### ANNUAL REPORT

9



The cast of It's a Wonderful Christmas-ish Holiday Miracle: set design by Lauchlin Johnston; costume design by Jessica Oostergo; lighting design by Conor Moore; photo by David Cooper. This production was a world premiere and a Silver Commission.

### **OUR MISSION**

The Arts Club leads in developing and producing live theatre in British Columbia. We inspire and nurture artists and audiences through diverse cultural experiences that are engaging, thought-provoking, and artistically innovative.

### **OUR VISION**

We envision a community that, through storytelling, is inspired to reflect on who we are and who we can be.

### **Board of Directors**

Chair Bryan Mabee Immediate Past Chair Richard Bell\* Treasurer John Dawson, FCPA, FCA Secretary Suzanne James, CPA, CA Mike Black Catherine Boivie\*\* Wanda Costuros, CPA (CMA), MBA Teo Dechev Anna Fung, Q.C. Eugen Klein Aaron Kueng Sandra MacKay Heather McKay Bonnie Mah Dave Morton Kerry Suffolk Erika Tse Shawn Williamson Art Vertlieb Q.C.

#### **Council of Governors**

Roberta Beiser Philip Bernard Donna Celle Axel Conradi Iamie Corbett Bruce Flexman, FCPA, FCA Christopher Gimpel Dr. Stanley Hamilton Catharine Herb-Kelly, O.C. Bruce Milley, FCA Morris Nord Ross Paul, CM, PhD Ioan Pitman Janet Rogers Ál C. Schultz Lisa Seed lim Storie John J. Sutherland Ian Waddell, QC

#### Board of Directors, Arts Club of Vancouver Theatre Foundation

President Lisa Seed\*\* Treasurer Jamie Bruce Secretary Carol Humphrys Jamie Corbett\* Suzanne James, CPA, CA Eugen Klein Bonnie Mah Morris Nord Glenn Powers

\*Chair/President from September to December 2019 \*\*Secretary from September to December 2019

## Bryan Mabee BOARD CHAIR



What a season it has been! Certainly more than I had bargained for when I became the Arts Club Board Chair in December 2019. The 56th season was equally divided into two different worlds. The first half of the season celebrated incredible productions, like *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *The Sound of Music* and the opening of the beautifully renovated Robert J. Sharman Waterfront Lounge, while the second part was about throwing our plans out the window and re-imaging how to operate a theatre company in a pandemic.

Despite the turmoil since March and the temporary closure of our theatres, there were so many incredible accomplishments made by the company during the year. As Chair, one of my great privileges is to get an insider's look at the work happening behind-the-scenes. There was a concerted effort to make our stages more accessible and in September 2019 we hosted a Digital Accessibility Symposium, bringing together artists, educators and theatre administrators to discuss how to make sure our productions and programs reach a wider audience.

Sparked by the civil unrest and the social injustice across North America, we also invested more energy into our diversity and inclusion work, which will continue on an ongoing basis. Our commitment to develop the next generation of artists and theatre-goers continues through programs like our Company-in-Residence, our Emerging Playwrights' Unit, and many wonderful education programs that you will read about in the pages ahead.

The senior leadership team, along with the Board, continued to work on a strategic plan which will shape the future of the company. We re-examined the goals and priorities of that plan in light of COVID-19 and it was interesting to see that the guiding principles and priorities remain relevant and perhaps more important than ever.

As I reflect on the major changes of the season, I have been in awe of the resiliency of Arts Club staff, volunteers, and artists as they navigate through the challenges that this pandemic presents. I am proud of their determination, tenacity, and creativity in their continued work to engage our community in a meaningful way. I want to thank our patrons, the three levels of government that support our mission (Canada Council, BC Arts Council, and the City of Vancouver), and numerous corporations and foundations for their ongoing support during a very trying time. We have been quite moved by the outpouring of support.

Finally, a special thanks to the executive team of the Arts Club and the Board of Directors. Your commitment and dedication have made it possible for the Arts Club to weather this storm.

Sincerely,

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Bryan Mabee Board Chair

## Ashlie Corcoran ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



2020 won't soon be forgotten. My second season at the helm of the Arts Club Theatre Company started out much like the first with great excitement and many fantastic productions. Come March, everything changed. Despite the turmoil in the world and the ways in which all of our lives have been impacted, I am so grateful for the support of the Arts Club community to see us through these trying times.

I am so proud of the shows that we were able to produce this season, from A *Thousand Splendid Suns* to *The Wedding Party* and the other 10 shows in between. The success of the first half of our season can be seen in the eight Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards that the Arts Club brought home, including Outstanding Production of a Musical for *The Sound of Music* and Outstanding Production of a Play for *Noises Off.* 

When the world changed in March, all of us at the Arts Club hunkered down and started re-imagining how we could keep our community engaged when we could not produce shows on our stages. We successfully shifted much of our programming online, launching our Digital Edition website as a hub for all things Arts Club. Soon after, we welcomed 20 Vancouver artists to join us in producing digital content as Education and Community Outreach Specialists, which you can read more about on page 13. In August we hosted Dialled Up, a digital community festival, which highlighted artists from across Vancouver that engage with us through our professional outreach programming.

