

Annual Report

2020/21



The Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre's John Hirsch Mainstage. PHOTO BY JERRY GRAJEWSKI
Inset: John Hirsch and Tom Hendry.



About Royal MTC

When the Winnipeg Little Theatre and Theatre 77 merged to form the Manitoba Theatre Centre in 1958, the goal was to produce great theatre with mass appeal. Artistic Director John Hirsch and General Manager Tom Hendry staged professional productions of an eclectic array of plays – classics, Broadway hits and new Canadian work. With the establishment of a second stage for experimental work in 1960, and an annual provincial tour that began in 1961, MTC fully realized the original vision of a centre for theatre in Manitoba. Inspired by the breadth and quality of MTC's programming, a whole network of what became known as "regional theatres" emerged across North America.

The company produces in two venues: the Warehouse, which opened in 1969, and the Mainstage, completed in 1970. The theatres were renamed after the company's founders in 2008. In 2009, the Government of Canada designated the Mainstage a National Historic Site and, in 2010, Queen Elizabeth II granted the company a royal designation.

Today, the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre produces 10 plays on two stages, a regional tour, a wide range of youth programming and two annual festivals: The Bridge: A Festival of Ideas (founded in 2021) and North America's second-largest Fringe Festival (founded in 1988). Attendance for Royal MTC programming averages 300,000 each year, and many Manitobans also support Royal MTC with donations and volunteer time. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Kelly Thornton and Executive Director Camilla Holland, Royal MTC remains Manitoba's flagship theatre.

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The Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre is proud to call Manitoba home. Royal MTC is located in Winnipeg on Treaty 1 land, the traditional territory of the Ininew, Anishinaabe and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. We are thankful for the benefits sharing this land has afforded us, and we are committed to the responsibilities of the Treaty. Hiy Hiy, Miigwetch, Wopida and Maarsii.

Mandate

It is the aim of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre to study, practice and promote all aspects of the dramatic art, with particular emphasis on professional production.

Vision

Royal MTC's theatres and our province will teem with artists and audiences sharing in the act of imagining, enriching lives and communities.

Mission

Royal MTC exists to celebrate the widest spectrum of theatre art. Deeply rooted in the province of Manitoba, which gave it life and provides for its growth, Royal MTC aspires to both reflect and engage the community it serves.

Values

EXCELLENCE

Our commitment to excellence is reflected in the writing of each play and the artists who create each production, and is a promise to the volunteers, staff, funders and audiences who support it.

BALANCE

A commitment to balance is evident in the variety of our playbill and in the wide range of programs Royal MTC offers.

INCLUSION

Our commitment to inclusion ensures that as we share theatre throughout our city and province, we create a welcoming space for everyone.

ACCESSIBILITY

Our commitment to accessibility requires that we broaden our understanding of barriers to engagement, and work to eliminate them.

AFFORDABILITY

Our commitment to affordability is reflected in marshalling public and private sector support to keep ticket prices as low as possible for all Manitobans.

SUSTAINABILITY

Our commitment to sustainability begins with understanding our environmental impact, and implementing best practices in environmental sustainability in theatre.

LONGEVITY

Our commitment to longevity is evident in our governance structure, business practices and financial management.



RobYn Slade and Toby Hughes in *All is Bright*. PHOTO BY HUGH CONACHER



Cherissa Richards and Ray Strachan in *The Mountaintop*. PHOTO BY HUGH CONACHER



Waawaate Fobister in *Ode to RED Auntie*
(*Tiny Plays, Big Ideas*). PHOTO BY HUGH CONACHER

ROYAL
MTC
MANITOBA THEATRE CENTRE

The Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre operates as a non-profit charitable organization, led by the Artistic Director, Executive Director, Board Chair and a volunteer Board of Trustees from the community. The management practices of Royal MTC are based on five best practice principles: forward planning, accountability, monitoring, a sound control environment and ongoing liaison with the Board of Trustees. The Board's input and agreement is sought regularly on the action plans developed by management. Royal MTC owes its success this season to the dedicated, enthusiastic, accountable and responsible governance by Board and staff. An open annual general meeting was held June 23, 2021 to report artistic and financial results to interested subscribers, patrons and community members.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS



Canada Council for the Arts
Conseil des Arts du Canada

Manitoba



MANITOBA ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DU MANITOBA



WINNIPEG
ARTS COUNCIL

“It was powerful and moving.
I felt like I was in the theatre.”

– PATRON



Cherissa Richards and Ray Strachan in *The Mountaintop*.

PHOTO BY HUGH CONACHER

MESSAGES

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

It is said – albeit with only dubious provenance – that Shakespeare wrote *King Lear* during a plague. If so, it was an early demonstration that great art can indeed be created during a global health crisis.

This was never more evident than the digital productions, thought leadership, dialogues, and insights curated and presented by Royal MTC in the 2020/21 season. As we celebrated the 50th anniversary of this architectural gem, the theatre remained in darkness with nary a hint of a live performance. From the comfort of our own homes we were awed, inspired, and yes, transported by digital works that explored themes of inclusivity, diversity and equity, and events that celebrated community and brought us together virtually.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees during these unprecedented and challenging times, I would like to acknowledge our sponsors, donors, funders and patrons for their continued and generous support. Royal MTC benefits from the care of thousands of Winnipeggers, who demonstrated this year through donations, digital ticket purchases and warm messages that they can't wait to come back to live theatre.

I commend our stellar management teams led by Executive Director Camilla Holland and Artistic Director Kelly Thornton who have expertly navigated these uncharted waters. And I would like to acknowledge and thank those staff who left Royal MTC as a result of the pandemic. The cancellation of live performances affected their livelihoods, careers and ability to support this great organization in the presentation of live theatre. We are most grateful to each and every one of you.

