

# Doctoral Research School in Music Therapy, Aalborg University

*Af Tony Wigram*

This article will describe the growth of the Doctoral Research School in Music Therapy, and explain some of the important elements of the school. I am immensely proud of the Doctoral Research School, and the high quality of the research milieu here in Aalborg. The Doctoral Research School in Music Therapy at Aalborg University is defined as an international school, because the initiatives by the Faculty of Humanities in establishing a scholarship programme has resulted in mature, international specialists in clinical music therapy and music therapy training choosing to register for doctoral research.

In 1997 funding was provided by the Faculty of Humanities for the awarding of Scholarship Grants to students from Denmark and abroad to undertake PhD level research while continuing their clinical work. This initiative has resulted in the registration of students from Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Austria, Israel, Korea, Sweden, Germany, Iceland, United Kingdom and Australia, who are at different stages of completion, or completed. I am also very proud of this international status, and whenever I am at international conferences, I am very aware of the high regard in which the Doctoral School is held.

The programme has attracted researchers of a very high level, and since we started in 1995, 7 senior music therapists who were Head of studies (studieledere), and 9 associate professors (lektorer) have registered as PhD students.

The criteria for entry, monitoring of progress, and examination through defending a thesis is carried out according to the requirements of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, and is controlled by the Department and the Faculty of Humanities. The training, both through supervision and courses, enables stu-

dents to carry out independent research in defined areas and produce dissertations demonstrating a high level of skill and the production of new knowledge. The development of an advisory board of supervisors from Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Austria, United Kingdom, the USA and Australia has enlarged the scope of the Doctoral Research School over the last ten years, and provided a quality control. The graduate students are involved in the selection of guest teachers and course content and format, and are also enrolling occasionally in other Doctoral Research Schools for specialist courses.

The Doctoral Research School at Aalborg has been growing successfully for the last thirteen years. For me, the next stage is to develop a larger body of researchers in this specialised field where the majority of the investigations are clinically applied studies looking at process and outcome of music therapy with a variety of clinical populations. With 11 active doctoral researchers currently, and a body of some 20 supervisors from Denmark, USA, Australia, and Europe, achieving a larger 'critical mass' is a primary goal over the next 3-6 years. The Doctoral Research School is well supported locally with an internationally renowned academic and clinical training in music therapy, driven by a team of two Professors, three Associate Professors, and a post doctoral researcher who is also an external Associate Professor, and other staff.

## Success in qualifying!!

In the last twelve years, seventeen scholarship students and eleven fellowship students have registered for doctoral study (many of them experienced clinicians and/or heads of study on music therapy programmes in different countries in Europe, Israel, Australia and the USA. To date, eleven of the scholarship students and seven of the fellowship students have successfully defended their theses. A further seven scholarship researchers

and four fellowship researchers are 'in progress'.

Since inception in 1995, the music therapy Doctoral Research School has a 100% successful completion rate, with no dropping out students. This is very unusual for the humanities (more typical of the Natural Sciences). Students usually complete within time limits, or within six months of planned completion. The FUR grant (støtte fra Forskeruddannelsesrådet) includes funding for pre-doctoral scholarships, expand the international scholarship programme, develop focussed, post-doctoral research, and train supervisors. The proud moment when a candidate has successfully completed their research is exemplified on picture 1 (next page), where we can see two former presidents of the World Federation of Music Therapy (Tony Wigram and Denise Grocke), one former and one current President of the EMTC (Tony Wigram and Jos De Backer), and now no less than 4 Professors (all male) and one Associate Dean (!!!)

