

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY MUSIC IN SOCIETY

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SUMMARY. Community music is a multifaceted phenomenon that fosters collaboration, social cohesion, and cultural expression through active music engagement within diverse communities. Community music-making is best understood as an inclusive, participatory practice that has the power to transform social dynamics within communities. The literature presents the multifaceted dimensions and potential of community music-making, showing its ability to promote not only artistic expression, but also social coherence, personal growth, and community development. This synthesis of literature underscores the potential for community music to serve as a catalyst for positive change in music education practices, focussing on communal engagement and empowerment rather than solely individual treatment.

Keywords: community music, music education, music-making, music therapy, well-being

Definition of Community Music

The notion of music as a communicative medium underpins community music. Kim argues that music invites social interaction, emphasising its role in facilitating prosocial behaviour through shared experiences.² This aligns with Cross's view of music as a participatory medium that promotes interactive engagement among individuals, thus improving communal ties and emotional connections.³

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² Kim, J. Music's ability to foster prosocial behaviour: a teleofunctionalist perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1472136>

³ Cross, I. Music and communication in music psychology. *Psychology of Music*, 42(6), 2014, pp. 809-819. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735614543968>



Definition of Community Music Making

Community music making is a multifaceted phenomenon that fosters collaboration, social cohesion, and cultural expression through active music engagement within diverse communities. It generally emphasises participatory practices that facilitate collective music-making experiences among individuals of varied backgrounds. The essence of community music can be distilled into several core principles, each supported by extensive academic discourse.

At its foundation, community music is characterised by collaborative music making, which enables participants to engage creatively and expressively in shared musical activities. Wong and Augustine assert that community music embodies the ideals of cultural democracy, allowing individuals to create music together regardless of formal training or background, thus fostering personal growth and community development through collective action.⁴ This aligns with the view expressed by Bartleet et al., who highlight the importance of shared experiences in music-making contexts as a means of enhancing intercultural relationships and promoting a sense of belonging among participants.⁵

In exploring the motivations and outcomes of community music, it becomes evident that such environments provide emotional and social outlets for individuals. Participatory music-making has been shown to contribute positively to community well-being, as it promotes social interaction and emotional connectivity between individuals. For example, research indicates that communal music activities can significantly improve mood, memory, and overall well-being among older adults, illustrating the role as a catalyst for positive community dynamics.⁶ Furthermore, involvement in community music often leads to the development of lasting interpersonal relationships that extend beyond the musical context.⁷

The context of community music is also deeply shaped by cultural and geographical dynamics. As noted by Schippers and Bartleet, the practices and frameworks of community music vary significantly across different demographics

⁴ Wong, W. and Augustine, C. Malay gamelan: approaches of music learning through community music. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 7(11), 2017, <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v7-i11/3562>

⁵ Bartleet, B., Sunderland, N., & Carfoot, G. Enhancing intercultural engagement through service learning and music making with indigenous communities in Australia. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 38(2), 2016, pp. 173-191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103x16667863>

⁶ Perkinson, M., Phatak, V., & Ramirez, M. Leveraging cross-campus expertise to contribute to dementia care through music. *The Ama Journal of Ethic*, 24(7), 2022, pp. 611-616. <https://doi.org/10.1001/amajethics.2022.611>

⁷ Carucci, C. An investigation of social support in adult recreational music ensembles. *International Journal of Community Music*, 5(3), 212, pp. 237-252. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm.5.3.237_1

and cultural settings, emphasising its adaptability and relevance in diverse settings.⁸ This adaptability is further reflected in how community music projects can serve various purposes, from addressing social issues like violence prevention through music therapy in classroom settings Wölfl⁹ to promoting cultural identity and resilience among indigenous communities.¹⁰

Moreover, the pedagogical function of community music is notable; it can serve as a vital educational approach that goes beyond traditional music education by fostering an inclusive environment for all individuals to explore their musicality.¹¹ By emphasising active participation and lifelong participation in music-making, community music practices can rejuvenate interest in music among individuals who might otherwise disengage due to commercialisation or elitism in traditional music environments.¹²

