

# Karl König's<sup>i</sup> Contribution to Music Therapy in Special Care and Education (Curative Education)

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## Abstract

Simultaneously with the establishment of music therapy training courses in London and Vienna in 1958/1959, an article was published on *Music Therapy in Curative Education* by the physician and founder of the Camphill movement, Karl König. He discussed basic musical elements such as melody, harmony and rhythm and their therapeutic effect on children with severe contact disorders, motor- and hearing impairment. He contributed to the development of anthroposophical music therapy and gave impulses for further research into the effect of music on life and vitality. Paul Nordoff, Hans Heinrich Engel, Hermann Pfrogner and Maria Schüppel in particular, took up these impulses and advanced them further in their phenomenological research. Thus the work of König and the Camphill Movement seems to have had a historical influence on the development of music therapy. The qualitative approach of internalizing elements of music is relevant again today.

## Keywords

*Music in medicine – Karl König – archetypal elements of music – Music Therapy – Curative Education – phenomenology*

The history of music therapy may be retraced further, but to get to the roots of contemporary music therapy in Europe we must look back more than sixty years. In the Training Manual for Music Therapy (2012) we can read the following about this: With its source in the artistic-pedagogical reform movements and parallel with modern psychotherapy, the systematic development of contemporary music therapy begins in Europe in the 1950's. More enhanced music-therapeutic activities can be found during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the founding of associations, training centres, research centres, as well as international congresses and publications. (Decker-Voigt et al., 2012, p.104)).

In 1958 Juliette Alvin founded the *Society for Music Therapy and Remedial Music* (British Association for Music Therapy) in London. Also in 1958 the Society for the Promotion of Healing through Music (*Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Musikheilkunde*) was founded in Vienna, and there, in the winter semester 60 years ago, the special course in healing through music began. (Oberegelsbacher, 2001).

At the same time, a first anthology of reports on experiences in music therapy was published in Germany with the title *Musik in der Medizin* (Teirich, 1958). He addressed physicians, therapists and "musical people who want to be informed about a new area of knowledge" (Teirich, 1958, cover-notes) looking for ideas and new ways to put into practice. One of the eighteen contributions by

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twenty-one practising medical doctors and therapists was by the Viennese physician and founder of the international Camphill movement, Karl König.

### **Biographical notes on Karl König**

#### *Growing up and studying in Vienna*

Karl König (1902-1966) was born in Vienna to Jewish parents. His musical training as a teenager enabled him to have profound inner experiences in music. Also his profound social feelings were noticeable already early. During his medical studies in Vienna he met significant personalities who, among other things, lectured on speech disorders in children with disabilities. He came across anthroposophy which helped him to gain the foundations for the understanding of and answers to his questions concerning aspects of life and social science. In 1927 he received his doctorate in medicine in Vienna.

#### *Meeting Special Care and Education in Arlesheim and Pilgramshain*

Soon afterwards, in Arlesheim (Switzerland), he was able to experience anthroposophic medicine and 'Curative Education' (special care, education and therapy out of anthroposophy), the way it had been founded in 1924 during the *Curative Education Course* (Steiner, 1972/2014) by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), spiritual researcher, philosopher, and founder of anthroposophy, and put into practice by the physician Ita Wegman (1876-1943). There he decided to devote himself fully to the child with disabilities. König worked as a medical doctor in Silesia in the curative educational establishment Pilgramshain until 1936. Although König had already converted to Christianity as a teenager he could not stay in Nazi- Germany as son of Jewish parents and moved with his family to Vienna, where he had a medical practice and worked with students until 1938. After many adventures he arrived as a refugee in Scotland where he was later joined by his family and the students from Vienna.

#### *Work and Training in Camphill*

The work initially began in Kirkton House in 1939 and then in Camphill near Aberdeen from 1940 onwards. This became the start of the international Camphill movement. The foundations for the work in special care and education (Curative Education) were developed. As a physician, König gave the impulse for the work and knowledge in medicine and special care and education, based on his manifold interests. Workshops for medical doctors, which were not limited to Camphill, took place regularly. König was especially concerned with further professional training for young medical doctors (Müller-Wiedemann, 1992). As an educator he taught the co-workers of the Camphill movement in the Seminar for Curative Education and especially saw to it that the curative education school was founded, which was at that time a totally new educational field for children with special needs. In the 60's, König held many lectures in Germany and thus made anthroposophic special care and education known to a wider public.

"König managed in his writings and public lectures to formulate the basic principles and perspectives of anthroposophic curative education in such a way that understanding it did not presuppose the acceptance of Steiner's writings." (Schmalenbach, 2011, p 504).

