

Helen Bonny's Guided Imagery and Music and different aspects of listening to music in preschool and early childhood

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present the receptive music therapy method developed by Helen Bonny. The method described is based on the awareness and analysis of the music listening experience. In its training, methodological elements are the most important, such as symbolic processing techniques of musical experience, including guidance instructions, which are mainly derived from the therapist's own experiential experience. The main points of her (Helen Bonny) theoretical background are Maslow's theory of needs and Rogers' non-directive attitude. In terms of the relationship between pedagogy and therapy, the therapist, as well as the pre-school teacher and the teacher, also takes care to create a relaxed atmosphere for the recipient during the listening process, to make him or her aware of the musical experience and to express it non-verbally or symbolically (e.g. through drawing, movement, dramatically). The difference lies in the purpose of the processing. Therapy focuses on the resolution of personality conflicts, whereas pedagogy focuses on the development of musical skills and the shaping of taste while listening to music. Both therapists and educators need to be trained in the characteristics of musical experience and musical style, but with different methodologies. What they have in common are the steps of relaxation, experiential mobilization, and becoming a conscious music listener.

Keywords: musical experience; music listening; receptive music therapy; musical taste and preference

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Definition and training of Guided Imagery and Music

Guided Imagery and Music (hereinafter referred to as GIM), Helen Bonny's receptive music therapy method, is designed for practitioners. In addition to music therapists, it is also used by psychologists, psychiatrists, teachers, physiotherapists, etc. GIM was born as a method for an in-depth music therapy process. The method was developed with Helen Bonny's questions in mind: in what way can the same music played by different performers simultaneously stimulate the client to confront and face conflictual issues, or, on the contrary, does the music not provoke any emotional response (Abbott 2010; Bonde 2015)?

According to Bruscia (2002), "Therapy is a modality that includes spontaneous imagery, expanded states of consciousness, pre-planned classical music

programs, dialogues during musical imagery, and non-direct control techniques” (Bruscia 2002, 59). GIM itself is “The guided imagery evoked by relaxation and music to influence an individual's processes of self-understanding and personal growth” (Bruscia & Grocke 2002, 95).

The training and teaching of the method focuses on personal experience, a kind of supervision¹, which provides the framework for study. The training blocks include learning management instructions, psychotherapeutic dynamics, session planning, and ethical principles, as well as clinical practice (Lewis 2002). Compared to the range of therapeutic training courses, the training at Anna Maria College is new in terms of learning specific association techniques, registering the personal development process, and peer and supervision interactions (Abbott 2010).

According to Abbott (2010), the skill set required to apply the method contains the following: managing the therapeutic relationship, assessing and managing the therapeutic dynamics², identifying the experiences of listening to music in the “here and now”, and using visual associations for personal development. In practice, the aim is to acquire the psychological knowledge necessary for the competences listed.

The methods of imagery vary depending on the level of training. They are developed according to the goal of therapy and musical style.

1. At the first level of pictorial methods, the focus is on developing interpersonal congruence³ (authenticity, self-identity). It focuses on the awareness of the experience of listening to music. And the music used is predictable (simple melodic arch, balanced dynamics and moderate tempo).

2. The second level of visual methods is the so-called tension-oriented level. The focus is on the acceptance and release of tension (intra-psychoic and interpersonal⁴) in the awareness of emotions related to music. In this process, the awareness of interpersonal congruence, the processing of tensions and doubts in the experience are emphasized. The choice of music is determined by the fact that the given piece of music expresses the state of tension and helps the client to bear it.

The third level of the visual methods is the reconstruction-oriented method, and the aim is to explore and reinterpret the client's state of experience, which has

1 Supervision is a psychological form of work aimed at increasing personal, professional, and organizational competence and efficiency, keeping in mind the preservation of mental health, which is so important in our fast-paced world, and the prevention of workplace burnout. <https://szupervizorok.hu/a-szuperviziorol/>

2 According to therapeutic dynamics, mental phenomena originate from the subconscious driving force of instinctual aspirations, which the process of therapy interprets from the present, i.e. “here and now” (Szőnyi & Füredi 2000).

