

HARP NOTES

Newsletter of the Australian Therapeutic Harpists Association

Calendar of Events:

✦ **All face-to-face events are dependent on the status of the Covid-19 Pandemic.**

ATHA AGM

- 17th October, 2020 4pm via zoom

IHTP - Module 1 online

- Nov 27-79, Dec 11-13 2020

Harp at the Dock

- 13th March, 2021
- 17th April, 2021

Recent graduates.

Moira Pagan - IHTP

Congratulations!



President's Report

The ATHA committee has continued to meet monthly via Zoom. Here are some updates

WEBSITE - The graduate list of "Find a Practitioner" continues to grow and recently a Paypal button was added which will offer an alternative form of payment for members to renew their membership.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - Dierdre May, ATHA member, presented a wonderful webinar on the 4th June titled "How to Set up and Run Remote and Online Harp Music Therapy Sessions". Over 25 members attended this Zoom presentation and ATHA invites members to consider presenting a webinar of interest to our members in the near future.

ATHA MENTOR REGISTER - The ATHA Mentor Register, currently in the early stage of development, will consist of experienced certified therapeutic harp practitioners throughout Australia, who will be available to support, guide and mentor those wanting to grow their skills in therapeutic harp work. The list will be placed on the ATHA website when compiled.

TRAINING PROGRAM RECOGNITION - Harp Therapy Training Programs from around the world are currently being invited to apply to join the ATHA. If their programs are

deemed to meet the standards set by the ATHA standards committee, their students and graduates will be granted full membership of the ATHA and all the benefits that this brings.

ATHA INTERN PROGRAM - the ATHA Committee are currently developing an ATHA Intern Program designed to provide direct supervision and mentorship by experienced practising certified therapeutic harp practitioners, across a range of areas within health care environments. This program will provide invaluable assistance for interns to develop confidence and skills to work successfully as therapeutic harp practitioners in their community.

ATHA MEMBERSHIPS - have been steadily coming in, with some members taking up the three year discounted membership. We have also recently welcomed ten new members to ATHA. Your valuable contribution allows us to sponsor our Website, pay Insurance and annual fees to Consumer Affairs, subsidise great initiatives such as "Harp at the Docks" and develop resource materials to promote and support the work of our therapeutic harp graduates and students throughout Australia.

INVITATION - Please join us on Saturday 17th October at 4pm (Melbourne time) & 1pm (Perth time), when we will be holding our Annual General Meeting via Zoom. Following our meeting, Jenni Sawell will be presenting a peaceful and relaxing harp meditation and then to finish off the afternoon you are all invited to join us for drinks and nibbles (BYO) and catch up for a good chat with fellow harpers from around Australia....

Don't forget to join our facebook page "Australian Therapeutic Harp Community" and to check our Web page www.atha.org.au regularly to keep up to the date with what's happening around Australia and beyond and to connect with the therapeutic harp community.

Finally a big thank you to the hard working ATHA committee members - Anna Muller Kerryn Viner, Catherine Lyons-Nash, Nicky Lock, Carol Booth, Vimukti Warr, Jenni Sawell. Each one of these committee members bring thoughtful and constructive ideas to the monthly meetings and are the reason that the ATHA association is progressing in such a professional manner.

COVID19 continues to turn our world upside down but some states are slowly returning to normal. Please stay well and stay safe.

Christine Middleton (President)

Australian Therapeutic Harpists Association

The Therapeutic Harpist featured in this edition is Catherine Lyons-Nash

Catherine Lyons-Nash

Pegasus Harp, Perth

My harp journey started way back in kindergarten, when I strummed a zither while portraying an angel for a nativity play. In my teens I watched Marx Brothers movies and loved to watch Harpo play his big pedal harp. My favourite piece was 'Everyone Says I Love You' from the film, *Horsefeathers*. Look it up on YouTube!



I harboured my desire to play harp for many years until, at 26, I realised that I had earned enough money to invest in a harp. At the time I lived in Kalgoorlie, 6 ½ hours east of Perth. Kalgoorlie wasn't flush with harps or harp teachers, so I decided to teach myself, scoured the internet and took the plunge, buying a 36 string lever harp from Blevins in Colorado. The delivery driver who brought the harp to my door looked at the large, vaguely coffin-shaped box suspiciously, until I told him it was just a big harp.

