Illuminations by Christina Tourin is a lovely music book comprised of 25 of Tourin’s original compositions arranged for beginning, intermediate and advanced students. Not only is Illuminations a beautiful collection of healing songs, it also includes a section in the beginning that discusses the five equalities of music:

- **The Effect Modes Have On the Mood of the Listener** - This section looks at each mode or scale and gives beneficial information on the physical and emotional effects the modes have on our patients, and the proper setting in which they should be used.

- **Using the Patient’s Breathing and heart Rate to Determine Meter and Tempo** - Tourin discusses how the harp practitioner observes a patient’s breathing pattern to establish meter and tempo, taking care to match or entrain with the natural rhythms presented by the patient and looking at “what is willing to meet me?”

- **Determining the Patient’s Resonant Tone** - This portion of the book is brief overview of the phenomenon of resonant tone and how to find our own resonant tone by doing toning exercises singing the vowel sounds of A, E, I, O, U, one at a time, beginning with the highest pitch that we can reach and sliding down to the lowest pitch that we can sing, paying attention to what pitch and vowels sounds cause vibrations on whatever area of our body we are focusing. Tourin shares a wonderful story in this section on how, during a lecture on the benefits of harp therapy that she gave in London, a man on crutches in the audience limped forward and asked her if she could heal his leg. When the man revealed his enormously swollen leg, Tourin, intimidated, but trusting in her training, put her left hand on her harp strings and the right hand on his leg. She then began plucking strings. Nothing happened until she felt as though her hand was pulled down to the base of the harp where she plucked the D string. She reports feeling amazed as she felt an electric charge travel from the D string up through her left arm, shudder across her chest, and flow down her right arm. It was then that she immediately felt a warm spot on the man’s leg. She tried other strings, and nothing happened, so she returned to the D string and says that she kept the energy going through. She continued to pluck the D string as she moved down the man’s leg and then to his foot. His entire leg became very warm, she reports, and then the man stood up and walked away without his crutches for the first time in 12 years! This event, Tourin shares, was a confirmation for her to learn to trust the process and to remain curious about “what is willing to meet me!” Tourin emphasizes that resonance needs to be experienced by the healer to be successful in interpreting a patient’s signals and notes how students in the International Harp Therapy Program are trained in using the technique of Inclusive Attention. Inclusive Attention is following certain body indications until the overall resonant tone of a patient is determined. This can also include determining the vibrational frequency of everything that is in the space of the room. This is key to our work as harp therapy practitioners.
• **Tone Quality of Delivered Music and Intervals** - Tourin discusses in this section the importance of harp therapists being comfortable with our instrument so that we can produce the most pleasing and relaxing healing sounds for our patients without struggle or disruption of the flow of the rhythm needed for a smooth delivery of healing music. The playing of a single tone, Tourin reminds us, needs to be delivered with grace and finesse so that the tone can travel “through the ocean of air molecules on its way to the patient and listeners beyond.” Inclusive Attention, Intention and understanding how intervals affect mood is essential and imperative to the harp therapy practitioner in delivering a nurturing cradle of sound. Tourin reminds us that the technique needed to play bedside in hospice or hospital settings, are different from what is required in an orchestra, for a solo performance or in group settings such as those in nursing home or assisted living centers; each of these setting requiring a harp designed to project sound at an appropriate distance. Therefore, the International Harp Therapy Program recommends a 22-stringed Therapy Harp with a three-octave range that reaches from C below middle to C two octaves above middle C. Tourin notes that the tension of a Therapy Harp is lighter than most harps and more suitable for the comfort of our patients, especially when playing bedside. A harp that has too bright of a sound can be irritating and discomforting to patients who might be on morphine drips. A Therapy Harp is also light-weight and portable so that we can easily manage holding the harp over a patient’s body and engage the patient in playing the harp, as well.

• **Musical Genres and the Benefits of Music to Patients** - Included in the back of the book is an extensive list of songs from various genres and time periods. This list is extremely helpful to students of the IHTP as we prepare for the 33 tunes we are required to memorize from at least 11 or 12 different genres. I love how the music list has noted the birth year and the year that the song was a hit on the music charts; an easy resource for us to reference especially when we are working with Alzheimer’s patients and are in need of an appropriate song to play that connects them with their teenage or courtship years. Tourin reminds us of the benefits of playing appropriate songs for our patients, and of how doing so can affect brain waves, oxygenation levels, heart rates, immune systems and how the vibrations of the harp can change the cellular structure of cancerous cells. We are also reminded of how our playing also provides healing comfort and relaxation not only for our patients, but for their families and their healthcare workers, as well.

Though the music in this book is primarily written for the harp, all pieces can also be played on the keyboard and other instruments. It is very helpful that each composition is arranged for various levels of playing, as well as size of harp, as is noted at the top left corner of the page of each variation of the song. Along with what key or mode the composition is in, the notes on which to improvise are also noted, as is the proper setting in which the tune might be played such as hospice, the hospital, NICU, pediatrics, etc. A companion CD of the beautiful music in *Illuminations* is also available for purchase. Tourin’s brilliant *Illuminations* recordings are soothing and relaxing, and I have found that listening to the CD has greatly enhanced my learning of the required songs in the *Illuminations* music book. *Illuminations* is a magical book of healing songs. I have certain favorites such as Annwyn, Little Dove, Harbor Cove, Anam Cara and Seal Lullaby, but I am looking forward to mastering all of them to cradle my patients.