



Special issue

**Music therapy in Europe:  
Paths of professional development**

in partnership with the  
European Music Therapy Confederation



## FRANCE

### Country report on professional recognition of music therapy

Nicole Duperret<sup>1</sup> & Adrienne Lerner<sup>2</sup>

#### HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Music therapy has been present in France since the 1970s with the establishment of the Association de Recherches et d'Applications des Techniques Psychomusicales (ARATP) in Paris through the initiative of pioneers Edith Lecourt and Jacques Jost. The first pioneer therapists were trained in private, post-university professional programmes. Over the years, through the initiative of François-Xavier Vrait (Nantes), private and public training centres have worked together to create the French Federation of Music Therapy (FFM). The FFM is growing and developing, and today it includes five training centres and a college of more than 170 practising music therapists. These centres, either university-affiliated or private institutions, offer a high level of training. The FFM has its statutes, by-laws and code of ethics based on that of the European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC). Strongly committed to cooperation with other European countries, the FFM is a long-standing member of the EMTC, of which François-Xavier Vrait, Director of the training centre in Nantes was a founding member.

Edith Lecourt, internationally known for her numerous publications on music therapy, has played a key role in encouraging research in music therapy in France.

Since 2011, a government-recognised Master's degree programme in Creative Arts Therapy has existed at the University of Paris developed by Lecourt. A recently created doctoral programme is now proposed at the University of Paris.

The exact number of therapists practising music therapy today in France is not known as there is no obligation of membership in a professional association.

<sup>1</sup> EMTC Country Representative; Psychiatrist; Head of PRISMe Unit, Psychiatric Hospital, Chalons/Saone, France.

Email: [Nicole.DUPERRET@ch-sevrey.fr](mailto:Nicole.DUPERRET@ch-sevrey.fr)

<sup>2</sup> Representative of the AFM Music Therapy Association to FFM; Doctor in Clinical Psychology, Private Practice, Paris, France.

Email: [adrilerner@wanadoo.fr](mailto:adrilerner@wanadoo.fr)

The FFM has 170 active members on its register. All members adhere to the code of ethics which, as stated above, is based on the EMTC ethical guidelines.

Throughout the country, small groups of therapists have created working groups to share their experience and maintain a high level of practice and the first annual national meeting took place in January 2012.

There are two specialised journals published in the French language, but they are struggling to survive; *La Revue de Musicothérapie* created in 1981 by the AFM, one of the five member associations of the FFM, and the M.T.C. *Musique, Thérapie, Communication* (Editions du non verbal).

#### IMPORTANT STEPS IN THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

In spite of a long history of music therapy practice in France, the profession has still not achieved official recognition at government level. A major task of the FFM has been to work towards finalising the steps towards government recognition. The majority of music therapists have completed an accredited training in a healthcare profession and in this way, are able to practise music therapy in various settings. Recently, several therapists have succeeded in achieving official professional recognition in their institutions even though the profession is not recognised at national government level. Increasingly, trained music therapists are making the choice to work in private practice and a few health insurance policies have accepted to cover a portion of the fees for children.

#### RECOGNITION AND APPROVAL

The FFM works toward establishing a professional identity and a recognised status in France for music therapy professionals. The five member training centres must maintain a high level of training over a two- or three-year period with theoretical courses, clinical training and a required final paper. Currently the member centres are the following:

- ❑ AMB, Atelier de Musicothérapie de Bourgogne
- ❑ CIM, Centre International de Musicothérapie Paris
- ❑ Université Sorbonne-Cité Paris – Association Française de Musicothérapie
- ❑ Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier III
- ❑ Université de Nantes, Institut de Musicothérapie de Nantes

By working together, the FFM hopes that official government recognition will become possible in the near future.

Although budget restrictions have meant that only a few music therapy positions exist in France, the use of music therapy is thriving. Many hospitals have made specific requests for professionals trained in music therapy, especially in the areas of palliative care,

geriatrics, autism and neonatal care. Adult intensive care units have also discovered that music therapy can play an important role in patient care. Music therapists work in a wide range of early childhood settings, programmes preparing couples for childbirth, paediatric units, cancer care, child day-care centres, or in foster child placement centres. Family music therapy is also practised in France. Sometimes employed in the school system, music therapists work in nursery schools and kindergartens often using a more 'pedagogical' music therapy approach for young children with behavioural disorders. Unfortunately, the distinction is not always clear between music and healthcare, and music therapy. Obtaining official recognition of the music therapy profession will help make this distinction clearer.

## SELECTED LINKS

- ❑ Atelier de Musicothérapie de Bourgogne:  
[www.amb-musicotherapie.com](http://www.amb-musicotherapie.com)
- ❑ Centre International de Musicothérapie (C.I.M.):  
[www.musicotherapie.info](http://www.musicotherapie.info)
- ❑ Fédération Française de Musicothérapie:  
[www.musicotherapie-federationfrancaise.com](http://www.musicotherapie-federationfrancaise.com)
- ❑ Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier III:  
[www.musicotherapie-montpellier.fr](http://www.musicotherapie-montpellier.fr)
- ❑ Université de Nantes, Institut de Musicothérapie de Nantes:  
[www.medecine.univ-nantes.fr](http://www.medecine.univ-nantes.fr)
- ❑ Université Sorbonne Paris-Cité- Association Française de Musicothérapie:  
<http://formations.parisdescartes.fr>  
[www.musicotherapie-afm.com](http://www.musicotherapie-afm.com)

## SELECTED REFERENCES

- Aucher, M. L. (1997). *En corps chanté*. Paris: Hommes et Groupes.
- Ducourneau, G. (1981). *Musicothérapie, Clinique, Technique, Formation*. Toulouse: Editions Privat.
- Lecourt, E. (2005). *Découvrir la musicothérapie*. Paris: Eyrolles.
- Lecourt, E. (2007). *La musicothérapie analytique de groupe*. Courlay: Fuzeau.
- Verdeau-Pailles, J. (1988). *Le Bilan psychomusical*. Courlay: Fuzeau.
- Verdeau-Pailles, J. (1995). *La Troisième Oreille et la Pensée musicale*. Courlay: Fuzeau.