

ANNUALREPORT



### **WELCOME**

Neptune Theatre's 2023-2024 season was a season of change, collaboration, and adaptability.

We saw great success with increased subscription packages, strong return of patrons to shows and classes, and the tour of Neptune's production of *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* to Mirvish Productions in Toronto. We were able to expand our administrative team and add a volunteer program, which filled in key positions, allowing us to better balance staff work loads. The year came with challenges, weather events, injuries and COVID still affecting our productions. The unpredictability of these events leaves the theatre vulnerable as we navigate solutions.

One of the most significant changes Neptune faced this year was relocating our carpentry shop and storage space after leasing the same facility for 40 years. Our lease expired in September 2023, and while we secured a new location, the increased rent and necessary retrofits were not fully accounted for in our initial budget. After a thorough search, we were able to find a space that, while still above our previous costs, remains below the current market rate.

A grant from the federal government helped cover half of the retrofit expenses, easing some of the financial pressure. Thanks to the hard work of our team, we were able to mitigate the impact of this transition on Neptune and continue our operations smoothly.

After 10 seasons on the Neptune Theatre Foundation's Board of Directors, Board Chair Paul LaBerge is stepping away. Paul has served in a variety of roles including Programs Chair, Vice-Chair, and Chair, and his leadership has helped steer the organization through a variety of challenges during his tenure, including the Covid-19 pandemic. We are grateful to Paul for his service, his knowledge, and his time.

As we reflect on the past year, it's clear that Neptune Theatre continues to serve as a cornerstone of artistic expression and community engagement. Despite the challenges faced, our theatre has remained resilient, innovative, and committed to bringing high-quality performances to our audiences.

In this report, we will provide an overview of our key achievements, financial performance, and the initiatives undertaken to ensure Neptune's continued success.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to sharing the year's successes and future goals.

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.

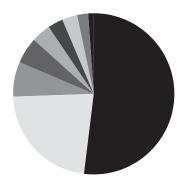
As artists, we are grateful to work and build community here. As stewards of culture, we are in the process of learning more about how our company can improve our relations with Indigenous People and uphold the values of collaboration and inclusivity in all that we do.

## 2023-2024 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

2024	2023	0000
	2023	2022
4,575,339	3,355,676	876,071
705,850	871,267	927,425
866,655	865,016	935,638
633,529	522,818	400,159
362,181	250,291	51,486
1,163,516	1,142,531	317,586
8,307,070	7,007,599	3,508,365
1,878,933	1,663,893	1,084,673
160,229	176,016	53,413
186,567	124,964	59,370
545,672	289,766	261,220
231,871	198,631	75,170
217,717	139,148	74,408
366,598	373,960	99,145
4,295,183	3,510,969	1,184,199
65,140	57,584	22,265
419,274	342,756	144,155
8,367,184	6,877,687	3,058,018
(60,114)	129,912	450,347
(758.965)	(698.851)	(828,763)
	705,850 866,655 633,529 362,181 1,163,516 <b>8,307,070</b> 1,878,933 160,229 186,567 545,672 231,871 217,717 366,598 4,295,183 65,140 419,274 <b>8,367,184</b>	705,850 871,267 866,655 865,016 633,529 522,818 362,181 250,291 1,163,516 1,142,531 <b>8,307,070 7,007,599</b> 1,878,933 1,663,893 160,229 176,016 186,567 124,964 545,672 289,766 231,871 198,631 217,717 139,148 366,598 373,960 4,295,183 3,510,969 65,140 57,584 419,274 342,756 <b>8,367,184 6,877,687 (60,114) 129,912</b>



REVENUE CONTRIBUTION 55% PRODUCTIONS 14% OTHER 10% DEVELOPMENT 8% THEATRE SCHOOL 8% GRANTS 5% TICKET SURCHARGE



EXPENSE DISTRIBUTION
51% PRODUCTIONS
22% ADMINISTRATIVE
7% BUILDING OPERATIONS
5% THEATRE SCHOOL
4% MARKETING
3% FRONT OF HOUSE
3% DEVELOPMENT
2% BAR
2% BOX OFFICE
1% THEATRE RENTALS

