



Music Therapy Day 2017 and 2018

Themed "Moving with the Times", the 7th Music Therapy Day was held on September 24, 2017, with over 150 members of the public attending to celebrate the development and milestones of music therapy practice in Singapore. Several local music therapists shared about their work in various areas, including special education, palliative and dementia care. Our guest presenter, Dr. Tan Xue Li, also shared about her work as a clinical and research music therapist, specifically in her work with burns and trauma. Other highlights of the event included the music experientials where audience members got to experience the power of music for themselves, and witnessed how music therapists facilitate the use of music for specific purposes.

On March 18, 2018, in conjunction with World Music Therapy Day, the 8th Music Therapy Day was held at the foyer of Ng Teng Fong General Hospital. Themed "Connecting Through Music: The Community and Me", a unique feature of the event included the set-up of booths, which allowed members of the public to mingle with music therapists working in specific settings, as well as inquire about different music therapy training courses offered around the world.

Dawn Chik, MT-BC, and Jen Sim, RMT
MT Day Organizing Committee (2017 and 2018)

Left: Members of the public at MT Day 2017 taking part in a music experiential
Right: AMTS Members at MT Day 2018

Editor's Note

Welcome to the 2018 issue of Music Therapy Times!

As the number of music therapists based in Singapore continues to grow, so have the efforts of AMTS in reaching out to engage with the community. In this issue, we are proud to feature initiatives such as the first workshop on music-based strategies for the special needs classroom conducted for special education (SPED) educators. This issue also features various trainings attended by local music therapists, some of them made possible by sponsors such as the Lee Foundation. We appreciate our sponsors for their continued support in enhancing the quality of professional development of music therapists in Singapore. We are also excited to connect with some music therapists who have returned from their studies, or have come to Singapore to work, in our Up Close and Personal section.

A huge thanks to the editorial team, including Eta Lauw and Melanie Kwan, as well as all the individuals who have contributed to the articles and reflections in this issue. We wish you a pleasant reading experience!

Lynn Koh, RMT
Editor



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You may also visit us online at <http://musictherapy.org.sg/>

MUSIC STRATEGIES FOR THE CLASSROOM
AMTS Workshop for SPED Educators

On 15 March 2018, AMTS professional members working in the special education (SPED) sector conducted a 4-hour workshop for 13 educators from various SPED schools in Singapore, entitled “Music Strategies for the Classroom”.

Organised by the Ministry of Education (MOE)’s Special Education Branch (SEB), this workshop allowed SPED teachers to experience music-based strategies which they could incorporate into their classrooms. SPED educators learnt about the musical development of a child, and how elements of music could be used in lesson plans to target respective learning domains, such as numeracy, literacy or physical education. Apart from using music as a tool for teaching and learning, participants were also introduced to how music could be used for social engagement and regulation.

All participants felt that they had benefited from attending the workshop. As one participant shared: “The therapists were very professional and I enjoyed the close and informal workshop. The different examples introduced were very beneficial.” Another participant reflected on the use of “live music” to engage students, indicating that “this enriches their learning experiences”.

The initiative for this workshop is part of AMTS’ ongoing efforts to engage the community, and is a follow-up from AMTS’ presentations to MOE and SPED school principals on the role of music therapy in Singapore’s special education sector, in July and August 2017. AMTS would like to thank MOE SEB for this platform, and look forward to more opportunities to share and engage with the community.

Eta Lauw, RMT



The AMTS representatives comprising of Calvin Eng, Dawn Chik, Eta Lauw and Loi Wei Ming, who also presented to MOE SEB and SPED school leaders in August 2017



Participants and music therapists at the first Music Strategies for the Classroom workshop

