

Relax and feel smooth

Pino:

My name is Pino, I'm a Co-Founder of Heart n Soul and I am a trustee and I'm an artist as well.

Mark:

Hello, it's Mark Williams here. I am the Artistic Director and Chief Executive of Heart n Soul. And I'm one of the core team at Heart n Soul at The Hub.

Jenny:

Hello, my name is Jenny and I'm the Project Manager for Heart n Soul at The Hub.

Pino:

I met Cheryl at a day centre about 1982 or something, and she never talked much. She never did anyway, Cheryl. I'm surprised that she's in this bit of music. I know she loves music, but I never expected her to do a bit of sound.

Mark:

We did a recording session with her, with her and a mix of her favourite musicians who she liked to play with. So it was a mix of disabled and non-disabled musicians who are actually in the band. And we recorded and one of the things that Cheryl is brilliant at doing is being very in the moment with her playing so, she's completely unfazed by making music that she doesn't know what it's going to sound like. So we were improvising. We were playing freely. And when we listened back, we discovered that actually Cheryl had been singing as well as playing. And the quality of her voice just feels really... I don't know, really, it's like elemental. It's got a real kind of pure beauty to it.

And it coincided that we got this piece of music around the time that we started our journey at Heart n Soul at The Hub. And I just found it

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personally, such a powerful and moving piece of free music. And I suggested at the beginning of one of our core team meetings that we just listen to it, and everyone loved it. It just created such a lovely atmosphere and a peaceful mood of being present. And in a sense, the fact that it was an unplanned and improvised piece of music, it kind of set a really great example for the way that this project has developed, in the sense that we wanted to create the right kind of feeling and the right kind of space. But then we didn't really know what was going to happen next.

So somehow that music really, it set the right kind of temperature and we've started using it, well, for all the meetings we have, and many meetings with guests and collaborators and outside people. And we've just all discovered that it really is a fantastic beginning to entering a new kind of a space together.

Pino:

Yeah. Yeah.

Mark:

And then obviously, Pino, you started doing this kind of spoken, like talk through of relaxation to the music. The more we've used it, the more different co-researchers and people who've been in the spaces have taken on the role of actually talking through and guiding people through that kind of letting go, releasing thing, which has also been wonderful. I love the description of what you described what that feeling is, Pino.

Pino:

Yeah, well, it's smooth and relaxed, you know.

Mark:

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Yeah. And that idea of relaxing and feeling smooth is a lovely concept. Jenny, I know that you've really enjoyed this music, haven't you, in the meetings?

Jenny:

Yeah. Particularly doing a job like a project manager while your head is kind of... You're sort of constantly multi-tasking and your mind is sort of jumping from one thing to another. So it's really nice to come into a meeting and have that moment where you just sort of settle everything. Yeah. I don't know, start the meeting in a different head space. And also if there's like a room full of people, even if it's a small group or a larger group, it just sort of brings everyone into the same space and into the same kind of zone. I don't know what you think, Pino, but I remember quite a few of you, you had long taxi journeys.

Pino:

That's right, yeah.

Jenny:

Yeah. It would be like quite a... Because we were up in Euston and a lot of people lived in South East London. I remember some people, if they'd come on public transport, or even if they'd just been cooped up in a taxi for an hour or so, people would all-

Pino:

They get fed up. Yeah.

Jenny:

Yeah. And everyone would arrive at The Hub in a slightly different headspace.

Mark:

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It's like being tuned into a particular frequency or a wavelength. And I think, in terms of setting the next step forward for what we were doing at The Hub, what's fascinating is although we've known Cheryl for years and years, 34 years-

Pino:

Yeah, it's just about that, I think.

Mark:

But in the spirit of what we were hoping to do at The Hub, which was that we would all feel comfortable to step outside of what we normally do and experiment and explore, it felt very fitting that we were listening to a piece of music that had been created in the moment and was entirely free. But also, that the lead voice was somebody who we never really had heard singing before. So, Cheryl was doing something that she doesn't normally do or that we'd not normally-

Pino:

No, she did, didn't she?

Mark:

So, it was almost as though the whole thing was giving everyone permission to go into a different space together.

Pino:

She thought that she couldn't do it, but she has. And I'm very proud of her really. I really am.