

**SPECIAL ISSUE**

Guided Imagery and Music: Contemporary European perspectives and developments

## Article

## ‘New Blood’: A contemporary GIM programme

Svein Fuglestad

**ABSTRACT**

This article is a presentation of a new contemporary Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) program based on orchestral re-recordings of various tracks by the English pop and rock musician Peter Gabriel. The intention is to share with the GIM community the author’s own experiences and perspectives using this music from the popular music genre with individual clients. The different pieces in the music programme are presented and described using the MIA intensity profile, Hevner’s Mood Wheel and the taxonomy of music. Whether the use of non-classical music is consistent with the individual form of the Bonny Method of GIM will be discussed, together with the potential advantages of repetitions and recognitions due to simplicity in structure, form and harmonies in building safety for clients within a therapeutic setting.

**KEYWORDS**

Guided Imagery and Music, new GIM programme, non-classical music in GIM, receptive music therapy, music and imagery, Peter Gabriel

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**INTRODUCTION**

This practice-based article is a presentation of a new contemporary Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) programme based on orchestral re-recordings of various tracks by the English pop and rock musician Peter Gabriel. The music in this programme is set for full orchestra, arranged by John Metcalfe, and internationally released in 2011 on the double album *New Blood* (Real World Records).

Based on my own experiences of using this

music in GIM sessions with clients, I want to share my perspectives from this work with the GIM community. Could this new programme be a possible addition to the existing and continuously growing pool of new music programmes within the field of GIM practice? From my perspective, it is also relevant to ask: can new music genres also used in individual therapeutic settings be beneficial to some clients – not as a substitute for the classical core Bonny programmes, but as a supplement – and can it also be a way of broadening the perspectives of GIM therapists.

## THE USE OF NON-CLASSICAL MUSIC IN GIM

In the history of GIM it has been a recurring issue whether the use of non-classical music “(e.g. new age, popular jazz, music for movies, folk or indigenous music) is appropriate for individual and group work” (Bruscia 2002: 307). Before presenting this new programme, I will therefore consider the question whether the use of music from the popular music context can be consistent with the Bonny Method of GIM.

The GIM programmes Helen Bonny developed specifically for individual work contain only music from the Western classical tradition, and in her writings and speeches she argued continuously for its advantages over other musical styles (Bruscia 2002: 307-308). The reason Bonny gave for this was that:

“Classical selections are able to provide depth of experience, variety of color and form, harmonic and melodic complexity which are qualities needed for self-exploration. [...] Popular music, on the other hand, is more peripheral, simpler in form, and less intrusive. Therefore, popular music of the appropriate kind (usually instrumental) may serve well in group sessions” (Bonny 2002: 150).

On the other hand, in different Music and Imagery formats a wide range of different types and genres of music are used (Fugle 2015, Grocke & Wigram 2007, Noer 2015, Wärja 2015). In several adaptations and modifications of the GIM method, with KMR (Korta Musik Resor/Short Music Journeys) as a relevant example, short pieces of music both from a classical and a non-classical tradition are used in group and individual formats with good therapeutic outcomes for the clients (Wärja 2015). According to Bruscia, therefore, “only classical music is considered indigenous to the individual form of the Bonny Method, while the use of classical and/or non-classical music is considered more characteristic of Bonny’s group form and adaptations thereof” (Bruscia 2002: 307-308).

Despite this, a couple of GIM programmes based on other musical genres like contemporary jazz and new-age inspired music have been developed during the last decade for individual therapeutic work. The programmes *Awakenings* and *Earth Spirit* are now used by GIM therapists as an addition to the classical GIM repertoire, and they seem to be beneficial to clients within a therapeutic process (Hall 2015, Leslie 2015). The *Awakenings* programme was included in the Norwegian

research project *Music, Motion and Emotion*; this was used with ten different participants and worked very well in a context together with programmes based on classical music (Aksnes & Fuglestad 2012).

Grocke and Moe (2015) have gathered the range of adaptations and modifications currently used in Music and Imagery and in GIM as practised by qualified practitioners, and made a table to depict the differences. The way these contemporary non-classical music-based programmes are used in individual therapeutic settings correspond in all the different variables to the Bonny Method of GIM (individual therapy). In this table, Grocke and Moe (2015: 25) describe the music used in BMGIM as “predominantly classical, or other structured form”. They are not excluding the use of structured non-classical music within this method.

Whether programmes based on non-classical music should be considered as new BMGIM programmes, (or categorised as adaptations or developments of other Music and Imagery formats), can certainly be a topic for further discussion. In a broader definition of GIM by Bruscia (2015), it would appear that he also includes the use of non-classical music within a GIM setting:

“Guided imagery and music (GIM) is a generic term for all forms of imaging to music in an expanded state of consciousness, including not only the specific individual and group forms that Helen Bonny developed, but also all variations and modifications on those forms created by her followers” (Bruscia 2015: 1).

The motivation to explore and possibly expand the potential of the GIM method by including new music genres is also encouraged by Helen Bonny herself. The creator of the *Awakenings* programme, Ian Leslie (2015), received a personal email from Helen Bonny as feedback to the CD Leslie sent her with the contemporary jazz programme: “I like your CD; selections well chosen. [...] Congratulations! I’m glad you are pursuing the creative area for GIM” (Leslie 2015: 311-312). To pursue the creative area – both for GIM and in my development as a therapist – has been part of my intention for creating the *New Blood* programme. Another aim has been to continuously strive to search for music that might help the clients to get access to their own inner sources for development and self-healing.

An inspiration for my work as a GIM therapist can be found in the description of this music-

centred receptive method given by AMI (Association for Music & Imagery). The aim is to “stimulate and sustain a dynamic unfolding of inner experiences in support of physical, psychological, and spiritual wholeness” (Clark & Keiser Mardis 1992: no pagination). The theoretical basis for my work is rooted in humanistic ideas (Ruud 2010), where one approach is that the human can be understood as *homo communicans*; able to give and share thoughts, experiences, and actions. “Such a sharing allows for recognition and partaking in one another’s life at an existential level” (Trondalen 2009-2010: 2). A part of this approach is the self-understanding and the client’s own lived experience that continues to develop throughout the therapeutic process (Heiderscheidt 2015; Schneider, Bugental & Pierson 2002).

In GIM the music itself is a part of this process as a relational agent (Blom 2011, 2014). The musical elements are metaphorically serving as relational ingredients with transformational potential. The triangle of music – therapist – client (the therapeutic relationship) is the interpersonal framework of this process (Blom 2011, 2014; Bonde in press), where being together in time in the ‘here-and-now mode’ – together with the music – is necessary to establish this kind of intersubjective relationship (Trondalen 2016).

## THE INTENTION OF THE NEW BLOOD PROGRAMME

In addition to expanding the creative area and broaden my own perspective as a therapist, the intention of the *New Blood* programme corresponds with the definition of the term ‘new blood’ found in several dictionaries; to provide renewed force, strength, revival, new ideas and new energy to the traveller. The composer Peter Gabriel relates to his own metaphoric-title of his CD in this way:

“We wanted to pump new blood into this old material. [...] We were trying to explore things to see if we could do it differently. There are places on this record where you hear something that you won’t have heard before. And that’s always exciting to me. So we chose songs that were more textural, more evocative, ambient pieces” (<http://petergabriel.com/release/new-blood/>).

