

FORT SMITH LITTLE THEATRE



SPOTLIGHT

401 North 6th Street

September 10, 2020

www.fslt.org

FSLT PERFORMANCES AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Dear Friends,

Every Fort Smith Little Theatre Board of Directors since 1947 has been tasked with making important decisions – show selection, ticket pricing, facility improvements, financial stewardship, and more. This year, with the onset of COVID-19 and the ensuing pandemic, our Board has also been tasked with making heavy decisions that impact the health of our patrons and volunteers, as well as the health of our organization. I want to take this opportunity to recognize our Board members for their commitment and thank everyone involved with FSLT for their patience and encouragement.

2020 is a year we will want to forget, but we will always remember. It's been difficult for all of us. Among the many losses caused by COVID-19 is the opportunity for us to be together. We miss not just the cultural, but also the social experience that FSLT provides. Live theatre is a collective experience. Imagine sitting in our intimate auditorium, laughter rippling across the room. Imagine the quiet as a dramatic line is delivered on stage. Imagine singing, dancing, and standing ovation curtain calls. And know that it will come again.

In the meantime, please take a moment to read the information provided below. We have provided answers to important questions about current and future seasons, as well as options for those patrons who purchased 2020 season passes.

While we are saddened that the theatre has temporarily gone dark, we look forward to a heightened appreciation for the performing arts and the part we play when the lights come back on. People need the shared experience that live theatre provides. If we have learned anything from this pandemic, we have learned that.

With your continued support, FSLT will get through this challenging time and thrive again. On the other side of this pandemic, you can count on us to be sewing costumes, building sets, and learning lines, and we know we can count on your applause.

Be safe and take care — *Steve Dwiggins*, President, FSLT Board of Directors

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Frequently Asked Questions

Will FSLT offer performances later this year?

Since March, we have monitored pandemic conditions and state-mandated directives with a hopeful eye, cancelling one production at a time. Now, as the coronavirus battle continues, the Fort Smith Little Theatre regrettably announces the cancellation of the remainder of Season 2020. This includes cancelling our November production, *Parfumerie*, and *The Holiday Channel Christmas Movie Wonderthon*, an off-season show planned for December. It is our plan to include cancelled productions in our next season.

Why are upcoming productions being cancelled?

As currently written, government directives regarding crowd limitation and social distancing restrictions for the audience, on-stage, and back-stage areas necessitate that we remain shuttered for now. It is not fiscally or physically possible for us to perform in our facility until guidelines are eased and potential health risks are diminished.

I purchased a 2020 Season Flex Pass or Gala Opening Night Subscription.

> **What is the value of my unused tickets?** For Gala Opening Night Subscriptions, unused ticket value is \$100/per subscription. For Season Flex Passes, unused ticket value is \$50/per pass.

> Can I donate the value of unused tickets to support FSLT?

As a show of support, we kindly ask that 2020 pass patrons consider donating to our theatre the ticket value of performances cancelled as a result of the pandemic. Your ticket value donation would help offset utility costs, facility maintenance, and operational expenses while we are dark. You will receive public recognition for your gift, and your contribution will provide us with a much-needed financial bridge during this difficult time.

If you are willing to donate your unused 2020 ticket value, please email fslt.communications@gmail.com. Provide your name and phone number, and put DONATE in the subject line. Alternately, you may call 479.783.2966 (extn. 4) to leave a message. If we do not hear from you by October 1, 2020, we will assume that you have agreed to donate your ticket value in lieu of requesting a refund.

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P.O. Box 3752, Fort Smith, AR 72913
www.fslt.org

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> Can I apply my 2020 Pass to Season 2021? Regrettably, the date we will be allowed to reopen is unclear, so we will not be announcing our next season schedule and not selling 2021 season passes at this time. Therefore, applying your 2020 pass to a future season is not an option.

> Can I request a refund? If donating does not work for your budget, we understand. You may request a partial or full refund for the value of unused tickets.

To request a refund, please email fslt.communications@gmail.com. Provide your name and phone number, and put REFUND in the subject line. Alternately, you may call 479.783.2966 (extn. 4) to leave a message. **Refund requests must be submitted by October 1, 2020.**

Will 2020 Gala Opening Night Patrons be able to retain their same seats for future seasons?

Absolutely! Brighter days are on the horizon, and there will be no better view than from your favorite seat at FSLT on Gala Opening Night! Rest assured that you will be contacted to confirm retention of your same seats at such time when we are able to offer Gala Opening Night Season Packages again.

When will the next FSLT season be announced?

For 2021, we have planned a wonderful line-up of comedy, mystery, drama, and musical productions. Unfortunately, uncertainty surrounding the pandemic has clouded those plans, and we don't have a clear timeline on when that season can begin. So at this time, we plan to remain dark until we are confident that we can be compliant with government directives and can offer the safe, enjoyable, live in-person theatrical experience our volunteers and patrons deserve and expect. We prefer to write performance dates in pen, not pencil, but currently there are too many variables beyond our control. Therefore, we will not publish our next season schedule at this time.

Please be assured that our decision to forego announcing our next season of shows is not retreating or giving up. It's positioning our organization for improvisation—something thespians do quite well. By

not announcing a firm schedule in this time of uncertainty, we will have the flexibility to react quickly whenever it is deemed appropriate for us to safely reopen. When that date occurs, we will excitedly announce upcoming productions, launch auditions, begin rehearsals, and provide information about the sale of season passes. Until then, we remain poised and ready, with a flexible plan in place.

When will Season Passes be sold again?

Without knowing when the season will actually begin, we do not feel comfortable publicizing a schedule of shows nor asking patrons to purchase a pass. And we don't want to risk further disappointment caused by announcing and then canceling shows. Therefore, we will not be selling any Season Passes for 2021 at this time. Information regarding the sale of Season Passes (both Flex Passes and Gala Opening Night Subscriptions) will be provided once we have clarity regarding our reopening date.

Are Gift Certificates available for purchase?

Yes. Gift Certificates in any denomination may be purchased at any time at fslt.org. Certificate information will be retained in our ticketing system so that it can be redeemed when we are allowed to safely reopen.

How can I provide additional support?

The COVID-19 pandemic closed the doors of our theatre in March and effectively removed our ability to receive ticket income. However, it has not removed ongoing monthly expenses to pay utilities, maintain our facility, and operate our business. Your contribution to our Annual Fund would be greatly appreciated. Donations can be made online at fslt.org or mailed to FSLT, P.O. Box 3752, Fort Smith, AR 72913. With your continued support, the Fort Smith Little Theatre will remain a vibrant part of our community's arts and culture scene for many years to come. Please do your part to help FSLT emerge from this crisis as strong as possible.

What if I have additional questions?

Should you have any questions or concerns, please email to fslt.communications@gmail.com or leave a message at 479.783.2966 (extn. 4). Calls will be returned by volunteers during variable hours.