Finally, community music must be seen as a dynamic and evolving practice that reflects the communities it serves. The rich variety of community music initiatives demonstrates a growing recognition of music's role in social justice and cultural expression, as articulated by Veblen, who points to the need for recognition of diverse musical practices that empower communities.¹³

In summary, community music making is best understood as an inclusive, participatory practice that has the power to transform social dynamics within communities. Through collaborative and culturally sensitive engagement, community music not only enhances individual well-being, but also facilitates broader social cohesion and cultural respect.

⁸ Schippers, H. and Bartleet, B. The nine domains of community music: exploring the crossroads of formal and informal music education. *International Journal of Music Education*, 31(4), 2013, pp. 454-471. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761413502441>

⁹ Wölfl, A. Drumpower – music for a better community in the classroom: group music therapy programme for violence prevention, social integration and empowerment in schools – suggestions from community music therapy approaches. *International Journal of Community Music*, 9(1), 2016, pp. 65-75. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm.9.1.65_1

¹⁰ Bartleet, B., Sunderland, N., & Carfoot, G. Enhancing intercultural engagement through service learning and music making with indigenous communities in Australia. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 38(2), 2016, pp. 173-191.

¹¹ Koopman, C. Community music as music education: on the educational potential of community music. *International Journal of Music Education*, 25(2), 2007, pp. 151-163. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761407079951>

¹² Howell, G., Higgins, L., & Bartleet, B. Community music practice. 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190244705.013.26>

¹³ Veblen, K. The many ways of community music. *International Journal of Community Music*, 1(1), 2007, pp. 5-21. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm.1.1.5_1

Types of Community Music Making

Community music-making is a broad field that includes various practices, methods, and outcomes resulting from collective musical participation. Within this genre, different formations are recognised, such as participatory music-making, therapeutic music experiences, and educational interventions. The complexity of community music stems from its various dimensions, often reflecting the cultural contexts and social dynamics of the communities involved.

At the core of community music is the notion of **collaborative music-making**, where individuals are brought together to create music as a collective expression. This aligns with O'Flynn's assertion that successful community initiatives strike a balance between participatory and performance modes, emphasising vernacular music-making that resonates with local culture and identity.¹⁴ Wong and Augustine further argue that collaborative music-making underscores cultural democracy, allowing community members to engage in musical practices that foster unity and personal growth.¹⁵ This practice serves as a vehicle for artistic expression and acts as a catalyst for community development, enhancing social ties between participants.

In various contexts, **community music making** serves as a vibrant means of fostering social cohesion. For example, music festivals in regional Australia provide a platform for community members to engage in creating, improvising, and performing together, reinforcing local identity and collaboration.¹⁶ Such events become microcosms of social interaction, where music acts as a thread that strengthens the sense of belonging within a community. McMichael's research illustrates that community festivals can extend musical practices, enabling innovative collaboration within community contexts.¹⁷

Additionally, research highlights the **educational benefits** of community music. The educational potential is evident in various forms, ranging from informal learning settings to structured educational initiatives.¹⁸ For

¹⁴ O'Flynn, J. Vernacular music-making and education. *International Journal of Music Education*, 24(2), 2006, pp. 140-147. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761406065475>

¹⁵ Wong, W. and Augustine, C. Malay gamelan: approaches of music learning through community music. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 7(11), 2017, <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v7-i11/3562>

¹⁶ Joseph, D. Community music-making in regional Australia: creating, improvising and performing at a festival. *International Journal of Community Music*, 7(3), 214, pp. 379-395.

