

Executive Management Report to the Board

Q3 Activity (Jul-Aug-Sept 2023)

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T0 Live

PRESIDENT & CEO'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The third quarter of 2023 was a time of restoration and development for TO Live. July and August are typically slower rental periods for our venues and offer a chance for the city to revel in the summer months.

The summer months also provided an ideal window for creative development. Through the use of our *Provisions of Space* program, our Programming team utilized this time to support artists by providing access to our professional facilities, continuing the cycle of creation of new works that we hope will eventually return to us in full production.

Additionally, the TO Live team strategically closed the MAC so that major construction upgrades to the building could be completed in a condensed period of time. If you haven't made your way up north recently, I highly encourage you to witness the remarkable transformation of the MAC into a more accessible building for all. Thank you to our partners at the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada for their support in making these vital changes possible. A special note of gratitude to our amazing Capital Projects team for their timely delivery, enabling us to reopen in September!

As the Board is aware, September comes in with a bang as we host both the Elevate Tech Conference and JFL Comedy Festival. We are fortunate to be able to support and work with these amazing clients who bring life to our city.

As we head into the final months of the year, we are seeing increased activity and revenue, positioning us to meet our financial year targets. Despite many challenges throughout the year, it is a testament to our incredible team at TO Live that we consistently fulfill our mission to celebrate the diversity of the city on our stages, all while staying on budget.

Happy Holidays to all!

Clyde Wagner
President & CEO



PROGRAMMING

TO Live Presents

Third quarter activity featured a broad range of activities on stage and in the community. The summer months were relatively quiet to accommodate the closure of the Meridian Arts Centre throughout July and August for Capital Works building improvements.

TO Live Presents

- The [2023 explorations](#) call-out for applications for TO Live's research grant initiative was announced and by closing date over 180 submissions had been received, again highlighting the community need for this type of support. Seven recipients, selected by jury, were announced on August 15.
- [Lakecia Benjamin](#) brought her jazz ensemble Phoenix to the George Weston Recital Hall on September 9th. Benjamin has since been nominated for 3 Grammy Awards; Best Jazz Performance, Best Jazz Instrumental Album and Best Instrumental Composition.

Making Space

Continuing TO Live's narrative as a meaningful and active contributor to Toronto's cultural life through provision of space, residencies, and other support:

- TO Live provided space and some financial support for:
 - Two important dance festivals for local independent artists: Danse Made in Canada and Common Grounds Dance.
 - Three artists whose work we have been supporting over multiple residencies: Naishi Wang, Susanna Fournier, and Roshanak Jabari, a TO Live *explorations* grant recipient in 2021 who is receiving second stage support.
 - Why Not Theatre rehearsed its *Mahabharata*, in preparation for this highly successful season at the Barbican Theatre, London.

Rentals

Highlights included:

- Indian Broadway style musical [Mughal-e-Azam](#), presented in Meridian Hall for three performances.
- Hong Kong based, Cantopop band, [RubberBand](#) played one date in Meridian Hall.
- The strength of the comedy market in Toronto was again in evidence when comedian [Theo Von](#), supplemented his five Elgin Theatre performances by adding four in Meridian Hall.
- The annual Just for Laughs Festival returned to Toronto and for the second year, closed Front Street from Yonge to Church to create a free pedestrianized [Street Festival](#) (22-24 September). Eleven headline acts were presented in Meridian Hall during the 10-day festival



- [The Canadian Opera Company](#), presented their first performance at the Meridian Arts Centre, a concert presentation of highlights from their forthcoming season.

Communities and Outreach

- Community classes originally planned for September were cancelled due to resourcing challenges, however July and August saw a busy schedule of Communities and Outreach events that expanded into new areas including: Arefa Hararwala's [resin art classes](#) , and MalPensando's [Public Speaking classes](#).
- In addition a diverse range of dance and movement classes continued with: SaMel Tanz's [Steps and Styles](#), covering hip-hop, contemporary and salsa.
- The inaugural [Taste of North York festival](#), organized by Neighbourlink North York and attended by thousands, featured local afrobeat band, Tumako, programmed by TO Live.
- September 30th, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation was marked by TO Live in a number of ways, including the edition of Discover Dance co-presented with Nova Dance and hosted by [Brian Solomon](#), a two-spirited, multi-award nominated, artist of Anishinaabe and Irish heritage.

