

## Case studies: How have culture and creativity been supporting people in health, care and other institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Project: Bring Me Sunshine / Spotlights / But Once a Year

Organisation: Voices Across Time

Region: South East

Designed for: Hospitals, care homes



### Introduction

Voices Across Time is an interactive musical theatre organisation, offering main stage productions as well as outreach programme which looks to engage people who would not usually be able to/want to access conventional theatre.

- Bring Me Sunshine – a 12-episode interactive radio series in collaboration with Radio Horton. Designed for hospital patients and care home residents to connect with loved ones via a message hotline and a shared experience of listening to an episode.
- Spotlights – 8 workshops for children aged 7-16 to develop music, theatre and communication skills, composing and performing their own musical creations.
- But Once A Year – a festive film created by Voices Across Time Nov20, which will form the centrepiece of an Age-Friendly Package (including a 45-min workshop, interactive digital resources and bespoke videos) designed to help older people socialise virtually.

### Funders

Banbury Town Council, Banbury Charities, Oxfordshire Community Fund (approx 40% funded, 60% free-of-charge (FOC) artist work).

### Who is it for?

- Hospital patients, Care Home residents and their friends/families who they could not see in person.
- Children with an interest in musical theatre or from low socio-economic backgrounds that would benefit from engagement with arts.
- 24 Age-Friendly organisations, plus the general public with several open access performances and workshops designed to reach older people outside of Age Friendly networks in Oxfordshire.

## Are these people you have worked with before, or new participants?

Both

## How many people took/are taking part?

But Once A Year: 16 Creatives, Age Friendly Package: 360 participants (24 organisations). Public Access Film: estimated 500 audience members (via 3 live stream performances).

## Where is it happening?

Oxfordshire mostly, as it's not virtual and reaching a national audience.

## For how long has it been happening?

Voices Across Time: July 2016, But Once A Year: Sept-Dec 2020

## What were/are the main outputs?

Films and workshops

## What outcomes were/are you aiming for?

Bringing new communities together via a shared experience, combat loneliness in older people, create more meaningful interactions between older people and their friends/families.

## Have you adapted existing work to make this happen? If so, how?

Yes, it is all virtual. Filming the main musical is the main adaptation within this: blocking, choreography and music has been adapted to allow social distancing.

## Does your work support people who identify with one or more of the protected characteristics<sup>1</sup>?

Yes, VaT specifically seek to include varied cultural content in musical theatre pieces, working with artists of varied cultures, structuring working practice to enable e.g. single parents to participate, LGBTQ+ artists creating situations where several people artists have felt comfortable talk about their own connections to LGBTQ+.

## Evaluation & Feedback

We have an Impact Report which can be shared on request.

## What is your own impression of how it has worked? What have been the challenges and successes for you?

Challenges: making new relationships

Successes: strengthening relationships and working practice with current portfolio organisations

## Are you reaching more people/fewer people/different people?

Yes, some care homes find it hard to connect digitally, especially with content which is live and responsive. However, our online reach has increased drastically especially due to open access resources.

## What new skills have you or your colleagues had to develop to deliver this work?

Technical skills to create podcasts, recorded music.

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<sup>1</sup>Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation (Equalities Act 2010).

What would you say has made this project possible?

Generosity of FOC work by artists. A clear need shown from current partner organisations.

What would have made it easier?

Funding at the beginning of the project.

Further information

<https://www.voicesacrosstime.com/shows/bring-me-sunshine-2020/>