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【論文】

How to place concerts as a part of therapeutic process in Community Music Therapy¹

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Abstract

Although it seems to have been over-looked in modern culture, concerts have inbuilt therapeutic aspects. Concerts can help people enliven or give an opportunity for self-realization. Concerts can work as therapy if they are rightly placed in a therapeutic process.

In Community Music Therapy (CoMT), concerts are an effective therapeutic medium because they are widely open to everybody and the first aim of CoMT is to unite participants to the community. But this kind of concert is supposed to be a 'special' one and different from a 'normal' concert (that is, a commercial venture which people are eager to attend). A 'special' concert has equal musical power to 'normal' one and they should not be thought of as so discrepant.

To establish a model of therapeutic 'special' concerts will enlarge the possibility of music therapy in both cultural and social aspects and also enlarge our everyday musical life, and that will benefit the community.

Keywords: Concert; CoMT; Interaction; Laughter; Elderly; Community; Culture

Introduction

The history of the musical concert is long and it can be traced back as far as ancient Greece. The opportunities for appreciating music exist all over the world, such as in rituals, theatres, or in ceremonies. But a 'concert' is a western notion that developed during 19th Century Europe and then spread all over the world. Nowadays the term 'concert' roughly means a system of appreciating the musical performances of musicians, which is held in a hall with a stage and with an admission charge. It contains both classical and popular music, and sometimes folk music too. Let us call it a 'normal concert'. Such a normal concert is open to an unspecified large number of people. Everybody can enter if he or she buys a ticket and so the audience are strangers each other. In such a case the musical experience is basically of a personal nature, and the first concern of the audience is the performer's musicality. The audience expect a high-level performance that corresponds to the fee, and they sit on their seat most of the time and just listen to the performance. It is normally a commercial venture, being dominated by the principle of supply and demand, which means that music and musicians that are less popular have fewer opportunities to perform, even though they are superior in quality. It is problematic that the concerts of famous and popular artists are full and the concerts of unknown artists, who are in most case local musicians, are thinly attended. For all that, normal concerts give people great pleasure and an exciting

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experience because of the power of the music.

On the other hand, there is another kind of concert, which I would like to call a 'special concert'. Special concerts are those which people of a certain community hold for themselves. For example, school concerts performed by students, concerts of piano or ballet by children, or concerts performed by adults in open schools are included in this kind of concert. And maybe concerts that music therapists hold with clients might also be included in this category. In such concerts, most of the audience know the performers, and many of them help to prepare the concerts. Usually the admission charge is free or very cheap, and most of the audience are residents of the local community. The audience is interested in the performers' level of musical development, not in their basic musical ability. Audience members often discuss with the performers later, and give their opinions regarding their development. The purpose of special concerts is that the performers will gain in confidence and heighten their ability. This gives great joy to the people involved, such as parents, teachers, or friends. In these special concerts the process of how the performers acquire the skills to reach their musical aims is the main concern. But for the people who do not understand this, a special concert might seem to lack artistic value, to be inferior to a normal concert, and so not worth paying for.

There is a discrepancy between a normal concert and a special one, and it seems that people take this for granted. But music therapists know well that the music which clients produce sometimes has genuine beauty and artistic power, which can move many people. I was concerned to find some way to take this power of music, which I feel is of equal artistic value to a normal concert, into the kind of special concert we hold in music therapy. I also hope to affect the habit of normal concerts, which are unnecessarily separated into two categories of popular and unpopular. I hope to do this by inviting local musicians to such special concerts. I believe that the local musicians will recognize the therapeutic value of music and help to establish a new concert model with us, which will benefit the local culture.

1. Concerts in music therapy

There has been a lot of research about the use of concerts in music therapy. Especially in CoMT almost all therapists plan to hold concerts for their clients and report how they and their community were changed by such concerts. Ansdell reported a case study of the 'Musical Minds' concerts, which gave both the participants and the audience great opportunity to communicate each other. Ansdell mentions the 'Chipped Mug Philosophy' regarding music in deprived communities. By this he means a community effort to repair some damage via contributing towards the musical performance in some way: "…the point being that we don't have to settle for the chipped mugs, but also of it mattering to make the effort to repair and give regard to what's already there."

Turry explained that his client Maria, who suffered from cancer, gradually recovered from her depression by making performances in front of a large public. In this case he made it clear that the performances (or the concerts) were strongly connected to the normal sessions clients were taking, and music therapists should propose various kinds of concerts which fit the client's needs, especially by considering the type of audience. His 2005 article, 'Music Psychotherapy and Community Music Therapy: Questions and Considerations', indicates to us how performance influences clients and therapists and the community, and how to use therapeutic powers of

² Ansdell, 2005: 18

performance with clients. He notes that: "Maria described the piano music as giving her a sense of being listened to deeply, motivating her to continue, giving her a power and strength even as she felt vulnerable and confused."