This summer, we also took this intermission from staging shows as an opportunity to learn more about peoples' experiences at the Arts Club and explore where there are barriers to inclusion within the company—including those created by systemic racism. Through many internal discussions centred around the institution of long-term, sustainable, systemic change, the Denis Simpson Fund was created. Led by Omari Newton—Silver Commissions playwright and Arts Club Community Liaison—this fund was created to support ongoing apprenticeships, commissions, internships, and much more, which will be put exclusively towards supporting the continued decolonization of the Arts Club.

Although this was an unprecedented season, it was full of learning, growth, and artistic innovation. I am so grateful to be able to collaborate and learn with the Arts Club team – from our incredible board who have supported us through the unknown, to our courageous staff who are trying and learning new skills and approaches every day, to my co-leader Peter Cathie White, who always knows how to find humour in the seemingly insurmountable.

And of course—thanks to all of you, our wonderful supporters. We couldn't have made it through without all of you. Thank you for standing by us during this ever-changing time.

Yours,

ashlie

Ashlie Corcoran Artistic Director

## **Peter Cathie White** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



To quote Queen Elizabeth II (after her castle burnt down and her children were separating and divorcing), 2020 has been an 'annus horribilis'. Not just for the Arts Club and not just for the arts, but also for many of you reading this who have been affected by the current pandemic in ways too numerous to count. Our thoughts are with you through this, and we appreciate your ongoing support. It has been an unexpected and devastating crisis.

I am grateful that we did get to produce half of our intended 19/20 season. And the half that we did produce was spectacular, including a sumptuous production of *The Sound of Music*, directed handsomely by my colleague Ashlie Corcoran, and *Noises Off*, a physically comedic roller-coaster that moved at break-neck speed. The success of the 19/20 productions that made it to the stage before the mandated shut-down placed the Arts Club in a healthier position to address our ongoing needs and contributed to a season-end result that, considering the circumstances, we are proud to have been able to achieve.

More than our productions, it has been the response from our patrons that has really pulled us through so far. At the beginning of this crisis, through a matching gift from the Longhedge Foundation that was then expanded upon by members of our Board of Directors, by our senior leadership team, and by our Artistic Director Emeritus Bill Millerd to a total of \$100,000, we were able to raise over \$520,000 through our Chrysalis Campaign.

In addition to this, many of our patrons chose to donate the value of their purchased tickets to cancelled productions to support the company. In total, over \$1,200,000 was raised through these combined campaigns all of which came from the generosity of our patrons. This support speaks to the value of the arts and the Arts Club in their lives, and the importance of the not-for-profit arts in a vibrant society. As stated in my favourite Canadian quote from Quebéc author Gabrielle Roy: "Could we know each other in the slightest without the arts?"

Many should be thanked, including the Federal Government for recognizing the need for the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy, the BC Provincial Government for providing some relief funds early in this crisis, the Vancouver Foundation for \$50,000 in COVID relief, and the City of Vancouver for providing early access to our annual operating grant. Thank you to you all.

On a personal note, I want to thank all my fellow Arts Clubbers—from our volunteer board, who have remained faithful stewards of the company, to my co-leader, Ashlie Corcoran, and from our senior leadership team, to every member of every team at this company—for all have worked long and hard to ensure our survival and to enable us to continue to celebrate our art form.

This too shall pass. Thank you to all who have supported us for you have helped the Arts Club to endure. For that, we are eternally grateful.

Sincerely,

Peter Cathie White Executive Director

# 2019/2020 PRODUCTIONS

#### **Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage**





A Thousand Splendid Suns

By Ursula Rani Sarma Based on the book by Khaled Hosseini Sep 12-Oct 13, 2019

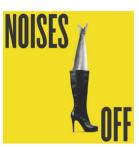
#### **Granville Island Stage**



The Birds & The Bees By Mark Crawford Sep 26-Oct 26, 2019



The Sound of Music Music by Richard Rodgers Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II Book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse Nov 7, 2019-Jan 5, 2020



Noises Off By Michael Frayn Jan 23-Feb 23, 2020



carried away on the crest of a wave By David Yee Mar 19-Apr 19, 2020 CANCELLED\*



Kinky Boots Book by Harvey Fierstein Music and lyrics by Cyndi Lauper May 21-Jul 5, 2020 CANCELLED\*



Cipher By Ellen Close and Braden Griffiths Feb 6-Mar 7. 2020



'Da Kink in my Hair By Trey Anthony Apr 16-May 16, 2020 CANCELLED\*



Peter Pan Goes Wrong By Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer, and Henry Shields Jun 25–Aug 22, 2020 **CANCELLED**\*



MISS BENNET: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY

at Pemberley By Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon Dec 5, 2019-Jan 4, 2020

#### **Goldcorp Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre**



Cost of Living By Martyna Majok Oct 10–Nov 3, 2019

**On Tour** 



Bed & Breakfast By Mark Crawford Oct 3-Nov 16, 2019



It's a Wonderful Christmas-ish Holiday Miracle By Marcus Youssef Featuring music by Sufjan Stevens Nov 21-Dec 22, 2019





The Shoplifters By Morris Panych Jan 9-Feb 9, 2020



VEN

Kim's Convenience

Feb 13-Mar 28, 2020

Partially cancelled\*

by Ins Choi



**Every Brilliant Thing** By Duncan Macmillan with Jonny Donahoe Apr 2–Apr 26, 2020 **CANCELLED\*** 



## THE JESSIE RICHARDSON THEATRE AWARDS

Held in June, the annual **JESSIE RICHARDSON THEATRE AWARDS** celebrate and promote the outstanding achievements of the Vancouver professional theatre community. 23 nominations were associated with nine Arts Club productions.