The orchestral arrangements are at times quite massive, or ‘fat’, as the intentions of these new arrangements are described by Peter Gabriel (2011). He wanted to work outside traditional rock arrangements and instrumentation, be bold and

innovative, and to work with dynamics and extremes where it was possible. He concludes: “In essence, still and stark at one point, fat, fleshy and emotional at another” (Gabriel 2011).

Although the music contains both clear contrasts, delicate nuances, drama and depths, it is less complex than most orchestral music used in the traditional GIM repertoire when it comes to musical form and harmony. The different themes and parts of the songs are being repeated various times, often without much musical development or change. There are clear parallels to this in older classical musical forms from the Baroque period (1600-1750) like rondo form, ABA form, the canon and the chaconne. This possible intuitive recognition due to simplicity, structure, form and harmonies both from popular music and Baroque style music, might give the (Western) client a safer environment for travelling. The advantages of repetitions and recognitions within a therapeutic setting are also made clear by Helen Bonny herself:

“The Western ear, for example, revels in the repetition of melodic phrases, especially if each is slightly altered by repetition on different instruments ... [...] The appearance of these expected phrases represents security, a return to the familiar. The harmonic progression, I-IV-V (and occasional II and VI chord) is so basic to our listening responses that much popular music is based on these simple patterns of chords. It is my impression that music listening affects deeper layers of human consciousness where primary process thinking and reacting occur. These deeper personal areas are moved less by words than by emotional feelings and concepts, and by the established musical forms which have been culturally reinforced through the centuries” (Bonny 1978/2002: 306).

As GIM therapists we strive to give the traveller a safe and stable base for exploring and processing during the sessions. Bonny here shows how the expected melodic and harmonic development in the music can be one way of creating security and be a “return to the familiar” (Bonny 1978/2002: 306). Another well-known approach is to afford “secure and holding music” (Wärja & Bonde 2014: 19) to the client, meaning music described as music with no major musical surprises, steady rhythm, clear and predictable melody and harmonic progression (Wärja & Bonde 2014). An extended use of repeated music listening can also be quite beneficial (Summer 2009), and to use music with repetitive forms and harmonies within the music itself can be another way of establishing this kind of

holding environment for the client.<sup>1</sup>

The *New Blood* programme is based on contemporary popular music 'of our time'. The 'familiarity' concerning structure, form and harmonies could possibly help build a safe field for the client and help him/her to trust the music and let go – because 'the Western ear' intuitively 'knows how the song goes'. This music might also give associations to music made for films and movies, but Gabriel clarifies the difference from his own perspective in a very direct way:

"We didn't want the typical film score approach of whacking you over the head with hyped-up mixes, and scraping your ears out with the string collection, we wanted a more retro approach, with enough space to allow the instruments to have their natural voice and colour. I also wanted a bass big enough to drive the bottom end that I didn't often hear in conventional classical mixes. I hope you enjoy it as much as we did making it" (Gabriel 2011).

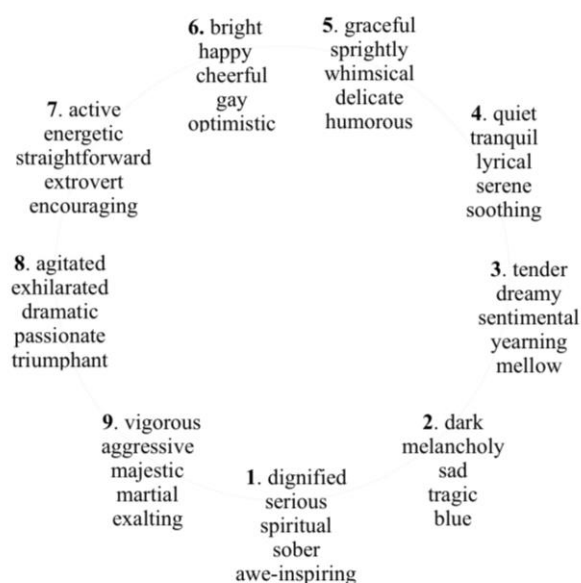
A "retro approach" (Gabriel 2011: no pagination) can within our context give associations to the classical GIM repertoire from the core recordings selected by Helen Bonny (Bonny 1978/2002). Music that allows "enough space for the instruments to have their natural voice and colour" (Gabriel 2011: no pagination) can also be relevant metaphors for clients travelling to this music.

### Categorising the music in the *New Blood* programme

To get a deeper understanding of the therapeutic potential and affordances that lies in the different pieces in the *New Blood* programme, I have categorised the pieces using the Mood Wheel developed by Kate Hevner (Hevner 1937). This is a systematic model of emotions, or rather moods, that can be expressed in music in a way that a listener can recognise it. "The mood wheel is used as a tool to classify emotional expressions of musical selections in GIM, where it is useful to match the mood of the client in the first music sequence of a session" (Wigram, Pedersen & Bonde 2002: 60).

<sup>1</sup> A case experience on the use of repetitive music in sessions was presented by the author of this text in the paper 'Insistence on truth. Excerpts from the opera Satyagraha by Philip Glass used in processing traumatic childhood experiences' at the 11th European GIM Conference, Berlin 2014.

In this context it has been more suitable to use the revised version of the Mood Wheel (Figure 1) developed by Bonde (1997), where "category 7 is an addition that allows the inclusion of forms in popular music" (Wigram, Pedersen & Bonde 2002: 59). Each of the nine different categories are represented in the *New Blood* programme, which offers the traveller a whole spectrum of different moods.



**Figure 1: Hevner's Mood Wheel (revised version). Category 7 is an addition that allows the inclusion of forms of popular music (Bonde 1997; Wigram, Pedersen & Bonde 2002: 59)<sup>2</sup>**

I have also used the taxonomy of music developed to classify music used in therapeutic music and imagery work (Wärja & Bonde 2014) in order to categorise the different music selections in the *New Blood* programme. The authors Wärja and Bonde (2014) write:

"[...] there is no general consensus on how the music can be classified according to the therapeutic needs and stamina of the client/patient. The authors have independently worked with the classification issue as related to the musical repertoire of GIM and to various client groups" (Wärja & Bonde 2014: 16).

As a result of this work Wärja and Bonde are presenting a matrix with three main categories: 1) *Supportive music* 2) *Mixed supportive-challenging music* 3) *Challenging music*, with three

<sup>2</sup> The Figure is remade for this article with permission from Lars Ole Bonde.

subcategories where the level of intensity is gradually increasing within each of these main categories (Wärja & Bonde 2014: 16). The music pieces in the *New Blood* programme are all placed in either the least complex category *Supportive music* or in the category *Mixed supportive-challenging music*, which also makes the programme suitable for less experienced travellers.

