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## Tribute

### **A Tribute to Sandra Brown**

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On the first day of September Sandra Brown, a beloved person to us, passed away. Sandra was our tutor, supervisor and enthusiastic supporter during our music therapy training, while later she became an inspiring colleague who prompted us to find our position in the professional field; she was an exemplary paradigm to us.

A talented musician with exceptional achievements as a pianist, she completed her studies in psychology in 1985, two years later she qualified as a music therapist at the Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy Centre (London, UK) and in 2003 she became a Jungian analyst. Combining creatively all this knowledge and potential, she composed a unique personality and served music therapy in the best way adding her own personal timbre.

Sandra had been a leading figure in music therapy, who dedicated the last twenty years of her life's work at the Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy Centre in London. During these years, Sandra took on a variety of roles: senior music therapist, senior tutor, supervisor and member of the board of governors. In 1993, she became the clinical coordinator of the first year of the master's degree training programme at Nordoff Robbins and she introduced a new system of individual supervision. Her input in the training course was invaluable.

However, her input was not limited to the context of Nordoff Robbins music therapy. Sandra contributed essentially to the development of music therapy in the wider context of the UK, but also internationally. She presented her work in international music therapy conferences and contributed to the development of music therapy literature through the publication of articles and book chapters, where she demonstrated her unique ability to combine academic skills with therapeutic

insight (for a selected bibliography, please see the next page).

Every time each one of us thinks of Sandra, many pictures come to mind. Each picture has its own little story, and, if someone could look closer into these stories, they could find some common threads which may represent who Sandra was for us.

*You have supervision with Sandra. The video is on pause. She has heard something; something you cannot really hear at first although you try! The child played a beat on the drum which was slightly different from the previous one. It feels as if she totally moves into this moment and brings to life all the possibilities of change which were hidden in it. Her unique musical awareness and her deep therapeutic insight open a whole new world in front of you!*

Having had this kind of experiences with Sandra, the way you perceive time is never the same as before. "Living in the moment" is not just a 'nice' expression to use any more. It becomes the way you experience time in music therapy.

Her visit to Athens in February 2005, together with Pauline Etkin, was of great importance for the Greek music therapy community. We still have very strong memories from that day when we had the chance to enjoy one more presentation of her work. According to Aristotle, "we are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit". Experiencing Sandra's work and the way she communicated with others - either with words or with music - we can relate with the famous Greek philosopher's words.

Her bright personality, her vivid spirit, her ability to listen, to connect, to give in every encounter a part of herself, to enlighten, to encourage, to bring enthusiasm and inspiration is what Sandra has generously shared with the people she worked with as a therapist, but also with many generations of music therapists who had the chance to be her students, supervisees and colleagues.

All of us will remember her unique sense of humour, her wisdom and compassion. All of us miss Sandra and keep her in our hearts as we go "...forward in hope into the unknown"<sup>1</sup>.

### A selection of Sandra Brown's publications

#### Articles:

- 1992:** **Stretto: The relationship between music therapy and psychotherapy**  
British Journal of Music Therapy, volume 6, issue 1, pp. 25-26
- 1994:** **Autism and music therapy - is change possible and why music?**  
Journal of British Music Therapy, volume 8, issue 1, pp. 15-25
- 1996:** **Clinical improvisation in creative music therapy: Musical aesthetic and the interpersonal dimension** (together with Mercedes Pavlicevic)  
The Arts in Psychotherapy, volume 23, issue 5, pp. 397-405
- 1997:** **Supervision in context: A balancing act**  
British Journal of Music Therapy, volume 11, issue 1, pp. 4-12
- 1999:** **Some thoughts on music, therapy and music therapy: A response to Elaine's Streeter's 'Finding a balance between psychological thinking and musical awareness in music therapy theory – a psychoanalytic perspective'**  
British Journal of Music Therapy, volume 13, issue 2, pp. 63-71

#### Book chapters:

- 1999:** **The Music, the Meaning, and the Therapist's Dilemma**  
In the book "Clinical Applications of Music Therapy in Developmental Disability, Paediatrics and Neurology" (editors: T. Wigram & J.D. Backer)  
London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- 2002:** **"Hullo object! I destroyed you"**  
In the book "The Handbook of Music Therapy" (editors: L. Bunt & S. Hoskyns)  
Hove: Brunner-Routledge
- 2008:** **Supervision in Context: A Balancing Act**  
In the book "Supervision of Music Therapy: A Theoretical and Practical Handbook"  
(editors: H. Odell-Miller & E. Richards)  
London: Routledge

<sup>1</sup> With this phrase Sandra concluded the personal note she had written in order to be read on the day of her funeral.