

Report on the 2nd ConnAction Meeting on 18th of November 2018 in Graz

It is Sunday morning. A late autumn morning in Graz that promises the first snow of the year. Wrapped up in coats, scarfs and hats, we leave our accommodation and make our way to Leonhardstrasse, to the Graz University of Arts. Right at the entrance we meet a student from Graz who accompanies us to the hall where the 2nd CMTS meeting (ConnAction of Music Therapy Students) for music therapy students and young professionals takes place today.

Goal achieved! It smells of hot coffee and tea, and a beautifully arranged buffet has been put up for our refreshment and to get to know one another. Up until the beginning of the event, approximately 30 students from Graz, Krems and Vienna arrive - all full of anticipation and expectations to meet new contacts, get inspired, exchange ideas, discuss music and just generally to have an enriching time together. The program starts with a group improvisation. Afterwards, we are welcomed by Friederike Kinne, Janine Gimpl and Ronja Gangler. An attunement with body and voicework, guided by Anja Schäfer (doctoral candidate in Hamburg) is next in the program. Body awareness, breathing, voices, movement in the room and contact with a counterpart plus a final group sound provide energy for the rest of the day. The pleasure that Anja Schäfer shows in her work with the students is contagious, everyone's face is beaming with joy.

After a short break, Friederike, Janine and Ronja report on their work in the organization team and on the intentions, goals and visions of the CMTS. An international network of music therapy students should facilitate exchanging with and learning from each other, provide orientation and information, and support the transition from university to professional life.

Learning from each other is the core topic of the following workshops called "proximity - distance" with Sophie Jäger and Lotte Wilfing (students from Vienna) and "Vocal improvisation in the circle according to Fritz Hegi" with Elisabeth Decker (student from Graz).

Creatively guided by the workshop leaders, the topics are discussed and experienced in practical applications. In an appreciative environment of like-minded people, one's own music therapy thinking and actions can be explored and enriched with many new ideas. It quickly becomes clear that there is a lot of swapping of ideas and that time passes quickly.

All students reach the lunch break inspired and elated. Strengthened by Italian pizza, coffee and cake, we start the afternoon. The joint rehearsal of the song "Music moves me" to this year's European Music Therapy Day follows in the program. As the song says, "... music moves me to dance (...) or play with my friends ...", we move through the room singing, dancing and making music.

The following Drum Circle Workshop by Markus Müller and Alina Baltzer (students from Graz) challenges some of us with fast rhythms and complex body percussion, but in the end it brings a lot of joy and energy.

Last but not least, in the final improvisation after this successful and wonderful day, it is clearly audible and perceptible how a colorful group of students has come together to form an imaginative, relaxed, creative, inspired and motivated collective.

A report from Viola Thies (student, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Austria) and Verena Hopfner (student, University of Applied Sciences Krems, Austria)