

EDITORIAL

Appreciation, Remembrance, and the March 2026 Issue

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Appreciation

Remembering Barbara Wheeler

Our *Voices* community is mourning the recent passing of Professor Barbara Wheeler. Dr. Wheeler passed away unexpectedly at the age of 77 on February 2, 2026. She began her career as a music therapist in 1969 and began teaching music therapists in 1975. Dr. Wheeler was an active member of *Voices* from its inception. In the early years, she served the *Voices* community by writing fortnightly columns from 2001–2012 and taking the role of Interview Co-editor from 2007–2012. As a columnist she covered topics ranging from the problems of language and terminology, to discussing culture, feelings of powerlessness, and sharing the joys of our work. She was also a regular peer reviewer and contributor to *Voices*. With her engaging smile, directness and endless energy, Barbara knit people together, all over the globe. She was perceptive and inquisitive, and always spoke her mind, qualities we greatly appreciate at *Voices* and that have benefitted our discipline of music therapy. Her voice will be greatly missed by the *Voices* community.

Recognizing Helen Oosthuizen

We would like to recognize the long-standing contributions of article editor Helen Brenda Oosthuizen. Helen first published in *Voices* in 2006, where she reflected on the role of music therapy in South African contexts. She has been consistently thoughtful and reflexive both in her roles as author and as part of the editorial team. Helen served as article editor since 2014 and has built a reputation of being uniquely and constructively supportive of contributing authors. She has taken great care and thoughtful efforts to encourage authors to deepen their contextualizations and reflection. She has been a supportive mentor to first-time authors and has been a trusted contributor to the evolution

of the *Voices* editorial team. Helen stepped down from *Voices* in 2025 due to personal reasons and we will greatly miss her thoughtful perspectives, warm smile, and optimistic energy.

Welcoming New Members of the Editorial Team

After an open call in 2025, we are very pleased to welcome the following people to our *Voices* editorial team: Article editors Chris Millett (who is also part of the communications team), Lizandra Maia, Lynn Gumert, Mariane Oselame, and Yu-Ling Chen 陳譽齡; Copyeditors Kate Apley, Kate Fawcett, Livia Umeda, Marcus Bull and Matteo Maienza; and Communications editors Lea Cheung and Xavier Saldes Martí. Welcome and we appreciate collaborating with you!

25th Anniversary in 2026

Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy commemorates its 25th anniversary in 2026. We look forward to facilitating a roundtable at the World Congress of Music Therapy in Bologna, Italy in July 2026, where we hope to connect with many of you for fruitful dialogue. We will also be marking this jubilee year with various celebratory occasions, including a joint jubilee celebration with the *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy* and the Grieg Academy Music Therapy Research Centre, in November 2026 (Bergen, Norway).

Inaugural Online Dialogic Event

Voices has just hosted an online dialogic event in conjunction with the *Special Issue on Decolonial Perspectives from Latin America* (editors Juan Pedro Zambonini and Virginia Tosto), published in November 2025. The online event brought together authors, editors, peer reviewers, copyeditors, translators and other interested parties for recognition, celebration, and dialogue around this important issue. Our new *Voices* communications team with Xavi, Chris and Lea helped contribute to the success of the gathering, which included simultaneous language translation. We encourage our readers to follow the *Voices* Facebook and Instagram accounts for announcements of related upcoming events. We carry on the spirit of possibility generated by this online dialogic event by moving into our first issue of 2026.

In This Issue

We have a broad and diverse set of 18 articles in this March 2026 issue. The first three articles are position papers. In the first position paper, Allison Fuller and Anita Swanson discuss ways in which music therapists can integrate augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) in their practice as a way to dismantle systemic barriers. They discuss and advocate for music therapy degree programs to embed AAC into the education of music therapists in order to promote disability affirming practices. With a similar focus on how music therapy can be a force for social justice for disabled people in institutions, in the second position paper Kate Apley and Stella Hadjineophytou propose the importance of being compassionate humans first and music therapists second. They provide case studies as a way to move towards building theory rather than a top down approach. In the third position paper, Stella Hadjineophytou, Beth Pickard, Hilary Davies, and Tara Roman discuss ways that the newly revised Standards of Proficiency that were developed by the Health and Care Professions Council in the UK can be met with a focus on critical disability discourse and the importance of moving away from a medically-informed lens. Through their collective positions, their critical reflections and reimaginings are an encouragement

to others to engage similarly as a way to challenge dominant structures and narratives in pursuit of justice for disabled people.

In addition to the three position papers, there are three essays in this issue. In the first essay, provided in both French and English, Cathy Schmartz shares her experiences in Senegal as a white, European woman music therapist working with women sex workers. From this work, she was led by the observations of the women with whom she was working to explore how Western music therapy concepts intersect with Senegalese healing traditions. This essay reflexively explores these connections. The second essay, by music therapist Joanne Loewy and musician Jon Batiste, outlines in detail the use of social music as a prescription for maintaining wellness within the US context in which people have moved more and more away from engaging in music in group/community contexts. They provide historical and cultural contexts for music's capacity to meet the social needs of humanity. Finally, Jessie Ku and Rina Tabuchi explore their experiences of imposter syndrome as music therapy interns working with people attending a bereavement group they developed and facilitated. After exploring different manifestations of imposter syndrome, they reflect upon how they each experienced imposter syndrome as they moved through different phases of planning and implementing the bereavement group and how these manifestations of imposter syndrome related to their sociocultural and historical contexts.

