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Voices2(1)Hartley

## 10th World Congress of Music Therapy

### 'Dialogue and Debate' Music Therapy in the 21st Century A Contemporary Force for Change

By Nigel Hartley [|Author bio & contact info|](#)



'...All the words that I utter  
And all the words that I write,  
Must spread out their wings untiring,  
And never rest in their flight...'

**W.B. Yeats**

Oxford is the place where I live, and also the place where I have worked for a number of years. My music therapy practise takes place in the local Hospice - part of an Oxford National Health Service Trust, with patients facing the end of life in one way or another. As the current Chairperson of the British Society for Music Therapy, it seemed fitting, therefore, to suggest Oxford as the venue for the **10th World Congress of Music Therapy** - 'Dialogue and Debate' - Music Therapy in the 21st Century. A Contemporary Force for Change.

Once the venue for the Congress had been secured we needed a place to start from, a point of origin, if you like; it was clear to us that Oxford was a centre of a unique academic and political tradition, and if it was to serve us well as a music therapy world congress location, we would need to start with the place itself - the history, the traditions, but also the present day image.

A massive part of Oxford's uniqueness lies in its philosophy of the two areas of dialogue and debate. Over a number of years, the Oxford Union Debating Society has provided a forum for both of these concepts - the art of debate, balanced by the craft of dialogue. It is a system of free-speech and always holds the possibility that other people's experiences and beliefs may be equally as appropriate as our own; this attitude is demanded of all who place themselves within this particular framework. Both dialogue and debate are vital concepts to all aspects of our life and world.

As the number of music therapists world-wide continues to increase, music therapy, as a discipline opens its doors to new possibilities. We all encounter music therapists using new and exciting ways of articulating and defining their work - new languages emerge in terms of describing the clinical work of the music therapist, the educating of new music therapists and those further afield, and the underlying research which has become vital in sustaining both the clinical work and education.

At the heart of this congress, therefore, lies this philosophy of Dialogue and Debate. It will include three areas within which music therapists are increasingly placing their work; each area presents us with possibility, potential and challenge, offering difference in both language and philosophy and offering music therapy as a very real 'Contemporary Force for Change'.

**Music, Culture, Social Action**

The first day of the congress will open with a keynote speech from Professor Nigel Osborne. He is professor of music at the University of Edinburgh and is world-renowned as a composer, performer, teacher, community music director and human rights activist. His connection with music therapy comes from his development of music projects, particularly in Eastern Europe, following the aftermath of war, destruction and famine. Many of our colleagues have been involved with such projects, and as such have brought the experience and benefit of music therapy to many. The keynote will be followed by responses from two international music therapists, Brynjulf Stige and Dr Julie Sutton. Both of these colleagues have practised, written and research widely into this area of work, and will help us to place Professor Osborne's ideas within the music therapy context. Questions will be invited from the audience to open the possibilities even wider.

### **Music, Meaning, Relationship**

Dr Anne Alvarez will provide the opening keynote speech of the second day and to many she will need no introduction. She is internationally renowned for her work as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist with autistic, abused and deprived children, and continues to write and lecture world wide about her experiences. She has influenced many music therapists through her insights into the musical makeup of the human condition, providing language and context for many of our colleagues work and teaching. This keynote will be responded to by the music therapists Jackie Robarts and Jinah Kim, both internationally renowned for their contribution to our practise in terms of their work with autistic and abused children. Again, questions will be invited from the audience to further open up the debate beyond the three presenters.

### **Music, Spirituality, Healing**

Many music therapists struggle to articulate the spiritual dimensions of the musical experiences encountered between music therapists and their patients. Increasingly, it becomes part of the music therapy canvass, and as such will be opened up for both dialogue and debate on the final day of this congress. The Very Reverend Michael Mayne, Dean Emeritus of Westminster, will open up this day sharing his thoughts and experiences around music, creativity and spiritual experience. He has written widely on the subject including the recently published book 'Learning to Dance'. He has shared experiences with music therapists, particularly those of us who have worked consistently with those people facing the end of their lives - an area of music therapy practise which continues to grow at this exciting stage of our professions development. His speech will be responded to by Professor David Aldridge, who has written and lectured widely about the connections between music therapy and spirituality, and who has also inspired many music therapists to think about their work in this exciting and dynamic way. The second respondent will be Lucanne Magill, an experienced American music therapist from within the field of Palliative Care.

### **Music, Dialogue and Debate**

The fourth day of the Congress will open with three large roundtable discussions based around the themes of the other three days, offering the opportunity for other people to dialogue and debate around the issues in a less formal way. Of course, the congress will include over two hundred paper presentations, workshops and poster presentations from music therapists all over the world. The 'Oxford Philosophy' will be fostered in all settings, offering the potential for easiness with each other and a feeling of inclusiveness.

It has always been our idea to provide a Congress sitting on the cutting edge of music therapy practise, education and research at this dynamic time of our professions development. As a result of this, many newer music therapists will have the opportunity to present their work and ideas as well as the more well-known names from the field. Woven into the programme will be a feast of the best of music from the United Kingdom, with performances from the renowned percussionist Evelyn Glennie and the 'Cellist Julian Lloyd Webber. Evensong at Keble Chapel will provide another insight into University life at Oxford and an opportunity for us all to be together in music.

We hope you are excited and maybe a little challenged by the programme, philosophy and direction of this 10th World Congress. Maybe, in some small way it can make a difference to the development of the music therapy profession in a global sense.

As delegates of the **10th World Congress of Music Therapy**, you are our most welcome

guests. As the key most important players in this event, that you feel warmly welcome and included at all levels is of the utmost importance to us. Whether you are presenting a paper, leading a workshop, asking challenging questions or providing a listening ear, your participation is of equal importance.

Come, come,  
whoever you are,  
Wanderer, worshipper, lover of learning,  
It doesn't matter.  
Ours is not a caravan of despair.  
Come, even if you've broken your vow a thousand times.  
Come, come, yet again, come.

**(Jelaludin Rumi Transl. Coleman Barks)**

As chairperson of the **10th World Congress of Music Therapy** and on behalf of the United Kingdom Music Therapy profession I extend to you the hand of friendship and welcome, not only to Oxford as the location of our meeting, but to the City where I both live and practise as a music therapist. I look forward to our time together.

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