

An Update on the 2021 Next Stage Theatre Festival

June 16, 2020

It is with great sadness that we have made the difficult decision to cancel the 2021 Next Stage Theatre Festival.

After talking through the various scenarios of what we could offer to our artists, we felt that so much information was still unknown about public health directives on public events in the new year that it was irresponsible for us to move forward. We do not know how many people will be able to be on stage together in 2021, we do not know how many people will be able to gather, and we do not know how many members of our community would feel safe to come to the theatre even if we can gather.

With all this uncertainty we felt the fairest thing to do was to cancel. By now our call for applications would have already been out, and we also need a full month with our jury to program the festival. It takes months for us and the artists to plan and prepare for the festival, and that runway is quickly running out. It is an unreasonable drain on the resources of Fringe and our artists – time, creative energy, funds – to start down this journey with the strong possibility of cancelling later on.

We are all becoming used to things being cancelled, and used to the idea that the return to theatre may take longer than we first thought. The pain is not any less, for us and the artists that could have had the opportunity to share their work.

Cancelling the two festivals that are our very reason for existing has been difficult, but we still remain hopeful for an even better future. As when we cancelled the Fringe, we are asking everyone to take a pause and allow us some time before we return to you with a plan for what will take up that space in January 2021. We already have some ideas cooking.

So for now just hold the Next Stage dates for us (January 13-24, 2021) and we will be back to you with good news to share. And of course before then we will be having our very wonderful Fringe Collective and virtual POSTSCRIPT events.

– From the Staff of the Toronto Fringe