



Conference Report

14th World Congress of Music Therapy “Cultural Diversity in Music Therapy Practice, Research and Education”

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14th World Congress of Music Therapy “Cultural Diversity in Music Therapy Practice, Research and Education”

7-12 July 2014, Krems an der Donau, Austria

World Federation of Music Therapy (WFMT)
Institute of Ethno Music Therapy
IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems



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Potheini Vaiouli holds a Master's degree in music therapy from New York University (2009) and a PhD in special education (2014) from Indiana University, Bloomington, USA. She is a board-certified music therapist, member of the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA), Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and Division of Early Childhood (DEC), and is a reviewer for early childhood special education (ECSE) and autism related journals and conferences. Her work focuses on ECSE and music therapy with a research interest in family-centred and parent and/or teacher-mediated interventions for young children with autism and other developmental disabilities. Potheini received the AMTA Graduate Research Award for her research on toddlers with autism (2013).

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Introduction

The international music therapy community celebrated great developments in practice trends

and research outcomes in the field, during the 14th World Congress of Music Therapy (7th-12th July 2014, Krems an der Donau, Austria). The conference was organised by the World Federation

of Music Therapy (WFMT), hosted by the Institute of Ethno Music Therapy and sponsored by the IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems. The Congress's focus was on cultural diversity in music therapy practice, research and education – a theme that embraced globalisation and attracted more than 1,000 participants from over 40 countries from around the world. This resulted in a large multicultural congress with 4 spotlight sessions, 212 concurrent presentations, 30 roundtables, 49 workshops and 125 poster presentations (Fachner, Kern & Tucek 2014).

Pre-congress seminars

On July 7th, during the pre-congress seminars, hosted at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, prominent music therapists in the field shared their expertise on a variety of music therapy topics. The seminar topics included music therapy in palliative care (Wenzel, Zoderer, et al), music therapy with premature babies (Standley), healing rhythms from India (Chowdhury), studying, interning and working abroad (Kern, Clements-Cortes, Register and Werner), interfaces of music pedagogy and music therapy (Pfeifer, Glawischnig-Goschnik et al), music therapy with children with learning disabilities (Oldfield), music therapy balint group – musiktherapeutische balintgruppe – doppelt blind (Rüegg and Portman), thesis and research (Silverman) and international perspectives on music and time (Murphy and Jackson) (Tucek & Anibas 2014).

Spotlight sessions

The 4 spotlight sessions covered a wide range of topics and promoted rich dialogue between congress speakers and delegates. During the first session, which focused on traditions and cultural diversity, Sundar stressed the need for cultural diversity to be integrated within the clinical music therapy practice. The second session concentrated on clinical practice in music therapy and on the healing force of music. The third spotlight session was on current trends and development in research in music therapy. In the beginning of his presentation, Hillecke began with a Greek quote attributed to Socrates “*ἐν οἶδα ὅτι οὐδὲν οἶδα*” (one thing I know is that I know nothing). This session focused on the need for pursuing rigorous music therapy research that includes well conducted randomised controlled trials and evidence-based strategies. On July 11th, the last spotlight session focused on contemporary education and training in music therapy. Kern reflected on the educational possibilities for music therapy within a growing

online world and Tucek focused on the need for a wider perspective of the music therapy educators. In addition, he emphasised that “as therapists/lecturers we cannot treat/teach all patients/students just in the same way”.

Overall program

The 14th World Congress was rich in presentations and topics from researchers and clinicians from around the world.



Photograph 1: First Spotlight Session¹

The IMC special contributions sessions presented research projects that stimulated discussions among professionals, researchers and clinicians. A rather interesting discussion took place on July 11th at a roundtable focusing on the issue of globalisation of our profession: “Envisioning a global equivalency certificate for music therapists: Training, qualifications, and clinical practice”. The main issue discussed was the meaning of being a trained clinician and a professional music therapist all around the world, the different training requirements within each country and the difficulty that arises in providing a global equivalency certificate that would find all countries in agreement.

During the final discussion that took place on July 12th, last day of the congress, on how to bridge the gap between practice and research, Thayer shared his view that it is necessary for the researcher to also do clinical work, and Loewy added that researchers and practitioners should work in close collaboration for effective results.

Presenters from Greece

Greece was well-represented in the conference by the work of a number of Greek music therapists. A

¹ All photographs are taken by the congress's official picture gallery: <http://www.musictherapy2014.org/picture-gallery/>

few of the papers and posters presented included an international survey on music therapists' perceptions of spirituality, by Tsiris (2014), a topic that was of interest to many. Psaltopoulou and Vaiouli (2014) analysed the "five types of discourses" in music therapy, adding to Lacan's four fundamental types of discourse. Akoyunoglou-Christou (2014) presented a field research study with lamenters in Chios Island and a case study on the Chios' folk lament, and Dimitriadis with Uhlig (2014) discussed the effects of rap/singing interventions with at-risk youth in the Netherlands.



Photograph 2: Opening ceremony

The round table "The color of us: Music therapy for children and families in Europe" focused on providing information on music therapy with young children and their families from various countries and Georgiadi presented demographic data, intervention settings and case examples from Greece (Kern et al. 2014). Music therapists from Greece also shared their work through poster sessions during the conference.

Highlights of the congress



Photograph 3: Group photograph

Part of the World Congress experience was the opportunity to 'taste' various flavours of Austrian cultural life. It is worthy of note that during the

official closing ceremony, the 2014 WFMT awards were presented in order to honour major contributions in education, practice and research of music therapists around the world. Standley (USA) was the recipient of the Research and Special Projects Award, Oldfield (UK) received the Clinical Impact Award, Kern (USA) received the Service Award and Sundar (India) was the recipient of the Advocate of Music Therapy Award. At the end of the congress, Clements-Cortes was accepted by all participants with great enthusiasm as newly elected president of WFMT.

Follow-up links

A range of photographs and video clips from the World Congress are available freely online.

Opening ceremony:

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FQ8Q30qyJY&feature=youtu.be&list=PLSXz1Aqa8l5U-nv1euzf9-FPwhz3SbJ9x
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FQ8Q30qyJY

Closing ceremony:

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpmkAgy5PRw

Picture gallery:

- www.musictherapy2014.org/picture-gallery/

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