

# How to Build the Dementia Friendly Music Player - 3D Printed Case Standard Model - 3D Printed: Use with Headphones or External Speakers

30 September 2020, <http://DementiaMusicPlayer.org>, Ross Porter [rosswesleyporter@gmail.com](mailto:rosswesleyporter@gmail.com)



3D printed case designed by Trey Bagley

I was inspired to design this by the documentary [Alive Inside](#) which shows the profound joy felt by some with dementia when listening to their favorite music.













My Dad could no longer operate the home stereo. But he could operate this music player because it operates like a familiar two-knob radio. The vintage style fit with his old intact memories – for most people with dementia, the old memories are the strong memories.

It's easier than you think to make one. Everything I did is open source. This document contains all the information you need. You can order the parts online, including the cut & engraved wood. It's a good family project – kids do well with this. It's also a project that friends would love to help you with.

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Parts cost</b>         | ~\$70 + tax + shipping<br>(drops to ~\$45 if make 10+ at a time, see <a href="#">Appendix 1</a> )  |
| <b>Music cost</b>         | Minimal as you should use the recipient's existing music collection                                |
| <b>Build time</b>         | About 3 hours once you have the parts & music,<br>Best if those 3 hours are spread across two days |
| <b>Parts source</b>       | All parts can be mail ordered, links below   |
| <b>Soldering?</b>         | No   |
| <b>3D printer needed?</b> | Yes, or work with a friend that has a 3D printer   |
| <b>3D printing time</b>   | About 18 hours   |
| <b>With a friend?</b>     | Good idea, especially if your friend has the basic tools required                                  |
| <b>Beverage?</b>          | I recommend a hoppy IPA while you are assembling   |



## Preview of the build steps

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1) Order parts</p>                          | <p>2) 3D print pieces</p>                  | <p>3) Stain the pieces (optional)</p>     |
| <p>4) Assemble recipient's favorite music</p>  | <p>5) Copy software to micro SD card</p>   | <p>6) Collect the parts &amp; pieces</p>  |
| <p>7) Add Pi</p>                              | <p>8) Install front panel components</p>  | <p>9) Glue it</p>                        |
| <p>10) Wire it</p>                           | <p>11) Screw on back</p>                 | <p>12) Enjoy!</p>                       |

