

THE LAST EPISTLE OF TIGHTROPE TIME
WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY WALTER BORDEN

PHOTO BY STOO METZ

2022-2023
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

WELCOME

The 2022-23 Season marked a significant milestone for Neptune Theatre, being our first full-length season since the onset of COVID, coinciding with our 60th anniversary. There's a remarkable parallel between the longevity of our organization, and the resilience required to navigate the challenges of the pandemic and return to a semblance of "normal". Throughout this season, we encountered new challenges, with shifts in audiences and an evolving landscape requiring a change in strategy. In the face of these challenges, we discovered new ways to connect with our patrons and gained a deeper understanding of their desires in this new normal.

After 5 years at the helm we saw the departure of our dedicated General Manager Lisa Bugden, who steadfastly guided the organization through the COVID storm. With a significant gap in our leadership team, we were fortunate to have the steady and experienced leadership of Catherine Bagnell-Styles as Interim Executive Director. Catherine's leadership was crucial in keeping the organization moving forward during the transition.

The appointment of Kimberlee Stadelmann as our new Executive Director, joining us from Citadel Theatre in Edmonton, has injected fresh energy into our team. Kimberlee has over 20 years of experience in arts leadership and the Neptune board and team are excited to be part of a new strategic direction.

This period of change and renewal has positioned Neptune Theatre for a vibrant future. The collective efforts of our dedicated team, coupled with the continued support of our patrons, are instrumental in writing the next chapter of our story.

The 2022-23 season held profound significance for Neptune Theatre Foundation as the theatre celebrated its 60th anniversary, and it was the first year without closures or restrictions due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Throughout this year, we celebrated our history and looked forward to the future unencumbered by the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

The theatre welcomed new and returning patrons to our full slate of productions ranging from brand-new works to beloved classics. It was a momentous occasion when the long-awaited Billy Elliot closed the season, delivering a stunning show but also concluding our outstanding ticket liability from pandemic-related cancellations.

The unwavering support from our donors, sponsors, funders, and partners played a pivotal role in bringing stories to life on our stage. Their generosity not only marked a significant milestone for Neptune but ensures that the theatre is poised for success in the future. Additional funding from the City to help stage Billy Elliot after the closure in 2020, coupled with support from our donors and the Province will help address critical infrastructure needs for the theatre.

This season's success is a testament to the tireless efforts of our Board of Directors, staff, technicians and artists. Their talents, passion, and unwavering dedication illuminate Neptune's stages.

Kimberlee Stadelmann, Executive Director

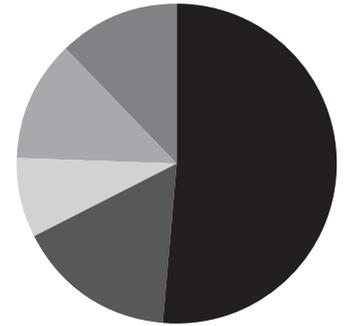
WE ARE ALL TREATY PEOPLE

Neptune Theatre is located on sacred land that has been the site of human activity since time immemorial. We are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq, and we acknowledge them as the past, present, and future caretakers of this land.

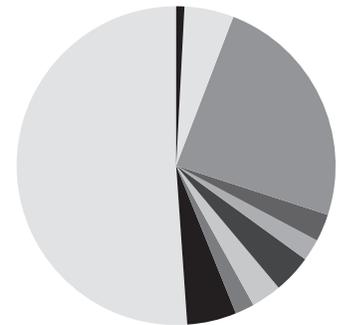
As artists, we are grateful to work and build community here. As stewards of culture, we are in the process of learning more about how our company can improve our relations with Indigenous People and uphold the values of collaboration and inclusivity in all that we do.

2022 – 2023 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

	2023	2022	2021
REVENUES			
Productions	3,355,676	876,071	65,361
Grants	871,267	927,425	671,825
Development	865,016	935,638	537,578
Theatre school	522,818	400,159	178,357
Ticket surcharge	250,291	51,486	(1,400)
Other	1,142,531	317,586	30,970
	7,007,599	3,508,365	1,482,691
EXPENSES			
Administrative	1,663,893	1,084,673	551,415
Bar	176,016	53,413	3,041
Box office	124,964	59,370	8,580
Building operations	289,766	261,220	159,562
Development	198,631	75,170	80,162
Front of house	139,148	74,408	1,544
Marketing	373,960	99,145	67,102
Productions	3,510,969	1,184,199	311,770
Theatre rentals	57,584	22,265	5,696
Theatre school	342,756	144,155	49,910
	6,877,687	3,058,018	1,238,782
SURPLUS	129,912	450,347	243,909
ACCUMULATED DEFICIT	(698,851)	(828,763)	(1,279,110)

