



Special issue
**Music therapy in Europe:
 Paths of professional development**

in partnership with the
 European Music Therapy Confederation



Editorial

'Thinking Globally, Acting Locally' Music Therapy in Europe

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WELCOMING DIALOGUE

Welcome to this special issue of *Approaches* and, indeed, there are various reasons that make this journal issue 'special'. First of all, this is the first issue dedicated to a rather complex and delicate topic: paths of professional development of music therapy in Europe. As a partnership between *Approaches* and the European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC), this issue is also the first of its kind; it is the first collaboration of *Approaches* with an international professional music therapy body, while at the same time it is the first journal-based publishing initiative of the EMTC. Thanks to the generous funding of the EMTC, this is also the first issue of *Approaches* to become available not only online but also in print format.¹

Considering the complexity of the topic of this journal issue (as well as its unusually large size!), we feel the need to write a more thorough editorial; an editorial which does not simply introduce the contents, but more importantly provides a context for understanding the background and the scope, as well as the limitations and aspirations of this publication.

Our paths as co-editors have crossed in varied ways over the past years in meetings and working groups of the EMTC, as well as in the editorial board of *Approaches*. In both contexts we have shared experiences, ideas and questions – where *professional development* has often emerged as an



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underlying theme; a theme that is of high priority across different contexts, and often generates heated discussions and, at times, disagreement within music therapy communities. The importance of this theme is particularly apparent within the EMTC which currently has 28 country members and represents more than 5600 music therapists across Europe. This international professional group highlights the diverse landscape of music therapy across cultures, bringing to the fore varied histories and paths of professional development, as well as financial and political priorities and needs. In this context, the need for a delicate balance between global and local aspects of music therapy as a professional field emerges.

Meetings, working group discussions, coffee breaks, walks and dinners – all have offered opportunities for exchange, debate, mutual support

¹ The launch of this special issue will be celebrated at the 8th Nordic Music Therapy Conference "Music Therapy across Contexts" in Oslo, Norway, 5-8 August 2015. Print copies can be purchased at the conference or ordered online by emailing: approaches.adm1@gmail.com

and learning, including: celebrating the establishment of a new training programme; worrying about funding and continuation of music therapy services; trying to protect the professional title of 'music therapist'; sharing struggles within professional communities; learning about practices in unlikely places to support vulnerable communities; considering problems with defining salaries; or developing ideas for interdisciplinary projects. Despite the different pathways that music therapy has taken in different countries, these discussions often highlight some common elements and patterns. In an attempt to systematically document and further understand these pathways, as well as their underlying elements and patterns, the idea for this special issue was born, with a basic premise: to allow diverse voices to be heard and welcome dialogue (Frank 2004; Tsiris 2014).

The topic of professionalisation has sparked the interest of many music therapy practitioners, researchers and policy-makers over the years. In particular, professionalisation of music therapy appears to be one of the most often represented themes in journal publications, such as the *British Journal of Music Therapy* (Tsiris, Spiro & Pavlicevic 2014), while there have been various attempts to document international developments, such as Dileo-Maranto's (1993) book *'Music Therapy: International Perspectives'*. More recent publications also reflect on music therapy as a professional field (Wheeler 2015), explore international perspectives on education and training (Goodman 2015), and consider the formation of the identity of the music therapy profession and of the professional music therapist, as well as the development of models of practice and theory at various stages (Aigen 2014). *Hybridity* is introduced by Bunt and Stige (2014) as a metaphor which could illustrate the challenge of diversity, tensions and contradictions in the field of music therapy.

Furthermore, as the profession grows in diverse places of the world, issues of professional mobility have become increasingly relevant in Europe and beyond. As a result, there has been an increased debate about qualification standards. A characteristic example is the work of the World Federation of Music Therapy (WFMT) Commission on Accreditation and Certification. At the 14th World Congress of Music Therapy, the Commission explored the potential for a global equivalency certificate for music therapists and its perceived benefits and drawbacks regarding training, qualifications and clinical practice (Register et al. 2014). Some of the tensions between global and local needs and priorities discussed in this context

have also been relevant to the ongoing work of the EMTC on establishing a European register for music therapists (De Backer, Nöcker Ribaupierre & Sutton 2013; Nöcker-Ribaupierre 2015). Aiming to ensure the recognition and protection of the professional title of 'music therapist', the European Music Therapy Register (EMTR) requires high qualification standards. Although it will take several years, if not decades, before all EMTC member countries are able to offer music therapy training at a Master's level including personal development and supervision, some music therapists have already been registered (EMTR 2015).

