



Conference Report

30th ISME World Conference

Pre-Conference Commission Seminar on Music in Special Education, Music Therapy and Music Medicine

Markku Kaikkonen

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12-14 July 2012

International Society for Music Education (ISME) and Greek Society for Music Education (GSME), University of Macedonia, Department of Educational and Social Policy Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece



Markku Kaikkonen works as a director in the Special Music Centre, Resonaari. He received his MM (music educator and therapist) at Sibelius Academy (Helsinki, Finland) and accomplished Advanced Studies in Dance and Music Pedagogy at University Mozarteums' Orff Institute (Salzburg, Austria). He is a co-author and/or co-editor of several music education and special music education books and articles in Finland and abroad. Markku is also a guest lecturer in continuing education programs and conferences internationally. He is a board member of the Finnish Society for Music Education (FiSME ry) and Drum Circle (Paukepiiri ry), Finland.

Email: markku.kaikkonen@resonaari.fi

Introducing ISME and its Commission on Music in Special Education, Music Therapy and Music Medicine

The International Society for Music Education (ISME) is an international organisation for music educators in a vast variety of the music education field. ISME organises the acclaimed World Conference every second year. The 30th ISME World Conference took place in Thessaloniki, Greece between 15th and 20th July 2012.

ISME has seven Commissions which align different areas of music education. Each of the Commissions organises its own pre-conference seminar before the World Conference.

The Music in Special Education, Music Therapy and Music Medicine Commission (www.isme.org/special) works as a holding organisation for ISME members who are special music educators, music therapists and music and health practitioners. The purpose of the Commission is to work as an advocacy group and promote awareness of music's potential in special education, therapy and medicine. The Commission's pre-conference seminars enable delegates to meet associates from different countries across the world.

Equally, the Commission supports various 'tracks' including the development of research and practice-based work within the fields of special

music education, music therapy and music medicine. The practice-based and clinical tracks of the Commission provide materials, demonstrations and workshops on therapeutic and educational practices applicable to music education, special music education and music therapy. On the other hand, the research track shares insights and results with the above interest areas. At its best, the Commission integrates knowledge between the different tracks. In addition to the Commission delegates and the people that they serve through their work (e.g., people with special educational or other needs), the entire field of music education derives considerable benefit from the Commission's work.

The Music in Special Education, Music Therapy and Music Medicine Commission actively promotes the rights of diverse learners and their possibilities to participate in music learning and other musical activities. The Commission aims at knowledge creation: as the learning potential and opportunities of individual learners are esteemed regardless of their special needs, the educational equality, social participation and well-being, in general, increases. To meet this objective, the network characteristics of the Commission are of high significance.

The Commission pre-conference seminar in Greece 2012

The Music in Special Education, Music Therapy and Music Medicine Commission held its pre-conference seminar at the University of Macedonia campus (Thessaloniki, Greece) between 12th and 14th July 2012. This particular ISME Commission was established in order to contribute to the development of music in special education, music therapy and music medicine. The goal of the Commission meetings is to provide a forum for music educators, therapists and other music and health practitioners from around the world to collaborate and to exchange teaching and therapeutic techniques.

The Commission chair, Dr Alice-Ann Darrow (Florida State University, USA), organised the programme for the 2012 seminar. The local host of the seminar was Dr Lefkothea Kartasidou, Assistant Professor of Special Education (University of Macedonia, Greece). The seminar was supported by the Greek Society for Music Education (GSME) and the Hellenic Research Association of Individuals with Visual Impairments.

The focus of the seminar was on sharing research, various teaching and therapeutic approaches and strategies across cultures. In addition, new ideas, teaching strategies and research projects in the fields of special music

education, music therapy and music medicine were introduced. The seminar focused on the following topics:

- perception research in special education
- music and people with autism spectrum disorders
- current trends in music and special education and music therapy
- music therapy for older adults
- music medicine and paediatrics
- community music therapy
- clients and students with special needs
- music therapy for clients with hearing loss

There were thirty-three presentations during the three-day seminar¹. The delegates represented fourteen different countries across the world (see Table 1). The international cooperation created an intriguing atmosphere which encouraged the exploration of diverse culture-related professional approaches and research on music in special education, music therapy and music medicine. In general, the seminar enhanced the credibility of the objectives not only of the Commission, but also of ISME as a whole.

Several interesting, even breakthrough approaches and proposals were presented. It was obvious that the most important benefit for those in attendance was the interactions between the leading practitioners (i.e. music teachers and therapists) and the high-level researchers who shared similar interests. The knowledge gained and the experiences shared were inspiring for both groups of professionals. In addition, it is noteworthy that there is a growing interest on the technology-supported strategies. The technology-based frameworks and services were evaluated as real possibilities for enhancing learning and well-being.

