**Audio Transcript: Interview with Arden**

**Arden:**

I've been lucky enough to have a good home situation throughout this, so that wasn't an issue. I was lucky to have been privileged in many ways throughout this, and through how my life was before this began. So, the main way in which my daily life has been affected, is that theatre was such a huge part of my life. So obviously that's been a dramatic change, and will continue until next year if, well, with whatever survives. Friends-wise. It was interesting to see, because you saw who your friends were.

Lockdown has been a really good time for focusing myself. And there were so many things before that would demand my attention. Like I had to show my face places that I didn't necessarily want to, or had the time to, around my other commitments, but I had to in order to network(!) and all that.

So it's really helped to kind of slice off the things that… okay, you *can't* do this right now, so you're able to focus on this and this and this, and don't worry about *maybe* having to go out this evening. So that's actually been really good work-wise. I did have some performances cancelled. But you know what, that's just how it goes. I mean, I think I've been able to respond pretty well to this, because of the adaptability and flexibility of my lifestyle before, anyway.

And also, I've really enjoyed reading.

What distinctions do we make, when we talk about the issue, between coronavirus and lockdown? Because, to me, those are two vastly different things. Coronavirus being the illness itself, and lockdown and being the response, and actions in response to it, whether government-sanctioned or independently taken.

The main thing for me is that I do not want to get this disease, and everything else is secondary. So much of my life, and my professional life, comes to having a certain level of cardiovascular health, so I don't want to risk that.

And the main impact on my mental health has been not seeing people take it seriously enough. And I just really resent the fact that government guidelines are being kind of conflated with best practice, because I don't trust this government. They’re like: okay, you'll get it eventually so just go out until you get it(!). And if you don't die great(!). If you don't get, like, chronic conditions, amazing(!), amazing, but go and like spend money(!). There’s an economy(!).

And it's not just you, it's who you pass it on to, because through the nature of this, it's an exponential effect, like the people around you can give it to you, you can give it to the people around you. If you don't have symptoms… Like, you can give it to people while thinking you're okay.

And then there's these idiots who wear masks below their noses. What are you doing? What are you doing!

That's basically what I can say. I've been getting on with it. Basically.

I think the government should prioritise safety for young people. I think the government should prioritise education, health and safety for young people, as well as employment, because there have been very many knock-on effects. And I think there should be broader support for people, so that they don't have to go out and risk their lives and the lives of their loved ones every time they're forced to go out there because it's destitution otherwise.

But the Arts Council has been absolutely brilliant at supporting artists and organisations during this time. Of course, many people are falling through the cracks, and that's just due to the resource available. Which you would think would be more, considering the creative industries are just such a huge part of the London economy, I think it's the second biggest one after finance.