Of angels and other spiritual powers - Orientation in peak experiences.
Recommended literature on spirituality for music therapists

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Introduction

There is a wealth of literature on spirituality. I want to assist potential readers in their search and to underline several core issues. If somebody does not find a book in this review that is important to him or her or even has been written by him- or herself, the reason is that I intend to present -
in addition to several exemplary books from the music therapy scene – books from completely different fields of experience that may broaden our perceptive horizon.

**Recommended literature**

In her book ‘*Grenzerfahrung Gott – spirituelle Erfahrungen in Leid und Krankheit*’ (God as peak experience – spiritual experience in suffering and illness) (Herder, Freiburg Basle Vienna 2003) music therapist Monika Renz describes spirituality as an experience with an entity that is eternally different. Listing a number of clinical examples, she points out that seriously ill individuals live radically in the present: all pain, all anxiety is inescapable for them. But relations to other individuals may also become so dense that some understand only in this situation what freedom and love might mean. In a situation of helplessness, sensuality has a new significance. The wish to be healed requires an atmosphere of awe in the borderline area between life and death. In an appropriate relational context issues of guilt may be explored anew and possibly be transcended, for example in the search for a deeper truth to replace life-long lies. Monika Renz underlines not the grandiose but rather the subtle aspects of spiritual experience. She has no answers to the question whether spiritual experience equals experience of God, and thus follows modern approaches in religious research. Starting from personal empirical analyses of interviews with seriously ill patients, Monika Renz postulates five categories of spiritual experience: the experience of one-ness and existence, that of another individual, experience of God passed on from parents, God ‘within everything’, experience of the spirit. She

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1. Editors note: This article is a translation of the original German article “*Von Engeln und anderen überirdischen Mächten – Orientierungshilfen bei Grenzerfahrungen. Literaturempfehlungen für Musiktherapeutinnen und Musiktherapeuten zum Thema „Spiritualität“*” published in Musiktherapeutische Umschau, Vol. 28 (3) 2007
describes these different modes of experience as approaches to something that must remain a secret despite all experience.

In 1902 the American psychologist William James wrote a standard book that is still highly relevant today on ‘Die Vielfalt religiöser Erfahrung’ (new edition 1997, Insel, Frankfurt am Main, Leipzig\(^1\)). His thesis was that religious life can only have an influence in subjective experience, but never through the ‘worthless inventions of dogmatic scholasticism’. James explored religious experience as an internal psychological process and its significance for an individual’s entire life. He thus conceived the first scientifically oriented, dynamic psychology of religious faith. His intercultural studies addressed above all the importance of unconscious factors of various forms of piety. Music therapists may find the chapter on mystics of particular interest where the author mentions relations between mystics and music. He underlines the inexpressable, fleeting and passive character of mystic states, already uses the term *trance* and points out that with sufficient motivation and preparation, psychoactive substances may tremendously stimulate mystic awareness. He specifically discusses the question in which cases ‘revelations’ may be experienced. Mystic states of a certain intensity may become decisive for the individual in question.

Willigis Jäger is a Benedictine monk and zen master. He links up mystic experiences of the world with modern natural sciences in ‘Die Welle ist das Meer – Mystische Spiritualität’ (‘The wave is the ocean – Mystic spirituality’, Herder, Freiburg Basle Vienna 2000). He proposes a ‘transconfessional’ level, i.e. going beyond religious denominations, where the statement ‘I believe’ becomes more assured the more the ego

recedes. ‘Mystical experience is the experience of a one-ness of form and emptiness.’ The author has his roots in the mystical-contemplative tradition of western christianity. He sought to deepen religious experience and submitted to a 12-year zen training, among other places at a Buddhist monastery in Kamakura/Japan. In his opinion natural sciences validate mystical spirituality. He quotes the American Nobel prize winner Gary Zukav who wrote: ‘Don’t be surprised if in the 21st century lectures on meditation appear in university catalogues for physics.’ By the way, the physicist Hans-Peter Dürr gave lectures on physics for psychotherapists on the occasion of the Lindau Psychotherapy Weeks – with much success. In Willigis Jäger’s book, and also in his other publications (for example ‘Das Leben endet nie – Über das Ankommen im Jetzt’ or ‘Life never ends – how to arrive in the present’, Theseus, Berlin 2005) you will find valuable references to the spiritual practice of mysticism with a focus on sitting, breathing, and keeping silent.

