



Historical Perspectives of Music as a Therapy in Different Cultures Worldwide with Special References to Shakespeare's Romances

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Article Information	Abstract
<p>Article history: <i>Received: 19.08.2012</i> <i>Revised: 21.09.2012</i> <i>Accepted: 22.11.2012</i></p>	<p>Music is often regarded as the most ancient form of communication among individuals worldwide because of the fact that it is considered to be common among all cultures, in all locations of the world. Music therapy uses music to promote positive changes in the well being of an individual. These positive changes may be manifested in changes in physical development, social and inter-personal development, emotional or spiritual wellbeing or cognitive abilities.</p> <p>The therapeutic benefits of music have been known and harnessed since the time of Vedas till modern age. Music therapy has been of great use to humanity. The University of Kansas was the first university in the United States to offer a degree programme in music therapy in 1944. Early exponents of music therapy in the 1950's to 1970's included the French Cellist Juliet Albin and Paul Nordoff and Clive Robbins. The Nordoff – Robins approach is still used in many countries around the world including the USA, UK, Australia, Germany and South Africa.</p> <p>Studies have theorized that when a music therapy is combined with other disciplines of therapy, improvements in patient conditions happen more rapidly. In literature the role of music therapy is very powerful simply because it influences different parts of the brain. Music therapy in literature stirres all emotions and sentiments and creates positive effects on the moods of the characters suffering from certain ailments. It has often been noticed that a certain piece of classical music can make one cry releasing one's stress and get one's out of one's negative mood.</p> <p>This paper is an attempt to bring out the spontaneous flow of powerful music therapy in different cultures of the world as well as in the dramas of Shakespeare.</p>
<p>Keywords: Shakespeare Music therapy</p>	

1. INTRODUCTION:

“If Music be the food of love, play on”, well said William Shakespeare in his ‘Twelfth Night’ establishing music as a vital source of energy. Music is an art form whose medium is sound. Its common elements are melody and harmony and is associated with meter and articulation. The word music derives from Greek ‘mousike’ i.e. ‘art of the muses’.

To many people in many cultures, music is an important part of their way to life. Ancient Greek and Indian philosopher defined music as tones ordered horizontally as melodies and vertically as harmonies. We mostly describes music as the art of putting sounds together and organizing the sounds so they could bring a response to whosoever listens to them. Some questions arise in the mind. Is there anything else that music could do beside from simply making people listen to sounds and respond to it? Can music go beyond its borders? As a matter of fact, it can, in the way of music therapy. Music is now being used not just for therapy but for contributing to a person’s emotional well being. In some instances, the patient’s needs are addressed directly through music; in other’s they are addressed through the relationship that developed between the client and the therapist. Music therapy is used with individuals of all ages and with a variety of conditions including: psychiatric disorders, medical problems, physical handicaps, sensory impairments, developmental disabilities substance abuse, communication disorders, inter personal problems and aging. It is also used to: improve learning, build self-esteem, reduce stress, support physical exercise and facilitate a host of other health-related activities.

Music as a therapy in different cultures worldwide:

The therapeutic benefits of music have been known and harnessed since ancient times. In India, since the time

immemorial, out of four Vedas, the Samveda is traditionally regarded as the origin of music in general. The poet singers of the Vedas knew the power of music very well. In the Veda there are numerous examples illustrating the close connection of music and medicine. Here the samans are described as ‘remedies (bhesaja)’.

Peoples of the different part of world suppose that music has a medicinal power in it. Many times it is used in various magical rites for curing a diseased person. Among the Chinese people in olden times, dances and songs used to be executed by a troop of performers masked as animals and led by a wizard. This performance was used to take place for driving away disease. In Greek mythology Asklepios is said to have cured his patients by means of chants so also in ancient Greece music was practiced as an ingredient of magical medicine. The use of music as a therapeutic agent was an essential part of healing practices and rituals in ancient Greece. Nowadays, there is a wealth of literature about these practices, as well as their philosophy with regards to music’s healing powers and its connections to psychological, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of well being.

Music has been used as a healing force for centuries. Music therapy goes back to Biblical times, when David played the harp to rid King Saul of a bad spirit. As early as 400 B.C., Hippocrates, Greek father of medicine, played music for his mental patients. Aristotle described as a force that purified the emotions. In the 13th century, Arab hospitals contained music-rooms for the benefit of the patients in the United States. Native American medicine men often employed chants and dances as method of healing patients. Music therapy was used perfectly after World war first and second. Musicians would travel to hospitals particularly in the United Kingdom and play music for soldiers suffering from war-related emotional and physical trauma. In

the Islamic ideology also medicinal properties of music were recognized. In the medieval period, Theophrast derived the conception of music as a means of cure from the ancient ethos theory producing non-sensical sounds or drone-sounds as well as playing upon instruments was practiced in curing ceremonies. In the Vedas also there are numerous examples illustrating the close connections of music and medicine. For example the Traisoka-Saman is to be sung to cure from lingering disease. The Ayasya-Saman is to be used for healing and appeasing the evil influence. The Saman Caksusya is to be sung to strengthen the eye-sight; the Karnasravasa-Saman improves the power of hearing and so on.

