



We *can* make music

By Farrell Renowden, February 2023

For the purposes of this blog, I'm going to call the amazing person I had the pleasure of learning from this month 'Jo', they happen to be over 50, living with a disability, caring for a loved one, but crucially, they are (whether they realise it or not) a cultural leader:

"When people get a disability, when they never had one before, it can be hard. They think about what they used to do and can't now. I've always had a disability, always had to do things differently and it comes easier to me to think differently, be creative [...] You might not be able to play the guitar now, but you can bang a drum, you can sing [...] You might've been good at that but you can be good at this [...] I'm here to show everyone that you *can* make music."

We can all make music, at any age, but when you start to believe what the media and society tells you about ageing, you can be forgiven for thinking that you can't. This constant narrative of decline, loss, reduction, decrepitude associated with age is all around us and it soaks in deep. No matter what your age today, take a moment to think about your life in your 70s, 80s, 90s, beyond... are you imaging the frail, sad, lonely person in a high back chair, lit in blue light, often seen in adverts or are you- like all of us- imaging that you are the exception to the rule and that, faced with a challenge like this, you would overcome adversity without the need for 'Jo'? Perhaps, instead of focussing on exceptional individuals, we should be fighting for a better universal offer for older people, including those who are living with a disability or caring responsibilities- Age Friendly Creativity for everyone.

So, how about we start a movement, sharing all the Age Friendly Creative activities that are already happening across the country as a collective? How about we find ways to be more Age Friendly in our cultural venues and take positive action? How about we give profile to people like Jo- and all those cultural leaders- to be our ambassadors and inspire our communities? How about we give a counter-narrative to those people who feel like they can't make music... or art, theatre, dance, poetry...

How about we have an age Friendly Creative Festival for England that we can get involved in. Well, you're in luck...here's one I prepared earlier: [Age of Creativity | Home](#). And if Jo can't convince you then there is also a fair bit of research to show how ageism impacts negatively and creativity impacts positively as you age: [Research | Age of Creativity](#)

Please join this movement and spread the word so we can all enjoy a creative life, no matter our age or ability.

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