## A PRESENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The double CD *New Blood* contains 28 tracks; all songs by Peter Gabriel in full orchestral arrangements. The 14 songs on the first CD have vocals by Peter Gabriel, Melanie Gabriel – Peter's daughter – and the Norwegian singer Ane Brun. The second CD contains instrumental versions of the same tracks, and these are the pieces I have used in the *New Blood* GIM programme.

Over the last four years, since I started using this music from the *New Blood* CD in GIM sessions, I have tried several different combinations, taking songs in and out of the programme and making intuitive music choices during sessions with clients. When it came to creating a full music programme, I ended up with these seven pieces:

### *New Blood* programme

- # 1: ***Mercy Street*** (Instrumental) 6:00  
Peter Gabriel: *New Blood* (Special Edition 2011 – original track # 21)
- # 2: ***Red Rain*** (Instrumental) 5:16  
Peter Gabriel: *New Blood* (Special Edition 2011 - original track # 22)
- # 3: ***Darkness*** (Instrumental) 6:11  
Peter Gabriel: *New Blood* (Special Edition 2011 - original track # 23)
- # 4: ***The Nest that Sailed the Sky*** (Instrumental) 3:54  
Peter Gabriel: *New Blood* (Special Edition 2011 - original track # 26)
- # 5: ***Don't Give Up*** (Instrumental) 6:40  
Peter Gabriel: *New Blood* (Special Edition 2011 - original track # 24)
- # 6: ***Downside Up*** (Instrumental) 3:52  
Peter Gabriel: *New Blood* (Special Edition 2011 - original track # 16)
- # 7: ***Wallflower*** (Instrumental) 6:25  
Peter Gabriel: *New Blood* (Special Edition 2011 -original track # 19)

The shifts in the music – both dynamically and melodically – are clearer and more distinct than in the majority of classically based GIM programmes. In Figure 2 you can see an intensity profile of the full programme, and as the profiles show, the music has many clear contrasts and a massive texture. It is also possible to recognise some of the repeated forms in the music through this intensity profile.

### Description of the programme

In this section of the text I will provide a summary of each music selection in general, focusing on a description of the music as it is heard as well as categorising the music as already mentioned.

**#1 *Mercy Street*** sets an open, airy and bright atmosphere, where the rhythmic percussion ostinato accompanied by a solo flute and a steady bass in the first theme gives the traveller the space and security needed for entering the scene of the journey. The second theme (Theme B, or refrain, marked in blue in Figure 3 comes with woodwind, brass, strings and longer melodic lines like a soothing and comforting blanket, but optionally also with some darker sensations/moods for the traveller.

Although the intensity profile (Figure 2) shows quite big dynamic contrasts between the two themes, it still feels safe and opening, and moreover grounding, due to the repetitive bass. The lighter A theme in C# minor with the solo flute in the foreground, and the darker and more powerful B theme in E major, give the piece a kind of 'double depth'; the lighter parts are set in a minor key with a dreamy, yearning, soothing and lyrical mood (Hevner's categories 3 and 4), while the darker moods are set in a major key. This part of the piece can be experienced as more dark and melancholic (Hevner's category 2), but also with a slight push forward.

According to the taxonomy of music (Bonde & Wärja 2014), this piece belongs in the third subcategory of *Supportive music: the secure and exploratory field*, and is suitable as an opening piece according to Helen Bonny's description: "The first piece [on a tape] should be suggestive, but not overwhelming; it should comfort, but not frighten" (Bonny 1978/2002: 310).

