



# Summary of the Inaugural Conference of the MHRI

Exploring the Intersection of  
Music and Health



# Introduction

The Inaugural Conference of the Music and Health Research Institute was held at the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre from May 3rd to May 5th, 2023. The event brought together experts, practitioners, and enthusiasts from diverse fields to explore the intersection of music and health. The conference featured a wide range of presentations, workshops, and performances, all aimed at understanding and promoting the therapeutic benefits of music.

Key topics included the use of music in treating neurodevelopmental disorders, the role of music in mental health, and the potential for social prescription of music-based interventions. The conference also showcased innovative research and practices, such as the use of adaptive musical instruments and the integration of music therapy and music education.

This summary document provides an overview of the conference's key topics and discussions, offering insights into the potential of music as a tool for health and wellbeing.



## About Us

In 2020, a multi-institutional collaboration led to the establishment of the Music and Health Research Institute (MHRI) at the University of Ottawa. This partnership included Carleton University, the Bruyère Research Institute, the Institute of Mental Health Research at the Royal, the Ottawa Hospital's Education division, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), and the Lotus Centre for Special Music Education.



## Bringing Music to Health Care

This partnership approach, which combines the concept of music in its diversity of forms, genres, and cultures, with that of health in its broadest sense, including its cultural and societal determinants, aims to explore the interactions of music with sensory, physical, psychological, and cognitive health, to develop innovative practices and solutions that can improve the well-being of individuals and communities. Since its creation, several new partner organisations and individuals have joined the institute.

## Our Vision for the Future of Health and Music

Our goal is to develop an evidence-based social prescribing model – known as Music on Prescription – that would enable health and social professionals to refer individuals to community-based music activities. We aim to establish community music as a reliable approach to fostering beneficial impacts on health and wellbeing in various health care environments.





# Opening Act: Day One Recap



# Morning Reverberations: The Kick-off in Winter Garden

On the first day of the conference, attendees started arriving at 8:00 a.m. The early risers were treated to hot coffee and tea, setting the tone for the exciting day ahead.

At 8:30 a.m., all eyes and ears turned to the Winter Garden, the site of the official welcoming event. Gilles Comeau, Martine Lagacé and Florence Dzierszinski initiated the proceedings with a warm welcome that echoed the serene ambience of the garden.

The morning was then punctuated by the resonant sounds of Jesse Stewart's Gong Structure. The unique installation, enhanced by motion interactivity, set the stage for an event that would be both interesting and engaging. Jesse Stewart and Ben Brown led an improvisation session, where the participants were invited to interact with the structure and create their own music, a literal and metaphorical striking of chords to begin the conference.

From 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., the focus shifted to the therapeutic benefits of music learning for children with neurodevelopmental disorders. Leaders Erin Parkes and Matthew Breaden guided the symposium in Room 1425, discussing the fascinating intersection of music, therapy, and neurodevelopment.

The start of the conference was a symphony of introductions, thought-provoking sessions, and exploratory sounds - an apt beginning to a harmonious journey through health and music.



- Jesse Stewart's Gong Structure is part of the WAAM WEB project, integrating traditional gongs and modern technology.
- The structure consists of five large and four smaller aluminum discs mounted on a wooden frame.
- The gongs can be activated through a motion-sensor camera system for interactive musical experiences.
- The structure also includes an online interface, allowing remote activation of the gongs.
- This innovative instrument encourages inclusive jam sessions, inviting a variety of participants to engage.

# A Symposium on Music and Neurodevelopmental Disorders

From 9:00 to 10:30 a.m., attendees were introduced to an integrated model of music therapy and music education, challenging traditional disciplinary boundaries. Matthew Breden and Erin Parkes spoke eloquently on how the binary approach might be less effective in capturing the fluidity and intricate nature of music-making for students with exceptionalities. The presenters offered a new model that emphasizes a responsive and relationship-centric pedagogy, charting a fresh course for integrating music, health, and education for children with neurodevelopmental disorders.

The session then delved into a study of the effects of singing lessons on auditory processing in children with Auditory Processing Disorders (APD). This pilot study, presented by Parkes and Amineh Koravand, explored the positive neural changes induced by formal singing lessons. The curriculum, meticulously designed to address challenges in auditory perception, demonstrated the potent influence of music on improving auditory skills in children with APD.

After a short break at 10:30 a.m., the symposium moved to the gymnasium, where an inclusive improvisation workshop was held. Jesse Stewart and Erin Parkes, alongside musicians from the National Arts Centre Orchestra and participants from the Sunshine Inclusion Centre, led the group in a lively, improvisation-based musical ensemble. By blending storytelling, movement, and musical activities, this session provided a practical demonstration of the power of creative inclusivity in practice.

