



# MUSIC THERAPY *Times*



## Moving with the Times

Celebrating 10 years as a profession in Singapore

### MUSIC THERAPY DAY 2017

Library @ Esplanade | 2-5 pm  
Sunday, September 24 2017

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Issue 11 | August 2017

### President's Note



2017 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the formation of the AMTS. Over the past decade, Music therapy has significantly expanded its presence both locally and worldwide. In Singapore, more healthcare institutions, voluntary welfare organisations and special schools are including music therapy as part of their core service.

Earlier this year, the executive committee conducted a yearly review of objectives of 2016 as part of strategic planning for 2017-2018, including a projection of the Association's goals for the next decade. AMTS remains committed to supporting professional development through initiatives like our Professional Supervision Fund, advocacy for music therapy services, and community engagement with the public.

Thank you to all the past and present members who have contributed time and effort in supporting the Association. I would like to thank our two major funders - **Lee Foundation** and **Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple** for their support towards our initiatives in 2017. This issue of our newsletter highlights some of our activities over the past year, contributed by members of AMTS. Founding President, Ng Wang Feng has also written an article to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Association.

Moving forward, I hope that the AMTS will continue to significantly impact healthcare, education and community building. To more exciting years ahead!

Evelyn Lee, RMT  
AMTS President

### Editor's Note



This issue of Music Therapy Times is significant as it marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the founding of the Association for Music Therapy Singapore (AMTS). Music Therapy in Singapore has certainly come a long way since the association was founded in 2007. More Singaporeans are going abroad to train and qualify as music therapists, and we get up close and personal with 3 of them who have returned and are part of the growing profession in Singapore. This issue will also feature "MT Greats" - inspiring pioneers in the field who laid the groundwork for the profession to take root in Singapore, as well as cover ongoing events such as our annual MT Day, and the inaugural SPED-MT Conference.

I would like to thank the editorial team - in particular Melanie Kwan, Eta Lauw, Evelyn Lee and Ng Wang Feng for their inputs and suggestions, and to our designer Tiffany for the layout and design. This issue would also not have been possible without the time and effort of our passionate contributors, and the support of our readers!

Lynn Koh, RMT  
Editor

### AMTS EXCO 2017/2018

President: Evelyn Lee

Vice-President: Dawn Chik

Treasurer:

Jacqueline Chow (outgoing),  
Loi Wei Ming (incoming)

Secretary: Eta Lauw

General Members:

Yang Shu-Ting,  
Tammy Lim, Calvin Ng  
and Jen Sim



For more information, or interested in music therapy as a career, please email us at [musictherapy.sg@gmail.com](mailto:musictherapy.sg@gmail.com)

Scan the QR code to visit us online at  
<http://singaporemusictherapy.wordpress.com>

## TREASURER'S REPORT

In this issue of Music Therapy Times, we would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge various organisations and individuals who have rendered their support to the growth and development of AMTS' initiatives in Singapore.



To start with, thank you to the steadfast support received from our professional, associate and student members of AMTS. We would also like to express appreciation to Lee Foundation and Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple for your generous donations, which have gone a long way in supporting our inaugural SPED-MT Conference in 2016, various professional training and education programmes for local music therapists, our annual Music Therapy Day, Medical Music Therapy Day, and this newsletter.

As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of AMTS this year, we look forward to continued support to increase awareness of music therapy in Singapore. If you or your organization are interested in supporting our future initiatives and projects, do drop us an email at [musictherapy.sg@gmail.com](mailto:musictherapy.sg@gmail.com). Thank you!

*Jacqueline Chow, RMT  
AMTS Treasurer*

## 10 MAGIC NUMBERS: TRIBUTE TO THE MT GREATS AND SELECTED AMTS MILESTONES

*(Spot and connect the numbers – think of 1 song title connected with each number)*

There was a time... when a seed planted in 1963, perhaps earlier, started to germinate with more momentum. In December 2005, a few music therapists (MTs) gathered in Singapore to promote MT in the community. By September 2007, the seed sprouted: MTs in Singapore officially formed the Association for Music Therapy Singapore (AMTS). I am among those lucky enough to make contact with each member of this pioneering group. Among those who signed up for the cause were 4 prominent local pioneers<sup>1</sup>, an expatriate MT, and 2 VCF scholars. Our professional members (made up of Singaporeans and colleagues from more than ten other countries<sup>2</sup>) graduated from various accredited MT programs around the world<sup>3</sup>. Many of us had the honour to train with, and/or were personally inspired by more than 8 internationally-renowned Music Therapy Giants<sup>4</sup>; of worthy mention is the awe-inspiring Dr. Clive Robbins, who was also the VIP at our inaugural MT Day.

