



Editorial

What Answers Do We Seek?

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“Some questions have no answers, but there are some answers which we never seek.”

It was spring of 2008 when at a presentation in London, Clive Robbins said the words above. Clive – co-founder of *Creative Music Therapy* together with Paul Nordoff – was referring to the value of (detailed and systematic) observation and documentation as a means of understanding important aspects of human experience in music therapy; aspects that we often overlook or ‘forget’ to seek. Clive’s words, one would say, reflect a broader philosophical and methodological approach. This approach – which is also described as *gentle empiricism* by Ansdell and Pavlicevic (2010) – I suggest is one of the most significant dimensions of Clive’s work.

Clive died on 7th December 2011. Yet these words have been imprinted in my mind and guide my thinking and action, not only as a practitioner and researcher, but also generally as a human being. Similarly, Clive’s stories, particularly those from his trips with Paul in Greece during the sixties and seventies, have remained within me as pleasant memories. Among these, I remember stories about their summer holidays in Pefkakia opposite to the city of Volos, as well as stories about their trip to villages of Epirus. On that trip they heard for the first time the sound of ‘koudounia’ (bells) from the sheep pasturing on the mountains. At the first opportunity they bought such koudounia from the nearby mountainous village, and a few months later they began to use them as musical instruments in sessions with people with disabilities in European countries and in the USA. Some of these koudounia are still used today at the Nordoff Robbins London Centre!

Simple stories like the ones above, but most importantly Clive’s generosity, his deep faith in the healing power of music and his work are the living heritage he bequeathed to the international music

therapy community. In this journal issue, music therapists from various countries share memories and photographs in a special tribute to Clive’s life and work across different parts of the world.

Of course, Clive’s exhortation to re-consider the questions we seek is a theme that penetrates multiple aspects of music therapy, let alone research. The importance of seeking ‘appropriate’ research questions becomes apparent in the articles of this issue. The article of Maria-Christina Papadopoulou presents a study on the use of therapeutic boundaries by Greek music therapists posing questions regarding the role of cultural and educational factors. On the other hand, the article of Katerina Kargiou focuses on the study of music as a means of addressing self-injurious behaviour of people with autism and explores the effectiveness of particular musical techniques and instruments. Participants in this study were music therapists from the United Kingdom and Greece.

The conduction and publication of such research studies is of great value, not only for the continued development of disciplinary knowledge, but also for the growth of a spirit of healthy inquiry of questions for which, yes, we can find some questions. The latter becomes even more important in times like the one in which we currently live, where the creative inquiry of the present tends to be displaced by the insecurity and sterile concern for tomorrow.

With these thoughts, and most importantly with Clive’s words, I welcome you to this issue of *Approaches*!

References

- Ansdell, G., & Pavlicevic, M. (2010). Practicing "gentle empiricism" - The Nordoff Robbins research heritage. *Music Therapy Perspectives*, 28, 131-139.

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