Considering the complexities above, an open and reflexive stance seems to be required in order to balance the possibilities, the limitations and the risks that any kind of professional protection, recognition and stability can bring. In addition to the professional rights and potentials (such as appropriate professional regulation, salary bands and research funding), professional recognition can also bring some kind of inertia and inward looking attitude. Therefore, a reflexive stance is required to remain alert to new possibilities that emerge for music therapy in relation to different (and changing) social, political and financial situations. Without such reflexivity², music therapy runs the risk of becoming an isolated profession that does not keep up with socio-political and interdisciplinary developments and changes in the world (Ansdell & Pavlicevic 2008; Barrington 2005, 2008; Procter 2008). The risk lies in becoming a professional practice which is not 'fit for purpose' and does not respond appropriately to the needs of the communities that it serves (Hartley 2008; Wetherick 2009).

Research, theory development and dialogue are essential components for maintaining a reflexive stance while re-visiting music therapy's histories and envisioning its future development in relation to the changing needs and resources of society. Examples of such initiatives come from the USA where a number of studies have been conducted regarding the workforce of music therapists (Groene 2003), the gatekeeping practices across academic programmes and internship sites approved by the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) (Hsiao 2014), the employment

² Reflexivity can be seen as a process of understanding one's perspective in relation to those of others (Finlay & Gough 2003) as well as a critical understanding of the relationship between knowledge and the ways of knowing (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009).

and membership trends in the AMTA (Silverman & Furman 2014), as well as music therapy salaries in comparison to those of related helping professions (Silverman et al. 2013).

In alignment with Bunt and Stige's (2014: 191) argument that "[a] profession that is a community of practitioners can grow in reflexivity and maturity only when its visions and purposes are under debate", the intention of this special issue is to offer ideas and questions for further debating music therapy's visions and purposes. As portrayed in the contents of this issue, the beginnings of these ideas and questions are traced in local, everyday life experiences, such as an internship experience in Poland, at a meeting with the Ministry of Education and Science in Latvia, a supervision session in Sweden, or an exam during the five-year training at the University of Bergen, Norway. Drawing from such local accounts, this issue attempts to think globally. Although no thorough comparative study of the different professional pathways of development is attempted, some overall questions regarding training, education, research and recognition across different countries are raised.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONTENTS

Organised in two distinct parts, this special issue attempts to consider the wide-ranging aspects of music therapy that influence and shape its pathways of professional development (Part I), as well as to provide a systematic documentation of the diverse pathways that have been followed across the different European countries to date (Part II).

More precisely, Part I includes 16 articles covering a range of themes in relation to professional development. While authors draw on their 'local' experiences of music therapy as practised, taught, supervised, researched and regulated within particular cultural contexts, their papers identify themes and raise questions which are highly relevant to other contexts too.

A different set of local accounts is presented in Part II by including 28 short country reports. Each report provides a synthesis of the development of music therapy within each country. In addition to identifying some key steps and milestones, these reports outline questions and challenges that each country is currently facing.

Part I: Articles

Part I opens with an article by Hanne Mette Ridder (Denmark), Adrienne Lerner (France) and

Ferdinando Suvini (Italy) who currently serve as President and Vice-Presidents of the EMTC respectively. Reflecting on the EMTC's role in the development and recognition of the music therapy profession, they offer an understanding of the profession through a set of aspects ranging from clinical intervention to music therapy as a credentialled profession which is formally recommended in national health guidelines. On a similar tone, Monika Nöcker-Riberbaupierre's (Germany) article lays the ground for understanding the EMTC and its function. In addition to details about the EMTC's background and history, this article highlights some recent developments, including emerging possibilities for further dialogue and research, and their political implications.

Next, Claire Ghetti (Norway/USA) writes about the dialogue between theory, practice and research, and the influence of this dialogue in the development of the music therapy field. After defining some key terms, Ghetti explores a number of thought-provoking questions, such as: Does theory serve a foundational role? Do music therapists make use of theory without awareness of such? Can theory ever be de-contextualised? How is theory generated? Does practice ever develop from theory?