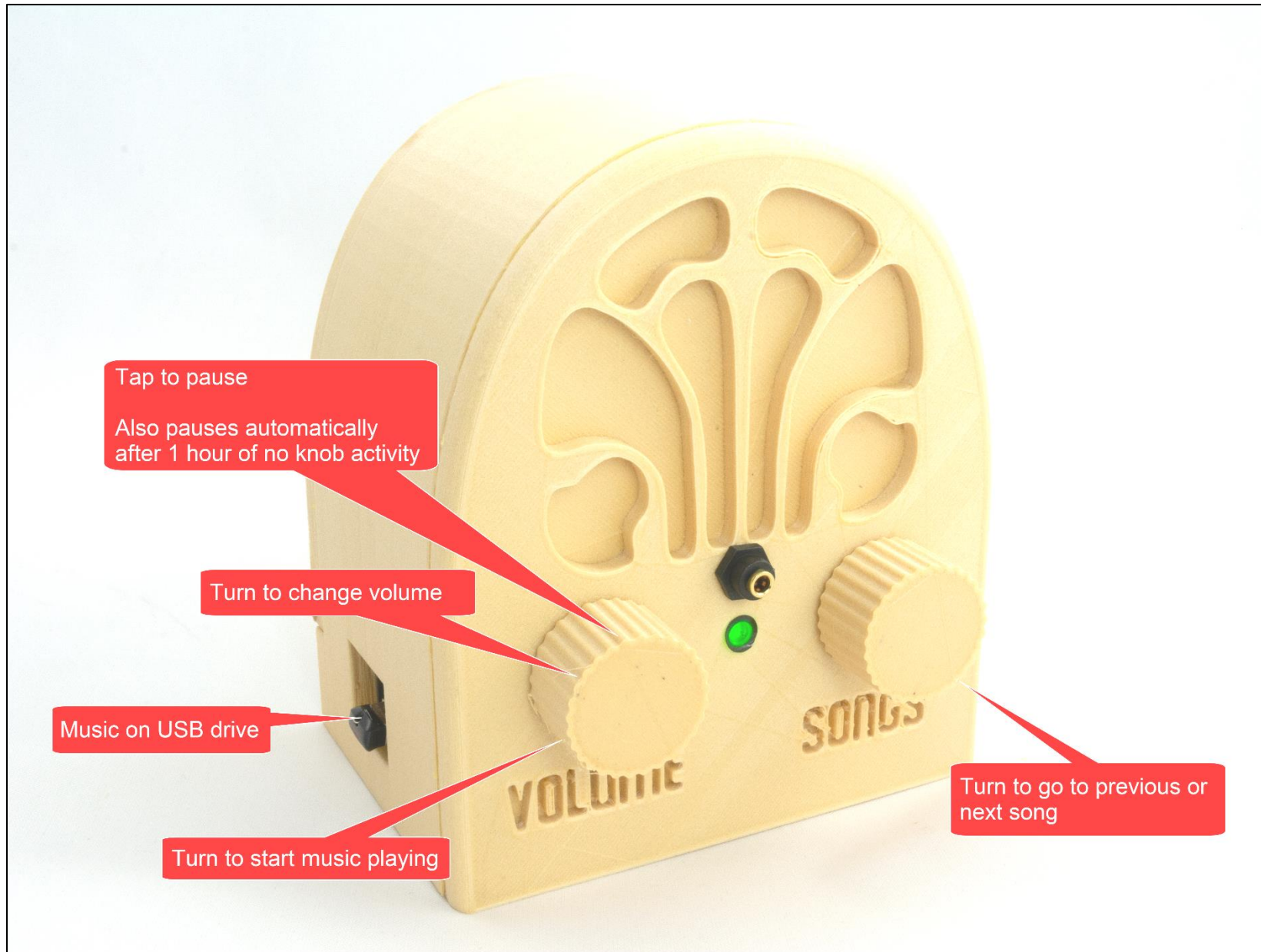
## No warranty

USE THESE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY MUSIC PLAYER PLANS AND SYSTEM AT YOUR OWN RISK. THE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY MUSIC PLAYER PLANS ARE PROVIDED AS IS WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND EITHER EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. THE ENTIRE RISK AS TO THE QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE OF THE PLANS AND SYSTEM IS WITH YOU. SHOULD THE PLANS OR SYSTEM PROVE DEFECTIVE, YOU ASSUME THE COST OF ALL NECESSARY SERVICING, REPAIR OR CORRECTION. IN NO EVENT WILL ANY PARTY BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR DAMAGES, INCLUDING ANY GENERAL, SPECIAL, INCIDENTAL OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES ARISING OUT OF THE USE OR INABILITY TO USE THE PLANS OR SYSTEM.

## Acknowledgements

People were very generous with their time, and I really enjoyed the experience. This is certainly an incomplete list: Trey Bagley, Alex & Mike & others at [Ada's](#), the super helpful crew at [Seattle Makers](#), neighbor Randy, [Stephen Christopher Phillips](#), [Bob Rathbone](#), [Stephen Rusk](#), [Graham Hill](#), support at [Ponoko](#), and my son.

## How it works





# STEP 1: Order the parts



If you plan to make 10+ units, see [Appendix 1](#).

| Item  | Supplier | Cost           | Notes & alternatives   |
|---|----------|----------------|--|
| <a href="#">Raspberry Pi 1 A+ single board computer</a> | Newark   | \$20.00        | Also tested with a 2B, 3A+, 3B, 3B+, 4B. Do not use Pi Zero.   |
| <a href="#">Power supply</a>                            | Newark   | \$4.99         | Or Newark 81AC2845. Or order one for your region/plug.   |
| <a href="#">Female-female jumper wires</a>              | Newark   | \$3.95         | Or Amazon B01L5ULRUA   |
| <a href="#">Panel mount 3.5mm headphone jack</a>        | Newark   | \$2.69         | Or Amazon B004JX64FE   |
| <a href="#">M2.5 standoffs (screws) – 8 of them</a>     | Newark   | \$4.32         | Or Amazon B06XXV8RTR   |
| <a href="#">16GB micro SD card</a>                      | Amazon   | \$4.95         | Or buy Amazon B06XWN9Q99 or other 16GB+ card   |
| <a href="#">USB thumb drive</a>                         | Amazon   | \$6.34         | Or Amazon B07MDXBT87 or other physically small USB drive   |
| <a href="#">Audio cable</a>                             | Amazon   | \$5.59         | Or Amazon B00SUIKMJ8 or audio cable with right angle bend  |
| <a href="#">KY-016 indicator LED</a>                    | Banggood | \$4.27         | ALLOW 3+ WEEKS TO ARRIVE FROM CHINA. Due to COVID, it's hard to find these in the US. You can get it quickly from Amazon B07KJYR8K1, but costs \$18. |
| <a href="#">KY-040 rotary encoders (knobs)</a>          | Amazon   | \$7.99         | Or Amazon B06XQTHDRR.  |
| <a href="#">#4 x 5/8" flat head wood screws</a>         | Amazon   | \$7.30         | Or buy at your local hardware store for less   |
|   |          | <b>\$72.39</b> | Prices will vary. Does not include tax, shipping.  |

## STEP 2: Get Headphones



| Item  | Cost    | Notes and alternatives   |
|---|---------|--|
| The recipient's existing headphone                | \$0.00  | The best headphones are the headphones that the recipient is already used to.  |
| <a href="#">Monoprice On-Ear headphones</a>       | \$10.99 | Very good sound. High sensitivity (which is important). Also available from Amazon for a slightly higher price but with Prime shipping: <a href="#">B014399CWK</a> . |
| <a href="#">Monoprice Over-the-Ear headphones</a> | \$15.99 | Amazing sound. High sensitivity (which is important). Also available from Amazon for a slightly higher price but with Prime shipping: <a href="#">B007SP2CO2</a> .   |
| Other   |         | Look for high sensitivity headphones, as the Pi's output is a bit weak.  |

## STEP 3: Gather tools & supplies

You probably have some of these tools & supplies. If you don't, you have a spouse or child or friend that does. This project is exactly the sort of thing that a friend would be happy to help you with.

| Link to order item                      | Notes & alternatives  |
|---|---|
| Elmer's wood glue                       | Any wood glue will do   |
| 3/16 <sup>th</sup> wrench or nut driver | Or needle-nosed pliers. Or really strong fingers  |
| SD card reader/writer                   | Your computer may have an SD card reader/writer. If not, you probably have a friend that does. Or order a <a href="#">USB SD-card reader</a> for your computer.   |
| Painter's tape                          | Any tape that comes off easily will do. Painter's tape is great. Regular masking tape is probably fine too. I haven't tried Scotch tape.  |
| Light blocking tape or sticker          | The unit's LED is quite bright, so I prefer to block some of the light. You can use the tape above. Or order light blocking stickers such as <a href="#">B009WSJNCW</a> .   |
| PLA wood filament (optional)            | This document assumes that you have a 3D printer, or you have a friend with a 3D printer. So you already have some regular PLA filament. I chose to use a PLA wood filament, specifically <a href="#">Monoprice PLA wood filament</a> .   |
| Wood stain (optional)                   | If you print with PLA wood filament, you can optionally apply wood stain. I used a pre-stain, a stain, and a protective finish. I went to the local hardware store and purchased what they recommended: <a href="#">Minwax Pre-Stain Wood Conditioner</a> , <a href="#">Minwax Wood Finish Cherry</a> . |

## STEP 4: 3D print the pieces

The key assumption is that you have a 3D printer, or you have a friend with a 3D printer. Thus, this document is not intended as an introduction to 3D printing.