¹⁷ McMichael, A. Activating a music festival: extending musical practices by composing with communities. *International Journal of Community Music*, 16(1), 2023, pp. 95-111. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm_00077_1

¹⁸ Koopman, C. Community music as music education: on the educational potential of community music. *International Journal of Music Education*, 25(2), 2007, pp. 151-163. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761407079951>

example, participation in music ensembles fosters significant social bonds and a sense of belonging among adults, which are key to emotional and social support.¹⁹ This aspect of community music emphasises the educational outcomes that result from collective musical engagement, indicating significant developmental pathways for individuals and groups.

Furthermore, **music therapy** intersects with community music practices, particularly in programmes that target vulnerable populations, such as people living with dementia. The findings of studies on community music in dementia care demonstrate that participatory music-making improves well-being and quality of life among participants, transforming music from a simple therapeutic tool into a medium for social and emotional engagement.²⁰ This aligns with Higgins' exploration of music's transformative power in establishing identity and community culture within various contexts.²¹ Through music, participants not only experience personal upliftment, but also cultivate an environment conducive to social interaction and emotional expression.

The global reach of community music is evident through its expression in diverse cultures. For example, in indigenous Australian contexts, community music connects individuals with cultural heritage and traditions, incorporating new musical forms derived from ancestral roots, thus enriching community engagement and expression.²² Similarly, Odezuruigbo cultural dance music within Igbo communities exemplifies how music functions beyond entertainment, being integral to cultural, religious, and social practices.²³ This illustrates how community music is intertwined with identity and collective memory, enriching the cultural landscape.

Telematic performance is another innovative approach emerging within community music, where technology bridges connectivity between remote communities. Such initiatives address geographical barriers, enabling musicians in isolated areas to collaborate in real-time, thereby expanding the scope of

¹⁹ Carucci, C. An investigation of social support in adult recreational music ensembles. *International Journal of Community Music*, 5(3), 2012, pp. 237-252.

²⁰ Smith, S., Innes, A., & Bushell, S. Music-making in the community with people living with dementia and care-partners – 'I'm leaving feeling on top of the world'. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 30(1), 2021, pp. 114-123. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.1337>

²¹ Higgins, L. Growth, Pathways and groundwork: community music in the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Community Music*, 1(1), 2007, pp. 23-37. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm.1.1.23_1

²² Cidade, J., Caramelo, J., & Costa, A. Civilian wind bands as agents of non-formal and informal education, 2022, *CIM22*. <https://doi.org/10.2218/cim22.1a47>

²³ Nwamara, A. and Okpala, H. The socio-cultural implications of Odezuruigbo cultural dance music in Awka, Awka South local government area of Anambra State. *Afrrevljah an International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 9(1), 2020, pp. 44-57. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ijah.v9i1.5>

communal music-making experiences.²⁴ This highlights the evolving nature of community music, where digital tools enhance traditional practices to create inclusive and expansive musical opportunities.

As community music increasingly evolves, understanding it through diverse lenses, particularly concerning its educational implications, is critical. Schippers and Bartleet emphasise that community music practices encompass a range of informal and formal interactions that resonate in demographic and cultural contexts.²⁵ By identifying key elements of successful community music initiatives, practitioners can more effectively articulate and promote frameworks that meet unique community needs.

Ultimately, the dynamic and inclusive nature of community music practices showcases their potential to foster engagement, identity, and collective growth in various environments. It is essential for community music practitioners to remain adaptable and responsive to the cultural, social, and emotional landscapes in which they operate.

The literature presents the multifaceted dimensions and potential of community music-making, showing its ability to promote not only artistic expression, but also social cohesion, personal growth, and community development. Future research and practice should continue to explore these aspects to enhance the understanding and impact of community music in diverse contexts.

The Effects of Community Music Making on People

Community music-making has been widely documented as a transformative practice that significantly enhances individual and collective well-being. This form of participation facilitates various social, emotional, and cognitive benefits, thus fostering a sense of community among participants. The literature reveals numerous dimensions of this influence, indicating that community music-making not only promotes social cohesion but also contributes to personal growth and improved subjective well-being in diverse populations.