This has been a year of learning for the organization, walking down the path of our organizational commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion. Our Board has enthusiastically participated in anti-racism and anti-oppression training with Jackie Hogue, and in reconciliation and Indigenous Perspectives workshops with Jessica Dumas. This is important and necessary work that we will continue to embrace in our capacity as leadership volunteers, and I know the staff and organization will continue to grow their understanding as well. We are committed to creating a safe and respectful workplace and gathering place for all, including audience members, artists and volunteers.

My profound thanks to the entire Board of Trustees for their patience and good humour through a year of Zoom meetings. To those

Trustees who completed their tenure at the 2021 AGM, you will be missed. I enthusiastically welcome our six new members, ready to roll up sleeves and tackle the challenges and opportunities to come.

There is reason for optimism and renewal as we are blessed with an abundance of creativity, perseverance and talented leadership. I look forward to greeting everyone when we are back in the theatre spaces we love, ready to watch the curtain rise.



John Guttormson

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I look back on the 2020/21 season, I'm proud that we persevered to create art in new and (for us) innovative ways, and kept our artists and staff safe throughout. Our mantra through this complicated year was, "Smaller is better than gone." We are emerging from this season resilient and indeed smaller, more nimble, ready to grow our scope and scale to reflect the needs and desire of our audiences, artists and community.

My deep thanks to current staff, and those to whom we bid farewell in a combination of retirements and furloughs. MTC also mourned the untimely deaths of Head of Scenic Art Sue Groff, and IATSE crew members Les Moore and John "The Hawk" Tomiuk. They will be greatly missed by their MTC friends and the larger theatre community.

This was an extraordinary year of listening, learning and organizational development. Our community asked us to evolve and change, and in collaboration with our Board of Trustees, we take this responsibility seriously, as reflected in programming, policies and processes, commitments, and the expanded values that are part of our Strategic Renewal Plan, which will guide the organization from 2021-2024.

Brief but profound gratitude goes to the resilient and ever-optimistic Kelly, and to John in his first year as Chair of the Board of Trustees. And huge thanks to our stakeholders – audiences, volunteers, funders, artists, staff, donors and more – who kept the faith with us.



Camilla Holland

MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

I am overwhelmed by the depth of gratitude I have for everyone at Royal MTC, who helped us weather a storm that none of us could ever have imagined. The year was defined by the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and a reckoning with systemic racism. As the world was tasked with addressing both head-on, our responsibility as a cultural institution came into sharp focus.

The 2020/21 season was to be my first fully programmed as Artistic Director, and subscriptions were buzzing until COVID-19 hit. In late spring we cancelled the first half of the season and by early fall we collapsed the remainder of it. It seems the fates had brought me to MTC to help navigate the rough waters our organization was to travel.

There is much to be proud of in this year of change. We learned to be nimble and reinvent ourselves. We launched a web series with *Backstage in the Peg*; pirouetted our way into a digital holiday special with *All is Bright*, filmed two Mainstage productions with *The Mountaintop* and *The (Post) Mistress*, and incubated emerging talent by creating four short films about human rights with *Tiny Plays*, *Big Ideas*. We also invested in our community, introducing the National Mentorship Program and the Pimootayowin Creators Circle. We converted the Warehouse to a digital studio and introduced The Bridge: A Festival of Ideas with the inaugural event focusing on Art & (re)Conciliation. Overall, we issued 236 artist contracts and kept our buildings humming with artistry and activity, even as our auditorium remained empty.

I want to thank the entire staff of Royal MTC. Your humour and dedication kept us going and we're proud of what you accomplished. Thank you to the dedicated audiences who pivoted with us to support and engage in these myriad activities, and to the artists who, while facing enormous challenges during the pandemic, never waned in their passion and dedication to the art form. My deepest gratitude to Camilla, who led with such grace and empathy. There is no one I'd rather have faced these challenges with. Finally, thank you to John and the entire Board of Trustees, whose sage advice and full trust in our leadership made all the difference.

Together this year, we did important learning, and set a strategic course for our renewal as Canada's oldest English-language regional theatre. I feel blessed to be on this journey with all of you, and I look forward to the great work ahead.



Kelly Thornton



Re-imagining Theatre

As we responded to pandemic restrictions, it was crucial that our work retain the essence of live theatre. Thanks to the expertise of Frank Digital, we reimagined the 2020/21 season with **FOUR BRAND-NEW DIGITAL PRODUCTIONS** that captivated audiences and provided meaningful work to our artists, production departments and staff.



Alex Poch-Goldin in *All is Bright*. PHOTO BY HUGH CONACHER

“I miss attending live theatre but Royal MTC is doing a great job in bringing virtual theatre to its audiences. Bravo.” – PATRON



Engaging Patrons

The brightest light of this challenging year has been connecting with our community and patrons. More than **10,000 HOUSEHOLDS** engaged with our many digital offerings this season, including full productions, play readings, behind-the-scenes conversations, fund-raising events, a digital arts magazine and more!



Connecting with Students

As schools went digital, so did our education programs. We redesigned our classes and programs to actively engage with schools and offer creative opportunities to students from all over Manitoba. This year, we were able to:

- Engage with over **585 STUDENTS**
- Connect with **26 SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS**
- Offer paid work to more than **37 PROFESSIONAL THEATRE ARTISTS** within Manitoba and across Canada

“Thank you so much for your great work this year! You provided my drama students with some really unique opportunities.” – TEACHER

Inspiring Conversations



From March 18 to 21, 2021, The Bridge: A Festival of Ideas welcomed households digitally to watch engaging conversations on the topic of Art & (re)Conciliation. Curated by Kim Wheeler, **40 ARTISTS, INNOVATORS AND LEADERS** from the Indigenous community across Turtle Island shared their time and expertise with festival audiences.



