



WFMT BUZZ

From the desk of Dr. Melissa Mercadal-Brotons



January 2020

Dear WFMT friends and colleagues,

Happy New Year 2020!

We are six months away from the **2020 World Congress of Music Therapy**. If you have not yet registered for the Congress, do take advantage of the Early Bird Registration with extra discount for WFMT Individual Members.

You have already received an invitation to put forwards nominations and suggestions to Council positions and we hope you will participate. You can find more on our website in the news section.

To continue our series of interviews with presenters at the 16th World Congress of Music Therapy, I am very pleased to introduce **Annette Whitehead-Pleaux**, who will also participate in the spotlight session on **Innovation in Music Therapy Practice** .

Our profession is diverse, and so are the people we serve. The need to be sensitive towards cultural differences and belief systems is imperative at this moment in time. Annette has worked tirelessly to research, advocate and educate on culturally responsive music therapy practices.

I have no doubts you will enjoy this monthly Buzz and get excited to read and to meet Annette Whitehead-Pleaux in South Africa next July.

Melissa Mercadal-Brotons, PhD, MT-BC, SMTAE
President WFMT



Annette Whitehead-Pleaux
MA, MT-BC

Annette Whitehead-Pleaux:

Annette Whitehead-Pleaux is an international speaker and has written extensively on culturally responsive music therapy. Annette is co-editor of Cultural Intersections in Music Therapy: Music, Health, and the Person.

Interview

1. What drew you to the field of music therapy?

When I was in my final year of high school, I knew I wanted to do something in music. However, the thought of being a band director did not appeal. I knew I was also interested in psychology. Then, one day, my guidance counselor called me into her office and showed me a brochure on music therapy. She had just received it and thought of me. I read it and immediately knew this is what I wanted to do. I went to college and studied music therapy. I have never looked back and have been very happy in my career.

2. What are your primary areas of practice and what fascinates you about that area/those areas?

I worked for 15 years in pediatric burn care. I loved this work. It was deeply meaningful to bring comfort to children and families who were suffering physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

3. What are your areas of research?

My research has focused on four areas: pain and anxiety, electronic music technology, LGBTQAI+ concerns, and culturally responsive music therapy.

4. Please describe in some more detail a study that you are currently involved in.

I am currently working on two studies. The first is a survey of music therapists in the United States which explores the level of cultural competence of music therapists. We are not only looking at the overall competence of music therapists, we are looking at different intersectional identities and comparing majority and minority populations. For example, we are examining the level of competence in white music therapists compared to music therapists of color as well as comparing music therapists who identify as women, men, and other genders. We hope to submit this manuscript for publication soon.

The other study is historical research exploring the experiences and contributions of LGBTQAI+ music therapists who have served in the American Music Therapy Association. We are conducting interviews of LGBTQAI+ music therapists and will qualitatively analyze the data to explore leadership styles, barriers they faced, opportunities they had, experiences of transphobia/homophobia, etc.



5. In this congress you will be presenting as part of the spotlight session on *Innovation in Music Therapy Practice*. Please give us a sense of the uniqueness of your contribution in this area.

Over the past several years, I have been on the forefront of research, advocacy, clinical practice, and education around LGBTQAI+ concerns and culturally responsive music therapy practice. I have had the pleasure of working with other music therapists across the United States and Europe (Team Rainbow) to develop the first set of best practices for LGBTQ concerns in music therapy within the world. We also surveyed the attitudes and beliefs of music therapists across the globe about LGBTQ communities, which we published in *Arts in Psychotherapy*. Team Rainbow has provided educational and community building.

In 2012, Dr. Xueli Tan and I began working together on what became “Cultural Intersections in Music Therapy: Music, Health, and the Person”, the first book that explores culturally responsive music therapy practices. I have presented across the United States on culturally responsive music therapy practices and continue my research to further develop and expand our understanding of the intersections of music, culture, and therapy.

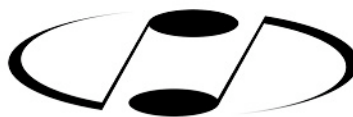
6. What are you looking forward to about attending and what are your expectations of the World Congress of Music Therapy in 2020 in South Africa?

I am so excited to hear about the work and theories of music therapists from other countries. The United States can be somewhat insular and we do not always hear about everyone else’s work, which is to our detriment. And I hope to make connections and friendships with music therapists from across the globe.

7. Please complete the following sentence which we will use to encourage others to attend:

Come to the World Congress of Music Therapy in 2020 because it’s gonna be spectacular!

Annette Whitehead-Pleaux, MA, MT-BC



World Federation of Music Therapy
Federación Mundial de Musicoterapia