



# Challenges and opportunities experienced by performing artists during COVID-19 lockdown: Scoping review

## Citation

Brooks, Samantha K., Sonny Patel. "Challenges and opportunities experienced by performing artists during COVID-19 lockdown: Scoping review." *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 6, no. 1 (2022): 100297. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssaho.2022.100297

## Permanent link

<https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.INSTREPOS:37373480>

## Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Open Access Policy Articles, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#OAP>

## Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

# **Challenges and Opportunities Experienced by Performing Artists during COVID-19**

## **Lockdown: Scoping Review**

**Samantha K Brooks<sup>1</sup>, Sonny S Patel<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Dr Samantha K. Brooks, Department of Psychological Medicine, King's College London, Weston Education Centre, London, SE5 9RJ, UK. Email: [samantha.k.brooks@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:samantha.k.brooks@kcl.ac.uk)

(Corresponding author)

<sup>2</sup>Sonny S. Patel, MPH, MPhil, Transcultural Conflict and Violence Initiative, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA; Department of Global Health and Population, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Boston, Massachusetts, USA. Email:

[spatel@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:spatel@hsph.harvard.edu)

### **Abstract**

This scoping review synthesises published literature on the experiences of professional and amateur performing artists during COVID-19 and their perceptions of the challenges and opportunities faced. Six electronic databases were searched for published English-language articles containing primary data on this topic; twenty-one studies were reviewed. Themes included loss of work, financial impact, concerns about the future, psychological wellbeing, social connections, continuing creative pursuits, and inequalities. Participants reported both detrimental psychological effects of lockdown such as anxiety and sleep problems and positive effects including reduced stress and enjoyment of having more free time. Most continued creative pursuits throughout lockdown, most commonly shifting to online platforms. However, many barriers to creative pursuits were reported, including lack of technological expertise or equipment. Concerns were raised about inequality, in particular racial disparities in the financial impact of the pandemic and additional pressures faced by

performers with disabilities; with insufficient funds to afford the equipment needed to shift to remote performing; and with additional caring responsibilities. It is important that performing artists have access to peer support; that education on digital technologies is incorporated into future performing arts education; and that inequities are addressed to ensure the needs of diverse communities are met.

Keywords: COVID-19; creative sector; pandemic; performing arts; scoping review

## **Declarations**

### *Disclaimer*

This study was funded by the National Institute for Health Research Health Protection Research Unit (NIHR HPRU) in Emergency Preparedness and Response at King's College London, a partnership between the UK Health Security Agency, King's College London and the University of East Anglia. Sonny S Patel was supported by the Fogarty International Center and National Institute of Mental Health, of the National Institutes of Health under Award Number D43 TW010543. The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR, UKHSA, the Department of Health and Social Care, or any other institution. The funding source had no involvement in study design; collection, analysis or interpretation of data; writing the report; or the decision to submit the article for publication.

### *Disclosure of Interest*

The authors report no conflict of interest.

### *Acknowledgements*

The authors would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers who gave helpful feedback on the first draft of this manuscript.

## **1. Introduction**

On March 11<sup>th</sup> 2020, COVID-19 was declared to be a global pandemic [1]. Across the world, governments took action to try to reduce the spread of the virus, including closing all businesses deemed to be non-essential and imposing restrictions on socialising. Across all sectors, the pandemic disrupted working conditions: by April 2020, around 81% of the world's workforce was reported to be affected by full or partial lockdown measures [2]. The lockdowns imposed due to COVID-19 have led to a global increase in remote working, rising rates of unemployment, and anxieties and uncertainties for workers around what the 'new normal' will be [3].

The pandemic has brought major disruption to the performing arts industry – an industry known for already precarious, often freelance, employment prior to the pandemic [4,5] with professionals in the industry often unprotected by employment regulations and unable to plan for the future [6]. In early 2021 the Actors Fund, a non-profit organisation supporting the entertainment community in America, surveyed 7,163 creators and actors during the pandemic and found that 76% reported loss of income, 62% lost part-time or gig employment, and 50% lost full-time jobs [7]. The cultural and creative sectors have also been labelled one of the most negatively-affected sectors in Europe [8]. Countries around the world have seen the closure of entertainment venues such as theatres and concert halls [9], thus denying performing artists their traditional communication with the public [10]. In addition to losing work, many performing artists found themselves unable to rehearse with their usual groups due to restrictions on social contact, which could result in performers being under-prepared to re-join the workforce post-pandemic [11].

Psychological wellbeing has been a major concern across the world throughout the pandemic, given the potential detrimental effects of quarantine such as anxiety, depression, loneliness and anger [12] and the impact of prolonged isolation from others on humans who are, at heart, ‘social animals’ [13]. Wellbeing of performing artists may be a particular concern. Professionals in the performing arts sector often report high levels of organisational demands, poor job security, over-commitment, difficulties coping with critical performance feedback, perceived lack of recognition for their work and poor relationships with colleagues (including competition amongst peers, bullying and temporary relationships due to transient affiliation to organisations), all of which may negatively impact on wellbeing [14]. Additionally, poor psychological wellbeing has been associated with the financial impact of infectious disease outbreaks [12], raising concerns for those who earn even part of their living from performing. Those involved in performing arts who do not earn their living from performing are also likely to have been impacted by the social restrictions of the pandemic, as the social aspect of performing appears to substantially improve psychological wellbeing [13]; the sudden loss of in-person performances may therefore negatively impact performers.

We were therefore interested in exploring how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected performing artists. Our target population was, broadly, ‘individuals for whom performing arts are a central part of their lives’. Such a target population cannot be easily defined by boundaries such as ‘being a professional working in the industry’ or ‘possessing a formal level of education in the performing arts’ because many performing artists do not hold formal qualifications or have an income exclusively reliant on their artistic activities [16]. The review was therefore interested in, but not limited to, professional performing artists; we were also interested in the experiences of amateur performers and performing arts students and teachers. It is also important to explain here why we have use the terms ‘performing

artists' and 'performing arts' throughout this review, and what exactly is meant by these terms. Essentially, we use the terms to distinguish between the type of artists included in this review (e.g. musicians, dancers and actors, who use their bodies and/or voices to express themselves artistically) and other types of artist (those who use their hands to create a physical product, e.g. painters or sculptors). While musicians, dancers and actors are commonly thought of as 'performing artists' and indeed are referred to as such throughout this review, it is important to note that such terms do not necessarily imply literal performance, nor do all musicians, dancers or actors work in front of audiences. Many creators of music, dance or theatre – some of whom were participants in the studies reviewed in this article – are members of active artistic communities who create art together without an audience. Take choirs as an example: for many members, their creative activities are more about the social interaction with others and the joint creation of music than about providing an artistic product to an audience. In other words, for some artists, it is participation (rather than performance) which is at the heart of their creative pursuits [17]. So, whilst we do use the terms 'performing arts/artists' throughout this review, we would like to emphasise that 'performing' is not necessarily the goal of all artists.

The aim of this scoping review was to explore published literature on how those in the performing arts have experienced the pandemic - in particular, how lockdown has affected their wellbeing and the challenges and opportunities they have experienced.

## **2. Materials and method**

This review followed Arksey and O'Malley's scoping review framework [18], consisting of the following stages: identifying the research question; identifying relevant studies; selecting

studies for inclusion in the review; charting the data; and collating, summarising and reporting results.

### *2.1. Identifying the Research Question*

The following question was identified: What is known about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and its associated lockdowns and restrictions, on the wellbeing of performing artists (including both individuals working in the performing arts sector and non-professionals who are members of performing arts organisations), and what challenges and opportunities have they faced during the pandemic?

### *2.2. Identifying Relevant Studies*

The authors designed the following search strategy:

(coronavirus or covid\* or sars-cov-2 or lockdown\* or pandemic\*) AND (performing art\* or musician\* or artist\* or dancer\* or actor\* or actress\* or creative art\* or creative occupation\* or singer\* or performer\* or entertainer\* or entertainment industry)

This strategy was used to search six electronic databases (Embase, Global Health, Medline, PsycInfo, Social Policy and Practice, and Web of Science) on November 30<sup>th</sup> 2021. The reference lists of all studies deemed appropriate for inclusion were also hand-searched.

### *2.3. Selecting Studies for Inclusion*

Studies were eligible for inclusion if they:

- Were published in English, as this is the language spoken by the authors;
- Presented results of peer-reviewed research;
- Had a study population of greater than one (i.e. no case studies);



- Had a study population consisting of individuals working in the performing arts sector *or* non-professionals for whom performing arts was a central part of their lives, such as amateur performers or performing arts students;
- Considered the experiences of performing artists during the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of: direct measures of wellbeing such as stress and mental health; indirect measures of wellbeing i.e. other relevant factors which might impact on wellbeing, such as social connections and finances; and any benefits or challenges experienced due to the pandemic-related social restrictions.

Resulting citations were downloaded to EndNote© reference management software (Thomson Reuters, New York). The first author screened the titles of all citations for relevance to the review, excluding any clearly not relevant to the study's aims. The abstracts of remaining citations were then screened, with any clearly not meeting the inclusion criteria being excluded. Finally, the full texts of remaining citations were obtained and screened to ensure they met all inclusion criteria. A random sample of approximately 10% of initial citations were also screened by the second author to ensure reliability of the screening process; any disagreements were discussed between the authors until consensus was reached.

#### *2.4. Charting the Data*

Data was extracted onto a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet containing the following headings: first author; year of publication; country of study; methodological design; number of participants; socio-demographic characteristics of participants; measures used; key results; conclusions; and limitations. Thematic analysis [19] was used to group the results of included studies into a typology.

#### *2.5. Collating, Summarising and Reporting Results*

Each of the themes identified in the data is summarised in the Results section below, with a narrative description of each theme and discussion of the evidence within each theme. More detailed results of each study are presented in Supplementary File 1.

### **3. Results**

A total of 1,199 citations were found via the database searches, and 90 duplicates were removed. Of the remaining citations, 1,000 were excluded based on title and 79 were excluded based on abstract. After screening the full texts of remaining citations, a further 10 were excluded and two additional references were added from hand-searching the reference lists of the full texts. One paper which passed the abstract screening was not available in full online and the authors did not respond to a request for the full text, therefore this too was excluded.

The majority of the included studies were from western countries, with nine from Europe (including participants from Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (UK)). Two studies were from Australia and one from the United States of America (USA); one additional study included participants from both the USA and Canada, whilst another included participants from Australia, the USA and the UK. Two studies were from Asia (China, n=1 and Israel, n=1) and one was from South America (Brazil). Three studies included participants from multiple countries across the world, and one study did not make it clear where participants were from (although the authors were all based in Europe). Study population sizes ranged from 18 – 5,044 (mean: 568, median: 101). Participants in six studies were students or teachers of performing arts, music or music education. Three studies included professionals working in any area of the performing arts, whilst another three focused on professional musicians. Five studies included professional

and/or amateur participants who were members of music groups (such as choirs or orchestras) whereas one study described participants simply as ‘musicians’, one described participants as ‘professional or non-professional voice users’ and two others described participants as ‘music creators’ or ‘producers of art’. Eight studies were qualitative in nature, using either interviews or qualitative open-ended surveys, whilst twelve were quantitative and one used both qualitative and quantitative methods.

An overview of the characteristics of included studies is provided in Table A.1.

