

## PRESS RELEASE

### INTERNATIONAL INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE COMPLEX IMPACT OF MUSIC ON PEDAGOGICAL PROCESSES, 10/11/2022, Prague

On November 10, 2022, an international interdisciplinary conference was held, which was devoted to the relationship between neuroscience research, music therapy and pedagogy, **COMPLEX IMPACT OF MUSIC ON PEDAGOGICAL PROCESSES**.

The conference was organized by the Czech Music Council and the Society for Electroacoustic Music in collaboration with the interdisciplinary expert Prof. Dr. Dr. Dr. Wolfgang Mastnak from the University of Munich and Beijing University and PhDr. Jiřina Jiříčková, PhD., member of the presidium of the Czech Music Council, working at the Pedagogical Faculty of Charles University. It was organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports with the participation of representatives of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic as part of a block of events around the European Day of Music Therapy (15 November 2022) with the promotional support of the Institute of Arts and Theater Institute, of which the Czech Music Council is a part, the UMěním platform, the Czech Music Therapy Association and the International Association for Creative Arts in Education and Therapy.

It took place in the form of ZOOM, because 2/3 of the participants joined from abroad (Montenegro, Finland, Slovakia, Germany, Great Britain, India, Australia, etc.). The main motivation for organizing the event is the current increase in psychosomatic and psychological problems of the youngest generation, not only in our country, but all over the world, which is documented by surveys in various countries, and the need to use all available tools to improve the situation of preclinical care, preferably within the framework of normal pedagogical practice.

Another reason is that the ongoing revision of the so-called framework educational programs of primary schools is a suitable period for inspiration and possible implementation of certain principles in education in the Czech Republic.

The third impulse is the fact that research into the functioning of the brain and its reactions to music and other artistic means has progressed since the Czech Music Council first dealt with the topic. The topic of so-called well-being is also updated in the initiatives of the European Union in connection with the effects of the crisis of recent years, to which other stress factors are following. The conference is also intended to contribute to desirable interdisciplinary cooperation and coordination.

The opening block of the conference was devoted to the general framework of the discussion. It was started by **Prof. Joachim P. Sturmberg, MD and President of the International Society for Systems and Comprehensive Health Sciences (ISSCSH)**. Prof. Sturmberg is also the initiator of the company's international conferences. He leads a number of research projects. Currently, he focuses primarily on a systemic view of chronic diseases, polymorbidity and the experience of illness. His contribution ***Music Therapy and Complexity Sciences for Health*** emphasized the linking of researches, which alone can provide synergistic effects both for the health of individuals and the saving of society's resources.

Other essential inputs were the contributions of **Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Mastnak** - especially the contribution ***Neuro-Music-Education and the Default Mode Network***. Prof. Mastnak holds six doctorates – in medicine, special sports medicine, mathematics, art therapy, music education and

psychology. He also holds diplomas in psychotherapy and physiotherapy. He is a professor at Beijing Normal University, University of Music and Performing Arts in Munich and part of research teams at other workplaces in the world. His main research concerns, among other things, the connection between psychosomatic health and the cultural context, preventive medicine. For him, the main impetus for the Czech conference was the current psychological and psychosomatic state of the young population (among other things, he also summarizes a joint article with Dr. Jiříčková), the integration of the findings of brain research and effective music therapy into the educational process in such a way as to make use of the available tools for preclinical preventive care, which is not expensive and can be demonstrably effective if used in a scientifically based way. Prof. Mastnak believes that the Czech **environment** has enough good capacities to create a core of integration here as well.

Another expert on the introductory general panel was **Barbara Tillmann, PhD.** from the Center for Neuroscience Research in Lyon (CNRS), co-author of a joint publication with colleague Emmanuel Bigand: *La symphonie neuronale, Pourquoi la musique est indispensable au cerveau/ The Neuronal Symphony. Why music is essential for the brain*, Paris, 2020 <https://www.insb.cnrs.fr/fr/la-symphonie-neuronale> , which was featured as the motivational book of the conference, as it includes data on the latest research on the effects of music on humans from prenatal development after old age, in health and illness. Her contribution *Neurosciences and Music: **From Basic Research to Impliations for Education, Society and Health*** also brought an interesting comparison of the impact of music with other art forms and, given the theme of the conference, focused on the demonstrable effects of playing music on improving other abilities and skills of children in the area of speech, perception and cognitive abilities, memory, neuroplasticity of the brain, the development of emotional, social and motor skills.