3 Interpersonal congruence: that verbal and nonverbal communication channels are in harmony, i.e. the spoken words and body language, tone of voice, and facial expression are in harmony with each other; in the therapeutic context: the therapist should separate his or her own and the client's emotions (Ónody & Bálintné 2006).

4 Intrapsychic=within the person, interpersonal=between people (conflict, tension, etc.) (Ónody & Bálintné 2006).

changed because of the music. The choice of music can include pieces of different tempo, dynamics, and character.

The levels of training are as follows.

1. The first training level is a 35-hour intensive introductory model. In this time, students will learn ways of managing the altered state of consciousness, different musical instructions, the special session form (diad⁵), and techniques of creating musical programs.

2. The second level of training consists of a 50-hour follow-up model, which includes the development of musical programmes used in the method.

3. At the third training level, modules and requirements are spread over several years; at this level, students become trainees (Bonde 2015).

The therapy workflow

The phases of the therapeutic workflow are the same at all three levels: 1. the opening conversation, where information about the client's life and experiences is obtained and the experiences are made conscious, 2. the musical induction and mental imagery, where the client describes the experiences with images, 3. The final discussion, in which experiences are summarised, tensions are expressed, and past and present experiences are compared (Abbott 2010; Bonde 2015).

In the individual therapy session, the therapist and client jointly develop the therapeutic goal during the introduction. This is followed by muscle relaxation and musical induction (listening to music) with guiding instructions. This is followed by a verbal discussion of the images evoked by the music in a continuous dialogue. Finally, as a deduction, the experiences are interpreted through the client's personal life story, which is complemented by drawing (Abbott 2010; Eyre 2012; Bonde 2015).

The process is detailed in the introductory phase, wherein the problem, the current life situation, is identified. Then the therapist gives instructions for muscle relaxation while the client is in a relaxed sitting or lying position. The client is then prepared to access deeper levels of consciousness and sensory concentration is developed. The focus is on the therapist's "instructions". This is followed by listening to music, when the guide offers the client the opportunity to express his or her experience in images while listening to music. During the "mental journey", a location is suggested by the therapist for the client to imagine themselves. These types of images mobilise and transform the experience and provide an opportunity to live conflictual and ambivalent feelings in a tolerable way. They resemble a dream, but unlike a dream, they do not disappear but persist and bring the meaning of the experience into the present - the "here and now". Finally, during the final discussion, the feelings associated with the images are expressed, problem-solving is generat-

⁵ Dyadic sitting: stable sitting position for two people, forming a triangle, expressing a sense of security in therapy. Dyadic (two-person) situation that offers a personalized opportunity to analyze and process individual mental problems (Kelló 2016).

ed, and the therapist adapts them to the client's personal life. Through the different sensory experiences (sight, hearing, smell, taste)⁶, the description of the images takes place, which often ends in insight, an “aha” experience. The symbols in the images represent archetypes, ancient human experiences of a certain content of experience. One might say that images hold a mirror up to who we are (Abbott 2010; Eyre 2012; Bonde 2015).

During the post-music process, the therapist brings the client back to the present, talking through the shared images. The verbal expression helps interpretation. During the conversation, relevant events and experiences are highlighted. In the days after therapy, the client continues to reflect on the meaning of the images and integrates them holistically into his or her personal life (Abbott 2010; Bonde 2015; Perilli 2017).

The process therefore involves first gathering information about the client's life situation. Then, the therapist gives relaxing, relaxation-inducing instructions to the client, who is in a lying, resting state. This state prepares the client psychologically and physically for the musical induction. The music is then played, during which the client reports on the images imagined, verbally describing his or her experiences. The therapist then asks questions or gives guiding instructions. In the final stage of the therapy, the therapist brings the client back to the present with questions and instructions, followed by verbal reflections on the experiences. Finally, mandala⁷ drawing helps to integrate the experiences (Abbott 2010).

Time and basic characteristics of listening to music in pre-school and early school

While therapy and listening to music take place at a specific time of day and in a specific time slot, listening to music in kindergarten can take place at any time of day, but it is also a prerequisite for a calm atmosphere. It is important that the kindergarten teacher is positioned among the children. In kindergarten, the duration of the music should be adapted to the needs and age of the group. It is necessary to choose the time slot and the number of repetitions of the piece. The duration should be approximately 2-3 minutes on average, as long as the age group is able to listen quietly.

After listening to the music, the child should have the opportunity to react and express his/her experience. This could be through drawing, movement, dramatic activity, conversation, etc. It is not recommended to give the child an intellectual task while listening to the music. The experience of music can be processed in a

⁶ For example: If you were on the beach right now, listening to music, what smells and tastes appear, how does it feel to touch the sand?

⁷ Mandala: a geometric configuration of symbols. In various spiritual traditions, mandalas are used to focus the attention of practitioners and devotees <https://indianfolkart.org/product/mandala-art-9-24/?add-to-cart=24090>.

symbolic form similar to therapy and linked to other developmental areas (Szarkáné 1989; Hovánszki 2008; Törzsök 2023; Forrai 2024).

The ONOAP's⁸ expectation is that, by listening to musical material during joint musical activities, we shape the child's taste and arouse his/her musical interest and aesthetic receptivity. In addition to developing skills, the experience of pleasure provides a basis for the development of traditions and a musical mother tongue.

According to Szesztay (2023) in school, listening to music is planned for specific time periods or stages. We adapt the planning to the tasks of the lesson. About 60% of the lesson is spent on singing, about 30% of the lesson on skill development and about 10% of the lesson on listening. In the first grade, music listening (in total) should take about 5-6 minutes. This can be doubled by grade 4.

Thus, listening to music is a specific stage within the vocal music lesson. If it is played at the beginning of the lesson, it could be a re-listening of a previously heard or known song for the purpose of processing it in the form of song identification. Or it may mean listening to music after learning a new song, for example, after a short break, to sing again the song learned for motivation. The listening part can also be placed at the end of the lesson, for example with listening material related to the theme of the lesson. This could be, for example, a 3/4 beat music for learning triple time (Laczó 1983; Bánki & Kismartony 1999; Pappné 2007; Réti & Döbrössy 2016; Szesztay 2023).

Skill sets to learn in therapy and the role of the teacher

In learning the GIM method, students will acquire didactic elements. Specifically, they have the opportunity to integrate experiences, deal with relational dynamics⁹, and learn techniques to avoid burnout¹⁰. They should learn that the most important aspects of the therapy process are non-judgement, non-directionality and authenticity on the part of the therapist. In other words, the therapist must be self-identical in all his/her roles, which is equally essential in the role of teacher.

In therapy, there are different levels of awareness of the experience, in relation to which it is an important guideline that the therapist allows the client's needs and confrontation with his or her experience to unfold freely. Therefore, it is essential that therapists in their practice are exposed to a complex combination of learning and experiential experiences and didactic information (Abbott 2010, Eyre 2012).

The training of a preschool teacher should prepare him or her to perform a piece of work that he or she can articulate with sufficient confidence. The interpretation should be authentic, i.e. it should express the mood and emotional content of

⁸ <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a12003>

⁹ Transference: emotions experienced in a given relationship in the past emerge in the present situation, e.g. towards the therapist (Szőnyi & Füredi 2000).

¹⁰ Burnout: a specific symptom complex: physical, mental and emotional exhaustion. It does not only appear in connection with work; it is generally characterized by hopelessness and desperation (Pines, Aronson & Kafry 1981).

the piece, with appropriate tempo, tone, rhythm, and articulation (Szarkáné 1989; Hovánszki 2008; Törzsök 2023; Forrai 2024).