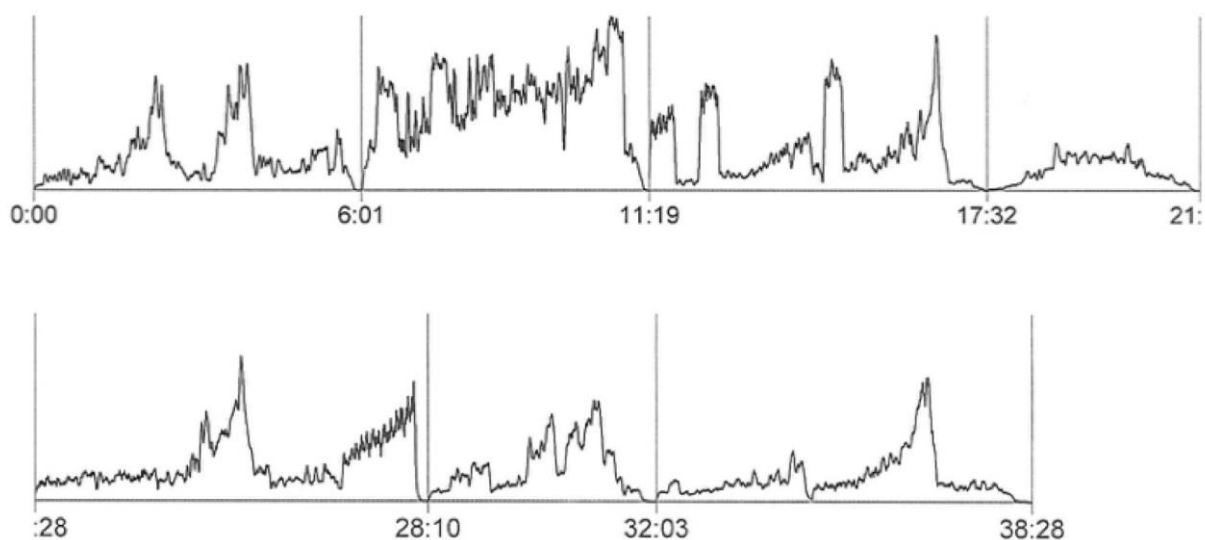


Figure 2: Intensity profile: *New Blood* programme

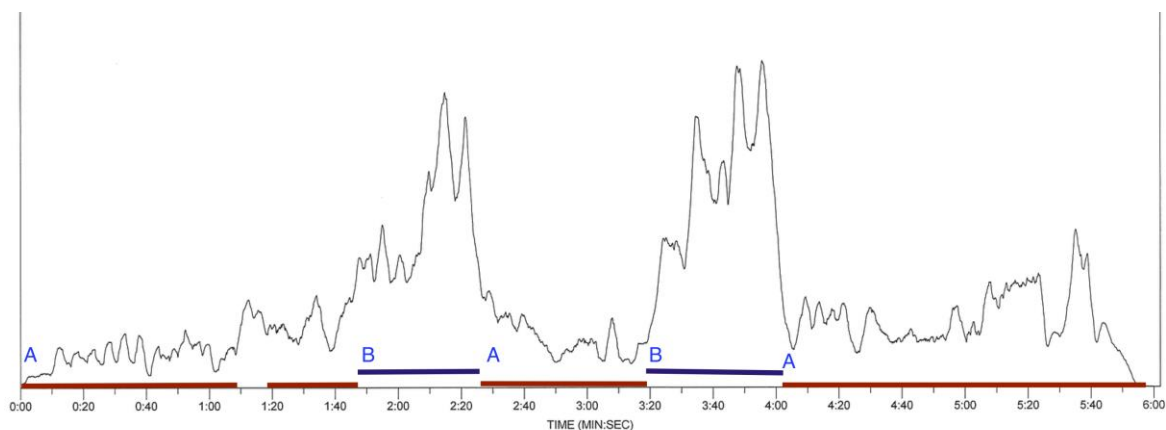


Figure 3: Intensity profile: #1 *Mercy street*

**#2 Red Rain** opens with a short build-up of tension with piano and trumpets in the lead (marked with blue colour in the MIA intensity profile, Figure 4), before the massive, full orchestra takes over in the A part (refrain) followed by a more 'spacious' and open B part with a very distinct rhythmical bass line. The piece has the classical pop song format: A B A B A C A C A, where the bridge (C part) is more or less a development of the A part. The massive and 'fat' sound Peter Gabriel intended (2011) is present throughout the whole piece, as can be seen quite clearly in the MIA intensity profile. Yet despite the massive orchestral arrangement with high intensity and power throughout the piece, it still feels quite predictable and 'safe' – without surprising shifts or big changes in the music. Based

on this conclusion, it might be a contradiction to place the piece in the first category of *Mixed supportive-challenging music: the explorative field with surprises and contrasts* (subcategory 4) in the taxonomic system. The music, however, is more explorative than supportive, and the contextualised experience of this piece of music makes category 4 most suitable.

The moods represented in this piece are found on the other side of the Mood Wheel compared to the moods in the first piece, and are placed in categories 7, 8 and 9; active, energetic, dramatic, triumphant and majestic. The piece has a function of "building to peak" (Bonny 1978/2002: 310), as Helen Bonny describes the second stage in the original contour based on the LSD-induced

sessions introducing and preparing the client for what is to come.

**#3 Darkness** is the most challenging part of the programme with its intensely evocative combination of contrasts. The music takes the traveller directly into a dark atmosphere where the full orchestra plays an insisting, almost 'attacking', but steady and rhythmic ostinato in *forte* and *fortissimo* repeated in the same shape and form three times. This theme A – marked in red in the MIA intensity profile (Figure 5) – lasting no longer than 20 seconds every time it occurs, is followed by two very gentle and soothing themes, one very light with solo flute (theme B) and the other more dark and melancholic with brass and larger orchestra (theme C).

These very abrupt, attacking and potentially scary shifts in the music place the piece in subcategory 6 in the taxonomic system: *the explorative and challenging field* (Wärja & Bonde 2014).

The big contrasts in this piece of music afford a wide spectrum of different and 'opposite moods' related to Hevner's Mood Wheel (Hevner 1937). The dark *fortissimo* parts are agitated, dramatic, aggressive and energetic (categories 7, 8 and 9) while the brighter parts of the music are quiet, lyrical, tender, dreamy and melancholic (categories 2, 3 and 4), but also optimistic, bright and graceful (categories 5 and 6) – and even spiritual and awe-inspiring (category 1). Based on this, all nine moods according to Bonde's revised Mood Wheel (1997) are represented in this dramatic piece of music full of contrasts.

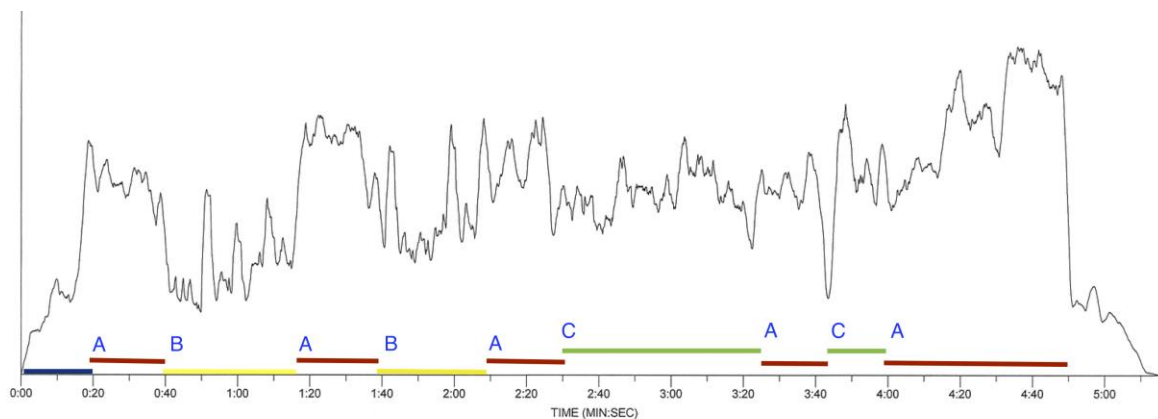


Figure 4: Intensity profile: #2 Red rain

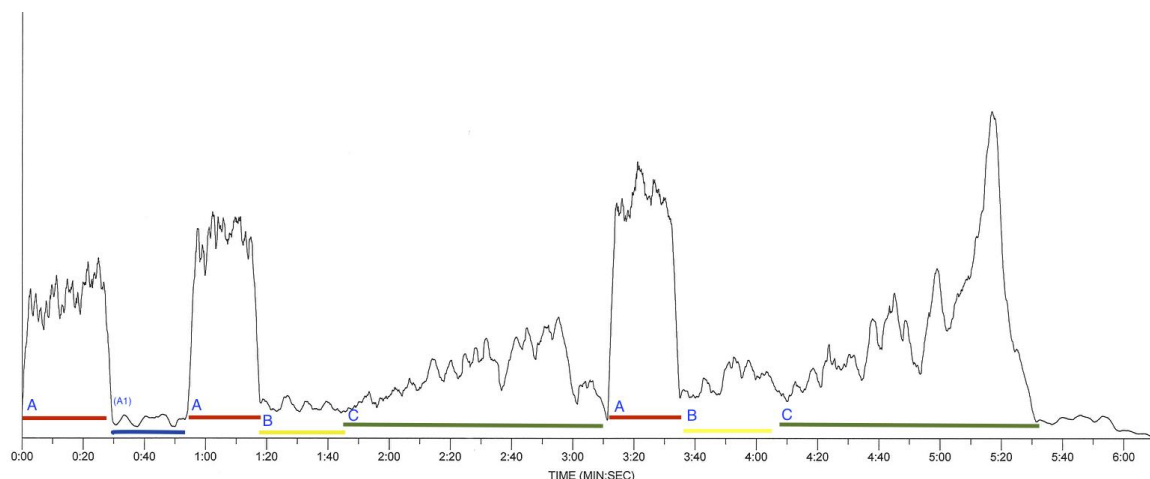


Figure 5: Intensity profile: #3 Darkness

**#4 The Nest that Sailed the Sky** is a short piece for rest and stabilisation after the potential heavy multilayered and highly-contrasted *Darkness*. This is originally an instrumental piece, written for the

*Millennium Dome Show* in London in 2000. With repeated chords played by strings in slow tempo and new layers added and then peeled off again, it offers a calm, dreamy and restful moment in the

middle of the two peak – or working pieces in this programme (Figure 6). The music is dreamy and quiet (Hevner's categories 3 and 4), and belongs in *the secure and opening field* (subcategory 2) of *supportive music* (Wärja & Bonde 2014).