One of the leading theologians of our times is Michael von Brück, university professor in Munich. In his book ‘Wie können wir leben? Religion und Spiritualität in einer Welt ohne Maß’ (How to live? Religion and spirituality in a world without moderation) (C.H.Beck, Munich 2002) he relates the search for spiritual experience to existential fears and modern forms of suffering from emptiness and loss of meaning. He analyses ‘images of hope’ in Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity and underlines the significance of utopias that support many an important hope. He formulates the interesting thought that utopian concepts can establish a qualitative standard to contradict the lack of moderation in today’s societies. Utopian concepts may then support belief in the beneficial effects of hope if they are combined with reason and a consistent education in responsibility, and also an honest perception of current social conditions, including the individual’s own and often neglected
potential: ‘It is about educating individuals to give up firmly established patterns of thought and habit, from a perspective of respect for life in all its forms in this and future generations.’

Another book to be mentioned in this context is ‘Einsichten – Ausblicke’ (Insights – outlooks) by Albert Hofmann, chemist, discoverer of LSD and natural philosopher (Nachtschattenverlag, Solothurn 2003). Albert Hofmann sees the so-called reality as the product of a transmitter – the entire external material world – and a receiver, that is an individual’s sensory consciousness. He quotes Ernst Jünger who wrote in his ‘Sicilian Letters to the Man in the Moon’: ‘What is real is just as miraculous as the miraculous is real.’ The transmitter/receiver concept of reality may help us to interpret extraordinary mental states, cosmic awareness, the unio mystica on a rational basis. The mystical vision is no illusion but the revelation of a different aspect of reality. All states of happiness are based on feelings of security in the widest sense of the word. Since all processes of life including human thought have an energetic basis in the way plants process light, the human spirit constitutes the highest, most sublime energetic level of transforming light. ‘The material world is no contrast to the spiritual world but its manifestation.’ Natural science and mystic experience of the world are no opposites in Albert Hofmann’s natural philosophy. For more details about this eminent scientists see Günther Engel and Paul Herrling (eds.) ‘Grenzgänger – Albert Hofmann zum 100. Geburtstag’ (Schwabe, Basle 2006).

A textbook of mystical truths from orient and occident is René Güüler ‘Die Mystik der Welt – Quellen und Zeugnisse aus vier Jahrtausenden’ (Mystics of the world – sources and reports from four millennia) (Otto Wilhelm Barth/Scherz, Bern, Munich, Vienna 1994). The focus of the American-Czech psychiatrist Stanislav Grof’s life-work is on the exploration of unusual states of consciousness where individuals perceive
extension not limitation and where they enter areas that are closed to our everyday consciousness. I mention as an example his book ‘Kosmos und Psyche – An den Grenzen menschlichen Bewusstseins’¹ (Wolfgang Krüger Verlag, Frankfurt 1997). In contrast to Gütler’s textbook mentioned above, Grof gives a systematic description of connections between consciousness research and eternal philosophy (Philosophia perennis). Like Albert Hofmann, Grof sees the universe as animated (this term should not be misunderstood as something resembling a human soul). A paradigm for his philosophy is the ‘unifying potential of birth, sexuality and death’. Grof is often called the ‘father of transpersonal psychology’. He coined the term ‘holotropic states of consciousness’ for the potential of humans to direct their conscious attention to wholeness. According to Grof, holotropic states are characterized by a specific altered state of consciousness, combined with changes of all sensory perceptions, with powerful and unusual emotions and deep-reaching changes in thought processes. I quote: ‘There are no scientific findings that demonstrate the priority of matter over consciousness and the non-existence of a creative intelligence in the universal order of things.’

