

## MusicTherapy for Actors: An Exploratory Study Applied to Students from University Theatre Faculty

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**Abstract :** Aims: This experiential research work presents a Group-MusicTherapy-Theatre-Plan (MusThePlan) the authors have carried out to support the actors. The MusicTherapy gives rise to individual psychophysical feedback and influences the emotional centres of the brain and the subconsciousness. Therefore, the authors underline the effectiveness of the preventive, educational, and training goals of the MusThePlan to lead theatre students and actors to deal with anxiety and to overcome psychophysical weaknesses, shyness, emotional stress in stage performances, to increase flexibility, awareness of one's identity and resources for a positive self-development and psychophysical health, to develop and strengthen social bonds, increasing a network of subjects working for social inclusion and reduction of stigma. Materials-Methods: Thirty students from the University Theatre Faculty participated in weekly music therapy sessions for two months; each session lasted 120 minutes. MusThePlan: Each session began with a free group rhythmic-sonorous-musical-production by body-percussion, voice-canto, instruments, to stimulate communication. Then, a synchronized-structured bodily-rhythmic-sonorous-musical production also involved acting, dances, movements of hands and arms, hearing, and more sensorial perceptions and speech to balance motor skills and the muscular tone. Each student could be the director-leader of the group indicating a story to inspire the group's musical production. The third step involved the students in rhythmic speech and singing drills and in vocal exercises focusing on the musical pitch to improve the intonation and on the diction to improve the articulation and lead up it to an increased intelligibility. At the end of each musictherapy session and of the two months, the Musictherapy Assessment Document was drawn up by analysis of observation protocols and two Indices by the authors: Patient-Environment-Music-Index (time to - tn) to estimate the behavior evolution, Somatic Pattern Index to monitor subject's eye and mouth and limb motility, perspiration, before, during and after musictherapy sessions. Results: After the first month, the students (non musicians) learned to play percussion instruments and formed a musical band that played classical/modern music on the percussion instruments with the musictherapist/pianist/conductor in a public concert. At the end of the second month, the students performed a public musical theatre show, acting, dancing, singing, and playing percussion instruments. The students highlighted the importance of the playful aspects of the group musical production in order to achieve emotional contact and harmony within the group. The students said they had improved kinetic and vocal and all the skills useful for acting activity and the nourishment of the bodily and emotional balance. Conclusions: The MusThePlan makes use of some specific MusicTherapy methodological models, techniques, and strategies useful for the actors. The MusThePlan can destroy the individual "mask" and can be useful when the verbal language is unable to undermine the defense mechanisms of the subject. The MusThePlan improves actor's psychophysical activation, motivation, gratification, knowledge of one's own possibilities, and the quality of life. Therefore, the MusThePlan could be useful to carry out targeted interventions for the actors with characteristics of repeatability, objectivity, and predictability of results. Furthermore, it would be useful to plan a University course/master in "MusicTherapy for the Theatre".

**Keywords :** musictherapy, sonorous-musical energy, quality of life, theatre

**Conference Title :** ICMT 2024 : International Conference on Music Therapy

**Conference Location :** Sydney, Australia

**Conference Dates :** August 29-30, 2024