



THE MUSIC HOUSE FOR CHILDREN

PIANO ★ GUITAR ★ VIOLIN ★ DRUMS ★ PERCUSSION ★ TRUMPET ★ CELLO
UKULELE ★ SINGING ★ MUSIC FOR BABIES ★ MUSIC FOR UNDER FIVES
INSTRUMENTAL LESSONS ★ HOME TUITION ★ WORKSHOPS ★ CONCERTS

July 2015 FINAL REPORT Funded by Universal Music Music and Composition Project

A music composition and performance project for young people with Autism and additional needs

A 10 week project taking place each week at QM school (outstanding provision for children and young people with autism and additional needs) for two terms. Commencing January 2015, concluding July 2015.

Outline

A club focusing on cross genre/cultural musical composition for young people with additional needs including: autism, language delay, learning difficulties, ASD, hearing and visual impairments and learning difficulties.

Overall Description

QM school (London) will be the beneficiary of the project. The school made provision for young people aged 14 to 16 to come as two groups on Monday afternoons during school hours. The groups varied a little as these young people had the choice to come or not. There was a core of four young adults who came every week and others making a total of seven who varied in attendance.

The two groups of seven young people had the opportunity to come together each week for jamming/composition and improvisation. Sessions were adapted accordingly to ensure all who attended were able to achieve all learning outcomes and be fully integrated in the project.

The performance of all pieces composed, arranged, adapted and learnt were performed on Sunday 21st June at The Music House and on Monday 6th July at QM school. Funders, family and friends and school pupils attended.

The basic lesson plan was constructed carefully to build on skills and confidence. The format has arisen out of many projects undertaken by The Music House for Children (TMHfC). The session is interspersed with chants which name the instruments and linking rhythms which often involve body percussion (1.19.15 sec A Clip #36.1). In these sessions the young people had the opportunity to enjoy themselves as a group in contrast to their normal routine of individualised learning and one-to-one support.

This type of musical activity is unusual in the school routine in that it supported music making together. Even though the group was 'led' by musicians Kirsty and Antonio, they were attuned to the young people's needs and enabled them to lead whenever appropriate. Research shows that for young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) playing music supports social and personal development (Wigram, T. and Elefant, C. 2009). QM School is particularly dedicated to the efficacy of teaching music throughout the school.

Evaluation of the Outcomes with examples of the young people's responses.

This report is written against the following outcomes. A monitor observed and filmed the groups on January 19th 2015, June 22nd 2015 and at the concert on July 6th 2015. The leaders Keogh and Parjea monitored responses week by week and adapted their plans accordingly.

OUTCOME 1

- **Musical: Develop and enhance children/young peoples' skills in music composition (cross genre / cross cultural), vocal skills and live instrumental performance.**

The first observation was made in the second lesson. Because of the music-making already present in the school, some young people knew how to play some of the instruments. There were also some young people who Kirsty had taught before in other special schools or at The Music House for Children.

Group responses

Young people enter to the soft and soothing sounds of a guitar and they often become calm very quickly. The leader sings a 'Hello' song to all of them individually and then leads them in a warm-up involving movement and body percussion. Djembes are brought in at a crucial point in the lesson, when the young people have relaxed into a different space and in closer proximity than usual to each-other. Music therapy case studies (**Wigram and Elefant, 2009**) show that when young people are able to experience vibrations through their hands alongside resonant sounds (e.g.guitars and drums) this enjoyment is remembered and is anticipated from lesson to lesson.

Pauses are incredibly important for these young people so they can respond with music as if they are having a conversation. In musical learning pauses indicate silent moments, and is a powerful tool in nurturing listening skills. A number of individuals play riffs in crescendo after song phrases are completed. e.g. Amir (**6.22.15 sec A Clip 179**), (**7.6.15 sec QM Clip 163**);

Early in the New Year the younger group responded to 'stop' and 'start' with djembes but then became caught up in their individualised playing (**1.19.15 sec QM Clip 34.3**). In contrast the older group play their djembes stopping and starting on cue, with more confidence to play different solos (**1.19.15 sec QM Clip #36.2**).

Five months later all the younger group play together and then play solos on the djembes (**6.22.15 sec QM Clip 157**). In the next part of the lesson they all responded in their own ways during the extended improvisation section: O played a few high notes with Antonio (leader) on the keyboard, E lurched forwards and backwards to the beat placing her hands on the djembe each time, K played the djembe and then the tambourine; Z vocalised and Om. vocalised and shook a tambourine; A played the djembe to a point where it sounded like he wanted to increase the musicality of the sounds; T gently played the xylophone (**6.22.15 sec QM Clip164**). The older group enjoyed playing their solos and sustained the music for some time (**6.22.15 sec QM Clip 168**).