Considering the role of music therapists as mediators between different (conscious) worlds, an excursion to a mythological subject might be appropriate that has fascinated not only children for thousands of years: What is an angel? The Italian publicist Paola Giovetti in her cultural-historical book entitled ‘Engel – die unsichtbaren Helfer der Menschen’ (Angels – Invisible Helpers of Man) (Ariston, Genf/Munich 1991) illustrated notions on angels as mediators in christian and non-christian beliefs from the perspectives of theology and depth psychology: angels in the biblical tradition, in arts, in important works of world literature.

Angels as phenomena of light appearing to the dying, or presented as ‘fallen angels’, and also the discovery of the ‘angel in us’ as helpers in need. Isn’t it tempting to assume the role of a guardian angel to help persons in need? But what are the implications? Angels are seen as sublime, pure and of celestial beauty, they guard our dreams and doings, they send us healing energy (Ditte and Giavanni Bandini: ‘Das Buch der Engel’ or book of the angels, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Munich 2005). Located between heaven and earth, mediators between God and humans, angels appear as caring guardians, but also as angry spirits with swords of fire. If it is true that images of angels serve as projections of our longing for a link to the divine, then we as therapists should be careful in choosing role models. Nevertheless I personally have perceived many a helper in situations of need as a guardian angel, not only because I felt effectively protected but because I felt healing energy of a quality going far beyond natural compassion.

It might be less risky for music therapists to see themselves as Muses instead of angels. In his book ‘Die Musen der Musik – Stimmig werden mit sich selbst’ (Muses in music – finding one’s own harmony) the music therapist Tonius Timmermann interprets music as a divine gift (Kreuz, Zurich 1989). For him, the language of sounds is better than the language of words to make contact with the next world, builds a bridge to the invisible world of spirits and gods and also to deepest layers of the unconscious. Our word ‘music’ derives from the Greek ‘musike’ that reminds of the gods of antiquity and of Muses. The nine Muses were believed to be the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne. Mystery cults often follow the basic concepts of purification, enlightenment, vision, unification. Timmermann sees the unification rituals as an expression of the probably deepest longing of mankind, that is, a blissful melting with the transpersonal, divine, original being.
Now to applications and their respective theoretical background. The American behavioural expert and meditation instructor Jon Kabat-Zinn developed a programme for ‘coping with stress through practiced attention’ that is employed in hospitals, health centres and business institutions all over the world; in his book ‘Zur Besinnung kommen’ (coming to our senses) (Arbor, Freiamt 2006) he describes in detail how to recognise attention and how to achieve a basic attitude that corresponds to the current circumstances at any given time. For Kabat-Zinn meditation is not just a technique but a way of life. The book has 664 pages and many redundancies, but the advantage is that reading it may already produce a meditative state free from criteria of efficiency or impatience. It is mainly about the potential to become aware of awareness from the perspective of the psychology of conscious behaviour.

While Jon Kabat-Zinn explores methods to achieve awareness, the Swiss psychiatrist Samuel Widmer addresses the contents of meditative exercise in his book ‘Vom Allerinnersten’ (Of the Innermost) (Basic Editions, Gerolfingen/Switzerland 2005) He reflects on issues like love, humility, sadness, trust, gratefulness or resolution in a metaphorical language that refers rather indirectly to what other authors call ‘spiritual’. Doubt, for example, is for him a part of the innermost that stimulates ‘religious curiosity’, the inquiring spirit that is able to penetrate and explore something.

Metaphors, by the way, play a significant role in almost any discourse on spirituality. For more details see the publications by Fritz Hegi (‘Übergänge zwischen Sprache und Musik’ or transitions between lan-


The psychosomatic clinic Heiligenfeld in Bad Kissingen hosts regular congresses on spiritual dimensions of healing. Lectures held at these congresses may be found, e.g., in Joachim Galuska and Albert Pietzko (eds.) ‘Psychotherapie und Bewusstsein – Spirituelle und transpersonale Dimensionen der Psychotherapie’ (psychotherapy and consciousness – spiritual and transpersonal dimensions of psychotherapy) (J. Kampphausen, Bielefeld 2005). The book gives insights into the spirituality of psychotherapists, into neurobiology, behavioural psychology and transpersonal psychotherapy.

Wilfried Belschner, professor of psychology in Oldenburg, cooperates closely with this clinic. In his latest book ‘Der Sprung in die Transzendenz. Die Kultur des Bewusstseins und die Entmystifizierung des Spirituellen’ (Jump into transcendence. Culture of consciousness and demystification of the spiritual) (LIT, Münster 2007) Belschner presents a radical suggestion to define spirituality. He replaces religious and far-eastern traditions by a more general postulate of a culture of consciousness. Based on the results of a 10-year empirical research project and the author’s personal meditative explorations, he presents the concept of an innovative fundament for professional action and for the health care system. He distinguishes between three states of consciousness (algorithmic, empathic and nondual presence) that have to be applied in the treatment process depending on the situation. This choice of terms shows that Wilfried Belschner locates the subject into a cognition-psychological frame of reference. The author thus offers to a scientifically oriented auditorium connectable concepts from professional psychology that may also be presented with ‘objective’ research instruments. For qualification in professional work thus designed, he presents a ‘training in transcendence’.

book is part of the series ‘Psychologie des Bewusstseins’ (psychology of consciousness) (eds.: W. Belschner and H. Walach) that represents the wide spectrum of spirituality (some key words: attention as a way of life; spiritual acting principles in psychotherapy; extraordinary experiences; states of consciousness; exorcistic concepts in counselling and therapy).

A systematic review on ‘Psychologie der Spiritualität’ or psychology of spirituality may be found in the new publication with the same title that is called a handbook (Beltz-PVU, Weinheim 2007). Anton Bucher, professor of religious pedagogics in Salzburg, explores the question why spirituality has become a significant topic in psychology. Of particular interest are comments on different developments of spiritual growth over a life-time. Another issue is the question how spirituality may affect physical and mental health. Some psychotherapists who refer to values they call spiritual distance themselves from mainstream psychotherapy with its scientific foundation because traditional psychotherapy mostly ignored the spiritual dimension of human existence over decades, with exceptions like Carl Gustav Jung or Viktor Frankl (e.g. ‘Ärztliche Seelsorge’, Deutike, Vienna and Frankfurt am Main 1982). Anton Bucher tries to fill a gap with his handbook and to show up connections. The author presents qualitative studies on various dimensions of spirituality and also some attempts to ‘measure’ spirituality. This is why this book is a rich source of information for music therapists who plan to do empirical research and are therefore interested in theoretical and methodological models.

Christian Scharfetter, professor of psychiatry in Zurich, is the author of a valuable and well-written book on ‘Allgemeine Psychopathologie’ (Thieme, Stuttgart 2002). Over many years he pursued the search of mankind for spiritual experiences from a perspective of intercultural psychology. In his surgery he was consulted by many individuals who were unable to
integrate altered states of consciousness in their self-image and worldview and therefore suffered crises (‘Der spirituelle Weg und seine Gefahren’, or The spiritual path and its dangers, Enke, Stuttgart 1997). In his book ‘Das Ich auf dem spirituellen Weg – Vom Egozentrismus zum Kosmocentrismus’ (The self on the spiritual path – from egocentrism to cosmocentrism’, Wissenschaft & Praxis Dr. Brauner, Sternenfels 2004), Scharfetter understands spirituality as ‘a basic attitude of the life-embracing orientation to the one entity that produces and removes any individual, any existing thing, that cannot be grasped by cognition nor affect but may nevertheless become the guiding star of orientation in life’. He interprets a spiritual attitude as a meaning in life that confirms and at the same time transcends religion, as ‘lived commitment – formless and in suspense’. Such an orientation in life, he says, is not irrational but transrational, a thought repeatedly voiced by Ken Wilber (compare Frank Visser: ‘Ken Wilber – Denker aus Passion’, or ‘Ken Wilber, an impassioned thinker’, Via Nova, Petersberg 2002). This means that the discovery of the spiritual dimension is not intended to replace rationality which is essential for survival but to enrich it and put it in a wider perspective.

