

***Charlotte's Web*, scheduled to begin performances on March 30, 2020 at Sierra Madre Playhouse, has been canceled.** The financial impact to the production because of the recent passage of Assembly Bill 5 (AB-5) by California forced the cancellation. A statement by the Playhouse President, David Gordon, and the company's Artistic Director, Christian Lebano, follows:

The mission of Sierra Madre Playhouse is to foster an appreciation of live performance in people of all ages. We engage and bring people together through the power of live theater. Our Theater for Young Audiences program, started six years ago, focuses on high-quality experiences for young audiences. *Charlotte's Web* had 36 confirmed and paid-for bookings for over 2,600 children and 400 teachers and parents. Another ten general audience performances were also planned.

The newly adopted California Assembly Bill 5 (AB-5) changes employee and independent contractor classifications in many ways, some that have yet to be realized. It does not, however, allow for any transition period to adapt to these changes. In the case of *Charlotte's Web*, the new AB-5 regulations quite unexpectedly added more than \$38,000 to the budget of a production planned under previous regulations.

The sudden financial impact of AB-5 forced the Playhouse Board of Directors to reluctantly make the difficult decision to cancel this year's Theater for Young Audiences' production of *Charlotte's Web*.

The new reality that we face as a non-profit arts organization is one that some 28 other Intimate Theaters in Los Angeles County face, as do other small performing arts companies. Collectively, we will seek a remedy that will enable us to continue to provide our audiences with the high-quality productions they have come to expect.

In the months ahead, we will be working hard to find a way to ensure that our mission and commitment to an annual Theater for Young Audiences performance

will be fulfilled by providing children in our communities with a memorable introduction to lifelong rewards from the arts.

Though we are canceling *Charlotte's Web* and are looking to fill this hole in our season with exciting programming, we will be going forward with the rest of the season as planned.



Christian Lezano
Artistic Director



David Gordon
President