

# Rakhi Singh

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, feel, music, rakhi, play, manchester, orchestra, realise, bit, experience, collaboration, hattie, find, lost, western classical music, education, musicians, world, programme, suppose

## SPEAKERS

Rakhi Singh, Rebecca Toal, Hattie Butterworth

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- H** Hattie Butterworth 00:02  
Hello and welcome to Things Musicians Don't Talk About with your hosts Hattie Buttworth,
- R** Rebecca Toal 00:08  
And me Rebecca Toal.
- H** Hattie Butterworth 00:10  
Within our vibrant musical world, it can often feel that the struggles and humanity of musicians is lost and restricted.
- R** Rebecca Toal 00:17  
Having both suffered in silence with mental, physical and emotional issues. We are now looking for a way to voice musicians stories, discuss them further and to connect with the many others who suffer like we have.
- H** Hattie Butterworth 00:28  
No topic will be out of bounds as we're committed to raising awareness for all varieties of struggle.
- R** Rebecca Toal 00:34  
So join me Hattie, and guests as we attempt to bring an end to stigma by uncovering the things musicians don't talk about

musicians don't talk about.

H

Hattie Butterworth 00:55

Hattie here. I'm so excited to be sharing another episode with you today. We are so thrilled to introduce you to wonderful Rakhi Singh who is the co-founder of the Manchester Collective. She's also a violinist and has had a really interesting past, combining sort of the more traditional classical music education with also being surrounded by musicians doing things differently and sort of subsequently being really inspired by that. So the Manchester Collective are redefining the way people experience classical music. They are a new music group and they're known for sort of experimental programming, daring collaboration, they now play in concert halls, warehouses, factory spaces, and have played all the way across Europe and the UK, combining you know, contemporary music, as well as the more traditional classical kind of masterpieces that we know really well. And they aim to bring this to a completely new audience of people who just love music in general. So we chatted to Rakhi shortly before the Manchester Collective go on their Oracle tour. They are in ... sort of in the middle of their tour at the moment. I just thought I'd say quickly that they are in Nottingham on the seventh of April and Leeds on the eighth of April this week, later this week. I realise that's probably a bit late, but just in case you are near any of these places. Then after that they are off to Manchester to the Bridgewater Hall, then to York, Bristol and finally finishing in London on the 24th of April. So those final four are towards the end of April. The Oracle tour is all about ... I mean we talk to Rakhi more about it, but it's basically a collaboration with the incredible cellist, singer, composer Abel Selaocoe. And it's all about connecting to ancestors, connecting to the past, it brings together the music of Abel's homeland with contemporary classical music and also music that we may know or more traditional music. So anyway, Rakhi was just wonderful to speak to, had a really big impact on both of us, and it felt like a bit of a breakthrough for me actually, in kind of just redefining what chamber music means. Because I think I've, I've often thought it had to be very traditional and static in the way that it was performed. But actually listening to Rakhi, it's like actually yeah, part of me can be in chamber music as well and also in the music that I choose to listen to, so I feel like both as an appreciator and a performer, this conversation had a huge impact on me, and I cannot thank Rakhi enough for ... Yeah, being such a wonderful, wonderful force within our world and thank you for letting us speak to you. Well, Rakhi, thank you so much for having us today. It's just awesome to be with you in person and to talk more about your life and about the work you do with the Manchester Collective, so thank you so much.

R

Rakhi Singh 04:17

Pleasure.

H

Hattie Butterworth 04:18

We spoke a bit before we started about you know, just coming back from Newcastle, doing your - what was it called - Deep Night Track event?

R

Rakhi Singh 04:26

Yeah, it was part of the After Dark Festival that Radio Three put on up there. Yeah, you're catching me on the Monday after the crazy Saturday night and Sunday? Yeah, it was an interesting experience, you know. I mean, you can't really predict what it's going to be like, you can prepare yourself like we were just talking..I was trying to make sure I was sort of, I'd actually did bits of meditation and I made sure I had good food and I kind of anticipated what might happen in my body. But then it's just like, "well, what the hell?" and also I suppose I was thinking, you know "if I make some mistakes or something, I've got an excuse because it's 4:30 in the morning!" D'you know what I mean? So it's like just be kind to yourself and give it the best shot.

R

Rebecca Toal 05:07

I guess, like I've, in the past, found it very easy to become obsessed with like their pre-concert routine for a normal concert like, and you have your timings throughout the day, but I can imagine that a concert like, what, what even time was it?

R

Rakhi Singh 05:21

Well, I played in the 7:30 concert to... 7:30 to 8:30. Then had a rehearsal at 11:30pm. We did our first piece at 1:30, the next piece at about 2:15, the next piece at about 3:15, Verklarte Nacht at about 4:30 and then finished off with Downland at about quarter past five. So it was ... you know, we'd go on stage and then we, we'd come off and have a little breather. But those were the moments where it's like you have to keep yourself up. If I lay down probably that'd be game over. So just like, you know, sat up, stood up, walked around, and yeah.

H

Hattie Butterworth 05:57

How many of you were there doing the, the sort of event, like the Manchester Collective part of it?

R

Rakhi Singh 06:02

It was a range of quartet, quintet and sextet. So there were six in total. Yeah.

H

Hattie Butterworth 06:07

Nice. Wow.

R

Rebecca Toal 06:09

Enough people to keep an eye on in case someone falls asleep.

R

Rakhi Singh 06:11

**R** Rakhi Singh 00:11

Oh, well, I kind of ... I lost... I gave up on that quite quickly. People going off, they can do the thing. As long as they come back and be in the right place at the right time, that's fine by me.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 06:23

Wow, well it'd be really cool to hear maybe if people don't know who you are, maybe just a little bit of your background, like as a, as a violinist, maybe a bit of your education or just where you come from in general and, and that sort of side of things?

**R** Rakhi Singh 06:37

Okay. Well, right now, I am a violinist and I'm sort of starting to do bits of composing and making music. I am music director of Manchester Collective, which is the group that I co-founded with my sister and actually with Adam Szabo about six years ago now. So that's sort of my main thing, and I freelance a bit around that. Growing up, I started violin at an early age because my mother taught violin. Then I went to Cheethams at about the age nine, nine or ten. So I had quite an intensive music, education, music, school, and then Music College, and then went into a string quartet. So I've basically done chamber music since the age of 14 when I was at school. So that's always been a huge part of my life, and I've had some orchestral jobs around that but chamber music was always like the main thing. So then when I stopped doing string quartet, and then there was a sort of a hole in my creative life, I suppose, and so that's ... few years later I met Adam, and it sort of all kind of started from there, really.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 07:38

Wow.

**R** Rebecca Toal 07:39

So you would say that your musical education was fairly traditional I guess, if you went to Chets?

