

2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT



theatre:
CALGARY

Stafford Arima, Artistic Director

MISSION

TO STIMULATE, PROVOKE, AND DELIGHT
THROUGH AMBITIOUS PROGRAMMING
CREATED TO IGNITE LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND
INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT.

VISION

TO STAND AMONGST THE BEST THEATRES
GLOBALLY AS A LEADER IN INNOVATIVE,
IMPACTFUL, AND DIVERSE PROGRAMMING.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In the spirit of reconciliation, Theatre Calgary acknowledges that we live, work and create on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation of Alberta, Regions 5 & 6, and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta. They were the original occupants of this land and continue to be here to this day. Theatre Calgary is grateful to have the opportunity to present in this territory.

WELCOME

Theatre Calgary's 56th Season, under the leadership of Artistic Director Stafford Arima and Executive Director Maya Choldin, was a resounding success. Stafford's 'Season of Smiles' showcased local talent, classic hits and world premieres, driving up ticket sales and engaging new audiences. Maya's diligent financial oversight and leadership of the Theatre for All initiative advanced our journey toward sustainability amid a challenging landscape for arts organizations.

The season opened with Shakespeare on the Go's comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, followed by the mainstage opener, Agatha Christie's entertaining whodunit, *The Mousetrap*. Next, Farren Timoteo's one-person runaway hit-comedy, *Made In Italy*, was presented in partnership with Alberta Theatre Projects (ATP). Audiences delighted in the return of the spectacular full version of *A Christmas Carol* for the holiday season. In the new year, Steve Martin's *Meteor Shower* provided quirky and absurd comic relief. The Shakespeare-Beatles dynamic mash-up *As You Like It* entertained with beloved songs against the backdrop of a modern take on the Bard classic. The world premiere of *Selma Burke*, written by two Calgary playwrights and presented in partnership with ATP, creatively told the lesser-known story of the American sculptor. The season ended with the spectacular world premiere of *Beaches the Musical*, a co-production based on the best-selling novel, which brought a Broadway-studded team to Calgary to dramatize this story of enduring friendship.

Season 56 demonstrated Theatre Calgary's adaptability beyond the Max Bell stage, a valuable trait as we navigate the Arts Commons Transformation. It delighted audiences to the point that for many shows, every possible single seat in the theatre was filled. Additionally, it enhanced Theatre Calgary's reputation in both the local and international theatre community. A Season of Smiles, indeed!

Key to the season's success was the launch of the Theatre for All ticket initiative, and we would like to express special thanks to Craig and Cara Senyk for their extraordinary lead gift and to our other major donors who helped kick off the Theatre for All campaign. Overall, Theatre Calgary sold over 40% more tickets than last year, and welcomed record numbers of first-time theatre goers. Increasing audience accessibility and expanding audience diversity will help ensure the longevity of live theatre and Theatre Calgary's sustainability.

We are incredibly proud of Theatre Calgary's management and staff. Under Maya and Stafford's direction, the team is stronger than ever before and the sense of everyone rowing together in pursuit of the singular goal – getting more people into the theatre – is truly palpable. We are grateful for the strength and unity of our management, staff, volunteers, Board and Committee members. As we bid farewell to outgoing Board members Brian Giang, John MacAulay, Kirsty Sklar and Tricia Leadbeater with deep thanks for their years of service, we also welcome six new Board and Committee Members and their fresh perspectives.

As Co-Chairs succeeding Craig Senyk (a very hard act to follow), we celebrate the positive trajectory of Theatre Calgary. We are thrilled with the current season's start, highlighted by record-breaking sales for *The Play That Goes Wrong*. We are excited to be working with management on a new strategic plan that will guide us through to 2030, emphasizing audience cultivation and a commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility. Together with our Board and our talented management team and staff, we look forward to continuing the momentum. Our future is bright.

Joy Alford Cathy Samuel
CO-CHAIRS, THEATRE CALGARY SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sitting in the theatre and experiencing a jam-packed house with an audience fully engaged in live theatre is pure bliss. It was Theatre Calgary's mission to bring a lineup of productions that excited and enthralled our patrons. And that's exactly what we did! We took our audiences on an incredible journey, presenting a range of stories that challenged perspectives and stirred emotions.

