

# *Soundbite: Hospital Notes*

June 2010-Feb 2011



**Bath & North East  
Somerset Council**



**MUSICIA**

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# Evaluation Report for *Soundbite: Hospital Notes*

By Rosanna Campbell: Musician in Residence

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## Introduction

**Art at the Heart** is the charitably funded arts programme for the Royal United Hospital (RUH) NHS Trust Bath. Its mission is to deliver a programme of integrated arts projects for the comfort, health and well being of patients, staff and the wider hospital community.

The Soundbite programme is an initiative from **Art at the Heart** and involves lunchtime performances and interactive music workshops. **Soundbite: Hospital Notes** is a programme of high quality musical workshops for patients on one of the Older People's Unit (OPU), Combe Ward, planned and delivered by Musician in Residence, Rosanna Campbell.

Research has shown that taking part in musical activities can improve the health and well-being of older adults, particularly those who suffer from dementia. Music can be seen as a way of communicating feelings that people with dementia might otherwise have difficulty expressing. But above all music is a fun, social and rewarding activity. This report includes detailed information of the project and an evaluation of the impact of the programme on the well-being of older patients at the RUH.

**Soundbite: Hospital Notes** programme 2010-2011 was generously funded by Awards for All, part of the National Lottery.

## Summary of Evaluation

The evaluation mainly took the form of anecdotal evidence including observations, interviews with patients and staff as well as key findings from research. Below is a summary of the key points from the evaluation:

- Hospital Notes can benefit the well-being of older patients especially those with dementia.
- Regular interaction through music can have a lasting effect and can build relationships between staff and patients.
- Hospital Notes is highly accessible for all patients on the OPU, and is flexible so can be run as a group session or individual.
- ***The Soundbite: Hospital Notes*** Programme works in line with current research into music and gerontology as well as the National Dementia Strategy.
- The success of the programme means we can continue the programme in the long-term and can perhaps form collaborations with other art forms.



## Rosanna Campbell

In June 2010 Rosanna Campbell was appointed to co-ordinate the Soundbite programme. Rosanna is a young professional musician, recently graduated with a Music degree from Bath Spa University. Whilst at University Rosanna worked as voluntary Musician in Residence at the RUH, running interactive music workshops on one of the Older Peoples Units. (OPUs). From this she set up her own business, Musica, offering music workshops to older adults in care homes across Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire. Rosanna won the Bath Spa University Business Plan Competition and also the Ivita Social Enterprise Award with her unique business. Rosanna has written a dissertation about the therapeutic benefits of music for older adults and is about to commence studying a Masters in Music Psychology.



## **Soundbite: Hospital Notes**

***Soundbite: Hospital Notes*** was an 8 month project (June 2010-Feb 2011), designed to increase the well-being of older patients at the RUH. This project involved Musician in Residence Rosanna Campbell and Combe Ward, one of the four Older Peoples' Unit (OPU). Combe Ward cares for 28 patients aged 65 and over, many of whom have dementia. This unit contains some of the most vulnerable members of our community who often feel isolated and threatened by the hospital environment and this can lead to a loss in confidence, anxiety, stress, lack of communication and depression.

The project involved 18 interactive music workshops on Combe ward and reached over 400 patients over the age of 65 as well as staff and visitors. Each workshop lasted 1.5 hours and involved group sessions and one-to-one interaction. Initially the sessions were held in a communal area of the ward but it was noted that this excluded patients that were bed-ridden or too ill to leave their bay, and so the rest of the workshops were run on the bays.

Rosanna sang well-known songs with the patients and performed a variety of pieces on her clarinet; this led to a discussion of the memories the music brought back for the patients. The workshops were clearly enjoyed by patients, staff and visitors.

## Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation for the ***Soundbite: Hospital Notes*** Programme was based on anecdotal evidence comprising:

- Observation of all the workshops by a volunteer.
- Conversations with staff, patients and visitors.
- Review of feedback gathered by Rosanna.
- Contextual research

We were able to gain some evidence of enhancement of mood resulting from the workshops, however we were not able to gain evidence of reduction in pain, or need for medication. This is something that could be put into place for the next project which will hopefully run for a year, giving more scope for a longer-term study.



## Impact on the Patients

### Patients with Dementia

Academic research has shown that taking part in musical activities can benefit older adults suffering from Dementia as it can improve communication and memory, and in some cases can even delay the effects of dementia.

