

***Basic anatomy and physiology for the music therapist***, Daniel J. Schneck, London and Philadelphia, Jessica Kingsley, 2015, 352 pp., £24.99 (paperback), ISBN 9781849057561

Daniel Schneck has written a comprehensive and informative book about fundamental anatomy and physiology for the music therapy profession. Although his experience and perspective is of an international consultant on basic physiological function, this book covers basic and advanced information for music therapists. Thus, it is a valuable resource for undergraduate music therapy students, graduate music therapists as well as educators in the field. In addition, Schneck provides extensive reference for the reader throughout.

Schneck has divided this book into two main parts: what is this thing called “me”, and how does “me” work? The book comprises 14 chapters as well as an opening preface which details the relationship between the human body and music. The medical model very much underlies the content of these chapters, where Schneck proposes that in order to provide music therapy, the therapist first needs to know what is “wrong”. The intervention which follows relies on duration of treatment, a particular dosage, and that therapy is administered under specific conditions. It is important to consider that not all music therapists adhere to this particular approach/model and that their focus may not be solely on the physiological effects of music.

Chapter One provides a general review of the human body and its levels of organisation to include atoms, cells, fluids, tissues and organs. Schneck compares the human body to a symphony orchestra in that it works as an integrated, functioning unit and “relies on the *collective* mission of all organ systems acting in concert” (p.53).

Chapters Two to Seven detail seven attributes of physiological function to include the alimentary system, the respiratory system and the circulatory system. With regard to the respiratory system, Schneck reports the human body is an instrument that is animated by the process of breathing, and that we are not unlike a wind instrument that “comes to life” when one breathes into it.

Chapters Eight to Thirteen outline bodily processes, including processing information, metabolism, consciousness, emotions and spirituality. The final chapter of this book explains how a music therapist may use an understanding of the human body in his/her practice. Schneck suggests that the key to effective music therapy is to first figure out what is “wrong” through assessment, clinical history, observation, and an investigation of a client’s anatomical and physiological status. Having identified the condition or presenting issues, Schneck advises that it is then time to “do something about it”. The latter involves accounting for the types of music that should be used (its historical period, its musical form, its musical style etc.), the dose (quantity, frequency, duration of therapy), and the elements of music (dynamics, timbre, tonic modes).

In this book, Schneck clearly articulates the anatomical and physiological structures of the human body in a comprehensive manner. He shares his perspectives about integrating musical and body foundations into music therapy at successive levels of depth without it being over-complicated for the reader who may not have prior knowledge of anatomy/physiology. I appreciated the links made throughout this book between body structures and musical instruments, and I feel that this would be a useful and relevant guide for both music therapy students and qualified music therapists.

### **Notes on Contributor**

**Jess O’Donoghue** qualified with a Master of Arts in Music Therapy from the University of Limerick and also holds a B.Sc. (Hons.) Speech and Language Therapy from the National University of Ireland, Galway. Jess has a broad range of clinical experience with children and adults with communication difficulties, mental health concerns, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and intellectual disability.

Additionally, she has worked as a guest lecturer and tutor on the Music Therapy Programme at the University of Limerick.