Table A.1. Characteristics of included studies

<b>Authors (year)</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Participant ‘n’, demographics</b>	<b>Measures, dates of data collection</b>
Antonini Philippe et al. (2020) [28]	Authors based in Switzerland, Austria and Italy; unclear where participants were from	Music teachers and their students, who were in their last year of a Master’s degree in music and earned their living from music (vs. athletes who were university students in sports sciences and held national titles, and their coaches)	18 (6 musicians and 3 teachers vs. 6 athletes and 3 coaches)  Mean age of entire sample 33.5  Gender breakdown of entire sample: 66.7% male, 33.3% female	Semi-structured interviews asking about different aspects of the teacher/student or coach/athlete relationship during lockdown  Dates of data collection not reported
Cohen & Ginsborg (2021) [23]	UK	Musicians (freelance, self-employed orchestral musicians)	24  Mean age 50.62; 12 mid-career musicians (aged 35-45, mean 40.75); 12 older musicians (aged 53+, mean 60.5)  41.7% male, 58.3% female	Semi-structured interviews asking about participants’ careers pre-pandemic and the impact of COVID-19 on their lives  Data collected May-June 2020

Crosby & McKenzie (2021) [22]	Australia	Professional musicians	203  Mean age not specified; biggest age group was 30-39 (17.2%)  59.6% male, 39.9% female, 0.5% not specified	Study-specific survey assessing pre-pandemic employment and income and how these have been affected by the pandemic  Data collected June-July 2020
Daffern et al. (2021) [26]	UK	Choir members and facilitators/conductors who participated in virtual choirs during lockdown	3,948 (819 facilitators; 2,753 choir members)  Age not reported  Facilitators: 35.8% male, 63.2% female, 0.9% other; Choir members: 21.5% male, 77.9% female, 0.6% other	Study-specific survey assessing use and experiences of virtual choirs  Data collected July–August 2020
Davis & Phillips (2021) [38]	Australia, but participants were from Australia (n=56), New Zealand (n=2), Mexico (n=1), Singapore (n=1) and the USA (n=1)	Performing arts teachers or drama teachers	61  Age not reported  Gender not reported	Qualitative survey with 16 open-ended questions about how COVID-19 impacted teaching and learning, teacher perceptions about student learning and how teachers coped during the pandemic  Data collection began in May 2020 and continued throughout 2020
Draper & Dingle (2021) [39]	Australia, USA and UK	Music group members (singing groups, instrumental	257 (172 members of singing groups, 48 members of	Study-specific survey assessing the

		groups or dance groups)	instrumental groups, 37 members of dance groups)  Mean age 45.93  22% male, 78% female	nature of group membership pre-pandemic; group identification (Doosje et al.'s Group Identification Scale); psychological need satisfaction (adapted version of Kyprianides & Easterbrook's scale); extent to which their music group had adapted to social distancing by meeting electronically; nature and success of this adaptation or reasons for non-adaptation; mental health (mental health score of the SF-12); extraversion (subscale of the Mini-IPIP)  Data collected May 2020
Flore et al. (2021) [21]	Australia	Professionals currently working in an arts or creative role	40  Mean age not reported; 15 between 40-49, 8 between 18-29, 10 between 30-39, 7 aged 50+  24 female, 12 male, 3 non-binary or	Qualitative survey with 9 open-ended and 9 multiple-choice questions asking about the extent to which participants experienced

			gender diverse, 1 did not disclose	changes in their work; their use of social and digital media to continue their work; and mental health experiences before and after the restrictions  Data collected August-October 2020
Fram et al. (2021) [29]	USA & Canada	Music creators	Surveys: n=101; Interviews: n=12  Surveys: Mean age not reported – the majority were between 25-44; Interviews: Age not reported  Surveys: 64.4% male, 33.7% female, 2% other Interviews: Gender not reported	Survey: study-specific survey assessing individual musical practice and inspirations, genre and style identification, collaboration network and behaviours, and technology use before the pandemic, during the early stages of the pandemic, and in the most recent month  Interviews: semi-structured interviews on the same topics as the survey  Dates of data collection not reported
Frick et al. (2021) [16]	Germany	Producers vs. consumers of art (performative arts, music, other forms of cultural engagement)	828 (301 producers v 295 consumers v 232 consumer/producers)	Study-specific survey assessing type and frequency of participation in cultural

			<p>Mean age not reported; over half of participants were aged over 50</p> <p>50.9% male, 48.2% female, 1.0% gender-diverse</p>	<p>events in the 30 days leading up to lockdown; type and number of cancelled events; Kemper et al. scale of optimism-pessimism; specific consequences of ‘cultural withdrawal’ experienced</p> <p>Data collected May–June 2020</p>
Li et al. (2021) [35]	China (Hong Kong)	Teachers and students from a Performing Arts Academy	<p>76 teachers, 163 students</p> <p>Age not reported</p> <p>Gender not reported</p>	<p>Study-specific survey to assess experiences with hybrid pedagogy, including technology and the e-learning environment</p> <p>Data collected July 2020</p>
MacDonald et al. (2020) [30]	UK (participants were international)	Members of the Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra, which grew to include musicians from across the world during the pandemic	<p>29</p> <p>Age not reported</p> <p>Gender not reported</p>	<p>Qualitative interviews about experiences performing online with the orchestra</p> <p>Dates of data collection not specifically reported, although interviews took place after three months of virtual</p>

				improvisation sessions
Morgan-Ellis (2021) [37]	USA	Sacred Harp singers (singers who sing from The Sacred Harp, a collection of shape-note songs)	22 Age not reported Gender not reported	Fieldwork and reflections as a participant-observer; Interviews about experiences of online singing during the pandemic  Fieldwork data collection began in April 2020 and continued for 3 months; Interview data collected July-September 2020
Onderdijk et al. (2021) [34]	Belgium (participants were from Belgium and the Netherlands)	Musicians	234 Mean age 38.5 47% male, 52.6% female. 0.4% preferred not to disclose	Study-specific survey assessing experiences of joint music-making before and during lockdown  Data collected April-May 2020
Primov-Fever et al. (2020) [31]	Israel	Professional artistic voice users vs. nonprofessional voice users	110 (57 professionals, including 34 singers and 19 actors, vs. 53 nonprofessionals)  Mean age 37.72 35.5% male, 64.5% female	Voice COVID-19 questionnaire designed specifically for this study, consisting of 20 items designed to assess general concern about voice, current voice difficulties, vocal training,



				<p>current stress, and vocal hygiene; Singing Voice Handicap Index to assess self-perceived voice concerns; Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) to assess anxiety</p> <p>Data collected April 2020</p>
Rosset et al. (2021) [27]	Germany	University students enrolled in performance and music education programmes	<p>80, including 54 music education majors and 26 performance majors (vs. retrospective data from 75 students at the same university in 2019)</p> <p>Mean age: 20.85 (vs. 21.11)</p> <p>47% male, 53% female (vs. 44% male, 56% female)</p>	<p>University-specific wellbeing and health survey, with added questions relating to COVID-19, perception of university's handling of the pandemic, fear of health problems, and the Stress and Coping Inventory to assess coping strategies</p> <p>Data collected July 2020 (and compared with data collected June-July 2019)</p>
Schiavio et al. (2021) [36]	Italy	Music students at an Italian conservatory	<p>20</p> <p>Mean age 31.5</p> <p>65% male, 35% female</p>	<p>Open-ended questionnaire designed to assess dimensions of musical learning impacted by</p>

				lockdown measures  Dates of data collection not reported
Spiro et al. (2020) [20]	UK	Professionals for whom at least part of their livelihood came from working in the arts and cultural areas	<p>Study 1: 385</p> <p>Mean age 44.08</p> <p>63% female, 35% male, 2% non-binary/transgender, 0.3% preferred not to disclose</p> <p>Study 2: 341</p> <p>Mean age 44.41</p> <p>64% female, other percentages not reported</p>	<p>Study 1: HeartS Professional survey charting working patterns, income, sources of support, indicators of mental and social wellbeing; Mental Health Continuum – Short Form to assess mental health; Centre for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale to assess depressive symptoms; Social Connectedness Scale to assess connectedness to others; Three-Item Loneliness Scale to assess loneliness</p> <p>Study 2: HeartS Professional Survey two open-ended questions on how the pandemic impacted on</p>

				arts and cultural work and how the pandemic impacted on health and wellbeing  Data collected April–June 2020
Stubbe et al. (2021) [32]	Netherlands	Performing arts students	98 (32 studying dance, 32 studying to be dance teachers, 25 studying circus, 9 studying music theatre)  Mean age 19.89  24.3% male, 75.7% female	Performing Artist and Athlete Health Monitor to assess mental health, stress, sleep quality and loneliness  Data collected monthly between September 2019 – May 2020
Szostak & Sulkowski (2021) [24]	Poland (participants were international)	Professional artists with additional, varying levels of, entrepreneurship	21 (majority – 86% - had a music background)  Age not reported; year of birth ranged from 1947-1999  71% male	Qualitative data collected via interview or 36-question survey; unclear which questions were asked  Majority of data collected February-March 2020
Teixeira et al. (2021) [25]	Brazil	Music professionals (musicians, public private institutions and their actions towards the music sector, managers or owners of show/entertainment places)	174  Mean age not reported; 36 aged 18-30, 54 aged 31-40, 46 aged 41-50, 35 aged 51+  77.6% male, 19% female, 0.6% non-binary, 1.1%	Study-specific survey to assess the impact of COVID-19 on musical professionals whose income depended mostly on face-to-face

			preferred not to disclose (unclear why these do not total 100%)	activities and how they survived financially  Data collected August–October 2020
Theorell et al. (2020) [33]	Sweden & Norway	Members of national choir organisations, both amateur and professional	3,163 Swedish and 1,881 Norwegian  Mean age not reported; 66% were aged between 31-65  76.8% female, 23.2% male	Study-specific survey; participants asked to rate the importance of various aspects of choir singing (social bonding, something to look forward to, possibility to experience flow, aesthetic experiences, the physical exercise inherent in singing, breathing training, and voice training) and rank how much they missed them during lockdown  Dates of data collection not clear, but the aim of the study was to assess the March–May 2020 lockdown experience

Thematic analysis identified seven main themes (loss of work, financial impact, concerns about the future, psychological wellbeing, social connections, continuing creative pursuits

during lockdown, and inequalities) and a number of subthemes. These are summarised in

Table A.2.

