

BOOK REVIEW

## Kerry L. Hyrniw Byers: A History of the Music Therapy Profession

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### **A History of the Music Therapy Profession: Diverse Concepts and Practices.**

Written by Kerry L. Hyrniw Byers. TX: Barcelona Publishers, 2016. Print ISBN: 9781937440954. E-ISBN: 9781937440961

Kerry L. Hyrniw Byers's *A History of the Music Therapy Profession: Diverse Concepts and Practices* not only provides us with a deep understanding of the history of music therapy but also encourages us to think about the future of the profession. Music therapy has become a vast field. There are various music therapy practical models based upon a wide variety of theories and philosophies. Byers stated that diversity is a natural part of the field and the vastness of the field is not a problem for music therapy as the availability of multiple perspectives provides a variety of ways to meet the varying needs of clients. On the other hand, she also indicated that the diversity can create confusion amongst the general public. For example, the work done by a Nordoff-Robbins practitioner and by a neurologic music therapist is very different, but the layperson may not necessarily comprehend the difference between the two approaches. Byers considered such diversity to be grounded in the field's history and provided a review of the development of the profession, showing how music therapy emerged and why the profession is so diverse.

The outline of the book is as follows: Chapter 1 briefly examines the roots of music therapy and its early evolution. Chapters 2 through 7 review professional, clinical, theoretical, and philosophical developments. Each chapter examines a different decade of progression, clarifies the background of the development of several representative practical models, and presents the process by which music therapy diversified. Chapter 8 provides a summary analysis of the developments that are reviewed in chapters 2 through 7. Chapter 9 considers the importance and difficulties of diversity in music therapy and chapter 10 examines a unified theory that binds the various approaches. Chapter 11 discusses music therapy through the lens of Abbott's theory of profession, and chapter 12 considers the future of music therapy as a profession.

One of the features of this book is the presentation of the relationship between theoretical, philosophical, clinical, and professional aspects of music therapy. It also provides a chronological understanding of how these four aspects influenced each other in the development of music therapy. I think this book is a suitable text for music therapy students to learn about the history and diversity of music therapy. I actually refer to

this book myself when teaching students in the music therapy training course in Japan, and I find it incredibly useful. In addition, this book may also be useful in informing the general public about music therapy.

Another important aspect of this book is Byers' search for a unified theory, which could explain the profession in its entirety, embracing approaches currently accepted as "music therapy". Tackling this difficult issue, she quoted Abbott's "system of profession" theory and his idea of jurisdiction. In order to gain better understanding from the public and to ensure a continuation of the music therapy profession for the future, we need to strengthen music therapy's jurisdiction as a single unit. Byers said that "use of music" is now weak as a jurisdictional area and finally concluded that an unarguable jurisdictional area is the music-client-therapist relationship. This relationship provides a concept that can embrace the great diversity in the field and allows for the differentiation of one approach from another. With this jurisdiction, music therapists are unified as a single unit beyond diverse theories, philosophies, and cultures.

This book presents the possible jurisdictional area of music therapy as well as its rich diversity. After reading the book, I realized once again that I am part of the rich diversity of a vast field called music therapy. I am a Japanese music therapist from a different cultural background to the author of the book and many of the readers of this journal. Nonetheless, we are all engaged in the same profession of music therapy and are playing a common role in ensuring the continuation of music therapy for the future. This is one of the reasons why I, as a therapist who lives and works in Japan, have written this book review. Though this book is mainly presented from a North American perspective as Byers mentions, I think that it will not only be useful to music therapists all over the world, but also for anyone who wants to learn about music therapy.