Until the end of his life in 1966 in Überlingen on Lake Constanz Dr König remained connected with the Camphill Movement which had spread ever more widely. He wrote articles and books and gave seminars and lectures. Plays and songs for the festivals of the year came about. Different therapies were developed for the children in Camphill, one among which was music-therapy. As a medical

doctor, musician and anthroposophist König initiated research into the ear, into the connection between hearing and movement, as well as into the anthropological laws of music. In 1958 he held a series of lectures in Camphill on the theme of 'Music and the Experience of Music', which can be found in the Karl König Archive, together with further studies by König on the theme of Music and Music Therapy.

### *Music Therapy in Camphill*

During the first years in Camphill König tasked musicians or physicians with making music for the children, composing, and shaping the festivals of the year musically. He himself also played the piano for them. The musician Ferdinand Rauter (1902-1987) and the physician Hans Schauder (1911-2001) must be mentioned here as examples amongst many others. In 1939, Hans Schauder graduated in Basel with a dissertation about music therapy and in the same year he visited the Camphill movement in Scotland. In 1944, Rauter spent several months in Camphill and later worked in London with Juliette Alvin and Anna Freud, as well as with Paul Nordoff and Clive Robbins. Like Schauder and Rauter, also Suzanne Müller-Wiedemann (1916-2010) grew up in Vienna. Already as a child she had come across eurythmy there, and in 1948 she came to Camphill as curative eurythmist and musician. There, together with König and Christoph Andreas Lindenberg (\*1932), she put music therapy into practice.

The article about *Music Therapy in Curative Education* is a summary of the music therapy activities that had come about in Camphill under König's direction in the 50's. The notes for his many lectures show that already early on König had occupied himself with the relationship between the human being and the musical instruments and the elements of music from a neurological, morphological, and anthropological point of view. He based his article on the scientific knowledge and experiences of his time, but also on Rudolf Steiner's lectures of 1923 on *The Human Being's Experience of Tone* (Steiner, 1923/1991). On Teirich's request, König especially turned to the theme of music therapy, giving the lectures on *Music and the Experience of Music* (Karl König Archive<sup>ii</sup>) from May to October 1958 in Camphill Scotland, Ireland, as well as London. But how did the article come about?

### **The Correspondence between Hildebrand Richard Teirich and Karl König.**

This correspondence may be found in the Karl König Archive with information on how the anthology *Musik in der Medizin* [*Music in Medicine, not translated into English, tr.*] came about. As can be experienced there, König and Teirich already knew each other from their time in Vienna, where both had studied medicine.

In 1957, Hildebrand Richard Teirich (1907-1974), a specialist in nervous disorders, from Freiburg, asked Edmund Pracht, the inventor of the lyre and musician working in Curative Education in Dornach and Arlesheim (Switzerland), to write an article for the anthology *Musik in der Medizin*. The latter, however, referred him to König, who then wrote the article. At that time it was quite special that an article on anthroposophic music therapy was represented in such a book. As may be understood from the correspondence between König and Teirich, König went to great lengths to completely avoid the word anthroposophy, as at the time it would have been judged to be sectarian. This article, later also published in *Aspects of Curative Education* (Pietzner, 1966), and *Erziehen und Heilen durch Musik* [not translated into English, tr.], contains the basic principles of anthroposophic music therapy.

An excerpt from the letter by Teirich to König of 12.07.1957 sheds light on his intention for the publication of this book, which had been written now already more than 60 years ago:

*“A contract has been drawn up between the Fischer Press in Stuttgart, formerly in Jena, which states that I should take on the publication of a book with the title “Musik in der Medizin”. About 16 authors will be contributing to this scientific work. During my short stay in Arlesheim I became aware of the efforts in music therapy there and for this reason I would very much welcome a contribution from the anthroposophic side..... Could I ask you to provide an article written by you? There is, at this time, in the German-speaking world no books available directed to the physician, and I do think this is needed. One’s own practical experiences should be discussed in the first lines in a form that is scientific, yet understandable, allowing also those interested in musicology to be part of the readership.”* (Karl König Archive, Aberdeen).

As music therapy had found a secure place in the Anglo-Saxon countries in the years after the second world war, Teirich was keen to bring to the German readership a possibility for a comparison, while showing them pathways for putting it into practice themselves. Following on from Viktor von Weizsäcker (1886-1957), the co-founder of anthropologic psychosomatics, Teirich’s intention was to write about the connections between music and patients and their illnesses. These connections were also important to König, as his article shows, even though some of the descriptions used by König in the article have now become obsolete.