Considering the role of training in shaping the future development of music therapy on national and international levels, the three following articles explore a number of questions pertaining to academic training. Thomas Wosch (Germany), in particular, considers the various arguments against and for the academic training of music therapists. Through the thesis and antithesis of such arguments, he attempts a synthesis for needs and visions of academic music therapy training. Jane Edwards (Ireland/Australia) writes about the profession of music therapy in Europe drawing on her experience as an academic tutor. Through an exploration of concepts underpinning professional identity, training and professional practice, Edwards presents some potential tensions between recognition and regulation of healthcare professions, while reflecting on the need for balancing training needs between techniques and skills, systemic national and regional policy, and institutional knowledge. Brynjulf Stige (Norway) reflects on how paths of development are shaped by conditions that are linked not only to the local context, but also to broader contexts. Using the five-year music therapy training programme at the University of Bergen as a case example, Stige considers two kinds of broader contexts: the conditions created by the political history of

Norway, and the shared European conditions created by the Bologna process on standards in higher education.

After the completion of their academic training, music therapists sustain and build upon their initial qualification through continuing professional development (CPD) and supervision. In many European countries, both CPD and supervision are a prerequisite for practising music therapists, while national associations and similar governing bodies set the respective standards and guidelines. Using the CPD system in the UK as an example, and through a detailed description of the requirements of the profession's regulator (the Health and Care Professions Council), Angela Harrison (UK) explores the role of CPD in sustaining and enriching the professional lives of music therapists. On the other hand, Rut Wallius (Sweden) and Inge Nygaard Pedersen (Denmark) write about supervision. Based on an interview with Ingrid Hammarlund and Sören Oscarsson – two experienced Swedish supervisors – Wallius writes about supervision as part of a learning process. She presents the interviewees' experiences and reflections regarding different aspects of supervision in music therapy, including the role of the supervisor, the role of music, and the development of a professional identity. Pedersen's article offers another view on supervision and, more specifically, on supervisor training programmes in the field of music therapy in Europe. Drawing on the experience of an integrated supervisor training programme (offered in Aalborg, Denmark, 2009-2010), some general issues regarding professional supervision and the application of artistic media in the supervisory process emerge.

In the next article, Lars Ole Bonde (Denmark) writes about Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) as a distinct model of receptive music therapy. After outlining the international professional development of GIM as well as some core issues related to its organisation in Europe and to standards of training and clinical practice, Bonde explores questions related to the integration and registration of GIM within the wider European music therapy community.

While the topic of music therapy's professional recognition underpins the whole special issue, the following articles introduce some particular perspectives on the topic. Melanie Voigt (Germany) explores two forms of professional/legal recognition: recognition under an 'umbrella' together with other related therapy forms, and recognition as an autonomous form of therapy. This exploration leads to a discussion regarding music

therapy's recognition at national and European levels; this discussion is closely related to the next article authored by Ranka Radulovic (Serbia). Informed by a comparative analysis of professional music therapy associations, as well as the circumstances that affect the recognition and regulation of music therapy, Radulovic explores the role of the professional association in the recognition process. Krzysztof Stachyra's (Poland) article proposes a model of training and certification for countries where music therapy is in the early stages of its development. Drawing from his experience within the Polish music therapy community, Stachyra describes some steps that can provide a basis for the development of music therapy while allowing enough flexibility to consider specific resources, traditions, needs and cultures.

Closing the first part of this special issue, Alison Barrington (UK), Elena Fitzthum (Austria) and Mirdza Paipare (Latvia) write about the development of music therapy in their countries respectively. Being the only European countries to date where music therapy has achieved professional/legal recognition at a state level (UK in 1999; Austria in 2009; Latvia in 2010), these three articles provide an insight into the varied pathways followed in each case. Authors outline some of the background (and often long) procedures and negotiations involved in the process towards professional recognition, including the crucial collaborations between universities, national associations and ministries. The themes emerging from these articles shift the focus gradually from the global to the local, and lead to the second part of this issue which includes reports from each European country.

Part II: Country reports

The 28 country reports included in this part of the special issue provide a succinct documentation of music therapy in each EMTC member country. Using the notion of *paths of development* – borrowed by Bunt and Stige (2014: 10) – these reports outline the diverse paths of professional development of music therapy in each country, including each country's achievements (and failures) regarding music therapy's professional recognition as well as suggestions for future development.

In line with the collaboration between *Approaches* and the EMTC, the authors of these reports are primarily individuals who currently serve as representatives of the respective EMTC member countries, while some reports are co-authored by a

team of music therapists.

Preparing these country reports was at times a challenging task. The brevity of these reports forced authors to be selective about what information to include. Such choices became more difficult where relationships and communication channels within a country's professional community were limited or conflicting. Although authors were urged to consult their respective country associations to ensure that their report offers up-to-date and inclusive information, their reports are not meant to be an exhaustive and objective documentation of the history and state of music therapy in each country. Authors were invited to be transparent about their own starting points and keep a constructive and dialectical stance. From this viewpoint, country reports are seen as a platform for furthering dialogue, and not as providing definitive answers.