The goal of the Doctoral Research School is to train researchers with sufficient theoretical, technical, method-

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Dr. Tony Wigram: Professor of Music Therapy and Head of PhD Studies in Music Therapy in the Institute for Communication and Psychology, Department of Humanities, University of Aalborg, Denmark, Head Music Therapist at the Harper House Children's Service, Hertfordshire. Herudover er Wigram forrygende til at undervise og underholde på dansk. Hans forsøg på at skrive dansk til denne artikel var dog aldeles mislykket, så redaktionsgruppen tillod derfor hans bidrag på engelsk. I sin sparsomme fritid dyrker han Quiddish, arbejder, shopper i Diagonal Alley, arbejder, går ture med Schubert, forkæler andre med sine fantastiske kokkeevner, arbejder, spiller musik med familien, og forfatter noget så ualmindeligt som sjove fællesjulebreve.



Picture 1: From left to right: Jaakko Erkkila, Thomad Wosch, Tony Wigram, Jos De Backer, Denise Grocke.

ological and applied clinical research knowledge in the field of music therapy research to assure scientific rigor. This requires critical assessment through peer review, supervised research studies and research courses to provide knowledge and expertise.

### The Doctoral Research School promotes research within theoretical and clinical areas:

1) The fundamental principles of research into music therapy including theories and methods to describe, analyse, interpret and evaluate method and process in music therapy. In the present research milieu, both qualitative and quantitative research is undertaken, investigating process and outcome. The development of an advisory board of supervisors has allowed the Doctoral Research School to incorporate both paradigms. Applied clinical research is actively encouraged, and forms 90% of the doctoral research studies, with occasional alongside theoretical or philosophical studies.

2) Research within the clinical area, in particular research methodology, is directed towards both process and outcome research. Clinically based research is increasingly demanded by health care organisations deciding and Evidence-Based medicine (EBM) calls for a hierarchical range of evidence to be presented supporting the efficacy of an intervention. Clinical fields that have been the focus of doctoral re-

search to date include mental health and acute psychiatry, psychosis, pervasive developmental disorder, autism, learning disability, brain trauma, cancer and neuro-rehabilitation. The research milieu in the music therapy Doctoral Research School at Aalborg University aims to promote the accumulation of such evidence and scientific knowledge.

The Doctoral Research School of Music Therapy is placed within the Department of Communication and Psychology at Aalborg University. The Doctoral Research School works within the recommended objectives of post-graduate research training in the Nordic countries (Norfa 2001), the Common Nordic principles for post-graduate research training (Siggaard Jensen et al. 2003) and the Nordic research training: Common objectives for international quality (Aasland & Nilsen (Eds.) 2003), which have both national and international aspects to ensure an international benchmark. International guest teachers and examiners are involved in training and evaluation.

### Cooperative relationships and local context

The Doctoral Research School has a long-standing collaboration with Aalborg Psychiatric Hospital where there is a research clinic in music therapy. Two graduates in the Doctoral Research School are employed there in research activities. Post doctoral re-

search is centred at the Videnscenter for Demens in Region Nordjylland, and also with Sundheds CVU Nordjylland. Clinically based research is encouraged as it is increasingly demanded by health care organisations. Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) calls for a hierarchical range of evidence to be presented supporting the efficacy of an intervention. The research milieu in the Doctoral Research School at Aalborg University aims to promote the accumulation of such evidence and scientific knowledge.

### Strategic importance and relevance

The Doctoral Research School is the only research centre in this discipline in Denmark, and is established in Department of Communication and Psychology where the sole Masters degree programme in music therapy in Denmark has developed. The development of the clinical profession of music therapy in Denmark is underpinned by the research production from the Doctoral Research School. At the present time, this is the only European PhD Doctoral Research School specialising in music therapy. International collaboration through both the scholarship students and guest teachers, gives the Doctoral Research School an international profile, enabling students to keep up with developments in their own fields, and build up international contacts.

### International collaboration

Formal collaboration was established with the National Music Therapy Research Unit at the Faculty of Music, Melbourne University, Australia, and with Witten Herdecke University, Germany over the period 2002-2007. I have made new formal collaborations that are currently being signed with University of Melbourne and with the only other music therapy Doctoral Research School offering a PhD in Music Therapy at Temple University, Philadelphia, USA

I have developed a second international network of formal collaboration between The Doctoral Research School in Music Therapy, Aalborg, the School of Music, University of Queensland, the Faculty of Music, University of Melbourne, and the research arm of the Grieg Academy, Bergen University.