One of the primary benefits of community music-making is its ability to forge social connections and improve feelings of belonging among individuals. As suggested by Creech et al., communal music-making fosters interpersonal relationships that can greatly enhance subjective well-being, particularly in

²⁴ Rofo, M., Geelhoed, E., & Hodsdon, L. Experiencing online orchestra: communities, connections and music-making through telematic performance. *Journal of Music Technology and Education*, 10(2), 2017, pp. 257-275. https://doi.org/10.1386/jmte.10.2-3.257_1

²⁵ Schippers, H. and Bartleet, B. The nine domains of community music: exploring the crossroads of formal and informal music education. *International Journal of Music Education*, 31(4), 2013, pp. 454-471. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761413502441>

older adults.²⁶ Individuals engaged in shared musical activities often report feeling more positive and animated during rehearsals and performances, which is a sentiment echoed in the findings of Smith et al., who noted that participants in community music projects experienced camaraderie that significantly increased their well-being.²⁷ This aligns with the observations made by Creech et al., who emphasise that active music-making supports social networks that can lead to empowerment and recovery from isolation and depression among older populations.²⁸

In terms of social cohesion, community music participation creates a foundational environment where individuals can share joy and foster positive relationships. The power of communal experiences in music, as illustrated by Lense et al., shows that parents and children, including those from varying backgrounds, can engage through music to promote emotional regulation and social play.²⁹ This kind of interaction is particularly beneficial in culturally diverse settings, as highlighted by Yi and Kim, who assert that music activities enhance emotional, psychological and social dimensions of well-being across various demographics.³⁰ Collective participation in music-making rituals can also serve as a medium for social integration, enhancing group identity and cultural understanding, particularly in contexts involving marginalised groups such as refugees and immigrants.³¹

Moreover, the emotional benefits of participating in music extend beyond mere social interactions. Participation in community music activities often leads to significant mood regulation, which plays a crucial role in coping with stress and adverse life circumstances. During challenging times, such

²⁶ Creech, A., Hallam, S., McQueen, H., & Varvarigou, M. The power of music in the lives of older adults. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 35(1), 2013, pp. 87-102. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103x13478862>

²⁷ Smith, S., Innes, A., & Bushell, S. Music-making in the community with people living with dementia and care-partners – li'm leaving feeling on top of the world'. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 30(1), 2021, pp. 114-123. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13378>

²⁸ Creech, A., Hallam, S., Varvarigou, M., McQueen, H., & Gaunt, H. Active music making: a route to enhanced subjective well-being among older people. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 133(1), 2013, pp. 36-43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1757913912466950>

²⁹ Lense, M., Beck, S., Liu, C., Pfeiffer, R., Díaz, N., Lynch, M. & Fisher, M. Parents, peers, and musical play: integrated parent-child music class program supports community participation and well-being for families of children with and without autism spectrum disorder, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/2ruza>

³⁰ Yi, S. and Kim, A. Implementation and strategies of community music activities for well-being: a scoping review of the literature. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(3), 2023, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20032606>

³¹ Marsh, K. "The beat will make you be courage": the role of a secondary school music program in supporting young refugees and newly arrived immigrants in Australia. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 34(2), 2012, pp. 93-111. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103x12466138>

as the COVID-19 pandemic, the function of music as a tool for social cohesion and mood regulation became even more pronounced, as evidenced by Chiu, who observed that musical practices facilitated emotional connections and collective experiences between communities.³² This sentiment was also captured by Daykin et al., who illustrated how music-making activities in healthcare settings improved the quality of life for individuals with dementia, underscoring the ability of music to enhance not just mood but also cognitive function and social engagement.³³

The psychological impacts of community music-making extend into the realms of personal development and achievement. Participants often experience a heightened sense of purpose and fulfilment when engaging in structured musical activities, as indicated by Weinberg and Joseph, suggesting that such engagement can elevate subjective well-being.³⁴ Participatory music experiences are particularly transformative for older adults, as they contribute to personal development and a sense of achievement, facilitate recovery from mental health challenges and promote overall vitality.³⁵ Additionally, the role of music facilitators in these settings is crucial; They guide and encourage participation, thus improving the impact of music on well-being and community cohesion.³⁶