Theatre Calgary continues to evolve with the times as we find new and innovative initiatives to bring audiences back to the theatre. Our Theatre for All ticket subsidy is an example of such innovation. By tapping into the generous support of our audiences, patrons, and supporters, we were able to provide an unprecedented ticket price of \$39 for every show and every performance. This made a huge impact within our city, and we saw a thrilling rise in attendance based on this ticket subsidy.

Theatre, at its roots, is an artform that connects people and creates memories through the power of live performance; and it is through these connections that stories can be told – stories that reveal to heal; stories that provoke discussion; and stories that entertain. This season's selections were a true cornucopia of rich and colourful plays that nourished our audiences with the best that theatre has to offer.

With evolution comes exciting metamorphosis, and we promise there is more to come.

Stafford Arima Maya Choldin
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



2023-24 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

Our 2023-24 season saw us traverse through worlds filled with dreamers, murders, Italian meals, ghosts, martinis, Shakespearean wrestling rings, ground-breaking sculptors, and warm beaches. It was a season that not only had it all, but was a season for all.

The summer of 2023 saw us once again provide performance opportunities for young emerging artists as we took Shakespeare by the Bow on the road once again as Shakespeare on the Go with an adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Our cast of seven made their way to numerous parks and community associations in Calgary and area including Inglewood's Jack Long Park, Brookfield Residential communities, and Heritage Park's front plaza.

We then began our 2023-24 mainstage season with the world's most famous murder mystery by the grand dame of the genre with Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*. The longest-running mystery in theatre history did not disappoint, as audiences flocked to see its legendary twists and turns.

Next, we brought in Alberta playwright and performer Farren Timoteo's one-person show, *Made in Italy*. Co-presented with Alberta Theatre Projects, and presented in the Martha Cohen Theatre, the play was a smash-hit, selling out numerous performances and bringing audiences to their feet as he told his semi-autobiographical story of growing up Italian in Alberta.

For the holiday season, Calgary's holiday tradition, *A Christmas Carol* returned to our stage. Having not produced our full large-scale production since 2019, families joined us in droves and tickets nearly completely sold-out for the entire run. The production also featured the debut of Doug McKeag in the role of Scrooge. His performance received great praise from patrons who had seen the show numerous times in the past.

The start of 2024 brought comedian Steve Martin's playwriting to our stage in *Meteor Shower*. This dark comedy highlighted the wit and absurdity that Martin is known for, and included a twist that left audiences talking about the show long after leaving the theatre.

Our fifth show of the season was a unique mashup of Shakespeare and the The Beatles in a presentation of Bard on the Beach's *As You Like It*. A truly unique telling of this story, the show not only featured a plethora of Beatles chart-toppers, but also a pre-show wrestling sequence that was a show unto itself.

Our next production was a World Premiere by Calgary playwrights Maria Crooks and Caroline Russell-King about sculptor *Selma Burke*. Featuring a commanding performance by Calgary's Norma Lewis, the show was also a co-presentation with ATP and ran in the Martha Cohen Theatre.

We concluded our season with spectacle and song as we presented the International Premiere of *Beaches the Musical*. Based on the book by Iris Rainer Dart, a unique six-week rehearsal process saw Dart (playwright) and music-writing legend Mike Stoller join us to work on bringing the musical to life. The show was directed by Lonny Price and Matt Cowart (*The Louder We Get*) and featured Broadway's Jessica Vosk and Kelli Barrett along with a cast of Calgary and Canadian talent, and a creative team consisting of many acclaimed Broadway designers.

The achievements of our 2023-24 season weren't just on the stage however. Our Theatre For All program, which saw the introduction of \$39 tickets for all of our main floor orchestra seats for all performances, was an incredible success for us. The program, made possible by the wonderful generosity of donors through our TC For All campaign, saw more than 74,000 tickets sold for \$39, with a staggering 59% of our audience consisting of new patrons to Theatre Calgary. With price, flexibility, and an entertaining mix on stage, our 2023-24 season truly was an opportunity for all theatregoers to discover, return to, and embrace the experience of seeing a live performance at Theatre Calgary.





