



April 7, 2020

Dear Hamilton Fringe Community,

As you know, the Hamilton Fringe prioritizes the health, safety, and accessibility of our artists, audiences, staff, volunteers, and community partners. It is therefore with great sadness that we announce the cancellation of the 2020 Hamilton Fringe Festival due to the ongoing uncertainty created by COVID-19.

It has become clear in recent days that there is no longer a reasonable expectation for the public health situation to be meaningfully resolved in time for our artists and our staff to adequately plan and prepare for the Festival. With no certainty as to when social distancing practices, physical isolation measures, and restrictions on public gatherings will be lifted, artists are unable to rehearse; our performance venues are closed indefinitely; and attending live public performances may well still be prohibited by summer.

The Hamilton Fringe Board and staff have not made this decision lightly, or without acknowledging the financial, emotional, and creative impact it will have on Hamilton's artistic community. Here at the Hamilton Fringe, our artists are at the heart of everything we do. All artists scheduled to appear in this year's festival will have their participation fees refunded and the opportunity to defer participation to 2021. Now more than ever, we remain committed to the support and development of Hamilton's vibrant arts community. Core Fringe staff remain available as a resource to 2020 festival artists, and the artists in the Hamilton theatre community.

As live performance makers, our practice is rooted in encouraging people to gather, by building and fostering community, by creating experiences that are designed to be communal and shared. In this moment, that core pursuit has—temporarily—become radically altered. But our artists are resilient, innovative, and fierce. In the midst of such upheaval, many artists are exploring alternative platforms and ways of connecting. We endeavour to use this time to grow, to adapt, and to find new and exciting ways to help our theatre artists survive and thrive, including our inaugural Hamilton Theatre awards program, The Golden Hammers, coming this November. We will be providing ongoing updates via our social media channels on local performance opportunities, artist relief and supports, and Hamilton Fringe news.

We would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of our grantors, sponsors, and community partners and thank our staff, volunteers, and Board for their ongoing commitment to the Fringe. In this time of uncertainty, we will continue to look for ways to support the local community and artists.

Thank you for your support and understanding. Please stay safe and healthy in all ways. We hope to see you again soon.

-- The Hamilton Fringe Festival Team

Media Inquiries:

Heather Kanabe, Executive Director, heather@hamiltonfringe.ca

Christopher Stanton, Festival Director, christopher@hamiltonfringe.ca

All Fringe staff are continuing to work remotely, individual phone contacts available upon request.