Other contributions combined more special experiences with the connection of theory and practice Among them was the contribution of the student of Prof. Mastnaka, Chinese woman **Jingyi Yang, Ph.D.** from Beijing University, Ludwig Maxmilian University in Munich and the University of Music and Theater there with the title ***Music Meditation, Mental Health and Stress Management/***. Yang is a trained psychologist and currently specializes in art therapy. It mainly deals with the possibility of stress regulation through music. It follows Chinese traditions in this.

**PhDr. Markéta Gelichová, Ph.D.** has been a recognized music therapist in clinical practice for over 25 years. Currently, he works as a physiotherapist and music therapist, assistant professor at the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine of the 1st Faculty of Medicine of the Charles University. She teaches music therapy at the Pedagogical Faculty of the Palacky University in Olomouc, is the vice-president of the Czech Music Therapy Association (CZMTA) and the author of the publications *Music Therapy in Practice* (2014, 2020) *Music Heals* (2017). Her clear contribution ***Music Education Promotes Brain Neuroplasticity*** proved that music education, especially practicing, significantly supports neurorehabilitation processes not only in patients.

**Prof. Andrea Sangiorgio, PhD.** is a professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Munich and the University of Exeter in Great Britain. He deals with, among other things, Orff's Schulwerk, cognitive aspects of music education. His contribution ***Promoting Personal Growth and Well-Being: The Potential of Elemental Music Education/ Support of Personal Growth and Well-being: The Potential of Elementary Music Education*** documented the complex influence of music practice on perceptual, language abilities, intellectual development, development of creative abilities, social skills and psychosomatic state. In his opinion, it is necessary to associate music with movement in well-manageable exercises, to combine music/art education with personality development. He personally works with a wide range of groups, from young children to socially

excluded and economically disadvantaged, health-impaired, etc. In his opinion, the quality of a teacher and therapist requires a combination (of course) of professional competence with flexibility and responsibility. He sees the benefits of cultivating music both on a physical level and on a psychological and social level - in cultivating the ability to concentrate, memory, problem solving, emotional self-regulation, and psychosomatic harmonization. His findings are consistent with the outputs of the other speakers.

**Doc. Mgr. Jiří Kantor, Ph.D.** works at the Institute of Special Pedagogical Studies, Faculty of Pedagogy, Palacký University in Olomouc. He is involved in several projects dedicated to the connection of music therapy and special pedagogy. His post ***Music-Based Education – How to Get Evidence Into Use?*** mainly devoted to examples of how to use simple musical procedures, e.g. in the acquisition of mathematics. He appeals to the possibility of a wider use of music to facilitate the development of other competencies and personality qualities than is the case so far.

**PhDr. Jiřina Jiričková, Ph.D.**, vice-dean for study affairs of the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Charles University, working pedagogically at the Department of Music Education of the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Charles University, member of the presidium of the ČHR and other organizations, prepared together with her husband, phoresic psychologist **Václav Jiříčka, Ph.D.** contribution ***Music and Joy in Education***. Her practice so far is focused on a playful pedagogical approach that increases students' motivation for musical practice and sharing. According to their contribution, joy is one of the outputs of that harmonization of brain and endocrine functions, which Barbara Tillmann reported on in particular. At the same time, Jiříčková & Jiříčka emphasize that music education represents a space not only for aesthetic purposes, but mediates music as a specific means of communication that helps the development of shaping and the development of social relationships.

The final Czech discussion was attended by **PhDr. Alexandros Charalambidis** from the National Pedagogical Institute, which deals with the current revision of Framework educational programs and director of the Department of Arts and Cultural and Creative Industries of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic **Mgr. Zuzana Zahradníčková**.

The discussion mainly dealt with the pros and cons of current music education in primary schools and the question of how realistic it is to incorporate some of the principles discussed at the conference into the regular educational process. An important argument is that it is necessary to understand that music, if its special potential is to be used, cannot be educated only as knowledge, but must go through the body and emotions in a controlled way and also be connected consciously with the cultivation of the pupils' personality. This, of course, places certain demands on teachers, but at the same time, such a more personal and creative approach can bring more motivation and joy from teaching. Another appeal relates to deeper interdisciplinary and international cooperation of experts. The conference should not be an isolated event in this direction.

More at:

[https://www.chr-cmc.org/cs/cimpp\\_2022](https://www.chr-cmc.org/cs/cimpp_2022)