



International

Harp Therapy Program

Australia

Newsletter 3 ~ March 2021

From IHTP~AU IT & Student Coordinator Anna Muller

Dear IHTP Community

How wonderful to be a part of this harping community! Each and every one brings along a special gift to weave into this musical tapestry. Each and every one has a special niche where their music comes to life!

We speak a language that brings us all together no matter where we come from or where life takes us from here. Music is the universal language we use to share our love with other sojourners of this earth.

Blessings, Anna Muller



News Flash!

Zoom into Skills Workshops in June 2021 !!

Are you or your friends interested in exploring your harp playing in a supportive environment?

Would you like to hear therapeutic harp music & find out more about IHTP-AU?

More info coming soon



Recent Events



Greetings from IHTP~AU HQ!

Well, in November & December 2020, we made lemonade from Covid lemons. Because we couldn't travel to a central location we met in the Zoom Room ~ and were thus able to encompass students and presenters in 5 different time zones!

[Working out viable times for all was quite the challenge, but we did it 😊🙄]

A vibrant and enthusiastic group gathered to receive expert tuition in therapeutic harp and related topics from our wonderful presenters [Christina Tourin](#), [Alison Ware](#), [June Swatman](#), [Anke Arkesteyn](#), [Anna Muller](#), [Louise Bell](#), [Vimukti Warr](#) & [Deirdre May](#). We talked, listened, played our harps, laughed, cried, shared deeply.

Please enjoy a personal reflection from [Bernadette O'Rourke](#) on the following page.

Love & blessings ~ Louise



... AND... we're delighted to be offering IHTP~AUModule 1 again early next year!

Module 1 Review by Bernadette O'Rourke



Over two weekends in Nov/ Dec 2020 I attended the online Module 1 training, as a refresher. I was part of a lovely caring, sharing group of students, refresher IHTP graduates, presenters and graduates of other Therapeutic Harp courses.

The module was led by wonderful speakers who wove the threads of past ESM's / IHTP studies with rich new sharing of ideas to expand on the teachings of Christina in Modes, NLP, Grief, Marketing, and examples/ discussions about clinical practices and experiences.

Christina's topics were extended to provide sessions on self care, exercise/ stretches, hospital equipment that may be encountered, a sensitive introduction to Kiirtan and Bhajan, Mysticism, Science and Death.

CHTP guests shared their stories and progression through their therapeutic harp work. I am so grateful for all the hard work of Christina, Vimukti, Anke Arkesteyn, Louise, Alison Ware, Linky, Deirdre May, guest presenters and my fellow participants.



Bernadette plays for her uncle in Aged Care

Technology, Zoom and the Internet were challenges that everyone patiently navigated through. I think I won the prize for my internet dropping out the most 😬

Great work everyone!
Best of luck for the 2021 ESM,

Bernadette



Check out the ingenious harp wheels! Ed.



Where To Now? by Carla Whiteley

I commenced my first reflection with the quote that “Life is a journey”, and shared with you all some of the journey that led me to study Therapeutic Harp. As I mentioned my great desire was to work in the local Hospital, but this did not eventuate.

Therapeutic Harp in Australia, when I graduated, was still in its very early days. There was some understanding in various circles of Music Therapy, but most found it difficult to get their heads around the idea of Therapeutic Music. Even today, after working in the field, many still consider the work I do as entertainment, and not therapy as such.

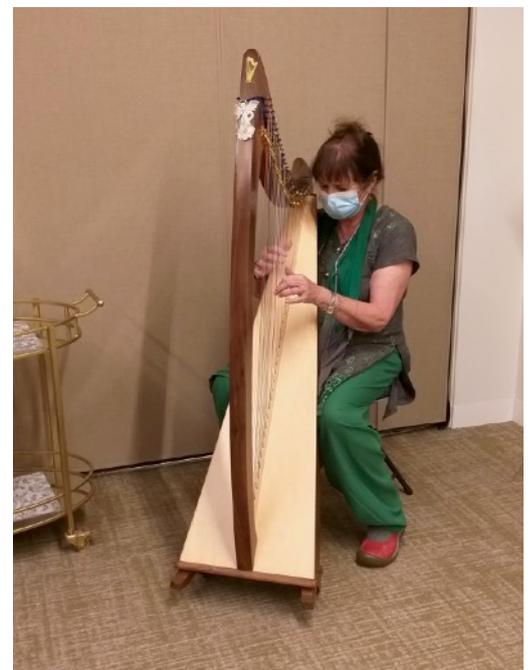
Gradually doors opened for me and I found myself playing in Aged Care. It was not what I had planned, but as someone recently said to me “Life is what happens while you are busy making plans”. The doors opened, mainly through recommendations and referrals, and I walked through, so to speak.

