

CT18.1 Attachment 1

Meridian Hall

St. Lawrence Centre

Meridian Arts Centre



Executive Management Report to the Board

Q3 Activity
(July-Aug-Sept 2020)

PRESIDENT & CEO'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A FOCUS ON DIGITAL

With the pandemic in full swing, a partial reopening, and then the beginning of the second wave, TO Live, like many organizations, moved to maximize its efforts in the digital sphere. The third quarter was an “in between” period of financing where we had reached the end of the investment for the second quarter program with no committed funding for the future. With tight financial management, we continued to push forward important projects for the future of the company, including the digital transformation and the planning for the STLC Redevelopment.

In addition to the above, the TO Live team collaborated with local and national organizations to consolidate information around the Health and Safety protocols for the live event industry, leading hopefully to a universal document around presentations that can be accepted by public health authorities and lead to a reopening of venues.

At a time when people are very much isolated in their homes, we are continuing to keep focused in the future. Budgets have been created and applications are sent to help underwrite the cost of digital infrastructure to help our partners and community present their work in a new format.

Supporting emerging artists while they are unable to present their work in a traditional format is a concern and priority for TO Live, and across all of our future planning you will see this moving to the top of our initiatives. This can be realized through infrastructure, programming and funding support and promotion - areas that TO Live has the ability to excel in.

As a team, the Board and staff need to be unified in our planning for recovery. With the assets and reach of TO Live, we can play a critical role in the recovery of the live entertainment sector and the recovery of the neighbourhoods that we serve.

Thank you to our Board for their support and guidance through this difficult time.



Clyde Wagner
President & CEO

PROGRAMMING

TO Live Presents

Many of the on-line projects initiated during the previous months drew to a close in July and August, these included:

- 100th artist contribution posted in the Living Room Series
- conclusion of the children's program, The Arts Squad
- partnership programs with:
 - Outside the March and Theatre Direct (Mundane Mysteries: Playdate)
 - Volcano, Summerworks and Canadian Stage (Metamorphosis: a viral trilogy by André Alexis)
- All the above projects remain live on the TO Live website

With these projects, the limited financial resources for programming during the pandemic were exhausted however the team worked hard throughout the three months from July through September, to ensure that planning and sector-wide discussions continued so that, should additional resources be identified, every opportunity could be grasped. The Program for Recovery has been kept up to date and refined in response to organizational, industry and environmental shifts, including laying plans for the longer-term when a return to live performance can be contemplated.

Resident Companies and Rentals

Our relationships with the resident companies and other presenters and producers in the not-for-profit and for-profit sectors who use TO Live's venues are of vital importance and we have been in regular communication throughout these past months providing regular updates wherever possible to assist with future planning. The Bookings Manager has made an exceptional contribution in this area. She works closely with the Ticketing Team and, as the VP of Marketing and Communications also reports, the work of cancelling and rescheduling of events due to COVID-19 has continued to keep both departments busy

Other rental activity included:

- Annual Fall for Dance North festival – Sept 29-Oct 18
The festival was predominantly virtual this year. TO Live usually provides venue and other support for this festival and we were pleased to maintain our partnership - through marketing assistance and utilizing the Meridian Hall lobby as the venue for their Open Studio event with a viewing station on the Western Plaza. Despite TO Live's reduced support this year, we were appreciative to be offered co-presentation credit as usual in the spirit of our enduring partnership.

Education and Engagement

The Education and Engagement Manager (working limited projected hours) continues to maintain her community relationships.

Corporate Events

The Corporate Sales team have focused on staying connected with existing and potential clients. They continue to post a weekly podcast for their Special Event Studio series.

Production

The Director of Production continues to:

- Work with the VP and Director of Programming on planning, budgeting and assessing feasibility of programming scenarios for recovery and for future seasons.
- Provide regular support for the Corporate Sales team as they respond to event inquiries
- Work on the model he is initiating for a mentorship and internship program for BIPOC technical and production students.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Ticketing Services

- The Box Office team has continued to provide patron and client support for active ticketed events, comprising over 35,000 tickets booked across 75 performances. Now responsible for all telephone customer service inquiries (no longer splitting with Ticketmaster), coupled with email support, the team has worked to keep event information updated and communicated to patrons and stakeholders, and managed requests for refunds, exchanges and additional information as the status of events has continued routinely changing.
- TO Live went through a detailed RFB submission process with the Elgin & Winter Garden Theatre Centre (EWG), and ultimately won the bid to provide Ticket Services for the EWG for the next two years. This prompted work setting up the theatres in our system, creation of new reporting and setup documentation, meetings with EWG staff and stakeholders, etc. Additionally, TO Live signed a contract extension with Ticketmaster to ensure an additional two years of hardware and software support for our family of venues.
- The Box Office team has done extensive work cleaning up our customer and event database, as well as creation and refinement of internal filing systems and department documents. Alongside this effort, the Box Office team oversaw the implementation of new Ticketmaster products including Modern Accounts and TM Engagement, and the back-end updates necessary to smoothly transition these products into use.

