misplaced in a book supposedly representing music therapy as it works in rehabilitation settings.

There is a welcome return to the clarity and style of the earlier chapters in the next chapter about music therapy in Multiple Sclerosis which provides a thorough overview of pertinent issues for those living with MS. A controlled pilot study is presented which used both qualitative analysis as well as quantitative data gained from standardised scales.

Chapter 8 presents a controlled study of a particular music-based treatment method for late stage rehabilitation of chronic aphasia. Despite lengthy reporting of significant positive results, the treatment protocol is never described, making replication by either clinician or researcher impossible.

The final chapters are also not representative of music therapy in neurological rehabilitation as it is practiced in Europe, the US or Australia. At the end of the book, I was still unsure of the target audience. This is not a book I would recommend to those wishing to gain a clear picture of music therapy in this field. As wider references on music therapy with neurological populations are largely absent from Chapters 1-3, 5 and 8, the book does not stand as an authoritative text for the reader who wants to be guided to the maximum number of sources about their area of interest. I would argue that the title suggests a much more representative view than is given.


Wendy Magee PhD RMT
International Research Fellow, Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability


This new book from JKP explores the various ways that humans seek altered states of consciousness, the reasons why, and the role that music plays in achieving, enhancing and maintaining these states. Music and altered States is a culturally rich and diverse book that examines aspects of music’s role in altering consciousness from Africa to Europe, from the US to the
Middle East. This is perhaps the book's strongest point, giving it a broad scope that challenges the reader's presuppositions about music's capacity to move listeners and players to an altered state where healing potential may be possible. The book begins by introducing the reader to the construct of consciousness and gives useful explanations of the discernable altered states we know of (e.g. trance-hypnosis, dreaming, and coma). Parts of the book assert that we experience alterations in our consciousness more frequently than we think. Take for example sleep, dreaming, daydreaming, or even the trance-like state achieved in a candle-lit and music accompanied bath after a hard days work.

Aspects of the music that accompanies the reaching altered states throughout the world will be of the most interest to the music therapist. Many of the chapters examine the music that support and enhance altered states, with the book overall giving a sound cross-section of the musical features that are salient in these realms (sound samples are available on-line). Of particular interest are the effects of monotonous drumming on imagery sequence and the concept of music as a "safety rope" during a deeply altered state. *Music and altered States* makes use of quantitative and qualitative perspectives and contains practical neurobiological explanations of music's effect on the brain, along with further aspects of Fachner's investigations into the links between drugs and pop music culture and the effects of cannabis on music perception.

The book's most fascinating chapter is Maas and Strubelt's empirical exploration of the ritualistic use of the Iboga plant (a hallucinogen) in the African country of Gabon. Whilst on study related trips to the region, first Maas and then Strubelt were permitted to undertake an initiation ceremony where the Iboga plant assists in facilitating a near death experience that serves as a means of personal change and maturation, and a broadening of one's self-concept. Maas' candid description of his hallucinations during the ritual is worth the price of admission alone (as are the extraordinary photographs), and music's fascinating role in supporting the experience of the initiate is explored in detail. The book's final chapters explore the myriad roles that music plays in the lives of substance dependent adults, those who seek out altered states as a means of escape from reality. Horesh describes her work in a Therapeutic Community in Israel, where she assists her clients in exploring their relationships with potentially "dangerous" music, that music with which they have drug related associations. Punkanen explores the use music accompanied physio-acoustic treatment for the treatment of traumatic memories in substance dependent adults.

*Musics and Altered States* will challenge the reader's ideas about consciousness, awareness, and music's role in removing the listener from
their “normal” state of consciousness and into a heightened state of awareness for the purposes of healing, growth, and change. I enjoyed many aspects of this book. It broadened my understanding of the use of music and substances in ritualistic and spiritual settings, it enhanced my knowledge of altered states and their healing potential, and it increased my knowledge of how frequently our consciousness is subject to small variations. I recommend Music and altered states to anyone who has an interest in music and its effects on consciousness.

John Hedigan RMT
Odyssey House Victoria, Melbourne


The acknowledgement of song writing as an important tool in music therapy clinical work is clearly on the increase. Although journal articles make reference to the use of song writing, and occasionally to the details of methodological implementation, this textbook is an opportunity to dive deeply into the details of its application. The range of chapters provides a focused analysis of the decisions made by music therapists during the song writing process. Authors flesh out a unique rationale for their specific approach to the method. A great variety of clinical populations are evocatively described as participating in the song writing experience. And yet despite this diversity, there is obvious consistency in the way music therapists approach writing songs with clients. As Wigram helpfully outlines in the final summary chapter, approaches essentially fall into the following structure.

Introducing the concept of song writing
Formulation of lyrics
Development of music
Writing down a song
Performing / Recording a song

This “flexible approach to song writing technique” (FAST) (p. 262) offers a range of possible methodological options at each stage, but its essence is a reflection of what the contributors to this book have consistently stated.