

Editorial comment

On the special edition of Td: Focusing on music and well-being

We are living in a world begging to be made better, and researchers from diverse disciplines increasingly are contemplating the role of music in lives requiring healing. From 6 to 10 August 2013 North-West University hosted a first international conference on *Music and well-being*. Delegates from all over the world came to the School of Music at the Potchefstroom campus to share their experiences of the relationship between music and states of physical, emotional, social, psychological and spiritual/religious well-being. This issue comprises seventeen articles that discuss these states. The majority of them discuss more than one type of well-being and I will highlight only a few.

David Elliott and Marissa Silverman argue that when we do not only teach people in and about music, but also *through* music – we achieve what Aristotle and many other philosophers consider the highest human value – *eudaimonia* – which is a multidimensional concept, whilst John Habron discusses implications for future training, practice and research in Dalcroze eurhythmics. This article takes a transdisciplinary approach, making conceptual connections. Ewie Erasmus writes about children diagnosed with Williams syndrome and the intense affinity they show towards music listening and music making. Diane Thram shares her field research in South Africa and points out how individuals benefit in all aspects of their being – physical, mental and emotional – from engaging in the act of making music. In her essay about trauma and well-being, Inette Swart concludes that the healing journey can lead to wholeness, transformation and growth. Many authors also highlight spiritual well-being that can be experienced through musical experience. June Boyce-Tillman in turn of the opinion that spirituality is to be found in the doing, not in what you produce, which is encapsulated in these lyrics by American song writer Berton Bradley:

Oh, you gotta get a glory
In the work you do;
A hallelujah chorus
In the heart of you.
Paint, or tell (write) a story,
Sing, or shovel coal,
But you gotta get a glory
Or the job lacks soul.

Musicians are known for their creativity. As such, we have chosen dandelions as a symbol of the conference: the ritual and mystery of blowing dandelion seed was taught to me by a young child. As scholars, we dream further about dandelions and their symbolic potential: the dandelion in seed is a depiction of individuality within a perfect totality. This totality may be interpreted as the cosmos (comprising society, nature and spirituality), within which well-being is rooted. The seeds that are blown about by the wind are symbolic of questing humanity. The softness and lightness of the seeds manifest the mobility and randomness of thought that seeks meaning and coherence.

I thank the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Prof Jan Swanepoel for financial support to host this *Music and well-being* conference. We are indebted to Prof Johann Tempelhoff who invited

the presenters to re-work their conference papers and publish them in *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*. The editorial members (peer-reviewers) for this edition made a huge contribution. Peer-reviewing took place from October 2013 to August 2014, and thirty-seven international and national reviewers were involved in the selection process. I also thank the International Advisory Board and Editorial Board for their advice and assistance.

All the authors have made a unique contribution to this edition thus I have decided to arrange the papers in alphabetical order.

Hetta Potgieter (Edition editor)