Around the same time, I saw Peter Roberts in an episode of *Australian Story*, and a little lightbulb in my head went 'Ping!' I thought 'I could do that!'. After making my pilgrimage to the Melbourne Harp Convergence in 2011, I signed up for the International Harp Therapy Program. I got so much more than I bargained for with that program. It plopped me in the middle of a huge community of harpists in Australia and overseas. I'm astonished at how many magical people I have met, and how many of them have now become my friends.

Over the years I honed my craft by playing for yoga sessions and guided meditations. It was a great introduction to playing long improvisation sessions and experiencing people's strong emotional reactions to the music. This work has taken me on some adventures. Last year I joined my husband, who is a teacher, on a school wellness camp. One night we hauled the big harp into Ngilgi Cave in Yallingup. I played a sound bath for the students, who laid down on yoga mats and looked up at the stalactites. The cave chamber is called 'The Amphitheatre'. In 1911 Dame Nellie Melba had a piano lowered into the cave for a performance. It was probably a lot easier to get the harp out than the piano.



In 2018 I began to play in the palliative care wards of Glengarry and Kalamunda Hospitals for my IHTP internship. Their wonderful Chaplain, Colleen McLevie, has been my partner and advocate in this work. I continued to play at the hospitals after graduating IHTP and am about to start paid work at Glengarry.

The staff have embraced the harp, and I regularly find them listening in the doorways of the rooms I visit. While the patients benefit from the soothing sounds of the harp, some of the most transformative moments have been experienced by their family members. It truly is a privilege to work with these people.



Last year I heard that our local harp maker and repairer had decided to retire from working with harps and was looking to pass on his skills and equipment. As a harpist, artist, wood worker, designer and tinkerer, I took an interest and ended up taking over the business, which has

broadened as I have observed how many services and accessories can be useful to harpists. Aside from repairing and regulating harps, I design and build harp legs, trolleys and accessories. I'm happy to engineer solutions that make life easier for harpists, such as creating ergonomic tuning key handles that make tuning easier for people with hand problems.

After noticing that quality harp merchandise is scarce (and being mystified by merchandise showing people playing harps from the pillar side) I decided to start creating harp-themed gifts. If there is any merchandise you have been looking for, but haven't found, get in touch and I may come up with something for you.



I have just launched my business, Pegasus Harp, offering therapeutic harp services to the public and supporting the Australian harping community. You can find me on Facebook, email me at pegasusharp@outlook.com and soon you will be able to view my website, www.pegasusharp.com.au.

In February this year, a small group of Western Australian therapeutic harpists came together at the invitation of a harpist who is a Counsellor and Reflective Supervisor. The group was intended to provide supervision and mutual support, and the first session was very positive. By the time we came to the second meeting everyone was being encouraged to stay at home. This ushered in a new period of meeting from home over Zoom. This was a great opportunity to experiment with this technology, and to think about other ways of bringing therapeutic harp to people when we can't meet in person.

After the first online session we organised to meet in pairs over Zoom and test how well our harp music was received by our counterpart. This led to some useful discoveries; an external microphone works a lot better than a computer microphone; metered music can sound strange with the sound lag that can happen in Zoom, so playing fluid, improvised music can be a good alternative; fast glissandos can be overwhelming and unpleasant, where arpeggios can be quite nice; and the highest and lowest notes can be hard to hear. We have also shared sessions about playing improvised music in palliative care, singing while playing harp and counselling principles that can be used when talking with people in aged care and hospital. It has been a great way to keep us all connected.

Kalamunda Hospital - National Palliative Care Week 24-30 May

I have been playing at Kalamunda Hospital for over a year, first as an International Harp Therapy Program Intern, then as a volunteer. After being unable to visit for a few months,

