

Press Release



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For Immediate Release

Musicians Benevolent Fund visits The Elgar Birthplace Museum to mark a long-standing association

- Representatives from the Musicians Benevolent Fund will visit The Elgar Birthplace Museum on 5 February to mark its long-standing association with Sir Edward Elgar
- Elgar was the first president of the Musicians Benevolent Fund in 1921 and its first real fundraiser
- Musicians Benevolent Fund materials will now be displayed at the museum all year round

Representatives from the Musicians Benevolent Fund will visit The Elgar Birthplace Museum on 5 February to mark its long-standing association with Sir Edward Elgar. Communications and Fundraising Manager, Rebecca Kingdom-Kruszewski, will present the museum with unique Fund materials, detailing its link with Elgar, which will be displayed all year round.

Sir Edward Elgar was the first president of the Musicians Benevolent Fund. The Fund, founded in 1921 in memory of the celebrated tenor, Gervase Elwes, was originally known as the Gervase Elwes Memorial Fund. Elgar was an admirer of Elwes and his work and after his friend's death in a railway accident in the USA on 21 January 1921, Elgar agreed to become the figurehead of the new charity.

Nearly 90 years later, the Musicians Benevolent Fund has grown to be the largest charity of its kind in the UK in providing essential help and support to musicians and their families. Each year it gives nearly £2 million helping some 1,500 music professionals, and their dependants, who struggle because of accident, illness or age related challenges. In addition, more than £400,000 is used to support outstanding young musicians in developing a professional career. The Fund also supports a wide range of music organisations which help it achieve its strategic goals.

David Sulkin, Chief Executive of the Musicians Benevolent Fund, says: "We are delighted to have information about our crucial work permanently displayed at The Elgar Birthplace Museum. The composer willingly gave his name as the first president of the Fund which helped raise money in the early days. We hope that connecting with the Birthplace Museum will underpin Elgar's reputation not only as a great composer but as one who was anxious to support members of his profession less fortunate than himself. By being President he helped raise those first few crucial pounds. We hope this will encourage people to give a donation to the work of the Fund so that we can continue our vital work for another 90 years."

Opened in 1935 and set in the heart of the Worcestershire countryside, the Elgar Birthplace Museum is home to a unique collection of Elgar treasures. Visitors can trace Elgar's musical life and achievements and see the man behind the music through personal and family memorabilia. The museum is situated 3 miles from the cathedral city of Worcester and open every day from 1st February 2010 to 23rd December 2010, 11am to 5pm (last admission 4.15pm).

Chris Bennett, of the Elgar Birthplace Museum said "We are proud to continue the connection between Elgar and the Fund. Thousand of visitors come to the Birthplace Museum every year and the great wealth of

material on display reveals the extent of Elgar's compassion for fellow musicians and friends. The more one gets to know Elgar it is not surprising to learn that he should want to be involved in the Fund at its very inception."

To find out more about the work of the Musicians Benevolent Fund, please visit mbf.org.uk or call 020 7239 9114.

For further information about the Museum, please visit elgarmuseum.org or call 01905 333224.

Notes to Editors:

The Musicians Benevolent Fund is a unique charity which provides essential help to musicians of all ages. The Fund supports music professionals throughout their working lives when a crisis such as an accident or illness can have a devastating impact and in later life, with the challenges that face older people. The Fund also recognises that the life of a professional musician has to begin early and support talented young people to enable them to fully develop their creativity and musical potential.

The Fund is independent and relies on the generosity of its supporters. Without the help of many people and organisations, it would be unable to provide the crucial support musicians need.

David Sulkin has been the Chief Executive of the Musicians Benevolent Fund since January 2009. He has spent all his working life in theatre, opera and music, taking key roles in education. He was Director of the Royal Court Young People's Theatre, Co-founder of the Young Playwrights' Festival in Australia, Co-founder of the Baylis Programme at English National Opera, Associate Director of the Janáček Festival in the Czech Republic and Director of Policy and Programmes at Youth Music. In 1999, he wrote a report for Arts Council England, *New Old*, about challenges that artists face after the age of 50 and beyond.

Please note that the Musicians Benevolent Fund is no longer using the acronym 'MBF' and should be referred to as 'the Musicians Benevolent Fund' or 'the Fund' thereafter.

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