

Live Music's Profound Impact for Dementia Sufferers

Submitted by: Vail & Associates

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- Charity Organisation calls for more music in the care of those with dementia

Following today's publication of the Government's National Dementia Strategy, the Charity Live Music Now, established by violinist and conductor Yehudi Menuhin, over 30 years ago, is calling for more live music performances to take place in care homes to assist people with dementia. The organisation believes that music performance leads to a greater wellbeing of both patients and carers and in turn should help the Government save major health and care costs.

The organisation, in partnership with Nightingale House Care Home, London, has been carrying out a sustained programme of interactive music workshops in a special dementia unit, with spectacular results.

In monthly sessions, over ten months, working with the same two specially-trained LMN musicians, recipients have engaged with the music and communicated with others. To their delight, staff, family and carers have seen glimpses of the real person behind the dementia as they begin to respond to the musicians and those around them.

Nightingale House is so impressed with the results of the 'Meaningful Moments' project that it is making the LMN workshops an integral part of its ongoing care for residents. It is also extending the programme to include people living with profound physical disabilities including those who have had severe strokes

Sarah Derbyshire MBE, Executive Director, Live Music Now said:

"Music is a memory function that remains towards the end of people's lives.

There is no doubt that the medium of music and the musicians themselves became therapeutic tools, activating communication and interaction that would otherwise never have taken place."

"The project's success has depended on the musicians' ability to call on a wide range of repertoire and use appropriate music in immediate response to participants, demonstrating the clear need for live music and highly competent musicians".

-Ends-

Further information and case-study from:

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Editor's Notes:

About Live Music Now's Meaningful Moments Project

Live Music Now (LMN) is working in partnership with Nightingale House Care Home, London to deliver the 'Meaningful Moments' project for people with dementia aiming to encourage and prolong their ability to communicate, interact and engage with others. It has been developed in consultation with Nightingale in recognition of the widely-held belief that the inclusion of music projects can make a positive contribution to the care of dementia sufferers and reduce the need for medication.

Since March 2007, LMN trained musicians' violinist Kokila Gillett and pianist, Pavel Timofejevsky, professionally known as the Philomel Duo, have worked in monthly sessions with 12 residents at Nightingale House. Through establishing a close rapport with residents, and also consulting with care staff, they have been able to base the music sessions on repertoire that links directly to participants' lives and memories. The musicians' ability to respond to participants' contributions with appropriate music has enabled dementia sufferers to reconnect with their past experiences. This has not only enhanced their confidence and well-being, but also their care and life within the home as families, staff and carers regain glimpses of the personalities within.

Whilst LMN musicians are not therapists, their specialist training with LMN enables them to work with great sensitivity to draw out their participants and gain their trust.

'Meaningful Moments' continues for another ten months programme in February 2009 with LMN musicians Ruby Aspinall and Candice Hamel, a harp and flute duo known professionally as Amadio.

The project arose as a result of work supported by funding from the Balance Foundation and the Dorset Foundation, subsequently developed through LMN's 'Active Music, Active Minds' programme, supported by Bank of America Foundation.

About Live Music Now (LMN)

www.livemusicnow.org

LMN plays an integral part in promoting the wellbeing of people in diverse communities throughout the U.K. As the largest provider of live music sessions in a wide variety of community, healthcare and educational settings, it brings crucial benefits to those experiencing difficult times or with restricted access.

Specially trained young professional musicians work with older people, children with special needs, young people in challenging circumstances, adults with learning difficulties, hospital and hospice patients, people suffering from poor mental health, prisoners and young offenders.

LMN is pivotal in keeping live music performance alive and well in this country. It offers employment opportunities to hundreds of musicians each year, who are just beginning their careers, and are from all musical genres and cultures.

The charity aims to reach more than 200,000 people annually and is the U.K.'s largest outreach organisation. It is chaired by Ian Stoutzker OBE, who is also the charity's co-founder, along with the violinist Yehudi Menuhin, and is run by Sarah Derbyshire MBE, Executive Director.

The annual running costs of the organisation are £1.3 m and it relies on trusts, foundations, private donations, corporate sponsorship and public funding bodies in order to maintain and develop its work.

For further information on Live Music Now, including details of upcoming events and how to become involved as a musician, a participant or a supporter, please visit www.livemusicnow.org.

Registered Charity No: 273596 (England and Wales), SC039600 (Scotland)