





**Saving Our Stages** was the session that was the most interesting to me, being in the performance field myself. The main speaker was Hal Real, Founder and CEO of World Café Live, who helped start the National Independent Venue Association just over six months ago at the beginning of the pandemic shutdown. Until now, there has been no national alliance for

independent music venues, a need that was noticed by Mr. Real years ago and had influenced his desire to form one on his own for quite a while. NIVA was jump-kicked into reality by the pandemic and the need of performing arts venues to remain for the future; while it was not initially meant to be used for lobbying, the support has pushed legislation on the Save Our Stages bill at a national level. In the 6-months of its existence they now have almost 3,000 members including performance venues, music halls, comedy clubs, and promoters in all 50 states. This was huge new to me, I hadn't heard of NIVA even though I saw a lot of #saveourstages back in April. I am so happy that this is being done, that there is a national alliance of people and independent venues that are struggling together to push through the complications of the pandemic. I love that NIVA exists, and I hope to learn more about it and maybe connect with them in the future.

***"I can allow myself to take breaks. I can allow myself to take opportunities to feed my happiness. I can allow myself to thrive."***

My biggest takeaway from sitting through these sessions is that I am able to take care of my mental health while also pursuing a difficult career path, and that maintaining good mental health will be the key to my success. I am often very stressed, and so my default setting is just to push those feelings aside and power through whatever I need to do. This is not good, obviously, and has led to a lot more stress in past experiences. One of the speakers emphasized that we need to allow ourselves some basic needs we might be pushing aside in order to work. I need to allow myself to take breaks and focus on what makes me happy and what I want to do sometimes, instead of putting myself completely into what I need to do that may be a big stressor for me. I will absolutely be bringing that with me in the future of my artistic practice. I can allow myself to take breaks. I can allow myself to take opportunities to feed my happiness. I can allow myself to thrive.

**Read more about the Summit and view recordings at**

**<https://artiststhrive.org/2020summit>**