**#5 Don't Give Up** is the most well-known song in this contemporary programme. (I will reflect upon the pros and cons about this piece later in this text.) The structure is typical for a pop song where verses are followed by refrains, a bridge (marked in red and C in Figure 7) and a tail or a loop in the end

(marked in green in Figure 7). There are big dynamic contrasts in the song, with the bridge and the loop in the end as the two dynamic and emotional peak points.

The moods are mostly in categories 3 and 4 regarding Hevner's Mood Wheel, but I would argue also with the potential of experiencing moods in category 6, 7, 8, 9 and 1. Regarding the taxonomy, I have placed the song in *the explorative field with surprises and contrasts*, subcategory 4 in *mixed supportive-challenging music* (Wärja & Bonde 2014).

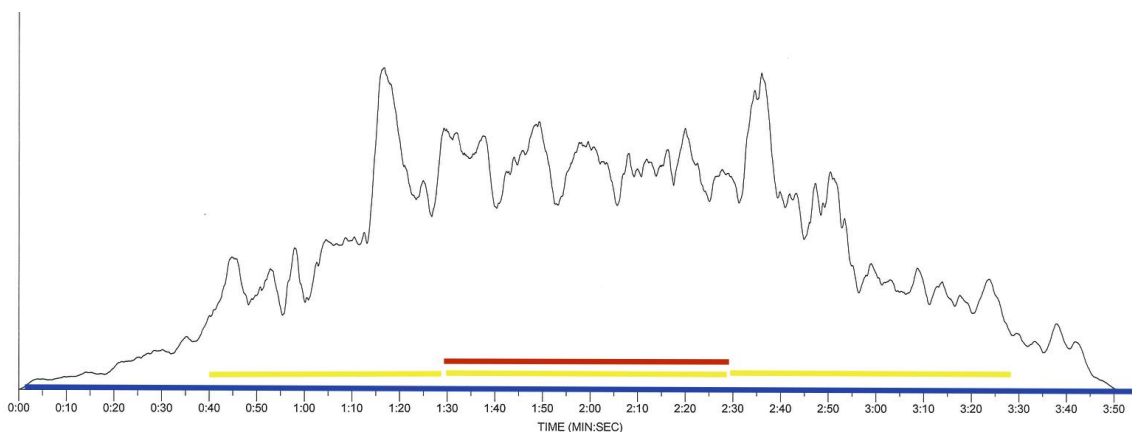


Figure 6: Intensity profile: # 4 The nest that sailed the sky

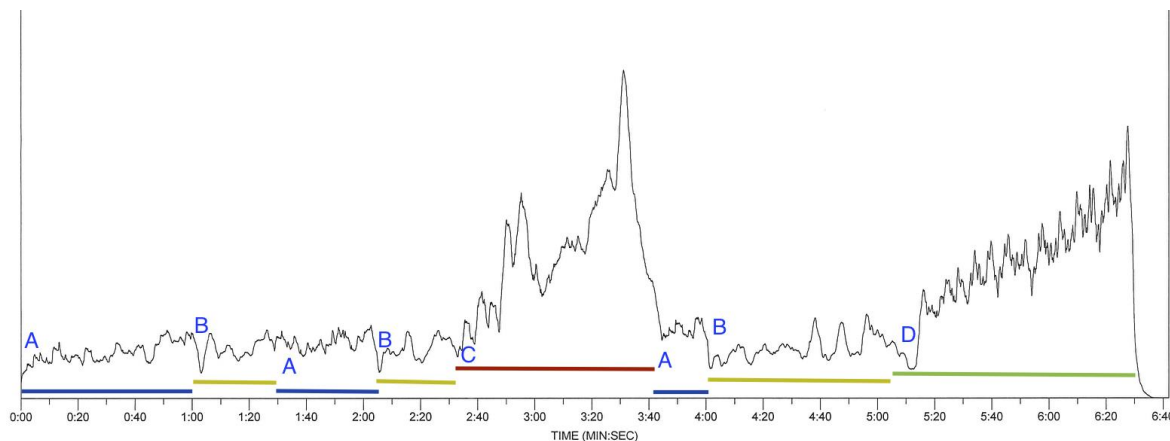


Figure 7: Intensity profile: #5 Don't give up

**#6 Downside Up** is the piece for "stabilization", related to the stages or sections in a GIM programme as defined by Helen Bonny (1978/2002: 311). This song has only two different themes: verse and refrain, and a little tail at the end, where you can hear Peter Gabriel singing: "Pull me in" three times (see Figure 8). This is the only vocal in the programme, and the 'message' might not be totally inappropriate for most travellers at that stage of the GIM travel. The piece has an

uplifting, bright and optimistic character, taking you forward with its long lines and light agitated strings on top in the B part (refrain). The emotional expressions of this musical selection can be placed into categories 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 (Bonde 1997). This piece has a supportive character in the programme, and I have placed it in subcategory 3: *the secure and explorative field* according to the taxonomy by Wärja and Bonde (2014).



**#7 Wallflower** ends this programme. The piano and a smaller string quartet are playing the dominant role in this song, except for the peak where full string orchestra is added. The song is soothing, quiet, tender and dreamy (Hevner's categories 3 and 4) with a spiritual and awe-inspiring potential (Hevner's category 1). In this context, I have placed this piece in the taxonomic

subcategory 3: *the secure and exploratory field*, because of its dynamic changes and support for surrender (Bonde & Wärja 2014). The last 1:30 minutes of the piece contain a beautiful and simple ostinato melody, marked in green in the MIA intensity profile (see Figure 9). This "return" (Bonny 1978/2002: 311) gives a safe way of ending this musical journey.

