

***“Music can heal the wounds which medicine cannot touch” -
Debasish Mridha***

Mental Health Foundation commissions music to relieve anxiety from chart-topping pianist-composer RIOPY

**RIOPY and the Foundation invite the public to learn the piece for
Mental Health Awareness Week with the help of lessons and tips
from RIOPY himself**

**Music video, tutorials and sheet music are available at
<https://www.riopymusic.com/pages/111>**



RIOPY (c) Pierre-Emmanuel Rastoin

The Mental Health Foundation has commissioned the chart-topping pianist-composer RIOPY – saved by music after a traumatic and abusive childhood – to write a new piano piece for Mental Health Awareness Week (15-21 May) to help people to soothe anxiety. The piece, called *Meditation 111*, is intended to be so simple that anyone can learn to play it, regardless of musical ability.

Mental Health Awareness Week, established in 2001, brings the UK together to talk about mental health and aims to tackle stigma and help people understand and prioritise their and others' mental health. This year the focus is on anxiety, one of the most common mental health problems in the UK.

RIOPY, himself a self-taught pianist, discovered the piano as a source of comfort in a traumatic childhood and has long relied on music to manage his anxiety, depression and OCD. He grew up in an oppressive French cult, where secret improvisation sessions on a disused piano provided him with comfort and hope until he escaped aged 18. RIOPY settled in the UK and, following bouts of drug and alcohol abuse and homelessness, eventually earned a scholarship to study music at university. He was later gifted a piano from none other than Coldplay's Chris Martin. RIOPY has since channelled his troubled past into his music, which now serves as a source of solace to millions around the world.

The Mental Health Foundation has now called upon RIOPY to write a new work to help people tackle their anxiety at home, either by listening to it or learning to play it themselves. The campaign is intended to encourage participants to engage in music-making and creative expression, both of which are widely acknowledged to have mental health benefits.

Meditation 111 is a repetitive, simple composition conceived to inspire a meditative state in the performer. The entire piece can be played with just three fingers and can be learned in one hour, making it accessible for all, even those with no previous musical training. The '111' is intended as a reminder of the NHS 111 helpline, which UK residents can call for urgent mental health support. The motif is derived from 'Essence of Light', an ode to serenity inspired by Debussy's timeless *Clair de Lune* which featured on RIOPY's latest album, *THRIVE*.

During Mental Health Awareness Week, RIOPY and Mental Health Foundation will invite audiences to join in via social media, either from pianos at home, or public pianos in schools, churches, malls and train stations. Participants are invited to learn the piece by the end of Mental Health Awareness Week, which runs from 15-21 May this year, with the help of tutorial videos, lessons and tips from RIOPY himself. RIOPY also calls on participants to reinterpret and improvise over the work and share their creations with him on social media, using the hashtags #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek and #ToHelpMyAnxiety, and tagging @riopymusic and @mentalhealthfoundation.

The *Meditation 111* music video, with free sheet music download and video tutorials to guide those wishing to learn by ear, has been posted online today [11 May] at <https://www.riopymusic.com/pages/111>. Further tips will be posted on RIOPY and the Foundation's social media channels throughout Mental Health Awareness Week.

RIOPY said of the commission: *"It is an honour to partner with the Mental Health Foundation for Mental Health Awareness Week this year. As someone who has struggled with poor mental health for most of my life, music has been a great source of solace and calm. It is not an exaggeration to say that the piano saved my life. I hope that, by sharing this piece with the world, I can bring the restorative power of music to others who are also suffering."*

Mark Rowland, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Foundation, said: *"We are privileged to have RIOPY supporting us this Mental Health Awareness week by sharing his experiences of anxiety and expressing these feelings through the composition of Meditation 111."*

“It is well known that the arts, including music, can be good for our mental health. It offers people the opportunity to explore their feelings and emotions creatively and can have a powerful and lasting effect on a person’s health. It can help to protect against a range of mental health conditions, help us to manage ill health and support recovery.

“Connecting with others helps to reduce feelings of anxiety and we want to encourage as many people as we can to join the Foundation and RIOPY this Mental Health Awareness Week.”

More information on Mental Health Awareness Week and how to get involved can be found at www.mentalhealth.org.uk/mhaw.

-ENDS-

Watch RIOPY play *Meditation 111* at: <https://youtu.be/2NJ4wxqCy8c>

Watch RIOPY’s tutorial video at: <https://youtu.be/Ae1u8RrXm4M>

Watch the EPK for the project at: <https://youtu.be/5K8ziomXamk>

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Notes to Editors

RIOPY

Self-taught composer-pianist RIOPY came to music in an extraordinary and unusual way. Escaping to the UK following a childhood spent in an oppressive French cult, his fortunes changed when he was given an opportunity to study at Oxford Brookes University, and then gifted a Steinway piano by Coldplay’s Chris Martin, who recognised his need and potential. He has since channelled his troubled past – which included drug and alcohol abuse brought on by depression and anxiety – into his music, which now serves as a source of solace to millions around the world.

RIOPY is already a leading light within the modern classical world, having achieved over 670 million streams to date and topped the US Billboard Classical Chart with ‘Tree of Light’ - which spent 134 weeks in the Top 10. His renown recently spread to new audiences when Lana Del Rey adapted his composition ‘Flo’ to become a key element of her song ‘Grandfather please stand on the shoulders of my father while he's deep-sea fishing’, which features on her recent #1 album *Did you know that there's a tunnel under Ocean Blvd*. RIOPY has just released his fourth album on Warner Classics, *THRIVE*, which follows his deeply personal journey from darkness to light and is already topping classical charts in the UK, France and USA.

RIOPY is supporting this year’s Mental Health Awareness Week and has been commissioned by the Mental Health Foundation to compose a piece of music to help people to ease their anxiety. The piece is simple enough that anyone – regardless of musical training or ability – can learn to play.

<https://www.riopymusic.com/> | @riopymusic (Twitter and Instagram) | @riopy (TikTok)

Mental Health Foundation

Since 1949, the Mental Health Foundation has been the UK's leading charity for everyone's mental health.

Our vision is for a world with good mental health for all. With prevention at the heart of what we do, we aim to find and address the sources of mental health problems so that people and communities can thrive.

We will drive change towards a mentally healthy society for all, and support communities, families and individuals to live mentally healthier lives, with a particular focus on those at greatest risk.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/about-us> | @mentalhealth (Twitter) |
@mentalhealthfoundation (Instagram and TikTok)

Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week 2023, on the theme of 'anxiety', is from 15-21 May.

Focusing on anxiety for this year's Mental Health Awareness Week will increase people's awareness and understanding of anxiety by providing information on the things that can help prevent it from becoming a problem. At the same time, we will keep up the pressure to demand change - making sure that improving mental health is a key priority for the government and society as a whole.

#ToHelpMyAnxiety #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek