

## “RECONNECTIONS – DRAWING THE THREADS TOGETHER”

The 4<sup>th</sup> MIAA Conference held at Villa Maria in Kew on September 5 – 6<sup>th</sup>, was a rich and varied experience for all those who attended.

Each presentation with its' own unique quality exposed us and reconnected us yet again to the richness of the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music. We were reminded again of its diversity and possibilities for use in so many different settings.

The experiential presentations provided time for our own reflections and learning as well as much enjoyment.



As we gathered for the opening each participant took a coloured scarf and laid it out representing the links and connections that we all share with one another and acknowledge and with Helen Bonny.

## MIAA CONFERENCE PRESENTATION REPORTS

With thanks to our contributors, Cherie Baxter, Joanna Booth, Jennifer Marr, Kay Kilham, and Carrie Salter. (ED)

### DAY ONE

**Alison Short** PhD, RMT, MT-BC, RGIMT, and AMI Fellow, is a healthcare researcher with a PhD in GIM with cardiac rehabilitation after bypass surgery, a music therapist and GIM therapist with broad experience in clinical applications as well as writing, presenting, researching, lecturing and service to the field. She was the first Australian GIM therapist (trained in USA), the first Australian GIM trainer, and an inaugural member of MIAA and National President of AMTA. She is currently a Research Fellow with the Centre for Clinical Governance research in Health, Australian Institute of Health Innovation, Faculty of Medicine, and The University of New South Wales.

Alison was the keynote speaker for the conference. In her opening address she explored a variety of aspects about her work with BMGIM and its adaptations, encompassing working with clients with dementia, research regarding using music to reduce noise stress levels for patients in the emergency department(ED) of an acute general hospital and her PhD research with patients recovering from bypass surgery. Alison's work with dementia clients highlighted each person's individual response to music and the importance of selecting the music and framing the session.

Her research with regard to noise in the ED brought to light very high noise levels from people talking, monitoring equipment, open space with flimsy curtains and the PA system. Patients who participated in the study filled out three separate stress scales pre and post application of the music.

The music consisted of two hours of recorded music on an MP3 player with earphones, with a choice of classical, modern, ambient and world music. Overall people reported that listening to the music reduced their awareness of outside noise and helped them feel more relaxed.

For her PhD Alison administered 6 GIM sessions to Patients experiencing a normal recovery from cardiac bypass surgery starting 6-7 weeks post surgery. Participants' experiences with GIM encompassed rehearsal for taking up pre-illness activities again, recovering physical energy, exploring physical after effects of surgery "*wanting to open the zipper to reduce shoulder tightness*" and what it meant to belong to the Zipper Club.

Carrie Salter

**Carrie Salter** is a Registered Guided Imagery and Music Therapist and Registered Nurse with extensive experience in general mental health and Palliative Care/ Oncology Nursing. Currently working in palliative/oncology nursing has helped her to recognize the benefits of GIM in full or adapted form for people experiencing a potentially life threatening illness, at any stage of this journey. This is also true for personal and professional carers. Witnessing the client's journey of discovery and developing trust in ones potential for wholeness and growth, is the most rewarding aspect of her work as a GIM therapist.

Carrie Salter presented "A study using GIM to explore the experience of Nursing Staff in caring for Oncology patients and their families."

This study was conducted for a three-fold purpose:

1) To offer oncology nurses opportunity and space to explore and reflect on their experiences of care giving, because time for reflection often is lacking at work or at home. Also, because of the

need for confidentiality, experiences cannot be shared with family and/or friends. The care giving work has considerable impact upon staff.

2) To gather information from a group of healthcare professionals about personal experiences of care giving for oncology patients and their families. Included factors are that this is an intensely personal yet shared series of experiences for nurses and that nursing practice is a series of skills, values and knowledge developed over many years that continues to evolve in an environment of continual change and increasing financial restraint.

3) To test whether the GIM process is a suitable modality to explore these areas. The participants were seven highly skilled and experienced Registered Nurses working in an Inpatient Oncology Unit and Day Chemotherapy Unit. Each participant was offered a series of six individual GIM sessions. Six focus elements were carefully selected for the GIM sessions. These were:

- Introduction to GIM
- Professional Identity/why the person chose this area of nursing
- Connecting to a care-giving event that stands out for the person
- Personal aspects the nurse brings to the situation
- Challenges in caring for oncology patients and their families
- Journey of discovery, reflection or renewal

Music selections were full Bonny programs (Quiet, Relationships, Explorations, Conversations, Transitions, Emotional Expression, Caring, Nurturing and Peak) or combinations of these to get a better fit

for the exploration of the experience of caring, rather than for a therapeutic purpose. 30-35 minutes of music were found to be effective.

The conclusions are that staff members benefited from their brief encounters with the GIM process, which brought out many aspects of the effects of their work that they had sidelined in their very full professional lives. It enabled them to reflect upon the various facets of their work and of the considerable impact that caring for oncology patients and their families had upon them. The prevailing economic climate has prevented any follow-up studies of this nature; a common occurrence regarding studies proposed for various hospital settings.

