

National Theater closing till February for upgrade

Staff writer, with CNA

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The National Theater is to be closed for eight months from next month for renovation after hosting performances by local and international troupes for 29 years, the National Theater and Concert Hall (NTCH) said on Sunday.

A ceremony was held in the theater's lobby on Sunday prior to a final performance before the building undergoes a full transformation.

Although the building has been maintained and partially renovated over the past 29 years, some equipment must be replaced because spare parts are no longer manufactured, NTCH artistic director Lee Huey-mei (李惠美) said.

The renovations, including the stage and equipment, is to be carried out by German-based firm SBS, which handled renovations of the Schauspiel Frankfurt theater in German and is to be supervised by Kunkel Consulting, another German company that rebuilt and updated the stage technology of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Lee said.

The National Theater opened with the National Concert Hall in October 1987 as the National Chiang Kai-shek Cultural Center. Cloud Gate Dance Theatre (雲門舞集) has premiered several of its productions at the theater before taking them on world tours, including *Moon Water* in 1998 and *Rice* in 2013.

The center was renamed the National Performing Arts Center in 2014 to manage the theater and concert hall, as well as the National Taichung Theater, the National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts and the National Symphony Orchestra.

The 2,064-seat concert hall, where the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra gave two performances last month on its fourth visit to Taiwan, was fully renovated during a four-month closure last year.

While the last show before the renovation — a local stage production called *U, Brother?* by the Godot Theatre Company — has concluded its Taipei run at the theater, ticketing and other services at the venue are to remain open until Thursday, officials said.

Services at the concert hall, including the box office, are to continue as normal, while the 1,524-seat National Theater and the smaller Experimental Theater will be closed from Friday to Feb. 28 next year.

This story has been corrected since it was first published.

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