**R** Rakhi Singh 07:43

Yes. Yeah. Yeah, I mean, so my mother is from Manchester, my father's Indian. So at home when I was young, you know, we... there's Indian food, there's Indian music in the kitchen, whilst my dad was cooking and stuff, so I've always had a sense that there's more out there, I suppose. And then during my college years, I always enjoyed doing the contemporary ensemble stuff, but I also enjoy doing period instrument, I did a project on Baroque violin, I always did the contemporary group, so I think I've always been a curious musician, even though I was being ... had quite a narrow path, I was kind of always had my antennae out, so I guess I'm just continuously trying to explore other parts of music that I love. And yeah, it can be quite hard when you've been put into a box. It's, you know, to have the bravery to step outside that is quite daunting, sometimes, but ...

H

Hattie Butterworth 08:39

Completely, I think that's what I kind of wrestle with all ... all the time really is like, how far do I brave stepping out of the box?

R

Rebecca Toal 08:49

Yeah, particularly...I feel like my teachers' voices were the main voices in my musical mindset when I was growing up, I guess even now sometimes. And yeah, when they're not necessarily encouraging you to look for other paths of music, then it can be quite ... it takes quite a lot to put yourself out there and try new things if nobody's demonstrating that for you.

R

Rakhi Singh 09:18

Yeah, exactly, yeah, but I suppose when you, when you realise that you have to do that or your doing that is coming from a strong place from within you, but I totally agree, it's quite hard, it's quite scary. Yeah and it's interesting talking about teachers because they have such huge responsibility, like, like you say, we remember the good bits and the bad bits that they pass on to us, and now I'm doing bits of teaching ... don't have a permanent class anywhere, but I always enjoy, explore-, working with... I suppose it's young adults I mainly work with to find out how I can help them, what they need at that at that time. Sometimes it's like, psychological help, and sometimes it's really physical help and ... but it's interesting how those two things are so interlinked. I realised that when I was growing up, and through my education, I didn't have much guidance on the sort of physiology of playing and the physical aspect of playing and I had periods of time where I actually got some injuries and stuff and I really had to figure that out for myself so this was post college. But even when I was doing concerts, and under pressure, I was in pain actually, quite a lot of the time. And this stuff doesn't go away and at some point you have to address it. That's definitely one of the lowest moments in my life.

R

Rebecca Toal 10:34

It is really ... I was gonna say scary, it's not scary, as you say, the responsibility of a teacher. And we did a Injury Awareness Campaign in November, and we had quite a lot of chats with people who were injury specialists who said, you know, usually the first port of call for somebody who's experienced even the beginning of an injury is their teacher, because they might just mention it in a lesson, but the teacher doesn't have any training and it's, it's very unfair to put the responsibility onto them. But that's the way our music education system has kind of been set up at music college, for example. So it's no wonder that you're playing through pain sometimes.

R

Rakhi Singh 11:13

I mean, I had some amazing teachers, and a lot of what I remember is, or often just being asked why, you know, teachers that get you to think for yourself, then, then you go on, and you have some tools to take out into the world, but I don't really, I don't really agree with the

teachers that try just try and make a prototype of David Oistrakh, or whatever. (For people who don't know about the violin, he is a famous violinist from years ago.) You know, we're not making clones, or I don't think that should be the idea. That's, that's quite an older violin school way of being, but I feel like it's still kind of around.

H

Hattie Butterworth 11:49

In terms of your own kind of experience, you say you had external influences that were quite exploratory and you didn't feel necessarily, like, stuck, but were there elements to your education where you would say like, that never felt quite right, "that element of music never sat well with me"?

R

Rakhi Singh 12:09

Ummm. Yeah, I guess I feel a lack of exploration, like I was never really encouraged to play for myself or in, you know, to write or I think, you know, if we, all of us who pick up an instrument, we love sound in some shape or form, and we should be encouraged to just sometimes just play whatever the hell we want, because that's developing our own voice. So I feel like a complete baby to that now, but I'm trying to nurture that in some shape or form. And I guess I'm, I'm glad I've learned so much about the language of music, because that helps me now interpret scores, and helps me put as much of myself into whatever scores I'm doing. So it's a bit like being an actor, you know, lots of people do Shakespeare, but you'll really remember Simon Russell Beale's Shakespeare or whatever. So when people put their own spirit into that literature, then I think it has a power, but also there's a tonne of music in the world that's made just by people playing themselves, so that's also an avenue that somehow we've forgotten about, because we've been playing other people's music all the time.

H

Hattie Butterworth 13:25

Yeah, I often, I often feel like I hit a place in my cello playing where I'd feel a bit depressed that I was never, like, I enjoyed playing, but I always felt like there was a slight lack of like, "Oh, my God, everything I play is written by someone else." And when you kind of feel like at music college, you can quite often feel quite numb to interpretation, you're like, "Oh, my God, like, I feel like I'm playing the same thing over and over again. I don't really feel like I'm in it"

R

Rebecca Toal 13:27

Or in a way that your teacher wants you play.

H

Hattie Butterworth 13:41

Yeah.

R

Rakhi Singh 13:41

R Rakhi Singh 13:41

Yeah, exactly.

H Hattie Butterworth 13:43

And it's like, "Oh, my God, like, I'm not creating anything." And then that's when I kind of went, "I can't compose so poetry is going to be my thing. " You know, like making sound in that way...

R Rakhi Singh 14:06

Yeah.

H Hattie Butterworth 14:06

...felt more natural for me.

R Rakhi Singh 14:08

But what's interesting is like, where did you get the idea that you can't compose? Like, a three year old can compose. Do you know? We can compose, but I guess in some ways we learn so much about, you know ... Western classical music is very cerebral, in a lot of ways. And, and, you know, just because I can't compose like Stravinsky doesn't mean I can't compose.

R Rebecca Toal 14:31

I think as a trumpet player, there's, there's always this thing of like, you know, there's a very, like, solid line between classical trumpet players and jazz trumpet players and it's any kind of improvisation or like, self-composition kind of stuff always felt like, "I couldn't possibly do that because I haven't had any training in it" or like "I'll be instantly compared to jazz improvisers".

H Hattie Butterworth 14:57

Yeah, put in that box kind of thing.

R Rebecca Toal 14:59

Yeah, and it is funny because obviously there's, there are more genres than just classical and jazz, so it's like, well, what happens in the middle of that? But I wonder, where, where did you get your courage to try new things and put them out there?

R Rakhi Singh 15:17

Well, actually, some of my friends are amazing musicians, and so like at school I, I was ... and they're good friends now.. Olivia Chaney is a very close friend of mine. She's a singer songwriter, but she studied classical piano and singing at school - we were at school together. She then went to the Academy, did a jazz degree, and then we lived together after that, and she was learning about British folk. So I was sort of observing, witnessing her exploration of this. So you know, sometimes in the morning, she'd go downstairs and play some Goldberg variations, and then start like, learning some English folk or learning, teaching herself how to play the guitar. So I was kind of around it, and she's a kind of constant inspiration really, if you don't know her stuff, check it out, and you'll be in floods of tears within like five seconds. She's amazing. And also another girl I went to school with Sepha Steer she is ... she now does ... she's in a band called Bas Jan and does stuff with Jarvis Cocker and she's a harpist, but she kind of she's very punk actually, and, you know, so these people kind of went ... we were all at classical music school together, but then they went off and found their own voices. And my partner now is an electronic musician and I've learned so much from him, and yeah, it's sometimes it's people you surround yourself with, you, you take bravery from them. And even when I've done, I've worked with dance companies in the past and observing how people work and create in different ways, I think that kind of feeds into your psyche and your psychology and you ... it just kind of makes you aware that there's other ways of doing things.

