

MEMORY PALACE

(I'm Still Here)

*One family's journey through music,
memory
and living with dementia*

Reflections on a journey of discovery, a creative
process and collaboration with the Alzheimer's
Society





Our identity:

Music based theatre company
Socially engaged theatre: informing,
educating, entertaining
Rooted in the Wakefield community

Personal Experiences

- Experiences of family members with dementia
- Paul's next- door neighbour

Origins

Aims:

To create piece that:
Explores

- music,
- memory & identity,
- living with dementia
- The role music has for those with dementia

Early explorations:

Organisations such as Music & Memory
(www.musicandmemory.org)

Oliver Sacks: "The past which is not recoverable in any other way is embedded, as if in amber, in the music, and people can regain a sense of identity. . . ." — Sacks, O 'Musicophilia', (2008)

“Music and rhythm find their way into the secret places of the soul.”

— Plato

“Despite growing evidence of the value of music for people with dementia, we are not seeing enough being done to improve access to appropriate music-based activities...

.... Current [specialist music therapy] availability only equates to roughly 30 seconds per week per person with dementia, meaning that very few individuals are benefitting from this valuable intervention.”

Dr Sally Greengross, International

actual
size

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The project (in a nutshell):

Phase 1: Workshops

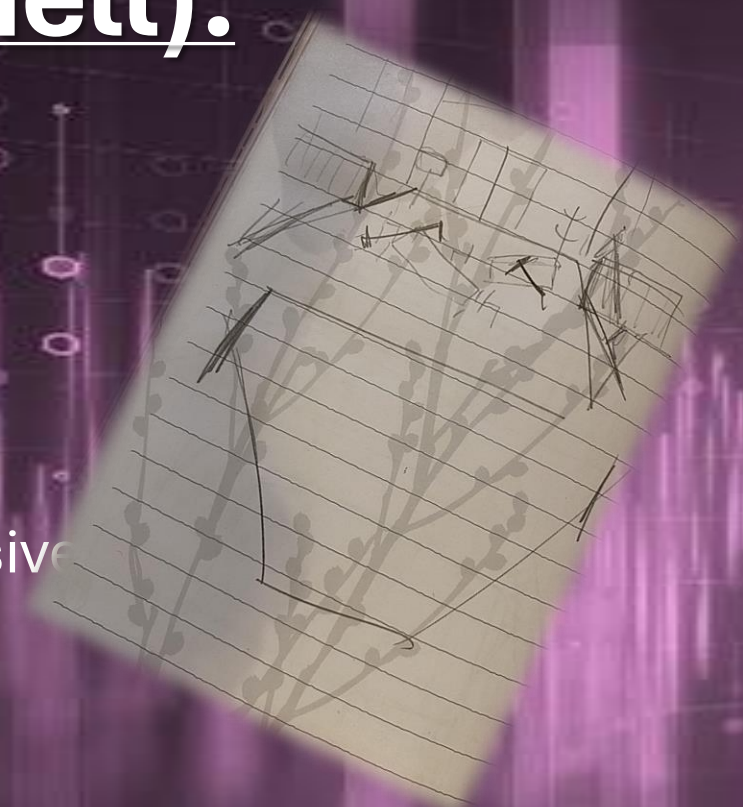
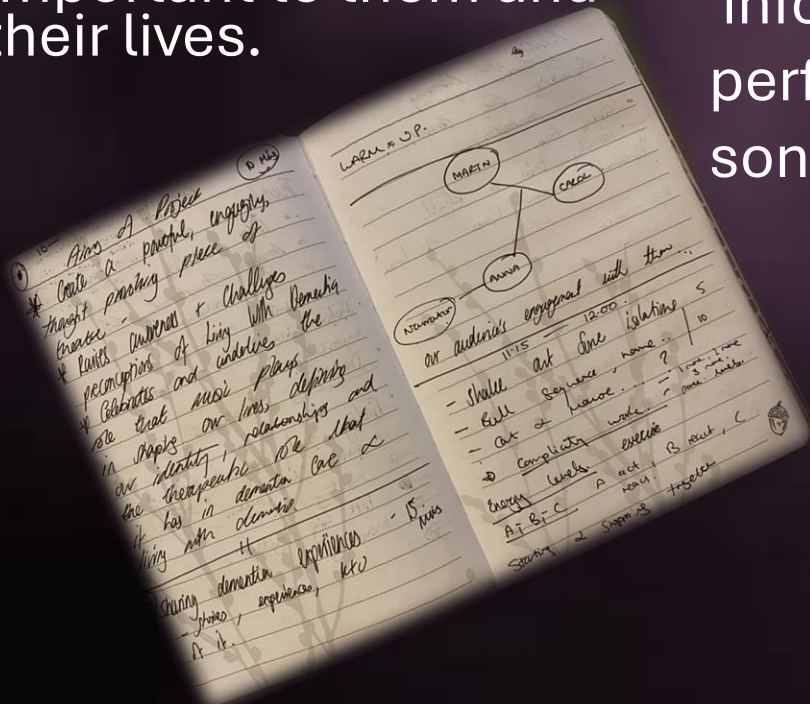
a series of interactive music workshops devised for dementia patients that will uncover the songs and melodies that are important to them and their lives.

