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Creating Accessibility in Classical Music Institutions

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Institute for Arts Education
and Special Needs

Creating Accessibility in Classical Music Institutions

ABLE Assembly 2022

Welcome & Introductions

Presented by Erin Parkes, PhD

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Adjunct Professor, School of Music, University of Ottawa

Questions We'll Explore

What are some of the barriers to participation in music education in the traditional Western music culture?

What are some of the factors that contribute to those barriers?

What changes can we make towards equitable participation for people with exceptionalities?

Two Levels of Barriers

Access to music education

Equitable participation in festivals, competitions and exams

“They’re just not cut out for music lessons”

- The notion of talent
- 10,000 hours (or at least, A LOT of practice)
- Adherence to strict standards of excellence

Required Skills to Engage with Classical Music

- Sustained attention
- Executive function skills to facilitate practice
- Perseverance
- Advanced motor skills
- Others?

Traditional Teaching Approaches

- Most teach the way they were taught
- Reading approach favoured
- Onus on student

Policies and Practices that Lead to Exclusion

- Auditions for music studios or programs
- Assessment through exam systems
- Mandatory participation in festivals and recitals

Proposed Changes towards Equitable Access

- Accommodations and modifications in curriculum or requirements in exams, festivals and auditions
- Adapted assessment
- Professional development for music educators
- Redefine our view of music education



Thank you!

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