



## International Symposium

### *Music Therapy with children with autism*

Balassi Institute Ljubljana

Saturday, 16. february 2019

9.00-9.30	<b>Opening</b> Music and speeches	Bíborka Molnár, Špela Loti Knoll, Patricija Lovišček, Nuša Piber – 'DoReMi'
9.30-10.30	<b>Keynote</b> Creating Bridges: Music Oriented Parent Counselling (MOPC) for parents of children with autism	Dr. Tali Gottfried, Israel
10.30-11.15	The AQR-Tool (Assessment of the Quality of Relationship) in the Work with Children with the Autistic Spectrum	Dr. Karin Schumacher, Germany
11.15-11.45	<b>Coffee break</b>	
11.45-12.30	<b>CASE STUDIES</b> Polona Štule (Slovenia): <i>"The voice of a child"</i> Nikolett Stánicz (Hungary): <i>Music Therapy and Autism Specific Therapy</i> Laura Blauth (Germany): <i>»He actually looks as if he knows what he is doing« – Celebrating strengths and building resilience in children with autism</i>	
12.30-13.15	<b>Round table</b> – moderated discussion	all presenters, Claudia Knoll (moderation)
13.15-14.30	<b>Lunch break</b>	

14.30-16.00	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>WORKSHOPS</u></b></p> <p>A) Dr. Tali Gottfried: <b>»Music as a tool to support interactions with children with autism«</b> – a workshop open for parents and professionals</p> <p>B) Laura Blauth: <b>»Let's do music together!«</b> – musical activities to facilitate social interactions and positive group experiences for children with autism spectrum disorder</p> <p>C) Dr. Petra Kovacs: <b>»Connecting through music«</b> – an interactive workshop for professionals and family members</p>
16.30-18.00	<p><b>Film: »Operation syncopation«</b> A Long Term Follow-Up on Previously Successful Music Therapy Interventions for Autism, <b>Dr. Amelia Oldfield</b>, director: Maximilian Thompson</p>
18.00-18.30	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Conclusion</b></p>

### Invitation

*With great pleasure we are announcing the 2nd International Symposium with the cooperation of the Cultural Center of the Embassy of the Republic of Hungary in Slovenia, the Balassi Institute Ljubljana and the Institute Knoll for Music Therapy and Supervision, Kranj, Slovenia. We are hosting excellent speakers on the topic of Music Therapy with children with autism. The keynote speaker is Dr. Tali Gottfried from Israel, presenting the Music Oriented Parent Counselling model she developed during her PhD at Aalborg University, Denmark. As well we are welcoming the established German music therapist, specialised in the field of autism, Dr. Karin Schumacher.*

*Case-studies from various music therapy practitioners are offering insights in the music therapy setting. The round table discussion moderated by Claudia Knoll brings together all presenters to join the discussion on relevant topics in music therapy with children with autistic spectrum disorders.*

*There will be time for experiential workshops in the afternoon. Every participant can choose one of three possible workshops, held by music therapists from Israel, Germany and Hungary. For the conclusion of the symposium we have the honour to show the recently released documentary film »Operation syncopation«, evaluating the work of Dr. Amelia Oldfield, music therapist, professor and researcher from Cambridge, UK, which will be followed by an open discussion.*

*The musical frame of the symposium will be created by young musicians with autism, learning at the private music school DoReMI in Bled, Slovenia.*

*We are looking forward to welcome participants from Slovenia and abroad, including parents and carers, professionals from various areas working with children with the autism spectrum as well as our music therapy colleagues and others interested in this field.*

*The symposium will be held in English language.*

### Registration:

Send the completed registration form to the e-mail address: [institutknoll@yahoo.com](mailto:institutknoll@yahoo.com) and pay the registration fee on the account below:

*Hranilnica LON, Bleiweisova cesta 2, 4000 Kranj, IBAN: SI56 6000 0000 0444 331*

**There is an early bird discount for registrations until 21 December 2018: 60€** (40€ for students and the unemployed)

**The regular price for the registrations until 31 December 2018 is: 80€** (60€ for students and the unemployed)

**Event location:** Balassi Institut Ljubljana, Barvarska steza 8, Vila Urbana, 1000 Ljubljana

**Organisation committee:** Claudia Knoll, Polona Štule, Patricija Lovišček

**Institute Knoll for Music Therapy and Supervision, Kranj, Slovenia**

You can find the invitation and the registration form at [www.institutknoll.eu](http://www.institutknoll.eu)

