



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Release Date: 03/13/2020

Harlequin announces social distancing and other measures in place effective immediately in response to COVID-19

Olympia, WA March 13, 2020 – On March 12, 2020, the Thurston County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution declaring the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a local emergency. At that time, Thurston County had one confirmed case originating in the county. The Board of Health then passed a resolution imposing restrictions on events over 250 people, excluding schools, and requiring of social distancing measures for events under 250 people to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This resolution aligns with the Executive Proclamation on COVID-19 Community Mitigation Strategies announced by Governor Jay Inslee on March 11, 2020. Events with fewer than 250 attendees are also prohibited unless event organizers take the steps listed in the resolution to minimize risk. Please see the related article in [The Olympian here](#).

Harlequin Productions has been dedicated to the health and safety of our staff, artists and patrons since the beginning of this outbreak. Starting on March 3, 2020, we had already implemented many of the steps outlined by the Board of Health, including encouraging patrons at increased risk of COVID-19 not to attend, making proper hand sanitation readily available to patrons and staff, and following the environmental cleaning guidelines outlined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Please see our original [press release here](#).

The maximum capacity of the State Theater is 212 patrons, making every one of our performances an event under 250 attendees. As such, the remaining steps we will undertake in order to continue hold performances are to screen employees for symptoms each day and to implement social distancing recommendations. The WHO [defines the term here](#).

As of March 12, 2020, Harlequin began screening employees and encouraging patrons to separate themselves by at least one seat in our house during performances of *The Highest Tide*. Next weekend, Harlequin will cap its house at 106 patrons per performance. The Artist's Talk with featured artist Susan Christian, to be held after the March 15 matinee performance, has been canceled.

Further, after much deliberation, Harlequin's Board and artistic leadership have determined it necessary to postpone the next production in our season, *For Peter Pan on Her 70th Birthday*, which was to have opened at the Washington Center Black Box on April 3, 2020. Says Artistic Director Aaron Lamb, "We are still hoping to produce this piece at a later date." Patrons

currently holding tickets for this production will be contacted as more information becomes available.

Lastly, the Season 2021 Announcement and Celebration, scheduled for March 28, is in discussions and a decision on time and place will be announced shortly.

At this time, Harlequin plans to resume operations with Tony Kushner's *A Bright Room Called Day*, opening May 1, 2020 at the State Theater.

Please see the Coronavirus Preparedness page on our site for updates as this situation evolves: <https://harlequinproductions.org/2020/03/03/coronavirus-preparedness/>

More Information:

- [Thurston County Department of Public Health and Social Services coronavirus information page](#)
- [University of Washington's novel coronavirus information page](#)
- [UW School of Public Health coronavirus response page](#)
- [Washington State Department of Health coronavirus information page](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) coronavirus situation summary](#)
- Washington State Coronavirus (COVID-19) hotline at 1-800-525-0127

Harlequin Productions is a professional not-for-profit theater company in Olympia, WA. We seek to invigorate, educate, and empower our community and all people to feel more, think more, play more, and judge less through the mirror of real live theatre.

PR: Helen Harvester, Marketing and Communications Director
helen@harlequinproductions.org