



Executive Management Report to the Board

COVID-19 Response

PRESIDENT & CEO'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We have educated ourselves into a world from which wonder, and fear and dread and splendor and freedom of wonder have been banished. Of course, wonder is costly. You couldn't incorporate it into a modern state, because it is the antithesis of the anxiously worshiped security which is what a modern state is asked to give."

— Robertson Davies, Fifth Business

I like this quote from Robertson Davies, especially today as we sit in our homes pouring over the news voraciously searching for updates on a virus that eludes even the most educated among us. The news is education, the education is security and we are all desperate for the state of comfort we held pre-virus. But I am afraid that in our search we are also in jeopardy of losing something important, especially for an arts organization - wonder. In this very moment when all our systems are shaken, this crack in our security can also enable our imaginations and our sense of wonder. Now is the time we need our artists the most.

The team at TO Live, along with the help of our Board, have rapidly and responsibly reacted to the situation at hand. We have cut down our size, mitigated losses, negotiated stop-gap funding, and are now planning a year that keeps us in this state potentially until 2021. Most importantly, we have not stopped wondering about the future and dreaming up ways to continue presenting the arts.

As a team, we were quick to launch the online **Living Rooms** series to provide a little much-needed income for local artists, while also promoting their work to our extensive network. We will soon launch a daily education and arts program directed at children (5-8 years old), who are at home looking for entertainment; and parents who are looking for a quality family-friendly content. But these programs are just the beginning.

In the following update, you will find an important three-phase approach to our **Recovery Program** that will guide us through the recovery process from the current situation where no audience is allowed in the halls, to a limited "social distanced" engagement, to a welcoming back to the arts, and finally, to the opening up of our halls post virus.

The TO Live team has also kept speed on two of the most important projects for the future of our company, the **StLC Next Redevelopment** and the **Digital Transformation**. When we started both of these projects over a year ago, we didn't know how the current situation would highlight the desperate need to have ways to engage our audiences across all forms of media and, using the best data management available, to understand who those audiences are - even when they are not in our halls.

In addition, the isolation of our stay-home world has featured the need for the creation of a venue where the best technology and a flexible space would offer inclusive access to the many artists of the City, so those that need the connection to digital platforms most are not limited by the size of their budget, but empowered by the size of their dreams.

Throughout this crisis, the Senior Team at TO Live have generously leapt in to help their community, quickly offering support to the artists and the clients we service. They have spent the precious time we had still in the venues completing necessary repairs and maintenance to our buildings, along with a much-needed deep cleaning so that when we do open again, our spaces will be ready to welcome back our audiences.

Our Development team has been reaching out to existing and potential patrons and setting the foundation up for future supporters with each new donation, small or large.

Each day of this crisis, TO Live continues its valuable work to support the artists in the City of Toronto. Each day I am filled with gratitude and respect for my colleagues and excited for what the future holds. We look forward to the time when we can all gather again together in our halls and celebrate the artists of this City. Thank you to our Board of Directors for your guidance and support throughout this challenging period.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Clyde Wagner', with a stylized, flowing script.

Clyde Wagner
President & CEO

PROGRAMMING

The Programming team (12 down from 26 as of 20 April) are all working remotely and meeting on-line for regular department meetings. As the new Vice-President of Programming (commencement date 17 March), I have met nearly all staff for the first time via on-line and telephone channels and have been universally impressed by their high levels of commitment, motivation and productivity.

Since the closure of TO Live's venues on 16 March, the Programming department has been focussed on the following:

- responding to the immediate impact of the Covid-19 crisis
- working on projects to be realised during the closure period that enable TO Live to maintain visibility and connection with artists, arts organizations, audiences, stakeholders and the wider community
- developing programming scenarios for the recovery, conceived as a 3-phase process, as noted below.

Phase 1 - Provision of Space/Commissioning

Phase 1 focusses on providing space and technical facilities to artists to recommence their creative development and rehearsal processes. We will start to establish our venues as professional and social hubs where artists can meet in a supportive environment. From the beginning of the recovery process, TO Live will deepen and expand its partnerships within Toronto's arts community, commissioning new work, conceiving a framework of company residencies and associate artists, and preparing for future initiatives.

