

signed music:
rhythm of the heart



DEAF ARTS HANDBOOK SERIES
Volume 2

signed music : RHYTHM OF THE HEART

Any individual or organization wishing this handbook should contact the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf or the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE at info@deafculturecentre.ca

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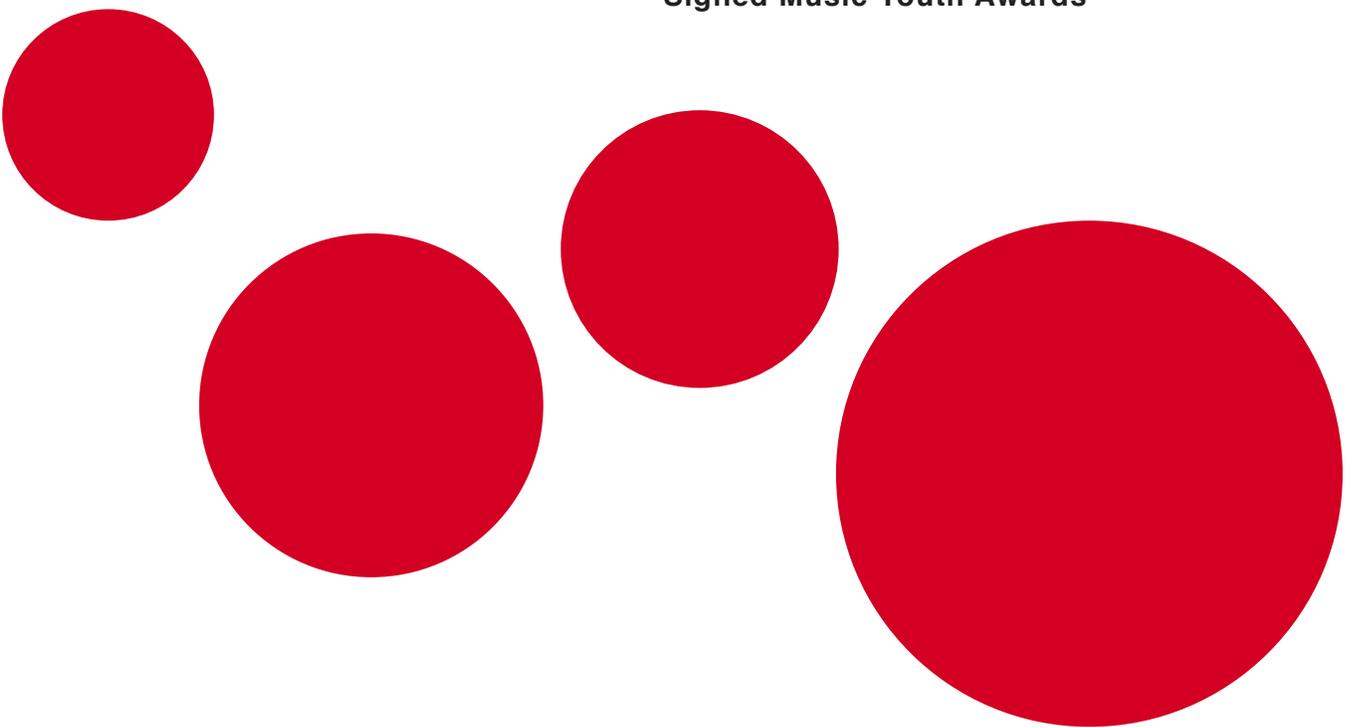
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 Volume 2 - Signed Music: Rhythm Of The Heart
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 Volume 4 - Deaf Filmmaking: Take Two!

DEAF ARTS HANDBOOK SERIES

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introduction¹

This handbook provides a forum for Deaf performing artists, members of the Deaf community, educators, students and the community at large to explore new artistic content in Signed Music.

Deaf performing artists have typically interpreted spoken lyrics into sign language that has been set to sound generated music. This art form is in large part influenced by the hearing community and hearing art forms. Many Deaf artists have felt pressure to be “on par” with hearing artists and the resulting art is often hearing centric² making auditory music accessible or expressed through interpreted American Sign Language (ASL)/language des signes québécoise (LSQ). They do not feel they have the ‘right’ to express their own creation freely as an outgrowth of their original Deaf artistic exploration. Signed Music is a unique and evolving performing art. While there are a few Canadian professional Deaf Signed Music performers whose performances are an outgrowth of the Deaf community and Deaf cultural experience, performance analysis and professional practice have not been well articulated for professional development of other artists.³ There are many misconceptions of Signed Music. To date, criteria for what Signed Music could be has not been clearly articulated or exemplified for professional performing artists, students interested in music or the general community.

Many Deaf artists feel the pressure to be “on par” with other hearing artists and the resulting art is often hearing centric. . .

They do not feel they have the ‘right’ to express their own creation freely as an outgrowth of their original Deaf artistic exploration.

1 Appreciation to Jody H. Cripps, Ely Rosenblum and Dennie Theodore for feedback on this document.

2 Cripps, J. H., Rosenblum, E., & Small, A. (in press). Signed music: An emerging inter-performative art. *Proceedings of the 2014 Deaf Studies Today Conference*. Utah Valley University, Orem, UT.