You will be printing the pieces that you see below. You should print in the orientation that you see below i.e. flat side down. On my basic 3D printer, the total print time was about 18 hours.



*3D printed case designed by Trey Bagley*

### General instructions

1. [Download the stl files from Github](#)
2. 3D print the files.

### My experience

Trey Bagley designed the case. I think he did a great job. But I'm a novice at 3D printing. Nonetheless here is what I did, and I'm happy with the result:



- [Monoprice Maker Select v2 3D printer](#)
- [Monoprice PLA wood filament](#)
- [Cura slicing software](#)
- Key settings
  - Layer height: 0.3mm
  - Initial layer height: 0.3mm
  - Wall thickness: 0.8mm
  - Top/bottom thickness: 0.8mm
  - Infill: 10%
  - Print temp: 188C (this low temperature reduced stringing issues)
  - Build plate temp: 50C
  - Diameter: 1.75mm
  - Flow: 100%
  - Enable retraction: yes
  - Retraction distance: 10mm
  - Retraction speed: 60mm/sec
  - Print speed: 45mm/sec
  - Infill speed: 50mm/sec
  - Travel speed: 120mm/sec
  - Initial layer speed: 5mm/sec
  - Enable print cooling: yes
  - Fan speed: 100%
  - Minimum layer time: 5 sec
  - Print sequence: all at once
- Post printing
  - My prints came out fairly clean, but I did use a tiny knife to extract extraneous strands from the lettering.

## STEP 5: Stain the pieces (optional)

This step is optional. I wanted to make something that seems familiar to someone with dementia i.e. make something that looks very much like a radio from the 1930s. These antique radios are made of wood and generally dark stained. Thus, I chose to print with a wood PLA filament and stain the print. You could choose to print with regular PLA filament. Or print with wood PLA but not stain it.

Here is the before and after of staining the front face:



I'm not a woodworker. Nonetheless, this is the process that I used:

1. Sand the parts with a fine grit sandpaper.
2. Apply [Minwax Pre-Stain Wood Conditioner](#), let dry. Or a similar product. Minwax is what my neighborhood hardware store has...
3. Apply [Minwax Wood Finish, Cherry](#). I applied a thin even coat. Minwax suggests waiting 15 minutes then wiping off the excess stain. I found this removed too much of the stain. So I didn't do any wiping off and just let it dry overnight. The photo above is with a Minwax red mahogany stain, which I found a bit too dark – thus the cherry stain suggestion.

## STEP 6: Assemble the personalized collection of music

### Choosing the music – go for familiar favorites

This is the most important step. The personalized (familiar) music is the fundamental magic. You don't need much music, perhaps 6-10 albums. But only familiar favorites. In my case, my Mom mailed me my Dad's favorite CDs. It will take two weeks for the parts above to arrive, so you have time to do this well. Though it is easy to change the set of music later.

### Put the music on the USB memory stick

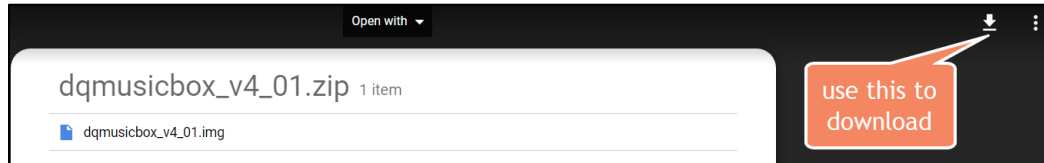
Organize the digitized music into folders on the USB memory stick, one folder per album. MP3, iTunes, and FLAC files are supported i.e. files with extensions .mp3, .m4a, .flac. In the end, you should have a set of folders that looks something like this:

| Name                                     | Date modified      | Type        |
|--|--------------------|-------------|
| A_Beethoven9                             | 10/24/2015 6:25 PM | File folder |
| B_Eli_Porter_-_Eli_Porter                | 10/24/2015 6:25 PM | File folder |
| C_Mozart_-_Overtures                     | 10/24/2015 6:25 PM | File folder |
| D_Tchaikovsky_-_Concerto for Violin i... | 10/24/2015 6:25 PM | File folder |
| E_Vivaldi_Telemann_Bach_Mercadante...    | 10/24/2015 6:25 PM | File folder |
| F_Samuel Barber_-_Barber; Adagio for ... | 10/24/2015 6:26 PM | File folder |
| G_James Galway_-_Serenade                | 10/24/2015 6:26 PM | File folder |
| H_Giacomo Puccini_-_Madama Butter...     | 10/24/2015 6:26 PM | File folder |
| I_Giacomo Puccini_-_Madama Butterfl...   | 10/24/2015 6:26 PM | File folder |
| J_Giacomo Puccini_-_Madama Butterf...    | 10/24/2015 6:26 PM | File folder |
| K_Leontyne Price_-_Arias                 | 10/24/2015 6:26 PM | File folder |

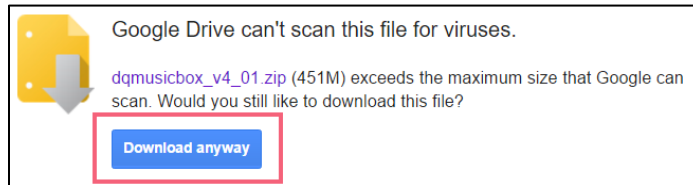
## STEP 7: Prepare the micro SD card

I prepared a disk image for you. It has all the required software. Your job is to download this disk image and then write it to the micro-SD card. The steps:

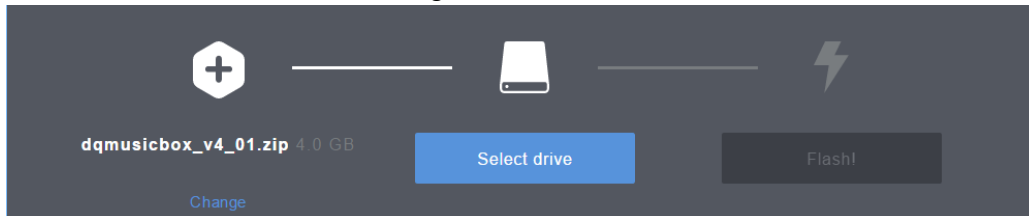
1. Install [Etcher](#) on your PC or Mac or Linux computer. [Win32 Disk Imager](#) also works.
2. Download the [Dementia Friendly Music Player disk image](#).