Table A.2. Summary of themes and subthemes

Theme	Description
Loss of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For professionals, pandemic was seen as worsening an already unstable, precarious type of employment</li> <li>• Negative impact on employment activities</li> <li>• Sudden nature of employment cessation experienced as difficult</li> </ul>
Financial impact <i>Subtheme: Loss of income</i> <i>Subtheme: Financial support</i> <i>Subtheme: Impact of financial losses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantial reduction in income for those whose livelihood depended on performing arts</li> <li>• Many were forced to seek financial support e.g. from government schemes, but often found they were ineligible</li> <li>• Many reported a sense of injustice in the perceived lack of support for performing artists</li> <li>• Participants experienced anxiety and poor wellbeing as a result of financial hardship</li> </ul>
Concerns about the future <i>Subtheme: Personal future as a performing artist</i> <i>Subtheme: Future of the industry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants – particularly younger participants – described anxiety and uncertainty around their future careers</li> <li>• Fears for the future of the industry in general</li> </ul>
Psychological wellbeing <i>Subtheme: Challenges</i> <i>Subtheme: Detrimental effects of the pandemic on psychological wellbeing</i> <i>Subtheme: Positive effects of the pandemic on psychological wellbeing</i> <i>Subtheme: Factors associated with wellbeing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants reported a number of detrimental emotional, cognitive-behavioural and health-related effects including anxiety, feelings of powerlessness and disturbed sleep</li> <li>• Wellbeing appeared to be poorer than it was pre-pandemic and also worsened as length of time spent in lockdown increased</li> <li>• However, some participants reported a decrease in stress and burnout, and enjoyed having more free time to spend with family or develop new skills</li> <li>• Some evidence that being older, male, and partaking in physical</li> </ul>

	<p>exercise were associated with better wellbeing, whilst financial hardship and greater fears of health problems were associated with poorer wellbeing</p>
<p>Social connections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many felt lonely and missed the social component of performing</li> <li>• Family and friends not in the performing arts were perceived as not fully understanding the challenges faced, whereas support from other artists was more helpful</li> <li>• Being older, taking part in physical exercise, and living with other people were associated with less loneliness and better social connectedness</li> <li>• Loneliness worsened as length of time in lockdown increased</li> </ul>
<p>Continuing creative pursuits during lockdown  <i>Subtheme: Maintaining creative identity</i>  <i>Subtheme: Seeking new avenues</i>  <i>Subtheme: Adapting to online platforms</i>  <i>Subtheme: Barriers to creative pursuits</i>  <i>Subtheme: Virtual vs. in-person performing</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative pursuits seen as central to participants' identities</li> <li>• Some participants sought new collaborations or new creative or entrepreneurial avenues during lockdown</li> <li>• The majority reported using online platforms to continue rehearsing, collaborating, and performing</li> <li>• Virtual rehearsals or performances were praised for being convenient, flexible, allowing collaboration with others across the world, improving confidence to try new things and allowing a sense of belongingness</li> <li>• Many barriers to continuing creative pursuits from home, such as lacking motivation and issues with the home environment</li> <li>• Many barriers specific to online platforms, such as lack of access to appropriate technology or equipment, internet issues, lack of technical expertise, and 'Zoom fatigue'</li> <li>• For many, virtual modes were a poor substitute for in-person performing and could not replace the sound, energy and quality of an in-person performance</li> </ul>

Inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Racial disparities regarding loss of income, with black performers more severely financially affected than white performers overall</li> <li>• Concerns about how participants with disabilities or special needs could cope with adapting to remote performing</li> <li>• Concerns for disadvantaged groups such as those lacking the finances needed for shifting to remote platforms or those living in unsuitable home environments</li> <li>• Those with caring responsibilities experience additional pressures</li> </ul>
--------------	---

### *3.1. Loss of Work*

Employment in the performing arts industry was described as being irregular and unstable prior to the pandemic, with professional participants reporting the COVID-19-related restrictions exacerbated the already precarious nature of their employment [20] and intensified their feelings of job insecurity and instability [21]. Participants working in the industry unsurprisingly reported a loss of employment due to COVID-19 restrictions – in Crosby and McKenzie’s study of professional musicians [22], 99% (200/203) reported a negative impact of the pandemic on their employment activities, and 64% reported unemployment (compared to 13% the previous year); in Spiro et al.’s study [20], 71% of 385 participants reported spending less time working than pre-pandemic. In the latter study, the areas of work with the largest reductions were those which involved predominantly working with others and working offline; 96% reported less time was spent performing, and the majority also reported a reduction in time spent conducting, directing, teaching or mentoring, managing, promoting, composing and choreographing. The pandemic-related loss of work was experienced as being very sudden, with the creative arts industry perceived as shutting down overnight [21,23] resulting in feelings of grief and loss [21]; this sudden cessation of work was often emotionally overwhelming, particular for younger professionals [23].

## *3.2. Financial Impact*

### *3.2.1. Loss of Income*

Given the substantial reduction in work for the majority of professionals working in the performing arts field, it is unsurprising that many also reported that the pandemic had a profound financial impact [20,21,22,23,24,25]. In several studies, over 70% of participants reported income reductions [20,22,25]; over half (54%) of Spiro et al.'s [20] 385 participants considered themselves to be in financial hardship whilst almost half (43.9%) of Teixeira et al.'s [25] 174 participants were earning minimum wage or less. Daffern et al.'s [26] choir member and facilitator participants also described a negative economic impact due to loss of funding and personal income, but additionally reported economic advantages to virtual choir participation such as reductions in travel costs and rehearsal venue costs. Although many participants across studies had made adaptations such as shifting to remote work, most professionals were still unable to maintain their usual income due to loss of customers and reduced demand.

### *3.2.2. Financial Support*

Participants in several studies reported applying for income support, grants and government schemes to provide self-employed workers with financial assistance [20,21,22,23]. The number seeking financial support appeared to have significantly increased from previous years: for example, Crosby and McKenzie's study [22] of 203 professional musicians found an increase in participants seeking government income to 60% from 9% the previous year. However, many found they were rejected as they did not meet the criteria for support [21,22,23], for reasons such as earning over the threshold, recently working abroad, being foreign nationals [23] or already receiving income support [22]. Flore et al.'s [21] participants described the government's approach to financial support as 'one-size-fits-all'



and incompatible with the performing arts industry, leaving them feeling misunderstood. Similarly, several of Cohen and Ginsborg's [23] musician participants expressed a sense of injustice in the government's treatment of musicians and perceived lack of support for the arts, and Spiro et al.'s [20] participants reported 'falling through the cracks' and described the perceived lack of support from the government as leading them to feel under-valued. Participants also found themselves relying on partners' incomes, borrowing money from family or friends, or accessing early superannuation [22] or borrowing money from colleagues [20]. Participants were more reluctant to seek donations for their work from the public, with Flore et al.'s [21] participants reporting feeling that it was inappropriate at a time of global crisis.

### *3.2.3. Impact of Financial Losses*

Participants described feeling anxiety about money [23] and fears that their pre-COVID-19 income would never return [22]; those who experienced financial hardship reported significantly lower wellbeing, greater depressive symptoms and greater feelings of loneliness [20] and poorer mental health generally [27].

## *3.3. Concerns about the Future*

Participants across studies described concerns about the future, both their own futures as performing artists and the future of the industry itself.

### *3.3.1. Personal Future as a Performing Artist*

Several of Cohen and Ginsborg's [23] musician participants described anxiety around their future career and many described difficulties coping with this career uncertainty; younger participants expressed confusion and distress about what they should be doing and several participants were considering leaving the profession and either retraining (younger participants) or retiring early (older participants), or expanding their work to include areas

other than performing, such as teaching. Spiro et al.'s [20] participants also frequently reported uncertainty regarding future work and worries about their career progression, whilst Antonini Philippe et al.'s [28] postgraduate music student participants reported feelings of destabilisation and doubt about their future careers. Flore et al.'s [21] participants reported feeling that the uncertainty of the sector was likely to extend beyond the pandemic and felt pessimistic and hopeless about their futures. In Crosby and McKenzie's study [22], whilst many participants were optimistic about continuing creative employment, they reported low confidence in demand returning for their own artistic services and for live performances in general.

### *3.3.2. Future of the Industry*

Many participants were doubtful about the future of the performing arts industry. Flore et al.'s [21] participants (creative arts professionals) reported feeling the creative arts sector was devalued, misunderstood and ignored even prior to the pandemic, and these feelings were exacerbated by the pandemic. Szostak and Sulkowski's [24] participants also reported that the pandemic had left them feeling unwanted and unimportant to society. Participants described anxiety about the future of their profession in general and the state of the arts sector [21,23].

## *3.4. Psychological Wellbeing*

### *3.4.1. Detrimental Effects of the Pandemic on Psychological Wellbeing*

Across studies, performing artists reported various detrimental emotional, cognitive-behavioural and health-related effects of the pandemic. These included anxiety and distress [20,21,23,29,30,31]; new or worsening symptoms of depression [20]; mood disturbances [20,23]; panic [29]; exhaustion or fatigue [20,30]; concentration difficulties [20]; confusion [30]; boredom [20]; low motivation [20]; self-doubt [21]; feelings of powerlessness [21,30];

desperation [29]; anger [30]; disconnection from others [21]; guilt at not working and feeling lazy [21]; mentally ‘shutting down’ and detaching to avoid thinking about the loss of performing [30]; fear for the health of themselves or their loved ones [20,23]; disturbed sleep or insomnia [20,23,30]; and poor eating or drinking habits [20]. Some reported feeling shame about their negative emotions, perceiving that they were unjustified when others were in worse situations [21].

Although most studies were cross-sectional, a minority compared data collected during the pandemic with responses to the same surveys by the same populations in previous years, whilst others asked participants to retrospectively rate their pre-pandemic wellbeing. We therefore have at least some estimates of the extent to which wellbeing was negatively affected by the pandemic: for example, 72% of Crosby and McKenzie’s [22] 203 participants reported they were less satisfied with their lives than they were in the previous year, 85% of Spiro et al.’s [20] 385 participants reported feeling more anxious than pre-pandemic, and Stubbe et al.’s [32] participants reported significantly more mental health complaints than pre-lockdown. Meanwhile, Rosset et al. [27] found that performing arts and music education students reported more stressful thoughts and feelings during the pandemic than before, although there were no significant differences in self-assessed symptoms of anxiety or depression between students who responded during the pandemic and those who had responded to the same surveys a year earlier (pre-pandemic). Additionally, psychological wellbeing appeared to worsen over time during the pandemic, as the length of time spent in lockdown increased [20,21].

#### *3.4.2. Positive Effects of the Pandemic on Psychological Wellbeing*

Across studies, participants also reported various benefits arising from the lockdown period. In Spiro et al.’s [20] study, 55% (of 385) reported moderate levels of wellbeing, including 34% who reported they were ‘flourishing’ (compared to 11% who felt they were

‘languishing’). Stubbe et al. [32] noted that average stress scores fell significantly from pre-lockdown to lockdown, and sleep quality improved significantly during lockdown.

Participants reported reduced feelings of burnout [21]; less pressure [20]; more time for themselves [20]; more time to spend with family [21]; enhanced connections with others [20] and having time to develop new non-performing-related skills such as learning a new language or doing voluntary work [23]. Lockdown also led to new insights, such as no longer taking things for granted [23]. Some participants reported improvements to their health and wellbeing due to exercising more, drinking less and experiencing less stress [20,23].

Additionally, participants reported improvements to their performing arts skills, due to more time to rehearse [27]; expanding their skillsets [20,23,29]; and realisations about their preferred creative and collaborative processes [29].

#### *3.4.3. Factors Associated with Psychological Wellbeing*

Spiro et al.’s [20] statistical analysis suggested that psychological wellbeing improved with age, whilst another study [23] found that participants aged 53 or over were more likely to reframe the experience as temporary than younger participants, often because they had experienced and overcome other challenging times in their professional lives. Frick et al. [16] also found that being under the age of 60 was associated with poorer self-reported coping with the pandemic. Better psychological wellbeing also appeared to be associated with being male [20,27]; taking part in physical exercise, both prior to and during the pandemic [20]; and higher levels of optimism [16]. Those who had a greater general fear of health problems appeared to have significantly poorer mental health than those who did not [27], as did those who experienced financial hardship [20,27]. Living in an urban area was associated with greater difficulty coping with COVID-19 restrictions [16]. Frick et al.’s [16] study found that participants who attended more cultural events pre-lockdown and those who experienced more cancelled events during lockdown reported greater difficulty coping with COVID-19

restrictions. Some participants self-reported that seeing other members of the arts community struggling worsened their own mental health [21].

### *3.5. Social Connections*

Physical restrictions limiting in-person socialising left participants feeling lonely [20] and isolated from their creative communities [21], with the social component of performing reported as the most-missed aspect [33]. The loss of in-person interactions with creative communities had a substantial impact on participants' wellbeing as such communities were seen as fostering their emotional health [21]. Family and friends not in the creative sector were often perceived as not fully understanding, or minimising, the challenges faced by artists; therefore, support from other artists was particularly valued as they understood the unique challenges faced [21].

Shifting relationships online posed challenges for teachers and students of performing arts, with the need to develop and negotiate new boundaries, and students reported that relationships felt more detached and their teachers were perceived as distant [28].

