

A brief history of Music & Healing and the introduction of Music Therapy at the RHN

Indigenous communities

Healing ceremonies often incorporated music and dance to support the integration between mind and body for internal harmony and optimal health.

Ancient Greeks: Apollo, God of medicine and music

5th century BCE: After considering illnesses god-inflicted retribution, there was a shift to considering ailments as an imbalance of the four humours of the body.

Both Plato and Pythagoras wrote extensively about music and its effects on the body, believing that music could restore peace and harmony to both body and soul. Plato suggested medical centres should embed art and music into its core. Both philosophers are often quoted in support of music, music education, and music as therapy.

The Enlightenment – Initial theories of music therapy

- 1789 “Music Physically Considered” (author unknown). The first published study regarding the physiological changes that music could effect.
- 1812 Benjamin Rush published one of the first descriptions and treatments for psychiatric disorders in American medicine, *Medical Inquiries and Observations, Upon the Diseases of the Mind*.
Rush, recognized as the "father of American psychiatry", was one of the first and strongest supporters of the idea that music could cure diseases. Two of his students publish papers about healing physical problems that music could address by making the patient want to move. Additional music therapy experiments were conducted with patients at Blackwell’s Island Asylum in New York.

The 20th Century

- 1916 After veterans’ moods and movements were observed to change when music was around, music was introduced to hospital to help people with shell shock.
- 1944 Thayer Gaston, American doctor and musician, helped to organize experiments and events for music therapy. He organized some of the first educational music therapy programs for professionals, including a college-level curriculum with Ira Altshuler, held at Michigan State University.
- 1950 National Association for Music Therapy (NAMT) founded in the US.

- 1958 The British Society for Music Therapy (BSMT), a registered charity, was founded by Juliette Alvin and her colleagues under the name of 'Society for Music Therapy and Remedial Music'
- 1968 The first UK Music Therapy training program was established at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.
- 1971 American Association for Music Therapy (AAMT) originally the Urban Federation of Music Therapists, was founded in the US
- 1974 Nordoff-Robbins music therapy training centre was established at the Goldie Leigh Hospital in South London.
- 1976 Association of Professional Music Therapists (APMT) was found in the UK
- 1985 World Federation of Music Therapy was established
- 1988 RHN introduced its first Music Therapist position under Occupational Therapy**
- 1990 European Music Therapy Confederation was established
- 1993 RHN established a Music Therapy department**
- 1998 NAMT & AAMT joined to form the American Music Therapy Association.
- 1998 RHN music therapy doctoral research completed.**
- 1999 UK Music Therapists are legally required to obtain State Registration as Allied Health Professionals with the Health Care Professions Council.
- 2002 RHN Music Therapy department grow to support 3 fulltime positions**
- 2011 BAMT replaced the Association of Professional Music Therapists (APMT) and the British Society for Music Therapy (BSMT).
- 2014 The Academy of Neurologic Music Therapy (NMT) was established by Dr. Michael Thaut
- 2014 MATADOC becomes a standardized measure for assessment of auditory responsiveness in PDOC by former RHN Music Therapist, Dr. Wendy McGee**
- 2017 The first UK NMT training of NMT with Dr. Michael Thaut and Dr. Coreen Thaut.
- 2018 RHN supports three full time specialized music therapy posts (all therapists are trained in NMT techniques)**