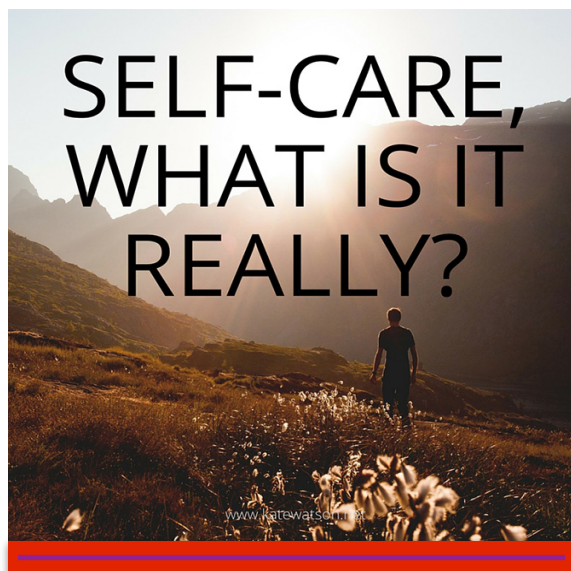
I was invited back to play for National Palliative Care Week. The chaplain had decorated the hospital's portico and entry with pot plants, framed pictures, flowers and streamers, imbuing the normally sterile entrance with a warm, homely feel. Instead of visiting the rooms, I settled in next to the nurses' station. The staff were happy to finally have the harp played in their area, rather than having to listen in doorways. The sound travelled up the hallways to the rooms and one patient asked to be brought to the lounge so she could watch. After playing for a while I moved to another location and continued to improvise musical journeys for whoever was listening. It was great that the hospital's chaplain found a way to safely bring

the harp back in to celebrate this special week.



Reflective Practice for Self-Care of Therapeutic Harpists

By Nicky Lock



"Can you play for the patient on the vent please? Can you visit the baby in 4 please? This facility really enjoys your singing. Can you add them to your schedule please? Can you do this presentation and bring your baby harps? What song would you play for this patient? What note would you play for that one?"

In the Fall 2018 Harp Therapy Journal, Jocelyn Obermeyer quoted the above as a standard conversation amongst the therapeutic harpists in her hospital setting. Just a brief glance at this highlights the potentially emotionally stressful and difficult settings that therapeutic harpists are invited into as part of their role in hospitals. Very early on in my own internship in an aged care facility one of the chaplains commented that she thought I was sensitive enough and ready to take on playing for the dying. I was not so sure! Another article by Carol Carpenter in the same journal edition talks of her work in a psychiatric setting, where 'the healing vibration of the harp played in a therapeutic manner can facilitate relaxation which can allow the patient to re-group and come into a state of mindfulness'. Truly, the work of the therapeutic musician is not 'performance': rather the therapeutic harpist chooses to enter into a deeply intuitive space with the patient or resident in order to choose just the right music which facilitates entrainment; music which soothes or heals through the inherent healing properties of music, vibration and sound.

*"AS YOU GROW OLDER, YOU WILL DISCOVER
THAT YOU HAVE TWO HANDS, ONE FOR HELPING
YOURSELF, THE OTHER FOR HELPING OTHERS."*
MAYA ANGELOU

This task of the therapeutic harpist to be sensitive to the patient or resident, their emotional state and any other obvious physical needs and then to intuitively play therapeutically opens the therapeutic harpist to the risk of vicarious trauma. This is documented well in other health workers,

especially frontline workers who are exposed to people in their most wounded states, but also therapists and counsellors who, like therapeutic harpists, aim to become attuned to what is happening in their clients.

Various forms of reflective practice have been either recommended or mandated for such workers as paramedics and therapists.

Debriefing can be undertaken as an immediate response to a critical incident. It can be an informal process often conducted by a manager fairly close to the time of the incident. Questions are asked that elicit people's reactions to the incident, affirmation of people's responses and normalising any stress reactions that people might be having. Often the offer of counselling, if needed is made, as part of the process.

Mentoring is a more structured relationship with a more senior or experienced person in your workplace or externally where regular meetings are held – maybe monthly. Sometimes there is a fee paid, but often not. The mentor is concerned with assisting their mentee in developing in their work practice and sometimes this may involve exploring the impact of work on their personal well being. There is limited accountability in relationship, but it is often a warm and supportive relationship.

Professional Supervision is an even more structured form of reflective practice with a trained or qualified supervisor. It is concerned with the interaction of the individual with their work practice and has supportive, educative and accountability aspects. A fee is paid for a structured appointment. A contract for what takes place in supervision is negotiated between the supervisor and supervisee, which ensures confidentiality and other professional boundaries, making it a very safe space for the supervisee. A professional supervisor is not necessarily skilled in the practice of the supervisee, for example a counsellor supervisor may also supervise church workers or paramedics.

