

## EDITORIAL

# Adapting to change, welcoming otherness

**Elizabeth Coombes**

University of South Wales, UK

**Giorgos Tsiris**

Queen Margaret University & St Columba's Hospice Care, UK

### AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Elizabeth Coombes**, PhD, FHEA FAMI, is leader of the MA Music Therapy course at the University of South Wales and book review editor of *Approaches*. [[elizabeth.coombes@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:elizabeth.coombes@southwales.ac.uk)]

**Giorgos Tsiris**, PhD, is senior lecturer in music therapy at Queen Margaret University, arts lead at St Columba's Hospice Care, and editor-in-chief of *Approaches*. [[gtsiris@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:gtsiris@qmu.ac.uk)]

### Publication history:

Submitted 25 Dec 2020

Accepted 28 Dec 2020

First published 30 Dec 2020

The second issue of *Approaches* in 2020 sees the world still in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic. Music therapy practitioners, educators, and researchers continue to adapt their practice creatively and develop new ways of working while navigating the challenges posed by the pandemic. What is becoming clear is that many of these changes are not simply temporary measures. Instead, they hold the potential to broaden practice, research, and theory, leading to a re-visioning of how music therapy can be practised, conceptualised, taught, and researched. As this re-visioning is becoming gradually evident (Lawes, 2020; Molyneux et al., 2020; Rizkallah, 2020), we encourage paper submissions to the journal reflecting on the implications of the pandemic for music therapy on local, national, or international level.

Although not specific to the pandemic, the contents of this issue of *Approaches* bring to the fore sociocultural perspectives and key considerations around the role of music therapy in ageing and end-of-life care. These considerations of course may well inform and resonate with our professional and societal responses to COVID-19 too. Kirkwood et al. present a synopsis of a feasibility study of music therapy in palliative care, while Segall explores music therapists' attitude toward wellness and ageing in relation to training curricula. Both papers link to the underlying theme of the special feature contained in this issue. Edited by Giorgos Tsiris and Enrico Ceccato, this special feature is dedicated to Mediterranean perspectives on dementia and end-of-life care documenting music therapy in eight countries. The different country reports showcase the interplay between culture and practice, and the diverse paths of development that music therapy has followed in the Mediterranean region. Some of these paths fit in more easily with dominant Western narratives of music therapy as a contemporary professional field, while other paths are linked more closely to traditional and, at times, mystical uses of music in healing rituals. The articles by Katušić and Konieczna-Nowak, and by Abdulbaki and Berger – while not part of the special feature – offer equally rich sociocultural perspectives exploring therapeutic boundaries in the clinical practice of Croatian and Polish music therapists, and the provision of music therapy in Syrian refugee host environments respectively.

Overall – when taken together with the selection of articles, reports, book reviews and conference reports – this issue outlines a rich tapestry of music therapy practice documenting voices and perspectives some of which may not sit comfortably with the prevailing discourse in the field. This openness to otherness is an ever more important component of the ethos of *Approaches* while considering the need to explore further how issues of justice, equity, oppression, and marginalisation influence practice and knowledge generation in the field (Norris, 2020; Whitehead-Pleaux & Tan, 2013).

In closing, we would like to express our gratitude to three colleagues who are stepping down from our editorial team at the end of this year: Daphne Rickson, Neta Spiro, and Laura Corrigan. Each and every one of them have played a crucial role in the development of the journal. Daphne joined the editorial board in 2013 and three years later she became associate editor and worked diligently with numerous authors and reviewers. Her sensitive, dedicated, and insightful way of working championed the ethos of *Approaches* and expanded the journal's reach. Her legacy will continue to influence and inspire our collective work. Equally, Neta's interdisciplinary expertise has been instrumental in the advancement of our work as a music therapy journal with an explicit commitment to dialogue across different disciplines and professional fields. Lastly, Laura's contribution expanded beyond her standard role as a language consultant to include the development of the referencing style details on our website and of the journal's in-house proofreading guide. As we thank each of them, we also warmly welcome our new colleagues who recently joined the editorial team: Saphia Abou-Amer, Jodie Boska, Konstantina Katostari, Crystal Luk, Elizabeth Mitchell, Kivijärvi Sanna, Indra Selvarajah, and Rachel Swanick.

## REFERENCES

- Lawes, M. (2020). Creating a COVID-19 Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) self-help resource for those with mild to moderate symptoms of the disease. *Approaches: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Music Therapy*, 1-17. <http://approaches.gr/lawes-r20201113/>
- Molyneux, C., Hardy, T., Lin, Y.-T., McKinnon, K., & Odell-Miller, H. (2020). Together in Sound: Music therapy groups for people with dementia and their companions – moving online in response to a pandemic. *Approaches: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Music Therapy*, 1-17. <http://approaches.gr/molyneux-r20201219/>
- Norris, M. (2020). A call for radical imagining: Exploring anti-blackness in the music therapy profession. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy*, 20(3). <https://voices.no/index.php/voices/article/view/3167/3081>
- Rizkallah, M. (2020). The North London Music Therapy Phone Support Service for NHS staff during the COVID-19 pandemic: A report about the service and its relevance for the music therapy profession. *Approaches: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Music Therapy*, 1-9. <http://approaches.gr/rizkallah-r20201110/>
- Whitehead-Pleaux, A., & Tan, X. (Eds.). (2013). *Cultural intersections in music therapy: Music, health, and the person*. Barcelona Publishers.