### **2020 Jessie Awards Recipients**

Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Lead Role **Deena Aziz, A Thousand Splendid Suns** 

Outstanding Performance by an Actor Supporting **John Ullyatt**, *Matilda* 

Outstanding Performance by an Actress Supporting **Tess Degenstein**, *Noises Off* 

Outstanding Sound Design/Original Composition Alessandro Juliani, *The Great Leap* 

Outstanding Set Design **Drew Facey, Cost of Living** 

Georgia Straight Outstanding Direction **Scott Bellis,** *Noises Off* 

Outstanding Production of a Musical *The Sound of Music* 

Outstanding Production of a Play *Noises Off* 





The cast: set and costume design by Drew Facey; lighting design by Itai Erdal; photo by Emily Cooper.

*The Sound of Music* was the most popular production of the 2019/20 season, selling out almost every performance and bringing in 36% of the season's earned revenue. The success of a production like this helps the Arts Club to fund future productions, new play development programs, and education initiatives.

# OF PERFORMANCES 69

TICKETS SOLD 42,021

TICKET REVENUE \$2,526,850

# OF ACTORS
2

# OF MUSICIANS

# OF REHEARSALS 32 days

COST OF SOUND \$7,200

# OF COSTUMES 130

COST OF COSTUMES & WIGS \$33,500

HOURS SPENT BUILDING COSTUMES

2,150

COST OF THE ROSE WINDOW \$5.000

# OF MOVING SET PIECES 13

COST OF PROPS \$16,500

COST OF THE CREATIVE COMPANY \$469,773 (actors, stage management & musicians)

COST OF THE ELEVATOR LIFT \$70,000

"The entire production was fantastic! The music, choreography, sets, costumes. I was moved and enjoyed the performance so much. Such talent. Thank you." —Brenda Tyc

"The performance was magnificent! I feel very fortunate to live in a city that has this level of entertainment. Thank you to all the cast and crew for all your hard work. You're fantastic!" —Anonymous



## **THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19**

The Arts Club Theatre Company is the largest urban theatre company in Canada. As one of the largest arts employers on the West Coast, the Arts Club hires on average 300 artists, from a multitude of disciplines, each season. When the global pandemic hit in March, it forced us to close our theatre doors for an undetermined amount of time.

Between March and August 2020, we cancelled a total of 21 productions: 5 in the remaining 19/20 season, as well as 16 planned for the upcoming 20/21 season, knowing we would be unable to stage large-scale productions as initially planned. Because of these cancellations, 171 artists lost their jobs.

## Due to the cancellations in the 19/20 season the Arts Club lost \$3.8 million dollars in projected ticket sales revenue.

No matter how uncertain these times continue to be, one thing remains certain—our supporters care about the future of theatre in Vancouver. This year we were humbled by the outpouring of concern and support from our patrons. More than 2,500 households decided to donate back their tickets, totalling more than \$682,000. This had a tremendous impact on operations and we are very grateful.

"Thank you all for these past amazing years of the most entertaining nights of captivating theatre. Even though it may just be for a brief moment, we are able to escape our world for a few hours and enter yours. We cry, we think, we laugh, repeat. Theatre is a form of therapy. The best part is knowing that we will all be back together hopefully soon to enjoy more. Thank you." —Sonya & Thomas Schmitz

In May we launched the Chrysalis Campaign, a matching campaign to see us re-emerge from this crisis. A few generous donors along with our Board of Directors stepped forward to match all gifts up to \$100,000. Thanks to the generous support of our community, including the Vancouver Foundation, BFL Canada, and Genus Capital Management, we raised over \$520,000.

Even with the success of our Chrysalis Campaign, this summer we had to make the difficult decision to lay off many members of the Arts Club staff. We would like to immensely thank each and every person for their dedication and service to the Arts Club.

### **New Play Festival**

Our greatest strength as a company has been, and continues to be, our vivid local identity. We hire and support local talent—onstage and off. Our New Play Festival (formerly called ReACT) serves two functions: it allows us to hear early drafts of scripts we have in development through our Silver Commissions project AND to try out other scripts we are really keen on. It's sort of a "test kitchen" to see what works and what doesn't. It's also a great way to engage with our audiences on a deeper level about new play development through conversations and post-show discussions.

This year's ambitious week of readings included three Silver Commission scripts (*Redbone Coonhound* by Amy Lee Lavoie and Omari Newton; *The Cull* by Michele Riml and Michael St. John Smith; and *Forgiveness* by Hiro Kanagawa) and three other remarkable Canadian plays (*I Sit Content* by Kaitlyn Riordan; *Little Red Warrior and His Lawyer* by Kevin Loring; and *Outside* by Gilles Poulin-Denis, translated by Leanna Brodie from his play *Dehors*).

The New Play Festival is a vital part of our new play development activities and is instrumental in our programming process. Thank you to Stan & Kathy Hamilton for supporting the Silver Commissions Project, and to Taseko Mines Limited, The River Foundation, and Ian & Frances Dowdeswell for supporting our new play development initiatives.