With its blend of academic insights and practical demonstrations, this symposium underscored the conference's commitment to exploring the harmonious intersection of music, health, and education.

**Dr. Erin Parkes**



**Dr. Matthew Breden**



**Dr. Carol Wiebe**



**Dr. Roxane Prevost**



**Dr. Gilles Comeau**



## **Resounding Life: A Symposium on Music, Aging, and Wellbeing**

Room 1424 hummed with stimulating discussions and presentations under the theme of music-making with older adults for improved health and wellbeing. The symposium, led by Carol Wiebe and Gilles Comeau, addressed the significance of music as a powerful medium to enhance the lives of the elderly and initiated a conversation on making it an integral part of caregiving and healing.

Kicking off the morning with scientific presentations, the audience explored the potential of personalized and interactive performances for vulnerable individuals in care through a project aptly titled "Unmasked Connections". Here, Carol Wiebe and her team presented their partnership with Radical Connections, the Bruyère Research Institute, and the MHRI, which aims at delivering interactive virtual events to culturally underserved populations. The project allowed long-term care residents to choose artists and genres that appealed to their interests, creating a sense of agency and connection despite their circumstances.

The presentation by Roxane Prevost introduced the "Online Music Lessons for Seniors Project", a pilot initiative providing online music lessons to a group of six seniors living independently. Through a Kodály-based approach, the project aimed at forming a shared musical community, involving participants in singing, playing the piano, and composing, thus investigating the impacts of learning later in life and online community engagement on seniors' perceived quality of life.

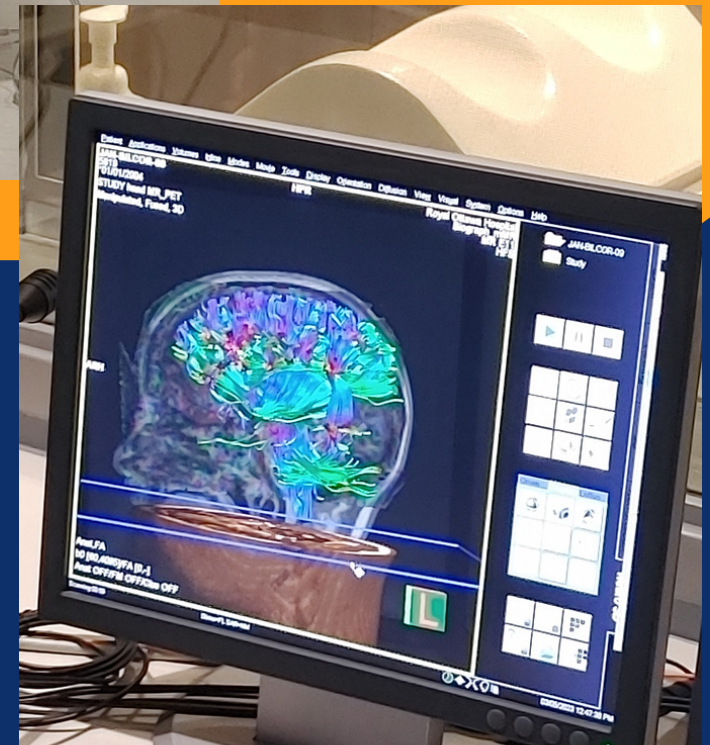
The symposium became a hub of lively discussion on integrating music into care practices for older adults, emphasizing the potential of music to echo into the lives of these individuals.

# Tour of the Brain Imaging Center



## The Tour

Each day of the conference, attendees could embark on an immersive tour of the Brain Imaging Center. This experience showcased the cutting-edge dual modality scanner (PET and MRI) in action, in this instance, demonstrating the neural effects of performance anxiety in musicians. Beyond a mere observation, the tour ignited intellectual curiosity, encouraging participants to ask questions and understand how brain imaging can address their specific research inquiries. The tour let attendees see the impressive power of modern technology and the ability of neuroscience to contribute to the knowledge pertaining to music and health.





# Harmonizing Accessibility: A Symposium on Music Inclusivity

After a brief lunch intermission, some of the participants reconvened in Room 1425 for a symposium on music accessibility. Led by Erin Parkes and Jesse Stewart, the session focused on making music more inclusive for individuals with disabilities.

The afternoon began with scientific presentations shedding light on the experiences of families and caregivers in adaptive music concerts. Jenna Richards and Erin Parkes presented a captivating piece on "Family and Caregiver Experiences in Adaptive Music Concerts," exploring how Sensory Friendly Concerts (SFCs) are enhancing accessibility in the world of performance. Their survey-based study, conducted with an Ottawa-based partnership of two arts charities, concluded that SFCs are successful in providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for neurodiverse audiences.