"REST AND SELF-CARE ARE SO IMPORTANT. WHEN YOU TAKE TIME TO REPLENISH YOUR SPIRIT, IT ALLOWS YOU TO SERVE OTHERS FROM THE OVERFLOW. YOU CANNOT SERVE FROM AN EMPTY VESSEL."
ELEANOR BROWN

When should you access some form of Reflective Practice?

The simple answer is – when you need it! Some might find it really helpful during their internship to meet with a mentor or supervisor to review both their actions but also their reactions during their placement, especially if working in a hospital or aged care environment is

new to them. A reflective space is where you can review what you have done, see the positives and negatives with your mentor or supervisor's support, and work out how to do things better the next time. You can also 'unpack' any emotional reactions you might be having to the work and see how to care for yourself when working in a distressing or stressful situation. Certainly, if you are going home and finding your self thinking over and over what happened or can't get a patient or resident out of your mind, you will find some reflective practice will be helpful.

The more time you are working as a therapeutic harpist in a stressful setting and the more stressful the setting is, the more you are at risk from some emotional trauma and even burn out if you don't attend to your self-care.

POOH BEAR IN HIS 'THINKING SPACE' - WHERE IS YOUR THINKING SPACE?



Where can you find a Mentor or Professional Supervisor?

ATHA is developing a list of suitable members who can offer mentoring to other members. The list will be published on the ATHA website in the next few weeks.

Alternatively you could seek out a professional supervisor through a professional association such as the Australasian Association of Supervisors at www.supervision.org.au. In the hospital setting, Chaplains who are trained as CPE Supervisor Level 1 would also be able to give you professional supervision.

Nicky Lock September 2020

Reflective Supervision

Reflective supervision is a collaborative process in which the supervisor assists the supervisee to reflect on how their work may touch and change them. It is an opportunity to reflect in a supportive environment on challenging experiences as well as experiences that have gone well.

Cate Litjens holds a Bachelor of Counselling from Notre Dame Australia, a post-graduate Certificate in Expressive Therapies, an Advanced Certificate in Professional Supervision and is currently studying harp therapy with Harp for Healing. She has extensive experience and works with individuals, couples and families experiencing life-limiting neurological illness. Cate has developed and delivered workshops to professionals and allied health personnel in the areas of grief and loss, suicide bereavement and burnout/compassion fatigue. Cate currently facilitates group supervision for Perth therapeutic harpists, LifelineWA as well as providing individual supervision for financial counsellors.

One-hour individual or group supervision Zoom sessions (1.5 hours) as well as in-person supervision sessions (Perth metropolitan area) are available.

Individual sessions \$80

Group sessions \$150

Cate Litjens Consultancy

Counselling, Clinical Supervision,

Workshop & Group Facilitation

M: 0468733764 E: catelitjens@westnet.com.au



Thanks to Carla Whiteley for keeping us smiling.

In August I joined in the International Play Music On Your Porch Day.

I was hesitant because many of my neighbours are young people and I didn't think my quiet harp style would particularly appeal. In the late afternoon the wind settled and I made my offering. Something to remember later from covid lockdown here in Victoria. One neighbour sent cheery applause from his balcony , another started an electric saw several times!



Bernadette O'Rourke plays on her porch.

COVID19 – Australia

Compiled by Christine Middleton.

Throughout Australia, due to current infection concerns, many healthcare facilities are protecting their patients and residents by only allowing family members and essential staff to enter the facility. That means that most therapeutic musicians will not be allowed to offer their music. The Australian Therapeutic Harpists Association asked their members how they were managing currently in this climate. Were they still providing therapeutic music in a facility or venue and if so, how were they restricting yourselves? If they were not allowed to offer their music, then what other ways were they providing therapeutic music to the community? Here are stories from some of our members.

LYN EVANS – Certified therapeutic harp practitioner.

I voluntarily began a self isolation period for an unknown time due to being in the vulnerable category on two counts – age and chronic illness (asthma). I was blasé about my risk until a colleague impressed upon me the danger for people with lung problems. However, the Covid19 restrictions in South Australia provided other opportunities for therapeutic music to be delivered. The Arts in Health at Flinders Medical Centre obtained a grant to fund a YouTube channel for the purpose of uploading videos to provide stress relief and relaxation for staff and patients. I worked from home recording several videos of mindfulness meditations with harp music and uploaded them to the YouTube channel. Some of the videos were specifically for patients of the Cancer Wellness Centre who could access the videos from home.



