

Executive Management Report to the Board

Q4 Activity (Oct-Nov-Dec 2023)

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T0 Live

PRESIDENT & CEO'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There was magic at the end of 2023, both literally and metaphorically.

The year went out with a roar as our co-presentation of Champions of Magic entertained full houses in the post Christmas to New Year's week. Just prior to that, we had a very strong presentation of the Muppets Christmas Carol with a live orchestra. These shows, along with busy rentals filling all the downtown halls and several uptown spaces, brought in a much-appreciated upswing in revenue at the end of the year. This, combined with strong fiscal management and restraint in spending in the last two quarters, pushed the end of year projections out of the red and solidly into a surplus position.

I'm always incredibly grateful for the hardworking team at TO Live, who worked throughout most of the traditional holiday period to bring the joy of live performance to Toronto audiences. Thank you as well to the artists and audiences who support us through their enthusiasm for the arts and its vital impact on our communities.

We are excited to start a new year together, and looking forward to our 2024 programming and the inspiring developments on the St. Lawrence Centre redevelopment project.



Clyde Wagner
President & CEO



PROGRAMMING

The 2023 year saw a very busy conclusion with a broad range of activities on stage and in the community.

TO Live Presents

- The annual [Fall For Dance North Festival](#), on which TO Live has partnered since its inception, again included two Signature Programs in Meridian Hall, and the premiere screening, and accompanying panel discussion, of the opening episode of the CBC docu-series *Swan Song* in celebration of recently retired NBOC Artistic Director, Karen Kain.
- The [New York Philharmonic String Quartet](#) played to the strengths of the George Weston Recital Hall with a program of Mozart, Schubert and contemporary composer Joel Thompson.
- The following evening, [Patti LuPone](#) gave us an unforgettable performance of her autobiographical concert *Don't Monkey with Broadway* also in Meridian Hall (Nov 17).
- [collectif9](#), is a chamber music ensemble from Montreal who seek to reinvent the way that audiences experience classical music. Their staging of music from the Middle Ages to the current day with choreographic accompaniment was no exception. A local cello duo, VC2, opened the program at the Meridian Arts Centre (November 23). A special [school performance](#) was well attended the following morning, arranged by our Communities and Outreach Department.
- The final concert for the year in the George Weston Recital Hall featured legendary guitarist [John Scofield](#), in trio formation. A packed house leant into every note of this memorable concert.
- Downtown in the Jane Mallett at the St Lawrence Centre, in a double-bill with [Digging Roots and Lacey Hill](#), audiences experienced the energy, power and beauty of these acclaimed Indigenous artists.
- The combination of film and live orchestra continues to be a popular phenomenon, and TO Live's presentation with Glatz Concerts, of films from the James Bond franchise, [Skyfall](#) and [Casino Royale](#) in November, followed by [The Muppet Christmas Carol](#) in the lead up to the holidays in December, were no exception. The latter in particular brought delight to audiences spanning generations and an extra performance was scheduled to meet demand.
- The holiday mood continued, when the [Champions of Magic](#) co-presented with Starvox Entertainment, brought cheering audiences to their feet. The TO Live Housekeeping staff deserve special thanks for making sure every sign of the mountains of confetti was removed after each show ensuring that each audience was surprised and amazed afresh.



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:
 - Tanveer Alam, Candace Kumar, and Lady C, three of the 2023 [explorations](#) artists.
 - SaMel Tanz, a dance collective to whom we have provided support over multiple residencies, Rumi Jeraj (Garage rehearsals), Yvonne Ng, and SummerWorks festival.

Rentals

Highlights included:

- An evening with [Jane Goodall](#), inspirational ethologist and conservationist;
- Persian singer songwriter Shahram Shabpareh;
- Comedy continued to have a strong presence including the Emmy nominated [Nimesh Patel](#), and Egyptian American, *Ramy Youssef*;
- Canadian Stage was in residence in the Bluma Appel with seasons of Akram Khan's [Jungle Book Reimagined](#), Kidd Pivot's [Assembly Hall](#), and [The Lehman Trilogy](#);
- [Menopause the Musical 2](#), ran through the second half of November, and Starvox Entertainment closed out the year with [Potted Potter](#) also in the Bluma Appel;
- Other resident companies were also busy in the final quarter including: Toronto Operetta Theatre with [The Merry Widow](#), and various concerts by Music Toronto;
- At the Meridian Arts Centre, Bravo Academy again took a month-long booking in The Studio, Harold Green presented their final production for the year, [Knock Knock](#), and Amadeus Choir, Mandle Philharmonic, Sinfonia Toronto and resident company, Orchestra Toronto presented concerts as did the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Communities and Outreach (C&O)

- The longstanding partnership with Xenia Concerts, who present concerts for neurodiverse audiences is one of our most significant. Their Q4 concerts with the [Dior String Quartet](#) and [Pulse Music Collective](#) provided an impactful finish to their year.
- Community dance classes continued at Meridian Hall with [Folk-Bollywood](#), and at the Meridian Arts Centre, where the new partnership with North York Arts is delivering on its potential to build new audiences with classes such as [Needle Felting](#).
- C&O's renewed focus on school age students referenced above in relation to the school's performance with collectif9, took on a new dimension with the launch in Fall 2023, of the new [Summer Camp](#) initiative which will commence in 2024.