3. Confirm download – “Download anyway”



4. Put the micro-SD memory card into the SD card adapter that it came with i.e. put the tiny card into the larger card.
5. Put the SD card adapter into the SD reader/writer in your computer.
6. Start Etcher, instruct it to write the image file to the SD card:

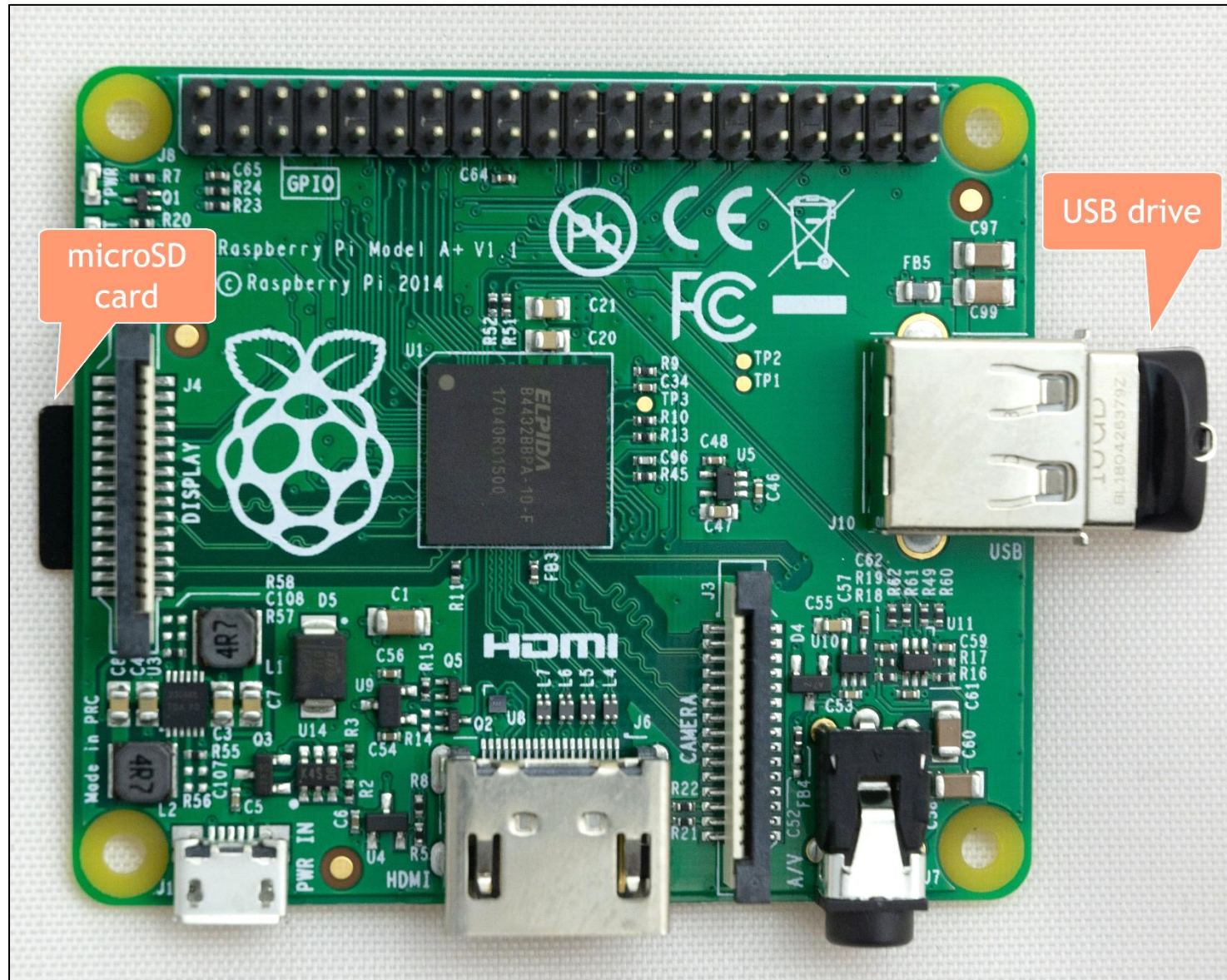


7. Wait for the writing to complete, ~10 minutes. This would be a good time to make a sandwich.





## STEP 9: Add Pi



## STEP 10: Mount the Pi





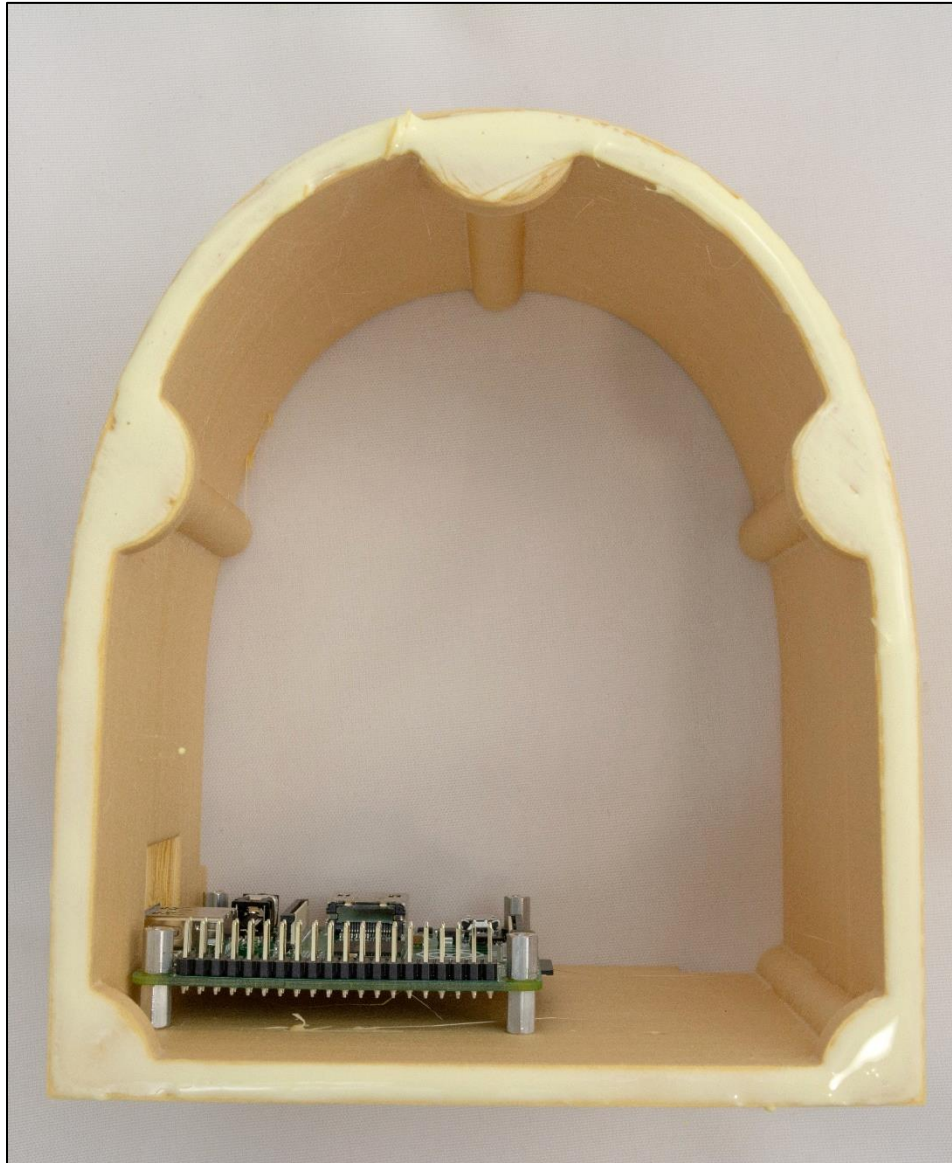
