) taps on the patient's auditory functioning and music-processing capabilities, through the use of live musical stimuli provided by the therapist (Daverson, 2010). MATLAS is not reliant on language processing capabilities, hence it complements existing language-based assessment tools. Music therapy is a viable treatment and assessment modality for patients with SSC.

¹The therapist improvised vocally based on patient's breathing pattern and pulse.

Aldridge, D., Gustorff, D., & Hannich, H-J. (1990). *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 83, 345-346.

Daverson, B. (2010). An audit about Music Therapy assessments and recommendations for adult patients suspected to be in a low awareness state. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 47, 4, 408-422.

Music Therapy with At-Risk Youth

Reported by Charissa Tan, MA, MT-BC

This column aims to highlight selected client populations or topics of relevance to the local scene.

In March, the Government announced that it has set aside \$1.2 million over the next 2 years to engage and help at-risk youth re-integrate into society, through a range of academic, vocational and therapeutic programmes. As music plays an important role in the lives of young people at this developmental stage of establishing personal identity, and as music is an outlet for emotional expression, Music Therapy programs with at-risk youth have been conducted in communities that are stricken with poverty and violence around the world. **Music provides a safe, non-threatening environment, where the therapist-client relationship can be significantly enhanced.**

MT goals with at-risk youth include: improving interpersonal skills and self-expression, developing coping skills, identity and self-esteem, improving impulse control and anger management.

Montello and Coons (1998) compared the behavioral effects of active group MT with those of listening-based group MT on adolescents with emotional, learning, and behavioral disorders. Results indicate that students improved significantly after receiving both MT interventions, and became less aggressive/hostile. Hence, group MT can provide an appropriate channel for self-expression, and for transforming frustration, anger, and aggression into the experience of creativity and self-mastery.

Montello, L. & Coons, E. (1998). Effects of active versus passive group Music Therapy on preadolescents with emotional, learning, and behavioral disorders. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 35, 49-67.

Music Therapy FAQ



What is the Association for Music Therapy (Singapore) AMTS?

Formed in September 2007 by 11 professional Music Therapists, AMTS seeks to raise public awareness of Music Therapy in the community and serve as an organizational agency for locally-based Music Therapists. As of November 2010, we have 21 members who are all trained Music Therapists! **Feel free to contact us to verify credentials of Music Therapists at musictherapy.sg@gmail.com.**

Who can benefit from Music Therapy?

Music Therapy serves individuals and groups of various impairments and conditions at all ages, from neonates to the elderly. One does not need any music background to benefit from Music Therapy! However, Music Therapy is NOT a miracle cure-all. Only a Music Therapist can assess whether Music Therapy is suitable for the client.

Who are Music Therapists?

Persons who complete an approved college Music Therapy programme in the country of training. As credentials vary from country to country, the following are recognized: MTA (Canada), RMT (Australia), RMth (New Zealand), SRMT/HPC (U.K.), and MT-BC (U.S.A.).

What music do Music Therapists use?

Music Therapists use client-preferred music, so any type of music can be used in therapy. Music is usually provided live!

Is there scientific basis in Music Therapy?

Yes, Music Therapy is evidence-based. International research is ongoing, documenting the growing evi-

dence base - with Music Therapists publishing in various journals, and organizations, including Cochrane Collaboration.

Is Music Therapy training available in Singapore?

There are plans to develop a local training programme in the near future. Please visit our website and blog for the latest updates.

“ I just want my child to enjoy music like her friends. ”



“ We've developed SmartSound™ technology and world leading music habitation materials to open up the world of music for Cochlear users. ”

We heard you. Whether your child plays an instrument, or simply listens to their iPod, Cochlear™ understand the happiness that music can bring. With this in mind, Cochlear designed SmartSound™ to enhance the listening experience. Because research shows that music appreciation is greatly enhanced by practice, our experts have also developed music habitation tools to help further improve your child's music experiences.

For more info call (65) 6553 3814 or email csgg@cochlear.com



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