Participants in the *Acimowin (To tell story)* Panel – Brett Huson, David A. Robertson, Katherena Vermette, Michael Hutchinson, Tasha Spillet-Sumner

Making Space for Creativity



The Tom Hendry Warehouse was transformed into the BMO Digital Studio, accessible to the community as a video streaming or video capture space (suitable for either live, streamed and pre-recorded events or productions). More than **15 LOCAL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS AND ARTISTS** made use of the BMO Digital Studio to create and stream their own content despite the closure of live-performance venues.

Developing New Work



Inspired by the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, *Tiny Plays*, *Big Ideas* produced **FOUR SHORT PLAYS** by emerging Manitoba playwrights, captured digitally on the John Hirsch Mainstage. Meanwhile, the inaugural Pimootayowin Creators Circle led to the development of **SEVEN NEW PLAYS** by local Indigenous artists, each shared with audiences during an online play-reading festival.

Supporting Emerging Artists



With an aim to ensuring the growth of artists and the development of a robust community that reflects the diversity of the province, we launched the National Mentorship Program – connecting **13 LOCAL EMERGING THEATRE ARTISTS** with senior arts leaders across the country.

DIGITAL PRODUCTIONS



All is Bright

December 19 – 31, 2020

Director: Kelly Thornton
Musical Direction/Arrangements: Andrew St. Hilaire
Lighting Director: Hugh Conacher
Sound Mixing Engineer: Chris Coyne
Set Decoration: Jamie Plummer
Costumes: Thora Lamont
Hair and Makeup: Beverley Covert
Additional Arrangements: Danny Carroll
Video Production: Frank Digital

Cast: Lisa Bell, Elder Dolorès Gosselin, Toby Hughes, Jennifer Lyon, Kevin McIntyre, Debbie Patterson, Alex Poch-Goldin, Daniel Roy, RobYn Slade, Stephanie Sy, Cory Wojcik

Musicians: Karen Barg, Natalie Dawe, Daniel Roy, Andrew St. Hilaire

SUPPORTED BY **SAFE AT HOME MANITOBA**

The Mountaintop

By Katori Hall

February 26 – March 14, 2021

Director: Audrey Dwyer†
Set Designer: Brian Perchaluk†
Costume Designer: Rachel Forbes
Lighting & Video Designer: Hugh Conacher
Sound Designer: Chris Coyne
Dialect Coach: Amani Dorn
Fight Director: Jacquie Loewen
Assistant Director: Hazel Venzon†
Stage Manager: Leslie Watson†
Assistant Stage Manager: Michael Duggan†
Video Production: Frank Digital

Cast: Cherissa Richards†, Ray Strachan

SPONSORED BY **THE ASPER FOUNDATION, THE GAIL ASPER FAMILY FOUNDATION, BMO & MANITOBA LIQUOR AND LOTTERIES**

The (Post) Mistress

Book, Lyrics and Music by Tomson Highway

April 8 – 25, 2021

Director: Simon Miron†
Music Director: Naomi Woo
Set Designer: Andrew Moro
Costume Designer: Andréanne Dandeneau
Lighting Designer: Larry Isacoff‡
Sound Designer: Chris Coyne
Assistant Director: Katie German*
Assistant Set Designer: Shauna Jones*
Stage Manager: Kathryn Ball†

Assistant Stage Manager: Zoë Leclerc-Kennedy
Video Production: Frank Digital

Cast: Krystle Pederson

Musicians: Neil Watson, Naomi Woo

SPONSORED BY **THE ASPER FOUNDATION, THE GAIL ASPER FAMILY FOUNDATION, BMO, THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION & MANITOBA LIQUOR AND LOTTERIES**

Tiny Plays, Big Ideas

May 7 – 23, 2021

Set Designer: Linda Beech
Costume Designer: Joseph Abetria
Lighting Designer: Scott Henderson
Sound Designer/Original Music: Dasha Plett*
Video Designer: Carla Hernandez
Video Design Mentor: Hugh Conacher
Dramaturg: Audrey Dwyer†
Artistic Coordinator: Melissa Langdon
Apprentice Set Designer: Joyce Licup*
Show Manager: Leslie Watson†
Assistant Show Manager: Zoë Leclerc-Kennedy
Apprentice Show Manager: Bearchild Harper
Video Production: Frank Digital

A Piece of Me By Jordan Sangalang

Director: Shannon Guile
ASL Consultant: Joanna Hawkins
ASL-English Interpreters: Cindy Boscow, Tessa Rogowski

Cast: Jordan Sangalang

Ode to RED Auntie By Waawaate Fobister

Director: Frances Koncan

Cast: Waawaate Fobister

The Show By Liam Zarrillo

Director: Matthew Paris-Irvine*
Choreographer: Jacquie Loewen

Cast: Kristian Jordan, Liam Zarrillo

Where.Are.You.From.