We have eight research articles in this issue, including arts-based inquiry, action research, other forms of qualitative research, mixed methods, and quantitative survey research. Lynn Gumert takes us inside the experience of Autistic meltdown through an arts-based inquiry. A multimedia representation of Autistic meltdown lies at the center of this research, with Gumert integrating music from their own orchestral compositions and text from their Meltdown Narrative, along with visual images and collages made by Gumert and their neurodivergent daughter. Gumert's inquiry, in which allistic creative arts therapists were invited to creatively respond to the multimedia representation, forms a crucial step in providing validation and acceptance for autistic individuals and in facilitating transformational dialogue with allistic individuals. Annet ten Brug, Richard Lekkerkerk, Gineke Hanzen, Aly Waninge, and Annette A. J. van der Putten used a case study to explore improvisational music therapy with a young woman with intensive support needs. The authors conclude that music therapy helped the young woman experience the world around her, through sounds and togetherness.

Bethany Mulley, Victoria Clarke, and Luke Annesley aim to fill a critical knowledge gap by exploring LGBTQIA+ people's perceptions of music therapy along with music therapists' preparedness to work with LGBTQIA+ clients. The authors used reflexive thematic analysis of the creative method of story completion to generate themes from the stories created by 46 participants. Themes included the importance of disclosure in therapy, that shared identity matters, and that effective therapists were viewed as non-judgemental and inclusive. In another study, adults living with chronic pain engaged in music therapy incorporating Mindful Self-Compassion techniques in a mixed-methods feasibility study by Diandra Russo, Friederike Haslbeck, and Joram Ronel. Drawing upon Russo's long engagement with Buddhist teachings, this multimodal approach integrated aspects of self-compassion and was linked to increased pain acceptance. Similarly, spirituality has been evidenced to play an important role for some people in recovery from substance use disorders. Jonah Pomerantz used survey methods to explore how music therapists in the United States address spiritual health among their clients with substance use disorders. Contrasting previous surveys, the respondents primarily identified as humanistically oriented, though they reported using predominantly outcome-oriented music therapy methods.

Using a community music therapy framework in Santiago, Chile, Gonzalo Ureta-Fredes and Andrés Salgado-Vasco explored how music could create a space for collectively

reflecting on the construction of masculinity. Eight men who were members of a popular social organization focused on public health participated in this action research that ultimately aimed to prevent gender-based violence. In another community based study, Anne Karine Råmunddal Kippenes engaged local musicians, singers, and health workers in the Himalayan Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan in a qualitative study of music in early caregiver-child relationships. Findings reflect a complex co-existence of traditional musical heritage alongside modern technology and the impacts of globalization. The potential of music therapy as a means for emotional and social adaptation among young people displaced from Ukraine and adjusting to Norwegian schools was explored through focus group interviews of school staff in a study by Viggo Krüger, Julie Liisberg, Sanna Martine Sørum, Ylva Jonsson, and Jenny Daling Korsøen. Participants recognized benefits of the music therapy offer but also acknowledged a need for better anchoring of the initiative via leadership.

The final four articles of this issue include an interview, a reflection on practice, a report, and a book review essay. In an interview with Indigenous musician Neil Morris, conducted and contextualized by Alex Crooke, connections between arts, healing, and social justice in the context of contemporary post-colonial “Australia” are explored. Their discussion helps readers reflect critically on the benefits and implications of combining arts and healing on Indigenous Lands, and what responsibilities music therapists have in terms of honouring Indigenous Culture in therapeutic spaces.

In a reflection of his practice, Nir Seri discusses his “VocaMom Group” model. In this model, intellectually disabled students listen to recordings of their mothers telling stories about them and sharing personalized messages for them. Seri illustrates the model using four vignettes and theoretical reflections. He notes that the model, while eliciting complex emotions for some, most often enhances emotional engagement, relational growth, and a deepened sense of belonging and self.

Lo-Ting Chen, Zehui Li, and Sisi Lin provide a report on a rapid-response online music therapy project initiated by a volunteer team from a Chinese conservatory in early 2020 soon after the Covid-19 outbreak. This project offered music support through online music therapy to 55 healthcare workers on the frontlines and 11 children of these healthcare workers. This report highlights the social value of the program during the early pandemic and the importance of music therapy as a form of biopsychosocial care during such a widespread health crisis.

Finally, Erinn Epp provides an insightful and balanced review of Tamar Hadar and Kenneth Aigen’s book, *Music, Time, and Self: A Time Model for Nordoff-Robbins Clinical Improvisation*.