

Editorial

Science and Politics in the New Year

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These days it is extremely hard for science editors to withstand from making political statements. The globe itself, the world we know, is under fire. The science community is struggling to find answers to those multiple threats endangering our species.

Can music work therapeutically here? If so, as a journal that supports Music and Medicine we should offer our share in seeking solutions, or at least in triggering necessary discussions about music's potential as a healing intervention to charge against anxieties, depressions, desperations, sufferings and social isolation, and perhaps most importantly to align our work against proactive means to address many more issues hindering a global response to that which poses a unique global threat. A first step could be the fostering of communication. As we all know musical language is understood everywhere by everyone. Looking at speechless politicians locked up in isolated group- we may consider our unique way of thinking, realizing that music might be language AND message at the same time: we are living in one world on one planet.

Looking on articles published in Music and Medicine since its implementation in 2009 we find that medical-music global communication is working. Successfully fostering intercultural, international, global exchange of ideas, concepts, experiences and data using music both as an intervention and a language seems to be something we all understand.

Here is the link to politics. Because politics (ancient Greek: *Politika* 'issues of the community') implies that those regulations governing our social communities based on social action are determined through decisions and mechanisms implemented and followed by community members. This sounds easier than it is actually, in reality, occurring - as we all know.

As science today is political and must be political in questions of global survival there is of course a dark side of

this relationship. Elizabeth Suhay has in detail, elaborated on the political influence on science, which, we all agree (and we do hope so) should be value-free, objective and independent from political influence [1]. Governments have always funded, managed, and consumed research and scientific knowledge. Maybe the example with highest impact of such political influence is the development of the atomic bomb.

Art, especially music, can profoundly influence politics. A most recent example is on display at 2019 World Economic Forum in Switzerland, where Mehdi Ghadyanloo's mural displays a point that invites attendee's attention as he leads their thinking toward specific political objectives, to the good or the bad, as he states that "propaganda is messaging created by artists..." [2].

Music was used as an instrument to manipulate people and communities from the early beginning of human civilization. Military music to direct soldiers may be just one prominent example.

But we have no other chance. WE, as citizens have to take care of the politics governing our future on earth. The science of therapeutic music intervention should be able to contribute. Thus, the editors of Music and Medicine do invite you to join and contribute your articles. Enhancing our common goal:

Global discussion about Music and Medicine. Let's create a choir of global voices, crossing borders and joining forces [3].

In this issue *The Use of Music in the Chronic Pain Experience: An Investigation into the Use of Music and Music therapy by Patients and Staff at a Hospital Outpatient Pain Clinic* by Hilary Moss examines the use of music in the chronic pain experience. The themes this study uncovers through quantitative and qualitative analyses provide rich material for clinicians and practitioners who are seeking to better understand the role of music therapy in a hospital outpatient pain department.

The next two articles will likely be of intense interest to music therapists and those who institute music medicine programs throughout our international community. In a two part sequence, Virginia Cierniak educates our readership about the 'El Sistema' music-education program, founded in Venezuela in 1975. This forum has become a movement. In

Part I: Community Music Therapy and El Sistema: Empowerment Needs of Individuals and Communities Facing Socioeconomic Marginalization, music is described and

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Ralph Spintge, MD Address: Department of Algesiology and Interdisciplinary Pain Medicine, Regional Pain Center DGS, Sportklinik Hellersen, 58515 Lüdenscheid, Germany. E-mail: Ralph.Spintge@hellersen.de | COI statement: The authors declared that no financial support was given for the writing of this article. The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

realized as an accessible tool that can foster change within people and societies. Community Music Therapy (CoMT) and *El Sistema*⁷ compares the empowerment needs of individuals and communities facing socioeconomic marginalization.

In *Part II: Community Music Therapy and El Sistema: A Multiple Case Design Study Reflecting Music's Empowerment in Marginalized Communities*, Cierniak presents the result of her study, uncovering the salient elements and divergences between El Sistema and CoMT. Understanding the essential role of the music in these 2 systems may further advance how we implement programming in hospital communities, clinics and educational institutions where music is most needed.

Understanding the disease manifestations of famous musicians has been a unique topic of interest in our journal. *The Myth of Schubert's Syphilis: A Critical Approach*, Eva Cybulska does not disappoint. In a critical examination of the diagnosis of syphilis in Schubert's case, she challenges the diagnosis from an epistemological point of view.

In *the Use of Acoustically Modified Music to Reduce Auditory Hypersensitivity in Children*, Jay Lucker describes his Listening Program, which is designed to help children with their auditory processing capacity. This may be of great importance to those treating children on the spectrum or even those who have difficulty with speech and language processing.

While the focus of pain tends to examine music's involvement in chronic and acute pain applications, in *Efficacy of Pain Management: Integration versus Distraction*, Joanne Loewy addresses procedural pain and takes a position against the usual recommendation of 'distraction'-by supporting an integrative approach to the way we implement music/team-oriented approaches.

Finally, the Editors are pleased in 2019 to begin the start of a new tradition entitled: *Rounds Corner*. Tucking itself in the end of each journal, *Rounds Corner* will serve to gather

various members of the team, and provide an inside perspective on a pertinent issue related to treatment strategies involving music and medicine. We hope this new section will strategize our overriding goal of blending musical ideas in meaningful ways for practitioners of all disciplines.

We begin the inaugural *Rounds Corner* with a most intriguing article by Mike von der Nahmer. His rounds is entitled, *Rounds Corner-A Therapist Speaks Musikalisierung: How a Despondent Mind Shapes Thought into Music: A young boy's journey & music therapy from an insider's point of view* provides a generous and poetic peak into our witnessing the journey of a 'wounded healer'. This piece may remind all of us how resilience and creativity can be enhanced when we as professionals have created road maps for ourselves. In an age where depression and suicide are on the rise, von der Nahmer reminds us how depression may be both a blessing and a curse, but nevertheless can steer us to become more astute clinicians. What a blessing this piece is, and certainly a wonderful start to our *Rounds Corner* which will likely unravel many prevalent aspects of treatment in the future as we invite contributors from all perspectives; patients, doctors, therapists, social workers, music therapists, physical therapists etc.

Happy New Year to all!

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