According to Szesztay (2023) in school, the teacher must represent a quality interpretation of the major works. Conscious listening to music requires the development of the following skills. The ability to hear sounds, such as noises, each other's sounds, instruments, groups of instruments, and vocal ensembles. It is an internal, conscious activity, which means observing the events taking place in music, the musical process. Attention concentration, musical memory and musical thinking (analysis, comparison) also play a central role in conscious listening to music. (Laczó 1983; Bánki & Kismartony 1999; Pappné 2007; Réti & Döbrössy 2016; Szesztay 2023).

Based on Szesztay (2023) creating the conditions for listening to music at school is a process on the part of the teacher. Its elements are the creation of a calm atmosphere, silence, and discipline. Another element is arousing interest and motivation in connection with the content of the lesson. The first time the music is listened to for the first time, which is a spontaneous experience. This is followed by listening to reactions and opinions, and then conscious processing guided by teacher questions. Further questions and listening may follow. Finally, during the last listening session, a conscious experience is created. The preparation and questioning culture of the teacher are essential for conscious listening and to create the conditions for it. Good questions focus attention on specific musical phenomena. For example, How many times have you heard the song you know? Was there a change in the music from the known song? What instrument(s) did you hear? Did you hear any acceleration/deceleration, voicing/reverberation, etc...? Why do you think the composer chose this instrument? In addition, a thorough knowledge of music and the availability and handling of appropriate digital/technical tools are also necessary on the part of the teacher (Laczó 1983; Bánki & Kismartony 1999; Pappné 2007; Réti & Döbrössy 2016; Szesztay 2023). Therapy also emphasises a calm atmosphere, the creation of conditions, the use of guiding questions to make the musical experience more conscious, but its aim is different, it aims at working through conflicts that are full of tension.

About the characteristics of music

Speaking about the characteristics of music in therapy, music helps to create a relaxed, calm state of mind in which our memories and emotions are safely expressed in a psychotherapeutic framework. In addition to its experience-mobilising effect, music has a transformative potential, i.e. it can transform our negative, doubtful experiences into positive, or at least neutral, ones through processing. The forms of processing can be, for example, conversation, symbols, metaphors, or drawing (Abbott, 2010).

The choice of music listened to can be derived from the client's life history and problems but can also be topically shaped by the goal of therapy. It may be excerpts from a particular piece or even a series. Usually, the duration is around half

an hour, and the style is classical music that has stood the test of time, so to speak. It has the characteristic of being so multifaceted that it can capture the dynamics of the human soul and has aesthetic and moral components. The range extends from the Baroque period to the 20th century. The psychic aspects of music used in GIM are to induce images, mobilise memories, and have a positive and relaxing effect (Abbott 2010).

In the series of images that emerge while listening to music, events and traumas from the early years of life are very often brought to the fore. Music plays a triggering and supportive role in this. The human psyche sees the images as a call to which the therapist provides a safe environment (*milieu*). The listened music, in turn, draws a so-called “sound envelope” around the client. A drawing (*mandala*) after listening to the music visualises the mental images. It is a complementary, mediating medium that can be further interpreted and analysed (Abbott 2010).

The main questions that the therapist needs to answer when designing music programmes are, 1. why and how the music elicits a response, 2. how generalisable the responses to the music are, 3. how the musical elements (dynamics, timbre, tempo, rhythm, form) influence the depth of the experience. To do this, the therapist needs to experience the effects on himself. This gives the therapist increasing freedom to choose and control the music. In a way, he becomes a kind of composer of music, related to the client's current state of consciousness. Music is a facilitator, but it is in fact a co-therapist. The images that emerge while listening to music allow for greater self-awareness and acceptance. They help the client to be able to confront the main issues in his/her life (Abbott 2010).

