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Live Aid 40: Music, Power & Unity

5th June 2025 to 4th January 2026

The British Music Experience, Liverpool to host a temporary exhibition looking at the legendary Live Aid concert 40 years later through some of the personal archive of organiser Bob Geldof.

It was the 13th of July, 1985 and the world waited with anticipation as the stage at Wembley Stadium was poised to launch Live Aid. BBC Radio 1 DJ Richard Skinner famously declared,

“It’s 12 noon in London, 7am in Philadelphia and around the world, it’s time for Live Aid”.

The ground-breaking concert was planned as a “global jukebox” and a continued response from the music industry and fans to the famine in Ethiopia. The concert was truly global, advances in technology allowed for its broadcast to over 150 countries. 72,000 people attended Wembley Stadium and 90,000 packed into the John F. Kennedy Stadium in Philadelphia. Estimates of the global TV audience vary, the highest of which (1.9billion) would have equated to around 40% of the world’s population at the time.

Band Aid and Live Aid were conceived to help meet an immediate and pressing humanitarian need. For many, they will always be era-defining moments when music was used as the most powerful unifying tool. The story continued – Visual Aid for Band Aid, Fashion Aid, Sport Aid and then Live 8 - the global series of benefit concerts timed to precede the G8 conference in 2005 featuring more than 1,000 musicians and with an estimated 30 million viewers worldwide. Importantly, government policy change was sparked as the enormous power of unity shown by record-breaking audiences and viewers was harnessed into action. No longer was it possible to turn a blind eye.

Over the past 40 years, the Band Aid Charitable Trust has raised an estimated £480 million. The Trust has utilised these funds to provide emergency aid and support long-term development initiatives, aiming to make a lasting impact on communities in need. The Trust continues to play a significant role in humanitarian efforts, with its fundraising activities and charitable work remaining active.

The British Music Experience, UK's Museum of Popular Music in Liverpool is to reflect on the legacy by displaying some items from the personal collection of organiser Bob Geldof. Items include letters from Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, planning documents for Live Aid, the very first test pressing for Band Aid, Peter Blake's stage-side sketches of Live 8, hand-written re-worked lyrics for Band Aid 20 and much more. The British Red Cross have also kindly loaned a collage by artist Julia Miranda and a letter by Dame Claire Bertschinger – the nurse who appeared in Michael Buerk's first report for BBC News on the effects of the drought in Ethiopia.

Legendary music promoter, British Music Experience Chair of the Trustees and Live Aid and Live 8 organiser, Harvey Goldsmith CBE, commented "Forty years on, Live Aid remains a defining moment in music and humanitarian history. It was a bold, chaotic, and surprising endeavour that united the world for a cause greater than ourselves. The passion and unity we sparked in 1985 continues to inspire, reminding us of music's power to drive change. Bob's personal collection from that time gives us all a look behind the scenes and we are delighted to host this at the British Music Experience."

Sir Bob Geldof, commented "As Live Aid turns 40, I look back at that day in 1985 when music became a global force for unity, bringing 1.9 billion people together to fight famine in Ethiopia. Our bid to change policy—pushing for debt relief and fairer aid—helped save millions of lives, proving that a song, a stage, and a shared purpose can tilt the world toward justice."

Midge Ure, OBE, singer, songwriter and co-organiser of Live Aid comments on the upcoming anniversary, "'Forty years on, Live Aid's legacy burns bright as a testament to music's power to unite the world. It showed us that together, we can confront the greatest challenges with compassion and action, creating a ripple effect of hope that still resonates today."

The exhibition will run from **5th June 2025 to 4th January 2026**.

The Museum's merch store will be selling limited original, official Band Aid and Live Aid merchandise after 40 years locked in a storage time capsule with profits going to the Band Aid Trust.

The temporary exhibition celebrating Live Aid 40 is included with all general entry tickets.

To purchase general entry tickets, go to www.britishmusicexperience.com

Live Aid 40: Launch Night – In Conversation with Harvey Goldsmith CBE
Wednesday 11th June 2025, from 7pm

Join us for an evening in conversation with the legendary producer and promoter of the two largest music events in the world ever; Live Aid and Live 8, Harvey Goldsmith CBE.

Back in 1985, Harvey was recruited to help turn Bob Geldof's concert vision into reality but preparations could only begin in earnest when he returned from accompanying Wham! on

their groundbreaking trip to China. Harvey says, *"I didn't really get a chance to say no. Bob arrived in my office and basically said, 'We're doing this.' It started from there."*

Hear Harvey talk about the preparation, promotion and management of Live Aid and Live 8, as well as the legacy work of the Live Aid trust, in this special conversation event which launches **Live Aid 40** at the BME.

As well as Live Aid and Live 8, Harvey has produced managed and promoted shows with most of the world's major artists and has most recently worked with Jools Holland, Andrea Bocelli and Hans Zimmer. Harvey has received numerous awards including, CBE, Chevalier des Artes et Lettres from the French Minister of Culture and the Diamond Award for his contribution to The Arts. In July 2012, Harvey received an Honorary Doctorate of Arts from the University of Brighton.

A ticket to the launch event gives exclusive access to the **Live Aid 40: Music, Power & Unity** (other museum galleries closed).

www.britishmusicexperience.com/harveygoldsmith

Tickets £8 each, on sale Friday 15th May.

Images

All Press images caption:

"Unofficial and unseen images from photographer given exclusive access to this historic concert"

About the British Music Experience

The British Music Experience is the UK's Museum of Popular Music – a place where visitors relive the moments that helped put UK music on the map. The BME opened in the heart of Liverpool in the iconic Cunard Building in 2017. The BME has made its mark as the centre for everyone who wants to celebrate the fantastic history of British music.

Boasting an unrivalled collection of stage outfits, objects and instruments, the museum charts the beginnings, rise and influence of British pop from 1945 to the present day. In addition to an incredible collection of artefacts and memorabilia – which includes some of the Rolling Stones costumes, the iconic Beatles' Saville Row Apple Corp Door and the original handwritten lyrics to 'Blue Monday' – the museum also covers the impact that British music had on the culture, fashion, art and politics of the time. It reminds us that British music has at times defined and celebrated what it means to be British, challenged the status quo and given voice to the dispossessed.

The Museum includes galleries, learning zones, audio visual experiences, an interactive instrument studio, a dance area, a vocal booth and a live music venue.

The Learning and Public Programmes, together with our temporary exhibitions further enrich the visitor experience through a range of events; from educational workshops for school children, to master classes and gigs hosted by industry experts.

Finally, there is a gift shop filled with the best of music heritage merch and a café, open to the general public, overlooking the Mersey.

The BME is a registered charity with a mission to advance the appreciation and understanding of the art, history and science of popular music in Britain. (Registered Charity 1125752).