



## Conference report

# 4<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Conference: Creative Arts Interconnection-Paideia-Therapy

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4<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Conference:  
Creative Arts Interconnection – Paideia – Therapy

Department of Music Studies  
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece  
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**Danai Giogiou** holds a master's degree in music therapy from SRH University Heidelberg, Germany and a BA in Music Sciences from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She has presented at conferences related to special education and psychotherapy. Her work focuses on music therapy in neurological rehabilitation, and her master's thesis was entitled '*Music Therapy Interventions in an Intensive Care Unit: Review and concept of treatment*'. Danai has also worked with children with developmental disabilities, autistic children and adults in Creative Activity Centres for people with disabilities and with adult groups in the psychiatric hospital of Thessaloniki. She has a keen interest in the research field of music therapy within medical disciplines.

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**Rama Cousik** holds a PhD in special education from Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, USA and works as an Assistant Professor at Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne. Rama is interested in arts-based research and enjoys creating research poetry. Rama is trained in South Indian classical music and frequently uses musical activities in her college teaching. Rama has worked with children with developmental disabilities for more than two decades and has made music and movement an integral part of special education.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Greek and international music therapy community celebrated a great event that brought together music therapists, artists and psychotherapists who were experienced in employing a plethora of approaches during the 4<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Conference '*Creative Arts Interconnection – Paideia – Therapy*' held from Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2015 in

Thessaloniki, Greece (<http://caipt.mus.auth.gr>). The conference was organised by the Department of Music Studies at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the research committee of Aristotle University. The focus was on education and therapies through the arts and music in particular. From visual arts, drama, dance and movement to expressive writing and special education, from philosophy to theory and practice of education and therapies, they all

provided delegates with multidimensional perspectives that surround the everyday experience of music therapy.

The scientific committee included 15 scholars and an organising committee of 14 specialists from a number of countries. The conference was chaired by music psychotherapist Dora Psaltopoulou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), and Nikolaos Zafranias (Music Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) was the co-chair. The conference spanned over four days and included 12 keynote presenters, 36 presentations, 22 papers and eight workshops. In addition, there were several musical, theatrical and other artistic forms being explored through meetings and impromptu gatherings.

## PRE- AND POST-CONGRESS SEMINARS

The conference offered the opportunity to accommodate a variety of pre- and post-congress seminars.



Photo 1: Dorit Amir

On the first morning the pre-conference seminar began with a supervision session for music therapists and music therapy trainees by Dorit Amir, Dora Psaltopoulou and Potheini Vaiouli which lasted for almost seven hours.

Participants described the supervision session as “enlightening” and “very useful for the everyday practice of a music therapist”.

For the post-conference session, another eminent music therapist, educator and scientist, Peter Jampel from the USA, was invited. He conducted a nine-hour long seminar aimed at those interested in learning innovative ways of using music as therapy in different settings, with an emphasis on community music therapy. In the words of a music therapy trainee, who participated in the seminar



Photo 2: Peter Jampel

“New ways opened up and personal growth flew out of Peter’s words on that day, for me personally, as well as for the future of the profession in Greece”.

## SPOTLIGHT SESSIONS

The conference had so many inspiring presentations which guided the delegates and created a learning atmosphere where they had the opportunity to learn about new trends in music therapy, whether practice- or research-oriented. The advances in the use of music therapy with premature babies, as well as the IAP (Improvisation Assessment Profiles) music therapy measuring scales and the Nordoff-Robbins rating scales were presentations that created an atmosphere of growth and inspiration. Another such session was the opening keynote speech from Barbara Hesser who talked about *‘Reaching Human Potential through Music’* that included a case study of a young boy who had autism and his music therapist, Alan Turry, who managed through music to break through the isolation that the boy seemed to experience.

A second spotlight session was the presentation of Andrea M. Cevalasco-Trotter from the USA. She spoke about *‘Music Interventions for Premature and Full-term Infants’*.

The third spotlight session was the presentation of Nikolaos Zafranias. Zafranias brought to the forefront a new dimension to the conference: “learning through music”. He made a critical reference to how music impacts the human central nervous system. His talk threw more light onto aspects of research in this area which is still nascent.

Last but not least, Dora Psaltopoulou, as part of the spotlight session on Sunday, presented a music therapy approach ‘FA-fonie’ that she has developed



Photo 3: Barbara Hesser



Photo 4: Andrea M. Cevalasco-Trotter



Photo 5: Nikolaos Zafranias



Photo 5: Dora Psaltopoulou

in recent years. With her presentation, she opened new paths to music teaching and therapy. The audience seemed interested in the FA-fonie (meaning FA-voice) and the approach called COMPASS (i.e. communication, music, processes, awareness, strategies and solutions). According to Psaltopoulou, the Fa-fonie (Fa-voice) is the healthy state of being a person with autism and may be acquired through music therapy when there is meaningful contact with the 'other' person. Each letter has several symbolic meanings: 'A' stands for aphonic and the Greek word "other" (allos); 'F' stands for the Greek word "voice" (fonie), as well as being the symbol for phallus (falos); '-fonie' means voice in Greek. With '-f' the minus phallus is symbolised. FA stands for the Greek word "speak" (fasko) and also is a symbol of the music key F: FA, where FA-f is the symbolic movement from autistic/psychotic structure of the self to the neurotic one.