H

Hattie Butterworth 16:57

Mhmm. Did you kind of find you didn't want to be around the sort of "traditional musician", as it were? Do you think that was like, your kind of, "oh, I'm gravitating towards these people because I'm more like them. I don't really fit with the traditional style of ..."

R

Rakhi Singh 17:13

Probably, yeah, I mean, it's only really now that I ... maybe since starting Manchester Collective that I feel like I'm maybe just getting more in the right place that I should have been. Sometimes this stuff is so ingrained in us that we ... it's almost like we deliberately keep it ... the lid on it, or I mean, I've always wanted to, to try other things, but often not had the courage to do it, so that actually leads to a lot of frustration. Yeah, which you can carry around with you for a long time, I mean as I said, my partner, you know, he ... I was like a broken record sometimes, just saying, "I really want to do this, I really want to do that." And they're not doing it.

R

Rebecca Toal 17:52

Sounds like me.

R

Rakhi Singh 17:53

But it's also the self-judging, you know. Part of what we do, and especially if you want to be really good at something, there is a huge element of self criticism. But then when you're being a creator, I think the act of creation, you have to park that and you have to have ... you have to



switch off the doubting thing and just let something flow and then afterwards, you can review it, but if you're already inhibiting that, you'll never, that action will never take place, that like Genesis moment.

R Rebecca Toal 18:25

Like for me, I instantly compare it to performing. Like as soon as I have doubt if I'm performing, which is all the time...But, you know, it's more likely to go wrong...

R Rakhi Singh 18:33

Yeah.

R Rebecca Toal 18:33

Or like if I think "Oh, I'm going to split this note." Probably will.

R Rakhi Singh 18:37

Yeah.

R Rebecca Toal 18:37

So I guess if you're doubting yourself in the creative process that you're going to make something bad, then it's ...

R Rakhi Singh 18:42

Yeah.

R Rebecca Toal 18:42

more likely that it's just going to block what needs to come out.

R Rakhi Singh 18:46

Yeah, it also means you're not in the present your, your, your mind is on something else.

H Hattie Butterworth 18:53

I read somewhere that you had a position as principal second with the RI PO? Or ?

I read somewhere that you had a position as principal second with the RLSO. Or...

R

Rakhi Singh 19:00

I was assistant leader.

H

Hattie Butterworth 19:01

Assistant Leader, sorry!

R

Rakhi Singh 19:02

Yeah, yeah. No, it's fine.

H

Hattie Butterworth 19:03

So Assistant Leader with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

R

Rakhi Singh 19:06

Yeah.

H

Hattie Butterworth 19:07

And this kind of part of your journey really interests me, because I'm wondering, first of all, like how recent was that?

R

Rakhi Singh 19:14

So that was probably around 10 years ago now. I had the job for five years, and it was a sort of percentage job, so it was ... I ended up doing probably about 35, 40%. So when I first joined them, I was in the string quartet. And they knew that so I would fit it around the quartet stuff. But then the quartet finished, so I ended up doing a little bit more, you know, it was great that I had a job at that point. And it was flexible, so I ... yeah, whilst I was kind of recovering...you know, I think it was when I was turning 30, like there was a big relationship I was in which I thought you know, might have been The One but my granny, my grand died, I ended my relationship and I left the quartet. So there were a lot of things happening at once which sometimes you kind of ... you know, which needed to happen. But it takes a bit of time to recover and, or to figure out why you felt like you needed to make those decisions. Because sometimes you just don't know at the time. And I think a member of family passing away often makes you just feel stuff in a different way. And yeah, so I had Liverpool there with some sort of structure, and I guess I kind of zoned out for a while I was just doing my job and enjoying it and enjoying the people there. But then after a while, I was like, "Okay, what am I doing now?"

H

Hattie Butterworth 19:19

Okay. Yeah, that was my question, I suppose like, did that feel quite restrictive, like for you personally? Like, having an orchestra job?

R

Rakhi Singh 20:39

How have you found it just like managing multiple ... because if you have a part time, or like, fairly busy job with an orchestra, and you've got string quartet and everything else, how have you managed with the balance of it all, and working with different people all the time? Because it wasn't a full time job and I was really lucky, you know, it was a great kind of security, and I, you know, I still get things of like, "Oh, why did I leave it?" but in ... sometimes you have to close a door in order for another one to open, and, you know, sometimes we, especially when people have families and mortgages and everything, and it's very hard to shut a door without one or without already having your foot in another door. But I do believe in like, the power of the universe it like ... and trust, like, somehow, if you, if you can trust them... I was lucky at that point in my life I could trust and so I, I, you know, I left it without having anything else necessarily to go to. But I guess that was ... it gives you fire in your belly as well. And then shortly after that, I met Adam, and we started this thing. I was like, "Okay, this is my chance", you know? It's, yeah, it can be quite tough sometimes. I think I found especially when I've been doing my own creative projects around things, you're, you're spinning a lot of plates, and it can literally like frazzle on your brain. So I just try and not do that too much now. I mean, maybe I'm lucky to be in a position where I can choose a little bit more what I do now. But actually, to be honest, I say that, I say that and I still end up taking on a bit too much, and then I go "oh, no, brain is frazzled." I don't know, you know, I just turn 40 and it's like, you have a realisation that rest time is so important, like for your brain. And yeah, we have to look after ourselves, like I suppose there's times in your life to push, to be intensive and to push because actually, I I enjoy that, I enjoy seeing, like, the limits of my capacity. Like with quartet, sometimes we'd do crazy, you know, rehearsal days, or we'd go to Berlin and have six hour lessons, and our teacher was amazing but he was quite crazy as well. He was like in his 80s and we'd have to ask him for toilet breaks, because he just be, he just so like intense in the music and stuff.

H

Hattie Butterworth 23:04

I can imagine.

