



WIGMORE
HALL

Music for Life

AN INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED CREATIVE MUSIC-MAKING
PROGRAMME FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR
FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND CARERS



Learning &
Participation

Our Vision

Our vision is a world in which the human rights of all people living with dementia are respected and upheld, where they are treated with dignity and fully included in society.

We play our part by creating music activity for and with people living with dementia, which is fully inclusive of people whatever their stage or type of dementia.

We aim to enhance the wellbeing of all those involved by enabling creative agency, a sense of purpose, and meaningful connections with others. We also want to support carers and musicians in their journeys to better understand the experiences of people living with dementia, and to help them to improve their confidence in supporting them.

Founded by Linda Rose in 1993 and led by Wigmore Hall since 2009, Music for Life encompasses a wide range of creative music projects in care settings, community settings, online, and at Wigmore Hall.



Left Image: Music for Thought
Right Image: Monday Afternoons

We believe that dementia should not stop people from continuing to pursue the activities and interests they have enjoyed their whole life, or from trying new things. With the right support, people can live well with dementia, and Wigmore Hall is committed to this goal: helping to build a dementia-friendly society and enabling people living with dementia to continue accessing high-quality, life-enriching musical experiences.

‘I think we get more medicine from this than anything they put in bottles and pills’ –
Person living with dementia

Our Projects

Projects in Care Settings

At the heart of the programme are our projects in care settings with groups of residents and staff: specially trained musicians improvise music with participants, valuing everyone's contributions equally. This enables creative communication with people with advanced dementia, drawing out their individuality and empowering them to make choices and express themselves.

Care staff build their skills and confidence in interacting with residents, expanding their understanding of person-centred care through experiential learning and reflection. A dementia specialist works with care staff to reflect on their experiences during the project, and to embed learning in their day-to-day practice.

'It is relieving. It just gives you this calm. Everything else goes away and you're just in that moment...' – Member of Care Staff

Monday Afternoons

A warm and welcoming group that meets in-person and online to support and inspire each other through music-making, made up of people living with a young onset dementia, their families and carers, and musicians and facilitators. Together we make music that reflects us as a group, with our stories, experiences and ideas leading to shared conversation and creativity.



Monday Afternoons

'...there is a remedy – love, kindness, and patience and you have all shown us this. You have come towards us when others hesitate or go away, and we have hope, we always have hope.' – Partner of person living with dementia

Singing with Friends

A choir for families living with dementia led in partnership with Resonate Arts. Founded in 2017, sessions are led in a responsive and person-centred way, drawing on the diverse heritages of its members and learning songs in many different languages. Whilst there is a strong focus on healthy vocal technique, Singing with Friends is just as much about connecting in the moment through singing, and each voice and personality contributes to the spirit and dynamic of the group. Sessions also include social time, movement, poetry readings, and live performances from visiting musicians. The group meets weekly in-person at Wigmore Hall, and our online Singing with Friends choir meets once a fortnight.

‘It widens the horizons of my life. It gives me a lot of happiness and it keeps me going.’ – Person living with dementia

‘It makes me feel taller and younger.’
– Person living with dementia



‘[I feel] very relaxed, happy, and enjoyed the moment. [I] can forget everything else, which is the thing that I want. I will be more courageous next time.’ – Person living with dementia



Out of the Ordinary workshop at Music for Life: Sharing Our Stories

Music for Thought

Creative music projects led in partnership with Resonate Arts and the Royal Academy of Music. The projects provide a relaxed environment in which people who are often new to dementia services, or may be at risk of social isolation, can take part in a meaningful activity in their local community. Sessions are shaped collaboratively with participants and typically use a theme for creative inspiration.

Out of the Ordinary

An innovative online project that brings together musicians, students from the Royal Academy of Music, and individuals from UCL's Rare Dementia Support groups, creating space for everyone involved to explore ways to nurture their own and each other's wellbeing through music and the expressive arts.

‘I felt connected, engaged and supported. I felt that I was being seen as myself, not defined by my diagnosis... This has been the most helpful intervention I have had since my diagnosis.’
– Person living with dementia

Music for the Moment

A free monthly concert series led in partnership with the Royal Academy of Music, Resonate Arts and St Marylebone Parish Church. The concerts, which are performed by musicians from the Royal Academy of Music, aim to be fully inclusive of people living with dementia. Complimentary refreshments are served before and after the concert, creating space for conversation and connection between audience members and performers.

Practice Sharing and Training

We strongly believe in the value of sharing our experience and knowledge with others: we continue to contribute to national and international research projects and offer training for individual musicians and organisations who are developing their own work inspired by Music for Life.

We lead regular dementia awareness sessions with our staff and musicians, and host an access and inclusion group to regularly review how to make our environment, facilities, and programming more accessible to people living with dementia.



Monday Afternoons

Partners and Funders

Our current creative, delivery, advisory and commissioning partners include:

Jewish Care, Music Circles (Switzerland), NHS North West London Integrated Care System, Rare Dementia Support, Resonate Arts, The Royal Academy of Music and Unmapped (research group)

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