

Oxfordshire Theatre Makers – case study

Jenny Johns

Actor

OTM Events Committee

At beginning of Covid, Jenny had role-play work arranged and fully expected to be auditioning for summer repertory theatre.

She was also was planning OTM events for the rest of the year.

When Covid-19 and lockdowns started in March 2020, she initially expected it to be a temporary measure. Her role-play work was cancelled and all OTM events had to be suspended as time progressed.

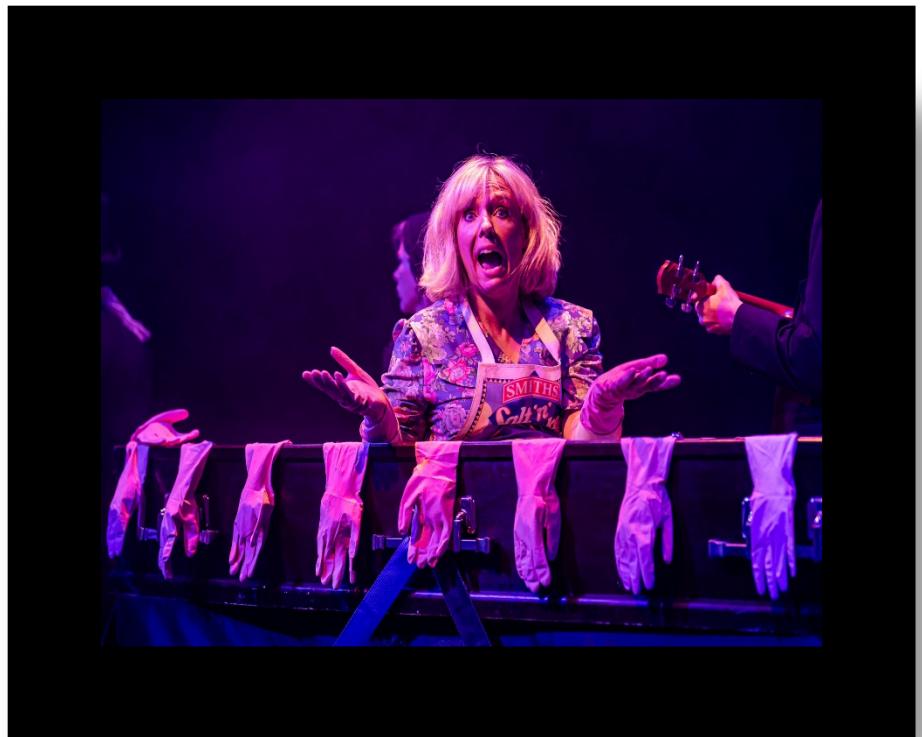
“Most of my work is in live theatre and in-person events – all of which suddenly disappeared. I wondered if I would ever work again. One company I work for moved all their business online which provided some opportunities for me during lockdown. We also held some OTM events on Zoom however it felt as though everything had to be scaled down and we weren’t able to offer the same kinds of experiences for members. To be honest, by the end of lockdown I think we had all had enough of looking at screens. It made me really appreciate the value of live theatre.

I qualified for the SEISS [self-employed income support grant] - I know many who didn’t. It’s awful to think of many brilliant creatives who were not supported at all.”

Connecting with other theatre makers, was online.

“Theatre makers are collaborative and resilient. OTM and various companies held play-readings, shared work and ideas. Zoom became a really important tool to stay in touch with the outside world.

“Online Theatre has developed into a whole new genre. All that being said, nothing has been able to replace the creative buzz of the rehearsal room or the shared magic of performing for a live audience.



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I have been very lucky. I've been involved in two wonderful live productions since June this year – one of which has returned for a second tour. I am hopeful for next year [2022]. The work I've done this year has reaffirmed my faith in the power of theatre making."

Photo: Atlantis at the Old Fire Station, Oxford. Credit Simon Vail