

28 September 2020

Oldham Coliseum asks public to ‘Get Behind Us’ with first ever Crowdfunder

Oldham Coliseum Theatre has today launched its first ever Crowdfunder asking the public to ‘Get Behind Us’ and support the theatre’s future for generations to come. Thanks to the generous support of local businesses and trusts donations can be matched.

For 135 years people have visited Oldham’s historic theatre to experience the magic of its renowned annual pantomime and year-round programme of award-winning drama, comedy and music. This year, due to the Coronavirus crisis, the Coliseum has been closed with no ticket income for over six months. As the crisis continues and with no current indication of when theatres can reopen to full capacity, the theatre is facing a difficult Christmas and an uncertain future.

A host of well-known faces connected to Oldham and the Coliseum have pledged their support for the theatre’s campaign.

Amongst them, **comedian Dave Spikey said:** *“I asked if I could get involved in the campaign because, whether you know it or not, Oldham Coliseum has played a massive role in my life. My first ever gig there very early in my comedy career... the memory of walking onto that stage in that beautiful auditorium to that sort of audience has always stayed with me”*

Theatres were the first industry to close due to coronavirus, a week ahead of the start of the national lockdown in March. In August the Coliseum announced the postponement of its pantomime, which would usually have welcomed an audience of 35,000 people. Not only is the Coliseum’s festive spectacular a fun-filled family tradition for generations of people from across the North West, income from the pantomime supports many of the theatre’s activities in the communities of Oldham throughout the year.

The Coliseum contributes millions to Oldham’s economy and has helped to launch the career of many famous faces. The theatre’s work in the communities of Oldham offers support to some of the most underprivileged people in the country, works with people with additional needs, offers training, brings the borough’s richly diverse population together and helps to build confidence. In a survey by The Audience Agency 95% of audiences said that the Coliseum is good for Oldham’s image and a further 63% said that the Coliseum enhances the sense of community in Oldham.

Actor, director and twice former Artistic Director Kenneth Alan Taylor added: *“It [the Coliseum] is the jewel in the crown of Oldham and if it went it would be a tragedy. The heart of Oldham would be ripped out.”*

Oldham Coliseum Theatre is a Registered Charity and its teams have been working closely with the Government and industry body UK Theatre since its closure. The theatre's first ever Crowdfunder aims to raise £40,000 to secure the Coliseum's future.

For many years audiences have come to the Coliseum at Christmas to shout 'it's behind you', this year the Coliseum is asking everyone to **Get Behind Us** and help save Christmas in Oldham for generations to come.

Donations are open at www.crowdfunder.co.uk/get-behind-us

- Ends -----

Notes to Editor:

For further press information, please contact Shelly Ramsdale via email at shellyramsdale@coliseum.org.uk (please note I am currently working from home)

Oldham Coliseum Theatre

The Coliseum is a cultural and educational charity that works with over 150,000 individuals per year.

The Coliseum has a rich history in Greater Manchester dating back to 1885. It provides a wide variety of distinctive theatre performances and participatory activities for people from all communities in Oldham, Greater Manchester and beyond. It creates original productions each year which are presented at the Coliseum and on tour. Intrinsic to the town's on-going regeneration, the theatre works with its local communities and young people to develop creative programmes to facilitate learning, engagement and community cohesion.

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