



ANNUAL REPORT
2020

TLB: A cultural venue bringing people together



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Theatre Lac-Brome (watercolour by Rhonda Price)

TLB: A CULTURAL VENUE BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Vision

TLB aims to leave its mark on the cultural life of Brome-Missisquoi region and beyond by positioning itself as a leading regional hub of artistic activity with a varied, attractive, affordable and quality program.

Values

The values promoted by TLB can be summed up in three words: **respect, openness and transparency.**

These values are expressed as follows:

- respect and highlight TLB's historical roots and the achievements of its predecessors;
- be artistically and linguistically receptive, and communicate effectively in English and French;
- establish and maintain a transparent and rigorous management framework.

Mandate

TLB's mandate is to offer a varied cultural program in both official languages to serve the entire regional community. TLB thus defines itself as an open, vibrant, accessible and unifying production and performance venue that promotes Canadian talent and creativity.

Programming

TLB's program includes plays in English and in French, shows and concerts in a variety of musical genres, productions for school audiences and families, comedy, films and various special activities. It also hosts local groups such as the Knowlton Players, exhibitions of local artists and the Knowlton film and literary festivals.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

TLB: A cultural venue bringing people together

When asked by a reporter why he engaged in theatre, the writer Albert Camus replied: *"Simply, because a theatre stage is one of the places in the world where I feel happy."* We believe that Theatre Lac-Brome is a place where all citizens can come to find happiness.

Despite a year 2020 in which almost no shows were presented, the team at Theatre Lac-Brome has not been idle. It quickly became clear to us that it was essential to focus on concrete actions that would give TLB a new lease on life when it reopened. Although we were able to count on the precious help of a few patrons to get through these challenging times, we had to quickly find new financial support and new partners to ensure the Theatre's survival and growth.

Funding, a vital question


With this in mind, we launched our fundraising campaign, LOOKING FORWARD TO 2021 ... AND BEYOND! We are very pleased that two well-known personalities from the arts and business world, Susan Pepler and Yves Desjardins-Siciliano, have agreed to serve as campaign co-chairs. Under their leadership, the campaign quickly took off and reached its initial goal of \$500,000. But this fundraising effort must continue, as there are still many challenges to overcome. We are therefore calling on all our fellow citizens, the business community and governments to actively support our campaign and play a key role in TLB's future.

Valuing arts and culture

TLB is proud to have participated in the Town of Brome Lake's working group on the drafting of a new cultural policy. By reaffirming its commitment to fully support culture, the Town recognizes that culture is a major component of our region's quality of life and an undeniable contributor to Brome Lake's economic vitality. At TLB, we also believe that it is a key both to understanding the world and to living together.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the dedication and perseverance shown by the Theatre's Board of Directors, staff and many volunteers throughout this pandemic year. I would also like to thank the Town of Brome Lake, our main financial partner, as well as our loyal sponsors and our very generous donors and patrons for their unwavering support of our Theatre.

Finally, for the post-COVID era, our dream is to quickly renew with the artists we love, to discover new talent, to see audiences flocking back to TLB and for all of us to watch unforgettable shows together.



Jean-Claude Mahé
Chair of the Board



MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

When I think of the year we have just gone through, and that another 365 days has passed since I last addressed you in this capacity, I find myself recognizing the duality of what we have experienced, and in many ways, are still living through. While 2020 into 2021 brought more “pandemonium” ... it also made so many things crystal clear. For me, the “mot-clé” is **connection**. That is what we missed, what we strived for ... and when it happened, what got us through. We found new ways to connect whether it be online, via Zoom, over the phone, texting, with socially distanced walks and talks, or by connecting to ourselves by baking bread, organizing our closets, and the like.

Some thrived with this time in a bubble ... others not so much ... and while we all tried to “pivot” and find our way to keep calm and carry on, for me one of the biggest challenges was the lack of live entertainment that I had been dedicated to bring you in my first season as Artistic Director. The fully bilingual and eclectic programming I planned in so many areas had been fashioned to give a fulfilling experience to our audiences, bridging our offering with our mandate of delivering a varied cultural program in both official languages to serve the entire community of our region.

In 2020, despite everything, we did manage to present a few shows, two outdoors and two indoors. We felt the palpable joy of a live audience participating in live performance. The experience for our audience, the performers, and TLB was a balm to soothe the soul. We managed to have a few vernissages and exhibitions of local artists, and while we had to limit the numbers attending, it was still a valuable and moving moment for both creator and spectator. We kept up with our newsletters, and are

very proud of our series on philanthropy, highlighting those dedicated and passionate individuals whose contributions have made such an enormous difference to the stamina and well-being of Theatre Lac-Brome. Those generous angels, and the donors for our Fundraising Campaign launched at the end of 2020, are the reason we are confident that we can not only survive, but thrive and make a difference in the cultural landscape of this area.

