

“If we want the arts to still be here when we get through this, we have to step up and find ways to support it now. With such a huge loss of revenue, you can only go on for so long.” **Christin Crampton Day, Executive Director of the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts**



GETTY IMAGES

STATE OF THE ARTS

It could take government action to revive performing arts

BY JOHN MOORE
Special to Colorado Politics

Fraught. Fragile. Dire. Endangered. Grim. Those are some of the words local leaders are using to characterize the present state of the arts in Colorado.

Signs of the arts apocalypse are everywhere: Foot-high weeds growing out of the abandoned stone rows of the Mary Rippon Amphitheatre, home to the Colorado Shakespeare Festival in Boulder.

The naked brick façade of the Boettcher Concert Hall, for the first time in decades not draped with oversize banners trumpeting current offerings at the Denver Performing Arts Complex.

The 48 empty tables recently spread out over Sculpture Park to represent the 12 million unemployed professionals in the national live-events industry.

To Shakespeare, silence was “the most perfect herald of joy.” To the tens of thousands who have been thrown out of work by the statewide shutdown on large gatherings, the silence on Colorado stages is a cacophony of despair.

The bad news has been relentless. Most recently, the Colorado Symphony Orchestra canceled the remainder of its 2020 indoor season, the Colorado Ballet furloughed all dancers through the end of the year, and the city’s Department of Arts and Venues, which has remained open during the pandemic largely to distribute \$1.2 million in emergency funding for artists and make its venues available as emergency shelters, has furloughed all staff and closed all its facilities through Jan. 2.

“This pandemic has had a devastating impact on our creative economy and our creative-sector workers, especially all those associated with the music and performing-arts industry,” said Margaret Hunt, Director of Colorado Creative Industries, the state’s arts office. “And when we factor together the pandemic with social unrest due to social injustice, wildfires, drought and climate change, there’s been an upheaval of comfortable ‘normalcy’ we haven’t experienced in our lifetimes.”

And the worst part: No one knows where bottom is.

SEE ARTS • PAGE 16

NO PEACE

In the oil and gas wars, things may be just heating up. **Insights, Page 2**

MONEY TALKS

Cash pours in for campaigns on ballot initiatives, state candidates. **Page 3**