Building on the accessibility theme, the discussion transitioned to inclusivity in after-school music programs. Erin Parkes, Andrea Unrau, Stephen Fisk, and Richard Marsella brought to the table a thoughtful examination of community music programs' structures that contribute to their success. The presentation highlighted three community music schools, each providing unique models that facilitate a positive teaching and learning environment. The speakers concluded by offering recommendations for community music schools based on the data gathered from these institutions.

**Stephen Fisk**



**Jenna Richards**



## **Harmonizing Accessibility: A Symposium on Music Inclusivity**

Following a half-hour break, the symposium concluded in the gymnasium with a demonstration of adaptive musical instruments. Adrian Chan and Jesse Stewart showcased a range of these specially designed instruments and facilitated an engaging Q&A session about their development and uses.

The afternoon was a testament to the growing efforts in promoting music accessibility, adding more notes to the symphony of inclusive music education and performance.

The lively discussions and innovative demonstrations highlighted the remarkable potential of adaptive music to create more inclusive and enriching musical experiences for people with disabilities

**Dr. Richard Marsella**



**Andrea Unrau**



**Margaret Konopacki**



**Bryant Didier**



**Allan Kinney**



## **Healing Through Harmony: The Inspiring Journey of the Birdsong New Music Foundation**

Simultaneously in Room 1424, another symposium on music and mental health was unfolding. The session, led by Gilles Comeau, centered on the concept of music making as a therapeutic intervention for mental health concerns.

The symposium began with a sharing session on "Birdsong Experiences," moderated by Gilles Comeau. The presenters, Margaret Konopacki, Allan Kinney, Ashley Bell, and Bryant Didier, shared their journeys of coping with personal tragedies and how music, especially creating original compositions, provided solace. They showcased their Birdsong New Music Foundation, a charity dedicated to empowering and healing through music. The common belief among Birdsong artists is the life-saving power of music. They see music as their most vital source for communication, hope, and healing.

**Ashley Bell**



# Musical Movements: A Journey of Sensory Exploration and Self-Awareness

After the moving Birdsong session, the symposium shifted locations to the gymnasium for another Dalcroze-based demonstration instructed by Jihye Kang. This session allowed participants to try an array of sensory and motor exercises integrated with music. The attendees learned how music-movement interactions enhance self-awareness and contribute to overall wellbeing.

**Jihye Kang**



# SHOW TIME!

## AT THE AUDITORIUM

The first day of the conference was brought to a close with a series of screenings held in the auditorium.



### **Lotus Centre students and Matthew Breaden students**

The 30-minute segment spotlighted performances by students from the Lotus Centre for Special Music Education and those taught by Matthew Breaden. This showcase provided a platform for these individuals to display their musical abilities, honed through the dedicated efforts of Erin Parkes, the Founder and Director of the Lotus Centre, and Rich Marsella, the Executive Director of Community Music Schools Toronto.

### **Pre-recorded videos: Parents/caregivers testimonials**

Following the student performances, the spotlight shifted to the parents and caregivers of children with neurodevelopmental disorders. In a heartfelt 15-minute segment of pre-recorded testimonials, these individuals spoke candidly about the therapeutic benefits and impact of music education on their children's development and wellbeing.



# The Follow-Up: Day Two Recap



**Dr. Ryan Rourke**



## **Music Experience and Engagement for Children with Hearing Loss**

Thursday, May 4th kicked off with a symposium centered around the complex relationship between music and hearing. Led by Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, and Ryan Rourke, this gathering in Room 1425 aimed to explore the music experiences and appreciation of individuals with hearing loss.

**Dr. Elizabeth Fitzpatrick**



The morning began with insightful scientific presentations. In their discussion on "Music Experience and Engagement for Children with Hearing Loss", Ryan Rourke and Mikael Swirp unveiled the intriguing findings of a survey conducted among caregivers of children with hearing loss. They delved into how children with hearing loss, despite the challenges, can find pleasure, learning, and social enjoyment in music through the aid of interventions like hearing aids or cochlear implants. The goal of the study was to better understand the role of music in the lives of children with hearing loss.

# A Case Study of an Advanced Violinist with a Cochlear Implant

The exploration continued to a unique case study of an advanced violinist with a cochlear implant. The study, presented by Ryan Rourke, Shannon Hamel, and Marc Laplante, detailed the exceptional musical perception and capabilities of an 18-year-old cochlear implant recipient who also used a hearing aid (bimodal hearing). This case study defied the conventional understanding of cochlear implant recipients' musical abilities, offering a remarkable example of the potential achievable in pediatric cochlear implant recipients with bimodal hearing.



Following the scientific presentations, attendees engaged in a sharing session. Elizabeth Fitpatrick moderated the discussion with Alexandre Sylvestre, the violinist from the case study who uses both a cochlear implant and a hearing aid. Alexandre, along with his parents and music teachers, provided valuable insights into his journey to become a musician, shedding light on the intricate dance between music and hearing loss.