3 Refer to Cripps, J. H., Rosenblum, E., Small, A., & Cripps, J. S. (2014). *Understanding music American Sign Language* [Website]. Towson, MD: Towson University http://pages.towson.edu/jcripps/SignedMusic/Signed_Music_Project.html for the only comprehensive website on signed music.

This handbook aims to:

- describe features of signed music developed from within the Deaf community
- provide an historic perspective on the evolution of Signed Music
- offer activities, a glossary and resources for those wishing to explore signed music in greater depth.

This handbook and its accompanying documentary, *Signed Music: Rhythm of the Heart* are produced by the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf and are supported by a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts. The handbook and documentary coincide with a Special Exhibition by the same title at the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE that opened in May 2015. It coincides as well with the *Defty Awards* of Excellence in the Arts: Signed Music Youth Awards. The Signed Music Youth Awards Program is also a project of the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf. The TD Bank Group is the presenting sponsor of the *Defty Awards* of Excellence in the Arts to encourage new Signed Music Performance across Canada. The handbook and documentary are available to ASL performing artists, educators and community through the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE website via the Curriculum Interactive navigation button (<http://deafculturecentre.ca/Public/Default.aspx?l=94&n=Curriculum+Interactive>) and via the Research button (http://www.deafculturecentre.ca/Public/Research/Category_Details.aspx?ID=2) and through the Towson University Signed Music Project website (<http://pages.towson.edu/jcripps/SignedMusic/Introduction.html>). A hard copy is also available for purchase at the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE as well as at conferences and educational forums.

Our intent is to enhance the quality and variety of Deaf artistic performance by providing a forum for exploring Signed Music, generating discussion points for risk-taking in creating signed music and for sharing signed music with Deaf and hearing audiences.

what is music?

*It's in the movement of the planets. It's mathematical.
It's visual. It's all around us.*

We tend to associate music with hearing and to think of visual forms of music as simply an interpretation of the auditory experience. However, history and study from a variety of fields points us in another direction. Music in fact is everywhere in nature and is experienced through all our senses. Opera has a highly visual component. Ritual drumming involves many senses. Instruments are highly tactile in their very nature.

Music is in the movement of the planets. Pythagoras, Greek philosopher and mathematician who lived from 571-495 BCE was among the first to describe music. He described music according to the movement of the planets. Pythagoras called it Musica Mundana . . . Music of the Spheres . . . and stated that our ears are unable to hear it.

This ancient concept regards the movements of the sun, moon and planets as a form of music that reflects mathematical proportions, shapes or patterns. These patterns are present everywhere and govern all temporal cycles such as seasons biological cycles, and all the rhythms of nature.⁴⁵⁶



Music is mathematical. International award-winning Deaf filmmaker, Jascha Blume, describes music as: “a mathematical form of life . . . Music can be without [auditory] sound . . . it’s mathematical so it can be found in any shape. If there is no sound in film but it’s on a big screen you can still see and experience the visual music in it.”⁷

**Music is in the movement of the planets.
Pythagoras [571-495 BCE] called it Musica Mundana, . . .
Music of the Spheres . . . and stated that our ears are unable to hear it.**

4 Pliny the Elder, 77AD. *Natural History*, books I-II, translated by Rackham (1938). Harvard University Press.

5 Boethius, A. M. S (1867). *De institutione musica*, G. Friedlein, ed. Leipzig, DE: Teubner; trans. by C. M. Bower (1989). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

6 Pythagoras is discussed in interview with Ely Rosenblum in Cripps, J.S., Small, A., Rosenblum, E. and J.H. Cripps. (2015). *Signed Music: Rhythm of the Heart*. Toronto: Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf. Documentary DVD.

7 Interview with Jascha Blume by Small, A. December 3, 2014.

Music is in visual art. Composers have spoken about an intrinsic relationship between colour in visual art, music and emotion. In the 20th century, Reinbert de Leeuw, conductor of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, asked a composer, “Why did you pick major C in your composition?” The composer answered, “Because I envisioned ‘red’ – major C is the colour red for me –that is what I see.”⁸



Kandinsky Composition X, 1939

Similarly, Wassily Kandinsky, Russian pioneer of abstract modern art (1866-1944) described rhythm, harmony, a symphony of contrasting colours and spirituality in his art. Kandinsky, representative of artists of his time, has been quoted to say, “The artist is the hand that purposely sets the soul vibrating by means of this or that key. Thus it is clear that the harmony of colours can only be based upon the principle of purposefully touching the human soul.”⁹



Kandinsky, Composition VIII, 1923

Music is in architecture. Dutch Deaf culture professor, author and sign language storyteller, Tony Bloem describes musical rhythms expressed through modern architecture. “I realized music is not claimed by [auditory] sound so I searched for music in different forms of art. Music is everywhere. If you look at architecture, a good building, a strong building has rhythm . . . Before, everything was compartmentalized - but Gerrit Rietveld (1888 – 1964) [Dutch architect and designer] searched for rhythms of colour and composition in space . . . he searched and found balance in colour and composition in buildings that are 95 years old but look modern . . .”