### **Karl König’s Article on *Music Therapy in Curative Education***

König’s contribution comes in between reports on the healing effects of music by Joseph Schumacher and H.R.Teirich from Freiburg, Hendrik Giltay from The Hague, Hans A. Illing from Los Angeles, Cesar Bresgen from Salzburg, Berthold Stokvis from Leiden, and Harro Wendt from Leipzig, just to mention a few of the many names.

König opened his article with Séguin’s and Heller’s experiences with music for children with disabilities, showing the stimulating and uplifting effects of music. Yet König contests that these can already be considered therapeutic effects. Forms of application as described in American and English schools over the past decades were, according to König, still far removed from what true music therapy should be. König deemed it important for a developing music therapy to first analyse ‘music in its basic elements and then to research these archetypal elements as to their effect on the human being. When these steps have been accomplished, a general as well as a specific music therapy can be developed, for instance in the field of Curative Education.” (König, 1958).

#### *General music therapy in König’s article*

König viewed general music therapy to be the type of music with children as described by Séguin, while special music therapy occupied itself with certain forms of illness, such as deafness, paralysis, or psychotic states. In the lectures which Rudolf Steiner held for musicians and eurythmists in Stuttgart in 1923 he attempted to present the musical elements from a physiological and psychological standpoint and described how the experience of music had changed during human evolution. According to König the development of the child from the point of view of developmental psychology corresponds to the development of music over the centuries. The physiological understanding of music was mentioned when, quoting Steiner, König described the connection of

the experience of minor with the inhalation process and the experience of major with the exhalation process. From a psychological point of view, the extroverted person relates more to the experience of major and the introverted person more to the experience of minor. With respect to Goethe's theory of tone König described that the audible in the widest sense of the word is endless because sound works through the world in an all-encompassing fashion similar to light. Therefore it is, like light, one of the fundamental forces of nature and of the human being.

“Music therapy in the future will have to increasingly study the basic elements of what weaves through the world as sound, so that the effects of melody, rhythm and harmony may be understood. Any musical phenomenon, if it is not a single tone but manifests itself as music, consists of these three elements. (König, 1958.)

The entire human being, not just the ear, may be considered the receiver of sound. In the limbs man experiences and reacts directly to the elements of rhythm and beat. In the middle, the breathing-and circulatory organisation, the harmonic element is experienced, while melody is taken hold of in the neuro-sensory organism. Within the three-folding as demonstrated by Steiner from ever new points of view, the human being thus also becomes the expression of the three archetypal parts of what has been described as cosmic sound.

“When we realise that the power of willing belongs to the human limb-organisation, the element of feeling to the rhythmic organisation, and the element of thinking to the nerve-sense organisation, the result is a first basis for the application of melody, harmony and rhythm in music.” (König, 1958.)

#### *Specialized music therapy according to König*

König called his deliberations on three attempts a very first beginning in the field of specialized music therapy: “working out a musical form of medicine for illnesses from a specific cause” (König, 1958). These three attempts have been described in the subsequent sections of the article, where he discusses music therapy for severe contact disorders, music therapy for children with a paralysis, and music therapy for deaf and partially deaf children. It is significant to note how König went about finding a path from diagnosis to therapy: characteristic symptoms pointed to the appropriate music therapy.

#### **Music Therapy for severe contact disorders**

It has been observed in children with hyperactivity (ADHD) that some have a sharp and deepened inhalation while their exhalation is forced. Children with apathy, however, have superficial and diminished inhalation and exhalation. For the development of the group therapy it had to be considered, that the contact-disorders in children with schizophrenia lay in the sense experiences, while in children with post-encephalitis they were determined by motor activity. The latter was experienced by the first group from the breathing into the limb-system. In the second group the breathing process was led upwards into the region of the senses. The result achieved by the therapy was described by König as extremely helpful. (König, 1958).

