



How Covid 19 Has Affected the Arts

The COVID 19 virus has obviously affected every aspect of society in many different ways and art and culture is no exception. There have been many positive impacts on the arts because of COVID 19. Artists have come up with many creative ways to present their creations. Of course, television has been used by the more well-known artists. Those of us who have not reached the status of a television appearance, however, have utilized the internet to present our art. Music and theatre have certainly found their way to viewers through social media, Zoom, and other online means. The COVID 19 virus has forced the creative types to become even more creative. The Beech Street Theatre Company has been rehearsing by Zoom once a week in the hopes that we will be able to resume performing in the near future.

Of course, not all impacts have been positive. The biggest negative impact has been the total disappearance of live audiences. Art galleries, movie houses, concert halls, sports arenas, playing fields, and theatres have all remained empty. There is no comparison between watching online versus a live performance. From a theatrical perspective, the Beech Street Theatre Company has been forced to cancel all of its community programs. This year we would have been providing drama workshops for the Brain Injury Association of Durham Region and Friends of Aphasia. We had to cancel two plays that were scheduled as fundraisers. One was a dinner theatre scheduled to be performed in Bowmanville in support of migrant farm workers and the other would have been an afternoon of live theatre in Minden in support of the Hospital Auxiliary there. And we cannot forget that we had to cancel three sold out performances of our newest play, *The Soddfather*, which opened in March.

The economic impact has been significant. The cancelled shows of course, mean that the actors and crew will not get paid. The loss of revenue from the cancelled plays will also have an affect on our future programs and plays. It may take us some time and expense to train new facilitators for these programs if and when they resume. The loss of revenue this year will likely mean some very tight budgeting when we return to the stage. I foresee tighter purse strings when we plan for costuming and sets for example. Our advertising budget may also be affected.

I hope this brief description of the impact COVID 19 has had on the arts is informative and helps shed some light on how it has affected art and culture in Ontario.

Regards

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