I am also building a third, specifically Scandinavian network for collaboration between the Doctoral Research School in Music Therapy, Aalborg, Jyväskylä University, Finland, and the Academy of Music in Oslo, Norway. Other universities involved informally with the Aalborg Doctoral Research School in Music Therapy include Anglia Ruskin University, England and Louisville University, Kentucky USA, as well as other universities where the members of the supervisors' board hold academic positions.

### Doctoral Supervisors Courses

With the co-financed resources from the FUR/Faculty of Humanities grant of 2004, a supervisors' course was held in 2005 and another is planned for 2008. The course that was held in 2005 included 22 participants from Denmark, Norway, Finland, Belgium, Germany, Israel, United Kingdom, USA, and Australia. This course was evaluated very positively by the participants. The participants now form the core of the supervisor corps of the Doctoral Research School, expanded to a larger resource of 25 senior researchers from Europe, the USA and Australia. This gives the Doctoral Research School enough expertise and capacity for a wide range of doctoral studies, and a larger number of students.

The supervisors course included the following subject areas:

1. Thinking about doctorateness
2. Paradigms in doctoral research
3. The conceptual framework of a doctoral study
4. Supervisor issues and roles
5. Securing your doctorate – preparing for defence
6. The defence – auditing the thesis

New supervisors in the Doctoral Research School are initially incorporated as 'apprentice' supervisors – sitting in on supervision sessions and then taking part responsibility. Co-supervision, previously not common, is now gaining ground as a model to training new supervisors. It is very clear that quality of research and timely completion relies on high quality supervision.

At the supervisors course we celebrated the publication of the 2nd edition of *Music Therapy Research* (Wheeler 2005), a seminal text for research students all over the world. Some of



Picture 2: From left to right: Tony Wigram, Barbara Wheeler, Even Ruud, Denise Grocke, Brynjulf Stige, Lars Ole Bonde.

the contributors are pictured in picture 2 with the editor, Professor Barbara Wheeler.

### Post-Doctoral research

The current budget funds a part time post doctoral researcher from October 2005 until June 2008. The existing post holder (Dr. Hanne Mette O. Ridder) has established research projects at the *Videnscenter for Demens in Region Nordjylland*, and also with *Sundheds CVU Nordjylland*. She has undertaken her own extensive review of the literature and research in the field of dementia/Alzheimers, and is now highly regarded internationally.

### Completed Doctoral theses - qualified Phd's

On page 76 is an overview of the Doctoral researchers that have gone through Aalborg, and those currently working at their projects at this moment in time, including the names of their supervisors and titles of their projects.

The table below shows the expected number of students connected to the Doctoral Research School from 2006-2008 and the expected number of completions during that period.

Year	Expected n. of students registered	Expected completions
2006	10	1
2007	12	3
2008	14-16	2

To give a perspective on the growth of the Doctoral Research School, here are the data from previous years to the present year.

Previous Years	Number of students registered	Completions
1997	5	0
1998	5	2
1999	9	0
2000	7	0
2001	6	2
2002	7	3
2003	10	2
2004	10	2
2005	9	2
2006	12	1
2007	12	3

Since its inception in 1994, the Doctoral Research School has trained researchers with sufficient theoretical, technical, methodological and applied clinical research knowledge in the field of music therapy research to assure scientific rigor. This involves supervised research studies and research courses to provide knowledge and expertise. The Doctoral Research School promotes research within theoretical and clinical areas: The fundamental principles of research into music therapy including theories and methods to describe, analyse, inter-

