

## Since Lockdown...how is the cultural sector adapting to deliver creativity for, with and by older people?

By Flora Faith Kelly

Since lockdown, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance is finding new ways to engage with older adults across Lewisham previously involved in our *Inspired not Tired* programme via dance classes, singing and movement groups and various other creative projects.

Many of our sessions are now online, allowing our practitioners to continue to engage with groups. Our dance group *Boundless* have been connecting and moving together via live sessions on Zoom, our singing and social group *The Befrienders* have been making use of the 'breakout room' feature on Zoom to enjoy small group chats over a cup of tea as well as meditating together as a whole group, and our music and movement group *Voices in Motion* have been doing chest-opening exercises and singing in their weekly online sessions. For those not so interested in online activity such as social group *Young at Heart*, creative activity packs including song suggestions, gentle movement exercises and craft activities are being shared via post. It has been vital to Trinity Laban that our participants know we are thinking of them and encourage creativity in this challenging time.



In this new and evolving environment, feedback, evaluation and creative ownership have become ever more important, and we are taking steps to ensure that our participants are creatively engaging with us in a way that is most comfortable and rewarding for them. Linked to this is our ability to

provide the correct support to help all participants of varying needs become involved in creative activities despite being unable to leave the home. This means providing technical assistance and reassurance in what can be a daunting move online. Participants have been made aware of wider resources to assist them in becoming confident online, but similarly it has been important to acknowledge that this online move can cause fatigue, and that boundaries must be set.

The key to our online activity so far has been open conversation, allowing participants to feel connected during a time of isolation, to discuss what creative practice they may wish to take part in at this time and how certain activities help us cope in difficult circumstances. As both participants and practitioners settle into remote delivery during lockdown, the hope is that with growing confidence will come greater creative freedom, encouraging

artistic response to our current situation. For example, some participants have been thinking about writing lyrics and poetry about their current surroundings at home. We are excited to see what new creations come out of this period.

Our activity can be followed via the TL website [here](#) and on twitter [@trinitylaban](#).