Artists who participated in Dialled Up: Kaitlin Williams, Derek Chan, Pedro Chamale, Marie Farsi, James King, Hiro Kanagawa, and Morris Panych

### **Dialled Up: An Arts Club Community Celebration**

Creating art during a pandemic proved to be a unique and stimulating challenge. But we were determined to not only meet it head-on but to celebrate the remarkable and meaningful ways the Arts Club engages with and supports the work of professional theatre artists. The result was Dialled Up— an online community celebration that highlighted some of our non-production programs like the Silver Commissions project, the Bill Millerd Artist Fund, the Emerging Playwrights' Unit, our Company-in-Residence, and the Community Access Program.

Over two weeks we released, via social media and our website, videos that featured a community open mic night, roundtable discussions, updates from artists on their work, original writing, and other highlights from our artistic projects. It culminated in a staged reading of our Silver Commission piece *Redbone Coonhound* by Amy Lee Lavoie and Omari Newton, streamed online and with a small in-theatre audience. Revenue from streaming sales supported our new diversity and inclusion initiative, The Denis Simpson Fund. Much of the content from Dialled Up is still accessible on our website at digital.artsclub.com/dialled-up.

Thank you to iA Financial and BMO Financial Group for supporting our digital content.

## THEATRE AND ACCESSIBILITY IN A DIGITAL WORLD SYMPOSIUM



In October 2019, the Arts Club Theatre Company, in partnership with the Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival, hosted a two-day symposium titled Theatre and Accessibility in a Digital World. The goal of the symposium was to explore the question: how can we use digital technology to provide access for theatre patrons, artists, and community members living with disabilities who currently encounter barriers to the traditional theatre experience?

Using the facilities and resources of the BMO Theatre Centre, this symposium hosted influencers, creators, artists, and administrators (both local and from across Canada) who came together and shared ideas, challenges, and successes surrounding the use of digital strategies to increase inclusivity in theatre environments.

#### **Highlights**

- 95 participants attended the symposium, among them were artists, administrators, and self-advocates.
- 40 facilitators and panelists led sessions at the symposium, the vast majority of them live with a disability.
- 11 sessions were held across two and a half days.
- Sessions explored themes, such as accessible websites, artistic collaborations via digital technology, theatre education and disability, ASL and Live Description, and more.
- 30 volunteers and staff members were on site during the Symposium.
- The event itself was designed to be as accessible as possible, including ASL interpreters, Live Closed Captions and Live Description services, Braille programs, large print programs, and more.
- Although the event is over, the symposium's website has remained a valuable resource, offering free learning opportunities about theatre, accessibility, and digital technology.

This symposium was made possible by the generous support of the Canada Council's Digital Strategy Fund.

#### **Testimonials**

- Learned a lot about the assumptions I make every day in regards to ability and access that I will chew on for a while."
- Thank you to the Arts Club and Bard on the Beach for an eyeopening and thought-provoking two days. I hope to bring some of what I learned to my work as an emerging artist. It is incredibly important."
- **F**This change is needed."
- In my role as Events and Customer Service Manager, I have started personally to more proactively engage with disabled patrons as well as training my staff accordingly."

Digital Symposium: photos by Moonrider Productions



## THE ROBERT J. SHARMAN WATERFRONT LOUNGE

The Arts Club has been a tenant on Granville Island since 1979. Most of the Island was used for industry and what would become the Granville Island Stage, was no exception. The building was originally a chain link factory. Over the years, there had been some improvements, such as the replacement of the theatre seats and the installation of new bathrooms, but the upper lobby hadn't seen much love in quite some time. As is often the case in the arts, we want to put every penny into our productions, and capital improvements often end up being put off. But, with the help of our patrons, all of that changed in the fall of 2018.

The work on the upper lobby at the Granville Island Stage really began with the construction of the BMO Theatre Centre. When the facility was completed a few years ago, long-time donor Robert Sharman remembers taking a tour of the space and noticing that there was no furniture in the lounge outside of the rehearsal halls. This was meant to be a place for artists to socialize, take their breaks and learn their lines. He knew he could play a role in improving the lounge and making it much more comfortable, bringing in friends, colleagues and clients to assist in the project.

The positive experience at the BMO Theatre Centre led to further conversations about other projects on the horizon. When the decision was made to renovate the upper lobby at the Granville Island Stage, Robert stepped forward once more, following a similar path by asking a personal friend and commercial designer, Sally Mills of Kasian Architecture, to assist in the project. Kasian ultimately became a lead sponsor of the project, pulling in the great team at Matra Construction, and Robert decided to become the naming sponsor of the upper lobby, which is now known as the Robert J. Sharman Waterfront Lounge.

With a little persuasion we were able to convince another long-time Arts Club supporter, Stan Hamilton, who was the Project Manager of the BMO Theatre Centre, to act as Project Manager for the renovation at Granville Island. Stan worked tirelessly to bring this renovation to life, spending most days over the summer of 2019 at the Granville Island Stage overseeing the project. The newly renovated Robert J. Sharman Waterfront Lounge opened to our patrons in the fall of 2019.



We would like to extend our gratitude to the Department of Canadian Heritage for their generous contributions to this project, and to Sally Mills and Kasian Architecture for their sponsorship.

Lastly, our sincerest thanks to Robert Sharman—who was the catalyst for making this renovation happen—and Stan Hamilton for their support and dedication in seeing this project through, as well as the many others who helped make this necessary upgrade a reality.

Valerie Prodanuk, Richard Bell, Sally Mills, Robert Sharman, and Stan Hamilton at the opening of the Robert J. Sharman Waterfront Lounge in October, 2019. Photo by Moonrider Productions.



