

## NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2020

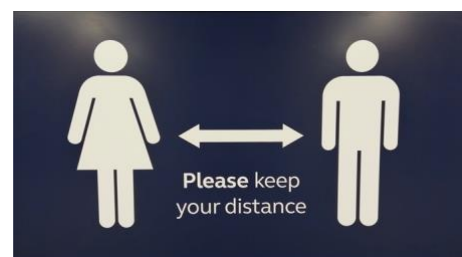
### Keeping it together during Covid

#### Whatever happened to March?



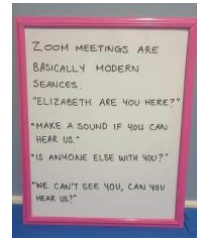
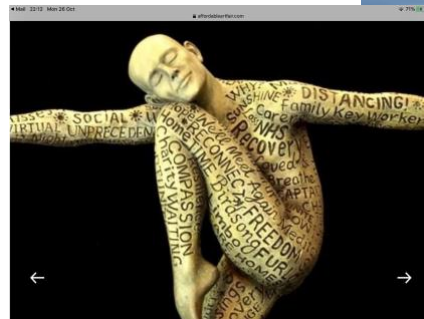
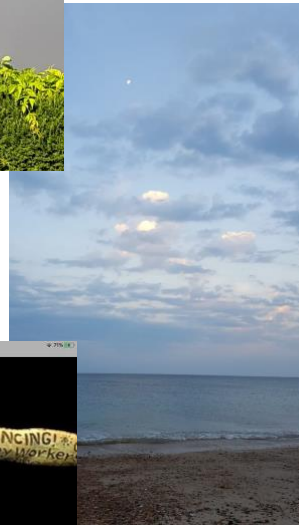
That was the month that it was all meant to happen for Sage. We were gearing up to our new show [EveryBodyDance 2](#) at the Arts Ed and had invited a great line-up of other dancers to share the stage with us. We had also been working hard with Manifest Nation to create a great new piece which we were looking forward to performing together. And as a wonderful prelude to the show we had arranged an evening of conversation with our illustrious patron, [Irek Mukhamedov](#), at the Swedenborg Hall. But like many professional companies and community groups all our plans came to a grinding halt, and our daily lives soon followed. Covid had arrived with a vengeance and indeed is still with us as we prepare to enter a second national lockdown.

#### Learning to live with lockdown



As the country locked down the first time around Sage members kept in touch. Thanks to Felicity McDonald, our unofficial social secretary who has always made sure that we laughed together as well as danced together, a Sage WhatsApp group was set up. We shared jokes, videos, dance clips, joys, sorrows, poems, photos, – anything to help us feel more alive and less alone. At the height of the pandemic we were in almost daily contact, maybe greeting each other in the morning with a beautiful photo of the sunrise over the Thames or a flower-filled garden and ending the day with some great dance sequence to wish us a good night. We celebrated each other's birthdays and tried to comfort each other in times of trouble and sickness. All of this still continues.

Here are just a few of the lovely images we shared:



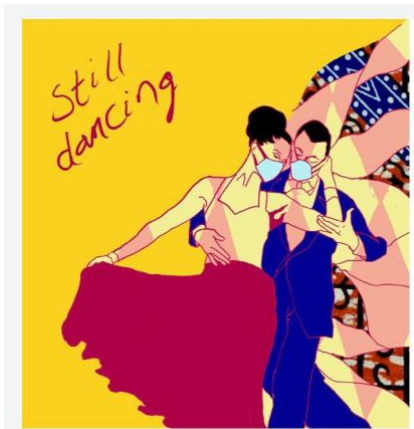
## Kim's Kitchen Ballet

And meanwhile, did we keep dancing? Yes! Kim Mendez, Sage member and former Royal Ballet dancer, saw to that. Kim is usually very busy teaching ballet and working as a therapist, but as she had more time herself during lockdown, she offered us two classes a week which she delivered on Zoom from her kitchen. The classes were rigorous, highly informative, and fun. Members who have done both classes on a regular basis have seen a great improvement in strength and technique. We are so very grateful to Kim for all she has done to keep us fit and motivated during such a difficult time.



## So where do we go from here?

It is ironic that, in some ways, Sage has never been in such a strong position. Just before lockdown the company received an extremely generous donation from an individual benefactor. Also, Jean Woollard, our new Chair of Trustees, and Gilly Wesley, our Treasurer, undertook the arduous task of getting us registered with the Charity Commission. The roles and responsibilities of the Trustees are now much clearer and the position of Artistic Director much more clearly defined. Of course, we have not been able to make any clear plans for the future, but Zoom rehearsals with Simon Rice have recommenced, and work on a new piece has begun.



This has been a time for reflection for us all and not all Sage members have decided to return to what is, and always has been, a performing company. New priorities, family responsibilities, ill health, have played their part. But the majority will return and Sage will continue as a company in some shape or form. Sage members have a special bond, as this pandemic has demonstrated. They are friends as well as dance colleagues. Whatever the future holds there is no doubt that they will continue to laugh together as well as dance together. And in these difficult times they will remain determined to show that the creative and life-affirming power of dance is more important than ever.



Virtual celebrations for our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in July