

Sleeping Beauty at the King's – not to be woken until 2021 as pantomime postponed

Capital Theatres announced this morning that this year's King's panto, *Sleeping Beauty* has been rescheduled until November 2021.

In line with the King's panto producer, Qdos Entertainment's announcement on Monday 3 August 2020, the uncertainty around ongoing restrictions and maintaining social distancing means that it is not possible for us to open on 28 November 2020 as planned. All customers who have purchased or reserved tickets will have them automatically transferred to 2021. Capital Theatre's box office will be in touch with those customers over the coming weeks.

Sleeping Beauty was to have opened at the King's Theatre Edinburgh on Saturday 28 November 2020 and run until Sunday 17 January 2021.

Starring Allan Stewart, Andy Gray, Grant Stott and Jordan Young, the spellbinding fairytale was last performed as the King's pantomime title in 1993 and has only been performed three times in its 114-year history. ***Sleeping Beauty* will now run from the 27 November 2021 until Sunday 16 January 2022** and become the last pantomime to be staged at the King's before the theatre undertakes its major refurbishment in the summer of 2022.

As Scotland's biggest and best-selling panto, with over 90,000 theatregoers attending the King's pantomime each festive season, the show represents nearly 30% of Capital Theatres' annual income and the postponement will result in the massive loss of £2.3m at the worst possible time for the theatres.



Fiona Gibson, Chief Executive of Capital Theatres said: "The impact of the global pandemic has been devastating on all theatres, and it has become a reality that to keep everyone safe and the organisation secure, mounting a full-scale production without social distancing in the current cycle would be challenging.

"There are only 3 occasions in its 114 year history that a King's panto has not taken place, the last time being 1968 ...so 2020 will be another landmark moment for all the wrong reasons! We know this will be as much of a blow to you, our fantastic and loyal audiences, *as it is to both the cast who love bringing you such joy every year, and to our tremendous staff who love making it happen. For so many it is the cornerstone of their festive celebrations.*

"I still remember to this day, at the age of eight, my parents taking my brother and I through to Edinburgh to visit relatives and as a festive treat we all went to the King's to see Mother Goose, with Stanley Baxter at the helm – we were mesmerised, and that was the start of my long love affair with the theatre.

"Capital Theatres is Scotland's largest theatre charity and the impact of this decision is devastating. The panto alone brings in nearly 30% of our income each year. Since we closed our doors on the 16 March we have had no source of trading income, have refunded millions of pounds in tickets and cancelled, rescheduled or postponed scores of performances. Without doubt the loss of the Kings Pantomime is our biggest blow to date."

Michael Harrison, Managing Director of Qdos Entertainment said: "I was studying in Edinburgh when I saw the first ever pantomime Qdos produced at the King's Theatre. I think I saw it four times because I just loved the genre and I knew that Allan was someone very special. As one of the longest running pantomimes in the country, and certainly one of the most popular it is incredibly difficult to step away from it this year and resign ourselves to a year without that wonderful atmosphere and love between the audience and performers on stage – that is pretty unique"

We interviewed the panto goodies and baddies earlier this year and you can listen to what they had to say here

Everyone's favourite panto dame Allan Stewart added: "I can't imagine a Christmas without a Kings Panto. But in the words of the Terminator 'We'll be back'"

Andy Gray said: "Very sad that we won't be trying to wake Sleeping Beauty this year... but it's been a strange year 2020 for us all hasn't it? I tell you this ... We look forward to seeing you all in 2021! Stay safe... and wash your hands!"

Edinburgh's very own panto baddie Grant Stott added: "Just like everyone who loves our annual Panto at The Kings Theatre Edinburgh, I am absolutely gutted at the prospect of no show this year – it will be my first Xmas away from the Kings since 1999. However, even baddies can be optimistic and I am already looking forward to staging Sleeping Beauty in 2021 – which, in the circumstances, now promises to be one of the most special Pantos ever staged at The Kings!"

Jordan Young said: "I'm incredibly disappointed that Sleeping Beauty won't be at the Kings this Christmas. The most important thing is safety for everyone, staff and audience alike. Last year was my first year in the Kings Panto and I

loved every single second. I can't wait to be back on that stage next year with the team and deliver the show that everyone will be wanting and deserve."

Capital Theatres continues to be hugely grateful to all those people who have been able to take gift vouchers or donate their tickets as opposed to refunds which helps to protect your theatres for the future.

Fiona Gibson added: "We truly believe that Capital Theatres can be a key part of the solution for Edinburgh getting back on its feet. Only by continuing to thrive can we help sustain the vitality of the arts, the cultural ecology, the economy and the wellbeing of the community in our wonderful city and surrounding areas."

If you feel you can help further, please consider making a donation via the website at capitaltheatres.com. Shows at all Capital Theatres venues are currently programmed into 2021 and 2022 and tickets are available to buy online.



The King's where until now there has been raucous laughter each Christmas. The panto would have moved to the Festival Theatre in 2020 but has now been postponed until 2021 PHOTO Mike Hume