R

Rakhi Singh 23:05

Yeah, but he's one of the teachers, I feel like I sort of learned how to interpret music from and it was, they were very powerful experiences. So it's, I like the fact that I know I can do that. And if I, if I know, I've got a big gig, and I'm like, "Okay, I'm going to absolutely, like slam it now. I'm going to get this prep done. I know I can do my six hours a day" or whatever. And, you know, it's not always comfortable doing that, but you know, you can, and then it's like, "Okay, I've I earned my rest", you know, it's important to I, for me, now it's important to rest. Not everyone's like that, some people just like to go go go and, and be on the train. But I think it's for longevity, it's good to get off the train sometimes. But the culture in our country is quite

workaholic. And I don't think it's healthy ultimately, because I don't ... actually this does apply to a lot of my thoughts on education and stuff, like, if we don't take time to think and feel deeply, then everything we're doing is surface and has an element of like 'frantic' about it. And I mean, I think you guys wanted to talk about education at sometimes, but I feel like there's a lack of deep learning. Just as in some ways, there's a lack of deep listening or, or concentration or because we're so distracted by so much stuff all the time and stuff everywhere that we have to fight that now but but like, deep learning is so important because I really believe that people go ... when they go to a higher education institution, we have to train or we have to guide people in being better people. Like if you're teaching people well, they will come out of college a better person, not just a better sportsman on their wooden box, like their job is not to teach, I think to teach someone to be instrumentalist...like to teach them to be an artist is a different thing. And you have to teach people responsibility for themselves, you have to help them find their own voice, you have to give them the tools in order to make those things happen. So you need reall-, total, like physical knowledge of whatever instrument they're learning, guide them in how to look after themselves, push them to ask themselves more and more questions, and then you will equip someone to have something of worth to take out into the world ... in a summary,

R

Rebecca Toal 25:34

Um, what do you think the long term consequences are of not learning that?

R

Rakhi Singh 25:41

Less interesting art-making? Less interesting culture, like, I don't know. I suppose now I'm mostly in my Manchester Collective working environment, you know, and I've realised that sometimes people come in there, and they're surprised by the culture that we've created. And because we're they're doing it all the time you kind of forget that other people aren't necessarily doing that, and it's very open and supportive. And actually, a lot of musical institutions are not necessarily like that. And I understand why because the larger they are, the more difficult it is to cater for everybody's emotional needs and to support everyone in the right way. For example, the orchestra is such a bonkers institution. You've got all these different sections of instruments that require very different types of lifestyle in order to be able to play or to do and then everyone's under this massive umbrella, most people feel like they're not heard at all, because sometimes conductors just don't want to engage in any sort of dialogue. So you've got this one person standing at the front who most people feel like they're not listened to by this person... It's just like, very unhealthy environment in a lot of cases, not always by any means. But you know, they can be interesting social experiments.

H

Hattie Butterworth 27:05

Ooh, yeah.

R

Rebecca Toal 27:07

I also feel like people aren't just feeling like they're not heard, they feel actively worried or scared

...scale.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 27:14  
Yes, I was gonna say that.

**R** Rebecca Toal 27:16  
And yeah, I wonder whether in terms of education, like I certainly felt in my music college years that there was just so much going on, like so many orchestral projects, so many lessons, so many exams, that I didn't have the space to ask those questions. But I also didn't feel like I could ask for that to be changed. Or like, I Didn't want to make the space either because it... Yeah, well, I couldn't.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 27:48  
Yeah.

**R** Rebecca Toal 27:49  
And I didn't feel like my suggestions on that would be welcome. And again, I understand this a big institution, and they can't cater to everybody. But yeah, I don't really know what I was trying to ...

**R** Rakhi Singh 28:01  
Well, I think, I mean, they're under a lot of pressure.

**R** Rebecca Toal 28:03  
Yeah.

**R** Rakhi Singh 28:05  
But, like, ultimately, you either have to have the balls to change something, or nothing's going to change. So I'm not saying that to you, I mean it's the people who are organising the ... doing the curriculum. I mean, like, what, how ... I find it absolutely bonkers that we still have to play Mozart concertos for orchestral auditions, or even like technical exams, it's great to play your 3rds and stuff, but I rarely have to play thirds now. I mean, I'm, you know, it's good that I can and I learned how to, but I think you can still learn how to play thirds, probably in a more interesting context, than ... You know, for my 20 years of musical education, I only played three scales: major, minor and harmonic minor. Like how many different scales and modes are there in the world? You know, like, if you think about what the Jazzers do: all the modes they learn, all

the rhythmic stuff they learn. Basically, learning about harmony, learning about rhythm and doing chamber music, that's probably all you need to do, and you've got all of the skills you ever need to go into it. Yeah, I went straight into a position job, because I know how to play in tune and with, with awareness and with good rhythm, and, and with musicality, like, you're not gonna learn that just sitting in orchestra all the time. You have to just strip things away, give people all the tools they need, and then they can go into any context, whereas if you're just putting people into an orchestra, which you've got far more time than you would, when you go out to the real world anyways ... if people don't turn up to the first rehearsal knowing their parts, stop the rehearsal, tell people to go and come back when they've learned their notes, because that's what, that's what happens. And so it's like, instil the right habits from the off. With everything, it's like we have to, we have to be it. It's all very good well talking about it, but we have to a) decide what, what you want to be like, what's your level of integrity and excellence? And be it. And if if someone's not giving you the answers, get answers from somewhere else, get answers from other people. And we're not alone. No one's alone in this, no one's perfect. And we can all help each other in any shape or form. I love it when I, you know, such amazing musicians come into the Collective like, lots of people who lead other orchestras, and, or ensembles or whatever, and it's great. I can ask them, "oh, how do you do this? Like, I'm having trouble with this" or whatever, or I see what they're doing with their bow and I'm like, "Oh, that's nice. I'll copy that."

H

Hattie Butterworth 30:45

It's the whole creative... Yeah yeah.

R

Rakhi Singh 30:47

Yeah. We don't have to be perfect.

R

Rebecca Toal 30:50

Because it comes back to your comment about "we don't need to create clones..."

R

Rakhi Singh 30:55

Yeah.

R

Rebecca Toal 30:55

...of people", and actually, like, being able to collaborate with people, even just in terms of like, "oh, yeah, I see what you're doing with (I literally have no idea about stringed instruments)..."

R

Rakhi Singh 31:07

Yeah.

R

Rebecca Toal 31:07

"I'll see, like, I like what you're doing with your bow there, so yeah, maybe I'll like..."

R

Rakhi Singh 31:12

How do you do that?

R

Rebecca Toal 31:13

Yeah. And asking, and I think it's in music education from right from the beginning to the ... well, there is no end, but all the way through, it's about creating a safe space to ask these things, whereas I'm not sure that I ever felt like musical college was a safe space to try things or like, musical education more in general.

R

Rakhi Singh 31:35

Yeah. Yeah. No, it's, it's ... if you think about, like, actors have incredibly rigorous training. And it's, excuse my French, fucking hardcore. But then they, you know, the level of self knowledge that they gain is amazing. And then you see them on screen, and you totally believe that they're being whatever they're being. And somehow, we've lost that, that depth of like, encouraging people to self analyse, and I guess there's an element of pain about it. Like, sometimes you have to be really thrown in the deep end or be really challenged in order to kind of be rebuilt. I don't believe in like torturing people, but it's, it's good to be lost. Okay, so I'm going to be quite open now. So I had, I had a rough time last year, some stuff went wrong with my health and, and so as a result, my partner and I have, had decided to have some counselling together, to try and figure out a way, way forward. Not because of, there's conflict between us, but just to like, help guide us going forward. We had a session this morning and, and it's, it's really interesting, because I, I came out - and it's been amazing for us - and I, I said to him, "God, the session's like... it's amazing, because I feel quite lost in some of them sometimes". Like this, this guy is helping me figure out my patterns of thinking, and actually challenging me to think and react and be in a different way. And we were just discussing about this thing of like, it's good to be lost, you know, it's good to be lost myself, you know, I'm in a very supportive relationship and supportive position. And, yeah, I think that's the thing. It's like encouraging people to be lost, because then you find something new and obviously has to be done in a safe environment. The more I do of this, the more I realise how valuable it is because people feel safe, unseen, and encouraged and ultimately, it's only making music it's not life or death. So literally what happened to me last year, I became very close to dying. And I actually have that perspective now, like I have, my body knows that I'm not gonna die.

