

Strategic Plan

2023-2026



Who We Are

For over 65 years, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre (“MTC”) has created, produced and presented extraordinary theatre for a vibrant audience. Theatre is part of what makes communities strong, and a powerful tool for social change. It fosters empathy, understanding and builds human connection. The stability and health of MTC over time has enabled programming in two downtown venues, the creation and support of significant festivals including the Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival, and a regional tour. MTC has embraced the opportunity to be a theatrical hub for our province.

As North America’s oldest English language regional theatre, we believe our responsibility is to be a theatre for all Manitobans. Located in Winnipeg, a city with Canada’s largest urban Indigenous population, we are committed to building authentic relationships through our art that will foster reconciliation.

With renewed artistic leadership, MTC has accelerated and advanced an organization-wide conversation about diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. Our mission demands this shift in focus to truly “both reflect and engage the community we serve”.

In 2021, MTC’s Leadership and Board of Trustees established a three-year Strategic Renewal Plan, to help guide the organization post-COVID. We imagined a strong resurgence of audiences, eager to reconnect to the art form they missed over an extended intermission. We now recognize that audience renewal and rebuilding our financial strength requires a longer runway. In 2023, the Board of Trustees and Senior Management reviewed the plan and recommitted to the key priorities, with some new language to support our evolution and growth as an organization.

With this revision and extension of the Strategic Plan to 2026, we commit wholeheartedly to connecting with Manitobans through the making and sharing of truly great theatre.

Mandate

It is the aim of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre to study, practice and promote all aspects of the dramatic arts, 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

Our commitment to balance is evident in the composition of the playbill and in the wide range of programs and festivals 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.

Royal MTC is located in Winnipeg on Treaty 1 territory, the lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples, and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. We are thankful for the benefits sharing this land has afforded us, acknowledge the responsibilities of the Treaties, and embrace the opportunity to partner with Indigenous communities in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

Royal MTC in the Time of Recovery

In 2021, when the Board of Trustees and Senior Management developed and adopted a Strategic Renewal Plan, we expected it would take three “recovery-informed” seasons for the organization to return to the financial, artistic and audience balance that characterized our pre-COVID scope and scale. Now in year two of this recovery period, we recognize that we underestimated the long shadow the pandemic continues to cast on so many aspects of our community.

Winnipeg, and Manitoba, have changed. Organizations large and small are grappling with an evolving work force, the vitality and safety of the downtown core, rising costs, and changing cultural norms – which can all be disruptive forces for live activities, including the performing arts. A true recovery is going to take longer than planned. The work ahead includes rebuilding to support the range of productions, festivals, and outreach and education programs for which MTC is known.

The pandemic and social justice movements of the past few years have had a profound impact within the organization. MTC is committed to embedding equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility throughout the organization, reimagining relationships with the community, and building bridges with those who have been historically excluded and underserved by our theatre. COVID continues to disrupt rehearsals and performances, as we support a broad diversity of artists to ensure their health and well-being. The safety of our artists, audience and staff is paramount to what we do in bringing live theatre to our province, creating relationships based on mutual respect and trust.

We are deeply grateful to be here, on Treaty 1 territory, a land that has celebrated stories for millennia. As we look to the future, there is a stirring conversation in the Canadian cultural sector, informed by and responding to the broader community. We are inspired to engage in this dialogue, to create the conditions where theatres truly represent our communities, and where the intersection of our experiences define our storytelling.

Priorities

In 2023, MTC recommitted to a set of four priorities – cultivating talent, fostering a deeper connection with community, engaging audiences, and balancing the organizational foundation. These four priorities are interconnected, and they inform and nurture each other.



Cultivate talent: MTC will invest in development that grows artistic and creative talent.

As the largest theatre employer in Manitoba, MTC creates meaningful opportunities for creators and artists who live in Manitoba, working alongside the best of Canadian talent. Programs for Manitoba-based artists help propel careers and address a history of an exodus of talent, most notably among emerging artists who bring diversity to the community. Play development prioritizes diverse voices, namely the talent of Manitoba's Indigenous community through our Pimootayowin Creators Circle, bringing important stories to MTC stages. We also recognize the talent and potential of our staff through continued commitments to professional development opportunities, and creating respectful workplaces for all.

Connect to community: MTC will ensure more Manitobans see themselves reflected throughout the theatre.

MTC strives to reflect the diversity of our province across the organization – onstage with creators and artists; backstage and throughout administration offices; in our theatres with audiences; and in the volunteers who contribute so meaningfully to our success. We will create sustainable relationships with community ambassadors, and actively welcome new audiences to join the existing base. Community connections will continue to be fostered in a spirit of reconciliation and truth with a focus on a sense of belonging for all Manitobans.

Engage audiences: MTC will attract and grow audiences with artistic excellence and meaningful dialogue.

Producing high quality theatre is fundamental to our success, and engaging in dialogue about our work strengthens our audience's relationship with MTC. Our work aims to inspire, illuminate and ignite critical conversations. By prioritizing engagement opportunities that nurture these conversations, we enhance the audience's experience and build loyalty. To ensure our theatre's future, we invest in educational enrichment programs to nurture a love of theatre among young adults who will become the next generation of theatre-goers.

