Welcome to Spotlight. I’m Robin Basselin. And I’m Colin Lowther. Spotlight uses a special English method of broadcasting. It is easier for people to understand - no matter where in the world they live. This is the sound of a cello. The musician concentrates on the music. He also wants the people listening to concentrate. He does not want them to sleep! This would be an insult to the music and the musician. But Briony Ming feels differently. She is happy when her music sends people to sleep. Briony is a music therapist. She is trained to use music to help people. Today’s Spotlight is on music therapy. Our ancestors knew how music can calm troubled people. The Christian Bible tells a story about an ancient king, Saul. King Saul suffered from fits of anger. He employed a young boy, David, to calm him with music. This was three thousand years ago. You can still read a collection of David’s songs in the Christian Bible. More than one thousand years ago, the Muslim scientist Al-Farabi also wrote about music. He wrote about the good effects music could have, especially for suffering people. He talked about this treatment in his book, “Meanings of the Intellect.” This may be the first book about music therapy! Ancient words from India also tell us: Listening to the happy music of the yazh puts people in a state of spiritual joy. It helps them to forget the pains of the world. Calming troubled minds. Helping suffering people. Bringing spiritual joy. Music can help people who are suffering mentally or physically. It can bring joy, and peace. Now, modern medical experts also recognize these effects. Briony Ming is among those who lead the way in this form of treatment. Briony works in a hospice. This medical centre cares for people who are dying. Briony believes that playing music can bring peace to people who are frightened or in pain. Briony talked about her work to local newspaper, This is Hull and East Riding. She said that music has a big effect on patients: “It is about giving them emotional support. It helps them express themselves. It helps them to communicate when words are not enough, or when it is not possible for them to communicate. It is possible to enjoy yourself and use the life you have left.” Briony cares for people of all ages -- from young children to those who are very old, helping them to make the most of their remaining days. It can be very difficult, but she says it is an honour to work with these people. The hospice in England where Briony works has a music room. There, Briony and her patients can play music. She likes to perform songs from the past. People enjoy it when she sings songs they remember from earlier and happy times in their lives. In the future, Briony also hopes that patients will be able to record their own music. She explains: “Everyone has songs that are part of who they are. It can be a way to connect with their past, with the music that connects to events in their lives. Some people do not think that they are interested in music, but it can bring back memories. It is part of who we are.” This part of music therapy is very important. Experts say that music can help people with memory problems. It can bring back memories - both good and bad. But it can also help in other areas. For example, a person with a brain injury may have problems speaking. But, with other treatments, music can help a person communicate. It can help a person learn to speak again. This is because music affects different parts of the brain. As a person listens to music, it builds connections in the brain. These new connections can help with healing. A stroke causes very serious injury to the brain. During a stroke, the brain does not get enough blood. This can cause parts of the brain to stop working. People who have had a stroke often have problems talking and moving. In studies with stroke patients, music has made a big difference. When combined with other treatments, patients who have music therapy show many improvements. They speak more easily. They have better, stronger movements. They also have less pain. But music also just makes people feel good. For people with emotional problems, music can build relationships. For people with deep sadness, music can create a feeling of hope and joy. This is true for Briony’s patients. Briony describes it this way: “It is about being with people in their sicknesses. It is about helping them find a way to deal with this experience. Having fun can be part of that. We invent musical games. Playing is sometimes a way of exploring how we feel. It can be a release of emotions. For people who have communication difficulties, music is a way of talking without having to use words.” A person does not have to be a skilled musician to experience these good results. Often, people do not believe that they can play music. But this is not true! Most people enjoy singing. Learning to play an instrument is also very helpful to a person’s brain. A person does not have to be an expert. And everyone can enjoy listening to music! Briony explained it this way: “When people are worried, afraid or in pain, music is not a wonder cure. But it can help.” What do you think about music therapy? Has music helped you during a difficult time in your life? Give your opinion on our website at http://www.radioenglish.net. The writer of this program was Alan Harris. The producer was Nick Mangeolles. The voices you heard were from the United Kingdom and the United States. All quotes were adapted for this program and voiced by Spotlight. You can listen to this program again, and read it, on the internet at http://www.radioenglish.net. This program is called, ‘Music As Medicine’. You can also leave your comments on our website. Or you can email us at radio@radioenglish.net. You can also find us on Facebook - just search for spotlightradio. We hope you can join us again for the next Spotlight program. Goodbye.