Spiro et al. [20] found that social connectedness increased with age, whilst loneliness decreased with age. The same study found that participants who engaged in physical exercise (both pre-pandemic and during the pandemic) also reported higher levels of social connectedness and lower levels of loneliness. Perhaps unsurprisingly, participants who lived alone also reported significantly higher levels of loneliness [20]. Additionally, Spiro et al. [20] found that participants who completed surveys earlier in the data collection phase (within the first two weeks of lockdown) reported higher levels of social connectedness and lower levels of loneliness than those who completed surveys after more than two weeks of lockdown; this could suggest that loneliness worsens over time during the lockdown period, although a measure of pre-pandemic loneliness would be needed in order to ascertain this.

### *3.6. Continuing Creative Pursuits during Lockdown*

#### *3.6.1. Maintaining Creative Identity*

For professionals in the sector, art, creativity, and working in the arts were seen as central to participants' identities [21,23,24] and perceived to be a lifestyle, rather than just a job [21]. The reduction in creative activities during lockdown therefore led to a loss of self-worth and loss of a sense of identity [20,23]. Consequently, many participants reported feeling it was important to continue carrying out creative activities during the pandemic as a way of reconnecting with their identities [23]. Non-professional performing artists expressed similar sentiments, reporting that performing was central to their identities and not being able to perform resulted in feelings of grief and distress [30] and suggesting they needed to continue their creative pursuits to retain a sense of purpose and normality [26]. Continuing to pursue creative avenues with others during lockdown was also a way of feeling connected to others, coping with the stressful situation, and relieving boredom [34].

#### *3.6.2. Seeking New Avenues*

The majority of Szostak and Sulkowski's [24] participants focused on finding new creative and entrepreneurial avenues, leading the authors to conclude that entrepreneurship was one potential way of improving wellbeing during the pandemic. Most of Fram et al.'s [29] participants also reported embarking on new collaborations during the pandemic, although many referred to an initial period of stagnation at the beginning of lockdown followed by an attempt to reclaim old collaborative practices and find new ones.

#### *3.6.3. Adapting to Online Platforms*

Most performing artists reported adapting their work to a virtual setting, such as online collaborative rehearsals and recordings or virtual concerts, carried out on platforms such as Zoom. Meanwhile, teachers and students in the performing arts adapted to online learning

[28,35]. Some participants reported that online participation in rehearsals and performances was more convenient, more flexible, less time-consuming and cheaper than in-person [26] whilst students praised online learning for greater flexibility [35,36], less commuting time [36] and promoting their personal growth and creativity [35,36]. Virtual interactions were also praised for allowing contact across large distances – for example, allowing collaborations with people in other countries which would not have happened otherwise [29,37]. Participants praised online creative communities for being non-judgmental, allowing them to explore new ways of thinking and expressing themselves [30], and some participants reported they had more confidence to try new things and take risks within the space of virtual platforms than they would in person [30,37]. Virtual participation was viewed as benefiting mental health, allowing participants a sense of purpose, giving them something to focus on, providing a sense of security, belongingness and connection to others, and helping participants to creatively evolve and redefine their identities [30].

#### *3.6.4. Barriers to Creative Pursuits*

However, working remotely could also be frustrating. Across studies, participants reported various barriers to continuing their creative pursuits. Some reported finding it difficult to motivate themselves [20,23,27] for various reasons including feeling that it was pointless, being too busy with childcare, and finding it difficult to play alone rather than as part of an ensemble [23]. Participants also reported lacking access to rehearsal rooms, difficulties concentrating, and mental health problems which prevented them from their activities [27]. Some reported that additional effort and preparation time was needed in order to participate in remote performances [26]. The home environment also appeared to be a hindrance, with participants citing issues regarding difficulties finding a way to participate without distractions [26]; not being able to sing at full volume [37]; limited space [26,35]; and hard

floors making it difficult to dance [35]. Not being able to continue creative pursuits to the extent they wanted left participants feeling their creativity was stagnating and stifled [20]. Performing arts students reported problems with remote learning including teachers having difficulties conforming to new teaching modalities, difficulties showing visual examples when remote teaching/learning, and less feedback from teachers than they would get face-to-face [36]. Teachers cited challenges such as less interaction with students, more theory and less physical work, less time to invest in disruptive students, and some students failing to engage in remote learning [38].

Amateur and professional participants alike also reported barriers specific to virtual collaborating, learning and performing, such as lack of technological expertise and difficulties learning to use remote platforms [25,26,29,34,39]; lack of appropriate technology [26,34,35,36,39]; difficulty organising and co-ordinating a large group of people [39]; lacking the finances needed to invest in equipment to transition to an electronic platform [26,39]; poor sound quality [37]; and problems with internet connection, bandwidth or Wi-Fi accessibility [26,35,36,37]. Some non-professional participants who were also remotely working other jobs reported 'Zoom fatigue' and a reluctance to engage with more screen-based activities [26,37]. In one study, participants also raised concerns about privacy and security when using Zoom [35]. Onderdijk et al.'s [34] participants reported that non-real-time remote methods (such as playing along with pre-recorded material or recording parts separately from others) had fewer latency issues, and although some were critical of the lack of eye contact and inability to read body language of others, such methods were still reported to lead to a feeling of social connection overall. Rather than highlighting the drawbacks of performing via Zoom, MacDonald et al.'s [30] participants spoke about working with the limitations (e.g. poor internet connection, editing out of sounds), embracing the faults of technology and seeing it as part of their journey.



### *3.6.5. Virtual vs. In-person Performing*

One recurrent theme was that virtual modes of performing were viewed as a poor substitute for in-person performances and the experiences created online did not equal those established offline [23,26,34,35,36,37,39]. In-person performing tended to be viewed as psychologically uplifting, reducing stress and increasing energy, which could not be replaced by online participation [26,38], which was perceived as more artificial [36]. Virtual performing was reported to lack what Morgan-Ellis's [37] participants referred to as the 'surround sound' of performing with others in person as well as the energy of face-to-face groups [39].

Participants reported they could not get the same quality or 'feel' for a performance as they would in a studio [35] and, for choir members, virtual choirs were seen as unable to recreate the real-life experience of voices blending together as well as the social and emotional connection arising from singing together in person [26]. Similarly, performing arts teachers reported they could not replicate online the interplay of energy given and received in the physical presence of one another [38]. Remote rehearsals also left participants feeling they were not developing their skills to the extent they would in real life [26]. For some, virtual participation affected them negatively and created more stress, anxiety, sadness and loneliness, as virtual participation reminded them how much of the social aspect of participation they were missing [26,37].

### *3.7. Inequalities*

One study reported on racial disparities with regard to the financial impact of the pandemic. Teixeira et al.'s [25] study on the impact of the pandemic on the income of 174 professional musicians found that, pre-pandemic, black participants already had a monthly income lower than those who identified as white; during the pandemic, white professionals represented 91.7% of the highest income range whereas black participants, although representing only

37.4% of total respondents, represented 50% among the lowest income range and only 7.7% of those with the highest income.

In Davis and Philipps' [38] study of performing arts teachers, participants reported extra concern for students with disabilities or learning needs and how such students would adapt to online learning. They also expressed concern for equity and inclusion for disadvantaged groups, for example those students who did not have access to the technology and tools required for online learning, or those with other environmental factors in the home preventing them from engaging meaningfully with their work. Additionally, a number of participants in two other studies reported experiencing further stress and strain due to caring responsibilities or home-schooling children [20,23].

#### **4. Discussion**

Our scoping review identified numerous personal and professional challenges and opportunities faced by performing artists during the COVID-19 pandemic. Unsurprisingly, participants reported substantial losses in work and income. Participants in several studies described the perceived failure of governments to understand the nature of work in the industry, reporting 'falling through the gaps' when it came to financial support schemes. This supports anecdotal evidence that initial policy responses in Europe were inappropriate, insufficient, and involved problematic assumptions about how performing artists can be productive in a global pandemic [6]. It is important to note that the majority of the data reviewed in this article was collected early on in the pandemic, in the first few months of 2020. Since this time, policy responses have changed in order to promote recovery in the performing arts industry – for example in Australia, several initiatives have been set up to assist such industries including grants, resilience funds and a series of webinars for artists to offer support and advice to those feeling isolated [22]. In Canada, funding programmes have

been launched to help the country's arts community shift their work to digital platforms for online audiences [40]. Various charities and non-profit organisations in the USA have also provided emergency relief for artists [41]. However, whilst such schemes may address short-term financial concerns they will likely do little to help concerns about the future and about employment in the long term.

The loss of work and income raises concerns about the psychological wellbeing of performing artists at such a time, given that financial difficulties due to pandemic-related quarantine have been shown to be associated with poorer mental health even during the relatively short quarantine periods during earlier pandemics, such as the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) pandemic [12]. The unprecedented length of lockdowns and social restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic has likely led to far greater financial distress and also potentially greater emotional distress. Indeed, psychological wellbeing was reported to have been affected in detrimental ways in the studies included in this review, such as increased anxiety, negative emotions, cognitive difficulties such as poor concentration, and poor sleep.

However, participants across studies also reported psychological wellbeing had been affected in positive ways. In fact, some reported improvements in their health and wellbeing which they commonly attributed to a reduction in stress, pressure and burnout. This suggests performing artists are a resilient population, and may be indicative of post-traumatic growth, which refers to growth and positive emotional responses as a result of experiencing great adversity [42]. This resiliency is perhaps unsurprising as professionals are familiar with coping with job insecurity and the uncertainty embedded in the nature of the industry (albeit on a smaller scale than a global pandemic); additionally, performing artists are by nature a

creative group, and so it is unsurprising that the majority have been able to seek new avenues or adapt their art to other platforms. Further investigation will be needed to explore the levels of, and factors related to, the post-traumatic growth being seen among the performing arts population since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The loneliness, isolation and loss of social connectedness reported by many participants illustrates the importance of having adequate social support. ‘Social support’, at a time of social restrictions, may appear to be a contradiction but is in fact essential to the wellbeing of performing artists (and, indeed, everyone else) during times of stress and uncertainty [12,43] with social networks and relationships being a key aspect of resilience [44]. In addition, Flore et al.’s [21] finding that many participants reported feeling their challenges were misunderstood and minimised by family and friends not involved in performing arts highlights the importance of performing artists receiving social support from other artists. This may be particularly pertinent for younger artists, who appeared to suffer from poorer wellbeing during the pandemic and may need additional support. Cohen and Ginsborg [23] suggest that seasoned performers are best placed to help younger, less experienced performers through this period of uncertainty, and suggest virtual meetings held by performers’ organisations could help link up performers to support each other.

As performing was such a central part of participants’ identities, the majority sought ways of continuing their creative pursuits throughout lockdown, which for many was reported to help them cope with the pandemic. This is unsurprising as research suggests that engaging in creative pursuits during the pandemic is associated with better psychological wellbeing in the general population [45]; this is arguably even more important for individuals for whom creative pursuits were already important. Creative pursuits during lockdown were continued

either by seeking new avenues or adapting their existing creative work to online platforms. Such adaptations indicate versatility within the population; however, many reported difficulties adjusting to different ways of performing. Participants reported mixed feelings about the adaptation to remote performing and how well this worked as a substitute for in-person performing. The shift to remote platforms was praised for giving participants a sense of purpose and belongingness and a way to maintain their skills; erasing geographical barriers to participation and allowing people across the world to collaborate together; creating new opportunities for experimentation and growth; and helping to develop confidence. However, many missed performing for an audience as well as the shared physical experience of performing with others, and overall it appeared that remote performing was perceived as not being able to capture the unique energy and dynamics of in-person performances. This supports Datta's [46] suggestion that 'virtual choirs' cannot replicate aspects of live performance such as responding to other singers' breathing and emotional states, and emphasises that remote performances cannot synthesise place, time, affect and emotion. Additionally, many reported barriers to participation including technology issues and problems with the internet and Wi-Fi connections. Whilst similar issues have likely affected people across all sectors working from home during the pandemic, this may be a particularly pertinent issue for performing artists collaborating remotely, where one person with unreliable internet or poor sound quality could significantly affect the entire group.