Phase 2 - Welcoming (2 Parts)

Part 1: Initially, some nervousness about entering theatres will persist. By curating a program of work conceived for small audiences, we can begin the process of reopening our venues in safe, anxiety-free ways so that audiences can again experience the power of live performance.

Part 2: When we envision the possibility of gathering in larger groups, we will start to broaden our presenting activities, and resume the education and community engagement programs that had been poised for expansion before the crisis.

Phase 3 - The New Normal

In Phase 3, TO Live will be ready to realize its vision to be a key cultural leader, embedded in the cultural fabric of Toronto and vitally connected to the pulse of the city. A distinctive program of Canadian and international work will offer a rich combination of inspiration, excellence, provocation, entertainment, and sheer joy. In addition to the 7 theatres and gallery, the expansive public areas to be found in the 3 venues will be reimagined as vibrant social hubs for artists and the community at large. Both off-stage and on, TO Live's venues will be places where we celebrate our society's rich diversity, places where artists and audiences feel equally at home.

TO LIVE Presents

TO Live Presents has cancelled or is in the process of rescheduling all events planned for this period. Where possible, events are being rescheduled into future seasons, and the programming team is working with artists, partners, and other internal departments to implement all cancellation and rescheduling requirements.

To maintain visibility and public engagement, and to assist artists affected by the pandemic, TO Live has conceived the following on-line programming:

Living Rooms

- online series featuring performances by local artists from their living rooms
- posted daily since 20 March; concludes on 26 June, the day marking inclusion of 100 artists in the series.
- also features newcomer/refugee artists via partnership with Small World Music

Family Programming

- daily program directed at children (5-8 years)
- will feature dance, music, theatre, comic arts, circus and spoken word artists
- production commenced on 4 May with first edition scheduled for 1 June

Other Initiatives include:

- one-off concert streamed on 24 April with Socalled (co-presented with URGNT and Ashkenaz Festival)
- participating in the development of several on-line platforms being created to aggregate on-line content across the sector, including the City of Toronto's initiative, Arts@Home

Programming planning for the 2021-22, and 2022-23 seasons continues, with the caveat that, in particular, the July to December 2021 season may still be directly impacted by restrictions due to Covid-19.

CANADA DAY Virtual Celebration

TO Live has been asked to be a key partner (together with Harbourfront and the CN Tower) to contribute to the programming, planning and implementation of the City of Toronto's virtual Canada Day celebrations.

Education and Engagement

All regular community classes and events have been suspended until 30 June. In addition to contributing to the on-line programming and future planning, the E & E Manager is TO Live's lead on the City of Toronto's Arts@Home platform, the content for which leans heavily into this area. Planning and Regular consultations continue to develop existing community and education partnerships in preparation for the expansion of TO Live's activities across these areas.

Producing

Producing staff have been scheduling, contracting and executing the production of our on-line programming initiatives, liaising both with other TO Live departments (particularly Marketing on video editing) and externally.

Production

Production staff are supporting the technical requirements of the on-line programming production where needed. Budgeting and the assessment of technical and other production requirements for prospective events for Phases 1-3 of the recovery period continues to support the future programming process, and to ensure that we are well-positioned to restart TO Live presentations as soon as is feasible.

Rentals

Stage rentals in this period to 30 June have all been either cancelled or postponed. For the most part, bookings for the entire summer of 2020 are also being affected with some organizers beginning to cancel or reschedule their fall events.

We are liaising with producers in the commercial and subsidised arts sector to facilitate arrangements, working closely with our Box Office team. Actual events (90+) are too many to itemize but include bookings for music promoters, large-scale family events, festival events and regular seasonal activity.

Corporate Events

Bookings from the corporate sector are similarly affected, and the Corporate Sales Manager is working on the necessary arrangements in that sector in liaison with the Bookings Manager.

