

View from my sofa

JOOLS HOLLAND

‘My dog spoils the whole film’

The *Later...* host loves watching forgotten classics – if he’s allowed

How are the family Holland’s domestic viewing arrangements?

I do have a television room, which is painted dark red, and a big television. And many years ago, Roland Rivron gave me a pair of seats from an old Gaumont cinema. They fold down and have ashtrays in the arms. They’re very uncomfortable.

What are you watching from these lovely old-fashioned cinema seats?

I have a wall of DVDs of unusual films that you can’t get on the internet: a collection of early British and continental films. I’ve been watching a few plague films, like Ingmar Bergman’s *The Seventh Seal* and one called *80,000 Suspects* from 1963 with Richard Johnson and Claire Bloom, where smallpox breaks out in Bath. There is a sofa, but I’m not really a sofa person. Never have been. If I walk into a pub and see a sofa, I walk back out again.

So who’s controlling the sofa, and the remote?

The dog. Just as you’re enjoying Dirk Bogarde saying something important, you get this aroma of dog fart. That spoils the whole film.

What lockdown telly is keeping you going?

The *BBC News* and *The One Show* – that keeps

me connected to the world. And I’ve been catching up with *Peaky Blinders*. I like it when you get a period drama and they’ve spent the money so you feel like you’re in that time. For instance: I watched *Versailles*. Historically it was completely inaccurate, full of gratuitous sex and violence, and I loved every moment of it.

How has the ban on mass gatherings and non-essential travel impacted on your life?

We were doing shows in Europe at the end of March just as this was all starting. I was in Austria, in Linz, when the Mayor said there couldn’t be any shows in the town. So we

went to the next town and there they said we could only have 100 people in the theatre. Mind you, we’d only sold 15 tickets.

And then the world shut down. How has that handbrake-stop impacted on you?

It’s exactly that, a handbrake stop: you screech to a halt. You’re trained to do all those nights a year on stage – it’s a cycle I’ve done since I was 15 years old – so it’s very strange not to be doing it. I’m playing the piano at home all the time to stop myself going mad, but it’s not the same as playing live to people.

The new version of *Later...* features archive clips and a guest beaming in from home. How does a live music show work in the era of social distancing?

We’ve done one with Christine and the Queens in Paris, and one with Dizzee Rascal. It’s quite strange because I’m in my studio in Greenwich and I have the laptop on top of the piano, watching

someone on Skype or Zoom film themselves in better quality on their phones. They’re recorded and I’m being recorded. Then the producers put the footage of the two of us together.

Sounds challenging...

Well, the positive side is that we’re on at 10pm on Friday, which is the best time we’ve ever been on – and in a period when there are probably more people watching TV than at any time since the Moon landings.

Any new lockdown hobbies?

I did some Instagram piano lessons that rather caught on, so the BBC asked me to do an online masterclass. Once I got into that, that took up a whole week. I’ve also been doing architectural drawings. I like knocking out the odd building for people. Some of them get made, some don’t. **CRAIG McLEAN**

Later... with Jools Holland Fri 10pm BBC2

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RadioTimes

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NOTHING TO WATCH?

MY RADIO I love *Private Passions* with Michael Berkeley on Radio 3.

MY BOOKS I’ve got a load of Maigret books which Eric Idle gave me. Ingenious.

MY MUSIC I love Celeste and – an old thing – Cecil Gant, a blues guy who died in 1951 when he was 37.