



WFMT BUZZ
From the desk of Dr. Anita L. Swanson



World Federation of Music Therapy
Federación Mundial de Musicoterapia

August 2020

Welcome to the 2020-2023 term, World Federation of Music Therapy members!

I am so glad that many of you were able to join us for the World Congress. Though we did not get the opportunity to visit together in South Africa, it was lovely to see many music therapists online. This monthly buzz features a report from the Congress organizer Dr. Carol Lotter; it follows.



In March 2020, the local South African organizing committee was almost ready with the planning of the 16th World Congress of Music Therapy scheduled to be hosted for the very first time on the continent of Africa. The University of Pretoria was to be the host site for the congress which would have taken place from 07-11 July 2020. Well, this was not meant to be...

With the world literally coming to a standstill towards the middle of March due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the in-person congress was cancelled and the organizing committee, in consultation with the World Federation, the South African Music Therapy Association, and the University of Pretoria, made the decision to take the congress online. Our partner organizations MusicWorks and the Tshwane School of Music were very supportive as we switched tracks to begin planning, in some ways, a brand new congress.

With many hours of research, IT testing, and rescheduling, we managed to convert the World Congress Format into an online experience. The program included an opening and closing ceremony, four spotlight sessions, one student seminar, a special webinar which paid tribute to Mercedes Pavlicevic, 198 presentations (comprising paper, roundtable and workshops), 43 professional, and 21 poster presentations as well as opportunities for delegates to interact through the live chat option in each of the webinars. All recorded webinars, which include the live chat and discussion, are available to delegates until the end of September.

We were taken by surprise as the congress was sold out, with about 1,000 delegates from 59 countries participating. Those who missed out are able to take advantage of a post congress package giving access to the recorded spotlight sessions, and all presentations (without the chat and discussion) until the end of September.

The theme of this year's congress was "Polyrhythms of Music Therapy," which facilitated dialogue and debate intentionally opening the space for many voices to be heard from across the global profession of music therapy. The congress intended to honor diversity, promote decolonization, value debate and difference, recognize and strengthen resources and resilience, hear silenced voices and invite new voices, grow music therapy with consideration for context, and champion relevant social issues.

The four spotlight sessions comprised of the following themes: "Access and Empowerment", presented by Marisol Norris (USA), Hiroko Miyake (Japan), Rene Nassen (SA) and Daphne Rickson (New Zealand); "Advances in Music Therapy Research", presented by Indra Selvarajah (Malaysia), Felicity Baker (Australia), Gary Ansdell (UK), Michael Viega (US) and Jinah Kim (Korea); Ethical Challenges in Music Therapy, presented by Werdie van Staden (SA), Debbie Bates (USA), Amy Clements-Cortes (Canada) and Andeline dos Santos (SA); and Innovation in Music Therapy Practice, presented by Andrew Knight (USA), Viggo Kruger (Norway), Anette Whitehead-Pleaux (USA) and Joanne Loewy (USA).

A total of 225 students registered for the congress. Countries represented by students included SA, Nigeria, India and China to the US, UK, Australia, New Zealand, and several European and South American countries. The congress sought to create a space through which students could connect with one another.

Whilst we remain disappointed that we could not offer delegates a truly South African experience through our music, culinary and beverage traditions, social experiences, and a range of cultural experiences which would have been part of the in-person event, we trust that the vitality, passion, color and rhythm of Africa were nonetheless experienced through the detail which went into the online experience.

I would like to thank the WFMT 2017-2020 council, under the leadership of Dr. Melissa Mercadal-Brotons, Professor Johnson from the School of the Arts at the University of Pretoria, partner organizations SAMTA, MusicWorks and the Tshwane School of Music, and the local organizing committee for excellent support and tireless work making the 16th World Congress of Music Therapy a virtual reality.

When the madness of Covid-19 is over, and our borders re-open we invite you to visit our shores. You will be welcomed, and it will be our pleasure to host you in different ways, and meet some of you in person.

Onward towards Melbourne in 2023!





















With best wishes to you all,
Dr. Carol Lotter
World Congress 2020 organizer



Thank you Dr. Lotter and all the individuals who made the first online World Congress a success!

In closing, we have a fantastic council that is in the process of generating ideas and plans for this term. Always feel free to contact us with your thoughts and/or concerns via our [email addresses](#) . We look forward to hearing from you!

WFMT Council 2020 – 2023

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Take good care!

Dr. Anita Swanson, MT-BC
WFMT President