

**THEATRE ALBERTA 2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**Executive Director's Report**  
**April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014**

I am pleased to submit this report to Theatre Alberta's membership outlining the past year of our operations. It was a year packed with exciting developments for Theatre Alberta, which included successful fundraising and advocacy activities, new partnerships, expansion of and improvements to our educational programs, and as always, exceptional work done behind the scenes by Theatre Alberta's dedicated and talented staff members.

Here are the highlights from our 2013/2014 year:

- **Theatre Alberta's Library**, the largest independent and fully circulating theatre library in Canada, added 787 titles to its collection, bringing the total to 19,282 scripts and reference materials available for our members as of March 31, 2014. Members who participated in our "Gift A Play" fundraiser during the holiday season donated 62 of last year's new titles. Our Librarians circulated more than 5,000 titles to 296 Theatre Alberta members.
- **Artstrek**, our popular summer theatre school for teens, took up residence at **Red Deer College** from July 7<sup>th</sup> through 27<sup>th</sup>, celebrating its 53<sup>rd</sup> year of operations exploring the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. The school was expanded to include a 3<sup>rd</sup> week of classes in order to meet demand, after having been sold out with a waiting list for the previous eight summers in a row. 333 students from across the province attended Artstrek 2013, which represented 10% growth in our first year of expansion. Waiting lists were eliminated and all interested students were able to participate. Artstrek can now accommodate up to 400 teens.

Theatre Alberta provided \$7,750 in scholarship support to 30 Artstrek 2013 students in financial need. We awarded 29 partial scholarships and one full scholarship: **The Keith Ewasiuk Memorial Award**. The Keith Ewasiuk Memorial Award is a new Artstrek scholarship created in memory of Theatre Alberta Board Member and Beaumont Composite Drama Teacher Keith Ewasiuk, who passed away in July 2012. The award will be provided annually to an Alberta student who exemplifies leadership in the LGBTQ community at their school or in their community. An additional 32 students were sponsored by 11 benevolent Alberta businesses / community groups.

Artstrek 2013 program partners included **Cenovus Energy**, who is supporting Artstrek's expansion with a three-year commitment of \$25,000/year; **Alberta Milk** and **Saputo**, who donated more than 2,000 individual servings of milk for our evening snack breaks; and Red Deer businesses **2-For-1 Family Pizza** and **Sobeys** who provided product discounts for necessary program materials and supplies.

- **PlayWorks Ink**, traditionally co-presented by Theatre Alberta and **Alberta Playwrights' Network**, was held September 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> at **The Banff Centre**, marking an exciting new three-organization partnership for the conference's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. PlayWorks Ink welcomed 81 participants from across Alberta and featured five comprehensive training workshops; both a private lecture and public performance by legendary Canadian actor Christopher Plummer; a staged reading of Katherine Koller's *Last Chance Leduc*, winner of the 2013 Alberta Playwriting Competition; and various community networking events/opportunities.

Theatre Alberta and Alberta Playwrights' Network provided nine bursaries totaling \$2,500 to PlayWorks Ink participants in financial need.

Additional partners for the conference included **Theatre of the New Heart** and the **US Consulate**, which both supported a playwriting master class with Robert O'Hara; and **Shell Theatre (City of Fort Saskatchewan)** and **Environmental Refueling Systems Inc.**, each of which sponsored bursaries for students in financial need.

