



Tribute to Clive Robbins

Kana Okazaki-Sakaue

On December 7th I received a short e-mail from Alan Turry about the news of Clive's passing. It was a big shock for me, as I only spoke to Clive two weeks prior to this date. In our last phone conversation, and despite the 14 hours time difference between New York and Japan, Clive said to me with his usual humour: "*Kana, you sound so close. This thing (Skype) is great! It makes the world smaller!*" This was the last conversation I had with Clive.

Clive's first visit to Japan took place in 1984. He and Carol Robbins were invited by the Japanese Anthroposophical Association and the Yasuda Insurance Company, both of which were interested in the power of music in mental health. On their first visit, Clive and Carol travelled from Tokyo to Hiroshima (Prof Yu Wakao), Kofu (Dr Toshikazu Matsui), Osaka (Prof Tadafumi Yamamatsu) and then back to some universities in Tokyo (with Dr Yasuji Murai and Prof Hitoshi Sakurabayashi). Their visit made a great impact on the Japanese music therapy scene as the professional history of this field in Japan had only started in the late 1960s. With the help of two great translators; the first Nordoff-Robbins graduate from London: Harumi Suzuki (nee Koyama) and the great Shakuhachi master: Christopher Blasdel, Clive and Carol's lectures and workshops were very successful and provided (and still provide) a great nourishment for the Japanese music therapy field.

Since this first visit, Clive and Carol continued to teach in Japan for many years. Regular seminars and workshops were hosted by the OSNRMT (Organisation for Studying Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy, established in 1993) with the sheer endeavour of Prof Noriko Hamatani, Prof Yoji Hayashi and Prof Hiroko Fujimoto.

After Carol's death, Alan Turry, Ken Aigen and Kaoru Robbins also joined Clive's visits to Japan.

Kana Okazaki-Sakaue, DA, MT-BC, NRMT, ARAM, is a music therapist and an Associate Professor of the Music Therapy Programme (both Undergraduate and Graduate) at Senzoku Gakuen College of Music, Japan. She studied piano at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and then was trained at the Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Centre, London, and graduated in 1989. Also she studied at the Music Therapy Program, New York University and obtained a master's degree in 1995 and doctoral degree in 2011. She was awarded Level III (certified to teach Nordoff-Robbins music therapy) in 2006. She is currently teaching and supervising students as well as practising clinical work with developmentally disabled children/adults and stroke patients. She serves as a member of Board of Councilors and also as a member of International Affairs Commission of the Japanese Music Therapy Association. She is also a member of the Accreditation and Certification Committee of the World Federation for Music Therapy (WFMT).

Email: kanaokaz@hkg.odn.ne.jp

In 2003, Clive was appointed as Guest Professor and Honorary Director of the Music Therapy Institute at our university, the Senzoku Gakuen College of Music, Japan. He came every year to teach and supervise our students. He usually stayed about three weeks at a small house provided by the university. Our students were so lucky to have *experiences* with Clive. They were so enriched by his teaching and his way of being. Prof Yuriko Shionoya, the Head of Music Therapy Programme, and myself had many wonderful evenings with Clive and shared dinners of various cuisines, which he loved to explore while he was in Japan.



Picture 1: Clive Robbins with Kana and Mayuko Watanabe, at the concert of Mustard Seed Gospel Choir formed by graduates and students of the Senzoku Gakuen College

When he gave lectures and workshops at our university and other places, I took a role as his translator. The hardest part of this role was that he had never written texts to read; he would always improvise his speech according to the audience responses.



Picture 2: Prof Yuriko Shionoya on the left, Kana as a translator on the right

It was my challenge to translate his philosophical world, and very often he got carried away with his passion and never made a pause for the translator! I felt pressured with responsibilities at times, however, the more I translated for him, the more I felt that I was making music with his speech. The way he talked and moved, his voice, words, nuances and inflexions had much of musical qualities, rhythms and phrases. I could sense his musicality in his speech and once I got into the ‘groove’ with his musical speech, it was possible to convert his messages into our language.



Picture 3: Clive Robbins at the Asian Music Therapy Symposium, 2005

I was very impressed with a comment one of my students made about Clive. She said “*I understand what Prof Clive is trying to tell us. I do not understand English, but I do get the core of his work. I can HEAR it through his voice!*”

I, myself, first met Clive in 1988 when I was a trainee at the Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Centre, London. I later trained at the New York centre from 1993 to 1995 for Level II, and again from 1998 to 2001 for my Level III.

As I was brought up within a British educational and cultural context, we very often shared our British jokes and had a good laugh. We also discussed at length about cultural issues and differences in music therapy education in Asian countries.

In 1990's, when Clive was making regular visits to Japan and I was one of his translators, he joked and suggested that we should form an association for “Workaholic International Music Therapists”. He claimed that he would be the “PWIMT – the President of WIMT” and appointed me as the “VPWIMT – the Vice-President”.

Many publications by Nordoff and Robbins have been translated into Japanese. To name a few; *Music Therapy in Special Education* was translated by Prof Yoji Hayashi, Kaoru Robbins (nee Mochizuki) and myself, *Healing Heritage* by Prof Yu Wakao and Kazue Shinji, *A Journey into Creative Music Therapy* by Rika Ikuno. Some of the *Children's Play Songs* were also translated and were compiled into one book. Also, I would like to emphasise that we are working on the second edition of *Creative Music Therapy* which will be published very soon.

In 2007, a group of Japanese music therapists with Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapist Certification formed the Japanese Federation of NRMT (JFNRMT).



Picture 4: Clive at the first meeting of JFNRMT in 2007



Picture 5: Clive's surprise 80th birthday party at the Senzoku, August 2007



Picture 6: Clive's last lecture at the Senzoku, speaking about Paul Nordoff, March 2010

I am sure that the seeds that Clive planted in Japan are now growing, blossoming and bearing fruits of authentic quality. I thank Clive for all he has given us. I will close my tribute with my message which was sent for his funeral.

Dear Clive,

It is very hard to believe that you have passed away. I am sending my sincere and deepest sympathy to Kaoru, Clive's family and his extended music therapy family in New York.

Clive, I would like to thank you for all that we have shared in London, New York and in Japan since 1988.

It is Saturday night here in Tokyo, and it is incidentally the night of the total lunar eclipse. It looks as if the moon is also mourning for your passing.

But we all know that the Sun, the Sun is rising tomorrow morning, as if we will be further lightened and enlightened by what you have left in us.

I send my personal thanks to you, as well as, on behalf of all the staff, students and the graduates of the Senzoku Gakuen College of Music, we thank you for being a great teacher and mentor.

*God bless you,
Kana from Japan*

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