

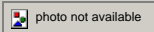
[More From This Issue](#)[Current Issue](#)[Back Issues](#)[Guidelines](#)

Vol 1(1), April 20, 2001
mitext11amir

Music Therapy in Israel

By Dorit Amir [|Author bio & contact info|](#)

This article describes the main discourse that I believe goes on in music therapy in Europe and other countries around the world: professional issues (registration, standards and licensing) and the development of research and cultural issues in music therapy. For the inaugural issue, I will focus mainly on music therapy in Israel. In the following issues of the journal, the focus will be on other European countries.

 photo not available

Music Therapy in Israel

The profession of music therapy has been influenced mainly by European and American music therapy (the former American Association for Music Therapy). All founders of training programs studied abroad and integrated their knowledge with the professional and cultural possibilities and needs of the country. Israel has been an active member of the European federation of music therapy and Israeli music therapists have participated in world and regional congresses.

Historical Perspective

Music therapy and other modalities of art therapy, celebrate 30 years of existence this year. The Israeli Association of Creative and Expressive Therapies (I.C.E.T.) was founded in 1971. It has been the only official association of the arts therapies in Israel and is recognized by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health.

The association includes a variety of modalities and professions: music, visual arts, dance and movement, drama, psychodrama and bibliotherapy. It has three branches, located in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa. The association usually holds a national conference once every two years.

The main functions and goals of the association are:

- To offer a forum for exchanging ideas and thoughts in each profession and within the therapeutic and medical community by organizing lectures, workshops and conferences with well-known local and international arts therapists.
- To promote the acceptance of the arts therapies in various therapeutic settings throughout the country and to improve the conditions of the therapists who are working in governmental institutions (medical, psychological and educational settings).
- To maintain and improve the professional standards of training programs and professional music therapists.
- To assist immigrants in finding jobs and in becoming members of the professional community.
- To enhance official recognition of the profession by the Ministry of Health.
- To publish a yearly journal.

There are three training programs in music therapy, founded in the early 1980's in the country: The Music Therapy post Bachelor diploma program at David Yelin College, Jerusalem; The Music and Movement Therapy diploma program at Levinsky College of Education, Tel Aviv; and the Music Therapy Master's program at the department of music, Bar Ilan University, Israel, the only Master's program in Music Therapy in the country.

Current professional issues (registration, standards and licensing)

The association has been in the continuous process of developing registration scale, professional standards and requirements for membership.

A new health law is in preparation by the Ministry of Health, where all the creative art therapy professions are going to be included. Heads of training programs and representatives of our association have met with the head of the paramedical professions in the Ministry of Health in an effort to discuss and negotiate one of the most crucial issues: what kinds of requirements should be established by the Ministry of Health for licensing people as music, art, drama, movement, psychodrama and biblio therapists?

In Israel, all training programs are located in colleges and universities. There are no programs at the Bachelor's level, only at the post Bachelor's diploma and Master's levels, unlike the United States, where most of the music therapy training programs are still at the Bachelor's level and fewer are at the Master's and Doctoral levels. A candidate who is accepted into a music therapy program in Israel must have a Bachelor's degree in another field of study before entering the program. Recently we have engaged in a meaningful debate as to what is the relevant Bachelor's degree for our professions? Should the Ministry of Health license music therapists with any kind of undergraduate studies (with completion requirements) or does one need to have a specific Bachelor's degree in a certain field? And if the answer is yes, what fields should be included? For example, should fields like education and anthropology be included, or only specific therapeutic professions - psychology, social work and special education?

A second issue is how much of an art background does one need in order to get a license, and how can it be measured? How much of it should one have before the entry level and how much can be completed during the program itself? What subjects should be included in the knowledge of art? How much has to be theoretical (music history) and how much of it has to be the actual skill (playing an instrument, drawing, dancing or other art media)?

A third issue has to do with the amount of "stag", or internship. How much of it has to be included within the training program and how much of it has to be continued afterwards by each individual? Stag requires supervision. Where will it be given and by whom, and who will pay for it? Will it be an

integral part of the stag, which means that it is offered and financed by the institution? Or will people have to seek private supervision and pay for it themselves? And what is the right supervision for our field? How much supervision should be given by a psychologist or a social worker? How much should be given by a music therapist?

In the United States, the American Music Therapy Association has a list of entry-level competencies for the practice of music therapy in three areas: musical foundations, clinical foundations and music therapy. There are no officially adopted advanced competencies at this time. The AMTA has just approved new standards for the education and training of music therapists. The new standards are being circulated and will have an effect on internship and supervision requirements.

I would be very interested in comparing our situation concerning such issues and dilemmas to other countries in Europe, South America, South Africa, Asia and Australia. In which countries is the profession of music therapy an official profession and included and carried out under the health law? What are the association's requirements to become a professional music therapist? Which organization registers therapists and gives them licenses?

Developing Research

In general, research in Israel is less developed than clinical work. I hope that in the near future, with the establishment of training programs at Master's and Doctoral levels, many more music therapists will be engaged in research.

One of our main goals at Bar Ilan University is to develop clinically based, applied research in music therapy and to initiate music therapy research in major hospitals. We have two research projects in affiliation with two of the major hospitals in Israel. The first project is music therapy with children who have Williams Syndrome. It focuses on reducing false and increasing authentic behaviors. The second project is music therapy with patients who are awaiting heart transplants, which focuses on reducing tension and anxiety and increasing relaxation and control. There are several doctoral dissertations in the works.

One of the main topics that European, American and Australian researchers in music therapy are currently interested in is the meaning of music in the music therapy experience and different ways of analyzing the music (whether improvised or listened to) in the context of music therapy in order to find meaning. Many researchers throughout the world are finding that quantitative methods cannot help with these kinds of questions and are looking for another paradigm.

Qualitative research has become an integral research modality in music therapy. Many researchers are doing qualitative research studies on a variety of subjects. The Doctoral program at New York University, for example, is interested in facilitating qualitative research in music therapy, the same as the University of Witten-Herdecke, Germany. The Doctoral programs at Aalborg University, Denmark and at the University of Melbourne, Australia, are interested in developing both qualitative and quantitative research in Music Therapy.

In terms of qualitative research in Israel, I am happy to say that lately, more and more researchers, especially in the field of education (but also psychology and social work), have been doing qualitative research. A special forum for qualitative research was created in order to share information and support. An international conference on qualitative research is going to take place in Tel Aviv University, Israel, in September 2001, with the participation of well-known international guests.

Cultural issues in music therapy

During the last few years it is noticeable that cultural issues in music therapy have occupied more music therapists from various countries. In Norway, both Even Ruud (1997a, 1997b) and Brynjulf Stige (1993) have written about the subject. Ruud calls for taking music therapy out of the "closed rooms" and bringing it to the society if we want our profession to be influential in political decisions in the health system. In Australia, Ruth Bright (1996) talks about immigrants and refugees and deals with issues such as grief and powerlessness, and how to help people regain control of their lives. Carolyn Kenny from the United States and Canada has been interested in cultural issues for many years and chaired a panel in the 9th World Congress of Music Therapy on the theme of: "Qualitative research in music therapy and social change". Culture and multiculturalism was, in fact, one of the main themes in the Washington congress.

Israel is a multicultural country, like many other countries all over the world. In a multicultural society, where there are many ethnic and cultural groups and continuous immigration, the identity of our clients can be shaken and even destroyed. Some of our clients suffer from cultural losses and radical changes in lifestyle, things that cause difficulties in interpreting cultural symbols and signs, thus interfering with their ability to give meaning to the world around them.

As music therapists, we are mainly concerned with our clients' health and quality of life. Therefore we need to look at our clients from a cultural perspective instead of one that focuses only on the individual as a totally independent entity with external influences. We need to study the concept of multiculturalism and understand the cultural patterns of our client's identity. A one-day conference on that theme is going to take place in the music therapy program in Levinsky College in Israel on May, 2001.

It would be interesting to share within our new journal how we deal with cultural dilemmas. How much can we help our clients establish a cultural identity? In what ways can we help the whole society and influence the health system so that both individuals and society will benefit?

Finale

Our main goal in Israel, Europe and the entire world is to continue to develop the field - to promote research and theory, to improve training programs and clinical practice, to enter into new therapeutic and teaching facilities, to promote professional writing and in some countries to get an official recognition by the government.

I'd like to end this article on a personal note. I am an Israeli, and it has been a big and important part of my identity. However, I prefer to see myself as a citizen of the world. I have traveled and lived in other countries and received all of my music therapy training and education outside of my country (in the United States). It allowed me to be with people from all over the world. The New York University music therapy community has been my professional and spiritual home for many years. I have also come to know many friends and colleagues from Canada, Europe, South Africa, the Far East and Australia. With some, we share our music. With others, we share wonderful, stimulating talks on personal, professional, spiritual and political topics. As much as I learn about the other, I learn more about myself. These ongoing multicultural experiences not only make me richer but also re-shape and widen my personal identity.

Please join in and share your thoughts, feelings and interests with us. Tell us about your countries and let's get to know each other, learn from each other, enlarge and strengthen our worldwide music therapy community.

Bibliography

Amir, Dorit (1999). *Meeting the sounds, music therapy: Practice, theory and research*. Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar Ilan Publishing Company.

Bright, Ruth (1996). *Grief and powerlessness: Helping people regain control of their lives*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Ruud, Even (1997a). Music and Identity. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, 6(1), pp. 3-13.

Ruud, Even (1997b). Music and the Quality of Life. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, 6(2), pp. 86-97.

Music Therapy in Israel. In C.D. Maranto (Ed.). *Music Therapy International Perspectives*. Pipersville, PA: Jeffrey Books, pp 305-320.

Stige, Brynjulf (1993). *Music therapy as cultural engagement*. A paper presented in the 7th World Congress of Music Therapy, Spain.

To cite this page:

Amir, Dorit (2005). Music Therapy in Israel. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy*. Retrieved from <http://www.voices.no/mainissues/mitext11amir.html>

Moderated discussion

Add your comments and responses to this essay in our *Moderated Discussions*. Contributions should be e-mailed to either **Barabara Wheeler** or **Thomas Wosch Guidelines for discussions**

View contributions on this essay: [yet no contribution]



©2005. VOICES. All rights reserved