Tony Bloem further describes a parallel between Dutch architect and designer, Rietveld’s search for rhythms of colour and composition of space and Wim Emmerik’s Sign Language of the Netherlands (NGT) poetry. “Others were traditional with poetry. Wim made you think with how he signed. . . People had previously thought that NGT [Sign Language of the Netherlands] was for home conversation only - that it was not abstract.”¹⁰ Wim Emmerik created rhythm in space with his sign language poetic style just as architecture can create rhythm in space with design.



*Wim Emmerik,
NGT (Sign Language of the Netherlands) Poet*



*Renowned Rietveld
chair design (1917)*



*The Rietveld
Schröder House (1924)*

8 Interview with Tony Bloem by Small, A. November 27, 2014.

9 McBurney, G. (2006). Wassily Kandinsky: The painter of sound and vision. *The Guardian* (June, 24, 2006). Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2006/jun/24/art.art>

10 Interview with Tony Bloem by Small, A., November 27, 2014.

“Who does music belong to? The answer is, it belongs to whatever culture it comes from.” - Ely Rosenblum

Music is in sign language poetry. American Sign Language poet, Ella Mae Lentz, describes music as follows, “What does music really mean? Music is in the rhythm of the heart . . . the rhythm of what surrounds us. We have visual rhythm, we have internal rhythm from within ourselves . . .”¹¹ We have established that music is everywhere - in nature, in the movements of the planets, in mathematics, in visual arts, in architecture and in signed language poetry. If that is so, then “who does music belong to? The answer is, it belongs to whatever culture it comes from.”¹² Music can be experienced through a variety of senses and enjoyed by all.

“What does music really mean? Music is in the rhythm of the heart. . . the rhythm of what surrounds us. We have visual rhythm, we have internal rhythm from within ourselves . . .” - Ella Mae Lentz

What is Signed Music?¹³

*Music is in the rhythms of the heart, in our language
and in our shared Deaf experience.*

Signed Music performer, Pamela Witcher, states, “I’m Deaf and I love the music . . . There is a myth . . . that music is only sound.”¹⁴

Signed Music is an art inter-performance art arising from within the Deaf community. It is distinct from Signed Language Literature such as ASL poetry, and from signed songs originating from spoken language. Signed Music may incorporate ASL literary poetic features and incorporates elements of music expressed as a visual artistic form.

11 Interview with Ella Mae Lentz in Cripps, J.S., Small, A., Rosenblum, E. and J.H. Cripps. (2015). *Signed Music: Rhythm of the Heart*. Toronto: Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf. Documentary DVD.

12 Interview with Ely Rosenblum in Cripps, J.S., Small, A., Rosenblum, E. and J.H. Cripps. (2015). *Signed Music: Rhythm of the Heart*. Toronto: Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf. Documentary DVD.

13 This section is adapted from Cripps, J.H., Rosenblum, E. and A. Small. (in press). Music: Signed. In: P. Boudreault, G. Gertz and J.G. Golson (Eds.), *The Deaf Studies Encyclopedia*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Refer to this encyclopedia article for further explanation of signed music.

14 Witcher, P.2013. “Image that flirts”. *Montreal Campus*. Feb 5, 2013. Retrieved from <http://montrealcampus.ca/2013/02/des-images-qui-font-de-loeil/> English translation.

Signed Music uses a variety of performance practices to achieve its unique end, drawing from:

- dance, poetry and musical practices.
- visual performance practice with structured hand and facial movements with unique traits.

Its linguistic and cultural roots are found in shared Deaf experience. It falls along a continuum, but is distinct from signed language poetry and dance. It is related to culturally expressive art practices that employ poetic and other musical performance practice with the same underlying human foundation of literary and musical expression. Researchers have begun to characterize these performance works from the prism of visual musical elements including rhythm, paralinguistic pitch, melody, and lyrics, as well as literary analysis and dance methodology. ASL performers are increasingly exploring this inter-performance art. The Deaf community is starting to push the boundaries of Signed Music.

In summary, signed music:

- evolves and emerges through inter-performance art
- develops through shared Deaf community experience
- falls along a continuum but is distinct from, sign language poetry and dance
- may or may not be created with lyrics
- may or may not incorporate cinematography

Evolution of Signed Music

Roots with trees and branches that tie music into one forest

Bahan (2006) described signed songs according to two categories - translated songs from spoken language and percussion singing (Deaf rap). These two performance practices are historical precursors to Signed Music. Signed Music has broadened and changed from these two categories into a distinct inter-performance art that has emerged from within the Deaf community.¹⁵

As pertains to translated songs from spoken language, Rosa Lee Timm (2013)¹⁶ provides a clear explanation in her YouTube video of the difference between signing a rendition

15 Cripps, J.H., Rosenblum, E. and A. Small. In Press. Music: Signed. In: P. Boudreault, G. Gertz and J.G. Golson (Eds.), *The Deaf Studies Encyclopedia*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

16 Timm, R. L. (2013). *A Deaf Take on Music*. 20 min, Webstreaming, Color, Comments. NIEC Outcomes Circle. <http://vimeo.com/68906742>

that follows the English lyrics so closely as to lose inspiration and relevance to the Deaf community versus a translation that does not alienate the Deaf community. Timm emphasizes the importance of making translated lyrics relevant to Deaf experience, maintaining the rhythm embedded within the ASL lyrics and using signs from within the Deaf community (i.e., ASL or sign language from another country).

