Breathe Harmony, Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Staff Choir release poignant cover of Anytime You Need a Friend, in response to COVID-19, with approval from Mariah Carey herself

Members of Breathe Harmony, the Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS staff choir run by Breathe Arts Health Research, created the international recording of Mariah Carey’s ‘Anytime You Need a Friend’ in partnership with Musical Director Mike King and MyCool Music Foundation, bringing over 100 singers and musicians together to show their appreciation for the NHS. The recording has even been tweeted by the song’s original artist Mariah Carey and gained over 55,000 views on YouTube so far: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mpT2vJgzp0


More than 100 musicians and singers from across the world came together to produce the track, with participants from the UK, USA, Barbados, Canada, Italy, Spain, Poland, South Africa, Australia, France, Belgium and Greece. To make the recording, each member joined weekly virtual rehearsals, submitting individual home recordings on their mobile phones, to create a global message of solidarity. The track was then produced by Musical Director Mike King who has worked with some of the most famous musical artists in the world, including Mark Ronson, Florence and the Machine and Boy George.

The single has been supported by Breathe’s celebrity patrons, Jim Carter and Imelda Staunton said: “We are huge supporters of the work of Breathe Arts Health Research. As actors we know the value that the arts have on our own health and wellbeing, and so during the coronavirus crisis, we need the sense of hope and community that the arts can provide more than ever.

“We love the Breathe Harmony & Friends track, Anytime You Need A Friend, as its words resonate with communities around the world right now, as together we face this global pandemic. We urge everyone to get behind our multi-talented NHS and download this track to help celebrate our NHS staff and spread Breathe’s message of global solidarity during these difficult times.”

Fionnuala Donovan, Guy’s and St Thomas Highly Specialist Neurophysiotherapist and Breathe Harmony member, who is the first singer to appear on the track said: “As always the choir and singing has added a little bit of light to my life, something which is particularly needed during these dark times of uncertainty. I hope this song spreads that light to everyone else that watches it.”

Breathe Arts Health Research’s Founder and Managing Director, Yvonne Farquharson said: “It is fantastic to get the support from our wonderful Patrons Jim and Imelda for this single, which was created to show our support and appreciation for the NHS and frontline workers. Breathe are a multi-award winning social enterprise who work in partnership with the NHS year-round to provide healthcare programmes which use the arts to support and improve health and
wellbeing. During this particularly challenging time, where many people are feeling isolated and fearful, it’s more important than ever to be uplifted and brought together through the arts and to offer our gratitude to the NHS to help them feel supported, appreciated and loved.”

Mike King, Musical Director of NHS Choir, Breathe Harmony said: “Singing is not only fantastic for physical and mental health and wellbeing, but it brings people together. At a time when people have never felt so isolated and alone, when hope is in short supply, I wanted to create an opportunity for people around the world to connect and have something positive to focus on. However, this wasn’t only meant to benefit those who took part in the experience but for the song itself to bring hope and comfort to those effected by the coronavirus and show our appreciation to the NHS and all those working on the front line.”

Small charities like Breathe Arts Health Research and MyCool Music Foundation will be some of the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. To make sure these vital services continue to exist, all proceeds from the single will be divided between Breathe Arts Health Research and MyCool Foundation to enable the charities to deliver their arts and health projects to patients and NHS staff, and support the NHS with arts services all year-round.

- Ends –

Note to editors:

1. **Primary contact:** Breathe Arts Health Research, Hannah Dye at hannah@breatheahr.org or 07849351932
   **Secondary contact:** MyCool Music Foundation, Carol Ashfield at enquiries@mycoolmusicfoundation.org or 07941 236593

2. **Interviews can be arranged**, depending on availability, with:
   Yvonne Farquharson, Founder and Managing Director, Breathe Arts Health Research
   Mike King, Musical Director, MyCool Music Foundation
   NHS Staff including:
   Lead Research Nurse, ICU
   Highly Specialist Neurophysiotherapist
   Specialist Occupational Therapist
   Clinical Nurse Specialist, Cleft Lip & Palate Network
   Education and Training Lead for Clinical Research Facility

3. **Breathe Harmony** (formerly known as Trust Harmonix) established in 2017, has around 30 regular members who rehearse weekly at St Thomas’ Hospital. The choir is non-auditioned and open to all Guy’s and St Thomas’ staff.

   **Breathe Arts Health Research** design and deliver artistic programmes, underpinned by scientific research, to improve health and wellbeing. Our innovative and artistic approach to transforming healthcare experiences, offer those we work with, a sense of empowerment, hope and creative fulfilment when they need it most.

   Our programme at Guy’s and St Thomas’ brings a diverse range of participatory projects, to meet specific clinical needs. In addition, we deliver an extensive live performance programme across 80 healthcare locations, which contribute to a more welcoming and relaxing environment. All of our work is co-designed with staff and patients. Annually we’re proud to engage 50,000 people through 1,400 projects and events. [https://breatheahr.org/](https://breatheahr.org/)

   The Performing Arts Programme is delivered by Breathe Arts Health Research and made possible with support from Guy’s and St Thomas’ Charity. [www.supportgstt.org.uk](http://www.supportgstt.org.uk)

3. **MyCool Music Foundation**

   MyCool Music Foundation, founded by Mike King in 2018, aims to make a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities through music. We develop projects that support people for who the therapeutic power of music and singing helps them to express how they feel, bring hope and develop confidence.
Initiatives include songwriting sessions for victims of sexual abuse, the terminally ill and carers as well as singing sessions for refugees and those suffering from bereavement or mental health challenges. MyCool Music Foundation also offers grants to individuals and other organisations to support their music projects that enhance the lives and experiences of their community. www.mycoolmusicfoundation.org

4. Small charities like Breathe, will be the hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis. To donate to Breathe Arts Health Research to continue to deliver arts and health projects and supporting the NHS with arts services year-round, please download the track on iTunes or Amazon Music or visit: https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/needafriend

5. Social media
@BreatheAHR (Twitter, Instagram and Facebook)
Hashtag: #NHSSingForSolidarity #NHSforthecharts
Retweeted and supported by Mariah Carey:
https://twitter.com/MariahCarey/status/1246977957014441985
55,500 YouTube views (20 April 2020)