



UNDER EMBARGO until Thursday 25 August 2022, 0:01am

FESTIVAL STARS **ALAN CUMMING, GABRIEL BYRNE, JAMES THIREEE AND BRIAN COX** JOIN WITH CAPITAL THEATRES CEO **FIONA GIBSON** TO CALL FOR KING'S THEATRE TO BE SAVED FOR THE FESTIVAL AND THE COMMUNITY AS FUNDING GAP EMERGES

- **As The King's Theatre plays host to its last performances before closing for a transformational redevelopment, a funding gap has emerged that puts the King's future in peril.**
- **Nearly all of the £25 million originally budgeted capital cost has been successfully fundraised by Capital Theatres, inflation, global conflict and changing trading agreements means that the project is likely to cost 20% - 30% more.**
- **If this funding gap is not closed before December 2022 the King's could close its doors forever, the Edinburgh International Festival will lose a key venue and Edinburgh will lose a key cultural hub for its communities, made fully accessible to welcome diverse audiences and performers.**
- **Funding from public bodies and generous donations have helped to get the project this far but we now need increased support including a contribution from the UK Government to see this project over the line.**
- **Festival stars Alan Cumming, James Thierree, Gabriel Byrne and Brian Cox have all joined the call to save the King's.**

Fiona Gibson CEO of Capital Theatres said:

"As the Edinburgh International Festival closes we're scheduled to begin the capital redevelopment of the King's Theatre to turn it into both a thriving community hub, fully accessible to audiences and performers, and a world class venue, while maintaining its history and heritage. Nearly all the original capital cost estimate of £25 million to transform the King's is in place thanks to grants from the Scottish Government, City of Edinburgh Council, the National Lottery Heritage Fund; generous donations from our patrons and donors, companies and trusts; as well as Capital Theatres' own contribution and our recent Crowdfunder. We are incredibly proud of the collective effort to reach this figure.

However, as with all construction projects in the UK currently, we are facing new challenges because of delays in supply chain caused by changing trading agreements, global conflict and increasing levels of inflation. Due to these factors, we estimate that the project costs will increase by between 20% and 30%. We've examined our options and we cannot reduce the project cost any further by value engineering and to delay the redevelopment could lead to even higher costs in the long-term, putting the entire project at risk. If this funding gap is not

closed before December 2022, the last opportunity for us to give the go-head, the King's could close its doors forever.

We are in close contact with all our key public funders and hope to secure additional support to ensure that this transformative redevelopment for Tollcross, Edinburgh and Scottish Theatre can proceed as planned, and a better, brighter King's Theatre can reopen its doors for generations to come."

Brian Cox, Honorary Patron of the King's Theatre said:

"It's in August that we are reminded how vital The King's Theatre is to the Edinburgh International Festival which over the years has played host to Juliette Binoche, Fiona Shaw and this year Alan Cumming and Gabriel Byrne. But for the rest of the year it's vital to the Scottish Theatre ecology and a key touring venue which brings a variety of genres to the central belt; not to mention a source of comfort and joy in panto season. Without the planned transformational redevelopment improving access, preserving heritage and opening the building up to the community, the King's will close its doors forever. After a hugely successful fundraising effort to reach the original budgeted cost of 25 million, we cannot let the rising costs due to inflation, trade agreements and global conflict put the project in peril. We must save the King's for future generations."

Alan Cumming, star of *Burn* presented at The King's as part of Edinburgh International Festival this year said:

"The King's Theatre is integral to the cultural health and wellbeing of the people of Edinburgh, and indeed Scotland. It brings us together in the Winter via the annual pantomime and it welcomes citizens of the World every August during the festival. This year, I was back at the King's with BURN and it reminded me how much I love this old beauty. But, she could do with a facelift and a pretty thorough makeover. Please, urgent funding is needed to help preserve the magic of the King's."

Gabriel Byrne, star of *Walking with Ghosts* presented at The King's as part of Edinburgh International Festival this year said:

"It's such a wonderful honour to be in the unique position of being the last person to perform on the stage of this amazing theatre which has a history going back years and years. I've always thought of a theatre as being somewhat like a church, it has a spiritual connotation and there's energy trapped inside it of all the people who've sat here and laughed and have been touched and have been changed by what they've seen on the stage. That's why a theatre is incredibly important to a city. In fact, it's the spiritual lifeblood of the city. To preserve a theatre is being a good ancestor. It's saying we need this, we value this and we're passing it on to the next generation. Anything that can be done to preserve The King's Theatre and give it new life has to be done. For it to not survive would be a tragedy for the audiences and for the city itself."

James Thierree, star of *Room* presented at The King's as part of Edinburgh International Festival this year said:

"I have a very huge affection for The King's Theatre - it feels like a vessel that's been on the sea for many years. I feel theatres like these are the real temples today - of the mind, of the imagination - and they have to be taken care of, cherished and protected."

Fergus Linehan, Festival Director of the Edinburgh International Festival said:

"There wouldn't be an International Festival if there wasn't a King's Theatre, because it is here that so many of the signature moments of the Festival have taken place. We want to make sure that our premier theatre space in the city is appropriate for the way theatre, dance and opera tours now, and ensure they don't leapfrog over Edinburgh. As a city and a country we must invest in The King's. Any responsible cultural sector must both make sure the next season is coming, but also to think 10, 20 years down the line to ensure that what we've enjoyed will still be there in the future."

ENDS

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Notes to Editors

The King's Redevelopment

The current funding model for the King's Redevelopment comprises of grants from the Scottish Government (£6.5m), City of Edinburgh Council (£4m), National Lottery Heritage Fund (£1.9m) and a further £3m raised from our incredibly supportive patrons and donors, companies and trusts. Capital Theatres is contributing £4.4 million and a £5 million prudential loan will see us reach the original estimated costs of £25M.

Capital Theatres

Capital Theatres present world-class shows to entertain and inspire audiences of all ages.

In a normal year we stage over 700 performances, at the Festival Theatre (1,900 seats), the King's Theatre (1,300 seats) and The Studio (155 seats) through a broad and inclusive programme featuring the very best in drama, dance, musical theatre, live music, comedy and pantomime.

In June 2021 we reopened our venues to welcome audiences back after the pandemic turned our theatres dark. Since then we have announced a series of co-productions including **James IV - Queen of the Fight**, **Sunshine on Leith** and three festive early years commissions, the first of which, **The Enormous Christmas Turnip**, premiered in The Studio in December 2021. We've also progressed our talent development strand through our Musical Commissioning Hub.

Much of our programme is exclusive to our venues in Scotland, providing the only opportunity for audiences to see the biggest shows touring north of the border, the best in international contemporary dance and the latest productions from leading local and national companies.

We support access to the arts for everyone and have an extensive and accessible creative engagement programme of talks, workshops and events to introduce and develop engagement and interest in the heritage of our buildings and all areas of live performance.

We are a registered Scottish charity (SC018605) and our theatres and our programme are supported by the City of Edinburgh Council.

www.capitaltheatres.com