In 2021, we have also continued to work on and improve our space with the resources we have within our means at the moment ... we are creating a new additional dressing room area, we have a new costume loft that is an organizational dream come true, our backstage and technical domains have been cleared and cleaned. Best of all, we have safely welcomed many back into TLB, and witnessed their joy at what we have presented ... from our new Children Theatre Festival, to our Ciné-Club, to our opening gala Fundraiser of *The Chain*, to musical events in many genres ... and as they say, “the best is yet to come!” We are only just beginning again and have as full a roster as we can hope for at the time.

You have been here for us, and we will be here for you ... and when we look back on what we have gone through, we will be thankful that we never lost our mutual connection, and for that we are grateful.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ellen David".

Ellen David
Executive Artistic Director

TLB TEAM

Members of the Board of Directors

(as at December 31, 2020)

- Jean-Claude Mahé, Chair and President
- Alison Milligan, Vice-President
- Bruno Bourgeois, Treasurer
- Marie-Claude Jarry, Secretary
- Hélène Jalbert, Past President
- Michel Green
- Peter Mendell
- Denis Piquette

Employees

- Ellen David, Executive Artistic Director
- Chris Ward, Director of Operations
- Olivia Enns, Administrative Assistant and Communications Manager

Contract employees

- Bruce Giddings, Director of Technical services
- John Cameron, Sound and Light technician
- Jeannette Leblanc, Accounting Clerk

Volunteers

Ushering and service

- Michel Drapeau
- Colette Ferland
- Roger Guertin
- Jacques Nadeau
- Ana Tomas Rousseau
- Raymond Savoie

Translation

- Anne Enns
- Patrick Godon
- Dominique Vallerand

Editing (English)

- Patrick Godon

Writing and editing (French)

- Dominique Vallerand

Photography

- Ben McAuley

Legal advice

- Fred Enns



In Memoriam

Jacques Nadeau

The entire Theatre Lac-Brome team was deeply saddened by the loss of dear friend Jacques Nadeau, who passed away on June 30, 2021. Jacques was an extraordinary human being who radiated a great inner light. His dedication and commitment to TLB as a volunteer over the years were unmatched. We will deeply miss his presence, his kindness and his infectious *joie de vivre*.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2020 SEASON

In anticipation of TLB's 35th anniversary in 2020, the Artistic Director had put together an impressive program. Unfortunately, like all theatres in Quebec, TLB had to close its doors for most of the year as of March 13, 2020, and cancel all activities, including its annual Opening Gala and the popular Knowlton House and Garden Tour. At the end of the summer, we were still able to offer a few shows and exhibitions featuring our region's talented artists.

However, the TLB team remained very active during this time of lockdown. It launched a major fundraising campaign, **LOOKING FORWARD TO 2021 ... AND BEYOND!**, initiated the Heritage project, continued its communications efforts and rigorously managed a balanced budget.



Foyer of Theatre Lac-Brome

ACTIVITY REPORT

Shows

Before the launch of its promising 2020 season, TLB suspended its public activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in September, audiences had the chance to attend two superb outdoor concerts by cellist Stéphane Tétreault and harpist Valérie Milot. This was followed by a performance by blues singer Angel Forrest, well known in the region, accompanied by Denis Coulombe on guitar. Finally, soprano Isabelle Metwalli and pianist Enzo De Rosa offered a lively show featuring a selection of beautiful film music.



Singer-songwriter Angel Forrest

Exhibitions

For several years now, TLB has offered visual artists from the region the opportunity to exhibit their work in the foyer. This year, despite the Theatre's closure, visitors were able to admire from a distance the works of six artists and even attend a few openings in compliance with health regulations. TLB displayed abstract paintings by painter, printmaker and publisher Muriel Faille, large floral paintings by Susan Pepler, animal paintings by Alan MacIntyre (aka LooseCanine) and silkscreens by Geneviève Duplessis. Marie-Josée Gravel presented her most recent photographic works and sculptures, while Andrea Amarica presented her abstract works.



Artist Marie-Josée Gravel and some of her works



Yves Desjardins-Siciliano and Susan Pepler,
Co-Chairs of TLB's fundraising campaign

Fundraising Campaign

At its annual general meeting on October 3, 2020, TLB launched a major fundraising campaign, **LOOKING FORWARD TO 2021 ... AND BEYOND!** Co-chaired by Susan Pepler and Yves Desjardins-Siciliano, the campaign's goal was to raise \$500,000 over two years. In just a few months, we have reached this goal—and can look to the future with optimism.