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
OPERATING REVENUE SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) ACCUMULATED SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$8.0M	\$7.0M	\$3.5M	\$1.4M	\$4.9M
	(\$60,114)	\$129,912	\$450,347	\$243,909	(\$955,954)
	(\$758,965)	(\$698,851)	(\$828,763)	(\$1,279,110)	(\$1,523,019)



## **YEAR IN REVIEW**

Looking back and looking forward. A message from Jeremy Webb, Artistic Director

Our 2023-2024 season was a healthy mix of popular titles, intriguing new works, musicals and lighthearted crowd-pleasing fun.

Neptune's toe-tapping, sociable good time, THE ARGYLE STREET KITCHEN PARTY, returned. The perfect way to experience a Nova Scotian tradition, with Maritime music and the cries of "Sociable". This production had a dramatic run this year with a cast member experiencing a back injury, resulting in some pivoting and extra support from the likes of Jimmy & Heather Rankin and Lenny Gallant.

RUMOUR HAS IT THE SONGBOOK OF ADELE, conceived and created by Kelly Holiff and Jeremy Webb, played in Neptune's Fountain Hall before heading off on a brief East Coast tour. This powerful night of music, soul and laughter is part of Neptune's plan to create content that can be sold beyond Nova Scotia's borders.

Our season opener, THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG featured much-loved local performer, Jonathan Torrens and a stellar cast. Attempting to perform a play, and failing at every turn, was a popular start to the season. The gigantic set was a tribute to all of our technicians and crafts-people. Laughter was the way to go this season!

PAWAKAN MACBETH is Reneltta Arluk's ground-breaking reimagining of Shakespeare's darkest play into Cree history, legend and cosmology. Produced by Akpik Theatre (co-presented with Prismatic Arts Festival) it played October 3-8 on our Scotiabank Stage. Inspired by working with the youth of Frog Lake First Nation, and shared stories from Elders in the Treaty 6 region, Arluk has created a terrifying jour-

ney through love, greed, honour and betrayal, with coyote howlers teaching us that resurgence requires balance.

The hilariously funny MURDER FOR TWO, a killer musical comedy (co-production with Festival Antigonish) was a big hit on the Scotiabank Stage and has already gone on to perform in Ontario.

DICKENS' A CHRISTMAS CAROL celebrated its 20th Anniversary this year. The show's creator and original 'Scrooge' (Jeremy Webb) returned for a few special anniversary performances this year, proving to himself that he was right to pass the show on!

CINDERELLA returned for another Christmas on the Fountain Hall Stage, this year under the direction of Stephanie Graham.



We started the new year (2024) with ROSENCRANTZ & GUIL-DENSTERN ARE DEAD playing on our Mainstage, written by Sir Tom Stoppard, directed by Jeremy Webb.

After a year of negotiations, we secured our two lead actors, Billy Boyd & Dominic Monaghan, who are internationally known from *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* movie trilogy. Mirvish Productions then presented it in Toronto. I am thrilled to report that the show sold out in both cities and extended twice in Toronto. Reviews were just wonderful and audience reaction was amazing.

Our Scotiabank Stage was busy with interesting work this year. THE LAST SHOW ON EARTH was a new play from the exciting multi-disciplinary artist, poet & playwright Breton Lalama. Also, a tour-deforce multi-disciplinary monodrama that unapologetically got you

hooked, *ADDICTED*, written, directed & performed by Raven Dauda was a hit with those that saw it.

It's important to find a crowd-pleaser to round out any season. A raucous, pop-rock-musical send-up of gender expectations and stereotypes... that takes it all off, *THE FULL MONTY*, in Fountain Hall. Sadly, numbers were lower than projected on this show.

