



# The Power of Music

Imagine the exquisite union of sounds made by a harpist and a violinist. Now imagine these traditionally classical melodies being lent to an Elvis Presley number. You might start to realise the diversity and celebration of music in the room that day.

The String Sisters are the talented duo who gave this incredible performance. The song requests landed from Disney to heavy metal and, quite honestly, there is nothing they cannot play together.

As I reach the final months of my photographic project with Cyfannol Women's Aid, I dedicate this third and final feature to the healing power of music and art, to talk about how the Horizon support team work closely with talent in arts communities to bring creative therapy to participants who have experienced trauma in their lives.

It was the end of a week of events hosted by Cyfannol's Horizon team as part of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week (held at the beginning of February each year). Horizon supports those of any gender who have experienced sexual violence at any point of their lives, regardless of whether this has been reported or not. Many have reached out to access specialist counselling and are currently on a waiting list.

Rachel (pictured over) is a participation and outreach worker for Horizon. She has the glorious job of combining her support work with the work of creative practitioners to offer a holistic experience to participants that draws on the therapeutic power of art and music alongside trauma-informed theory.

"While I'm not technically arty," explains Rachel, "I have always loved dance and music, and the power that the arts can bring alongside the more tick-box exercises of support work.

"Group work and participation fill my cup," says Rachel. "I love being privy to that lightbulb moment when people understand that they are not to blame for what has been done to them and also that they have choice and control over where they direct their energy with the present."

Rachel has organised this intimate and emotional concert with the String Sisters, who first worked and performed with the group online during the pandemic. A few years on from this, I'm in a room listening to a beautifully surreal version of an old favourite of mine, Metallica's 'Nothing Else Matters'. We have tears streaming down our faces as the harpist gives new meaning to those guitar riffs and the violinist adds haunting melody to a famous singer's voice.



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Sexual violence is still shrouded in stigma and shame, so it is a challenge for people to know what services are out there, and many are referred via mental health professionals. By offering these interactive and inspiring concerts, along with creative crafting workshops, Cyfannol Women's Aid provides a non-judgemental, equal and safe space in which people can express themselves, however they need to. ●

**Jo Haycock** is a documentary photographer who lives in South Wales. She focuses on exploring the real connections and relationships that people have with each other, and with the spaces they live within and objects they live with. Jo photographs families and communities, alongside longer-term social and personal projects. She enjoys travelling with her family in their camper-van whenever they can. [johaycockphotography.co.uk](http://johaycockphotography.co.uk)

Cyfannol Women's Aid specialises in supporting women and girls who have experienced any form of violence against women, domestic abuse, or sexual violence. It delivers a range of support services across Gwent in South-East Wales, empowering individuals to recover from their experiences, rebuild their lives and flourish in a life free from fear. [cyfannol.org.uk](http://cyfannol.org.uk)