



Since Covid restrictions have lifted and I've been able to perform more in care homes, it's been wonderful. It's just been a terrible time for the residents, which I think is also down to the lack of contact they've had. Music is so important to people and it doesn't matter what the specific needs of a person are – you can't deny someone basic enjoyment.

I describe myself as a soprano costume artiste, which is a job title of my own creation – to say I'm a vintage singer isn't very Google friendly, as you often get clubbed together with old sewing machines! But my voice type is soprano, and I use costume to illustrate the various historical periods I represent.

I've been a professional singer for 29 years, and I specialise in music from the 1880s through to the 1970s, opera to rock and roll. I've sung for royalty, performed in care homes, at ceremonial events, worked in theatre, dance shows, pubs to panto, right through to stand-up comedy in the Joyce Grenfell style – you name it, I've done it all.

I sing for all sorts of occasions, including private parties and large events which take me abroad and have included the Normandy D-Day commemoration. Working in care homes represent the budget end of my business, and are also my bread and

butter when out of season. Unfortunately, a lot of people in the industry can be a bit sniffy about it, but that's because they don't understand the job. It's highly skilled – and just because somebody's elderly, has cognitive problems or can't get to a theatre, doesn't mean they shouldn't have good quality entertainment.

So when I'm putting shows together, it's very important I utilise all the skills I have to make them entertaining. There's singing, dancing, movement, and spectacle. It's also about speaking and engaging with people. Being well-costumed is very important, as well as the music.

The average person's attention span is nine seconds, and that can be less if you're performing for people who have learning disabilities or are

suffering from Alzheimer's or dementia. So within my orchestrations, I have different sounds that invoke interest and attention. A medley arrangement of about four minutes is right because it's constantly changing, and it keeps the attention span.

Timelines are constantly moving forward – whereas perhaps 10 years ago 'We'll Meet Again' was my best-selling show, I would say it's now my 'Thank You for the Music' show spanning the 50s, 60s and 70s. But then again, everybody loves ABBA!

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