



## Love Singing celebrates 5 new collaborations with the launch of 5 commissioned songs alongside extensive learning resources free for community choirs to access and sing

*"This process has absolutely framed my journey as an artist and has definitely changed the way I will think and work in the future, without a doubt."* songwriter

*"If we'd set out on our own... we would never have had the confidence to know who to ask. The existence of Love Singing was fundamental to creating that assumption of faith and trust."* choir leader

**Love Singing** is a community engagement initiative produced by **Love Music**, aimed at promoting and supporting creative, healthy singing communities across Scotland.

Today the organisation launches 5 new songs for choirs across Scotland and beyond, formed through 5 new collaborations and now available for all choirs to access free of charge.

After a national call out, five community choirs from across Scotland were chosen to collaborate with 5 professional songwriters, to meet online, to challenge each other, and to each make a new song that could be gifted to others that speaks of this moment but also lasts.

Love Music's own 300+ community choir at the Usher Hall in Edinburgh was hit hard by the pandemic and by the necessary but challenging physical isolation. As many other choirs across the country did, they tried to find creative solutions to the challenges of singing together online and staying connected to support their community. The success of their first online term led to the concept for this national **Love Singing** project, which was to provide a structure to support and engage with the wider community singing sector during difficult times, to share our learning and inspire others to take a creative leap of faith.

Supporting the collaborative process between each choir and songwriter formed the core of the project, alongside the technical 'how to' aspect of delivering choir rehearsals online whilst teaching completely new music. So many community choirs ordinarily exist as isolated units, let alone during a pandemic, without the support or input of other choir leaders or organisations. Getting together to learn from each other and exchange knowledge about how each was going about online teaching, suitable music choices, and how to overcome the challenges of online delivery platforms was critical in building confidence and skills to take on a songwriting challenge.

*"I just feel really happy that I'm part of it and quite proud of it... it gives all of us that are leading the choirs a sense of self-worth or value because normally we're just doing this by ourselves aren't we? It's really nice to be part of a team and to be given time to be heard, to be asked questions, it's a really good feeling."* choir leader

Perhaps most importantly, the dialogue and creative exchange between choir and songwriter has been the most transformative experience for those taking part. It created an opportunity for people to have fun, to continue to be musically stimulated and creatively engaged despite all the technological barriers and issues of enforced isolation. It also provided a sense of solidarity that, as hard as it was to keep singing and keep going, it was good to know there were others out there feeling the same and also finding creative and engaging solutions, keeping their communities going through singing and song.

*“Everyone who took part in that bit of the song writing process absolutely raved about it, they just loved it. Just being part of that process, they felt included, special, that they were definitely part of this, and it was very inclusive.” choir leader*

*“We’ve really become closer as a choir. Members themselves have said we’ve never had this amount of time to just get to know each other before and I think, in particular when you’re a choir like ours which is focused on mental well-being, that’s the main purpose of our choir and music is our tool to achieve that.” choir leader*

The project also wanted to provide opportunities for professional songwriters to develop their skills while writing and arranging for community choir. There is a lack of accessible new music written especially for and with the input of community singers, and the skills and approach needed to ensure a well-crafted piece, combined with working collaboratively with the singers themselves, was a valuable experience for those taking part.

*“The engagement, like incredible engagement, has been really wonderful and super positive and hugely unexpected.” songwriter*

*“The responsibility lies with me; if I don’t find the right way to write the words or the music it’s not the failing of the choir that I’m working with. I’m nearly always on my own in that environment, so having space to throw back and forth musical and lyrical ideas with Stephen [Deazley] and have a bit of extra input was invaluable and also it made the process more enjoyable... it was an extra collaboration.” Songwriter*

*“I never would have thought that I would feel a sort of closeness like you do when you meet people regularly in real life.” Songwriter*

There is a great range and variety in the many voices that have gone into the making of the new songs, with each choir recording a music video of their own piece.

Now the songs are being sent out into the world, free for choirs and singing groups anywhere to use, sing and enjoy, and all are supported by a host of tailor-made musical resources, videos and audio, that will be easy for people to access, whether online or in person. As many choirs are still meeting online, there are music scores formatted for screen sharing, as well as piano lead sheets and audio backing tracks to use in practice.

The song arrangements provide a starting point for choirs to make them their own as they are written to be flexible and easily rearranged for different voices. The songs are challenging yet accessible, and the learning resources are there to provide support for online as well as in-person teaching.

