

What kind of musician is a Music Therapist? Music Therapy Musicianship as a Musical Pedagogy

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A different kind of musician?

Music therapy training involves a 'high standard' of musicianship,¹ yet the **kind** of musicianship involved has been more rarely discussed.³

This study identified a distinctive 'Music Therapy Musicianship' selected for at admission and developed in training.² Its values and principles suggest a specific musical pedagogy may be active.

Methodology

A critical discourse approach was used for a two-part study:

5 trainers from different programmes were interviewed about music therapy training practice;

14 applicant statements, audition reports, and 9 stakeholder interviews from the Guildhall School were used to explore how musicianship was assessed.

Literature cited

¹ HCPC. 2023. *Standards of Proficiency (Arts Therapists)*.

² Wetherick D. 2022. 'The assessment of musicianship in selection for UK music therapy training'. PhD. Guildhall School.

³ Wigram T et al.. 1999. 'Music therapy training: a process...'. In *Clinical Applications of Music Therapy in Devel...*. London: JKP.



What do trainers say about music therapy musicianship?

Findings about Music Therapy Musicianship

T2: 'Someone should be a musician who is highly skilled in whatever it is they play, who has a musical life...'
(Gatekeeping)

T4: '...and it's almost about the application of their music [...] I mean, what we're not doing is assessing the standard of their music.'
(Fencemaking)

Two discourses appeared in trainers' talk: trainers valued high standards of musical skill as well as evidence of a 'musical life' (a **gatekeeping** discourse), yet they also *de-valued* virtuosity and performance skills while emphasizing simplicity, versatility and inter-personal skills applied in music therapy practice (a **fence-making** discourse).



How do selectors assess musicianship at admission?

- Audition tasks on voice, piano and other instruments tested applicants' **versatility** and **resourcefulness**, as well as their technique;
- Specific musical tasks (e.g. role-plays) were chosen by selectors to challenge applicants' musical and inter-personal **emotional capacity**;
- Some audition tasks (e.g. unaccompanied song, themed improvisation) mirrored musical activities also used and developed in training.

Music Therapy Musicianship draws on skills not always developed in other musical trainings. Trainees come from different musical backgrounds and develop their musical versatility, resourcefulness and emotional capacity to work effectively as music therapists. These are features of a distinctive musical pedagogy.

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Further information

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