

Recent Trends in the Organization of Music Therapy in Japan

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is not to present new knowledge but to explain the tendency concerning recent music therapy in Japan, to those who are interested in becoming involved in this activity. Further, the content of this information does not come from the author's direct involvement with music therapy but is based on reports from people actively engaged in it.

I. Foundation of the Japanese Music Therapy Association as a United Organization

The big event in music therapy in Japan was the establishment of a national organization unifying areas of music therapy. The practice of such therapy in Japan is said to have started in the 1950s but, according to Mr. Norikazu Matsui, the germ of the organization was the establishment of the "Japanese Music Therapy Association" founded by the late Tetsuro Kaga who devoted his life to music therapy for the education of handicapped children. Also the establishment of the "Study Group of Music Therapists" by Dr. Shitsubun Yamamatsu, Professor Emeritus of Osaka City University in 1969 and the "Meeting Group for Music Psychology and Music Therapy of Japan" by the late Hitoshi Sakurai in 1960 made a great contribution to personal exchange in the music therapy area. Dr. Matsui worked for the promotion of music therapy through psychotherapy and was a key person in the establishment of the Association for Clinical

Music Therapy, Japan that will be mentioned again later in this paper.

From such steady efforts, two groups of national level associations comprising practitioners and researchers were formed recently. These are, the "Japan Biomusic Association", founded in the early days as a study group and the Association for Clinical Music Therapy, Japan" in 1994).

The Japan Biomusic Association as its name suggests, is involved in studies concerning how to relax people under different kinds of psychological and physical stress and how to prevent the occurrence of such stress by means of music. The Association was developed by people in the areas of psychosomatic medicine and medical care for the total person. The Association for Clinical Music Therapy, Japan was established by people and groups working for the education, therapy and help of the handicapped by means of music in various locations and their aim is to study the clinical techniques and knowledge necessary for such practice. The group consists of clinical practitioners who use music for their therapy. (2) There was an unspoken wish of both music therapy practitioners and members of the Japan Biomusic Association to form a national organization for the future development of music therapy and to obtain social recognition through further growth in Japan. As a result, these two groups formed the "Japanese Federation of Music Therapy" in 1995, while the Japanese Music Therapy Association was formally

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established on April 1, 2001, after a period of six years. The objectives of the association were stated in item 3 of chapter 2 of the constitution, as follows: This association aims to carry out interdisciplinary studies on the function and role of music in relation to sickness and health, towards the active development of music therapy in medicine, welfare, health and education, and to make a wide ranging contribution through music therapy to the maintenance and promotion of peoples health.

II. Background of the Birth of the National Organization and Approval System

The other purpose for the establishment of such an association is to set national qualifications for music therapists in order to promote music therapy as a recognized part of medical treatment. For this purpose the creation of a proper approval system by the association for music therapists and the building up of the reliability of music therapy and therapists first materialized under the auspices of the association. (3)

In the "Regulations to Approve Music Therapists Through the Japanese Music Therapy Association" the following is stipulated concerning this certification system. In order to improve music therapy as a clinical activity meeting a certain standard which can deal with criticism, thereby providing higher quality service, it is necessary to establish a professional educational institution together with the establishment of the title for certified music therapists, as well as a qualification system to identify their specialty.

The Japanese Music Therapy Association has issued the qualification called "Music Therapist certified by the Japanese Music Therapists Association" from 2001 as temporarily effective to March 2005. After that this recognition will be given to people who have completed the study units and training according to the association's

directed curriculum and passed the examination.

III. Related Organizations

Needless to say, there are many large and small organizations at the national and local level that are practicing music therapy. Similarly, there are various music therapists who are recognized and certified by both the prefectural and city governments as well as by private institutions. In this paper we will deal only with the system recently established by the Japanese Music Therapy Association. Besides this, there is an approval system recognized by the national organization for training music therapists, which was established by people in universities and colleges of music in July 1999. They also have restricted rules, and in accordance with this, they issue a degree of music therapist (class 1 and class 2). This is currently in practice.

IV. Organization in Niigata Prefecture

This section will briefly discuss the movement in Niigata. The Music Therapy Society was started by Dr. Akira Hayakawa who has been active as a key person in music therapy at the Tamiya Hospital in Nagaoka City since June 1992. This is still the only organized group in Niigata.

This Society participated in the preparatory meeting held in January 1994 in response to an invitation from the Clinical Music Association upon the occasion of its establishment. In July 1998 the Society reestablished itself under the name "Niigata Music Therapy Society" The membership totaled about fifty in 1998, half of whom were music therapists, with the remainder having some relation to music including piano teachers. They held meetings twice a year, inviting speakers from outside Niigata Prefecture and their activity continues today (4).

Following establishment of the Japanese Music Therapy Association, members from Niigata Prefecture joined with members from the

Prefectures of Nagano, Toyama, Ishikawa and Fukui to form the Shinetsu/Hokuriku Branch of the Association and worked for the development of music activity in Niigata Prefecture.

V. Contents of the Research Study

At the end of this paper, the titles of case studies published in volumes one and two of the Journal of the Japanese Music Therapy Association are listed as references to help in understanding the trend of music therapy in Japan.

[Original Papers]

- Studies on the fluctuation of heartbeat and activity of the autonomous Nerves: the 8th report, Effects on sports players and 1/f music hearing.

- Evaluation by hearing psychology for fluctuation of voice during music therapy.

- BGM prevents reduction of the immune system caused by stress — Study using NK cell activity as a marker.

- The relationship between the adaptability of mental patients to dental treatment and participation in music therapy sessions.

(The above are taken from vol. 1 - 2)

- Effectiveness of music therapy in early life education for autistic children.

- Effects of various music on the completion of signal detecting problems.

- The cluster and dimension revealed from the free-writing approach towards students music hearing activities in daily life.

(The above are taken from vol. 2 - 1)

[Case Study]

- Trials of phased music therapy at care and treatment-type medical institutions.

- Music therapy for home care following surgery for lung cancer.

- Youth suffering from social withdrawal.

(The above are taken from vol. 1 - 2)

- Number of smiles as indicators of the effects of music therapy after an operation.

- Effectiveness of music therapy in a small group of the elderly with dementia.

- Trials with patients suffering from Total Aphasia to regain the language of greetings by the introduction of singing.

(The above are taken from vol. 2 -1)

Conclusion

As a psychologist, music therapy was very familiar to me as a part of psychiatric treatment. I joined the Association of Biomusic to obtain information and knowledge concerning research and clinical work on the function of music for the mind and body, as I have decided to specialize in this field.

With a wide application from infants to the elderly, music therapy has diverse purposes such as for the education of handicapped children, treatment of the disabled, and terminal and general health care. Its methods and measures vary also including passive and active therapy, individual or group sessions, use of musical instruments or the like and singing. Concern and expectation regarding music therapy has probably increased, as music is familiar to everyone. If music can be used as therapy, if people are to overcome disabilities and maintain their health through music, music therapists must study this case-by-case and analyze and understand scientifically the results in order to increase its application. However, in some cases, an adverse effect may occur.

Establishment of a national organization; the Japanese Music Therapy Association may be the first step toward an ideal future for music therapy in Japan. The activity and development of the organization for music therapy has been extremely rapid as have changes; thus the development of music therapy has become a reality although not without trial and error.

The author applauds the formation of groups and organizations that function and make a contribution to human welfare.

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