Scharfetter illustrates possible erroneous attempts, taking ‘pseudomysticism’ as an example with various self-delusions that prevail in the ‘new age pop esoterics’ and among self-styled ‘neo-shamans’. In contrast to the often mentioned idea of relativation or even dissolution of the self in meditation, Scharfetter employs highly differentiated psychodynamic analyses. A strengthening of the ego may also become an objective, even an ‘ego freedom’ in the sense of Jean Gebser. The potential of the brain to keep an ‘observer ego’ active as a superior monitor may protect from excessive demands even in altered states of consciousness, comparable to ‘lucid dreams’.
In contrast to Christian Scharfetter, Prof. Jürg Willi, psychiatrist and psychotherapist and also from Zurich, explores the spiritual dimension specifically in the context of ‘co-evolution’ in close relationships. Jürg Willi starts from the meaning of self-fulfilment in love and the growth potentials resulting from the fact that longing is never completely satisfied (‘Psychologie der Liebe’, Rowohlt, Reinbek 2004). A ‘religious deepening of love’ might occur if lovers experience absolute unity in sexual ecstasy: a feeling of limitless connection with every living thing as ‘part of the big dance of life’ and – if you believe – even as becoming one with the divine. In his most recent book ‘Wendepunkt im Lebenslauf’ or ‘turning point in life’ (Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 2007) Jürg Willi integrates what some describe as spiritual experience into a general ecological view of life. In our postmodern, globalized and liberalized society an individual’s path through life quite often is no consistent story full of meaning and identity; there are many crises and turning points that produce inner changes as well. For Jürg Willi a turning point is an instant where the train of life changes tracks and starts off in a different direction. The suffering caused by the never quite perfect congruence of persons and their surroundings may stimulate the individual to leave his safe corner and to experience ‘transcendent feelings of being guided’. ‘The question is in how far we are open and willing to being touched by what is happening to us.’ Voices of others who are in contact with meaningful truths may help us to understand: ‘You are not alone. There is something that is bigger.’

The spiritual dimension of healing plays a specific role in palliative care. The book by Monika Renz ‘Zeugnisse Sterbender – Todesnähe als Wandlung und letzte Reifung’ (statements of the dying – nearness of death as change and ultimate maturity) (Junfermann, Paderborn 2005) has already been presented and critically reviewed in the journal Musikthera-

Therefore I shall not discuss it here. From the perspective of Buddhism, Christine Longaker defined four missions in life and death in her book ‘*Dem Tod begegnen und Hoffnung finden*’ (meeting death and finding hope) (Piper, Munich Zurich 1997): understanding and transcending suffering; taking up a relationship, rectifying relations and letting go; spiritual preparation for death; finding meaning in life. Our Heidelberg team in cooperation with Christine Longaker, the cultural scientist Eva Saalfrank and the music therapist Martina Baumann, designed a ‘network for an attentive culture of dying’ (see Eva Saalfrank and Rolf Verres ‘*Stärkung der eignenen Spirituality und Offenheit in der Sterbebegleitung*’ (strengthening one’s own spirituality and openness in palliative care, Zeitschrift für Palliativmedizin 2004, 5, 1-9). Martina Baumann is currently preparing a music therapy contribution to our network project; she may be contacted at martinasophiebaumann@gmx.de.

