



Canadian Mennonite University

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Programs in Music

Music Therapy

Music therapists use music in a skillful, systematic way to promote positive changes in the mental, physical, emotional or spiritual functioning of individuals and groups.

The Bachelor of Music Therapy (B.M.T.) degree at CMU consists of four years of academic and clinical work, culminating in a supervised internship at an approved facility. It provides strong academic and professional training in both music and music therapy. Graduates are highly skilled and broadly based entry-level music therapists who will meet the requirements for accreditation by the Canadian Association for Music Therapy.

Employment opportunities for music therapists exist in mental health facilities, nursing homes, hospitals, schools, group homes and many other settings. As well, many music therapists develop their own private practices. Music therapists are expected to be accomplished and versatile musicians with a solid grounding in the study of normal and abnormal human development in addition to their music therapy skills.

CMU will equip students in this program with an understanding of spirituality, ethics and counselling invaluable to a career in any care profession. Above and beyond the skills and techniques of music therapy, coursework at CMU helps students examine spiritual issues as a background to service within the community.

The Introduction to Music Therapy course is open to individuals who wish to learn more about how Music Therapy approaches are applied with special needs populations and who have the necessary course prerequisite (MUSC-1030/3 Rudiments of Music or equivalent). The course may be of interest to individuals in areas such as education, nursing, social work and ministry, as well as those who want to find out more about the profession before committing to the full program of study. **This is a survey course and does not develop the therapeutic skills required to be a music therapist.**

Students entering any music program at CMU must demonstrate proficiency on their major instrument in an audition prior to beginning their studies. Entrance interviews for the BMT program normally occur at the end of Year 2, after completion of the Introduction to Music Therapy, Music Theory IV, Music Skills IV and Introduction to Psychology I and II courses. Students will be asked about their motivation to enter the music therapy profession and it is recommended that students demonstrate knowledge of and commitment to individuals with special needs (e.g., through previous volunteer experience) prior to their BMT entrance interview. Competency in piano, voice and guitar are also tested during the interview.

Applicants who have previously completed a Bachelor of Music degree and the courses Introduction to Psychology I and II (or their equivalents) should find it possible to complete the academic coursework for an After-Degree Bachelor of Music Therapy in two years.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Canadian Association for Music Therapy (CAMT) defines music therapy as “the skillful use of music and musical elements by an accredited music therapist to promote, maintain, and restore mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health” (CAMT Annual General Meeting, Vancouver, BC, May 6, 1994). This approach to humans, health and music is holistic in focus. It is consistent with ancient views, which considered music as a phenomenon on three levels:

- *Musica instrumentalis*, or the experience of music at the physical level of the body, where musical sounds can be heard by humans
- *Musica humana*, or the experience of music’s moral and ethical potentials at the level of the soul or mind
- *Musica mundana*, or the experience of music as a pathway to deep universal truths at the spiritual level

This concept of music as influencing body, mind and spirit and reflecting universal life principles was at the core of classical theories of music and medicine. These ideas are once again being given consideration (Wigram, Pederson & Bonde, 2002).

The Music Therapy program at CMU is set within a Christian university, and addresses music as therapy in a holistic framework that will include spiritual dimensions. Since everyone has a belief system which influences all that they are and do, and because complete neutrality in knowledge is not possible, students will be challenged to consider what their belief system is and to understand how it influences them, as well as to understand how those seeking music therapy treatment are influenced by their belief systems.

The Bachelor of Music Therapy degree is part of CMU's music program, which strives to place the study of and participation in music within a framework of personal and communal interrelationships, whether in music education, church music, musicology, performance or music therapy. Whatever one's musical activity, one is influencing and impacting the wellness of those with whom one is in contact (Bartel, 2002).

Humans are social beings and music is human behaviour. The music we create in turn helps shape and influence us. We create the improvisation that is our life in musical community with other human beings. The music therapist cannot work with a client in isolation. The client has a context, and the music therapist works with this social context, attempting to move the client back to community and attempting to deal with unhealth and dysfunction in the community. Music creates community. It demonstrates humanness as an antidote to inhumanity. Music is a transformative social force, which cannot only reflect emotional life but also creates it, playing an important role in health promotion, cultural identity building and rebuilding (Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004).

The program seeks to provide undergraduate music therapy training that is broad and eclectic in scope, and which will prepare students for entry into the profession while creating awareness of advanced levels of training that exist for those who wish to further their education.

References:

- Bartel, D. (2002). *Music as building and maintaining wellness: Principles for a music program*. Paper delivered to a CMU Music Consultation.
- Pavlicevic, M. & Ansdell, G. (2004). *Community music therapy*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Wigram, T., Pederson, I., & Bonde, L. (2002). *A comprehensive guide to music therapy*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

See Academic Calendar for complete listing of admission, residency, graduation, and curriculum requirements.