



**City of Dublin**

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**Memo**

**To:** Members of Dublin City Council

**From:** Dana L. McDaniel, City Manager

**Date:** June 8, 2021

**Initiated By:** Matt Earman, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Tracey Gee, Director of Recreation Services  
Kelly Rigano, Recreation Administrator  
Joe Bishara, Theater Supervisor  
Shirley Blaine, Public Information Officer

**Re:** Brand refresh and new logo for the Abbey Theater of Dublin

### **Background**

The Abbey Theater of Dublin was constructed in the year 2000 with the intent of being a black box theater, a simple indoor performance space with plain black walls and a level floor, providing flexibility in configuration of the stage and audience seating. Michael Schirtzinger, the City's former Theater Supervisor brought life into the theater and created an environment where the youth of Dublin could shine. In addition to internal programming, the Abbey Theater was utilized heavily by external groups who rented the space for a fee. Over the years, the Abbey Theater has provided a home to many children's performances, drama camps, private rentals and a partnership with Ohio University's Tantrum Theater.

Under new direction of Joe Bishara, who was hired into the Theater Supervisor role in October 2019, the Abbey Theater of Dublin has become a destination for theater companies and artists to produce diverse, inclusive regional and world premiere productions for audiences of all ages. Joe has provided a new direction to serve the community, serve the arts and serve the children. He has partnered with a wide variety of multi-cultural groups such as the Columbus Black Theatre Festival as well as Central Ohio's only LGBTQ+ theatre company, Evolution Theatre Company, in an effort to bring diversity, equity and inclusion to the stage in Dublin. During the pandemic, the Abbey was at the forefront of virtual theatre initiatives, garnering a Greater Columbus Arts Council (GCAC) Community Arts Innovation nomination for **The Virtual Theatre Project**. The Abbey's Fall 2020 production of *Aliens, 3 Miles, Turn Left* was chosen as a Finalist for the International Virtual Good The@ter Festival. The Winter 2021 production of *#CHARLOTTEVILLE* has been chosen as a Finalist for the June 2021 Atlanta Fringe Festival as well as the July 2021 East of Edinburgh Theatre Festival.

To align with this new direction, staff feels a logo refresh is well timed. The goal of this refresh is to establish and implement a dynamic Abbey Theater of Dublin production strategy that connects the theater with the community and to increase audience and community engagement.

The objective is to build a unique/branded presence on social media channels in order to further highlight our unique brand offerings leveraging the optimal channel for the right program with the best brand-right message.

The current logo is a red image of an "A" doubling as a spotlight, along with the Abbey Theater of Dublin text. Staff identified several weaknesses surrounding the current logo:

- Branding confusion with DCRC = diminished community awareness
- Lack of clarity on what makes the Abbey Theater unique compared to other theaters
- Lack of Social Media presence
- Unique, tailored marketing that tells the Abbey Theater of Dublin's story



The new, proposed logo ties Dublin's colors of green in a design that incorporates spotlights as a nod to the former logo, but with an updated look. It has an updated font that is bolder and more eye catching while utilizing blacks and grays as a nod to the theater's black box beginnings.

It has the capability when used in video and social media to be animated with moving spotlights. Unlike the original logo, the spotlights are focused on "Abbey," which is a strategic design choice to draw the reader's focus. The refreshed logo is designed in a vertical style to allow for more versatility in print, digital and other assets. Additionally, the spotlights can be separated from the logo to use as another brand identifier for the theater.



In addition to updating the logo, one of the most recognizable visual elements for the theater, we have also evaluated and enhanced the Abbey Theater's mission and vision.

**Mission:** *The Abbey Theater of Dublin creates dynamic programming for the stage, classroom and the community that captivates and inspires.*

**Vision:** *The Abbey Theater of Dublin lights the sparks of curiosity, empathy and humanity.*

With the Abbey Theater of Dublin's new vision, the proposed logo transforms how the brand is received. This brand refresh maintains a visual connection to how the brand identity was seen before, but the overall makeover is up-to-date, vibrant and designed for today's audiences.

## **Recommendation**

In order to align the look of the Abbey Theater of Dublin with this new programming direction, we are seeking Council's input toward the refresh of the Abbey Theater's brand.