



Editorial

Music, Health and Wellbeing: The Need for Polyphonic Dialogues

Giorgos Tsiris

Reflecting *Approaches'* interdisciplinary and intercultural vision, the pages of this new journal issue contain articles from different disciplinary, professional and cultural spaces. At the heart of this diverse grid of professional practices and disciplinary perspectives however, lies a common denominator: music's power to bring change in the person's health and wellbeing (Bonde 2011; MacDonald, Kreutz, & Mitchell 2012). The polyprismatic understanding of this common denominator forms the basis for fruitful dialogue and development of different practices and fields which are not independent entities but mutually-defined parts of a constantly evolving system. Contributing toward understanding this common denominator, the articles of this issue document multidimensional facets of music and its impact on health and wellbeing. This documentation happens on a research, practice and theory level, while it concerns the uses of music within a range of contexts, including therapeutic, educational and artistic contexts, as well as in the context of everyday life.

Setting the tone for this issue, the interview with Alice-Ann Darrow highlights the need for interdisciplinary dialogue and cooperation. Drawing on her extensive experience in the fields of special music education and music therapy, both in the USA and internationally, Darrow describes the tangible possibilities that interdisciplinarity can offer to the lives of people with whom different professionals work. In this context a number of themes emerge such as inclusion and 'musical rights'.

Then, the first two articles (by Carol Chambers and David Akombo) present research findings from the field of music therapy and community music respectively. Carol Chambers explores the use of humanised images in song in the context of music therapy. Based on her doctoral research, the author presents a case study which examines the song

choices of a woman during music therapy sessions in a medium-secure forensic unit in the United Kingdom. Chambers shows how humanised figures, as third person characters, may act as a form of representation and experimentation that facilitate the therapeutic process. On the other hand, David Akombo studies the effects of participation in African drumming circles. The results of this study, conducted with adolescents in the USA, show how a form of community music, such as drumming circles, can help to reduce anxiety and improve academic performance.

The next two articles offer perspectives from practice, describing the application and implementation of different music programmes. More specifically, Julie Wylie and Susan Foster-Cohen draw from their work with children with special needs and their families in the Champion Centre in New Zealand. The authors present four case studies through which they illustrate the importance of musical play in early intervention. Then, Tom Northey describes the work of Jessie's Fund, a British charity that supports children with complex needs through music therapy and other creative music services. The author focuses on a six-month project which was conducted by Jessie's Fund in collaboration with a special school in the United Kingdom. In addition to presenting this project and its outcomes, the author outlines a number of factors that can contribute to the realisation of similar future projects.

Moving from research and practice to theory, Dylan van der Schyff writes about the therapeutic aspects of musical experience in everyday life. Through a critical literature review and by synthesising ideas from fields such as music psychology and philosophy of music, the author proposes an embodied conceptualisation of the emotional response to music and musical meaning, and the importance of this conceptualisation in both clinical and everyday contexts.

Moreover, this issue includes Robert Fulford's report from the 40th anniversary conference of the Society for Education, Music and Psychology Research (SEMPRE, 14-15 September 2012), as well as three book reviews by Stuart Wood, Varvara Pasiali and Mariko Hara respectively. Lastly, Janet Graham, Claire Molyneux and Sarah Hoskyns write a short tribute to Robin Howat: a pioneer music therapist colleague who died in October 2012.

Closing this editorial note, I warmly welcome the new editorial board members of *Approaches*: Deborah Blair (USA), Kevin Kirkdale (Canada), Kimberly McCord (USA), Daphne Rickson (New Zealand) and James Robertson (United Kingdom). The diverse areas of expertise of each contribute to the further development of the journal's vision for polyphonic dialogues within the wider field of music, health and wellbeing.

References

- Bonde, L. O. (2011). Health musicing - Music therapy or music and health? A model, empirical examples and personal reflections. *Music and Arts in Action*, 3(2), 120-140. Retrieved on 9 June 2013, from: <http://www.musicandartsinaction.net/index.php/maia/article/view/healthmusicingmodel>
- MacDonald, R., Kreutz, G., & Mitchell, L. (Eds.). (2012). *Music, Health, and Wellbeing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Suggested citation:

- Tsiris, G. (2013). Music, health and wellbeing: The need for polyphonic dialogues. *Approaches: Music Therapy & Special Music Education*, 5(1), 5-6. Retrieved from <http://approaches.primarymusic.gr>