



Additional Programming Cancelled Due To COVID-19

Drayton Entertainment cancels all programming through September 5

Friday, May 15, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Amidst continued concerns regarding the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and in keeping with physical distancing recommendations, Drayton Entertainment has cancelled additional productions at its seven stages across the province. The wellness of patrons, staff, artists, volunteers, and the community continues to be of paramount importance for the not-for-profit charitable arts organization. The new cancellations will impact all programming through **Saturday, September 5**.

New cancellations are as follows:

- *Rock of Ages*
 - July 2 to July 18 at the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse
 - July 22 to Aug 15 at the Huron Country Playhouse
 - Aug 20 to Sept 5 at the King's Wharf Theatre
- *Buying The Farm*
 - July 8 to July 25 at the Drayton Festival Theatre
- *A Closer Walk with Patsy Cline*
 - July 29 to Aug 15 at the Drayton Festival Theatre
 - Aug 19 to Sept 5 at the Huron Country Playhouse
- *Driving Miss Daisy*
 - July 29 to Aug 16 at the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse
- *Kinky Boots*
 - Aug 19 to Sept 5 at the Huron Country Playhouse

These productions join the list of previously announced cancellations including *A Few Good Men* (St. Jacobs), *Kinky Boots* (Cambridge), *Billy Bishop Goes To War* (St. Jacobs), *On Golden Pond* (Cambridge), *Return To Grace* (Drayton), *A Gentleman's Guide To Love & Murder* (St. Jacobs), *42nd Street* (Cambridge/Grand Bend), *Fiddler on the Loose* (Grand Bend/Cambridge/Penetanguishene), *The Dixie Swim Club* (Drayton/Penetanguishene/Grand Bend/Cambridge), and *Sleeping Beauty: The Panto* (Penetanguishene/Grand Bend).

“It’s sad and disappointing, but we know this is the right decision. Health and safety must come first,” says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director & CEO of Drayton Entertainment. “We’ve received many wonderful messages of support, which are so appreciated. These may be uncertain times, but one thing we can be sure about is the innate power of arts and culture to bring us together. We’ll be back when the time is right, excited to share the magic of live theatre with the community once again.”

With these additions, 14 of the 18 productions in Drayton Entertainment’s 2020 Season have been cancelled at this time. The new cancellations will result in the loss of the entire season at the company’s venues which are traditionally only open during the summer months: the Huron Country Playhouse in Grand Bend, the King’s Wharf Theatre in Penetanguishene, and the Drayton Festival Theatre, which was to celebrate its 30th Anniversary this year.

The company’s popular summer programs for youth are also impacted. All one-week Youth Musical Theatre Programs, including the Youth Education Program production of Disney’s *Frozen Jr.*, are cancelled along with any special concert events or rentals scheduled from now through Labour Day.

Drayton Entertainment stages over **800** performances annually at its various venues, with paid attendance exceeding **250,000** annually, making it one of the country’s largest not-for-profit theatre festivals. Economically, the Government of Ontario’s Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM) estimates the organization’s economic impact on visitor spending at over **\$60 million** annually, positively affecting multiple communities throughout Ontario. Drayton Entertainment also provides over **400** employment contracts annually to actors, musicians, designers and other creatives, making it one of the largest employers of professional artists in the country across all artistic disciplines. These programming losses are significant for Canada’s arts & culture and tourism sectors.

All Drayton Entertainment Box Offices are closed to in-person traffic but continue to operate remotely through phone and email communication in a reduced capacity. Over the next several weeks, patrons who have purchased tickets for cancelled performances will be contacted by the Box Office to facilitate account credits or refunds. Due to the volume of cancellations, Drayton Entertainment requests patience and cooperation as the team works to accommodate patron needs as operational capabilities permit.

Drayton Entertainment operates in accordance with advice from public health authorities and in compliance with directives from government agencies. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is significant to all communities and industries. Live theatre involves large gatherings of people, and as such, Drayton Entertainment will continue to reassess its policies and procedures as they relate to future productions based on guidelines from designated Canadian public health authorities and government agencies.

Cancellations are determined on a production by production basis and impact the playbill at each Drayton Entertainment venue differently. The status of each season production is outlined by the venue on the Drayton Entertainment website at: www.draytonentertainment.com/Online/article/season-2020.

Current information regarding coronavirus programming cancellations is posted on the Drayton Entertainment website at www.draytonentertainment.com/online/article/coronavirus.

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