As we commemorate our 10-year milestone, we give a deep bow of reverential gratitude to all our mentors and role models,

1. Audrey Ruyters-Lim, May Clulee-Goh, Dr. Patsy Tan, Dr. Xueli Tan 2. Australia, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Thailand, U.S.A., U.K. 3. Australia, Austria, Canada, New Zealand, U.K., U.S.A. 4. Edith Boxill, Dr. Ken Bruscia, Barbara Crowe, Dr. Kate Gfeller, Dr. Joanne Loewy, Dr. Amelia Oldfield, Dr. Alan Turry, Audrey Ruyters-Lim

## BOOK FEATURE

### CULTURAL INTERSECTIONS IN MUSIC THERAPY: MUSIC, HEALTH, AND THE PERSON

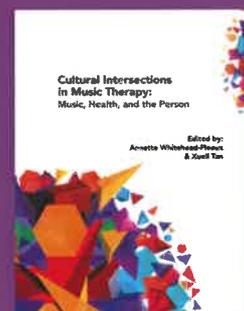


*Editors: Annette Whitehead-Pleaux, MA, MT-BC & Xueli Tan, PhD, MT-BC*

In 2012, Annette Whitehead-Pleaux and Xueli Tan were invited to co-chair a multicultural institute at the annual American Music Therapy Association Conference held in St. Charles, Illinois (USA). The ensuing conversations focused on self-reflection, biases and assumptions, meaning of health and medicine, and the significance of music within minority cultures. Both editors felt a sense of urgency in documenting these conversations. This urgency was shared by Dr. Ken Bruscia (Barcelona Publishers), who offered the editors a book contract in less than two hours after the book proposal was submitted. With 24 authors penning 20 chapters, the vision for the book came to fruition in April 2017. This is the first comprehensive textbook on the multicultural dimensions of music therapy, explored through the lens of music therapists who have found belonging and identity in diverse cultures. The authors examine how music therapy is relevant within an individual's cultural context through personal and scholarly explorations. The chapters are separated into three sections: 1) understanding oppression and bias, 2) minority cultures, and 3) inclusive music therapy practice and education. The book is available via Barcelona Publishers:

<http://www.barcelonapublishers.com/multicultural-intersections-music-health-the-person>

*Xueli Tan, Ph.D., MT-BC is a board-certified music therapist, Assistant Professor of Music Therapy at Lesley University, and professional AMTS member.*



and a humble hat tip to my seniors and compatriots from the pioneering core group, and to each AMTS member: May we continue to inspire everyone we come into contact with!

*Ng Wang Feng, MMT, MT-BC,  
Neurologic Music Therapist  
Founding President of AMTS*

*Key: 1 more night, Perfect 2, Knock 3 times, Love is just a 4 letter word, 5 hundred miles, Route Sixty-6, 7 lonely days, 8 days a week, Love potion number 9, 10 years gone  
Special hint: Two of the numbers are hidden within a word or implied*



## SPED-MT CONFERENCE 2016

In Sept 2016, yet another milestone was achieved with our Inaugural SPED-MT Conference (SGMT16) (<https://sgmt2016.blogspot.sg>), featuring the expertise of three visiting experts: Dr. Vicky Abad, Dr. Petra Kern, and Dr. Amelia Oldfield.

Local presenters included Sun Sun Yap who shared about action research with a Cerebral Palsy client, Loi Wei Ming who presented on the efficacy of music for improving language with a colleague, and Ng Wang Feng who discussed her work with at-risk youth. Jane Tan's presentation, "When Music Speaks" delineated her expertise in music education and music therapy. Loi Wei Ming and Clara Chong also gave an overview of the development of music therapy in local special education. Recent graduates Michelle Low and Dawn Chik shared their insights gleaned from their first year of practice.

The conference also attracted presenters and attendees from Thailand, Hong Kong, Germany, Malaysia and Taiwan.

The areas of knowledge covered by the speakers included how music development was closely related to early childhood development, and how music interventions could be adapted to impact communication and development as well as sensory processing. Music-based strategies for self-regulation were also introduced. Some participants, inspired by the presentations, felt keen to explore more collaborations between special education and music therapy. As a piece of written feedback stated, "I found it interesting that music therapy spans such a wide range of contexts and settings, and that musical elements



can be productively used to achieve therapeutic goals".

The conference and workshops recharged and inspired over 30 preschool educators, allied healthcare professionals, private music teachers, psychologists and music therapists. The discussion-filled, resource-packed week was an intense and fruitful time of sharing and music-making that allowed all to emerge feeling better informed and inspired to apply ideas and insights gleaned into their practice and work.

