

In and Outside the Box: On strawberries, children, poetry, garden sheds and a lot of sewing

Or 27 linguini recipes later

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Recently I conducted a small poll of my singing colleagues. I wanted to know what they had been doing during this time when the stage was strictly off-limits, either in order to survive (often no productions = no salary) or just to see something besides their own four walls. The responses ranged from making cloth masks to doing photography, from building a garden shed (for a client) to making a career change and becoming a professional costume designer, sound engineer, carpenter, model, or baby-sitter. Others made a living watching over minor children during a train trip, working in a mountain chalet, selling strawberries in the countryside or writing, illustrating and editing a children's book of poetry. And the number one unpaid pass-time: cooking. Excellent idea, if ever there was one. I've personally benefitted from that trend embraced by some of my colleagues (and it was really, good, thanks!).

Let no one say then that artists live in their own bubble, that they don't respond, that they aren't flexible and don't take risks....

During this time, governments have tried, with more or less ardor and resources, depending on the country, to save whatever can be saved. If you, dear readers, have been lucky and not had your situation totally threatened, you will find

programs in your own country to help artists. Some depend entirely on their social media presence, including “Support Art Workers” in Greece, #sangundklanglos in Germany, #Cultureismyjob in Switzerland, #saveourstages in the US, and many others. You will certainly find a local initiative.

Let us not lose hope, dear colleagues. Someday, we will no longer have time to try out complicated recipes or build garden sheds; we will have to squeeze in meals between productions. Meanwhile... it will soon be strawberry season.

Translation by Anita Shaperd, USA