

The Beginnings of Music Therapy in Costa Rica

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The purpose of this paper was to give a descriptive account of the development of the profession of music therapy in Costa Rica. Currently, there are only three professional music therapists in Costa Rica and only two of those individuals are actually working in the profession. One of those music therapists is the Academic Coordinator of the Music School of Pérez, Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica Zeledón and the other music therapist and a music educator are working in a music education/therapy capacity in the National Children's Hospital in San Jose, the capitol city of the country. In addition, Dr. Guillermo Rosabal-Coto, the Chair of Music Education at the University of Costa Rica has created a new focus of the music education program at the University called the "observatory of formal and informal learning," that includes plans to use music in healthcare settings throughout the country and eventually to create a music therapy program at The University of Costa Rica. Many of the challenges encountered by these brave pioneers in creating the profession of music therapy in their country, however, seem somewhat reminiscent of the growth processes encountered by the innovators of music therapy in the United States. The author of this paper was invited to give a three-day workshop about the use of music with developmentally disabled children at The University of Costa Rica in 2010 and was honored to interview each of these individuals and receive first hand accounts of their valiant efforts at creating the profession of music therapy in Costa Rica.