

What is Music-Thanatology?

Music-thanatology is a professional field within the broader medical subspecialty of palliative care. It is a musical/clinical modality that unites music and medicine in end of life care. The music-thanatologist utilizes harp and voice at the bedside to lovingly serve the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the dying and their loved ones with prescriptive music.

Prescriptive music is live music that responds to the physiological needs of the patient moment by moment. For example, by observing vital signs such as heart rate, respiration and temperature, the music-thanatologist provides music that is tailored to each specific situation. The warmth of this living music can bring solace, dignity and grace to those nearing the ultimate journey at the end of life.

A music-thanatology vigil can help ease physical symptoms such as pain, restlessness, agitation, sleeplessness and labored breathing. It offers an atmosphere of serenity and comfort that can be profoundly soothing for those present. Difficult emotions such as anger, fear, sadness and grief can be lessened as listeners rest into a musical presence of beauty, intimacy and compassion. The music-thanatology vigil is not intended to entertain or distract the patient, but instead allows the patient to enter into the unbinding process of letting go in his or her own very personal way. It affords families a chance to be with their loved one in a very intimate yet safe atmosphere where words are not necessary and the words that are said can come from a deep place, aided by the music.

Since antiquity, music and medicine have a long tradition as allies in healing. Music-thanatology is a contemporary field rooted in that same tradition. It has developed over the past three decades through the foundational work of Therese Schroeder-Sheker. Today there are music-thanatologists practicing throughout the United States and in several other countries around the world.

As medical technology becomes more advanced, it is recognized that some suffering eludes even the most sophisticated medical treatment. Many physicians and caregivers welcome music-thanatology vigils as an integral form of care that offers an opportunity for relieving suffering and providing comfort.

The Music-Thanatology Training

Program Components:

- Registration and tuition for Music-Thanatology Training through Lane Community College in Eugene, OR. This is a non-credit program.
- Over 600 total contact hours
- Didactic sessions one weekend per month from January 2010 through November 2011. These will be held in the Portland, OR area.
- Assignments related to monthly didactic sessions.
- Independent study materials, including books, videos, tapes, handouts, etc.
- Clinical Internship in a hospital / hospice includes working over 300 one-on-one hours alongside a MTAI certified music-thanatology mentor.
- Clinical Discussion one Sunday per month from January through November 2010-2011. This will take place on the same weekends as the didactic sessions.
- Schola Cantorum (Singing School) during monthly didactic weekends.
- Harp and voice lessons with an MTAI certified music-thanatologist or approved teacher throughout the program. These lessons are paid for by the student in addition to the tuition and course/material fees.
- Purchase or rental of an approved harp for the entire length of the program.
- Opportunity to participate in a yearly concert series.

Program Prerequisites

- Demonstration of proficiency on an instrument, preferably harp. This may be done by submitting an audio example with your application (i.e. CD, tape or video).
- Basic understanding of music theory, including reading and notating music.

Applicants meeting all program requirements will be invited to attend a two-day, on-site, interview process September 26-27 2009 in Portland, OR. Music proficiency and theory skills will be further assessed at this time. Successful applicants will receive written notice of acceptance into the program.

Application for Music-Thanatology Training

The next two-year Music-Thanatology Training through Lane Community College begins January 2010. Application deadline is August 28, 2009. Applicants meeting all program requirements will be invited to attend a two-day, on-site, interview process September 26-27 2009 in Portland, OR. Music proficiency and theory skills will be further assessed at this time. Successful applicants will receive written notice of acceptance into the program. Please send the following Application Materials in one envelope to:

LCC Music-Thanatology Training
c/o 128 NE 43rd Ave
Portland, OR 97213

APPLICATION MATERIALS

1. employment resume
2. educational curriculum vitae
3. copy of college transcripts (does NOT need to be an official copy)
4. three letters of reference: two professional (on letterhead), one personal
5. demonstration of proficiency on an instrument
6. personal statement
7. music questionnaire
8. non-refundable application fee of \$50.00, payable to: Jane Franz

Personal statement:

Please write briefly about the following, using no more than five typed pages total. There are no "correct" answers; we are seeking to understand the unique perspectives and experiences that you would bring to the bedside of the dying.

1. What calls you to music-thanatology?
2. Describe your work history. What have you loved in your work? What have you found to be the most difficult and challenging?
3. What personal and/or professional experiences of death and dying have you had?
4. Describe your relationship with music. Summarize your musical journey throughout your life. Please speak specifically about your experience with voice and harp.
5. Music-thanatologists serve the needs of the dying with prescriptive music. What does service mean to you?
6. How do you renew yourself spiritually and emotionally? Describe any contemplative, meditative, or spiritual practices that are a part of your life.

Music Questionnaire

Do you currently own or rent a harp?

Levered Pedal Make and model _____

Number and type of strings _____

Range of strings (lowest and highest pitch) _____

(Second harp) _____

Have you had private harp lessons? ____ How long? _____

Teacher (name & contact information) _____

Are you a professional harpist? _____ Do you perform publicly? _____

Type(s) of music you perform _____

Please describe your ability to play harp, read music, improvise, and/or compose music.

Do you play other instruments?

What is your primary instrument? _____

Have you had formal training? _____

What are your strengths and weaknesses? _____

Do you conduct? _____ do harmonic analysis? _____

What is your vocal range: soprano, alto, tenor, bass? _____

Have you studied voice? _____ Describe your vocal ability _____

Do you sing on pitch? _____

Describe how, when and why you sing _____

Have you studied music theory? _____

What are your strengths and weaknesses? _____
