

Andrew Lewis

In Memory

for orchestra and electronics

In Memory is a reflection on life with dementia, and especially the experience of unpaid family carers. Extracts from recorded conversations with family carers are woven into the fabric of the piece, forming its melodies, harmonies and rhythms.

The title *In Memory* carries different meanings. It is the sense of identity that resides in memory, and a memorial that marks its loss. It is the memories of those caring for people with dementia, memories of the person as they were, and more recent memories of the challenges their caring role now brings. It is also an invitation to keep in memory the dedication of the many thousands of unpaid family carers, whose work often goes unrecognised. Finally, the piece is offered in memory of all who have been lost to dementia, and as a celebration of what remains when all else is forgotten.

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*... remember ...
He doesn't remember
... sadness, despair, guilt ...
They didn't understand
... just exhausting ...
Life was closing in, and we'd barely started
... really frustrating ...
People are on their knees caring*

*It's wearing (...remember...)
Everything has to be planned (...remember...)
... very lonely ...
Dementia's part of my life, caring twenty-four seven
... sadness, grief, despair (...remember...) in this caring role
... constant repetition, constant following you around,
it's wearing
The person you love is disappearing from you*

*He doesn't remember
He'll turn round to me and say, 'Where is she?', and I'll say 'Who?'
'My wife, where is she?' – and I'm with him*

*It creeps up on you: I am a carer! (...remember...)
I don't want to be*

*... music ...
He was looking at a newspaper or a magazine that I'd given him
And he was reading out loud, but singing what he was reading
The last few times he was talking it was in a sing-song voice
Whatever he said was in a sort of sing-songy, lilty way that was musical
He was sort of singing what he was saying*

*So he was just really enjoying singing
He loved classical music,
'The Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves', 'Tannhäuser'
Music ... seems to soothe him*

*He's always had a very strong faith
... I pray ... (...remember...)
... the 23rd Psalm ... (...remember...)
... it's a great comfort ...*

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures
The LORD is my shepherd ...
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
I will fear no evil
For thou art with me ...*