## PROGRAMME SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

Participants had the opportunity to attend several presentations, keynote speeches, workshops and live performances. With a rich variety of subjects surrounding the topic of music, therapy and education, scholars from various disciplines (such as music, visual arts, dance and drama specialists) had the opportunity to share their diverse points of view. Presenters from the therapy-related disciplines (including psychologists, psychoanalysts, and other therapists) attended the conference too, creating a baseline for the main theme of the conference "education and therapy". Different perspectives were offered from different faculty members (such as scientists of music acoustics and composers) as well as from members of the Department of Music Studies of Aristotle University.

During the conference a number of performances and creative events took place, including an art exhibition by two painters: Yiannis Kaminis and Alexandros Tsamou. This art exhibition, which was called 'Edge Perception', presented different views of life through the use of symbols, reality and fantasy. During the exhibition the two artists presented elements of their paintings linked with therapy and alternative ways of perception. The first conference evening closed with the musical contribution of Maria Alexandru (Associate Professor, Aristotle University) and Emmanuel Giannopoulos (Lecturer, Aristotle University) and their Byzantine choir called

'*Emotion Balance in Byzantine Music*'. On Friday everyone had the opportunity to listen to a young composer, Giorgos Psaltopoulos. On Saturday the stunning music performance by Nikos Zafranias and Yiannis Miralis (Associate Professor of Music Education and Saxophone) served as a refreshing break from the intensive workshops and sessions. The day finished with a spectacular music and theatrical performance by the group Polytropo called '*Damn you migration with all the poisons you have*'.

On Sunday there was an outstanding performance by the students of the special education centre SOTIR in Thessaloniki. The audience was deeply touched by this performance, while the children presented how music therapy had inspired their way to learn, express and communicate their feelings with other people by creating music. This was the ultimate goal of the conference: to show the connection of learning, paideia and therapy. Overall the programme was enriching and fulfilling. The outcome was the new and innovative collaborations that were developed, such as between Alabama University and Aristotle University, and the neonatal intensive care unit at the hospital in Thessaloniki.



Photo 6: Nikos Zafranias and Yiannis Miralis

## WORKSHOPS

Several workshops by experts in the areas of dance and movement therapy, psychoanalytical music and art therapy, as well as drama, movement and music for social awareness and change were offered. The second author had the opportunity to attend a few lecture-demonstrations by professionals from across different types of performance art genres such as music, dance and theatre. For example, the Hellenic Playback Theatre led by Vassilis Ploumis, Eleni Leventi and Natasa Stoimenidou conducted a workshop entitled '*The celebration of the personal story*'. The participants sat in a circle and were asked to volunteer a short personal story or incident. The

facilitators then called more volunteers on stage and guided them to express the range of emotions experienced by the narrator of each story through movement, body language, facial expression and drama – all without words. Participants described the experience as liberating and empowering.



**Photo 7: Instrumental ensemble at the Hellenic Playback Theatre workshop**



**Photo 8: Participants at the Hellenic Playback Theatre workshop**



**Photo 9: A scene from Mousiko Polytropo**

The next performance/workshop that the second author attended was entitled '*Mousiko Polytropo*'; based on a musical drama that started in 1994 by Jannis Kaimakis (Associate Professor, School of Music Studies, Aristotle University). The musical '*Damn you migration with all the poisons you have*' by Mousiko Polytropo was a tragic tale that

lamented the immigrants' plight. Kaimakis and his troupe endeavoured to convey the tragic plight of the immigrants through evocative music, lyrics and movement.

The next workshop that the second author attended was about dance and movement therapy entitled '*Dance therapy class/workshop in structures of mental health*'. The facilitator was Maria Karapanagioti, a choreographer and dance therapy practitioner. The facilitator led everyone gradually from a slow, calm and simple movement phase to a fast, rhythmic and highly energising tempo that had everyone moving and dancing in synchrony. She ensured that the transitions were unhurried and smooth. There were quite a few opportunities within the dance session for exchanging pleasant greetings, sharing laughter and generally having lots of fun.

The last workshop that the second author participated in was a demonstration session about musical improvisation under the expert tutelage of musicologist and composer Gerhard Lock. Lock, a musicologist from Tallinn University (Estonia), led the session by playing a few chords and notes on the piano. Two participants joined him on another piano and a third participant began to play the flute. The instructor and the participants alternatively engaged in creating melodies in a call-and-response fashion, or taking the lead to change the rhythm and scale to begin a new melody. The technique of improvisation demonstrated by the instructor enabled participants to experiment with melodies and rhythms with no formal musical training required.

## REFERENCES

Mousiko Polytropo. School of Music Studies, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Retrieved from <http://www.mus.auth.gr/cms/?q=en/node/131>

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