After 60 plus years on the corner of Sackville & Argyle Streets in the downtown core of Halifax, we know that our programming is not only a vital part of the artistic and cultural landscape but integral to the economic fabric of the city.

As the performing arts sector begins to turn a corner following the devastation of the pandemic and the impact of current economic struggles, we look ahead to a continued celebration of our artistic and

cultural communities in all their resiliency, diversity, and splendour.

The last three years have been a staggering challenge. The work is not over and, indeed, knowing that we share the same issues with theatres around the globe, has helped us to a degree.

- January

Jeremy Webb, Artisitic Director

# THEATRE SCHOOL YEAR IN REVIEW

2023 - 2024 was a year of getting Neptune Theatre School activities back on track after the whirlwind of post-COVID recovery. With the biggest change internally was the onboarding of our new Theatre School Manager, Maddie Maitzen. Due to a flood at our long standing partner, Shambhala School, we had a quick shift of venue location for summer camps. We are now working out of Halifax Grammar School. Throughout the season we welcomed over 1,200 students through our recreational programs, adult workshops, Prep Program and Boot Camps.

YPCo, Neptune's Youth Performance Company, presented two fun, quirky, and empowering shows with *ALMOST MAINE* and *THE PROM*. Over 3000 audience members were wowed by these amazing young talents.

We are proud to share that in Fall 2024 ten of our Prep program graduates were off to well recognized training programs across the country including the Fountain School of Performing Arts, Sheridan and the National Theatre School.

The biggest challenge for us has been the increase in asks for bursaries and scholarships, as well as access support staff. Finding sustainable ways to offset these requests has become a priority, to ensure that everyone feels safe and welcome at Neptune Theatre School.

The Neptune School Tour was a huge success, running for eight weeks and reaching close to 15,000 students across the province, presenting SHAKE-SPEARE ON TRIAL (by Jeremy Webb) and GRUMPY & GRIMM (by Laura Caswell).

Overall, Neptune Theatre School is proud to be a leader in providing fun, creative and accessible recreational programs for all ages, as well as foundational skill building in the arts. We look forward to sharing more with our community and all of Nova Scotia in 2024-2025

#### **ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMMING**

While there is still a long way to go, Neptune has been working hard internally as well as with community and other organizations to continue developing accessible performances and spaces at Neptune Theatre.

We engaged with local consultants to develop the following targeted performances:

**Relaxed Performances** for Cinderella, Christmas Carol and The Prom.

**Audio Described Performances** were presented for *PAWÂKAN MACBETH, THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG, CINDERELLA, THE FULL MONTY.* Unfortunately, the presentation for *ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD* was canceled due to a snowstorm.

We proudly presented our **American Sign Language** interpreted performance of *DICKENS' A CHISTMAS CAROL*.

These programs allow us to reach hundreds of new patrons, many of whom have returned multiple times.

Neptune encourages all board and committee members as well as staff and volunteers to attend our accessible performances; it is a truly heartwarming and a new lense to experience theatre.

Laura Caswell, Director of Education



# DEVELOPMENT YEAR IN REVIEW

#### **FUNDRAISING**

The Development team ran a full year of fundraising initiatives starting with an online raffle for a trip to Toronto to see Queen in concert and SIX at Mirvish. Two incredibly successful in house raffles during CINDERELLA and THE FULL MONTY resulted in over \$100,000 in sales. Thank you to our partners CAA and Trafalgar Travels who continue to enable us to offer these raffles. ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDEN-**STERN ARE DEAD** plans included our first Minicon, in partnership with Hal-Con, where we offered their members an afternoon add on Q&A with Dominic Monaghan and Billy Boyd. Merchandise was specially created for this production including a collectible two headed coin. Fun was had during CINDERELLA with a carriage goody box containing extra prizes in every 16 carriages - including CINDERELLA diamond necklaces from Charm Diamond, carriage bracelets, rhinestone tiaras, etc. Thank you to our volunteers who worked with us to sell the merchandise at both productions and were amazing at it.