Digital Transformation

- A meeting with the Digital Transformation Committee of the Board provided staff with valuable insights into Board Committee members' experiences with various technologies.
- TO Live's Selection Committee made a decision on mobile technology, and is pursuing a progressive web application hybrid approach. This was communicated to RFP proponents and bids were amended accordingly.
- TO Live is initiating negotiations with the successful vendor and will bring forward a recommendation to the Board along with a resource plan in early Q1.

Marketing

- In June, TO Live launched The Arts Squad, the organization's first independently produced and distributed digital content series for children. The series received significant media attention and now has almost 6,000 views.
- TO Live's Living Rooms series concluded with its 100th artist in July. The popular series received over 130,000 views online. We are exploring ways to re-use this evergreen content including sharing the artists' videos on our social channels and making connections with timely events or other work they are showcasing.
- In August, TO Live led the marketing efforts for Metamorphosis, a viral-trilogy from *André Alexis*. Almost 1,000 people have listened to the Lucretia in Quarantine episode which was presented by TO Live. The project received tremendous media coverage including CBC Here and Now, Toronto Star, Globe and Mail, CP24 and a number of industry blogs.
- TO Live provided marketing support for the Fall For Dance North festival through email and social media including on-site promotion during the Open Studio at Meridian Hall.
- Marketing continues to support TO Live's philanthropic initiatives including the launch of Meridian Hall's 60th Anniversary with a celebratory video, social and email campaign.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Finance

- Continued submission of Weekly COVID-19 reporting template to the City
- Financial models for 2020 shaped, reshaped and shaped again
- Finalized 2021 Operating and Capital budgets
- Working with the Facilities Department, researched bulk buying options for PPE for TO Live and TAPA membership
- Preparation for 2020 audit started, meeting with new auditors (PWC) held

Human Resources

- Launched BambooHR to the Senior Executive Team and Directors
- Received confirmation on September 9, 2020 that the IDEL (Infectious Disease Emergency Leave) was extended to January 2, 2021 and as a result, non-union employees on IDEL had their benefits coverage extended until then
- Held Virtual Town Hall on Wednesday September 16, 2020
- Ontario Human Rights eCourse "Call it out: racism, racial discrimination and human rights" given to current working staff
- Work on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee commences in Q3 with Priya Malik, Director of Capital Projects and Christine Kelsey, Director of HR. The first DEI Committee Kick Off meeting took place on October 1, 2020
- Held Senior Team Retreat in August with all VPs and Directors in attendance

Information Technology

- Completed Microsoft Bitlocker Security Project for all active mobile computers
- Received and inventoried IT equipment returns for all furloughed staff
- Reconciled and cancelled (where realized savings in 2020 could be obtained) for cell phone contracts for furloughed staff
- EBMS Fee negotiations for 2020 and 2021 pertaining to the annual support contract alongside the Finance department for realized savings in 2020 and 2021
- EBMS v20.95 test environment setup and prepped for EBMS upgrade in Q4 of 2020
- Continued and ongoing support for remaining staff

OPERATIONS

Facilities

- Meridian Arts Centre continues to experience issue with roof leaks. Capital requests have been submitted to Financial Planning at the City as part of the 2021 budget process to address the issue
- TO Live continues its partnership with Ryerson University in the creation of a COVID-19 reopening guide to benefit performing arts organizations across the City; publication of the guide is expected in early November

- The Facilities Department has spent considerable time focusing on how to best reopen the venues safely once audiences are again allowed to gather
- All venues continued to be staffed by a skeleton staff to ensure safety, security and basic building operations

Patron Services and Food & Beverage

- With the exception of two weeks of services to celebrate the Jewish High Holidays at Meridian Arts Centre, staff in this department continue to be on leave

Capital Projects

- Most capital projects are entering their final stages with a majority on track for completion in December

DEVELOPMENT

Development continues to prioritize and develop short and long-term fundraising strategies in line with industry trends and best practices. TO Live has transitioned from short-term emergency campaigns, and we are now focused on galvanizing support for recovery and rebuild. Our efforts to grow and strengthen our multichannel fundraising sources, and public and private partnerships have included:

- Launch of our year-long celebration of Meridian Hall's 60th Anniversary with a request for audience stories; this will be leveraged for Legacy giving
- Refined plans for our final 2020 push for donations, including Giving Tuesday and the End of Year campaign, including:
 - launching an email acquisition campaign
 - themes testing development
 - developing donor stewardship and recognition strategies
- Government grants saw a massive push in Q3, with several applications submitted requesting a total of \$800,000.

- Development remains in conversation with government and foundation programs about other prospective projects, including the support of:
 - proposed technical production mentorship program for BIPOC youth
 - TO Live Presents programming
 - Provisions of Space program
- Completing TO Live's draft Case for Support, which will be tested with major gift prospects
- Preparing launch of Patron's circle

StLC REDEVELOPMENT

- Ongoing relationship with partnership with Create TO
- Recruited and secured new members for Board Committee to reflect City diversity and expertise for the project
- Communications with Mayor's Office and Ward 13, Councillor Wong Tam (secured written endorsement for project)
- Preparations for Public Engagement; StLC website and project materials to include; Diversity and Inclusion and culture of belonging