## Completed Doctoral theses 1998-2007

- Gudrun Aldridge (1998), Germany, Supervisor: Dr. Lars Ole Bonde.  
*Die Entwicklung einer Melodie im Kontext improvisatorischer Musiktherapie* [The development of a melody in the context of improvisational music therapy].
- Wolfgang Mahns (1998), Germany, Supervisor: Dr. Lars Ole Bonde. *Symbolbildungen in der analytischen Kindermusiktherapie. Eine qualitative Studie über die Bedeutung der musikalischen Improvisation in der Musiktherapie mit Schulkindern* [Symbol development in analytical music therapy with children: A qualitative study of the meaning of improvisation in music therapy with school children].
- Niels Jørgensen Hannibal (2001), Denmark, Supervisor: Dr. Björn Wrangsjö.  
*Präverbal overføring i musikterapi* [Preverbal transference in music therapy – a qualitative inquiry of the transference processes in the musical interaction].
- Torben Moe (2001), Denmark, Supervisor: Dr. Lars Ole Bonde.  
*Restituerende faktorer i gruppemusikterapi med psykiatriske patienter - baseret på en modificeret udgave af den receptive musikterapi metode Guided Imagery and Music* [Restitutive factors in group music therapy with psychiatric patients based on a modification of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM)].
- Ulla Holck (2002), Denmark, Supervisor: Dr. Lars Ole Bonde.  
*'Kommunikalsk Sammenspil i musikterapi. Kvalitative videoanalyser af musikalske og gestiske interaktioner med børn med betydelige funktionsnedsættelser, herunder børn med autisme* ['Commusical' Interplay in Music Therapy. Qualitative Video Analyses of Musical and Gestural Interactions with Children with Severe Functional Limitations, including Children with Autism].
- Trygve Aasgaard (2002), Norway, Supervisor: Prof. David Aldridge.  
*Song Creations by Children with Cancer - Process and Meaning*.
- Cochavit Elefant (2002), Israel, Supervisor: Prof. Tony Wigram.  
*Enhancing Communication in Girls with Rett Syndrome Through Songs in Music Therapy*.
- Hanne Mette Ridder (2003), Denmark, Supervisor: Prof. David Aldridge.  
*Singing Dialogue. Music therapy with persons in advanced stages of dementia. A case study research design*.
- Christian Gold (2003), Austria, Supervisor Prof. Tony Wigram.  
*An analysis of long-term music therapy intervention with mentally ill children and adolescents in Austria*.
- Felicity Baker (2004), Australia, Supervisor Prof. Tony Wigram.  
*The effects of song singing on the affective intonation of people with traumatic brain injury*.
- Rudy Garred (2004), Norway, Supervisor Dr. Lars Ole Bonde.  
*Dimensions of dialogue: an inquiry into the role of music and of words in creative music therapy*.
- Jos De Backer (2005), Belgium, Supervisor: Prof. Tony Wigram.  
*Qualitative case study research: The transition from sensorial impression to a musical form (proto-symbolism) in psychotic patients in a music therapeutic process*.
- Lars Ole Bonde (2005), Denmark, Supervisor Prof. Tony Wigram & Dr. Denise Grocke.  
*The Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (BMGIM)*

*with Cancer Survivors. A psychosocial study with focus on the influence of BMGIM on mood and quality of life.*

Jinah Kim (2006) Korea, Supervisor Prof. Tony Wigram.

*The Effect of Improvisational Music Therapy on Joint Attention Behaviours in Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.*

Inge Nygaard Pedersen (2007), Denmark, Supervisor Prof. Tony Wigram & Dr. Denise Grocke.

*Counter transference in music therapy. A phenomenological study on counter-transference used as a clinical concept by music therapists working with musical improvisation in adult psychiatry.*

Helen Odell-Miller (2007) United Kingdom, Supervisor Prof. Tony Wigram.

*The Practice of Music Therapy for Adults with Mental Health Problems. The Relationship between Diagnosis and Clinical Method.*

## Doctoral research in process

Randi Rolvsjord, Norway, Supervisor: Prof. Even Ruud.

