

Help
Musicians

Help Musicians: A History

Supporting musicians since 1921





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Foreword

My association with Help Musicians began in 1985 (then known as the Musicians' Benevolent Fund) when, as a young percussionist needing help with securing the appropriate tools to progress my musical journey, I applied for help to secure an instrument.

The charity fully embraced my request and kindly helped secure a second-hand xylophone from the BBC allowing me to practice at home and hone my skills in becoming a solo percussionist. I treasured that first instrument and still have it in my collection – I cannot underestimate how crucial that support was and how grateful I have been to receive such help.

The challenges I faced as a young musician are still relevant today; musical training can take many years and, along with investing in instruments and other equipment, puts up financial barriers to creative progression. At any stage in a career, there can be ups and downs – a musician's life can be precarious. Opportunities must be hard-won, whilst challenges come along all too easily, with unsteady income and physical and mental health concerns common issues to navigate.

Musicians are mostly freelance, with little support or training available for the wider helpful skills they need to support career longevity. That's why it is so important that a charity like Help Musicians exists, providing a lifetime of support to musicians right across the UK – a friend in times of opportunity and in times of crisis.

Help Musicians is now 100 years old and remains true to its founding mission – a mission more relevant than ever following the COVID-19 pandemic, with the charity spending £18m to help over 19,000 musicians in real financial need. For so many during this difficult time, music helped sustain us emotionally and, by its omission, truly appreciate the power for live music to connect us in the moment, no matter the venue.

I'm proud to lead this charity into its next centenary where it continues to make a meaningful difference to the people behind the music which plays such an important role in all our lives.



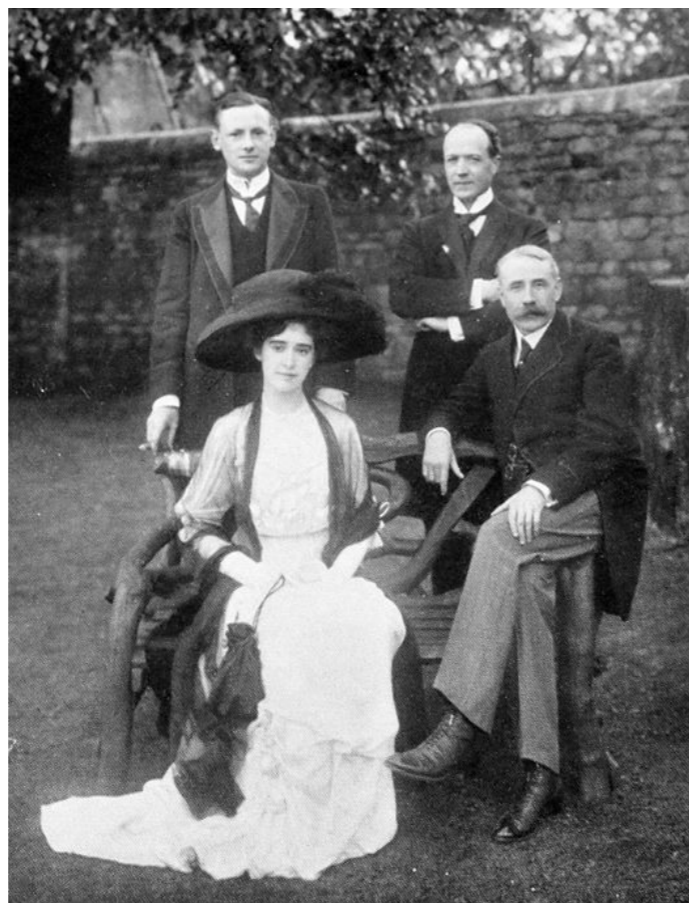
Dame Evelyn Glennie, 2021
Help Musicians President

Introduction

Help Musicians is a charity with compassion at its core; since its conception in 1921, it has been rooted in a desire to support professional musicians during their time of need and to provide opportunities to help them thrive in their careers.

In the early 1900s, Gervase Elwes was not only a celebrated tenor who held great influence over the advancement of English music, but he was well known for his compassion and kindness towards his fellow musicians. Keenly interested in progressing emerging musicians' careers and offering help to those who had fallen on hard times, Elwes' contribution to the profession was considerable. He generously donated his services for free, or at a minimal charge, to organisations like the People's Concert Society, which only charged a penny admission to bring the best quality music to the very poor. When pioneering composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor died in 1912, aged just 37, Elwes performed at his memorial concert, held at the Royal Albert Hall, to help raise funds for his widow and their children. Elwes was even known to care for sick and distressed musicians at his home, Billing Hall in Northamptonshire, until they were fully recovered.

Tragically, in 1921, while on a high-profile tour of the USA at the height of his career, Elwes was killed in a freak railway accident in Boston, leaving a devastating loss in the musical community.



1910: Gervase Elwes (top right) pictured with his friend Sir Edward Elgar (bottom right)

Following his untimely death, his friend and renowned vocal teacher, Victor Beigel, founded the Gervase Elwes Memorial Fund to continue his legacy. Esteemed composers, Sir Edward Elgar and Ralph Vaughan Williams, who were part of Elwes' remarkable circle of friends, became closely associated with the organisation and helped to generate critical donations in the early days of its formation. In 1926, the Fund was registered as a charity and became known as the Musicians' Benevolent Fund. Victor Beigel took on the role as its first Chairman and Sir Edward Elgar remained its President until his death in 1934.

Another hugely influential figure in the charity's formation was Lady Maud Warrender. With a fine contralto voice and a great love for music, she shared Elwes' passion for helping musicians during their time of need. In her lifetime, she came to the aid of many and strove to make music an accessible artform by opening it up to audiences outside of central London.

Since its inception, the charity has supported musicians across a diverse range of genres; from classical, jazz, music hall and silent cinema players in the 1920s, through to modern day rock, hip hop, electronic and punk - and everything in between. In 2014, the charity updated its name to Help Musicians in order to better reflect its purpose and to reach more people in need of support.