### **Music therapy for children with a paralysis**

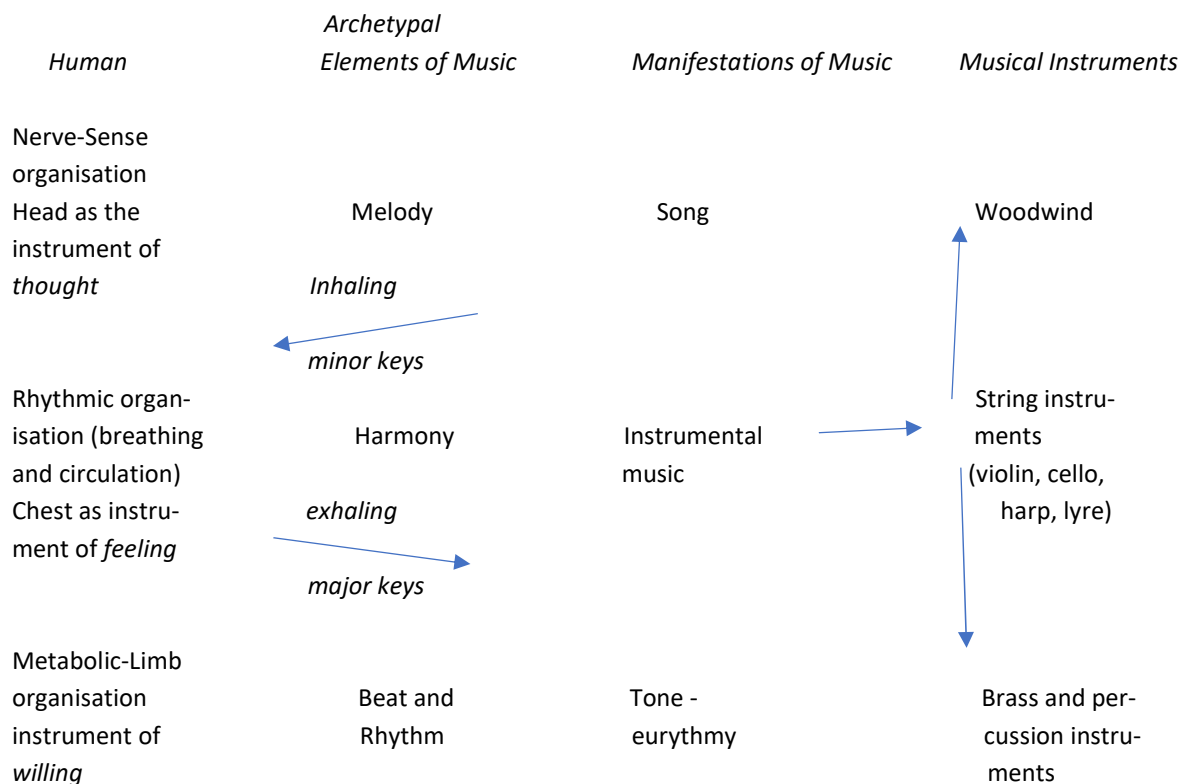
Already earlier on (in 1955) König had reported on the therapy with music and coloured shadows for children with cerebral palsy. He distinguished a link between motor disabilities and emotional disorders, which called for a more passive group-therapy. The aim was to bring the children into a state of complete relaxation, not only with the aim of relaxing the motor contractions but also the emotional sphere. To achieve this, the eye was to be diverted by moving coloured shadows in such a way that the music could link directly with the feeling sphere. The harmonizing of the soul thus achieved through the therapy would last for days and many children with a paralysis could find relief from their severe emotional disorders.

### **Music Therapy with children who are deaf or hard of hearing**

In the 50's, various children who were deaf or hard of hearing were admitted to Camphill, although they came with a different diagnosis. The fact that being hard of hearing influenced their behaviour was first discovered in Camphill. König was convinced that being hard of hearing was not so much an illness of the sense of hearing, but that the ability to listen had not been developed or trained. For this reason, a step-by-step approach to listening was begun with the children who were deaf and dumb. Starting from the acoustic method described by Goldstein (1939), work was taken up with the human voice and with the lyre. Every day single tones were sung into the children's ear in a darkened room. Later, single intervals were played to them on the lyre. Over time the children learned to concentrate on this new world of experience and thus gain experiences in listening which until then had been inaccessible to them. Other exercises were aimed at motor activity because a disturbance in the movement organization could be determined in children with damaged hearing. According to König the treatment for hearing problems had to address to the whole human being, as the deaf child is not just deaf but also extremely damaged in the entire human being. If the motor activity was affected, according to König, also all other activities out of initiative were either formed too much or too little and would disturb the development of the personality. Where listening had been learned, also the 'too much' or 'too little' limb activity could be balanced out.

"Only the world of sound can bring harmonisation". (König, 1958)

König rounded off the article on Music Therapy in Curative Education with a diagram, which he called a compass, and which was to serve those who "on their own initiative wish to enter the land of music therapy." (König, 1958). In picture form he presented here the connections of the human being with the archetypal musical elements, the manifestations of music, and the musical instruments.