Welch et al (2007 - 2009) show that young people with ASD make unconventional sounds (e.g.squealing) and actions (throwing). These are actually positive responses to the music. e.g. In Z first lesson he attempts to strum the guitar strings with the help of his TA. As he relaxes into the session he begins to vocalise. He continues to make short squeals in response to the rhythm of the rhymes and songs (**6.22.15 sec QM Clip 146.1**).

The introduction of a microphone and PA system encourages much more singing and vocalising. Kirsty finds that almost all the young people children will sing solo with the microphone. Generally they do not sing without one. They have something to sing into. This habit indicates the support that appropriate resources provide, and the imaginative development of personal experiences.

In turn resources help children to engage with confidence. It is more difficult for them to hear themselves at normal volume. At the concert there were many children that Kirsty had not met before. They all sung and vocalised in time to the beat into the microphone. Maciej, the school's music teacher, said that K (new student) is speaking to him in the one to one sessions, particularly through the microphone.

Two weeks later, performing for peers, parents and supporting adults, all the young people responded together to the music with their djembes and tambourines. For example whole group attempts to play together as a group can be heard in the accompaniment to Ukulele blues (7.6.15 sec QM Clip 194). Young people such as S participated more wholeheartedly in the concert with a parent in the audience than in the weekly lessons (7.6.15 sec QM Clip 188).

OUTCOME 2

- **Social: To improve confidence, social skills and the ability to work effectively as a team with leading professionals and their peers (with additional needs/vulnerable backgrounds).**

There are more than three times as many boys as girls. Each child has a different spectrum of difficulty in social confidence and communication. Wigram and Elefant (2009) suggest that turn-taking and turn-yielding can be indicative of the participant's social skills and much of the planning is based on duets and call and response musical interactions (see examples below and from the individual case studies).

At the beginning of the project the younger group were confident to play drum solos (1.19.15 sec QM Clip #34.4) They then enjoyed playing as drum teams and play in turn as Kirsty and Antonio lead (1.19.15 sec QM Clip #34.5). At the beginning the older group were able to follow Kirsty's instructions and play well together (1.19.15 sec QM clip 36.1)

Regulars and other young people who decided to join in the performance responded with body percussion in front of the audience of parents, peers, teachers, and funders. (7.6.15 sec QM Clip 157) They also participated wholeheartedly in familiar songs and movement (7.6.15 sec QM Clip 160). They enjoyed playing djembes (7.6.15 sec QM Clip 167)

There were many instances of audience participation during the concert e.g. (7.6.15 sec QM Clip 197)

The TA's were supportive of their charges but did not engage confidently in movement or music-making. TMHfC teachers have found that they need to be quite explicit about their expectations of other adults in the room, and it takes some time to build up confidence.

By the middle of the project a number of TA's modeled playing instruments, helped the young person to play if necessary and mirrored them. This was achieved by the positive communication and guidance of the music leader. In her studies of Autistic children in primary schools, Lloyd (2013) found that children who were supported by TA's who prioritised mutual relating showed increased happiness, confidence and made friends with each other. Frith, 2003 (cited in Lloyd, 2013) found the enthusiasm of the people leading successful interventions had a greater effect than the rationale of the intervention itself.

OUTCOME 3

- **Personal: To increase positive wellbeing, self esteem in all participants musically and personally.**
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There are often young people participating in the lessons who are new to the school. This means that there are often young people who are more withdrawn at first. Lesson delivery prioritised mirroring musicality when young people had the confidence to take the lead. e.g. S started rapping a 'Harry Potter' verse into the microphone which Kirsty converted into a song (1.19.15 sec QM Clip 40). During the concert S extended her vocalisations and the rest of the group accompanied her on their instruments (7.6.15 sec QM Clips 181 to 188)

Tracking individuals (All outcomes)

T

In January T plays the Tibetan hand drum correctly as soon as he receives it but then tries to shake it when Kirsty begins to sing. He drums and claps in time in response to number chants. (1.19.15 sec QM Clip 34.2). He later plays a complex drum riff when a solo is requested

In the lesson observed in June, T chose to sit outside with the door open and played the djembes with a rhythmic pattern as soon as he got them (1.19.15 sec QM Clip152).

During the concert two weeks later he asserted his individuality by remaining sitting when everyone else stood, but he remained part of the group and engaged in the musical activity seated (**7.6.1 sec QM Clip 160**).

O

Early in the project, O is taught how to strum the ukulele just after he comes in to engage him. Kirsty teaches him the 'C' chord. Occasionally he plays the cabasa correctly. At one point when Kirsty begins to sing, O strums her guitar. He can also sing in correct pitch in the call and response sections of 'Aluetta' (**1.19.15 sec QM Clip 34.1**). Sanderson et al (2013) found that young people respond very positively when their teachers duet with them.

By the second observation, O takes the second guitar, plucking and strumming as Kirsty sings the 'Hey Hello' song. O occasionally adds to the music with high notes while Antonio (second leader) plays blues chords on the piano. When Kirsty used her voice as an instrument O responds to this with other vocalisations (**6.22.15 sec QM Clip 162**).