By Primrose Madayag Knazan

Director: Hazel Venzon

Cast: Rochelle Kives, Robb Paterson

SPONSORED BY **THE ASPER FOUNDATION, THE GAIL ASPER FAMILY FOUNDATION, BMO, THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION & MANITOBA LIQUOR AND LOTTERIES**

DIGITAL SERIES



BACKSTAGE IN THE PEG is an online arts magazine created to celebrate the incredible artists, arts organizations and local heroes that make Winnipeg such a vibrant city. Launched by Royal MTC, the project aimed to serve the entire arts community and the creative team included Royal MTC's Artistic Director Kelly Thornton and Associate Artistic Director Audrey Dwyer, Ari Weinberg, Artistic Director of Winnipeg Jewish Theatre, and Manitoba Theatre for Young People's Artistic Associate, Katie German.

BACKSTAGE IN THE PEG was a great way for audiences to stay connected to theatre during the pandemic. The five-episode digital series blended news magazine stories with performance segments, while also profiling public figures, artists and local heroes.

Producers: Audrey Dwyer, Katie German
Kelly Thornton, Ari Weinberg

Story Editors: Audrey Dwyer, Kelly Thornton

Editor: Caro Ibrahim

Winnipeg Dispatch Editor: Arne MacPherson

Production Associates: Sue Caughlin,
Katie Inverarity, Laurie Lam

Special Thanks: ACTRA, CFTPA, Playwrights Guild of Canada, The Theatre Community of Winnipeg

Episode One - Special Guests: Carol Philips, Hazel Venzon, RobYn Slade, Toby Hughes, Nelson Bettencourt, Debbie Patterson, Junior Musical Theatre Company

Episode Two - Special Guests: Kimberley Rampersad, Andrea del Campo, Gord Tanner, Lara Rae, Debbie Patterson, Students from Garden City Collegiate & Linden Meadows

Episode Three - Special Guests: Rick Frost, Sophie Smith-Dostmohamed, Danielle Kayahara, Ryan James Miller, Georgette Rahman, Debbie Patterson, Munchkins from *The Wizard of Oz* (Rainbow Stage)

Episode Four - Special Guests: Jessica Dumas, Hugh Conacher, Jesse Miki, Anjali Sandhu, Uzoma Asagwara, Debbie Patterson, Junior Musical Theatre Company

Episode Five - Special Guests: Keren Taylor-Hughes, Josh Caldo, Joseph Seville, Cuinn Joseph, Jane Testar, The Students of Native Youth Theatre, Nova Courchene, Darian Sutherland, Debbie Patterson

*Position funded through the Jean Murray - Moray Sinclair Theatre Apprenticeship Program †Past Jean Murray - Moray Sinclair Scholarship award winner

‡Position funded through the Kingfisher Foundation §Past Naomi Levin Theatre Scholarship award winner



Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival

Due to pandemic restrictions, our annual summer festival was presented in a digital format. From July 14 to 17, VIRTUALLY YOURS, #WPGFRINGE featured a wide range of free performances and music from local, national and international artists. Fringers gamely tuned in and interacted with the livestream show that was hosted by Ray Strachan, and available on the festival's Facebook and YouTube sites.

NUMBER OF PERFORMING COMPANIES • 28 (24 LIVESTREAMED AND 4 TAPED)

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS • 69 INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

SUPPORTED BY **MANITOBA LIQUOR MARTS** AND **ASSINIBOINE CREDIT UNION**



Host Ray Strachan with co-host Toby Hughes

VIRTUALLY YOURS,
#WpgFringe
- Winter Series -

Thanks to the Safe at Home program, the Fringe offered a free digital series from March 10 to 31. Fringers tuned in through the festival's YouTube and Facebook sites.

NUMBER OF PERFORMING COMPANIES • 5

NUMBER OF SHOWS • 8

SPONSORED BY **SAFE AT HOME MANITOBA**



The Bridge: A Festival of Ideas 2021: Art & (re)Conciliation

THE BRIDGE: A FESTIVAL OF IDEAS is an annual event that invites audiences to go deeper, to engage in the issues of our time. For our inaugural festival, we explored how art moves the conversation forward around reconciliation. Curated by Kim Wheeler, this digital event attracted participation from across the country, highlighting the depth and breadth of talent in our Indigenous arts community. From March 18 to 21, audiences engaged with a variety of festival offerings – one-on-one conversations, panels, music, play excerpts, an art walking tour and a full-length livestreamed production. The first-ever Festival of Ideas was a great success and we look forward to next year's event, which will focus on climate change.

SPONSORED BY **DELOITTE**



Meegwun Fairbrother in the livestreamed production of *Isitwendam*

Literary Development

The Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre produces an average of one new play each season. This year, four new plays by Manitoba playwrights were part of our digital Mainstage offering. *Tiny Plays, Big Ideas* was a series of short plays about human rights written by four Manitoban playwrights. It was previously envisioned as an in-person event at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The commissioned playwrights were Waawaate Fobister, Primrose Madayag Knazan, Jordan Sangalang and Liam Zarrillo. Their plays were workshoped throughout the season, then recorded and shared online in April 2021.

The Pimootayowin Creators Circle also launched this year, led by Governor General Award-winning playwright Ian Ross, and assisted by Katie German. Pimootayowin is an Anishinaabemowin word meaning *Journey*, a word chosen by Ross who likens the creation of new art to a journey. The Creators Circle brought together a powerful array of Indigenous voices including Lynette Bonin, Jim Compton, Rosanna Deerchild, Katie German, Kathleen MacLean, Dave McLeod and Tracey Nepinak whose work culminated in a play-reading series – *Pimootayowin: A Festival of New Work* in June 2021. The Pimootayowin Creators Circle was generously sponsored by **TD Ready Commitment**.

We received over 75 script submissions this year, cultivating relationships with writers and theatre companies across the country. We supported Obsidian Theatre's *21 Black Futures*, invested in Young People's Theatre's *The Darkest Dark* by Chris Hadfield, partnered with Alberta Theatre Projects and The Shakespeare Company to workshop *The Trial of William Shakespeare* by Alex Poch-Goldin, commissioned Debbie Patterson and Joseph Aragon to write short plays for Boca del Lupo's *Plays2Perform@Home*, *Prairie Edition*, hosted a workshop reading of Vern Thiessen's *The Diviners*, and continued development on Sam Vint and Trish Cooper's new play (*Untitled*). Overall, we invested in the development of 18 new scripts and hired 40 artists to work on readings and workshops. These diverse activities are invaluable to the playwright's process, and ensure there is a strong pipeline of new work heading to the stage.

National Mentorship Program

In fall 2020, Royal MTC announced its new National Mentorship Program. This annual program aims to help Manitoban theatre practitioners overcome the barriers of geographical isolation to build a web of connections and opportunities. As part of our commitment to nurture and support our local talent pool, we launched this program to connect the brightest emerging talent with the most innovative and exciting theatre practitioners across the country. Each mentee selected a mentor from across Canada. They met online throughout the year to discuss theatre, leadership, art making and more. The program culminated in a short interview filmed between the mentor and mentee, which can be found on our [YouTube page](#). The National Mentorship Program was generously supported by **The RBC Foundation**.

2020/21 NATIONAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

MENTEES	MENTORS
Ksenia Broda-Milian	Beth Dart
Katie German	Yvette Nolan
Melissa Langdon.....	Kimberley Rampersad
Joyce Licup	Joseph Abetria
Sarah Luby.....	David Connolly
Julie Lumsden	Renelitta Arluk
Andrea Macasaet.....	Nina Lee Aquino
Matthew Paris-Irvine	Philip Akin
Dasha Plett.....	Deanna Choi
Sophie Smith-Dostmohamed...	Haysam Kadri
Hazel Venzon	Maiko Bae Yamamoto
Haley Vincent	Laura Nanni
Liam Zarrillo.....	Sunny Drake



Digital Programming for Youth

Royal MTC has prioritized educational opportunities for students so it was vital to find a way to deliver programming during the pandemic. After consultation with educators, we developed a series of flexible, digital education programs for little to no cost to schools and students. We were also thrilled to connect more professional artists with students than ever before.

SUPPORTED BY CANADA LIFE AND DEBORAH GRAY

INSIGHTS: CONVERSATIONS WITH DIRECTORS, PLAYWRIGHTS AND ACTORS • 30-minute Q & A sessions where students engaged in an interactive and lively discussion with professional theatre artists. This series of conversations with directors, playwrights and actors was so popular we ran it three times. A total of **17 schools and 325 students from grades 6-12** participated throughout the season.

TEACHING ARTISTS

Katie German	Simon Miron	Joseph Seville
Kevin Klassen	Ellen Peterson	RobYn Slade
Julie Lumsden	Alex Poch-Goldin	Justin Stadnyk
Jennifer Lyon	Kimberley Rampersad	Hazel Venzon

"This was a one-of-a-kind opportunity for my students to ask questions of a professional person and in an approachable way."

"I loved that Jennifer (Lyon) was extremely willing to share and elaborate on her personal experiences as an actress. It felt almost as though I was in the same room as her."

"This is very inspiring to know that someone who comes from small-town Manitoba can become a professional actor."

CAMERA, LIGHTS, ACTION • A series of free Zoom audition prep classes where students learned to navigate the pros and cons of auditioning online, participated in mock auditions and received lighting tips for on-camera auditions. This three-workshop series was offered twice during the season and engaged **64 grade 10-12 students**.

TEACHING ARTISTS

Christopher Brauer	Ann Hodges	Cherissa Richards
Hugh Conacher	Krista Jackson	Justin Stadnyk
Starr Domingue	Alex Poch-Goldin	Ray Strachan

SPRING BREAK: MORNING MAKERS • **15 students** participated in a spring break series of two workshops that provided a hands-on opportunity to delve into the production and technical elements of costume and scenic design. Ksenia Broda-Milian led 'Costuming a Character' while Shauna Jones taught an 'Introduction to Painting Woodgrain'.

THE MOUNTAINTOP WORKSHOPS • Throughout the run of *The Mountaintop*, we offered a school group rate with access to two workshops and a study guide for the production. Evangelia Kambites, Starr Domingue, Devon Glover, Jameela McNeil and Melissa Langdon taught various workshops and brought their unique perspectives as Black theatre artists to the conversation. **120 students from 9 schools** participated in these workshops.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. & THE 1960S • Students were invited into the world of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Through practical exercises and drama activities, students learned about Dr. King's influence and connection to the US Civil Rights Movement.

CHARACTER DYNAMICS - SCENE STUDY • Through practical exploration and scene study with professional theatre artists, students discovered how character dynamics influence the powerful relationship between Dr. King and Camae.

"Melissa (Langdon) was fantastic to deal with. Made everything simple... the students were easily able to connect with her during the workshop as she created a safe space for all."

*"Thank YOU so much for the opportunity. I really enjoyed sharing whatever I could with those lucky students who got to see Royal MTC's wonderful production of *The Mountaintop*."*

- Starr Domingue, Teaching Artist

"It was a great experience this year. We are a school that does a ton of leaving to learn excursions in non-COVID times. We haven't had these experiences this year... today was much appreciated!"

Teacher Think Tank

Educators joined forces this year to enrich and enhance the work of the Education & Community Outreach team. They helped us cultivate new ideas, contributed to positive change and shared their own journey in the world of education. Thank you so much to all the inspiring educators who joined the Teacher Think Tank this season!

