

# The Global Music Therapy Educators Network

Tríona McCaffrey<sup>1</sup>, Katrina McFerran<sup>2</sup>, Gustavo Gattino<sup>3</sup> & Sumathy Sundar<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer in Music Therapy at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick, Ireland.

<sup>2</sup>Professor in Music Therapy at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne, Australia.

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor in Music Therapy at Aalborg University, Denmark.

<sup>4</sup>Director of the Chennai School of Music Therapy, India.

Music therapy educators around the globe are united in their commitment to the development of the profession through the education of new professionals. Although different university programmes emphasise diverse approaches and are representative of their surrounding cultures, there is much that is shared between different programmes and educators. However, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was minimal interaction between educators as a group, possibly due to time pressures and a lack of need to unite and celebrate our diversities. With the onset of the pandemic and the rapid transition to online learning, an unexpected space emerged for collective dialogue among the music therapy educator community. Brought together by the challenges imposed on professional training due to a global pandemic, a number of global educators united in discussion to seek a way forward.

With the original intention of having only one international meeting, the first online gathering of global educators took place in March 2020. The aim of this meeting was to discuss the rapid transition of training programmes to online delivery in the face of COVID-19. As organizers, the authors were clear from the onset not to claim authority on this subject, rather we tried to create a welcoming forum where music therapy educators could discuss and learn about online delivery of our trainings as a topic that was new and unfamiliar to many. Over seventy colleagues from around the world attended this first meeting with presentations on blended teaching of music therapy and online group musicking. Poignant reflections on this early meeting spoke to the generosity of spirit among those present, and perhaps most importantly, a willingness for our international music therapy community to unite at a time of global crisis. It quickly became apparent that a space for further learning and discussion was warranted. Subsequently, the Global Music Therapy Educators Network was created which has since hosted six international meetings over the past seven months. This initiative was initially organised by Tríona McCaffrey (University of Limerick, Ireland) and Katrina Skewes McFerran (University of Melbourne, Australia), and then expanded to include Gustavo Schulz Gattino (Aalborg University, Denmark) & Sumathy Sundar (Chennai School of Music Therapy, India). To date, these meetings have been attended by music therapy educators from eighteen countries, many of whom have generously offered their skills and ideas in problem solving during a time great uncertainty.

While the main focus of the Global Music Therapy Educators Network has been on sharing tools and resources for online teaching and learning of music therapy, another central point of discussion has been on the care and welfare of students and their clients on placement. Over our series of meetings, several practitioners and educators presented on their approach to running clinical placements in light of the public health restrictions experienced by many of our community members across the world. Images and footage of our music therapy community working on the front-line of COVID-19 are ones that will stay with many of us for some time to come. These creative and often, quite emotional presentations, have been central to our realization that the world has changed significantly. They have also served as a source of inspiration as we reimagine how music therapy practice and training can be delivered into the future.

A tangible outcome that has been created by this international community of music therapy educators is the "The Global Music Therapy Educators Library (E-library)". This is a temporary e-library for the pandemic period only, which offers a space for music therapy educators to create and share videos on music therapy for educational use through the VIMEO platform. All educators are welcome to become a member if they are teaching a music therapy training course, or a music therapy introductory courses. The e-library only accepts video lectures recorded exclusively for this initiative and cannot include repurposed video material. The rationale for creating these videos is that music therapy educators can use this material in their own programmes, and by doing so, share knowledge of different international experts with their students. Although the e-library so far features videos in English, we also welcome video recordings in other languages to ensure it is accessible to all educators, music therapists and students. The generosity of each global member in sharing their intellectual property for a common cause indicates their pro-active effort to support and extend a meaningful change in the teaching process in times of global need. Our hope is that this network can positively impact the work of music therapy educators internationally by providing a space for sharing various perspectives and knowledge but also various tools to adapt to the vastly changed circumstances of music therapy training across the globe.

We are also hopeful that this global music therapy educators network may fortify resilience in our teaching system and support our efforts to cope effectively with the pandemic situation. The opportunity to connect global educators with diverse practice perspectives and geographic locations under one virtual roof enables us to share knowledge and expertise in innovative ways that support the education-learning needs of the music therapy community. One of the most certain outcomes of the Global Music Therapy Educators Network is that it has brought this community closer together, even in a period of physical distance. Until some sense of equilibrium returns to the world, our aim is to encourage the joining of our wonderful and creative forces to lead us through these uncertain times.

To date more than 70 people have joined the Global Music Therapy Educators Network. We particularly wish to acknowledge those who have presented at meetings and/or attended more regularly. In doing so they are foundational members of this community. *Andeline Dos Santos (South Africa), Blythe LaGasse (USA), Claudia Zanini (Brazil), Cochavit Elefant (Israel), Diego Salamanca (Spain), Dikla Kerem (Israel), Efrat Roginsky (Israel), Elizabeth Coombes (Wales, UK), Eugenia Hernandez Ruiz (USA), Florence Ierardi (USA), Hilary Moss (Ireland),*

*Juan Pedro Zambonini (USA), Julianne Parolisi (USA), Philippa Derrington (Scotland, UK), Sabatino Miranda (Italy), Tessa Watson (England,UK), Scott Horowitz (USA), Wendy Magee (USA), Tony Meadows (USA), Laura Pawuk (USA), Melody Schwantes (USA), Özgür Salur (Turkey), Stacey Thomas (Australia), Clare Maddocks (UK), Petra Kern (USA), Sarah Hoskyns (New Zealand), Daphne Rickson (New Zealand), Kate Teggelove (Australia), Karina Daniela Ferrari (Argentina) and Mireia Serra Vila (Spain).*