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Flat Rock Playhouse Postpones 2020 Season

FLAT ROCK, NC – May 5, 2020 – With deep regret, Flat Rock Playhouse has announced it will cancel the balance of its 2020 season and shift the entire Mainstage series to 2021. Ticketholders will be contacted by the Playhouse Box Office team starting in the coming days about their tickets.

“We are heartbroken to have to make this decision,” said producing artistic director Lisa K. Bryant. “With state-mandated limitations on gathering sizes for the foreseeable future, as well as recent information that union rules for actors returning to work may not even be issued until summer, it is now clear we cannot reopen in mid-July as we had hoped. The right decision for the long-term health of the Playhouse and for our patrons is to move the entire 2020 season to 2021.” This decision was ratified unanimously by the Playhouse Board of Trustees.

In a letter to ticketholders, the Playhouse acknowledged that “it has been incredibly complicated and challenging to carve out a clear path forward these last weeks. Information has been changing so fast and much remains unclear.” The Playhouse faces substantial uncertainties about when government-mandated limitations on large gatherings will be eased, and under what conditions. This critical information is indispensable to any operational decision-making, particularly in a profession that depends on large-group attendance.

In addition, the Playhouse learned just days ago that the Actors’ Equity Association (AEA) union guidelines for when actors, stage managers and other essential artists can return to work will likely not be announced until mid- to late-summer. In order to reopen in mid-July as originally envisioned, the cast and crew would need to arrive in June. Under current union guidelines, this will not be possible or even allowed.

“We know we share the burden of difficult decision-making with the community at large,” Bryant continued. “As we do everything we can to reduce expenses and conserve cash while we are closed, we have had to make the unbelievably difficult decision to significantly reduce our cherished, loyal, and dedicated staff. After launching the 2020 season with the strongest financial position the Playhouse has enjoyed in over a decade, the shocking impact of this epidemic on our beloved Vagabonds has left us emotionally reeling. We are not alone in this as many theatres locally and around the country are canceling their 2020 seasons, but it doesn’t make it any easier.”

The Playhouse will stay connected with patrons and the community through its weekly “Rock Out Newsletter” and social media channels. “You can bet we’ll be finding ways our Flat Rock Playhouse campus can help serve the community in the time ahead,” Bryant commented. “And of course, we’ll look for opportunities to come together for special events as soon as it’s safe to do so.”

With over 80% of Playhouse revenue coming from ticket sales, and with no shows, the Playhouse will be entirely dependent on the generous support of donors and sponsors. Ticketholders are encouraged to consider donating back their tickets to help support the theater while it is closed. Many people already have done this, as has 100% of the Playhouse Board of Trustees. Donations also are greatly appreciated and can be made through the Playhouse website, flatrockplayhouse.org.

“We want to thank our beloved patrons, sponsors, advertisers and supporters for sticking with us at this difficult time,” Bryant concluded. “We especially appreciate the sacrifices our cherished staff is making. We are all in this together. We look forward to the time when we all can be back on the Rock again.”

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