T

Over the two terms T develops more and more confidence. He shows a talent for music, can read musical notation and remembers the words to many songs. The other young people enjoy his performances and collaborate to make backing music (**7.6.15 sec QM Clip 178**). He is undertaking the GCSE Arts Award for differently abled young people.

Early in the year T performed with disco lights, microphone, and accompanying music during the session (**1.19.15 sec QM Clip 41**). T is a big Elvis fan and by the end of the project led the whole group in "All Shook Up" (**6.22.15 sec QM Clips 180, 181**) making the same movements as Elvis. Two weeks later he sang an extended version for the concert with even more moves. (**7.6.15 sec QM Clips 177, 178, 179**). It can be seen that a larger space and an audience contributed to his performance - this can be seen comparing the film clips. Makjek the school's music teacher, reported that T is singing every day.

E

19.1.15 E is does not play, or even explore the ukulele, even though she is encouraged by nearby adults. Antonio plays one to one with her and after no response, he brings her a djembe to which she responds more readily. She moves her whole body forward as she beats the drum with both hands in a regular rhythm, continuing after others stop playing. She continues to play like this throughout the project. However as she becomes more settled in the group, she becomes interested in other instruments when she is able to play with a leader's full attention. She begins to enjoy the tactile and auditory pleasure of the guitar e.g. She looks directly at Kirsty with a big smile as she is helped to strum the guitar (**6.22.15 sec QM Clip 146.2**). Unlike many of the other children, she sat behind the main group mostly observing during the concert.

K

K is new to the school. In his second group music lesson, he looks to his TA for support as the guitar is presented to him. Even with encouragement it is too unfamiliar. However later in the session he gently lifts his feet during the warm-up. Later he gradually begins to play his djembe alongside the others.

A

A tends to sit hunched up but responds very positively to body percussion and musical instruments. When he feels excited he vocalises and moves to the tempo. He also beats riffs on the djembe during

pauses. He responds musically to the words 'short' and 'loud'. He can strum the ukulele in time with the leaders, placing his fingers on the frets on the shape of chords and clearly enjoys the whole activity (22.6.15 sec QM Clip 168).

Modules

The music club covered the following modules:

Percussion

Children/young people will have the opportunity to explore sound making through body percussion, vocalisation, beat boxing, tuned and un-tuned percussive instruments. Technique will be developed to create arrangements and compositions, write lyrics and explore rhymes/songs. Classical, jazz, hip hop, pop etc, well-known repertoire, and the children/young people's own compositions will all be explored using group and solo musical games and activities.

Vocal

Varying genres and repertoire will be developed within our vocal module as well as participants' own compositions. Vocal concepts including warm ups, styles, technique, vocalising together and learning simple harmonies will also be explored. This important aspect of vocal study gives children/young people an insight into the excitement of live performance.

Instrumental

Improvisation, exploring repertoire, composition, playing in small/large groups, playing with guest performers/artists and playing solo will all be studied. Varying genres will be explored with experienced musical leaders supporting individual learning on a variety of instruments.

Technology

Ipads, microphones, amplified music and electronic devices will all be used and skills developed throughout the two terms. Children/young people will have the opportunity to explore making and recording music with technology.

These modules will be explored independently/group by all young people/children accordingly to their needs and ability.

Musical Leaders

Kirsty Keogh BMus (Education and Project Coordinator at The Music House for Children) will head the project. Kirsty has extensive experience with SEN groups, and a range of sensory disorders. Kirsty teaches piano, guitar and voice.

Antonio Parjea MA (Music Tutor at The Music House for Children) will act as the assistant music leader: Antonio gained experience of working with children/young people with SEN as a qualified primary school teacher. Antonia teaches piano, voice and theory.

Additional support will come from Emma Hutchinson MA, Founder of TMHFC. Emma will provide integrity, clarity and support throughout the process of the project. Emma has led many projects and case studies for children over the last 25 years including those with SEN and EAL.

End of Project

Performances took place at The Music House annual summer concert and at QM school for all our pupils involved in projects and learning to come together to perform in front of their peers and families.

Children/young people will be sent via drop box MP3's of all songs and repertoire recorded by the group(s).

REFERENCES

Lloyd, E. (2013) 'To what extent is the relationship between teaching assistants and pupils with autism valued and facilitated as an educational strategy in mainstream schools?' : GAP 14:1

Sanderson, T et al (2013) 'MusicSPACE at home: a music tuition model for people on the autistic spectrum' (GAP, 14, Supplement 1)

Welch, G. et al (2007 - 2009) 'Sounds of Intent' - 4 to 19 year olds

Wigram, T. and Elefant, C (2009) 'Therapeutic dialogues in music: Nurturing musicality of communication in children with autistic spectrum disorder and Retts syndrome; Chapter 19 in **Malloch and Trevarthen 'Communicative Musicality'** Oxford University Press