R

Rebecca Toal 33:57

That's pretty good.

R

Rakhi Singh 33:58

Yeah, well, it's interesting because before I'd always say to myself, in order to try and calm myself down with preconcert nerves or whatever, I'd say to myself "Oh, you know, it's not life or death", but my body didn't believe it, or, you know, part of yourself, we say a lot of things to ourselves, but we kind of don't believe it.

H

Hattie Butterworth 34:15

Yeah.

R

Rakhi Singh 34:15

So you have to kind of train yourself and now I'm starting to do bits of meditation and just like, just be better at doing yoga sometimes and just like create space internally and externally. And it's a really valuable thing.

R

Rebecca Toal 34:32

Have you found more.... maybe motivation's the wrong word, but more energy to look after yourself in all aspects having gone through that experience?

R

Rakhi Singh 34:41

Oh definitely. Yeah. I mean, it's just..

R

Rebecca Toal 34:43

No brainer.

R

Rakhi Singh 34:44

Yeah, I mean, at the time, I knew it was life changing. You just never quite know how. But it's also for all of the devastation that came with it, it was a gift. You know, a lot of people don't have the chance to have another chance, basically. So, yeah. And then few months later, we did our prom and I was like, "Oh my God", because I didn't know if physically I'd be able to do it. So, but yeah, it was interesting because I was wondering, would I feel nervous for it? Because it's our first prom, and it's in the Albert Hall and blah blah blah. I'd played in the Albert Hall before, but with other orchestras and, you know, amazing experiences doing that. And I walked out in rehearsal, I was like, "oh, it's not as big as I remember it." And then ... but with this stuff, you never know how you're going to feel. And actually, I just didn't feel as nervous as I thought I would because it's like, "okay, we could do this job". Yeah, somehow, it's like having a deep belief. And, yeah.



**H** Hattie Butterworth 35:48  
I really, I really love what you say about like, leaning into not being scared about being lost.

**R** Rakhi Singh 35:53  
Yeah.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 35:54  
Because I think that's something that in some ways, I think having a more secular culture can be more freeing for a lot of people. But actually, there could be an argument to say, "Oh, we have lost this, this sense of the world religions that all basically say: suffering, failure, loss is like, kind of the crux of like, love and success and like fulfilment."

**R** Rakhi Singh 36:18  
Yeah.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 36:19  
And I think it's really interesting how, like, a lot of people come out of very, very lost situations to find something incredibly life giving, like, I certainly feel that with my mental illness like, I talk about it all the time, but...

**R** Rebecca Toal 36:33  
Yeah, you won't shut up about it.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 36:36  
Everyone knows I'm depressed. We get it, honey.

**R** Rebecca Toal 36:40  
It's all about the people you surround yourself.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 36:43  
But in all seriousness, like, as you say, that was only after I'd been through that, that I have  
...  
.

perspective on like...

**R** Rakhi Singh 36:49  
Yeah.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 36:50  
What do I really want to do now? Like, I don't...You know, I'm well now and that means something different to what it used to mean.

**R** Rakhi Singh 36:56  
Yeah.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 36:58  
So where do I want to go?

**R** Rakhi Singh 36:59  
We're surrounded by like, just so much advertising and so much like fake life that isn't ... you know, animals are not going around, like being happy or sad. I mean, maybe they are actually.

**R** Rebecca Toal 37:12  
My cats, definitely. They let me know.

**R** Rakhi Singh 37:15  
Yeah, that's true. But I yeah, I retract that, actually, but I think they do. But I suppose maybe they're not sitting around thinking, "Oh, I'm happy now." Or like expecting themselves to be happy all the time. We don't have to be happy all the time. Yet so much around us is telling us that we do. It's a completely unnatural. Yeah, like you say, it's like the, I mean, I feel like I you know, you learn this in many different things. It's all about cycles, like the world exists on cycles. Yeah, I remember even when I was younger, and Chets and practising, and I might have, like a really good day of practice. I was really focused, the next day be okay and then the third day be really pants. I'm just like "why, if I'm trying.." It's just like, but that was always a cycle. It's like, "Oh, it's okay, that will just happen, and then it'll pass and then maybe tomorrow be good. Maybe tomorrow won't be good, but it will be good again." And it's like, it's okay. Yeah. But also, like, if we fill our time too much, there's no, we don't even leave time for cycles. And we freak out when something's bad because it should be good all the time.

R

Rebecca Toal 38:18

Going back to Manchester Collective, in... I can't remember which interview it was, you talked a lot about how everything is just so based on your values and your artistic, kind of, authenticity. Has that helped? Because sometimes I've revisited artistic endeavours that I've started that I've maybe not been so true to my values. And then like, because we all change as people over time, I found it very difficult to reconnect with projects that I started long ago, but with Manchester Collective, because it's always been about your values, has it been easy or more simple to just keep going with it?

R

Rakhi Singh 39:04

I would say the values are there. It's like an ethos to refer back to. So everything has to like pass those goals or something. So and they're not specifically, I mean, they're things that ... it's like umbrella things. So being ... playing stuff you want to play, like actually makes you realise that up until this point, I wasn't doing that, which is quite mad, really. I guess part of it is doing it, doing it as well as you possibly can. So that's a commitment to yourself for integrity of output. Another one is like you know, don't restrict where you play it. Because if you're really believing in it, then you should be able to take it anywhere. And don't restrict who you play it to, like don't already ... we make so many judgments about the audience who we don't even know. Like, we're already judging what we think their reaction is going to be and what they're going to say about what pieces or how they're going to feel. We don't know them at all so let them like, be themselves and let them show you if they like it or dislike it or whatever, don't like, preempt that.

R

Rebecca Toal 40:20

That's really true. I wonder whether, because we're always trying to invite new audience members without really trying to get to know the original audience people.

R

Rakhi Singh 40:30

Yeah, I suppose what I meant is, we, we never did stuff just to please the audience. So it's like, we're going to programme whatever we want. And people will either trust us or they won't. But the ones that do and come along will be like, you know, trusting, so it gaining people's trust by being your most authentic self, which is exactly what bands do. You know, I think as humans we have, we have very, like deep senses. And we can tell when something or we react, or we resonate with things when they're really like genuine and original, and there's something about the strength of just something being genuine. And that doesn't mean you have to like it or not, like, actually, you know, I was at something the other day, and there were two really interesting and strong acts after me. And one of them, I much preferred to the other, but I really appreciated that it was it was so genuine, what they were both doing, they were both really powerful experiences. And then, you know, we don't ... no one has to like everything.