Directing and Design Assistant Program

Royal MTC is committed to the cultivation of local talent by providing opportunities for early career designers and directors to refine and strengthen their craft. Through our Assistant Program, successful applicants work with established theatre artists to broaden their skills and obtain professional experience.

Katie German - Assistant Director, *The (Post) Mistress*
 Shauna Jones - Assistant Set Designer, *The (Post) Mistress*
 Dasha Plett - Sound Designer/Original Music, *Tiny Plays, Big Ideas*
 Hazel Venzon - Assistant Director, *The Mountaintop*

SUPPORTED BY THE KINGFISHER FOUNDATION

Scholarships and Apprenticeships

In recognition and celebration of two Winnipeg theatre pioneers who contributed to our company's development, Royal MTC established the Jean Murray-Moray Sinclair Theatre Scholarship Fund. This fund awards scholarships to successful applicants who are full-time students attending accredited theatre schools or university theatre programs, and who intend to pursue a career in theatre. This fund also awards apprenticeships to emerging professional artists and craftspeople who have completed accredited post-secondary training within the past two academic years and are looking for opportunities to gain experience in professional theatre.

Thank you to our patrons who contributed generously to our second-highest "pass-the-hat" campaign during performances of *As You Like It* in January 2020.

Royal MTC awarded a total of **\$27,300** for the 2020/2021 academic year/theatre season.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Vincenzo Alberto	Madeline Emmonds	Victoria McNeil
Julia Anderson	Natalie Ferguson	Alanna McPherson
Rachel Baziuk	Laurel Fife	Juliette Schroeder-Suss
Kate Berg	Tristen Foy	Bennette Villones
Anika Binding	Sophie George	Hunter Watson
Gennevieve Bourdeau	Samantha Hutchings	Haeln Weldu Gebre
Ashlin Daly	Taylor Izon	Katie Welham
Taryn Edgeworth	Ben McIntyre-Ridd	

APPRENTICESHIP RECIPIENTS

Joyce Licup - Apprentice Set Designer, *Tiny Plays, Big Ideas*
 Christine Leslie (deferred to 2021/22)
 Matthew Paris-Irvine - Director, *The Show, Tiny Plays, Big Ideas*

Talkbacks

For each digital production, we hosted an hour-long talkback on Zoom that was available to all ticket buyers. These behind-the-scenes conversations with performers and creators included a question-and-answer session with the audience.

THE MOUNTAINTOP - CREATING THE CHARACTER • Actors Ray Strachan and Cherissa Richards joined Dialect Coach Amani Dorn and Director Audrey Dwyer to discuss how they created the iconic real-life character of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the fictional character of Camae.

THE (POST) MISTRESS - HOW MUSIC SETS THE SCENE • Director Simon Miron, Musical Director Naomi Woo, Performer Krystle Pederson and Set Designer Andrew Moro dug into the music at the core of *The (Post) Mistress* and discussed how the beauty of the Canadian Shield transformed the set beyond a small-town post office.

TINY PLAYS, BIG IDEAS - INSPIRING SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH STORYTELLING • Playwrights Waawaate Fobister, Primrose Madayag Knazan, Jordan Sangalang and Liam Zarrillo took patrons through the journey of creating their tiny plays. They shared highlights from each step of the process and discussed the transition from 'promenade-style' theatre at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights to filming a digital production on the John Hirsch Mainstage.

Cocktails with the Creators

Donors enjoyed a peak behind the curtain thanks to a series of conversations with the creators of favourite Royal MTC productions including *The Cottage*, *Billy Elliot*, MTC nominees for the Winnipeg Theatre Awards, *All is Bright*, and a special edition about the 50th anniversary of the John Hirsch Mainstage building.

Drama Club

Launching this season, The Drama Club brought monthly donors together to experience an intimate series of live play readings and critical conversations with artists. Two virtual events were held this season - the first centred on the concept of the 'Tragic Hero' by contrasting characters from August Wilson's *Fences* and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. The second focused on censorship and examined Paula Vogel's play *Indecent* alongside its inspiration, Sholem Asch's 1923 play *God of Vengeance*.

Opening Night Conversations

Donors were invited to deepen their understanding of each production this season with an opening night speaker series sponsored by **Taylor McCaffrey LLP**. Former Consul General of Canada to the Southeast US, Nadia Theodore, inspired and educated us about Dr. Martin Luther King's legacy and connection to Canada. Playwright Tomson Highway's sparkling wit delighted as he shared his writing process with us. Canadian Museum for Human Rights President and CEO Isha Khan furthered our understanding of the museum's role in advancing human rights.



Ray Strachan in *The Mountaintop*. PHOTO BY HUGH CONACHER

BLACK & WHITE BALL

THANK YOU FOR MAKING SPARKS FLY!

On Saturday, November 14 we celebrated and watched the sparks fly at the sold-out Black & White Ball at Home.

We were joined by 300 guests for our first-ever Virtual Cocktail Cabaret, featuring performances by Laura Olafson, Simon Miron and Paul De Gurse, a delicious spread from Mottola Grocery and wine from Jones & Company Wine Merchants. Additionally, 250 lucky patrons purchased the incredible Luxury Gift Box, filled with sweets, treats and beautifully handmade gifts from local Manitoba artisans. With 70 generously donated prizes, our online silent auction exceeded expectations and raised over \$28,000!

On behalf of every artist and staff member at Royal MTC who is supported by these funds - THANK YOU! Your support as a ticket buyer, donor, sponsor, auction donor, artisan or volunteer contributed to recreating the magic of the Black & White Ball from the safety of home. Your generous contributions are helping us redefine theatre in new and innovative ways.

