

Speaker 1 (00:00)

Sarah Hughes (00:00)

Workie Ticket Theatre is proud to present our bonus episodes to complete series one of the Woman Up podcast. This includes four real-life interviews with some of the women who inspired our audio plays. These podcasts contain adult themes and some strong language.

Sarah Hughes (00:24)

Hello, Jojo.

JoJo Kirtley (00:26)

Hi, Sarah.

Sarah Hughes (00:28)

So we're back in the studio in February 2022. In fact, it's today, isn't it? That's exciting.

JoJo Kirtley (00:38)

That's scary.

Sarah Hughes (00:40)

So, yeah, we are about to release three new bonus episodes of the Woman of podcast. So thought would come in and just have a little chat about how things have changed, if anything has changed since we recorded those first episodes and did the audio plays. Jo, how's life been for you personally? Go on, get that bit out.

JoJo Kirtley (01:06)

Well, I've had Covid since then.

Sarah Hughes (01:09)

Excellent.

JoJo Kirtley (01:09)

Yeah. It wasn't very nice. And I think we had the omicron version of it just after Christmas. .

Sarah Hughes (01:20)

Yeah. It was wildfire, wasn't it, before Christmas? Because I think when we recorded the plays and stuff, that was like end of October, beginning of November, and things seemed to be calming down quite a bit.

JoJo Kirtley (01:34)

Then I was getting excited about everything opening and we're going to be back and everybody felt a little bit better and then all of a sudden it ...

Sarah Hughes (01:49)

It turned a corner.

JoJo Kirtley (01:50)

Yes.

Sarah Hughes (01:53)

I'm going straight in there. Straight in there with it I mean, you've been raging. Well, everybody's been raging, haven't they?

JoJo Kirtley (02:01)

Yeah. And I think what has hurt a lot of people is that they've lost family members and then they found out that the rules weren't being taken seriously by the people who make the rules. And that includes my family and me, because this last year I lost someone and I was grieving. And those times

where I couldn't go into the hospital, I was in hospital last year as well, and my kids couldn't come in and see me. And there was lots of different rules that affected me personally. And you hear these horrendous stories. I've been reading lots of stories about people who've lost not just family members to covid, but cancer, really serious things happening to people. And then you find out that they just want wine and cheese and lots of work events.

Sarah Hughes (03:03)

Yeah. Well, actually listening back last week to the visual recordings and the audio recordings that were done when we'd interviewed all these fabulous women for this podcast series, it really kind of brought it into focus for me, being reminded of.

Sarah Hughes (03:27)

Lesley, for example.

Sarah Hughes (03:28)

Who we'll hear from in I think the next episode, who was grieving completely on her own. And it's easy when things do open up and life seems like it's moving back to normal to forget actually what some people really went through.

JoJo Kirtley (03:48)

I mean, publicly as well, when you're seeing what was happening, when we couldn't reclaim the streets. And I remember seeing people raging on social media how dare those women get together. We're going through a pandemic. And it was like, well, actually, they were protesting about something really important. The same with Black Lives Matter. How many people pulled those activists apart for standing for what they believed in? Where are those same people now? Like, are they saying, are they pulling Boris apart? And I think it's all those things that are making people think about or are they thinking about it? I don't know.

Sarah Hughes (04:30)

I think we've ended up with this kind of culture of where we think he's a little bit hilarious, don't we? And he's a little bit of a Joker. And isn't it funny to have a comedy Prime Minister? But yeah, let's not make this whole episode about Boris. So, yeah, I think it's just really nice to revisit this and to look at those interviews again and just to tell people a little bit more about the women who inspired the plays. And obviously, we couldn't talk to everybody who filled in that survey that we put out, which would have been amazing. But we did get such a great response. And I know you read every single one of those surveys.

JoJo Kirtley (05:22)

I think that's what makes me more upset and angry about everything, because obviously things personally were happening to me. But I was feeling the impact of every single woman that I interviewed, every single woman. There were people that we didn't interview that rang me up and spoke to me personally about their situations that they were in, where they had miscarried on their own, where they had to give birth on their own, where they lost someone and that person had to die on their own and funerals. There was a woman who rang me and talked about her mam had died and they couldn't have a proper funeral. And it's just those massive things that you think this has massively impacted people, not just women. And then the other thing that I just felt that was important was when we were actually interviewing, and obviously, people are going to be listening to these real life interviews as well. The maternity stuff was pretty hard hitting, and there was a lot of women who refused to be interviewed, but they would speak to me, but they didn't want to be recorded. And I think because they were still living it and they were in shock.

