2C) “Don’t Jump on My Life!”: Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Utilizing the Bass Guitar with a Boy with Emotional and Neurodevelopmental Challenges

Matthew Brady, MT-BC (USA)

The clinical potential of using the bass guitar in music therapy is a topic that has had limited exploration, particularly as a primary clinical intervention. This presentation will share a case study on the individual treatment of a boy with significant emotional and neurodevelopmental challenges, during which the music therapist began using the bass in sessions. While examining the treatment process, examples will be shown of how the bass was used with an improvisational approach to enhance the client’s engagement in music-making, create a sense of empowerment and safety in sessions, provide organization for his thoughts and ideas, and facilitate further emotional expression within aesthetic form. Key concepts of the bass as they relate to music therapy will be illustrated, including aesthetic qualities, the role of the bass as a rhythm section instrument, and when and how to move beyond this conventional role in a clinical context.

Matthew Brady, MT-BC is the music therapist at Imagine Academy in Brooklyn, NY. He earned his BS in music therapy with a minor in psychology from Molloy College, where he is currently completing a graduate degree in music therapy. Matt also has additional certification as a DIRFloortime® provider. In 2015, Matt completed advanced training in Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy, focusing on using the bass guitar as a primary clinical instrument.