

Signing Music Videos

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Music is a Universal Language¹

Deaf and Hard of Hearing people can enjoy music through feeling rhythm and musical vibrations, writing music, and playing instruments. One way that Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and hearing people are increasing access to music is by creating ASL music videos.

It's Everybody's Music²

Deaf Professional Arts Network (D-Pan) is an organization that aims to make music and music culture accessible to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The signed music videos they produce began from feelings of oppression by a community that has been misunderstood and discriminated against for years. They say, "We are waiting on the hearing world to drop their prejudices and acknowledge us not as a lesser group, but as equals."

The Deaf Experience of Music³

Music is a full body experience for the Deaf, who absorb rhythm from bass vibrations while immersing in lyrics via the hand, face and body communication of sign language, in a kind of visual poetry. The best ASL videos don't translate lyrics word-for-word, they reinterpret the energy, style, and meaning for audiences.

Contrary Voices⁴

Some Deaf people feel that hearing people making ASL music videos is a form of cultural appropriation. This is especially true when hearing people make money from these videos. Other Deaf people feel that when hearing people attempt to engage with Deaf culture, it is a positive thing, and that the videos encourage recognition of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.