*An Explorational study of resource-oriented music therapy in mental health care.*

Dikla Kerem, Israel, Supervisor: Prof. Tony Wigram.

*Effect of music therapy on spontaneous communicative interactions of deaf toddlers following cochlear implantation.*

Karin Schou, Denmark, Supervisor: Prof. Tony Wigram.

*A Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) of the Effect of Guided Relaxation with Music (GAM) on Anxiety, Pain, Mood, Satisfaction with Hospital Stay, and on Length of Hospitalisation in Cardiac Valve Surgery Patients.*

Sanne Storm Wich, Faroe Islands, Supervisor: Prof. Tony Wigram.

*Case study research into developing a tool for the assessment of voice in therapy in psychiatry.*

Valgedur Jonsdottir, Island, Supervisor: Prof. Even Ruud.

*The lived experience of a group of mothers of infants with special-needs, participating in a music therapy program defined as music-caring within the framework of early intervention.*

Charlotte Lindvang, Denmark, Supervisor: Dr. Lars Ole Bonde.

*Learning through Self-experience: an investigation of learning dimensions in and professional consequences of Danish music therapy students' self-experience training.*

Märith Bergström-Isacsson, Sweden, Supervisor: Prof. Tony Wigram.

*A neurophysiological study of the effects of music and vibroacoustic stimulations in persons with Rett Syndrome.*

Carola Maack, Germany, Supervisors: Prof. Tony Wigram & Dr. Lars Ole Bonde.

*Comparing the Treatment Outcome of the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music and Psychodynamic Imaginative Trauma Therapy for Female Patients with Complex Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.*

Bolette Daniels Beck, Denmark, Supervisors: Prof. Tony Wigram & Dr. Lars Ole Bonde.

*A study of the impact of combined music and arts therapy on groups of traumatized refugees on salivary cortisol, coping and hope.*

Lisa Summer, USA, Supervisor: Dr. Lars Ole Bonde.

*Client Perspectives on Music Experiences in Music-Centered GIM.*

Stine Jacobsen, Denmark, Prof. Supervisor: Prof. Tony Wigram.

*Using Music Therapy for the assessment of parental competences in cases of suspected child neglect.*

pret and evaluate method and process in music therapy. In the present research milieu both qualitative and quantitative research is undertaken, investigating process and outcome.

In 2004, the Doctoral Research School received a co-financed grant from Forskeruddannelsesrådet and from the Faculty of Humanities, AAU, for 3.926.400 DKK (1.800.000 from Forskeruddannelsesrådet and 2.126.400 from the Faculty of Humanities) to build up the school during the period 2004-2009.

### Quality Control and Self evaluation

The Doctoral Research School has a history of successfully completed research and qualified PhD graduates which it jealously guards. Consequently, the admission, supervision and evaluation of doctoral applicants and candidates is maintained at a high level through a set of internal rules that continually evaluates the doctoral students throughout their studies. Application procedure, internal rules and guidelines and subject areas for bi-annual research courses are described in detail at the home page: [www.musikterapi.aau.dk](http://www.musikterapi.aau.dk)

### Research courses

To date the guest professors on the bi-annual research courses represent an international "Who's Who" of leaders in music therapy research:

- Prof. Even **Ruud**, Oslo University (Norway) 1995-2007
- Prof. David **Aldridge**, University of Witten/Herdecke (Germany) 1995-2002
- Prof. Kenneth E. **Bruscia**, Temple University, Philadelphia (USA) 1993, 1994
- Ass.Prof. Kimmo **Lehtonen**, Jyväskylän Yliopisto (Finland) 1992
- Dr. Björn **Wrangsjö**, St. Görans sjukhus