When examining the broader social implications of community music making, it becomes evident that this practice can bridge gaps between diverse groups, thus enhancing cultural understanding and mutual respect. Music's inherent ability to transcend cultural barriers makes it an effective vehicle for promoting intercultural dialogue and fostering inclusiveness within communities. This is particularly relevant in divided societies, where music programmes can cultivate a sense of unity among individuals of different

³² Chiu, R. Functions of music making under lockdown: a trans-historical perspective across two pandemics. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.616499>

³³ Daykin, N., Parry, B., Ball, K., Walters, D., Henry, A., Platten, B. & Hayden, R. The role of participatory music making in supporting people with dementia in hospital environments. *Dementia*, 17(6), 2017, pp. 686-701. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1471301217739722>

³⁴ Weinberg, M. and Joseph, D. If you're happy and you know it: music engagement and subjective wellbeing. *Psychology of Music*, 45(2), 2016, pp. 257-267. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735616659552>

³⁵ Creech, A., Hallam, S., Varvarigou, M., McQueen, H., & Gaunt, H. Active music making: a route to enhanced subjective well-being among older people. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 133(1), 2013, pp. 36-43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1757913912466950>

³⁶ Lee, J., Krause, A., & Davidson, J. The perma well-being model and music facilitation practice: preliminary documentation for well-being through music provision in Australian schools. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 39(1), 2017, pp. 73-89. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103x17703131>

ethnic backgrounds.³⁷ By leveraging the emotionally resonant and connective nature of music, community music initiatives can promote peacebuilding and social stability in contexts marked by conflict and division.

As the discourse around community music continues to evolve, it becomes essential to recognise the ongoing challenges and opportunities in this field. Commercialisation of music often leads to disengagement from traditional music-making practices, highlighting the need for community-based responses that foster genuine engagement.³⁸ In this context, community music practitioners play a critical role in reengaging individuals with music through innovative practices that are culturally and socially relevant, thereby revitalising community bonds and collective creativity.³⁹

Furthermore, the importance of inclusive practices within community music initiatives cannot be overstated. Addressing the needs of people of varying backgrounds, including those with disabilities, older adults, and children from disadvantaged communities, is essential to foster an environment where everyone can thrive. As shown in the research conducted by Perkins et al., participatory music participation is especially beneficial for mental well-being and can help address disparities in access to cultural and artistic activities.⁴⁰ This underscores the potential of community music to serve as a democratizing force in society, facilitating access to creative expression and community involvement.

Overall, the wealth of literature available on the subject illustrates the profound effects of community music-making on individuals and communities alike. By fostering social connections, regulating emotions, improving cognitive functions, and contributing to personal and societal growth, community music serves as a vital practice with far-reaching implications for well-being. As we continue to explore and establish community music as a legitimate domain of study, it is critical to integrate collaborative approaches that consider diverse voices and experiences, ultimately enriching our understanding of music's transformative power in community settings.

³⁷ Howell, G., Pruitt, L., & Hassler, L. Making music in divided cities: transforming the ethnoscape. *International Journal of Community Music*, 12(3), 2019, pp. 331-348. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm_00004_1

³⁸ Howell, G., Higgins, L., & Bartleet, B. Community music practice. 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190244705.013.26>

³⁹ Schippers, H. and Bartleet, B. The nine domains of community music: exploring the crossroads of formal and informal music education. *International Journal of Music Education*, 31(4), 2013, pp. 454-471. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761413502441>

⁴⁰ Perkins, R., Mason-Bertrand, A., Fancourt, D., Baxter, L., & Williamon, A. How participatory music engagement supports mental well-being: a meta-ethnography. *Qualitative Health Research*, 30(12), 2020, pp. 1924-1940. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732320944142>

By prioritising participation, inclusivity, and cultural relevance, community music initiatives can effectively harness the transformative potential of music-making to foster well-being, social cohesion, and a vibrant sense of community among individuals from all walks of life.