# Rhythmic Resilience: Navigating a Musical Career Amidst Hearing Loss

The symposium continued post-break with an emotionally resonant sharing session led by professional musician and composer, Ben Brown. Titled "Listening Shift," this session delved into Ben's unique journey of building a successful career in music while living with hearing loss.

In the 45-minute presentation, Ben openly shared his experiences of finding his unique way of hearing and 'feeling' music, which has been integral in shaping his career and relationship to sound. His explorations led him to drumming on large-scale sculptures as an embodied way of making music, and studying under Dame Evelyn Glennie and George Marsh introduced him to the notion of sound travelling within the body.

Ben's narrative provided a valuable perspective on using the body as a tool to listen to and compose music. His session was a testament to the power of creativity and resilience in the face of adversity, and his journey serves as an inspiration to many in the music community and beyond.

**Ben Brown**



# The Resounding Impact: A Symposium on the Benefits of Singing

Parallel to the symposium in Room 1425, an equally enriching session was taking place in Room 1424 on Thursday, May 4th. This symposium, led by Anna Zumbansen, aimed to shed light on the multifaceted benefits of singing on health and wellbeing.

The morning began with a compelling scientific presentation by Nicola Oddy on the "Principles of Environmental Vocal Exploration". Over the course of 45 minutes, Nicola shared her unique approach to establishing a connection between herself and her environment through a listening practice known as "environmental vocal exploration" (EVE). This practice, which blends vocal improvisation and listening awareness, offers a novel perspective on the transformative power of singing to reshape perceptions of self and environment. Nicola presented key insights from her PhD studies and recent music therapy fieldwork, illustrating the practical applications of EVE for health interventions.

**Dr. Nicola Oddy**



# The Resounding Impact: A Symposium on the Benefits of Singing

Following the presentation, a fascinating demonstration was held on "Singing and Mindfulness". Nicola Oddy, together with Nicole Stanson, led participants through a series of mindfulness experiences that use the principles of EVE. The demonstration highlighted preliminary research findings from their work with individuals dealing with performance anxiety, illustrating the potential of integrating singing and mindfulness for therapeutic benefits.

After an insightful and enlightening first half, the morning concluded with a break, allowing attendees to reflect on the therapeutic potential of singing and its far-reaching impact on health and wellbeing.

**Nicole Stanson**



**Dr. Anna Zumbansen**



## **In Unison: Exploring Choir Singing as a Therapeutic Tool**

Post-break, the symposium resumed with Anna Zumbansen presenting an intriguing talk titled "Choir Singing for Speech and Language Disorders in Age-Related Pathologies: Clinical Research Challenges". In this session, Anna emphasized how our body becomes the musical instrument when we sing, leading to potential beneficial effects on health and wellbeing.

Given the shared vocal apparatus for both singing and speaking, Anna explored the potential of choir singing as a therapeutic tool in speech-language pathology. She delved into the challenges and possibilities of clinical research, specifically for communication disorders often encountered with age such as aphasia and dysarthria. The presentation offered a comprehensive overview of experimental methodologies, contributing to the evidence-based clinical practice of choral singing.



# In Unison: Exploring Choir Singing as a Therapeutic Tool

The morning session concluded with an enriching roundtable discussion on "Social Prescription Mobilization for Inclusive Choirs". Moderated by Anna, the discussion featured a diverse group of experts, including Richard Marsella, Andrea Unrau, and Cynthia Friesen. The aim of the roundtable was to identify concrete objectives and specific projects for the implementation of a Choir on Prescription program.



The fruitful discussion culminated in a report, to be presented later at the Summit's plenary session, paving the way for future initiatives in the domain of music, health, and wellbeing.

# THE INCLUSIVE CHOIR WORKSHOP

As part of the conference's second day, attendees had the delightful opportunity to participate in the Inclusive Choir Workshop, running during lunchtime from 12:30 to 1:30 PM. Spearheading this session was Ludovic Dubé, a musician, vocal coach, and choir director who has proven the power of music as a tool for cultural and social integration.

In line with Ludovic Dubé's innovative approach, the Inclusive Choir Workshop challenged traditional choir protocols and instead embraced a more intuitive methodology. Eschewing the typical use of sheet music, Dubé took the helm and led the choir organically, teaching the songs piece by piece in an interactive and dynamic session.



With the clock ticking, the choir had only one hour to rehearse. Despite the pressing time constraint and the fact that this group of individuals had never sung together before, everyone leaned into the experience, engaging fully with Dubé's unique teaching style.

Despite the brief preparation time, the choir was ready for their evening performance at 4:30 PM. The result was nothing short of astounding—a testament to Dubé's effective teaching methods and the power of music to unite and inspire.



