

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - December 4, 2020
Contact: Chris Silva, 845-518-5688 csilva@bardavon.org

FROM ALBANY TO BUFFALO, AND IN-BETWEEN, THEATER #lightsUPstateNY

(Poughkeepsie/Kingston, NY) - The Theatre lights in Upstate New York went dark in mid-March and the curtains remain closed today. Despite their best efforts and positive outlook, the reality is that these organizations and facilities will need help to restart when the time comes. New protocols, requirements and re-staffing will require both time and capital. Every month of closure costs these venues a collective \$1,500,000 dollars, with no significant revenue to offset it. The estimated cost to restart these venues, if a spring 2021 opening is possible, will be \$15,000,000 dollars - more if the "pause" continues. The performing arts centers of Upstate NY have much in common, as successful, historically significant theaters, in their respective cities. Without federal and state funding, the futures of many arts organizations are at risk. Now, eleven venues have come together in an effort to have a successful re-start:

The Bardavon - Poughkeepsie
UPAC - Kingston
Shea's Performing Arts Center - Buffalo
RBTL's Auditorium Theatre - Rochester
Smith Center for the Arts - Geneva
Landmark Theatre- Syracuse
Stanley Theatre - Utica
Proctors Collaborative - Schenectady
Palace Theatre - Albany
State Theatre - Ithaca
Clemens Center - Elmira

Each venue is operated by a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization – committed to serving their communities – and have worked together to create the country’s most momentous locations for tech-ing and launching new touring Broadway productions as well as prepping tours for national bands. Additionally, they each present a variety of live entertainment for all audiences, including concerts, comedy, dramatic and family events, as well as offer their venues as a mixed-use space for local performing groups, graduations, recitals and other presentations. They have also been equally challenged by the need to be closed or “on pause,” as the Governor and the State navigate the COVID-19 crisis.

Combined, these eleven upstate performing arts centers have cancelled or postponed hundreds of events in response to the ongoing pandemic, including all seven of the Upstate NY Broadway techs/launches planned for the fall of 2020. They have had remain idle while watching the over \$250,000,000 dollars of collective local economic impact they bring Upstate each year, come to an abrupt halt. Apart from touring events, these venues serve thousands of students in their communities each year, with dozens of arts education programs...which have also been forced to discontinue.

Amidst this hardship, leaders of these performing arts centers have remained “NY Tough.” Together with their staff, they have pivoted to continue to be community anchors. Whether it be by hosting virtual education programs, or making their facilities available for blood drives and other essential community activities, these organizations remain resilient. Most importantly, they have been preparing for the day they can safely re-open to patrons in full-force.

“The large theatres of Upstate so often share similar realities,” says Chris Silva, Executive Director Bardavon/UPAC. “As we think about our restarts sometime in 2021, we decided to come together to speak with one voice about our needs and challenges as we get back to being at the heart of our cities and communities.”

These performing arts centers are at the heart of their cities and are a vital component to the quality of life in their communities. They need the help of Governor Cuomo and their state elected leaders, to design a plan to move forward to save not only their stages but the local communities that depend on the economic activity and educational opportunities that these venues generate.

The Theatre lights in Upstate New York, will shine again, when the time is right.

####

Chris Silva, Executive Director
Bardavon 1869 Opera House
35 Market Street
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
Adm: 845-473-5288 #101
Fax: 845-473-4259
Cell: 845-518-5688
www.bardavon.org