The United States National Anthem, Star Spangled Banner is the earliest translated song recorded in ASL, in 1902.¹⁷ The Canadian National Anthem, Oh Canada has also been recorded numerous times with a recent version performed by Dawn Birley from Saskatchewan in 2013.¹⁸

An example of a recent famous Canadian ASL song translated from English lyrics is, Is Somebody Singing, performed by student Corinna Den Dekker. She created this ASL translated song¹⁹ to be performed in tandem with Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield.²⁰ This was the first filmed singing performed by an astronaut from the space station along with the Bare Naked Ladies and a student choir at the Ontario Science Centre. The official 2013 Music Monday song was co-commissioned by CBC Music and the Coalition for Music Education in Canada. The Deaf community has mixed feelings about ASL translated songs. However, this translated song created much excitement in the Canadian Deaf community because of Deaf ownership in creating the song and sense of connection of the Deaf community in this proud national event.

ASL poet, Ella Mae Lentz emphasizes the same points as Timm in the documentary Signed Music: Rhythm of the Heart.²¹ In the documentary, Lentz describes her early attempts to create ASL poetry that are free of English lyrics as she developed skill in creating her own ASL lyrics with their own artistic beauty. Ella describes an evolution in her process while composing the ASL poem Eye Music²². She makes a clear distinction between her early attempts at poetic translation to her later independent artistic expression of concepts in ASL and the inspiration she derived from Deaf experience with rhythms embedded within the sign production of the lyrics. Her inspiration came from watching telephone poles and telephone wires “dance by” like visual music while riding on a train. This provided the impetus for her to break away from English poetry to evolve her own ASL poetic rendition Eye Music.

Deaf rap can be viewed through the same prism. While some Deaf rap stays very close to English lyric translation, others are ASL independent creations whether originally inspired by spoken language lyrics or not. Signed music includes Deaf rap that is independent

17 Gallaudet University (1902). Deaf mute girl reciting “Star Spangled Banner.” Washington, DC: Gallaudet Video Library.<http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=17493>

18 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BawOJrDlwnY>

19 Patti Trofimenkoff, Director of Dancing Hands, a school program at the Ontario Provincial Schools for Deaf Students, worked with Corinna Den Dekker on the ASL translated song.

20 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYEBwPFr7Sk>

21 Interview with Ella Mae Lentz in Cripps, J.S., Small, A., Rosenblum, E. and J.H. Cripps. (2015). *Signed Music: Rhythm of the Heart*. Toronto: Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf. Documentary DVD.

22 Lentz, E.M. (1995). Eye Music. In *The Treasure*. San Diego: InMotion Press. DVD.

<https://www.dawnsign.com/the-treasure>

Signed Music is an inter-performance art arising from within the Deaf community. Researchers have begun to characterize signed music from the prism of visual musical elements, literary analysis and dance methodology.

of a spoken auditory version and generates its own expression in ASL with the Deaf rap rhythm embedded within the signs. Early examples of Deaf rap generated from within the Deaf community in the 1930s in the United States are highlighted in Charles Krauel: A Profile of a Deaf Filmmaker (1994).²³ In this early film, Krauel demonstrated two Deaf raps - Boat, Drink Fun, Enjoy and Oh Darn, I Hear Nothing. The former is a form of Deaf rap or percussion song with the typical beat one, two - one, two, three. The latter is a signed choral song with lyrics created in jest to mock the audist perspective of the importance of audition.²⁴ Canadian Deaf rap also has a tradition from the provincial schools for the Deaf in the 1900s. The typical Deaf Rap rhythms popular in Deaf schools and Deaf organizations for performances and festivals, were often accompanied by beats (one, two - one, two, three) on a large Deaf rap drum.²⁵ Use of the drum seemed to dissipate in the 1980s in the provincial schools for Deaf students and then re-emerged in the 1990s. In 2000, the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf and TVOntario recorded Deaf rap with children from the provincial schools for the Deaf with a Deaf rap drum for the popular video series Freckles and Popper.²⁶

My Third Eye performed and recorded in 1973 represented a watershed as it features multiple performers to create harmony. Good examples are The Rescue Story and Three Blind Mice. The choral signers simultaneously perform different roles, complimenting each other's signed music to create the whole. Detailed description of these performances can be found in J. H. Cripps, Rosenblum and Small (in press b) and can be found on the DVD.²⁷

In the 1990s, ASL poetry was first described by Clayton Valli through the prism of a linguistic framework.²⁸ He discovered and described poetry lines including meter and rhythm in ASL literary performance. His work was seminal in providing a Deaf perspective,

23 Supalla, T. (1994). *Charles Krauel: A Profile of a Deaf Filmmaker*. 30 min., VHS, Color/b&w. Documentary videotape. San Diego, CA: DawnSignPictures.

24 Cripps, J. H., Rosenblum, E., & Small, A. (in press). Signed music: An emerging inter-performative art. *Proceedings of the 2014 Deaf Studies Today Conference*. Utah Valley University, Orem, UT.