**2023-24
PRODUCTIONS**



**SHAKESPEARE ON THE GO –
A MIDSUMMER
NIGHT'S DREAM**

JULY 14 - AUGUST 6, 2023

BY William Shakespeare
ADAPTED BY Anna Cummer
DIRECTED BY Kelli Fox



**THE
MOUSETRAP**

SEPTEMBER 12 - OCTOBER 8, 2023

BY Agatha Christie
DIRECTED BY Craig Hall



MADE IN ITALY

OCTOBER 17 - NOVEMBER 11, 2023

BY Farren Timoteo
DIRECTED BY Daryl Cloran

Presented in partnership with Alberta Theatre Projects



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 31, 2023

BY Charles Dickens
ADAPTED BY Geoffrey Simon Brown
DIRECTED BY Stafford Arima
ASSOCIATE DIRECTED BY Jane MacFarlane



METEOR SHOWER

JANUARY 23 - FEBRUARY 11, 2024

BY Steve Martin
DIRECTED BY Lezlie Wade



AS YOU LIKE IT

FEBRUARY 27 - MARCH 24, 2024

BY William Shakespeare
DIRECTED BY Daryl Cloran
MUSIC DIRECTION BY Ben Elliott

Conceived by Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival
and Daryl Cloran



**WORLD PREMIERE –
SELMA BURKE**

APRIL 2 - 27, 2024

BY Maria Crooks & Caroline Russell-King
DIRECTED BY Delicia Turner Sonnenberg

Presented in partnership with Alberta Theatre Projects



**INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE –
BEACHES THE MUSICAL**

MAY 18 - JUNE 16, 2024

BOOK BY Iris Rainer Dart & Thom Thomas
MUSIC BY Mike Stoller LYRICS BY Iris Rainer Dart
DIRECTED BY Lonny Price CO-DIRECTED BY Matt Cowart
MUSIC DIRECTION BY Katie Coleman
PRODUCERS Jennifer Maloney-Prezioso,
Douglas McJannet for Arden Entertainment,
Alison Spiriti for Right Angle Entertainment and
Broadway & Beyond Theatricals (Tracey McFarland,
Ryan Bogner, Victoria Lang)



CREATIVE LEARNING

This past season, Theatre Calgary launched our new Creative Learning initiative. Its purpose is to provide programs that introduce, nurture, and train young artists in the magical world of theatre. Using a team of professional artists, our goal is to support the growth, advancement, and joy of each participant.

From spring and summer theatre camps, to field trips and artists in the classroom, our first year was a tremendous success. Our Creative Learning programs will continue to grow in 2024-25, as we explore more fun and innovative ways to give the next generation of young artists an opportunity to explore, create, and perform!

Mask, Musical Theatre, Playmaking, Puppetry, Tech Theatre, Storytelling, Theatre Games

Offerings in camps, field trips, classroom visits

K-12 Grades of participants

86 Spring and Summer Camp/Intensive participants

256 Artist in the classroom and field trip participants

THEATRE FOR ALL - A SUCCESS!

74,345 \$39 Theatre For All tickets sold

91% Of available \$39 Theatre For All tickets sold

12,922 New-to-TC ticket purchasers in 2023-24

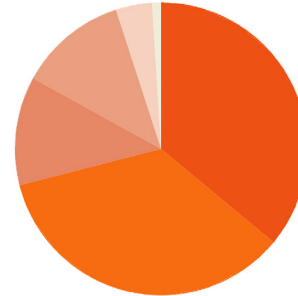
59.4% Total patrons that were new-to-TC ticket purchasers



2023-24 STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS*

REVENUE

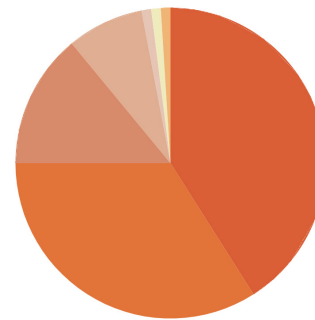
	2023-24	2022-23***
BOX OFFICE REVENUE	4,675,836	3,624,277
FUNDRAISING	4,694,685	1,682,974
GRANTS	1,575,654	1,639,845
COMMERCIAL ENHANCEMENT & OTHER	1,503,294	669,590
DONATED MATERIAL	104,000	0
DISBURSEMENT FROM TCEF**	529,900	573,452
TOTAL	\$13,083,369	\$8,190,138



- 36% BOX OFFICE REVENUE
- 35% FUNDRAISING
- 12% GRANTS
- 12% COMM. ENHANCEMENT & OTHER
- 4% DISBURSEMENT FROM TCEF**
- 1% DONATED MATERIAL

