

# **New Bedford's Zeiterion Performing Arts Center announces outcome of Covid-19 restrictions**

In response to the disruption caused by COVID-19 outbreak, The Zeiterion Performing Arts Center, and their resident companies The New Bedford Symphony Orchestra and The New Bedford Festival Theater, have extended the postponement of all programming through August 2.

As a result of the closure, the Zeiterion furloughed 70% of staff. Beginning with the first performance cancellation in mid-March, 30 show-related employees were immediately without work. Three weeks later, a combination of 15 full-time and part-time positions were furloughed.

Michael Tavares, President of the Zeiterion Board of Trustees stated, "We made the difficult decision to furlough most of our staff temporarily, in order to protect the financial stability of our organization. The Board is committed to preserving The Z as the heart of our community well into the future and is taking the necessary short-term measures to ensure the best outcome."

The closure also affects over 700 performing artists. This includes all artists, musicians and dancers employed by the The Zeiterion, the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra and the New Bedford Festival Theatre.

On March 12, The Zeiterion was among the first cultural organizations in New Bedford to cancel a major event in response to the virus. Following the initial cancellation, performances were postponed through April 30. That postponement date has now been extended through early August

and affects over 50 performances, 10 school student shows, and the annual two-day New Bedford Folk Festival.

In total, the three non-profits estimate over 31,000 people would have attended performances at the Zeiterion during the closure between mid-March and early August, and that translates into a \$2.3 million dollar economic loss for the region. Annually, The Zeiterion, New Bedford Symphony Orchestra and New Bedford Festival Theatre attract 100,000 visitors to downtown New Bedford which represents a \$7.6 million dollar impact on the regional economy.

Zeiterion's Executive Director Rosemary Gill added, "We are acutely aware of our influence on the local economy and we are all doing everything we can to ensure the strongest possible reopening."

The COVID-19 closure has a deep financial impact on the all three organizations. Like many non-profits presenting entertainment, a majority of their annual budgets are derived from earned revenue through ticket sales. The Zeiterion alone will endure a \$1.4 million dollar loss of income.

"Many supporters are asking how they help during this time. Charitable donations or memberships would immediately benefit any of the three non-profits that share the Zeiterion's stage" says Rosemary Gill, the Zeiterion's Executive Director. She added, "I'm so grateful to The Z's board for their courage to make difficult decisions to protect our future, to our patrons for their patience and understanding, and to our donors and funders for their generosity."

The Zeiterion, NBSO and NBFT are currently planning for days when safety allows people to gather again. New Bedford Festival Theatre has postponed its 2020 production of Annie and is working to secure the rights in order to bring Annie back in the summer of 2021. Many of the Zeiterion and some of the New Bedford Symphony shows have been rescheduled, and new

performances will soon be announced. During the closure, The Z is offering pay-what-you-choose virtual classes like salsa dance and ukulele lessons, and both the NBSO and The Z are presenting virtual concerts on their social media channels.

For continued updates, please visit the web sites for all three organizations: [www.zeiterion.org](http://www.zeiterion.org), [www.nbsymphony.org](http://www.nbsymphony.org), and [www.nbfestivaltheatre.org](http://www.nbfestivaltheatre.org).