### Presentations and presenters in detail

**Keynote presentation: Dr. Tali Gottfried**

***Creating Bridges: Music-Oriented Parent Counselling (MOPC) for parents of children with autism***

During my 20 years of clinical and research experience with children with autism and their parents, it became clearer to me, that music therapy practice can create bridges of musical relationships within these families. Music therapists around the world argue that working with the families of children with autism is essential for the benefit of the child and the whole family, and that music therapy has much to contribute to parent-child interaction, overtaking language and emotional barriers that are core features of the autism condition. Also, studies show that due to these features, parents of children with autism endure a significant level of stress – not only compared to parents of typically developed children, but also compared to parents of children with other disabilities. With the aim of supporting parents of children with autism in their unique challenging parental journey, the Music-Oriented Parent Counselling (MOPC) model was developed. The MOPC is an evidence-based clinical model, which focuses on the use of music-therapy techniques within continuous parent counselling sessions, parallel to the music therapy sessions for the child. This systematic, but yet flexible model, provides the parents with the opportunity to explore, reflect, investigate, and share their own parental experiences with a music therapist that treats their child and is familiar with the unique ways of communicating and interacting of the whole family members. The MOPC also provides the parents with useful simple ways of using music to support their children in daily situations and increase mutual engagement. Video excerpts will be presented to highlight "what works" in music therapy with different families with children with autism.



**Tali Gottfried, PhD**, is a registered music therapist and a certified supervisor. She is the co-director of the Master training school for Arts Therapies M.A.A.T at David-Yellin Academic College in Jerusalem, Israel. Tali is also the owner of the Private Practice for Music Therapy, for children, adolescents and their families. Tali's clinical experience includes working with children and adolescents with

neurodevelopmental delays and emotional needs, in both public and private sectors. Her research focuses on music therapy with children with autism and on the unique needs of their parents, within an ecologically oriented perspective in a parallel treatment setting. Tali is most interested to continue pursue a deep understanding regarding the musical bridges that can be created between parents and their children with autism, as a result of music therapy practice. Tali has presented her work at various National and International conferences, published several articles, and contributed a chapter about her model to the book "Music Therapy with Families: Therapeutic Approaches and Theoretical Perspectives", co-edited by Stine Lindahl-Jacobsen and Grace Thompson. Since 2014, Tali is the Israeli delegate to the European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC).

\* \* \*

**Presentation: Dr. Karin Schumacher**

***The AQR-Tool (Assessment of the Quality of Relationship) in the Work with Children with the Autistic Spectrum***

The **AQR-Tool** is an observation tool to assess the quality of relationship based on Daniel Stern's "model of development". It helps to answer the question whether the therapist's intervention is appropriate to the patient's ability to be related to himself (body and voice), to objects like music instruments, and to other people. This tool is developed by the music therapist Karin Schumacher and the developmental psychologist Claudine Calvet. On the basis of our understanding of autism as a pervasive specific emotional disorder, we focus the social-emotional development of the nonverbal time.

**Karin Schumacher**, Prof. Dr. rer. sc. mus. studied music therapy in Vienna and music and dance education in Salzburg. She is teaching at University of the Arts in Berlin and, together with Claudine Calvet developed the AQR-Tool to assess the ability for relationships in children with autism.

\* \* \*

## **CASE STUDIES**

**Polona Štule: *The voice of a child***

Presentation is based on the theoretical and empirical research on the use of voice of the therapist and the client with autistic spectrum disorder inside music therapy process.

The case study is the presentation of music therapy work with a five years old boy with Kanner's autism. The therapeutic process was 18 sessions long. It was divided in three phases of the process (introductory/ middle/ final period) and a video clip was analysed from each phase. The presentation focuses on three main objectives which were observed and analysed: building of the child's use of voice during the process; the development of the interaction between the child and the therapist and the influence of the moments of synchrony on the whole process. The case study describes and offers new insights and professional guidelines, which could be useful in the future music therapy practice with children with ASD.

