

Shakespeare Can Suck It! 10 Artistic Ideas Developed During Quarantine That Are Probably Better than King Lear

By Amanda Faye Martin

Covid-19 has given me so much amazing free time that I have used productively and responsibly to give birth to my inner artist. Here are 10 ideas I plan to develop after lockdown:

Russian Pippin

Pippin is a musical about a boy prince who goes on a search to become “extraordinary” without any direction or cause. In this new adaptation, Pippin will be severely punished for his entitlement and pride. I call this show *Russian Pippin*, as this is how a Soviet Russian story would treat a main character who pursues personal gain without considering the overall good. Pippin is the kind of person who would hoard TP. Down with Pippin.

Fly Me to Your Butt

This is an album of Frank Sinatra hits where some of the words are replaced with “butt.” Try singing “My Kind of Butt,” “I’ve Got You Under my Butt,” or “Send in the Butts” to yourself, alone in your kitchen. It’s a cool way to laugh-cry yourself into momentary joy and then loneliness again.

Cat Ophelia

This is a very traditional production of *Hamlet*, except Ophelia meows through all her lines in iambic pentameter. The cast and crew must *at all times* insist that this is not the case if asked about it. Hamlet isn’t mad; you are.

Fopplegangers

After several weeks in quarantine, I succumbed to hate watching a reality show called “100% Hotter,” where people with fiercely eccentric styles are told they need to look more normal, then undergo various forms of public humiliation before three agents of the patriarchy give them a sub-par makeover to make them look as average as possible. At the end of each episode, the former individuals are led to a mirror, where they vacantly stare into their newly hollowed eyes and say “yes, good, much better, thank you for showing me my potential.” This is a deeply upsetting show, but instead of turning me away from television forever like it should have, it inspired me to dream up *Fopplegangers*. This is a show where people who look like fat versions of celebrities enter a competition to lose weight and do lots of celebrity-inspired challenges in a beach house. The reward is a makeover, however money seems like enough to justify the embarrassment of participation, and guaranteed short-lived fame. Now give me your hard-earned money, I am part of the problem.

Hamlet again

Forget Cat Ophelia. Hamlet should be instafamous and live stream all his soliloquies. This should be cross-gendered and take place in a post-apocalyptic junk yard. Perhaps this is the endless daytime coffees talking, but I’m genuinely starting to like this idea.

Love in the Time of Coronavirus

This had to be done and it is exactly what you think it is: a series of vignettes devised by college sophomores. There is definitely a couple that falls in love on Zoom. A friendship forms from a 6-foot distance in a park in New York. Something about Instagram and modernity and connection. Whatever this show is, it is insider-y and masturbatory and boring, and it is the only reason we should be glad colleges will not return to session until next semester, when even the people who would normally make something like this will find the idea of a Covid-19-inspired play so tedious and obvious that they will literally roll their eyes and opt for a lockdown-inspired Shakespeare play instead. May I suggest cross-gendered trash heap Hamlet?

The Big Bang Theory – Live!

This show should be marketed as an episode of *The Big Bang Theory* performed live. People should expect to see their favorite actors doing all the quirky Big Bang Theory things they love! What the show will actually be is an experimental theatre performance where 4 “adorkable” geeks insult each other and various women around them in increasingly violent and problematic ways, while an on-stage “audience” laughs harder and harder. Eventually, the audience laughs so hard that their noses bleed and they begin to seize and die. The “actors” should ignore the deaths and continue to berate each other, repeating the same 22-minute “episode” until everyone in the actual audience has left. Sorry this is getting dark. It has been many days inside.

Adult Annie

It’s time for something more uplifting! The sun will come out tomorrow! In *Adult Annie*, Annie and the gang are orphan drug addicts, aged 30-50. Miss Hannigan uses the girls in a B-grade prostitution ring. Annie escapes and befriends a human man named Sandy she believes is a dog due to her opiate addiction. Eventually, she gets picked up by Mr. Warbucks, and it’s more or less just *Pretty Woman* but a lot more fucked up from here on out. I actually have a full outline for this which includes very specific re-writes, and it is only at this moment that I’m wondering why I spent several hours doing that. Don’t I have work to do? Yes, I do. A lot of it. Look at all these e-mails. It’s just hard to engage with the life I knew outside of these walls when it now feels so distant and irrelevant. What day is it?

Theatre in the Dark

I have been informed that this is actually just radio or a podcast.

America gets competent leadership

This is a fever dream where the federal government decides to listen to experts and we just patiently (even if deliriously) stay in lockdown until it’s safe to lift regulations and nobody hoards anything or goes to the beach because an alien parasite infects Trump’s brain which inspires him to be consistent and logical and to stop sending out checks with his name on it (that wasn’t necessary, right?). This is the best production idea yet! We should pursue this! Wait never mind they’re re-opening my favorite Korean restaurant for pick-ups.

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