



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

in partnership with the
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DENMARK

Country report on professional recognition of music therapy

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HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The music therapy profession in Denmark has existed for more than five decades. In the early 1960s music therapy pioneers such as Claus Bang, Synnøve Friis and Grethe Lund began using music therapy in a few institutions, mostly in educational settings, and shorter courses in music therapy were held in Denmark occasionally. The focus of music therapy at the time was mainly on special education, with music providing a basic support for learning and development.

Danish music therapy has always been very internationally-oriented and influenced by pioneers and developments in other countries. During the 1970s, for instance, shorter introduction courses by different European music therapy pioneers were held in Denmark, and as a result, the interest in having a university-based Danish music therapy programme increased. This led to the establishing of a four-year music therapy training course at Aalborg University Centre (now Aalborg University – AAU) in 1982, which in 1995 was extended to a five-year Master's programme. The Danish programme is integrative as its founder, Inge Nygaard Pedersen, had been studying at the international Mentor Programme in Herdecke, Germany, that sought to bring different music therapy traditions in Europe closer together.

The Danish programme includes theoretical knowledge about psychology, music psychology, theory of science and music therapy theory, practical musical and improvisational skills, and therapeutic modules focusing on self-experiential learning processes. The Aalborg syllabus is currently duplicated by the training

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programme in Vitoria, Spain, whose students can then enrol for the MA thesis at Aalborg University. In 1993 Inge Pedersen, Lars Ole Bonde and Tony Wigram established a doctoral programme in music therapy at AAU, and in the spring of 2015 PhD student number 40 will hopefully be receiving the PhD degree in music therapy.

In 2012 Aalborg University furthermore established a two year part-time introductory course in Copenhagen for students with a relevant BA degree within healthcare or music. The course focuses on the application of music in practice and successful completion enables students to take the entrance test for the two year Master's programme in Aalborg.

Denmark had previously two professional organisations for music therapists, which merged in 2007 and became the Danish Association of Music Therapists (DMTF). DMTF has currently 135 members, a member register, ethical guidelines, a national music therapy journal and provides access to, for example, network groups, collegial support and professional supervision.

RECOGNITION AND APPROVAL

Denmark has two music therapy training courses: the full-time music therapy Master's programme and the part-time music therapy training course. Both are led by Aalborg University and approved by the Danish Accreditation Institution.

The title 'Music Therapist' is not protected by law and there is no state approval or registration yet. So far the recognition process has resulted in the Social Services recommending music therapy for people with dementia and the creation of new jobs within this field, as well as research collaboration between music therapists, doctors and the Faculty of Health Science at Aalborg University in a study regarding schizophrenia.

Often qualified music therapists have to be creative in finding new ways to create jobs and to extend people's knowledge of music therapy in order to find jobs, and there is still a lot of work to do in informing the general public and the relevant authorities about music therapy.

IMPORTANT STEPS IN THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

Currently DMTF, the music therapy Master's programme and the Faculty of Humanities at Aalborg University are working towards professional recognition and approval by the government.

In 2011 the Faculty of Humanities supported a project aimed at examining the possibilities for professional recognition. This indicated the need for a larger project including the approval of other professional disciplines as well as an overview of judicial, political and financial aspects of the recognition process (Jacobsen & Hannibal 2012). In connection with the music therapy programme at Aalborg University's 30-year anniversary, the university made a booklet in which professionals from other disciplines gave their views on music therapy as a

profession and its relevance to the Danish healthcare system. This booklet can be used to communicate the relevance of music therapy to politicians and employers.

In 2012-2013 a larger project was made with support from the Faculty of Humanities, to determine the steps toward recognition of music therapists, and towards music therapy becoming a government-supported treatment. The project resulted in a report on judicial, political and financial aspects of authorisation, with fact sheets about music therapy regarding three specific client groups (dementia, autism and schizophrenia), and a plan for the following three steps in the recognition process:

1. Music therapy has to be part of the national guidelines on the treatment of specific client groups, and local authorities have to be urged to use music therapy by the university as well as larger NGOs.
2. Aalborg University and DMTF have to request an authorisation plan from the Danish Health Committee, and later on from the Minister of Health, as an amendment is needed for music therapists to be recognised.
3. Establishment of a subsidy scheme for private music therapist practitioners.

SELECTED LINKS

- Aalborg University, music therapy education: www.musikterapi.aau.dk
- Aalborg University, PhD theses: www.mt-phd.aau.dk/phd-theses/
- Aalborg University, publications from the music therapy team: <http://vbn.aau.dk/da/organisations/musikterapi%28fbf6a341-ca3a-4afb-88d8-1e0024bd7378%29/publications.html>
- Centre for documentation and research in music therapy: www.cedomus.aau.dk
- Danish Association of Music Therapists (DMTF): www.musikterapi.org
- The Danish Journal of Music Therapy (Tidsskriftet Dansk Musikterapi): www.musikterapi.org/?L%26aelig%3Bs_om_musikterapi:Tidsskriftet_Dansk_Musikterapi
- EMTC country information: <http://emtc-eu.com/country-reports/denmark/>

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Recent publications from Denmark

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Høj Laursen, L., & Blum Bertelsen, M. (2011). *Musik i øjeblikket – en håndbog om musik i ældreplejen* [Music in the moment – A manual on music in elderly care]. Frederiksberg C: Unitas Forlag.

Jacobsen, S. L., & Hannibal, N. (Eds.) (2012). 30 år med Musikterapi. Oplevelser, erfaringer, visioner: Jubilæumsskrift [30 years of music therapy: Experiences, lessons, visions. Anniversary magazine]. *Dansk Musikterapi, Sænummer*, 1-48.

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Wigram, T., Pedersen, I. N., & Bonde, L. O (2002). *A Comprehensive Guide to Music Therapy*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Publications that represent past and current approaches and theories from Denmark

Ridder, H. M. O., (2005) *Musik og demens – musikaktiviteter og musikterapi med demensramte* (Music and dementia – musical activities and music therapy with people with Dementia). Aarhus: Forlaget Klim.