On a more positive note, initiatives in this area include:

- production of an event industry podcast
- refreshing of the client-facing informational packages focussing on the future and ensuring that TO Live is well-positioned to retain and develop new corporate events business in the future

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Ticketing Services

- Box Office has been focused on providing excellent customer service to the over 80,000 ticket holders affected by the postponements, rescheduling and cancellations of shows due to COVID-19. Information about changes to shows has been communicated via email, TO Live's websites, social media and on the phone.

Digital Transformation

- We continue to make progress on Digital Transformation, a project made all the more important due to COVID-19. The Digital Transformation team has developed a Digital Transformation Roadmap - a plan to implement specific digital initiatives that will address TO Live's strategic challenges.
- A cross-departmental Selection Committee was formed to evaluate all responses to the Digital Transformation RFP. Next steps for the Selection Committee are to contact the proponents for further detail around costs, and to make a final recommendation to the President and CEO. Development and implementation are slated to begin in Q3 2020, with an estimated 12 months to completion.

Marketing

- Our Living Rooms series has well over 10,000 views on YouTube. This series is entirely digital and features performances by local artists from the comfort of their living rooms. We have been promoting the series through social media and email and have created a special page on tolive.com where all of the videos can be viewed.
- CUIT-FM has agreed to spotlight artists from TO Live's Small World Wednesday partnership with Small World Music's eMERGEance initiative. Small World Wednesday is part of TO Live's Living Rooms series and will feature artists from the eMERGEance initiative, a program dedicated to supporting refugee, newcomer, and marginalized emerging artists in Toronto.
- On April 24, TO Live hosted our first ever live stream on Facebook with Montreal musician Socalled. There were 10,000 views across all partner channels including URGNT TRNTO, Ashkenaz Foundation and Maclean's. Socalled was originally scheduled to perform at the Meridian Arts Centre this spring but was postponed due to COVID-19.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

During the first days of closure, Finance and Administration concentrated on:

- ensuring staff working from home had the necessary infrastructure
- ensuring staff on leave had access to their ROEs quickly
- answering any questions with information/resources available at the time

COVID-19 task includes:

- City Reporting: cash flow, funding requests, COVID-19 savings/underspending, bank reconciliations
- COVID-19 modelling, modelling, and more modelling
- review of SOGR/FFRF projects per City request to reduce costs/funding

Regular Accounting/Finance processes:

- monthly management financial reporting
- payroll (issuing ROEs)
- forecasting
- regular cheque/wire payments

Projects and Other Tasks:

- 2021 Budget continues to be developed and the presentation created
- 2019 financial audit was undertaken remotely, with TO Live and PWC sharing documents via a PWC portal.
- Settlement team worked and continues to work with Programming and Box office on processing ticket refunds and refunds of event/stage deposits for cancelled corporate events and performances
- Regular communication via email and Teams for working Staff and those on Emergency Leave
- Leading and coaching virtually & upskilling staff while working from home – offerings made from HR Downloads
- Continued work on BambooHR for rollout later in year
- Maintaining IT infrastructure for staff working remotely
- VPN functional for all staff
- mobile phone data packages up to date
- Q2 Cybersecurity training for staff

OPERATIONS

The abruptness of the onset of the pandemic and the subsequent shutdown of all TO Live venues required the operations teams to work quickly and collaboratively to ensure the safety of all staff, guests, audiences and contractors during the initial phases of the COVID-19 crisis.

Upon shutdown, the focus was to transition from three fully operating venues to venues which were safe, secure and operating at minimal costs. While efforts are underway to determine additional cost savings, a process is also occurring to support the recovery efforts and determine what venue operations will look like in a post-COVID-19 setting. To that end, TO Live has been asked by the Economic Development and Culture Department of the City to lead an, “Entertainment Venues - Recovery Initiative” working group. This group is composed of representatives from venues and organizations across the City of Toronto to develop new guidelines, standard operating procedures and public safety protocols to propose to Medical Officers of Health for their consideration.