H

Hattie Butterworth 41:38

Yeah.

R Rakhi Singh 41:39

That'd be a really boring world.

H Hattie Butterworth 41:41

I think that's what strikes me about the Collective, the Manchester Collective as a project, it's like, I've never seen something that looks so authentic. I don't know, as a, as a concept. Like, I just love how each of your tours, the simple thing of just having a name...

R Rakhi Singh 41:58

Right.

H Hattie Butterworth 41:58

You know, or having ... even if it's like not necessarily like how everyone's feeling about the music, it's still like "this is, this is the idea that we're going for."

R Rakhi Singh 42:08

Yeah.

H Hattie Butterworth 42:08

And it's sort of like, "oh, so I'm going to this tour, having these ideas about, you know, what they're trying to get across." I don't know, I feel like there's a lack of communication sometimes with classical programming, like what they're actually trying to get across, I don't know.

R Rebecca Toal 42:22

Or why they chose their pieces.

R Rakhi Singh 42:23

Yeah. Well yeah, I mean, maybe it's like a lack of concept.

H Hattie Butterworth 42:27

H Hattie Butterworth 42:27  
Yeah.

R Rakhi Singh 42:28  
I have to say, Adam is incredible at that stuff. That's like ... he's so artistic with it. And ...

H Hattie Butterworth 42:33  
You can so tell.

R Rakhi Singh 42:34  
The copy and, you know, we sort of design the programmes together and then he thinks of these really compelling titles and stuff.

H Hattie Butterworth 42:44  
It's is poetic, like, what he writes about it. Yeah, it's awesome. And I mean, do you ... Can we talk a bit about like, the upcoming tour, The Oracle?

R Rakhi Singh 42:53  
Yeah.

H Hattie Butterworth 42:54  
Which is, you know, the ensemble's ... like a big part of it is this partnership that you have with Abel Selaocoe.

R Rakhi Singh 43:02  
Yes.

H Hattie Butterworth 43:03  
It's just amazing. Like, and it kind of reminds me ... I don't know, it leads back to this idea of like a 'daring collaboration'. That is something that you kind of aim for with the collective like... Can you tell us about the Oracle Tour about like, what you've done with Abel and why that collaboration is like so important to you?

R

Rakhi Singh 43:21

Yeah. I mean Abel's a powerful spirit to be around, isn't he? You've probably witnessed him, he's amazing.

H

Hattie Butterworth 43:27

Love him so much.

R

Rakhi Singh 43:27

Yeah. And actually, he was at the Royal Northern with Adam and my sister. And so he's sort of, we've known him for many years. And so it was great to do a project, to put the Sirocco project together with him, and I think that was like the ignition for lots of things, both for our relationship and for his career going forwards as well. And yeah, so this is sort of our second exploration into working with him. And I think, you know, we didn't want to just repeat Sirocco. So the idea was like, "Okay, what, where are we going now?" And Abel, really wanted to explore this idea of like your ancestors and his land, you know, he's not from here. He's from South Africa, and from a really different culture. So while Sirocco, we were sort of ... started that journey, I think this will be a deeper exploration into that. But of course, marrying it with stuff from our culture over here, but where I think there's more kind of contemporary sounds in there. The idea is to look back, present and future. So I think that's what his kind of his works are going to be about. And then we're... there's sort of Mica Levy and Oliver Leith in it as well. So we've got contemporary British artists, but we've also got like Vivaldi and Stravinsky. And so it's just weaving different threads together. You know, it's kind of let's see what it's like.

R

Rebecca Toal 44:53

The wording of 'daring collaboration', I think, is it on the website?

R

Rakhi Singh 44:58

Mhmm-hmm.

R

Rebecca Toal 44:58

What makes a collaboration daring to you?

R

Rakhi Singh 45:04

I suppose with collaboration, you ... you're often doing stuff, which you can feel uncomfortable, because it's not natural to you. But that's the whole point of a collaboration isn't it? It's not ... it's to be stretched out of your comfort zone a little bit. There's obviously different degrees of that. And you don't want to just be completely thrown in the deep end, but I suppose we don't,

we don't prescribe them. So you know, we ... over lockdown, we made a film. And we'd never made a film before and we worked with a dancer and we hadn't done any of that before. So that did feel a bit like, "aahhh!" but it was a, I think we just made a unique work of art that came out for that came out of that. And that will exist now forever. And it forged again, we forge really good relationships, like we collaborate with Sam Buckley, who is from Where the Light Gets In.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 46:03  
Oh, yeah?

**R** Rakhi Singh 46:03  
And he's a chef. And we have such amazing conversations and find, you know, like common ground about food and music. And that's another thing that will come out soon, a film about that. And, like, collaboration can be anything. I mean, we're kind of doing a collaboration now, having a chat.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 46:20  
Yeah it's very daring. Gotta say so.

**R** Rakhi Singh 46:27  
I've been part of or sometimes gone to witness some collaborations where, you know, you put some names together or whatever, but it doesn't result in something that feels dynamic, and, and risky.

**R** Rebecca Toal 46:43  
Can be quite predictable.

**R** Rakhi Singh 46:45  
Or even, like, but sometimes I've seen stuff where you've got two really interesting names, but it doesn't always result in something that's ... that that spark has been ignited or fused or something. So, but the thing is collaborations, often run ... can always come with that risk, you know, you might not, it might not work, which is then also fine. But I suppose that's where you've got to be like, daring and also try and really trust in your instinct. Yeah.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 47:17  
That goes to the authenticity side of it, it's like you are willing to risk it not working just to try it

out. Or just to like, experiment, which is really inspiring too. hard.

R

Rebecca Toal 47:28

It's hard when people are watching.

R

Rakhi Singh 47:29

I think you've got to risk that but then you also have to, like you've got to push yourself to work hard in it. You know, we've done collaborations where I've been like, "oh my god, this is not good right now" on day one or whatever. And so I'd push, push, push, and by day three it's like "okay, now we're getting somewhere", but maybe that's just like, it's up to you where you set your bar, isn't it?

H

Hattie Butterworth 47:53

That's a really good point, actually. I mean, I have to be honest, that looking at what you've got coming up with the Collective - the two tours, like quite close together, I'm just sort of like, "Wow, all these venues, all these dates, like are quite close together". Does that ... Is that something that like, you look at that and you're like, "yeah, so excited about it!" Or is there ever a sense of which you get midway through a tour, and you're sort of slightly burnt out, and you slightly regret putting them so close together or anything like that?

R

Rakhi Singh 48:24

I mean, once you're in a tour, I think it's a joy to be able to play things over and over again. And of course, once you've done it a few times, it's really in your body and in your bones. And you know what the experience is like, even though it's different every time because each venue is different, each audience is different, your mood on days are different. So, you know, the experience will be a different thing. But you've got prove to yourself that you can do it. So you know, it's yeah, in that sense, it's, it's we're really lucky, we get to play things so many times. You know, some people have to rehearse stuff, and then just do it once or even we put together an orchestral programme on one day, or something. And just like, you know, what kind of experience is that for the players? It's not very satisfying.

