



National Star

Realising the aspirations
of people with disabilities

EdTech Demonstrator: National Star case studies

Orchestral composition with iPads and so much more

By Kayleigh Hunt, July 2021

‘National Star students composed the music for the end of year achievements celebration using iPads and apps.’

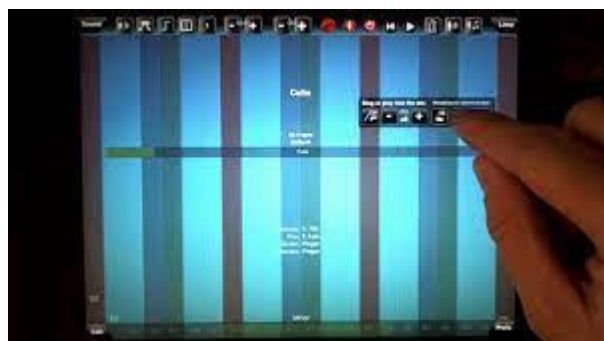
‘Music releases creative potential and enhances communication, confidence and freedom of expression. Technology enables participation through accessibility. Eye gaze cellos and foot-playing pianos add to the diverse contributions from all players.’ Paul Tarling, StarArts Coordinator

National Star’s Level 1, 2 and 3 students thoroughly enjoy attending their weekly group sessions with our music and performing arts coordinator. They routinely produce a variety of polished orchestral compilations using unconventional approaches.



Using traditional orchestral instruments can be challenging for some students, therefore we introduced iPads with the ThumbJam application, enabling them to play their choice of instrument on the device. ThumbJam permits the user to select an instrument and displays the chords on the touch screen of the iPad. The student then touches the screen to play the chords.

During Covid-19 restrictions, we accommodated up to 14 students in our large college theatre. One student performed the role of the conductor and the others each had traditional orchestral instruments or iPads with the ThumbJam application to play. Over multiple weeks of lessons, the composition was refined and ultimately recorded, edited and finalised.



The students and our staff are understandably proud of the final compositions, especially when they’re used for special events and occasions at National Star, such as end of year achievement celebrations. The iPads and applications such as ThumbJam have provided an invaluable mechanism for all students to actively participate and enjoy music and performing arts lessons.

Technical considerations:

- Current supported iPads, one per student;
- Audio recording and editing software;
- WiFi network.