In GIM, we use all our senses to listen to music. We perceive and appreciate the music we hear kinesthetically, visually, and through auditory experience. The different elements of music (rhythm, melody, timbre...) carry meaning separately, yet as a whole they offer a complex way to create visual experiences, to explore our subconscious. The combination of musical elements provides a sense of security to the process. The resulting musical experience opens up deep and psychic spaces. Thus, the client receives a peak experience, so to speak, which affects all aspects of the personality (e.g. perception, relationship or sense of self) (Abbott 2010).

Music not only serves as a catalyst, but also as a container as a repository of emotional experiences, accompanying the client's changing mood. Helen Bonny used classical music because it is complex, multi-layered and predictable, but it also has a dynamic quality. It is therefore suitable for creating visual experiences. When choosing music, it is important to take into account the characteristics of the culture. The right music programme also depends on the personality of the client and his/her current problems. Psychological suitability and emotional readiness are also essential for participation in therapy. Music should represent a supportive presence. Visuality and other artistic media are used in the method to express images. The point is not to interpret musical experiences immediately, but to integrate them when the client is ready.

Features of the choice of music, music programmes

Bonny has developed targeted music programmes for different psychological states and problems:

- Imagery/imaging program, designed to solve relationship problems. For example, *Pierne: Harp concert piece*.
- Program for a beginners' group (so-called "silent music") to deal with psychological problems (tension, anxiety, grief). For example, the *Adagio* movement of Haydn's *C major Cello Concerto*.
- The Bach programme is the one that offers the most varied visual experience. For example, the *Passacaglia* and *Fugue in C minor*.
- The Revival programme, which promotes renewal, includes, for example, Vivaldi's *Violin Concerto in A minor*.
- The transitions programme, to facilitate change (e.g. change of environment). Music such as the slow movement of Brahms' *Piano Concerto No 2*.
- The recharging programme, which energises. A related piece of music is, for example, Schumann: *5 pieces in folk style (Op. 102. movement 2)* (Abbott 2010).

In the process of developing the theory and practice of GIM, Helen Bonny listened to the music in different performances and in different ways. While listening to music, she engaged all her senses (she tried to process the musical experience through movement, kinesthetically, visually). She considered music to be a kind of co-therapist. And she considered the personal experience as the primary means for developing and guiding the client in music programmes.

The criteria for choosing music in kindergarten are similar. The chosen piece of music should be performed expressively and authentically and should be of different genres and styles. Listening to music should be adapted to the current period and needs (e.g. current folk tradition, development plan, children's needs) (Szarkáné 1989; Hovánszki 2008; Törzsök 2023; Forrai 2024).

The pitch of the piece's performance should reflect the child's ideal voice range. It should be mostly live music, but if the material intended for listening to music is played digitally, it should carry the basic aesthetic characteristics.

It is emphasized that listening to music should be an experience, the most important thing is to receive it, without an intellectual task. Therefore, the chosen music should be expressive, i.e. it should give an experience. It should connect to the highlighted musical development task, which can be developing a sense of rhythm, melody, timbre, and the difference between quieter and louder (Szarkáné 1989; Hovánszki 2008; Törzsök 2023; Forrai 2024).

- For example, after games aimed at increasing rhythm, rhythmic singing (e.g. *And, your head is so big...*, *Once upon a time, a prince...*) (Törzsök 2023).
- Or singing at a faster or slower tempo to develop a sense of tempo (e.g. *My horse in seven borders...*) (Törzsök 2023).
- Or singing songs that imitate tones after an opportunity to develop a sense of timbre (*I went to the fair...*) (Törzsök 2023).
- Or songs with dialogue after the task of perceiving quieter or louder, higher or lower (Törzsök 2023).

It is essential that the child gets to know and experience the specific sound of musical instruments and the different moods of musical works. Songs of different genres, styles and moods, or songs presenting the specific soundscape of musical instruments can be found, for example, in Béla Törzsök: *Listening to music in kindergarten* (Törzsök 2023) (Hungarian folk songs, songs of related and other peoples, excerpts from classical music, canons, folk song arrangements), Katalin Forrai: *Songs in kindergarten* (Forrai 2024) (composed children's songs), Kismartony & Döbrössy (2018, Eds.), *Let's sing in two voices*.