”
My personal loss is greater than I can bear to think upon but this is nothing - or I must call it so - compared to the general artistic loss - a gap impossible to fill - in the musical world.”

- Sir Edward Elgar | writing to organist Percy Hull a week after Elwes' death

In the simplest terms, Help Musicians is a charity that loves music. With a staff of passionate music lovers, their enthusiasm to see musicians flourish is profound. It's natural to focus on the joy that music brings and forget about the vulnerability of the person behind the performance, but Help Musicians believes that those music creators need to be supported and given access to the resources they require to allow them to prosper at every stage of their career.

“ We felt that above all things **he would have liked his name to be associated with helping musicians in times of distress** or when they are unable to carry on in their old age.

- Lady Maud Warrender | speaking on the death of Elwes and the founding of the Musicians' Benevolent Fund | from her book, 'My First 60 Years' (Cassell & Company, 1933)

Working as a professional musician has always come with unique challenges. Often faced with infrequent work or low paying opportunities, an individual can quickly be thrown into a state of poverty. Without the security that conventional employment would offer, a simple slip on a wet floor could spell the end of a young guitarist's career; post-natal depression might take its toll on a singer's ability to work; or an economic downturn may lead to a function band facing redundancy. Help Musicians exists to ensure that those challenges can be made much more manageable if and when they arise.

The charity strives to propel musicians forward in their creative development because all too often, financial difficulty becomes a barrier to a musician's progression. Whether it's heading into the studio to record a new album, taking a course to learn how to use production software, or financing postgraduate study, alongside an array of other creative opportunities, Help Musicians turns these prospects into a reality.



A lifetime of support when it's needed most

As musical and cultural landscapes have evolved, the charity has been there to help musicians navigate their way through it and adapted its support accordingly. When the Fund was first established, its agreed purpose was to train emerging musicians. However, as circumstances were particularly difficult for musicians at that time, its focus shifted to providing financial relief to musicians facing hardship and alleviating their distress.

The emergence of the radio in the 1920s had already posed a threat to musicians' opportunities for work, but one of the most significant events that caused unprecedented hardship for musicians came in 1928.

During the silent film era, cinemas relied on live musicians to bring the soundless on-screen drama to life. In the 1920s, 80% of musicians were employed as silent cinema players but, with the advent of recorded sound in film, known as the 'talkies', which also coincided with the Great Depression, thousands of cinema players found themselves out of work. By 1929, applications for support from the charity had multiplied tenfold.



The 1931 Census recorded that a third of musicians were jobless; even during a time of widespread hardship, the figures were more than double the average of most other occupations.

Within just a decade of its founding, the value of the charity was evident as it came to the aid of an overwhelming number of musicians who were suddenly unable to make ends meet due to the impact of the talkies. Providing financial relief for clothes, food and shelter, the organisation offered support to professional musicians who had nowhere else to turn.

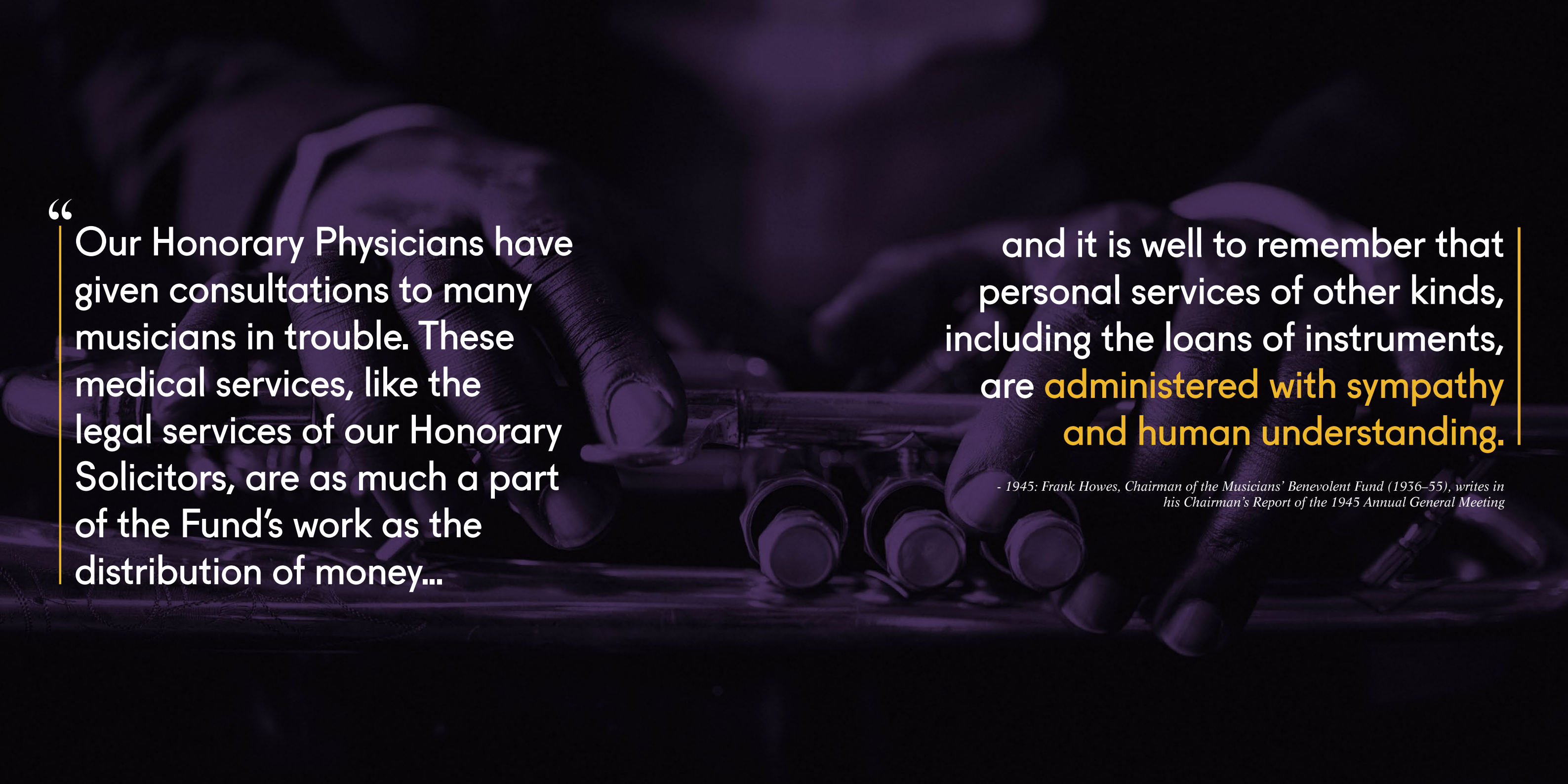
1939 brought the outbreak of World War II and saw many musicians called up for service. Although the circumstances had changed, musicians' needs largely remained the same. With the closure of venues, due to nightly air-raids, came the cancellation of many events and, once again, musicians were forced out of work and no longer had a stable source of income. During wartime, the charity provided not only financial support to those in distress, but offered clothing, legal services, instrument loans and medical consultations.