## STEP 11: Install the front panel components

Install the two rotary encoders (knobs), the LED, and the headphone jack. The rotary encoders need to be screwed in as far as they will go, or the button press won't work – test the rotary encoders to make sure they rebound from a button press.



## STEP 12: Apply glue

Apply glue to the front of the body piece:



## STEP 13: Glue the face

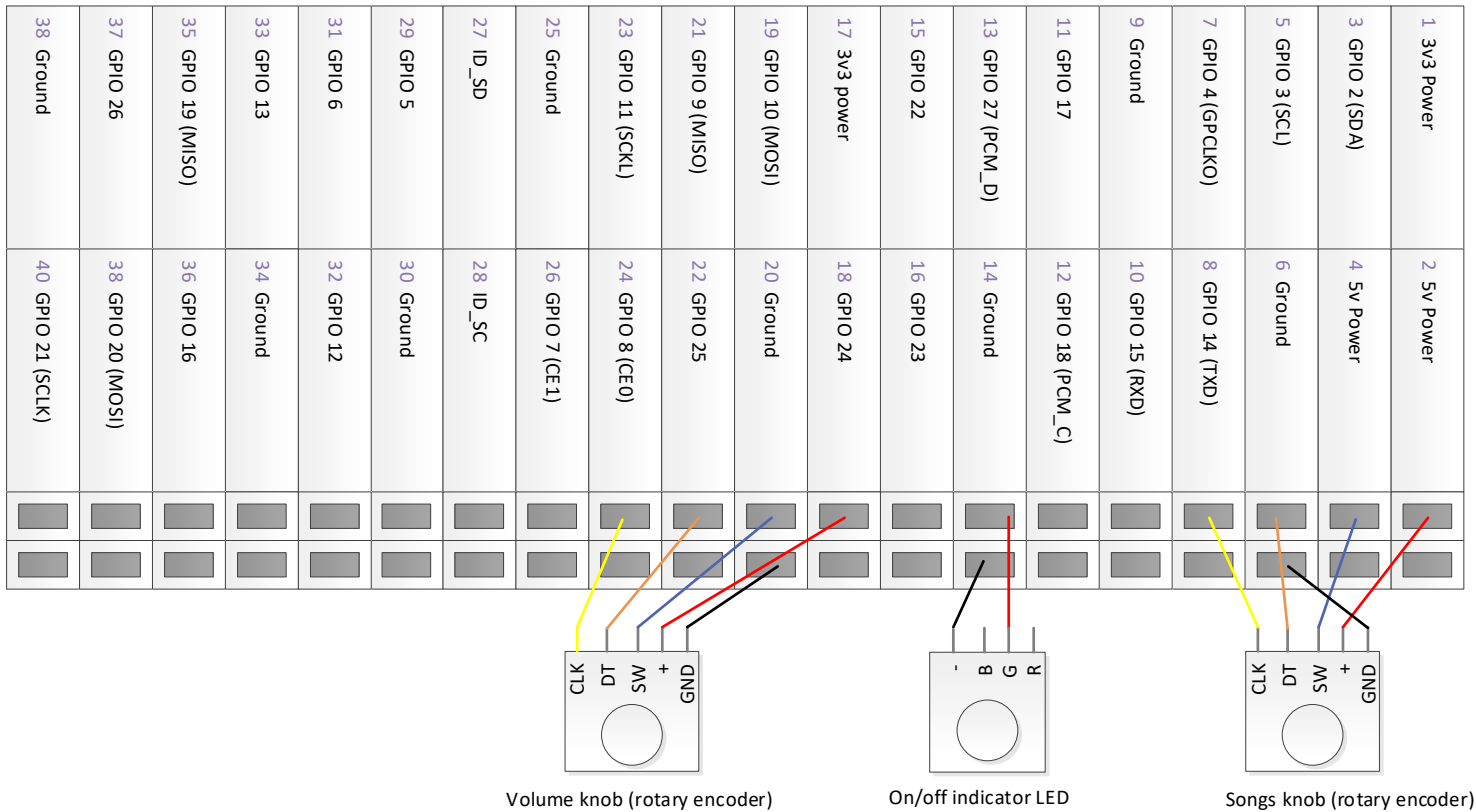
Glue on the face, using painter's tape to clamp:



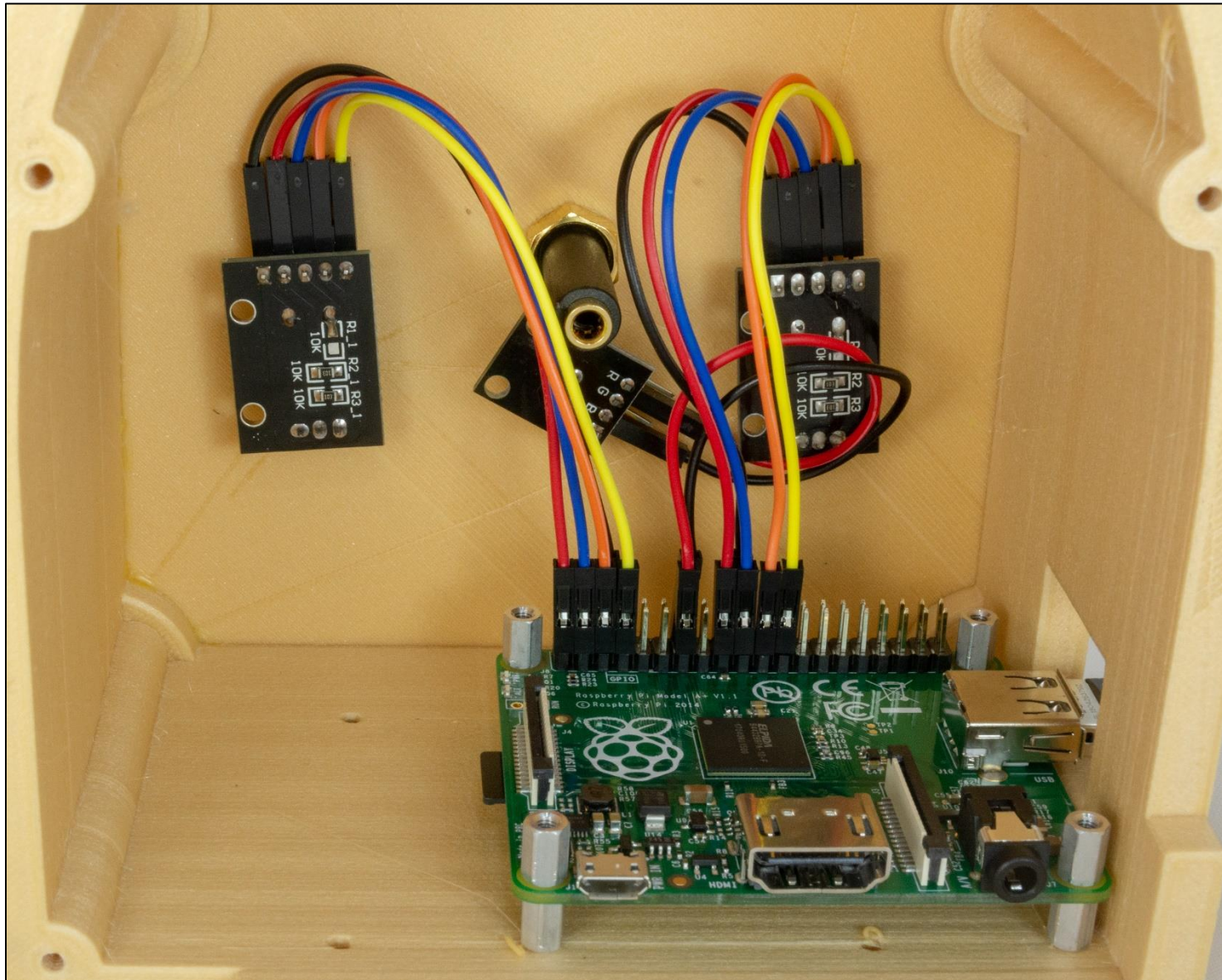


# STEP 14: Wire it

Attach wires from the knobs and the LED to the Raspberry Pi as per the diagram and photos below. No soldering required – just press the wires into place. **This is where most build errors happen, so please carefully check your work.**



