

Dolly Parton musical halted over 'homophobic abuse'

11 hours agoJonny Humphries
BBC News, Manchester

Getty Images Dolly Parton, with blonde hair and wearing a red dress encrusted with shiny studs, waves at the camera.

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Dolly Parton has long been considered an ally of LGBT and other progressive causes

A Dolly Parton-themed musical had to be suspended mid-show when homophobic abuse was hurled at the stage, an actor in the production has claimed.

Stevie Webb said an incident at the Opera House in Manchester during Here You Come Again saw the whole cast "leave the stage, because a woman was so disgusted there was a gay character on the stage".

Mr Webb, posting on social media platform TikTok, said the incident last Wednesday was followed by similar trouble on Saturday, when a man had to be removed from the audience.

ATG Entertainment, which runs the venue, said it took a "zero tolerance" approach to such incidents.

Google An outside view of Manchester Opera House in Quay Street

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Manchester Opera House said any audience member engaging in abuse, harassment or bullying would be "immediately" rejected

Mr Webb, who plays a superfan of the country music superstar in the show, said there had also been problems during the London run of the production.

He described an incident involving a man shouting an offensive slur and adding: "I just want to see Dolly Parton."

Parton has long been an ally of LGBT and other progressive causes, and in 2014 spoke out in favour of gay marriage.

Mr Webb said the incidents had "really opened [his] eyes".

"We're in such a bubble in this industry. But travelling the country and seeing how many people literally cannot bear to see a gay person depicted on stage - it's wild."

Publicity for Here You Come Again described the show as the story of "a diehard fan whose fantasy version of international icon Dolly Parton gets him through trying times".

The Opera House said such incidents were "rare" and that anyone engaging in abusive behaviour would be removed "immediately".

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