Heritage Project

The Heritage project, **RESPECTING THE PAST, BUILDING THE FUTURE**, was launched, with the Brome County Historical Society Museum contributing to its historical component. Thanks to the support of the Government of Canada, TLB's team is engaged in the design and development of a multi-faceted program that will be deployed in 2021. These include choral, photography, visual arts and playwriting workshops. In the fall of 2021, a special evening will be held to revisit TLB's 35-year history and pay tribute to the Theatre's past and present colleagues and patrons. At the same time, we will highlight a few of our musical and theatrical productions' most notable moments. We will also highlight works produced during the summer workshops.

Communication in action

Information table at the Brome Lake Farmers Market

Every Saturday during the summer, TLB hosted the Brome Lake Farmers Market on the Theatre's grounds. We took advantage of the market's substantial number of customers to promote TLB to potential new audiences. Theatre regulars and members were also happy to talk with staff present on site. Indeed, many people showed interest and subscribed to our newsletter.

Newsletter and social media

Just because there were fewer shows does not mean that we took a break in communicating with our audience. On the contrary, we made it a point to keep our members informed throughout the pandemic. In 2020, we sent out eight newsletters to our members and subscribers interested in receiving TLB news. The readership rate of 45.5% per issue is significantly higher than the typical 18% rate achieved in the cultural community. In December 2020, we presented a series on philanthropy, with profiles of patrons who support Theatre Lac-Brome activities with both generosity and conviction. On the social media front, TLB's Facebook page is followed by more than 1500 subscribers.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Although the pandemic forced our operations to shut down in 2020, the financial results achieved are the most robust recorded to date in Theatre Lac-Brome's history. TLB is showing a profit of \$151,000 for the year, compared to a small loss in 2019. On December 31, 2020, we posted an accumulated deficit of \$9,000, while this deficit exceeded \$160,000 at the end of the previous year.

Considering these results, it can be said that TLB's financial situation has improved significantly, despite the circumstances.

Three key factors contributed positively to the achievement of these encouraging results:

- the launch of our fundraising campaign in October 2020;
- access to various federal government programs in support of cultural enterprises;
- tight control of expenditures.

The fundraising campaign quickly generated a tremendous outpouring of generosity from TLB members, friends and new donors. The Town of Brome Lake, for its part, confirmed and renewed its support.

TLB also benefited from the Canadian Business Emergency Account (CEBA) loan program in the amount of \$60,000, of which \$20,000 was recorded as a grant. On the balance sheet, a loan of \$40,000 has therefore been recorded as long-term debt, in accordance with the contractual agreement and the accounting principles applied by our auditor. This interest-free loan is repayable in December 2022.

As at December 31, 2020, revenues from gifts and grants totalled \$300,000, a 100% increase over the previous year.

As expected, box-office revenues were virtually non-existent for fiscal 2020. At the same time, management continued to apply tight expense controls during these troubled times and to maintain a minimum of operational activity to ensure the Theatre's survival. Federal government assistance programs, namely the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), have been instrumental in reducing salary costs.

At the end of the fiscal year, the bank account balance stood at \$50,000, compared to a negative \$85,000 at the same time last year. The Theatre's line of credit was maintained at \$100,000 at the opening of fiscal year 2021.

Finally, auditor Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton noted the significant improvements to management practices and controls.



Cellist Stéphane Tétreault and harpist Valérie Milot
Photo: Frédéric Robitaille

HEADING FOR 2022

Imagining the post-COVID era

At the end of 2019, the Board was defining its [TLB 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN](#) and its priorities for the future. The strategic framework, **ACTING ON OUR STRENGTHS, MEETING OUR CHALLENGES**, continues to be relevant after months of lockdown and in the context of successive waves of COVID-19. Indeed, several measures have already been implemented. Caution remains the order of the day, but given the high vaccination rates in Quebec and the easing of pandemic health measures, there is optimism that the Theatre will gradually reopen. The following guidelines restate and reinforce the essence of the strategic framework.

TLB will continue to distinguish itself through:

- its wide-ranging programming, aimed at a variety of audiences;
- the strong support from the public, the Town of Brome Lake and its donors;
- committed board members, dedicated staff and many enthusiastic volunteers.

To continue to evolve in this environment, TLB, along with its partners, is working to address three key challenges:

- ensure its financial viability by diversifying its revenue streams;
- meet the programming expectations of both language groups and reflect the diverse aspirations of its broader community;
- optimize its promotion efforts and broaden its audiences.



Soprano Isabelle Metwalli and pianist Enzo De Rosa

Long-term priorities

In the long term, TLB has set the following goals:

- become a leading hub of artistic and cultural activity in the region;
- promote and showcase the talent of artists from the region, from Quebec and elsewhere;
- contribute actively to the quality of life of Lac-Brome's citizens.

