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Running head: MUSIC ANALYSIS OF CLINICAL IMPROVISATIONS

Music Analysis of Clinical Improvisations with an
Adolescent Who Has Communication Difficulties

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Music Therapy

At the New Zealand School of Music

Wellington

New Zealand

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2010

Abstract

This qualitative study examines four improvisations taken from four phases of the researcher's clinical music therapy experience with an adolescent who had Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Therapeutic changes and communicative qualities in the improvisations were traced through reviewing clinical notes and journal reflections, and using adapted versions of Bruscia's Improvisational Assessment Profiles (Autonomy and Variability profile) to provide insights to the description and interpretation of the music. The results suggest a progression in the client's awareness of the music therapy student (MTS) (who later became the researcher) an increased ability to interact through turn-taking, imitating, sharing and empathetic playing, as well as enhanced non-verbal and verbal skills. The analyses unfold the client and the music therapy student's journey in music therapy, highlighting the process of how two strangers became partners through improvisations.

Keywords: music therapy improvisation, adolescent, analysis, Autism Spectrum Disorder, communication, Improvisational Assessment Profiles (IAPs).

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to God, who made this whole journey possible and meaningful.

My gratitude also to my parents, Paul and Julie Wang, who made financial resources available for my music therapy training.

It has been a pleasure to work with my client (the participant of this study). Many thanks to the family who allowed me to analyse clinical improvisations for this research.

I would like to thank my supervisor Daphne Rickson for her helpful feedback and encouragement throughout the year.

I am also fortunate to share this research journey with my wonderful peers in Wellington and Christchurch – especially Pornpan and Sophie.

Last but not least, I am heartily thankful to my friends (Ruth Nunn, Raphael Lee, Vincent Ow-Yeong) and brothers and sisters from the Christchurch and Wellington Chinese Methodist Church for their earnest prayers and support during the period when I was unwell with Bells Palsy.

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