Community Music Making in Education

Community music production in education has emerged as an essential topic with opportunities to enhance students' engagement, creativity, and social cohesion in educational contexts. One of the foundational roles of community music is its ability to emphasise participatory and vernacular music-making practices, allowing students to experience music as a shared cultural activity rather than just an academic discipline. O'Flynn discusses how community-based initiatives balance participatory and performance modes of production, suggesting their applicability to school music education, which increasingly seeks to integrate informal, culturally relevant music practices into formal curricula.⁴¹

Further examining the impact of community music on creative thinking, Koutsoupidou and Hargreaves conducted an experimental study that highlights the positive effects on children's creativity in music education. Their findings suggest that social interactions during music-making are critical for musical development, supporting the idea that music education should nurture collaborative environments that mirror community practices.⁴² This perspective reinforces the notion that music instruction can improve social outcomes and academic performance, particularly for students from under-represented backgrounds.⁴³

The pedagogical implications of community music-making extend beyond individual creativity to the promotion of inclusive learning environments. Winter emphasises the importance of various activities, including performance, listening, and composition, in providing a well-rounded music education that aligns with the community music ethos, which advocates a holistic approach to music learning.⁴⁴ Complementarily, Draper et al. discuss how peer interaction in inclusive music classrooms can lead to positive experiences for

⁴¹ O'Flynn, J. Vernacular music-making and education. *International Journal of Music Education*, 24(2), 2006, pp. 140-147. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761406065475>

⁴² Koutsoupidou, T. and Hargreaves, D. An experimental study of the effects of improvisation on the development of children's creative thinking in music. *Psychology of Music*, 37(3), 2009, pp. 251-278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735608097246>

⁴³ Doyle, J. Cultural relevance in urban music education. *Update Applications of Research in Music Education*, 32(2), 2014, pp. 44-51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123314521037>

⁴⁴ Doyle, J. Cultural relevance in urban music education. *Update Applications of Research in Music Education*, 32(2), 2014, pp. 44-51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123314521037>

students, including those with disabilities. The insights of this research indicate that community music practices can foster inclusive settings that respect and accommodate diverse learning needs.⁴⁵

Incorporating culturally relevant and community-based methods into music education promotes not only musical skills, but also a sense of belonging among students. One case study elaborated by Gage et al. illustrates how an urban arts high school aligned its curriculum with students' musical interests, thus fostering greater engagement and community ties. This integration of real-life music-making activities exemplifies how community-orientated approaches can enhance educational outcomes and student satisfaction.⁴⁶

In addition, the historical context of community music, as illustrated by McCarthy, reveals its evolution within academic and social boundaries. Establishing commissions and interest groups, such as the International Society for Music Education's Community Music Activity Commission, demonstrates a concerted effort to legitimise community music as a significant educational discipline aimed at enriching the music education landscape.⁴⁷ This historical perspective is vital for understanding the ongoing dialogue between community practices and formal education.

In conclusion, community music making within educational contexts not only supports musical skill development but also fosters creativity, collaboration, and social cohesion. By integrating vernacular music-making practices into educational settings, community music can transform the nature of music education, making it a more inclusive, engaging, and contextually relevant experience for students. This synthesis of literature underscores the potential of community music to serve as a catalyst for positive change in music education practices.

