



MUSICAL GUIDE HELPS TO BEAT ISOLATION BLUES

- **Launch of musical guide**
- **Music services moving online to be added to digital Musical Map of virtual performances and services**

April 15, 2020

Music for Dementia is launching an inspirational Musical Guide for making the most of music's powerful ability to connect people during COVID-19.

Backed by broadcaster and Music for Dementia 2020 ambassador Lauren Laverne, the guide offers creative tips and activities to help everyone in isolation, using music as a unifying language.

Originally developed for people living with dementia and their carers, the practical Musical Guide can be used by anyone to bring the uplifting benefit of music into the home, including:

- Watching live-streamed concerts and performances
- Making a playlist
- Watching a musical film
- Involving children in becoming musical detectives.

Grace Meadows, Programme Director at Music for Dementia, said: "We've already seen how music has played a vital role in keeping people's spirits up across the world during isolation. It echoes exactly what the Music for Dementia 2020 campaign has been saying - although the feeling of isolation is an ongoing situation for people with this condition. For people living with dementia, music is a lifeline to connect in a way that nothing else can."

Watching live-streamed concerts and performances -

Many music organisations have already made their services available digitally and these are being added to Music for Dementia's digital Musical Map, an advice hub of virtual events and activities that people living with dementia can participate in.

Examples of online music events include: The London Symphony Orchestra, now streaming online-concerts and The Sofa Singers, a new weekly online event which sees 500 people come together for a 45-minute rehearsal where they learn a classic song and sing it together.

Music for Dementia is urging music services that are moving online to get in touch, so they can be added to Musical Map.

Kathryn McDowell, Managing Director of the London Symphony Orchestra, commented: "With the sudden end to our live concert schedule at the Barbican and overseas, the musicians and support teams at the LSO have worked incredibly swiftly to launch a full programme of free archive concerts.

We have had a fantastic response, from across the world. We hope that all our audiences experience the joy of music at this difficult time.

“We know from the London Symphony Orchestra’s regular work with those living with dementia that music has the most extraordinary positive affect on many.”

Claire Molyneux, Music Therapist at Together in Sound, said: “I witness first hand the positive impact music has on people living with dementia. For many people I work with, coming to our group music therapy sessions is the highlight of their week. Moving the sessions online has allowed people to sing from the comfort of their home during a time when they might be feeling particularly isolated.”

Helen Foster, Director of Operations at Alzheimer’s Society says: “We are delighted that Music for Dementia 2020 has released this new guide focusing on music to support the 850,000 people living with dementia.

“Music can have such a positive effect on people with dementia. At our Singing for the Brain groups, we’ve seen people who may have become less communicative completely transform. There’s also evidence that music can improve mood and wellbeing, as well as being a powerful prompt for memories.”

“Currently, eighty percent of calls to our Dementia Connect support line are from people who are seriously concerned about the virus and the impact of self-isolation. Many face being completely cut off from the outside world, and music offers people with dementia enjoyment and the chance to connect with others.”

Grace Meadows added: “We’re facing unprecedented times, and for those living with dementia, it will be particularly unsettling and distressing. While the attention is on looking after people’s health, what we mustn’t forget is how the experience of social isolation can have on people’s mental health and overall wellbeing.

“The decline in people’s wellbeing is already being noted, attributed to the lack of engagement with their normal music activities or music therapy sessions.

“At this time of crisis people are experiencing increased social isolation, particularly those living with dementia and their carers. More than ever we need to connect with them through the power of music.”

The Music for Dementia musical map and guides can be found online at www.musicfordementia.org.uk

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Notes for Editors

About Music for Dementia

Music for Dementia campaigns for people with dementia to have the right to music as part of their care and access music free of charge, wherever they are. We are calling on the music industry, philanthropists, and the health and social care sectors to help make it free and easy for people with dementia to access music.

Music for Dementia has partnered with Live Music Now to launch a new Musical Care Taskforce, which brings together more than 60 leading representatives from across health, social care, dementia and music with the aim to make music an essential element of dementia care. We are also working closely

with DCAN which is a newly formed initiative from the Alzheimer's Society, NHS England and Improvement and the Coalition for Collaborative Care.

In September 2019, we launched our Musical Map – an online interactive map which will become the largest and most comprehensive database of dementia-friendly music services in the UK.

About The Utley Foundation

The Utley Foundation was founded in 2014 by Neil and Nicky Utley. The Foundation exists to advance social causes and to act as a catalyst for greater funding and wider action for the causes it supports. Music is a personal passion of the founders and trustees and underpins many of the key funding areas of interest to the foundation. The trust has other charitable objectives including Armed Forces Veterans, Children and Overseas Aid.

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