## Music Learning for Children with Hearing Loss

The session commenced with a compelling scientific presentation titled "Music Learning for Children with Hearing Loss: Music Abilities and Effect of Music Intervention" by Sandra Marković and Amineh Koravand. They shared findings from a ground-breaking study comparing the piano performances, melody contour, and pitch discrimination accuracy of pediatric cochlear implant recipients (PCIRs) and children with normal hearing.

### The Afternoon

The afternoon symposium, held in Room 1425 from 1:30 - 4:30 PM, continued the exploration of the intersection between music and hearing under the theme "Music Appreciation and Experiences of People with Hearing Loss (Part 2)." This second segment, led by Elizabeth Fitzpatrick and Ryan Rourke, delved deeper into the world of music perception and appreciation for individuals with hearing loss.

### Findings

In recent years, advancements in cochlear implant design have been significant, with research largely focused on enhancing speech and music perception. The team's study was noteworthy as it extended beyond typical therapeutic interventions and delved into the outcomes of formal individual piano instruction for PCIRs. Their research utilized a multi-sensory approach and a novel aural modeling methodology, providing original songs unfamiliar to the participants.



Valeri Le Beau



## Two Sharing Sessions: Piano Students with Cochlear Implants / Music Experience for Adults with Cochlear Implants

The first session addressed the fascinating topic of musical development in children with hearing loss. Strategies to bolster music participation and enrich learning experiences for these children and youth were explored. The dialog provided a unique perspective on the challenges and achievements of young cochlear implant users in the realm of music.

The second session invited adults with cochlear implants to share their experiences. These individuals had acquired severe or profound hearing loss after their hearing and language skills were already developed. They candidly shared their experiences with various types of music both before and after cochlear implantation, painting a clear picture of their auditory journey. Their discussions touched on how their perception and enjoyment of music changed post-implantation.



From the booth of Advanced Bionics



# Round Table - Social Prescription Mobilization: Music and Hearing

The symposium, "Music Appreciation and Experiences of People with Hearing Loss (Part 2)," held in Room 1425, was punctuated by a significant round table discussion from 3:30 – 4:30 PM. Preceded by an exploration of the impacts of music intervention on individuals with hearing loss, the round table provided an interactive platform for speakers to share insights and perspectives on the possibilities of social prescription for music for both children and adults with hearing loss.

In the context of previous presentations and discussions that underscored the transformative role of music for individuals with hearing loss, the round table sought to identify specific projects and objectives to advance the implementation of a music prescription program. Recognizing the unique needs of children and adults with hearing loss, the discussion revolved around harnessing the therapeutic potential of music in this demographic.



Photo from the Round Table. Moderated by Elizabeth Fitzpatrick and Ryan Rourke, the session convened a diverse group of participants. Among them were Ben Brown, a professional musician, Valeri LeBeau from Advanced Bionics, Stephanie Stacey, an Audiologist from The Ottawa Hospital, and Chi Lo from SingWell.

**Nicole Stanson**



**Dr. Andra Smith**



**The Effectiveness of Mindfulness  
Training on Young Adult Musicians  
Experiencing Music Performance  
Anxiety**

As concurrent activities were happening on the conference's fourth day, Room 1424 became a focal point for an insightful discussion on musicians' mental wellness. At the heart of this conversation was a scientific presentation by Nicole Stanson and Andra Smith titled "The Effectiveness of Mindfulness Training on Young Adult Musicians Experiencing Music Performance Anxiety."

This presentation was rooted in the observation that music performance anxiety (MPA) is a widespread experience affecting musicians of all ages and skill levels. With the quest for effective treatments of MPA being a crucial issue in the field, the team turned their attention towards the potential of mindfulness. This method, known to be effective in populations with generalized anxiety, was hypothesized to offer benefits to musicians suffering from MPA.

To investigate this, the team conducted a two-week mindfulness intervention on musicians and observed its effects using performance anxiety and state/trait anxiety questionnaires. To deepen their investigation, they also incorporated a neuroimaging component involving functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) during a task designed to provoke anxiety, both before and after the mindfulness intervention.

Their findings were encouraging, revealing a significantly positive impact of mindfulness on the cognitive experience of MPA. Furthermore, they observed neurophysiological changes occurring after just a two-week mindfulness training intervention. These promising results provide a strong empirical basis for further research into the application of mindfulness training for managing MPA among musicians, indicating a hopeful avenue for performers struggling with such anxieties.

# The Effect of The Alexander Technique on Pianists' Posture During Performance

Dr. Grace Wong



Brigitte Caron



In Room 1424 at 2 PM, a captivating presentation on the impact of The Alexander Technique (AT) on pianists' performance posture was led by Grace Wong and Brigitte Caron. This exploration stemmed from a pilot project conducted in collaboration with BodyWise Ottawa and Montreal School of the Alexander Technique.

