

Stephanie Morin — Where the Arts Stand in Society Transcription

Well, I mean, I kind of touched on this at the beginning, but just in terms of the NAC's response to COVID, and how it feels to be there right now. It's, you know, it's difficult to play with two meters between every person, it's difficult to play with barriers that block sound, it's difficult to play when you're maybe concerned that you're trying to remember to follow everything like to put your mask up whenever you can. There are a lot of obstacles. But the attitude of the people there is really what makes it a good experience. It could be not a very good experience if people just focused on everything that we couldn't do. But I think everyone's just, and I think this happens a lot, whenever there's a group of people that are in a difficult situation, or collectively difficult situation, you can't focus on the bad things, you have to find the positives, and I think everyone there is so happy that that we can play at all, so grateful that we have this stability.

I mean, it's been pretty awful for anyone who's a freelancer. I have a lot of friends and colleagues that I've made over the years who are freelancers and they're fantastic, and they bring so much to the music industry and the field, and they're just not really able to do that right now. And that's a really big problem. And they can't get the support that they need. So, I mean, there's a huge number of musicians that are either considering or have already decided to retrain because of this. And, yeah, it's just, you know, it kind of shows you—we've seen how it's difficult to get your priorities straight, sometimes. It's not that there's a specific way that your priority should be. But obviously, you know, we have healthcare essential services—that's the most important. But then after that you have small businesses, the economy, and the arts, and all these other things—like, which one is more important than the other? And I think that the arts often feel like they're the last one. Like, we were the first ones to close, and we're going to be the last ones to open fully. And that can be, I guess, just disheartening. But at the same time, we have also seen this huge outpouring of support from our community and our audience, so that gives us hope. And it's nice to see those people and to hear from those people that you don't usually hear from.

So, I mean, I'm just kind of spouting random things at this point. But it's just, I think that the attitude of the artistic community has been overwhelmingly positive in the face of a lot of negative. And that's been pretty incredible to see.

Like, yes, going to concerts and the arts are, you could argue, the least essential thing. There's an argument for that. But I think that we've seen over the course of the months that it's actually more essential than we thought it was, initially. Like, people need that kind of thing in their lives.