Corporate and Private Events

- The [Corporate and Private Events](#) Department had its most successful year ever in 2023.
- The education sector has been a significant driver of this growth with new clients including Seneca College and longstanding clients such as George Brown and St Clair Colleges.
- Awareness of TO Live venues for private events has been boosted by excellent social media coverage via its various channels including [@toliverentals](#) and [podcast series](#).

Production

- Production continued its program of updating equipment and infrastructure in the theatre spaces, through both its own initiatives and working with the Capital Projects department.
- Significant upgrades to lighting and video equipment were either completed or initiated at Meridian Hall and Meridian Arts Centre. In addition, some of critical systems repair was undertaken at the St. Lawrence Centre to ensure that the stages systems are safe and functional for the foreseeable future.
- Through the development of new contacts at Seneca, the Production Services department has been able to find new candidates for the mentorship program that aims to have young members of BIPOC communities gain practical production management experience in working venues at the start of their careers. Two candidates from Seneca will be interning with Production in the first half of 2024.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Marketing and Communications

- Recognized holidays of national and social/cultural importance on social media and digital signage, including Christmas, Hanukkah, Transgender Day of Remembrance, Diwali, Latin American Heritage Month (artist Instagram takeover by Quique Escamilla)
- Created and shared content to highlight TO Live Presents shows, including:
 - [editorial article](#) on Indigenous resistance through music featuring Digging Roots
 - Backstage with... artist Q&A featuring 5 musicians from collectif9:
 - [J r mie Cloutier](#)
 - [Thibault Bertin-Maghit](#)
 - [Andrea Stewart](#)
 - [TJ Skinner](#)
 - [John Corban](#)
 - Video interview series featuring Lacey Hill:
 - [Life on the rez](#)
 - [Home is Six Nations Reserve](#)
 - [Uplifting fellow Indigenous artists](#)
 - [What it means to be an independent artist](#)



- [The Indigenous Music Community](#)
 - [The frequency of love](#)
 - [Following the music](#)
 - [Bringing a love fest to Toronto](#)
- Artist Instagram takeover for collectif9 (with member Andrea Stewart)
 - TikTok/reel for [Pirates of the Caribbean](#)
 - TikTok/reel for [Patti LuPone](#)
 - 2 TikToks/reels for collectif9:
 - [We would like to introduce you to Hildegard Von Bingen!](#)
 - [And we're back with our girl, Hildegard Von Bingen!](#)
- TO Live created content highlighting our explorations initiative, including social media profiles & Q&As with explorations artists:
 - [Candace Kumar](#)
 - [Robbie Grunwald](#)
 - [Caroline Fraser](#)
 - Media highlights included:
 - HARIHARAN – Weekly Voice (South Asian News), [Soul to Soul with Hariharan](#)
 - PATTI LUPONE – Toronto Star by Shinan Govani, [‘I never choose my battles. They choose me’ — a conversation with Broadway legend Patti LuPone](#)
 - PATTI LUPONE – CBC radio Q with Tom Power, Patti LuPone joins Tom Power for a career-spanning interview that ranges from her early years to the state of Broadway today. [Patti LuPone, Jorja Smith | Q with Tom Power | Live Radio | CBC Listen](#)
 - DIGGING ROOTS – Toronto Star, [Indigenous music is more visible in Canada — Digging Roots is part of the groundswell](#)
 - TREEMONISHA - New York Times, [Best Classical Music Performances of 2023 ‘Treemonisha’](#)
 - TREEMONISHA – Toronto Star, [The ten best theatre shows in 2023, Treemonisha \(Volcano, the Canadian Opera Company, Soulpepper Theatre, Moveable Beast, Luminato Festival, TO Live\)](#)

Ticket Services

- Q4 was the busiest quarter of ticketed activity both of 2023 and since the pandemic closure in general, with Ticket Services providing box office support and customer service across over 260 events at TO Live’s principal three venues and the Elgin & Winter Garden Theatre.
- The ticketed events in Q4 of 2023 saw over 184K ticketed attendees, along with over 187K new tickets booked within the quarter.
- In collaboration with the Marketing team, a new design for physical tickets was put together and the new ticket stock ordered that is now in use.



FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Finance

- Prepared for interim audit and year end

Payroll

- Prepared for interim audit and year end

Information Technology

- Completed EBMS cloud platform migration project from on-premises
- Completed FFRF Wireless projects for network upgrades at all venues
- Completed FFRF UPS replacement project at Meridian Hall
- Completed FFRF Switch replacement project at Meridian Hall
- Started initial setup and configuration of FFRF Client Firewall project for firewall separation

HUMAN RESOURCES & ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

- 401 employees at the end of Q4 (+44 (12%) compared to Q4 2022)
- Filled 14 positions in Q4
- Employee turnover 4% in Q4 compared to 1.1% same time last year
 - 16 employees left in last quarter; majority of turnover occurred in November (10)
 - unspecified (37%) performance (12%), job abandonment (12%)
 - tenure less than 6 months (31%), 1-3 years (31%) and 5-10 years (18%)

Training

- Compliance completion rate:
 - 264 employees - *AODA Customer Service Standards Training*
 - 251 employees - *Addressing Racism in the Workplace Training for Employees*
 - 246 employees - *Demonstrating Respect at Work Training*
 - 200 employees - *Unconscious Bias Training for All Audiences*
 - 251 employees - *Workplace Violence and Harassment Refresher Training*
 - 160 employees - *Harassment and Respect in the Workplace Training – FOH*
 - 20 employees - *Disciplinary and Coaching Training* (Manager Development)
- AODA
 - Scheduled monthly Accessibility Committee meetings
 - Prepared multi-year plan and submitted yearend report
 - Rolled out AODA training on HRdownloads platform
- Employee Recognition Program
 - Implemented Employee of the Quarter Recognition Program
 - Nominated and celebrated 11 employees for Q4
- HR Round Table
 - Implemented monthly HR round table
 - Scheduled two sessions per month (in-person and virtual)



OPERATIONS

Facility Services

- Collected and disposed of chemicals and hazardous waste from all locations
- Began a process of providing regular waste diversion rates for all staff
- Updated electrical arc flash study and electrical diagrams
- Conducted general maintenance equipment during a building power shutdown
- Carried corrective works on fire safety systems at STLC and MH
- Installed additional containment for asbestos in the North Mechanical room at MH

Patron Services and Event Services

- Continued work on policies and service plans to coincide with expanded staff training in 2024
- Provided coaching to department managers on a variety of management responsibilities
- Introduced show specific concession offerings, including offering Vesper Martinis, the highest-sold item of the night during the James Bond film
- Successfully expanded popcorn sales during events
- Realigned some management roles to support the changing needs of the department better
- Began work on moving kitchen inventory into software for enhanced reporting

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 deficiencies
 - AODA Work Package 6 (Offices and Lunchrooms): Occupancy of phases 1 & 2 is complete, and working on the remaining deficiencies
 - AODA Work Package 7 (Back of House support Phase 1): Phase 1 work commenced. Demolition and rough-ins are ongoing
 - Roof Replacement Phase 2 (PVC): Completed
 - Replacement of Chillers/Cooling Tower: Substantial completion achieved. Working on Cooling Tower refurbishment deficiencies remaining
 - Technical Theatres Improvements: Progressing on schedule
 - Performance Portable Lighting Equipment: Completed
 - Rigging Replacement for GWRH and Lyric: Work has begun in the Lyric
 - MAC Exterior Repair: Completed; deficiencies remain
 - NET Zero Carbon Initiatives: RFP closed, interviews completed, and proponent selected.
- **Meridian Hall** highlights include:
 - Door Replacement: Doors installed, working on remaining hardware and finish issues
 - 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): Project Completed.
- AODA Projects - Work Package 4 (Front and Back of House Services): Construction underway. B1 dressing room 80%, B2 staff kitchen & staff changerooms 95%, and VIP room 70% all in progress
- AODA Projects – Work Package 5 (Lobby Washrooms Phase 2): Construction underway and 50% complete to date
- PSVC Systems: Completed.
- Exterior Envelope & Site Work: The contractor mobilized, and demolition was completed
- NET Zero Carbon Initiatives: RFP closed, interviews completed, and proponent selected

DEVELOPMENT – Philanthropy & Corporate Sponsorship

- Completed Giving Tuesday and end of year campaign (Nov 20-Dec 31, 2023)
- Continued outreach to Consulates aligning with TO Live’s international programming priorities
- Major Gifts & Foundations
 - Hosted two legacy events
 - Hosted two major gift events with Castlepoint Numa
 - Hosted two post-show events (Patti LuPone/NY Philharmonic)
 - Hosted two pre-show donor events (Patti LuPone/NY Philharmonic)
 - 20+ priority major gift prospects ongoing
 - Continued stewardship of donors through newsletters, reports, and dedicated events
- Sponsorship
 - Secured water partner for 2024
 - Identified approximately 50 Program sponsorship prospects, email/phone campaigns in progress
 - Started conversations with car dealerships
 - Completed five sponsor activations
 - Renegotiated contract with Muskoka Brewery
- Stewardship and Retail
 - 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

- Executed Architectural contract
- Executed CREM contract
- Initiated Schematic Design process
- Participated in Ottawa in-person meetings with various ministries and their staff
- Continued Indigenous consultation
- Recruitment of Senior Manager, Capitol Fundraising position
- Participated in Economic Impact Study for STLC (and TO Live)