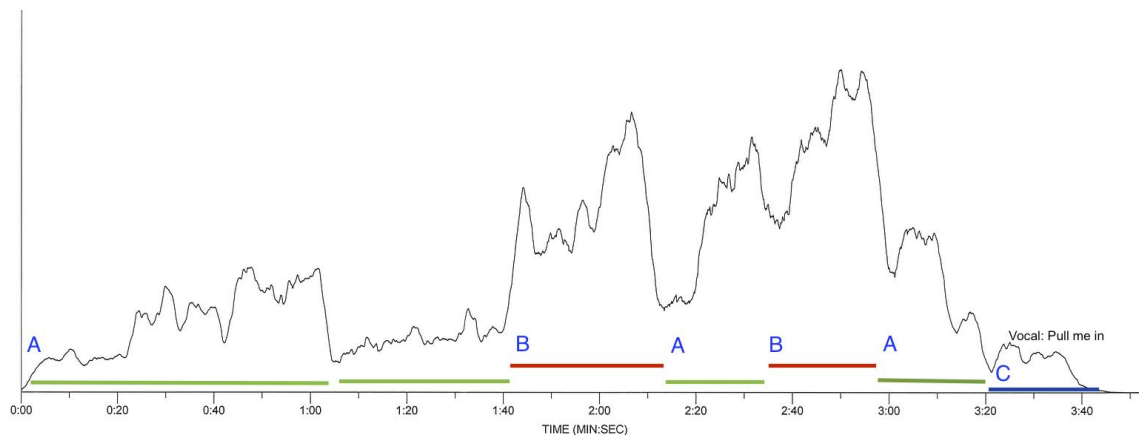


Figure 8: Intensity profile: #6 Downside up

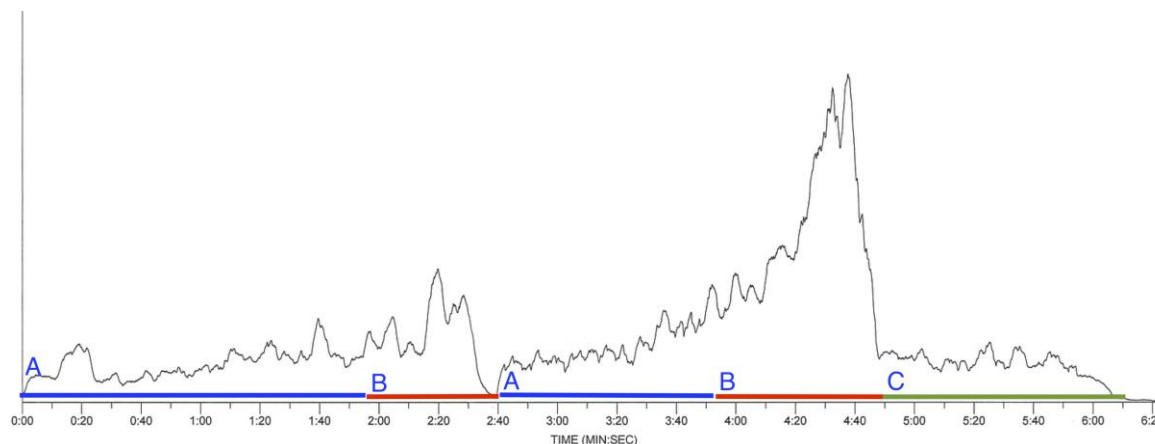


Figure 9: Intensity profile: #7 Wallflower

### The absence of lyrics

The musical pieces in the *New Blood* programme are pop/rock songs with more or less well-known lyrics by Peter Gabriel. In these instrumental versions set for full orchestra, both the lyrics and the melody lines are absent. I have been curious about the potential influence this absence might have on the traveller during the music journey. With the exception of the core piece *Don't Give Up*, none of the clients travelling to this programme has recognised any of the songs or fragments of the

lyrics during the sessions, neither while listening in an altered state of consciousness, nor in the postlude. But when I looked deeper into the lyrics of the seven songs in the order I had chosen to set the GIM programme, I discovered a fascinating aspect; a story of its own, describing a person's surrender into a therapeutic or healing process:

#1) dreaming of mercy ...  
wear your insides out ...

#2) I come to you, defences down  
with the trust of a child ...

No more denial ...

#3) ... It's not the way it has to be  
 ... When I allow it to be  
 There's no control over me  
 I have my fears  
 But they do not have me ...  
 ... And the monster I was so afraid of  
 Lies curled up on the floor ...

#4 ...

#5 ... You're not beaten yet ...  
 It's gonna be all right ...  
 ... Don't give up,

#6 ... I could feel my balance shifting  
 Everything was moving around ...  
 ... The only constant I am sure of  
 is this accelerating rate of change.  
 Downside up, upside down.  
 ... Slipping into the unknown

#7 ... Hold on  
 ... Let your spirit stay unbroken  
 ... You're not forgotten here  
 And I will say to you:  
 I will do what I can do

All lyrics: © Peter Gabriel (*New Blood*)

This 'little story' about a person with "defences down" and "the trust of a child", (from *Red Rain*, track #2, Gabriel 2011) reminds us about the necessity of acceptance and surrender (Blom 2011, 2014) in the process of therapy: "When I allow it to be, there's no control over me." (from *Darkness*, track #3, Gabriel 2011) The feeling of "balance shifting" and "everything moving around", and daring to "slip into the unknown" (from *Downside Up*, track #6, Gabriel 2011), reminds me of the famous Kierkegaard quote: "To dare is to momentarily lose one's footing. But not to dare is to lose oneself" (Kierkegaard 2016: 39).

The last text line is repeated several times in the vocal version: "I will do what I can do"<sup>3</sup> Could these potentially healing words – at least as a fascinating thought and reflection – be imagined coming from the music itself? And could this also be a message from the therapist to the client, or from the depths of the self-healing sources within the client herself?

## The use of music with embedded meaning: Pros and cons

One of the core pieces in the programme is #5 *Don't Give Up*, a song which many people know by heart and might connect to specific memories. In other words, maybe not the first choice of music suitable for therapeutic work based on music without embedded meaning. I have therefore been taking this piece in and out of the programme, uncertain if it should be included or not. But because the piece fits so well with the intention of 'being renewed and getting new blood and new energy', I could not resist using it. Of course, to some clients – or maybe to many clients – the piece might be too directive and bring up too many concrete associations. To many British people the song might be directly connected to memories about the political situation in the UK during the 1980s: Margaret Thatcher, unemployment and people losing their jobs. Others might first see or hear Kate Bush and Peter Gabriel, or remember using the piece as a kind of a sing-along track to lyrics they know very well by heart.

I have used this piece in five sessions, with four different clients. Only one of the clients has connected directly to the song, strongly and immediately (See case study: Client A.) The other three clients did not have any specific memories connected to *Don't Give Up*, and another even said this in the postlude after listening to the full *New Blood* programme: "It's good not to know the music so well. It makes it easier to avoid memories of there and then".

Although the melody line of the song is absent, the melodic figures and themes in the flute and piano as well as the well-known bass theme surrounding the original melody make this piece stand out from the rest of the pieces by its more directive way, and it might therefore be excluded from the programme. Some classical pieces might also have a similar embedded meaning connected to specific memories, persons, situations and feelings, and my experiences in general are that most clients use the music to their benefits and in the way they need there and then, related to their personal processes.

<sup>3</sup> This text line is, of course, not heard in the instrumental version used in this programme.

## CLINICAL EXPERIENCES WITH THE PROGRAMME: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES AND POTENTIAL BENEFITS

My intention with this practice-based article has been, as already mentioned, to share my own experiences and perspectives using this orchestral music in therapeutic settings with individual clients with the GIM community. From a qualitative research perspective, a more approved scientific approach involving clients and other practitioners in clinical trials with this programme would have been beneficial. The triple role of being the therapist producing a programme, the therapist testing the effect of the programme on clients, and also the one to reflect upon this, can give me a unique closeness to and knowledge of all the sides of the process. On the other hand, it is crucial to be aware of how my own pre-understanding is affecting the writing process and the way I interpret the reactions and experiences from the clients, as there is a danger of being overly positive and not seeing or including critical comments or questions (Stige, Malterud & Midtgarden 2011).

