

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?

Jonathon Hogan, UR Here

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?

Funny story... We exist BECAUSE of the pandemic.

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

Friends sitting in a living room (pre-pandemic) reading scripts for fun. This was the seed that BYRTL (Backyard Readers Theater Lab) grew from in the summer of 2020. A small group of thoughtful people found a way to safely experience extraordinary works and explore a deeper understanding of the material.

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

Yes

No

If so, what is it and when is it?

Stay Tuned!

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

We have a few options we are looking into for the Fall. We hope to announce mid-summer for a mid-Fall show.

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.)

We will be staying as educated as we can and adhering to the guidelines put forth by the state and county health officials. Then pivot when needed.

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

Regarding the above question: Would you care to comment?

As I alluded to earlier, we exist because of the pandemic. The need for a few 'theater geeks' to consume works that express a different point of view from our own. That flicker has lit a flame that has become UR Here.

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
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Regarding the above question: Would you care to comment?

No pre-existing organization, so no assistance needed.

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?

It will be an interesting journey for us. While there are people ready to get back out in the world, there are some that will be more reluctant out of fear or concern. We will create as safe an environment as we can for our audience and our cast & crew.

We are new therefore name recognition or nostalgia doesn't help us.

Some of the titles we are looking at aren't well known to the general public.

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 had a great opportunity to partner with Bitwise last Halloween for a and we had a really good turnout during our Rogue Festival show!

With Zoom Fatigue, we may scale back on virtual reads, but it also gave artists a new avenue for performance. Never say 'never'!

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

I believe that the true patrons of The Arts will quickly come back once they feel it's safe to do so. It's up to all of us to make sure we take the steps to ensure everyone's safety and inform the public.

Anything you'd like to add?

I have heard similar thoughts from several people during this trying year... In many ways, Art helps lead society to understand, to heal, and ultimately, to move forward and experience life fully.

We look forward to being a small part of that.

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