

# Hungary

**Eszter Forgacs, MA**

(psychology and music therapy)

Gezenguz Early Intervention Center

Kispest Out Patient Child Mental Health Center Budapest, Hungary

## Snapshot

### Area

93,030 square kilometers

Hungary lies in the Carpathian basin surrounded by Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania and the countries of former Yugoslavia.

### Population

9,976,062 (July 2011 est.)

### Official Language

Hungarian

### Ethnic Groups

Hungarian 92.3%; Roma (Gipsy) 6-8%

### Median Age

40.2 years

### Children under 5

0-14 years: 14.9% (male 767,824/  
female 721,242)

### Source

Népmozgalom, 2010. Január–  
Augusztus

<http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/xftp/gyor/nep/nep21008.pdf>

The World Factbook

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>



**"To see like a child means to see the world in itself, the most simple thing as a unique phenomenon in its wholeness. It means experiencing the world the way art represents it."**

**–Ferenc Mérei**

## Demographics

In Hungary, there are about ninety music therapists who graduated from Hungarian music therapy courses or received their degrees from another country.

## Background Information

Due to the efforts of early pioneers in the mid 1970's, music therapy is now a more established field in Hungary, though it still strives for broader recognition. The establishment of two post-graduate music therapy courses in the 1990's was an important milestone in the development of music therapy in Hungary.

Due to the fact that music therapy is not a state-registered profession and courses are only offered on a post-graduate level, most professional music therapists build their music therapy practice on their original qualification such as teaching, special education, or psychology.

Most music therapists work part time or on a contract basis in hospitals, early intervention centers, child development centers, nursery schools, children shelters, or day care centers as members of multidisciplinary teams. Music therapists often integrate music therapy into their special needs practices or psychotherapy work. At present, there are no qualified music

therapists who have a private practice based solely on music therapy.

Two collaborating professional bodies represent music therapists in Hungary, the *Hungarian Music Therapy Association* and the *Hungarian Arts Therapies Society*. Both currently strive towards the development of an official register.

## Common Approaches

Music therapy in Hungary is based on the European traditions and has strong developmental and/or psychoanalytical foundations. Music therapists utilize active, improvisational music-making and receptive music therapy techniques as well as combinations of music with movement, artwork, and drama. As psychologists tend to master several psychotherapeutic methods, musical psychodrama and musical drama therapy groups are also offered – even for children as young as five.

Amongst the first pioneers using music with young children to encourage self-expression was Klára Kokas, whose special music and dance and movement program is now also applied by music therapists to enhance children's self awareness, creativity and emotional expression.

With children under the age of five, music therapy is practiced in a variety of

settings for prevention and rehabilitation in both the community and special institutions. Although music therapy techniques vary, therapists focus on the therapeutic relationship and improvisational music making, and use a balance of structure and free play depending on the therapeutic goals. Individual and group work are both common, and some music therapists also work with families. Parents are encouraged to take part in the therapy process of very young children.

The most common settings for music therapists with this age group are early intervention centers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for children with disabilities. In these settings, music therapy is used for multiple purposes within the multidisciplinary team: Assessment, communication and language development, motor development, improving social skills, enhancing self expression, and supporting the relationship between child and caretaker among others. The role of the music therapist, however, varies from institute to institute.

As special needs teaching and physiotherapy have strong and long traditions in Hungary, these practices greatly influence the work of some music therapists and the equipment they use besides instruments. Therapists often collaborate with other professionals and conduct multidisciplinary groups for children and their caretakers. For example, a therapist may combine sensory processing models and a focus on the parent-child relationship.

Music therapists lead groups in the community for parents and toddlers which support children's development and foster parent-child relationships. Groups for pregnant women are provided with a focus on relevant mental health issues. Music therapists who work with children with emotional issues often conceptualize their work within the frameworks of psychodynamic, humanistic, and attachment theory, combining music therapy and play therapy.

## Prominent Publications

- Buzási, N. (2003). *Írások a zenterápiáról [Selected writings about music therapy]*. Pécs: PTE Művészeti Kara.
- Hadházi, J. (2005). Zeneterápia és konduktív pedagógia kapcsolata egy halmozottan sérült gyermek bemutatásával [The relation between music therapy and conductive pedagogy presented through the case of a child with multiple learning disabilities]. In Kardos Erzsébet (Ed.), *Lindenbergné Kardos Erzsébet (Ed.), Zeneterápia: Válogatott írások a művészetterápia köréből, a tudomány és a média világából*, pp. 22-36. Budapest, Kulcs a Muzsikához Kiadó.
- Kokas, K. (1992). *A zene felemeli a kezeimet [Music lifts up my hands]*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Konta, I. M. (2005). *Zene-képzőművészet-mozgásterápia elemek [Combining music therapy, arts and movement]*. In Kardos Erzsébet Lindenbergné (Ed.), *Zeneterápia: Válogatott írások a művészetterápia köréből, a tudomány és a média világából*, pp. 42-64. Budapest: Kulcs a Muzsikához Kiadó.
- Konta, I., & Zsolnai, A. (2002). *A szociális készségek játékos fejlesztése az iskolában. [The playful development of social skills at the school]*. Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó.
- Madarász né Losonczy, K., & Urbán né Varga, K. (1996). *Zene és terápia [Music and therapy]*. Budapest: ELTE Bárczi G. Gyógyeped.
- Sáry, L. (1994). *Kreatív zenei gyakorlatok [Creative musical experience]*. Budapest: Jelenkor.
- Ubán né Varga, K. (1999). *Nyíl ki, nyúj ki bokrostul, zöld levelestül...: A belső bezártságból az alkalmazkodás felé a zeneterápia segítségével [From inner closeness towards adaptive behavior with the help of music therapy: A case of a child with autism]*. In Süss fel nap Ed, *Fűzfa Balázs, Pilisborosjenő, Pedagógus-továbbképzési módszertani és információs központ.*

## About the Author



Eszter Forgacs, MA (psychology and music therapy) has worked as a music therapist in the United Kingdom and in Hungary. She is currently working as a music therapist, psychologist and child psychodramatist in the Gezenguz Early Intervention Center for Children with Birth Injuries, and in the Kispest Out Patient Child Mental Health Center in Budapest. She works with children of all ages and their families, conducts individual and group music and/or play therapy sessions, music therapy sessions with families and musical child-psychodrama groups. Her clinical practice also involves parent counseling.

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