WORLD-WIDE PERSPECTIVES ON IMPROVISATIONAL MUSIC THERAPY FROM THE TIME-A PROJECT.

*Grace Thompson*

The University of Melbourne, Australia

*T. Gottfried2, M. Geretsegger3, A. Oldfield4, F. Suvini5, G. Gattino6, C. Elefant2, J. Carpente7, J. Kim8, C. Gold9*

2Tel Aviv/IL, 3Vienna/AT, 4Fulbourn, Cambridge/UK, 5/IT, 6/BR, 7New York/US, 8Jeonju/KR, 9Bergen/NO

**Background**

Improvisational music therapy methods have been viewed as a valuable way of working with children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) since the pioneering efforts of Alvin and Nordoff and Robbins (Alvin, 1978; Nordoff & Robbins, 1977). The TIME-A project is a unique international collaboration targeted at investigating the effectiveness of improvisational music therapy (IMT) (Geretsegger, Holck, & Gold, 2012; Wigram, 2004) for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Within this project, an international “consensus model” for IMT has been developed by drawing on the world-wide perspectives of the international collaborators.

**World Wide Perspectives on Improvisational Music Therapy with Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Clinicians from 4 continents around the world presented examples of clinical work highlighting an aspect of working improvisationally in their local context. The overarching principles of the “consensus model” developed within this project were explored across the presentations, particularly those aspects of IMT that are categorized as unique, essential and acceptable within the model. Clinical examples focused on how IMT is adapted to different contexts and why IMT is useful with children with ASD (Oldfield, 2006). The clinical examples also examined the range of characteristics of the children in the study, including those who are: high functioning and verbal; low functioning and non-verbal; younger (4 years old); older (7 years old); and receiving IMT in natural settings such as the home (Thompson, 2012).

**Conclusions**

The global perspectives provided in this round table provided an opportunity for a round table discussion that will help to explore and deepen our professional understanding of an important music therapy method within the field of ASD (Gold, 2011).

**References**

Alvin, J. (1978). *Music Therapy for the Autistic Child*. London: Oxford University Press.

Geretsegger, M., Holck, U., & Gold, C. (2012). Randomised controlled Trial of Improvisational Music therapy’s Effectiveness for children with Autism spectrum disorders (TIME-A): Study protocol. *BMC Pediatrics, 12*(2). doi:10.1186/1471-2431-12-2

Gold, C. (2011). Special section: Music therapy for people with autistic spectrum disorder (Editorial). *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy, 20*(2), 105-107. doi:10.1080/08098131.2011.569164

Gold, C., Wigram, T., & Elefant, C. (2006). Music therapy for autistic spectrum disorder. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* (2), CD004381.

Nordoff, P., & Robbins, C. (1977). *Creative Music Therapy: Individualized Treatment for the Handicapped Child*. New York: John Day Co.

Oldfield, A. (2006) *Interactive Music Therapy, A Positive Approach – Music therapy at a Child Development Centre*. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley.

Thompson, G. (2012). Family-centered music therapy in the home environment: Promoting interpersonal engagement between children with autism spectrum disorder and their parents. *Music Therapy Perspectives, 30*(2), 109-116.

Wigram, T. (2004). *Improvisation: Methods and Techniques for Music Therapy Clinicians, Educators and Students*. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley.

**About the Authors**

Grace Thompson is a lecturer at The University of Melbourne whose clinical work focusses on young children with special needs in family-centered settings. graceat@unimelb.edu.au

Tali Gottfried is a PhD candidate at the Doctoral Program for Music Therapy in Aalborg University, Denmark.

Monika Geretsegger is a music therapist, clinical and health psychologist based in Vienna, and a PhD researcher at Aalborg University.

Amelia Oldfield is a lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University and has worked as a music therapist with children with ASD and their families for over 30 years.

Ferdinando M. Suvini is a music therapist and teaches at the University of Florence and the Conservatorio of Como and L’ Aquila.

Gustavo S. Gattino teaches at UFRGS University (Brazil) and his clinical work focuses on children with autism and multiple disabilities.

Cochavit Elefant, is the head of the music therapy program at the Graduate School of Creative Arts Therapies at the University of Haifa, Israel.

John Carpente is a professor of music therapy and founder/executive director of The Rebecca Center for Music Therapy and Center for Autism at Molloy College, New York.

Jinah Kim is Associate Professor at Jeonju University, Korea and Associate Editor of the Nordic Journal of Music Therapy.

Christian Gold is Principal Researcher at Uni Research, Bergen, Norway; Adjunct Professor at the University of Bergen; Honorary Professor at Aalborg University, Denmark; Editor-in-Chief of the Nordic Journal of Music Therapy.