

THE SKOOG: A NEW KIND OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENT



The Skoog: a learning engagement tool

The Skoog meets the need for a new kind of inclusive musical instrument, one that maximises the educational and health benefits of the creative arts. Developed by researchers spanning music, psychology and physics, it enables people of all ages with a wide range of disabilities to have accessible, expressive control of sound.

Designed to be commercially viable and useful to as wide a range of audiences as possible, the Skoog is a research-led product that has been successfully brought to market. The spin-off company, Skoogmusic, was formed in 2010 and now employs six staff, selling the instrument in 27 countries and online via the Apple Store.

The origins of the Skoog lie in music in the community research led by Professor Nigel Osborne, at Edinburgh College of Art.

In collaboration with The Tapestry Partnership, Professor Osborne's research team engaged in extensive consultation with Scottish schools between 2003 and 2005. They identified music as a tool that could be used for improving learning engagement in children, particularly those with profound physical and learning challenges. ▶

DEVELOPMENT TEAMS: SKOOG & SKOOGMUSIC

The Skoog was developed by a team led by Professor Nigel Osborne at the Reid School of Music, in Edinburgh College of Art.

Funding totalling £195,000 from the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (Nesta) allowed the team to create an instrument that met the needs of budding musicians of all abilities. They developed a flexible but robust object with a sensitive interface; with software capable of picking up expressive movement, interpreting its meaning and communicating it in sound.

Skoogmusic was formed in 2010 by two members of the research team, Dr Ben Schögler and Dr David Skulina.

They received £400,000 investment from the University of Edinburgh, Nesta, Scottish Enterprise, Barwell plc and the Daedalus Investment Fund.

Skoogmusic is currently crowdfunding to bring an updated version of the instrument, Skoog 2.0, to market.



Skoog 2.0



The Skoog can be used for education or performance

RESEARCH IMPACT

Apple Accessibility Ambassador, and distinguished educator, Greg Alchin, has said of the instrument: "I have seen the potential of the Skoog to benefit students from every level of musical ability".

More than 2,000 Skoogs have been sold, mostly to schools and education services. It has also been incorporated into the Special Educational Needs (SEN) and mainstream music curriculum by UK Local Education Authorities and music hubs.

Also widely used in clinical music therapy, the Skoog featured prominently in *Technophonia*, a composition by Oliver Searle. The composition was commissioned by the Drake Music School Project for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad and featured three instruments played by disabled performers.

Technophonia was premiered in Queen's Hall Edinburgh, and was then performed in the South Bank Centre as part of the London Olympics celebrations. It was shortlisted for the 2013 British Composer Awards in the Community or Educational Project category.

In 2011, Skoogmusic donated two Skoogs for use at Athens Special Olympics events, where athletes could try the instruments in a specially designated Skoog Zone.

Mary Mavis, Managing Director of Special Olympics Europe/ Eurasia, commented that: "The Skoog is a wonderful invention which is accessible to everyone and gives people with disabilities of all ages an opportunity to express themselves and develop new skills".

Images of the Skoog, courtesy of Skoogmusic Ltd, available online: www.eca.ed.ac.uk/reid-school-of-music/research/projects/the-skoog



INDUSTRY ENDORSEMENT

"A fantastic product that shows real innovation and fun alongside its more serious educational benefits. One of the easiest five stars we've given."

– *Able Magazine* 'Best of the Best' 2010



The Skoog is accessible to everyone

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