



Conference report

The 20th International Seminar of the ISME Commission on Music in Special Education, Music Therapy, and Music Medicine

Melita Belgrave

The 20th International Seminar of the ISME Commission on Music in Special Education, Music Therapy, and Music Medicine

“The Diversity of World Music: Engaging Individuals with Special Needs”

The Parana Faculty of Arts, Federal University of Parana Curitiba, Brazil, 17-18 July 2014

International Society for Music Education



Melita Belgrave received her bachelor's degree in music therapy from Michigan State University. She also earned her master's in music therapy, a certification in aging studies, and a PhD in music education with an emphasis in music therapy at Florida State University. She has worked as a music therapist in special education, mental health, rehabilitation, hospice, geriatric, and intergenerational settings. Her research interests are music therapy with older adults, wellness and intergenerational settings. She has presented at regional, national, and international conferences, and her research has been published in national and international journals.

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The ISME Commission on Music in Special Education, Music Therapy and Music Medicine was established in 1974. The Commission was established in order to contribute to the progressive development of music therapy and music in special education, and music in medicine. The Commission seeks to emphasise the importance of communication between the related disciplines that are involved. One of the ways this is met is through the biennial Seminar meeting for the Commission.

During July 2014, over 60 special music education, music therapy, and music and health practitioners and students travelled to Curitiba, Brazil for the 20th ISME Commission on Music in Special Education, Music Therapy and Music Medicine. The Commission seminar was held at the Parana Faculty of Arts, Federal University of Parana in Curitiba, Brazil from 16th to 18th July 2014. The theme of the Commission seminar was: *The Diversity of World Music: Engaging Individuals in Need of Special Support*. The Commission chair,

Lynn E. Schraer-Joiner (Kean University, USA), and the seminar host, Clara Piazzetta (Parana Faculty of Arts, Federal University of Parana, Brazil), organised the seminar programme, as well as cultural events and excursions. Additionally, Clara and the local committee organised the printing and translation of the abstract book, which contained abstracts in English and Portuguese (ISME 2014). The State University of Paraná (Brazil) and Kean University (USA) also provided support for the Commission seminar.

The Commission started with a workshop on July 16th for music therapy practitioners and students from Brazil. The one-day workshop consisted of lectures and demonstrations by two commissioners, Melita Belgrave (University of Missouri-Kansas City, USA) and Markku Kaikkonen (Special Music Centre Resonaari, Finland). During the morning, Belgrave spoke of her research and work using music therapy with community-dwelling older adults in wellness and intergenerational



Photo 1: The 2012-2014 commissioners during an excursion to Paranaguá (Bo Nilsson, Sweden; Hsiao-Shien (Jessie) Chen, Taiwan; Markku Kaikkonen, Finland; Lyn Schraer-Joiner (Chair), USA; Melita Belgrave, USA)¹

settings, while Kaikkonen spoke of his research and work using music education and music therapy with individuals of all ages who have special needs. During the afternoon workshop, Belgrave provided a demonstration on the use of technology with older adults in wellness settings. In the afternoon session Kaikkonen provided demonstrations for making music with people with special needs using Figurenotes™ and other music applications.

The Commission seminar occurred over two days and involved presentations and demonstrations by 33 presenters from Austria, Brazil, Finland, Sweden, Taiwan and the USA. Day one of the seminar, July 17th, included 11 spoken papers that pertained to music teaching and mentoring for students in need of special support, music therapy for older adults, music therapy for clients with adolescent idiopathic scoliosis (AIS), and the use of music therapy and music education applications for clients with autism. On day two of the seminar, attendees experienced 10 demonstrations from presenters who spoke about their work using music and movement, technology, Orff music therapy, group singing, iPads, music performances, and modern dance for clients with physical disabilities. Additionally, there were two demonstrations that pertained to older adults in wellness and intergenerational settings. The Commission seminar concluded with a poster session that consisted of eight research posters by

¹ The 2012-2014 commissioner Helen Farrell (Australia) is missing from this photograph.

special music education and music therapy practitioners and students.



Photo 2: Commission delegates holding power poses during Alice-Ann Darrow's research presentation on the use of power poses with older adults

In addition to attending presentations, attendees were exposed to the culture of Curitiba through food and music. The music therapy students from the Parana Faculty of Arts, Federal University of Parana provided traditional music during the first coffee break on July 17th. On July 18th, a music therapist brought a choir comprised of adults from a rehabilitation centre in Curitiba, to perform for the seminar attendees. Adults participate in the choir at the rehabilitation centre as part of their music therapy treatment. After the performance, the music therapist led a group discussion between choir members and seminar attendees.



Photo 3: Rehabilitation choir and commission delegates participating in a demonstration led by a music therapist from a rehabilitation centre in Curitiba

The Commission seminar served as a time for practitioners and students to learn about current international perspectives for special music education and music therapy. Additionally, seminar attendees shared collaborations that had occurred

since the last Commission seminar in Thessaloniki, Greece in 2012 (ISME 2012; Kaikkonen 2012), as well as potential future collaborations. These conversations often occurred during morning and afternoon coffee breaks, on walks to lunch at a local restaurant, or doing our evening or weekend excursions. The local host, Clara Piazzetta did a wonderful job planning the evening and weekend activities. On July 17th everyone attended a traditional music performance by the *Molungo Group* followed by a traditional dinner. On July 18th, the seminar attendees had dinner at a traditional churrascaria restaurant. The last day in Curitiba was spent travelling to the coastal town of Paranaguá for an Arts and Culture festival.



Photo 4: Final seminar with commission delegates

The 2016 Commission seminar will be held at Drake Music Scotland in Edinburgh, Scotland. The chair and current commissioners are beginning to plan for the seminar. The Commissioners for the next seminar are:

- Markku Kaikkonen (Chair), Finland
- Melita Belgrave, USA
- Hsiao-Shien (Jessie) Chen, Taiwan
- Michelle Hairston, USA
- Bo Nillson, Sweden
- Giorgos Tsisis, United Kingdom/Greece

The call for papers and more information will be provided during the summer of 2015. If you have an interest in the ISME Commission on Music in Special Education, Music Therapy and Music Medicine please join its Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ismespecial?fref=ts>) and/or sign up to receive the Commission's Newsletter. You can contact the Chair of the Commission, Markku Kaikkonen, at markku.kaikkonen@resonaari.fi, if you are interested in receiving the Commission's Newsletter, or participating (presenting or attending) in the 2016 Commission seminar.

REFERENCES

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