

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?

Julie Carter, artistic director/founder of Soli Deo Gloria women's chorale

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?

November of 2019

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

At the beginning of the pandemic when we thought it would be just a short time, we held regular meetings on Zoom. We had lessons in IPA (international phonetic alphabet) which we planned to use to mark our music in a more specific fashion. Brigid de Jong (voice professor who taught at Fresno Pacific University and CSUF) gave several wonderful sessions for us and many of our group participated!

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

Yes

No

If so, what is it and when is it?

I'm hoping an early December Christmas concert.

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

I'm hoping to begin rehearsals the end of August and have a performance Friday, December 3 at 7:30 pm. I'm hoping to make the concert announcement late August and announce to the singers by June 1. I've already begun asking singers to commit to the fall so I know what kind of group I'll have, how I need to recruit, etc.

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.)

I'm thinking we might rehearse outside some, or rehearse in a large sanctuary like First Pres where the singers can spread out a bit more than in a regular choir room. I'm thinking they might wear masks entering and exiting, utilize hand sanitizer, and stress that if you don't feel well you should stay home. We can make use of Zoom with someone's computer screen or phone and the ill person could participate in the rehearsal from home without sharing germs. We will work with the concert venue regarding their requirements. It's possible to have the audience do social distancing too... We also considered informing the audience that all singers had been vaccinated (if that were true). Not sure if we'll do that or not!

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?

We have no income coming in due to no concerts. We have fewer expenses but we still need to purchase insurance so that puts us in the negative.

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 type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>						

Regarding the above question: Would you care to comment?

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
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Regarding the above question: Would you care to comment?

Its difficult to answer the question because we don't know how December or the fall will be. I'm kind of guessing.....

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?

We sent emails to our supporters with pre-recorded songs. We included a note from me, the artistic director, and an interview with a singer.

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

Returning to singing(safely) and getting audiences to return!

Anything you'd like to add?

This has been a difficult year. My singers can't wait to return and are eagerly looking forward to it. I think when we first sing together we'll all just weep for joy! I also know that singers are out of shape so it will require careful music programming (not the hardest music we've sung) and time to get in shape vocally! It will be thrilling to make live music again!

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