

# 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?

Sequoia Symphony Orchestra

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?

our last live public event was pre-pandemic. Once the pandemic hit, we cancelled our planned live events.

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

While the pandemic halted our normal concert experience, it really acted as an accelerant for our creative digital experience strategy. We've talked for years about finding a way to impact a new audience in an extremely accessible way and the pandemic gave us the time and sense of urgency to create new, high-quality content that was reflective of our growing brand.

We used the pandemic as an opportunity to jump right in to this new strategy and put everything we had financially into this project and we've reached people all over the world with our video content; something that wouldn't have been possible before.

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

Yes

No

If so, what is it and when is it?

We're still making plans for the 21/22 Season and don't have dates ready for public announcement. Our best case scenario has live events returning in October 2021.

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

Fundraising Gala in September, Live Concerts in October and November with digital content through December. We're hoping to announce in June once we have a better idea of what "guidelines" will be given in California.

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.)

Pod-seating is our main consideration for our live events to promote social distance.

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"/>						

Regarding the above question: Would you care to comment?

While we did happen to receive the largest contribution to our endowment in our 61 year history, we saw a 60%+ decrease in income with the loss of ticket sales and sponsorships.

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?

The Payroll Protection Program grant we received was everything to us when we had no other income last year.

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"/>						

Regarding the above question: Would you care to comment?

I think it's going to be difficult to gauge just how audiences will respond as we come back. My preference is to just provide a venue and allow every individual to make their own determination on whether or not they want to return. We will have to make budget plans with low expectations and hope for the best.

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. Our Musical Uplink content has been so well-received and has blown all of our expectations out of the water. Our content has been viewed over 35,000 times between Instagram, Facebook and YouTube and we absolutely plan on building out our digital content library going forward.

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

I think it's a combination of changing rules/requirements and how that impacts our diverse audience. On top of that, it's very difficult and nearly impossible to make plans that will make everyone happy so we need to do our very best to come up with a reopening strategy that will still make sense financially

Anything you'd like to add?

Thank you for looking into this! We look forward to the results.

# Google Forms