On the same subject, music therapists Sabine Rittner and Friederike von Hodenberg gave a detailed description how music therapy may be applied with fatally ill patients in the context of high-tech medicine, in their book ‘*Strahlentherapie im Erleben der Patienten*’ (how patients experience x-ray therapy, Johann Ambrosius Barth, Heidelberg, Leipzig 1997). The comprehensive chapter by Friederike von Hodenberg entitled ‘Dona nobis pacem’ addresses feelings of being safe within a wider entity, which may be interpreted in many different ways and be stimulated subtly by music therapists.

The above-mentioned psychiatrist Stanislav Grof, who teaches at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, wrote several important books on consciousness in the process of dying, for example ‘*Jenseits des Todes – an den Toren des Bewusstseins*’1 (Kösel, Munich

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1984), ‘Geburt, Tod und Transzendenz’\(^1\) (Kösel, Munich 1985), or ‘Totentbücher’\(^2\) (Kösel, Munich 1995). In his most recent book ‘The ultimate journey – Consciousness and the Mystery of Death’ (Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies – MAPS, Ben Lomond/California 2006) he summarizes his findings from four decades on this subject in a new way. He describes archaic ecstasy-inducing techniques, transition rituals in various cultures, mysteries of death and rebirth, and uses the Tibetan death book in particular to describe some ways of dying with an alert consciousness. In addition, Grof presents numerous experiences involving consumption of psychoactive substances in preparation for death. Known worldwide is Laura Huxley’s report on her husband Aldous Huxley who in the process of dying demanded to be injected with 100 micrograms of LSD. This report is part of Grof’s book. In this context I would like to mention that the area of psychedelic approaches in psychotherapy is by no means over. In Switzerland a research project is in preparation on LSD assisted psychotherapy for patients in advanced stages of life-threatening illness, under the management of Dr. Peter Gasser, president of the Swiss Physicians Association for Psycholytic Therapy (SÄPT) in Solothurn. In all these different approaches I believe the ultimate question is how to achieve a comprehensive resonance between individuals in existential borderline situations and their therapists.

Personally I was deeply impressed by Barbara Gindl’s book ‘Anklang – die Resonanz der Seele’ (accord- resonance of the soul, Junfermann, Paderborn 2002). This music therapist explores various dimensions of resonance and describes in detail how emotional resonance between

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individuals in a context involving music may point to something beyond our earthly existence that is inherent in all of us. I was influenced by Barbara Gindl just as much as by the very useful book by Friedrich Cramer ‘Die Symphonie des Lebendigen – Versuch einer allgemeinen Resonanz-theorie’ (symphony of the living – attempt at a general resonance theory, Insel, Frankfurt am Main 1996) when I wrote ‘Was uns gesund macht – Ganzheitliche Heilkunde statt seelenloser Medizin’ (holistic healing instead of soulless medicine) (Herder, Freiburg Basel Vienna 2006) which I shall not review here.

The book by David Aldridge and Jörg Fachner (eds.) ‘Music and Altered States – Consciousness, Transcendence, Therapy and Addictions’ (Jessica Kingsley, London Philadelphia 2006) has a very special place in this review. This international collection of texts addresses the question how music-induced altered states of consciousness may become significant for healing. The authors describe a wide range of phenomena from many different cultures, for example polyrhythmic music, monotonous drumming, western pop music and arabic forms of music. The chapters address theoretical issues and clinical applications in music therapy. The book is for music therapists, musicologists and ethnologists, psychologists, students and all researchers with an interest in the field. The two editors are experts of international renown for altered states of consciousness. David Aldridge is the author of many publications relevant to the subject, for example his books ‘Spirituality, Healing and Medicine: Return to the Silence’ (2000) and ‘Musictherapy Research and Practice in Medicine’ (1996, both Jessica Kingsley). Jörg Fachner graduated in social and educational sciences, and his doctoral thesis on Cannabis and music perception researched with electroencephalographic techniques at David Aldridge’s Chair for Qualitative Research in Medicine at the University Witten/Herdecke achieved the highest possible mark (summa cum
David Aldridge and Lucanne Magill conclude the book with reflections on music therapy and spirituality, with a specific view to understanding suffering and the challenges involved in terminal states of illness.