One of the earliest mentions of music therapy was in Al-Farabi's (C.872-950) treatise 'Meanings of the intellect', which described the therapeutic effects of music on the soul. In the 17th century the scholar Robert Burton's 'The Anatomy of Melancholy' argued that music and dance were useful in treating mental illness, especially melancholia. He noted that music has an "Excellent powerto expel many other diseases", and he called it 'A sovereign remedy against despair and melancholy'. He pointed out that in Antiquity, Canus, a Rhodian fiddler, used music to 'make a melancholy man merrya lover more enamoured, a religious man more devout.'

Music therapy in Shakespeare's Romances:

William Shakespeare has made the best use of music in his plays. In his 'Twelfth Night' the melancholic duke Orsino gets relief with the cadence of music. He asked his assistants to play more and more music for him as it serves as a therapy to his love lorn heart.

Give me some music.

Now good morrow friends

Now, good Cesario, but that piece of song.

That old and antic song we heard last night;

Me thought it did relieve my passion much,

*More than light airs and recollected terms
Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times
Come, but one verse.*

The noble Orsino, forsaking the sports of the field and all manly exercises in which he used to delight, passed his hours in ignoble sloth, listening to the effeminate sounds of soft music, gentle airs, and passionate love-songs; and neglecting the company of the wise and learned lords with whom he used to associate, he was now all day long conversing with young Cesario.

In Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' also the use of music therapy can be seen. Here both Lady Macbeth and Macbeth became subject to most dreadful fancies. He and his queen has their sleeps afflicted with terrible dreames and the blood of Duncon and Banquo troubled them a lot with the result they could find no peace anywhere. The disease of mental disorder of lady Macbeth grew worse and worse, and even the astute doctor of Physic confirms that Lady Macbeth's illness and sleepwalking are 'beyond my practice.....More needs she the divine then the physician'. Here the physician clearly suggests that only a therapy imbued with music could be used as a treatment for her mental disorders such as anxiety and dementia. Lady Macbeth could be a victim to dementia which results in a brain disorder leading to the deterioration of the affected individual's mental disposition along with emotional disturbance. Her mental disorder makes her see blood of Duncon everywhere on her hands. Even the water of the whole sea would not wash off the spots of blood on her hands. A complete mental disorder of a lunatic made her forget her identity. The divine practice suggested by the physician is none other than applying the medicinal power of music. Here he means to use music in various magical rites for curing a diseased person

The earliest use of magic of music by a physician or his representative in a Shakespeare's play had already been shown

in 'All's Well That Ends Well' (1602-1603) in the cure of the King of France's illness by Helana. Helena had hoped to cure the King by prescriptions inherited from her father but the King refused medicines that had not worked in the past. So she quickly adds another power i.e. astrological and magical power of music to reinforce the effects of medicines. In Shakespeare's other romances 'Pericles' (1607-1608) Cerimon practices the new magical medicine incorporating the magic of music. He prepares to raise the body of Thaisa, wife of Pericles being washed away on the shore of Ephesus. 'The music there; and announces: Gentleman this queen will live.' The onlookers consider Cerimon has worked a miracle through divine intervention but it is the magic of music which accounts for his intervention and alters the nature of medicine. The music which helped rescue her mother from death also contributes to Marina's treatment of her father Pericles. Most important is the revelation of how the magic of music creates its therapeutic effect. The harmony of the music of the spheres has charmed the disharmony of Pericles' soul. He is cured when he hears the celestial music which is not heard by mortal humans, since 'this muddy vesture of decay doth close it in' as Lorenzo explained in 'The Merchant of Venice'. The illuminated therapist enables the suffering patient transcends the body and receives the healing effects of harmony of the universe.

The expectation that music would be needed in the transformation of the lost and dead back in to glowing healthy life is very well established in Shakespeare's last play 'The Winter's Tale'.

The magic of music is so well seen in his great romance 'The Tempest'(1611).The master of the island, Prospero, uses the heavenly music to comfort Ferdinand for the assumed loss of his father and at the same time to calm the Tempest. Prospero requires heavenly music to work his last magic and the music finally cures the discord of each other's souls.

It was Shakespeare, creator of the Prospero of The Tempest, who demonstrated dramatically so well what musical medicine might become.

2. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All citations from Shakespeare are from The Riverside Shakespeare, 2nd edition, edited by G. Blackmore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

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