My name is **Polona Štule**, I am a social pedagogue and Music therapist (Institute Knoll) from Slovenia. I work as a manager of Shelter for women and children victims of domestic violence in Ljubljana. I

have a private practice for Music Therapy and my main interest is working with children with ASD. I am practicing Music Therapy also with women and children, victims of violence.

\* \* \*

**Nikolett Stánicz: *Music Therapy in Autism Specific Therapy***

At the Child Psychiatric Ward, belonging to Budapest 1st Department of Paediatrics, we have been working on the therapeutic treatment and diagnostics of children and adolescents, living with autism spectrum disorder, for many years.

We go through a special, therapeutic follow-up process with part of the children treated at our ward, who have been diagnosed with autism. The basis of our program is the combined usage of autism-specific visual aids and tools of music therapy. The visual daily-routine and system of rules provide a stable frame. Within this safe space it is possible for the instruments to help with the otherwise difficult connection making process and communication. Studies and our own experiences show that music therapy positively affects the attention system, planning and execution skills, improves flexibility, social, emotional and connecting skills; i.e., it affects many of those areas positively that oftentimes function with a deficit in children living with autism. Through their predictability these special instruments calm the child, while at the same time they function as a tool that makes the process of connecting to each other easier. An important effect of the therapy is that this connecting skill becomes an integrated skill that manifests, due to the transfer effect, in every-day social space as well.

In my case-study presentation I would like to show in detail one of our kindergartens, the methodology we work with and our results here.

My name is **Nikolett Stánicz**, im a special education teacher and music therapist. Im working at the Child Psychiatric Ward, belonging to Budapest 1st Department of Paediatrics on the therepeutic treatment and diagnostics of children living with autism spectrum disorder. I have been working at Tábita Children’s hospice House as a voluntary music therapist for many years. Two years ago I joined to Smile Foundation, which provides free-of-charge psychological therapy programs and positive experience programs for children who suffer from chronic disease (mostly Hematology/Oncology).

\* \* \*

**Laura Blauth: *“He actually looks as if he knows what he is doing” – Celebrating strengths and building resilience in children with autism***

In this presentation, I will introduce Zain, a 6 year old boy with autism spectrum disorder. When he started music therapy, Zain used no words to communicate. He displayed self-injurious behaviour, hit other children, and started spitting when someone came too close to him. His teachers and his foster parent were very worried, mainly focused on Zain’s difficulties and the things that he could not do. We hoped that music therapy might provide him with alternative means of self-expression, opportunities to explore his strengths, and positive experiences.

Zain received individual music therapy sessions three times a week over a period of five months in his school. Sessions were mainly child-led, using improvisational music therapy techniques, but within a supportive structured framework. A positive therapeutic relationship and a strength-based approach were essential to facilitate communication and enjoyment. I met regularly with Zain’s caregiver to discuss aims and progress, and to show videos from the music therapy sessions. Similarly, I invited his teachers to observe and discuss the sessions.

Zain participated in music therapy with enthusiasm. The fact that he enjoyed music and was given opportunities to succeed helped him to build up his self-esteem, to feel happy about himself, and to become more resilient. Sharing videos and ideas with the school staff and his caregiver helped them

to become more aware of Zain's strengths, empowering them to try out new forms of play, as well as enabling us to work as a team.

**Laura Blauth** has worked as a music therapist with children with autism spectrum disorder in various settings, including mainstream and special schools, child development centres, and a child and family psychiatric unit. Before training as a music therapist, she studied music education and philosophy, and worked as a teacher in Germany and India. She is passionate about working in partnership with the families, community members and other professionals of her clients. Laura is currently doing a PhD at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, looking into the effects of music therapy and parent counselling on resilience in young children with autism.

\* \* \*

## WORKSHOPS

### Workshop A: Dr. Tali Gottfried

#### ***»Music as a tool to support interactions with children with autism« – a workshop open for parents and professional therapists***

Usually, parents use music spontaneously in different ways when interacting with their children. Some of them sing to their children, some of them speak in a melodic intonation, where others might play simple rhythmic games. But what happens when the child is diagnosed on the autism spectrum? Does it influence the way that parents use music while interacting with their children? It might be that parents notice the high level of responsiveness that some children with autism show to music, and incorporate music in their daily routine, to facilitate their children's functioning. But what happens to their own musical world?

