

# Music Heals



By Sage Satori

Music, beautiful music that haunts our memories and elicits different emotions from the depth of our being is also music with the magic power to heal and cure.

Music therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed



Music therapist, Jaelyn Palmer, dressed as Annie Bruggman, age 101, excitedly shares stories from her musical past.

professional who has completed an approved music therapy program. Goal areas may include, but are not limited to, motor skills, social/interpersonal development, cognitive development, self-awareness, and spiritual enhancement.

The idea of music as a healing modality dates back to the beginnings of history, and some of the earliest notable mentions in Western history are found in the writings of ancient Greek philosophers.

The North Coast Voice secured an interview with Music Therapist, Jaelyn Palmer, who works at both UH Ahuja and UH Case Medical Center, and she shared with us an inside view about the profession.

**NCV: How did your life path lead you to music therapy as a profession?**

**Jaelyn:** The era of performing in my life began at age 3.

For decades I lived a

whirlwind existence that included singing on stages across the globe, recording albums and appearing on two seasons of a television show while working as Danny Bonaduce's personal assistant in L.A. By the time I reached my late twenties, I was compelled to use my talents for the greater good. Amidst a performer's life, filled with both harmony and dissonance, there was an inner wisdom that propelled me toward giving fully to others through my talents. I returned home to Cleveland and began volunteering at a children's hospital where I was introduced to the profession of music therapy. The idea of integrating my musical skills with my desire to serve others sparked an excitement in me that led me to obtaining a post baccalaureate degree in music therapy from Cleveland State University. Since I already held a bachelor's degree in vocal performance from Indiana University, it would only be a two additional years of study.

After graduation I was accepted into a highly respected internship

at University Hospitals under the direction of world renowned music therapist, Dr. Deforia Lane who is a pioneer in field. After the internship, I was blessed by being hired by the Connor Integrative Medicine Network to establish a music therapy program at University Hospitals Ahuja Medical Center in Beachwood. Looking back, I feel that my entire life has prepared me for this extraordinary career. I realize that in my life, as long as I've followed the music, I've ended up right where I'm supposed to be.

**NCV: Tell us about some of the highlights in working with your patients.**

**Jaelyn:** I have found that this career path allows me to be with people more authentically than in almost any other experience I have had in my life. While people are ill, in hospital garments, things like finances, status, and professions do not matter and I have had the privileged of interacting with people without pretense. As a music therapist in a hospital setting I have aided patients in rebuilding speech or movement after a stroke, finding hope during sickness, and allowing families to say goodbye when their loved one is in hospice. Recently I had a most memorable patient named Annie Bruggman who was a sparkling 101 year old woman. Through music therapy, Annie was able to reminisce about her musical childhood, express herself and cope with her hospital stay. Weeks later, her daughter, Joan, relayed to me that Annie had passed away, yet the music therapy had lifted her spirits during her final days and had inspired the family to use singing to help Annie to pass peacefully.

In the hospital, music therapy sessions include songwriting, instrument play, lyric discussions, relaxation to music, singing, and co-treating with physical/occupational therapists and speech language pathologists to facilitate rehabilitation. On special occa-



Traveling through the hospital with her instruments in tow, The Connor Integrative Medicine Network sends Jaelyn to brighten the days of UH Ahuja inpatients. Photo credit - Chuck Nannett

sion, we even like to involve the hospital's interdisciplinary team. Recently, a favorite patient had returned to the hospital for a much anticipated final surgery. When the procedure was complete and determined to be a success I recruited nurses, doctors and other staff to sing a celebratory song to him. As we all gathered in the hospital room to acknowledge this 36-year-old's remarkable recovery, the hospital became a joyful place, filled with hope, honor and dignity.

I feel privileged to be working as a music therapist. It is my ultimate hope to lead patients in acknowledging their own bright light at a time when it appears to be very dim, using the power of music that has so greatly graced my own life.

**NCV: What do you see in the future for music therapy? Do you think it may become common & available everywhere?**

**Jaelyn:** This is a very exciting time for the field, especially in the music therapy hub of Cleveland. More than ever before, music therapists are gracing the halls of schools, hospitals, prisons, hospice, psychiatric programs, developmental disability centers and assisted living facilities. Universities like Cleveland State and Baldwin Wallace have degree programs that are growing with more students each year. In addition, continued research is further establishing the field as an evidence base profession. This month I will embark on a two year, 200 person study at UH Case Medical Center with my mentor Dr. Deforia Lane; nurse anesthetist, Diane Mayo; biostatistician, Dr. Mark Schluchter; and surgeon, Dr. Rosemary Leeming. We will be studying the effect music therapy has on women undergoing surgical breast biopsies, measuring the effect live and recorded music has on preoperative anxiety, intraoperative anesthesia requirements, time in PACU and patient satisfaction. This research will allow the medical community to further understand the effect music therapy has in the surgical arena. As more individuals become board certified music therapists and the community continues to reap the benefits (congresswoman Gabriel Giffords, for example), I believe that music therapy will only flourish.

Everywhere in our universe is a symphony of sounds interacting and vibrating together, music is the energy pulse that courses in and through everything via sound vibrations. Music nourishes and enriches our lives in so many ways, inspiring us, relaxing us, energizing us; in short it has immense healing power.

Outside of the hospital setting Jaelyn does perform and record. To see Jaelyn's schedule of performances and events visit [jaelynbradley.com](http://jaelynbradley.com)

Cover Photo Credit: Brandon Blackwell

## ABBIEY RODEO

Thur, Aug. 23rd  
Willoughby Gazebo  
7:00 til 8:30  
(bring a lawn chair)

Sat, Sept. 29th  
Hooley House  
Mentor  
9:30 til Midnight

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