#### **ARTISTIC DIRECTORS' WALL**

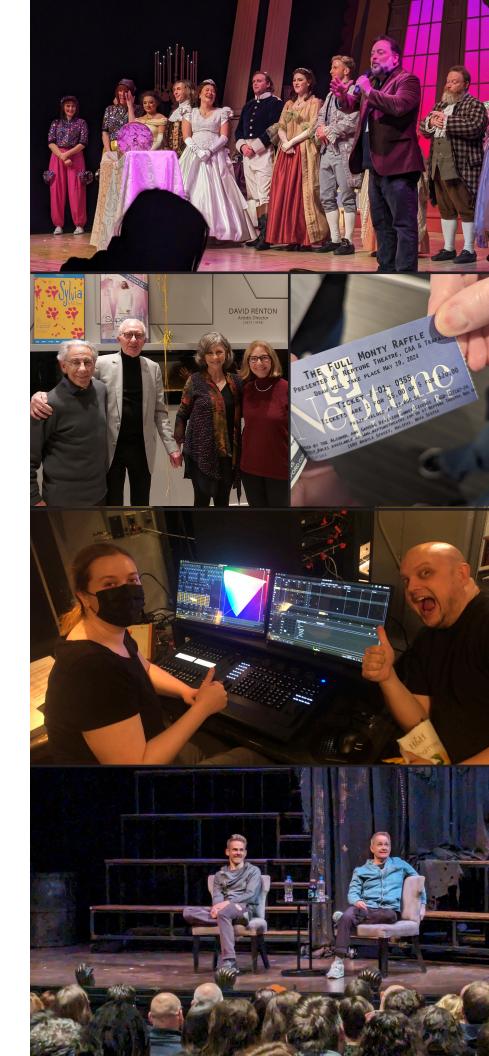
On October 16, 2023 we invited patrons and past cast and crew of Neptune Theatre to join us in celebrating Ron Ulrich and inducting him onto the Artistic Director's Wall. Ron Ulrich served as the Artistic Director of Neptune Theatre from 2000-2008. During his tenure, he brought a fresh perspective, invigorating Neptune's programming with a mix of classic and contemporary theatre. We were thrilled when Ron was able to join us as his name was inscribed on the AD Wall.

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE CAMPAIGN**

In the past year, Neptune Theatre has seen growth and success, made possible through generous support from grants and foundations. We are thrilled to share that the Murphy Foundation helped us replace the lighting board in the Scotiabank Studio Theatre, a much-needed upgrade that ensures we continue to run without disruption. We are so thankful for the support from the Murphy Foundation. Additionally, Neptune Theatre received the John Bragg Award for 2024 through Canada's History Magazine. Being one of three recipients, this gave the theatre the tools to support a new play in development.

Neptune is so grateful to Nova Scotia's Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage, whose ongoing support has enabled us to undertake several key initiatives. The Creative Industries Fund made it possible for our ROSENCRANTZ & **GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD** tour to travel to Mirvish in Toronto, showcasing our local talents on a national stage. The department's Access-Ability Program helped fund necessary infrastructure upgrades, including new handrails in the Scotiabank Studio, push buttons for washrooms, a visual fire alarm system, and an accessible box office desk in the Scotiabank Studio. We also upgraded our hearing assistance system, adding more hearing loops in both theatres to ensure greater inclusivity for all patrons.

Leslie MacDonald, Director of Development



## **DONATIONS**

Neptune Theatre could not continue to do what we do without the generous support of our donors. The 2023-2024 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 +

Lorraine & Bill Black ★★★ Margaret & David Fountain \*\*\* Tim Margolian & Dawn Frail \*\*\* The Craig Foundation ★★★ Stella & Scott Balfour ★ John Lindsay & Anne Campbell

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\* five to nine years
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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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