AT, a somatic method commonly utilized by musicians, educates students about their behaviors during different tasks. It instills a sense of conscious awareness, encouraging them to evaluate whether their actions are beneficial for task completion and, if necessary, alter their behavior.

The Technique has been associated with improved music performance and the ability to handle performance-related issues such as posture. Although qualitative research backs this up, the presentation emphasized the need for more quantitative research to validate these claims and determine if physical, measurable changes occur.

During this 30-minute presentation, the researchers delved into a study that assessed the effects of ten AT lessons on pianists' postures during performances. They examined if these changes persisted even four weeks after the lessons concluded. Additionally, they explored the relationship between participants' perceptions of the Technique's effect and their postural measurements post-lessons.

An AT teacher also provided further insights into the pianists' learning of the Technique. The presentation contributed to a more in-depth understanding of how somatic methods like the Alexander Technique can positively influence musicians' performances and well-being.

## Jillian Beacon



### **Enhancing Interpretability of Motion Capture Analysis of Musicians' Coordination Characteristics by Applying a Novel 'Theoretical Model of Variation in Music Performance'**

At 2:30 PM in Room 1424, Jillian Beacon took the stage to discuss a groundbreaking theoretical model designed to enhance the interpretability of motion capture analysis of musicians' coordination characteristics. This unique 30-minute presentation focused on the potential challenges faced when tracking and measuring subtle differences in cross-body coordination, particularly in musicians undergoing somatic training.

Current methods to measure human movement often fall short in capturing these nuanced variations, especially in the context of authentic music performance involving complex musical patterns. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the different sources of variability contributing to a musical performance is necessary for researchers to accurately isolate and examine variations influenced by biomechanical and musical factors as a result of somatic training.

In addressing this need, Beacon proposed a theoretical model of variability in music performance. This model categorizes sources of movement variation based on whether they freely fluctuate in response to the musical and biomechanical choices of the performer or remain fixed due to biochemical and musical constraints defined by the musical task.

The presentation provided several examples of how this theoretical framework improves the interpretability of principal component analysis of motion capture data, particularly in pianists performing musical tasks of varying complexity. Beacon further illustrated the applicability of the framework through a recent case study of a pianist undergoing a Feldenkrais Method intervention.



## Alexandre Sylvestre

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On the second day of the conference, we were treated to a remarkable performance by Alexandre Sylvestre, a dedicated violin student from the University of Ottawa. Despite being hearing-impaired, Alexandre has used his cochlear implant to navigate the world of music with determination and grace.

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## Mastering Barber's Violin Concerto Op. 14


Alexandre graced us with his interpretation of Barber's Violin Concerto Op. 14. A piece renowned for its atmospheric and harmonious accompaniment, it presented a unique challenge for Alexandre, whose cochlear implant excels in processing rhythm. As he explains, his experience as a hearing-impaired violinist is quite unique:

"To me, it's quite peculiar because I've always had a cochlear implant, so I don't know any other viewpoint. This makes me feel that I am not fundamentally different as I've become used to working with the tools I have. That said, I've always leaned towards rhythmically driven music, like Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Reich, and so on. The reason, which I learned during the symposium, is that the cochlear implant is highly effective at processing rhythm."



## Perserverance

Approaching Barber's repertoire was a challenge, especially when practicing with the piano. Yet, in the face of this challenge, Alexandre remained undeterred. He believes that such obstacles only serve to strengthen his musical abilities. Alexandre's concert was a testament to the power of determination, adaptability, and the love of music. His performance was not just a musical feast, but also a source of inspiration for all attendees.



"Every time a challenge like this presents itself, I always come out stronger than before [...]"



# The Grand Finale: Day Three Recap





## A Symphony of Somatic Workshops

The culminating day of the Music and Health Conference, orchestrated under the insightful leadership of Jennifer Johnson, was a symphony of knowledge and experience, encapsulating the themes of the conference perfectly. Taking place in the versatile spaces of rooms 1423-1425 and the gymnasium, the day was meticulously scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., offering a rich tableau of workshops and activities that left the attendees both enlightened and invigorated.

## A Choice of Feldenkrais, Body Mapping, and Eutony


The morning commenced with a choice of workshops in Feldenkrais, Body Mapping, and Eutony. Participants, split into three groups for convenience, had the freedom to choose their initial workshop. Whether it was the dynamic movement sequences of Feldenkrais in the gymnasium, the exploration of human anatomy in the Body Mapping workshop in Room 1424, or the therapeutic journey of self-perception in the Eutony workshop in Room 1425, there was an enriching experience awaiting every attendee.