A small but notable minority of studies included in this review identified issues around inequalities, raising concerns about the potential impact of the pandemic on particular groups including black performers, performers with disabilities or special needs, performers lacking the finances to afford the technology and equipment required for shifting to remote platforms, and performers with caring responsibilities. Similar concerns about additional pressures

experienced by disabled artists, artists from working class and diverse communities, and artists who have caring responsibilities were raised in the early days of the pandemic [6], with concerns the pandemic could result in a step backwards regarding improving inequalities in the performing arts.

Overall, our review supported the results of a UK-specific meta-analysis of unpublished results of surveys being carried out by the creative and cultural industry [4]. This analysis revealed that performing artists reported significant reductions in organisational activities and individual workloads, corresponding with a loss of income/revenue; concerns about the long-term survival of organisations or their ability to continue working in the industry; and issues relating to eligibility criteria for government schemes.

There are a number of implications of this review. First, it is important to build networks of performing artists so that they may benefit from supporting others and having the support of others who can relate to their circumstances. Spiro et al. [20] suggest that such networks could also work to identify the challenges faced by artists, come up with solutions to them, and lobby for additional support for those in the arts. Peer support groups have been found to be helpful in strengthening mental health during the pandemic and helping people to cope [47]. During a global pandemic, such networks would be forced to operate mostly remotely, but it is important that those without computers or reliable internet access are not forgotten [48]. As such, we recommend that performing arts networks should aim to put people in contact with others who live close to them who may be able to provide in-person support by joining that person's social distancing bubble. Telephone peer support may also be useful, as well as potentially helplines specifically for artists to turn to for support. Such helplines already exist in some countries: for example, in 2017 Australia set up the Support Act

Wellbeing Helpline available to anyone in Australia who works in the performing arts or creative industries [49] whilst in 2018 the UK launched a 24-hour Theatre Helpline for theatre professionals [50]. It is important that performing artists are made aware of the existence of support tools like these, and also recommended that countries without similar helplines should consider developing them. We would also like to emphasise the importance of such helplines and peer support networks providing support for non-professional performing artists, as well as professionals; whilst professionals will have unique challenges relating to employment and income, amateurs are likely to be experiencing similar psychological effects to the loss of in-person performances and also need support.

Our findings on the barriers to remote participatory creation of art suggest changes are needed in order for artists to be able to fully engage with online platforms. Since participants overwhelmingly reported that virtual performing was no substitute for the energy of an in-person performance, changes in technology itself are needed in order to capture the group experience better. Daffern et al. [26] suggest that future technological developments should focus on immersive audio techniques with narrow latency limits in order to better bridge the gap between remote and in-person performing. Additionally, it is important that performing artists are equipped with the skills needed to adapt their work to remote platforms when necessary. Education and training in performing arts should therefore incorporate more digital technologies and appropriate skills. It is important to note that, despite participants in this review describing issues around using digital technology for their creative pursuits, they did at least have access to such technology in order to try it. Performing artists without the means to attempt remote performing would be unlikely to have participated in the studies reviewed, which predominantly collected data online. There may therefore be a hidden population of performing artists without access to the internet whose experiences of the

pandemic are yet to be explored. This highlights what Baker et al. [51] refer to as the ‘digital divide’: the gap between those in society with full access to computers and those without.

Even if allocated resources and support were amply supplied during the pandemic, it is important to address inequities in the performing arts industry which appeared to exist pre-COVID-19 and increased during the pandemic. This review has raised concerns about the particular impact of COVID-19 on performers who are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour), for example. Pre-pandemic reports suggest large funding disparities between predominantly white and BIPOC performing institutions – for example, the Asian American Performers Action Coalition (AAPAC) found that in 2018-2019, 92.2% of government funding for theatre companies (almost \$150 million) went to predominantly white institutions whilst theatres of colour received just \$12.5 million [52]. Whilst only one study in the review considered race as a factor affecting pandemic experiences, this study found that race was a significant predictor of the financial impact of COVID-19. Similarly, a survey by the Actors Fund and reported in *Variety* [7] found that BIPOC respondents were more likely to experience food insecurity, housing changes, increased debt and changed utility usage compared to white respondents. This review also raised concerns about those with disabilities, low income, or caring responsibilities, who may find it more difficult to adapt their performing during the pandemic and who are likely to have experienced additional pressures and challenges during lockdown. A key priority for policy-makers across the world when considering how to support those in the arts should be ensuring that the diverse and unique needs of different communities are met.

#### *4.1. Limitations*



Due to the timing of this review (conducted in November 2021), there was a lack of longitudinal work to be reviewed, with all data in the included studies collected in 2020 and most gathered early in the pandemic when social restrictions had only been in place for weeks or months. However, the review provides a useful snapshot of how performing artists experienced the pandemic-related lockdowns at their most severe. The next step for researchers in the field should be to consider the long-term effects of the pandemic on performing artists.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the majority of studies in this review were advertised and recruited for online. This is understandable given the context of the research, but automatically excludes those without internet access and those lacking the skills and technology to respond to online surveys or take part in remote interviews – which is problematic, given the concerns discussed about additional pressures of the pandemic for disadvantaged groups. Additionally, due to the fact that participation in most studies involved being online, samples were likely to be skewed toward those who had adapted at least somewhat to remote participation in the creation of art, and results may therefore not accurately capture the barriers experienced by others who had not. Many studies also had small sample sizes and were based on convenience samples, meaning results may not be generalisable to the wider performing arts population.

In terms of our own review process, one limitation is the decision to limit to English-language papers; although the included studies represented a number of different countries, important papers in other languages may have been missed. Using more terms in the search strategy may also have yielded additional papers, as could searching more than six databases or including grey literature.

## **5. Conclusions**

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns and social restrictions have led to substantial losses in work and income for many artists and led participants to worry about their futures and that of the industry in general; additionally, they have had to deal with feelings of loneliness and isolation due to social restrictions. Whilst many negative psychological effects of lockdown were experienced, including anxiety and poor sleep, participants also reported positive effects, and described personal and professional opportunities the pandemic had brought, such as experiencing less pressure, enjoyment of having time to spend with family, and time to spend pursuing new avenues, developing new skills or improving existing skills. Although artists frequently adapted their work – for example, to online platforms – they reported mixed feelings about how well this worked as a substitute for in-person artistic pursuits and believed that it could not replace the shared experience of creating art in person with others. Additionally, many reported barriers to participation including internet connection issues, lack of appropriate technological skills and difficulties finding the time or space to participate from home. Overall, artists showed resilience and versatility throughout the difficulties they faced as a result of the pandemic. However, there are a number of inequalities which raise concern and require further research, such as the unique impact of the pandemic on black artists, disabled artists, those with low income who cannot access the technology needed for remote performing, and those with additional caring responsibilities. It is important to build networks of performing artists who can support each other during difficult times, and incorporate more skills and training in digital technologies into performing arts education.

## **References**

- [1] World Health Organization, WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 – 11 March 2020. <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>, 2020 (accessed 7 December 2021).
- [2] International Labour Organization, ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Second edition. Updated estimates and analysis. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/dgreports/-/dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_740877.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/dgreports/-/dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_740877.pdf), 2020 (accessed 7 December 2021).
- [3] Fouad, N.A, Editor in chief's introduction to essays on the impact of COVID-19 on work and workers. *J Vocat Behav.* 119 (2020) 103441.
- [4] Comunian, R., England, L., Creative and cultural work without filters: Covid-19 and exposed precarity in the creative economy. *Cult Trends.* 29(2) (2020) 112-128.
- [5] Hancock, P., Tyler, M., Godiva, M. Thursday night and a sing-along 'sung alone': The experiences of a self-employed performer during the pandemic. *Work Employ Soc.* (2021) doi:10.1177/09500170211045830.
- [6] Tsioulakis, I., FitzGibbon, A., Performing artists in the age of COVID-19: A moment of urgent action and potential change. <http://qpol.qub.ac.uk/performing-artists-in-the-age-of-covid-19/>, 2020 (accessed 8 December 2021).
- [7] Malkin, M., Actors Fund study details devastating impact of COVID-19 on entertainment industry. <https://variety.com/2021/film/news/actors-fund-covid-impact-survey-1234967568/>, 2021 (accessed 22 December 2021).
- [8] IDEA Consult, Goethe-Institut, Amann S., Heinsius J., Research for CULT Committee – Cultural and creative sectors in post-Covid-19 Europe: crisis effects and policy recommendations, European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels.

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/652242/IPOL\\_STU\(2021\)652242\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/652242/IPOL_STU(2021)652242_EN.pdf), 2021 (accessed 9 September 2021).

[9] Moon, S. Effects of COVID-19 on the entertainment industry. *IDOSR-JES* 5(1) (2020) 8-12.

[10] Bronner, S. Here's to our community. *Med Probl Perform Art.* 35(4) (2020) 233-234.

[11] Stuckey, M., Richard, V., Decker, A., Aubertin, P., Kriellaars, D. Supporting holistic wellbeing for performing artists during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery: Study protocol. *Front Psychol.* 12 (2021) 577882.

[12] Brooks, S.K., Webster, R., Smith, L., Woodland, L., Wessely, S., Greenberg, N., Rubin, G.J. The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: Rapid review of the evidence. *The Lancet*, 395(10227) (2020) 912-920.

[13] Pietrabissa, G., Simpson, S.G. Psychological consequences of social isolation during COVID-19 outbreak. *Front Psychol.* 11 (2020) 2201.

[14] Willis, S., Neil, R., Mellick, M.C., Wasley, D. The relationship between occupational demands and well-being of performing artists: A systematic review. *Front Psychol.* 10 (2019) 393.

[15] Gick, M.I. Singing, health and well-being: a health psychologist's review. *Psychomusicology.* 21 (2011) 176-207. doi:10.1037/h0094011

[16] Frick, U., Tallon, M., Gotthardt, K., Seitz, M., Rakoczy, K. Cultural withdrawal during COVID-19 lockdown: Impact in a sample of 828 artists and recipients of highbrow culture in Germany. *Psychol Aesthet Create Arts.* 2021 doi:10.1037/aca0000389

[17] T. Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2008.

[18] Arksey, H., O'Malley, L. Scoping studies: towards a methodological framework. *Int J Soc Res Methodol.* 8(1) (2005) 19-32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1364557032000119616>

- [19] Braun, V., Clarke, V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qual Res Psychol.* 3(2) (2006) 77-101, doi: [10.1191/1478088706qp063oa](https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa)
- [20] Spiro, N., Perkins, R., Kaye, S., Tymoszuk, U., Mason-Bertrand, A., Cossette, I., Glasser, S., Williamon, A. The effects of COVID-19 lockdown 1.0 on working patterns, income, and wellbeing among performing arts professionals in the United Kingdom (April-June 2020). *Front Psychol.* 11 (2020) 594086.
- [21] Flore, J., Hendry, N.A., Gaylor, A. Creative arts workers during the Covid-19 pandemic: Social imaginaries in lockdown. *J Sociol.* 2021 doi:10.1177/14407833211036757
- [22] Crosby, P., McKenzie, J. Survey evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on Australian musicians and implications for policy. *Int J Cult Policy.* 2021 doi:10.1080/10286632.2021.1916004
- [23] Cohen, S., Ginsborg, J. The experiences of mid-career and seasoned orchestral musicians in the UK during the first COVID-19 lockdown. *Front Psychol.* 12 (2021) 645967.
- [24] Szostak, M., Sulkowski, L. Identity crisis of artist during the Covid-19 pandemic and shift towards entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurial Bus Econ Rev.* 9(3) (2021) 87-102.
- [25] Teixeira, N., Vianna, G.M., Lima, R., Jauregui, C., Furtado, L., Alberto, T.P., Medeiros, R. Covid-19 impact on the music sector in Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais, Brazil). *Front Sociol.* 6 (2021) 643344.
- [26] Daffern, H., Balmer, K., Brereton, J. Singing together, yet apart: The experience of UK choir members and facilitators during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Front Psychol.* 12 (2021) 624474.
- [27] Rosset, M., Baumann, E., Altenmuller, E. Studying music during the coronavirus pandemic: Conditions of studying and health-related challenges. *Front Psychol.* 12 (2021) 651393.