### **The Reach of the Book *Musik in der Medizin* and the Article by Karl König**

Already in 1948, an anthology of Music and Medicine by Max Schoen had been published in the USA. After the publication, the consolidation of the schools and initiatives already in existence had come about there with the founding of the National Association for Music Therapy (NAMT) in 1950. After the publication of *Musik in der Medizin* (Teirich, 1958) two music therapy associations were founded in Europe, one in London and one in Vienna. Should this be traced back to Teirich's initiative? Alfred Schmölz did certainly trace the founding of the Austrian Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Musikheilkunde (Society for the Promotion of Healing through Music) in 1958 and the Ausbildungsganges für Musikheilkunde (Training for Healing through Music) in 1959 in Vienna to the initiative of the physician Teirich and his publication of *Musik in der Medizin*, as well as the similarly named symposium in Velden Kärnten in the year 1959 (Schwartz, 2004). Teirich also invited König to this symposium, who was unable to come.

Elena Fitzthum wrote in relation to the first pioneers of music therapy in Vienna, Edith Koffer-Ulrich, Alfred Schmölz, Ilse Castelliz, and other anthroposophists, that Rudolf Steiner had a considerable influence on the development of the music therapy in Vienna (Fitzthum, 2005). Mimi Scheiblauser, especially known for her work in rhythm, was also connected with the training in Vienna. She was familiar with König's article and studied anthroposophy (Brunner-Danuser, 1984).

In October 1958 König spoke about the therapy with coloured light in the Rudolf Steiner House in London, where Paul Nordoff heard his lectures. The therapy was also done in Sunfield, where Nordoff worked from 1959 to 1960 and had his first experiences with music therapy together with Clive Robbins. According to Kenneth Aigen (1980), König's lectures in London were a decisive factor in Nordoff's change from professional musician to music therapist.

In 1958 König gave various lectures with the title *Music and Musical Experience* for music therapists and eurythmists in Camphill. According to König himself, these lectures grew directly out of the impulse of his work on the article for Teirich. Music therapy conferences in Ireland, the Netherlands and Switzerland followed, which were increasingly devoted to the aspects of the living element in music, which was a theme close to König's heart. He himself was no longer able to attend all of these conferences, but he managed to win over a musicologist from Munich, Hermann Pfrogner (1911-1988), who, at the beginning of the 60's, worked together with the physician Hans Heinrich Engel (1921-1973) as well as music therapists and eurythmists on the foundations of a music therapy out of anthroposophy and developed from musical phenomena (Pfrogner, 1978, 1989). In doing this they mainly wanted to experience and understand how the different processes of what is living manifest in the musical elements, the tones, and the intervals (Engel, 1999, 2013).

Maria Schüppel (1923-2011), the founder and long-time leader of the Musiktherapeutische Arbeitsstätte (music therapy workshops) in Berlin, took part in a music therapy conference in Camphill Scotland with König at least once. In Berlin, in 1965, she heard Karl König's lectures on Curative Educational Diagnostics. The training founded by her stood out because of the consistent phenomenological research into the musical elements with the students. This was, as was mentioned in the beginning, also for König the most essential thing in music therapy.

## Conclusion

The books in which this article by König was published are now all out of print. In some more recent articles and dissertations the wish was expressed to hear more about anthroposophic music therapy (Intveen & Edwards, 2012). The research in the Karl König Archive was able to bring to light documents showing in how far König had also been occupied with the significance of the musical instruments or the relationship between hearing and movement. In some not yet published articles he described both these subjects in their connection with noise, sound, speech sound, and tone. König's documents on Music and Music therapy are being examined today and prepared for a book-publication of the Karl König Institute.

According to Ansdell and Paclicevic (2010), Goethean phenomenology as applied by König and Steiner, as well as Steiner's relationship to science may be considered basic conditions for important discoveries in the various alternative therapies today. They are of the opinion that Goethe was the godfather of contemporary qualitative research, on which he had put the stamp of *gentle empiricism*. It could, moreover, also be interesting to place König's perspectives alongside the research ideas of Fritz Hegi (Components of music, psychodynamic music therapy), or of Rosemarie Tüpker (Morphological music therapy, which also refers to Goethe).



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i Karl König must not be confused with Professor Karl König M.D., specialist in internal diseases and psychotherapeutic medicine at the Lou Andreas-Salomé Institute in Göttingen.

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ii In the Karl König Archive, Camphill, Scotland, letters, and writings by König have been kept which so far have not yet been sorted and published systematically but are in the process of being archived and were accessible to the author of this article.

### **Taking stock for the practice**

- Researching elements of music phenomenologically
- Internalizing the effects of music in such a way, that they can become part of the therapeutic context for the practice
- Understanding music in its inner relationship to what is alive, to vitality, and to the whole human being
- Discovering and working on further unpublished documents in relation to Anthroposophic music therapy

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