



Special issue

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

in partnership with the
European Music Therapy Confederation



NORWAY

Country report on professional recognition of music therapy

Ingeborg Nebelung¹ & Viggo Krüger²

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Music therapy in Norway originated in the late 1950s, mainly in the field of special education (Trondalen, Rolvsjord & Stige 2010). The music therapy pioneers Paul Nordoff and Clive Robbins were influential in the forming of Norwegian music therapy, and during the late 1960s and 1970s held workshops and courses in several Norwegian cities. Even today, with music therapy in several new fields of practice, our music therapy tradition and education is still inspired by the principles underpinning Creative Music Therapy.

The Norwegian tradition of music therapy is deeply rooted in humanistic values informed by social perspectives (Ruud 2010). In 1978, the first Norwegian training programme in music therapy was established in Oslo. This programme is now located in the Norwegian Academy of Music. Another training programme – independent yet cooperative – was then established in 1988 in Sandane, a small town in Western Norway, and this particular Master's coursework programme is now located in the Grieg Academy at the University of Bergen. Today there are two equivalent training programmes in Norway at Master's level and both offer PhD programmes. The training programmes in Norway emphasise research documentation and theoretical reflection, combined with values that focus upon client participation, empowerment and an orientation towards strengths and resources (Trondalen, Rolvsjord & Stige 2010). In 2014, there were about 400 trained music therapists in Norway, with approximately 20 new candidates being trained every year.

Music therapy in Norway is still linked to the approach developed by Nordoff and Robbins, which emphasises clinical improvisation, songs, musical activities, music technologies and musical performances (Nordoff &

Robbins 1977). Over the years a wider range of approaches have been adapted in relation to various areas of practice. Community Music Therapy is a strong tradition in Norway and works as an integrated dimension of most areas of practice (Stige et al. 2010). The kinds of novel practices associated with Community Music Therapy are the use of rock band approaches in settings such as prisons, child welfare and mental health (Hodne 2008).

Music therapy practices have been developed and documented in a range of fields, including mental health (Gold et al. 2013; Rolvsjord 2010; Solli 2008), music and the elderly (Kvamme 2013), music therapy and criminology (Tuastad & O'Grady 2012), child welfare (Krüger 2012) and in relation to young people on the autistic spectrum (Mössler et al. 2013). There has also been an increased practice within hospitals (Aasgaard 2002). Furthermore, Norwegian music therapists have been involved in various music and health projects in refugee camps (Storsve, Westby & Ruud 2010).

Both university programmes have established research centres and produce diverse research outputs. At the University of Bergen, the researchers at the Grieg Academy Music Therapy Research Centre (GAMUT) conduct a variety of research projects and network building, e.g. within mental health, the rehabilitation of offenders, care for the elderly, neuro-rehabilitation and child welfare. Many of these projects are inspired by, and grounded in, the theoretical framework of resource-oriented music therapy. The researchers at the Centre for Music and Health at the Norwegian Academy of Music carry out, for example, exploratory studies within mental health care, research on musicians and health, and music as a resource in everyday life.

Two renowned international peer-reviewed music therapy journals are published in Norway: the *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, and *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy*. Both journals are hosted by GAMUT in Bergen. The Norwegian Music Therapy Association (NMTA) also has its own peer-reviewed journal, called *Musikkterapi*. In addition to these three journals, there is a fourth venue of music therapy publication in Norway, namely the peer-reviewed series from the Centre for Music and Health in Oslo.

RECOGNITION AND APPROVAL

In their national guidelines for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of psychotic disorders, the Directorate of Health is recommending the use of music therapy on the highest level (Nasjonal faglig retningslinje for utredning, behandling og oppfølging av personer med psykoselidelser 2013). Due to new guidelines from the Norwegian Directorate of Health, there is a growing need for more music therapists, music therapy training, music therapy research as well as practice development.

¹ Sandefjord school of visual and performing arts.

Email: ingneb74@gmail.com

² The Grieg Academy Music Therapy Research Centre (GAMUT).

Email: viggo.kruger@rieg.uib.no

IMPORTANT STEPS IN THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The Norwegian Music Therapy Association (NMTA) was established in the 1970s and has been a member of the Council for Music Organisations in Norway since 1981. This confers important rights to the organisation regarding financial support from the government. The primary goal of this association is to promote the understanding of music therapy and the establishment of music therapy practice in Norway. Due to the strong tradition of music therapy in special education in this country, the professional title of 'music therapist' was recognised in state-funded resource centres for special education as early as 1992. Recently, the desire for music therapy within the health services has increased rapidly. In 2010 an application was sent to the Norwegian Directorate of Health requesting state registration (legitimation) of music therapists in the health services, but this request was denied. The NMTA will continue to work towards full legitimation for music therapists in the future.

SELECTED LINKS

- ❑ EMTC country information:
<http://emtc-eu.com/country-reports/norway/>
- ❑ Norwegian Music Therapy Association (NMTA):
www.musikkterapi.no/#!english/czwc

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