I also took the self-isolation period to provide harp music to people walking past my house. I would set up my harp on the front porch with a sign attached to my music stand which read "Corona Cheerup" and played a range of "happy" familiar tunes. People walking by would wave, smile, stop to chat and take photos. It was a way to connect with strangers and brighten their day.

CATHERINE LYONS – NASH – Certified therapeutic harp practitioner

A group of six harpists (including me) have been meeting on Zoom over the last couple of months to share our experiences, share information and test Zoom's suitability for playing live music. We called each other, played structured music, improvised music, glissandos and arpeggios and gave feedback about the sounds that do and don't work. We have had sessions about playing improvised music for people in palliative care, learning to sing while playing harp and therapeutic harp counselling micro skills.

I have played for two morning stretch sessions that were livestreamed from the Facebook page of the Don Russell Performing Arts Centre, which is run by the City of Gosnells. I played lever harp for the first session and chimes and Reverie harp for the second session, while instructors demonstrated gentle stretches for viewers to follow. One of our members played harp at a Labyrinth in Bunbury for World Labyrinth Day.

JENNI SAWELL – Certified therapeutic harp practitioner

Like many others, I have found myself "on hold" this year. Although my work will be resuming again shortly at Uniting Care on the Central Coast of NSW, I have been keeping my teaching going via Zoom for those that can manage it. I spent some time during lockdown making videos of myself playing and posting them on Facebook. This was therapeutic, for both myself and the viewers. I also took part in a global Virtual Choir, as one of the accompanying instrumentalists.

CARLA WHITELEY – Certified therapeutic harp practitioner

It is certainly a different time that we now live in. The facilities that I provide therapeutic harp music to are still welcoming me but with lots of protocols in place – filling in declaration forms stating that I have not been ill or returned from overseas, nor been with anyone who has had Covid19. Temperatures are taken upon entry to the facility and it is expected that hands will be sanitized between every area.

DEIRDRE MAY – Therapeutic harp student

Faced with the challenge of how I might get my Internship hours completed, I came up with a creative new way of presenting my music by making my own YouTube channel and uploading audio recordings of myself playing, to a backdrop of beautiful calming scenes from nature. This resulted in me being invited to play via video link, for young patients and their families in a Children's Hospice in Queensland. I'm planning to run a Webinar to give technical advice on how to link the harp directly into the computer to get the best possible sound to play remotely for patients.

ALISON WARE – Certified therapeutic harp practitioner – The Therapeutic harp program continues to support patients and staff at Canberra Hospital during the Covid19 pandemic. Initially I modified my service by playing only in more public spaces, general ward areas ,the cancer centre and public areas. As the restrictions have been gradually easing, I am now beginning to provide bedside visits as well.

BERNADETTE O'ROURKE – Certified therapeutic harp practitioner

Nearly all my aged care facilities have postponed my bedside and small group visits for the time being. Some have taken up my offer of sending a CD/USB of recorded music for the residents to listen to and I will infuse the music with a healing intention.

GLENDA UNDERHILL –Certified therapeutic harp practitioner

I am currently self-isolating and using this time for deep reflection, study and repertoire development.

BARBARA WILSON – Friend of Australian Therapeutic Harpists

After my shortened cruise on “The Golden Princess”, I went into self isolation for 2 weeks. When the sun appeared after a week of clouds, I took my harp onto the verandah to practice. Being a retirement village, several people walk past on the other side of the road. Many of them stopped to listen and chat from a distance. I let it be known that I would play at 12.30 each day the weather was fine. This got a few people out walking to hear the music. Many of them were on walking frames, so had their own seat. The results were humbling. One man is caring for his wife with cancer3 doors away and was trying to work out how to get the music to his unit. When my isolation finished yesterday, he brought me out a chair and I was able to play for her. A neighbour with dementia also came out after much coaxing be her husband. The difference it made to those two ladies was amazing. There was an animation present that had been absent for months. The Village has encouraged me go to the gazebos dotted around the village and play as long as there are not more than two people off their properties. As the gazebos are at the end of courts, the music reaches 6-8 units.