Community Music Making in Music Therapy

Community music therapy (CoMT) represents a significant evolution in the intersection between music-making and therapeutic practices, emphasising communal engagement and empowerment rather than solely

⁴⁵ Draper, E., Brown, L., & Jellison, J. Peer-interaction strategies: fostering positive experiences for students with severe disabilities in inclusive music classes. *Update Applications of Research in Music Education*, 37(3), 2019, pp. 28-35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123318820401>

⁴⁶ Gage, N., Low, B., & Reyes, F. Listen to the tastemakers: building an urban arts high school music curriculum. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 42(1), 2019, pp. 19-36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103x19837758>

⁴⁷ McCarthy, M. The community music activity commission of ISME, 19822007: a forum for global dialogue and institutional formation. *International Journal of Community Music*, 1(1), 2007, pp. 39-48. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm.1.1.39_1

individual treatment. It operates on the premise that music has inherent social and communal qualities that can be harnessed for therapeutic benefit, particularly within diverse populations.⁴⁸

One of the critical aspects of community music therapy is its emphasis on co-creative processes that support both individual and group growth. Goodrich describes how community music therapy facilitates communal music making, allowing clients to navigate their musical experiences within a supportive therapeutic framework.⁴⁹ This connection between individual needs and group dynamics highlights how CoMT can promote social integration and empowerment, allowing participants to engage meaningfully within their communities.⁵⁰ Participants in community music settings report significant developments in personal growth, self-esteem, and confidence.⁵¹

Furthermore, CoMT actively encourages collaboration between trained music therapists and community musicians, enhancing the musical experiences for participants, particularly those with developmental disabilities or other challenges.^{52 53} For instance, Gosine et al. document how inclusive music-making initiatives allow participants with physical disabilities to collaborate with local musicians, fostering a sense of belonging and community involvement.⁵⁴ This adaptability and responsiveness of music therapy practices to the unique preferences and cultural contexts of diverse groups is essential.⁵⁵

Furthermore, there are calls within the field for ongoing research to better delineate and understand the role of community music within therapeutic practices. Joyce and Moss emphasise the necessity for practitioners to critically

⁴⁸ Yang, Y. The impact of community music therapy on social integration and empowerment in different settings. *Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, 4(9), 2022, [https://doi.org/10.53469/jssh.2022.4\(09\).04](https://doi.org/10.53469/jssh.2022.4(09).04)

⁴⁹ Goodrich, A. Health musicing in a community orchestra. *International Journal of Community Music*, 6(1), 2013, pp. 45-63. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm.6.1.45_1

⁵⁰ Kwoun, S. Service learning within the community music therapy approach (comt). *Voices a World Forum for Music Therapy*, 19(1), 2019, <https://doi.org/10.15845/voices.v19i1.270>

⁵¹ Wong, W. and Augustine, C. Malay gamelan: approaches of music learning through community music. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 7(11), 2017, <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v7-i11/3562>

⁵² Curtis, S. and Mercado, C. Community music therapy for citizens with developmental disabilities. *Voices a World Forum for Music Therapy*, 4(3), 2004, <https://doi.org/10.15845/voices.v4i3.185>

⁵³ Oosthuizen, H., Fouché, S., & Torrance, K. Collaborative work: negotiations between music therapists and community musicians in the development of a South African community music therapy project. *Voices a World Forum for Music Therapy*, 7(3), 2007, <https://doi.org/10.15845/voices.v7i3.546>

⁵⁴ Gosine, J., Hawksley, D., & Quinn, S. Community building through inclusive music-making. *Voices a World Forum for Music Therapy*, 17(1), 2017, <https://doi.org/10.15845/voices.v17i1.893>

⁵⁵ Thomas, N. Community-based referential music making with limited-resource adolescents: a pilot study. *Music Therapy Perspectives*, 38(2), 2020, pp. 112-118. <https://doi.org/10.1093/mtp/miaa016>

evaluate how music therapy can best serve community needs.⁵⁶ This inquiry is vital as it leads to a more nuanced understanding of the therapeutic landscape and ensures that community needs are prioritised in music therapy practices.

In conclusion, community music therapy represents a complex interplay of individual and communal music-making that addresses therapeutic goals while encouraging social cohesion and empowerment. This framework promotes collaborative efforts, enhancing access to musical experiences and allowing therapeutic practices to flourish within natural community contexts. Such approaches have far-reaching implications for healthcare, social services, and educational settings.⁵⁷

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