- [28] Antonini Philippe, R., Schiavio, A., Biasutti, M. Adaptation and destabilization of interpersonal relationships in sport and music during the Covid-19 lockdown. *Heliyon*. 6(10) (2020) e05212.
- [29] Fram, N.R., Goudarzi, V., Terasawa, H., Berger, J. Collaborating in isolation: Assessing the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on patterns of collaborative behavior among working musicians. *Front Psychol*. 12 (2021) 674246.
- [30] MacDonald, R., Burke, R., De Nora, T., Donohue, M.S., Birrell, R. Our virtual tribe: Sustaining and enhancing community via online music improvisation. *Front Psychol*. 11 (2020) 623640.
- [31] Primov-Fever, A., Roziner, I., Amir, O. Songbirds must sing: How artistic voice users perceive their voice in times of COVID-19. *J Voice*. 2020 doi:10.1016/j.voice.2020.07.030
- [32] Stubbe, J.H., Tiemens, A., Keizer-Hulsebosch, S.C., Steemers, S., van Winden, D., Buiten, M., Richardson, A., van Rijn, R.M. Prevalence of mental health complaints among performing arts students is associated with COVID-19 preventive measures. *Front Psychol*. 12 (2021) 676587.
- [33] Theorell, T., Kowalski, J., Theorell, A.M.L., Horwitz, E.B. Choir singers without rehearsals and concerts? A questionnaire study on perceived losses from restricting choral singing during the Covid-19 pandemic. *J Voice*. 2020 doi:10.1016/j.jvoice.2020.11.006
- [34] Onderdijk, K.E., Acar, F., Van Dyck, E. Impact of lockdown measures on joint music making: Playing online and physically together. *Front Psychol*. 12 (2021) 642713.
- [35] Li, Q., Li, Z., Han, J. A hybrid learning pedagogy for surmounting the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in the performing arts education. *Educ Inf Technol*. 2021 doi:10.1007/s10639-021-10612-1
- [36] Schiavio, A., Biasutti, M., Antonini Philippe, R. Creative pedagogies in the time of pandemic: a case study with conservatory students. *Music Educ Res*. 23(2) (2021) 167-178.

[37] Morgan-Ellis, E.M. “Like pieces in a puzzle”: Online Sacred Harp singing during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Front Psychol.* 12 (2021) 627038.

[38] Davis, S., Phillips, L.G. Teaching during COVID 19 times – The experiences of drama and performing arts teachers and the human dimensions of learning. *Drama Australia Journal.* 44(2) (2021) 66-87.

[39] Draper, G., Dingle, G.A. “It’s not the same”: A comparison of the psychological needs satisfied by musical group activities in face to face and virtual modes. *Front Psychol.* 12 (2021) 646292.

[40] Risk, L. Imperfections and intimacies: Trebling effects and the improvisational aesthetics of pandemic-era livestreaming. *Critical Studies in Improvisation.* 14(1) (2021) 1-22.

[41] [Artwork Archive, Financial relief resources for artists during COVID-19.](#)

<https://www.artworkarchive.com/blog/financial-relief-resources-for-artists-during-covid-19,2020> (accessed 22 December 2021)

[42] Tedeschi, R.G., Calhoun, L.G. The posttraumatic growth inventory: measuring the positive legacy of trauma. *J Trauma Stress.* 9 (1996) 455-471.

[43] Patel, S.S., Clark-Ginsberg, A. Incorporating issues of elderly loneliness into the coronavirus disease-2019 public health response. *Disaster Med Public Health Prep.* 14(3) (2020) E13-14. doi:10.1017/dmp.2020.145

[44] Patel, S.S., Rogers, M.B., Amlot, R., Rubin, G.J. What do we mean by ‘community resilience’? A systematic literature review of how it is defined in the literature. *PLoS Currents*, 9 (2017) ecurrents.dis.db775aff25efc5ac4f0660ad9c9f7db2.

doi:10.1371/currents.dis.db775aff25efc5ac4f0660ad9c9f7db2

- [45] Morse, K.F., Fine, P.A., Friedlander, K.J. Creativity and leisure during COVID-19: Examining the relationship between leisure activities, motivations, and psychological well-being. *Front Psychol.* 12 (2021) 609967.
- [46] Datta, A. 'Virtual choirs' and the simulation of live performance under lockdown. *Soc Anthropol.* 28(2) (2020) 249-250.
- [47] Suresh, R., Alam, A., Karkossa, Z. Using peer support to strengthen mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: A review. *Front Psychiatry.* 12 (2021) 1119.
- [48] Conroy, K.M., Krishnan, S., Mittelstaedt, S., Patel, S.S. Technological advancements to address elderly loneliness: Practical considerations and community resilience implications for COVID-19 pandemic. *Work Older People.* 24(4) (2020) 257-264. doi:10.1108/wwop-07-2020-0036
- [49] [The Arts Wellbeing Collective, Support Act Wellbeing Helpline.](https://artswellbeingcollective.com.au/resources/support-act-wellbeing-helpline/)  
<https://artswellbeingcollective.com.au/resources/support-act-wellbeing-helpline/>, 2021 (accessed 9 December 2021).
- [50] Musicians Union, 24-hour helpline for theatre professionals launched.  
<https://musiciansunion.org.uk/news/24-hour-helpline-for-theatre-professionals-launched>, 2018 (accessed 9 December 2021).
- [51] [Baker, C., Hutton, G., Christie, L., Wright, S., COVID-19 and the digital divide.](https://post.parliament.uk/covid-19-and-the-digital-divide/)  
<https://post.parliament.uk/covid-19-and-the-digital-divide/>, 2020 (accessed 9 December 2021).
- [52] AAPAC, The visibility report: Racial representation on NYC stages.  
[http://www.aapacnyc.org/uploads/1/3/5/7/135720209/aapac\\_report\\_2018-2019\\_final.pdf](http://www.aapacnyc.org/uploads/1/3/5/7/135720209/aapac_report_2018-2019_final.pdf), 2021 (accessed 22 December 2021).



**Supplementary Table 1. Detailed results of studies included in the review**

Authors (year)	Key results
Antonini Philippe et al. (2020) [28]	<p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing a new relationship – participants developed new forms of relationships (long-distance, online), which involved development and negotiation of boundaries and making efforts to maintain similar dynamics to those pre-lockdown;</li> <li>• Working on a new form for the relationship – establishment of a new supportive relationship based on the search for new knowledge and strategies; establishment of a close bond; nurturing the relationship; students needed guidance relating to their concerns about the future;</li> <li>• Developing functional, positive adaptations – increased adaptive behaviour, increased focus on contextual activity, adapting at the behavioural level (e.g. adapting to communicating via a screen), adapting content (e.g. revising planned programmes);</li> <li>• Developing non-adaptive, detached relationships – change in attitude of coach/teacher (often perceived as distant), destabilisation and doubts (many students felt doubts about their careers), resignation (impossibility of creating a bond induced a feeling of resignation)</li> </ul>
Cohen & Ginsborg (2021) [23]	<p>Central overarching theme of ‘loss of career’; all participants referred to having previously successful careers which they enjoyed; all described the loss of work as being very sudden when lockdown started; a third of participants (mostly younger) described this as emotionally overwhelming; all participants described missing making music and missing their colleagues;</p> <p>Lower-order overarching themes were anxiety, maintaining identity as a musician, strategies for coping, and positives / opportunities;</p> <p>Anxiety was discussed by all participants, including anxiety about money (n=22), future career (n=24), and future of the classical music profession (n=24); some had applied for a government scheme to provide self-employed workers with financial assistance but several (38% of 21 who applied) were ineligible due to earning over the threshold, recently working abroad, or being foreign nationals; most described difficulties coping with the uncertainty surrounding their careers; many younger participants expressed confusion and distress over what they should be doing at this time; 11 participants were considering leaving the profession and either retraining (younger participants) or retiring early (older participants); others were considering expanding their work to include areas other than performing, such as teaching; 13 participants expressed a sense of injustice in the government’s treatment of musicians and a perceived lack of support for the arts; 14 participants reported experiencing emotional and behavioural signs of anxiety and distress including</p>

	<p>disturbed sleep (n=7) and mood disturbances (n=9); all 6 participants with young children described additional stress and strain associated with childcare and home-schooling; 4 participants reported anxiety about catching COVID or family members catching COVID;</p> <p>Four sub-themes of ‘maintaining identity as a musician’ – motivation to practice, challenge to identity, collaborative playing and teaching; 22 participants were still playing during this period but their motivations varied, including reconnecting with their identity as a musician and improving their skills; 8 found it difficult to motivate themselves, for various reasons including feeling that it was pointless, being too busy with childcare and finding it difficult to play alone rather than as part of an ensemble; several expressed disappointment in themselves for their lack of motivation; nearly all (11) mid-career participants and one older participant described their inability to work as a challenge to identity; 15 had been involved in collaborative playing e.g. participation in online recordings or street concerts, however all who had been involved in collaborative online recordings described them as frustrating and no substitute for playing together in real life; older musicians were more positive about online recordings; 21 were involved in teaching which reinforced their identity as musicians;</p> <p>Coping strategies included support networks (friends, family, colleagues), cognitive strategies (e.g. positive soothing self-talk, trying not to ruminate), active strategies (e.g. giving the day a structure, physical exercise), and using social media, although social media was reported to have both positive and negative effects; there was some evidence older participants were more emotionally robust, with more older participants describing reframing the experience as temporary, often because they had experienced – and overcome – other challenging times in their professional lives;</p> <p>14 participants reported opportunities / positives arising from the lockdown period, including expanding musical skills (most frequently reported by mid-career participants), new non-musical skills (e.g. learning a language, voluntary work, reported by older participants), improved health and wellbeing (due to exercising more, drinking less and feeling less stressed – the latter most commonly reported by older participants with financial aid), and new insights (e.g. no longer taking things for granted)</p>
<p>Crosby &amp; McKenzie (2021) [22]</p>	<p>200/203 reported a negative impact of the pandemic on employment activities. More than ¾ (155/203) participants reported a 75-100% reduction in artistic income. Significant increase in unemployment (64% vs 13% the previous year), seeking government income support (60% vs 9%), and reliance on partner’s income (21% vs 7%). Most had not applied for grants or funding; of those who had, 22 were successful, 24 were unsuccessful and 7 still pending. Some participants pointed out that such schemes were ineligible for people receiving income support.</p>

