**Institute of Popular Music Tales from the Square Podcast Transcript**

Professor Sara Cohen

You're listening to Tales from the square with me Professor Sara Cohen of the Institute of Popular Music. The Institute of Popular Music was established in 1988, as the world's first specialists centre for the study of popular music, it's now a research centre homed in the Department of Music, and a hub for interdisciplinary research on popular music which we defined very broadly. We examine popular music from different perspectives, using different approaches, and encompasses a wide diversity of musical styles from jazz to K-pop.

The archive of the Institute of Popular Music is a very extensive sort of wide-ranging collection of materials. It's housed in four different locations across the University. And it really consists of materials that we have been gifted to the Institute of Popular Music since it was established in 1988. We have 10s of 1000s of vinyl singles and albums we have 10s of 1000s of reel to reel tapes, and we also have cassette tapes and DVDs. So those are the kinds of sound recordings we have. We also have paper-based materials, periodicals, journals, fanzines, photographs, posters, and we have some objects as well. So within the archives, there are quite a few diverse collections, specific collections, that were gifted to us by music industry professionals, by journalists by biographers. They often collected around particular sort of genres of music, or particular sort of types of music materials were collected.

Heritage is one of the four main research themes of the Institute of Popular Music, and it's a focus for a broad and diverse range of projects. So at the moment, for example, we've got projects on the history of British jazz, and on popular music in museums. We also have a number of projects exploring the musical past of England and Liverpool, and how people engage with it. We're interested in how the musical past is made and understood as heritage in particular contexts, and at the interest this serves. So the official promotion of the Beatles as the heritage of England or Liverpool is one obvious example. But we're also interested in alternative understandings of the musical past and addressing the questions you know, whose heritage whose music. We've worked with communities and organisations to explore their lived experiences of the musical past and what matters to them and why. We've investigated how the musical past is remembered by groups of musicians and audiences. And we've considered diverse music histories and explored notions of music heritage that are quite different from the official story of English or, or Liverpool music heritage. So here on Merseyside are researchers underpinned various film documentaries, exhibitions, illustrated books, and so on. And these are provided a platform for diverse stories about the musical past, and they've kind of helped to broaden public understanding of the richness and diversity of the region's music heritage and of Liverpool’s status as the UNESCO city of music.

One particular project involves working with Chilean exiles and their families to explore their experiences of the musical past. These are exiles who settled in Liverpool in the 1970s Following the introduction of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile in 1973. And there's a team of people working on this project from across the departments of Music, Languages, Cultures and Film, History, and English. And they include researchers at all stages of their career from undergraduate students to professors. And we're also collaborating with a number of organisations both in Liverpool and also in Chile. We're interested in how music helped Chilean exiles who came to Liverpool and were interested really in, you know how music helped them to come to terms I guess with being uprooted from their homeland, and offered them support when they were putting down new roots and making their homes in Liverpool, and how music might provide them with maybe a sense of inheritance. So what music is important to them and why and do they associate music with a sense of heritage or inheritance. And to prompt them memories and stories of music, we're inviting these exiles and their families to engage with a particular collection of materials in the institute a Popular Music Archive. This particular collection it was donated to us by Robert Pring-Mill in 1996. Robert Pring-Mill was a professor at Oxford University who taught Spanish and was also a dedicated radio broadcaster and researcher. And he first visited Chile in 1949, and fell in love with the socially committed poetry of Pablo Neruda, who is a Nobel Prize winner. So, Robert Pring-Mill consequently, he became very interested in socially and politically committed poetry and song in Latin America, what he termed songs of hope and struggle. And he researched and published on politically engaged music and made original field recordings of music performances. In his collection that we have here we have around 500 albums, singles, and also original cassettes that he put together and collected and over 100 books. For our project, they're sort of providing a starting point for conversations about music. We're inviting these people who came from Chile in the early 1970s, as exiles and settled in Liverpool, we're inviting them and their families to come and to engage with the materials in the Robert Pring-Mill collection, to listen to the some of the recordings, to look at the some of the magazines and so on. And we're really using this as a starting point to get them talking about their memories of the musical past, the music that was important to them, and to their families, the music they remember, and then we'll be talking to them about how music is very much a part of their lived experience.

**Professor Lisa Shaw**

I'm Professor Lisa Shaw at the University of Liverpool, and I am a professor of Brazilian Studies in the Department of Languages, Cultures and Film. The Robert Pring-Mill collection relates very much to Liverpool's role as a place of exile and of refuge, which I think it's really important to the city of Liverpool, you know, it's really part of our identity. And it still is, and I think this very few people know about this period, this history of Liverpool in the late 70s, early 80s, when Liverpool was a safe haven for people who were likely to be victims of the Pinochet regime in Chile. And it was the solidarity movement, the unions in Liverpool, the relationship with Chile that was so important, often these histories get lost, and that they're captured in sort of things like music and related material objects. And I think that's why we need to make this archive much more known, we make it much more accessible, and actually, something that is a living archive so that we can get more contributions, because I'm sure there are lots of families out there with connections to this period in the city's history, who maybe have kept posters, and they've got things in their loft. And we really want to try and capture that, you know, to expand it. And to make it accessible, to make it useful not just to kind of something that you go and look at nice objects behind a glass cabinet. But that those objects can be used as a focus for continuing to engender a sense of solidarity and community links and our identity, but also to bridge the gaps between different communities, which is so important as well.

I think everybody kind of is aware of the power of music or the importance of music in their lives. You know, we all have favourite tracks, or artists or songs, tracks, that means something particular to us. And that's part of really what we're trying to do with the material in this archive is to encourage people to think about the power of music, the importance of music in their own lives, and to link that with wellbeing as well and how music can be channelled to boost people's wellbeing, but also to help communicate across generations, or perhaps across different cultural groups, about our identity as well. And I think it's a really easy way really, to get to the heart of people's identity often, and to make connections.

**Professor Sara Cohen**

Our aim really is to make these materials publicly accessible through different projects engage members of the public in these collections.

**Dr Jacquie Waldock**

I'm Jacquie Waldock. I am the Faculty Impact Fellow here at the Humanities and Social Sciences at Liverpool University. One of my roles is thinking about how the work that we do here at the University reaches beyond the bounds of ourselves. So we're not just writing journal papers, or sitting in an office thinking some interesting things. Actually, my job is to think about how the work that we're doing here at the University can reach out whether that schoolchildren or change the way we're thinking about Liverpool history, or maybe think about race or gender, or in programming music. So it's thinking about what are the big things we think about the university? And how can they go out and make changes outside of the university for the city for the country? And how can we make really kind of world changing research make a difference? One of the ways in which we've been thinking about reaching out is to think about how music in particular and the Popular Music Institute can provide a way of bringing forward stories that haven't been told of people groups that aren't being platformed in that way. And I think there's something really powerful in the way that music and the research that's happening at the Institute of popular music across the board has for being able to speak into those worlds, and to be able to bring about policy change about what's significant.