

CBC MITM press coverage.docx



[Montreal](#)

[LIVE Montreal](#) [More Streams](#)

[Radio One](#)

[Listen Live](#)



Blues artist Anthony Gomes gives the gift of music to Montreal General Hospital psychiatric department

Music is the Medicine Foundation donates sound recording and listening equipment for patients

By Jeanette Kelly, Kalina Laframboise, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jul 06, 2016 10:01 PM ET

Last Updated: Jul 06, 2016 10:01 PM ET



Anthony Gomes said music helped him as his mother faced paranoid schizophrenia. (CBC)

Musician Anthony Gomes came to play at the Montreal Jazz Festival, but before he left he gifted sound recording and listening equipment to a special choir at the Montreal General Hospital.

Groupe MusiArt is a choir for out patients at the hospital's adult psychiatry department, which Gomes said he heard about the choir from a friend.

"He told me about this wonderful choir, how inspiring it was. They were writing songs, touring, and singing and it really resonated with me," Gomes said.

Gomes shared a personal story on Wednesday, explaining his commitment to mental health and why he started his Music is the Medicine Foundation.

A way of healing

Music played in Gomes' childhood home all the time.

"My love of music came from my mom," he said.

When Gomes was 12, his mother was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. She moved from their home in Toronto to Montreal to live with his grandmother. Gomes would travel with his dad every few weeks to see her.

"It was very tough on our family," Gomes said.

"Thirty years ago nobody talked about mental illness. Nobody knew what it was all about and it was a big scary thing."



Anthony Gomes performs with the choir of MusiArt. (CBC)

On one of those trips, Gomes got himself a big, black Ibanez Destroyer guitar at Steve's Music in Montreal.

"And music at that point became my world," Gomes said, adding that it helped him through the healing process of what his mom and family were going through.

"It taught me about love, it taught me about life, it taught me about heartbreak," Gomes said. "It taught me that I wasn't the only one. It also taught me that everything was gonna be okay."

Music is the Medicine

Somewhere down the road Gomes took his passion for music and turned it into a career.

"I realized that music had been so good to me and such a healing force that I wanted to be in some small measure an agent of change and allow music to help people in the way it helped me and my family."

The money donated by Music is the Medicine has funded the purchase of tablets for music listening stations so patients in psychiatry can listen to music they need at the time they want, individually or with other patients.

Part of the funding will also be used for a sound system for the choir's concerts both on tour and at the hospital.

"What a great honour it is to give these gifts of making music to a group of wonderful and deserving people."