Phase 2: Creative Exploration

inform the creation of a live, immersive performance piece rooted in music, song, spoken word and video design

Phase 3: Performance

a fascinating insight for audiences of the relationship between memory and music, the realities of living with dementia and the role that music plays in our lives



actual
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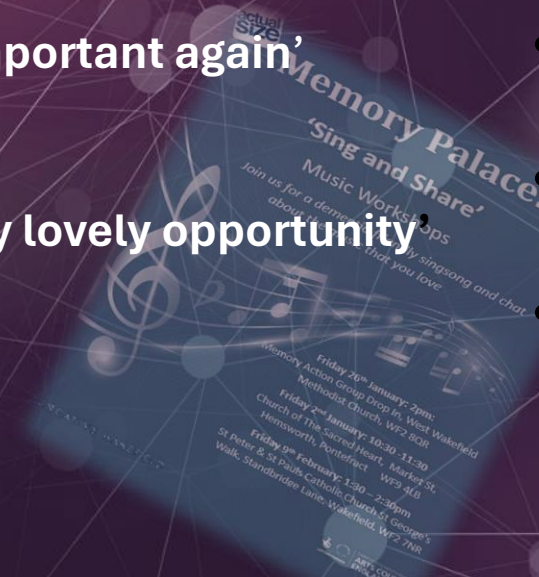
Workshops

- We were welcomed to the Alzheimer's Society's 'Singing for the Brain' workshops experiences where we met the incredibly inspiring dementia community of Wakefield
- Working in collaboration with Jo Currie from the Alzheimer's Society we designed three Sing and Share workshops.
- Intimate, qualitative in nature – rooted in personal stories
- Music, singing and information gathering
- Story hunting, prompting discussion through song

'It made her feel important again'

'Really lovely opportunity'

Thank you for the music - Abba
Summer Holiday - Cliff
You needed me - Anne Murray
What A Wonderful World
Celestina
with a little help
Am I that easy to forget
I love you because
me - starts to make a playlist
of music

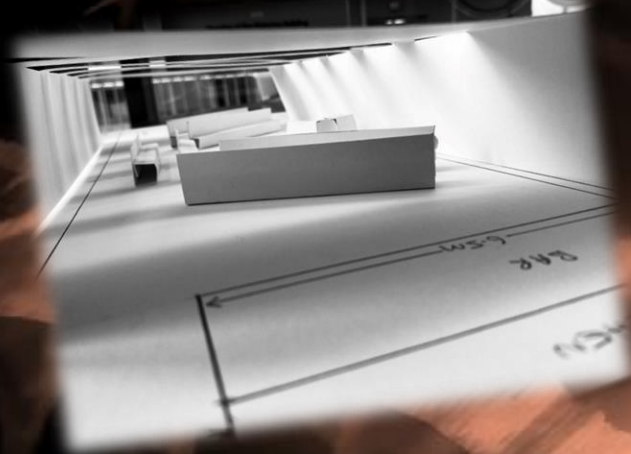


The piece follows the story of a musical family, a father, Mother and daughter and the early part of their dementia journey, from diagnosis, to their efforts to come to terms with what this means for them, the challenges of being a carer and to a reconciliation to what this means for them and how they can find their best way forward. It is a celebration of and synthesis of our personal experiences, the experiences of carers, the memories of participants and of the music that has played a part in their lives.

Throughout process – Jo, Elaine and Ian Wood and Jan Archbold @ Memory Action Group have been invaluable contributors.

Jo has worked as consultant in terms of providing clarity on procedures, consulting on script development, sitting in on rehearsals. Ian and Elaine’s music.





**“This is the story of the
Booth family.
But it could be anyone’s
family.
Anyone’s story.....**



**It is a story about living
with dementia...
But not being defined by
it.”**



Acknowledgements:

A big thank you to Andy Pickersgill for his never ending support and expertise, Wakefield College for their generous contribution to rehearsal space, Kerry at Tileyard North and to Wakefield Council's Culture Grants.

We are deeply grateful to the incredible warmth and support of the dementia community of Wakefield, who have contributed their experiences and stories and without whom this project would not be possible. Special thanks go to Joanne Currie and Katty Kehani from the Alzheimer's Society for their expertise and guidance; and for all those who made us feel so welcome at a number of Singing For The Brain workshops and to Jan Archbold at the Memory Action Group, whose generosity and support is truly inspiring. Finally we would like to dedicate this production to Ian and Elaine Wood, who supported our workshops, contributed music and whose personal story has informed and inspired so much of this project. Memory Palace (I'm Still Here) is also dedicated to the memory of Simon Hanes.

Support & Information

Memory Action Group –
memoryactiongroup@gmail.com

Singing For The Brain - www.alzheimers.org.uk

Dementia Support Line: 0333 150 3456