In spite of a lot of good aspects in the use of performance in the course of music therapy's development, there are also some hazardous aspects in holding concerts with clients. Turry discusses the 'potential hazards' which performance has and calls therapist's attention to this in his 2002 article. He notes the tendency that can develop of considering the performance as the key aim rather than the clients' individual development. Turry states: "By setting the goal of a good performance as a high priority, patient's issues may have been ignored by the therapist." This is because the therapists may be — perhaps unconsciously — using the performance to work out issues within their own musical ability. Such research as this can help all of us to become more aware of such tendencies within our own practice and therefore help us avoid this counter-productive habit.

Ansdell reported that Scottish anthropologist Victor Turner has also contributed some key concepts that may help us understand performance. Turner considered performance to be a completion of a wider process involving the performers, audience and the society they are in. In the performance something of importance is 'carried out' that involves a transformation on the individual and societal level. He notes: "In this sense performance events are closed to ritual events in being both experiential (going with the liminal flow of musical communitas), but also potentially reflexive — showing people back something about themselves and their society." ⁵

Considering the above aspects, I would like to search for a better way to hold concerts with clients — who are, in my case, elderly people in the local community.

2. A Case Study — Community Music Therapy in an old shopping arcade, Kokai

(1) About our normal session

We have been holding CoMT session for the elderly since May, 2006. The session room is located in an old shopping arcade in Kumamoto city, called Kokai, where many elderly shoppers visit everyday. Many of them live alone or in couples, having some problems in health, so that their opportunities to join the community and its activities are limited. We planned the session as follows:

Table 1

Aims	1. To increase the elderly people's physical and mental QOL by music.
	2. To reunite the elderly people with the community by meeting people of various generations
Methods	
Time &frequency	10:30 to 11:30 am (60 minutes), once a week.
Contents	singing songs (old ones, seasonal ones and requests); appreciation (the staff sing songs and other people listen); light exercise with songs; conversation.
Staff	2 registered music therapists, several graduate and undergraduate students.
Concerts	to hold concerts several times a year and join in the local events as a choir in annual winter music festival.
Policy	Respect the autonomy of the participants and assure them of their freedom to participate in a flexible way which allows them to attend irregularly if they wish.

³ Turry, 2005: 3

⁴ Turry, 2002: 2

⁵ Ansdell, 2005: 14

⁶ The period of this research is 2006-2008.

(2) About Participants

Inclusion criteria

Initially we intended for only elderly people (65 and above) to be included, however some people in their 40s and 50s started to come, therefore we dropped any criteria of age exclusion. Likewise we initially intended that only people in the local area would attend. However some friends who lived outside of the local area began to come also. The gender ratio is heavily towards females (male 15%, female 85%) with only 3 male members attending regularly. Many of the elderly women are now living alone after the death of their husbands. Most (around 70%) attend every session.

(3) Development and result

Some participants who had been rather depressed before became cheerful and positive during the course of sessions. They began to feel relaxed and to talk about their life history to staff or other participants. This seemed to ease their mental difficulties, such as loneliness, depression or withdrawal. Some participants who suffered from the aftereffects of cerebral hemorrhage told us that singing had a good effect on their speech and moving their body with music helped to improve their paralysis. Some participants developed new friendships with each other in and outside sessions, which further encouraged them to come to future sessions. They said that they came to think more positively about their surroundings and to take a more active role in their local area. Some of them made presents for staff or other participants, and others brought material relating to old songs, which helped to create a congenial atmosphere. They gradually began to feel happy to help someone and their dedication was rightly appreciated by the other participants and staff. To perform at concerts became an important momentum for them, because the preparation for these concerts helped their voices to become louder and more beautiful, which gave them greater confidence in general. They even came to feel like extending their efforts beyond singing to also try some acting. That would be another good step in the process of greater involvement in the community.

We gave out two questionnaires to participants in the CoMT weekly sessions, the first in summer 2006, and again in summer 2008. Both questionnaires revealed that CoMT was good for their QOL, but while the 2006 questionnaire reported internal improvements, the 2008 questionnaire revealed more regarding external aspects. The participants became more positive and active in social ways (like 'make friends' or 'feel easier to go out'). It might be understood as the effect of two years of gradual improvement in how they felt inside, that led to more social confidence. The participants came to have a sense that their physical and mental state was improving, and they looked forward to the sessions more and more. The weekly set time for 'Going to sessions' seemed to help them to lead a better-regulated and more cheerful life.

