**AURHYTHMICS BLOG 2**

**Generalisation of live music sessions into classroom listening programmes**.

Live music sessions delivered face to face with anyone is likely to illicit positive enjoyment and engagement. However it inevitably raises the next question as to where do we go following this lovely experience?

Seashell has been delivering Aurhythmics to a cohort of hearing impaired students with complex additional needs for almost a year now and the Youth Music funded project is drawing to a close. The face to face live music sessions have proved to be hugely popular both with the students and support staff, but as part of our project brief we were keen to address how to carry this work forwards in order to embed and promote listening skills in the wider environment.

It was hardly practical to drag two musicians, their instruments and the audiologist/singer to classrooms and residential houses for each student on the programme. So we decided to record the session songs that corresponded to individual targets and measured outcomes. This proved to be challenging, not least because of the ongoing impact of Covid 19. How could we do this within the constraints of ensuring those students with more significant hearing loss could actually hear the recorded music, working in tight bubble groups, mask wearing and restrictions on instrument playing?.

After lengthy discussions, sections of their sessional music input were recorded using the same instruments and voices that we used for live music, and we provided very structured scripts on the delivery of this recorded music. Given the difficulty of finding safe places to deliver the programmes, we used iPads with speakers as the most practicable portable solution. It was also clear that we would need to train and guide support staff around listening programmes, the acoustic environment and provide student specific information. Key workers and class teachers and/or residential managers were recruited to the programme and given the training, through a power point presentation and question and answer sessions. The ‘buy in’ proved very favourable as staff were keen to find stimulating activities to do with their students given the range of problems and limitations imposed by Covid; although Covid continued to disrupt the best laid plans, many recorded listening sessions went ahead. Again support staff were surprised by the student engagement and enthusiasm. Their anticipation of actions within songs and recognition of familiar tunes have given staff the impetus to continue to carry out these listening programmes on a one to one basis and enjoy the close interaction. Feedback has been very positive despite the pragmatic approach that we had to take!

Jane Douglas

20th April 2022