	<p>67% were using their savings, 16% borrowing money from family/friends, 14% accessing early superannuation. Many sought new ways to replace their income such as developing new collaborative projects (42%) and replacing live performance income (37%). Participants had limited confidence in their pre-COVID income returning, but were more optimistic about continuing creative employment. They reported low confidence in demand returning for their own artistic services and general demand for live performances. Many reported low general life satisfaction (average score of 5.31/10); 72% reported they were less satisfied with their lives than they were in the previous year.</p> <p>Regression analysis revealed that positive prospects about the future were related to future sentiment about industry demand returning and most importantly the demand for the individual's own creative services. There was some evidence that more positive sentiments about future creative employment were associated with being more engaged in creative work and having better general education. Short-term income support and adapting to online media strategies were not associated with positive sentiment about industry demand returning.</p>
<p>Daffern et al. (2021) [26]</p>	<p>Thematic analysis revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frustration of the inability of virtual choirs to allow singers to sing together and hear each other in real time;</li> <li>• Virtual choirs seen as unable to recreate the real-life experience of voices blending together and the social/emotional connection and interaction arising from singing together;</li> <li>• Participants missed performing for an audience as well as the shared physical experience of performing together;</li> <li>• Barriers to participation such as technology issues, lack of skill with the technology, internet issues, lack of suitable hardware, cost of purchasing suitable equipment;</li> <li>• Participation in virtual choirs required additional effort, preparation time and often learning new skills for some participants, whilst others found it more convenient, more flexible, less time-consuming and cheaper than in-person rehearsals;</li> <li>• Some found it easier to access virtual rehearsals from home, whereas others had difficulty finding space at home and time without distractions;</li> <li>• Some reported 'zoom fatigue' and reluctance to engage with more screen-based activities;</li> <li>• Participants described a negative economic impact of lockdown due to loss of funding and personal income but there were also advantages to virtual choirs such as reductions in travel costs and rehearsal venue costs</li> <li>• There was a strong sense of wanting to maintain the choir, due to wanting to retain normality and wanting to feel they were doing something rather than nothing; participants also described a sense of responsibility and loyalty towards each</li> </ul>

	<p>other which was often the driving force behind participation in virtual choirs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virtual choirs were seen as a poor substitute for the ‘psychologically uplifting’ experience of in-person rehearsals, which were seen as reducing stress and improving energy, although the virtual choirs did provide a sense of purpose and connection during lockdown;</li> <li>• For some participants, virtual choir participation affected them negatively and caused stress, anxiety and sadness; some found they increased their loneliness as they highlighted how much of the social aspect of choir participation they were missing;</li> <li>• Some described feeling they were not developing their musical/vocal skills to the extent they would with real-life rehearsals.</li> </ul>
<p>Davis &amp; Phillips (2021) [38]</p>	<p>The most frequently cited teaching challenges for performing arts teachers during the pandemic were: moving teaching online; more instruction and theory and less face-to-face physical work; rewriting assessments and programmes; less interaction with students; performances and events cancelled; increased classroom cleaning; more feedback and responses to emails; loss of income; hybrid teaching; and less time invested on disruptive students.</p> <p>Teachers reported concern for students who did not engage with remote learning and those with disabilities or learning needs. They also expressed concern for equity and inclusion for disadvantaged groups, for example those students who did not have access to the technology and tools required for online learning, or those with other environmental factors in the home preventing them from engaging meaningfully with their work.</p> <p>Many expressed emotional responses about missing their students and the interplay of energy given and reciprocated in the presence of each other; that dynamic was seen as sustaining teachers and making them feel more energised.</p> <p>Some teachers reported their motivation was suffering as a result of not being face to face with their students: the energy and feedback from students was what kept them going usually and they found it difficult without that. There appeared to be joy and delight in the reciprocity of embodied teaching and learning and they felt loss and sorrow in its absence.</p> <p>Teachers described the shift to online teaching as sudden, and that they were suddenly expected to be digital learning designers, multimedia content creators and facilitators regardless of their expertise or experience in having done so before. They added that there was significant work involved in designing the content, generating and sharing learning materials, and supporting students in their different home learning contexts. They noted an increase in working hours and found it hard to switch off from work.</p> <p>Many reported that their students participated less due to not wanting to be on camera or speak online. Drama classes are known for their capacity to build safe spaces for example with warm-up activities, which could not be replaced online.</p>

<p>Draper &amp; Dingle (2021) [39]</p>	<p>Group identification was similar across all three types of music group; No significant differences between music groups on any psychological needs;</p> <p>Instrumental groups (59.6%) had a significantly lower adaptation rate than singing (83.4%) and dance (86.5%) groups;</p> <p>Reasons for non-adaptation included lack of technological expertise, inability to find appropriate technology, difficulty organising and co-ordinating a large group, lack of funding and other resources to facilitate the transition to an electronic platform, and unwillingness to adapt due to perceiving virtual modes as lacking the energy of face-to-face;</p> <p>For groups who did adapt, dance and singing groups rated the adapted group as more successful than instrumental groups.</p>
<p>Flore et al. (2021) [21]</p>	<p>Participants reported feeling the creative arts sector was devalued, misunderstood and ignored prior to the pandemic and these feelings were exacerbated by the pandemic.</p> <p>Working in the arts was perceived to be a lifestyle rather than just a job, and – particularly after Australia’s second lockdown – participants felt powerless and disconnected from their communities (creative or otherwise). They reported concern about the state of the arts sector and the potential impact of this on wider society.</p> <p>Many reported grants and funding were not available to them / funding criteria were incompatible with their work, and felt misunderstood by what was described as a one-size-fits-all approach to financial support. Several reported being reluctant to seek donations for their work as they felt it was inappropriate at a time of global crisis.</p> <p>Many described their work being irregular and precarious pre-pandemic, and COVID intensified the complexity and feasibility of working through the insecurity. Many reported the loss of routines and project-related deadlines leading to a heightened sense of insecurity and instability.</p> <p>COVID restrictions were overwhelmingly experienced as a challenge, although some did welcome the break from their ‘normal insecurity’ and described other positives including reduced feelings of burnout, more free time, and more time spent with families and being able to be part of their children’s education. The extra free time allowed space to slow down and create new practices of connecting with others, but as lockdown persisted these became more difficult to maintain.</p> <p>For some, anxiety and self-doubt were reported to worsen during the pandemic. Others reported that seeing other members of the arts community struggle worsened their own mental health. Some experienced guilt at not working and becoming ‘lazy’ during the restrictions. Some reported shame and feeling their emotional responses were unjustified when others were in worse situations.</p> <p>Physical restrictions left participants isolated from the creative communities they saw as fostering their emotional health. Family and friends were frequently seen as not fully understanding, or minimising, the challenges faced by artists; support from other artists</p>

	<p>was seen as most helpful as they understood the unique challenges faced.</p> <p>Many reported feeling that the uncertainty of the sector was likely to extend beyond the pandemic and felt pessimistic and hopeless about their futures. Many reported envisaging a very negative impact on the sector as a whole and a generation of performers affected by the pandemic.</p> <p>The industry was perceived as ‘shutting down overnight’ resulting in feelings of grief and loss</p>
<p>Fram et al. (2021) [29]</p>	<p>The early period of the pandemic had a strongly negative effect on time spent making music live and a positive effect on time spent making music online. Collaborative music-making decreased and solitary music-making increased.</p> <p>Although most participants expressed feeling negative emotions during the pandemic (e.g. desperation, existential anxiety, panic) they preferred to discuss positive changes, such as realisations about their preferred creative and collaborative processes, excitement at new techniques and technologies, and the virtualisation of human interaction which allowed for contact across distances.</p> <p>Most had embarked on new collaborations during the pandemic although many referred to an initial period of stagnation followed by an attempt to reclaim old collaborative practice and find new ones. Participants expressed a desire to maintain connections with their peers.</p> <p>Barriers between collaborators included lack of real-time interaction (e.g. live performances, playing in groups), multimedia challenges, lack of technical knowledge and shifts in the market for musical performance. Some felt worried the effects may continue after the pandemic.</p>
<p>Frick et al. (2021) [16]</p>	<p>Self-perceived resilience to lockdown differed between producers, consumers, and consumer/producers (<math>p=0.0074</math>); 4.5% of consumers, 7.1% of consumer/producers and 9.7% of producers perceived serious threats whilst coping with lockdown restrictions; 37.7% of consumers, 27.9% of consumer/producers and 25.6% of producers perceived no cultural withdrawal symptoms;</p> <p>Unsatisfactory coping with restrictions correlated with number of pre-lockdown cultural events, number of weekly cancelled receptive events and number of weekly cancelled active events;</p> <p>Unsatisfactory coping was associated with greater losses of events, lower optimism, and fewer reported coping activities during lockdown, but was not associated with perceived advantages during lockdown;</p> <p>Coping was not predicted by age, gender, medical risk status, education level, living alone or with others, or state of residence, but degree of urbanity correlated with poorer coping;</p> <p>Multivariate analysis found that severity of lockdown consequences was predicted by number of weekly cancelled receptive events, number of weekly cancelled active events, age group (60+ v. younger), increased professional activities during lockdown, and urbanity of place of residence;</p>

	<p>Reporting 2.05 or more weekly cancelled receptive events was associated with a more than doubled incidence of serious impact of lockdown;</p> <p>More severe consequences of lockdown associated with more cancelled receptive and active events, decreased professional engagement, being aged under 60, and living in an urban surrounding.</p>
Li et al. (2021) [35]	<p>Over half of the respondents believed students' lack of access to suitable digital devices negatively affected their learning. The majority (74% of teachers and 51% of students) reported that bandwidth/wifi accessibility would need to be better in order for teaching to be effective.</p> <p>The majority were satisfied with using Zoom although students raised concerns about privacy and security.</p> <p>76% of teachers and 56% of students reported the home environment hindered the learning experience, for reasons such as being hard to learn dance at home with a hard floor and limited space, and being unable to get the same quality or feel for the dance as they would in a studio. However, many students preferred online learning as it allowed greater flexibility and was seen as promoting personal growth.</p>
MacDonald et al. (2020) [30]	<p>Participants frequently discussed the negative impact of the pandemic on physical and mental health. They reported feelings of grief and distress at not being able to perform which appeared to be a central part of their identities. Some reported problems such as insomnia and mentally 'shutting down'/detaching to avoid thinking about the loss. Other reported negative emotions included impatience, exhaustion, helplessness, confusion, anger, loneliness, and feelings of being useless or out of control. However, becoming involved with the orchestra appeared to help address many of these issues. It was seen as a benefit to mental health, allowing participants a sense of purpose, something to focus on and a sense of security and connection from joining online sessions with other musicians. After the sessions participants felt positive mood and described the sessions as cathartic, empowering, and inspiring the creative process. A sense of belonging was seen as a major mental health benefit.</p> <p>The online creative space was viewed as liberating, non-judgmental and allowing new ways of thinking and unexplored interdisciplinary expressions and choices to be made; participants reported feeling more inclined to take risks within the space and offer things to the group. This helped participants creatively evolve and redefine their identities. Rather than highlighting the drawbacks of performing via Zoom, participants spoke about working with the limitations (e.g. poor internet connection, editing out of sounds), embracing the faults of technology and seeing it as part of their journey.</p>
Morgan-Ellis (2021) [37]	<p>The author describes rapid adaptation of Sacred Harp communities to online singing activities.</p> <p>Many reported a great deal of satisfaction from video-based Zoom singing ("zinging"). A minority could not see the appeal and found it unsatisfying, and missed the 'surround sound' of in-person singing. The sound quality of videos was often found to be unsatisfactory.</p>