(4) The effects of laughter

In CoMT, it is important to create an atmosphere in which participants feel safe and relaxed. We found that encouraging laughter in sessions increased participants' sense of well-being and improved their relationships. By laughing a lot together they get rid of stress and more easily engage in conversation. We often used comical songs or parody songs, or parodied some famous scenes of films that the participants knew well. These old songs helped them to recall the old days and increased their sense of unity, because to laugh together is an

⁷ Concerning the result of these questionnaires, please refer to the appendix.

indication that one is accepted in the community and is part of the wider culture.

There is a lot of research on the effects of laughter and humor in the fields of psychology, sociology and cultural anthropology that reveal why humans developed laughter and what benefit we derive from it. Some have considered the psychological effects on emotional well-being, or the effects on social interaction. Lefcourt suggested that humor worked as a stress moderator and it could be "…taken to be a sign of resilience in the face of stress…". Puder stated that: "…humor and laughter can be an effective self-care and caregiving tool…" Puder mentions McGhee's (1979) suggestion of the therapeutic power of humor, which states humor in therapy can:

- 1) create a more relaxed atmosphere
- 2) encourage communication on sensitive matters
- 3) be a source of insight into conflict
- 4) help overcome a stiff and formal social life
- 5) facilitate the acting out of feelings or impulses in a safe, non-threatening way

The contention that laughter is something possessed only by human beings means that it is likely to be an essential aspect in the functioning of human society. Laughter is understood as a sign that you don't have a hostile feeling to the person you are interacting with. In such ways it has a social function, as Bergson stated in 1900: "To understand laughter, we must put it back into its natural environment, which is society, and above all must we determine the utility of its function, which is a social one." One such utility is in defining group membership and sense of belonging. Berger noted that what is considered hilarious within a family setting, for instance some funny thing 'Little Johnny' did, may not be seen as humorous by others. Berger points out: "In this, comic culture performs the same important social function of all symbol systems: it draws the boundary between insiders and outsiders."

In the field of music therapy, Aasgaard pointed out the importance of fun and laughter. He set the promotion of fun and laughter as one of the aims of the 'Musical Hour', his CoMT setting for children with cancer or other serious diseases in a paediatric hospital. He noted: …A paediatric hospital does not give many opportunities for such *normal* experiences. The music therapist is also a clown, a fool, an ignoramus: performing funny songs, using puppetry or tales."¹². A similar alienation from what's 'normal' can be noted in the case of elderly people who live alone or in couples with health problems.

3. The concerts

We began to hold concerts from an early stage of our CoMT to give the participants opportunities to perform and to communicate with local people. We thought it was not enough to hold sessions only, because to enlarge the participant's inner world the sessions are too narrow a focus. We conceived of the usual sessions as 'home', and the concerts as 'the outer world'. Every child has to be fostered at home, but sometimes he or she has to go out and experience many things outside home also. So, in CoMT it is important for the participants to have

⁸ Lefcourt, 2001: 12

⁹ Puder, 1998: 49

¹⁰ Bergson, 1900: 12

¹¹ Berger, 1997: 68

¹² Aasgaard, 2004: 155

opportunities to have a wider range of experiences, in this case a concert. And also a concert is a field of deeper communication among the participants, as the participants need to co-operate with each other in preparing for a concert. Their bond is strengthened by the concert, which has a good effect on the usual sessions. In that sense, a concert is not a festival once a year, but an important process of music therapy, which has to be linked more strongly to the sessions, and which influences the whole process.

We held 7 concerts from July 2006 to November 2008, the aims were as follows:

- 1. To help participants to overcome feelings of mental withdrawal and lack of energy by regaining self-respect.
- $2.\ To\ help\ restore\ mutual\ understanding\ between\ people\ in\ the\ community.$

And our methods are:

- 1. To involve the participants as choir members.
- 2. To select the songs and the activities which participants are fond of and will happily take part in during the concerts.
- 3. To set laughter as a theme of the concerts.
- 4. To organize the concert interactively, so that everyone can feel a sense of involvement in the process.
- 5. To involve the local musicians as guests.