I was fortunate that, as well as having learnt the harp, I was also able to play the guitar, ukulele, flute and recorders. My work grew to where I found myself performing what I refer to as “Therapeutic Diversional Concerts” where I play the harp, as well as my other instruments, and read poetry and sing familiar songs with the residents, around a theme, be it Australia Day, St Patrick’s Day, Weather, Travel etc. I have built up a total of 29 programs which ensures that I do not repeat the same music week after week. I then spend time with residents in their rooms. They may have newly arrived and are feeling depressed or they may be ill, feeling unwell, depressed or are palliative.

I am now employed by four different Aged Care Facilities. I perform Therapeutic Diversional Concerts, as well as bedside harp.

As with most things in our society, life has been somewhat turned upside down and for most of last year and early this year these Aged Care Facilities closed their doors and are now gradually opening up again to receive Therapeutic Music. The existence of Covid in our midst now requires one to often play masked, which is doable when playing the flute, but a challenge never the less.

So, what does it require when one works in these residential aged care places?



Where To Now? by Carla Whiteley, contd.

One has to be flexible. Things do not always work according to plan especially when one is working in the dementia specific areas. There are moments when I have to stop to help a resident who maybe trying to stand without their walker and there are no staff to give support or I might have to wheel a resident to the nurses' station as they need to go to the toilet.

Accountability is paramount. It is a privilege, not to be taken lightly, to enter into the room of a resident, close the door, leaving a notice on the door making it clear to staff that you are within and if necessary, would they enter quietly please. I personally believe that it is vital to document all your activities within a facility. Often staff do not see what you are doing and how the residents react. It is up to me to write up the experience and send it onto the appropriate staff. This not only lets them know the effect that the music has on the residents in their care, but it helps for me to record my work so that management and lifestyle staff are able to build up a folder of my work which can be presented to the auditors when they come to the facility.



Totally relaxed while I played the Harp...



Sharing with Residents

It is important to have a wide repertoire as I am often asked to play specific music for residents as they become more familiar with me. I have found it helpful to have downloaded my print music, into folders on a tablet, which enables me to access the tunes and songs I might be asked to play. The repertoire is constantly building and a great deal of work is required to maintain the tunes to a reasonable level.

Attending a facility regularly allows one to build up relationships with the residents and become familiar with their particular likes. Having been in some of the facilities for more than 10 years, as a Therapeutic Musician, one journeys with people in their life and it is often a great privilege to then be with them at the end of their time here on earth. There is, of course, the down side to this, as one must be prepared to be facing the reality of constant loss.

When one works in hospitals there is also the reality that we may play for those who depart this world, but we also have the joy of seeing babies in NICU thrive and leave the hospitals as well as the recovery of long-term patients, and cancer patients moving into remission.

In Aged Care there is much joy and often laughter, but the reality of life is such that most of the residents are at a stage of life where they require daily help and face the sure and certain knowledge that eventually they will leave this world.

The harp and music brings comfort, peace and joy and as such, for me it continues to be a privilege and joy to be there with people whom I have grown to love.

I do what I love, and love what I do, sharing music and bringing peace and calmness during this stage of life's journey for people.



Bedside Harp



Vimukti Warr, photo by Kaye Dixon / Montage by L. Bell

IHTP~AU Newsletter is designed & edited by Louise Bell.
Please send any contributions to music@louisebell.com.au



From our harps ~ and hearts ~ to yours. xx