*Melanie Kwan, MMT, LCAT, MT-BC  
Co-Chair, SGMT16 Organizing Committee*

## MUSIC THERAPY DAY 2016

Our 6<sup>th</sup> annual Music Therapy Day, themed "Experience Music Therapy in Action" was held on April 10, 2016. Music therapists working in special education schools, hospitals and hospice shared various music therapy interventions used to address clients' needs with over 100 participants. These interventions include improvisational, compositional, re-creative and receptive music experiences. A highlight of the event was when the participants eagerly engaged in live demonstrations. Our music therapists shared how some of these music experiences could be applied or adapted for work with the young or the elderly.

Our 7<sup>th</sup> Music Therapy Day will be held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017, at Library@Esplanade, from 2pm to 5pm. All are welcome to join us for an afternoon of learning and sharing!



*Professional Members of AMTS*



*Music Therapist, Wei Ming, engaging a young member of our audience in a structured improvisation.*



*Audience participating in a receptive music experience - relaxation with music.*

*Dawn Chik, MT-BC  
MT Day Organizing  
Committee (2016)*

## UP-CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH TAMMY LIM



### What drew you to music therapy?

The calling for making a difference in this world with this important component of my life – music!

### What has been the most inspiring moment in your MT journey?

When music is the only way to convey feelings and thoughts. In my work in the hospice setting, I have witnessed how music plays a role in palliative and hospice care. As death and dying is not a commonly discussed topic in our culture, music can help open a gateway to this aspect of our lives. Music can also relax us and lower our internal defence, granting the individual greater readiness to confront the unresolved content of our inner self. There were also a few times I had the honor of providing music till a patient's last breath, with their families. These are all inspiring moments to me.

### What has been the most challenging moment in your MT journey?

When I am not sure if I am doing something that is helpful for the patients due to limited sources of feedback. I would then turn to related books and research articles for insights, or discuss with my music therapy colleagues in similar settings.

### What is your area of interest in MT, and why?

My area of interest is in hospice and palliative care. I believe it is a calling, and I've found myself very comfortable working with individuals at the end of life.

**Tammy Lim, MT-BC**

## UP-CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH CORWIN TANG



### What drew you to music therapy?

I had an unforgettable musical experience in secondary school, when I learnt how to improvise on the piano from a classmate. In that moment, the feelings of burden, pressure and anxiety in my heart were relieved. After I completed my bachelor's degree with a major in Psychology and learnt about basic concepts in counseling theories, I found that music therapy was a profession suitable for me, matching my personality and talents. That was how I started my journey in music therapy.

### What has been the most inspiring moment in your MT journey?

"Let the music do the rest" – this was said by one of my supervisors. I remember a time when I was working with an elderly lady in Hong Kong - She did not give any response, no matter what and how I spoke to her. Her facial expression only conveyed feelings of sadness and gloom. I went ahead to sing a few songs for her, even when she did not show any signs of paying attention. To my surprise, at the end of the session, her facial expression changed. She gave a lovely smile to all of us and said "goodbye" to me. It was a real testament to the power

## UP-CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH KAYLA WONG



### What drew you to music therapy?

Music was the one thing I felt good at and really enjoyed while growing up. I also had an underlying desire to be a good listener, to help people, and to work through their challenges with them. When I discovered music therapy, it was the natural choice for a career as it combined both my passions.

### What has been the most inspiring moment in your MT journey?

To me, the inspiring moments are the small things which make someone feel valued or share a connection within the music. Inspiring moments also include the special conversations that start to flow through a person's favourite piece of music, and meaning and insight that can be gained through these conversations.

### What has been the most challenging moment in your MT journey?

Working with people with brain injuries, resulting in low response to stimulation. The challenge lies in finding out the most effective way to engage them with music and providing opportunity for response and communication. It can be challenging to distinguish the slightest blink of the eye or the smallest head nod as a way of response from them. However, when read right, it is a beautiful thing to see that slight smile on their faces.

### What is your area of interest in MT, and why?

I am most drawn to working with young children and their families. I believe that the environment of a person plays an important role in shaping the person they become. Therefore, I am passionate about working with the family unit to shape young minds toward a fruitful and meaningful life.

**Kayla Wong, RMT**

of music doing its work. While I still rely on verbal techniques and other therapeutic skills, I am always reminded of the healing power of music in inspiring moments such as this.

### What has been the most challenging moment in your MT journey?

Language and cultural barriers have been the most challenging for me in my MT journey. Although music can be said to be a universal language, using music in a therapeutic setting, within another culture, is not an easy thing to do. In addition, as a non-local working in Singapore, I've also had my share of challenging moments in Singapore's multicultural society.

### What is your area of interest in MT, and why?

I am interested in the analytical approach in music therapy, where communication can be established through improvisation, free association and other psychosocial applications. I enjoy the sense of mystery and freedom between client and therapist in this approach, as the music can be improvised and become "playful" in exchanges within the therapeutic setting.

**Corwin Tang, RMT**