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Programme: Queen Margaret University, MSc Music Therapy

Music Therapy Charity Student Bursary Recipient Report

In November 2019, I was graciously awarded the Music Therapy Charity Student Bursary. When my programme leader at Queen Margaret University, Philippa Derrington, asked to meet with me privately, my first thought was that something was wrong with my international student visa. She assured me that all was well, and I met with her the following day. When she told me the news, I was so surprised and humbled by the generosity of the MTC and by the gesture made by each member of the programme team. Receiving this bursary made an instant difference.

I have dreamt of being a music therapist since I was fifteen, but the timing had to be right. I knew that I would not be ready at 21 years old, fresh out of my undergraduate degree to be able to hold the weight of all that accompanies being a music therapist. So, my path got a bit longer. The question of timing is one that I carried until I found Queen Margaret University. I have honestly never felt so sure of a decision. When the semester started, all of the natural nerves and insecurities were there, but I knew the timing was right.

Enter Philippa, with the news of the MTC Student Bursary. In that moment, all of my planning and waiting for the right timing was validated. I was validated. I felt so valued and supported and assured that I was exactly where I was meant to be. In addition to the positive psychological effects of receiving this award, I also suddenly had a financial resource to support my learning and growth at QMU. My bus fares to and from QMU and practice placement were covered. I was able to have my clarinet shipped to me from the US. I bought my own guitar, which traveled with me to my practice placement, and to my surprise, quickly became my most valued companion. I was able to buy my own course books that I could highlight, annotate, and refer to repeatedly. And finally, an unexpected benefit: I was able to go home to my family for Christmas (something that is even more valuable now that Covid-19 has separated us for the foreseeable future).

I am humbled and so grateful to the Music Therapy Charity. This bursary has truly helped me, both financially and psychologically, during the foundation of my education and future career as a music therapist. Thank you.