

The Royal Lyceum Theatre will hibernate for now

The Covid-19 pandemic is especially hard for those who just need people to come along and join in – whether it is a restaurant, a bar or a theatre, all businesses are affected.

The Royal Lyceum management has taken the tough decision to cut their losses by hibernating the theatre for now.

All shows have been postponed for the rest of the year, and sadly staff have been advised that jobs are at risk.

The closure of the theatre so far has cost around £700,000 in lost ticket and trading income, so despite generous donations and support from Creative Scotland and The City of Edinburgh Council, there is no sustainable outlook until the government allows us all to go back to the theatre.

Staff have been furloughed, but The Lyceum must manage its limited resources to get through the pandemic and have a future on the other side.

The restrictions on gatherings of crowds over 500 destroyed the income stream for all theatres, and most are struggling to survive. For the foreseeable future it is clear that the theatre's income will continue to be affected by social distancing measures.

This week theatre management contacted unions and staff to inform them of possible redundancies and will be working closely with them to minimise job losses as far as possible in

consultations starting today. All posts are under review with significant cost savings required.

The Lyceum's Artistic Director David Greig commented: "This is an unprecedented, and devastating moment for our industry, and we are already seeing theatres in dire straits due to the pandemic. The Nuffield, Southampton, where we recently toured our production of *Pride and Prejudice (Sort of)* has already gone into administration with the loss of all jobs leaving its future existence uncertain. I fear it will not be the last theatre British theatre to fall victim to the virus in this way with others including the Globe, Royal and Derngate and National Theatre issuing further warnings this week.

"To protect The Lyceum from such closure we have to act now to preserve the Theatre Company and our ability to create theatre in Edinburgh in the future. Sadly, to do this we have to reduce the wage costs which make up the vast majority of our expenditure. This will mean losing friends from our theatre family – people I am in awe of, who make the magic happen on our stage and who are much loved and valued. Very sadly, with our principal income stream removed during this epidemic, the stark choice we face is between a redundancy process now to reduce our expenditure, or total closure before Christmas – an alternative that would leave The Lyceum shut long after the pandemic has passed.

"Entering this period of hibernation will allow us to conserve the limited resource we have through the dark winter of Covid-19 and emerge, hopefully in the spring, with enough capacity to make theatre again with the brilliant theatre-makers of Scotland for the people of Edinburgh."

"We will be in touch with audiences affected by cancelled shows this autumn with the offer of full refunds for any shows cancelled. We will continue to work with artists to make plans for re-opening and hope to be able to announce a Spring Season once it is clear that audiences will be able to attend.

“In the interim, we will be doing all we can with the support of our funders and partners to sustain our community engagement and creative learning efforts and to remain part of the creative life of Edinburgh and its citizens. Their generosity and support to date has been vital and heart-warming for us all, giving us the encouragement and resources to see a way through this crisis.

“My thanks go out to them and of course to The Lyceum staff as we work together, to find a way through this crisis.”

The Lyceum has now entered into consultation with unions and staff to determine the impact of possible redundancies, until this process is complete no further details will be available but The Lyceum will issue a further statement once the outcomes are known.



David Greig in happier times