Corporate and Private Events

- Highlights for the third quarter of the year included the return of the annual Elevate Tech and Innovation Festival in Meridian Hall.
- The Canadian Institute for Theatre Technology held its annual conference in Meridian Hall for the first time with the active support and participation of TO Live's Production and Operations departments led by Kris Dell and Matt Farrell. This conference also presented an opportunity to showcase the St Lawrence Centre redevelopment plans when Clyde Wagner, hosted a session with Siamak Hariri, Founder Hariri Pontarini Architects.

Production

- Continued development of the new video production suite in Meridian Hall slated for completion in Q4, and consultation for the Nia Centre for the Arts prior to its soft opening in October of 2023
- After an internal and external search, promoted the Lyric Theatre Head Technician to Recital Hall Technician, continuing the development of a program of internal advancement between the seven venues for Production staff. The hiring of a new Lyric theatre technician will take place in Q4.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Marketing and Communications

- Recognized holidays of national and social/cultural importance on social media and digital signage, including Canada Day, Emancipation Day/Month, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Jewish New Year.
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- Highlights included:
 - Artist Instagram takeover for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by Lacey Hill
 - Blog post promoting local arts events (including TO Live's presentation of Digging Roots concert): [5 ways to participate in the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#)
- TO Live also created and shared content to highlight TO Live Presents shows, including:
 - Profile of [Lakecia Benjamin TikTok](#)
 - Backstage with... artist Q&A featuring [Carter Brey](#) of the New York Philharmonic String Quartet
 - Video interview series featuring VC2 Cello Duo: [How well do they know each other? Game](#), [Repertoire reveal](#), [Cello 101](#), [A fresh take on classical music](#), [Music for when you're feeling... TikTok](#), [Types of Western classical music TikTok](#)
 - Video interview with conductor Evan Mitchell on the [magic of film and orchestra](#)
- Media highlights include:
 - Lakecia Benjamin on CBC Q with Tom Power (aired August 3, 2023), [“Saxophonist Lakecia Benjamin is born again on her latest album Phoenix”](#) – CBC Radio
 - **“The upcoming Canadian jazz calendar”** by Brad Wheeler, Globe and Mail (Aug 4, 2023) Lakecia Benjamin and Phoenix
 - Print article in the Caribbean Camera, **“Stand back. Don’t sit down. Lakecia Benjamin will blow you out of your seat anyway!”**

Ticket Services

- Q3 saw Ticket Services providing box office support and customer service which constituted an activity increase of 25% over Q3 for 2022, even with the Meridian Arts Centre being closed for much of the quarter. This included over 96K ticketed attendees and over 130K new tickets booked.
- Q3 was also one of the busiest quarters in TO Live's history for new onsales, with more than a hundred production setups yielding over 240 distinct performances put on sale during the quarter.
- Amongst the events for which Ticket Services provided support were two of the largest festivals of our year in JFL Toronto and Fall For Dance North, for which service was provided both at TO Live venues and offsite venues.



FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Finance

- Ongoing regular business activity

Payroll

- Ongoing regular business activity

Information Technology

- Started EBMS cloud platform initial onboarding, setup, and configuration
- Finalized all Cybersecurity Policies, Incident Response Plan, and Electronic Monitoring Policy for Board Adoption
- Started FFRF Projects for Wireless network upgrades at all venues
- Completed assessments regarding electrical upgrades and logistics necessary for FFRF UPS replacement project at Meridian Hall
- Completed Office Moves project at Meridian Hall and STLC including setup of booking desks for all spaces deemed bookable
- Completed Office Moves project at Meridian Arts Centre including setup of booking desks for all spaces deemed bookable
- Upgraded digital signage platform at Meridian Arts Centre in preparation for media player additions
- Started Wireless Captive Portal project for Free Wi-Fi networks at all venues
- Completed Switch Move project for Meridian Hall Media Wall for relocation to safer space