*“We’ve got such a lot of challenges as it is doing it online and in 4-part harmony when all my zoom choir music has been very much intentionally more simple than that, so having this piano line and these resources was really, really helpful.” choir leader*

**Stonehouse Male Voice Choir** from Lanarkshire, which started as a lunch time sing along in a builders’ yard, was paired with **Penny Stone** to create a 4-part rousing a cappella chorale with optional brass. The lyrics draw on the sense of camaraderie and community that is so evident between the singers.

**Sing Mor**, a homespun singing collective in the West Highlands of Scotland, engaged with social and environmental justice while writing with **Debbie Armour** in a 3-part flexible and folksy a cappella song with some close harmony and watery vocal soundscapes.

**Freedom Of Mind Community Choir** from Falkirk, who sing for the physical, social and emotional benefits that singing can bring, joined with Danish board **Hannah Fredsgaard-Jones** to create a 3 or 4-part song which offers a positive, bright and optimistic outlook characterised by Hannah’s quirky modal sense of harmony.

**Earnsong**, a vibrant and fearless rural singing community in Perthshire joined forces with French-Cameroonian singer songwriter **Djana Gabrielle**, whose 4-part song has a catchy chorus and a classic feel-good quality with a jazzy gospel swing.

**Fochabers Community Sing** combined with **ELM Music Therapy** to learn and share signing with Makaton for their song written in collaboration with **Zac Scott**. It’s a 3-part pop ballad featuring an enigmatic chorus hook with themes of resilience and looking after each other.

*“If there was a community choir who was thinking about going for their first commission or collaboration with a songwriter I would say to them “Go for it!” It’s a great experience, you won’t only have a unique dedicated piece of music that’s so special to you and your group but you’ll also have an amazing experience working through that process.” choir leader*

*“This project has met all my expectations in a sense that, to reach out at this time, to make new connections with other groups and to affirm what we all know about what music can do for people’s lives... I think for me that’s something that I definitely won’t forget.” choir leader*

All the choir videos can be found here: <https://sing.lovemusic.org.uk/songs> and their learning resources can be found here: <https://sing.lovemusic.org.uk/resources>.

Artistic Director Stephen Deazley, says:

*“Love Music is a charity delivering high quality, inclusive musical adventures for communities and people of all ages and levels of musical experience. We tackle inclusion head on. We are fully engaged with the issues of access and accessibility and work hard to eliminate the actual and perceived barriers to participation in the arts. We know what rewards exist for people just around the corner if we can find a way to open that door and make it as easy and attractive as possible for people to join in and have a go. Love Singing speaks of creative resilience and of the important impact our community singing sector has on wider society. It tells a story of this time, but we hope the songs will be sung for a long time to come.”*

Project title is ***Love Singing***

Love Singing website: <https://sing.lovemusic.org.uk>

Project is run by charity ***Love Music Productions Ltd***

Love Music website: <https://lovemusic.org.uk>

Love Music on social media: @LoveMusicScot

Hashtags: #LoveSinging #LoveMusic

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### More about Love Music

Love Music is a music education and inclusion charity based in Scotland, No SC037370.

### **Mission**

Love Music inspires and empowers people to be curious, creative and adventurous with music, regardless of their skill base or background, raising aspirations and changing lives.

### **Vision**

For our communities to have no-barrier access to the highest quality musical encounters that leave them inspired to engage in their own creative journeys and open to new ideas and experiences whilst increasing their confidence, well-being and personal resilience.

### **Values**

Love Music's work focuses on:

- ~ **No-barrier \***, **accessible experiences**, and a **culture of equality** across all activity
- ~ **The power of learning** and **the educational impact** on participants
- ~ Providing the **highest quality experiences** with exceptional artists and practitioners
- ~ **Embracing diversity** and providing access to **culturally diverse music**
- ~ Creating **inspiring experiences** that enrich participants' lives, and inspire their families and communities
- ~ **Insisting on excellence** and being **artistically ambitious**
- ~ **Innovation**, enhancing its work and enriching the sector through **new thinking** around delivery, planning and engagement

\* No-barrier access means that we do not discriminate on the basis of ability to pay, social background, previous experience, musical skill, or physical or mental ability, and that we have an aspiration to deliver inclusive and accessible experiences to all who wish to take part.

### **What we do**

Love Music creates and produces a portfolio of adventurous participatory projects and new music through which young people and communities can come together with musicians in a professional setting and participate in inspirational music making. There are 2 clear strands to our work, Community and Young People, and under each strand we offer a number of projects and opportunities for people to participate.