25 Refer to http://www.deafculturecentre.ca/Public/Place/Item_Details.aspx?ID=30 for explanation and photograph of an original Deaf rap drum from the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf courtesy of the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE virtual museum.

26 Holst, D. (2000). *Freckles & Popper*, Part 1-4. 3 min, video, Color, Skits. Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf & TV Ontario. Deaf Rap with Darren Holst and the Deaf Rap Troupe. http://www.deafculturecentre.ca/Public/Language/Item_Details.aspx?ID=38&mID=19. The drum seen in this Deaf rap video belongs to the provincial schools for Deaf students.

27 National Theatre of the Deaf Presents. (1973/1980). Three Blind Mice and Rescue Story in *My Third Eye*. 60 min., Webstreaming, Color, Theater. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University. <http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=16588>

28 Valli, C. (1990). The nature of the line in ASL poetry. In W. Edmondson & F. Karlsson (Eds.), *Signed Language Research '87: Papers from the Fourth International Symposium on Sign Language Research* (pp. 171-182). Hamburg, DE: Signum Press.

ASL framework and linguistic terminology to describe ASL poetic literary forms and to experiment with them.

In 1993 Valli was the first to receive his doctorate in ASL poetics and to describe ASL poetry literary features in their own right.²⁹ His work impacted ASL performance by describing, clarifying, delineating and further separating this distinct ASL poetic artistic expression from its English poetry counterparts. The impact of Valli's ASL poetry research and his ASL poetic expertise was felt not only in North America but also in Europe. For example, former ballet dancer and renowned Sign Language of the Netherlands/ Nederlandse Gebarentaal (NGT) poet Wimm Emmerik, attributes the influence of Valli's style to his early NGT poetic style in 1989.³⁰ Emmerik was searching for elegant movements in creating his poetry – his movement flow. Emmerik saw Valli's poetry through a "dancer's eyes"³¹ and the ability to express deep thought through sign language. The internal structure and movement flow using two hands was critical in alternating movements, creating a rhythmic flow drawing out and continuing the flow from one hand to the other in his poems.³² Both Valli and Emmerik's poetry do this masterfully. This paved the way for signed music that emerged later from within the Deaf community on both sides of the ocean.

Valli's poetry also had profound impact on early ASL literary development of infants as programs sprung up in Canada modeled after Valli's use of ASL rhythm and handshape rhymes.^{33 34}

Signed Music performances in the 2000s have been significantly impacted by technology and multimedia both in terms of the ability to incorporate cinematography as part of the artistic expression of the performance as well as a mechanism for sharing what is created. Witcher, Cripps, Timm, Sanborn, Meyer and Jobse all referred to in this handbook, has each released their signed music performances online on YouTube. In doing so, they provide broad audience access, opportunity for feedback and further experimentation. Go online and view the variety of signed music performances!

*Experiment with your own signed music
performance and post it!*

29 Valli, C. (1993). *Poetics of American Sign Language Poetry*. Doctoral dissertation, The Union Institute Graduate School. June 1993.

30 Interview with Wim Emmerik by Small, A., January 29, 2015.

31 Interview with Wim Emmerik, by Small, A. January 29, 2015.

32 Interview with Wim Emmerik, by Small, A. January 29, 2015.

33 Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf. (2004). *The ASL parent-child mother goose program: American Sign Language Rhymes, Rhythms and Stories for parents and their children*. Mississauga, ON: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf Project.

<http://www.deafculturecentre.ca/Public/estore/Product.aspx?ID=72&n=ViewCategory-ID02018a>

34 Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf. (2008). *ASL Rhymes, Rhythms and Stories for You and Your Child*. Mississauga, ON: Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf and The Ontario Trillium Foundation.

<http://www.deafculturecentre.ca/public/estore/Product.aspx?ID=211&n=ViewCategory-ID00431>

Signed Music Styles

Where will your inspiration and creativity take you?

Six examples of signed music from three countries currently accessible online via YouTube (2015) reflect a variety of artistic styles:

A Signed Music –
no auditory component or signed music guides an auditory component:

1. Signed Music is an original performance created from within the Deaf community.
2. It can be without ASL/LSQ lyrics or created with lyrics (ASL/LSQ).
3. Auditory music may be added after the signed music creation but it is not necessary.
4. If auditory music is a component, it is based on the visual signed music performance which was created first.

Examples:

- Pamela Witcher's Experimental Clip (Canadian)³⁵
- Rosa Lee Timm's Tell Your Story (American)³⁶ expressing lyrics in rhythm under water. No auditory music was added to this piece.
- NGT (Sign Language of the Netherlands) performer, Ilse Jobse created her signed music performance Water (Dutch)³⁷ with lyrics. She later met with a hearing composer who created an auditory orchestral piece to accompany her signed music performance.

Valli's work was seminal in providing a Deaf perspective, ASL framework and linguistic terminology to describe ASL poetic literary forms and to experiment with them.

35 Witcher, P. E. (2008). *Experimental Clip 2*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPHraTb36wc>

36 Timm, R. L. (2014). *Tell Your Story*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfZ8fVf6Ldc&list=UUWDxkkg2vNvH0MsAxp3Zf_Q

37 Jobse, I. (2013). *Water*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wc3zsMKYzHAI> Ilse Jobse signed music performance with orchestra March 2013.

