

**The Bachelor Degree program in the Music Therapy Course
 of the Conservatoire of Music in Pescara**

by Silvio Luigi Feliciani

▶ These are some pictures of the Conservatoire of Music in Pescara. The building recalls its historical origins, while the inside was renovated for educational and music activities. ▶ In the next slide You can see the Music Therapy room, also. ▶

Pescara is situated in the centre of Italy, on the Adriatic Sea, just opposite Rome. It has a population of about 120 thousand people and it is quite a modern town. ▶

The bachelor's degree program in music therapy of our Conservatoire of Music is a special program, since it is the only nationally accredited Bachelor's degree course in Music Therapy in Italy.

In my Country there are about 80 music conservatories, and about 80 universities. Conservatoires are not associated to Universities but are independent organizations, and in the same city you can find both a University and a Conservatoire. Some Italian conservatories offer two-year programs of specialization in music therapy, but they do not issue a bachelor's degree, as they are not academic courses. There are neither Bachelor nor Master's degree courses in music therapy in any university. Unfortunately, in my country music therapy has still a fairly recent history and despite it is widely practiced, there is not a formal acknowledgment of this profession by our Government yet in contrast to what happened a few years ago in the near Austria. Hopefully this will happen in the near future in Italy too. So in this context, our program represents an incentive and an element of great importance. ▶

I chose to divide this presentation into 3 parts:

- 1) In the **first** part, I will talk about the educational activities of our academic course.
- 2) ▶ In the **second** part I will discuss those initiatives that give an international dimension to the program. These pictures show some moments of our Seminars and Master classes;
- 3) ▶ In the **third** part I will present the developments we expect for the near future, with regard to mobility.

▶ Okay. **Educational activities**

Part of the activities of the program is represented by the disciplines of the curriculum, that are partly theoretical and partly practical.

Theoretical disciplines are divided into areas traditionally belonging to the theoretical skills of a music therapist.

Practical disciplines are, on the other hand, those that provide students with the ability to use different musical instruments.

Then there is a part of activities which consists in the practice of music therapy, a part which is divided into two typologies :

Practical exercises (use the technique of role playing) and traineeships (see the participation of the patients themselves).

▶ So that's a summary of the program, with all the disciplines, the number of lecture hours for each class, and the number of credits earned for each exam. By clicking on the link at the bottom of the page you can read the English version of the contents related to many disciplines.

A special section of the website has an English version to facilitate the analysis of the curriculum for foreign students interested in Erasmus mobility.

► Students can access our academic course through an admission exam, and this exam is open to all those who have a secondary school diploma, and who possess musical skills. Very often there is talent, but not discipline. Many applicants play their instrument very well, but are not aware of what they do, and cannot control these skills in any way.

► That is why we have included this discipline (Parameters and functions of the music code in therapy), through which, in a three years time, all students shall master and become aware of the use of the ear, and shall build a melody, according to the rules of harmony, singing and rhythmic reading. We do not underestimate the need for students to acquire medical and psychological skills, but we give great importance to their musical training. If they are not good musicians, they will not become good music therapists.

► The next slide shows, instead, the disciplines included in the two areas (medical and psychological), but please note that here you will find some disciplines which cannot be categorically included neither in the psychological area nor in the musical area: I am talking about psychodynamics of music, geriatric music therapy and psychology of aging, psychodynamics of the children's music repertoire.

► In the next slide I preferred to use some images to enlist the different music instruments played by our students.

Every music therapist, of course, has a favorite instrument. But, in our experience, there is no instrument capable of dealing with all the typical situations a music therapist may face. Therefore, each of our students must learn to use different instruments: first of all, his own voice. The use of the voice, the ability to use it while singing, to improvise and play with it, are really important for us. In addition to the voice, students must practice the piano and the guitar, as polyphonic instruments. Obviously, if you have never practiced these instruments before, in three years you can only learn to accompany. But this is already enough. Students also learn to play the recorder, which is extremely useful in music therapy, easy to transport and quite evocative.

Certainly, students are also trained to play percussion instruments, Orff and ethnic instruments. Our percussion teacher also teaches them the basic rules of maintenance and how to build instruments in a traditional way.

Finally, in the third year, students are trained to use music software, so that they can also create special mixes or sound collages, to be used both in active and receptive music therapy.

► **Now, let's talk about our practical music therapy training**, where students, working together, in pairs or in groups, learn to recognise their feelings, to give life to the feelings themselves through sounds, and learn how to control and manage the outflow of emotions through the use of sound and music.

In the **first year** students must focus on sound production, will have to learn the use of various aspects of dual and group sound relationship.

In the video students improvise the audio description of anxiety and fear.

Video

► Students of the second year will learn the technique of thematic improvisation in individual and group simulations, and in the most diverse contexts.

In the video students of the second year improvise an audio description of expectation, wait and wonder, surprise

Video

► The ultimate goal of the program is to provide students with the ability to learn the fundamental parameters of sound communication; to use sound elements

of a nonverbal context; to recognize the use of the patient's body-music-sound expressions.

