



Proceedings of the 1st One-Day Conference of ESPEM

Editorial

Music Therapy in Greece: Developing Indigenous Knowledge and Research

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Welcome to the first special issue of *Approaches*! This issue is dedicated to the first scientific one-day conference of the Greek Association of Certified Professional Music Therapists (ESP^{EM})¹ which took place at the Onassis Cardiac Surgery Centre in Athens, 13 December 2008. The conference was entitled “*Music Therapy: Theory and Practice*” and within it a range of theoretical approaches and practical interventions were presented, as these are applied in various therapeutic contexts and target groups in Greece.

Recognising the multi-layered significance of this one-day conference for the development of music therapy in Greece, the documentation and dissemination of its proceedings to the wider scientific and professional community was considered essential. Towards this direction, in August of 2009 *Approaches* entered into a partnership with ESP^{EM}. The publication of this special issue with the proceedings of the conference is the fruit of this productive collaboration between the two bodies, and is a useful example of the potential force and creativity that are feasible when professional and disciplinary bodies bond their actions, knowledge and vision towards a common purpose.

The coordination of the editing and publication procedures of the proceedings, which I had the honour to undertake as the Editor-in-Chief of *Approaches*, was a creative and, at the same time, challenging task. Each speaker of the conference was invited to submit the full-text or abstract of their presentation for publication in the journal. All

the submitted texts followed the standard peer-review procedure of the journal (see Tsiris & Procter 2009). Through this process, the speakers’ texts were edited and developed further (whilst maintaining their original theme and style) in order to be published in the form of an article in the journal. The contribution of the members (reviewers) of the Editorial Board of Music Therapy of *Approaches* to this process was invaluable, and I would like to warmly thank them.

This special issue begins with the opening speech of the conference. The full-texts of five presentations, and then all the abstracts and biographies of the speakers who submitted their material for publication in *Approaches* follow. The full-texts are published in the original language chosen by each author, but all the abstracts and biographies are available both in Greek and English. The audio material that accompanies some of the articles is available on *Approaches* website.

The publication of this special issue of *Approaches* brings to the foreground a burning issue for the development of music therapy in Greece: the development, documentation and publication of indigenous knowledge and research. This knowledge and research stems from the in-depth study of the application of music therapy in the context of the Modern Greek society, by taking into consideration its particular indigenous cultural, political, economic, social and musical characteristics. Despite the rich international literature, the development of music therapy in each country requires the genesis of knowledge and practices on the basis of its own specific characteristics, needs and context – something which is of vital importance for the development of music therapy as a profession and discipline in every country (see Bunt interviewed by Durham 2000; Etkin interviewed by Tsiris 2010).

¹ The name of the Association changed from “Greek Association of Qualified Professional Music Therapists” (ESKEM) to ESP^{EM} in the summer of 2009 (see Papanikolaou 2011). Throughout this special issue, the current official name of the Association (ESP^{EM}) is used.

Until now, music therapy in Greece is based mainly on the knowledge which emerges from studies and research of the international community – something which is, of course, expected during the development of any new professional field in a country. However, the material included in this issue demonstrates that the Greek music therapy community is now mature enough for the gradual development of indigenous knowledge and research. This development will provide a solid ground upon which political and economic decisions can be taken for the establishment of appropriate working frameworks and conditions for music therapists in Greece. I hope this issue will contribute towards this direction by opening new pathways for communication and growth where the differences in our theories and practices become fruitful points for polyphonic dialogue and research.

From this perspective, the publication of the proceedings aims to promote scientific dialogue and is addressed to a wide audience. In particular, it is addressed to music and other arts therapists, to professionals from the fields of health, education and social care, to policy-makers and funders, as well as to any person who wishes to know more about: how music therapy can be applied in different contexts and with different target groups in Greece, what different approaches exist, and also in what ways one could support its further development.

I hope this special issue will trigger the accomplishment of other similar efforts and partnerships aiming at the development of music therapy in Greece as an autonomous profession and discipline with a firm clinical, theoretical and research background.

References

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