The Arts Club Theatre Company would like to thank Robert Sharman, the lead donor for the Granville Island Stage's newly renovated lobby, now known as the Robert J. Sharman Waterfront Lounge. We would also like to acknowledge the generosity of the following donors.

Funded by the Government of Canada Canadä

#### \$15,000+

Stan & Kathy Hamilton Irma & Marvin Lamoureux Glenn Powers & Melanie Wong

Financé par le

gouvernement du Canada

#### \$10,000+

Alan & Gwendoline Pyatt Foundation Jamie & Margaret Corbett David McCann—WIIFM Management Ltd.

#### \$5,000+

Bonnie Mah Matra Construction The McLean Foundation TD Bank Group Ian & Frances Dowdeswell The River Foundation

### Up to \$4,999

John D. Aczel Chris Allen Bryn Archibald & Rory Fatt Corinne Assayag

 SHAWN WILLIAMSON

Ilene-Io Bellas Maya Bleiler The Boivie Family Fund Lyrica Bradshaw Sheila Brew **Janice Brown** Marlene & Kenneth Brown Marilyn Bullock Elizabeth & Michael Burton-Brown Peter Cathie White & Douglas Seifert Ashlie Corcoran Greg Deans & Jim Beaudreau Iim & Muriel Don Nina Ferentinos Megan Halprin lames Harcott Gerald & Patricia Haslam **Jack Holmes** Mark Kahn Sabine & Glen Keil Jean Lawr I. Lee Lorne & Audrey Lindsay Kathy & John MacKenzie





Kenneth MacLeod & Elizabeth Black Arlene MacPhail Maxwell Floors Ltd. Douglas Mazur Sheila McGivern Betty McGowan Bill Millerd Rose Mitsushio Stanley Moore Heather Robbie William D. Robertson Johanna & Derek Rundell Sonja Sanguinetti The Sherwin-Williams Company **Pierre Soucy** WA Architects Ltd. Rick & Trish Wagner Julia & Doug Wallis Ralph & Valerie Wettstein Terry Whitehead Susan Williamson Daniel Worsley Anonymous

## ECOS: EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH SPECIALISTS

When it became clear we weren't going to be able to hire artists to create and perform shows in the spring and summer of 2020, the Arts Club started to think about alternative ways to give local artists employment and help us further connect with our patrons in a digital landscape. With inspiration from the Shaw Festival and help from some of our most loyal donors, as well as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, we were able to hire 20 artists from a broad range of artistic disciplines—Actors, Directors, Designers, Stage Managers for 4 weeks of full-time work as Education and Community Outreach Specialists (ECOS).

The ECOS members began on June 8 and the Arts Club welcomed Paul Almeida, Abraham Asto, Duston Baranow-Watts, Alexandra Brynn, Andrew Creightney, Mishelle Cuttler, Sia Foryoh, Paige Fraser, Jeff Gladstone, Cory Haas, Camille Legg, Makayla Moore, Omari Newton, Amir Ofek, Monice Peter, Jason Sakaki, Amanda Testini, Michelle Thorne, Kaitlin Williams, and Raugi Yu to our team.

During their time with us, ECOS members worked closely with all departments to lead workshops, create content, reach out to donors and patrons, and come up with innovative ways to create art in this new normal. Three ECOS members, Omari Newton, Sia Foryoh, and Andrew Creightney, also worked with our staff to help create a road-map for making the Arts Club fervently anti-racist. These conversations delved into people's experiences at the Arts Club and examined where barriers to inclusion exist within the company, including those created by systemic racism. Following his ECOS contract, Omari Newton became our Community Liaison.

This program was supported by the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, the Bill Millerd Artist Fund, Grosvenor, The River Foundation, and Ian & Frances Dowdeswell.



ECOS members: Paul Almeida, Abraham Asto, Duston Baranow-Watts, Alexandra Brynn, Andrew Creightney, Mishelle Cuttler, Sia Foryoh, Paige Fraser, Jeff Gladstone, Cory Haas, Camille Legg, Makayla Moore, Omari Newton, Amir Ofek, Monice Peter, Jason Sakaki, Amanda Testini, Michelle Thorne, Kaitlin Williams, and Raugi Yu, captured from our digital content.

## **THE DENIS SIMPSON FUND**

The Denis Simpson Fund supports equality, diversity, and inclusion. The idea for this fund came out of many internal Arts Club discussions, centred around an identified lack of training opportunities for diverse artists and cultural workers. Through these discussions, we decided to create a fund in our endowment which will help support ongoing apprenticeships, commissions, internships, and much more. Donations to this fund will be put exclusively towards supporting our continued pursuit to be inclusive and equitable.

This fund was named after the late Denis Simpson, a wonderfully gifted actor, singer, writer, director, and choreographer, who graced the Arts Club's stages for 25 years in over 20 productions. Born in Jamaica, Denis arrived in Canada at the age of 8, spending his early years in Toronto. His career began at the age of 19 when he performed in the original Canadian production of *Hair* at Toronto's Royal Alexandra Theatre. His face and talent became nationally known in 1978 when he was the host of the popular children's TV series *Polka Dot Door* and an original member of the a-cappella singing group The Nylons. He selflessly gave his time to countless charitable activities, including raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic and supporting fundraisers to benefit the cultural community of Greater Vancouver and Canada as a whole.