Table 2. The history of each concerts and its development

Name of event	date	time	place	aim	contents	Participants involvement
The 1 st concert	Jul. 22, 2006	2h	Local community center	Advertisement of CoMT Introducing local musi- cians	Chorus of university students, recorder ensemble, recorder solo, piano solo, clarinet solo, vocal duet, old Japanese chorus, soprano solo	As audience
Local event in winter music festival		0.5h	Temporary stage in the arcade	Communication with local people to offer participants an opportunity of performing	Seasonal songs (chorus), old Japanese solo songs, exercise with music, a parody song	Some of the participants sang as a choir with staff.
The 2 nd concert	Mar.10, 2007	2h	Local community center	to offer participants an opportunity of performing Communication with local people	Seasonal songs (chorus), old Japanese solo songs, exercise with music, re- corder ensembles, recor- der solo, guitar ensemble, vocal duet, piano solo	Most of the participants sang as a choir. Some par- ticipants offered several requests on the program.
Local event in winter music festival	Nov.17, 2007	0.5h	Temporary stage in the arcade	Communication with local people to offer participants an opportunity of performing	Seasonal songs (chorus), old Japanese solo songs, local folk dance	Some of the participants sang as a choir.
The 3 rd concert	Dec.22, 2007	2h	Local community center	to offer laughter to participants Communication with students social experience for the students education of music management for students	All the program was planned and carried out by students: Musical paro- dies of Japanese famous dramas, light exercise, sea- sonal songs, old Japanese solo songs	As audience but sang together at the seats. Some of the participants made presents for the students to encourage them and to express gratitude.
Local event held by prefectural office	Mar. 1 2008	0.5h	Temporary stage in the arcade	Communication with people in different community to offer participants an opportunity of performing to get to know about local culture	Local folk songs, seasonal songs(chorus),old Japan- ese solo songs, local folk dance	Some of the participants sang as a choir
Local event in winter music festival		0.5h	Temporary stage in the arcade	Communication with local people to offer participants an opportunity of performing	Seasonal songs and local folk songs (chorus), old Japanese solo songs	Most of the participants were willingly to perform on the stage

Results and Discussion

In the course of holding concerts, we recognized two things. The first is that the clients develop their motivation to perform only gradually. This perhaps derives from Japanese culture, where modesty is respected and showing off is disliked. There is a tendency for the elderly to be diffident towards the wishes of their adult children. Therefore many elderly people may lack the habit of independent action. Secondly, the small stage and hall where the concerts are held is better for the clients as it is more intimate, rather than the big, imposing halls in the center of the city. The big halls may be exciting but often they are too much for the inexperienced elderly people to handle.

However gradual the progress the participants developed their positive attitude toward performance with every concert. For them, the experience of standing before the public was somewhat embarrassing at first, but soon it turned to be an exciting one. They came to look forward to performing at the concerts, recognizing the value of going outside of themselves in that way. There appeared to be a sense of a 'new self' emerging in the process and this involved somewhat overcoming the 'old self' that worried about what other people would think most of all. They came to understand the difference between 'showing off' and 'self-realization'. In that sense, we can say that the concerts helped to develop their positive attitude and to extend their inner world.

Part of this process was the active encouragement of laughter as way of both helping to break down barriers of communication and of increasing the level of enjoyment of the sessions and concerts. They simply had a good time laughing. This type of physical enjoyment also feeds back into the process of interaction. They themselves created this kind of interaction by joining in on an increasing atmosphere of fun. A particular point of this is that many of these elderly people have had a lot less laughter in their lives than they enjoyed during their younger days. A key aspect of our therapy process is to encourage a feeling of positive connection to their past by the use of songs from their younger days — a renewing of a more energetic state. Our hope is that this greater feeling of connection of the stages of their lives can help them to have a more meaningful existence. We, as staff, observed the way they were relaxing together and increasingly laughing. We therefore took part in the interactive process by further encouraging this atmosphere and making jokes ourselves. Therefore we too were part as the process, not authority figures standing outside, though we did carry out a role as guides and facilitators.

The theories of symbolic interactionism can be useful here. One aspect is that perhaps the participants had previously thought of culture as something far from them that only occurred in museums and big theatres. Our small-scale performances are quite different, taking placing in a medium sized performance space with an audience of about 70 or 80 people. There are about 15 to 20 performers, mostly local people from the CoMT group. This creates a type of intimacy in which artistic production can occur without it appearing to be 'art' in the formal sense that most people consider. Yet they are involved in a kind of interaction which creates and reflects something cultural. Symbolic interactionism focuses on how meanings emerge via such interaction in everyday settings, considering that: "Humans derive their (social) essences from the communities in which they are located, and human communities are contingent on the development of shared (or intersubjectively acknowledged) symbols or languages." So, the self is made in the social setting through sharing symbolic

interaction, of which music is a key form.

