

NEWS RELEASE

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Laurier Centre for Music Therapy Research names first director *Heidi Ahonen-Eerikäinen to head only university-based research centre in Canada*

For Immediate Release

September 15, 2003

67-03

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WATERLOO – A world leader in Finnish music therapy has been named the inaugural director of the Laurier Centre for Music Therapy Research (LCMTR), the first university-based centre of its kind in Canada and only the fourth in the world. Heidi Ahonen-Eerikäinen will serve a one-year term as director of the centre beginning September 1, 2003.

Among the first challenges Ahonen-Eerikäinen will face as director is the development and implementation of the mission and mandate of the LCMTR, which is to advance the discipline and profession of music therapy. She will also attempt to improve the relationship between clinical practice and research, provide a context for applying diverse approaches and forge important and innovative links among research findings.

“Dr. Ahonen-Eerikäinen is in an excellent position to further Laurier’s reputation in music therapy throughout the world,” said Charles Morrison, dean of the faculty of music. “The Laurier Centre for Music Therapy Research is poised to be a leader as we look to discover music’s place within the health care system.”

Her teaching career includes posts at North Karelia Polytechnic, University of Helsinki and the Sibelius Academy for Further Education. She received her master of arts from the University of Helsinki as well as a doctorate of education from Joensuu University in Finland. She joined the music therapy program at Laurier in 2001 and was instrumental in preparing the curriculum for the master of music therapy program, which began in 2002.

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With her strong background in music therapy, education and psychotherapy, Ahonen-Eerikäinen is looking to further both professional research and the option of music therapy as a career for professionals from different areas of education and training.

“The overall focus of the centre will be to strengthen and shape the status of professional music therapy and music therapy research in Canada,” she said. “The LCMTR will create a synergy among the research team members’ areas of expertise, combining approaches and theoretical models to further the study of music therapy and its impact throughout the world.”

Laurier is currently the home of the only master’s program in music therapy in Canada. The LCMTR will provide a context for a wide variety of research and educational initiatives, involving and ultimately benefiting undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students, and music therapy professionals and researchers in music therapy and allied disciplines.

The faculty of music at Laurier offers a wide range of music programs, from performance, composition and music education, to theory, history and church music. With a limited enrolment of 300 undergraduate students, classes remain small and students receive a high level of interaction with nationally and internationally renowned scholars, performers and composers. The addition of the music therapy graduate program in 2002 has cemented Laurier’s position as a world leader in the field of music therapy education.