

An Emerald Music Moment with Mary Sue

by Mary Sue Wilkinson,
Founder of Singing Heart to Heart

With a gentle smile, Bob shared with me that he had memory loss. He was trying to recall the name of one of his favorite songs. Not knowing the song title didn't dampen his enthusiasm. As our music session began, he pushed up to his feet so that he could dance - with his imaginary partner. He held "her" tenderly as he closed his eyes, wrapped his arms around himself, and caressed his own cheek. He swayed to the music and let the song take him to a place he remembered.

Bob likes rock and roll, Elvis, and *Blue Suede Shoes*. He could be any man on any dance floor. He laughs as he dances. When we sing *Home on the Range*, he joins me in adding the coyote's howls. Without being prompted, he adds the sound of a horn to *I've Been Working on the Railroad*. He cups his hands around his mouth as we sing other familiar lyrics: "Can't you hear the captain shouting; Dinah blow your horn!"

Bob's wife arrives for a visit. She sees Bob dancing and tells me, "We both love music. We used to love to go out and dance." I sing, "I'll be loving you, always..." Bob and his wife hold each other tenderly as they dance. They could be any couple on any dance floor.

Mary Sue Wilkinson is the founder of Singing Heart to Heart and the author of [Songs You Know By Heart: A Simple Guide for Using Music in Dementia Care](#), from which this Music Moment is adapted. The book includes contributions from Teepa Snow as well as Mary Sue's CD of 18 favorite sing along songs.