Part of the value of these concerts has been perhaps to give the participants a sense of creating 'art' in a way that they may have thought was not open to them. It was not thought to relate to their lives much before. Berger and Luckmann, in the classic book *The Social Construction of Reality*, noted that: "My knowledge of everyday life is structured in terms of relevances." Previously, the participants felt that such 'high art' objects and processes were not of relevance to them. In taking part in this interactive process of creating music, of 'Musicking' as Christopher Small termed it, the participants came to enjoy a new situation in which such art was relevant in their lives. It became a part of their social reality, something that they felt they could internalize and relate to others with.

This then perhaps is connected to a healthy expansion of their horizons in life, in that this previously distant social aspect become relevant to them, something they felt as newly meaningful to them. A new area of activity that can have beneficial affects on their sense of involvement with other people and self-worth. Specifically, for the participants singing meant a kind of self-assertion or a process of self-affirmation, a renewing of aspects they thought they had lost, both physically and mentally¹⁵.

Conclusions

We situated our CoMT not as a welfare project but as a cultural one. As Small pointed out by his word 'Musicking', everyone is producing music culture with their own musical potential. The process of CoMT can help to draw this potential out, which leads to the creation of culture. In sociology, the term 'culture' can be defined as everything that human beings create including everyday rituals. This view has not always been accepted in music culture, as it still seems to be considered as a somewhat 'professional' issue, something that is supplied to people by professionals. CoMT can help to make people feel that such aspects of their culture are not removed from them, but are things that they are involved in. The CoMT concert enlarges this feeling of involvement in a wider circle and creates a feeling of participation in the community. To introduce other entertainment such as laughter, play, or light exercise in concerts helps to ease the barriers between people and encourages good relationships. And the effect of the concerts is long lasting — after the concert the participants remember its warm atmosphere, which helps lead to a better relationship in the community.

Acknowledgments

I am very grateful to Mr. Sean Michael Wilson, who is a comic book writer, sociologist and psychologist,

¹³ Prus, 1996: 10

¹⁴ Berger & Luckmann, 1967: 45

In addition this theory helps to understand the process of how the meanings are created in these everyday interactions. According to the symbolic interactionist approach: "(1) Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that things have for them." (2) The meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows." (3) These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters." (Blumer, 1986: 2)

living in Kumamoto. He not only checked my English but also gave me plenty of useful advice on sociology and psychology. I also would like to address my thanks to the staff and the undergraduate students of Kumamoto University. Finally my special thanks goes to all the participants of the Kokai CoMT, who encouraged and inspired me the most.

Appendix:

The result of questionnaires which carried out in 2006 &2008

(*Number of the responses: 7 (2006), 14 (2008))

1. How do you feel about Kokai CoMT?

2006	2008		
very good	5	very pleasant	8
good	2	pleasant	3
no opinion either way	0	looking forward to the next session	2
not very good	0	interesting	1
bad	0		

2. How do you feel after the session?

2006		2008		
very comfortable	7	very comfortable	10	
comfortable	0	feel better in health	2	
no opinion either way	0	get more energy to live	2	
not very comfortable	0			
uncomfortable	0			

3. Can you describe how participating in the music therapy sessions has influenced or changed your normal life? (multiple-response)

2006	2008		
remember frequently the old songs and memories		make friends	4
become more cheerful	6	feel easier to go out	3
often sing songs in daily life	5	feel more joy in singing	2
improve in communication with others	3	improve in communication with others	2
become positive	2	improve health	2
voice becomes louder	2	become more cheerful	2
improves the posture	2	improve muscle movement	1
feel tired	0		
become negative	0		
feel reluctant	0		

4. Do you come more often to Kokai arcade for shopping than before?

2006	2008		
yes	5	yes	6
same as before	2	same as before	7
		only once a week after the session	1

5. [Do v	ou have	anv	wishes	about	the	sessions?
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2006	2008		
wish to sing in a bigger space and with more people 1		contented with the present state	6
wish to sing 30 minutes longer		Hope these sessions continue in future.	3
no wishes expressed		wish to make an excursion	1
		to have 1 more session a week	1
		no wishes expressed	3

The two questionnaires did not have exactly the same questions each time, there was some difference in the specific wording — but each aimed at eliciting information regarding their development. We felt it was necessary to keep each questionnaire short, with just 5 questions on each, because a long questionnaire may have tired them or put them off filling it out. In addition the 2008 questionnaire was a verbal one, with participants giving the answers to students, who wrote them down on behalf of the participants. The 2006 questionnaire was a multiple-choice one. However 2008 questionnaire was more open-ended with participants answering as they wished to certain set questions. We then grouped the answers into general headings that summarized the responses (such as "very comfortable"). The information received in these questionnaires also helped me to consider how to apply music therapy in the concerts.

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