

THE MSU MUSIC THERAPY PROGRAM

MUSIC THERAPY

Music therapy serves people of all ages, as well as families, and even societies having health, developmental or interpersonal needs. Such needs can arise from stress, medical conditions, handicapping conditions (e.g., developmental disabilities, physical impairments, emotional disturbances, autism, sensory impairments), trauma, specific learning problems, or the wear and tear of the living process. Music has been demonstrated to be a powerful medium for facilitating growth and rehabilitation when used in a systematic, goal-directed manner by a trained music therapist in either individual or group settings. Music has also been found to be a strong factor in maintaining health and well-being.

The overall focus of music therapy is (1) the growth and development of new skills and abilities, (2) the restoration of lost or deteriorating abilities or (3) the maintenance of existing healthy functional skills. The specific focus of treatment may be on one or more of the following areas: perceptual-motor skills, social-emotional needs, learning skills, communication and self-expression, stress reduction, and music/leisure skills.

The therapeutic experiences used in music therapy are designed to stimulate and motivate the client to engage in constructive tasks that have direct bearing on the individual's needs (e.g., moving to music to develop motor coordination, creating songs to encourage self-expression, following directions for playing instruments to promote learning skills, or using music to effect relaxation and reduce stress). The activities are structured to allow for success and confidence at the specific level of personal skill for the individual at the time. Clients are actively involved in responding to or making music the majority of the time. Specific experiences can be: playing instruments, moving to music, singing/vocalizing, listening and responding to music, relaxing to music, or creating music. While many sessions are made up of a variety of activity types, some needs are appropriately met with a single activity format, for example, learning to play guitar.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The MSU music therapy degree program was the first of its kind in the world designed specifically to train music therapists. The curriculum was established in 1944 by Dr. Roy Underwood, who was Director of the Division of Fine Arts and Head of the Music Department at that time. Area music therapists were brought in to provide the core music therapy instruction. In 1956 the Department hired Robert Unkefer, RMT (Registered Music Therapist), to begin the teaching of specific music therapy courses. Under Professor Unkefer's guidance the program flourished and was a model for new programs across the country. In 1969 the on-campus Music Therapy Clinic was established in the newly built Music Practice Building and became the prototype facility for student practicum training at many universities throughout the U.S. At the same time the master's degree program was initiated.

In 1965 Dr. George Duerksen was employed to teach Psychology of Music and conduct research. When he left in 1969 to become the Chairperson of Music Education and Therapy at the University of Kansas, Dr. Dale Bartlett was hired to fulfill that role. In 1977, Professor Roger Smeltekop was added as a second professional (Music Therapist - Board Certified) faculty member to expand music therapy course and clinical work. By this time the knowledge base for the field required additional curricular and clinical experiences for music therapy students. In the 1980's Doctoral study in music therapy was offered through the Ph.D. degree in Music Education.

Robert Unkefer retired in 1989 after thirty-three years of building a respected and widely recognized program. In 1996, with the retirement of Dr. Bartlett, the School of Music hired Dr. Ted Tims to further the growth of the program, particularly in the areas of research and graduate education. Recent developments include the program's association with the MSU Cancer Care and Prevention Group and the opening of Music Therapy Clinical Services, a program offering professional music therapy treatment under the auspices of the MSU Community Music School. Recent research grants have provided new knowledge and information on providing music therapy strategies for persons with Alzheimer's disease, breast cancer, and the maintenance of health in retirees. Affiliations with the MSU Department of Radiology are producing brain-mapping studies to demonstrate how music can promote health and well-being.

Over five hundred clinicians have been trained in the MSU music therapy program and many are practicing worldwide. A number of the music professors and researchers at colleges and universities in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Japan, China, and Australia have studied in this program, as well.

Research conducted by M.S.U. Music Therapy faculty and students contributes to the growing body of knowledge upon which this discipline is based. Faculty, students and graduates have a strong tradition of participation and service in the American Music Therapy Association (formerly the National Association for Music Therapy) at the national level, as well as in the Great Lakes Region and the Michigan Music Therapists. Several figures prominent in the areas of publication of music therapy textbooks and original research, as well as in national and international leadership to the profession have their roots in the M.S.U. program traditions.

Services to Citizens

For more than 40 years the faculty and students from the Music Therapy Program have served individuals with special needs and their families through bi-weekly "Dance and Chorus" activities in the evening. Citizens with disabilities of various types (usually physical and developmental disabilities) found that after they had passed school age the services and social opportunities for them dropped off significantly. A group of their

parents approached Prof. Robert Unkefer in the music therapy program, and together they initiated the evening events. It has continued since that time, with parents, group home staff members and citizens with disabilities attending and participating in the music activities. Music therapy faculty and virtually all students in the program share in the leading of the singing and dancing, while parents provide refreshments and maintain a communication network among the participants.

Since 1969 the on-campus Music Therapy Clinic in the Music Practice Building has been the site for countless hours of clinical service to members of the Greater Lansing community. Through the clinical practicum experiences that are an integral part of the education and training of students seeking their Music Therapy degrees, clients of all ages with special needs are seen by student therapists in individual and groups settings. Student therapists are directly supervised by M.S.U. music therapy faculty and graduate students who are experienced Board Certified Music Therapists (MT-BC). Referrals for these services are received from parents, the client him/herself, special educators, physicians, activity therapists and other clinicians from the surrounding area, and contact is maintained to coordinate the music therapy treatment with the services and goals of the other caregivers.

With the opening of the MSU Community Music School in the Fall of 1993, the Music Therapy Clinic became a resource for further services to the community. Professional clinical and consulting services are now available on a contractual basis to individuals and healthcare agencies. This division of the CMS, under the title of Music Therapy Clinical Services (MTCS), employs trained, certified and experienced music therapists to provide these services.

March 2002

Music Therapy at Michigan State University

Facts and History

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In **1956** the Department hired **Robert Unkefer**, RMT (Registered Music Therapist), to begin the teaching of specific music therapy courses. Under Professor Unkefer's guidance the program flourished and was a model for new programs across the country.

In **1970** the on-campus **Music Therapy Clinic** was established and became the prototype facility for student practicum training at many universities throughout the U.S. Concurrently, the **master's degree program** was initiated. **Doctoral study in music therapy** is offered through the Ph.D. degree in Music Education

Since 1970 the Music Therapy Clinic has been the site for countless hours of clinical service to members of the Greater Lansing community. Through the **supervised clinical practicum experiences**, clients of all ages with special needs are seen by student therapists in individual and group settings.

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For **more than 40 years** the faculty and students from the Music Therapy degree program have served individuals with special needs and their families in the **East Lansing community** through bi-weekly evening music activities.

Over **five hundred clinicians** have been trained in the MSU music therapy program and many are practicing worldwide.

A number of the **music therapy professors and researchers** at colleges and universities in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Japan, China, and Australia have studied in this program.

Research conducted by MSU faculty and students contributes to the growing body of knowledge upon which this discipline is based.

Faculty, students, and graduates have a strong tradition of participation and service in the **American Music Therapy Association**, at the national level, as well as in the Great Lakes Region, and the Michigan Music Therapists.