H

Hattie Butterworth 49:10

That's not something I'd actually, like considered, but it's less taxing... well not less taxing, but like...

R

Rakhi Singh 49:16

It's much more satisfying.



**H** Hattie Butterworth 49:17  
Yeah. Because you're not forcing people to learn, like huge swathes of stuff to...

**R** Rakhi Singh 49:23  
Just for one output, like we have chance for it to develop and evolve and ...

**R** Rebecca Toal 49:28  
Yeah, and you always hear like, "oh, you know, performances are amazing, because it's like this moment, that will never be the same and like you'll never be able to relive that again." But if you're only doing that programme once it's like, "well, yeah, but we didn't get to develop it."

**R** Rakhi Singh 49:43  
Yeah, exactly.

**R** Rebecca Toal 49:44  
Like it feels much more relevant in terms of, if you play it like a good load of times,

**R** Rakhi Singh 49:50  
Yeah.

**R** Rebecca Toal 49:50  
Yes, it will never be the same again, but there's also like one that you can ... not compare it to, but also like have a different experience of that same music the next night or...

**R** Rakhi Singh 50:00  
Yeah, definitely. I mean, we ... I find when ... so first night, most of the adrenaline, I guess. Because it's like, "Can we do this?" And, you know, see your nervous system is in a different state. And then each time you do it more, you're ... I find as musicians we manipulate time, and the more you know something, the more manipulation you can do with time. It's not just sound we're playing with, it's like, we're making sound in the present so we're masters of time, as well. And so the more you know something, the more mastery you have over that, or more possibility.

R Rebecca Toal 50:47  
I love that. I've never heard that but I'm like ...

H Hattie Butterworth 50:50  
That's so cool. It makes me want to sort of play more from memory, even... Oh, no. I love playing from memory. I love the idea like that everyone has that, like, everyone's free of that paper.

R Rebecca Toal 51:03  
But it's still written by someone else. That's what I get down to, it's like, as much as you're playing it from memory, and you're trying to express yourself, and it's like, "wow, it's really coming from the soul", it's still written by someone else.

R Rakhi Singh 51:14  
But what about all those folk tunes that are learned, you know, people learn by ear? And they learn tunes by ear. It's still written by someone else.

R Rebecca Toal 51:22  
I'm just thinking of like trumpet concertos.

H Hattie Butterworth 51:25  
We won't make you play that from memory, don't worry. Yeah, I was sort of wondering, what have you experienced to be like, the biggest taboo among either your musician friends or your like, generation in general? Oh...

R Rakhi Singh 51:43  
Biggest taboo? Interesting.

H Hattie Butterworth 51:44  
Yeah. Within mostly classical musicians, I'd say.

R Rakhi Singh 51:47  
Yeah I think there's a lot of stigma around injury isn't there? Which like you can often

Yeah, I think there's a lot of stigma around injury, isn't there? Which, like, you can often ... people kind of look down on it or something, but I think that's ... we should get rid of that. Because actually it can happen to anyone, and like we talked about a little bit at the beginning of this, like often it's psychological damage rather than physical, or we all hold stuff in our body. Another thing I think, is that... actually I've been thinking about it quite a lot recently, like, there wasn't any time during my education that, like spirituality of playing music was talked about. And I think this, again, comes back to like, depth of feeling and depth of thought and why and ... but I think sometimes... Gosh, I don't quite know how to explain it. We've, we've come quite far away from what music actually is. And it's like communication of the human spirit, ultimately. And in our Western music, there's quite a few sort of, it's like the hurdles have been put up. And it's not, it's not bad. I think it's just encouraged us to forget what it is in the first place. Because actually, when you go to different cultures, or different scenarios where music is used to heal, or for ritual, or for enjoyment, all of those different elements, that is actually more the crux of music, than our scores. And how do we bring that spirit, human spirit back into ... Doesn't mean ... Yeah, we have to bring that back. We have to, otherwise the scores will die. Like, yeah.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 53:54

I think that reminds me of like, even if you think about Western classical music, and take that back and back and back, which I love reading about, because I'm very into church music. But it does come from plain chant, you know, which is one of the most soulful things you can have really. Yeah, like, in my humble opinion.

**R** Rebecca Toal 54:14

Alright, if you say so.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 54:15

No, but like, you know, even Gregorian chant or like, deep Orthodox chant, like...

**R** Rakhi Singh 54:20

Yeah, exactly.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 54:20

Those are the basi-.. bases?

**R** Rebecca Toal 54:23

Go for it.

H Hattie Butterworth 54:23  
...of, of Western classical music.

R Rakhi Singh 54:26  
Yeah, and then you think about like, Indian ragas, or like, South American, you know, chants or, you know, it's, yeah, like the origins of music, like that spirit shouldn't just be a ... or maybe it got lost in the Classical era, and we started getting Sonata form, and that was complicating things. I mean, I love a good sonata form. But, you know, what I'm finding interesting is like questioning this stuff and being like, how does it relate to my life now? And I increasingly feel like, like, as much as I love Haydn string quartets, I don't feel that it's that relevant to me now in my life to play a minuet and trio. And I think about how many minuets and trios I've played in my life, when I could have been playing some other stuff. Do you know what I mean?

H Hattie Butterworth 55:11  
Yeah.

R Rakhi Singh 55:11  
Like what is relevant to you and your human spirit? A minuet and trio from Vienna?

R Rebecca Toal 55:20  
I mean, I'm a trumpet player. I don't have that luxury.

R Rakhi Singh 55:23  
Yeah sorry.

R Rebecca Toal 55:25  
Not very jealous I'm afraid.

H Hattie Butterworth 55:26  
That's fine.

R Rebecca Toal 55:27  
As a non-religious person

AS a non religious person,

**H** Hattie Butterworth 55:30  
Yeah.

**R** Rebecca Toal 55:30  
I feel like any talk of like spirituality, like, yeah, I feel very spiritual through yoga, or, yes, sometimes through to music, but I haven't necessarily explored that to the extent that I would now like to having had this conversation. But I feel like there's ... maybe stigma's too strong a word for it,, like, but a fear of spirituality and religion? Like, I know, we don't talk about it in terms of its ... Yeah, spirituality is quite hard to explain.

**R** Rakhi Singh 56:09  
Yeah, yeah it is.

**R** Rebecca Toal 56:11  
In terms of, because religion is easier. Not completely, it's obviously very complex. But especially in an education, musical education, where, I don't know, it'd be really hard to teach spirituality. But I guess in yoga, and these sort of practices, it comes more naturally.