The arrival of the National Health Service in 1948 saw the state broadening available healthcare, relieving the charity of its heaviest demands. Although the poorest members of society were newly able to access doctors and a range of treatments previously beyond their means, the introduction of the NHS did not remove the need for the organisation's services; pensions were supplemented, and grants were still made for medical care.

From the late 1980s onwards, the charity observed a frequent need for support with complex financial issues like unmanageable debt, mortgage arrears and bankruptcy. It's notable that the mental health impact in the form of stress and depression, among other struggles, has been emerging in recent years as an acknowledged issue among musicians seeking help for desperate financial problems - a clear reflection of changing attitudes and the evolution of healthcare.



1940: music provides some comfort in an air raid shelter during the London Blitz



“ Our Honorary Physicians have given consultations to many musicians in trouble. These medical services, like the legal services of our Honorary Solicitors, are as much a part of the Fund’s work as the distribution of money...

and it is well to remember that personal services of other kinds, including the loans of instruments, are **administered with sympathy and human understanding.**

- 1945: Frank Howes, Chairman of the Musicians’ Benevolent Fund (1936–55), writes in his Chairman’s Report of the 1945 Annual General Meeting

Lesley's Story

Britain's best-known soprano, Lesley Garrett, is an ambassador for Help Musicians who passionately advocates for the charity after it helped her recover from a career-threatening illness many years ago.

At the beginning of her career, Lesley was hospitalised and found to be suffering with a kidney disorder. As she began to recover from her ordeal, she was devastated to realise that she was unable to sing, "it had gone, it had disappeared" she recalls, "I was in such a desperate state when I thought I'd lost it all. It was the worst time of my whole life."

The crisis caused her to hit "rock bottom" and, on the advice of Ursula Vaughan Williams (Ralph Vaughan Williams' widow), Lesley called Help Musicians for support. "They were amazing. They put their warm loving arms around me and said, 'come on, we're going to sort this out.'" Help Musicians sought Lesley's specialist treatment and referred her for therapy sessions to address the impact of emotional stressors on her health. She gradually began to build up her voice again - a process that took over a year.

“

All that time Help Musicians was there for me. I wouldn't be here today, forty years later, with the career that I've had, without those **loving arms that came around me when I needed them most..** the feeling of being helped by Help Musicians has stayed with me my entire career. Every single day I feel that, **without them, I would not be here.**

- Lesley Garrett

The organisation has supported musicians' education since its very beginning. In 1922, its first full year in operation, the Fund made five grants totalling £91, including one to John Collinson. The British tenor requested help to further his musical education and, with Sir Henry Wood as his reference, the money was granted. Perhaps his most famous achievement, in 1926 Collinson went on to record the first version of 'Waltzing Matilda', the unofficial Australian national anthem.

Over time, the charity has explored new ways to develop its offering to support different aspects of musicians' needs at every stage of their career. To this day, the charity still runs named awards for musicians in specific disciplines alongside its broader strands of support.

The Myra Hess Trust was founded in 1966 to dedicate grants to outstanding pianists, enabling them to study at postgraduate level. The Sybil Tutton Award has been funding talented opera singers' further education since 1988, with recipients including Alfie Boe and Katherine Broderick. The Peter Whittingham Award made its first grant in 1990 and now focuses its support on progressing the careers of promising jazz musicians. In 2001, to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the organisation's association with the Ian Fleming Charitable Trust, the Ian Fleming Musical Theatre Awards began supporting musical theatre students with the costs of undergraduate and postgraduate education.

In more recent years, the charity has continued to widen its impact by working with the likes of the MOBO Trust to expand opportunities for creative development. Notable beneficiaries of the charity's broad creative support have included Nigel Kennedy, Nubya Garcia, Soweto Kinch, Charles Owen and Errollyn Wallen.



It takes a lifetime of dedication to cultivate the skills required to become a professional musician. In order for the next generation of performers to achieve their potential, intensive postgraduate study can be crucial, but the cost of obtaining it is a barrier which can run into tens of thousands of pounds, pushing access out of reach for many individuals. In order to ensure no talented musicians are denied this opportunity, the charity has been contributing to the cost of postgraduate music education, making awards of up to £5,000 to help students to further their studies at leading UK conservatoires and performing arts colleges.

Over the last century, musicians have had to overcome some incredibly challenging situations. Due to the instability of the profession, many music creators safeguard their careers by taking on additional roles within the industry, whether that's teaching, session playing or producing for others, it's a way of securing multiple income streams in case anything unexpected should occur.

However, nothing could prepare musicians for the devastation that would be caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. When restrictions put an end to public gatherings, music creators across the UK found themselves out of work overnight. Help Musicians reacted immediately, launching an emergency fund to provide urgent financial support to those unable to get by during the crisis. In just over four weeks, the charity had made payments of £500 to 16,700 struggling musicians.



