



My Way OR THE HIGHWAY

What tastes in funeral music tell us about change in public attitudes to funerals

In May, Co-op Funeralcare released its 2019 Funeral Music Chart. In findings certain to resonate with NAFD members across the UK, the list - which first launched in 2002 - sees Frank Sinatra's *My Way* retain its position at the top, followed by songs by Andrea Bocelli and Eva Cassidy. Ed Sheeran breaks into the Top 10 for the first time with *Supermarket Flowers*, his tribute to his late grandmother.

Particularly notable is the fact that 2019 marks the first time that traditional hymns haven't made the cut and do not feature anywhere in the Top 10. *The Lord is my Shepherd* and *Abide with me*, previously strong contenders in the funeral chart, have been pushed out as Westlife debuts with *You Raise Me Up*.

Other new requests include songs by George Ezra, Wiz Khalifa, Freya Ridings and Stormzy - perhaps tracks to look out for in future funeral charts.

When it comes to music genres, pop proves to be the most popular with a quarter (25%) of UK adults revealing they would want such music at their funeral. A further fifth (19%) would opt for rock, whilst a fifth (20%) would choose classical for their final farewell.

Research from the Co-op also reveals a trend in more people keeping music in the family, as a third (32%) of people say they would consider asking a relative to do the honour of performing. A quarter (24%) of UK adults say they have already told loved ones which songs they would like to be played at their funeral, compared to just a fifth (19%) in 2016, suggesting more people feel comfortable talking about their end of life plans.

The research was conducted among Co-op's funeral directors and arrangers in April 2019, based on approximately 100,000 funerals conducted in the last 12 months, and among 2,000 UK adults by Atomik, on behalf of Co-op Funeralcare, in April 2019. David Collingwood, Director of Funerals at the Co-op, said: "We all live such unique lives and funerals should completely reflect that. Each element of a funeral is a very personal decision which is why the music choice plays such an important and impactful role.

"We're always encouraging people to be more open about their funeral wishes, making it clear to their loved ones what they would want for themselves when the time comes. Even knowing what song someone would have wanted can bring such comfort at an incredibly hard time."

No	Song name	Artist	Movement since 2016 chart
1	<i>My Way</i>	Frank Sinatra	Non-mover
2	<i>Time To Say Goodbye</i>	Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman	Non-mover
3	<i>Over The Rainbow</i>	Eva Cassidy	Non-mover
4	<i>Wind Beneath My Wings</i>	Bette Midler	Non-mover
5	<i>Angels</i>	Robbie Williams	Re-entry
6	<i>Supermarket Flowers</i>	Ed Sheeran	New entry
7	<i>Unforgettable</i>	Nat King Cole	Up 3 places
8	<i>You Raise Me Up</i>	Westlife	New entry
9	<i>We'll Meet Again</i>	Vera Lynn	Down 3 places
10	<i>Always Look on the Bright Side of Life</i>	Eric Idle - from Monty Python's <i>Life of Brian</i>	Down 2 places

The research also reveals how music affects the mood at a funeral. Over half (55%) of UK adults say music at funerals makes people feel nostalgic. A third (34%) said it makes mourners feel sad and a further third (32%) said it makes people happy. Just a seventh (14%) said music makes people laugh.

Yet, when considering how UK adults want the music at their own funerals to make people feel, over a quarter (27%) agreed they'd want the music to make guests laugh, highlighting a trend of funerals becoming more of a joyful celebration in the future.

Commenting on the funeral music chart, Sinitta, singer and TV personality, said: "Music at funerals is such a personal choice and it's interesting to see that, whilst some classics such as *My Way* are here to stay, there's also a good mix of new music making its way into the chart.

"When it comes to my funeral, I'd choose the prayers, readings and create my own track list, so my children wouldn't have to worry about it. I'd have *Shout To The Lord* and *Always* by Stevie Wonder. *Always* would be a love letter to my children, friends and family telling them I'll continue to love them and leave them with my love."