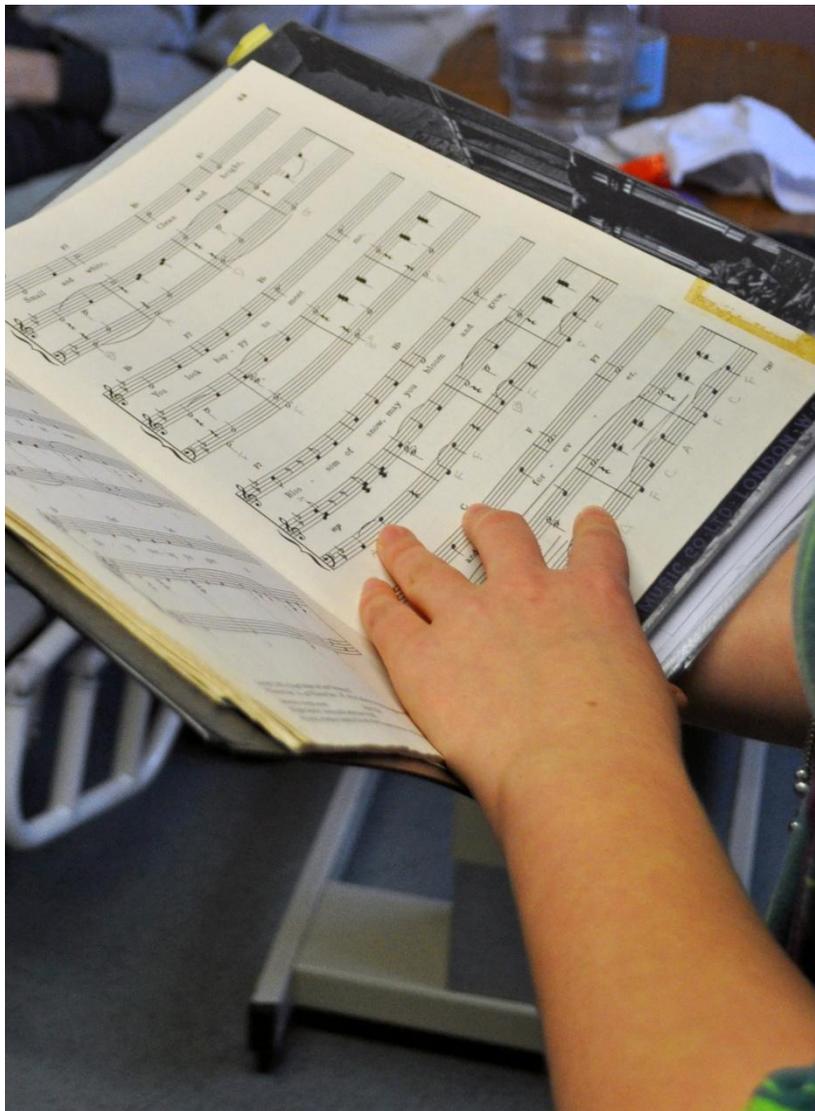
Terrence Hayes and Victor Minichiello in their study 'The Meaning of Music in the Lives of Older People' found that participating in musical activities can improve the quality of life of older people who suffer from dementia:

'music therapy can be an effective intervention for maintaining and improving emotional and cognitive skills and decreasing behavioural problems of individuals with dementia. For example music activities with Alzheimer patients have been found to facilitate interaction and social interaction.' (Hays and Minichiello 2005: 438).

From observations taken during the **Soundbite: Hospital Notes** Project, it was discovered that patients with severe dementia used music as a means of communicating and Rosanna included those patients by giving them musical instruments to use as a way of communicating their feelings. Without needing to communicate through words, music was used as a tool for social interaction with patients with dementia.

## Case Study

*“We arrived on the bay and there was a female patient at the end of the bay screaming. We started the workshop at the other end of the ward and near the end of the session decided we would sing a song with this patient to see how it went. To our amazement the woman stopped screaming and had a huge smile on her face. It was very clear that the music had a positive effect on this patient and encouraged social interaction between the patient and staff.”*



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## Memory

Research shows that music can trigger long-lost memories:

‘Caregivers have observed for decades that Alzheimer’s patients can still remember and sing songs long after they’ve stopped recognizing names and faces. Many hospitals and nursing homes use music as recreation, since it brings patients pleasure. But beyond the entertainment value, there’s growing evidence that listening to music can also help stimulate seemingly lost memories and even help restore some cognitive function.’ (Carl 2009).

It is clear from the Hospital Notes Project that music can bring back memories for the patients; and generally this lead to a reminiscence discussion with Rosanna. It was very interesting to see how music affected each patient in a different way and made them remember different aspects of their lives.

Below are observations taken during one of the sessions:

*“The music brought back a lot of memories for the patient. In particular it made her think of her father who was musical”.*

*“The music encouraged the patient to talk about her singing interest”.*

*“One lady was just groaning, and then burst into tears at ‘Don’t Sit Under the Apple Tree”.*

## Communication and Social Interaction

For adults with dementia, music can be seen as a way of expressing emotions that they might otherwise have difficulty communicating. Bunt and Hoskyns state that:

“Those with dementia are often confused and express themselves in disconnected regressed speech. Verbal elements, as in ordinary fluent speech and language, are often missing. So music can be an alternative means of expression and communication because a combination of music and sound often improvised, provides a more accessible mode of communication for this population”.

Music can be an excellent form of promoting social interaction and this was evident during the ***Soundbite: Hospital Notes*** Project. Patients welcomed the interaction of having a musician on the ward, and enjoyed discussing their varied musical tastes with Rosanna. After listening to the performance, some of the patients would start chatting to each other and would continue after Rosanna had left. Social interaction can reduce boredom which is a main problem for patients whilst staying in hospital. Interaction with others can also reduce aggression and falls, therefore reducing the need for one to one nursing.

### Case Study

One male patient came into the session accompanied by a nurse as the patient had a tendency to wander and fall. He joined in with the session and towards the end after playing percussion and joining in with the songs, began to reminisce about when he sang as a child. It was noted that he sat calmly for hours after the workshop.

## Testimonials

*“The current environment lacked any stimulation for the wide range of patients we care for. Live music on an acute geriatric ward has been a revelation. Many of the patients have dementia and the positive effect of music is clearly observable. Not only does it alter the ambience of the ward but also can trigger long lost memories for patients. Watching the smiles appear on patients, staff and relatives faces is wonderful to see. Wednesdays are now looked forward to by everyone on the ward.”*  
Jonathan Willis. Ward Manager Combe Ward.

*“We love to hear your songs” – Patient.*

*“It makes a nice change” – Patient.*

*“It makes us feel younger” – Patient.*

*“I think it is an excellent workshop for patients to get involved. It helps to engage patients especially those who can get bored easily. It is great that they can interact and can listen to musical instruments being played. I sat with a confused patient who really enjoyed participating and helped trigger his memory.” – Nurse.*



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## References

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