**R** Rakhi Singh 56:32  
Or maybe again, it's about encouraging people to find the thing that they need for that kind of support for themselves. Like, somehow when you ... Ah, I don't know, it's about a connection of human spirit somehow, and it depends which context you want to have that in. Can be in church, can be in the concert hall can be, you know, in the middle of the jungle with a tribe, it can be in an Indian setting, you know. There's all of these .... but that's about the connection of human spirit. And I think that's something that's quite lost actually. Can be in the pub, you know, that's when people ... any, any where there's

**H** Hattie Butterworth 57:11  
Sea shanties!

**R** Rakhi Singh 57:11  
People gathering. But then why isn't there a feeling of collection of the human spirit in an orchestra?

H Hattie Butterworth 57:17  
Yeah, yeah.

R Rebecca Toal 57:21  
I think because people are overworked.

R Rakhi Singh 57:22  
Yeah.

H Hattie Butterworth 57:23  
Could be. I think, I think it's like, it's a good point you make of like very ... spirituality's feared, like religion is...

R Rebecca Toal 57:32  
Yeah, like, even when I found out that you were Christian. I was like, "Oh, God I don't know if we're gonna get on", which is so bananas.

H Hattie Butterworth 57:39  
No, no, it's how people have viewed it my whole life, you know, and it's kind of funny, because I've, I've had to tell people that I am religious, while simultaneously telling them that I'm bisexual, and that I'm also ...

R Rebecca Toal 57:53  
You almost have to justify.

H Hattie Butterworth 57:53  
You know, I have to justify. And, you know, I'm never gonna get married in a church and I might go to church, but I reject a lot of it, you know, which is funny, because actually the spirituality side, I never feel like I can talk about, it's always like I have to tell everyone why I'm not who they think I am first.

R Rakhi Singh 58:13

Yeah. I mean, also, like, the classical world is quite closed, it feels like in many ways, compared to, like the progression in the outside world with this stuff. Yeah.

R

Rebecca Toal 58:28

Yeah, totally. Can I ask my nice question now?

H

Hattie Butterworth 58:31

Ask your nice question.

R

Rebecca Toal 58:33

So you're from... you used to live in Wales?

R

Rakhi Singh 58:37

Yes. Yeah. My parents still live there, actually. Same house.

R

Rebecca Toal 58:40

But ... because we've talked about this a couple of times, but we've never actually asked anybody about, is there ever a feeling of "I wish I could do the job that I have now, but not have to be in an urban setting?"

R

Rakhi Singh 58:54

Oh, yeah. Oh my gosh. Yeah, definitely. Yeah, I do, I crave the countryside a lot. Crave nature. Yeah, let me know when you find the answer to that. Maybe it's, well, I mean, you have to find ways of either being able to do some teaching or recording from home, and then just choose to less, some ways. I don't know. Or, I mean, there are other cities which are not as big as London and people can live on the outskirts of the city and still travel in to that city. Manchester, being one of them. Cardiff, Birmingham, you know basically any city which isn't London, you've got ...

H

Hattie Butterworth 59:41

It's affordable.

R

Rakhi Singh 59:42

Quicker access.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 59:43  
Yeah.

**R** Rakhi Singh 59:43  
To countryside or yeah, exactly. It's affordable. Yeah.

**R** Rebecca Toal 59:47  
Just to close off, have you had any little wins this week? Because I feel like we ... just in terms of like little victories, little things that you're like, "Yeah, I'm proud of that."

**R** Rakhi Singh 59:59  
Yeah, I survived an overnight gig...

**R** Rebecca Toal 1:00:03  
Well yeah, fair enough. That's a huge...

**R** Rakhi Singh 1:00:04  
That felt like a little win to me. But I have to say, I think it is down to doing meditation and yoga and stuff. I think that's what saw me through, which is a really nice thing to feel.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 1:00:17  
That is a win.

**R** Rakhi Singh 1:00:18  
Yeah.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 1:00:19  
Meditation's not easy at all.

**R** Rakhi Singh 1:00:21





Rakhi Singh 1:00:21

No, no, I mean, I mean, I have realised that my brain just goes a million miles an hour sometimes. And I was determined to start this year off just, with better habits. I don't want to say resolutions, because somehow it just gets annoying when people are saying that all the time. But like, I was like, "okay, all you have to do is just like change little habits. And then suddenly, six months later, you can be quite a different person in many ways." So one of the habits was just kind of being a bit more active physically and yeah, meditation and finding space and calm. And I think is paying off so far.



Rebecca Toal 1:01:01

Well, if you can do an overnight gig, clearly you can do anything.



Hattie Butterworth 1:01:06

What about you? Do have a win?



Rakhi Singh 1:01:07

Oh yeah. What's your win?



Rebecca Toal 1:01:12

It's only Monday.



Rakhi Singh 1:01:15

What about one from last week or the weekend?



Rebecca Toal 1:01:17

Well we had a chat...



Hattie Butterworth 1:01:19

You can say your last one if you... if it still stands.



Rebecca Toal 1:01:22

Ummm, oh no, I've done stuff since actually, then. I had two... so mostly been doing teaching recently, and I've been wanting to do more playing. But then because I, I graduated in lockdown, and then the world felt, felt so empty, I didn't perform for ages. So actually, any

performance now feels so terrifying, and I'm so scared to see people that I played to before the pandemic, because I'm like, "oh my god, I'm so much worse." And it was my first natural trumpet gig since 2019, I think. So I was like, "okay", and it was fine, like it was really nice.

**R** Rakhi Singh 1:01:59  
Great! Well done.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 1:02:00  
Wow. That's so cool.

**R** Rebecca Toal 1:02:01  
And yeah, had a great time. And I enjoyed it. That's probably more of a win.

**R** Rakhi Singh 1:02:05  
Great! That's amazing. Maybe you don't need to worry so much.

**R** Rebecca Toal 1:02:12  
Ah! What about you Hattie?

**H** Hattie Butterworth 1:02:13  
I knew you were gonna ask that and I was literally like, "oh my god, what am I gonna say?" I don't know, I had a really bad weekend, to be honest with you. I just, just didn't feel good at all. Like, just very down, and I'm just feeling like it was a big win to go to work today and I'm so glad I did, because like, I feel I've come the other side, a d like, even though things are still not feeling 'right', necessarily or like perfect, like, I'm still here now, I've still done everything today that like I wanted to do, and I feel like in the past if I have felt depressed, like that would have written off a week or two. But it's like "no, like, I can still move through things. I still feel supported by people", like I'm better communicating it so yeah, it feels. Yeah.

**R** Rebecca Toal 1:02:55  
Big win.

**H** Hattie Butterworth 1:02:56  
Big.

R Rebecca Toal 1:02:57  
Yeah, we should turn this segment into big wins.

H Hattie Butterworth 1:03:01  
Oh, Rakhi, thank you so much. It's been such a fun chat. So so nice, thank you.

R Rebecca Toal 1:03:07  
Yeah, really nice to meet you. Cause obviously I'd like just read all this stuff and heard all this stuff about you and I was like "we're gonna talk to her?!"

R Rakhi Singh 1:03:15  
Aw!

H Hattie Butterworth 1:03:15  
I know, I know!