Based on Szesztay (2023) the main aspects of selecting musical works for schools are as follows. The length of the musical work should range from about half a minute to a maximum of 4 minutes. Children's attention span is limited, so it is often only possible to listen to a certain part of the musical work. The acceptability of the musical work should match the abilities and interests of the given age group. The musical work may be thematically related to the material of the singing lesson, to the learned melodic and rhythmic elements, to a certain timbre (instrument), or to a character (Laczó 1983; Bánki & Kismartony 1999; Pappné 2007; Réti & Döbrössy 2016; Szesztay 2023).

Music listening materials in the lower grades may be the following, for example:

- Choral works: Zoltán Kodály: *Selected biciniums*, Zoltán Kodály: *Children's and women's choirs*, Béla Bartók: *Children's and women's choirs*,
- Piano works: Béla Bartók: *For children I-IV. and Microcosm piano series*,
- Works by Baroque composers: Telemann, Vivaldi, Purcell, J. S. Bach, G. F. Handel,
- Works by Viennese classical composers: J. Haydn, W. A. Mozart: *The Magic Flute*, Beethoven,
- Works by Romantic composers: Tchaikovsky: *The Nutcracker – ballet*, C. Saint-Saëns: *Carnival of the Animals*, Egressy: *The Clapperboard*, Mussorgsky: *Pictures at an Exhibition*,
- Works by 20th century composers: Zoltán Kodály: *Háry János song play*, Prokofiev: *Peter and the Wolf*,
- Contemporary works: György Kurtág: *Games piano series* (Laczó 1983; Bánki & Kismartony 1999; Pappné 2007; Réti & Döbrössy 2016; Szesztay 2023).

According to Szesztay (2023) The observational aspects of music listening to music at school are as follows. Questions should always be directed at musical means of expression. For example, rhythmic elements (rhythm, beat type), melodic elements (melody, pitch), formal characteristics (repetition, similarity, difference, musical question-answer), dynamic characteristics (soft, loud, fading, voicing, echo effect), tempo characteristics (slow, medium-fast, fast). Questions may also relate to timbres (instruments, vocal types), characters, moods, and the text (Laczó 1983; Bánki & Kismartony 1999; Pappné 2007; Réti & Döbrössy 2016; Szesztay 2023).

Based on Szesztay (2023) when imparting the knowledge necessary for listening to music, the teacher should pay attention to the following. At a younger age, let's approach music in a "fairytale-like" way. In grades 1 and 2, the focus is on the musical adaptation of children's songs. In higher grades, certain music history

knowledge may be provided, e.g. the author's biography or the circumstances of the composition. Basic music history knowledge can best be captured with appropriate illustrative material (video, picture) (Laczó 1983; Bánki & Kismartony 1999; Pappné 2007; Réti & Döbrössy 2016; Szesztay 2023).

Theoretical framework of Guided Imagery and Music

The theoretical starting points of GIM are Maslow's theory of needs, which is a determinant of motivation research in psychology. Also, a determining theoretical background in GIM is the principles of Rogers' client-centered therapy (Bonny 2001). Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs includes a five-level model of human needs, which are often depicted as hierarchical levels in a pyramid. From the bottom of the hierarchy upwards, the needs are: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization. Needs at lower levels in the hierarchy must be satisfied before individuals can respond to needs at higher levels (McLeod 2015). Other features of the theory include that the satisfaction of needs does not necessarily occur linearly, there may be cultural differences (individualistic versus collectivist societies), and different practical applications (e.g., education, healthcare, management) may help or weaken the steps (McLeod 2015). Carl Rogers' humanistic theory focuses on the idea that people have an innate desire for personal growth and self-actualization. He believed that people have a tendency to reach their full potential if they live in an environment that provides them with unconditional positive regard. In the Rogerian client-centered approach, the therapist provides empathy, honesty, and unconditional positive regard to the client in order to facilitate personal growth. Other key principles include subjective experience (the personal assessment of reality that guides human behavior), innate predisposition and motivation to grow, and congruence (the agreement between individual self-image/beliefs and practical experiences) (McLeod 2025).