GLOBAL LOCALS: LIVING HISTORIES, CREATING PATHWAYS

As portrayed above, this special issue is situated between a set of creative tensions. These tensions include the interplay and negotiation between local and global considerations and initiatives, as well as the past and living aspects of histories.

In engaging with the contents of this issue, we invite readers to keep a reflective and critical stance as 'locals' with awareness of global issues. The phrase "thinking globally, acting locally" is highly relevant here. Used within an environmental context, this phrase urges people, corporations, government officials, educational systems and local communities to consider the health of the entire planet while taking action in their own communities and cities; thus achieving a balance between global considerations and local practices. As Rootes (1999: 290) suggests, "the success of local campaigns depends increasingly on the actions of non-local actors, and solutions even to local environmental problems demand transnational organisation".

From this perspective, *thinking globally, acting locally* is a core message that we wish to communicate through this issue. We try to stay close to local experiences and stories of music therapists and their communities. At the same time, we attempt to explore a number of overarching themes and questions pertaining to training, supervision, regulation and theory that resonate with various music therapy communities globally and seem to shape the ways that music therapy is defined.

Acknowledging the political aspects of writing and publishing (Clark & Ivanič 1997) however, while preparing this special issue we came across a number of questions and dilemmas, especially when it came to documenting the local histories of music therapy in different countries. Is history one or many and what's the 'right' version of the history?

Human experience shows that history does not belong only to the past. History is lived and thus constantly being (re)constructed through our individual and collective memories, narratives, values, interpretations and actions (Stephenson 2005). Facts and events of the past, of course, cannot be changed. Our understanding, however, and the meaning we attribute to such facts or events do change. This *living* aspect of history has become apparent in music therapy literature over the years, where diverse (even contradictory) reports about the development and status of music therapy within particular contexts can be identified in different books and at different times in history. Such contradictions are often the result of different value systems and points of reference (such as different value systems regarding qualification and training criteria), as well as the result of changing perceptions and understandings over time.

Certain information that might be significant at a particular point in history may seem secondary, insignificant or even 'incorrect' after years. It is not a surprise then if some information provided in this issue appears to be at odds with those provided in other publications. A comparative study of similar publications such as the book '*Music Therapy: International Perspectives*' (Dileo-Maranto 1993), as well as the country reports available on *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* (www.voices.no), those on the EMTC website (www.emtc-eu.com) and in the compendium '*Music as a Global Resource: Solutions for Social and Economic Issues*' (Hesser & Heinemann 2011), would certainly reveal some inconsistencies.

Any attempt to document professional development, thus, is not a matter of simply collecting facts; it is an interpretative process. The result of such a process is not the 'pure' documentation of history, but the interweaving of experiences, personal and collective stories passed from one generation to the other, as well as political considerations and contradictions. In this act of documenting paths of professional development (which can also be seen as an act of *creating* such paths in itself), we find it important to allow multiple voices to be heard. We welcome dialogues where diversity is acknowledged and respected, and open

channels of communication are fostered while maintaining a focus on enhancing the wellbeing of the communities that we serve as music therapists.

The considerations above form the backdrop and sub-text of this special issue, and in our attempt to welcome otherness, we treat this issue as a starting point with the hope to instigate further contributions in the form of articles and responses, conference presentations, and so on. The forthcoming paper by Mercadal-Brotons, Sabbatella and Del Moral Marcos (2015) is an excellent example of the dialogue emerging from this special issue, where a more detailed account of the professional development of music therapy in Spain is provided. We hope similar contributions offering complementary information, expressing different viewpoints or exploring less documented topics will be submitted to *Approaches*.

In closing this editorial, we express our gratitude to everyone who contributed to this edition. In addition to all the authors, a warm thanks is given to the editorial board members of this special issue: Anthi Agrotou, Yiota Andreopoulou, Jos De Backer, Lars Ole Bonde, Leslie Bunt, Catherine Carr, Xanthoula Dakovanou, Cochavit Elefant, Jaakko Erkkilä, Markéta Gerlichová, Melissa Mercadal-Brotons, Helen Odell-Miller, Evangelia Papanikolaou, James Robertson, Krzysztof Stachyra, Thomas Stegeman and Thomas Wosch. We also thank the advisory board members who also currently serve as the EMTC board members: Adrienne Lerner, Alice Pehk, Ranka Radulowic and Ferdinando Suvini.

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