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Curtains rise on Huntington Theatre's \$55M renovation

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A year after going dark, the curtains are rising on a new act for Boston's 95-year-old Huntington Theatre.

The theater, built in 1925 as the first nonprofit playhouse in the U.S., is set to undergo a \$55 million renovation and reopen next fall.

While the Covid-19 pandemic forced the furloughs and layoffs of nearly two-thirds of the Huntington Theatre Co. staff, it is now allowing for an accelerated renovation timeframe.

"The Huntington Theatre has been home to so many extraordinary productions over the past four decades. We now have the opportunity to restore this gem of a theatre to its former architectural glory, while also enhancing it with new, modern amenities to serve our artists, our audiences, and our community," said Managing Director Michael Maso in a statement. "And after a year of the theatre being dark, it is



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thrilling to announce that there is once again energy and activity in the building, as we plan for an exciting future.”

The Huntington Theatre Co. bought the property from QMG Huntington in 2017, and now plan to upgrade the venue with a full restoration of the theater building as well as renovating the adjacent service building, which is home to dressing rooms, rehearsal and function space. The theater seats will be upgraded to include more legroom and accessibility, and all 1925-era light fixtures will be restored. A second phase will expand lobbies and add elevators that reach all floors of the property.

The Huntington has raised \$81.5 million toward its \$110 million capital campaign goal for the project, including a \$9 million commitment from David and Betsy Epstein. Capital campaign chair Ann Merrifield and Huntington Board President Sharon Malt are leading the effort. The renovation’s construction is expected to cost \$55 million.

“The Campaign for The New Huntington is both an investment in the diverse cultural fabric of Boston and a promise that The Huntington will serve even more artists, audiences, and young people for years to come,” Merrifield said in a statement.

Jason Forney of Boston-based Bruner/Cott & Associates is the project’s principal architect, along with Nurit Zuker, Karen Greene, and Rima Abouseleiman. Boston-based Shawmut Design and Construction is the construction manager, led by David Lyskowski, with Jeff Ganem of Leggat McCall Properties serving as project manager. Kat Herzig is the Huntington Theatre manager.

Project consultants include Auerbach Pollock Friedlander, Jaffe Holden and Selbert Perkins Design.

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