JoJo Kirtley (06:38)

They had their babies, but they were in shock. They hadn't seen midwives. They were denied birthing partners. They were going through quite a lot of stuff, and they just didn't want to talk about it. They wanted to maybe talk to me a little bit and say, yes, I'm part of that group. And then obviously, some of them had come from being referred from the charity Pregnant and Screwed. And I don't know, for them, that was a huge group of women who I think just now might start talking about it more.

Sarah Hughes (07:12)

I think that goes for women who experienced lots of different things. It feels like hopefully we're kind of coming out of the trenches a little bit now and people are starting to put their heads above the parapet and be a little bit more reflective. And possibly we can pull out some positives on reflection that when you're in the thick of it. I know for me, in the middle of the home schooling, I could not have picked out anything positive about that. This time last year was like what?

Sarah Hughes (07:47)

Like, what is going on?

Sarah Hughes (07:49)

I was hitting the wall. The February half term was a real low for me. But now with a year, with hindsight, I can look back, I can see some of the hilarious things. And I can also see some of the really funny things about it and the nice things about it, the benefits that have come from it. I was talking to a friend last night whose husband is a tune musician. I nearly said a tune magician.

Speaker 3 (08:19)

I thought you were going to say it.

JoJo Kirtley (08:21)

I don't know.

Sarah Hughes (08:22)

Maybe he does magic at the same time.

Sarah Hughes (08:25)

Yes, he's a touring musician and he left yesterday for like, I don't know, four or five month tour of the States. And it's really hard for her because she's got used to she said, you know, I've just got used to having him around. The kids have got used to having them around. And it made us kind of chat about how our kids are of this generation where I never had three or four months with both parents at home and as stressful as it was and all the rest of it, the fact that you couldn't go anywhere at weekends, you couldn't do anything that enforced family time, I think on reflection, is something that we've got to look back and cherish because we're not going to have that again, hopefully.

JoJo Kirtley (09:07)

Yeah, I know. We do say that. Yeah. But we don't know what's around the corner do it the only thing I would say to that and yeah, I guess that is nice and lovely. It definitely was like that for me a lot. I appreciate the people that I lived with more.

Sarah Hughes (09:24)

Absolutely.

JoJo Kirtley (09:25)

But actually I think this kind of can't and I hate to go back to Boris. I hate this idea that everyone thinks that we're going to get back to normal. Like we have just been through it, where one person caught covid and I was at that ethical stage of....do I send my other son to school? So I didn't. And so he was off school for nearly two weeks. He eventually caught it and my partner then got it. And then the impact of my little girl getting it, we didn't know whether she had it or not because how do you test a baby? But we just assumed. And then it was only until the end of everybody coming to their ten days that then I got it and so then I had all that timing, all that time off work and then I got it and I was ill and my partner was back at work. So I had three kids off and I think it's the idea that actually families are still being massively impacted by it and not just me.

Sarah Hughes (10:27)

Families and schools and hospitals and all the rest of it. But obviously, again, hopefully we're coming out of the other side of that and hopefully by the end of March, staffing levels will recover. Won't be if

this isolation is over.

Sarah Hughes (10:48)
What will we talk about?

JoJo Kirtley (10:50)
If we don't say we're self isolated?

Sarah Hughes (10:52)
What will we have to talk about?

JoJo Kirtley (10:54)
What will people say? They're all not ill as well.

Sarah Hughes (10:58)
Excuse me when they don't want to go to work. Yeah, but I think it's been good to look back at those interviews with a lot of space between them and just remember how difficult those times were, but hopefully to see that we're kind of moving.

JoJo Kirtley (11:20)
Yeah, there's the whole point of this project is that we really want to accession these audio plays and these real life interviews into a Museum so that it creates a herstory and that we continue to preserve and archive, all of these stories that we see it through women's eyes and women's stories that future generations of girls can listen and learn.

Sarah Hughes (11:46)
Not just girls, but kids. Teenagers can listen and hear about how bizarre it was. I think it would be really hard. It's almost like us hearing stories from our grandparents about the first time the arid siren went off and it's so real for them, that thing of running to the shelters and all the rest of it, and we just it's really hard for us to get our head around. So I think any way that we can preserve this really unique moment in not just northeast history, obviously global history is really important, so fingers crossed we'll get it into a Museum.

JoJo Kirtley (12:28)
Yeah, that's the next part. And then hopefully we're still looking at funding and trying to make a second series, and hopefully that will happen.

Sarah Hughes (12:41)
Of course it will. It's me and you a bit between my teeth. Lovely. All right. Well, lovely to chat and catch up. And next up are our two episodes with our lovely interviewees.

Speaker 1 (13:02)
Woman up has been funded by the National Lottery Heritage fund. The podcasts are presented by me, Sarah Hughes, produced by Workie ticket and edited by studio 26.

JoJo Kirtley (13:15)
Thank you.