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The 4th International Conference of the International Association for Music and Medicine (IAMM)

Amy Clements-Cortés

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Conference report

The 4th International Conference of the International Association for Music and Medicine (IAMM)

Amy Clements-Cortés

The 4th International Conference of the International Association for Music and Medicine (IAMM)

11-13 June 2016
Beijing, China



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In June 2016, I had the privilege and honour of attending and presenting at the 4th International Association for Music and Medicine (IAMM) Conference in Beijing, China. Attendees included music therapists, physicians, healthcare professionals, researchers, musicians and students.

It seemed timely for the conference to take place in Beijing considering that the development of music therapy in China has been growing steadily over the past two decades. The first music therapy academic programme was established at the Central Conservatory of Music by Professor Tian Gao. At present, 12 universities in China offer music therapy programmes and these schools graduate approximately 200 students each year.

Many students are also travelling to study music therapy in western countries to obtain advanced degrees; and a number of students were in attendance at the conference to learn from international delegates and their areas of specialty and research. To date, music therapy professionals from around the globe have made important contributions to the growth of the profession in China.

The conference offered a number of keynote sessions, alongside a full programme of concurrent papers and posters, as well as workshop opportunities post-conference. To see the full programme, please visit <http://iammchina.org> Concurrent sessions were conveniently organised into thematic opportunities for learning. These



Photograph 1: Amy Clements-Cortes GIM workshop attendees

included: oncology/palliative care/pain management, older adults, maternity/infant/paediatric, research, mental health, general hospital, special education, neurorehabilitation, music and health, programme development, and multi-culture. One example of a session in the neurorehabilitation theme which helps to elevate the significant impact that music therapy has, was given by Wendy Magee, titled *Music Therapy Assessment Tool for Awareness in Disorders of Consciousness (MATADOC): A Standardized Diagnostic Music-Based Measure for Minimally Responsive Populations*. This presentation outlined the MATADOC tool which has already been standardised for use in the diagnosis and treatment planning for adults with prolonged disorders of consciousness (PDOC) (Magee et al. 2014, 2016). Additionally, results from a pilot study assessing the use of the MATADOC tool for children with PDOC suggested that the tool was useful in helping with behavioural assessment and treatment planning for this population for which no standardised assessments currently exist (Magee et al. 2015). This is a substantial contribution to the field of music medicine and music therapy as the tool is used by the interdisciplinary team and highlights the important role music plays in assessment, diagnosis and treatment.

Another concurrent paper session provided by the new President of IAMM, Patravoot Vatanasapt, focused on how music can reinforce medical education. In his talk, Vatanasapt discussed the common qualities of music and medicine, and presented how music listening, music and movement and music making can be applied in medical education.

Keynotes addresses were given by: Alex Doman: *Healing at the Speed of Sound: Transforming Lives Through Music*; Tian Gao: *When Music Meets Trauma*; Suzanne Hanser: *Integrative Health Through Music Therapy: Accompanying the Journey from Illness to Wellness*; Brian Schreck: *Sounds of Life: Using Internal Sounds to Connect with the External World*; Cheryl Dileo: *Songs and Meaning-Making in Music Therapy at the End of Life*; and Tong Zhang: *Combining Medicine with Art – Effect of Music Therapy on Neurological Disorders*. While all of the keynotes were informative and well-delivered, the one that stood out for me was presented by Brian Schreck. In his moving talk, Schreck shared how he developed a music therapy intervention that records internal sounds of patients such as their heartbeat and lungs. In his clinical work this service is offered to various patients; for example, it is offered to expectant mothers whose babies will have incurable diagnoses. It is also offered to persons in paediatric palliative care, neonatal, cardiac and paediatric intensive care; and is actively used well into the bereavement process. These recordings can become so important to families when their loved ones pass away. It is through this innovative thinking, creation and embracement of technology that music medicine and music therapy work are joined to have a positive lasting benefit to patients and their families.



Photograph 2: Amy Clements-Cortés presenting at the 2016 IAMM conference

I was pleased to share my research posters on *Singing for Health and Wellness*, and *Rhythmic Sensory Stimulation and Alzheimer's Disease*. Further, I enjoyed presenting a concurrent paper on *Clinical Benefits of Singing for Cognitively Impaired Older Adults*, (Clements-Cortés, 2015a, 2015b) and



Photograph 3: 2016 IAMM delegates

providing a post-conference workshop on *An Overview of the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music*. I was fortunate to have two amazing translators assigned to my talks, and to share my work with many professionals and students.

In addition to all these wonderful education opportunities, there were several social events and dynamic presentations of music, including a wonderful jazz concert, where attendees were invited to dance and sing with the performers. Congratulations to IAMM for hosting this conference in collaboration with Tian Gao and his conference organising team directed by Jing-Wen Zhang, Bing Li, the members of IAMM's Board of Directors, and the scientific committee. Start preparing your travel plans for the 5th international IAMM conference in June 2018 in Barcelona, Spain.

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