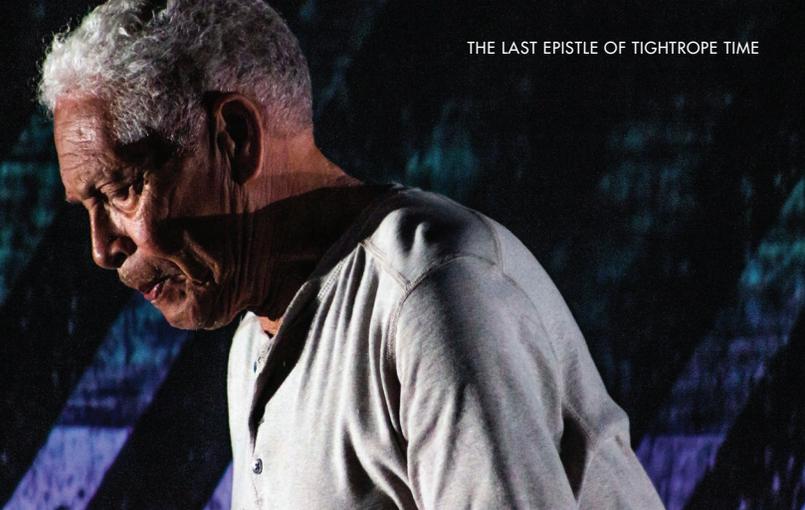


REVENUE CONTRIBUTION
51% PRODUCTIONS
16% OTHER
12% GRANTS
12% DEVELOPMENT
8% THEATRE SCHOOL



EXPENSE DISTRIBUTION
51% PRODUCTIONS
24% ADMINISTRATIVE
5% MARKETING
5% THEATRE SCHOOL
4% BUILDING OPERATIONS
3% DEVELOPMENT
3% BAR
2% BOX OFFICE
2% FRONT OF HOUSE
1% THEATRE RENTALS

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
OPERATING REVENUE	\$7.0M	\$3.5M	\$1.4M	\$4.9M	\$7.2M
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$129,912	\$450,347	\$243,909	(\$955,954)	\$17,224
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(\$698,851)	(\$828,763)	(\$1,279,110)	(\$1,523,019)	(\$567,445)



MISERY



HUFF

YEAR IN REVIEW

A message from Jeremy Webb, Artistic Director

The 2022-23 Season marked Neptune Theatre's 60th anniversary. Emerging from the pandemic, we embraced the opportunity to celebrate the resilience, diversity, and splendor of our artistic and cultural communities, both on and off our stages.

The 22-23 season was about solidifying our return in the eyes of the public. We welcomed back patrons and sought to persuade donors, sponsors, patrons and supporters that Neptune was still a viable and vital organization.

The past 2 ½ years were shaky and uneven with cancellations, postponements and illness. We needed to exhibit steadfast strength and return to a level of creative output that encouraged audiences to return to the theatre.

The 60th season kicked off with

the National Arts Centre (NAC) English Theatre's production of Walter Borden's *The Last Epistle Of Tightrope Time*, curated by Black Theatre Workshop. This marked the homecoming for the veteran Nova Scotian actor, author, playwright and advocate. Since premiering at Neptune, this play has gone on to the stages of Tarragon Theatre (Toronto) and the National Arts Centre (Ottawa.)

Reflecting on the artists that shaped our company and our community, we honored Linda Moore (AD 1990-2000), adding her name to the Artistic Directors' Wall, and recognized Walter Borden's contributions by naming our greenroom area the Walter Borden Greenroom.

In collaboration with the Nova Scotia Mass Choir, celebrating its 30th Anniversary, we presented a

joint celebration concert. This joyful weekend was a wonderful tribute to song, spoken word and history.

In partnership with our Company In Residence, Prismatic Arts Festival we presented Cliff Cardinal's tour-de-force, *Huff*. This award-winning, heart-wrenching, yet darkly comic tale told the story of Indigenous brothers, struggling to cope with the death of their mother and the realities of life on a reservation.

After four years of trying to get the performance rights untangled for the stage adaptation of Stephen King's classic *MISERY*, we were able to present the show this season. Our outstanding production and technical departments shone on this play, creating a truly spectacular revolving set.