The seminar programme was rich with many and diverse presentations, but still, there was plenty of time for discussion and no sense of hurry. In addition to the presentations, the informal peer-to-peer sharing (i.e. discussions without any programmed agenda) was extremely significant. Meeting colleagues, striking up new acquaintances and renewing former affiliations was productive and of utmost necessity. The informal lunches and dinners in the Ladadika Quarter of Thessaloniki and the celebratory Commission dinner at Hamadrikas allowed much time for conversation.

¹ The abstracts of all the Commission presentations are re-published in *Approaches: Music Therapy & Special Music Education*, volume 4, issue 2.

Mary Adamek , The University of Iowa, USA	Bo Nilsson , Kristianstad University, SWEDEN
Melita Belgrave , University of Missouri-Kansas City, USA	Varvara Pasiali , Queens University, USA, CoO, CYPRUS
Hsiao-Shien (Jessie) Chen , National Taichung University, TAIWAN, ROC	Dora Psaltopoulou , Aristotle University, GREECE.
Cynthia Colwell , The University of Kansas, USA, CoO, CANADA	Daphne Rickson , New Zealand School of Music, NEW ZEALAND
Alice-Ann Darrow , Florida State University, USA	Patricia Sabbatella , University of Cadiz, SPAIN, CoO, ARGENTINA
Shirley Day-Salmon , Mozarteum University, AUSTRIA, CoO, UK	Maritza Sadowsky , Arlington Public Schools, USA, CoO, BRAZIL
Yoshiko Fukuda , Japanese Research Union of Music Therapy, JAPAN	Lyn Schraer-Joiner , Kean University, USA
Amy Furman , Minneapolis Public Schools, USA	Giorgos Tsiris , Nordoff Robbins / City University London, UK, CoO, GREECE
Alan Gertner , Kean University, USA	Potheini Vaiouli , Indiana University, USA, CoO, GREECE
Lori Gooding , University of Kentucky, USA	Kimberly VanWeelden , Florida State University, USA
Michelle Hairston , East Carolina University, USA	Victoria Vega , Loyola University, USA
Julie Heath , Florida State University, USA	Wei-Chun Wang , National Taipei University of Technology, TAIWAN, ROC
Linda High , East Carolina University, USA	Jennifer Whipple , Charleston Southern University, USA
Markku Kaikkonen , Special Music Centre Resonaari, FINLAND	Yen-Hsuan Yang , Florida State University, USA, CoO, TAIWAN, ROC
Angela Lee , Transworld University, TAIWAN, ROC	Maria Yennari , Cyprus Ministry of Education & Culture and Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, CYPRUS
Liza Lee , Chaoyang University of Technology, TAIWAN, ROC	Gina Yi , Michigan State University, USA, CoO, SOUTH KOREA
Yim Ting (Jenny) Leung , Hong Kong Institute of Education, HONG KONG, ROC	
Kimberly McCord , Illinois State University, USA	

Table 1: List of presenters

Future prospects

I believe music educators and music therapists agree with H.E. Josephine Ojiambo (Deputy Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations) who describes the meanings and effects of music making as follows:

“Music as a practical tool for dialogue amongst peoples must be used to enhance and promote solutions for social and economic challenges. The power of music is immeasurable and filled with endless possibilities. Therefore we, as members of the global society, must foster the acknowledgement of the importance of music as a natural contributor to health and social/economic issues, as well as peace on earth” (Ojiambo 2011: IV).

It is vital that we remain aware and up-to-date with the developments and achievements across the globe. In the future, the main objective and topic of the Commission is to ensure that the learning of music and related musical activities are accessible to everyone. Learning, making and experiencing music is a basic human right. In general, the positive tone of the 2012 pre-conference seminar offered an encouraging outlook towards the future development of music in special education, music therapy and music medicine. Of course, there are diverse challenges in all countries, but similarly,

there is growing evidence that new approaches and development work will advance our common goals.

The next Music in Special Education, Music Therapy and Music Medicine Commission pre-conference seminar will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2014. The Commissioners for this next seminar are:

Lyn Schraer-Joiner (chair), USA
Melita Belgrave, USA
Hsiao-Shien (Jessie) Chen, Taiwan
Helen J Farrell, Australia
Markku Kaikkonen, Finland
Bo Nilsson, Sweden

More information about the seminar and the call for papers will be announced approximately one year before the conference. However, commissioners are already encouraged to invite established researchers and clinicians from their respective countries to contribute to the seminar.

People who are interested in receiving the Commission’s Newsletter and/or participating in the next seminar can email Lyn Schraer-Joiner (chair): lschraer@kean.edu

References

Ojiambo, J. (2011). Introductory Statement. In B. Hesser & H.N. Heinemann (Eds.), *Music as a*

Global Resource: Solutions for Social and Economic Issues. (Compendium - 3rd Edition).
New York: United Nations Headquarters.

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