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Simon Miron and Paul De Gurse
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Josep Seras-Gubert & Kelly Thornton



Laura Olafson
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SPECIAL EVENTS

Royal MTC/MBA Lawyers Play



Picasso at the Lapin Agile

By Steve Martin

Director: Michelle Boulet*
 Production Designer: Kari Hagness
 Wardrobe Coordinator: Thora Lamont
 Audio: Chris Brett
 Stage Manager: Chuck McEwen
 Digital Stage Managers: Tori Popp, Lisa Hunt

Cast: David Dick, Tashia Dreger, Reid Girard, Benji Greenberg, Danny Gunn, Ashley Korsunsky, Jeff Palamar, Jaime Rosin, Neil Steen, Geoffrey Toews, Maria Versace

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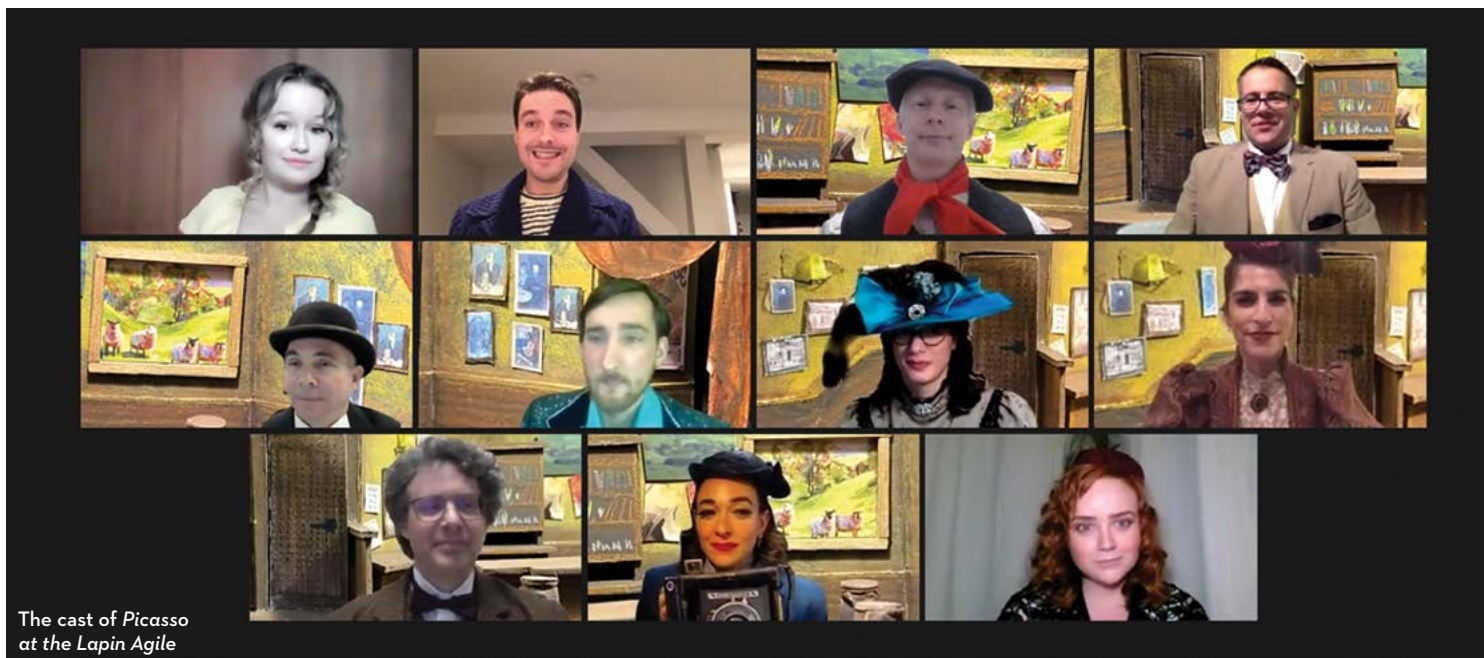
Melissa Hazelton - Chair	Jason Gisser
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Jessica Isaak	Nalini Reddy
Jamie Jurczak	Stéphanie Tétreault

MERCI, MES AMIS!

It was the perfect night for a cocktail in Paris as members of the Manitoba Bar Association presented *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* by Steve Martin. Our incredible cast took on the new challenge of a free virtual reading with grace and humour as they shared this unique collection of characters with us on Friday, April 9 for the annual Lawyers Play.

Cast entirely with members from the Manitoba Bar Association, the Lawyers Play is one of Royal MTC and the Winnipeg Fringe Festival's largest fundraisers and since its inception in 1990 has raised over \$1,100,000 to ensure vibrant theatre remains accessible to all Manitobans. Exclusively supporting the Winnipeg Fringe Festival this year, the Lawyers Play will help us connect to share exciting, independent theatre from across the globe.

An enormous thank you to our patrons, donors, advertisers and sponsors for supporting our efforts. Royal MTC and the Winnipeg Fringe Festival would also like to extend sincere thanks to the talented cast and hardworking crew, as well as our wonderful committee members.