### A ROTATION OF RICH EXPERIENCES

The intellectual feast continued into the next hour, with a Mental Skills workshop being added to the palette in Room 1423, and an intriguing workshop on the Alexander Technique in Room 1424. The Eutony workshop continued its session in Room 1425. The availability of multiple workshops at the same time offered participants the opportunity to tailor their conference experience to their interests.

As the morning unfolded, the workshop options rotated, providing each group with a chance to experience all the offerings. By noon, attendees had been immersed in a diverse mix of Feldenkrais, Body Mapping, Mental Skills, Alexander Technique, and Eutony workshops.



**FROM  
FELDENKRAIS TO  
EUTONY: A  
SOMATIC JOURNEY!**



## A NEW PRESCRIPTION: THE INTERSECTION OF MUSIC AND MEDICINE

### Setting the Stage

Kicking off at 9:00 a.m in the auditorium., the summit opened with a warm welcome and introduction from Sylvain Charbonneau and Florence Dzierszynski, setting the tone for the day's rich roster of sessions.

### First Presentation

Natasha Beaudin was the first to take the stage with an insightful presentation titled "Social Prescribing in Ontario: Co-creating wellbeing with patients and providers." Beaudin skillfully painted an overview of the successes in health equity-focused Social Prescribing in Ontario's team-based, community primary health care."

### Co-creating Wellbeing with Social Prescribing

Her session spotlighted the transformative shift from asking "What's the matter with you?" to the more compassionate and holistic question, "What matters to you?" She vividly demonstrated the practical application of social prescribing and its benefits to patients, providers, and the broader community through real-life examples across different clinical settings. The presentation was complemented by a thought-provoking video screen presentation by Dominik Nowak, who proclaimed "Why Social Prescription Is the Future."



# The Carswell Research Partnership

Next, the intriguing relationship between a University and a Community Music School was explored by Dr. Richard Marsella and Dr. Amy Hillis. The pair delved into the origins of the Helen Carswell Chair in Community-Engaged Research in the Arts, an endowed community-university partnership that facilitates research projects benefiting community arts organizations and the underserved Jane Finch community.

**Dr. Richard Marsella**



**Dr. Amy Hillis**



They discussed the partnership's challenges and successes, offering a reflective insight into building an ideal relationship between researchers and community partners. Diane Kolin, a current Helen Carswell researcher, joined the conversation, sharing her research project "A Discovery of Adaptive Instruments" as a compelling case study from the first five years of the partnership's existence.

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'Espace Transition' (ET), a focal point of their discourse, is a series of artistic programs designed for groups of young individuals, most of whom grapple with stabilized mental health issues that impede their daily lives and social integration. Patricia Garel, with her substantial experience as a psychiatrist, co-conceptualized ET, envisioning art as a catalyst for smoother transitions to social normalcy for those affected by mental health issues.

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### ART AT THE SERVICE OF MENTAL HEALTH – A SOCIAL INNOVATIVE PROJECT AT STE-JUSTINE HOSPITAL

ET represents a conceptual space where the challenge everyone faces can be staged: defining oneself as a unique individual within a group, finding an authentic place without losing one's identity. In this space, art is central, just as it has been an integral part of the human journey since prehistory. Whether it's painting, sculpture, music, dance, or theater, art is a vital means for humans to face their destiny, conscious of their own mortality. It provides access to a mysterious and sacred dimension that allows a new perspective on the world, others, and oneself.

### THE PRESENTATION

Joining **Patricia Garel** on this enlightening journey was **Pierre Vachon**, a distinguished musicologist and a community arts advocate. His dedication to using music and arts as a social and educational catalyst added depth to the presentation.

The duo highlighted how the creative process in ET is oriented towards the realization of a collective work presented to a selected audience, leading participants on an exploratory adventure filled with unexpected discoveries. They emphasized the profound mobilizing potential of music, particularly singing, and its role in this project.

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## LUNCH AND PARTNER'S FAIR

After a morning full of informative presentations, participants took a much-needed break. This pause was a chance to not only grab a bite to eat but also to visit the Partners' Fair and learn about the work of various organizations.

During the lunch hour, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., the Winter Garden was buzzing with activity as it hosted the Partners' Fair. Different organizations, including the Community Music Schools of Ontario, Sounds of The Next Generation (SONG), and educators from various Somatic Methods like Feldenkrais and Eutony, had set up exhibits. Participants had the opportunity to visit these displays, learn about the work of these organizations, and network with the representatives.

## A MINI CONCERT BY JOYFUL SOUND OTTAWA

Adding a touch of melody to the midday break was a mini concert by Joyful Sound Ottawa. The choir, comprising people with memory loss, their caregivers, and friends, filled the Winter Garden with their beautiful renditions from 1:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. This performance not only added a melodic dimension to the lunch break but also reinforced the conference's overarching theme of the healing power of music.

In essence, the midday break at the "Music on Prescription" summit was a harmonious blend of nourishment, networking, and music, offering participants a well-rounded, enriching experience.