To build this endowment, the Arts Club launched the Denis Simpson Fund with a goal of raising \$20,000. The Arts Club committed \$10,000 and reached out to our community to match our contribution. We were successful in raising \$23,312, which will be endowed at the Arts Club of Vancouver Theatre Foundation. This endowment means the principal amount put into the fund will be invested and continue to grow over time. It's the gift that keeps on giving!

To support the creation of this fund, the Arts Club produced a streamed reading of *Redbone Coonhound*, a Silver Commission written by Omari Newton and Amy Lee Lavoie. *Redbone Coonhound* explores the intricacies of both the subtle and overt polemics of race, systemic power, and privilege. All proceeds from the streaming tickets were included in the endowment.

A special thank you to Lyrica & Jack Bradshaw for offering a generous matching incentive for this fund.

#### Denis Simpson Fund Donors, \$100+

Corinne Assayag, WorldExposure.com William Boden Lyrica Bradshaw Jennifer Clement Jeff Cummings Dr. Kate Dahlstrom Josh Epstein Dave Kirby & Louise Guinand Dan and Andrea Jabour Lorna Jean Klohn Irma & Marvin Lamoureux Allen MacInnis Kathy MacKenzie Rose Mitsushio Jane Mortifee Omari Newton Esther Rausenberg Gloria Reuben Lynne & Don Rose Zaitoon Shariff Kathy Sherlock Marsha Sibthorpe Donia Sims Karen Speirs Brian Tate Alex & Wendy Thorburn B. Weppler James Wright Anonymous

## **STATEMENT OF ACTIONS**

In July 2020 we released the following letter outlining our commitment as an organization to explore where barriers to inclusion exist within our company. We have since launched many of these initiatives and we look forward to sharing updates with you throughout the coming year.

As leaders of the Arts Club, we strive to be kind, clear, and fair employers, creating a home for talented staff whom we value, develop, and retain. We are committed to fostering a welcoming, supportive, and creative place for artists—to be an incubator where artists create exceptional work, fully reflective of our community. We seek to have a culture that crackles with positivity, generosity of spirit, and a willingness to engage with difficult content and conversations.

As the whole theatre sector experiences this intermission from staging shows, we want to take this opportunity to learn more about people's experiences at the Arts Club and explore where there are barriers to inclusion within the company—including those created by systemic racism. Our job is to listen to ongoing conversations and to engage in a deep examination of our past and current working practices, so that we can improve and build bridges for the future.

#### As leaders of the Arts Club we are committed to these direct actions:

- In collaboration with paid BIPOC artists, we are currently engaging our teams in conversations about systemic racism to uncover how it exists within the organization and to take specific and strategic actions to dismantle it. Our goal through these conversations is to create a culture where we all have agency and accountability for this ongoing work. The first step, made clear by this process, will be the creation of an Anti-Racism Policy for all employees.
- We engaged local theatre artist and activist Omari Newton as our Community Liaison throughout the summer. Omari focused on practices of inclusion at the Arts Club, fostering our relationship with the professional theatre community, and making specific recommendations and plans for the company.
- We hired Amy Amantea as our Accessibility Coordinator for the 20/21 season to provide guidance and counsel on accessibility at the Arts Club and to aid in the creation of inclusive programs for persons with disabilities, including artists, audiences, and staff. We are grateful that this position has been made possible through funding from the British Columbia Arts Council.
- We created the Denis Simpson Fund within our endowment to fund anti-racist and inclusive activities throughout the organization. Please find more information on page 14.
- We will undertake an internal audit to collect comprehensive data about the diversity of our past and current teams, including staff, artists, and board members. This data will be used to assess how we have, or have not, reflected the diversity of our community and whether people of all characteristics have had equitable access to opportunity. We will assess shortcomings and successes, and use these findings to meaningfully and thoughtfully create processes, take actions, and hold ourselves accountable.

• We understand that not everyone is comfortable speaking candidly to their past, present, or potential employers. We will establish a third-party confidential disclosure process that will create a safe space for artists and staff to speak about their experiences either working at or gaining access to employment at the Arts Club. While this process can be used to seek information to address a specific concern (when possible), the desired outcome is to identify themes and barriers to equity and inclusion in the company's practices and workplace culture. This report will anonymize feedback and contribute to the development of a detailed action plan for accountability. These findings and our resulting plan will be part of an ongoing examination and bettering of our working practices and culture. At this point, we are putting together the third-party confidential disclosure process and more information about this timeline will be shared as soon as it's ready.

In order to foster transparency, we will publicly share reports of the work detailed above, including:

- Recommendations and actions from our internal departmental work
- Recommendations from our Community Liaison
- Recommendations from our Accessibility Coordinator
- Findings from our internal audit
- Findings from the third-party confidential disclosure report

After the public has had time to read and consider these reports, we will host a Community Forum. At the forum, details of the reports will be shared and there will be an opportunity for community discussion.

The Arts Club strives to be a space for the community; a space where, through imagination and storytelling, we are able to have compassion and empathy for others. And so, the Arts Club must be a safe space for all members of this community. We are committed to doing the work to uncover the barriers that exist to engagement with the Arts Club, and we are committed to dismantling them.

Sincerely,

Ashlie Corcoran, Artistic Director Peter Cathie White, Executive Director

The cast of A Thousand Splendid Suns: set design by Ken MacDonald; costume design/coordination by Linda Cho/Alison Green; lighting design by Robert Wierzel and Andrew Griffin; photo by David Cooper.