Joanna  
Booth

**Marea Richardson** is a Registered Guided Imagery and Music Therapist, Accredited Loss and Grief Counsellor (NALAG Vic) and Accredited Spiritual Director, working in Private Practice and as part of the Team at Campion, Centre of Ignatian Spirituality in Kew.

Marea Richardson's presentation was titled

"The Deceptive and Unrelenting Nature of Non-finite loss: Facilitating the expression of the resulting emotional impact through Guided Imagery and Music".

Marea was introduced to the concept of "non-finite loss" via the work of Bruce and Schultz (*A Psycho educational Approach*, 2001; *Living through loss*, 2004) which she encountered during her Grief and Loss training. Marea drew from multiple therapeutic examples from her GIM practice to demonstrate the impact of, and process of recovering from and living with, examples of non-

finite loss. Travelling with the music, the clients connected with the emotional and somatic impact of the loss and enabled its expression and transformation. With her clients, Marea identified the primary loss then the many secondary losses that impacted on the clients over many years, and in many varied ways.

Cherie  
Baxter

**Joanna Booth** BSc, BMus, LTCL, AIRMTNZ and FAMI is temporarily retired from GIM therapy, but staying in touch with the GIM community at large, edits the "World GIM" column of the AMI Newsletter, and has been revising and putting all her musical programmes (46 at last count) onto CDs. She hopes to complete a programme entitled "Ravelling" specifically for this conference. Joanna considers that these programmes, for Music, Drawing and Narrative and also for various lengths of GIM sessions are her contribution to the GIM community, and hopes that people will find them useful.

Joanna Booth facilitated an experiential workshop based on the Conference theme of "Reconnections—Drawing the Threads Together" with a music program compiled for the occasion, entitled "Ravelling...Reflecting.

Participants were invited to have either a Group M&I or an MDN experience, choosing a focus from strands of experience with and outside MIAA, connections with the land and other lands, with self, or any current issue. Listening to the music without imaging was another option. Compositions ranged from the initial Chinese traditional lyric song, two selections by Vaughan Williams, one of which utilized brief vocalizations, and compositions by Finzi, Ravel and Barber. This latter was vocal, in English, and several words, including 'beautiful' and 'light' could be

distinguished. All participants including the inexperienced were fine with these. MIAA's President, Kay Kilham, dedicated this session to the memory of Ngame Grezik, an RGIMT who passed away last year, and who was passionate about the music and imagery process. Feedback indicated that the music well suited the people and the occasion.

Joanna Booth

A personal Experience of "Ravelling – Reflecting"

'Music in my soul  
Coming from the very depths of me  
Welling up unbidden  
Flowing over into all

Come journey with me  
Calling all experience  
Created from childhood till now,  
Enveloping, creating  
My inner being

Working in my chosen field  
Opening opportunity to be called to serve  
Reach out and touch all those I meet  
'Calling, calling – come be with me"  
Following closely another's journey into new life  
Across the border

Privilege, expectant, sitting, waiting, being  
Bringing music to their world

Crossing over,  
Letting go  
Floating images of connection,  
Yearning, sighing, letting go, allowing to be

Special connections made,

Enhanced, new learning  
Experiencing my passion,  
A way to move forward

Special people along the way,  
Supporting, influencing my choices  
Navigating rough waters, then smooth

Heart opening up to new experience  
Touched by divine love, every moment  
Dancing singing for joy  
What love to be given and received  
One beloved, sharing life,  
So precious now  
Becoming truly me  
Standing firmly planted  
Blooming where I am meant to be

Passionate intensity,  
Focus in my life  
Music speak to me?  
'Come hither dear one, follow me  
Feel who you are, a precious soul among souls  
Share me with those you meet, rejoicing in my experience'

Margaret Lee

### **Alison Short**

Alison Short: Integrating the healthcare experience using GIM.

On the first day of the conference, Alison gave us an informative look at the use of her physical marker model in working with clients with health issues. Alison spoke about the increasing use of mental imagery to understand the disease process in clients. Using her material from her PhD thesis on the use of GIM in the recovery phase of cardiac bypass surgery, Alison explored clients' imagery over a number of sessions. I found that revisiting Alison's research after a few years allowed a fresh

viewing and understanding of the power of GIM in helping patients to not only come to terms with the trauma to their bodies but to also look forward to recovery. Well worth a second look!  
Kay Kilham

## DAY TWO

**Denise Grocke** PhD, is Associate Professor, Head of Music Therapy, and Director of the National Music Therapy Research Unit at the University of Melbourne. She is co-author of *Receptive Methods in Music Therapy* Jessica Kingsley Publishers (2007).

Denise Grocke presented her doctoral research in her presentation “Pivotal Moments in Guided Imagery and Music (Bonny Method)”. Denise began by describing the GIM method. She then outlined the phenomenological approach and research questions that she took in this retrospective study that involved semi-structure interviews with seven clients and therapists. Denise identified the features of the music, imagery and therapists’ role and presence during the pivotal moments. She provided GIM session examples, using recordings and transcripts. The presentation concluded with a distilled essence of what is defined as a “pivotal moment” and stimulated further discussion about the musical elements that might have contributed to the “pivotal” experiences.

