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A new opportunity for arts and culture

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Local theatre company Wild Rice's decision to upload its musical production, *Monkey Goes West*, on YouTube is an example of the creative use of new mediums to broaden outreach and attract fresh audiences.

Covid-19 is acting as a catalyst for greater use of the Internet and digitalisation as artists turn to offer their works online and discover different ways to interact with peers and to draw in audiences from across a wider spectrum. Museums and libraries, too, are stepping up to provide an alternative menu of leisure, educational and entertainment options, given that a night on the town to cinemas, theatres and entertainment spots is not possible.

Thus, it is possible not just for a connoisseur of the arts, but a novice too, to walk the corridors of Italy's Uffizi Gallery virtually, see the displays in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, or tour Singapore's

ArtScience Museum for free and without leaving home.

Thanks to the Internet, the opportunity to enjoy art, musical and cultural performances has widened even as physical distancing has become the norm. The National Library Board, which still has its digital services available on its website and mobile application, has complemented efforts by cultural and other groups to keep life as recognisable as possible in spite of the pandemic's economic and social dislocation.

Indeed, this is an opportunity for such organisations to win over and keep new converts even after the shutdown ends. By turning today's challenges into opportunity, sellout concerts, exhibitions or productions could have also a second run online for free or at much lower rate than for the live event. The imaginative use of technology is a chance for cultural entities to win over larger or new audiences so that entertainment and exhibitions do not need to be the privilege of a few. The Covid-19 shutdown is an ideal opportunity to expand the mass appeal of arts and culture.

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