In the first part of this workshop, the Music in Everyday Life (MEL) assessment will be presented, helping to map the different ways of using music in each family. The participants will be given hand-outs of the assessment to try on, and a space will be provided for exploring the personal uses of music that are taking place in each family.

In the second part of the workshop, participants are invited to bring and share with the group two musical choices: one for representing themselves, and the other for representing their child or their patient with autism. Space will be provided for discussing and reflecting on the meaning of each choice of music, making a connection to the participants' own musical identity. Please bring your musical choices on a disk-on-key.

\* \* \*

### Workshop B: Laura Blauth

#### ***“Let's do music together!” - Musical activities to facilitate social interactions and positive group experiences for children with autism spectrum disorder***

Many autistic children struggle with conventional verbal and non-verbal means of expression and communication. As a result, social interactions and group activities are often difficult for children with autism, but also for their peers and their teachers, and might lead to stress and exclusion. It is important to create alternative group experiences which are enjoyable for all participants and which offer autistic children opportunities to engage successfully in social interactions.

Children with autism enjoy music just as much as anyone. Many children can be motivated by listening and moving to music, singing, and playing instruments. Therapeutic group music activities

can encourage communication and connection with others in a playful, non-threatening and enjoyable way.

The aim of this workshop is to learn and experience a number of musical activities that are suitable for groups of children with (and without) autism spectrum disorder. We will try out activities that help to develop awareness of self and others, to develop a sense of belonging to a group, to explore feelings, to communicate non-verbally, to develop social skills, and to support self-esteem. The activities can be easily implemented in different settings and with children with varying abilities. Group leaders do not have to be expert musicians to run these sessions. We will discuss ways of adapting activities, consider difficulties that may arise and how to respond to them, and think about the potential as well as the limitations of these activities. But most importantly: we will make lots of music!

Target Group: Professionals (music therapists and other professionals)

\* \* \*

### **Workshop C: Petra Kovács**

#### **»Connecting through music« - Interactive workshop for professionals and family members**

How can music, as an alternative channel of communication, help children with autism to strengthen their sense of self and identity and get in touch with their environment? How can we help non-verbal children with autism to express their feelings and needs through music? How can music provide a safe and controlled environment where these children can join dyadic, triadic or even larger communities and have fun.

But music is not just fun. It is a truly multi-sensory exercise and hence it provokes the development of new pathways and connections in the brain. A child with severe verbal impairment can produce rhythms, noises and various sounds to play, to express or to communicate. Positive feedback can activate the reward system and can further motivate the child to use music as an alternative communication. At the workshop - depending on the interest of the participants - we will explore various musical activities that can be used for multiple purposes.

The aim of the workshop will be sharing through self-experience. Participants of the workshop will be invited to engage in selected simple musical activities and to reflect on their own experiences.

Musical activities will not require any previous musical education and vice versa; musical background will not prevent any participant to benefit from new experiences.

**Petra Kovács, PhD**, complex art therapist (MOME, MMSZKE), community music therapist (Sáry method, SZFE), and internationally licenced master practitioner and trainer of the Ronnie Gardiner Method, sociologist (ELTE, Université de Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne). For almost two decades, she used verbal and drama-based social therapy approaches to improve the quality of life of traumatized and other vulnerable populations. Since 2013, she works full time as music therapist bringing music close to people in recreational, community centred, educational, developmental as well as clinical environments. She uses music with different populations for expression, emotional regulation, communication, stress reduction, neurocognitive habilitation and rehabilitation. She has over 5 years of experience in using music with children with severe physical and intellectual disabilities. In 2017, she joined the clinical team of Murmo Psychopraxis where she uses music as a multisensory therapeutic and developmental approach to delayed neurocognitive development, attention deficit, emotional disorders, anxiety and atypical neurological development. Together with Ittész Zsuzsa (musician, MT), Kovács Petra is the co-founder of the Music Therapy Club. As an educator, her teaching is focused on innovative methods of musical improvisation. As a musician, Petra is an active member of the Hungarian Soundpainting community and the Csíkszerda improvisational choir.