In conclusion I want to mention several books that have no immediate connection to music therapy but in my opinion are worthwhile reading for music therapists.

The logotherapist Otto Zsok follows in the tradition of Viktor Frankl. In his book ‘Musik und Transzendenz’ (EOS, Erzabtei Sankt Ottilien 1998) he tries to formulate the mental-spiritual contents of the most important works of western music. He quotes philosophers, theologists, composers and practicing musicians with a variety of ‘approaches to a resounding mystery’. He addresses in detail the Gregorian chorale as a ‘contemplation of eternity’, or Johann Sebastian Bach who wrote the music for the gospel, Ludwig van Beethoven as ‘man reaching out for heaven’ and also Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart who in the author’s opinion ‘translated the wisdom of an all-embracing love’ into music. Personally I found this book tremendously inspiring. Referring to the psychology of conscious behaviour on transcending experience, Otto Zsok explores fundamental structures of existence that may be felt in our innermost being and that he connects to the original logos. The author describes the emergence of western music as a mental-spiritual spring of wonderful clarity that may reveal certainties associated with an individual’s inner core and is able to fortify human consciousness with the knowledge that life on earth strives to achieve ultimate perfection, provided the individual attempts to live in accord with the harmony perceived in music.

The former school musician and therapist Claus Caspers voices similar ideas in his book ‘Mysterium Musik – Die abendländische Tradition aus
spiritueller Sicht: Von Bach bis Messiaen’ (the mystery of music – occidental tradition from a spiritual perspective: from Bach to Messiaen; Orpheus, Heidelberg 1991). The first part again explores the spiritual dimension of classical western music while the second part addresses various levels of consciousness on the basis of which the composers Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner, Mahler, Weber and Messiaen created their music that has the potential to guide listeners far into mental-spiritual space. Claus Caspers makes suggestions for deliberately contemplative listening that goes far beyond sensory pleasure, relaxation or even distraction. He proposes ‘music as a spiritual path’ and refers to masters from the far east, but also includes natural scientists in his considerations who related mystical experience of the world to empiricism. In times of antiquity the term for a harmonious accord of all existence was ‘spheric harmony’. The ability to perceive the harmony of spheres requires an ‘advanced soul’ that may physically experience a resounding reflection of cosmic harmony in a state of boundlessness. Caspers shortly mentions ways to cope with dissonances which are also of some significance in this context.

We see a completely different approach in ‘Musik und Spiritualität – Quellen der Inspiration in der Musik von der Frühzeit bis in die Moderne’ by Joscelyn Godwin, musicologist and teacher in New York (music and spirituality – sources of inspiration in music from antiquity to modern times, Otto Wilhelm Barth/Scherz, Bern Munich Vienna 1989¹). He takes modern physics as a basis where the existence of a closed material world is considered an illusion. For him, material matter is nothing but a visible state of universal energy, perhaps only of the spirit, and the laws of its generation are musical or harmonic by nature. We are surrounded

everywhere by unheard music that even enters our body. Everything we call material matter is in continuous vibration. The fact that only a certain range of vibrations reaches us closes our ears to the far larger range of vibrations which we do not perceive – which may be good or bad. From this perspective, ‘music of the spheres’ is perceived within a boundless cosmic horizon. For Godwin this means that harmonic systems may be related to various planet scales, something Johannes Kepler had tried to demonstrate. The author also explores astrological aspects of intervals which I must admit I am unable to follow, and finally speaks of ‘orders of angels and Muses’ in a variety of metaphorical meanings. He also discusses in detail the ideas of Georg Gurdjieff and his disciple P.D. Ouspensky on metaphorical laws of octaves and the seven-note scale as symbols of evolution, and analyses them for possible symbolism of overtone and undertone series. The book is very abstract, and readers are left to look for ways to relate personal musical experience to physical laws of the universe - if they are so inclined.

