

# The Live Audience Accessibility & Augmentation Project (LAAA)

Exploring Inclusive Haptic Futures for Music Festivals

**Adrian Bossey**

# Presentation Overview

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- **Discuss accessibility for people who are d/Deaf, disabled or neurodiverse to music festivals**
- **Introduce haptic ICT**
- **Consider the LAAA Project**
- **Share on-going research directions**



Image: 'a level pathway to accessibility' - CREDIT: A Bossey

# Disability in the UK

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- ***“An individual can be classified as disabled if they have ‘a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on (their) ability to do normal daily activities”*** (The Equality Act, 2010)
- In 2020/21, **24 percent of the UK population** (16 million people) had a “physical or mental health condition or illness that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more” (House of Commons Library 2023:1)
- “More than a quarter of UK residents will be aged 65 years or over within the next 50 years” (Office for National Statistics, 2018)

# Some music context

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*The music industry is exclusive, it **discriminates** against pretty much all the protected characteristics of the Equality Act **and** poverty*

***“73% of disabled respondents felt they had to compromise their health or wellbeing to do their job (vs 52%)”*** UK Music Diversity report (2024)

*Accessibility refers to **“measures put in place to address participation by those with impairments”*** Finkel, Sharp & Sweeney (2019. 2)

- **Attitude is Everything** “connect disabled people with music and live event industries to improve access together”
- At **Falmouth University** “we work towards an equitable and diverse world”

# Accessible Digital Futures

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- Existing ICT augmentations can increase access
- **Hearing loops** which deliver a wireless signal for hearing aids (Hearing Link Services, 2023)
- Time synchronised text in the form of **closed captioning** (Mahoney 2023)
- **Sign language interpretation** on a big video screen
- **Haptic technologies??**

# Haptic Technologies

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- Touch is one of the **“big five”** senses (Sensory Trust 2020:3)
- Identified by Robertson et al (2015:580) as a likely element of future audience experiences at music festivals.
- **“Deep-seated correlations”** between the senses of hearing and touch (Jack et al 2015)
- Haptic ICT deploys tactile sensations to **“stimulate the sense of touch in a user experience”** (Mass Challenge 2021)
- **Vests, dance floors, benches, gloves, sneakers ...**

# My Research

Considers **'liveness'**, haptic technology and potential digital futures for accessible live performances for people who are d/Deaf, disabled or neurodivergent at music festivals



Image: Attendees at NIN at Eden Sessions 2022 – credit Adrian Bossey



Image: Stormy live at Glastonbury 2019, 'live' on BBC; on my TV – credit Adrian Bossey

# Live Audience Accessibility & Augmentation Project (LAAA)

- Live public performances in AMATA
- In-conversation events with Suzanne Bull, Attitude is Everything and Lucy Evans, In Place of War
- Deaf Rave DJ Workshops for schools groups
- A haptic sound installation by PhD students
- Accessing Culture & Tourism Workshops
- Subsidised places on Attitude is Everything CPD course
- Volunteering opportunities for UG students



IMAGE: LAAA 80 Raves Poster



# LAAA Project Outputs

- 255 attendees
- 17 businesses supported
- 2 schools supported, 5 performers showcased
- 124 students engaged
- Research towards proposed journal article:  
**Developing a scale to measure perceptions of 'liveness' during augmented performances designed to increase accessibility at music festivals**
- 1 Royal Visit



IMAGE: LAAA Royal visit

# LAAA Project Images



Image: Attendees at LAAA Project using BEAT BLOCK haptic floor CREDIT Matt Jessop



IMAGE: Attendees at LAAA Project DEAF RAVE DJ Workshops CREDIT: Matt Jessop

# Live Audience Accessibility & Augmentation 2 Project(s)



Image: Attendees at Boomtown Fair 2023  
Deaf Rave takeover – credit Adrian Bossey



Image: Attendees using BEAT BLOCKS haptic floor  
CREDIT Rah Petherbridge .

# Thank You

- We have time for a 15 minute discussion ...
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Image: LAAA Tourism Poster

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