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TOVEYBROS
FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Consolo

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

Music has always played a part in celebrating the happy times in life – singing "Happy Birthday" at a child's party, the first dance at a wedding, family favourites that have everybody on the dance floor at celebrations, wonderful memories most of us can relate to. Sometimes after we lose a loved one it can be difficult to hear those same pieces of music as they remind us of those happier times.



Incorporating a loved one's favourite song into a funeral service – especially alongside a visual tribute – is a beautiful way to honour them, but it can make that music incredibly difficult to endure in the days that follow, it often leaves that music too difficult to listen to in the immediate aftermath of loss. Over time, as healing happens, the music that hurts today can become the very thing that brings us comfort and solace tomorrow. Based on 2025 UK data, the most used funeral music blends emotive classics with personalised pop, featuring "Time to Say Goodbye" by Sarah Brightman & Andrea Bocelli and Frank Sinatra's "My Way" as top choices. Modern selections like "Supermarket Flowers" by Ed Sheeran and uplifting, unique or humorous tracks are increasingly popular, reflecting a shift toward celebrating individuality. If we look back 25 years, it seems little has changed: Frank Sinatra's "My Way" was the most used and requested non-hymn pop song at funerals in the UK around 2001, alongside more traditional choices like the hymn "Abide with Me" and classical pieces like Elgar's "Nimrod." Other top non hymn tracks of the era were "Wind Beneath My Wings" by Bette Midler, "Time to Say Goodbye" by Sarah Brightman and Andrea Bocelli and "Angels" by Robbie Williams, all of which are still popular to personalise a funeral a quarter of a century later.

James Tovey

1860 150 YEARS 2010
A family concern



The Healing Power

We turn to music at some of the hardest times in our lives – when we're angry, sad, afraid or we can't find the right words to express our emotions. It can bring such comfort. So, it's not surprising that a 2024 Marie Curie survey found that 82% of recently bereaved people listened to music at the end of their loved one's life, and that most of them felt it relaxed and calmed their loved one in their final days.

When words falter, music speaks. In the quiet halls of a funeral service, a melody does more than fill the silence - it serves as a vital emotional bridge, helping mourners navigate the complex journey of loss. From traditional hymns to contemporary ballads, the songs we choose become a final gift to the deceased and a source of profound solace for those left behind.

Grief is often a chaotic, wordless experience. Music provides a necessary structure for these overwhelming emotions. Whether it is the steady reassurance of a classic hymn like "Abide with Me" or the nostalgic warmth of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," a song can validate sadness in a way a speech cannot. It creates a safe communal space to pause, breathe, and release bottled-up emotions, acting as both a cathartic outlet and a soothing balm.

The most moving tributes are those that capture the essence of an individual. Integrating a loved one's favourite music - be it a Bach concerto for a classical enthusiast or an upbeat track that always made them smile, music transforms a generic ritual into a deeply personal celebration of life. These "auditory anchors" shift the focus from the tragedy of death to the vibrancy of the life lived, ensuring the service feels authentic and heartfelt.

Music is a universal language that binds a grieving room together. When a congregation joins in a familiar chorus or sits in shared silence during an instrumental piece, the sense of isolation often felt in grief begins to dissolve. This collective experience reminds every person present that they are not alone in their sorrow, fostering a support system that extends beyond the funeral doors.

Beyond its emotional weight, music serves a practical purpose by signalling the transitions of a service. From the processional to the final exit, musical cues help the mind process the reality "goodbye." In religious traditions, hymns like "Amazing Grace" offer spiritual hope, while secular services use personal anthems to mark a life well-lived.



...of Harmony: Why Music is comforting in Grieving...

This use of music is not a new idea - music has always been a vital tool for honouring the dead. Long before recorded history, early humans used raw wailing and chants to guide souls to the afterlife. As civilizations grew, these traditions became more structured. Ancient Greeks hired professional mourners to lead funeral songs, while Romans used flutes and loud percussion to ward off evil spirits. By the Medieval era, the Catholic Church standardized funeral music across Europe through solemn, wordless Latin Gregorian chants.

During the Baroque and Classical eras, funeral music grew grander and more theatrical. Royalty and nobility commissioned composers to write massive orchestral masses for the dead, known as Requiems. At the same time, legendary composers like Chopin and Beethoven created slow, heavy instrumental "funeral marches" designed to mimic the sombre pace of a walking procession.

By the 18th and 19th centuries, the tone of funeral music shifted toward communal comfort. The rise of Protestantism brought popular church hymns into the service, allowing the entire congregation to sing together. Hymns like "Abide with Me" shifted the focus away from the fear of judgment, offering instead the promise of afterlife and spiritual peace.

In the late 19th century, unique cultural traditions began to emerge, most notably the New Orleans jazz funeral. This style blended African, French, and blues traditions into a two-part ritual. On the way to the cemetery, a brass band plays slow, mournful dirges to honour the grief of the community. Once the burial is complete, the music instantly shifts into upbeat, joyful jazz to celebrate the soul's liberation from earthly struggles.

Today, modern services focus not only on strict religious rituals but also on celebrating an individual life. Some funerals are now entirely secular, swapping traditional hymns for personalized soundtracks.

Top 10 Funeral Songs 2025...

1. Time to Say Goodbye
   Sarah Brightman & Andrea Bocelli
2. My Way
   Frank Sinatra
3. Somewhere Over the Rainbow
   Eva Cassidy
4. You'll Never Walk Alone
   Gerry & The Pacemakers
5. The Best
   Tina Turner
6. Supermarket Flowers
   Ed Sheeran
7. Wind Beneath My Wings
   Bette Midler
8. Abide With Me
   Traditional Hymn
9. We'll Meet Again
   Vera Lynn
10. You Raise Me Up
    Westlife

Light Up A Life Outdoor Service 2026

Sponsored by Tovey Bros Funeral Directors

Date: Thursday 3rd December 2026.
Location: St David's Hospice Care, Blackett Avenue, Newport NP20 6NH.
Time: Arrive from 5.45pm for a 6.30pm start.
Entry Fee: £10 (Under 16s Free).
(Please buy tickets in advance).

The Lysaght Institute and STEPS new home at Stow Park Community Centre...



The Lysaght Institute.



Stow Park Community Centre.

The Lysaght Institute was built as a joint venture between John Lysaght Ltd and its workforce and opened in 1928, known affectionately by locals as "The Stute", it served originally as a recreational hub for the 3,500 employees of the nearby Orb Steelworks. As heavy manufacturing in South Wales declined, the institute faced lower attendance and officially closed its doors in 2001, falling into disrepair. It was purchased by housing association Linc Cymru (now Codi group) and the site underwent a massive £3 million refurbishment scheme and officially reopened to the community in November 2012 – its future is now once again uncertain as the current owners have taken the difficult decision to stop running Lysaght Institute from 31 December 2026. It is with regret then that after many years hosting our STEPS (Supporting Those Experiencing Personal Sadness) meetings here we have had to find a new home and we are delighted to say we will be relocating the STEPS programme to Stow Park Community Centre, Brynhyfryd Road, Newport, NP20 4FX – Tovey Bros sponsors STEPS several times during the year without any cost to those who come along. The aim is to provide a safe place for bereaved people to find support, reassurance and information on their unique, natural but often difficult grief journey.



Pre -registration is required so please contact Tovey Bros on 01633 266848 or email steps@toveybros.co.uk or via our Facebook page.

To receive 'Consolo' via email please contact: info@toveybros.co.uk

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