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"Edith Hillman Boxill - Making Peace"

By Carolyn Kenny [|Author bio & contact info|](#)

One of my jobs as Co-editor-in-Chief for *Voices* is to help our contributors and editors who use English as a second language. On October 13, 2005, I was reading through Ng Wang Feng's text for this issue, titled "Music Therapy, War Trauma, and Peace". In the article Wang Feng pays tribute to several music therapists who have worked with war trauma and have dedicated themselves to the peace movement. Wang Feng was writing about Edith Hillman Boxill.



I took a break from my editing job and checked my e-mails. And I was shocked and saddened by three e-mails communicating the news that Edith Hillman Boxill passed away on October 11, 2005. Wang Feng had written in her article: "Edith is passionate about Music Therapists for Peace's vision for music therapists to be 'ambassadors of peace.' She wrote about the founding of *Music Therapists for Peace* in 1988 in Boston, Massachusetts." (see article in this issue by Ng Wang Feng).

Yes, Edith Hillman Boxill was a passionate woman. She founded a vibrant and active organization in 1988 called *Music Therapists for Peace*. In 1988 she also edited a special issue of *Music Therapy*, the journal of the *American Association for Music Therapy*. In the invitation to submit statements for her special issue, Edith wrote:

Dear Colleague:

There's a change in the making, and you are invited to participate. . . Music Therapy, the journal of the American Association for Music Therapy (AAMT), is expanding its vistas. We are opening up a dialogue among music therapists, music educators, musicians, psychologists, physicists, physicians, and other health professionals, designed to explore the unique potential of music to affect wholeness/health in this modern age.

Humankind faces a challenge such as has never before beset us-the survival of our planet. It is to be hoped that the field of music therapy will bring about states of harmony, consonance, resonance, synchronicity that reach beyond the parochial walls of our practice-to assume a world perspective-yes, to promote global peace." (Boxill, 1998, p.5).

Edith Hillman Boxill was a woman of courage, vision, compassion, and peace. She worked tirelessly to emphasize the role that Music Therapists could play in making peace. As you will read in Ng Wang Feng's article, in 1993, Edith also founded *Students against Violence Everywhere* (SAVE) Through Music Therapy.

In 2001, Edith was exactly where she was supposed to be and where she could be the most effective. As part of the *2001 United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations*, Edith, along with a host of music therapists, world leaders, composers, philanthropists of the arts, physicians, and scientists, participated in a panel to advocate the use of music to encourage healing and peace around the world.

In 2003, Edith made several contributions to *Voices* discussions, describing the very effective

initiative of *Music Therapists for Peace* - the *Drumming Circle for Peace* and reminding us about the power of language to communicate violence or peace to young children.

Edith Hillman Boxill is an inspiration to many Music Therapists around the world, particularly Music Therapy students, who are just beginning to shape their notions of what is possible in this world. She was a pioneer of the highest order and will be sorely missed. But her work will carry on through the many students, professional Music Therapists, and hundreds of others whose lives she has touched by making peace day-by-day, person-by-person, country-by-country, continent-by-continent, world-by-world.

Ng Wang Feng is only one of the wonderful articles you will encounter in this issue of *Voices*.

I also want to take this opportunity to present our new European Editor, Dr. Jane Edwards. Jane is the Course Director for the MA in Music Therapy at the University of Limerick, Ireland where she holds a Senior Lecturer post (www.iwmc.ie). She is also a Guest Professor at the Institute for Music Therapy in Berlin, Germany. She is known to many of us through her writings including journal papers and book chapters, many of them report on music therapy for children in hospital but she has also published about music therapy theory and research. Jane states:

As European Editor, I hope to encourage and facilitate new voices in music therapy to write about their work; experiences, and aspirations. These new voices might be experienced practitioners who have never published, or new graduates who are unsure about writing in a public domain, or might be non-music therapists whose voices would add something to the mix of ideas we can consider when developing the field. I hope to be open to support and encourage writers from all European countries in the development of new ideas and the critical examination of existing ideas in music therapy.

Since we are gradually moving to Co-editors for every region, eventually Jane will be joined by one of our colleagues who will share the work for this region. We extend a hardy welcome to Jane and look forward to working with her over the months and years ahead.

Reference

Boxill, Edith Hillman (1988). Letter of invitation. *Music Therapy*. 7(1)

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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**

Comments to this essay:

- **Joseph Moreno**, December 6, 2005.

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