The cast of *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*

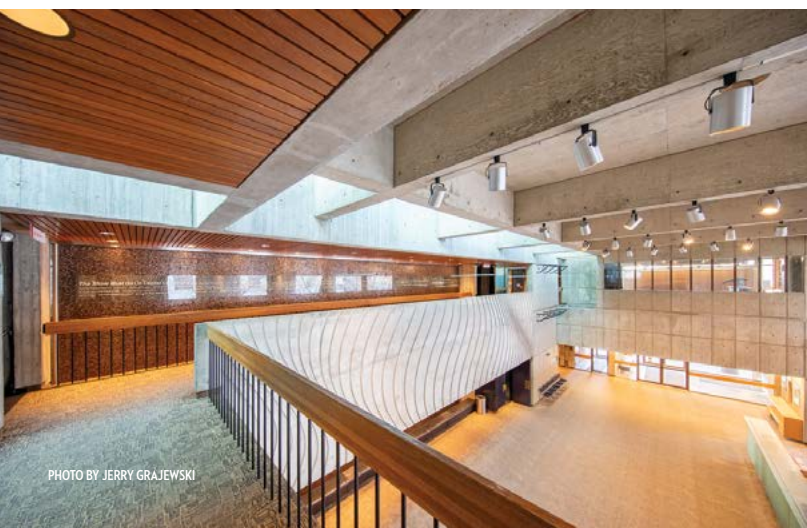
*The participation of this Artist was arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the Dance • Opera • Theatre Policy



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John Hirsch and Tom Hendry shared a dream of creating great professional theatre with mass appeal. With the visionary support of Founders' Circle members – those who have made a planned gift to Royal MTC – their dream will live on for generations to come. Thank you to our Founders' Circle members.

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Final Bow

The Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre honours the passing of those dear to our theatre – people who've made a lasting commitment to this ephemeral art form.

Alberta Fenning, MTC volunteer
Susan Groff, MTC Head Scenic Artist
Joann MacMorran, MTC volunteer
Les Moore, IATSE crew member
Dave Moran, MTC volunteer
Sharon Pollock, MTC Associate Artistic Director
John "The Hawk" Tomiuk, MTC House Stage Hand

*2020/21 Royal MTC Board of Trustees/Advisory Board members

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§Fondly remembered

Krystle Pederson in *The (Post) Mistress*.
PHOTO BY HUGH CONACHER



“We miss you guys!
Hope to see you again soon.”

– PATRON

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Notes on Financial Position**AS AT MAY 31, 2021**

This has been a complicated and challenging year for Royal MTC. COVID has had a very significant impact on the theatre's financials, particularly impacting our strong track record in earned revenue.

Starting with the 2020 Fringe Festival, Royal MTC cancelled all planned live performances in the season. Royal MTC made the strategic decision to pivot to digital programming to remain connected to our audience. These programs were well received and made possible thanks to extended government support.

Royal MTC's operating expenses were down \$5.5 million from the prior year. This significant savings on operations was offset with government COVID support including the unanticipated extension of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy. This has resulted in a significant surplus which has been transferred to Royal MTC's stabilization fund.

Royal MTC thanks the various levels of government, along with our many sponsors and donors for ensuring that we were able to weather this initial year of COVID, and can emerge ready to invest in activities that will welcome back our audiences safely and strategically.

¹Fondly remembered

FINANCIALS

Statement of Financial Position AS AT MAY 31, 2021

	OPERATING FUND	CAPITAL REPLACEMENT FUND	THEATRE DEVELOPMENT FUND	STABILIZATION FUND	SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUNDS	2021 TOTAL	2020 TOTAL
ASSETS							
CURRENT							
Cash and cash equivalents	3,499,156				77,745	3,576,901	3,564,664
Accounts and grants receivable	1,025,662					1,025,662	953,144
Prepaid expenses	176,027					176,027	326,042
Due to/(from) funds	(2,017,014)	654,231	98,825	1,263,958		–	–
	2,683,831	654,231	98,825	1,263,958	77,745	4,778,590	4,843,850
CAPITAL ASSETS							
		1,173,717				1,173,717	1,413,149
	2,683,831	1,827,948	98,825	1,263,958	77,745	5,952,307	6,256,999
LIABILITIES							
CURRENT							
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	454,573					454,573	232,577
Deferred revenue	2,229,258					2,229,258	3,125,735
	2,683,831					2,683,831	3,358,312
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS RELATED TO CAPITAL ASSETS							
		1,577,286				1,577,286	1,777,281
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS							
					77,745	77,745	83,126
	2,683,831	1,577,286			77,745	4,338,862	5,218,719
NET ASSETS							
Internally restricted	–		98,825			98,825	68,440
Invested in capital assets	–	250,662				250,662	276,944
Unrestricted	–			1,263,958		1,263,958	692,896
	–	250,662	98,825	1,263,958	–	1,613,445	1,038,280
	2,683,831	1,827,948	98,825	1,263,958	77,745	5,952,307	6,256,999

Statement of Operations & Changes in Net Assets AS AT MAY 31, 2021

	OPERATING FUND	CAPITAL REPLACEMENT FUND	THEATRE DEVELOPMENT FUND	STABILIZATION FUND	SCHOLARSHIP TRUST FUNDS	2021 TOTAL	2020 TOTAL
Revenue	5,757,801	248,179	–	–	27,300	6,033,280	10,855,004
Expenses	5,116,739	274,461	39,615	–	27,300	5,458,115	10,962,714
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	641,062	(26,282)	(39,615)	–	–	575,165	(107,710)
Net assets, beginning of year		276,944	68,440	692,896	–	1,038,280	1,145,990
Interfund transfers	(641,062)	–	70,000	571,062	–		
Net assets, end of year	–	250,662	98,825	1,263,958	–	1,613,445	1,038,280

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We need the arts!”

– PATRON



This page: Stephanie Sy in *All is Bright*.
Back cover: Jordan Sangalang in *A Piece of Me*
(*Tiny Plays, Big Ideas*). PHOTOS BY HUGH CONACHER

ROYAL MTC

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