

# Press Release



9 February 2011

For Immediate Release

## Sean Rafferty and John Mark Ainsley launch Musicians Benevolent Fund 90th year celebrations

- BBC Radio 3's Sean Rafferty joined tenor John Mark Ainsley to launch the Musicians Benevolent Fund's 90th year celebrations at the Swiss Church, Covent Garden last night
- John Mark Ainsley, pianist Simon Lepper and the Badke Quartet performed Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge*, with Sean Rafferty chairing a discussion
- The evening also marked the launch of the Fund's *90 years: 90 Big Ideas* campaign



Last night, the Musicians Benevolent Fund launched its 90th year with a special fundraising event at the Swiss Church, Covent Garden. A *Date to Remember* featured music from John Mark Ainsley (tenor), Simon Lepper (piano) and the Badke Quartet, remembering the life of tenor Gervase Elwes whose unexpected death in 1921 caused his friends to set up the Musicians Benevolent Fund 90 years ago today.

Guests were treated to a performance of Gervase Elwes' signature song-cycle, Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge* as well as hearing Elwes' interpretation recorded in 1917 and reproduced on a 1928 EMG Handmade gramophone. Radio 3's *In Tune* presenter Sean Rafferty hosted the evening and lead discussions with the performers on the song-cycle and Elwes' interpretation.

One musician who the Fund helped at an early stage in his career was Thomas Gould, a leading young British violinist who last night was performing with the Badke Quartet. Thomas said it was a "fantastic pleasure to be involved in the night's celebration. The help the Fund offered me and countless others was truly helpful in making the transition from student to professional."

Last night's celebratory event also marked the launch of the Fund's *90 years: 90 big ideas* campaign which will see 90 events taking place throughout the year, across the UK. Many musicians and music-lovers have already offered their support with varied events from 90 themed quiz nights and concerts to marathon running. Each one will support the Fund and its work.



David Sulkin, Chief Executive of the Musicians Benevolent Fund (pictured with gramophone, right) comments “Over the years this work has evolved and enabled us to help musicians at all stages of their careers from young post-graduates to frail and vulnerable musicians who we help stay in their own homes as long as they can, close to friends and family. As well as looking back, the Fund is looking ahead.....”

You too can get involved by visiting: [helpmusicians.org.uk](http://helpmusicians.org.uk)

For more information about Gervase Elwes and the history of the Musicians Benevolent Fund visit [helpmusicians.org.uk/about\\_us/history/](http://helpmusicians.org.uk/about_us/history/)

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

#### **About the Musicians Benevolent Fund**

The Musicians Benevolent Fund is a unique charity which provides essential help to musicians of all ages across a range of genres. 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 disability or growing older can bring. It also supports young aspiring musicians to help them enter the profession with the best chance of success.

*Musicians Give* is the new fundraising campaign of the Musicians Benevolent Fund. Musicians, music promoters and music lovers are asked to sign up to the campaign at [musiciansgive.org.uk](http://musiciansgive.org.uk). The aim is to raise £10m over the next five years to guarantee support for musicians in need. The campaign has three strands.

- *Musicians in Crisis* - providing working musicians with substantial and immediate intervention when they experience a major and sudden crisis, such as serious illness, accident or emotional breakdown
- *Musicians Staying Connected* - A lifetime in music means just that. A lifetime. Staying Connected will give older musicians the support they need, when they need it most.
- *Musicians Launchpad* - providing crucial support for today’s rising musical stars to ensure they have the best possible chance to become tomorrow’s professional

**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.**

For further press information and high resolution images

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