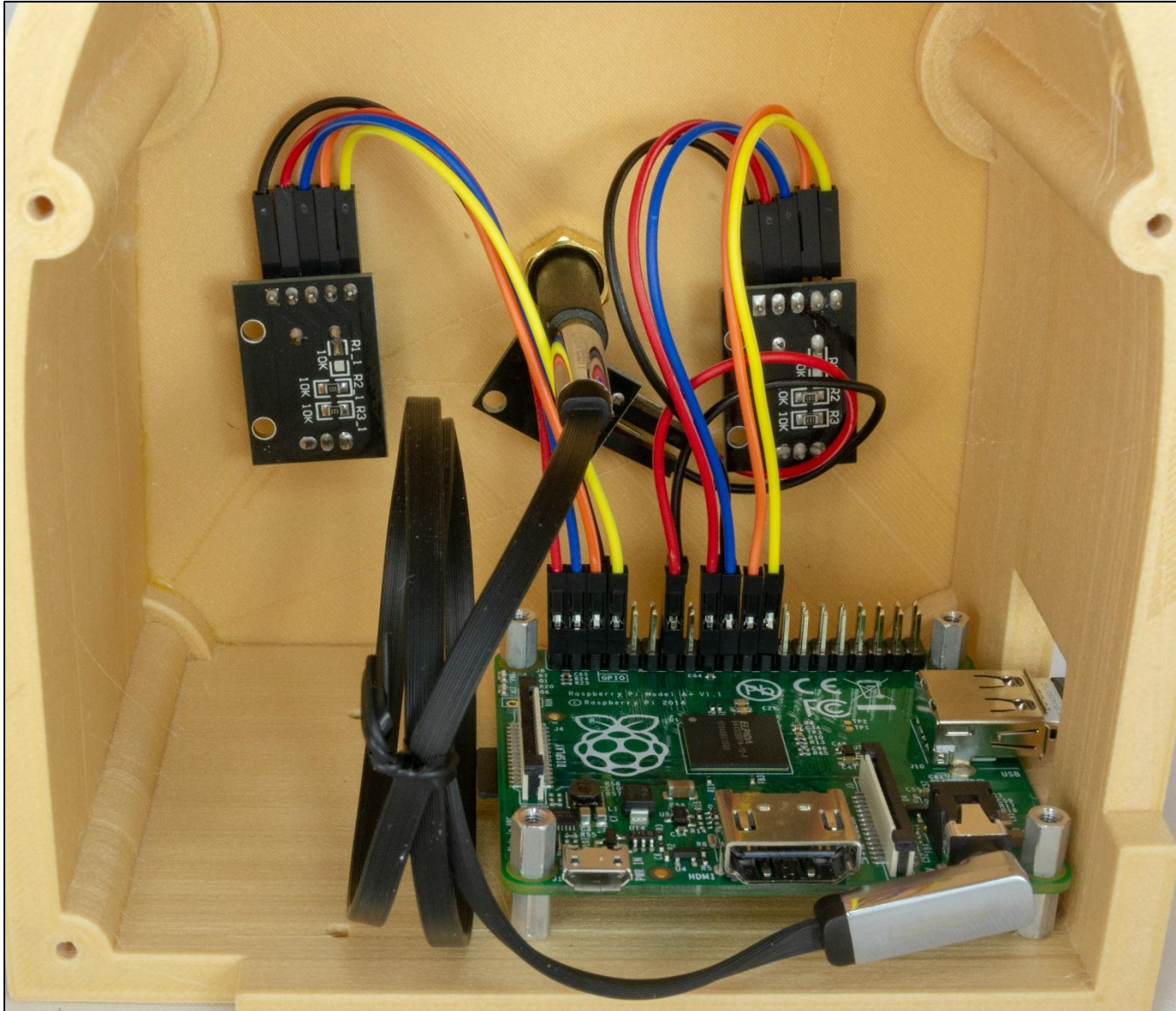
The result should be as you see it below. The front of the LED should be flush with the front of the face. If the LED is a bit loose, just use some glue.





## STEP 15: Add audio cable

The audio cable goes from the back of the Pi to back of the front panel's headphone jack:



## STEP 16: Screw on the back





## STEP 17: Put on the knobs & enjoy

If the knobs don't easily slide on the metal shafts, just heat the knobs up with a heat gun or hair dryer or (last resort) boiling water. You can also put some grease or cooking oil on the metal shafts.





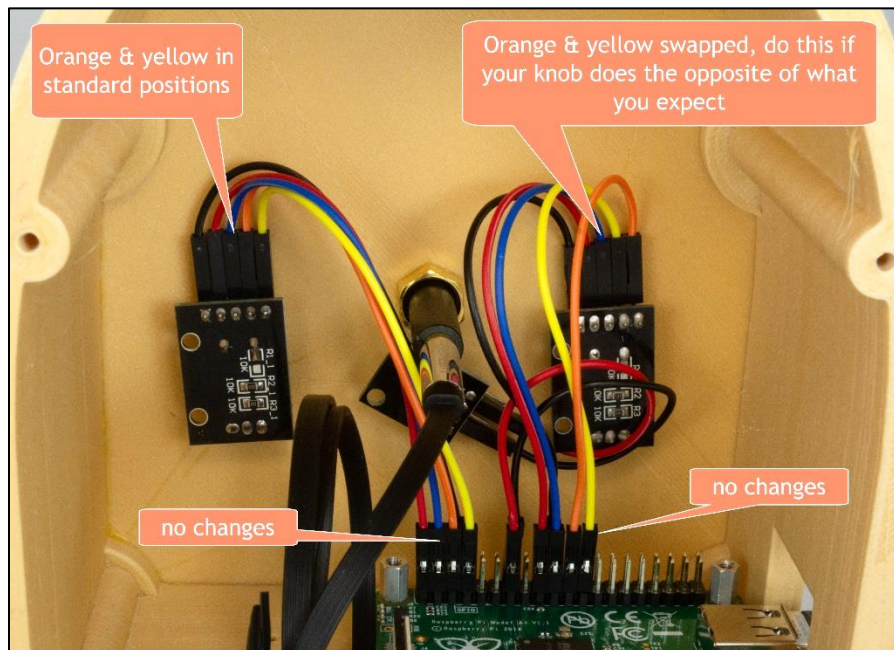
## STEP 18: Test it

Now that you have assembled everything, it is time to test.

| Test                       | Description & Expectation  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Light 20sec after power on | The indicator LED turns on when Dementia Friendly Music Player is ready to play music, which is generally about 15 seconds after power on. |
| Start song                 | Turning either of the knobs will start music playing.  |
| Change song                | Turn the songs knob. If you go forward and backward through the song list as expected, then all is well.                                   |
| Change volume              | Turn the volume knob. If the volume goes up and down as expected, then all is well.  |
| Pause                      | Tap the volume knob, song should pause. Tap the songs knob, this should also pause the song.   |
| Unpause                    | Tap a knob   |

### If one or both knobs do the opposite of what you expect

Once assembled, you may find your knobs doing the opposite of what you expect e.g. a clockwise turn decreases the volume. This is because there are two kinds of rotary encoders out there. Happy, the fix is easy, just switch the orange and yellow wires on the misbehaving knob(s) (don't touch the Pi itself):



# STEP 19: Tape on the instructions

Print this page and tape the instructions in the box below to the bottom of your new Dementia Friendly Music Player:

## To create personalized music

### Organize the music on your computer

- ✓ A\_Beethoven\_9th
- ✓ B\_AndrewsSisters\_Hits
- ✓ C\_GlennMiller\_Hits

One folder per album. Use MP3 files, must have .mp3 file extension. Or iTunes files (.m4a). Or FLAC files (.flac).