ELF THE MUSICAL



DICKENS' A CHRISTMAS CAROL



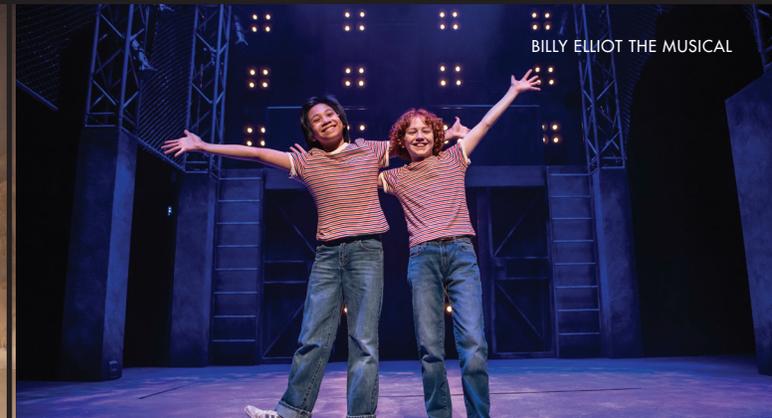
FALL ON YOUR KNEES



BALLAD OF THE MOTHERLAND



IN LIEU OF FLOWERS



BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL

Neptune returned the popular holiday show - Elf: The Musical. This modern-day holiday classic had many embracing their inner elf. With overwhelming demand we announced the show's extension on day one of rehearsals.

A second collaboration with the NAC brought the world premiere of Anne-Marie MacDonald's multi-award-winning novel Fall On Your Knees to Halifax audiences. Audiences were enthusiastically drawn to this two-night epic production.

Our commitment supporting new works continued with the world premiere of In Lieu Of Flowers, part of our INKubator project. Written by emerging Nova Scotian playwright Alison Crosby and developed with the support of our in-house team and the Playwrights Atlantic Resource Centre (PARC) and present-

ed in partnership with the Highland Arts Theatre this new production captured the imaginations of a younger audience

In spring 2023, we premiered Annie Valentina's Ballad of The Motherland, a story inspired by real events of the 2014 conflict in Donbass, and explored the human search for meaning in the face of impossible odds.

The long-awaited production of Billy Elliot finally took its place on the Neptune stage. A beautiful musical about defying gender stereotypes and celebrating the transformative power of art. Audiences were enthusiastic about this show and word of mouth was incredibly positive. After 3 years we could finally breathe a sigh of relief as the liability that we'd been carrying since 2020 from this production was lifted.

As we move forward from this season, our task is clear: to continue the theatrical excellence that draws audiences back into our two theatres. We've heard the message loud and clear that audiences want and need to laugh. Understanding the pandemic has shifted the desires of our audiences and that they lean towards the familiar, we are ready for the challenges ahead.

Artistically, we approach the 2023-24 season with these lessons still fresh.

THEATRE SCHOOL YEAR IN REVIEW

YPCO PRODUCTIONS

In July we started our season off with Little Women, our first Youth Performance Company production since the lockdowns of 2020. YPCo was very excited to perform on the Fountain Hall Stage. With a sold-out run and over 2,000 tickets sold this was proof that YPCo is ready for the mainstage.

In the spring we rounded out our season with our production of The Sponge-Bob Musical, which sold out two weeks in our Scotiabank Stage welcoming over 2,000 people to our space; for many attendees it was their first time seeing a live theatre show.

CAMPS AND CLASSES

Summer Camps reached over 850 students 4-18 years of age. March Break Camps, PD Day Camps and Weekend Classes welcomed over 500 youth through our doors.

Thanks to our donors, we were able to welcome over 50 registrants from the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre and other underserved communities to participate free of charge.

We also continued our regular adult programming and thanks to the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, we were also able to continue our Re:Action&Care program with a focus on artistic exploration and wellness. These adult programs represented approximately \$30,000 in revenue this year.

TOURCO SCHOOL TOUR

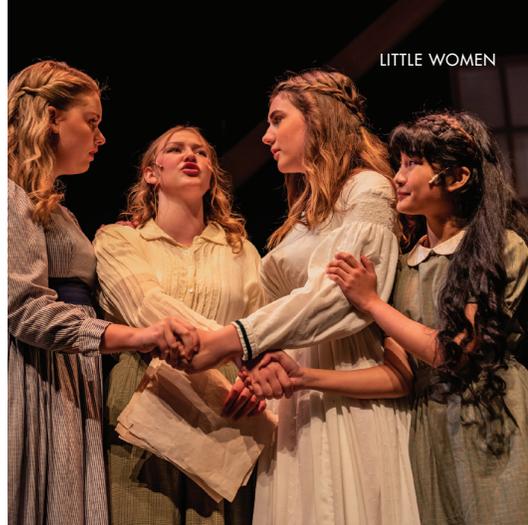
School Tour was back live in schools for the first time since 2019. We proudly presented at over 50 schools (for over 12,000 students) all over Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI with the plays Mischief/Colonial Park and Birds of A Feather. Thanks to the Artists in Communities Grants we were also able to share these presentations in community at the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre and Black Cultural Centre. Our sit-down productions on the Scotiabank Stage welcomed another 200 patrons to our space, many of them under 4 years old.

ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMMING

With the return of a full season of Neptune productions came our accessible programs which included ASL interpreted shows (2 shows), Relaxed Performances (3 shows) and Audio Described Performances (5 shows). All of this work has resulted in a lot of learning, and we will continue working with consultants and our development team to create a three year accessible programming and implementation plan to better prepare us to do this important work. It is estimated that we welcomed at least 200 new audience members thanks to this programming.

I would also like to acknowledge that this year marks the final year with Julia Topple as our full-time Theatre School Administrator and Touring Company Coordinator as she heads off to law school. After five incredible and challenging years, Julia has become a staple of the Neptune and the Theatre School. She will be truly missed. Congratulations Julia!

Laura Caswell, Director of Education



LITTLE WOMEN



THE SPINGEBOB THE MUSICAL



MISCHIEF/COLONIAL PARK



BIRDS OF A FEATHER

DEVELOPMENT YEAR IN REVIEW

BILLY GALA

After 3 years, Neptune Theatre celebrated the Billy Gala. The evening commenced with a delightful pre-show champagne reception, followed by a captivating performance of *Billy Elliot the Musical*. Post-show, attendees indulged in a culinary experience across three levels, featuring high tea in the RBC Lounge and a delectable roast beef dinner in the Spatz Lounge. The event buzzed with excitement over the silent and live auctions, with the fortunate winners now enjoying their enhanced theatre experiences. Thank you to our event sponsors: Emera, Domus Realty, and Micco. A heartfelt thank you to the patrons who came out to support their beloved theatre—a testament to the strength of our dedicated community.

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS' WALL

As part of our 60th Anniversary celebrations, Neptune Theatre paid tribute Linda Moore, the longest-serving Artistic Director, by inducting her onto the Artistic Directors' Wall. On October 18, 2022, Linda Moore's name was proudly inscribed, honouring her impact during the years 1990-2000 and her gift to us—The New Neptune. Sincere gratitude to donors Anne Campbell and John Lindsay, whose contributions supported the creation of the Artistic Directors' Wall.

INFRASTRUCTURE CAMPAIGN

While celebrating Linda Moore's legacy, a donor outreach campaign was launched to secure funding for critical building needs through the Infrastructure Campaign. Many patrons, pivotal in constructing the New Neptune, generously contributed—much appreciation to those who gave in addition to their annual gifts. Tim Margolian's collaboration with the development team was instrumental in securing additional funding from the Provincial Government. We're pleased to announce the success of this initiative, with all three major infrastructure projects currently underway. Sincere thanks to the Provincial Government and Tim Margolian for their invaluable support.

LOTTERIES

In the 2022-2023 season, Neptune Theatre conducted 5 online raffles, including a trip for two to see Adele in Las Vegas, raising \$47,000*. In-house raffles during *Elf* and *Billy Elliot*, including a holiday raffle for a \$5,000 Charm Diamond gift card, raised \$24,000*. The travel lottery in partnership with CAA and Trafalgar Travel raised \$62,000*, with a portion allocated to the 24-25 season.

TOURCO SUPPORT

Heartfelt gratitude to long-term patrons Cheryl Steadman-Roth and Jason Roth, whose generous support revived the annual school tour (TourCo), bringing the magic of live theatre to schools across the province.

GROWTH

Neptune Theatre is excited to announce the expansion of the development team with the addition of a Development Officer, Grants & Foundations. We look forward to reporting on the success of this new position in the next fiscal year.

Leslie MacDonald, Director of Development

*gross revenue



DONATIONS

Neptune Theatre could not continue to do what we do without the generous support of our donors. The 2022-23 season saw a large amount of donors donate their tickets as the time to use past tickets from covid times ran out. We appreciated that they opted to use their past tickets this way and assist Neptune Theatre in removing the liability from our books. We also had one of our largest years of donations with no extraordinary gifts involved. Thank you for your continued support.

\$10,000 +

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Neptune Theatre wants to thank all of our partners and sponsors, most of whom were able to stay with us during our shutdowns. This past season we were almost immediately back to our pre-covid partnership levels.

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2022-2023

ANNUAL REPORT