An important issue in the music listening process is imagination, which GIM views as making subconscious contents visible, to which music gives accompaniment and a sense of security. Imagination also preserves the information carried by the images (Bonny 2001; Bae 2014).

The concept of altered states of consciousness is related to imagination – the state in which the client enters while listening to music. According to Fromm's (1977) theory, these are types of consciousness that differ from the waking state. These include relaxation, meditative states, night dreams, dissociation or psychotic states. Music therapy works with the so-called "lucid dream technique" (Bonny 2001; Bae 2014).

Imagination provides a way to subconscious states and preserves information in the form of images. Relaxation processes similar to GIM are present in Jacobson's muscle relaxation and Schultz's Autogenic Training method. In these techniques, the leader gives instructions to tense and relax muscle groups, and the participant's task is to focus on certain sensations to relax (Bonny 2001; Bae 2014).

Like Maslow's theory, GIM also focuses on the client's self-actualization, intuition, self-experience, and development processes to reach their maximum potential. In addition, Rogers' non-directive attitude appears, in listening to the client without judgment and accepting their changes. GIM acknowledges the client's needs and demands, and helps them find their own way of solving problems and facing their conflicts. Symbols and archetypes appear in the images and verbal conversations (Bonny 2001; Bae 2014).

The GIM theory therefore carries the Jungian perspective, working with the subconscious by processing symbols and increasing spirituality (Bonny 2001). Aspects of Nordoff and Robbins' improvisational therapy (Birnbaum 2014) can be characterized by emphasizing improvisational learning, nonverbal communication with music, motivation, and creativity along with the use of musical and "peak" experiences. In addition, Guided Imagery (GAI), Leuner's visual technique (Leuner 1969), also gets space, which also uses music to evoke affective reactions in the client along with viewing certain image sequences. The images can include a meadow, stream, mountain, house, or forest edge, to which the therapist asks targeted questions related to the client's life. While the images in the Guided Imagery method are structured and strict, GIM is flexible in the use of images (Bonny 2001; Bae 2014).

Listening to music at school: tasks and forms

According to Szesztay's approach (2023) in the preschool period, the family/parental environment plays a decisive role. Already in the intrauterine stage, hearing the acoustic stimuli of the environment, the fetus is what could be called a "competent music listener". Then, after leaving the family, in the kindergarten, the kindergarten teacher's live, vocal musical, and less often instrumental presentation is a process lasting a few minutes.

According to what is designated in the NAT¹¹, the development tasks are: 1. musical reproduction (singing, musical writing and reading, recognizing sheet music), 2. reception (listening to music, developing receptive competencies, listening to music) and 3. practicing improvisation (developing creativity) as a supplement to Zoltán Laczó. The further significance of listening to music is the expansion of the monophonic, vocal musical world, knowledge of the country and its people, and learning about European cultural values. By listening to music, we can contribute to the development of children's musical abilities to a higher level during the activity of reproduction as well as reception (Laczó 1983; Bánki & Kismartony 1999; Pappné 2007; Réti & Döbrössy 2016; Szesztay 2023).

The tasks of listening to music according to the framework curriculum¹² are as follows. "The requirement of the ability to understand and feel music, recognizing and naming musical works that have been listened to several times, distinguishing

11 <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1200110.kor>

12 https://www.oktatas.hu/koznevels/kerettantervek/2020_nat

the timbre of human voices and musical instruments, observing the difference and expressive power of musical characters". In addition, "the development of musical memory, the verbal, visual and motor observation of the musical experience" are the designated goals.

According to Szesztay's approach (2023) specifically, the goals and tasks of lower-grade music listening are: 1. providing spontaneous and conscious experiences through the music listened to, 2. developing concentration (focusing attention) and internal mental activity, as well as musical memory and thinking, 3. establishing a sense of hearing and sensitivity to sounds, 4. arousing interest in music listening. Another important goal is to use the skill-building opportunities inherent in the relationship between hearing development and music listening during the lesson (Laczó 1983; Bánki & Kismartony 1999; Pappné 2007; Réti & Döbrössy 2016).

Based on Szesztay (2023) music listening can be a passive activity, when we listen to music but do not hear the musical events. Or it can be an active activity, when we pay attention to the music with concentration. Listening to music can become an experience if we participate in it both intellectually and emotionally. What is conscious listening to music like? A key task when listening to music is the conscious development of attention control. Conscious listening requires the voluntary suspension of all other activities and the focus of attention on the music. The teacher or therapist can help the voluntary focus of attention by providing observational aspects in the processing of the experience. These can be, for example, how many times the well-known song was played, was there a slowdown or reduction in volume, what instruments can be heard in the piece? (Laczó 1983; Bánki & Kismartony 1999; Pappné 2007; Réti & Döbrössy 2016, Szesztay 2023). The therapist, on the other hand, asks questions related to personal, emotional experience, for example, where do you see yourself if you imagine an image to the music, or what smells might be on the "seen" beach.

According to (Szesztay 2023) possible forms of listening to music at school may include the following. For example, the goals of listening to music may be to develop musical knowledge (melodic, rhythmic, formal elements), abilities (perception, memory, thinking) and skills. Or, additional forms of listening to music could be listening to music related to a well-known song for the purpose of providing an experience. Furthermore, there is the possibility of a live music demonstration within the framework of listening to music (e.g. in connection with the teacher or invited artist playing an instrument). Or we can use listening to music in other subject classes (e.g., for illustration, to enhance the experience, to exploit the opportunities for subject integration). In addition, there are other opportunities for listening to music outside of class (e.g., attending a concert or musical performance together).

The aim is for the child to develop a correct aesthetic judgment and critical attitude while listening to music at school. The idea of non-musical content may also occur during the musical experience. The evaluation of non-music theory components may also be present during music listening (Šulentić Begić & Tomljanović 2014). An interesting research result is that during a linguistic study (e.g. Shakhno-

za et al. 2024) it was found that music training increases the listening skills of those who participate in regular music classes.

It is important that reflections related to the content of the chosen piece of music are also generated by the children, even in the form of associations. This allows the interpretation of the piece of music in a broader context (Vidulin et al. 2022). In therapy, the processing of the musical experience takes place in the context of the client's personal life. That is, musical effects are used to relieve the client's tension and find ways to solve problems.

Summary

The aim of the study is to present Helen Bonny's method of imagination-guided music listening, while drawing parallels with aspects of music listening in kindergarten and primary school. The theoretical background of imagination-guided music listening is characterized by helping the client to develop himself/herself, unconditionally accepting his/her needs, evaluating his/her experiences without criticism, and expressing subconscious psychological contents in symbols. The therapist experiences and learns this in his/her own experience during his/her training. The method is listening to music and processing the experience created during listening to music (Žauhar et al. 2023). In pedagogy, music listening is also defined by the expression of musical experience, for example, through movement, drawing, etc. But while therapy focuses on the process of expressing and processing the experience while listening to music, pedagogy turns towards a musical product, the formation of musical taste. Both require the conscious creation of conditions and the creation of a safe atmosphere, and the matching of the music played to aesthetic considerations. However, in therapy, the choice of music is determined by the client's current life situation and problem (Perilli 2017). In pedagogy, the choice is more tightly bound, shaped by curriculum, skills to be developed, preservation of traditions, etc. It can therefore be stated that therapists and educators use the same tools and methods (in this case, listening to music), but with different goals and frameworks.

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