Optionally, use folder names prefixes to specify the play order e.g. A\_, B\_

### Copy the music to the USB thumb drive



1. Unplug the Dementia Friendly Music Player.
2. Remove the USB thumb drive and place in your computer.
3. Copy music files from your computer to the USB thumb drive.
4. Put the USB thumb drive back in.
5. Plug in your Dementia Friendly Music Player.

## Congratulations!

Congratulations! You should have a fully functional Dementia Friendly Music Player.

## Let me know how it went

I'd love to hear how your build process went and if it was useful for the recipient. [rosswesleyporter@gmail.com](mailto:rosswesleyporter@gmail.com)

## Appendix 1: Building 10+ at a time

Assumptions:

- You want to build 10 or more units at a time
- You are planning this far enough in advance (8 weeks or more) that you can order some of the parts directly from China

| # units to make  | 10          |      |         |          |                |                  |
|--|-------------|------|---------|----------|----------------|------------------|
|  |             |      |         |          |                |                  |
| Item   | Supplier    | Quan | Each    | Total    | Per unit       | Notes            |
| <a href="#">Raspberry Pi 1 A+ single board computer</a>            | Newark      | 10   | \$20.00 | \$200.00 | \$20.00        |                  |
| <a href="#">Power supply</a>                                       | Newark      | 10   | \$4.99  | \$49.90  | \$4.99         |                  |
| <a href="#">Panel mount 3.5mm headphone jack</a>                   | Newark      | 10   | \$2.69  | \$26.90  | \$2.69         |                  |
| <a href="#">Female-female jumper wires</a>                         | Ali Express | 10   | \$0.60  | \$6.00   | \$0.60         |                  |
| <a href="#">M2.5 6mm thread + 6mm standoff screws (100 pieces)</a> | Ali Express | 1    | \$1.78  | \$1.78   | \$0.18         |                  |
| <a href="#">Audio cable</a>  | Ali Express | 10   | \$2.69  | \$26.90  | \$2.69         |                  |
| <a href="#">KY-016 indicator LED (10 pieces)</a>                   | Ali Express | 1    | \$1.92  | \$1.92   | \$0.19         |                  |
| <a href="#">KY-040 rotary encoders (knobs)</a>                     | Ali Express | 20   | \$0.72  | \$14.40  | \$1.44         |                  |
| <a href="#">16GB micro SD card</a>                                 | Amazon      | 10   | \$4.95  | \$49.50  | \$4.95         |                  |
| <a href="#">USB thumb drive</a>                                    | Amazon      | 10   | \$6.34  | \$63.40  | \$6.34         |                  |
| <a href="#">#4 x 5/8" flat head wood screws (100 pieces)</a>       | Amazon      | 1    | \$7.30  | \$7.30   | \$0.73         |                  |
|  |             |      |         |          | <b>\$44.80</b> | + tax + shipping |

## Appendix 2: Change log

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| v1, November 2015         | Original release   |
| v2, September 2016        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changed music storage from a micro-SD memory card to a conventional USB memory stick.</li> <li>Changed the base Operating System from full Raspbian to <a href="#">DietPi</a> – much smaller, so faster to boot, and less to go wrong.</li> </ul> |
| v3, January 2017          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changed from USB audio to Pi built-in audio, including a firmware update for excellent audio quality.</li> </ul>  |
| v4, May 2017              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Switched to bamboo for durability and use of standoffs.</li> <li>Switched to Pi A+ to lower cost.</li> <li>Made USB thumb drive externally accessible, to make it easier for the caregiver to organize music.</li> </ul>                          |
| v4.01, 25 June 2017       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor edits.</li> </ul>   |
| v4.01_1, 20 July 2017     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor edits.</li> </ul>   |
| v4.01_2, 11 August 2017   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added links for ordering parts in the UK.</li> <li>Added detailed instructions for write protecting a micro-SD card.</li> </ul>   |
| v4.01_3, 12 August 2017   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor edits</li> </ul>  |
| v4.01_4, 12 August 2017   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor edits</li> </ul>  |
| v4.01_5, 14 October 2017  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edited text and updated photographs to reflect the change from an HDD-style LED to a KY-016 LED module.</li> </ul>  |
| v4.01_6, 26 February 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated the links for purchasing the parts. No changes to the parts themselves, just the links.</li> <li>Minor change to the instructions, noting how the build can be accomplished in one sitting, if desired.</li> </ul>                        |
| v4.1, 7 April 2018        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflects that the software has been updated to support the new Raspberry Pi 3 B+. No new software features.</li> </ul>  |
| v4.1_1, 23 April 2018     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated to reflect the new bamboo case design.</li> </ul>   |
| V4.1_1, 6 May 2018        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adapted the existing instructions to match the new 3D printed case design.</li> </ul>   |
| 27 January 2019           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted support for the Raspberry Pi 3A+.</li> </ul>  |
| v4.2, 1 March 2019        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Switched to pmount for USB drive auto mounting.</li> </ul>  |
| v4.2, 7 April 2019        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removed instructions for write protecting the SD card – rarely used and may cause certain rare problems</li> </ul>  |
| v4.2, 8 May 2019          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted that it may be necessary to do in-slicer scaling of one the STL files prior to 3D printing.</li> </ul>  |
| v4.2, 26 October 2019     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated the parts list</li> </ul>   |
| v4.2, 28 October 2019     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated the parts list</li> </ul>   |
| v4.2.1, 14 March 2020     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added tips for making 10+ units at a time</li> </ul>  |
| v4.2.1, 22 March 2020     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edited for clarity</li> </ul>   |
| v4.2.1, 13 April 2020     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edited for clarity</li> </ul>   |
| v4.2.1, 13 April 2020     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated parts list</li> </ul>   |