Cherie  
Baxter

**Pat Hamilton** has recently added the Graduate Diploma in Guided Imagery and Music to her list of qualifications. As a Registered Psychologist, Patricia has worked for many years using the tools gathered from varied and interesting modalities. The interest in depth psychology, working with dreams and drawings all came together with the music, not only for her clients but also and especially for herself.

Patricia Hamilton presented “Befriending the Heroes Within, Romancing the Archetypes”. Rich archetypal material was presented in a distilled form via the work of Carol Pearson (*Awakening the Heroes Within*, 1991). Pat began by outlining the features of twelve paired archetypes through engaging description summaries and character examples from movies and family life. The pairs share the same life issue (including security, responsibility, identity, authenticity, power and freedom). The ways in which the paired archetypes were different but share the life issue were illustrated by the “mandorla” pattern (i.e. two intersecting circles) and colour. Experientially then, Pat invited us to focus on one life issue, journey to some Vaughan Williams music and draw our own mandorla. Pat has successfully whetted our appetites for more voyage and discovery with archetypes and music.

Cherie  
Baxter

**Carolyn van Dort** MA (Supervision), RMT. RGIMT. has a private practice working with BMGIM and she teaches the Certificate and Graduate Diploma courses in Guided Imagery and Music at the University of Melbourne. Carolyn is listed on the PACFA Register of Practitioners.

Carolyn van Dort: “Experiential Learning: GIM gathers the threads together in supervision”

Sometimes I find it a challenge to know the best way to approach the supervision process when a RGIMT is dealing with a client’s imagery process and how it manifests within the music/guiding context. The usual process is to discuss key images and

what they might represent, or to engage in the therapeutic processes that could help the client to gain insights and move forward. I found Carolyn's presentation on the use of the BMGIM process itself to be a very thought provoking and exciting prospect. The RGIMT becomes involved in the client's imagery with the music program that was used in the client session.

Then as the supervisor becomes the guide, my understanding is that the guiding process assists the supervisee in their reactions and responses to their client's imagery but while they are in the altered state. It takes a fair bit of training and practice for both parties to be able to remain in the client's experience both as therapist and supervisor. However, I found this to be something I would like to try as a participant on both sides of the supervision experience. The implications for GIM in supervision with practitioners of other therapeutic modalities could be substantial.

Jennifer  
Marr

**Rachael Martin** is a Music Therapist, Dip. Guided Imagery and Music Therapist in Melbourne. She completed a Master's degree in early 2007 at the University of Melbourne under Assoc Prof Denise Grocke, trialing the use of the Bonny method of GIM with the specific issue of performance anxiety with five tertiary performance students. Her music therapy work outside of GIM private practice has recently shifted from aged care and young children to working in palliative care in both hospice and community settings.

Rachael Martin presented her Master's in Music Therapy Research topic "The Effect of a series of Guided Music and Imagery sessions on Music Performance Anxiety". She described her understanding of music performance anxiety and the psychological

approaches that exist to treating this. Rachael explained her process for recruiting the participants in the study, and developing the therapeutic method that she developed and called "Guided Music Imaging". The Guided Music Imaging differed from GIM because it provided a structured program of six individual sessions that each had a theme on an aspect of performance anxiety and utilized approximately ten minutes of pre-selected music. Rachael gave case descriptions using the imagery and mandala examples of the participants. Quantitative results were encouraging, and qualitative reports suggested that the program made a lasting and positive effect on the lives and performance experience of the participants.

Cherie  
Baxter

**Raymond Ng** is a Registered Music Therapist (APMT & HPC, UK) and Registered GIM Therapist (AMI, US) in the Chinese regions. He graduated from the HK Academy for Performing Arts, majoring in Chinese Music, with a Bachelors Degree of Music (First Honor), Bachelors Degree of Psychology (Honor), Postgraduate Diploma in Music Therapy, Graduate Diploma in Guided Imagery and Music and a Master's Degree in Psychology of Music. Raymond is a past President of the Hong Kong Music Therapy Association, and is currently the Adjunct Assistant Professor, teaching and supervising at the HKAPA (School of Music & EXCEL), HKU SPACE, CUHK (Department of Music) and Kingston University (Hong Kong Program).

The Exploration of Chinese Music in a GIM music program 'Harvest'. Raymond, who is a Music Therapist and educator in Hong Kong, recently completed the Graduate Diploma in Guided Imagery and Music. He presented the music program that he developed as part of his studies. Firstly,

he described the process of choosing the music including an interesting description of classical Chinese music. He then gave us all an experience of his music program which he entitled 'Harvest'. We were invited to listen to the program in its entirety first. He then played it again, and we were invited to draw or write about our experiences of this music. I was intrigued that, despite the music being distinctly Chinese, I had a rich imagery experience. This seemed to be the experience of others in the room as well. Raymond very generously gave us all a copy of the music program and notes. I felt that it was a wonderfully enriching cross cultural experience and look forward to further programs in the future!

Kay Kilham