

What is Seattle Rep doing to continue to meet its mission while your stages are dark?

We are supporting playwrights and expanding the canon of American theater by doubling down on our investment in **new work**. Through our new play development series, The Other Season, Seattle Rep's artistic staff continues to workshop new pieces online (with projects planned monthly throughout the season) in collaboration with writers based in our region and across the country. This fall, we are also launching a major new multi-year commissioning project with the goal of launching 20 new plays over the next decade, as well as providing commissions to directors interested in developing new work, and launching micro-commissions to local playwrights. The new work driven by these investments will be a major factor in shaping future seasons when we return to live performances.

We are supporting Seattle Rep's **Public Works** community through programming and communications that engage members across a variety of channels. Through social media groups, a weekly newsletter, and weekly artist hours held on Zoom and accessible by phone, participants can share their artistic challenges and inspirations, and channel them into creative collaborations with their peers. In October, we'll begin online classes with four of our eight community partner organizations. We are also in regular conversations with all of our partners about how Public Works can help them engage and meet the needs of their communities during this challenging time, for example by organizing a drive for food, masks, and household goods to distribute to their constituents, as we did in May.

We are connecting our community through free online **arts engagement** programming for theater enthusiasts and theater makers of all ages. From our Masterclass Monday workshops to Creative Conversations with beloved theater personalities, Artist-to-Artist interviews, and (Re)Imagine Theater panels about the future of our field, Seattle Rep's virtual programming fights the negative effects of social isolation, engages people in creative practice, and deepens their understanding of our art form.

Through online **youth engagement** programs, we are offering our region's students creative opportunities that give them a place to discover themselves, work out their problems, and connect with peers through artistic projects. We are also offering middle- and high-school educators virtual arts enrichment options for their classes, led by professional teaching artists and developed especially for a school year unlike any other.

And, of course, we are continuing to work on options for sharing live or recorded **performances** via online streaming, and to ensure that the theater is ready to launch into production again as soon as public health conditions allow. Part of that relaunch will include new policies and protocols to welcome our community back into the theater with health and safety—for patrons, artists, and staff—at the center of the experience. We want you to be able to return with confidence and peace of mind, prepared to focus fully on the art on the stage.

You aren't offering live performances right now, so if I make a gift, what will it support?

Your donation will support a balance of near-term and long-term organizational goals. It will provide essential resources for the theater to carry out our new play commissioning and development work and engage community members of all ages in weekly online programming. Behind the scenes, your gift will also help us continue to investigate new and innovative ways to create and share theater during social distancing, for example by continuing to work with unions to adapt policies in a way that would open up more possibilities for sharing live or recorded performances online, or by reopening with social distancing as soon as we can responsibly do so. We are also taking advantage of this time to accomplish facilities and operation work that will support greater safety and comfort for patrons when we reopen. And because preparations for future productions take place at least a year in advance, we are already deep into planning for our 2021/22 season. All of this work is ongoing and critical to Seattle Rep's ability to ramp up quickly and begin producing theater as soon as public health permits.

Why support the theater when there are so many other pressing needs in our community?

In this time of immense need, both locally and nationally, we know you have a lot of worthwhile causes and organizations to support, and we are grateful for your consideration.

When you support Seattle Rep, you're supporting artists and a field that has been economically decimated by the coronavirus pandemic. Actors Equity Association, the union representing stage actors and stage managers, estimates unemployment among its members at nearly 100%. Seattle Rep employed more than 300 artists in our most recent full season, and while we cannot hope to achieve the same results in the year ahead, we are deeply mindful of our role in providing continued employment for more than 30 artists and others on staff, and ongoing paid opportunities for artists leading or participating in our new work development and online engagement programming. If we want theater as a sector to survive, we have to support the survival of the artists who create it.