REFLECTIONS FROM WORLD CONGRESS OF MUSIC THERAPY 2017

In 2017, I was an awardee of the AMTS-Lee Foundation Professional/Student Education, Training and Development (PETD) fund to attend and present a research poster and symposium at the 15th World Congress of Music Therapy held in Tsukuba, Japan. The research poster was titled, “A Review of Multicultural Music Therapy Literature: Trends and Future Directions.” This study examined the current status of multicultural music therapy research published in the Journal of Music Therapy and Music Therapy Perspectives. Working on the poster presentation provided me opportunities to connect with international researchers from Canada and Japan, and I look forward to collaborating with them on future projects. My symposium presentation was titled, “Experiences as a Student Overseas and a Professional Back Home.” This symposium brought together new professionals from the Dominican Republic, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan, all of whom had recently graduated from various Music Therapy Training Programs in the U.S.A. Vibrant discussions emerged from topics such as reverse culture shock, discrepancies between expectations and reality, as well as successes and challenges of practicing music therapy in one’s home country. It was a fruitful and reflective experience for both the audience as well as participants.

My overall experience at the World Congress was packed with spotlight sessions, presentations, workshops, roundtables, symposiums, and cultural experiences, allowing me to gain much insight and learning. The 16th World Congress of Music Therapy will be held in South Africa in 2020 - an event I’m sure many will be looking forward to!

Jonathan Tang, MT-BC



Workshop participants taking part in music-based activities

RECHARGED WITH IMPROVISATION
Nordoff-Robbins Improvisation Training at NYU

Every summer, the Nordoff Robbins Center for Music Therapy at New York University (NYU) offers 2 training programmes relating to clinical skills and improvisation in music therapy. After 16 years in the field, I was looking to be re-inspired, and 2 weeks of pure improvisation was the remedy. Mixed funding from the AMTS-Lee Foundation Professional Education, Training and Development (PETD) fund and employer sponsorship made this a reality.

The first week focused on *Introduction to Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy: Foundations, Improvisational Resources and Clinical Applications*, where the historical and philosophical foundations of the Creative Music Therapy (CMT) approach was outlined along with contemporary case studies. For the attendees comprising of music therapists, musicians, related professionals, and CMT students, seeing the effects of goal-directed improvisation as the primary mode of treatment with a range of clients was profound. My understanding of the clinical functions of various elements of music was significantly deepened.

The second week delved more deeply into *Clinical Improvisation in Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy*, as we role-played different situations and musical contexts. Musical resources and techniques for improvising and composing for therapy were modeled, and applications with a range of clients in different scenarios were detailedly explained.

Experiencing creative music improvisation in and as therapy proved to be a catalyst for me to incorporate more improvisation in my work. With each day, I found the lenses of filtering through behavioural, psychodynamic, and other skeletal frameworks becoming undone, until I was experiencing music relationally and in the moment. I came back from the 2 weeks with a renewed understanding of the clinical functions of each element of music, what it means to truly be in the music, the concept of the musical child, and a vivid awareness of the therapist’s role in inviting the client to musical engagements.

Melanie Kwan, MMT, LCAT, MT-BC



Course Attendees at NYU

MUSIC AND MEDICINE WORKSHOP IN TAIWAN

In March 2018, I had the privilege of attending the Music and Medicine Training Workshop in Taiwan, organized by *Listen.Play.Create* in collaboration with TMU Taipei Cancer Center and Taipei Medical University Hospital.

The training was led by esteemed speaker Dr. Joanne Loewy, director of the Louis Armstrong Center for Music and Medicine. The 2-day programme attracted a crowd of over a hundred in attendance, including 5 music therapists from Singapore. Workshops included the Rhythm, Breath and Lullaby Training (Tier 1), Music Therapy and Trauma, and Music Therapy and Pain. The audience were deeply moved and inspired by the presentation of the case studies, current research, and the immersion of music-based experiences.

From observing Dr Loewy’s work in the NICU and general hospital wards, one can see the passion she has for people and her strong belief in the use of music to help. Dr. Loewy’s studies and research has also affirmed, enhanced, and invigorated my practice, and I am thankful to have had the opportunity to be directly inspired by one of the leaders in music therapy.

Kayla Wong, RMT



Music therapists from Singapore at the Music and Medicine Workshop in Taiwan, with Dr. Joanne Loewy.