B Signed Music - inspired by an auditory component made visual:

1. Signed Music may be an original performance created from within the Deaf community without lyrics (no signs) or created with lyrics (ASL/LSQ) where the signed music performance is inspired by auditory music.

Example:

- Janis Cripps' *Eyes* (Canadian)³⁸. In this piece, Janis used a metronome to visually mark the rhythms inspired by an auditory piece of music. She then created her signed music piece (with culturally appropriate characteristics) based on these visual-gestural rhythms and the images they inspired.

C Signed Music – incorporates cinematography as an artistic feature of the performance:

1. Signed Music performances may incorporate cinematography as part of the artistic expression.
2. Handshape, location and movement parameters are among the features of signed music as described above.
3. Facial expression and mouth movements as non-manual features of sign language may also be components of signed music. Spoken language is not part of signed music as it does not arise from within the Deaf community and is not part of a signed language.

Examples:

- *Experimental Clip* by Pamela Witcher³⁹. The cinematography peephole frame creates spectator perspective.
- *Eyes* by Janis Cripps⁴⁰, She uses cinematography with images of nature (waterfall, crashing waves and birds) to evoke concepts suggested in the signed music performance.
- *Caterpillar* by Ian Sanborn⁴¹. Cinematography is used for speed and slow motion techniques indicating flight of the butterfly.
- *Fire* by Giselle Meyer⁴². Cinematography is used with a glass pane, colour and lighting to evoke volcanic fire. These visual effects become part of the artistic expression in this style of signed music performance.

38 Cripps, J. E. (2003). *Eyes*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnwJsFHFebg>

39 Witcher, P. E. (2008). *Experimental Clip 2*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPHraTb36wc>

40 Cripps, J. E. (2003). *Eyes*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnwJsFHFebg>

41 Sanborn, I. (2014). *Caterpillar*. *Deaf Studies Digital Journal*, 4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTgGQnxX5Uw>

42 Meyer, G. *Fire* in Bewogen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8knx8-U_8

Activities

*Only by experimenting and adding our ideas to the growing pool,
can Signed Music truly emerge.*

Activities suggested, focus separately on rhythm, harmony, lyrics, handshape rhymes, movement path rhymes and dance. Activities are intended to focus separately on different elements and different genres of creative expression that may provide inspiration for signed music as an inter-performance art.

Try some of the following alone or with students, friends and other artists:

- Hold a set time and a place each day to be creative musically. Indulge in creative activities experimenting with different notions of musicality.
- Examine environments at home, work, school, at play and on the street. What do you learn? Develop rhythms, harmonies and lyrics from your observations.
- Watch nature and people. Create rhythms for the scenes you see.
- Play with rhythms. In a group circle, throw a ball to each other and keep the rhythm. Add another ball to throw in the circle and then another one keeping the rhythm set for each ball. See how many variations you can make.

Using a drum:

Create drum rhythms in pairs or in a group circle.

- Copy drum beat rhythms with lights on the drum that light up when you beat. The rhythms get successively more complex and longer.
- Hop to the beats.
- Jump to the beats.
- Stomp to the rhythms.
- Create a rhythmic pattern of standing and sitting with a group of nine people.

X = up O = down

Then reverse the movements to the same rhythm.

X	O	X
X	X	O
O	O	X

The intent of activities in this handbook is to focus on elements that can contribute to or inspire signed music - for members of the Deaf community to feel the freedom of experimentation with their OWN musicality through signed music.

- Group watches nature and creates their own signed music performance first without lyrics and then with lyrics. Each individual takes on one role and layers it to complement the other individuals in the group and together create the scene (inspired by The Rescue Story in *My Third Eye*).⁴³
- An individual in a group creates one movement, the next person repeats the movement and then adds to it, etc.
- Line up. Starting at the back, blow on the neck of the person in front of you to a rhythm that you agree on before. This puff of air serves as a tactile rhythm cue that the person in front of them must move their arm, torso or leg slightly upon feeling the cue. Reverse the direction (going from front to back) with the first person moving one arm, leg or torso slightly and the person behind them moving next based on the visual rhythm cue and so on down the line maintaining the rhythm with their collective movements.
- Rock back and forth taking turns signing keeping the rhythm as a couple.
- Taking turns, create a poem with one handshape.
- Taking turns, create a poem with number handshapes 1-20.
- Play with lyrics. Sign images of ocean waves, forests, cities, crowds, calm scenes, memories.
- Create a sign; sign it high, sign it low, sign it fast, sign it slow, repeat the sign two times, repeat the sign three times. You can do this in a group circle with everyone using the sign they have created.
- Create a sign; sign as many synonyms (signs with the same meaning) as possible, create the antonym (sign with the opposite meaning). You can do this in a group with everyone using the sign they have created.
- Create a sign, then using the same handshape create as many signs as possible.
- An individual in a group creates a sign, the next person repeats the sign and adds to it using the same handshape.
- Use one, two, or three handshapes to create a poem with a rhythm. Keep it simple.
- Create movement path rhymes (such as repetition of a circular movement).