## **DIGITAL INITIATIVES**

2020 brought the unique challenge of having to pivot as many of our programs as possible to online platforms. In the early days of this new landscape, the Arts Club's priority was to keep our community engaged while our theatres were dark. A Digital Task Force was assembled to plan, create, and implement online content that could be provided to our audiences as a way to connect with us through free workshops, panels, interviews, and more. The Arts Club Digital Edition, a new section of our website, was launched to provide patrons with access to this digital content.

This spring and summer, the Arts Club was able to facilitate 54 online workshops and 17 panel discussions. 919 people—including artists, theatre patrons, educators, students, community members, youth, and adults registered for these programs.

Our Live from Home series brought performance into people's living rooms while our venues were closed. Twice every week, we shared a performance, such as a song, monologue, dance number, or anything in between, from a local artist affected by our theatre closures.



#### **Testimonials**

- I really appreciated the diversity of the panels, in terms of gender, race, experience, and career paths. Thank you for continuing to connect artists and for providing educational opportunities to emerging artists."
- **F** These courses are so valuable. Well run, lots to learn and I appreciate that they are offered for free."
- **C** The instructor created a safe place for me to explore and express myself. I found the workshops were paced well and progressed nicely with gradual risk-taking for beginners. Wonderful experience!"

The Arts Club Digital Edition is still available on our website. Visit digital.artsclub.com to discover previous and upcoming digital content.

Thank you to BMO Financial Group for sponsoring our Workshop Wednesdays and to iA Financial Group for sponsoring our Live from Home series.

## **EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

In order to continue providing our important youth and education programs during this turbulent time, two initiatives, Creative Teens and LEAP, were pivoted to online platforms:

### **Creative Teens**

In March of 2020, as our theatres closed due to COVID-19, our Creative Teens class was able to quickly transition to online learning and resumed directly after Spring Break, as originally planned. Creative Teens is a program that invites students to use their own stories and ideas to develop theatre as a mini company. The class was able to pivot to a digital platform and deliver their showcase to an online audience in June 2020 with much success.

Creative Teens is generously supported by Roberta Beiser & Allan Black.



### LEAP (Learning Early About Playwriting)

The Arts Club's LEAP (Learning Early About Playwriting) program was another program that had to transition to a digital medium without much notice. Entering its 13th year, this program is available at no cost to students through generous support from our donors. As we were no longer able to hold our traditional LEAP Festival with readings of their work, the students had an opportunity to chat about their work to the public through a live-streamed panel in the spring of 2020.

LEAP is generously supported by the Y.P. Heung Foundation, RBC Foundation, The River Foundation, Bonnie Mah, Roberta Beiser & Allan Black, Kathleen Dahlstrom, Lee Grills, and Bonnie & Terry Gordon.



Thank you to all of the donors who support our education programs: The Simons Foundation, Marin Investments Limited, The Lohn Foundation, Cadillac Fairview, Eldorado Gold, Neil Duke & Candace Yip, Johanna & Derek Rundell, Art Vertlieb & Bev Briscoe, Irma & Marvin Lamoureux, and Connor, Clark & Lunn Foundation.

### **The Shoe Project**

In the fall and winter of the 2019/20 season, the Arts Club Theatre Company partnered with The Shoe Project to host the Vancouver chapter of this national program. The Shoe Project describes themselves as a "women-led, charitable, national initiative to showcase the written and spoken voices of women immigrants and refugees. This is achieved through writing workshops, voice classes, and performances in which immigrant women tell their stories of arrival in, and adaptation to a Canadian community through the lens of a pair of shoes." Eleven women participated in classes from September 2019 to January 2020 using the rehearsal facilities at the BMO Theatre Centre and the Granville Island Stage. The program, led by Caroline Adderson, Alison Matthews, and Tara Cheyenne Friedenburg, culminated with showcases on January 11 and 12 at the Goldcorp Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre.

464 people attended these showcases, 299 of which were Arts Club ticket buyers. The local Shoe Project Coordinator for Vancouver was Zahida Rahemtulla, one of the Arts Club's emerging playwrights and a former LEAP student.



### Arts Club Drama Club

The Arts Club Drama Club offers students from equity-seeking communities an opportunity to access drama education on their home turf with this free program, which explores theatre and theatre-making in an inclusive and collaborative environment. The 2019/20 season for the Arts Club Drama Club expanded its reach to include programming at the Lee School, which serves as an alternative learning space for students coming from places of trauma, anxiety, depression, autism, or other learning barriers. Our programming continued at Britannia Secondary and the Ray Cam Cooperative Centre for a second successful year, engaging students to learn the elements of theatre through their own stories.

- Lee School: 15 participants (Grades 8-12)
- Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre: 15 participants (Grades 5-7)
- Britannia Secondary: 9 participants (Grades 8–12). Britannia students performed their selfdevised theatre piece at the Goldcorp Stage in February of 2020.

The Arts Club Drama Club is generously supported by G&F Financial Group.



Ashley Wright in *Cost of Living*: set design by Drew Facey; costume design by Amy McDougall; lighting design by Rebecca Picherack. Photo by David Cooper.

Deena Aziz in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*: set design by Ken MacDonald; costume design/coordination by Linda Cho/Alison Green; lighting design by Robert Wierzel and Andrew Griffin; photo by David Cooper.

