



WFMT BUZZ

From the desk of Dr. Anita L. Swanson



February 2023

Dear WFMT members,

This month we will hear from three of our World Congress of Music Therapy spotlight speakers. I do hope you can see and hear them in person in July.

Felicity Baker, PhD



I am delighted to be asked to be one of the spotlight speakers in the research session along with esteemed colleagues. Over the past 15 years, I have been leading large interdisciplinary, multisite, and international clinical trials, and made many mistakes along the way, primarily because I lacked knowledge, experience and adequate local mentoring to implement high

quality research. I learned much of what I know now by trial and often error. I had the pleasure of sharing my wisdom during my spotlight speech at the 2020 World Congress titled *Trials, Tribulations and Triumphs of undertaking large clinical trials*, where I stepped the delegates you through some of my experiences and learnings to date. I focused on issues like how I organized governance, managed unexpected events and the spiraling costs of trials, monitored the progress of complex multisite trials, and how I optimized the strengths and skills of my team. I focused on the barriers to success and how I addressed them. Many music therapists approached me after the 2020 congress commenting on how valuable this presentation was, so much so, that it inspired me to author a book on this topic *Leadership and Management of Clinical Trials in the Creative Arts Therapies* which I published last year and will speak to some aspects of it at this spotlight session. More specifically, I will present on my perspectives for the need to prioritise and coordinate research efforts that will enable us to scale up so our research has greater global impact. I hope to inspire researchers to consider the bigger picture, to work towards “doing less research but better research, and research done for the right reasons”. I hope to demystify the process of large trials, challenge people to think about what research is needed as opposed to just what is interesting, and to highlight that if we work together, the body of research that will be policy and funding influencing will accelerate.

The perspectives I offer have been influenced by four related areas. First, as a practitioner embedded in a more medically-oriented setting, I was constantly called for evidence, with case studies not regarded as sufficient evidence and trials that were largely biased and underpowered. Second, as a researcher at Australia’s number 1 university, there was pressure not just to undertake world-leading research, but bring in funding. This by default forced me to prioritise my research foci towards research that fell into our national priority areas. In doing so, this increased my chance of funding success. Third, I was influenced from interactions with colleagues in the medical faculty who showed me how interdisciplinary research strengthened rigor, enabled scalability, made my research more dynamic and acceptable within the broader medical research community, and led to securing large funding bids. And finally, I had a term as President of the Australian Music Therapy Association and shortly after served for 6 years as the inaugural Chair of Industry Engagement for the Association – essentially government relations and advocacy – where I was responsible for overseeing and submitting various policy responses to government and private health sector. These experiences reinforced the need to prioritise efforts and join forces with other music therapy researchers and researchers in health more broadly.

I have many achievements I am proud of in my career that it is hard to just name one, but perhaps one recent one, is that I submitted a thorough submission into the Royal Commission into Aged Care, which led to a recommendation that music therapy be provided by every Australian aged care provider by June 2024.

I am looking forward to seeing people face to face again and connecting with my ever growing music therapy family. I'm particularly keen to meet new researchers and expand my global network so that I can continue to work with others on research that has global impact.

Monika Geretsegger, PhD

Senior Researcher at GAMUT – The Grieg Music Therapy Research Centre, NORCE Norwegian Research Centre, Bergen, Norway; music therapist at Department of Social Psychiatry, Regional Hospital Hollabrunn, Austria; Managing Editor of the *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*.



What are you looking forward to at the World Congress?

This will be the first big music therapy conference I attend in North America...I look forward to seeing whether this will feel any different from previous conference experiences – and to meeting old friends and new colleagues, not just on screen, but in three (or more) dimensions!

What do you hope attendees will gain from your spotlight speech?

I plan to talk about user perspectives on topics and methodologies in music therapy research and about ways of having them take effect. In that way, I would like to invite attendees to view their own work through the eyes of those who are affected by music therapy research, and gain some inspiration and ideas on how meaningful collaboration can be facilitated. Apart from that, I hope attendees will feel inspired to reflect on what they individually might envisage as important as we move into the future of (research in) music therapy, and

how we can all pursue both big ambitions and small-scale changes and adaptations in our respective areas of work that will all shape the future of our field.

Do you have a favorite memory or memories of past world congresses?

It is quite hard to believe that it will be 18 years ago this July that I attended my first World Congress in Brisbane, Australia. It was just shortly after I graduated from my music therapy training in Vienna, Austria, and being able to present my master's thesis to an international audience on the other side of the globe was quite exciting for me. I was lucky to have Helen Shoemark gently chair the session...she even kindly congratulated the slightly nervous greenhorn that I was afterwards on having had Tony Wigram ask a question during the discussion part....

Taking part in such conferences definitely shaped and helped to consolidate my identity of being a music therapist, so I can recommend attending international conferences particularly to students, music therapists who are new to the profession, and those who like to refresh and reevaluate their expertise!

Natalie Jack, RMT, MTA, MMHSci

Director and Supervisor - Workplace Wellness Collective



Natalie has been a music therapist since 1999 and is from Melbourne, Australia. Natalie is really looking forward to being with music therapists around the world again, as it's been so long since we've been able to gather together. Natalie used to live in Canada, so she is especially excited to be seeing her Canadian colleagues again.

Natalie has had a long interest in technology, and began offering supervision online back in 2013 via Skype. Her experience came in handy in early 2020 of course, when many music therapists and other health professionals were forced to provide their services online, and she was able to support many of her supervisees and colleagues in learning this emerging area of practice. Natalie hopes that the spotlight presentation she is part of - Telehealth in Music Therapy - will give attendees validation, confidence and curiosity to continue using online services to theirs and their clients' advantage.

Natalie's favourite memory of the 2017 world congress in Japan was going to karaoke with old and new friends and colleagues and having a wonderful night!

The main benefit Natalie sees of coming together as a global community at the world congress is to reconnect and to support each other. The last few years have been extraordinarily difficult for many of us, so just being together and being there for each other in person will have so many benefits, in Natalie's opinion.

Natalie can't wait to see you in Vancouver soon - don't forget to come up and say hi to her when you see her!

