

Dancers in the Age of Covid by Bernice Maslan

We are self-defined dancers. How can we survive and thrive in a world where there is only dancing in our individual homes and virtually?

People have lived through many hard times, whether times of health crisis, dictatorships, war, genocide, financial crisis, family tragedy, and other personal crises. Most of us will survive this one too.

I searched for "will social dancing come back?" and found some relevant articles including one from the Washington Post geared for dance performers entitled "How dancers cope when they can't dance: They improvise." It starts this way: "In this uncertain time, dancers have a useful perspective: Gently loosen those joints and muscles as much as you can, firm your self-discipline, calm your mind. Dancer wisdom teaches us that life is live theater, forever an improv performance, and we can feel our way through it by establishing a routine, caring for our whole selves and also turning outward, to care for those around us." One person sums up, "There is nothing that can replace what we do as dancers, being in the flesh and in the company of one another." Another concludes, "But what's difficult for me now is that dance is my main source of interacting with the world. And I am starting to get itchy. My work depends on a community and a lot of energy. I'll be going on a lot of runs to keep my endorphins up. I'm left in this space with the switch stuck on, without any kind of resolution."

All around the country (and world), we read about dance communities being hit. Dancing was a respite from life's rigors. Now what do we do...

Dancing is gone for now and the hole is huge. Some of us find zoom dancing an acceptable alternative, some do zumba, some like Bob Ingalls prefer to dance solo dances to recordings of dance teaching such as <http://ifdo.ca/~seymour/videolinks/> which is an alphabetical list of folk dance video links. Some of us do a lot of walking, maybe with tunes in our heads. If we are inclined to see what is available on line, there are numerous calendars such as <https://www.cdss.org/community/covid19/online-events>, from the Country Dance and Song Society. No matter what you choose to do, keep dancing in your heart while you do it.

One thing is for sure, things will likely look different once this virus has run its course. Those who present dances for us to attend need our support now. They are doubly and triply hurting. So instead of encouraging you to get out and dance at this time, I encourage you to lend your support to our communities to help ensure that the activities we love can return.