With this reflection from qualitative research methodology as a background, I will now present my findings and experiences with the use of *New Blood* in individual therapeutic GIM settings. I have used this programme – or selected pieces from the programme in another order – in eight different sessions with five different clients (four women and one man), all of whom had previous GIM experience, so that they were quite familiar with the traditional classical GIM repertoire. In addition to this, I used this programme in a workshop I did in Athens with a Greek GIM level 3 training group led by Dag Körlin and Evangelia Papanikolaou in July 2014.

The music from the *New Blood* CD was used in ‘real’ therapy sessions with these clients, and not in any set up ‘test situations’. All of the clients had experiences with a rich and broad spectrum of different imagery and meaningful metaphors travelling to *New Blood*, and most sessions also had a clear narrative from beginning to end. The clients have given me permission to use quotes from their GIM travels in this text.

When reflecting upon the music in the postlude of the session, one of the clients said:

“It was good with the clear structure in the bass” (Client B, woman), while another client responded: “The music was clearer in a way, simple in the sense of clear. The shifts in the music were clear” (Client C, woman). The two clients’ experiences

with the clear shifts and bass are substantiated by Gabriel’s intentions with the orchestral arrangements, wanting a bass “big enough to drive the bottom end that is not often heard in conventional classical mixes” (Gabriel 2011: no pagination). The distinctive and grounding bass, which is a characteristic element throughout the whole programme, allows for contrasting experiences and potential clear choices for the traveller, like Client B concludes in the postlude:

“I got new tools: a stick and the knights on horseback. And I wonder: how pleasant and comfortable shall it [life?] be? Shall I keep on walking on the hard gravel or allow myself to float away with help from the church bells? Permission to rest and be in the pleasant present?” (Client B, woman)

Client E (man) experiences other kinds of contrasts: “Life and love is like music. The clock: to march in step with oneself. It’s like a phoenix rising from the ashes. From winter to spring.” Here also the stable rhythmical element in the music might be the underlying catalyst for “the clock”. “I feel strong and confident” is a quote from Client D (woman), who might be inspired by both the distinct bass and the steady rhythm in this music.

Despite the big contrasts, this programme also affords a potential sensation of nuances: “It was an experience of everything at the same time, like an ability to sense the life and what’s happening in all the very small processes. Awareness and senses” (Client C, woman). The description of the music as “clear” can also be connected to Client E’s experience of the music as a tool with the capacity of enlightening the soul: “The music shows the way. It is like a torch enlightening what you might forget. The soul gets enlightened when you participate in the music. It gives calmness and meditation, and becomes like a nice and warm blanket” (Client E, man).

Client B describes her experience travelling to *New Blood* with these words: “It was exciting and unpredictable music. It made me curious. I might have experienced more feelings if the music had had classical wrapping” (Client B, woman). This reflection corresponds with Helen Bonny’s argument for using only classical music selections with its harmonic and melodic complexity in individual GIM therapy, qualities needed for self-exploration (Bonny 2002).

Music is often described as “the language of

emotions” (Corrigall & Schellenberg 2013: 299)<sup>4</sup>, and as GIM therapists (and clients) we have experienced the great potential music has to evoke a wide spectrum of feelings and emotions. Sometimes these feelings might almost be too overwhelming for the client during sessions. Structured music like these ‘predictable’ pop songs might therefore be supportive and suitable in regulating feelings for some clients.

As already mentioned there are no instruments playing the melodic lines from the well-known original songs as a substitute for the lack of vocals in these instrumental versions of the songs. According to the philosopher and musician Rousseau, who lived in the Age of Enlightenment, the melodic line contributes to the communication of emotions, and acts on us as signs of our affections and sentiments (Gracyk & Kania 2011). The absence of a melodic line, as in this GIM programme, might therefore lead to less feelings, as Client B also experienced it. This absence, however, might also give a kind of openness and space for new underlying melodies, instruments and ostinati to come forth when the original melody line is no longer there. If fewer feelings and emotions do occur during the travel, it might give room and space so more and perhaps richer imagery can flow, as several of the clients experienced during the travels. In addition to this, less focus on feelings might also lead to deeper body experiences and be an invitation to go deeper into the clients’ own self-awareness.

Client D made a colourful mandala after travelling to the *New Blood* programme and named it *Undertow*. She said: “There’s something about the depths that is infinite. One cannot understand oneself 100 percent. One becomes dizzy if one starts thinking about the infinite depths inside oneself, or outside”. My reflection upon Client D’s self-recognition was the well-known poem *Romanesque Arches* by the Swedish Nobel Prize winner Tomas Tranströmer<sup>5</sup> (2001). The poem contains this famous quote: “An angel whose face I couldn’t see embraced me, and his whisper went all through my body: Don’t be ashamed to be a human being, be proud!” (Tranströmer 2001:102) The poem continues and reminds us that inside ourselves vault after vault opens endlessly. We will never be complete, and Tranströmer concludes: “That is exactly as it should be” (Tranströmer

<sup>4</sup> See also Gabrielsson (2011) and Juslin and Sloboda (2010).

<sup>5</sup> Translated by Robert Bly.

2001:102)

The experience of vaults – or “new rooms” – opening inside is also very prominent in the following case study, together with profound body experiences.

### ***New Blood* programme: Case study Client A: An expanding body journey**

A woman in her early 40s is going through massive changes in her life, and uses GIM therapy in this process.<sup>6</sup> Here follows a full transcript of the GIM session where she was travelling to the *New Blood* programme.

#### *Prelude*

It is challenging with all the new possibilities in my life. I long for freedom, but when I get that, it feels overwhelming. I need to find a way to get out of the narrow room I’ve been living in.

#### *Induction*

*Focus on breath – open up and fill the body, expand in different directions.*

#### **#1 Mercy Street**

I feel my own distrust for being received as I am. There are so much frustration and anger in my lower back, a pain like a claw. [Cries ...] I’m incredibly pissed, feels like I could have killed someone. My chest clamps my back so I can’t stand up. I’m so tired of living like this. The music says I am allowed to grow bigger, to design and move in a big room. I’m ambivalent, it’s safer to crawl into a foetal position and close the door to the room.

#### **#2 Red Rain**

[Client asks for a pillow.]

*What does the music do to you?*

The music lifts me, but at the same time I feel I am being chased: Watch out for this and watch out for that, don’t do that!

*Is there something you want to say to the chasers?*

Fuck off!

*I can’t hear you!*

[With louder voice] Fuck off! Leave me alone!

<sup>6</sup> The client has read this transcription of the session, and has given me permission to include it in this text.

*Fuck off! Leave me alone!*

There is a fear deep down in my diaphragm; what shall I do if nobody is actually chasing me?

### **#3 Darkness**

I'm growing and notice more strength and energy in my body.

Almost like a protecting shield.

Now I feel the old anxiety again, telling me it will all be very bad.

When will the old ghosts stop chasing me?

That's why I go into the narrow room, but I need more space.

There must be another room for me to move in.