▶ **The last part of our activities involves the participation of our students in traineeships with real patients.** This activity is really important for us and students can access it only after gaining 60 credits. Students are assisted by the tutor. The hours required to complete this activity are 250: 100 in the second year and 100 in the third year of practical activities to which we must add 50 hours of supervision distributed in the best way during practice. Before being authorised to have a first contact with the patient, an observation period is required, to give students the time to plan the intervention, describe the objectives, the modalities and the setting they intend to use.

▶ In the next two slides you can see : the different institutions operating with our Conservatoire for this activities;
▶ and some pictures of our students filmed while performing this activity.
▶ I also have a short video, but time does not allow me to show it.

▶ **Now, I'll talk about those activities of the curriculum, which give an international dimension to the program.** In the first slide you can see the first part of these activities : international placement, seminars and masterclasses.

▶ In the second slide : the membership with world Federation of music therapy, participation in conferences and international meetings, organization of conferences and international meetings .

▶ The most important is certainly represented by the job placement at foreign institutions. This activity is essentially what I have just described, with the notable difference that it does not take place in Italy, but in a foreign institution. The main difficulty is represented by the fact that students must communicate in a different language (both with operators, families and patients, of course) and must use relational sound models appropriate to the culture of the host country. Right now, two female students of the Conservatoire are in Devon, in the south of England, just to end their period of placement at Mayfield School in Torquay. Students have access to this experience after passing a selection, and receive a scholarship that allows them to travel and live abroad for the months required.

▶ In the next slide I am going to show you those activities that we call **Seminars or Masterclasses**. These activities are held by experienced and internationally renowned musicians or professionals. Sometimes, these activities are also linked to teachers' mobility within the different institutions. Since I do not have much time available, I cannot show you a video in which Skille explains to the public the concept of vibration, although it would have been really interesting.

▶ In the next slide I am going to show you some other examples of **Seminars**: on the left the seminar on the preparation of the Certification Exam *Music Therapist Board Certified* (MT-BC). On the right, the Seminar on the first 3 "levels" of the Benenzon model of music therapy (music therapy experts know what I am talking about).

▶ I must point out that all these activities are not charged to domestic students. They can attend them without paying anything.

In this slide, instead, you can see the **Masterclass** held by Alan Turry (the managing director of the Nordoff Robbins Centre in New York) who is talking to

the students about the Nordoff Robbins approach. In the video some moments of the masterclass are shown.

Video

► Other initiatives which give an international dimension to the program are the membership of the Conservatoire of Pescara with the **World Federation of Music Therapy**, as well as the participation of the Conservatoire in World Congresses of Music Therapy. First of all, this circumstance allows us to achieve a certain visibility at international level, then it allows us to keep abreast of the most current scientific guidelines and to give students an up-to-date and modern idea of music therapy.

► My presence in this meeting demonstrates our determination to gain visibility at international level, in wanting to promote our course, and our idea of the study of music therapy. We are also interested to know the ideas of others, and to confront with them.

► Organizational activity : to this end, in Pescara we decided to organise an international conference, which is limited to institutions of higher education in Europe and addressed in particular to those offering a music therapy program. We decided to invite all those who are sensitive to this issue, to present their music therapy programs and to verify together if there are the conditions necessary to create a network of institutions ready to welcome effectively the mobility of students in this subject area.

► **In the last part of this presentation I would like to discuss the developments of mobility in the near future.**

These developments should aim at two objectives: the first is to expand the number of activities that have already returned positive results; the second is to make the necessary adjustments to those activities that have not given good results yet.

With regard to mobility, the activity with the most positive results is certainly the job placement activity. Our wish now is to increase the number of partner institutions with characteristics adequate to this kind of experience.

Another activity that is giving really positive results is represented by the masterclasses held at the Conservatoire by renowned experts. The time they spend with our students always leave very positive effects and show them unimagined perspectives. Teachers can also benefit from these visits, since they can compare their knowledge and broaden their interests. The limit of this initiative is represented by the costs. Our goal is to reduce these costs for as -as much as possible- by using Erasmus + funds.

The third objective is to implement the mobility of students and teachers, once again with Erasmus + funds. Today, this objective finds some obstacles, since we found it difficult to identify foreign institutions with a curriculum that is compatible with ours. When the curriculum is compatible, the calendar is not, or the opposite happens. This seems to be the main problem in students mobility for music therapy programs. We need to further deepen our research in order to identify those institutions where this mobility is actually possible.

Finally, the international conference I have previously spoken about is not just an idea, it is already a resolution of the Academic Council and the Board of Directors, which have chosen the days of 24-25-26 April 2015 for this event.

► In the next slide I prepared an **interview with some students** , but the time has expired, and we can not see it.

► In the last slide you can see my **email address**: please use it if you need more information.

Thank you for your kind attention, and I hope the topic was not too boring for you.

Thank you