‘This book is a valuable contribution to the growing body of scientific literature that documents how fundamental music can be to our health and well-being. As such, it is an important text for conservatoire teachers and students who are alert to the most recent trends in higher music education, and who are keen to exercise their art to the benefit of society.’

Dr. Jeremy Cox, Chief Executive
Association Européenne des Conservatoires,
Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC),
Brussels

‘People living with advanced dementia frequently experience isolation and loneliness because they are perceived by others as being unable to communicate. While the Music Lasts shows us that, where we have the belief and commitment to reach people living with advanced dementia, communication is not only possible but it also reaches depths and tenderness that are extraordinary.’

Simon Morris, Chief Executive
Jewish Care, London

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book on the challenging topic ‘Music and Dementia’, describes recent research into the innovatory practice of ‘Music for Life’, a project managed by Wigmore Hall in London. Through engaging in music as a participatory process, its goal is to make the person behind the dementia visible again.
The book explores the interaction between music and dementia through the stories of people who have been working closely together: three musicians, eight women living with dementia, five caregivers, a staff development practitioner, a project coordinator and three scientific observers.

The result is a book in which all of them have participated in their own way. It consists of field observations, reflective journals, conversations, interviews and careful scientific analyses.

There is, in the words of Clifford Geertz, a ‘thick description’ of a new friendship between music and dementia, a story about a fascinating practice.

The project presented in this study opened up learning processes for the musicians involved, nurturing their professional lives and development. It changed their understanding of the place of music in people’s lives; it touched their personality and stimulated deep reflections about their identity.

The book is highly beneficial for any musician who wants to reach out into society, to engage with new, and perhaps vulnerable audiences. However, musicians are not the only target group. The discoveries of the study are also helpful and inspiring for caregivers of people with dementia and for families of a loved one living with dementia.

FOR WHOM?

This book, ‘While the Music Lasts - on Music and Dementia’, addresses the interests and concerns of the growing number of people engaged in some way with the challenge of dementia - musicians, music students, health care professionals, volunteers and family members. Its depth of insight and range of examples also helps to inform policy makers and qualitative researchers, as well as illuminate the changing role of the artist in health care settings.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Flautist, musicologist and music educationalist Rineke Smilde is Professor of Lifelong Learning in Music at Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen, the Netherlands, and Professor of Music Pedagogy at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna.

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