⁴³ National Theatre of the Deaf Presents. (1973/1980). *Rescue Story in My Third Eye*. 60 min., Webstreaming, Color, Theater. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University. <http://videocatalog.gallaudet.edu/?video=16588>.

- Create location rhymes (such as repetition of the location looking left then looking right or signing left then signing right).
- Think about how you wish to locate signs simultaneously in the signing space using two hands to create a flow or rhythm.
- Refer to the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE website for the Ontario Curriculum grades 9-12 for dance that incorporates ASL and signed music at <http://www.deafculturecentre.ca/Public/Default.aspx?l=208&n=Dance>

Consider exposing Deaf community children, youth and adults to different music genres from different countries to broaden experience from different creative productions and from different cultures. Some Deaf individuals enjoy drums, vibrating chairs⁴⁴, “dancing lights”,⁴⁵ loud speakers, metronomes, vibrating floors while others disdain them as hearing centric still tied to auditory music. It is a fine balance not to limit exposure while simultaneously not creating pressure to adhere to hearing art forms as has happened historically.

The intent of activities in this handbook is to focus on elements that can contribute to or inspire signed music - for members of the Deaf community to feel the freedom of experimentation with their OWN musicality through signed music and not to feel tied to any one traditional musical format or hearing centric music as the community has felt in the past. Signed music grows from within the Deaf community and will emerge from individual creativity and Deaf experience.

44 For more information about vibrating chairs contact Frank Russo at russo@psych.ryerson.ca.

45 For more information about the Baker Light Integrated Star System (BLISS) dancing lights contact Jeffrey Baker at balletbliss@gmail.com.

Advancing Professional Experimentation

The *Defty Awards* of Excellence in the Arts 2015 featured Signed Music Youth Awards to encourage this new emerging art form. The *Defty Awards* of Excellence in the Arts promotes and celebrates emerging Deaf performing artists and showcases the works of talented young Canadian Deaf performers. The Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf (CCSD) established the *Defty Awards* in the 1980's to promote and recognize the arts of fellow Canadian Deaf performers. The DEAF CULTURE CENTRE under the auspices of CCSD is delighted to continue this tradition. The TD Bank Group is the presenting sponsor of the *Defty Awards* of Excellence in the Arts. For details of the *Defty Awards* of Excellence in the Arts: Signed Music Youth Awards please refer to Appendix A.

Companion DVD Documentary

This handbook is accompanied by the documentary, *Signed Music: Rhythm of the Heart*.⁴⁶ The documentary features examples of signed music and interviews with performing artists. After viewing the documentary, consider the following questions:

1. What did you learn from the documentary?
2. How would you distinguish signed music from poetry and dance?
3. What is your experience of signed music?
4. What do you think are good examples of signed music?
5. What questions did the documentary raise for you?
6. How would you sign, signed music?

⁴⁶ Cripps, J.S., Small, A., Rosenblum, E. and J.H. Cripps. (2015). *Signed Music: Rhythm of the Heart*. Toronto: Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf. Documentary DVD.

Glossary

ASL Poetry	A frozen aesthetic literary form. It has the same features as spoken language poetry including rhyme, rhythm and meter. ⁴⁷
Audism	The notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or to behave in a manner of one who hears. ⁴⁸ It is a set of individual or group practices that elevates English and other spoken languages and devalues ASL and other signed languages. ^{49 50}
Beat	A steady pulse.
Choreography	Step sequence or planned movements that make up the whole composition. Can refer to dance movement or signed music composition.
Cues	Signals or prompts.
Dance	Rhythmic body movements.
Handshape	Describes how the fingers are extended or bent in a particular sign. Each sign can be described by the handshape, by the movement and by the location of the sign and repetition of any of these three features creates a rhyme.
Harmony	A pleasing combination of elements performed together.
Lyrics	Words that accompany a music composition. Either the words or the music can be created first and inspire each other.
Melody	The primary feature of a musical work. The structure or arrangement of a work is developed around this often recurring theme.
Meter	"Is a count of something we see. The essence of a meter is the contrast between heavy and light syllables. The meter of ASL poetry [or signed music] depends heavily on visual movement." ⁵¹
Practice (verb)	To prepare or rehearse to get better at something.
Practice (noun)	Work of a profession or performance of a profession.
Rhyme	In ASL poetry and in signed music, it includes repetition of the same handshape, repetition of the same movement path or repetition of the same location. ⁵²
Rhythm	If the beat is the steady pulse, the rhythm is what you do with the pulse by different combinations of durations, sometimes within the beat and sometimes not. In ASL poetry [and in signed music], it is created by movement paths, assimilation, change of a sign, choice of a sign, handedness, alternating movements, movement duration and size. ⁵³
Signed Music Composer	Individual who originates the signed music creation.
Signed Music Lyricist	Individual who originates the ASL words in the signed music composition (The composer and lyricist can be the same person or can work very closely together since the rhythm is embedded in the ASL lyrics).
Signed Music Performer	Individual(s) who present(s) the signed music composition for an audience or production - it could be the same or different person from the one who composed the signed music piece.
Timbre	A synthesis of performance quality, character or tone. Two individuals can present the same signed music performance but their inherent styles of movement create a different identifiable quality to the identical signed music piece that is associated with the different performers. This is the case with the quality or characteristics of different musical instruments as well. ⁵⁴

47 Valli, C. (1996). *ASL Poetry: Selected works of Clayton Valli*. San Diego: DawnPictures. Videocassette.

48 Humphries, T. (1977). *Doctoral dissertation*, Cincinnati, Ohio: Union Institute and University, 12.

49 Small, A. Cripps, J. and Côté, J. (2012). *Cultural Space and Self / Identity Development Among Deaf Youth*, Toronto, Ontario: Ministry of Education and Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research, 46.

