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## MEDIA RELEASE

06/20

### **Stratford Festival cancels performances April 11 to May 2** *Action intended to help slow the spread of coronavirus*

*March 13, 2020...* In an effort to help mitigate the impact of coronavirus, the Stratford Festival has decided to cancel performances from April 11 to May 2, as well as all public events in its facilities during March and April.

“The performing arts are facing the biggest challenge in living memory,” says Artistic Director **Antoni Cimolino**. “The motto ‘The show must go on!’ is bred in the bone and it’s therefore very difficult to break out of that mindset. But sometimes the show should not go on. It is extremely important for public health that we do our part to protect our people and lessen the burden on our healthcare system.”

“By cancelling public events we will be able to limit outside attendance and protect our artists and crew while they continue rehearsals,” says Executive Director **Anita Gaffney**. “We think it’s vital to cancel performances in order to protect audiences and the people of Stratford, as well as the public at large. Our hope is that the worst will pass and we will be able to launch our season to healthy and eager audiences soon.”

The Festival will be contacting individual ticket holders to make arrangements to re-book their shows.

This latest move is in addition to other measures already undertaken by the Festival, including:

- Stepped up cleaning and sanitizing of facilities.
- Encouraging telework as a means to support social distancing among those essential people whose work requires they be in our facilities.
- Prohibiting non-essential business travel, and limiting the extent of essential travel.
- Observing periods of self-quarantine for contract workers coming into our facilities from hotspots or via airports.

- Planning a streamed version of the annual general meeting, scheduled for March 28.

These moves are made to support public health in Canada and worldwide, and to protect staff and artists, as well as our patrons and the people of Stratford.

“We have not come to this decision lightly, as it will have a multimillion-dollar impact on our organization and the surrounding tourism economy,” Gaffney says. “However, we believe it is the responsible thing to do.”