



Parent

Henry loved it. Lockdown has seen the end of all the activities Henry used to enjoy (including school) and which, through play, encouraged him to socialise and use language. Pericles Online was a rare and fantastic opportunity to recover the fun and joy of being with others.

Parent

Lumen is a very happy eight-year-old, non-verbal, autistic boy who primarily uses gesture to communicate. He says a few words, although not always in context. He conveys his needs and emotions, as well as self-regulates by spinning, flapping his hands, jumping, swinging, chewing various objects, and using facial expressions. Lumen suffers from sensory processing disorder which translates into him being very sensitive to sound, light, temperature, and texture. He learns about his environment through touch and also by licking objects. He has difficulty with transitions, being flexible in situations, and understandably, being misunderstood. It is during these times that he harms others and himself.

All of this makes his participation in Flute Theatre's activities all the more profound. He has been given tools not offered anywhere else. He has been given a sense of security and familiarity, which for an autistic child, are not always easy to come by. He said 'Hello' for the first time after listening to Heartbeat Hellos for weeks; he was captivated for the entire hour of Pericles online; he smiled, laughed, and even emulated facial expressions of actors; and he has sung some of the songs he has heard from Flute's Soundcloud as a way to self-regulate or to express joy.

He said Hello for the first time: <https://vimeo.com/456544289>

Joanne Horsley. Teacher, St John's College

We had 30 performances of Perciles Online as part of a residency at St John's College Brighton. Each performance was unique to the individual and catered for their specific needs and communication style. The learners responded with great enthusiasm; enjoying the interaction and engagement with the actors, and joining in with play, singing, listening, sound, language, emotion and movement opportunities. It was a welcome break from the restrictions that had been imposed on them during lock-down,

which had seen many of their freedoms curtailed and was resulting passive and withdrawn behaviours. in The learners connected extremely well with the online format, and were quickly immersed into the world of 'faces'. It was a great privilege for each learner to have a bespoke one-to-one session, where actors could perform directly to them and make them feel valued and special. Some were offered a second opportunity to do the performance, and they all accepted enthusiastically. I felt that most would have benefited from repeating the experience at least one more time to build familiarity and develop skills . As is always the case with Flute Performances, there were some learners who demonstrated creativity and interaction that as teachers, we have never seen before. It's like they have been unlocked and given permission to express themselves in a truly authentic way. All learners engaged and found an aspect of the performance that appealed to their sensory preferences, whether that was listening to beautiful voices singing their name, enjoying the feedback from the physical movement, or embodying character and emotion.

Participant

Dear Flute Theatre,

Thank you for coming and sharing your play with the learners at St John's College.

I enjoyed reeling the fish in and making the music with the wizard.

I felt happy and was really good at remembering the moves.

I think it's good for learners to get interactive with the Flute Theatre .

I think it's a good idea to see new faces in isolation.

Thank you for letting us take the time and space to do it:-)

I am looking forward to doing again in the future

Kind regards, David

Parent

I am honestly in shock! I thought you'd be able to hold his attention for about 10 mins, and I only just realised he was captivated for the entire hour! You guys are insanely amazing! This says a lot not only for autism but ADHD! You all were so magnificent in both Lumen's and Kourosh's performances, and I'm so grateful. Your energy levels never dwindle, and how you keep two very different autistic boys (Lumen and Kourosh) equally engaged really is a testament to your amazing work. I don't know how long it took to perfect that performance, but it was absolutely seamless. No easy task, I'm sure. Thank you again from the bottom of our hearts! You have given me hope once again for Lumen's ability to concentrate, if he's motivated to.

Rachel Harris. Head of Public Programming UCL

We've literally just exited your magical world. Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to witness the performance.

I can honestly say that it's the most connected I've felt in any screen interaction since lockdown. It was so wonderful to see your techniques and the team's skills translate so naturally to this context giving us the feeling we were in such a close and intimate encounter. And of course joyous to see the participant contribute and get so much out of it in equal measure. It's so clever how you lure us in to the structure!

Please do pass on our thanks to the performers and hosts.

I hope many many more people will be able to have access to your work in all its forms going forward.

Parent

Thank you for the lovely photographs and may I just once again thank you and all your wonderful actors for such an enjoyable experience. My daughter was a little shy at first but soon got into the swing of it. Afterwards, she gave me an enormous full body hug and said thank you and how much she loved it. She then ran around the garden making lots of noises from the performance. It's quite difficult to jog my daughter out of her own head/daydreams sometimes but this sure did the trick! I think she'll remember this valuable experience for a long time. I am very grateful and will make further donations on your site.

I truly wish you all every success in keeping your company going through difficult times.

James Dunn. Education Mental Health Practitioner

I wanted to pass on my immense gratitude for letting me observe your session this morning.

I have heard Jess talk about the wonderful things she has witnessed and I have been in awe of you all, so it was an absolute pleasure to peek behind the curtain this afternoon and see the full impact of the amazing and groundbreaking service you are providing to young people.

I have worked within children's services within Liverpool for the last 12 years, and as we have a lot of deprived areas and have suffered repeatedly from drastic cuts and within

our public services, I have seen the impact of having vital services including arts and cultures being chipped away from our young people, but none more so than young people identified as having specific educational needs; I have always thought we as a society are far lagging behind services to enable these young people to not only enable them to reach their full potential but have the same experiences as their peers.

Working with children with additional needs for 2 years as a support worker gave me insight into the struggles these young people and their families face to access support and services that fit their needs, even if your child is neurotypical it is a struggle to access support in this current climate and watching your show, with so many professionals engaged with the sole purpose of providing an immersive, transformative and enjoyable experience to a young person based on their needs and abilities was a joy to behold.

I am going to spread the word of your project, and hold a special place in my heart for the wonderful people you are; overcoming the odds to help our young people be inspired and enabled to enjoy wonderful experiences.

With immense gratitude, James Dunn

Parents

Dear Flute theatre,

We hope that you are all well! Me and Bobby would like to thank you so much for the time and effort you have put for us. Its been a great experience and has helped Kourosh enormously.

A Big special thank you to Hepzi and Holly for the heartbeat hellos they made for Kourosh.

Last and not least we would like to thank Kelly hunter for her dedication and vision in putting this wonderful team of people together with such a great theme.

We love you Kelly and we love all you guys.

All the best,

Nadi and Bobby

Participant

Dear Flute Theatre

My name is 'innocent' otherwise known as Ava. I have autism. I was the cheeky one that called Kelly Susan Boyle.

I would like to tell you that you were really good performers in Pericles. I really liked

*your faces, especially the actor whose eyes were coming out of his head, and Hepzi,
who stuck out her tongue.*

*My favourite game was when I was the assassin and I had to hide and say 'Zsa Zsa Zsa
Zsa Zsa'. I liked this game because it was naughty and mischievous like me.*

*I also liked going right up to the screen and giving you 'The Look'. I liked dancing the
Tango and spinning and running at the end.*

*The play made me feel really happy and excited. It was so much fun. It also made me
feel very relaxed.*

*This play is important to people with autism because during lockdown there is a lack of
routine and stimulation and structure. Everything is upside down, everything has
stopped and it can make you feel stressed and anxious. Using different movements and
facial expressions is a way for people express themselves in a way they can't verbalise.
It takes you away from the stress.*

Thanks for coming to St. John's.

From

Innocent.

To watch performances of Pericles Online click HERE - <https://flutetheatre.co.uk/pericles-online/>