



JEREMY WEBB artistic director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Neptune Theatre Reports Record Attendance and Surplus in 2019

**HALIFAX, NS – October 21, 2019:** Neptune Theatre reported record attendance, enhanced community engagement and a modest surplus for the second year in a row at its Annual General Meeting today in Halifax. Members of the Neptune Theatre Foundation also celebrated the contributions of outgoing president Rebecca Hiltz LeBlanc and welcomed incoming chair Paul Laberge.

Over 105,000 patrons came to Neptune during the season, a 25 per cent increase over the previous year. Much of the increase was due to the success of *Cinderella*, which attracted more than 24,000 patrons, becoming the highest grossing holiday production in Neptune's history, and attendance from summer programming.

"We are delighted by the response to Neptune's programming and our work to better connect the theatre to the community we serve," said Ms. Hiltz LeBlanc. "Serving on the board of directors for the past 10 years has been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life."

Neptune presented over 450 performances in the 2018-2019 Season. The playbill featured a strong lineup of Canadian and Atlantic Canadian content, including the premiere of *The Bridge*, produced by 2b theatre company and written by Halifax playwright and author Shauntay Grant. Neptune also partnered with Eastern Front Theatre to premiere *KAMP* written by Halifax playwright Jamie Bradley and composer GaRRy Williams. The poignant production garnered critical acclaim and became the highest grossing production in the history of Neptune's Scotiabank Stage. The season concluded with the Canadian regional premier of the musical *The Color Purple*, drawing large crowds and rave reviews from patrons.

"I am very proud of what we have accomplished during my first full season as artistic director," said Jeremy Webb. "I committed to opening Neptune's doors to the broader community; to elevating and celebrating the work of local artists and supporting the growth and development of the regional theatre community. Neptune made progress on all of these goals this season."

Mr. Webb also highlighted the Chrysalis Project, the hands-on training program Neptune created to provide directors, designers and choreographers the opportunity to be mentored by visiting and local professionals while working on productions at Neptune.

Neptune continued its focus on the financial health of the organization, expanding programming and enrollment at the theatre school, welcoming new audiences and growing alternate sources of revenue. The theatre also strengthened outreach and engagement with several important communities during the season.

“Neptune is fortunate to have wonderful community, corporate and government partners,” said general manager Lisa Bugden. “Financial support and valuable advice has enabled Neptune to develop new programming and to make theatre accessible to more people across the province.”

Neptune enhanced accessible programming at the theatre school and presented its first relaxed or sensory friendly performances. The theatre also introduced American Sign Language (ASL) interpreted performances for the Deaf community.

“My goal is to build on the foundation in place to ensure Neptune continues to be a dynamic and sustainable organization,” said Paul Laberge. “I want the theatre to continue telling important stories from our region and to elevate Neptune’s stature on the national stage.

The Foundation thanked outgoing directors: Pete Clive, Chuck Homewood, Virginia Jones and Kate Mullan-MacLssac for their service and contributions to Neptune and welcomed a new slate of officers and directors.

The 2019-2020 Board of Directors of the Neptune Theatre Foundation includes:

Paul Laberge	(Chair)
Kelly Boudreau	(Vice Chair)
Charlene Milner	(Treasurer & Chair of the Audit Committee)
Rodney Belliveau	(Secretary)
Rebecca Hiltz LeBlanc	(Past Chair)
Mary Clancy	(Chair: Advocacy & Education Committee)
Tracey Jones-Grant	(Chair: Community Outreach Committee)
Catherine Bagnell Styles	(Chair: Strategic Marketing Committee)
Sara Scott	(Director)
Krista Grant	(Director)
Leslie Hawco	(Director)
Anna Grue	(Director)
Shafin Mahfuz	(Director)
Raymond Sewell	(Director)
Stella Balfour	(Director)*
Anna Hurshman	(Director)*
Andrea Hughes	(Director)*
Larry (Lorne) Izzard	(Director)*

\*Indicates newly appointed directors

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**BROADCAST COPY:**

NEPTUNE THEATRE INCREASED ATTENDANCE BY 25 PER CENT DURING THE YEAR ENDING MAY 31, 2019. THE THEATRE WELCOMED OVER 105,000 PATRONS, ENHANCED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RECORDED A MODEST SURPLUS FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW.

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

**Jennifer MacNeil, Social Media, Communications & Content Creator  
Neptune Theatre Foundation  
(902) 494-8465**

[jmacneail@neptunetheatre.com](mailto:jmacneail@neptunetheatre.com)