Balance a strong foundation: MTC will stabilize our business model, so that we can deliver our programming in a financially sustainable way.

MTC faces real challenges in achieving organizational balance in the time of recovery. This stems from increased costs, flat public sector investment, and a significant drop in earned revenue which combine to put pressure on programming. A continued focus on philanthropic and private sector opportunities can enable artistic growth. The company's long financial success has the subscription model at the core; we need to keep investing to grow audience loyalty and commitment. We remain dedicated to deliver strong long-term fiscal management, and recognize that alongside financial resources, we need to shore up the human resources that balance our organizational capacity.

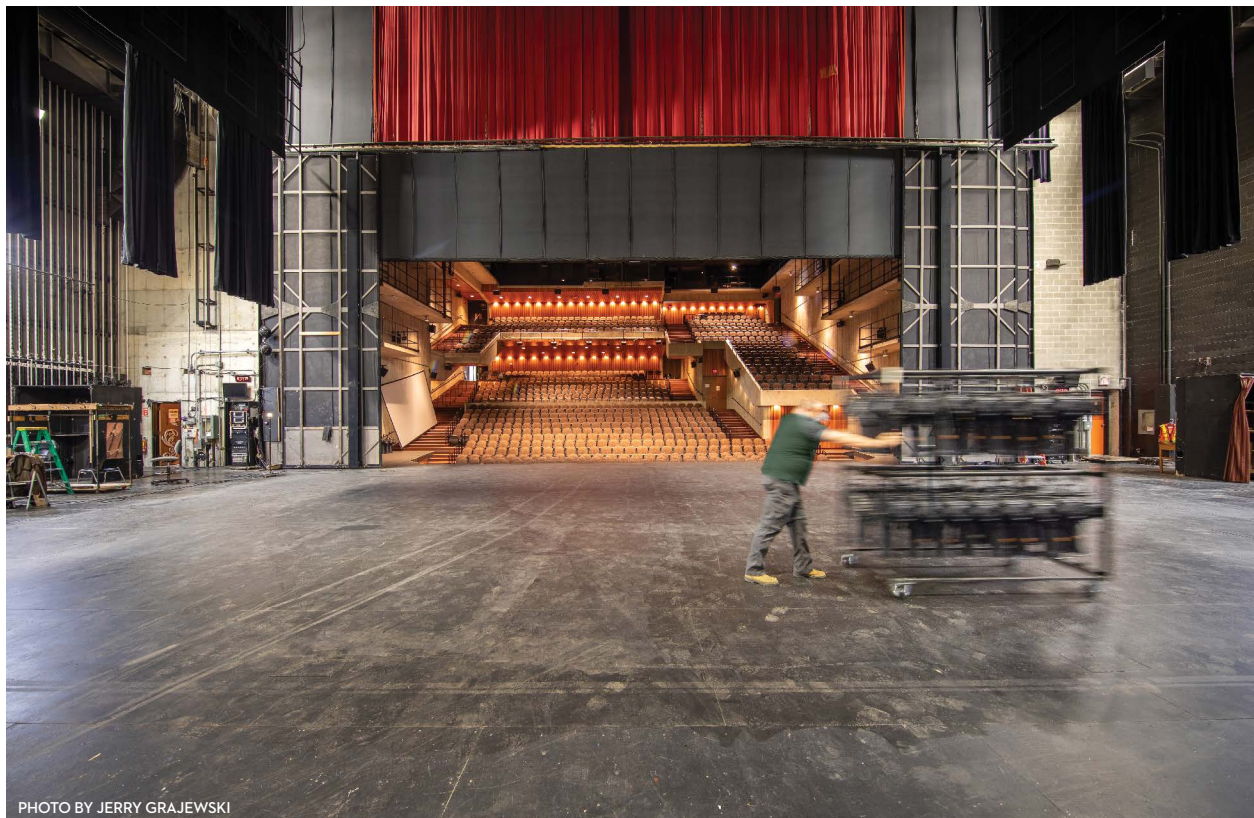


PHOTO BY JERRY GRAJEWSKI



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Looking Forward

As Canada's oldest English-language regional theatre, the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre is symbolic as a national institution and local treasure. From the inspiring dreams of John Hirsch and Tom Hendry who believed that art can “give a great city an image of its soul”, MTC has played a significant role in the cultural identity of Manitobans.

With this Plan, we set a hopeful and pragmatic course for the future, informed by equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility, and integrating these principles into powerful programming that will celebrate a myriad of voices on our stages.

As storytellers and theatre-makers we can shape a Canadian theatre that carries us forward as a society. We recognize the profound responsibility to stabilize our organization through this recovery period, so we can flourish for generations to come. We embrace the opportunity to use our resources and our powerful platform to lead this change.

MTC's 2021-2024 Strategic Renewal Plan was originally approved at the June 21, 2021 Board of Trustees meeting. This Revised Plan (2023-2026) was approved at the June 26, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting.



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