

BLOG: It's Time To Support Local

by Rebecca Wallis @MTlivesinme

Whilst the glistening west end may be the heart of the theatre industry in the U.K., it is the regional theatres that are the lifeblood. On any normal year, wonderful productions would be travelling up and down the country, stopping at our incredible regional theatres and putting on shows. But, sadly, 2020 is not a normal year. All theatres have been closed since March, and many are now struggling financially with no idea when they are going to be able to open their doors again.

The Theatre Royal Plymouth is a registered charity and is of huge importance to the city. Since being forced to close its doors, the theatre has had to launch an emergency appeal in order to raise funds. Despite this, the theatre has warned that it still faces closure without government support. So many jobs are at risk of being lost, from those who work behind the scenes, to the interval ice cream sellers, the café workers. The list is endless, and it's heart-breaking to think about.

Before all of this, Theatre Royal Plymouth was thriving. In the last few years, huge tours such as Matilda the Musical, Miss Saigon and Les Miserables have brought the very best of the west end to Plymouth, thrilling audiences and bringing an economic boost to the city. This year, the theatre was due to host many more big touring productions including 9 to 5, Mamma Mia! and Six. With the tours stopped and the theatre now closed, this is a huge financial loss for the theatre royal and this loss has an undeniable domino effect on the city as a whole.

It is no secret that when a show is running, it isn't only the theatre that benefits. Restaurants, cafes, pubs and hotels are also known to benefit. A theatre brings people in, and not only to enjoy a show. People who travel need somewhere to stay, they need somewhere to have a meal before the show and somewhere to enjoy a drink after. If Plymouth were to lose its theatre, it wouldn't only be the arts sector that would suffer.

You don't have to be a huge theatre fan like myself to realise just how important the arts are, and just how vital regional theatres are to this industry. Theatre is for everyone, no matter what age, no matter what interests. Even if you only attend a

panto once a year, or whether you are a regular attender, theatre has something for everyone. Can you imagine what life would be like without it? Children from the local schools would not be able to experience the joy of live theatre, see books that they are studying brought to life before their very eyes. Families would not be able to share in that happiness that comes from watching a pantomime together. Those who are unable to travel to the bright lights of London would not be able to see those incredible shows without a regional base for them to be performed in. Without our regional theatres, we would lose so much.

I know that times are tough for so many of us right now, but if you are local to Plymouth and have visited the theatre in the past (or are a theatre fan in general), please find a place in your heart and make a donation to the theatre's emergency appeal if you can. If you are unable to donate, please consider sharing and spreading the word. If we continue to talk, we can keep the theatre in people's minds.

Donate to Theatre Royal Plymouth's Emergency Appeal



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