The classic by Joachim Ernst Berendt ‘Nada Brahma – Die Welt ist Klang’ (nada brahma – the world is sound, Insel, Frankfurt 1983) is far easier to understand. Berendt is not afraid of adventurous speculations either; for example, that protons or neutrons of the oxygen atom ‘vibrate in C major’, or that harmony is the ultimate objective in the world and that God created the universe ‘as one single incomprehensibly big musical instrument’ from sound. But Joachim Ernst Berendt finds such irresistibly charming words for his ideas that at some point it does not matter anymore to the reader (or at least not to me) whether the author presents sound scientific findings or whether he was (he is dead now) perhaps just a gifted story teller.

Rhythm doubtlessly plays an important part for individuals in borderline experiences. Mickey Hart, one of the two drummers of ‘Grateful Dead’,
wrote two very good books on the subject: ‘Drumming at the Edge of Magic – A Journey into the Spirit of Percussion’ (Harper Collins Publishers, New York 1990) and ‘Planet Drum – Celebration of Percussion and Rhythm’ (Harper Collins Publishers, New York 1991). The first was also published in German (title: ‘Die magische Trommel’ or magical drum, Goldmann, Munich 1991). The American original contains many very inspiring and artistic pictures and may therefore be recommended. ‘Planet Drum’ offers a feast for the eyes with fantastic pictures from many different cultures and periods. Of specific interest for our topic is the chapter ‘Rhythms of Life and Death’. How does rhythmic music act as a catalyst for transformation experiences? What is the role of musicians as individuals? How much training is necessary before a percussionist is able to employ powerful trance-inducing rhythms in an appropriate way? What have trance and ecstasy in common and how does a musician focus his attention at the threshold of magic? With curiosity and thoroughness Mickey Hart sets out to explore the spiritual essence of rhythm, its myths and legends. I believe every music therapist should have at least one of Mickey Hart’s publications in his or her bookcase.

There is one more delicious book to be mentioned: ‘Rhythm for Evolution – Das TaKeTiNa-Rhythmusbuch’ by the Viennese musician and composer Reinhard Flatischler – an opus magnum that is unique (Schott, Mainz, 2006). The book contains an interactive DVD (‘TaKeTiNa Explorer’) to practice rhythmic skills and creativity in all musical styles that permits improvisation in all European rhythms and others. The DVD contains highly stimulating video recordings that offer a synaesthetic perception of rhythmic ideas and their visualizations. I have accompanied Reinhard Flatischler in the various stages of this book production and contributed many of the metaphorical pictures and therefore may be somewhat prepossessed in favour, not least because of a TaKeTiNa work-
In conclusion I would like to mention an anthology by Michael Fischer (ed.) entitled ‘Da berühren sich Himmel und Erde – Musik und Spiritualität’ (where heaven and earth touch – music and spirituality, Benzinger, Zurich Düsseldorf 1998). The book contains a wealth of quotations from authors of many epochs and cultures on the origins of music, on images...
and similes and everything that was touched upon in this collective review.

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Angel numbers are recurring spiritual number sequences that carry angel meanings and symbolism. Reveal your angel number meanings and signals today. Spiritual Awakening is the initiation into expanded states of consciousness. Are you experiencing it? Here are the spiritual awakening signs you need to know... Beltane celebrates the peak of Spring and the bursting forth of new life. Learn 9 easy and fun ways for how to celebrate Beltane now! Ascended Masters Love Now Feeling Loved. Spirituality means many things to many people. Learn about the meaning of Spirituality and gain insights into this subject that is infinite in its scope. For those who seek the meaning of Spirituality there is much literature that can be found on the web. However, this presents another problem as one may get confused as to what to choose as an accurate definition. Sometimes, along the way seekers can experience a lack of will power, diligence or perseverance in their spiritual practice which will impede their spiritual growth. This is why being associated with other co-seekers or a spiritual organisation helps in providing seekers with the necessary impetus and encouragement in their spiritual journeys. 10. Practising Spirituality.