At the same time, when you support Seattle Rep, you're also supporting our community as a whole. COVID-19's threat to our physical health is clear; its negative impact on mental health is less visible but equally worrisome. In a recent CDC survey, more than 40% of respondents reported that the pandemic has adversely affected their mental health. So many people in our community are struggling right now, and we hope you will support Seattle Rep and the programming we are offering to promote creativity and connection while alleviating the pain and isolation of illness, quarantine, and social distancing.

What we can offer right now is something for people to look forward to, in both the immediate and the long term. Whether it's a costume design class next week, a live conversation with artists from a favorite production next month, a Zoom-based Public Works performance next quarter, or the possibility of a live-streamed or socially distanced production in 2021—simply having a reason for hope is important for maintaining one's equilibrium in the face of previously unimaginable circumstances. Hope feels like a radical act right now, but that's what we are asking our donors to do: share our hope in a brighter future so that we can help others feel it, too.

When we come out the other side and need a way to heal from the loss and the loneliness of this pandemic, that's when our community will need theater most. Theater brings people together in a shared experience, creating awareness and understanding, spreading joy and laughter, and restoring the collective spirit that defines who we are as a community. It's a place where people who have been apart too long can learn to have faith in one another again, and celebrate the kindness and compassion that

brought us through this together. Times like these underscore the importance of theater as a civic institution, and the essential role that Seattle Rep plays in our community and our future—and we need your help to remain strong and ready to serve.

If your budget is so much smaller this year, then why is my support more important than ever?

While our budget for 2020/21 is vastly reduced, so are our options for bringing in revenue. Like most not-for-profits, Seattle Rep relies on a combination of earned and contributed income, and we are proud of how we have diversified the theater's revenue streams over the last several years. In our 2019/20 season, we budgeted for total revenues to consist of 50% contributions, 40% ticket sales, and 10% primarily from our annual endowment draw and royalties on past productions (such as the musical blockbuster *Come From Away*, which was running five national and international productions when theaters had to close around the globe). But COVID-19 has eliminated our ability to earn revenue from live performances. Without ticket sales or royalties for the foreseeable future, we are almost solely reliant on contributions to support the theater until performances can resume.

And with the timing for reopening so uncertain, we must generate enough income in the interim to continue to meet our mission and sustain essential functions as we prepare for the future. And then, when it is finally time for us to return, we will need the wherewithal to cover earliest outlays necessary to start producing again, such as rehiring production and front-of-house teams, making initial payments on artist and actors contracts, and purchasing materials to build sets and costumes.

This is what we mean when we say, "Your support is more important than ever." Your passion for our mission is the only thing that can sustain the theater through the challenges ahead. Without your dedication and continued investment, Seattle Rep could end up being among the 12,000 arts organizations expected to close forever due to the economic effects of COVID-19. In times like these, none of us can take the health and viability of this theater or the broader cultural sector for granted, especially as pandemic conditions persist without deeper government investment in the arts or in economic stabilization in general. If we are to remain actively engaged with our community and fiscally sound while our region makes its way through this health and economic crisis, Seattle Rep needs your help.

Positioning Seattle Rep (and the arts and culture sector as a whole) to come back strong will only help bolster the rest of our local and regional economy. According to ArtsFund's most recent economic impact study in 2014, King County arts and culture organizations contribute \$2B in business activity to Washington's economy annually through their own spending and that of their patrons. A single theater of Seattle Rep's size contributes more than \$27M to the local economy each year. This includes wages and benefits to staff and artists, payments to vendors, and audience spending on food and beverage, transport, shopping and lodging. Your investment in the theater will help to restart the engine of economic activity generated by these visitors, as soon as it is safe to do so.

As difficult as this year has been for us, it has unleashed a wave of creativity across the organization that we believe will transform our theater in positive and lasting ways. While the challenges have felt relentless at times, we have been so heartened by the extraordinary support of our donors, and we cannot wait to welcome audiences back once we are able. Until then, we are committed to doing everything in our power to engage with, support, and bring hope to our community.