

## *Book Review / Compte rendu*

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Kroeker, J. (2019). *Jungian Music Psychotherapy: When Psyche Sings*. Routledge. ISBN: 978-1-13862-566-2, xviii + 187 pp.

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### ABSTRACT

Joel Kroeker's book, *Jungian Music Psychotherapy: When Psyche Sings*, is a sophisticated presentation of the impact of sound and music in analytic depth psychology. It lays out a solid foundation for both music and analysis then bridges the two. The author introduces his archetypal music psychotherapy modality and translates the main analytical elements of Jungian technique into specific musical processes. For clinicians, educators, and those interested in the power of sound and music, this is a potent resource for understanding the relationship between sound, music, and musical imagery and their impact on our human psyche.

### RÉSUMÉ

Le livre de Joel Kroeker, *Jungian Music Psychotherapy : When Psyche Sings*, est une présentation raffinée de l'impact du son et de la musique dans la psychologie analytique des profondeurs. On y présente des fondements solides aussi bien pour la musique que pour l'analyse, puis on y conjugue les deux. L'auteur introduit son mode typique de psychothérapie par la musique et traduit les principaux éléments analytiques de la technique de Jung sous forme de procédés musicaux précis. Pour les personnes qui s'intéressent au pouvoir du son et de la musique, notamment les cliniciens et les formateurs, il s'agit d'une ressource possible vers une meilleure compréhension de la relation entre le son, la musique et l'imagerie musicale, ainsi que de leur impact sur notre psychisme humain.

Joel Kroeker's *Jungian Music Psychotherapy: When Psyche Sings* is a sophisticated presentation of the impact of sound and music in analytic psychotherapy. It begins with a discussion of Jung's relationship to music through his accounts before building a rich understanding of the matrix between sound, music, and the unconscious. The author reminds us of the powerful symbolism available in sound and music. At the same time, he explores the clinical treatment of musical symbols that arise in the analytic environment and how they relate specifically to

Jungian archetypes. Kroeker's archetypal music psychotherapy (AMP) modality presents in some detail the use of musical processes (e.g., improvisation, songwriting) as the framework for analysis.

Kroeker is a Zürich-trained Jungian analyst, an accredited music therapist, and a registered clinical counsellor. He holds a master's degree in music therapy and ethnomusicology. He has certificate training in cognitive behavioural therapy and in level I guided imagery and music. Augmented by a career as a songwriter/composer/performer, Kroeker has a unique personal and professional perspective on the topic of music and Jungian analytic psychotherapy.

The book is divided into 14 chapters, helping us to understand the potential for using music in Jungian analysis. The first five chapters examine the history of sound and music as a healing mechanism, including a discussion of Jung's perception of sound and music through his accounts of his personal and clinical experience. Kroeker examines the cultural impacts of the notion of the musician/healer. We are encouraged to turn our attention to our acoustic environment while remembering that each of us has a unique perception of sound and music. Chapters 4 and 5 examine music as language and communication, scrutinizes the debate about music as a universal language, and notes a gap in the literature around music and analytical psychology.

Chapter 6 is an extensive chapter that brings into perspective the enormous dimension and enduring impact of sound and music across all domains of the human experience. It defines music in an analytical context, delving deeper into how music creates a mental image and how sound becomes music. The author shows us how the symbolic aspects of music often remain in the unexplored shadows in clinical literature. Music becomes a "location," where unconscious material becomes potentially available for conscious reflection. The author reminds us that there is no limit to the relativity of musical perception and that the footprint of music goes far deeper and remains long after words are gone.

Chapters 7 and 8 expand upon the Jungian analytical foundation of working with symbols to include auditory symbols. The author introduces his AMP process and details its principles, noting that the process "involves accessing, amplifying and integrating unconscious material through musical means while exploring the dynamics that emerge along the way" (p. 71). The AMP process is comprised of six main principles:

1. Perception is a creative act.
2. Loosening attachment to mastery can liberate expression.
3. Improvisation is the inner state manifested in outer form.
4. Sound is an *image* that can be a glimpse of wholeness.
5. Active imagination can be done through musical images.
6. Holding irrelevant aspects in a constellation can lead to consilience.

These six principles operate within different musical forms, such as attending to the musical qualities of verbal exchange or improvising spontaneous music.

Chapters 9 through 11 discuss existing psychoanalytic field theories (e.g., bionian field theory) and introduce the notion of a *musical field*, which is the multi-dimensional matrix along which unconscious materials in the form of symbolic sounds are laid and musical interaction occurs. As both analyst and client are participating in the creation of material in the musical field, Kroeker illuminates an essential duality that exists within the analyst as music composer that requires the analyst to participate in the liminal sounds and fabrication of the musical field while maintaining the role of observer/analyst and even notator. The author discusses ethics, aesthetics, and the importance of beauty to the well-being of people. The analyst/composer can take symbolic sounds created in the musical field and offer them as aesthetically pleasing music to the client. We are reminded that imaginative acts can be significant in themselves as a move toward personal development.

In Chapter 12, “Musical Approaches to Analytic Technique: Navigating the Dual Role of Musician and Analyst,” the author skilfully uses case examples to illustrate analysis through the musical process including understanding music and analytic structure, navigating the dual role of musician and analyst, holding tension through dissonance, the use of silence, and musical transference. Finally, Chapter 13 presents an extended example of the archetypal musical image of “tonality” and its relationship to the archetype of “home” on both a personal and a collective level. In contrast, Chapter 14 elegantly concludes this comprehensive journey through music and analytic psychotherapy.

The author’s writing style is as rich in metaphor and imagery as the material being conveyed; however, at times, the robust language makes the book challenging to read. Readers will benefit from a slow absorption of the content as there is a tremendous amount of complex material to digest that may be made more difficult without musical training.

With a trained supervisor/analyst, Kroeker’s AMP process would be an ideal model for clinical and peer supervision, and it is this reviewer’s opinion that this valuable resource should be considered a standard text for musicians, educators, clinicians of various disciplines, or those wanting to relate to their auditory world more deeply.

### **About the Author**

Kristen L. Anderson is a registered psychotherapist with music therapist accreditation. She works in private practice in Southern Ontario with people having a wide range of diagnoses and in a variety of clinical settings. The settings for her work include clients’ homes as well as medical and long-term care facilities.

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