Patron Services and Food & Beverage

- In the initial weeks of the COVID-19 shutdown, remaining staff wrapped up departmental operations and eliminated lieu time

- Currently, all but two staff members across the two departments have been placed on Emergency Leave
- A new Patron Services manual has now been completed
- Concessions point-of-sale system will be streamlined and merged across all venues and an inventory module added. With the collaboration of the Development department, these enhancements and features will be added without any new direct costs to TO Live over a two-year period. Work continues the integration of these items.
- New catering menus are in development for food service in a post-COVID19 environment
- New online training modules are in development for all patron service staff
- Negotiations with IASTE B-173 are currently paused while venues are shutdown
- A one-year extension/modification to the existing contract between Sodexo and TO Live, for food services, has been negotiated. This contract brings all beverage service in-house while keeping food service outsourced. An RFP will be considered in late 2021/2022 to all TO Live food and beverage offerings
- Efforts are underway to determine what public health requirements are necessary to re-open in a post-COVID-19 environment

Facility Services

- All venues received a deep cleaning and disinfecting upon shutdown
- Skeleton housekeeping crew continues to maintain a clean and sanitized facility for the essential staff and contractors working out of the venues
- All preventative maintenance contracts, where possible, have been renegotiated to limit service to minimum requirements
- All building utilities and equipment operations have been reduced to minimum requirements
- Building operators team have been reduced to a core group rotating through all three venues to ensure all building machinery receives base line care
- Building security is reduced to minimums to ensure security daily rounds can occur
- In conjunction with the Project Management department, procedures and protocols related to COVID-19 were established for all essential staff and contractors to enter, exit and work within any of the venues
- Efforts are underway to determine public and occupational health requirements necessary to re-open in a post-COVID-19 environment

Capital Projects

- City of Toronto requested that TO Live consider capital projects which could be deferred until 2021 or beyond due to financial constraints caused by COVID-19
- TO Live was able to reduce the 2020 capital budget funding envelope by approximately 60% of what was originally approved by City Council
- Projects moving forward include projects where commitments to contractors have been made, projects required for legislative reasons, the St. Lawrence Centre Redevelopment Planning project and projects where the design phase could occur (without actual construction)

DEVELOPMENT

Development continues to develop and execute our multi-year fundraising strategy, including plans for the St. Lawrence Centre redevelopment. In response to COVID-19 we have focused on strengthening sponsor relationships, growing our government grant portfolio, and increasing online donations. Also, we are committed to setting us up for success upon the restore period post COVID-19.

Programming

- Retaining BMO's sponsor commitment
- Running a cause-marketing online with Ace Hill
- in-kind sponsorship and charitable donation from Volante to allow us to continue to upgrade F&B software
- Continuing to submit grant applications, final reports, and continuously monitoring stimulus funding announcements. Canada Arts Presentation Fund (CAPF) in-progress for submission May 15th
- Digital fundraising weekly campaign is on-going
- Have developed extensive marketing briefs for 2 major fundraising campaigns:
 - o Patron Giving Campaign for all levels of giving – Launch in market, 3rd quarter
 - o 60th anniversary campaign (October 1 is anniversary) – soft launch in market in 3rd quarter – Full launch in 4th quarter
- Developed a robust Sponsorship prospect list
- Working with Senior board and executives to develop a Foundation committee list to support both fundraising and StLC Redevelopment

Operations

- Bi-weekly meetings and planning with Meridian Credit Union

Infrastructure

- Developed strategic Government Relations fundraising plan for StLC – planning stage

StLC REDEVELOPMENT

The St. Lawrence Centre Redevelopment project - **STLC NEXT**- is in progress. We have established a partnership with CreateTO and are working steadily towards launching the project subject to City timelines and Public announcements regarding Recovery directives. STLC NEXT is positioned to be part of rebuilding and reimagining the Arts and Culture Sector.

Progress to date:

- contracted consultants KerrSmith to lead Public Consultation for the project
- created a website www.stlcnext.org to be the portal for all information regarding the project
- created a communications strategy in conjunction with CreateTO to reach out to ALL stakeholders, Government and Media Relations (funding strategy is a TO Live initiative)
- engaging additional consultants in concert with the launch of the project including; Architect, Theatre and Heritage.