



## **Blind to the Facts 2023 survey launched by the Baluji Music Foundation**

*Survey launched to expose challenges across London and the UK music industry and encourage inclusion of blind and visually impaired people.*

**London, 20th February, 2023:** Baluji Music Foundation (BMF) launches “Blind to the Facts” survey to expose the challenges faced by blind and visually impaired people across the UK music industry. Funded by the Vision Foundation and conducted by Dr Claire Castle in collaboration with Dr David Baker of the University of London Institute of Education, the survey will reveal what is needed to drive greater inclusion.

Dr Claire Castle, Baluji Music Foundation Research Fellow and Senior Scientist, (Social & Welfare) BRAVO VICTOR said: “This project is a really exciting opportunity to ensure equal opportunities in music, regardless of disability or impairment.

“We need feedback from both those who employ musicians in the UK, and musicians themselves. By sharing their experiences, these individuals will highlight how the industry can do better in its employment, support and encouragement of blind and partially sighted professionals across all areas of the music industry.”

The 2023 survey updates the Blind to the Facts research completed in 1995, which highlighted the dearth of professional performing opportunities for blind musicians, and led to the establishment of the Baluji Music Foundation and the Inner Vision Orchestra, the only orchestra of professional blind musicians in the UK.

Blind to the Facts 2023 is an update and extension of research commissioned by Baluji Shrivastav OBE in 1995 and supported by the RNIB and Platinum Trust (*Blind to the Facts - An exploration into the needs of blind and visually-impaired musicians, 1995, John Ludlow, Inner Visions Music Company*).

Baluji Shrivastav OBE says: “Being great at music isn’t enough to get you employed as a musician. That’s true for all musicians, but the 1995 survey showed it’s even more so the case if you’re blind. I have experienced this myself. I have lost jobs or

been made to feel that including me on a tour would be an inconvenience because of my blindness - the music doesn't even come into it.

“The point of this survey and what we're trying to do with the BMF is to find out why, and remove these pointless obstacles - not just for musicians but for promoters, sound technicians, composers etc. - and create opportunities across the whole UK music industry. Blind people may not be able to see you, but we deserve to be seen and heard.”

The low number of blind and visually impaired musicians and individuals working in the UK music industry is reflective of a broader situation. There are more than 2 million people in the UK living with sight loss, causing a significant impact on their daily lives. Only 1 in 4 registered blind or partially sighted people of working age is in paid employment, a figure that has worsened in the last decade. This compares to 51% of disabled people and 75% of the general population and is even worse for people who are completely blind. Only around 1 in 10 people with poor functional vision is in paid employment (*Slade, J, Edwards, E, 2017. 'Employment status and sight loss' - RNIB. 'See my Skills', 2021 - Vision Foundation*)

The survey will be open from 20th February to 3rd April and can be completed online at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/blindtothefacts/> or over the phone. Data will always be made confidential, and participants will not be identifiable by name. Participants can request a copy of any report or publication produced during this project by contacting the lead researcher.

**Ends**

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**About the Baluji Music Foundation:**

Founded 15 years ago by blind Indian multi-instrumentalist and composer Baluji Shrivastav OBE and Linda Shanson, the Baluji Music Foundation is an arts charity programming and promoting events featuring blind and partially sighted musicians and advancing access to musical and artistic experiences for blind and partially sighted people. Its showcase project is the Inner Vision Orchestra of professional blind musicians which performs nationally and internationally and has released

music on Arc/Naxos. Please contact [baluji@baluji.com](mailto:baluji@baluji.com) or visit [www.balujimusicfoundation.org](http://www.balujimusicfoundation.org). Registered charity number 1130985

**About The Vision Foundation:**

Formerly the Greater London Fund for the Blind (GLFB), the Vision Foundation has distributed more than £30m to sight loss organisations across London. They have sustained essential grassroots activities working at the heart of their communities, and been the first to support innovative new projects boosting the quality of life of the visually impaired community. Find out more at [visionfoundation.org.uk](http://visionfoundation.org.uk). Registered charity number 1074958

**About BRAVO VICTOR:**

A research organization existing to inspire, facilitate and focus the world's best research scientists to improve the lives of veterans and people living with visual impairment <https://www.bravovictor.org/>. Registered charity number 1195189