Over the course of the pandemic, over 19,000 musicians were given hardship relief totalling in excess of £18m, enabling them to pay bills and put food on their tables. Sadly, the further impact of COVID-19 meant that in 2021, demand for mental health support through Help Musicians' dedicated service, Music Minds Matter, nearly doubled, reflecting the ongoing emotional strain that musicians were suffering under the extraordinary circumstances.

Madeleine's Story

One musician who has been supported by Help Musicians' Postgraduate Award scheme is violinist and violist Madeleine Pickering, who began playing the violin when she was six years old. After many years of practicing and studying, Madeleine was awarded financial support by Help Musicians that enabled her to complete her master's degree at London's prestigious Royal Academy of Music.

During her postgraduate years, she led the Academy's Chamber and Symphony Orchestras, won the Winifred Small Prize for Solo Violin (2020), and directed a recorded performance of Mendelssohn's Concerto for Violin and String Orchestra in D minor as the winner of the Martin/Hooton Concerto Prize (2021). Madeleine found her final years to be extremely helpful in providing clarity and experience in preparation for her to enter the profession.

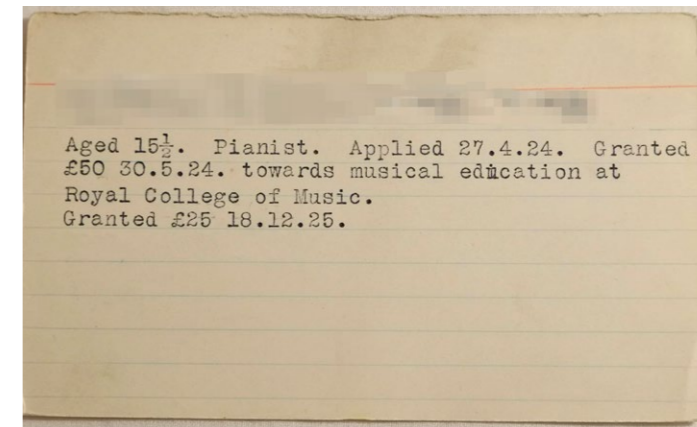
“
Without the support of Help Musicians, my studies would have been drastically affected by having to take on many hours of work unrelated to performance each week. The financial support from Help Musicians allowed me to throw myself fully into my course. **I have been free to practise, collaborate, and learn in so many ways.**”

- Madeleine Pickering

From the archive: Support across the years

To date, over 10,000 index cards have been found in the Help Musicians archive, documenting the support given to individual musicians from 1921 up until the mid-2000s.

Here are a selection of them:



1924: a pianist, aged 15½, receives a grant towards his education at Royal College of Music



efm.

██████████
 ██████████
 Trumpet player.

5th November 1935 applied for help.
 Form sent. City of Glasgow Society of
 Social Service reported he has played
 the trumpet in many different cinemas in
 the neighbourhood of Glasgow, as well as
 in the city itself but he has now been
 idle for 6 years, largely owing to 'talkies'.
 He is married and has one son and
 daughter at home with him. His present
 p.t.o.

income is 23/6d Public Assistance. Girl's
 wage 12/- and boy's wage 30/-. Their
 rent is 21/- per month. They owe 2 months
 rent. Pawn tickets total 35/3d while they
 owe £4.17.7d for boots and clothing.
 Funeral insurance is 2/- per week and the
 arrears are 34/4d. Help recommended.

28th November 1935 Granted £10.
Nothing further heard. Total grants £10.

1935: a cinema trumpet player in Glasgow who lost his work due to the talkies

4.11.

IS ██████████
 ██████████
 ██████████

4th August, 1940. Mr. Stenning of the L.C.C.
 advised Mr. ██████████ to apply to the Fund for
 assistance. Married - 3 children.
 Unemployed - no income. 27/9/40. C.O.S.
 reported that he had obtained work. 17/10/40.
 reported that Mr. ██████████ house was bombed
 and they have gone to Wycombe. He is in
 arrears with his rent and has several pawn
 tickets. 25/10/40. The C.O.S. wrote saying
 that Mr. Isaacs had obtained work at the
 Stratford "Empire", but this was bombed.

Help recommended. 28/11/40. Granted £2.17.0.
Nothing further. Total grants £2.17.0.

1940: a musician whose home and place of work has been bombed during the war

DA [redacted]
 Violinist
 Married 2 children.
 25.3.52 Musicians' Union wrote about above who has T.B. of the right lung and needs help as he cannot work.
 26.3.52 GRANTED.....£20.0.0.

1952: a violinist is unable to work while suffering from tuberculosis. The Musicians' Benevolent Fund contacted the Musicians' Benevolent Fund

DO [redacted]
 Teacher/guitarist
 23.10.68 We were informed that Miss D [redacted] was in urgent need of financial assistance. In late September just before the beginning of the academic year she slipped while putting her milk bottles out, dislocated her elbow, fractured her arm and severed her main artery. She has therefore been unable to teach.
 23.10.68 GRANTED.....£25.0.0.

1968: a guitar teacher suffered severe injuries after a fall. She was unable to work and in urgent need of assistance

File closed 19.11.90, 781004 1978
 [redacted] violinist
 17.3.78 Contacted by Sir David Willcocks as he is in dire need of help with a problem of chronic alcoholism
 The Committee agreed to contribute £1.000 towards his treatment

1978: a violinist suffering from chronic addiction in dire need of help

H [redacted] Ms [redacted]
 Teacher (gamelan/pno)
 23.12.94 - Gamelan tutor/music therapist. Started training course Jan 94 but had to stop Jul due to depression. No income, expensive course of psychotherapy. £300 grant for costs, to be visited re followup.

1994: a gamelan tutor and music therapist had to stop a training course due to depression. The Musicians' Benevolent Fund offered support for costs of psychotherapy

"Hold" Sept 96
 DA [redacted]
 Org/pf/hpschd/flute
 27.10.95 - Promising career (inc international competitions, solo perfs abroad) ended by Ehlers-Danlos syndrome. Mobility affected. Help needed with music therapy course fees (£1k p.a. for 2 yrs).

1995: a musician's promising career is ended by a rare syndrome affecting bodily connective tissue. The Musicians' Benevolent Fund provided help towards music therapy course fees

(H) Nov 96
 C [redacted] Miss [redacted]
 Composer, singer
 27.02.96 - Single mother, 1 10-yr-old child. Referred by BPAMT. Suffers from eating disorder. Help provided with counselling bills.

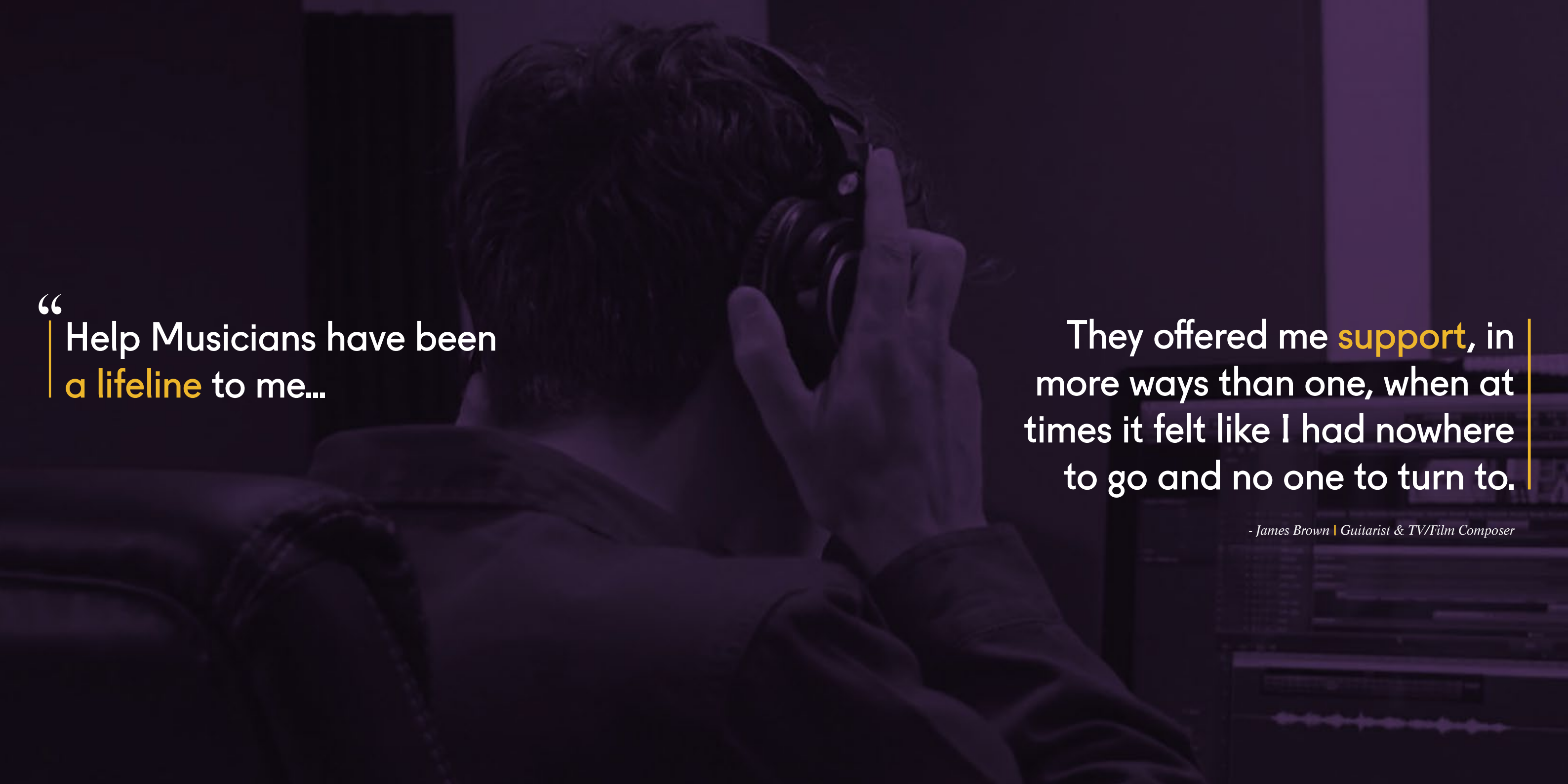
1996: a composer and singer needs support with counselling bills

D [redacted] Mrs [redacted] (H) 25/08/05 [redacted]
 Violin
 31 May 2005
 Freelance violinist, Irish Chamber Orchestra/Academy of St Martins in the Fields. Problems with pain in back, neck shoulders, arms for 10 years, cervical ribs removed 95 and 97. Requested help with treatment costs.

2005: a freelance violinist, playing with Irish Chamber Orchestra, has had chronic musculoskeletal problems. Requesting help with treatment costs

FA [redacted] (H) 31-01-07 [redacted]
 Singer/teacher
 31 January 2007
 Freelance singer and singing teacher. Sessions/choirs/hotels. In July 2005 voice stopped working (nodules on throat). Unable to work since that date. Requires professional singing lessons in order to regain voice.

2007: a freelance singer and teacher suffering from throat nodules requires lessons to regain voice



“ Help Musicians have been
a lifeline to me...

They offered me support, in
more ways than one, when at
times it felt like I had nowhere
to go and no one to turn to.

- James Brown | Guitarist & TV/Film Composer

Our supporters

As an independent charity, Help Musicians relies on the generosity of its donors to continue offering a lifetime of support to musicians when it's needed most. Legacies are an important source of revenue for the organisation and, owing to its solid investment strategy, all overheads are now covered by investment income, ensuring that 100% of donors' current contributions go directly to the frontline to help musicians in need.