HUMAN RESOURCES & ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

- 400 employees compared to 356 the same time last year
- 21 positions filled in Q3
- Onboarding session for Front of House held during this quarter
- Pay Equity information gathering began in preparation of implementing a process and policy to keep TO Live consistent with pay rates in the industry
- Executive Compensation information gathering, and program design began to align with the City of Toronto practices and guidelines
- AODA Update
 - statement of commitment on the website
 - Accessibility policy on the website
 - Accessibility feedback form updated in line with AODA and on the website



OPERATIONS

Facility Services

- Conducted annual fire safety system testing; inspection completed at all locations
- IR scanning and ultrasonic testing of the electrical systems
- Implemented an updated asbestos assessment system
- Conducted staff training for asbestos awareness, pneumatic systems, and lift equipment
- Conducted annual Backflow preventer testing at all locations
- Commenced contract negotiations for IATSE B-173 Housekeeping at Meridian Arts Centre

Patron Services and Event Services

- Final updates made to coffee service (working with new partner, Pilot Coffee Roasters)
- On-boarded large number of new staff (gained during summer job fair) for fall season
- Development underway of new catering menus under new Executive Chef

CAPITAL PROJECTS

- **Meridian Arts Centre** highlights include:
 - Lyric AODA Work Package 3 – completed
 - AODA Work Package 5 (Theatres Phase 2): substantially completed, working on minor deficiency
 - AODA Work Package 6 (Offices and Lunchrooms): occupancy of Phase 1 completed
 - AODA Work Package 7 (Back of House support Phase 1): Phase 1 work commenced
 - Roof Replacement Phase 2 (PVC): completed
 - Replacement of Chillers/Cooling Tower: substantial completion achieved, working on Cooling Tower refurbishment
 - Technical Theatres Improvements: progressing on schedule
 - Performance Portable Lighting Equipment: completed
 - Rigging Replacement for GWRH and Lyric: project has started in the Lyric
 - MAC Exterior Repair: 85% completed, one balcony on Beecroft to be completed Q4
- **Meridian Hall** highlights include:
 - Door Replacement: door installation to be completed by end of November 2023
 - B1 Audio & Video upgrades: completed
 - AODA Projects - Work Package 2 (Stage door, lower admin, LL ramp): completed
 - AODA Projects – Work Package 3 (Front of House Heritage Renovation): completed
 - AODA Projects - Work Package 4 (Front and Back of House Services): construction underway; B1 dressing room, B2 staff kitchen, B2 staff changerooms, and VIP room all in progress
 - AODA Projects – Work Package 5 (Lobby Washrooms Phase 2): construction underway, 25% complete
 - PSVC Systems: completed; equipment delivery scheduled for November 2023
 - Exterior Envelope & Site Work: project awarded, agreement completed, and startup documents commenced



DEVELOPMENT – Philanthropy & Corporate Sponsorship

- Completed lead generation campaign
- Ongoing outreach to Consulates that align with TO Live’s international programming priorities
- Completed Phase 4 work for Audience Analytics Collective project with Nordicity Group
- Continued to cultivate potential venue and programming sponsors, donors, and Foundation partners
- Secured grant to continue Audience Analytics project with arts partners. TO Live manages the program. (Nordicity)

- Major Gifts & Foundations
 - Met and engaged with naming partner at Meridian Hall
 - 20+ priority major gift prospects
 - Developed end of year campaign launching November 20
 - Continued stewardship of donors through newsletters, reports, and dedicated events
 - Through the foundation secured multi year funding for Explorations

- Sponsorship
 - Secured sponsorship support for TO Live summer patio
 - Secured water partner for 2024
 - Identified approximately 50 Program sponsorship prospects, email/phone campaigns in progress

- Stewardship and Retail
 - Hosted receptions for Lakecia Benjamin in September
 - Contra opportunity: ongoing conversations for potential sponsorship

TO Live Foundation and TO Live fundraising are separate entities. TO Live Philanthropy and Sponsorship staff are currently working on both.

StLC REDEVELOPMENT

- Project approved by City Council to proceed at Mayor Chow’s inaugural Council Meeting
- Transferred project from CreateTO to Corporate Real Estate Services (CREM) for their services in Procurement and Contract Management etc. of the STLC project
- Initiated Contract negotiations with CREM and, Architectural Team to begin Schematic Design
- Continued Public consultation and, with Indigenous communities
- Continued Fundraising efforts and Lobbying Province/Federal Governments