IHTP News.



Module 1: November 27~29 and December 11~13, 2020

Over 2 long weekends: November 27-29; and December 11-13, 2020. Friday afternoon & evening / Saturday & Sunday morning & afternoon sessions with a lunch break. Please join us at this virtual gathering on the Zoom platform.

For current and incoming IHTP-AU students, the Module is included in your overall study fees. For others who wish to refresh their skills the cost is only AU\$300!

<https://www.harptherapycampus.com.au>

Presenters

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Christina Tourin | Founder & Director, IHTP; Music Therapist (ASU) Founder, Rainbow of Sound™/Color My World© Harp Circles harptherapyinternational.com playharp.com/christinas-world |
| Alison Ware | Creative Arts Therapist, Clinical Musician (Harp), Registered Counsellor, CHM, CTHP, CCM alisonware.com atha.org.au/alison-ware |
| June Swatman | Grad Dip Community Health, Master of Women's Studies, General & Palliative Nurse, Reiki Master, Aromatherapist, Reflexologist |
| Anke Arkesteyn | IHTP-AU Co-Director, CTHP, BA, Music & Dance Teacher atha.org.au/anke-arkesteyn |
| Anna Muller | IHTP-AU Student Administrator, CTHP, BA (mus), DipCouns, Pastoral Care Associate, Performer atha.org.au/anna-linky-muller |
| Louise Bell | IHTP-AU Director of Mentors, CTHP, Certificate in Sound Healing, Composer, Performer, Artist, Educator louisebell.com.au atha.org.au/louise-bell |
| Vimukti Warr | IHTP-AU Director, CTHP, Yoga & Meditation Teacher, Naturopath wholebodyharmony.com.au atha.org.au/vimukti-warr |
| Deidre May | IHTP Student, Harp Music for Health https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0X-FVWouoKlrryCVD9q02g |



Plus surprise guest speakers sharing their CTHP stories

Following the devastating explosion in Beirut last month, I recorded this harp improvisation, in Middle Eastern mode, and created a video with images of this beautiful city. The music is played in a contemplative mood of sadness, and with a vibration of love and compassion.

There are many challenges faced around the globe, and I cherish the privilege of sending harp music out into the world on wings of singing strings, with healing intention.

Love & blessings to all, Louise
0421 252 881 music@louisebell.com.au

Lament for Beirut



Listen: <https://youtu.be/ohe9Sa3lhDg>

Love & Solidarity with the people of Beirut



WA News.

Catherine Lyons-Nash

I recently played improvised harp for a Spring Soiree at a West Perth aged care facility. I had to provide a certificate to say I'd had a flu vaccination. It was a beautiful sunny afternoon and I mixed pieces of music with amusing little stories, because although they were encouraged to move around and socialise, they sat in their chairs with their eyes glued to me for most of the time.

The hospitals I have been playing back are now allowing volunteers to return. We need to have had a flu vaccination and to demonstrate that we know how to wash our hands thoroughly. The staff have been eagerly awaiting the return of the harp. A few weeks ago, I returned to Kalamunda Hospital to play four sound bath sessions for the staff as part of a wellness program. They enjoyed being able to sit down and listen in person.

Helen Punch

I started my practicum/internship at SJOG hospital in Bunbury in mid-July and should be finished with my bedside sessions and required hours in the next few weeks....yay! The staff have been very welcoming and supportive.

At the beginning of July I started back at two nursing homes which is paid work. As a condition of going back into the nursing homes I needed to provide a certificate of proof that I had my flu vaccine for this year, plus upon entry my temperature is taken, I need to sanitise my hands, and there are a number of questions I need to answer relating to Covid and who I've been in contact with.

I've also recommenced harp meditation sessions at Solaris Cancer Care and they have the same condition of entry as the nursing homes.

For me it has been full on since the beginning of July and I alternate between playing 3 to 4 days per week. I find at this time having the balance of paid work and volunteer work is a good compromise for me.

Advertisements



Tim Sheed, Portarlinton, is available for Harp
Repairs, Restringing, Levers and Harp Hire.
Contact Tim on 0438861271".

Many thanks to all contributors to this edition of 'Harp Notes'.

Enquiries about ATHA can be directed to;

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