- Stockholm (Sweden) 1995, 1996
- Dr. Jette **Fog** (Denmark) 1995
- Dr. Daniel **Stern**, Geneva (Switzerland) 1996
- Prof. Leslie **Bunt** (Bristol University, England) 1998
- Dr. Mercedes **Pavlicevic** (South Africa) 1999
- Prof. Colwyn **Trevarthen** (Scotland) 1999
- Dr. Gudrun **Aldridge**, Witten Herdecke University (Germany) 1999
- Dr. Gary **Ansdell** (England) 2000
- Assoc. Dean Denise Erdonmez **Grocke**, Melbourne University (Australia) 2000-2007
- Prof. Brynjulf **Stige**, Bergen University (Norway) 2000
- Prof. Lutz **Neugebauer**, Witten/Herdecke University (Germany) 2001
- Prof. Jayne **Standley**, Florida State University (USA) 2001
- Dr. Henk **Smeijsters**, Sittard Professional College (Netherlands) 2002
- Dr. Julie **Sutton**, Belfast & Dublin (United Kingdom) 2002
- Dr. Thomas **Wosch**, Magdeburg University of Applied Sciences (Germany) 2003
- Prof. Tony **Wigram**, Aalborg University taught on courses 1997-2007
- Dr. Ken **Aigen**, New York University (USA) 2004
- Prof. Barbara **Wheeler**, Louisville University (USA) 2004, 2006
- Dr. Michele **Forinash**, Lesley College (USA) 2004
- Prof. Nicki **Cohen**, Texas Womans University (USA) 2004
- Dr. Wendy **Magee**, Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability (UK) 2004
- Dr. Brian **Abrams**, Immaculata University (USA) 2005
- Prof. Susanne **Metzner**, University of Applied Sciences, Magdeburg (Germany) 2005, 2007
- Dr. Christian **Gold**, Bergen University (Norway) 2006-2007
- Prof. Carolyn **Kenny**, Antioch University (USA) 2006
- Prof. Jaakko **Erkilla**, Jyväskylä University (Finland) 2007
- Dr. Dorit **Amir**, Bar Ilan University (Israel) 2007

The lectures have been supplemented and followed up by the staff of Professor and Associate Professors at the programme at Aalborg

University.

### PhD Board of Supervisors

The board of supervisors has been expanded over the last two years. Quality of supervision is a high priority in the Doctoral Research School. The internal regulations require students to meet targets for their research as specified below, and the quality, structure and procedures of supervision are significantly influential in ensuring that students maintain their timeline and schedule, and produce a high quality.

There is actually a peer group marker on good supervision because when presenting their research progress every six months at PhD intensive courses, often with their supervisor alongside, the quality of supervision is placed under continuous scrutiny in this Doctoral Research School. In addition, critique offered in the public defences has given more insight into the strengths and weaknesses of supervision. Nevertheless improvements are continuously sought, and consequently funding for the supervisors courses is part of this application.

### A cosy atmosphere

Above all, I believe that doctoral researchers need nurturing and support, and part of the success of the programme has relied on a milieu that is friendly, allowing, respectful, fun, interesting, supportive and caring. Many of the researchers have struggled to complete their research while undertaking full time work, carrying case-loads, or with many responsibility for others – particularly the scholarship students. I have established some traditions for our PhD groups that have helped – jokes before the



Picture 3: The hard work of PhD courses...

morning and afternoon sessions during the courses, home cooked meals together at my, Ulla Holck, Lars Ole Bonde and Niels Hannibal's houses during the courses, and the famous 'robing ceremony' after a successful defence when a researcher is dressed in graduate robes, given a black velvet Tudor PhD hat (bonnet), and lots of presents and speeches during the reception. Actually, we don't know what an 'unsuccessful defence' is to date!!!!



*Picture 4: ... and the great challenges of the public defence ...*



*Picture 5: ... can be complimented by friendly home cooking and the fun and laughter of social time together ...*



*Picture 6: ... and the confident support of a team that have worked hard to achieve recognition and respect for the Aalborg Milieu ...*