50 Cripps, J. H. & Supalla, S. J. (2012). The power of spoken language in schools and deaf students who sign. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(16), 86-102.

51 Valli, C., Lucas, C., Mulrooney, K., and M. Villanueva (2011). *Linguistics of American Sign Language, 5th edition*. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press.

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53 Valli, C., Lucas, C., Mulrooney, K., and M. Villanueva (2011). *Linguistics of American Sign Language, 5th edition*. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press.

54 Murray Campbell. "Timbre (i)." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed July 6, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27973>.

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PERFORMERS CALL FOR ENTRY

2015 JURIED SIGNED MUSIC PERFORMANCES

Defty Awards of Excellence in the Arts 2015

Signed Music Youth Awards

Sponsored by



Signed Music Exhibit Opening
at the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE May 29, 2015
Defty Awards September 19, 2015

Winning Canadian Signed Music performances will be exhibited at the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE
Rhythms of the Heart: Signed Music Exhibit from September 19, 2015 to December 1, 2015

Winning *Defty* Signed Music performances receive a *Defty award* and cash prize (between \$300 -\$1,000)

Eligibility Criteria

- Open to all Canadian Deaf performers.
- Applicants must be 16 years of age to 34 years of age (inclusive).
- The theme is open.
- Performance must be original and created by the performer. Experimentation is strongly encouraged.
- Signed Music performance can be created with hand and body movement and facial expression but not lyrics (ASL/LSQ) or created with ASL/ LSQ lyrics.
- Signed Music performance may incorporate cinematography techniques as part of the artistic expression.
- Signed Music Categories:
 1. An original performance created with with hand and body movement and facial expression but not lyrics (ASL/LSQ) or created with lyrics (ASL/LSQ). Signed music performance may be experimental in nature. (Auditory music may be added after the signed music creation but is not necessary. Auditory music added would be based on the visual signed music performance).
 2. An original performance created without lyrics (no signs) or created with lyrics (ASL/LSQ). Signed music performance is inspired by auditory music made visual.
 3. Entries will be juried on digital media and must be submitted on USB and mailed. No email submissions please.
 - A maximum of one (1) performance in each category may be submitted by each performer for consideration by the jury.
 - Performance must be between one (1) minute and no more than five (5) minutes.
 - A maximum of two (2) performances may be submitted by each performer for consideration by the jury.

Submission Checklist

- Completed Entry Form (attached) as a paper document
 - USB containing a digital file of the performance in .MOV or MEG4 format. File must be labeled with the artist's last name and performance title. (LAST NAME. Name of performance). No email submissions please.
 - Performing artist Biography (maximum 150 words) in word document on the USB
 - Performing artist Statement (maximum 150 words) in word document on the USB
- The artist statement explains how the performance is an expression of signed music. Performing artist statement

includes the title, description of the performance and comments to assist in analysis from the performer's perspective. The artist statement can be bulleted or in narrative form.

- Performing artist photograph (300 dpi) on the USB

Submission Deadline

Entries including support material must be submitted in full, postmarked (stamped) **no later than Monday June 15, 2015.**

Please submit mailed entries to:

Attention: *Defty Awards* 2015
DEAF CULTURE CENTRE
Distillery Historic District
34 Distillery Lane
Toronto, Ontario M5A 3C4

Selected Performances/Awards

- All decisions made by the jury panel are final.
- The jurors reserve the right to disqualify any original work misrepresented by the digital files.
- No entry may be withdrawn from the exhibition until after closing.
- The DEAF CULTURE CENTRE has permission to display and/or share images or samples of accepted work for publicity, educational and research purposes.
- Entries in each category will be judged for best performance.

Adjudication

Submitted works will be juried by a panel of professionals who are engaged in the performing arts.

Notification

Artists meeting the submission deadline will be notified of acceptance by July 15, 2015.

Shipping and handling

Postage is the responsibility of the artist.

Insurance

- Artists are responsible for maintaining a copy of their performance to ensure backup in case of USB loss or damage during transit. The DEAF CULTURE CENTRE assumes responsibility for insurance of the performance while on display at the Centre.
- Every reasonable precaution will be employed by the DEAF CULTURE CENTRE to handle digital material according to standard professional public exhibition practice.

The DEAF CULTURE CENTRE acknowledges the generous support of TD Bank Group for the *Defty Awards of Excellence in the Arts: Signed Music Youth Awards* and for sponsoring the *Signed Music Exhibit* in 2015. *The Defty Awards of Excellence in the Arts* promotes and celebrates emerging Deaf performing artists and showcases the works of talented Canadian Deaf performers.

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DEAF CULTURE CENTRE

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