

PROPOSAL for Able Assembly 2025 from: Adrian Bossey, Falmouth University
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Live Audience Accessibility & Augmentation – Exploring Accessible Haptic Futures for Music Festivals

Music festivals need to increase accessibility for people who are Deaf, disabled or neurodivergent. In response, music festivals are increasingly deploying ICT augmentation designed to enhance accessibility. This presentation considers three successful Live Audience Accessibility & Augmentation ('LAAA') projects exploring haptic technologies, pertaining to the sense of touch, for people who are Deaf, disabled or neurodivergent.

The initial LAAA project at Falmouth University in May 2023 built on previous research to evaluate audience experiences of engaging with authentic 'live' music performances. Attendees were invited to experience BEAT BLOCKS a new Bass flooring system which transforms sound into felt vibration. Six LAAA events were devised to support the gathering of research data via questionnaires and deliver a range of knowledge exchange outputs.

Two follow-on LAAA2 projects from August 2023 to July 2024 measured audience perceptions of experiencing the BEAT BLOCKS flooring system, or wearing haptic vests on-site at selected Music Festivals. LAAA2F field tested Woojer haptic vests during Deaf Rave performances at Boomtown Fair and the Deaf Rave Festival. LAAA2BB installed BEAT BLOCKS at; Cheltenham Jazz Festival, Meltdown Festival and Tropical Pressure. A photo elicitation methodology was adopted along-side questionnaires considering potential policy implications. Knowledge exchange outputs and publications are anticipated.

Adrian Bossey is Head of Subject at Cornwall Business School, Falmouth University and former artist manager whose clients included Carter the Unstoppable Sex Machine and Chumbawumba. At Falmouth, Adrian leads delivery of courses including BA(Hons) Sustainable Festival Management in partnership with the Eden Project. Adrian is a Trustee of Attitude is Everything and Chair for the Association of Events Management Educators. His research interests include potential digital futures for live performances at music festivals. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9874-6323>