	<p>Others used Jamulus, a computer programme facilitating low-latency audio communication. Again, the sound quality was often poor. Facebook Live was also used for singing (“stringing” – a participant broadcasting themselves singing along with another Facebook Live broadcast). Some reported they could still feel part of a communal activity even when they could not see who was watching them, whilst others felt lonely if there was little interaction (e.g. commenting) from those watching. The ‘liveness’ was valued (i.e. the fact singing was taking place in real time).</p> <p>Virtual choirs were also seen as meaningful ways of having a communal experience with other singers.</p> <p>Online singing erased geographical barriers to participation and meant singers from across the world could perform together.</p> <p>Participants reported issues such as not being able to sing at full volume as they were singing at home. Others reported feelings of isolation, finding that online singing made them feel more lonely. Many reported problems such as poor internet connection, inconsistent audio, and ‘Zoom fatigue’ after spending all day on the platform for work.</p> <p>Overall most found the experience rewarding and meaningful. Many found online singing created new opportunities for experimentation and growth, or helped develop their confidence.</p>
<p>Onderdijk et al. (2021) [34]</p>	<p>16% (n=38) reported a decreased urge to make music with others during lockdown, citing reasons such as loss of social connectedness. Those reporting an increase (41%, n=95) cited reasons such as needing to feel socially connected, needing to cope with the situation and stress, and to relieve boredom.</p> <p>84% missed playing with others during lockdown. The majority reported a decrease in music group participation and a decrease in the size of their musical network.</p> <p>23% (n=9) of the participants who used online platforms to play music during lockdown indicated unsuccessful experiences. The majority who used these felt that the experiences created through these platforms did not equal those established through offline musical interaction.</p> <p>Those who did not use online real-time methods during lockdown (n=194) cited reasons such as not feeling the need to, knowing the methods would not work for them, not being aware they existed, lacking time, and lacking equipment or technical skills.</p> <p>Alternative remote methods (e.g. playing along with pre-recorded material; recording their parts separately from others) were seen as having fewer latency issues as compared with online real-time methods, but negative comments were reported such as lack of eye contact and inability to read body language of others. However, such methods were reported to lead to a feeling of social connection and goal achievement.</p> <p>There were negative associations between experienced technical difficulty and assessed pleasantness of alternative remote methods, as well as negative associations between experienced technical difficulty</p>



	and ability to experience social connectedness, ability to reach an intended goal, and ability to synchronise musical output.
Primov-Fever et al. (2020) [31]	Voice professionals reported significantly higher general concern, voice difficulties, current stress, and GAD-7 scores than the controls; there were no significant differences between singers and actors in the professional group.
Rosset et al. (2021) [27]	<p>76% reported change in practicing hours since the pandemic – 31% increase, 45% decrease. Reasons for increase included more time and reasons for decrease included loss of motivation and concentration, lack of access to rehearsal rooms, and mental health problems. Respondents reported more stressful thoughts and feelings during the pandemic than before.</p> <p>44% reported a loss of earnings due to concert cancellations or not being able to work their side jobs, although only 19% indicated financial distress.</p> <p>No significant differences in self-assessed symptoms of anxiety or depression between students who responded during the pandemic and those who responded a year earlier.</p> <p>In regression analyses to assess the determinants of mental health during the pandemic: female students reported significantly lower mental health status; inclusion of COVID-related items did not account for a significant increase; of COVID-related items, only financial distress due to the pandemic was a significant predictor of mental health, with those in financial distress experiencing more mental health problems. A model including general fear of health problems found that students reporting higher fear of health problems showed decreased mental health; including this item led to financial distress no longer having a significant effect on mental health. Coping strategies were not found to significantly affect mental health. The final model showed that only fear of health problems showed a significant effect on mental health and gender was no longer significant.</p>
Schiavio et al. (2021) [36]	<p>Students discussed missed opportunities, concerns and organisational problems such as not having good recording devices or fast internet connections, their teachers having difficulties conforming to new teaching modalities, difficulties showing visual examples when remote teaching/learning, less feedback from teachers than they would get face-to-face.</p> <p>Some participants also spoke of benefits such as online lessons being enjoyable and free from distraction, making it easier for students to organise their days, less commuting time, finding new ways to spend time while rehearsing e.g. comparing different interpretations of the same piece on the internet, finding new ways to be creative, and having more confidence to try out new technical solutions than they would in person. Some felt that, with less time for human contact, more attention was placed on content and their lessons were more productive and focused.</p> <p>Physical interaction and collaboration between students and teachers was missing and often found to be difficult to replace online. The</p>

	<p>online environment was described as more complicated and artificial. Many spent considerable time (re)building connections with others to help their learning, and relied on support from each other to help each other, which was helpful; however, some believed playing music together ‘as one’ could not be achieved if not in person.</p>
<p>Spiro et al. (2020) [20]</p>	<p>Study 1:  Time spent working reduced; 96% reported less time spent performing, 90% less time conducting/directing/performing, 73% less time teaching/coaching/mentoring, 62% less time managing/promoting, 50% less time composing/choreographing/designing. Across all areas of work, 71% of participants spent less time working than before. Areas of work with the largest reductions were those predominantly offline and involving others.  61% reported not learning/practicing/preparing/reflecting with others since the start of the pandemic and another 30% reported doing so less.  76% of participants experienced a decrease in income with 54% considering themselves to be in financial hardship.  Substantial increase in social meetings online (88%) along with a decrease in in-person meetings (95%) and an overall drop in socialising with 70% socialising with fewer people. 63% reported feeling more lonely and 85% reported feeling more anxious as a result of the pandemic.  55% reported moderate levels of wellbeing; 34% were ‘flourishing’ whilst 11% ‘languishing’.  69% reported three or more depressive symptoms and could be classed as ‘depressed’.  Mean social connectedness score was close to the mean found in previous work with a broader population pre-COVID (48.56 in the present study vs. 41.48). 41% scored 6 or higher out of a possible 9 on the loneliness scale and classed as lonely.  Regression model adjusting for COVID-related factors only predicted between 4-7% of variance in mental health/loneliness outcomes. Fully adjusted model also including demographic and work characteristics accounted for 13% of the variance in wellbeing, 12% in depression, 12% in social connectedness and 15.3% in loneliness.  Age was positively associated with wellbeing and social connectedness and negatively with depression and loneliness.  Physical activity/exercise during lockdown was associated with better outcomes (significantly higher wellbeing and social connectedness, significantly lower loneliness and depression). Physical activity prior to the pandemic was also associated with significantly higher wellbeing and social connectedness, and lower loneliness. Self-rated health was associated with significantly higher wellbeing and lower depression.  Earlier completion of survey (within first two weeks) was associated with higher wellbeing, higher social connectedness and lower loneliness.</p>

	<p>Perceived financial hardship was associated with lower wellbeing and higher depression and loneliness.</p> <p>Those living alone had higher loneliness scores; males had lower depression than women and non-binary participants; a higher percentage of freelance work relative to employed work emerged as a predictor of loneliness but the effect is likely to be small and the directional relationship and magnitude of this finding are advised to be treated with caution.</p> <p>Of the 205 participants who experienced financial hardship, 61% sought financial support, and 45% sought support for health and wellbeing. Most popular sources of support were colleagues and family/friends; colleagues were more frequently turned to on finances and family/friends to support with health. Most popular formal support routes were trade unions for financial support (45%) and health professionals for health and wellbeing (28%).</p> <p>Study 2:</p> <p>Most frequently cited challenge was work: loss of work, reduced work, rapidly changed work, uncertainty regarding future work, worries about career progression, loss of income.</p> <p>Participants also reported challenges of working or being at home including boredom, fatigue, increased workload (e.g. caring responsibilities), difficulties adjusting to working online, difficulties maintaining skills or practices, feeling that creativity was stagnating or stifled.</p> <p>Participants reported areas in which they experienced loss, threat or vulnerability: loss of social networks/connections, lack of support from government and feeling undervalued or ‘falling through the cracks’, feeling the already precarious nature of employment in the sector was exacerbated, loss of self-worth and identity, missing personal and professional activities, concern and uncertainty about the health of loved ones.</p> <p>Participants reported detrimental effects on health and wellbeing, including anxiety, low mood, worsening or new symptoms of depression, mood swings, poor sleep, poor eating/drinking habits, lack of exercise, concentration difficulties and low motivation.</p> <p>Finally, participants discussed professional and personal opportunities: many reported coping fine or living more healthily, and others reported more time for themselves, less pressure, time to explore new activities, enhanced connections with others, and developing new skills.</p>
<p>Stubbe et al. (2021) [32]</p>	<p>Prevalence of mental health complaints rose from 21.4% (September-November 2019) and 24.5% (December 2020-February 2021) to 27.6% during the lockdown period (March-May 2021), <math>p &lt; 0.001</math>.</p> <p>Subjective mental health ratings also increased: 27.6% were mentally unhealthy in March, 32.7% in April and 35.7% in May.</p> <p>At least 75.5% dealt with moderate to very severe loneliness during lockdown.</p> <p>Average stress score fell significantly from 40.38 pre-lockdown to 37.66 during lockdown.</p> <p>Sleep quality improved significantly during lockdown.</p>

Szostak & Sulkowski (2021) [24]	Pandemic was viewed as causing structural changes in their lives, in both creative artistic and financial/safety terms. Art and creativity were seen as central to their identities and the pandemic led them to feel unwanted and unimportant to society. The majority focused on finding new creative and entrepreneurial avenues.
Teixeira et al. (2021) [25]	<p>Profound financial impact, with a significant reduction in income (for 71% of participants); those whose income was on minimum wage or less increased from 5.8% of participants to 43.9% during the pandemic; those on the top income and over dropped from 15.2% to 7%; no participants had an increase in monthly income; only 29.2% maintained an income similar to their pre-pandemic income whilst 70.8% showed a decline; income reduction caused by disruption of usual activities, need to adapt to the online environment which included loss of audience or reduction of pay, and prevention or reduction of other activities unrelated to music; approximately half depended solely on income from music and of those with other income, almost half reported it amounted to very little;</p> <p>Racial disparities: pre-pandemic, Black participants already had a monthly income lower than those who identified as White; during the pandemic, White professionals represented 91.7% of the highest income range whereas Black participants, although representing only 37.4% of total respondents, represented 50% among the lowest income range and only 7.7% of those with the highest income;</p> <p>Issues with online live performance: investment in equipment, learning to use the platform;</p> <p>Most had made adaptations, indicating versatility within the population, but were still unable to maintain their usual income due to loss of customers, reduced demand, unpaid or low-paid activities, increasing the number of hours worked or resorting to non-music activities</p>
Theorell et al. (2020) [33]	<p>The social component was the component most frequently reported as being missed the most (approximately half the participants);</p> <p>In Norway, ‘something to look forward to’ and ‘voice training were second and third, whereas in Sweden ‘aesthetic experiences’, ‘possibility to experience flow’ and ‘something to look forward to’ were equally rated;</p> <p>Short period as a choir singer was associated with elevated likelihood of missing the social component the most; women were slightly more likely to miss the social component most; amateurs were more likely than professionals to miss this the most; age was not associated with missing the social component; Norwegians were more likely to report missing this the most than Swedish participants; singers in the classical genre were less likely to miss the social component the most compared to all other genres (gospel, pop, mixed music, other); in a multivariate analysis number of years in the choir and status as professional or amateur lost statistical significance and those remaining significant were gender, country and genre;</p> <p>Missing ‘experiencing flow’ the most was associated with shorter experience of choir singing, the middle age category (31-65) compared to older participants, being female, being professional rather</p>

	<p>than amateur, being Swedish rather than Norwegian, and being in the gospel or 'other' genre; multivariate analysis led to duration of choir singing, amateur/professional status, and genre becoming non-significant;</p> <p>Missing having something to look forward to was not associated with duration of choir singing, amateur/professional status or nationality, but was associated with the older age category, being female, and being in the gospel or 'mixed' genre;</p> <p>Missing the aesthetic experience was associated with longer experience of choir singing (50+ years), but also with younger age groups, and also with being female, being Swedish, and singing classical music;</p> <p>Physical aspects of singing (exercise, voice training, breathing training) were missed more by those singing for 50+ years, women, and professionals; Norwegians considered the general physical training aspect to be more important than Swedish participants.</p>
--	--