



How Melbourne Fringe Pulled off the “Art of the Impossible” and Went Digital During the Pandemic



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ticketing system.

With up to 3,000 artists presenting 450+ works across 2.5 weeks each Spring, The [Melbourne Fringe Festival](#) is one of Australia's leading arts festivals. Operating since 1892, more than 360,000 people annually attend the event. Like many other fringe festivals, the Melbourne Fringe usually hosts performances across 170 different venues, theaters, galleries, outdoor spaces, and an array of unusual venues such as restaurants, libraries, and even the backseat of cars.

But with Covid-19 shutting down just about every possible venue, the Fringe knew it needed to go digital. Not just to prove the show could still go on, but as a relief for the creative community of Melbourne and beyond.

"A lot of artists were really happy to be able to present their work in a time when nothing was happening. It was a dark lockdown in winter in Melbourne. I think for a lot of artists, having something to focus on was a light at the end of the tunnel. It gave them a milestone to work toward at the end of the year," Mat Spisbah, Artistic Director at [EXHIBITIONIST Digital](#) said.

As Broadcast Manager for digital at the festival, Spisbah was in charge of finding a complete video solution to help Melbourne Fringe go fully digital. With just a matter

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Melbourne Fringe was able to put on a successful festival even during the peak of the pandemic.

The Covid-19 crisis also provided an opportunity to broadcast more widely and reach new audiences. With JW Player's casting abilities, the Melbourne Fringe was able to broadcast onto larger screens at the fraction of the cost of an OTT platform.

One of the challenges Melbourne Fringe faced while organizing a digital arts festival was the coordination across time zones for event organizers and the over 2,000+ participating artists and performers. With JW Player's easy-to-use dashboard, performers around the world were able to set up their live streams without having any technical know-how. Organizers were able to run rehearsals for each and every live performance (40+ separate live events, in the end).

Like any other arts organization funded in part by local government, Melbourne Fringe was also cost-conscious. JW Player's technology seamlessly integrated with the Fringe's existing ticketing system and website—one less thing to worry about as the entire format of their festival changed.

"If you're doing a digital festival, the backbone of your festival is your video server. If that goes down, especially when 80-90% of the performances are video or streams...

it's your whole festival that

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and spirit of their resilient artists,

the Fringe successfully broadcast over 18 days with non-stop art in over 250+ events
—all digital via video. Their digital event reached thousands of people in over 50



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countries, and still managed to succeed in a turbulent year.

28k+

Attendees

180+

hours of video

content

created

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As Director of Product Marketing, Kristin brings over 20

years of experience in driving strategic

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initiatives across B2B SaaS and media industries. With a passion for aligning product value with customer needs, she thrives on creating impactful strategies that deliver measurable results and help brands grow.

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