therapy, there are key points and questions to consider, a list of resources required and a Table offering criteria for performance evaluation. McFerran concludes by presenting a Table that outlines “A symphonic model of music therapy group development” (p.271).

The author summarises by highlighting the need for professional and peer supervision when working with adolescents and states the importance of clinicians in revisiting their own experience of this developmental stage of life. It is suggested that future research should systematically focus on the ways that teenagers use music to “have fun, to express something of who they are, and to explore who they might become” (p. 277).

McFerran’s genuine interest and passion for working with young people is infectious and her caring and genuine regard for the people with whom she has worked shines through. This book is a timely resource that will add to other music therapy references (Baker & Wigram, 2005; Grocke & Wigram, 2006; Wigram, 2004) and is a valuable reference for clinicians, students and educators interested in or currently working with this population.

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References


It is now almost ten years since Community Music Therapy (CoMT) splashed clearly and forcefully into international music therapy waters, with the publication of Gary Ansdell’s web-based article (2002) and Brynjulf Stige’s book (2002) in the same year. Since then there has been much more open
discussion about certain aspects of music therapy practice, such as performance (Ansdell, 2005), not to mention the rapid development of theoretical frameworks to support and extend the practice of CoMT.

To date, there are two books explicitly devoted to the topic; the first was published in 2004 and takes “Community Music Therapy” as its title. Edited by Mercedes Pavlicevic and Gary Ansdell, the first book provides several case studies from different parts of the world that challenge traditional boundaries and definitions of music therapy. Building overarching theories out of the rubble was not so much a focus of this first book; instead, context and “anti-definitions” were emphasised. Six years on, the second book devoted to Community Music Therapy is available. Refreshingly, it represents less reaction toward “consensus music therapy” and more bravery in offering well-developed theories to support and extend CoMT practices. Context, however, is still the magic word.

Written by Brynulf Stige and Cochavit Elefant in collaboration with the editors of the first CoMT book, Gary Ansdell and Mercedes Pavlicevic, Where Music Helps communicates the main findings from a collaborative research project involving 8 qualitative case studies from Norway, Israel, South Africa and England. From Norway, Stige examines a cultural festival for adults with intellectual disabilities as well as a senior choir. Elefant explores how music can facilitate integration in two different cases set in Israel; one case involves bringing together elementary school children with and without special needs while the other case combines two very different adult choirs. Andsell investigates a singing and performing group of adults in East London as well as a musical performance in Southern England by neurological patients who had moved beyond the acute stage of the health. And from South Africa, Pavlicevic explores a variety of musical activities involved in two different community-based programs for young people.

Each of the authors first describes the case in a narrative entitled “Action” and then interprets the case as “Reflection.” These subtitles are evocative of the research spiral associated with Participatory Action Research, and the critically-oriented and situated ideas within the book are certainly well aligned with this approach. The “Action” sections are engaging, grounded and sometimes moving, while the “Reflection” sections transport the reader more into the realms of intellect, into cerebral journeys involving sophisticated yet relevant and useful theoretical explorations of where, not to mention how, music helped in each case. Most of the authors draw upon ideas from “new musicology,” rather than literatures from psychology or medicine, in order to develop their
reflections. Each author artfully explores the themes that emerge in their analyses; these themes include belonging, intergroup processes, collaborative musicing, participation, performance, participatory change processes, social activism and mutual care. It is the metamorphosis of ideas drawn from musicology as well as the depth to which they are related to each case that particularly signify just how far CoMT theory and practice has come.

If Community Music Therapy (2004) helped to clear the decks, Where Music Helps is radiantly successful in building the first CoMT storey. Less is written in reaction to what has gone before, and more is bravely constructed. In their conclusion, the authors posit that CoMT is ecological, participatory, performative, resource-oriented and actively reflective. They also suggest that CoMT is not a unified theory but “a broad perspective exploring relationships between the individual, community and society in relation to music and health” (Stige, 2010, p. 15-16). Where Music Helps is the closest a music therapy publication has ever come towards a broad understanding of “music and health.” I heartily recommend it to music practitioners who are interested in exploring innovative, critical, situated and in-depth ways of understanding and communicating the relationship between music and health.

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References