# Gilles Comeau Presents

After the lunch break and the Partners' Fair, Gilles Comeau took the stage for a presentation titled "Developing an Evidence-Based Model for Music on Prescription". The 75-minute session included a video presentation by Stephen Clift titled "How can we know if social prescribing works?".



## Addressing the Challenges in Social Prescription

Comeau delved into the concept of social prescription, which allows healthcare professionals to refer individuals to community-based activities. The idea is that these activities can significantly improve wellbeing. However, he pointed out that most reviews have found that these social interventions have grown rapidly without the necessary research to back up their effectiveness. This gap in research is mainly due to resource limitations, the wide variety of interventions, and high dropout rates.

To address these issues, Comeau explained that Music on Prescription aims to gather evidence-based data on the impact of music interventions. The project will focus on one main social prescription activity - community-based music programs - and implement these in the participants' familiar environments or immediate communities. This approach aims to tackle the challenges that currently face social prescription models.

# THE PLENARY SESSION

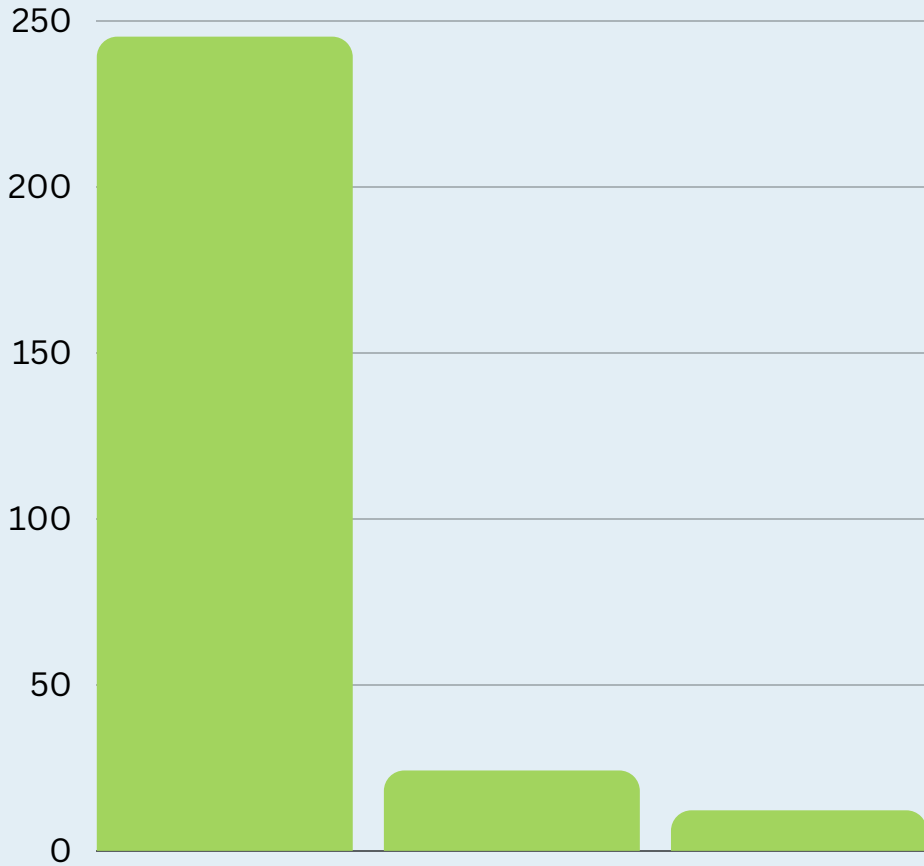
Moderated by Paul Hébert and Heidi Sveistrup, the 90-minute session aimed to create a concrete action plan for a Music on Prescription program.

The session began with a brief report on the symposia by Naoko Sakata. This was followed by an open discussion involving Florence Dzierszinski, Natasha Beaudin, Carol Wiebe, Pierre Vachon, German Chique-Alfonzo, Marilyn Desrosiers, and Arla Good. The goal was to identify specific projects and objectives for the program.

The discussion centered around establishing bridges between health workers and evidence-based community music making. The focus was on creating a structure that would allow this connection to thrive, fostering a more integrated approach to health and wellbeing through music. The conference was brought to a close by Gilles Comeau, who delivered the closing remarks, wrapping up three days full of insightful discussions and forward-thinking plans.



# MHRI Conference Statistics



**37**

**SYMPOSIA, SCIENTIFIC  
PRESENTATIONS, ROUND  
TABLES AND WORKSHOPS**

**17**

**POSTER PRESENTATIONS  
AND 5 MIN THESIS  
PRESENTATIONS**

**19**

**PARTNERS' BOOTHS**

People who attended

People who attended without registering

People who registered without attending



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