EXPENSES

PRODUCTION & ROYALTIES	5,990,134	3,794,976
FACILITY & CONCESSIONS	1,505,320	1,109,353
SALARIES, ADMINISTRATION & DEPRECIATION	4,659,463	3,853,060
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS	1,120,128	795,707
FUNDRAISING	191,627	135,689
OUTREACH & RESEARCH	172,200	127,010
DONATED MATERIAL	104,000	0
TOTAL	\$13,742,872	\$9,815,795



- 44% PRODUCTION & ROYALTIES
- 34% SALARIES, ADMIN. & DEPRECIATION
- 11% FACILITY & CONCESSIONS
- 8% MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
- 1% FUNDRAISING
- 1% OUTREACH & RESEARCH
- 1% DONATED MATERIAL

DEFICIENCY OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES (-\$659,503) (-\$1,625,657)

* THEATRE CALGARY SOCIETY CONDENSED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2024.

ABOVE RESULTS ARE NON-CONSOLIDATED AS THEY EXCLUDE THE RESULTS OF THE THEATRE CALGARY ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION.

** THEATRE CALGARY ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION.

*** CERTAIN PRIOR YEAR EXPENSE AND REVENUE AMOUNTS WERE RECLASSIFIED TO CONFORM TO THE CURRENT YEAR PRESENTATION TO APPROPRIATELY REPRESENT THE ORGANIZATION'S BUSINESS ACTIVITIES.

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NAIRN NERLAND



Production Photo Credits: All photos by Trudie Lee except where noted. Cover: Farren Timoteo in *Made in Italy*; Page 4: The cast of *Beaches the Musical*; Theatre Calgary audience (Jeff Yee photo); Page 5: (top row, l to r) Jessica Vosk in *Beaches the Musical*; Stephanie Alexandre, Matthew Mooney, Christian Krushel, Kathleen Faith Ballangan in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Kristian Jones photo); Tyrell Crews, Vanessa Leticia Jetté in *The Mousetrap*; (middle row, l to r) Farren Timoteo in *Made in Italy*; Marshall Vielle, Doug McKeag and the cast of *A Christmas Carol*; Nathan Schmidt, Bahareh Yaraghi, Helen Knight, Braden Griffiths in *Meteor Shower*; (bottom row, l to r) Oscar Derkx, Chelsea Rose in *As You Like It*; Norma Lewis in *Selma Burke*; Jessica Vosk, Kelli Barrett in *Beaches the Musical*; Page 6: Creative Learning 2023 Showcase (Photo: Ben Laird); Page 8: Christopher Hunt, Norma Lewis in *Selma Burke*; Page 10: The cast of *The Mousetrap*; Page 11: Doug McKeag in *A Christmas Carol*; Max Bell Theatre (Photo: Jeff Yee). For full cast and creative teams for these shows, visit: theatrecalgary.com/archive

THANK YOU

Theatre Calgary received gifts from over 1,500 donors in 2023-24! We are very grateful for the outpouring of support from individuals, companies, foundations, and all three levels of government. We were able to achieve many things this year, thanks to you, our loyal and generous donors.

We sincerely thank all the amazing individuals, companies, and foundations for their generosity. They are all instrumental in our success, and helping secure a vibrant Arts and Culture community in Calgary.

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Adele Sato
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Barbara Sibbald
Neil Silver
Alane Smith
David & Betty Smith
Paulette & Rick Smith
Penny Smith
Victoria Smith
Solo Compute
Gregory Somer
Anne Spicer
Yvonne Stanford
Janelle Stangl
SGS/Sarah Stanley
Carol A. Stevenson
Betty J Stein
Penny Stone
Nola & Tom Stuckert
Janice Sturm
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Swanson
The April's
Margot Theriault &
Genie Collins
Ian Thom &
Christina Halasa
Mark Thomas
Lynne Thornton
Sabrina Thornton
Jana Tobin
William & Colleen
Tobman
Lynn Topp
Danuta Trafford
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TC FOR ALL

In May 2023, Theatre Calgary embarked on an ambitious \$10 million campaign to make **Theatre Accessible to ALL.**

Thanks to the incredible support of over 2,700 donors, we've already raised \$6.5 million, bringing us more than halfway to our goal!

We would like to thank the following leaders for their vision and generosity:

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theatre: CALGARY



Theatre Calgary is a professional non-profit theatre company and a resident of Arts Commons, operating out of the Arts Commons Max Bell Theatre.

It is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and operates within the jurisdiction of the Canadian Theatre Agreement. Theatre Calgary employs technicians under a collective agreement with the I.A.T.S.E.

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