



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:

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Theater at Monmouth Postpones 2020 (R)evolutionary Season In compliance with Governor Mills Re-opening Maine Plan

Monmouth, Maine – For the first time in the theater’s history, Theater at Monmouth will not produce a Summer Repertory Season. After months of planning for the 51st Season, the theater will remain dark for the foreseeable future. While TAM had been preparing patrons, artists, and staff for the inevitable, having paused ticket sales in early March, they were surprised by Governor Mill’s announcement of the Four-Stage Plan to re-open Maine on April 28.

“We surveyed our patrons early on and had an idea of what they would and wouldn’t do in response to the continued spread of the coronavirus and what guidance they would be looking for from state and national officials before making a decision to come to the theater again.” said Dawn McAndrews, TAM’s Producing Artistic director. “On April 28, we expected that the Governor would announce an extension of the Stay Healthy at Home mandate and were hoping for guidance on how best to move forward during the pandemic. Governor Mill’s announcement confirmed that arts organizations and particularly theaters would not be opening for some time. We recognize that many patrons will be disappointed by the news but due to the continued threat of COVID-19, we’ve decided to postpone the 2020 season.”

TAM’s Board President, Ryan Dumais, agreed, “Since early-March, the Board of Trustees has been monitoring developments surrounding COVID-19. It had been our hope that the situation would improve more quickly and that we might be able to go ahead with our 51st season of classic theater here in Monmouth. Unfortunately, things have not turned out that way. After nearly two months of meeting, planning, and strategizing, the Board came reluctantly to the conclusion that it has no alternative but to forego production of our 51st season in the summer of 2020, and to move that season instead to the summer of 2021.”

Before the Governor’s announcement of the four-stage plan to reopen the State, it was already clear that it would be extraordinarily difficult to go ahead with TAM’s summer season in a way that protected the health and well-being of audience and company members. Any lingering hopes that somehow, somehow, the season might happen were dashed with the announcement of plans for reopening the State. Unfortunately, under that plan, theaters will be among the last classes of establishments to re-open. Closing, though not easy, was the right and responsible decision for the well-being of company members and audience.

Theater at Monmouth previously cancelled its spring Page to Stage Education Tour *PACHANGA! Latinx Stories for Kids* in consultation with school administrators. This annual tour brings adaptations of classic literature to elementary and middle school students throughout Maine and into New Hampshire. McAndrews continued, “We looked for ways to bring this production to students through video or live streaming but with actors and director coming from New York City, it would have been impossible to guarantee the safety of artists and our community.”

Theaters across the country have shuttered, and many artists find themselves suddenly unemployed. It is essential that Maine’s only Classical Repertory Theater does not collapse. By making the difficult choice to postpone productions this summer, TAM hopes to ensure that it will survive until next year and thrive in the summers to come.



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TAM's 2020 (R)evolutionary Season was scheduled to begin public performances on June 27 and conclude August 27. The season was programmed to celebrate Maine's Bicentennial, the 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage, and the Election Year. Summer Repertory plays included Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* directed by Eddie DeHais and *Julius Caesar* directed by Bill van Horn; the Maine premiere of Mat Smart's *The Agitators* directed by Josiah Davis; a World Premier of Callie Kimball's *Sophonisba* directed by Dawn McAndrews; Edward Albee's *Seascape* directed by Kate Bergstrom. The Family Show, *Aesop's Guide to Friendship* adapted by Dawn McAndrews and directed by Ian Kramer, annually reaches young people and the young at heart.

TAM currently plans to produce the plays of the (R)evolutionary Season in 2021. Thanks to an outstanding group of artists, technicians, and administrators, the summer was on its way to being one the theater's strongest yet; and they look forward to coming back stronger than ever in 2021.

"We believe that arts are essential during times like these but until there is a vaccine and universal testing, it seems impossible to bring people together in the intimate space of any theater and ensure the safety of all. Know that this is not a curtain call. This is only an intermission. And we will be back for the next act."

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Theater at Monmouth, founded in 1970, was named the Shakespearean Theater of Maine in 1975. The theatre's mission is to present innovative approaches to Shakespeare and other classic plays through professional productions that enrich the lives of people throughout Maine. Since its founding, TAM has produced expertly crafted, engaging productions in its three-month Summer Repertory Season entertaining audiences from 36 states and through Education Tours annually reaching more than 15,000 students.