



## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC THERAPY CENTRE

# Notes to Heal

**KINGMAN CHUNG** is at the forefront in providing this allied health, music therapy service to Hong Kong.

**T**he soothing and therapeutic qualities of music have been recognized since ancient times. This unique practice of treating ailments has proven to be effective at promoting mental and physical development and health. Kingman Chung makes this unique health service available in Hong Kong through the renowned International Music Therapy Centre (IMTC). Established in 2013, IMTC provides a range of specialized services for various purposes and clients.

“Music had changed my life,” says Chung. “When I was 15 years old, I learned how to play the keyboard, which helped me to express emotions. Music also built up my self-confidence and enhanced how I valued myself. I have since had the passion to use music to help others in their lives.”

### A Very Good Place To Start

Hong Kong has long had a deep appreciation for music. The city is a hotbed for local and international concerts. Many children and young adults have received instruction in voice or playing an instrument. In addition to classical training, new means of expression and consumption via electronic and digital channels become more available.

On the other hand, the region is also no stranger to illness. An ageing population and a declining air quality index have seen some alarming diseases in recent history. Dissatisfaction, unhappiness and stress levels in the city have also been detriment to the mental well-being of citizens. Among its primary objectives, IMTC seeks to address such health issues as strokes, cancer, and autism spectrum disorder while, or even before, resorting to medication.

While the practice is validated in



study and repeatedly proven effective, quite a few still consider it hogwash, and dismiss it altogether. “The public does not know what music therapy is about. The challenge is for us to raise public awareness,” says Chung.

Music therapy has a broad range of applications that go beyond treating medical and psychiatric disorders. It features heavily in child, adolescent and prenatal development. It is an essential tool in many special education courses, and highly effective in caring for the elderly. “People are aware of the limitations of verbal language,” says Chung. “Music can stimulate different parts of the brain that help individuals to express themselves, and perhaps regain speech for those who have lost the ability.”

### Around The World

To administer the form of treatment in Hong Kong effectively, Chung has assembled the finest team sourced from around the globe. “We have registered therapists from various countries, including Great Britain, Australia, Canada and the United States,” he says. “They have been trained in the different approaches of music therapy, including cognitive behavioural, psychodynamic, and humanistic approaches, in order to meet specific needs.”

The diversity of the therapists’ disciplines has allowed IMTC to offer a myriad of services and bespoke options

to fit patients’ personal backgrounds. Regular staff sharing and supplementary training keep the team sharp and up to date with the latest methods. Besides individual treatment, IMTC also engages in community therapy. These include putting together choirs for cancer and stroke patients, as well as bands for reforming drug addicts.

Now, the company connects with the broad network of registered music therapists in foreign countries who help the cause of promoting music therapy locally and globally. With currently less than 80 registered music therapists in Hong Kong, Kingman Chung hopes to motivate others to take up the study. Increased participation means further recognition of the field. Having the city become a music therapy hub of Asia, with International Music Therapy Centre leading the charge, would be an ideal outcome. More than that, many who need something apart from conventional medicine can enjoy such treatment. ■



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