

# Flickering back to bright: a survey of Fresno-area arts organizations

Your feedback and comments may be included in an upcoming article.

What is your name and the name of your arts organization?

Children's Musical Theaterworks

How do you categorize your organization?

- Theater company
- Orchestra / Classical music ensemble
- Museum / gallery
- Dance company
- Literary organization
- Producing organization
- Other: .....

Thinking back to the start of the pandemic, what was the last date your organization offered something "live" (a non-virtual performance, exhibition, festival, reading, etc.)? What was the event?

July 2020, Small Semi Private Show (before that, Frozen 12/19)

Do you have an anecdote or memory of the pandemic related to your arts organization that stands out for you? Can you share it?

The most memorable event for us this year was our "Music in a Climate of Change" showcase. We went into the summer not knowing what to anticipate. We only knew that the health and safety of the performers would not be compromised. We were one of the first organizations to attempt live rehearsals and performances, in mask, with all applicable Covid protocols in place. After successfully completing the summer program (which also included our 6-13 year old's Disney montage showcase), we felt confident that we had built the tools necessary to get through this without a complete shut down.

Do you have an upcoming public live event scheduled with a specific date?

Yes

No

If so, what is it and when is it?

Matilda the Musical - June 11-20

What are you planning for the fall season? If you haven't yet made a public announcement, when will you do so?

Summer - A Variety of Camps | Fall - Skillz Classes, a Fundraiser Performance Special Event and Auditions for Descendants (show is in December)

What sort of social-distancing and virus-mitigation options are you planning or considering for your organization's return to public life? (Realizing that regulations and recommendations can change.)

For now, masks and social distancing persist. We also limit participation numbers (not our norm) and check temps/provide sanitizer. For audience members, masks will be required, and our ticketing program algorithm will automatically limit and socially distance audience groups as per the current guidelines at the time.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most severe, how has your organization been impacted financially by the pandemic?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					

Regarding the above question: Would you care to comment?

If not for grants, donations and a PPP loan, we would not have survived. Thanks to the help we received, we have been able to pivot our plans to a safe, more sustainable model for the time being. We are also fortunate enough to have the benefit of low cost rent at our offices and rehearsal space. A large part of our remaining expense was set shop rental space and overhead, which, fortunately, we have been able to cover to this point.

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On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being extremely important, how important was government assistance (grants, loans, other financial incentives) to keeping your arts organization alive during the pandemic?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>								

Regarding the above question: Would you care to comment?

We received multiple grants and a PPP loan that allowed us to stay afloat.

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On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most difficult, how hard do you think it will be to convince audiences/visitors/supporters to return to your organization?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					

Regarding the above question: Would you care to comment?

It is hard to answer at this point, but based on participation levels in our current cast (Matilda) and on-going classes, we feel optimistic that people will come to see our dedicated cast that has been diligently hanging in there since October. Vaccines are out there and available to all who choose to have them, so we are hopeful that people will flock to this opportunity.

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Did your organization try a digital strategy during the pandemic? If so, what do you think your most effective offering was? And will you continue any digital components when you return to live performance/exhibition?

Yes, we offered Zoom classes, did some Zoom rehearsal's when Covid numbers were bad around the holidays, and offered Zoom workshops. Our Zoom classes were unique, fun and interactive, and while very successful at first, they became less popular once "Zoom Fatigue" set in. Kids didn't really want to Zoom all day for school and then Zoom again for class. So, we shifted our focus to small, safe, in person classes, which have been very successful. We will most likely not offer Zoom classes in the future, unless we feel interest in them has increased.

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What do you think is the biggest challenge that arts organizations now face in the greater Fresno area?

The biggest challenge for arts organizations in Fresno remains what it has been for years. Bringing attention to the arts, bringing access to the arts, and bringing funding to the arts. In some ways this pandemic has helped to bring funding that was not always available, but it remains imperative that we provide channels of access to those who don't have it. For a community with such a large population, the majority have not experienced the joy that live entertainment and the arts bring.

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Anything you'd like to add?

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