

Joy of music for all

There is music to cater for all types of tastes, but getting enjoyment out of music for a deaf person is nearly impossible. Now, Southampton researchers are investigating how patients with a cochlear implant can 'hear' music. Cochlear implants can enable people with severe to profound hearing loss to perceive and understand speech. However, current technology doesn't allow the same with music due to the complexity of the sound produced.

Music professor David Nicholls, project composer Dr Ben Oliver and Dr Rachel van Besouw from the University's Institute of Sound and Vibration Research (ISVR), with the help of a £109,000 grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, are looking at ways to help patients from the South of England Cochlear Implant Centre, based at the University.

Through innovative music workshops in conjunction with the Southampton Community (SoCo) Music Project, the team will explore the aspects of music that can be appreciated by patients through listening, computer-based and practical activities.

"We want to build a computer tool kit of listening exercises that people can listen to at home, which will help them to distinguish, recognise and appreciate different musical sounds," says David.