### **#4 The Nest that Sailed the Sky**

*...There must be another room for you to move in.*

Somewhere there's a room where my heart has

space to move, but I need to open up.

My chest is just too narrow.

...

It feels like I'm getting angel wings, spreading out backwards, opening up my breaths.

*Wow!*

Oh my god, how wonderful!

*Oh my god, how wonderful!*

I need to breathe backwards and not downwards.

Or, not up and down, but out and back.<sup>7</sup>

### **# 5 Don't Give Up**

Oh my god. I have listened to that song so much, it contains so much. Now I hear Kate Bush, I have listened to this recording one year of my life.

*What does the song do to you?*

It gives me motivation and comfort. It represents something beautiful, belonging.

*Does it fit with your angel wings?*

This song fits to anything! I feel growing pains out in my arms. When you let go of something there is pain connected to it.

[Shivering in body. Shivers and breathes.] ...

<sup>7</sup> This experience might be influenced or inspired by the Induction to the session with the focus on breath expansion in different directions.

### **#6 Downside Up**

[Shivers in body.]

Frost, I'm freezing in my legs and hands. I think it is anxiety on its way out.

*Use the music ... release and let go of what's no longer supposed to be there.*

[Shivers in body]

Blood and oxygen are coming to my head through my breath.

### **#7 Wallflower**

It feels like I have opened a room inside myself that I didn't know I had, or a door or something. I feel very present, like a religious experience. There's love in that new room.

*Can you receive that love?*

[Client nods]

I'm thinking about my children, they have a natural place there.

I'm also receiving that love.

[Cries ...]

....

This is where I shall be [– puts her hands on her heart/chest.]

The room is really big. I need time to explore it. I know about it now, that's a start

### *Postlude*

It was wonderful to be in the body this way, but it is also difficult. I have so much to discharge. So much fear and uncertainty need to be discharged to get room for this new love.

It went from not being anybody there able to receive, till me being able to both receive and give at the same time. That was an important experience. I still got frost in my body, but it's pulsing out now – like 100 persons are giving me healing at the same time, wow! I feel total presence in my whole body, but still some pain in my arms. The tensions in my lower back are gone, and the anger and aggression down there also needed to be discharged.

It is powerful to work with(in) the body. There's a lot of insight there.

### Therapist's reflections

This powerful and transformative journey from Client A adds more layers to the potential of using structured, semi-predictable music with clear contrasts and elements like well-known harmonies and form in GIM.

Hall (2015) points out several advantages of using non-classical music in GIM settings:

"[...] the programme may appeal to a wider group of potential GIM travellers. It might also not be as threatening as classical music to anyone who has an adverse reaction to classical pieces. A final advantage may be found when working with a client whose life has been closely connected to classical music (e.g. a professional musician) or someone who has a very good academic knowledge of classical music. In these situations, using classical music may be too intense for the traveller or trigger a large volume of thoughts, which may impede the deepening of awareness into emotion, instinct and imagery" (Hall 2015: 315).

Client A is an experienced musician with a great knowledge of classical music, and the orchestral arrangements of pop songs in the *New Blood* programme might have been the right facilitator and entrance key for her to go into deeper expanding body experiences in her travel. In this session, the music serves as a relational agent with transformational potential (Bonde in press) to Client A. Her travel to the New Blood programme becomes a interpersonal experience with a transcendence which also brings "a quality of awe, ineffability and surrender" (Blom 2011: 191). The client surrenders to the music and she lets the music open new rooms and layers within her body, which leads to new insight and growth. At this point I find it relevant to bring in Peter Gabriel's own *New Blood* metaphor; the photo by Steve Gschmeisser used on the front cover of Gabriel's double CD *New Blood*.<sup>8</sup>

The photo shows a coloured *Scanning Electron Micrograph* (SEM) of an *Embryonic Stem Cell* (ESC) placed on the tip of a needle. ESCs are pluripotent and can differentiate into any cell type. This ability makes ESCs a potential source of cells to repair damaged tissue in diseases such as Parkinson's and insulin-dependent diabetes. However, research using ESCs is controversial as

it requires the destruction of an embryo.<sup>9</sup> An *Embryonic Stem Cell* might be a clear symbol and metaphor of new growth, new life, and a change within yourself, not only mentally and psychologically, but even physically, as Client A experiences: "It feels like I have opened a room inside myself that I didn't know I had". – Like the cells are changing and the blood is renewed. Can this be like a birth of something new, a birth from an embryo...?

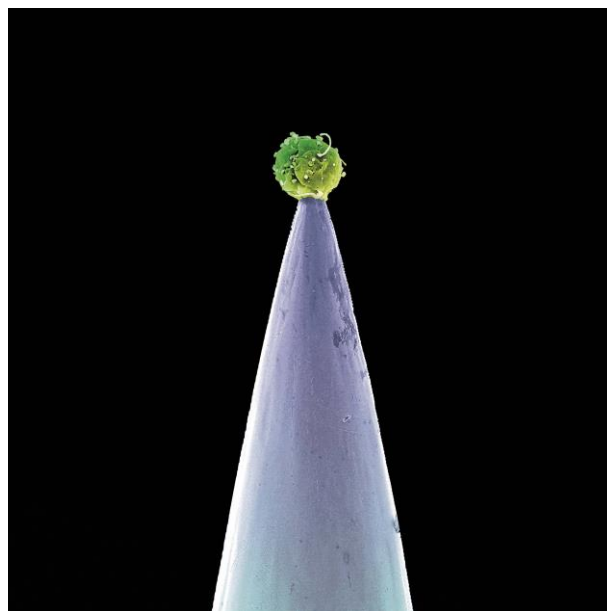


Figure 10: Front cover of Peter Gabriel's double CD *New Blood*

### FINAL REMARKS

In this article based on my own experiences as a GIM therapist using orchestral arrangements of pop/rock songs written by Peter Gabriel, I have asked these questions: can new music genres also used in individual GIM sessions be beneficial to some of our clients – not as a substitute to the classical core Bonny programmes, but as a supplement – and can it also be a way of broadening our perspectives as GIM therapists; and could the *New Blood* programme be a possible addition to the existing and continuously growing pool of new music programmes within our field of practice. My suggested answer to these questions would be: yes. I see, however, that my embeddedness in all the different parts of this process – including my triple role of producing, testing and reflecting upon the potential outcome of

<sup>8</sup> The photo is reproduced in this article with permission from the photographer Steve Gschmeisser.

<sup>9</sup> Downloaded on 10 May 2017, from: [https://stemcells.nih.gov/info/Regenerative\\_Medicine/2006Chapter1.htm](https://stemcells.nih.gov/info/Regenerative_Medicine/2006Chapter1.htm) ()

the *New Blood* programme – could have made me overly positive and not being able to see or include critical comments or questions.

I would therefore encourage GIM fellows to use this programme in their work, and invite those of you who could find this interesting to send me comments and feedback from your own experiences using the *New Blood* programme in therapeutic GIM settings. A further investigation of the potential outcomes of using non-classical music also in individual GIM therapy, and not only for group work, would be useful.

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