



To the Honourable Minister Adrian Dix,

We write to you today with our earnest concern regarding the Provincial Health Order effective November 20, which mandates the shuttering of live theatre organizations in British Columbia. We are the Artistic Director and Executive Director of the Arts Club Theatre Company; based in Vancouver, our organization is the third largest not-for-profit theatre company in Canada, after the Shaw and Stratford Festivals.

On behalf of the Arts Club, we would like to register our shock and dismay at the latest order, which allows every business already operational under the previous order to remain so **with the exception of live theatre**. While we appreciate the necessity of increasing restrictions at this time, live theatre is one of the few businesses that is mandated to close until at least December 7, while movie theatres, restaurants, and bars may remain open. We are struggling to understand why our industry appears to have been singled out.

Since September, the Arts Club has produced over 156 performances of one-actor plays—all in accordance with the strictest of WorkSafe-approved safety protocols (including collecting contact tracing information and making masks mandatory). The safety of our patrons and staff has been our greatest priority. We have had zero transmissions, and our patrons have affirmed through surveys the thoroughness of our COVID-19 protocols. Despite the rising case count in our province, to our knowledge, there has been no outbreak in the live-theatre industry. Given these facts, we are deeply disappointed by the order to shut our doors at this time.

We have proven our ability to safely operate our business. We ask that you consider live theatre to be in the same category as movie theatres, and allow us to remain open as well. The enormous cost of cancelling two productions is a massive blow to the Arts Club's financial sustainability, and to the employment of local artists. Additionally, singling out theatre companies for closure reinforces to audiences the misperception that our industry has not met the safety standards required to conduct business.

The not-for-profit arts industry has been dealt a particularly cruel blow by this pandemic. We implore you to meet with us and our colleagues so we can directly communicate to you our distress at this latest health order.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Cathie White, Executive Director
Ashlie Corcoran, Artistic Director