## **CORPORATE SUPPORT**

The Arts Club Theatre Company is grateful for the ongoing support from government funders, foundations, and corporate partners.



## **OUR DONORS**

The Arts Club Theatre Company is grateful for the ongoing support from our donors. \*indicates 5+ years of giving

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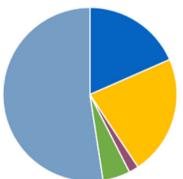
Shirley Taylor Dr Tim & Hilary Temple\* Peter & Carol-Lyn Thaler\* Kerry & Harry Tomyn\* Dawn Tonge Cyril & Patsy Tsou\* Sue & Ron Tucker John & Jean Turnbull\* , Sarah Tutton Frost\* Art Vertlieb & Bev Briscoe\* Barrie & Margaret Vickers\* Dr. Debra von Mandl **Betsy Waddington** Tim Wake & Karen van Schie Jane Wakefield\* Mrs. Rosemary Wakefield Ellis Ripley Trafford & Michael Walker\* Susan Wall Margaret Wallace Dr. Anne Wallis Julia & Doug Wallis . Tom Wallis Mr. & Mrs. Richard Wambolt Lisa Ward Jennifer & Dymetry Warnyca Michael & Judith Watson\* Brian & Eloise Watt\* Elaine Hunter & Bruce Watt\* Bonnie Watts\* Lyn & John Webster\* Mary Westrom Terry Whitehead\* Pamela Whittall & Ed Beange\* Lindsay Wilde Dr. & Mrs. David & Susan Wilkinson Mrs. Terry Wilkinson\* Mr. Shawn Willliamson\* Edward L. Wilson\* Stephanie Wilson John & Cathy Windsor\* Wendy Winslow & Robert Paterson Mignonne Wood ВоБ & Edie Wood Doug Wootton Marg Worthy\* Rosemary Wray\* Linda Wright Donna Wyman Cheryl Yarenmko & Kevin Clegg Margaret Yoshida Charles & Dale Young\* Peter & June Young Legacy Fund, held at Vancouver Foundation\* Jean Yuen . Liz Zaozirny Anonymous



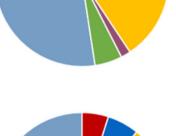
Tom McBeath, Christopher Allen, and Susian McFarlen in *The Birds & the Bees*; set design by Ted Rober design by Alaia Hamer; lighting design by Michael K. Hewitt; photo by Moonrider Productions.

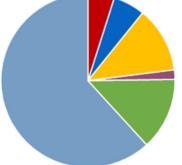


Teal Sherer and Ashley Wright in *Cost of Living*: set design by Drew Facey; costume design by Amy McDougall; lighting design by Rebecca Picherack; photo by David Cooper.



Revenue	2019/20		2018/19	
Earned Revenue	52%	7,013,344	71%	11,392,167
Lounge	5%	680,990	9%	1,499,451
Fundraising for Foundation	2%	242,451	0%	36,201
Fundraising for Operations	22%	2,977,617	13%	2,092,008
Public Sector Grants	18%	2,463,473	7%	1,057,863
Total	100%	13,377,875	100%	16,077,690
Expenses				
Production	62%	8,427,317	64%	10,380,832
Education and Administration	13%	1,830,170	11%	1,780,906
Contributions to Foundation	2%	242,451	0%	36,201
Premises, Amortization, Rental	12%	1,663,557	11%	1,862,000
Bar Operations	6%	802,652	9%	1,381,257
Fundraising	5%	670,172	5%	759,805
Total	100%	13,636,319	100%	16,201,001
Surplus (Deficit)		(258,444)		(123,311)





Ashlie Corcoran Artistic Director

#### Peter Cathie White Executive Director

### Artistic

Artistic Director Emeritus Bill Millerd Resident Designer Ted Roberts Associate Artistic Director Stephen Drover Artist Liaison Stephanie Hargreaves Producer Melissa Tsang Company Manager & Assistant to the Artistic Director Bronwyn Carradine Dramaturgy Assistant Meghan Chenosky

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**Front of House Attendants** Lince Amora, Brendan Blanchard, Celeste Cadieux-Rey, Susan Chalmers, Pamela Choi, Saskia Cseh, Linda Guthrie, Meredith Hambrock, Vanessa Ho, Michelle Kaesar, Boris Kocmaruk, Aaron Lee, Louis Liu, Shirley Lum, Atsumi Mizuuchi, Kirsten Niedtner, Shea O'Connor, Shannon Putnam, Mylyn Ramos, Ashton Ramsay, Roberta Sciarretta, Chanelle Sheehan, Miranda Smith, Nathan Smith, Karen Worrod, Vanessa Yee, Natalie Zhou

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The cast of *The Wedding Party*: set design by Brian Perchaluk; costume design by Christine Reimer; video and lighting design by Hugh Conacher; associate lighting design by Jon Cleveland; photo by Matt Duboff.



### ARTS CLUB THEATRE COMPANY

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COVER PHOTO: The cast of The Sound of Music: set and costume design by Drew Facey; lighting design by Itai Erdal; photo by Emily Cooper.

Arash Khakpour and Delia Brett in *Cipher*: set design by Narda McCarroll; costume design by Stephanie Kong; lighting design by Parjad Sharifi; projection design by Jamie Nesbitt; photo by David Cooper.

