

Conference report

Rethinking Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Towards New Ethical Paradigms in Music and Health Research

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<http://www.gold.ac.uk/music-mind-brain/sempr-bfe-conference/>

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The one-day interdisciplinary conference '**Rethinking Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Towards New Ethical Paradigms in Music and Health Research**' was jointly supported by the Society for Education, Music, and Psychology (SEMPRE) and the British Forum for Ethnomusicology (BFE) and organised by Dr Muriel E. Swijghuisen Reigersberg. It was hosted by Goldsmiths College, University of London through the Music, Mind and Brain Centre, Psychology Department, and supported by the Music Department. The conference sought to explore the nature of research into the relationship between music, health and wellbeing. It aimed to investigate how research and practice might become more inclusive, and therefore more ethical, through collaborative endeavours by bringing together researchers, practitioners, and students from various disciplines including: music (neuro) psychology; music therapy; applied/ medical (ethno) musicology; to encourage the re-thinking of research methodologies and epistemologies and practices.

Panels were deliberately formed of music therapists, music psychologists and ethnomusicologists to ensure cross-disciplinary debate. Appropriate themes were selected to enhance discussion coherence. These included: *Music, Stress and Trauma: Biomedical and Social Approaches to Enquiry, Inculturation, Enculturation and Musical Wellbeing*; and *Experience, Quantifying outcomes ethics and government policy/research funding*. All speakers and chairs had been asked in advance to prepare presentations which were intelligible to non-expert audiences and to ensure papers addressed the allocated themes. The embodiment of music and experience was included through two workshops: one by Catherine Pestano, Natural Voice Practitioners' Network and one by Kate Binnie, music therapist and yoga practitioner.

The conference included stimulating presentations such as those by ethnomusicologist Martin Greve, on *Music in Dersim (East-Turkey : Research within a traumatized Society)*. Daisy Fancourt's work provided insights into the emerging field of music and psychoneuroimmunology and Friederike Haslbeck discussed *Music therapy in Neonatal Care: insights into culturally appropriate approaches and research*.

Distinguished plenary speakers included Prof. Ian Cross (Music Psychologist, University of Cambridge), Dr. Caroline Bithell (Ethnomusicologist, University of Manchester), Dr. Gary Ansdell (Director of Education, Nordoff-Robbins Centre), and Dr. Giorgos Tsiris (Music Therapist, Nordoff-Robbins Centre and St Christopher's Hospice). The plenary was chaired by Dr Kathleen J. Van Buren. Cross discussed the paradigmatic and methodological challenges faced before reconciliation between ethnomusicologists and music scientists can occur. Bithell, in her humorous presentation, argued for, amongst other things, the need for an ethnographic approach to researching the benefits of community music making and the value of qualitative, contextual and experiential data. Ansdell offered wonderful insights into the experiential nature of research ethics in context and Tsiris summed up the days' events nicely by asking further questions rather than providing answers, clearly suggesting that this interdisciplinary field is at its exploratory stage, and not yet a fully-fledged one with a critical mass of research behind it.