

Lindsay's Academy Theatre tries to retain revenues

Catherine Whitnall

The Academy Theatre for Performing Arts has done its best to keep people entertained through difficult times, including two world wars and the Great Depression.

But COVID-19 has thrown out a serious curve ball and it's unknown if the stage lights will shine as bright as they did before the pandemic.

"As we are all aware, the COVID-19 virus is affecting every aspect of our lives. It has interrupted our routines, suspended our work lives and minimized our social interactions," noted theatre general manager Craig Metcalf.

When viewed through a broader lens, said Metcalf, the closing of theatres like the Academy may seem like a minor inconvenience.

But the impact ripples out beyond the building — from clients and patrons to marketing and eco-tourism.

"For over 125 years, the Academy Theatre has provided some of the best entertainment available and closing its doors for what could be the longest in its history is very unsettling," stated theatre board president Mike Piggott.

He added the theatre is more than just a building, "it is a landmark."

The theatre remains closed to the public with only Metcalf working. Very basic, essential maintenance is being done.

Metcalf has been busy rescheduling many of the events at the theatre with only a few postponed, left pending or cancelled altogether. A number of summer shows optimistically plan to go ahead as scheduled.

"Like everyone, we have no idea when we will be able to open," Piggott said.

"However, we are fairly certain that we will be one of the last businesses, given the fact that we could have almost 600 people in close proximity at any given show."

The theatre board continues to meet regularly using electronic mediums and there are plans to research and apply for available government subsidies and programs.

"Please bear in mind that, at any time, but particularly now, the theatre gratefully accepts any donations that will assist us in our operating and potential upgrade costs. We will be looking for ways to raise funds during this difficult time, understanding that we are asking at a time when most have less to give," continued Piggott.

Anyone who is interested in supporting or getting involved with the theatre is asked to email mgr@academytheatre.ca.