UP-CLOSE AND PERSONAL

1 What inspired you to become a music therapist?

Alvina: Music has always been a source of support and outlet for my emotions. It provides a safe way for me to express myself when I find it difficult to communicate. Hence I became inspired to equip myself with therapeutic skills to help promote positive changes in people who might benefit.

Calvin: To continue pursuing music, working with different individuals, and using elements of music to support an individual holistically!

Farhana: I was inspired by my late sister who had Down Syndrome, and my piano teacher who planted the seed in me when I was 16 years old. I am also passionate about working with children, and that further inspired me to become a music therapist working with children with special needs!

Hanna: From my experience as a young Korean exchange student in the USA, I have experienced how music can play an important role as emotional support, identity preservation, and as a bridge to social circles. I also witnessed how music can impact students with special needs and emotional difficulties, and these combined experiences inspired me to train as a music therapist.

Ru Yu: I became inspired after attending a music therapy symposium in Australia, where music therapists shared their working experiences with adolescents. I was inspired by the way music could be used to provide a medium for self-expression and to facilitate communication.

2 Tell us about an inspiring moment in your position as a music therapist.

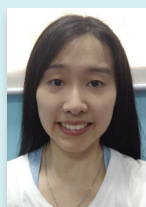
Alvina: I worked with a child who frequently expresses anger and tends to participate in activities in solitude, away from his peers. It was a moment of joy for me when he showed motivation to join his peers to explore and play the drum together.

Calvin: When the parents of a student I have worked with approached my team and I to convey their thanks for the work we have been doing. It was an inspiring moment to witness their joy.

Farhana: A young girl with ASD turned her head, made eye contact, and started singing along when one of her favourite songs was sung. Such moments, when the therapist and individual are able to connect within the music, are truly precious to me.

Hanna: Moments that show potential for change are inspiring to me - such as when a teenage girl who had been suppressing difficult emotions found an outlet in music. These moments give me hope to draw out more potential through music.

Ru Yu: A student who was playing the drums and turned to smile at her mother, who broke into a huge smile and hugged her daughter in return. This moment made me realise how the small things really matter.



Alvina Chin,
NZ RMTh



Calvin Eng,
MT-BC



Farhana Rizaini,
NZ RMTh



Hanna Ma,
KCMT



Ru Yu Wang,
IACAT

3 Tell us about a challenging moment in your position as a music therapist, and what/how you learnt from it.

Alvina: It has been challenging for me to adapt to working with a large team of therapists and teachers in a school setting. I have learnt that maintaining communication is crucial, so that we can better support our clients together.

Calvin: I find it challenging when I have to express myself or advocate for my profession in mandarin. I have been improving my command of the language to prevent potential misunderstandings!

Farhana: As a new graduate, my biggest challenge was learning how to tailor interventions to the diverse spectrum of children's needs. I have learnt much from working in a multidisciplinary team, and am growing in confidence in using different music therapy techniques.

Hanna: I used to feel challenged by seemingly difficult clients who did not want to engage, and by feelings of disappointment towards myself. I eventually learnt that it would be more beneficial to cultivate openness to accept situations as they are, before working to improve them.

Ru Yu: As I used to be a special education teacher, I sometimes find myself wondering if I'm approaching a situation as a teacher or music therapist. Self-reflections and peer discussions have helped me appreciate the benefits of having both perspectives.

4 How would you describe your philosophy of music therapy?

Alvina: I believe that music therapy can be flexible and spontaneous, so as to support the needs of the client(s) at any given moment.

Calvin: My philosophy of music therapy is inclined towards being person-centred.

Farhana: I believe that music therapy is a powerful tool which can affect all aspects of an individual: body, heart, mind and soul. It is a universal language that can bring people from all walks of life together.

Hanna: I believe that through the motivating, supportive and creative processes of music therapy, clients can express emotions, build a relationship with the self, and be empowered to cultivate a better quality of life.

Ru Yu: My philosophy of music therapy stems from a humanistic approach. It is essential to work with what the clients bring into the session, and according to the client's needs. The relationship between the therapist and the client is also fundamental in the therapeutic process.