Since 1921, the organisation has relished the patronage of the Royal Family who have attended many events to highlight its work. Both King George V and King George VI were Royal Patrons, succeeded by HM Queen Elizabeth II, all of whom have given their time generously to support the work of the charity.



1969: Her Majesty The Queen accompanied by Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh at Festival of St Cecilia

A key event in the Help Musicians calendar is the annual Festival of St Cecilia concert, held at Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Cathedral alternately. Established in 1946, the service takes place in the name of the patron saint of music and musicians, aiming to bring together its supporters to celebrate the value of music and mark the contribution that musicians make. To this day, the event remains a special moment for Help Musicians and was even presented in an online format in 2020 to allow it to continue during the pandemic.

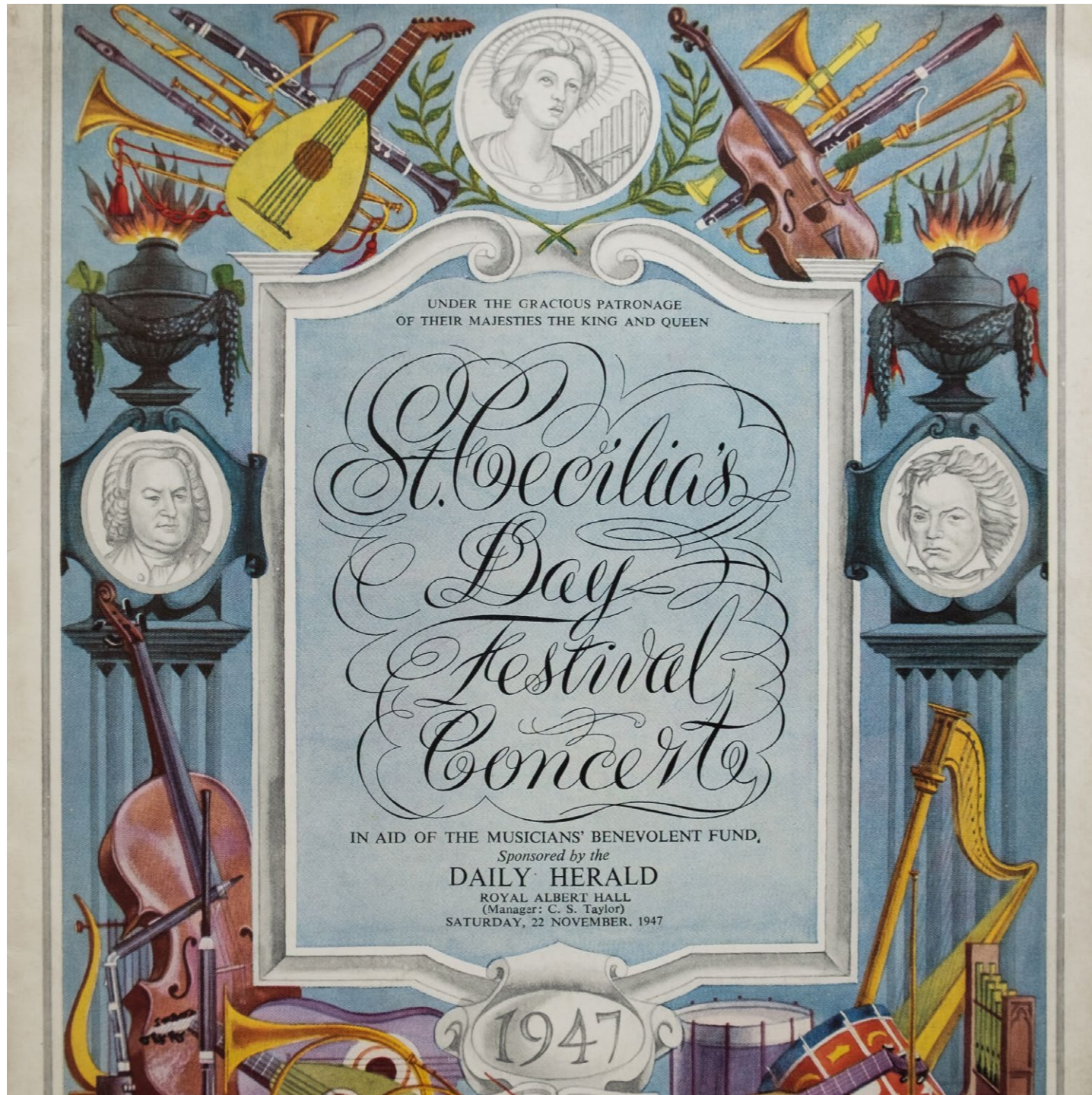
In the early days of the charity, grand fundraising events were common, including celebrity cricket matches. An Actors v Musicians match was played at Hampstead Cricket Club in the summer of 1930, under the patronage of Princess Helena Victoria, a granddaughter of Queen Victoria. In 1935, England star Jack Hobbs came out of retirement to lead a charity team at Lord's Cricket Ground in aid of the Fund. Similarly, each year, the organisation would host an annual fundraising dinner at The Savoy Hotel in London, often chaired by members of the Royal Family. The event in 1931 featured a fanfare by Dame Ethel Smyth, the first female composer in history to be granted a Damehood, and the first to be commissioned to write music for the organisation.



1935: world-famous England cricketer Jack Hobbs (front row, fifth from left) led a charity team in support of the Musicians' Benevolent Fund at Lord's Cricket Ground

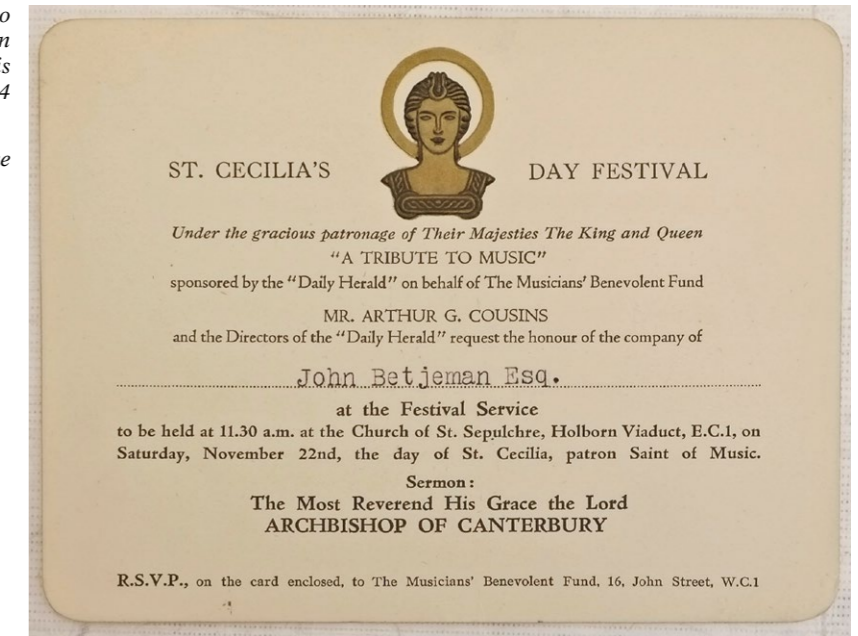


2021: Georgia, Emily and Lisa run the Hackney Half marathon in aid of Help Musicians



1947: St Cecilia's Day Festival invitation card to the poet and writer John Betjeman, later Sir John Betjeman, Poet Laureate from 1972 until his death in 1984

(Far left) 1947: St Cecilia's Day Festival programme



(right) 2015: Festival of St Cecilia. Sir Andrew Carwood, Director of Music at St Paul's Cathedral, leads the St Paul's Cathedral choir



Sir Henry Wood, founder and former chief conductor of the Proms, was an early supporter of the organisation and remained closely associated for much of his career. Sir Henry conducted several of the early Royal concerts held in aid of the charity. In 1944, shortly before his death, the charity had hosted a luncheon at The Savoy Hotel in tribute to Wood, celebrating both his 75th birthday and the 50th anniversary of the Proms, which included a message of congratulations from King George VI.

Raising funds hasn't always been easy. During the Second World War donations to the charity declined as the nation felt the impact of the conflict but musicians' need for support remained. Through the war years, one of Britain's most famous classical pianists, Dame Myra Hess, contributed to the organisation through lunchtime concerts held at a picture-less National Gallery.

Dame Myra felt that the British public were deprived of music during the wartime period and saw the concerts as a means of providing income for out-of-work musicians. She waived a tour in America to perform this unique type of national service and continued to perform every day, even during The Blitz, in total giving 1,698 performances up until 1946. On several occasions, Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother was in attendance with the princesses to enjoy the shows. Dame Myra's concerts raised over £10,000 for the charity.

1925: Dame Myra Hess,
photograph by Alice Boughton



1937: invitation to the Musicians' Benevolent Fund Annual Dinner at The Savoy Hotel, chaired by The Duke of Kent. Winston Churchill also spoke at the event



1939: music lovers queue outside the National Gallery for a Myra Hess lunchtime concert

“The Queen looks back to her visits to the National Gallery Concerts as **some of the happiest hours of the dark times** through which we have passed.

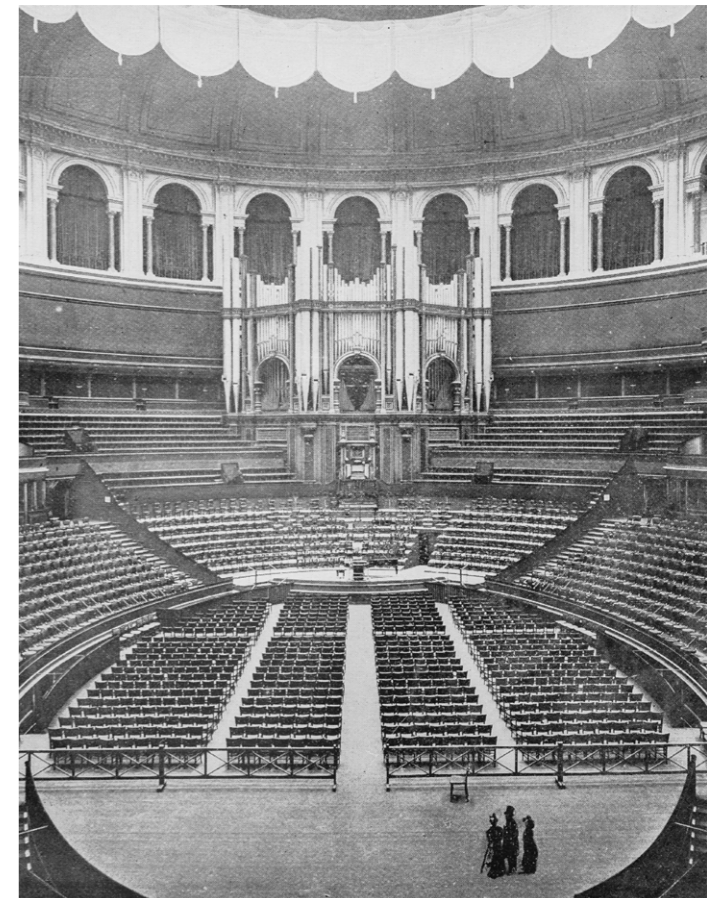
- Letter from HM The Queen's Private Secretary to Frank Howes | taken from Frank Howes' Chairman's Report of the 1945 Annual General Meeting

1959: Myra Hess performs at a National Gallery concert

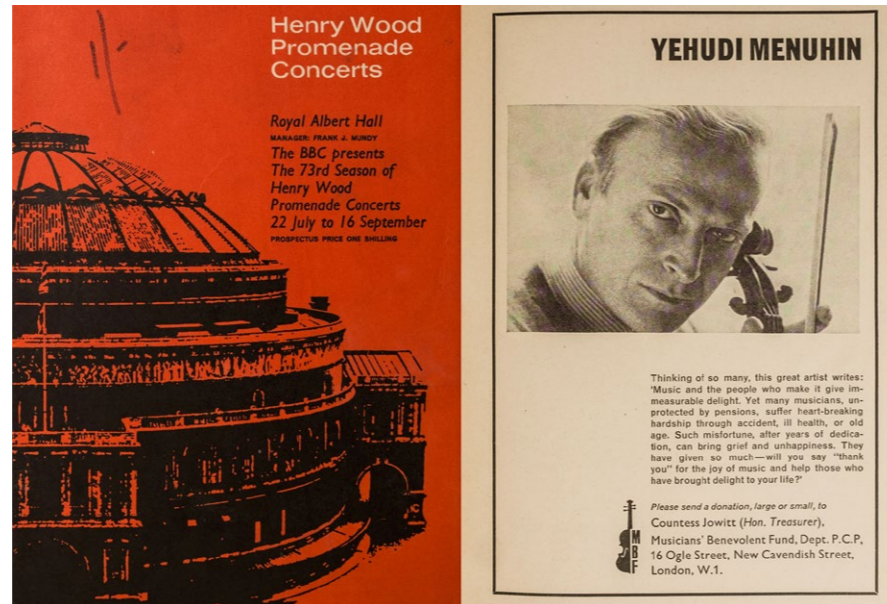
The organisation has valued the support of the wider industry throughout the decades. A long-standing association with the Royal Albert Hall has seen numerous events hosted at the historic venue in aid of the charity. With one of the earliest taking place in May 1922, conducted by Sir Henry Wood, subsequent gala performances have been attended by high profile royals such as King George V and Queen Mary, HM Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, and Diana, Princess of Wales.

The Fund has always worked closely with the Musicians' Union, who regularly directed its members to the charity for support, as well as organisations like the Incorporated Society of Musicians, the Royal Society of Musicians and, more recently, partnering with the likes of The Ivors Academy, the MOBO Trust and Black Lives in Music. Through collaboration, the charity successfully increased awareness of its services and, in turn, saw applications rise, enabling more musicians to get the help they needed.

1896: Interior of Royal Albert Hall



1967: (Right) Violinist Yehudi Menuhin features in a fundraising advertisement for the Musicians' Benevolent Fund in the programme for the 73rd Season of the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts. (Left) The programme cover



Over the years, many leading musicians have contributed their support to the charity's fundraising efforts. In 1954, one of the greatest viola players in history, Lionel Tertis, performed at an event at Wigmore Hall in aid of the Fund. During the '60s, prominent supporters included world-famous violinist, Yehudi Menuhin, who featured in an advertising campaign for the charity, and international cellist Jacqueline du Pré and leading entertainer Joyce Grenfell who both raised funds in aid of The Myra Hess Trust. Other notable supporters have included the highly regarded conductor and cellist, Sir John Barbirolli and legendary pianist Arthur Rubinstein.

Today, the charity remains inspired by its music-loving supporters, including its valued ambassadors who continue to advocate on behalf of the organisation and raise awareness of its cause.

Over the last century, musicians have encountered frequent changes and challenges, but one thing that has remained constant and unchanging is the ethos at the heart of Help Musicians. Gervase Elwes' legacy of compassion towards musicians and appreciation of the value of music has been continued by key individuals such as Victor Beigel, Sir Edward Elgar and Dame Myra Hess and, 100 years on, it still remains at the heart of everything the charity does today.



Phill's Story

Caerphilly-based musician, Phill Court, was supported by Help Musicians' Coronavirus Hardship Fund when the crisis hit in 2020. Before the pandemic, Phill's career was flying. With ten years' experience in the industry working as a professional bassist, composer and educator, he had shared stages with global popstars including Jessie J and Mark Ronson.

When social distancing measures were enforced in March 2020, Phill watched in despair as all of his upcoming work was suddenly cancelled with no indication of when it would return. The emergency financial relief eased some of the anxiety he was experiencing in light of the unprecedented situation and enabled him to pay his household bills and living costs.

It also afforded him some breathing space to figure out a plan that would allow him to stay in the sector, rather than being forced to leave the industry. For eighteen months, the charity ensured Phill could stay afloat. With the crucial Hardship grant supporting him, he managed to build his online teaching business in order to sustain himself until he was able to get back to live performances.

“
With the support, advice and financial support, **Help Musicians** have helped me feel valued and helped me keep a foothold in my **industry** while having better financial security personally.

- Phill Court

Music unites us

Time spent in isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic was a stark reminder of the value that music holds in our society, in our communities and to all of us individually. Throughout troubled times, music has a way of giving us connection and unity. The pandemic brought us footage of strangers all around the world singing together from their balconies and rooftops, reminding us that music is an impenetrable force for bringing people together and offering hope even in the most uncertain circumstances.

Music adds the colour to our world and the soundtrack to our lives. Whether it's a piece of music that instantly transports us back to times gone by, the favourite song of loved ones we've lost, the dramatic score of a Hollywood blockbuster, that special song leading a couple's first dance, or the magic of the festive season captured within Christmas carols, music will always be intrinsically intertwined with our memories.

Help Musicians would like to extend its deep gratitude to all of its supporters over the last 100 years who have enabled the organisation to keep the music playing and the music creators thriving, without whom, the world would be a much quieter, and emptier, place.

Love Music; Help Musicians.



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Wales No. 252783. Incorporating the Scottish Musicians' Benevolent Fund. Registered
office 7-11 Britannia Street, London WC1X 9JS

helpmusicians.org.uk



(Front cover) 1940: a crowd is entertained by an ENSA concert party in Aldwych Underground Station during the London Blitz ©Getty Images