- **Workshops by Request** supported 20 theatre training workshops in Bashaw, Calgary, Calmar, Camrose, Canmore, Devon, Drumheller, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Jasper, Red Deer, Spruce Grove, St. Albert, Taber, Wainwright, and Whitecourt, reaching 283 Alberta theatre artists. Workshop topics included acting and character development, voice and singing, improvisation, dance, musical theatre, directing, stage combat, scenic painting, technical theatre, lighting, make-up, and stage management. The Workshops by Request season was generously sponsored by Canadian lighting company **Chrisite Lites Sales**.
- **Emerge**, our tenth annual general audition event for the graduates of Alberta's post-secondary acting training programs, was held April 22<sup>nd</sup> in Edmonton and April 29<sup>th</sup> in Calgary. 64 graduates from eight Alberta universities and colleges auditioned for 82 of our province's directors – the highest number of professionals to attend in the program's history.
- **All Stages**, Canada's only provincially focused theatre magazine, completed its 5<sup>th</sup> full year of publication, featuring issues that explored theatre design, playwriting, and training in the province.
- Our website – **www.theatrealberta.com** – was visited ~194,000 times by ~104,000 unique visitors, an increase of approximately 40% from the previous year. We have developed a robust and expanding social media presence on Facebook and Twitter, sharing an average of 70 classified listings per month. We continued to publish **Theatre Buzz**, our monthly email newsletter, which condenses the wide variety of classifieds information on our website – audition notices, job announcements, theatre news, and upcoming shows – into an accessible digest format.
- The 2013/2014 **Playbill** listed 396 productions by 165 theatre companies – marking the highest number of events and companies ever included in the *Playbill's* history.
- We continued to **provide financial support via sponsorships** to **Alberta Playwrights' Network**, **Alberta High School Drama Festival Association**, and the **Canadian Institute for Theatre Technology**. We also continued to sponsor awards at the **Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Awards**, **Betty Mitchell Awards**, and **Calgary Amateur Theatre Awards**.
- We continued working with our sister Provincial Arts Service Organizations (PASOs) and Cultural Industry Associations (CIAs) as the **Alberta Partners for Arts and Culture (APAC)**. APAC is a coalition of Alberta's 12 PASOs and CIAs that meets six times per year to discuss advocacy issues and strategies that impact the larger Arts and Culture industry in Alberta. In the Fall of 2013 we conducted an arts advocacy campaign where 20 volunteers sourced from APAC's membership met with their MLAs to deliver three key messages: Culture Strengthens Communities; Arts and Culture Help Build the Economy; and Government Wins by Investing in the Arts.

- Theatre Alberta continued to work on behalf of group member Front Row Centre Players and the theatre community in general to advocate for changes to the **Workers' Compensation Board – Alberta's** 'live theatre industry code,' as it relates to volunteers in our industry. Our lobbying efforts came to fruition January 1, 2014, when changes to the WCB Alberta's policy regarding unpaid workers and volunteers came in effect. While WCB coverage for all paid workers in the live theatre industry remains compulsory, coverage for volunteers and hobbyists that work for registered nonprofit theatre companies is now optional.
- We embarked on an exciting new partnership with the **Arts Touring Alliance of Alberta** and **Fringe Theatre Adventures** to stimulate theatre touring in rural Alberta. **Picks of the Edmonton Fringe** will support three Albertan theatre productions selected from the 2013 Edmonton International Fringe™ Theatre Festival in touring Alberta during the 2014-2015 season. The productions are *Happy Whackin' Jim McCrackin* presented by The Accidental Humour Co., *Never Let the Crew See You Cry* presented by Northern Sabbatical Productions and MAA & PAA Theatre, and *The Bomb-itty of Errors* presented by Edmonton Actors Theatre. So far we have booked performances in Fort McMurray, Edson, Camrose, Spruce Grove, and Morinville, and we are still taking bookings.

Special thanks and recognition are due here to Theatre Alberta's staff, whose contributions always go above and beyond the call of duty. Working with us during our 2013/14 year were Office Administrator **Maura Penn**; Librarians **Brenda Sutherland** (retired), **Chris Profiri** (retired), **Solveig Anderson**, and **Becca Barrington**; Communications and Marketing Coordinator **Aaron Talbot**; Programmers **Michelle Kennedy** and **Frazer Andrews**; Financial Administrator **Zenovia Adams**; Artstrek Director **Marie Gynane-Willis**; Artstrek Registrar **Stephanie Leaf**; Artstrek Administrative Director **Karen Johnson-Diamond**; Artstrek Co-Curriculum Directors **Tami Dowler-Coltman** and **Greg Dowler-Coltman**; Artstrek Technical Director **Sui-Fan Wong**; and more than **80 more individual artists** who contributed to our programs and services as instructors, writers, and support staff.

Theatre Alberta's Board of Directors works hard all year to ensure the organization is viable, strong, and responds to the needs of our membership. My thanks to all members of the Board, and in particular to outgoing members **Michele Fleiger** and **Cyril Cook** for their years of excellent service. It is an honour and a privilege to serve the members of Theatre Alberta alongside the most dedicated, engaged, and attentive Staff and Board of any arts organization in Alberta.

As always, we rely on our members' valuable input, opinions, and expertise to keep Theatre Alberta current. We would love to hear more from you. Please let us know how we are doing and how we can serve you better.

Respectfully submitted:

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