

Programming live classical music concerts in elderly homes

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I. Research question

What are the factors that determine an optimal live (classical music) concert programme in elderly homes?

This question breaks down into two areas of research:

- 1- The elderly (age 75 and above) as a distinct and separate category of audience (how are they similar or different from others) and within-group differences (e.g. normal to heavy sufferers of dementia/alzheimers).
 - 2- Programming of concert music: guidelines, criteria for the selection and ordering of music, optimal length of the concert, optimal length of each piece, whether and how to talk between pieces, communication with the audience, etc.
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II. Literature review

Desk research (see references at the end) gave the following findings on music preferences of the elderly and positive effects of music (copied nearly verbatim from the researched articles)

- Passive involvement (listening to music) was preferred over active participation
- Live music increases the level of engagement and well-being of those with dementia
- Live music by trained musicians is more accessible and easily implementable than music therapy
- Music can unlock memories when recollections appear locked away, temporarily helping to reconnect people suffering from dementia while the music is playing
- The calming effect of music makes it an effective tool for reducing agitation, increasing attention span, and even decreasing disruptive behaviors
- Music facilitates communication in residents whose speaking ability is limited by dementias or verbal aphasia
- Music elicits responses from beyond the physiological, into the psychological and spiritual realm. It may be that music taps into a different part of the brain
- Music is used for pain management
- Elderly persons prefer popular music from their early adult years rather than popular music beyond young adulthood
- Slow and moderate tempos were preferred to fast tempos to a significant degree by elderly persons
- Patients receiving live music were significantly more likely to report an increase in vigor as well as decreased tension and anxiety than those individuals receiving taped music
- Music provided the participants with ways of knowing, understanding emotions, self, others, and expressing their spirituality
- Many older people use music as a way of measuring and maintaining their sense of well-being. Music contributed to their daily physical and psychological health and informants cited examples of how music can provide them with hope for everyday living

Nothing was mentioned about how to program live concerts in elderly homes, however.

For the rest of the report, please contact Anne Ku via http://www.anneku.com/contact.htm
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