

Abbey Theatre St Albans COVID Secure precautions

On 13 August it was announced that live indoor theatre could go ahead with social distancing from 15 August which was great news, but we have taken time to prepare our theatre to welcome you back as safely as possible. We will be closely monitoring government advice in case that changes.

What extra measures do you have in place?

There is a one-way entry system through the building with hand sanitiser placed at regular intervals in the front of house area.

All tickets must be booked in advance and will be available as e-tickets only. The box office won't be open prior to each performance. Audience members will show their e-tickets to stewards either on their phone or via a print-out if that's easier.

No latecomers will be admitted to the performance.

We will be operating a cashless bar. Coffee and ice creams may also be ordered and paid for at the bar, and all refreshments will be delivered to audience members, either for collection at a designated table in the foyer or to your seat.

Only the Main Theatre is in use to allow for social distancing. Alternate rows are just under 2m apart, but rows in use have seating staggered to ensure there is a 2m distance between each person or household 'bubble'.

The performers, stage crew and all Abbey Theatre front of house staff will follow strict social distancing and cleanliness protocols. Our front of house staff will be wearing transparent visors so you can see their faces.

Will I be sitting in the seats that I've chosen on the plan?

Yes. You will be sitting in the seats you chose on the seating plan when you booked. If there are any issues or reasons for us to change your seat(s) we will get in touch with you prior to your booking to discuss this but please be assured that it's highly unlikely we will have to do this.

What happens on the day?

We respectfully ask all audience members to wear a face covering. If you can't wear a mask for health reasons, please download and print a card [here](#) to explain to anyone who asks why you are not wearing one. Because government advice around wearing face coverings may change, we will update our website with information so please check before your visit. We know some of you don't have internet access – if this is the case, please give us a ring to let us know and we'll arrange for someone to call you the day before your visit to advise on current government guidance and how it relates to your visit to our theatre.

When you arrive for your performance, you will be asked to wait in the front of house area until we can seat you.

A member of staff will then take you to the auditorium. We will be taking one party at a time through to the auditorium and getting them seated before admitting the next party, to allow for social distancing between each booking.

At the end of the show, you will be led out by a member of staff through the emergency exits, rather than through the bar, to keep the one-way system in place. You are then more than welcome to come back in through the front door to join us for a post-show drink in our socially-distanced bar.

How will the cast be socially distancing or will they be in each other's 'bubble'?

Building the Wall was already cast and well into rehearsal when lockdown struck. For personal reasons, the previous director had to stand down and the replacement director is married to one of the two-person cast. Everyone is taking stringent precautions to maintain hygiene and ensure safety. The director sets up the space and uses disinfectant spray on all furniture, door handles and other touch points before and after rehearsals. The actors bring any personal props they need. Most of the action observes the 2m rule, but any moments of contact closer than this have been reduced to a minimum. Please subscribe to our e-newsletter to get the latest information.

What happens if the show cannot go ahead?

We will be operating under government advice, so if the performance is not able to go ahead, we will issue full refunds to all bookers.

If we find that we are unable to go ahead with the performance, we will contact you as soon as possible via email. Please make sure that we have your most up-to-date contact information, so you don't miss anything.

What will happen if I book tickets but then have to self-isolate or have symptoms?

If you have to self-isolate or have symptoms, we will refund your tickets. You should not attend the theatre. Please email or call to let us know and we will issue a direct refund.

Can I sit with friends?

You can only sit with people who are in your household or 'bubble'. If you are not in the same household or bubble, we ask that you book tickets separately and maintain at least 1m+ distance during your visit.

I am coming on my own. Can I buy a single ticket?

Of course! You can do this via the website as usual. This just means that you will have a 2m space (2 empty seats) on either side of you.

I am in a wheelchair. Can I still come to the newly configured auditorium?

Yes, definitely. Our usual wheelchair space can be booked by phone on 01727 857861 and we will sort your booking for you. Your companion will sit next to you in the usual way, but you should still be from the same household or 'bubble'.

Can I order a drink?

Yes. Our bar has been operating on a socially distanced model since the beginning of July and it will be open before and after the performances for you to purchase drinks and refreshments. Please follow the one-way system to place your order and pay by card. The bar staff will tell you how your order will be delivered to you.

Can I buy a programme?

No. All programmes will be available as e-programmes supplied as a PDF document emailed to you prior to the performance. This is to avoid queuing and cash payments, as well as minimising the number of things you touch when you arrive at the venue. It's also more environmentally friendly.

Will your toilets be open?

Yes, our toilets will be open before, during and after your visit to us. Please use hand sanitiser before entering the toilet area, and observe social distancing measures – we will be operating a one in / one out system.

To avoid congestion, toilets will remain open throughout the performance and audience members will be permitted to leave the theatre and re-enter at any point.

How should I travel to the theatre?

You may travel to us however you wish but if possible, we would advise using private transport. The car park adjacent to the theatre is open, and there are no parking charges after 6.30pm. If you are coming by public transport please wear a face covering (unless you are exempt) and sanitise your hands on arrival at the theatre. There is a bicycle rack outside the theatre if you are cycling.

How often do you clean the space and toilets?

Throughout the lockdown we had a strict cleaning schedule in place for our theatre. All high-traffic touch points are wiped down with anti-viral spray on a regular basis and will continue to be cleaned in this way.

Front of house surfaces are wiped down with anti-viral spray before opening, before and after the interval (if applicable) and after each performance.

Toilets are cleaned regularly every 2-3 hours and deep cleaned every evening after the show and every morning/afternoon before the show.

We have a full risk assessment which we will share on the website nearer the time and also have copies of in the venue.

I have a question that you haven't answered. How can I ask it?

No problem! Just email us on boxoffice@abbeytheatre.org.uk and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.