Short- and medium-term priorities

In the short and medium term, the new action plan for 2022-2025, **ENSURING TLB'S LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY**, will guide the implementation of its strategic framework in line with desired outcomes. This new action plan is based on the following watchwords: [competence, innovation, partnerships, and reach](#).

The action plan's strategies and measures are aligned with the following four objectives:

- build a diversified program that reaches out to both English- and French-speaking audiences;
- redefine the organization by developing a new financial framework, an infrastructure and technical resources plan, and a human resources plan aligned with TLB's strategic vision;
- develop a marketing and communications plan by adopting digital practices to develop new audiences and continue to build loyalty among existing TLB goers;
- ensure TLB's financial viability by continuing the fundraising campaign, seeking partnerships, renewing and developing special relationships with patrons and sponsors, and by applying for appropriate government grants and maximizing box-office revenues.

PARTNERS AND DONORS

The Board of Directors, staff and volunteers would like to thank the Town of Brome Lake, all donors, partners and sponsors for their outstanding support of the Theatre. Thanks to their contribution, TLB can continue to distinguish itself as a stimulating production and presentation venue and as a source of pride for all our citizens.

\$75,000 or more

Claire Léger
Town of Brome Lake

\$20,000 or more

Helgi Soutar

\$5,000 or more

Laurent Beaudoin
Pierre Boivin
Jean de Saint-Victor
Yves Desjardins-Siciliano
Michel Green
Hedavi Investments Inc.
Hydro-Québec
Jean-Claude Mahé
Gisele Wilson

\$1,000 or more

W. R. G. Abbott
Émilien Bolduc
Toni Bramley
Daniel Colson
Domenica Didio
Alfred Enns
Hay Foundation
Hélène Jalbert
Marlene Kahn and
Leonard Sanders
Jane Latter-Beaudoin
Peter Mendell
Philip O'Brien
Sibylla Hesse Foundation
Elizabeth Wirth

\$500 and more

Carlo Alacchi
Michele Beckerleg
Patricia Blanshay
Carolle Brabant
Lorraine Briscoe
Natalie Cooke and
Sam Altman
Effie Côté
Susan Jacques
Laura Kay
Stuart MacLeod
Fred Melling
Michèle Paré
Rhonda Price

\$250 and more

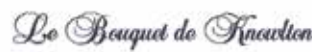
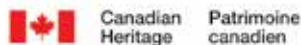
Francine Bastien
Sophie Boucher
Marc-André Fortier
Robert Harvey
Sophie Ouellet
Tony Rotherham

Up to \$249

Anonymous
Pauline Alègre
Dorothy Baranak
Pierre Belair
Marie Blouin Nightingale
Véronique Boucher
Brigitte Boutin
Cedric Briggs
Micheline Brochu
Richard Champagne
Maude Choko
Richard Coté
Eva Daeumling
Carolyn Dagenais
Suzanne Dandenault
Judith Duncanson
Ilze Epnors
Joyce Faughnan
Claude Fontaine
Margaret Fordham
G. Ian G. Fowler
Lilianne Fox Mettarlin
Claire Frenette
Jacques Gagnon
Renalee Gore
Cynthia Grahame
Jane Hayes
John Hoblyn

Bill Jarand
Frank Johnston-Main
Vesta Jorgensen
Stuart Ladd
Patricia Lavoie
Nancy Lemm
Pauline Leroux
Jacques Letendre
Martha Matossian
Susan Moss
Luc Nadeau
Lucia Nikitin
Louis Pagé
Jean Plaisance
Robert Quilliams
Pierre Sansregret
Henry Schreiber
Linda Seguin
Marguerite Severs
Olive Shields
Sylvie Simoneau
Phyllis Sise
Karen Smith
John Trott
Chris Ward
Peter White
Tom Wood
Bohdana Zwonok

SPONSORS



SHOWS AND EXHIBITIONS

Shows

March 7th
Jonas Tomalty

September 4th
Corbeil & Maranda (*online*)

September 12th
Duo Milot-Tétreault: Stéphane Tétreault, cello, and
Valérie Milot, harp (*two outdoor concerts*)

September 19th
Angel Forrest, singer, and Denis Coulombe, guitar

September 25th
The Best Cinema Soundtracks:
Isabelle Metwalli, soprano, and Enzo De Rosa, piano
(*two shows*)

Exhibitions

March
Muriel Faille

June
Susan Pepler

July
Geneviève Duplessis and Alan MacIntyre

August
Marie-Josée Gravel

September
Andrea Amarica



Outdoor concert featuring Milot-Tétreault duo,
in compliance with social distancing measures



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